

# **A Secret Marketing Weapon**

**How to Submit Expert Articles  
Online that Drive Qualified Leads  
to Your Web site**

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**Small Biz Survival, a special report**

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## **A Secret Marketing Weapon**

Congratulations! You're about to learn one of the most effective and affordable online marketing secrets your competitors don't want you to know. What's more, you don't need a Web site to use this technique. All you need is an email address.

What's the secret marketing weapon? It's the act of submitting expert articles, written by you, to Web sites looking for your knowledge of expertise. It's also the coolest way I know to attract qualified sales leads to your inbox without spending ANY money!

### **Who Benefits?**

Small or home-based businesses, authors, experts...anyone! Essentially, it costs nothing other than your time. Frankly, I've never seen a free marketing tool work as effectively as this.

### **Submitting Articles Online Helps To:**

- Increase qualified Web site traffic
- Establish and grow your credibility
- Quickly build qualified prospect email and postal opt-in databases
- Increase inbound links. Google, the most popular search engine, uses inbound links as a key measurement in determining whether to return your Web site in a search.
- An incredible passive income tool; articles are easily converted into e-books, special reports, teleclasses, etc.

## **How It Works**

There are a tremendous amount of webmasters looking for entrepreneurs to post expert articles to their Web sites. In exchange, they funnel your articles to other Web site and ezine editors who need fresh content continuously. Why would you want to do something for free? Because in exchange for your expert article, editors commit to keep your article intact, including your personal bio at the bottom, which describes your expertise and provides your contact information.

Your bio and article content are the keys to your success. If your content isn't informative, then readers won't be compelled to find out more about you. If your article is, indeed, packed with information, the reader will remain interested and continue to the end where your bio and contact information await. Thus, if a reader likes what you have to say, they contact you -- a qualified lead! I write and submit marketing articles regularly to more than 30 Web sites and have been receiving new leads almost DAILY!

## **It Sounds Too Good To Be True**

It does, doesn't it?! There are various reasons why a Web site owner would allow you to post an article at no charge, and then want to circulate it for you. Many of these Web sites make their profits by selling advertising and special subscriptions to ezine editors searching for specific content [your content]. For example, an ezine editor may be able to pay for an enhanced service, such as automatically receiving articles pertaining to specific topics, rather than having to search lengthy article databases. If an editor needs fresh daily content, then it may be worth \$20 a month to have the article Web site owner provide custom information, saving the ezine editor time!

## **Article Submission Process**

Once on the home page of an article submission Web site start looking for the following links: "submit article," "article submit," "submission," "contribute content," or "articles." Sometimes they'll be a search box you can type these words into and it will return the appropriate link. Once you click on the "submit article" link, it usually brings you to a standardized form page. At the top will be the Web site's guidelines. Usually the guidelines describe what type of expert content they're searching for, what they do with it, and they also ask that you acknowledge you're allowing them to use your article freely on their site as well as partner sites with no pay in exchange. Of course you want to agree to this; if you don't, they probably won't use your article.

Most of the article submissions sites I've come across are professional and state up front that they'll leave your article intact. As you continue down the form page you'll usually be asked for your full name, email, URL, article title, article content and bio. Many of these sites are automated; your article posts right away after pressing the submit button. Some are not. And in some instances your article will never be posted because the editor doesn't like it, need it, topic doesn't fit, etc.

## **Submission Protocols**

- Make sure you have a third party proof your article before submitting! If you have too many grammar mistakes the editor will reject it, worse still, your prospects may see them.
- Some article submission Web sites make you set up an account at no charge. It's a bit time consuming the first time you submit an article, but every time thereafter you only type in your password. I find these sites to be the most professional and find it's worth the extra time and effort.

- When you cut and paste your article into the form, first paste it into a non-formatting program such as Notepad. Why? Because if you cut and paste your copy directly from a program such as MS Word, it carries over unnecessary formatting such as hard returns, which makes the editor's job tougher. Since your competitors are submitting articles, you want to establish a reputation of submitting easy-to-manage articles.
- Keep your bio at a maximum of four or five lines. Otherwise, you risk being rejected or edited.
- Never try to sell anything in an article; it will be rejected. Remember, by simply writing the article, you're selling yourself indirectly by telling your readers how knowledgeable you are about your subject area.
- Most article sites want your name, email and URL. Make sure you provide an email that you check regularly. Don't provide an email that has an auto responder. Most editors insist that you provide an email you check regularly. It's very unusual for an editor to contact you, but you must do it.
- Some sites require you to submit your article via email. Sometimes this is easy, but sometimes it's a hassle because they'll also require you to make the line length no more than 60 to 65 characters. When doing this manually it usually only takes a few minutes.
- A few sites require you sign up for their ezine before submitting your article. This can be advantageous since you'll learn a lot more about the editor, their audience and the topics they prefer to cover.
- One thing NOT to do after submitting an article is email the editor and ask if your article is going to be posted or circulated. Editors don't have time for these types of communications and often don't welcome follow-up correspondence. Most sites will send an immediate pop-up message that

acknowledges your article has been received. This is all the confirmation you should anticipate.

- Before submitting your first article, spend time on some of the article submission Web sites. Check out articles posted under your topic category. Ask yourself if they're any good. You'll find that some will be really good, and some will have no information at all. Look at the formatting; is it easy to read? Also, check out the headlines; are they understandable, interesting? Essentially, you're looking to learn about the process, see it in action, before undergoing your first attempt. Editors appreciate it if you submit relevant articles. The only way you'll know if your topic is relevant is if you spend a little time on the article submission Web site and understand who their audience is. [See several examples of my marketing articles that have been submitted to various marketing related Web sites, at [www.sharronsenter.com/ma.htm](http://www.sharronsenter.com/ma.htm).]

### **Article Creation**

- Your topic and content are the most important elements for an effective article submission campaign. If your article isn't well written or the topic lacks pizzazz, then you're wasting your time. When first deciding what topic to write about consider some of the greatest challenges your prospects face every day. Then, pick one topic and write an informative piece that'll help your prospect. I can't stress this enough, put some knowledge into your article. Don't worry about giving away your secrets. You must display some concrete knowledge before someone would ever read your article and then contact you.

The more information-rich your article is, the busier your inbox will be! For example, let's say you're an interior designer. Consider how the use of colors can make a room look larger. Your article could then describe in detail two or

three scenarios of space-challenged rooms and how using appropriate colors makes them look larger. The key is to make your articles as specific as possible about one subject within your expertise. A too-general article will be overlooked by your prospects.

- **Length** -- Your articles should average 600-800 words, definitely not much longer than 900. I've seen some articles that are less than 400 words; this does not reflect well. Give the reader solid content.
- **Format** – When you post your article it's extremely important that it's easy to read. Editors looking for fresh content do not want to waste time reformatting writer's work; that's your job. More than likely, the editor will simply keep looking for a more professionally formatted article. Moreover, bolds and italics do not usually withstand the form submission process. Therefore, make sure you double return between each paragraph and begin each with a subhead. I also add dashes [ - - ] after each of my subheads before starting the first sentence. This way, if your subhead doesn't remain separated from the first sentence during the submission process, the dashes ensure a way to visually show you're starting a new thought or paragraph.
- **Headline** -- You must write a great headline, but keep it short. Think about all the headlines you see on Web sites. They're short and very enticing, or the reader won't click them. Also keep in mind that your article is being circulated around the Internet. Editors are looking to stack headlines on top of each other. They're trying to show their audience, "See...look at all the fresh articles I offer at my site." If your headline is too long, they won't use it simply because it won't fit within their format. I recommend you write your article first and

then your headline. Make your headline specific. Don't use puns or words a sixth-grader can't understand. You want the reader to immediately understand from just the headline what solutions are enclosed. For example, the headline for the interior designer could read, "Make Rooms Larger Using Color" or "Get Spacious, Add Color." Use verbs in your headlines; they tend to be stronger headlines because they show action.

- **Call-to-Action, a.k.a. your bio** – Your call-to-action is actually your bio and/or resource box. Depending on what Web site you're visiting, webmasters use the terms "bio" and "resource box" interchangeably. It's a short paragraph at the end of your article that tells readers more about you and how to contact you. There are several things you'll need in your call-to-action, including your hyperlinked Web site URL, email and possibly a phone number. It all depends on how you want prospects to contact you. The more contact options you provide, the more approachable you'll appear.

Now that you've spent all this time writing an informative article, your bio must be equally good. It must prompt readers to take action – visit your Web site, call or email you. Also, focus on one, not more than, two, credibility points about yourself. For example, "Phil Smith is a CPA specializing in technology-driven companies. He's also the author of the free monthly ezine, "Tax Technology." Readers may sign up for Smith's ezine at [www.taxtechnology.com](http://www.taxtechnology.com)." In this example, Phil is driving readers to his Web site where he'll have several other helpful tax articles posted and a sign up script on every page prompting visitors to receive his free monthly tax technology ezine.

I want to caution you about using your email in the body of your article. There are spam crawlers that actively crawl the Internet collecting posted email addresses. When I first started submitting articles I noticed an increase in spam. I don't believe it's the article submission sites themselves selling my information. In fact, before I submit with any site I read their privacy statement to ensure they say they keep all my information confidential and won't sell it. If I can't find a privacy statement, I don't submit an article. Posting a privacy statement is basic business etiquette when conducting business on the Internet. If the site doesn't have one, definitely ponder their professionalism.

To minimize spam in my primary email, I created a second email address and use it exclusively when submitting articles. However, you must check this email daily, because you'll receive leads and edit or inquiries. What's more, a unique email helps you track your article marketing efforts. Also, I strongly recommend you don't use free email such as Yahoo or Hotmail. You don't look serious about your business when prompting customers to contact you at a free email address. Instead, try to use an email address that has your URL, i.e., [yourname@yourbusinessname.com](mailto:yourname@yourbusinessname.com).

- **Offer Something For Free** – Ideally, within your bio, you want to prompt readers to “sign up for,” “download for free,” etc. some service, ezine tip, special report, newsletter, white paper, etc. The idea is to lure readers to your inbox or your Web site. Giving something away expedites the process.

### **Other Tid-bits**

- You'll come across many Web sites that welcome your articles. However, I caution you to stick to the bigger article portals that specialize in receiving

hundreds of articles; rather than a one-off webmaster who welcomes articles just so they can beef up content. Not that there's anything wrong with this. Certainly, if you happen upon one of these sites, go ahead and submit your article. However, you'll find that submitting articles can be time-consuming, and therefore, you'll want to post to portals that have a lot of qualified traffic.

A lot of webmasters are jumping on the bandwagon of "looking like" they're an article portal, but they're not. Instead, they're a one-person show just looking to add content; rather than actively market your content, as the larger portals do. Generally speaking, it can't hurt to post an article to a site such as what I'm describing, since at the very minimum you'll receive an inbound link.

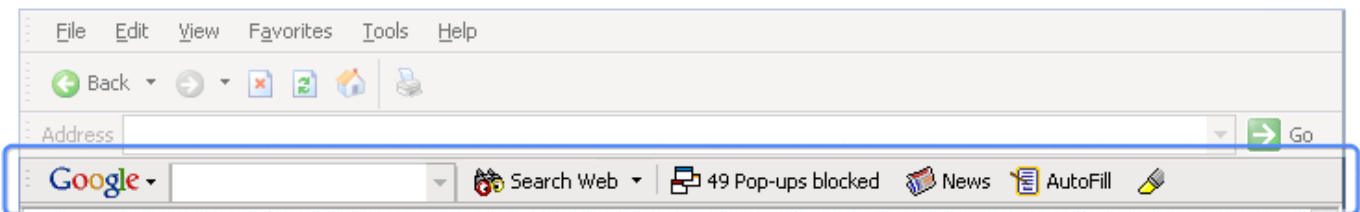
- Make certain when you're submitting articles that your URL is hyperlinked; meaning you need to add the <http://> before your address. For example, <http://www.sharronsenter.com>. Without the <http://> your article is not hyperlinked, and therefore, is NOT considered an inbound link.
- Not all inbound links are created equal. You want inbound links that are complementary to your business. Thus, if you're an anger coach, Google will think more highly of your inbound link from the Anger Association, than from your friend's rock climbing Web site.
- I only submit to Web sites that have a Google ranking of four or better, on a scale of one to 10 -- 10 being the highest score a page can obtain. It's not that rankings less than four are bad. That's not it at all. It's simply because I'm short on time, and therefore, I need a cut-of-point of how I'll spend my time. I've

picked a “four” Google ranking because it’s considered “good.” Whereas anything less than a four is not as desirable.

**The following is Google’s explanation of their page ranking process.**

“PageRank relies on the uniquely democratic nature of the web by using its vast link structure as an indicator of an individual page's value. In essence, Google interprets a link from page A to page B as a vote, by page A, for page B. But, Google looks at more than the sheer volume of votes, or links a page receives; it also analyzes the page that casts the vote. Votes cast by pages that are themselves "important" weigh more heavily and help to make other pages "important." Important, high-quality sites receive a higher PageRank, which Google remembers each time it conducts a search. Of course, important pages mean nothing to you if they don't match your query. So, Google combines PageRank with sophisticated text-matching techniques to find pages that are both important and relevant to your search. Google goes far beyond the number of times a term appears on a page and examines all aspects of the page's content (and the content of the pages linking to it) to determine if it's a good match for your query.

- How can you tell a Web site’s Google page rank? It’s simple. You just need to download the Google toolbar. It’s free and only takes a second. Here’s the link: <http://toolbar.google.com>. Every time you visit a Web site, the page rank of the Web site will be reflected on the Google toolbar which will be at the top of your browser once you download it. Here’s what it looks like:



## **Article Portals to Submit to**

The following are a list of general and business Web site portals to submit your expert articles to. After each link is a list of topics covered at that particular portal.

At the time of writing this report the following list of sites are current. However, please keep in mind that Web sites come and go, and individual Web sites' submission guidelines change from time to time.

[www.addme.com](http://www.addme.com) - Web site Promotion, Attracting Traffic, Search Engine Secrets, Search Engine News, Advertising Tips, Affiliate Programs, Keywords and Meta Tags, Java/Javascript Tips, HTML/XML, Database/SQL, E-commerce, Website/Banner Design and Starting/Growing Business

[www.addto.com](http://www.addto.com) - E-commerce

[www.advisortoday.com](http://www.advisortoday.com) - Business, Marketing Finance and Insurance

[www.amazines.com](http://www.amazines.com) - Everything from camping, poetry to writing. If you write it, you'll definitely want to submit it here.

[www.allnetarticles.com](http://www.allnetarticles.com) - This site covers just about any topic.

[www.articlecentral.com](http://www.articlecentral.com) - Small Business/Web site Management

[www.articlecity.com](http://www.articlecity.com) - Auto/Trucks, Business/Finance, Computers/Internet, Family, Food/Drink, Health, Home Improvement, Kids/Teens, Legal, Marketing, Online

Business, Parenting, Recreation/Sports, Self Improvement, Site Promotion,  
Travel/Leisure, Web Development, Women and Writing

[www.authorconnection.com](http://www.authorconnection.com) - They cover pretty much ALL topics. No matter what your expertise, you'll want to submit an article regularly here.

[www.bestparentingresources.com](http://www.bestparentingresources.com) - Parenting and Kids

[www.boonline.com](http://www.boonline.com) - Small Business, Business and Marketing

[www.businessknowhow.com](http://www.businessknowhow.com) - Sales/Marketing, Internet, Human Resources, Leadership, Law, Finance, Start-up, Home Business, Career and Jobs

[www.businessnation.com](http://www.businessnation.com) - Advertising, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Small Business, Human Resources, Law, Management and Sales

[www.businesstoolchest.com](http://www.businesstoolchest.com) - Small and Home-based Business

[www.certificate.net](http://www.certificate.net) - Business, Marketing, Favorite Things, Health, Hobbies, Life, Pets, Religion, Sports, Technology and Internet

[www.connectionteam.com](http://www.connectionteam.com) - Starting a Small Business

[www.digital-women.com](http://www.digital-women.com) - Online community for women in business.

[www.dime-co.com](http://www.dime-co.com) - Internet Marketing

[www.ebooksnbytes.com](http://www.ebooksnbytes.com) - Ebook Publishing & Marketing Only

[www.expertmagazine.com](http://www.expertmagazine.com) - Business, Personal Development, Speakers and Trainers

[www.ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com) - Arts/Humanities, Business/Finance, Computers/Internet, Family Activities, Food/Drink, Health/Education, Lifestyles, Press Releases, Recreation/Sports, Shopping, Web Site Debuts/Reviews and Women

[www.goarticles.com](http://www.goarticles.com) - Covers almost any topic you can imagine. Advertising, Writing, Family, Religion, HTML, Direct Mail, Psychology, Law and tons more.

[www.ideamarketers.com](http://www.ideamarketers.com) - Business, Computers, Entertainment, Home, Finance, Life, Spiritual, Marketing, Politics and Trivia

[www.insideoffice.com](http://www.insideoffice.com) - General Business

[www.netterweb.com](http://www.netterweb.com) - Internet Marketing

[www.powerhomebiz.com](http://www.powerhomebiz.com) - Starting, managing and growing a home business.

[www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com) - Life, Sex, News/Politics and Arts/Entertainment

[www.smallbusinessoutpost.com](http://www.smallbusinessoutpost.com) - Small and Home-based Business

[www.webmarketingspecialists.com](http://www.webmarketingspecialists.com) - Arts, Business, Career, Christian, Computers, Culture, Education, Entertainment, Health/Fitness, Home, Inspirational, Lifestyle,

Marketing, Motivational, Publishing, Relationships, Romance, Self-help, Travel and Women's Issues

[www.zinos.com](http://www.zinos.com) - This site runs the gamut - Arts, At Work, Books, Business, E-commerce, Fiction, Food, Health, Holiday, Home/Food, Life, Love/Sex, Movies, Music, News, Poetry, Politics, School, Sports and Travel

### **Ezine Email Announcement Lists/Groups**

The key difference here is that your articles are distributed via email, versus uploading them to a Web site, such as the list above. You must join the following article announcement groups in order to distribute your articles.

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/article\\_announce](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/article_announce) - This announcement list is facilitated and sponsored by Yahoo. You'll need to choose among Business, Home/Family, Health/Fitness, General Interest or Internet. To reach each category audience you must join all five, of course, you can join as few as you want. **Sharron's Top Pick**

The following additional nine article announcement groups are similar to the above; however, these are "hosted" at yahoo, but not run by Yahoo. Instead, they're run by individuals who have a vested interest in submitting and distributing online articles. If you have the time, it may make sense for you to sign up for one or more. However, I recommend the Yahoo group above if you're short on time. I use it. It's well organized. That's not to say the below are not, and there's a large audience, larger than all of the following individually.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ArticlePublisher/>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Free-Reprint-Articles/>  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Free\\_eContent/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Free_eContent/)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/freezinecontent/>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/netwrite-publish-announce/>  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/publisher\\_network/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/publisher_network/)  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/QC\\_Reprint\\_Articles/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/QC_Reprint_Articles/)  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ReprintArticles-Paradise/>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/reprintedarticles/>

### **Ezine Announcement Lists**

The following are places to promote your ezine, a.k.a. electronic newsletter. However, you have to join before making your announcement.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sitesandzines/>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AAnnounce/>  
[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/for\\_all\\_ezine\\_publishers/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/for_all_ezine_publishers/)

### **Ezine Directories**

These are places you need to go once to list your ezine. It's definitely worth the time!

[www.huginc.com](http://www.huginc.com)  
[www.jogena.com](http://www.jogena.com)  
[www.ezine-marketing.com](http://www.ezine-marketing.com)  
[www.ezinelocater.com](http://www.ezinelocater.com) - There is a fee to list your ezine.  
[www.homeincome.com](http://www.homeincome.com)

[www.ezine-universe.com](http://www.ezine-universe.com)

[www.new-list.com](http://www.new-list.com)

[www.cumuli.com](http://www.cumuli.com) - Charges a small fee.

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

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

[www.netterweb.com](http://www.netterweb.com) - This is a free listing; however, you'll have to agree to promote Netterweb at least once in your newsletter, once a year.

### **Finding Additional Article Submission Sites**

To find more sites that welcome articles, go to [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) and type in ["your expertise" article submit]. For example, if you're an accountant you may search for [accounting article submit], [taxes article submit], [balance sheet article submit], [accounting technology article submit.]

### **Tip**

While you're on the various article submission sites, keep a lookout for "submit ezine," or similar copy. Many of the above article submission Web sites, as well as many others, offer a free listing promoting your ezine [electronic newsletter.] To find more sites that offer free ezine listings, go to [Google.com](http://Google.com) and search for [your expertise ezine submit] or [submit ezine.]

### **But I Can't Write**

That's okay. You still have a couple options. A lot of entrepreneurs underestimate their writing talents. No matter, you need to do what's comfortable for you. So we'll discuss a new up-and-coming marketing service a lot of 'consultants' are offering. I caution you to make sure you get what they promise because you're paying for it. For example, someone could promise to write your article and submit it to more than

2000 editors for only \$99. My comment is -- who are these editors, have these editors opted-in to receive your articles, etc. In short, be careful.

### **FREE Online Press Release Distribution Services**

Another method to obtain inbound links is to reformat your articles into press releases and distribute them for free. My #1 resource is [www.prweb.com](http://www.prweb.com) – I easily convert my articles into press releases, post them online and immediately obtain inbound links. I use the following three and free press release posting resources regularly.

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

[www.prweb.com](http://www.prweb.com) Sharron's Top Pick

[www.pressbox.co.uk](http://www.pressbox.co.uk)

### **Summary**

Submitting expert articles really does work. I've been implementing this marketing strategy for well over a year now, and I receive leads almost daily. However, it doesn't happen overnight. Don't expect 30 leads the moment you submit your first article; it won't happen. It takes a few weeks to start seeing results. Remember, your article has to be filtered around. An ezine editor could pick it up today, but not publish it in her ezine for another month, since she distributes a monthly ezine.

What's more, your articles over time get archived, so your initial efforts keep working for you long after you've submitted them. I've received leads from my first article several months after my original submission. Be prepared to receive leads from all over the world. It's the coolest thing when you're living in a small New England town [like me] and someone from Paris signs up for your free monthly tips. You'll also be

visited by some tire-kickers. Therefore, be sure to qualify prospects as best you can before beginning any project on their behalf. I also recommend you secure at least a 50% deposit upfront before being any project.

The key to success when a reader contacts you is to establish a personal relationship as soon as possible. How? Try checking out their Web site and offering some feedback. Once, a reader from Colorado signed up for my free monthly marketing tip. So I wrote back, thanked him for signing up and then described how I spent two years in Colorado, asked if he were a skier, how was the snow, told him we're getting tons of snow in New England, etc. When a prospect reads your article and contacts you, this is only the first step in building your relationship.

Now it's up to you to build trust, so that eventually this prospect will turn into a longstanding customer. In such a big open space like the Internet, it takes time to build a relationship with someone who may never meet you. So before you submit your first article, make sure you've decided what you want the reader to do once they contact you. **The key to success with the article submission marketing strategy is your follow-up after a reader contacts you!**

## **[Appendix I – Sample Marketing Article Submitted Online by Sharron Senter]**

The following article has been extremely successful. I attribute on average at least 30+ new business leads a month from this one article. If you search this article at [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com), you'll find that it takes up most of the first page of returned links. Not bad for approximately three or four hours work!

### **6 Affordable Strategies to Build a Cash Cow**

By Sharron Senter

Small businesses must be extra imaginative with their marketing efforts in order to attract customers and get them to open their wallets. Even more challenging is that most entrepreneurs have shallow pockets and shoppers are being more selective as a result of the sluggish economy and volatile stock market. The following are six proven low-cost marketing ideas that help small businesses increase sales and generate referrals, ultimately helping you build your cash cow, while spending very little.

#### **- Get Out and Walk**

Next time you walk down a street with high foot-traffic, pay attention to storefront windows underutilized. Approach the store owner and offer to pay a small fee to advertise your business in their window. Imagine, you pay \$50 per month for a location that costs someone else \$2500 a month in rent. This idea also works in reverse. If you're the store owner with great window visibility, approach other entrepreneurs and offer them an affordable advertising opportunity.

### - Special Deal Today Only

The next time business is slow, try sending out an email to your prospect list that reads, "Please call me. I have a special deal I can offer you if you call me today. You'll be glad you did! (978) 346-4086. Thanks, Sharron." This method really works. Prospects call because of the urgency you create using such a short deadline and to make sure they don't miss out on a worthy opportunity. Be careful. You'll lose credibility with your prospects if your offer isn't aggressive enough, i.e., 10% off won't cut it!

### - Under Your Nose

Are your vendors doing business with you? Why not? Here's a short list of the prospects you should contact within 48 hours of reading this article, your: accountant, attorney, plumber, electrician, daycare provider, housekeeper, greens keeper, mechanic, realtor, friends, family, minister/priest/rabbi, etc., dentist, physician, gynecologist, nail technician, hairdresser, Mary Kay Consultant, marriage counselor, coach, personal trainer, financial advisor, and so forth. If you and your vendor are not a match, he or she probably knows someone who should be doing business with you. Now, all you have to do is ask your vendor to provide some word-of-mouth about you. At minimum, ask to display your business cards and flyers at their office. Take a moment and make sure people in your immediate circle understand what you're selling for a living!

### - Customers on the Fence

Before you send off your next proposal, call your client and tell her the proposal she requested is ready. Tell your client you'd like to forward the proposal to her, but before you do, ask her what time tomorrow would be convenient to discuss the

proposal. Remember, always set up your next appointment before releasing any information!

#### - Charge at Least Five Bucks

Always charge a fee for all your event marketing efforts. Fee-paid seminars and workshops almost always generate more participants than free events. The fee does two things. First, when you charge for something, there's an implied "value" built in. Your prospect will believe they "get more" when they pay, versus not paying. Second, when a prospect pays you, they're showing a commitment and are now a more qualified prospect and more likely to show up. Don't just take my word for it; test it. It's true.

#### - Stimulate Customer Senses

Do you think the smell of fresh baking bread flowing throughout the grocery store or music playing is by chance? Absolutely not. Retail businesses have been going out of their way for years to stimulate shoppers and keep them browsing. Stimulating the senses works outside of bricks and mortars too. For example, let's say you're a business development expert and you're getting ready to mail your quarterly newsletter on white stock. Instead, try a red or pink-hued paper. Or, if you'd prefer to remain conservative, use a white textured stock. Another example: There's nothing worse than the smell of a disinfectant used in a doctor's office. Try burning vanilla candles in the waiting room, they'll help sooth your customers while they wait. If your business is notorious for long waiting room times, fresh baked cookies would work well.

Remember, the more comfortable we keep our customers, the longer they'll stay, the more memorable experience they'll have and the more they'll spend, or pass on

positive word-of-mouth. When you're planning your next marketing activity, remember to stimulate your customers' senses, including eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

### About The Author

Sharron Senter is a New England-based marketing consultant, speaker, writer and founder of Senter & Associates, a marketing communications firm that helps businesses deploy profit-producing online and offline marketing strategies. She's well known for her free monthly emailed marketing tips. Readers are invited to sign up at <http://www.sharronsenter.com/fmt.htm>.

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## **[Appendix II – Article Converted to Press Release]**

I took an article I wrote about pricing and simply turned it into a press release. I posted the following release to [www.prweb.com](http://www.prweb.com) – which is free. However, I recommend you make a small donation, since it guarantees more visibility. My release got picked up by a newsletter editor who asked me to expand upon the release. He included it in his printed newsletter that was distributed to more than 3500 readers. He also told his readers how much the report was and how and where to purchase it!

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Special Report Teaches Small Businesses Effective Techniques to Increase Prices without Irritating Customers**

**Boston** - Most small businesses undervalue themselves and don't charge enough. What's more, this can be very dangerous to a business' bottom-line, since pricing is also a strategic marketing image tactic. Businesses can find answers to this problem inside a newly released downloadable report called, "How to Increase Prices without Irritating Customers," written by Sharron Senter, marketing consultant & author.

"There are two common reasons why many entrepreneurs undercharge," said Senter. "One is fear, and the other is that they don't realize the value of their services and products upon the launch of their business. However, after being in business for a while, entrepreneurs have more time to learn what their competition is charging and what the marketplace is willing to pay, which is usually more. Thus, many small

business owners are very frustrated with their pricing. What's more, it's a myth that you can't raise prices in a down economy," said Senter.

Senter offers the following tips when increasing prices:

Tip 1 -- Don't drone on with unnecessary explanations, and certainly don't give details about your personal life and why you need more money. This is unprofessional and makes customers feel uncomfortable. In most instances, customers won't tell you they're uncomfortable; they'll simply stop doing business with you.

Tip 2 -- Don't attach rules to pricing increases. Customers won't remember the rules and such a policy is awkward.

Senter recommends that before increasing prices, it's important for business owners to feel confident about their new pricing. "There's nothing more destructive to a business' pricing strategy and the bottom-line than feeling insecure about your pricing," said Senter. "Customers will pick up on your insecurities, causing them to question whether you're "worth it." Let's face it; if you question your pricing, why won't your customers?"

The 10 page report, "How to Increase Prices without Irritating Customers" retails for \$17 and can be purchased and immediately accessed at <http://www.sharronsenter.com/fs.htm>

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## Contact Information

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#### ABOUT SHARRON SENTER

Sharron Senter is the founder of [sharronsenter.com](http://sharronsenter.com), a US-based, Merrimac, Mass. marketing firm that specializes in helping businesses deploy profit-producing online and offline marketing strategies.

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## About The Author



Sharron Senter is a New-England based marketing consultant, speaker, writer and founder of Senter & Associates, a marketing communications firm that helps entrepreneurs deploy profit-producing online and offline marketing tactics. She has been helping businesses develop marketing strategies since 1990. Sharron is well-known for her free monthly emailed marketing tips, now in its fourth year of circulation, with international readership. Contact Sharron at [sharron@sharronsenter.com](mailto:sharron@sharronsenter.com) or sign up for her free marketing tips at <http://www.sharronsenter.com/fmt.htm>.

**Guarantee:** If you're unsatisfied with my report, I truly would like to know. It's important to me that you learn a minimum of 8 to 10 truly fresh ideas to help you generate revenue for your business. If you do not find the new ideas you're looking for, email me at [sharron@sharronsenter.com](mailto:sharron@sharronsenter.com). I will counsel you for 30 minutes on the phone to generate other marketing ideas to help you grow your business. Or, you can simply return my report for your money back.

**Feedback:** I welcome any feedback you have about my report. I'm always trying to improve my reports and CDs and to reaffirm what lessons I've learned. I'd especially love to hear about successes you've had after implementing strategies outlined here. Email me anytime at [sharron@sharronsenter.com](mailto:sharron@sharronsenter.com).

### Check it out!

Check out my other ***Small Biz Survival*** marketing reports and recorded audio CDs at [www.sharronsenter.com/fs.htm](http://www.sharronsenter.com/fs.htm) I generally add a new product every 45 days.

### **New Reports Include:**

- *How to Increase Prices without Irritating Customers*
- *19 Ways to Increase Profits in Less Than 90 Days*
- *Double Newspaper Response in Less Than 3 Weeks*

### **New CDs Include:**

- *Successfully Selling Your Professional Services – Overcome Fear of Selling*
- *Low-cost Secrets to Landing Corporate Accounts*
- *Protecting Your Home-based Business from Viruses, Worms & Hackers – Security 101 in Laymen's Terms*
- *Outlast & Outclass Your Competition – How to Make First Impressions that Increase Your Bottom-line*

### **Article Writing & Submission Services**

I do offer article writing and submission services. I'll write one 600-800 word article and submit it to 20 Web site portals for \$895. This includes one minor editing revision. Please email me for more information, [sharron@sharronsenter.com](mailto:sharron@sharronsenter.com).

**Best of luck to you and your business!**