

6 Keys to Connection

Your marketing works only when you know:

Key #1 Who your target clients are

Key #2 What they are looking for

Key #3 Where they look for you

Key #4 When they look for you

Key #5 Why they should choose you

Key #6 How you want them to engage with you.

Key #1: Who Is Your Target Client or Customer?

Identifying and gearing your marketing to a specific target market (or two) allows you to make the important emotional connection that is the first step in developing a relationship with your potential clients. When you have made the effort to speak and write directly to your ideal client, she'll feel it. She will feel as though you truly know and understand her needs and desires—because you will. That task alone will go a long way toward building the trust you desire with the clients you seek.

If you're not crystal clear on whom you want to reach out to and attract, it's going to be hard to develop a marketing plan that works because you'll be chasing after everyone, and you won't be making a strong connection with anyone.

Who is your target market?



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Key #2: What Are They Looking For?

You've got to understand what your ideal clients or customers are looking for—the kinds of products or services they think will solve their problems or help them reach their goals. It's very important to be clear on your answers because if you don't know what your potential clients are looking for, you won't know what to offer or how to communicate what you have to offer, in ways that resonate with them.

We often talk about what we do in terms that we think are relevant. It's time to put your target market first and work to truly understand what they know is relevant. Then you can decide what you're going to offer them that will meet their needs.

Example: In my case, they want direction on how to communicate more effectively. They want skills to be able to better manage their emotions so people don't leave them or push them away. They want strategies for feeling more confident and independent.

Give a description of your ideal client within your target market in terms of what is relevant to them (what are their big problems, urgent needs, and compelling desires)?

Key #3: Where Do They Look for You?

Do you know where your target market looks for you? Do they search online? Do they call their friends for referrals for the kind of service that you're providing? What other types of business professionals do they trust to get their referrals from? If you don't know, survey your current clients. This should always be one of the first questions you ask a new client: "How did you come to find me?" If you don't have any clients of your own yet, ask a colleague how her clients find her.

Where do your clients look for you?



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Key #4: When Do They Look for You?

When do the folks in your target market look for the services you offer? What needs to happen in their lives for them to seek the kind of service that you offer? How high do the stakes need to be before they decide to get help? They may be interested in what you do, and your offerings may resonate with them, but they might not need you at the moment they find you.

You'll want to make it easy for them to step into your environment (to try you on) and move closer to your core offerings over time. When their stakes rise, they'll reach out to you and ask for you. But you've got to keep the conversation going. What are the situations that are likely to drive potential clients to seek your services, products, and programs? When do they look for you?

Examples: The ideal clients in my target market: lose another job; get dumped in another relationship; act out in big ways that leave them feeling humiliated and ashamed.

When do your ideal clients look for you?

Key #5: Why Should They Choose You?

That's the BIG QUESTION. Why are they going to choose you? Are you a credible authority in your field? What makes you the best choice for them? What is unique about you or the solutions you offer? For this, it's crucial that you set your modesty aside and express yourself clearly and with confidence—no wishy-washy answers to these questions.

While it may feel uncomfortable at first, you've got to get comfortable saying: "The best thing for you is me!"



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Granted, saying you are the best may be a bit too bold for you, but at the least you've got to be able to say, "You've come to the right person. Yes, absolutely, I can help you. I'm an expert at what I do and this is how I can help." Bragging is about comparing yourself to others and proclaiming your superiority. Declaring your strengths, your skills, your expertise, and your ability to help is not bragging. Expressing confidence is what your potential clients expect, want, and need to hear from you.

Why should your potential clients choose you?

Key #6: How Do You Want Them to Engage with You?

Once potential clients have learned about your services, how would you like them to interact or engage with you? Do you want them to call your office? Do you want them to sign up for your newsletter on your web site? What is it that you want potential clients to do?

One of the concerns I hear from potential clients and referrers is that when they try to reach out to a professional, they can't seem to connect. The person often does not answer his/her phone (or have support staff). The person does not return calls in a timely fashion (or at all). The phone tag is too frustrating, and they don't/can't wait.

How do you want your potential clients to interact or engage with you?

(Remember: Establishing a line of communication is the first step in developing a relationship of trust.)

