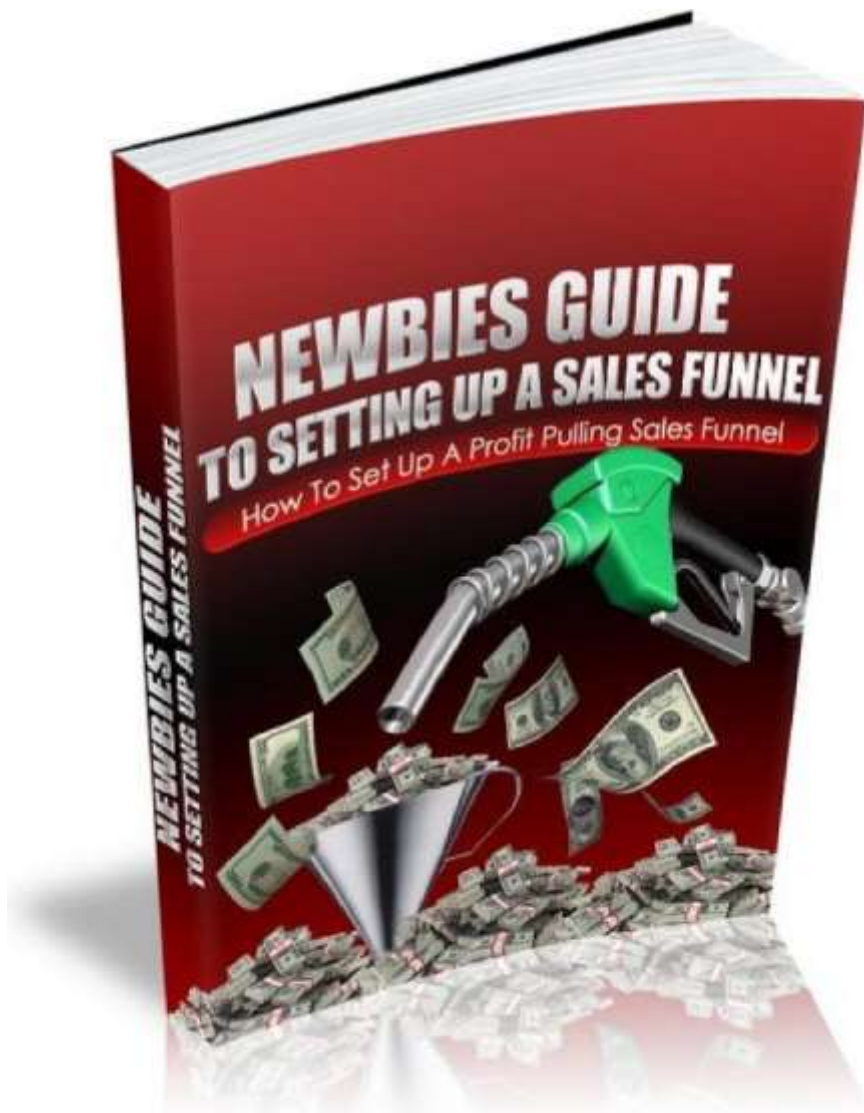


Newbies Guide to Setting Up A Sales Funnel



Steven Spellborgh

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How To Set Up Your First Profit Pulling Sales Funnel

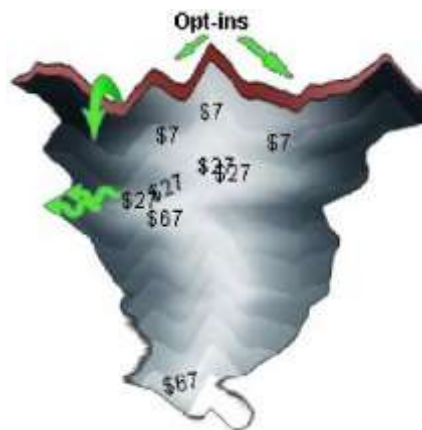
Every internet marketer who sticks with it longer than a few months ends up with a general idea of what a “sales funnel” ought to look like. The trouble is...

- A. You often find out about sales funnels too far onwards into your marketing journey. The sales funnel you hastily create as a result ends up more as a “patch” or afterthought on your marketing strategies, instead of a vital component in your initial long-term plan.
- B. And this is the biggie - everyone tends to think in “Perfect Diagram” mode.

What is “Perfect Diagram” mode? It’s the phenomenon that occurs after a lifetime of reading textbooks and picture books. People imagine **simplistic, textbook perfection**, like so...



... when in reality, until you become a seasoned, experienced internet marketer, if your first sale funnel could be rendered or “translated” realistically, it might look more like this...



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So... are you really doomed to mess up your first sales funnel, so that it looks like something from a carnival Hall of Mirrors, or a psychedelic scene out of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland?"

Of course not. This only occurs because people do not understand all the different components that go into creating a successful sales funnel. Take care of learning **about the different components**, set each one up properly – and your funnel will be 50% perfect!

So... what do you need to do, to take care of the OTHER 50%?

You need to have that **long-term marketing plan** – so your sales funnel can play an important part towards bringing your goals to successful fruition.

There are dozens of reports and posts out there, dealing with "making a long-term marketing plan", so that's not going to be our primary focus today, though we will cover the basics. Instead, we're going to take a good look at every single funnel element, so your plan won't have any invisible gaps – the sort that quickly cause problems like unnecessary **leaks** and **bottlenecks**.

You need to know how to effectively use:

- **Squeeze pages**
- **Entry points**
- **Freebies**
- **Low end offers**
- **\$1 offers**
- **Upsells**
- **Downsells**
- **Cross sells**
- **OTOs (one-time offers)**
- **Repackaging**
- **Repurposing**
- **Recurring income products and services**

You'll also need to know how to perform **specific functions**:

- **Incorporating affiliate products into your sales funnel**
- **Leading the customer up through different price points**
- **Collecting opt ins**

- **Building buyers list and prospects list**
- **Separating the two lists**

We’re going to cover those too – as well as intersperse them with **2 Sales Funnel Super Tips** – and **12 Sales Funnel Mistakes** – and more.

But don’t worry: We’ll pare all this down to the absolute, essential “bare bones” detail – there’s nothing worse than an overload of information! Let’s start with the basics...

Squeeze Pages

Alternate Names: “Landing page”, “opt-in page”

A “squeeze page” exists for **one crucial purpose**: to turn readers into subscribers. Subscribers – not readers - make up **your email list**, which exists so you can track your traffic and conversions, and legally send each member emails without it being considered “spam”.

How does a squeeze page get readers to part with their name and email address? It literally “squeezes” the reader until he feels he has no choice but to give up the contact information you’re requesting – because he wants your **irresistible bribe** or lure that much! He may not even want to subscribe to yet another list – but he will subscribe to yours.

There are things you **must** and **must not** do, in order to create this highly desirable outcome:

DO...	DON'T...
...research and get to know your target niche down to the smallest detail, starting with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Subject – E.G.: Cooking • Niche - E.G.: Mexican Cooking • Sub-Niche – E.G: Corn dishes 	...put any other link but your sign up box on your squeeze page. (It’s not there to make a sale or divert them to an affiliate product – it’s there solely to convert readers into registered subscribers!)
...include bullet points to list the main selling points. Remember... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullet • Points • Work 	... make your squeeze pages overly long. Include just enough detail to get the job done and inspire the reader to sign up. Something as small as a one-page sign up box will work better than a six page sales letter.

...include a call to action . Yes, It's true your readers are staring at textarea boxes saying:	...forget your only job is to MAKE YOUR READER BEG FOR MORE .
But the experts will tell you, s-p-e-l-l-i-n-g out what do to next is essential .	That's the single most important secret of squeeze page success!

A Simple Squeeze Page Sample...

Here's a sample of a typical short Squeeze page...On the net, this is exactly what you might see filling up your screen – a one-page squeeze.

The diagram shows a squeeze page with the following elements and labels:

- TITLE**: "How You Can Build a List of 60,000 in 60 Days!" (Your "hook")
- SUBHEAD**: "Here's what you'll learn, seconds from now..." (Your promise)
- BULLET POINTS**: A list of benefits (Irresistible benefits)
 - Discover 3 Keys every opt-in page MUST have
 - How to make your readers beg for MORE
 - How to PRE-QUALIFY your list - and weed out the "weeds"
 - How to Quadruple your subscribers while you SLEEP!
 - And Much, Much More...
- INSTRUCTIONS**: "Simply Enter Your Name and eMail Address Below, then click the button. You will immediately receive your own, personal Download Link to your List-Busting Secrets Unlocked course!" (What to do and how to do it)
- CALL TO ACTION!**: "Go Ahead - fill in your details now, and click!"
- CONTACT BOX**: A form with fields for "Email:" and "Name:" and a button "Send me your Sales Funnel Template now!"
- CALL TO ACTION Reinforced**: "*PRIVACY POLICY- Your Email Is Safe With Me It will not be sold or rented out, I HATE SPAM !!"
- LEGAL INFO**: "Copyright © Squeeze Page Secrets And Sins - All Rights Reserved"

Now, you may be looking at that example and thinking "I could write better bullets!". Great! That's what you want to be thinking! The bullets in the above example could be much more specific – which means they will be much more targeted at your ideal subscriber, increasing your opt-in success rate. But note – specific doesn't mean "giving away every detail" – it just means "more specifically designed to appeal to the exact customer you want."

Entry Points

An “entry point” is simply any external vehicle that leads readers to your squeeze page offer.

Examples:

- PPC (Pay Per Click) Advertisement
- Ezine Advertisement
- Article with resource box with link at the end of an article
- Blog Posts
- Link given in hard-copy newspaper ad or press release

These are all great traditional tactics – but there’s one more “entry point” we should never forget, particularly as people become more online-marketing-savvy and harder to convince. It is rapidly becoming the most important entry point generator on the net: And that is **word of mouth**.

How do you create “word of mouth” (or “buzz”) on the internet? Very easily:

- Reviews
- Twitter
- Discussion in other social media
- Forum posts

One particular hybrid blend between traditional entry point tactics and the new “word of mouth” method is the **expert recommendation**. When an authority source you really trust tells you in a review or via any of the other word of mouth methods that a product is superior, that type of social proof seems to carry greater weight than ever before.

But if you are the one doing the recommending – make sure your promise really “delivers”.

Freebies

This is the traditional way to get people to opt in to your list. Offer a freebie that promises to **give them vital information they desperately need**, on a subject they’re passionate about (and that had better be your exact niche subject!)

There are a few tried-and-true “rules” about Freebies. Observe them, and you’ve won most of the battle!

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1. Give them one or more of **your most valuable** pieces of information
2. Try to fill the “gap” no one has filled, or **solve the problem** that everyone’s talking about, but **no one is bothering to solve**
3. Let them know you have **even more** detailed information or instructions
4. **Keep your freebie short but value-packed**

The traditional way to use freebies is to “show them WHAT to do, but not HOW to do it”, teasing them to buy your paid product to find out the “how”. Nowadays, many marketers don’t want to risk frustrating their increasingly more demanding buyers, so instead they opt to completely give away one thorough and complete piece of the puzzle – one of high value in itself, that the reader can immediately put to use.

But you don’t just give your freebie away and leave it at that: You let the reader know that although that one problem or point has been dealt with,

The subject is covered much more extensively in your paid product. (In other words, lead those to the next sales funnel spiral.)

You are not limited to offering the traditional “Special Report”, either. Other popular freebies you might wish to offer include:

- 5-7 day email course
- 5-7 day audio course
- Free video
- Newsletter packed with relevant tips
- Teleseminar or webinar

But whatever you choose to offer, remember these two “golden rules”:

1. Make sure your freebie is a logical first step of your overall package of offerings, from low end to high end – in other words, make it parallel your marketing plan
2. Your freebie’s whole purpose is to get your **ideal customer** – no one else – to sign up to your list

In fact, the only thing you are limited by, when designing your perfect, irresistible freebie... is your imagination.

\$1 Offers

Why would you ever charge a measly dollar, instead of just giving away a product for free? It all boils down to “perceived value”. This sort of value should not be confused

with what a product is actually worth: it refers to the value attached to it by each individual.

For example, someone who loves chocolate ice cream is going to attach more value to chocolate dip than a vanilla lover – to the point of happily paying 80 cents extra in order to get that chocolate dip applied to their generic soft vanilla ice cream cone.

So am I saying that people should perceive your offering as worth only a \$1? Absolutely not!

It's just that sometimes attaching any price tag to a product can actually **increase its value in the eyes of the desired customer**: What they wouldn't touch for free, they will scramble to buy for "only" \$1. In their eyes, they are getting a PAID product ridiculously inexpensively, rather than another run-of-the-mill, worthless freebie.

Will the \$1 offer work with every product?

That's hard to answer. This is where you need to use your best judgment in evaluating your market. You need to ask yourself:

“Will a freebie or a \$1 offer work more effectively in this particular scenario – and in my overall marketing plan?”

The only unchangeable factor? Your ideal potential customer should attach a **greater value** to your \$1 offer than would any other reader.

Low Price Offers

This is a solid tactic for new marketers to use in their sales funnel – but again, use your best judgment. There is no “rulebook” that says you have to follow the traditional route in placing your offerings throughout your sales funnel. Starting with a high end product is actually a good tactic – in some cases.

A more effective way to decide what to offer consists of evaluating what your specific niche market will bear – and what you want to “say” about yourself to your market (I.E. how you want them to perceive you.)

In other words, you don't have to walk around for a prescribed number of months shouting “I'm a newbie”. If you have the chops – if you have the expertise your market needs (even if that's just being a few steps ahead of the people who you want as your subscribers) – go ahead! Position yourself as that expert.

And if there's a big enough demand for your product, you may find it surprisingly easy to command a higher price. (Just keep in mind the actual budget of your target group.)

In general, however, low priced initial offerings are a tried-and-true way to go.

The best way to create your first low priced offer? Present it as an exclusive, limited-time Special Offer in an appropriate niche forum – there's usually a "Special Offers" section for members. (Just make sure you observe any rules before posting your offer, and make sure you've actually contributed helpful posts to that community, first.)

A forum Special Offer is a valuable tactic for two reasons:

1. It gives you feedback – and hopefully testimonials – from your ideal target group, so you can tweak anything that needs to be tweaked, or correct any mistakes people have pointed out.
2. It provides you with that highly-prized "word of mouth" – and potential affiliates or JV (joint venture) partners.

When you release your Special Offer to the world at its "regular" price, you can be sure that the small adjustments you've made, the affiliates you've picked up and the word of mouth "buzz" you've started will give it that extra boost.

Upsells

What is an "upsell"? You probably already know the answer! It's an additional offer at a higher price, included in documentation for the product you've just sold (or are about to sell.) A simple example: When you buy a new TV remote control at your local Electronics store. As he's about to ring up your purchase, the clerk asks: "Do you need extra batteries for that?"

You answer: "Ooh. Yes. Better give me a couple of packets."

And the clerk has just completed an "upsell", increasing the amount of money you've spent:

1. At his store
2. During that particular purchase

As an online marketer, you can "catch" your customer at the point of checkout and offer a relevant upsell, too.

One big mistake new marketers sometimes make: Attempting to sell an unrelated product that does not feel to the customer like the next logical step as an upsell.

Notice that in our example, our store clerk offered you batteries – something the remote you just purchased will need regularly. That is a relevant upsell, highly conducive to a “yes” answer.

If the clerk had said instead: “Hey, would you like a pair of speakers to go with your TV remote? They’re only \$299.99...” you most likely would have stared at him in surprise and sudden mistrust, before firmly declining. (You’re not shopping for speakers. You’re not thinking “audio”. Your \$14.99 TV remote doesn’t even relate, price range wise, to \$299.99 speakers.)

Other places to introduce an upsell:

- On your download page
- In your “Thank you” page
- In selected emails
- In your membership sites (you can offer “lifetime” memberships, or “Gold” and “Platinum” upgrades, with more privileges and/or resources)

Upsells should be built into every part of your sales funnel. You should be thinking “upsell” even as you’re planning a campaign, or writing a report.

And definitely when you’re creating that first sales funnel!

Cross Sells

A “cross sell” is the practice of recommending additional products that compliment or enhance yours. You can add these in the same places you add your upsell offers.

Cross sells can consist of either your product – or a related affiliate or JV product. The only rule is... it should be of high perceived value to your customers; so much so that your offer comes off as genuinely helpful.

Done correctly, cross sells can not only augment your own offering (and profits!) but up your emotional value to your customer as a whole. A good, well-placed upsell can enhance your reputation and establish you as someone who is really looking out for customers’ best interests.

One Time Offers

One-time offers, or OTO's, make use of the "scarcity" principle. These are usually offers you see after you've purchased a product, but before you download it. ("You'll only see this once...")

Another effective place to plant an OTO: in a special email to your list. You let them know your product or service will only be offered at that price for a very limited time (scarcity) to them, privately, as members of your list (exclusivity.)

The exclusivity and the scarcity factors add a powerful double-whammy.

Repackaging Products

You should get into the habit of always looking to see how you can take advantage of this powerful income boosting technique. It works like this:

If you've written a Special Report, don't leave it at that. Offer it in audio and/or video format too – either as a bonus, or an upsell.

Break down your report (or video/mp3 content) – and create a 5-7 day email course.

Take that wonderful video or audio interview you've just done, and have a .PDF transcript made, which you can offer as a bonus. (Those still stuck on dial-up will love you forever!)

The other important reason to repackage products in different media?

You can create different price points. For example, you can charge more for a video series than an eBook. You can charge more for a Teleseminar than for a report.

Repurposing Products

Once you've written that eBook and collected every penny you can for it, don't let it go to waste. Take it out a year or two later (perhaps even less) and repurpose it into an email course for your list, or a batch of blog posts.

And vice versa.

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Smart marketers build the equation “how many ways can I make money from this same product?” right into their marketing funnel calculations.

Downsells

Is there ever a time to use a “downsell”? Sure there is!

You’ve probably seen them yourself. You’ve opted in to purchase Joe Blow’s product, because it really looks irresistible – only you get to the shopping cart page or checkout, and discover it’s \$599! Disappointed because that’s way beyond what your current \$962.49 monthly salary as a bus boy will bear, you click to close. You’d love the product – but you just can’t justify spending that amount.

A popup appears on your screen as you go to leave the site. It says:

“But WAIT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” - and then goes into an energetic spiel; something

like, “Maybe \$599 is too much of a bite for your budget to swallow right now. But did you know you can still get my amazing Traffic Volcano course – just the basics – for only \$197? That’s less than HALF PRICE! You won’t get the CD delivered to your door every month, or my amazing Volcano software – but you’ll get all the PDFs and 20 selected audio files to help you explode your traffic off the face of the earth!”

(Notice our marketer is also repurposing his content, even as he’s downselling it. That’s the way you need to be thinking.)

So that’s the basic principle: Take a higher end product, and offer a less expensive version of it for people who simply cannot afford your higher-priced version.

Recurring Income Products and Services

Regular recurring income from repeat customers is the \$20,000,000 win in the Big Lottery; the Mercedes Benz Grand Prize in the French fry sweepstakes; the meat to the potatoes.

It’s is one of the 2 main areas where real profit lies – profit that means the difference between \$100 or so extra a month, and those 6-figure incomes you keep hearing about. (What’s the second of the 2 main areas? “Big Ticket” items!)

How do you create recurring income/repeat customers?

1. Build trust. Do this through your free and low ticket items.

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2. Overdeliver. This does not mean bombarding your new customer with a blitz of random freebie bonuses: It means always going that one step extra to be helpful. But make sure it's a huge step; for example, offering a free report on squeeze pages – and surprising your customer with a package of 4 top-quality, superbly designed squeeze page templates as a bonus. (Unannounced bonuses with every offer are a “must”!)
3. Pace your offerings and know yourself. Recurring income occurs at the right psychological moment. For someone who can provide compelling proof of their expertise in a desired area, this could be almost instantaneous: such a marketer could offer a “Gold” membership site subscription right along with his free “Silver” one. Someone who is only a step or two ahead of other “newbies” would feel more comfortable offering any sort of membership site – a perfect vehicle for recurring income – only after getting a few low and mid priced products out, and under their belt.
4. Be consistent. Don't “disappear” for a few months, or suddenly flood inboxes with offers. Plan your offers – and the way you want them to progress – well in advance.
5. Teach your list that you are the “go to” person they need for success. (You do this through all your other methods, of course: answering questions on forums, through your products, testimonials, to name 3 of the most common.

When you have done all this you are ready to invite your customers to participate in offers that will bring you recurring income.

Some examples:

- Paid membership sites
- Paid membership sites upgrades (the “inner circle” principle) E.G. “Platinum” or “Diamond” levels
- Group coaching
- One-on-one coaching
- Monthly audio, video or report clubs
- Courses (long-term)

These are all great tactics to use. But how do you use them effectively? How do you prevent leaks in your funnel, where customers spill out and drift away? How do you prevent the dreaded “bottleneck”, where people pile up in your funnel and spin their wheels?

That's where you need to develop your skills in the following areas...

Leading the Customer Upwards through Different Price Points

There's an art to guiding customers through your sales funnel, so that they progress to higher and higher priced offerings until they become recurring "lifetime" customers. Getting it wrong is what causes those dreaded bottlenecks. Fortunately, although it takes diligence and a sincere effort, actually getting it right is not quantum physics.

There are 2 major principles to creating a smooth flow from price point to higher price point. Make sure that:

1. The next price point feels like the next logical step
2. Your offers are "planted" throughout your sales funnel at regular intervals

Get those two things right, and your sales will reflect your good judgment. Get either one wrong, and you risk leakage and bottlenecks.

(It all boils down to consistency – and empathizing with your buyers' journey and progress.)

In real life, not every customer – no matter how willing – may be able to progress right through your sales funnel price points to the end of the funnel. Wise marketers expect and plan for "leak points". When the customer leaves, unable to afford the \$127 10-CD course that is the next spiral of the funnel, the marketer is able to steer him swiftly out of the funnel to one of two money-making places – and make it seem like a favor!

The two places to divert your exiting customer to are:

1. The mouth of another of your own Sales Funnels (a lateral move, with the customer starting back at square one with your different product line or marketing campaign.)
2. A highly relevant affiliate product she may benefit from – one that is in her price range.

If you are able to successfully help your customer step safely into your next "boat" (I.E. One of your relevant lateral marketing campaigns) at a price level she can afford, you are actually keeping her as a recurring customer. (And when her budget increases, she'll be eager to buy your high end products.)

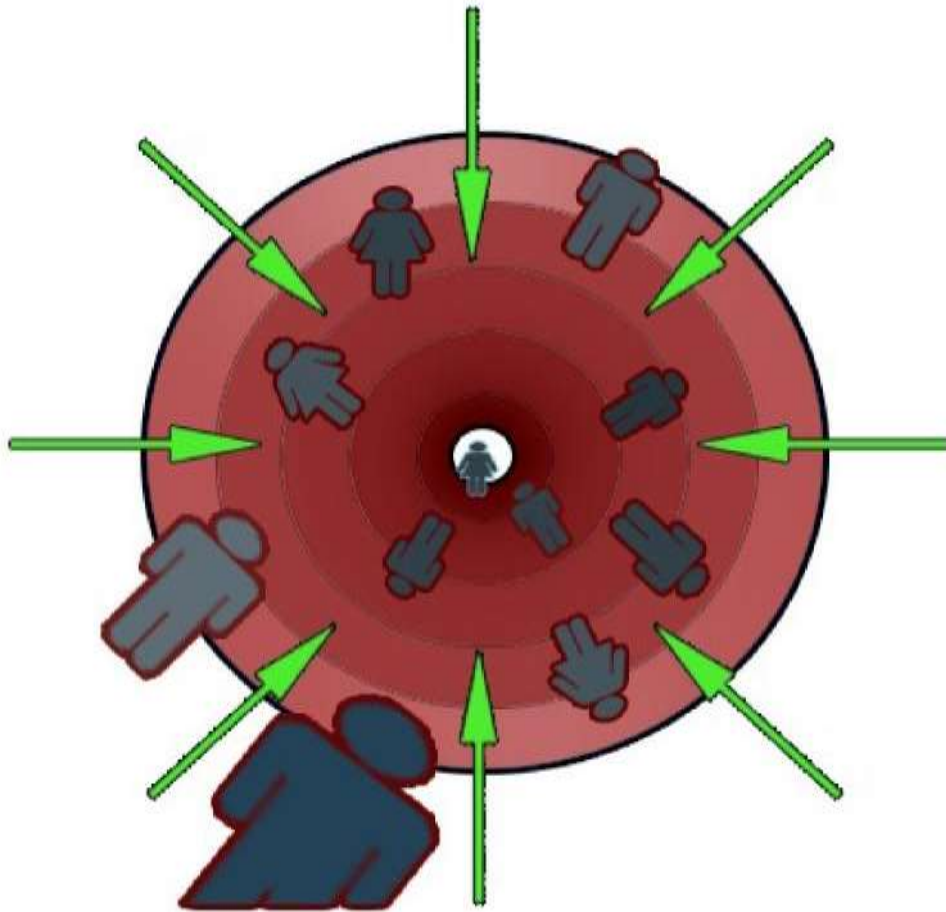
You are also creating – no pun intended – “multiple streams of income”. Instead of letting her disappear and slip away, you’ve at least maximized your profits by selling her an affiliate product on the way out the door – and keeping yourself firmly in her memory as a good and trusted resource.

You can bet she’ll be on the lookout for future products you may produce in her price level – providing your content has been valuable enough and your emails consistent and regular enough for her to continue to think of you as part of her marketing journey.

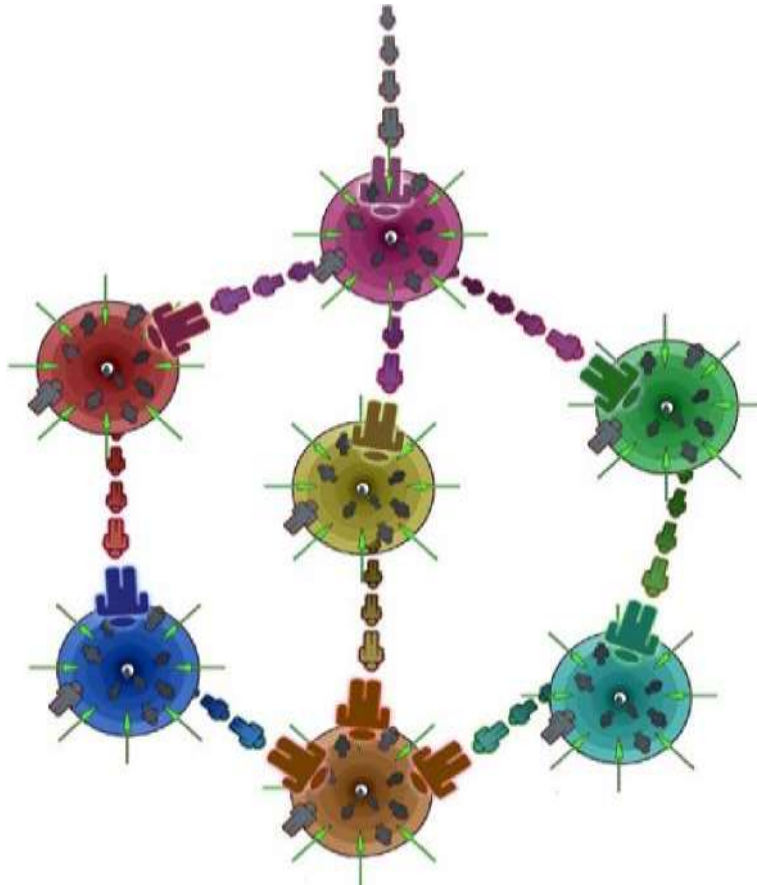
It helps, at this point, if we stop thinking of the old, simplistic sales funnel model...



...And instead, flip the funnel so that we’re looking into the funnel mouth – a true aerial view...



Now, pretend you're looking at Google Earth, or an Expedia map... Zoom WAY out, and the following image is what you ought to be "seeing" for your long term marketing plan for all aspects of your niche (or niches)...

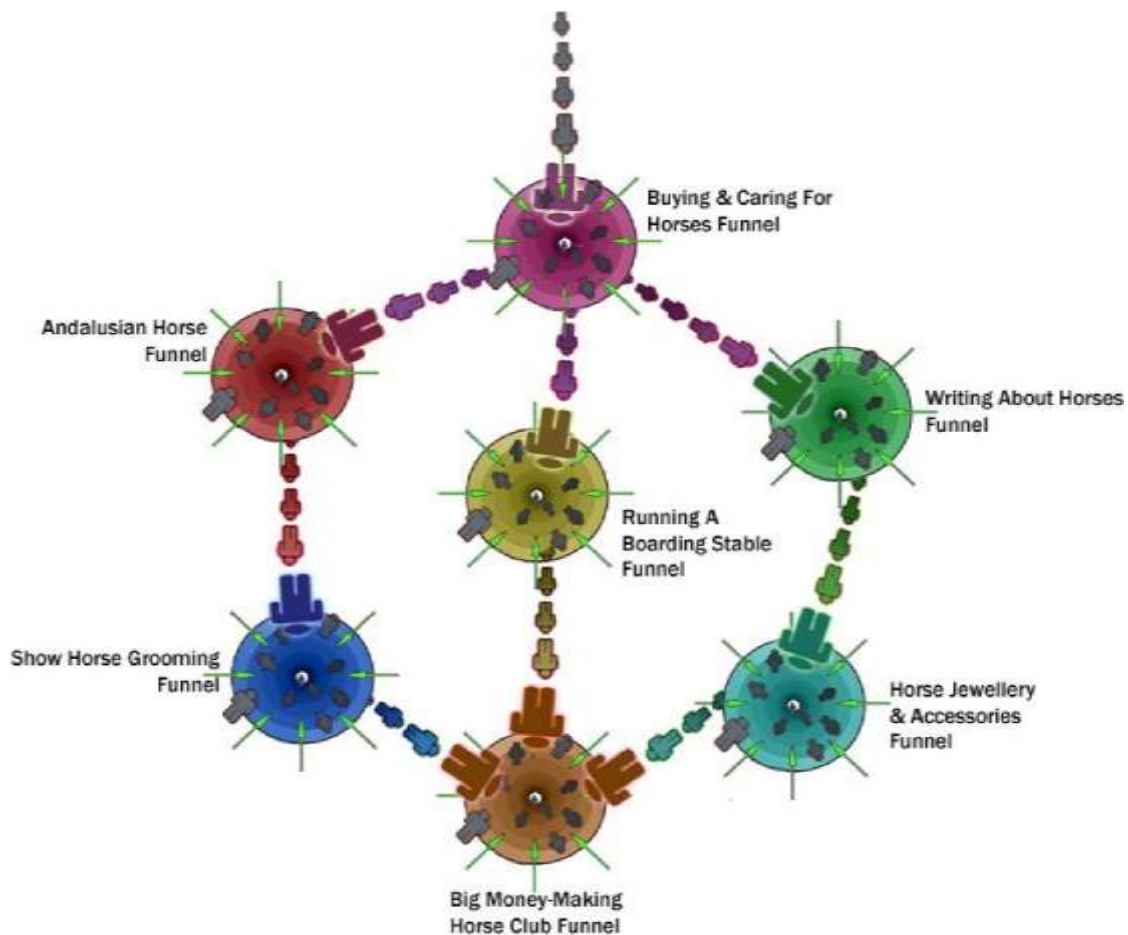


As you can see, your subscribers land in your first funnel via all your lead-generating methods – squeeze pages, article resource boxes, forum links, etc. You’ll have each funnel designed so that people can either cross-migrate laterally or progress onward to your next, more high ticket (or lower ticket) funnel.

The little “people” arrows traveling through your funnels in the diagram above aren’t limited to the directions I’ve used, of course. (That’s just a simplified example.) You can have traffic flowing back and forth from any funnel, in either direction. You can bring people in via 2, 3, 4 or more funnels simultaneously – or just your basic first one. Some funnels will naturally lead to others; the rest will not.

I’ll give you an example... Let’s pretend for a moment your area of expertise is all things equestrian, and eventually you want to be a major force in the online equestrian world. You might spend 95% of your time for the first six months planning, designing, implementing and populating one sales funnel only – your “Buying and Caring for Horses” funnel.

But all the time you’re doing that, because you planned future funnels from the start, you will have in your conscious and sub-conscious all future funnels you’re going to create, to round out your online empire...



Merely knowing that next year you plan to be running a lucrative Horse Jewellery and Accessories business will help you:

- A. **Design for expansion** right from the beginning, when creating your first simple funnel. (E.G.: if you're starting out with a very simple shopping cart, you'll want to make sure it's one that allows you to export your list, when it's time to beef up your shopping cart to handle the more sophisticated functions of a serious physical product catalogue business.)
- B. **Know what not to spend time developing.** If you know you're going to specialize later in an Andalusian horse funnel, you may wish to emphasize the virtues of the Andalusian in your "overview of horse breeds" book – and you'll scrap that special report on the virtues of Hanoverians. (It might steer potential horse buyers away from thinking "Andalusian".)

Now, obviously, markets change, new opportunities arise and you may ultimately decide to change direction altogether, one day.

But for now, the more you plan for the future with your sales funnels, the more expertly, smoothly, consistently – and lucratively – you will be setting yourself up.

Incorporating Affiliate Products into your Sales Funnel

One easy way to up your value in your customers' eyes – include affiliate products into your sales funnel.

But won't that take away from your own sales?

Yes – and no.

The whole key lies in genuinely putting your customer first – that rule is absolutely crucial. Keep it natural. Make sure that the affiliate product you're recommending is not only perfect for your list, but also something that really enhances your own products.

But there's another tactic to explore... Do your best to find and promote high ticket items as your affiliate product. That's where many seasoned marketers insist the real profits lie.

Just make sure you've tried the affiliate product yourself. And be sure to observe the new FTC revised guidelines (effective December 1, 2009), when promoting affiliate links..

Leading the Customer up through Different Price Points

Getting your customer to progress through your different price points should feel as easy and natural for them as falling off the proverbial log. In order to do that, you have to know your market – and your individual customer – as well as you know your family members.

While it's true that you as seller and your customer as buyer go through the funnel together, your journeys are not wholly identical. For one thing, you want to get on with the business of selling – but it will take your potential customer several exposures until she decides (or suddenly discovers) she needs your first product. You have to respect and allow for this time lag.

The most important thing you can do is put yourself in her shoes. There's no cut and dried rule on exactly what steps to take, in order to achieve this, but

it's all part of keeping things natural, not seeming to force the pace (while actually “prompting” it quite assertively). Above all, keep empathizing with your customer. How would you feel, if you were her, right now?

Another major key to keeping in tune with your sales funnel: Take the time to track everything – email campaigns; opt-out points; which squeeze pages convert better than others; which email links drive customers to your products and which ones are ignored... If tracking is new to you, and you don't at least have Google Analytics, then create a new account with Google and sign up for it straight away!

With Google Analytics, you can also use the Goal Funnels tool. This is particularly helpful in tracking exactly where people “leak” without purchasing, during the shopping cart process. Knowing which page is causing people to abort the purchase is a useful step towards discovering the problem. You can test it, or have others test it for you (and sometimes it's obvious at a glance what the problem is – for example, a link that doesn't work.)

But you can even track through your cPanel, via your FTP program. Log in to your server, and see which pages are getting the most attention.

2 Sales Funnel Super Tips

There are a couple of basics that are so essential to a successful sales funnel, I call them my “super tips”.

1. When deciding what to put in your sales funnel – go check out your competitors. See what they're doing, and what's selling like hotcakes; which products are creating all the buzz.

If you don't know who your competitors are, a simplistic way to find out involves running a Google search on your primary long-tailed keyword phrase – then checking out the results on the first Google page that comes up. (Use a plug-in like SEO Quake, if you have Firefox as your main browser – that will allow you to view each site's true page rank, as well as many other vital statistics.)

Then read all the reviews you can, to see what their customers love – or hate.

Pay particular attention to the “hate” letters: These identify the “holes” you can fill with your product.

In other words, take what they do (poorly or well) – and do it significantly better.

2. It's not always possible, but do try your best to keep your products "evergreen" – meaning that even if someone buys them 10 years from now, they won't be out of date. This makes them easy to repurpose.

12 Sales Funnel Mistakes

1. Creating a product, then looking for customers. Always identify the need first – then create the product or service to fill it.
2. Creating one offer and expecting it to provide you with a complete business
3. Not spending enough time on research first.
4. Not asking your market for feedback
5. Not looking at the "bigger picture"- how your sales funnel fits into your overall marketing plan.
6. Not testing and tracking at every step.
7. Using the wrong medium for your message. (For example, if you wanted to explain how to perform a complex technical task to your customer, you wouldn't use an audio file; you'd create a video and easily show them "how".)
8. Ignoring or not planning for customer service issues. If you're too busy to respond personally, set up a Help Desk and outsource it to a Virtual Assistant (VA). Make sure all refunds are processed promptly. Refunds will happen – but hopefully not too many.
9. Focusing on selling, instead of thinking about your buyers and their needs
10. Not remembering that customers typically need 7-12 exposures product before buying – just as in the offline retail world.
11. Bombarding your list with offers, and not giving them space to "breathe"
12. Putting affiliate links on your squeeze page (happens more than you might think!)

Collecting Opt-Ins

Keeping in mind that it does usually take prospects several exposures before they finally buy, the best way to collect solid opt-ins is two-fold:

- Make sure you perform thorough keyword and targeting research
- Give your future customers more than one way to find you. Be a presence on their forums (always a helpful one, with a ready answer.) Join social networking

groups like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace and the like. Create Squidoo pages. Offer to be a guest poster on relevant blogs. And of course, create punchy, potent landing pages!

Some of these methods will feel more natural to you than others. Play to your strengths, and don't waste too much time learning new skills if they're not absolutely necessary (your marketing overall plan and sales funnel should actually help you decide that question!) Outsource anything you can, and keep your focus on the things you do best.

Above all, however, always remember... your focus should be on your ideal customer: Never on yourself! Focus on their needs, and your sales will reflect that. Give them enough glimpses of your personality to allow them to see your unique difference – and don't be afraid to show that difference, because ultimately, that is what will weed out customers who won't be happy (and who will cause endless problems – and refunds – because of it) and attract highly qualified ones right on your wavelength. However, don't bombard them with intimate personal details – if you tell a story about yourself, make sure it relates to your reader and is really all about her!

Building your Prospects List and Buyers List

The most important thing to do, when building your list, is to focus not on sales but on lead generation. This simply means capturing names and email addresses for your prospects list.

There are many techniques you can use, starting with that all important opt-in box on every page of your site and, of course, your dedicated squeeze pages.

And you don't have to give a freebie away. You can simply ask them to sign up for your newsletter – just make sure you give them a strong and specific reason, and don't forget your “call to action” phrases. Tell them what to do and how to do it.

You don't just stop, however, once you've captured their subscription. Remember it will take the average prospect 7-12 further exposures to you and your product – reminders that you exist and can help them – before they will actually buy something. So you need follow-up emails stacked in your autoresponder.

These can include solo emails, offers of an email course (or another email course, if that was your sign-up freebie) or – most important of all – priceless tips, with no attempt at a sale (though do put relevant sales links in your signature: Most people will not perceive that as “pushy”.)

Separating the Two Lists

The most important action you can take, once your prospect becomes a buyer, is to migrate her from your prospects list to your buyers list. Most people become annoyed if they've already bought an item, but continue to receive emails inviting them to buy that same product. They feel as if you don't value them as a customer and don't remember their existence – so get them onto a buyer's list straight away – with different products and offers that enhance and enrich the benefits of the product you just sold. (And in between, don't forget to keep sending valuable tips, without sales pushes.)

Ideally, as they progress through your funnel, you should migrate them to multiple different lists – the more specific, the better. But if all this seems too complex and you are uncomfortable with your autoresponder and have real trouble mastering the flow, consider outsourcing this area to a VA who specializes in autoresponders and autoresponder emails.

Tools and Resources

Here are links to 3 free tools you may find it helpful to use, to help you calculate, plan or set up your new sales funnel(s):

- SmartDraw is a highly sophisticated diagram program that will not only draw sales funnels, but several other useful business diagrams, too.
- Sales Funnel Calculator from MathMarketing will help you calculate how much you can realistically make from sales.
- Inspiration – a simple, graphic-based “mind mapper”. Can help you plan, think through and prioritize your sales funnel steps.

Autoresponder Basics

Make sure you get a good autoresponder, which is up to the job:

- Aweber, GetsResponse, iContact, Oprius are all top quality autoresponders. (iContact is unique from the other 3, in that it gives you the option of not using a double opt-in for lead generation capture.) Before you rush to subscribe, however, be aware that some shopping carts (like WahmCart) actually include autoresponders.

Be aware that as your subscribers increase, most autoresponders will up their prices for the increase in your usage of their system. When your list passes a certain number – usually around 10,000, there'll be a price increase.

But if this happens to you, you should be able to afford the price increase – and consider it a good thing!

When planning to use a shopping cart autoresponder, script, or service like Aweber, select one which will allow you export and import your lists, should you ever switch service providers.

One final caution: avoid free autoresponders. They are usually laced with the provider's ads – and that is deadly for your landing pages and sales material!

Payment Processors

You don't need to be intimidated by the whole issue of autoresponders and payment processors. In fact, a good rule to remember, when starting from zero: don't overtax your budget. Increase your purchases and monthly fee services as your profits start to generate. Don't be paying out more per month than you take in, if you can help it!

And, of course, it helps to plan for these necessary increases in service as you anticipate your list growth, too.

In fact, one of the easiest ways to get going with paid products is to pay a \$50 fee and offer it through Clickbank, if you like. The advantage to Clickbank: it performs many important functions for you, such as providing the payment processor and being your affiliate manager.

Incorporating an Affiliate Program

But there's one more important sales funnel component we haven't yet mentioned...

One of the most vital sales strategies that separates the "pocket money" marketer from the big earners: Running your own affiliate program. Have a resource center set up for your affiliates, filled with graphics, ads and code they can use, as well as sales tips and tutorials, and pre-written emails.

The happier your affiliates are with your support, the more enthusiastically (and easily) they will promote you.

In fact, that brings us to the last major recommendation in our special report: using JV (joint venture) partners.

Again, this doesn't need to be a complex, intimidating process. All you need to do is fit the right offer to the right marketer – and more importantly, to her list. If you have a product or a brandable report that could benefit Ms. Bigname's list, don't hesitate to approach her and simply suggest she review it, pointing out why it's valuable to her list and offering her a good commission rate – 75% to 100%. (Remember, that first product is really there to build your list. By using her large list, you're capturing perhaps thousands of subscribers without lifting a finger. You might decide that is worth 100% commission offered to a "super affiliate".)

And that brings us to the end of our sales funnel overview. Some of the techniques and tips you've received will most likely need further study on your part – but don't be intimidated. Remember, you can plan for more complex operations and goals, even before you've got there. All you need to do is keep your first funnel simple – and concentrate on your ideal customer and his or her needs!

On the following 2 pages are 2 simple worksheets you can use, to help get those brain sparks going. Print them out and use them as many times as you like!

My Business Strategy

My Business Strategy	
My niche target is:	
In one year, I plan to have [quantity] ___ funnels.	
In 3 years, I plan to have ___ funnels.	
In 5 years, I plan to have ___ funnels.	
In 10 years, I plan to....	
Income I would like to generate in: 6	
months	_____
1 year	_____
3 years	_____
5 years	_____

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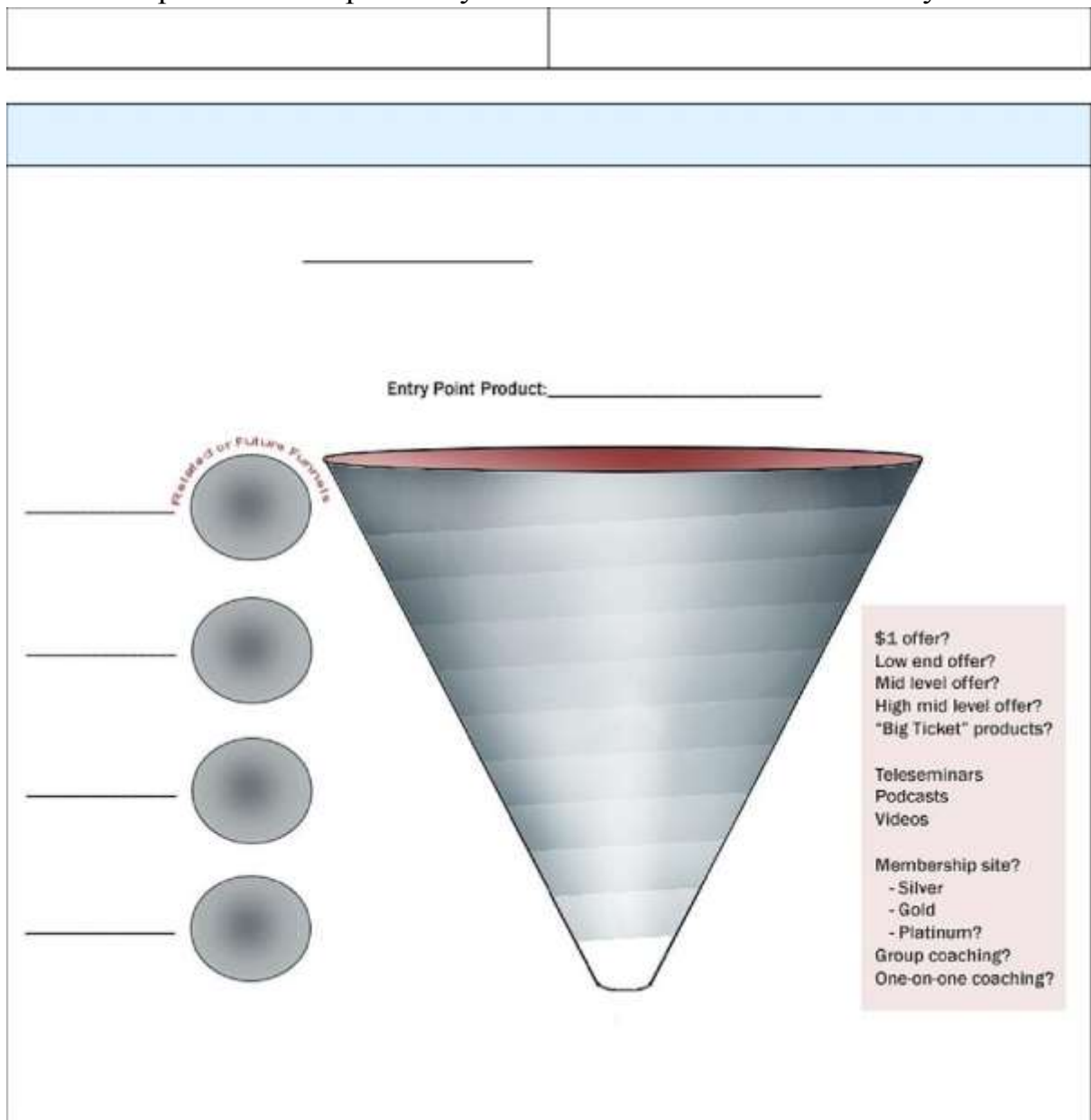
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10 years	
Reminders: What I Will Need... Domain name registration Autoresponder Basic web hosting? Reseller web hosting? Shopping cart Payment processor? Specialty software Tracking software or subscription?	Hints: My Strategy... Blog(s) How many? Landing pages: Opt-in boxes on every page Email courses Free or paid? Article marketing Social Media
Outsourcing Plan:	Purchases to be made this year:

My Sales Funnel

Use this simple planner as many times as you like, for each sales funnel... Note that the “spiral” markings are just visual guidelines: If you prefer, print this page out and use a

ruler and pencil to “separate” your sections into divisions of your choice.



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