

Bare Minimum Marketing

A Manual for Microbusinesses

Amanda Pingel Ramsay

<http://BareMinimumMarketing.com>

Introduction

In 2004, my friend and roommate had finally gotten a job offer in the tech field – essentially the first one after the 2001 dot-com crash.

It was an interesting offer: the job was fixing computers, but payment came in two options:

Be an employee. Fix computers for a small fixed salary plus a bonus for each computer actually fixed.

Or

Be self-employed. Fix computers for a much higher hourly rate, and pay a referral fee to the business instead of them paying you. No guarantees of income, but (contrariwise) the possibility of much higher income if you can drum up some business on your own.

I urged my friend to take option 2, and start his own business. After much deliberation, he did so.

8 years later, that friend is now my husband, and we've been running a small business through seasonal fluctuations, more business than we can handle, months with only \$300 income, a housing boom, a housing crash, a recession and the start of a recovery... a roller coaster complete with ups, downs, and moments of utter terror.

Through all of it, I've noticed a couple of consistencies in almost every small business environment:

One: most small business owners feel pretty helpless with regards to marketing. There are a lot of questions about how to do it, what should be done, what's important, what's a waste of money, and how do you tell the difference? Most small business owners aren't comfortable with marketing, and aren't sure what to do about it.

This is hardly surprising. It's sub-branch of the E-Myth¹: very few small business owners start up because they're good at running a business, and marketing is one of those "business things" that they're not good at. But...

Two: there are very few resources out there on marketing for small businesses. Almost all marketing education assumes that you have a million-dollar marketing budget, and are trying to reach an audience of millions across 6 continents. That you are making billions and are looking for 1-2% growth each quarter. That your primary concerns are with market share and share price.

Even in business school, as I was earning my MBA, my professors ignored the obvious fact that there are only 500 slots for Fortune-500 Chief Marketing Officer, and that small businesses are becoming more and more important in this economy. That odds are good that many of us will end up self-employed, or catering to those who are self-employed. I had to fight tooth and nail to be allowed to work projects for businesses with 1-5 employees, and a marketing budget of a couple hundred to a couple thousand.

Furthermore, the marketing resources that *do* exist for small businesses are mostly scattered and unfocused: they assume that you already have a marketing background, and are just looking for a couple new techniques to add to your grab-bag. [Guerilla Marketing](#) is a fantastic book (and highly recommended), but there's no overview, no feeling of comprehensiveness, no help putting all the pieces *together* into a coherent picture.

I want to fix that.

¹ [The E-Myth](#), which I highly recommend, argues that most small businesses are not started by Entrepreneurs (who love risk and are fully knowledgeable about every aspect of running a business), but by Technicians, who are good at plumbing and so decide to start a plumbing business.

This book assumes that you own, or are considering owning, a small or micro-business². That you're really good at what you do – when you're able to convince someone to hire you. That you're kind of intimidated and overwhelmed by this whole “marketing” thing, and wish someone would just tell you what to do.

I can't tell you *exactly* what to do, because the Correct Answer varies so much from industry to industry, business to business, owner to owner, season to season, year to year. (Obviously there's no One Great Secret to marketing – if there were, the person who discovered it first would have All the money, and also rule the world.)

But what I can do is help you to understand *what* marketing is, *how* to do it and *why*, so that you can make intelligent decisions about your own business and your own situations. This book covers:

What is marketing? (And why yours is probably better than you think!)

The differences between what Coca-Cola does and what you need to do

Marketing ethically

What is branding? (And how to get it)

Bare Minimum Marketing: the stuff you *have* to have

How to decide which media and channels are right for you

Incorporating marketing into your business day-to-day and month-to-month

With action steps and ideas for anyone, ranging from the quick-and-dirty to the OCD.

Ready? Let's get started with the basics....

Part 1: Theory

What is Marketing? Closing the Gap

I've been told it's geeky, but whenever I'm trying to understand a concept, I like to look at the origin of the word. In the case of “marketing”, the root word is clearly “market”. In fact, all we did was verb the word market. So what does it mean “to market”?

When most people think of marketing, they think of advertising. Maybe some sales. Maybe some PR. But basically advertising. Marketing is about promoting your business, right?

Well, yes.... But there's more. In point of fact, marketing is *anything* that involves the relationship between your business and your market. And when you think about it, that covers a lot of territory. “The relationship between your business and your market” includes:

Modifying products, or making new products, in response to customer feedback.

Designing unique products for your customers' unique needs.

What price you're charging

What price changes (sales, discounts, inflation adjustments) get made, and when

How your product and your customer get together. Do you ship to them? Do they come to you? How long does it take? Can you do everything online? By phone?

Do people know who you are?

Do people know what you do?

Do people know how your product can benefit them?

If they're interested, can they get more information? Is it easy or hard?

How do customers feel about your business? Do they enjoy working with you? Are they frustrated? Do they like you better before or after the purchase?

² “Microbusiness” was coined by Chris Guillebeau to describe the businesses he covered in [\\$100 Startup](#). If you are considering becoming self-employed, or are self-employed and are struggling to figure out how to make this stuff actually *work*, [\\$100 Startup](#) might be my #1 recommendation.

The best description I ever heard, from an otherwise unremarkable marketing textbook, is that between you and customers, there are assorted “gaps” - reasons they don’t buy from you - and marketing is the process of closing those gaps.

Everyone thinks about the “customers have never heard of me” gap; the solution is to buy ads, and that’s marketing. Everyone agrees on that. But there are lots of other reasons customers don’t buy:

Maybe your product isn’t quite right for them. Adding the features they need - that’s marketing.

Maybe your prices are too high. Creating payment plans or partnering with a bank to help customers get loans -- that’s marketing.

Maybe they can’t get to your store during your business hours. Adding shipping options? Turn 9 - 5 into 11 - 7? Offering products that can be digitally downloaded? All marketing.

Why aren’t your customers buying? Let’s look at the four big major categories of “gaps”

The 4 Ps (plus one)

There are, of course, a lot of reasons that people aren't buying from you - as many as there are people who aren't your customers. But that's not really useful to know; your time is much better spent bridging one gap that's preventing a lot of sales than in trying to find every last gap. To this end, marketing professors have long divided possible customer gaps into four categories. To make them easier to remember, they all start with P:

Product - What is it, actually, that you sell?

Price - how much do you sell it for?

Place - how do your customers and your product get together?

Promotion - how do your customers find out that you exist, and what you do?

Traditionally, most of a business' consumer gaps fit into one of those four categories, so it's been a good model since it was proposed in the 1960s. But it's not quite complete. Marketing is, as we've said, anything and everything having to do with your interactions in the market - interactions with customers, suppliers, and competitors. But none of the traditional 4Ps has anything to do with interaction. I mean, there's some: you interact with your competitors by responding to each other's products and prices, and you interact with your customers by sending them ads and maybe at the location of the purchase. But it's all indirect - no conversations, no Q&A, no asking what they want, except in formal press releases and focus groups.

There's a very good reason for that: in the 60s, those were the only ways you *could* interact with your market. There was no way to make an announcement to 1,000 people at a time, or ask a hundred of your biggest fans what they want, or be there when a customer complained to her friends.

But now you can do that: post on Facebook, and 1,000 people can easily see it. Ask for feedback on your blog, and the people who like you well enough to read your blog will give you ideas. If a customer complains on Twitter, you can be there with an apology. And so several people have suggested that we need to add a 5th P to the model:

Participation - how and where do you interact with your customers?

So that's the 4 (plus 1) Ps; together, they'll cover almost all the customer gaps your business faces, and therefore most everything you need to think about when creating your marketing plan. Now that you have an overall view of all the Ps, let's look at each one in detail.

Product

Product is the category of marketing that covers what it is that you sell. Note that this doesn't have to be a physical item: a plumber might charge for a fixed toilet or unclogged sewer - those are his products. Many consultants have one and only one product: an hour of my time.. (This doesn't mean that they don't sell many things, or that their marketing can't be all the same. It only means that their invoices all look the same: whether I organized your closet or helped you balance your checkbook, the cost is based not on what you wanted from me, but on how much time I spent doing it.)

Whether you have one product or thousands, this is also a good time to think about why you sell what you sell. What does the customer get when they from you? What good does it do them? See, there's often a major disconnect in marketing, based around that question, and it comes down to this: **people who are good at what they do are bad at talking to people who aren't.** I'm sure you've noticed it in your own life with consultants or contractors. If you haven't, go to your local big box computer store and ask what computer you should buy. Unless you have amazing luck, the clerk will start talking about megs and gigs and RAM and processing speed. But you don't care! You have exactly two questions: will it run Quickbooks and iTunes, and will it hold all your photos?

So now that you're back from your trip to geek land, you want to *not* do that to your customers. And the best way to avoid it is to stay focused on **how your products will help your customers.** So for each feature your product has, think about how that feature makes your customer's life better. For example.

Instead of "We only use lenses of at least f/2.8"

use

"We only use lenses of at least f/2.8, which allows us to take high quality images in lower light, with nicer backgrounds."

Instead of "We provide CT Angiography"

use

"We provide CT Angiography, so you can save money and get your results faster."

Instead of "I have 15 years' experience in auto repair"

use

"I have 15 years' experience in auto repair, so you probably can't create a car problem that I haven't seen before."

This sounds really simple and obvious when I say it, but when you sit down to do it for *your* business, it will feel really stupid. You will feel like you're talking down to your customers. It will feel like you're belaboring the obvious -- because to you, if a product has this feature, it's self-evident that it would have that benefit. But that's because you're really good at what you do. To the geek at Best Buy, it was equally obvious that 4G RAM meant it could run ACT! and iTunes. Your customers are coming to you *because* you're better at this than they are. It's your job to help them understand what you do.

Examples of "product" questions

What category/industry does my business fit into?

What makes my product(s) different? Are they effective? Pretty? Safe? Durable?

What are my best-selling products?

Why do my customers want these products over those, or my products over others'?

Would our customers prefer to pay by the hour or by the job?

If you sell physical goods, would your customers like to buy related services?

If you sell services, would your customers like to buy related products?

How do you come up with new products, and what kind of input do your customers have in that process?

Why is this marketing?

In some cases, especially if you sell things online or consult by email, your product may be the only interaction you get with your customer. Every impression they have of you and your business is because of your product. (That is, for example, probably the case with this book. Everything you know and think about me is dependent on whether you find this book interesting, entertaining, and helpful, or tedious, annoying, or difficult.) It's therefore critical that your product provide the best possible impression.

Your business is also probably focused on niche markets (since most mass markets are covered by the big box businesses), and so your product is one of your biggest competitive advantages: people come to you because your goods meet their needs better than what they can get at Wal-mart; your service is better than what they could get through Geek Squad. Having a high-quality, noteworthy, specialized product is the basis for all your other marketing: for charging prices that get you above poverty level, for getting people to talk to you, and for getting people to talk *about* you. Multi-national corporations can get away with releasing lousy stuff and covering their sins with billion-dollar ad campaigns, but *your* marketing is based on providing your customers with goods and services that meet their needs and fix their pain. (The high-quality-product approach to marketing is also better for those who like to sleep soundly at night.)

How to improve this aspect of your marketing

Always be on the lookout for ways you can make your products better for your customers. Always answering the same five questions after a sale? Send a follow-up email answering those questions -- your customers will be happier with your consulting package (and also think that you're psychic). Always having customers call to ask how something works? That's your market telling you that they'd pay a few extra bucks for a user's manual. Most common complaint is that it doesn't have handles? See if you can add handles.

Customer complaints are extremely annoying -- especially when they're *stupid* complaints. But they're all -- even the stupid ones -- also opportunities. If you can address the problem, then no matter how dumb the problem was in the first place, you've made yourself a better product than your competitors have.

Exercises and Action Steps

Throughout this chapter, I'll have some action steps for you to work on. Our goal is to create a marketing plan for you -- something you can refer to when you're making decisions, and add to as you're developing your marketing plan further.

So create a new document on your computer, or pull out your favorite notebook. At each phase, I'll have three options for you:

Quick and Dirty action steps are truly the bare minimum: they'll get you going, and give you an idea of where you stand now, but they won't help move you forward any. This level is best for people who like to get a quick overview to start with, then come back for more detail.

Minimal action steps are what I'd recommend most people start with. It helps you to identify where you're at, and to start thinking about ways to advance, hopefully without being *too scary*.

Extra Credit action steps are best for people who like to really dive in right away. If you're craving action and want to get your marketing plan up and running quickly, the Extra Credit exercises are the way to go.

Quick and Dirty

Define your products. What do you sell? If possible, list available products individually, or sort them into general categories. Why do you sell these products? What makes your products better than your competitors? What criteria would a new product have to meet for you to consider selling it?

Minimal

Brainstorm other products you could offer. What else might your customers be interested in? What would sell well with the products you currently have? What do customers often request?

Extra Credit

Ask your customers what else they'd like to see. What do they wish you'd carry? What features would they like? What features would they like to get rid of? Design a new product (or product line) based on that feedback.

Price

I assume I don't need to go into a lot of detail explaining what price is. There are no technical definitions involved here - price is simply what you're charging for each of your products. And it's good that the definition is so easy, because the actual implementation of it is fairly complex. Among the questions you'll want to consider:

What is the best base/normal price for each of the products you identified back in section one?

For each of the features you identified as being important to your customers, does it make sense to sell and price it as a separate product, or to allow the customers to pay extra for the features they want?

When and how will you deviate from your base/normal price? Common examples include

- Seasonal changes (if you own a bed & breakfast, you'll want to charge more during tourist season)
- Bulk discounts ("Buy one get one 1/2 off" or "15% off ten or more")
- Loyalty discounts ("10th Burrito Free", or a 10% off coupon whenever a customer spends \$500. Starbucks, though not a microbusiness, does this very well.)
- Sales and Coupons (to move items that aren't selling, or to entice people in during holidays)
- Marketing discounts (many service providers offer a discount off your next service if you refer someone to them)

When and how will you reevaluate your prices and adjust your base/normal price for changing market conditions?

It's a lot to think about, no doubt. And *someday* you may want to go into all of those details. But surprisingly, and helpfully, the most important one to get right is the one that most microbusinesses get wrong, and that's the first one.

What should your normal price be?

Let's just say this right out: humans are bad with money. We like \$4.99 better than \$5.00, and 24 better than \$24. We don't understand compound interest or security derivatives. And we have absolutely no idea what stuff is worth. There are lots of interesting studies on that point, but as Peep Laja has pointed out, you only need to see one episode of *The Price is Right* to know that it's true. We are just terrible at guessing how much something "should" cost.

Now say you're trying to price your own stuff: how much "should" your handmade baskets or your custom computer software cost? It's a really difficult question to answer, because you need to consider so many things:

How much does it cost you?

How long does it take you?

How much are people charging for similar products?

In comparison to those other products, is yours better? Worse? Both? How?

Given the differences between your product and theirs, what price differences are justified?

What products are not similar, but could substitute anyway? (eg email, Dropbox, fax, and FedEx are all ways to get a document to someone.) How much do *they* cost?

What impressions do you want your prices to make? Do you want to seem exclusive and special? Set your prices high, like Apple does. Do you want to show that your product is a little better than your competitors'? Make sure it's priced a little above your competitors.

It's a mess.

In the real estate investment world, there's an adage that goes "A house is worth whatever someone will pay for it." In the end, it's the decisions of the market that matter. *I* don't think that there are *any* handbags worth \$16,000, but Ralph Lauren customers feel otherwise -- and that means that I'm wrong. To some people a Ralph Lauren handbag is worth it, and that's all that matters. So here's how to set your prices: **Try it out, and see what people will pay.**

And while it is that simple, it's not that straightforward, so let's talk about how to experiment with your prices in a systematic way. And in order to understand which prices are working best, we're going to have to talk math. Sorry, but there's no way around it. I'll try to make it relatively painless with a story....

Economics has a lot to say about supply curves and demand curves and the elasticity of these curves in relation to price. But the end result of all those fancy terms and pretty graphs is this:

There exists some price at which

- if you raise your prices, you lose money because you lose enough sales that the extra money-per-sale can't make it up, and

- if you lower your prices, you lose money because you have less money-per-sale, and the increased number of sales can't make it up.

| Price | Start Date | End Date | Sales | Days | Sales/day | Monthly Gross Income |
|----------|------------|----------|-------|------|-----------|----------------------|
| \$89.00 | 23-Oct | 30-Nov | 30 | 38 | 0.79 | \$2,107.89 |
| \$96.00 | 1-Dec | 31-Dec | 23 | 30 | 0.77 | \$2,208.00 |
| \$120.00 | 1-Jan | 30-Jan | 22 | 29 | 0.76 | \$2,731.03 |
| \$150.00 | 1-Feb | 28-Feb | 15 | 27 | 0.56 | \$2,500.00 |

For example, these are hypothetical sales numbers for a small computer repair service who currently charges \$89/hour. On October 23, they decided to test their pricing, and so started tracking sales. Through November they had 30 sales. If they reliably had that number of sales per day, they'd make \$2,108 each (30-day) month.

Starting in December they raise their prices to \$96/hour. They have fewer sales – 23 instead of 30, and even taking into account the smaller number of days at this price, they have fewer sales per day. But that's more than compensated for by the increased amount of money they make per sale – their monthly gross income at this level would be about \$2,208, or \$100 higher per month.

Encouraged, they try again, and raise their prices to \$120/hour. At this level they again lose customers, but not nearly as many, and monthly income goes up again, to \$2,731, or a \$500/month raise over what they were making at \$96/month.

So they raise prices again, to \$150/hour. They still lose customers, but this time the price raise doesn't make up for it; their monthly gross income is only \$2,500 – more than they were making at \$96/hour, and noticeably more than they were making at \$89/hour, but less than when they were charging \$120/hour.

The next step would be to try \$130/hour, or \$115/hour, and see what that does to the numbers.

Of course, they should be careful to keep an eye on other things that could be affecting sales: if a new virus was released January, it might be that that's the reason January didn't drop so much, that normally \$120/hour would result in only 18 sales for the month. If you see something that might be making your numbers weird, it's safest to throw out that time period and run your test again.

You should also select your time period carefully: you want it to be long enough that normal fluctuations are balanced out. So if you have day-to-day fluctuations, but your weeks are usually about the same, then a week or two is long enough; if you normally have month-to-month fluctuations, you might need 3 or 6 months to get a useful test. If you sell something that makes a good present, you shouldn't do any of your testing between Thanksgiving and Christmas; if you sell summer clothing, you should make sure that all your tests are comparing summer days to summer days, or winter days to winter days.

(And the term for all of this, should you wish to impress someone, is "Measuring Price Elasticity")

Now you'll notice that in the story, I started by raising prices. Although there are always exceptions, most microbusiness owners should start by charging more. Why?

Because you're not good at estimating what something is worth Sorry, but you are human. We're all bad at it. Your gut feeling is just probably not a good number to use.

Because you don't want to seem greedy As you waver around wondering what something is worth, you'll tend to err low when pricing your own stuff. Our culture is full of the Greedy

Business Bastard meme, and most of us were raised to be generous and not demanding. And most of us harbor hidden self-esteem issues that lead us to say "Well, if I made it can't be worth *that* much...."

Because it seems trivial to you You started this business because you're really good at what you do. So the goods you make and the services you offer seem like they should be really cheap, because *you* wouldn't pay very much for them. But your customers are coming to you because they're not as good at it. And the difference can be immense: I've seen programmers spend 45 minutes on a program that saved their clients 50 *hours* of work. To the programmer it was no big deal, maybe a buy-me-a-six-pack job, but to the customer, it's totally worth several hundred dollars.

Because you listen to the wrong people Since your customers are also human, it follows that they are also really bad at estimating what something's worth. And some of them are also manipulative bullies, who won't hesitate to yell and curse at you if your price is higher than their insanely low estimate. This is not a moment to lower your prices; it's a moment to remember that one of the perks of self-employment is the ability to fire customers.

Because you've never been paid this much before Many people leaving the corporate world set their prices at what they were being paid as an employee. Say you were working for a design firm, who charged \$150/hour for your services, and paid you \$50/hour. That's *why* you left to start your own business: you were sick of your boss keeping most of the money. But many first-time microbusiness owners then charge \$100/hour - forgetting that *the market has already determined that they're worth \$150*.

Because you're not thinking about overhead To be fair, \$150/hour for 40 hours a week seems like a lot of money. It is -- or it would be. But you won't be working 40 hours/week on billable time: at the very least you'll have to spend time sending out the bills. And marketing. And buying ink for the printer. And...

And the money's not going directly into your pocket. It has to pay for the printer paper. And rent. And shipping. And electricity. And gas for company errands. And...

Because you overestimate how much people care about price Think back over the last week. Have you bought something recently that you could have gotten more cheaply at Wal-Mart? A latte at Starbucks when you could have brewed coffee at home? A massage at a luxury spa instead of a discount one? A book from Amazon instead of checking the used bookstores?

Why did you do that? Because it's higher quality. Because it tastes better. Because you know this masseuse. Because it's faster. There are all kinds of reasons you don't buy the cheapest option -- sometimes don't even look at the price. *Your customers are the same*. Don't lower your prices; give people a reason to pay more.

And the rest of the questions

Once you've got your base/normal prices set, feel free to start experimenting with the other stuff -- create a loyalty program, or try sending coupons to customers. See if people would rather have a preset package than select their own set of features. Just make sure that at least once a year, you take the time to look at your products, your competitors, and what's changed, and experiment with your prices again (usually up, to compensate for inflation).

Why is this marketing?

Having spent all that time talking about how price is less important than you think, let's take a moment to be clear: price is still important. It will always be the tie-breaker between otherwise comparable products, and it often determines whether prospects will take the time to

learn about you and your products. It communicates how highly you value your product, and determines which competitors you'll be compared to. It helps your customers decide whether they're part of your target market. And when set correctly, it can help you make quite a bit more money. That's a lot of market interaction for one number!

Exercises and Action Steps

Quick and Dirty

Defend your prices. How did you select them? Do they cover your costs? How do they compare to your competitors'? Does that price difference make sense, given the differences in your products?

Minimal

Research your competition: identify some companies that provide roughly comparable goods/services, and average their prices.

Then find your break-even point.

First, figure out how much it costs you for each unit you sell (this might be the cost you paid for an item, or the cost to drive to a client's house and provide a service, sales taxes that have to be paid...anything that you have to spend in order to deliver on a sale). Do *not* count things that have to be paid every month regardless; what you're looking for here are the costs that make you smile, because spending them means you've made a sale.

Then, calculate your overhead. Here's where you put the costs that aren't directly related to sales: rent, monthly advertising or subscription costs, utilities costs, and so on.

Based on your current prices, how many units do you have to sell in order to break even each month? (If this math seems overwhelming to you, visit <http://bareminimummarketing.com/break-even>, where you can just type the numbers in and it will give you a result.)

If you add in a reasonable salary for yourself as an overhead cost, then what's your break-even point?

Fiddle around with other prices, and see what effect they'd have on your break-even point. Are there reasonable price changes you could make that would result in better break-even points for you? What could you change about your products and distribution in order to justify those changes?

Extra Credit

Change your prices based on your research. Track your sales numbers post-change (if you need to, delay this change by a couple of months so you can get some baseline pre-change sales numbers to compare them to). Did you make more money or less money after the price change? If you'd like a spreadsheet to do some calculations for you, you can download one at <http://bareminimummarketing.com/elasticity>.

Change your prices again, based on what you learned.

Place

Unlike price, "Place" is a little misleading nowadays. It used to mean just what it sounds like: where is your business located? And for some businesses, that's still important: selecting a busy mall can do wonders for your retail boutique, and a sushi restaurant is likely to do better in California than in Iowa.

But this section of your marketing plan is also important to on-site businesses such as electricians or carpenters -- in their case, "Place" is at the customer's house, and this section will discuss how the technician gets to the customer's location, how the business will ensure that

there are enough technicians to go around, where the technicians will hang out while they're not working, and so on.

Meanwhile, some businesses actually literally don't care at all where they are -- all their work, their sales, and their customer interactions, and their product delivery take place via phone, fax, email, or online. Software developers fall into this category, as do sellers of ebooks or other digital products. For these businesses, the Place section of their marketing plan is about domain names, social media presence, and which ecommerce and order fulfillment methods they're going to use.

So a better term for this part might be Logistics, or Distribution, or perhaps Delivery, but those don't start with P, so we keep calling it Place.

Whatever you call it, this section of the marketing plan answers the question "How do your customers and your products get to the same place?" Happily, it's not a complex section, and there are no experts with mathematical formulae to make you feel stupid. All you have to do is answer that one question. Once you've answered it, you're ready to move on.

Why is this marketing?

This is where we start getting into the things that actually *feel* like customer interaction. If you're going to sell anything, there must be a way for customers to actually find it and buy it. And while promotion is important for letting people know that you exist, and why they should buy from you, it's all for naught unless your promotions direct them to the place where they can actually purchase what you're offering.

How to improve this aspect of your marketing

The best advice I have here comes from a con man in a fantasy satire novel, but it's good advice nonetheless:

Always make it *easy* for people to give you money.

-Moist VonLipwig, Going Postal, Terry Pratchett

Be on the lookout for more and better ways to get your customer and your product together. If you *can* offer expedited shipping for a slight upcharge, why not let your customers get their stuff faster? It makes them happier and cuts down on buyer's remorse. If you can do your consulting online, it enormously expands the number of potential clients you can reach. Can you open another storefront? Or take a booth at conventions where your customers go? Of course not every distribution channel you try is going to pan out, but a successful one can increase your sales by 50% - 100%... so it's worth trying.

Exercises and Action Steps

Quick and Dirty

Define your current logistics methods. How do your customers and your product get together?

Minimal

Brainstorm other distribution options. Do you have anything you could turn into a digital download? Would your customers like to get things shipped instead of coming to pick them up? Could you do some consulting over the phone or email, instead of visiting people in the "real world"?

Extra Credit

Open one of those distribution channels. Ask your customers which one(s) they'd most like to have available, then do the research and the work to get it set up.

Promotion

So now we're finally here, at the part of marketing you were probably thinking of when you picked up this book. Promotion is the part of the marketing plan where you explain how you will ensure that people have heard of you, and know how to buy from you, and know why they should. Which is quite a lot to cover, when you think about it, which is part of why promotion looms so large in people's minds when they think of marketing.

(Another part of the reason is that, in big companies, Product is shared with the R&D department, Price is shared with the accounting department, and Place is shared with the operations department...so Promotion is the only part of marketing that belongs to marketing alone. But since your marketing, accounting, R&D, and operations departments are probably all contained inside your head, the distinctions are irrelevant to your business.)

So let's take those questions one by one.

How will people know that you exist?

Some of this may already be covered for you -- if you resell other people's products, their website may direct people to your store; if you have a spot in the mall, people will find you by the old-fashioned method of "walk by and look". But you'll certainly want more than that, especially if you don't have anyone else doing promotion for you. So how will people learn that you exist?

Advertising is the first thing that jumps to most people's minds, and it's a valid answer. But if you look at most microbusinesses, you'll find that the ways in which their customers find them tend more towards things like "I ran a search on Yelp, and you guys came up", or "My brother stayed here, and really liked it", or "I searched for this on YouTube, and your video came up -- great video, by the way".

An enormous number of people, when they need to buy something, start by going to Google and typing that thing into the search box -- a website that matches what they type may be the best way to get discovered. There are lots of ways your customers can and will find you, so don't limit yourself to the one method used by megacorps.

How do your customers find you now? What could you do to help more people find you that way? For example, if a lot of people are finding you on Yelp, you should make sure you're doing everything you can to improve your rating on Yelp, and should also make sure you're on UrbanSpoon and FourSquare.

If you're getting most of your customers through word of mouth, you should make it easy for your customers to refer you to friends, and consider giving them an incentive to do so.

How else *could* customers find you? Do some brainstorming. Google [your industry] [your location] and see what social media and referral sites come up. Ask other people in the industry what methods they use. And try them out one by one.

How will your customers know that you can help them?

This is another aspect of marketing that is astonishingly difficult. A lot of it comes back to that [features vs benefits](#) thing we talked about back in the Product section: there's a very good chance that your prospective customers know nothing about the jargon and details of your industry, and so won't realize that "Intersegmental Traction" is the solution to "my back hurts".

In general, the solution to this is not to do any extra promotion, but rather to make sure that the promotion you're doing is truly geared towards your target market.

The most reliable way to do that is to show your promotional material - brochure, website, video, whatever - to someone who's in your target market. Ideally, you want to do that before you commit to it, so you can make changes based on their feedback. Ask them to paraphrase what you said, so that you can verify that the message they "heard" was the message you "sent".

If you don't have a member of your target market available ... then you need to spend more time working on Participation. Relationships with your customers are good for more than just getting sales. But a review by anyone outside your industry -- a good friend or significant other -- can at least verify that your marketing is comprehensible to the general public.

How will your customers trust that you can and will do what you say?

Even assuming someone knows you exist, and what you do, they still won't buy from you unless they have some reason to think that your product actually works, that your advice will actually help, or that their toilet will actually be fixed. You need some way to build credibility with your prospects. The correct methods will differ from industry to industry and business to business, but here are some common techniques:

Social Proof from testimonials to word-of-mouth referrals to ratings on Yelp or Amazon, interacting with other, satisfied customers goes a long way towards helping new customers feel comfortable.

Demonstration of Expertise If you've shown me that you know the local real estate market thoroughly, I'm more likely to believe that you can help me find my dream home. Blogging, press releases, interviews, or free seminars -- all of these can help me believe that you know what you're doing.

Try it Out If there's a convenient way to do it, and also a convenient way to get paid afterwards, free samples are the most convincing method of building credibility. For restaurants, see about attending trade shows or food conventions. Photographers and artists should have samples of their work on their websites. Authors should offer sample chapters, and software developers should have a free trial version of their program. If you're a consultant, you can use the same places you're demonstrating expertise -- ebooks, blog posts, and so on -- to provide samples of your advice; if your recommendations for using Google Analytics worked, I'm more likely to hire you to sort out the rest of our customer retention problems.

Again, having a relationship with customers can help a lot here -- ask people what they worried about or researched before they hired you, and why they decided to hire you after all. Use those answers to build credibility in the ways that your customers are most likely to resonate with.

How will your customers know how to buy from you?

Hopefully this isn't too much of a challenge, but it's important to remember. Let me reiterate advice from earlier:

Always make it *easy* for people to give you money

I've visited websites where their search function allowed me to find the exact pen I wanted... but there was no interconnection between the search results and the store, no way to find the pen I wanted *in* the ecommerce side of the site.

My favorite fast-casual restaurant in the entire world has almost all of their marketing right: they have amazingly yummy healthy food, at a price comparable to Q'doba and Noodles & Company. They're in busy shopping centers where people go on their lunch breaks. And their ads are attractive, informative, and hilarious. *But...* their layout is so weird that a lot of people literally cannot figure out how to order food. I've spoken with several people who have seen the restaurants, walked into the restaurants, and walked back out again because they couldn't figure out how to operate it.

I've received promotional items -- pens and things -- that didn't have a phone number or website listed; even if the pen worked, and you wanted to call them, there was no way to do so.

I've seen games that were advertised heavily and well, and would have been all the rage in their holiday season... but no one bothered to mention that they could only be found at King Soopers.

So think about your sales process. Make sure it's as easy and as obvious as possible, and where it's difficult, make sure your customers get instructions.

Advertising and the Permission Marketing Revolution

There's no point dodging around it, so let's talk about it straight out: most people, when they say "marketing", actually mean "advertising." Even when they say they don't, if you start talking about their marketing program, and how to improve it, all their ideas are about taking out ads in a different magazine, or putting up billboards, or hiring someone to stand on the street corner with a sign. "Thinking outside the box" means coming up with new and different places to put ads.

By now, I hope, *you* don't think that. But the marketing-industrial complex has been going on for our entire lives, and the megacorps' marketing is so focused on advertising, that it's still hard to break out of that mentality.

But advertising is probably the wrong answer for you. And it's *certainly* the wrong answer to start with. Here's why...

The essence of advertising is *interruption*. People are trying to drive, or read a magazine, or play a game on their iPad, and you try to interrupt what they're doing and get them to pay attention to your ad. Which is why Seth Godin calls this process Interruption Marketing.

Seth Godin uses this analogy: suppose a young man has decided that it's time for him to settle down and find a family. Therefore, he needs to persuade a young woman to marry him. As many people have pointed out, this is a sale: you need to convince someone to take what you're offering. So he takes a standard marketing approach, goes to a bar, and proposes marriage to the first woman he sees. If she declines, he moves to the next and proposes marriage. And so on.

Is this a good plan? I think we can all agree that it's not. Why? Because it's inefficient - he's not likely to find any women who were sitting in a bar thinking "I need a husband. I'll sit at a bar until someone proposes marriage to me." If he does find someone this way, she's likely to be either extremely desperate, or irresponsible and doing this on a lark. Either way, it'll be a rough marriage. And even if she's an intelligent, responsible, compassionate woman, there's no guarantee they'll be matrimonially compatible: she may be a devout Catholic, and he's a rabid atheist.

That's what advertising is. It has a lot of benefits: it's easy, it's repeatable, and if you do it long enough, it will eventually succeed. But traditional marketers are excited with 1% response rates, which is to say that being ignored by only 99 out of every hundred people they contact is a *good* day for them. And that means that you have to run a lot of ads in order to get any benefit:

if you want to make 10 sales a month, with a 1% response rate, you need an ad to reach 1,000 people, which makes it just barely feasible if you can live on 10 sales a month. But if a living wage requires you to make 100 or 1000 sales in a month, reaching 100,000 people is going to become prohibitively expensive -- and that's with a "good" response rate!

The alternative? What Seth Godin calls Permission Marketing, which he compares to dating. You start with something small and low-risk. "Can I buy you a drink?" "Would you like to get coffee after class?" "Can I offer you a free sample edit?" "Would you like to download the first four chapters of my book?"

If that goes well, and it seems like you and your prospect actually are a match, you move up to something a little bigger, but still low risk. "Would you like to go to a concert with me?" "There's a great exhibit at the natural history museum, would you like to check it out?" "I have an ebook on that topic - it's only .99 cents -- you might check it out." Or even, at this stage, "My competitor has a product that I think would really help you with that -- can I put you in touch with her?" (The loss of this sale, if it actually helps the customer, will almost certainly result in increased goodwill that will be worth far more). As with dating, you'll want to use the information you got from your initial contact to create something that will be a good match for your prospect - the better an offer you can create, the better off you'll be.

After a few rounds of that -- determined by your compatibility, and your personality, and that of your prospect, and a host of other factors -- you'll be ready to move up to some real commitment. "My family is going skiing over Christmas - would you like to come along?" "We have a book coming in on October 17 that I think would be great for you - can I preorder one for you?"

Does it work 100% of the time? Obviously not, since most people don't marry their first boyfriend/girlfriend. Will it succeed more often than proposing marriage to random people on the street? Almost certainly. (And if not, it's a clear indication that you need to work on something).

That's the concept of permission marketing: you have permission to *propose* more audacious and/or risky possibilities, like road trips, skydiving, or spending several hundred dollars on a seminar, because of the existing relationship you've already built.

Seth Godin's book on this subject, conveniently called Permission Marketing, details the reasons that interruption marketing is becoming less effective, and the history of permission marketing, and the ways in which it will define the future of marketing. But the essence of it is that -- he believes -- permission marketing is currently more effective than interruption marketing, and its effectiveness will only continue to grow while interruption marketing gets less effective, and therefore any intelligent business should be focusing on getting their permission marketing program set up. The book is fantastic, and highly recommended for any microbusiness owner, but to summarize:

Advertising is expensive. It's one of the most expensive forms of promotion, in terms of dollars (rather than time) spent. This is fine for the big businesses, because they're bringing in several billion dollars annually. But you have greater cashflow fluctuations and much better uses for your cash anyway.

Permission marketing can be done with free or low-cost tools. Twitter, email, YouTube, and a blog are your best friends in the permission marketing realm. You may incorporate more expensive marketing materials, but you only send the expensive stuff to places where it's likely to do good.

Advertising is short. Signs and billboards, if well designed, can only accommodate 6 words. An \$800 magazine ad is the size of a business card. Even a TV or radio commercial only

allows you 30 seconds to communicate all four points (that you exist, which problems you solve, that you're trustworthy, and how to buy from you). Again, this is fine for big businesses, because their message is something along the lines of "You're thirsty. Drink Coke" or "Rocky's Auto is holding a (big, big, big, big) sale this weekend." But *you* can't assume that listeners have heard of you, or that they know what you do. And you can't fit everything you need to say into a single ad.

Permission marketing can give you successively longer and better opportunities. Maybe you use an ad to get someone over to your website. Then you've got a whole website to persuade them to buy. Or you give them a 30-second pitch that convinces them to sign up for your email list – then you've got plenty of time in newsletters to convince them to buy from you. Or a tweet persuades them to download a free report, which can persuade them to buy a Kindle Single, which can persuade them to attend a seminar....

Advertising is ineffective in small doses The rule of thumb taught in marketing classes is that someone needs to be exposed to a message seven times before they'll act on it. Like most such statistics, the number was probably made up out of thin air, but the point still holds: a single ad accomplishes almost nothing. Customers probably need to see your add 2-3 times before it even registers in their mind. Then maybe the 4th or 5th time, they'll think "Oh yeah, I've heard of them". Then maybe the 6th or 7th time they'll actually *look* at what your ad has to say. So you need to run probably a dozen ads before they'll start doing any good, and that turns "expensive" into "*really* expensive."

Permission marketing can work with any opportunity. If a customer is prepared to buy from you today, by all means sell to them today. But if all they want is to follow you on Twitter? You can work with that. If all they want is to ask you a question? That's fine, too. Any opportunity to interact with a customer lets you build the relationship and increase your level of permission.

Advertising is a crowded field Yankelovich, a marketing research firm, estimates that, between TV & radio, Google search ads, ads in your smartphone apps, billboards, buses, turnstiles and manhole covers, the average US resident sees 5,000 ads per day. Even assuming they pay attention to and remember 500 of those, there's still a 90% chance that your ad will be completely ignored and forgotten. Advertising is simply becoming less and less effective as the noise level increases.

Permission marketing makes you unique. Your business is different – it reflects your personality, your interests, and your talents. Why filter all of that out for a 6-word billboard? If you're unique, and your offerings are unique, then you have no competition. Permission marketing allows you to showcase everything different and exciting about your business.

Advertising is obnoxious I mean, did you really want to turn into a junk mail spammer? Or increase the number of billboards in your town? If there's a way to grow your business without interrupting and annoying people, wouldn't you prefer to do that?

Advertising isn't always wrong for everyone – obviously it works great for some companies. But advertising is at its most effective when it's paired with a strong permission marketing system. If you have a good website, then the ad doesn't have to convince a prospect to buy, it only has to convince them to click. If most people who sign up for your newsletter buy something within a year, then all your advertising has to do is sell the newsletter. Permission marketing mitigates most of the disadvantages of advertising – it lets you run fewer ads, and because people get repeated exposure through your permission marketing, there's no need to buy several dozen ads just to get seven exposures. Short form ads are terrible for selling

products, but decent for getting people to visit a website, or watch a video. So advertising might help you out ... *if* you already have a good permission marketing system for the ads to offer to prospects. Which is why you won't find advertising listed among the requirements for bare minimum marketing – it doesn't make any sense unless you already have the bare minimum marketing in place.

Fortunately for you, the megacorps have mostly ignored Godin's advice, and have decided to instead spend more and more money on ads. Which gives us microbusinesses the chance to beat them in the up-and-coming marketplace...in a sphere where lots of money doesn't matter - but lots of compassion does. Where knowing what you're doing is more important than sounding pompous. Where your strengths are at an advantage, instead of the megacorps'. But in that case, promotion is intimately intertwined with the 5th, brand new, P: Participation.

Exercises and Action Steps

Quick and Dirty

Where do you get your customers now? What's your best promotional channel? Write up a paragraph or two explanation and add it to your marketing plan.

Minimal

Brainstorm other promotional channels. Where do your customers hang out? What promotional methods have you considered? To get you started, you can download the promotional-cost-benefit spreadsheet from the Extra Credit section - it has a list of ideas for small business marketing.

Extra Credit

Estimate the cost-benefit of each potential method by...

First, download the analysis spreadsheet at

<http://bareminimummarketing.com/promotional-cost-benefit>

In the spreadsheet, list each prospective marketing method you came up with in the minimal work.

For each method, research the cost of using that method in both time and money. Enter those into their respective columns

Estimate the traffic each method would bring. For ads, how many readers / viewers / passerby would see the ad (usually the people selling ad space are eager to give you this information)? For a networking group, how many members does the group have? For a blog, how many readers do you think you could get?

Estimate the conversion rate of each method: of the people exposed to your promotion, what percentage are likely to actually buy from you? Ads are usually doing well if they manage a 1% conversion rate; an email newsletter might manage 20%. Direct sales can sometimes manage as much as 50%.

Select a promotional method to try. Update the spreadsheet with better estimates as you get more data from your own experience.

Participation

Participation is a brand new thing, and a brand new concept. It has precursors in the pre-social-media days (the Harley-Davidson Sturgis Rally, paper newsletters, and so on), but really hit its stride when electronics made it as cheap to mail 1000 people as 20, and nearly as easy to talk customize marketing for one person as for hundreds. The essence of participation is that, for the first time since mass markets were created, you can actually have real conversations with your customers, and be available to them when they need you. So participation is simply the act

of listening to your customers, caring about their concerns, and doing what you can reasonably do to make them happy. For better or worse, your customers are talking about you, many conversations take place in public, and a company that ignores that conversation is at risk of losing customers in droves.

DELL MARKET CAP



Source: ycharts.com

Dell Hell Illustration Credit: @davegray @dachisgroup

On the flip side, though, a company that does listen to its customers (instead of posting on social media without ever reading replies), and who actually cares what they think (instead of making you listen to a prerecorded "We Care About Your Opinions" message while you sit on hold for hours) has a tremendous competitive advantage. And microbusinesses usually have an edge in those areas... in large part because they actually *do* care about their customers.

So the simplest, and most crucial, aspect of Participation is not so much a technique as an attitude: a belief that what your customers have to say is worth listening to. A willingness to address their concerns with questions ("What do you mean by that?" or "How would you design it?") instead of dismissal and scorn ("I'm sorry, that's our policy" or "It says right on the package!")

The essence of participation, then, is conversation: talk to your customers, your prospects, your suppliers, your competitors. Listen to what they say. Ask questions. Suggest alternatives. You can divide conversational participation into four levels:

Conversations you watch At the very least, do some searching on Twitter, and on your competitors' Facebook pages, and in Google Blog search, and see what people are talking about. If you do nothing else, this will give you ideas on what your customers are worried about, what makes them choose one business over another, what they like and hate about the business they currently buy from, what else they wish they could find, and other invaluable insights.

Be in the places your customers are, and listen to what they're saying. If you sell quilting patterns, then your market is quilters. Visit quilt shows and talk with the contestants. Spend some time browsing Etsy and learn who the major quilters are. Since quilting is a very visual experience, Pinterest is a good choice for your business -- make some pinboards of "beginner quilts" and "themed quilts" and "baby quilts" and whatever else interests you. See what resonates with people -- you may learn that there's a large fantasy novel quilting contingent that's currently unserved. Do a search on "quilting social media" and see what comes up.

Conversations you start This can be as simple as "Check this out!" and a link on Facebook. If you regularly post things that are (a) interesting (b) amazing (c) funny or (d) helpful (or any combination thereof), then people will start connecting with you.

Conversations already going on There are certainly conversations in your field. Whether it's political controversy, new techniques or technologies, or regional differences undiscovered until the internet brought people together, there are major discussions and debates going on. Jump in! Give people your perspective. Help newbies understand what the discussion is about.

Show people how to reconcile two differing perspectives. Whatever contribution you think you're best suited to make.

Conversations you direct As you start getting followers, friends, or fans, you'll start getting conversations big enough that you can't respond to everyone anymore. But you can still be part of it -- post questions, and see what your fans can come up with. Ask for ideas and see what you get. You can do market research -- ask what people think of the new product you're considering, or what their biggest complaint is about people who provide the same service you do.

Participation is NOT

Since it is a new field, there's a lot of confusion out there, particularly among marketers who want this "participation stuff" to fit into their old model. By way of contrast, let's point out that participation is *not*...

Another Advertising Channel. The single biggest mistake companies make when trying to use the internet is that they try to treat it like a new form of TV. It's not; it's a fundamentally different creature, based on interaction, having conversations, and doing your own thing. The best content is created by small fry. The best conversations have no moderator and no panel of experts. You cannot just post ads in the middle of it and expect to find any kind of success.

Another type of promotion. For a long time, participation was denied its place among the Critical Marketing Concepts because it was considered a subset of promotion. But when you think like that, you want social media to act like a promotional channel -- to provide measurable, consistent results, and to have clear rules you can follow -- and it simply doesn't. The advantage of social media is not that it gets you a specific number of sales per hour spent, but that it gets you opportunities and insights you cannot otherwise get at any price.

A quick and easy way to boost sales. Participation is about building relationships. And that takes time. You can't walk up to a stranger and say "You're my new best friend! How about helping me move this weekend?" -- you likewise can't create a Twitter account today and expect to see increased sales tomorrow. Or next week. Or next month. If most marketing is like gardening, participation is like creating fertile soil in the garden beds -- it reaches its fullest flower in two or three years, not overnight.

Something you can do with a formula. You likewise can't create a straightforward, foolproof process for making friends. It depends on the situation, and the time you've known each other, and what you have in common, and what's going on around you. Participation -- being essentially about building relationships -- works the same way. There are no hard and fast rules, except the ones your mom taught you in elementary school: to make a friend, be a friend, and so on.

About you. The long and the short of it is that unlike the other four, Participation is not about you and your business. The internet has enabled connections that weren't possible before. We have used that ability to create parties -- places where we can chat with friends, see what they're doing, what they're thinking, and what they're like. Places where we can hang out.

You are invited to this party, but it's not your party. It's our party. If you insist on talking only about yourself, and ignoring everyone else, then we will ignore you in turn. But if you can bring good stuff to the party: new ideas, helpful tips, funny comments, good insights ... we'd love to have you around.

It's a very new field

The other 4 Ps have been around since the 60's, so academics and marketing execs have had a couple of generations to kick the ideas around, try stuff out, and discuss what it means and how it works. Participation doesn't have any of that. It's only been around (kinda) for a decade; was only suggested as an addition to marketing a couple of years ago. We're not completely sure what we're doing here. So certainly you should read UNmarketing. You should subscribe to Six Pixels of Separation (the blog or the podcast or both). You should sign up for the IttyBiz e-newsletter. But really, you have as much to contribute as anyone else. Jump in, try it out, and let us know what works for you.

Exercises and Action Steps

Quick and Dirty

Where do you interact with your customers? Do you have systems in place to capture their ideas, requests, and suggestions? Do you know what interests them, what bothers them, what they care about? Write down a paragraph or so of overview, and put it in your marketing plan.

Minimal

Brainstorm magazines your customers might read – subscribe to them, or add to your calendar to go read them at the local library once a month.

Do a search for “[those topics] blogs” and subscribe to at least a dozen. (If you don't already have an RSS reader you use, sign up for one at <http://google.com/reader>). Set Google Reader as your browser homepage or get an app with push alerts for your smartphone or iPad, so you'll remember to read them.

Search Twitter for topics your customers might care about, and find people who are saying interesting things or posting interesting links. Sign up for a Twitter account and follow those people.

Your goal is to be seeing the same things your customers are seeing, reading the same things they're reading. Take note of interesting articles, or quotes from articles. At the end of each magazine or day's worth of blog posts, ask yourself if there were any points you thought were well made, or that offered a different perspective you'd never considered, or were simply awful. What would you say in response to those authors, if you could?

Extra Credit

As you find interesting articles and quotes, use the Favorites function to keep a list of them, or store them in a file. After a month, start posting quotes or links on your own Twitter account.

When people you follow on Twitter post something you agree with, retweet it. If they ask a question, respond. If they say something you think is inaccurate, start a (polite) conversation about it.

Sign up for a blog from WordPress.com. Add “write blog post” to your calendar and make it recur on a weekly basis. Write responses to articles you have in your Favorites list – adding on to things they didn't cover thoroughly, or explaining why their argument was totally and completely wrong, or adding your own perspective.

The 4Ps of Marketing – summary

It's easy to see that no one category can be considered in isolation. If you have a higher-quality product you need to, and can, charge a higher price for it. If you're going to have a sale, you need to be sure that you're logistically prepared to handle the higher demand. New ways of bringing your product and customer together may be a crucial aspect of your product's definition – both of which would affect how you promote the product, and to whom.

So a good marketing program can't focus solely on promotion. All four Ps need to work together to create the best possible marketing situation for your business.

What this means for you

It means that probably, your marketing is better than you think. Most small business owners feel like their marketing is terrible, or that they have no marketing at all. But if you're in business, you have marketing — at the very least you have a product and a price, and probably a decent logistical system.

The bad news is that, with all the systems interconnected, you really have to think about all of it. The elements of marketing work together like the parts of a wheel: if you're missing even one, the whole thing comes to a dead halt.

But the good news is that, just because your marketing program isn't going anywhere, doesn't mean you're doing everything wrong. Odds are actually pretty good that most of your marketing is pretty good, and if you can just get one or two things right, the whole thing will come together and work effectively.

The important thing is to be able to identify which piece of your marketing is holding you back, and take steps to improve that part. If you've been doing the exercises, you should have a pretty good idea of where your marketing strengths and weaknesses are. And usually, once you've got (say) your participation going and have started doing some promotion, you'll realize that, actually, you can improve your product, or that you should be charging more. But it doesn't make sense to make those changes until they are the bottleneck. So one more action step:

Exercises and Action Steps

Go to your calendar. Advance to the page that's three months from today. And schedule another marketing review, so you can go through all these steps again and see where your time would best be spent now that you've been working on marketing for three months.

This has been a sample from my upcoming book, Bare Minimum Marketing. For more information, or to place a pre-order, visit <http://BareMinimumMarketing.com>

###