

FRANK KERN

I knew it was important to control traffic from the beginning.

I got really lucky because I started Internet marketing in 1999 and I didn't have to learn the pitfalls of the free traffic myth, specifically about the affiliates and joint venture stuff because it really didn't exist back then, at least not with anybody I knew. There was no "Internet marketing" community back then; there were only a few people publishing and it was all experimental. I had to advertise. My first ad, I remember, was for a \$47 product that went straight to a sales letter. I bought my first ad from goto.com, which became Overture, then became Yahoo, which became Bing, and it was one of the first pay per click search engines. It worked, and that immediately hooked me.

I spent about \$5 to get a \$47 sale, and I was very excited about that, which was both good and bad. The good was I was able to turn advertising into profit. The bad was that it took me years until I fully recognized that the first sale is the hardest to make and what I really got was a customer for \$5.

And of course, nowadays, because we have funnels and we know more and practice relationship marketing and really bond with our buyers and customers, that initial purchase is worth infinitely more than that sum they paid upfront. I'm much happier to buy that customer for a small fraction of the initial value as opposed to paying some other party like an affiliate person or joint venture partner that I would depend on half my gross sales forever. It just doesn't make sense to me.

I've made quite a few mistakes. I think its fairly safe to say with a fair degree of accuracy that I have customers in every country and continent on the planet. Maybe there is some very obscure place in eastern Europe or somewhere where I don't have a customer, but besides that, I have clients everywhere. And I also have coaching and consulting clients who I speak with regularly and help. The mistake is universal and it's prevalent and it's everywhere. It's both a frustration and also something worth getting very, very excited about because it represents massive opportunity for folks who realize it and work around it. Here it is: most people will do 2 critically devastating things to their business.

The first is that they falsely believe that advertising is an expense and it's better to get free advertising. Here's the thing: advertising should never ever be an expense; advertising should always be looked at as an investment. And you should never invest any significant amount of money into advertising until you have proven, with a very small amount of money, that for every dollar you put in, you will at least get that dollar back and preferably 2, 3, or 4 dollars back. So now the question becomes, "Well that's sort of obvious, but how do you do that?" That brings us to the big significant mistake that I can almost say everyone is doing. This mistake is that they send traffic to an incomplete or not existent system. And I'll tell you what I mean by that with a metaphor.

Imagine going to a job interview without taking a shower or putting on decent clothes. Well, when you drive traffic to your website, that's kind of like you going to an interview with that prospective customer. If you don't have a complete sales funnel built, it's like showing up to that job interview with 2 nights of party clothes on and no shower and your hair's sticking up everywhere, and you're reeking of vodka Red Bull. Depending on the job, it's not going to go over very well.

There are a lot of ways to turn traffic into money, but the simplest way is to make sure you have a complete system, a predictable system, that can systematically and predictably turn X percentage of visitors to initial sales, and then X percentage of those initial sales to escalating sales, and then X percentage of those escalating sales into repeat lifetime customers. If you do that, it's over: you get all the traffic you want.

Because traffic is like sand. The traffic by itself is worthless. If you go to the beach, take a bunch of sand, give it to someone and say, "Do you want to buy this sand?" they will say no because it's just sand. Like the traffic itself means nothing...it's what you make of it. If you take that sand and heat it and mold it, you can have something nice made out of glass. Or, we can build castles out of that because we make bricks out of the sand. It's the same way. You pour that raw material of traffic into a good system that is designed to turn it into profits consistently and predictably, then you have an asset that can feed you for years and years and years if not a lifetime.

Is it hard to get traffic? No, it's not, if you are on the up and up. Within the Internet marketing community, which, on the large part, is often the business opportunity space...if you are trying to send traffic to a page that is not compliant, that makes these outrageous hype claims that violate the clearly stated terms and services of advertising platforms, then you're going to have a hard time.

But, if you follow the rules, then no, it's not hard. We have some of the largest companies in new media. We have Google and Facebook, which are public companies and the purpose of those companies is to deliver revenue and profit to their shareholders. How do they do that? They sell advertising.

So is someone going to logically say that it's difficult to buy advertising from some of the largest companies in the world, whose sole function is to sell advertising? No, it's not. Seconds from now, well seconds may be an exaggeration, but I would bet you that, if you wanted to send traffic to a blog or something, not that that would be a good idea, but say you have a blog post that would be generally beneficial to your reader and you want to send traffic to it, within the next 10 minutes, you can create an ad, and be set up on a network to send traffic. You can publish that same stuff in a CPA network. Obviously you would need to have an offer attached to it for those publishers to want to do it, but no, it's not hard to get traffic at all.

Of course, people ignore the existence of other media; everyone is focused on joint ventures and email because they think that's all that exists. You have a tiny little microscopic camp of people who sell things on the Internet, and then you have the rest of the world who sort of laughs at them. There's never a question of trying to get traffic; it's always the question of can you convert the traffic? That's the real art. Getting traffic is having a credit card. Do you have a credit card? Is there money on it? Can you type the little order form and fill that out on Facebook, Google, Bing, or whatever? Then yeah, you can buy traffic.

The biggest tip for buying traffic? There are two. First of all, you have to understand that not all traffic is created equal. My teacher, Dan Kennedy, taught me, message to market match. The right message in front of the right market at the right time with the right media. So, segment your audience. If you have something like health to sell, don't just go and advertise "Get healthy." Who is it for? Women? Women over 40? Women over 40 who are 30 pounds overweight who want to lose that weight? Whatever it is, dial it in perfectly to that market. Your traffic is going to be less expensive and that's a great way to make a \$500 ad spend on traffic feel like \$5000, because you're laser targeting just the right person.

But that is not nearly enough. You also need to understand human psychological nature and build everything to go with that human psychological nature. This is where your competitors are going to do the polar opposite, so this is very good. I think it's logical for

us to assume that the vast majority of people that come to your website for the first time aren't going to buy your stuff. If you got the majority of people who came to your website for the very first time to buy your stuff, then we would be building solid gold statues of you in direct response marketing hall of fame, wherever that may be, because it's unheard of; it just doesn't really happen ever. So, instead of trying to rack our brains and torture ourselves and hammer visitors over the head with false scarcity and countdown timers that don't tie into anything, and ever increasing exaggerations and claims, why don't we understand their basic human nature and build everything to go along with that and guide their decision over time?

Right now is the first time really in the history of humanity where we have the ability to communicate with so many people with really zero expense; it really doesn't cost anything to send an email. You may say, "That's not true. I have Aweber for \$30," so it may cost you .000001 cent over a lifetime to send an email to that client. So, knowing that, build a system that you can send traffic to that is going to first capture interest by immediately providing value to that visitor for free. The way you do that is by solving an immediate problem for that person for free with some information, with tutorials, whatever it may be. And build a relationship with that customer through an automated sequence over time. It can be quick time by the way, it doesn't have to take years, and have that relationship build trust and desire, which leads to a sale, which, and this is the big one, leads to increasing sales, whether that's a lifetime of continued business, or that is accession where they buy more and more products from you within a short amount of time. Either one of those works. So, it's really: send the right traffic, which isn't just any traffic, but properly targeted traffic, which is cheaper, to a properly built funnel that provides value first, builds a relationship first, then asks for the money, only after that value transaction has been established to where you're giving to receive. If you do that, and stick with it, it's going to be pretty hard for you to mess it up.