

## 58. How To Make Quick Cash For Your Service Based Business

00:04

I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being an entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing. Join me as we talk about marketing, small business and life in between. Welcome to my Weekly Marketing.

00:28

Hey, hey and welcome to another episode of my Weekly Marketing. I'm Janice Hostager and, if we haven't met, I'm a marketing strategist and fractional CMO, but mostly I love working with small business owners like you to get your marketing on track so you can grow your business. So I was going to do a Q&A episode today and I still am of sorts but there's one question that really covers the entire episode and it's a question that I've received before and I've experienced in my own life. And so here's the question. Quote I have a photography business that's really busy during some months and completely dead after that. What are some effective marketing strategies I can do inexpensively to keep business on a more consistent basis? This is from Janelle. Okay, Janelle, first of all, I feel you, even though you have a photography business, if you have any kind of a service-based business, this can certainly happen.

01:26

I had a design and marketing agency for many years and the feast or famine life is real. I know that there were a couple of times when I knew I had to make money to bring in my fair share for our family finances and I was in a panic mindset and that is not the place you want to be. It's not comfortable, it's not fun, it's super stressful. The typical scenario that I see in other businesses is that they lean, they hit lean times, they realize they have to do a promotion or run a Facebook ad and they offer some sort of big discount on their services to get last minute business. They offer some sort of big discount on their services to get last minute business. That can work. But because you're in panic mode, which is really the wrong mindset to be in, you tend to underprice your services so much just to get in business that you really end up losing money and frankly, it creates a lot of stress and anxiety. And who needs that? But fear not, there's a better way, and that was one of the reasons I created my Trail to the Sale™ framework, because I didn't ever want to be in that situation again. Now I understand in real life things happen and sometimes we need to pull in some quick income and no judgment here.

02:39

What I want to do today, by the end of this episode, is number one give you my recommendations on how to get past a cash crunch if you're a service-based business, and I'm going to show you how to use my Trail to the Sale framework to do that. And number two, get you started on an email list where you're not having to spend as much money and time to make money, and so you have a list of warm buyers that you can appeal to if you end up in a pinch like this again. Okay, so I'm going to start off here, assuming you know your ideal customer. If not, it's easy to get off track, promoting things that your ideal customer doesn't really want in the name of making quick cash. If you don't, I highly recommend getting my free ideal customer profile and I'll put the link to that in the show notes so that you can get a feel for exactly who you're talking to, because that makes a huge difference in all the marketing that you do.

## 03:31

For example, if you've been shooting weddings and you get a great idea to start doing senior portraits, that would require a marketing reboot of sorts, since weddings and high school seniors or their parents are probably two completely different groups of buyers. Or if you have a website design service and you're thinking about doing podcast editing again, that's a different market altogether. But what you could do as a web designer is to offer Facebook or Google ad services, since that's likely a similar small business client that you have had before. Or if you're a wedding photographer, you could offer engagement shoots. So think about in terms of the market you already have built up, if you're going to offer something different. So, for the sake of this podcast episode and for making quicker cash, let's just stick with your existing customer that you have been targeting and hopefully working with already.

## 04:21

What I'm going to do today is take the Trail to the Sale and condense it down. The Trail to the Sale is a framework that's based on the path customers typically take to find a product or service and to do business with them, and the first step of that is awareness. At this part, you just want to get the word out. It's really all about eyeballs at this stage. Don't just choose one channel. You need to choose multiples for a quick win. Typically, I like to look at metrics and you should know where most of your traffic comes from typically, and you can look at your metrics to find that out. So in this situation, here's what I'd recommend.

## 04:57

First of all, run a campaign. They used to say it took seven touches to get a customer's attention. Now they say it's like 70 or something ridiculous, since we live in such a loud, noisy world with so many distractions. So one postcard or an ad or an email isn't going to be enough to move the needle. You need to think in terms of multiple touch points. So if you do an ad, do an email, get on social media, offer value and you'll get noticed. Value can be a lot of things. Think about what you will do to entertain, encourage or inform them, to get their attention. These are all valuable things that will grab people's attention and get their eyes on you, and that's where you want to be at this stage.

## 05:40

Next, focus on channels that drive quick revenue, such as paid ads, emails to your existing list and maybe some public relations. If you don't have an email list or a small list, I'll get to that in a bit. Also, just a note about paid ads. If you do run anything paid, any paid promotion at all, I'd recommend understanding what the lifetime value of your customer is, or you could spend more on ads than a lead is actually worth. You can Google the formula, but roughly, if you take the number of customers you have and divide it by the number of dollars that you've made in a year, you can determine what each customer is worth to you. I am the farthest from a math genius that you will ever meet and I don't love calculations, but this is easy math and you don't want to exceed this amount when you're running paid ads or any kind of paid promotion.

## 06:31

Number three Google my Business listing. If you have a local business, this is a no-brainer, it's free and Google promotes it for you in the search results. Make sure it's filled out and correct. You can post your menu of services and promotions that you're running right there on the Google my Business app and ask for reviews. 91% of consumers read at least one review before making a purchase decision and Google will put them front and center if you do it on their platform, right in the Google my Business listing. Next, you want to post frequently on social media platforms of your choice. Again, if you listing. Next, you want to post frequently on social media platforms of your choice. Again, if you know your metrics, you know where most of your ideal customers are and where you get the most clicks and engagement. If it's Instagram, post like two times a day for several weeks, and don't forget Pinterest and YouTube, which also act as search engines. Rich pins allow you to share pins that update automatically, so if your price changes on a page, for example for a promotion, your pin will be updated automatically.

## 07:34

Think in terms of entertainment, education or inspiration. What would you like to see if you were your target customer? You don't need to be on all the platforms. Look at your idea client and figure out where they're spending their time. Also, don't forget about neighborhood groups on social media and Nextdoor, the Nextdoor app. But know this it takes being louder than you think to get heard by your ideal customer and for them to take action, so don't be afraid of putting yourself out there over and over again. Again, you want to track conversions, not just the traffic. So focus on what generates revenue and pay attention to what's working.

## 08:11

You could also team with some micro-influencers. They can make a big impact with a small budget. This will even work if you have a local business. Look for local influencers on Instagram, such as ones that share local events. For example, making a guest appearance on a podcast or a video streaming show is also an option that can generate a lot of traffic quickly. But look for popular shows that are in your niche so that you can give some unique advice. It's important to

bring something new to the table to present to the hosts that will set you apart just to get on the show. So it's what I call the uniquely you factor, something that you offer that sets you apart from everybody else in your industry. That's also what your customer wants to know too, so give this some thought. Almost every local market is flooded with designers, hair salons and photographers, so you need to define what sets you apart from the crowd. If you're a local business, that will still work. Just really share snippets of that on social media.

## 09:10

Typically, I also talk here about search engine optimization or SEO, but a lot of what we talk about or recommend for SEO is a longer game that probably isn't going to help you when you're in a quick cash crunch. So if you're looking for a quick win, that's something to put to the back burner. Not that you should neglect long-term solutions like search engine optimization, but you should schedule them on your calendar for when you have time to work on them and know that over time it's going to improve your site getting found on the search engines. But again, it won't be a quick win for you, and this is more in terms of an offer. But something that is often attractive to people is a gift with purchase. I don't know about you, but I have a lot of little cosmetic bags from Clinique that proves that gifts with purchase really work. In the photography world, that could be a free photo book or an 8x10, or even something fun like a tote bag. It could also be something like a free car wash with an oil change or a free conditioning treatment with a salon visit. Whatever it is that you're offering, it really should set you apart and play into that uniquely you factor.

## 10:26

Direct mail is also an option here, but if you're looking for something that's not expensive, that would not be it, because direct mail can definitely get expensive because you'll likely have to buy a mailing list, a physical mailing list, have the postcard printed and then also pay for postage. Also, if you're going to do direct mail, I'd recommend doing it in conjunction with a digital promotion, such as email or digital ads and social media. And if you're going to do direct mail, I would also suggest having a unique URL or phone number on that mailer piece, like if it's a postcard, so you can track what leads come in from that particular piece to keep track of your return on investment from that particular piece. To keep track of your return on investment. Okay, so after you've built up awareness and got a lot of eyes on your product or your offer or your business, then I move into the consideration stage.

## 11:18

Since you're in a cash crunch, this might be something that you want to do later on, but typically I like to recommend building an email list at this point if you don't have one. But building a list does take some time. But they say the money is in the list and that's because it is a email list filled with warm leads or people that you know that are interested in your business and what you're offering. So once you have eyeballs on your service, if you have something to get people on your email list, that's the next step I'd recommend. So we want to attract people with

freebies. So, depending on your service, this could be an ebook, a checklist, cheat sheet, webinar, a challenge, a workshop, anything that would be relevant to share free information that could get your email address or contact information to you and it would give them lots of free value. So you can learn how to do this step by step to get your email list going by going to my free list building accelerator at [janicehostager.com/list](http://janicehostager.com/list) and I'll put a link to that in the show notes too.

## 12:26

Once you have a free lead magnet, then you need to promote it. It doesn't help to offer a free thing if you're not going to let everybody know about this. Even for free items, you'll still have to promote it. If you do brand photography, for example, you could create a lead magnet that includes what photos people should have taken professionally for their website or their social media. You could even team up with a web designer to put something together and cross promote it. As a business owner, I love getting emails from people who like to team up for a joint promotion. You'll also want to create a separate landing page and a download page on your website just for this promotion, for your lead magnet that is. There are instructions for this in my list building accelerator challenge too. So if you download that, you'll have everything you need to get up and running.

## 13:13

Then, after you create your freebie, in your situation, you might also want to present a low priced upsell on the thank you or download page. This is nice, because you can make back some of your money that you spent on the freebie. Plus, it helps you separate the buyers from the tire kickers. Once someone is willing to put even a little money down, you know that they're a much warmer lead than someone who's just after something free. So once you have their email address, I'd recommend setting up an automation with your email software that would tell them about how you can help them in the future and how they can get to know and like and trust you so they'll do business with you later on. Again, the how-to for this is all covered in my list building accelerator. So some other ideas for lead magnets.

## 14:00

I'm going to steal a phrase from Amy Porterfield here, who says when creating free content, consider what your audience needs to know, understand or be aware of before they're ready to buy your product. So let me say that again what your audience needs to know, understand or be aware of before they are ready to buy your product. So if that's photography, maybe it's how to prep your kids for a photo shoot or how to prepare your work team for headshot day. If you're a web designer, maybe it's what content you need to have pulled together before you contact or create a website. Be creative and think this through. It will make a huge difference if you can step into the shoes of your customer and really get inside the head of the potential buyer. Webinars are a common list builder for the business world and they work really really well, but

it's less often used with other services. But that's not to say you can't try it, and it might work really well, depending on the service that you offer.

## 15:05

Giveaways and contests can also be great list builders, because there are certain legalities to running a contest, though. I recommend software for contests such as KingSumo or Short Stack. I've used both of them. I'll put the links to those in my show notes, too. Giving away a free service like the one you're selling will draw people who are interested in that particular service. So, for example, if you're giving away a free family portrait session, you know that all the people who entered are interested in family portrait sessions, right? So you have a hot leads list and you can send out an email promotion campaign following that drawing and maybe include a discount afterwards to people who entered but didn't win.

## 15:48

Just to be clear with regards to email, though, here's what you do not want to do: you do not want to buy an email list. Buying an email list is poor marketing and illegal in many countries and in some states. Not only is it smarmy, but it could also get you and your email service provider in some hot water, so don't do it. Enough said Okay, if you don't have an email list and don't have time to build one, I still highly recommend that you start. But here are some other suggestions. In the meantime, if you're producing regular content, such as a podcast or videos or a blog, and use your own platform to do it, you can go ahead and toot your horn about your promotions and make sure it's keyword rich and focus on the words your ideal customer will be typing into Google to search for your service. I think ChatGPT is an excellent tool to get content ideas, and I recommend using a tool like Mozcom to do some keyword research too.

## 16:47

Make sure the call to action on your blog post is to get your free offer. Use words like get the deal or something else that's really compelling as your call to action. Then you want to post that on social media, especially Facebook or Pinterest or anything where you can post a link Also. You'll also want to create scarcity by making it a limited time offer, even if it's a product you offer regularly, giving it a special discount or some other promotion like a gift with purchase. You want to make that always for a limited time. If you don't get all the bites you want, you can always extend it on the last day. But this scarcity is important to motivate buyers to act or they'll just put it off. But this scarcity is important to motivate buyers to act, or they'll just put it off.

## 17:32

Also, create a separate page for this service or this promotion on your website. If you typically do weddings, family shoots and portraits, for example, then create a page just for each of your offers. That way, you can drive traffic directly to that page. You don't wanna be the Walmart of your industry, the one-stop shop for everything. Sorry, walmart. You want to appear to specialize

in one or two few things, like a boutique, which gives you credibility and allows you to charge some higher prices. Again, this is the page you want to drive traffic to from other places. You don't want to send people to your homepage. If you're promoting a specific service, okay.

## 18:09

Next, we want to help them compare you to others. Some buyers will always compare you with other businesses out there, especially if you're something that's popular in nature, such as photography. So you need to plan on that. So it's important to set yourself apart again what I call the uniquely you factor. This is really your unique value proposition. Make sure what is unique about you is obvious everywhere, on your website and in your sales copy. Show and tell people what you do and how it's different from everybody else in the industry.

## 18:42

In a competitive industry such as hairstyling, that will make or break your marketing. Otherwise, you'll be seen as a commodity. Have you ever been to a farmer's market where every vendor has cucumbers and tomatoes Unless one vendor is different from another? It becomes a price war and that's a race to the bottom. You absolutely don't want to get in that position and it doesn't need to be a huge difference. I used to go to one stylist because they did a scalp massage and a free conditioner treatment with every visit. Of course, they also did a good job with their cuts, but that was what set them apart.

## 19:18

Next, in this comparison stage, you want to get reviews. 87% of consumers say that reviews and ratings from ordinary people have a greater impact on their purchase decisions than opinions from influencers or celebrities. Oof, that's powerful. So if you've already created a Google my Business page, I highly recommend following up with your previous customers to ask them for a Google review, which will show up in the search results when other people search for your business. So next you have to ask how will people evaluate you? Some people are hesitant to buy if it's a big ticket service and they don't know you well. So I like to include the evaluation stage for those businesses and services. It's sort of how we like to try the mini cheesecakes at Costco before we buy a box of 500 of them.

## 20:10

For a photographer, it could be a mini session or just having your portfolio on your site, or it could be a free coaching call if you're a photographer, it could be a mini session or just having your portfolio on your site, or it could be a free coaching call if you're a coach, or a case study if you offer other services. This phase depends on your customer, your service and the amount of time you have available to pull it together. Okay, so next it's time to sell it. When it comes time to sell, look at your price points. Start by calculating your real hourly rate here. If you don't know this, now's the time to figure it out. Factor in your overhead, your marketing expenses, software,

your equipment and the hourly rate for photographers in your market assuming you're a photographer.

## 20:48

Of course, if you're promoting something at a sales price, look at anchoring your price and let people know what it is regularly or what other people charge for it, and make sure that's listed on your promotion too. If you're offering a website design at \$4,000, for example, make sure that they know it's a \$6,000 value. There's a famous case where kitchen retailer William Sonoma introduced one of the first bread machines to the market for \$275. However, sales were disappointing, so what they did was kind of counterintuitive. They introduced a larger, better functioning model at double the price of the first one, and then the sales for the original \$275 machine took off. People like to believe they're getting a deal, and that's price anchoring in action. Also, remember, when you are writing your sales page or putting together your text, to focus on the transformation or the value your service will add to their life. They don't buy your service, they buy the results your service will bring them.

## 21:55

Also at the sales stage and even before you'll want to counter objections. Think of the things that people have said to you in the past for reasons they didn't buy. Encounter them in your offer, copy your sales calls or at least give them some thought in advance. Keep in mind that these objections are often based on beliefs and not facts. Most people value time and money the most, and so often you'll hear things like it's not the right time, so be ready to give them a reason why waiting could cost them more money or more time in the long run. Sometimes there's also an excuse behind the excuses. They tell you this is too expensive, this is too time consuming, but it's important to remember that those aren't facts. A belief will get in the way of buying. So to convince them to buy, you need to counter that belief with a fact. Too expensive may sound like a fact, but the right customer will have money for things they really want. Price is relative, right, I pay \$6 for a coffee at Starbucks, but would I pay \$6 for a Twinkie? No, thank you. So to try and convince them of anything, we must debunk the belief that's standing in the way.

## 23:04

I'm going to go into all of this in depth in my new course, modern Marketing Mastery 2, but understanding the roadblocks is key and should be included in your messaging. One more thing write this page for different types of buyers. Some people love stories, some people love facts. Some are quick to buy and others are very slow, and you need to take account of all these different buying types when you're writing up the text for your landing page. So I do have a free download for that as well. It's about the four types of buyers, and I'll put the link of that in my show notes too. Also, if you've got a webpage or landing page devoted to your offer which I highly recommend then make sure it includes all the details of what they're gonna receive,



including a warranty or a guarantee, if you have one and I recommend that you do if you can and make sure the transformation that they're going to receive is really clear.

## 23:59

Okay, moving along, we are going to the next phase, which is called supersize. I also almost always recommend an upsell, or what I call a supersize. Remember when you used to go to McDonald's and they would ask you if you'd like to supersize your beverage? So that's an upsell. Right there, there is almost always someone willing to pay a little more to get a little more. Using our photography example, think about a package that includes additional shots, prints, books or anything else that you can think of. That would add value to that package. You'd be surprised how many customers take the upsell. If it's not offered, it's leaving money on the table.

## 24:38

Next I go to the serve stage. I find this one is often forgotten and it's not really considered as part of marketing oftentimes, but I think it is so important. Following up with your customer to really thank them for the sale is super important and really will make you stand out in the market. It could be emailing a handwritten note or sending a special thank you via email. It really gets people's attention in a world where you don't always even get a verbal thank you when you go to the grocery store.

## 25:08

But serving means more than that. It's also making sure that they're happy with the sale. You might be checking with them, making sure that they know who to contact if they have issues, or creating an easy to use user guide or a video. Step into your customer's shoes to understand what they'd like, to help them feel loved, and it will go a long way. Remember, even though we focus on getting new clients, repeat customers are way cheaper. According to Constant Contact, you only have a 13% chance of persuading a new customer to buy, but repeat customers have a 60 to 70% chance of buying. So you want to make sure that after people buy, they're happy campers.

## 25:49

Okay, the last phase of all this is what I call the send stage, and one more reason to make sure people are happy is that you want them to tell others. Nothing is better than good old word of mouth. Referrals: Referred customers can have a 25% higher lifetime value than other customers and, according to the American Marketing Association, they spend 200% more on average. I like to offer a bonus to customers who refer. After a customer buys from me, I like to send them an email asking for referrals and promote a freebie for them if they do refer. If you have a lot of existing customers, you may want to do that too. It's way less expensive and way

easier than starting from scratch to get new clients. It's way easier than starting from scratch to get new clients. So that's my Trail to the Sale in a pinch.

## 26:38

Of course, it's not what I recommend for the long term, but I get it. Sometimes we just need a little cash flow to keep things moving forward. After you do one of these pushes, I'd recommend creating a promotional calendar for the following year so that you know when the slow times are likely to pop up and you can plan for them. I like to plan quarterly at a time and then I add in smaller promotions along the way if I need them to reach my goals, or I go ahead and plan promotions regardless. That's what I recommend for most of my clients too. I hope this was helpful for you today. If you have any questions, you can go ahead and send me an email at [hello@myweeklymarketing.com](mailto:hello@myweeklymarketing.com). I read all the comments and my emails that come through. For more information about anything we talked about today and to find all the links at go to [myweeklymarketing.com/58](https://myweeklymarketing.com/58). Thanks so much for joining me today. See you next time. Bye for now.