

**The Smart Business  
Owner's Guide to**

**ACHIEVING  
ROCK STAR  
STATUS**

Tips and Strategies for  
Creating Raving Fans and  
Growing Your Business

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Achieving Rock Star Status

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Printed in USA

# Introduction

If someone could wave a magic wand and suddenly change something about your chosen profession or business, what one thing would you have them change?

Would you have them provide you with an easier way to contact more, better-qualified prospects? And would you want those prospects as well as your current customers to view you as even more of a professional, or maybe even an “expert” in your field?

You may be good now, but how would you like to be even better at making more effective, more persuasive presentations? Perhaps you would like to be more effective at closing sales or handling objections. Or, is repeat business more important to you?

What if your current customers felt that you were the only person or the only business who understood and could effectively serve their specialized, unique and individual needs?

Or, how about referrals? Take the best customer you have right now. How would you like to have more contacts just like him or her than you could possibly handle? What one thing

would you change to make you a better, happier, and more productive businessperson?

In the chapters to follow, we'll be discussing not only these areas, but other factors that are critical for you to realize real business success. Throughout the pages of this book we'll explore some of the most effective ideas and field-proven methods and techniques that you can put to use immediately to help you increase your sales, improve your business, overcome some of your most difficult problems and challenges, gain extra income, have more free time, and find a renewed enjoyment from your chosen profession.

## **Increasing Your Effectiveness**

It's no secret that things are changing today, faster than ever before. Technology has become more sophisticated, competition more keen, and consumers – the people who buy your products and services – have become more educated and aware.

And with the wide variety of choices your customers or clients have, not only in similar products and services from different companies, but also in the individual people they deal with, it

stands to reason that the more skillful and professional you are at meeting your customers' needs, the bigger advantage you can command, and the more effective and successful you can become.

If you're really going to be effective and successful in the marketplace today, it is necessary, even vital, that you continually change, improve, adjust and update your selling, service, and problem-solving skills, as well as your methods of marketing and general business operation. It has been said, and you've no doubt heard, that:

**“People don't care how much you know  
until they know how much you care.”**

One of the best and most effective ways you can show your prospects and customers you care is by helping them solve their problems in a satisfactory, cost effective, and professional manner.

## **Exposure to New Ideas**

That's what this book is all about. It has been written with the goal of helping you become the best you can be at what you do professionally.

Naturally, this book doesn't claim, nor does it pretend, to have all the answers to all your business problems. No book, course or seminar could do that.

Rather, the objective of this book is to expose you to some tried, tested, and field-proven ideas, concepts, and techniques that have worked for other businesspeople much like you.

Once acquainted with new information and ideas, it will then be up to you to decide which ideas can best be tailored to your own individual business situation, and how you will begin to use them to better serve your customers and prospects.

The goal of this book is not to try to make you a marketing expert, but rather, to provide you with some of the tools the experts and those who are already successful in business are currently using.

Together, we'll explore specific marketing, sales, customer service, and business building techniques that others have used to significantly

increase their businesses and incomes with very little extra effort.

You will most likely find that many of these ideas will be easy to implement, and you'll be able to begin using them right away. Others may take a little longer to gear up for. And still others may not be right for you or your operation at all. That's okay. It's not possible to provide 100% usable ideas for every person in every situation.

But if you get just one or two good, usable ideas that you can put into your business operation that make a difference, then your time, effort and money will be well invested.

## **How We Retain Information**

Getting a new idea is one thing, but what you do with it once you have it, is just as important as getting it in the first place. Studies on retention show that you remember:

- 10% of what you read,
- 22% of what you hear,
- 37% of what you see,
- 56% of what you see and hear, and up to
- 86% of what you see, hear and do.

So an idea that is heard but not acted on is only half as likely to be retained as an idea that is actually put into practice. With that concept in mind, it is important to understand that if the information presented in this book is to be of any real value to you, it must not only be read, it must be applied. It must be experienced or acted on. And that means it's going to take some effort on your part.

In their book, *The Knowing-Doing Gap*, authors, Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert L. Sutton, mention that every year there are 1,700 new business books published, \$60 billion spent on training, \$43 billion spent on consultants and our universities turn out 80,000 graduates with MBAs. Yet most businesses continue to operate day in and day out in much the same way as they've always done.

You see, knowledge without action is no better than no knowledge at all. Just knowing isn't enough. You've got to do something with what you know.

The ideas presented in this book work. They're not theory. They're not speculation on what "should" work. And they're not philosophical musings. These ideas, concepts and techniques are currently in use by business owners across the country in one form or another.



They're being proven in actual field use day in and day out.

They work for others and they can work for you. But you're going to have to take the time to study them, understand them, and make the necessary modifications to tailor them to your own personal style. And then finally, you're going to have to apply them in your business.

## **Five Steps of Learning and Retention**

Learning – the acquisition of new information or knowledge, and Retention – the ability to capture that information and recall it when wanted or needed, is actually a process that involves five steps:

First is **Impact**. That is, actually receiving the idea in your mind. Impact can be in the form of a word, a visual observation or a concept. It makes no difference. Your mind isn't capable of making a distinction between a visual or an actual experience. Nor is it capable of determining the difference between a conscious or an unconscious impact an idea may have on you. As far as your mind is concerned, those experiences are all the same and your mind will accept them, regardless.

If information or an experience appears real to your mind, your emotions and nervous system will react as though it were actually real.

To illustrate this point, try this simple experiment:

Seat yourself in a comfortable chair, feet flat on the floor and your hands resting comfortably in your lap.

Close your eyes, take a deep breath, let it out slowly and relax. Take another one. Let it out slowly. Relax even more.

Picture in your mind a lemon resting on a table in front of you. Visualize it. See it clearly. Look at its shape – its color – its texture.

Now mentally reach out with your hand and pick up the lemon. Bring it up to your face. Look at it closely. Squeeze it. Do you notice how firm it feels? Feel the texture of the lemon's dimply and waxy skin. Notice the lemon's yellow color and round shape, with its pointy ends.

Now, hold it up to your nose. Smell it. Do you notice the lemon's citrusy smell?

Place the lemon on the table and mentally pick up a knife that's lying nearby. Cut the lemon in two.

Pick up one half of the lemon and see the juice dripping from it. Bring the lemon up to your nose. Smell it again. Now bite into the lemon.

What's happening to you right now? Is saliva flooding your mouth, both in your mind as well as physically?

Now consider what just happened. In actuality, there was no lemon. You just pictured one in your mind. While this was just a mental exercise and the lemon was just imagined, chances are, if you are like most people, the mental image you were playing on the screen of your mind triggered certain responses which manifested themselves physically. So, you can see by this demonstration that *Impact* is a critical step involved in the process of learning and retention.

The second step is **Repetition**. One university study revealed that an idea that was read or heard only one time was 66% forgotten within 24 hours. But if that same idea was read or heard repeatedly for eight days, up to 90% of it could be retained at the end of the eight days.

So once you've read this book all the way through, go back and read it again. But this time read with a highlighter, a pencil and notepad handy. Mark up the book. Write down the ideas you feel fit your personal business situation. This repetition will help you retain more of the information than if you had read it only once.

The third step in the learning and retention process is **Utilization**. This is the "doing" step. It

is here that neuromuscular pathways are actually developed, creating a “mind-muscle memory.” And according to the study quoted earlier, once you physically experience an action, it becomes twice as easy to recall as if you had only heard it.

Fourth, is **Internalization** - actually making the idea a part of you. That may involve some customizing or tailoring of the idea to fit your situation or style, but it is vitally important for you to personalize the idea and make it “yours.”

The fifth step is **Reinforcement**. In order to maximize the effectiveness of an idea, you should continually be looking for ways to support and strengthen it. The more you can support the idea, the more you will believe it, the longer you will retain it, and the more effective it will become in helping you serve your customers' needs.

Now, what does all this have to do with your business? Simply this - in your daily business and personal activities, as well as throughout your experience with the information presented in this book, you are going to be exposed to a great number of ideas.

Some ideas will be brand new, meaning you've never heard them before. Some will be ideas you have heard in the past, but have forgotten. And others will be ideas you come up with on your own as a result of something that

was triggered in your mind as you read. Understanding and applying these five steps in the learning and retention process can help you retain more of what you read and experience.

## **Action Makes the Difference**

It's important to keep an open mind as you read, hear, or otherwise experience ideas that can help you. Try not to judge them or cast them aside too quickly because they don't sound good, they're not part of your personality or make-up, or because you may have heard them before.

Instead, consider these courses of action:

If you've heard an idea before, say to yourself, "Yes, I've heard that before, but am I using it? If not, why not?"

If you are currently using the idea, ask yourself, "How effective am I at using it? How can I improve on it to make it even more effective for me and my business?"

Next, ask yourself this question: "What will I do as a result of what I've learned?"

Remember, it's not *what* you know – it's what you *do* that counts. Ideas are powerful. And good ideas are really important for any business.

They're what keep your interest up and your business fresh and alive and growing. And when put into action, good ideas can make a huge difference in the way you do business, the results you realize, the fun you have, and the profits you make.

This book is full of good, practical, and usable ideas that can help make that big difference for you. But it's up to you to tailor them to your own unique situation, and more importantly, to put them into action.

## **The Business You're In**

If you don't learn another thing from our time together, remember this...

**You're NOT in the (insert your occupation) business...**

**You're in the MARKETING business.**

Read those sentences again... and again... and again. Digest them. Understand them. Internalize them. Make them an integral part of your business philosophy. Because unless and until you do, your business will be no better and no different than any of the other choices your

prospects and customers can select from to do business with.

Let us explain by using the insurance profession as an example, and as we do, think about how these principles might apply to your business.

It's a well-known fact that very few people, if any at all, want to actually buy an insurance policy. It's true, they may want the benefits, security and peace of mind that insurance provides them and their families or their business, but they don't necessarily want to spend their money on an insurance policy. But what do most insurance salespeople sell?

### ***They sell insurance!***

No wonder the business is so difficult. It doesn't take a Harvard degree to figure it out. If you sell insurance... and know that people don't want to buy insurance... why would you continue to beat your head against the wall trying to sell it?

Consider the way most people shop for auto insurance. They call a number of insurance companies and ask for a quote. The agent asks what coverage the caller is currently carrying, and provides a quote based on those figures.

The caller then thanks the agent or staff



member, and goes to the next number on their list. They keep repeating that scenario until they're convinced that they've found the lowest price... and whichever company comes in lowest gets the business.

But wait a minute. Isn't there more to buying insurance than just "low price?" Well, sure there is. We both know it and so do most insurance agents.

Why is it then that nearly every agent from nearly every insurance company you call tries to sell on price knowing that there's probably someone out there with a lower price than they can quote?

Why is it that so few agents try to differentiate themselves from their competition and change the prospect's thinking away from price and on to other, more important things?

Price is important, don't get us wrong. It's very important and it carries a lot of weight in a prospect's buying decision. But it's only one of many factors that a person needs to consider when making a buying decision.

In actuality, there's very little difference in insurance policies issued by any number of insurance companies in the same geographical area.

And likewise, there's usually very little



difference in the products or services you sell versus those same types of products or services sold by your competitors.

General overhead costs, utilities, phones, supplies, wages, and product costs are also similar for most companies that sell like products and services.

So, if all those factors... similarity of products and services, overhead costs and product costs... are pretty much the same, the prices charged by each individual business must, out of necessity, be pretty close as well.

It's true that one company may, for example, obtain a lower purchase price on their products and as a result be able to offer a more attractive sales price for a certain period of time, but eventually things change and the playing field becomes pretty level once again.

There are other factors not to be overlooked such as investment income and tax write-offs or advantages that can play a role in the prices businesses charge for the things they sell.

But overall, all things considered, the prices charged for the goods and services from one company to another similar company are going to be fairly close over the long haul.

The point is, that... no matter what business you're in...

**You will never maintain, long term...  
a competitive advantage because  
of the products you offer or  
the prices you charge.**

As soon as you develop a new product or offer a new service, it's just a matter of time before your competition latches on to it and offers the exact same thing, or maybe even enhances it and offers it for a lower price. And as soon as you lower your prices, your competition can do the same thing.

The marketplace you operate in is so fiercely competitive... so cutthroat... so unforgiving... that you absolutely *must* do something to differentiate yourself from your competition.

If you don't, you'll be relegated to just another "me-too" business, just like all your competitors.

Now... you want to know the good news?

That's how your competitors operate... in a "ME-TOO!" mode.

Just look around. They're all the same. Their businesses all look the same. Their products are all the same. They walk and talk the same. And their advertising all looks alike and says the same thing as the next guy's. And because they all operate that way and don't know how to change... it gives you a tremendous opportunity!

You see, if they keep doing what they've always done, they'll keep getting what they've always gotten.

But you... if you want something different... you've got to be willing to make some changes. And that's what this book is all about, making changes - changes that will produce real and measurable results in your business.

But what you'll learn here isn't enough. These ideas and strategies alone won't work. You've got to take action on them if you expect anything different from what you're currently getting.

So, make the action commitment now and let's get started!