



James Schramko here with an internet marketing news update. We'll talk about a free tool that you can use to really get a lot of information from your customers. We'll cover marketing budgets and how to calculate them. And I'll let you know about a great information product that you can access for nothing.

Where can you get this great information product for free?

Well, I should be charging for this but I did a fantastic interview with Tim Conley from [FoolishAdventure.com](#) and I put it on [InternetMarketingSpeed.com](#). It's called [How to Turn Your Content into Cash](#). It's a really good recording, Tim is so enthusiastic and an expert at helping people start from a very low base and get their information out there and start charging for it and build a real business from it. I'm sure you'll get great value from that podcast.

Making a marketing budget

There was a big discussion this week in [SuperFastBusiness.com](#) about marketing and what percentage of your budget should be for marketing. Well I don't really love the word budget and percentage values for marketing is just one way to calculate it. We're used to this methodology from large businesses and unfortunately, quite often they will actually allocate a budget, they then burn that budget up having to spend that percentage budget and not necessarily getting the most effective bang for buck. Another way to look at it is to look at the dollars for dollars return model where you spend a dollar to make x back hopefully more than a dollar. That can often be a little bit simplistic.

What you might need to do is have a look at your overall strategy, you will have a different way of calculating your marketing expenditure depending on what you're strategy is. If you're try to grow a huge company, and get a lot of database and market share, then you may even spend more than 100% of your turn over or sales volume on actually acquiring customers with the big hope that you'll get a pay day.

Now that might not pan out. That's where the dollars for a dollar plus return is not that easy to calculate because you really don't know right now. What you want to do is work out the most reasonable acquisition cost for your customers so that you can work out how much you need to invest in marketing because hopefully one day you want to make more than a dollar back. But it might not be today.

Have a look at your industry and see if there's metrics or benchmarks that you can use as a starting point. I know for example in my old industry, the automotive industry, they would spend around about 1% of their sales volume on marketing as a budget. You can use that as a guideline. In my business, I like to know that at the end of the year whatever I've sold somewhere around half of that should be profit. That will be made up from staffing costs, wages, equipments, services, systems and it will be marketing. And marketing could be made up with affiliate commissions, banner costs, Facebook costs, and the cost of making videos like this. And press releases to announce them.

The main thing is work out your context, get yourself a system and then use that as your best starting point and be willing and open minded to adjust that as you go. Once you know your number, you can keep an eye on it just to know if you are speeding up or slowing down.

Create forms

Google docs is a great place to make forms for free. I used to use SurveyMonkey for forms but Google docs is actually really rich in the data that they present, it puts it into a spreadsheet which you can then turn into word clouds or graphs. So I recommend you go to Google document's new form and you can make a form that you can customize and make different fields and it will work really well. Then what you do is you

ask your customer information like why did you buy, or how can we improve, or what other products would you like to buy from us. That's when your business will take off. Put these systems to work, Google are really good at search and apps so check out their apps. We use a professional Google apps package but I'm pretty sure you can access it for free from your Gmail account.

Creating your website mockup

If you want to turn your vision into reality, you might need to mockup something. When I want to draft a website, usually I will actually draw it on a whiteboard and take a picture of it and send it to my designer. But other people like to use online collaborative tools. One of the most popular tools that all the members of SuperFastBusiness seem to like is called Balsamiq. You should check that out if you want to mockup a site online and then send it to your designer. That way you can turn your dreams into reality with a pretty clear and precise understanding of what you want it to look like in advance and that cuts down a lot of error.

Get into videos and audio

Finally, if you're into making videos and doing audios and frankly you should be tapping into YouTube and iTunes like these videos I put out regularly. You can learn a lot about cameras and flips and SLRs and iPhones and microphones, shotguns and lapel mics, and you can find out about lighting, keylight, backlights the works. Check it all out in [SuperFastBusiness](#). We have discussions on this.

In fact I'm sure that once you've gone through the interviews and information that we have, you're going to get far more than your \$67 a month return on your investment. So get into making videos of whatever you do. Put them on your website, put more up there. Each month I'm getting around 10,000 views on my YouTube channel and that's got to be worth something to my business. I'm pretty sure that my customers enjoy it and it's a great way for me to connect with new people.

SuperFastBusiness.com has access to very high level video production experts. I highly recommend you come along and get involved with that discussion.

That's it for this week.

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