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Thriving in the New Economy: Extreme Client Care™ Practices that Ensure Your Small Business is THE Choice for Your Ideal Audience

by Sandra Martini

For Engaged Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners



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OVERVIEW

Imagine a world where your clients wanted to do business with you, and only you, regardless of price. Where when they needed your service, you were the only one they thought of. Competitors don't exist.

That world exists. When you incorporate Extreme Client Care™ practices and systems, you become the go-to person for your clients and customers. You become the person they check with before going anywhere else. Your clients refer others and they refer others. Your marketing expenses plummet and "word of mouth" becomes your biggest new client channel.

This Report shows you how to create that world for business.

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What is the "New Economy"?

The "New Economy" is a term which has been coined to describe the post-2008 recession era. A period where it became apparent that we weren't going back to the boom of earlier years, a period where unemployment skyrocketed, gas and oil prices hit levels never contemplated in the U.S. and many started counting their pennies and thinking long and hard before purchasing.

That said, it's not all bad:

- this period forced business owners, particularly smaller businesses, to either step up and adapt or go out of business
- businesses were forced to listen to their customers and clients in order to stay in business
- smart businesses learned to anticipate what they're clients wanted and provide it before being asked

You see, clients and customers have changed. And, in order to become a successful business, your marketing and sales processes need to adapt.

Customers today have more knowledge and more power than ever. Gone are the days when they rely solely on you, the business owner, as their source of information. The Internet has changed that forever.

In today's society, prospects and clients have smartphones, tablets, computers/laptops, social networks -- they're digitally equipped, savvy and extremely interconnected and informed.

As a result, they're also more value-focused, less trusting and less loyal -- unless you give them a reason to be otherwise.

Today's customers and clients also expect a lot more in the way of service, entertainment, engagement and quality. And if they don't receive it, they share:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- LinkedIn
- Google+
- Foursquare
- Blogs

- and numerous other platforms

As business owners, we walk the line -- we are, of course, consumers yet we're also providers. How much do we share? How much information is too much?

It's another question to ask yourself, because not only is everything your clients and prospects put "out there" available, everything you share is as well.

The Challenge of Being a Lifestyle Business

When many small business owners open their doors, literally or virtually, they often do it with the goal of living a "lifestyle" business.

You know, one where you only do work you love, work the hours that please you, are always there for your friends, family and take several vacations each year.

Unfortunately, reality often hits pretty quickly. Some of my clients have likened it to walking face first into a brick wall, or turning into a really hard reality slap.

Reality brings with it several things:

- people care about their wants and needs before your offerings and if your business has been more focused on what you love rather than what your prospects want, you're going to lack for paying clients
- there is no magic wand which gets waved and POOF! you have a website, content marketing plan, nurturing process, shopping cart setup, list of loyal readers and raving fans who happily take out their credit card each time you make an offer
- people are busy and usually think they're busier than they truly are -- they're too busy to read every single thing you send to them and
- one person can't do it all without sacrificing all the reasons you went into business in the first place, including sanity and sleep

These are the very reasons that the Small Business Administration reports over 63% of all businesses fail in the first 5 years and, according to the experts, 95% of all online-based businesses fail within the first 2 years.

There are no systems, no reasonable plan of how to achieve goals -- with "reasonable" being the operative word here.

Many business owners also attempt to grow their business out of order. There are 3 Stages of

Business Growth and when we confuse them, it impacts our success or lack of.

The 3 Stages of Business Growth

Every business goes through 3 separate and distinct stages – truthfully there are 4, but everyone tends to merge 1 and 2 together so it makes sense to treat them as a single stage.

Level 1: Foundation and Getting Clients

Level 2: Adding Leverage

Level 3: Increasing Profits

It's critical to note that "length of time in business" has absolutely no, make that ZERO, bearing on what level your business is in. It's a matter of reaching certain goals or levels, totally irrespective of "time in business".

How does Extreme Client Care™ fit in?

When this business opened its doors in 2005, something became clear very quickly. We did business differently.

The client was the focus point. First, middle and last. In everything we did.

No program, product or service was created that they hadn't already expressed an interest in. Every client was treated as the only client, her needs anticipated and served before she realized she wanted something.

As a result, the business busted through six figures in revenue within the first six months, with a list of under 100 people.

Clients referred others. The business grew. An assistant, then two, then three were added until the team grew to its current level of 6 core members, all with one overarching objective: to serve the customer.

Note however that:

- it doesn't mean the customer is always right -- she's not.
- it doesn't mean the business is a doormat -- it's not. Clients have been let go.

- it doesn't mean that the team never makes a mistake. We're human, we do. Then we fix it, apologize, do what we can to make up for it and to ensure it never happens again.

In essence, Extreme Client Care™ can be explained as:

**Knowing what your ideal prospects and clients want
and giving it to them, even when they don't ask for it.**

So, what do prospects and clients want?

It's human nature to want certain things. The more you can offer those, the more successful your business will be. Those things are:

- ways to save time
- ways to save effort
- ways to save money
- ways to make money

To the extent what you're offering results in one or a combination of the above, you'll do well.

Now, that said, most business owners, particularly small business owners, simply "pop out" with whatever it is they're offering.

"Hey, I have this doohickey which will revolutionize the way you make dinner!"

And their doohickey may be the best thing ever. But simply coming out with a statement/offer like that will net them close to nothing.

The typical small business owner spends so much time creating the *thing* (program, product, service) that one of two things happens when it's time to market and get sales:

1. She's bored with it. She's been *in* it for so long that she longs for something different. Entrepreneurs often crave variety and, being creative, are quick to move on to the next project. Or . . .
2. She has no plan, no strategy behind the announcement of it. Thinking that because it is so wonderful that, of course, when she announces it to her community, everyone will want it.

Sadly, as a result of either/both numbers 1 and 2 above, sales fall flat and the business owner is

left shaking her head wondering what happened.

Wondering what this has to do with Extreme Client Care™? It's simple, this type of business model results in a roller coaster of revenue -- some months are great and some, put simply, suck.

"Will this month be a peak or a valley?" becomes your overarching question.

What if you could project your revenue and profits? What if you knew, to within a few points, what your conversion would be?

When you create a business on the tenets of Extreme Client Care™, you can. Let me show you how.

Thriving in the New Economy

First, it's critical to understand that prospects (and clients) need to be nurtured. They're not looking for a "hi, how are you, let's have a one night stand or get married" type of approach.

It's a courtship.

And the courtship begins long before you even realize it's happening.

With everyone going online first, they've likely searched for what they want. The question is, "Does your business show up?"

And if your business does show up, how is it represented? Do you provide the prospective customer with helpful information or is your online presence trying to sell them immediately?

It all starts with your Strategic Marketing Plan.

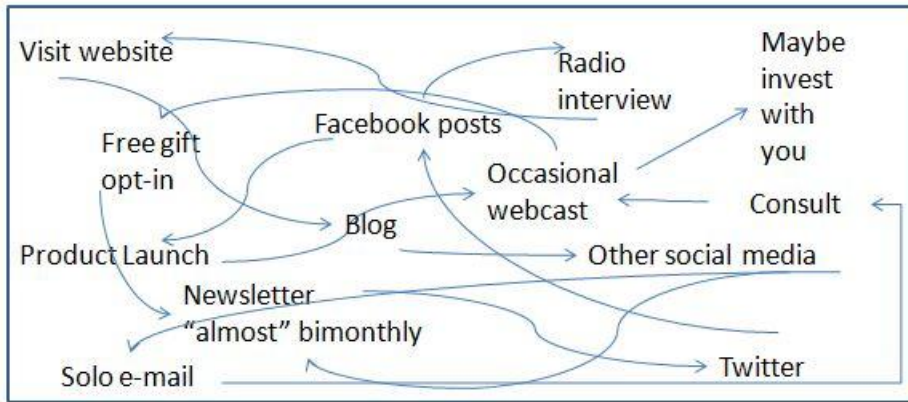
Many business owners create content:

- blog posts
- newsletter articles
- social media posts
- various reports and white papers
- videos
- podcasts



with no plan behind them. Whatever they "come up with" is what gets used.

As a result, the business owner ends up with something that looks like the below with the blue lines representing the path their prospective clients take:

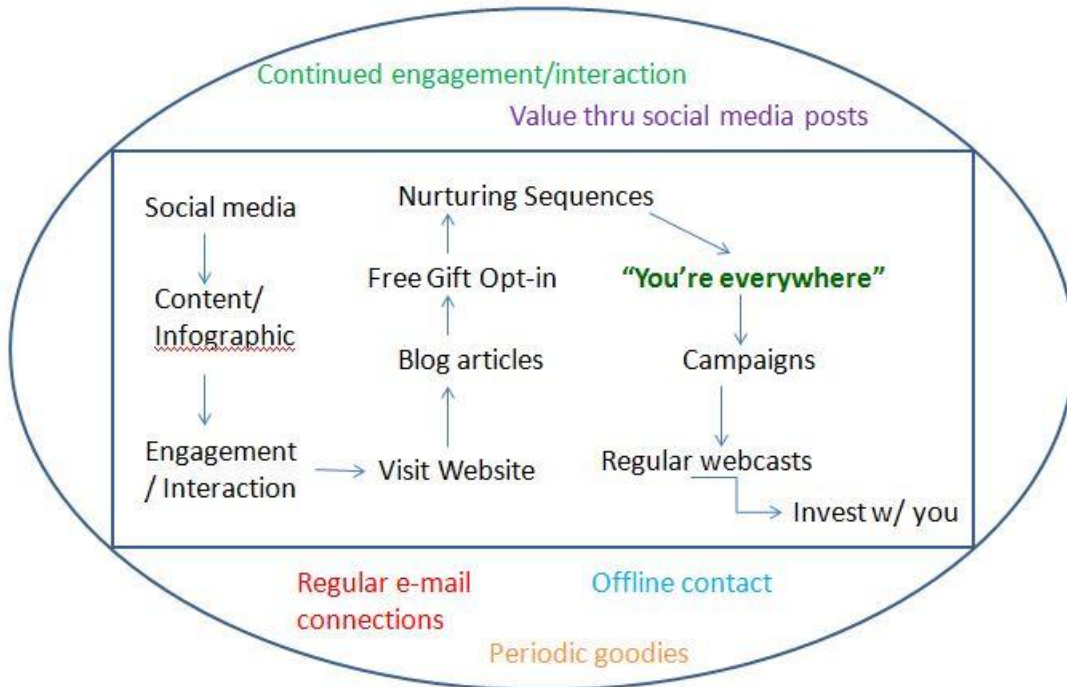


There's no consistency, there's no build-up of trust and there's certainly no nurturing of a certain brand or theme.

What if we were to take that mess and turn it into something which anticipates what your prospects are searching for and then gives it to them? What if we provide solutions before selling?

What if your plan was more than "get it done" or "make it happen"?

What if this was your business:



And everything flowed into something else? There was a natural progression? How would that impact you:

- knowing what content to share and never needing to wonder "What do I write about/post about?"
- having a consultation or strategy session with a client who says "I already know I want to work with you, how do we make it happen?"
- having a definable brand and a natural suite of offerings so you're ready for speaking engagements (after all, you have a core set of talks), giveaways, promotions and other opportunities which often arise and many business owners aren't prepared for.

It's possible and you can do it, without overwhelm.

Making It Happen

In order to create a business which flows, one which serves your community, even before they invest with you, you first want to know where your business currently stands:

- Do you know who your ideal audience is?
- Are you reaching them? If not, do you know why?
- Do you know where they "hang out"?

- If you were to rate the effectiveness of your business in "doing its job" (a.k.a. "being profitable") on a scale of 1-10, where would it be?

What we typically find is that small businesses could use a stronger foundation. They're doing okay in the good times, but when times get tough, revenue and profits plummet.

Remember those 3 Stages of Business Growth?

Level 1, Building Your Foundation and Getting Clients, is where most business owners start. . . and stay. Often until they close their doors. I don't tell you that to be all "doom and gloom", but rather so you can avoid the pitfalls of so many before you.

Level 1 Need:

Increase industry visibility & credibility as you get clients/earn revenue

What often happens however is that Level 1 business owners want to achieve success quickly – become profitable, earn 6 figures, host a high level program or offer high level consulting services, all when no one knows who they are or whether they're even going to stay around.

While this is true for most businesses, it's much more so for online-based businesses. There's such a low investment for becoming an online business that people are starting and closing them daily.

Level 1 business owners are often easily seduced by those who cater to opportunity seekers – simply because they're so anxious to generate revenue. As a result, many Level 1 business owners end up deep in debt with very little to show for it.

A Level 1 business owner is defined as someone who needs clients. Period.

If you're wondering, or worried, about where your next client (or mortgage payment) is coming from, you're currently in Level 1.

A few things to note:

- There's no shame in being in Level 1 – even if you've been in business for several years. You didn't understand the levels or what to focus on in each.
- The only way to graduate from Level 1 is to embrace that you're currently in it and take the consistent, concrete steps to move forward.
- Most importantly, R U N from anyone who promises you "6 figures in 60 days" or any

other similar slogan. They're likely preying on your desire to grow quickly.

It's critical to understand that what you do, or don't do, will build the foundation of your business – rush things and your business will be like a castle in the air: pretty and without a foundation, ready to be blown here and there by every little hiccup in your client base or the economy.



Set things up so that you have a solid foundation and your



business has the ability to survive anything: the economy, your vacations, your family's desire for attention, unanticipated expenses. . .you name it – no more castle in the air.

Note that many businesses never graduate from Level 1 and the primary reason is because they're so focused on the future that they fail to address the present. **It's a chronic case of living "as if" and never "as is".**

Level 1, your Business Foundation ensures that your business is always represented well, regardless of what the economy's doing.

A typical strong Foundation includes:

- your website
- a complimentary giveaway on your site
- a way for prospects to opt-in to your community (or list)
- strong, informative and relevant content/information -- "relevant" as defined by your ideal audience
- the information in multiple media formats: written, audio, video, combination, experiential and
- delivered in multiple ways: online, offline, via telephone as well as tablet

The key is to meet your client where they're looking (not always where you want to be). The more places you can appear, the more likely it is that your audience is going to find your information when they need it most.

This is your first step in providing Extreme Client Care™ and requires you to know your ideal audience in order to achieve it.

Note: See the Resources Section if you don't know, or aren't sure, if you know your ideal

client/audience.

As part of building your Business Foundation, you want to ensure that every person who moves from a prospect to a paying client has the exact same experience -- one scripted by you.



You see, what often happens is that we spend so much time trying to get clients that once they arrive, we're a little lost/overwhelmed on what to do next. And if we're blessed to have several come simultaneously, well. . .the issue is compounded.

Depending on your business, it can look like a variety of things. **Here's a sample from our Get It Done Right Community:**

1. Prospect invests in program
2. Within minutes, client receives Welcome email restating all the program benefits and what to expect next
3. Within 12 business hours, client is added to our Facebook group and is publicly welcomed there
4. Within 24 hours, a handwritten "thank you" card is mailed to client (sent separately from Kit below)
5. Within 24 hours, a hardcopy Welcome Kit is mailed to client
6. After 4 business days (if client is in US, outside US timeframe depends on which country to allow time for receipt of Kit), she receives a call verifying receipt of Welcome Kit and a check-in to see if she has any questions, ensure she knows when our next call is

This happens for every client who joins the above Community and we have similar processes in place for other programs, products and services.

Can you see how a client would feel welcomed and appreciated?

And it doesn't stop there, they get special incentives, periodic gifts, etc. All items to let them know how much we appreciate their business.

What typically happens is that our clients refer other clients who refer more. . .and more. You get the idea.

Others can put out the same quality information in their programs, products and services, but they don't take the extra step to incorporate, and surround the client with, Extreme Client Care™. That's what makes clients come back year after year.

Simple Ways to Incorporate Extreme Client Care™

Extreme Client Care is, at its core, about:

- thinking like your client and asking what type of an experience they'd like and
- going one step further

That's it. It's truly that simple.

Stop using words like "cost", "buy" and "purchase". Start thinking of your offerings as "investments" and recognize that you provide clients with "experiences".

They can be good experiences. . .or not. You choose.

And recognize that "no choice" is a choice in itself. If you don't plan, or script, your client's experience, you leave things to chance. Anyone who's had a "run-in" with Murphy's Law knows better than to leave things to chance. :-)

Some simple ways to incorporate Extreme Client Care™ throughout your business:

- Send handwritten cards for all occasions
- Create nurturing sequences (email message sequences, automatically delivered through a system such as <http://www.KickstartCartSolution.com>) which lead your clients through the products, programs and services they've invested in and, if they haven't yet invested, which support them in searching for solutions/information
- Always say "thank you" -- you'd be surprised how much this means
- Send periodic snail mail gifts/goodies -- just because
- Add thoughtful touches. If you record a particularly strong call, have a transcript made and send it along. Jot down notes and send them to your client.
- When appropriate, give your client exposure. Share their content with your community, ask them to provide you with a guest blog post or article
- Send flowers, fruit or other appropriate gift when they celebrate a big *win*
- Create client-centered processes and systems for everything -- and then follow them



Of the list above, notice several things:

- they're all low or no out-of-pocket expense
- they all create goodwill with your clients (and prospects)
- most of them are system-related

It's no longer a matter of simply sending emails, it's now a matter of engaging your prospects (and keeping your paying clients engaged) despite everything else that's going on in their lives and around them.

My definition of "engagement" is two fold:

1. A client or customer must spend time "in your world":
 - a. reading your articles, social media and blog posts,
 - b. watching your videos,
 - c. opening your emails,
 - d. stopping by your store,
 - e. sharing your social media posts and
 - f. listening to your podcasts
 - g. or whatever version of marketing you're doing and
2. that same client or customer must take some type of action based on the time they spent with you. That action can look like several things, including:
 - a. responding to your emails
 - b. commenting on your blog posts
 - c. "checking in" to your store or physical location and sharing with others that they're there
 - d. sharing your social media with their friends
 - e. commenting on your social media
 - f. investing with you
 - g. referring others to you

Practicing Extreme Client Care™ is truly about:

Ordinary Things, Done *Consistently*, Create Extraordinary *and* Consistent Results

Once you create your systems and integrate them into your nurturing process and strategic marketing plan, there's no place your business can't go.

Recommendations

Graduating from little-to-no Extreme Client Care™ to a fully formed nurturing process and strategic plan should be considered within the context of your primary goals, team resources and current Business Foundation:

- **Crawl.** Begin by identifying your current baseline and what needs to happen to improve your ability to convert leads to subscribers, subscribers to readers and readers to paying clients. Choose a specific goal related to firming up your Business Foundation, identify a completion date and how you'll track/measure progress. Determine what resources are needed to achieve your goals and how they'll be acquired.
- **Walk.** Once your Foundation is in place and you've seen an increase in your Visibility with additional quality prospects becoming subscribers and readers, you can move on to a more sophisticated nurturing process. At this stage, you'll design more personalized and integrated engagement paths, incorporate business processes and develop specialized/segmented content required for engagement. Incorporate Extreme Client Care™ into each step.
- **Run.** In order to convert your new paying clients into raving fans who refer you again and again, you'll create a referral plan, full Extreme Client Care™ package and improve engagement by segmenting at every stage of development. The experience gained will give you the capability to drive truly game-changing results.

Resources

- Sexy Systems: Identifying Your Ideal Client -- [learn more here](#)
- Overcome Overwhelm: Getting Clients, Adding Leverage and Increasing Profits -- [download your complimentary copy here](#)
- Want support and assistance in creating your process and systems? [email Gina@SandraMartini.com](mailto:Gina@SandraMartini.com) to set up a no cost, no obligation session with Sandra



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Extreme Client Care™ was created by Business Growth and Marketing Expert Sandra Martini as an integral component of Escalator Marketing™, an alternative to the marketing pyramids and funnels which fail to address the need for a comprehensive approach to marketing and business growth.

An approach which includes marketing, visibility, credibility, Extreme Client Care™ and programs designed to support your clients as they grow – of you being the natural choice for your clients in all stages of their business and life.

Sandra Martini provides practical, personalized and forward thinking advice to engaged entrepreneurs and small business owners in all industries.

For more information, visit www.SandraMartini.com

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