

Marketing Ball - The Game of Marketing

Marketing is a game. The purpose of the game is to turn strangers into prospects, buyers, and clients. Marketing Ball is a model to help you understand this game and play it effectively. (See the Marketing Ball diagram, next page.)

Marketing Ball starts in the "Locker Room." This is where you develop your Core Marketing Message that lets your prospect know who you work with, what issues and challenges you address, and the solutions and outcomes you deliver. We will cover your marketing message in Fast Track step 4.

Once you have your marketing message developed, you get to play and step up to Home Plate. Every prospect you have a connection with is a new "chance at bat." When you make this connection, you have the opportunity to communicate your Core Marketing Message. If you do it well, you generate attention and interest.

When someone is interested in your message, you're on First Base. They're not a buyer yet; they may not even be too enthusiastic about what you're offering, but at least you have their attention. At this point, a prospect is open (at least to some degree), to knowing more about your services. (More on how to accomplish this in Steps 3 & 4.)

Once you're on First Base, you want to get to Second Base. You know you're on Second Base when the prospect is willing to explore working with you. This usually takes the form of a meeting of some kind. And the way you get onto Second Base is by developing Familiarity and providing the right Marketing Information.

Now that you're on Second Base, your goal is to make it to Third Base. The journey from Second to Third is the sales process. And when you're on third, the prospect is ready to buy. They want to work with you. You're almost home. Just one more base before the client is actually secured.

From Third Base, your aim is to get back to Home Plate and score a run (a new client). This step is a matter of agreeing to terms, signing a proposal or contract and getting your first payment. Sometimes this takes a long time and a lot of work. Often it happens immediately after you get to Third (depending on many factors such as the size of the contract, the kind of service you offer, etc.).

When you play Marketing Ball, you know exactly where every prospect is and what you need to do to move them to the next base.

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Steps in the Marketing Conversation

A Marketing Conversation is when you engage someone in a discussion about your business. Let's go through the different stages of the Marketing Conversation.

1. Audio Logo –The Audio Logo is a conversation starter and a tool to generate attention and interest. An Audio Logo gets you on First Base. But you don't want to follow an Audio Logo with a long conversation all about you and your business. Instead, you want to engage the person in a conversation that will help you determine if they are a real prospect or not.

2. Questions – What will you ask the prospect to know if they are qualified to be a client and purchase your services? The more you know about the prospect, the better you can determine if they are indeed an ideal client for you. You won't learn this if you are doing all the talking.

3. Answers - What are the answers to the typical questions a prospect asks you about your business and services? What are the follow-up questions to ask the prospect? If your prospect asks you questions, you need to answer concisely and then turn the conversation back to the prospect by asking more questions.

4. Call-to-Action – If you get a sense through this conversation that you are speaking to a qualified prospect, you need to set up an opportunity for follow-up. One of the best ways is to offer an article or other information related to your services. Then you can make a request to follow-up, usually by phone to explore further.

5. Follow-up – A call to explore what the next steps might be, including setting an appointment for a selling conversation. Making follow-up calls is one of the biggest fears of Independent Professionals. We don't follow-up because we assume if they were interested *they* would follow up and we're worried that if we make the follow-up we'll be seen as pushy and may be rejected. The truth is, this is usually not the case. You are not selling yet, just exploring the possibilities with this next step.

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