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# EARN MORE WITH NICHE MARKETING

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# How to Find Your Ideal Client



Do you have an ideal client?

And why do you need one?

Do you know the answer? If not, you should.

## Why does an ideal client matter?

Because you need to [think like a fisherman](#). Decide what kind of clients you want to catch. Then you'll know where to go look for them, how to attract their attention and what services to offer them. The closer your prospect is to your ideal client, the better.

## What kinds of people do you enjoy working with?

Think about the problems you solve. If you're a web developer, you solve the problems of people who want web sites, and don't have them. People at large corporations? Solo entrepreneurs? Musicians? Are they creative risk-takers? Or more conservative? Fit your prospects to your personality. If you're a creative person, full of ideas, and a risk-taker, accountants may not be your best choice.

## How much can you spend to reach them?

There's no sense trying to find clients with a splashy Super Bowl ad campaign if you're a small business. Think about the resources you do have. There are inexpensive or even [free ways to promote your business](#).

## Can they afford you?

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It's no use trying to sell a \$10,000 solution to a small business that earns \$100,000 a year. They can't afford it. To attract smaller companies, offer less expensive options, or payment plans.

### Why you?

Do you specialize in a particular industry or offer specialized services? [Pick a niche](#). If you design web sites, set yourself apart from every other web designer. Be the designer who specializes in small business web sites or the designer who does sites for independent bookstores.

### Do they want what you sell?

Are you offering something people want? Is there a big enough market for it? Think about the kinds of challenges the company faces (outsourcing, increasing market share, learning to use social media) and how your services help them solve those problems.

It doesn't have to be a multi-million dollar problem; it could be helping someone who is overwhelmed with paperwork and needs a virtual assistant.

### **Who is the decision maker?**

Are you talking to the head fish of the family? (OK, so I'm stretching this metaphor until it nearly breaks) Aim your marketing and your discussions at the person who has the authority to buy your product or service.

# Is Your Niche Too Small?

You may want to sell sandals for hamsters, but that doesn't mean anyone will want to buy them. Yes, build a tribe. Yes, focus on a narrow niche - but not so narrow that you and three other people are the only ones in it.

## Do some research first

Check Google. How many results do you get for "sandals for hamsters" (with the quotes)?

Is there a newsletter? A magazine? How about blogs? Are there any other sites selling hamster footwear?

## Find a good angle

If you want to focus on hamsters, maybe you need a different angle. Like hamsters 101, or hamster accessories. Or build-your-own hamster habitats.

If there are people who share your interest, they'll be on the Internet - they'll have forums, magazines, blogs, Facebook groups, and events.

Hamster shoes are, of course, silly. The real point is to do some research and make sure there is a market for what you want to sell (hamsters with cold feet?), that it's big enough to support you, and that they can afford/find value in what you're selling. \$5,000 gold and diamond hamster shoes? Probably not. How about a nice plastic wheel instead?



# Is Your Niche Too Big?

Trying to sell to an audience that's too small can kill your business before it starts. Hamster shoes, anyone?

Too big, or too varied a niche can be a problem too.

Just the other day, someone wanted a business name for a company she was putting together with two friends. She was having a lot of trouble finding a good name, and asked for help.

Each of them had a different specialty. They were: fitness, safety training (first aid and construction), and weddings.

Several people (including me) begged her to reconsider. We said, that's three businesses, not one. Split them up. She left, disappointed that she hadn't gotten what she wanted (a name).

There was no niche there at all. These were three businesses that didn't belong together.

## What's the big deal?

- ◆ It will confuse prospects - the three businesses are so different, people will wonder how you can be good at any of them
- ◆ It may drive people away - do people looking for a wedding really want to see smelly people working out in a gym?



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- ◆ they'll need three marketing plans, three brochures, three sales pitches on the web site, and three audiences to build

### **A real niche:**

- ◆ Picks a specific business to be in (say the safety training)
- ◆ Narrows that down further (maybe safety training on construction sites)
- ◆ Chooses a specific problem in that niche (safety training for new workers on commercial construction sites)
- ◆ Addresses marketing, web, business cards, ads, etc. to *your people* and *only* your people

Not everybody, just your tribe. The blue guys.



# Do You Have a Target?

Why do marketers always ask if you have a target audience? Why not just tell the client what to do? You know, a step-by-step tutorial.

It may seem odd, but there is method to this madness.

## Target More, Spend Less

The reason we ask is because we're trying to find out how to help you and what to recommend. It matters because what's appropriate for a designer trying to reach Fortune 500 companies is not suitable for a designer who wants to do design for local dry cleaners.

## Choose the Right Message

If you were going to do a logo for a toy store, you'd choose different fonts, colors, and design elements than you would if you were creating a logo for a funeral home. The first should be lively and happy and bright. The second should be somber and reassuring.

Spending a lot of time creating a cheery logo for the funeral home would be a mistake. The client would be unhappy and you'd probably have to redo it (costing you time and money). If you spend a lot of time and money trying to reach "everybody," you'll end up with fewer clients (not more). Market to fewer people, and you'll earn more.



## Get More Money

You need a target audience so you know where to focus. Picture a real archery target. There's a big red circle in the middle, and rings around it. Hitting the circle gets you 10 points. Hitting one of the rings gets you fewer points. The further the ring is from the center, the fewer points you get. If you miss the target entirely, you get nothing.

Same thing with marketing. Hit the center (your ideal customer) and you make money. Hit something close, you make some money, but not as much. Miss entirely, you get nothing.

Selling car insurance for commercial fleets? Your perfect target might be moving companies. A close second could be florists or plumbers. Copywriters and designers: a complete miss.

Once you do have a target you can then narrow down where you look for prospects, what to offer them. and how you reach them. Use arrows, not strawberries.

# Narrow Your Marketing and Earn More Money

Less gets me more? How can that be?

Focusing on a small group of people, instead of trying to sell to everyone, can actually [get you more business](#). You need a niche.

But how do you find one?

## Find your passion

First of all, think about what you like. Is your passion for design in a particular industry? Are you more drawn to pharmaceuticals? Or does your heart beat faster when you work on something for the music industry? If you're passionate about something, the joy will come through in your work. You'll be happier, and so will your customers.

## Narrow it down

Next step is to narrow it down. Music is a big topic. Do you want to focus on big labels? Or up-and-coming indie country music artists? Be as specific as possible.



## Check the market

Do some research. You may have a great idea, but there's no sense going ahead with an idea without a market. So, do a little research to find out if a market exists. Here are some tools.

### Market search tools

- ◆ [Google Blog Search](#). Look to see if there are blogs in your chosen market.
- ◆ [Magazines.com](#) or [Amazon magazine search](#) (if there's a magazine, there's a market).
- ◆ Check for trade associations (same principle as magazines)
- ◆ [Google Keyword Search](#)

Become known as a specialist in a particular field, and you'll be the go-to company. "Oh yeah, she's the green exhibit designer."

# Are You Marketing Like a Rabbit or a Fox?

I had a client some years ago whose marketing ideas kept turning left, then right, then doubling back on themselves, like a rabbit fleeing a fox. Each time we spoke, I'd try to get him to focus. Each time, he had a different idea about what he wanted to do (sales reps, networking, telemarketing, articles, newsletters)...

You name it, he tried it. Any of these can work, but he never gave any of them a chance - so none of them did.

The rabbit just runs. The fox, on the other hand, sniffs out the best places to find rabbits. He then picks a target and chases after it.

Pick two or three marketing tools. Concentrate your efforts on those. Try different messages. Track them to find out which gets the best results.



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# About the Author

*Earn More With Niche Marketing* was written by Jodi Kaplan. Jodi fixes “broken marketing.” Her clients are writers, graphic designers, and creatives who are great at generating ideas and doing their jobs — but need help turning their expertise, their skills, and their desires into dollars.

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