

# Ten simple steps for grabbing & retaining your clients

How to reach rural  
Australians using simple, smart &  
cost-effective marketing



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## Overcoming the poisonous epidemic in rural Australia

The majority of client communication with rural Australians has been *poisoned*! Typical symptoms include:

- Boredom
- Lack of response
- Loss of contact
- Wasted money

Causes of poisoning have been attributed to:

- Long-winded writing
- Confused messages
- Dull headlines

In January 2009, we launched an antidote. Through an intensive one-day workshop a miracle cure was revealed. *Direct marketing techniques in Australia's rural sectors - a revolution in 'Grabbing and retaining your clients.'*



The rehabilitation program is constantly reviewed. In November 2009, an updated version was unveiled to an *exclusive* selection of 20 people.

They were smart enough to enrol in the program at the 5th International Australasian Pacific Extension Network (APEN) conference. Many had travelled 1000's of kilometres to be there.

This prescription reinforces some of the curative techniques unveiled during the workshops. It's intended for use by willing patients only.



**WARNING** - direct marketing can be addictive. May lead to rapid increase in demand for you & your services!

### The Steps

1. Do your research - know your clients
2. Identify what is unique about you
3. Write with clarity - grab attention
4. Get your letter opened
5. Get your letter read - use great headlines
6. Provide an offer
7. Highlight value
8. Address WIIFM
9. Use a range of media & tools
10. Create interest

## Step 1. Do your research. Analyse, understand and connect with your clients

If you want to really engage with your target audience be prepared to do some extra research. That's the reality of your role and it sure is worthwhile when your clients' interest is sparked.



At the top of the list is identification of your clients' concerns. Those identified by workshop participants included:

- Financial security
- Doing the right thing environmentally
- Time available
- Productivity gains
- Understanding government policy & investment
- Economic equality
- Looking good
- Risk minimisation
- Capacity
- Do something different, having variety
- Easy access to help
- Dealing with their life situation – kids, commitments, ageing
- Social connectivity
- Drought

### How do we address some of these concerns?

Good question! Here's some more thoughts from your peers:

- Get out there & talk to people - know your client. Find out what they need!
- Use innovative tools to communicate. Use different media (and tools) to communicate the same message
- Build investment, ownership and buy-in from clients
- Segment message to target different interests and needs
- Get involved in the local community & show commitment to the local community
- Be upfront. Be realistic!

### And how do we make sure we're wanted?

- Be personable - develop a good rapport with clients
- Work with service providers (private sector) more
- Establish credibility
- Maintain independence
- Provide free information

**Step 2. Identify what is *unique* about you**

Our parents always valued us for our uniqueness. Some of us were even ‘special’...which can mean sooooo many things! The problem is many of us forget this. And in Australia we’re often ‘shunned’ for standing out. Too cocky. Too up ourselves (to use a technical term.)

But if we don’t stand out, we’re gone. We know our clients have a lot on their plate. We know a lot of people are competing for their time. We have to **stand out** from the crowd. One of my (new) favourite quotes is “If you want to have unusual success - you gotta be unusual!”

Being self-centred, I’ve never found that difficult! Still it’s not just about bragging or being a freak! It’s about providing a host of *irresistable reasons* for your clients to do business with you.

You already know your clients’ concerns - so build on these



*Exercise*

- List the reasons why your clients (current or potential) won’t work with you now
- Brainstorm ways to overcome these
- Identify what’s *uniquely different* about you (your role, skills or services)
- Articulate why they should do business with you

Top 5 reasons customers aren’t working with me	Options to overcome these

*What is uniquely different about me (or my work)?*

- 
- 
- 

*Why should people work with me?*

- 
- 
- 

*What's my 'Unique Selling Point'?*

*Example USP*

For our cafe & catering business we've articulated why our clients should do business with us. We've condensed this down to "Healthy, high quality food that you'll love. Guaranteed. Or it's FREE."

### **Step 3. Get the writing process right - writing with clarity**

Communication is about connection. With people. Not stakeholders. People. Most of the people we deal with are busy in all aspects of their lives. Just look at the list of concerns we generated in Step 1! So our writing process needs to be simple, clear and effective. We're not writing essays or looking to pad things out. All we need to do is focus on:

- Key messages
- Outline of headlines & subheadlines
- One idea/sentence
- Short sentences (4-16 words)

Remember - all letters should follow the AIDA structure:

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

## Step 4. Get your letter opened

This can be one of the fun and creative aspects of direct marketing. You can use either:

- Sneak-up mail
- 'Billboard' mail (headlines, calendars or testimonials on the *outside* of the envelope)
- Lumpy (3D) mail

Options identified to do this included:

- Sticky tape seeds on to the letter or paper infused with seeds
- Matchbox with seeds inside
- Hand addressed envelopes (to small target group)
- Coloured envelope
- Seasonal postage stamps
- Stickers with messages on them
- Chocolates, minties or lollies in envelope
- Use target groups' own language (eg Yorta Yorta)
- Deadline or date to be opened before
- Calendar printed on envelope
- Postcards
- Using the flier with no envelope



You can also use text & email reminders before meetings and follow-up calls to maintain contact

## Step 5. Get your letter read

### Using headlines

Having an effective headline is one of *the* ways to get peoples' attention. All you need to do is make a start and rework it. Keep thinking of the benefits that your reader may see. The headline needs to grab their interest and get them to read on. And on. And on.

Some headlines that we reworked:

Original headline	Reworked headline
Communication brainstorming session	How are you reaching your people?
Chiltern-Mt Pilot Biolink project	How to improve properties in the Chiltern-Mt Pilot area
Apply now for River funds	Would you like some extra funds to better manage your riverfront?
Funding available	Plan now and reap later
A message from the Chair	Listening to our community. People love getting letters!
Another farmer dies early	Can you help save 112 farmers lives this year?
Relevant research - you can make a difference	Make our research relevant...to <u>you</u>

Original headline	Reworked headline
How to safeguard your stored grain	Is your grain in the silo as safe as money in the bank?
How is your dairy business positioned for 2010?	How to be <i>ready</i> for your 2010 milk price OR How low can you go? Plan for 2010
What the wine industry wants from you	Worried about your funding future? OR Is your research end-user focused?
Effective tools to turn ideas into action	What's been on your mind? How to work through those challenges

### Other headlines we created

- Improve your performance...as a manager. **Free** evaluation planning support
- Can you make **\$80/ha** from saltland? We can!
- Sick of milking cows? Install robots!
- Farmers - have you got financial problems? Contact FAB for *free & confidential advice*
- Hear about research grown in *your backyard*. Register now for the Geraldton crop update
- The *only* thing we want from you all year...

**BONUS!** Here's an *example* of the opening for a letter inviting farmers to be paying members of a local grower group.

*At last! Research that's relevant to the West Midlands!*

*Good research does not come for free.*

The reality is that one simple variety trial can cost over \$100,000. Just like your crops - it needs land, inputs and careful management. Then there's the specialist scientific expertise, measurements and documentation of results. Sound expensive? Well the truth is we've only scratched the surface....

But we have good news! The *new* West Midlands Grower Group is now offering you exclusive access to local research. For only \$37.95/month you'll get:

- A quarterly newsletter showcasing local research results
- CD interviews with industry experts (every 2 months)
- Website access - to see yield results as they're posted
- Access to growers online forum (find out what other cutting-edge growers are doing)
- Free attendance to our annual field day

Sign up before 30th June and you'll receive your first month's membership for FREE!

Just complete the membership application below and fax it to Hellene Iscool on 9981 666 or join online at [www.wmggroup.org.au](http://www.wmggroup.org.au)

PS - you've only got 13 days to get a free month's membership

PPS - this is the *only* group providing localised research in the West Midlands

## Applying the 4U's to a headline.

Bob Bly's 'bible' (The copywriters' handbook) shows a fantastic way to 'measure' the strength of your headline even before you use it

- Urgent
- Unique
- Ultra-specific
- Useful



Testing our headlines on a 1 (poor) to 4 (great) scale for each of the 4U's enabled us to come up with these improvements.

Headline	Updated headline
How to improve properties in the Chiltern-Mt Pilot area	Chiltern-Mt Pilot landholders. Only one month left! Get help to improve your property now.
\$5000 scholarship available to students	Apply now for an Agricultural Field Scholarship for your child
Stone knapping workshop	It's happening! Stone knapping workshop soon.
Plan now and reap later	Funding available for immediate environmental works – farmer trials

## Step 6. Provide an offer

We need to make sure we keep our reader interested in our message. They've got plenty of other things to be reading! A great offer will keep their interest and get a response. Some offers to use include:

- FREE training and planning tools
- Money for nothing
- Turn off your mobile & get your boots dirty (getting managers into the field)
- Come and meet your data (join the field trip)
- Touch a real, living blackberry (getting managers into the field)
- I'm free and available
- Up to \$1.0 Million available to manage native vegetation
- \$10,000 for firewood establishment
- \$10,000 to burn! Bonus future carbon credit options
- \$2000 to bury (soil carbon)

## Step 7. Highlight value

We need to constantly highlight the value of the services or products we're offering. People need to have a solid *reason* to contact you. One that directly *benefits* them.

- We have funding available to rehabilitate your eroded gully
- We can translate guidelines. 90 pages of bureaucratic BS translated into English

## Step 8. Profile and tools

There are plenty of cost-effective ways to lift your profile.

- Newsletters
- Postcards
- Website
- Blogs
- Online-forums
- Member events
- Use celebrities
- Video online & DVD
- Podcasts & interviews
- Advertorials
- News articles

## Step 9. Address WIIFM

One way to identify your target audiences' WIIFM is to go back and

- Identify concerns
- Identify how you can assist in addressing them

## Step 10. Create interest

Remember, people love stories. We've connected with stories since we've been kids. So always be on the lookout for stories to use with your target audience. Think of and document:

- Three things that you know about their local area in relation to the topic
- Three things that link you to the target audience, the local area or the topic

Hint 1 - find some good *people-based* photos

Hint 2 - another way to create interest is through competitions. The options are endless!

### *'Before' and 'After' photos*

When using these, think of innovative ways to really highlight differences. Lots of us have taken before & after photos. They're a fantastic tool to highlight the effectiveness of a project, program or change.

To add some impact to this consider your 'before' photos. If you want to highlight just how bad things 'were' how could you do this? And how could you magnify the impact of the 'after' photo?

Here's one idea that you may be able to tweak (this would need someone with a sense of humour and that you get along with) for 'comparison' photos



Say the farmer has tried a new 'fertiliser' on his crop in a test paddock. (And I'm assuming here that it's worked really well) Get a photo of them in the 'old' fertiliser paddock just before harvest. Have them wear the crappiest clothes they possess (I've got plenty of these...) and have the world's worst farm ute in the background. In the 'good fertiliser' paddock get them to dress up in a dinner suit, nice clothes, top hat, whatever you can convince them to do. Get a really nice car in the background. You could even get them to do the 'Toyota' jump (Oh what a feeling!)

This is just one idea & there's plenty of variations – the key thing is to highlight and magnify the differences

PS - and of course you'll be doing a short video interview with them in the paddock on this.... won't you?

### **Reignite clients**

If you're trying to get 'old' clients back on board, consider using surveys, letters, calls or field trips

### **Summary**

Identify your message. Match it to your market. Use the appropriate media. Keep it short & sweet. Use your headline to get their attention and keep them reading on. And on. And on.

And if you're under the pump, always remember, 'Good is good enough!'

## **More on Andrew Huffer and Associates**

All our programs are tailored to client needs. In plain English, we'll find out the problems and challenges you have and develop a solution just for you. Recent programs delivered include:

- Crash course in facilitation
- Five steps to improve team effectiveness
- Strategic Planning 101

See [www.andrewhuffer.com.au](http://www.andrewhuffer.com.au) for more information

## **Background on Andrew Huffer**

Andrew is a qualified facilitator and trainer with 16 years experience in working with managers, rural communities and businesses across Australia and overseas.

His expertise includes:

- Client engagement through direct marketing
- Group facilitation & planning
- Community engagement
- Developing effective teams
- Conference facilitation

In his consultancy role he has delivered 551 workshops (at last count) for a wide range of clients over the last ten years. These workshops used a participatory approach to ensure all people were involved in actively contributing to the workshop outcomes.

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