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Ten Takeaways For Your Business

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Introduction

I've been making a full-time living online since 2000. That's ten solid years. In that time, I've learned a lot through observation and experimentation. And I also quickly realized that –

Many of these important lessons aren't shared anywhere else!

You see, when you buy a marketing product, you learn about things like traffic generation, product creation, copywriting and all the other technical pieces you need to make money online.

But if you've ever followed the advice in these manuals and you couldn't seem to make a go of it, you probably realized something was missing.

So what was missing?

These ten lessons. What I'd like to do is give you ten takeaways from my ten years online to help you with the next ten years of your own business. These ten lessons really will make a difference if you'll just put them into practice.

Indeed, if you create a solid marketing plan and then follow these ten tips, you'll start seeing success.

In some cases these lessons may be breakthrough you needed to get to the next level. In other cases, they might just be the bridge that finally links together two crucial pieces of the marketing puzzle so it finally makes sense.

In all cases, you can use these tips to grow your business *easier* and *faster* than you ever thought possible.

So without further introduction, let's get to these ten crucial lessons...



Lesson #1: Salesmanship is the Hare, Content is the Tortoise – And We Know Who Wins in the End

There's an old story about the tortoise and the hare who challenged each other to a foot race.

At the starting line, the hare took off quick like a bullet. He looked back to see the tortoise moving along slow and steady, but way behind the hare. So the hare napped. Meanwhile, the tortoise slowly and steadily made his way to the finish line to win the race.

You can take away a great business lesson from this fable:

Slow and steady wins the race.

And since salesmanship is the hare and content is the tortoise, you know where to focus your efforts.

I've seen a lot of slick marketers come and go in this business in my ten years as a full-timer, but those who were in this business then and still are here now all share one thing in common:

Great content.

Think about it...

Example #1: You can sell anything with good marketing – once. A great sales letter can sell a mediocre ebook, a misleading report or even a downright ghastly video. But as soon as the customers discover the quality of the content, they're out the door for good.

Some will refund, some won't, but none of them will ever buy from the marketer again.

Example #2: You've probably also seen people use poor content – even "scraped content" – to pull in traffic from the search engines.

Problem is, this content is written solely for the search engines, without any regard whatsoever for the end user.

So while the site might pull in traffic, it's NOT going to garner any repeat visitors.

Both of the above points are examples of short-term thinking.

But this sort of business model always leaves the marketer scrambling for new customers, trying to repair his reputation and chasing rather than attracting customers.

It's exhausting – no wonder people who do this tend to eventually give up! Listen, making money doesn't have to be that hard.

Instead of relying solely on great salesmanship to make money, why not focus on a combination of great salesmanship AND great content? That way your marketing and sales copy bring the customer into the door – and your great content keeps them coming back again and again.

Which brings us to the next point...

Lesson #2: The Easiest Way to Grow Your Business is to Keep Customers Happy



I can't put it any more plain than this:

If you didn't have any customers, your business would cease to exist.

And that means one of the keys to building and growing a successful business is to grow your list of satisfied customers.

Indeed, when you have satisfied customers, your business grows because of the three R's. Let me explain...

Repeats: Satisfied customers become repeat customers – and they usually make repeat purchases with escalating frequency and price points.

Example: The customer who's satisfied with his \$10 purchase will go on to buy your \$50, \$100, \$500 items... and so on. As long as he's satisfied – and as long as your products keep meeting his needs – he'll keep buying.

Referrals: Unhappy customers tell their friends to steer clear of you and your business. Fortunately, happy customers also tell their friends about your products or services.

Sometimes satisfied customers become active affiliates who promote your products via traditional means. These are folks who are marketers as well as customers.

At other times, your satisfied customers simply become raving fans on forums, blogs, social networks and elsewhere.

Example: Other members of a forum might ask who has the best product in your niche, and your raving fans will always answer those threads by naming you, naming your products and even linking to your sales pages.

Now that's powerful!

Residuals: Finally, happy customers don't just buy your products – they trust you enough to join your membership sites and other continuity programs. They'll join your highest priced programs – maybe even personal coaching – and become "followers" who're part of your inner circle.

It all seems pretty simple, right? But here's the thing...

Satisfying your customers isn't just about putting out quality products and over-delivering on expectations.

They're important, yes. But they're NOT the only factors.

You also need to give your customers a good buying experience. In other words, you need to provide great customer service.

You see, you can have the best products in the world, but you may only have a handful of happy customers if your customer service stinks.

Example #1: Maybe a customer purchases one of your items but is unable to download it. And when he emails you about it, you don't get back to him for a week or two. Probably by this time he's so frustrated that he's requested a refund.

Example #2: Or maybe you offer software but no support. Maybe you don't even provide adequate installation and customization instructions. Even if your software is better than the competitors' software, your customers are going to drift away and find someone who's willing and able to show them how to make their purchase work.

Bottom line: Provide great products and a great buying experience, and your customers will repay you tenfold through repeats, referrals and residuals.



Lesson #3: You Need Only One Source of Traffic to Get All the Visitors You'll Ever Need – Partner Traffic

When you first start thinking about how to get targeted, high quality traffic to your site, you're faced with a lot of options.

These options include affiliate and joint venture (JV) marketing, pay per click (PPC) marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), ezine articles, blog posting, video distribution, placing classified ads, blogrolling, distributing press releases... and everything else.

However, you really only need to use one source: Partner traffic (i.e., traffic from your affiliates and joint venture partners).

There are two reasons for this.

1) First, if you put a good affiliate program in place, you don't need to use any of the other traffic-generating tactics. That's because your affiliates will do them for you!

Your good affiliates and JV partners will:

- Blog about your products.
- Tell their lists about your products.
- Write and submit articles to article directories.
- Purchase banner ads, ezine ads, PPC ads and classified ads.
- Market your products offline.
- Drop links to your products on forums and social media sites.
- Create short reports to sell your product.
- Mention your product on their own thank you and download pages.

And so on.

The point is, if you have a good team of affiliates, you don't even need to touch those other marketing methods.

I'm talking from experience here. Since 2000 – about ten years online – I've purchased almost no advertising myself. My affiliates do it all for me. And your affiliates can do all your advertising, too.

2) Now, there's a second reason why partner traffic is such valuable traffic. Namely, because it's just another form of word of mouth traffic – which is extremely powerful and returns high conversion numbers.

Let me explain...

Example: Let's suppose Paul the Prospect is thinking about buying your product. He doesn't have a clue who you are. So if he merely stumbles on your sales page through one of your own articles or blog posts, he may not be wholly convinced to buy your product.

Now let's suppose that Paul the Prospect is on Mark the Marketer's list – and he has been for many months, maybe even a year. As such, Paul trusts Mark implicitly. When Mark recommends

something that Paul needs, Paul doesn't even bother to read the whole sales page - he buys it mainly on the basis of that trusted recommendation.

You can see where I'm going with this. If Mark recommends YOUR product to his list, you'll get an amazingly high conversion rate - simply because a trustworthy source is recommending your product to a list with which he's built a relationship over the years.

That's powerful.

Bottom line: Focus on finding and recruiting affiliate and joint venture partners. Not only can you get a great deal of traffic from these partners, it also tends to be high-converting.

Lesson #4: The Fortune is NOT in the List – The Fortune is in How You Utilize the List



You've heard the marketer's mantra a million times: "The money is in the list."

Listen, that's NOT *entirely* true.

If it was true, then anyone could build up a big list and soon retire to a private island. But it doesn't work that way.

People still believe it, however. You'll see beginning marketers focusing on building up big lists quickly - a few thousand in a just a week, tens of thousands in a few months, 100,000 strong in a year. They start having visions of a \$1 per subscriber per month rolling in.

When the money doesn't materialized, they're baffled. Worse yet, sometimes new marketers are shocked to discover that their conversion rate is at or near zero. You can see how frustrating this is to folks who believe that all you have to do is build a list and watch the money roll in.

Now, a list can be profitable. But in order to see those profits come in, you need to do two things...

1. Build a Targeted, Responsive List

If you're selling dog collars, then you should be building a list of people who want to buy dog collars.

Building a list of cat owners, people who like rose gardening or people who want to learn how to cook French food aren't good candidates for your list. Your subscribers need to all be interested in what you're selling. Period.

Secondly, your subscribers must WANT to be on your list. If you offer a freebie (like an ebook) in exchange for an email, your subscribers better know they're going to get a newsletter from you. If they join a contest, they better know their registration puts them on your list. And so on.

Point is, use whatever means you want to get them on your list – but make sure they're equally as excited to read your newsletter as they are to get your freebie.

2. Build Relationships With Your Subscribers

As mentioned, the first step in building a responsive list is to make sure you're only attracting targeted subscribers who want to join your list.

The second step is to build relationships with your subscribers. As they begin to know, like and trust you, they'll start buying more and more from you.

Here's how to build those good relationships:

a) Communicate Regularly: Think about your personal relationships – how often do you talk to your best friends? Chances are, the people you know, like and trust the most are also the ones you talk to regularly.

And likewise, the best way to build up a relationship with your subscribers is to communicate regularly. If you're only sending them emails once per month, they're going to forget about you in between

emails – and they may even forget your name and report your emails as spam.

But send out emails regularly – about once a week – keeps your name in front of subscribers and gives you a chance to share quality content and offers.

Which brings us to our next point...

b) Create Quality Content: Your subscribers signed up to your list to get solutions. And in many cases, that means they want information.

If you can solve their problems (by providing quality content), you'll earn their trust. And that makes it much easier for you to sell your offers.

c) Choose Solid Offers: The second way to provide solutions to your prospects' problems is by recommending products that solve their problems.

However, just as you need to provide quality content, you also need to recommend quality products – honestly. To do otherwise means risking your reputation as an honest marketer.

Here are a couple guidelines:

- If you wouldn't recommend it to your best friend or your mother, don't recommend it to your list.
- Review the product honestly, flaws and all. Indeed, revealing a flaw creates trust between you and the prospects, and this trust spurs sales.

Lesson #5: There is No Better Income Generator for the Long Haul Than a Subscription Program



Over the years I've sold everything from \$10 reports to coaching programs with price tags starting at \$497. And here's what I've learned:

The key to long-term profits is to start a subscription site (AKA continuity program).

Now, I'm not talking about a hidden continuity (forced continuity) program where marketers trick their customers into getting rebilled month after month. Instead, I'm talking about a completely transparent program. And in some cases, you use the rebilling as a benefit to the customer.

Example: Do you have an automatic subscription to a newspaper or magazine? It would be a hassle if you had to log into the provider's site every month and renew (and pay for) that subscription manually. That's just one reason why it's actually a benefit for customers to get rebilled automatically.

And there are plenty of benefits and reasons why marketers like continuity programs, too. Here are five of those reason and benefits:

- ✓ **You get an effortless, residual income stream.** Because your customers are rebilled automatically (usually monthly, but sometimes weekly), you don't have to spend as much time thinking up new backend offers to sell to your customers. And once you've built up your membership numbers, you have a fairly predictable and reliable monthly income coming in... effortlessly!
- ✓ **You can create a "set it and forget it" membership site.** You don't have to chain yourself to your computer just because you're running a membership site. If you run a fixed-term membership (FTM), you can create the content ahead of time, load it up ... and then spend more times doing the things you enjoy.

- ✓ **There are plenty of backend income opportunities.** Every week – and certainly every month – you’re sending out new emails and content to your subscribers. And that means you have plenty of chances to sell extra products and services to your existing customers.

Think about it. If you were running a traditional business where you sold products in order to build customer lists, then you’d need to constantly sell backend products in order to sustain your income. But when you have a membership site, you’re bringing in your main income passively through membership – and all the backend products contribute are just “gravy” as far as your income is concerned!

- ✓ **You position yourself as an expert in your niche.** When you create a membership site and regularly produce quality content and solutions for your customers, they’ll start to see you as the expert in your niche. And that means it’s even easier for you to sell additional products and services on the backend.
- ✓ **Low barriers to entry.** Starting a membership website several years ago was more tricky, simple because most of the payment processors didn’t have recurring billing. Plus, most people wanted to use automation tools such as membership scripts – and there were very few on the market.

Today it’s much easier. Indeed, you can be up and running in a matter of hours, simply by using PayPal or Clickbank plus LFM.

Bottom line: Go ahead and stock your product funnel with everything from inexpensive reports to high-ticket home study courses – but don’t forget about continuity programs!

[Click here for information on getting your own membership site setup in 48 hours or less starting from scratch!](#)



Lesson #6: Creativity in Your Marketing Can Make You a Fortune With Minimal Work

Good information, a solid reputation and a dash of creativity go a long, long way together.

Let me explain...

Plenty of marketers put out a product, sell the product to their customers and then think up a new product to sell to these customers. They "rinse and repeat" this process over and over.

I tell you what – it's exhausting to come up with new products all the time.

So here's a tip: You don't need to start from scratch every time you create a new product.

Instead, I suggest you consider one of my favorite strategies – repurposing content.

Let me give you an example to show you why this is such a powerful and profitable strategy...

1. I originally wrote the List Profit System as List And Traffic lessons and earned well over \$20,000 in List And Traffic fees for it. (This is where many marketers would stop.)
2. Sometime later I sold the "product" at ListProfitSystem.com and made quite a bit of additional money.
3. Next, I offered resale rights to this product for \$97 and sold quite a few of those licenses.
4. Finally, months later I sold 250 PLR licenses to this same product.
5. Sometime in mid to late 2010 I'm going to convert the content into a 4-week eclass that sells for \$497 to get another stream of income from it.

Now consider this – I made tens of thousands of dollar selling the same information over and over.

The only difference is that I reformatted and repackaged it.

Indeed, just a few hours work tended to result in thousands of dollars.

Plus think about this – if you have a niche product (like a golfing ebook), you can convert it into an autoresponder course, a membership site or even use it as the basis of personal coaching offer. Then you can repackage the content and sell the resell rights to marketers.

In other words, you can profit from two niches – golf and Internet marketing – with the same product!



Lesson #7: It's Better to Master One Thing Than to Dabble With Many Things

If I was just starting out with online marketing – and I needed to drive traffic to my sites – I'd focus on partner traffic (as mentioned earlier).

The truth is, however, you can be successful with most any proven traffic generation strategy – provided you master it and stick with it long enough to see results.

You see, a big problem I've noticed is that many new marketers tend to spread themselves too thin. They become a "Jack of All Trades" but a master of none. They put up a few blog posts, write a few articles to submit to EzineArticles.com, gather together a handful of affiliates, optimize for a couple keywords... and so on.

Because they're attempting too many traffic tactics at the same time, they end up doing a mediocre to poor job of generating traffic with any single strategy.

Many times, they skip from one thing to the next before they even see results. (And then they assume none of the strategies work.)

Point is, if you do a lot of things poorly or even "so so", you'll spend more time and see less results than if you do one thing very well.

So pick a business model and pick a traffic strategy – and then focus 100% of your efforts on mastering it and getting results.

Lesson #8: Anyone Who Doesn't Outsource Doesn't Recognize the Value of Outsourcing



One of the fastest ways to grow your business is to clone yourself. Since that's not possible yet, the alternative option is to hire freelancers to do some of your work.

Indeed, I've come to believe that anyone who's not outsourcing is simply missing the boat.

Here's why...

1. Your time is better spent focusing on other tasks.

Most of the tasks you'd ever consider outsourcing are "low value" tasks. That means you get a very low return on your investment of time. And in most cases, it makes better financial sense to outsource the low-value tasks so that you can focus on the high-value tasks.

Let me give you an example...

Example: I can hire a freelancer to setup a blog for me for \$20 - or I can spend an hour doing it myself. Because my time is much more valuable to me than a mere \$20 per hour, the choice is clear - outsource!

Then my time is free to do things like build relationships with my joint venture partners, brainstorm new product ideas or work on my business plan (all of which are high-value tasks and/or they can't easily be outsourced).

Let me elaborate on that point...

2. The investment is returned many times over.

You have a million and one little tasks to do in your business, from creating products to designing your site to marketing your sites. If, as mentioned above, you focus on the high-value tasks and outsource the rest, you'll see your investment returned many times over.

Let's continue with the above example.

Consider this...

Example #1: If I pay a guy \$20 to set up my blog and then use that hour to write a small report that I sell over and over again for \$20 - potentially making tens of thousands of dollars - which was the better use of my time? The clear answer is to use my expertise to write the report.

Here's another example...

Example #2: Let's say you pay a ghostwriter \$500 to create a really good 25 page manual. If you sell it for just \$27, then you only need just 19 sales for it to pay for itself. From the 20th sale on is pure profit - and get to profit for the life of the product.

You can even repackage and reformat the content (as mentioned in NLA action step #30) to keep profiting for years to come! For example, if you sell just five \$100 licenses, you get your money back almost instantly. And you still own rights to the product so you can profit from it as long as you're still breathing. It's a no-brainer.

Let me give you another example...

Example #3: Let's say you outsource some of your advertising - maybe someone is going to set up and manage a pay per click campaign for you. If this outsourced traffic generation tactic costs you \$1 per visitor and you make \$1.25 per visitor, then you're making a profit.

Even if you spend \$10,000, you'll bring in \$12,500. That means you'll pocket \$2500 for every 10,000 visitors they send you - and that's just on the front end. These customers get added to your customer list, so you can send backend offers to make hundreds more per customer!

Again, it's a no brainer.

3. Outsourcing removes barriers.

If you ask the average Internet marketer (who is failing, by the way) what is keeping them from success, they'll usually know immediately what stands in their way. They might be technophobes... or they hate to write... or they can't stand dealing with pre-sale questions.

When you outsource, all these barriers fall to the side of the road - that's because all you have to do is outsource whatever is holding you back.

- Don't know how to setup a list? Outsource it.
- Can't figure out script installations? Outsource it.
- Don't know how to write SEO articles that really work? Outsource it.
- Don't know how to land good affiliates? Outsource it.
- Can't design a website to save your life? Outsource it.

You don't have to let lack of knowledge, tedious tasks or even fear stand in your way any longer - just outsource the tasks that you don't want to do!

In these cases, it just makes sense to hand the job over to a professional who can do it faster and better than you.

4. It's an investment.

Those who are most reluctant to outsource think of it as an expense. It's not - it's an investment. And if you outsource your low-value tasks, you'll make your money back many times over.

Plus think of this...

If you opened a brick and mortar store you'd have a minimum of the following expenses:

- Property lease or rent.
- Utilities with deposits.
- Office supplies and other materials.
- Inventory.
- Marketing literature such as signage and business cards, advertising, etc.
- Insurance.

These expenses would easily cost thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars. And yet you'd risk if.

So why not spend a few hundred bucks and invest in your Internet business?



Lesson #9: The Greatest Education You'll Ever Receive is the One Obtained by Observing Others

You can learn a lot from studying a book or another information product. But you can learn a whole lot more by studying what master marketers are doing.

Case in point...

I got started in this business by watching Marlon Sanders and other master marketers. I studied their sales letters, subscribed to their newsletters, analyzed their emails, and devoured their affiliate training materials. See, I wasn't just learning by reading their products.

I'm much more interested in what others are doing than what they are saying. I was learning by watching them and learning their every move. And then I modeled – NOT copied – my own efforts after theirs.

So here's what I'd suggest you do: Spend a little less time with your nose in a manual and more time just watching what successful marketers around the web are doing.

Example: Instead of reading yet another book about product launches, become an affiliate AND a customer for an upcoming launch. That way you can watch the process unfold from both sides of the counter.

No matter what you're observing, you should ask yourself questions like this:

- What works and what doesn't?
- What gets great feedback and what causes others to complain?
- What are other people doing well and what are they doing poorly?
- What creates a viral affect?
- What makes successful sales letters so persuasive?
- Why do people buy this product?
- Why do people respond so eagerly to this approach?
- Why is this product selling like ice cream in July... while a similar product is failing?
- Why is one blog a "must visit" blog, while another blog on the same topic is not worth visiting at all?

And so on.

Just keep observing and asking yourself these questions – and once you've reverse-engineered a successful product and marketing process, model it in your own niche.

Lesson #10: By Contributing to the Success of Others You'll Find That Your Own Success is Enlarged

You've heard these sayings before:

- You reap what you sow.
- If you help someone get what they want, you'll get what you want too.
- What you send out comes back to you tenfold.



These aren't just motivational catch phrases – they're truths to live by. Because whether you're helping a customer successfully solve his problems or you're helping a joint venture partner make money, your own success is enlarged.

Let me give you a few examples...

- ☑ **Your product helps a customer solve his problems.** This goes back to Lesson #2 – if you create good content that solves problems, you'll have happy customers. And happy customers reward you with repeat business, referrals and residual income.
- ☑ **You go the extra mile to help a customer personally.** Customer service isn't limited to only those tasks that put a direct profit in your pocket. For example, you don't just answer pre-sale inquiries and ignore the rest. Instead, you help your customer... no matter what they're asking.

Example: Maybe you just created an audio interview. And maybe one of your customers is hearing-impaired. If you go the extra mile to create a transcript of that audio, you can bet your customer will remember it (and order from you again). You just created a satisfied, lifelong customer.

But that's not all. By helping that one person, you just created a new format for your product – and that means you now have an upsell offer to pitch to your customers.

- ☑ **You create a product with an expert in your niche.** Even if you do most of the work and it seems your partner has benefited the most, you still reap great rewards. That's because your name is now linked to that expert. So even if you're new to the niche, you've already established yourself as an expert, too – just due to your association with the other person.

So not only do you have a product (which puts a profit in your pocket), you now have a new reputation that you can directly use to attract new customers and profits.

- ☑ **You promote someone else's product.** If you promote another marketer's product with an affiliate link, then obviously you benefit too. But what benefits could you possibly get from promoting a product without an affiliate link?

For starters, your savvy customers will be impressed that you're not seeking financial compensation – and that means they're more likely to trust you from now on. That trust leads directly to more sales.

Secondly, if you're recommending a good product, then your reputation for honesty grows. And again, this leads to more sales.

Finally, the other marketer may just surprise you. He may decide to promote YOUR product without an affiliate link. And in the end, your small gesture may turn into a massively profitable move that endeared you to both your customers and the other marketer.

Conclusion



Congratulations – you now know my ten business-changing truths, many of which took me several years to uncover.

Indeed, there are many other lessons I've learned that I share in the full NLA course.

[To receive our net learning academy action steps coaching course absolutely free click here and register](#)

Maybe when I've been online 20 years I'll share 20 truths. ☺ But when I reflect back on the last ten years, these are the ten lessons that stick out in my mind the most.

Let's quickly recapped some of these lessons:

- ✓ Salesmanship is the hare, but content is the tortoise – and you know which one wins!
- ✓ Happy customers reward you with repeat business, referrals and residual income.
- ✓ Subscription programs are great long-term income generators.
- ✓ The fortune isn't in the list – it's in how you use the list.
- ✓ Outsourcing is a great investment that helps you grow your business more quickly.

Plus five other lessons that you can put to use immediately to grow your business!

Like anything, just knowing these lessons isn't going to put a profit in your pocket.

That's why I encourage you to really take them to heart and start applying them today. **And then in ten years you can look back and see this day as the day that changed everything!** ☺