

Chapter 1

Marketing Yourself as an InfoGuru

Why do we hate to market ourselves?

One of the first things I ask participants in my talks and workshops is “What do you hate about marketing?” I get many answers. Some of the most common are:

- Don't like being rejected
- Takes too much time
- Don't know where to start
- Don't know what to do
- It doesn't work anyway
- It feels like I'm just trying to hustle business
- Think business should just come to me

I'm sure these sound familiar to you. Over the years I've worked with hundreds of small business people and independent professionals, and I've heard these over and over. The main conclusion I've come to is that independent professionals hate marketing because what they are doing really doesn't work very well.

I became a marketing consultant because I found it fun and challenging. I read a lot of books by the top marketing experts and I started to try all kinds of marketing ideas with my clients. Some flopped spectacularly, some worked so-so and some were triumphs. What was puzzling is that usually I didn't understand exactly why some things worked and why others didn't work.

I broke marketing down into strategies, techniques and skills. I started to build a repertoire of those that I knew would work. For instance, once I helped an Internet Service Provider with a mailing. Previously he got 6 responses. My mailing got 175 responses. I worked with an executive recruiter who struggled to attract clients. We implemented one strategy and she doubled her business in a little over a year. I used several strategies myself that grew my business from nothing to bursting at the seams.

I had many successes like this over the years. I was getting better at what I did and was helping more people but I always wasn't sure why the things that worked

worked! You might say I was looking for a **“unified field theory of marketing”** – some principle, that if you applied it to every marketing situation, would always work to attract clients.

One day, in the shower (of course), it hit me. What all my successful strategies had in common was that they were based on **Solutions** and **Information**. For the Internet Service Provider, that was a booklet that promised to “Untangle the Internet.” For the executive recruiter it was a unique search process that guaranteed their satisfaction. For me it was giving talks with a focus on attracting new clients. In every case we were offering ideas and information that promised a desired solution to their problems.

I realized that focusing primarily on solutions and information could be leveraged to attract new clients. For the most part, as I’ll demonstrate in this manual, most of us don’t market using solutions and information. We market commodities, features and processes. We don’t explain what they get from working with us, we explain what we do. People are profoundly interested in what they might get and profoundly uninterested in what you happen to do!

What our prospects are looking for is the promise of a solution to a nagging problem, pain or predicament. What they want information about is how that problem, pain or predicament can be resolved once and for all. By providing good solid information about the solutions we provide, our prospects can put themselves in the place of our past clients and see themselves getting the same kind of results.

So I called this principle the InfoGuru Marketing Principle. We are Information Gurus. We give some of that solution-based information away to leverage our credibility as Independent Professionals. And the more we give away, the more we are perceived as partners that prospective clients want to do business with.

Let’s Look at “Getting” a Little More Closely

Your marketing doesn’t work because you are trying to GET something. Your attention and activities are focused on trying to get clients to work with you. And paradoxically, in trying to get clients, you actually push them away.

Let’s look at some of the dynamics of typical marketing activities that work against you. First, you’re in a condition of need because you’re short of business. It’s hard to hide that. The feeling of neediness, even desperation is apparent to everyone. When you’re needy, your focus is on you and you tend to talk a lot about what you HAVE or what you can DO or what you KNOW.

At networking meetings, in calls to past clients, even in letters, it’s all about you and your services. You fail to remember that everyone else, including your prospective clients, are also preoccupied with themselves and frankly don’t care much about what you HAVE or can DO or KNOW. In fact they’re downright indifferent about you!

No wonder you’re feeling a lot of rejection and don’t enjoy marketing yourself. No one shows much interest or asks useful questions about your service. Nobody returns your calls or replies to your mailings. It’s perfectly understandable that you’re starting to think marketing is a complete waste of time.

It gets even worse. The more of this unproductive, you-centered marketing you do, the more discouraged and cynical you get. You not only start believing that marketing is a waste of time and that self-employment is a cruel joke, but you begin to adopt a negative attitude to life in general and to business in particular. Perhaps you're saved by that last minute phone call from an old client, but when this roller coaster process keeps repeating itself, you seriously wonder if you can hang in for the long-haul. Many give up before success strikes.

But there is hope! This manual tells you exactly what to do to attract new clients consistently. But to make this work you're going to have to start thinking differently and then taking actions consistent with that new thinking. And I need to warn you that thinking in a new way can be uncomfortable. It can be hard work. It can be confusing and even frustrating. InfoGuru Marketing might seem counter-intuitive. After all, we have so many fixed stereotypes about marketing and selling. We think they're true but they're not. For instance, I'll bet you didn't know...

It's better to tell a prospective client the problems with your services up front.

That long copy in brochures works a lot better than short bullet-pointed copy...

That speaking about your services in terms of a problem is more powerful than speaking in terms of a solution...

People may be interested in your services even if they don't return your phone calls...

When talking on the phone with a prospective client you should spend more time trying to "reject" them than convincing them...

The very last thing you should do is develop a proposal – but when you do it should hardly tell anything about what you actually do...

And that's barely the tip of the iceberg! But let's look at what does work – the InfoGuru principle that can be applied to every single area of marketing your services.

What to do that works

InfoGuru Marketing isn't focused on getting but on GIVING. And it's not focused on you, it's focused on the needs of your clients.

InfoGuru Marketing works so brilliantly and so effortlessly because you're providing useful, valuable information and resources to your prospective clients. You spend virtually no time talking about what you DO or what you KNOW. Instead you learn about what they need and determine where they want to go. And now, instead of pushing people away, they are attracted in droves because you have something they want – the promise of a solution that works.

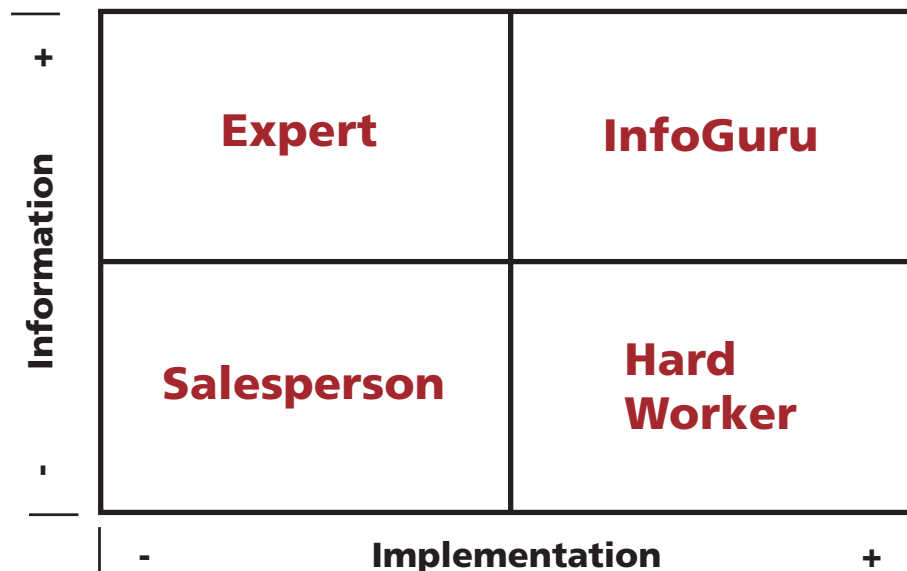
An InfoGuru Marketer might attend networking events, but the focus and purpose are now completely different. You don't talk about yourself, you ask questions and listen. You don't give out your card urging people to call, you ask for their card and tell them you'll send them a recent article you've written or a case study of a successful project. You do contact past clients, but it's never to ask for work, it's to share an idea or a resource. But your call is never a voice from the past,

because they've been getting your newsletter or eZine every month for the past year. They're happy to hear from you. And when you mail letters to many prospects at once, it's not to ask for business but to invite them to an event or tell them about a valuable report you'd be happy to send.

The InfoGuru Four Quadrant Grid

As an Independent Professional you have two main things you have to offer: What you know – information, and your ability to implement. The problem is, we often focus on one or the other, not both. When we combine them both we're truly InfoGurus.

The following diagram illustrates the balance between information and implementation:



In the lower left quadrant we find the Salesperson. The Salesperson sells a **"Commodity,"** something anyone could sell. Yes, if you say you're selling "training" or "resume preparation," you are marketing yourself like a Salesperson. There's nothing to differentiate you from everyone else. The Salesperson is always focused on what they HAVE to offer to their clients. It's not about a solution.

The lower right quadrant is the Hard Worker. This quadrant makes up the vast majority of independent professionals. They put in time and effort and make a contribution, often doing excellent work. But what they focus on selling is a **"Process"** or what they DO for a client. If you're marketing and selling "the XYZ facilitation methodology" or the "career management process" you're marketing yourself as a Hard Worker. You pay attention to the time and effort you put into the processes you offer.

The upper left quadrant is occupied by the Expert. These are the academic types, people who know a tremendous amount and who put a premium on what they know. Much of their knowledge is theoretical, not practical. Experts sell **"Expertise."** If you are

selling “the Quantum Training Concept” or the “Lateral Career Progression Index” you are marketing yourself as an expert. Experts can write brilliant marketing plans but are often hopeless at attracting clients to their own businesses.

The upper right quadrant is the InfoGuru. InfoGurus not only have an abundance of information and knowledge, they are masters at applying this knowledge in practical ways to help their clients. InfoGurus sell **“Solutions.”** And what you’ll discover is that what clients want more than commodities, processes and expertise are solutions that make a bottom-line difference.

How do the different categories market themselves?

Salespeople: Their ideal marketing medium is **calling and mailings**. They have something to sell and they want to tell as many people about it as possible. I get calls from independent professionals and service firms every day marketing services like this. They never find out about me or ask what solutions I’m looking for. They have turned their service into a commodity with very little differentiation.

Hard Workers: Their main approach to marketing is **making new contacts**. This approach is OK if you are selling a service that everyone is familiar with but it doesn’t differentiate your services above everyone else’s. You’re often seen as just another service provider, hustling for business.

Experts: A great majority of experts rely on **writing articles and speaking**. Nothing wrong with that, in fact those are excellent strategies. The problem is that the articles and talks are often more conceptual than practical. It’s sometimes hard to see what this information has to do with how they can help your business.

InfoGurus: The approach InfoGurus use to market themselves is **EVANGELISM! InfoGurus work at spreading the word about how to make things work better**. They are committed to results, passionate about solutions, fanatical about what really works. And they spread their gospel far and wide using any and every marketing tool they can get their hands on. InfoGurus get business from all corners because so many people hear about them and their innovative, problem-solving approaches.

So how are you going to market yourself? As a Salesperson, a Hard Worker, an Expert or as an InfoGuru? Hint: It’s more fun and more rewarding to market as an InfoGuru, as we shall see.

Underlying principles

InfoGuru Marketing works because it is based on simple underlying principles that will always be true about human nature. It doesn’t matter what technology or medium you use to market your services if you keep these principles in mind:

People react favorably to InfoGuru Marketing because of these principles:

Selfishness – People are looking out for “what’s in it for me.” When you give them some useful ideas and share results that apply to them, they respond with increased interest.

Familiarity – People like to do business with people they know and trust. Let them know about what you do and how you think and they will feel comfortable with you and more likely to work with you.

Resonance – People also want to do business with people they like. People like people who are generous and helpful and who produce results.

Reciprocity – People are likely to do business with people who have given them something valuable because they feel they “owe it to them.”

Some Wisdom from Claude Hopkins

Claude Hopkins was a copywriter, some say the “father of modern advertising.” In 1920 he wrote a book called *Scientific Advertising*. It’s still in print by the way, along with his biography, *My Life in Advertising*. I learned about this book through the marketing consultant Jay Abraham. He made the bold claim that the ideas in this book made him more than 2 million dollars in the course of his career. In writing this manual, I revisited *Scientific Advertising* to learn what he had to say about InfoGuru Marketing. It’s right there at the beginning of Chapter Three – “Offer Service.” (The words in brackets are mine)

Remember that the people you address are selfish, as we all are. (Think “What’s in it for me?”) They care nothing about your interest or your profit (or what you do.) They seek service for themselves. (Solutions and benefits.) Ignoring this fact is a common mistake and a costly mistake in advertising. Ads say in effect, “Buy my brand (or my service). Give me the trade you give to others. Let me have the money.”

This is not a popular appeal.

The best ads are based entirely on service. They offer wanted information. They cite advantages to users. Perhaps they offer a sample, or to buy the first package, or to send something on approval, so the customers may prove claims without any risk.

Claude Hopkins understood the essence of Marketing based on giving way back in the 1920’s. And he applied this principle to grow companies like Pepsodent, Goodyear Tires and Bissell carpet cleaners. You can use exactly the same principle to attract new clients to your professional service business. By the way, you can get a complete and free copy of *Scientific Advertising* online in the Goodies Section of this manual.

Not Attracting Enough Clients? Here’s Why.

You’re not attracting enough clients to your business for a very simple reason. You’re not doing the right things.

Not only are you not doing the right things, you actually think you know the right things you ought to be doing. You most likely think you should be doing more networking, have a better web site, and do more speaking engagements. You think you need to “get out there more.”

But those are not the right things. After all, you’ve tried all of those things to some degree, haven’t you? If they really worked, how come you’re not doing them consistently? If they worked they would bring you all the new business you needed. Right?

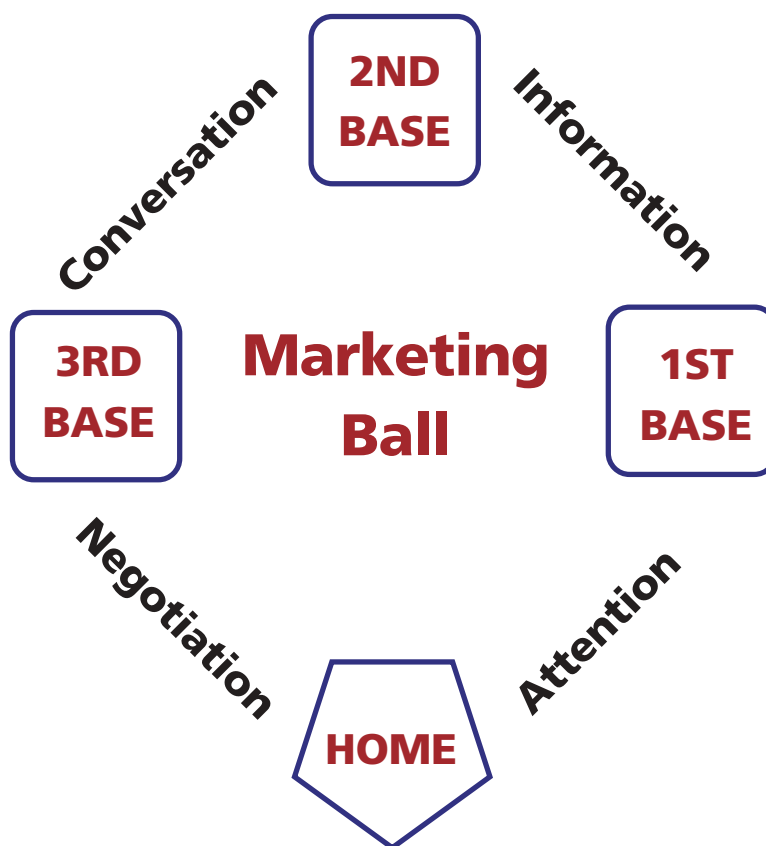
No, doing the right things first means understanding how the marketing and sales process actually works and then following a proven system for attracting new clients. Perhaps one of the best ways to look at this is through the game of baseball.

To win at baseball you need to do a lot of things. You need to throw the ball, hit the ball, catch the ball and run. Pretty simple, right? But consider this: I can take a bunch of people and put them on a baseball field and have them throw and hit and catch and run and you don't necessarily have a baseball game going on. You just have a lot of activity that leads nowhere. You get some exercise but that's about it.

And that's how most Independent Professionals approach marketing! They get on the field of business and do some networking and calling and mailing, but not a whole lot happens. They certainly aren't playing the marketing game. Because if they were, they would be attracting more clients than they could handle. In baseball you'd never settle for those kind of results. Why would you settle for it in something that's responsible for your livelihood?

Putting it all together with "Marketing Ball"

An excellent way to better understand the whole InfoGuru Process is through the analogy of baseball. You'll find this model very useful in understanding how to win at InfoGuru Marketing.



More detailed diagram contained in Appendix of complete InfoGuru Manual.

I developed this model when working with a client and we were trying to identify where he was in the marketing process. This model slowly emerged and has become the main model I use when explaining how the marketing process actually works. Here are the main rules of marketing ball.

1. The aim of the game of Marketing Ball is to attract as many clients as you can handle in your business while making a profit.
2. To successfully attract new clients you must cover all the bases. If you miss a base you are tagged out and lose that client.
3. You must get solidly on each base before you can proceed to the next base.
4. Your prospects determine whether or not you are solidly on a base and whether or not you can move to the next base.
5. Each client you are trying to attract equals playing one game. You can play as many games as you can manage simultaneously.

The object is to start from Home Base where you don't have a client, go all around the bases and then get back to home again where you have secured a new client. The number one rule in baseball and also in "Marketing Ball" is that you have to touch each and every base before you get to home plate. If you miss a base, you're out of the game. Here are the steps:

Home Plate Objective – You have identified potential prospects that you want to offer services to and have found ways to connect with them.

First you need to get up to home plate to start playing the game. To do this you need to find a field or fields to play on and put yourself in front of prospective clients. There are several ways of doing this, from networking, to asking for referrals to doing speaking engagements to direct mailings.

Getting to home plate means you're ready to play the game. The trick, of course, is knowing the most effective ways of getting in front of prospects. For each business it's a little different. For many Independent Professionals they think this is all there is to marketing, but it's really only the starting point.

First Base Objective – The prospect knows you exist. You have their attention and interest and they want to know more.

To get from Home Plate to First Base you need to get the attention of your prospective client. You do this through effectively communicating what I call your "Core Marketing Message." This generates interest so they want to know more. It comes down to what you say when people ask you what you do or what headline is on the letter or brochure you send and what title you use for the talk you give. Words matter here.

The key to generating interest is focusing on results, not process, benefits, not features, stories, not concepts. Tell people what they'll get, not what you'll do.

One of the things you're doing wrong is talking about YOU. You need to start talking more about THEM.

Second Base Objective – The prospect sees you as a possible source of help and has identified both a need and a want that you just might be able to fulfill. At this point they are ready to discuss their needs.

To get from First Base to Second Base you need to give them more information, in the form of an article or report or other valuable ideas that educate them about your thinking, capabilities and results. You want to build a case for your solution. Many miss this step altogether. The purpose of this information is to warm up your prospect so that they will be willing to meet with you and discuss their needs.

Realize that it sometimes takes a LOT of information to move a prospect from first base to second base. That's why marketing isn't about one-shot deals, but about building long-term visibility and value. Keep-in-touch marketing strategies such as newsletters, eZines and invitations to presentations will keep the information flowing. Sooner or later you'll get to second base.

Third Base Objective – You have agreed in principle that working together is the right thing to do. The conceptual sale has been made. Now you're ready to finalize the deal.

Getting from Second Base to Third Base is the whole "selling conversation." This is where you talk to the prospect and determine needs. You explain more about what you do. You present ideas and solutions. You work at coming to a conceptual agreement about how you can help your prospect.

Ideally, marketers are never trying to convince prospects to do business with them. Instead they are in effect saying to the prospect, "You already **understand** the value of my services, now let's discuss if these services are right for you or not." Smart marketers are able to do this because they've built up trust through the information they've provided. Nobody wants to discuss business with a complete stranger who has a "great" idea. This is why so many get tagged out early in the game.

Home Plate Objective [Score] – You have a win-win contract or agreement and are ready to move to implementation.

Getting from Third Base to Home Plate involves negotiation and wrapping up the deal. You're not complete until you've put together a proposal and gotten agreement from your prospect that you will proceed with the work.

The key here is to structure a win-win agreement that will ensure that the expectations of the client are met while getting them to take responsibility for the success of the project. How to do this will be covered in chapter eleven.

And of course, the more times you get around to home plate successfully, the more success you have in your business.

Dugout Objective – You have performed in such a way for the client that they refer a continuous stream of new clients to you.

After you round the bases to home you go back to the dugout. In our analogy, the dugout is where you take care of your client. Performing for the client means all the big things like doing a great job and adhering to the highest standards of excellence and integrity. It also means paying attention to the little things like returning calls, staying in communication and handling problems immediately.

The work you do in the dugout is often the most important marketing step of all. If you don't meet or exceed client expectations your business will never gain the momentum that comes from word-of-mouth referrals.

This model can be used whether you're marketing your consulting or speaking services to a multinational corporation or marketing your coaching services to a one-person business owner. The point is to know which base you're on and to do the activities appropriate to that stage in the marketing and sales process.

Where you can go wrong

A lot of people tend to skip bases. For instance, you want to go directly from home to second base. You leave out the information base. This is what a lot of cold callers try to do, or those who meet someone in a networking session. They want to get right to the appointment and to the selling conversation.

Usually a big mistake. You may have their attention, but you don't yet have their trust. By providing more information, you warm up the prospect. You prove that you're credible and successful. If you try to hurry and get to second base too quickly, you'll get put out of the game before you know what's hit you.

Once at first base people then try to get to third base too soon. This is skipping the sales process altogether and jumping to the proposal or the close. It's all happened to us. Before we have time to really warm up to what is being offered, the close comes on strong and we get turned off. Again, you need to be patient, listen to your prospect's needs, give them more information and move naturally to the proposal or close.

Finally, many try to get to home base from second base. This means they skip the proposal or close. The purpose of this stage is to confirm understanding, work out the fine details and handle any final objections. And you need to go at a pace that works for the prospect. Sometimes the marketing and sales cycle is longer than we like, but if you try to push it too fast, you'll be tagged out once again.

Of course, once you get to home base, you've arrived at a solid agreement to work with your client. Now the work begins of performing well for that client.

You need to be patient to make this process work. Don't skip ahead or you'll end up out of the running when you're playing on the real field of marketing and selling your services.

In the chapters that follow, we'll outline in great detail every main stage and every single step of the marketing and sales process.

InfoGurus Use Every Tool Possible

Looking at the 5 P's of marketing (more about that later), your Solution is the first P of Positioning. It's what sets you apart. And then InfoGurus use every tool possible under the other 4 Ps.

Packaging	Promotion	Persuasion	Performance
Brochures	Speaking	Listening	Keep Promises
Reports	Writing	Diagnosis	Guarantees
Questionnaires	Networking	Openness	Keeping in Touch
Articles	Referrals	Curiosity	Thank-yous
Web Sites	Newsletters	Visioning	Going Extra Mile
Power Point	eZines	Education	Commitment
Cassette Tapes	Letters	Presentations	Walk the Talk
CD Presentations	Postcards	Asking	Innovation
Videos	Calling	Recommending	Creativity
Books	Media	Assuring	Persistence

All InfoGurus share the following qualities:

- Commitment to what truly works
- Clear communication – they build a solid case
- Generously share what they know
- Help prospects determine future objectives
- Commitment to producing results

In short, an InfoGuru marketer is someone who values what they have to offer, believes in the solutions they provide and is committed to helping their clients achieve results. InfoGurus use that mindset to attract all the clients they'll ever need.

Does this really work?

Being an InfoGuru Marketer isn't about episodic marketing that happens between projects, it's about consistently sharing valuable ideas as long as you're in business. And since your focus is not on getting something but on giving, it starts to become a fun, even joyful activity because you know you're making a contribution. And a wonderful side benefit is that you'll attract all the business you'll ever need.

The purpose of this manual is to share the strategies, the techniques the skills and the how-tos of successful InfoGuru Marketing. We'll go into detail on all the InfoGuru Marketing tools listed in the chart above and we'll do it all from an InfoGuru Marketing perspective. I'll show you exactly what you need to do to turn the tables on marketing and start giving instead of getting. And when you start to seriously apply this new approach, you'll never look at marketing quite the same way again.

Still, you may ask, does it really work? Indeed it does, and I'm living proof. I get 50 to 90 new names on my emailing list every single day using this approach. I gathered 150 to 170 people together two years in a row for a sales presentation (disguised as a workshop) with only four or five hours of work and no money invested. I got over 6,000 people to download a report from my web site in one month. And the result of giving all that stuff away? I have more business than I can handle. In fact, it seems that the more I give away, the more business I get! And all my clients call me. I haven't cold called in years. Throughout this manual I'll be sharing specific ideas that have worked for me and my clients.

But before you jump into the manual and all those InfoGuru Marketing how-tos, there's something else very important to consider.

It's not just what you do

An InfoGuru also realizes that it's not just what they do that creates success. It's who they are BEING. Yes, doing is important and this manual is mostly about doing – how-tos and action plans. We'll talk about giving talks and writing articles, setting up web sites and sending out eZines. All important stuff. But before you do anything, you need to have a motivation, a vision, a passion, or nothing's going to happen.

I come across this every single day as a marketing coach and mentor. People know what to do but they aren't doing it. They are stuck in a default "Marketing Mindset" that consists of fears, misconceptions, cultural myths and stereotypes. Let's look at some elements of a vision that can get you past that non-resourceful mindset.

Several years ago when I started Action Plan Marketing I had the vision of being "The resource that people would call in the San Francisco Bay Area if they needed help marketing their professional service business." And that vision is constantly being validated. I'm now expanding this vision internationally.

But what is connected to that vision? Values that are important to me. Some of them include:

- Commitment to lifelong learning
- Insatiable curiosity about how things work
- Wanting to make a contribution
- Wanting to make an impact, make a difference
- Being independent
- Being innovative and creative
- Intellectual stimulation
- Being recognized and acknowledged
- Being challenged and solving problems

That's the kind of stuff that motivates me. And with that list it was a natural for me to become an InfoGuru. With those kind of values and vision it was only natural that I'd learn what I needed to be successful and help make my clients successful as well.

Action Plan

Throughout this Manual you'll see this heading, "Action Plan," followed by action steps to put the information into action. Here's your first chance to take a positive step towards being an InfoGuru. And, by the way, this is really the only Action Plan in this whole manual that can produce "Magic."

Here's what one person got from the exercise below:

"I read chapter one (of the InfoGuru Marketing Manual) the other day. Got to the part where you are to start your "action plan" with your visions and values... and bogged down completely. For several days I read and re-read but just couldn't pick up my notebook to start.

"Finally, I just started. I read the examples you gave... and just started listing my strengths... those things that are important to me... and amazingly enough it started to flow!

"So, after finishing I looked at my list...and here are the items listed... learning, innovation, compassion, teacher, visionary, motivator... and lo and behold I realized that what I've felt about myself all along is really true! I AM a teacher/trainer/motivator. I'm NOT a salesman, I'm not a hard worker, I'm not an expert....I'm an InfoGuru!

"And now I understand what the whole thing is all about! Not what they can do for me, but how can I help them to be the best they can possibly be! And when you concentrate on sharing what you have, instead of selling it to them, it makes all the difference in the world.

"The funny thing is, I've KNOWN that all along, just never really saw how it applied and could help me in my future endeavors. Do what I say, not what I do. NOW, it will be do what I do! Lead by example... because I AM the person I've always wanted to be! Yee Ha.

"Whew..you're right...it DOES change your whole way of thinking!"

Lorian Rivers

Being clear on your vision and values can transform you and propel you in a way that defies explanation. One minute you're sitting there like a dummy, the next you're energized and thinking up a zillion ways to apply this information. **So the magic ingredient in this manual is YOU.** The information won't do anything just sitting in this web site. You've gotta turn it into gold.

- 1. Here's what to do before taking another step.** Get yourself a notebook and label it something like "InfoGuru Marketing." As you go through the manual, stop when you get to an Action Plan and start writing. Start creating your own Action Plans to make these ideas real in your business.
- 2. The first Action Plan is to write down the vision and values for your business.** Really take some time to think about this seriously. When I wrote down my vision, I tacked it up on my wall. I talked about it a lot; I dreamed about it; I tried to figure out how to make it real.

