



Growing Your Business Together

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## The 10 Sins of Website Marketing

**Q**uestion: What do the following lead generation techniques have in common: direct mail, trade shows, and executive briefings? Answer: They don't generate much in the way of real business.

Current research indicates that the web has become a major source of research for prospects seeking to find business software and resellers. Traditional marketing techniques have become less effective while internet marketing is quickly becoming a premier source of lead generation. As a result of this paradigm shift, a VARs website becomes a vital portal for a prospect to learn about your company and solutions. A well-designed website with a clear and concise message generates significantly more activity than a poorly designed product-centric website.

The vast majority of VAR/ Reseller websites we visit look like a technical person using FrontPage created them in the basement. The content and message is all wrong and the site tends to drive visitors away rather than attract them to the site. In a recent marketing publication, "The Small Business Marketing Bible 2003", David Frey discusses the 10 sins of most small business websites. His message is right on target.

**Sin # 1**—No clear differentiation of the competition. What makes you better? Why should a prospect buy from you rather than the competition?

**Sin # 2**—Poor and complex designs that divert a visitors attention away from your site.

**Sin #3**—No compelling use of headlines and sub headlines.

**Sin # 4**—Dull mind-numbing content with boring specs and data rather than interesting content dealing with a visitors pains and problems.

**Sin # 5**—Confusing navigation.

**Sin # 6**—Use of annoying and overwhelming flash and graphics.

**Sin # 7**—No strategy to drive traffic to your website such as newsletters, white papers, industry issues, and links from other sites.

**Sin # 8**—No strategy to capture visitors email addresses.

**Sin # 9**—Content only focused on you and your business rather than what's in it for the customer.

**Sin # 10**—No tools, content, or messaging to overcome a visitors skepticism.

On average, a visitor spends 8.5 seconds looking at your website than makes a determination to stay or leave. Your website must do its part as an important element of your marketing plan



to capture a visitor's attention so that you have a fair chance of being considered as a potential solution provider. Considerable time and attention to detail must be spent to put forward a professional and powerful image and message.

Couple a well-designed website with search engine optimization services, pay-per-click preferred placement, and you have the making of a finely tuned internet-marketing machine. Times are changing and as they do, we must shift our thinking towards marketing techniques that have a better chance of achieving results.

- The vast majority of VARs have sub par websites
- The internet has become the premier method for researching software
- The internet is now a significant lead generation tool
- Times are changing and so does our approach to marketing

## A Wealth of Revenue from Existing Clients

The two biggest business assets a VAR has are its' employees and clients. To excel and prosper both require care, nurturing, and attention. The **Life Time Value** of a customer is very significant. As the business software marketplace saturates, more revenue comes from current clients and less comes from new client acquisitions. To maximize revenue from your client base two elements are required. They consist of a good customer care program and a proactive marketing program.

Customer care is all about listening and being responsive. Clients want to know whom they talk to and when they will get an answer. It is all about communication. Clients want answers in a timely manner and not reasons why you cannot help them. I am familiar with a large National VAR who over the last couple of years has lost over 200 customers. They blame their client losses on VARs stealing their clients. What a foolish thought. Clients never leave a VAR that provides good communication and services them well.

Successful client care is easy. Design simple processes without layers of people and complexities. Have a single point of contact for the client, tell them when they can expect an answer, and make sure you follow-up on time. Try to avoid excessive email, as there is no substitute for human interaction. Treat your clients well and they are yours for life.

Once upon a time VARs sat back and waited for clients to call and request add-on products and services. Today, a proactive client-marketing program is an essential element to maximize your revenue from existing clients. If your clients are satisfied, with your services they will welcome any opportunity to meet with you to discuss their business and how they benefit from your solutions. Clients are your easiest source of revenue and your best source of leads. Here are a few ideas and programs to bring to your customers.

Software support contracts are the best source of recurring VAR revenue. Every one of your clients' should be on some form of contract. So many VARs are missing the boat by having their clients' on time and material (T&M) support. T&M support does not give the VAR the necessary revenue to plan and staff support to optimize service and response time. Every successful VAR is capitalizing on the financial benefits of contract revenue and it should be part of your client-marketing program. When there are few new

sales, the cash flow from support revenue makes a big difference.

Customer newsletters are a great way to communicate with your clients and prospects. Newsletters should not focus on your company and employees, but on business issues and solutions that are of value to the reader. Each issue should present an add-on product or new module that can benefit most of your clients. The newsletter should include special offers, promotions, training classes, seminars, upgrades, customer success stories, helpful hints, and other meaningful information. Your clients will appreciate your efforts and you will benefit over time.

During my tenure as a VAR, we billed close to \$200K each year on classroom training. This is an easy source of revenue. Publish a schedule of classes and proactively communicate the schedule to your clients. If you have four or more people, sign up you hold the class. If fewer people sign up offer them personalized on-site training. If no one signs up, you do not hold the class and lose nothing.



User Groups are one of my favorite events to drive revenue. They provide a forum for clients to interact with you and each other. You have them captive for several hours providing the opportunity to dazzle them with solutions to help them improve their business by purchasing additional products, upgrades, and services. We ran User Groups once each quarter. The goodwill and benefits are well worth the energy and effort.

Once a year we would provide each of our clients with a **FREE** Annual Checkup. The visit would focus on their business and how our solutions were meeting their needs and requirements. We would discuss any changes in their business and help them plan how we could better service them in the future. This was a great time to ask them for a referral. It was rare to walk away from a meeting without the potential for additional business.

I would always ask my best clients to introduce me to their accountant, banker, business consultant, and hardware vendor. I would set-up a breakfast or lunch meeting and explore ways that we could better serve our mutual client. Establishing a new relationship and asking for new referrals was an important goal of each meeting. Try it, it really works well.

## Telemarketing—Results in Sales

**W**hether you build an internal team or use an outside service, telemarketing represents the most effective form of lead generation today. The keys to successful telemarketing are good lists, a CRM system to maintain notes and data, and a sustained effort.

I often hear from VARs that they tried telemarketing once or twice and it didn't work. No surprise there.

I set up a telemarketing team in 1996. After 12 months, we only made one sale and I was very discouraged. We decided not to give up and the second year we closed 12 new deals from telemarketing. The third year we closed 18. Telemarketing is like a fine wine. It takes time and gets better and better with age.

When telemarketing is coupled with database marketing, the results are even better. Telemarketing, when done properly, is a sure winner.

## 380 Leads & Climbing



Joanne Booth

Jamie Rambo

Ed Mosinak

## Ask the Experts

**E**arlier this month, I visited with John, a potential new client. John explained that his company has lost money for the last two years and he had to painfully downsize his 15-person operation. I asked how he was making out today and He told me they were barely breaking even. I asked John how much he was charging for his services. He explained that the standard rate was \$125 per hour, but customers' could buy prepaid blocks of time for \$110 per hour. John spent the next 20 minutes explaining to me why his customers would not pay a dime more than the \$125 per hour.

This is a common problem I hear wherever I travel. My advice to John is to leave his business and get a job. He will have less stress and earn more money elsewhere.

Depending upon your geography and the type of service, a VAR must charge between \$150 and \$225 per hour in order to make a reasonable profit and sustain the business.

John needs to open his mind and work on communicating to his clients the value he brings to them and why he requires a certain rate.

When is the last time you went to your health insurance company and told them you were not paying their rate increase?

What John doesn't realize is that his customers are business people too. They want him to be successful or he will not be there to help them. I can count on one-hand the number of clients I lost over a fifteen-year period due to a price increase.

There is an old saying that says, "If 20% of your customers are not complaining about your prices, they are too low."

As your cost of doing business increases, so must your prices. Approach the subject with your clients on a business-to-business basis and you will have little trouble with a fair hourly rate.



# Sales and Marketing With a Money-Back Guarantee



## WHAT ARE PEOPLE SHOUTING ABOUT SUCCESS DRIVEN BY TECHNOLOGY

"The most successful athletes rely on coaches to help them reach their full potential. I find working with SDbT to be the equivalent. We meet on a regularly scheduled basis. They help keep me focused on areas of our business that can be improved and their experience is a great help to me when I need to work through ideas. I would highly recommend you consider doing the same."

**RMI Corporation**  
Paul R. Chapdelaine, CPA, President

"The channel partners that engage SDbT will certainly not remain status quo or show no growth of new business. I have no doubt in my mind. In today's environment we must differentiate ourselves from the competition. Sheldon has proven to us that he knows how to do that. He knows this industry. He knows our pains and concerns and how to address them. I would suggest that if you really want to drive more revenue, it would be wise to engage SDbT."

**iCepts Technology Group**  
Ron Fullmer, Vice President

Everyday I am asked, "what is working to increase sales?" and "how can I improve my business?" Now I have something to offer you. SDbT is one of the very best solutions I've seen. Let me first say, that I have known Sheldon for many years and that this a powerful method to increase your sales. The interesting part is that the way it is structured, you do not pay unless you get results. It is not a tele-marketing scheme, and it doesn't come on a library of cassette tapes - this is the REAL thing.

**Best Software, Inc.**  
Michael Santoro, Senior Account Executive

I have known Sheldon for quite some time now. After having worked with VARs for almost 20-years, I can honestly say that Sheldon ranks among the most successful, the most knowledgeable, and the most capable of any VAR in this country. He has my complete support. SDbT is as close to a sure thing as you will ever encounter! "

**Aperum**  
Geoff Ashley, Vice President Business Development

[www.sdbt.com](http://www.sdbt.com)



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BY TECHNOLOGY**

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