

# Web 2.0 Marketing for the 21st Century: The Missing Chapters of Grassroots Marketing: Getting Noticed in a Noisy World and Grassroots Marketing for Authors and Publishers

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## INTRODUCTION

*Grassroots Marketing: Getting Noticed in a Noisy World* was written a number of years ago and published in 2000. Most of the book is still surprisingly current. But some things have changed since then, especially in the area of social networking, or Web 2.0. And while there's very little overlap between the two books, *Grassroots Marketing for Authors and Publishers* was written in 2006, just before social networking websites became a major factor in marketing (it does cover blogs a bit and at least mentions social networking sites). So this update will be useful for readers of that book as well.

Everyone knows Web 2.0 exists, but not so many people have really focused on using these new tools and interfaces for marketing. Here's the chapter I would have written if I'd been writing *Grassroots* today—plus a bonus chapter on what else has changed (aimed much more at readers of the original *Grassroots*), as well as a resource appendix useful to readers of both books.

(Note: Much of this material originally appeared in/was adapted from my monthly e-zine, Shel Horowitz's Monthly Frugal Marketing Tips, published continuously since May, 1997. If you'd like to subscribe by e-mail, please visit almost any page of [frugalmarketing.com](http://frugalmarketing.com) except the home and order pages, and scroll to the bottom. If you prefer RSS, please visit the newsletter homepage at [www.frugalmarketing.com/newsletters](http://www.frugalmarketing.com/newsletters), where you can get signed up.

## CHAPTER 1: WEB 2.0

### *1: Why Participate in Social Networking?*

It's kind of funny, but it took me quite a while to begin actually marketing on social networking sites. I've been on LinkedIn for probably five years, MySpace for maybe a year, and several others (Ning, Ryze, Eons, probably more I'm forgetting). But it was only when I joined Facebook in October 2007, and then shortly thereafter found my way to Plaxo and CollectiveX, that I finally started using them to really do some business.

It's kind of odd that it took me so long because I've been marketing very effectively on one of their predecessors—email discussion groups—for over a decade, and I first wrote about the idea of marketing online via many-to-many groups way back in 1991, when I wrote *Marketing Without Megabucks*.

And I freely admit there are bugs to be worked out. Some of the interfaces are confusing. I find that I see a screen and find two or three things I want to follow, and then after I've followed one I can't always get back easily to the next one. The e-mail notifications seem to be very erratic; sometimes I'll sign on and find a dozen posts I should have been notified about.

Yet in the few months that I've been participating actively, I've found that there's a lot of good to be had. A few examples:

- I get notices from a service that started as a Facebook group called "Help a reporter out"—Peter Shankman, a well-known NYC PR guy, posts notices from journalists looking for sources. The price is right (zero), though as the service grows, reporters get flooded with responses. He sends queries from reporters a few times a day, and if there's a good fit, I answer the journalist. And he gets some leads that never make it to the much pricier Profnet/PR Leads. Very few of the leads are relevant to me, but if I get covered in even one major publication, that's well worth participating. (This got too big

for Facebook's then-1200-contact limit (now bumped up to 5000), and you can now find it at <http://www.helpareporter.com/> — he now has over 35,000 subscribers, just a few months in.)

You can sign up as well. This should be a no-brainer. If you get one good lead in a year, it's worth it. He has passed on leads from the NY Times and Washington Post, as well as lesser venues. Sign up at [www.helpareporter.com](http://www.helpareporter.com)—but don't abuse it by answering inappropriate queries or pitching inappropriately, or you'll piss him off and get thrown out. (If you want some guidelines on approaching the media, I recommend my books, especially *Grassroots Marketing* and *Principled Profit*.)

- The owner of a large marketing agency on the West Coast had a long talk with me about the possibility of opening up an East Coast division for him. This is in the formative stages, but should it materialize, it would be a major step forward in my business. I met him on Plaxo.
- This same person connected me with a like-minded gentleman only an hour away from me, whom I met a month or so later. He and I are now enclosing fliers for each other's books when we mail appropriate titles.
- Facebook and Plaxo allow me to automatically post my blog entries into my profile, potentially exposing me to many, many more readers.
- When I post something to my blog that I think will be relevant to some of my social networking communities, I can post the link and a comment (which gives it more attention than simply feeding it into my profile). I can also do this for links I didn't write, but which others will find useful, and this boosts my standing in these communities.
- The France-based founder of two of the communities I participate on through CollectiveX had a long phone call with me, and will be looking for chances to bring me to Europe to speak at his conferences. And if that happens, I can finally bill myself as an international speaker (a goal of mine for several years).

- Industry experts who no longer respond to e-mail can sometimes be reached through social network sites.
- Resources like FriendFeed and Ping.FM allow you to set up your profile so that you update your status once and it reverberates automatically into all your profiles—how cool is that?

## **2: Specific Social Networking Strategies**

In order to get much out of a networking site, you need to network. There are dozens of ways to do this, and here are a few.

1. **Friending.** Most social networks offer the option of sending a friend or business connection request—called “friending” or simply “requesting a connection.” Start with friends, colleagues, relatives, people in nearby locations, and see where it leads. The cool thing is that when you “friend” someone, and they accept, you get to look over their friends and friend any that look interesting. Since I travel in marketing circles, I often find very good connections (industry leaders, gurus and such) within the friend networks of those who reach out to me. Almost as cool: every time you post something to your profile, all your connections get a notice about it. Note: You will get friend requests too. I generally say yes, figuring it's easy enough to unfriend anyone who's inappropriate. But in the past, I would visit their profiles and/or friend lists, and say yes if I could see some common interests—or if they responded appropriately to a template e-mail I send saying I don't recognize you, how do we know each other or if we don't, what led you to friend me? If you have time, it's a good idea to look at the profiles of your new friends anyway; several times, doing so has led to very fruitful conversations and sometimes sales, new affiliates, etc.

2. **Public messaging.** One tip I picked up from Facebook guru Mari Smith: the social networks offer private and public message options. If you're welcoming someone to the network or thanking that person for a friend invite, do it in the public comment space

(like the profile or the wall) rather than in a private message. I usually include \*one\* link at the end of my post.

3. Interest groups. This is the 800–pound gorilla of successful social networking, and so far, relatively few people are taking advantage. Find groups that are relevant to your interests, your geography/history (e.g., your city, the schools you attended) and/or your business, and participate actively on a few of them (don't forget that link at the end). Use these groups as a way to locate and friend sympathetic people, too.

4. Requests for help. Ask questions about resources, tactics, suppliers. Answer questions in your field of interest. (LinkedIn is really nice for that).

5. Following. On Twitter and similar sites, you subscribe to a Twitterer's tweets by following. Using the Find and Follow tool, you identify the people you want to follow, and when you log on to Twitter, you can click on pictures of the people you're following, one at a time, and see their latest posts. Encourage people to follow you, and use the tweets to build real dialog. Remember, too, that you can direct a tweet at a specific person by preceding the message with the @ sign. Thus you could write to @shelhorowitz and I'd see it the next time I logged in (which isn't very often). Anyone following me will be able to read the message; however, you can also send private messages through Twitter.

How can Twitter be used for business in just 140 characters per Tweet? A reporter asked that question recently, and this is what I replied:

My posts serve a few different types of purposes (example after each, italicized):

\* Connecting 1:1 with people who are important in my industries

*@TerryDean Thanks 4 following. Loved yr post about hypercopyitis--very in tune w/ my philosophy of copywriting*

\*Exchanging useful information  
*@drmani Picked out an article for yr Heart Kids Tweetathon (honest copywriting)--have sent to my assistant to set up the download page.*

\* Subtly demonstrating my skills and capabilities  
*Waiting for two different clients to send follow-up so I can write them knock-'em-dead press releases :-)*

\* Generating interest in an article I've written or found worthwhile  
*Is horrified at police violence against protesters AND JOURNALISTS at Repub Convention <http://ping.fm/zeNHo> [[www.principledprofit.com](http://www.principledprofit.com)]*

\* Once in a great while, something about my personal life if I think people will actually find it interesting  
*Reunited with important old friends from NYC poet days after ~17 years--great visit!*

I joined Twitter in the summer of 2008, and am finding it increasingly useful, almost addictive. I typically spend about five minutes, two or three times a day—but invariably I then spend some extra time following useful links that others have posted. I have no patience for the "I had cereal for breakfast" type of tweet, and I unfollow people who chatter about nothing all day long and fill my box. But I'm finding it a nice little relationship-reinforcer, especially for those who know me very casually, as well as a fabulous source of information, a way of knowing new people I should know, and in some situations, a way to hear breaking news. I first found out that Paul Krugman won the Nobel Prize on Twitter. And by following skydiver (Help a Reporter) and ProfNet, I'm able to get a jump on fast-breaking requests from journalists for story sources.

And I expect to use it shortly to build interest in a discussion list I run.

By the way, If you'd like to friend or follow me, here are my most active profiles:

Plaxo: <http://pulse.plaxo.com/pulse/profile/show/128849525442/>

Facebook shortcut: <http://profile.to/shelhorowitz>

LinkedIn: <http://snipurl.com/1w1s3>

CollectiveX:

[http://www.collectivex.com/network/show\\_profile/54661](http://www.collectivex.com/network/show_profile/54661)

Twitter: shelhorowitz

If you include a message that you own one or more of my marketing books, I'll definitely accept your request—and I'd be grateful if you tell me something you love about the book and give me permission to quote you. (That way, I get another testimonial and you get your name and link on my high-traffic website—see how easy this stuff is?)

### **3: Which Sites Should You Participate On?**

You want sites that are useful to you professionally, easy to navigate, and that have significant participation from the sectors where you want to have an impact.

That third reason is why my wife participates actively on MySapce and LiveJournal, both frequented heavily by librarians. As a children's author, she wants to be in front of librarians.

By contrast, I put up a MySpace page over a year ago, but the interface is too clumsy for my taste and I've let my page go dormant. I certainly won't take it down without a good reason, but I'm doing essentially nothing to brand myself over there.

Facebook, in comparison, has a very flexible and easy-to-use interface that also has a lot of power—and the display is pleasant to look at, with lots of white space (unless people gunk up their pages with too much crap, which is a bit too easy to do in Facebook). And as people realize its superiority to MySpace, traffic migrates there, just as Alta Vista and Yahoo lost search traffic to Google. But Facebook is certainly not without its limitations. The most

frustrating thing to me is that you can't notify all your friends at once; batches of 20 at a time make for a frustrating communication experience. For this reason, many marketers are setting up groups and/or fan pages, to enable them to reach all the people following them easily and quickly.

Professional usefulness has a lot to do with what groups you participate in. I'm on Ning because people like John Kremer of [bookmarket.com](http://bookmarket.com) have set up communities there, and I want to be part of those communities. As an example, on Ning, I participate in communities for authors/book marketers, copywriters, and social network marketers. But I have to confess, I find the Ning interface crazy-making, and I'd participate a lot more often if these groups were on a more stable platform.

I participate in the Europe-based network CollectiveX because several groups involving environmental justice and social change in a business context are hosted there. I like it, but it seems much smaller than Facebook. And I also do several groups on Plaxo, whose web interface is similar to Facebook. I just wish that Plaxo's group activity e-mail notifications would include the content, as Facebook's does, so I wouldn't need to click the link to read a message. I also wish Plaxo would block duplicates so if someone posts the same message to three of my groups, I'd only get it once.

LinkedIn is nice for connecting with people in a work context, and I have a few hundred connections there. I haven't done much on the network, but I expect it will be important when I release my next book (for example).

Twitter (and similar sites) are called "micro-blogging." You get to post 140 characters (typically 10 or 20 words) at a time. It's a very small canvas, but more and more marketers are Twittering (and automatically feeding their Tweets into Facebook). You can connect with people you admire by following them, and you can post short updates similar to the Facebook or Plaxo status updates (in fact, you can even set up your Twitter Tweets to show as Facebook status updates). More and more marketers are using this and

similar sites. While I do use it, I'm so far not convinced, in part because Twitter requires logging on to its webpage (while Facebook updates merrily flash across my screen and Plaxo's arrive by e-mail). But many marketers report making fabulous connections. One thing I do like: you can send a note to a specific person and everyone can see it. For pros and cons, click on this link for an extended discussion of Twitter on the LED Digest:

[http://www.led-digest.com/index.php?option=com\\_search&Itemid=196&searchword=twitter&submit=Search&searchphrase=any&ordering=newest](http://www.led-digest.com/index.php?option=com_search&Itemid=196&searchword=twitter&submit=Search&searchphrase=any&ordering=newest)>.

#### **4: Your Own Blog**

The last two sections discussed social networking communities—places like Facebook, MySpace, Plaxo, CollectiveX, Ning, LinkedIn, and literally hundreds of others.

But full-blown social networking sites are only part of the picture. Your promotional strategy can incorporate many other types of Web 2.0 sites. Any site that allows visitors to participate actively, and not just passively receive information, is a Web 2.0 site—and can be used in some ways for marketing purposes. Blogs are among the easiest to market on.

Blogs have several advantages over traditional websites. To name a few:

- They get into the search engines almost instantly (I once did a Google search for something I'd blogged about ten minutes earlier, and my blog post was there, on the first page of the results)
- Once a blog is set up, it's extremely easy to update on your own, at any time—without involving a webmaster or tech guru
- It's easy to increase the reach of a blog (see below for some ideas on how).

## How to Get Your Blog Noticed

A few possibilities:

- Set up your blog to automatically feed it to your social networking profiles
- Mention other blogs in your post, and use the "trackback" feature so your post shows up in their comment pages
- Use pingoat.com and/or pingomatic.com to automatically ping (notify) Technorati and other blog content directories and aggregators, so people will find you quickly if you blog about something topical and hot
- Send e-mails to friends or e-mail lists that would be interested in the topic you posed about (but don't spam!)
- Include a link to your blog in your e-mail sig (if you're ambitious enough to keep the sig updated, you can even list your most recent post)
- Have your webmaster set up the blog to use an SEO-friendly naming convention for your posts, so keywords from the headline show up in each post's filename; if you're using WordPress, this can be done with a simple plug-in. (And if that sounded like a foreign language, don't worry—just ask your webmaster to set it up.)

Your own blog should be closely focused on the topic you want to promote. It's OK to have an occasional post that's off topic, but you'll get much better results if you can stay on track. This is a challenge for me, so I describe my blog, "Principled Profit: The Good Business Blog" broadly: as "covering the intersections of ethics, politics, media, marketing, and sustainability." That's big enough territory that I can ramble, and still be within that rubric; see for yourself at <http://principledprofit.com/good-business-blog> (or visit [principledprofit.com](http://principledprofit.com) and click on the blog link).

Note: I strongly advise hosting your blog on your own server, and not on the software's server. That way, if whatever platform you've chosen (e.g., WordPress, TypePad, Blogger) goes out of business, starts charging high fees, or begins to censor content, you won't

lose your blog and have to start over again. It's also not a bad idea to keep copies of your posts.

### **If a Blog Feels Too Overwhelming**

If writing and managing your own blog feels like more than you want to take on, you can find a freelance writer to do it for you. Ideally you'll look for someone in your field, who already has some subject knowledge and will commit to blogging for you at least three times a week. (I'm one of many writers who would be happy to help you with this, especially if you're blogging about marketing, ethics, social change, Green issues, or publishing/book marketing.)

## **5: Market With Others' Blogs**

### **Comments**

There are blogs I follow regularly (or stumble across because of a particular post), and make public comments every once in a while (frequently, in some cases). Posting on others' blogs gets me known and respected by people I want to impress, exposes me to their fans, and also provides high-quality backlinks to my own various sites.

### **Guest Blogging**

Just as you can supply articles to stand-alone websites, you can also volunteer as a guest blogger or even a regular columnist on high-profile sites. I've been asked to do two week-long stints as a guest blogger for the International Association of Online Communicators blog, and I also maintain a weekly blog on the high-traffic site Fast Company (in the Social Responsibility forum).

### **Interviews and Excerpts**

Bloggers need content too! Supply great (relevant) articles or book chapters, offer to answer e-mail Q&As, or do an audio interview for them, and you're on the good list. Many authors these days are

doing a "blog tour" with several such appearances, in addition to—or even instead of—traditional bookstore signings. Much less stress for the author than personal appearances! However, I still recommend face-to-face as well, for those who are suited to it.

### **Affiliate Relationships**

Turn bloggers into your affiliates, and they have an economic incentive to promote your stuff. Of course, you can also earn commissions selling their stuff on your blog.

## **5: Other Web 2.0 sites**

A few more ways to get known (at no cost) in Cyberspace:

### **Comment on News Articles**

Just like blogs, many of the top (and lesser known) mainstream and alternative media allow comments on their stories. And the value of a link is even higher. While in traditional media the number of published letters to the editor is sharply limited, blog comment space is refreshingly open-ended. Spam comments will be removed, but most legitimate ones will be allowed to stay. As an advocate for decades of letters to the editor as a marketing strategy, I adapted easily to this new reality. (Tip: Keep a copy of the comments you post on other blogs and news sites). Latest wrinkle: Huffington Post, a progressive politics site, just announced that you can now set things up so that when you make a comment on its pages, it automatically feeds to both your own blog and Twitter.

### **Set Up a Squidoo Lens**

The brainchild of master online marketer Seth Godin, Squidoo allows you to focus attention on a topic area through a "lens." Rather than try to explain this, I invite you to look at this sample lens, on home energy conservation:  
<http://www.squidoo.com/home-energy>

## **Contribute to Wikipedia**

You've probably visited the online encyclopedia Wikipedia following some Google searching; Google ranks Wikipedia pages extremely highly. But did you realize that *all of the content is created by its users*? Yes, it comes across as very authoritative—but that authority rests on the shoulders of its tens of thousands of contributors. If you want people to know something about your topic, consider sharing your perspective on Wikipedia. But understand that others may change your work.

## **"I Found Something Cool" Sites**

Digg, del.icio.us, StumbleUpon, and many other sites let you share great discoveries. It's a bit tacky to flag your own stuff, but you can get away with that once in a while, if you've been flagging other stuff too. And of course, if you publish content by other people, you can flag these articles without seeming self-aggrandizing, and bring more traffic to your sites. The sharp marketer can build substantial respect and traffic. Oh, and don't forget that these, too, can be automatically fed into your social networking profiles on Facebook, etc.

On my own blog, you can click and share my posts with over 30 networks; this is something you can easily set up for your own content, too.

## **6: Develop Social Network Applications or other Viral Media**

It's amazing how rapidly something can spread online if people perceive it as "hot." The same psychology that floods us with chain letters, urban legends, and long-obsolete requests to help spread a message can also be used to inculcate a friendly "virus" into the culture.

The idea is simple: people like to share their discoveries. If they discover you and it makes them laugh, or cry, or even think, they may pass it on as well.

When I get the same item from four or five different people, I'm pretty sure it's gone viral. Some of the success stories are frankly and openly commercial, for example...

- Burger King's "Subservient Chicken" (see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subservient\\_Chicken](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subservient_Chicken) )
- The powerful trailers for the movie, "The Secret"
- Performances by contestants on American Idol"
- Political rants on the Left by Keith Olbermann and on the Right by Bill O'Reilly

Caution: most of what goes viral can't be controlled or manipulated. I've seen a number of people, particularly in the Internet marketing space, create content that they clearly intended to go viral—but it was too easy to see through, and the effort flopped. But there certainly are exceptions; I've already cited the trailers for "The Secret."

Viral content often has sound, video, interactive components, or other multimedia aspects—but the jokes and urban legends that make the rounds prove that plain old text (creation cost: zero) can also go viral. Some of it has ethnic or subculture content, like the "Matzo Man" Passover video that crossed my desk about eight times this spring. Some of it gets you playing trivia or skill games, perhaps with a charity tie-in, like the vocabulary-building game that feeds the hungry at <http://www.freerice.com/> . Sometimes, the viral spread is a productivity booster, some sort of handy utility. The extreme example of this used to be Hotmail, which appended to every e-mail message a note about how to get your own free e-mail. But the real success story is Google.

Google is one example where the largely discredited "build a better mousetrap" theory of marketing actually worked. The user experience—clean and ultraintuitive interface, instant results, and far greater accuracy of those results than anything then available—just about forced users into the role of evangelists; once you tried searching in Google, you were hooked, and you told your friends. Google's massive growth was organic, and had far more to

do with creating user evangelists through superior engineering than from traditional marketing,

But you don't have to create anything as useful and powerful and world-changing as Google to go viral. A few possibilities:

- Funny videos
- Games
- Amazing performances of music theatre, dance, acrobatics, sports, etc.
- Anything where the user helps create the content
- Online productivity tools such as Mail2Web.com, Dictionary.com, and FreeTranslation.com
- Free services such as conference calling or file storage
- Discount or free online alternatives to brick-and-mortar shopping (travel booking, stock market trading, classified advertising, auctions, and plain old shopping)
- Sites to share music, video, pictures, etc. (can you remember life before Youtube, Flickr, and Pandora?)
- "Authority sites" that serve as the definitive resource within a niche

Always remember when creating viral content to include, at the end and perhaps at other points, an action step (such as a link to click) and a reason to take that step.

## CHAPTER 2: WHAT ELSE HAS CHANGED?

### **1. Important Changes to E-Mail**

In 1998, spam already existed. But it was a manageable problem; few people received more than a handful of junk e-mails per day. And almost no one had anti-spam filtering protection.

Unfortunately, that's no longer the case. Spam has become a plague, spammers hijack legitimate addresses which then get added to blacklists, and spam filtering—while it does reduce the burden on our mailboxes—is plagued by false positives: non-spam that lands in the junk box, or worse, the trash can. In other words, a much larger percentage of e-mail than most people think simply never gets delivered.

Mail that is not spam is quarantined as if it were—and that's very bad news for e-mail marketers. You can only be absolutely sure your mail was seen if you receive either an answer or a return receipt (if you requested one, that is). E-mail delivery is uncertain because you may have set off a spamfilter (either installed by the user or the Internet provider), you might have been caught in a spammer blacklist (which could block the entire range of IP addresses assigned to your ISP), the recipient is using a challenge-response spamblocker where your message is only delivered if you click on a website, or the recipient is simply so overwhelmed with e-mail that your message got to the inbox but wasn't noticed. (I receive hundreds of e-mails every day, and that happens to me all-too-frequently.)

So if you send something that needs a response, and you don't get one, a polite phone call may be in order. Often, you'll find that either your message didn't get through, you didn't receive the answer, or it's waiting unread and unnoticed.

Filtering drastically alters how you write e-mail copy: not just the body, but also the subject and from lines.

Fortunately, there are plenty of things you can do to increase delivery rate.

For example, here are a few things you want to *\*avoid\**:

- Words that are used often by spammers (for instance, "free", "mortgage", or any words with a sexual connotation)
- Trying to fool the spam filter by adding extra letters or changing one letter to an asterisk or other symbol (I've seen experienced e-marketers who ought to know better resorting to this dumb trick)
- Exclamation points or dollar signs in a subject line—or more than one exclamation point or dollar sign at a time anywhere in the email
- Excessive capitalization, either in the subject line or in the body
- HTML formatted e-mail with bold, color, fancy typefaces, etc. (I personally hate HTML newsletters anyway, and—like many experienced users—keep HTML turned off. If you want to show people a formatted version, give them a link to a web page!)
- E-mail addresses from the very popular and much-abused services such as hotmail, yahoo, msn, and aol
- E-mail addresses that are on any blacklist
- E-mail addresses that sound like a different person than the name in the "from" field

Blacklisting (which may have nothing to do with your own behavior) is one of several reasons to contract with a recognized and legitimate bulk e-mail distribution service, such as GetResponse.com, AWeber.com, ConstantContact.com, 1shoppingcart.com (bulk mailer is one among many components), Zinester.com, or YMLP.com, among others.

Yes, you *can* use Yahoogroups for free, but it's lacking in many features, not the least of which is automatically removing the non-deliverables after a certain number of failures. I can't recommend it

for serious e-mail marketing, though it's still nice for newsletters (and free is certainly a good price).

Writing spam-proof e-mails can be quite a challenge. I've had several clients who work in areas where it's almost impossible to write filter-proof e-mail, such as financial planning, debt counseling, marketing, or erotica. For one such client offering a no-charge seminar, I ended up writing this e-mail subject line: "No-Cost Teleclass Thurs: Control Your Finances, Don't Let Them Control You" — far weaker than I'd like to use, but something that won't set off the alarms.

As we are all increasingly buried in e-mail, the majority of people \*don't\* read everything they receive. In fact, they don't even receive everything sent to them.

I personally delete hundreds of unread messages every single day—and even then, mail piles up in my inbox. Most of the ones I delete are obvious junk. But still, I often find out later that mail I would have liked to receive didn't get through. Either I thought it was junk and deleted it, or it simply didn't reach me. Just as I was writing this section, a valued colleague wrote to me and a few other people asking for advice and hinting at future work. I did not receive his note, and only found out because one of the other people he asked used "reply to all." He is whitelisted and in my address book, but his mail did not arrive.

### **The From Line**

So...how can you increase the chances of getting through? Let's start with the single most important factor, according to various studies: the from field. And empirically, I'm convinced this is true. Many times I've just been going through my spamfilter, about to trash something with a spammy subject line, and I happen to notice it's from someone I know and/or respect—which earns it a place in my inbox

- Get your own domain name, and let it reflect your business name, personal name, core competencies/services/products, or some other credibility-building factor. It's a ridiculously small investment, and increasing your open rate is one of a dozen good reasons to have domain email. Oh, yes, and you'll have the best response to .com, .org, or .net names, in that order. Avoid domains with country codes that signal spam-haven, like Russia (.ru), South Africa (.za), or Brazil (br)
- Use your real name. Which would you more likely open? Mail from Shel Horowitz (shel@frugalfun.com) or mail from Studmuffin365@hotmail.com? Would you open anything from Cranberry U. Thornwacker (yzzzzkhj@clueless.com)? For some reason, spammers often create very fanciful names, often composed of odd nouns, on either side of a middle initial.
- The sender's name and e-address should reinforce each other. If I get a mail from Stephanie Jones, davidorloff@marketingexpert.ru, I definitely won't open it. But if the subject line happened to entice me, I'd at least glance at it if it came from David Orloff, Marketing Expert at the same address, even with the origin in Russia (I've even had some legitimate business contacts with people in Nigeria, often thought of as the spam/scam capital of the world).
- Get known through other channels, so that your name and email address are recognizable before you ever write to this person. Discussion groups provide one avenue, and telling your own newsletter subscribers how to whitelist you, right on your thank-you-for-subscribing webpage, is another.

## Subject Line

The best subject lines create curiosity, have some clue about what's inside, and avoid even a whiff of junk mail.

If you have a pre-existing relationship, it should convey that as well. Which is why my subject lines for my monthly newsletters include not only a brief capsule of the content, but follow that with a colon and "Shel Horowitz's Monthly Frugal Marketing Tip."

The number of characters count, too—which is why I've switched to putting the newsletter name at the end. If something's going to be truncated, let it be that. Some systems won't show any more than 50 characters in a subject line.

What if you are writing the e-mail equivalent of a cold call? You haven't ever corresponded and the person hasn't heard of you. I encounter this a lot when I'm pitching media people. So I establish context right away. If, for instance, I'm trying to get myself on a radio or TV show, my subject line starts with "Guest Available:" After the colon, a few words about what I'd like to talk about, so the full subject might read "Guest Available: Ethical Business Actually Works Better." It's succinct, hopefully intriguing, and truthful to the contents that follow.

Some others I've used that worked (e.g., got a personal response)—these are actual examples straight from my Out box in the last few months:

- Linda, background for our interview on 1/24, 7:55 a.m. PST (to a radio host once the interview is scheduled)
- Stefi, Liz Burton thought you could answer my question
- Dear Mr. Papoutsy—Saw Your Article on the 5 Simple Questions for Ethics
- Review Copy Request: Lean and Green (to a publicist at a publishing company—Lean and Green is a book she represents; I'm a legitimate reviewer, covering one book a month in one of my newsletters)
- Thank you for asking about our marketing/copywriting services (my standard follow-up to telephone or e-mail client inquiries)

You'll notice that three of these five use the person's name—but do so in way that nobody could mistake for a mailmerge. And in fact they aren't mailmerged; these are all individual letters. One of them references a known person who referred me (it happened to be her mother), one an article that my prospect had written, and the third, an event that we'd scheduled together (by telephone, as it happens).

In none of these cases had I emailed before or asked to be whitelisted.

### **Body of the E-mail**

The third key in writing e-mails that get opened is to send e-mails that don't get caught in spamcatcher filters—because if you want your post to be opened, it has to be seen. If the filters grab it, your recipient may not ever have the chance to see it.

In the above paragraph, I reworded three bits to avoid that trap—and this is what you've got to do if you're writing e-mail. I said "not ever" because "never" is one of the trigger words. So are "here" and "now." And I wrote "spamcatcher" as one word, because the first four letters by themselves would ring a filter bell.

Learn to phrase things differently. Instead of "free," for instance, I might say "no-cost," "without charge," etc. For me, writing to beat the filters has become automatic (and given that I write about marketing and profit, it's a challenge). I still run my stuff through a checker, and there will be a few items that I miss, but even my first-draft scores are pretty clean.

Most filters will rank a piece of mail, and those above a certain score will be blocked entirely or held for review before delivery. So, typically, you can have a few of the filter hooks but not too many.

In addition to word traps, some filters are set for format traps. Fortunately, those are easy to avoid—if you know what they are.

This isn't a complete list, but it'll get you started:

- HTML formats instead of plain text (and yes, that includes merely changing a word to bold or italic, or using the default settings in AOL, Outlook, and some other e-mail programs)
- Strings of all-capital letters
- Multiple exclamation points and/or dollar signs
- Documents that are excessively long (yes, I'm guilty, I confess)
- Double-high priority flag

- Too many hotlinked URLs (I don't know what the number is, and it may vary with different providers)

Now you know why more and more newsletters include just a brief summary and a link to the full content. It's frustrating to those on dialup, but at least the mail arrives, most of the time.

OK, so how do you know if your mail is clean? Run it through at least one of these:

- <http://spamcheck.sitesell.com/> (use the web-based and NOT the e-mail report)
- <http://www.lyris.com/resources/contentchecker/> (another one that e-mails the report)
- The spam-checker for whatever bulk e-mail service you use

Still, none of these precautions guarantee that your mail gets through. If a few of your subscribers were too lazy to unsubscribe and labeled your message spam, or even if your ISP got flagged for bad behavior because of messages sent by users you don't even know, you could get filtered. *The only way to know for certain that your e-mail was delivered and read is if you receive a response to it!*

## **2. Paid Ads Online**

### **Pay-Per-Click**

Yes, skyscraper and banner ads still exist—but few successful grassroots marketers are using them. These days, the biggest and most effective portion of the online ad universe is pay-per-click text advertising, or PPC. And while you can find hundreds if not thousands of vendors to sell you PPC, the most important, by far, is Google. Its two nearest competitors, Yahoo and MSN, have small but noticeable market share, and the numerous others pick up the crumbs (some of them, in niche markets, very successfully, by the way). Google displays its unobtrusive and brief paid ads both on its own search results pages and on content pages from thousands of other web publishers.

In the latter case, you sign up once, add a little bit of code to your site, and Google does the rest. Once a month, a check in your mailbox. Sweet!

The thing that allowed Google to so dominate the online advertising world was its astonishing ability to match the context of the page with relevant ads. While it certainly doesn't guess right all the time—and sometimes its wrong guesses are very funny—it's a good enough guesser that lots and lots of people click the ads. That means tremendous revenue for Google, enough traffic to the advertisers to actually build a business, and a steady enough stream of revenue to publisher sites that it's worth giving up some precious real estate.

Marketers have studied Google ads for many years now, and have learned quite a bit about how to optimize the ad content and landing page as advertisers, and how to optimize the placement as participating publishers. And Google itself has a cool tool to track and suggest keywords—useful not only for PPC, but also for any copywriting online:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal?defaultView=2>

If this is an area you'd like to explore, I recommend that you spend some serious time with the sources listed in the resource appendix.

### **Paid Viral Tools**

Other ways to advertise—or gain advertising revenue—online have tended to look a lot less like traditional ads. These include any kind of viral mechanism to gain clicks: games, surveys, funny film clips, book trailers, etc.

Covering them in detail is outside my scope—but I wanted to acknowledge their existence.

### **3. Changing Publicity Strategies**

A few dramatic shifts have changed the ways press releases and media contacts work. First of all, through tools like

HelpAReporter.com and Profnet (mentioned earlier), you can now find out exactly what journalists are looking for sources, and for which stories. Pitching in response to a query will vastly outpull sending a press release—but since this is individualized, it's somewhat labor-intensive.

Second, both reporters' workloads and their inboxes have gotten a lot heavier; as a result, they give even less attention to unsolicited press releases than in the past. You've got to really use a great subject line, targeted to gain interest but not to feel like hype. And even then, your release may or may not be seen.

And third, these days, e-mail is the preferred submission method for most journalists. If sending some other way, I suggest including a URL where the complete press release is posted along with supplementary information, and please make the URL easy to type!

## **APPENDIX: MORE RESOURCES FOR YOU**

Disclosure: Some of these resources are affiliate links and will earn me some small commission if you choose to purchase them. I do believe the affiliate model is valid. However, affiliate commissions are a very tiny part of my income stream, and I only endorse products that I believe are genuinely useful for at least some of my readers. Your mileage may vary, depending in part on how advanced you already are.

### ***Shel's Books and Products***

If you have purchased this e-book independently (or if you only have one of the books, which don't overlap much), you'll benefit enormously from my full-length books on marketing:

#### **Grassroots Marketing: Getting Noticed in a Noisy World**

Need to boost your business on a budget? *Grassroots Marketing: Getting Noticed in a Noisy World* is your one-stop roadmap. Everything you need to access a huge range of low-cost, high-ROI marketing strategies and tactics that slash your marketing costs, boost your results, and take your organization (business, nonprofit, or grassroots community group) to the next level. Foreword Magazine Book of the Year Finalist.

Jay Conrad Levinson, author of *Guerrilla Marketing*, says *Grassroots* is essential for "covering all the bases and providing budget-minded marketers with the wisdom that they need... Best of all, he does it with warmth, clarity and lots of real life examples. His book should be mandatory reading... It's fun to read and it will be even more fun to deposit the profits his book can earn for any reader."

#### **Grassroots Marketing for Authors and Publishers**

A thorough and readable guide to book marketing for authors who publish traditionally, who self-publish, or who use a subsidy publisher (sometimes incorrectly called a "self-publishing company")—as well as for small to medium-sized publishers of other authors. Covers not only bookstore marketing but many other

areas that may be more profitable. endorsed by some of the top names in the industry, and includes several cool bonuses.

### **Principled Profit: Marketing That Puts People First**

Why are ethical, cooperative business practices the secret to powerful profits? This award-winning book shows you how to achieve greatness through the "magic triangle" of honesty, integrity, and quality—because it shows you how to highlight those principles in every facet of your marketing.

Jack Canfield, co-creator of the Chicken Soup series, says, "Shel Horowitz shows in *Principled Profit: Marketing That Puts People First* that not only do people want to change the paradigm toward cooperation and people-centered behavior, but that they can profit handsomely by doing so. I'm delighted to recommend this book."

Please visit <http://www.frugalmarketing.com/cart> to purchase these with autographs/inscriptions, with discounts if you buy more than one, and—for the author/publisher book—a number of extra bonuses.

### **Become an Affiliate for My Products**

You can actually earn money selling my products and services. Please visit <http://www.frugalmarketing.com/affiliate-program.shtml> if you'd like to learn more.

### ***Monetizing Social Media***

Mari Smith is my favorite expert on monetizing Facebook; many of her strategies apply equally well to other social network sites. Visit her at <http://snipurl.com/3o2js> or go directly to her Podclass at <http://snipurl.com/3qi16> To learn how to use a blog as a business-building tool, I recommend books by Ted Demopoulous and audio programs from the Blog Squad (Patsi Krakoff and Denise Wakeman), <http://snipurl.com/1vidw>

## **Resources on Google Ads**

The first two are for bringing traffic to your own site through paid ads on Google (and to some extent, on other pay-per-click systems); the third is about optimizing the return of the ads Google puts on *your* site.

- I suggest information products from Perry Marshall (beginner to advanced). Perry has a **free** five-day course you can sign up for at <http://snipurl.com/3lfue> and as well as a much more advanced "black belt" product at <http://snipurl.com/3lfv1> — and one-on-one coaching, too: <http://snipurl.com/3lfvq>
- Glenn Livingston (advanced). Glenn, in my eyes, is possibly the smartest guy in the world when it comes to multivariate testing, measuring the potentially huge results of very minor changes (e.g., a search term in the singular may attract a vastly different audience than one in the plural; one could be buyers ad the other tire-kickers), and much more. At the moment, he's offering a bunch of **free** audios, and I suggest that you go and listen. If you decide to buy, his system isn't cheap—but if you get really into this, it should pay for itself quickly. <http://snipurl.com/3qcc7>
- Joel Comm (for publishers selling space to Google). I paid \$89 for my copy of his first e-book and it was worth every penny. Now he's got a mass-market book that'll set you back less than \$20, and a bonus package as well. Amazing! <http://snipurl.com/3qbwt>

These people know their stuff. By reading their material and implementing their strategies, you will most likely save hundreds of hours of testing and boost your response/profits very quickly.

## **Help Directly from Shel**

I am available to help with a number of aspects of your marketing campaign. Contact me if you need someone to:

- Develop an overall marketing plan—for your book, product, service, line of products, or your company as a whole
- Write compelling and effective press releases, sell sheets, e-mails, search-friendly web pages, e-mail signatures, ads, etc.

- Select the best publishing path for your book
- Take you from unpublished writer to published author
- Provide media training
- Speak to your group on any aspect of frugal/ethical marketing, book publishing, and/or business ethics as a success driver
- Write and/or manage a blog, e-zine, or newsletter

Please contact me through my website contact form at <http://www.frugalmarketing.com/contactform.shtml> or by phone at 800-683-WORD (800-683-9673) in the U.S. and Canada or 413-586-2388 from elsewhere or if you have free long-distance calling.

### ***Shel's Websites***

**Thank you for reading my e-book. Please visit my websites for hundreds more resources at no cost:**

**<http://www.frugalmarketing.com>:** How to market cheaply and effectively in any medium. Pay special attention to the Monthly Frugal Marketing Tipsheet Archives going back to 1997 (you may want to subscribe), and to Down to Business magazine (which includes a big section on sustainable business that I think is particularly fine).

**<http://www.principledprofit.com>:** Ethical, Green business as a strategy for success. Includes archives of Positive Power of Principled Profit (profiling one responsible business and one book worth reading each month) since 2003, a collection of ethics articles, and The Good Business Blog, looking at the intersections of marketing, media, ethics, politics, and sustainability.

**<http://www.business-ethics-pledge.org>:** Join a movement to make crooked business as unacceptable in a few years as slavery is today. Be part of the tipping point toward business ethics, and take advantage of the marketing boost you can get as a result (including a link back).

**<http://www.the-domain-finder.com>**: Let me find the perfect domain name for your next venture.

**<http://www.frugalfun.com>**: My first site, aimed at consumers, and offering lots of resources on how to have fun cheaply, as well as arts, travel, general frugality, and peace. Archives of Monthly Frugal Fun Tips back to 1997