

STACKING THE SUCCESS

Business Secrets

TRACY L THOMAS.Life

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Stack 1: Create the niche

There's an old wives tale of business that says *if you build it, they will come* which translates to, if you build your business, that's enough, and clients and customers will come knocking at your door. At face value, we can see where the notion is erroneous and can lead to failure because we know there's more to growing your business than simply that. But oftentimes we can unconsciously fall into adopting that very notion without actually realizing it. We get our business built, get on the ground, get a website and open the doors.

Then we wonder why the day passes and nobody comes calling.

And sometimes it's easy to become intimidated with all the various marketing strategies and ways of going about things and we just sort of passively neglect doing what's best for our business because it's easy to tell ourselves we'll look into it tomorrow, and let it slide, and just focus on our day to day issues.

But that's what Stacking the success is for, to take away the intimidation, keep you mindfully focused on helping your business grow, and doing what it takes to take your business to the next level.

The first thing you need to do is create your niche. You have to allow yourself to stand out to the clientele you're looking for, and to other businesses. You need to give them a reason to come to your door or look you up online and pick you instead of a competitor. Creating your niche is most readily done by creating your corporate brand. Creating your corporate brand takes all the important information you want to share with the public and encapsulates it in one easily recognizable, solid form.

Corporate branding is also a solid way to build those intangible assets like trust, and loyalty between you and your customer base.

Corporate branding starts by considering the values you want to convey to your client, whether it's reliability because you build cars, or its trust because you're running a law firm. But you want to look at the values you want to convey and consider how you can incorporate that into some type of visual form. For instance, you might consider adopting a darker color scheme if you want to convey trust, reliability, firmness in your position. Or maybe you'll want something lighter and airier if say you're running a boutique or flower shop? Then there's a logo to go with it. Like books for a bookshop, and so on.

Now, this doesn't mean you absolutely positively have to go after corporate branding for yourself. And you absolutely have to develop some cool swoosh symbol like one of the famous shoes. But it *does* mean you want to at least consider the impact of a corporate brand and consider what elements of that you can utilize to put your business in the niche it belongs to.

The reason this is important is that inside a corporate brand is your identity, and that identity is easily conveyed in a quickly recognizable form that gets spotted anywhere. Consider the giant M for a popular fast food burger joint we all know. It's easily recognizable, it tells the client base that this is the place you want

to go for a great-tasting burger made fast and easy. And that's the power of having a corporate brand and identity.

Your corporate identity is the story of who you are, what you stand for, and the quality of the business you offer. It creates a sense of longevity with your client base and as we mentioned, it builds those intangible assets.

Intangible assets, in the business world, are anything of value that you own, that you can't quite hold in your hand, but it's just as valuable and sometimes even more than the things you can. Trust, loyalty, value, reliability, all the things you want a client to remember about you and your business. It creates the foundation for that permanent relationship that you ideally want in your business model.

And in truth for as long as you are in business you will be creating that corporate identity whether you actively pursue it or not. So, it is a wise move to be cognizant of that and guide it. Because the business world is a rough place, and you need every edge you can get to be successful.

This is what it means to be stacking for success.

You are actively pursuing the leads that can help you move forward.

Now branding is only the beginning, and for some, the idea can seem too big for a small company. But it doesn't have to be that way and you don't have to possess the resources of some multinational corporate giant. It can start small and be something as simple as a tagline that you leave your customers with after a purchase like *you can always find quality here*. That's just an example of passing on information that will stay with your customer and keep you in their mind when the time comes for them to make a purchase again.

In the next chapter, we'll be talking about who that customer is exactly, because that information will help you build your brand, and it'll help you communicate your identity to them more readily. You'll be able to discover exactly what they're looking for in a product, service, or business and naturally, that helps you customize your base to suit and meet those needs. And as you'll see you're already stacking yourself for success by taking information that is already there. You're just harnessing it and cultivating it to help your business grow.

Because remember, you owe it to yourself to take every advantage you can to win more customers and their loyalty and grow your business. You've worked hard for your business. Now you can learn to work smart, by stacking for success.

Stack 2: Dream Customer Profile

It could be argued that perhaps the number one most self-defeating behaviors a business owner can engage in is buying into the belief that if you build it they will come. What that means is we often believe that all we really have to do is build our business, stock the shelves, and open the doors. And by that customers will come in ordering and ready to do business.

Taken at face value it seems reasonable enough. But it's not. It's self-defeating and here's why.

To a client or customer's eye, you're just one more store that's open. Sure, you'll likely get an immediate bump of traffic just out of initial curiosity. But you'll soon discover, if you haven't already through trial and error, that most of the clientele will simply browse, and walk back out again without having made any purchase.

Then you'll discover right out of the gate, nobody's interested. Then you start to wonder what you did wrong, self-doubt builds, the initial high of having created something goes away, and a dry spell hits you hard. And you've got nothing, but mounting pressure to pay bills, and mounting depression.

Now if you're at that point, don't beat yourself up. It's important to remember the first thing to do is stop defeating yourself, listen up,

and look for a solution. SAR- Solution, Action, and Result oriented steps will define you and your business.

And the number one solution to that problem is identifying your dream customer profile.

Your dream customer profile is exactly that, you imagine just exactly who your ideal customer is. It might seem easy, and sometimes it can be. But it can also be equally deceptive. That's why you have to dive in, think about what you are selling, what service or product you have, and who wants it, who *needs* it.

Consider by example a popular fast-food restaurant.

What do we see? We see a clown and the whole gang. We see the playground, we see the happy meals and toys. So, it seems obvious they are marketing to kids. It's a fair assumption to make and in one sense you wouldn't be wrong.

But on deeper inspection that's only the initial layer, that's only the imaging.

Ask yourself one question. Are the kids buying the food?

Negative, they're not. The parents are. So, who is the real target market audience?

The kids see a fun place to eat with toys and games.

The parents see a cheap and easy way to feed the kids with some fun involved, that is quick and convenient and solves a lot of their problems if they're on the go, if they're traveling, if they're busy, or just don't feel like cooking, or even just want to go out without breaking the bank.

When you look at it from that perspective it begins to make sense. And that's what you want to do with your own business, is look just

a little deeper. And more importantly, you want to stack for success by building on top of what you already know.

In the previous chapter you built your foundation, you created your niche.

Now you must sell that niche to the right people who *will* buy, and not just browse. Sometimes that can seem tricky because the first thought that comes to a lot of minds is *my product or service is for everyone* and you want everyone to be a customer. The trap of this kind of mindset is that you *think* by excluding one type of person, you're not going to get them as a customer, or that you're going to somehow miss out on their business.

Wrong. And here's why.

Take the fast-food example above. They specifically marketed and geared their efforts toward their dream customer profile, and that dream customer was a parent.

Their dream customer profile was someone who had kids. By association naturally, they allowed themselves to appeal to children of course, but the parents were the real ideal customer. But by association, they also get people who are around parents, young adults for instance, and friends of theirs. What you see emerging here is an ideal customer profile that was gone after, but all the various groups of people who might be associated with parents *also* went there. Even more, those people came to the same conclusion that the fast-food chain wanted the *parents* to come too and that their meals are cheap, easy, decent, and convenient. It's not five-star dining, and it's not meant to be, and it's certainly not marketed that way. But by determining who their ideal customer was, they were able to capture the interest and loyalty of all those groups around that ideal customer.

That's how you do it with your business. And that is how you stack for success.

Now we can tell you exactly who your ideal customer is, and we can tell you *how* to answer that.

Look at the root of the service or product you provide. Who's buying that, who *needs* that, and who *wants* that. Not everyone, a specific group or type of people is going to be your dream customer profile. Consider for a moment who you originally thought would be an ideal customer, then look at it from another perspective. Maybe you even go outside your store and look at your storefront, maybe you go to your website.

But look at and consider who you think is going to come in and buy and consider who it looks like you're encouraging to come in and buy. Are the two matching up? Is there some difference? What are those differences and where and when did your thinking change?

Once you've got a good solid idea of who that ideal customer is you have another question to ask. And that question helps you get them in the door, exactly as you had imagined when you built your business.

How do you incentivize them? What is the hook that makes them feel like you are different than your competitors? Remember the hook is a key element within your market space.

It may pay to see what your competitors are offering, not to copy them, but just to understand and get a feel for how others are working and consider ways you can use that knowledge to your benefit. It might be helpful again to take another look at your storefront, your website, your image and consider what would make you want to walk through that door with the strong intent to buy whatever service or product that place provides.

Now, one of the first things new business owners consider is some free offering. But that is not always the way to go, it may sometimes be misleading to yourself and your efforts. Offering something free like some samples for instance if your product is food is a good way to get people to browse, and maybe hang around a bit. But that isn't necessarily incentivizing them to *buy* and become a customer. In this case, incentivizing them to buy might be a discount or package deal of a meat and a cheese for instance, like a picnic package. There's a difference in what you just did, and it's a big difference that pays big dividends in the end. Free samples are encouraged, but they aren't incentives to do anything more than just peruse and browse. Think of something that gives them what they want *if* they *buy* your service or product. That's incentivizing. That's hooking. Create your roadmap in this area and test it out.

Stack 3: Call to action

In the last chapter, we talked about incentivizing potential customers to buy into your service or product. We talked about that hook needed to bring them in with an already existing intent to make a purchase. One means of utilizing that incentivizing method is the Call to action.

A call to action is a marketing term used for a tactic that encourages the public to engage with you and your business and make a purchase. It's an opportunity for you to engage with the public and incentivize them into becoming a loyal and returning customer. Most often it involves something like a visual aid, audio message, or combination of multiple actions. But the message it contains talks directly to the public and encourages or incentivizes them to do a certain thing. In your case you want them to come in and buy, but sometimes it isn't specifically geared toward buying something. You are just wanting the public or online user to *do* something, obviously, every case isn't the same. You may want them to buy, fill out a form, or call. Map your call to action out.

Think of the posters that say **get out and vote now!** That's a call to action. It's incentivizing or encouraging people to commit to an action, in this case, vote. It may be followed by an endorsement of a particular candidate for a particular office, but again, it's a tactic

commonly used by different sides in a political contest, and not specifically related to anyone, it's merely a tactic or tool used by many. With your business, you can utilize an offer side by side with the call to action.

Oftentimes that call to action isn't just a poster but it's many different mediums, like stickers, stamps, hats, shirts, on your website, or any form of advertisement. These are all viable mediums by which to use your call to action. It just depends on which medium(s) might best serve your particular need.

But remember that the call to action is exactly that, you're calling the public to commit to an action. It isn't just advertising alone. The difference would be if you made a shirt or hat that had your brand logo on it and simply said *my shoe shop* or whatever the name of your business is. But if you did the same and said *support such and such charity, buy shoes today* you're telling your customers that if they buy your shoes today they are supporting a good cause, a charity of some sort. You are incentivizing them to commit to an immediate action. In this case, they are helping a particular cause, that's the incentive, and they're getting quality shoes.

Calls to action are a powerful way to reach out and engage the prospective clientele because it subtly grabs their attention. The difference here is that it is an assertive action on your part as opposed to a passive one in which you are simply putting something in front of the public and hoping they will respond to it. You are encouraging, incentivizing, and hooking them into doing something. Yes, the bait for your business.

Calls to action however need to follow the same guidelines as you laid out with incentivizing and hooking. It needs to actually reach that ideal customer profile that you created. It needs to be geared toward satisfying a need or want that they have. And if it's done right, then actually getting them to buy will be a done deal. So before creating a call to action consider carefully what you want to

say to that ideal customer or client. Now consider what you can give them aside from your product or service that goes along with it.

Maybe you are attending an event and your business will have a booth there. Your call to action would be that they attend that event, they'll have fun, or they'll be put in touch with someone or something else that's needful to them. And by that action, you are incentivizing them to commit to this action, and not just think about it or consider it at their leisure. So, when putting together a call to action refer to your ideal customer, then consider the message that might best reach them and *engage* them, then design your call to action around those needs. Do that and you will have added one more building block to your goal of stacking the success and building a better future for yourself and your business.

Stack 4:

The value ladder

In the previous chapters, we covered basic building blocks and simple tactics related to an overall strategy. But here we're going to step up your game and get into greater detail, details that will align your business and your efforts for stacking the success.

We're covering the value ladder.

What is a value ladder and how can it help your business grow?

The value ladder is a method of devising a strategy for offering your products or services. You aren't simply stacking things on a shelf and hoping a customer will buy. You are actively looking at your ideal customer and considering their needs.

Remember, the products or services you provide are there to satisfy a particular want or need for your customer. So, your efforts and your strategy need to bear that in mind and incorporate that in its overall strategy. That will help you determine which tactics are available to you to reach that customer's need.

The value ladder helps you reach and satisfy your customer no matter where they are at in what they need. Consider the simple shoe shop example. Maybe you have a customer that simply needs a pair of shoes. But what if you have a customer that is

outfitting a sports team and that customer needs *many* pairs of shoes? The value ladder helps you help them get what they need. The value ladder helps you reach both customers by building in various price plans that satisfy their needs so that you don't lose either sale because you hadn't accounted for it. As the value increases so does their loyalty and their spending habits with you and your business.

But remember this is called the value ladder, not the price ladder because you are focused on satisfying a need of the customer, and not your own need to make a particular sale. If you focus on the value, then the sale will come of its own accord. That's a given. So, look at the simple sale of a single pair of shoes. How can you satisfy a customer that's just looking for that? Now, look at the other end of the spectrum, the customer that wants to purchase many pairs of shoes. Maybe they want to have the apparel you sell that matches the shoes. How can you satisfy *that* need? Now look at the gaps in between and fill those out. How can you meet those intermediate needs?

It's important to cover the entire spectrum because if you don't you are missing out on satisfying customer needs, and your business won't grow.

Consider the advice of a successful entrepreneur with proven results, Russel Brunson.

"You need to build out a full value ladder. Most businesses I look at have one or two pieces of the ladder. But they rarely have all four. Once we add in the missing pieces the business can start to expand dramatically. There's no end to the level of backend services and experiences you can add. If you keep providing more and more value people will keep spending more and more money to work with you."

He tells it like it is right there and summarizes exactly what you need to help your business thrive, expand, and ultimately succeed. You are hampering yourself and undercutting yourself if you provide only a piece of what you're capable of. Consider also the words of another massively successful entrepreneur and business coach Dan Kennedy who has this to say, and who echoes Brunson very directly.

“Ultimately, the business that can spend the most to acquire a customer, wins.”

Notice he didn't say the business that can spend the most money, which means he is implying that there is more to spend than money. He is implying that those who expend more effort on building the value ladder will be the ones who capture that customer. And if you've built real value into that ladder, they'll become a returning, loyal customer.

What you're doing, and what these experts recommend you do is look at every potential need your customer might have according to where they might be on the value ladder. Are their needs modest and simple? Are they somewhere in the middle or are they extravagant? And then you look at your skill set, look at your means, and what you can do to fill each and every one of those.

But in order for this to be ultimately successful, and precisely as mentioned earlier, you have to remember this is a value ladder, not a spending ladder. Do not just focus on specific amounts of money and price brackets and things of that nature. You are concentrating on what that client's needs are and how you can fulfill that need with value, real everlasting value. If you succeed in doing that the return on investment will come on their own. Let's keep that in mind and continue as long as it takes until you begin to *think about value* and not some dollar amount. Then it will become second nature for you to consider catering to needs and wants, you'll see things from the customer's perspective and learn

to read what they're after, and even too many extents what they don't know they are.

Ultimately what you are doing is satisfying your need, to have a successful business through satisfying a customer's need to have a successful interaction and purchasing experience. Too often these days people are thinking dollar amounts and fixating their attention on that when they shouldn't. They are completely misleading themselves and finding themselves sunk when in fact they should be fixating on how to satisfy that value ladder and give the customer the experience they are searching for.

And the dollar amount will follow.

Your business will grow, and continue to grow because customers will return, and they will return loyally. Even to the extent of bringing you new business and customers. Essentially by giving the customer the experience they need, you recruited them to sell for you, even while they're buying.

Think about that, when you think about stacking for success.

Stack 5:

Attack the stack

In this chapter, we're talking about taking the fight to the market. We're talking about marshaling all the resources of our company, taking all the advice and knowledge we've acquired, and putting that to work to make our business grow. Remember the first lesson we learned was that it wasn't enough to simply build it and they will come, and in fact, we learned that's actively self-defeating. And so that bedrock lesson remains. We can't simply develop these tools that we have like our value ladder and then sit, and hope business will come our way one day.

We've got to look at everything in our toolbox, consider how we can best apply those tools to our needs, and get the most bang for our buck as the saying goes.

We created our company from the ground up. But now we need to identify what it is our company needs to make our business grow and remain sustainable. What are our objectives?

Maybe we've got a great brick and mortar location but not a whole lot of social media presence?

Maybe we've got a great online presence, cool website, but for some reason, we aren't getting traffic to our website? Maybe we're looking to expand but we don't know how, or where?

That's the first thing we do, is identify our business objectives.

Don't think of solutions yet, just identify the objectives and make note of that and move on. Our next objective is to identify our ideal customer and their needs. What are they looking for?

Now we look at our value ladder and see which things correlate between those needs of our business and the needs of our clients. Let's look at where the two might meet?

For instance, maybe our clients or customers aren't getting enough information about what they want, and maybe we aren't seeing enough traffic to our website?

There's a strong correlation right there and it helps us define our problem specifically and it provides a solution. In this particular case, it sort of spells it out for us. If we add more information, if we provide more ways for our customers to learn about our business, we're providing them with *value* and we're filling out our value ladder even more. And if we do that it seems relatively certain we'll see that uptick in traffic to our website. Do you have a marketing plan?

Maybe we need to balance out our proactive and reactive services a little better? Proactive would be emailing potential clients or finding ways to assertively reach out and engage them. Reactive would be areas like customer service. Here again, we're adding to our value ladder by offering our clients more value, and then again, we aren't talking about dollars and cents, we're focused on providing value to our customer experience at both ends. And the money will take care of itself as the business scales.

Maybe we need to work on our branding because we're having issues, and that somehow correlates to clients not understanding our platform, our message. This is where we identify the SWOT-strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats. We invest in

improvements to our customer service and inside communications between partners, coworkers or departments.

Everything we're doing here relates directly to our value ladder and taking an active part in engaging our business and promoting its growth.

And this isn't all. This is only a part of what we need to be doing when we attack the stack. We also need to be considering the power of technology and social media as tools and considering the potential for new tools as they emerge. What's more, we also want to be constantly looking for what works, as well as what *doesn't* work or *isn't* working for our business and growth.

Several years ago mass email subscriptions became a viable tool for reaching out to the public and garnering potential new customers. At the time it appeared to be a fabulous way to reach literally thousands and more who could conceivably be interested in the business we were promoting. And for a while, it worked precisely as it should, and it did reach thousands.

But then times changed, and the landscape we were operating on changed and we discovered something. Tools that were working for us, stopped. And it even went so far as to become distinctly counterproductive to our growth. Precisely because mass email marketing worked, everyone adopted it, and soon potential customers went from receiving one or two emails to dozens and dozens more. Suddenly it became less an informative form of outreach and assertive marketing, to being an annoyance, and considered invasively aggressive. And companies that utilized that type of marketing could be counted on to be thought of as spam. Although this may be the perception this is not entirely true.

Nobody listened, nobody was interested and it at all went in the trash. And any people who remembered the name attached to it automatically associated that company with spam also because

the subject lines and content within the emails were not written correctly.

And this became very bad for those businesses that did not understand adding value and emailing to those who have opted in with interest.

As a tool that was once fabulously effective, became almost overnight, obsolete, and notoriously ineffective, even counterproductive for nearly all small businesses.

When we're looking at technologies and marketing strategies we need to consider which of those tools work, and which of those tools *don't* and we need to stop using them or become educated on how to make them more effective. What is your opinion on emails? Have you ever opted in on something and feel they deliver value?

When we do that we're taking resources formerly allocated to something else and freeing them up for better use of time and effort.

Now that didn't mean we still couldn't reach out to potential customers and get them on a mailing list. It just meant we stopped doing what didn't work and allocated those resources to a new strategy, this is a keyword. In some cases, we went from being proactive, to *reactive* by simply allowing customers or potential clients to add themselves to a mailing list, opt-in on a landing page etc. Maybe we were getting fewer on the mailing list, but those that were going on it had an invested interest in being there and turn into a higher quality lead.

So again, it might at face value look like we lost business growth, but we didn't. It grew, maybe a little slower, but it was growing, and we stopped actively hurting ourselves or hampering growth by utilizing a tool that wasn't working as it did in the past.

Understanding that applications, push notifications, and text was the next big resources in the marketplace.

But we maintain this ability to know what works and what doesn't not just by using fancy analytics and such, but also, and more importantly, by seeing things from the customer's perspective and A/B split testing everything we can. We need to be able to consistently switch between our perspective, and the clients and see social media, and the technological tools as exactly that, tools. They aren't an automatic fix. Remember what we said about building it and they will come? If you notice, sometimes we are still at risk of falling into that same self-defeating behavior because we adopt a certain new technology and think if we do that, it'll fix everything, and the business will flow. We cannot allow ourselves to think that way. Rather we have to think of our business as a high-performance vehicle we're driving and attempting to bring it to its greatest possible state of performance. Keeping in mind that off-roading and racing on the track are completely different and the tools in which we utilize are geared toward that specific usage. Any mechanic will tell you it requires constant maintenance. Tools can fix a problem and they can improve performance. But they aren't a one and done solution that fixes everything all time for every condition. One must adapt and change as the online market and technology changes. How often do think technology is being updated?

Just like a race car, our business requires constant maintenance and constant vigilance when we are stacking for success.

Stack 6:

Strategy vs tactics

Strategy vs tactics in online marketing, and business. This is a two-fold chapter we're talking about this time. And it's important because both have relevance to the growth of your business.

Strategy in online marketing is focused largely on long-term gains, and goals. Its focus lies in the overall path that your business should take to reach whatever goals you have set for it, and even surpass them. Because we are talking about stacking for success, we're talking about growth and succeeding beyond even our own expectations for our business. With that in mind, we truly do need to sit down and map out where we are now, where we want to be, and what that mid-field position is going to look like. Then we consider what needs to happen to reach each of those milestones and positions. We also need to determine which tools we will need to acquire to implement those plans. Those tools we use are for short-term gains, and those fall under tactics.

For long-term goals in online marketing, there are typically four different categories that help us define our goals and what they should be, and how we achieve them.

1: Strategy defines our future direction. Simply that, it defines where we want to go. Do we want to open up new outlets for our stores? How do we use online marketing to help us do that? Do

we want to reach one million subscribers to our mailing list? Strategy helps us map out the playing field and allows us to see everything from a distance so that we can grasp all the outlying factors that are playing a part in the growth of our business. It helps us define likely obstacles we might face at certain points so that we can develop ways of dealing with those obstacles before we reach them.

Just like any competent general in warfare knows, it isn't a wise idea to simply go marching the army off into the wilderness without an idea of where we are going, and what sort of opposition we are likely to face. If we encounter equally organized resistance in the form of an enemy army, our strategy must necessarily differ than if we encounter bandits or small bands of disorganized resistance. And then we've got to look at the simple topography of the terrain. What does the playing field itself look like? Are there rivers to cross? Are there mountains? All these things are understood and discovered through the use of strategy to define our future direction. And if we are smart we will use our outside perspective to see things from our customer's point of view, we will pretend we're at the opposite end of that spectrum, and what we look like trying to get there. It's no different in online marketing strategy. Remember the example of mass emailing subscriptions? Sounded like a viable tactic to use in an overall strategy, but seeing things from the customer's perspective, we discover that isn't viable at all and indeed is counterproductive. It hampers our overall direction and ability to get there. That is an example of the strategy defining our direction and altering the tactic we use to help us get there.

2: Strategy defines our competitive advantage. And our competitive advantage is defined by our value ladder. When we created our value ladder we started by looking at what we offered customers in various states of expectation. We went beyond simply *offering shoes* but asked ourselves how can we cater to the customers who have different needs? Is it enough to simply offer

shoes for sale? Or do we need to ask ourselves how do we satisfy the modest client who only needs a single pair of shoes to a client who needs shoes for a whole sports team? And what about the client in between? We are looking at the value we can offer each and every one of those customers to make sure their experience leaves them wanting to return as a dedicated and loyal client who thinks about us first, and our competitors second. The value ladder helps us develop the means of reaching our long-term objectives by offering value to each and every engagement we have with a potential or existing client or customer.

Those back-end services we offer on the ladder are tactics, they are short-term movements and activities we engage in to achieve a short-term gain. But the ladder itself and the concepts it represents are an overall strategy that helps us define our competitive advantage.

Ultimately we want to focus strictly on satisfying our customers or clients with the very best service we can provide. But our competitive advantage there is a result, and it becomes a *superior* service over what our competitors provide as a byproduct.

The beauty of the value ladder strategy is that it provides *us* with what *we* need to grow our business by forcing or encouraging us to focus on the *customer* and *their* needs. Consequently, *our* needs will be met, and our growth achieved.

3: Strategy defines top level resource allocation. What this means is that strategy is defined as *how* and *where* our resources are used and to what end. And that end is of course growth and success within our company. Those resources are essentially the tactics we use, they are the tools, effort, and manpower that we utilize to achieve our overall goal. But the means by which we allocate those resources is our strategy. One example is if for whatever reason we decided to use all our resources toward reactive marketing, in which we relied upon making the customer

approach us, engage with us, and ultimately give us their business. If we avoided all proactive methods of online marketing that would be a particular strategy. It all depends on what our endgame is, which helps us define how we allocate those resources. And for some particular businesses, maybe those that rely on ambiance, subtle engaging experience, and a relaxing atmosphere, maybe a reactive marketing strategy is the way to go? It all depends upon where we ultimately want to be that helps us define how we do it.

4: Strategy sets a specific long-term vision. Strategy is also defined in what our long-term vision is going to be, what our long-term perspective is going to be on how we conduct our business, and how we seek our growth. Are we going to be proactive in our behavior and perspective, or are we going to be reactive? Are we going to be a mix of the two? Naturally, we've developed a long-term destination that we eventually want to reach but the strategy is also our perspective on how we're getting there. Are we setting an ambitious timetable for doing so? Or are we in no hurry and we're going to proceed at a slower pace? That's part of our long-term vision because it's determining our perspective and how we see what is in front of us.

Stacking the success as it applies to online marketing and long-term strategy vs tactics means understanding what your long-term goals are, and which tools, or tactics you use that best suit your customer's needs above all. That's the value ladder, and your monetary success will follow.

Strategy vs tactics in business also relies on the value ladder because it is such an inherent part of reaching the growth your business needs to thrive. What really makes the value ladder so necessary to winning is because it ties into the number one marketing strategy used by businesses everywhere. And that is

exactly what we covered in the very beginning, branding, and finding your niche.

When used correctly the value ladder reflects all the values that you built into your business and what you made your foundation. Remember that branding is the process by which you determine what your values are, and you translate that into an identity, and personality for your business. You then take the comparative lessons you learned about how being a mechanic relates to running your business. It requires consistent maintenance in order to keep your growth moving along as it should. Remember when we talked about changing perspectives and seeing things as our customer base sees them? All these elements contribute to your strategy in business.

And it contributes to the success of your branding process. The experts and their opinions reflected this when they told us that if we invest the most in our customers, our customers will invest the most in us, and that will bring the success we are looking to achieve. Now branding is a long-term strategy precisely because it requires you to look at the overall picture, all the pieces on the board, and understand how and why they interact as they do. Then you utilize the message of who you are, your brand, to mold that information to your competitive advantage. The tactics you use will be dictated by that because they are short-term movements and actions designed for an immediate return.

Branding as it applies to business is crucial in the sense that it conveys your value ladder to your customer base, and allows them to see what you value, it allows them to see what drives you and how you see yourself and your business. When done correctly branding can and does communicate a great deal of information immediately and allows the customer to associate you, your business, and your values with the traits that are most desirable to them in a given business.

Branding identity allows you to associate those traits with your business, personality allows you to associate the human characteristics you want to your business so that your customer base sees your business as a reflection of you. It allows your business to seem more personable, friendly, and approachable. And it allows your customer to see that your business sees *them* as valuable insofar as they know they will be treated to value when they interact with your business. The distinguishing factor here is value, and that is the key element within your interaction and engagement with your customer.

In the end, value should be the hallmark of your overall business strategy. And if each element of the value ladder is added, and you continue to maintain that process of adding value to the ladder your customers will associate those words, those traits to your business, and what ends up happening, is that by treating each customer with value, you recruit them into your business to sell for you. Satisfied customers like telling others about the great deal they got. And they'll tell their friends, coworkers, and family about where they got it from. It's a basic element of success called force multiplication whereby you recruit others to help you achieve your goals, and you take potential negatives or neutrals, and you recruit them as allies. This is a sound business strategy and that is stacking the success.

Stack 7

Continuity programs

Continuity programs are those that provide a continuous stream of revenue at specific intervals. For example, they might be programs in which a customer is provided with a regular product or service, and they recurrently pay on a monthly basis. These programs figure into the value ladder significantly because they allow your business to grow on its own with residual revenue you don't have to actively pursue. In other words, continuity programs provide revenue reactively, which means you aren't investing any greater resource than what you put into it to set it up. All you do is simply maintain it and interact with the customers as they request it.

Perhaps you own a bookshop. One continuity program might be that customers can pay a monthly subscription fee and perhaps they receive a new book in a particular price bracket. One way that this could easily tie into the value ladder would be that you provide with that small book a newsletter that features upcoming releases of anticipated authors. Additionally, you can fill out your value ladder by offering different packages which provide greater and greater content and thus more value as the customer desires, according to their position on the value ladder.

Maybe a modest customer at the bottom end receives the newsletter and a small book. Then someone on the intermediate

level receives the newsletter, a larger book on the price bracket, and something additional to that. Then those on the highest level receive even more value according to their place on the ladder. In this way, you are reactively allowing the value ladder to accrue increasing amounts of revenue on a regular basis with little involvement beyond basic maintenance of your own.

This is smart business, this exhibits the virtues of the value ladder precisely and this you, and your business stacking the success.

In truth, one could arguably say that it is a continuity program that embodies the value ladder at its finest because you are covering the entire spectrum of clients that you could have, and you are providing for all of them with little more from you than basic maintenance. What you'll do in order to set up a continuity program is no different than what you have already done with your value ladder. You've looked first and foremost from the customer's perspective and asked yourself, *what can this business provide me* in terms of the value I'm looking for. Then you are looking at your business from your perspective and asking yourself the same question. Then you are correlating the answers from the two and connecting those by lines. A modest customer could find value in an in-depth newsletter of some type that uncovers upcoming features you might be providing in terms of services. A more intermediate customer gets that, and a deal on some product or service that you might provide them residually. And for the extravagant customer, you provide the works, with possibly even greater deals available only to them because they are a loyal and valued customer who is seeking the very best your company has to offer. A continuity program is simply a smart tool, and tactic which allows you residual growth you don't have to proactively pursue. This allows an even greater revenue stream of resources to be allocated into other programs or aspects of your company, which in turn promotes still greater growth overall.

Continuity programs are great also because in a sense they reveal to the customer your value ladder, and it allows them to see and know that you are ready to satisfy their needs no matter where they are on that ladder. And even more, it allows your customers to move up the ladder at their convenience so that they can open themselves up to more value you can provide them. It offers your customers greater freedom of choice in deciding what is best for them, and a sense of trust and reliability that you've already provided for them. It's merely a matter of their pushing the button and signing themselves up for more value. It allows your customers freedom of movement. And that itself is a virtue they may not find with competitors, and certainly not to the level that you can provide.

Continuity programs tell your customer that they matter.

They matter because you thought well enough of their needs, that you thought of them, and did more than simply put products on a shelf and let that be that.

That's the power of a continuity program because it relies on precisely the same principles you built into your ladder. You took care of the customer's needs first and foremost, and in turn, your customers will provide you with the revenue, and growth your business requires.

But none of this will apply if you haven't applied the lessons you learned about the value ladder to the program.

Look at your business first, as a customer would. Then consider what they want and need out of your business. Then look at how you can meet those needs, and even go the extra mile.

Your customers will thank you for it by providing you with a steady stream of residual revenue at intervals, and which tells you that your customer is a returning and loyal one that values your

business above your competitors. What is even better than all of this is that it allows your customer's room to tell you more about themselves, and you'll be able to capitalize on that by continually offering new and even better services to provide for their needs.

That is smart business, and that is stacking the success.

Stack 8: Secret formula

Sustainable business development plan.

That is your secret formula to continued growth in your business. But to do that you have to understand what it means in terms of your environment, your business, and your customers. You have already learned how to develop a long-term strategy; you've learned how to build a plan. But now you want to keep that going, you want to keep that momentum building so that you can continue to feed your business and see it grow. And that is part of what sustainability means. Sustainability means keeping the momentum and growth potential for your business viable. But it also means understanding the environment you and your business are operating in, and how you can use that or harness the energy present there to help aid in keeping that momentum. That's what sustainability means and here's how you can achieve it.

You draw upon the skill set you already have to help you. Remember when you learned about long-term strategy and seeing not only your business but your customers, and the playing field you were on? So, look at the environment you are operating in. Maybe you have that shoe shop and you have an online presence, and you have your value ladder and things are looking good for you. But is it going to *continue* looking good for you? Or is your

business going to grow as a result of your efforts, but then peak and stop growing? Part of a sustainability plan is looking ahead at your growth and seeing problems before they arise. It may seem counterintuitive but experiencing growth without a plan behind it could actually cause you to *lose* growth in the future if you don't plan for it. Consider your shoe shop and you've got great results stemming from your value ladder and from your continuity program you've instituted, and you have great traffic from your website.

But what happens when the business and the traffic start to overwhelm your ability to satisfy the needs of all those customers banging down your door for great shoes and the value that comes with them?

The business will stagnate because your supply can't keep up with demand.

Then customers will start looking elsewhere.

You have an endless amount of creative options if you want to continue growth and create potential for new revenue streams.

There may be both positives and negatives to many of the options you plan, and there really isn't a wrong answer insofar as each one could apply to your shoe shop depending on what you have projected your needs to be and which are most equitable to you in that regard.

Now in the more physical sense of understanding your environment that has as much bearing as the intellectual sense of your environment. If your shoe shop were in a less than desirable location but you were providing that A + level of service, then moving completely, could theoretically be just the thing you needed. Consider the possibility of getting that larger location when you did. If your location is already fairly desirable then obviously expanding your existing space could be just the trick. Or

maybe you aren't getting as much traffic in the store but you're seeing a significant amount from online purchases, maybe even from customers across the country? Then clearly expanding the online business is now an option.

Understanding your environment both physically and intellectually helps you determine the longer range plans you make to create new or increases revenue streams.

What if you take that big step and you get that second location? What if you invest to expand the existing one? What if you expand that online business? Can you legitimately and reasonably keep that going? Or is that investment going to kill you in cost?

To some extent certainly many business decisions are gambles, but with proper planning, we can hedge those bets to a standard that supports our decision.

And that's what this chapter and this subject is all about, supporting our decisions with sustainability and allowing growth to continue to happen.

Now in looking forward and according to whichever decision we made in this situation, we would have the ability to see the potential for further growth and of course the potential for further problems which might interfere with that. We would want to build in what we've learned about calls to action and other helpful tactics which move our overall strategy forward.

For instance, in whichever move you made you'd want to choreograph that with a call to action for the customers to check out the new place. You could build in further and greater value by giving them some added service according to their place on the ladder. A grand opening is naturally an outstanding place to help kick off your momentum. But then you need to consider what to do once that party is over, and the excitement wears off, the initial

high that customers get from being in a brand-new place. That's where the value ladder really comes in because you need to keep them coming back, and most crucially you need them to tell others.

Remember what we said about recruiting them to sell for you? Here again, moving them up the value ladder is precisely the way to do that. Focus on what your customer is going to expect, and want, and need from your new place, and consider how you offer that to them.

Consider that continuity program of residual revenue streams.

Now you are thinking several moves ahead, and like the game of Chess, that's how you win.

That is the essence of stacking the success.

Stacking the success means exactly that, you are stacking new levels on top of the foundation you built, and level by level you are sustaining your growth by sustaining the value you offer your customer or client through the products or service you provide them.

Stack 9: Referral benchmark

The referral benchmark is a crucial part of continuing growth and customer engagement. The referral is of course the process of creating ways for customers to refer your business to others. Remember earlier when we said that if we hit the mark on our ideal customer and provided them with the experience they wanted and needed, they would naturally recruit themselves to sell for us?

That's what the referral benchmark is. It is the process whereby we get our loyal customers to sell our services for us to others. And we do that by first creating the ideal experience for the ideal customer. Secondly, that customer then tells others, brags about our service, and tells others what a great service or product they received from us.

But we need to build into our system multiple ways in which they can do that. Word of mouth is naturally the most potent way they can do that, but we have social media at our disposal, and this is the virtual component of that word of mouth. They can spread that word to others far away, and we can garner that attention further away and still reap the rewards of that word of mouth experience. We build multiple ways of referral by introducing various social media mediums to the customer, from our website to perhaps a Facebook page, or some other platform. Each one allows the

customer to share that link or their experience with us to someone else or even multiple people. There are numerous social media outlets by which they can post a review, others can share in their ideal experience. Then we have analytics by which we can view the statistics on how effective those mediums are. We can determine which mediums are working, which aren't, and why. A ballpark figure on what we should expect is in percentages of 7,15,30 and 50.

If we are getting a referral rate of 7% this means it's on the very low end of okay, but really could use a lot of work. If it's at 15% we can say that's fairly solid but could naturally still benefit from improvement. If we're getting a 30% referral rate that means it's looking very good and we need to determine ways to make that even better. There are some situations in which a whopping 50% return on referrals has been reported and this is truly astounding. It means literally half of every single person participating in the referral benchmark is passing word of mouth to others.

That's incredible, it's incredibly hard to achieve, but it's also incredibly possible with the right magic working for us in our referral benchmark system.

And the incredibly hard to achieve should be exactly what we shoot for when we institute our value ladder and customer satisfaction. Because if we do that, always keeping customer value in our primary focus we can honestly look forward to those incredibly hard to achieve rewards.

Everything that we have discussed from chapter one to the present has been focused on giving that ideal customer the ideal experience and simply letting them give us the revenue and growth we need in return. At no point in any lesson have we put price, above a customer.

That's because we know that if we treat our customers right and provide them with value, they will provide value to our revenue in return. Success will follow if we invest our efforts in the right strategies and the right tools.

So, in order to continue our ability to produce sustainability in our momentum we need to produce sustainability in customer satisfaction. No other tool nor strategy will benefit us according to our needs in referral benchmarks as much as basic customer satisfaction. When we go above and beyond and show our customers that we value them as people, and see them as people, and not simply as a mere number by which to sell a particular price point, we raise the bar on our rewards and the success that comes with it.

At every level by which we engage our customers, we must always come back to that basic tenant, which is complete satisfaction. We need them to see us as a cut above the rest, we need them to see us as the only truly viable choice when balanced against our competitors. And that is how by treating them to the very best of experiences they can have.

It isn't enough to build it and they will come. We need to follow the words of the experts who told us that if we spend the most on our customers they will spend the most on us.

And we know that that meant spending the most for their customer experience, and not exactly the most money on them. It isn't enough to offer various gifts or shiny baubles in exchange for their business, we need to offer them what they need and what they want and package that inside the kindest and most considerate exchange possible. If we do that then according to the tools and strategies, we've implemented that customers will see us as a business they want to return to and a business others need to know about in a positive way.

With every single customer we provide value to, we are stacking the success in ways that will pay us back with continued and sustainable growth in our business and levels of success we never imagined we could achieve.

And we do that, by putting our customers, and their needs, first. We define our success by their value, and we cater specifically to that first and foremost. And we look for ways to continue to expand on that, always keeping them, and their experience in our primary focus.

That is smart business, and that is stacking the success.

Stack 10:

Recovery strategies

Let's assume that something completely outside the realm of your control has caused the loss or unhappiness of customers or clients. Maybe you've taken over a company and you are calling the shots now, maybe you were sick and removed from decision-making processes. But now you're in the driver's seat and there's a mess ahead. There are unhappy customers, there are clients who said they won't be coming back.

How do you fix it?

We'll tell you how, by implementing recovery strategies already in place and built into the value ladder. Because remember we are focused primarily on the customers' needs and we know that if we follow the formula as laid out in the previous lessons, and the inherent virtues of the value ladder we will take care of our customers first and they, in turn, will take care of us.

And prosperity *will* follow.

The first thing you do is reach out to them, even personally in some cases if you can. Apologize for any inconvenience, then ask them what is wrong. Ask them for their perspective first and foremost always. Maybe you've designed a survey or customer complaint service in which they can voice their opinion there. In whatever

fashion you've designed it finds out first and foremost from them what they think, what their experience was.

You see the situation from their perspective, just as you shifted your perspective to theirs in the beginning when you considered how to make things better, do it again here with that same design in mind. What went wrong for them and why. Then, once you've determined in their perspective what went wrong and why you can explain what happened on your end. You don't make excuses.

Never make excuses for any reason.

Instead, simply explain the shortfall.

There's a big difference between making excuses and simply explaining a shortfall.

Then you let that customer know that you value their opinion and perspective, you appreciate their voicing it and letting you know when something was less than satisfactory.

Then you explain that you would like to make things right for them. You'd like to retain their business and you are their advocate. When you position yourself as their advocate in making things right you position yourself in a place of alliance with them. They already see the company in a negative light, but if you position yourself in alignment with their perspective you place yourself outside that circle of negativity and instead, you are working on their behalf to fix things.

Once again you are in a place in which the value ladder works to satisfy that customer and their needs. Refer yourself to that value ladder and consider what they need to walk away from this particular situation satisfied, and no longer viewing the company in a bad light.

Ideally, you want them to view you as an ally in their cause, and in turn, when you succeed in answering their complaint you have turned negativity into positivity. You have allowed them the opportunity to reassess their earlier negative opinion and switch that to positive.

Look at the value ladder and consider their needs. Then look at what you have available among your resources to meet that need. Once again it is abundantly important to remember this is *not* about fixing a price and throwing that at them. Don't offer some lavish gift that doesn't meet their need because then it appears you are doing nothing but bribing them to keep their negative opinion to themselves and go somewhere else with it.

That doesn't go to say you don't offer some gift, but it needs to be done in accordance with satisfying their need.

Maybe the client got a bad pair of shoes from your shop? You don't offer them a different pair if those aren't the ones they want. Offer to have that particular type given to them from your stock, special order it, but remain focused on *that* need. And you'll earn yourself a great deal of goodwill from your customer. Once you've delivered on that need and they state that they are satisfied with that gesture of rectification *then* you could offer something additional as a compensatory gesture. Maybe you offer them a discount on another purchase? Maybe you offer to give them a month free on your continuity program with the intent to sign them up the following month as a residual customer? Consider how you can make each gesture with value from their perspective. What would appeal most to that particular customer?

When you reveal to them that you are giving them special attention you are revealing to them that you care about their happiness and their business personally.

You aren't going to offer them some coupon book, no, you are going the extra mile for them because they have been wronged in some fashion and you are there to fix it and see their complete satisfaction.

See the difference? You already can't you? If someone offered you some paltry gift that didn't really satisfy your need vs someone who offered to fix the problem, provide for your need, and then offer a small gift on top of it you would feel that they cared about you and your experience enough to go that extra mile.

That is what brings a customer back, that is what provides for a full recovery and that is what puts negativity behind you where it belongs. It belongs in the rearview mirror, not on the road ahead.

Because you are in the business of stacking the success and you have every confidence that with all the tools we have provided in this book you can achieve that success and that sustainable growth your business needs.

But this is always done with the customer or client's needs and satisfaction as your primary driving force. When you focus on price points you are missing the point. You are missing out on value not only for yourself but for your customer.

But what if we have a bigger problem? What if we have somehow alienated a lot of customers?

There's a recovery strategy for that too. But our goal here is to arm you sufficiently with the tools and the knowledge that you can avoid that situation in the first place and stop trouble before it starts.

Let's consider a wider issue for an example.

One of the leading causes of alienation in larger numbers of clients or customers is over the branding process. Remember what we

said about remaining consistent in the message you are sending to your target market audience? In your branding process, you are telling your target market audience that you stand for certain values, you've attached certain traits to your corporate identity and personality.

Now if for whatever reason that message changes and the public suspects or perceives that you have altered that message and done or said something that was perceived as contrary to your own values they tend to take that personally. And well they should because you have invested time and money, and effort into building up a relationship with them and causing them to see your company as a person. And if that *person* does something contrary to what they say they stand for the public you engaged in takes that as an affront, possibly an insult, and a violation of the trust you expended blood and treasure into investing in.

Several years ago a particular company, which will remain unnamed because we are here to illustrate a lesson, not cast aspersions, got themselves into trouble because their target market audience perceived that they had done something that went against their values.

What had happened was that this particular company stated its values and built its identity on those particular values. Then the social landscape began to change and certain elements within society began to embrace those values. But *those* values were at odds with what this company said *theirs* were. As it happened they produced a television commercial espousing this embrace of the *new* values, which went against the *old* ones.

Their reasons for doing so could have been many, who knows. They might have been trying to tap into a new market of customers. But they did so at the expense of their already existing base. This base took the move as an affront to them, and a direct violation of their trust.

The company experienced a major backlash and their loyal customer base demanded an explanation.

Now at this point, the smart business might have made the wise decision to at least engage with their customer base and offer an explanation. If even it didn't bring back the old customers it might at least have mitigated some of the damage. Maybe they might have issued a retraction and an apology? That might have gone even further in mitigating some damage and it might have at least been the first step in a recovery process.

And in any case, it would still have been a gesture that showed they were actively engaging their old customer base. But they didn't do that. The company completely ignored the grievances all across social media and even went so far as to publicly state that they weren't apologizing for the commercial and indeed espoused those new values.

Essentially what they did in harshest terms was to tell the old loyal customer base to shove off.

They completely and totally abandoned a loyal customer base to cash in on what they felt was a newer and riper target market audience. They tried to stay relevant with the changing landscape of a new social movement or force.

What they did in truth was pile mistake on top of mistake, and then had the temerity to not even try to engage the loyal customer base that made them into the multinational multibillion corporate giant they became.

They got too big for the britches and thought they were too big to fail.

What they did was commit a host of cardinal sins, and then not even try to apologize for it.

And the number one sin they committed was abandoning their loyal target market audience and sold them out for what they perceived was more and new money.

If there is any lesson we have hammered home here is this school of thought, it is the value of the customer experience. And any money or prosperity or growth you are seeking will come with that. Seek to satisfy the customers' needs, and the money will follow.

Never, ever put money before the customer's need. And never, ever refuse to engage with them, or even go so far as to tell them *they* are wrong.

Ultimately they discovered they were not too big to fail. And as a result, they lost their standing among their competitors as the leader in the industry. They gave their competitors a Christmas gift all wrapped up in a bow, to which those competitors gleefully went to work entertaining thousands of customers looking for a new company with which to do business.

Lesson #1 you are never too big to fail.

Lesson #2 your success rises and falls at the behest of your customers. Don't ignore them. And NEVER tell them they are wrong.

Lesson #3 if for whatever reason you shoot yourself in the foot. Try not to do it again.

The damage this company did to itself was catastrophic and it was all over greed and hubris.

What this company *should* have done had they been so eager to engage this particular sweeping social trend and tap into a new customer base would have been to do it slowly, and far more subtly. And they should never have actively turned on their loyal customers or even give the remotest perception they were doing

so. And upon discovering that they had they should have aggressively and proactively engaged their loyal customers and explained to them their position and why they had done so.

In the larger sense here where we are talking about branding, our identity, and our personality remember this.

Remain consistent.

Engage your base.

Offer to rectify.

Incentivize them to return.

Remain consistent in your identity and if you can't, engage your base and explain your position. Offer to rectify any insult or perception of such, offer to rectify any hurt feelings or failure to see their needs as a customer. And incentivize them to return or remain as a loyal customer.

Stack 11:

Tell them your story

This is the end of the line, and if there is anything we have tried to put forward above and beyond anything else, it is care for your customer or client. It is engagement on a personal level even if that is only through social media. We still need to convey the message, and never waver from it, that the customer's needs are first and foremost our own. We want to see them completely satisfied with their experience with our company. And we do that by offering them the value ladder, and their ability to move and up down it as is most convenient to them.

We want to incentivize them to engage with us and create and build a relationship and rapport with them so that we keep them year after year as loyal customers.

And at the very root and heart of that engagement is one simple salient human trait.

Honesty.

And the most direct and powerful way in which we can engage them and incentivize them to walk through those doors and do business with us is by being honest about ourselves and telling them our story.

And that is what you will do with your business and your customer base.

Tell them your story. And make that story easily accessible to them, whether it's through a plaque on the wall in your store, or whether it's on your website. Sensibly you should do both.

But tell the customer your story. Tell them about your dream of having the business that you do. And tell them why you had that dream. You saw that they had a particular need that they couldn't find elsewhere. So, you wanted to give it to them.

You had a dream of a shoe shop that was unlike any others elsewhere. You wanted to give them *more* than just a pair of shoes. You wanted to give them a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere and experience that went with that. Of course, you want to make money and be successful! But who doesn't? And why does that inherently have to mean you're greedy or up to no good or in some ways are less than a decent businessperson? Good business is what makes the world go round, and you're participating in something bigger than yourself. And you wanted to share that with others, you wanted everyone to share in this dream of yours of having the best shoe shop anyone had ever imagined. It's exciting and it's energizing and that's a dynamic you wanted to bring to the industry of shoe shops!

It's a pretty cool thing to be a part of. Consider for instance the trend one particular banking firm is taking. They are doing something so people think is pretty weird or radical, but it also weirdly makes sense. They understood that banking and finances and things could be pretty stressful for folks. So, they changed the entire atmosphere of their banking outlets and combined them with coffee shops. So, a customer can have a relaxing cup of coffee with a representative while they do their business. It's a brilliant move and it's groundbreaking in its simplicity. But no one until now had ever really thought about doing it even though it seems to make a lot of sense when you think about it. That's the power of stepping forward and trying something new. That's the power of

bringing value to a customer experience. And that's what you did when you stepped forward to create your business, you wanted to bring value to another person's experience in dealing with you and doing business for whatever service or product you provide.

That's the power of telling your story and sharing it with customers and clients and people you hope to become that. And it's the power of our lessons because already you are exemplifying a lot of the lessons taught.

Right here, right now, you are already creating a value ladder by expressing to the customer that you recognized their need, personalized them, and provided value to their experience.

Boom. Right there you are already engaging and incentivizing them and building rapport.

And as a result, you are already personalizing your business and giving it the identity and traits, you want to see reflected in their perception. You are already branding your business and executing one of the most effective marketing strategies out there. You are transferring the human characteristics of positivity you possess, to your business and that is going to reflect itself in every engagement you have with customers and clients. And you are creating an atmosphere that makes them feel good about their decision in having decided to bring their business to you. You are acknowledging that and building on that to make the future experience even better.

So, consider this in conclusion, consider the simple power of the intangible asset you are bringing to your business with this statement about telling your story. Remember, an intangible asset is something of value that you possess, though you can't physically hold it. But it is as valuable if not more so than any amount of money or other physical assets you could hold.

You are engaging with your customer; with that ideal customer you drew out in your dream customer profile. You are speaking to them on a personal level and treating them like a person, first and foremost, and a valued customer secondly. You are explaining to them that you saw a need, and you wanted to provide for that need. You are setting up your value ladder. Then you are giving them movement on that value ladder because you are showing them what you mean and intend to offer because you're telling them about the business you created. Then you are offering them the opportunity to engage you in business, and business that is valued by you.

You are thanking them for even being there, and patronizing your establishment, and you are wishing them well, and hoping to see them again. You are creating and building rapport and trust.

And all of that together incentivizes them to give you their purchasing power. And in return, you give them a pleasant and satisfactory experience that encourages them to return again for any further needs they might have.

And you succeeded in doing all of that before the very first sale.

That's the power of simply being honest and telling them your story.

That is stacking the success. And you just did it.

Stack 12: The S.T.A.C.K.

Did you really think we'd call it quits with just the book? Did you think we'd let you walk without showing you how *we* value *you* as a client?

Well, here we are. And here we are giving you a little bit more than what you asked for because we *do* value you as a client and we wanted to illustrate the lessons we laid out by satisfying your need for knowledge and giving you just a little bit more.

The S.T.A.C.K. for success



The S.T.A.C.K. for success

So why the word stack? Why did I choose to use that particular word in illustrating the lessons laid out? Because the word itself represents another little secret to building sustainable business growth, and that is a secret we're sharing with you here, and now.

STACK

S: Strategic planning is where success in business begins. No endeavor worthy of prosperity can ever succeed without strategic planning. From the smallest act of thinking about how you might set up a garden, to the greatest act of building an entire business, neither one can succeed with at least a little strategic planning. And both can benefit immensely from using it. It pays to pay attention and that is where the strategy comes in. I had spoken earlier about the general moving his troops and all that he had to potentially contend with. It is no different whatsoever than you are moving your resources into the land of building a business. There will naturally and always be unforeseen circumstances that arise, but with proper planning, you can assess a situation rapidly and feel confident that you have a plan in place to deal with that, or at least allow yourself to survive the experience and not be overwhelmed by it. Strategic planning means you are carefully mapping out where you are, where you want to be, and what it is likely going to entail in getting there. You are planting the seeds of growth before you even begin your endeavor, and you are putting in place the plans you need to harvest and reap the rewards of that growth and sustain that.

T: Tactical executions allow for a focused approach to your overall strategy and your goals. Tactics in this sense are the tools and decisions you make in the short term, meant for short-term gain, which pushes your overall strategy forward. Tactics are the calls to action, well-timed, that help give you a little extra boost to get the next move off the ground. For instance, consider the example

I have spoken about when you opened your new shoe store location. And so, you considered the benefits of a well-timed move, and you put out a call to action to bring attention to your new location, engage your customers, and incentivize them to come in and check out the new digs. Every tactical move you make is designed specifically for a short-term gain, that moves your business forward to that sustainable growth potential you know is possible.

A: Authority. To achieve or earn authority you have to stand out among your competitors as a leader. Become an influencer. You must show your target market audience that you are a cut above the rest. And *why* are you a cut above the rest? Because you aren't focused on price points and you don't see your customer as a number or statistic. You don't see your customers as a commodity or resource toward your big bank account. You actually care about your customers and you care about their experience with you. You see the customers for who they are, people with needs and wants and you are the one who can bring value to that. You are in business first and foremost to engage that need and provide for it. And you know the value of the relationship you have with your customers. And you know and possess every confidence that if you treat them right, they will treat you right. And in the end, the prosperity will follow that relationship. You stand strong and immovable in your branding, in your identity, and in your personality. And you that that breeds trust. And you understand and communicate to your customer that *that* is your most prized possession among all your assets. Their trust.

C: Channels. Choosing the right marketing channels for sustainable growth is key. You understand the tools you have at your disposal; you understand how and why they work. And you understand the necessity of discarding those that don't. Remember when we talked about mass spam email and how at first it was initially regarded as a viable and reliable tool. But then

it became annoying to customers and they never bothered to read them? Smart businesses understood the value of reaching out to customers in a proactive way. But as the climate changed that no longer brought growth, but instead began to hamper it. So, the smart businesses retained their ability to get customers on a mailing list but simply changed it from a proactive to a reactive approach. That was a smart use of marketing channels.

K: Keys. Keys are monitoring and measuring success with three keys, result oriented basic steps. Solution-action-result are those keys. You read the need for a solution and present that. Then you observe the action with defined monitoring and measuring steps that generate the results you are looking for as you STACK your success.

That's why we chose that particular word, because it embodies the secret elements that contribute to our success, and we know that it will contribute to yours when you implement those elements into your overall business plan.

And we know that your success is our success, because we have done our best to take care of you as our client, and as a result, we trust in the relationship and rapport we have built.

We value that, and we value you.

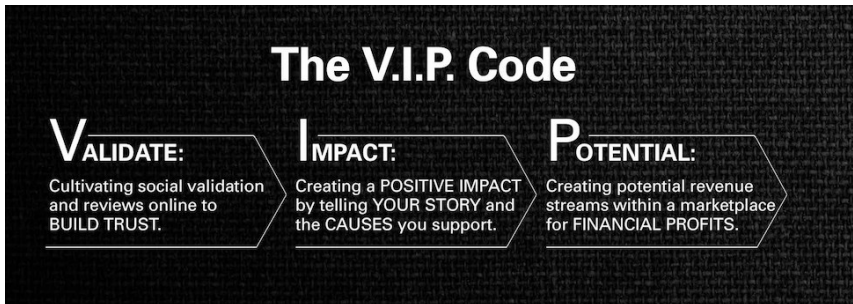
Stack 13: The V.I.P. Code

The V.I.P. Code

Validate: Cultivating social validation online to BUILD TRUST.

Impact: Creating a POSITIVE IMPACT by telling YOUR STORY and the CAUSES your support.

Potential: Creating potentials within a marketplace for FINANCIAL PROFITS.



Validate: Cultivate and *validate* reviews online to build trust. What that means is you have set up and created the means by which social media benefits your relationship with your clients and customers. You have provided value to that relationship by creating message boards and ways and means by which

customers can communicate with you, and you can let them know they've been heard and acknowledged. Validate means to acknowledge their perspective and whether good or bad you are acting on it. If a customer leaves a fabulous review about your service you can thank them and tell them what a wonderful experience you and your business had in dealing with them. And if something were less than satisfactory you can reach out to that customer and show them that they have been heard, and you are able to begin rectifying that situation. You are always focused on their satisfaction and their ultimate fulfillment of needs. What is more, you are doing so in front of an audience, your target market audience. You are letting them see the interaction taking place and reassuring them that if they have any such problems you will be there for them as well.

You are building and enhancing trust.

Impact: By engaging your customers as people and bringing value to their experience, you are impacting them. By telling your story you are engaging them on a personal level and inviting them to see your company as possessing the positive human characteristics they want to interact with. And by doing all of that you are showing them that *they* have value. Part of sustaining your growth is sustaining the positive momentum you are generating every day in every act. You are leading by example and showing your authority as the best in whatever business industry you find yourself in. And you are doing it by generating positivity, not negativity. You'll see a lot of companies out there that try to gain traction by actively competing and talking smack about other companies. You don't need to do that because you are generating the forward momentum you need by generating a positive impact in every aspect of the word against every aspect of your business. You are creating a dynamic that energizes your interactions with your customers and clients and makes them gravitate to you for all their needs.

Potential: In business, we need to create potential to scale our business model and create multiple revenue streams. Ultimately, we all know that a business is in business to earn money. That is understood and generally, nobody faults anybody for it when they are doing it fairly and squarely. So, with that understanding, you don't need to focus on that, and you certainly don't need to convey that to your client or customer. You don't ever want to lend the impression that they are there simply to give you a payday, and in exchange, you hand them a product. No, you are there for a positive relationship and rapport that meets their NEED. You are there to bring them satisfaction in meeting that need. You are there to provide value to their experience.

The potential here is that you are taking a simple exchange of services to a whole new level and that is what brings you and your sustainable business growth to a whole new level. You are laying out the foundation for an abundance of prosperity that meets all of your financial needs. You are trusting in the system you have built by learning from us and the knowledge we have shared. Understand what that really means, trusting in the system you have built. Understand that by focusing on your customers, your financial needs will be met in abundance. And all the prosperity you are looking for will come to you because you were busy doing something else at the time.

Stacking for success.

We aren't in the business of preaching success and strategies and grand marketing schemes. We are in the business of helping build good business. Because we are exemplifying everything that we've taught here in these lessons. We believe that if we focus on you, our customer, we will meet your needs, and give you the fullest satisfaction from the experience. We are showing you that we value you, for who you are, a person just like us looking to do your best and find prosperity. And we understand that if we've

done our job well, you'll do yours well. And the end result will bring that abundance of financial security and prosperity where you want it, firmly in hand.

And we accomplish all that, and so will you when we all understand exactly what success really is when we understand what stacking for success truly is.

Stacking for success isn't simply exchanging a service or product and being handed a paycheck. Stacking for success is providing VALUE to that exchange and in return receiving a high ROI.

And seeing a lot of happy clients walk out the door with the promise to return knowing that you have changed a life.

That is the true meaning of stacking for success.