



Market Your Creativity

By:
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Introduction

I am Lisa Jacobs, a work-at-home mom and CEO of a thriving creative business. I get paid to do what I love to do, and I want the same for you.

Through my blog, Marketing Creativity, I show people how to get more website traffic, sales and professional recognition. I want you to build a business that you rely upon for extra income, and I can help you brand, market and advertise your wares to make it happen.

Plus, I talk about building and expansion every chance I get because it is delicious, and I love it! The infinite potential for growth is, by far, my favorite part of this career.

While I discuss the strategy and operation of my business often, I rarely share the full story of how I built my own. Here's the truth: I never imagined I could do something I love, work from home, and get paid for it. To this day, the thrill of it still knocks me off my chair.

I built the [Energy Shop](#) in 2010 with less than \$100 in supplies. Today, I've earned more than six figures and counting. This complimentary e-book will give you some background on my journey and some insight into my strategy over the years.



About Lisa Jacobs

I live in a gloriously rural area of Virginia in a town called Jeffersonton on the outskirts of Northern VA. I am a happily married mother of 4 absolutely scrumptious children (2 girls and 2 boys).

I am always, Always, ALWAYS! looking for hard-working, like-minded artists to connect with, so please say "hello!" You're only a stranger once.

[Marketing Creativity](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) |
[Pinterest](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Etsy](#)

My Marketing Strategy, in a Nutshell

If you live in a snowy region, you'll know that every time there's a big snowstorm the news and weather channels cover it all. day. long. If you're anything like me, you watch the report for five minutes and then wonder: *who in the world is going to watch this all day long?*

The answer to that question is: my husband. He eats snowy weather reports up with a spoon. He simply can't get enough of the Doppler, the predictions, the pictures or the footage of snow. He loves it, and he tunes in and switches between snow-reporting channels all. day. long.

Here's the important question: Which viewer is more valuable to the news stations? The woman who tunes in for five minutes or the man who tunes in for five hours? Which person is going to watch more commercials, share snow report videos, and talk about what they're hearing on the news? The guy who tunes in for five hours, of course.

I've always understood this about business. "My people" are the only people I focus on. Many sellers will jump through hoops for that one-off sale: they'll stuff keywords, list and re-list all day long, spend eight hours chatting in the forums, etc., but I've never been a seller who looks for one-off sales (or five-minute viewers).

I only want to talk to the people who are willing to really tune in. I know they're what matters most to my bottom line, and I value them immensely. In fact, I invite my Energy Shop customers to read Marketing Creativity regularly (the blog where I discuss all the marketing strategies I use to find Energy Shop customers).

Know why? Because if you look at the core of my strategy, it is simply this:

- Find people who deeply appreciate your work, and then
- Deeply appreciate those people, and then
- Brainstorm ways you can find more people just like them.

There's no scheming or tricking involved. I certainly do not use fear-based tactics or cringe-worthy advertising strategies. I offer full disclosure into my very honest marketing mission: I want to find the people who really *get* what I do.

If that sounds good to you, then let's get down to business.

The Success Series

The Success Series is a guide that I created to help people create side income and a multi-faceted business from their passions. Even if you already own an online storefront, you might find new ideas to create multiple streams of income. And who doesn't love multiple streams of income?!

- Part I: What do you want? That is the question! •

I am curious: Do you know yourself well enough to have a clear definition of what you want? It sounds like a simple question, but many people don't (1.) Know themselves well or (2.) Have a clear definition of what they want. And it's imperative that you figure this out! I created [Marketing Creativity](#) with the specific purpose of helping handmade sellers define and create the success they seem to seek. I offer tips, ideas, and instruction for gaining sales and earning income.

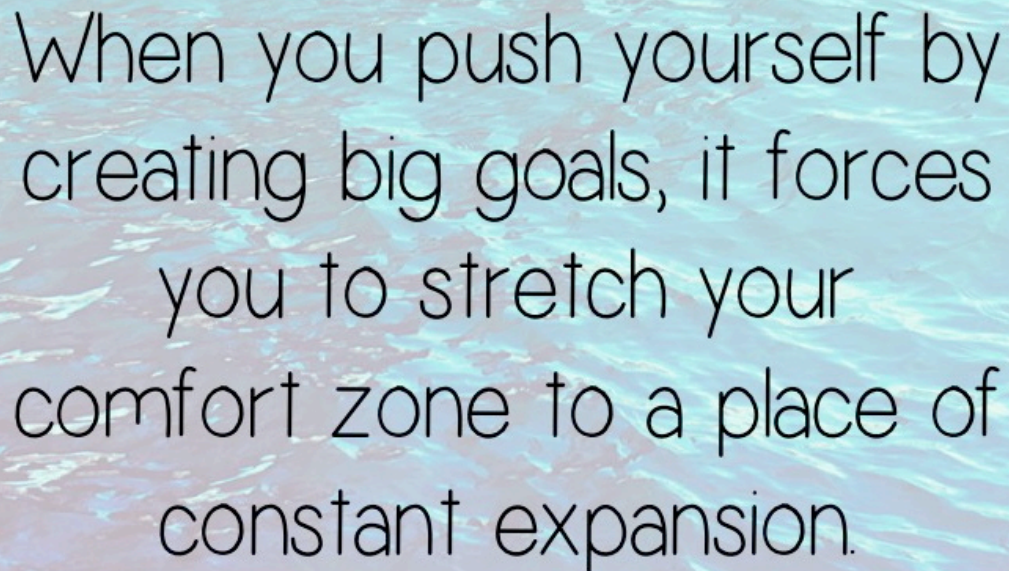
However, if you don't have an intended destination, how will you ever arrive? In other words, business articles can offer you advice all day long, but unless you apply it toward your definite goals, you'll be zigzagging all over the map.

I have an important request of everyone who reads this series. I ask it kindly, but urgently: please do not compromise with this life. Please do not vaguely wish for more money, more exposure, more family time, more love, more success, more laughter, or more adventure. If you want more of anything, turn off the TV or stop surfing the internet, sit down with yourself, and clearly identify what needs to change for you to feel fulfilled, satisfied, and hungry for more Life every day!

Because we all deserve more LIFE! in our life.

[{Tweet it}](#)

This means no more accepting, keeping, or doing what you don't want. This is a tough statement because it calls for change. Change can be uncomfortable--but the discomfort only lasts a minute in the grand scheme of things. I'll talk more about embracing change later in the program, but the point is ...



When you push yourself by creating big goals, it forces you to stretch your comfort zone to a place of constant expansion.

As Cherie Carter-Scott said, “You deserve to have everything in your life exactly as you want it.” To kick-start your success, I ask that you create a clear definition of what you want. The rest of the series will help you start organizing your wants and desires into an action plan, but first you must specifically name what it is that you want for your life.

Next action. Compose an “I Want” list. It will have three columns, and I’d like you to list AT LEAST ten items under each category. Your categories are: I want to have; I want to be; and I want to do.

Don’t you dare put easy things on that list! Here, you want to stretch your imagination, reach for the stars, and envision your very best life. Yes, you can have it all--you absolutely deserve to have everything in your life exactly as you want it. So go make your list and check it twice!

- Part 2: Ready up for change. What don't you like? •

Now I ask you to prepare for change, as it's absolutely necessary in life. How do you feel about change? Personally, I love it though [I know how uncomfortable it can be](#). Change can break hearts, cause grief, make you hurt, and induce fear. Sometimes it's blunt and traumatic, and you're left in the wake of change trying to piece yourself back together.

At other times change is so subtle and gentle, it happens without your knowing. Suddenly, you feel the urge for a new haircut, a new wardrobe, or even a new career. The instinct to change pushes you to spring clean, clear your clutter, and organize your life. It blooms in rhythm with the seasons.

Change is born of your desire to grow as a human being. It's part of evolution. It happens regularly as you shed who you were and open up to whom you are meant to be. Many people resist change and stand hard in their position; Others embrace it and follow its lead. Like anything else, you have three options on how you'd like to handle change: fall backward, stay in place, or advance forward. Which one do you choose?

Open yourself to the flowing river of life. Don't decide where change is taking you; [let it lead](#). Last year, I resolved to finish a book, but in the middle of composing it, the [Energy Shop](#) fell into my lap and became a full-time gig. The book had to wait while I let that sudden inspiration be birthed into reality. Don't be too rigid, and always be willing to improvise.

Next action. Create a "What I don't like" list. Naming your dislikes is the quickest, easiest way to discover what needs to change in order for you to succeed. I want you to observe every aspect of your day for the next three days, and keep a running tab of things you don't like. List at least three items for each of the five pillars of life: 1. Physical; 2. Relational; 3. Financial; 4. Spiritual; and 5. Mental.

Physical will include what you don't like about your body and your physical space. Your relational category includes any issues you're having with every living thing you have a relationship with--from houseplants to your child's friend's parent. Financial dislikes include any problems or worries that occur in relation to money. The spiritual category will cover anything that unsettles your overall wellbeing. And finally, mental dislikes will cover lack of attention, focus, and continued learning, as well as time management and productivity.

• Part 3: Create an “I’m SO Good at This!” List •

If you haven’t figured it out by now, I’m going to let you in on the secret: We’re researching your best life! First, you made a list to help you figure out what you want. Next, you created a list of all the things you don’t like about the way your present life is unfolding. Now, you’re going to study your activities and figure out what you love to do well! How fun is that? If you’ve never looked at your life like this before, then I am particularly excited for you!

Next action. Create an “I’m So Good at This” list. This one is really eye-opening and a joy to create. It will have four categories. I want you to list at least five items in each category, though I encourage you to list as many as you can. Your categories are:

1. I do this very well (I’m practically an expert or I am an expert)
2. I do this rather well (better than most)
3. I do this well (better than some)
4. Things I want to learn to do well in the near future

Take a few days and really think about this list. You’ll definitely enjoy most things you do well, so train yourself to be conscious of what you’re doing and how good you are at it. Some activities to get you thinking: dancing, cleaning, playing softball, shipping, gift wrapping, crafting (be specific--knitting, making soap, throwing pottery), organizing, writing, exercising, caregiving, cooking or baking, playing golf, marketing or promoting your business, socializing, decorating, etc.

Go through your day from start to finish and think about your routine. You’ll surprise yourself at how many items you can add to the list!

• Part 4: Map Your Dreams •

Next you are going to map the “I Want” list that you created in the first assignment. By simply mapping this long lists of wants, you begin to organize your plan for success. As you consider each of your desires, your priorities present themselves in proper order. As you put your distant goals further out on the map, any current or pressing goals will feel more surmountable.

Next action. Grab a blank piece of paper (or use the back of this page). Put a “you are here” dot right in the center of your canvas. Next, grab your “I want” list and get ready to move all the items over to your Dream Map.

● You are here!

Just like a real map, your dreams and destinations certainly can’t be stacked all on top of one another. As you plot your destinations, you may realize that some take priority over others, some are within reach, and some will take longer to achieve.

As I was doing my own Dream Map, I realized that some of my desires are way off into the future. For instance, I want to be an active senior, but that’s decades away so I’m able to put that desire way out in the corner of the map. I want to be a good wife and mother to my family. Because I want that all day, every day, I practically wrote it over top my “you are here” marker. As I filled up my map, I started to separate what was important to me right now from what I’d like to focus on later.

In creating your map, you will see how your goals are achievable and that you must physically move toward them. If I want to travel from Pittsburgh to New York, I can’t sit down on a park bench in Pittsburgh and wonder why I’m not getting to New York.

Here’s the simple formula for success: take a few small steps toward your goals every day.

{ [Tweet it](#) }

You either take those small steps, or sit on the park bench wondering why you don’t have what you want.

It seems simple, but few people actively move toward their dreams. Most people are sitting on a metaphorical park bench complaining about how their dreams aren't showing up for them. Can New York show up in Pittsburgh? NO! If you want to see New York, you must move toward it.

Have fun with this assignment, and meet me back here for Part 5, where I'll help you speed your travel along your Dream Map.

• Part 5: Remove Your Speed Bumps •

Welcome to the finale of the Success Series! Let's wrap this up by brainstorming ways you can speed up your travel along your Dream Map. We'll utilize some of the assignments that you've already completed (starting with your "What I Don't Like" list), so have them handy.

Imagine all of those things you don't like as obstacles or speed bumps en route to your destination. We want to find solutions for these energy drains, because they can truly slow you down every day. Just as there are only 1,440 minutes in a 24 hour period, there are only so many units of attention you have during your waking hours.

You must begin to pay attention to where you apply your attention.

Just like time, you can't waste attention and use it productively at once. For example, I can't [obsessively click my six favorite websites](#) waiting for something to happen and make something happen at the same time. I have to choose one or the other.

That is why what you don't like is so important. Your "What I Don't Like" list is filled with giant speed bumps that manifest as procrastination, resistance, negative influence, and the invisible sandbags you might carry on your back. When you think about some of the items on your list of dislikes, can you not feel the energy zap it causes? Whether it's a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach, a stressful sigh, or an ache in your back, that energy zap physically shows itself in one way or another, literally slowing you down.

You want to remove those speed bumps to reach all the goals on your Dream Map. To do so, you need to take a hard look at that list and figure out what it's going to take to delegate that task, forgive that person, disengage from that activity, or rearrange that situation--whatever the unpleasant thing may be, you need to find a solution for it.

Next action. Come up with at least two creative solutions for each item on your "What I Don't Like" list. Pretend that you have unlimited resources and plenty of time to remove each obstacle, and write down every imaginable solution that comes to mind.

Be forewarned: at times, the solution for these speed bumps may seem paradoxical to your goals. For example, you may want to have six months' salary saved in the bank, but at the same time, you're absolutely sick of cleaning the bathrooms in your house. It sounds like ridiculous advice, but to save more money I would not hesitate to tell you to hire a housekeeper for two hours per week. I feel that you need to remove the speed bumps on your path to increase your speed of travel. With a housekeeper cleaning your bathrooms, you're free to increase your productive units of time and quality of attention.

If your "What I Don't Like" list and Dream Map are anything like mine, you'll need money to work on your obstacles and objectives. To earn this, we are going to revisit the third assignment: your "I'm So Good at This!" list.

Let me preface these final instructions concerning money with this important message:

You are part of an infinite and creative universe that is ever-expanding. You're made of the same stuff as that universe, and your own resources and potential are equally creative, ever-expanding and infinite. Money is only one of the resources just waiting for you to enter its abundant flow. It is exchanged all around you, and right to you, every day - just like the air you breathe.

Conversely, if you believe money is hard to attain, it will always be hard for you to attain it. That said, you can use your “I’m So Good at This!” list to find new and creative ways to tap into that ever-expanding, infinite flow of money.

Wayne Dyer said, “Genius can show up in as many ways as there are human beings.” That list of things you do well is full of genius. Your unique talents hold the secret to funding all the travel around your Dream Map.

How can you perform those things you do well in service of others?

It’s like playing connect the dots. What is on your list that can be combined, or done in new ways, that will bring you more income? Believe it or not, there are a million ways to combine your talents to boost your revenue. The following are a few of the ideas I came up with to increase my income using my own “I’m So Good at This!” list:

1. I feel that I handle the business of running an Etsy shop rather well, so I opened another one: a supply shop where I de-stash and sell unused items.
2. I feel that I dance well, and that I exercise more than most, so I decided to obtain a Zumba instructor’s license. Currently, I am paid \$40 per class to lead the exercise sessions I’d be doing anyway.
3. I feel that I write well, and I love to research marketing strategy, so I am building Marketing Creativity into a community. I’m planning an e-program, courses, and webinars that will produce revenue.

Those are just three examples. Sometimes to increase my income, I have to earn a new license or skill-set, and I plot those challenges onto my Dream Map. The more I learn and do, the more I grow and expand. I work on my map every day, and I feel on purpose and in Life’s abundant flow. I wish you very much of the same. I thank you for participating, and for sharing your individual genius with me.

The Success Series: Brainstorming Solutions

| What I don't like | Creative Solutions |
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How I Earned Thousands of Sales on Etsy

In August of 2010 I had been in business for a total of three months, and I had earned 450 sales. I found that I loved business as much as I loved making the products that I sell. I wrote the following story and published it in the Etsy forums. (The thread was closed within a few days because I was fresh, juicy meat in a vicious shark tank. Have I mentioned that the [Etsy forums drive me crazy?](#))

Days later, Tim Adam picked up the article and published it on [Handmadeology](#). The positive response from the handmade community was amazing. But more importantly, I had found my voice. The infinite potential for growth and expansion that came with the Energy Shop? I could talk about it all day.

My blog, Marketing Creativity was the result.

450 Sales in the First Three Months of Business: Here's How!

Give Stuff Away. If you check out my shop, it will come as no surprise to you that I'm a real believer in karma. Share your product. If anyone I know personally shows interest in my jewelry, they get a bracelet. I appreciate support in all forms. Before I started selling anything, I gave packets of bracelets to many of my friends. Their feedback was essential to my beginning, and it proved that I had a lovely little gift in each creation.

This reminds me of something written by Wayne Dyer, "When you say, 'How may I share?' the Universe responds, *How may I share with you?*"

Let me be clear in that I don't share for what I'll get in return. I'm often thinking of someone when a new stone comes across my desk, and I love making a new bracelet in loving thought of someone I know. Having clarified that you don't want to give just to get, here's my point: Anytime I put an unexpected gift package in the mail, I see a huge increase in sales that week. How can you share?

Don't Do Giveaways. Early on, I ran a sweepstakes on my own blog site for a free bracelet. I was just starting out, and I had plenty of time to play with my blog and mention my website on the forums (read “Help Your Customers Find You” below).

By the time the winner was chosen, my business had gotten busier, but of course I made the bracelet and sent it to the giveaway recipient as promised. She had an issue with the bracelet on arrival, and her story was suspicious. I was sorry to disappoint the winner, but I did not have the time or energy to perform ongoing customer service for a nonpaying customer.

I've learned to work around this by offering gift certificates for sweepstakes. To redeem my gift certificate, the customer will need to log into their Paypal account and fill out all the information on Etsy as well. That person is then a customer with a gift certificate, rather than a sweepstakes winner, which means we're “in business” and following all the regular policies.

Celebrate Your Sales. When I hit 100 sales in my first month of business, I was beyond ecstatic. To me, it meant: *I really have something here!* I saw a full-time job and a second income in my near future. I needed to CELEBRATE! and I wanted to do it with the people who got me there.

At 100 sales, I created my first “[Customer Appreciation Special](#).” I ordered Chrysanthemum stone, and that sale is how it was debuted in my shop. I made a stock of 10 bracelets and priced them so that I didn't lose, but my customer clearly won.

Once I reach a goal, I make a new customer appreciation special and plan the next sale accordingly (including larger stock for higher landmarks).

Help Your Customers Find You. This means to have a [Facebook fan page](#), a [Twitter account](#), a blog (if you like to write), a website, and a public email address. Encourage other bloggers to review you. These forms of spreading the word are a slow-moving, but steady progress. You are building a brand. Every spot where you leave your mark is leading people to your shop.

Be Wary When One Customer Finds You Too Much. I do well enough wasting time. I don't need other people to do it for me.

When I first opened shop, I earned a huge fan. Man, she loved me. She followed me on Twitter and tweeted to me often, she found me on Facebook and commented all over the page, and she wrote me direct messages through whatever forum was available to her in the moment. She had a boatload of requests.

My site had all the things she loved; she'd just like me to alter them slightly: a different size, another stone, etc. For two months, I worked for her, ordered for her and researched for her. Just as I was about to jump through 3 hula hoops on fire, I looked her up in my records. She had made one sale, with no promise to make another. It seemed one of her hobbies was managing my business, and I was allowing it! I stopped doing anything just to please her, and we grew apart gracefully.

I love my customers so much. 99.8% of them are not anything like the person I mentioned above. Moreover, when I'm dealing with that .2% of customers who are all-demand and no check-out, I don't have time to appreciate my valued buyers. When the convos are coming daily, but there hasn't been a sale in weeks, you might want to determine who's really interested in your products from who's just bored at home.

Buy Advertisements. I'm in the jewelry business on Etsy, so I *absolutely* have to fish a bigger pond. I spend an average of \$.40 per click on Facebook advertising to bring the outside world onto my online storefront.

I love! Love! LOVE! my Facebook advertising. Where my stuff is trending is where I need to advertise. I pick very select groups to sell to, which keeps my cost per click rates on Facebook very low.

I'm not going to give away my entire strategy here (but I do share it all in Advertising & Exposure). For our purposes today, let's say I make boutique-y children's clothing (I don't). I used to subscribe to US Weekly,* and man oh man, did I think that I needed to outfit all of my children (there are four) in upscale, boutique-y, one-of-a-kind outfits. If I were selling this line, I would take out an advertisement on Facebook for married women aged 26-38 who "like" the US Weekly Fan Page. I would put a child that looked simple and neat, a like Suri Cruise-like model, in one of my cutest outfits and create a fabulous headline.

In start-up, Facebook Ads have been everything I need. Facebook recently started accepting Paypal, which is just one more convenience. Google Ads are another very user-friendly advertising resource. However, I find the cost per click to be insanely

over-priced. Books that teach the CPC strategy, like *The 4-Hour Work Week* by Timothy Ferris, have increased the popularity of search engine advertising. I recently cashed a coupon for \$75 in free Google advertisements,** and I was paying more than \$1 for every click (two years ago, each click would have cost ten cents). In my opinion, a dollar per click is simply not worth it.

However, you may have a product that would do very well on Google Ads and every \$1 spent could potentially bring in great profit. Obviously, your marketing strategy depends on your market. So, ask yourself:

- Who are your customers?
- How old are they?
- Are they predominantly male or female?
- Do they have a family or are they single?
- Are they conventional or quirky?
- What do they read?
- What movies/TV do they watch?
- Where do they take vacation?
- Are they easy-going or adventurous?
- What are their hobbies?

Build a typical customer on paper, and then you'll start getting ideas on exactly how to find them.

Follow Your Customers Lead. For me, this means always carrying 3-packs. My 3-packs are three bracelets made of smaller gemstones, listed at inexpensive prices. The 3-pack is not my favorite listing as they take up much of my precious time and they are always at a reduced price, but the customers love them.

I've spent these last few weeks trying to cut 3-packs out, but when I do sales drop. The 3-pack is especially important when I think of new customers. I imagine them coming to my site, seeing all the different gemstones with all the different meanings, and feeling completely overwhelmed. *This one means this; that one means that. I need a little of the moonstone, and a little of the jasper in my life . . .* I imagine them doing this until they just leave my website and we part ways forevermore.

If a customer comes looking for a great place to start, there it is: the 3-pack. For this reason, I try to always carry a starter 3-pack because even if I'm not gaining profit, I am gaining a new customer—which is so much more valuable than that of a single sale. The point is to follow the customers' lead, and give them a simple

place to start. They'll thank you for it, and you'll thank them for all the future business to come.

Think Outside the Box. The Energy Shop has taught me that I have an entrepreneurial spirit. This does not feel like work to me. It feels like *Cake Mania* or *Spa Tycoon*, or any of the other virtual business games that I have become obsessed with in the past. Every seed you plant is important. Even though it doesn't take root and sprout immediately, you're putting yourself and your brand out there.

Finally, Realize That I Am Not Your Competition. I am always your friend. We have neighboring shops and we help each other, whether you realize it or not. My Facebook advertising brings people to Etsy with each campaign I run. I guarantee that some of them have shopped around and spent elsewhere. I'm glad; I want them to! Because I love you, Etsians. I really, really do! I care for you and your wellbeing. So good luck!

*If I were a boutique-y children's clothing store, I would also subscribe to *US Weekly* to keep up with Hollywood baby trends and change my item tags to match what other *US Weekly* subscribers might be searching each week.

**Magazines, like *Inc.*, will offer great coupons for first-time Facebook and Google advertising

Competitively Speaking, Think Abundance

After the above article was published, I split my time between building my business and writing about its growth. Because I was also promoting my blog, I continued to share in the Etsy forums. The following post was inspired by my time there ...

There are currently more than 260,000 open shops on Etsy* and, I'm proud to say that one of those belongs to me. I'm Lisa Jacobs of the Energy Shop—a spirited little spot where I sell mostly bracelets. Jewelry is a crowded market on Etsy, but I've made over 800 sales this year.

When I wrote my first post in the Etsy forum about making 450 sales in my first three months of business, I shared my secrets and asked that readers remember that I am *not* the competition. I told the community, "I am always your friend. We have neighboring shops and we help each other, whether you realize it or not."

At the time, I was using Facebook advertising to attract new customers, many of whom joined Etsy when they visited my shop. I saw my Facebook ads as a way to help my business *and* the selling community I was a part of. However, that logic sparked a debate between me and a reader who wondered: if I'm not trying to "outsell the competition" then why do I advertise in the first place?

If you and I were both shop owners at a local mall and I advertised to draw people to my store, you would benefit. All Etsy sellers are my neighbors, and if someone comes to my door, it just so happens to be right next to yours. I don't want to take your sales, but I do want to make sales. I told the reader, "To me, that's like saying if you and I were fishing the ocean for dinner, we're competing with each other. I don't see it that way. I see it as both of us pulling from the bounty of the ocean."

This is where we must be careful in business: erase those thoughts of scarcity.

Ignore the reptilian-side of your brain that tries to shout, "If they have, I'll have not!" I keep book author, Louise Hay's lovely voice on my iPod and in my ear, and this topic reminds me of her saying that every thought we choose to think is an affirmation. When you say, "There's only so much to go around," that's an affirmation, but a negative one based on fear and lack.

As we are all human, we all are capable of that sudden jolt of envy when we see the high sales and huge success of another. What I try to do is transform that scarcity thought from envy to admiration. Do you realize that small business magazines, like *Inc.*, are doing articles on Etsy sellers, like Ashley G, who are reporting six figure salaries with their handmade craft? **SIX FIGURES!** With nothing but the most respectful admiration, I shout, "Yes, please! That's for me! Hallelujah!" By keeping my creative juices positive and forward-moving, I work toward success.

Imagine this: If you could figure out how to tell everyone in the entire world about your product right now, and then weed out the people who were interested from the people who were not, you would never be able to keep up with the demand from those who were interested. Not by yourself, anyway.

Here's a new thought for the New Year: change your affirmations in a direction that leads you away from competitive, scarcity thinking and toward that sea of interested people. If you take one thing from this article, I hope it will be this quote

from Wayne Dyer: “Abundance is scooped from abundance, and abundance remains.” That’s Universal thinking, and to that I say, “Yes, please!”

*There were 269,000 active shops in January of 2011. That number has since quadrupled. My feelings remain the same.

1,000 Sales and Counting in My First Year of Business

This was my first anniversary post, and it became a beloved tradition that I’ve honored every year since.

In this post, I won’t tell you the basics that I assume you already know as it’s been said a million times that a successful shop has excellent photographs, detailed listings and targeted tagging. Booming expansion involves more than that, and I LOVE talking shop.

I believe that businesses DO grow organically, but I also believe that you can fertilize your business for a more aggressive growth rate (this costs you money, more time, and forces you out of your comfort zone). This post, I’m going to highlight your organic options. I’ll save the more aggressive growth strategies for a later time. Here are some free or low-cost strategies to get your shop rolling:

Contribution = Good Karma. In my last post, *450 Sales in the First Three Months of Business*, I explained what I believed karma was doing for my shop. I gave product away whenever I could, and I still do. Now that I have some more money flowing, I practice “Etsy karma.” I set aside a small portion of my monthly expense budget to buy handmade from my community. I spend that fixed dollar amount of my expense budget on whatever’s happening in my life that month—child’s birthday, 1,000 sales present for myself (thank you very much, @onegarnetgirl), stockpiling Christmas gifts, etc.

If it can be said that 68% of what we spend locally goes back into the local community, then you better believe the same about our online Etsy community. I don’t just love to sell here; I love to shop here too!

Think Positive. I write about this a lot, as it’s one of my favorite topics and it’s at the core of what my Energy Shop is about. I create jewelry to remind people of

their best intentions, I have studied Feng Shui, I practice positive affirmations daily, and I pay close attention to what drains my energy and what inspires it.

Help Your Customers Find You. This bears repeating, so I'll say it again. This means to have a Facebook fan page, a Twitter account, a blog, a website, and a public email address. Encourage other bloggers to review you. These forms of spreading the word are a slow-moving, but steady progress. You are building a brand. Every spot where you leave your mark is leading people to your shop.

One of my best forms of free advertising is a blog post I wrote about one of Bravo TV's Real Housewives who wears spiritual jewelry similar to what's featured in my shop. This blog article was written months ago and continues to drive traffic to the Energy Shop today:

[Dina's Bracelets on the Real Housewives of New Jersey](#)

Consider Every Customer a Repeat Buyer. The majority of my first-time buyers become my repeat customers, and you better believe I honor that bond. I urge you to take a step back the next time you get a sale and see the bigger picture. Don't think of any sale as a one-time deal; always treat each order as if you've just earned a loyal customer for life.

Let your listings reflect this. How can you anticipate the needs of your customer in every listing? Do they know you have a necklace to match those earrings? Do they know you make soft, knitted throws that will match the scarf they just bought?

You are the expert in your field. The customer came to you because you have knowledge and talent that they appreciate. That means your shop is full of items that they want. Own your expertise, and be each customer's personal stylist by using your listings to suggest what other products you have that will work for them. Throw Customer Appreciation Sales and Specials

Here's wishing another 1,000 sales to you and me!

Convert Your Item Views into Items Sold!

This is a report I wrote to offer you eight concrete actions that you can take **RIGHT NOW** to increase your sales this month.

I assume that if you're looking to increase your sales, you already know the three key factors to a successful shop as they've been repeated a million times. (1.) [Take excellent photographs](#); (2.) [Write detailed, descriptive listings](#); and (3.) [Use keywords that will help your customers find you](#).

Now it's time to fine-tune the inner workings of your small business for maximum sales potential.

Perfect your proposal

Online storefronts can be very successful, but you must first realize that the internet may as well be as big as the universe. It's vast, ever-expanding, and so much more than we will ever fully comprehend. Every day, people are uploading products, pictures, information and more onto the same web space where you sell. It's hectic, and you need to stand out.

So, the first thing you want to determine is where you are getting your sales from right now because you can enhance what's already working. For instance, if your blog is bringing you the most traffic (and consequently, customers), then you have one of two options:

1. Double the traffic —or—
2. Double the effectiveness of your shop listings so your views lead to more sales

Given these options, the typical approach is to double the traffic. When all is said and done, that's the easiest route. For instance, imagine you have 1,000 monthly views to your blog and those views drive traffic to your Etsy shop. You predict that you will need 2,000 monthly views for your sales to double. Therefore, to increase your traffic, you will leave back-links around the web, comment on other blogs,

submit some guest posts to bigger blogs, etc. Do enough of that legwork and you'll definitely increase your sales in the next 30 days.

Let's imagine you did just that, and you go from 20 sales in January to 40 sales in February. If you want to match those sales in March, you have to do the same amount of legwork. What happens, six months down the road, when you want to reach 80 sales per month? You'd have to double your blog traffic again, thereby doubling your doubled legwork! Not only are you working on your craft, but you're also spending hours commenting, linking, and submitting to bigger blogs in the hopes that your legwork may or may not pay off.

That's not the most effective use of your time.

Now, let's look at option 2: Double the effectiveness of listings so your views lead to more sales, which I highly recommend. Make your listings more effective so that views lead to sales as often as possible.

If you want to increase your traffic later, you can be confident that your listings are doing their job when those new visitors arrive. With this approach, you understand that each potential customer has an important decision to make when they visit your listing: *Should they buy?*

Every view that goes without a sale means that they answered, "No." Obviously, you want them to answer, "Yes!" So, here are five ways to turn every "no" into a great big "yes!"

Engage Your Customer. Create a catchy title for your listing and make sure the description sings the beauty of the item and/or lists its attributes. Then, close strong.

Your title needs to catch the customer's attention in two seconds, so ensure that it does that with powerful description (words like: soft, cozy, brilliant, trendy) or service of the product (words like: convenient, priceless, holistic, organic, natural).

The listing should help the customer imagine what they'll *feel* like when using your product. This can be difficult, because once your product goes to listing, you've dealt with it a lot and it's become an ordinary sight. Remind yourself how extraordinary and unique the piece is by imagining your customer's reaction to it upon arrival. What will they think when they see the color, feel the texture and

weight, and use it for the first time? Visualize the impression they are going to have, and describe *that* in your listing.

Explain the Value. Believe it or not: people don't care about price. EVERYBODY wants value. What value does your product have? Insert that into the listing! If it's a knitted scarf, it might be softness guaranteed! If it's jewelry, it might be affordable luxury. As creative artists, we have to ensure that our customers know they are getting unique products. Your listing must convey that the customer will receive unmatched, custom-made quality at an incredible price.

Feature Feedback. That last positive feedback you got from that customer who couldn't stop raving about the amazing order she received from you? Yeah, go ahead and put that across the top of your next listing. Word of mouth is HUGE, and don't think that we need to know whose mouth is producing that word! If you hear how great a product is, you know you have to check it out! As will your customers.

Insert a Call to Action. If you have created a piece of pottery, jewelry, art, knitted cloth, etc., and you know that's the only one that exists on this planet—SELL THAT. Make sure your listing reveals that the item is the only one of its kind, and it may not be there next week. Sellers use the phrase, "one of a kind" and "only one in stock," but don't forget high-quality phrases such as, "limited edition" or "elite." You are original, so be sure to market your uniqueness.

Up-Sell. Do you gift-wrap? Up-sell. Do you have a matching sweater to go with that scarf? Up-sell. Do you have a pair of earrings that compliment that necklace? You guessed it, up-sell. Frequently leave a link in your listing to another listing.

When I shop a brick-and-mortar store, I usually don't check out unless I have found two things that I both want and need. If I can only find one thing from the whole store to buy, I question if that retailer is really my style and I usually put the one item I found back on the rack. Help the customer shop your store by leaving convenient links to like products.

Ensure Repeat Business

Once a customer finds and follows you, HONOR THAT BOND. Finding new customers can be difficult and expensive, but appreciating the people already

shopping your online storefront is simple and cheap. Here are three ways to do just that:

Offer After-Purchase Discounts. You can buy a cheap box of business cards from Vista Print or MOO with a discount code printed on them. Include this card with every order you pack for returning customers to use on their next visit, as it's an ingenious marketing strategy. I once ordered from an Etsy pottery seller who included a discount coupon in the package. I normally toss business cards right away because I can't afford the clutter. However, this coupon sat on my desk for months, right in front of my computer—which led me to the seller's shop often! Discounts are irresistible, so offer a good one, and your customer will keep your shop name front and center.

Make Exclusive Offers for Previous Customers. When you are communicating with your buyer post-sale, make sure that they know you offer exclusive discounts to returning customers. Encourage them to sign up for your email notifications, Twitter feed and Facebook fan page. Leave links to make it easy on your customers, and then make those special offers count.

I have a policy in my shop: I don't contact my customers through email with anything less than a spectacular offer. I won't waste their time with 10% off or free shipping sales because I know that only amounts to a few dollars off the purchase. But every once in a blue moon, I'll host a 25% off sale in my shop and send my previous customers an exclusive code for an additional 10% off. That's a total of 35% off their order! When I contact my customers, I make sure to let them know that they are valued, and that I respect their time and consideration.

Honor Your Best Customers. At the end of my first year of business, I sent handwritten "Thank You" cards and a free product to my five most valuable customers. Their huge purchases and repeat business seriously contributed to the Energy Shop's bottomline. They not only shopped my store, they gifted it to their friends as well—giving me exposure to people I would not have reached otherwise. The bond that I created with those customers increased my shop's success. I was so grateful for their business, I couldn't help but express it.

That's one of the ways you can separate yourself from the big retailers, such as Old Navy. You're not big business, and that's one of your shop's assets. I can bet Old Navy doesn't know the name of their best customer or recognize the value of that person's business, but you can! Recognize them for their value to your personal and professional bottomline.

Perfect the customer-shop interaction so that it becomes as effective as possible, and later you can focus on increasing your views. This will guarantee higher returns whenever your site traffic increases.

You can increase your sales this month, so go get busy with it!



Be so good they
can't ignore you.

- Steve Martin

Make the Most of a Trending Product

I mentioned earlier in the book that I had written this blog post, [Dina's Bracelets on Real Housewives of New Jersey](#) when I noticed a product similar to mine on television. Here's an article I wrote on how to make the most of a trending product:

I recently noticed a picture of Johnny Depp in one of the "Etsy Finds" promotional emails. He was sporting a leather cuff, and I got so excited! I wondered, *does an Etsy shop make bracelets for Johnny Depp?!* As I clicked through the link it turned out that no, they do not. The listing was for a cuff "inspired by" and "styled like" Johnny's cuff.

When your product is trending, it's a golden opportunity to recruit new customers. The style of jewelry I make at the Energy Shop is a hot trend right now. Beaded bracelets are up and down the arms of very high-profile celebrities. I see jewelry similar to mine all over the pages of In Style, US Weekly, and other big magazines. The question is: how do I ride that hot trend?

I don't have any photos of celebrities in my listings because none of them are wearing Energy Shop (yet), and I'm cautious of the legal permissions those photos may require. However, you can use the trend without infringing on any copyrights, and I'll offer you an example of how I managed to do just that.

I'm a huge fan of Bravo TV's *The Real Housewives*. I love them all in every location. On one episode of the Real Housewives of New Jersey (#RHNJ), a cast member named Dina was wearing gemstone bracelets and had an "energist" come over to smudge them.

To explain, gemstones are minerals of the earth, and like crystals, they've been believed to hold natural attributes and healing properties for thousands of years. Smudging is a cleansing, Native American ritual that involves white sage.

At the Energy Shop, I use gemstones and materials like those seen on TV. I cleanse, charge, and smudge each piece I make. As I was watching RHNJ, I quickly realized

that the episode explained everything I make and sell! The question became, how can I use that information as my own commercial?

Let me touch back on my feelings on competition before I go any further. When it comes to gemstone jewelry, you can find bracelets similar to mine at \$2,000. You can find those featured on RHNJ for \$150. You can find mine at \$30. Or you can find them at others shops on Etsy for \$5. It all depends on what you're looking for.

If you're looking for THE bracelet that Dina wore on a RHNJ episode, you're not going to be satisfied with anything less than that bracelet for \$150. If you like the concept of spiritual jewelry, then I can offer you an armful of bracelets for \$150 that will satisfy your needs. There are different strokes for different folks, and some customers like to pay for higher-profile, brand names. As handmade artists, we are not competing for those customers.

Instead, we're looking for customers who like the trend and appreciate handmade products. We can use the higher-profile attention to find our customers. Here's how:

Cost-per-click Advertising. On Facebook, we “like” all kinds of pages and activities. We enter our age, our gender and our marital status. When you come to Facebook as an advertiser, you realize how ingenious the system is.

I “like” Real Housewives of New Jersey. Therefore, I've seen the episode that explains the bracelets that I sell, and so have the other 200,000 people that “like” the show. While that particular episode was airing (read: my product was trending), I paid about \$.40 per click to feature my products and target those 200,000 RHNJ fans. It made for many new customers.

To begin, all you do is click the link “Create Ad” above the ads that show to the right of your Facebook profile. Then, simply fill-in-the-blanks and you've got your first ad.

This works with Google and other search engine advertising as well, although I've stated before that I think their CPC has become insanely overpriced. For the Energy Shop, it's over \$1.00 per click, and text only. But, the same idea applies.

Blog on Your Trend! The post I made on [Dina Manzo's bracelets](#) drew in way more traffic than I would have ever expected. If you search “Dina's bracelets” on Yahoo or Google, my blog is the first result—and that just happened for me with

good tagging and keyword usage. I'm honest in the post, I give credit to the actual jewelry designer who appeared on the show (I even link to her online storefront), and I leave links to my site as well.

Tweet to Your Audience. Again, at the time this RHoNJ episode was airing, I used the hash tag (#) on Twitter to reach fans of #RHONJ while promoting my shop. I often repeated tweets as new episodes were airing. The hash tag is a great way to talk to a large audience of like-minded people.

Carefully Tag Your Listings. Remember to include “inspired by” and “styled like” as mentioned in the Depp example above. I think it would be big trouble and bad karma to lead any person to believe that you made a product that you didn't.

Imitations and likenesses are a natural part of the handmade world, but everyone has a unique style. You are right for your customers, so help them find you with tags. I use “spiritual gemstone jewelry” and “beaded, power bracelets.” If the customer is looking for that general concept, then they are really going to enjoy browsing my shop.

Here's wishing you good luck with your trending product.

Budget for Success: How I Tripled My Income in 2 Weeks

I wrote this report after my second year of business when I had an A-ha! moment about my business finances. Though I'd earned a substantial second income for my family, my business finances had been unstable at best.

While I enjoy budgeting, I am unable to predict my income with any certainty. Therefore, any budget I tried to create caused me a great deal of stress. Even if I only promised to pay myself a minimal amount every two weeks, I became anxious at the prediction. With the ups and downs of my account balance, I always feared that the business funds would be depleted when it came time to transfer the promised amount.

In addition, my [paid advertisements](#) had become inconsistent. Typically, I push them hard for two weeks and then drop them for a month. I had no marketing calendar. If there was a lot of inventory, I advertised; If there wasn't, I built stock.

I found the state of my bank account so worrisome that I chose not to count on my small business for any income at all. In fact, I thought I was doomed to wait three years (experts estimate that it takes at least three years to establish and rely on a small business) before I could regulate my budget.

Therefore, there was no method to my madness. I randomly paid myself, ordered supplies at will, and sporadically placed advertisements. Recurring monthly bills associated with my business never failed to surprise me. I always walked away from the notice wondering, "This again? When am I going to be able to pay it?"

Unfortunately, this is a good reflection of the way I've managed my own personal finances in the past. Six months ago, my husband and I were scrambling to catch up with our bills, and then three months later, I paid off every dollar of debt we owed ... including student loans! My financial situation is sometimes good,

sometimes bad, but almost always extreme. What I realized is that, when it came to money, I didn't know how to create a comfortable and happy medium.

Since money brings me a solid sense of security, I knew I had some well-worn patterns to break in terms of financial management. I don't personally know any very wealthy people, which means my natural environment can't teach me how wealthy people think. My new household financial plan is a result of three resources I've been studying: [I Will Teach You To Be Rich](#), [The Millionaire Next Door: The Surprising Secrets of America's Wealthy](#), and [Get Rich Slowly by J.D. Roth](#). My method is credited to all three.

The personal financial plan I'm discussing today is based on the Balanced Money Formula (I learned about this from J.D. Roth and it's credited to [All Your Worth: The Ultimate Lifetime Money Plan](#)). Of your take home-pay, 50% is allotted to needs, 30% to wants, and 20% to savings. You can read all about it here: [The Balanced Money Formula](#). I love the idea, and it's given me great peace of mind in my personal financial planning.

Therefore, I've adapted a business financial plan from the Balanced Money Formula. I decided to take one week's income and divide it: 50-30-20. In my business version, 50% of the revenue is allotted to business needs (supplies and shipping), 30% is dedicated to advertising (I'm currently using Facebook ads), and 20% of the week's revenue is my paycheck.

I wanted to implement the budget immediately. But first, I needed to regulate my marketing plan. When you find marketing that works, there is nothing better than being able to set it and forget it. Before the 50-30-20 plan, I allotted \$20-40 per day for advertising and nervously watched to see if I would make a sale. If I didn't sell something, I felt like I lost that investment. I'd turn the ads off and go back to the drawing board.

That's a bad move on many levels. First and foremost, it's scared money, and scared money never wins. You should confidently put forward an investment and believe in either its purpose or return. Second, it's only the beginning of *real* marketing as it can take up to 20 times to capture a potential customer's attention.

The following guide to advertising was written by Thomas Smith in 1885, and with today's short attention spans and desire for instant gratification, I believe it's even more relevant now.

Guide to Advertising

The first time people look at any given ad, they don't even see it.

The second time, they don't notice it.

The third time, they are aware that it is there.

The fourth time, they have a fleeting sense that they've seen it somewhere before.

The fifth time, they actually read the ad.

The sixth time, they thumb their nose at it.

The seventh time, they start to get a little irritated with it.

The eighth time, they start to think 'Here's that confounded ad again.'

The ninth time, they start to wonder if they're missing out on something.

The tenth time, they ask their friends and neighbors if they've tried it.

The eleventh time, they wonder how the company is paying for all these ads.

The twelfth time, they start to think that it must be a good product.

The thirteenth time, they start to feel the product has value.

The fourteenth time, they start to remember wanting a product exactly like this for a long time.

The fifteenth time, they start to yearn for it because they can't afford to buy it.

The sixteenth time, they accept the fact that they will buy it sometime in the future.

The seventeenth time, they make a note to buy the product.

The eighteenth time, they curse their poverty for not allowing them to buy this terrific product.

The nineteenth time, they count their money very carefully.

The twentieth time prospects see the ad, they buy what is offering.

My new technique is to do what's already working, only for a lot longer. If no sales come that day, I know that my advertising money was well invested because I'm building a relationship with many potential customers.

When I combined a regulated marketing plan with the Balanced Money Formula, I had the unexpected benefit of increased confidence and a new shift in momentum. In fact, I tripled my earnings in two weeks. Here's what happened:

The first week I applied the 50-30-20 plan, I stopped spending and saved all of my earnings for 7 days. There was approximately \$350 in my account.

50% Needs: I purchased \$175 in supplies.

30% Marketing: I set my Facebook ads for 7 days at \$15 per day, renewing an ad that performed well for me in the past.

20% Pay: I sent the remaining \$85 to my personal checking account. Payday!

Now I know that \$85 doesn't sound like a lot. I'd like to pay myself more after a long week, yet it felt so good! When I sent that \$85 from Paypal to my personal checking, I knew that it was what I could rightfully take from the account and still attend to all the other necessary matters in business.

As the week progressed, it became clear that my Facebook ads were performing exceptionally well. It was hard to stop looking at the growing balance in my Paypal account, and I could hardly wait to divvy the next week's earnings.

In seven days, I had an outstanding balance of \$1,351.63!

50% Needs: I spent \$675.82 on the next batch of needs and supplies for the business.

30% Marketing: I renewed the same ads, and started another one geared toward a new and different target audience. This week, my daily budget was a whopping \$57 per day.

20% Pay: I paid myself \$270! Getting much better!

This is both comforting and exciting! It feels like I have control. I know I won't accidentally bankrupt myself with a new project idea ... right before my monthly bills roll in. I've learned how to budget with what I have, and there's nothing better than feeling like you're operating within your means.

After six weeks of following this budget plan, I felt in total control of my finances. I had enough stock and supplies stashed away to put me ahead a few months. I had plenty of cash for shipping expenses, and I was able to earmark money for other recurring fees before the bills actually arrived.

Once I was all caught up on expenses and more in control, I changed my plan to pay myself a better percentage of the profit. **An average week looks like this:**

Average Weekly Income: \$600

20% Needs: \$120 for supplies, shipping, monthly fees and expenses

20% Marketing: \$120 for marketing. (This averages out to just under \$20/day.)

10% Savings: \$60. I like to put a small amount away each week for an emergency, my next big idea, or even a potential Christmas bonus.

50% Pay: \$300

This works out beautifully, because after a busy week I have more money to replenish my supplies, *and* I get compensated accordingly.

How to Gain Free PR for Your Business

I have become obsessed with gaining PR for my creative business, mostly because it seems elusive and elitist; a spotlight reserved only for the uber-successful. Public relation experts charge outrageous fees for helping you spread the word about your creative business. However, with a little research + the right introductions + a pinch of patience, it is possible to get your work out into the world without shelling out the big bucks!

The point is not to tell the whole world about your product, but rather a whole lot of the right people. Start by [identifying the ideal customer for your business](#). You want to be sure you're sending your marketing message out on the right channels to exactly the people who want to hear it. Once you've identified your ideal customer, ask yourself: Who are they reading? What's their style? Who do they follow on Pinterest?

The better you get to know your customers, the better your chances are of connecting with them. Next ...

Actively seek out new business all the time. How do PR agents spread the word about your business? They simply *know* people. They introduce themselves to everybody and form relationships. I know it's old-school, but maybe you've heard of it? It's called "networking," and most online sellers and industry leaders are doing *a lot* of it.

Think "two degrees of separation." For example, maybe you've learned that your customers love to read *Better Homes and Gardens*. Unfortunately, a magazine with a large audience can be hard to tackle on your first PR pitch.

Instead, think in terms of two degrees of separation from that large publication to come up with a handful of home and style bloggers that BH&G has featured or invited to guest pin on Pinterest.

Next, pitch a giveaway, seasonal story, or a tutorial to those home and style bloggers. Once you get to know the blog, you can probably think of many ideas that would work for their audience, which is wonderful because bloggers need new stories every day!

Start writing your own blog and newsletter. This is the starting point to position yourself as the expert in your niche (whether it be crocheting, painting, jewelry designing, or candle stick-making).

Creatives, in general, are too used to imagining themselves in this huge collective of other creative people. We often think to ourselves, "Why should I make my product when so-and-so already has it covered?" -Or- "Anybody could make this. Why am I trying to do it for them?"

Let me bust this myth once and for all: The world is waiting for your unique spin on the talent that many may have, but none will deliver quite like you.

And not everybody can do it! Most people label themselves as "not creative" (and consequently believe their non-creative affirmations). They're looking to you to fill the void. Show off your work and share your talent in a blog. Send newsletters and special offers to all of your readers to build an audience of raving fans and happy customers.

Start to engage with other leaders in your niche market or industry.

Reach out to one new contact. And then another. And then another. I lovingly laugh at us all when we sit at home and wait to be discovered. I know I'm guilty of it, and I bet you can relate! It took me two years to realize that if I wanted people in my industry to know me, I had to go out and introduce myself!

Not only that, I knew the people that I wanted to know better were *busy*. I assume hoards of people are reaching out to them every day. So (and like any virtual interaction I conduct), I first imagine how I would approach my would-be friend in person.

- Would I waltz up to a stranger and ask them to introduce me to their circle of impressive and popular friends?

- Would I introduce myself and then ask for a big favor?
- Would I say hello and then tell that person to go look me up online?

Introduce yourself in a way that makes people want to get to know you better. When I meet someone face-to-face, I always show interest in them whether they initiated the introduction or not. If I'm not the initiator of the first contact, the number one thing I want to know about a new acquaintance is, what brought upon this meeting? Who are you and why might we know each other? What do we have in common? Are you someone I would be interested in getting to know better?

I'm an introvert, so if I'm the one introducing myself there's always a good reason! When I'm the initiator, it sounds something like this: "I'm Lisa, and I'm your neighbor on (street name). I wanted to meet you because our daughters have (teacher's name), and I hear about (your daughter) often! How long have you lived in the neighborhood?"

On both accounts, I listen for cues that tell me more about the potential relationship: are they positive and upbeat? Did they lead off with something negative or sarcastic? Are they warm and friendly? Or are they cold, abrupt, or standoffish? Is there humor or a willingness to laugh? I love a first impression! I think it says so much about a person.

Now, let's translate that into an online introduction. First things first. If you're the initiator, please do a little friendly, online stalking and get to know the person you're contacting. The first time you find a popular blog in your industry is not the day to contact the editor. Take your time, do your research, read a few blog posts and learn more about the person in charge.

This will help you ...

- Perfect your "who I am, and why we might get to know each other"
- Find common interests
- Brainstorm ways you might help each other
- Think of possible contributions or guest posts
- Show familiarity with their work

You'd think the key to a good pitch would be to keep it short and sweet, and it is, but beware of new introduction turn-offs. As a blogger, I get pitched to by nameless corporations and marketers trying to build back links. Therefore, avoid a too-short

or -direct email that could be read as cold and abrupt (or be confused as nameless corporation-spammy). If a potential contributor doesn't sound warm, friendly and a part of my industry, I don't take the time to respond to the contact.

In an introduction, tell your potential contact who you are, what you do and what you two have in common. Then, tell them why you're reaching out.

Why are you reaching out? If you want to make fast friends in your industry, then you're always going to reach out to a new contact with an offer to contribute or support. How can you help? Let me count the ways:

- Offer a review or testimonial of their product. Ask them if they'd like to use your headshot with it. (In marketing and copywriting, a testimonial with a headshot is proven to be the most persuasive to potential buyers.)
- Share their product or article with a tweet, and follow-up with a "thank you" email telling them why you liked it.
- Consider advertising on their website.
- Offer a guest post or tutorial to a blogger.
- Interview them for your blog (or share it with a larger blog audience).
- Think of an introduction (to another professional you know personally) that you could make to potentially help their career.

Be sure that you've supported your potential contact in some way, big or small, before you ask them to support you.

Don't forget the follow-up. So, let's say you just made a great new acquaintance in your neighborhood. For me that would mean, she laughs easily, loves to watch and process *The Real Housewives*, and she likes campfires and beer (down-to-earth). I can tell in the introduction that we're going to hit it off, and I want to be her friend. At the end of our meeting, should I shake her hand and say "goodbye", or should I invite her for a coffee sometime?

Just like in real-life, if you want your contact to become more than just a far-off, virtual stranger, you'll want to leave an opening to follow-up ...

- Offer to support, help, review with any upcoming projects
- Tell them you'll reach out again when ... [a mutually beneficial time/place/event is going to happen]

- Ask for a one-on-one consultation for whatever amount feels appropriate to them
- Tell them you have some ideas to bounce around if they're interested in collaborating and promise to get back later
- Offer to Skype if they need anything else or have any questions about your ideas/talents/abilities

Make a List. In my productivity planner, [Your Best Year](#), I ask readers to make a list of 20 creative connections: people you want to support, collaborate with, be mentored by, interview, or introduce yourself to. Challenge yourself to list all 20 right now, and vow to reach out to them ALL by the end of the year. You'll be amazed by what your creative connections will inspire!



Creative Connections



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5 Income-Boosting Ideas for Your Creative Business

1. Identify where you're getting a return on investment and what you're giving away for free.

For example, if you're spending the majority of your day methodically producing one-of-a-kind designs and listing them in your online storefront, *be sure* to ask yourself if it's paying off for you. I work with countless shop owners who spend months, if not years, stocking their virtual shelves toward a goal (# of products, # of pages or # of product in each shop category).

Having inventory and a strong selection does help your shop, it's true. However, I've had sales with only four items in stock. Inventory doesn't make or break your storefront. If customers see something they *have to have*, well, they buy it.

If you're all production and no sales, it's time to ask yourself if your current strategy is working. You're giving all of your designs and creativity away for free! Stop producing and start examining your business model, marketing strategy and shop cohesiveness. Tweak the business until you start seeing a return on your investment of time, resources and energy.

2. Challenge every limitation you have. Get used to asking these questions in this order:

- **Why not?**
- **How so?**
- **For what result?**
- **Is it worth it to try?**

Challenge Your Limitations

1. Why not?

2. How so?

3. For what result?

♡ Is it worth it to try?

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Here's my own personal example, a conversation between me and myself:

Q: Why am I **not** learning a new jewelry skill that will take my business to the next level?

A: It's costly to learn.

Q: How so?

A: It would take a \$500 investment just to get started.

Q: For what result?

A: A massive increase in profit.

Q: Is it worth it to try?

A: I mean, *yes!* Why not?

I'm sitting beside my new blow torches and soldering equipment as I type this!

3. Think large-scale and long-term. Be better than Etsy (or whatever online host you might use).

For example, Etsy's new handmade rules don't affect me at all. If anything, the change makes me sad because some of you have told me it makes you sad. Other than that, it has no personal impact on me *or* Energy Shop Jewelry.

It's only a host for the business you want to build, but too often Etsy sellers feel as if Etsy's business *is their business*. Please remember that Etsy is its own business, in fact, it's its own corporation. Your business feeds Etsy, but Etsy does not depend on you alone ... SO PLEASE don't depend on them.

4. Stay the course. Just keep swimming! Keep working toward your goals even when there's no fanfare, and you're in for another really long day.

I've truly thought about quitting my creative business at least a dozen times. I just get tired of the lonely hours, the lack of professional support and the feeling that this may be all for naught. I get sick of people not being able to relate to me or my career ambitions. I get really tired of the unreliable income.

However, I've seen enough return on investment to know that it's worth it. In fact, this business has become everything I dreamed it would be three years ago as a stay-at-home mom with toddlers still in the house. When you're feeling low or disgruntled, take a moment to appreciate your business for what it adds to your life.

5. Teach what you know. Even if it's just to one other person. If you're living your passion, teach someone else how to do the same. Thank you!

On Closing, with Love

I want to end this book by telling you that your reading it means so much to me. I dream of a world fueled by passion and creativity, and by our doing what we love to do for a living, we add to that mighty vision every day.

The point I don't want you to miss is that we are, each one of us, creating something unique from our positive thoughts. We are artists. A few years ago, I didn't have a small business ... I just had an idea. I invested my time, energy, and a little bit of money; just as you did.

Taking the leap into creative business is something to be proud of, whether you're waiting for your first sale or celebrating your first thousand. You *are* creativity, and I want to thank you for bringing all of that fabulous energy here and sharing it with me. I adore you! Wishing you all the best in life and business, Lisa Jacobs

Feeling hungry for more? Here's what else I have to offer:

[The Marketing Creativity blog](#)

[Private Coaching](#)

[Shop Fundamentals](#)

[Build a Better Creative Business Course](#)

[Advertising and Exposure](#)

[Marketing Creativity Shop](#)

If you enjoyed this e-book, I'd be ever so grateful if you shared my work with your friends and colleagues. Thank you!

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