

Effective promotion using what's already in your kitchen cupboard...

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. Tell your story
4. Use connection, clarity and structure - use great headlines
5. Provide an offer
6. Highlight value
7. Make sure your letter gets opened
8. Use a range of media & tools
9. Address WIIFM
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. Here's a selection identified by previous workshop participants:

- Financial security
- Time available
- Productivity gains
- Understanding government policy & investment
- Risk minimisation
- Capacity
- Dealing with their life situation – kids, commitments, ageing
- Social connectivity

How do we *find out* our clients concerns?

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

- Get out there & *talk* with people - know your client. Find out what they need! Listen to them
- Use innovative tools and different media to communicate and find out what's going on in their lives
- Build investment, ownership and buy-in from clients
- Use surveys and competitions - online and offline

And how do we make sure we're wanted?

- Be personable - develop a good rapport with clients
- Work with other service providers (across sectors) more
- Get involved in the local community & show commitment to the local community
- Establish credibility
- 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 and we're 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!"

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



Stand out!

Top 3 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. Tell your story

People love stories. We've grown up with them. We tell them to our friends. We watch them on TV. Stories are a constant in life. They've always been told and passed on. So tell yours. Let people know who you are, what you're trying to do and what's important to you. Include things like:

- Years of experience or time in business
- Brief history of your business or organisation
- Number of clients
- Awards received or relevant qualifications

Most importantly, personalise it. If you're a small business or a small office you have a fantastic advantage - flexibility! So use this and tell people a bit about yourself (without even getting your story approved!)

You could tell them about:

- Hobbies
- Recent holidays
- Pets - yes pets make great celebrities!

Step 4. Use connection, clarity and structure

Communication is about connection. With people. Not stakeholders. Not clients. 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. So when you're going to write something - anything - make sure you focus on:

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

This approach applies to fliers, brochures, sales letters and websites - even Facebook!

Put simply by John Carlton:

- Tell them what you've got
- Tell them what it will do for them
- Tell them what to do next!

(i) Follow the AIDA structure

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

So what does this mean in practice?

Attention

Use a HEADLINE to grab people's attention. You'll need to constantly test your headlines. One simple test is to think, "I was reading my favourite magazine and saw this headline...would it grab me?"

Interest

What's their main concern? What's a big challenge they're facing? Think about this and how you can connect to this in your promotional work. And rather than just making them feel bad (or worse) about this, show a bit of empathy. Show how you understand their situation.

Desire

This is where you start to flag that there's a solution to their problem or solution - and you have it!

Action

Tell them exactly what they need to do next to get hold of the solution to their problem

(ii) Identify the Message-Media-Market mix

We're going to help you work on your message using the AIDA formula and develop strong, attention grabbing headlines. When you've got your message right, think about where your target market gets their information from. That's where you need to have your message - right there in front of them. And if they go to multiple places to get their information, you need to be in all those places.

And you may be trying to hit a number of target markets with your message. So be willing to put in some extra leg-work and tailor your message for each different audience. Remember the things that are important to you may not be so important to a teenage audience. Amazingly, husbands and wives have different views on the world, so you'll need to think about the male:female ratio of your target audience as well.

Just think of this as the Message-Media-Market triangle. Make sure you address each 'side' of the triangle. Test that your message is for the right market, using the media they prefer.



(iii) Use a headline to grab readers attention.

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. Knowing who you're targeting and what their concerns are makes this much easier. The headline needs to grab their interest and get them to read on. And on. And on.

Some headlines that we've reworked:

Original headline	Reworked headline
Chiltern-Mt Pilot Biolink project	How to improve properties in the Chiltern-Mt Pilot area
Kambalda's Biggest Morning Tea 2012	Indulge and feel good at Kambalda's Biggest Morning Tea
Celebrate National Heritage Week	A day of fun, food and entertainment for you and the kids
Aussie Host	How to stand out with great customer service
Tjuntjuntjara CRC Goes Wireless	Now you can get 24 hour internet access each day of the year
Another farmer dies early	Can you help save 112 farmers lives this year?
How to safeguard your stored grain	Is your grain in the silo as safe as money in the bank?
Sixty five roses day	What would you do with sixty five roses?
Get out of my Cyberspace	Surfing lessons in Koorda! Keep yourself safe inside cyberspace

Types of headlines

Direct – GP in town, this Wednesday only!

Indirect – The \$250 alternative to losing customers

News – Finally – vet services come back to Leonora

How to – How to improve business performance in less than 4 hrs per month

Question – Are you concerned about your eroding hearing?

Command – Act now to protect the health of the man in your life

Reason why – Eight great reasons to use your local CRC

Testimonial – “Being part of this workshop has finally enabled me to have a clear direction for my business”

Headlines starters

- We're looking for people to...
- How to..
- Isn't it time you..
- Finally..
- Now you can...
- Why most..
- Remember when you..
- Want to...
- A message to all..
- Is your..
- 1400 reasons why..
- If you're going to..you may as well...
- How I..

(iv) Practise writing your headline

Think of an event you have coming up, or a service you'd like your clients to utilise. If you've already done some promotion for it, review your headline. If not, then brainstorm a number of different headlines that will **grab** people's attention and get them to keep reading.

(v) Apply 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 a \$5500 Agricultural Field Scholarship for your child
Plan now and reap later	Funding available for immediate environmental works – farmer trials
Finally! Men's Shed for Coolgardie.	Finally! Men's Shed for Coolgardie – but we need your help to make it a reality
Does your computer argue with you?	Does your computer argue with you? Take one of our computer courses to ease your differences.
Need a present for the person who has everything? Let us help you design the perfect present.	Need a present for the person who has everything? Bring in a special photo and let us help you design the perfect present.
Health or family problems? Rural in Reach can help	Do you have health or family problems? The CRC can arrange free and confidential help through the Rural in Reach program

My original headline

Make it urgent

Make it Unique

Make it Ultra specific

Make it useful

Step 5. 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
- 1:1 consultation valued at \$330
- Access to Members Only forum
- Go into the draw to win a \$500 travel voucher
- I'm free and available ...to help you attract up to \$10,000 for your community group
- Complimentary entry and afternoon tea at home games
- 10% off your membership when you pay before June 30th
- Be featured on our website when you become a Gold Sponsor
- Membership package. FREE headphones when you sign up for our silver package.
- No fee for design and printing (valued at \$20.00)
- Save \$550.00 by signing up to our MYOB course
- 10% off library memberships during school holidays

My offers

Step 6. 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 7. 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 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!'

My three month plan

From this workshop I will use the following:

During the next three months I'll take the following actions to utilise the tools & knowledge I picked up:

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 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
- Stakeholder engagement
- Developing effective teams
- Conference facilitation

In his consultancy role he has delivered 616 workshops (at last count) for a wide range of clients over the last twelve years. These workshops used a participatory approach to ensure all people were involved in actively contributing to the workshop outcomes.



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