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... kalmali lee

Principles for Spreading Inspiration

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Nevada City, California

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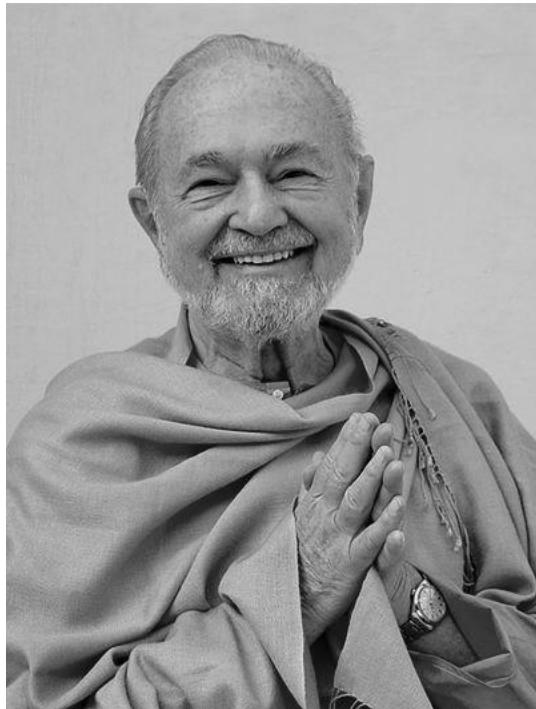
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## Dedication

To my guru, Paramhansa Yogananda, for showing where true success lies.

To Yogananda's direct disciple, and my teacher—Swami Kriyananda, for all you have done to share Paramhansa Yogananda's wisdom in this world.

To my partner, and divine friend, Yogesh, for spending this life as my spiritual companion, a treasure for which I will always be grateful.



*Swami Kriyananda*



*Paramhansa Yogananda*

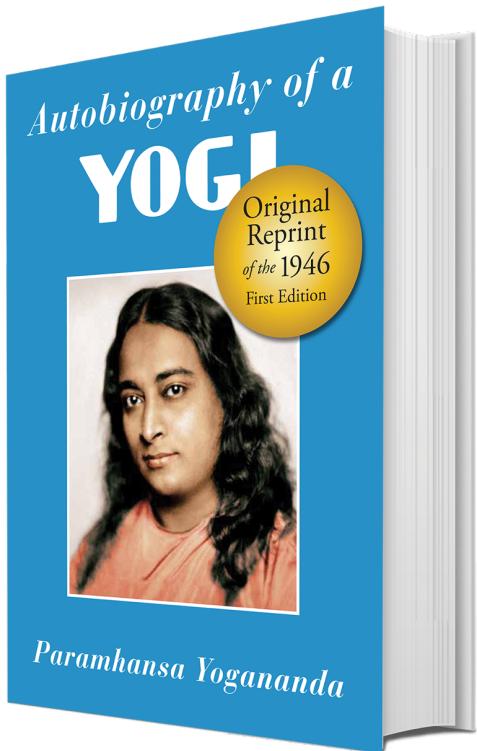
## Preface

If we were to create a wheel that included as its spokes all facets of life, one might find within it education, the arts, leadership, business, spirituality, religion, community, home life, health, and medicine.

To help the whole wheel move forward in life, all of these spokes need to provide proper support. To do this, spiritual qualities need to be developed in one's wheel—qualities that run harmoniously with “other wheels”—such as kindness, caring, generosity, calmness, and joyfulness, applied to all areas of life.

However, most of the world's wheels are still trying to run solely on greed, power, self-interest, and restlessness. And many of the other wheels are falling behind, while still others try to grow bigger and stronger by getting ahead. Yet the whole system cannot progress if the wheels forget to be thoughtful and helpful to one another.

What we need now more than ever, are more who know that by helping others succeed, they, too, will be successful. People who know that by bringing happiness and harmony into their way of life—no matter what bumps in the road lay ahead—they will still find happiness.



The *inspiration* for this book is Paramhansa Yogananda, author of one of the best-selling spiritual books, *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Yogananda came to the US to share the ancient yoga teachings of India, with applications to this age of energy, far ahead of his time. His profound, yet practical teachings inspired successful leaders like Steve Jobs, George Harrison, Luther Burbank, and Henry Ford.

Paramhansa Yogananda, a spiritual master who came from India to America in 1920, brought the art and science of yoga. His teachings were practical, and could be applied to all aspects of daily life. His ancient wisdom of the east is based on the teachings of *Sanatan Dharma*, the Eternal Truth.

Only you know who you really are. Only you know your true capabilities, and your innermost aspirations and ideals. *You* have the responsibility to know yourself, and to be true to what you are here to give. Fulfilling this—is your Truth.

## Introduction

There is no reason to continue going through life without inspiration—that which we are here to find within ourselves, and to share with mankind.

“If your vocation does not satisfy your heart, it is not the right path for you.  
If you want to reach the abode of lasting peace and happiness,

you should pursue whatever path your heart’s desire tells you to follow.”

—Paramhansa Yogananda

Following this inspiration is a pathway to success. You will not find happiness by serving what others think you ought to do, but by following your heart—your own inner guidance, and listening to your higher Self. Feel what lays dormant inside of you, waiting to be shared; bursting with energy, enthusiasm, and joy!

We are here to grow with one another, to aspire to become a part of a greater reality, and to awaken to our infinite potential. We are here to learn lessons, to find purpose, to give meaning to life, and to expand our God-given higher natures.

*Now is the time* to begin an inspired life *full of purpose and meaning*.

And it is time to learn how to be *successful in the highest sense*, by rediscovering the boundless fountain of enthusiasm and joy for life that resides within.

To be alive is to be on fire with purpose,  
to move forward with undaunted determination toward a goal.  
You must be enthusiastically active, make something of yourself,  
and give something worthwhile to the world.”

—Paramhansa Yogananda

The *purpose* of this book is to help you tune into the inspiration and meaning in life that you are seeking, and learn how to effectively share it with the world. That means, yes, we will be teaching you a new approach to marketing (high-minded marketing), and how to cultivate the qualities of success in daily life, such that they translate to all the things that you do. This combination is important, for you could learn all the best marketing techniques in the world, but without the right attitude for success and daily habits, you may never implement them effectively.

If you are dedicated to sharing your inspiration with the world, you must first dedicate yourself to learning how to be a successful individual, and how to use heart-centered and inspiring marketing to expand your impact. There are many successful examples of this strategy—*it works!* Yet there is nothing combining this new marketing framework with examples of how to apply it, and how—despite the chaotic, stress-filled workplace—to cultivate the qualities needed for success.

This book is that combination. It provides ancient spiritual principles from the East, as taught by Paramhansa Yogananda, for cultivating qualities and attitudes needed for success; and practical methods for marketing efficiency from the West. With this meeting of Eastern spiritual principles with Western methods of efficiency, we can achieve greatness.

This book is divided into four parts: 1) Magnetize Success 2) Manifest a Vision  
3) Share Inspiration and 4) Market Your Purpose.

Within each chapter there are practice exercises to help you successfully apply these principles, and begin, right then and there, to practice marketing your endeavor. By doing the exercises, you will create an experience that will hasten your learning through direct experience. Furthermore, the benefits of the exercises are scientific. Why not at least test them in the laboratory of your own life, applied to your own marketing endeavor? In this way, the book becomes your own experience. Your own insight will help to make the book more meaningful, and your participation will make it come alive.

If you are dedicated to sharing your inspiration with the world, you must first dedicate yourself to learning how to be a successful individual, and how to use heart-centered and inspiring marketing to expand your impact.

Having a framework for success; a framework for manifesting a marketing plan; and the exercises to *start now*, you will have the opportunity to apply what you learn to whatever endeavor you set your sights to accomplish.

# Part 1: **Magnetize Success**

## Finding a Source of Inspiration

Before we begin *Part 1* of this book, let us define inspiration and what it feels like to find inspiration from within.

The root of the word inspiration (similar to respiration) means to *draw in*, as in to draw in the breath of life or *conscious* life force (*spirito*). *Spirito* or spirit, is all around you, waiting for you to open yourself to an all-pervading, joyful consciousness that can be a source of personal upliftment, or if you share your inspiration with many, a source of upliftment for others.

When you open yourself to this conscious life force, or Spirit, inspiration comes from a higher source, beyond personal limitations or desires. This is why great works that come from, said, *inspiration*, are remembered far beyond their time. The originality, the sense of joy they bring to all those who see such great works, are timeless. The best works throughout history, the most memorable teachings and people, come from those who tried to become pure channels for inspiration, for Spirit to flow through them.

Drawing inspiration is an active process because we must participate by becoming an open channel for beautiful things to manifest. When you are ready to draw true inspiration, you must go within to a place where there is calmness, where outside noise and restlessness cannot drown out the melody of inspiration playing in your heart. In the stillness of your heart lies the answer to *what you are here to give*.

The melody of inspiration you form will originate from your unique individual qualities, in their truest form at your center, within your soul. Yogananda said that the soul is like a wave in the ocean of Spirit, thus a bit of spirit (ocean) makes up each individual (the wave). Therefore each individual has access to the melody of Spirit that resides within their heart, all one has to do is *tune into* the individual expression of Spirit within. No two souls are the same. No true sources of inspiration are without originality.

When we move in the direction of sending our energies to fulfilling this higher nature's natural expression, we begin to feel what is right for us in this life.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Let's get started by practicing an introspection exercise based on Yogananda's recommendation. (This is our first exercise together. Start by getting a notebook or opening a document on your computer that you will use to participate in the exercises *throughout* this book.)

Begin by writing down the answers to the following questions:

- What do I have to give?
- Who do I have to give it to?
- How can I reach those who will be helped by this gift?
- What inspires me to take action in life?
- What makes me want to get up each day?

- Who and what do I live for?
- What do I feel my *dharma*<sup>1</sup> is? How can I fulfill it?
- What are the ways that I can share my inspiration with others? Does this bring me joy?
- When I was young<sup>2</sup>, what do I remember brought me joy? What did I enjoy doing to be creative? To have fun? To feel uplifted? What inspired me?
- How do these things relate to what I am doing today?
- In any way, can these be changed to align myself more “in attunement” with what brings me joy?

“Life should be a source of continuous inspiration.”

—Paramhansa Yogananda

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<sup>1</sup> Right action, or that action which leads to victory and success of all kinds.

<sup>2</sup> Yogananda suggested reflecting on the activities and forms of creativity that you enjoyed as a child (ages 3 to 12). Specifically those that expressed your highest nature.

## What Is Success?

To understand success, we must define it by what we mean when we say “success.” Success is accomplishing what we set out to do; and, when faced with challenges, putting out the energy needed to overcome them.

Paramhansa Yogananda said that “the season of failure is the best time for sowing the seeds of success.” Why? Because it gives us the opportunity to grow personally; to put out *great energy*; and to get in touch with our true potential. It is during moments of trial that we test the limits of our strength, and push ourselves to new heights.

In this modern age, science has shown that matter is energy. Being in control of our energy, therefore, helps us to have better control over the material world around us. As Swami Kriyananda, a direct disciple of Yogananda, explained, “in order to be successful, one *must* have energy.”

In part one of this book, you will learn how to have success by understanding success, finding a source of inspiration, and cultivating right attitude.

As you complete the exercises in this section, you can create your own success story, and *open yourself to your limitless potential*.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Ask yourself the following questions, writing them down in the same place as exercise one.

- How do I define "success"?
- What do I believe will make me successful in life?
- What do I believe will make me happy in life? Is it related at all to how I view success?
- What do I have already that brings me happiness and fulfillment?
- What am I grateful for?
- When I picture myself achieving my dreams and doing what I love—what do I see myself doing?

## What Is Joy?

True joy comes from within. How ever is it possible to feel joyful in life if we never take the time to listen to our soul? It knows exactly what we need to do. It is a part of all that is, connected to a greater reality—one that knows how we can be successful in life and fulfilled.

“Never lose hope.

Your soul, being a reflection of the ever joyous spirit, is, in essence, happiness itself.”  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

True joy comes from knowing who we really are, and awakening to this truth.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Let's continue with our introspection exercises. Don't forget to take the time to write this down somewhere for later reflection:

- When am I most joyful? How has this changed over time?
- What are the things that I can start doing right now, to increase the amount of joy I experience each day? Even by as little as 1% each day. (Even as little as a 1% increase adds up to success over time.)
- What kind of environment can I create to support my determination to be joyful? Are there new activities and people I need to surround myself with?
- Do I currently approach joy as something based on outer circumstances? Do I believe that joy is dependent on other people and their behavior, and certain things happening in life?
- How can I approach joy as something more in my control, how can I remain even-minded and cheerful despite what happens around me? How can I remain centered, with a calm heart, so that I may never lose that joy?

It is possible to never again go a moment without joy. The great yogi masters of India have done it, and their wisdom, expressed in the next section, helps us to cultivate the attitudes needed to remain in the seat of joy, despite the crash of breaking worlds<sup>3</sup> around us.

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<sup>3</sup> In reference to the great Indian scripture, *The Bhagavad Gita*.

## Cultivating Right Attitude

Right attitude is an important quality to cultivate on your path to success. If you try to uphold an attitude in alignment with those held by the great masters of Joy, such as Paramhansa Yogananda, you are “tuning in” (like a radio station) to the channel of greatness.

This booklet focuses on the importance of cultivating attitudes including positivity, enthusiasm, courage, and calmness.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

- What does right attitude mean to you?
- When is it hardest to control your reactions to things?
- When do you feel strongest to control your reactions to things?
- What are some of the practices you can do to change the habitual patterns of your mind?
- Have you thought about yoga or meditation? If you already practice yoga or meditation, what are ways you can bring your practice into daily life to help you feel joy and become successful in your endeavors?

Meditation focuses at the point between the eyebrows, which is literally the seat of joy in the brain, the prefrontal lobe. If not meditation, how about learning to control the life force through *pranayama*, techniques of yoga.

For example, try practicing the yogic breath, also known as diaphragmatic breathing:

- Lie on your back and place one of your hands on your belly.
- Feel the rise and fall of the breath in the belly.
- Watch the flow of your breath as you inhale and exhale through the nostrils.
- Try even-count breathing with the count of “4”: inhale through the nose 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, and exhale to the count of 4. Extend to longer even-counts if you can.

Practice this breath whenever you need to feel calmness and get re-centered. The flow of oxygen will also help you to reenergize your being, so that you can begin to feel joyful again.

## Positivity

A positive attitude is a right attitude.

Have you ever noticed that when you are positive, your energy is lifted? During such a time, you may say, “I feel high”, or “I’m on top of the world!” Now, reflect on those times that you were feeling negative. Did your body seem to become “heavy” and would you say you were feeling “low”?

This is a natural phenomenon. When we are negative, our energy is heavy, and it is hard to face life’s challenges; to rise to the occasion; and to have the qualities and inner strength needed for success. When our energy is light and lifted, there is no challenge too hard. No obstacle too big.

“There are no such thing as obstacles: There are only opportunities!”  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

*Seeing the glass half full* is a positive way of approaching life, but in relation to success, positivity is known for its ability to *attract solutions*. When you hit a “block”, or mental struggle, that keeps you from moving forward, rather than seeing more and more problems along the way, a positive state of mind will help you clearly see *just the right solution!*

Make positivity a habit. Then, even when you hit blocks, you will have already set up the neural pathways in the brain that habitually move to a positive approach, seeking solutions, opportunities, and the “bright side” to a situation. The momentum of this good habit will then help you in more difficult times of trial.

Holding a positive attitude also frees up energy that would otherwise be used on negativity. Think of how many *negative* self-talk thoughts you may have *per minute*, and all the energy that this drains from you. See how much it could weigh you down, preventing you from a bright and successful future!

Set your sight on success, by resisting negativity. Negativity can come inwardly in the form of fears, doubts, and worries; or it can be reflected outwardly in the form of business failures; lack of financial gain; or disharmony amongst your colleagues. When we run into a wall of negativity, we must push past it again and again until we are free from its hold. Focus on how you can uproot negativity at its source (*see chapter on affirmation*) and keep it from ever holding you back again! Keep your thoughts uplifting. Be one of the few who live above doubt and negativity, in skies of inner peace and harmony.

Whenever negativity surrounds your environment, it takes great energy and will to overcome it. One way to do so, is by putting out great amounts of *positive* energy. Especially in the form of creativity and service to others. The more, the better!

“Seek to do brave and lovely things that are left undone by the majority of people.”  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

To have mastery over our thoughts, we first need to become aware of them. Practice observing these thoughts and reflecting on their nature.

1. On a piece of paper, make a *dot* each time a *thought* passes through your mind.
2. Differentiate between whether this thought is positive or negative by making two columns. A negative thought is any thought that is contractive, lacking confidence, thinking badly of yourself or others, worrisome, or in any way self-limiting. In the positive thought category will be anything that is expansive, joyful, uplifting, encouraging, or helpful to others.
3. Relax and let your mind wander as it will. Observe your thoughts for one minute. Put your dots in the appropriate columns. Now take a look at your results:
  - Which column has more dots?
  - Are the results what you expected?
  - Is there room for improvement? If so, what will you do to improve? Throughout the first part of this book, you will find exercises for just that!

In one week, try this exercise again. See if you are able to transform some of your negative dots into positive.

## Enthusiasm

“To be alive is to be on fire with purpose,  
to move forward with undaunted determination toward a goal.  
You must be enthusiastically active, make something of yourself,  
and give something worthwhile to the world.”  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

Positivity and enthusiasm are sister qualities in the sense that they both require high energy to manifest themselves. When you picture someone you know who is enthusiastic, probably what comes to mind is someone you know who is joyful and energetic. Why is energy such an important part of enthusiasm?

The root meaning of the word “enthusiasm” is *en* or “in” and *thus*, Greek for “spirit”. More simply stated, enthusiasm’s root meaning is “inspired by God.” To be enthusiastic, therefore, one must be a channel for God’s inspiration to flow through them. That kind of inspiration has the power to attract limitless energy to manifest it on this plane, as long as we are true to *what Spirit is trying to manifest through us.*

Love for helping others and the inspiration to share can also make one very enthusiastic! The energy of the heart, when opened and lifted upward to the flow of inspiration, has great potential for what it can accomplish. Inspiration is a gift, and it is our responsibility to do all that we can to manifest it. And by helping others grow and expand, we, too, grow and expand.

“Where there is adherence to truth and right action, there is victory.”  
—Sanskrit Proverb

Acting only with the desire to help others—and without a desire for what your actions will do for *you*—is *right action*. Those who are enthusiastic about achieving great things, and sharing good ideas, will be successful.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

To generate enthusiasm, Yogananda said to *raise your energy*. Here are a few exercises<sup>4</sup> that will help you to raise your energy to the levels needed for drawing positivity, inspiration, and creativity:

**Smile!** When we smile, even if we don’t feel to smile, the physical movement itself causes us to feel happy. Our bodies read that our smile muscles are in “smile position” and the mind translates this information into “We must be having a happy experience.” Thus it helps us *feel happy*!

**Raise your arms above your head.** On a deep inhalation, lift your arms out to the sides and up overhead, and gaze upward. At times, this may be even easier than smiling! Try it now. The upward flow of energy against the pull of gravity can lift your spirits.

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<sup>4</sup>This is from a series of exercises called the *Superconscious Living Exercises* from *Awaken to Superconsciousness* by Swami Kriyananda

**Practice an affirmation.** Practice this affirmation exercise with great energy to awaken body, mind and soul:

1. Extend your arms vigorously out to the side, then in front, then high above the head, affirming, “I am positive! Energetic! Enthusiastic!”
2. Begin with your fists together in front of your chest.
3. Swing your arms out to the side with the affirmation, “I am positive!”
4. Bring your hands back to the chest, then push your arms vigorously in front of you with the affirmation, “Energetic!”
5. Bring the hands back again to the chest, then fling them high above your head with the affirmation, “Enthusiastic!”
6. Relax the arms at your side, then repeat this exercise and affirmation several times, as you like:

**I am positive!** (while swinging your arms out to the side)

**Energetic!** (while pushing your arms straight in front of your chest)

**Enthusiastic!** (while stretching your arms up and jumping as high as you can)

## Courage

“Meet everybody and every circumstance on the battlefield of life  
with the courage of a hero and the smile of a conqueror.”  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

Be willing to face any challenges or misfortunes that arise on your journey, and challenge—within yourself—any resistance that arises in the form of doubt or perceived obstacles. Change the way you think about things. View every obstacle as an opportunity for further growth, and greater success. Opportunities, moreover, must be met halfway. You can only have the opportunity to be successful *if you try*.

Every time you set out to start something new, you have to face doubt and fear in the face. On the outset of something you feel deeply inspired to do, you may even be confronted by voices of negativity whispering: “What if this fails completely?” “Is this even worth the energy?” “What will people think?” To overcome these questions, it is helpful to be reminded that you only have to take one step at a time. Challenge each fear as it arises, one by one, telling it to “Get out!”<sup>5</sup>.

By putting up this fight, no matter what happens, we at least are left with the knowing that we *did our best* along the way. This is the most important thing, for by doing our best is where we grow the most.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Fear blocks the positive energy flow that you must attune to in order to attract inspiration, and blocks the energy needed to achieve success. This wall of negativity must be overcome again and again in order for you to be free. Here is an exercise for overcoming fear:

Face fear head on! Practice imagining the worst thing that could happen with regards to your current worry or doubt. Now, ask yourself the following questions:

- What fear do you most need to face in order to achieve success?
- What is the worst thing possible that could happen if this fear came true?
- What does it *feel* like to have the worst imaginable thing happen?
- Is it as horrible as you thought?
- What other fears can you apply to this practice?
- Do you hold any fear of the unknown successes that lay ahead?

Next, take the time to write down a plan of action for facing any fears or misfortunes that may arise during your endeavors. What will be in your tool kit if fear arises? Friends? Exercises? Breathing technique? (Write it! It sets the intention to bring out your tool kit when needed.)

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<sup>5</sup> A technique given by Swami Kriyananda, disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda

## Calmness

“Be calmly active, and actively calm<sup>6</sup>.  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

Calmness is what gives us the power to overcome obstacles, to remain even-minded despite whatever difficulties arise.

When we approach our endeavors with the attitude of calmness, remaining calm even while active, we are more able to make decisions from a place of inner strength, for it takes great inner strength to be calm despite all outer circumstances. When we are calm, our minds are still, and we can hear the voice of truth residing in each one of us: the voice that knows the right way to act in all matters.

Rajarsi Janakananda, one of Paramhansa Yogananda's foremost disciples, was a millionaire from Kansas. Though a “business tycoon,” in the face of million-dollar decisions, he could be completely calm, solution-oriented, and focused. He was said, at board meetings, to listen to all points of view calmly and quietly, and then—when he felt clarity and guidance from within—state the exact solution that was needed.

Rajarsi attributed this state of clarity and calmness to his practice of meditation and his attunement to the spiritual teachings of Yogananda for daily life. Every morning before starting his workday, because he was unable to meditate at home, he would meditate from his office until 10am.

Swami Kriyananda was another great example of someone who mastered a state of calmness during intense activity. Throughout his many years of actively serving his guru, Yogananda (composing over 400 pieces of music, more than 150 books, and founding eight spiritual communities), he lived by the principle that *peace was his bottom line*. No matter what he did outwardly, he never allowed the trials of life to affect his inner peace, and because of this, great things were accomplished through him.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Meditation<sup>7</sup> is a wonderful way to practice peace and stillness, which when active in service becomes calmness. It is key for finding inspiration, becoming joyful, and achieving success. Begin by incorporating even a short meditation (5 minutes or more) into your daily routine. Here are a few tips to help you begin:

#### **1) Find a quiet place to sit still where you can go to practice each day.**

Forming a routine is helpful to establishing a regular habit of meditation. It also helps to create an environment that is supportive to evoking a state of peace.

#### **2) Find a comfortable position.** Relaxation is key or else bodily tension will translate to mental tension, making it harder to concentrate.

- Sit upright with a straight spine. A bent spine makes it harder to feel uplifted.

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<sup>6</sup> ...That is the way of a yogi.” —Paramhansa Yogananda

<sup>7</sup> Yogananda brought meditation techniques for controlling energy or *life force*. Specifically, he brought the technique of *kriya yoga*. (Learn more at [www.paramhansayogananda.com](http://www.paramhansayogananda.com)).

- Slightly tip your hips forward so that your knees are perpendicular to the floor. (If your legs are longer, you may need to place a pillow or folded blanket on the chair to have this alignment.) Knees will be above the ankles in alignment.
- Bring your shoulders back by resting your hands, faced upright, at the juncture of thighs and hips. Your chest should feel open, and your shoulder tension should release with this posture.
- Chin parallel to the floor.
- Uplift your gaze. Bring your eyes to a point as if you were looking slightly above the horizon. Eyes should feel relaxed not tense, but focused at the point between the eyebrows. An uplifted gaze helps with an uplifted mind.

**3) Relax.** It has been found that by first tensing all parts of the body, and becoming aware of the any tension we are holding, we can then relax more completely. Try this exercise called the “Double Breath”:

- Tense your whole body on with a *double inhalation* through the nostrils with a short and then long inhalation. You can close your eyes when you do this (after you've practiced a few times and don't need the instructions.)
- Vibrate all the muscles of your body (hands, face, feet, arms, legs, everything you can!) with tension as you inhale.
- Release all tension with an exhalation, double exhale through the nose and mouth (makes the sound like haa-haaaah) and relax.
- Do the inhale-tense and exhale-relax sequence 2-3 times.. *Let all tension leave you.*

**4.) Even-Count Breath.** This will help to focus your attention on the breath, and thus focus the mind. As the mind finds a point of focus, it will be able to calm some of its restlessness, and thus allow you to begin to feel more peaceful.

- With eyes closed, gently lift your gaze. Focus your attention at the point midway between your eyebrows.
- On your next inhalation through the nostrils, inhale to the count of four.
- Hold the inhalation with gaze uplifted and eyes closed to the count of four.
- Then exhale to the count of four.

Even count breath should be done 4 (inhale) - 4 (hold) - 4 (exhale) or longer 6-6-6 if you can hold your breath that long calmly. If you have trouble holding the breath or have history of high blood pressure you could do 4-2-4. Take one more natural inhalation and exhalation and move into Step 5.

**5.) Mantra – with observing the breath.** The use of a mantra in meditation has been in practice for over 5,000 years. It is known that the connection between the breath and mind is such that calming the breath, by focusing on the breath, calms the mind. In this part of the meditation practice, remember that you will become an *observer of the breath* by not controlling the breath, rather you will begin to watch the flow of breath as it you inhale and exhale through the nose. As you practice longer, you may feel the breath slow down very greatly, the mind become more peaceful, the body relaxed, and you can enjoy these moments of stillness.

The mantra that Yogananda used with this meditation technique of concentration was “Hong” (rhymes with “song”) – Sau (like “saw”). On the inhalation, one would chant “Hong”, and on the exhalation, “Sau”.

“Hong” means “I am” and “Sau” means “Spirit”. This translates to the little self becomes the greater Self, or the individual soul dissolves into the ocean of Spirit. This mantra is called a *bija* mantra, because Hong and Sau are “seed thoughts” that have the power to transform consciousness. Particularly, they are healing sounds for the soul, helping to regain a state of peace.

If you prefer, you can use other words like “I am peace” or “Still-ness”.

Practice the Hong-Sau technique for 5 minutes at first:

- Make sure your spine is still straight, your body relaxed, gaze uplifted.
- Do the Double Breath two to three times to let go of any remaining tension.
- Practice 6 rounds of Even Count Breathing.
- Inhale and exhale naturally beginning to let the breath flow naturally in and out of the nostrils. Feel the breath as it rises up to the point between the eyebrows, cool air as you inhale through the nose, warm air as you exhale through the nose.
- Begin to chant the mantra “Hong” on the inhalation, “Sau” on the exhalation. To help you focus on the breath, but not control it – visualize a wave going in and out with your inhalation and exhalation.
- If you are able, follow with the inhalation of Hong, the movement of your right forefinger resting on your lap, bringing it in toward your body. On the exhalation, Sau, bring the forefinger out away from you. Inhale – Hong – right forefinger in. Exhale – Sau – right forefinger out.
- Continue to bring your awareness to the breath, without control, gaze uplifted.
- Enjoy the natural pauses between breaths as you practice this technique more deeply.

Now, you will enjoy the “being” part of the meditation where you let go of even the mantra and finger movement with an inhalation, and exhalation out through the mouth three times – ha, haaa, haaaa. Let it all go.

Keep the posture and relaxation with gaze uplifted, but just enjoy the feeling of peace.

This would make up about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your meditation. So 5 minutes of Hong-Sau, 2 minutes of just feeling peaceful without any technique.

Expand on the feeling of peace that comes with meditation, and try to carry its peaceful effects with you as long as you can throughout the day. Whenever there are natural pauses in the day, between thoughts or activity, allow yourself to rest in this feeling of peace.

## Energy and Magnetism

“There is no limit to the energy that we can draw from the Universe for any endeavor.”  
—Swami Kriyananda

*We are made of energy.* Becoming aware of our energy; learning to direct it at will; and understanding the laws that attract a greater flow of energy, are all essential parts of success.

Paramhansa Yogananda said that we recently began *Dwapara Yuga* (the age of energy)<sup>8</sup>. One example of this is how within the past century Einstein’s theory proving that all matter is a manifestation of energy is widely known and accepted. The science of yoga takes this even further, stating that energy is but a manifestation of *consciousness*<sup>9</sup>, the conscious life force of Spirit.

Uplifting your consciousness allows a positive flow of energy to enter into your being. From there, learning to direct your energy using your will, allows the abundant energy of the Cosmic Spirit to flow through you.

Think of will as willingness. Your desire to give energy, and your faith in what you’re giving energy to, creates an attitude of willingness, and you become an open channel for more energy to flow through. “To will something strongly,” Swami Kriyananda said, “one must will it with one’s entire being. To draw anything to yourself, learn to put your whole self into the energy flow you are directing.” Yogananda’s axiom for this is: “The greater the will, the greater the flow of energy.”<sup>10</sup>

When you do things with willingness and joy, energy flows freely. When willingness is lacking, suddenly there is no energy left! A basic principle of yoga states that awareness precedes control. By cultivating an awareness of the flow of energy in our body, we can improve our ability to control and direct that energy at will. This will help us to draw positive energy to feel joy at any moment, to fuel the concentration and determination to be successful, and to more powerfully draw the flow of inspiration into our hearts.

### PRACTICE EXAMPLE:

Observe what happens when you command your body to lift your arm. Your will is what tells your body to move, but it is the energy you put behind the action that does the lifting. To will your arm to move takes energy; without sending energy to your arm it remains motionless.

The moment which energy can be perceived in the arm is when you consciously *tense* the arm muscle. When we concentrate on the feeling of this tension in the center of the arm muscle, we increase our awareness.

*Consciously* exercise the muscles of the forearm with alternating *tension* and *relaxation*:

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<sup>8</sup> The yugas are explained in more depth in the book, *The Yugas: Keys to Understanding Our Hidden Past, Emerging Energy Age, and Enlightened Future*; by Joseph Selbie & David Steinmetz.

<sup>9</sup> Swami Kriyananda, *The Art & Science of Raja Yoga*

<sup>10</sup> For this, the Energization Exercises —Paramhansa Yogananda’s unique contribution to yoga—strengthens the will and builds awareness of energy, thereby allowing one to consciously direct it in meditation and daily activities.

- Practice alternating tension and relaxation in your forearm three times.
- In between alternating states of tension and relaxation, become aware of what that energy feels like in your arm.
- Describe to yourself this feeling. Is it tingly? Does your forearm feel lighter? How would you describe it?

Now, observe the flow of energy in your own life:

- Observe: When you give more energy, you receive more energy.
- Conversely, the more stagnant you are, the lazier and less energetic you feel.
- Notice also: When you *want* to do something, when you are going to do something you think *will be fun*, no matter how tired you were a second ago, you suddenly have all the energy you need!
- How can you infuse willingness into everything you do, so that you have a constant flow of energy throughout the day?

## Magnetism and Success

Magnetism is the most important thing for success.

What is magnetism? Magnetism is a force that operates in the material world, on an *energetic level*. Like gravity, it is there even though our five senses may not perceive it outwardly. Though physically unseen, we know of its existence. For example, this force is at work from experiments with metals and magnets. Specifically, how iron filings on a piece of paper can be seen either moving toward or away from a magnet, based on the magnetism of the particular magnet.

When we see the poles of two bar magnets either attract or repel one another with subtle lines of force, this is the force of magnetism at work related to the power of attraction. And, in the sense that magnets can also act upon unmagnetized iron, drawing it toward them, we, too, with our magnetism, can act upon objects—even opportunities.

Magnetism shows us that our creative power is not limited to words or outer appearances, but that there is a subtle quality at work that affects us, affects others, and can be affected *by* others. The greater our *awareness* of this subtle level of energy flow, the greater our ability to control matter. And *the greater our ability to control matter, the greater the ability to attract within the physical world what we need for success.*

This law of attraction is the reason right attitudes are so important. Whatever one holds strongly in the mind, one attracts. Love attracts love. Fear attracts fear. However, the ability to attract circumstances, even inspirations—depends on the *strength of one's magnetism*.

This magnetic field—whether strong or weak according to the *strength or weakness of will*—generates *energy*. Remember, Yogananda's axiom: “The greater the will, the greater the flow of energy.” What follows? “The greater the flow of energy, *the greater the magnetism*.” Thus, if your will, and the resulting flow of energy, is powerful, there is *nothing* you cannot draw to yourself. No situation where you will not be able to remain even-minded and cheerful.

“That power which best energizes the body is an attitude of willingness.”  
—Swami Kriyananda

Thus, even if you are not trained in most technical aspects of a field, a *willingness* to do good for others may draw the knowledge you need to go forth.

The law of magnetism is also why the company we keep has an important effect on our ability to be successful. Just as a rod of iron next to a magnetized bar becomes similarly magnetized, so also does our act of placing ourselves in the company of successful individuals improve our magnetism for success.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Observe the laws of magnetism at work in your life. Watch your energy throughout the day, with respect to qualities and attitudes you take on in certain environments, around different people. Yogananda stated that, "Environment is stronger than will." Thus, a supportive environment is also important to success.

- Do you notice certain qualities more prominent in certain environments? (Perhaps comparing a positive environment you know to a negative one.)
- Is there an attraction to certain environments or circumstances you would like to change, so that you can make room for more positivity in your life?
- Are there certain things you would like to avoid, like habits or negative patterns with others, that keep continuing? If so, is there something within yourself that you can identify as the reason for this continuous attraction?
- What kind of environment do you hold within your own mind? Every thought in itself has magnetism, and attracts its likeness. How many of those thoughts are building a positive environment? How many are feeding a negative one? The metaphor often seen in spiritual literature is of course, what seeds in the garden of your consciousness are you giving water to, and helping to grow?

# Part 2: Manifest a Vision

## Developing Concentration

In directing all of your energy toward achieving a goal, one-pointed concentration is necessary. The key to increasing concentration is practice: practice concentrating on one thing at a time, and cultivating *awareness*: bringing your full awareness to whatever you do.

We also must avoid multi-tasking, which breaks our concentration, and increases our tendency to worry, blocking the flow of positive energy.

When we are aware of how we direct our attention to things throughout the day, we are more likely to notice when our concentration is broken, and bring it back. We have to practice this again and again before we can say we've got it.

Learn to focus in everyday life by becoming mindful of the way you use your time. Prioritize your activities and take them one at a time. Treat time and energy as precious resources to be used as efficiently as possible. You will find more about time management in the *Setting Intentions* and *Prioritizing Goals* sections.

Concentration is important before we begin the work to manifest something new, and integral for visualization and affirmation. If our energy is scattered while endeavoring to do these exercises, it will lose the power needed to be successful. We will go into affirmation and visualizations in the next two sections.

To improve focus, incorporate the following proven practices into your daily life:

Time outdoors, especially for fresh air and sunshine: Studies show that sunshine and fresh oxygen revitalize body and brain. Sunshine has also been shown to lighten mood. Sunshine and fresh air are the most natural form of pure energy to energize you and prepare you for one-pointed concentration.

Daily exercise, which like sunshine, exercise releases endorphins, which then stimulate a positive mood. Exercise also increases blood flow to the brain, thus supplying what the brain needs for focus, problem-solving, and getting things done.

Eating a healthy diet, including foods that improve memory and the ability to concentrate. Foods containing healthy fats, such as almonds and avocados, give the brain what it needs to function at its best. Equally important is avoiding foods that make you hyperactive (processed foods, candies, too much caffeine or other stimulants) and foods that make your body sluggish and your mind dull.

And lastly, study after study after study has proven meditation enhances memory, focus, and concentration by activating the prefrontal lobe of the brain. Meditation trains you for the mental marathon of setting a goal and working toward it day after day. Meditation also improves your ability to overcome challenges as they arise, and to do so calmly, with a positive frame of mind, and a feeling of inner peace and equilibrium—all of which are necessary for success.

“Meditation is a state of intense awareness achieved by stilling and concentrating the thoughts.”  
—Nayaswami Jyotish Novak

## PRACTICE EXERCISE:

This exercise focuses on how to get your daily dose of fresh air and sunshine:  
Experience for yourself the benefits of taking short breaks throughout the day to get outside, take deep breaths, and, if possible, rays of sunshine.

If there is sun, practice *consciously* (*intentionally*) absorbing the sunrays into your body. Feel them entering with all of their warmth—nurturing and energizing all cells of your body.

Even without sun, practice directing the energy into your body as you take in deep breaths. A double breath (short, then long inhalation through the nose, and short, then long exhalation through the mouth and nose), has been proven to supply *more oxygen* than a normal breath. Practice this breath several times, then tense your whole body, feeling the sun's energy coming in, and release.

Paramhansa Yogananda said that the *medulla oblongata*<sup>11</sup>, situated at the base of the brain, is where we draw in the cosmic energy of the universe. He said that if we only knew how to *consciously* draw that energy through the medulla, our bodies could be sustained by that energy alone.

Practice *drawing* the energy within at this point, if possible, stimulating—with your fingertips—the indentation at the base of the skull. This is a natural remedy for fatigue, and a way to revitalize your body, mind, and spirit. This is a part of the Yogoda System of Energization Exercises Yogananda brought to the West. (Available in the book, *How to Achieve Glowing Health and Vitality*, by Paramhansa Yogananda)

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<sup>11</sup> Yogananda explains that at the time of conception, the first cell that forms is the medulla, and it is also the place where we exit, or leave, the body at the time of death.

## Affirmation

Swami Kriyananda said that, “An affirmation is a statement of truth which one aspires to absorb into his life.” Affirmations work by changing the patterns of our *subconscious* mind, while also reinforcing the highest potentials in our *superconscious* mind (our highest level of awareness). And because what we experience is in relation to the consciousness we hold, and the thoughts we think, practicing an affirmation regularly and deeply can, to a great extent, create our reality.

Try using an affirmation from Swami Kriyananda’s *Affirmations for Self-Healing*, to absorb the qualities of success more deeply into your life:

“I leave behind me both my failures and accomplishments.  
What I do today will create a new and better future, filled with inner joy.”

To make your affirmation most effective, first practice the affirmation loudly, awakening your conscious mind (guide of our daily decisions).

Then practice it more softly, whispering, to activate the subconscious mind<sup>12</sup> (how we act based on stored memories and tendencies).

Finally, mentally, silently, bring it into your superconscious mind (seat of our highest aspirations and divine qualities, located at the point midway between the eyebrows).

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

To overcome old mental habits of negativity, affirm positive and uplifting qualities. This changes the directional flow of energy from downward pulling to upward lifting. In a positive flow of energy, we are more likely to attract opportunities for success:

- Create your own affirmation, or select an affirmation on success. To create your own affirmation, identify a negative habit or belief and create an exact opposite *positive* statement.
- Practice this affirmation right before sleep or upon awakening in the morning. Affirmations are especially influential at these times. Then practice the affirmation throughout the day, as often as possible, and whenever a fear or negative belief comes up.
- Have reminders to keep up your progress. For example, place the affirmation on your mirror; your bedside table; somewhere in your office; and any other place that you frequent.

Deep concentration and affirmations go hand in hand in magnetizing success.

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<sup>12</sup> See the glossary for further definition of key terms.

## Visualization

Visualizations are an important part of success. Visualization combines inspiration with imagination. When a visualization has your focus and one-pointed attention, it has more power to attract what you are visualizing. Therefore, the more detail you use in your visualization, the more deep will be your experience, the more likely it is to take seed in the universe and become manifest.

Your visualization is in itself an affirmation, that if you direct great energy into will become a reality.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Expand your vision to its ultimate form. *Allow yourself to dream big*, without any limiting thoughts. The more detail the better! Understand what success and happiness means to you:

- Close your eyes, and bring to mind what you want to accomplish.
- What do you envision for yourself? For your family? For your business? Community?
- How does this relate to what you feel your true purpose is in life?
- How can your work be shared with others?
- How vast will it grow? How many people will it reach? How will it reach that many people? Over what span of time?
- How will your endeavor manifest? Write down as many details as possible.

You can also use visualizations in meditation to visualize yourself acting in the new ways that support your affirmation. You can visualize yourself reacting positively and calmly in situations, or coming up with just the right solutions.

## Setting Intentions

“Many individuals think great things, but do not act on them.  
However, it is the activity that creates the greatness.”  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

First we start with a good idea (vision); then we are inspired to act. Now we can share ways to be most efficient in our actions to make this vision manifest, and long term.

Before we begin these next two task-oriented sections, it is important to be reminded that the nature of the universe is constant motion, constant change. You will always face challenges, opportunities, successes, failures, and changing directions. The point is to learn how to stay strong, positive, and adapt to circumstances as needed.

Try to be in tune with what is trying to happen, and remember that people are more important than things\*. Give your energy to your service, but give twice as much energy to those loved ones who support you. Give your all to succeed, but don't let the things you believe will make you happy on the outside keep you from finding true inner joy. Give everything your absolute best, always striving for excellence, but know that the efforts you put forth matter most in the end. The things you learn along the way, the strength of character you build, and those you touch with your determination to do something for the greater good.

And remember, as you put out positive energy in your determination to help others—you will attract the support you need to reach your true potential. For *like attracts like*.

Once the importance of putting out energy is understood, it can be applied to setting an intention, and achieving goals along the way. If you apply your will to manifesting set intentions, you can align each step with your ultimate vision of success. As you put out positive energy, and follow your true purpose in life—you will attract support.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Write down your intentions. Notice how much more accessible they can be when they are clarified. Writing also helps to take your goals from the mental plane into the physical plane—bringing you closer to manifesting your dreams in daily life. Identify specific steps to your goals. Write down everything that comes to mind:

- What is the timeline you foresee? What do you hope to accomplish in the next ten years? Five years? One year?
- What are the minimum resources (time, environment, people, or income) you need to acquire in order to realize your desired outcomes?
- Write down the steps within your immediate reach. These are the first steps you will have to take in order to achieve success, for we must all start from where we are.

## Prioritizing Goals

Think back to our section on envisioning: your vision for your ultimate goals. Feel the inspiration that came from this, and its expansive and uplifting nature.

Now, let's work backward from that expansive place to the steps you will need to take to make this vision a reality. Be mindful of the intermediate goals you will need to set during the year in order to achieve success. These are the goals you will need to make your vision a reality. As we begin, let's think in terms of the first year of marketing only.

A wonderful way to prioritize your action plan is to create a list of things to-do from your visualization and intention. A to-do list is a tool for directing energy with concentration and will power. To-do lists help you focus clearly on the steps—and each step's activities—necessary for success.

Here are key ingredients for a helpful to-do list:

- organization of activities by area of life (work, family, school, play),
- organization by projects (new garden, community service project, family trip),
- organization by time: immediate (for today), upcoming (for the week), and long term (future projects that align with your goals and vision),
- organization by place: to do at work, at home computer, by phone, etc.,
- format that will be easy to use and can be updated often (electronic or hand-written),
- and fun to use.

Writing down tasks helps release worry-energy, but only if your mind knows that somewhere the tasks are written down in a place you will check regularly. For example:

- A calendar (whether electronic or paper) that can send timely reminders.
- System for connecting your to-do lists with those of teammates or family members who share projects, tasks, or events with you.
- *Asana* (an organization service that can be used at no cost, or charged monthly depending on the # of users and features) is an excellent program you can use to develop our recommended to-do lists. You can also try Google's Gmail Tasks (a free service) to develop to-do lists. Through this service, you have access to Google Drive, where you can share information and documents with other team members, and Google Calendar, where you can share due dates and calendars for projects with teams.

Fun fact: When sharing documents on Google Drive, more than one teammate can make comments and participate in brainstorming via group chat at the same moment. Asana has a similar feature, which emails you whenever team members make comments on a task.

Remember, the quality—not the quantity—of tasks completed is what matters most. Properly organizing our work through efficient use of to-do lists helps us act from a balanced, calm center, and in doing so, consistently produce the high quality of work necessary for success.

It helps to focus on a task of pre-determined importance from your list one at a time, concentrating with your *full attention*, and thus giving it all of your energy. If you are thinking of other things while acting upon something else, your energy is divided. Instead, give your all to everything you do.

Direct all of your will toward reaching your goal, and draw upon the unlimited energy from the universe to succeed. It cannot resist an individual who is determined never to give up.

“Live each present moment completely, and the future will take care of itself.

Fully enjoy the wonder and beauty of each instant.”

—Paramhansa Yogananda

## Finding Balance and Harmony

“If you have lots of health and lots of wealth, but lots of trouble with everybody, including yourself, you have very little.” —Paramhansa Yogananda

As you go forth, remember the true meaning of success. Make the focus of all your efforts be to find balance and harmony in all aspects of your life; to maintain your inner peace and be true to your highest Self, your soul calling.

Remember that life is short; in reality we are only here for a short time. At the end of your life, what will matter most is whether you have done what in your heart is truly important to you. Be sure that you give energy to those things that will help you to live rightly, without regrets. Be true to your purpose and how you can be a channel for upliftment in this world. Success, ultimately, must be measured not by all of our outward achievements, but by our level of soul joy.

In this life, we have the opportunity to share our unique gift with the world. To do this, we must listen to inspiration and creativity when they are speaking to us. It is essential that we learn how to share our gift to the best of our ability, and that we direct our will power and concentration toward that noble end.

Ultimately, it is not for ourselves that we are trying to earn success. Rather, we are striving to serve in an expansive and beneficial way. The universe supports the success of those who strive to help others.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

“You have come to earth to entertain and be entertained.”  
—Paramhansa Yogananda

See yourself as an actor or actress playing in the movie of your life. See all that you have done as coming from the light projecting the film onto the movie screen. That light is the light of Spirit. Offer everything that has happened and will happen back to that light. Share your successes and your failures with Spirit. Try to feel that the role you are playing is a part of all that is.

Each night to let go of all of the failures and successes of the day:

Feel, in your heart, memories of the day. Then lift them up from your heart to the brain, and forward to the seat of superconsciousness at the point between the eyebrows. Whether in the form of mental images or feelings, offer them to Spirit, that higher self that lives within and all around us. Try, also, to free yourself of remaining attachments, worries, and past hurts and regrets. Reflect on the day so that you can improve tomorrow.

# Part 3:

# Share Inspiration

## Introduction: High-Minded Marketing

Marketing in its highest form is a way to share inspiring and helpful messages with the world.

The field of marketing is changing fast, and we need to keep up! Marketing is transitioning from a more *me-mine* approach based on loud, grand, and expensive campaigns to one strategizing in building long-term relationships, and providing helpful information.

Yogananda said of marketing, “If Wrigley’s can advertise to get people to chew their gum, why shouldn’t we advertise to get them to chew good ideas?”

Examples of marketing dedicated to bringing good ideas into the world are needed. Needed even more is a clear framework for how to do so successfully, with universal principles that can be applied to any endeavor.

Here are two simple questions that capture the most useful way to think about successful marketing:

1. What do you have to give that others want to receive?
2. How shall you find the people who care the most about what you have to give?

By focusing on what you can give, rather than on what you can get, you work with universal positive forces which will in turn help you attract success.

Instead of *pushing* forth information, make an *offering* of inspirational and educational communications that naturally inspire others such that they are inspired to continue to share your messages with the world.

People are motivated to share if something brings them joy; and naturally, so naturally they want to share that joy with others.

The marketing terms for describing the phenomena discussed above are content marketing and virality. Content marketing is the marketing of content (information to be shared) that is useful and helpful. (Explained in detail in *Part 4*.) Content is usually shared via the online marketing channels with the greatest impact, like social media, blogs, and video.

Basic marketing theory is: To be successful, create the kind of content that *wants* to be shared. This means that your communications can go on reaching people even after you shutdown your computer.

To be successful depends not only on creating good content, but also on getting it to the *right people*. It is our goal, that after completing this section, you will have gained the most effective marketing skills to unlock tremendous potential for reaching others.

## Create a Marketing Plan

*“With ingenuity, you’ll find that there’s no limit to the ways in which one can advertise both creatively and dharmically (virtuously).”*  
—*Success Through Yogic Principles* by J. Donald Walters.

As you move through the following sections, remember that those who create works to uplift and inspire, acting with kindness, and whose work inspires others to expand their awareness, is *dharmic*, and will attract support from the universe.

Your marketing plan or strategy will include your vision, a list of goals from *Part 2* to support the success of that vision, your next year’s objectives for meeting those goals, and the activities you will do to meet those objectives. Your plan should also include a timeline to urge it to completion (See *Appendix* for a complete *Sample Marketing Plan*).

Taking the team to create a marketing plan is key to helping you stay on track, keep your vision and goals clearly in mind, and focus on what will help you reach more people and achieve success!

Developing a successful *marketing plan* includes these key points:

- genuine helpfulness and desire to give;
- strategy for becoming readily available and easy to find;
- a strong *brand* (uniqueness and clarity of who you are);
- high-quality and innovative content that makes you stand out;
- a central landing point and pathways to go from there;
- and integration across marketing mediums (search engine optimization, social media, blogging, newsletter, advertising, and photo / video sharing).

Many of these points will be interwoven throughout Parts 3 and 4 of this book.

The steps to creating a successful marketing plan (Part 3) for sharing inspiration include:

- envisioning success,
- sharing a story,
- identifying core values,
- attracting support (“target audiences”),
- conducting basic marketing research,
- defining a niche,
- establishing your brand,
- and tracking progress over time.

## Envisioning Success

Connecting with your original source of inspiration (*Part 1*) and visualization (*Part 2*) helps you reinforce the positive energy and magnetism you need for successfully manifesting your vision. Now, we will market your inspiration by visualizing in more detail the steps that will bring you to your ultimate goal.

This process of “envisioning” is also done to discover the *why*—what motivates you, what inspires you to share, and what is your story (how your endeavor came to be). It helps to identify what you want to give, so that later you can match what you want to give with what others want to receive.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

The exercise below can be practiced individually or with a team (if your goal is to inspire and unite group energy around a common vision). For groups, instead of writing your answers, divide the group into pairs and have partners alternate speaking in an ABAB format.

Begin by writing down the following sentence on a piece of paper:

- A. If people were to find my xx [product, service, or project] then yy would happen.
- B. Now go a step further: if yy happened, then zz would happen.
- A. Then continue even further: if zz happened, then aa would happen!

Apply this to what would happen if something you shared online were to be successful in reaching a wide audience. To help you get a better feel for this process, here is an example:

*If people could find our yoga center's website more easily, then more people would come to our classes.*

*If more people came to our classes, then more people in our larger community would be healthier.*

*If people in our community were healthier, then they would feel happier and live longer.*

*If people in our community felt happier and lived longer, their friends and family would want to practice yoga too.*

*If their friends and family wanted to practice yoga too, then even more people would come to our yoga classes.*

*If more people came to our yoga classes, then we could open new centers.*

*If we expanded into more than one center, then we could hire more staff, have more classes and events for the community, and become known for helping thousands of people feel happier and live longer.*

*If we became known for helping thousands of people feel happier and live longer, we could become nationally known as expert yoga teachers.*

*If we became nationally known expert yoga teachers, then we would so expand our yoga teaching that millions of people would feel happier and live longer.*

*If we expanded our impact so that millions of people felt happier and lived longer, we could end the disharmony and dis-ease worldwide.*

And so on...

Now, look at the vision that emerges from this exercise, especially at the essence of what you are offering to give to the world. The essence of what emerges in this example, is providing yoga practices that will not only help people feel happier and live longer, but that ultimately will transform the world into a place of peace.

## Sharing a Story

Do you find it easier to remember a story someone has shared with you, or a list of facts? Some people may have differing experiences, but most would say, that a story is easier to remember and can even recount it to others in detail at a later time.

One supporting theory as to how stories are more easily remembered is that in ages of higher human awareness, we transmitted information from generation to generation in the form of oral history, or storytelling. For example, in India, great epics<sup>13</sup> such as the Bhagavad Gita, and the Ramayana tale of Ram and Sita were traditionally passed down in the form of story.

Remembering information in the form of a story has also been proven by psychological studies to be a successful technique for memorization. Therefore, if someone can remember the story described in your vision (the details of what it took for you and others to get there, and where you want to go in future), they are more likely to be able to remember it and share it later.

More importantly, if that story is inspiring to them and relatable to their *own* life, they are even *more* likely to share your story. Whether by word-of-mouth or online, they will be happy to share it with friends because they identify with it as a part of their deeper self. When people take part in sharing your story, they feel an almost personal connection to you, simply by the nature of their interest in what you have in common.

The envisioning exercise provides the beginning to your story: the *why* you are determined to give great energy to sharing what you have to give. And because the why is based on inspiration, it is the most *magnetic* part of your story.

The people who are likely to have a vested interested in your story, and who are most likely to become your supporters over time are those who share a similar *why*. Thus, it will come into play in the section on attracting support for its role in connecting you to like-minded people who share your ideas and values.

Another important aspect is that others who hear your story may be inspired by the fact that they too, want to *travel the same path as you*, but haven't yet arrived. They hope to try one day as you did, to set out from scratch, and so gain courage as they follow your story to success!

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Practice writing the story of how you began your journey, leading up to where you are now:

- How did your endeavor come to be?
- What inspired you to begin? Was there a major shift or change in your life? A turning point? (Think “climatic moment!)
- What do you hope to bring to the world with the success of your endeavor?
- Who was involved in this process? In other words, who are the “characters” (you, your team, your mentors)?

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<sup>13</sup> These epics were allegories to human nature, and the universal quest back to our highest nature, to express the highest of human potential.

Give your story (as much as possible at this point) a beginning, middle, and end. Add details, but not just rote facts. Add the feelings, and what the experience has been like to arrive to where you are standing now, and where you *hope to go*.

Note: Later on you can place this story on your website, into a video, in a fundraising letter, whatever you can do to share it online with others who would be inspired by hearing it, and who will begin to cheer you on to success.

## Identifying Core Values

A core value is not just any value; it is the essence—the core—of what you care about. It probably started to emerge as you told your story. It can also be thought of as the power words you will thread throughout your content, words like *freedom, equality, security, connection, unity, joy, innocence*, etc.

The core value can also be thought of as the *heart* or essence of what you describe in your marketing content that motivates someone to *take action* (for example, means sharing something of yours online, telling a friend about what you're doing, or buying your book). This is an important concept to grasp so that you know how to communicate *directly to the heart instead of the mind*. The mind usually talks people out of taking the next step, but if you appeal to someone's heart, they will feel what you are saying as their own, and want to move in the direction you are guiding them to take.

In turn, when your communications centralize around core values, you will be more likely to make a *heartfelt* connection with potential support that is *inspiring*. This is more lasting than sharing facts or information about what you have to give, long forgotten after someone goes onto their next tasks online.

The concept of core values is often tricky for people to understand, because they aren't always able to get as deep as they need to go in order to find the core of what they are sharing that is *most motivating*.

So how can you identify the core values in your own marketing plan?

In the envisioning exercise, the yoga center began to help people feel healthy and happy. Though “wanting to be healthy, happy, and help others” is not the strongest point, it is often the typical point repeated again and again in marketing (with the thought that it is indeed the strongest messaging for an audience).

Instead, let's go deeper. Keep asking *why* something is meaningful to others, until you get to one word (or two at the most), that describe why people will care about becoming involved with your endeavor. *Why will they be inspired?*

For example: Why do people want to be healthy, happy, and help others? To feel their highest potential in daily life, to feel connected, to be free to move healthfully through life. The core values here could be *expansion, connection, and freedom*.

Having more than one core value gives you room to relate to different groups of people that are likely to connect with you. In the next section (Attracting Support), you will learn how to identify these different groups, and how to be successful in expanding your impact.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

The answers to these questions make up your core values. They connect the why, what, and how back to your source of inspiration:

- What is at the heart of what you do?
- Why do you do it?

- Keep asking why!
- One more time, ask why!

Don't stop until you have one to two words that describe why what you have to give is helpful, that you feel will speak to the hearts of many, and that can be threaded throughout your marketing.

Now once you have your top 2-3 core values, look at the websites and communications of others in your field. Can you identify their core values?

- Search online for the website of 3 organizations who share a similar service to yours.
- Write down their slogans, a few of their strongest communications (messages), the imagery that they use, and the core values that these all represent. Within some of these organizations you may not be able to decipher clear core value(s), but this means they lacked proper planning and clarity about the essence of what they have to give.
- Rank the organizations, including your own, by the order of *core value strength*.
- Ask yourself if your core values can be even more improved, and from there, decided on the top ones. See appendix “Our Brand” Team-Handout to see how you can share core values and top communication messages and imagery with an entire team to use throughout its marketing materials and avenues.

Here are some more examples of core values:

- Youth (Children), Innocence, Purity
- Security (not protection which is more contractive)
- Joy (tends to be stronger than happiness)
- Freedom, Independence
- Love, Connectedness, Oneness, Unity
- Peace, Calmness, Stillness
- Self-acceptance / Acceptance by others
- Self-discovery
- Vitality, High-Energy
- Expansion, Greater Awareness

As you saw in our example, it is best to create a combination of 2-3 core values that is unique to others in your field, forming a unique “vibration” of ideals you represent, or the essence. One can become very specific and unique in their vibration and how others relate to them.

## Attracting Support (Target Audience)

Supporters taken as a group are called, in marketing terms, a *target audience*. A target audience is a group of people with a particular *persona* and accompanying approach to life. A persona is made up of many individuals who share demographics, interests, and ultimately have their own *vibration*. For example, our yoga center may list its three audiences by giving each one a name, and describing their persona:

- Current Supporters: yoga lovers and practitioners, people who come to class regularly, have a basic knowledge of yoga philosophy, see yoga as a lifestyle;
- Likely to Become Supporters: people who are health-conscious, practice yoga here and there, but are not committed to daily practice;
- Potential New Audience: 9-5ers with lots of stress, people who know yoga is good for them but haven't tried it yet.

It is best to stick to about three target audiences, or for some organizations, to heavily focus on just one (a *specific audience*) that shares your values and are deeply searching for what you have to give. Although individuals within your selected audiences will have varying approaches to life, understandings, motivations, and interests, the key strategy is to find the common underlying theme that is shared by all of them, that is unique to your service, and that speaks to their heart.

However! Note that each one may need to be *reached* (marketed to) in different ways. To do this, learn how best to market to each target audience and choose several to focus on *intensively*. By working with your audience directly on your marketing messages (see section on Marketing Research) you will understand how to individualize the way you connect with each one.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Start by writing down three target audiences that:

- make up what you know to be your current group of supporters,
- are likely to become supporters because they already support organizations with similar core values, or
- could become potential new target audiences.

Let's step into a psychological dimension together. It is essential that you put yourself in the shoes of the audience by thinking deeply about the cares and concerns of the personas.

First, list the characteristics of your three audiences in detail, one list per audience, each with the following information:

- Demographics (including age, gender, location, occupation, education)
- Interests and hobbies
- Typical online behaviors (how tech-friendly, where they go for information, what social media sites they use, and when)
- Cares and concerns of daily life
- Struggles

- Areas of knowledge and areas they want to grow
- What inspires and motivates – connected with what you have to give

Are you sure you are deep in their shoes? Thinking empathetically about their struggles and deepest cares? Okay, good! Now answer the following questions:

- What is most important to you in life?
- What motivates you to take action and do something new? To make your biggest, life-changing decisions?
- Why do you want to hear the story that is being told about this organization or service?
- What about the story will you relate to most?
- What is your daily life like? Where do you place most of your energy day-to-day?
- How do you use the Internet? How do you get trusted information to help you and your family? Or your business?

Think about what content you can provide each of these audiences relative to what its members will be searching for online:

- What are my biggest questions? Where will I go for answers?
- What do I want to learn how to do? And where would I go to learn new information?
- What are my greatest needs? And who do I trust to help me find solutions?
- What motivates me? What core values do I relate to in life-changing and inspiring ways?

If you can correctly identify the needs of your audience, and find a way to support them, they will support you in turn.

## Basic Marketing Research

Through research you can learn more about the things important to your target audience. Let's balance what you have identified so far on your own, with what we can gather from objective (non-biased) marketing research. Many times people don't realize the benefits of research until they try it.

Even a little research is likely to help you learn something *new* not yet realized about your audience. For example, some aspect the audience deeply cares about that was missed, or a surprising reason why people have sought out your service, that if you shared more intentionally, would reach even more people.

Using research will help you approach your plan more effectively and with a fresh look that comes *directly* from your audience. Above all, even just a few hours of research can give you a feeling for what energy is out there around what you have to give, and what strengths you carry within your services. It helps clarify a direction that can then be strong and unified throughout your communications.

### The Right Language (Keywords)

Carefully chosen language makes your information relatable and enhances your connection to an audience. Language is the *bridge* you need for others to cross to understand that among the offerings you share there is one that speaks to them. Thus, if your language isn't quite right, you may lose people. For example, the use of a word or phrase called *jargon* (language used regularly within your group that doesn't make sense to people outside of the group). Often this deters people who would normally greatly benefit from what you have to give, but can't be linked to the true meaning that they themselves would understand.

Thus, it is your responsibility to ask others, outside of your normal group perspective, about how *they* might describe what it is you do, how *they* have found you, and what *they* would like to learn about. Don't be someone who goes full-steam ahead and never once looks back to check-in: Ask others what they need and how they would describe it, so that they can be inspired when they see your marketing messages for the first time.

One way to identify the right language and prevent misunderstandings is to test language within a search engine tool. Identify the right *keywords* or *keyword phrases* that your audience types into a search engine to find information online. It is important to see if what you name something on your website is the same as or different from the name your audience might use in its search. This will greatly improve your ability to reach others and share in the most effective way. Based on your results, you can update the language in your communications, and design content like blog titles or social media hashtags around these keywords (discussed further in *Content Marketing Success*).

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Type into the search engine topic areas or questions your target audience might ask, this time focusing on the same phrases but worded differently than you might expect.

To identify what keywords to plug into the search engine, think about how your audience might refer to different topics—try typing a few variations into a keyword search tool (like Google AdWords if you have an account) and look at what results come up. It's a great way to get started *thinking outside your normal box*.

Begin to get a feel for not only what the audience is asking, but how. Jot down a few notes as you practice this:

- What keyword phrases are being used? Which keywords match the ones you use?
- How well have you related to how others describe what you have to offer?
- Do you see how different words and phrases affect the type of websites that come up in the search? If you open some of these pages, you will see that each has its own vibration. Be sure the phrases you want to use in your language are the phrases that have similar vibration websites in search results to capture the right audience. It is better for everyone when *searchers* and *searchees* are rightly matched.

## Types of Marketing Research

Think of marketing research as taking the opportunity to *ask your audience directly how you can be of help*.

Typical marketing research usually takes the form of surveys, focus groups, and interviews. We will focus on these three forms in their simplicity, due to the majority of our organizations' and small businesses' needs for something they can do with limited resources.

One of the benefits to using these research methods are that they provide a much needed, and sometimes overlooked, person-to-person perspective to verify the accuracy of what is believed to be represented in one's online data (using an unbiased tool like Google Analytics). Remember, that online data only captures what you know to be true of the users who *have found you already*, not the audience that you are *waiting to find*, or the ways you can *improve* your site navigation or content.

A side-benefit to conducting research is that it also serves as an opportunity to market with others about your new services, your vision, and your core values. This can deepen the relationship with those you reach, because they feel how much you care about their opinions. It also may help them to feel more apart of your vision, because they took the time to share how they feel about your messages or your story. It then increases the likelihood that they will share what you are doing with others they know would also be inspired. Let's begin with *key informant interviews*.

### *Key Informant Interviews:*

A *key informant* is a representative of your audiences, who has deep insight and helpful information to share regarding the topic or services you will be marketing. The interview itself has to do with the fact that you are asking questions to simply get them to openly share their thoughts about the field, in an open way that allows for new insights and possibilities to flow through conversation.

To find people to interview, think of individuals you know who share qualities with the typical person you would find in your target audience. It may even be someone who already supports your endeavor, and you spend your interview with them delving into *why* they would support it. Perhaps you had an idea of what your audience might be inspired by already, based on the framework you

have created thus far; and you take the time to ask others how they feel about the approach, if it is an accurate representation of their experience.

Interviews are often transcribed to computer documents, so that one may begin to decipher themes and common messages that appear. From these basic findings, you can decide which direction to take. Once you have a direction, you can create marketing questions with specific details around the messaging you will test. This is called a *survey*.

#### *Surveys:*

Use the results from your interview to create an overall purpose for what you hope to gain from conducting a survey. Especially because surveys take the most effort to create, gather an effective *sample size* (relative to the number of people you asked versus those who took the time to respond), and analyze the results. So think about what areas you would like to get specific answers, and even take the time to test the beginnings of your slogan, graphic imagery, or communication messages.

Surveys are most reliable when one asks a larger number of people a certain series of questions, of which you can gather a “majority vote.” For example, test a slogans or message by asking others to rate it on a scale of 1 (lowest) – 5 (highest), and see how “strong” a message was by which one had the most number of 4’s and 5’s.

They can also be used to ask questions about demographics (age, location, place of work), to determine similarities in the audience that indicate areas of need. Or to ask how people heard about your organization, for example, by word-of-mouth, search engine, or social media. You can even use a survey to determine where they would likely go to get information they *trust*, or how they would be most motivated to take the next step into what you offer.

One of the strengths of surveys is that they are more reliable and statistically valid than a focus group (*below*). And they are useful for obtaining precise answers and ranking so that you may discover more than one message is strong. Or one message is stronger for only a certain demographic, of which you can refine your marketing plan *even further*.

The one problem with surveys is that getting a good response can be difficult. Fortunately, if you have a group of people who already feel like you are sincerely trying to help, and who care that you do well in future, they will be glad to give you their time. However, if you are starting from the bare beginnings, you may have to run a Facebook ad that offers an incentive for them if they complete it, like \$5 or a free PDF booklet related to your service.

Another way to improve the likelihood that others will complete the survey is to keep it short and easy-to-read, or if you are using an online survey, to use buttons and clear directions. (People like buttons because they feel like an online game!)

And finally, it is important when using surveys to *always* have someone test it that has not seen it prior. They can tell you what is unclear and their suggestions for improving questions and answer options. (See *Appendix* for examples of surveys.)

### *Focus Groups:*

Focus groups are made up of individuals representing different demographics of your target audiences, (the *group*), focusing on an aspect of your service and how you can better reach them or serve them (the *focus*).

Compared to surveys, focus groups are less statistically reliable (as far as quantifiable data) because of their small sample size and group dynamics (specifically the ability to have all demographics equally represented in conversation, and sometimes for groups to go off topic). Because of this, most researchers recommend that you stick to surveys and interviews for accuracy and resourcefulness.

All of the results gained from marketing research can be applied to what you will create to be successful in your marketing. Use your findings to fill in the gaps you need to have clarity in your plan. Your results can also be used to create new content or revise content for a more successful marketing campaign.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Think of someone you feel you can ask to be your first interview, give them a call, and meet them to discuss the most inspiring and helpful aspects of your organization or service.

Here are some tips on how to do your first interview:

- Be relaxed. Remain natural and friendly.
- Stay focused during the conversation by giving it a set amount of time. Begin by letting them know the purpose relevant to how it might help them or what you intuit will be most meaningful.
- Remain impersonal. Be careful not to lead their answers and thus affect their responses by reinforcement of what they share in the form of head nods or too many *yes*'s. Share with them ahead of time, that you will simply be asking the questions and taking notes so they don't feel awkward with your note taking.
- Express to them that they have the freedom to answer honestly and directly. That their experience—no matter what—is valid and helpful. And that the more the better, even if it means taking longer than you anticipated. It might be at the very end of a conversation that you get the spark of information you have long awaited!
- Record the interview so that later you can review notes.
- Consolidate all of your notes and begin to look for patterns. These patterns can be used to show you the *right language (keywords)* or messages that are most meaningful to others. Start by underlining powerful phrases or key points that appear in the interviews, places these on a separate document and start to categorize the responses, tallying up when others give the same response or point in their interview as well.

Here are some examples of *open-ended* interview questions or potential survey questions:

Remember, to ask not only what the interviewee “thinks” but also how they *feel* or experience different aspects related to your content, slogan, name, story, core values, etc.

- What about our vision are you inspired by? How does this relate to the vision you have for your own life and journey? This may prove the most important question you ask! Why? Because from this answer, you can design an entire marketing plan for success!
- What brought you to your first experience with [insert your brand or service]?
- What were you searching for when you found us?
- What were you going through at the time of your search? What made you decide to reach out?
- What do you feel is (or will be) most helpful about what we have to offer? Do you feel you know who we are and what we have to share with you?

Once you have information from your key informant interview, you have a more clear direction for what you can ask in a survey.

## Define Your Niche

Now that you know what you have to offer, and what you believe your target audience might be looking for, your next step is to find what you have to give that is unique to your endeavor. In marketing terms, this is called your *niche*. To be successful, design your marketing plan around this niche and for the audiences you have identified to be most interested.

It is important to understand and have a clear definition of what your niche is, so that you can clearly and quickly express the essence of your niche. Because sharing happens often online, you have even less time to make your case and still have an impact. (In fact, we have only 2 seconds once a person lands on a website's home page to make a good impression.)

To be strategic when it comes to finding a niche online, try using Google or other search engine to discover what areas of your service might be best to focus on in your marketing.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Practice typing a question your audience might have into a search engine. Observe the results:

- Are there gaps in the information that is available? Do you have unique information to fill in those gaps?
- Is the way you would have answered the question different than the types of websites, services, or articles that come up? If so, elaborate on what you would share differently.
- Who are the others that tend to come up in your sample searches? Open these websites in a new tab. *Keep these websites open or bookmark them for later use in the chapter on basic marketing research.*
- Go through the websites that you think are similar to your niche, but not quite the same, and clarify even further what it is that makes you unique and sets you apart. If there isn't something, it's time to get a bit more creative! Think hard about the possibilities or potential new directions you could go to fill a niche.
- What services do you provide or can you provide that your audience is asking for because it hasn't been met adequately in the field?

For example, if our example yoga studio were to do this exercise, they might type in a need of their audience like "yoga postures for stress." In the search result will be a listing that includes other yoga centers in their area, as well as online yoga resources available that provide free videos or blogs on yoga and stress. Now they need to see what they can offer that is unique, or what vibration of yoga they can represent, that is creative and sets them apart, yet still *vibes* with, and represents their core values and broader communications.

Using our example, it might be that no one has done a series of yoga postures you can do from your *desk at work, or in a limited amount of time* like during a lunch break. This might appeal to the target audience we described as the *9-5ers*, rather than college students or online yoga students. By now taking this niche and focusing on how to stand out in this way, the yoga center is more likely to stand out to this specific group of people. Otherwise, the energy expended to create content for marketing around the idea of "yoga for stress" would be likely unsuccessful due to the high volume

of online competition. Because there are so many people who offer similar information on yoga, it is really important to identify where you can fit in, in a unique way, maximizing your energy.

If you're really stumped on finding a niche, try talking directly to your audience to discover new directions they may be seeking, or areas you haven't yet known were what made you stand out in their hearts already. In the next section we will go into detail for how to use basic marketing research for just this practice.

## Establishing a Brand

A brand is a central component of your marketing plan. You can think of the brand as the overall vibration for “you” or your “organization or business. To know the essence of your vibration, be clear on what you represent—a clear vibration is a strong vibration. Those who are clear about what they represent, and carefully craft their brand messages experience the most success. To be strong requires consistency in how you present your main messages and core values within a *marketing framework*—how you will “frame” (portray) content to a target audience.

A marketing framework is the core for which you and your team go back to again and again, asking: Does this reflect our brand and our main core values?

The best way to figure out how to frame content is to ask the audience using the research methods we described above, starting with the right language to describe your core values and niche. From within this framework, you know whether a message or service area is going outside the brand. It helps to keep your vision clear, messaging strong and unified, and adapts to reflect how audiences feel about you and your services over time.

A *marketing framework* includes:

- name of organization or business;
- messages (like slogans or power phrases) you choose to express your content;
- core values expressed;
- metaphors or phrases with implied, deeper meaning;
- main imagery and media you are using, including logos, fonts, colors, pictures.

A brand also includes the *feeling* and perceptions your audience holds about your organization or business, determined by what that they feel when they see your messages. This affects whether they will be inspired to share your brand with people they care about in life. If they do, it will mean that they identify with your brand by association, relate to your messaging, and are likely to share the content you create.

Apple is a good example of a company that has built its brand over time. So much so, that when we see an advertisement for apple, they can have a photo of their newest model and the apple logo, and leave it at that. They have built the association of feelings and core values they want their brand to elicit in the audience so well, that now they don’t even need to communicate with words for their logo is so deeply associated with excellence.

When determining the strength of your framework, look at how clearly the ideas are expressed, and whether there is a unitive and cohesive message within the framework as a whole.

Let’s look at an example of a professional singing group for which we applied a marketing framework based on the pre-determined core value of *joy*:

The Joy Singers

Spreading Joy through the Power of Song

[Home](#)   [About](#)   [Events](#)   [Blog](#)   [CDs](#)   [Book Us](#)   [Contact](#)

**About The Joy Singers**

The Joy Singers are a singing group based near Nevada City, CA whose purpose is to help make [Ananda Music](#) more widely known.

They offer music that will inspire and uplift, not dogmatize or threaten anyone with new and unfamiliar beliefs; what they offer is more human than religious teaching.

They sincerely feel that this music, as a new form of artistic expression, is destined to have a major impact on society as a whole, and uplift our materialistic civilization into a more spiritually oriented

**Upcoming Events**

No Events

**Latest Posts**

- [The Joy Singers performing at World Brotherhood Day](#)  
December 20, 2014  
0 comments
- [These are the moments...](#)  
December 13, 2014  
0 comments
- [We're back...and raring to go!](#)  
December 8, 2014  
0 comments

The core value of *joy* is represented very well throughout the page, in several ways:

- the name is clearly stated and related: The Joy Singers;
- the slogan is “spreading joy through the power of song;”
- the imagery (including logo) represents the feeling of joy, the rising sun in the header, the varying shades of yellow across the top, the happiness of the singers in their photos and brightness of the background;
- the font expresses the gracefulness of music and yet still maintains the feeling of power, reinforcing the slogan “spreading joy through the *power of song*;”
- the main messages or phrases include “music to inspire and uplift,” “new form of artistic expression,” and there is a metaphor in the testimonial that alludes to a healing power with bold text;

Overall, this framework is strong in comparison to other spiritual singing groups, which tend to have disjointed messaging for more than one theme, or they don’t use strong core values to determine these themes, subtly decreasing the energy and power of their framework.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE:

With the open tabs you have from doing an internet search on possible ways of phrasing what you have to offer (see *Right Language (Keywords)* exercise), go through each website and *analyze the strength and clarity of its brand*. (This is called a *Framing Memo*<sup>14</sup>).

As you view each one, write down answers to the following questions:

- At first glance, what is the *feeling* you get for what they *represent energetically* (the *vibration*)?
- What is the logo and imagery being used on their website? Their social media? Does it reflect their vibration?
- What is the name of the organization or business? Does the name reflect the vibration?
- What is their slogan? Does it too reflect the feeling? You are beginning to understand the framework of the brand.
- What are other powerful messages are repeated or used throughout their website to support the feeling and its vibration?
- If they share a story, how does the vibration of the site relate to the inspiration and meaning behind it?
- Are the core values reinforced by the feeling you got?
- So far, do the name, slogan, imagery (font, background color, photo, video), main messages, feeling, core value, and story go together? If not, how could it be improved? How could their brand be more clear and focused?
- What would you say their niche is? How does this relate to the messaging they use? Is the niche reinforced in the messaging?
- What do you think the target audience is based on the vibration they built? Are there more than one messages being communicated to potentially different audiences?

In efforts to improve the strength of your brand, let's see how you stand out in your field using the results of the framing memo:

- Do people know your name by your logo? By your slogan?
- Do people understand your mission or vision? Is the public aware of what you stand for and where you hope to go?
- Can others easily identify and tell your organization story? Can they name your core values? Do you think you and your audience share these core values?
- What do you have to share that your audiences need?
- Compare yourself with others in your field: What do you have to give that is unique?
- Where can you make a bridge between what you have to give and your audience?

Use these results to clarify and redefine your marketing messaging. Once you have identified the best way to frame your messages from the point of your brand, you are ready to design content and take your marketing plan from ideas to action.

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<sup>14</sup> This research method was taught to me by a professor at Boston University, Dr. Michael Siegel. He was well known for his work across the country prohibiting smoking in restaurants and public spaces. He was successful at helping to protect many Americans from exposure at their workplace to secondhand smoke, and thus saving many lives.

## Tracking Progress

It is important to have ways of tracking the effectiveness of your marketing plan—so that you can keep on improving your strategy. Tracking your progress over time will help you shape an increasingly effective plan. Because tracking will also save time and energy in the long run, your new plan will be sustainable.

Begin by looking at your marketing plan's first-year activities for variables that are measurable, and so can be used to track progress. Such variables are called indicators because they can indicate whether your goal is being achieved. Thus, each indicator relates to a goal and its supporting activities. Here are some examples of indicators:

- How many people joined your social media network (% increase)?
- How much website traffic did you have (% increase or # visitors)?
- How often was a post shared (# times shares in relation to total # followers)?

It is important that you consistently monitor your progress along the way. Don't start out with good intentions to track indicators, yet let yourself forget to do the actual tracking. Monitoring progress as your marketing plan develops over time, helps you direct your energies effectively and to the right projects, people, or places.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

If, for example, you choose to track social media shares, look for which posts did best over the past three weeks. Here's what to watch for:

- What times of day showed the most shares?
- How often did content need to be shared before it was picked up by a larger network?
- Which content topics had the most shares? What qualities do the most shared posts have?
- Are there patterns in your network's most frequently shared content?
- Were there any holidays or news events that corresponded with the frequent sharing of particular content?
- What questions or needs of the audience were most helpful? Anything else you could use to draw conclusions from for what content to share in the future?

# Part 4: Market Your Purpose

## Content Marketing – The Ultimate Integrated Strategy

**Content** includes *information shared*. The vast majority of activity through content marketing happens online, in the form of social media posts, videos, images, blogs, newsletters, links to websites, etc. When you market content that communicates an inspiring message or illustrates a helpful service you offer, the helpfulness and inspiration an audience feels when they discover this content motivates them to share it further.

Why do people share content? They are motivated by the joy they feel from helping and inspiring others, sharing the original message you created according to your high-minded marketing approach.

Put simply, *content marketing strategy is sharing information that is inspiring and helpful to others*. The more a piece of content is shared, the more successful your marketing will be.

To successfully raise awareness of what you have to give, you must learn to sincerely give to your audiences without seeking something in return. This means that you value or prioritize the creation of a lasting, meaningful relationship with your audience, over a quick sale.

To learn what is helpful to others, you must understand them. To do so requires an opening of the heart to their current reality, attitudes, and inspirations. You must reach beyond your own life experiences and individual needs to understand how you can design your content, and expand your awareness to include others.

By becoming more effective in how you communicate and share content, you build a long lasting, trusting relationship with your audience. This kind of loyalty is of value beyond measure. Helping people in this way is in itself fulfilling. For when you know that you are marketing to inspire and uplift others, to make the world a more positive place, it makes your work more meaningful.

And when you assign deeper meaning to what you do by serving others, what you share will become a positive force, one that attracts success. Your audience will feel the sincere motives with which you work, and so they will be inspired and happy to continue to share your content—beyond what you could do alone.

### **In other words, the more you give the more you receive.**

Remember, marketing in its highest form is used as a way to increase awareness of *good ideas* and share them with others, and to have fun! Marketing should be joyful, imaginative, and creative. And heart-opening, inspired marketing allows us to go deeper into why we do what we do—its true purpose—which brings us closer to understanding our aspirations and finding meaning in whatever we do.

### **PRACTICE EXERCISE:**

How do we create or gather the kind of content that will spread exponentially, often referred to as *going viral*? To the point where after you've created that content, it is shared again and again, with your brand and website along with it? The latest in marketing research says content that goes viral is often in story form, evokes high energy or enthusiasm, and expresses creativity, beauty, meaning, humor, caring, practicality or usefulness. It can be timely or surprising, based on what's trending or

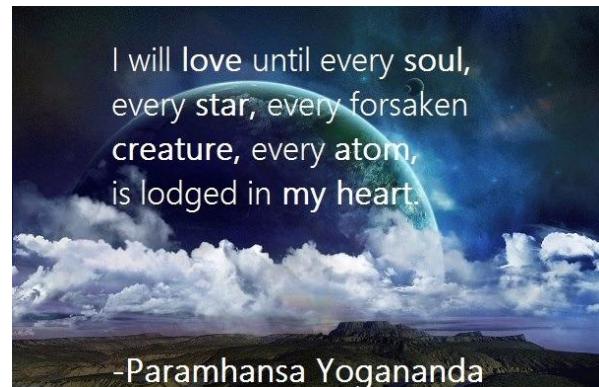
in the news. In addition, it is helpful to know that the two most shared topics online are: health and education.

Decide what content you can create that will be helpful and meaningful to your audience. Be consistent in how you present your core ideals in content, to make your meaning clear—something your audience can relate to in just a few seconds.

For now, just have fun brainstorming the kinds of content you are inspired to create, writing down the answers to the following questions:

- What will help you to have fun creating new content? What ideals would you be happy to share?
- What do you think your audience will look forward to sharing with their friends and family? How will they be able to use what you post to help the people around them?
- List any possible content topics that could be fun to create images for with regards to social media, blog articles, or videos.
- List up-and-coming topics in areas (fields of interest) for which you can be a content innovator.

Below are two examples of posts that have gone viral within their networks. Take note of which qualities from the above tips each one meets:



*What similarities between the two images do you see? Differences? What makes each one effective?*

Some of the similarities are the use of powerful imagery that is expansive, encouraging aspiration to higher ideals. They are both nicely formatted, with text that helps the main message stand out, so it is clearly understood. This clarity helps it to be shared more easily, as well as the magnetic high-quality images used.

The differences include the values that they express in their main message. One is about love and connection, the other about aspiration, service to others, and sharing joy (smiling). They are successful most of all because their messages are universally relatable and inspiring. The Finding Happiness movie photo-quote has the core value of joy, which also reinforces the core value of the

movie and its essence. Both have imagery of space or nature, which also tends to do quite well on social media.

The best way to tell if your content does well, and how you can improve it, is to look at the social media analytics, or Google Analytics if you are looking at blog or website articles. All social media sites do have a way to track which posts have done the best, you can look at their help section. (Note: Facebook and Pinterest require you to have a Business page/account to have analytics, so this is helpful to know ahead of time if you are planning to do marketing with social media.)

Other ways to improve your content include:

- Keeping each piece of content to one topic or idea, unless it's a longer article. For longer articles, you can have one main idea with several supporting points that have the underlying theme of expressing a core value.
- Using high-quality, professional graphics to provide the best imagery and visuals. Your content will be not only more credible and respectable, but also more magnetic, increasing the likelihood that it will be shared.
- Remaining aware of copyright; use only photos that you have created yourself, have received permission to use, or ones taken from the public domain (see Appendix for more on *Copyright and Stock Photo*).
- Remembering to maintain your sense of genuine helpfulness and desire to give. Even if you have a small budget and are still learning the skills of creating professional-quality content, you can still be successful *if* you remember to come from this place. Even if it's to share a joke via video or an inspiring quote via Pinterest, if you can make people smile, you will see that content shared.

## Landing Pages and Pathways

With the right (strategic) placement of your content, especially across online channels, your content has the potential to *go viral*. This means that it is shared exponentially, across several channels (social media, blogs, websites), by a variety of people who care about the underlying message that speaks to their heart.

To do this, it can be helpful to create content around a theme, or *point of concentration*. Create a landing page on your website based on this theme, evoking the most powerful messages of your brand relative to the theme (the ones you know are the strongest from doing simple marketing research or from analytics).

Then reinforce that people will arrive at this landing page by placing a link in the social media posts you create, and at the end of any blogs or articles that are related to the theme as a *next step*.

Later, you can use Google Analytics to see how most people arrived to the landing page, like whether the Facebook ad you did sent more people than the free post you did on Pinterest. Improve your content strategy for next time based on the results (we'll explain how to do this the next section).

You may help your content to go viral by building a team of *partners* who work together to share each other's content. Encourage your friends and family, business connections, or greater online network to share content. People will want to help you in your endeavor, especially if you make it easy for them to do so by utilizing online marketing. Have them share your website from their blog, or repost something you've created on social media to their page. This is especially successful when these partners share your core values and will be inspired by what you have to give to their audiences as well. (It is helpful to note that people are always looking for new content to share and don't always have the time to create their own, so this can give them a "content break".)

The most successful way to share content is online. Online content sharing forms a system made up of different mediums that have the potential to reach people at an exponential rate. These mediums include blogs, social media, video, photos, website content, and links that work together to share content across space and time.

Here are the ways you can successfully guide people to find you over the Internet:

- direct visits to your website: through business cards, a newsletter, or referrals;
- search engine optimization (SEO), so that your website shows up at the top of search results;
- and online advertising: ads that people click on to go to a particular webpage.

All three are supported by these online mediums:

- social media (including Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube, Google Plus, Twitter, and Instagram);
- search engine optimization (SEO);
- blogs;

- video;
- images;
- websites;
- and newsletters.

Strategic content marketing is more important now than ever because Google (the #1 search engine) has changed the way they rank search results online. Websites that are useful or helpful are given higher ranking than sites that only use hidden web coding to match certain targeted keywords. In addition, they are incorporating social media content via images.google.com that come up in searches, as well as social media posts (specifically Google Plus social media posts). Recently, they also ask that your site be mobile-friendly (this is called a responsive design) to keep your high ranking.

Here is an example of how content can spread exponentially leading back to the landing page and pathways:

You've used social media to post content with an inspiring quote and photo; your post has a link back to your website in the text section (so that it is clickable) as well as right on the photo (so if it is shared and the text is no longer associated with the photo, they still see who created the content right away).

For example, the image on the right is a quote by Swami Kriyananda, that leads them back to the site that has lots of spiritual quotes by Kriyananda at [www.ForJoyWeLive.org](http://www.ForJoyWeLive.org).

Meanwhile, the photo is inserted into a related blog (usually as a *featured image*), and your blog followers share the blog link on their own social media sites, *but because* the photo has your website and name, people can see the photo and article link, and are able to find you no matter where the content travels.

Then, you can use the photo for the *thumbnail* of a video blog you create to go along with this point of concentration on YouTube (the #2 search engine). The *video description* includes in the *very first line* the link viewers back to your site.

Low and behold! The photo is picked up by the Google Image search engine from your website and shows up in a content search for photos or graphics related to your point of concentration; if shared often enough, the original social media post shows up in the search engine when someone types in the same words (*keywords* when referring to SEO) used in the original post. This is especially true for an image posted on Pinterest.



# Social Media

## Introduction to Social Media

We use social media because we have a unique opportunity to share with *millions* of people across the Internet. In fact, it's been estimated that 4.75 billion pieces of content, including photos, videos, web links and news stories are shared each day.

This is one of the many methods we have available to us to inspire others without limitations of resources. We also use it because we have to in order to keep up and be found online!

### **Social media can be used for good**

We can create a place on social media websites to share helpful and useful information with each other, to connect with people all over the world, and uplift consciousness. In turn, you increase the chance that your audience will spread the word to friends and family when they come across content they feel is genuine and wants to help.

Social media is unique because it's based around people-to-people sharing. The more you think of it as relating to someone who is right in front of you, asking for your help and your services, the more successful you will be. If you take it a step further, and see your followers or connections on the network as friends, and try to help them in this way, you will become even more successful and have fun in the process! If you have the right attitude by feeling you have the potential to share something with the power to uplift many, many people, more than just a simple email or blog going up on your website, it will raise your energy and help your posts become magnetic.

### **How to Start Your Social Media Strategy:**

Social media works best when there is one person working on it who has an affinity for this kind of work. For example, they may be friendly, like to get to know new people, are creative and positive, and are happy to engage in conversation with people online. If you will be doing your own social media, which is great for keeping the true vibration and your *voice*, so to speak, you will then want to learn how to make the process enjoyable so you can keep your posts energetic and uplifted. Either way, it will help you to put into the practice the following tips for initiating a social media strategy:

Begin by developing a plan that helps you focus on *two to three goals for social media success* that support the main goals of your organization or business. You may want to review your core values and, if possible, the vision that inspired you to begin your work. You will then be able to more carefully prioritize the activities you will need to perform to fulfill your goals.

It will help to decide based on these goals and the needs of your target audience which of the many social media sites you would like to use often, and which you can set up and then leave for some time before making infrequent, generic updates (like a new photo or business address).

The main social media sites we recommend clients use (in order of importance) include Facebook, Pinterest, and Google Plus / YouTube. If you have limited resources, take time to choose the sites that you know will have the greatest impact with the least energy output (like sites where content can be shared again and again without your efforts day-to-day). After you have refined your goals according to your resources, you may decide to choose only one social media site to give energy, or

maybe your audience is much more reachable on Instagram (youth-oriented), Spiritual Networks (spiritual business networking), or LinkedIn (professional networking), and you focus on these instead of the broad-reaching sites we recommend. Ultimately, you will want to decide for yourself what will be best based on available resources.

Once you decide on which social media sites you will use and how often you can post to still reach enough people for it to be successful and worthwhile, you will want to decide how often you will check them in order to respond to comments. Many people overlook this important aspect of social media. (But, for example, if a friend came to your house the same way they arrive at your Facebook business page and asked you a question directly, would you ignore them for several days or respond as soon as possible?)

It can be helpful to set up alarms on your smartphone for when someone makes comments, or say yes to email notifications in your social media account settings, but personally, I find that very time-consuming and distracting! Instead, I give ten minutes in the evening to just checking in on my social media notifications, with most attention going to Facebook or YouTube where you are more likely to get spam comments and negativity. This can help keep a nice positive atmosphere around what I share, and people still get energy from me that is probably more heart-felt and meaningful than if I were to respond distractedly during the day while involved in other things.

Over time you will be able to practice better time management by reviewing the data and analytics for each site. You will see which sites actually work to draw people to your website and which ones seem to just be empty interactions. One of the reasons we recommend Pinterest is that it brings over 90% of *new traffic* to three out of four sites of clients, with two being over 95%. The third one out of the four may have been simply due to lack of activity on Pinterest in comparison to paid Facebook ad traffic. And Pinterest activity is free! The best plan we can offer you—if you only have time to do one site—is to blog and master the use of Pinterest to share blog posts or video blogs that send people right to your site again. We have an hour-long training on effectively using Pinterest and why it's so powerful here: <https://goo.gl/e8DNum> (short link generated by Google Short – great for converting super long links to shorter versions for social media cut-offs on character limits).

### **How to Strengthen Your Social Media Connections & Network:**

*Follow* or *like* other user accounts that have followed you, but especially look for those who are likely to have a genuine interest in your area of expertise. Send them a personal *thank-you* message.

Don't post only on your own Facebook site, but reach beyond your usual audience to those connected to other big names in your field. Post on the walls of your most active, influential connections with the largest networks. You can often tag them (e.g. Twitter uses the @ symbol and Facebook generates other business page names as you type) so they see your content posts. (I've always wanted to make a video and tag Oprah...)

Work with the people who are already loyal to you. Have you ever heard the phrase, your best market is the one you have already? Probably because you have developed a trusting and caring relationship with them already, you are likely to have more success trying something new with the people who already enjoy your content. Ask your followers to like or follow your other social media pages, or invite them to share helpful content with their friends to *spread the love*.

Integrate more with other departments connected to you, or organizations, or other individual bloggers or entrepreneurs (like an *extended content family*). Create a synergy (the more people united in helping for a greater cause, the stronger they can be). Are there projects or services that are new or very fitting to your content's themes that you can share? Also, be sure that your social media posts link up to the various websites, newsletters, and other online marketing efforts that help your extended content family.

Make sure that all of your social media is connected with your other marketing efforts, like newsletter and blog or website. If it isn't apparent how to do so, you likely just need ask for help from Google, a Webmaster, or us ([expandyourimpact@gmail.com](mailto:expandyourimpact@gmail.com)).

### **How to Choose the Right Content for Social Media Marketing:**

Did you know that 80% of your posts and content should be for or about your followers and only 20% should be content that promotes your business. This means the focus has to be on contributing engaging, useful content to gain credibility and respect. You have to be so much more aware of this on social media because you are supposed to be *social*. If you had a friend that every time she came to visit, you asked her if she would come to your art show next weekend and that it was \$15, do you think she'd come to visit much longer? It's the same with social media sites. If you bombard people with your next events and stop posting inspiring and helpful things, like a friend, you lose their trust. The only site where this is not relevant, and why we recommend it the most, is Pinterest. Unlike Facebook, people are not going there to talk to their friends, they are going to get tips for crafts, recipes, and get ideas for shopping! It's like a magical online magazine that connects you with people all over the world, interested in exactly what you have to offer. (Just a fun side note.)

Be creative and think of new and interesting ways to post content on social media networks: Choose content that will encourage participation and interaction. Make it specific, local, relevant content; ongoing activities that encourage participation; or original photos that have to do with the latest in your field. Figure out ways share meaningful stories or excerpts from your books or products using audio, video, text, or images. Choose a medium that plays to your strengths and in which you enjoy working.

Here are some other general tips for social media success:

Post new content throughout the week, not just on the days you're open. For many businesses, Sunday is one of the most active days on Facebook. (In general, weekend posts are best.) Can't dedicate time throughout the week, and only have one day to really focus on Facebook? Use Facebook's scheduling tool to create and schedule posts to go out days, weeks, even months in the future.

Every so often, change your cover photo and profile photos, across all social media networks. And, some of the sites have a place for text for the photo (Google Plus and Facebook for ex), so be sure to write in the photo description something fun so that when it goes out on the network that you've made an update, you have maximized the usefulness of the post by writing about something and giving a link for people to visit who see your new cover/profile photo on the main network feed.

Always post reminders about time-sensitive topics like upcoming seminars, registrations, programs, special events featured movies, customer service updates like closed due to icy roads, new buildings, etc.

Carefully select high quality, aesthetic photos. Keep your highest quality photos to use as your profile picture and cover or background photos. Study what makes people share posts online. Analyze what kind of imagery your audience resonates with the most: What posts were shared or liked the most, and be strategic in future.

Learn from other organizations with a large network: what are they doing that is popular? Successful? What do you like/do not like about their posts. Study and analyze their strategy and learn how to use these techniques to improve your own.

Avoid distractions. Online there are all too many ways to get distracted. To be successful, self-discipline is vital. Be careful not to get caught up in anything that is distracting and takes away from your own creation of content and sharing to your network. Hone in on the things that will help you reach your goals, and avoid the temptations of browsing through unnecessary photo albums or unrelated posts.

Seek support to keep going. Find ways to earn income, inspire donations, and receive support. A great way to earn income and share something of inspirational value is to write eBooks (little PDF booklets) that consolidate information that are several of your posts or articles combined for study or inspiring reading.

Audiences have a short attention span, so make the most of it. Instead of turning viewers away with too much text, keep it exciting by using easy to read and understand videos or pictures to express what you want to communicate. Say what you mean simply and clearly.

Individualize your posts by sharing several that make up a story about your organization. Most people understand a message best with a story, so use the power of storytelling to express the message that you want to communicate. For example, share a photo and in the description tell its story. Place text over the photo itself to communicate the main message with core value to touch the heart in a short amount of time.

Be personable and consistent. Don't post too much but don't post too little either, e.g. one to two times a week is a good amount. It is a helpful technique for building a relationship with your viewers because it is not enough to be considered spam, but not too little to be forgotten. The consistency also increases the likelihood that viewers will return again and again to your site.

Post at a time when your demographic is likely to be online with time to check your page or updates. This will help build on the momentum of your promotional work because you add to the likelihood that individuals will see your posts and help with the networking of your organization. Over time, you can increase the number of followers on your social media pages and more.

Build trust with subscribers by giving to them before asking from them. Offer great new articles, upcoming events, and services before asking for donations/volunteers, support etc. Again, this is a form of hospitality and building relationships before asking for too much.

Don't get carried away by simply having a large network, with big numbers. Value quality over quantity. You don't want to become impersonal, and this way you can be personal in your responses and postings. Focus efforts on increasing number of new fans and "likes" of people that will truly support you, actually read posts, and are interested in your cause. Yes, it is true that the more followers or likes you have, the more your posts will be seen, but there is usually a minimum number for success, and even then, you may not have much quality that leads to trusting relationships and loyalty.

If you put these things into practice, you will surely be on your way to becoming an online marketing success. Remember to see it as an opportunity for service: How can you help people and make them realize you truly value their support and friendship? This is an important aspect of the energy that is behind your social media sharing.

## Facebook

Why use Facebook in your social media strategy? 1.44 billion (2015 estimate) are on this social media network. This means there is an enormous opportunity to reach new and wider groups of people online. There is no reason your Facebook page should not grow into the millions.

How to make your Facebook page successful means making your posts more magnetic (positively attractive), creative, and fun. It is not only important for energizing you, the social media poster, but also for the audience that you reach. They will feel the energy behind what you do, and thus share it or like it, increasing your engagement.

The goals of using Facebook are:

- to increase your reach or network;
- to connect with other like-minded individuals;
- and to build friendships and relationships, thus Facebook is made up of *friends* and *likes*.

Here are some tips for how to get creative and be strategic to make your Facebook posts more successful:

Upload videos directly to Facebook and use their new features, like action-directed links (learn more), and featured videos that show up on your business page's about section area (prime real estate). Be sure to write in your “about” section messaging related to the video that you know is powerful or inspiring to your audience to also encourage taking the next step. Video testimonials and stories about your core values or why you are doing what you are doing are very helpful.

This is an important way to upload videos now, as posting YouTube links will now appear with a fuzzy, sort of hard-to-read thumbnail image. And Facebook videos automatically start playing as people scroll through their newsfeed, increasing the chance of people seeing the message you have to share. We've experimented and found that directly uploaded Facebook videos are more than double the success rate of sharing YouTube videos (via copy and pasting YouTube sharing links to Facebook).

Creating and sharing content in the form of photo albums is sometimes an untapped resource. Albums are not only super mobile-friendly, but they are way more interesting and interactive than a static photo-quote. When we create photo albums, we try to do it around a theme with which we can find supporting photos and quotes to click through as one browses the album. You will increase your likes and engagement by having a story told through an album. It is well worth noting that photos are still more likely to be shared and viewed than videos on Facebook. And with an album, you share more photos at one time, with likelihood that get more engagement.

Here is an example of a recent album we had great success with: Take lines from a book that has a series of quotes like sayings for the day, and do one saying per day for the whole month. Each day add that photo into the album titled the book's name or topic, and in the “about” section of the album, include a link to purchase the book or more info about the book's content that would encourage people to take a next step.

Once you feel you really know your audience, try a promoted post (Facebook ad) around a photo-quote or video. You can even go so far as to use this image or video to direct the audience to a free download on a website, the landing page, which then leads to a newsletter/email sign-up right away, so that anyone who clicks on their ad to get their free PDF becomes connected to them personally through email. Building your email list is also one of the #1 ways to build lasting relationships with your audience and connect with them in a way that will help you to expand your impact.

It is best to choose your photo-quote and/or video wisely. Base it on the Facebook Insights analytics. Go to your history of posts and engagement in insights; click on *view all posts*, click on the column that shows you the *total reach*, and Facebook will organize the posts by number of highest views and shares. That way you can see what kinds of posts have done the best over the past few months (note that means you need to keep up to date a larger database where you can track the top posts over the past year or years). See what your audience is connecting to the most, and try to create more posts like this. The top post is also a likely candidate for what you should use to attract people with an ad.

Promoted posts are also great because they simultaneously increase page likes and encourage an action button click-through like “Download” “Sign-Up” “Learn More” which takes them to your landing page with another call to action, perhaps to make a purchase or join your newsletter.

Take more photos of the people who have a story or deeper connection with your purpose and core values. People who are visiting your classes or business and have been deeply moved or changed by the positive things you are doing. Take a quick video testimonial with your cell phone, or post a photo and a quote about what they have to share from their heart. This heartfelt approach will deeply touch your audience, and hopefully continue to spread across the network as more people are moved by what you have to share. They will also be more able to *remember* you far into the future. For a story is one of the ways we recall information best.

Overall, for success on Facebook, if you continue to share helpful content, that help your audience to feel more joy and inspiration, they will want to share those things with those they know and are connected with, likely friends and family. They are motivated to help others feel that same joy. In this way, your content can spread throughout the 2.1 billion accounts, on the most popular social media site.

## Pinterest

Everyone can use Pinterest, and everyone should! Pinterest is organized by topics and themes, and so it is less about who you are and more about what you have to offer. It is like an online magazine, that connects people who share your interest by photo – if they've pinned it, you are likely to be connected, whereas most sites will never connect you with people outside of the friends of your friends (limiting how far your posts can reach). Instead, the main homefeed is anything and everything related to the interests you plug in when you first start an account (in addition to your network of course).

Because Pinterest is still growing, you still have the opportunity to join and be an innovator. You can create boards that haven't yet been created, and expand your network much faster as new people join and need pins to make their profiles savvy and interesting.

Still need to be encouraged to *get on board with Pinterest?* Here are some fascinating statistics and facts about this leading social media site:

- Pinterest was one of the fastest growing social media sites in 2012, and was amongst the top 4 leading social media sites in 2014 (next to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn).
- The demographic of users is within the age range of 18 to 55 years, most with college degrees and money to spend. The number of pins that lead to online sales is unlike any other social media site. Pinterest visitors convert into leads (they click to your blog or purchase your for sale items) faster than other social media source.
- The population of female users is currently larger than males, but the number of males using Pinterest is increasing, and is expected to be more equal to the number of female users in the coming years. This means it is soon to be one of our leading social media sites.

We go into more detail in our educational one hour free Pinterest class on YouTube:  
<https://youtu.be/bVtCevRQjMA>

In this section we will teach the basics of Pinterest so you can become a highly effective and strategic Pinterest user:

- how to make pins go viral;
- how to create the best pins;
- how to expand your Pinterest network;
- how to use the best image size for Pinterest;
- and how to search engine optimize a pin.

Before we go into helpful strategies for Pinterest, here are a few words that you may want to know: individual pins are posts; pinners are like-minded pinners fellows with similar interests you can follow; and boards represents a topic, category, or interest you have and use to represent your account.

One final note, if you are starting an account for the first time, please be sure to create a *business account* right away instead of a personal account. If you have a personal account for a business

already created, don't worry! You can convert it, and Pinterest's help section will give you the steps to do so.

## How to make pins go viral

The most viral *pins* (Pinterest's name for *posts*) are those that get shared (re-pinned) time and time again, bringing the number of views into the thousands. You want to be re-pinned so that more people are exposed to your pins. This will likely lead to more visits to your website, and a growing network of followers.

Here are some helpful tips about going viral on Pinterest:

Pins in the categories of *Food and Drink* and *Do-it-Yourself (DIY)* are the most viral. If you are going to create boards, it will be in your best interest to include one or both of these categories. And pins that are quotes, jokes, and cute pins are shared the most.

If you want to appear first on the Pinterest homefeed, most recent is what counts. This is why it's so important to pin at the appropriate times of day. The best times of day to pin are Thursday, Friday and Sunday nights, from 6:00 to 9:00pm, and Saturday mornings. The lowest priority time is Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm, due to the common work schedule. But if you want to show up in the Pinterest search engine, you will need to have a large network *and* get your pins shared (re-pinned), while using hashtag keywords most effectively.

Pins can go viral more than once. So every once in a while, re-pin your favorites again. They may rank higher in the search this time, but also new people might pick them up and share them with their networks. It is helpful when re-pinning to pay attention to seasons, choosing content that will do well because it's on other's minds. But don't get carried away with re-pinning, you want to avoid posting a pin more than once in a 24-hour period, otherwise it acts like spam. This can get you removed from community boards (which you don't want). Instead, strategize

And don't really figure out what kinds of pins will go viral, learn to use Pinterest analytics and track your results. Also check your Google Analytics to see if you are getting website hits from Pinterest posts, and which pins are leading to landing pages with good next steps (like a purchase or sign-up).

## How to create the best pins

Be interesting, be creative, and be funny! Brainstorming is an important step because a good “pin” requires thought and creativity. Spark pin ideas by browsing images on Google, and see if there is one you love and believe you can do even better, recreate it, and pin!

Learn from the best “pinners” like Whole Foods (#1). They succeed by selling, not food, but content about healthy lifestyles. Here's an example: If you are going to sell shoes, don't put up product pictures, but use a picture and description that shows someone how to be run faster, or jump higher. With business accounts: Be thoughtful about your boards, and showcase the *core values* of what you represent, but also the *points of concentration* or *themes* you have in your marketing plan. Make each board an aspect of what you have to give, and make the photos reflect the vibration (feeling nature) of your brand what you have to offer.

Focus on creating pins that apply to more than one category, and they will get pinned in more places and to different audiences. Create pins for multiple boards so that more people can see you and follow you; variety is helpful. You can keep the number of pins to each board around 30 or less.

On your pins, ALWAYS be sure to provide a link to your website in the source section, directing the viewer to the exact page they want to see. So if it's a product, don't make the source your home page, take them to the exact page on the site where they can make a purchase. Do not waste their time. This also ensures that when someone re-pins your pin, Pinterest will generate all of the other pins you have created, with that website, so that large numbers of people will see your account as a recommendation to follow.

### **How to expand your Pinterest network**

Here are some tips for creating magnetic and engaging boards on Pinterest, to attract more followers:

Post pins from other sites onto your board, outside of your organization and its products and services. This will increase networking, and will show that you are not merely spamming or self-promoting. (This is more important for personal accounts, but it also helps to identify your brand as a friendly and trustworthy source.) They will see you sharing their pins in the notifications, and may also take the opportunity connect with you.

In addition, make sure the link you associate with your pin goes to a web page, also known as a landing page, that is associated with your content, so that your board will be trusted and followed. This is also reflective of your sincerity, and builds respect.

You can also connect and link your Pinterest account to other social media sites, so that a bit of energy can go a long way. You may also notice some Pinterest users have an @ symbol in the title of their boards or in pin descriptions, that is someone optimizing their pin or board for Twitter, as it is easily connected within your Pinterest page—a great way to have crossover between fans of your different social media accounts.

Once you've strategized how you create pins, request to join community boards that show recent usage, and a large number of followers. This will springboard the sharing of your content. You can also look for boards by local areas to see if you can get connected with businesses in your area. If there are sparse boards for your area, create your own and make it the place other pinners from your area go to and share from to their board.

### **How to use the best image size for Pinterest**

Use a 700-pixel resolution (in either height or width) to take up the best amount of space. In addition, successful images are visually appealing, colorful, and high quality. Make use of instructographics, which is goal oriented and teaches through a series of pictures. If you are unable to use graphic design programs that create graphics such as this, you can use a single picture, and write instructions or catchy quotes in the descriptions related to the photo.

This will appear large on the screen of the person pinning it, as they scroll through the latest pin activity, and yet it will not be distorted when viewed up close. If you are able to create instructographics or infographics, here are some tips:

- Pins that take up the most board space will be more readily sighted and more frequently re-pinned by others.
- The most successful image size is 500px wide by 3000px long.
- Titles on instructographics should be large and easy to read.
- Place your product or logo (for branding) in the right corner. Include your website's URL address so that, even if someone doesn't click, they know where to find you in the future.
- One thing about Pinterest is that it is easy for your photo to lose its source or any form of edit. Every so often, you may want to check that people aren't using your photos or graphics without crediting the source. If they are, ask that they site your website address as the source. Tineye is a tool to check who is using your photos, and Google Image can be used to see where your images appear.

With all this being said, startups should focus first on building a following, and then on getting high quality graphics. Otherwise, who will be there to see your graphics?

## **How to search engine optimize a pin**

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) ranks pins by keywords and content that is related to a search phrase. To stay high on search rankings, keep the associated phrases and keywords true to the content you're pinning.

The Pinterest search is located in the upper left hand corner of the Pinterest home page. You can do a search by entering in a word or words into the search box, and get results for individual pins, pinners, or boards.

To show up in the search sooner, is a combination of optimizing your use of keywords in your pin, your account itself (your profile name and website URL address), and your boards. It is also based on how many times your pin has been liked or re-pinned, or how many follows your board or account has.

Like most social media sites, coming up in a search is based on strategy as well as the strength of the content you create.

Here is a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) checklist that you can use the next time you log on to Pinterest to pin (post) new content of your own, or the next time you pin from a website as you surf online:

Use descriptive keywords in the board title AND board description. Especially using hashtags in the board description and pin description (#): Keep it simple: One or two hashtags in your pin's description is enough. Separate keyword phrases into one word each. Experiment to see what words work best. It is helpful to create a list of keywords that you might use for different boards within your areas of interest. For example, a yoga board might use keywords like #yoga, #asana, #namaste, etc.

Your keywords will change from board to board, and from pin to pin! Optimize it by taking the time to really make use of this wonderful tool to make sure your pins and boards are found.

Know your brand and know your audience by doing the necessary marketing research beforehand to identify your niche and needs of the audience. But also, do the practices to know what vibration you want to give on your Pinterest account (the pins, the boards, etc.) so that you can be sure to use keywords that fit with your overall content marketing plan.

Take a bit of time to come up with a list of keywords that will fit for the board that you are trying to promote. For example, we have a meditation and visualizations board, and the pin below on meditation can fit quite nicely into that board (ex following the pin below). It uses #meditation, and has the word meditation as the first word in the pin.

In addition, it is vitally important if you want to show up on Google Image searches and even the main search engine to be sure you have descriptive keywords in the original image file name on your computer that you use for a pin. To change the file name, find where your image is saved, and save it in the form of keyword-xxx-keyword-keywordz.

Practicing these easy-to-do Pinterest tips will help you soon reach your goals for Pinterest and success!

## Google Plus

Google Plus has wonderful ways that you can reach lots of people far beyond your usual network, and connecting into the highest ranking search engine itself (Google is #1 place people go to search online. When you post, if you use hashtag keywords correctly (Google Plus will help you as you type in your hashtag keywords to pick some good ones), you have the potential for your Google Plus social media posts to show up on search engine results.

Here are content marketing tips for search engine optimization, making connections, and branding for Google Plus:

First set up your Google Plus user profile. Start by using your brand logo or a professional, personal image for the icon photo (see girl jumping in mid air). Then be sure to use a high-quality resized photo for Google Plus's cover photo. Then completely fill out the information on your profile. Especially using the opportunity to link to other sites and use keywords in about sections. However, you will also need to create a separate page from your personal account to use for your business, especially for something called Google Local, which is what you see when a business address and photos come up in Google's search results. Creating a local page is easy to do, and just requires waiting a few days for a postcard to come in the mail with a code you plug into your profile to verify that you have a real business address.

Build your network by adding other Google Plus users to your circles. You can start by connecting your GMAIL contacts with Google Plus, so it automatically connects these contacts, and then begins to suggest new people you may already know to your circles. This is a really effective way to network, because you start with people you already correspond with and know, building from there. Circles are Google Plus's version of a Facebook friend, but have the ability to be organized by circles of friends, or groupings; so you can target certain groups with different posts.

Because Google Plus is still gaining popularity, you may be one of the first people out there in your field starting a Google Plus Community (the Facebook equivalent to a group). Begin by going to the search engine bar (underlined in orange at the top of the screenshot above), and type in the name of a community or a topic for a group you'd like to start. We started one of the first Online Meditation groups on Google's community pages, and look forward to watching it grow as more people join Google Plus: <https://goo.gl/Asw3fD>

Google Plus also offers features like *live broadcast* and hangout where you can either hold large conference calls, buddy calls, or broadcast talks live to the whole network—no limitations! These are great for integrated content marketing because when you're done they automatically upload to your YouTube account! The only downside is that lots of people get their Gmail accounts confused, having multiple, some set up for business pages, personal profiles that are in fact business pages gone astray, etc. so just be sure you select the correct account to be logged into when you do these in the upper right hand corner where your photo is located.

## YouTube

YouTube is the #2 search engine, with about 4 billion views each day. It is a wonderful way to attract new people who spend time viewing video, especially because of the generating of related videos at the end of each one, encouraging you to keep watching and connecting you with potentially new audiences. Once you learn how to navigate YouTube and create video (later section), you will find it to be a fun and powerful way to reach large audiences.

A simple and easy checklist for anyone looking to utilize YouTube for a content marketing strategy, including search engine optimization:

The first step to setting up YouTube properly is to make sure it reflects your brand. Upload and edit your profile picture and change the background image to fit the style found on your main website, and resize your logo to fit the upper left hand image (80 x 80). You will need to do this through your Google Plus (+) account. Make sure your Google + and YouTube channel have the same imagery, descriptions and feeling for what your brand represents.

Be sure to edit the area “edit links” by going to the upper right corner (hover until you find the pencil). Then you will be asked to write in your main social media sites, choose which ones to display (always do the max of 4 if you have that many). You will also be able to choose which sites to link up with, choose the main one you will want to display and drive users to.

Choose your marketing message and slogans wisely. This is the spot where you fill the “about” section in with words and keyword phrases that get to the heart of what you are trying to share. It is how you will make the personal connection with users. It is to the right of your main video that will support this main framework. The main video should have been created as an introduction to your brand, your website purpose, or tell your inspiring story.

Take the time to find or connect with other channels that you consider your partners in the field of what you do, and list their channels in the sidebar labeled *Featured Channels*. Often we work with have many individual users who have YouTube accounts and videos on their own pages that could be featured here.

You may also improve your network by subscribing to other YouTube channels, or following individuals out there that have included your videos as playlists on their page. You can find these individuals by doing a general search in the YouTube search bar, and seeing what videos and playlists come up with your name or organization in the title. They will be happy to see you connect with them!

It is also very important to create playlists right away, and to create a featured video for the home landing page. This will guide viewers to see the playlists that reflect your pathways, leading back to the landing page on your site where they can make a purchase or donate to your cause. Your featured video will change for returning viewers to your most recently uploaded video, so be sure that you test back and forth how it looks for each group.

In the additional account settings area, you can also select a brand image to show up in the corner of your video, and even a video to play next automatically. There are other things too like enabling longer videos and monetization. All of this is free!

When putting together a playlist of video clips around a topic area or idea that is specific to your target audience's interests (and yours). Do this not only within your channel, but also for any videos that may include your presentations, interviews, or events from other YouTube users.

Playlists work such that if a person finds one of your videos that belong to a list, instead of the video just ending, it goes on to play additional videos that you have selected to be on the same list. They therefore end up watching more from your channel, and are likely to share more of your videos.

To share your playlists, simply click to where you can embed a video (under share), and copy and paste the HTML code for the playlist, plug this into your website or social media sharing sites.

Like Facebook, you want to respond to comments on videos. Users will have a lot to say, be sure to post and comment to their questions or praises, and also to their complaints. Don't delete complaints or negative comments to ensure your credibility, as an open and honest user remains stable. This is an opportunity for relationship building in a more personal way.

Because Google Plus is connected to YouTube, you can easily connect with users more personally by posting your videos on your Google Plus account, and messaging and +1-ing (liking) their comments of encouragement.

## Search Engine Optimization

When uploading YouTube videos, you also have a great opportunity for search engine optimization you don't want to miss!

In the *Info and Settings* area (look for the pencil icon at the bottom left of an open video when you are logged in). Write in a description that includes your website (drive people to your site where they can learn more information or shop etc.) and uses keyword phrases that you know your audience will relate to, and that describe your brand. You may repeat some of these words in tags at the bottom of the info and settings area.

These are really important to use. Think of them as what forms the giant *web* of associations and connections of video topics that you want this video to show up for as a *related video*. Be sure to include your name or brand.

There are two aspects of when we write YouTube video titles and descriptions that are helpful to think about if we want to optimize our ranking in the YouTube search engine:

1. Descriptions are seen when someone is browsing on YouTube, rather than when they stand alone on a website, so we want to use our descriptions specifically for the search engine on YouTube. That means optimizing with our main keywords.
2. Externally linking to our main website where we are hosting the videos on the web. This is also the landing page we want to take them to when they see the video, and is likely a corresponding article, blog, or info page on our website.

The prime real estate on a video description is the first words that appear. These first words are best used when they are the URL link to your website (call-to-action link). In addition, the keywords you include in this first line are the ones most likely to be picked up first in the YouTube search engine and connected with other like-minded or similarly categorized/themed videos. For example,

[www.expandyourimpact.org](http://www.expandyourimpact.org) ~ A Heart-Opening and Inspirational Marketing Blog. Marketing tips for nonprofits and small businesses that want to share inspiration.

#expandyourimpact #inspirationalmarketing #marketingblog #marketingnonprofits

Keywords that we have found useful are “inspirational marketing blog” “educational marketing blog” “marketing blog for nonprofits” and so on. So not only do we have our website, and a link to it right away for someone interested in wanting to learn more, but we also have keywords that will hopefully send people searching in YouTube for a video on “educational marketing tips. YouTube has its own keyword tool, but I find Google Keyword tool is more effective (it’s had bugs worked out), or else just typing in and trying my own searches to see what’s out there— being sure to search *incognito* (Ctrl +Shift + N) Windows or (⌘ - Shift – N) Mac.

Our keywords will also help improve the likelihood we land as a recommended video associated with other educational marketing videos. The SEO matrix of YouTube is so smart, and quite complex! It also includes your video “tags” which is at the bottom of a video when you are in “info and settings.” Use “tags” to add more keywords related to your video or video series.

## Twitter

Twitter is a social network that based on “tweets” or posts, and “following.” It is a two-way communication based on the twitter character limit of 140 characters or less. Thus, tweets are used to update others quickly on the latest news from your business or center, the latest helpful tips or links to a new blog post, or sharing of inspiration via photos or quotes.

“The creative idea plus a fresh network is the best way to go from zero to millions.”  
—Jonah Peretti, Co-founder of Huffington Post

Here are some basic definitions and functions to know about Twitter:

- To follow someone means that you subscribe to his or her tweets, which will then show up on your home “tweet” feed.
- The more followers you gain, the further your reach on the social media network. (The Facebook equivalent to “friends” or “likes.”)
- The greater your number of followers, the greater your ability to reach new people (for businesses this might mean an increase in the number of new customers) and to create relationships with those who “follow” you.
- Great way to connect with people who are in your field of interest.

Did you know that 85% of Twitter users feel more connected to a small or medium sized business after they begin following them?

Here are some tips for increasing the number of followers on your Twitter network:

Social media is based on the same social rules we use in daily life to build relationships. So act as you would with friends in a respectful, personable and kind way to encourage friendship and trust. For example, in your settings you can select to send personalized thank you's when people follow you. Or when you do see that someone has liked or commented on a tweet, engage with them, start a conversation or return the favor and re-tweet their content. When someone re-tweets your tweet, it's great to say thank you and to follow.

Start thinking about what niche or network you will fit into (bloggers versus sustainability or green groups, etc.) as you build your Twitter account. It is best to choose a high quality picture of your logo or yourself that serves as an easy way to identify you or your organization. It should match your website (this helps with branding). Upload both a profile badge and a cover photo that fit this image or brand. Your profile picture and description is the first place people get the impression of whether they want to follow you or not. Practice using your marketing messaging and branding images (from your marketing plan).

To begin building your network, think about what websites you go to frequently, articles you read, mentors or leaders in the field, etc. and follow similar pages. You may also want to do keyword searches on the head organizations in your field. See who comes up, visit their pages, and connect to their social media sites directly from there.

Build your network around people with the same vibration, like-minded users on Twitter, that are sharing content similar to what you would be sharing, or who would be interested in what you are sharing. Follow their pages; it is likely they will return the energy by following you back. They are also more likely to re-tweet your content with their network. If they have large networks, they present opportunities to reach out to potential new followers whenever you participate on their twitter post threads.

Specifically, you can tag these users by using the @ symbol in front of their username in a tweet (for example: xx @ExpandUrImpact) and they will see your tweet on their account when they sign in. You can also hold chats to share expertise with your community, these are indicated and joined by people in hashtag (#) conversations so be sure to do something fun, funny, and creative! #yay! The hashtag indicates a topic or conversation (search-engine friendly!). These can be product related as well.

In addition, automatic recommendations provided by Twitter are based on the current following and connections you have in your field, grouped by shared interests. So you can start showing up by association with other big names in your field. You can also creatively change your about description on your profile to include hashtags that connect you with those names or topics.

Share valuable content when you tweet. Be consistent and persistent in this and over time you will grow in value to followers and appear more often across Twitter. People post and engage in real-time, so it takes some involvement to be a part of the “conversation.” The more unique your content, the more valuable you will be to your followers.

## Instagram

Instagram is another great image and video social media sharing site, that is gaining popularity. It's a form of mobile photography, attracting a young and creative base of users. As with any form of art, those who are most successful over the long run are those who find ways to inspire others, and capture something beautiful.

Here are some ways to use Instagram more effectively, and to improve your content marketing plan overall:

The more you stay true to the natural vibration and quality that represents your creativity; the more your photos will stand out to others on Instagram. It is best on Instagram that you “brand” your photos, creating a look and feel that is easy to identify and recognize as your art. Release photos that represent your unique vibration, keeping to a certain font, imagery effect and feel (Instagram effects), and selection of hashtags for posts (see Instagram’s hashtagging tips).

With Instagram, photos on your profile appear as a grid. If they have a unifying theme, it is easier for people to see a clear message and understand the feeling you are trying to give them. If you are using this to express something deeply inspiring, it will help others receive your message by having such clarity.

Try out different angles, effects, enhancements, and more to make sure your images stand out. Follow the lighting and keep your images bright and uplifting as a service to others. See things in new and exciting ways. Expand your vision and yourself in the process. New features for editing from Instagram: filter strength, adjust, brightness, contrast, warmth, saturation, highlights, shadows, vignette, sharpen.

Up-close photos that capture amazing detail are always received well. These up-close images are becoming more and more possible with high-resolution smart phones. (You can always take a photo of a subject from far away, and crop it later to keep the quality and definition high rather than zooming from long distance).

When taking your photos, take the time to get in tune with the subject at hand. Be still and observe. Capture the moment of your photo more deeply, with greater awareness, by becoming still before you take the picture, and try not to rush from one place to another too soon.

Connect with the item that you are focusing on and feel its essence. You can even experiment with sending love to the subject matter you are photographing, and watch it come alive in your pictures. Think of how you can tell a story with your photos. We are all naturally moved by and remember for years to come a story that touched our hearts. (And a picture is worth a thousand words!)

You can always take more than one photo, but don't give up until you feel you've given your best at capturing the scene and found the quality that maximizes imagery and upliftment. The same goes with editing, and taking the time to channel your inspiration into your art through the right version of an image.

Use your social networking to connect viewers of your profile to your website or another social media site for which you want to drive traffic. Once you do connect to other networks, whenever

you post a new photo, remember it will go out on those sites unless you change the settings on a photo you share. Be careful to respect other profiles and not to spam if you are in the middle of uploading a large quantity of photos.

Observe what other Instagrammers are posting that you feel uplifted by and are inspired to share. How can you improve the technique you are already using to connect more deeply with your audience? Follow and observe those that stand out to you in your field and continue to study and improve how you use Instagram to be successful.

## Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

To prepare for improving your search engine optimization<sup>15</sup>, review your content according to your target audience's needs. Everything you share, whether on your website, photo, video, or social media, can increase your ranking in the search engine if you know how to reach the right people. This takes time and research to determine what your audience searches for, what else comes up in a similar keyword search, and the best content to create that fits your brand and its niche. (We will work on this in the section's practice exercise.)

Some of the first things you will want to do to improve SEO is on your website itself:

The most important part of a website for SEO is the titles for pages and posts. These are the first thing picked up by search engines because they usually describe most accurately what someone will find if they click to go to that section of the website. Note that the character limit of the title that appears in a search engine result is about 50-64 characters. Next comes the first paragraph (those first few sentences should be created with keyword phrases), and then subtitles (things in bold or italics).

The first paragraph sometimes becomes a meta-description—what you see in your Google results as the few sentences of description that follow the page title (a blue hyperlink). The character limit of a meta-description is max 160 characters before it is cut off. Choose the strongest sentences from the webpage or blog post, and if possible, use the keywords again there.

Most websites have a plugin you can download (like *YoastSEO*) that allow you to manually type in a title, keywords, and meta-description for SEO on a topic area of your choice. You can see how well optimized with a color indicator at the top of the page (red needs work, green means you have a strong SEO presence with the keywords you chose and the cohesiveness of the others).

The permalinks, or existing URLs: can also be changed to reflect keywords in the form of a slug, for example: <http://expandyourimpact.org/fundraising-proposal-writing-tips-and-template/>. In this case, “fundraising-proposal-writing-tips-and-template” is the slug that belongs to the full permalink.

WordPress is a wonderful platform for do-it-yourself SEO'ers who want to change the “slug” manually on a page or post. It is just below the title is listed, and when you click you can edit and update the words to have dashes between keywords like “fundraising” “tips” and “template” in the hopes that someone who types in all three as a keyword phrase, will find your article first).

When you start working with SEO on a webpage, it is really helpful to first create a list of keywords that you will target. Create a document that you can copy and paste from with this keyword list by topic area so you don't have to recreate a list every time. It will save time and energy, and keep your strongest keywords ready for use on the site! Pick five keyword phrases total that you feel will succeed with your audience. Throughout the webpage or blog you are optimizing, place the relevant keywords into the appropriate places (especially the page titles and first paragraph), and then use

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<sup>15</sup> Search engine optimization (SEO) simply put means that you “optimize” how high you appear on a search engine—like Google or Bing—in their ranking (the order of websites that show up) when someone types in keywords or phrases into the search bar.

them as potential hashtags<sup>16</sup> for social media sharing, in the content of an online ad, in the name of an image file title, and alt-text of images. The image file title is the .jpg or .png file name on your computer, *before you upload* to the website. Once it's on the website, you can't change the file name. But you can update the "alt-text" which is very helpful! It's what generates automatically when someone shares your blog photo to Pinterest, so if you even work on Pin-optimization in the alt-text space that will really help your complete content marketing strategy.

Over time, you may notice that some people come to websites via Google Image searches, in which they see a photo they like on a topic they want to learn about, and they click and go directly to your site. Every time this happens, it increases your ranking.

When writing on the web, be sure to link properly to other related articles, pages, or topics within your site—*internal linking*. For example, at the bottom of a page have a “further reading” or “next steps” or “related posts” section. Then link to the correct URL on your site. This is a sign to the search engine that you are providing higher quality information, and so they rank you higher.

Linking to other articles or websites that can provide further information, act as a helpful resource, or provide a tool that you recommend will also benefit you. This shows search engines that you are genuinely trying to help people, and they reinforce websites who build connections with others in the field to get visitors the best information available. Just be aware that you want to be balanced with how many places you potentially could send people off of your site.

To stay on the good side of the search engines, don't copy and paste text from other sites, even if they are affiliated. This is the search engines' way of preventing plagiarized information from being used, and helps with copyright. If you are reusing content between sites that you own, try to rearrange them enough that it won't affect SEO, or let go and just share, knowing it might not rank as high.

The best tool to see how you are doing over time with improving SEO is Google Analytics. It shows you variables like number of page views, new site visits, and length of time on the page help to see how you are doing to get found, and how well you do once people reach your site. You can also see what search engine phrases are doing best, which ones to keep using or to change, and you may even see new phrases or words that bring visitors to the site.

After making changes to your site it could take time (weeks even) for anything to be reflected within the search engine ranking. This is because search engines rank based on information collected and updated by something called a “site crawler.” Site crawlers go through all the words and phrases within a website, and changes the rankings based on the information it “crawls” or gathers. It takes time for updated information or the SEO work you do to get processed by these crawlers. We recommend the plugin “Generate a XML Sitemap”.

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<sup>16</sup> The hashtags are the symbol # followed by a keyword or keyword phrase. For example #marketing #content #nonprofit are hashtags with keywords. Whereas keyword phrase hashtag is something like #contentmarketing #expandyourimpact

## PRACTICE EXERCISE:

Type into the search engine topic areas or questions your target audience might ask, this time focusing on the same phrases but worded differently than you might expect.

To identify what keywords to plug into the search engine, think about how your audience might refer to different topics—try typing a few variations into a keyword search tool (like Google AdWords if you have an account) and look at what results come up. It's a great way to get started *thinking outside your normal box*.

Begin to get a feel for not only what the audience is asking, but how. Jot down a few notes as you practice this:

- What keyword phrases are being used? Which keywords match the ones you use?
- How well have you related to how others describe what you have to offer?
- Do you see how different words and phrases affect the type of websites that come up in the search? If you open some of these pages, you will see that each has its own vibration. Be sure the phrases you want to use in your language are the phrases that have similar vibration websites in search results to capture the right audience. It is better for everyone when *searchers* and *searchees* are rightly matched.

## Writing Blogs Strategically

With blog writing, it is very important to remember to offer something to others that will be educational, useful, or inspiring. See blogging as an opportunity for service. This kind of content would be supported and expanded upon by sharing it via social media, and using SEO keywords or phrases in the content itself to improve its success.

Today, any organization of any size or budget can easily find and set up blogging platforms like WordPress.com or WordPress.org or Google's Blogger. And these blogs can then be incorporated into your website rather easily. They help improve search engine optimization and can open the door to new approaches for serving people. Use the blog to express topics that are things you care about and want to share with others.

Blogging is also an invaluable way to share who you are and what your story is, with an open platform for expression. The length of time you have to share in this way, especially with writing, is likely more able to reach hearts than simple social media posts or answers to common questions in Google. Think of inspirational and meaningful stories, articles, or sources to share, like you would a dear friend. Make an effort to build trust by writing deep and meaningful articles, and continue to deepen relationships with your audience.

To begin building a magnetic blog, choose a captivating question to answer or topic to uncover. Write to your audience, as if someone was sitting directly across from you and you were speaking to them personally. Focus your efforts on increasing the number of new “followers” or subscribers that support you, read your posts, and are interested in your cause. They are then more likely and motivated to share your blog with others. The 1,000 true fans rule (by Kevin Kelly) is a wonderful theory that illustrates why 1,000 fans for any sized organization can make it a success.

Do your research beforehand so that you can be the expert on your latest post or topic. It is important to gain credibility to be trusted. Aim to become the respected source (go-to blog) for well-researched content. Use sourcing or cite articles<sup>17</sup> that you gathered research from as appropriate. It is important too, that if this is your first time blogging, that you go out there and look up bloggers on your topic, big name bloggers, etc. to really see what you like and think will work great on your blog too. Then after you've done your best to get grounded in the topic, begin to write from inspiration and with great interest in what you have to share.

If you need ideas for getting inspired for new blog topics you may enjoy looking at sites like Quora, Google Scholar, Google Reader, Digg, RedIt, etc. and type a keyword phrase or topic into the search that serves as the question you want to answer in the blog. You can also get new ideas by reading new books, or scanning the news or social media posts for something you'd like to go into deeper.

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<sup>17</sup> If you need to brush up on sourcing the APA has a wonderful sourcing guide. RefWorks is also a wonderful citation service that provides you with a downloadable toolbar plugin for tracking and siting articles as you conduct research online. It can be also added to your Microsoft Word programs so bibliography and citations can be transferred directly into your document. Zotero is an additional citation service that is offered at no cost to the public.

Along with high quality content use high quality media when using photos. Your blog posts are more likely to be read and will more easily be shared on the web if you are thoughtful about the photo you use, especially if you create one specific to the blog itself. For example, when the blog's link is shared on social media, some sites will automatically generate the featured image or the first image that appears in the blog (like on Facebook).

If the image you create has words that reinforce a quote or important message from the blog, or even summarizes the “5 tips” from the blog, it is going to be shared much more frequently. This is largely due to the large portion of people who use their mobile phone to scan social media for content, find these easier to enjoy than a simple version of the post with only a text and link. This “thumbnail” can be chosen to express the main idea or theme of your article. (If you are short on images or programs to help you create images with text, we will go into detail about images in a following section.)

Become more strategic and effective with what you write about. Post at a time when your demographic is likely to be online with time to read your post. For example, some audiences will never ready your blog if it is posted on the weekend. Typically Monday and Tuesday mornings are good if the blog goes to email, while weekends are good for sharing the link itself (though as you read this all varies by social media site).

Try to maintain a writing schedule that allows for writing when inspired, not just for a certain number per week. Quality is more important than quantity. Your audience knows when your writing comes from the heart and is sincere. There is a direct relationship with blogger's growing success over time and those who post meaningful content. Time will distinguish those blogs that came from the heart. Simply continue to do your best and remain patient, but keep sharing those blogs across the various content marketing platforms.

And finally, we will mention again the importance of using available tools to track your progress. Most blog sites, especially WordPress.com for beginners, will track your pages views, demographic info, and search engine terms typed into the web that led them to your page. It is helpful to track these and see what is successful, what posts people liked the most (and think about why that is), and who your audience is based on those indicators. You can also get your website tracked by Google Analytics, highly recommended to see where your blog was shared the most across social media, or if when you shared it in your email it was clicked on for “more reading”.

Blogs are very useful tools for transforming your website and really offering something of deep substance to your audience. They are worth the several hours a week they take to write, but only if it is done with the thought of what you can give.

## User-Friendly Websites

Correctly marketing your website is important now more than ever! For your website is the holder of your content. It is a key place for people to land after they've seen a video, social media post, or blog. We've introduced the importance of making sure these mediums link back to the source by linking to a website address. Thus, the next step is to be ready for your audience by assuring that your homepage or landing page is *user-friendly*! And one of the most important, yet often overlooked aspect of web marketing is *website usability*. Website usability means that your site is navigable, user-friendly, and its capabilities and features are straightforward.

Your website is a reflection of your organization. If you can make a big impact with your website and build a happy group of visitors, you will be able to accomplish much more even with limited resources.

Here are some simple changes that will make your website more user-friendly so that can have greater success on the Internet, so that all the efforts you've made thus far don't end when someone lands on your site:

Studies show that within the first two seconds, the visitor decides whether they will leave your page, or stay and engage. That two-second time frame is all they need to gather the look and feeling of your site. Two things, therefore, are very important in making a good first impression:

1. Have a high quality visual presentation, and
2. Clearly convey who you are, and what your purpose is.

These can be improved further with a simple design will allow readers to immediately see what information you are sharing. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Make the layout one column, and your readers will be guided in a more predictable way. Furthermore, the page will more easily flow to places of importance.
- Provide a clear next step for your visitors (call-to-action). Have a link guiding them to the next place to go, or next content to see. And be sure it is visible. These should be the pathways we mentioned in *Part 1*. By having clear directions you will find you are more successful and users trust your services as they navigate with ease and purpose.
- Less is more. Don't duplicate the same information in different places. Make sure that your content is straightforward, keep instructions uncomplicated, and don't waste space. Users don't want to spend a lot of time searching for things, they just want to be easily directed to the information they need.
- Keep the content language clear by using keyword phrases that your audience will understand and be encouraged to read more, or visit more pages.
- To keep content straightforward and relative to your theme, focus on using words or phrases in your content that match your website's purpose and intent. This will also help with search engine optimization.

Make the webpages clear and understandable as to what's what. The most important place one can do this is first within the menu-navigation bar:

- Distinguish topics
- Keep options visible and drop-downs minimal.
- You may want to use something called an Ubermenu.
- Have distinct styles between links or menu items that are clickable (where they can go on the site) versus selected (where they are on the site)

Your home page should also capture the user's attention within those first few seconds. So the layout should let the user know right away what the organization is about, its purpose, and why you are special or unique from others in your field.

- Make the homepage information and picture small enough so that all of the most important sentences that identify your purpose can be seen without the user having to scroll down--they can see it right away.
- Make the most of your homepage header space, logo, images, and columns (e.g. widgets).
- Have clear actions that the user can do to get to their next page of interest. Make the links clear and easy for a person to get back to the home page if necessary. To be navigable, keep important information highlighted and easy to find. Put in the effort required to make the site headers and menus simple and yet visually appealing. Users should be able to easily find answers to their questions relating to why they came to your webpage in the first place.
- Have clear visual hierarchies that organize the web pages. This is similar to how newspapers are set up by categories and hierarchy, using headlines and captions to help readers visually scan and find the sections they want to go. This improves satisfaction and audience trust. On the web, being set up for reader scanning improves the likelihood that they will return to your site and support you in the future.
- Improve the use of headers to help the user navigate. Headers also help with search engine optimization because their words/phrases are picked up in search engines and increase their ranking.

Within landing pages or top ten pages, you will want to also focus on improving the following:

- Have a rhythm for each page's organization and layout. This includes the use of headers, titles, subtitles, information, and call to action (next steps, further reading, etc.). Keep a consistent organization as people travel from page to page.
- Define the theme of the particular page, with two to three main points per page that belong to the overarching theme of the website itself. These points will be part of the thread throughout the website that tie it all together (contributing to a powerful marketing framework and brand).
- Don't include too much information. Most visitors on the web are not searching for long passages; nor do they have time to read them when they are looking for quick answers to their questions. You can shorten lengthy paragraphs into bullet points and easy-to-read sections wherever possible and make it scannable. Think about the layout of a newspaper: it affords the reader a conveniently quick, point-by-point glance.

Establish yourself as a qualified resource in your field of service by illustrating the qualities that make you reliable and trustworthy:

- If people are visiting your site in order to learn more information—be it about a topic, product, or service—be sure to show them what's useful to them or relevant to their needs. They are there to learn; you must guide them in the process.
- Sincerity. Be frank about what you have to give, and for who (the audience) it is helpful. For example, label menu tabs for certain target audiences, e.g. "For Educators" or "For Parents" to help them get to pages for which they are most likely interested.
- Use testimonials to show positive things that have been said about what you offer, or what you have accomplished.

Also be sure to make your website interactive and fun to use. Trends suggest sites that keep visitors interacting with quizzes, polls, apps, forums, or clickable features are more likely to succeed. Be creative and have fun with new ideas for keeping visitors engaged. Ask yourself: What can I offer them that they might share with others? Is it a gift, an eBook, an inspirational piece, or anything else to show your visitors that you want to help them? Decide what you can share that is practical, helpful, and interesting.

This will help build trust: a key ingredient in any lasting relationship, and give them incentive to return in the future, share it with friends, and stay connected with your organization (via social media or newsletter etc.).

Imagery and video are also interactive. As the saying goes, “a picture says a thousand words.” Don’t just talk to your visitors, help them to experience what you mean and what you are offering that is unique. For example, infographics are useful for giving information in a creative, dynamic way. They display information along with a supportive graphic, allowing the viewer to assimilate what you are conveying clearly and quickly, and more memorably according to research.

User testing is the best way to measure the effectiveness of your usability improvements. It is very important to test your website usability early and often. People forget that this process needs to be done from the very beginning in order to save time and energy down the road. And from then on, test usability again every few months. Sit with a potential website user or visitor to perform the testing. Have them report their experience page-by-page (or action-by-action). Ask thought-provoking questions, have them perform key actions, and record helpful information for making future site improvements. Some examples of questions include:

- What do you make of our header?
- If you had to guess, what do you think these menu tabs go to?
- What is the first thing you think of when you see this page?
- Where would you go to find \_\_\_\_\_?
- What stands out, or captures your attention first?
- Where do you think clicking \_\_\_\_\_ will take you?
- If you land on this page, what would you do next?

Use Google Analytics as a complementary analysis tool to see how your audience users your site, and observe which pages are doing better than others (user's jump rates). Over time, you will be able to watch as the benefits from website usability continue to take form. And after all is said and done, remember to have fun! If you are having fun creating it, visitors will have fun engaging in it.

## Videos: How to Create Them and Why

### **VLOG: Video blogging**

If you are a believer in the age-old saying, *a picture is worth a thousand words*, then you will definitely want to learn more about the ever-increasing online marketing tool of VLOGing or video blogging. Video blogs have the capability to build connections with your audience unlike any other online network. Thus, it is of increasing importance to learn to incorporate video blogging into your marketing strategy.

Below are some statistics about the growing capabilities of VLOGs and why your organization should start video blogging now:

- 161 million viewers watched an average of 157 videos each;
- 82% of the total U.S. Internet audience view videos online;
- 10 hours of video were watched by the average online viewer;
- there are billions of views every month on YouTube;
- and the #2 search engine is YouTube (Google is #1).

To design a VLOG strategically you need great content, a good sense of humor, interesting commentary, and a professional presentation.

To have great video content you will need to be passionate and cover topics you care about, but also get to the point right away—you have only 10 seconds to capture the viewer’s attention. Always keep your audience in mind when determining video length. Two and a half ( $2 \frac{1}{2}$ ) minutes is a good amount for delivering a story while still providing the viewer with a memorable experience.

How do you know the right topic for a video blog or web presentation?

- Start by choosing a small, specific topic for your theme that your audience wants to learn more about. Then elaborate on three to four main points that belong to this theme.
- By sticking to a few concise points, your audience will remember more of what you taught them, and be more likely to share what they learned from you with others.
- Tell stories or make it more personal, use a subject that is timely, or talk about something that your audience is passionate about too, so that as time goes on you will attract more subscribers.
- Choose a great title that evokes your theme and captures the attention of your audience. This will also help people find you through “organic” search (rather than paid ads) on search engines like Google.

To ensure that you have a professional presentation in your video content set a design for your video blogging room that reflects content and how you want to express your story. Keep the set high-energy and magnetic by keeping it clean, using quality furniture or props, etc. and use great audio. To create this space, choose a quiet room with no external noises, and remember to capture great lighting. Make sure the source of light is *behind* the subject of the video shot.

Learn through trial and error as you create video. Post them online, observe the results, practice filming again, write better scripts, improve, and observe again. Try to aim to purchase professional equipment as you gain experience<sup>18</sup>, as equipment is becoming more affordable and accessible. But to start with, you can make a lot of improvements in quality simply by following those tips.

Here are some helpful tips for public speaking, to help those new to being on film:

- Be confident and eloquent (try not to say “um”).
- Practice brevity and speaking clearly and to the point, but remember to speak slowly and rhythmically, even melodically to enunciate your content.
- Study other videos and pretend you are watching as your own target audience to learn how to approach your presentations.
- Be your own audience by practicing in front of the camera. Record yourself and then watch your body language. Look for how you can be centered, magnetic, and engaging with high-energy, without losing your calmness and focus.
- Shots close to the face are more intimate, tight movements for authority, and emphasize points with facial expressions and energy.

Don't be afraid to start posting before you have all the strategies down perfect. Know that it will take practice and some experimentation, and do your best!

Because one of the main purposes of video blogging is to improve your online reach, it is also important that after all you have done to prepare, we make sure that your video appears in Internet searches (SEO):

- Add videos to your own website or any affiliated blog sites<sup>19</sup>.
- Be sure to promote the publication of your video at the *right* moment and the *right* social space.
- Learn the best times to post on the various social media sites according to your audience. (You can also learn this by trying different times of day on your own and seeing when the most shares and views occur.)
- Choose the right title and description when you post a video, based on audience keyword research.
- Find out where your audience goes to watch video and post it there—remember the number of viewers on YouTube.
- Transcribe the content of the video and place it as text directly below, now you have a blog and video to share!

As long as you share what you care about, you will succeed at gaining support through video blogging.

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<sup>18</sup> Shop around for the best pricing. And also consider getting a separate microphone and tripod to ensure great sound quality (very important) and stabilized video making (also very important!).

<sup>19</sup> Recommended WordPress Plugins for video include Smart YouTube to easily insert YouTube videos into your posts and Vipers Video Quicktags for spreading to multiple social media networks

## Hosting a webinar (live video)

Webinars are a great way to share with others the information and knowledge that you have gained in your area of service. It is a wonderful way to expand the capabilities and skills that we can all do in our service, by sharing even the simplest tips that can create the biggest impact.

Here are some webinar host or online class streaming programs:

- *Free*: Google Hangout's Live On Air Streaming (nice because it downloads directly to users).
- *Free*: Google Hangout *non-live* (nice because it doesn't broadcast live to people all over, good for even conference calls or meetings that you want to keep private).
- Adobe Connect (can keep records of files and is professional and easy to control who attends).

Here are some simple tips on webinars to remember leading up to the presentation:

The content of the webinar and the way you lead it will affect the impact or quality. Remember that less is more, as people are generally overwhelmed with information. Take people step-by-step and see it as your goal to help them remember just two to three points they can learn and take with them. Help them by telling meaningful stories, giving concrete examples of your main points, that they will remember long after the talk is done. Incorporate jokes and humor to keep these points light and engaging, helping your listeners to be more receptive to what you have to say.

Think of your audience as you are writing the points. Be aware of the kind of language you may use that would be confusing to a beginner. Think of the topics they would need to know most, given the level of experience and availability of time/resources. (You can even send out a survey either via email or SurveyMonkey ahead of time to ask them simply what topic ideas they would want to learn more about.)

In the presentation, use images or even cartoons (humor) to support these point. You may want to experiment with using print screens as examples of what you are talking about right on the computer screen. You can also create graphics that illustrate a point or a metaphor for the information; sometimes visuals make it simpler to comprehend an idea. Just be sure to keep each slide fairly simple with just a few bullet points. Submit your slides and perhaps any handouts to be edited and reviewed early on for error.

The handouts should capture the summary of your presentation for helpful referral later on, and include some suggested reading and practical next steps.

Don't forget to practice a run through of the presentation to see how it does with the time you have been allotted. Rehearse the way you will speak to each point so you can be clear and not stumble over words.

Before the webinar beings, send an email reminder *once the day before*, and once *one hour* before the actual day/time. Some people do more than this, including a follow-up email that includes a link to the recording. Just be aware of what might become *too much*.

Before starting, visualize and feel the audience and tune into *their* needs and what they need to hear that will be most helpful.

Prior to the beginning of the webinar, login to the chat room and set up everything you will need to supplement the PowerPoint, like any videos to play, MP3s, etc. ahead of time. Close all unnecessary applications on your computer to avoid popups or interruptions. Create a positive environment and vibrationally set-up the atmosphere for those attending.

Once you begin, in your introduction be sure to state *ahead of time* how you will do the question and answer (throughout or saving questions until the end). And get started about two minutes into the hour, just to allow for a few late arrivals.

Once the talk is complete be sure to upload the video file and publish to YouTube or other video-sharing site. See the YouTube section for tips on how to be most effective with branding, messaging, and landing pages.

If you have an email list of those who joined you, send out the recording and slides within 24 hours. Fast follow-ups help others take the next steps. You may also want to ask ahead of time for the participants' email addresses so you can share the talk with them later and *stay connected*.

Share the presentation in a few simple photos and updates on your social media to encourage people to come next time (include next talk's day and time so they can mark their calendar and a link to sign up).

Your video has the potential to be engaging and powerful, shared again and again. And with the right topic and promotions ahead of time, your webinars have the potential to be creative and magnetic, drawing many to attend again and again.

## Creating Imagery, Photography, and Copyright

Previously, we spoke about imagery in relation to marketing framework and branding. And in the web usability section we talked about the importance of imagery in making sites interactive and creative.

Here we will focus on how to create imagery based on content marketing strategy for success. Ask yourself the following questions before you begin gathering images for your content:

- Who is your target audience? Think about the kind of photo they will respond to by stepping into their shoes. Think of their interests, their likes, and the kind of images that would inspire them and speak to their hearts.
- What story or message are you sending that you want the photo to support? Each photo has an energetic feeling to it that should correspond with the quote or event or blog post it will be used with.
- Do you have the right setting for the photo? Check for appropriate lighting and a quiet background. If a person can't see clearly because of shadows or too many things going on behind the main focus of the photo, it will not be magnetic when you share it online.
- Is it high quality and professional? Will it represent your organization or business well and maintain your credibility?
- How can you size the photo correctly? This is important especially depending on which social media site you post to. Don't let your image get cut off or your quote overlooked.
- Did you credit the appropriate person for the original photo? Or if it is created by your own marketing team, did you include your organization or business website URL address so people can find you if they see your picture across the Internet?

The websites we recommend for finding free stock photos are generally sites that provide inspirational and uplifting stock photos on a weekly or monthly basis, or websites that offer free high-quality photos for public use:

- For Joy We Live Photography: Dedicated to sharing all the social media-friendly photos we've contributed for nonprofit marketing, including nature photography and inspirational stock photos.
- Unsplash.com: Stock photo service that sends new photos monthly straight to your email for download. I prefer the high-resolution quality of these, and they tend to be of nature or subject that relate to the mission of the nonprofits and small businesses we work with.
- List of over 70 free stock photo sites at <https://designschool.canva.com/blog/free-stock-photos/>. For if you want to pick and choose some of your own free stock photo sites.

Other free stock photo sites that are part of a “commons” or public domain for use (not restricted by copyright laws) include:

- Flickr Commons
- IM Creator, nature photos especially
- Morgue File
- SXC

- Creative Commons
- EveryStockPhoto
- Dreamstime
- Freerange
- FreeImages.com
- Free Digital Photos
- Pixabay
- PlaceKitten (yes! kitten photos...)

Other .gov sites, unless they do credit a specific photographer, in which case you should too somewhere in the photo caption area. However, you should read each government sites disclaimers and usage policies:

- NASA.gov, great for space photos!
- Wikimedia Commons

If you want to search for a very specific kind of photo or image, go ahead and type it into the Google Image search, and then just be sure to look for sites that have .wikimedia.common or .gov or .flickr.common in their URL address.

If you really want something specific, try shooting a high-quality photo of your own. Camera phones these days can do great quality images (megapixels) that can provide some wonderful shots.

*Note: If you choose to purchase stock photos, you will pay for the license or right to use an image under certain circumstances (according to their website terms). This is always a worry-free option if you have the funds. But don't forget the commons sites that are listed above.*

In addition, here are a few free photo-editing sites that we use and recommend for simple photo editing to create content that has a photo overlaid with text (like a quote, title, or summary of the article they are displayed on):

- Adobe Photoshop
- Google Drawing (free)
- Ifranview (free)
- Paint (Microsoft) (free and old-school!)
- Photo editing apps for your smartphone, with easy follow-up posting on social media aps

A picture is worth a thousand words. And the use of imagery in content marketing is a powerful tool for success.

## Newsletters

Online newsletters are a wonderful way to create a relationship with your audience. Learning to write online newsletters is an important skill. It allows you to quickly send new information or recently written articles, advertise important upcoming events, or appeal to donor support. It is often also called *email marketing*.

It is important in content marketing, because it is often the vehicle you will use to share content, especially video, image, or blogs with your audience. And it can be linked to post on social media whenever you send to your list. It is also the most personable, and necessary for success long term. For an email list is like the permission to walk into a friend's house when they aren't home, and leave them a welcoming note for when they return.

To improve your newsletter strategy, first, consider your audience (based on our previous exercises) and choose the right content for them.

Within each newsletter, try to limit how many topics you cover. It is better to do a weekly short email with one topic, then a monthly email with way too much information overload. No one will read it, look forward to reading it, and thus it won't be shared. So first improve the effectiveness and ease with which the reader will be able to relate to the information you share.

This will also help appeal to a variety of possible viewers who may subscribe to your newsletter. They will have the chance to see a few different topics and choose to read which one pertains to them, answering their questions, etc.

It is important to choose content from one of the known successful types including condensed or summarized articles with easy-to-read tips and follow-up link to the full article; personal stories from individuals in the organization that introduce upcoming events or exciting news; and videos that answer a commonly asked question or concern; or other short, inspiring, and interesting messages to share.

Overall, most readers are interested in a newsletter that is worth reading, that tells a story, and that inspires or entertains. When you establish a connection by speaking to the hearts of your audience, it will motivate them to take the next step or perform the call-to-action in the newsletter. Whatever action you have in mind, whether visiting your website, reading a new article, or participating in a fundraiser; they should all be introduced in a creative way.

When you begin to insert your content remember to format clearly. The best practice for newsletter formatting is a single column, mobile-friendly design, with a clear distinction between topics as one scrolls down the letter. In fact, it should facilitate scanning— meaning that it doesn't take much time or require lots of attention to understand the main concepts. Use headings and subheadings to organize the themes and concepts of the newsletter in a memorable way, so after someone reads the letter they could tell a friend what they learned.

Whenever you get ready to send a newsletter take the time to think deeply about the subject line. Engaging subject lines are incredibly important. They are the first thing people see when they get your newsletter in their inbox. It has the potential to capture the attention right away, so that people

open the newsletter rather than delete it. Think carefully about what you can mention in the headline that will attract attention. Carefully selected, exciting content from the newsletter is a good strategy as long as it remains within the 50-60 character limit of the subject line on most email inbox's. Do not use this limited space for titles that include the name of your organization or "Summer News", rather, use it to describe the main benefit or exciting content within the newsletter that people will want to open it for, right away. Let's re-emphasize: the subject line is the most important part of your newsletter!

Get together with your team and think about how often you want to share your newsletter, set the goals, and set the vision of the number of subscribers you want to have and then brainstorm ideas about who you want to reach and what you have to give and share with them. Letters should be sent on a schedule that is not intimidating, regular, and only send extra emails if there is breaking news—which you would want to indicate in the headline.

In the heading of your newsletter, insert your logo as a header (with alt-text in case people don't "download pictures" from a newsletter). Make sure that in the settings, you insert a link from the image to your website.

At the footer of your newsletter, include your social media networks. In addition, most newsletter programs like MailChimp (free<sup>20</sup>) have a feature you can plug in for others to share the email via their own social media networks. Use the newsletter program's ability to set up what photo and preview text will be shared on social media if clicked. Look in the "help" section of your newsletter server, they should be able to walk you through the steps.

Be professional when sending your newsletters. Users have emotional reactions to newsletters as they are more personal than visiting a website where people go for just information. They read your newsletters because they care about your organization and what it represents to them. This makes it important that the newsletter functions properly and has no broken links or code, and that articles have been thoroughly researched and are credible.

These practices will build trust with the user and they will more likely go to you for information on that topic or suggest your organization to friends.

To help you, here are three phases to split up editing your work, to be sure you don't overlook any mistakes:

1. Content and creativity.
2. For grammar, formatting, and correct hyperlinks.
3. Any last minute edits on the "final version," especially links.

Be sure to in phase 2, have someone with fresh eyes read for easy-to-miss typos.

After you send a newsletter, post it to a section on your website that could be dedicated to newsletter archives, especially if you are including relevant and helpful information or fun tips that

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<sup>20</sup> Up to 2,000 on your list, free! And we also recommend it for its easy-to-use features that most non-techy people can use intuitively, and wonderful techy features as well.

anyone in the future could benefit from as well. Potentially, anyone typing into the search engine for quick tips on your topic could land on a newsletter that includes this content.

Be sure that you also make signing up for your newsletter visible on your website. Make this a call-to-action you lead people to from the home page (you can use the newsletter program's code creator or if you have WordPress, their MailChimp widget). It will help to even provide an incentive for new subscribers. Offer a free mini eBook or PDF handout with information that is useful to your audience. You may also offer a free week of classes or a free introductory course. Give something to them, and they will be more likely to feel to give back by supporting you in this way.

And this will help to make newsletters an integrated and important part of your content marketing strategy for success.

## How to Improve a Content Marketing Plan

Improve your marketing plan so that you can be the most effective even with limited resources. Marketing plan evaluations are essential because they provide you with *unbiased* results about what you are doing in your marketing messages or content that is effective.

Evaluations require thinking about what variables you want to measure that show what has been effective. These variables are called *indicators* and they should be tracked over time to monitor your progress.

### PRACTICE EXERCISE:

As you go through these questions and evaluate where you stand, put a star next to the things you can start doing to improve your content marketing plan right away. Then go through and with your starred areas, prioritize the steps according to resources required versus greatest impact. The best ones to start with are those that will have great improvements and require the least amount of extra resources.

#### **Evaluate your SEO and Web Presence:** *Track the effectiveness of your website.*

Use Google Analytics on your website to track some of the most important variables on your website:

- Which links do people click first?
- Where do they go from there (tracking behavior)?
- How do they arrive? Top places they arrive from?
- What do they type into the search engine?
- What is your current rank in the search engine for your top keywords?
- What is your bounce rate, or time before someone leaves your website?
- What is the average viewing time per page?
- Who are the visitors coming to your site? New vs. returning?

#### **Social Media:** *Monitor the effectiveness of your online networks.*

- Facebook: Track your “Friends”, “Likes”, or “Shares”. All are important, but *counting “shares”* is most representative of your overall social media strategy success. Shares indicate both connections that are visiting and interacting with your page, but also that they like what they see!
- Pinterest: Be sure to sign up using a Business Account to get these benefits. See your most popular pins and do more like them!
- Google Plus: Watch your public views rise and see how your Google Plus profile or page ranks on a search on Google. How can you improve the use of keywords to rank higher as time goes on?
- YouTube: Have weekly updates of new views and most popular video and/or playlists.
- Twitter: How many people follow you? What types of groups are following you? New followers per month, per week, over time?

**Brand:** *Evaluate marketing framework effectiveness, whether in print or online*

- Ask people on scales of 1-5 how much they agree or like your message.
- Try testing your image with different phrases or slogans with a large sample size.
- Test the recognition of your campaign, ask what people remembered or if they remembered who you are? Ask where they saw your ad, were there differences in the methods in which you reached new people? See how your core values match up.

**Newsletter Reach:** *Improve how effectively you speak to your audience using newsletters.*

- Which links do new subscribers most commonly open?
- If possible, use A-B testing to determine the most popular email subject links.
- How many people ask to be “*unsubscribed*,” can you have the option of asking them “*why*”?
- What are the *demographics* of your subscribers? Who are the most active subscribers and why do you think they are?

## Conclusion

We hope through the completion of this work you are now inspired and confident that you have something to offer that is special, that you can create that kind of content that is uplifting and a joy for others to share, helping many people along the way.

The principles of success, sharing inspiration, and high-minded marketing together have the power to help you share good ideas in this world. Thank you for sharing the opportunity to expand and grow with us.

# Part 5: Appendix

## Sample Online Marketing Plan:

*Expand Your Impact: “Heart-Centered & Inspirational Marketing”*

### **Summary of Online Marketing Plan:**

To improve awareness among nonprofits the best strategies for online marketing by 1) Building Awareness of our nonprofit marketing blog and 2) Increasing readership and empowering individuals to learn how to market.

**Vision: Nonprofits around the country who want to serve good ideas are more successful, and the world can become a better place.**

**Target Audiences:** Innovators and motivated individuals who want to learn how to improve how they share with others online “good ideas.”

- Yoga & Meditation Centers (% total target audience)
- Wellness-Holistic Health Nonprofits (%)
- Social Advocacy Groups (%)
- Countries: Start with targeting US and India, then Europe

### **Measurable Goals:**

1. Increase website traffic –1,000 views per day
2. Increase eBook sales – 1,000 per year
3. Increase webinar views – 100 views each presentation
4. Increase social media presence (Facebook likes, Pinterest and Twitter followers, Google+ community presence) –10,000 likes/followers

**Objective 1) Share Expand Your Impact helpful tips online:** Build community of supporters who share our cause and feel connected to us based on the inspirational content (information) we provide.

### **Content Marketing Activities:**

- Blog articles
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) guiding the creation of content
- Marketing Tips Newsletter
- Infographics- Visual Graphics for online sharing
- Social Media Sites Networking (Facebook, Pinterest, Google+, YouTube, Twitter)
- Online Advertising
- Webinars and Presentations
- External linking with other like-minded sites

**Objective 2) Market-Based Research:** Using Formative Research to test marketing communications to find the best “framework” or ways to use language and make connections with the audiences.

Research our niche:

- Marketing Surveys: testing of messaging by target audience and content themes
- Identify search engine keyword phrases (SEO for content marketing)
- Sharing results with team members for promotions and outreach

**Objective 3) Evaluation:** Tracking how we are doing, what needs improving.

Weekly reports that track areas of online marketing:

- Social Media
- Website traffic, views, user behavior - Google Analytics and advertising results

### **Potential Timeline:**

Phase 1: Build brand awareness

Month 1-3:

- Develop the reservoir of content and disseminate online via social media networks and website
- Start online advertising to improve page visits and Facebook page likes

Phase 2: Encourage next steps for commitment to learn

Months 3-6:

- Develop newsletter and encourage next steps
- Create more free webinars and presentations that encourage next steps

*END*

## Sample Social Media Plan:

**Goals:** [Base these on the most pressing needs of your organization.]

1. **Create content that is inspiring** for [your audience] based on what people's most pressing needs are in life—how can we best serve these individuals, and meet them where they are at?
2. **Unifying our efforts** by sharing and posting what we are creating on behalf of [organization or business name] onto various social media sites. In addition, using *similar content with similar messages* that are going to create *magnetism* around *our communications*.

## Social Media Activities:

- Share quotes from available book resources you have available.
- Link to a specific landing page on your website.
- Create ongoing articles and content related to the needs of your target audience (think social media photo-quotes, related blog articles, events to promote, educational resources, fun articles related to your topic by others in your field).
- If possible, use your personal social media accounts to share these posts again and again, or share to friend's profiles, and other pages that it is appropriate to.
- Update cover and profile photos frequently, being sure to update the description to highlight something you are sharing of timely importance.
- Mimic newsletters as events or new social media posts with a photo of a flyer describing upcoming events, or a book cover for launches of books.
- Schedule social media posts ahead of time to go out once a week reminding people about the events and even do a countdown.
- Promote/create new events to offer for follow-up of anything you focus on promoting, always think next steps and long-term where you want to direct people.
- Create photo albums of these photo-quotes as a series, or by the books we have related to a course.
- Create photo albums (most social media sites) or boards (Pinterest-only) based on the topics that represent your brand's messaging and new topics of importance to share.

## Hashtags:

This is less important for Facebook, but you can use # (hashtags) to tell the search engine either within your social media site or for Google -- which works *great* with Pinterest's images and articles, as well as Google Plus (least of all Facebook and Twitter posts).

- For Pinterest - one **word** per hashtag symbol: #meditation #yoga #healing #retreat
- For Google Plus - one **phrase** = one hashtag: #spiritualretreat #howtomeditate #mediationquotes #happinessquotes
- MAX 2-3 phrases per social media post -- don't overuse hashtags, it's not necessary if you are specific and clear with them, they will do well.

Recommend to try # [your top keyword(s)] whenever it's appropriate, and then *always* include a link to the appropriate page you want a person to land if they click on your social media post. With albums this is something you can put in the description.

## “Our Brand” Team Handout

The marketing handout template is a great tool for getting everyone that contributes to your marketing plan on the same page—one page to be exact!

The marketing one-pager includes information to share with all members participating in your marketing or outreach, including the core values you will use, your main target audiences, your slogan and imagery, and marketing messages. It can also include links to your social media sites for easy networking and sharing amongst departments.

Having this unified frame throughout our marketing and outreach is key to success. It is the grounded and focused frame that will provide the strong core at the center of your promotions, so that we can go from this one core story into creative directions, but not lose the power that stems from that core. (The power to create positive reactions and inspire our audiences to support the goals of your cause.)

This document will and should change throughout the development of your organization’s business and marketing strategies. But keeping this document up-to-date with these new developments and distributed to those who are involved with your team will help maintain a stronger and more magnetic core of your message to the world.

### **What is the focus of this handout?**

- Creating a UNIFIED frame of your main message, that tells the story of your organization and what it is at the essence (including core values).
- This unified frame will meet the needs of what we want to communicate is at the heart of our organization and programs, and how we meet the needs of our target audiences.
- Goals for the year?
- Target audiences—the people who will help support you in efforts to accomplish your goals?
- Testimonials that can be used again and again.

To create your handout, study the example that follows:

This document is to be shared with those who become involved in your organization’s marketing. Having this one-pager is one of the many keys to success because not only does it put to paper your marketing intentions and help you to identify your goals, but it provides the focus and center for your marketing messaging.

It will and should change throughout the development of your organization’s business and marketing strategies. But keeping this document up-to-date with these new developments and distributed to those who are involved with your team will help maintain a stronger and more magnetic core of your message to the world. And from this core people can be encouraged to go into creative directions, without losing the power that stems from your core messaging.

## “Our Brand” Team Handout: Education for Life

### What are the core values of Education for Life (EFL)?

- Youth, Joy, Upliftment, Opportunity (for Success)

### Who will help us complete EFL outreach goals for 2012-13? And what do they care about?

#### *Families for a New Tomorrow*

- Looking for a solution to the problems of the current education system
- Feel their children are only being prepared to do well on tests and not in life
- Looking for a place for their child to develop creatively
- Appreciate individualized learning and teachers who help their child development according to that child's strengths

#### *Educators for Higher Consciousness*

- Want to teach curriculum beyond the current public school or charter school curriculums
- They are solution-oriented: feel frustrated with the limitations of current education standards and looking for a solution or a way to express their own creative ideas
- They want to give more care to each student
- Early innovators, socially active, and compassionate

### What are our main marketing messages?

- Education for Life is a system of education that emphasizes experiential learning, practical skills for living, and spiritual development.
- EFL is a *proven* approach to education that is now used all over the world in schools ranging from pre-school to college.
- EFL teaches success in life through joyful learning based on the needs of each individual.
- EFL is the solution that educators and families have been looking for throughout educational curriculums and institutions.
- EFL programs are for those who understand that happiness is the end goal of all learning and for leading a successful life.

### What would be helpful to have appear on all of our communications?

- The EFL logo, colors (green/blue) and main marketing messages (*see above*)
- A few strong (agreed-upon) pictures that capture the messages (change by target audience)
- Quotes/testimonials (*below*) that fit in with the story or target audience for that communication
- Imagery that fits the story of EFL: classrooms, joyful children, teachers and children in exciting interactions, families out in nature cooperating and having fun, trees/nature, apple
- Catchy font that fits the website (On homepage: logo—"Cutoff" and "Trajan", content—"Arial")

### Great Testimonials that can be used again and again:

- “The goal....is to teach children the art of living, while giving them, in addition, the knowledge imparted by a conventional education.” —J. Donald Walters, *Education for Life*
- “If you could put what you are doing in the public schools, it would change the world.” —School superintendent on a WASC accreditation visit

## **Marketing Research**

### Sample Marketing Research Survey with Explanations

Surveys are a wonderful tool for which to measure your marketing plan outcomes over time and to obtain the opinions of your target audiences directly. Their opinions are what matter most, second to staying true to your own beliefs.

As for a wonderful marketing survey tool we recommend using Survey Monkey because it includes data analysis and up to 10 questions free! This is wonderful for those on a tight budget or those without extra data analysts available.

Below is a marketing survey template with some of the most important marketing questions for nonprofits hoping to take a closer look at the needs of their target audiences.

#### **Sample Survey Questions Explained:**

1. When thinking about your first choice for a tagline, which of the following words do you associate with [insert your name]? Please place an “x” next to your top three choices.

*Here you would provide different ideas that you have come up with for possible taglines. It is best to include a few tagline ideas that will address different target audience needs, core values, or beliefs.*

2. When thinking about [insert your name], which of the following phrases best describes what services we provide that are most important to you? Please place an “x” next to three top choices.

*Here you would provide different phrases that you have come up with for possible descriptions of your services. It is best to include a few phrases per target audience.*

3. What are the top three needs or concerns that [insert your name] meets for you?

*Insert some of the top choices you believe why people look to you for help.*

4. What kind of information do you look for from our organization? What is it that we provide that you wanted to know more about? Please place an “x” next to your top three choices.

*Insert some of the top questions and answers that you provide for your audience. You can discover these by asking yourself what is your market “niche”? What is the content that people come to you for?*

5. Which of the following services are you most likely to choose us for? Please place an “x” next to your top three choices. (Or you could ask them to rank in order of 1 to 5, 5 being the most likely.)

*List different services or activities of your organization and identify the types of people or their “personas” associated with what activities. This will help you in the future learn to market more effectively certain activities/services with the right audiences.*

6. Ask a question about a specific behavior that is relevant to your cause or services:

- How often did you [xx]?
- What made you do [xx]?
- Where did you [xx]?

*Helps you to determine which behaviors are more cost-effective to target, and the details that will help you see maybe where you are missing chances to reach your audience.*

7. How can we improve [xx]? What are we doing well?

*Always good to leave open-ended, but you may add specifics where appropriate. It helps to evaluate the effectiveness of your organization and what people like about you. This is good for knowing what makes you unique and special. If you leave this question open-ended you leave room for collecting great testimonials!*

8. What influences your decision making to support our cause/organization/[xx]?

*Helps to understand action-oriented behaviors that you want your supporters to take.*

9. How would you like to stay informed or connected with us?

- Social media platforms
- Newsletters
- Print mail, etc.

*Helps you to allocate energy and resources more effectively.*

10. Demographic Questions:

*Information you ask for should be brief or minimal, so include only those demographics that may affect the likeliness that your target audience will be motivated to take action.*

- Where do you live? Or what region/country? Urban/rural?
- Age? Gender? Marital Status? First language?
- Occupation or Industry?

11. Is there anything else you would like to add? Questions/Comments/Concerns?

*Keep this open-ended and allow for respondents to give you information freely that you may have not received otherwise.*

## Sample Marketing Survey:

### *Survey Header*

#### Why We Need Your Help:

Thank you for taking the time to complete **Expand Your Impact's** survey. We need your help to discover what it is about our organization that people care about most. This will help us reach more wonderful organizations and causes in the future in need of marketing services. We want to help more nonprofits grow and change the world using the power of marketing!

#### Ease of Completing the Survey:

The survey should take as little as **5-10 minutes** of your time. Thank you!

#### Instructions on Submitting the Survey:

You may complete the survey online at:

Or print a hard copy, complete, and mail to:

#### Directions for Completing the Survey:

Please read under each voting topic the information on what this topic will be used for in our communications. Then rate on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being "most effective" and 1 being "least effective," the options that follow. Mark an "x" in the box corresponding to your number rating.

Core Values (ex's below)	1	2	3	4	5
Opportunity (Freedom)					
Positive Change					
Achieving Success					
Slogans (Use a few which have been possible choices by your organization to test)	1	2	3	4	5
Expand Your Impact: Sharing Inspiration with the World					
Expand Your Impact: Marketing Consulting & Evaluations					
Expand Your Impact: Informed Social Marketing for Nonprofits					
Messages (Phrases that you can use in multiple communications)	1	2	3	4	5
Using state of the art marketing research and theory					
Balancing informed, proven marketing research with the heart of your organization's cause					
True success begins with sharing the heart of your organization with the world.					
Other: (Insert _____)					

*Note: Include this message: Please continue to the next page... if applicable. And use page #'s in case surveys get unattached.*

## Questions to Ask Before Designing a Website

### **What is the purpose or intention of your website?**

Try to think of a clearly articulated goal, it will help you to create a more clear vision so that you are able to attract more readers. If you don't understand your purpose, they won't understand either. What is the story you are trying to tell? How are you going to help others with your website? What is its gift to the world?

### **Who is your Target Audience?**

Who are you trying to tell this story to? And why do you think they want to hear your story? Think not only of the demographics, but also the persona or characteristics/interests of your audience.

Pretend you are the person who represents your target, now think about what they need to know if they were seeing your organization's website for the first time, and what you would need to tell them to keep them feeling connected and interested.

- Considering the above, what will be the title of your website?
- Does it tell your story, is it clear? Does it support your intention?
- What is the tagline, slogan, or inspirational quote that you would like as part of your website's header? Does this fit with the story and intention of your organization, the purpose of the website?
- How will you express your brand?
- Do you have a brand or graphic design that you will be using? If not, it is really helpful in any marketing strategy to have a graphic design for your brand so that people can begin to associate it with your organization or cause. It will go not only on your website, but on your pamphlets, flyers, media etc. What are the colors and style you want to use? How do these relate to the kind of feeling you want the viewer to have on your web page? You may want to think of words you would use to describe your website and then how they translate visually.

### **How do you want to organize your website?**

- What are your sections or main themes?
- Why do you want to organize it this way?
- What are your menu tabs, what will appear on the top menu bar? Note: Try to find a balance, also use common phrases that people may even type into search engines, or user-friendly words commonly used: Home, About (Philosophy, Mission Statement or Vision, People or Staff), Works/Portfolio/Content-Related, Blog or News/Events, Contact (Maps & Directions, Contact Form), FAQ, Resources, Services/Store, Gallery (Photos & Video).
- What do you want the readers to see on your home page?
- What do you need to be sure can be seen right away? What can be elaborated on later in more detail on a connecting page?

You have 10 seconds to capture the reader's attention enough to stay on your page, so you must have exciting, creative, and FOCUSED and CLEAR intentions of the site's purpose.

## **How do you want to express yourself in the content of your site?**

- Is it in a language that anyone coming for the first time could understand?
- Is it relatable?
- Have you looked at how other people doing similar things have talked about what you are talking about?
- What works and what does not work?
- How can you tell your story but be sure to connect on a deep and inspirational level with your audience?
- How can you frame your story in language and words that do this?

## **What other features or capabilities on your website will you need to communicate effectively?**

- Do you need blog functions?
- Do you need an internal search engine?
- An online store?
- A media gallery?
- A professional and well functioning calendar?
- Social media connections?
- PayPal or donations functions?
- News feeds? Etc.

## **What images will you be choosing to appear on your website?**

Images should tell the story of the content that they are with, they are used to supplement the communications messaging or framework– not to add a new idea– that is too confusing to the reader and takes away from the power of your clear intention. It is best to put imagery at the top or on the left, as the eyes go most naturally to the imagery on a page (especially faces) and then we read normally starting from that point– thus some content can be skipped over easily or hidden if it is not placed carefully/strategically.

## **What videos should you include on your website?**

Videos should be dynamic, creative, inspirational, and even funny! And limited to about 2-4 minutes if they are on a homepage or more of a summary to keep the main message to the point AND keep the attention of the audience (detailed interviews etc. can be longer of course).

Remember, it is helpful to keep an open mind and to be flexible throughout this creative process. Websites often go through many design phases in their lifetime, and change as the ideas of the organization change, and with the needs of their audience.

Hopefully, you can continue to see it as an important tool for reaching millions of people all around the globe, and an incredibly worthwhile investment of your energy. After all, it is your window to the world!

## Miscellaneous

### Facebook for Beginners

**How to Share a Post on Facebook:** Under all status updates or posts, there's a share button that allows you to share things of interest with others. When you click share, you are then able to choose how and with whom you want to share. You must copy and paste any text or messaging, links to landing pages, etc. when sharing from page to profile or page to page.

Choose one of the following options from the dropdown menu:

- On a friend's timeline. Enter your friend's name and write an optional message in the open text-box.
- On your own timeline. Adjust who can see your post by choosing an audience from the lock icon dropdown menu (for privacy settings) and write a message in the open text-box.
- In a group. Choose this to share the post to a group of which you are a member. Enter the group's name and write an optional message in the open text-box.
- On a page you manage. Select or enter the page's name, and write an optional message in the open text-box.
- In a private message. Use this option to share privately with an individual or small group of friends. Select from your friends list or enter your friends' names, and then write an optional message in the open text-box.

### What are some of the most frequently used Facebook definitions?

- Friends: The friends or businesses or causes etc. you have connected with by adding a friend. They make up your network.
- Like: The thumbs-up signal that allows others to say "I Like this post!"
- Post: A unit of content (photo, video, article link, event, or poll) that is shared from a user's profile or page (e.g. you post to a Facebook user's wall).
- Wall: Where others can see the posts that have been created by you or shared by your friends to your profile.
- Profile versus Page: Your personal page is your profile while the business page is what others refer to as a page.
- Newsfeed: Where you can go to share others' posts and see the latest from friends in your network or pages you have liked. What shows up on your newsfeed is determined by the friends or pages you most usually interact with, the posts that have been shared the most (so Facebook has deemed it relevant for you...), and the friends or pages that have the greatest number of friends or likes (the largest networks—again the most relevant by popularity).
- Viral or virality: Something that has been posted and re-shared and re-shared so many times and to so many various networks its reach is exponential.
- Insights: For business pages only. Where you can go to see what posts have been liked the most, who is following your page, and other helpful data to see what's been effective in increasing your network.

## How to Get Media Coverage: Becoming “Newsworthy”

Media coverage is a wonderful way to get your story heard. It is the amplifier; the microphone to speak out about what you believe will help the world. It is a way to shape the expression of your organization that the public receives in the news and media. It is a tool of empowerment to promote the positive changes that you are seeking, enough to reach millions!

If you can take the time to be open to learning the correct, best practices and techniques of obtaining media coverage, you could be picked up by just the right newspaper or channel, and find yourself sharing your story with more people than you ever imagined possible! Your story and your organization have the potential to go viral.

But you must be honest with yourself, letting go of any subconscious resistance to change, and become fearless of the potential you have for real results and true success!

There are several tools that organizations may choose from in order to generate media coverage. They each depend on what your goals are, your budget, and how you want to present your cause.

Three examples below include press conferences, press kits (also called media kits), and press releases:

Press conferences are a great way to make your initiative a new story instead of just a feature story. However, they can be more expensive, and if promoted improperly have the risk of no shows. It is very important to have media strategy in place, footage bites, and a press kit to give to reporters or potential partners in attendance.

Press kits can be used to generate ongoing coverage and a dialogue with reporters. The contents are determined by the focus of the most recent event or coverage. For example, if the kit will be provided at the time of an event, it should include the event agenda, news release covering who, what, when where why and how, and background info on the program. Press kits also often include:

- biographies of the main players of the organization;
- information about the organization’s mission and cause;
- most current press;
- sample story ideas;
- media including artwork, photographs, logos, and if available slides or camera ready slicks of footage or imagery of the organization;
- informational fliers or brochures;
- copies of articles that have been written about or testimonials for quotes to use.

Note: One strong photo is more effective than a series of smaller photos. Photo captions are ready almost twice as often as body copy, so they provide an ideal venue for key points.

Market and media experts tell us that there are several important things to keep in mind when trying to obtain media coverage.

Here are some of the best ways to make sure your story is heard:

Use a pyramid structure used by journalists by including the most important information at the top of any informational material. Place it at the beginning of the story so it cannot be missed or skimmed over in efforts of a reader to go over information quickly. Then you may follow this first paragraph with progressively less important information.

You must create a media strategy using marketing messaging that supports your goal and objectives. Your strategy should answer the following questions that reporters will be looking for when they decide what will make a good story:

- What is the problem?
- What is the solution?
- Who has the power to make the necessary changes?
- Who must be mobilized to apply pressure for change?
- What message would convince those with the power to act for change?
- Why is your story interesting and important?

“To get the media’s attention, you can’t just say something; you have to DO something.”  
—*News for a Change: An Advocate’s Guide to Working with the Media*

You want to be sure to break the problem down into easy, simplified pieces that readers can relate to and recognize. Then describe what the solution will be and what you and your organization are doing about it. Speak to where changes are being made, how it is happening, and by who, and how other people can get involved in these positive changes.

In addition, you want to keep in mind who the target of the media coverage is to be sure to speak to those problems specific to them—what is on their mind and in their hearts. This will then be used to guide your marketing framework and messaging. For example, if your target audience is youth—you will want to make your piece active and full of youthful energy. It should leave readers feeling energized and inspired for a brighter future.

In relation to your topic, know what is being talked about in the news in your topic area, what are the time sensitive issues and things that your target audience cares about.

Here are some additional things that will help you make a newsworthy story:

- highlighting an individual’s story, making it personal;
- relevant statistics or interesting social math/facts that support the story’s issues and/or solutions;
- celebrities or famous supporters of the cause;
- scientific breakthroughs or NEW research discoveries;
- irony or humor;
- seasonal or timely events, including anniversaries or holidays that you can tie into your story.

Remember, if they don’t find your story newsworthy enough, it simply will just not get covered. Try performing some research to see what the interests might be in your audience and area.

## How to Write a Donor Letter for Fundraising - Template

The following is a template on writing the perfect donor or fundraising letter or e-mail. It incorporates recommendations from some of the top marketing and fundraising consultants in the business.

To be successful at fundraising, you need a strong will, a great affirmation for success, and the consciousness of abundance. Money represents, quite simply, a flow of energy. Fundraising is learning how to access this flow of energy, to attract it, and to use it properly for a continuous and sustainable flow.

Here's a fun fact about fundraising online: "In 2013, 3 million people pledged \$480 million to Kickstarter projects."

Abundance exists; it is just a matter of attracting it into your endeavor.

How to format your fundraising donor letter or e-mail:

- Use subtitles to break up your letter with exciting questions (see example outline below) or captions that describe the general flow of your letter and the purpose of the succeeding paragraph.
- Use paragraphs that are not too long. Break them up by sections to help the reader more easily read through the entire letter. Many people also tend to scan, so this will help them to still capture the main message if they do.
- Keep the letter interesting and meaningful. Insert a powerful testimonial, use beautiful imagery, or display a photo that tells your story. Visual imagery is often more powerful than words and speaks more deeply to what you are trying to communicate.
- Remember: You are telling the story of your organization in order to move hearts to want to support your cause.
- Use a service like MailChimp to make your emails professional if you will be doing online fundraising.

Header/Footer:

- Contact information
- Logo or Banner (something to identify with your brand)
- Date of Send
- Who you are writing to — their contact information (making the relationship more personal)
- Should have a standard header/footer for letterhead that you can use for outreach and promotional materials like donor letters.

## **Part 1: Introduction**

It is important to establish what the purpose of this letter is about, right away! People have limited time and are on information overload— so this will help them see your purpose before they have time to “delete” or throw out your letter.

- Who are you?
- What is your vision?

## **Part 2: Clarify your Mission/Purpose**

It will be helpful to use the messaging or phrases and language (or frames) found to be supported by marketing research that appeal to your reader’s core values. You will want to do this by thinking about what your organization offers that is unique? And how you fulfill the needs of the reader as a target audience? Then use this framework to answer the following questions of the reader:

- Why have we written to you?

Text Example: We are writing to you because we believe you share an appreciation for these same ideals. You also have valuable resources that could serve to support this work. We are presenting you with a unique opportunity, by inviting you to join us in...

- How are we doing it?

Text Example: We are currently fundraising to finance... Our next step (or supreme goal, future steps) will be.... Will you help us fund this effort and donate (time, money, resources...)? (State fundraising goal) by (date). Then include any details or upcoming events that are relevant to this fundraising goal.

## **Part 3: Establishing Credibility**

It is hard for any individual to support a cause that they don’t believe will spend their money wisely. On a recent marketing survey, when asked why people chose the organizations they donated to, the most common response was that they had established trust. In addition, most people donated to a cause that was affiliated with a personal relationship— meaning that they knew of the organization through someone they trusted like a family member or friend.

- Who is leading this cause? Information on your organization, years of experience, education or background. Mention important names that you know will have immediate recognition.
- Mention your partnerships or affiliations with other credible organizations.
- Talk about how expansive your work is (how many countries, centers, etc.).
- List your years of experience.

#### **Part 4: Leading the Reader to Action**

When it comes to fundraising, the end-result action of your reader should be to donate resources to support your cause, and it is best to be clear and provide an immediate opportunity for them to act by providing the exact information that will be needed to do so. Making this action as easy as possible, with as few steps as possible.

- What action do we want from you?
- How can you take this action?

Text Example:

We want you to attend the event and bring your talents, experience, and creativity to help us xx. List RVSP or details needed for informational purposes.

- What do you get from this?
- Why are you passionate enough or inspired to take such action? Here you would then tie back to your purpose—the cause or inspiration. Let them know they are part of a greater opportunity for positive, social change. Then you can end with a strong statement like, “Please accept our invitation to [insert action].”
- When and Where? (for performances, media events, etc.)
- How to contact your organization?

To RSVP or xx contact (name) by phone (#) or email (email address). For questions about this event or organization contact (name) by phone (#) or email (email address). Sincerely xx (with additional title and contact information).

# Fundraising Proposal Writing Tips & Template

## What is a Fundraising Proposal?

An application or proposal submitted to a foundation that provides nonprofit organizations with the resources necessary to fund programs for positive change.

## Fundraising Tips: Before Getting Started

Understand the field of fundraising and how others have achieved their success. Most fundraising resources come from individual sources, and the relationships built between an organization and these individuals.

“The sharing of resources is the best way to get something done.”  
— Sarah Collins, *The Foundation Center’s Guide to Writing Proposals*

It is always important to remember those more personal connections are important to give energy to and to maintain—because over time they may be or become your most enthusiastic supporters.

Approach interested individuals with an attitude of service and cooperation, openness trust, and giving, and you will be more able to attract a wide range of supporters.

Try to develop this relationship by understanding their positions, concerns, and passions for this cause. Approach your fundraising proposal with understanding and deep care. This will shine through the writing and enable you to connect directly with supporters. This unity is what will have the power to create positive change.

Before you begin to write the proposal, set up a time to collaborate with the members of your team, get creative, and research who else in your field has already accomplished and succeeded in getting the support they needed and why. Take the time to talk to them, network, build relationships and create partnerships that will help your organization’s reputation long term.

## Fundraising Proposal Template

Each fundraising proposal’s format depends most specifically on the requirements of the foundation, so it is important to follow their directions exactly. However, the following are tips on writing for the most common proposal sections:

**Summary:** *Brief information about the request, the need, the program responds to the need, and your organization’s history and credibility.*

- Answer why you? Why your organization? Be creative and point to new and innovative ideas.
- Define your “niche” in the nonprofit world by getting to know what sets you apart from others in your field.
- What is your philosophy of social change? Or the core ideal from which positive changes will be made.

**The Narrative:** *Your passion, clarity, and leadership should shine through your proposal in a way that is readable and informative to the reader.*

By sharing your story in this way they will enjoy reading the proposal and understand exactly why financial support is needed and should be given. Do this so that they recognize your cause and see too that it is important to fund. Touch their hearts AND minds.

Show your ability to achieve your mission. This will help you as well by refining your organization and efforts to do so. Make your points clearly and simply.

In addition, the use of headers and sub-headers effectively and according to the proposal's instructions is a great way to organize thoughts and communicate clearly to the reader. Most successful proposals make use of headers and facilitate a flow of consciousness that attracts the reader's attention. You may also use photos to help support your points.

**Needs Assessment:** *Why is your program needed? Think locally and nationally (even globally).*

- Support with facts and well-cited statistics.
- Bring in news articles or videos that you can add to support your main points.
- Relate these needs to your program objectives, description, and evaluation and assessment.

**Objectives:** *What you intend to accomplish in a specific, measurable and clear way.*

Objectives will most likely be found in your organization's mission statement and by looking at your program activities and outcomes.

**Program Description:** *What your program does and why.*

It is important to have strong program "logic" that is clearly communicated. This shows that you have clarity about your organization's programs and capabilities. Be prepared to have a thorough presentation of your plans for future programs that can easily be sent or shown to prospective donors.

- Identified needs: what to do, for whom and by whom, and how/when this will happen.
- The most exciting project activities that you can highlight simply and elegantly. Think of expansive activities that you can incorporate to show the sincerity of your goals for positive change.
- Accomplishments over the past year to establish credibility and sustainability of program activities over time (lead with the biggest). Discuss the people who benefited from these, the individual stories, testimonials, news articles, or examples that illustrate effectiveness on a personal level.

**Evaluation & Assessment:** *How you know you will accomplish your goals and measure progress and success over time. Relate these back to your objectives.*

Measure a set of outcomes that will be used to convince potential donors that programs are effective and evidence-based. These should be founded in reliable research in the area of science related to

your organization's cause. Some variables for measurement are more reliable and useful than others, so be prepared to show why you chose to use the outcomes you did.

Budget: *A realistic portrayal of cost. This is another opportunity to share your story in number format. Budgets are often the most important component and yet are often overlooked by organizations.*

- Ask a team member with this strength to clearly organize and calculate the financial
- Two years is usually better than one year only. It shows thoughtfulness and preparedness.
- You may include staff, office expenses, marketing and promotions, events, and program development. (Personnel versus non-personnel.)
- Show the remaining income needs based on current or expected assets.
- Focus on the program activities if possible (develop them furthest) as most people prefer to think of these aspects of financial support rather than administrative costs.
- Not too many or too few details when it comes to services and supplies- find a balance.

Choose the Correct Type of Fundraising Proposal:

- Single Year vs. Multi-Year
- Endowments- long term sustainability support
- Building / Renovation
- General Operation Support- administrative functioning and staff
- Letter of Inquiry- submitted prior to a funding proposal

Additional Ideas for Writing Fundraising Proposals:

Other possible topics include agency and staff qualifications, network and collaboration, recent accomplishments, testimonials and articles, and sustainability.

You can also try to answer the following questions:

- How did the program originate?
- What will happen to the participants after the program?
- Which staff will allocate?
- How does the board make decisions long term?

Be prepared for success and think next steps. If a funder is interested in learning more—you will want to have materials at hand that they can use to investigate more deeply about any of the topics above. Presentations, press kits, business cards, and additional letters or fundraising cards that could be sent out easily for them to share with other potential funders.

You will also want to have handy a copy of your determination letter from the IRS and the California (or your state) Franchise Tax Board.

“Make your work known and then do not worry about the results.” —Sarah Collins

In other words, what matters most is that you lose yourself in the goodness of your cause. In this way, the positive energy willing to support that cause will find you and help you to achieve success.

## 5 Simple Tips on How to Reduce Stress at Work

Staying balanced during the work day will not only help you to improve productivity by removing the barriers to focus and creativity, but can keep you more healthy physically and more centered mentally so that you can solve problems as they arise instead of reacting stressed and overwhelmed. Instead you can be the person who your co-workers go to feel motivated and to feel calmer when things start to get difficult.

Here are five simple tips for reducing stress at the workplace:

1. Take a worry vacation during your commute. Promise yourself that you will stop any worrying on the way there. If you feel like you really need to think something through, do it before the commute, and tell yourself you can thoroughly think it through just once, then you have to practice letting go of the tendency to re-think the same thing through again.

Remind yourself of your commitment and acknowledge that thinking it through again and again (ruminating) only uses up more mental energy.

Instead try putting your mind on other activities that are relaxing:

Focus on taking deep breaths with measured counting: Breathe in (1-2-3-4-5-6) pause (1-2-3-4-5-6) and breathe out (1-2-3-4-5-6).

Listen to positive or uplifting music that you know makes you feel happy and relaxed (like classical). Research has proven that high vibration quality music can improve your health both physically and mentally. The vibrations of music affect the nervous system. The brain receives the signals from your nervous system, and uses them to identify how we are feeling. So if you listen to music that has harsh lyrics or a strong bass it makes your nervous system respond with stress, weakening your immune system and putting you in an irritable mood.

You can visualize everyone at the workplace getting along, things running smoothly and basically picture the opposite happening from what you have worries about. Strong visualizations and positive intentions have been proven to improve performance.

2. Learn how to deal with conflict positively when it arises. If you are someone who is a people-pleaser, or someone who does not like to confront bad behaviors or treatment from the boss, or if you are just sensitive to criticisms, practice being neutral and not reacting emotionally. Take a step back from the situation, and return to a response when you can approach it calmly and from your center.

3. Throughout the workday be sure to take 5-10 minute breaks. This may seem hard, but if you don't practice this not only are you going to become less effective work-wise, but you are also more likely to have a large drop in energy later on that may affect your mood and concentration.

Instead, when you have been working for several hours— give yourself a nicely planned break to bring your energy up again and to take care of your health in order to prevent problems later on.

Taking breaks will help you to:

- Recharge your eyes (from staring at the computer). Optometrists recommend taking your eyes off the screen at least once every hour to prevent damage from constant fatigue.
- Recharge your brain. Give yourself a chance to go for a quick walk, go up and down the stairs, etc. so that you can pump your heart and send fresh energy throughout the body. And instead of another coffee or caffeinated drink you get to go outside for a breath of fresh air and exercise, helping to prevent the heart disease that results from sitting all day.
- Prevent repetitive motion injury. Take time to stretch where you have been performing repetitive movements without breaks—like your wrists and arms to prevent carpal tunnel. Or you can do a forward bend to relieve backaches from sitting too long, doing unsupported heavy lifting, or from having bad posture at your desk.
- Take a mental break. A moment to relax and let things be without struggling harder. Psychology research has shown that the best thing to do when problem solving is to leave the problem alone for 5 or 10 minutes and simply just do other things. While you are doing other things, the answer will often pop into your head.

4. Make a choice to fight fatigue naturally. If you do get to a point where you feel stressed or your energy drops, train your brain to say, “I need to stop what I’m doing and fix this.” This will stop you from automatically continuing to feel low so that you can turn yourself around and bring it up again. If you are stressed or frustrated, it is a lot harder to complete more work effectively—you are more likely to make mistakes, solutions get blocked so you stay stuck on problems longer, and you are more likely to want to go gossip or complain to other co-workers and then before you know it there is a whole group of you co-workers feeling low.

5. The best stress-reducing activity that you can do is to learn to meditate. If you already know how to meditate—meaning you have taken a class and know a technique that really works for you (otherwise keep looking)—then meditate every morning for at least 5-10 minutes and if you can again after work or before bed to help you get proper rest and sleep better through the night. Taking care of yourself by doing activities that prevent stress and keep you balanced are priceless in helping you to have a better day at work.

And above all else, keep a positive attitude! This has the power to change everything. If you can feel joy at the workplace, and be enthusiastic about what it is you are there to do—then not only will you reduce stress, but you will become a more magnetic friend and employee.

And this attitude will attract success not only at work, but help you to find the joy that comes from within you.

## How to Be a Supportive Leader

What is leadership? Leadership is the ability to inspire and motivate others. And to lead is to direct others' energy toward a shared or common goal.

“Genuine leadership is only of one type: supportive.  
It leads people: It doesn’t drive them.  
It involves them: It doesn’t coerce them.  
It never loses sight of the most important principle  
governing any project involving human beings:  
namely that people are more important than things.”  
—J. Donald Walters, *The Art of Supportive Leadership*

Many of us at some point in our life must take on the role of a leader—whether at home, at school, or at work. And whether we are natural leaders or not, the following tips on how to be a more effective leader are meant to inspire you to lead yourself and others in achieving success in all areas of life.

Note: A team is defined as those coming together for a common goal, and so will be used here to reference those being led.

Here are the steps for becoming a supportive and successful leader:

1. Know yourself. Start by knowing yourself and where you want to go in life by creating a personal mission statement. Include the objectives that will help you to achieve both the short and long-term goals that support your mission.

Having to think deeply about why you are here and what you want to accomplish gives clarity about who you are what you want to become. This enables you to draw from your inner strength within—from a strong center or foundation that you can then utilize to more effectively lead others. If you don't have this inner clarity and motivation to accomplish your own goals, you will not have the magnetism needed to inspire and motivate other individuals to accomplish shared goals.

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”  
—Oliver Wendell Holmes

2. Know your team. Once you have a team of people working together, it is important to complete this process as a group. Ask your team what the overarching vision is for accomplishing these shared goals, and why you all care about making this vision a reality? What are the shared core values at the center of these goals? What is the shared mission statement? And why?

Inspire one another so that you may share in a common direction or vision. This strengthens the group and makes it easier to cooperate and act together harmoniously. When people can work as a team, they can work synergistically toward the common goal to achieve success.

3. Visualize outcomes of success. At Expand Your Impact, we call this the envisioning process: Use deep, detailed visualizations of the outcomes you want to achieve, reinforcing their manifestation

and helping to magnetize what you will need along the way. You may want to come together to create an affirmation to attract these experiences.

The vision and affirmation can be used to support or develop your shared mission statement. This will unite everyone on your team and help him or her to commit to supporting it through his or her individually identified roles. This will allow for a greater context throughout the process for everyone to refer back to, in order to be clear about their next steps and come back to the why or inspiration for whey they are giving their energy to this vision.

4. Practice time management. Throughout the various projects and among the various roles required to complete your mission, it is important that people learn to prioritize and organize the actions they need to take for the mission to be fulfilled.

Teach your team how to organize and execute in order of importance while allowing them to maintain balance at work, with family and loved ones, in their spiritual life, for their physical and mental health, and creativity. The challenge with time management lies not in managing time but ourselves. To really understand and know in your heart your priorities you must practice discipline and self-control.

This means that you and your team must practice creating organized, priority-driven to do lists that reflect your vision. And this then must be balanced with inspiration and guided by each individual's intuition about what next steps not only look right, but also *feel right*. There must be positive energy behind completing a task, but individuals must see the importance of completing also those tasks that are less inspiring but need to get done.

Sticking to the priorities sometimes isn't always easy. Things come up, emergency phone calls happen, and personal and work lives often get mixed up. This is why teaching each other how to say "yes" to the things that are in line with what they need to do that day, and also how to say "no" is essential for staying on track both short and long term.

The following are qualities of an effective leader, to keep at the forefront of your consciousness, to affirm, and to practice daily in order to become a more effective leader:

- self-honesty;
- ability to expand your awareness;
- openness to change;
- a holistic, balanced perspective of life in harmony with all the different roles you may have within and outside of the home;
- principle-centered, dharmic, virtuous;
- ability to delegate and give responsibility to others, letting go of control;
- trust in others: allowing people to make mistakes and to grow from them;
- leading by example: actions represent values;
- positivity and solution-oriented despite hardships;
- and lastly, but most importantly:

“The essence of leadership is giving energy, not receiving it.  
View [your] role as a simple service to others.” —Swami Kriyananda

## Meditation and Affirmation for Success

Meditation from *Success Through Yoga Principles* by Swami Kriyananda:

Visualize the bubbles of your advertising projects rising high over the earth. Then see them expand outward to infinity. Think of them as points of light. Then see those points expanding ever outward in all directions—until you see infinite space filled with light.

Whatever your work is in life, see it as a point of light, shedding that light in all directions, everywhere. Think of your work as a service to others. Added to the efforts of many people all of who follow yoga principles, and all of who are united in serving humanity, see yourself and them as instruments of the divine light, bringing that light to everyone. Creatures everywhere need to experience that light.”

Affirmation:

“The work I do is a shining light to all it touches.  
I do my best to bring light, love and, shining joy  
into the dark world around me, and into the universe.”

## Glossary

Across (sites): Wide range of sites including social media, website for organization or business, the span of the Internet you will reach with your online marketing.

Affirmation: A statement of truth that one aspires to absorb into their life.

Blog: (Web + log) A chronologically ordered series of Website updates, written and organized much like a traditional diary, right down to the informal style of writing that characterizes personal communication.

Brand(ing): Brand is the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer's decision to choose one product or service over another. Branding is the act of sharing your brand, and enhancing the consumer's ability to recognize and identify it.

Channels: In marketing, channels are vehicles through which marketing communications can be delivered. Examples are social media, websites, video, and news coverage.

Conscious Mind: One of three levels of awareness (subconscious, conscious, and superconsciousness). Rational awareness that guides our daily decisions. Divides the world into either/or categories, and is problem-oriented.

Content: Information to be shared, as an aspect of content marketing theory (see below).

Content Development: Creating or improving content that can be shared.

Content Marketing: Any marketing format that involves the creation and sharing of content in order to become successful.

Core Value: Fundamental beliefs of a person or organization. The core values are the guiding principles that dictate behavior and action.

Envisioning: Process of visualizing possibilities for expansion in the future.

Focus groups: Part of formative research. Small number of people brought together with a moderator to focus on a specific product or topic in order to acquire information helpful to your marketing messaging. Research done via focus groups is aimed at group discussion rather than individual responses to formal questions, and produces data on preferences and beliefs. A focus group may or may not be representative of the general population.

Formative Research: Marketing research that provides objective information about your marketing strategy's effectiveness. It includes activities such as surveys, framing memos, interviews, and often works with focus groups.

Framework: How you will portray or "frame" your messaging to your audience directly.

Framing Memo: Part of formative research. An objective comparison of the variables found in the marketing framework of other organizations or businesses. Examples of variables include core values, niche, messaging, and imagery.

**Imagery:** Visually descriptive or figurative language which can be used when writing marketing messages to improve the appeal of your content.

**Image content:** Photos that capture your core values, messaging, or the feeling you want to give your target audience.

**Impact:** Your ability to affect the world in a positive way.

**Indicator:** Measurable variable that can be used to show progress over time in relation to goals you have set.

**Keyword Phrase:** A keyword is a word or phrase that is used to help index content on Web pages so that search engines such as Google can better connect the search terms people type into the search box with the websites the search engines discover in their results.

**Magnetism:** A force that operates in the material world, on subtler, spiritual levels. Related to the power of attraction and repulsion. Related to the magnetic fields produced by matter. A strong current (energy flow) generates more magnetism, while a weak current produces little.

**Messaging:** What is communicated to the public, or more specifically, to your target audience. It includes your slogans, logos, imagery, written website text, brand, core values, and niche.

**Niche:** The unique gift that your target audience is seeking, within the current market of your field.

**Network:** A group or system of interconnected people or things. Within the online world, networking is especially relevant to social media sites and to the friends, and businesses you have chosen to connect with. Networking allows their content to appear in your network. (See social network)

**Persona:** Social role or character, helpful for defining the characteristics or daily life of your target audience.

**Photo Commons:** A common area in which photos are shared by individuals who are relinquishing copyright to allow others to use their photos for personal use, online or print.

**Post:** A unit of content that is shared on a social media site, usually Facebook, within a user's account or a group page (like a post to a Facebook user's "wall").

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** The process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine.

**Share:** This verb is used in relation to sharing with your online network content that you see and like on your social media or while surfing the web. To post or re-post content on a social media site is to share it. Facebook has a specific share option, which allows you to post someone else's content on your page. On Twitter, this posting is called re-tweeting.

**Shareable:** How likely content is to be shared, how appealing, useful or helpful it is.

Slogan: A short and striking or memorable phrase used in advertising.

Social Network: The social media sites (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) where people connect and interact with friends, colleagues, businesses, and organizations. Examples of building a network on social media: “Follow” (Twitter, Pinterest), “Like” (Facebook), +1 (Google +).

Story: The story behind why you started your business or became a leader in your field. Your story describes the events, the people involved, the timeline, and the inspirations and motivations behind your business or form of service.

Subconscious Mind: The lowest level of awareness (one of three levels of consciousness). Every experience, thought, impression resides in the subconscious mind. These contribute to our habits, patterns, and behaviors.

Superconscious Mind: The highest level of awareness (one of three levels of consciousness). Where intuition and heightened mental clarity reside. It is unitive and sees all things as part of a whole, and can readily draw solutions.

Supporter: A person who supports your organization or business’ cause or mission because it aligns with his personal values. The term indicates a long-term relationship.

Target Audience: A specific group of people within the target market at which a product or the marketing message of a product is aimed. The audience has a persona (characteristics and qualities relative to their social role) and accompanying lifestyle. A description of a target audience includes identification of behaviors that relate to your product or service, schedules, and interests/hobbies.

Variable: A characteristic, number or quantity that increases or decreases over time, or takes different values in different situations.

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Thank you