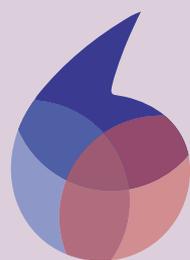


# **The 6 marketing fundamentals every business owner needs to increase sales**



the  
copy**buff**  
Ad + Email Specialist

# PRINCIPLE #1: Reciprocation

**People tend to return a favour. If you offer something for free, people are more likely to buy from you in return.**

## The Proof

Waiters rely on tips from satisfied diners to boost their salaries. Imagine boosting those tips by almost 25% (!) with minimal effort and cost. A study showed that tips increased by 3% after diners were given a free mint along with their bill – and increased by 14% when diners received 2 mints.

The most effective was when the waiter left one mint with the bill, and then returned quickly to offer a second mint, implying that this was done specifically and exclusively for those diners. **That resulted in a 23% increase in tips. Not a bad ROI, eh?**

## The Personal

Let me tell you a story.

The setting: London's Regent Street. Hamleys toy store. Seven storeys of themed displays, magic shows, and novelty toys. A child's wonderland.

Yet my 5-year-old daughter just couldn't pick a birthday gift. I pointed out the merits of painting kits, doll accessories, and Lego sets as we purposefully rode escalators and she flitted from one option to the next – but we headed back towards the tube station empty-handed.

A woman wearing a long, flowing skirt and a loose bun hairstyle approached my husband and held out a single flower to our toddler. "Keep walking," I hissed, but he didn't hear me. Our toddler reached out for the flower, and my husband politely smiled his thanks. "Don't take it," I muttered fiercely. "Give it back."

The woman silently held out her palm. Her subtle smile turned into a distinctive scowl as my husband tried to return the flower. She refused to accept it. She did however take the £1 coin my ever-generous husband was coerced into handing over, and melted back into the crowd to ply her blooms onto the next unsuspecting person.

**The whole exchange had taken place without a word. It was a simple transaction: Give flower, get money.**

## The Practicalities

The principle of reciprocity confirms that giving = getting. Some ideas about what you can give prospects to trigger this instinct:

- » **Produce valuable content:** This can be on social media, in your email sequences, in a webinar, or on a blog offering practical tips and high-quality insights. (Pssst! Content marketing receives 3x more leads than paid search advertising. Let that sink in for a minute.)
  - » **Be generous with your expertise and advice:** Even a sales call with a prospect is an opportunity to give them something they'll be grateful for – and feel a need to repay.
  - » **Offer free resources:** How about an e-book packed with industry tips, or a handy checklist that is highly relevant to prospects' needs? These can be available for download on your website, or sent by email.
  - » **Hand out free samples of your products.**
- Give, give and give – and you'll quickly start to get (more leads), get (more authority) and get (more sales).

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## PRINCIPLE #2:

# Commitment + Consistency

**People have a deep need to be consistent.**

**Once they've committed to something they are more likely to follow through.**

*(Psychology geeks – here's why: We have so many choices and decisions to make daily. Commitment and consistency make our lives easier by reducing the amount of things we have to think about. We just make a single decision, and use that as reference for subsequent related choices.)*

### The Proof

**Amazon earns 35% of its revenue from cross-selling** – that is, when you place an item in your basket, a bar comes up with related items. This plays into buyers' need for both commitment (once I've bought the workout DVD I'll go all the way and get the gym mat as well) and consistency (I'm a fitness fan, and I do it properly).

### The Personal

**Developing my website involved way too many very, very late nights – and pomegranate-flavoured licorice in quantities too embarrassing to mention publicly.** (There was also a rather excessive amount of chocolate in the mix.)

On the page where visitors could schedule a call, I originally had several fields that would give me a lot of useful insight, such as, "How did you hear about me?"

Then Justin Blackman entered the scene. Justin is a copywriter with a unique brand of humour and a very specialised offering. He kindly volunteered to review my website copy, and suggested keeping the form skeletal. If people see a long form they might just click away from it, was his line of reasoning. Having a short form will encourage visitors to start filling it in – and once they've started, they're more committed and likely to complete it and just get on that call.

I listened to Justin – and learnt a valuable lesson.

### The Practicalities

**There are so many ways to get prospects to commit to your product or service. Take your pick:**

- » **Get prospects to make micro-commitments:** Also known as the 'foot in the door' technique, this gets people to comply to a big favour by starting with a small request. Instead of asking directly for the sale, ask prospects to take a small step that is easy and low risk:
  - Sign up to your email list - Download a PDF - Request a free sample - Check out your blog
- » **Keep your forms really simple.** Once prospects start filling out the form they will feel compelled to complete it.
  - Include only essential fields. A long, complicated form is daunting and off-putting, and prospects won't attempt to fill it in.
  - Break up longer online forms (both information + payment forms) into short, manageable sections and stages.
- » **Optimise your pop-ups:** If you have a pop-up on your website asking visitors if they'd like to sign up to your emails, download your free content, or give you some feedback, have one "Yes" option, and one "I'll do it later" option. Having committed to do it later will subconsciously nag at visitors and make them more likely to do what you have asked.
- » **Get a small investment first:** Charging a small fee for a consultation, audit or inspection (depending on your industry) increases prospects' commitment to your brand, thereby increasing the likelihood that prospects will then hire you for a full project.

**Channel prospects' innate need for commitment + consistency, and you're on your way to an expanded client base!**

## PRINCIPLE #3: Social Proof

**Remember negotiating with your parents as a kid? I'll bet your final card was: "But everyone's doing it!" – right?**

Surprise, surprise. It turns out we still follow the herd mentality as adults – just a little less vocally or consciously.

**People do what they observe other people doing.** This is particularly effective when:

**a)** We're not sure what to do; and **b)** The people we're observing are very similar to ourselves.

*Seth Godin, a marketer & bestselling author, says that the essence of effective marketing lies in these words: "People like us do things like this."*

### The Proof

**I could go on and on here! (I won't though – I know you've got stuff to do). Social proof is likely the most powerful of the six marketing fundamentals – check out these stats:**

- » 88% of consumers trust user reviews as much as personal recommendations
- » 97% of consumers look at reviews before purchasing
- » Testimonials can increase conversion rates on sales pages by 34%
- » Customers spend 31% more on a business with good reviews

### The Personal

**I've invested over \$12,000 in buffing my copywriting skills to a blinding sheen (grab your sunglasses!) and developing my brand identity and website. Going all in was not a hasty decision.** One significant investment was Michal Eisikowitz's CopyTribe course. I was debating about going ahead with it – until she did these two things:

1. The landing page was flooded with testimonials – including full names, pictures, and links to websites – from copywriters who had graduated the course and established successful copywriting businesses. They looked like me, they sounded like me – if they could do it, so could I.
2. Michal ran a launch webinar about the course. She described her pre-copywriter life vividly: having 3 jobs, but not being able to focus and excel at either. Always being pressured and busy, but never earning enough. It was creepy – she was describing my life. I was sold right then.

### The Practicalities

**It's so easy – and so worthwhile – to use a combination of these 4 types of social proof:**

- » **Expert:** Get a doctor's endorsements for your line of vitamins; a renowned counsellor to recommend your course on relationships; a successful investor to promote your investment program.
- » **User:** On your website, ads, catalogues, and flyers:
  - Include ratings for your company and for specific products
  - Feature testimonials (using full names and a picture where possible)
- » **Crowd wisdom:** If everybody's choosing this, there must be a reason why.
  - Highlight bestselling items - Label 'most popular' packages
  - Showcase numbers: clients, projects, results, social media metrics - Feature your clients' logos
- » **Certification:** Nothing says "Trust me" like qualifications:
  - Display industry certifications, associations and awards
  - Mention magazines features, speaking engagements, conferences attended, or podcasts you've been on.

**Get out there and establish your authority!** Let prospects know how awesomely happy your clients are; how highly qualified you are to solve their problems; and how choosing you is something everybody does.

## PRINCIPLE #4: Likeability

**The more you like someone, the more likely you are to say 'yes' to them.**

*When a used-car salesman asks you that, you can be sure of one thing: whatever your answer will be (Sydney / Texas / London / Honolulu), his reply will be, "Oh, my father was actually born there, too!" There'll be no sleazy car salesman tactics at your business – but there's a reason this tactic works, and you can use it in perfectly ethical ways.*

### The Proof

**Researchers in Hong Kong tested the effects of an advertisement for a clothes store that read: "We are contacting you directly because we know that you are a fashionable and stylish person. Your dress sense is not only classy, but also chic..."** Upfront reactions were as you'd expect: people knew they were being flattered. But their reaction was still positive, and increased the likelihood of them making a purchase. Knowing what was happening didn't stop it working.

### The Personal

**Every single one of my current clients came via LinkedIn.** But not in the way you'd think. The leads didn't come from my awesome content. Or from an irresistible pitch in a DM. Nope. It was from my connection requests.

» I always add a note to my connection requests – but not a generic template. I read the profile in full, and include a sincere, specific compliment in my note. I comment on the incredible testimonials they've received; the memorable or creative name of their brand; their impressive accomplishments (such as publishing a book); a particularly powerful line in their summary; or their extensive qualifications. Where relevant, I add some value: a suggestion for their headline, or a comment on the opening of their summary. Of course, the tone (and genuine intent) is helpful rather than condescending.

**The results are often surprising. Connection request accepted – and an enquiry.  
I was even hired on the spot a few times!**

### The Practicalities

» **Similarity:** We like people who are similar to ourselves. That's why salespeople are trained to mimic your accent or body language. My advice? Find some common ground with prospects to increase trust + likeability:

- Shared interests (e.g. art, sports, literature)
- Shared circumstances (e.g. job title, number of children, age/stage in life)

» **Familiarity:** Let prospects get to know + like you via positive interaction with you and your brand:

- Be yourself on social media. Be helpful, complimentary and respectful. Build relationships.
- Make your About page human and relatable. Include pictures of team members, and mention their hobbies and quirks in friendly bios. Bonus points if those interests are aligned with those of your target market.

» **Cooperation:** We like people who want to help us. Offer free value and have a generous, helpful approach on social media, in direct interaction with prospects, and on calls.

» **Praise:** Compliments make us feel good, confident, and more receptive to the person who has gifted us the compliment. That explains the success of my personalised LinkedIn connection requests. Give a genuine compliment – there's something truly nice to say about everybody.

» **Superficial factors:** We like things that look nice.

- While our influence over our appearance is limited, we can make sure to always look presentable and appealing.
- Make your website good-looking! Is it clear, striking, and beautifully designed?

**'Likeability' is probably the easiest marketing fundamental to implement, because you're naturally nice already :)  
This is how business happens: Know - like - trust.**

## PRINCIPLE #6:

# Authority

**Being in a position of authority (or perceived authority) makes people more likely to comply with your requests. We tend to obey knowledgeable, credible experts and figures of authority.**

### The Proof

**Would you give a stranger money just because somebody told you to? Read about this study before you answer.**

A person wearing a security uniform approached people on the street and said, "See that man over there? He's over-parked, but doesn't have any change. Go give him a dollar."

92% of people followed this command unquestioningly. But when the same person wore civilian clothes, that percentage dramatically decreased to 42%. Same person, different outfit = huge difference in influence.

### The Personal

**Our first child came in faulty packaging. The instruction manual was missing.**

What were you meant to do when a beautiful, tiny girl demanded 40 minutes of rocking – and then slept only 10 minutes? We muddled through that first year, confused by the conflicting advice we received from family and friends. "Never let a baby cry herself to sleep – she'll be emotionally scarred for life," warned one. "Letting a baby cry teaches them to self-soothe," counselled another. "Rocking for long stretches of time can damage your baby's developing brain," cautioned a third. "The rhythmic rocking motion is soothing to babies – it calms them emotionally," asserted yet a fourth.

What's an exhausted mother to do? There was no way of knowing who was right – and which advice to implement.

When Little Brother came along and showed the same resistance to sleeping as his energetic older sister, I called a sleep coach for a consultation. She was qualified. She was confident. She had an answer to every question I asked. She told me about how many babies she'd helped routine – and how many parents enjoyed feeling normal again as a result. I signed up right away – and followed her guidance even when it sounded ludicrous.

Unlike my well-meaning friends and family, **the sleep coach was an authority in this field – and she spoke like one.** She earned my trust, my confidence – and my custom.

### The Practicalities

**You know so much about your industry. But you can't sit around waiting to receive The Authority Award. Here's how to position and present yourself as an authority:**

- » **Get out there:** Publish an article. Be a guest on a podcast or blog. Seek speaking engagements.
- » **Own your niche:** Specialising in a particular service or clientele makes you the authority in that area.
- » **Talk the talk:** In your conversations and published content, express yourself confidently, assertively, and... well, authoritatively :)
- » **The stamp of approval:** Get endorsements from respected experts in your field (a renowned doctor for medical services; a gourmet chef for food products). Reference your qualifications, experience, and memberships/affiliations with trusted institutions.

**You're just a few short steps away from being crowned The Authority in your field. So, when's the grand coronation?**

## PRINCIPLE #6: Scarcity

**The Scarcity Principle is the urge to purchase or obtain something that a person feels they may not be able to get in the future. Scarcity generates demand. When you believe something is in short supply, you just want it more.**

### The Proof

**Chocolate chip cookies. Mmm. Crispy on the outside, gooey on the inside. There's just something so homey and warm-and-fuzzy about chocolate chip cookies. Want one?**

The answer may just depend on how many there are available. In a famous study, researchers presented subjects with two glass cookie jars. Both were filled with exactly the same type of cookies. The only difference? One jar had ten cookies in it; the other had only two. Subjects overwhelmingly chose a cookie from the jar with hardly any cookies left.

*Those will be gone soon, they thought. I'll miss my chance to have that one.*

**It's deliciously simple: Decreased supply = increased demand.**

### The Personal

**Confession: I have an obsession for shoes. At any time, I have 25-30 pairs (I know that's way too many). Colourful flats, glossy stilettos, slim boots – bring 'em on!**

Recently I was eyeing another pair from Russell & Bromley, my favourite shoe retailer. They're pretty high-end, so I indulge only occasionally, and only during the sale. "My" pair weren't included in the first sale – or the next. I kept checking in online. I'm persistent that way ;)

When the shoes did finally go on sale (yippee!) the discount was too minor to make me hit "Add to basket." Then I clicked on my size. My heart dropped.

Only 2 left. This was an emergency. I frantically completed the checkout process, picturing two other shoe addicts with impeccable style doing the same – and maybe (gasp!) doing it faster than I was. "Order complete." Whew. We're saved!

### The Practicalities

**Want to get your prospects scrambling for their credit cards like I was? I thought so ;) Get those sales figures surging with these proven tactics for your website, print ads, emails, and social media posts:**

- » **Limited time:** Slap a visible end date on your promotions. Countdown timers on your email campaigns or website are also very effective.
- » **Limited number:** Remember the supply + demand rule? Try these: 3 in stock. Only 2 new clients accepted per month. 4-6 weeks wait list.
- » **One-time offer:** An offer that will never be repeated.
- » **Pre-launch discount:** A discount if your product/book/course is ordered before launching. The saving opportunity is only available until the launch.

**Important note:** The scarcity must be real. Extending the sale; offering at a later date a better discount than your 'once-in-lifetime' offer; or lying about how many units are available seriously damages buyers' trust and the seller's credibility. No messing about!

**Happy scarcifying!** (yeah, I made that one up)