

Seven Strategies

To Successfully Sell

Services Online



ark.advance

Grow Your Services Online 

ANALYTICS



RESULTS



KNOWLEDGE



About Ark Advance

Our Approach

We start with a solid analytical foundation to build future online marketing efforts upon. This allows us to quantify the true return on effort for investments across areas such as natural search, paid search and / or on page website changes.

Our Commitment to you

To teach you about the key performance metrics specific for your website and business and then to show you how to make better decisions based on these when it comes to allocating your online marketing budget.

Who we work with

Our team of seven works with companies in New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific Islands.

What we charge

This depends on the work that is required. But as a guide clients pay between \$695 and \$3500 per month for the outcomes we deliver.

The approach required to successfully sell services online is vastly different from that needed to sell products. Since we started in 2002 we have helped dozens of service-based organisations achieve more online.

These seven tips are a selection of strategies and tactics that we apply through our standard implementation process. By following any or (ideally) all of these points you will be well on the way to transforming your website into the lead generating machine it can be.

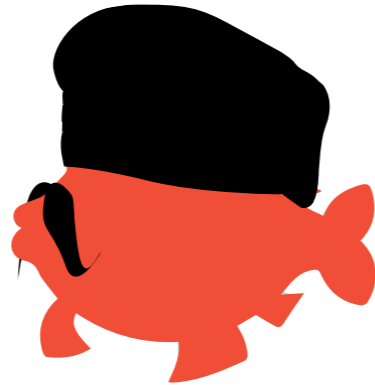
TIP
1

Pick Your Ideal Audience(s) and produce your content to suit just them



Alfred

GUESS
WHO
?



Jimmy

TIP
1

Let's get the hardest task nailed first. Whilst your website's images set the scene, it is your words (through either text or video) that move people to make a decision. Writing them with a specific person or group of people in mind is much easier than writing for a broad, nebulous group of web users.

You have probably visited websites that do this well. They may have talked about the exact problem you were experiencing or the ideal goal you were looking to achieve. The more you read, the more it felt like the service was crafted for people just like you.

Compare this to content that totally misses the mark. Then, you switched off after the first paragraph. It contained a list of features which were applied to a wide range of possible applications – all to produce nonspecific improvements. Boring, boring and more boring.

But what if your service is relevant to a wide range of customer groups? No problem – just avoid slamming them all together with the

one boring, nebulous message. Do the harder work and split them into separate pages, each one written with a specific group in mind.

Let's say you're a smart accountant. You might write three separate pages on how your services can be customised to suit businesses in Auckland who are: 1) a small tech service start up; 2) a medium-sized manufacturing company, and 3) a company in either group who wants to trade in Australia.

Each group would have a page of 800-1000 words, say, talking about the love and attention your accountancy practice provide to solve its specific problems and opportunities.

Conversely, your not-so-smart competitor, who wants to take the easy road to website creation, produces just one page of generic copy which lists the needs all three in a page of boring, non specific "grey suit talk". Yawn.

Do the hard work and write for each of the audiences you want to appeal to.



Ensure All Your “Content Prerequisites Are Met” – But Then Go Further and Highlight What Makes You Different



People come to your website with an existing expectation of what they're about to or should experience. For instance, if you're an architect, people expect your website to show beautiful pictures of finished houses complete with glowing words from happy clients. The more the merrier.

If you're a web design company, they are looking for links to sites you have created and, again, paragraphs of praise on how delightful you are to work with.

A branding company? The natural thing would be plenty of “before and after” shots of shocking brands that have been transformed into sexy logos and type faces. A business coach? Words from happy clients and a simple way to “try before you buy” your service (more on this later).

All these I call “content prerequisites” – content that will count against you if they're missing, and ensure you are part of the “consideration group” if they are present.

All well and good. But what moves you from mere consideration to that happy state of confirmation is content that shows how you stand out from the rest.

So what does make you different? Imagine you and your competitors are all sitting on one side of a table and the prospect is facing you all on the other – what would you say to ensure they pick you and not the rest?

Let's tackle a short list of differences that you may think differentiate your company: great customer service, super product knowledge, excellent post-sale follow up. Unfortunately, all fall flat as bullet points on a page. All are subjective and a challenge for prospects to actually experience.

And do they really differentiate you? If I was engaging an architect, I wouldn't want one who had great customer service skills but produced designs that left me cold. I'd be more tempted by someone who spent their life focusing on producing great design for tiny spaces of land; just like I have.

Your challenge is certainly to deliver the prerequisite content but then quickly present a point of difference that appeals to a sizeable part of the market and can be easily described **and proven**.



Make It Easy For People to “Experience” Your Knowledge



Let's say you are looking for a lawyer to help you set up a family trust. The last time you used one was when you purchased the family home a few years back and it seems trusts is not one of their specialties. So you head over to Google and start searching.

Imagine you find three possible choices. The first two include a few pages on their trust services with nice shiny pictures of the partners who specialise in the space. They look OK. The third, however, has this stuff too but also a page of free PDF resources available for download.

You click on a PDF that catches your eye, open it up and are pleasantly surprised by its easy-to-read plain English style. This informative but short document explains

what you need to do (and why) in order to set up your trust. It doesn't solve the complete problem but it does answer many of your initial questions.

It all ends with a picture of the partner responsible, their email address and a reason to call (more on this later). “Why not?” you think, and the email is sent and the two companies that made it too hard are quickly forgotten.

See how it works? I'm not advocating you provide a complete “step by step plan on how to solve the problem that people are dealing with.” Just a tidbit of advice that provides enough value to make you seem as smart as you really are.



Provide Social Proof of Your Abilities



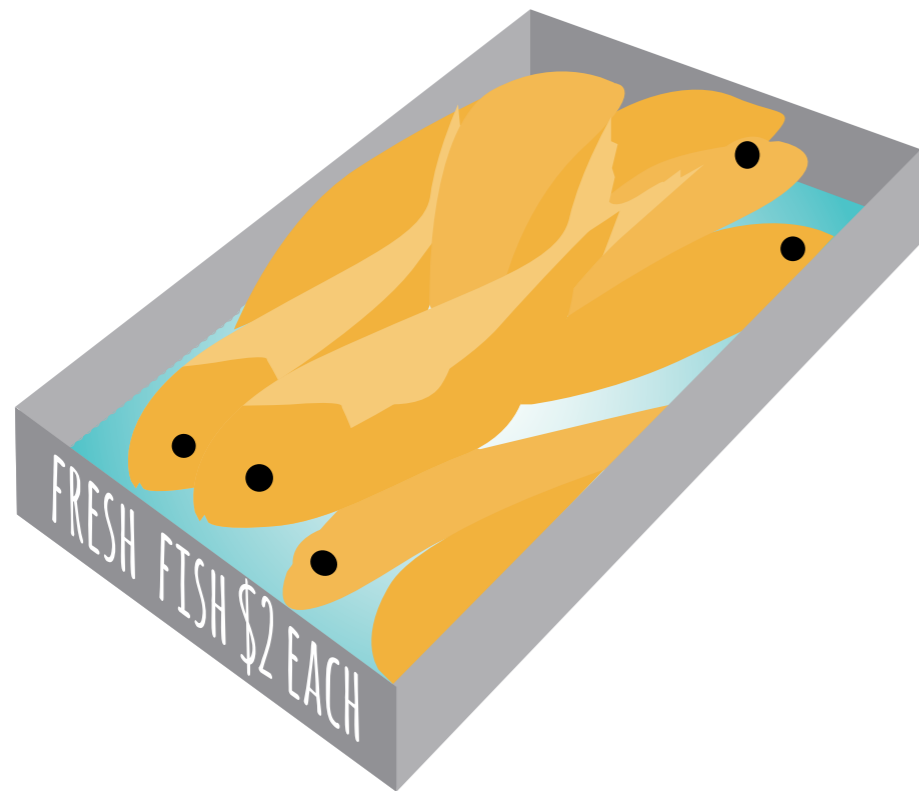
So your website says you provide excellent customer service – that’s the easy part. Going ahead and proving it – now that’s a different matter!

Maybe you survey your customers each quarter on this exact metric and share the results on your site; or your customers write in and talk about how great your staff are in dealing with them. You may even mention how smart your team is. All of that’s good stuff – but even better would be to prove what you’re saying with links to partner programs they belong to or awards they have won.

Any opportunity you have to back up your story with social proof is well worth taking. The more the merrier.

TIP
5

Make Your Service Super Easy to Buy By Focusing On Outcomes and Transforming Them Into Products

TIP
5

Thankfully, there are an array of smart online marketing tools to help you recycle your clean traffic enough times to ensure it converts. Remarketing and email marketing are among them.

Remarketing is an easily set up Google product that lets you “follow” your non-converted website visitors as they browse the web, presenting targeted banner ads to them. You’ll need a range of banner sizes to display and someone to help you build your target audience. You can also choose the frequency at which your banner ads are seen, allowing you to hit the sweet spot between visibility and annoyance.

Email marketing is the stalwart of online marketing. It’s been going so long that many forget the reason for its longevity – it works. The main challenge is providing content that the customer deems worthy of giving you their email address. Every year the bar is raised higher.

So there you go: my five strategies to fix a failing service marketing solution. We have seen clients use these steps to transform a system that hasn’t delivered a lead in 10 months to one that delivers every month.

Call us for more information, or if you’d like help applying these steps to your business.



Sell the Act of Picking Up the Phone



So you have the right audience defined, the content is tuned just for them, and it's littered with nice social proof of your super-talented team. Services are addressed as outcomes and packaged up as handy products that anyone in this industrial segment would be a fool not to own.

All you want them to do is pick up the phone and call you. Which is exactly what they are not doing. So what gives?

Well, my friend, you need to “sell” the act of calling you. Remember, prospects have to take their hands off the keyboard or mouse, place it on their smartphone or office phone and dial those numbers. This takes effort. Seriously.

So why should they? What's going to happen to make their effort worthwhile? Perhaps a bribe? Like a complimentary 30 minutes of consulting, or a chance to share their problem with an expert willing to listen.

Think what you can provide to them to make placing that single call a win in itself. Just placing the phone number at the top of the page and expecting them to call will not be effective.



Know What Happens When They Call – It's Time to Script the Experience!



All going well all the last six tips have been implemented (clever you!) and the phone decides to ring (good phone!).

But uh oh! You are out of the office and someone else picks it up. Then what happens? What's that first conversation like? What questions do you or your team ask and, more importantly, which ones do you leave for later? And how do you ensure the customer's called back anyway?

How many times have you been in this customer's shoes and had no one call you back – or call back weeks later after you have already made a decision?

Don't let this happen. Put a system in place to reliably manage the process from that first call through to the sale. Ideally, it should also be a system that is followed by everyone who is part of your customer-facing operation.

A good system will include somewhere for all leads to be stored, some way to track what has been said or sent to whom, and a way to define what should be said and when. It could be a simple spreadsheet or it may be one of the many sophisticated CRM applications available to small businesses.

BONUS
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TIP

Record your success



THE SWORDFISH TROPHY 2015



201b SNAPPER 2015

BONUS
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TIP

Think of all this, Grasshopper, as a journey, not a destination. At the start, you know you will be a mess across many stages of the service sales process. That's why you are starting. But still, you will record how many people visit your site, and how of those become leads, and who then end up as clients.

The percentages could be scary at first – few conversions from prospect to client. But over time things change – perhaps on the content creation side – so the conversion rate starts to lift, little by little.

Customer testimonials are then added to your website at the same time as you productise some of your popular services. Suddenly, a big bump in lead conversion rate takes place. Then you write down the script for that first phone call, practise it, and start using it instead of your previous “wing it” non-script Sales conversion.

On and on you go, adding a few tweaks here and there to make things even smoother than before. Until you reach that Zen-like phase of having so much new business coming across your desk that you can pick and choose the projects that appeal the most.

Sound like a plan?

If you would like to learn how Ark Advance helps companies achieve such heightened states of enlightenment, contact us today here.

Ark.Advance Testimonials

I am very happy with Abby and her work and am seeing the results in improved website performance with better targeting and subsequently improved sales.

Rod Moratti

I think you do a great job and to a very high standard.

Kendall Cochrane, The Baby Factory

We have only begun working together so my answer is not definitive yet, but so far so good. Excellent communications, expectation setting, planning and feedback.

Jeff Robbins, Vesper Marine

Excellent service, excellent knowledge base.

Tracey McKay, NZ Sugar

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Grow Your Services Online 



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