

How do you get More of the right customers?

Imagine you knew exactly who your prospective clients are, where to go to find them and exactly what it is they want.

Imagine having a highly responsive list of prospective clients who were hungry, ready and able to pay for your services.

It's every fitness professional's dream. A constant stream of new customers on tap. Does it really exist? Well, welcome to the world of niche marketing.

Niche marketing is about narrowing down your prospective client base and finding the customer group that fits the demographics (the characteristics of a population segment), occupation, Geographic's (location) or psychographics (ideas, thought, values etc) of your target market.

In other words it's about finding the people you would consider your ideal clients.

Business owners are often afraid they will 'miss out' on getting prospective clients when they niche market. It's a valid concern that's often driven by the fear rather than fact. One of Australia's largest fitness chains have built their business on a niche market. The truth is niche marketing opens up a whole new world of possibilities for your business.

Without a niche everyone is a potential client and this can pose some major problems. Here are some of them:

1. How exactly do you reach everyone?

The only way to reach everyone is through mass marketing and mass marketing can be a very expensive exercise for a small business. It's a process which I call Spray and Pray advertising. You spray your marketing message all over the place, newspapers, saver coupons, mail outs and more. All in an effort to reach as many people as you possibly can and then you pray that someone will notice it and take action. It's a hit and miss approach that can be very costly.

2. How do you get their attention

You want your marketing message to capture your audience's attention, and the way you do that is by putting a message in front of a person that is directly relevant to them. When you mass market you can't possibly know who will see your marketing message and therefore you don't know what message is going to be relevant to them. So you try and please everyone by using generic messages. The result is a generalized, diluted marketing message, that has lost its potential and power to get people to respond

3. Lack of Direction

Mass marketing attracts a broad range of people to your business, all with very different needs and wants. A professional athlete has very different needs and wants from a person wanting to lose weight for their wedding. Trying to be all things to all people puts a huge strain on you and your business. It takes your focus away from what you love doing and instead you spend your time simply trying to keep up with it all and trying to keep everyone happy.

A world of possibilities...

Focusing on a niche opens a world of possibilities for you. Here are just 5 of the many ways in which choosing a niche will transform your business.

1. You become more desirable

Generating new leads and selling your services can be hard work. Being clear on who it is you want to target gives you the opportunity to develop marketing, services, and information directly relevant to your niche. You become more desirable to your niche simply because you are more relevant to them, and by including information products you'll also be seen as an 'expert' in your niche.

2. Your business will demand attention

Specializing in niche helps to give you and your business more focus. You know exactly who you want to target and what you have to offer them. By targeting a specific niche you're able to create a very powerful marketing message that demands their attention. You can speak directly to your prospect in terms of their values.

People with back pain will be much more likely to respond to:

"Suffer from Back Pain? Eliminate back pain for good with our '7 steps to a pain free back' program"

Rather than to a generic message such as:

"Want to get fit?"

3. Easier to generate leads

Knowing who you are marketing too makes it much easier to reach them. You can identify places they would visit, magazines they would read or products they would use and strategically place your marketing message in front of them at these points. An example of this would be to target people suffering from back pain by creating referral programs with chiropractors.

4. Lower cost of lead generating

Generating new leads can be costly exercise. Knowing exactly where and how to reach your target market can dramatically lower your cost of lead generating and increase your conversion rate. You don't need to rely on costly mass marketing campaigns and because you are targeting a specific target group with a message that is highly relevant to them you also increase your conversion rate which means the cost per client decreases.

5. Your business becomes easier to manage

By its very definition a niche is a group of people that share things in common, they have common needs and wants. This makes it much easier for you to begin to systemize your business. You can develop standard procedures in many areas of your business, freeing you up to do more of the things you love.

Choosing a niche

There are a number of important factors in choosing a niche for your business. You want to target a niche that has a genuine desire for your services. One of the biggest mistakes fitness professionals make is to target a niche that they believe needs their services.

People are motivated by their wants not their needs. Eg. People who want to lose weight take action on it, people who need to lose weight but don't want to will do little about it. Make sure your niche wants what you are offering.

Are they willing and able to pay for it? For example if your niche is high school students who want to improve their athletic performance, chances are the students themselves could not afford your service. In this case you might do better to market to their parents.

Is your niche easily contactable? You want a niche that is easy and affordable to contact. Let me give you an example.

People who are going to have a sports injury. Imagine how much work you would have to put in to contact people who may some time in the future have a sporting injury.

The other side to this is **people who have had a sporting injury.** In this case you could associate yourself with a number of sporting injury specialists such as chiropractors and physiotherapists. This way you can readily and easily get your message in front of your target market at a low cost.

Remember, niche marketing is about narrowing down your target base and approaching them with an effective marketing message that is relevant to them. You can't be all things to all people.

If your current marketing is not working for you or even if it is but you want to increase your client base and decrease your marketing costs, start a niche marketing program in conjunction with your current marketing campaigns.

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