



STEP CHANGE

strategy, meet creativity

HOPE MEDIA PODCAST

THIS MONTH'S STRATEGISTS



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If you have a marketing, strategy or business question. You can [submit it for next month's podcast](#) or you can [contact Step Change](#).

TOPICS WE'LL TACKLE

Background: Sheila is a director at Carnegie Pty Ltd. The company provides a mix of accounting, financial and investment advice to clients - where Sheila handles the financial planning side of the business. When dealing with customers, Sheila finds they often have negative preconceptions about the industry. Her main concern is how to tackle these negative concerns head on and generate more positive press.

1

How to generate positive press coverage

And how to leverage this press to attract more customers

2

How to resolve negative misconceptions customers may have about your industry

Ways to reduce this tension and convert these leads into customers

3

How to brand and promote yourself online

Strategies for a strong web presence to increase online traffic to the business

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Finding the Triggers

For every business, it's important that you differentiate customer motivation to buy, based on need stage and life stage triggers. People don't need another list of services that are undifferentiated, people are looking for something that is entirely specific to their current needs. Rather than stating that you offer 'tax accounting, financial planning, investment advice' - perhaps take a closer look at your customers and tailor what it is you 'offer' per customer.

To understand this better, let's explore the difference between a 'need stage trigger' and a 'life stage trigger'. A need stage trigger is where someone decides 'it takes me too long to do my tax' or 'I need help with managing my finances'. A life stage trigger can include - 'I've just gotten married' or 'I am retiring'.

By connecting to the need stage triggers and life stage triggers of your customers, not only do you *understand* your customer's needs better, but you're able to offer them something that's more tailored and specific.

Customer Acquisition Tactic: Associations

In Australia we have more associations than any other country in the world. We have so many associations that we even have the 'Associations of Associations of Australia'. These Associations are gold mines. They have a bunch of customers and SMEs that are going through all these different life stages. These associations have a real problem delivering relevance to their members.

A great idea is to approach these associations and speak at their conferences with relevant content around their need stages and life stages. Frame how you can help them around these stages, then remember to capture their data. All of this, will increase your likelihood of converting these customers.

Positioning

The first step in getting positive press, is to focus on your positioning and tagline. In order to come up with a tagline a helpful tool is the 'inch-wide mile-deep' strategy where you ask yourself, "how relevant can I be for the smallest and most targeted group of people while meeting all my growth needs?" This is also known as niche marketing.

Then, overlay a venn diagram (important to customers, unique to your business and what the competition has) and find the intersection of the three, where you can stand out and have a sustainable positioning advantage.

Positive Press

The first question to ask yourself concerning receiving positive press is, "what am I doing to deserve it?" Unless your business is doing something remarkable, in a space that people care about, nobody will read about it and nobody will write about it.

If you're in the position where you feel you're not doing anything worth writing about, you should focus on industry trends. Spot and follow all the trends and conversations that are happening around your industry through media channels and on social media. Make sure you comment on the trends with your opinions on the issue. Then, you can issue these statements out to journalists or you can write it up in a blog article.

Writing regular blog posts that comment on what's happening in the sector is a powerful way of boosting SEO and driving web traffic.

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Meeting Misconceptions Head On

Use satisfaction rates to push up against negative preconceptions about the industry. Collect testimonials from every client and group these testimonials according to need stages and life stages. This will demonstrate to your potential customers why they should buy with you.

If there is negative press around your industry, it's important to locate all the tension points and the misconceptions that people have. Then, when you approach a customer, you need to dispel these tension points one by one without the customer having to bring them up themselves. Not only does this show foresight, but it demonstrates to the customer that you understand them and takes you from the position of being defensive of these tension points, to proactive about these tension points.

Systemising Referrals

In order to ensure a steady stream of referrals, it's important you set up an automated system where you ask all your customers on a scale of one to ten, how likely they are to refer you to another company? If they score you nine or ten, you can then ask them to pass you the contact details for someone who they think will benefit from your service. For these customers, it's also important to collect testimonials from them. Ask them specifically to crystallise to you why they enjoyed your service or how you helped them. This will help other people be able to envision what your services can do for them.

In just prompting customers and getting them to crystallise their experiences, you subconsciously arm them with the tools they need in order to help sell for you. Often it takes nothing more than just a reminder for them to start talking about your business to other people.

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