



## **Now is not the time to sit back & wait for clients to come to you...**

I speak to quite a few people every week and I have never heard so many people express such high levels of stress in their lives. Part of it is due to the economy and the fear that it spurs, and part of it is due to busy-ness - Just about everyone that I come in contact with seems to be busier than ever before- even if they are struggling with their businesses. This being said, people now more than ever - weather they know it or not - need your services. The problem is that most of them are so paralyzed by fear that they won't seek you out.

Now is not the time to sit back and wait for them to come to you! You may also be feeling the challenges of the times and may in effect feel the paralysis that accompanies those challenges- and as a result your PT business may be struggling. But, you can turn things around by being proactive and taking action. There is a saying that goes *'When you don't know what to do, do anything...'* Now is a time for action- especially when it comes to growing your business. There is no doubt that we are in a recession and you may have heard that there are opportunities in recessions- and this is totally true. The opportunities arise when business owners that are used to sitting back and waiting for business come to them, start to proactively market their business and end up generating more business than they ever had before.

The opportunities are compounded by the fact that there is less competition during a recession since more companies are going out of business. A recession is a weeding process in the business world. Only the strong fitness business will survive in times like these, and these are also the times that make businesses strong. That strength doesn't necessarily lie in your current skills and abilities or even in the quality of your training- but that strength is built and is based on your willingness and ability to put yourself out there. I consider this to be a universal law - that when energy is expressed in an area that there is a return on that investment of energy.

In terms of how this applies to business, I discovered the power of this process when I worked for a company selling packaging products many years ago. The company highly encouraged us to cold call/prospect in order to build our client base and I went through phases in which I would cold call regularly and then stop for a period of time (since I never really enjoyed it). But, I found that when I was cold calling regularly that my business would grow even though the results were not usually directly related to the cold calls that I was making. That lesson has stuck with me ever since and as a result I am continually dedicating myself to proactively marketing and promoting my business. I would strongly recommend – especially if your business is struggling - that you incorporate at least one new proactive marketing strategy into your business development process right away. Here are 7 ideas that most people could take advantage of immediately:

1. **Join a Networking Group-** There is tremendous power in numbers and it is not always what you know, but who you know...
2. **Email Marketing-** If you are not currently sending out an email marketing newsletter to your clients and prospective clients start immediately. It is the most



cost effective form of marketing ever - and if you are a resource to your clients they will look to you to educate them and inform them on the area that you specialize in. There is no better way to brand your business, stay in constant contact with your market, and to build credibility.

3. **Build an Email Marketing List-** If you can build your email list to several thousand names/emails, email marketing could and probably will become the primary marketing channel for your business. Set a goal of collecting 25-100 emails per month from people you meet. Ask everyone that you come across that you would like to add their email to your email list and that you will reward them with great, consistent information on improving the quality of their lives. In addition add an email opt-in form to your website with an incentive based opt-in (give them something like an e-book for signing up.)
4. **Develop a Strong Referral Program-** Many great PT businesses have been built on referrals and most of them are very proactive in getting referrals. Get in the habit of telling everyone that you meet what you do and ask them if they know of anyone that could benefit from your service. People love to help others that they respect- especially if they get something out of it. To that end reward everyone that gives you a referral with some type of gift or incentive. That gift might just be a thank-you note, but imagine if you gave away \$1,000,000 for every referral that you received- You can only imagine how many would be pouring in. This analogy demonstrates that people will give if the incentive is high enough...
5. **Presentations-** Develop at least one 30-60 minute presentation on a topic that you are passionate about and experienced in. Once the presentation is complete contact organizations, community groups, corporations, etc... and offer to give it to their members/employees for free. You will be surprised at how receptive they will be. Most organizations look to outside resources to provide educational information and presentations and make time for such activities on a regular basis. If you come to them as a credible resource you could secure an opportunity pretty easily. Giving regular presentations optimizes *'putting yourself out there'* and usually has a very high ROI if the presentation is educational and informative - and if you follow up with the participants in a timely manner.
6. **Follow Up-** Especially in times like these, each lead that you receive is like gold and should be treated as such. If someone makes an effort to contact you or if you meet someone and they express interest in your training you can't realistically expect that they will invest immediately. As a responsible business owner, it is your responsibility to follow up with them regularly, to build credibility and to educate them on what you offer. Statistically it takes at least 7 contacts to convert a prospect to a client- and most people give up after 2. Put their email on your email marketing list and follow up with them at least 3-4 times over the

phone. If you are getting regular leads it can be difficult to track the follow up process. To that end, some type of follow up management process is an important tool for every fitness business that is focused on growth. You can either create a process for yourself or you may want to consider investing in a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) program such as ACT ([www.act.com](http://www.act.com)) or Salesforce ([www.salesforce.com](http://www.salesforce.com)).

7. **Create a Marketing Plan-** A business without a marketing plan is like a ship without a rudder. A marketing plan is a physical manifestation and reflection of your conscious intention to grow your business. Most of us want our businesses to grow but in most cases we are in such a reactive mode when it comes to business development that we don't take the time to state what we want and how we plan to go about getting it. Just going through the procedure of creating a marketing plan will initiate the process of turning your business around because it will force you to see how little you are currently doing to build your business- and will cause you to act differently- almost immediately. A marketing plan does not need to be a formal document unless you are seeking outside funding. It can be very basic and can contain 3 simple sections:

1. Choose at least 3 marketing strategies (there is a list below to give you some ideas) and outline how you plan to use these strategies. List as many details as possible when describing how you will implement each strategy & where you will apply each strategy to your business. Be as detailed as possible and list all the expenses related to each strategy and any outside resources you will need in order to be successful.

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| Telemarketing      | Search Engine       |
| Marketing          |                     |
| Presentations      | Adword Marketing    |
| Cold Calling       | Press Releases      |
| Networking         | Article Submission  |
| Client Referrals   | Yellow Pages        |
| Print Advertising  | Affiliate Marketing |
| Media Advertising  |                     |
| Signage/Walk INS   |                     |
| Directory Listings |                     |

2. For each strategy create at least 2 SMART goals. A SMART goal is one that is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (contains timeline)
3. Come up with a list of action steps for each goal and add timelines to each action step.

A marketing plan should be a Living Document which means that it should have life. It should be viewed and referred to often. It should be revised and updated based on changes in your business (at least on a monthly basis). And the goals that you are shooting for should be emblazoned on your mind and should be posted somewhere that you can see them throughout the day.



The financial mess that we are in was created by greed and is driven by fear. The fear that perpetuates the situation is a collective fear and everyone that is afraid contributes to the problem. Now, more than ever before, you are either part of the problem or a part of the solution... The great thing is that when a single individual rises above the fear, not only do they relieve the pile of fear by one, but they have the power to infect many with their intention to grow as business owner and as a person. That power is fueled by their actions and by the results that they will receive from their proactivity, willingness to be visible and to put themselves out there.

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