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Competitors into Profits:

*Your Guide to Building
Relationships to Grow Your Business*

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LESSON 1: How to Use Guest Blogging to Grow Your Relationships and Expand Your Reach

We're kicking things off in Competitors into Profits with one of the simplest things you can do to make a connection with another online business owner. As one of our readers at Contentrix, I imagine you already write blog posts, right? Well, all you're doing now is doing that writing for a different site in order to get these added benefits:

- **More exposure for your business:** You tap into a new audience and get to include a byline that sends readers back to your site to sign up for more information.
- **A budding connection with a fellow online business owner:** You grab their attention by showing you're a provider of quality content, and they appreciate that you took time to understand their audience.

And of course, that fellow online business owner also benefits because they get **AWESOME** content for their audience at no charge. The only thing they need to do is allow you to include a byline.

But before you rush off and start submitting posts or asking for opportunities, there are a few things to keep in mind.

- **Be Targeted:** Always understand the blog's targeted audience before you approach the owner. Read their posts, sign up for the newsletter and pay attention to comments on the site and social media. In other words, and it's what we do for ALL networking activities, do your homework!
- **Be Prepared:** You can always pitch an idea to a blogger about a post, but make sure your idea is complete and has concrete details that will generate interest. My recommendation is if you don't already know the blogger personally, have a finished post that you can show them, so they can see the quality of your work and they know that it's something their audience will find very valuable. It saves them a lot of time and helps ensure they're not wasting their time with a bunch of back and forth trying to get the content ready to go. Of course, you should always let them know that you can do any edits they want or even switch focus for the post if they prefer. Assure them that you're there to serve their audience in the best way possible.
- **Nurture:** Make the most of the connection you've made. Do follow up guest posts and work together in other ways. Not sure how to work together? Consult the other lessons in this course. Whether you do webinars, create products or do other things, work to keep the relationship going. And be natural...the more you correspond, the more you can get involved with a little chit-chat, ask more personal questions, get on Skype to talk, the stronger your relationship will become. Just be natural. Don't force it.

But Hang On, What is Guest Blogging Exactly?

Let's back up a bit and talk about what "guest blogging" is. Most of us probably have some idea, but let's define it in terms of a business AND relationship-building activity.

The mechanics of a guest blogging opportunity is that one website owner publishes an informative blog post on another website owner's blog. In return, the guest blogger is generally allowed to include a byline with a link to their site. They may also be able to include some links within the content. Sometimes, guest blogging is reciprocal in that both website owners publish content for one another's sites. But in many cases, it's just one website owner publishing content for another.

Setting Your Guest Blogging Goals

Clearly, guest blogging is not just a relationship building technique; there are plenty of other benefits. Here are some things you can accomplish with guest blogging.

1. **Build relationships with other business owners within your niche market.** Choose your connections wisely. The more time and effort you put into each guest posting opportunity, the better your results will be.
2. **Increase your online presence and gain traffic.** If you provide great content and a compelling reason to come back to your site, your traffic will grow.
3. **Build your list.** Always send traffic from your byline to a special opt-in offer. If you send them to your home page, most of that traffic will be wasted. It's also harder to get them to buy something on first contact, so make them a free offer they can't refuse.
4. **Establish yourself as an expert in your field.** When your highly informative content is seen in more places, it establishes your credibility and people are more likely to see you as an expert.
5. **Build your brand and reputation.** Getting more people seeing your content, knowing your name and seeing your face (since you'll include your image in your guest posts whenever you can) means more brand recognition.
6. **Bigger and better more opportunities.** Once people see you publishing on other high profile blogs, they're more likely to want you to write for them. You can even think of it as a ladder of sorts. When you start with smaller sites and can show you have experience and expertise, larger sites are more likely to start publishing your content too.

For the purposes of our course, keep the #1 goal first and foremost in your mind. Reach out to people you want to connect with and who would make great potential partners. If you think they're too high profile and out of reach, then start with other sites. Once you've established yourself as a quality guest blogger, you can then go to the higher profile sites with more to offer.

Start with Blogs You Know

Consider some of the blogs that you already patronize. Most business owners stay in touch with their fellow businesses through social media as well as blogs that pique their interest. If you know your way around a blog, then you know which ones have a greater sphere of influence and which do not. As you comment on blog posts, you get a sense of who the owner is, and if their goals and ideals match yours. You will also have a better understanding of the type of content they publish and what their audience is all about.

If you want to seek out new blogs that you don't already know, always do your homework before proceeding. Get to know them before you prepare any content or make first contact.

The Responsibilities of a Good Guest Blogger

In order to make this guest blogging thing work for you, there are a few responsibilities to keep in mind. There are no shortcuts to providing stellar content blog owners will be jumping at the chance to publish.

1. **Research the blog in question** – I've already mentioned it before, but this is the first mistake many potential guest bloggers make, so it's important to drill this home. Your content needs to be in line with the focus of the target blog and its values.

Before sending a pitch to the blog owner, know what they stand for, what type of content their readers are interested in, as well as what their guidelines are (if they're posted).
2. **Adhere to the rules** – Falling afoul of the guidelines will not be looked on favorably by the host blog. Know what is expected of you and what is being asked in return. Always search for guest author guidelines on the site before drafting any content. Not all blogs publish guidelines, but check first.
3. **Gauge the blog's reputation** – Remember your reputation is going to be linked to the host blog after you make your guest appearance. If they are not influential in the industry, you may not gain as much exposure as you were hoping for, but don't put your nose up at quality bloggers who currently may not have a broad reach because you're here for the relationship. My whole online career was sparked by relationships I built with other like-minded people who were just starting out too.
4. **Make sure it's targeted** – Blogs that are not relevant to your niche, even if you like to write about the blog's subject matter, won't likely result in the mutually beneficial relationship you're hoping for. I can't tell you how many guest posting requests I get from people who aren't even working in the same niche as mine. They just publish on all sorts of subjects, hoping something will stick somewhere. Always stay targeted – the relationships you develop and the traffic you get will be much more beneficial.
5. **Stick around the blog** – Don't just do a guest stint and never communicate with the blog again. Become an active participant on that blog, answer comments to your posts and become a part of the community.

6. **Write stellar content** – Always bring something new to the table. Many guest bloggers make the mistake of thinking that mediocre, watered down recycled content will fly on a guest blogging stint. This mistake might seriously tarnish your reputation. Provide the same quality that you would if you were writing for your own site.
7. **Reciprocate** – Return the favor by promoting the host blog's content. Remind your audience to check out your guest posts. Post on social sites and encourage your readers to support the blogs that have offered you this opportunity.
8. **Nurture the relationship** – I'll probably say this a few more times before this lesson is done, but it's important: keep in touch, work together and get to know the blogger on a more personal level.

Approaching the Blogger

We've put together a couple of templates you can use to make the first contact. Please note while these letters are templates, they still require you to put some thought into them and customize your letters to each guest posting opportunity. If you sound like you're sending a form letter, then they're going to treat you like someone who sent a form letter – and they'll put your email in the trash. When using those templates, be sure to read the instructions in the instruction document AND in the templates themselves.

Remember, read any submission guidelines the site may have before you do anything. They may specify whether they want an idea pitched to them or that they'd rather receive a completed post. If they don't specify this, I recommend having a complete post ready if you don't already know the blogger personally. That will save them a lot of time in deciding in whether they want to work with you or not.

Always address the blogger personally. Never write "To Whom it May Concern," but instead show that you actually do read their blog and know what it's all about. The less personal your email is, the more likely they are to ignore it.

Remember to also let the host know who you are. Introduce yourself and your blog/online business. Include links to a few past guest blogging stints or to articles you have written that have been published on your site, as well as your publications in other places online. Remember to link directly to the content you are most proud of, don't just give them your home page link and make them search around for your best content.

The key in all this is to be personal and to make it as easy to work with you as possible... don't waste their time!

Creating your Guest Post

Writing your post may go before approaching the blogger (if you plan to write the post first), but you can also start the process by planning your approach, so you have a very good idea about what you want to do before you start writing.

Either way, what you write should be your best work and should be very targeted to the blog you want to write for. Here are some steps for putting your blog post together:

- **Read Through the Blog:** Look at recent posts and dig deep into the category you want to write about. You do not want to duplicate something that has already been done. Take note of the voice and style to see how your writing might best fit in. Also, take note of the perspective the blogger takes on certain subjects. While there may room for varying perspectives, you do not want to directly contradict the core opinions of the blog owner.
- **Read the Comments:** Understand the people who are reading the blog. What posts seem to resonate with them? What questions do they have? How can you help with something they seem to be looking for?
- **Create a Quality Post:** Obviously, you want to make sure your post is of the highest quality possible. If you want it to be noticed by the blogger and to make an impact on the audience, the post has to be good. Make sure you have your post proofread as well. Typos are a fact of life (boy, do I know that!), but in this case, you have to put your very best foot forward.
- **Create an Original Post:** You will also be creating completely original content and offering exclusive publishing rights, unless the blog does not require it. While you can write on topics you've covered before, make your guest post original and try to incorporate new ideas. Also, try to link to other relevant content from the blog you're writing for as well. Bloggers love it when you can link with content they've already published on their own site. It also shows you're paying attention.
- **Create a Targeted Post:** In addition to having a quality and original post, you want it highly targeted to the audience. Mention things that are relevant to the readers and link to previous posts and any relevant products the blogger may have.
- **Avoid Self-Promotion:** You can mention what you do for a living in your post, as it adds to your credibility, but don't promote your products or link to a bunch of your pages inside your post. In fact, don't include any of your own links inside the post, unless the blog owner has specifically said you can do that.
- **Craft Your Byline:** In addition to developing a relationship with the blogger, you also want your site to benefit from the guest post. Make sure you craft a byline that is targeted to the topic that you wrote about and provide a link for them to claim a free offer (in return for an opt-in) on your site. We've also included a document with more byline tips and some templates you can use for best results.

Continuing to Build the Relationship

Once the post is up, your job isn't over. Here are a few things to do to ensure your fellow blogger is thrilled with your work and will want to stay in contact.

- **Promote your post.** It's not simply the blog owner's responsibility to get eyeballs on your content. Promote your post to your list and social media followers as well. Your fellow blogger will also appreciate the burst of traffic.
- **Respond to comments on your post.** It's polite and helps develop the community of your fellow blogger.
- **Write a follow-up to your post.** Are there certain points you can expand on or did the blog readers have questions you could answer in-depth?
- **Write other posts.** If the blogger liked what you had to offer, ask if there is any other topic they'd like covers.
- **Reciprocate the opportunity.** Return the favor and ask if you can them help expand their reach by posting on your site. Make it easy for them by coming up with subject ideas or interview them, so all they have to do is answer a few questions.
- **Work together in other ways.** Remember, my post on meaningful ways to connect with people you don't know? It includes 7 more ideas, so use them readily:
<http://contentrix.com/meaningful/10170>

Overall, remember to treat this like any other budding friendship. Don't be pushy and don't try to force being buddies. You'll find some of your connections are very personable and want to share private details about their lives, but some will want to keep things on a more professional level. Get a sense of what they need and nurture the relationship that way.

What to Do Now?

Now it's time to get to work. Your tasks for this lesson are:

- Find a blog you want to write for and do your homework. If you don't already know the blog well, get to know it.
- Pitch an idea or prepare a highly-polished post and contact the blog owner. Use the template provided with this lesson.

Once the post is published, remember your responsibilities and continue to develop that relationship. And after you have one guest posting experience under your belt, see what other blog owners you can connect with.

Guest Blog Checklist

Before putting together any guest post, make sure to review this checklist. It will ensure you cover all your bases when providing quality content and will make it as easy as possible for the target blog to publish your content.

Note: “*target blog*” simply refers to the blog on which you want your blog post published.

Getting Your Post Together:

Put your best foot forward with the content of your post. Here are some tips to help you do that.

- ☐ **Read Through the Blog:** Look at recent posts and focus on a category you want to write about. Don't duplicate something that has already been done. Make sure your post is compatible with the blog's overall tone and style.
- ☐ **Read the Comments:** Take a look at the comments on the blog to understand more about the readership, their interests, and their questions.
- ☐ **Create a Quality Post:** Make sure your guest post is as good as possible, and free from typos. If you wouldn't post it on your own site, then it's not good enough for a guest post!
- ☐ **Create an Original Post:** You will also be creating completely original content and offering exclusive publishing rights, unless the blog does not require it.
- ☐ **Create a Targeted Post:** In addition to having a quality and original post, you want it highly targeted to the audience. Mention things that are relevant to the readers and link to previous posts and any relevant products the blogger may have.
- ☐ **Avoid Self-Promotion:** You can mention what you do for a living in your post, as it adds to your credibility, but don't try to sell your products or link to a bunch of your own pages inside your post.
- ☐ **Craft Your Byline:** In addition to developing a relationship with the blogger, you also want your site to benefit from the guest post. Make sure you craft a byline that is targeted to the topic and provide a link for them to claim a free offer (in return for an opt-in) on your site. We've also included a document with more byline tips and some templates you can use for best results.

Formatting Your Post:

Formatting is also important. It shows extra care and attention, and makes it easier for the target blog to publish your post.

- ☐ Use good web writing format by using short sentences and paragraphs. Use bullet points and subheadlines to make your content easy to read.

- Format your subheadings with <h2> tags or whatever is appropriate for the blog.
- Format your links, so they can be pasted into a blog and be clickable. For example:
Jeff recently went fly fishing here.
- Include images, and make sure you have either created the images or you have permission to republish them. You can host the image on your site and include the html code for the blog to display it automatically, but you may want to also attach the image (be sure the image file isn't too big) so they can upload it themselves.
- Do keyword research and optimize the post for a relevant keyword or phrase. Just don't let SEO take over, as the quality of your post is always the most important thing.

Contact the Blog Owner:

- When you have a polished product, contact the blog owner. You can contact them prior to writing the post, but you'll probably get a better response when they see a finished article. Use the templates provided with this course to help form your letter.
- If you have a connection with the blog owner through Facebook, Twitter, a website forum or anywhere else, send them a quick private message to let them know you emailed them and verify that you have the best email address.
- Don't harass the blog owner, but do follow up. If you don't hear anything within a few weeks, you can use the post somewhere else. But do give popular bloggers extra time to respond since they may receive a lot of requests for guest blog posts.

Do More Posts and Work Together

- If your guest blogging effort is a success, do more of it. Do a follow up to your previous post, answer questions people had in the comments or attack a new subject.
- Work together to grow the relationship further. If you're not sure how else you can work together, go back and [check these great ideas out](#). And really, treat this like you would any other budding friendship.

Overall, it's important to put your best foot forward. Don't skimp on quality or polishing your post before submitting it. Do your homework, write your best work, check it twice and ensure you're saving your new connection time rather than wasting it. People appreciate when you're well prepared and are more likely to respond and want to work together.

Guest Blogging Byline Tips & Templates

One of the main benefits of guest blogging is having the opportunity for a byline or resource box that tells the reader about you and includes a link back to your site. Some blogs may have specific byline guidelines, and if they do you should follow them accordingly. This document will give you additional tips and some quick templates to help you along.

Tips:

- Check for byline guidelines on the blog you're writing for before proceeding.
- Make the link in your byline highly relevant to your content. Readers will be more likely to click. This may mean linking to a specific page of your website, a special offer, etc.
- Include keywords in your link for search engine benefit. Conduct keyword research at <http://wordtracker.com> or using your favorite keyword tool to find a very specific keyword phrase that is readily searched for and describes your link.
- Include a specific call-to-action. Don't just say, "My website is XXX" as that's not compelling enough to get a click. Ask readers to sign up for your mailing list, download some free software, ask for a quote, etc.

What to Offer in Your Byline's Call-to-Action

As noted in the tips above, we encourage you to include a call-to-action in your byline. That doesn't mean you have to ask people to buy something, but if you want the most results from your guest post, then you want to ask readers to specifically do something.

You can offer:

- A subscription to your newsletter.
- An invitation to a webinar.
- A free report.
- A free consultation.
- A software download.
- A tool download – think spreadsheet, worksheet, template, etc.
- An instructional / step-by-step video or tutorial related to the article.

Anything you can offer of value is perfect for your call-to-action.

Byline Templates

You can use each of the templates below as a ready-made guideline for your guest posting bylines. Feel free to use them “as is” and replace the red text with your own information. Or you can use bits and pieces from one or more templates. Whatever works for you.

Template: Free sign up for newsletter, publication, webinar etc.

[Your name] makes it easy for you [insert how you help people]. Sign up for [his/her] highly-acclaimed and surprisingly free [insert publication, etc] to find out how to [enter a specific result], [quickly, easily, inexpensively, etc].

Template: Free webinar / teleseminar series sign up

[Your name] is your host of the [frequency - daily, monthly, etc] [catchy name of webinar / teleseminar series] that shows you how to [insert benefit / desired result]. Sign up to instantly download your first lesson free.

Template: Free report

Need a little extra help? For a complete guide that shows you exactly how to [insert specific and main benefit, related to the article], grab a copy of [name]’s [name of report]. It’s yours free and will save you plenty of [headache, time, money - be specific].

Template: Free consultation

For a free, no-obligation consultation, contact [insert name] by completing the [3-step / quick-response / something that shows it’s simple to do it] form at [insert location of form]. Set aside just [amount of time for consultation] and [he’ll/she’ll] how you can [benefit of your consultation/service].

Template: Software or Tool

[Insert your name] can help make the job go [X] times faster with her highly-acclaimed [insert software/tool name]. It allows you to [what it does + benefit], saving you tons of [benefit of the benefit]. [Download yours free / get a free trial] at [insert location].

Template: Instructional Video

Need a little visual? [Insert name] shows you exactly how to [what you're teaching] [benefit - in 6 easy steps, etc.]. Go to [insert location] to watch a step-by-step video to get started [insert project, task] right away.

Template: Step-by-step Instructions

Need a breakdown, step-by-step? [Insert name], your go-to source for [subject matter / product type], breaks it down for you, making it simpler than ever to [insert project / task]. Go to [insert location] for a complete and easy-to-follow tutorial.

Guest Blog Post Submission Template Instructions & Tips

The enclosed letter templates make it easy for you to create a cover email when you submit a guest post or a pitch and idea for consideration. Here are some basic instructions and tips to make the most of your guest blogging experience.

Important!

Before submitting a post to any blog, always look for their submission guidelines and follow them fully and completely. In some cases, they will have a submission form or a particular format they want you to follow. In that case, don't use the template and use their guidelines instead.

Instructions:

- The template includes red brackets with tips inside for enclosing your specific information. Remove the brackets and insert your information as appropriate.
- Paste the letter into an email and attach your blog post to the email. We recommend attaching the post in .doc and .txt format. This is because .doc format is easier to read when opened; while .txt format provides a cleaner copy and can include HTML formatting for quick and easy posting. While it is not always advisable to send an unsolicited attachment via email, pasting the post into the email can cause odd formatting and may make it difficult for the recipient to copy-and-paste your post into their blog.

Tips:

- Keep your email short and to the point, but do ensure it conveys the following:
 - Why you've decided to contact them – i.e. what you like about their blog
 - Brief information about you and your credentials
 - Why your post is relevant to their specific target audience
 - That your post is original and is exclusively theirs to use

If it sounds complicated, don't worry. The template will take you through all of this.

- We recommend having the post ready when you make contact with the blog, especially when contacting someone you don't already know. If they have a ready-made post, targeted to the blog's audience, then they can immediately see the quality of your writing and all they have to do is copy-and-paste your post if they like it. If you simply send a proposal, you will need more back-and-forth communication and the blog owner may get busy with other things. Having the post ready makes it as simple as possible for you and your target blog.

POST READY

SUBJECT: Hi [insert recipient's name], thought this might be useful at [insert recipient's website name. Say "Sally's Blog", rather than the URL sallysblog.com – as the latter will make it look like you're mass emailing people and you scraped the info off the net]

Hello [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] from [insert website address, if relevant] and we have [Insert how you have had some kind of encounter or how they may know you. If they don't know you, talk about how you've been a long-time subscriber, customer, Twitter follower, Facebook fan, etc...but only if it's true]. [Insert brief information on why you think the blog provides a great service, without gushing].

I am [insert your credentials and other relevant information] and have put together an original blog post that I would love to give you exclusive rights to publish. It covers [insert what the post is about and include some information why the post is targeted specifically to the blog's audience]. The blog post is attached in both .doc and .txt formats. The .txt version is already html formatted for use on your blog, but I am happy to make any necessary edits you wish. I am sure you'll find the perspective on this topic useful for your readers.

[OPTIONAL:] I've had quite a few blog posts published elsewhere online, including [insert names of sites they would recognize]. It would be an honor to be published on your blog as well.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working together!

Respectfully,

[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

PITCH

SUBJECT: Hi [insert recipient's name], thought this might be useful at [insert recipient's website name. Say "Sally's Blog", rather than the URL sallysblog.com – as the latter will make it look like you're mass emailing people and you scraped the info off the net]

Hello [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] from [insert website address, if relevant] and we have [Insert how you have had some kind of encounter or how they may know you. If they don't know you, talk about how you've been a long-time subscriber, customer, Twitter follower, Facebook fan, etc...but only if it's true]. [Insert brief information on why you think the blog provides a great service, without gushing].

I am [insert your credentials and other relevant information] and would love to put together an original blog post with exclusive rights for you to publish. I've been reading your blog for a while now and I thought that a post about [insert what the post is about and include some information why the post is targeted specifically to the blog's audience]. Some of the points I'd like to cover include:

- [insert point]
- [insert point]
- [insert point]
- [insert point]
- [insert point]

If there is a different topic that you'd like covered, I'm happy to oblige. You can see some of my work at [insert a couple of links where the blogger can see your best content... link directly to the articles you want them to see... don't make them search].

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working together!

Respectfully,

[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

LESSON 2: Meet New People and Develop New Relationships Through Interviews and Webinars

In this lesson, we're going to talk about conducting interviews and doing webinars. Our focus will be on audio interviews, rather than written ones, but you can certainly apply a lot of the advice to written interviews if you prefer.

The great news is, interviews are possibly the easiest way to make a business connection with someone you don't know. Most online business owners are open to being interviewed. All you have to do is make it easy for them to be interviewed and make the opportunity as attractive as possible.

Easy and attractive... that's going to be a common theme in all our lessons. We always want it to be a no-brainer for people to work with us. ☺

And there's even more great news. If you're a little bit shy about the quality of your own content (how silly of you!) and things like guest blogging make you nervous, interviewing someone relieves you of that pressure. All you do is ask questions and the expert you're interviewing provides the great content.

Your interviews can be individual recordings that you share freely, add to a membership or even sell as a product. Or they can be part of a podcast where you record different interviews on a regular basis.

Your webinars can be free events that you use to grow a list and attract new audience members, or they can be a paid product where everyone pays to attend. Your free webinars might simply be information only or you might (err...probably should) promote your guest's product as a way to create more revenue for you and your guest (because you'll be using an affiliate link, right?).

There are so many way to approach it, but don't overthink it – just keep it simple if you haven't done interviews before. The key is getting out there and growing a new relationship.

Before we continue, here's a little something that you should keep in mind...

The Golden Rule of Online Interviewing:

If you want more people to say yes to your interview requests, there is one thing you should always do, and it's something that's often expected in the online community. Offer the person you are interviewing full rights to their recording and, if possible, have it transcribed so they have a product they can use as well.

Now that we have that out of the way, let's talk about why you want to interview people and why others will want to be interviewed by you.

Benefits to You:

- Open the door to a new mutually beneficial business connection. We know this... this is why you're working through this course. You want meet new people and forge new relationships.
- Great content for your audience. And it's easy content too. Just come up with the questions and roll with it.
- Bolster your reputation by interviewing experts and influential people in your niche. The quality of your guests is a reflection on you, so if you interview good people, you look good too.
- Expand your reach when your guests publicize their interviews. Most people like to share the interviews they've taken part in. When your guest tells their readers about your interview, you get in front of new people.
- Increased sales from any products you promote in the interview or webinar... or if people have to pay to get in the webinar, you get paid for that.

Benefits to Your New Connection:

- A polished product they can share with their audience. Give them the audio recording or video, plus a transcript. This is a very attractive part of being interviewed.
- Not only do you expand your reach by getting in front of their audience, they also get the same benefit when you promote their interview.
- They get to sell more products by promoting theirs in the interview. Always give your guests a chance to tell your audience about their products and even encourage them to make a special offer for better results.
- A new connection for them...and that's YOU! Remember, you're worth knowing too, and the new relationship begins with the interview.

As you can see it's a win-win-win for you, your guest and your audiences. Now, just like last time, there are 3 things to keep in mind, and those are being targeted, being prepared and nurturing the relationship. Let's discuss those in relation to conducting interviews.

Keep in Mind

- **Be Targeted:** I'm going to talk about it a bit more in the next section, but look for people who are the best fit for you. Who would your audience want to hear from and what questions would they like answered? Don't worry about who is the most famous Internet celeb in your general niche...get the people your audience really wants to hear from.

- **Be Prepared:** This is part of making it easy for people to work with you. Be flexible in your scheduling and ensure you're always ready to go when it's time. Have great questions and have the technology ready to create a great product... and help your guest with the technology if they aren't familiar with it. Also, ensure you can have your recordings quickly and easily transcribed. By the way, we can [do transcription for you](#), if you need a hand.
- **Nurture:** Don't just stop at the interview. Keep in touch by sharing feedback you receive from their interview and let the conversation develop. Work together in other ways. If you're short on ideas, we've got [7 other ones here](#).

Now that we have that out of the way, let's get this interview thing going...

Who Should You Interview

I am hoping that you're already in tune with who some of the players in your niche are (knowing who's out there should be regular habit for you). You (should) know what websites are out there and which personalities stand out and would be great people to interview. If not, it's time to start paying attention.

One thing I really want you to take away from this course is that relationship building isn't a numbers game. You don't have to spend a ton of time making big lists of people you want to write for, to interview and so forth. I want you to find the **BEST** people to connect with each week. Of course, not everyone is going to say yes, so you do want some backup...but if you get a yes from someone right away, direct all your attention to that person, and do your **very** best work with them.

Just like I stressed in the last lesson, you want to make it easy for people to work with you and you want them to be proud of the results of doing so. That means you have to be responsive and answer questions as soon as possible. If you're distracted with contacting a list of 30 people at once, you won't be able to do that. Add to that, you'll never do your best work if you're spreading yourself too thin.

So think about the people who have stood out to you. Who are the people that have something interesting to say and you know your audience will really enjoy? It doesn't have to be the most popular person in your niche, but rather someone who puts forth quality and is a good fit for you.

You may have noticed I haven't mentioned looking at Alexa.com numbers or looking at how many followers someone has on Twitter or Facebook in this course at all. While that can make a difference in increasing your exposure quickly, popularity shouldn't be the only factor that guides you to connect with people.

You want to connect with the people who are the best fit for you.

Add to that, if you set your sights too high when you don't have those big numbers in return, you may find your efforts futile and you're likely get frustrated at the lack of response. But more importantly, you'd be surprised at what people with seemingly little influence can do for each

other in business...they grow influence **TOGETHER**. I believe I mentioned it in the guest blogging lesson, but when I first started out, I didn't go for the big dogs...I connected with people who were also just starting out and wanted to make a difference. We worked on products together, promoted each other and we blossomed.

So never put your nose up at someone because you think they don't have much to offer. If they are publishing great content that is in line with your own audience and your values, these are the people you **need** to connect to.

That said; if you want to set your sights a little higher on an interview, go for it. You'd be surprised at who will say yes to a little extra exposure for their business.

How to Get People to Say Yes to an Interview

We've provided you with a template to put together a contact letter, but customize this as much as possible. You don't want what you send to sound like a form letter... make it personal.

Above all, provide plenty of detail so they can make an informed decision, but ensure you keep things as succinct as possible.

A few things to include:

- Start with what you're looking for... a quick XX-minute interview (or whatever it happens to be). Keep your first contact short. If you are going to do a webinar, you can keep their contribution down to about 15-30 minutes – and then fill up the webinar with other guests or do the rest of the content yourself. On first contact, you don't want to take up too much of their time.
- Briefly describe your audience and explain why you think it's a good fit for what they're doing. Also explain why you sought them out...sincere flattery can go a long way.
- If it's an asset of yours, include any stats about your traffic and mailing list numbers. If you're just starting out and don't have any numbers to boast about, don't worry about this.
- Make sure they know that you'll be providing them with a recording of the interview and they have full rights to that content. Also include a transcript, if possible.

Again, don't go overboard with all the extraneous details. Just give them the information they need to decide if it's right for them.

Once they've said yes, you can provide more information, like the following:

- Give them an idea of when you want to schedule the interview (perhaps a date range and suggested available hours) and let them know that you're open to fitting into their schedule. Mention your time zone, ask them what theirs is and provide this link, so you can coordinate the times: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/meeting.html>.

- Provide them with the details on how you'll be recording (Skype, webinar platform, etc.), but be flexible. If they're more comfortable with something else, consider adjusting to suit their needs.

Don't get too upset if you don't hear back or you get no for an answer. If you don't hear back after a week or so, try to contact them through another method, but keep the tone light. If you still don't hear... make a note to try to connect with them at later date, but now make more of an effort to be seen in their blog comments, social media pages, etc... so they're more likely to recognize your name. Or better yet, if you know they're going to be at an in person event, try to attend so that you can introduce yourself personally.

Coming Up with Great Interview Questions

Well planned interview questions are important for a number of reasons. If you're organized and plan ahead, your interview will go much more smoothly. In addition, many online business owners aren't professional speakers, so they will want to have an idea about the questions you'll ask ahead of time. And of course, if you plan ahead, you'll be able to ensure you ask the best questions that your audience wants answers to.

Here are some tips Annette Elton (my partner at [All Custom Content](#)) has come up with for getting ready for your interview and coming up with questions:

1. **Research your guest.** Make sure that you know all that there is to know about your guest. Visit their blog. Visit their social media pages, and if they're published then read that material as well. The better you understand your guest, the easier it will be to ask relevant and interesting questions. Hopefully, you've already done this BEFORE you even invited them for the interview.
2. **Make a list of things you want to know.** Your guest is an expert, so tap into their knowledge. What do you think you can learn from them? Write down those thoughts and questions and be sure to ask them, because your audience may have similar questions.
3. **Ask your audience.** What do your customers and subscribers want to know? Consider asking them for their input. You can use social media, email, and other communication tools to gather their feedback. Have them submit a form, so you can keep all the responses in one place. I currently use the premium version of the [Formidable](#) WordPress plugin.
4. **Hunt for similar interviews.** Chances are your expert has been interviewed before. Read or listen to those prior interviews. Look for opportunities to expand on good ideas.
5. **Become an interview expert.** Watch and read other interviews in your niche and outside of it. Identify the questions that are thought-provoking. How can you apply those types of questions to your interview?
6. **Pay attention to industry news and trends.** Staying informed is a wonderful way to help you identify great interview questions. If relevant, you can ask your guest their thoughts on current events.

7. **Ask your interviewee.** It's okay to ask your interviewee what they want to communicate to listeners. They may have some very good ideas about how to approach the interview. Remember, being interviewed is good for their business too. You're in this together; it's okay to collaborate on questions.

Of course, it's important to come up with follow-up questions as the interview progresses. Listen intently and turn the interview process into an interesting conversation that will keep listeners engaged.

Getting it Done: Tools and Technology

This isn't a technical course, so we aren't going to spend a lot of time on technology, but here is some information that will put you in the right direction, depending on the type of interview you want to conduct. Once you decide on a platform, there are plenty of videos and how-to tutorials you can find on the web to help you with the technology.

- **Webinars:** There are a ton of webinar platforms out there, but some of the more popular ones include [Adobe Connect](#), [GoToWebinar](#) and [Instant Teleseminar](#).
- **Video Interviews:** [Google+](#) has powerful video software and allows you to conduct live Hangouts, where you can invite your viewers to submit questions and more. And, of course, Google+ is free. Learn more about [Google+ Hangouts here](#), if you haven't done one yet.
- **Audio Interviews:** A super easy way to record your audio conversations is to get on a [Skype](#) call and record the interview with software called [Pamela](#). You could also look into using [Evaer](#) to record the calls as well.

But seriously, don't get bogged down in software. If it's overwhelming to you, set up a simple audio call with Skype and record it with Pamela. I promise it's VERY simple.

Marketing Your Event / Interview

You want to ensure the best possible exposure for your guest, so you really have to market your interview. Here are just a few ways to do that.

- **Tell your mailing list.** Warm them up before you even publish the interview. Tell them what you're working on and who you're working with, to get them excited. Let them know when the interview is ready and remind them with a follow up message. Share a little quote or tidbit from the interview to pique their interest.
- **Post it to social media.** It's a no-brainer, right? Share the great content with your social media followers.
- **Buy ads on Facebook and Twitter.** You can set up highly targeted ads with a specific budget to bring traffic to the interview.

- **Ask your affiliates to spread the word.** If the interview is for sale, they can promote it as a product. If it's a free interview, make sure there is product offer on the backend where they can earn commissions.
- **Put it on iTunes and other apps.** There are plenty of places to post audio content. Get out there and share your content.
- **Link to It.** Link to the interview from your relevant blog posts and other popular content. You can also have a promotional graphic created for the interview and add it to the sidebar of your website.
- **Repurpose the content.** Just because you've posted an audio interview to your blog, doesn't mean that's all you can do with it. Here are some ideas:
 - Take thought-provoking quotes from the interview and turn them into graphics, using software like [Social Graphics Pro](#) or your favorite graphics editor.
 - Have the content transcribed, so you can break it up into blog posts, create worksheets, checklists and other types of content for your readers. Note that transcriptions usually have to be edited quite a bit to make them into meaningful pieces of content, but [we can help you with that](#).
 - Create a slide show from some of the content and add it to [SlideShare](#)... or then put the audio together with the slide show and turn it into a video for [YouTube](#). Include information on where they can get the full interview.

Always keep in mind how you can share the interview

What to Do Now?

There are a few steps for you to take right now and that includes:

- Who do you want to interview? Study their blog, sign up for their mailing list, follow them on social media and get to know them.
- Write up an interview proposal. Use the template provided to ensure you include all the details you need.
- Come up with interview questions and decide how you will record the interview.
- Market, market, market... get that interview out there. Obviously, if you're conducting a webinar, you'll market it before the event. If you're recording an interview, marketing comes after.

If you've never done an interview before, don't worry. Just start with a short one and ask someone you'd be most comfortable working with. With a little practice, you'll be a pro.

Conducting Interviews Checklist

Before contacting anyone for an interview, run through this checklist so you'll be as prepared as possible and are more likely to have a successful interview and create the beginning of a mutually beneficial relationship.

Finding Someone to Interview

- ☐ Listen to podcasts, join webinars and search audio recordings related to your niche subject area.
- ☐ Look for someone who is a good fit for your audience and is very knowledgeable about a topic you want to discuss.
- ☐ Don't overthink it. Find someone and approach them with your interview idea.

Getting People to Say Yes to an Interview

Contact them with a very succinct message letting them know the details of your request. Include:

- ☐ How much time you need (15-30 minutes max. on first request)
- ☐ Who you are and why you decided to contact them
- ☐ The subject you want to talk about and why they are a good fit
- ☐ If you have high traffic numbers or a large subscriber list, mention it
- ☐ Tell them they'll get full rights to the audio recording and the transcript, if possible

Once They've Said Yes

- ☐ **Schedule It.** Give them some times to choose from and let them know you are flexible with their schedule. Be sure to coordinate your time zones.
- ☐ **Recording Details.** Provide them with the details on how you'll be recording, but be flexible. If they're more comfortable with something else, consider adjusting to suit their needs. (See "Choosing the Right Technology" section of this checklist first)
- ☐ **Provide Them with a List of Interview Questions.** Many people like to be prepared, but some people like to do things off the cuff. You can always ask their preference before sending them questions. (See the "Preparing the Interview Questions" section of this checklist immediately below.)

Preparing the Interview Questions

Need help with this? We can [do research for you](#).

- ☐ **Research your guest.** Make sure that you know all that there is to know about your guest.
- ☐ **Make a list of things you want to know.** Your guest is an expert, so tap into their knowledge. Write down all your thoughts and questions and be sure to ask them, because your audience may have similar questions.
- ☐ **Ask your audience.** What do your customers and subscribers want to know? Consider asking them for their input before the interview.
- ☐ **Hunt for similar interviews.** Chances are your expert has been interviewed before. Read or listen to those prior interviews. Look for opportunities to expand on good ideas.
- ☐ **Become an interview expert.** Look at other interviews and note the thought-provoking questions. How can you apply those types of questions to your interview?
- ☐ **Pay attention to industry news and trends.** Staying informed is a wonderful way to help you identify great interview questions.
- ☐ **Ask your interviewee.** It's okay to ask your interviewee what they want to communicate to listeners. They may have some very good ideas about how to approach the interview.

Choosing the Right Technology

If it's your first interview, just keep things simple for your first recording. Get on Skype and record it with Pamela or whatever you choose. It's important to just get it done and not to overwhelm yourself with technology. Consider some of these options...

- ☐ **Webinars:** There are a ton of webinar platforms out there, but some of the more popular ones include [Adobe Connect](#), [GoToWebinar](#) and [Instant Teleseminar](#).
- ☐ **Video Interviews:** [Google+](#) has powerful video software and allows you to conduct live Hangouts, where you can invite your viewers to submit questions and more.. You can learn more about [Google+ Hangouts here](#).
- ☐ **Audio Interviews:** A super easy way to record your audio conversations is to get on a [Skype](#) call and record the interview with software called [Pamela](#). You could also look into using [Evaer](#) to record the calls as well.

Marketing Your Interview

- ☐ **Tell your mailing list.** Warm them up before you even publish the interview. Tell them what you're working on and who you're working with, to get them excited. Let them know when the interview is ready and remind them with a follow up message.

- ❑ **Post it to social media.** It's a no-brainer, right? Share the great content with your social media followers.
- ❑ **Buy ads on Facebook and Twitter.** You can set up highly targeted ads with a specific budget to bring traffic to the interview.
- ❑ **Ask your affiliates to spread the word.** If the interview is for sale, they can promote it as a product. If it's a free interview, make sure there is product offer on the backend where they can earn commissions.
- ❑ **Put it on iTunes and other apps.** There are plenty of places to post audio content. Get out there and share your content.
- ❑ **Link to It.** Link to the interview from your relevant blog posts and other popular content. You can also have a promotional graphic created for the interview and add it to the sidebar of your website.
- ❑ **Repurpose the content.** Just because you've posted an audio interview to your blog, doesn't mean that's all you can do with it. Here are some ideas:
 - ❑ Take thought-provoking quotes from the interview and turn them into graphics, using software like [Social Graphics Pro](#) or your favorite graphics editor.
 - ❑ Have the content transcribed, so you can break it up into blog posts, create worksheets, checklists and other types of content for your readers. Note that transcriptions usually have to be edited quite a bit to make them into meaningful pieces of content, but [we can help you with that](#).
 - ❑ Create a slide show from some of the content and add it to [SlideShare](#)...or then put the audio together with the slide show and turn it into a video for [YouTube](#). Include information on where they can get the full interview.

Expanding the Relationship

- ❑ Consider making this an interview series and invite your guest back, or perhaps they might interview you.
- ❑ If your audience responds well to the interview, consider doing a Q&A session, so they can ask your guest questions.
- ❑ Work together in other ways. Our handy [list of meaningful ideas is always here](#).

Interview Question Worksheet

Here is a worksheet to help you formulate your interview questions. If you need help with this, we can [do the research for you](#). Use this sheet for brainstorming to come up with your final list of interview questions.

Guest Details

Name: _____

Website(s): _____

Social Media Profiles: _____

Official Bio (for announcing your guest during the interview):

Ask if they have a professional bio they prefer you to use or come up with something more casual that will be of great interest to your audience.

Professional Background:

Publicly Shared Personal Details (like family, interests, etc.):

Previous Interviews

[illegible]

This free course provided for WriterHelpWanted.com members only.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Survey your own readers to see what they'd like to know.

[illegible]

Current Events and News?

[illegible]

What Does Your Guest Want to Talk About?

Putting Your Interview Questions Together

After you've completed all the brainstorming on this worksheet, finalize your questions in a separate blank document. Remember to include your guest's name, websites and official bio as well, so you have that information handy during your interview.

Interview Pitch Template Instructions & Tips

The enclosed letter template makes it easy for you to create an email to pitch your potential guest about an interview. Here are some basic instructions and tips to keep things detailed, but still as simple as possible.

Important!

Before submitting an interview request, do check if they have any information on their site about how to approach them. They may want specific information and/or for you to contact them in a certain way for an interview, so do check this and follow any guidelines closely.

Instructions:

- The template includes red brackets with tips inside for enclosing your information. Remove the brackets and insert your appropriate information before you send a pitch.
- Paste the letter into an email – do not send it as an attachment.

Tips:

- Keep your email short and to the point, but do ensure it conveys the following:
 - How much time you need (15-30 minutes max. on first request)
 - Who you are and why you decided to contact them
 - The subject you want to talk about and why they are a good fit
 - If you have high traffic numbers or a large subscriber list, mention it
 - Tell them they'll get full rights to the audio recording and the transcript, if possible

If it sounds complicated, don't worry. The template will take you through all of this.

Interview Pitch Template

SUBJECT: Quick interview request for you, [insert recipient's first name]

Hi [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] from [insert website address, if relevant] and I was hoping you might have [enter a number, but keep it small...about 15 to 30] minutes for a quick and casual interview.

I have a [insert topic] [website/blog/podcast/whatever] at [insert URL], and know my audience would love to hear from you about [insert interview topic]. I have [include details about interviews you've listened to, posts you've read, etc] and think you have a lot of great things to say about the subject. I'm specifically interested in [tell them something specific that you want to ask them about the subject].

[insert info about your traffic numbers, subscribers, etc. if they are large and will impress your guest...otherwise, omit this]

I will be able to provide you with the full publishing rights to the audio recording and transcripts of your interview, so you'll have a polished product to use as you see fit.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider and look forward to talking to you soon.

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

LESSON 3: Offering Product Bonuses to Boost Your Competitors Products

Moving right along to Lesson 3, we're now going to talk about adding value to your competitors' products.

What?! Why would we want to make our competitors' products BETTER?

Well, by now, I'm guessing you have this figured out. When we work to help our would-be competitors, we work to create mutually beneficial relationships that mean more profit for everyone. We can do this by offering product bonuses.

So what exactly does "offering product bonuses" mean?

It's simple. You create, recreate or repurpose a valuable piece of content that enhances another product in our niche. You contact the seller and ask if they would like to offer this content for free to their customers, no strings attached. Other than including your branding and a free offer (with your new partner's affiliate link, of course), you ask for nothing else.

Let's take a closer look at how this benefits you and your new partner...

Benefits to You:

- Showcase your knowledge to new audiences.
- More branding and name recognition as your branded content gets in front of more people.
- New leads from your connection's customer base. Keep in mind that these are paying customers who have proven they buy content similar to the content you created for the bonuses. These are highly targeted and valuable leads.
- Potential for content recycling. You don't always need to create something brand new to offer a very valuable product bonus.
- A new relationship with a would-be competitor. That's always a good thing and the reason you're here, right?

Benefits to Your New Connection:

- Beef up the amount of content in their products.
- Provide a better customer experience, so they can accomplish what they set out to by purchasing the product.

- They earn affiliate commissions whenever someone buys your product as a result of the free offer you make in the bonus content.
- And, of course, they're lucky enough to start a new relationship with you. It's a definite win-win!

Now before you jump into this, there are a few things to remember...

Keep in Mind

- **Be Targeted:** As always, targeting is key – and in this case, targeting is required on three distinct levels.

First Level: The bonus you offer must be highly targeted to your competitor's product and their customers. It should be an enhancement to the product and make it easier for them to use the original product.

For example, if they have a product on family budgeting and you have a sophisticated, but easy-to-use family budgeting spreadsheet, that's a perfect addition.

Or if they have a product on creating graphics for social media and you have software that makes it easy to make social media graphics, it's a perfect addition.

Second Level: The bonus you provide should be targeted to the free offer you'll be promoting inside your bonus. You will get more people opting in for the free offer if you make that offer the logical "next step" to your bonus.

For example, if you offer that budgeting spreadsheet and you have a free report that shows your readers how to shave \$200 or more dollars off their monthly budget, that's highly targeted.

Third Level: And finally, that free offer they opt-in for must be just as targeted to the paid product you are offering them. Again, the "next step" is a good approach to this.

In our example, this might be a product that further shows them how to shave even more money off their budget without sacrificing quality of life. As long as everything is connected, you'll get a much better response.

- **Be Prepared:** Do your homework on the product and purchase it if possible. You want to fully understand the product seller's approach to the problem the product solves. You want to offer something that enhances that customer experience and if you don't have a deep understanding of the product, it's difficult to do that.

In addition, the more you know about your new potential partner and their customers, the better. So read their blog, follow them on social media, pay attention to the comments their followers make and really pay attention to their entire online presence.

- **Nurture:** As always, the relationship shouldn't end there. You can offer more goodies for that product or subsequent one. Or get together for an exclusive interview for their customers. And always PROMOTE the product you are offering a bonus for. It creates goodwill and more sales for both of you. If you're still short on ideas of what else to do together, [consult our list here](#).

Now, you probably have a lot of questions, so let's get into some finer details of offering product bonuses. Before we go on though, remember, there is no right or wrong approach to this, but I'll try to provide you with some best practices and things to consider, so you can get great results quickly.

Finding Your Ideal Partners for Your Bonus Offer

Start by looking at people you already know and trust in your niche, and see what products they have to offer. If you don't see something that immediately stands out, you'll have to do some more research. Look for a product that reaches your ideal target market and solves a problem that you can help with.

Obviously, you want your bonus offer to be seen, but it's not always immediately apparent how well a product is selling. To date, we've told you to avoid turning relationship-building into a numbers game, and I still don't want you to, but there are a few ways to ensure you're not wasting your time and efforts creating content.

A couple of ways to tell how well a product is selling:

- If it's a ClickBank product, you can search products by popularity... but please don't simply seek out a popular ClickBank product as your target, as products there can be hit and miss. Look for a great product first, rather than worrying about its popularity.
- If you're a customer (and you should be), you can often get a sense of how many other people have the product if there are webinars or other gathering places for customers. Just remember, not everyone participates in the interactive parts, of course, so gauging popularity only by this number won't give you the complete picture.
- Are there are lot of reviews online? This could give you an indication as well. Be sure to read through the quality of the reviews as well.

If you still aren't sure how well the product sells, don't let this scare you off. You can still offer a bonus, but don't offer them exclusive rights to the content. Keep the right to reuse your content and reshape it for different bonus offers.

Overall, go for the product and product seller that are the best fit for you and what you have to offer. And consider that having smaller bonus offerings under your belt gives you the opportunity for trial and error before you approach a more popular product seller.

Ideas for Product Bonuses

Obviously, there are so many possibilities for product bonuses, and what you choose will depend on the situation and your area of expertise. If you want some ideas on types of products and/or content you can offer, here is a list to get you going.

- **Reports / Ebooks:** This is the easiest thing to throw together and you may already have something you can use. Choose topics that help the customer apply what they've learned. It might provide more detail on a certain part of the course or simply inspire the customer to do even greater things with what they've learned.
- **Workbooks:** These are great for helping customers apply what they have learned. Before creating a workbook based on someone else's course material, you should always ask permission.
- **Checklists:** These are another great way to get the customer to take action and make sure they're on track. Just like with the workbooks, always ask permission before creating a checklist based on the specific material covered in your new partner's product.
- **Interviews:** Audio, video or written – if you've got an interview or want to create one that is a complement to the course, it can be a great addition.
- **Flowcharts or Mind Maps:** For your visual learners, a flow chart illustrating a process might come in very handy. Make sure they're very detailed (but easy to understand) and provide extra value.
- **Instructions:** If your competitor's product suggests using a certain piece of software or product, provide step-by-step instructions for doing so. You can do this with screen capture video or making a written document with screenshots.
- **Spreadsheets:** Help their customers keep inventory, do calculations and stay organized. Make sure the spreadsheet helps the customer apply advice provided in the product.
- **Glossaries:** For a product targeted to beginners, glossaries are a definite bonus, but not all product sellers have time to create one. You can do this for them.
- **Patterns and Blueprint:** If it's a craft or sewing product or something else that requires a pattern or blueprint, add some of your own.
- **Software:** Simple software doesn't have to cost a lot to create, or you can find brandable software with resell rights. As long as it makes it easier for the customer to implement the advice in the product, it could be a winner.

Those are just a few ideas, and certainly there are many more. Go through the product and write all the ideas that come to you, and see which would be the best enhancement for their product and are also highly relevant to the offers you want to make.

Best Practices for Creating Your Bonus

There are a few ways to approach creating bonuses and you'll need to decide what is best for each situation. Here are a few things to think about when creating your bonus offers.

- **Exclusive or Non-Exclusive Rights?** In most cases, it probably isn't necessary to create completely original content that is totally exclusive to your product sellers. As long as it's valuable, is targeted and isn't available for free all around the web, you've probably got a good fit.

Of course, if there is a really big product seller and you're looking to create an equally big impression, you might want to create something exclusive and use this as a selling point when you contact them.

The choice is completely up to you, but remember you won't be able to repurpose or reuse the content again if you go for exclusive rights, as that limits your options.

- **Create Something New or Repurpose?** If you aren't doing totally exclusive content, you have another decision to make. As I already mentioned, you don't necessarily need to create something brand new for each bonus, but you do want to ensure whatever you offer is best targeted for the appropriate audience. That probably means doing some edits and adding examples that would be well understood by the target market.

Here's an example I created for someone recently. I was helping a woman who trained virtual assistants (VAs) by teaching them about copywriting. She asked if I would offer a bonus to her customers and I had a report on Finding Your Target Marketing & USP. It was originally made for any type of online business, but I retargeted and made it more specific for VAs.

I changed the title to target VAs and even adjusted the introduction to speak more directly to them as you can see in the image below.



Target Market & USP Blueprint For Virtual Assistants

In order to create a clear message to your potential clients that readily makes them purchase your services, you have to understand who your prospects are. The deeper understanding you have and the better you use this information to differentiate yourself in your market, the easier it is going to be to get your prospects and your existing clients to say yes more often.



Hey, I'm Alice Seba and since 2002, I've been helping online business owners, just like you, use the power of words to sell more.

I also happen to know that virtual assistants are a lifesaver to any online business, so if I can help you start out on the right foot to sell your services, that would make me quite happy.

Business owners need you, but they may not already know it, that's why it's your job to show them how you can help. To start with, we're going to examine your ideal Target Market and Unique Selling Position (USP). I'll explain those in a bit, but I do want to

I also added examples that would be easy for the audience to understand. I did this throughout the document and it didn't take me long to create something very valuable for the product seller.

Step #2: Your Target Market's Characteristics

Now we're digging deeper into your target market – the ideal BUYER for your services.

If you are currently reaching an audience of people who aren't really buyers, this is where you need to adjust your thinking. This is one of the pitfalls of online business where we focus on providing information. Drawing in traffic and prospects with free information is a low-cost way to build an audience of loyal customers, but if the audience doesn't readily buy your products, then it's time to rethink things. It's time to shift to an audience of buyers.

To do this, look at the benefits you listed in the previous step. What type of person wants what you offer and is **willing** to shell out good money for it? There is no sense in catering to those who don't want to invest in their businesses or for lowering your prices so much, just so you can wrangle a few clients. Instead, focus on the ideal target market that is willing to pay you well for your time and expertise.

For example, if you're targeting small business owners who want to run their business on a shoestring and you provide them with all kinds of money-saving tips and free marketing tools, tips and so forth, you may run into some issues. However, if you shift your focus slightly to the entrepreneur who is willing to invest in their business and wants to know how a VA can help them earn more money in the long run, you'll probably see much better results.

You can probably do the same thing with a number of your reports and pieces of content that you already have.

- **Ready Before or Make It to Order?** Just like with guest blogging, it's often best to have a finished product ready, so you can show them what you have. Plus, if you ask them if they want a great bonus for their product and you don't deliver it for a couple of weeks, their excitement will probably wane.

At the very least, make sure you have a very clear and detailed outline of what you want to create and ensure it's possible to put the content together quickly if you get the green light.

If you're repurposing and retargeting content to a specific audience, you can show your new partner the original content and tell them how you'd like to customize it for their audience.

My personal preference is to create content that can be repurposed and retargeted, so even if I do a bunch of work upfront and one person declines my offer, the content is still useful for another project.

Once you've figured out how you'll approach your bonus offer and do the necessary steps to prepare, you're ready to get in touch with the product seller.

How to Approach the Product Seller

As usual, this lesson includes a contact letter template that you can use to put together your message, but here's a basic rundown of what you want to do.

- Tell them you've recently purchased their product and give them some thoughts on why you liked it so much.
- Tell them what you have to offer and why it would be a great fit for their product. If the bonus offer is ready, show it to them. If it's not quite ready, show them the original content you'll be retargeting or give them a detailed outline.
- Offer the content for free and say there are no strings attached other than you'd like to make a free offer inside the content you're providing.
- Let them know if you're offering the content exclusively for them. If it's not exclusive, there's no need to mention anything.
- You can also tell them that you plan to promote the bonus and the product to your own mailing list and customers, so you'll likely be sending referrals their way as well.

Branding and Monetizing Your Bonus

Before you hand off the content, you want to ensure it's designed to bring as many people back as possible to sign up for your free offer. Here are a few things to include:

- Your logo and other branding, but also incorporate the product sellers logo too. You can say the content was created by you and presented by the product seller.
- Make sure you include a targeted free offer that they'll want to claim for more information or help in whatever it is they want to accomplish. Ensure it's very noticeable, and repeat the offer a few times. If you're providing a free report or other written document, have a look at the report template provided in this lesson. It will help ensure you make a compelling offer.
- Ensure you have a backend process to turn the free leads into customers. The more affiliate sales you can make for the product seller, the better. I'll go into more detail on that in the next Lesson.

This is an important step for you and for the product seller because you want them to see extra sales volume from the whole process. But it doesn't quite stop there...

Creating Your Backend Offer

Once they've grabbed your free offer, you want to ensure as many of those people buy your product as possible. Outside of ensuring that you make a highly targeted product offer, you can use these tips:

- Make a special limited-time offer to encourage quick purchase (but you will need to update this as the offer expires).
- Offer a special discount and/or special bonuses for these customers only.
- Add the product offer to the thank you page after they sign up for the free offer.
- Add the product offer in the automated email they receive after they sign up for your free offer.
- Create a follow up series where they receive useful information and tips, but continue to mention the product and your offer as well. Customize the series so it acknowledges where the customers came from and reiterate that you're doing this especially for those customers.

Treat these people like gold and give them an offer they can't refuse... you'll turn more of them into your own customers as well.

What to Do Now?

It's action time, and I promise you this is much easier than you think. You probably already have content you can use and you'll be surprised at how willing people are to include your materials if you offer them tremendous value. Here's what to do next:

- Look for a product that is the best fit for a free offer and product you'd like to promote on the backend. Make sure you're able to enhance this product, rather than just add to its "noise".
- Plan your product bonus in detail. What information will it include? What format will it be in? Have all this ready before contacting someone, so you can provide enough detail and put the product together quickly when it's time.
- Contact the product seller and ask them if they'd be interested in adding your bonus to their product, at no charge. Use the template provided, so you cover all your bases in the contact email.
- Develop the bonus product or repurpose and retarget it, if you haven't already.
- Set up the back end, so prospects come into the free offer and are also offered a product for purchase, so you and the product seller can earn more.
- Promote the product yourself. Remember, we'll be talking about rocking their affiliate program in a future lesson and you'll get plenty of great tips.

Creating Bonus Offers Checklist

Before contacting anyone about offering a bonus for their product, go through this list to ensure you've got all your bases covered.

Finding a Targeted Product You Could Offer a Bonus For

- ☐ See what products those in your niche are creating and find one that is highly targeted to a product offer you could make.

Deciding What to Offer

- ☐ Purchase the product if possible so that you understand exactly what it's about and how you could enhance that product.
- ☐ Decide if you already have a product or piece of content that would work well or if you need to create something original.
- ☐ Decide on the format of the new content and create an outline if you aren't developing the product in full at this time.
- ☐ Target the content to the target audience as much as possible, even if you aren't creating something from scratch. Address the audience directly and include examples that will make the most sense to them.

Contact the Product Seller

Send the product seller a short, but detailed message that includes:

- ☐ That you are a current customer, and why you like their product.
- ☐ What you would like to offer them and why it's a good fit.
- ☐ Tell them there are no strings attached, just a free offer link you'd like to include.
- ☐ If the content is exclusive for them. If it's not, no need to mention it.
- ☐ Let them know that you'll be promoting their product as well.

Finish Up Your Product and Create Your Backend

- ☐ If the bonus product isn't fully ready, finish it up now.
- ☐ Include your free offer in the bonus and use the product seller's affiliate link. If you're making a document or free report, use the template provided below.
- ☐ Make a special limited-time offer to encourage quick purchase (but you will need to update this as the offer expires).
- ☐ Offer a special discount and/or special bonuses for these customers only.
- ☐ Add the product offer to the thank you page after they sign up for the free offer.
- ☐ Add the product offer in the automated email they receive after they sign up for your free offer.
- ☐ Create a follow up series where they receive useful information and tips, but continue to mention the product and your offer as well. Customize the series so it acknowledges where the customers came from and reiterate that you're doing this especially for them.

Expanding the Relationship

- ☐ You can offer more goodies for the same product or subsequent one.
- ☐ Get together for an exclusive interview for their customers that expands some of the ideas in the bonus product.
- ☐ Always PROMOTE the product you are offering a bonus for. It creates goodwill and more sales for both of you.
- ☐ Work together in other ways. Our handy [list of meaningful ideas is always here](#).

Bonus Offer Brainstorming Sheet

Here is a worksheet to help you come up with your bonus offer. If you need help with this, we can [do the research for you](#). Use this sheet for brainstorming to figure what to offer and how to turn it into sales for both of you.

Product Seller Name: _____

Product: _____

URL: _____

What problem does the product solve?

How can you help with that problem?

What product do you already have that might fit? What customization could you do to target it better?

What kind of product can you create? Will you create it yourself or do you need to hire out? Who will help you create it?

Will this be exclusive content?

___ YES ___ NO

What will the free targeted backend offer be?

What will you promote after the opt-in to free offer?

What special offer can you create urgency and increase the number of sales?

Bonus Offer Pitch Template Instructions & Tips

The enclosed letter template makes it easy for you to create an email to pitch your bonus product offer. Here are some basic instructions and tips to keep things detailed, but as simple as possible.

Important!

Before sending the email, do your homework. Buy their product and get to know it as well as possible.

Instructions:

- The template includes red brackets with tips inside for enclosing your information. Remove the brackets and insert your appropriate information.
- Paste the letter into an email and do not send it as an attachment.

Tips:

- Keep your email short and to the point, but do ensure it conveys the following:
 - That you are a customer and why you like their product.
 - What you would like to offer them and why it's a good fit.
 - Tell them there are no strings attached, just a free offer link you'd like to include.
 - If the content is exclusive for them. If it's not, no need to mention it.
 - Let them know that you'll be promoting their product as well.

If it sounds complicated, don't worry. The template will take you through all of this.

Bonus Pitch Letter Template (Not Ready)

SUBJECT: From a customer – A [insert content type] for your customers?

Hi [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] and I recently purchased [insert product name]. I wanted to let you know that I think it was [awesome / just what I needed / you choose something] and I loved [insert what you loved about it in some detail].

I actually work in a similar market and was wondering if you thought a [type of content – report, piece of software, spreadsheet, etc.] would be useful for your customers. If you'd like, you could provide it to them for free and with no strings attached. All I'd request in return is to include a link to a free offer that I think would be quite useful to them.

What I'd like to do is: You can see the [insert details of what you want to do and show how it would solve a problem or enhance the product].

And, of course, I'd be happy to promote your product to my list as well. I think it's a great fit for them since they need help with [insert what they need help with].

I hope you'll find this useful and I really look forward to hearing from you. Thanks again for providing such a great product.

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

Bonus Pitch Letter Template (Ready)

SUBJECT: From a customer – A [insert content type] for your customers?

Hi [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] and I recently purchased [insert product name]. I wanted to let you know that I think it was [awesome / just what I needed / you choose something] and I loved [insert what you loved about it in some detail].

I actually work in a similar market and have a [type of content – report, piece of software, spreadsheet, etc.] that I thought your customers might find useful [insert a specific reason why it would be useful – how does it enhance the current product?]. If you'd like, you could provide it to them for free and with no strings attached. All I'd request in return is to include a link to a free offer that I think would be quite useful to them.

You can see the [type of content] here: [insert link to where they can download it].

[Optional ->] I could customize it even more and target it specifically to your customers by [insert how you'd customize it]. I can also include your logo as a publishing partner and include any information you'd like to add.

And, of course, I'd be happy to promote your product to my list as well. I think it's a great fit for them since they need help with [insert what they need help with].

I hope you'll find this useful and I really look forward to hearing from you. Thanks again for providing such a great product.

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

LESSON 4: Using Your Intelligence to Get Attention

This is going to be a very simple and short lesson. There is no real “how to” for this one because there is no real “how to” for using your own noggin. It’s something that comes naturally, but what I do want to accomplish is to make you aware of opportunities to use all the knowledge and common sense you already have. I also want you to be conscious of how using it will help you grow new mutually beneficial relationships.

Way back when, I used this method with great success, although it wasn’t a conscious thing at all. But low and behold, speaking up and sharing what I knew allowed me to connect with very influential people early on. These people became my mentors, and also helped expand my reach by sharing my content with their own followers.

In some cases, it was a matter of me creating reviews and biographic profiles of certain people I admired. When those profiles hit the top of the search engines, those people definitely noticed. I remember one guy in particular was particularly baffled at how I had a better Google ranking for his name than he did... but as a marketer, he realized that I was bringing him traffic and took it as a challenge to try to beat me out of top position, so a friendly rivalry was created.

In a couple of other cases, I contributed to some very heated and very public debates about people’s products. Because I had experience with those products, I contributed my own reasoned thoughts in defense of my not-yet friends. This caused those people to contact me directly to thank me, and opened up a new dialogue and friendship. It was really something simple that I did naturally, but because I kept a cool head and shared logical thoughts based on actual knowledge, it stood out.

It’s funny how things work that way when you’re willing to speak up and say something.

I am terribly blessed for all that, and it made me realize that people are paying attention online. What you say will be noticed, and if you have something worthwhile to say that attention can be a very positive thing.

If you’re a bit shy, I know this can seem daunting, but take baby steps. Start creating product reviews or blog posts that reference other people’s posts. The more you do it, the more comfortable you’ll become. People like to be acknowledged and to know that others are listening to what they have to say... they’ll appreciate what you do.

Now before we continue, we have to keep 3 things in mind, just like with all our other lessons...

Keep in Mind

- **Be Targeted:** Don't worry about being seen by a lot of people... strive to be seen by the right people. Spend plenty of time thinking about certain subjects and doing your research, so what you have to say is right on target.
- **Be Prepared:** As always, do your research. Understand the topics being discussed and know the background of the person you're trying to connect with. Knowing all these things will help you have a more intelligent conversation. Add to that, think critically and don't be afraid to accept new ideas and change your point of view in light of new evidence. The more open-minded and willing you are to discuss the issues, the better discussions you'll have and the more meaningful connections will be made.
- **Nurture:** This is really just the beginning of the process. Figure out which subjects you could do more with and consider creating blog posts, doing interviews or even having a cross-blog conversation. If you're not familiar with a cross-blog conversation, it's where you ask a question on your blog and the other person answers on their blog. In turn, they ask you questions that you then answer on your blog. A full [explanation of how this works](#) is on Kelly McCausey's blog.

And, of course, you should always [consult our list of other connection ideas here](#).

Ways to Get Attention

There are plenty of ways to initiate conversations and to get noticed for what you have to say. Here are a few ideas to get the creative juices flowing.

- **Blog Commenting:** A simple well thought blog comment can go a long way. This is a strategy best used with bloggers who actively respond to the comments they receive. Try to include a question, so you're more likely to get a response.
- **Get in Touch:** If you have a way to contact the person directly, do it. If you have an email address, Skype contact or whatever it is, use it. Just use this power wisely. Open up a discussion that is likely to be of interest to them and keep it brief, so you don't take up too much of their time and so that they can decide how deep the conversation will go.
- **Live Events:** If you know the person is going to be attending a local Meetup or seminar in a few states away, go if you can. Face to face contact is invaluable. When you meet, keep things light and focus on topics you're both interested in. Avoid asking for favors or being too needy... be casual and smart instead.
- **Your Own Blog Posts:** If you see someone writing about a topic of great interest to you, create your own follow-up post. Link to the original post and share your thoughts. Once the post is up, try to get in touch to let the author know you've posted some thoughts for them.

- **Social Media:** Don't just like or retweet, put some thought and effort into your social media activities. If you want to get noticed, post your opinions, offer extra information and go the extra mile.
- **Ask Intelligent Questions:** I've already mentioned it briefly before, but asking a question is the most effective way to start a conversation.
- **Interviews:** We've done a whole lesson on this one, so you know how to get the ball rolling on interviews. If you see someone discussing something particularly interesting, ask if they'd like to do a quick interview on that subject.
- **Forums:** Good 'ol fashioned forums and message boards are still around if you look. Finding one where intelligent people connect can be a great boost for your business.
- **SEO:** I mentioned creating reviews and biographical pages that allowed me to connect with some influential people. I created those pages with the purpose of selling more of their products through affiliate programs, but because they noticed the pages, it opened up a dialog too. If you need a help optimizing some of your pages, you can [grab an SEO checklist here](#) (log into your account to get it).

Just remember to be natural. Avoid being pretentious or pushy... simply engage in a conversation.

What to Do Now?

As I mentioned, there is no real defined roadmap to this lesson. But here are a few things you should start doing right now.

- Make sure you're following key players in your niche. Subscribe to their mailing lists, blogs and social media. Pay attention to what's going on and jump in when you have something to say. I often use my downtime away from the computer and catch up on topics on my phone or iPad.
- Think about the subjects you know a lot about. Look for discussions on these subjects by key players in your niche, or search Google to see what people are talking about.
- If you're shy, just get out there and be more vocal. After all, no one can bite you through the computer screen. Start making it a daily habit to reach out and start a new discussion every single day.
- Consider creating review and biographical content for your website. More content means more eyeballs, and when you're reviewing products, it means more sales... and the people whose products you're writing about will notice too.

All it takes is paying attention to what's going on around you and sharing your thoughts. It's really THAT easy.

Use Your Intelligence Worksheet

Here is a worksheet to help you put that noggin to work. If you need help with this, we can [do the research for you](#). Use this sheet for ideas to start up new conversations, but remember, work on key connections and meaningful conversations. If you try to do too much, you'll overwhelm yourself and won't produce as great results.

Topics I Know a Lot about and/or Like to Discuss and Learn about

Places to Find Conversations on Those Topics

Key Players in My Niche I'm Already Following (are you following their blog, mailing list, Facebook, Twitter, etc?):

Key Players in My Niche I Should Follow (be sure to follow them on their blog, mailing list, Facebook, Twitter):

Ideas for Content You Could Create (interviews, cross-blog conversations, reviews, biographies, etc):

Results (record your results here and do more of what seems to be working):

This free course provided for WriterHelpWanted.com members only.

LESSON 5: In Person Networking to Grow Your Connections

This lesson is all about really getting out there. I mean, literally getting out there. It's not always in our comfort zones, but it's well worth the effort. There is nothing quite like face to face contact for growing your relationships.

In-person networking can take place in a number of different ways. It could be a local Meetup of business owners in your area, a seminar across the country, an expo event or just about anything that gets you out of the house and meeting your fellow online business owners.

The advice shared in this lesson may go against a lot of traditional networking advice you have heard. When you're connecting with other online business owners, consider that we're a different breed than traditional brick and mortar business owners. We're generally more casual and often introverted. We're certainly profit-driven, but most of us who are doing well put serving our online communities in a positive way on the same level as profits. We aren't just interested in making a buck... we're also interested in improving lives.

All this means you have to pay attention to other people and listen first. Don't be in a rush to form a working relationship until you understand what your connection really is.

Now before we continue let's look at those 3 things we always have to keep in mind.

Keep in Mind

- **Be Targeted:** Events can't always be targeted to your particular niche, but if you find something that is, you should definitely take advantage. Other ways to be targeted include looking for likeminded business owners in your area. Or, if there are events for "mom bloggers" or "affiliate marketers" and that fits what you do, those are great events to be a part of as well. Even so, general events for online business owners can provide great benefits as well.

No matter what type of event you attend, get out there and talk to as many people as possible. Don't worry about making a connection with all of them or fulfilling some type of quota... just be casual. After all, there are other benefits to making connections than just finding a way to work together. Share your knowledge and experiences. And seriously, just being able to connect with other online business owners who understand what it is you do can be priceless.

- **Be Prepared:** Once you've chosen your event, learn as much about it as possible. Find out about the learning and networking opportunities. Sometimes you have to sign up (or even pay extra) for certain networking opportunities, but it's often well worth it.

Try to learn about the people who are attending and you want to meet. Do some background research and look at what projects they're working on. They'll be impressed when you know your stuff.

- **Nurture:** One of the biggest mistakes people make with in-person networking is not following up. It's understandable though. We go with big intentions, but then we get busy when we return home. Don't just collect business cards, because they'll sit in your desk drawer somewhere. Instead, make a concrete plan. If you're going to interview someone, schedule the time. If you're going to do a guest blog post, commit to a date when you'll deliver it. Schedule it and you're more likely to follow through.

Now let's look briefly at a few types of events you might attend for your in-person networking.

Local Meetup:

There are many ways to find or arrange local meetups. The first, and the reason we've started spelling "meetup" as one word, is because of the site Meetup.com. You can use the site to look for local Meetups or even create your own.

Of course, if you're active in online groups and forums, you've probably discovered a few people living in your area who also work online. I've never attended a formal Meetup, but I often get together for lunch with different online business owners in the area. It's a pretty casual thing and is a great way of sharing information. It also offers a feeling of belonging when you're with people who understand what you do.

If you don't know of people in your local area, it's probably time to step up the online networking a bit. Get involved in marketing forums or join some Facebook Groups. Pay attention where people are from and once you get to know some local people, ask if they know others.

Seminars:

Business seminars are a great way to combine learning and networking. You might find some in your local area, or you might have to travel distances to be a part of the right ones for you. I've attended a dozen or so over the years and they've been tremendously helpful in terms of expanding my knowledge and building my connections... but I always had to have a plan for action when I got home and I'll talk more about that in a bit.

If you're not sure about what other events you could attend, ask your friends. If you don't have online business owner friends yet, get out there and start connecting. This is important!

Expos:

There are a lot of larger events (like BlogWorld and others) that are more like expos. There are learning and networking opportunities, but these are generally a very large events where your goal should be to meet vendors and other people who can help your online business.

I've never attended one because I shy away from events that are too large, as it's tougher to get to know specific people. I've been to a few seminars that kept getting larger and larger each time they were put together, and after a few hundred people are added to the mix it's tougher to keep up.

However, there are people who love to attend these events, and they often make very valuable connections. If you see something that catches your eye, go for it. Be sure to do your research, so you know about the different specific learning and focused networking opportunities, and make sure you take advantage of them.

Other Events:

Certainly, the three types of events I mentioned don't cover everything. If there's an opportunity for you to meet face to face with other likeminded business owners, there's one thing you should do... and that's... just do it!

My Tips for You

As I mentioned earlier, I have my own way of approaching events and it's worked well for me. It's allowed me to connect with some key players in my niche and to take big action after investing my time and money in attending. Here are a few thoughts for you.

- **Skip the business cards.** If you don't have business cards written up already, don't sweat it. Focus on talking to people and getting to know them. If you really want to keep the conversation going, you don't need a business card to share contact information. When you bring business cards, the focus often becomes the mere acts of giving yours out and collecting cards from others. That's not networking and relationship building.
- **Make friends first.** Focus on getting to know people and carrying on regular old conversations. Obviously, the focus will probably be on business conversation, but don't worry about what you could get out of a potential relationship... become friends first.
- **Plan to do a few events.** One event can make a big difference, but trying to get together with some of the same people a few times more in the near future can really solidify the relationships. Of course, keep your budget in mind and don't spend thousands of dollars travelling across the country just because I said you should. It should be profitable for you to do so. Be strategic and make a plan to have more face to face contact. And remember, local meetups are very inexpensive to do.

- **Connect others.** Don't just worry about the people you are going to meet. Make introductions when you think two people would definitely make a good connection with one another. When you connect others, they are most likely to help you make better connections as well.
- **Always stay in the event hotel.** If you're staying in a hotel down the road or a taxi cab away, it's harder to fully immerse yourself. Always find out the hotel information and book early, so you can be in the center of the action.
- **Split up.** If you go with a friend you know well, or your spouse, don't always hang out together. Split up and network separately so you can meet more people.
- **Make a plan.** If you want to continue talking to someone after the event, make a concrete plan to do so. Schedule an interview or write a blog post for them... do something that requires a commitment on both your parts so you are more likely to stick to the plan.
- **Don't overwhelm yourself.** Make every effort to be engaged in all aspects of the event, and don't hide in your hotel room because you'll regret it. That said, if you need a little quiet time to recharge then give yourself that, but get back out there as soon as you're ready. Overall, it's not a contest. You do want to meet as many people as possible, but you also want to take the time to nurture new and promising friendships.
- **Listen when learning.** If you're attending a seminar, don't get bogged down in taking too many notes during the session. If you're busy writing notes, you're not paying full attention. Instead, write down a few key ideas that apply to **your** business as you hear them. Then when you get home (or better yet, while you're in the airport and it's fresh in your mind), read through your notes and create an action plan based on those notes that are highly relevant to your business.
- **Think before you spend.** Many seminars will offer "Continuing Education" opportunities where the speaker will put together a great offer for their products and/or services... usually with a high price tag. Seminars do this as a way to earn money and to compensate their speakers who often speak for free.

Skilled speakers can get you all pumped up and convinced that you need to buy, but use your head first. Evaluate the offer more critically and decide if it's right for you. They use scarcity tactics to make you think you have to act quickly because it won't be offered again. Now sometimes you might not get the same deal if you wait. But the reality is if you decide, at a later date, that you really do need something, you can still get it.

In short, don't go into debt because you're excited and someone is promising you the moon. This is a business purchase, and like all purchases they need to be carefully evaluated before being made. None of the purchases you make will be magic pills. There will always be hard work and probably more money to implement what is promised... so only do it if you're prepared.

The key here is to get out there and have fun... learning the whole way through. Be a friend first, and everything else will fall into place.

What to Do Now?

Here's what I'd like to see you do with this lesson and if it means going outside your comfort zone, I want you to push yourself.

You could either:

1. **Organize or join a local Meetup.** Set a time, date and place... and show up. A Meetup organization checklist has been included with this lesson. Or look to see if there is a scheduled Meetup that you can join.
2. **Find a seminar or expo to attend.** Register and book your flight and hotel (if applicable). And, of course, show up. Checklists for finding the right event and getting prepared have been included in this lesson.
3. **If you're really ambitious, create your own seminar or expo.** There is a lot involved with the preparation, but if you want to connect a certain group of people and share networking and education opportunities, it might very well be worth it.

I'd love to hear what you're going to commit to doing.

Finding the Right Event for You Checklist

Finding the right event isn't a pure science. In fact, it's not always easy. When it comes to local meetups, it's easier to learn through trial and error. For an event you have to travel to, you really need to do your homework and be sure it will be beneficial to you. For any event you're thinking about attending, consider the following:

- ☐ Check [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com). If you don't see anything in your area, consider doing a day trip to travel a bit further.
- ☐ Ask your friends for their recommendations. This will always be your best source because you want to attend events where you know a few people. Don't have any online business friends yet? It's time to step up your online networking.
- ☐ Watch your Twitter or LinkedIn feeds. What events are people talking about? Follow event hashtags to see what people are saying.
- ☐ When you find something that interests you, do your research. Search Google and ask around. Learn more about the organizers, speakers and so forth.
- ☐ Beware of "pitch fest," but understand that just because the speakers make product offers, doesn't discredit the event. It's a common practice to offer tons of great content in the presentation and then offer a product at the end.
- ☐ Choose events that are targeted to what you're working on. If you're not big into blogging, don't attend a blogging event. If you're trying to get more serious about affiliate marketing, look for an event that focuses on it. If you're just getting your feet wet, go to an event that offers a variety of topics, so you can figure out where to focus.

Once again, friends are the best source of information. Go to the events they recommend and attend and start making those face-to-face connections.

Create Your Own Local Meetup Checklist

You can always join a pre-organized meetup, but you might serve your needs better by creating your own and inviting the people you want to be there. This is just a quick list of tips to help you get a local group together.

Please note that this checklist doesn't include instructions for the Meetup website. If you want to use Meetup.com site to plan your event, [here is a very detailed checklist](#) with plenty of tips to help you. Remember, an official Meetup will be more open to the public and is good for meeting people for the first time. Once you know a few local people, it's probably even more beneficial to get together in a small group of specific people you want to get to know better.

Here are a few things to do when trying to get a small group of like minds together.

- ☐ Have a reason why. If you want people to get together, you need to give them a good reason why. For local meetups, it might just be the opportunity to connect with likeminded online business owners. Just make sure you understand why you're putting together the event and make that known.
- ☐ Check if there is already a similar event available for you to attend first. If you check sites like Meetup.com or Yelp.com and see that there is a group getting together, you might just want to join them first to get your feet wet. You'll probably meet a few people there that you can invite to your next event.
- ☐ Decide whether you want to create a more public Meetup group or do you just want to invite a few key people to a lunch or other type of meeting? The latter allows for more intimate conversations and will help you make the specific connections you're seeking.
- ☐ Choose a comfortable place to meet and ensure you have enough space. If you're going to a restaurant, make a reservation. If you plan to meet at a coffee shop, keep it to a small group unless they take reservations. You want everyone to be able to sit down (unless it's a stand up cocktail party) and to feel welcome.
- ☐ For larger groups, figure out the details before you send invitations. If you leave it open to a large group to decide when and where you'll meet, the planning quickly falls apart. If you set the date, time and place people can simply decide if they want to attend or not. For smaller groups of 2-4 people, you probably want to discuss it and come to a consensus on what works best for people.
- ☐ If you do use a website like Meetup.com, don't just post it and forget. Directly invite a few key players and promote your event outside the site as well.
- ☐ Send reminders before your event. People forget, and online business owners are notorious for backing out of opportunities to get out and meet people face to face. Just

send a quick note saying that you're looking forward to meeting them, and include the details of when and where to meet.

There are so many benefits to meeting face to face with other online business owners and you might be surprised how many people you can find locally. And remember, just like with other networking opportunities, nurture the relationships you form and get together more often.

What to Bring and What to Do at a Seminar Checklist

If you're a little nervous about your next (or first) event, here's a checklist that will help you through. Don't worry about being perfect... just be yourself. You'll be fine. The important thing is to get out there and embrace the fact that you're moving outside your comfort zone because that's where the magic happens.

What to Bring

Great news... there's not much that you need to bring. If you're traveling overnight, you'll need your clothes and usual items. Other than that, there are just a few things you need.

- ☐ Don't worry about business cards, but if you have some, bring them. Unless the event is designed to be self-promotional, leave your brochures and other promotional items at home or just pack a few for when you really need them.
- ☐ Consider bringing some little gifts. If you're traveling to a different area of the country or internationally, bring a few souvenirs or local treats. Give these to people you'd like to get to know a bit better.
- ☐ Something to write with. Whether it's a notebook and pen, your smartphone, tablet or laptop, you want to be able to record notes and ideas.
- ☐ Check the event schedule to see if you need a more formal outfit. Sometimes, there are evening networking opportunities and you may want to dress up for them.

What to Do

- ☐ Book your hotel room where the event takes place.
- ☐ Ask questions (but don't be nosey... keep it light and casual) and focus on listening.
- ☐ Don't hide in your room. Be out there as much as possible.
- ☐ Talk to a lot of different people, even if it's hard. You will kick yourself if you waste a bunch of time and money hiding in your hotel room.
- ☐ Attend all the networking opportunities. Whether there is a cocktail reception, dinner, karaoke part or anything else, go and have fun.
- ☐ During information sessions, only take notes on ideas and tips that apply to your business. Focus on listening, instead of trying to remember absolutely everything.
- ☐ Keep calm and think about your wallet when they present "Continuing Education" opportunities. Only buy something if you know it is the right investment for you and it's an investment you can afford.

- ☐ Make concrete plans with the people you connect with. Schedule an interview, write them a guest blog post or plan to promote their product. Commit to it and follow through.
- ☐ Soon after the event, read through your notes and make an action plan based on what you've learned. How will you put those ideas to work for your business?
- ☐ Make a plan to do it again soon!

LESSON 6: Rocking Their Affiliate Program... Even if You Have a Small Audience

There are many instances where having a large list or a ton of website traffic can be a tremendous advantage. Doing an affiliate promotion for someone else's product can be one of those instances. But you can still grab attention of your would-be competitors by singing the praises of their products and bringing new customers to them... even if you don't have a huge audience to start with.

This lesson is going to be all about using your genius and creativity to make a splash with someone's affiliate program – and grow your list at the same time. A couple lessons ago, we talked about using your intelligence, and in this lesson we'll be kicking it into high gear. So fasten your seat belt, it's time to get things going.

Let's look at why this is a good relationship-building strategy.

Benefits to You:

- Show yourself as a “player” in online marketing and get the product seller's attention.
- You get to make commissions... hopefully, a lot of them.
- You'll grow your list, and that has lasting value.
- You'll establish yourself as a provider of quality content with your audience.
- The product seller might just return the favor and promote you.
- A new relationship with someone in your niche.

Benefit to the Product Seller:

- They will see increased sales.
- They will get more exposure for their name and help build brand recognition.
- They'll get to know about a great new potential business partner... you!

Now before you rush in and start promoting, we always have 3 points to think about and they are targeting, preparedness and planning for the future...

Keep in Mind

- **Be Targeted:** Now, just because you see someone in your niche that you'd like to get to know, and you believe they have a great product, that doesn't necessarily mean you should choose that product. If you promote a product that your audience won't be terribly excited about, you're going to water down your results tremendously. Always keep your audience in mind and look for products that are the best fit for them. What problems do they have and what products can you promote to help them solve those problems?
- **Be Prepared:** Wherever possible, purchase the product and review it thoroughly. If it's not feasible to buy it, then do your homework thoroughly. Look for product reviews, investigate the seller and ensure you have a good handle on what you're promoting. If it's a downloadable product, you might even approach the seller for a review copy and tell them your plans for promotion.
- **Nurture:** Don't just promote and forget it, take the next step and actually get in touch. Depending on your promotion approach, you might get in touch before you promote or while you're promoting, but if you don't, make sure you get in touch after. Let them know your readers are really enjoying the product, approach them for an interview or open up a meaningful dialog in some way.

Keeping those things in mind, there are many ways you can start promoting their products. Let's now discuss some of them.

How to Promote Their Products

If you have a large audience already, you can certainly just pick and choose a few of these and you'll probably get some great results. If you have a smaller audience, you'll have to make a more concerted effort and clear your schedule to focus on the promotion over several weeks. The great thing is, if you use the ideas in this guide, you'll be providing your readers with plenty of helpful content that they'll be thanking you for.

- **Get your hands on the product.** Your first step is to get your hands on the product, so go buy it. You could possibly ask for a review copy, but unless you know the seller readily gives out review copies, it's probably best to buy it yourself. Once you have the product, use and review it thoroughly.
- **Contact them and ask for a special coupon. If they do landing pages, get one.** One you have the product in your hands and have reviewed it, this is the perfect time to get in

touch with the seller. To have the most success with a promotion, you want to have two important things:

- **A targeted offer:** Many independent product sellers will create landing pages that include your name, and they might even add a video from you or a special product bonus to make it as personal as possible. Obviously, you don't want them to spend hours working on something if you're unsure of the number of sales you're going to send, but you can be honest with them and let them know you plan to promote their product over the long term and continue to bring sales.
- **A sense of urgency:** If your readers feel compelled to take advantage of an offer right now, they'll be more likely to do so. Many people will put off purchases thinking they'll come back later, but then they never do. If you can secure a coupon, a special price or add some limited time bonuses to the product offer, you'll probably have much better results.
- **Use the product yourself and be a case study.** People make buying decisions based on social proof, and what better social proof is there than if you use the product yourself and show your results? For example, if you're promoting a weight loss product, keep track of your progress, share photos and more. If you talk the talk and walk the walk, more people will get on board to join you.
- **Do a complete product review.** Conduct and publish a complete product review. Provide as much detail as possible so that your readers can make an informed buying decision. A thorough product review is another form of social proof because it shows you know your stuff.
- **Offer a highly relevant bonus.** If you really believe in the product and want to get the seller's attention, over-deliver with a bonus that really complements the product. Remember our lesson on offering product bonuses? It's a good time to review that, so you can put together something valuable for your readers.
- **Write content designed to promote the product.** If you're promoting a product on meal planning, for example, write blog posts and other content that will get your readers interested in meal planning and which shows them how much time and money they can save by doing so. Publish the content on your blog, in your newsletter and share it on social media. And don't just stop at one blog post. Keep the momentum going and grow your reader's interest on the subject.
- **Have your content published on other sites.** Add the content you write to article directories or other places that will accept your content with an affiliate link.
- **Set up a mailing list, just to promote the product.** If you want the most targeted buyers possible, make a list of them. Offer a free report, audio recording or video in return for their opt-in. See if the product seller offers some type of valuable content that

affiliates can give away... many do. Then create a follow-up series that continues to educate your subscribers and promotes the product.

- **Use your thank you pages and thank you emails.** One of the best places to make a targeted offer is on a thank you page, and in the automated emails you send out to them thanking them for their subscription or purchase. Use these valuable pieces of virtual real estate to make an offer for the products. Do this for all your relevant mailing lists and if you sell complementary products, add a promotion to the follow up on those purchases.
- **Set up a pay-per-lead affiliate program to grow the list.** If you want to grow your list faster, you can set up an affiliate program where your affiliates receive a referral fee for each new person that opts in to the list. Many affiliate program systems offer a pay-per-lead option.
- **Purchase advertising, and track it.** You can also advertise on Facebook, Twitter, Google and other sites in order to bring more people to your offer and to grow your list quickly. Just make sure to track all your ads, so you know which ones are performing well.
- **Promote the product to your regular mailing list too.** For the duration of your promotion you're probably going to create and/or share a lot of content, but you also need to push a little harder if you want to make a good number of sales. Don't just hide your promotions inside content or with other newsletter tidbits. Make a solo mailing offer to tell them directly about the product, why you recommend it and where they should go get it. Add a sense of urgency to the offer for even greater results.
- **Follow up often.** You need to follow up on any solo offers. In fact, you should follow up more than once. Always include more helpful information in your follow ups and your readers will appreciate it. For example, include creative ideas for using the product or other tips they'll find helpful.
- **Add the promotion and follow ups to your autoresponder.** Once the initial promotion is over, don't let it go stale if you got good results. Add your promotional emails to an autoresponder series so your newer subscribers will also benefit from learning about the product.
- **Use the tools provided.** Many affiliate programs include graphics, articles, reports and other useful content that you can share with your readers. Check for these and use them. If you don't see any content provided in the affiliate center, ask them if they have something you can share.
- **Make videos.** Show yourself using the product, or use video to show your progress, where appropriate. Adding multimedia content to your promotion campaign can have great results. Add your video to YouTube and other video sharing sites for extra exposure.

- **Make podcasts or audio recordings.** Reach your audience with the product in as many ways as possible. Create informative audio recordings, interview the product seller (see below) and more. Add your podcast to iTunes and other podcasting sites.
- **Interview.** If your readers are responding well to the product and the content you're sharing, ask the product seller if you can interview them. It could be a webinar, pre-recorded podcast or even a written interview, if you prefer.
- **Create Pinterest and social media graphics.** It's easy to put together visual striking images that are readily shared on social media. You can gather up thought-provoking quotes from the product seller, includes tips about the subject matter and more. If you're not a graphics whiz, you can try this [Social Graphics Pro](#) software. It's super easy to use.

There is no shortage of ideas, and by focusing on publishing great content and making targeted promotions you'll do well with the promotion. Just make sure you continue to work to grow your list and keep the momentum going by following up.

What to Do Now?

Is there a product seller that you'd like to impress AND you know that your audience would love their product? This is where you want to start. Just choose one product and put all your efforts into that.

Here are some action steps for you:

- **Find the Product:** Select the product and brainstorm the many reasons why your readers would love it. If you can't come up with a lot of reasons, move onto something else. Keep that list of reasons because it will help you create your product promotions as you go along.
- **Get the Product:** Purchase the product and review it thoroughly. Make sure you know it inside and out. Also, take the time to get to know the seller as well, through their website, mailing list, social media and more.
- **Get in Touch:** Now's a good time to get in touch and see if there is any special content you can share with your list. You can also ask for a coupon code or limited special offer and even have them create a simple landing page for you.
- **Plan Your List Building and Follow Through:** The first step is to grow a list of targeted buyers. Figure out what free offer you'll be making and start promoting it.
- **Write Down and Schedule a Promotion Plan:** Over the next few weeks, write down the content you're going to publish, and the direct promotions you'll be making. Plan your blog posts, videos, reports, recordings, solo mailings and more. Always work to make each of your audience members a more informed buyer, so they can make the

best decision for themselves. And remember, to always follow up. Remind people about your content, where to get the product and more.

- **Keep it Going:** If your audience responds favorably, invite the product seller for an interview. Ask them what other content you could publish or share? See if they have other products you could promote.

There is an Affiliate Marketing Checklist that is included with this lesson, which will help you keep all the steps you need to take in one place.

The beauty of this plan is that not only will you make some sales, but you'll grow your audience and establish yourself as a valuable source of information too. It can be a lot of work, but it'll be well worth it.

Affiliate Promotion Checklist

The key to success with an affiliate promotion is focus. Focus on one product at a time, and shape your content, emails and everything you do around the appropriate subject matter that will sell the product. This checklist is designed to help you, no matter the size of your audience, to start getting good results for with your promotions, so you can grab the attention of product sellers in your niche.

- ☐ **Step 1: Find the Product:** Select the product and brainstorm the many reasons why your readers would love it. If you can't come up with a lot of reasons, move onto something else.
- ☐ **Step 2: Get the Product:** Purchase the product and review it thoroughly. Make sure you know it (and the seller) inside and out.
- ☐ **Step 3: Get in Touch:** Ask the seller if there is any special content you can share with your list. Also ask for a coupon code or limited special offer, and even if they can create a simple landing page for you.
- ☐ **Step 4: Plan Your List Building and Follow Through:** The first step is to grow a list of targeted buyers. Figure out what free offer you'll be making and start promoting it.
- ☐ **Step 5: Write Down and Schedule a Promotion Plan:** Over the next few weeks, write down the content you're going to publish, and the direct promotions you'll be making. Plan your blog posts, videos, reports, recordings, solo mailings and more.

Use a piece of paper, write down your list, add it to your Google calendar, your whiteboard or whatever works for you. Just make sure you have the plan written in full, including all the dates you'll be publishing each piece.

Here are some things to include in your plan.

- Publish updates about how you've used the product and how it's working for you.
- Create an in-depth review and demonstration of the product.
- Add a bonus that helps your audience use the product better. See the lesson on "Offering Product Bonuses" for ideas.
- Write and publish content designed to create awareness and interest in the product.
- Make a free opt-in offer to build a list of targeted buyers.
- Add promotions to your thank you pages and thank you emails.

- Set up a pay-per-lead affiliate program to grow your list.
- Purchase advertising to promote your free opt-in offer.
- Use the content and promotion tools provided by the affiliate seller. Make a schedule to publish their articles, reports and other content.
- Make videos, recordings and other multimedia content.
- Ask the product seller for an interview.
- Plan and schedule follows up to your promotion. You'll always make more sales when you follow up.

□ **Step 6: Keep it Going:** If your audience responds favorably, invite the product seller for an interview. Ask them what other content you could publish or share? See if they have other products you could promote.

Affiliate Marketing Contact Letter Template Instructions

We've included some templates to make it easy for you to get in touch with product sellers to open the lines of communication and to increase your success with their affiliate programs.

All you have to do is fill in the blanks, but do use as much detail as possible, and personalize the letters where you can.

Instructions:

- The template includes red brackets with tips inside for enclosing your information. Remove the brackets and insert your appropriate information.
- Paste the letter into an email and do not send it as an attachment.
- Feel free to edit the letter as much as you'd like, so it fits your unique situation. For example, you might combine the letter for asking for a coupon/special offer with the landing page request.

Coupon/Special Offer Request Template

SUBJECT: A question about promoting [insert the product name]

Hi [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] from [insert website address, if relevant] and I am just about to embark on a promotion of [insert the product name] because I know it'll be a great fit for my audience.

I'm hoping to get as many sales to you as possible and was wondering if it might be possible to set up a special offer for my readers. I'm not sure if you can do a limited-time coupon code or if there is something else you typically do with affiliates, but I'm very keen on creating a sense of urgency and getting more people on board as your customer.

Thanks for considering. I'm looking forward to sharing your product!

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

Landing Page Request Template

SUBJECT: Going to promote [insert the product name] – just one thing

Hi [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] from [insert website address, if relevant] and I am just about to embark on a promotion of [insert the product name] because I know it'll be a great fit for my audience. I'm hoping to get as many sales to you as possible and was wondering if you happen to set up landing pages for your affiliates.

It would be great to have a page that welcomed my readers [and if possible, I'd like to add a video to the page and bonus offer as well, if you're game]. I think this would really increase the number of sales I could make.

I don't want it to take up too much of your time, so if you need me to help with setting it up, I'm happy to do that. I'm going to promoting your product over the next [say how long] and have [insert type of content and promotions you're doing].

Thanks for considering. I'm looking forward to sharing your product!

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

Interview Request Template

SUBJECT: My readers love [insert the product name] – quick question

Hi [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] from [insert website address, if relevant] and I have been sharing [insert the product name] with my readers and they love it. I was wondering if you had about [enter a number, but keep it small... about 15 to 30] minutes for a quick interview.

It would be a great opportunity for my audience to get to know you better and for me to send some more sales your way.

I think they would be particularly interested in learning [insert some of the questions you want to ask or topics you want to discuss].

I will be able to provide you with the full publishing rights to the audio recording and transcripts of your interview, so you'll have a polished product to use as you see fit as well.

I appreciate you taking the time to consider and look forward to talking to you soon.

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

LESSON 7: Wowing Their Audience with Free Stuff

Now that we've arrived at the seventh lesson of our series, I hope connecting people with your ideas has become a lot easier. Once you've developed the habit of readily sharing ideas, resources and content, you will see your business start growing much more easily. You'll have to worry less about search engines or where your traffic is going to come from and at the same time, you'll see your audience and sales volume grow.

This lesson is not only a continuation of developing those good networking habits, but also of creating great offers that make you and your new partners more money.

If you haven't gone through Lesson 3 on "Offering Product Bonuses," I highly encourage you to do so now. It's very important because it really focuses on ensuring that your free bonus offers translate into sales for you and your partner. If you get results for your new connections, you can bet they're going to want to work with you more, so it's important to master that stuff.

This lesson is going to focus on coming up with creative ideas to get valuable free stuff to new audiences in your target market.

This Lesson Is Short, But...

This lesson will be relatively short, but that's because it encompasses information from other lessons that we've already covered (particularly Lesson 3)... but don't be fooled into thinking there's not much to do in this lesson. I'd really like to encourage you to share your free stuff with as many people as possible and make it a habit to get out there.

Review Lesson 3 Again

Just remember to read the Bonuses Lesson again, so you set things up right. In particular, check out the sections on:

- "Keep in Mind"
- "Branding and Monetizing Your Bonus"
- "Creating Your Backend Offer"

These will put you in good form for using these ideas.

Approaching Your Free Stuff Promotion:

There are countless possibilities for offering free content. The most important thing is to be targeted. Keep an eye out for new blog posts, podcast episodes, videos and other content that those in your niche are putting out. When they're talking about a topic relevant to something you could offer for free, this will likely be a good fit. Make sure it's as targeted as possible and they're more likely to share it.

If it's not content that is readily available elsewhere on the web for free, and they can see it's a more exclusive offer, they might be more interested. However, that's not always necessary. Most online business owners just want to make sure the content is valuable to their audience, so don't feel you have to create a bunch of content to reap the benefits of this lesson. Get out there and share what you have. You'll be surprised at the results.

You can also offer free access to a paid product. Just have the visitors enter a coupon code to claim the product for free. That's an offer that's sure to impress, particularly if it's just what their audience needs.

But whatever you offer, make sure you have the backend set up, so you can turn more of those free offer claims into buying customers... that means more money for you and your new partner. And when your new partner makes money, they'll want to work with you over and over again. Furthermore, if you have a free offer that readily converts to sales and you have the data for those conversions, be sure to share that data with your fellow online business owner.

Free Stuff Ideas:

There are no rules with this stuff, and this isn't an exhaustive list, but here are a few ideas to get your creative juices flowing. But before you go through this list, take an inventory of what you already have. You probably already have a ton of gems that should be getting out there!

- **Audio Recordings:** Whether it's a recording you already created or a recording you make with a new competitor turned partner.
- **Webinars:** If you have an upcoming webinar and it fits in with what someone is discussing on their own site, tell them about it. Don't have a webinar coming up? Make one.
- **Videos:** Get more eyeballs on those YouTube videos. Suggest videos that people can embed into their specific posts that you've been reading.
- **Checklists:** If you have some checklists handy, provide them. If you can make one that helps your fellow online business owner's audience consume their content, make it.
- **Worksheets:** Worksheets and brainstorming sheets are always a great extra. Why not provide one or make one for a new audience?

- **Spreadsheets:** If a spreadsheet can make putting plans into action easier, provide or make one and give it away.
- **Software and Apps:** If you have a free software or app solution, don't be afraid to share it with your fellow online business owner.
- **Reports:** If you've been running an online business for a few years, it's amazing how many reports you've probably accumulated over that period. Unfortunately, most of them get completely forgotten after a little while, so sharing them with new contacts is a great way to revitalize them. Don't have any reports? Make one or find some PLR content that will be useful.
- **Full Products and Courses:** As mentioned, there's nothing stopping you from giving someone else's audience access to a product that people normally have to pay for. Of course, if you do this make sure you have a backend set up, so they'll be motivated to buy. That way both you and your new connection make money.
- **Tickets to Live Events:** If you're holding a live event, why not share some tickets? More cheeks in the seats are always a good thing.
- **Brainstorming Sessions / Q&As:** If you're an expert on a topic that your new connection has been talking about, why not get together for a brainstorming or question and answer session? Invite both your audiences and get that brainpower flowing.
- **Sweepstakes and Contests:** Not everyone is keen on giveaways, but some people love them. You could set up a random draw or even a special contest where people can win your product.

Those are just a few ideas...so get out there. Don't be shy. Start sharing your free content.

How to Approach Your Fellow Online Business Owner:

As noted before, the best results will come when you're super-targeted. If you have a home repair ebook, and you contact a home repair blogger and tell them about your book, your results might be disappointing. But if they've been writing a series of posts on tile repair and you have tile repair video, they're more likely to share that highly topical and targeted information.

Your success will depend in part on how you contact each new potential partner. It seems a bit gauche and self-promotional to post publicly on someone's blog or social media post and say, "I have this free widget I'd like to share with your readers." They might be wary, of competitors or might think you're just trying to use their virtual real estate to promote yourself. Instead, keep the conversation as private as possible. Find contact forms or send a private message.

And remember, the more you get to know people in your niche, the easier it will be to connect with other people directly. Just think, if you have 5 friends in your niche, the chances of having access to the direct contact information for someone new you want to meet go much higher. So keep building that network. It's so worth it.

Just let them know that you've been keeping up with their video series, reading their blog posts or whatever it is. Let them know where you've shared their content (do this by email, on your blog, on social media and more). Then suggest that you have the perfect complement to their content, and that their audience can get free access. And, of course, tell them about the backend you've set up, so they can earn some cash by spreading the word.

Easy peasy... now get out and do it.

What to Do Now?

1. Take an inventory of some valuable freebies, products and other items that you could offer.
2. Start by looking at your email inbox, RSS feed and social media streams a bit more. What are people in your niche talking about, and what freebies can you offer?
3. Figure out how your content can help fill in some gaps or add more value. If you don't have something all ready, what could you create?
4. Share some of the great content they're putting out with your own audience. Do them a favor first.
5. Contact your fellow online business owner and tell them what you have to offer. Include information about the backend, if applicable... I hope it is applicable!
6. Repeat and nurture the relationships you make for maximum benefit.

Freebie Offer Checklist

Before contacting anyone about sharing your freebie, go through this checklist first to ensure you dot all your I's and cross all your T's.

Find Targeted Content for Which You Can Offer a Freebie

- ☐ Look for blog posts, social media updates, emails, podcasts and other content your audience is currently sharing, and figure out what you can offer to enhance the discussion. Check your email inbox, RSS feeds, social media streams, iTunes and anywhere else you keep track of niche content.

Do Your Homework and Share First

- ☐ Make sure you've read/listened to/watched all the relevant content your new contact has been sharing on the topic. Get a very good understanding of what their opinion is and what they've already covered.
- ☐ Share some of that content with your own audience... and share it readily. Things work better when you help someone else first.

Improve, Customize and/or Plan Your Freebie

- ☐ If you have an existing freebie, see what you can do to improve it for the current situation. You might also consider customizing or branding it for the audience you're trying to reach.
- ☐ If you're making a new freebie, it's time to start planning it. Go back and look at Lesson 7 again for ideas on what types of freebies you can offer.
- ☐ Make sure you plan a backend for when people claim the freebie, if you don't have it set up already. You want to collect email addresses when they claim the freebie and follow up with a targeted, hard-to-resist offer.

Contact the Publisher

- ☐ Send the product seller a short, but detailed, message that includes:
 - ☐ Information about the content you've been enjoying and why you enjoyed it

- Tell them where you've shared their content
- Share what you would like to offer them and why it's a good fit.
- Tell them you can provide them with an affiliate link and what you'll be promoting on the backend. Include any stats about conversion, if you have them.
- Let them know that you're interested in sharing more of their content.

Add the Finishing Touches and Make Sure Your Backend is Fully Ready

- ☐ Finish any customization and branding of the freebie, if you haven't already.
- ☐ Set up your new contact's affiliate link.
- ☐ Set up an opt-in, so you can include a promotion on the thank you page and in the follow-up emails.
- ☐ Make a special limited-time offer to encourage quick purchase (but you will need to update this as the offer expires).
- ☐ Create a follow-up series where they receive useful information and tips, but continue to mention the product and your offer as well. Customize the series so it acknowledges where the subscribers came from and reiterate that you're doing this especially for those customers.

Expanding the Relationship

- ☐ Keep sharing each other's content. Pay attention to what your new friend is publishing and share it readily.

Work together in other ways. Our handy [list of meaningful ideas is always here](#)

Freebie Brainstorming Sheet

Here is a worksheet to help you come up with freebies to offer other publishers in your niche. If you need help with this, we can [do the research for you](#). Use this sheet for brainstorming to figure out the most targeted freebie for your new connection's audience.

Publisher's Name: _____

Specific Topic They've Been Discussing for Which You Might Offer a Freebie:

Blog and Other Important Links:

What freebie could you offer? How can the audience claim the freebie?

How is your freebie highly relevant? What does it add to the discussion?

What will you promote after the opt-in to freebie?

What special offer can you create urgency and increase the number of sales?

Freebie Pitch Template Instructions & Tips

The enclosed letter template makes it easy for you to create an email proposing to share the freebie you'd like your new contact to know about. Here are some basic instructions and tips to keep things detailed, but also as simple as possible.

Important!

Before sending the email, do your homework. Buy their product and get to know it as well as possible.

Instructions:

- The template includes red brackets with tips inside for enclosing your information. Remove the brackets and insert your appropriate information.
- Paste the letter into an email and do not send it as an attachment.

Tips:

- Keep your email short and to the point, but make sure it conveys the following:
 - Information about the content you've been enjoying and why you enjoyed it.
 - Tell them where you've shared their content.
 - Share what you would like to offer them and why it's a good fit.
 - Tell them you can provide them with an affiliate link and what you'll be promoting on the backend. Include any stats about conversion, if you have them.
 - Let them know that you're interested in sharing more of their content.

If it sounds complicated, don't worry. The template will take you through all of this.

Freebie Pitch Letter Template

SUBJECT: Had an idea while reading your [what were you reading and what was the topic?]

Hello [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] and I've [been a long time listener/reader/watcher of XXXXX]. I've really enjoyed your recent [what topic / what type of content, etc.?] and have shared it with [insert where you've shared it...include direct links if possible].

I actually have [insert what you have that's relevant] and thought it would be a great fit for your audience if you want to share it. [insert some reasons why it's relevant]. If you wanted to share it with your audience, I can even set you up with an affiliate link. The free offer promotes [insert what it promotes] and [insert conversion statistics, how much they'll earn, etc.].

Thanks for considering! If you have any other content on [insert subject], let me know as I'd love to get it out to my audience as well.

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]

LESSON 8: Creating a Mastermind Group

It's our last lesson at Competitors into Profits and this one involves the deepest method of connecting with people who might normally be considered competitors. It's also an opportunity to connect with others who may not be working in the same niche as you, but have similar interests. There are many possibilities with a "mastermind group."

You may not be completely familiar with the concept of a mastermind group, so take a moment to talk about that first.

Many credit Napoleon Hill with coming up with the concept of a mastermind group. According to Hill, *"the 'Master Mind' can be defined as: 'Coordination of knowledge and effort, in a spirit of harmony, between two or more people, for the attainment of a definite purpose.'"*

To put it a bit more simply, you can think of it as a small group that gets together regularly to share knowledge, experience, results and encouragement with the purpose of promoting growth for each individual member.

Okay, maybe that wasn't particularly simple, so let's break it down:

- **It's a small group.** It could be anywhere from two to six people, but obviously, that's not a hard and fast rule. You don't want it too large because then it becomes difficult for everyone to benefit and to manage. Personally, I'd aim for about three to six people, so that you have a variety of perspectives, but not many more people than that. You may want to start with a group of three to start, and then consider inviting a couple more as you have a better feel for how the group is working.
- **You meet regularly.** It's important to have a regular schedule and stick to it, or the group can easily fall apart. That's why having three or more people is helpful. That way, if one person can't make it, you can still keep to the schedule. You can meet as often or as little as you'd like, but for busy people, once or twice per month is probably plenty. Then, if you find the group to be very helpful, you can all decide if you'd like to meet more frequently.
- **This is not "networking" or "joint venturing."** Up until now, we've been talking about how you can work together with other people, but that's not really what a mastermind group is all about. You're not trying to figure out how to make money together, but rather sharing and providing accountability to other members, so you can all achieve success in your own businesses. Of course, there may be a networking component to a mastermind group when your businesses overlap, but the mastermind group goes much deeper.

- **Supporting each other in your goals and providing accountability.** Group members share their goals and, with the group's help, develop a plan to achieve those goals. The group also provides accountability, so each member stays on track.

As you can probably see, there are definite benefits to a mastermind group. Some of those benefits include:

- Sharing of knowledge and experience.
- Differing perspectives... sometimes we need to see things from another point of view.
- Accountability to regularly set and achieve goals.
- Motivation and renewed excitement in growing in your business.
- Support when you run into problems or lack direction in a particular area of your business.
- Mastermind members are a source for making new connections through introductions.

Now that we know what a mastermind group involves, and what its benefits are, who should you bring together for this potentially life-changing opportunity?

Deciding Who Should Be in Your Mastermind Group

For best results, mastermind group members should:

- **Have similar interests.** In this case, your common interest is likely to be business (or online business specifically), but you want to go even deeper than that. You could bring together people who serve their community with their businesses or work in a particular niche.
- **Be at roughly the same success level.** You want everyone to be able to benefit from the group and provide an equal contribution as well. When everyone is on a level playing field, it's easy for everyone to help all of the other group members get to the next level.

That said, you don't want everyone to be the same...

- **Have different skill sets.** If everyone brings a different skill to the table, there will be more opportunities to learn new things and grow in different ways.
- **Have goals they want to reach.** If someone is satisfied with their current level of success, they probably aren't a good fit for a mastermind group. Everyone in the group should be working toward growth.

- **Be enthusiastically willing.** They should be interested in sharing experiences with a group, brainstorming and providing accountability to other group members. A mastermind group is not for everyone.

When you're ready to approach people, start with the first person on your list and tell them what you have in mind. If they're interested, you can share the list of people you'd also like to invite. They may want to suggest some people as well. At this point you should have a meeting schedule in mind, so that the remaining invitees can decide if they are able to join or not.

When to Meet Up

How often you meet is a personal decision, and what you start with may end up changing over time. Starting once or twice per month gives a chance for the members to see how valuable the group can be, and you can increase the frequency of your meetings if everyone finds it beneficial.

How long you meet up will also depend on group preferences, but start with about an hour. If the time is too short, it may not be enough time for everyone to contribute. If it's too long, you may lose people's interest.

How to Meet Up

With today's technology, there are so many possibilities for getting together. If your group is a local one, try to meet in person as much as possible. If you're scattered around the country or planet, try to do a yearly meet up in person... it will solidify your relationships greatly.

A few ways to meet regularly:

- **In person** – This should be a private area, and not in a restaurant or other public place. You want everyone to be comfortable sharing as much as possible. Either choose an office space, a private meeting room or something similar.
- **Telephone** – If you're not working with a super tech savvy group, a conference line can do the job.
- **Skype or similar service** – Just about everyone has Skype or can sign up for it. It can also be used for free across long distances.
- **Webinar room** – If you have a webinar room available, this can be very handy. You can use the audio, video and screen sharing features.
- **Google+ Hangouts** – Google+ Hangouts is another easy way to use video technology to get together. You can also benefit from the service's screen sharing capability.

There are also other interactive tools like Facebook Groups and message boards, but these should probably only be used as a supplement to your regular meetings. There is less accountability with a Facebook group or forum as people may only participate whenever they have time or the inclination.

Determine the Group Rules

It's important to have some guidelines on how the group runs and what everyone's expectations are. A few things you might include:

- **Be on time for each meeting.** There should also be some expectation that members attend as many meetings as possible.
- **Everyone participates.** Everyone needs to share their experiences, problems, etc.
- **Everyone provides feedback.** Without feedback, the group doesn't work.
- **No judgment.** Feedback should be constructive at all times.
- **Everyone gets equal time.** While some people may naturally speak more than others, there should be an opportunity for everyone to speak equally.
- **Don't interrupt.** Let people finish, whether they're sharing their experiences or offering feedback to something you've said.
- **No excuses.** If you're going to achieve goals, you shouldn't be making excuses. If someone doesn't achieve what they said they would, they shouldn't make excuses, but ensure they get it done for next time.
- **Keep it confidential.** Everything shared in a mastermind group should be confidential. If preferred, even membership in the group might also be confidential.

Depending on your group's purpose and its make up, you may find the need for other rules. You don't have to have a lot of rules, but you do need guidelines to follow.

How to Run Your Mastermind Sessions

The important thing about mastermind is that everyone gets a chance to participate. In fact, everyone must participate or they aren't contributing to the group effectively. You can do this in roundtable style and have everyone answer a couple of questions. For example, you could ask:

- What is one thing that is working well in your business right now?
- What are some challenges you're facing right now?

...or whatever is most appropriate for your group. You should also give people a chance to outline any goals they want to achieve. They could be goals they want to achieve by the next

meeting or something more long term. Then, for the next meeting, everyone should share how they are coming along with their goals.

It's important that everyone participates and everyone has a chance to respond to everyone else's contributions.

What to Do Now?

Creating a mastermind group is certainly not rocket science, but when you put together a great group, you might just feel like rocket scientists! Here are a few action steps for you to get going.

- **What will the group do?** What type of people do you want to gather together and what is the group's objective? But before you set anything in stone, do remember the mastermind is a group, and the group itself will ultimately decide how the mastermind will evolve.
- **When and how?** Figure out when, where and how you should meet. Decide this early on, so that you can plan a concrete schedule and new members can decide whether or not this is a good fit for them.
- **Who will be involved?** Decide who you'd like to invite. Make a list of up to 10 people. Not everyone will say yes, so come up with a few more names than the number you ultimately want the group to have.
- **What will the group rules be?** Keep them simple and logical, but make sure everyone knows them.
- **Start contacting.** Contact each person one by one, starting with the person you most want to be in the group. They may have suggestions on who else to invite, so your original invitation list may change.
- **Meet.** Start with your first meeting and come up with the questions to ask each member ahead of time. Ensure everyone has an opportunity to respond to everyone's answers. Everyone should also set some goals to achieve before the next session.
- **Do it again.** Keep meeting, providing feedback and accountability for members. Consider new members, but ensure you reach a group consensus before bringing anyone else in.

Mastermind Group Checklist

Starting a mastermind group needn't be complicated, but it's important to plan it carefully to ensure its best success. Here's a quick checklist to ensure you're on track. Be sure to read the full lesson document and use the brainstorming sheet to help yourself along.

- ☐ **What will the group do?** What type of people do you want to gather together and what is the group's objective? But before you set anything in stone, remember that the mastermind is a group and the group itself will ultimately decide how the mastermind will evolve.
- ☐ **When and how?** Figure out when, where and how you should meet. Decide this early on, so that you can plan a concrete schedule and new members can decide whether or not this is a good fit for them.
- ☐ **Who will be involved?** Decide who you'd like to invite. Make a list of up to 10 people. Not everyone will say yes, so have a few extra people in mind.
- ☐ **What will the group rules be?** Keep them simple and logical, but make sure everyone knows them. For example, everyone must participate, no excuses, no interrupting, be on time, etc.
- ☐ **Start contacting.** Contact each person one by one, starting with the person you most want to be in the group. They may have suggestions on who else to invite.
- ☐ **Meet.** Start with your first meeting and come up with the questions to ask each member ahead of time. Ensure everyone has an opportunity to respond to everyone else's answers. Everyone should also set some goals to achieve before the next session.
- ☐ **Do it again.** Keep meeting, providing feedback and accountability for members. Consider new members, but ensure you reach a group consensus before bringing anyone else in.

Mastermind Group Brainstorming Sheet

Here is a worksheet to help you come up with the best plan for your mastermind group. Fill it out as completely as possible, so you know exactly what you want before moving forward.

Why do you want to start a mastermind group? What do you hope to get out of it? What do you want your members to get out of it?

What type of people would be best suited for your mastermind group? What types of businesses do they run? What are their business philosophies? What skills should they have? Try to bring different skill sets together.

What type of success should your members have? Remember, everyone should be at roughly the same success level, so they can contribute to the group equally. You can define success in monetary terms, audience numbers or whatever you think is most appropriate to your group's purpose.

When and how often will you meet?

What technology will you use to connect with one another?

What will the group rules be? (ex. Be on time, participate, no interrupting, no excuses, etc.)

What are the key questions you want everyone to answer at each session? (ex. What is one thing that is working well in your business right now? What are some challenges you're facing right now? What will you accomplish before the next meeting?)

How will the group ensure they're achieving their goals? What can group members do to ensure accountability to one another?

How will the group decide when and if to accept new members?

Mastermind Pitch Template Instructions & Tips

The enclosed letter template makes it easy for you to contact someone about joining your mastermind group. If you already have a connection with someone and you'd like to invite them, consider calling them or giving them a shout on Skype and offer a more personal invite. But if it's your first contact, the letter might just do the trick.

Important!

Before sending the email, do your homework. Make sure the person you're inviting is a good fit and both of you will benefit from being a part of it.

Instructions:

- The template includes red brackets with tips inside for enclosing your information. Remove the brackets and insert your appropriate information.
- Paste the letter into an email and do not send it as an attachment.

Tips:

- Keep your email short and to the point, but do ensure it conveys the following:
 - The purpose of the group
 - When, where and how the group will meet
 - The basic ground rules of the group (but don't overwhelm with minutiae)
 - How the meetings will be run

If it sounds complicated, don't worry. The template will take you through all of this.

Mastermind Pitch Template

SUBJECT: Invitation to our private [topic] mastermind group

Hello [insert recipient's name],

My name is [insert your name] and I've [been a long time listener/reader/watcher of XXXXX]. I've recently put together a mastermind group of [who is in the group? Online business owners / copywriters / virtual assistants, etc] to meet regularly to share experience, brainstorm and provide accountability to achieve our goals. I thought you'd be a great fit for this group because [insert reason].

We get together [when and frequency] via [what technology] and I would like to invite you for our next session, just to see if you think our group might be useful to you. If you feel it's not quite the right fit, there is no obligation to come again and we'll just be happy that you gave us a try.

The discussions in these meetings are completely confidential and [insert any attractive ground rules you want to mention here].

I appreciate your taking the time to consider this invitation and please do let me know what you think. It would be great to share ideas and brainstorm with you.

Respectfully,
[insert your name]
[title, website address]

[insert any contact information like telephone number, Skype, etc. in case they want to get a hold of you]