The Art of "Selling Shovels" To A Hungry Market

This Product Brought To You Courtesy Of:

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Brief Introduction

You know, I never quite got this at first. I had heard it said a billion times over, but didn't really know what the TRUE meaning of this little phrase was. . .Until Now.

See, I had been doing some research for my next PLR project and stumbled across the BIG answer that I was looking for. And now, I'm going to share it with you, hopefully reducing the time it will take YOU to understand this concept. And show you how to do this successfully.

First, you need to understand that there is no real measure to one's own personal success. It is all in how YOU view the word success. Is it finishing up a product? Is it selling at least ONE copy of your new product? Selling 3? 10? 50? YOU are the one that determines your own definition of success. No one else can do that for you. But, I can show you how to get started in the right direction towards reaching your success goals via product creation.

That's what this report is all about. Showing you the way. . . .

". . .I can only show you the door. You're the one that has to walk through it."

-- Morpheus. "The Matrix"

The Concept Of Selling Shovels

So, what is this "selling shovels" concept and how can we use it to our advantage?

Well, along while back, during the "gold rush" many people traveled out to the "wild west" to find their fortunes through gold digging. Not many made it.

But, a few smart cookies who knew that gold digging and panning just wasn't for them came up with a different way to cash in. Instead, they decided to **sell** gold hunting supplies to those that were convinced they would find their fortunes.

And **THOSE** few smart cookies discovered it was much easier to earn profits hand over fist by selling "shovels" to those searching for the gold all the while getting their part of the riches without all the back breaking work!

That's **OUR** goal here. To sell the "gold diggers" their "supplies".

And, how do we do that?

Well, it's a might easier than you would think it is.

Here's the concept in a nutshell. . .

There are thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, of people searching for "Internet Gold" by way of selling digital products such as information, like this report you're reading right now. Hence the "Internet Marketer".

And these Internet Marketers don't have the time to create their own digital "gold mines" themselves. Most of them have their time stretched so thin, it's simply easier to "outsource" this process of product creation to someone else.

Those are our "gold diggers".

Now, of course we know that these "gold diggers" already know where to find the online "gold"(their customers). So, all we really need to focus on is HOW to sell our products to the folks that we know want our products and more importantly, have the MONEY to pay us.

But, what do we create? What is it that we should focus our writing on? What will ***SELL***?

Those are some tough questions to answer. The main reason they are so tough is because finding a hot topic to center our info product creation around is a toss up. One never knows what will be the next big thing.

With that said, there are a few ways you can determine what it is you should be making your product topic focus that may be more successful than simply selecting something you already know about.

Yes, most Internet Marketers that teach you "how to write" will tell you, and I've often said this myself too, that you should begin writing on topics you fully understand, or have past experience in. A.K.A. - knowledge.

However, sometimes, and this is more true than not, those subject matters that we are "knowledgeable" in don't always sell that well to others who may not have any interest in them, as we do.

So, just how do we find our successful topic, or "niche", idea then? One word -- RESEARCH.

Yep. That's how every single info product writer does it. They research. But, HOW they research is the key to their success.

Just like the "Wild West" shovel sellers, we must search out that one thing the mass population is in desperate need of to make their work, or life, EASIER. And in turn, make us our profits. Remember too, the HOTTER the topic, the better placed we are to

earn money from our creation.

Understand that when we are talking about "the mass population", we don't mean Worldwide. Even though, there are some subjects that will always be hunted down by folks throughout the World. And, we'll get into that a bit later on. For now, let's keep our focus on the "How's" and the "What's" will follow as you're about to see.

So, let's start digging. . . .

Shovel Hunt Method #1

One terrific way to get this answer faster is to see what's HOT in the World at the moment. Any local or World news channel or web site will do for this purpose. And, yes, that includes posted videos of news recordings. In fact, those may bring you the information faster and more efficiently, so don't count those out. Definitely count those IN!

What we are looking for in general is **FACTUAL INFORMATION**.

We don't want someone's personal YouTube video on a certain topic. We want our info straight from the "horse's mouth".

Morning news programs such as the Today Show on NBC are outstanding for gathering up subject matter to expand upon. They have plenty of interesting little bits on health, travel, beauty, cooking, etc. all the time. And they let you know what their viewers are interested in learning more about.

Don't count out the Holiday seasons either. That is one subject that always seems to come in to play, especially as specific holidays such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, or Christmas draw nearer on the calender. So, grab a cup of your morning beverage favorite, turn on the television, and make either physical or mental notes of what the morning news programs are talking about. Remember, we WANT subjects that are "newsworthy".

Here are a list of sites you can peruse to help you search out your hot topics:

MSNBC
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/

CBS
http://www.cbsnews.com/

FOX NEWS

http://www.foxnews.com/

ABC
http://abcnews.go.com/

BBC
http://news.bbc.co.uk/

US NEWS
http://www.usnews.com/

CNN
http://www.cnn.com/

And of course, if you want to get a bit more "local" be sure and do a simple Google search for your local news stations web sites. Those can contain a wealth of information for subjects you can write about.

For the purposes of this report, I'll go ahead and use the general starting subject: ***Improving Parenting Skills*** as if I had found that through this first method and see what else we can find and expand on. . . .

Shovel Hunt Method #2

Ever had a problem you just can't seem to solve on your own? Well, so do thousands of other people, everyday. Where do these folks go to try and find answers from a friendly, helpful community online?

Forums of course!

And what an outstanding source of information these are. No matter the subject, there is probably a forum dedicated to it. The best way to search these out is by using a search engine such as Google(can you tell I like Google? ^_^) and enter the phrase: forum ***your-subject-matter-keyword-here***.

So, if I'm trying to create a holiday recipe product, then I would put in something such as this: parenting forum. Or, to scale that broad topic down further, I could type in something like: new parent tips forum.

I think you get the idea by now, right? ;-). At this point, before putting in your **forum *subject-matter*** search, you should have an idea of what you're looking for from ***Shovel Hunt Method #1***. If not, try using it because it may make this part a bit easier for you.

Now, if you already have an idea in mind, then simply go with that and find a forum that caters to it exclusively. For our example, we'll go with the subject “Improving Parenting Skills”. It's a pretty long lasting subject, and we can spawn lots of "spin off" ideas from it too.

This is a terrific subject that you can profit from, and one that it sure to hang around for a long time to come. So, there are no worries that this subject will be going “out of season” any time soon. There are loads of people looking to improve their parenting skills, or becoming a new parent looking for help. So this make it a HOT topic, and one that will be long lasting.

In fact, at the time of this writing, there is a new “hit” show airing on the NBC

network called “The Baby Borrowers”. If you haven't ever heard of the “Baby Borrowers” before, here is a short synopsis of what it's all about from the official NBC.com website:

> *“Baby Borrowers is a unique social experiment that takes five teenage couples on a roller coaster ride of adult responsibility, allowing them to experience parenting firsthand.”*

The teens start off caring for babies, then move on to toddlers, followed up by pre-teens, teens (like themselves), and eventually rounding out with senior citizens to care for.

Before “The Baby Borrowers”, there have been a plethora of other similar shows such as “Nanny 911” and “Super Nanny”, while still more are coming up such as “Meet Mr. Mom”, and “Brat Camp”.

I would surmise that until humans stop the procreation process, this subject will never end, and therefore should be a great subject matter to take on for an upcoming project.

Now that we know what we'll be writing about, let's do some research.

To begin, we'll type: *parenting forums* into Google and see what we come up with. . . .

Still searching. . . .

Got it!

There are quite a few results, so we'll go with just the first three links provided from our search:

ParentingForums.org
Family Forums

Focus On Family Parenting Forums

What we are looking for are problems. And, not just any old problems.
We want COMMON problems that quite a number of people are experiencing as parents.

From just one of the above forums, Focus On Family Parenting Forums, there are ideas galore. And that's just from the main forum category names!

Take a look at these:

“How Moving Impacts The Family”
“Surviving Baby's First Year”
“What Parents Should Know About Teens”
“Cooking For A Busy Family”
“Family Safety And Security”
“Single Parenting”
“Parenting Grandchildren”
“Parenting And Divorce”
“Parenting Adult Children”
“Step-Parenting And Blended Families”
“Parenting Multiples”
“Adoptive And Foster Parenting”

And the list goes on and on.

Those are some outstanding topics we can use to get more specific with generalized parenting skills from just one forum alone!

Still, we need to find a “common problem” amongst all those forums. So, let's find one. . . .

It seems as if parents need help with toddlers and “temper tantrums” as this question

continues to be brought up through the ParentingForums.org website inside the "Infant/Toddler" section.

And this is a great place to start.

The reason why this is a great place to start is because television reality shows, as I mentioned earlier on this subject, such as "Nanny 911", deal with getting young children to "behave", and so many parents need assistance in this area across the World.

"Temper tantrums" are a **common problem** amongst parents. Yes, even older children can have "temper tantrums", and parents need help knowing how to deal with them properly at any, and every age.

So, this will be the subject we begin researching.

We have to become an "*instant expert*" on the topic. Even if we have no experience. We will gain it rapidly through our research and be an expert on the subject by the time we are finished.

Okay, we have the problem we're going to focus on, and based on the amount of separate threads started on the subject and the responses, it's an important one.

With that said, we don't necessarily need to venture on to the other two forum sites, but you can do further research if you either want more problem ideas you can solve, or want to delve deeper into the one we found.

Now, we can go back to Google and expand our knowledge a little bit more about this problem and get started on our "instant expert" status.

There are two ways you can research your subject. . . .

1. Look up more information on the **problem**

2. Look up more information on the ***solution*** to the problem

Both of the above research methods will give you terrific amounts of content for your new product.

Of course, when doing research, it may seem rather tempting to simply “copy and paste” what you find on other web sites, slap it inside your product, and sell it to others, but DO NOT DO THIS!!

This is **NOT LEGAL** and you can get yourself into big trouble.

Besides, the best way to create any product is to create it yourself. Write it yourself. Or at least hire someone to write it up for you (if you don't like writing).

All we are doing is looking at other people's solutions and information outlines via their web sites so that we will gain a greater understanding of what needs to go inside of our own product. That, of course, we will write ourselves with our own unique content and words providing viable solutions to the problem at hand.

Now all that's left to do is begin researching. Let's start off by looking up the “parenting problem” with the assistance of Google. . . .

Simply type in the problem: "*temper tantrums toddlers*" or “*toddlers temper tantrums*” (without the quotation marks of course) and you should come up with more information if you want to expand on what this is so that your readers will know why you have put out your report/ebook/etc. on the issue in the first place.

That's the whole concept behind ***research model #1*** listed above. And this will also aid in educating you more on the issue so that you become even more of an expert on the subject.

Not to mention, this "extra" research will also come in handy when you come up with a sales page, if you plan on doing so that is. Personally, I don't know why you wouldn't want to create a sales page, otherwise, how else are you going to earn money off your hard work?!

So, what results came back for “toddlers temper tantrums”?

About 184,000 pages of content!

Seems like a lot, but in most cases, if the problem is common enough, you will begin to see a pattern in the information provided throughout these pages. You will often times see major similarities in the information provided.

Those are the portions you want to “pick out” and focus on.

For our “test subject matter”, there are quite a number of websites to go through. This may take some time, but the end result of this research method will be worth it for the quality of your product.

We'll start with the first result brought back.

It happens to be a site by the name of KidsHealth.org and there's some terrific “clinical” information there. Why do I use the word “clinical”? Because if you scroll all the way down to the bottom of the page, you will see that the author of the informative article was reviewed by an “MD” or “Medical Doctor”.

In other words, a “professional” in the field of medicine has approved of the information provided in that particular article. Or at least, that's my synopsis.

There's a lot of great stuff just in this first page alone.

The article explains what a “temper tantrum” is, what causes kids to have them, how to avoid them, and what parents should do if a tantrum cannot be avoided.

Basically, you have just found your first five sections of your product. . . .

What Are Temper Tantrums?

At What Age Do Children Have Tempter Tantrums?

Why Do Children Have Them?

How To Avoid Them

What To Do When A Tantrum Cannot Be Avoided?

Obviously, you'll want to do more research and write everything out in your own words from all the information that you find.

Sounds pretty simple, right? Maybe even too simple?

Indeed, it is!

After following the first research model, I am satisfied with the results and don't really need to go any further with the second.

For some subjects, you will find this to be true. However, for the purposes of this report, we will continue on with the second method as if we never found any worthwhile results by using the first research model.

All right, so, we didn't seem to find anything by using the first research model, **wink, *wink,* which brings us to our **second research model**. . . . .looking for solutions to our problem!

When doing this type of research, you will want to use search terms such as: "*(insert your subject)* **solutions**", "**how to handle** *(insert your subject)*", "**manage** *(insert your subject)*", and so on.

For our example, I chose "temper tantrum solutions" and did a quick Google search. Not as many results came back. Only around 65,000 this time around.

But that's okay because we are slowly drilling down our broad search terms of "*temper tantrums*" to more specific terms. And so, there will be less results the more specific we

become with our searches.

Still, 65,000 results is nothing to sneeze at.

From the list, the second result caught my eye. It's a link to an actual physical book product description. This is really good.

The two main reasons why are these. . . .

1. **It gives us a better idea of what our competition is putting on to the market and what we need to put inside our product**

2. **It tells us that there is indeed a market for our subject**

So, we can continue to go through the remaining results and take notes on the content that will comprise our product.

Then, based on our notes and findings, we write it up!

That's really all there is to this method, and it has worked for years many times over.

If you can research, then you can utilize this method easily.

Shovel Hunt Method #3

There is also another way you can find out about certain problems which is a little different than what we did in ***Shovel Hunt Method #2***. We're following on the same "find a problem and solve it" premise, but we're taking it to an "interactive" level.

In essence, WE are going to be the ones presenting the question, or problem to our "audience". And, by "audience", we're talking about either web site visitors or people on our email list, if we have either. If not, you can skip this Method entirely.

Now, we can either present one "open ended" question giving our site visitors or email subscribers freedom for providing any type of answer they want.

Something like:

"Hey [FirstName]. I just returned home from the grocery store with our little one and something insane happened while we were there.

[Child's Name] had their first ever "temper tantrum", right there in the cereal isle. I never knew my baby could scream that loud and act out in such a way!

Has this ever happened to you?

I'd like to hear your experiences and how you handled them. So, write in and tell me if you've had anything crazy happen to you when you're out with your child!

I'm off to find answers to what upset my baby so much and what I can do to stop it from happening again. I'll let you know what I find!"

Or, you could say something like this:

"Hi there [FirstName]. [YourName] here. Well, you know that I'm a single mom/dad of 3 beautiful children and I love them dearly. However, I don't always love their behavior.

Especially out in public.

Well, I decided that it was time I tried something different, so I packed up the kids and we went off to the movies to see what they would do.

Not even 20 minutes into the movie theater and whaddaya know?

They started fighting, screaming, and acting like little hooligans!

At first I thought, 'Okay. I can handle this situation.' But, then I realized that the it was spiraling way out of control – and fast!!

Have you experienced anything like this with your children lately? If so, write in and tell me about it. I'd love to know, especially from you, that I'm not alone.

Maybe together, we can come up with an effective solution!"

That's the "open ended" question method. It's amazing how much information you can find out from other people and their experiences with a specific topic.

You may find that there's so much information provided to you from other people, that you could come up with more than just one product based on it alone.

Plus, you'll be providing others experiencing the same problem with do-able solutions. It's a "Win-Win" situation all around!

Now on with the other method. . .the public "poll".

In order for this to work, you will need to already have a web site. This can be a blog, or personal networking page such as a MySpace page. Those will do fine. And, depending upon your selected subject, they may even help provide a greater response to your online poll.

There are a couple of different places you can find free poll creating services. One of which is http://www.easy-poll.com/ .

All you need to do is put in your info and wham! Out comes a pre-designed poll that you can post up on your site.

Then, you can simply leave it up and see what your visitors choose. Now you will have all the input you need to create a new, “in-demand” product full of useful solutions to the problems caused by your subject matter of choice.

Shovel Hunt Method #4

While finding solutions to common "problems" is one obvious way to go for a successful "shovel", there is yet another way. And that is. . . .explaining how to perform a certain task that may not be well known, but plenty of people want to learn how.

Ah yes, the "how to" shovel.

This, in my experience, has been a terrifically successful seller to both Internet Marketers, our "gold diggers", and the general public, or the "gold", who are interested in "learning how" to do something.

And, the latter part of the above sentence is what makes the "how to" "shovel" such a **HOT** seller. Because our "gold diggers" **KNOW** that they will have a top notch product on their hands that their "gold" source will eat up.

Let's head back to our "example" subject, “dealing with temper tantrums”. Now, we're not talking about "problem solving" here per say, but rather, we're speaking about ***how*** to **DEAL** with them in a positive way as a caring and loving parent.

Going back to our top three forums, we can figure out how to explain parenting effectively during a raging temper tantrum by learning to do this ourselves.

No. You don't NEED to be a parent for this part.

Many a successful author of children's books aren't parents themselves. And, it's important to keep that in mind when writing.

All we need to do is **EDUCATE** ourselves on the process of how to do what we will be explaining to our readers. And the forums we found are just the ticket we need.

All right, I found a couple of interesting topics. . . .

1.) Bedtime Tempter Tantrums

and

2.) 2 Yr Old Very Whiny

So, that's a start in the right direction. Of course, if we did a bit more digging, we could find even more, but those two will do at the moment.

Again, we're just trying to gain a better understanding of what our subject matter is. What we don't want to do is copy any of the information we find “word for word” as this would be plagiarism on the highest level.

At this point, we need to learn the steps involved in combating unacceptable behavior in younger children. So, we can either continue reading the replies inside these posts on the forum, or we can use Google and type the same questions inside the "search" bar.

Either way, we need to learn everything we can about the process so that we can be sure we are explaining it correctly to our readers/customers/"gold" and providing them with good solutions to the main problem.

While we, in our example throughout this report, have focused on the subject of Parenting Skills, everything outlined will work for any subject matter you might be considering.

But, if you're completely lost on finding a good subject, you should take a deeper look into a full fledged “how to” site called eHow.com.

Believe me, you'll probably spend hours there just rifling through all the subjects and have a ton of ideas by the time you're done.

Shovel Hunt Method #5

There is one other way that you can find sizzling hot subjects to write on. And they're as close as your competitors sales pages.

Did you know that you can actually find hot subjects just by looking through the “bullet points” on sales pages across the Internet?

It's 100% **true**!

I know you've probably seen at least one sales page online, but have you bothered to ***really*** look closely at what's there? You can find all sorts of things to write up hot selling products about based on the information found within just **one** sales page.

And, realistically, there's not set length on how long, or short, your information product has to be. It can be a short 3 page “special report”. Or, it can be a super lengthy 200 page informational guide. It all depends on what you want to do and how you want to present information to your readers.

Let's examine this concept further by following our example subject matter.

Here's a really good sales page that gives you plenty of ideas on successfully handling unwanted behavioral problems. The product is called the “Good Child Guide” and the sales page is phenomenal for our purpose.

Focus in on the Headline text first.

Do you see any ideas flying out at you?

How about these:

“Embarrassing Public Behaviors of Your Children”
“Rudeness of Your Child”
“Public Temper Tantrums”

“Effective Parenting Techniques”

Those are pretty darn good. And we swiped those ideas just from the main Headline text!

Let's go a bit deeper down the page and see if anything else springs out at us. . . .

Oh, there's another great idea in a sub-headline:

“More Fun and Less Stress as a Family”

That's pretty good!

If you go further on down, you will see the real money makers inside the “bullet point” list.

Here's what I found inside it:

“Specific Reasons Why Kids Do The Things They Do”
“The One Critical Parenting Error Most People Make”
“Positive Action Steps To Stop Unacceptable Behavior”
“Understanding Manipulation”
“Most Powerful Technique To Eliminate Whining”
“Dealing With Stealing and Lying”
“How To Effectively Teach Responsibility To Your Children”
“How To Analyze ANY Behavioral Problem And Come Up With A Winning Solution”

And there's a few more I didn't list. But that's a great list of ideas!

Obviously I changed some of the wording, but the base ideas are still prominent as you can clearly see from the list above.

You can effectively do this for any sales page covering any subject. And, you could even come up with other ideas that aren't even listed in the sales letter just by being

inspired by the ideas that are there!

The most important thing you can do is be sure that there is a “buying market” that will be interested in your product's subject matter. Otherwise, it won't matter what you write or how you write it. It will bomb out terribly.

So, how can you be sure that you'll have a winner on your hands every time?

Simple. . . .

Do some keyword research!

Final Conclusion

You have just discovered 5 different ways to “dig” up new ideas for your next writing project and turn it into online “gold”.

By no means are these the only ways to find hot selling topics, but they are among some of the best and most commonly used methods by successful Internet Marketers the web over.

The best part about all the Shovel Methods outlined is that although some of the strategies for using them might change, the core of the methods themselves will remain the same for years to come. In this light, you'll never have to worry about them becoming “outdated”.

Being a good researcher is worth it's weight in “gold”. Learn how to research effectively and you could expand your profiting potential for a lifetime.

Of course there are other skills to learn when it comes to being a successful Internet Marketer, but they are outside the scope of this small report. I encourage you to always keep learning how to improve your skills over the course of your online earning journey. Doing this will allow you to become the top at your game.

I wish you all the best success with your ventures, now and in the future. And my greatest hope is that this report helped you reach that success!

All The Best,

Alex Major
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