

DID YOU KNOW THAT IT'S OK TO HAVE AND MAKE MONEY?

Written by Chris Cobb

This week, I'm going to provide you with some excellent online business tips that will help any business, and also I'll tell you a story about an e-mail that I received this week.

Firstly, on New Year's Eve I met a friend of a friend... We were allowed by our respective partners to talk business for an hour over dinner! In all seriousness, we'd spoken before, but this was the first time that we'd met in person so we had our excuses...

Anyway, he has a similar background to myself - he's a normal person just like you and me... But, he decided one day that the office and a 9-5 job just wasn't what he wanted to do for the rest of his working life. The result of this decision was that he refinanced his house and set-up his very own landscape gardening business in his local area.

He told me that one day it just hit him - out of the blue. He realised that he only had one shot at this life and he hated what he was doing at the time... and he wanted to make more money... And I could certainly relate to that!

His business has been going for over one year now, but he did confess that 2006 was going to be a make or break year for him in terms of purely finance... And as we talked more it became obvious to me that for the immediate future he needed to target very specific 'contracts' that would bring his business a residual income for the entire year or perhaps longer.

In the past, he'd been dropping a simple leaflet through doors, or letters to the bigger clients - and we talked about what the leaflets and letters contained. They were good in content, but I suggested that he needed to stand out from his competition by offering something in addition to the service that everyone was offering. i.e to maintain your garden for £x every month.

So, with my marketing hat firmly on and in place, I suggested that he offer something free - as an additional bonus for winning the contract. Something that would encourage the potential client to become a paying client...

I told him that he needed to focus on his customer - what do they want from a landscape gardener? What are they really looking for? It's not primarily cost, but something to make you stand out from the competition.

He told me that potential clients were often unsure as to the quality of the job or whether gardeners could be trusted. Well, this was it... this was the 'clincher' that I was looking for...

He's since added a few testimonial quotes to his sales letter and is now offering a 'first month free' service to all maintenance contracts signed in January. Of course, he's adjusted the price to accommodate this free month, but the importance is winning the contract in the first place... And I understand from speaking to him this week that he's already arranged two meetings with potential clients for next week.

You see, marketing and sales is all about knowing what your market wants. If you can offer them what they want at a reasonable price and make yourself stand out from the competition, then you'll be successful. To target your market, you can then use leaflets, direct mail, internet marketing, e-mail marketing or even a telephone call.

My tip for this week is, therefore, to get inside the head of your customer and then ask yourself (as the customer) "what do I really want?" Once you master this, the rest will be simple.

Moving on...

I received an e-mail that upset me this week - it was from someone that isn't a customer of mine questioning how to set-up an online business. I always try to help everyone that I come into contact with, so I responded to a series of questions from this person in an attempt to help them get started... The response to my final e-mail amazed me!

It read something along the lines of "it's alright for you - you do this for a living"...

Well, what do you say to that?!

Believe it or not, I wasn't born with my home-based online business in a box - ready to open and start making money whenever I felt like it. There was a time when I knew nothing about the internet, nothing about marketing techniques and even general business knowledge let alone an online business!

So to say something so defeatist just amazed me. To me, it's like saying that becoming a self-made millionaire just isn't possible...

Sure, people have done it, but that doesn't mean that I can do it?!!

So much of where you are and what you do is in your mind, which is why I want to make the following statement regarding the rich and successful amongst us:

Everyone has the right to become wealthy and experience financial freedom. Those that do... believe that "it's ok to make and have money..."

And if you think about this statement for just a moment and consider all the negativity associated with having or making money, then it becomes very clear as to what this means.

At a young age, we're taught that "money is the root of all evil" and "money can't buy you love/friends". We also see our parents using credit and spending everything they have, so we copy them...

My parents retired BEFORE they'd paid off their mortgage, so not only did I have absolutely no advantages than the 'normal' person... I saw that working all your life was NOT the way to go.

If you take only this from this online business message, it should be that any business can be improved with the correct and most cost-effective marketing. And in order to succeed you need to start thinking like the rich - it's ok to make money... and lots of money at that.

Best wishes,
Chris Cobb