

TITLE PAGE PLACEHOLDER – TO BE REPLACED WITH PDF COVER

Affinity Marketing

By Chris Cooper

Every gym owner knows it: Word-of-mouth advertising is the best advertising.

In fact, even Facebook marketing companies prefer to get their clients through referrals from other clients instead of through Facebook!

Clients who are brought in by other clients have a pre-formed bond with your brand. They have built-in support when things get tough and a strong emotional reason to stick. It's a lot easier to go to the gym when you know your friends will be waiting, right? And because every single "stick to your workout" article published online includes the term "find a training partner," our clients already know they **should** exercise with a buddy.

So why aren't they all dragging their spouses, coworkers and best friends into your gym?

Because they're not salespeople.

The customer-referral process is too passive. If we wait for our clients to do our marketing for us, we'll starve. As entrepreneurs, we can't afford to wait for our clients to talk about us.

Affinity Marketing is the process of turning client referrals from passive to active. It's a point-by-point strategy to take control of the conversation, help your clients bring in the people they care about and serve those people best.

I teach this strategy to gym owners around the world. It's effective for many reasons:

- Gym owners attract the **right** clients.
- The new clients already have a strong bond with your **current** clients.
- The process doesn't feel like "**selling.**"
- The process makes your current clients feel **great.**

Affinity Marketing is a win for everyone—the gym owner, the coach, the client and the client's connections.

If you care about your clients, you have to care about what happens to them outside the gym. That means you have to care about what they eat, where they work and what they do. In turn, that means you have to care about their environments, their family lives and their workplaces.

Taking greater care of your clients means broadening your care to include all of these things. And expanding your care means expanding your business—if you follow the process in this book.

Let's start with **why** you should market your business more. Then we'll get to **how**.

Are You In or Out?

Care or quit.

Before we start this conversation, I want you to ask yourself a question: "Do I care enough?"

Does the care for your clients exceed your fear of selling, your fear of asking, your fear of meeting and your pathos?

Care is all you need to sell more. You don't need a checkered suit or shiny shoes. You don't need a Rolex. There's no set of steak knives to motivate you, no "top salesperson" award for shilling.

Before we start this conversation, I'm going to make a few assumptions about you:

1. You have some skin in the game. You own a business or manage a business, and your kids eat what you bring home. You **need** to succeed, in other words. This isn't a side hustle or hobby.
2. You really care about your clients. You want them to succeed.
3. You honestly believe that your service or product **will** help them succeed. If there's any doubt, stop now. You need to read another book.

Zig Ziglar, the greatest salesman of all time, wrote this:

"You can have anything you want in life if you just help enough other people get what they want."

That's been my maxim, first in owning a gym business, then in owning several related businesses, and finally in building the worldwide mentoring practice Two-Brain Business. The concept provoked me to write "Help First," a book about selling without selling. And it led to this e-book, which is a step-by-step guide to growing your business the best possible way.

Before we start this conversation, I want you to know something: I'm a salesman. So was every other instigator whose ideas took root.

Because the idea alone is never enough.

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What Is Affinity Marketing?

We're going to take an inside-out approach to sales: We'll start by identifying your best clients, and then approach the people to whom they're most closely connected. Then we'll follow the same method to get to the next-highest "affinity" group, and the next, and the next. This is Affinity Marketing.

At Two-Brain, we teach marketing in three phases. First, Affinity, then organic, then paid. All three are important, but Affinity Marketing makes the other two far more powerful because it's a force multiplier.

Every new client has connections. When you gain new clients, you're also gaining their families, friends and coworkers. You're gaining access to the teams their kids play on, the neighborhoods where they live and the other golfers on the golf course.

When we gain a new client, we'll talk to him or her about goals and explore ways to help the people closest to him or her. What we **won't** do is immediately jump to advertising on Facebook or Google to find the next client. Those are amazing platforms, and their power is in attracting the attention of strangers. We can do a lot more—for free—by leveraging your own connections before we turn to paid ads.

(By the way, my first blog was called DontBuyAds.com. I now believe strongly in paid lead acquisition, but not at the expense of talking to people and helping them.)

Who Sells?

The next time you're in a staff meeting, look at the faces around you and ask, "Which of these people is in charge of sales?"

If you can't name the person responsible for selling, bad news: It's you.

There are between 12 and 15 roles in every gym. But there are three "meta" roles that really make the business run: finance, operations and sales.

Finance is all about accounting, goals and targets.

Operations is how you coach your clients and clean your bathrooms.

Sales is how you keep your business alive.

Gino Wickman wrote about these "three chairs" (which I call meta roles) in his books "Traction" and "Get a Grip." Other authors have said the same things.

Sales includes offering your services to past clients, current clients and future clients. When you're selling to strangers, that's marketing.

Most business owners don't hire salespeople. Gym owners hire coaches. Butchers hire assistant butchers. Chefs hire prep cooks. Instead of hiring to fill the holes in their businesses, they try to duplicate themselves. And that's OK—if they plan to take the sales role personally. But most never do.

If selling is “everyone's job,” it's no one's job.

Someone has to become good at sales. That doesn't mean the person has to be dishonest or slimy or greedy. It means the person must do each client the ultimate service: The salesperson must discover how to help **first**, then **most** and then **forever**.

I certainly want someone to tell me what to do most of the time. I don't want to figure out how to change the oil on my new truck. I don't want to repair the roof on my cottage or change the chain on my chainsaw. I want someone to say, “I've got this. What's your credit-card number?”

If you own a gym, your clients don't want to figure out nutrition on their own (they've probably already failed at it). They don't want to figure out how to avoid an injury. They don't want to figure out how to do a power clean correctly or how to climb a rope. They want you to solve the problem. That, my friend, is selling. And it's your job.

But you **hate** selling.

Selling feels unnatural to you. It's painful. You can't “close.” You underprice your service. You find excuses to give discounts to everyone. You don't trust yourself.

So you outsource your “marketing” to someone else. You give the person free rein: “Put up a bunch of Facebook ads, get as many leads as you can through the door and I'll pay you anything you want.”

What many entrepreneurs really want to buy is the ability to abdicate responsibility for generating revenue. They don't want to learn Facebook ads or search engine optimization (SEO), and they definitely don't want to feel like salespeople. That's certainly understandable. But almost all of them are missing the easier way to get new clients that fit. They're skipping steps 1-6 and jumping straight to Step 7.

Here are the steps you're missing. They're easy, they rarely cost more than a cup of coffee and they work.

Attracting better clients means having better conversations.

You are the ultimate lead magnet.

You are the service that people want to buy.

You need to stop burying your light behind a keyboard and go meet people. They'll love you—I promise.

There's a time and place for cold leads. The value of social-media marketing is too great to ignore completely.

But Facebook marketing won't last forever. Lead-generation strategies change quickly, but relationships change slowly. Bet on relationships.

Why Most Gym Owners Can't Sell

If you're a good gym owner, you probably started as a great coach. That means your empathy skills are pretty high. You know how to read a client and you're pretty good at knowing how he or she feels.

But empathy is a two-way street. If you're good at "wearing" other people's feelings, you're also good at projecting **your** feelings onto them. That's a handicap. Your clients aren't limited by your budget. They aren't limited by your beliefs. They weren't brought up in your home. They aren't you.

The first reason gym owners can't sell is **projection**: We project our feelings about money and time onto our clients.

We also know, deep down, whether our service is worth the price. If our workouts haven't gotten results for clients in the past, we feel guilty selling those workouts to new people.

The second reason gym owners can't sell is **value**: We aren't confident that our service can really do what we say it will.

Next, we often don't make time to have meaningful conversations with the people we care about. We think, "These people are my friends! They'll tell me if they want more help. They care about my success. They know I need more clients. They're trying to bring me new clients all the time. I need to talk to more strangers instead of asking my friends for help!"

Another reason gym owners can't sell is—well, you know the most popular relationship status on Facebook? "It's complicated." We confuse business relationships with friendships. We imagine that our interpersonal relationships with our clients are somehow more than transactional. We tell ourselves that we're making deposits in an "emotional bank account" when we give them freebies and discounts. We only remember that we're not best friends, not dating and not married when clients leave.

We all make selling an emotional hurdle. We build it up too much.

Like a high-school freshman on a first date, we build the event up in our minds until we're paralyzed: "Golly! If I say exactly the right thing, this person might marry me someday!"

We all know how that goes. Stammering awkwardness. Too much pressure.

Finally, here's the biggest reason gym owners can't sell: We mistake helping for selling—and remember, most of us don't like selling. But we all like to help people. So do that.

The greatest gift you can give your clients is to tell them what to do. They're paying you to be their coach. So coach them. Make them famous (I'll tell you how later in this book). Celebrate their wins. Cultivate support for them by recruiting their friends. Improve their marriages by

helping their spouses. Make them feel amazing by letting them show off to their staffs and colleagues.

Trust me, they need you to do this for them.

Because no one else in their lives is doing it.

Everything You Need to Know About Marketing and Sales

You probably chose your vocation for one of these reasons:

1. The work is easy and lucrative.
2. You're very interested in the topic.
3. It doesn't feel like work.
4. You wanted to change others' lives.

Not everyone will feel the same way about building toy trains as you do. That's why they're willing to pay money for you to do it **for** them. Many people **want** toy trains. Many more would like to build toy trains—if they only knew how. Your service is valuable to both groups.

So how do you find these people and how do you charge for your service?

If you already have a few clients, we'll start with them.

If you don't, we'll start with your first client: you.

We're going to approach marketing and sales as a target—but we'll start at the bull's-eye and work our way outward.

Each circle around the bull's-eye is called an "Affinity Loop." The smaller loops—closer to the center—represent tighter affinity, or closer connections. You influence these people directly. The bigger loops represent larger audiences but lower affinity; you're less connected personally to these people.

We'll explore all the Affinity Loops in the next few sections. Then we'll dive deep into each one.

But first, here's all you need to know about marketing and sales.

Sales Versus Marketing

In January 2017, I traveled to San Diego with an elite mastermind group. We visited several companies who had scaled past the \$5 million mark, including Classy.org, whose founders provided an insightful perspective on sales versus marketing.

Classy provides a payment platform for charities. It bills clients (the charities) based on a recurring monthly fee, a percentage of revenues collected or both.

The service allows charities to scale without hiring software developers or negotiating payment rates with different processors. It's a great model, and the company has some huge clients.

When Classy started, most of its sales were inbound. Charities heard about the platform, called for information and signed up (or not) based on the pitch Classy gave them. This is **sales**, and as Classy refined its process, more people signed up.

The sales process we use with our gym mentoring clients is called a "No-Sweat Intro." But the goal of any sales process is a high conversion rate.

Picture a sale as the "finish line" at the end of a long race. "Conversion" is the process of walking a potential client across that line—converting the person into a client. Your conversion rate is the percentage of people who actually cross the line and evolve from "potential client" to "client."

Conversion usually happens in person. It usually takes place during a dialogue (a two-way conversation) instead of a monologue (a video or advertisement). We call the act of conversion the **sales** process.

There are two stages of client interaction before the conversion stage. These are called Awareness and Interest, and we refer to them as **Marketing**.

As Classy.org grew, its leaders realized they could help more people by adding a marketing team. The sales team polished its conversion process while the marketing team started its awareness and interest campaigns.

Your easiest opportunity for growth probably isn't marketing but sales. If you consider the people who have visited your business in the past or attended a free seminar or indicated interest by downloading some of your content, you probably have an email list with hundreds or thousands of names on it. These people are already at the Interest stage and just need one little barrier to fall away before signing up.

That barrier is usually best overcome through a conversation, **not** social media. Later in this book, I'll share that conversation and the entire conversion process step by step.

All this might all seem like theory. But knowing your intent at each marketing stage will help you meet more people, help more people and enroll more people.

And then, when you're ready to pay for ads online, you'll be much better at converting your leads—another force multiplier!

Different Sales Strategies Are Necessary at Different Times

I've been an entrepreneur for more than 13 years and I'm approaching a decade as a business mentor. I have hundreds of clients around the world, all of whom work one-on-one with members of our mentoring team at Two-Brain.

In the Great Information Age, we all have access to more knowledge than we can absorb, let alone act upon. And action is the only thing that matters. So what knowledge? What action? When?

Entrepreneurs pass through four distinct phases as they first grow their business, and then their leadership. These phases are Founder, Farmer, Tinker and Thief.

In the Founder Phase, the entrepreneur leaps off the cliff with a big idea. The goal is simple: to survive.

The big idea might leverage a better life, but labor is the fulcrum. And that's understood by the Founder, who embraces the romantic ideal of the entrepreneur—poring over the books at midnight, a trace smear of flour on a tired face, pondering the next step up the ladder to success. Hashtags: #hustle and #grind.

The Founder should focus on personal relationships for first sales. Most clients will be within one degree of separation (they know the Founder or know someone who knows the Founder). In the Founder phase, the entrepreneur puts himself or herself at the center of the Affinity Marketing bull's-eye and asks, "How can I help the people closest to me?" Then he or she finds excuses to meet neighbors and make more friends.

The Farmer Phase starts when the entrepreneur begins the shift from self-employed to business owner. He or she has hired a first employee, even if only for a low-level role. The owner has begun paying himself or herself a little but is likely still the face of the company—probably still baking the doughnuts at 4 a.m., then answering emails and making sales calls "as time allows." The owner is still working in the business instead of working on the business. He or she is busy being busy.

In the Farmer Phase, entrepreneurs are susceptible to The Martyrdom. "No one can do it like I can!" they think, whether about sweeping the floors or mixing the secret recipe. And they're right: No one else would do it that cheaply, that tired or at the expense of a kid's baseball game. No one else would work for a boss so demanding, so cheap, so ruthless—but in buying themselves jobs, Farmers are beholden to their own self-worth.

My role as mentor to the Farmer is to replace him or her in low-value roles and fill that free time with high-value roles. It's to systemize batter mixing, replace the owner at the front counter and teach him or her to extend personal reach. Eventually, the goal is to get the owner home by dinnertime.

One of the higher-value roles in the business is sales. As you'll read, business owners must learn how to sell services. They can't delegate the role and they can't hire an agency to do it for them. Getting clients through the door is one thing; converting those clients is another. That's why Conversion comes first in the tactical section of this book.

In the Farmer Phase, the entrepreneur should focus on generating word-of-mouth promotion, making more connections in person to expand clientele and serving his or her current clients to a greater degree. The first four loops of Affinity Marketing (Axial, Affection, Activity and Acquaintance) should generate more than enough sales for the Farmer. And until he or she has really dialed in strategies with the first four loops, the next loops won't be nearly as effective.

The Farmer Phase is where 90 percent of entrepreneurs spend the entirety of their careers. They call themselves "owner-operators," and most will never even retire from their businesses, let alone become wealthy. This is because they wait for business to come to them, wait for staff to ask for a raise, wait for a crisis to make a move. Most never get beyond Farmer Phase because they don't learn the difference between being good at their craft and good at business.

But some do. They are the Tinkers.

A Tinker has built a business that runs itself. Now he or she is trying to build another, duplicate the first success, take the first idea to a new market or start over with a new idea. If not given new challenges, the Tinker will probably stick his or her hands in the machine, constantly "tweaking" the original business until it's broken.

My role as mentor to Tinkers is to help them identify the Next Big Project and then keep them focused on it. I've never met a Tinker who didn't have at least three Big Projects in mind. Free from their original businesses—and still making passive income from them—Tinkers are at risk of killing the golden geese.

In the Tinker Phase, the entrepreneur must market to strangers. This means a process to nurture "cold leads" and "warm them up"—essentially, forging a bond of trust with someone he or she has never met. The Tinker must create a system for conversion, train others to sell and then build a marketing strategy that can be carried out by someone else.

In the short term, the Tinker must become a marketing expert and leave the delivery to others; in the long term, he or she must hand off even the growth portion of the business. As the owner introduces a "managerial layer" to the company for the first time, he or she will create three managers' positions: operations, finance and sales. The Tinker will remove himself or herself from the operations seat first, then the finance seat and finally the sales seat. But the owner must have a replicable sales and marketing process to do so.

If the owner can do all that, he or she becomes a Thief.

A Thief moves resources from an area of high concentration to an area of low concentration. Think Robin Hood, not the Hamburglar. With new resources, the Thief seeks to build a legacy

business, providing multi-generational wealth or service to the community.

Many Thieves mentor other entrepreneurs. Others create bursaries or endowments or found charities. Some continue to build, forging partnerships and taking their expertise to new markets. But this is a process of selling a personal brand. In the Thief Phase, entrepreneurs return to their roots as icons—but with larger audiences. Sometimes, this marketing looks a lot like politics. But most larger-than-life icons have a brand manager.

The path from Founder to Thief is the path to self-actualization. The Founder builds a Foundation of service, the Farmer cultivates success, the Tinker builds on his or her invention, and the Thief spreads the wealth.

Each phase has unique marketing opportunities and challenges.

Success isn't guaranteed in any phase. But sales are necessary from the first day of business to the last.

A successful entrepreneur masters the basics first and repeats them forever. No one ever graduates “out” of the first stages: Your Axial clients will always be your best, whether your company does \$10,000 in revenue or \$10 million. As an entrepreneur moves from Founder to Farmer to Tinker, he or she adds layers of marketing but never subtracts any. Of course, this requires more staff, more measurement and more knowledge. Thus, our instruction always progresses from the fundamental skills to the more advanced.

Advanced marketing skills change, but the fundamentals don't. My purpose with this e-book is to make you an expert at fundamental sales skills by giving you a step-by-step process to practice. It's worked for hundreds of my clients over the years.

I also want to help you with the advanced stuff. Our mentorship program at TwoBrainBusiness.com includes one-on-one mentoring in digital marketing, with an emphasis on Facebook advertising. That course will help you with the huge (but cold) audiences waiting online.

Here's our qualification, though: Before you learn digital marketing, you'll have to become really good at Affinity and Organic marketing. I want you to be excellent at sales before you start using your new skills on strangers. Keep reading to develop those skills.

Let's Start at 500: Why I Teach Conversion Strategies First

My first business was a gym. In my gym office, I used to keep a picture of myself over my desk. In the picture, I'm deadlifting 500 lb. in a powerlifting meet.

After one client meeting, I took the picture down and put it in my drawer. I haven't looked at it since. Here's how the meeting went:

Client: Is that **you** in that picture?

Me: Yes. Last year.

Client: How much weight is that?

Me: five-oh-five.

Client: Can you teach me how to deadlift 500 pounds?

Me: Probably. What can you deadlift now?

Client: As a guess, I'd say 300.

Me: OK, well, I think a good short-term goal is to get to 315 pounds. That's a big milestone for a lot of lifters. It's three plates a side, and—

Client: Nah, I don't want to lift 315. I want to lift 500.

Me: Well, you have to go up in small increments. It's not really a trick you learn. You have to build up—

Client: If you can really lift 500 pounds, why can't you just show me that?

This is a true story—except for the deadlift part. I really did lift over 500 lb. in several meets. But no client would ever think, "Let's just start at 500."

In the **real** story, a business owner gets me on the phone, and the conversation goes like this:

Client: Can you teach me how to reach more people with my Facebook ads?

Me: Sure. Who are your best clients right now?

Client: Married parents who earn over \$100,000 per year and don't want to waste their time in a globo gym.

Me: Great. Let's start with your email list. Let's upload a list of all emails from people who have ever come in and not signed up or signed up for a while and then quit because—

Client: Nah, I don't care about my current clients. I only want **new** clients.

Me: Well, you don't want just anyone. You want to target people who are likely to actually want your service—

Client: If you can get me more clients, why don't you just tell me how to do it?

The questions are sometimes even be more specific:

- "Should I target only people within 10 miles or within 25 miles?"
- "What picture should I use on my ads?"
- "What should my headline be?"
- "What should my monthly ad spend be?"

I get all these questions regularly. And they tell me the caller is trying to learn a 500-lb. deadlift instead of building on a 225-lb. deadlift.

There are plenty of easy and free options to use before jumping to paid traffic. But they're not alternatives to paid traffic; they're actually stepping stones. Asking your clients to tell their stories is an easy skill to learn. Asking for a referral to a spouse is a little tougher. Inviting a client's coworkers is hard but gets easier with practice. Walking down the street with coffee for the staff of a neighboring business might be a new experience for you.

But until you're good at talking to clients in person, it makes little sense to flood your office with cold leads. Until you can confidently recommend your service to a stranger, why sit with a dozen strangers?

This is why I teach sales before marketing and how to have good conversations before how to make good advertisements.

Starting at 500 and working backward usually causes something to break.

Taking Their Temperature: Who's Closest to Conversion?

I once spent 15 months traveling with a group of very high-level SaaS founders—that's "software as a service." These guys are all extremely successful. And they **know** Facebook and social-media marketing.

During that time, I also enrolled in every online marketing course I could find and spent thousands on ads to test the systems. I went to lunch with experts, I invited some onto my podcast and I took 1:1 lessons from others.

I compiled all these lessons into an online Facebook Marketing Course. I listed the course for \$599—and then, after one day of open enrollment, I decided to stop selling it.

Why? Because it's **not** what most business owners need.

Many entrepreneurs (and some "consultants") think funnel marketing and Facebook ads are the answer. And they're partially right. But jumping straight to social-media advertising is like

starting a learn-to-drive course in the middle of a NASCAR race: It's frustrating, it won't build the best habits for driving and it might almost kill you.

Instead, we want to start by practicing conversion. We want to get really good at signing up people who are interested.

And that means taking the temperature of your audience, so you know who is interested.

The “Temperature” of Your Audience

The Sale Line

INFORMED—HOT LEADS

AFFLICTED—WARM LEADS

OBLIVIOUS—COLD LEADS

Informed (very warm, ready to sign up)—They've decided to buy your service and are just comparing you with your competition.

Aware (warm but not hot)—They know they "need to do something" and are actively seeking a solution to their problem.

Oblivious (cold)—They don't even know they have a problem and aren't looking for a solution.

Hot leads are close to purchasing your service. Cold leads are very far away from purchasing your service.

Are there hot leads on Facebook? Of course. But Facebook isn't the easiest way to reach them.

Are there warm leads on Facebook? Yes. Many. These folks are waiting to be told how your service will solve their problems—but most ads don't do that well. Ads need to start the conversation.

Are there cold leads on Facebook? Billions. But they don't know about you or care about your service.

The latter category is the trap: People think, "If only **1 percent** of the people who see this ad sign up, I'll make thousands of dollars!" And they're right—but conversion rates for most ads are a fraction of 1 percent. Really great ads might get attention but won't keep it. You'll have to warm up cold leads over time. And you probably **already** have hundreds—if not thousands—of people in your pipeline who have shown interest. But you're not warming them up in any way—so why add more people to that list?

Before I move on from cold audiences and warm audiences, here's another illustration:

Audiences and Targeting



This is a "temperature chart" for custom audiences that you can create on Facebook. We'll walk through it later. For now, just note the relative temperature of each potential audience.

These aren't all the audiences you can sell to, however. Conversions start with your own clients—the people who already love you, their families and their friends. We'd call the top of the list above (a Facebook audience made from people on your email list) Stage 6 of a good marketing plan. That means there are five levels of people—dozens, maybe hundreds of people—who are more likely to want your service, are able to afford your service and fit in with your best clients.

The reason we don't teach funnel marketing in the first stage of our mentorship program is because it's not the fastest way to get new clients, make more money or take more time off. It's **not** what entrepreneurs actually need at that point.

When business processes flow smoothly, when owners have time to rest and think and plan, when they have staff in place to handle multiple revenue streams, and when the clients are being helped optimally—sure, then we might build them a marketing funnel for cold leads. We have the largest and best course in the world to help them do it.

But many of our entrepreneurs don't use funnel marketing at all—because they don't need to.

Now, some people do like setting up ads, tweaking one word at a time and waiting patiently for days while the algorithm does its job before tweaking the next word. I prefer direct and effective action that will have an immediate impact. And that's why we tell people to "F their funnel"—at least for a little while—because they're usually making sales and marketing more confusing than they have to be.

The “Help First” Philosophy

I hate feeling “salesy.” The “always be closing” mantra from the movie “Glengarry Glen Ross” always makes me laugh.

But I’m successful because people buy my services. They buy my services because the services are excellent.

I wish it were enough to just be excellent. It’s not.

Every business needs to sell. And most owners usually wind up becoming the Head of Sales.

I wrote an entire book on the philosophy and specific strategies of “Help First.” But I’m going to ask the question “how can we help that person?” a lot in this e-book, so I want you to be familiar with the process.

You know your service better than anyone else. Sometimes that’s a trap—we call it The Curse of the Technician. Because you know so much, it’s easy to spout the features of your service to anyone who will listen. But clients and customers don’t care about features; they care about benefits. How will your service help **them**?

I was employed as a treadmill salesman for a few years. I was really bad at it, so my boss came to visit for the weekend to watch me work. When the first customer came in on Saturday morning, I put him on an expensive model and ran down its features list: top speed, low-slip belt, DC motor. The customer’s eyes drifted to the next machine, so we moved to that model, and I ran down its specs, too. I thought my boss would be bowled over by my memory for details.

The client left without buying anything.

“Chris, you barfed all over them,” she said. She meant that I’d paralyzed the customer with details about the product instead of figuring out how the treadmill could help them solve a problem.

When the next customer came through the door, she said, “Watch me.”

After the usual “good morning” greeting, she said, “So why do you want a treadmill?”

The customer mumbled something about getting in shape. Her husband said he needed to lose a few pounds.

But my boss wasn’t done.

“Why do you think you need to get in shape?” she asked.

The client paused; this question wasn’t in the usual salesperson-buyer dance.

“Well,” she looked at her husband. He looked at the floor. And I saw it: They were both worried that they weren’t attractive anymore. They wanted a treadmill to look better for each other and maybe fix other parts of their relationship.

Of course, my boss saw it, too.

“You know,” she said, “my husband and I started working out together in our basement. It’s the only time we really get without kids and work.”

They started talking about their kids and their work. They left with a new treadmill **and** a home gym. They weren’t buying a 3.3-horsepower motor; they were buying adult time and a sex life.

Help First means carefully asking yourself “how can my service help this person?” and then offering to help. The transactional part will come later.

The teenager who booked a haircut is really trying to get a date for the prom, because all his or her friends already have dates lined up.

The parent in the wine store is trying to figure out how to wind down after a very stressful day at work.

The person looking at a new top is trying to figure out how to survive a spouse’s office holiday party.

The teenager joining the gym is trying to fit in with the other kids.

Everyone is looking for benefits, not features. Help First means we start by identifying potential benefits and offering to share them.

What Comes First: Mentorship or Marketing?

When you break your day down into the roles you fill at the gym, how much time do you spend marketing?

If marketing takes up all your time, you're a marketer. But if marketing only occupies some of your time, you're a business owner.

Specialists (marketers) work for generalists (business owners) because your business is **so** much larger than the marketing piece.

Marketing takes on disproportionate importance when you don't have money. But when it works, and you **have** money, do all your problems disappear? Of course not.

I've done this broke and I've done it with a lot of money in my account. Having money is better than not. But the way your business is set up to handle new leads, the way your staff is compensated, the way your clients are retained, and even the type of marketing you do are far more important than learning how to build a Facebook ad.

Five years ago, Facebook wasn't the most popular platform in the world for advertising. Five years from now, it will no longer be. What then?

(Your mentor will know the answer.)

Two-Brain is a mentoring practice, not a marketing agency. Sales and service are the yin and yang of good business. If you don't have a plan for your business, start with mentorship first.

Why Imperfect Is Perfect

The greatest sales tool anyone can wield is authenticity.

Nassim Taleb might be surprised to find himself mentioned in this e=book, but in "Skin in the Game," Taleb mentioned the value of authenticity with this story about U.S. President Donald Trump.

Taleb wrote that he "knew Trump would win the election" after watching the future president on television with the sound turned off. Trump's flaws—the hair, the swagger, the facial expressions—were often ridiculed by his opponents. But those are the things that make him seem more human. We all have flaws, and we relate to others who are open about theirs. Trump's competitors, with their tailored suits and coiffed hair, made you wonder "what are they hiding?"

If no one is perfect, having your flaws out in the open is actually an advantage. The devil you know, right?

In one of our Sales Mastery videos, Two-Brain mentor Jeff Burlingame stops and sneezes. Loudly. Then he has a hilarious reaction while the cameras keep rolling.

One of the reasons Jeff is so successful at the sales process is because he's so authentic. When I watch him in a video, I find myself reaching for my wallet.

Not because he has the perfect script but because he doesn't appear to have a script at all. If you saw his videos, you would see a point-by-point guide to the conversation. But in front of a client, he doesn't even appear to care whether they buy his service. He's relaxed and conversational. But Jeff's a **closer**.

This is a challenging balance: Many in his field (personal trainer) are authentically relaxed but can't convert a lead into a client. Others are so scripted they seem like robots. Jeff has it **down** thanks to years of practice, role playing and refinement.

My best-ever consultation in my gym went like this: I was waiting when the client arrived, but my desk was empty except for a blank sheet of paper. I asked for his story. I wrote down every word, filling both back and front. He said that his job had him sitting in a truck for hours every day; I asked how he killed the time.

He said, "I read lots of books." I read a lot, too, so I asked what he read because I love talking about books.

He mentioned an author we both like. I offered to bring him in a few books from home. Then I said, "If I were sitting in a truck all day, I'd have a stiff back."

"I do," he said.

I said, "OK. Let me show you something." We walked out to the gym and I gave him a stretch to do. Then we walked back to the office.

"You don't fit the mold. Here's what I think we should do," I said. Then I created a custom package for him. It was twice our regular rate.

"How do I pay?" he said.

We shook hands. I told him to pick up the books the next day, and he thanked me.

"I was worried this was going to be some kind of sales pitch" he said on his way out.

You could use a sales checklist to evaluate our conversation, and you'd see that I hit **every** point: I built rapport, assessed his needs, found his most painful point and made a confident prescription. Then I closed, baby.

But you don't always get the "thanks" at the end. That's the reward for perfection—when you're thanked for doing your job. It **only** happens when you see "selling" as "helping" and as an important responsibility instead of a painful necessity.

That's what makes an authentic salesperson: caring enough to guide the client to the right choice and the best value without worrying about the client's wallet. Let the client worry about it. Care enough to give him or her your best option. Care enough to love that client. And care enough to show your authentic self.

The Hierarchy of Communication

When you're delivering bad news, you want to do it in person. Right? You feel like you should. Like it's your duty. Because it's important.

And if you're delivering amazing news, you **really** want to deliver it in person. Because there's no emoji for "we're pregnant!"

Face-to-face interaction is the way you deliver **big** news or share big events. That's because we communicate with far more than words. Our facial expression, our posture and our eye contact all tell people more than our actual words do.

It's also easy to take black-and-white text out of context. Three different readers of the same message will interpret it three different ways. When it's important to be absolutely clear, make a great first impression or really understand someone, you need to do it in person.

In-person conversation evokes sincerity (I care enough to be here with you and only you), focus (I'm not talking to five people at once or skimming email while you talk) and investment (look at me looking at you).

Obviously, when you're trying to find new clients or interview new staff members, face to face conversation is best. I wouldn't buy a new car from a robot; a Facebook ad might lead me to the dealer's website, but if there isn't a way to make an appointment with a human, I won't buy a new truck.

But when you can't meet a person face to face, a hierarchy of communication will get you as close as possible. My mentorship practice spans the globe, with hundreds of clients. Obviously, I haven't met most of them in person. But I try to use the highest possible communication medium when I speak to them, in this order:

- Face to face, in person, with eye contact.
- Video chat.
- Phone call (can't see them but can still get a lot from voice inflection and tone).
- Online voice chat.

- Private message (PM/IM/SMS).
- Email.
- Public channels, like chat rooms and Facebook groups.
- Posts in forums (one-way monologues instead of conversations).
- Posts on social media (Twitter/Instagram/Facebook).
- Posts on our website.

Knowing the hierarchy of communication is important for marketing purposes. If a prospect is drawn in by a Facebook ad and then signs up for your email list before coming to meet you for the first time, that's three conversations (Facebook, email, in person). If the common denominator for most of your conversions is that final in-person meeting, why not aim to simply meet more people?

After all, a person who has met you face-to-face won't seek you on Facebook, then join your email list. Three conversations aren't actually required. The first conversation's goal is to get you to the second, and the second conversation is aimed at getting the prospective client to the in-person meeting. Why not skip the first two steps when you can?

The communication hierarchy is another reason Affinity Marketing is so powerful: You can leverage the best vehicle for your message (yourself).

Many business owners forget that they are their own greatest asset. They overlook the fact that their clients' primary reason for using their service is the owner! If you're a Founder, people probably love you. They want to be like you. They have those same romantic visions of entrepreneurship, and you're the one who had the courage to take the leap! At the very least, they admire you.

No Facebook ad will ever be as powerful as a conversation with the CEO.

When I was selling commercial treadmills to YMCAs, I was struggling to close the big deals. My boss—who was an excellent saleswoman—said, "Watch me." She called the YMCA's buyer and sold him four commercial treadmills on the spot.

I'd been working on the deal for three months. And the worst part: She didn't say anything I hadn't already said. Why could she close the deal so easily?

"Sometimes they just want to talk to the owner," she said.

Many people in the public have the mistaken idea that every business owner is a millionaire. Sometimes that breeds resentment, but it always breeds respect. Your attention is flattering. Your in-person time is valuable. Share it generously.

Cold Leads, Bad Filters and Apathy: F Your Funnel (For Now)

One of the most popular marketing strategies is to develop leads through a "sales funnel." This method is to broadcast a message as widely as possible and then filter clients from there. The idea is to catch 1,000 clients in a net, for example, and then sort through them until you find a dozen who will purchase your service.

I think that's wrong. In fact, I think it's completely backward.

Think about your spouse: If I asked you to find the person in the world who was most like him or her, would you start by interviewing every person in your city—or would you start with your spouse's siblings?

Or imagine we're sitting in the stands at a sold-out football stadium. I hand you a picture of my kid. Then I say, "Go find me a person who looks most like this picture."

No wonder returns on ad spend are getting worse all the time: People aren't data.

As Mike Michalowicz wrote in "The Pumpkin Plan," our next clients should come from our current **best** clients. We should groom them, duplicate them and forget the rest.

If you haven't read the book, you can listen to Mike's synopsis on [Two-Brain Radio](#), and then buy the book later. I teach our mentoring clients to flip the funnel—to start by identifying their "seed clients," increasing their value, and then working outward. This is the core of Affinity Marketing.

Social media has improved our chances of finding new clients because we can sort people much more quickly. Using tools like the Facebook audience and conversion pixels, we can quickly eliminate non-candidates and gradually narrow our focus. It's like holding a bullhorn and saying, "All the blonds can leave the stadium now." You still have to communicate with everyone before you can find the right people, you still have to waste a lot of time, and the people you eventually find might not want to date you.

Conversely, what if we start with the people most likely to enjoy your service, pay what you're worth and not cause problems with your other members? Why not start with our current best clients?

All right, you get it. Let's get to the tactical part.

Affinity Marketing: Loops

A bull's-eye target is made of concentric rings. In Affinity Marketing, each ring—or “loop”—represents a new audience for your service.

Starting from the middle dot and working outward, here are the Affinity Loops:

Axial Loop—Your best clients (or, if you don't have any clients yet, yourself). The center dot in our target. The ones around whom the entire business pivots.

Affection Loop—The people closest to your best clients—spouses, parents or kids. Probably the people who live with your best clients.

Activity Loop—The people who work with your best clients (or your own coworkers). This loop could also contain complementary service professionals. For example, if you're a personal trainer, your occupational loop could include nutritionists or physical therapists. These are people with whom your best clients share an activity. It could also be a recreational activity, like midnight basketball.

Acquaintance Loop—The “friends of friends.” People with whom you have one degree of separation. You might not know them directly, but you have a friend in common.

Attention Loop—Future (or past) clients who aren't currently using your service but are still active on your email list or in another conversation, like a business owners' group. They're not paying you money, but they're still paying attention.

Awareness Loop—People in your neighborhood or in a similar niche who are aware of you but aren't exactly sure what you offer or how your service works. They probably don't know anyone actively using your service.

Audiences Loop—People in your target niche who aren't yet aware of your service or how you can help them.

Ambient Loop—Every potential client for your service who isn't disqualified or “filtered out.” If you perform surgery in Idaho, the people in your Ambient Loop would include anyone who would drive to your location for surgery, can afford the surgery, needs the surgery or knows someone who does. Disqualified candidates would be people who don't need the surgery, people who have access to a better surgeon or people who can't afford the surgery.

We'll walk through each loop fully in this section, and I'll share examples for each. Your job is to review the Affinity Loops Cheat Sheet, add at least three names in each category every month and actively work through your opportunities as you read along.

A few notes:

- As we move from the center toward the outer ring (Ambient Loop), audience awareness cools off. People on your Facebook feed might not really know what you're selling or even what you do for a living, but you can bet your mom sure does.
- Audience attention follows awareness. The further you get from the center ring, the less influence you have over the people in that loop. That means you should try to move people from the outer loops to the inner loops (i.e., from Awareness to Attention first). This is where the "funnel" comes in.
- The further from center you get, the more education a prospective client will require before signing up for your service or buying anything from you.



CHEAT SHEET

CLIENT	Axial Loop	Affection Loop	Activity Loop	Acquaintance Loop	Attention Loop	Awareness Loop	Audiences Loop

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Axial Loop – Your Best Clients

Not every client deserves the same attention. Your clients might always be right, but they're not always equal.

The voices of your best clients are often drowned out by the “squeaky wheels,” but your best clients are really the driving force behind your business. Trying to please 200 cranky clients is like herding cats; duplicating and growing your best clients creates a quiet, happy garden.

Another reason to focus on your **best** clients is their Net Promoter Score. I won't break down the whole scale here, but let's imagine you ranked your clients on a scale of 1 to 10, and a 10 meant they were extremely likely to recommend you to your friends. A 1, of course, would mean that they're probably bad-mouthing you to their friends. A 5 is neutral.

It's much easier to take a 5 to an 8 than it is to take a 1 to a 5.

For example, it's easier to delight a mediocre client, turning him or her into an evangelist for your service, than it is to change the mind of someone who dislikes your service. And even if you **do** fix the “1” client, you'll only move the person up to neutral: satisfied but still not talking about you.

This is counterintuitive to common wisdom in business. Mike Michalowicz makes the case more thoroughly in “The Pumpkin Plan,” which I recommend to every entrepreneur.

This is the Two-Brain version of Michalowicz's exercise to determine your best clients:

Take out a blank sheet of paper. Draw a vertical line down the middle. Write two headings at the top of the page: Money and Joy. You'll be writing a list of names under each heading.

On the first list, record your top 10 clients by the amount they pay you. This is the Money list. On the second list, record your top 10 clients by how happy they make you. This is the Joy list. Now compare the two lists side by side. Which names appear on both? These are your seed clients, according to Michalowicz.

Next, we want to hear—in **their** words—why they're using your service. Set up client meetings with each seed client individually. **Ask each:**

- "What do you like most about my gym?"
- "What frustrates you most about fitness in general?"
- "What's your biggest source of stress when you leave my gym?"

The answers to these questions will tell us:

- What our most prominent marketing message should be.
- What we should avoid doing in the gym or fix.
- What other opportunities we have to help our clients, partner with other professionals or

generate revenue.

For example, let's say a regular client makes an appointment for a session at your Side Hustle Salon.

After the appointment, you both go to the coffee shop down the street and grab a table. Over coffee, you work the three questions above into your conversation.

Her answers:

"I like the informal attitude and the fact I can get in on weekends."

"The worst part is maintaining my cut after I get home—I always seem to get frizzy in a couple of days."

"My biggest source of stress is definitely my kids, especially on weekends when they have nothing to do."

Bingo! First, you should be promoting the fact that you're open on weekends to everyone who will listen.

Second, you should keep a few hair products on hand that will help your clients maintain their cuts. At the very least, allow them to order products through your site.

Third, you should consider partnering with a local kids activity: Parents make an appointment to drop their kids at the play center and tick a box to automatically book an appointment with you at the same time. Then, after you've cut the parents' hair, they shuttle the kids in one at a time.

An example from my first business (a gym): I believed my seed clients came to my gym because the workouts were intense, the coaching was technical and the community felt like friends.

But when I interviewed them, that's not what my seed clients actually said.

Instead, they said:

"I don't have to think when I'm at your gym." (We're a coaching facility, not an access facility.)

"I always feel happier when I leave than I did when I got there."

"This is the only place where people tell me I'm doing a good job."

Obviously, that insight was quite different from what I had anticipated. I immediately changed our brand to "The Happy Gym"—on my billboards and website. I started writing more content about how exercising in a group, under the watchful eye of a coach, makes you happier. And I focused on delighting my seed clients instead of patching up the little problems my less-than-perfect fits complained about.

My next task was to increase the value of my seed clients. During one interview, a seed client said, "Chris, when I leave the gym, it's 6 p.m. My kids have to get to baseball practice before 7. Dinner isn't made yet. So most of the time I go through a drive-thru to pick up dinner. I know it's probably canceling out the work I do in the gym, but it's the only way I can get here every day."

I asked myself: What if the gym had a nutrition program or partnership with a food-delivery service? What if the gym sold ready-made meals or organized client meal swaps on the weekends? What if we partnered with a local grocery store to set up curbside pickup? One did it for free already.

Guess what happened? My best clients were delighted. My worst clients dropped away. My mediocre clients moved up a few notches in Net Promoter Score and became brand evangelists.

The reason we call your best clients the Axial Loop is because your business revolves around them. Your service is not the sun at the center of the universe; your best clients are the sun, and your service revolves around them.

If I discovered that nutrition coaching would help my clients more than fitness coaching, I'd set up a nutrition business with a squat rack in the parking lot.

By the way, the reason I really couldn't sell treadmills? I didn't believe in treadmills. Every night after closing, a teen athlete would show up behind the shop and we'd push homemade sleds around, sprint up and down the street, and lift heavy objects that I'd found on my farm. That's what my seed clients wanted.

The client meeting has two parts. The first part, detailed above, is all about the client and your service to him or her. The second part is about extending your service to their Affinity Loops.

From One to Many: Extending Your Help

After identifying your Axial clients in the previous section, you need to book some time with them. If you own a gym, these conversations might be called Goal Review Sessions. If you own an accounting firm, you might call them Annual Planning Sessions.

Here's the actual script we use. I recommend you practice five times with **each** of your staff to become confident with the conversation and to show them that it's not a sales pitch: It's your best offer to help.

First question: "Has your overall goal changed since you started/since our last goal review?"

Second question: "What is it now?"

Third question: "Are you happy with the progress you've made?"

Here's where it gets interesting. Every answer is an opportunity. A client's responses to your questions can take one of three paths.

Path 1: "I'm not satisfied with my progress."

If the client says, "No, I wish I were making faster progress," it's time to introduce an objective measure. I use an InBody machine at my gym, but you can use **any** metric. If the client says she wishes her performance metrics were improving ("I wish my deadlift were going up faster"), then use performance data. Because most will care more about their anthropomorphic measures, start with that.

Then make a new prescription. Honestly ask yourself, "If money wasn't an issue here, what would I tell the client to do?"

Say, "Here's what I would do in your shoes." Lay out the prescription. Ask, "How does that sound to you?" before the money talk.

Then say, "Let's try this for three months and meet here again to re-test your progress. OK?"

When the client agrees, spell out the pricing options.

If the client says, "I can't afford it," simply ask how much of the plan she **can** afford, and then say, "If my budget was \$200 per month and I wanted to get as healthy as possible, I'd prioritize these two things." Obviously, sub in the exact number they just gave you.

Meet again in three months and repeat the process.

Path 2: "I am satisfied with my progress."

First, congratulate the client. Then have him tell his story. Have your camera ready.

"Fantastic! I'd love to brag you up a little. I think the entire gym family should know your story. You ready for a short interview? Less than three minutes—I promise."

Bring out your camera. Ask these three questions:

"What brought you to Catalyst in the first place?"

"What are your new goals?"

"What's your favorite part of the Catalyst experience?"

Share the video on your social-media channels later with a link back to your on-ramp program.

Next, ask: "Who has helped you **most** in this journey?"

This is your opportunity to "Thank Up"—to find an excuse to approach a new high-affinity client. This question is followed with, "What can I do to thank that person?"

Your offer should be a free personal-training session or a body scan or even a nutrition program. Ask the client how to best contact the friend (get a phone number or email), and then get in touch right away.

"Hey, Bill, I was just talking to Mary, and she gave a lot of the credit for her success to you. Thanks for supporting her, man. I really appreciate it. As a thank you, she suggested a 30-minute PT session. When can we get together?"

Always finish with a question. The next email should contain a link to book the appointment, which is really a No-Sweat Intro.

Finally, move to the Affinity Marketing worksheet. Has Mary mentioned her aging parents or her stressed-out coworkers or her golf buddies? Ask how you can help **them** next.

"Hey, Mary, as a final thank you—because I really love having you here. You add so much to the Catalyst family—I was thinking about that thing you said last week. I know this is a stressful time of year at work. What if we invited your coworkers in on Friday night and did a little team-building with them? I'll bring some wine or snacks or whatever, and we'll do a short little workout. You'll find it easy, but they might not. What do you think?"

As an example, a Catalyst client mentioned that everyone at his office was "stressed" at a certain time of year. So we invited them in for a team-building, stress-reducing session at Catalyst. Here they are:

One of them joined right away, and we started the rest on our conversion email sequence.

The greatest "sales" move you can do is to ask questions and allow the client to fill in the blanks. Never guess: Always let the clients tell you what they want. Then you tell them how to get it.

Axial Loop Specifics by Phase

Founder Phase: You're the axis.

Your service should be built around your future "best clients." You might not actually be your best client. But in the Founder Phase, you're all you've got.

Place yourself in the axis of the Affinity Loops. Whom do **you** live with who might want your service? Will you charge your spouse to do his or her taxes? Probably not. That doesn't mean your spouse is not your client. Tell the story!

Will your dad join your gym? Your mom? Probably. And you might not charge them, though some will insist on paying. Tell their story anyway.

Farmer Phase: Perform the “pumpkin” exercise to determine your seed clients. Repeat it every year. Later in the book, I'll discuss goal-review sessions: Repeat them at least twice per year with every client. The person most likely to buy your service is the one who is already buying your service. Your most likely client next month is your current client this month. And the person most likely to want your new service is the person using your old service successfully.

Tinker Phase: The people you hang out with are probably the ideal clients for your primary business. But what about you?

Are you actually using your service? Or is it a case of the mechanic's car: Everyone else gets their car fixed first and the mechanic drives a beat-up clunker?

You've become your business' ideal client avatar. Do you want to use your service?

Affection Loop

The Affection Loop contains the people who are closest to your seed clients. They're connected by love: It's the parents, children and partners of your clients. Usually, these are the people who live with your clients.

How can your service help **them**?

If you're driving a cab and your best client mentions that he's been taking care of his elderly father, offer to help: “What if I picked him up and took him to his appointments for you? Would that help?”

Then, of course, you would bill the client.

If you're selling a wine subscription service and your best client mentions that her sister is at risk for losing her job, offer to help: “You know, I make an extra \$200 per week guiding people to the right wine. Do you think that would make a difference to your sister? If so, I can call her and tell her how to do it, too.”

Offering your service to a person in a client's Affection Loop should flow naturally in your client meeting.

Affection Loop Specifics by Phase

Founder Phase: You're at the center of the bull's-eye. Start with your Axial Loop: Who in your family would want your service?

Many entrepreneurs feel guilty about charging their friends and family for a service. Things turn to gray when emotions are in play. But consider this: No one is more likely to want your service than your friends and family.

When my first business (a gym) got into financial trouble, I knew I had to raise my rates. They were far too cheap, but I danced around the inevitable until I could dance no longer. On the eve of the rate increase, I went to visit my friend Nick.

Nick was a huge, burly auto mechanic. He had curly black hair and a huge beard. The only fingers that weren't stained black by grease were stained yellow by nicotine. But he was one of the most caring humans I've ever known, and one of my first mentors.

He asked, "Why are you so scared to charge a few bucks more?"

I answered, "I don't want people to quit over it. I need the money."

He said, "So what? You go up 10 percent. If you lose a few people, you're still making more, and you have fewer people to worry about."

I said, "Nick, these people are my friends. I don't want to piss them off."

He said, "If they get pissed off because you're trying to make a living, they're not your friends."

Then he wrote me a check for the new amount and slid it across his dining room table at me.

"There," he said, lighting a new cigarette from the tip of the old one. "I paid the new rate. Now everyone had better get charged that rate tomorrow or you'll be screwing a real friend."

Yes, your mom might be your first client. Charge her for your time. Only your spouse gets your service for free—because you're going to owe him or her big. Trust me.

Unless you share a bank account with them, they pay.

Farmer Phase: Whom do your best clients influence on a daily basis?

In the Farmer Phase, client quality is very important. This is when it's most tempting to try and get all the clients: You're dealing with payroll for the first time, and possibly expansion. And you definitely have a higher cash-flow roll.

But you don't have time to waste on "weed" clients. Your focus should be firmly on retention; your primary duty is to your current clients. What will an influx of complete newbies mean to your best current clients?

Would it be better to slowly introduce people just like them or ask them to forgive rookie behavior from a flock of a dozen strangers?

Tinker Phase: Perform the seed-client exercise on Page 30 above, and pay close attention to the other problems these clients are trying to solve.

When I began mentoring entrepreneurs, I started with the gym industry but quickly found that entrepreneurs who exercised at my gym had many of the same problems. The Two-Brain Workshop bridged the gap between my international mentorship practice and the needs of local entrepreneurs. Whenever I'd take local entrepreneurs out for coffee, they'd say something like:

"I don't know how Facebook works, but I see your articles everywhere!"

Of course they do, because that's exactly how Facebook works. And they could do the same things if I taught them how. So I started offering classes; when my office got full, I knew I needed a new building.

Our high-level strategy for finding new markets and selling in the Tinker Phase is called "The Authority Ladder." Guess what the first step is? Identifying Your Niche, which is a fancy way to say, "Ask people what they want." And the people we care most about are your Axial clients. Let them bridge the gap for you.

Thief Phase: Find out what people want but can't have. The people closest to you are living within their means. What's beyond those means? What can you enable with your resources now?

When a close friend and business partner wanted to expand, it was easy for me to lend him \$20,000 to buy new equipment. That \$20,000 won't make a difference in my life, but it allowed him to jump a few years ahead and expand his service quickly.

When my son's hockey team seemed about to fold because no one would volunteer to coach, I changed my schedule to step in. I knew nothing about hockey, but I'm a fan of the kids. I taught them what I know (how to eat well, how to exercise, how to deal with setbacks and how to support each other) and hired skating coaches for the rest. I moved my resources (time) to an area of lower concentration. I sacrificed my evenings and weekends for a few years. I donated money for equipment and travel and uniforms.

But what I got in return was tenfold. I could never have spent the time or money while in the Founder or Farmer phases.

Activity Loop

This loop contains people who **do** things with your best clients. They could be coworkers or they could be friends who participate in an activity together.

These can be recurring activities, like golfing, or they can be a one-time activity, like a wedding. This is where I'll take a moment to remind you to work through your **own** bull's-eye, because the Activity Loop is extremely open to your own influence.

There are really four broad "activity" areas that I consider in my attempts to Help First:

Coworkers—Whom does your client work with and how can you help them? If you're walking the dog for one family, ask whom they work with. Officemates usually have the same schedules and often have the same challenges outside the workplace.

Ask this: "Who else is in your office with you? What if we all met this weekend with your pets—would that help you all work better together?"

Partners—If you do personal training for a few hours per week and one of your clients works at a hair salon, you're selling complementary services. You can make salon clients feel beautiful; the stylists can make your clients look beautiful. Why not build a packaged service together?

Say this: "Jill, I'd love to help my clients find you. What if we built one of your services into my packages and offered them together for wedding season?"

Hobbies—Are your clients in a book club? Do they golf with others? Do they belong to the chamber of commerce or go out for girls' or guys' night once every month? How can you help them with those experiences?

Big events—If you're a wedding photographer, your next client is probably standing in the wedding party. You should land a few more shoots if you grab the email addresses of the wedding party, add them on Facebook, tag them in wedding pictures and then follow up with a clear offer.

Your approach should be tailored by the activity. Coworkers require a different approach than bridesmaids or groomsmen.

Activity Loop Specifics by Phase

Founder Phase: Think about the people you used to work with (or maybe still do). Whom do you hang out with on the weekends? How about your kids? Who are the other parents at your kids' soccer games?

The Founder Phase relies heavily on personal connection. The best thing a Founder can do is to

increase his or her web of connection by meeting new people. Though it feels like your time is best served with your head down, working in your business, it's not: The Sales Role is ever present, and your best tool in Founder Phase is yourself. Introduce yourself to others; don't wait for them to introduce themselves. Go first. Make eye contact, engage and ask about their interests. View every social situation as "speed dating" for your business.

Farmer Phase: Pull out your Affinity Marketing Cheat Sheet. Identify your Axial clients and then pillage your knowledge bank. What do they do for fun? Where do they go on the weekends? With whom do they work?

If that doesn't work, stalk them on social media. What's their spouse's name? What sports do their kids play? With whom do they play them?

How can you help these people?

At your next client meeting, refer to your Cheat Sheet. Bring up at least one other person in the client's life who can benefit from your service. Ask, "How can I reach this person?" Usually, the client will volunteer to make the introduction for you.

Tinker Phase: The Activity Loop presents an opportunity to meet people just like your best clients. But instead of simply making connections, you're now looking for common problems.

For example, when I coached a hockey team, I noticed that all parents struggled to feed their kids properly before evening practices. Like me, they would finish work for the day, then scramble to get home, pick up their little athletes and deliver them to the rink with enough time to get dressed. The kids would wind up eating "something quick"—usually pure carbohydrates—and then struggle to focus in practice, run out of energy halfway through, and be cranky and tired at the end. The parents recognized the problem but didn't know how to solve it.

Fitness and nutrition go hand in hand, so I gave them some simple, general advice: Cut up vegetables the night before, put them in a little bowl with your kid's favorite protein and add some nuts if you can. Many of the kids developed a sunflower-seed habit, but it was better than the candy bars they were eating.

If I were a dietitian, I would have seen a huge opportunity to deliver meals to families at the rink. A family would pay a monthly fee, pick up their "rink-ready" meals on Monday and Wednesday nights, and have a snack for the kids and a meal for the family ready to go. Would every family jump on it? Of course not. But some—including me—would have jumped at the option.

Where do your best clients go after they leave you? With whom do they go? What problems do members of the group share?

Thief Phase: Identify opportunities to leverage your resources to help many at once. When I found a T-shirt vendor for my gym, I shared the information with hundreds of other gyms. The

vendor's revenues increased by hundreds of thousands of dollars. They asked what else I had to teach them, and I invited them into mentorship.

When my hockey teams needed new warm-up suits, I knew where to get the best.

The Thief Phase is different from the Tinker Phase because the Thief tries to solve problems permanently. "Let's make sure this **never** happens to anyone else" is the slogan of almost every charity. The Thief—being an entrepreneur—knows how to leverage assets to solve bigger problems—and solve them for good.

Acquaintance Loop

Has a business owner ever asked you, "Do you know anyone else who might benefit from this service?" If so, the owner was leveraging a social trick: your desire to help.

If a financial planner has ever asked this question, I'm willing to bet that you racked your brain to think of someone—or to think of a way to avoid the question. If you valued the service, you probably tried to help with a good referral.

Unless you know an acquaintance of your client you can definitely help, the best approach is the blanket approach above. Asking for referrals is intimidating but gets easier with practice. However, if you'd prefer not to ask for referrals or feel to "salesy" about it, there's no need to force yourself to do it.

Another way to identify potential clients in an Acquaintance Loop is to think about where your best clients congregate.

When you're not at your business, where do they go? Who else goes to the same spot? Do they watch their kids play soccer? Who else is there, watching their own kids? Do they belong to the local chamber of commerce? The Rotary Club? A church? Go with them.

Where do **you** go when you're not at work?

I volunteer to coach kids hockey teams. When we're traveling to a tournament, the question "where do you work?" always comes up. If the subject doesn't come up, I bring it up. And because I wear fitness T-shirts everywhere, it's usually pretty easy to guess.

I quickly describe my gym as "lots of fun" and then say, "Why don't you come with me to noon group sometime? You'll fit right in." Then I push a tiny bit further: "How does Wednesday sound to you? I'll meet you there and we'll work out together." I informally set a date so we've made a commitment.

These in-person conversations allow me to skip right over the "oblivious" and "informed" stages; we've already built a strong foundation of trust. If a new friend asks you about your

service more than once, he or she wants to buy from you. Your job is to make it easy; don't make the person beg. Invite him or her to your business and schedule a time to meet. Make it a date.

Changing Focus: From Current Connections to Future Connections

Shifting from the Acquaintance Loop to the Attention Loop requires a change in mindset. Our marketing focus turns 180 degrees from our current clients to the faceless future clients. We go from one degree of separation to a murky connection.

This shift means that we can no longer connect face to face with our potential clients. Instead, we rely on virtual connection and conversation to bring the client to our door. It means every new client requires a lot more work. You must make new clients aware of your service, link their needs to your benefits and warm them up to conversion.

It's important to consider the role of your website, your social-media presence and the media you produce.

The closest channel to conversation should be your website. Though it's not a true conversation, a website doesn't have to be a monologue. A good website moves someone from "paying attention" (the Attention Loop) to having a real conversation. Its role is to convert a visitor from passive observation to in-person discussion.

Think of your website as the boat and your blog posts and content as your lines and nets. That makes your social-media posts the lures and the bait.

The boat hauls the fish home to dock—your office or meeting room. The bait lures the audience, and the lines and nets lead them back to the boat.

In this analogy, the lines and net are the content you create. They have to connect two things: the client's problem and your solution.

Content marketing will form a major part of your marketing plan from this point forward, because that connection between your brand and your audience is the lynchpin. This is where poor "funnels" fall apart: When a cold lead doesn't immediately sign up, they're lost.

But most people, when considering a big purchase or high-ticket service, need to warm up before they commit. They need you to say exactly the right thing at the right time—or many right things, or the same thing over and over. This is what your content should do.

In the Attention Loop section, I'll talk about how to decide what type of content to produce, where to publish it, how often to publish and why create content.

Attention Loop

Most people in this Loop have given serious thought to buying from you. Your influence is lower, but they're paying attention even though they're not paying you money (yet).

People in the Attention Loop are qualified clients: They know what you're selling, and they're aware of your competitors. They might not be certain how you can solve their problems, but they're actively seeking a solution and hope you might have it.

Notably, many people in this loop have been your clients before. They're asking themselves, "Is now the best time to come back?" or "What's new since I was there last?" or "Can I actually get myself back to the place I used to be?"

How do you know who's in the Attention Loop? They've taken an action to continue your conversation. They might be on your email list (a critical tool) or they might leave a comment on your website. They might have called your business or sent you a private message on social media. They might have purchased your book or attended your seminar or registered for your free course, then taken a follow-up action.

They've done more than just read one blog post or seen one commercial for your product; they've actually engaged in two-way communication, even if only online.

As a reminder, what most businesses need is **not** marketing at all. What most businesses need is **sales**.

Here's the difference: Marketing puts your name in front of people for the first time. It guides them to your door. And then it stops and sales take over.

Marketing starts with a very cold audience (they've probably never heard of you) and warms them to the point of interest. Marketing won't get anyone to pay for your service. Virtually no one enters credit-card numbers online without any product education, right? At the very least, marketing puts people on your email list. Then it's time for sales.

Marketing gets people to pay attention. Sales gets people to pay money.

The thing is this: You probably already have a few people paying attention—even if you don't have enough people paying you money. If you've been keeping an email list, let's take a look at it: How many people are on there who **aren't** your clients?

Why don't they unsubscribe or hit "spam"?

Because they're waiting. They're sitting on "maybe." Doesn't it make sense to coach the "maybes" to either a "yes!" or "no" than to put more people into "maybe"? Especially because it costs you money to put cold leads onto your list but costs you **nothing** to talk to those already there.

What's the value of your email list if you're not having a conversation with the people on it?
Zero.

I have a list of thousands of people. I write them a letter almost every day because I want to help them choose: either to sign up for our program or to sign up for someone else's program. I want them to say "yes" to something or "no." I want to get them off "maybe." I want to push the conversation until they get off "maybe."

"Maybe" is actually worse than "yes" or "no" because someone can be "maybe" forever, take no action and slowly slip backward. If they say "yes" to me, we can move forward. If they say "no," I'm sure they'll find help somewhere else.

Now think of the folks on your email list: If they say "yes" to you, you can enhance their lives. If they say "no," they might get help elsewhere, or they might not, but at least you'll stop splitting your focus. But if they stay on "maybe," everyone loses.

We're going to spend a long time talking about email lists because they're far more effective at bringing clients to the conversion point than anything else. Why? Simply because we have more than a single opportunity to say the right thing.

When a client sees a Facebook ad or Google ad or an eight-second YouTube spot, their attention is rarely captured. Fewer than one in 10 "impressions" will ever result in action. I'm being very generous here: For most ads, fewer than one in a **thousand** impressions will ever result in a sale.

But if a potential client is reading your emails, he or she is simply waiting for you to say the right thing. And that potential client will keep waiting until you either hit the target or run out of bullets.

In a few pages, I'll share my Love Letters strategy. This strategy is **so** powerful that I actually share it with my email list; I tell the people on the list exactly what I'm doing. And we **still** convert new clients every single day from our emails. Because unlike Sales Letters or Newsletters or Tripwires or any of those other sales "secrets," the love letters I write are actually useful. People enjoy reading them. When I ask them to sign up for our paid service, some always do.

Since I adopted the Love Letters strategy nearly two years ago, I've emailed most of my lists almost every day. I made myself this promise: "If my open rate falls below 30 percent, I'll stop." And it hasn't. If you're familiar with direct marketing, you'll know that's remarkable, especially with new cold leads joining the list every single day.

I have three things that make people read my emails:

1. An extraordinary level of care. I really **do** care about my readers.
2. Utility. Most of the emails give readers one actionable step to do that day.
3. Permission. I don't buy lists or spam anyone.

Let's start with the third one.

Permission

Have you ever been to a kid's birthday party? You probably have. How about a kid's birthday party that involved a pool?

It's pretty noisy—especially if the pool is indoors. Hollering, splashing, everything echoing off walls and ceiling. Most parents prefer to watch through the windows.

The "old" marketing was brand marketing.

With brand marketing, you put your brand in front of people in any way possible. You bought ads. You handed out flyers. You put up banners and posters and leaflets.

Brand marketing was a one-way conversation. It was just the marketer shouting, "Here I am!" When there were only a couple of kids in the pool, the loud one got lots of attention from the parents on deck. But when you added a dozen other kids and a beach ball, it became hard to hear what anyone was really saying. Between radio, TV, print and the internet, brand marketing got really noisy.

Now let's say it's time to go. All the kids are still in the pool. No one wants to get out. How does the parent get Bobby moving toward the door?

Well, she uses his name. Or maybe dad uses a special whistle that means, "C'mere, boy! Time to go!" When you need a kid to take a specific action, to get out of the pool and towel off, you speak to him or her directly. You use something the child identifies with, like a name or a secret sign.

This is direct marketing. It's been around for decades and was mostly relegated to mailed newsletters and then email.

For decades, big brands such as Tide and Coke stuck to brand marketing. They interrupted television viewers or radio listeners to say, "Here's what popping a tab sounds like. Aren't you thirsty?" or "You can't send your kid to school with grass stains. What kind of mother are you?" But those ads don't really work anymore.

"Awareness" campaigns are over because shelf space in the brain is limited. A Facebook ad that says "Dentists Are Good" won't have any effect because we already know that dentists are good. We need to hear how a dentist is going to solve our specific problem right now.

For a very short window of time, brands (and a few dentists) got really good at targeting us. If I were searching Yahoo for a dentist in 1996, an ad would have popped up for teeth cleaning. When we bought a fertility test at Target, a coupon for diapers might show up six months later.

More than one pregnancy was announced by the arrival of a "Congratulations on your pregnancy!" card from a marketer before the woman told anyone else—true story.

And direct marketing worked. But then came new spam laws. Even as ad targeting improved, legislation emerged to protect the consumer. Marketers can know almost everything about us—we've surrendered our right to privacy almost entirely—but they still can't hammer us with targeted ads. Not without permission.

Seth Godin wrote, "Permission marketing is the privilege (not the right) of delivering anticipated, personal and relevant messages to people who actually want to get them."

He wrote that in 2008. At that time, spam filters existed only in the user's head. Now they're built right into our email servers—and getting stronger every day.

As spam became less obvious—the prince of Nigeria no longer announces himself in the first line of his emails—anti-spam software got stronger to match. More and more, readers and listeners and watchers saw only the messages they allowed into their lives.

This is bad news for the big guys, but it's fantastic news for us. As the quietest parent at the party, it's hard to be heard by the kids in the pool. But when your kid is watching for your signal, it's easy to get him or her out of the pool.

How do you get permission to talk with a potential client?

- You find the greatest needs of your current **best** clients.
- You find out where your best clients congregate when they're not with you.
- You join that group and find the biggest problems.
- You solve those problems and offer to give the group members more help.

For example, I was talking to Alex and Chris in Boise, Idaho, a few years back. They wanted to open a new gym. Both have athletic backgrounds; one was a distance runner and the other a fitness model. They're both engaging, happy people with a lot to share.

If their first niche is the running community, they could ask their local friends, "What's stopping you from running longer/faster/better?" and then build their service around that. Then they could ask their friends, "Whom do you run with?" and join that group. While running, they could ask the same question of their new friends and offer some advice. Or they could post a link to their "how to stretch" videos in local Facebook groups for runners, or host an event on Strava, or offer a free seminar to members of the running group on Sunday at their new gym.

And then they'll have permission to talk more. This could mean a sign-up for your email list or a subscription to your YouTube channel or a follow on Strava or an invite to the next party.

How do you **retain** permission to keep talking?

- Don't spam anyone. I write to several lists: one is a list of thousands of gym owners. It has a daily open rate above 30 percent. That's more than double the industry average of "success" because I have permission to talk to them. People actually write back several times every day. Another list is local entrepreneurs. Most of them aren't really sure what business mentorship means yet. That means my open rates are even higher—over 50 percent on most days—but many also unsubscribe because they've decided this isn't for them. That's fine. We're feeling each other out. But you know **your** audience; send them stuff to help.
- Don't include a "call to action" in every post. People unsubscribe from sales letters. They don't unsubscribe from love letters. Include a helpful call to action in every third post, but always write to help first.
- Ask your audience questions. Turn your monologue into a dialogue. One post I made had over 50 responses in the first 24 hours. So I shared them.
- Don't be boring. Bridge the gaps.

Before people pay money, they'll pay attention. That attention is precious. When you have permission to interrupt, don't abuse it.

The “Love Letters” Strategy

Here's how I get the thousands and thousands of readers on the Two-Brain mailing list to get off “maybe”: I write them love letters.

Every day or so, I pick a muse: one person facing one problem I can solve.

Then I write them a love letter about their problem.

Then I send the letter to everyone on the list.

Plain text, no images or links.

And seven people email me back with their problems!

Then I think about *their* problems for a day or so, and if I can help, I write them the next love letter.

I use this same email in each of my businesses. Each niche has its own email list, and I write to them almost every day.

It's really effective in my gym business. In other gyms, clients don't hear from anyone until their membership agreement is about to expire. At Catalyst, they hear from me many times every week.

The results? Seven new sign-ups each month from our email list. That's greater than our drop-off rate, so the gym could keep growing on email alone. Of course, we rely heavily on the Affection, Activity and Acquaintance Loops, too.

In January, I walked out the front door of my gym to find a person staring in the window. I recognized him: He was a client over a decade ago. I greeted him by name, and he said: "I've been reading your emails almost every day. But that thing you said last Thursday really got to me."

He'd been reading my emails for over 10 years. That's thousands of emails before I hit the nail on the head and compelled him to act. Hundreds of clients heard their secret siren song before he did.

When I present this strategy in seminars, an audience member invariably asks, "Aren't you afraid someone will just hit 'spam!' and you'll never reach them again? How many emails is too many?"

My answer: "I'll let you know if I ever get there."

People who opt out of my list are doing me a favor. They're telling me "I don't want to hear this message" or "this message didn't work. Try again with someone else."

But it rarely happens. Reading this as an entrepreneur, that might be surprising to you. I get nearly 200 emails every day, and I really hate spam. But if my mentor sent me valuable strategies every day, I would open those emails.

And most people don't get as many emails as we do. We're biased.

I learned from a reputable source that the top-converting email in the martial-arts world is the 21st email. This person is a mentor to hundreds of martial-arts schools, and he says that their email sequences are fine-tuned for conversion. But most people don't sign up on the first email. There's a small spike in sign-ups on the third email, and then a few conversions here and there for the next 18. But the 21st email is usually the tipping point for most readers.

It doesn't matter what's in the email, he assured me (direct marketers never share their email text for free). It's simply the recurring nature of a helping hand in a person's inbox.

Here's the key at Two-Brain: I can't just email a "newsletter" or send special offers or incentives for signing up. Even the stuff I used to do in 2011 doesn't work anymore.

I have to really care. Like, really, **really** care.

I pretend the person is right in front of me, sitting around the campfire and asking me the question. Then I answer the way I would in person: I use familiar language, because they're my friends. I tell them the truth, because that's what they deserve. I don't give them an up-sell or cross-sell or any kind of offer **at all**.

I just care a lot.

I write these books and letters to **you** because I care if your business succeeds. You've invested your life into the service of others. If you're investing your attention in me, I want to give you a return on that investment.

The future clients on your email list are the same. You care about them—I know you do—and want them to be successful. So tell them how.

Where do you start?

Use an eight-word email or just ask, "What's your biggest hurdle to exercise?" on Facebook. People will tell you. Take each of their reasons and write a love letter. That's your muse. Your email list shouldn't be a storage facility. It should be a temporary way for people to sample your empathy and knowledge before deciding yes or no.

Finally, include a call to action in your emails (a link to purchase your service) once per week. Not too often, but not never, either.

Love + Letters

You can't get people into your business if you won't let people into your life.

If you haven't heard the term "love letters" before this e-book, that's OK. Love letters are simply notes to your audience about the things **they** care about. They're helpful tips, answers to questions and intimate details of **your** story.

They're not "newsletters."

They're definitely not "sales letters."

I write my love letters to **you** as answers to questions I receive from other gym owners. Every week, 10 of you book a free consultation on the Two-Brain Business website. We chat for half an hour. Sometimes I invite you to join our mentorship family and sometimes I don't. But the questions are always good, and I always know that **others** have the same questions.

So I answer them here. The best love letters I've written came from the best questions I was asked.

For example, these are the most popular love letters I've written to gym owners on my email list:

"Why I'm Headed to CrossFit HQ"
"How Many 'Likes' Do You Need?"
"How to Say 'No' to Discounts"
"Why You'll Never Need 300 Members"
"How to Optimize Your Day"

There are literally hundreds more.

On a podcast interview, I was once asked, "What's the most important piece of content you've produced? Which one made the biggest impact?"

A better question would have been: "What year of writing was your best?"

I wrote over 390 blog posts on DontBuyAds.com. Then I wrote the book ["Two-Brain Business."](#) I had over 300 posts on a consulting website. They're gone now, but most of them appeared in my next two books ["Two-Brain Business 2.0"](#) and ["Help First."](#)

I have almost 1,000 blog posts on [TwoBrainBusiness.com](#) and [Two-Brain Radio](#) has aired over 300 episodes. Our [YouTube Channel](#) is slowly growing, and we post several times a day to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

How do we produce so much? How do we publish every day? How do we find so much to talk about?

The simple answer is we can't not publish every day.

We can't not do free calls with entrepreneurs who want to grow.

We can't not answer their questions.

I can't not care.

And that means I **must** share the answers. I'm literally compelled to. When a business owner asks a great question, I have to share my answer. I've skipped workouts, family time and a ton of fun personal stuff to do so.

That, my friend, is love. Not the love of writing but the love of The Movement, of your potential to change lives. It's also the love of service.

What are you compelled to share with your friends? What will keep you up at night if you **don't** tell them?

The Video Strategy: Make 'Em Famous

For nearly 10 years, I've been telling people to "create more content!" and "write every damn day!" I've issued challenges, I've checked in on people and I've assigned accountability partners. I gave Two-Brain clients a few dozen reasons why they need to create content: building authority, establishing the expertise of your coaches, creating familiarity, generating interest, encouraging re-engagement, making conversions.

But perhaps I haven't given you a good **emotional** reason. So let's take it from the top: Your job as an entrepreneur is to grow your company. And the best way to grow your company is to make someone famous.

In the Founder Phase, you need to make yourself famous.

In the Farmer Phase, you need to make your clients famous. And then yourself, too.

In the Tinker Phase, you need to make your team famous. And then your clients, and then yourself.

In the Thief Phase, you need to make your cause famous.

(Not sure which level of entrepreneur you are? [Take the test here.](#))

At every level, you need to be devoted to putting someone on a pedestal and earning fame for him or her. Because most readers are stuck in Farmer Phase, I'll focus on making your clients famous.

Every day, identify one client and tell yourself, "I'm gonna make this person famous today."

Then: Put the client on TV. Grab your phone, hold it up and say, "Jill, I'm so proud of you! I want to share your story with everyone I know! You ready? I'm hitting the record button." Then hit the record button and do a quick interview. Share it everywhere. You've created a media platform; put her in the spotlight. Take a selfie like you waited in line all day to see her.

Drop her name to three other people. Brag her up. "Hey, I've gotta tell you what Jill did this morning. She'd never done a double-under before, and today she linked **five**! Isn't that crazy?"

Tag her on social media like she's a celebrity.

Put her name in print. Add Jill to your PR board for the week, and on Friday, have a staff member call her with congrats.

Ask her what's next. Interview her! Pretend you just won a competition, and the prize was to spend five minutes with Jill.

What's the value of making your client famous? Well how about this:

- No one else is doing it.
- Your clients deserve it.
- They'll always talk about you.
- Their friends will be jealous.
- They'll feel like a million bucks—and that's why they pay you money every month.
- Social proof, referrals, testimonials—all that stuff works. But make someone famous because it's the best thing you can do for that client today.

Zig Ziglar said, "No one loves anything more than seeing their name in print. The greatest compliment you can give someone is saying their name out loud."

Get excited. They're not **your** fans; you're **their** fan. By some divine miracle, you're also their coach. What can you do to inspire your clients to be their best today? Try putting them on a red carpet.

The Power of Ten

"How will I ever produce all this content? What will I write about?"

At Two-Brain, we publish something—a blog post, video, webinar, or podcast—every single day. That's a lot of media!

Content marketing is the backbone of your online authority. It's a reference library. It's your marketing plan at the Attention Loop.

I have over 1,500 blog posts and hundreds of videos and podcasts online. They're all free. In this section, I'll refer mostly to writing because that's my medium of choice. But you can do the same thing with YouTube videos, Facebook Live, Instagram stories, podcasts or Snaps. The medium doesn't matter that much.

I send emails to my readers almost every day. How do I produce so much content?

First, writing is a type of fitness. When you practice every day, it gets easier. You can build your fitness to high levels for short periods, and sometimes you need a total break. Like training for a marathon, you can "peak" a few times every year.

Just like fitness, it helps to have a scoreboard. I've used apps that track my output in the past. And also like fitness, writing becomes easier if you have a model to work toward.

Fitness magazines are full of pictures. You think, "I want to look like **that** guy." Then you go to the gym. You try to match the pace of your training buddy or group. But when you're writing,

you need more than a model. Saying "I'm going to write in the style of Jack Kerouac" won't help you get your blog post done. Instead, you need a muse.

Start by finding the questions your audience is asking. In a previous section, I asked, "Where else do your top clients congregate?"

Some of these places might be online. What questions do they ask in Facebook groups? What do they share on LinkedIn? What advice do they seek on Twitter or other media?

When you're talking to them in person, what do they ask about your service?

In the Power of Ten strategy, you'll be answering those top questions. But to help you start writing, and frame the response best, you need to channel the power of a muse.

For our purposes, a "muse" is just the person asking the question, or a key client, or even a problematic one.

Here's what you do:

Find a big question. Imagine yourself responding directly to the person asking the question. Write an email to the person explaining the answer in great detail. Answer all his or her questions. Now remove the person's name.

Your email is a blog post!

It can be paralyzing to write a monologue for a large audience. To make it simpler, just write an email to one person—and then ship it to everyone.

You've probably figured it out, but you're **my** muse. Every day, I answer questions about these same topics on my blog. I haven't run out of content in a decade because the questions keep coming.

If you can't find a good question, try these:

What's the last question a client asked that made you think, "Gee, doesn't everyone know that?"

If that doesn't work, walk to your neighborhood drugstore. Look at the magazine rack. Find the magazines about your business. Look at the titles. Then use the same titles in your own writing.

In the fitness industry, there are so many misleading titles and all-around myths that any magazine can give me a reason to write. I don't dare read the articles; the titles are enough. I copy the titles but write the truth.

A Smack, a Chip and a Stub: The Keys to Proliferation

What if you can't find a muse?

In "The War of Art," Steven Pressfield instructs us to get up and write every day, to lock ourselves in a room and overcome "the resistance" through habit and will. It's a helpful book. But most people struggle with finding a topic.

I wake up every day to write at 4 a.m. And I usually know what I'll write about before I get out of bed. I once wrote two books in 70 days while still maintaining a daily blog post or two.

The key isn't fine-tuned creativity. The keys are smacked foreheads, stubbed toes and a chip on my shoulder. Many fine writers use noble purpose to trigger their daily word count. I use more base methods for inspiration:

Smacked head—When I read bad advice from another "expert" to someone in my niche.

Stubbed toe—When I repeatedly run up against the same obstacle in an industry.

Chip on my shoulder—When a competitor directly copies or criticizes my ideas.

Here's a way to use one of these methods yourself right now.

Righting wrongs (smacked head)—If your niche is targeted by magazines, video blogs or other popular media, you're likely to find some really questionable opinions in them. Most media is created for the sole purpose of attention. That means shock value, provocation and oversimplification. It also means a huge opportunity for inspiration.

The fitness industry—my original niche—is an easy example. Every fitness magazine says "arms" or "abs" on the cover and then promotes a diet or workout plan inside. But most of the pictures are misleading, and many of the articles are flat-out wrong.

Inspiration comes from many sources, not all of them enlightened. The practice of writing and delivering content to your niche means occasionally getting dirty. Finding a muse usually leads to my best work and high audience engagement. But on mornings when I can't get started, it's sometimes easier to look in the other direction and push instead of pull.

Authenticity

I was Yogi Bear.

In my last summer of college, I took a job in Wisconsin. I thought I would be teaching kids to play sports. Instead, I was running Hanna-Barbera-themed activities and birthday parties. And

twice every day, I was zipping up a giant fur suit, slipping into rubber boots that were too large and walking five miles. I lost 20 lb. despite the ice vest I wore underneath the suit.

When you put on a Yogi Bear costume, you don't take on the full character. You're not allowed to steal pic-a-nic baskets or swat beehives. And you're not allowed to do the Yogi Bear voice. You have to stay silent, because while the giant costume sure makes you look like Yogi, no one actually sounds like Yogi. Little kids will run from their cabins and tents to hug Yogi's legs, but if you speak, the illusion is shattered. You're only authentically Yogi until you're obviously not.

Einstein said this: "Do not worry about your difficulties in mathematics. I can assure you mine are still greater."

Being a genius made Einstein good at his job. But being relatable made him popular.

Authenticity, in business, means that you have skin in the game. It means that you identify with your audience because **you are them**.

You know all about their accounting problems because you have trouble balancing your own books. You know all about their weight-loss problems because the last thing you want to do is cook dinner after working a 14-hour day at the gym. So, doughnuts. You know all about their bad hair days because you have them, too. Remember that time the blinkers wouldn't turn off in your truck? That was annoying. And it happens to your customers, too.

Sharing these stories with your clients tells them, "We're the same." It says, "You can believe me when I tell you that you need a new bumper on your truck because I had the same experience."

The reason my first book ("Two-Brain Business") is still popular is because I share the bad stories as well as the good. I don't give advice without the hard lessons that led me to a positive outcome. In the fitness industry, where everyone knows everything, there are many consultants who have never made a mistake in their lives. They're better at working out than I am, their hair is "on point," and they get 50 new gym members every single day. Believe it, bro.

CrossFit Podcast host Sevan Matossian asked me, "How important is authenticity in our business?" and I gave the example of an overweight trainer who exercises hard. If the trainer has lost 100 lb., he can help another client lose weight better than I can—even if the trainer is still slightly overweight. He doesn't have to be the best exerciser in the gym. He doesn't need the best abs. He just needs to be authentic.

That same trainer might not claim expertise on throwing a fastball. He might not teach yoga. He knows his niche and his limits. But he also knows his strengths—and knows them to a depth far beyond what I'll ever understand. He has skin in the game. His truth is more than enough. And if he tells his story far and wide, clients will flock to him.

Authenticity means sharing your failings. It means not exaggerating your expertise. It means limiting your lessons to your core competency and experience.

You and I, we're in the relationship business. Our clients choose us because we're authentic. They know when we're faking it. People are smart.

You might think you can do the perfect Yogi Bear voice; you can't. Just wear the suit and let them hug you.

Using Lead Magnets

A “lead magnet” is an exceptional piece of content that you trade for an email address.

For example, if you visit TwoBrainBusiness.com, you can download some great e-books—just like this one—for free. We've got definitive books on how to make more money with personal training, how to market, how to create great opportunities for staff, how to buy or sell a gym, and so on. To access the books, you'll have to share your email address so we can continue the conversation together.

In your business, a lead magnet helps you bring a site viewer into a conversation. Every day, you could have hundreds or **thousands** of people viewing your site without any idea of who they are. They are generally warm leads; they've taken a step away from Instagram to find out more about you. Wouldn't you love to answer their questions and keep talking to them?

Most websites represent our best guesses: What do we need to say to get someone to convert? What picture will encourage someone to book a call or schedule an appointment? We make guesses, knowing full well that we can't possibly appeal to everyone. We only know a picture that appeals to young families will probably discourage senior citizens.

The best websites have separate channels for different audiences. A young mother might be guided to a page that's built to appeal to moms; a senior might find a page that will help him with his questions people his age would ask.

But as I wrote in Permission Marketing above, you need to exchange some information with every website visitor as soon as possible to continue your conversation.

Lead magnets are simply special content you create to exchange for an email address or phone number. For example, a lead magnet could be a special report you write or access to a special video series.

While any visitor to your website should find a ton of free content, only those willing to trade email addresses should get your special stuff.

I track readership and viewership and downloads of all my content. When I see one piece getting extraordinary attention, I know I should go deeper. So I'll write a longer piece exploring the topic more deeply and make it available as a trade.

I share the special content on my site—maybe on a specific landing page or through a pop-up—and invite viewers to download it. They enter their email addresses and are added to my list. Then my software automatically sends them the information they've requested or grants them access to our video bank.

This is all done automatically; I set it up once and let it run forever.

For example, I might write a post about weight loss on our gym website. But weight loss has many facets; new books are published on the topic almost every day. My blog post will focus on one piece of the puzzle. Let's imagine I give a simple diet tip.

If I find that blog post to have higher interest than normal, I might write a five-page booklet to explain my point further. Then I'll make that booklet available on a special page that asks for an email address. When a new viewer enters an email address, my software automatically sends the new book and adds the person to my list.

Want to see a good example? Visit [this page](#). If Two-Brain's free retention guide might help you—we're certain it can increase revenue at a gym—enter your email address and we'll send you the guide. And then we'll stay in contact through love letters.

I wrote a lead magnet called "The Side-Hustle Handbook" from several blog posts I had written for local entrepreneurs. It took a day to curate and link the posts together. It took less than an hour to set up the opt-in form and write the emails that trigger automatically.

I wrote an e-book almost by accident. I asked my editor how many posts we published on TwoBrainBusiness.com in 2017; the answer was over 320. She compiled the posts into some semblance of order, and I published them in an e-book people could download in exchange for an email address. I promised to send them the e-book—**and** daily love letters.

Some of the people who got my love letters emailed back, and we started conversations. Some of those conversations led to long-term mentoring relationships that resulted in good things for the client's company and mine.

The First Six Emails You Send

In the Awareness Loop, the content you publish will bridge the gap from Awareness to Attention. First impressions matter, so when someone moves from Awareness to Attention, it's best to have him or her encounter your best content first.

That move usually comes when new clients join your email list.

They might have seen your Facebook post or heard your podcast. Maybe they clicked on your lead magnet and downloaded your helpful content for free.

The leads coming from social media to your website are cold leads. Only a small fraction of those cold leads ever jump straight to a purchase. Most need to know more: They need to know that you care about their problems and have a reasonable chance of solving them.

The job of your website is to get people off Facebook and encourage them to sign up for your email list (or a face-to-face meeting). No one browses websites anymore. So you write content to attract people to your site, and then you get them to continue the conversation through email. As I said above, lead magnets are a great way to use a stellar piece of content to acquire permission to email people.

The email conversation that follows should explain the benefits of your service and "warm them up" to book a consultation with you. The emails can easily be set up to run automatically without fancy software—a Mailchimp account is more than enough, and some billing platforms and website providers actually allow you to build in email automations. We show you how in our mentoring program.

Below, you'll find the DIY guide to writing a six-email starter sequence (we give our actual text and several other sequences to clients in our mentoring program).

Overall look and feel: personal, not like a newsletter. Avoid logos or footers. Use first-person, intimate language. It should look like a real email. Use merge tags to insert the person's real name in the email, and **always** have a P.S. with an action at the end.

The goal of our first email sequence: Get the prospect to book a call.

First Email—Thanks for signing up! Here's what to expect from us over the next few days. Also include: You'll have an opportunity to book a free consultation with us. Want to skip right to that step? Click here! [insert your link]

Second Email—Here's the #1 struggle faced by people like you, and here's how we solve it. As described earlier in this e-book, you can interview your ideal current clients, identify their biggest challenges and then solve them. Now you can use that info to show prospective clients how you solve common problems.

Third Email—Link to video. Twist the knife: If the struggle from email No. 2 isn't resolved, how bad could things get? Share a story of a worst-case scenario.

Fourth Email—The "light at the end of the tunnel" email. Share client stories with successful outcomes. Show the contrast between the "twist the knife" video and the happy ending. Foreshadow the next email: "Tomorrow, I'll tell you how Shane got out of his rut." In the P.S., share a link to book: "If you're too impatient, go ahead and skip to the free call with me."

Fifth Email—The sales email. Tell the secrets. Remind the reader of Shane's story and what he did to reach a happy ending. Have a clear call to action printed at least twice, with a link to purchase in two clicks or less.

Sixth Email (48 hours later)—Send as a reminder to book a call today. Show the readers what they'll miss out on if they don't book.

No action? Drop the email address into your general email list and keep sending love letters forever!

Writing good emails might be an art, but you don't have to be a master. You can paint by numbers.

Marketing strategies to generate cold leads come and go. But as you get further down the funnel, the strategies change less often. Three years from now, if your cold leads are coming from virtual reality tours instead of Facebook, you can still point them toward your email list or YouTube channel, trigger an automated sequence, and warm them up.

Awareness Loop

As we travel further from the center of our bull's-eye, affinity goes down: People care less about your product or service. But that doesn't mean they're not aware of you. They might seek your expertise in the future.

A person in the Awareness Loop has probably seen your brand and left a footprint: a Facebook "like" or a click through an ad, a sign-up at a local brand fair or a "Hey, you're **that** dude!" at a restaurant. I actually get the last one all the time.

These future clients will need education to bridge the gap to an Affinity Loop closer to the bull's-eye. That means publishing content aimed at solving their problems.

YouTube is incredibly powerful here. Some how-to videos go a long way to building authority within your niche. Gary Vaynerchuk did it for his father's wine store; you could do the same videos for **your** store and become the leading local authority.

Your content should lead back to your website or blog, where a clear path to registration resides.

So how many "friends" do you need to make a living? And what's your profit margin on "views"?

Facebook is a fun toy that really does have practical business applications. For generating interest and communicating with people, it's the most effective online platform the world has ever seen.

But Facebook's real mission is to keep you on Facebook. It can be a useful business tool, but it can also distract you into "ego traps": likes, shares and views. Here's what they mean, and how to avoid the traps.

First, a review on who's actually paying attention. As shown above, we teach three stages of audience interest:

Informed (very warm, ready to sign up)—They've decided to work out and are just comparing gyms.

Aware (warm, but not hot)—Know they "need to do something" and are actively seeking a solution to their problems (like weight loss).

Oblivious (cold)—Don't even know they have a problem, aren't looking for a solution.

This is important to understand, because your messages on Facebook reach **all** three audiences at once.

For example:

You post a before/after picture in a blog post about your nutrition challenge.

Informed: "That's cool. This gym has nutrition challenges."

Aware: "Looks like I can lose weight through nutrition challenges. Add that to my list of options."

Oblivious: "Person in swimwear!"

People in each audience might hit "like" or even share your post, but for far different reasons.

The point is that we really have no idea who's hitting the "like" button. If your picture receives fanfare from 100 people, it's entirely possible that none will become a new client. It would be nice to have an algorithm that says, "If 100 people hit 'like,' one of them will sign up." But that's not true; there's no linear progression at all.

What really matters: **conversions**.

A conversion is when someone signs up for your service. With money.

A conversion isn't a "page like." A conversion isn't even a "free trial." A conversion is a purchase. A "view" means they're slow at scrolling their finger on the screen.

Again, there's no linear relationship between a person sharing your post and signing up for your service.

How do we get people to conversion? We start with the people closest to converting.

First, former clients. How can you reach them? Probably a phone call or email. This is a very warm audience because its members have purchased from you before. Re-engaging former

clients is a top priority for gyms in the Two-Brain family. It's so effective that when we give a gym owner an email to use and they don't bring anyone back, we know there's something wrong in the gym.

Second, people who have done a free consultation but didn't sign up. They were ready to go, but something stopped them. How do you reach them? Use consistent messages about how your service will solve their problems. You can trail them to their coffee shop every day or put a sign in their yard—or send them love letters through email.

Third, people on your email list. These folks are paying attention and have indicated so by taking action (signing up for something). They're waiting for you to say the right thing. Luckily, they'll let you say a lot of not-quite-right things first. As I wrote earlier, some industry surveys (martial arts, for example) show the 21st email has the greatest conversion rate. Let that one sink in. Email warms up a cold audience; the colder they are, the more emails they'll need to get from you.

If they're not on your email list, they probably haven't done much to indicate their interest. But let's say they've hit "like" or "follow" on your social-media page—that's a sign they have at least a passing, minimal interest in you. Our audience engagement is already getting colder here, but you warm people up through constant conversation. That's easier through email, because everyone gets the email. On Facebook, only a small percentage of your page audience will see your posts at any given time, and almost never the same people. So your top priority with people who like your page should be to get them onto your email list.

If they're not followers of your Facebook page—at a bare minimum—they probably don't count as a future client at all. And if they're not on your email list, you're going to have to do **a lot** of work to warm them up before they convert. The early adopters are gone. Now you need to show people how you're going to solve their problem.

If you share the before/after pics from above and get 100 "likes," here's how it might break down:

55—Your current clients who know the person in the pic.

10—The family of the person in the pic (if you've tagged it properly).

5—Your coaches.

3—Your mom (she has secret accounts. She told me about them.).

1—Your fourth-grade teacher (a "like" is the new gold star).

2—Former clients who have moved away.

4—Candidates running for office.

17—Other gym owners who are "liking" your Facebook play.

1—A person who has been thinking about your service. He or she won't see your next posts, by the way, unless you get the person on your email list.

That list is an overdramatization, of course. It's a guess. But here's the kicker: It's just as likely to be true as false. Go ahead: Hover over the "like" button on your last post and track who's paying attention.

So that covers organic posts. So what about ads? We'll briefly touch on a few elements of paid marketing here so you can see how it links up with Affinity Marketing.

Following the Informed/Aware/Oblivious model, our sales and marketing priority should be:

1. Current and former clients.
2. Not-quite-conversions (they came in for an appointment but didn't sign up).
3. People on your email list.
4. Maybe people who like your page. At this point, the audience is cooling off; you have better options.
5. Lookalike audience of people on your mailing list—maybe someone who also likes Garth Brooks music, long walks on the beach, high-intensity fitness and vampire romance might also like your service and be ready to sign up. But again, you have other priorities.
6. Lookalikes of people who like your page—you're really reaching here.
7. Demographic targeting—You might as well drop flyers out of a helicopter. The odds are better because you'll only drop the flyers over the neighborhoods where your best clients live. Right?

So how do you get leads?

Most gym owners don't actually need leads. What they need is conversions: to move the people on their email list toward a consultation or intake meeting. Of course, it's a lot easier to run an ad and get 400 more followers on your Facebook page than to actually convert any of them, so that's what many marketing companies sell. Unfortunately, it's really easy to convince us that "likes = \$" because we really want to believe it.

Is it possible to entice a cold lead into your gym for a free trial? Yes, it is—at least, it's possible to get someone from your "aware" audience into the gym for something.

Companies selling a six-week challenge have proven successful by putting a novel fitness "challenge" in front of thousands of colder leads in different markets. People signing up for the challenge are "aware" that they need exercise and are enticed by novelty. But most haven't previously indicated interest in fitness. And the marketing plan doesn't attract warm leads: It simply fires a lot of bullets until someone gets hit.

The gym owner might be successful in warming the lead up and converting during the challenge (our data shows this used to happen 38 percent of the time, best-case, but this seems to be dropping to below 10 percent as leads get colder).

When I was 13, I visited Paris. Part of the tour involved spending an evening at Notre Dame Cathedral. I met people from all around the world; my friends from home were with me in the tour group. I took pictures of myself in front of gargoyles and went away happy.

But I didn't convert to Catholicism.

I was there for the tour. I wanted to say, "I did Notre Dame." I was an oblivious audience. I was a teenage boy on a trip with his friends.

Skip ahead to 2016, when I embarked on a 12-month journey to finally "figure out Facebook." I travelled extensively, took expensive courses and took top experts to lunch. And what I learned comes down to this:

The "trick" to Facebook is that we're all just a bunch of humans on there.

The "magic" to Facebook marketing is understanding what people actually **want**, not what headline will make them want something different.

The real truth to Facebook marketing is that there isn't a trick. It's practicing, trial and error, and scaling. It's a lot of patience, like learning the air squat over and over for weeks and then finally adding a barbell.

We include Facebook marketing mentorship in our program because digital marketing is a process. You can't simply learn to do it the way you learn to change a tire. You need constant mentorship and help making decisions. You need to constantly evaluate your funnel and optimize for conversions.

Just as the number of clients in your gym doesn't really matter—profit matters—the number of people who "like" your page doesn't really matter. Only conversions matter. A marketing funnel is only as good as its number of conversions. Only after optimizing your conversion rate should you add a large number of cold leads through audience targeting.

Audiences Loop

An audience is a group of similar people. They might not be paying attention—or even be aware of you—but they flock together over similarities.

Most of the time, when marketers discuss "audiences," they're talking about groups of people on social media.

For example, one audience might be the people in my town. I can advertise to them. Or I can cut that audience down to include only the people in my town aged 30-35 who like Garth Brooks and the Pittsburgh Penguins. Facebook calls this "refining" your audience, and it seems like magic to most people the first time.

However, advanced ad targeting and the best audience refining **still** puts your message in front of people who have never heard of you. They have a long road ahead before they'll sign up. I prefer to stick with warmer audiences and make a broad appeal to cold leads in targeted audiences only three to four times per year.

For example, you might start by uploading your email list (a warm audience) and building a Facebook audience out of that. If you don't want your ad to be seen by your current members, you might build a separate audience from your member list and exclude them from a campaign:

Total email list – current clients list = warm leads who are paying attention but aren't paying you money.

Facebook marketing seems like magic, but it's really a giant algorithm that starts with "ad spend" and ends with "conversion." It's far less sexy behind the curtain than it appears on the street.

The greatest line in marketing history is this one from John Wanamaker:

“Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half.”

But digital platforms let us know **exactly** what's working. Reading the data is a skill that we develop in Two-Brain gym owners.

The real secret to Facebook marketing is testing: trying one ad against a similar ad for several days and then changing one ad slightly, running the test again, and comparing results. It's a boring process, and even though most gym owners now understand that Facebook is powerful, most of them have no idea how to read the data required to harness that power.

Full-time Facebook marketers can make millions of dollars, but mostly through selling their "secrets" to other advertisers. The problem is that no Facebook marketing strategy or algorithm works forever. New tools appear every few months, which require testing and retesting all over again. Old tools sometimes disappear. No one stays an expert on the algorithm forever. But anyone can learn to read the data, and we have some of the best coaches in the world.

Every audience is different. But some broad rules apply if you want to get started without specific mentoring for digital marketing. Here's how I market to strangers and "colder" leads on Facebook, gain their attention, and start a conversation that will lead to a conversion—with an ad spend of less than \$21 per month. This is the strategy I used to take Two-Brain Business from startup to a multimillion-dollar worldwide mentoring practice in less than two years.

First, I publish all my blog posts to my Facebook page. That's easy. I grab the URL, paste it into the right spot on the page, wait for Facebook to "grab" the post, and then delete the URL and write a catchy intro sentence. That's child's play, really.

If a post receives more than 10 likes or shares, that's a good indication my entire page audience should see it. The Two-Brain page has around 4,500 followers (pretty tiny, right? Just wait) but only around 10 percent of them—or less—will see the post in their feed unless I boost it. For an audience of that size, a \$7 boost over two days will get at least 20 percent more of them to click the link and go to my website.

The purpose of my Facebook page is to get people to my website.

Remember the analogy: Your website is your boat. Facebook is the ocean. Content is your net. To make sure my posts are seen by the people who like my page—people in the Audience Loop, who have already indicated some minor interest in my service—I boost the post to them, and only them.

I boost around two or three posts per month for a total ad spend of around \$21. Now, those costs will definitely rise over time. Keep in mind that ad costs will rise as more marketers compete to get in front of your audience, whether that advertiser knows what he or she is doing or not. Ads go to the highest bidder, not the advertiser with the best service or greatest value to their audience.

In the gym industry, we've already seen some Facebook ad strategies that worked well at inception but poisoned their own food dish as ad costs rose.

For example, an advertiser will push a six-week challenge and pump 30 new people into a gym. But most of those were attracted by the novelty (and end point) of the challenge, so they won't stick. And they flush out great, long-term members before they go. So the gym eventually gets on a treadmill of recruitment and loss. It's hard on everyone, and margins get smaller as ad costs go up. Maybe worst of all, as lead quality decreases, the gym has to interview more people to find the ones who will sign up, and even those are less likely to stick around. It's a downward spiral.

At time of writing, we still use "challenge" in the ads we help many gym owners create. The difference is that Two-Brain gyms don't try to onboard, train and retain 30 people at once. Instead, the challenge is a personal one, with a high degree of retention. But all of this can change quickly, and that's why we teach mentorship instead of just giving away a swipe file or specific ad copy.

Second, and even more powerful, is my Power of Ten strategy. This is an organic lead-generation strategy with zero ad cost.

I get into specific details on this strategy in our Growth Stage of mentorship. But here are the broad strokes:

First, I join Facebook groups that are specific to my niche. For example, I would join the EliteFTS Gym Owners Group on Facebook (if there was one). But I could also join a group for Dentists in Omaha or Runners in California—any niche that I can legitimately help.

Finding the right groups takes some trial and error. You want to choose active groups where participants ask a lot of questions and admins loosely patrol what's posted.

Here are some signs that you're in the wrong group:

1. Everyone's an expert. No one asks questions for fear of criticism, and the rare question receives a thousand opinions.

2. The group founder is trying to sell a service. There's nothing wrong with this (although I don't do it), but the founder probably won't want you to post helpful links to **your** service in the group.
3. No activity in the last few days. That means group activity isn't showing up in the feeds of its members, and no one is paying attention.
4. External links are banned. Offering help and advice in groups is nice, but if you can't provide a link back to your website, you're really just scattering fish food in the ocean without a net.

When you find the right group, engage. Sincerely seek to help the people who have questions.

Scan through the group chat history. Find the questions that recur most often. Or just wait a few months and pay attention to the topics that appear over and over. Because Facebook is built on short attention spans, only a few posts appear at a time. No one uses the "search" feature well, so you'll read a lot of repetition. For our purposes, that's great.

When a question seems to be common, write a blog post explaining the answer. I originally used this method because I was tired of writing the same answer over and over. So I wrote my best possible answer once in a blog post, and the next time the question arose, I pasted a link to the group.

That got readers off Facebook and onto my site, which is the goal of content marketing. From my site, they signed up for my daily love letters, and we began our relationship. You could use a pop-up or put your best content behind a registration link (lead magnets!), but always work to get visitors onto your email list and into a conversation!

The Power of Ten strategy means identifying the questions your future clients have and then answering them in a way that starts a conversation. And doing it 100 times. Find the top 10 questions and write a blog post (or shoot a video) explaining the answer to each one. Over the next year, return to each question and answer it again: rephrase your solution, use different media, update your answer or simply refine it.

You'll get tired of your content **long** before your clients will—I promise.

When you have a bank of 100 pieces of content, you're ready for the next step. But until then, you're creating the content your audience wants most, creating a clear path off social media onto your site and letting your niche guide you.

My email list is more than twice the size of my "page likes" on Facebook. That means potential clients are jumping straight from Facebook groups to my site without even passing through my page.

The fewer steps to conversion, the better. This strategy has given me a huge shortcut.

Ambient Loop

This is the rest of the universe.

The Ambient Loop is the total of all the people who have the means and ability to purchase from you. They might not have desire yet; that doesn't matter. Some of them will eventually swim toward your boat. But we'll focus on the fish who are already in the pan first.

The key to appealing to the Ambient loop is knowing what problem they're trying to solve and then giving them a clear path to that solution.

Remember the section on Interested, Aware and Oblivious audiences? In the first few Affinity Loops, we worked hard to convert people who were already Interested, or at least Aware. These were warm audiences.

Then we used email marketing, webinars and free content to guide the Aware audiences toward becoming Interested. Now we're going to help Oblivious and slightly aware audiences find you.

And as a bonus, your paid ads might even push a few interested people to sign up. Not everyone reads email. Some people might be interested in your service for years and then see an ad and sign up. Some might talk about it, think about it, ask for opinions—and then an ad pushes them to take action. You need concurrent media, and if the only way to get your message in front of your audience is paid ads, then you need paid ads.

The freebie days of Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram are over. Paid lead generation is still in its infancy: New platforms, like Strava, have massive user bases and are now working to incorporate ads. But Facebook is still relatively inexpensive: We can learn the lessons now that will serve us for the next 30 years online.

Paid lead generation is effective, and it's been done for centuries. Wanamaker's quote about 50 percent of his marketing being effective? He was talking about paid lead generation. In his case, he meant flyers and newspaper ads. Print media is mostly gone now, but only the medium has changed. We read on screens instead of on paper. And we watch videos on demand instead of television programming broken up by paid ads. In short, we now consume media that we choose from a menu of options.

So what do people choose to consume? What will we always choose to consume?

Things that have value to us personally.

What we value changes. But our sense of value doesn't.

Zig Ziglar was a traveling salesman in the 1940s. He did door-to-door sales for decades, eventually becoming a popular sales coach and public speaker. He recounted this tale in his book “Ziglar on Selling.”

Ziglar was in a family’s living room—the studio for his art—pitching cookware. The family desperately needed cookware; there were many of them, and mama spent much of the day over a hot stove, reusing the same pot. Ziglar spent two hours trying to convince them that new cookware would save mama a lot of time cooking and even more time cleaning. But the family—mama included—kept repeating, “No money, too expensive, can’t afford it.”

As Ziglar was packing his samples into his suitcase, mama spied a catalogue for fine china in Ziglar’s bag. She asked if he sold fine china, and he said, “Yes, ma’am, we sell the finest china in the world!”

She and the family made a huge order for fine china—one of Ziglar’s biggest sales—in the middle of a depression. I’ll let Zig take it from here:

“Less than 30 minutes later, I left that household with an order worth substantially more than the entire set of cookware. Now think with me. If she couldn’t afford the set of cookware she so desperately needed, how could she afford the china she didn’t need? The answer is, she couldn’t afford a set of cookware she didn’t want, but she could afford a set of fine china she did want. Here is the key point: People buy what they want when they want it more than the money it costs.”

We are not rational beings but emotional ones.

We don’t weigh purchase decisions logically (“I can cut my \$4 daily coffee budget and be able to afford \$120 per month at the gym”). Instead, we approach every purchase decision from an emotional perspective first. Then we rationalize that decision.

In the coffee example, I’d prefer to have both the coffee and the gym membership. But if forced to choose one, I’d take the coffee, because I love coffee. And then I’d rationalize my choice by saying, “The coffee will make me more productive. So I’ll go to work, earn a raise and then be able to afford a gym membership.”

Is that logical? No. See: “We are not rational beings.”

After we find what we want, we rationalize the purchase. We can talk ourselves into believing anything.

When you realize that people buy what they **want**—not what they need—you start to gain insight into marketing.

People don’t want to get beaten up by tough workouts every day. But they DO want visible abs and to feel like an athlete. They want to be the only person in the office who can do a bar

muscle-up because they're also the only person who can't turn in receipts on time. And they rationalize that decision by telling themselves stories about "functional fitness" and "longevity."

This is why No-Sweat Intros are far more effective than movement screens at intake: The former focuses on "what makes you more comfortable?" instead of "here's what you need to fix yourself."

People are attracted to nutrition challenges because they want others to be jealous of their abs, not because they need to avoid sugar.

Want > Need. It's how our brains are wired. Good coaches seek deeper understanding of their clients' psychology and learn to leverage it. They **don't** post social media rants that highlight their lack of understanding.

For example, "For the cost of one coffee every day, you could afford a gym membership that will save your life! Wake up, people!"

Or, "People say they can't afford a gym membership but then they get the new iPhone—I just don't know sometimes!"

These distance you from your audience instead of demonstrating that you understand what they want.

Let's say that I want a new truck (I **always** want a new truck), but my insurance broker is trying to sell me more life insurance. He posts on his Facebook page:

"I can't believe people would buy bigger trucks when that same monthly payment would earn you three times as much when you retire!"

First, I'd think, "That guy just doesn't get me."

Then I'd start justifying the truck purchase: "I need to haul my kids' hockey equipment around, and my old truck can't hold all my tools, and we'll probably need a bigger trailer soon"

And then I'd buy the truck.

Another example: I don't understand why some gym owners have 12 rowers and no business coaching. Luckily I **do** understand that it's easy to buy rowers and hard to ask for help (because I've certainly been there). So I wait until they want to change.

The duality of human thought is fascinating. We're always balancing "what I want" against "what I need." And as we move up the hierarchy of self-actualization, want trumps need more and more.

We sell a premium service. That means our audience is likely to buy new iPhones and get Starbucks every day. But if they can't afford those things **and** a gym membership, they'll

probably prioritize what they want over what they need. The Apple Watch is the “fine china” of our generation.

Facebook Marketing: What I Actually Do

In early 2018 at the Two-Brain Workshop in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, we hosted an event for entrepreneurs in our city.

A government-sponsored organization put the event together and rented space from us. But Two-Brain mentor Greg Strauch flew in from New Mexico to attend and Eden Watson, one of our local staff members, coordinated the event.

One of the speakers was a professional “marketer.” She spoke about identifying your target audience; then she told these under-30 entrepreneurs how to write effective radio ads.

What?

Greg and Eden said to each other, “I wish Coop were here.” They didn't feel right about questioning the speaker's recommendations, and I was coaching kids at a nearby arena. So the young founders left with the impression that radio ads (and newspapers!) were part of a comprehensive ad strategy, and that \$25,000 was a good “starting place” for an annual marketing budget.

I don't think I've spent \$25,000 on marketing in my life.

My first blog, DontBuyAds.com, was written before Facebook marketing was popular—or even known, really. It was pre-Facebook Pages, pre-IPO. Advertising was all done by hard copy back then. But even without competition from social media, radio and newspaper, ads **still** sucked compared to real conversations with real people.

Do I stay away from Facebook and Google ads and SEO? Of course not. We follow the mentorship of the Two-Brain Marketing team, too.

As I wrote this section, Catalyst, my gym, was on a tear. Here's where the new leads were coming from:

1. Affinity Marketing—The stuff in this e-book (in our mentorship program, you can go through the process step-by-step with a Two-Brain mentor).

Specifically: I got out from behind my computer and met people. I volunteered to coach hockey for two teams, and that brought in new clients. I was taking members for coffee every week and asking about their families. That's brought me a new client, too.

2. Love letters—You now know all about this. People get love letters from me almost every day. My members get different ones. I've always shared members' stories through love letters, but a series called "[The New Kid](#)" was mentioned in three straight consultations.

There's no call to action, just plain text written in a different voice than my own. I'm really just paraphrasing the stuff that new members have told me for years (there's no actual "Jim"—he's an avatar).

3. SEO—I publish a lot. Google wants you to publish a lot. You can pay a ton for SEO tricks or you can earn Google's trust by publishing a lot. That's what "organic" really means. You can't buy real organic SEO.

4. Google and Facebook ads—These were created following the 1:1 guidance my gym gets from our Two-Brain Marketing mentor. We had 12 new leads in the week I wrote this: three booked No-Sweat Intros; two showed up. But more importantly, they were all added to my email list, which is really where I warm them up. Very few people go from cold lead to sale in my community, but in others, I know they have higher conversion rates.

Total daily budget: around \$15. In time, it will go up. But my new clients in the last month came from No. 1 and No. 2—at a cost of \$0.

This might be bad news to some of you. Fifteen bucks every day might dip into your grocery money.

But here's the silver lining: When I opened my gym, any advertising cost hundreds to thousands of dollars and just raised awareness. I couldn't afford any of it, and it took years to get to real profitability.

Now you can do it a lot faster for a ridiculously low cost—under \$10 for a conversation with an interested prospect? That's incredible when you compare it against \$1,500—or more—for a one-time half-page ad that doesn't trigger any action at all. Or how about spending \$500 for a radio ad with results that are impossible to measure?

It's the difference between shooting a rabbit with a rifle or setting off a firecracker and hoping a rabbit happens to jump on it while it's going off.

Many gyms can really benefit from marketing, but the long game is won through relationships, conversations and stories.

I want you to get 50 new clients. But I don't want you to need another 50 new clients in May, and another 50 new clients in July, and another 50 every three months for the next 30 years.

Dump cold leads into your funnel when necessary. But never stop warming them up, and don't forget to use Affinity Marketing on your "new kids"!

No Matter What: Be Clear, Not Cute

Much of my mentorship practice involves helping gym owners grow their businesses.

My first business was a gym, and I love mentoring others in the industry.

When you look at a gym's website, you'll probably see stuff like "great workouts" and "community" and "fun." But you won't usually see the message that counts:

"We are a gym."

Isn't that funny? Non-gym goers go to these websites and see pictures of people high-fiving each other in tight-fitting clothes. They might infer that they're all sweaty and lying down because they had a hard workout—or they might infer something else.

Even though 70 percent of the people visiting these sites are looking for ways to lose weight, you'll rarely see "we help you lose weight" on these websites. Instead, you'll read stuff about "programming" and "community"—but unless you're looking for more friends, or to join a Ruby on Rails colony, you might not click around much further.

And it's not just gyms. **Every** business makes the same mistake in media. They focus on the process—"We're ISO 9001 certified"—instead of saying "We dig ditches." They advertise their prices ("\$99 perms!") or their policies ("walk-ins welcome!") instead of what they do ("We make your hair look fantastic").

Sometimes, they even obfuscate their name or business on purpose to appear more artistic. If I invited you to CtlstGm, would you know to wear workout clothes? Of course not. But the entrepreneur feels like an artist. And that's why they do this stuff: They confuse marketing with art.

Every inside joke is a deflected arrow. Every bad rhyme or pun is a missed opportunity. Removing the vowels from your brand is, well, I'm not really sure what that is—and that's the point.

Your biggest opportunity in business is clarity. What good is a louder megaphone if you're speaking the wrong language?

For more, read "Building a StoryBrand" by Donald Miller. Listen to his podcast, too: You'll hear him say "if you confuse, you'll lose" every week.

Remember the oft-forgotten bull's-eye. Who is the **first** person you should examine when you're attempting to grow your business? Who has the connections to those most likely to become your clients?

It's you.

In the fall of 2017, I took a call from a distraught client in Colorado. She was worried about the lack of leads coming into her business, a gym. And she'd been through every stage of the funnel: attracting cold leads, writing them love letters, interviewing her best clients.

So we talked about ways to have more conversations with real people, to get her out from behind the screen. We covered the usual ideas: her local chamber of commerce, a local entrepreneur group for women and a charity or two.

Then I asked her about her email address, which started with "climber." I guessed she might like climbing. I was right: She was a big rock climber, and so was her husband.

I asked if any members at her gym were also climbers.

"Well, a lot of the originals were," she said.

Then I asked how often she climbed with a group each week.

"I don't really have time," she said. "We're too busy with the gym."

It seems obvious in hindsight: Here are two engaging, fun people who opened their gym with their climbing friends. They stopped climbing with groups as their gym got busy. Where should they turn for more leads? Other climbers!

Her action plan, starting with herself as the bull's-eye client:

1. Invite her current members to go out for a hike or easy climb.
2. Ask if their friends would like to join.
3. Find a local climbing group—even a gym—and join.
4. Ask local climbers if they'd like to meet at the gym for a fun workout after their outing.
5. Get the climbing club's email address list.
6. Join a specific social-media platform for climbers and add friends. Meet them in person. Add them to an email list. (I'm not sure what this is for climbers, but endurance athletes have Strava and fighters have their own platforms, too.)

Because we're in our heads so often, it's very easy to overlook the very easy possibilities right in front of us. The client on the call was thrilled that her homework was to go outside and climb, and it was the fastest way for her to gain more clients, too.

Return to Sender: Don't Forget the Basics

Yesterday morning, we hosted a "bring a friend" day at Catalyst.

11 new athletes showed up.

We stopped doing "bring a friend" days back in 2014 because we stopped getting new clients from them. So I looked at the list of clients who had brought their husbands, wives, uncles and buddies.

You can probably guess what I saw: None of the "veterans" were here in 2014, when we last did "bring-a-friend" day.

I was hosting a podcast interview in 2016, and my guest was a high-level athlete who owned three gyms. This is a charismatic guy. He looks like a model and he's one of the fittest men on the planet. And he told me, "There came a point where my members just stopped referring people. They had already brought in everyone they knew."

I'm a fan of him, and he was a fan of a Facebook marketing program for gyms. So I let his words fly by because I was eager to hear about his system for generating new leads for gyms.

The system worked. But my friend skipped a step: Instead of taking in a batch of new members and then starting at the center of the Affinity bull's-eye with each one, he stayed at the Audiences Loop and kept working on cold leads.

This guy has an amazing personality, and he's charismatic. When we had coffee at the CrossFit Games, we were interrupted at least six times by people who wanted to take their picture with him (I was always asked to hold the camera). And he's not just famous in that community—guys like this make friends and fans everywhere they go. But I think the draw of Facebook ads was too strong, and he was missing opportunities to meet people in his community.

Sometimes you need cold leads. And as you warm them up, they'll refer others to you.

Instead of the one-and-done approach to Affinity Marketing, the process should really go like this:

Axial clients—how else can you help them?

When you've exhausted all possibilities, add new clients from their second Affinity Loop.

But if those clients become axial clients, interview them.

Then go to the third Affinity Loop.

And with those new clients, ask how you can help the people in their second Affinity Loop.

After an influx of new members, start the Affinity Marketing process over with each new person.

Just because you've done the "axial clients" exercise once doesn't mean you're done: You should revisit it every quarter. And each loop in Affinity Marketing should be repeated with every new client.

Don't forget that a new client won on the mean pages of Facebook also has a spouse, some coworkers and some friends. You can help those people, and you don't need a new ad to attract them.

The tighter the Affinity loop, the more frequently you should revisit it.

What do you fix first? The closer to the center of the bull's-eye, the more important each layer becomes. Fix your email capture before you fix your Facebook ad. Fix your intake process before you worry about driving more leads into your gym. And fix your retention before you upgrade your sales binder.

And cultivate your care before you do any of it.

Because if you don't care, no one else will either.

Love,

Coop

REPLACE WITH NEW SHEET



CHEAT SHEET

CLIENT	Axial Loop	Affection Loop	Activity Loop	Acquaintance Loop	Attention Loop	Awareness Loop	Audiences Loop

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