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Online Booklet Results

By Paulette Ensign

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Selling over 500,000 copies of an informational tips booklet, '110 Ideas for Organizing Your Business Life,' and earning a quarter of a million dollars in the process is not at all where I thought I would end up when I started writing a tips booklet in 1991. Putting it bluntly, I was broke. I was desperate. I was trying to use the booklet as a marketing tool to breathe some new life — any life — into my speaking and consulting business. Not only did that happen, but the process spurred an entire new business along the way. And I did it without spending a penny on advertising. Or PR people. And, '110 Ideas' is now in three languages, other booklet and guide formats, and an audio tape program.

August 1994 was the magical turning point: I went online, signing up with CompuServe, solely for the purpose of marketing my business. Little did I know what doors I was opening. I was like a kid in a candy store, roaming around the forums, reading the postings, and chatting with people online. I saw opportunities to market everywhere I looked.

The third day online, I exchanged email with a man in Milan, Italy, who has a marketing company. I read his post in a forum. I asked who his client base was. When he said small business and vendors to small business, I told him I had something he might find useful. I asked his permission to send him a sample of my tips booklet. Eighteen months later, he wired me several thousand dollars for royalties on the first sale of the Italian version of my booklet. We had struck a deal for him to translate, edit, produce, and market my booklet contents in Italy. The first sale was 105,000 copies to a magazine. To this day, we have communicated solely by email, fax, earth mail, and electronic funds transfer. I have no idea what the Italian version says, although my former hairdresser said it's a great translation. What I do know is that the deal was a good one.

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I am currently talking with others to translate my publication into other languages, again from connections made online, connections I doubt would have happened any other way. Those connections happened by others seeing posts I placed, and by my responding to things I saw posted. Another language happened after the Italian version. It is now also in Spanish...all from online contacts.

The results I've had come from my using a buffet of basic online formats:

Email * Submit articles and queries to online and hardcopy publications *
Send promotional information to media and prospects * Answer questions from

prospects and clients * Process orders directly

Seminars * In real time * Post in forums * Participate in others' seminars

Listserves and Discussion Boards * My own discussion board * Initiate
postings * Responses

Web site * My own web site * Linked to others * Articles posted to other
people's sites

Online newsletters * Write an article * Be written about

This happened much the same way I networked offline. To get online seminar and conference bookings, I developed a presence and relationships with the decision makers of those areas. They are always looking for interesting programming for their audience. My story about writing and marketing booklets for cash has been an interesting one for audiences in several online forums.

I posted questions seeking suggestions to all kinds of additional opportunities. 'Does anyone know who, how, where...?' That brought many new connections, one after the other. In some cases, it also brought new ideas I hadn't considered. Asking for information or suggestions is one of the best-accepted forms of marketing yourself online. It's a more benign way of publicizing yourself than a blatant sales approach.

Reading the postings in the forums, newsgroups, listserves, discussion boards, and anywhere else is like mining for gold. Responding to other people's posts allows for a soft sell of your own products and services while being helpful and providing solutions to their concerns. I often gently make reference to my publications or services. You'd be amazed how often that generates at least an inquiry, if not a direct sale. It might seem to take a little longer. It is a very effective way to go much

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further, though. Referrals come when and from where you least expect them, I have noticed.

Online newsletters are like hard-copy newsletters. The two differences I am finding are that online newsletters appear more willing to accept articles and that the decision-making process on acceptance seems faster. The online newsletters often have a larger subscriber base than many hard copy newsletters. For me, this has also been like trying to eat only one potato chip. The emergence of online newsletters is huge. Finding one generally leads to more.

I view my technological capability. savvy, understanding, and certainly equipment at the lower end of the scale. In spite of this, my results have included:

- > Direct sales of my booklet, audio tape, and manuals (about 150,000 booklets solely through online efforts)
 - > Translations into two languages.
 - > Speaking engagements around the country and the world
 - > Consulting clients, served by phone, fax, and online
 - > Interviews in other media (in print, online, radio and television)
 - > Saving time and money in communications (greatly satisfying that instant gratification urge)
 - > Writing assignments (small, medium and large assignments)
 - > Reseller relationships to distribute my products throughout the world
- Consider this: I have never taken a business course. (I used to be a music teacher.) I did the copy and original design on a primitive computer with no hard drive (it's amazing what you can do with floppy disks). Every day brings new possibilities and opportunities to this booklet journey. I have had a web site for a few years now, and, like every web site, it is forever evolving. The latest addition has been an e-booklet catalog which sells other people's booklets as digitally as fully automated downloads.

I can hardly imagine what results will show up next!

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Tips Booklets – Choosing Your Best Topic

By Paulette Ensign

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There are TONS of things you find interesting in your life. You could write an informational tips booklet about any one of them to help other people learn what you know, and make some money from the booklets in the process. Where is the place for you to start?

First, give thought to whether you want your booklet to have a two-fold function as a marketing piece for a current business you own and also an income stream unto itself. That will narrow your choices somewhat. Choosing a topic that has nothing at all to do with your business means your marketing efforts will be split between marketing your business and marketing the booklet. Why not align them so they cross market each other? You may have a passion about something that has nothing to do with your business. If that passion is so strong that you just have to do it, then you already know your answer. Otherwise, select a topic related to your business activities.

Now that you have narrowed it to something connected to your business, consider whether the booklet needs to be an overview of the topic you are promoting, or if it needs to focus on one specific aspect of something you know is your big seller or greatest profit service or product of your business. Starting with an overview booklet and spinning out more specialized booklets later is something that will provide good opportunities for re-sales to the people who bought your first booklet, opportunities for you to stay in front of those same clients. They could become buyers of larger quantities, larger services or become ongoing customers of a very consistent volume of what you have.

A public speaker could do a booklet mirroring each of the topics on which they speak. A consultant can focus on each of the areas within their specialty. A manufacturer would be likely to create a booklet on the uses and benefits of specific product lines. A therapist could consider doing one on coping mechanisms for different syndromes.

You may find yourself wandering in your thoughts as you begin the first booklet. It just might be that you are writing two booklets at once. Keep yourself to writing no more than two booklets at a time to assure completing them. Once those are done, start the next two! Or, you could realize that one 16-page booklet accomplished all that you wanted it to, once you identified your most appropriate starting place.

The next challenge will be what to do with the booklet once you have written and produced. There are untold ways to promote your booklet. For

more information on how to write and market booklets, contact Tips Products International at Paulette@tipsbooklets.com or 858-481-0890.



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