

# Open the Door to More Business with Your Ideas

By Charlie Cook

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Visualize your business as a building. Whether you are an architect, lawyer, coach, graphic designer or accountant, to bring in more clients, you need to make it easy for them to enter. The more doors you create and open the more prospects will come in and become clients. Too many small businesses inadvertently put up walls instead of opening doors to new business.

People buy products and services from firms they know and trust. If you are trying to attract new business by advertising, cold calling and direct mail you may be creating barriers to communication instead of opening doors.

Networking and referrals are a couple of doors that let new business in based on familiarity and trust. The problem with these two approaches is that they are limited to the people you've met or worked with.

If you want to increase the number of people interested in your business you need to find a way to open many more doors. One of the most effective and low cost ways to do this is to position yourself as an expert and demonstrate your expertise through an article or series of articles. Chances are you've got dozens of ideas that would be helpful to prospects. Each time you put one of these ideas in writing and share it, you open a door to more business.

Articles help you attract people who are interested in your services, establish your firm as experts, and, if you give them at least one idea they can use in each article, builds trust. A handful of articles can attract hundreds of people interested in your services each week. If you have a web site, incoming links from your article placement are the best way to boost your ranking when people search for you site using Google, Yahoo, or AOL, bringing you even more prospects.

Of course your article needs to be well written and effectively targeted and distributed to motivate prospects to action. Use the following steps to build more doors to let business in:

### 1. Target Your Market and Their Needs

Focus your article on the primary concerns and specific needs of your market. To generate ideas for articles, jot down your observations and reactions after every client meeting or conversation. Cull your list of ideas and start with the ones that will be of the most help to prospects. If you can't come up with any ideas at all, use a survey to ask questions that will generate more information for articles.

### 2. Write Compelling Copy

No matter how helpful your ideas are, if you don't have a headline that grabs your readers' attention, they won't read it. Next, your lead sentence needs to capture their interest so they'll read the rest of your article and let you demonstrate the value you provide. Generally, you'll spend 50% of your time crafting your article title, then another 25% on your lead sentence, and the rest of the time writing the body of the article.

Find someone to read your writing. Even great writing can profit from editing. And don't count on the 'spell check' on your computer to find all the errors.

### 3. Distribute Your Article Everywhere Your Prospects Read

Sending out a copy to your existing clients is a good idea but to attract prospects you need to get as many of them as possible to read your article. If your market is business executives, placement in Forbes, Fortune or Harvard Business Review would be ideal, but isn't realistic for most authors.

Send your article to the hundreds of ezines, newsletters, and newspapers that are looking for fresh content they can use to meet publishing deadlines and attract more readers. Online placement has the advantage that with a link included at the end of your article readers can easily be connected to your web site.

### 4. Motivate Readers to Take the Next Step

Motivate your prospects to take the next step to learn more about your business. At the end of your article, offer something they will want for free, and tell them how to get it. For example, a short report or tutorial that provides inside advice or research will entice them to contact you.

Most small businesses mistakenly lock out many prospects with their marketing. Instead you can turn your ideas into articles and open doors to new business. Once you've written and published a handful of articles you can use the same content

to become a featured speaker, demonstrate your expertise in person, and open even more doors to attract prospects and convert them to clients.

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The author, Marketing Coach, Charlie Cook, helps independent professionals and small business owners who are struggling to attract more clients. To get a copy of the free marketing guide, '7 Steps to Get More Clients and Grow Your Business' visit [www.charliecook.net](http://www.charliecook.net) or write [ccook@charliecook.net](mailto:ccook@charliecook.net)

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