

Selfish Advertising™

Advertising From Your Audience's Point of View

How Good Are Your Salespeople?

Dear Fellow Business Owner:

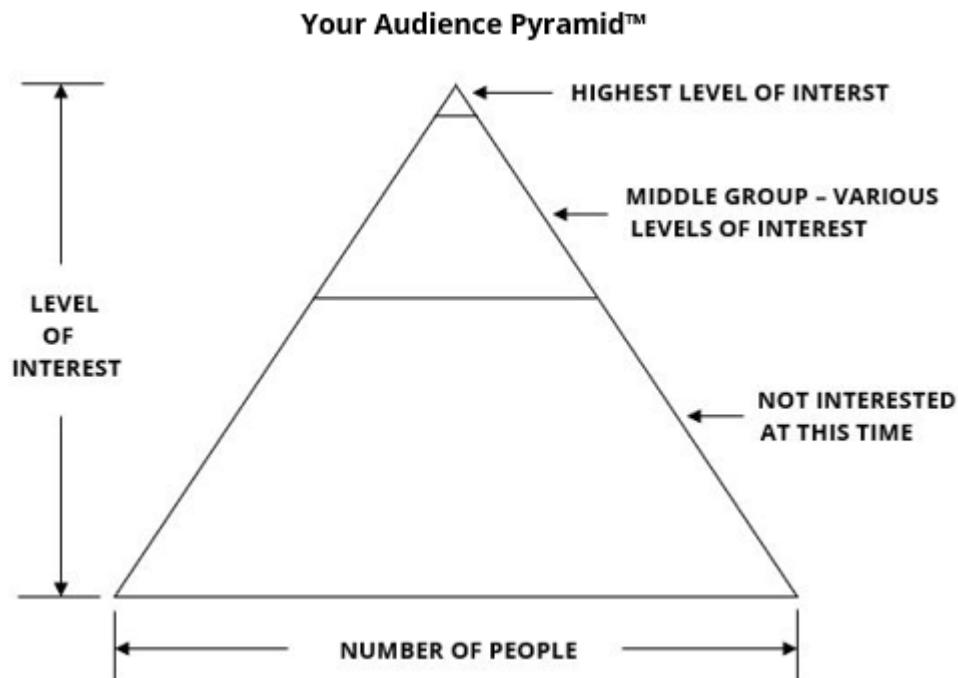


I'm Gary Blackman. I help business owners create an advertising system that instantly captures and holds their audience's undivided attention long enough for them to know they've found the right place, even if they're not yet ready to buy. And this includes even those who may only have a mild or casual interest and remain skeptical.

In fact, I specialize in delivering these mildly interested individuals to your salespeople on a silver platter. Why? Because the tiny fraction of the people in your target audience who are ready to buy right now **are vastly outnumbered by all these overlooked, mildly interested people**. They have various levels of interest, and they're scattered all throughout your audience, so why not also engage as many of them as possible for the same ad cost?

And here's the bonus...**You can do this at a cost that's less...sometimes a lot less...than what you may be used to**. You'll soon see how.

But back to your audience...here's a picture of what I'm talking about. It represents what the target audience of just about any business looks like.



Most of the advertising that surrounds us every day appeals only to the highly

motivated people in the top group...those who are ready to buy right now. Selfish Advertising greatly expands your reach by also appealing to the middle group. How much larger is the middle group than the top group? Ten times? Fifty times? A hundred times? Doesn't it make sense to multiply the size of your receptive audience many times over without spending a single additional dime?

This is why I asked the question about your salespeople in the headline above. I assume your people can convert enough of these "just looking" individuals into strong prospects or customers to make a significant difference on your bottom line. These people represent game-changing potential your competitors are leaving on the table. **If this huge segment of your audience is handled correctly, they're yours for the taking.**

Before getting to the three-page article, I wanted to present and explain the extra numbers in your own Audience Pyramid because it provides a better overall perspective and the information ahead refers back to it.

There are no gimmicks or clever tricks in what's ahead...just a clear presentation on how to get human nature working for you, instead of against you. And, believe me, having human nature on your side makes all the difference in the world. **It's the key to everything.** You do not want to spend good money turning off the very people you're trying to attract. Unfortunately, most of the advertising we see and hear every day does exactly that.

Respectively,



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P.S. The next few pages present a discussion of "direct response advertising," which has a very long record of success. As you've seen, my trade name for it is "Selfish Advertising" because it's based on audience self-interest. It's blunt and provocative, which requires an explanation. This creates curiosity and helps me engage my own audience. ("Self-Interest Advertising" is too tame.)

"You can have the best product in the world, but if no one knows about it...it's useless." – Arnold Schwarzenegger

Selfish Advertising™

Advertising From Your Audience's Point of View

**"Sell the benefit, not your company or the product.
People buy results, not features." – Jay Abraham**

*In other words, when you advertise, it can't be about you
or what you want to sell. It must be about them and
what they want, need or fear at that moment.*

Here's the universal challenge all advertisers face...you must instantly grab the attention of your target audience and hold it long enough to make a difference. Your window of opportunity is two or three seconds. If you fail, then – poof – they're gone. Opportunity lost and money wasted...your money.

Here's the thing about this...before you sell anything else, you must first sell your audience on paying attention to your ad, because, right now, they're thinking, "Why should I?" If there's no reason why they should, they won't. It's their instantaneous natural sales resistance. We all behave this way.

What follows here is a bullet-point overview of why Selfish Advertising succeeds during this tiny window of opportunity when other types of advertising do not. **Your ads must always be about them, not about you or even your business.**

- **Brand Advertising** is the type of advertising that surrounds us every day. It's basically an announcement that a business exists. It attempts to persuade its audience with a list of features and facts about the business, wrapped in hype.
- **Marketing guru, Jay Abraham**, calls brand advertising "tombstone" advertising because all it really does is present basic facts about a business, like on a cemetery tombstone. "Here lies John Smith, devoted husband, loving father, etc." The usual audience response is something like..."Gee, that's nice."
- **Sustaining brand awareness** is very expensive. It's most appropriate for national, regional or very strong local businesses that have huge budgets. The hope is that people will remember the message when it's time to buy. It's about the future, not the present. Trying to influence future behavior is a money pit.
- **Absolutely no one cares** about facts like "in business since 1974," or "family owned," or "veteran owned," or "great inventory," or "great service." They've heard this stuff a million times. All it does is reinforce their natural skepticism toward advertising in general. The result? "Adios..."

- **What most of the ads** that we see and hear every day do not do is offer the answer to this vital, age-old audience question, which is...

“What’s in this for me...right now?”

To instantly stop them in their tracks, you must offer something specific about what they want, need or fear. In other words, your ad must deliver real and immediate value, because, at that moment, **your ad is your product**, and you must sell it right then and there. Luckily for us, self-interest makes this quite easy.

- **Self-interest...the key to everything.** It gets human nature working for you instead of against you. Self-interest drives every decision we make, all day, every day. From deciding what toothpaste to buy to life changing financial or medical decisions. From trivial to critical, it’s life-affirming, self-interest that guides our every move.

- **And the trigger is...curiosity.** Here’s the thing about that...**a curious person always wants to know more.** It’s Mother Nature’s magnificent gift to advertisers everywhere. Curiosity instantly flips people from apathy and even cynicism to fully engaged and eager to learn more. It’s nearly irresistible. It’s why clickbait works.

- **Direct Response Advertising** uses curiosity about something of strong interest to your target audience to entice them into taking immediate action. As opposed to the static nature of brand advertising, direct response advertising is dynamic. It’s a process...a two-step process, represented by this formula...

Curiosity + Satisfaction = Maximum Audience Response

- **Step one is your advertisement.** It should consist of a curiosity-triggering headline that immediately grabs their attention, followed by a super convenient, zero-risk call to action, leading them to step two, where they satisfy their curiosity, learn more and are offered other benefits.

- **A call to action that is “convenient” and “zero risk”** (no human contact) is an essential part of a productive ad. It’s how you eliminate any psychological barriers and motivate all the mildly interested people in your Audience Pyramid to at least take a look. We want them to think, “It’s so quick and easy, so why not?” This leads them to step two of the process...the satisfaction part.

- **Step two is a web page.** This is where you begin your sales process. As opposed to very expensive ad space, a web page has all the room you need at a super low cost. Present any content you need to deliver real and immediate value to your visiting audience. So, what this means is... **your ad’s only purpose is to get people to this page...that’s it...nothing else!**

- **Step one...your ad...is 100% emotional.** Since an emotional response to anything is instantaneous, a profitable ad employs it to succeed during those

critical first two or three seconds. It's like a fish hitting bait...they don't think about it...they just do it, especially since step two is so easy and risk free.

- **Your web page is different.** People arrive there, driven by curiosity but quickly begin to rely on logic, as they evaluate the benefits contained in your overall message. Let's say they're now 50% logical and 50% emotional. You've heard this before...people use logic to justify emotional decisions. It's the same here. Their logical state of mind kicks in and helps make an informed, feel-good decision to continue.
- **A sales page, not a fact sheet.** While you're now presenting facts about the benefits of your product or service, it's still a sales page. You need to offer solutions to what they want, need or fear, address common objections, etc. to maintain the momentum you've built.
- **This two-part advertising system actually has a third part.** It's the second call to action at the end of your web page that motivates them to contact your business and walk themselves into the open arms of your salespeople. I offer an approach that eliminates a major psychological barrier to making that call as well as a method for how you should receive these calls. (See Free Offer at the end.)
- **Your web page is the epicenter of your advertisement system.** Every type of ad you run, with its super convenient, zero-risk call to action, should point only to your web page. Remember, the only purpose of your ads is to get people to this page...that's it...nothing else. Here's what that looks like...



Your Web Page is the Centerpiece of Your Entire System

Every One Of Your Ads Should Point Only To This Page

It's Your Automatic Sales Agent Selling One-On-One 24/7

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The next few pages contain some examples, a more detailed discussion and a free offer at the end...

Okay...let's take a look at a before-and-after example, followed by a brief analysis.

The ad below appeared in my local newspaper. (I changed his personal and company information to protect his privacy.) As you can see, the ad is loaded with a ton of tombstone information. He's attempting to cover all his bases and appeal to everyone out there with this long list of services.

JCS TECHNICAL SERVICES

Jonathan Smith 512-555-1234

Professional Office Home and RV Service in North County

Consulting	Computer Systems	Component Selection
Setup	Software Development	Digital Photos
Training	Networking	System & Process Docs
Backups	Technical Systems	Website Maintenance
Upgrades	Maintenance	CD/DVD Duplication

Want help selecting the best value?
Office systems not maintained?
Did you kids or employees leave your computer useless?

Jonathan@jcstechsvcs.com

As you can see, it's all about his company and his products and services. Does it answer his audience's question, "What's in this for me...right now?" It certainly doesn't look like it. His audience is supposed to remember the ad and find him when they need something (in the future). Does anyone actually do that?

On a visit to his website, I found this statement: "My current focus is on helping small businesses take advantage of technology." From this, we know he's targeting small business owners and home office workers. Accepted wisdom in small business marketing is that pursuing and connecting with a niche is much more productive than targeting everyone with a broad approach.

So, let's pretend you and I are consultants, and he's asked us to improve his ad. With his preferred niche in mind, here's the new ad we created...

BUSINESS OWNERS!

"Do you know the 3 key features of the ideal office computer system?"

Instant access to the answer in bullet points at...perfect3.com

When we show this new ad to him, he immediately notices these six things...

1. The new ad stops business owners in their tracks with a strong, attention-grabbing headline, quickly followed with a relevant, irresistible question.
2. This ad has two parts, not one. It has a super convenient, zero-risk call to action that links to the second part, which is a web page with the answer to the important question in the ad. (Not immediately apparent is all the other information on that page about his other services, along with the soft-sell copy that keeps the momentum going. The content is intentionally designed to be incomplete to encourage additional questions that only he or his people can answer.)
3. The font size is much larger and easier to read quickly.
4. The ad itself doesn't mention any of the specific services he offers.
5. It doesn't even mention his company name.
6. It's half the size (and half the cost) of his original ad, yet much more noticeable.

Why does his new ad have a far better chance of grabbing the attention of his audience and motivating them to take action than his original ad?

Here's the summary...his new ad doesn't directly confront his audience's natural skepticism or cynicism toward advertising in general. Instead, it focuses on a subject of strong interest to them and then supercharges that message with **curiosity**. His irresistible call to action leads them on a convenient, zero-risk path to quickly satisfy that curiosity and learn more.

Here are the details...

- First, an explanation..."zero-risk" means responders know that "instant access" means they will not encounter a human salesperson during the next step. The goal is to **totally eliminate any psychological barriers** as they move through this process, so they can relax instead of preparing to defend against sales pressure.
- Who will respond and visit the web page? Anyone who is **even slightly interested** in the ideal office computer system, including all the people with home offices. After all, it's so easy to just take a look, right?
- There are only a few words in his new ad so it's easy to **quickly absorb his brief, focused message**. It's also why it **costs so much less**.
- The key component of his new ad is **curiosity**. Curiosity instantly vaporizes the the natural resistance people have toward advertising in general. And we're all vulnerable to its immense power. **From indifference to curiosity to action**. It all

happens in an instant, up front, during that tiny window of opportunity.

- Step two in the process is the ad's accompanying sales web page. **That's where all the selling takes place.** There, he has all the space he needs, at a **very low cost**, to satisfy their curiosity and to offer additional benefits.
- The ad itself is step one in this process and its **only job is to use curiosity to get people to the web page...that's it.** Ads are far too expensive to do any real selling. That's the job of the web page.
- This two-step approach is a tried-and-true technique called direct response advertising. It delivers **real and immediate value** to your audience because the web page answers questions and offers further information using any combination of text, images or videos. This natural flow gets human nature working for you instead of against you and **that's the key to everything.**
- In addition to people ready to buy, all of these additional, "just looking" people represent potential business that his competitors are leaving on the table. His new ad captures people **as early as possible** in his sales cycle and delivers these additional leads to his salespeople **now**, not sometime in the future.
- And, finally, the expert advice offered on his web page immediately **establishes him as a market leader.** This further convinces his visitors that they've found the right place.

A stand-alone, one-step tombstone ad can't do any of this. Your audience **only cares about what interests them.** And because of that, all the other tombstone stuff is off the subject and totally irrelevant. Brand information adds value when they arrive on your web page **but not in your ads.**

The Most Important of the Two Parts

The most important part of this two-part system is not your ad...it's your sales web page. Yes, of course, your ad is important but if they don't see the content on your web page, it's kaput. It'd almost be as if you didn't advertise at all. Once the sales content on your web page content is finalized, writing the ad is easy.

Creating the content and designing your web page is what requires the most attention. It's where your audience satisfies their curiosity about what you promised in your ad but, also, it's where they're persuaded to **keep the momentum going** straight to your salespeople.

The Back Seat

With the direct response approach to advertising, you must be comfortable having

your brand information take a back seat to the message in your advertising. As tough as it may be to hold off on talking about yourself or your business, you have to remind yourself that no one cares about any of that in the ads themselves. You must focus on what they want, need or fear at that moment. Anything else is irrelevant and strange as it seems, it's off the subject. I have a little slogan for it. I call it, "benefit before brand."

As they browse around your web page, they will start caring that you've been in business for 27 years or that you're a family-owned business or that you've won customer service awards...all that stuff is important...just not in your ads.

Sales Web Page...Yes! Your Company Website...No!

A quick word about your ad's web page vs. your company website...a sales page is focused on one thing...taking the handoff from your ad and boosting the momentum along the path straight into the open arms of your salespeople...that's it. There are no links on the page to any other location. There is no escape. People are compelled to move through the process.

Dropping your ad responders onto the main page of your company website is a disaster. There is far too much distracting information there for people responding to the focused headline in your ad. You will lose them if you do that. You paid good money to get them this far and to motivate them to take action. Don't put them on the wrong path and give them an excuse to give up or think, "Maybe later..."



"As a master copywriter, marketer, and marketing coach, I teach highest-level lead-generation. Gary's advertising technique follows the structure of my \$6,000 self-marketing course. If you're a business owner or marketer, you'd be wise to put it into action as soon as possible. Do it right and your investment will pay for itself exponentially, day after day, month after month, year after year!"

- Chris Marlow, Sales Catalyst & Copywriter's Coach (now deceased)
Palm Desert, California

Here's another before-and-after example...

The before version of this small ad on the next page appeared in the services directory in my local newspaper. It appears here slightly larger than its actual size. These spots cost \$100 per month or \$25 each week that they appear.

The entire space of the before version contains brand (tombstone) stuff. In other words, everything he wants his audience to know about his business. The trouble

BEFORE

MASONRY
John Smith Masonry
Brick & Rock
Masonry-Fireplace
and Block Work
Any Size Job
18 Year Experience
Cell: 512-123-4567 Home: 512-123-7654



AFTER

MASONRY
BRICK, BLOCK & ROCK
FIREPLACES, PATIOS, GATES, ETC.
18 YEARS EXPERIENCE
Go to **JSMASONRY.COM** to see
Before & After Photos, Design Ideas
and Customer Reviews
John Smith 512-123-4567

is...no one really cares about that...yet. What they care about at this stage of the process is what interests them...the results of his work.

In the after version, the ad attracts attention with a black background headline and very quickly mentions what he builds (fireplaces, patios, gates, etc.) and then offers what they really want to see...before-and-after photos, design ideas and customer reviews. We can't really save him any money here because the size of these small spots is fixed. The direct response part is everything in the "Go to..." area.

The before version says what he does; the after version shows everyone how well he does it. Big difference... How many jobs will it take to pay for this \$100 ad? How many people will visit his web page to see his work and get ideas? Answer: A lot more than before.

He should also have a downloadable PDF version of his before-and-after content so visitors to his page can save it or print it out. They may want to spend time thinking about ideas for their own projects and his information will help with that. This means their printer becomes his brochure box at zero cost to him.

Where else should this ad appear? Should it also be in a sign on the back of his work vehicle? Everyone in slow traffic and in parking lots will see it...all for the one-time cost of setting up his web page...and the sign, of course.




"The Selfish Advertising information is the shortest distance between new customers and your business. Gary clearly lays out what you have to say. When you see his Audience Pyramid diagram you suddenly realize how much more business you could be getting and, sadly, how much business you've been missing out on."

- Earl Strumpell, Marketing Consultant, Eugene, Oregon

Bare bones example but it gets the job done...

The display ad below is similar to the ideal office computer ad. At the top is a headline to grab the attention of homeowners, along with a fear-driven subhead and a call to action about termites. The company name is optional because it's unnecessary at this point.



HOMEOWNERS...

Do you know how quickly termites can do real damage to your home?
Have they already invaded and started to go to work? Our FREE 1-page report tells you what to look for and what can be done.
Get instant access at **TermiteArmy.com**

This is a small, low-cost ad. It could be placed in a local or community newspaper or on postcards to a specific market area. Testing will reveal the best course to follow to scale up. This ad could also be a script for an inexpensive, 15-second radio spot. Eliminating irrelevant information saves money.

The call to action lets people know they have instant access to a one-page report, so it's a quick and easy way for them to learn more about the fear generated in the headline. They also know they will not be accosted by a human salesperson. This zero-risk guarantee eliminates any psychological barrier to taking the next step.

The sales pitch is presented on the web page, following the content of the free report. Maybe it's an offer of a free home inspection. Maybe something else. The sales pitch leaves some questions unanswered to encourage a call to the company.

Here's an example of converting a tiny sign into a productive ad...

When I was stopped at a red light behind a dump truck, I noticed a tiny sign sewn on the back of the tarp covering its load. It read, "Joe's Tarps" and, just under that, a phone number. It was about 18 inches wide and meant to be read up close. I thought, "What else could it say to convert such a tiny sign into a productive ad? What would motivate people to take action, even if they didn't have an immediate need for a custom tarp?"

Note: Turns out, this business is totally focused on dump truck tarps and motors. Any prospective customer who operates dump trucks knows exactly what these tarps do. So, it comes down to things like quality and price. Dropping responders directly on their website's existing pricing page works but some sell words should

be added to maintain the momentum, along with another call to action. (See my free offer at the end about this point because it'd be a terrible waste to drop the ball at this stage of the process.)

Back to the little sign: It could include, "Go to TarpPrices.com." Why not say "Go to JoesTarpPrices.com?" Because proper names on vehicles or road signs are instantly forgotten. The same goes for phone numbers. English words like, "tarp" and "prices" are easily remembered. Including a name ruins your chances. Small changes in a small sign...big difference in performance for the same cost.



Would this, even smaller sign work? No company name...no phone number...but a clear and obvious call to action about these particular tarps.

Go to **TarpPrices.com**

I present this even smaller version to emphasize how irrelevant and off the subject some company information can be in an advertisement that's focused only on moving people to the web page. In many cases you can save money by omitting this information. See the following examples of this...

Examples of super low-cost ads...

Each of the examples below could be a complete ad. Since their calls to action to learn more on the accompanying web page is their only job, no other information is necessary.

Why Is a Two-Year-Old Car Your Best Value?

Go to ValueCars.com to see a bullet-point list.

Doesn't Your Dog Deserve a 5-Star Vacation, Too?

Go to DogParadise.com and take our 3-minute video tour.

Dry Clean or Steam Clean Your Carpets?

Learn the difference at WhichOne.com – We do both.

What's So Great About a Standing Seam Metal Roof?

Go to TortureVideo.com to see our wind and hail torture tests.

One of the benefits of small, inexpensive but effective ads like these is that they enable you to run low-cost tests of different media to see which performs the best. I like to say, "Test something, then you'll know." Knowing is better than guessing.

And finally, a Selfish Advertising business card...

The message across the top is the curiosity-triggering headline and the line just under it is the call to action, with the link to his web page. Everything else is contact information. Notice his website address is not there because it would be a major distraction from his lead generation process. And isn't capturing new customers the major function of a business card?



The article I wrote about this ("How to Have the Most Powerful Business Card in Town") received very positive reviews from people in several different countries. Most of them said they're going to immediately revamp their business cards to follow this example. In the article, I suggested the technique used to create the card could be used as a template for any other advertising they may do. Could this card, along with a supporting explanation, be a tiny course in Selfish Advertising? Could everything here be condensed down to a single page? (Don't answer that!)

Reality Check

I like the saying, "Reality bats last." "Too good to be true" is another saying that's usually right more times than we'd like. When all the excitement about a promising new idea calms down, we're left with...reality. It's the universal truth that affects all of us. So, what's the reality of Selfish Advertising? What can you reasonably expect from this technique?

Even though I feel, and I hope you agree, that it makes a lot more sense than the usual tombstone stuff, will it motivate your entire target audience to completely ignore your competition and come stampeding through your door? No, it won't. That's just not realistic.

But here's what I think you can reasonably expect... All other things being equal, I think you will have an excellent shot at capturing more than your fair share of the people at the top of your Audience Pyramid...those ready to buy. And I think all the people in the entire middle area of your Audience Pyramid are yours for the taking because the odds of your competitors motivating this segment of your audience are nearly zero.

Your Takeaway

Constant Contact surveyed 2,500 small businesses owners from several countries with this result... "What we found confirmed what many of you might be feeling: **marketing effort and investment are up, but confidence in what's actually working is slipping.** Just 18% of SMBs say they feel 'very confident' in their marketing — down from 27% in 2024."

What's the problem? It looks like increasing "marketing effort and investment" isn't working. Could it be their message is off target and mostly irrelevant? Selfish Advertising focuses on your message not your investment. The right message can grow your bottom line, month after month, year after year, even on a tiny budget. "Advertising from your audience's point of view" puts human nature entirely on your side and **that's the key to everything.**

Not Original

Nothing here is original. Direct response advertising has been around for a long time. It's the basis of all the direct marketing mail we used to get and still do. They have one shot at their audience, so their offers must be irresistible and conclude with a super easy path to respond. "Reason Why Advertising" by John E. Kennedy, a small book first published over a hundred years ago, presents a compatible theme. (You must give them a reason why they should respond to your ads or they won't.)

All I've done here is to give this approach a clever name, Selfish Advertising, explain how it works and suggest using it in any advertising you do. Why? Because, as I've mentioned several times here, it goes with the flow of human nature (self-interest) and tombstone advertising doesn't. It's that simple. And, since I'm not a psychologist, I have no idea why more business owners don't use it, especially business owners with small ad budgets, who need it the most.

"Nobody reads ads. People read what interests them and sometimes it's an ad." - Howard Luck Gossage (1917-1969)

* * *

See my Free Offer on the next page...

FREE OFFER FOR A QUICK START

Curios About What?

Throughout this article, I've emphasized that advertisers must identify what their audience cares most about. That single insight sets the theme for both your web page and the ads that send people there. In other words: What will trigger the strongest curiosity about what they want, need, or fear? Once that's clear, everything else falls neatly into place.

To help you get started, I offer a brief Q&A type phone conversation, where we isolate the specific information that they'll want when they land on your web page. I use a technique that identifies this very quickly. It's fast, and it's accurate because it's based on the theory that not even an expensive, out-of-town expert knows more about your customers than you do. With that established, you'll know exactly what you need to say.

The second call to action at the end of your web page motivates page visitors to contact your business. I suggest an approach that eliminates the main psychological barrier to making that call as well as a method for how you should receive these calls. This is very important because you've put forth too much trouble and expense to lose them at this final step.

I don't charge anything for this phone session...it's free. Its purpose is to help you get started. By the end of it, you'll have two things...a ready-to-go ad and a plan for your sales web page. You can complete the work on your own, or I can provide you with a quote for writing the content and building the page, And, if you wish, I also offer free hosting for a year.

If this free call interests you, send an email to **gary@marketingfirst.com**. Put "Get started" or "Help" on the subject line and include your web address so I can learn a little about your business before the call.

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