**Week 3: Client Acquisition Techniques**

***Email Marketing – Benefits***

* Fast, effective and free
* Avoid gatekeepers!
* However! Can’t guarantee a good open rate
* Some service providers send your email to the spam folder!

***Email Marketing Tips***

* Don’t offer prices in your emails at all – remember each project is unique
* Invite prospects to have a ‘Free 30 Minute Consultation
* Use LinkedIn groups for highly targeted business owners and using Email Hunter, you can grab email addresses of the target prospect
* So for IT professionals – go to groups and type in IT and see what it brings up
* A good template to use in place of direct mail and cold calling which has a good response rate (typically around 20%):

**Subject: Free 30 Minute Marketing Consultation**

Dear [client name],

My name is [your name] and I am a commercial freelance writer based in [your location]. I understand that you are busy, so will keep this email very brief.

My aim as a commercial writer is to help businesses boost their bottom line by helping them attract more profitable customers. I do this through a variety of ways, but primarily by analyzing existing sales and promotional material and identifying weaknesses in them.

I would like the opportunity to offer you a free 30 minute marketing consultation either by Skype, phone or in person.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please email me at [your email] or call me on xxxxxxxxxx and we can arrange an appointment.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Thanks for your time,

Kind regards

[your name]

[your website address]

When you generate interest, always book a slot a few days ahead so you have time to research everything. Ask for their website address over the phone so you can evaluate their site.

Here’s what to do when you do get a marketing consultation booked:

**The Marketing Consultation**

Simple things to look at include:

* Their website – how well is it written?
* Do they even have a website?
* What’s their Google search engine rank as a local business? (simply type in the name of the business followed by your location to find out)
* Do they have a lead capture system? (where customers can sign up for more information)
* What kind of marketing materials do they currently have?
* How effective are they at communicating the business message?
* What kind of products and services do they sell?
* Is there another type of service they could offer?
* Do they have a newsletter and how often do they send it out?
* Do they advertise anywhere such as the local paper or business directories?
* Do they have a yellow pages listing?
* How well are their adverts written?

This is more than enough information for you to get started on. Make a note of all of these points so that you can discuss them when you talk to them. Always ask them how they keep in touch with their customers – this is vital in gleaning work from them.

Most business owners don’t bother going to the trouble of touching base with customers other than the odd advert in the local press. This is a prime area where they can improve their customer retention and bring in new business.

Once you have gone over their details, you can ask them which areas they would like to work on – at this point, always make suggestions.

If they don’t have a website, point them in the direction of a good website designer. Now, a clever thing to do here is team up with a website designer. Have an arrangement where if the designer brings customers to you, you can give them a 10% referral fee from the commission. If you bring a customer to them, you get a 10% referral fee from the commission. And it also saves you the hassle of trying to find a reliable web designer at the last minute.

Ensure that the site has a simple lead generation system and a contact form. Write the content for them, and always ensure that the content is all about what the business can do for the customer rather than all about the business itself.

This is true of all of your marketing materials – keep them customer focused. Customers always think and ask ‘What’s in it for me’ and think in solutions and benefits.

Once you have discussed the needs of a customer and completed the work, there a few things you should keep note of:

* Make a note of which businesses used your services and what you did for them
* After each project, always ask for feedback and how you could improve
* Ask for testimonials – this is very important and you can add these to your portfolio
* Ask if they will allow you to use their work as samples on your site
* Ask if they wouldn’t mind referring you to others if they are happy with the work you provided
* Always touch base with them once a month – a simple email with suggestions of other work you do to remind them works well. Keep the email generic.
* When you invoice them, you could always put at the end of the invoice a list of other services you provide as a gentle reminder
* Keeping in touch via a newsletter is an excellent idea. It doesn’t have to be long – just two or three topics that are easily digestible and which subtly upsell your business. For example, you could focus a newsletter on the benefits of a website or the benefits of training staff on report writing etc and at the end provide your details and what you can do to help

As you can see, there is no easy route to getting clients other than being focused and consistent, having a plan and then following up on it. Always start with referrals first – this is probably the quickest and easiest way to get work. You may decide to offer some services for free in return for referrals and a testimonial – something that most people will only be too happy to provide.