

Andrew: Hey everyone. This session is about giving small business owners a step by step marketing system. It's led by John Jantsch. He is the founder of Duct Tape Marketing, an education and consulting company which teaches real world, proven, small business marketing ideas and strategies. He is also the author of this book, "Duct Tape Marketing."

I'll help facilitate. My name is Andrew Warner. I am the founder of Mixergy, where proven founders like John teach. These ideas come directly from John's book. We've pulled out a few that we think you as a member of the Mixergy community will be especially interested in, and we're going to go over them and give you an understanding of John's process for marketing for small businesses.

Welcome, John.

John: Hey, thanks Andrew.

Andrew: One of the problems that we are here to address is an issue that Laura Frazier had. What was the issue that she had when she ran Espresso Escapes?

John: She had a coffee shop, an espresso business. It's probably a business that really relies on that everyday customer coming in. That's how they build momentum. But, she really suffered from the same problem every business has. What do I do that's cost effective? How do I promote my business in a way that allows me to build that regular customer?

Andrew: I see. So, what did she end up doing to get regular customers for her business?

John: She tried a lot of things, like advertising and different things. She said one day on a whim she came up with this idea. A couple of people told her it was crazy. She made up these cards. She played on the potty humor, if you will. She played on the being regular in those types of areas and being a regular customer.

She printed up cards that had a message. It was something like nothing feels as good as being regular, or something of that nature. On the other side it had a coupon and information about her shop. I don't know if she paid people to do it or she did it herself, but she left them around town in various bathrooms.

I think people thought it was funny. This was before social media of any sort. You can imagine today how people would be tweeting this. She found that people came into her shop. It cost her very little.

When I interviewed her she swore it was absolutely the biggest thing she'd done from a promotional standpoint. She even got a couple of articles in local newspapers about the idea. It turned into a real hit for her.

Andrew: All because she printed up these coupons where on the back of the coupon it said nothing feels good like being regular, and she passed them out in bathrooms. I can see how that would be shocking and get attention. But, I'm curious. Before we get into the specifics of the ideas that we'll be talking about

today, what about this makes it into "Duct Tape Marketing?"

John: The idea behind it, and it's the metaphor of the name quite frankly, is that it's simple, effective, and affordable. I'd owned my own small business for at least 10 or 12 years already before I wrote the book "Duct Tape Marketing" and really refocused my business totally on small business. It's kind of the perfect metaphor that a lot of small businesses go through.

I'm sure a lot of your viewers, listeners, and subscribers go through that same thing. What can I do that's cost effective that I can bootstrap, that I could try tomorrow and see if it works? We're going to talk about strategy, too. But, those are the kinds of tactics that really get my attention. I think they're fun. Quite frankly, they're very practical.

In my mind they're one of the key advantages that the small business has. Can you imagine Starbucks doing what we just described? They'd be ridiculed. But, a small business owner who's trying things out and really has the ability to change on the [??] that kind of thing.

Andrew: All right, let's get into these ideas right now. The first one is you say to put strategy before tactics. At your company, what is your strategy?

John: First, let me describe what I mean by that and why that's really point number one.

Andrew: Okay.

John: For maybe hundreds or thousands of small business owners that I've worked with, the first question was always some tactical thing. Do I need a website? Nowadays, of course, it's should I be on Facebook? What social network should I jump into? They really get pulled by kind of the idea of the week. I tell people when I consult with them you can't pass Go unless you have a firm strategy and that firm strategy says here is who our narrowly defined ideal customer is. And, here's how we're going to tell them or get them to understand how we're different than everybody else who says they do what we do.

That second part, of course, is crucial because there has to be some difference. There has to be some way that you stand out, that you offer value, and that you do what you do in a way that nobody else does. A combination of those two elements really makes up a marketing strategy. For a lot of small businesses it's really their business strategy.

It is the thing that we then can hang all of the tactics on or be a filter for the tactics. A lot of times, when somebody will develop a really strong marketing strategy it makes it very easy then to say we're not doing that, we're not going into Facebook or whatever the tactic is just...[SS]...

Andrew: ...But, once you come up with your strategy you're able to express to others and to yourself what you're going to do and also understand what's just not right for you.

John: Exactly. It's like everything, all the tactics that you do, then just become the voice of a very well defined strategy. So, you're right, [??] decide what not to do as well as what to do.

Andrew: Here's how you put it in your book for your business. I'm always curious about how the people, the entrepreneurs who I interview, use the ideas that they teach.

You said, when I created "Duct Tape Marketing," my stated strategy was to create a recognizable small business marketing brand by turning marketing for small businesses into a system and product. This strategy contained a narrowly defined ideal client and a clear point of differentiation. Our mission was to radically change the way small business owners taught marketing, and our marketing as a system strategy became how we do that.

So, marketing as a system - that is your strategy, and that's the kind of thing that you want us to do.

John: Yeah. What I did to create that point of differentiation was... Nobody in the small business world was really talking about marketing as a system. We went as far as to suggest when somebody [??] - and we're going to talk about the talking logo or a way to really describe your difference - I would tell them I install the Duct Tape Marketing system.

What I found was for my business I actually created this point of differentiation quite selfishly for myself. I was tired of walking into a business and saying what do you need. Okay, we'll write a proposal. Then, we'll come back and tell you what we can do.

So, I said what if I created this turnkey system where I'd say, look, here's what I'm going to do and here's what you're going to do. Here are the results you can expect. By the way, here's what it's going to cost.

I was, of course, addressing my frustration. What was interesting about that - and when I knew I was really onto something - was that I ended up addressing the greatest frustration most small businesses have. That is how do I buy marketing, how do I acquire marketing services. Because everybody was essentially making it up on the fly. Nobody was walking in and saying every other part of your business is a system so why isn't marketing.

Andrew: Here's the way I see that strategy expressed on your website. I happened to show it earlier, so I still have it up on my screen. Here it is, the ultimate system. One of your products includes the word system in it. You are not just teaching marketing. You're giving people a system.

John: You bet.

Andrew: Now I understand it, this tactic illustrated through your business. How does the person who's listening to us right now come up with their strategy?

John: One of the ways I have, a really simple way, may not be the only answer. But, it can be a great start. We'll come back and dissect that idea of an ideal customer. But, the way I have been successful in getting small business owners to identify and then, hopefully, embrace that difference is to talk to their customers. Talk to six, eight, or ten of your ideal customers [??] ones where, and this is the easy test, ones where you said if I had six, eight, or ten more just like that then life would be great. Ask them why they hired you in the first place, and why they stick with you, and what you do that nobody else does.

A lot of times you're going to get generic answers like, well, you provide good service, things like that. You dig a little deeper. You say tell me a story about a time when we provided good service. You ask what does good service look like to you.

Here's what my experience has been in doing now thousands of these interviews for small business owners. You're going to start hearing themes over and over again. A lot of times it's the little things that you didn't know were so valuable, that you thought maybe everybody else did. A lot of times that's what you have to embrace and say here's how we're different, here's how we're going to tell the world that we're different.

Sometimes it takes some guts. Because we all want to sound really, really important, right? And our business does this, and it solves this world problem. Then, our customers tells us, well, that's great. But what I really like is that you return my phone calls, right? [laughter] It's the little things like that.

I'll give you an example. We had a remodeling contractor. This is one of my favorite stories. They did great work. They had carpenters on staff, they did great craftsmanship, and they would swear, when asked, that that's our key difference is that we do great work.

We started talking to their customers, and their customers said, well, yeah. They do great work, but they're expensive. We expected them to do great work. What they do that nobody else does is at the end of each day they clean up the job site like nobody else that we've ever worked with. They are nice to our kids, they don't let the dog out, I mean, it was all this stuff that they didn't think to really promote, and yet it became an essential part of their overall message, that the process of how you get your project done is just as important as the end project.

It really changed their entire marketing message, and really their entire business mentality, to the extent that allowed them to grow in the period we worked with them about 300% just with that new focus and that new message.

Andrew: All right. Great example. Let's go on to the next big idea, which is to identify your ideal client.

John: Yeah. I ...

Andrew: Uh-huh. I was going to show ... [??] ...

John: I was just going to say, you can tell I'm a little giddy about this stuff. I love talking about these concepts, because I've seen the power that they can have. Even if people have heard some of these things over and over again, the whole packaging of them as a system is really a very powerful concept. The idea of the ideal client is that you can't serve everybody. You can't be all things to all people.

So often, I talk to larger audiences all the time and I'll ask people repeatedly who's your ideal client. I can't tell you how many times people have said, "Anybody who says they'll pay us." Right? That's kind of the typical response so often. What happens is, of course then I say well, do you want this kind of client or that? Well, no. We don't want those people. We don't want people to beat us up on price, or no, we don't want people that don't sit through our process so that we can deliver [??].

We start narrowing that down, and it turns out that there are certain not only demographics, the type of business, or firmographics as we call them now, or the type of individual. Those are interesting characteristics, but what always happens is, when we really narrow it down to that, tell me about six or eight or ten customers that, if you had six or eight or ten more just like that. There's always a behavior. A certain type of thing that they do. A certain type of thing they appreciate.

For example, in my business, or my marketing consultants, we have determined that if a small business owner also participates in their industry association, is on committees, or serves on the board of their chamber, or something of that nature, that that's a really good marker of a behavior that suggests they understand lifelong learning, they want to grow their business, and they want to make their industry better.

So a lot of times you can get really good at creating that narrowly-defined ideal customer. It doesn't mean that you're not going to take work outside of that, but if you know who you're looking for, then you can use all of your marketing and all of your decisions about where you're going to advertise, what shows you're going to participate in, what trade shows you're going to go to, and really focus on attracting more of that ideal customer.

Andrew: Here's an example of that that I saw in the book. This is Malinda. I'll zoom right into her site. This is Malinda Bartling [SP]. She's a real estate agent who is focusing on people who have changing lifestyles. She knew that it worked for her, that this message worked for her, when a friend of hers introduced her to a new client.

She said to this friend, "Mary, why didn't you refer this person to your son?" And Mary said, "Well, it's because this person was changing lifestyles, and I know you specialize in that." Another real estate broker didn't get that business. Malinda did because she focused on that point in people's lives.

John: Yeah, and what's interesting about that example is, I think in that case there are probably some specific details that are really helpful. You get into some of the finances say of a divorced couple or something, you know. There can definitely be some particulars that somebody with experience ... but the big thing is that the perception is certainly that hey, if this is my situation, if you only work with

companies of this size or you only work with people that are in a changing lifestyle, and I myself identify as one of those, at least the belief is that you are going to know how to meet my needs.

Quite frankly, or quite often, that belief turns into the expectation that I'm actually going to pay you a premium to do so, because [??] after all the BS, you're going to know what I need, and that's going to get me a better solution.

Andrew: In your business, if you say, "I help anyone with marketing," you wouldn't get as many referrals, and you wouldn't be able to charge as high a premium as if you say, "I help small businesses with marketing." And that's what you want us to do. Find that ideal client, communicate that that's your ideal client, and people will send those clients to you and you'll be able to charge a premium because you specialize.

John: Quite often, that's the case, and you can even go farther than that. I've chosen to focus on the small business that wants to go to the next level that understands the idea of a system is very attractive, too, and so we hear that time and time again from the folks that hire our consultants is "I want that system in my business." But you can take that a step farther.

I can be the marketing consultant that specializes in working with plumbers, for example. That would be another great way to niche down even farther. The key is that you've got to be able to make a living in that niche, but the narrower you can go, the better in many cases.

Andrew: Real quick. This is a magazine I wouldn't expect you to read, but there was a period there when you were reading it. You don't care about the Olsen twins, you don't care about most of the topics in there. Why did you read People Magazine?

John: Well, I use that example in the book, and quite frankly, now there's so many only examples, but the thing about People Magazine, if you've ever stood in a grocery store aisle, you've got all these kind of magazines. Cosmopolitan is another great example. The men's magazines, like Men's Fitness, and the National Enquirer. One of the things that these magazines do is they know how, their existence is sucking people in by the headlines that they have on the cover. And they really understand the formula for how to do that.

And the other thing that I think that, particularly in the case of People Magazine, is that if your business relies at all to any degree on pop culture, and what's going on, and the trends, how silly the world is being, then this is sort of the leading edge of that silliness, but not in a hip way, at all, but more in a, "it's tipped," right?

The mass market is now on board with whatever that trend is, so it's one example of how you have to broaden your horizons, and particularly to get outside of your industry and don't just focus on the websites and the blogs and the magazines and the newsletters in your industry. Get out there and read everything, particularly anything that your customers are looking at.

Andrew: Here's the next big point: Discover your core marketing message. This

company did it. Again, I will zoom in. Steve, I hope I'm pronouncing his last name right, [SP] and Neil Harris Heating and Cooling. They developed a consistent core marketing message that separated their company from the competition, positioned it at the top of consumers' minds, and their message is, "Technicians you can trust with your house keys."

And I can see that right up in the upper left, they have those house keys, there's an arrow that [??] pointed to a sign there, where they have a picture of house keys on it, too, so I can see the consistency of the message. I see the power of it, "Technicians you can trust with your house keys." How did they come to that? How [??]

John: Yeah, that's a great story. I think they've actually changed their name, now, so it's not Neil Harris anymore, but, they came to that by doing those interviews, actually. They had, repeatedly, you think about people coming into your home, and that's why people rely upon referrals so much. That's kind of a hard, potentially scary thing to have somebody show up, and come in, and a lot of times you need to leave for a while, while they're working on a project.

And they just repeatedly heard people say, "Your technicians are just so great. We'd have them over for coffee." And they even had some people say, "We just give them our keys, because we're going on vacation, and we want them to finish." And so they said, "We're going to run with that theme," and it's because of that idea, what they're playing on, of course, is they're using a catchy slogan, so that's different from your point of differentiation.

Their point of differentiation is that their technicians are so clean and professional and friendly, that that's their differentiator, but they turned that into a slogan of sorts that drove that message home in a way that made people--That's like saying, "You can trust us," but in a way that certainly brings it home from a marketing standpoint. So, that's surely where they came up with that slogan. It's a great example of then how to turn that into your core message into something that delivers for you from a marketing standpoint.

Andrew: Okay, so I can see how it originates with phone calls and conversations with customers. I want to get a more tactical approach from my audience so that we know how we can also come up with a short message. Maybe this is a good time for us to talk about a talking logo.

John: Sure.

Andrew: What is a talking logo?

John: Well, it's a device that I really came up with to really help and it's really just a tool to help in this idea of creating a core message. So, it starts with . . . well, you now understand a logo of course, is that your identifier that should say something about you and should be recognizable and all those things. So, the idea of a talking logo is that same thing, but it's the answer to this question. What do you do for a living?

Andrew: When people ask you what do you do for a living you want to [inaudible 00:00:58] their answer for them?

John: Yeah, when people ask you, but in terms of using it as a tool, I'll pose that question to a client.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

John: What do you do for a living? Well, they always say, well I'm a chiropractor. I am a dentist. I'm a plumber, right? It's their title.

Andrew: I'm a web designer.

John: Yeah, I'm a web designer, right? So, imagine you're at this fictional cocktail party or networking event and somebody asks you that. Oh, you're a chiropractor? Okay, don't need one of those. You know, see you later, right or you're a plumber or you know, whatever it is. They already believe they know what that is, so the conversation doesn't go much farther a lot of times.

I'll give you an example of an architect, right? That's what he used to say.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

John: You used the answer you know, I'm an architect. Well, we interviewed the clients and after about the third . . . and then his clients were all commercial construction contractors. After about the third, one of them said this, we had to say, well tell me more about that. So, they said, yeah. They do good work. You know, they've got those letters by their name. We expected them to be able to design our buildings, but what we really love and you can almost feel them lean into the phone. What we really love is that they help us get paid faster.

Again, after I heard that about three times I had to dig into it. Well, it turns out this architect, their firm had three or four of their architects involved in city councils, on zoning boards, different things around the community and so they really understood the whole red tape game and how to get stuff through [inaudible 00:02:22]. So, consequently their plans got approved much quicker and because of that the contractor got to start to work earlier and got to get that first draft.

So that became their talking logo. Now when somebody said, what do you do for a living? Instead of saying I'm an architect you would say I help contractors get paid faster. Now, if you're a contractor who has all the struggles and challenges of a normal contractor, are you going to at least say, tell me more about that?

Andrew: Right.

John: You know, as opposed to oh, you're an architect. I got four of those. Get in line, right? So, it actually became a big part of their core message, but what it did is it captured the chief benefit of how they were different.

Andrew: So, here's what I see, three parts to that. I help, contractors, get paid faster.

John: Yes.

Andrew: So, it's I and then the verb of what I do. I show. I teach. I help.

John: Yes.

Andrew: Contractors is who you're addressing. So, I help web designers. I help plumbers. I help, etc. That's who you're helping. Then the final part is, part three is, what you helped them achieve? What's the problem frustration that your market has? So, I help web designers get paid faster. I help web developers get jobs that are meaningful. That's the three parts. I didn't make it up and I didn't just break it down right now. I obviously read it in the book, but you also talk about it here on your site.

John: Yeah.

Andrew: What I can do is to make sure that people who like this or think that this is useful can see the breakdown of it. I'll include this in the tool box section of our conversation so that they can come directly here and see how that happens.

John: Yeah, there's actually a little form there that they can download, worksheet to help them through it. The one point that I want to make on that is you know, for a lot of people that benefit when they get the idea of the formula, but then they say I help small business owners with websites that actualize their core value and blah, blah, blah. It's like . . .

Andrew: Yes.

John: . . . you basically told me your entire business. So, it's got to be a real . . . here's how you know you've really nailed it. The person on the receiving end says, really? Tell me more about that, right? I mean, they have to know more. Then you get to talk about your special process or your special experience you know, once you've kind of peaked their interest.

Andrew: Okay, not a full description, just a way of peeking people's interest. Let's go onto the next big idea. Well, we have so many here, but we'll get to them all. Next one is to wake up the senses with an image that matches your message. You give an example in the book. This is [laughs] ...

John: [laughs]

Andrew: ... just an image that I saw online, and you know where I'm going with this, of a boss who wears Chuck Taylor shoes, the ones that I have up on the screen, to the office. His chocolate lab greets everyone who comes to the business, and this person and the people at his company would rather eat uncooked meat than throw recyclables in the landfill. That's the way you described this person. It's right down to his outfit and the dog that greets you where you get his message. What's going on there? Help me understand that process.

John: I intentionally went maybe a little over the top with that description. Do you get a real sense of this business? You get a real sense of this person, what they care about, their vibe, their sense of style, you get a lot of that. If that business that I just described, their clients were corporate CEOs of fortune-500 companies that were looking for a special type of [??] consulting, that's probably not the match, right?

But, if that business was a software company that designed software that educational institutions used, and again I'm just making up an example there, but the key to that was that if we have this core message, if we have this narrowly defined ideal customer, a lot of what goes into the image elements to the branding really is more effective if it matches.

Now, I'm hesitating because I'm not saying that if you like dogs and your clients don't like dogs that you can't have a dog in the office. But I do think that there are certain expectations with ... all of those pieces go into what the perception of your brand is, and they should at least be thought out and be a true representation of what your business stands for.

Andrew: So the brand doesn't end with the logo, it doesn't end with the website, and it doesn't end with the product. It extends even to the way you're dressed, the way you function in the office. I have an example of this ...

John: To a large degree, even the core values that are put into action. I used that example of recyclables, and obviously some people jump on the whole green thing because it's the politically savvy thing to do, but that idea of believing in renewing the planet, that goes deeper than just having recycling bins. Many people are attracted, quite frankly, to businesses where they share their beliefs or they share why they do what they do. So, a good part of your brand as part of that can really be sharing what's our higher purpose for this business.

Andrew: Where else? What's our higher purpose is one. You also say on the phone, the way you greet people on the phone. I remember even as a kid calling up Tony Robbins' phone number to buy a CD or to ask about a CD, and they put me on hold and it wasn't music. It was Tony Robbins talking, self improvement. What else? Where else would we not ...

John: [laughs] You can be a better person today.

Andrew: Right. Exactly. That's his message, and it's there on voice mail. What other aspects of our business would we forget to have our brand influence?

John: Well, here's the over-arching global approach. Any way, shape, and form in which your business comes into contact with a customer or a prospect, you're performing a marketing or branding function, right?

Andrew: OK.

John: So, that's the over-arching thing where a lot of people, especially in this day and age when a lot of organizations have found that it's easy to get virtual workers

and to outsource things. Those folks are an arm and a branch of your organization. Are they representing your brand the way you want?

Finance. That's another one of my favorite areas to pick on. How many companies have incredible branding, incredible marketing, everything is just laid out to a T that touches the customer. Then, they've got Olga back there in finance that's pretty much ruining the whole deal with any interactions [laughs] that the customers have with that department. That's how you have to look at it.

Andrew: My buddy Noah Kagan from AppSumo, when he sends money as refunds, or just sends money to compensate someone for helping out, it doesn't come from his main email address or just some billing@whatever, it comes from jay@appsumo.com [laughs] or something. Right down to the email it's a fun personality.

John: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Andrew: All right. Let's go on to the next big idea here, and that is to create products and services for every stage of client development. You talk in the book about, and I'll go again to the example. I always want to show the examples because I understand and I visualize better when there's a concrete example there. Here's the one. This is vision space and we can see that they have a white paper for perfect coaching, how companies are maximizing software delivery ROI through Justin Time Training, etc.

So, what are they doing here that we should be studying?

John: Well, there's a concept. As we were talking about [inaudible 00:00:30], there's revision of the book. I've added this concept that I call The Marketing Hour Glass.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

John: It's something that I've been working on for some time. It's probably the thing I'm probably most proud of in terms of you know, original creation. So, the idea behind this is that there's a logical path or journey that the ideal customer needs to go down. What typically happens is those customers that are referring business, they love you, they're evangelists. They've probably whether it was intentional or not, walked down that path. So, the idea behind this is that obviously the first goal is to get them to know you, right?

The seven logical steps are know, like, trust, try, buy, repeat and refer. In a perfect world as somebody comes to know you whether it's because they read an ad or they did a search and found your website or a friend referred them that you actually have your marketing set up not in the funnel fashion that's really just aimed at trying to you know, squeeze a few of those people that come to know you through that small part of the funnel, but that you actually spend as much energy on getting them to like you and trust you and understand the value of your brain. Maybe even having a process where they can try what you do.

Obviously, once somebody comes to buy or decides to become a customer, what

do you do to keep that experiences high? What's the orientation process? What's the new customer process? What's the process after the sale for making sure that they got the result that they were after? What's the process after the sale to sell them more stuff? What's the process of the sale to actually turn them into a referral customer?

So the idea is that you think out each of these stages and that you intentionally create campaigns and products and processes and services that move people through those stages logically. Most people want to run an ad and you know, call us up and we'll come out and sell you something. That's actually how you know, the problem is at works sometimes, but that's how you get that customer that's not an ideal customer. The way you get more of those ideal customers is you actually teach them to be ideal through your process.

Andrew: Here's the hour glass. I just found this online.

John: Yeah. That's it. You [??].

Andrew: I understand the steps, but how is this different from a standard sales pipeline where you get someone to know you, like you, trust you, try what you've got, buy it, keep coming back and refer other people? Why the hour glass metaphor as opposed to a pipeline?

John: Well, the reason I use the hour glass, most people actually use a funnel.

Andrew: I know, right?

John: I mean, it's probably the most common. The problem is it ends when somebody says, okay. Yeah, I'll buy, right? I mean, that doesn't mean that they don't do other things in their company to keep them a customer. What I suggest is and the reason for the hour glass shape is that from that point they decide to become a customer and that you do things to make them a repeat customer and a referral customer, you focus on the customer experience.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

John: The shape expanding back out really demonstrates the idea that a happy customer, a satisfied customer is actually your best lead generation source. That's the idea behind this shape. Imagine if organizations spent as much time on even lead conversion, but certainly customer experience and referral generation as they did on trying to make the phone ring which is where everybody focuses their attention.

In fact, what I generally tell people to do to make this really effective is to flip it on its head. If you can and you're really good at this Andrew, so if you could like turn that over for me it would help this presentation. Imagine if you said to yourself, okay we got this new product coming out.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

John: We want to launch this thing, right? Everybody's first feeling is, okay. You know, what's the email copy? What are we going to do to get people interested? Imagine if you started with what do we want people thinking, doing and feeling 90 days after they buy this product from us?

Andrew: I see.

John: You know, 45 days after at the time they buy it. So, the idea is that if you worked backwards like that and you focused first on the customer experience [inaudible 00:05:50] referral generation, it would first off you would make a better product, but you would certainly create a better experience.

Andrew: I was also grabbing the link to the eBook that you wrote on this to make sure to include that in the tool box so the people could find that after the session.

John: Great.

Andrew: Whether it's just so many different sites about this or so many different pages online referring to the marketing hour glass which I'm seeing on this computer right. I said, what's the best one to link and I think I found a good one.

John: Yes.

Andrew: We'll include the eBook. All right.

John: Great.

Andrew: Let's go back to the big board here and now we're talking about producing marketing content that educates. In your first book, you actually talked about a man called Victor Gonzalez, the logic of success. Actually, here it is. This is the guy. I didn't see it in the second version, the most recent copy of the book. Do you remember him?

John: I do, but as you and I were talking offline some, the first version of the book was written in 2006. I'm [??] and I'm old. So, I don't remember everything . . . [SP] . . .

Andrew: Two different things here at Mixergy to make sure that we got this right, Alex Champagne who read the copy of your book that he had for a long time which was the older version .

John: Yeah.

Andrew: I read the most recent one which I got on Kindle because now I prefer Kindle and so he pulled that. I couldn't even find it in the book, but now I understand why. Well, I'll quickly tell the story and people will see why it's not included in the latest version of the book.

Basically he said, people aren't coming to my website. I'm going to take the content that I think is best, most useful, most educational, put it on the CD-ROM, send it out to potential customers. He did that. Total cost, \$3200 back in the CD-ROM days, but

because of that he ended up getting 15 customers at an average of \$2500 plus travel per engagement. So, 15 customers at an average of \$2500 just because he decided to take his educational material and send it directly to users.

So, the format doesn't work. The main idea still does of educating. Talk about that if you good.

John: Yeah. I do remember it now especially when you reminded me of it. He was a pioneer of sorts, right?

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

John: We are all now. You know, content marketing you can't get through about eight blog posts than you are assess reader now without somebody writing about content marketing. I mean, everybody's really accepted this idea that we have to be producing content. It's not just because you know, we have great things or that we're all great writers, it's just that the market now expects to be able to find anything about any problem or solution.

That eBook that you mentioned you know, that's the CD-ROM now.

Andrew: Mm-hmm.

John: Right? So, you know, we have to be [inaudible 00:02:44], we have to be producing high quality educational content that answers you know, that doesn't just sell or promote, but answers those burning questions that are prospects that customers have or that teaches them actually how to do what they want to do so that they realize we know what we're talking about.

Andrew: Do you think that it's enough to just have a blog where you teach or do we need to go beyond a blog and do what you did which is create eBooks?

John: Well, I think you need and again this can get almost silly, but I mean I think you need a blog. I think you need to be producing videos. I think you need to be on YouTube. I think you need to be creating eBooks. I think you need to be on Facebook promoting all of those things. I mean, it really has gotten to the point where once you have this marketing strategy you know, then you need to figure out where are all the [??] that we can create exposure and drive people back.

Still today you know, we're in many cases trying to drive them back to our home website to capture an email address in many cases so that we can continue that journey you know, through the outer bus.

Andrew: Now, here's an interesting thing that I saw about you in preparing for this interview. One of the most interesting concepts for me is tactics. In your book was have a testimonial party.

John: Right.

Andrew: I've seen actually restaurants. There was this authentic New York pizza in

Washington, D.C. where the founder said, when I open I'm going to throw a testimonial party essentially for people who are big on Yelp and have them come out, enjoy the pizza and hopefully they'll give testimonials. I've seen restaurants do it.

You say any business can do it. Hold the party, hire a professional videographer and have the videographer record professional looking testimonials from all of your guests who are willing to participate. Even kick in a benefit for them you say. I love this tactic. That's why I'm repeating it with such enthusiasm. Even you can say, offer to have the professional videographer record video for their own businesses and their own websites as long as they're helping you, you should help them too.

I said this is a great idea. Let me go to John's website and see what I can learn about this, so I can really be prepared in case we talk about it. What I found was the section of the book where you talk about that tactic along with others that are similar on your website.

Then I said, I see John's process in action. He says, take the content that you put in one medium, put it in whatever mediums make sense," and you did. You had it almost, maybe even exactly, word for word like it was in the book on your website, and I think in one other blog it was somewhere else. That's the message that you're leaving us with. Educate, and forget about one single medium. Put it out there.

John: Yeah. You know, the example I use all the time, and it always boggles me, but I have a podcast that I have had for years. You can go to my site, you can put on the podcast link, and listen to them for free all day long. An organization approached me and said, "Hey, we want to create a podcast app for you." I was like, OK. Fine. No cost to you. We'll sell it on iTunes, and it's \$2.99. Thousands of people buy that app and listen to my podcast. It's the same feed that goes into that.

Andrew: Wow.

John: The message there is, they are getting the content the way they want to get it, and the way they want to control it and have access to it. That, I think, is the important thing. It's like in the days gone by when people said, do we need to take checks and credit cards? Within reason, you've got to be catering to the way people want to get information.

In my business, I have people that buy from me that are 25, and I have people that buy from me that are 65. I guarantee you that they are, in most cases, consuming content and finding me in much different fashions. So, if I want to be able to be available to that slice of the market that fits my ideal prospect, then I'd better make myself available in the ways that they want to consume content.

Andrew: All right. Produce marketing content that educates. There's a big idea, there. We're going to go on to the next one, which is to get your entire team involved. Again, I'm going to pull out an example. This example maybe was 20 words in your book, and I still decided I was going to bring this one up. So, no surprise, I will just tell you what it is and tell the audience. This is Conference Calls, Unlimited, a telecommunications firm in Fairfield, Ohio.

John: Actually, Iowa. But yeah.

Andrew: Oh, where is it?

John: In Iowa. Yeah. Fairfield, Iowa.

Andrew: Right. I said Ohio, even though it clearly says "Iowa" in my notes here.

John: [laughter]

Andrew: What they did was they wanted their whole team, contractors and employees, that's where their focus was, and they wanted them to focus on making customers happy, prospects happy, and making each other happy. Very [??] right?

John: Yeah, right.

Andrew: Do you want to take it from there, or should I continue to read?

John: No, go for it.

Andrew: All right. The goal of each employee when answering the phone was to give callers more than they asked for and play nice with each other. Everyone focused on that goal. They found that employee-based focus worked wonders for the customers, their calls for ... boy, I should not be reading this out loud.

John: [laughter]

Andrew: Basically, everyone had more fun, was more productive, had a better experience, and their customers were happy. But, what we're trying to say here is it's not just the boss who did this and said, "This is the way I'm running it." He got everyone involved in the process. You can go to their website and see the phone numbers up there, the focus is on this, and you say that's what we should be doing. Even if we have one extra person we need to recruit them for our mission.

John: Yeah, and what's interesting about this particular organization is that not everybody answered the phone. That was not their job, right? But everybody, including the CEO at the time, would rotate through and make sure that they were actually talking to customers, and that they actually had some metrics of how many high-fives they got was kind of in their language.

They actually gave all of their people leeway to, if they had a customer that maybe had a particularly tough challenge, or had something going on that didn't quite work that they helped them through, they would send them flowers and stuff. Everybody had license to do that.

But where that really starts, quite frankly, is having this marketing strategy and making sure that everyone understands it. I can't tell you how many organizations I've worked with over the years that you walk outside of the marketing department or the board room where the executive team meets, and ask them who an ideal

customer is for this company, and they couldn't tell you. Even if they're a sales person. Ideal customer? Well, I don't know.

I just go out there and get new business, right? It's amazing how engaged people will become if you include them in here's what we stand for, here's how to talk about our business, here's our talking logo. I've had some organizations where we did this talking logo as a group, and it was actually the first time they all wanted to hug each other instead of kill each other.

Andrew: [laughter] Do I have your permission to link to the page in the book where you talk about it? Because I think I didn't read it as clearly as I should, but if people want to read it more clearly they should have a way to do that, are we good with that?

John: You bet, you bet.

Andrew: All right. It's directly to your book, from Google book search, thank God for Google, for situations like this they are priceless. All right, back to the big board, and the next big idea we'll talk about is, use direct mail, you call it an ideal target medium, why direct mail?

John: Well Sarce(SP), I get a little heat for this because I'm still the promoter of this, frankly. When you think about your own, again, this is going to go with some assumptions that we're doing it effectively, but think about first off, in your own world, we don't get a lot of mail that we want to open anymore. First off, we don't get very much period. People don't send catalogues and things, or what we used to call junk mail so much.

And so, particularly if you are highly targeted, you know who your ideal customer is, and you are going after the small slice of that possible, and you are sending something that is highly personal, that is valuable, that is leading them to, say, educational content. So an example might be, that you would send to a highly targeted list, you have a new eBook that tells them how to do something.

You send a direct mail piece, maybe 500 pieces, to people to actually offer them this free eBook, which is then going to be followed up by a webinar, or in person seminar that you're going to do. It does have a hard cost, but what I love about it is you can really stand out doing it effectively, particularly when you combine it with some online tools. You're driving people online, even if you're then trying to drive them back off line, into a seminar or workshop.

Andrew: We're not talking necessarily about buying a list of names, I think you gave an example of one person in your book here, this is Donald Levin, Levin Public Relations, in New York. What he does is, he uses something that he calls the Levin 10 letters a week method, I like that he named it after himself. First he researches 10 companies, for who he thinks he can provide profitable service, profitable to the company, and profitable to his own business. He studies their websites, calls them to confirm the single best person to write, then he starts writing to them.

Then he gets the follow up with them. But what he's doing here that stood out for

me was, he's manually looking for these people, he's manually making sure it's the right person, he's not sending out thousands of letters to a list that he bought, he's just doing it one at a time. To me that feels more connected to the work that we do, easier to do, more manageable.

John: Well, it's far more effective, I think a lot of people want the push button method, send out 10,000 letters and make the phone ring. What he's doing is, he understands who's an ideal client, and he is personalizing the experience in very, very small batches. The other thing I love about it too is, he probably spends a couple hours a week doing it, and it all comes down to the type of business, what business you need, or how many leads you need.

But that type of prospecting, personalized prospecting can be done by an individual sales person, and greatly increase their chances of getting in front of the right person, with the right need, and having that person really being receptive to actually now talking to you about their issues and challenges. Now I believe that you also have to have that in this day and age, you have to have that.

Here are some resources, you know, here's an online video you can watch, because we have to build that trust, we have to establish that trust. You can do it with that letter, but then you have to back it up with some things that allow people to experience your brand, before they ever invite you into their world.

Andrew: Here's the final point that we pulled out of the book. Ramp up your referral machine. How do we do that?

John: Well, you know this is a great segue, I've written another book since Duct Tape Marketing, called The Referral Engine, so you just go buy that book. Actually, this is one of my favorite subjects, because so many businesses I work with will tell you that a significant amount of their business comes by way of referral. But it's what I call, the accidental referral, you know, they do good work, somebody else needs what they do.

And so they tell a friend, and next thing you know they've got a referral, right? So, what I'm suggesting, and really that entire book was about, that you have to have a very systematic approach to that. It's part of the hourglass, that I talked about, so you're going with every customer with a referral in mind even if that's you know, I give one really tactical thing that has worked for thousands and thousands of people that I've worked with during the sales process as you're actually agreeing to here's what we're going to do for you today customer that you actually would say.

We know you're going to be so thrilled with the result that we'll promise today that in 90 days I'm going to come back, we're going to make sure you're thrilled and we're going to ask you to tell us about five more people that you think need this result as well.

Just even a simple thing like that of putting referrals in the lead conversion of the sales process is one really simple way to make a focus on referrals. It's amazing how many companies I've talked to that they get a significant amount of their business by way of referrals and yet they do nothing to actually amplify their refer

ability.

Andrew: You know, I did an interview with a top salesman at this company. There it is, Cutco Knives. I said, how did you become a top salesman? He said, you know, one of the first things I did was I didn't call on customers and said I want to sell you. I said, I'm here not to sell you. I'm here to get a referral from you and so I'll show you my knives and teach them and show you why they're so important, but my hope is at the end of this if you know someone who could use it then you'll refer me.

Obviously, often people buy from him, but he asked for the referral upfront that way. Here's the other thing that he did. He said most people would just ask for referrals. What he would do was, he would put a list numbered 1 to 20, I think and he said, who do you know who would benefit from this? The implication was if there's 1 to 20 that you and I are going to fill out 20 names.

John: Yeah.

Andrew: That's one of the reasons why he did so well asking for referrals that way right up front like you're suggesting.

John: Well, I worked with a financial planner years ago and his referral system was he would have a client, he knew maybe what country club they belonged to, what church they went to, what school maybe their kids went to. So, he would actually prepare a list of 20 names and he would say, hey. You know, here's some people I think I'd love to meet. Do you know any of these people? Well, nine times out of ten if he did his list right they knew half of them.

A lot of times what the mistake people make is they say, hey. If you know anybody who needs what we do, you know, send them our way, right? You know, we can't. Our brain can't process that. If you say, do you know any of these ten names on this list, all of a sudden it's like, oh yeah. I just played golf with him yesterday, you know? I'll introduce you. So, you make the job really easy for them. That's a little . . . you know, we could go on. We could do an entire show about this.

Andrew: Just on referrals.

John: Yeah.

Andrew: And I hope we'll . . . [SP] . . . to do it. This was really helpful. The big ideas were right there. If you want to follow up, my suggestion of course and you guys know where I'm going with this is to check out ducttapemarketing.com. Not duck, no quack quack. I'm so proud. I'm very carefully articulated. Duct Tape Marketing just to make sure I don't make that quack quack mistake.

John: Well, I do own the URL though for that.

Andrew: Oh, is that right?

John: Just in case people do.

Andrew: Let's see. If I go to D, U with a K.

John: Yeah.

Andrew: Oh, there we go. That's a smart move. Thank you so much for doing this. Thank you all for being a part of it.