

# Here's to a Happier New Year!

I don't know about  
anyone else, but I am  
more than ready for a  
happier new year than  
the past three.



**UPDATES JANUARY '23**

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***"Kindness in words  
creates confidence.  
Kindness in thinking  
creates profoundness.  
Kindness in giving  
creates love."***

**-LAO TZU**



# Leaders, Define Your Standard of Excellence

by  
Hugh Ballou



One of the most common problems I encounter when working with leaders to build results and create effective teams is described in the statement, “My people just don’t do what I need them to do.” I suggest that this problem comes from the leader, not the team. Leadership is defining the desired outcomes and then making those outcomes become a reality. Leadership is a skill and a system.

When a leader defines the vision and then sets specific goals to achieve it, it’s essential to leave a place for team members to create strategies for their work. It is limiting for team members when a leader not only defines the outcomes but also all the steps to get there.

You have a worthy vision and have created powerful goals that will drive processes toward achieving that vision. Create systems where team members can make the steps to success – the action plan. Once each team member can contribute a process step, they move from being interested in the vision to own the vision.

“...you can hold people to very high standards of excellence while caring more broadly for who they are as humans. Caring first is not conditional on what you receive in return.”

Welby Altidor, “Creative Courage” (50)

When developing the action plan, encourage the team to define the standards of excellence – the critical success factors.

Could you define what success looks like and how it will be measured?

If you create a sloppy procedure for this process, you create a less-than-excellent organization. Inspire excellence. Define the goal, move forward by creating a strategy to define all the steps to achieve that goal, put the efforts into a sequence, and then let the team members divide up the responsibility for managing those process steps. Be focused on your process. Allow each member to contribute. Assign duties and deadlines. Shift the accountability from you, the leader, to the team, in a culture of peer-to-peer accountability.

The biggest killer of excellence is the dull, unproductive meeting! Rehearse excellence by creating effective systems. Effective meetings empower and encourage high functioning in team performance. The finest musical ensembles rehearse for every performance. Change the misquoted phrase, "Practice makes perfect," to the correct quote, "Perfect practice makes perfect performance." Rehearse for success. Build the DNA of high performance into every system in the organization you lead.

**TIP:** Plan the outcomes at the planning meeting. Plan the process to get to the products. Define the process and works at the beginning of the meeting. Keep the group on task. Excellence in planning leads to excellent results. ✨





## Good News Resolutions

Who ARE YOU in the New Year? How will YOU show up in January 2023? Planning on New Year Resolutions? Nationally, it's estimated that 99.25% of those well-thought-out resolutions are done for by the end of January, most by mid-month. We'd prefer it if you took up some Good News Resolutions instead.

Why not identify ways to be a better human being? How many resolutions can you conceive that will help someone in need? Can you find a cause to support? If not, we have plenty of ideas.

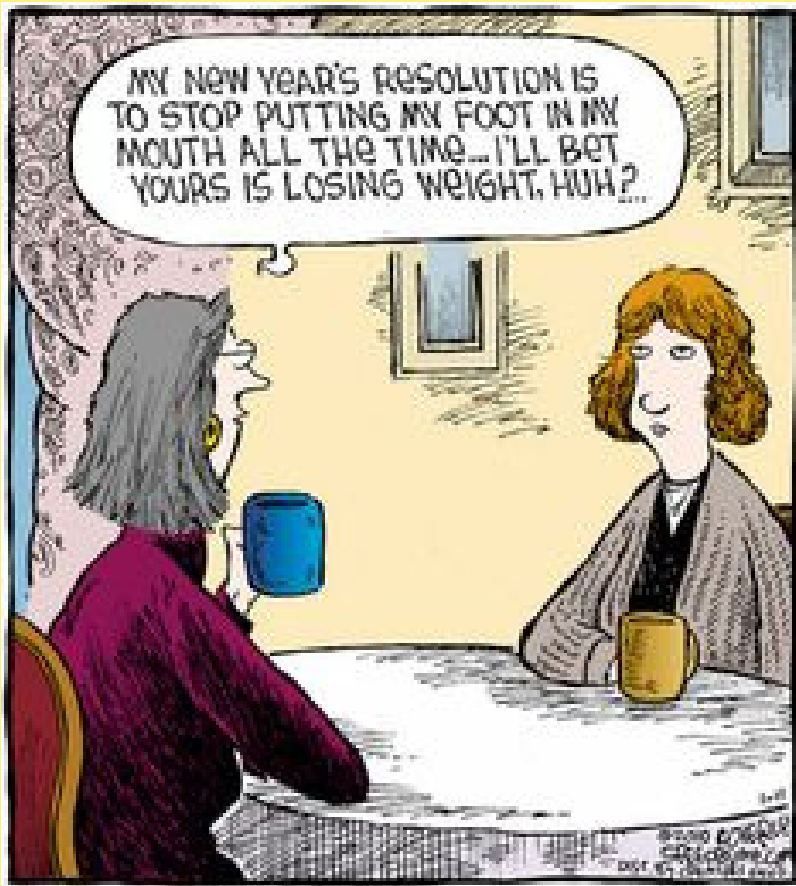
Why not try performing an inventory by determining what type of philanthropist you are or would like to be? Here's the first of several things we'll share with you during January 2023.

We suggest that new responsibilities, challenges, goals, objectives, and thinking come with the New Year. How about how you show up to the world now that you are part of the giving crowd? ✨

**The year is yours.  
What will you do with it?**



## On the Lighter Side



### Off-beat New Year's Resolutions

*I will not waste my money on a gym membership*

*I will buy stupid things that make me happy*

*I will make up elaborate backstories in my head about my annoying coworkers*

*I'll make every weekend a three-day weekend*

*I will pick fewer internet fights*



This year, my wish is that everyone gets exactly what they deserve.





# The Nonprofit's Zero to Hero Breakthrough Toolkit

This handy guide shows you the right path toward real growth through direct response marketing while avoiding the tangled web of social media advertising.

But it isn't necessarily bad because it is built to lose. It's made with the knowledge that the public sees social media as a panacea. The hyperbole surrounding it by gurus feeds the misguided perception of unsuspecting but anxiousness to successful entrepreneurs and business owners.

**Tool Number One - *Learn Social Media Likes and Shares*** don't pay the bills.

Random acts of marketing happen all day long. It's constant, as many people are trying to sell products and services on social media. It seems to make sense that so many entrepreneurs and practitioners dream of hitting it big by placing ads in front of hundreds of millions of people every second.

Everyone online is talking about it, so why not give it a try? How hard can it be, they think?

All my friends are moving to social media advertising. If they know something, I'll mirror their advertising. This is one of the greatest mistakes of marketing in general.

First and second-timers using social media ads do so at their own peril.



Even experts who know precisely how to construct digital advertising ads result in goose eggs on occasion. Nobody is perfect, not even the gurus. Marketers are just like every other career field. There are generalists and specialists; if you plan to hire someone to help you with social media advertising, find someone with a track record of success.

Facebook, Google, and other social media platforms have created a no-win scenario for 98.23 % of marketers. Less than 2% of all digital advertising on social media does what it is supposed to.

An internet search for the top ten digital ad firms provided this impressive list.

**1. Disruptive Advertising** – “On average, 80% of potential conversions from Facebook are lost to poor ad strategy.” <https://www.disruptiveadvertising.com/>

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## The New Leadership Playbook

Smart Scaling for  
Sanity in Your Life

Avoiding Strategic  
Planning Pitfalls

Hugh Ballou's Christmas  
Music Selections from  
His Conducting Career

## Missed Any Episodes?



IMAGE CREDIT: TRAVEL & LEISURE



# *The Year*

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

*What can be said in New Year rhymes,  
That's not been said a thousand times?  
The new years come, the old years go,  
We know we dream, we dream we know.*

*We rise up laughing with the light,  
We lie down weeping with the night.*

*We hug the world until it stings,  
We curse it then and sigh for wings.*

*We live, we love, we woo, we wed,  
We wreath our prides, we sheet our dead.*

*We laugh, we weep, we hope, we fear,  
And that's the burden of a year.*

*From A Poem for Every Winter Day*



# Obstacles Become Opportunities

by  
Hugh Ballou

So, it's not going as you planned? You are doing too much, and your team is accomplishing too little. The work is more intense, and the income is down. It's difficult to see anything but obstacles.

It might be time to reframe those obstacles and attempt to define a way forward. Those obstacles can become opportunities if you can rethink your strategy.

It's also time to rethink your own skill set, as well. To transform an organization or a team, it's important to begin that transformation with yourself. None of us can see our blind spots – hence, that name.

Let's do a situation analysis...

Analysis:

- Are the perceived obstacles, or is it your mindset?
- Are you defining the problem accurately?
- Are you attempting to solve a problem before understanding what caused the problem?
- Is the market telling you that your concept needs to change?

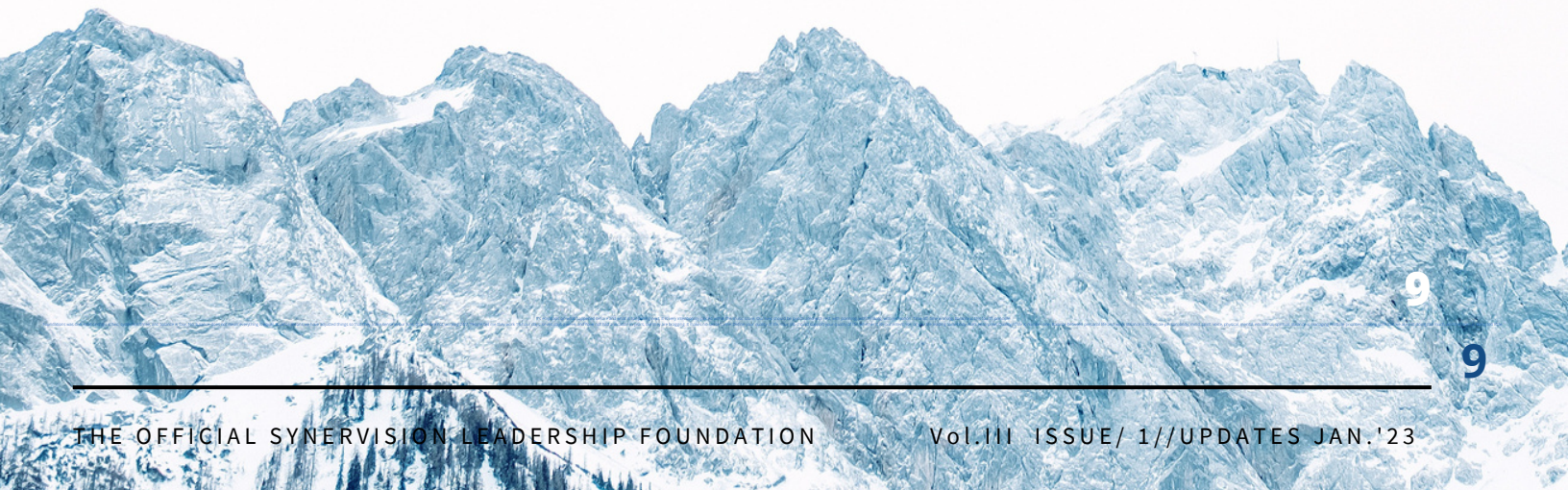


- Are you too tied up with your idea to admit it's flawed?
- Is the obstacle the idea or the strategy (the vision or the tactics)?
- Is the obstacle defining the limit to your ability?
- Is it time to work on your self-awareness and team management?

Let's look at a basic problem-solving model. It works as follows:

1. Clearly define the problem (obstacle) and get feedback from your team – be sure you have determined the correct situation. Many times, leaders solve issues that are not problems. What obstacle keeps you from success, and is it clearly and accurately defined?

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Obstacles

2. Identify ALL the parts of the problem setting up or causing the obstacle. Could you make a comprehensive list of everything that impacts the situation? This is the most extensive set of data. It's essential to do this activity with the team members – after everyone has agreed on #1 to ensure everyone sees the problem the same way. If the group is uncomfortable with the word “Problem,” consider using the topic header of “Pieces of the Puzzle.”
3. Group the items created in #2. (I use storyboards and half sheets of letter-sized paper to create separate idea cards to place on a board sprayed with a repositionable spray mount.) If you can, group (cluster) the cards by topic or subject to get an idea of what you are dealing with. This sets up defining a way forward and helps to gain clarity of the accuracy of your perceptions.
4. List potential solutions. Could you list them without priority? Next, see if some of these ideas can be combined for strength or create a sequence of steps. In this process, you will gain perspective and be able to see opportunities emerge.
5. Create the final solution or sequence of steps to the solution. Get consensus from the group and set accountability mechanisms for the process.

I have defined a process for separating feelings/emotions and moving to think. Our emotions often color our decisions, and we can't make accurate judgments. Approach problems calmly and directly. Look at the facts and leave emotions aside. Anxiety spreads to everyone in any group.

As identified in the quote from Henry Ford, we see obstacles when we take our eyes off our goals. However, ignoring problems creates barriers that can be threatening to our success.

As the leader, you set the standard...obstacles are opportunities in disguise.





**2. Lyfe Marketing** – “We create and manage top-performing social media campaigns for business.” An Award-Winning Agency in 2020.” <https://thriveagency.com/>

**3. Sociallyin** – “Helping brands with different aspects of their social media marketing strategy by deploying result-driven services around social strategy, content production, community management, paid social advertising, influencer marketing, and more.” <https://www.sociallyin.com/>

**4. #7 Thrive Internet Marketing Agency** – “Attract, Impress, and Convert more leads online and get results with Thrive.” <https://thriveagency.com/>

**5. #3 Sachs Marketing Group** – “Award-Winning Marketing Agency for Any Size Business.” <https://sachsmarketinggroup.com/>

**6. One 10 Media** – “We build bots. We run ads. You get sales.” <https://www.one10media.com/>

**7. Joseph Studios** – “Harnessing advanced tactics and strategies to find, join, and influence your ideal customers.” <https://josephstudios.net>

**8. Sculpt** – “With hustle and heart. Let’s use social media to inspire your advocates and book more meetings so you can grow in 2020.” <https://wearesculpt.com/>

**9. Viral Nine** – “Rise above the noise to connect with your audience.” <https://www.v9digital.com/>

**10. Viral Nation** – “We create the most viral, captivating, and ROI-focused social media influencer campaigns for brands globally.” <https://viralnation.com>



These top ten marketing agencies are taken from the Clutch.co website and are by no means an endorsement of any of these firms. This is only a ranking published on the Clutch.co site for you to provide alternatives to your social media marketing needs.

**Tool Number Two – Content Syndication** - Why spending money on digital ads is wrong. It’s the bad move unless and until you know precisely what you are doing. Vast amounts of money are gathered in social media coffers every day.

*“In 2019, about 98.5 percent of Facebook's global revenue was generated from advertising, whereas only around two percent was generated by payments and other fees revenue.*

*Facebook ad revenue stood at close to 69.7 billion U.S. dollars in 2019.*

Statista.com



# ***Will It Be Champagne & Caviar... ...or Warm Beer & Puppy Chow?***

**After All, It's Your Retirement!!**

**In The Greatest Country In The World...**

...not a day goes by here in the United States where you won't find a senior citizen performing menial tasks at a job suited for teenagers. Whether it be in fast food or greeting incoming shoppers at a big box store, the elderly have little choice to do now what they couldn't accomplish in all the years of their working lives, saving enough to survive retirement. Who would have guessed it would cost as much as it does just to get by? The Dollar has practically no value. Its buying power is 3 cents compared to what it was in 1933.

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## ***Life is Based on the Choices We Make***

It couldn't be more true when it comes to not only the lives we've led to date but what life there is left to live as we are near or in retirement age.

So, what will it be? A retirement lifestyle of one's dreams where every day is an adventure? Champagne and Caviar? Or will it be something less inviting?

There is still time (even if you think there isn't). Some severe planning and review of your current state of financial affairs can seriously impact how comfortable retirement is ahead of you.

Know this. It doesn't matter at what stage the retirement phase of your life is currently; there is always something that can be accomplished to make those years count for more than just the passage of time.

## ***Getting Past COVID***

*There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the nearly three years of all things COVID have devastated many households, including seniors nearing retirement age. COVID exacerbated an already uncertain future, but the ongoing misinformation, disinformation, and ever-shifting information shared by the so-called "powers that be" have wreaked havoc on our economy, individual incomes, and personal income savings. Inflation by the devaluating dollar is adding fuel to an already out-of-control fire, burning up savings, placing investments in jeopardy, and causing the stock market to rollercoaster our emotions daily. Sure, the market is up. Today. What about when the market dropped 32% in a bit more than a month (Feb.20 – April 7)? May didn't prove to be any better, as T-Bills inverted and stayed there until October. "Cam" Harvey and Arturo Estrella, two Wall Street Gurus, went on record stating that 2021 would be a recession year. The absurdity in the markets and hyperinflation have continued throughout 2022 as well. It's certainly been an unusual year as of this writing.*

## ***It's NOT the New Normal***

*Whatever you've been comfortable with is no longer dependable. Everything is up for grabs, especially economically. All I can tell you is that this writer believes that the market makers make the markets, and the average person is merely along for the ride. Things will continue to be volatile as the Fed already talks about more Helicopter Cash (stimulus checks), while raising interests to highs not seen in nearly a decade. Money made out of thin air only erodes the currency's value already in circulation. Consider the REAL value of the dollar – nothing but the paper and ink it is created with. "Well, what about the dollar being backed by the full faith and trust of the United States."*

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## ***What's Your Financial Advisor Done For You Lately?***

You may love your stockbroker, financial advisor, CFP, CPA, or whoever advises you about your wealth creation and preservation, or not so much. That's your business and the money they are handling. They're also taking your future wherewithal, financial and otherwise. Your golden years might be forged in brass if you are not critically careful.

Please don't misunderstand; I mean no harm to these fine men and women. The vast majority are well-meaning individuals trying to make a living by helping others meet their financial goals.

Most of these folks offer products and services they know about and have been trained to deliver, manage, and control. And therein lies the crux.

A CPA is an expert at managing profit and loss, forecasting, and filing taxes. You wouldn't go to a baker to get your taxes done.

So, a CPA is necessary for your business' financial affairs. If you were to ask him about establishing a Trust for your legacy, you would be directed to a Trust attorney. If you went to just any attorney for Trust work, you'd be surprised that the average attorney receives less than three months of Trust Law training in the entire course of legal study.

And not all Trust Attorneys have a full grasp of the intricacies of the variety of Trusts available under the law. (more on this topic is available in another special

report entitled "Not All Trusts Are Equal" available next month.

Certified Financial Planners are relatively well-educated individuals, as they must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in any course of study, along with nine months of study in financial planning. Heck, some CFP study programs offer a money-back guarantee!

There's only one thought that comes up for me. Remember, I'm a curmudgeon who challenges everything in this secular world. Like a physician, upon graduation from medical school, they earn the title of Doctor. It doesn't matter if they were the valedictorian of the class or the one that had to cheat on the test to pass; they all earned the title.

My point is this: verify credentials and challenge thinking. These folks sell what they know. They offer products and services from the companies they represent for commissions.

What else is available, and from whom?

There's the Insurance salesperson. Car, home, family, self, business, there are all kinds of risk mitigation vehicles on the market today. Insurance is a wise idea, although there are ways to utilize life insurance that hardly anyone speaks of, like banking on yourself.

Do yourself and your family a favor and read the best-selling book by Nelson Nash-[Becoming your own Banker](#). You'll amaze yourself with how the banks have taken advantage of everyone. The elite families have used Life Insurance for financial management since the earliest days. Become your own Bank.



*“Until we have begun to go without them, we fail to realize how unnecessary many things are. We've been using them not because we needed them but because we had them.”*

**SENECA**



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Breakthrough Kit

***“In 2019, Google's ad revenue amounted to almost 134.81 billion US dollars. The company generates advertising revenue through its Google Ads platform, which enables advertisers to display ads, product listings and service offerings across Google's extensive ad network (properties, partner sites, and apps) to web users.”***

Statista.com.

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If you don't have stock in either one of these companies, or you have significant expertise in the social ad function, please do your best to avoid this technology spiderweb. Easy to fall, victim, not so easy to benefit.

There are many ways to attract the right audience without spending hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars on social media advertising. Save your money until you can afford to invest in the tactic. As with every other marketing spend, you are investing in producing a return on investment.

Have you considered increasing your blog and article shares across a more robust syndicated service like these top 16 from shanebarker.com:

- Content Syndication Network and SEO
- Top 16 Content Syndication Platforms
  - o Content Syndication Platform
  - #1: Infographic Syndication
  - o Content Syndication Platform
  - #2: Video Syndication
  - o Content Syndication Platform
  - #3: Inbound.org (Free)
  - o Content Syndication Platform
  - #4: Medium (Free)
  - o Content Syndication Platform
  - #5: Slideshare (Free)
  - o Content Syndication Platform
  - #6: Quora (Free)
  - o Content Syndication Platform
  - #7: Outbrain (Paid)
  - o Content Syndication Platform

#8: Taboola (Paid)

o Content Syndication Platform

#9: Scoop. it (Paid)

o Content Syndication Platform

#10: Facebook Business (Freemium)

o Content Syndication Platform

#11: LinkedIn (Freemium)

o Content Syndication Platform

#12: StumbleUpon (Free)

o Content Syndication Platform

#13: Reddit (Free)

o Content Syndication Platform

#14: Tumblr (Free)

o Content Syndication Platform

#15: Audio Syndication

o Content Syndication Platform

#16: RSS Feeds – Rich Site Summary

### **Tool Number Three-Marketing Budgeting**

Why it's imperative to get this right. Major corporations are using Monopoly Money®

Their shareholder's investment dollars are supposed to bring in a rise in the share price through wise investment and effective marketing, advertising, and sales.

These significant companies can throw money at an issue until they get it right. And they justify it by hitting it big. If it goes wrong, they keep slinging cash at a problem like spaghetti at the wall. You don't have that luxury.

Conversely, every dollar you spend comes out of your pocket, which is supposed to provide enough profit to feed your family.

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With that clear, you need to look at the process of budgeting as a sound business practice. All too often, people act like they know they're right 100% of the time and only admit to themselves that they don't know when things go array.

Budgeting is all about dollars and cents based on goals and objectives. How much money is available to "invest" in marketing? Ask yourself this: What happens if you fail and all that money is set on fire, producing nothing but smoke and ash?

Money is a critical resource that must produce an ROI to reinvest repeatedly until you reach your pre-determined outcomes.

So, how much can you put at risk? Could you define that and stick to that number?

Before you write numbers on a page, you have some preliminary steps to perform if you want those numbers to make any real business sense.

You'll need to do these tasks first.

Ø Identify goals and objectives – What exactly do you wish to do?

Ø Determine the amount to invest in marketing based on your goals

Ø Market Research – You'll need to learn as much about your market as possible, such as:

§ Demographics, Psychographics, Geographics

§ Competition Strengths and Weaknesses

§ Your Ideal Target Audience Personas-go to: <https://buyerpersona.com>

Now that you understand how much money you have to invest in a campaign, a number of elements comprise a solid execution. They are:

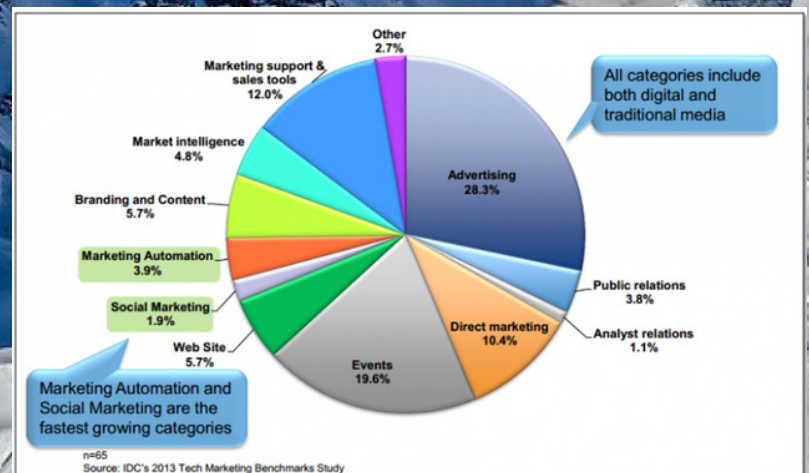
Ø What to promote and how to execute it effectively

New product or service

oLead generation

special Offers

survey, Quiz, Audit



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Breakthrough Kit

**Tool Number Four – Reviews** – Why You Need Them, and How to Get Dozens of Them. This is a digital world. Analog has passed on, and our world spirals toward all that is digital. Social media is the new word of mouth, so the more people attest to your business, the better.

Testimonials and reviews are critical to those seeking a product or service from a merchant. Reviews and testimonials are the new storefronts. How will people feel when they come across your website and information? The critical first impression makes a huge difference.

How do you feel when you go shopping and come across a messy storefront and area? Would you know if the sidewalk and parking lot are clean and tidy? What do you think about the front door? Would you know if the glass is clean and the door handles shiny?

If things are not pleasing, your first impression will place either joy or contempt based on the image it presents. Now, this may be subconscious, and you might not even be aware of it, but the brain stores information the senses transmit to it.

Here is a simple way to obtain massive amounts of testimonials and reviews based on your type of business.

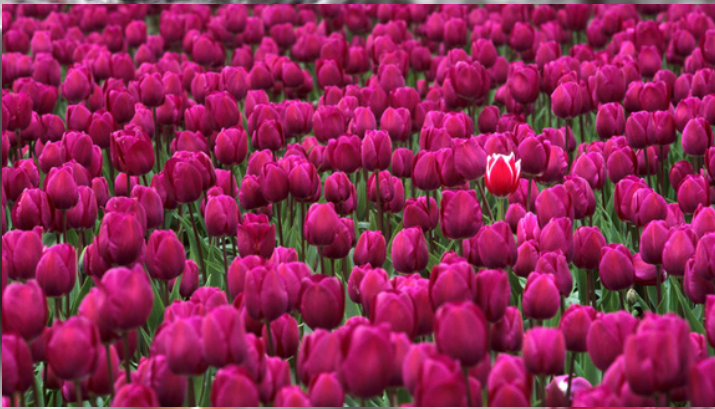
Suppose you have a seat in your office. In that case, you'll want a tablet with video recording capabilities to capture a positive reaction as soon as the service is performed. If the person is still seated, catch a review while they are there.

If you can set up a small space with a colorful background, or if you have your company logo displayed on the wall in an open area, a standing camera is positioned to capture testimonials and reviews before the client or patient leaves the office.

When performing follow-up calls, could you please ask if you can record a quick review or testimonial and then have it transcribed?

If you are a speaker or coach, develop an app to ask your audience to download as they sit before you. Within the app, they can leave a video testimonial or text a quick review. The EzCard is a perfect app that you can customize in just about any format to include a feedback survey, video capture, audio testimonial, or text response. ★





## How Do You Deal With Your Competition?

What makes your business unique other than the name? What do you do that the public (or your ideal prospect) obtain from your services or goods that they cannot get anywhere else? Why should anyone believe you when you state you are unique? Can You Prove It?

I look upon competition as a benefit, not a liability. You can learn a great deal from your competitors if they only take the time to examine them. If they study them, track them, and learn what works for them and what doesn't, you can find ways to rise above them and stand out.

Going through this exercise on a regular basis can provide insight to allow you to NOT BE LIKE THEM. Establishing a unique position in the marketplace is key to thriving and surviving.

However, you also have to let the world know you you can solve their problems and challenges, ease their pain and make their lives better in addition to just standing out.

If you are truly unique and not a single other entity can compete with you, the sky's the limit. You are free to charge what you like, because you have become the ONLY solution.

Why try to work with everyone when you can have your pick of only those that are destined to work with you? By being the ideal and sole solution to your perfect prospect base will create celebrity status, establish you authority and expertise for which people will clamor.

You see, these are the types of questions you need to explore deeply to separate yourself from your so-called competition. Don't worry about others, focus on what makes you the best, the numero uno, the only place in town.



This is exactly what it is going to take to remove the guesswork from your avatar/persona development. Get out there and talk to people, don't just make s\*\*\* up about what you think they are like.





## UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC PYRAMID

Embracing this model entirely will do wonders for your business. It is hands down the best advice and lesson I received from Dan Kennedy in all the years being around him. Although Dan goes deep into this topic, there isn't enough room in this periodical for the thirty-something pages of notes I took over the course of three days that he taught.

If you can structure your entire business around this model, you'll never again have to worry about a lack of clients or customers. There might be a lull between acquisitions from time to time, mainly if you are limited to how many clients you can support with your time and talent. And the top tier of the market is not easy to crack without some insights from someone within that niche. But never fear; this model is, without a doubt, the salvation for any small business.

All prospects are not equal. The solopreneur massage therapist thinks the only way to make a living is to underprice themselves against all the other solopreneur massage therapists. Why did Massage Envy enter and dominate the market if that's the case? They offer the same service but at premium prices.

### The Economics of Market Segments



This is the secret to making competition non-existent. Selling to the top 5% of the pyramid removes all doubt about whether your prospect can afford your service. Why be a price provider? Remember Blockbuster, Border's Books, Circuit City, and on and on? How about Walmart? They are a price provider, and Amazon is now eating its lunch. If your business can be Amazon'ed, you're in big trouble. Competing on price is a sure path to extinction. Focus on the top end of the market. There are those in every market niche that can afford anything they wish to acquire. Purchase a Timex or a Rolex? They both tell time. Your job is to provide enough value and serve that market.

The wonderful thing about working in the top 5% is that occasionally some up-creep occurs. Once in a while, someone is reaching the next level of economics, and there is nothing wrong with that. If you've focused on the foundation, take the elevator up a few floors to the top of the pyramid. The air is fresher. ★





**UPDATES JANUARY '23**

## Hugh's Favorite Recipes: *Veggies with Ginger & Garlic Stir Fry*

### RECIPE

Servings: 2

Prep Time: 15 Minutes

Total Time: 15 Minutes

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 Cup Dry Sherry
- 2 Stalks Celery Sliced at Right Angle
- 2 Carrots Sliced at Right Angle
- 1 Onion Sliced at an Angle
- 1 Cup Bok Choi Cut in 1" Pieces
- 6 Medium-Sized Mushrooms Sliced
- 10 Fresh Water Chestnuts Sliced (or Small Can)
- 1/2 Cup Snow Peas
- 1 Cup Fresh Mung Bean Sprouts
- 3 Cloves Garlic Minced
- Ginger Minced Same Amount as Garlic
- 3 Tbs Peanut Oil
- 1/4 Cup Soy Sauce
- 3 Tbs Sesame Oil
- 3 Tbs 50/50 Mix of Corn Starch and Water For Thickening
- Toasted Sesame Seeds for Garnish
- Some Type of Noodles or Rice
- Glass of White Wine

### DIRECTIONS

1. Pour Yourself the glass of white wine for drinking while cooking
2. Cut Chicken into 1" pieces and place in a bowl with sherry to marinate
3. Cut all the veggies
4. Heat a wok and add peanut oil and chicken, stir constantly
5. Add garlic and ginger and stir for 1 minute
6. Add other veggies in this order: onions, mushrooms, then the others
7. Stir until veggies are done but still crisp
8. Add soy sauce and stir in the 50/50 mix of corn starch and water
9. Drizzle the sesame oil on top and sprinkle on the sesame seeds
10. Turn off heat and serve over rice or noodles
11. Pour another glass of white wine and enjoy



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