

LEAD GENERATION GUIDE

*little
word
studio*

#SMALLBIZSTUDIO





OVERVIEW

you can sell out without selling out

I'm a writer, not a sales professional but I do know a thing or two about sales. My business has grown steadily through the COVID-19 crisis and I don't say that to brag (or even humble brag). I say it because growth means I've figured out a key to success and now, I want to share it with you.

In my wildest dreams you'll take the key, fashioned from months of hard work, and run into a field of possibility, wind blowing through your hair. In the middle of it all, there's a door. You unlock it. Once you've figured out what to do next, you pass the key to someone else, who gallops into their own field with their own wind, their own door, and so the story goes ...

Ah! Another thing: I'm not about the cold call or chilly email. The tactics in this guide are definitely non-traditional. They're not about finding business with sales scripts or templates. They're about being proactive, valuable and unique.

No, I'm not afraid of spilling my secret sauce. I think in a service-based business, there is no secret sauce. (An exception would be if you're actually selling sauce, then there is something to spill.) When you're good at what you do, clients and customers will come. Believe in the awesomeness of the brand you've built and what you can offer - that's the first step toward sustainable success.

Belief isn't easy, believe me. Thankfully, I've done the heavy lifting for you, so please go forward with confidence. Take my grind and make it your gold. - **Melissa Kandel, founder/CEO, little word studio**



USE THE TANGENTIAL TACTIC

Kindness, I'd argue, should be a living, breathing lodestar of any creative collaboration. It's just good business. And if you think kindness is some lofty ideal, lurking in the cotton candy ethers of the fluffy unknown, you're wrong. Kindness is as much a real part of any powerful marketing strategy as the more traditional components -- the deadlines, metrics and goals. In fact, it might be the most important part of all.

- *Melissa Kandel* for Forbes

When you operate with kindness, you'll see it reflected in top-line sales. Should that be your chief motivation for being kind? Of course not. But there are bills to pay and success to be had, so know that practicing kindness is always good business.

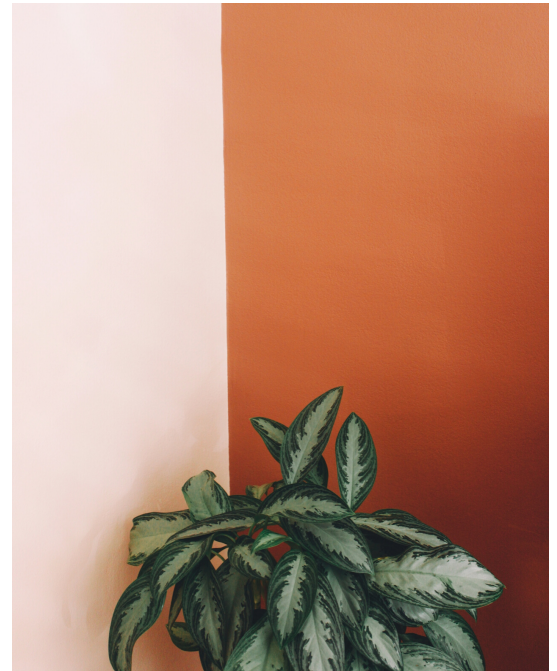
Cool, you say, except how does it really translate into sales?

There's a strategy I implemented early on in my business - let's call it The Tangential Tactic - and it hinges on the idea of kindness for all. Here's how to make it work for you:

Think about the businesses that are tangentially related to yours. For me as a content marketing firm, this meant photographers, videographers, web designers, web developers and graphic designers.

Research 10-20 local professionals in each field. Nextdoor, Yelp, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and a good, old google search are excellent places to start building your list. Make sure each company has an established pipeline of business, which a quick browse of their website should reveal. (Check client pages, testimonial pages, work examples and do your due diligence.) Create an Excel spreadsheet, Google sheet or Notion page of all these professionals with the following labels on the horizontal x-axis: contact name, business name, contact information and notes about the business, (you can use these in your outreach). Also, create a column for date emailed/called and follow up.

Reach out. You can tackle this list by emailing five businesses each day, noting your outreach in your master spreadsheet. In your message, emphasize the win-win situation at hand: You're not competitors, you're tangentially related businesses and you can refer business to them just as they can refer business to you. Even if this means a referral fee on your end, it's worth it to build up your client/customer roster quickly. Think of this tactic like a game of business leap frog or that Ciara song, "Level Up." You're leveling up by partnering with a business that already has proven success. The other trick here is to do your research. Beyond a book of business, make sure the company has a solid reputation you can get behind. At the end of the day, you're forging a new relationship built on mutual kindness.



This is an actual email I sent that generated quality client leads!

Subject: Local Referral Connection

Hi,
I came across your website while researching for a client project and wanted to connect. I'm the founder of a boutique content marketing agency based in Newport Beach and am looking for referral partners. I thought you'd be a great fit! My services are mostly focused on high-quality content creation (ad copywriting, scriptwriting for videos, SEO-optimized website copywriting, etc.) for small businesses, mid-sized brands and c-suite executives but I'd love to offer video/multimedia content creation services to my clients as well. Perhaps we can chat soon to see if there are ways we can help each other grow our businesses?
Best,
Melissa

ENHANCE YOUR SERVICE

What separates a brand that will flop from one that will flourish? The successful brand knows that providing excellent service, convenience and value is the competitive differentiator in any type of market - tough or easy. For this tactic, let's break down those three words and identify actionable strategies to augment your consumers' experience.

SERVICE

Honestly, it baffles my mind how many businesses just don't understand quality service. It's not always about going above and beyond; sometimes, it's about going. Showing up (even virtually). Responding to emails and phone calls in a timely manner, being solution-based in your responses and putting customers' needs first.

Actionable Tactics:

- **Add handwritten notes to your sales strategy.** Whether you send them with every purchase (à la Kylie Jenner's lip kits, though hers are typed) or simply send handwritten thank you notes to prospective or past clients, add a touch of personal to boost sales.
- **Ask customers what they need.** When was the last time you surveyed your email list and asked them for critical feedback on your service product? Try it today. No email list? No problem. Ask your inner circle to weigh in on adjustments you can make.
- **Create a knowledge base, tutorials and educational materials.** This works for practically any type of brand. How can your bracelets be styled? How does your app work? Boosting sales is a give and take - you listen to the consumer and you also tell the consumer what they don't even know they need - and how to get it.
- **Check your contact form.** It's a given you should set expectations for replies (e.g., "We will get back to you in 24 hours") but it's possible your contact form is the problem. Is it easily accessible? Asking for too much information? Analyze its positioning and content critically to increase your responses. You can also take this opportunity to do some A/B testing on the CTAs in your emails. What text is more click-worthy? What color button are people more likely to click? (Test only one variable at a time.)



CREATE CONVENIENCE

CONVENIENCE



The path of least resistance is coincidentally, also the road to sales success. Product designers often talk about "delightful design," and the principles of delighting your audience apply to any business looking to increase profitability. Make it easy to view, learn about, try on (even digitally) or demo, and buy your product/service. Make it convenient for customers to purchase and to care.

Actionable Tactics:

- **Offer early access to your loyal fans.** It's highly possible your core super-fans aren't buying or engaging with your product right now (they've got a lot on their minds), so incentivize them with cool stuff. Offer discounted pricing to your email subscribers, or a promo code for Instagram followers. Make your customers feel special.
- **Host a virtual event.** When Cinco de Mayo fell on Taco Tuesday this year, Patrón hosted a virtual event with bartenders providing recipes to make at home. It was convenient to attend (virtual) and convenient to stay tuned in (hello, delicious cocktails). Take their lead and go virtual - a festival, a conference - to spur sales.
- **Make sure it's super convenient to purchase your product or service.** This could mean rearranging your online product display, finding a better e-commerce hosting site or partnering with a company like Klarna to make large payments doable.
- **Be easy to find.** Sure, you can pay for Google Ads but there are free ways to get more exposure. Make sure your contact information is up to date on Facebook, spruce up your Instagram bio, clean up your free Google listing. Here are some other hyper-local networking and business-generating apps to garner free exposure:



EMPHASIZE YOUR VALUE

VALUE



Everyone talks about value proposition and it's for good reason - a value proposition positions your brand as something unique while also letting consumers know the value they get when they spend their hard-earned money on your products or services. It's the answer to the question: "What's in it for me?"

saving them money or making them money, saving them time, .. making them safe ... they have to hire you because you save them money ... you're going to sell their house for more, will protect them will keep them out of a lawsuit ... understand compliance, when you educate them ... educating them they're learning and they'll save money by what they learned ...

Actionable Tactics:

- **Make your value easily shareable.** Create a document just like this one highlighting what you or your products bring to the table. You can call it your brand book, your capabilities brochure ... it doesn't matter. People want to know how you either make their lives easier, save them money or save them from an otherwise unpleasant circumstance that your product/service allows them to avoid. Focus on value from one or both of those perspectives.
- **Get creative with your testimonials.** If you don't have testimonials, now is the time to solicit them - perhaps by an emailed survey, an Instagram question ... wherever your audience is most vocal and active, ask them to explain why they love you and your brand. Next, devise a plan to share these testimonials in a high-traffic digital or physical space. The momentum they'll generate will help drive brand value.
- **Do better.** It used to be that social responsibility was a kind add-on for brands but now, it's a necessity. Whatever cause you're passionate about (and it doesn't have to just be one), explain to customers and existing customers how you're actually supporting it and how their money to buy your products goes toward furthering this cause. Good-will, like kindness, is just good business.

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