

Funnels That Click Quick Start Guide

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What is an Online Marketing Funnel?

If you have ever used a funnel, you know what one looks like. The idea is that you can focus a large quantity of something down into a very narrow flow. That is why funnels are wide at the opening and extremely narrow, sometimes even pointed, at the bottom. This upside down pyramid shape also works extremely well online for building your business.

The attention span of people online is extremely short. There are so many marketing messages, social media sites, consumer electronics and other media vying for the attention of your prospect. This is exactly the reason why an online marketing funnel is so important. You focus, or funnel, the attention of your prospects in a very specific way, providing value, building a relationship and eventually presenting an offer.

Start with a Large Prospect Pool And Narrow the Focus

Before you ever create your online business, you have to narrow your focus. Much like a funnel directs a stream or flow into a very narrow channel, you want to focus on a niche inside a niche inside a niche. This makes the marketing funnels you develop much more effective. In other words, instead of getting into weight loss, or even weight loss for women, marketing funnels will be more successful if you offer weight loss products aimed at overweight grandmothers over 50.

Once you focus on a niche market, you need to build your online marketing funnel. This is going to hopefully take your prospect through the following stages.

Discovery

The people in your market need to discover your website or blog. You accomplish this through paid advertising, word-of-mouth referrals, search engine optimization that sends you free traffic and a multitude of additional marketing methods both online and off. Here you're filling your funnel at the top.

Interest

Now you have some traffic to your online piece of real estate. Offer them something for nothing. This is known as an opt-in bribe or opt-in freebie. Get your audience interested. In exchange for signing up to your newsletter or email list, you send your subscriber a high-value report, checklist, e-book or list of resources, or some other piece of content that solves a big problem or answers a big question in the minds of your target audience.

Relationship

You have now funneled a large group of people into a smaller group that makes up your email list. Here is where you begin to build your relationship with them. Offer them a lot of value. Continue to answer questions and solve problems. Send out emails on a continual basis through an autoresponder program that handles the task automatically.

Make the Sale

Early in your autoresponder sequence, make an inexpensive offer that is too hard to pass up. Later on, after sending several additional emails that deliver a lot of free value, make a bigger offer. If your list purchases either your smaller or larger offer, immediately offer them an upsell, which is a pricier option.

Re-Funnel

You should now be building 2 lists. You will have buyers and non-buyers. Funnel your buyers to a particular autoresponder sequence so that you don't needlessly make them the same offer they already responded to. Non-buyers should continue to receive valuable free content in your email sequence, as well as offers to purchase your products that they passed on the first time. Continue to build your relationships.

At the beginning, at the discovery stage, you may have 1,000 people visiting your website every day. You may only have 50 or 100 people each day sign up to your email list, accepting your free incentive. As you build a relationship with that small group of people and make an offer, you may see only 5 sales per day. The funnel is always a trickle down process, where you eventually end up dealing with a smaller number of very interested people rather than a huge group of people that are mildly concerned about what you have to say.

The key is to online business success constantly fill your funnel at the top.

It is great to have Google and the other search engines send you lots of free traffic, based on the quality content you put on your site, and your efforts at SEO. However, search engine algorithms can change and your free traffic can grind to a halt. You should constantly spend some of your online business proceeds filling your marketing funnel at the top with paid traffic, because the greater the numbers at the top of your funnel, the greater your sales and profits will be at the bottom.

How Many Levels Can You Have in a Sales Funnel?

A sales funnel is an ongoing process where you move a prospect through a series of communications that hopes to build interest, peaking in a best case scenario with a purchase. FunnelWebClass.com and Zoho.com are two companies that will handle every aspect of the sales funnel creation process for you. There are also individual

marketing pros and freelancers that can make this process simple. No matter whether you handle the job yourself or pay a professional to do it, you may be asking yourself the following question ...

"How many levels should my sales funnel have?"

A basic sales funnel starts with a lead generation process. This could be a simple email opt-in page where people that join your list or newsletter receive a free report, product or service in return. You then send those subscribers a series of emails, eventually making one or more product offers that you hope will end in a sale. You have one main product, and if you make a sale, your job is done.

You've done a lot of hard work to develop leads, so doesn't it make sense to have several levels in your sales funnel, offering products and services a multiple number of times?

At every level of a sales funnel an offer is made. At the top of the funnel, you are offering a free product in return for getting a prospect's contact information. Then you begin marketing, following up with emails, telemarketing efforts, direct marketing or other attempts to make a sale. A single level sales funnel means after a purchase is made, you are through marketing to that buyer.

This is leaving money on the table, and not servicing your buyers correctly.

You should have multiple offers that complement each other. When you buy a car, the salesman doesn't simply hand you the keys and then disappear. You are offered extended warranties, upgrades like upholstery and wheel options. Every few months the salesperson will contact you, ask you if you're happy with your purchase, and let you know about a discount or sale going on.

You will be approached with opportunities to trade in your vehicle in the future, and the sales process goes on and on. For a lot of reasons, it makes sense to market to someone who was already purchased one of your products, rather than try to convince new people to buy your services.

There is no "secret number" of sales funnel levels. Each business, product and service is different. Just make sure you are constantly offering your prospects and customers opportunities to enhance their lives with future purchases. Your current customers will be happy as long as you continue to provide real value, and it is easier to convince a previous purchaser to spend money with you than it is a new prospect at the top of your sales funnel.

How to Turn One Time Customers into Repeat Buyers

When you get someone to buy into what you are saying, you can turn a prospect into a customer. This is time to celebrate, right? You have made a sale, so your work is done. Now it is time to find some new leads so you can hopefully repeat the process.

Slow down, speedy.

The customer you just obtained is fruit that is ripe for the picking. No one will be more interested in what you have to say and offer than somebody who pulls out their wallet or purse and buys what you are selling. Their level of interest in your business is sky high right now. This is the perfect time to deliver an upsell, downsell or some other type of offer. Look at this as an opportunity to provide additional value and solve more problems for your customer, rather than thinking about making a sale.

A Bird in the Hand and All That

There are all sorts of business statistics that show it is infinitely harder to get a new customer, as opposed to getting a current customer to purchase additional items or accessories. This is only one of many excellent reasons why your sales funnel needs to include an immediate offer to anyone who buys one of your products or services.

A proven process here is to offer something that costs more than the item just purchased.

This is known as an upsell. If the customer passes on the upsell, offer a downsell option or discount your original upsell price tag. You should also segment your email lists and autoresponder sequences. When someone makes a buy, they are then sent an ongoing sales funnel to generate more sales. Non-buyers continue to receive a different email series, one that is intended to make that crucial first sale.

The Power of Unadvertised Bonuses

You can also create lifelong customer loyalty and multiple sales by rewarding a purchase with an unadvertised bonus. Make this bonus something outstanding. You want to truly reward a buying decision with massive value, and something that solves a big problem in the lives of your customers.

Another way to turn one time customers into repeat buyers is to offer referral discounts and free products. In turn for a customer referring you to a friend, you extend a future purchase discount or extra product to that person if the referral also makes a purchase. Finally, don't discount the power of constant email contact. Capture the email information with every purchase, follow up regularly, and you can turn a one time buy into a lifetime of purchases.

What Role Does Social Media Have in Your Sales Funnel?

Spending time on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn can be a great way to build a pool of prospects or leads. LinkedIn is full of millions of business professionals that are more serious about the way they spend their time online. People on Facebook are not there to be marketed to, and both Twitter and Pinterest users have their own unique characteristics and patterns of behavior. Because of this, not all social media sites are alike when it comes to your sales funnel.

However, as a general rule, most social media platforms work best for doing a very specific job in your sales funnel ... creating leads.

Social media sites are so named because people like to socialize there. They are generally hanging out to have a good time, let their guard down, and are not usually looking to buy products and services. Even on LinkedIn, populated by serious business minded professionals, people are not usually looking to buy your products and services. They are there, however, and on the other social media sites, for engagement.

They want to chat, interact and hang out with people a lot like themselves. This means social media offers a great opportunity for you to connect with your target audience. Present yourself as a "real person" rather than someone doing business. Put out a lot of great content that answers big problems and solves real questions for your audience. Then you infrequently want to build your email list and prospect pool.

The top of the funnel is the perfect place for social media. This is where you build a list of contact details by offering a free product or service in return for the email address of a prospect. This is the "meet and greet" stage of the sales funnel, where you let people know about you and your business. Keep the conversation casual on social media sites during this process.

Business owners should also understand they shouldn't expect marketing miracles from social media. Over the years it has been found that social media is a great place to keep in contact with your customer, and it does work effectively to collect prospects at the top of your sales funnel. It is, however, not usually a place that is efficient for selling your goods and services. Contact, engage, inform and build interest, answer questions, offer quizzes and contests, but don't try to sell on social media.

Why Getting More Testimonials Can Boost Your Business

The XYZ company specializes in helping you grow your business by maximizing your list building and email marketing efforts. They know more than a little about generating leads, and turning those leads into customers. They define social proof as:

" ... psychological phenomenon where people conform to the actions of others under the assumption that those actions are reflective of the correct behavior."

You probably have made a purchase because of a reference given to you by a friend or family member. When you see advertisements where people just like you mention how great a product is, you believe what that person has to say more than you do someone who is trying to get you to buy their offerings. Simply put, people tend to believe the advice of a "regular Joe" similar to themselves, rather than a paid marketer.

This is how testimonials can boost your business.

A testimonial is the perfect example of social proof. Testimonials can be seen as public tributes or statements testifying to the quality of a product, service or business. Testimonials from happy customers effectively sell your product for you. When those gushing customers are examples of your perfect prospect, sales can come quickly and regularly.

For example, maybe you are marketing weight loss to single moms over 50 who also work full-time. Think about the unique way your product helps that type of woman. Then reach out to your customers. Find ladies that personify the exact type of person you are trying to help. Ask them for text-based, audio or video testimonials and then share those happy customer stories everywhere online and off.

People like to be asked what they think. With so many marketing messages bombarding us every day, we all beg for social proof to validate their purchasing decisions. Positive testimonials from previous customers that tell a powerful story

build automatic trust in your brand, and if you can get a testimonial from an influential figure relative to your niche or market, all the better.

The human brain processes video 60,000 times faster than text. This means even a very short video testimonial accompanied with audio is processed immediately by your prospects. Video testimonials are also more believable than other types. Your audience can see who exactly is saying such good things about your prospects, unlike a text-based testimonial, which may or may not have been written by a real customer or a marketing agency.

*To Your Great Success,
Connie Ragen Green*