

The Step-by-Step System to Building Your Small Business

**Helping small business owners build successful, abundant and
rewarding businesses**

Module 2 Learn the Core Marketing Essentials

Lesson 2A Determine Your *Who and What*

**Solutions and
Direction for tomorrow's possibilities**

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Introduction

Hello!

You have (hopefully!) completed the first module of this business development system, which is about strengthening your foundation. Now we're on to Module 2—creating a foundation for your marketing activities. From here on, all of the marketing you do will be built around what we cover in this module.

This class is about your WHO and your WHAT. While marketing professionals tend to use the terms “Target Market” and “Niche,” I like to think of it as *Who* you serve and *What* you do for them. The more specific you can be, the better—more about that later.

The other class in this module is about your HOW. Your *How* is the unique service proposition you offer potential clients and the unique service you deliver to current clients. For some business owners, this is a specific program you walk your clients through. Essentially, it's how you do what you do. I recommend you do Lesson 2B next.

Some business owners resist the steps covered in this lesson because they are afraid of limiting themselves or being bored. You will learn why you don't need to be concerned.

In fact, when you “get it,” you will be excited, because it is virtually guaranteed that when you choose a specific *Who* and *What* and actively market to that group using the step-by-step guidelines provided in the next module, you will expand your business.

In this class, you will:

- Learn exactly what I mean by *Who* and *What*.
- Understand the critical importance of picking a specific *Who* and *What* and targeting your marketing to reach that group.
- Explore possible options for your *Who* and *What*.
- Pick a specific *Who* and *What* as the basis for your marketing activities.

Based on the feedback and experience of hundreds of small business owners who have used this business building system, many have struggled when picking a *Who* and *What*. While working through this struggle and making a decision seems to be a part of the process, know that it is time and energy well spent. Determining your target market and niche is the essential first step to effectively marketing your business.

Best regards,

Susan Brockmeier
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Overview

FACT: People don't really care about you or your business.

People care about their own problems. If your business can provide a solution, then they will care a great deal about you and will be interested in your business.

FACT: Most business owners are too vague and try to be all things to all people.

Owners give the impression that they are ready, willing and able to specialize in everything. Vagueness is not attractive. It is extremely difficult to market and creates confusion in the minds of the people with whom you speak.

You have probably served a variety of people on a diverse array of topics, and your clients have probably benefited from those services. In fact, this diversity may be one of the things you love most about your business.

But just because you can work with many different types of people on a wide range of things doesn't mean that you can effectively market to everyone on everything. In fact, it's virtually impossible.

Instead, you need to engage in consistent, focused marketing to the people who already want and need what you business delivers. And you can only do this if you get specific about what you do and who you do it for!

Definitions

It is customary in the field marketing to first refer to Target Market (your *Who*) and then to Niche (your *What*) in that order. For the purposes of this lesson we will first be determining your *What*, what you do, and then determining your *Who*, whom you serve.

After identifying your *What* and *Who*, we will return to the standard target market and niche arrangement to discuss your *Who* and *What*. And since you will be seeing and using the terms *Who* and *What* throughout this business-building program, here are the definitions. Let's start with your *What*.

Your *What*—Niche

Your *What* is what you do for your clients. In general, niches are defined by the problems and needs that are common to a group of people. The solution or benefit you provide to assist a common group of potential clients is your *What*. I like to keep things simple, so I

refer to what you do for your clients as your *What*. In general, the more specific you are about what you do, the better.

In the best-selling book *Good to Great*, author Jim Collins identifies key characteristics of great companies, the ones that consistently have achieved phenomenal returns over a period of 15 years or more. One of the most important characteristics that these highly successful companies have in common is a clear focus on one specific area. And that area always meets these criteria:

1. They are deeply passionate about what they do.
2. They believe they are the best in the world at it.
3. What they do for their clients “drives their economic engine.”

The same thing is true for your business. In order for you to achieve success (i.e., get more clients and make a living doing what you love), you must focus on a specific area.

This is one of the fundamental principals of marketing, yet so few business owners adhere to it. The importance of this can not be emphasized enough. If you want to build a thriving business, you will be most successful if you pick a specific area of expertise and **focus on reaching out to the people who already want and need what your business provides.**

People hire a professional as a way to “solve” their specific “problem.” A perfect example is the legal profession. If you need the services of an attorney, don’t you seek out a lawyer who has specific knowledge, experience and expertise with your problem? People going through a divorce seek out a divorce attorney. Those creating an LLC or S-Corporation seek out a business attorney.

The medical profession is another terrific example. Would you go to a chiropractor to get your eyes examined? Of course not! We seek out professionals who can help us with our specific problem. The same is true with your business.

Your *What* must address one of these two things:

- A specific RESULT or BENEFIT that your clients can achieve through your products and services.
- A specific PROBLEM that your business can solve.

Examples:

“I’m a psychotherapist, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- enjoy greater intimacy in their marriage.
- have better relationships with their teenage children.
- feel less anxious in social situations.

“I’m a minister, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- incorporate more spirituality in their lives.
- find greater meaning in their lives.

“I’m a corporate consultant, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- learn skills to do their jobs better (i.e., leadership, management, communication skills).

“I’m a financial advisor, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- get out of debt and create a plan for financial independence.
- increase the return on their financial portfolios.
- retire at 40.

“I’m a personal trainer, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- lose weight and get in shape.
- have more energy on a daily basis.
- climb Mount Everest.

“I’m a coach, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- work less and enjoy more happiness, fun and fulfillment.
- improve the profitability of their businesses.
- enjoy more fulfilling and satisfying relationships.

“I’m a career counselor, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- find jobs they really love.
- achieve promotions.

“I’m a realtor, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- find their first homes.
- relocate to another part of the country.

“I’m a professional caregiver, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- better manage the non-medical side of their illnesses.
- maintain their independence.

“I’m a massage therapist, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- relieve stress in mind and body.
- support muscular goals.

“I’m professional healer, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- remove unwanted emotional baggage..
- find more peace in their lives.

“I’m network marketer, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- start home-based businesses.
- learn how to build winning teams.

“I’m an interior decorator, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- create beautiful home environments.
- sell their homes faster.

“I’m an attorney, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- reduce their tax liabilities.
- acquire other companies.

“I’m a mediator, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- resolve their divorces quickly and cheaply.
- resolve disputes with win-win outcomes.

“I’m an energy worker, and I work with <your *Who*> who want to...”

- treat medical conditions without drugs.
- overcome fears and phobias.

Your *Who*—Target Market

Quite simply, your *Who* is whomever you serve. It is also called a target market, a specific group of people to whom you are focusing your marketing. Similar to your *What*, the more specific you are, the better.

A target market is some combination of the following characteristics:

- Demographics (i.e., gender, age, income level)
- Field/industry (i.e., high tech, health care, retail sales, restaurants, educators)
- Job/position (i.e., CEOs, sales people, accountants, mid-level managers)
- A common focus (i.e., career changers, people in mid-life transition, new business owners, people seeking health and wellness)

Examples:

Executives in Fortune 500 companies

CEOs of start-up companies

People in their 30s looking to make major career shifts

Private-practice attorneys seeking life balance

Stay-at-home moms who want more time for themselves
Baby boomers preparing for retirement
Teenagers with ADD
Self-employed professionals starting their first businesses
Mid-level managers in biotech companies
Home-based business owners

Benefits of Choosing a Specific *What* and *Who*

You will find listed below some of the many benefits of picking a specific *What* and *Who*. However, the main reason you must pick a specific *What* and *Who* is so you can create marketing strategies to proactively reach out to the people who already want what your business offers.

This business-building program is based on identifying and focusing on a specific problem that your business solves or a specific result or benefit that it delivers and then marketing to the people who have that problem or who want that result. The benefits to you of doing this are:

- You know who they are.
- You know (or can research) where to find them.
- You become recognized and known in that particular community.
- You are seen as an expert.
- People will start seeking you out.
- You know where to spend your marketing resources (time, money, energy, effort).
- You can focus your networking on events that cater to your target market.
- You can create specific marketing materials that speak directly to your prospective clients.
- You become more confident and attractive.
- You become more knowledgeable in your area of expertise.
- You attract more clients outside your specific niche.

Determine Your What (Niche)

On the next several pages, we provide exercises and examples to help you determine your *What*. Do the best you can to make your *What* as specific as possible.

When picking a specific *What*, be like the incredibly successful companies identified in Jim Collin's *Good to Great* and choose an area that:

- **You love and are passionate about.**
- **You are great or can become great at.**
- **People want, need, and are willing to pay for.**

A big mistake that business owners often make when choosing their *What* is believing that it must appeal to thousands and thousands of people. It doesn't!

For example, let's assume that a full practice ranges between 20-25 clients, and the average duration of the client relationship is six months. You only need to secure 40-50 new clients per year, or 3-4 clients per month. Forget about appealing to everyone! You want to pick a specific area and focus on finding 40-50 people who already want/need what you provide.

Choose one area of expertise! While this can be a challenge, your marketing efforts will be more effective if your business provides a solution that helps your potential clients resolve one particular area of concern.

Example:

The example below is provided to simply give you some ideas. A business professional, let's call her Sally, filled in the following chart based on answering the three questions below:

1. What do I love?
2. What am I great at?
3. What do people want and need that they are willing to pay for?

What I Love	What I'm Great At	What People Want/Need
healthy living	sales	better health/fitness
outdoor sports	marketing	more money
strategic planning	follow through	more free time
creative thinking	implementation	less stress
helping others	writing	better relationships
planning events	networking	greater work satisfaction
using my intuition	managing budgets	a life that has meaning
playing guitar	crunching numbers	weight loss

reading	inspiring people	to get out of debt
travel	having fun	to be in love
great food and wine	cooking healthy meals	work promotion

Upon studying her chart, this Sally listed the following things as possible niches:

- helping businesses create strategy and follow-through plans
- helping sales people make more money
- helping people achieve more balance and fulfillment
- helping people lead healthier lives

When narrowing the list, Sally chose to help people find ways to have more energy and lead healthier lives. Sally realized that the thing she loves most, feels that she can truly excel at and that people want, need and are willing to pay for is more energy and better health. Sally is passionate about healthy living and has had success working with clients who were stressed, worn out and not taking good care of themselves.

Sally was tempted to include “make more money” as part of her *What*. Like many entrepreneurs, she was concerned about limiting herself and didn’t want to focus on just one thing.

Fortunately, she remembered that there is a big difference between marketing her business and delivering her service. She understood that she needed to pick a specific “problem” people have that her business could “solve.” She chose helping people have more energy and lead healthier lives because it is what she is most passionate about.

While Sally is capable and has experience in other areas, she knew that selecting a specific *What* and marketing that one area would enable her to grow her business more quickly. Sally also realized that she works with the whole person; and once the relationship is established, she will likely touch on many other areas of her clients’ lives.

Finally, she reminded herself that she could always branch out later if she wanted to once her practice was successful. She chuckled to herself because she realized that “not wanting to limit herself” was really just an excuse that kept her from taking the right kind of action!

What You Love and Are Passionate About

Of the three areas, this is the most important. To achieve maximum success as a business owner, you need to be passionate about your primary area of expertise. Use the worksheet on the following page to list the things you love and are passionate about delivering in

your business. As you do this, don't worry about whether or not you are great at it, or whether or not people want or need it.

What You Are Great At

People want to work with professionals they feel are experts in the area that they represent. Further, the more experience you have in a particular area, the more value you can provide to your clients. As such, it makes sense to develop a particular area of expertise. You can either leverage your knowledge and experience or acquire mastery over time. Use the worksheet on the following page to list the things you are great at or feel you can become great at. As you do this, don't worry if you love it or if people want or need it.

What People Want, Need and Are Willing to Pay For

Remember, your objective is to find a need that people already have. You then market your products and services as a way to fill that need.

I find that almost everything that people want, need and are willing to pay for falls into seven main categories. The following list identifies these and provides examples for each category. Use this list as a tool to spur your thinking and create your own categories as desired.

Examples:

Love

- More romance
- Greater intimacy
- More fulfilling and satisfying relationships
- Improved sex life
- Finding their romantic partner

Money

- Make more money
- Get out of debt
- Create a plan for financial independence

Peace of Mind

- More happiness, joy, fun and fulfillment
- Greater spirituality

Health/Wellness

- Lose weight
- Have more energy
- Overcome illness

Career/Business

- Make a career transition
- Find a new job
- Achieve a promotion
- Learn skills to help do a job better (i.e., leadership, management, communication skills)
- Start a business
- Grow a business
- Improve the profitability of their business

Family/Friends

- Better relationships with children, parents, siblings
- Create a sense of community
- Have more social interaction

Time

- Less stress
- More balance
- Better time management

Exercise 1 Determine Your *What*

Use this chart as a tool to help you determine “what you do for your clients.”

1. Fill out each column, focusing on one column at a time. For example, when you write down items under “What I Love,” don’t worry whether you are great at it or if people want, need and are willing to pay for it.
2. When you have listed things in all three columns, look to see if there are any congruencies.

What I Love	What I’m Great At	What People Want/Need

Possible Niches

Assignment 1 Choose Your *What*

I hope that you now see the benefits of picking a specific niche and marketing to the people who already want, need and are willing to pay for what your business provides.

Many business owners struggle with picking a niche. If this is true for you, you really just need to “get over it.” Choose something you want to do. Start talking about it, working with it and marketing it. Remember, you can always change later.

About 20% of the small business owners who have worked through this lesson changed or modified their original *What* and *Who* within one to three months. In fact, you might find that the first *What* and *Who* you choose aren’t “right” for you. That’s okay! It’s a good thing because it is often only by choosing a *What* and *Who* to begin with, even if they are the “wrong” ones, that eventually leads you to the “right” one.

My *What* (What I do for my clients) is:

Determine Your *Who* (Target Market)

Remember, a “target market” is defined by and best thought of in terms of “census” type information, such as age, gender, income, marital status, religious/social affiliations, profession, field/industry, job/position or a common focus.

Once you determine what you do for your clients, the next step is to determine who needs the benefit or solution you provide. After that, to really expand your business, you direct all of your marketing efforts toward reaching your specific target market. When you do this, you can deeply penetrate a specific target market. And when you do that, you become known, you are seen as an expert and then your phone will start to ring!

Determining your target market is important for four main reasons.

1. You Can Find Them

You need to be able to **find these people** and **target your marketing** specifically to them. For example, it’s hard to find “small business owners” because the category is so broad. However, you could find (or research how to find) a specific type of small business owner, such as chiropractors, private-practice attorneys, graphic designers, etc.

2. They Feel Like You “Get” Them

When you engage in marketing activities geared towards a specific group of people, you can tailor your message directly to them. You can speak their language and address their specific concerns and challenges. You want your prospective clients to think, “Wow, she’s talking about (or to) me.” When people feel like you understand them and their situation, they are more comfortable and confident that you can actually help them.

3. Being Specific—More Referrals

The more specific you are, the more referrals you will generate! Being specific paints a very clear picture of who you work with and what you help your clients attain. For example, let’s say you help people to achieve better work/life balance. That’s pretty general and, quite frankly, not very memorable. But add a specific *Who*, such as single working mothers, and WHAM! what you do and who you do it for suddenly becomes a lot more clear and memorable for the listener. When you are clear about what you do and who you help, people can (and will) refer others to you.

4. Achieve Deep Market Penetration

People associate with like-minded people. When you pick a specific *Who* and focus on it, you are able to **deeply penetrate that market** through word of mouth. The “buzz” about your product or service can spread quickly. In addition, when you focus on a specific *Who*, you can become known as an expert in that target market, someone who

understands that group of people and the unique challenges they face. Once this happens, you become known and people will seek you out.

Example:

Continuing with the example, Sally might complete this exercise to determine her *Who* as follows:

What I do for my clients:

Helping people have more energy and lead healthier lives.

What people think or say to indicate they have the problem that my business can solve:

- “I feel guilty and frustrated because I know that eating better and exercising more would have a tremendously positive impact on my life, but I can’t seem to make it happen.”
- “I’m successful at work, but my job consumes me. I want to take better care of myself, but by the end of the day I’m so tired that I end up ordering take out and vegetating on the couch in front of the TV.”
- “I’m worried that if I don’t take better care of myself, I will die of a heart attack or develop some other serious health problem.”
- “I’d like to do more things with my kids, but I don’t have the energy or stamina to keep up with them.”

People who have this problem or want this outcome:

- People in their 40s and 50s who are worried about health issues.
- Busy, successful professionals who are overweight and out of shape
- Working parents who don’t have enough time to take care of themselves

Narrow the *Who* to focus your efforts:

Working parents of elementary school children

Exercise 2 Determine Your *Who*

Use the worksheet below to explore the kinds of people who have the problem that your business solves or who want the outcome that your product or service will help them achieve.

What I do for my clients:

What people think or say to indicate they have the problem that my business can solve:

People who have this problem or want this outcome:

Narrow the *Who* to focus my efforts:

Assignment 2 Choose Your *Who*

When narrowing your *Who*, you want to identify **people you can find**. Just like choosing your *What*, the more narrow and focused you are, the better. Remember, you can always expand or change later.

As you finalize your *Who*, think about whom you would love to serve. Who is your ideal client? Do you prefer working with men or women? How old are they? Where are they in their life? What experiences are they having? What do they value? What do they do for a living? What gifts or talents do they have?

Note: Often entrepreneurs belong to their target market. That doesn't need to be the case; but if so, go for it!

***Who* my business serves:**

The *Who/What* Statement

Once you have identified your *Who* and *What*, you can begin to effectively market your business. In Module 3 of this business building system, we discuss the importance of targeting your marketing to the people who want and need what your business offers in order to secure more Complimentary Consultations.

But before we jump there, let's make sure you can successfully communicate what you do and who you do it for in a way that paints a very clear picture for the listener.

When Sally first began in her business, she prayed that people would not ask what she did for a living! Her stress level rose at the thought of meeting new people because she knew people would inevitably ask, "So, what do you do?" And Sally couldn't always tell them in an effective way.

At that point in her business, Sally had not yet identified her *Who* and *What*. She was trying to be all things to all people and didn't have a good answer to the question.

It is virtually impossible to build a thriving and sustainable business if you can't clearly articulate the service you provide and the benefits/results people can gain from utilizing your service. This is especially true if you want to build your business through networking and referrals.

Developing a clear, concise and compelling answer to the question "So, what do you do?" is quite easy if you have already identified your *Who* and *What*. Some people call this response an elevator speech, a core marketing message or a USP (unique selling proposition). I call it your *Who/What* Statement. And quite simply, your *Who/What* Statement is a sentence that describes who you serve and what you do for them.

Sample *Who/What* Statements

Below are some examples of *Who/What* Statements. I have included a weak example followed by a strong example. You'll see there are many ways of creating an effective *Who/What* Statement. Some describe the problem; others explain the outcome.

Use these to spur your thinking as you work on your own *Who/What* Statement, and then go out and try it! The more you use your *Who/What* Statement, the more naturally it will flow and the more effective it will be.

Weak: "I help people be more authentic based on who they truly are."

Strong: "I work with midlevel managers in high tech who are tired of being stuck in a job they hate. I help them find work that uses their true gifts and talents."

Weak: "I help people make better choices in their business."

Strong: “I’m a business coach, and I work with home-based business owners who have trouble managing their time and generating the revenue they desire. I help them make more money in less time!”

Weak: “I work with creative people and help them manifest their artistic gifts.”

Strong: “I work with writers who have always dreamed about writing the Great American Novel but never seem to take action.”

Weak: “I help people have more passion in their life.”

Strong: “I’m a marriage and family therapist, and I specialize in helping busy couples add more sizzle and passion to their marriage.”

Weak: “I mediate for couples.”

Strong: “I’m a divorce mediator, and my specialty is to help parents 1) divorce amicably and 2) create and implement an effective parenting plan.”

Weak: “I am a corporate coach, and I work on facilitation, productivity and communication.”

Strong: “I am a corporate coach, and I work with teams who waste a lot of time and energy because their meetings are inefficient and whose members don’t fully understand and appreciate their roles and responsibilities.”

As you work on your *Who/What* Statement, we recommend **focusing on the problem your business solves or the result it provides**. Focusing on the problem is often more effective than describing the outcome. People tend to relate more easily to the problem and assume the desired result will naturally happen.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Don’t get too caught up on the specific wording. Speak in simple, straightforward language when creating your *Who/What* statement. Remember: The whole purpose of identifying your *Who* and *What* is so that you can proactively market to the people who already want what you provide!

This is the exact opposite of simply “responding to people” or trying to identify people’s “hot buttons” so you can sell to them. Don’t worry about matching your *Who/What* to the needs of the person asking you, “What do you do?” If your *Who/What* statement resonates with them, great! If not, do not worry about it. Maybe the person will become a source of referrals.

It doesn't really matter because you are implementing a system, and you will be proactively marketing to people who already want and need what your business provides.

Put yourself in situations where people ask, "So, what do you do?" (parties, networking events, etc.), and then see what kind of response you get when you share your *Who/What* statement. Do people's eyes light up, or do they glaze over? Do they "get" what you say and come back with something like, "Wow, how do you do that?" Do they say "I know someone who could use that!?" If so, you know you are on the right track.

Assignment 3 Create Your *Who/What* Statement

Now it is time to put it all together! Use the area below to write out who your business serves and what you do for them.

Summary

I am excited for you and the growth of your business!

Do you now see that if you identify a *Who* and *What* you are passionate about and if you proactively market to the people who want and need what you provide, then you will be successful?

The irony is that the more focused and specific you are, the more people you will serve and the more successful you will be. Picking a *Who* and *What* is not limiting. It is freeing, even liberating! You get to serve the people you most want to work with and provide something you care and are passionate about!

And, it will not stop there. Each person is a holistic, complete being and tends to have diverse needs and a range of problems related to your specialization. You will work with your clients in a variety of ways, even if they are all in the same target market and hire you for the same basic reason. You need not get bored!

You have two choices. You can either pick a specific *Who* and *What* and fill your business/practice, or you can try to be all things to all people and serve a limited number of clients. I encourage you to do the former.

Simply let go of trying to be all things to all people. Stop trying to find people's hot buttons. Stop expecting to get a client by meeting someone on a plane or in the grocery store. If you happen across someone who becomes a client, then it is a bonus!

Instead, get excited about learning the rest of this business-building system, so you can implement the marketing strategies that work best. You can proactively market to the people who already want and need what you offer.