As a small business owner, your personal income is linked primarily to one thing — PROFIT. There are a variety of ways to build more profit in your business — from growing sales to increasing productivity. Some of these you are doing, others you are not. Based on YOUR goals, start adding some of these to your business activities.

**Marketing General**

**... Attracting & Retaining Customers**

- Define your ideal customers — specifically so others can help you reach them
- Have a varied marketing plan — with a variety of strategies and tactics
- Carry business cards — always
- Communicate what you do and how you help customers to friends and family — don’t assume they know.
- Create a personal name badge with company name / logo — wear it
- Ask clients why they chose you (and former clients why they left)
- Get customer feedback — solicit ideas for improvement
- Update / repackage products or services
- Create new products or services
- Develop a niche for your products/services
- Create a compelling USP and positioning
- Develop new distribution channels / networks
- Develop (purchase) target prospect lists
- Use and maintain a marketing database (Outlook, ACT or online options)
- Have an online presence — website and/or blog — update often
- Create a private (your own) label

**Marketing — Lead Generation**

**... Strategies to Pull in Prospects / Customers**

- Industry newsletter ads
- School or church newsletter ads
- Mailbox flyers
- Sidewalk handbills
- Modify or expand hours of operation
- Referral system
- Form strategic alliances / power partners
- Publish ‘Ask the Expert’ articles
- Start a blog and share relevant information
- Direct mail—personalized sales letters
- Article marketing (online distribution)
- Window displays
- Direct mail postcards — with offer
- Sidewalk and/or building signage
- Point of Sale materials or displays
- Video for in-store displays, websites or social media networks
- Build network on Linked-In — and participate
- Create a Facebook Page for your business
- Join Twitter or Instagram
- Create Google+ Business Page
- Seek out speaking engagements
- Telemarketing or cold calling with scripts
- Trade shows — attend or participate (booth)
- Sponsor local events
- Brand company vehicles -- driving billboards
- Create a newsletter (print or email)
- Employee uniforms and name tags
- Attend networking events
- Join industry / business association — participate!
- Join a networking or leads group
- Optimize website for search engines
- Write a book, e-book or white paper
- Piggy-back invoice mailings (alliances)
- Free seminars, workshops or webinars
- Develop joint seminars / webinars—power partners
... More Lead Generation
• Create videos for YouTube and website
• Do teleclasses
• Get certified for government programs or contracts
• Develop ‘resource list’ for networking — become the go-to person
• New Mover direct mail programs
• Endorsed Mailings (print/email)
• Community Outreach Programs
• Create company brochure or info packet
• Hire a salesperson or telemarketer
• Use e-Bay or elance for distribution
• Direct mail—coupon mailers
• Online press release distribution
• Submit press release to local media
• Hold ‘invite a friend’ event (wine/cheese) for VIP’s
• Appear as expert guest on radio
• Radio advertising
• Join a board or community group
• On Hold or promotional phone messages
• Build auto-responders for email
• Cable TV advertising
• Create ‘lumpy’ direct mail
• Create Infomercial
• Yellow / White Pages—print or online

Sales
... To Convert More Leads to Customers
• Provide a written guarantee
• Get online reviews—FB, Google, Yelp
• Follow Up, Follow Up, Follow Up!
• Use a sales management system—always
• Use a prospect questionnaire
• Expand payment options—check, credit cards, PayPal, phones!
• Use payment plans or financing options
• Develop client testimonials — use them!
• Up-sell, Down-sell, Cross-sell options
• Stay connected — mail, email, social or phone
• Ask powerful questions—and listen
• Create ‘value-added’ offers
• Develop benefits / results list (not features)
• Use before/after photos or videos
• Write company ‘Magic Story’
• Allow online or mail order for convenience
• Provide free home/office delivery
• Create proposals and quotes that ‘sell’
• Display awards — onsite, website, social media
• Try before you buy options
• Give back — create reciprocity
• FREE Stuff ... info, consultations, widgets
• Set sales goals and targets — measure
• Sales training
• Use client case studies — presentations, website
• Get recommendations on Linked-In

Service — Create Raving Fans
... Keep Them Coming Back and Referring Others
• Document and stream line your service delivery — make it easy for staff and customers
• Under promise, over deliver
• Document complaints, how to handle and give team the authority to do so
• Monthly specials — mail or email
• Implement customer feedback surveys — after purchase, before renewal, ad-hoc, etc.
• Create WOW moments for customers
• Book next appointment
• Communicate full range of products/services
• Create a membership or VIP program
• Promotional gifts (with logo/name)
• Special occasion cards or gifts
• Keep customer information up-to-date
• Create a ‘stay connected’ program
• Offer free trials of new products/services
• VIP (customer only) offers
• Referral system — ask for them
• Make service everyone’s job — train and reward them
• Be accessible — phone, email, voicemail
• Create customer ‘shopping’ lists or checklists
• Bundle or package products/services

Personnel Management / Team
... A productive and high performance asset
• Job descriptions and clear responsibilities for all team members
• Build and share business goals and priorities
• Use a recruiting and hiring SYSTEM
• Clear, easy to understand ‘How-To’ Manual (Policies / Procedures)
• Hold regular interactive team meetings
• Incorporate performance bonus program in compensation.
• Get new employees trained properly
• Develop or update employee handbook—insure everyone has current copy
• Create team incentives around sales, profit and/or service.
• Create and use team building activities
• Use an annual performance and feedback system — make development a priority
• Implement an Employee Feedback Survey — listen and take action
• Solicit team feedback and ideas

Margins Mastery ... Putting More on the Bottom Line

• Do it right the first time — eliminate rework
• Increase prices, and add value
• Stop discounting
• Promote higher margin products/services
• Cash gap, lifetime value and break-even analysis for business
• Manage inventory turnover—just in time delivery and elimination of non-moving items
• Use a financial management system (eg, Quick Books) — and review monthly
• Focus on A customers — Sack C and D’s
• Keep an accurate customer database
• Manage labor / payroll — eliminate excess or unnecessary staff
• Consider temporary or outsourcing for short-term or season labor needs.
• Reduce or eliminate overtime
• Investigate options on services like insurance, rent, etc — don’t just automatically renew
• Reduce duplication
• Rent idle space and promote idle times
• Join a buying group
• Keep overheads to a minimum
• Invest in technology — to reduce labor and improve efficiency
• Outsource / use subcontractors to do specialty work or address short-term need
• Schedule efficiently & fill cancellations

Personal Development ... As you grow, so will your business

• Develop (and put in writing) a personal and business vision that inspires and motivates you!
• Set goals and use action plans for clarity and focus — on what’s important
• Develop or improve time management skills
• Become the serving leader your company needs
• Start or join a mastermind group
• Attend training workshops — learn new skills
• Create balance — incorporate well-being, enjoyment habits into your day!
• Make personal time — doing what you love — a priority too
• Attend industry events and learn from others
• Build a business library — read daily
• Subscribe to industry or business publications
• Subscribe to relevant newsletters or blogs
• Get a good business coach or mentor — for focus, support and accountability.

"Great things are done by a series of small things brought together." ~ Vincent Van Gogh

Joan Nowak is a business improvement specialist and creator of the Hybrid Business Improvement System—to help small business owners create a sustainable, profitable business—one step at a time. Focused on optimizing seven key areas that drive success, owners have the tools and methods to turn ideas into results.

To learn more, visit www.HybridBizAdvisors.com