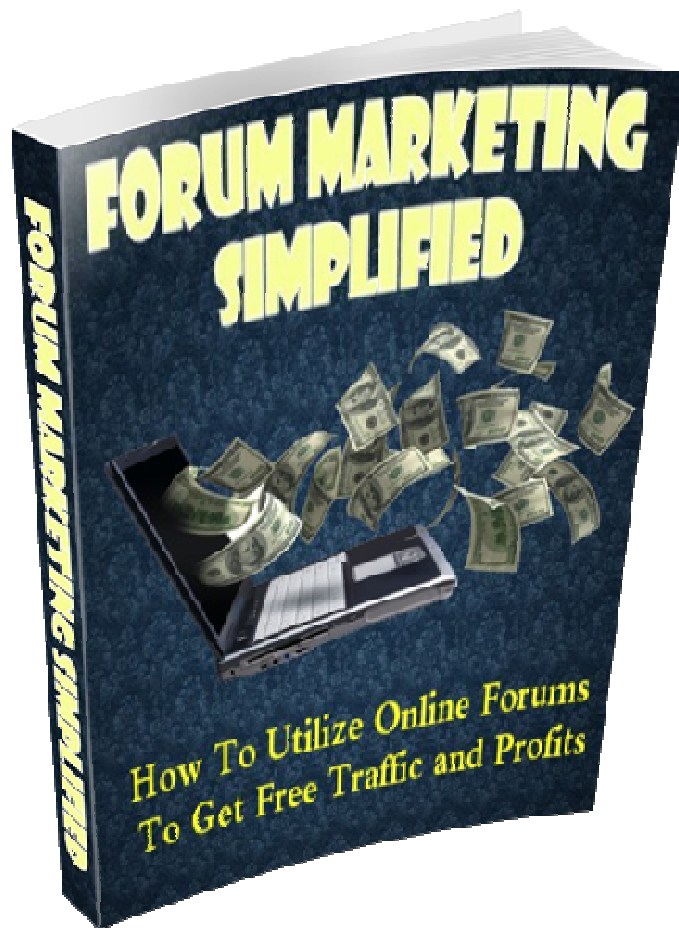


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# Forum Marketing Simplified



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# **Forum Marketing Simplified**

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# Forum Marketing Online

If you are serious about wanting to promote your website on the Internet, then going via forums available is the best option for you. These forums are easy to join and require no additional monetary deposit to be a member. Moreover, being a storehouse of information and accessible to anyone, these forums are an ideal way to go about advertising your web page.

These serve as social networking centers, where topics are discussed and information exchanged. Hence if one can search out a forum where discussions held are relevant to ones own product or field, then his chances of getting his website noticed and popularized would be more. So that should be the first step towards establishing your identity on the Internet.

But remember as it is with all kinds of marketing...finesse is everything. Do not over do anything in your enthusiasm. It is best to act calm and not seem like you are desperate to market your product. Such over eagerness is often the most sure shot way of offending customer sensibility, leading to possible bans against your website with the allegation of spamming.

It is therefore better to leave frequent yet understated messages informing about what's on offer or rather go to forums, which have questions put up regarding matters close to your product and then respond to them. So go and read the threads posted on the forum, figure out how best you can respond to queries and do that.

This will help you build a customer base as soon as people on the forum trust you to be helpful and genuine. Once that is done, all you have to do is subtly lead them to your website and that is that.

This is an easy and profitable option for you because it is absolutely free and targeting a certain niche clientele is very easy. But try and avoid promoting your website on irrelevant platforms as it might hamper your reputation. So do it casually and always follow up and enquire about whether the directed person found your website helpful or not.

This is a great way to get feedback, which will help improving your site, build client rapport, and woo new customers towards your site with show of attentiveness to their likes and dislikes. But finally the most important think to keep in mind that though beneficial for marketing, these platforms are for discussion not sales. So be subtle and it will be a smooth sailing for you.

# Why is Forum Marketing Effective?

Internet forum marketing is the form of marketing where you market your business through online discussion groups. First you join a forum and start adding posts to the discussions. You are though not allowed to advertise or market directly through your posts, this is called spamming. After registering as a member of the forum you can create your own signature file.

In this signature file you can hyperlink a keyword phrase back to your website, which when clicked can bring on the traffic to your site.

The following are the five benefits of forum marketing.

1. **Always remember when you are posting you are helping out someone.** It is a great feeling when you are of any help to the other person. If you are a believer of the law of when you give you always receive something then online forum marketing is the place for you.
2. **You get to learn a lot for free.** When I started my Team-Schuman.com website I never felt the urge to post. I only read other people's posts. I hung out in the Warrior Forum and learned a lot which helped me grow the business.
3. **You'll get free advertising from your signature profile.** People read your posts and view your signature profile and click on the link for your website. This type of traffic is very passive and a great source of sales.
4. **Search engines would give you credit for a backlink when you hyperlink your keyword phrase back to your website.** As for example, my article writer website hyperlinks the phrase article writer. And now we feature in the top 10 on Google because of the backlinks from forum marketing. I try to be very regular and post on these forums several times a week. You can try Google search and you will get a large list of forums and discussion groups. Find the few which has any form of relevance with your business.
5. **One other huge benefit I get is that I acquire ideas to write articles on my blog by going through the different kind of questions people ask.** A good question usually stimulates a lot of discussion. Such questions can be made into good articles.

These are several reasons good enough for you to include internet forum marketing to be part of your advertisement strategies. Be consistent and rip the benefits.

# Getting Started with Forum Marketing

Forum marketing can make your online business get noticed. Forum users, by and large, are tech and net-savvy and like purchasing things online. Many forum frequenters are also authorities in the topics discussed in the forum.

Forum marketing, thus, helps make a good impression in front of a knowledgeable and influential audience, which can help spread word all over.

What follows is a step-by-step guide that will tell you how to effectively make forum marketing a part of your marketing strategy.

Not all forums host the people you want to communicate with. You have to choose a set of 5-10 forums to concentrate your energies on. Ensure that these forums have at least 10,000 posts from at least 1,000 members; that there are at least 10-15 new posts every day.

Avoid forums which are hosted by your direct competitors; and those which are flooded by spam. Create your forum accounts as soon as possible. This is helpful because seniority is given a lot of importance in most online forums: some even require you to wait a few days before posting for the first time.

When you sign up, you'll be asked to agree to their user agreements and posting guidelines. Read these documents carefully. A lot of people skip this and just click yes, because there is a lot of legal jargon. But some important things to look for are:

- Are you allowed to include links in your posts?
- Can you promote your business?
- Can you use commercial messages as your signature?
- Can you contact other members for business purposes on the forum?
- Are there restrictions on new and privileges for old members?
- Your user name is the first thing that'll be noticed. Pick one that's memorable, simple and can be easily pronounced. You might want to use your real name and/or the name of your company. Do not use random combinations of letters and/or numbers, or something that's significant to you and you alone.

Create a profile that will help you establish credibility. Put up a description of your experience and expertise. Personal information can help break the ice, but don't venture into topics that can alienate anyone, like race or religion or political affiliation.

Above all, treat forum marketing as an integral part of your long-term strategy, not just a one-off opportunity to bombard the message-boards with information about your hot new product.

# Forum Marketing Etiquette

There is nothing which screams out 'brilliant opportunity' as does Internet marketing. That is why if one does not want to lose out on serious profit making chances then one should read the basic forum rules posted on each site.

This provides guidelines as to what can or cannot be done on the forum, helping you draw your limits as to how aggressive your marketing can be on these forums. Lack of this often leads to carelessness leading to unnecessary bans, and black marking against a particular user's name.

So reading the rules before joining any forum is absolutely crucial, and comprises the first rule in successful internet marketing. The rules of the forum are posted right in the beginning under the guidelines or general discussion category and are not too detailed or tedious.

They simply ban or disapprove of any kind of aggressive self promotion and untoward comments which may offend the sensibilities of the other forum members. But the degree of strictness in implementing these rules differs from site to site, so checking beforehand is the safest way not to get yourself in trouble.

Remember you are a fellow forum member who has joined because you like the sound of the forum and the topics being discussed in it, you are not supposed to be here to market yourself. So do not start singing your own praises and that of your website and product the moment you enter, especially without context.

Read what is being discussed, see how the forum is (formal or informal) and respond to it. Moreover get to know some of the people on the forum, build a rapport before broaching the subject of your website, that also subtly.

Following threads also has another bonus. If you follow, then you can keep track of certain queries raised by members, and if this falls in your area of expertise then you can help them out and solve their problems, maybe even lead them subtly to your site containing matters about these issues.

This not only gets you traffic to your site but also creates your reputation. This procedure becomes even more relevant for sites which let you to add the links to your websites along with your name. Thus in time, your credibility will increase and people will flock to your site to get help or buy your product, increasing your sales.

So just go ahead and follow the etiquettes and all will be fine.

# Make Your Presence Felt through Forum Posting

Being a part of the network marketing business you'll know that participation on forums is an effective way to grow your downline if you can do the right forum marketing. If you are using forums to build your downline, these two basic things you must do regularly to get hundreds of target audience interested to check you out and then join your team.

## Regular Participation

Inability to use forum everyday is quite overlooked. Most people think after joining a forum and participating for a few days that people will check them out. But they generate no leads because you must post a lot before anybody will check you out.

For maximum results here is what you should do. First locate 3-5 forums that are in the network marketing field by searching on Google. By doing this you'll get a list of forums to join and participate in.

While doing your search make sure to look for forums which have more than 10000 members and above. This will increase your chance of getting enough traffic that will subsequently pay for the time you have spent on posting.

After this prepare a good signature from your profile settings. Create something that will get everybody's attention towards you after reading it. However do not overtly try to advertise on your signature, rather be subtle and get the message across. Every little detailing you think will add to your credibility must be added in the profile.

Once you are through with this, introduce yourself to the community. After that make sure you are regular with you postings on the forum. The traffic would not come if you have not posted in the forums regularly for at least 2 weeks.

## Only Post High Quality Content

Every day you will encounter new people who will post questions. Try to reply to every post that you have answers to or opinion about. Do this for 5 people (at least) each day on each forum. You can also ask relevant questions yourself for attracting replies so that many people will notice your signature link.

Sometimes try to write posts which are very informative and has relevance. This will benefit other people in the forum. You must write articles based on your experience. For example: in areas you have been successful in getting traffic or any similar useful tip that would help others to build their business.

# Forum Marketing Can Become an Addiction

Forum marketing is a great way of marketing if you can do it the right way. But it can be a financial equivalent of stepping on a land-mine. Forum marketing is basically showing your expertise and building a reputation. It does exactly that if you do it the right way. But done wrongly it reflects your lack of expertise and turns your name to mud.

Once you have decided the forums to use, go through their rules and regulations. Each forum's rules are different. Many have some topics banned, some allow advertisement and some don't. First learn the rules of the road. Not following the rules will make you banned in the forums. Even if it is allowed you should not advertise through your posts or comments. Rely on the signature to promote you and your business.

Before you start actual postings go through the contents of the forum thoroughly once. By reading the forum you will have a good idea about what the forum is all about and the best way you can approach it. If you try to barge in, that will have a negative impact within the forum and that is one land mine you would surely want to avoid.

Always remember that along with the new comers the best known brains in the online marketing industry are also posting in these forums. So, before you post something on a given topic or try to comment on a post make sure you have the necessary expertise to do that comment. If you do not have the necessary knowledge and shoot from the hip then at best you will be ignored or at worse, experience marketers will call you to task and that will ruin your reputation.

There is nothing wrong in creating a little controversy in these forums. I sometimes acquire some of my best and most successful business ideas from such forum topics which have created some form of arguments within the ranks. But this is entirely different than from being called a fraud.

Comment when you can help someone with a problem otherwise keep num. the forums is all about helping each other with a common goal. If you can provide help then go for it. Good or bad the reputation you create in the forums will be synonymous with you through out your online career and internet marketing.

# Steps to Successful Forum Marketing

You must take the steps after you have registered in a forum, to ensure your success in forum marketing.

A lot of forums have specific threads designated for welcoming new members, where those who have just registered are encouraged to introduce themselves. Your introductory post should basically inform the other members who you are and why you've joined the forum. The reason you give should not be in any way business-oriented. Making a sales-pitch in your first post will definitely be frowned on and may get you banned.

Do not post immediately. Most forums have at least one, large, close-knit community in it. If you suddenly post on a thread where discussions have been carried on for days, you shall be shunned and ignored. Spend some time going through the archives—figure out which topics are perennial favorites and which users are the unofficial leaders. Also observe the particular etiquette of the forum.

Whenever there are questions asked that fall within your area of expertise, answer them to the best of your ability. Back up your answers by providing links to trusted sources and answer follow-up questions promptly. If you prove to be a helpful, efficient member, you're more likely to be paid attention to.

Do not get involved in heated arguments, no matter what you think of the question at hand. Keep reminding yourself that you're there to build up a clientele for your business; stay away from topics like religion, race and politics; don't immediately respond to criticism; make sure the others know when you're joking; leave discussions when they become contentious.

Once you're acknowledged as a respected user, start marketing your products aggressively. Focus on techniques which are likely to prove beneficial to the community as a whole. Offer forum members free samples and/or discounts. However, make sure to obtain the forum moderator's permission before you start a marketing campaign.

If you are hiring a marketing agency to run your campaign for you, research their methods. A lot of agencies use robots to spam forums. While spamming might ensure temporary traffic, in the long run, it'll do you more harm than good. Forum users dislike being flooded with spam and can blacken your reputation if they so wish. So accept the services of only those marketing agencies which will abide by the guidelines set out above.

If at all possible, you should handle your own forum marketing.

# Importance of Forum Based Market places

If you are trying to make a mark in deliberate online marketing, then you should definitely try to utilize the different forums that are available online. To begin with, forums are excellent to get information. Thus, one should frequent these forums to establish one's professional status. This can be done prior to actually starting to sell his/her product or service. Almost every full time marketer is fairly active on the various popular Internet Marketing forums. These serve as excellent medium to achieve brand awareness for one's program.

These further serve the cause of generating several useful contacts. There are a lot of like minded people you can find online and these forums help on to garner networking prospects like never before. Thus the forums are extremely useful social mediums too.

One thing that you should definitely avoid while making use of the forums is to push your product indiscriminately and too frequently to ruin your professional image and lose all trust of fellow users.

There is only one way of garnering the trust of the forum members and holding on to it and this can only be done by offering information or services which are genuinely useful to fellow users along with a proper promotion through signature tags, valuable posts etc. There **might** also be the case when the forum would itself allow for promotion **for example** many forums have marketplaces where you can actually sell your products and services.

A significant part all online marketers efforts should be framed on forum marketing. This can prove to be another very useful equipment to create a brand of one's own. To create a professional brand on a forum is the most efficient kind of promotion. Trust does not come as something easily buyable.

# Forum Based Market Places - It's More Than About Making Quick Money!

Do you have a product or service in the Internet Marketing niche? Perhaps, you have a list building campaign going on or you are selling an E-book on making money online or may be, you have created a software that could prove to be a boon to every Internet Marketer? If you have any such product or services, then forum based market places can be very beneficial in selling and marketing your products or services.

Contrary to the common belief, forum based market places are not at all meant for making some "quick cash". Instead, you should make wise use of these channels to leverage your business. Here, I am not talking about the significance of signature tags but I am focusing on doing some REAL business through the market places of the various forums.

Did you know that some of the popular Internet Marketing forums receive a huge amount of traffic every day? Most of these forums have over 60,000 members who are quite active and regularly visit the forums. Therefore, you can well imagine the potential that the forum market places hold in terms of marketing and generating sales of your products and services.

# Making Your Offer in a Forum Based Marketplace

In an Internet Marketing Forum, all people want to display their superior copywriting skills while composing a special offer. I have listed some tips for you to follow while posting your ad in a forum based market place.

Do not try to overdo the title - if your offer cannot be understood, there are high chances of you losing out. They should be directed to your sales page and the offer copy should be short and pin pointed.

Apart from the headline, actual copy and payment method, you need to ensure the inclusion of the following:

- ✓ **Rights** - What are the rights to be included (use these in the zip file too!)?
- ✓ **Guarantee** - Will you guarantee refund? You better, especially if you are new.
- ✓ **Delivery Terms** - Enlist the timeframes and if they are manual or automatic.
- ✓ **Support** - Does your offer allot any support, installation or other such help?
- ✓ **Upgrades** - To be included or served as extra?
- ✓ **Reviews** - Did you get 5 to 10 members to review your offer before?

Some forums allow the members to post their ads related to their product / service for free. But there are many forums such as warrior forum that asks for a small fee of \$20 to post the ad. Also, price your products or services properly. It is better if you charge a special price at the forums which will definitely attract more customers towards your products or services.

As a matter of fact, in some forums , it is mandatory to charge a discount price compared to what is being charged to the general public. This is because more people to go to buy in some particular forum based marketplaces since they know that they are going to find quality products a low price in those market places.

By asking for a lower price, you will definitely have higher chances of making sales. Remember, I talked of over delivery earlier. A good way to over deliver is you can charge for one product and give 2 quality products to the buyers. Or you can add 5 valuable E-books that will be of great use to your customers or you can also, use the technique , buy 1 and get 1 free technique to attract more customers.

Many experienced marketers create an urgency in their products or services by restricting their number clients or by restricting the period of the offer. So, if you have a product or service, that you are confident of , you too can create exigency by placing certain limitations.

Spend some time in posting your ad and trust me, it's worth every penny or second that you invest. Owing to the large number of traffic flow to the popular Internet Marketing forums, not only

your products or services but also you are going to get some good exposure. That is why I repeatedly kept focusing on the importance of a QUALITY product and the value of a well crafted offer.

Remember, a forum based marketplace has every power to make or break your online business.

# Before You Post Your Offer...

## Spend Time on the Forums

**You can utilize forums daily in various ways:**

- You can just go over several fresh posts to find out "what's new" - thus you keep tab of every possible new thread of information.
- You could frame particular questions for others to answer. Thus several opinions can be obtained.
- You might be immensely wise and help others by answering the plethora of questions that everybody has.
- You might not be immensely knowledgeable and yet want to convey your views regarding something or the other.
- There is the obvious advantage of utilizing the "search" function of the forums to get to know about a particular side of things in the industry.

Remember, people are usually asking for solutions and one of the best places where people turn to for getting answers to their queries is forums. Therefore, if you carefully take a look at the discussions and threads in the forums, I am sure you will get a lot of ideas about what kind of products are in demand currently.

Based on the forum discussions, you can create a product and pre launch it in the forum market places to test the waters and then finally do the main launch.

Through the forum market place offer, you can not only test the product but also do the improvements according to the buyer's feedback and finally launch the main product that will definitely have bigger chances of sure shot success.

Spending time in the forum is of course a very useful way to furnish information about the market. You can always get to unveil specific aspects which keyword research tools cannot. Take this as a definite assurance that these forums are mostly used as bitching devices.

Lurking around the forms provide some valuable customer information and thus it is necessary spend time on the forums concerned, before you finally launch your offer.

# Why Should Post an Offer in a Forum Market Place?

## Price testing

A forum based market place offer can be a great way to do price testing before the main launch of your product.

For example, suppose you are selling a product for \$ 10 in a forum market place and you you sell about 500 copies of it, which means you get a positive response from your offer. Now what you can do is, you can raise the price of your product to \$25 and bump the offer and see what kind of response you get.

Sometimes you find that you sell half as much product at \$25 as you do at \$10, but guess what happens if you do that math - you still have more profits! Here's an additional advantage - the more someone pays for your product, the less likely you're going to issuing refunds, and the less likely you're going to have customer service issues.

First of all, because you have more of a margin to play with, you have more resources to devote to customer service. Plus, a lot of people will make an impulse \$10 purchase knowing darn well they can get a quick refund. But few people are going to make an impulse purchase at a comparatively higher cost.

Since, it is very important to set the right price of a product , therefore a forum based market place offer can actually be effective in helping you price your product suitably, creating a balance between your target audience's attitude along with your profit margin.

# To Develop Products and Improve on Them

There are ways to go about this.

First there could be a release of the first version of the product. There would be a consumer feedback on this which could be evaluated. There could be further versions and the same processes repeated for them till semi perfection. There are always newer things and technologies to incorporate.

The best instance of product development would be the automotive industry. Car designs have to go through constant updating to suit the needs of the market. There are new models every year. This is done keeping the market in mind. You have to do the same.

This would imply that the similar features may not all come up at the same time but takes considerable time. There is obviously an improved product in mind but attempts at getting at it will have to be slow and steady. The idea is to create demand and suit the model accordingly. The revenue from earlier models can be utilized to create improvements.

Enterprises like Microsoft evolving new products every year they basically improve on their earlier ones. There is new hardware to which they suit their software every year. This could be the same idea in use for other products like information products.

Like let's say something like an E-book. The information with each issue should provide a sense of betterment for the consumers. This revision can be done every six months or something. Information sought through these devices has to be regularly updated to furnish new consumer interest.

# Tips about Your Forum Based Market Place Offer

To run your first forum based market place offer, leave some profit margin for paying for your next product. This process if repeated several times can keep your enterprise running continuously. We can safely assume here that with these tips your first offer went really well. The product could then be promoted on a higher scale elsewhere. You also might get a higher price for it.

Try and keep in touch with the initial customers even if you are done with them. You should always be able to answer their queries in particular. These people are now your consumers and they have to be revisited again and again.

Create a self evaluation scheme for your offer's performance. And find out what went wrong and where you can better things or what strategy helps more or how and where and why the criticism is coming from. Improvement can be the only concern.

The delivery quality and the value and the worth should be your primary concern. You should be able to associate your Offer with audio, video, resale rights and so on.

Find a suitable partner and find common interests and try and expand. You can always correct things and repeat. The inertia shouldn't be lost. Also remember to carry on with your forum considerations even when you have finished with developing some financial stability. Always be ready to go big.

## Management of Your Offer

It is hardly believable to see the extents that people go to in order get their offer noticed. There are "Sneaky" little tricks to be seen, such as asking people to post to their offer, in lieu of some bonus products.

You could actually steer clear of the "Dark Side" and not take to trick stunts to garner attention to your offer. You could obviously answer questions which are asked and definitely extend thanks to people from time to time.

Don't end up making a huge lot of stupid posts to inflate your post count. This way you lose out on sales and people are easily turned off by such tricks as soon as they find out about it and finding out is not very difficult. Just make very good products which sell well and you have done the trick.

# How Can You Leverage Your Business with a Forum Based Market Place Offer?

## #1 - Thank Your Buyers

This is quite obvious, right? Yet the problem is that only one in four Forum Market place sellers actually do this.

How problematic can this be? Just send them a thank you note as soon as they have bought the product. This cannot be that tough. And there are subsequent chances to this working for you later. To take a further step, you could post them handwritten cards saying thank you. You could perhaps utilize a service like SenditCards.com

## #2 - Build Your List

There are several ways of doing this anyway. These are usually legal too. For example, the contact details could be furnished from payment receipts and added to your list. This is legal but not the best way to go about list building.

You could post a link to a squeeze page that might consist of an opt-in form. Through that page, you could invite the buyers to sign up. Yet this is again not the most effective method.

You could give away a free report and tell your customers about the same and convince them that it is going to be great for them if they sign up to your opt-in list and receive the free report as well periodic updates. This is legal as well as one of the most effective methods.

By this method of list building, the subscribers will actually be looking forward to your emails. They will be definitely attracted by your promise of good quality and valuable content. So make sure, you keep your promises though.

## #3 - Construct your Database Carefully

If a complicated situation is beyond you to handle, you could perhaps make use of a simple Excel file to create a record of data of all sorts such as the client' name, contact details, date of ordering, product or service nomenclature, the price and other useful data.

Why would you need to do this?

This is due to the fact that you want to trace the kind and the number of people who are your consumers along with what you had to sell. You also might want to do this because you need to know what more you can do to make them purchase from you again and what should you offer and at what price, the next time.

There is also a general need to find more about the clients and their usefulness to your business. This will further allow you to locate the best kind of client to sell your product to and this could be extremely useful.

## **#4 - Make an Offer with your Upsell**

Many marketers fail to grasp the fact that the 'front-end' sale is most often the most miniscule profit center. The main cash really arrives via the back door which is the 'back end' sales you manage. Do not ever wait too long. It could prove to be a huge mistake. When could you possibly make the buyer a second 'follow up' offer? The right answer would be as soon as you want to and that could be right now.

Yes, right after the sale (or even prior to that). Do this as fast as you can, in fact. This is because you need to get a hang of the buyers' moods and the mode. The very idea of going beyond the customary research on products and making a purchase is cause for hope for you. Try and use this phase the buyer is going through to pick up something else to sell to him.

This of course cannot be done like you are trying to force something on him or her. There should be considerable panache in the upsell product offer in question. This approach will help you to garner greater sales and greater trust from the consumers in question.

## **#5 - Please Follow up**

This obviously does not imply go ahead and pursue all your consumers to buy. This merely means that you should be in regular touch with them. Find out about how the product is working or take their feedback in the form of suggestions or you could even ask them, if they need any help. Point out things on the product that they could have just slipped.

## **#6 - Bridge Your Way**

There are two key things to a relation- takes time and involvement. You need to possess both in order to be successful. Only then can you hope to make a difference. There should be a certainty of investment in your business and clients. There are new and exciting growth prospects you might want to tell your customers about.

Serve them with updates and good advice.

This is often done with the help of newsletters/ezine, or often by starting a blog or by forming a customer-only forum. There could be teleseminars, live events and group networking events of the sort of webinars or group coaching intervals by which this can be done.

## **#7 – Testimonials**

The testimonials arrive only when consumers are extremely satisfied with your product. The first group of clients can therefore be taken care of specially and with due care. The marketing budget can come in useful for this.

In such a world that we inhabit, advertisement is very effective when it spreads by the word of mouth. There cannot be a fixed price for this. Loyal clients and happy ones too are thus to be taken care of.

## **#8 - Consolidate your Affiliate Army**

The greatest advantage of being a part of forums is that the buyers are marketers themselves. They are themselves people who deal in niche products. If you manage to convince them of your product and your efficacy they will go on to take your efforts to greater levels of involvement.

They will themselves recommend you to greater target customer groups. You share a commission with them. The success of an offer is the mainstay of the affiliate army. You need to manage it well basically.

## **#9 - Locate Joint Venture Partners**

You will find within your list of customers potential JV partners. You can go on to inquire them straight away or find familiar names on the consumer list. You have made your first contact and go on to have JV partners if you manage to create a good impression with your product.

## **#10 - Get a Big Launch**

There is certain inertia of movement which seemed to have arisen from your offer and now there is greater roll out that you are prepared to make. You also have your testimonials right. You have affiliates for publicity and JV partners to make that big launch that you have always hoped to get.

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