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The 7 crucial steps independent professionals need to take before marketing their services

By Susan Martin

The national SCORE Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to entrepreneur education and the formation, growth and success of small business nationwide. SCORE Portland is one of 389 chapters throughout the United States, with over 11,000 volunteers nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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By [Susan Martin](#)

Are you an independent professional who needs more customers? You don't need a large marketing budget to generate sales for your product or service. But you will need to take some important steps in order to "position" yourself in the marketplace. Here are 7 steps you won't want to skip:

1. **Identify your ideal client and claim your niche.** Hone in on the type of person or business you can get the best results for. Get clear on the market segment and type of problem you solve. Get really specific, don't be afraid that you might be eliminating 90% of the population because the more specific you get, the easier it will be for them to recognize that your products or services are the right choice to help them solve their problems.
2. **Pinpoint their pain.** What are the things that keep your ideal clients worry about that your product or service can help them resolve or eliminate? People buy when there is a need. The more urgent the need, the faster and easier it is to make the sale. Recognize their pain, hit a nerve and help them understand that they need to solve it and you're halfway there!
3. **Understand what their customers really want.** What are the results that your ideal clients are looking for? What are the REAL reasons they'll want to buy from you? Avoid talking about features here; concentrate on the results they'll get from working with you and the things that will motivate them to buy (make money, save time, feel better, etc.)
4. **Get clear about what makes you different from your competition.** Define your unique selling proposition or USP, which gives your prospective customers a reason to say YES by helping them understand why they should buy from you rather than your competition.
5. **Create a compelling values proposition** which explains who your customers are, what they struggle with, how you can help and what results they will get. Use this in all of your marketing communications - your website, business card, sales letters, brochures, sound-bites etc.
6. **Develop a powerful message.** And make sure that your message matches your target market and customer, and your market matches the medium (the vehicle you're using to reach your customer.) This way your message will hit the people who need you the most.
7. **Position yourself as an expert problem-solver.** Write articles, do workshops and seminars, publish a newsletter, anything that gets you out there in front of your target audience and lets them that

you're the person or company who will best help them solve their problems.

Once you've taken these 7 critical steps, you'll have a compelling marketing message that will help you attract the customers your business needs.

Susan Martin, professional business coach, based in NYC, created **Business Sanity** to help business owners and independent professionals who struggle with marketing, management and productivity; want to increase profits, avoid burnout and run their business most effectively. To find out how you can make more money with less effort and stress; [visit Susan on the web](#) and [subscribe to Business Sanity Tips](#) or [schedule your free consultation](#).

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