

WORKBOOK & CHECKLIST

3

The Only Systems You Really Need for a Successful Business



Inner Success Circle Special Report

Presented by Marty Marsh

The Only 3 Systems You Need for a Successful Business

*H*ave you noticed that these days the measure of success in business is to be earning 6-figures? It's kind of become a cliché and yet it is a goal that most business folks I encounter aspire to. Even if they'd be just as happy (and successful) at half that much.

And, to hear some people talk, achieving any sustainable income, let alone that “6-figure business” level is an exercise in frustration and futility. Those are (in my experience) the folks who are working 80-hour weeks, struggling with less-than-ideal clients, and quickly losing their motivation.

You'll often hear them say things like:

- ▶ “If only I could find the right clients...”
- ▶ “If only I could retain my clients for more than a month or two...”
- ▶ “If only I could create products that don't require me to trade hours for dollars...”

And the truth is, those “if onlys” could make all the difference in their business. *If only* they knew how to achieve them.

The fact is, though, they *can* find the right clients, keep them happily paying for months or years, and even dramatically reduce the number of hours they work — without lowering their profits and have more time for doing other things besides marketing.

It's all in following a simple, proven system that works to fill your funnel and keep the clients and money coming in, predictably and consistently. And there's just 3 of 'em.

- ▶ **Discover.** Before your first client can pay you, she has to know who you are and what you do. Discovery can happen in a dozen different ways, so it's just a matter of choosing the best method for you and your ideal client.
- ▶ **Build a Relationship.** Once she's found you, your future client is unlikely to hire you on first sight. That would be a bit like getting married on the first date. It's possible, but it rarely goes well or lasts long. To have a successful marriage, you first have to build a relationship. The same is true in business.

- **Make the Sale.** The final piece of the income puzzle is to make the sale. This can happen in a variety of ways, and an ideal sales funnel contains them all, working together seamlessly to present the right offer at the right time, and seal the deal.

Sound too easy? While this is proven to work, and easy to set up, it can be confusing to make all the pieces fit together seamlessly, so let's take a look at them one at a time.

Discovery Systems

Ask most coaches and small business owners and professional service practitioners where their clients come from, and they'll almost always tell you "word of mouth."

That's great, because it skips right over discovery and relationship building and makes a beeline for the sale. Here's the problem though: It's inconsistent and unpredictable.

You need to supplement word-of-mouth promotion with discovery methods that will fill your funnel — and keep it full.

Your Blog

Is blogging still relevant today? That's a question that many online business owners ask, and some will tell you — like they say about email marketing — that blogging is dead. Don't believe them!

Blogging is critical for building your audience. It's the very foundation of your discovery system, and forms the centerpiece for everything else you do online. Blogging consistently gives you:

- **Powerful credibility.** Everyone who reads your blog will immediately know you are the expert in your field. Think of it as your resume online.
- **Great searchability.** Using proven SEO strategies means your blog will rank well in Google and other search engines, putting you in front of your ideal audience.
- **Your own web property.** Social media and other discovery methods are important (we'll talk about them in a minute) but they're not yours. You don't own Facebook or YouTube or Pinterest — and you can lose your access to them at any time. Build your business on a web property you own, not one controlled by someone else.

Here's the key to successful blogging: *consistency*. You absolutely *must* commit to blogging regularly.

You don't have to blog every day (although you certainly can) but you *do* have to set a schedule that works for you and then stick to it. To do any less is going to frustrate your readers and waste your time.

SIDE NOTE: Sticking to things is the bane of every entrepreneur I know. (Me included.) We are a breed like no other. Always full of ideas and ready to move on to the next greatest thing. Just getting started is a big hurdle, but the secret to success is found in sticking to it. Whatever “it” is. But also, knowing when to change course if things just aren’t working. Being an entrepreneur is a tricky business, I know.



Brainstorm topics that will help grow your audience. These are the subjects your market is most interested in, and which will establish your expertise. Commit to a blogging schedule you can maintain for at least 6 months to accurately gauge the response.

Social Media Accounts

Judging by the number of social media platforms out there, it’s pretty clear that “being social” accounts for a huge amount of all time spent online. While it’s generally not a good idea to base your entire business on *any* social media platform, these days it is a necessary part of your overall success.

Not all social media platforms are created equal though, and not all of them will be suitable for your business type or your audience. Your market might love Pinterest but completely avoid Twitter. They might hang out on LinkedIn but hate Facebook. They might love Facebook for groups but not participate on a personal profile.

Your job is to find out where your market spends most of its time, and establish your presence there as well. Start conversations, share your blog posts, encourage engagement, and simply be seen. This is all about discovery, so make sure your ideal client can find you on her favorite social sites.

While you’re checking out social media platforms, don’t neglect YouTube. As the second largest search engine, this is a must-have tool in every business owner’s toolbox. Getting on camera is ideal, but if you’re shy or just not ready for prime time, there are plenty of other ways to make video work for you, such as...

- ▶ Screenshare
- ▶ Slide presentations
- ▶ Photo montages
- ▶ Animations

Like all other discovery methods, though, video relies heavily on consistency. Don’t think you can create one or two videos and suddenly have a gaggle of YouTube followers. Instead, aim for creating at least one video per week. It doesn’t have to be long — in fact it’s probably better

if it's not — but it does have to provide great information. 2-5 minutes max is about all the time folks are willing to give you before moving on to the next thing.

Check out SavvySexySocial.com for some fabulous YouTube marketing tips.



Identify the top three social media platforms where the folks in your niche tend to hang out, and set up or update your account, keeping in mind the subjects you brainstormed in the section about blogging.

Free Webinars

For list building and sales, you really can't beat the power of a webinar. They give you the opportunity to:

- ▶ Introduce yourself to a previously unknown audience
- ▶ Prove your expertise by sharing valuable information
- ▶ Grow your mailing list by partnering with a colleague in a complementary niche
- ▶ Make sales through time-limited offers

Not only that, but once you've created two or three presentations, you'll always be prepared to speak, whether at a conference, a telesummit, a podcast, or anywhere else your audience is.



Create your "go-to" presentation — what most folks call your "signature" presentation — and schedule a free webinar for your audience. Or make it easier on yourself and just teach a teleclass to start.

You can always graduate to webinars later. Just be sure you have your goal — what do you want to have happen as a result of your webinar or teleclass — clearly in mind as you're creating your event.

Public Speaking

Like webinars, public speaking is an ideal way to get in front of your ideal client and speed up the "know, like, trust" time. Wherever you're speaking, the audience members will feel an instant connection, and if your topic resonates with them, you're well on your way to turning those listeners into buyers.

Public speaking doesn't have to mean you get up in front of an audience of thousands, though. (And you probably shouldn't, at least not at first.) Start small, with local business networking events, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and other intimate gatherings. Niche conferences are another great opportunity to be seen.

If you're not comfortable on stage, get some practice and grow your confidence by joining a local Toastmasters group or taking a Dale Carnegie course. You might also consider working with a speaking coach like Stage Fright Coach Marti MacEwen, StageFright.com.



Research (or have your VA research) several public speaking opportunities. Call and ask the speaker coordinator if they take outside speakers. If so, get on their schedule, keeping in mind that you want it to be an appropriate audience.

Look for:

- ▶ Local events
- ▶ Niche conferences
- ▶ Meetup groups
- ▶ Telesummits

Publish a Book

When it comes to getting discovered, there really is no better method than to write a book. It doesn't have to be as difficult or as time-consuming as you think, either. In fact, if you've been blogging for a while, you likely already have all the content you need; it just has to be organized and formatted, then uploaded to your favorite self-publishing platform.

Done right, your book launch can introduce you to a whole new audience who are eager to learn more from you and order your products and services.

If you want to make your book an instant best-seller, get in touch with Diana Needham. (DianaMNeedham.com) She's helped a lot of folks do just that. And then contact me and I can get you some nifty gold stickers to go on your books that say Amazon Best Seller.



Brainstorm and outline a book, then set aside at least 30 minutes each day to write. With just that small amount of time, you can easily finish your first book in only two months! Or, if you're like my friend Ben Meredith, do it in just a couple of weeks.

Relationship Systems

Once you have their attention (the "know" part of the oft-repeated "know, like and trust") you have to foster a relationship. It's not enough for a potential client to stumble across your blog or social media accounts, or even for them to buy your new book. You also have to maintain contact and become the "go-to" expert if you want to turn those chance meetings into sales.

Email Marketing

Like blogging, many "gurus" will tell you that email is dead. In reality, email marketing is very much alive, and is still the single best way to stay in touch with your potential clients.

But the key here is to stay in touch. You can't simply ask for their email address in exchange for a free gift, and then only reach out when you have something to sell. Doing that is a surefire way to destroy any trust they have in you.

Instead, commit to a regular email series that provides useful, actionable advice, and little to no selling. This will train your readers to expect great content from you, and help improve your open rates. The occasional sales pitch will be received much better when it's a part of an otherwise information-based series.

Many online businesses are even bringing back the weekly newsletter. This is a colorful, information packed email that typically contains several articles and resources, along with a "related products" section that offers a soft sell. Again, the key to this strategy is consistency, so if you do decide to launch a newsletter, be sure to commit to it for at least several months in order to better gauge its effectiveness.



Commit to a regular (at a minimum, weekly) email series your readers can look forward to. Set this up as an autoresponder series and you'll never have to think about it again. But if you really want to be timely, broadcasting may be the best option.

In-Person Networking

As old-fashioned as it might sound, in-person networking can really cement a relationship that begins online. Attending conferences is a fantastic way to meet your ideal client just when she's ready to make a commitment in her business or life.

Business networking events can be productive as well, especially if you live in a large metropolitan area. Check Meetup groups, BNI chapters, and other organizations for events where your ideal client is likely to attend.



Plan to attend at least 3 conferences or networking events this year. Before attending, decide on your most important goals for the event, including who you want to meet, and what you want the outcome of those meetings to be. (And before you go to another networking event or meetup, make sure you've listened to my class on what to say when someone says, "So, what do you do?" (martymarsh.com/noelevatortpitch))

Free Consultations

No networking opportunities in your area? No problem. You can network in person by providing free consultations. In fact, this tried-and-true method is a favorite among coaches and consultants looking to grow their business.

Not only are free consultations perfect for showing your potential clients how you can help them achieve their goals, but they're also ideal for weeding out the tire kickers. By creating

an application of sorts, you can easily separate the action-takers from those who simply want to “pick your brain” or who are not committed to making the changes necessary to reach their goals.

You can also use your free consultations to determine if you really want to work with someone. Since not everyone is your ideal client, a short phone call is ideal for getting to know someone better and deciding if you want to continue the relationship.



Set up a system to offer short, one-on-one consultations. This can be through a scheduling app such as TimeTrade or ScheduleOnce, Acuity Scheduling (which is the one I use) or have “open office hours” on a regular Google Hangout. In fact, if you’d like to have a conversation about growing your business using the law of attraction, you can schedule a session with me at TimeWithMarty.com and we’ll just chat. No pressure.

Sales Systems

Now that you’ve got your discovery and relationship systems in place, the only thing between you and your six-figure year are more well-thought-out sales systems to handle sales, follow-ups and even customer support automatically, leaving you free to continue to grow the discovery and relationship components.

At its most basic, your sales system must contain:

- ▶ **Your funnel.** This begins with discovery (the top of the funnel) and continues through low-cost products and services, right down to your high-end VIP coaching program.
- ▶ **Payment system.** Whether a shopping cart or a simple PayPal button, you have to have a way for people to pay you, and for them to receive their product.
- ▶ **Customer support.** Not just a help desk, customer support includes everything from your FAQ page to follow-up messages and encouragement. The last thing you want is for your clients to feel they’ve been abandoned as soon as they make a purchase.

Your Sales Funnel

Entire books have been written about sales funnels, but here’s the basic idea:

Your sales funnel begins with your free offers — your blog, social media updates, YouTube videos, etc. These are the things that anyone online can access at zero cost.

Following that, are your free items that require an opt-in. The cost of access isn’t money, but rather an email address. These include checklists, worksheets, video training, small reports, resource guides, webinars, etc.

Below that in your funnel are low-cost items. Depending on your market, low cost might be \$7 or it might be \$70. Only you can determine what your “entry-level” rate is.

Next are your mid-range products, followed by those top-end, elite offers.

Ideally, your sales funnel will work in conjunction with your social media, your blog, and your email autoresponders to move people from the top through to the bottom over a period of time. If you find that people opt-in for your free offer, buy your low-cost items, but don't purchase your higher-end products consistently, you have what's called a leaky funnel. It simply means that buyers are “escaping” your funnel at some point. Identify where your trouble spots are, and you'll be closer to your earning potential.



Draw out your sales funnel, with your free offers at the top (this is your opt-in), followed by your low- and mid-priced products, and finally your highest-cost program at the bottom. Do your email messages, follow-up marketing, and other information work together to move buyers through the process?

Special Offers

When a visitor lands in your cart, your relationship with them has reached a new level. If they buy, you're in the perfect position to offer more in terms of an upsell, cross-sell, or one-time-offer.

You'll see this in action whenever you buy from places like Amazon or Wal-Mart. Before you click the “buy” button, you'll often see a row of items with the heading, “Customers who bought this item also bought...”

This encourages buyers to explore other, related items, and ultimately increases the average sale amount.

You can do the same thing in many of the most common shopping carts available today, but even if your cart doesn't have that option, you can easily add a few related items to each check-out or thank you page.

But what if a customer lands in your cart and doesn't buy? Perhaps she decided the cost was too high, or that she's not quite ready for this product. That's the perfect opportunity to offer a downsell—a lower-priced item in the same category. Your downsell might be a “lite” version of the item she almost bought, or a self-study course rather than live training, or even an ebook instead of an on-site workshop.

The point with a downsell is to turn a “no” into a sale, even if the sale is of your lowest priced product. It's much easier to sell to a customer than to sell to a visitor, so if your downsell converts, it's a powerful tool. And a whole new buying audience that you can continue to pitch your higher priced products and services to.



Consider all of your products, and where it makes sense, add a downsell. Then track your cart abandonment rates and see if they improve.

Shopping Carts and Product Delivery

The cart you choose and the method of product delivery can mean the difference between making a sale and not. While a PayPal button is really all it takes to collect payment online, it might not be enough to instill confidence in your audience.

If your ideal client is older or is used to doing business offline, she might not be comfortable with just PayPal as an option. Consider upgrading to a cart that offers credit card payments as well, so she'll feel better about security.

Your cart should also be as professional as possible. WooCommerce might seem like a great option (it's free, after all) but does it really present the image you want to portray? SamCart, 1Shopping Cart, Infusionsoft, or Premium Web Cart lets your clients know you're committed to your business—and to them.

SIDE NOTE: I use SamCart. It is so, so easy to set up products to sell and they have a template that includes both a sales page and the order form all built in to one. It's pretty cool and saves you a lot of time.

Product delivery is best when handled automatically, not only for you, but for your clients as well. Imagine if you make a purchase at 8pm on a Friday evening and have to wait until Monday morning for delivery, because the seller is offline for the weekend. You won't be thrilled with the experience, and neither will your buyers, so be sure whichever cart you choose has the capability to deliver products automatically, within minutes of purchase.

Your cart should also handle refunds, coupons, bundles and other ecommerce components with ease. Sophisticated buyers have come to expect this of the merchants they buy from, and if you don't offer such things, you'll very likely be passed over in favor of someone who does.



Take a look at your shopping cart setup. Does it need updating? Is it still serving you and your clients well? How could you make it better? Never underestimate the importance of having a good, well-functioning, easy-to-use shopping cart.

Customer Support

From the moment of purchase onward (and really, even before!) your clients and customers deserve the best support you can offer them. It begins with product delivery, which we've already covered, continues with follow-up and encouragement, private and group calls, your help desk, product updates and more.

And if you're providing a service where there is no concrete product to deliver (whether physical or digital) then you need to make sure you communicate with them immediately so they fully understand what happens next (and next, and next) in your process. Never leave them hanging or wondering "what happens now?"

Begin by incorporating a series of emails that encourage clients to both use the products they've purchased, but also participate in any groups or other live training available to them.

A coaching program by one of my colleagues does this by requiring mastermind members to complete a questionnaire by Friday afternoon each week. One of the questions is, "What was your biggest accomplishment this week?" The following Monday, the entire group receives an email listing the upcoming events, and detailing everyone's greatest moments from the previous week. This keeps members engaged, and makes it far less likely they'll drop out part way through the year.

You can offer encouragement to your buyers whether your program runs live or is a self-study plan. Simply set up your emails in an autoresponder to go out on a regular schedule, and your clients and customers will be much more likely to not only complete your program, but to purchase other things from you as well.

Your help desk is an important part of your customer support system as well. By providing fast, courteous help, you'll build a loyal fan base that will happily sing your praises and refer new clients to you as well.

Whether you maintain your help desk via email or with a dedicated app such as ZenDesk or Help Scout, take the time to at least set up a FAQ page. This will help your buyers find the answers they need without you having to spend time responding to easily answered queries. For those questions that do require an answer from your team, canned responses can easily take care of 80% or more of the tickets you receive. Not only that, but you can (and should) craft your responses to gently nudge your readers more deeply into your funnel.



Create a FAQ page, set up a help desk, and ensure that your buyers aren't being left in the dark after their purchase. Check your follow-up sequences and see if they can be improved.

Solid Systems Can Transform Your Business

If you're not earning that six-figure salary you deserve, or whatever figure you want, chances are one or more of these systems are lacking. Perhaps you have lots of traffic to your blog and social media, but few sales. That would be an indication that your relationship building system needs some work. If engagement is rocking, but you're not making sales, it's time to take a look at your sales system.

If your sales system is good, but you want to increase your profits (who doesn't?) then a good

hard look at your funnel is probably in order. Also, check your follow-up system if your customers buy once but never again.

And of course, if there's no traffic at all, and you can trace each and every client back to a referral, your discovery system likely needs an overhaul.

I do want to stress, though, that these three systems work best when they're tightly integrated with each other. A discovery system alone can bring in clients, but it won't be efficient or consistent. A relationship system will help grow your list and build your audience, but it will be slow going if you don't have a great discovery and sales system in place.

Take a look at your overall business, and identify those areas where each system could use some sprucing up. Whether your social media accounts are outdated, your blog looks like a ghost town, or your sales funnel is as leaky as a piece of cheesecloth, take the steps needed to tighten those systems up and you'll be well on your way to earning that six-figure paycheck (or whatever size paycheck you want).

Use the Checklist on the following pages to make sure you have all of your systems in place.

Systems Checklist

- I have a blog and I post to it consistently
 - Using topics my audience wants and needs to hear
 - Using good keywords for SEO
 - Providing great information that establishes my credibility
- I maintain no more than four social media accounts
 - I consistently post updates
 - I consistently respond to my readers and encourage conversation
 - I make use of YouTube on a consistent basis
 - I stay up-to-date on new social networks my target audience uses
- I have created and hosted my “go-to” webinar presentation
- I am actively seeking out public speaking opportunities in:
 - My local area
 - Niche conferences my audience is likely to attend
 - Meetup and business networking groups
 - Online conferences and telesummits
- I have brainstormed a book idea my audience will love
 - I have outlined my book
 - I have committed to writing for at least 30 minutes every day until the book is finished
- My email marketing system is solid, with:
 - Timely autoresponders designed to inform and engage readers
 - Occasional sales emails
 - A regular newsletter
- I actively seek out opportunities for in-person networking, such as
 - Local business get-togethers
 - Niche conferences
 - Area Meetup groups
 - Chamber of Commerce meetings
 - Volunteer opportunities
- I offer free consultations to:
 - Get to know potential clients
 - Eliminate the “tire kickers”
- My sales funnel is strong, with clearly defined:
 - Free product offers (my blog, social media, etc)
 - Opt-in offers
 - Low-cost products
 - Mid-range products
 - High-cost products and services

- I have a series of well-planned special offers for every occasion:
 - One-time-offers for buyers
 - Cross promotions in my cart and on my download pages
 - Upsell offers in my cart
 - Downsell offers for those who do not buy
- My shopping cart makes me look professional in every way, including:
 - Seamless handling of product delivery
 - Multiple ways to pay
 - Easy refunds and credits
 - Coupons, bundles and other special offers
- My customer support is top-notch, with:
 - Well-developed FAQ pages
 - Thoughtful follow-up messages for buyers
 - A help-desk to resolve issues quickly