

Part 1 – The Game of Marketing

Introduction to The Fast Track to More Clients

When we think of marketing, we usually imagine things like branding, advertising, distribution channels, market segmentation and packaging. Some of these concepts apply to professional service business marketing, but the process is really quite different. The difference is in relationships. In product marketing the relationship is with a thing. In professional service business marketing, the relationship is with a person. Big difference!

Relationships with things are much less complex than relationships with people. I have a relationship with products such as Diet Coke, Suave Shampoo, Gillette Razors and Macintosh computers, amongst others. But I have a very different relationship with my dentist, my business coach and my financial planner. What they offer is more complex and more expensive than almost any day-to-day product I consume.

Even with products, it takes a certain marketing effort to get me to give that product a try. It might be an advertisement, a store display or a recommendation from a friend. But buying professional services is much scarier. You are putting yourself into the hands of someone who knows more than you do; how their service actually works is often a mystery. They provide a service, offer advice, implement projects and then charge shockingly high fees.

As a result, most people end up hiring a professional service provider as a result of a recommendation from a friend or close associate. But when you are new to your profession or trying to grow your

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client base, referrals often don't come in quickly enough. And when you turn to marketing to attract clients more quickly, it becomes all too obvious that most marketing approaches are not appropriate for professional service businesses. Not only that, there are so many things you could do, it can be confusing where to start and where to invest the time and money wisely to get a good return for your marketing efforts.

What this program is about is creating a breakthrough in your marketing. And what I mean by a "breakthrough" is taking your business to a whole new level, a level that many of you can't even imagine.

A breakthrough is not necessarily about doing to begin with, because in this program you'll be learning things and understanding things, but my promise to you is that you'll have a breakthrough in your ability to attract clients, and that means you'll have insights, ideas, and realizations that will make it such that when you go back to your business, in many areas, it will never be the same.

When people ask you, "What do you do?" you'll never be able to answer in the same way, or at least you'll realize how you answer now is absolutely useless. You'll go, "Oh, I realize, I just absolutely didn't do what Robert said." At least that's an opening to try to change it. You'll learn these kind of distinctions in this program.

You'll have breakthroughs in one or more of these seven areas. And the seven areas, or seven principles of this program are:

Number one, the game of marketing. You'll see marketing as a game

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that you can play to win that actually has rules and structures that work. Virtually nobody sees marketing as a game. Nobody's playing it as a game. It's no wonder marketing is a struggle. So, you're going to learn the game of marketing.

Number two, the mindset of marketing. You're going to switch the whole way that you look at marketing, think about marketing and feel about marketing. And this is all in the first two sessions of the program.

Number three, the language of marketing. The language of marketing is how you speak about what you do, so you get attention and interest. You know, sometimes when you talk about what you do, people could care less. Have you ever noticed that? Well, you're going to learn the language, the actual language so that when you speak about your business, more people will pay attention. In this part, you'll also create a unique marketing message for your business.

Number five, marketing and selling conversations. You'll learn what to say, how to say it and when to say it when communicating with a prospect of your services that will move them closer to being a client.

Number five, marketing materials. You'll have a formula for creating written marketing materials that you'll be able to apply to anything you ever write, ever in your business again. You'll have a formula. Do you have a formula now? I didn't think so! Just in understanding that you'll have a breakthrough.

Number six, marketing strategies. We're going to have you look at and

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understand how to choose marketing strategies that will actually work for you based on the Marketing Ball model or the game of marketing.

Number seven, marketing action plans. And finally, you'll learn a planning process: A very simple but powerful planning process that will show you and help you step-by-step to plan and implement your marketing.

So, if you got one or two or three of those do you think you'd have a breakthrough? The way to engage with this program is with the intention to have a breakthrough (or many breakthroughs). In most programs we're just looking for a few tips, but I don't think that's good enough. Sure, you'll get some tips along the way, but the program is about understanding these seven principles very, very deeply and then applying them to your business.

The Fast Track Workbook

Let me tell you a little bit about how your workbook is organized.

There's a lot of written material and most of this written material you can also find in this manual. But the most important thing about the Workbook is the exercises. Once you've read this material and listened to the audio tutorial, open your workbook and do the exercises.

I'm going to do my best not to give you information overload. Each of the ideas in each of the sections is extraordinarily simple. So, I just want you to grasp that for yourself. Not the theory, but the actual practice for yourself. That's what you'll get from the program.

I use a model called Marketing Ball and I'll demonstrate why this model

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is the key to your marketing success as a professional service business. Once you understand this model, many of the mysteries of marketing will disappear forever. This model is the foundation for the complete Fast Track to More Clients Program, which consists of seven key marketing principles. Marketing Ball lays a foundation for all the other six marketing principles and I'll keep referring to the Marketing Ball Model throughout the program.

Where the Marketing Ball Model came from

Many years ago I was meeting with a client trying to figure out his marketing, and we were talking about a particular prospect he was attempting to turn into a client. As usual, I was drawing diagrams on a piece of paper as I worked with him. The diagram was a baseball diamond.

At one point I said, "Well, now you've got this person to first base..." Then he asked, "What's first base?" (Of course, I was just making this up as I went along. That's how it is sometimes as a consultant or coach!)

And I answered, "Well, first base is where you've gotten his attention and interest." This is where you've communicated to him in such a way that he's interested in what you have to offer and he wants to know more.

"OK," he replied, "Then what is second base and how do I get him there?" After a little head scratching, I said, "Second base is where you have an appointment with your prospect. This is where he's willing to explore working with you. But before you get to second base, you need to develop more of a relationship, building trust and credibility."

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Over the following months and years I worked at tweaking this Marketing Ball model until I arrived at what I think is the most accurate model or process of how prospects ultimately turn into clients. I've taught it to thousands in workshops and other programs and tested it out with dozens of clients who have applied it to their businesses with great success.

In this first section of the Fast Track to More Clients we'll go deeply into the Marketing Ball Model and you'll learn exactly how to apply it to your business as well. This model works particularly well for professional service businesses such as consultants, coaches, trainers, speakers, financial, employment, and legal professionals. It's the perfect model for any business owner who wants to attract "clients" as opposed to customers. It can be used with one-person businesses, larger professional firms, and in some cases, large corporations who are offering a complex and expensive service to other businesses.

We'll start by understanding the fundamentals of the Marketing Ball Model. There are two levels to grasp. The first level is the macro level, the big picture, and the next level is the micro level, the detailed picture. You might even say there's the micro-micro level. That is, at each step of the diagram there are even more subtle steps and distinctions. The Marketing Ball Model is powerful, because once you understand it you can use it to solve virtually any marketing challenge. By studying the model and where your prospects are on the model you can know what to do next to move them around the Marketing Ball until they become a paying client.

You might say it's the Rosetta Stone of professional service business marketing.

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Nevertheless, a model, process or system is only as good as the application. The model will not do your marketing for you. It will only give you the structure and the direction. Just as with baseball, the game that Marketing Ball is based on, it takes talent, knowledge, skills and practice to become a champion. If you master Marketing Ball, you will get to play in the big leagues by dramatically increasing your business.

The good news is that the basics of Marketing Ball are not complex.

Any intelligent professional can learn to play this game to attract more clients on a consistent basis. Even if you make mistakes along the way (and you will), you'll get better the more you play. After awhile, the game of Marketing Ball will become second nature to you. Attracting new clients will no longer be a mystery or a struggle. It will be fun because, you'll know how to both play and win.

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The Macro Game of Marketing Ball

On the Marketing Ball diagram (Pg 8 above) you see what looks like a baseball diamond. The object of the game is to move a prospect around the bases until you have “scored” a new client. To do this successfully, you need to stay on the baselines and touch each of the bases as you go. You cannot skip bases. There are no shortcuts. However, you can often go around the bases very quickly. It may take a matter of hours to convert a prospect into a client. Or it may take months or years. As we’ll see, it depends on the service you’re selling, the market conditions, how well the prospect is qualified and how knowledgeable and skillful you are at playing the Marketing Ball game.

Some of these variables you have control over; some you don’t. One of the most important variables in Marketing Ball is what you communicate to your prospects about your services. This is at the heart of marketing and we’ll explore this in depth in Part Three.

The first marketing work you need to do, even before you step up to home plate to connect with a prospect, is to create a unique marketing message. Your marketing message consists of four simple but powerful elements:

- 1. Your ideal target clients.** You must define who the best clients are for your services.
- 2. The clients’, problems, issues or challenges.** Why do your clients need your services in the first place?
- 3. Your promised outcomes.** What exactly will your clients get if they

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retain your services? How will they benefit?

4. Stories or proof. Who has used your services and what results did they get? Stories create trust and credibility.

This message is the foundation of your marketing. And when you have that clearly articulated, then you have the right to step up to home plate and start to play the game.

We won't work on this message now. That will come in Part Three. Just know that this is the first step in Playing Marketing Ball. It's illustrated in the rectangular box beneath home base - "Target – Issue - Outcome - Story." You might say this is the "locker room" where you work on your message and your marketing strategies before you go out on the field and play Marketing Ball.

First Base

Once you have your marketing message, you step up to home plate.

Your first big aim or objective is to get to first base. First base is when you have the attention and interest of a prospect. Write that down on the diagram by first base: "Get the attention and interest of the prospect." You get to first base by communicating your marketing message. You might communicate it verbally, one-to-one with another person. You might also communicate it through the home page of your web site or the title of an article or any other marketing materials.

You know you're on first base if the prospect responds in some way.

The generic response you're looking for is: "Tell me more." Or even better,

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“That’s for me, tell me more!”

Second Base

Once you are on first base, the objective is to move to second base.

Second base is when the prospect is ready to explore working with you. So you might write, "Ready to explore working with you," there at second base on the diagram. You'll also notice in the diagram that you have “marketing process” on the right and the “selling process on the left.” Second base is where the marketing process ends and the selling process starts.

Again, you only know you’re on second base by what the prospect does. If they want to meet with you to find out if your service can help them, you are solidly on second base. Just a meeting, as we’ll discover later, is not necessarily being on second base.

Third Base

Going from second to third base is the selling process. Third base is where a prospect is ready to buy your services. You might say that a prospect is “sold conceptually” once they are on third base. They say they like what they hear and that they want to work with you. They might even say they are ready to start working with you. All of this is good. But you still don’t have a client until they are on fourth base or back to home.

Fourth Base (Home)

Fourth base is when a prospect has put their money where their

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mouth is. They have started to work with you and they have paid your fee (and the check has cleared the bank). Only when you've gotten a prospect to fourth base can you say that your marketing and selling efforts have been successful.

Errors

An error in baseball is when you miss catching the ball, or fail to touch a base as you run around the field. If you make an error in baseball, it can affect the outcome of the game. The same is true in Marketing Ball.

There are plenty of opportunities to make errors. The most common error in Marketing Ball is skipping bases. The other big error is thinking you have a sale when you have merely gotten to first, second or third base. As in baseball, it only counts when you get all the way around the bases and score a run. So to win in Marketing Ball, you need to know where you are in the game at all times and know what you need to do next to ultimately score a new client.

Prospects can sometimes go around the bases with little effort on our part. This often happens if they come to us a result of strong referral. As we say, they are "pre-sold." But more often than not, you need to make focused efforts at each stage of the Marketing Ball Game. I've heard many a professional think they had gotten the client, just because they had set up an appointment with a prospect.

Fooling yourself into thinking you have a client and then not

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continuing to make the required effort to win that client is called “dropping the ball.” And, as we’ll see throughout this program, there are many opportunities to do this! By learning and ultimately mastering the Marketing Ball Game, you’ll drop the ball a whole less often.

The Dugout

Now, a couple more things in the Marketing Ball diagram. Once you've gone around the bases and scored a run, and secured a client, then you deliver the services to the client. You might call this the dugout (lower left of the diagram). We often don't think of delivering our services as part of marketing. But if you really think about it, it's one of the most important aspects of marketing. Providing great service results in great word-of-mouth. And word-of-mouth is the life-blood of any business. I don't care how great all your other marketing efforts are. With great marketing and poor service, you will just kill your business faster.

Referrals

Ultimately, great service and the subsequent word-of-mouth results in referrals to your business (see circle on lower right of diagram).

Referrals can substitute for all the marketing efforts between home and first base. In other words, a referral can get you strongly on first base where you have the attention and interest of a prospect who wants to know more about your services. If the referral is strong, it often paves the way to second, third and home.

Now here's the interesting thing. Do you know how many people get the

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majority of their business through referrals and word of mouth? From talking to a whole lot of businesses, I figure it's about 80% to 90%. But it's extraordinarily rare that anyone has an actual marketing strategy or plan to generate referrals. They just happen. You'll learn later in Part Six how you can intentionally create a referral plan that even brings in more clients.

Your Current Marketing Game Plan

I've just outlined the basic rules of marketing ball. You take a prospect through a step-by-step process. You communicate the value of your services and get the prospect onto first base by getting their attention. Then you communicate more value and get the prospect onto second base where they are ready to explore working with you. Then you learn more about the needs of your prospect and communicate even more value (in the selling process) until they are ready to buy. Finally, you come to an agreement on the value they will get and consummate the sale.

But is that how your marketing process works? Yes, when it works, but most of the time it doesn't. Let's return to the baseball analogy. There are four primary activities in baseball: You throw the ball, you catch the ball, you hit the ball and you run.

Now imagine a baseball team that can do those four things very well. They can throw, catch, hit and run. But they know nothing about baseball, nothing about the rules or the structure of the game. What is that baseball game going to look like? Basically like chaos.

It will look like your current business looks like. You know some of the

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basics. You can talk to people, give a presentation, send out an email, and perhaps write an article. But if you engage in these activities randomly, there is no real game, no predictable process for attracting clients. As a result, business will come to you randomly.

The Prayer Marketing Strategy

Here is the marketing plan for most professional service businesses:

"I'll do the best job I possibly can and then I'll go home every night and pray for referrals." Is that your marketing plan? If so, I hope you're beginning to see that by playing Marketing Ball, prayer doesn't need to be a cornerstone of your marketing. It would be much more effective to pray to master Marketing Ball!

With Marketing Ball, you'll finally have a proven approach to attract all the clients you want. You can play this game and win over and over again. You can create marketing campaigns and strategies that bring you many, many clients and earn you hundreds of thousands of dollars in a short period of time if you learn how to play this game.

Marketing Ball – The Micro Game – or play between the bases

Up to this point we really haven't explained how to play Marketing Ball, just what the bases are. And knowing which base you're on and which base you need to head for next are very important. Next you need to know what do between the bases. These are the actual marketing activities that get you on base. Let me give you an overview of these activities.

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Home to First – Stranger to Affiliation to Attention

Initially all your prospects are **strangers**. You don't know them and they don't know you. Before you start marketing to prospects it's useful if you have some **affiliation** or connection with them. Then you need to communicate to these affiliates in such a way that you get their **attention** and interest. Now you're on first base.

First to Second – Familiarity to Information to Experience

Once you have some degree of attention, you build **familiarity**. This is where prospects begin to know, like, and trust you. At this point some may want more **information** about your business and services. Then those who are more engaged will often seek a more in-depth **experience** of your services. That can take some prospects to second base where they are ready to explore working with you.

Second to Third – Challenges to Outcome to Presentation

This is where the sales process starts - with understanding of your prospects' situation and what their current **challenges** are. From there, you need to determine their goals – the **outcomes** they really want to accomplish. Then the **presentation** of your services demonstrates how you can help the prospect get from where they are to where they want to be. This can get prospects to third base where they're ready to buy.

Third to Home – Next Steps to Agreement to Payment

The final stage of marketing ball is closing and negotiation. You need to agree on **next steps** – what you will do and what the prospect will do as well. In many cases, a signed **agreement**, proposal or contract is necessary. Then it's a matter of arranging for and receiving **payment**. If

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these steps are not executed thoroughly, the sale may be lost. If they are completed, you now have a new client.

In this program I'll be going through all of these steps in great detail. It is not enough to know what the steps are; it's essential to know how to do them and to build the skills that will enable you to implement them successfully every single time you engage with a prospect.

Where we'll start is by clearly defining each of the steps between the bases.

Home to First – Strangers to Affiliation to Attention

Strangers

Everybody that was ever a client of yours at one point was a stranger. They didn't know anything about you. And you didn't know anything about them. What you may have discovered is that it's hard, sometimes nearly impossible to get the attention of strangers. You're an unknown quantity. Why should they trust you or give you time for an appointment? This is why cold calling is so difficult. The rejection rate is very high. It's usually a waste of time and energy marketing to strangers.

Some people say, "Just get the appointment." In other words, go from stranger to appointment. Just make that call and force your way in. Have you ever done that, met with a stranger where you didn't know much about their business and they didn't know much, if anything about your or your services?

That isn't a lot of fun! I've had appointments where I was sitting there,

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the guy's answering the phone, taking notes, looking up every once in a while and I'm trying to present to him. That's what happens when you go from stranger to appointment. You want to avoid that. It's painful and it's not productive. It's not good marketing and it certainly isn't marketing ball. You've skipped first base and a whole lot of necessary steps in between.

Here's the good news: you never have to market to strangers. Forget about it and put it out of your mind entirely. Instead, you market to prospects you have an affiliation with.

Affiliation

An affiliation is any connection you have between another and yourself. It's easier to market to those whom you're affiliated with because of that connection. There's already a degree of trust.

Affiliations are not rare, they're common; affiliations are everywhere. In business, the most common affiliations are with business groups, associations or organizations. From chambers of commerce to service clubs such as Rotary, to professional trade associations, these groups are often the key to making connections. If you belong, you have an affiliation so that you're not a stranger anymore.

There are also many powerful affiliations outside the business arena that can ultimately lead to new business. Alumni groups, your church or temple, relatives, parent activities, social clubs and personal growth groups. If you belong, you're no longer a stranger.

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Attention

Then, once you have affiliation, you can get someone's attention. If

I'm at a networking event, we're in an affiliated event. Everyone is connected through their chamber membership for instance. I can come up to someone and say, "Hi, I'm Robert Middleton. What do you do?" We can have a conversation. And when they ask what you do, you can say something that might get their attention and interest.

In fact, if there's an affiliation we can do all sorts of things to get

attention. We could even call the members of our chamber and introduce ourselves. We could send a letter and follow up and get appointments relatively easy. These are not cold calls anymore. It's the affiliation that makes all the difference. This is what I did years ago when I joined the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. I contacted other members, set up appointments and got several new clients.

Right now we're not going to go into the details of what to say to get

attention. We're not going to discuss all the marketing strategies you could implement at this point. The thing to understand here is the power of affiliation. One minute you have no connection to the members of your local chamber of commerce. Then you go into their office, fill out a membership application and pay your fee, and instantly you are affiliated with several hundreds of other business owners, several of them potential clients.

In Part Three we'll go into great detail about how to develop your

marketing message to get attention. But right now, let's look a little closer at first base. What exactly does it mean to get onto first base? Why is it so important and what's your next marketing step once you're on first

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base?

First Base

When you're on first base, you have the attention and interest of a prospect. It may not be wild interest; mild interest is enough. This is the beginning of a marketing conversation. A marketing conversation is where people exchange information about each other's business. At this point this person may or may not be a qualified prospect for your services (or visa versa). The degree of mutual interest will determine how fast things develop from there. One way to think of it is the beginning of a relationship. And the next natural step from attention is familiarity.

Attention and interest are also developed in ways other than personal connections. For instance, a client of yours mentions your services and points them toward your web site. The affiliation is the relationship this person has with your client. When they look at your web site (if the web site is designed well and contains attention-getting messages), they become interested and get to first base that way. As they explore more, familiarity develops.

First to Second – Familiarity to Information to Experience

Familiarity

Once someone is on first base, then you start to move toward second base. The first step after first base is Familiarity. This is where you get to know more about your prospects and they get to know more about you. It's often said that until a prospect knows, likes and trusts you, you are unlikely to do business with them. Ultimately it's about building

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relationships.

Familiarity is built through a series of connections, meetings and conversations. I call these “marketing conversations.” You show up at chamber meetings; have lunch or coffee with these connections; get to know them in more depth; send them hand-written notes, etc. In the virtual world you develop familiarity through discussion groups, email newsletters, and other online interactions.

You follow the "Woody Allen" rule. You know the Woody Allen rule? “Eighty percent of success is just showing up.” And if you belong to the Chamber of Commerce and you get on their roster but you don't show up to meetings, you're not going to get a lot of results. If you join Facebook and never look at it again it's not going to do you much good. So, it's that simple act of showing up that creates the familiarity more than anything else.

Information

The next step between first and second base is Information. Once someone has some familiarity with you and they have some interest, the next thing they want is some Information. They want information about what you do and how you work and the kind of results you've produced and the problems that you've solved. This is where the marketing currency or marketing information comes in, so that you can provide the information they want after they show interest.

What kind of information can you provide? A web site is the most common nowadays (although most web sites don't contain enough solid information). Brochures, one-pagers and articles are also good. Articles are

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amongst the best kinds of information pieces you can offer to a prospect. Everyone should have an article or two that conveys your expertise without being too “salesey.” I’ve included some good examples of articles under Part Five of the program.

Have you ever connected with someone, gotten their attention, and interest but you didn't have more information to give them? If you don't have the information for the prospect when they are showing interest, the game of Marketing Ball stops. If your prospect says, “I'd like to know more about your business, do you have some information?” and you say, “Sorry, I have nothing to give you,” it's game over!

When we get to Part Five of the program, we'll explore in depth the kind of information you need to provide to your prospect to move them towards second base.

If someone does not have information about you, not only are they not likely to work with you, they are not likely to pass your name on to someone else. Would you take the “million-dollar bet”? If I were to contact 20 of your business associates and I asked them to tell me about your business, would they all say pretty much the same thing? Would you bet a million dollars they would? a thousand dollars? a hundred? I didn't think so. And it's because even those people who know you, and are familiar with you, are not necessarily fully educated about what you do and how you help your clients.

There are infinite chances and opportunities to educate your prospects about your business. My thing has been educate, educate,

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educate. Emails, email newsletters or hard-copy newsletters, articles, information on the website, recordings, video, etc. etc. Educating people, not trying to sell them yet. Moving them slowly along the marketing ball process. So by the time they want to take the next step, they really know what you're about.

Experience

The final stage between first and second base is Experience. You have the attention of the prospect, you've developed some degree of familiarity and provided information; so what else do you need? Some people want more than that. They want, a sample or an experience of you before they take the next step to meet with you and explore working with you. That's being on second base.

What experiences can we provide for prospects? Case studies, testimonials, or samples of your services, in many cases, all go beyond information. They give more of a taste or sample of what it would be like to work with you. But there's no more powerful way to offer an experience than by giving a presentation, which includes talks, introductory workshops and trainings, and teleclasses. For most clients, I recommend using presentations as a key component of their marketing plan.

A client I worked with years ago, was offering a certain business service. She had good connections, so she had lots of familiarity, and she met with prospects and talked about her services and gave them information. Everyone was interested. "This is great. We haven't seen anything like this before. We love it! I hope we can hire you someday." But what happened? Nothing! They kept her information but no work emerged

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from her marketing efforts.

Now, you could count on this person to follow up. She was a good follow-upper. But you can follow up forever and ever and, in many cases if you haven't given them a taste, they still won't buy. So I recommended, "Why don't you offer to do some complimentary, in-house workshops?" She said, "What a great idea!"

She did that and every time she did, she got a new client. She discovered that giving prospects a taste, an experience was the key.

Now sampling, or giving a taste is something that's been done in marketing forever, especially with products. Do you ever go to Costco? I love Costco on Saturdays. You walk down the aisle and here's someone who's got little sausages and here we've got some kind of a drink and there we've got pancakes. I mean you can have a whole meal just sampling all this stuff. Sometimes the person offering the food talks up the product: "Oh this is really good. It's made out of whole wheat and it's organic, etc." You taste it and go, "This is fantastic," and you buy it.

The chances of you buying a new product without sampling are very low. Sampling is an extraordinarily powerful, yet simple, process. The people who are shopping in Costco, are they affiliated? They're members; of course they're affiliated. Are they already familiar? Sure, they go to Costco all the time. But they don't yet have information or experience about particular products, and that's why Costco offers samples.

This is what you need to do in your business as well. The prospects

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who are already noticing your business, giving you attention, building familiarity, receiving information; those are the ones you offer experiences to. It's an amazingly effective tool to get prospects to second base.

Playing the Marketing Ball Game

Let's look a little closer at how the Marketing Ball game works between home and second base. You meet someone, say at a meeting of your professional organization that you both belong to. You talk about what you do, and your marketing messages triggers some attention and interest. Over the course of a few months you meet this person at chapter meetings, have more conversations and get to know them better. In the process, you send them an article and add their name to your email list (with their permission). You hold introductory workshops a few times a year and send an invite to this person, who attends. After the workshop you connect and you arrange for a time to meet to discuss how you could help them with their business. And that takes the prospect from home to second.

Online it works the same but looks somewhat different. For instance, I join Facebook and someone looks at my profile. That gets their initial attention (because I wrote a good profile), so they click onto my website where it tells them more. And as they browse my web site, they are growing their familiarity with me and my business. Then they feel comfortable enough to sign up for my eZine or email newsletter and that builds more familiarity, while providing them information. Later on, I offer a teleclass, which they attend. They get a deeper experience of my work and ultimately we connect, and they land on second base. This all happens without meeting the prospect face-to-face. This is where my business has evolved to now.

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But it's all still following the steps of Marketing Ball.

Of course, the exact steps of this process are never the same for every prospect. Nevertheless, you always go through some version of Affiliation, Attention, Familiarity, Information and Experience. Sometimes it takes a long time, other times it happens relatively quickly. But when you follow this process, when you think of it as a game, you take very intentional actions to keep the game moving; you engage your prospect in conversations, you provide information when the interest is there and you offer samples of your services to those who want explore further.

The F.U. Gap

There's one little and very important piece that is missing, however.

And by missing this step you can lose a whole lot of business. I call it the F.U. Gap. That's the Follow-Up Gap. The follow-up gap is the step you take to reach out once you have provided some information or an experience. For instance, if you offer an article, you should follow up to see what their reaction was to it or if they have any questions. After a teleclass you should follow up to see if they are ready for a second-base conversation.

In Part Four we'll go into more details on how to follow-up effectively and what to say to keep the Marketing Ball game moving forward. Those who neglect to follow up when it's needed are literally "dropping the ball" and will lose a lot of business because of it. Unfortunately we often wait for the prospect to follow up. We reason, "If they are interested, they would call me." But it doesn't work like that. It's the job of the service provider to follow up. If the prospect follows up, it's a nice bonus. But if you wait for those calls, you may wait for a very long time!

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If you play the game of marketing ball according to these steps I've outlined, you'll end up getting a lot more prospects to second base. And you'll also turn a lot more of those prospects into clients. Your prospects will be ready for the selling conversation – they already know, like and trust you, have lots of information about your services and even have a taste or an experience of what you do. This works a whole lot better than trying to get people into selling conversations with none of that relationship building.

Here are a few common questions about Marketing Ball:

Q. What happens when you get a call from a referral or someone who just heard about you and immediately wants to set up an appointment with you? Should you do that?

A. The answer is no. This person may be solidly on first base, but they have not yet passed through Familiarity, Information or Experience. So you want to slow things down a bit, find out more about them, and tell them something about your services. Perhaps even send them an article. This whole process is also called "qualifying." You're trying to learn if they are qualified to be a prospect and if you are qualified to help them. Now this process might go more quickly when you get a call like that, but don't jump immediately into an appointment.

Think of yourself as a doctor. I come into a doctor and say, "Hi, I need an operation on my lungs. Can I have it today? Here's a hundred thousand dollars." He doesn't put you in the operating room and start operating in the next ten minutes. He says, "Well, we've got to do an x-ray. We've got to find out a little bit more." The patient says, "No, I want to buy that operation. I

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hear they're on special this week." No, that's not what a professional will do. You're a professional.

Q. What if someone calls me and the first question they ask is "What's your fee?"

A. Same answer. You need to slow things down. You have no obligation at this point to discuss your fees. You have no idea what they need, if they are qualified or even if you want to work with them yet. The best answer is, "Our fees really depend on the service we offer. We offer different services depending on the needs of our clients. So before we discuss fees, I need to know more about what you're looking for and the results you want. Then I'll be happy to discuss fees."

Q. How fast does it take to go from home to second?

A. It depends. It can be pretty quick and it can take a long time, really depending on their needs, the previous relationship, the depth of the relationship, your kind of services, and the scope of your services. It's easier to sell one-on-one coaching services than it is to sell a whole change initiative in a company. That's a longer selling and marketing cycle.

Q. What is the key to playing Marketing Ball to Win?

A. There are always two things to ask with Marketing Ball. The first is, "Where is your client or prospect now on the Marketing Ball diagram?" For instance, you might want to sell a new service to existing clients. Where are they on the Marketing Ball diagram right now? They would already be at

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familiarity. They know, like and trust you already. So you can skip that stage and you can just work at getting their attention for this new service and providing information about it, and perhaps an experience as well.

The second thing to ask is, “How do I get them to the next step in the game?” All you need to do is look at the next step. Once you have their attention, the next step is familiarity. So what’s my strategy to build that familiarity? Or I’ve gotten them to experience and the next step is a follow-up. How am I effectively going to do that follow-up?

Notice that it’s just like baseball. The aim of baseball is to score runs, and the aim of Marketing Ball is to get new clients. In both games you have to go one base at a time. You can’t skip bases. And so you’re always focused on two things: What base is the prospect on now and how do I get them to next base? If you play marketing ball that way, you will attract clients more easily than you ever have before.

Q. What’s the minimum I have to have in place to actually play marketing ball effectively?

A. You need seven things. We’ve covered the first, the rules and the structure of the Marketing Ball game. You also need the following if you’re going to succeed. And these are the principles of the Fast Track Program.

2. Marketing Mindset – You need to know how to think about marketing and selling in the right way. When people don’t, they typically quit before they see any results. We have a powerful process in Part Two that helps keep your marketing mindset focused in the right direction. We also show

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you how to get unstuck and easily work through resistance or fears you may have about the marketing process.

3. Marketing Language – You need to know how to speak and write about your services so that you get attention and interest. Most people have no real idea how to do that. It's all guesswork. It needs to be a formula, and you'll learn that formula in Part Three.

Also, Part Three includes using the language of marketing to create a unique, attention-getting message for yourself. This is easier than you think if you know the proper formula and structure for that message. In Part Three you'll create your personalized marketing message.

4. Marketing And Selling Conversations – Once you have the attention and interest of prospects, you need to know what to say to move them through the stages of Familiarity, Information and Experience. It won't happen by itself. You also need to develop a selling conversation customized for your business so that you can get from second base to third and then home. We'll cover marketing and selling conversations in Part Four.

5. Marketing Currency – These are the written marketing pieces or the marketing information you provide to someone who is interested in your services. This information gains attention, interest, time, and trust from the prospect. That's why I call it currency. It buys what you need. We'll show you how to create an executive summary and discuss the basic structure of an effective professional service business web site and a 'Core Issue Article' You'll learn the basics of Marketing Currency in Part Five.

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6. Marketing Strategies – These are the various marketing outreach strategies to get your message in front of prospective clients. They include networking, publishing, speaking, and keep-in-touch marketing. Each strategy follows the Marketing Ball model. The whole purpose of these strategies is to get more prospects onto second base. You'll choose your marketing strategies in Part Six.

7. Marketing Action Plans – These are the step-by-step blueprints or marketing recipes you'll develop and follow to implement marketing strategies. Ultimately it comes down to what you'll do, how you'll do it and when you'll do it. We'll get right down to the nitty-gritty steps. In Part Seven you'll develop your marketing action plans.

Identifying Your Prospects

Hands-on Exercise #1 - Where are your prospects in the Marketing Ball game?

In the Fast Track to More Clients, we'll always include a hands-on exercise for each part. Don't skip this exercise! The exercises are the keys to building your marketing understanding and skills.

To do this exercise, you'll be filling out the table below. The table plots where your prospects are in the Marketing Ball game. Below the table are detailed instructions on how to fill it out.

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Where are your prospects in the Marketing Ball game?

Marketing Ball Diagram Location	Prospects – Who and where are they?
Strangers to Affiliation	
Affiliation to Attention and Familiarity	
Familiarity to Information	
Information to Experience	
Experience to Appointment	

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Where are your prospects in the Marketing Ball game?

Strangers to Affiliation – Box 1

These are groups or organizations, who are now strangers but that you could create an affiliation with. So what you want to put in this box are any groups that you ought to join or become affiliated with.

There are endless numbers of groups or affiliations where we're just not doing anything. We may have heard about them. Some we don't know and we have to network and ask. When I first started my business and read some things about marketing the advice was, "Join groups and network." So my first question was, "Where's the groups?" So I started to ask people and they said, "You should check out this group and that group." What you should be writing on this chart in the first box are specific groups such as chambers of commerce, etc.

Affiliation to Attention and Familiarity – Box 2

What groups do you already belong to that you are not leveraging?

That is, you belong to the Chamber but you've never been to a meeting. You belong to a professional group and you haven't been for six months. You belong to an alumni association but you've never been to anything. Or, online, you're on Facebook or LinkedIn and you're just not actively participating. You put your profile up there a year ago and nothing's happening.

You may want to work more on this box than on the first box. Maybe you've got a lot of organizations you belong to but you just need to leverage

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those organizations. I've had some people get some big ah-has: "Ah-ha! That's the group I should be networking with but I never do!" So put that kind of organization or association in the second box.

Familiarity to Information – Box

Now, this might be groups and it might also be companies or individuals. For instance, you may belong to BNI, Business Networking International. Everyone at BNI is familiar with you. But how much do the members really know about your business? Have you given your fellow members a brochure or article, or sent them to your web site?

So who are these people you already have familiarity with but who do not yet have enough information about your business and services? Don't worry right now what information to give them. We'll get into that later. Just focus on those who need that marketing information.

Information to Experience – Box 4

In the fourth box you want to write down any groups or individuals who may be ripe for an experience. Perhaps you've got a lot of people who have received information from you. They've read your articles, been to your web site, gotten your eZine for some time. These are the ones you want to offer experiences to.

Those in this box may also be current clients. They may have purchased other services from you and you're introducing a new service. Because they already know you, it's easy to offer an experience such as a

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teleclass or presentation or some kind.

From Experience to Follow-Up and Appointment – Box 5

This is about the F.U. gap. I had someone recently who said, "Robert, I did all these workshops for real estate offices. I didn't get any clients from it." And I said, "Um, did they like the presentation?" "Oh, they loved it. They came up and said it was great." Then I said, "And what happened when you did the follow-up?" And he went, "Follow-up? I was supposed to do follow-up? I thought they would just call me back!" I said, "No, you missed that part. That's your final step in the marketing process." It was a revelation.

When you get people up to Experience, you need to follow up. If people come to a workshop or presentation, you call them. You email them. You do something. You're trying to get them to second base or to an appointment. Who do you have on your list now that you need to follow-up with? You know them well enough, or have provided enough information or an experience that it would be appropriate to follow up to get an appointment and have a selling conversation.

Part One Wrap Up

You now know the rules and structure of Marketing Ball. You understand that the game is to move prospects around the bases and you know the various stages or steps each prospect needs to go through on their way to second base, or the selling conversation. You also have a beginning plan of which prospects are on which stage of the Marketing Ball game and an idea of what stage you need to move them to next.