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Before ordering any products featured, we highly recommend ordering a very small number of samples and testing your idea before committing any significant sums of money.

Preface

What follows is a ‘best of’ collection of daily emails I wrote between 2016-9, about various aspects of selling products online.

I hope something in this collection will serve as a good idea starter for you.

You’ll also find here, interspersed throughout, a variety of different articles I wrote for my ‘paid’ newsletters, for a similar time period. (These articles are highlighted with ***----*** for the headings.)

Once again, I hope they provide some ‘food for thought’!

Good luck with your online sales, and be sure to stick around for *Volume 2* of this series – coming your way some time soon...

Sincerely,

Oliver Goehler
‘Auction Kommando’!

Who's Your Buyer?

Who do you think buys online?

Most people would probably say "Everyone!", and there is certainly a wide range of buyers.

But here's the thing...

Because of recent events, guess who's shopping *more* online?

It is...

....elderly people.

In fact, new research by *Mintel.com* points out that the over 65's are likely to be the drivers of e-commerce growth over the next couple of years.

Why? Over the last few months, more and more elderly people have effectively been 'forced' into online shopping.

And now, they've got a taste for it!

Going forward, they're also the demographic that's arguably the *least* likely to venture out shopping. (Because of potential health concerns).

And on the flip-side of this...

The *younger* generation - who most of us think of as being the biggest online shoppers - are facing *higher* unemployment.

It's not hard to predict that the older online consumer is set to be a real growth area, whereas the 'younger' demographic may actually see declines in spend.

Alright, so what does this mean to us?

Well, I'm always focused on what new products are coming onto the market...

And I usually don't concentrate on demographics - only on markets themselves. *But now I'm going to think a bit more about products for this demographic.*

As they increasingly turn online, they're likely to get 'hooked' on online shopping. So this demographic is going to grow and grow...

What can you sell to them?

Mental vs. Physical?

OK...so for the first time in my life...

I've gone and got myself a personal trainer. Why?

Well, I've not got much time to workout these days...and when I do, I don't have the same enthusiasm as I used to.

What's more, with the gyms closed...I found a way of bringing the gym 'to me'!

So, twice a week, I'm systematically 'tortured' by my guy.

And I had an interesting thought last week, during a particularly brutal session. You see, as we all know, after 12 or so 'reps', your muscles give up and you drop the weight...

But what if...

Underneath the weights you were lifting, there was a large knife? (Stick with me here).

And...one day, your trainer proposes something to you: Simply put, you have to make it to 14 reps (instead of your usual 12). If you don't make it to 14 reps, then your arm will fall onto the knife below...slashing it to ribbons.

Sounds rather barbaric, right?

But let's think about this...

Would you make it to 14 reps...if threatened with the knife-below, ready to slash you to the bone? My hunch is you would make it to 14...instead of your usual 12 reps. You would, wouldn't you?

And that suggests your 'physical' limits are partly-determined by your 'mental' limits. In other words - when you give up, *it's mostly your mind that gives up before your physical body does.*

Alright, so what does this have to do with us as online sellers?

In short, your mental game is just as important as your 'physical' game.

In this case, your physical game is your skillset - product sourcing, images, sales copy, research, marketing tactics, and so on.

Your mental game is the rest of it - whether you can implement, how much action you take, your persistence, your ability to overcome failure, ride out the competition...and so on.

What about it?

Are you pushing to the limit, or are you going to quit at 6 reps... and then get a milkshake?

Crazy Ads Give You Good Ideas

You've seen them...

...but maybe didn't know they were there.

Why? Because they don't look like ads.

Hence, they 'fly under the radar'.

I'm talking about those ads you see at the bottom of news sites...

Like these two...



UK Households (With Smart Meters) Are Starting To Realise Something...

Sponsored: Money Saver Report



Chiropractors Baffled: Simple Stretch Relieves Years of Back...

Sponsored: www.your-health-today.com

Yeah...they are the standard 'click-bait-ish' ads you see at the bottom of lots of news articles.

This is a HUGE business... think hundreds of mill-yuns...

Now, I'm not recommending you use this kind of advertising at all (the technical term is 'Native' and it's dominated by taboola.com).

Rather, I'm asking you to keep an eye on these ads...and use them for *product ideas*.

The example I gave above links to a 'Relieve Sciatica' product. And why is this useful?

Because it must mean sciatica is a highly lucrative market. Why?

Because these adverts cost a fortune to run at scale.

So, this is a great way of identifying hot markets.

Some of these adverts are service-related, so aren't useful to us.

But for those that advertise products - keep your eye on 'em.

As they can sometimes give you decent ideas!

The Most Popular Categories To Sell To Online

The 'gurus' always tells us to 'go niche' when looking for a product to sell...

But how do you know where to start?

I mean...which categories are hot to start with?

That's what I want to touch on today.

Let's take Amazon as a whole...

How do we know which categories are 'hot', and which offer little chance of making big sales?

Here's one really simple way...

Simply choose a category...

Then look at the best-sellers, and the NUMBER of reviews for a handful of the top-selling items.

Some 'live' data for you...

Here's the number of reviews for the top-3 best-sellers in their respective categories: Golf - 175, 74 and 4 (number of reviews for three best-sellers). Large Appliances - 611 (number of reviews), 488 and 146 Beauty - 2391 reviews, 1024, 5010 Car Parts - 297, 219, 1023

So, what can we learn from this?

Beauty is likely the hottest category (by some way), followed by car parts/ large appliances, with golf products being the laggard.

Now, this doesn't mean golf is a dead-loss category...

It could be that it's a great category because it's growing (well, maybe not!), and because the competition is slim.

But still - looking at the number of 'raw' reviews for the top-sellers in any category...gives us some ideas as to its hotness/coldness.

The #1 Factor To Sell Online

You'll often hear it...

Some guru mentions that they have a marketing hack/secret to boost your results...

"Use this - and get 77% MORE clicks or sales!"

Sometimes these hacks can work.

But in my opinion, they are very much over-rated.

And often, they don't work at all.

Example...from the Real-World...

You know these emails? Well, I include links to various products. The link is just a text link. But...

Recently I tested whether a text link...or a big red button... would get more clicks (or less). What do you think?

What were the results? NO difference. Like...zero difference.

The 'text' link got EXACTLY the same result as the 'Big Red Button'.

This is why I'm sceptical of 'hacks' such as "Just increase the size of your headline!" or "Put your text in yellow - response goes up 9.3% - GUARANTEED!"

Most 'hacks' like this...as my test illustrated...are bunkum.

So, what makes the REAL difference?

What makes all the difference in the World is *having a GREAT product that people love*.

If you have that...then you don't need these daft 'hacks'.

Outline the benefits of that great product, and the market will do the rest.

One Of The Best ‘Kinds’ Of People To Sell To

Tsundoku...

I'm guessing you've never heard of it. And neither had I.

Until last week.

It's a Japanese term for something that I can relate to...

In short, it's the art of buying books *you never actually read*.

'Tsundoku' is buying books, and then piling 'em up.

Sound familiar?

I must have 200 books in my office, and hundreds more scattered around.

Plus, maybe another 300-500 on my Kindle. That's a lotta' books.

And...I'll admit: most of them I've NOT actually read (all the way through).

But here's the thing... This isn't unique to books. Nor is it unique to me. You could apply this to clothing, to records, to cars, to watches...to lots and lots of product categories. Right?

And that's my point... These 'passionate collector' markets are great to sell to. Because once your customer buys one product...inevitably a percentage of them will buy more...and more... and more.

And the best news of all is that there are thousands of these 'passionate collector' markets out there.

The best place to find them, and to market your products to these kinds of markets is... Facebook. They have the 'data' on what interests people. And you can exactly target those people. Build a mailing list...and go from there.

What kind of 'passionate collector' niche could YOU sell to?

Making ‘Thrupence’ Online

So my 'old fella' is listing a car on eBay... It's an old kit car. Reason for sale? He can no longer get in it!

Anyway, he called me the other day to tell me of the issues he was having: "I've factored in the amount of time I've spent on this damn listing, and I reckon I'm earning about thrupence!" LOL. He'd spent hours on his listing. And when I checked it, it was still miles off being right.

Now, after some 'handiwork' by yours truly, he's got 20 watchers... and hopefully more to come.

So what was he doing wrong? There are some common listing mistakes that many people make. He was making them. Many other people make these same mistakes too. They are:

1. Poor pictures - you NEED good lighting! (Get a light-box for smaller items, available from eBay).
2. Weak TITLE - he only had two words in his title! Use ALL the space you can when you create your title... filled with keywords. The more words, the better!
3. 'Bunched up' description. We have all seen 'em...description which is all bunched together, with no paragraph spacing. Space it out, make it look readable!
4. Small text. See what I mean? Increase the size of your font.

He'd also listed the car in the wrong category. (Be sure to check your competition before listing...and see what categories they are using!).

Alright, that's all for today. Will report back when we have a successful sale!

Use This Angle With Any Product To Increase Sales

It's extreme!

You've probably seen products that are 'angled' as 'Extreme'...

It could be anything... An 'extreme' flashlight... An 'extreme' muscle-builder... An 'extreme' household glue... And so on.

I can tell you from experience that these kinds of products often sell well. And, they often sell better than 'normal' (non-extreme) products.

But why? Why would an 'extreme' angle work better than a normal approach? I think it's for at least two reasons...

1. 'Extreme' gets your attention - one of the absolute KEYS to selling anything.
2. By implication, 'extreme' promises a better result. On point 2... If you buy an 'extreme' glue, surely it must be better (in this case, stick better) than a 'normal' product. If you buy an 'extreme' muscle builder... surely it must help you build more muscle.

There's a final point too... If it's extreme... surely it must produce QUICKER results than the competition...

On all these fronts, you can see why extreme sells. Something for you to incorporate into one of your own products!?

The Unusual Dream

The co-pilot is close to tears. The fifty-three year old plane is bouncing, bouncing on the runway. Thick, overgrown weeds populate the runway's surface.

"We're not going to make it, damn it!" shouts the co-pilot, his hand on his forehead. "No, we can do this!" shouts the pilot. There is a look of worry and strife spread across both their faces.

They both know it's 50-50, if that. The pilot punches the aircraft's accelerator further to the floor. Sweat pours from his forehead. The engines whirr loudly as they hit full runway-speed, the plane's wings howling, almost like they are about to break apart.

"Come on, come on, come on", the co-pilot chants, almost under his breath, too nervous to shout. The plane shudders loudly as the pilot starts to pull up, a grey fog billowing from one of the engines.

"We're not going to make it!" screams the co-pilot "We're almost out of runway!" "No, we're almost there!" shouts the pilot. The engines scream. The wings howl.

"Argghhhh" they both scream, as the end of the runway approaches, with only the thick jungle lying ahead. Yet, with a strength that seemingly comes out of nowhere, the plane's nose tilts up to the sky.

Air rushes underneath the wings. The plane takes off, soaring into the clear peace of the beautiful blue sky. Sheer elation. They made it.

John wakes up and starts to make his Ready-Brek. His wife, Mandy, senses his mind is somewhere else. "Something wrong, John?"

"No. I just had an unusual dream last night."

"Oh, OK. Anyway, did you think anymore about that internet business you were going to start?"

"Yeah, a bit" John replies. "Anyway, I have to get ready. I've got to take the Mondeo in for a service before work. I have to be in early today. I have a meeting about what to do with the refuse collection schedule for Norwich council."

John grabs his keys, and makes the comfortable drive down the M60 to his job, his dream a distant memory.

An Under-Utilised Way To Boost Conversion and Sales

I want to look now at something called infographics, and how they can **boost your conversion rate, and hence, your sales.**

The image below is one I've just taken from fiverr.com (the freelancer website).



What's an infographic?

It's a graphical way to tell a story of how good your product is (rather than just using sales copy). It highlights information (and the sales benefits) of your product in a graphical type format.

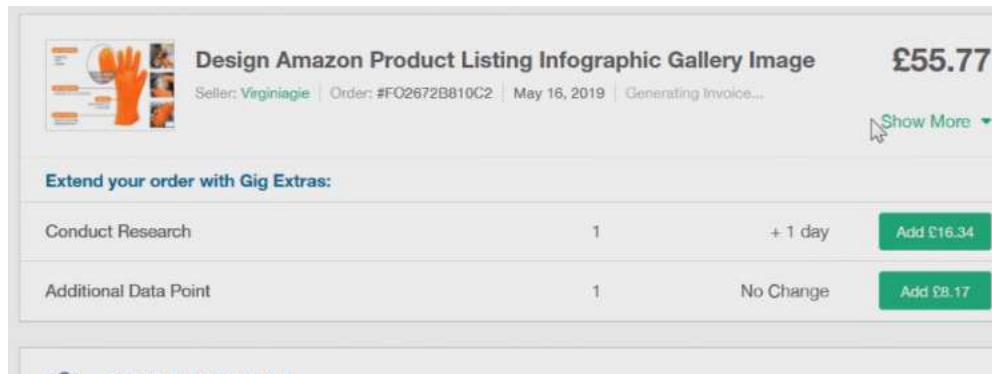
Let's say you were selling an anti-grey hair supplement (see above). Now, your sales copy is important. No doubt. But not *everyone reads that*. Especially when you consider how many people shop on their mobile...well, people often 'flick through' your images instead! That's where infographics come in.

You can see another example here for a bike:



I'm just about to 'buy' one for one of my own products. I've explained a bit about what I want the designer to do (you must have some ideas really – as the designer is no more an expert when it comes to your product than you are).

I'm paying £55.77 for my one. Not cheap.



Now...I wouldn't do this with a product that's *new*. **You should only be using this for PROVEN products.**

So my recommendation to you is only use infographics IF you've already proven your product sells. If it does sell well, by all means add one – as it can help sales.

If you know me, you know I always want to test things small...

Once you've got something that's working, consider one of these infographics. You can use them on your website, on eBay, Amazon...wherever you sell.

Then if you're already making some money from your product then paying £55 for something that could boost your sales isn't a great deal of money.

Don't get me wrong.

An infographic isn't going to make or break a product. The key as always is the **strength of the product and market you're selling** to. How good is your product? How much does the market want it?

Those are the things you should always concentrate on first!

Infographics come later.

Choose Your Market Carefully

To try and become a professional footballer...

I know. The top players earn ridiculous amounts of mon-ee. But you're talking 500 players... out of 2 bill-yun blokes!

I was reminded of this at the weekend, when I had a 'kickabout' on Father's Day. And I thought to myself: "How many kids are there around the World who play the 'beautiful game'?" Millyuns....bill-yuns?

In short, you've got about as much chance of being a top player as you have of hitting the lottery. Why? Because you've got about a bill-yun people to compete with, that's why!

On top of that...

- You're competing with players who pretty much ONLY play football (no education etc) - meaning they'll practice a LOT more than you ever can...
- You're (possibly) competing against players who are using performance-enhancing substances...
- You've still got to be 'in the right place at the right time', and catch a break...
- You've got to hope you don't get injured or get some sort of illness that destroys your career...

But worst of all: see point 1! In short, you're competing against virtually EVERY male on the planet!

Who hasn't at least tried to play football? And this is my point... When we're looking to sell online, we need to be very careful as to WHICH markets we choose to compete in.

Get it wrong - and you'll never get out of the starting blocks. Sure, there might be sellers who sell £5K/day worth of headphones - but chances are, you won't be able to do that. The market is far too competitive.

But that doesn't mean there aren't 10 markets where you can sell £500/a day worth of products.....with only 2-3 competitors. Choose your battles carefully.

With some markets, you've got a better chance of hitting a scratch- card jackpot!

Fire Some Arrows

I'd never considered having a go at archery...until last weekend!

I spotted a set online...and thought...why not? And so I trundled down to my local Decathlon and parted with about 70 quid.

In return for my hard-earned funds, I am now the proud owner of a rather impressive looking archery set. It is a 'soft' set however, with soft (not real) arrows.

So I tested 'the beast' in part of our warehouse, then took it around for everyone to play with on Father's Day.

Now, here's the thing... As I started to 'play', I was (as you'd expect) a rather rubbish archer. But...as you'd also expect... I improved relatively swiftly.

(Eventually fancying myself as the new *Robin Hood*...or perhaps *Fryer Tuck*).

Point is: **I had a go.**

Now, how laughable would it have been...if I simply stood there, and looked at the arrows and the bow? Then ummed-and-ahed...and only wondered what it would be like to 'try' archery?

How much do you think I'd have improved, simply (and only) staring at the bow and arrow? Am I being clear enough here?

You can stare at eBay and Amazon all day. Just as you can stare at your bow and arrow. But it's ONLY by picking it up...and throwing a few arrows around...that you'll ever be able to adjust course... And, hopefully... One day...be able to hit the bullseye.

Are you sat there, staring at the bow? Or...are you going to fire a few arrows?

The Value Of A Name

The value of a name...

As part of my 'job', I spend some time every week looking for new and interesting products...

Here's one I saw this week: A hand sanitiser spray for sports-people. It helps to sanitise the handles of sports rackets and the like... and I think this could sell! Especially in times like today.

But the product itself didn't interest me that much. Rather, it's the name of the brand that got me: *Big Germ Hunters!*

What a great name! It's highly memorable, isn't it? What's clever about it is that it uses an already well-known phrase ("Big Game Hunters") to make a connection in your mind.

Hence, it's more memorable.

It also communicates 'what it does on the tin' - almost providing a benefit right there in the name!

Your product names are, without a doubt, **super- important**.

If this business had called themselves "The Sanitiser Company"...would it have been anywhere near as memorable? I doubt it.

It's definitely worth spending plenty of time thinking of YOUR product name/s!

Moats Are Invincible Money-Makers

I've just been scouring through some info on 'moats'...

Now, I'm not talking about the watery kind here. No... I'm talking about **business 'moats'**.

If you don't know...this term was coined by Warren Buffett.

Essentially, a business 'moat' is something that **protects a business from attack by competitors...**

For example: if you own a burger van outside a football ground and there is only ONE license available for burger vans - that's a 'moat'.

Your business is protected from competitors. Because only YOUR business has a license to sell there.

eBay is another business with a 'moat' (or several)...

Since it takes serious mone-ee and a huge user-base to start an auction site...that's a 'moat'. i.e. protection from competition.

Yes, YOU too can develop a 'moat' on a very small-scale, no matter what you're thinking about selling.

What's more you should absolutely try to develop your own moat.

How? There's no 'one' way to do it, but here are two simple examples...

1. **Get the EXCLUSIVE rights to a product.** Once you get the exclusive rights, only you can sell it. There's your moat; your defense against competition. (Patents are another similar example to this).
2. **Manufacture your product (instead of buying it wholesale).** Assuming few or no other sellers are doing this, you'll have the lowest cost. This will act as a defense against other sellers, as you can under-cut all your competitors (as your costs are much lower).

There are many more 'moats'... Some bigger, and stronger, than others.

It's well worth thinking about how you can build a 'moat' of some sort around your product or online business.

If you can manage, your business will be more profitable, longer-lasting and more fun to run!

Sell The Best You Can

A couple of years back, I released a product called *'Rocket Profits'*...

It was/is all about how to launch first in a new product category...and why this is arguably THE secret to online success.

At the time, I genuinely 100% believed I'd stumbled upon a **truly powerful insight**.

I also mentioned: a lot of 'marketing' is DEAD in this day and age... And as each day goes by, I believe I hit the nail on the head two years ago.

Now, let me make a tremendously bold statement, which follows on from this.

Marketing is dying, and in a few years from now will truly be on life-support, if not 6-foot under!

I can't make the complete case here, but I'll say this.

As 'Artificial Intelligence' becomes more powerful, and as 'Big Tech' continues to dominate, 'marketing' will almost become an after-thought. Instead, the 'best' products will most likely be the 'best' - not just the best marketed.

Why?

It's complicated, but it has to do with the way 'Big Tech' will show you only the 'best' items - those that have the social media proof, reviews and 'buzz' that will kill off the need for 'marketing'.

In short, all the 'marketing' will be done by 'Big Tech' - by showing you only those products which THEY believe are the 'best'. You won't be able to 'market' them as 'good' - 'Big Tech' will decide for you!

The 'crap' products - products which previously might have been 'marketed' to best-seller status - will no longer even be SEEN! They will simply be snuffed out - like a candle in the wind.

Instead, in 2020 and beyond, the winners in the online space will truly be those with the BEST products... ..products that generate buzz, that garner large social followings, and that consumers buy over and over again.

By 'performing' well for consumers, these products will become more visible on the World's biggest online platforms - thus generating even more sales. 'Weak' products - even if they have a great sales spiel behind them - will struggle to grow, simply because 'better' products will garner more visibility (via Big Tech, not the marketers themselves).

I'm not going into all this here.

But it's a fact.

The implication? Sell the very best products you can. You will be rewarded for doing so.

Algorithmic Secrets

Algorithms...

They're everywhere! And no more so than online...

It doesn't matter whether you're using eBay, Amazon, TikTok, YouTube or Google...or any other 'big' site...they all use algorithms.

But what are 'algorithms'?

Algorithms are basically a set of rules. So, on eBay there is an 'algorithm' that determines where YOUR listing appears...compared with another.

The eBay algorithm may look something like this...

If Listing 1 is cheaper than Listing 2, put Listing 1 above Listing 2 in the search results.

Now, that is a VERY basic algorithm...but that's the gist of it. Simply put, it is a set of rules that determine an outcome.

Alright, so why am I mentioning it?

Because understanding algorithms...and what makes them 'tick'...is HUGELY important.

If you sell on Facebook - they will use an 'algorithm' to determine how 'good' your adverts are...

If you put videos on YouTube...they will use an algorithm to determine how high up you come...

If you sell on eBay or Amazon...they will use an 'algorithm' to determine where your listing appears (how high up).

In short, the more you know what these sites 'look for' - what they think is 'good' - the better you will do.

How do you 'crack' the algorithm?

The best way is to simply observe the top/highest- ranked products in any category. (On either eBay or Amazon).

Then ask yourself...

What do they all have in common? Maybe it's great images, great prices and a large number of variations. Bingo!

It ain't easy, but trying to understand why/how algorithms work...is one of THE most important things for online sellers today.

Make It QuickER

I've just been viewing the results of a 'successful' online product.

By that I mean: it's making brisk sales. Why?

Well, there's lots of reasons, but I want to highlight one really important one here today.

Simply put, this product makes a QUICKER claim vis-a vis the competition.

More specifically, it promises a quickER result than competing products. This is powerful. To be clear: it doesn't just offer a QUICK result. It offers a quickER result than competing items.

Let's say you're selling a skin cream...

Everyone claims it quickly improves your dry skin.

BUT...if YOUR product can be **quickER** ...to improve dry skin - then that's a big boon. QuickER results...that's what people want.

If your product can (legitimately) provide that, then you should plaster it everywhere you can! One final thing... Be specific.

If the competition's products takes 14 days - yours takes only 9! Keep it specific. Why?

Because specifics are convincing.

Better Than QuickER?

Today, let's look at the copywriting cousin of 'quick'... She's called 'EASY'!

But let's look at making the standard copywriting- claim of 'easy'...better.

How do we improve on 'easy'? If your product 'easily' cuts the lawn, or 'easily' improves the leather on your sofa...how do we improve on this?

The answer: we power-up easy...

...and turn it into easiER.

Let's say you're selling a leather sofa care kit... it makes it easy to give a nice shine to your leather sofa. Wonderful!

Your competitors claim it's 'easy' to apply their product...and to get results!

But guess what? Yours is even easiER!

Again, as I mentioned yesterday, it's important to be specific here.

If there's is 'easy' - maybe even a child can do it - yours is so easy even a baby can do it! You get the idea! Is your product easiER than competing products? It's worth thinking about!

This Can Magnify Profits

So there I was...

...minding my own business in B&M Stores (one of my favourite shops, by the way). And there it was...

Like water in the desert...

...what I'd been looking for...

A giant crumpet!

Well, in truth, I'd never seen it before. But by damn - it looked interesting. And different.

You know the standard sized crumpet, right? Well, someone came up with the great idea of magnifying it...to twice its normal size. Great idea!

Now, what does this have to do with us... as online sellers?

Simply put, any product can be 'magnified'. So we take any successful product...and simply make a bigger version of it.

Maybe you see a particular toy is hot...can you **make a bigger and badder version**? Likewise...

Instead of magnifying, you can also miniaturise a product... and make it smaller.

Key is: start with something that's already hot...and then go from there.

Best-Sellers Are Duds

Best-sellers...you've probably heard the advice before...

Check the 'best-seller' lists...then sell something similar! But does it work?

At one time, it probably did. But now?

It's nowhere near as effective. Why not? Simply because: the online markets are now TOO big.

Let me explain...

When you find a 'best-seller'... you're looking at a product that has already exploded in demand, and which has probably already been 'sewn up'. And because the online marketplaces are so big...and because a 'best-seller' will therefore be making a bomb...

You might not be able to get a look in...especially if you're just starting out.

An example: You go on Amazon and see that a 'beat cellulite' cream is a raging- best-seller. Great! But it's already got 1,000 reviews. As such, it may already be 'too late'.

This 'best-seller' is simply too competitive already.

So, what to do? Surely...we can do something !?

Yes, we can. Concentrate on items that are selling well, but which do NOT have much competition.

On Amazon, you want items that sell maybe 5-10 units a day. These aren't 'best-sellers' - at least not big ones. They may be 'niche' best-sellers. But they won't make a real best-seller list.

These are the kind of products I'd urge you concentrate on. Get 5 of those, and sell 10 a day of each...and that's 50 sales a day.

That's a great start - and you completely avoided the 'big' best-seller lists!

You Can Wish For Product Ideas

"One weird trick reverses belly fat overnight!"

If you're anything like me...you'll have seen adverts like this plastered all over the Web.

And here's the thing...

For the savvy online seller, these adverts are great *market research*. You can see what's selling...and you can see what people are really responding to.

Anyway, last week, The Sun newspaper ran an article about the 'weird adverts' that are put out by Wish.com. You may know of this website...

Wish.com.

It's a website that connects Chinese sellers to Western consumers. And guess what? It's great for market research.

If you're interested in knowing what's selling online - then download their app, follow them on Facebook... and see what they are pushing.

Now - here's the funny thing...

A lot of Wish's top-selling products are actually border-line illegal - which tells you something about the kind of products that sell!

For example...

I've seen fake perfumes for sale on there...as well as fake Nike trainers, as well as, let's just say, 'bedroom toys'.

Still...it's a good app for generating ideas. And, of course, there's no cost to follow them...to see what they are doing.

Example? I'll give you one example product now.



Women will love this! You may or may not have seen these before. But, my point is - there will be plenty of products like this. Products that you may be able to sell in your own way.

Obviously - just stay away from the 'dodgy' stuff!

Customer Archetype Secrets

Customer archetypes...

In short, 'who' is your customer.

Let's face it: we can all be put into 'groups'...or at least most of the population can.

You've got your 'eco-warriors'. You've got your 'gym freaks'. You've got your 'entrepreneurs'. And so on.

Let's go through a few 'archetypes' now...

MR ENTREPRENEUR. Oh...this one might sound familiar! Always looking for the next idea to make him £100K/month. Preferably from the armchair! Talks a lot about 'PPC', 'Overdelivering' and 'Sales Funnels'. Has a shelf full of books on 'cultivating a mill-yunaire's mind'. Is currently importing 150 dog vests from China, whilst doing affiliate marketing on the side. Spends 10 minutes a day chanting positive mindset affirmations to himself (in the mirror).

MR FITNESS. Lives for the gym! Tattooed all over and has the worst smelling farts this side of Chernobyl. Carries a Pure Gym sports bag, loaded with a protein shake, bullworker, creatine and a pack of viagra. Desperately trying to get the biggest pecs in town. Drives a Mitsubishi Evo with over-sized exhaust and winged spoiler.

MR SPIRITUAL. Meditates 1-hour every morning at sun-rise. Drinks a smelly concoction of herbs each morning for breakfast. At the moment, he's experimenting with astral projection, testicle shakras and inside-out sauna yoga. Currently unemployed.

MR PROFESSIONAL. Went to Uni and got a 'good job' as an accountant. Always pays his bills on time. Married with two kids. Gets his leg over once a year - usually on his birthday. Washes and waxes the Jaguar every Sunday, before reading The Sunday Times. Currently renovating a property to sell on, whilst saving to send the kids to private school (so they can do exactly the same as he did). Secretly wants to escape to Thailand.

LOL.

How many of these did YOU recognise? I'm guessing - all of them!

OK, tomorrow I'll look at the female archetypes...

More Archetypes To Take To The Bank

Yesterday we looked at some customer 'archetypes'...

Basically, 'groups' of people in our population...and how they think and what they like. Whilst I concentrated on 'males' yesterday...today, let's look at some female archetypes...

First up...

MISS INSTAGRAM 'CELEB'... Currently working as a legal secretary, but would like nothing more than to be an Instagram star. Watches Love Island, Big Brother, I'm a Celebrity, Googlebox, follows all the gossip columns, and shops at BooHoo.com.

MRS 49. A mother of three (now-grown-up) kids. She's let herself go a bit and is currently trying the modified Atkins diet. Was previously on Zone, Herbalife, The Cabbage Diet, The Cucumber Method, The 7-Day BigMac Meal System, Weight Watchers and, before that, Slimming World. Frequently a victim of the latest anti-wrinkle cream scam. Married to MR PROFESSIONAL.

And finally...

MISS MUSIC FESTIVAL. Loves music festivals and sleeping in tents with substandard sanitary arrangements. Has pink streaks in her hair, and previously did voluntary work for Greenpeace. Vegan. Loves music 'bands' no-one has ever heard of. Will only buy SUSTAINABLE products. Identifies as a staunch feminist who is fighting the evil patriarchy and greedy globalists. Currently in an open-relationship with MR SPIRITUAL.

Ah-ha!

So what was the point of all that? Simply put, most people fall into these kinds of 'groups'. Do you know which group YOUR customer is in...and what their overall likes/dislikes (and thought- patterns) are? Once you do, you'll become a much more effective marketer. And more importantly - you'll be a much better creator of excellent products that both perform for the customer - and sell like hot-cakes!

To Start All Over Again

I was watching a video the other day...

Actually, it was more of a news article...

All about some poor saps who are currently stranded on an island...somewhere.

They were at a music festival, then 'the virus' hit...and now they are stuck! Which got me thinking... You often hear people ask the question: "If you had to start over from scratch...what would you do?"

Let me take that one step further...

What would I do if I had to start all over...with zero capital...AND assuming I was stranded somewhere? This could also apply to YOU - if, for example, you were thinking of moving abroad.

NO capital. NO contacts. NOTHING. So, what would I do? Firstly: online selling would likely be OUT...at least for a while...

So, first up I'd try and build up a bit of capital. How? By using/acting on a financially valuable skill. By that I mean - I'd provide some sort of service to other people...

For example...graphic design, copywriting, general writing, photoshopping, infographics, or something similar. I'd post my offers on a website like [freelancer.com](https://www.freelancer.com), or [upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com).

This can be done by anyone from ANYWHERE. And, it can be done with zero capital. Don't have a skill? Learn one! How many courses are there out there these days?

So I'd post my services on these websites...and get some business. Once I had a few clients under my belt, I'd THEN start thinking about online selling.

Tomorrow, we'll look at what I'd do next...

Desert Island Profits

Yesterday, I discussed what I'd do to make mon-ee online... IF I were stranded on a desert island! I mentioned freelancing as a 'way in'...but what about after that?

Well, once I'd built up a bit of capital from freelancing, then I'd buy a boat! And sail to the nearest non-desert island! From there, I could start a little online business. But...doing what?

I still wouldn't have much capital. But I'd have some.

So here's what I'd do...

I'd use eBay as my first selling channel. Simply because it's quick, easy and cheap to start on there...

I'd search eBay and try and find a breakthrough NEW item.

By this, I mean: I'd try and find something new and upcoming that doesn't have much competition. I'd then try and source something similar to that...but better. Then, I'd sell that.

I'd go heavy on some slick copywriting and nice images....realising that this one single product may NOT work... but I'd have a go. If it fails, it fails.

If it fails, I'd move onto something else.

But, I know that ultimately I'd get a 'winner'.

Once that winner was in the bag... then I'd launch the same thing on Amazon (or my own website), and I'd recruit *affiliates* to help me promote it.

And, I'd go from there. And...if I didn't have access to a post office on the desert island...then I'd find a UK fulfilment company... and get them to send out my parcels (or would simply use FBA).

So there...how to make mon-ee from a desert island - the super short version!

The World's Most Valuable Currency

With governments everywhere debasing their currencies...

Who knows what will happen to the future of the Pound and Dollaroo? "Just print monee-ee...it will be alright!" I'm not sure about you, but it doesn't sound like a great plan to me!

But no matter.

You see, there is a currency that's far more valuable. (And no...it ain't Bitcoin!). It's THE most valued currency out there today, and likely will be forever. What is it?

It's your attention.

All the most valuable companies/apps/ websites...online...can get and keep your attention. Often, for hours on end. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Amazon, eBay...how many hours have you spent on these?

And these days, half the battle is...**getting people's attention.**

So, how do you do it? There are lots of ways, but here are two recommended pieces of advice:

1. Aim to get your listing to 'page 1' for whatever you are selling (this is a task in itself). Why? As 90% of someone's attention stays on page 1...and scrolls no further. If you want to sell decent numbers online, you **MUST** be on 'page 1' for whatever you're selling.
2. Aim to 'match' your product precisely to whatever someone is searching for. The closer the 'match' is, the more likely it is to 'trigger' the prospect's attention switch. (So they click on your product, rather than someone else's).

These two points are a bit vague, I know.

But a full discussion of the subject would take days.

And, it's a damn Monday morning!

Pigeons On The Ropes

Those poor pigeons!

I was driving down a dual carriageway recently.

Stopped at the lights... And lo' and behold...a gaggle of pigeons 'appeared'. Looking for food - miles outside the town centre!

What on earth are these guys doing so far outside the city centre?

As you know, city and town centres have been pretty much empty as of late...

And that means the pigeons' prime hunting ground (for partly- eaten sandwiches, bagels and crisps) is now a food-desert.

Yes, coronavirus has hit the poor pigeon as well. In short, their food source (us) has suddenly vanished. Yet my guess is that they'll be just fine. They'll survive. I'm not sure exactly how, but I do know they will likely adapt.

In the same way as the pigeons' food source has now vanished.....many businesses' 'food sources' have also disappeared.

Clearly, what you can't do is just stay where you were, and hope for the crumbs to 'magically' come back. That probably ain't gonna' happen.

In short, you have to adapt - or starve!

Fact is, the online selling landscape is constantly changing. Coronavirus is one change. But it's just one. There have been many other changes before now... and there will be many after.

What works well this year, may not work in 18 months. And what works in 18 months, is likely different than what will work in five years from now!

What doesn't change is:

- People will always buy products that provide **solutions to their problems.**
- Sellers who can effectively communicate this to *their appropriate audience (in volume)* will always *sell a ton.*

The landscape may change, but the fundamentals of the soil don't. Next time you see a pigeon...remember that - and throw him some breadcrumbs!

End Of China?

Let me be clear...

Sourcing products from China isn't going to go away. But, as the World settles down and deals with the virus, I do expect some sellers to think of alternatives.

China (as the World's number one product source) has been hit on three fronts...

Firstly, not everyone realises that wages have increased markedly in China over the last 5-10 years. That's a lot - considering that many people still think it's a low-cost-labour country.

Secondly... We're seeing an uptick in nationalism, with the corresponding 'tariffs' that go right along with it. So, don't be surprised if 'China goods' get hit with an extra 'tax' of some sort...

And finally...

Alongside this...

You've now got a virus that has/will decimate China's reputation. Once the World comes back online, I expect there will be some sort of repercussions.

Where else can we source from?

There are several countries that spring to mind: 1) India 2) Vietnam 3) Taiwan 4) The UK/Europe...

Of all these, my top picks are 3) and 4).

IF you can source from the UK/Europe, then you'll do very well. I can't give you a full run-down on sourcing here, but the above countries are certainly a good starting point.

When To Throw In The Towel

I can't remember how it all started... Maybe it was because I was struggling to make sales for a certain product... Maybe it was because of the rain...

Or maybe it was because of the Coronavirus...

Last week, I was 'stewing' on this question: "If you're selling a product, or trying to run a business - when do you know when to throw in the towel?"

Maybe you've tried to sell on eBay. Or, maybe you've tried to start on Amazon. But, you're not getting the results you want.

It's an interesting question, isn't it? I mean...quit 'too early' and you could potentially miss out. But quit too late, and you're causing yourself unnecessary hardship.

My hunch is: if you are getting SOME results, then it's worth sticking at it. And if things are generally improving...then stick at it. But if you're consistently getting poor-to-no results, then it could be time to move on.

For example: if I want to become a boxer, and I keep getting knocked out - eventually I have to realise it isn't about 'persistence'. I may simply NOT be cut out to be a boxer!

So just persisting and persisting...and persisting... and persisting... Without getting any results... means I'll end up a cabbage. And that means I'll have to go and try something else.

Of course, persistence is important. But not at the risk of brain damage.

The Syrian Refugee's Secret

Adam Agha is a Syrian refugee who arrived in the UK around 6 years ago.

He started selling on eBay, offering traditional Arabic items he sources from Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon.

This story highlights the importance of sourcing products from unusual countries for your online business.

Most online sellers rely on China and Alibaba, but smart entrepreneurs are now looking for little-known sources of supply.

By sourcing from unusual places, Adam operates in a competitive 'vacuum', which is likely why his business is successful.

To succeed in e-commerce, consider sourcing from countries that are not traditionally associated with online selling.

World's Most Successful Online Store?

Today - let's look at the #1 Shopify store in the World.

Now, to be clear...no-one really knows what the #1 store really is... as we don't have the figures on each individual business. KylieCosmetics.com (the Kardashian family) is probably the biggest.

But, up near the top is a store you've probably never heard of. The man behind this business is certainly a unique 'character'. Here's the store: www.jeffreestarcosmetics.com

Who is Jeffree Star?

He's a cross-dressing 'trans' (I think) singer/makeup artist...turned Shopify entrepreneur. His store does probably \$100m+ online every year (and maybe multiples of that). All by selling...makeup. Allegedly, he sold 1 mill-yun units of his latest product - in one day.

Another hugely successful Shopify business is the UK's Gymshark.com. This store sells tight-fitting gym/fitness clothing.

So...what can we learn from these three stores?

Well, lots - but there's one thing I want to touch on in particular. They all focus on 'image-based' products. They all enhance the customer's image in some way.

Furthermore...

Because they are promoted on social media, they allow the customer to 'share' their 'product success' too. I'll leave that one there for today, but it's well worth thinking about it how and why this works!

Depop Arbs?

Depop... I'm guessing most of my readers will have never heard of it... ...and until recently, neither had I.

But it's sites/apps like this that are likely to pose a threat to eBay going forward. Depop is basically a 'for sale' site...like eBay...but it concentrates on clothes, shoes and trainers. And it's HUGE.

Nowhere near eBay's size...but it still has 13m users. The vast majority of these users are under the age of 25. Some of these users are making mon-ee using the app - by selling clothes, shoes and trainers!

Alright, so what does this have with YOU? Well, I've not had much chance to check...but I wouldn't be surprised at all if there were arbitrage opportunities here. In short...buy on eBay, sell on Depop. OR - buy on eBay, sell on Depop.

Like I say...never had chance to do a thorough analysis, but it would not surprise me if there were mon-ee to be made here! There are more and more 'splinter' sites opening up like this...and I expect more in the future, as savvy entrepreneurs look to attack eBay with niche sites like this.

eBay's dominance may well weaken, but with it, new opportunities are likely to arise.

So, let's see if one of my readers has a pop...at Depop!

Starting From Zero – A Great Product To Sell

I want to start with a very common question: *what would I (personally) do now IF I had to start all over again, from total scratch?*

What opportunities would I start with online? What would I sell?

This is an interesting question.

Here's what I'd do: I would probably start on eBay and choose to sell a product that *would be quite hard for others to sell*.

For example, if you're just selling a regular coffee mug, and seeing any level of success with it, it would be very easy for someone else to duplicate what you're doing. If someone sees that you're suddenly selling 20 mugs per day, they'll just come in with the exact same product.

If you're selling that much with an **easy-to-replicate product**, it's inevitable that someone will copy you.

This is especially so if you find a large enough market which moves a lot of product. Someone will copy you IF it's easy enough.

In other words...I do NOT want to sell an 'easy-to-replicate' product!

That is why I would try to identify a product that is *more difficult* to put together and sell.

A great example of this, and something I've mentioned before, is some sort of KIT – something where you have several component parts in one product.

The additional steps of assembling different products adds a barrier to entry. It makes copying the product more difficult. You are less likely to get knocked off. And ultimately, that means there is more money to be made!

If you look at the products my businesses are currently selling online – there's maybe 200 of them – generally speaking, the ones that are more difficult are the ones that are making more money.

This is an absolutely key point!

A few days ago, I was speaking to an entrepreneur who sells around £30K of products per week online. And guess what? More and more of their products are *hard to source*.

Now, I'm not expecting you to go out and start a multi-million pound online business by going after extremely difficult products. However, if you were to look at a sliding scale, the easier a product is to source and sell, the less money there is in it.

Really, you're looking for a middle ground on that sliding scale.

And a KIT would be a good example of this.

You've probably seen me talking about my slime kit product before. We've sold hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of these slime kits. That's a prime example of the type of product I'm talking about here. It can be something that simple.

In past issues, we've looked at vegan gift sets and kits, retro sweets kits, and so on. Key is, you put a variety of themed products together into one and sell it as a boxed set.

With retro sweets, you could assemble a set of Refreshers, Sherbets, and so on. Creating this kind of "ultimate sweets kit" is more difficult than selling a SINGLE item. Agreed?

In short, kits offer this "middle ground" that we're looking for. It's more difficult to put a kit together than it is to simply buy from a wholesaler. But it's not so difficult that it's impossible to do.

So, assuming we've decided to go ahead and start selling kits, how do you even come up with an idea of what to create a kit for?

Well, one thing you can do is just go to eBay and search for kits that are already selling. Just type in "kit" and see what comes up. There will be a huge list. Go through it and see what catches your eye.

Secondly, think about markets that you may have interest in yourself. Or markets that you already know have demand.

For example, you may already know that there is a big market for anti-cellulite products. Then, think about how you can build a **cellulite busting KIT**.

So, rather than just selling a single product like cellulite cream, have a cellulite kit that solves the problem. Doing this not only makes it more difficult for competitors to copy you, but you also offer customers *a more all-encompassing solution*.

In conclusion, if you're just starting out, I would look at selling kits on eBay. If you find success there, then start selling the product on Amazon as well. That would be the way I'd get started in today's online selling environment!

American Site For Product Ideas

Pinterest.com...

...it's a website you may have heard me mention before. If you don't know: it's a site that lets people 'pin' interesting things...to, well, the 'page'! If you're interested in dress-making, or dogs, you can see what other people have found interesting (this week, or this month).

If in doubt...check it out yourself, and you can see what it's all about.

Now, here's the thing...

Recently, I've noticed more and more adverts on this site - and that's a good thing. Why? Two reasons:

1. You can use it to come up with products idea. See what's working then sell that on eBay/Amazon. 2) You might be able to just sell DIRECT on Pinterest.com. To do this, you'll need a website however.

How do you find what's selling on Pinterest.com?

Simply browse through and look for posts that say 'Sponsored' - these are the adverts. Then see what kind of products are repeated the MOST...these are the big winners.

Then, think about transferring these onto eBay/Amazon. I'm keeping my eye on this site, as I believe it could be worth a punt!

A Common Question

One very common question I get...

How long will it take me to get started, doing X? (Where X could be anything, in relation to online selling)... Selling brands, doing private-label, selling on eBay or on Amazon...

Today, let's look at eBay in 2020 - how long does it take to get started, to make mon-ee?

The answer: it depends.

But I will say this: often, very quickly - far more quickly than most businesses. Now, coming back to 'it depends'... depends on what? Depends on how good/new your product is!

In short...if your product is great and something new and different, and it's trending - the results can be (almost) instant.

I've had cases where we've got our first sale *in a few hours*. But there's the other side to this... If you're selling something 'just OK' - something 'me-tooish' - then sales can take longer to come in.

It might take a few days to see your first sale. And if you've not got a sale in a few days? Chances are, you're flogging a turkey - and the turkey is on life-support.

If you've not got a sale by the end of week one, you need to change your listing title, images - or choose a whole new product.

Tomorrow, I'll look at 'speed to market' on Amazon...

Speed To Market On Amazon

Yesterday, I looked at 'speed to market' on eBay...and how quickly you can get sales (hours, sometimes!)

But what about Amazon?

How long does it take to launch a product on there, and get some sales? Again, it depends.

If you're selling a brand, or a product with an EXISTING listing, then it can be hours (or less!). But if you're building your own listing, it will take longer. I'll give you a current and recent example from my own files... Product 'launched' around October, and took a few weeks to see some initial sales.

Some reviews came in around a month after launch...

Sales have really hit their stride this month. That's, what?

About three months to get up to speed. There are exceptions to this.

But, on Amazon, the general rule is weeks to months to see the best results. On eBay things tend to happen more quickly.

The main reason for this is probably to do with reviews.

On Amazon, you need to get some reviews to really see some nice sales - and that takes time. Ergo... Private-label sellers on Amazon should budget 1-3 months to see sales. On eBay, a lot less! Here's the rub though... Once your sales motor on Amazon, they are likely to be a lot higher than they are on eBay. So, it's worth the wait!

Mike Vetter's Secret

You've probably never heard of *Mike Vetter*...

He's a car-maker - yet, you've probably never heard of the kind of cars he manufactures.

Starting out, he created 'knock-offs' of high-end brands (Ferraris, Lamborghinis, etc). He'd make cars that looked similar to high-end cars - but which cost 20% of the price!

But then - it all came to an end...

The 'big boys' threatened legal action. What to do?

Mike started to build his own custom cars... Twenty+ years later, he's still doing it! And he (allegedly) makes up to \$50k per car.

Now, very few of us are likely to do anything like this...

But here's the thing...

There's certainly room online for people who want to *create their own products*.

Perhaps you think this is impossible. Well, it's not!

For example, maybe you're into Indian spirituality...

You get a designer to make up some designs...create some prints...and sell those online. (Maybe through eBay and Facebook/Instagram).

Or maybe you've developed a great way to clean and condition leather sofas. You get a liquid made up... start bottling it...and you're away. Bingo - your OWN 'custom' product. This isn't as difficult as it sounds. And once that product is 'yours' - you own it, and no-one else can sell it.

One final benefit... When you create your own 'stuff', you'll make a lot more margin than if you buy from a wholesaler. That's more mon-ee on every sale that drops right into your pocket. Don't get me wrong. This isn't for everyone. But it's still something to think about.

A \$2bn Buy-Sell Market

Many moons ago, I used to buy/sell rare books online...

(You may have heard of me talk about it before.)

But what about buying and selling trainers...aka 'sneakers' (as our American friends like to say)?

(I've never understood that word - to me, it conjures up visions of a burglar sneaking around someone's house with a pair of Nike's on).

Well...believe it or not, buying and selling 'sneakers' is a thing.

People are making moolah doing it.

Can you believe it's a \$2bn market?

And allegedly - there are people making 7-figures a year 'pwofit' doing this.

Incredible!

How?

In a moment, I'll give you a link to a more detailed report on EXACTLY how they do it...

But - bear in mind that this is being done in America.

Could it work over here?

I don't see why not.

Anytime there's a hot resale market for a 'good', there will be 'pwofits' to be made.

And I'm sure there are enough trainer-mad people here in the UK who'd make this worthwhile.

Me? I don't know anything about it. (And I've got enough on my plate already!)

An article in GQ recently got me interested in this. It talks about (as just one example) a guy called Matt Cohen. Matt Cohen started his journey with sneaker reselling in 2002 and continued selling sneakers through high school and college.

After working for Citigroup, he moved to Los Angeles and joined Upfront Ventures, which had invested in a sneaker resale company called Goat.

Today, Cohen is the VP of business development and strategy at Goat, where he helps the platform's top sellers maximize their profits.

Goat's best sellers have made profits in the millions, and the platform sells more Yeezys than Adidas.

The 1-Legged Pigeon

So there I was, minding my own business in Starbucks...

I gazed out of the window, looking out upon life's rich tapestry....

The obese guy on crutches, the middle-aged man dressed as a woman...the pigeons feasting on scraps - and all the hustle-and-bustle of a cosmopolitan city centre.

But it was the 'big' guy with the burger that caught my eye.

There was something unusual about his demeanour. You'd think he'd have been happy with a burger in his hand. Right?

But he was anything but. In fact, he had a look of out-right disgust on his face - despite the lunch-time feast.

What was up? It was hard to tell.

But there was a clue.

He was looking at something on the ground...something that was clearly putting him off his lunch. Then, I saw it.

A pigeon. But not just an ordinary pigeon. This was a *one-legged pigeon*.

Yes, a one-legged pigeon.

Now, I don't know about you... but if there's such a thing as reincarnation, I'd hope not to come back as a pigeon. And...one of the few things worse than coming back as a pigeon - would be coming back as a 1-legged pigeon.



A constant scrap for food, a pea for a brain, and a life- expectancy of just six years. Now imagine all that whilst having ONE-leg. It brings a whole new meaning to 'survival' of the fittest.

Your two-legged buddies can easily beat you to food.

And forget about trying to find a mate.

What female pigeon would go for a 1-legger, whilst there's plenty of two-leggers on offer?

If you want to see the poor bastard in all his glory...I thought of you - and took a picture!

(The fat-guy-with-the-burger's face was pure comedy; alas, I didn't get that shot!)

Anyway, let's imagine for a moment that our 1-legged pigeon doesn't have a pigeon's brain. Let's pretend, for a moment, he is a whizz a marketing. What does he do?

He turns his obvious disability into an advantage, that's what.

In his hunt for scraps, he markets and presents himself as the '1-legged pigeon' - and goes for the sympathy vote. He tells people how he is disadvantaged.

How hard things are.

Please could they help him?

...and he's suddenly the richest, most well-fed pigeon in town...

My point is this:

A lot of 'disadvantages' (of any product) can be spun into an advantage.

Product too small?

It's compact and lightweight.

Product bulky?

You can really feel the quality!

Bottom-line...

Any product has, built into its very nature, a way to market that will generate maximum sales.

You just have to find it.

Should Everyone Run An Online Biz?

As you know, in these emails we talk about all things 'online selling'...

But should everyone run a business?

How about a BIG business?

I was reminded of this just last week...

You see, someone 'leaked' a transcript of a meeting from Facebook. Now, Facebook is one of the biggest companies in the World. (And very few of us will ever run a business this size!).

But this 'transcript' told us more about what they are up against.

It recounts how Mark Zuckerberg (the founder) has to battle governments, regulators and other 'nasties'.

Now, as mentioned....very few of us are ever going to be running a business of this size.

And the question I want to pose today to you is: *would you want to?*

Sure, the wealth is extraordinary - but so is the 'hassle'. That's why very, very few people are cut out to run a business like that. My point is simple; there's a 'trade-off' with any business.

Because, generally speaking, the bigger the business is - the more hassle it will be.

Don't get me wrong.

If you run a small eBay/online business, then the 'hassle' will likely be minimal. (That applies to most readers of this newsletter.)

But if you want to get into bigger numbers, you have to realise there is going to be a trade-off.

You'll likely have a mountain of customers, staff and paperwork.

I mean...can you imagine Mr. Zuckerberg's workload?

This isn't to put you off in any way.

Far from it.

Rather - it's to realise and determine what you want out of it all...and the 'hassle' you can reasonably put up with. If you want a business that gets 1,000 orders a day - fine.

But realise it's going to be a lot more 'hassle' running that...than a business that gets 40 orders a day.

What do YOU want...and are you prepared to pay the price?

Sell A Solution In A Box

So last Friday, I had a meeting with a supplier...

The usual 'meet and greet' ensued before we 'shot the s**t' for a while over a freshly brewed cup of Nescafe (decaff).

Anyway, he started to tell me about a new product his company is promoting that's starting to fly.

(One company is already selling it for them, and is growing like wildfire).

As the conversation progressed, something came up - and it's that which I want to share with you now.

Now, I can't say exactly what the product is...but let's say it provides an important solution for a certain group of people. (Is that vague enough for you? *Good!*).

My supplier questioned why on earth people would pay £30 for this product – when you could actually buy something similar from a supermarket for £3.50!

Why DO they spend £30 then?

My answer was...

“Because the box provides a seemingly easy solution to their vexing problem.”

That's pretty powerful! And if you can inject that 'quote' into YOUR product, more power to you.

You see, people buy solutions to their problem...whatever that problem is.

And since most of us are lazy, pushed for time, and want something that really works - we're all prepared to pay for...

A easy solution to our most vexing problem/s.

Preferably a 'solution in a box'!

If your 'box' can offer THE solution their problem - you can charge £30, £300, £3,000...or more...for that self- same 'box'.

Going back to our meeting...

The big difference with the £3.50 super- market product, and the £30 'box' - is that the £3.50 isn't really a 'solution in a box'.

The £30 product?

Is a solution in a box!

You pick up the box, implement, and your problem is (hopefully) solved. So...

If YOU can inject that same flavour into YOUR product...

...then you'll certain 'cook up' some pwofits!

The Tipping Point Secret

The 'tipping point'...

(And I don't mean the gameshow).

Malcolm Gladwell coined this term, some years ago now.

Roughly translated, it's the point where something (such as a product) 'goes crazy' and becomes insanely popular.

(If you want to know the full ins- and-outs, the book 'The Tipping Point' is available from Amazon!)

Anyway, I was thinking about this the other day.

And?

And I realised that now, more than ever, this 'tipping point' really does apply online - to virtually any niche. I'll explain what I mean...

Let's say you are selling a certain kind of fishing bait. For Carp. Now, let's say your average carp fisher-man comes to buy some carp bait...which does he choose?

The answer: the 'best' one.

Note - he probably doesn't buy more than one!

As such, you want to be THE ONE that he buys.

How do you do that?

You 'tip' your product to the tipping point...so you get to the TOP of the search results.

(This is where all this action is - where most of the sales take place online).

How do you 'tip' YOUR product to the top?

You do this by making it A BIT BETTER than the rest of products your customer could buy. You see...

By being a BIT BETTER, perhaps in a few different ways, you hit the 'tipping' point - and become #1 in your niche.

For example...

You're a BIT cheaper than your competition...

Your sales copy is a BIT better...

Your images are a BIT better...

Your guarantee is a BIT better...

And so on.

See how this works?

Compounded together, being a 'bit' better (in every way), compounds to a point where it puts you in the #1 spot.

Then, you capture MOST of the sales in any given market.

I've seen this happen time and time again.

I'm talking from direct, personal experience!

These days - especially online - only a few products garner most of the sales.

And it's usually a combination of 'plus points' that put it over the top, and make it number 1.

How will you get YOUR product to 'tip'...by being that bit better than your competition?

Because when you do, you'll end up with most of the sales in YOUR niche.

The Fake Pregnancy Debacle

The fake pregnancy debacle...

Fortunately, it doesn't involve me! But there was something in the news about this recently.

In short, there was a 'product' floating around...a 'joke' pregnancy test...

This 'joke test' was being sold online.

In case you can't guess... it tells someone they're pregnant - when they are not.

Now, here's the issue:

Someone can use this to potentially blackmail a boyfriend...or even someone they hardly know.

So, there's talk these 'tests' are going to be outright banned.

Shame. *I'm sure it was profitable!*

Anyway...this brings up a whole niche that few people know about...

JOKES.

There are 'fake' lottery tickets for sale online... and then there's the gamut of electric shock pens, flowers that squirt out water...and so on.

I DO think this is a niche worth looking at. If you're like most people, you've probably never considered it...

...which is exactly why it's a good idea.

One to consider, certainly!

Figure-8 Patterns In Your Brain

So for the last few weeks or so, as you know, I've been in London...

And frankly, it's been good to get out of the office!

Now, I want to talk about the brain - and specifically how it 'loops' into patterns that can destroy productivity.

Imagine a figure of 8...continuously 'looping' around in the same pattern...endlessly.

This is how the brain operates for so many people.

It gets 'stuck' in the same pattern/s.

And once it's 'stuck' there... it can be immensely hard to break this non-stop, looping pattern.

(This patterning-process can often create destructive habits...alcoholism, over- eating etc.)

Anyway, the same 'looping' process happens every day to all of us ('Groundhog Day'), but on a low-level scale.

Question is: how do you break the loop?

If that figure 8-pattern sets like stone, then it can be immensely hard to stop.

Now...back to my London trip.

A simple trip OUT of the office - a change of scenery - can be enough to (at least temporarily) break the loop.

I've never seen this NOT work. All it can take is a sufficient change of environment - and you can destroy the loop.

Bingo...your productivity goes up!

At least for a while.

You've probably noticed this yourself; you change location, and suddenly, you become 'alive' again.

What to do...to boost productivity?

Simply change your location!

Go the local library, or somewhere you've never worked from before.

This will break the 'loop'... at least for a while!

Give Them The Full Story

Jack has gone!

At least according to the latest Tube advert for Jack Daniels.

Emblazoned across the tunnel walls, is 'Jack's' latest attempt to tell us how great his Whiskey is.

Actually, I think it's a great advert.

**IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE
JACK'S GONE.
(JUST TASTE THE WHISKEY).**

Jack Daniel was a man dedicated to both the distillery that bears his name and the smooth sippin' Tennessee Whiskey that it makes. He did build the whole thing from scratch, after all – right here in Lynchburg, Tennessee. And even though Jack died sometime in 1911, if you visit us at the Jack Daniel Distillery, you might get the distinct impression that he's still coming to work every morning, making sure his whiskey's made exactly the way he likes it.

Mr. Daniel is certainly present in just about everything we do. From the ingredients we use, to our whiskey-making process, to the stories we tell. And not all of those stories are as historical as you might think. Some folks claim that they've seen a strange thing or two around the distillery – flickering lights in a barrelhouse, ghostly figures pacing the rafters – and wonder if Jack might still be coming to work after all these years. His office is still here, after all. And so is the old iron safe. The one that he kicked when it wouldn't open, breaking his toe and ultimately dying from the infection.

Even his grave in the town cemetery lead you to believe that he's not a distillery. It's only half-carved – re all of the unfinished business he had left to do.

But a lot of that's just the kind of people in a small town start talking about as the calendar creeps bit closer to Halloween. We're so particular about making our whiskey the same way that Jack did that, we're pretty sure he's got no reason to get involved from beyond the grave. His spirit is alive in everything we do. Not that he wouldn't be welcome. We'd just hope

IT MAY HAVE BEEN SECURE. BUT AS JACK LEARNED, IT WAS NOT SAFE.

that after such a full life of making both whiskey and stories, that wherever Jack is, he's surrounded by friends, relaxing with some of that whiskey. So, Jack, if you're reading this, your whiskey is in good hands. Keep on enjoying the afterlife. And give

(I realise you can't read the text).

What's that?

You'll notice it's rammed full with text - typically a no-no for tube adverts, when people won't have the time to digest it all.

Compare this advert with the typical tube (or billboard) advert.

They're World's apart.

Notice... 'Jack' - despite having a products that's likely very similar to every other Whiskey on the market - goes to great lengths to tell us all about it.

There's a full story behind what's just a brown liquid that gets you 'pished'. And you know what?

I bet it works. I bet people do read the story - because people want to feel something when they're using a given product. Most people would laugh at the endless text. But I bet this increases sales.

There are plenty of studies and anecdotes out there that 'stories' behind products increase sales.

And this could be anything...

How your product is made and manufactured...the story of the founder...how committed to customer service you are...and so on.

What's your story?

The Only Permanence Is Impermanence

Saudi Aramco...

You might have heard the name...

It's basically the Saudi Government's 'Oil Company'...which, as you can imagine, is a monstrous outfit!

You may also know that they recently floated on the Stock Exchange.

The valuation has come in at almost \$2tn!

Yes...with a 'T'! Which isn't really a surprise, considering they produce a substantial percentage of the World's oil. But it's not all good news...

Why?

Because many people are considering the floatation a 'flop'.

Environmental groups campaigned against it, and going forward, will oil still even be 'top dog'?

Or, will we increasingly see a shift away from it, for a variety of reasons?

Here's my point:

Any and all businesses can go strongly for a while.

As can niches and products.

But nearly always, the 'law of impermanence' gets them.

In short, we live in a *constantly changing World*.

Nothing stays the same. No-one knows what is around the corner. All we know is that change is about the only constant.

Even Saudi Armco - which is reckoned to be the World's most profitable company - will, I'm sure, one day be no more. (Although it may take 100+ years).

This isn't meant to be depressing. Far from it. Because as change occurs, then new opportunities arise.

All we can do...as online entrepreneurs... is sell products people want.

Here's the formula that has worked since day dot:

- Find a market that wants something...
- Provide a solution that is better than anything currently available...
- Tell that market that you're better!

Niches, products and even entire countries may come and go... but the fundamentals remain the same.

When Do You Stop

Jack Ma...

You may have heard the name.

If not...he's the founder of Alibaba.com... and one of the World's 'richest' men...

Earlier this year, he 'retired' from Alibaba. Guess what? In a recent interview he revealed the best time of his life...wasn't landing a \$30bn fortune. No - it was when he was an English teacher - earning a whopping \$12 a month!

Why?

Partly because with the kind of wealth he now has, he also has the (inevitable) huge responsibility that comes right along with it.

Which reminds of that rap song...

"Mo' mon-eee....mo' problems!"

Of course, most readers of this newsletter want 'mo moneee'... in some way. Right?

So...if someone like Jack Ma tells us he was happier before... is there any point?

Of course, I'm being a bit facetious here. We all know there is a point.

But perhaps a better question is - where do you stop? When is enough...enough?

I'm not sure there's a 'proper' answer to that question, because everyone is different.

But a great piece of advice I once heard was...

"Wealth is not a lump of mon-ee, but an income stream".

In short, if you can make X per month, and get a 'system' going so that this stream is constant (or as constant as is reasonable), then that IS your 'freedom'.

The goal is freedom.

Anything after that is pure ego.

What's your 'income stream' level of freedom per month?

Find that out, then find out how many products/systems you'll need to get there.

Then you'll be happiER...

...but hopefully without too much happiness-killing responsibility!

A Friend With A Job

I have a friend...

He has a job.

But he wants to start his own business.

And I've offered to help him...

But he's been 'meaning to start' for the best part of two years!

And he's STILL not started!

What gives?

Well, as I mentioned before... he has a job already.

And it's a well-paid job. All his bills are paid...he lives in a nice house...and there are two cars on the driveway. As such - there's one over-riding reason why he's not got started yet.

He's simply too comfortable as he is.

Or put another way, he's not *desperate enough* to start his own business. And that's what I want to highlight today...

You see, you really have to WANT to do the 'online thang'...and yes, there must be some sort of 'desperation' about it.

Otherwise? You won't have the urgency, you won't have the desire, you won't have the ability to 'bounce back' (when you hit a hurdle)....that you'll need.

So quick question for you...

Are you DESPERATE enough?

I know. It sounds bad.

But think about it.

15 Years Of Lessons

Today...I want to look at some things I've learned over the years.

Why not?

It's been 15 years since I sold my first 'thing' online...or is it 16?

Anyway...

Here's some of the most valuable lessons, so far:

1. Everything takes longer than you expect. If you launch something new, you probably have an idea as to when it will turn profitable.

Double that.

And then double that again.

Everything takes longer than you hope - almost always.

2. Strategy reigns supreme. You can have the best product or ad... but you'll get beat by the guy with the better strategy.

I don't have time to go into this here, but the person who sees the 'big picture' (and the bigger the better) - wins.

For example, don't just sell one product...but build a mailing list.

3. Cultivate your edge - and win. If you want to win again and again and again - you need an edge over your competition.

That 'edge' could be superior copywriting, better product sourcing...or whatever.

Key is: having an edge.

And then sharpening it.

4. Sell something that no-one else has. Here's the thing:

You don't want to sell anything that someone else has.

If everyone else is selling salt - and you try and sell salt - you're trudging uphill with a rucksack on your back, whilst nursing a bunion.

Sell something unique, something that no-one else has.

Then tell people why it's unique.

Why it's better than anything else out there.

That's enough for today.

Some more tomorrow!

15 Years – Part 2...

Yesterday, I gave you four things I've learned over the last 15 years 'in the game'!

These 'things' are based on real-world experience.

Starting and building stuff from scratch to mill-yuns.

If you didn't see the first four 'things I've learned'...check yesterday's email.

Now, on to the final three today...

5. 300 years from now, even the "most important thing" happening right now...will be laughably irrelevant.

You might think this has nothing to do with online selling. And, you'd be half right.

But we all get so invested in ideas and niches and stuff...and really, in the grand scheme of things, it's all laughably trivial. So, take it easy.

You not being able to sell kitchen utensils on Amazon isn't going to make the history books.

Trust me on that.

Relax.

Exhale.

And try to enjoy it...

6. Everything changes - except fear and desire!

The online marketplaces of 10 years ago are radically different than they are today. And 20 years ago...the media landscape was TOTALLY different than it is today. You can bet that they will be different again in 10 (or even 5) years from now.

The ONLY things that don't change much are the core 'buying emotions' - primarily, fear and desire.

If you can appeal to either of these two emotions, then you SHOULD be able to make a living - regardless of the ever- present 'changing conditions'!

7. Do what others can't or won't do IF you want to succeed.

People don't like to hear it, but it's true. If you do what everyone else does...you will, by default, get average results.

The successful entrepreneur does something others won't or can't do, thereby separating themselves from the pack....thereby earning 'excess returns'.

What can you do that others can't or won't do?

Alright, that's all for today!

I Cut My Foot - And The Inner Beast Woke Up

So the other day, I cut my foot...

Long story short: I ended up with a small gash from some glass.

No big deal...the plaster and bandage went on, and then I started to 'hobble' about!

I could definitely feel a smidgin' of pain, but nothing too major.

But then something interesting happened...

I had an emergency at work, and had to finish something very quickly (I only had 2 hours to finish a big job). And the job was, surprisingly, somewhat physical (lifting some stuff around to get it ready).

What happened?

Instantly - my foot pain disappeared!

I sprang into action, my brain conveniently sweeping aside the pain - and I got on with it! Around 60 minutes later, the job was complete! And guess what?

The pain in my foot came back!

Interesting, no? Now, I'm sure there's a purely- scientific explanation here...but my explanation is much more simple:

When the pooe-y stuff hits the fan, then your inner beast takes over!

You've probably experienced this yourself: a 'must-do' emergency FORCES you to spring into action, sweeping aside any puny objection that would usually enter your mind.

Question is...

How do you 'awaken' the inner beast, when there is no 'poo-ey stuff' hitting the fan?

Do you 'accidentally' cut your foot?

Needless to say, that's probably not the best idea.

And in reality, it's virtually impossible to 'activate' it without somehow faking it.

The ONLY reasonable method I can think of is deadlines - and deadlines with some sort of punishment attached (if it's not met).

"I will finish sourcing 5 products before 31st Jan...or else will donate £500 to charity."

One thing is for sure:

The 'inner beast' is much more effective and efficient than you and me.

It's just 'raising' him that's the hard bit!

The Avon Customer

So there I was in Costa Coffee...

...minding my own...

When I saw an elderly lady away in the corner... filling out some forms. She had an intense look in her eye. Whatever she was doing... meant a lot to her!

So, what was she doing?

She was browsing through (and ordering from) the good 'ol Avon catalog.

Now, despite the rise of e-commerce, Avon is still one of the biggest beauty businesses in the World... with annual revenue in the multi- billyuns.

Their 'network marketing' model isn't new; but it has stood the test of time (whatever you think of it!).

The lady I 'viewed' obviously gets value out of Avon, and dare I say it, but she may well never have bought a single thing online!

Now, this brings me to a point...

In short, every business' customer base is different.

And really: it can be really hard to know exactly WHO you are selling to.

Who are YOU selling to?

This old lady is probably an ideal Avon consumer. But it ain't always easy to tell.

For example, you might think my email list is made up of young whipper-snapper entrepreneurs. But it's not. It's made up of mostly retired men, who are very interested in all things online selling.

Point is: it can be very hard to tell who your consumer is.

I could give you myriad examples of this phenomenon.

How do you find out who your customers REALLY are?

One really simple method is to just check the names and addresses of your best customers.

That can often tell you a LOT.

Heck, you can even check out where they live (and in what kind of house) using Google Maps (very sneaky!).

The Gifted Product

From time to time I get 'random' ideas for these emails...

And just a few days ago, I remembered an old quote...a quote which I want to discuss today.

It comes from David Ogilvy - the late, great advertising pioneer.

But before I get to that...an interesting aside:

I have a reasonably impressive collection of rare advertising books/materials (I know, something REALLY impressive to brag about!) - a throw-back to my days as a rare book trader.

And in that collection of advertising materials, I have a (signed) record of a speech David Ogilvy made - an uber-rare piece. (I doubt there are many of these in the World).

It sits alongside a first edition copy of Eugene Schwartz's original "Breakthrough Advertising" book (another very rare piece).

And that sits alongside a signed copy of Rosser Reeves seminal "Reality In Advertising" (the first book to nail-down the concept of the 'USP').

Which is (possibly) rarer still.

But enough bragging...

Back to Ogilvy's admonition...

Here it is, in all its glory:

"A gifted product is mightier than a gifted pen."

And you know what?

Never more than right now, today, has this been more true.

And I can tell you from experience:

The better your product is, the easier your job of selling it will be.

I'm not going into all this here today. BUT - when your product is great...

Reviews/feedback comes more easily...

Repeat business is a given....

It's harder for competitors to attack you...

And lots more besides.

Don't have a great product? Then get one. OR - improve the one you have. Everyone will benefit by your doing so - including, of course, YOU!

An Insanely Large and Hungry Market

And it's staggeringly large...

Worth an estimated £2bn a year.

And it is?

Electronic Sports. Or "E-Sports" as it's known.

You know...a bunch of people 'battling away' to become the best 'X-Box' video games player.

You may not care for video games. No matter. Because either way, this market is huge.

And it's growing.

The prize-monee on offer is staggering, too. For this year's 'Fortnite World Cup', the total prize mon-ee was \$30m! So with this kind of demand, we need to take a look at possible products.

One I've seen, and like the look of personally - are stimulants/ supplements for gamers.

LEGAL ones.

(Yes, there are rumours that some top players are on ILLEGAL stimulants!) There are plenty of products that might fit the bill here. And did you know?

Many gamers practice for 8-12 hours a day.

As such, their eyesight suffers (one gamer - Evgeniy Ree - was recently advised to quit playing because of eye issues, at the age of 24). Products such as 'gaming glasses' will find a ready market.

In short, we're looking for anything that will give gamers 'an edge'.

These products will sell on eBay, Amazon and also on Facebook/Instagram.

Demand is huge...and it is likely only to get bigger.

What's more, these players have mon-ee to spend...and lots of it!

And...they are online a LOT too. Can you think of a more perfect storm for making online sales?

Anyone fancy it?

Juul's Secret

Juul...

Perhaps you've heard of them, perhaps not. They are a huge mon-ee-making success story.

So if you don't know...'Juul' is an electronic cigarette vaping brand.

And, it's HUGE.

It was only founded four years ago - and was recently valued at \$38bn.

Yes, in four years!

How? Juul captured a whopping 72% of the entire US vaping market... starting from zilch.

But there's a rub....

I first remember reading about Juul some time ago.

And I was a bit 'put off' by their business model.

For two reasons:

1. They went out to target youngsters.
2. Their product was designed to have the highest nicotine content of comparable products.

In short, they tried to get the youngsters addicted!

Did it work? Absolutely. Altria (one of the World's biggest tobacco companies) recently bought a 35% stake of Juul for over \$12bn.

Now, I don't know about you, but something doesn't quite sit well with this.

Sure, we've discussed before the power of selling 'addictive' products.

If someone is addicted to buying wrestling DVDs, or gardening products, or car accessories - great!

Let 'em, and you'd do well to sell to that market...

But addictive, health-demoting products...to kids?

Look - it's YOUR business and you live with the consequences of what you sell.

But where do your boundaries start...and finish?

Don't get me wrong. I still favour selling 'addictive' products.

As long as they're quality products that don't do any harm - then 'addictive' stuff is absolutely something to sell.

Where do YOU draw the line?

Orthodox Jews Clean Up

Interesting stuff...

BuzzfeedNews.com recently published an article about some of Amazon.com's most successful sellers...

(This is in America).

Who are they?

Orthodox jews...from Brooklyn. Apparently so...

Heck, when asked for a comment, even Amazon themselves stated: "Brooklyn is home to many impressive independent retailers selling on Amazon"

Why? Who knows...

Maybe it's the work ethic, or maybe it's such a close-knit community, that when one person started...everyone else heard about it...and did the same!

And that's what I want to talk about now...

It's very important to surround yourself with people who are positive, or, if you're not able to do that, avoid negative people.

Why?

Because attitude is contagious, isn't it?

I'm sure that the Jewish community 'feed' off each other's energy - in a good way.

I mean...if one person has built a successful Amazon business, then their friend/s are likely to believe they can do it too.

But then imagine the opposite scenario: all day, every day, they 'hang about' with people who say 'it can't be done', and that 'it's impossible' etc etc...

What would the effect be?

Even a very strong mind is likely to be swayed (negatively) by such a constant barrage.

So quick question for today....

Are YOU feeding your attitude with the 'right stuff'...or are you 'hanging about' with people who are likely to bring you down?

This kind of thing might not find you a 'hot' product, but is still important nonetheless.

Add Value and Win

Alarm clocks...

I keep an eye on eBay.co.uk/trending (a resource I've mentioned before)...

And, earlier this week - can you believe? The top trending item on the whole site was....

Alarm clocks.

I'm not sure how they worked that out...but that's what came up top. I investigated further... And sure enough there *is* a decent- sized market for alarm clocks on eBay.

They *are* big sellers.

But this fact, in and of itself, is rather meaningless.

Which is the point of today's email...

You've probably heard me discussing 'adding value' before; and I want to use the 'alarm clock' example to illustrate. Let's say you want to sell alarm clocks...

You know the market is there. But how are you going to do it? You do it by *adding value* to the alarm clock market.

You can do this by offering something different/better/newer/cooler or cheaper than the existing offerings.

But you *can't* do it by doing what everyone else is doing.

In short you have to ADD VALUE in some way.

Do that, and any market - alarm clocks or not - opens up. And if you *don't* do that...then it's a lot harder - especially in today's uber- competitive online markets.

How To Raise 200 Squid

Recent article...released by eBay... tells us that 'anyone' raise 200 hundred squid.

So...how is it done? Simply....

...by selling your old mobile phone.

Now, if you're anything like me, you probably have your existing mobile phone...and an old one (or two). Maybe you upgraded your contract. Or maybe you simply bought an newer model.

Either way, you've probably got an old phone 'kicking around' somewhere. And that's where the '200 quid' comes in....

These 'old' phones can actually be worth a bomb.

I use the iPhone personally, and my 'old' phone is, I've found out, worth a bomb. (Well, maybe not a 'bomb', but still not bad).

Heck, how EASY is it to list your old phone on eBay? Very.

Mobiles are already in eBay's catalog... so you'll just have to type in a bit of text, and eBay will fill in the rest.

You could use that mon-ee to buy some stock, test some products...or just leave it/spend it from your PayPal account.

Come to think of it....I've probably got about three old phones kicking about. Should bring in enough to cover my monthly cross-dressing bills.

What have you got hiding that can be resold?

If you're struggling to get some money for stock (maybe for a private-label item) – this could be a good way of raising some (small!) seed capital.

Perrier's Genius

Did you ever wonder who came up with the idea of selling bottled water?

Fact is, Evian started the biz...by selling water to city dwellers who were worried about *dirty water*.

Makes sense...pay a premium for clean water.

But sales collapsed when chlorine was added to the water supply, meaning ALL water was then super clean.

The real 'geniuses' in this business were Perrier. Perrier was bought by a guy called John Harmsworth over 100 years ago.

What was a simple French water spring, was renamed as 'Source Perrier'. Very flash!

In a stroke of marketing mastery, John sold the 'French water' to the daft Brits...calling it the 'Champagne of Waters'. Gotta' love it.

Bottled water is now a \$100Bn business.

That one certainly worked, didn't it?

But here's my point...

How you package and present your product - and the story behind it - is HUGE.

If you drizzled tap water into a bottle...no-one is buying.

But if you say it's from 'Source de Stourbridge', and put it in a glass bottle.. with a gold label adorned across the front...then maybe you've got a sale!

Currently, I'm working on a new project.

And I've hired a cracker-jack designer to create my **box** for me.

Why did I do that? Because I know that the box will sell the product, more than the product itself!

How do I know? Because I've tried this thing over and over (over many years). And so I know the best 'package' often wins.

Worth thinking about!

How To Steal A Supplier

So on Sunday, I headed to one of my favourite stores...

"The Range". (I've talked about this place before.)

It's essentially a giant 'everything' store, full of interesting products that you'll want to buy.

Anyway, I picked up a little something for Halloween...

'Twas a 'crazy' mask...

So I examined the package...and guess what?

Right there on the back - there is the supplier's name (which happened to be Chinese).

The packaging said something like: "Made in PRC for The Range by XYZ supplier" How easy can you get? I then Googled the supplier...and got their contact details.

Just like that.

This, does, surprisingly, 'work'...

Not always.

But some of the time.

In short...

You buy a product.

You examine the back of the packaging... ..and sometimes (but not always), you'll find the name of the supplier on there.

How easy can you get?

Anyone can try this. And, with any product. It's not guaranteed, but it's worth a try.

Especially if you can put the product back on the shelf afterwards!

The Rolling Stones vs. Steps

The Rolling Stones...

Arguably the most successful rock band of all time.

Why do I say that? Because they've been 'at the top' for *decades*.

In a list of the top tours of the 1980s, 90s and 2000s... who was always in the top 3 (in terms of gross sales)?

The Rolling Stones.

And...they are still selling out concerts today.

Now, how about the band... "Steps"....remember them?

"Steps" were a cheesy pop-band who strung together a parade of manufactured 'hits'.

They promptly disappeared (save for a few reunion pics in *The Sun*).

This reminds me of online selling and entrepreneurship in general. I've met plenty of 'entrepreneurs' over the years. Plenty of 'em are like 'Steps'.

But there are hardly any like 'The Rolling Stones'.

Quick customer story...

I had this guy as a customer, years back (when I was a young gun me-self). Guy's name was Dave (can't remember his surname)... bought a package off me...and copied something I was demonstrating.

And he copied it practically word for word!

I don't have a problem with that, by the way. I'm just mentioning it.

And guess what?

He started making dough...maybe for the first time ever...as an independent 'entrepreneur'.

His sales hit around £150/day. Which is OK!

But it didn't last.

Why not?

Because single products and promotions never do. Something (and it's not important what it was) upset the apple cart.

Dave couldn't make dough any more (from that product). Where is he now?

No idea, but he's probably no longer an entrepreneur!

Why?

You can 'get lucky' and 'luck out' into the right market at the right time.

You can land on your feet as a 'Steps'.

But few people have the mettle to become a 'Rolling Stones'.

The difference, if you were to single it out, has to be simply this: **You have to become a hit-making machine, rather than a one-hit wonder!**

And how do you do that?

Via:

- 1) A general, high-level of intelligence...and desire to improve your lot (which most people reading this probably have already)
- 2) Insatiable curiosity about what's working TODAY and why....
- 3) Persistence
- 4) A continuous desire/process for learning more about your business/market... ...amongst other things!

This is a bit much for a Monday, but there we go.

In short - 'da best'...keep learning, keep up to date on what's working, keep trying and keep at it - and therefore prosper.

The 'Steps' crew expect it all to be handed to 'em. And then wonder why their success goes away!

Women Over 40

Long-time readers will know I've spoken before about Facebook selling...

I have been more experimenting some more on 'FB' this month.

And I've 'discovered' something that I'd forgotten.

This is something very few online sellers realise...including many of the successful ones.

It relates to WHO actually buys products online.

I mean...WHO actually, really buys all this stuff that we sell?

Who's your typical online buyer?

It's not, as many people believe, 'young' and 'tech-savvy' people.

It's actually...

Women over 40.

I'll repeat: *women over 40.*

Now, this doesn't mean men don't buy online.

Of course they do.

But my experiences on Facebook, and other sites, show that's it's older women who buy the most.

How do I know?

Because on Facebook you get the AGE and GENDER of who is buying your stuff.

And the biggest-selling products are nearly always aimed at women over 40.

This is a CRUCIAL insight. Yet few 'gurus' talk about it.

If you know that many online buyers are women, aged 50, what does this mean? It means you should be **sourcing products** for this market. Yes?

Now don't get me wrong...

One of the most successful eBay products I've ever sold (a car product) was for men over 30...and there's 100% a market for selling to blokes. But what I'm saying is there are more women over 40 who buy than any other 'demographic'.

This is well worth thinking about. It has a fair few implications!

Does Facebook Beat eBay?

Not sure how true this is...

There was an article a few weeks ago in 'The Sun' (perhaps not always a great sign!) about whether Facebook beats eBay.

The headline was: **"Here's why Facebook beats eBay for selling everything from old cots to toys online."**

Well, firstly - 'everything' is a rather 'hefty' claim...

I very much doubt Facebook is better than eBay for selling rare books (for example).

Any product which needs a national (or international) audience to achieve a high selling price...will do far better on eBay than Facebook.

Anyway...

The article lists various items, and then compares resale prices.

For example:

Airgo Nimbus 8 Tent.

Facebook selling price: £650 eBay selling price: £279.90

Belstaff Biker Boots.

Facebook selling price: £99 eBay selling price: £28.40

Now, I don't know about you...

But these prices 'divergences' seem rather extreme!

But... IF they are true - and they may well be, for the odd item - that means there's a now a huge arbitrage opportunity here.

In short, buy on eBay, and then sell on Facebook marketplace.

Is it really the case?

I'll have to research more and find out. In the meantime, it might be worth you doing the same!

Be A Monopoly – And Win

It's a hot day...

You see an ice-cream van...

"Yes!" you think to yourself! Time for a nice, whipped ice-cream...with flake!

You approach *gleefully*.

BUT something's wrong.

Really wrong. You notice that there's a distinct lack of any kind of engine noise coming from the van.

You get closer...and then it hits you...

There's no whippy ice-cream.

IT'S SCOOP ONLY.

Yes, they only serve that crappy, rock-hard scoop-stuff....instead of the creamy-whippy stuff!

This happened to 'moi' the other day at a local park.

And worse: When I realised they had no 'whippy' stuff, I decided to get a drink instead. I was then presented with a WARM Pepsi. That's right.

THERE WAS NO FRIDGE.

An ice-cream van without whipped ice cream.

And without a fridge.

I kid you not.

In fact, to say this was an 'ice-cream' van is simply false advertising. Because this wasn't an ice-cream van...

...it was a van with a tub of ice-cream in it!

Laughable.

Wondering how on earth they're still in business, I then realised they are the *only* 'ice-cream' van in a busy park.

In short, this van is effectively a monopoly. Their products are cr*p. But they 'pwofit' because they have the park on lock-down.

Which brings me to today's point...

The biggest 'pwofits' when it comes to online selling are likely to go to 'monopoly' products. These are products that only YOU can sell.

If you sell on eBay or Amazon, and you're the ONLY seller of 'slime kits' (and assuming there's demand for them) - your pwofits and margins will be high.

Far higher than someone who is selling the same thing as everyone else (e.g. iPhone chargers). So...my recommendation today is to focus on 'monopoly' markets/products - where you can create a product where there's demand, but which only YOU can sell.

Do that, and your 'pwofits' will explode!

A Niche With Legs

I've noticed something...

If I wake up in the morning, and then go back to sleep...I invariably end up with a headache for the rest of the day. Anyone else experienced this?

I'm sure other people have. Maybe it's to do with the brain being shut on/off...

Which reminds of something...

The 'sleep better' niche.

This is a HUGE market, and a VERY lucrative one.

Here's some product examples to set your mind going...

- Sleep masks (for your eyes) - VERY popular...but a bit old (you'll need to add a new 'twist' of some sort).
- 'Better Sleep' supplements... pretty much self-explanatory...
- 'Better Sleep' essential oils (and the devices that put the oils into the air)
- Info products (usually based on hypnosis) to help you sleep...
- 'Wake up lights'...these are huge. The manufacturing giant Philips has a few models...basically they 'wake you up' naturally (still sleep related!)
- Special pillows...(I saw one of these being sold on Facebook the other day. It seems to be a big winner!)
- 'White Noise' machines...

And many more...

All the above products are 'working' right now for other online sellers. And don't neglect NEW ideas either; with some digging, perhaps you can find something **new** for this market, and something effective.

If you do - watch out for the sales explosion!

This is certainly a niche worthy of further investigation...whether you sell on eBay, Amazon, or Facebook.

3 Steps To Online Success

So on Friday, I met up with a couple of successful Amazon sellers...

Dim sums were served, beer was gulped, roast duck was 'wolfed down', sea bass was munched...
...and then it was time for the main course!

Anyway, one thing we were talking about was how things *change and evolve*...

For example: the online markets today are certainly different than they were five years ago...

And I have no doubt that, five years from today, they will be different again.

But here's the thing...

Although a lot changes online... and although it changes fast... *some things never change*.

The 'formula' for making mone-ee will never change.

Because all it is...is:

- 1) Find a product that people really want to buy (i.e. solve a problem experienced by a group of people).
- 2) Find a way to reach those people (affordably)
- 3) Tell them (and prove to them) how great your product is!

Pretty much all online selling can be parceled down into this essence.

Of course, there are definitely 'tricks' to help you with all three of the above points.

But...

Whatever happens in five years, ten years, or fifty years from now...

If you can adhere to and follow- through on 1-3 above, you'll always be able to 'pwofit'.

I guarantee it.

New Way To Find Product Ideas

There are lots of ways to get ideas for what to sell online...

You can look on eBay.

You can look on Amazon.

You can look on other websites.

You can look to the USA.

You can look OFFline.

You can look to the moon (and chant vigorously).

And so on...

Amazon Launchpad is an interesting one. The idea is simple: unique and innovative products 'launched' via Amazon.

Now, you COULD (possibly) launch your own product this way.

But just as valuable is using it for inspiration.

If you scroll down a little, you can search by category. Now, I don't recommend COPYING product ideas.

But this is good to get niche ideas....for niche discovery.

For example, I just looked in the Pet market and found this product: it's a device to keep track of your wayward pet. And it's selling VERY well!

So immediately we've discovered a niche; pet tracking! This is a good way to see not only what's hot, but also what niches are new and taking off.

Well worth a look!

The Other Person Inside You

So there I was - 9pm, and still in the office.

Sweat on my brow, tackling a seemingly 'impossible' problem, and with nary a person to help me.

My 'inner person' was screaming at me..."STOP it...this can NOT be done!".

But you know what?

Something inside me didn't listen to the voice.

I kept on...going on.

I'm sure you can relate to this...

You come up against an 'issue' which is certainly challenging.

And you feel like 'jacking it in' and doing something else.

But there's something in you that urges you to carry on.

Here's what I believe...

There's two 'people' in every one of us...

There's the person that says 'I don't want to do this'. And then there's the other person - the one that pushes you forward.

The first 'person' could be loosely called your 'social' self - your conditioning, and the like... your 'human ego'.

But then there's the 'other person'...

The 'other person' is THAT thing which is much stronger. *And, this 'thing' is in everyone.* It's THAT thing which - if someone held a knife to your first-born's throat - it would jump into action.

It's THAT thing which - should you get trapped on a rail track, unable to get f-ree - it would 'find a way' to save your own life.

Problem is - that 'inner beast' isn't really 'needed' by most people. Yet it's there, and, like the mythical Kraken, can be called on when really needed.

How to channel it?

I'm not sure you can - but what you can do is ignore the voice in your head that tells you 'Quit!' Are YOU 'channeling your inner beast'?

Or do you pay too much attention to that voice in your head?

Best Passive Income Opp #1

Now I want to look at some of best passive income opportunities out there today.

Now, firstly - a definition.

What do we mean by this term 'passive income'? Wikipedia defines it as:

"Passive income is income resulting from cash flow received on a regular basis, requiring minimal to no effort by the recipient to maintain it."

Alright, that's a bit clearer. But how do we define 'minimal' effort? An hour a day? Or an hour a week...or an hour a month?

Let me add my own definition of what 'passive income' is: **Passive income is income that is earned with 4 days or less of 'work' per month.**

That means the income has to be generated continuously with just 1 day a week of work (ideally less).

Going back to Wikipedia...

If you accept the definition of 'passive income' as requiring no effort, then there are virtually no opportunities that fit the bill.

Even property investment - that old stalwart - requires time (even if you job it out to a letting agent).

About the only true 'passive income' I can think of is interest on savings - and that opportunity is all but over (because of our uber-low interest rates). So - let's work with this definition of 4 days (or less) of time required per month.

Alright, so what fits the bill?

Here are three passive opps that require physical (monetary) capital and which are working right now:

- 1) Domain investments.
- 2) Niche website investments.
- 3) Peer-to-peer lending investments.

Best Passive Income Opp #2

Yesterday I was talking about passive (online) income opps. Today let's delve deeper into the three opportunities I mentioned.

(There will be more coming tomorrow). But firstly: Realize: all three of these require 'physical' capital of some sort (i.e cashola).

As such - these won't be for everyone, especially if you are capital constrained. TOK, the three passive income opps are as follows:

1) **Domain investments.**

In short, buying valuable domains, and running adverts and/or affiliate offers on these websites. Maybe you find a domain that is for sale (or not taken).

Let's say 'PPIclaims.co.uk'. You buy it, and run ads on it. Bingo. The domain just sits there and gets a trickle of traffic every month, naturally.

You won't make much from a single domain. Let's say it's £30/year. But then you do this with 1,000 domains. This is a great passive income opp, but rather played out.

2) **Niche website investments.** You can use websites like empireflippers.com to find websites that are for sale.

Particularly, you'll want to focus on sites that require minimal effort to tick over. And - which aren't exposed to competition. And - which are in 'evergreen' type markets.

Buy those websites. Then reap the cash-flow. This is risky. But it can be done if you do your 'due diligence'.

3) **Peer-to-peer lending investments.** Likely will generate the lowest returns of the three, but needs little knowledge or experience.

Sites like ratesetter.com will start you on your way. Typically, you'll be lending mon-ee to other people (spread across a portfolio of loans, to reduce risk).

Apparently, returns of 10% are possible, although I've never tried it. Now, you've probably noticed a catch with these three opportunities.

They all require 'physical' capital (as mentioned earlier). In short, you'll ideally need a five- or six-figure 'slush fund' just to get started!

OK, so tomorrow I'll look at a different kind of online passive income 'opp'. These require little in the way of physical capital. But they require a different kind of capital - your time. More tomorrow.

Best Passive Income Opp #3

And so we come to our second online passive income: Publishing. This is essentially the 'social community' opportunity I mentioned last week.

I think it's worth mentioning again.

And yes...this can be run as a passive income opp. You won't earn 'passive income' right away. It will take some time to build up. But after establishing a good foundation, this can be run in a day a week.

Let me give you a practical example of how this would work. I'm a HUGE 'MMA' fan (Mixed Martial Arts).

I frequent several forums for MMA fans. These 'forums' generate a lot of traffic, and the owners likely generate a nice income every month from the advertising run on their websites.

The 'forum' practically runs itself. The owners get a cheque each month for advertising that's run on the forum.

But establishing a 'forum' is only one part of the opportunity.

The idea is simple....

You create an 'online community' ...for example, of chess fans. You create a Facebook community and a website and a forum.

You build up the community, and then sell advertising and products to that audience. There will absolutely be 'work' at the outset of this.

But down the line, this will be an opportunity that can 'tick over' without much work. And, it can be run from anywhere.

There are a practically infinite number of niches where you can apply this strategy. The 'work' is in establishing the community.

Once that's done, it should be easy to maintain and collect your monthly cheque. As such, done right, I classify this as a 'passive income opp', and one that you could scale up into dozens of markets.

Best Passive Income Opp #4

Alright, tomorrow we'll look at setting up and running a MOAT based passive income opp.

For our final 'passive' income opp: This is the hardest one to pull off. But it also has probably the greatest income-earning opportunity.

Done right, it will require less than a day a week - maybe less. Much less. In short, it's creating a business that has a MOAT, and which can be run by someone else.

Firstly...a 'MOAT' is defined as a competitive edge. To keep things simple, let's say you invest in a specialist engraving device.

You then offer personalized 'engraved' necklaces for people who have just got engaged. You target these people through the usual channels.

Now - here's the thing: Since it's targeted and has a barrier to entry (MOAT), then it will be HARDER for people to copy what you do.

This is what you want - as then you'll own the market for personalized engraved necklaces for people who just got engaged!

Once you're up and running, you employ a capable staff member to run the business for you. (Be sure to keep the marketing know-how etc to yourself...otherwise they may run off with the business!).

You set up systems and procedures to keep everything running. You can then run that business 'passively' - without needing to do much work on it each week/month.

This opportunity is much more like a 'real' business and won't be for everyone. Key is - doing something that's hard to copy, yet scalable, getting it profitable, then handing it off to others.

Do this in an evergreen market, and you could generate a passive online income for years to come. There are dozens of MOAT based businesses out there like this, if you dig around.

I hope you enjoyed these 'passive' business ideas this week.

My Amazon Ranking Formula – Getting To The Top

What follows is a longer article about how I believe Amazon ‘ranks’ products. I call it simply...my **Amazon ranking formula**. You can find this – in all its glory! – on the next page...

And although it’s based around Amazon, a lot of the big sites probably use a similar kind of ranking method. So it’s critical to understand this kind of thing.

(This ‘formula’ is something I’ve developed from selling over £2m of products on Amazon in the last few years....

...and it stems from launching and trying to sell some 250+ products)...

I will outline the full details on the next page, followed by an in-depth explanation.

Here’s the formula...

Review Score x (Click Through Rate x Conversion Rate) + Other Factors (seller history/feedback, off-Amazon advertising, PPC spend etc.)

Review Score =

Number Reviews and Quality of Reviews

Examples:

Product 1: has 50 reviews, all five stars, therefore review score = 0.8 (low number of reviews, but high score)

Product 2: has 500 reviews, all five stars therefore review score = 1.0 (high reviews, high score)

Product 3: has 1,000 reviews, average 4 stars, therefore review score = 0.95 (high reviews, but not great score)

Product 4: has 1 review, average 5 star, therefore review score = 0.5 (very low reviews, but high score)

$0.8 \times 10\% \text{ Click through rate} \times 10\% \text{ Conversion rate} = \text{total score of } 80$

$1.0 \times 10\% \text{ Click through rate} \times 10\% \text{ Conversion rate} = \text{total score of } 100$

$0.95 \times 10\% \text{ Click through rate} \times 10\% \text{ Conversion rate} = \text{total score of } 95$

$1.0 \times 20\% \text{ Click through rate} \times 50\% \text{ conversion rate} = 1000$

Assume 1000 searches for term ‘Gardening Gloves’.

There are three different gardening gloves for sale, all priced at £10. Assume Amazon makes £2.50/order for any of the three products.

Product 1 – price £10

CTR (50%) x Conversion Rate (50%)= 500 clicks and 250 sales = Amazon earns £625 in fees.

Product 2 – price £10

CTR (30%) x Conversion Rate (30%)= 300 clicks and 90 sales = Amazon only earns £225 in fees.

Product 3 – price £10

CTR (50%) x Conversion Rate (60%)= 500 clicks and 300 sales = Amazon earns £750





- **WINNER!**

Now...an explanation!

You may know I sell a Tie-Dye kit on Amazon and eBay. December was a busy month (because it's often bought as a gift).

We sold about £12,000 worth in December of this Tie-Dye kit.

This is my product here with 300+ reviews @ £21.95.

 <p>Ultimate Tie Dye Kit For Kids and Adults - UK Manufactured & Safe - Deluxe Set of 12 Colours, Two T-Shirts Clothes, Hair Tie And...</p> <p>★★★★★ ~ 313</p> <p>£18²⁹ excl. VAT £21.95 incl. VAT Get it Monday, Jan 10 FREE Delivery by Amazon Ages: 0 - 8 years</p>	 <p>EBAPProducts Mega Tie Dye Kit with 36 Vibrant Colours - Arts And Crafts For Kids Including Storage Case And All Accessories. The Perfect Tie Dye...</p> <p>★★★★★ ~ 123</p> <p>£23⁹⁹ Get it Monday, Jan 10 FREE Delivery by Amazon Ages: 6 years and up</p>	 <p>imoli Tie-Dye Art Kit for Kids 18 Colours Tie Dye Kit 122 PCS fashion design for kids Fabric TextilePaints Tie Dye Art Set for Adults tie dye ki...</p> <p>★★★★★ ~ 1,395</p> <p>£20¹⁵ excl. VAT £24.18 incl. VAT £25-99 £23.94 incl. VAT with quantity discounts Get it Monday, Jan 10 FREE Delivery by Amazon</p>	 <p>MELAND Tie Dye Kit - 26 Colours Fabric Dyeing Art Craft Set for Adults & Kids, Including 1 White Canvas Tote, 3 Spray Nozzles, DIY Dyeing...</p> <p>★★★★★ ~ 52</p> <p>£18³² excl. VAT £21.99 incl. VAT Save 15% with voucher Get it Monday, Jan 10 FREE Delivery by Amazon</p>
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The question I've been pondering is: why does MY product come up in position number versus the TOP-selling product...which obviously appears in position ONE?

What makes the difference?

The top-seller's ranking is 1,451 in toys and games (which means their product is th 1451st best-selling item in the whole category). He's way ahead of me. I think my ranking is around 8,000.

The (truly) million-dollar question is:

Why is that seller number one, and why am I sitting at number 10?

This is a HUGE question.

If you can answer it perfectly – you can get rich. And I'm serious when I say that.

What is causing the difference? It's a huge question, like I say. I don't think anyone's got the answer because Amazon keeps it to itself.

You've heard me probably talk before on eBay about why products come up in a certain order. It all centres around "the algorithm". This is a computer-generated piece of code that determines what product comes where.

The question is – how does it work, and how does it determine which product **appears in the number one spot?**

It's such an important question because if you know the answer - if you knew why this one is here versus why that one is there - you could use that information to tailor your product to the algorithm to **gain the number one spot in search.**

Which is where all the money is!

Like I say, no-one really knows how Amazon's (or eBay's) algorithm really works.

But.

Today, I'm going to have a stab now at what I think it could be. I could be completely wrong, but this is based on my own experience. And it is:

Review Score x (Click Through Rate x Conversion Rate) + Other Factors (seller history/feedback, off-Amazon advertising, PPC spend etc.)

Firstly, let's just break this down.

We'll look at the *review score* to start with.

The *review score* of a product is the number of reviews and the quality of the reviews, together. This is the first metric I think Amazon is looking at, although it's not the most important. I'm just using it here as first in the equation.

An example...let's say there are three products in a niche.

Let's say product one has got 50 reviews, and they're all five stars...a complete clean sweep. That gives them a review score of 0.8. (I'm just using made-up figures here to show you the example).

Product two in the niche has got 500 reviews, and those are all five stars. Clearly, in terms of reviews, this product is superior to product one. Why? Because it's got more reviews, and they're all five stars. So let's say it has a review score of 1 (compared with 0.8 for product 1).

And then there's product three that has 1,000 reviews. But they're only averaging four stars. This product's review score is 0.5.

Let us put in one more; product four has one review, an average of five stars. So its review score equals 0.5.

Examples:

Product 1: has 50 reviews, all five stars, therefore review score = 0.8 (low number of reviews, but high score)

Product 2: has 500 reviews, all five stars therefore review score = 1.0 (high reviews, high score)

Product 3: has 1,000 reviews, average 4 stars, therefore review score = 0.95 (high reviews, but not great score)

Product 4: has 1 review, average 5 star, therefore review score = 0.5 (very low reviews, but high score)

These are arbitrary figures I've made up, for this example.

You can see product TWO has the best score. So, as I say, these are just arbitrary figures, but this is what I think goes on behind the scenes: every product has a **review score based on the number of reviews and the quality of those reviews.**

Let's go back to the equation...

It is:

Review Score x (Click Through Rate x Conversion Rate) + Other Factors (seller history/feedback, off-Amazon advertising, PPC spend etc.)

So we've determined what 'Review Score' is.

But let's look at the next part:

(Click Through Rate x Conversion Rate)

Firstly: click-through rate.

What's this all about?

Well, let's say you go to Amazon. You're looking for a 'tie dye kit'. So you type in 'tie dye kit'.

The click-through rate is the number of clicks that your product gets for every search. So, I've typed in Tie-Dye kit here.



Sponsored

Desire Deluxe Tie Dye Kit – Set of 18 Colours Ink Tie-Dye Kits for Dyeing Fabric, Clothes – Creative Art Craft Games Activity for Kids & Adults...

★★★★★ ~ 2,676

Limited time deal

£12⁰³ excl. VAT

£14.44 incl. VAT £19.99

✓prime Get it Monday, Jan 10

Eligible for FREE UK Delivery



Sponsored

Desire Deluxe Tie Dye Kit – Set of 9 Paint Colours Ink for Dyeing Fabric, Clothes – Creative Art Craft Tie-Dye Kits Games Activity for Adults & Kids

★★★★★ ~ 2,542

£11⁶⁶ excl. VAT

£13.99 incl. VAT

Save 10% with voucher

✓prime Get it Monday, Jan 10

Eligible for FREE UK Delivery

Ages: 36 months - 20 years



Sponsored

KUMBER Tie Dye Kit Kids - 5 Colours with Added Refill Packs, Rubber Bands, Gloves and Funnel - Art and Craft Set for Dyeing Clothes, Creati...

★★★★★ ~ 551

£9⁹⁹ £13.99

£8.99 incl. VAT with quantity discounts

✓prime Get it Monday, Jan 10

Eligible for FREE UK Delivery

Amazon's Choice



Sponsored

Desire Deluxe Tie Dye Kit – Set of 5 Paint Colours Ink for Dyeing Fabric, Clothes – Creative Art Craft Tie-Dye Kits Games Activity for Adults & Kids

★★★★★ ~ 77

£7⁴⁹ excl. VAT

£8.99 incl. VAT

Save 5% with voucher

✓prime Get it Monday, Jan 10

Eligible for FREE UK Delivery

Let's say I click product 1 (top left). And then another two people search from their PC or mobile, and they also click product 1. That means this product has got 3 clicks. Now, another person searches for "tie dye kit" and click product TWO.

Here's how it breaks down:

4 searches...

Product 1=3 clicks

Product 2=1 click

Product 1 clickthrough rate is: $\frac{3}{4}$ =75%.

Product 2 clickthrough rate is: $\frac{1}{4}$ =25%

So clearly product ONE has the HIGHEST clickthrough rate.

If you've got a very high click-through rate, it means a lot of people are clicking and opening your product **relative to everybody else**.

What is Amazon going to do? Well, in that case, they're obviously going to push the product which is getting the MOST clicks FIRST.

Why? Because it's the one that appears to be 'interesting' to the MOST amount of people (That's why people are clicking it!).

OK, so that's clickthrough rate.

But they also want to see those clicks **turn into sales**.

So the next factor here is **conversion rate**. Conversion rate is simply: number of sales of the product/number of times it was viewed.

For example: if 100 people open my product page, and 25 buy, then the conversion rate is 25%.

Amazon want to see a very high click-through rate and a very high conversion rate.

You've got to have them both together.

Why? Well, let's say your click-through was 100%, so every single person that searches for a term clicks on your product and leaves all the others.

But then your conversion rate turns out to be ZERO! That means Amazon are not making any money. Because although everyone's clicking and opening your product (to see what it's all about), they're not then buying.

That means Amazon makes ZERO commission (FBA fees).

Likewise, if your product has got a really low click-through rate (let's say only 1/100 people click it), they're not going to show you because you're not being clicked on ENOUGH. Again, they don't earn enough fees from your product, compared with the competition.

You have to have the high click-through rate and the high conversion rate together.

And...?

You also need a high review score.

Why? Because Amazon don't want to promote a bad product.

Let's say you had a really high click-through rate (so everyone's opening your listing). And, your conversion rate is also huge! Great!

But.

Your reviews are bad.

Amazon will downgrade you. Simply because they don't want to create a bad experience for their customers.

This is all conjecture, of course. My opinion.

How I've approached this problem is I asked myself: if I were an engineer at Amazon, how would I want to structure it?

Here's the bottom-line:

The higher a product's click-through rate, and then the higher it's conversion – the **more money Amazon makes from that product.**

See these examples, for a 'gardening gloves' product:

Assume 1000 searches for term 'Gardening Gloves'.

There are three different gardening gloves for sale, all priced at £10. Assume Amazon makes £2.50/order for any of the three products.

Product 1 – price £10

CTR (50%) x Conversion Rate (50%)= 500 clicks and 250 sales = Amazon earns £625 in fees.

Product 2 – price £10

CTR (30%) x Conversion Rate (30%)= 300 clicks and 90 sales = Amazon only earns £225 in fees.

Product 3 – price £10

CTR (50%) x Conversion Rate (60%)= 500 clicks and 300 sales = Amazon earns £750

- **WINNER!**

When the clickthrough rate on your product AND when its conversion rate are BOTH sky high, Amazon make an awful lot of money on a product...

When these two metrics are low, the product makes them virtually nothing.

As a profit-maximizing business, they're going to push products with the highest click-through and the highest conversion rates.

Because that generates the most revenue.

However – just to ensure they don't promote BAD products...they also create a gauge for how 'good' your product is...based on its reviews. That's where both the number, and the quality, of your reviews come in.

If you want to sell on Amazon, you should work on all three of these together to get the best results.

What can you do to improve all three factors? Your clickthrough rate...your conversion rate...and your reviews?

Let's start with reviews: you can't really change the quality of your reviews; it's too difficult. So this means you should start by **selling the best product you can.**

You can probably can affect the number of reviews for your product. How? You can run lightning deals. You can also run ads on Facebook offering a coupon. You could give people a discount for buying the product and then chase them for a review. That's perfectly within the rules. So, the idea is to increase the sheer number of reviews. And then the quality will come from the product. That's the first thing.

The second part here is the click-through rate...

How are we going to increase the click-through rate? How do we get MORE people to click on OUR product...vis-à-vis all the others?

That comes down to your product again. It is a good FIT for the market? When people see it – do they go “Wow! That’s just what I need”

Also, this is about the packaging and the brand, and how appealing it is. Does it match with the market? Are people really seeing anything like, "That's for me?" The quality of your images also counts for a lot.

Also, are the keywords/titles matching what people are looking for? That's going to affect your click-through rate too.

And then finally, the conversion rate...

This is arguably the thing that you can change the most.

And really, that comes down to having a really great description. And great images, and infographics.

You really need to get A+ content on your listing. That means you should register a trademark, which is about £180, and then you're able to access A+ content.

This means you can give an all-singing, all dancing description which will then increase conversion. Also, the conversion will come down to the quality of the reviews as well and the sheer number of reviews.

To be successful on Amazon: Fantastic product, great reviews, high number of people clicking through to see ‘what it’s all about’...then a high conversion rate when they get there. Not much to ask, is it?

Products For Sale Match Our Level Of Consciousness

And so Boris is the new PM! Whatever you think of him, well...I'll guess we'll see what happens.

Now as I'm sure you've noticed, whoever the current PM of the UK is... not that much really ever changes (here or abroad).

Why not? I'm of the firm belief that we are ruled by people who 'match' the level of consciousness of the 'average' member of the public.

I'm not going to go into all that here today. But guess what? It's just the same with products.

The products we 'get' are those which 'match' the level of consciousness of the 'average' member of the public.

If an 'average' member of the public believes that XYZ oven gloves are a great idea - then that product will be sold to the public, and will become a 'success' (will survive in the marketplace, and will continue to be produced).

If the 'average' member of the public believes that Clearasil spot cream is a 'good' product, then that product will stay on the shelves.

And so on. What this means is: the politicians we get, and the products we get (online or offline)...

....'match' the average member of society. We'll never 'get' a PM or a successful product that is at a higher level of consciousness than the average person.

It's impossible!

OK... So what does this mean to us, as online sellers?

When you're looking at successful products, you're looking at products that appeal to Mr. Joe Public. And...what you must do is - 'think'... like Mr. Joe Public.

You must then sell a product that 'matches' the mind of your perfect prospect - whatever you may think of that product.

It's easier said than done. But to be a successful seller, it's almost mandatory!

Develop Your Own 'Purple Cow'

So I did some reading over the weekend...and read a book I've had for YEARS (but never got around to reading). [I'm always doing that.]

It's called 'Purple Cow'...by marketing guru Seth Godin. The book was written way back in the early noughties...but it's quite prescient.

In short, the message is: If you want to sell something these days, the 'clutter' and competition is so high...that you have to be 'remarkable' in some way.

If you look at a field of 100 cows, which cow do you notice?

The purple cow! In short: stand out, be remarkable.

So...when it comes to selling products online...is this really true? I mean...do you NEED a 'purple cow' these days to actually make any kind of sales online?

Yes and no. For sure, a purple cow helps. But it's not always necessary. I'll tell you what the exceptions are to this 'rule'...

The exception is when the market is SO HOT and SO NEW that virtually any product will do. When the demand in a given market is HIGH, and competition is LOW...you don't need a purple cow.

In short - it all depends on the market and the 'newness' of that market. If the market is new, and hot, with little competition - most anything will do.

The overwhelming demand, coupled with (as yet) established competition will propel your ship forward with gusto.

But if the market is old, and is over-run with marauding levels of competition - you'll do far better with a...

PURPLE COW. i.e. a remarkable product that makes people sit up and take notice. Purple cow? Sometimes, but not always. At least in my humble opinion!

Forget Half-Eaten Hot Dogs

So there I was, walking through the local shopping centre...

...when I spied a half-eaten hotdog, carelessly tossed on the sidewalk.

And guess what? It was surrounded by three birds (avine-variety, not local lasses) - all trying to get a piece.

One squawked his way in...and tried to out-muscle the other character, who belligerently 'beaked' back.

And so it went on. All for a half-eaten hot-dog! Hardly rich pickings, is it?

Anyway...

This reminded me of some online sellers.

They're 'squawking' and 'beaking their way in' to markets/products that are about as valuable as the aforementioned half-eaten hot dog.

Look: If you are battling away, trying to sell generic USB cables...or keyboards...or generic garden gloves...or...heck, anything that is bland/boring or generic...

Then you too are guilty of battling for the half-eaten hotdog.

Some markets...like some food stuffs, and like some relationships, simply aren't worth the fight.

What to do instead? Find products/markets/niches that are hot, but, as yet, are NOT hotly- contested.

Get in there, quickly.

And then establish your position.

Sure, it's easier said than done. But, if it's not 'done', then you may well find yourself on the sidewalk!

Indoor Plants?

Sales are booming... They've quadrupled this year!

What's the niche?

Indoor plants. Yes, really...

What's driving this trend? Apparently, the trend is being driven by the 'need' of the millennial generation to care for something.

Anything. Of course, plenty of people are now living in cities, and so maybe there's an element of 'returning to nature' too...

Either way, the market for both indoor plants - and their related accessories - is booming.

How to 'pwofit'? Same as always...

First up: simply hit eBay, or Amazon, and preferably both...

And then look for products which are selling, but which are NOT over-run with competition.

Then try and sell something similar (or even the same).

This formula works in any market! Find the right market.

Find a good product - one which is selling (or is likely to sell), but which doesn't have too much competition.

Then test it. If it 'works' - great! Do more of the same. If it fails? Drop it and move on.

Definitely simple, although takes work. :)

Make Sure You Can't Be Copied

So yesterday an old friend came to visit the office...

And he had a poke around. To see if I had any old stock he could poach...

I gave him a few samples... and then he left. Nothing too eventful in that right?

But one thing he mentioned, stuck out: "Oliver, I want to run this business from a laptop. I want to sell the products from home with my laptop!"

And, of course, that's the dream, isn't it? Possibly, it is.

But here's the thing... To 'profit from a laptop', you'll almost certainly have to do something that other people can't do or won't do.

I'll repeat that, because it is important: To 'profit from a laptop', you'll almost certainly have to do something that other people can't do or won't do.

Now, the above paragraph is broad. I realise that.

But...it's true.

In other words: if you want to profit 'laptop style', and be able to live that lifestyle, you'll have to find something that other people can't copy or can't do.

An example...

Maybe you know a unique manufacturer of candles. They supply to you and ONLY you. You sell their products online. You have zero competition, as you are the only seller.

Thus, you are doing something other sellers can't do - selling something that they can't access. You win!

Or, looking at it another way...

If you do what everyone else does, you will scratch out an income - but you won't be 'living the dream' with a laptop lifestyle.

Sell what everyone else sells, do what everyone else does...and you'll get mediocre results. (If any results at all).

Key To Facebook Sales

I've been doing plenty of Facebook advertising recently.

And I'll admit. I've NOT mastered it.

At least not yet. I've spent the best part of £100K - and made a small 'pwofit'.

But it's far from a big 'pwofit'. Facebook ads are still a work in progress, until I 'crack the code'

But here's the thing... When you read what a lot of Facebook experts tell you - they'll tell you how it's all about your adverts, and how you set them up.

They'll tell you it's about the audiences, the videos you use to sell, and so on.

But it's mostly baloney. And it's the same on eBay or Amazon...

People will tell you it's about the marketing, the listing, the images etc.

But it's mostly baloney. Why?

Because, now, today, more than anything - what counts is your product, and how appealing it is to your audience.

By way of example... If I advertise on eBay or Amazon or Facebook...and I'm selling ten pound notes for a fiver - how good at advertising do I need to be?

I could be terrible at it - shockingly bad - *and I'd still sell infinite amounts.*

It wouldn't matter whether my listing was crap, or whether my images were garbage.

What I'm saying is...

What really counts isn't the marketing.

It's the product itself and - how appealing it is to who I'm selling it to!

Get the right product to the right market, at the right time - and you can clean up.

Without great marketing. Get the wrong product to the wrong market at the wrong time - and you could be Claude Hopkins himself - and you'll still crash and burn.

Just some thoughts!

Amazon Auctions?

This was in the Daily Mail recently...

It was headed up: "EXPOSED: How Amazon destroys milliyuns of new items it can't sell with everything from TVs to kitchen equipment, books and nappies dumped in landfill sites."

In short, workers at Amazon's warehouse 'dump' great products into landfill (mostly returns etc).

But is it true? My hunch is - probably not; perhaps a few items go to landfill, but many more go somewhere else.

Where is this 'somewhere else'? Well, Amazon has their own 'warehouse deals' part of the site...

Where you can find plenty of used stuff.

But there's something else too...

You may or may not know that Amazon have their own auction site.

You can buy returns through this site - directly via Amazon.

I have no idea whether this is a good opportunity or not... but feel free to do your own research.

Heck, maybe a subscriber could try it out...and see how it goes!

Are you up for it? <https://a2z.bstock.com/>

I think you'll need a fair whack of spare capital to try this...and some courage.

But still, it's interesting to take a look!

Buyer Empathy Is Key

Drew Manning USED to be 190lbs of ripped, stony muscle...

Until he started eating pizzas and cream cakes - on purpose, no less - to deliberately 'balloon' himself up to 250+lbs.

Now he's a fat 263 lbs. **Why?**

As I just mentioned - he's done it all ON PURPOSE!

He started because his clients were telling him he didn't know what they REALLY have to go through to lose weight.

So he thought to himself ..."WTF?" (as our American friends like to say).

He'd try it himself...pile on the pounds, with the intention of THEN taking them off again.

Fit to FAT...to fit again. All to see what his clients REALLY have to go through.

He says: 'Now I understand a little bit more of how hard and how real addictions are to foods.'

The key here of course is EMPATHY:

The guy is trying to understand what it feels like to be 'on the other side' - what it feels like to be fat.

This is something a lot of us need to be more aware of.

I'm NOT just talking here about people marketing diet products!

Far from it. WHATEVER you sell...you should always be "Trying to put yourself in the other person's/buyer's shoes."

If you're selling art prints - what are your buyers thinking/feeling before they spend their hard-earned cashola?

- Is this print going to look good in my house?
- Is this print going to fall apart?
- Will it make me look cheap in front of my friends?
- Will it elevate my social status?

And so on... Whatever you're selling, putting yourself in the other person's shoes is KEY.

What are they thinking about when they read about what you've got?

What are their real concerns, their biggest problems?

This is KEY not only when writing product descriptions, **but also when actually CHOOSING products to sell as well.**

By understanding and putting yourself in your potential buyer's shoes...you can more readily realise what they really would like to buy.

Sponsored Ads Are Winners

Here's an important secret for when you list and sell a new product on eBay...

You may have heard of eBay's 'Sponsored Adverts'.

Well, these are great to use when you list and sell a NEW product.

Why? The way it works: By running 'Sponsored Ads', you can gain INSTANT visibility for your item.

This then tells you whether it's a winner...or a loser.

You'll also get sales from your advert that you might not otherwise get.

But does it work?

Based on personal experience... it absolutely does.

For example, here's some results I picked up for last week (over a 7-day period).

In short, I spent £62 to get back £894 - which isn't too shabby...

Now, this is for a variety of different products, but the results speak for themselves.

You only pay when a sale is made...so it's not like Google where you pay per click, without any guarantee of results.

If you want a full run-down on this program and how it works...you can find it here:

Every seller should be using 'Sponsored Listings'. But not everyone is!

Ignore China? Yes and No

A customer called the other day...

And he asked whether importing from China (to sell on eBay) was still viable.

It's an interesting question, especially in light of what I've been talking about recently (about 'adding value').

My thoughts? Yes and no.

But in a lot of cases, 'straight' importing from China won't work as well as it used to.

'China' isn't what it was.

The simple reason is because of increased competition.

Now, any man and his pet budgerigar can order something from there... and sell it on eBay.

And when THAT can happen...'pwofits' get watered down.

So, what's the alternative?

There's a few, but I'll give you one now: Go for niches/markets where you don't NEED to 'use China'.

Sounds simple..how about an example?

Well, an example might be the grocery market.

Let's take sweets...yes, sweets.

Items like this can be sourced more easily from within the UK.

You can build a product like a 'Retro Sweets Hamper' and sell that.

This way, you avoid the need to use China in any way.

There ARE some ways you can still use China...such as using them to build a 'kit' of items.

However, the days of buying 'simple' products on Alibaba, then selling them on eBay, are likely gone forever.

Thankfully, there ARE alternatives sources and 'models' that can still work.

It's Takeaway Night For Dave

Dave couldn't wait!

It was Friday - and that meant it was takeaway night!

Chicken tikka, two poppadums and three cans of Stella.

His plan was to polish off the curry, before booking this year's summer holiday (Tenerife, all-inclusive) on one of those Internet websites that got you the best deal.

Tonight's entertainment was already planned....

A spot of 'Corrie', followed by Ant and Dec's new one, then Graham Norton before bed.

He couldn't wait for the weekend.

He never could.

On Saturday, they were going down the Feathers to having a meeting about his best mate's (Jimmy's) stag do.

The options were *Whitley Bay* or *Magaluf*.

On Saturday, he was also going to return that drill to B&Q to get a replacement (he was learning DIY).

On the way, he was going to grab a coffee (Latte) and a piece of deliciously soft carrot cake from Costa.

He was trying to cut back.

He'd created a savings fund for a rainy day, and it was well over £1,000 now.

Dave had been busy improving his life.

He was on a new diet (*protein shakes*), and was also trying to get to the gym twice a week (£10/month - introductory offer, so the personal trainer told him)

He was settling down, too, getting ready to marry Tracey, hopefully next year.

He'd even tattooed her name along his forearm, along with the date they met.

He was still renting, but had dreams of one day owning a home.

His current home had all the mod cons - those copper-coated pans you get from B&M, an espresso-maker, and even a device that created perfectly poached eggs (ideal for his high protein diet).

He'd also got a dog - Smithy, a cross Staffy and Lab.

All was well.

But one day, it all fell apart.

You see, Dave woke violently one night.

He'd had a dream - more of a nightmare - that his life was a sham.

He was actually not 'Dave' at all, but a mere robotic clone.

He'd come off an outer-galactic factory line, one of 1 billion others.

A carbon copy...designed only to do what all the other clones did.

In the dream, he'd met other clones just like him - Oliver, Mike, Rich and *Jonny-Boy*.

Dave's programming was simple - watch Corrie religiously, get a tattoo, get married, get a dog.

From now until his body withered away.

Dave came over all woosy... reaching out for a four-pack of Stella from the fridge to calm his nerves.

END of story...

Now, what was the point of that story, exactly?

Is this a typical customer?

The American marketing 'gurus' like to call this 'Your Customer Avatar'.

So...question for the day...

What is YOUR 'customer avatar'?

WHO is the person who is buying what you're selling (or thinking of selling)?

It's well worth thinking about....what they dream about, hope for, dislike, fear etc.

And I can guarantee you this:

Once you know your 'avatar' - who exactly you're selling to - you'll be much more effective when it comes to both sourcing and selling products they want to buy.

Tracey Does A Detox

Tracey couldn't wait!

Next week was Donna's hen night.

Everything was planned, right down to the nurses outfits, and the inflatable, blow-up 'schlong' that they were going to carry around town with them.

They'd booked a table at *Bushwackers* Disco (the local club), and even bought a special bottle of Gin for the occasion.

Tracey was going to have a big blow out.

After all, she'd been really stressed out.

The wedding to Dave was really getting on top of her.

She didn't know whether Dave was the one, and, if she was honest with herself, preferred her old boss Phil. But she knew Phil would never settle down.

So, she'd gone for Dave instead.

She knew her biological clock was ticking, so would press on regardless.

Onwards and upwards!

With the stress of it all, she'd put on a few pounds and had joined the local slimming club, Bee-Thinner (it was something she'd seen advertised on Facebook).

She was also trying out a new fruit blending machine (to help with *detoxing* the body).

She'd bought it from one of the home shopping channels on Sky TV.

The best bit was how quick and easy it was. (Even the cleaning up was easy).

Tonight was *Britain's Got Talent* night.

The plan was to get her nails done first, and then they'd move onto planning the hen night, whilst they could all talk about whose fella had the smallest todger.

Donna looked in the mirror.

The pounds were certainly coming off.

And the new fake tan looked great.

The new earrings from the catalog looked great, too. (Only £1.66p per month for the next 43 years).

Suddenly, Donna had a staggering sense of *Deja Vu*.

It was a sense of 'Deja Vu' that was even more powerful than the one she'd had last week (at the psychic event she'd been to, hosted by *Derek Acorah*).

She realised she'd been here before, in a past life.

She was repeating all the same crap all over again.

The names had changed, but the game was the same.

She then woke up.

Dave lay next to her, sweating.

END of story...

If you caught yesterday's email, you'll know I was talking about profiling your customer.

Maybe you thought about that... maybe you didn't.

Either way, I enjoyed writing today's email regardless!

Do It In Chunks

I'm sure you'll agree...

If you are running something online, or are you are thinking about it, it's very easy to get overwhelmed...

You take one look at what you have got to do...

...and you head scrambles like the proverbial *breakfast eggs*.

That's why I believe it's important to find some way to overcome this.

And one way is to 'break down' what you have to do into CHUNKS...

...and then 'block out' time according to these chunks.

For example...

You've got 3 things to work on today...

Find 10 products to test. Find 3 suppliers for each of those products.

And then contact them all.

So it could look like this:

9am-12pm - identify 10 products to test.

1pm-4pm - find three suppliers for each of those 10 products, add to spreadsheet.

4pm-6pm - make contact with each of those suppliers.

If you just 'attack' the problem as "I need to find something to sell!", then the problem is too big and overwhelming.

But by breaking it down into CHUNKS, things seem easier.

And then...you're more likely to actually start, and do something.

If you see a big hill in front of you, it can seem daunting.

But if you 'attack' it one bit at a time, it doesn't seem so bad after all!

So one of my staff members is away currently...

Office Dog Insights

And that means I'm looking after the office dog...Arch, the Shi-Tsu.

Now, to me, as an observer, it seems like his life consists of:

1. Eating as much as possible (the more fat/protein, the better)
2. Trying to hump anything that moves.
3. Sleeping
4. Playing ball.

But is that really any different than the average guy?

But when I look at him - I'm puzzled.

Most of the time he is either sleeping...or just sat there.

Is he bored?

I have no idea, and I can't see how I'll ever know.

And that's my point...

I can't know what he thinks/feels, and you can't think/feel what your prospect thinks/feels either.

If you're selling a product to people who want to be taller (yes, that is a niche!), you can't know how they think/feel - if you're 6ft 2'!

Point is...

The better you can think/feel like your average prospect, the better your sales and marketing will be.

That's an absolute fact.

The best marketers and copywriters are absolutely 'in tune' with their markets.

Many of them were previous customers in those markets...so know their prospects inside out.

How well do YOU know the person you're selling to?

If you don't know them well, you better learn as much as you can.

If YOU don't, then your competitors probably will!

Countering Objections Online

I rarely see door-to-door salespeople.

But I was at someone's house the other day...and there was a knock on the door.

Who could it be?

We opened the door, and were greeted by a bespectacled old lady, grasping a leaflet.

"Jesus..." She began...

I then realised she was a Jehovah's Witness.

I must admit, I did start to listen to what she had to say.

But here's the thing...

Can you imagine if you saw an advert for her 'pitch' on the Internet?

99.9% of people would click off immediately.

But when you're face-to-face?

It's much more hard-to-ignore.

This, of course, is the huge advantage of face-to-face sales.

And here's the really important thing...

Face-to-face, you can easily counter 'objections'.

It's much harder to counter objections online, yet it's critical.

So how do we do it...how do we 'counter' objections, online?

(Whether you're selling on eBay, or elsewhere).

You simply setup a 'FAQs', and answer them...

For example...

If you're selling a remote control helicopter, and it's cheap, people's objection might be...

"Won't it break the first time I use it?"

Or: "If I crash it, will it smash to pieces?"

These 'questions' can then be answered in your sales copy.

And there's your 'objection handling', like in face-to-face sales.

As online sellers, we're never going to have the face-to-face 'power' of the Jehovah's Witness...

....so we have to do what we can...to come close.

Subway Secrets

Some years ago...

I read an article about the incredible success story that is 'Subway'.

I'm not a Subway sandwich fan to be honest... but I want to talk today about the 'business' of Subway.

The sandwich shop and franchise made its owner (who recently passed away) extremely wealthy.

And let's face it: It's just a very simple idea - a glorified sandwich shop - brilliantly executed!

Founded in 1965, it has grown to over 44,000 stores - and over \$11bn in revenues.

But recently, the giant booty-maker has gone into DECLINE...

Why?

Well, there's lots of talk as to why sales are falling.

The Quality. Competition. Franchisee issues. And so on....

But here's the thing...

How many businesses really survive more than 10 years....never mind more than 50?

Hardly any.

If you look at the SP500 - America's biggest companies - the list changes constantly.

Even the biggest companies are constantly dying off...and being re-born, or decaying completely.

With something like Subway, you'd imagine that - being in the 'food' market - there will always be a market for what they're offering.

That's true, but any and every business is always subject to various forces that are out of our control.

In short, you can't predict the future!

Just look at what happened to Taxi companies (recently) and Blockbuster video!

No-one knows 'when' your 'niche' will disappear.

But one day - it probably will!

All of this sounds depressing, but it isn't!

Because if you have 'the skills' - if you learn how to write a good sales 'pitch', learn what makes products sell, learn how to advertise etc - you can always do well.

You just need to adapt to whatever new terrain springs up.

Will this be the end of Subway?

Who knows.

But even if it is...

Some entrepreneur will no doubt re-invent the sandwich, and build a 'new' Subway that is bigger and better than the original foot-long.

Niches change, die off and re-appear.

But sales skill lasts forever!

Energy Limits

And so life goes on!

What have YOU been up to?

Working hard...or not working at all...on your online biz?

I was thinking about this just last week...

Why? As I simply couldn't be bothered working at all!

What gives?

Usually, I'm a hard worker.

But the week before last, I'd had my 'nose to the grind-stone'.

It's like my energy stores had gone...and had to be replenished.

I've often wondered this...

Let's take a given week... if you get your head-down and do 70 hours, could you really keep that up?

I doubt it. Maybe SOME people can, but most will eventually give up.

Exhausted.

Why?

In my own case, it seems like I've only got a limited supply of energy that can be 'spent' on work.

If I had to work two weeks solid, 14 days non-stop, I'd then probably need at least 7 solid days off!

Work, productivity and the desire to work comes in phases...and bursts.

So, where am I going with this?

In short, all this reminds me of how important regular breaks are IF you sell online.

It's easy to 'do too much'.

Because we're living in an 'always-on' World.

But if you go too hard, eventually your stores run out...and your creativity goes with it.

So - this week, let's all do LESS!

Because by doing less, eventually you end up with more energy and more creativity...and better (final) results.

The Seasonal Arbirtageur

It's Mother's day this week...

Can you 'pwofit'?

Possibly...

You see, just about now...a ton of people are going online to find a gift for the big day...

And guess what?

Some of them are going to pay over the odds...for whatever they're going to buy.

Here's what I mean...

Plenty of people (blokes especially - you know how lazy we are) will go to Amazon and buy something at twice the price you can buy it for on eBay.

Where do YOU come into all this? So...you go to eBay. You find an item that's selling like crazy.

You then list it on Amazon...at twice the price.

And you see if you get any sales.

(Done right, this will hardly cost anything. And, you can do it with as many products as you want).

IF you make any sales? You buy said product from eBay and ship it to your Amazon buyer.

Will this work?

I don't know for sure...but it POSSIBLY could. Possibly.

And what do you have to lose by trying?

Not much.

Heck, this 'strategy' can be used at any 'hot' time of year...or during events...basically, any time when people's 'buying blindness' gets ramped up.

Best part:

It would only take you an hour or two to 'av a go...and it will barely cost you a penny.

One for you to 'stew on' this week!

He Sold One Product , In One Way – And Quit

How many times have you had ONE bad experience with something....

...and vowed NEVER to 'do it again'?

A few, I'll bet!

A bad experience at a restaurant, a duff hotel...whatever.

We've all experienced this.

And the conclusion is: "I'm NEVER going back THERE again!"

I think it's the nature of our mind to do this.

After all....we only have a limited amount of time, and have to make quick (and final) decisions about the vast array of options we all face in any given day.

If 'X' doesn't work, we dismiss it quickly.

And then we move onto something else.

But here's the problem...

When you only have a very limited experience with 'X', can you really make a final conclusion about this 'X'?

Yet - we all do this...

How on earth does this relate to your online selling?

Let's take an example...

You try and sell ONE product...

...and it fails.

What do most people do next? They automatically assume 'this product is an absolute failure!' OR - you try and list a product on Amazon for the first time...

...and it fails. The conclusion?

"Damn it - Amazon doesn't work!"

Or you list one product with one title...and it fails.

"Garbage!"

Yet all this really tells you is: the ONE way you listed/sold that one item, one time - didn't work. It doesn't conclusively prove anything, of course...other than that particularly 'one-time-experience'....was a failure!

Yet - how many of us automatically 'extrapolate' that 'ONE-experience' into a much broader (and likely faulty) 'final conclusion'?

Because ALL you've really proven...is that 'ONE-thing you did...didn't work this (particular) time around.

Now...that's not to say that this 'one-experience' didn't teach you something.

And yes...maybe that product IS a dead-loss.

But surely it's worth a few more goes, using different 'angles of attack'...to reach a more solid and valid conclusion?

Have YOU drawn a (potentially) faulty conclusion from just ONE bad (or good) experience of something?

Haven't we all?

What conclusions have you drawn...which were based on only limited experience?

Are you 100% confident in your conclusion?

That's something to think about, for sure!

The Online Echo Chamber

So there I was, minding my own business...in Costa coffee...working on a little some-thing...

...when I was rudely 'interrupted' by the table nearby...

Turns out - it was a job interview.

Not sure the position...but something in public service.

So what did I do?

I listened in...naturally.

And the questions!

Ever heard the expression 'Echo Chamber'?

That's the first term that popped into my head when I got wind of what was going down...

In short, I soon realised that this was...

Two people parroting loads of junk that 'society' has told them they should say!

"Tell me what interests you about the role..."

Answer: "I love exploring new cultures and working as part of a team."

ACTUAL answer: "I need the cash to pay my bills and pay for alcohol on the weekend!"

Now - give us the damn job!

And shut up with the questions!

Alright, alright...so maybe I'm being a little harsh...or not. And here's the thing:

There's an 'online echo chamber', too.

It's basically where you do the same thing as everyone else... without even thinking about it.

Example: you find a product to sell. You look at your competitors. They're doing alright with it...so you can do the same!

You choose similar PACKAGING. You use a similar DESCRIPTION. Your images are SIMILAR.

You sell it in the SAME WAY. Exactly.

Of course, you could argue...why re- invent the wheel?

And a lot of the time, that's true. If you're a 'newb', you're best going with the flow.

But BREAKTHROUGHS come from getting out of the echo chamber...and throwing a grenade in there...as you walk away.

Whether it's politics, religion or online selling, is 'the echo chamber' holding you back?

A Staggering Discovery!

I'd like to begin this month with a *staggering discovery*. Something I've just discovered that is critical for one of our products!

(And it's vitally important to YOU too – as you'll see!).

If you've been a long-time subscriber to *LOS*, you know that one of our products is **slime kits**. This past November and December, we sold around £100,000 worth of these kits.

We've been selling them on Amazon...and also on Facebook.

Now, here's the discovery I literally *just* found out...

These slime kits are obviously great for children, usually in the 8-12-year-old range. But let me ask you a question: WHO do you think buys these slime kits?

It's obviously not going to be the kids. Why not? As they don't have credit cards ready to purchase.

That would mean it has to be the parents, right?

Now, if you asked what **age** the parents of these children are, you'd probably guess in their 30s and 40s. That's my thought process anyway...

Well, the great thing about sending traffic via Facebook advertising, is you can target these demographics. You can show your ads to an audience **matching this age range and target only parents**. That's perfect for our product, and we sold a lot of slime kits (of course not all of our sales were through Facebook, some were through Amazon as well).

BUT: Here's the mind-blowing thing...

You can collect a lot of data through Facebook Ads. And you can sort the data based on what provides the biggest return to see which audience is THE most profitable.

For example, it might be women in the 25-35 age range, or 35-45 age range, and so on.

In this instance, you would *expect* the best-performing age range to be 35-45, as I mentioned before. That's what you would *expect*.

But that's not the case.

So what age range performed best for our slime kits? The best performing age range from our Facebook Ads wasn't 25-35 year-old parents...it was people aged 50 and over!

So, why is this the case? Why are 50+ year old parents the best performing target group for our slime kit ads on Facebook? Surely, they aren't buying slime kits for their adult children?

Well, they aren't. 50+ year old parents are actually grandparents (makes sense, to be a grandparent you need children to have children). And these were actually the *best responders* for this product.

I would have never guessed that.

And I doubt most people would have either!

But once you see the data and explanation, it makes sense. But without seeing the data, there's a good chance that you would have never guessed this would be the best-performing audience (even if you have tons of experience selling online).

...hindsight is 20/20, I guess.

Here's the great news: I can now use this data to target this age group specifically with my Facebook Ads and improve the returns I'm getting on my ads.

That's extremely valuable data. And now that I have it...well...I have it!

But you don't even need to run Facebook Ads to get this kind of data. Maybe you've never run a Facebook Ad before. Maybe you haven't even decided on a product yet.

In this case, the Facebook Ads were the tactic for getting the data. The most important thing is the data itself. There are other ways of obtaining this information.

For example, when you ship your product, you can include a survey in the package. You can literally print out a form or just drive people to an online survey. (I use **kwiksurveys.com** to set up online surveys easily).

Just point people to this page and easily collect data directly from your buyers.

Now, you'll need to incentivise people to actually complete the survey. The simplest and most common way to do this is having a survey response enter the buyer into a draw for a chance to win something of value (Amazon gift card, for example).

I'll leave it up to you how you want to go about collecting this information. But just know that this information is incredibly valuable. **Nothing will help you make more sales than by speaking directly to the buyer – and to do that you have to know WHO the buyer is!**

This case with the slime kits surprised me. But honestly, it shouldn't have!

Here's another example...

If you've followed along with *LOS* long enough, then you may know that I've run a self-defence business with my brother for about a decade. We've sold millions of pounds worth of DVDs on the topic. And we've run surveys for this business, as well.

Another question for you...

Who do you think would be the buyer of this type of product...a downloadable, instructional, information course on self-defence?

Most people would probably think guys in their 20s and 30s, who are interested in martial arts. Yet, the most lucrative audience for that business are people over the age of 65. You would probably never think this to be the case (neither did we!), but it is.

What's the reasoning? I'm not sure. Maybe as people get older, they become more concerned about security. Or maybe it's because they have more disposable income to spend on this sort of product. Maybe they just have more free time to pursue this as a hobby.

The reason behind why this demographic is *the* most lucrative is unknown. And it IS unknowable, because even if you ask your customers directly, they may not give you a useful answer (and often open-question responses are flawed). But whatever the case may be, we know that *this* is the customer we should be really going after.

In the case of the slime product, maybe the grandparents have *more disposable income*. Or maybe they look after the children once a week and need something to keep them occupied.

The reason behind *why* these buyers are the buyers is hard to get to. But the important thing is we know *who* the buyer is...

...because now we can advertise to them!

In the case of our self-defence business, knowing that our customer base is older would alter the advertising strategy. Let's take magazines (rather than online advertising), for example. Knowing who the audience is, would lead us to advertise in *magazines that older men are likelier to read*, as opposed to something like FHM (a now-defunct young man's magazine).

It would also alter how *we write our sales copy*. If you know your buyers are 65+, you can speak to how the product is useful for someone in that age range, as opposed to focusing on the benefits of the product for someone much younger.

And in the case of self-defence, there are different styles. A style that relies heavily on strength and fitness may not be as appealing to someone in an older age bracket.

So, you see, this type of information is **absolutely critical** to the success of a business. And as I've been pouring over our data from Facebook about our slime kit buyers, this discovery revealed itself to me.

So, the lesson for today is simply: **know who your customer is!**

And if you don't yet know who it is, devise a way to find out!

That way, your product, sales pitch and copy, and even images, will cater to that specific demographic. Your best buyer isn't always who you think it is. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that – most of the time – who your best buyer is might surprise you.

The Kuwaiti Secret

I don't think many of my subscribers are very interested in bodybuilding...

But no matter.

It's the subject of today's email, and it does relate to online selling.

I promise.

A little background:

Bodybuilders compete each year at a show called 'Mr. Olympia' (think the World cup for bodybuilders).

As you might expect, the competition is usually dominated by American contestants.

But for the last few years, somewhat out of the blue... KUWAIT has been sending more and more 'World Class' bodybuilders to compete.

Kuwait!

Not exactly what you'd consider the 'Mecca' of bodybuilding.

The secret lies in a single gym in Kuwait...called 'Oxygen Gym'.

No-one knows for sure HOW they are doing it...but they have built an impressive record at 'training' hugely muscular bodybuilders.

So what's the secret?

Apart from the usual copious amounts of steroids and the like...it's most likely that the 'secret' can be summarised in one word.

FOCUS.

Apparently, when bodybuilders go to 'Oxygen Gym', there is basically NOTHING to do...except build your body!

They sleep just over the road from the gym.

They eat at the gym.

They don't go out.

All other distractions are nulled.

It's FOCUS...at its most extreme.

And...the results are exceptional.

Now, imagine this...

You get yourself a little mud hut in Bognor Regis...

You take your laptop and secure yourself a high-speed Internet connection.

You make sure there is a local post office!

You focus SOLELY on 'cranking up' your online business.

What do you think your results would be like....with this kind of FOCUS?

Now, don't get me wrong...

You don't need that level of focus.

But think about it. What could you do if you built your own 'Oxygen Gym' of sorts? What could you achieve? No matter what your goal/s are, we could all benefit from some time at the 'Oxygen Gym'...for online sellers!

Repair And Add Value

Just been reading an article about an 'eBayer' who's done up a Ford Granada...

He bought it for just £89 from eBay.

He then spent a bit of dough on it.

His goal was to turn into a 'replica' of the Pagani Zonda.

The Zonda is a supercar...worth about a mill.

So he bought loads of bits (some off eBay) to turn it into a lookalike.

Twin turbos, facelifts, new interiors etc.

He 'cobbled' it all together - and, to be fair, it's not a bad likeness.

What's it worth now?

Now, I doubt it's worth £1mill, but starting with £89...it ain't a bad effort.

(I imagine it would now have a decent resale value - at least £99.99.).

OK, all jokes aside...

This can actually be quite lucrative.

This kind of 'fixing-up-and- selling-higher' can be done by (practically) anyone...in all sorts of other markets.

You certainly don't have to do this with just cars...

I think there are two approaches here:

1. 'Repair' something that's broken and relist it...
2. 'Add value' to an existing product and relist it...

For the first option it could be anything from iPad and their screens...to expensive 'GHD' hair straighteners.

Both can be bought low, repaired, and then sold higher. (And there are plenty of these kinds of products out there to try).

For the second...adding value...well, again, it could be anything.

A very quick example might be engraving: You simply buy a product, and then offer customers the option of adding an engraving (their initials, for example).

There are people doing this in plenty of markets - indicating it does 'work'.

I 'like' the whole opportunity of doing things up/repairing them, as not many people are already doing it. Some...but not too many.

That means you might well be able to carve out your own 'niche', and run things as a part-time business. You don't need to 'add-value' to a Ford Granada and turn it into a super-car. But maybe you can repair/restore or otherwise add value to other, smaller products...and find your niche that way.

Sell To The Desire Scale

Desire...

The very word brings up thoughts of Ferrero Rocher, and soppy romance novels...

But this 'word' was something I was stewing on the other day...

What is 'desire'?

Isn't it the force that sells products?

I mean...

How many products would we sell...if it weren't for the D word?

Sure, you'd still be able to sell meat, veg and socks.

But at least half the World of commerce would disappear in an instant, if it weren't for the D.

Now, let's look at desire on a scale...imagine a starting point of zero (on the left hand side), going across to '100' (maximum), on the right-hand side.

Zero is no desire, whereas 100 is absolute, full-on, sleepless obsession.

Now - let me ask you this: Where do most products (or perhaps I should say 'markets') sit on this 'Desire' scale? About the middle?

Here's the thing:

The higher a product sits on the 'desire' scale, the easier your (sales) job becomes.

In short, the greater the desire that drives the sale of the product, the easier your selling job is. To take an extreme example - those 'nude-y' sites that are (apparently) all over the Internet...

They have a huge desire score, as any guy under 30 will tell you. Desire off-the-charts, bordering on insanity. They are at 90+ - and hence they are hugely popular.

Why? The 'desire' that drives them is almost over-powering...as all men will know.

Now, to be clear here I am NOT talking about the desire for an individual product here.

I'm talking about the OVERALL desire of your OVERALL market - how much, on average (the average consumer) in your market...wants to buy the product you sell.

Ask yourself this question:

How BADLY do they want/desire it?

This is KEY.

Clearly - you want markets where the desire scale is as close to 100 as possible.

Examples?

Alcohol must be over 90 on this scale for CERTAIN people (not everyone obviously...your product can't appeal to everyone).

Sleeping pills must be up there, as are certain other health products.

Nose jobs? If you've got an enormous great big hooter, in CERTAIN cases anyway, your desire to shrink it will be HIGH on our little scale.

No? Now, I hear you moan...come on, this is taking advantage of people!

And you'd be half-right.

BUT you don't need to sell alcohol or bare images or nose jobs to profit here.

For example, how badly do photographers want a camera lens that shoots super crisp pictures?

How badly do people want quick, tasty and cheap food?

How badly do people want to be able to answer their mobile phones in their cars, without needing to actually pick up the phone and break the law (i.e. product= bluetooth headset)?

And so on.

Whatever product you're thinking of selling ask yourself...

Where is THIS product on the desire scale?

The closer you can get to 100, the easier your sales job will be.

It's that simple!

Be A Chinese Personal Shopper

You've probably never heard of 'daigou'...

I hadn't...although I had heard of 'what it's all about'...

In short, it's the Chinese name for 'personal shopping'.

Quick explanation...

Let's say you're Chinese and live in Shanghai...

You want to buy some German baby milk powder.

Why? Because you're worried about Chinese fakes. So, you contact someone in Germany.

You ask them to buy the baby milk in Germany... thereby confirming its authenticity... then you tell them to ship it to you in China.

Bingo. You are guaranteed genuine goods.

This is actually common practice in China.

But now - the Chinese government are clamping down on it.

Why?

Because many of these goods also avoid import tax.

Previously, there were a fair few savvy entrepreneurs making good dough doing this.

And this kind of foreign trade is allegedly worth \$14bn per year.

(Which ain't no triflin' sum).

So - is the 'daigou' opportunity now dead?

Yes and no.

You see, there now arises a new opportunity!

The 'new' opportunity is to sell these kinds of foreign goods directly through e-commerce websites. The Chinese government will still allow...even encourage... this (because they want the tax!).

Believe it or not...Sainsburys are already doing this. They sell tea (English - the real thing!) via Alibaba.com and TMall.com.

That's the key - **you have to sell direct to China.**

How?

Via either Alibaba.com, TMall.com or JD.com.

This is certainly an interesting opportunity. But there are certainly some 'creases' to iron out before taking the leap.

Happily though - like many online businesses - you can start small. Get a listing up. And then see how things go.

Think About Your Prices

Amazon Prime...

You've heard of it, and you may even use it...

But did you know?

Earlier this year, Amazon.com (in America) raised the monthly price of Amazon Prime by 2 bucks a month...

Now...2 bucks doesn't sound like much, does it? But Amazon.com allegedly has 90m subscribers...

Now, to be clear...the ANNUAL subscription 'fee' is staying the same. It's the monthly fee that's going up. How many of the 90m subscribers actually pay monthly? A fair few.

In fact, let's say 15m do... well, that EXTRA \$2 per month...is a lorra' extra dough per year...

And it's all 'pwofit'.

Quick 'story' of my own on pricing...

Last Xmas, I raised the price of one of our most popular products by a fiver...

And since we sold about a thousand of 'em... that's a decent amount of extra dough. (Incidentally, this year - I will be doing the same!). But don't get me wrong.

In certain markets, it's VERY hard to raise prices.

If you're selling a commodity, or a branded item, or exactly the same product as everyone else... forget about it.

But if you're selling something unique... with good reviews...and booming demand, then don't neglect this idea.

By raising your prices, you can substantially increase your 'pwofit'. You might be able to add 50%...100%...or even more...to your bottom-line. As mentioned - this won't work for everyone, and you must tread carefully.

But used correctly with the right products, it can be a serious 'pwofit-booster'!

Information Marketing...Profits?

If you've been around the 'biz-opp' type world for a while...

You might remember the old glory days of 'the information marketing' business. You probably got the mailshots and the spam emails. Just sell information products...and you'll clean up! There were a legion of people telling you what a great business it was. (I'm talking 5-10+ years or so ago now).

There was certainly some truth to that.

It was and is a great business.

But it isn't what it was.

Why not?

For several reasons...

In short, the business of selling information (online and offline) got hit by a perfect storm of problems.

Firstly: was and is the rise of YouTube. From 2014 onwards, information was effectively commoditised by the likes of YouTube, and other sites like Udemy.com.

Need information? Just YouTube it. This led to problems for anyone selling 'how to train your chihuahua' DVDs.

Secondly: the Internet advertising eco-system was effectively monopolised by two companies: Facebook and Google.

That wasn't a problem in itself. What was a problem was that neither of them liked "info marketers", with their big headlines and £77 price points. As such, it became very hard to recruit new customers.

And thirdly: GDPR. This made it practically impossible to recruit new customers by direct- mail.

Put these three things together, and you can see why it got a lot harder for info marketers...and why you no longer see mailshots espousing its perfection.

So where does the info biz go from here?

There is still 'pwofit' in it, for the right kinds of products, in the right kinds of markets.

But here's the lesson...

You never know when a business model will stop working.

NO-ONE predicted the three things above. Certainly, no-one I know predicted more than one of these.

The only thing you can do is... "adapt and flow"! Adapt to the changing circumstances.

Keep learning about the new media available to you. Keep your sales and copywriting skills 'sharp'.

And then adapt to the new circumstances you find yourself in.

Indoor Plants?

A New Year is here already!

Relax.

And exhale.

What's the SECRET to selling hundreds of thousands online... or more...in 2019 and beyond?

What's the secret then? Well...let me illustrate with a story.

Let's say you invent a new product - the battery. Yes, the battery! You start to sell this new product.

And wow...people are loving it. You price your battery at £5, and you're selling dozens per day...then hundreds per day...then thousands per day. Mon-ee is flowing hand over fist.

But then - something strange starts to happen...

Sales start to slow up...fatigue... and eventually start to collapse altogether.

What's going on? Simple...

You find out that the guy across the street has also sourced a 'battery' - and it's almost exactly the same as yours. And yet - he's selling his at half the price!

Damn!

And before you know it...101 other people start to sell their own batteries too.

Your 'pwofits' collapse.

Now, let's repeat the story - but let's say you are the **ONLY PERSON** on the planet who is actually allowed to sell batteries.

Yes...the only person in the World.

What happens? You grow 'wich' beyond your wildest dreams.

Why?

Because you didn't JUST have a hot product.

You had a hot product THAT ONLY YOU COULD SELL!

And this, mi amigo, is KEY.

A hot product in a hot market... is great. But a hot product in a hot market that only YOU can sell is the 'secret' to wealth. No?

A 'shovel' is a hot product. So is toilet paper. But how many people make big dough from flogging shovels and toilet roll? Not many. As although they're hot, anyone can sell these things. So, margins crater through the floor.

But become the **ONLY** producer of toilet rolls in the World? And you can hopefully see my point.

Here's my point: A **HOT** product which **ONLY YOU** can sell...must be your ultimate goal. Alright - so sounds OK. But you might think: "But I'm not an inventor - how am I supposed to get a hot product that **ONLY I** can sell?"

Relax. And exhale.

Fortunately - you do **NOT** have to be a genius inventor to partake of this strategy... Far from it. You can look for hot products which **ARE UNIQUE**...and then simply brand them as your own.

An example...

You're at a trade-show and see a new type of anti-snoring device. You know this is a hot market. And you know this product is new and unique. Bingo...put it in your own box, with your own name on it...with your own packaging...and you're away.

You now have your **OWN** hot product... that only **YOU** can sell. Far better to do this...than try and sell toilet rolls, shovels or any other item that may 'sell', but which has 101 competitors after the same 'pie'.

Next time you want to sell something, ask: **HOW CAN I BE THE ONLY ONE TO SELL THIS PRODUCT?** How can I add/subtract/package/box this item to make it unique to me and only me? That's a question well worth asking.

Wake Up...And Change Your Life!

So there I was...in a charity book shop.

No, I wasn't looking for stock to resell! I was just havin' a look...

And what do you know?

I stumbled across Duncan Bannatyne's book - "Wake Up and Change Your Life".

The title looked promising, as did the charity shop's knocked- down price - £1.89!

I'll take it!

It's a good book, full of solid advice. One 'piece of advice' (actually it's more of an observation) really hit home though. It's basically this...From Duncan himself (I'm paraphrasing here):

"Very few entrepreneurs make serious mon-ee from their first business...it's usually their second, third, fourth or fifth business where they do really well."

Now, I don't have that many subscribers running multiple online businesses...but I do have plenty of subscribers who try to sell into different niches.

And this advice applies to those people too...

In short, the first 'niche' you choose to sell to...probably won't be the one you end up selling into.

At least, not in the way you think.

You might try one niche, and find it bombs.

You might try another.

And another.

And who knows...maybe it will be the tenth 'niche' you try that works for you.

Key is...well, two things:

1. Learn something from every selling experience... good or bad...
2. Keep trying new things.

And the third key?

Actually start something... anything!

If it's good enough for Bannatyne... it's good enough for us, too!

An Unusual Source Of Product Ideas

'The Range'... Perhaps you've heard of this store.

I must admit: I love it. And I was there just this weekend...

"The Range" is probably my favourite retailer in the UK right now. Started by Chris Dawson almost thirty years ago, it sells all sorts - cheap.

It's not as cheap as a pound shop, nor is it as expensive as John Lewis'. It sits somewhere in the middle. But more towards the pound shop end of the spectrum!

If you get the chance - go in.

Why?

You can 'use' these guys to find hot products. How?

When I go in - I simply look for products which are running low on the shelves!

Yes, I realise this is a very crude and rudimentary 'method' for identifying hot products. BUT - you'll get some ideas. I guarantee it.

I just tried it on Saturday.

And one product I spotted (which was seemingly running low), was a posh dog toy, made of rubber, but with a 'posh' finish. Very cool!

Of course, this is just one example.

If you can't make it to their offline stores, you can always hit up their website at:
<http://www.therange.co.uk>

'The Range' has gone from one store to over £750m in sales...so clearly their products sell!

Tomorrow, I'll reveal THE 'big secret' behind how they've done it.

‘The Range’ (Part 2)...

Yesterday, I told you about how to use 'The Range' to find hot products.

'The Range' is an offline retailer who have gone from 1 store to 750m in sales.

But how? That's what I want to talk about today.

What's their secret?

I think I know. And it's really simple.

THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT SELLS – AND THEN THEY SELL IT!

It sounds simple, and it is - but they are TRUE masters of it.

Now - let's compare two companies...

Debenhams...

And 'The Range'.

Now - I dare you...

Go into Debenhams, and walk around for 10 minutes.

And I'll bet you won't see much that you want to buy!

Then go to 'The Range'...

And I'll bet you come out with SOMETHING...

Why?

Because these guys are great at knowing what people will buy. Again, it sounds simple - but why are Debenhams and the like going under? Partly: because their product selection is poor.

'The Range' are the opposite...

They have a real 'knack' of sourcing items that once you see 'em...you'll think...

"I'll take two of 'em!"

Again: I dare you to go in.

And I'll bet you the biggest donut in Doncaster that you'll come out with something...

One of the most important keys to selling online is just this:

Knowing what people will buy - and then selling THAT.

Knowing what the public really wants.

And givin' it to 'em...

But what if you don't know what to sell?

You learn!

Once a week, you look through Amazon's best-seller rankings, eBay's hot items, and you find out what's trending.

This will help build up our 'what sells' muscle.

And when you build that - you'll be on the Royal Road to online selling success.

Calling Is Better

And so the search begins!

I've got a new product idea and am looking for a manufacturer...

The product is in the Beauty niche. What's occurring? Well, for this kind of product, I prefer to source from Europe.

And so...I've compiled a list of possible manufacturers.

I've given said 'list' to a member of staff...

...and I've told her to CALL each and every one of 'em.

Let's break this down:

When you're looking for a manufacturer for a product, you've got to realise it's a lot like dating...

You can't expect the first 'punt' to land you a Princess.

You've got to try plenty of 'em...

So far, in our 'beauty' niche experiment, we've contacted about seven manufacturers. And so far, I've not yet found anyone really suitable! So...the push continues.

The 'list' stretches to about 30 companies! So there's plenty to go at yet...

My guess is I'll find maybe TWO companies that are suitable for what I want.

Now, this is something of an extreme example because I'm looking for something specific.

But my point stands:

You can't just contact 1, 2 or 3 manufacturers and hope for the best result. You have to DIG. Remember the dating analogy.

And another thing...

Notice we are CALLING...not emailing. Email is usually fine.

But when you call, you can ask questions, you show you're serious, and you'll often get a faster and better response.

Multiple suppliers.

And use the phone.

A couple of VERY worthwhile tips!

Offline's Secret

I can hear the retailers now...

"Offline retail is far harder - our rates are huge!" "The online guys can undercut us!" And so on.

Relax.

Breath out.

And take a seat...

I don't doubt that there are big issues with offline retailers. Their costs are higher, they are getting squeezed by rates etc. etc. But here's one important difference... something that was brought home to me just yesterday...

Offline - you know who your customers are.

You can talk to them.

You can find out what's bothering them.

You can work out how to help (and sell!) them.

In short, your customers become a gold-mine of information to help you grow your business.

Online...you almost never talk to a single customer. How do you know what's bothering them? You don't.

And that's the difference...and the problem with 'online'.

Sure, you get the old email about what's bothering a customer.

But that's nothing like going 'toes-to-toes' with someone. I mention this because I've just been working through some 'data' on a product I sell...

And it turns out - the people who I THOUGHT were buying it...aren't buying it as much as another group of people!

Let's say you're selling mobility chairs...

Who buys them?

Elderly people?

Disabled people, who are young?

Hopefully you can see my point.

Online, it's very hard to know.

Offline, you know instantly!

It's CRITICALLY important to know who you're real customers are.

Then you can offer them a great product/solution that matches what they really want.

Who's REALLY buying your products?

You might be surprised.

I often am.

Great Website For Product Ideas

For a long time, it was one of my favourite websites...

I'm talking about... www.watchcount.com

It tells you which items are 'Most Watched' on eBay. Which is very useful for market research!

More watches=more interest= higher likelihood you can sell something similar.

Today, I want to talk about one way to use it to find great product ideas. (And tomorrow, I'll look at the second way to use it).

Alright - so the first 'method' is to choose a category and find something UNIQUE.

This is really simple...

Let's take an example category - Gardening.

Now, we want to find something UNIQUE. A one-off product. If you look through the list, you'll find plenty of 'repeated' items, such as artificial grass. We want to avoid those since they are already full of competition.

Again, look for a 'one-off'. And yes, there's one there.

This item is the one I'm referring to - a survival seed kit!

Really interesting item...which is what we want.

And now?

We create something similar to this...something that's proven to sell. In short - look in any category. Find a 'one-off' item. Then introduce something similar – and ideally *better!*

Tomorrow, I'll look at the second way to use this website.

Create A 'New Mechanism' – And Win

Yesterday, I looked at one way to use WatchCount.com...

Today, I want to look at the second 'method' for finding products.

Alright, let's get to it...

This time, I'm going to choose the Health and Beauty category.

Alright, this time we're going to look for 'common' products... products we see repeated over and over again. Clearly, these are items that are in DEMAND!

The item I've found this time (which was repeated twice, in the WatchCount list, above), is this one: it's a special pillow.

Now, we COULD sell something similar.

But there's already quite a few sellers.

Instead, we're going to sell a product which addresses the same NEED, but provides a **NEW MECHANISM**.

In other words: we sell a pillow for bad necks, but our product solves the problem in a NEW WAY.

So it could be a different shape, made of a different material...etc etc.

Same problem. But a new way to provide the solution.

Both the 'method' we looked at yesterday, and this one, are great 'ways' to sell/introduce new products.

Car Crime and Spare Part Secrets

And no, I'm not recommending it...

But according to what I've just read... an article in The Manchester Evening News...car crime is a *lucrative game*.

Go around to some poor bleeder's house...knock on the door (or burst in)...grab the keys....and off you go.

You then either flog the thing and leave it to the 'head man' to export...

OR - and this is where online selling comes in - you chop it down, strip the parts....and put them (individually) on eBay.

According to Greater Manchester Police - this is what happens.

Makes you wonder whether you should risk buying your parts on there!

But here's the thing...

Putting aside the theft angle, this 'strategy' is well worth a look.

In short...

You source a high-priced item of some sort (could be anything... let's say used, high-end lawn-mowers).

You go for the ones that say 'for spares and parts'. These are not working 'as is', and so will be super cheap.

Then you strip 'em down...and sell off the bits onesy-twosy.

(It's really easy to search eBay for 'spares' and then sort by category). Now, you might think you'd have to have some sort of knowledge to do this...but do you?

I can't see it being that hard to 'strip' most things. And 'YouTubing' will probably clear things up in any case.

I just hunted around and found this: an RC chopper.

It's 'for spares'. I checked for spares on eBay...and sure enough, there IS a market there for RC 'chopper' spares...

So with the one above...you'd make a low offer to the seller... then strip it down...break it up...and resell the bits individually.

Sure, it's a 'some work' opportunity.

But it's better than nowt!

All Businesses Get Destroyed

The only constant is... CHANGE!

I was thinking about this the other day...and over the weekend. In time, nearly all businesses get destroyed for some reason.

Depressing? I'll get to that, in a moment.

But first...

Who remembers the magazine... "*Exchange & Mart*"!

Anyone remember that? I bet plenty of people do!

Remarkably, that magazine was 'open for business' from 1868, before closing in 2009. (Although the website lives on - selling cars only).

It was a great mag. I used to love looking through the business classifieds (at the back!).

But who could have ever predicted in, say, 1994, that just 15 years later...this iconic magazine would be bust?

As we all know, this thing called 'The Internet' came along....and their business changed forever.

You can find hundreds of stories like this - where a sudden shift in the media landscape, or consumer wants, or regulations....suddenly wipes out an entire business.

And it can all happen tremendously quickly.

But there's a flip side here, too...

And it's NOT depressing...

Why? Because those same 'shifts' are the catalysts for the explosive growth of the 'new', emerging businesses...which take the place of the now-extinct 'dinosaur'!

No-one knows where the next bounce of the ball will be.

And that's the thing...

You can either look at it as a pessimist - and see the destruction of the old...

...or you can look at it as an optimist, and wonder which 'big opportunity' is next.

It's just that, sadly, these days, you won't find 'the next big thing' in the back of The Exchange and Mart.

Is Email Dying?

IS email dead?

Well, you're reading this now!

Question answered....right? Well, not quite...

Going back some years...I've got no doubt that you, like me, read nearly every email you received!

Then...a few years later...you didn't read as many.

Now? You have your 'important' emails that you read....then you have the rest - that you never get around to.

(Inbox: Unread emails - 12,129!)

In all this, there's been another important change...which I want to touch on today. Now, the Internet itself has become a replacement for email.

What do I mean?

Now, instead of reading email, companies communicate with customers across a host of different channels. YouTube. Facebook. Even those adverts you see that 'follow you around the Internet'.

The entire Web has become a communication channel....one which never stops. Previously, email was THE way to communicate, but now companies can use a much larger range of media.

So where does this leave you?

Email isn't dead - yet.

And I doubt it will 'die' in our lifetimes.

But if you're trying to build a 'brand' online...it shouldn't be the only way you communicate with your customers.

You've got YouTube. You've got Facebook. Heck, you've even got 'push notifications' now that come up in your browser (Alibaba.com use these).

All these can be used to keep in touch with your customers... keeping them updated, and helping to increase your sales.

Don't want to do all that?

Then simply make sure your emails are worth reading...and hence go into your customer's 'important' pile! That should certainly continue to 'work' - for a few years yet!

‘Exchange & Marts’ Customers Went Here?

Last week, I sent out an email about the old magazine "The Exchange & Mart"!

Back came this email from subscriber Walt!

(Thanks Walt).

=====

"Read your email today and was reminded of the good old days, when we could buy our weekly copy of the "Exchange & Mart".

I really miss that publication, as I spent hours on end, looking through its pages.

In fact, I made my first ever sale through it, way back in 1998 when I sold a 5 page plan, on how to make yourself a remote control for Nikon and Canon cameras.

I charged £3.50 a pop and sold about 20-25 copies, each sent out via Royal Mail.

Boy, how times have changed eh!

Regards

Walt"

I'm sure there are plenty of other 'stories' out there from other readers!

But here's the interesting thing.

Walt mentioned that "...times have changed." And they have. Massively.

But in many ways...they've not changed at all. Instead of spending 'hours looking through the pages of a magazine...

What do they do instead?

They now spend hours looking at their Facebook feeds (like it or not!). And instead of poring over classified ads - instead, they pore over eBay to find a bargain! And instead of buying a book about building remote controls - they YouTube it for nought instead!

It's certainly true that the media landscape has changed markedly. But our desires/wants have stayed exactly the same.

The 'formula' remains the same...

- Develop a product for a market... something that people will really want.
- Make sure you can REACH them - so you get enough eyeballs on 'said product'!
- Craft compelling sales 'pitch' as to why people should buy 'said' product.

That's it. Job done!

It's very simple.

But not always as easy as we'd like it to be!

What Makes A Good Product?

What makes a 'good' product?

Now, if you ask most people they will likely say - "Something that's decent!"

True! But that hardly gets us very far now...does it?

So, let me ask you...which of these makes a 'good' product?

1. A product which performs exactly as the seller says it would/does?
2. A product which the intended audience buys eagerly and wants to buy more of?
3. A product which is 'good' for the end-user (e.g a product that helps a customer improve their health etc)?

Which is it? If you really think about it, it's hard to define what a 'good' product actually is.

Let's take the example of Coca-Cola...

Is Coke a 'good' product?

Well, if we go back to point 1) above...then I suppose it 'does what it says on the tin'. It's cold and refreshing and hits the spot. (Although to be fair even that is a highly subjective assertion!).

What about point 2)?

Absolutely! Coke is a hugely successful product.

But then we come to number 3)...

Now, I don't know about you, but I don't think Coke would win any awards for helping people's health.

So...is Coke a 'good' product?

A more interesting experiment: Go over points 1-3 again, but substitute Coke (the drink), with 'Coke' (Cocaine) - the drug!

Is there any difference in the end result?

I realise this maybe a bit 'much' for a Monday morning, but, for what it's worth, here is my opinion of what a 'good' product is.

A product which people in a given market buy eagerly, and which performs for them as they expect.

Once you go any deeper than that, it gets far too deep, and even philosophical.

And as 'online sellers'...we don't need to go that far! We just want to sell 'good' products. That is: products that our chosen market/s buy eagerly, and which perform as expected.

And that's deep enough for a Monday morning!

Sell To The Obsessed

I was walking around town the other day...

And in one shop, I noticed a gentleman buying SCRATCH CARDS...

I walked over the road, and noticed someone else buying LUCOZADE...

A bit further down, and a girl was eagerly buying some COFFEE...

And just a bit later - someone came out of Argos with some GOLFING equipment.

And then?

I bought myself a *fry-up*.

Whilst scoffing the fried eggs and bacon, I noticed a women buying masses of LINGERIE...

Alright, point is - there are 'niches' you can sell to...

And then there are 'obsessional niches'.

And ideally - you'll want to be selling to the obsessional niches...rather than the 'normal' niches.

Why? Because it's easier, that's why! Would you rather be selling coffee, or cleaning cloths?

Point is, the buyers of the former are a lot more 'into it' than the latter. Your average coffee buyer is mad about his drink. Whereas the cleaning cloth buyer spends (usually) about 10 seconds thinking about his purchase.

Think of a scale...1 to 10.

'1' is the niche where it's a hassle for the customer to even part with their money for the product.

And '10' is where the customer spends a large portion of their life thinking about that product.

The closer to a '10' you can get, then the easier it's likely to be to get a sale.

Horrifying?

Probably.

So, best pass me the WHISKEY and COKE!

How 'obsessed' is the market you are selling to, or thinking about selling to?

Scepticism Rules

I watch some sport...

Mixed martial arts, and the 'big games' in the World Cup...

But not much else. Why?

Over the last few years, I've become more and more sceptical about 'sport'. For two reasons.

Firstly - the obvious prevalence of 'performance enhancers'.

Yes...those that you inject in your buttocks.

It's hardly 'fair' is it? And yet it goes on. In a big way.mWhat's the point in watching something... when you don't who's cheating and who's playing fair?

Secondly: how much of pro sports is actually 'fixed'?

I was just reading about how a tennis player has been banned for fixing tennis matches.

He's not a big player, but still number 100 in the World.

And he's been busted. What a joke!

Injectables or match fixing? Choose your poison...

Now, this isn't about online selling - but here's the thing...

It doesn't take a genius to work out that this kind of thing makes the public *increasingly sceptical*.

And I mean sceptical about EVERYTHING. If you can NOT trust multi-billyun pound sports enterprises.... can you trust lowly online sellers? That's my point - this kind of thing makes people more and more sceptical about all sorts.

('About the World' if you prefer!).

What to do?

More than ever - we all need to be sure that people are given ample proof that what we say is true.

In short...

Offer proof of your CLAIMS.

It's EASY to claim 'my product is the BEST in my niche'.

It's quite another to show and prove it!

How?

Lots of ways. I'm not going to go through 'em all here...

But: *customer comments, reviews (even these can be 'fixed' now!), certificates from suppliers, pictures from customers, videos, video of the product 'in action', how many you've sold, etc. etc.*

When you've got your own product in your hands, you might think it's the bees-knees. But no-one else does. Yet. It is down to you to prove that. And prove it you must...in today's increasingly sceptical World.

Nigel Is Finally Free

Poor Nigel...

There I was. Minding my own business.

Looking up towards the roof of our warehouse - there he was...

A lone pigeon, Nigel I did call him.

Now...I'm not sure if you know, but having a pigeon in a warehouse is mightily annoying. They crap everywhere - all over your products.

And they hide towards the top of your ceilings...so they are hard to catch.

Should I gun him down with an air rifle, I thought?

Maybe I should whack him, get him on the ground, then pulverise his weedy skull with my workwear boots? But I looked up and he had an innocent look in his eye.

I couldn't do it.

Instead, I bought two nets from eBay - at a not inconsequential cost - and then, one evening, after everyone else had left the office - got to work.

Frankly, by the time I got to him he already looked knackered; as such, the nets made swift work of his 'adventure' and led to his inevitable capture.

Soon, he was in a cardboard box, then in the car, and then back home where he 'met his maker' in a magnificently juicy hotpot (with a side of freshly- baked bread).

Alright, forget the last bit...

He was still in a box...but I took him outside and 'unleashed the beast' and he was finally FWEE!

But here's the thing...

Before his release from 'prison', each time I checked on Nigel, he was always edging towards the glass windows. Once there, he'd peck at the window, fruitlessly.

Nigel was dumb. Annoyingly so.

Literally...all that separated him from total freedom...*was 2mm of fused sand.*

He could SEE freedom, but no matter what he did - it eluded him by 2mm. Just 2mm!

Now, if you're interested in online selling - you can no doubt SEE people selling tons of products. But there's a 'barrier' (of sorts) that stops YOU doing the same.

Now, if you're like Nigel you can keep banging against the glass, which is what every other pigeon does. But it will never work. Barring a miracle 'glass smash', you won't break the barrier.

So what's Nigel to do?

In short, he has to do something DIFFERENT.

He can't do what every other pigeon does. He can't keep tapping the glass. That's the 'easy' way - and it won't work.

The way out is to think different and do different - something apart from the rest of the pack.

The obvious and 'easy' way - although it may seem like the best option - will NOT work.

Is this like online selling today? In a way - yes.

It's now more competitive than ever, so the 'obvious' and 'easy' way is unlikely to bear fruit. It's 'obvious' to go to Alibaba to source products...everyone does it. Which is why you might be better off NOT doing it. You might be better off using another sourcing option entirely (tradeshows, for example).

It's 'obvious' to buy products from a wholesaler. Which is why you could do better by manufacturing your OWN products....cutting out the middle-man, and then being able to under-cut everyone on price.

It's 'obvious' to list in the same way as other sellers....which is why you might be best with a totally different, off-the-wall approach that no-one else is doing. Peck the glass like everyone else, and you might just starve like Nigel nearly did!

How 'Tech' Is Driving Inequality

You hear a lot of talk these days about 'inequality'...

And I'm not talking about 3rd World problems here. Nooo....

This inequality is now more prevalent than ever in '1st World' countries like the USA and the UK. The gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is widening.

But why? Mostly you'll hear talk about 'the failure of capitalism' and the like. The 'witch' have got 'witcher' (as Jonathan Ross would say)...but few other people have shared in the gains.

So what's really going on here? Well, there's a few reasons why I believe this is happening - but one I want to talk about today is simply...

Technology!

These days, everyone is buying online and is glued to their mobile phones. And this is playing a role in the 'inequality' that we're seeing. How?

If you search for something on Google, how many results do you actually check? If you buy something on Amazon, how many results/products do you look through?

If you're like most people, you only look at the top few results. It's these websites/sellers/businesses that garner most of the sales - whilst everyone else fights for the scraps!

And this is just one reason why we're seeing inequality increasing...

(The other being the likes of super-low interest rates).

And there is absolutely nothing any government can do about it.

In short the 'Internet' itself is a powerful mechanism for driving inequality.

So how does this relate to YOU? Simple!

In short - you must be in the 'top 1 or 2' of businesses that OWNS your niche.

If you're not - you're only going to get the scraps!

Fact is the top 1 or 2 players in any niche now get 80%+ of the sales. But how do you get to be one of the 'top 1 or 2'?

Here's how: You pick a niche you can WIN in (that means LOW existing competition) - and then you do everything you can to win, and promote yourself as hard and as cleverly as you can!

You take over control over said category. Forget about being number 1 or 2 in selling groceries online, or 1001 other saturated niches. They're long gone. Instead, concentrate on those niches where you can be '1 or 2'.

This sounds simplistic, but it's some of the most powerful advice I can give in today 'unequal' World! I'm sure some people reading this can, and by doing so, your sales are likely to go...up!

Only Two Reasons People Buy

Tomato!

I couldn't believe they'd put tomato on my favourite turkey salad sandwich! Oh well.

I swiftly 'dug out' the red-coloured critter from the crusty baguette, and threw it in the nearby bin...

It was then that a small poster caught my eye.

Just outside the charity shop.

It was asking for 'volunteers'. "*Can you spare three hours on a Saturday afternoon?*"

Intrigued, I moved closer. Now, I don't know who wrote this 'advert'...but they did a good job. Why? Because the next line was:

"And feel good about yourself for helping people!"

Now, you'll have to forgive me here for lambasting the natural beauty of human nature...

But isn't this the REAL reason people 'do charity'? Don't get me wrong... 'Doing charity' is a great thing to do... But why do people really do it? Of course - to help other people.

But don't they do it for themselves as well?

To make themselves 'feel good'?

Our charity shop copywriter understood this. Hence his 'killer copy'!

Now...this applies to lots of products, doesn't it?

There are TWO reasons why people buy something...

The 'reason' they tell their friends.

And the 'reason' only they themselves know to be true!

Think about it.

And USE that 'second reason' (the reason only they themselves know to be true) in your sales copy... In your product descriptions.

In your Amazon listing, in your eBay listings... and on your website.

Always think: What are the TWO reasons why people buy this product?

‘Needy’ Markets Win

Interesting success story...

A couple develop a shampoo that helps prevent hair loss. Stick it up on Amazon. (This was in 2014).

Now, they're expecting £5m turnover for next year.

Very impressive!

The company/product is called Watermans...you can check 'em out by searching for their name on Amazon. As I'm writing this now, their product is number 30 in the best-seller rankings.

That's HUGE...my guess is they sell around 200 units a day at £25 each (and this is only one product).

They claim to sell one product every 30 seconds.

What can we learn from this? The biggest lesson is simply that products aimed at a 'needy' market will always have a high probability of success. (Markets don't get much more needy than hair loss!)

Secondly - and this is something I need to learn myself - is that a successful product should always be MAXIMISED.

If you get a big winner, you should absolutely then milk it, rather than moving onto something else.

I don't always do this myself...as I always like to try new things!

But the Watermans crew have done this to the max. They no doubt started with one product...then added others to the line (ONCE the concept was proven).

They then won awards for their now-proven products. In short, they kept hammering away once they got something that 'worked'.

Rule 1) Enter needy markets.

Rule 2) Then maximise it!

2,000 Sales And Someone Piggy-Backed Me

Very interesting!

We have a product that does well on eBay. We've sold over 2,000 units ...at about a tenner each.

But recently - something weird happened...

We get an email one morning...

Someone had just bought the item. But the 'customer' asked us to ship the item to his friend...as a 'gift'. OK.

Now, I know a bit about 'online arbitrage'... and this certainly seemed like what was going on. I did some digging...

And sure enough: there was some 'arb-ing' going on after all...

But, the way this seller was doing it was something I've not seen before. In short - he was listing MY eBay items at a higher price (as much as £10 more!) - and simply selling them on eBay as well!

It's staggering that this works. But it does.

In short - let's say you're selling an item on eBay for £10. Someone else lists the same item. But for £15. IF the item sells, then they ask YOU to ship it...to whoever just bought from them (at five pounds more). Cheeky?

I investigated further...

And this seller is doing this with other items, too.

They aren't making a bomb. But they are selling about 60 items a month. If they make £50-£100 on each, that ain't bad.

And, I can see someone who REALLY knows what they are doing... maybe doing 10 times that. Could you do this? Yes.

The KEY is to focus on the very best- selling items. List them in a unique way. Concentrate on items priced at £10+. And add at least a fiver to the selling price.

A very interesting strategy, and one that is actually working for one savvy seller!

Why Starbucks Failed In Oz

What does Starbucks's business in Australia have to do with online selling?

Let me explain...

I was watching a video over the weekend...

And it was all about Starbucks' doomed entry into the Australian market.

Starting in the early-2000s, Starbucks decided to invade the Ozzie market. What could go wrong? They've got an addictive product, a proven business concept, and billions of dollars in funding!

Bingo!

Just roll the idea out to other countries!

EXCEPT: after opening almost 100 stores in Oz...and losing money hand over fist...they realised the whole thing was a bust.

One of the World's most successful businesses had failed. Miserably.

But why? There's a lot of debate as to the 'why'...

But the most obvious explanation is this: Starbucks simply didn't cater to what the Australian market really wanted. In short, Starbucks shoved their own idea of what the market wanted - right down the throat of the Australian coffee market.

This is hugely common, and it absolutely applies online. In short, so many of ASSUME that we know what people want - and then 'do it our way'.

Which is all backwards!

Your product should always be all about what your CUSTOMER REALLY WANTS TO BUY.

What YOU think they want or 'would like' is absolutely irrelevant.

But how to know what they want? From research, from talking to the people in the market, from KNOWING your market inside out...from knowing who you're really talking to...and from experience.

Point is, you need to remove your PERSONAL expectations and 'wants' from the equation - and turn the tables.

"What do the Ozzies really want?" was the question Starbucks should have asked. And NOT: "We have something really good, and we're going to sell it to them!"

A subtle difference...but a critically important one, nonetheless.

Big Problems Create Strong Markets

Has summer finally gone?

Either way - it turns out that STOP SWEATING products are doing well. In fact, the product I'm writing to you about today is one of Amazon's best-selling products...

It's called Odaban...interesting name...and it apparently blocks your sweat glands to stop sweat.

Now...I'm not sure how healthy all this is - but this product is one of Amazon's best-selling items in the 'Beauty' niche.

So, what can we learn from this success story...if anything?

Firstly - any market where there is a BIG problem - you've got a shot at serious dough...

If you constantly sweat, and it's driving you mad...then you'll want to find a solution. HOWEVER much it costs. You'll eagerly be searching sites like Amazon for this 'solution'.

In short: BIG problem = definite market.

Look out for markets which address a BIG problem in someone's life...

And secondly...

Could YOU actually develop a product for the 'sweating' market? I've never thought of it (until now) but this 'niche' is likely NOT over-run with competition...

In fact, I just checked - and there isn't too much competition at all...

If you get something really good in a market like this, you can sell a LOT. I mean...we all sweat, don't we? Key is getting something new, different and interesting.

Do that...and you could be the next BO mill-yunaire!

Does Bad Press Really Kill Sales?

So something 'interesting' happened to me last week...

In short, a product I sell got a LOT of bad press.

Now...this isn't my own product specifically.

It's more of the overall 'industry' (if that's the right word). And what happened? Sales collapsed! Literally overnight. This is the first time I've seen anything like this.

If anything, I look for products that are generating positive press coverage. So, this was a real shock.

And by the way - the 'news' was utter garbage and completely untrue. Surprised? No! It reminded me why none of us should watch/read the news!

Anyway...

What's happened since then? Well, sales have recovered - somewhat.

Here's the interesting thing...and something I want to know myself...

Will sales STAY low? It's an interesting question, and the answer isn't at all obvious. Why? In short, the real question is: will the public forget about the bad press...and buy anyway?

I've got NO idea. This is what I want to find out...

Does any 'bad press' about a product actually effect sales in the LONG-TERM? Or is there are only a short-term blip? I guess I'll find out! As a related point - this goes to show how you should diversify your products. When you start out - you should absolutely ONLY concentrate on one or two products. But once those are 'up and running', be sure to birth a few more eggs for your basket. Because you never know what's around the corner.

P.S. Update – 6 months later – sales quickly rebounded. So, it seems the negative press was, after all, just a temporary blip. I imagine it's the same for lots of things – unless the press is truly awful.

My Most Important eBay Secret?

I want to talk today about a very important eBay 'secret'.

It's something I've known for a while. It can literally make OR break your entire eBay business...

Intrigued?

It all involves your listing TITLES. In case you don't know - your title is the main listing title.

That's the words that you'll see when you scroll through eBay.

You click the 'Listing Title'...and then can read more about that particular product.

OK - so here's the thing...

I recently tried experimenting with testing four of five DIFFERENT titles... for EXACTLY the same product.

Here's how it works...

Let's say you're launching a new leather cleaning system.

You'd create your listing and use a specific title. Then you copy the listing. And you use a completely DIFFERENT title.

And then do it again.

And again.

Strictly, this is 'against' eBay's rules. But it's hardly the crime of the century! Anyway - here's some recent results. (This is for the SAME product).

Title 1 - 27 views

Title 2 - 30 views

Title 3 - 356 views (!)

Title 4 - 27 views

Yes, those are absolutely TRUE figures.

Again, this is for EXACTLY the same product.

EVERYTHING is the same....

EXCEPT for the listing's title. In the case of Title 3 above - this listing is now flying...whereas the others have crashed and burned. So, what does it mean to you? Simply put - TEST your titles! You'll probably find one that works far better than the rest.

I've not got time here to explain all this (although I will be doing in some of our paid-for products). I've done this with OTHER products as well...

Whilst the rest of the results aren't as extreme as the above...they are still show SIGNIFICANT differences between different listing titles. Seriously powerful tip for you here.

Use it!

Walmart For Great Ideas To Sell Into The UK

Most of us have heard of Walmart...

In case you haven't: they're one of the World's biggest retailers. (Think the American equivalent of Tesco...)

Revenues of nearly half a trillion per year.

But they are mostly an OFFline business.

Yet...

Did you know?

They are now turning over about 10 billion quid a year ONLINE too...and are gunning for Amazon. (This is via their website - www.Walmart.com) Here's something else...

Whilst I write about eBay and Amazon in these emails, the truth is that there are tons of other sites that sell tons of products.

However, you obviously can't sell your products on these 'other sites' (such as Tesco.com, Argos.com, Walmart.com, etc.).

Yet - is there a USE for these 'other sites'?

I believe there is.

Let's take Walmart.com for example...

You can browse around on here, and find 'great ideas'.

How?

Simply by browsing! You'll stumble across ideas-a-plenty. Sure, they sell a lot of branded stuff that you wouldn't want to sell. But still, there will be ideas here - simply because they are such a successful retailer.

And there are tons of other sites like this...

Target.com is another. HomeDepot.com another. Hammacher.com another.

I could go on...

Fact is, there are thousands of small e-commerce sites like this where you can get GOOD PRODUCT IDEAS. You can try Alexa.com here. They list the Web's most-trafficked sites. Simply browse anything from about 500 onwards (the top sites are things like Facebook/Google...and some rather rude ones!).

Now, you'll notice I've only featured AMERICAN sites above...

And that's deliberate...

Why?

Because then you'll get the 'latest and greatest' from over the Pond...before it hits the UK. There's a lot of 'data' out there that can generate solid product ideas. What's more, it's interesting to find these gems. Or is that just me?

Be Embarrassed About The 1st Version Of Your Product

And so another week rolls around!

Last week, I read an interesting quote which I want to share with you today...

It's by the founder of LinkedIn.com - the huge 'business networking' site that is worth I-don't-know-how-much.

Here's the quote:

"If you are not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you've launched too late." - Reid Hoffman, founder of LinkedIn.com

Yes! That's a great quote, and it mirrors my own experiences online.

In short, so many people get 'caught up' in the smallest of details when launching a product online. I see people obsessing over the smallest things.

Usually, these people are NEW to this kind of thing... As such, they can be forgiven! Simply put, you just need to get it OUT THERE...and see if the damn thing sells!

Heck, you'll hear people obsessing over things like.... Should the angle of my product photo be at 45% or 51%?

But it's complete BULLOCKS.

Coming back to the quote above - what I think Mr Hoffman meant, was simply - Launch fast, Launch first, and get some feedback from your market!

If you WAIT until every last detail is 100% - you'll have done yourself a disservice. Launch FAST! The market will give you feedback from there!

And if it fails - move on!

Dropship Seasonal Solutions To Big Problems

In DEMAND products...

As you can imagine, there are some products that come in and out of demand...at different times of the year.

Right now, for example, air conditioning units are VERY hot (or cold!) Demand soars. Then falls away.

But here's the thing...

When demand SOARS, people will pay almost ANYTHING to get 'the product' (whatever it is). And this creates an opportunity for savvy online sellers...

How? Drop-shipping is one option. I'll give you one example now...

- Find hot-sellers on eBay which are NOT being sold via Amazon PRIME...

– Buy those 'hot-sellers' on a wholesale basis, ship them to Amazon, and use FBA to sell them.

What have we done here?

Many people are 'Prime' subscribers.

They want their products NOW...and are prepared to pay a PREMIUM for the privilege. So let's say we see a 'World Cup' themed item doing well...

But it's on Amazon, and the seller is NOT using FBA. We buy the same item from eBay. We then ship it to Amazon and use FBA.

By doing this...we can probably add £5 to the price - which will cover our costs and leave some 'pwofit'.

Practical example to make this clearer...

World cup flags on eBay for £5.99.

Same item on Amazon at £5.99, but the seller is NOT using FBA. We approach the eBay seller, and buy the item for £4 (wholesale). We ship those items to Amazon and use FBA. We raise the price to £10.99.

So we bought at £4, and we're selling at £10.99.

My experience tells me that you'd get some takers - plenty, in fact - who would pay the £10.99 to get 'next day delivery' via Prime. (I'm like that - I am prepared to pay a bit extra to ensure next-day delivery. And plenty of people are the same).

There are probably DOZENS of products you could do this with at any time...

This is an interesting strategy, and one that I can see working well for the RIGHT products. Key is to have very 'in-demand' products that are time-sensitive.

Ignore Well-Publicised 'Opps'

Is your old tax disc worth a fortune?

According to the Express.co.uk - it might just be possible!

Or maybe not...

Trust the press to get us all worked up over nought...

So my eye was captured by a headline that stated...

"Your old tax disc could be worth a fortune: You could make over £500 selling them online" Sounds good! I thought... ..something my subscribers would be interested in hearing about!

In short, there are eBayers who are selling old car tax discs (the discs you used to put in your window). Some of these things go for hundreds of pounds - so what's the catch? Well, the valuable discs are super rare. I quickly shuffled my mouse over to eBay - and found a few eBayers having a crack...

...and getting about 99p per disc! Not a very profitable niche after all! All of which brings me to today's point...

If the national press are shouting about an online opportunity, then chances are - that opportunity has already sailed.

So what's a 'better way' to use the national press? In short, we can 'use' the press to see what TRENDS are kicking off...

For example - there is a lot of talk at the moment about CBD/hemp oil... The press aren't clamouring about the mon-ee making opportunity in selling the oil - but they are clamouring about how good the oil ITSELF is.

THIS is the way to 'use' the Press. It's about keeping your ear to the ground, and 'listening in' to what they are talking about (in terms of products and trends).

Forget about 'reading about' the latest hot moneee making opportunity. As mentioned, by the time you read about it, it will probably be too late. Instead, keep an eye out for products/ niche trends that they feature - then investigate THOSE.

There's Always A War Somewhere

There's always a war somewhere...

An extremely positive way to start the day, right? But anyway - I was listening to a 'TED' talk the other day by a guy called Jocko Willink. He's basically a former Navy Seal...turned speaker/entrepreneur.

There was something interesting he said in his talk...

And it went something like this: "In war, you learn more from when things go wrong, than you do from when things are going well." And it's true online, too...

Let's say you launch your first product... It does well. Wonderful. Did you learn much from that 'success'? Yes and no.

You might have stumbled across a good market, or dare I say it - you might have just been a bit lucky!

Now say you launch 20 MORE products.

And they all FAIL...

Wouldn't you learn something from those 20? Of course you would. You'd scour through what was happening with those...to try and 'figure out' what made them all fail.

You'd analyse your listings and those of your competition (at least I would) and try and work out what had happened. And you'd probably be able to piece together a lot of lessons from these 'failures'.

Perhaps you'd actually learn MORE from these 'failures'...than from your single winner. That's information you'd then be able to use to create successful products going forward. No? In short, your failures will teach you a lot...at least in my experience. Those 'failures' will help you launch more successful products going forward. So...fail. It 'works'! And it can often be the only way to learn!

Mind Gives Up Before Trying

I want to talk today about the 'big fight' from the other week...

Anthony Joshua vs. Joseph Parker. I'm sure you've heard of Anthony Joshua, and perhaps you saw the fight. Did you notice?

'AJ' is ultra-calm and collected before his fights. Like he's about to cook an egg...or something. And it's not just Joshua...

If you look at ANY top-performer... whether they're fighters, runners, or skaters...the very best are immensely calm before the 'action' begins. Why? Well, probably a combination of experience and confidence.

Now, let me take you into a different 'arena' entirely...

The refund letters we receive at our office.

These are the letters which accompany the products which people have returned to us for a refund. The letters vary, but very often the underlying sentiment is actually... "I was beaten before I even got started."

Of course, the excuses vary. And don't get me wrong: I'm not saying ALL refunds are like this. There are perfectly valid reasons people return info products (in fact, any reason is valid).

But I reckon that 50% of returns we receive are because people's MINDS gave up BEFORE even TRYING. The key words are BEFORE TRYING.

This is a difficult one. Why?

Because it doesn't matter WHAT the opportunity is.

Because that same 'mind' is likely to perform the same negative mental gymnastics REGARDLESS of what the opportunity actually is.

The 'opportunity' could be anything.

But 'the mind' looks at anything and everything with the same 'I-might-as-well -give-up-before-I've-started' kind of attitude.

I think we're all guilty of this, at least some of the time...in all sorts of different 'arenas' of life. What about you?

Did your mind ever beat you...BEFORE you actually got started? I know plenty of people like this - and who are like it with almost everything - hopefully not you!

The Thai Shop-Seller

So as you know...I'm taking a bit of a break in Thailand.

Whilst still writing you these emails...(maybe I should stop for a while...).

So the other day, I grabbed a coffee on one of the main roads around where I'm staying. And there she was...

A street seller. Putting out her 'stand' for the day.

Now, the 'shop' consists of some plastic sheeting, strapped between two public lamp- posts. Yeah...you heard right.

Some pegs are then placed onto the sheeting. The 'pegs' hold the various goods - mostly handbags and purses.

Sad...brave...heroic...?

Either way, it made me think of something. Look at how many 'tools' we have access to 'back home'....look at how simple it is for ANYONE to start an online business these days...

Yet still - you hear people 'crowing' about their lot. I often hear from people - cackling about how they can't find a product, or how they can't find out how to create a basic listing on eBay! Come on!

Imagine you've got zero dough, and zero social security. No Internet, no computer skills. All you've got are some plastic sheets...a couple of lamp posts....and desire.

Actually in certain cases, some people might be better off in a desperate situation like this - simply because it FORCES you to take action.

Now...I'm not 'avin' a go at YOU in particular...at least I hope not.

But as you sit down in your comfortable armchair today...with your super-fast Internet connection...and your central heating...and your access to millyuns of suppliers, ideas and opportunities... ..and, of course, my emails!

Spare a thought for the two lamp-post street seller. If they can 'get moving'...can't you?

An Average Chinese *Bear* In Shanghai

And so I wake up to another day in China!

Yesterday, I mentioned how I'd 'landed' in Shanghai...

Now, one thing I've noticed about the people in China is that they look, behave, eat, and speak in a certain way.

In a...similar way. No great surprise there, right?

I mean...if you go to the UK - you'll find a similar scenario. In short, the members of any society are like carbon copies of each other. If you travel to the UK, the 'average bear' has a tattoo, likes Carlsberg, and watches Ant-and-Dec on a Saturday night (with a chicken Tikka and nan bread in hand).

If you travel to Germany, the 'average bear' is a highly efficient semi-robot who likes rising early to steal your sunbed.

If you travel to Russia, the 'average bear' likes Vladimir Putin, enjoys slurping Borsch, and hates America.

It's like there's a factory (or God?) churning them all out.

The 'face' of the 'average bear' might be slightly different - but this average bear squeals just like all the other bears. Only the shell is really much different.

I realise this may sound like a complete dismissal of 'individualism'. But when you travel to new cultures, surely you can see this. So, what's my point?

Well, there really isn't one. Except, when it comes to launching and selling products - you must know this 'average bear'. And you must know 'it' well.

Can you say that you really 'understand' the average British consumer? What they really like...what they really want to buy? It's a really simple question. But when you start to 'delve into' it, it gets much more complex.

I'll leave you with this one today: "*Do you really understand and know what motivates the 'average UK' bear... to buy?*" Forget about the 'average Chinese bear'...that's another (and much harder question entirely!)

Sure, there are similarities across cultures. But what does the average 'British Bear' really like, want and need? The best online sellers know the answers. So should you!

The World's Greatest Wholesale Market

So I've landed in China...

In fact, I 'landed' a little while ago.

But I've only just had chance to send you this update... I'm in a city called YIWU...if you're a long-time reader, you'll know I've been here before.

It's known as the World's 'commodity city'.

If you've ever wondered where the £shops buy their stuff...it's here.

The city is centred around an enormous market, home to tens of thousands of little 'stores'. These 'stores' are mostly owned by local factories. You go into the 'store' and talk about what you want to buy or make...and they will 'get' it for you. What kind of products?

Virtually anything you can possibly think of.

It's unfathomably large. You could walk around it for a year or more, and never get around all the little shops. So what kind of products have I seen so far?

Plenty...and I'll be updating you on those soon.

But here's the thing...

There's a 'right' way to use China and Yiwu...and a wrong way. If you've been following my emails over the last few weeks, you'll know I've been arguing it's getting harder and harder to sell 'obviously' hot products online.

And what kind of products is Yiwu full of?

'Obviously' hot products! Garden trowels, bars of soap, wicker baskets...all 'obviously' hot, and hence difficult to 'pwofit' from (as the competition online is already too great for these kinds of items).

So what's the best way to use the market?

I'll get to that - soon! And I'll be telling you exactly how *I* am using it...to tackle today's large but competitive online marketplaces...

For now...time to get some lunch... probably a 'Chinese'!

Back In Yiwu

And so I return to the 'China' market in Yiwu for another day...

Today, I want to talk about one product I 'eyeballed'... and the 'lesson' learned from it...

Now, I'm not much of a cyclist. In fact, I can't remember the last time I sat astride a gel padded saddle. But I appreciate and realise that there's a big market in the UK for 'bike stuff'. More and more people are cycling.

Anyway, I caught sight of one of those bikes with HUGE tyres.

I've seen a few of these in the UK, and they're not cheap. So, I went into the market 'store'...and asked for a price. You're looking at around 50 quid a piece. Not bad...although I'm not sure what the quality is like.

More intriguingly, they also had the same model but with an ELECTRIC motor. (Actually the pic above might be the electric one...can't quite remember). So, you don't need to use your pedals. I can't see the point of these things (surely it's a glorified motorbike?), but there we go.

Now, these things are EXPENSIVE back home... I checked and there's one model on eBay at £1,300.

For this one, they wanted around £300 - a very nice return. How many of those would you have to sell per week?

Now, whether the quality is abysmal or not...I don't know.

But here's the thing. IF you can get a product like this with VERY high value (ideally over £1K), and manage to make some sales, it can be very lucrative.

Imagine if you had 5 products, and each sold for over £1K.

Now, imagine just one sale a week from the five...that's five sales per week. If you made 20% on each £1K sale, then that's £1K/week 'pwofit'.

From making only 5 sales a week. Now, of course, it's not THAT simple.

There's probably very few products that you can sell for that kind of dough online. But still, it's an interesting idea.

Anyway, I'm not interested in importing these bikes...so I'll leave that for someone else... So there we go: another day in the market, another day of eating multiple bowls of rice!

How To Really Use China To Profit

Today is my last day at 'the market'...

It's one of those days without much focus, so I thought I'd talk about what I think is now the 'ultimate way' to profit from China...

(In 2018...in today's very competitive marketplace!). As I've stressed before...you can't import 'commodity' type items from China and hope to make much dough now. Forget about wooden spoons, hair-dryers and other every-day stuff. The markets for those items are now far too competitive.

You've got two options, as I see it:

- 1) Go super-niche or 'new'.
- 2) Use China in combination with the UK to create UNIQUE products.

It's 2) I want to look at now.

Let's say you want to create a unique product for the beauty market.

Let's say...for people looking to 'battle' cellulite.

So, you find a nice cream over here in the UK that purports to help.

Then, from China, you source some sort of 'brush' that also helps.

Then you COMBINE the two together... into a SET.

This is the 'better' way to use China for online selling.

IF you sourced the 'brush' on its own...then you're just selling the same product as other sellers.

But by COMBINING it with something else...then you've created something unique. See how this works?

To me, this is the 'smart' way to use China in 2018, and going forward.

It's also the approach I'm taking PERSONALLY. (This should tell you how much I value this 'method!').

This way, too, you don't compete directly with the Chinese factories IF (at some point) they decide to sell a similar product directly through Amazon FBA. So, use China as a 'combinator'... that's my advice, and the conclusion I've developed over the last couple of years.

How To Work Out Any Product's Cost

With my China trip now in full swing, I want to talk today about product manufacturing costs.

Over the last few years, I've developed a big interest in manufacturing. I won't bore you with the 'reasons why' here, but it was all partly 'sparked' by my various trips to China.

As a result...I reckon I've now got a pretty good 'handle' on how to 'figure out' what most products actually cost to make.

It's not that hard to do this...and it's something we'll talk about now.

This is very valuable information to have. Not just as a business owner... but also in life. (So either way: you'll never be ripped off again).

You'll know for example...when a supplier gives you a price...whether they're in China or the UK... what the product actually DOES cost...compared to what they are actually charging you.

Now, it's very difficult to put a rigid fool-proof formula for this into a single email.

But the short version is:

1) Google the cost per ton of the main material used in the product.

2) Find out the weight of the product in question.

Take figure 2) and divide by figure 1) to get 'raw material' cost.

3) Add the cost of anything else added (such as battery, plug etc.)

4) Add another couple of bucks for 'labour', if the product is likely to need a human to produce it (this is very vague but it's ball-park).

An example...

Let's take a stainless steel ashtray.

The current cost per ton of stainless steel is, say £1,500. That means the cost per KG is £1.50 (as 1000KG=1 ton). The cost per gram is therefore 0.0015p. (As 1000grams=1KG). Let's say our ashtray weighs 250g. Now, simply multiply 0.0015 by 250. This is our raw material cost. In this case, 37.5 PENCE.

Anything else added to it?

No...it's just steel...molded into a shape.

Any human involvement? Unlikely to be much, as there's likely a big machine/press that does most of the work. Let's triple the cost to allow for a 'pwofit' to the factory and other incidentals. So reasonably, we shouldn't be paying more than a QUID for this ashtray.

Alright, so there was a bit of 'massaging' here, but you get the point.

You can do this with lots of things. Heck, if you're in John Lewis and they're charging £19.99 for a steel ashtray...you'll know better!

But seriously: this is very valuable knowledge to have, regardless of what you're thinking of selling.

Next time you're sourcing a product...break it down.

Ask yourself what's actually in it...and work out the raw material costs. You might be surprised at how 'cheap' many products actually are! Get the 'knack' of this and you'll know when you're suppliers are OVER-charging you... and, also, when they're giving you a great price. BOTH valuable 'things' to know!

The Secret Of Chinese Super Agents

My legs are knackered!

After walking around the vast Yiwu market for the last few days...I'm feeling the effects.

Or rather...my limbs are.

Today, let me briefly talk about a 'secret' for dealing with China.

OK, the 'secret' is two-fold. 1) Firstly: if possible, come in person. 2) Use an agent.

The first point is obvious. And I realise for many people, it's simply not possible.

How many people are really going to come out here? Not many.

But although it's 'better' to come in person... thankfully, it's not totally necessary. If you look hard on Alibaba.com, you can still find good suppliers from your favourite armchair.

But, as I've mentioned in these emails before...you can't just look 'surface level' on Alibaba these days. Go deeper. Email MULTIPLE different suppliers. Get as many quotes as possible.

And try and make sure you're dealing with a 'proper' factory rather than a middle-man.

Yes, you can still use Alibaba.

But coming here in person - to somewhere like Yiwu - is better.

Now, onto point 2...

Using an agent in China. What's an 'agent'? It's a person who helps you speak to, and do business with, your supplier/factory.

Let me explain...

Let's say you want to source some wicker baskets.

You land in China. You start looking up, down, left and right to find a factory....

You start in the hotel reception and, after checking in...you ask them...where's the local wicker basket factory? Needless to say: you'll probably be laughed at. In a Chinese accent.

So you turn to Alibaba...and maybe you find a supplier, and you go and visit them.

Problem: you can't speak Chinese, and they can't speak English (well, not in all cases, to be fair).

This is where the agent helps. Firstly, they speak the language. And more than that: they can help you negotiate with the supplier.

The agent then can pay the factory (as many 'true' factories often only have Chinese bank accounts; it's a major ball-ache trying to pay them from the UK).

The agent also CHECKS the finished goods (to check they are all OK), and also ships them for you from the warehouse. What do they charge?

5% or so of the price you pay for the goods. So, if you pay \$3,000 for the goods, they will take a fee of \$150. My agent - "Mr. Jacky" - does all this for me. He also takes me out to all the sleaziest night spots.

("Another rum and coke, Mr. Jacky?" "Yes, please, Mr. Oliver!")

An agent can be a huge help. You can find them online. The key, of course, is getting one you can TRUST!

And that's probably the hardest part of all.

Use Other Sites For Product Ideas

And so another Monday rolls around!

Recently, I've been 'knee deep' into researching various products online...

And what do I do to 'find' great ideas? I usually scour eBay and Amazon, and keep my eyes peeled for products which look new, interesting and different...

But then someone pointed something out to me...

Why ONLY check those sites for hot product ideas? I'd usually respond with: "Because eBay and Amazon have literally mill-yuns of products for you to discover, that's why!"

But then I realised something...

There really ARE plenty of other sites where you can find great product ideas... ...and you can then TRANSFER those ideas ONTO eBay/Amazon.

For example: <http://www.notonthehighstreet.com>

These are an alternative online retailer.

So...you scour their site for ideas. Then you 'creatively emulate'...and transfer their hottest items onto the big two online selling sites. (Obviously...look out for truly UNIQUE products only!)

WHY THIS IS A GOOD IDEA: Because MOST eBay/Amazon sellers only check eBay/Amazon for product ideas!

So, by looking elsewhere, you can get ahead of the crowd.

You can do this with loads of other sites, whether it be mainstream sites like Argos.co.uk, down to niche retailers like Bakerross.co.uk (craft products).

Very good idea this one.

And it is, of course, totally 'fweeee'!

Genderise Your Product And Win

Who was it that wrote that book... "Men are from Mars...and Women are from Venus?"

Anyway...

I was 'scouring around' on Amazon the other day...looking for some hair gel. You see, my old 'gel' has now (unfortunately) been discontinued by the manufacturer.

Hence the search...

And then I stumbled across this interesting product...

Yes...this is a hair spray...for MEN. *Specifically* for men...

It's sold by the rather intriguingly- named 'Da Dude'...

For me, the name conjured up images of Mr. T...of A-Team fame...not sure why!

But this strategy...of targeting a specific gender with your product... is a great strategy.

And guess what?

This product IS selling well...last time I checked, it was in the top 2,000 best-sellers in 'Beauty'. That means they are selling a fair few - perhaps a few hundreds units per month, at £13 a pop.

Now, imagine if they just sold this product as... "Hair spray."

Would it have sold as well? Nope.

Fact is, by simply adding a gender to your product - by assigning a target gender to it - you can increase your sales (and heck if you're really smart...maybe target it as one of the 'new' genders!).

Now...a quick experiment...

As most of my readers are men (sorry ladies)...which of these three products would you rather buy?

"Razors for men"

"Razors for women"

"Razors"

Chances are - the first one. And yet, the products are likely all the same.

Yet...you 'chose' the one that was specifically aimed at your gender. Interesting, huh?

So...

Can you 'genderise' your product?

I'm sure some people reading this can, and by doing so, your sales are likely to go...up!

Be Refreshing And Get The Sale

I've been advertising for a job...

Here at the office, we often use an agency for 'part-time' staff. But for a variety of reasons, I've decided to advertise myself this month...

And what comes back? Usually, the CVs that I read all say something like this! "A hardworking, reliable person, who has the ability to work independently but also enjoys working within a team. I thrive under pressure and have the ability to work as part of a team."

Or something like that!

Does the above sound familiar? Of course it does. Why? Because they all say that!

Actually, one of the candidates I invited in didn't have any qualifications at all - but they did have an unusually honest CV!

In this particular person's CV...they used NO buzzwords...at all. What a change! And it was this...that made this particular CV stand out against all the rest (and it subsequently 'got the sale').

Now, you can probably guess where I'm going with this... I'm NOT saying you should be totally brutal with your product...and suggest it's not that good...

But I am suggesting you can be 'refreshing' and still get the sale.

An example might be - you're selling a cheap product...a cheap set of pliers. Your sales copy might say:

"Look, there are higher quality pliers on the market than ours. You can buy a branded pair and they will probably last a bit longer - but you'll pay £20 more for the privilege. Instead, our pliers are solid, dependable and VERY good value. And although there are higher quality pliers out there...we doubt there are any better VALUE for just £4.99!"

Don't get me wrong.

You need to handle this like you need to handle nitroglycerin; with great care. However, done right it can work well. Just like with CVs: if everyone else is using the same 'lines'...and bragging about how great they are - then you can often stand out by being totally honest.

And that's got to be a FIRST when it comes to online marketing!

The Second-Hand Toy Collector

So there I was...chomping down on a sausage roll...

When I glanced in the local newsagent's window...

And lo and behold - there was an advert that read like this: "I will buy your old toys - good mon-ee paid, and will collect. Call Graham on zzzzz".

Now...what do you think this advertiser will do with the toys?

My guess is: he will sell them on.

And...he'll probably sell them on eBay, or perhaps through a niche toy website.

I doubt he's making a 'bomb' doing this.

But this could be a 'fun' little business for practically anyone.

You don't HAVE to stick to only toys... There are dozens of potential niches you could do this with. Old records? Memorabilia? Old books? And more besides.

Heck, you could place a few different adverts...one for each niche.

And how many newsagents could you do this with?

10 newsagents, and maybe three adverts in each! That's 30 'fishing lines' out there...looking for resaleable stock.

But how do you know what the stock is worth?

Simples!

Just check eBay...and see what the resale values are for the items you're looking to buy. There ain't much mon-ee required to give this a go.

Wide open to anyone who wants something small, and part-time!

How Much JACK Is In You?

So Saturday night rolled around... And what's on? The boxing. Tyson Fury vs. some relatively unknown Italian fighter.

Now, I'm a big fight fan...so I tuned in. The fight was relatively uneventful, but the interview after the fight, with Tyson Fury's father (John) was very entertaining.

And it's that interview which I want to talk about now...

As you may know, the Fury's are a traveller family (Tyson Fury's ring name is 'The Gypsy King').

Very proud. Very tough.

And here's what John said (I am paraphrasing here): "You can fight us, but we'll never quit. You'll have to kill us to make us quit.

There is ABSOLUTELY NO JACK IN US AT ALL!"

Said with absolute conviction! And you know what? I absolutely believe him!

Now...a question for YOU.

How much 'Jack' is there in YOU?

How many hurdles would you leap over, if they were put in your way to online selling mastery? 1? 2? 5? 10? 100? 1...thousand?

I suppose there's two sides to this, when it comes to your online endeavours.

1) How many concepts/products you test/try.

2) How much 'jack' there is in you IF those products don't go to plan.

The more you have of 1), and the less you have of 2)...

...the better you'll do.

Maximise both...

...and the sky is the limit!

Do The Opposite And Win

News from *The Sun* newspaper!

An entrepreneurial mum has started a 'traditional' dating agency. Why?

As a response to the go-go Internet dating apps and websites.

"Dennie Smith is hoping her site will be an antidote to the throw-away internet dating culture..."

She's bringing back 'old school dating'...

How it works: entrepreneur sees that the products offered to a particular market are all being sold in a 'certain way'. As such, she decides to offer HER products in...

"The opposite way." T

his is a common strategy. And...it works!

And...it applies to practically any market/niche.

Everyone is saying one thing in a particular market...about a particular product.

Then - you find and sell a product that essentially offers the OPPOSITE.

Example...

You're selling a supplement. Many people are saying they only offer 'all natural' supplements these days.

Instead - you say: "Look, this product IS enhanced. It's NOT all natural. And that's because we only wanted THE most effective ingredients - which has meant we use both natural AND non-natural sources to give YOU the best results!"

In short - everyone is claiming one thing...

You turn it around, and offer the OPPOSITE.

Key is: the 'opposite' offer you give people MUST still be appealing!

At least for a SPECIFIC segment of your market. This can 'work' very effectively in many different markets!

Can YOU use it?

Invest In Coffee

Costa Coffee was recently sold...for almost 4bn quid!

If you're not a customer of Costa Coffee, you've probably seen their numerous stores dotted around the high-street...

And just last week - the entire chain was sold to Coca Cola for almost 4bn, 'Costa' was originally bought for just £19m in 1995. So that was a pretty good return on investment!

Anyway, you might think this has no relevance at all for us as online sellers...

And it doesn't - well, almost...

You see, what do Costa sell? Coffee!

And that's a market I want to talk about today...

Clearly, 'coffee' is a market which is NOT going anywhere soon.

Apart from...up.

Do companies like Coca Cola invest in things that aren't 'on trend'? Far from it. There are myriad products you can sell into the coffee market - from accessories, to blends, to 'nespresso capsules', to creamers and syrups.

Monin? It's a syrup brand which is BIG online (and offline).

Super-strength coffee blends that will 'blow your head off'?

Yes, yes...these kinds of products sell. And they sell well.

Fact is, there are tons of potential products you could sell into the coffee market.

And what is coffee? It's an addictive substance, that's what! Which is why this market is only going one place - UP.

The Perfect Online Shopper

Who's the perfect online shopper?

I mean: Who is the kind of buyer/person who actually spends the MOST on the Internet? If you know 'who' this is....well, that's valuable data.

Why? Because then you can think about sourcing/ designing products specifically for THAT shopper...

So...who is this 'perfect shopper'?

Research by VertoAnalytics.com leads us to believe it is...

A 47-year old woman with an average income. Surprised? I was. And...I wasn't.

This research by Verto also goes deeper...

It also reveals that 'Millennials' - the whiny youngsters - actually spend the least online. I don't find that too surprising. Most savvy marketers realise that people who are 'older' tend to spend more. Why?

Probably because they have more disposable income.

Anyway - back to the perfect shopper...

Can you 'design' products for this 47-year old woman?

Immediately, you'll probably be thinking of health and beauty products, home and garden, and kitchen products. And guess which are some of the biggest categories online?

Yes...it's these self-same categories.

So this 'research' by Verto seems to make total sense.

But don't get me wrong.

This certainly does NOT mean you should ONLY concentrate on the 47-year old woman! There are vast numbers of niches/products that can work online - for both young and old, for men, for women...and yes, for transgenders (a good market by the way!). Still, something worth thinking about...

Most Wished For Products Give Clues

You should always be on the 'lookout' for new product ideas...

But where to look? I've talked many times about where to find potential ideas....

Look at what's already hot. Look towards America. Look on the best-seller lists. Look at trade-shows...and so on. Before now, I've also mentioned Amazon's 'Movers and Shakers'. Which is an excellent resource.

You can find that here: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/movers-and-shakers>

But there's also another, less-often- used-by-sellers resource.

It is...

Amazon's 'Most Wished For'.

This is basically a list of items which people have...er...'wished for'...but not necessarily bought. It's similar to best-sellers, but you can often find items on here which you won't find on the best-seller lists.

A further recommendation: Check the American lists, not just the UK lists.

On Amazon.com (American), you're more likely to find something new which you can then sell into the UK.

I had a look around the Beauty category and found this item: a stretch-mark cream for pregnant women. Which I thought was a 'good idea'; they are basically 'niching' some standard beauty creams. Instead of just 'stretch mark creams' - these are especially for pregnant women. Is there really any difference? I doubt it!

So there...'Most Wished For'...another page to bookmark.

How Many Productive Hours Per Day/Week?

So....

...as we make our way through 2018...

How many PRODUCTIVE hours of 'work' have you done so far this year? If you had to count them up...how many would there be? (Don't cringe...)

And yes - be sure to exclude emails/Facebook (if you use it)/the news sites...etc.

When it comes down to it, most people (and that includes me), a lot of the time - aren't actually as 'productive' as they think they really are. And that's the brutal truth!

Here's one thing I've been doing recently...

I set aside the FIRST HOUR of my day to concentrate on the MOST important task at hand (at the moment)...and allow myself ZERO distractions.

I never check my email first thing in the morning...as it's always a trap.

Instead, for that first hour of the day - I do something that's MOST important... and this usually means 'the thing' that is MOST likely to bring in the MOST mon-eee.

It could be writing some sales copy.

It could be creating a new product listing.

It could be hunting for a new supplier.

It could be creating an online advertising campaign.

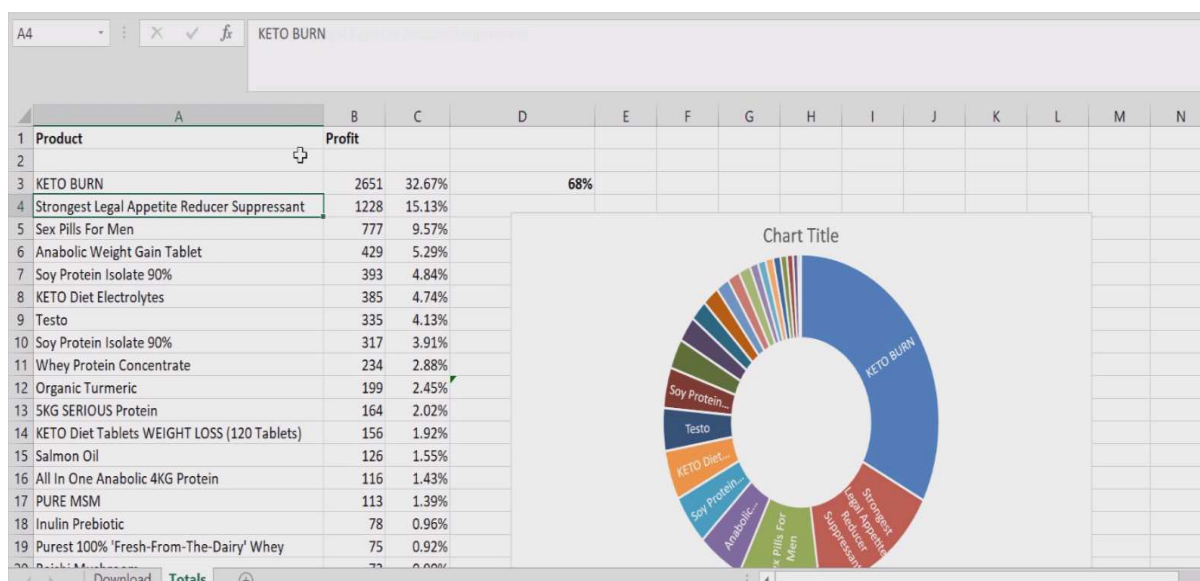
Key is...get it done 'early' - whilst you are still fresh. An hour doesn't sound like a lot. But if you're tightly focus, you can get plenty done.

Heck, if you could really focus on getting the really important stuff done every day...with no distractions...then this year could be your best year ever.

Can you spare an hour when you're 'at your best'?

An Incredibly Important Piece Of Analysis

Check the image below...



So the figures you can see here are profit—the monthly profit figures for one of my eBay accounts. (I've got actually got two eBay accounts). It tells you how much profit each of these products makes (per month).

For example, “Testo” is making me £335/month. And this is 4% of my total profit for that particular eBay account.

You can see the most successful product is *Keto Burn*. That's number one. It accounts for a staggering 32% of my *total* profit (on this account). In total, this account makes £8,150 pounds a month.

Here's the interesting thing: the top five products are producing 68% of the *total* profit.

There are a couple of points I want to make...

The first is how much profit is made *from a handful of products*. This is so important. Something so few sellers realise. It is one of the great secrets of entrepreneurship, actually.

If you have a hundred products, you might only have ten that are really bringing in most of the profit. If I didn't have my five top-sellers, I'd only be making 30% of what I'm making now.

This is actually VERY common in a LOT of businesses...

Take Google, for example. They have got hundreds of products...artificial-intelligence-type businesses, the mobile android, they're looking at driverless cars, and piles more...

BUT a lot of their products are NOT very successful.

The most successful product – the one that brings in all the money - is Google’s advertising—Google ads. And that's one of the most successful companies in the world.

It's the same with Apple.

If you look at Apple, the Apple iPhone brings in most of their money.

And that’s just ONE product!

What does this mean to you?

In short, you have to launch a lot of products to make sure you find those that produce the big results. Now, if I suddenly lost these five products, does that mean I'd suddenly go to making two-and-a-half grand a month?

Well, initially, I would. But over a period of time, I’d find products to replace those.

So it's a continuous process of testing products, seeing which ones work the best, and then going from there.

You must TEST a lot to see what really works!

The second point I want to make is: look at the top-selling items. What are they all about?

They're all sex and weight loss, which tells you an awful lot!

You might think online buyers are high-brow and sophisticated. But when it comes down to it, plenty of people buy these ‘base’ type products. So, sex, weight loss, muscle building—nothing particularly glamorous in those markets, but they just sell **extremely well**. Don’t overestimate the sophistication of the people that you sell to!

Even a good friend of yours may never say, “Oh yeah, I’d NEVER buy sex pills.” But actually, if you look at their internet history, it will probably reveal a *totally different story*.

Now let’s look at the LEAST successful products in my portfolio.

L-Arginine	58	0.71%
Moringa	61	0.75%
Anabolic Weight Gainer Mass Gainer Capsules	47	0.58%
Inulin Powder STRONG Prebiotic	21	0.26%
BCAA	9	0.11%

If you look at the amount of contributions of profit— it’s only a few % of the total. So, is it worth keeping those? Probably not. We want *more* of the top-sellers, and to *drop* our poor sellers. It's a continual process there of finding new products and dropping old ones. OK, so that’s some insight inside a REAL eBay business. I hope you found it interesting!

We Used To Sell 'X', But 'Y' Sells More

I doubt you'll have heard of 'em...

And no! I'm not going to give you their name here today...

But I got an interesting email from them the other day...a supplier I've used for a few years.

In short, the gist of it was this:

We started out in business 30 years ago. For 10 years, we sold X. Then, we realised it was much more profitable to sell Y. So now we're doing that instead...even though it has absolutely NOTHING to do with what we started out doing.

To anyone who's run a business for any length of time, this will ring true.

Why? Because you never know what will work... until you try something!

In the case of the above company, they tried to sell electronics for years...until they found a much more lucrative (and totally unrelated niche).

This is now a substantial company that has made the owner wealthy.

Now...the key phrase here is: "Because you never know what will work... until you try something!"

Example...

You want to sell online. You research and research. And you find a niche...hunters. So you try and sell some telescopic sites for hunting rifles. They don't sell.

But you ask your supplier what else they sell...and what's doing well...and they tell you about some bird-watching cameras they have in. These things are really moving. You try those. They start to sell more briskly than the scopes.

Then you realise the 'bird-watching' market is far better and less competitive...so you end up selling into that market.

9 months later, your hit product is NOTHING like what you thought it would be...when you first started out. This is very common. The point?

You can't really know what will sell, or what market you'll 'end up in'...until you get moving. When it comes to online selling, motion beats meditation.

Every.

Single.

Time.

For a lot of online sellers, the market they 'end up' in looks very little like the one they originally started out with.

But - key is - at least they started out... and then adjusted as they went along.

Find A New Way To Solve An Old Problem

I've just been a-browsing... ...looking for 'what's hot' at this 'hot' time of year...

And as I looked through the various best-sellers and trending products...

...I was reminded of something...

And it's simply this:

"Sell a NEW way of solving an OLD problem, and your odds skyrocket!"

There are mill-yuns of products you could sell online...

But only a relatively handful of those will really sell well. Maybe 10,000 products in any given category do 'sell'.

And of those, 1,000 sell like gangbusters.

But what do these products have in common?

Well, you might struggle to draw out any real generalisations across categories. But one thing is for sure:

Most products fill a desire/need/demand... they solve some sort of problem that people have.

And, guess what? The 'problems' people want to solve almost never change. They're the same...year, after year...after year. And the bigger the problem your product promises to solve...the more units of your product you can expect to sell.

People want products that will purify the air in their home/office. They want products that can help them sleep more soundly. They want products that can help keep the kitchen clean.

They want products that will enable them to cut the hedge quickly and easily. They want products that will lessen the pain of a bad knee. And so on...

These 'problems' never change. But what does change - and this is the key - what does change...is the solution.

The 'solution', of course, is YOUR product.

And any time you can come up with a NEW way to solve an old problem...you are almost certainly onto a winning product.

People have always wanted to get the creases out of their clothes. Heck, even 'neanderthal man' probably disliked the creases in his overly-saggy brown wide-fronts (with the bone across the front).

Any NEW product - any new solution - to solve the problem of 'creased undies' is going to sell.

This isn't complicated...

Look at existing products that sell well.

Then, have a look around for new solutions/angles to address the problems they solve. Have a look at trade-shows, or their websites, to find what enterprising inventors have come up with now...to solve these 'old-age' problems.

Then sell these products.

And watch the sales take off!

‘Cooked By Real Cooks’! Really?

So there I was, working late... and with no options for food!

And there it was...like an oasis in the desert!

The bright lights...of KFC!

So I pull in...and immediately... I got taken in by their flowery marketing.

The latest slogan: *"Cooked by real cooks"*.

How could I resist?

Now...let's just think about that statement for a moment... "Cooked by real cooks." I ask you : could the chicken (or whatever is in the batter these days!) be cooked by anyone but a cook?

Alright...so I'm being a cheeky t*.**

I can see what they were trying to do with their marketing slogan, but it fell a bit flat to my marketing-worn ears.

Something a bit more specific might have been more convincing: "Cooked oven-fresh each day by our roasting team". Alright, so maybe I put the hyperbole into high gear there, but it's stronger, and something you can really picture... ("Roasting Team" = gaggle of spotted youths with 1-hour of training. Either that - or the Chelsea squad.)

Now, let's go back to their slogan...

"Cooked by real cooks". To me, it's not really consistent with KFC's 'positioning'.

I mean...is the food in KFC even supposed to be 'cooked by real cooks'? To me it's fast food...tasty food, but there isn't even supposed to be a 'real cook' in sight. That's not the point. It's simple, tasty FAST food. We all know it's come out of a bucket, out the back!

In short, the marketing they're using isn't really consistent with their product.

And this is the (somewhat subtle) point I want to make today...

Consider: you're selling a cheapo watch on eBay, and you claim it's "The same quality as you'll find in Royal Mayfair!" (or something!). That's not going to cut it. Why?

You're selling a cheap watch. People know it's a value purchase. So your marketing should focus on the value.

You can mention how your watch rivals watches costing 3 times as much...

...but I think you can go overboard as well.

Another example might be a weight loss product. You might claim "Lose 10 stone in a week!", but a lot of prospects know it's baloney ("cooked by real cooks", anyone?) Don't get me wrong.

You should certainly 'play up' the advantages of your product.

But I think you can take it too far - and the whole thing becomes incredible. How to know if you've taken it too far? The laugh test?

If your average customer read your product's claims back to you, and let's out a cackle, you've gone too far. In short, if most prospects would let out a 'Ha!' as they read your offer, then you need to reign things in a bit. Or at least offer some PROOF.

Be consistent with your image and claims...but still make sure your product 'is the best thing since sliced' bread...if you catch my drift.

The Power Of Media To Build A Business

Today, I want to talk about a very powerful marketing 'secret'...

One which you won't hear this anywhere else!

It's a 'secret' that I've only just realised very recently...

It's what I call the 'Power of Media'.

This has nothing to do with 'The Sun' newspaper!(Actually, maybe it does!).

Let me explain what this is...and why it's so important...

So, around 2001, eBay started to become popular....

Around 2002, Google Adwords started to become popular...

Around 2011, Amazon started to become popular...

Around 2012, Facebook started to become popular... And?

When a 'new medium' becomes popular, then fortunes can be made.

Specifically, many fortunes are built not from businesses 'per se', but from (new) MEDIA. And it's often a new 'medium' that drives the success of a given business.

Let me go 'in depth'...

Let's say the year is 1997, and you've invented a new product that lets people examine their family history...their family tree, if you like. How would you market this product? You might use direct-mail. But you try, and it's too expensive.

The business - despite being a 'good idea', and with a proven market - FAILS. Now, the year is 2011...and you decide to try the idea again.

This time, you use Facebook to advertise it. Now, BECAUSE of Facebook, you can target people over a certain age, who are more interested in their family histories. You can target people who have a proven interest in genealogy (as Facebook has that data).

And unlike direct mail, you can test the ideas out for cheap.

Bingo...it starts to 'work', and you build up the business into a success. What was responsible? You...or the business idea? Neither.

It was the MEDIUM.

In short, the new 'medium' of Facebook DROVE the success of the biz - because it helped you reach the RIGHT customers!

But in 1997 - that same business failed.

Another example...

It's 2003...

The 'Kommando'...aka 'moi'...has an idea - to sell rare books online! And he does. But before 2003? That business wouldn't have even been possible.

eBay MADE it possible!

Another example...

It's 1999. You want to sell tools. You open a shop, but the overhead is too high. You go bust. It's 2003. eBay arrives. You start to sell the SAME tools again, and the business takes off - because you don't have the same overhead that you had from the shop.

eBay DELIVERS the customers right to you.

In short...

The MEDIUM of eBay ENABLED the success of the business.

It's 2009. You want to sell vitamins online, but Google won't let you. The business goes nowhere. And, opening a shop is simply too expensive...

Amazon starts to get popular. You sell your vitamins on there - and business explodes (these products are very popular on Amazon).

My point is simple...

NEW MEDIA channels often CREATE the success of a business. I

It's not necessarily even the product...OR the entrepreneur...but the **access to customers** that is GRANTED by a 'new medium'. My point?

Look out for these 'new media'. They are where fortunes can be made!

Create Your Own 15-Minute Meals

Then - there was 15-minute meals! And now!

Just five ingredients!

What am I talking about?

If there's someone who knows how to sell cookbooks, it's Jamie Oliver (or his publishers). A quick Google search reveals he's sold over £126m of cookbooks!

Obviously, it's not just the titles/themes of the books...but there's no doubt that these have played a HUGE role here as well. His latest book (after 30-minute meals and then 15-minute meals) is: "5 Ingredients".

Now...I'm certainly not recommending you sell, or write, cookbooks...

But here's what you CAN consider: What is 'Oliver' doing here with these cookbook titles?

The answer: he's making it seem SIMPLE AND EASY.

This is key - whatever you're selling.

And you can often 'communicate' this via your product's name/title. For example: You're selling a grass seed. It's a product that helps people grow grass. What to call it?

You COULD simply call it "Grass Seed."

But better would be something that communicates how simple and easy it is to grow grass with this seed... "Throw and Grow"? Not bad!

Hopefully you can see where I'm going with this...

You want to communicate 'simple and easy' with your product's NAME.

If you took away Jamie Oliver's book titles, and simply called the books "Cookery Book 1, 2, 3 etc.", would they have sold anywhere near as well?

Nope!

Split The Day In Two

I've been very busy recently.

I wanted to share with you today a 'technique' I've been using to get things done...

Let's face it: For nearly all of us, there are TWO types of 'stuff' you have to get done at any given time...

The trivial.

And the MAJOR!

The 'trivial' is all the little things like sorting out customer queries, paying suppliers etc (although they probably don't see it that way!) The 'major' - as I see it anyway! - is the stuff that will actually bring in SALES!

Finding new products. Writing sales descriptions. Setting up JVs. ...et cetera!

So here's something I've been doing recently...

I split the day in TWO...morning and afternoon.

And I do one MAJOR 'task' in the morning...and I do another MAJOR 'task' the afternoon...

AND...and this is important...

I write those two things DOWN...as I start the day (or else the day before).

So today, for example...I have my two 'major' things planned already...

If you must know: in the morning, I'm working on these emails (the ones I send you every day)...
...and, in the afternoon, I'm setting aside some time to work on a 'new' project.

What's the new project? Well, without going into too much detail, it's a method I'm developing that enables us to test dozens of new product ideas extremely quickly... (think hours!).

So, I've got to lay out a 'plan' to get this moving, with my 'software-developer- guy'. Alright, so I realise my day and yours are probably going to be different!

But...can you split each day down the middle...and have two MAJOR tasks to do each day? Then write those down. I've found this quite helpful.

Why? Maybe because 'drilling down' and 'minimising' like this makes things less intimidating...and hence - easier to act upon.

The Stranded Luggage Opportunity

What happens to all those suitcases which get left at airports?

Yes...believe it or not, luggage IS left 'on the regular' - and it has to go somewhere.

The answer: it goes to auction.

There was an interesting article on BT.com (of all places!) recently. The author tried to buy some of this 'lost luggage'...and then sold it online - via eBay, and Facebook (anything left over went to car boots). The result?

It was profitable. But only to the tune of about 30 quid! Hardly much to shout about.

On an 'hourly' basis, it probably broke down to what a spotty youth would make as an apprentice mechanic. Worth it?

Not really - UNLESS you want a part-time opportunity, and something for a 'bit of fun'.

It will probably break down like this: On most of the lost-luggage 'deals', you'll make a bit of dough - and then you'll get the odd 'whopper' where you make a lot more...

Where to find these auctions?

Simply Google the likes of 'lost luggage auctions'.

Apparently, the biggest 'lost luggage' auction house in the UK is in London.

And it is: <http://www.greasbys.co.uk/>

Related, here's another site that specialises in Police-confiscated property:

<http://www.bumblebeeauctions.co.uk/>

Lost luggage...a worthwhile opportunity? It can certainly be profitable - especially as you gain more and more experience. But this one is more for fun - and for the part-timers.

Best-Sellers vs. Viable

They are huge sellers online...

They're also an incredibly dull product...

I'm talking about USB cables.

There's no doubt - these are a 'best-selling product'. They're undoubtedly hot. They're MONSTER sellers!

But would they be a good product for YOU to sell? No - as there's an important difference between...

'Best-Selling' products...

And 'VIABLE Products'.

Best-sellers are exactly that. They are the top-selling items in a given category. USB cables. Foam ear plugs. Cardboard packing boxes. All big sellers.

And all absolutely useless if you want to sell something similar! Why?

They're simply too competitive and TOO GENERIC. You can't differentiate against the competition, and you'll face huge competition.

Now - how about these products...

- Anti-aging capsules
- Motorbike cleaners
- Spider repellents

None are really 'best-sellers', and you won't find them down your local 'Dixons' (or whatever they call it these days!) THESE are 'viable' products. They still sell. But they're not overly-competitive.

What's more, they can be 'own-branded'... you can make 'em your own.

We don't want to sell 'best-selling' products. We want to sell viable products - hot, but not too competitive.

An important but powerful distinction!

You Must Add Value

Let's imagine there are two products for sale online...

Let's say...coffee.

Two separate listings on eBay or Amazon. Both offering a pouch full of coffee. Both sellers are offering exactly the same product, with every detail the same.

Which do you buy? The cheapest?

Alright, let's say they are equally priced as well...

Which do you buy?

OK...now let's make another assumption.

Let's say you decide to sell your OWN 'pouch of coffee'...competing with the other guys...

You sell EXACTLY the same thing...in the same way. And at the same price.

Now - which of the three products are people going to choose and buy? Well - either of them! As they are all the same.

My point is simple: when there is no 'added value', then there is NO reason for someone to buy your products...compared with another seller's.

And...

In today's increasingly competitive online markets, you must find a way to ADD VALUE.

In short, you must give people a REASON to buy your product/s... compared to your competition.

Could be price.

Could be packaging.

Could be quality. Could be loads of things.

But the more value you 'add'...in comparison to your competition, then (generally speaking), the better you will do.

Going back to coffee...

Let's say we now go back and sell our coffee again...

But this time, we source it more cheaply. We package it more 'nicely'. And we find a unique blend... that no-one else has. Now...who will the consumer choose to buy from? 'Adding value' is a must these days.

Whatever you're selling!

The Instant Consumer

The instant consumer!

You've probably heard of 'Amazon Dash'...and it's something I wrote about a few weeks back. And just the other day, there was an article in The Telegraph about how 'big brands' are trying to tap into this now ever-present desire...

Which desire?

The desire to 'have it now'. (Whatever 'it' is).

Now - we know how sites like Amazon do it. They offer instant downloads for eBooks and they offer next-day (or same-day) delivery for physical products.

But how about the 'big brands'?

It's more difficult if you're selling washing up liquid and detergent.

Proctor and Gamble - marketers of many of the World's biggest brands (Ariel, Crest toothpaste etc) have launched 'clubs' where you get subscription deliveries of all your household essentials.

But do people really want 'instant gratification' when it comes to things like washing-up liquid? I don't know...

Anyway...one thing is for sure, and it's worth repeating:

'Instant Gratification' works on TWO levels:

- 1) Delivery of your product.
- 2) The results your product gives your consumer.

With respect to point 1), this means shipping quickly and - if you sell on Amazon - it means using FBA (easy enough to do nowadays).

Point 2) is trickier, but it ideally means you should source/sell products where you can offer this 'instant gratification'. Results right out of the box.

Even if that only means...

"You can start USING this product as soon as you take it out of the box!". Obviously, how you approach this will differ from product to product.

The 'instant consumer' isn't going anywhere. So it's well worth thinking about how to 'cater' to this want-it-now-animal.

Please Take A Break

One of the most powerful aspects of taking a break from work.... ...is that it f-re-es up your mind! Your head clears. Junk thoughts dissipate. And you can start thinking creatively again...

This is what happened when I went away last week, for just a few days. Now - one thing I was reminded of recently was what I call...

"The World's Most Powerful Business Strategy!"

A rather grandiose and hyperbolic term. But a true one, nonetheless!

As I 'got comfortable' in my seat on the plane, I picked up the in-flight magazine...

And there you'll find a selection of unique and unusual products.

My guess is that the manufacturers of these products have created some sort of 'joint-venture' with the airlines. The airline gets a percentage of each sale...as does the manufacturer. Everyone wins.

This is the joint-venture...the most powerful business strategy there is (and something I used to launch my own business career).

In short: you approach another company who already has access to a group of

customers....customers who are IDEAL PROSPECTS for whatever you're currently selling. You put together a deal that works for both parties. And everyone wins.

Now, in this newsletter, I talk about selling online.

But...I don't talk about JVs.

Fact is, though, you can and should 'JV' any hot products that you've already proven sell well online.

For example: you're selling some sort of gadget that improves the quality of the pictures you can take on mobile phones. You could approach small websites that cater to phone/photo enthusiasts. (Blogs and the like).

You propose a deal where you split the 'pwofits' from any sales...50/50...with the website owner. You're selling a brush that straightens hair more effectively. You approach people who have large followings on Instagram and Facebook... and ask them to recommend your product. You split the profits 50/50.

There is HUGE potential with this strategy, but very few online sellers ever think about it! You should!

A Weekend In Abu Dhabi

So after a weekend away in Abu Dhabi to watch the Grand Prix...

...I got back to the UK on Tuesday.

On the flight back, I noticed someone in front of me was watching an action film. One of the 'Fast and Furious' type films... lots of fast cars and explosions!

Now, as I was sat behind them....I couldn't listen to what the actors were saying. But I could see their mannerisms, and the action scenes. And then I realised: I didn't even NEED to hear what they were saying!

You could work most of it out by simply watching!

Not sure what that says about the plot 'depth'!

As with many films, they follow a familiar story...

Good guy. Bad guy. Good guy struggles against bad, and at the end of the film... is victorious! And gets the girl! How many times has this idea been sold to the public? And it continues to sell.

The storyline is essentially the same. Only the faces change (and even the faces don't change much either, as it's the same actors!).

And it's just like that with products...

The 'problems' and the 'solutions' are basically the same year in, year out...

People want to look younger. Someone comes out with a new product that purports to help solve the problem. Pictures are shown of the 'problem skin'...and pictures are shown of people with 'beautiful skin'...after using the product!

People want to be more productive. Someone invents a new 'mechanism' that purports to save time...and everyone tries it out!

The 'storylines' are ever-lasting. Only the pictures change.

My point? Stick to the kinds of markets/appeals that have been PROVEN to work.

Time saving, beauty, a nicer garden, less mice around the house, and better health.

All these appeals - like Hollywood plots - will still work 1,000 years from now.

They sell.

Don't reinvent the wheel. There is no need to.

How To Be Lucky

I only 'watch' YouTube these days...

You see, I binned my TV aerial a long time ago. I hate 'normal' TV.

Anyway...

There was an interesting program on YouTube that caught my interest... by master illusionist Derren Brown. It's quite an old show, but it's still a good one.

The subject is luck...and how to be lucky.

Derren's belief is this: The more opportunities you take, the 'luckier' you get.

In short, 'luck' doesn't really exist.

And the program tries to prove this point. (It's well worth watching by the way...you can find it on YouTube by typing in 'Derren Brown secret of luck'.)

Derren tries to prove to us that the more 'things' you try, the 'luckier' you seem to be.

Which reminds me of the old golfing quote... "The harder I practice, the luckier I get!"

But is it true?

I think so, and it relates to online selling as well.

Let's take a seller...this person wants to sell online...so tries to sell five different products. Great. Of the five items they try, they find that three don't sell, one sells OK, and one sells well!

Now, let's take another seller...

They try 100 items!

60 fail. 30 do well.

9 are really good sellers.

And one is an absolute, balls-to-the-wall, wealth-creating monster. Was our second seller 'lucky'? Or was he just trying more opportunities?

The secret of luck?

Trying more opportunities...

...and...

...learning something from each as you go...

Sell High And Sell Low

I've been launching lots of new 'projects' recently...

One of those...I started around the beginning of this month.

And so far - it's going quite well.

Now - the catch...

The product I 'buy in' from my supplier is quite expensive. (Relative to other products available for sale online in this 'niche').

You see, there are models available online that cost approximately HALF the price of 'mine'. But, 'my' product is still selling... and people seem to like it.

But there's a danger here.

And the danger is that, eventually, people will simply opt for the cheaper stuff...in a kind of 'lowest-price-wins' fashion. What to do?

I COULD source a cheaper model. And chop my price in half.

But this is the dilemma, and something I want to touch on today...

You've got two choices...

You sell a quality product for more dosh, and hope people appreciate it

Or, you sell a crappier product for less - and get more sales (but not necessarily more 'pwofit').

What to do? This is the big question. And it's one that re-surfaces in all sorts of niche markets.

The answer!

Sell BOTH! That's right.

Sell one under one name...and sell the other under a different name (no - you don't necessarily have to use two user names - just two different packaging approaches).

Bingo...problem solved.

Heck, this seemed to be a vexing problem...until I sat down to write this email. Now - I know what to do!

And, this is worth thinking about for you too...

Listing two different products that address the same 'need'...

At two different price points. If you sell on eBay, you can even sell them from the same listing (using a 'Variation' listing) - a basic and a 'deluxe' pack. Can be applied to LOTS of niche markets!

Try And Get A Result

I got an email from a customer recently... After much 'flailing about', he mentioned he was now 'getting a couple of sales per day' with his online biz. Not enough to quit his job. And not enough to retire on.!

But - some RESULTS.

And that's what I want to touch on today...

Let's say you're going to the gym...because you want to get into shape. You slave away on the machines. Two hours a day. Four days a week. For three months.

And you keep looking in the mirror...and weighing yourself.

ZILCH...no difference! What happens? You give up.

Now...let's take a different scenario. You go to the gym...and work hard. And one day....you see you've lost a POUND.

One, solitary pound.

Not a lot, but enough to KNOW IT'S WORKING.

And this is key, isn't it?

You need RESULTS...any kind of result...to keep going.

Whatever it is that you're doing. When it comes to online selling, it doesn't even matter if you make one sale or one hundred.

But you need SOMETHing.

Something to put your stake in the ground...something to keep you motivated. How many sales have YOU got?

Point is...it's not necessarily the amount. It's the fact that you can get SOME kind of result...and it's that will create the drive and motivation to continue.

It's the same with anything - going to the gym, selling online, or becoming an artist. You need to see improvements and results.

Because if you don't...you'll quit! And how do you get those 'results'? By starting and by trying!

Trying different things. ADJUSTING if you don't get any results...and then seeing how things go.

Selling online is like working with a living, breathing 'thing'...you need to work with it, know its pulse and how it operates...so you can make the necessary adjustments and 'tune into' its rhythm. That comes from doing and trying and experimenting. And then - getting some results. Anything!

Once SOME 'result' comes in - then you'll be highly motivated to keep on going.

The Good Ol' Leaflet Drop

So I came home the other day to find a leaflet on my floor....

...advertising a 'local cleaning service'.

Aha! Just so happens - I need a new cleaner. So this was very timely. I was straight on the 'blower', and secured them a trial for this week. I could just imagine the lady taking the call and thinking 'Wow! These leaflet drops really do work!'

But did she get any other calls, or just me?

Who knows...

Anyway, some time later, I was driving to work and saw another 'old school' marketing tactic. The old lamp post with a leaflet strapped to it. Know that one?

This one read: *"Wanted: your old collectables, records and toys. Call Dave."*

Interesting...

Not sure if this was so he could buy and resell online, but there we go...

Anyway, my point is: these 'old school' marketing methods can still work, especially if you can keep the costs down (like Dave!).

And how could you use them? Like Dave!

In truth, anyone could 'advertise' in this way, looking for old stuff to resell.

I realise this isn't for everyone.

But how much would it cost to give this a go? You could print the leaflets at home, and deliver them (or advertise them). Or, you can get companies to do it for you...

You'd need virtually no capital.

And if nothing else, you'd gain some experience from the whole thing. It's not the 'ultimate system', I realise!

But nonetheless, a little biz idea that can be effective, and requires practically ZERO capital to try out for yourself.

What Can You Stop Doing Today?

And so another Monday morning rolls around!

Now, if you're like most people on a Monday (including me, most of the time)... then you're probably asking yourself...

"What can I DO today...to get a step closer to X goal?"

Maybe it's researching products.

Maybe it's sourcing products.

Maybe it's finally getting a listing together. You've got a 'to-do' list of some sort... right? But instead - how about asking this question instead:

"What can I STOP doing today?"

Isn't that as valuable a question?

I'm not just talking about 'stopping' bad habits here. I'm also talking about cutting out those other superfluous tasks/projects/ time-killers that we all get involved with... ...things which stymie you.

'Tasks' and other stuff which stop you from following through on the 'good' stuff that can actually bring in the moolah. Or how about 'projects' you have 'to do'...but which are low-probability? ...

In fact, how about NOT EXPANDING your 'to-do' list at all....

...but actually SHRINKING it?

If you're anything like me, you've probably got a list of 'projects' to do.

But you probably realise - deep down - that at least some of these are likely never come to fruition.

In short, can you cut the 'to-do' list down...instead of expanding it? Isn't it better to focus on the 'good stuff'? What can you JETTISON entirely... or give to someone else to do?

These questions are certainly as valuable as asking yourself... "What can I DO today to get to my GOAL?" Instead - can you think about what you need to STOP doing?

One thing I'm going to stop doing? Stop adding anything else to my own 'to-do' list, and instead concentrate fully on what I'm doing well currently.

Secret Of The World's Most Successful Products

Is there a 'common factor' that links a large number of the World's most successful products?

I mean - what could all THESE products really have in common?

- A supplement that purports to make your 'member' larger...
- Louis Vuitton handbags...
- Rolls Royce motor cars...
- Luxury pet treats for your dog...
- Makeup...
- A rubber duck for your baby...

Anything in common? On the face of it - NO. They all solve a problem?

No...it's not that. They all provide a benefit to the customer? Yes, of course...but it's not that, either.

Alright it is... EMOTION! That's right.

That's what sells these products, and most of the World's successful products.

In short, there has to be an emotional element attached and almost BUILT-INTO the product, in some way.

Sure, you've probably heard how salesman talk about 'selling to emotion'. But this is different. This is about the product ITSELF having emotion 'built into it'...about the product itself GENERATING emotions in whoever is buying it.

Let's break it down - by looking at the products above (all extremely lucrative):

A supplement that purports to make your 'member' larger...

Emotion BUILT-INTO this product?: I feel inadequate, this will make me FEEL better. –

Louis Vuitton handbags...

EMOTION BUILT IN?: I want to be one of the 'gang', it will make me FEEL better.

- Rolls Royce motor cars...

EMOTION BUILT IN?: I am the best, I deserve to FEEL the best. I want to impress people and will feel better by doing so!

Luxury pet treats for your dog...

EMOTION?: It FEELS good when I feed my dog - he will love ME more!

Makeup...

EMOTION?: I FEEL more confident with this clay caked onto my visage.

A rubber duck for your baby...

EMOTION?: I FEEL great when I see my baby's toothless grin!

In short, all these products - all the best products - change how people FEEL in some way.

They create an emotional response.

If you think of a successful product now...(go on)

...I'll bet you'll realise that, on some level, people are buying it to change how they FEEL! And this is very important.

Let's say you've got a choice of TWO products you could sell online.

One is table SALT.

The other is a bacon-flavoured luxury pet treat.

On the face of it, they may not be vastly different; both are 'foodstuffs'.

But when you realise that one will ramp up the EMOTION in your prospect...

...then you'll realise the dog treat is (by far) the better product to sell.

I mean - who gets excited by SALT?

Look for products that are targeted at...and create...emotion.

These are the most profitable and best products to sell.

The \$22 Strawberry

It certainly looks fantastic...

But \$22...for a strawberry? Yet, remarkably, it appears some mug(s) are actually buying it!

Article from GrubStreet.com...

The Kotoka Strawberry comes from Japan....

And it does look rather tasty - but \$22...EACH? Come off it.

Now - here's the issue...

See, you don't JUST get the berry. You also get a nice little box. And some straw. And...some kind of foam 'doughnut' thingy that the strawberry 'sleeps' on... (Before it gets bitten in half...by you).

I mean - could they have sold this strawberry for \$22...if it was simply wrapped in CLINGFILM? I doubt it.

And that's my point for today...

How you package your items makes a big difference...

I see some online sellers who offer up their 'stuff' in placky-bags...and others who go the whole hog. Who can charge more? Alright, that much is obvious...

But don't get me wrong. I'm NOT saying you must go 'high-end'.

Far from it.

See - bargain basement sells too...

So, if you sell on the basis of: "We are cheap - we cut costs to bring you the lowest prices and best value" - then you better make sure you have some standard packaging.

Key is: be CONGRUENT. If you sell 'value', be value. If you sell over-priced strawberries, make sure you've got the luxury boxes, doughnuts and straw at hand, and ready to go. There's room for both.

As long as you're congruent with your overall theme!

The Unusual Arbitrageur

I have a product that does well on eBay.

I've sold over 2,000 units...at about a tenner each. Then, something weird happened...

We get an email one morning...

Someone had just bought the item. But the 'customer' asked us to ship the item to his friend...as a 'gift'.

Now, I know a bit about 'online arbitrage'... and this certainly seemed like what was going on.

I did some digging...

And sure enough: there was some 'arb-ing' going on after all...

But the way this seller was doing it was something I've not seen before. In short - he was listing MY eBay items at a higher price (as much as £10 more!), and simply selling them on eBay as well!

It's staggering that this works. But it does.

In short - let's say you're selling an item on eBay for £10. Someone else lists the same item.

But for £15.

If the item sells, then they ask YOU to ship it...to whoever just bought from them (at five pounds more). Cheeky?

I investigated further...

And this seller is doing this with other items, too. They aren't making a bomb. But they are selling about 60 items a month.

If they make £5-£10 on each, that ain't bad. And, I can see someone who REALLY knows what they are doing... maybe doing 10 times that.

Could you do this? Yes. The KEY is to focus on the very best- selling items. List them in a unique way.

Concentrate on items priced at £10+.

And add at least a fiver to the selling price.

A very interesting strategy, and one that is actually working for one savvy seller!

Can You Sell Rubbish Online?

Can you sell rubbish online...?

Yes, real rubbish.

And instead of being morally reprehensible, it could actually be profitable...

Here are six that could work:

1) Old Coat Hangers. Yes, I can see these selling - as long as they are in decent shape and you have enough of 'em (and they're the wooden ones, instead of the cheap plastic).

2) Empty loo and kitchen roll tubes. You'd need a fair few, but these are useful for arts/crafts projects.

3) Wine corks - after all, you can never find one when you need one.

4) Empty wine bottles.

5) Old jam jars. (Can definitely see those selling, especially if they are decent quality).

And finally...

6) Old after-shave bottles. This is a surprisingly hot market on eBay.

One question...

Could you advertise for these items, and then resell them, in your local community? You probably could 'flyer' your area and then source these kinds of items locally.

But it would be a lot of work for not much reward (you'd probably be best trying to get all the stuff for 'fre-e'...just by telling people you'll take it away for no charge).

Regardless of this, many of us have 'stuff' we no longer need - which is probably worth a few hundred quid when you resell it on eBay.

Looking for something to 'get you moving'? Then you could do worse than simply selling all that old consumer junk you no longer want, need or use.

The Broken Escalator Phenomenon

So there I was...

...standing in the middle of the famous 'Futian Market' in China (a few months back)...trying to get from the second to the third floor.

Aha!

An escalator...

But an escalator that was turned off. Never mind - it was still walkable.

And so... I put my foot on the first step of the 'turned off' escalator...

and...

...my head starting spinning. I felt dizzy and disorientated. Very weird.

Later, I found out why.

Believe it or not, there is actually something called "The Broken Escalator Phenomenon", or the "Walker Effect".

Simply put, your brain is used to stepping onto 'moving' escalators.

So, when you step on one that isn't moving...your brain over-corrects. You feel dizzy and disorientated. From Wikipedia - here's an explanation of what's going on:

"...parts of their brains still act on previous experience gained when it was moving, and so misjudge how to step onto it."

Key point is that the 'previous experience' you had...dictates what happens NOW... ...WITHOUT 'you' realising it, or having any part to play in it! In short, the brain is dictating what's happening to you, based on past experiences.

'You' have ZERO role.

Interesting, no? **So where am I going with this?**

In short, your unconscious can often be 'doing stuff' behind the scenes that you are not at all aware of. It doesn't take a genius to 'work out' how this phenomenon can work its way into all sorts of thing...

When it comes to selling online?

When you're looking at products to sell, you look with pre-conceived ideas about what you 'think' should sell (rather than what actually sells)...

When it comes to getting started, a bad experience 4 1/2 years ago (unrelated) puts you off...and leads to procrastination...

When it comes to getting started, your fear of doing something (or the brain's fear) ensures you make brews all day, instead of pushing forward...

Your fear of any kind of 'change'...means you do very little of, well, anything!

And so on...

It's hard to 'work out' your unconscious habit patterns. But there'll be there. Somewhere.

And chances are, they're stopping you doing the things you want, need or have to do.

A Mind Shift

It was an interesting evening...

Friday night, I met up with an old 'pal' of mine from London...

The 'meeting' was in Manchester.

So...we head out to a particular restaurant. A place I know all too well, A place which, to be totally honest, isn't really my cup of tea. In fact - I hate the place! Down there we go... (He wanted to go!).

And he starts telling me how great this particular place is. He starts 'mingling' with the crowd in there. And you know what? Suddenly - my thoughts about the place change. And I realise...it ain't that bad after all. In fact, it's pretty good!

What gives?

Surely it was the same place I usually go to? True. But one thing changed. The restaurant was, in truth, the same as it always has been.

So what changed? My perception of it! What my friend did...by coming with me to the restaurant, and looking at it with 'fresh eyes'....was change my own thoughts and perception about the place.

Soon enough, I was enjoying myself - *and 'seeing' that old place in a WHOLE NEW LIGHT.*

Interesting, isn't it? Just through a simple shift of perspective, you can overhaul your opinion of something.

What's today 'old hat' can be tomorrow's chocolate gateau with whipped cream - IF you can shift your perspective just a little.

Key is - often the 'shift' has to come from outside, in order for the 'inner' perceptual realisation to occur.

Alright...

So what on earth does this have to do with selling online?

Imagine this...

You're looking around for a product to sell, but haven't got started.

And you're always 'stumbling' across some obstacle or other. Heck, you're often on the verge of giving up and pursuing something else entirely!

Then, one day - you're lucky enough to meet up with a real-life entrepreneur....

He shows you what he does on a day-to-day basis. His office is alive with excitement... You see the orders coming in, and the parcels going out. You see 'mon-ee' coming in hand over fist. You see the entrepreneur doing what needs to be done - and it's WORKING!

What happens? You mind SHIFTS instantly.

Suddenly, you see this whole 'online thing' in a WHOLE NEW LIGHT! Why? You realise it CAN be done. And you realise it's not necessarily 'brain surgery'.

And then what happens! You go out there and do it yourself! See what happened here? By entering someone else's World, your own mind shifts.

And when your mind shifts, your OWN World changes. What previously seemed impossible...

Now seems not only possible - but inevitable!

Stuck in a rut? Then try and find someone else who sees things differently than you - and try and get access to THEIR World.

By doing so, you'll change your own World - and bust your way right out of that damn rut!

7 Things I Learned In China

Alright, with my bottom now safely back on UK shores...

Let me round up my recent China visit.

Yes...here are 7 things I learned in China!

1) China is still pretty much the BEST place to source virtually any product. Cambodia, Bangladesh and Vietnam are giving it a run for its money. But for most things online sellers are going to sell - China is still the place you'll want to source from.

2) WITHIN China...one good place to source goods (for online sellers) is Yiwu. It has the largest variety of products at the best prices. And, it doesn't have excessive 'minimum' order quantities.

The SECOND best place to source from is Guangzhou (this all depends on what you want to sell, of course).. Both these places have large 'markets' where anyone can source products.

3) The Canton Fair is a great place to visit...but it's not the best place to source products. If you've already got some product ideas in mind, and they are fairly 'mainstream' items, then it's worth a look. But for most of us, the better places are the Yiwu and Guangzhou markets.

4) If you come to China - get yourself a translator. It will make things a lot easier. It's practically impossible in most places to do any kind of 'negotiating' (or buying) without some form of help! Forget about using some 1.99 'translation' app on your phone. They don't work!

5) Most factories in China probably aren't as large as you think. Previously, I always thought that most of the factories I was buying from are LARGE. This time around, I met a superb contact. And he told me: many factories in China aren't much bigger than your house!

It's true. That doesn't really matter, but it means there are often a LOT of factories out there all working hard, and trying to get your business.

6) Alibaba can still be a great way to source products from China...

BUT: these days, you need to be more thorough with your research. Why? Many Alibaba 'sellers' are really just middle-men, sat in an office somewhere in a city in China. (Or maybe even outside of China!) They simply source the goods from a factory, then add their markup on top. This can make it more difficult for you to 'pwofit' yourself.

To get around this?

Make sure you get at least 3-5 quotes for any product you want to source. Do NOT buy from the first quote you get from Alibaba! Also consider using alternative sourcing sites. (GlobalSources, Made-In-China, etc).

7) The Chinese people's work ethic is off-the-charts. It's no wonder they've become so wealthy so quickly. 12-13 hour days are the norm...six days per week. They put us all to shame...especially me!

Alright, so now I'm back in the UK... things will get back to normal!

Be Unique, Different And Useful

Nuclear war...is here!

Alright, maybe not. Heck, these days with the media and politicians as they are...who the hell knows the truth?

Anyway, all this talk of missiles and Kim-whats-his-name...'forced' me to search eBay for... 'Nuclear Bunker'.

There are a few listings - but they are all books. It seems that no switched-on (?) entrepreneur has yet found a way to get involved in this niche.

But here's the thing...

There are 'survival kits' that are already selling well online.

Why does it sell? It's unique. It's different. It's useful (for its intended niche), and it's a good value.

You can't buy this down Tesco, that's for sure (and that's what you want – whatever you're selling online!). It looks the part, too.

All these factors are important when it comes to creating a saleable online product.

One tip here...

This is actually being sold by a Chinese seller. So, a savvy UK marketer could come in...and arguably do a better job (certainly - they would have a better description, and would be able to ship more quickly!)

PRO TIP: Any time you see a Chinese seller doing well, like here...ask yourself why you can't sell something similar - but only better, and faster!

So yes...the survival niche is alive and well. And now that Trump and Kim are in power... and likely will be for some time...I'm sure this niche will only grow from here.

Unless, of course, we're all blown to bits!

Add Action Shots Please

So last week I finally spoke to a 'colleague' of mine I have worked with for years...

You know...that's the 'weird' thing about today's online biz scene...you can work with people for years - and literally NEVER speak to them! (Same with customers!)

Anyway, the 'man' in question is a designer I've used for years for various projects.

And last week - we finally actually SPOKE to each other! A fine-change in today's World!

We were discussing something new I've been working on...

Anyway, Rob - my contact - told me 'we should do some photographs of this product IN ACTION'. And he was right.

Now, if you sell on eBay and Amazon... you are supposed to photograph your item on a white background.

And, of course...I'd recommend you do that. (Personally, I take my photos on my iPhone and then use a site like fiverr.com to get the background removed.)

But back to my conversation with Rob... he mentioned how I should use other photos as well...of the product in various 'scenarios'. At first - I 'ummed-and-ahhed'. Do we really need these? Rob convinced me.

And here's the thing...

If you look online these days, these kinds of 'action' shots are getting more and more popular. Now, with your images on Amazon... you get about five photos that you can upload.

So, let's say you're selling a car dash camera...

Firstly - you have an image of the product itself, with a white background behind it for your main shot. Then - maybe you have a photo of it on a car dashboard. Then another image of it 'filming' something from the car.

Then...another image of someone playing back the footage on a laptop...and so on.

I've never really bothered doing this. But, I think it's getting more and more important to do this. Fortunately - it's not that hard to do.

If you've got a decent mobile phone, the camera on there should be sufficient. Take some shots...and you can then use fiverr.com to get someone to make it all look pretty. (Remove backgrounds, sharpen up the image, etc.)

You can also then use these shots within your eBay description, as well as with your Amazon listing photos. Very nice!

Action shots...one (for me at least) to make a note of for the future!

Which Of These Is Correct?

I don't really read 'self-improvement' books...

I did when I was younger, but not any more. BUT: I still like some of the stuff the 'Yanks' talk about...

Tony Robbins? I'm sure you've heard of him. Although I don't read his stuff regularly, he sent out an email recently that impressed me.

It was all about what story you chose to focus on, when it comes to the things that happen to you...

For example...

You get adopted as child. You could look it as "My parents didn't love me!" OR - you could look at it as "My adopted parents loved me, so they adopted me!"

Same event. But a totally different outlook. Alright, so it's a bit 'American', but it's far better to look on the positives. Right?

Now, let's turn to our 'speciality' of selling products online...

You test out a product...

And it doesn't sell. Which of these is correct?

1) Selling online doesn't work.

2) I just learned some valuable information - namely, that this product, sold in the way I tried to sell it, does not sell. Now I'm one step closer to working out how selling online DOES work...

With option 2), you have now eliminated one 'way' of selling online that doesn't work - meaning you're getting closer to one that does! I realise it may sound a little 'Polly-ann-ish', but it's worth trying to frame things this way.

Of course, there are limits! If your ship your goods by sea, and the ship sinks on the way here, I'm not sure telling yourself "It's fine, I lost a fortune, but now the fish have a brand-new, interesting reef to play with!" is going to cut it.

Still, MOST of us, MOST of the time, look at events in a negative way - when it's just as easy to look at them in a 'positive' way.

And as you get older, I think this 'phenomenon' gets more and more pronounced.

Maybe you're the same?

Georgie Gets Served As My Dinner

Alright, the Canton Fair starts up again today...

It's actually done in three phases - split across two weeks. It's so big they have to do it that way. So you have certain categories of products in 'Phase 1'...different categories of products in 'Phase 2'...and so on.

Today, the third 'phase' starts (I deliberately missed phase 1 - as I didn't see many categories of interest).

I'll be sending you some updates on these 'Phase 3' products as the week goes on...

In the meantime: Chinese food shocker!

Every time I go to China, I struggle with the food... Or, rather, my rear-end struggles. This time, so far, I've not been doing that badly...

Here's one 'sample' of what I was munching down on the other day (picture of bowl of Chicken's Feet').

Not exactly what you'd get at the local Beefeater - but not bad by 'China' standards.

(Although to be fair, when 'it' arrived... I didn't know whether to eat it, or wave at it. It just kind of 'floated' up to the surface of the soup...)

The bad news: there was hardly any meat on the damn thing. So, unsatisfied with the 'soup', I had no choice but to try and find a new restaurant...

Walked down the block a bit... And found a new place.

From the outside, it looked promising enough...

The staff were welcoming, the menu looked substantial - and there was a full house of seemingly-satisfied eaters. Wonderful! My rear-end would undoubtedly thank me later.

And then I opened the menu...

Here's what greeted me:



Oh geez. Was that George? I mean...my pet tortoise from the late 80s? It certainly looked like him. And so off to McDonald's I went...

I'm back at the fair today, and will send you some further updates soon!

A £5M Amazon Growth Secret

Recently, I met up with a former nightclub bouncer, turned Amazon seller. And as we got talking, he mentioned something important...

(I'll get to that in just a moment).

Now, if you use Amazon and their 'FBA' service (where Amazon send your parcels for you), you DO get plenty of free time...

Simply because they handle all the grunt-work. And? Well, what to do...if you're an Amazon seller...who doesn't have that much to do every day?

Well, your REAL 'work' is really then all about finding new products to sell.

Back to my discussion with 'Da Bouncer'...

He mentioned his 'growth strategy' for Amazon. And it's simply this: Find more products to sell! It sounds incredibly simple and basic. But he's absolutely right. To 'grow' an Amazon...or eBay...business... *you simply find more products to sell.*

This is a powerful and incredibly simple (obvious?) way to grow any business.

Everyday, countless 'searches' are made by consumers on these two sites.

These 'searches' are for all sorts of different products.

Kites. Underwear. Fake noses. And so on.

There are tens of thousands...or hundreds of thousands...of different products...which people search for every single day.

To expand your biz, you simply need to 'appear' more often...when people search for these different things.

In short - if you want to 'grow', you sell more products to more people.

Of course, to start with, you might be best off selling 'more products' which are closely related to your original products (those which are already selling well).

But the number of markets which you can sell into are almost innumerable.

Want to EXPAND? Simply sell more products - in your existing niches, or in new ones.

It's the most simple growth strategy. But it can't really fail!

The Great British Market

The Great British Market...

A lot of Brits shop there...

But here's the thing...

As you'd expect, the rise of the online retailers, and the supermarkets, has led to their decline.

According to the National Association of British Market Authorities, from 2009 to 2016, the number of market traders almost halved. Now, many markets are shrinking or closing up shop entirely.

The BBC recently did a piece on Leeds market and the traders who sell on there. And who's still 'alive and kicking'?

Which traders are still surviving?

Unsurprisingly, it's the ones who do something a bit different.

The people selling unusual fish, or some unusual food-type. The people selling unique products of some sort. And the ones who are 'going under'?

They are the people who are competing head-on with the supermarkets and online retailers.

People might complain about this. They might say "It's a shame because it's so historical. We want to keep our markets!" But it's not true.

Why not? Because even though you might want to keep it, if people aren't prepared to buy from there, the markets don't deserve to stay.

I know this may sound harsh. But it's the truth.

Just because a handful of people 'want 'em to stay!' doesn't mean they should.

Simply put, if any given market 'should' stay, then a SUFFICIENT number of people should show they want it to stay, by shopping there (rather than from online retailers and supermarkets!).

It's simply NOT good enough to throw tax-payer mon-ee at it...just because a select group of people 'want it to stay'. If they want it to stay - shop there!

And if not enough people are shopping there to make it pay - tough. It shows us that the 'market' - as a whole - does not want THE market (stalls) to stick around.

I may 'want to 'av a Rolls Royce for a quid', but willing it doesn't make it so!

If I don't get it for a quid, do I 'demand' that Rolls Royce drop their prices? Of course not. I can't go around demanding what I want simply because it feels good. It should be left to market forces.

Now, what does this have to do with you?

Well, apart from possibly changing where you buy your cucumbers, it relates to ANY product you are thinking of selling...

It's easy to get 'emotionally involved' with a product. (And that's often especially so if you're 'passionate' about a niche...and try to create 'something better'). But it's cobblers.

You should look at products as mere 'market signals'. If the market starts buying, it's a signal to start selling more and more of that product.

If it doesn't sell, you should see that as a 'stop' signal and move on. If you start to get 'wishy-washy' about products (like some people with markets), you can end up losing mon-ee hand-over-fist.

Simply put: if it doesn't sell (and, usually, that means selling quickly) - drop it. And if it starts selling, keep selling more of the same.

There are literally mill-yuns of products and markets out there. And the market as a whole will signal to you which you should drop, and which you should pursue.

Life is too short to get 'stuck' on any single one!

Warren Buffett's Best Strategy

Last week, I mentioned Warren Buffett - the World's most successful investor, and one of the most 'waddled' men in the World.

Well, since then, I've been somewhat addicted to watching videos about him...on YouTube. (Highly recommended. Simply search for 'Warren Buffett' on YouTube).

He comes across as a great guy, as you'll see for yourself. Heck, he still drinks coke and has McDonald's on his way to work! My 'Buffett' addiction (much easier on the waistline than a 'buffet' addiction) has been paying dividends when it comes to insights for selling stuff online.

Here's something interesting about Buffett...

He owns 80 companies (or parts of 80).

And MOST of them sell what you might call 'slam dunk' products.

In short, products which basically cannot NOT sell... products which are never going to go out of fashion. Basically, GUARANTEED mon-ee-makers.

Examples?

GEICO - insurance (when will we stop needing insurance?)

Pampered Chef - cooking equipment. NOT likely we'll stop using this!

See's Candies - chocolate gifts. Enough said!

H.H. Brown Shoe Company - when will we stop wearing shoes?

Nebraska Furniture Mart - a huge local furniture retailer with practically zero competition.

Benjamin Moore & Co - paint retailer.

Notice anything similar about these? They all sell products which we simply cannot go without. In short, these companies sell products which will still be selling 100 years from now.

What's more - the companies Buffett invests in are the LEADERS in these industries...meaning they are still likely to be 'at the top' 100 years from now.

THIS is how to invest...

And the same kind of thing applies when you think of products to sell online...

Let me twist this a bit, however...

You see, as an online seller, I don't recommend you just 'copy Buffett' and start selling paint and shoes.

But what I AM recommending...

...is that you should be selling 'slam dunk' products. You want products with a HIGH probability of being 'wanted'. Chocolates. Products that improve your garden. Pain relief products.

Products to help you slim down. Products which make cooking EASIER. See the theme?

They are all products which are 'slam dunks'... products that people WILL ALWAYS buy.

They will buy them today.

They will buy them in 2027.

And they'll be buying them in 2127. Go for slam dunk markets and products.

You'll be in good (profitable) company if you do!

Don't Sell Blah

The Body Shop...

We've all heard of it.

But since most of my readers are male...

I doubt many of us have actually bought from there (regularly at least - Christmas doesn't count!). L'Oreal (the makeup giants) bought 'The Body Shop' back about 10 years ago...and are now trying to sell it.

They recently stated they were... "to explore all strategic options regarding The Body Shop's ownership". Sales are down. And something has gone wrong.

But what? Well, no-one knows for sure. But in my opinion?

It's a bit of a BLAH place these days...

In short, it doesn't seem to do anything particularly well.

Originally, wasn't it meant to be the 'ethical' place to buy cosmetics? But now, it doesn't seem to fit into any particular profile.

If you want 'cool' cosmetics, you go to 'Lush' (that high-street store with the outrageously coloured soaps etc.). If you want great value, you probably go to Boots. And if you want a broad selection...you go to Amazon, or another online specialist.

In short, The Body Shop has no real 'position' in the market.

It doesn't target any particular shopper...and doesn't have anything particularly special to offer.

Now, a particularly important part of selling anything...is to know what makes you different - and why people should choose YOUR product, over your competition.

In short...

Why should I buy YOUR product...rather than buy your competition's product?

It's a very important question to ask. Let's say you're thinking of selling a frying pan online. You know there's a 'market' there for this product. Mill-yuns of such pans are sold every year.

So you know people are buying.

But what you don't want to do...is simply sell ANOTHER frying pan. You don't want to open just another 'Body Shop'.

Instead, ask yourself:

"If someone is looking to buy a frying pan...why should they choose MY pan...over the rest of the pack?" (Simply replace the word 'pan' above with whatever product you're selling).

It's a very important question to ask IF your market is saturated (naturally, if you are the only one selling frying pans in the country...you won't need to answer this question. Lucky you!).

Maybe your frying pan will be non-stick... or coated with something to lock in flavour... or made from a certain material that lasts 100 years.

Point is: you'll do better if you've got an answer to the above question.

I'll repeat the question again here:

"If someone is looking to buy a frying pan...why should they choose MY pan...over the rest of the pack?"

Replace 'pan' with your niche product.

And answer this question. It's important!

Random Words For Big Ideas

So there I was...

...stuck for a name for a new product I'm supposed to be selling...

And I was FROZEN. Couldn't get the brain into gear at all. What to do? Well, can't remember where it came from...but I thought to myself:

"Why not just create some random words...to see if they give me some ideas?" And that's what I did. How? I went to Google...and found this site:

www.randomwordgenerator.com

(There are loads of similar sites if you look).

Going back to the site above...

It has a few options available to you, but I didn't use 'em.

I simply pushed the button "Generate Random Words", and it starts to churn out words. Keep hitting it...and it will keep churning 'em out!

So, what is this good for?

Product names.

Brand name ideas.

Headlines for your descriptions.

Heck, it can even help you think of product ideas...

For example: I just hit the 'random' button and got 'Mars' as the word.

How could you use this for product ideas? Telescopes? Night vision scopes? If you're sat staring at Google Chrome (or, worse - Internet Explorer), and can't get your brain in gear...

Try a random word. You never know where it will take ya!

Easy Way To Find Your Best Customer

Launching a new product in a new market? Then one of the tricky things is knowing WHO your customer is.

Selling a knife sharpener? Is the customer an old...young...or 'middle- aged' woman?

Or is it a MAN?

If you're new to it all, it can be a bit puzzling....

But here's the thing: It's good to know exactly who you are selling to.

Much better than...NOT knowing! How to do it? Simple! Go to Amazon.

Look at the reviews... AND THEN - look at the NAMES of the people who leave reviews. I did this myself, just recently.

The product in question is a beauty product.

But who is buying? Young women? Middle-aged women? Older women? I checked the reviews of similar products.

Then, I looked at the NAMES of the reviewers.

Shirley. Barbara.

Heck, there was even a Doris sandwiched in there...

So, now I know - it's an older woman.

That means I can tailor my message to the right person. Valuable info!

Best of all, this 'market research' is absolutely f-r-e-e. The 'process' only takes minutes and can be done by anyone!

Jim Climbs The Mountain

Jim had to get to the top of the mountain...

In front of him, there was a vast wall of steps, heading high up into the clouds... "Oh well" he said - "Didn't the Chinese say a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step!?"

Still, the steps were simple and straightforward enough.

You put one leg up...then brought your other leg up from behind you...and so on, in rather rapid succession. This was called 'walking'.

"It can't be so hard" said Jim...I just follow the steps... 'step-by-step' - and I'll get to the top of the mountain!" Jim had recently received a letter through the post, which gave him precise, "step-by-step" instructions as to how to climb this particular mountain.

This letter told me how to get from the bottom of the mountain to the top...in a 'step-by-step' fashion. The letter explained how you just to follow the steps, raising one leg after the other in fairly rapid succession.

But there was a problem.

As he climbed the mountain, a variety of obstacles crossed Jim's path.

Firstly, there was a large, creamy banana skin - something that he could have easily slipped on. This first obstacle was a shock to Jim. He assumed the steps would be free and clear.

Secondly, there was a step covered by ice.

Further up, there was a man sat on one of the steps who made it very difficult to pass. Jim went back and re-read the letter he had got through the post.

"This thing said it was 'step-by-step'!" Jim carried on.

Nearer the top of the mountain, things got even trickier. There was a troll, an officer from some sort of government agency, and a cup.

But sure enough, Jim made it. At the top, there was a man to greet him.

"You made it, Jim! Yes, there were some obstacles. But did you really expect a journey to the top of the mountain to be entirely free of obstacles? Where would be the fun in that? And if it was completely clear - this place would be over-crowded."

The genie went on...

"Many start, but a lot give up when they see the banana skin. Then, still more of 'em give up when they see the ice... And if they are not finished by then, the other obstacles finish 'em off usually does the rest."

Jim laughed and admired the view.

‘The Hulk’s’ Secret

Possibly my all-time favourite comic character... HULK! Not something (or someone) you would expect me to talk about in these emails.

But here's the interesting thing about HULK...

Did you know?

My brother mentioned the other day that the HULK wasn't really an original character... In fact, his creator - Stan Lee - took his inspiration from two other characters... Frankenstein And: Jekyll and Hyde.

He kind of 'merged' together the two characters to create the HULK.

(As you can work out...the green came from Frankenstein and the 'changing' character came from Jekyll and Hyde).

But it doesn't stop there...

Stan Lee also knew that the most popular character in the 'Fantastic Four' was THE THING...that big, monstrous orange almost-jigsaw-like beast.

And so - the HULK was born (he didn't really come from gamma radiation?)

Alright...so what does this have to do with selling online?

Well, nothing directly - but it does have a fair bit to do with developing products. Why?

Firstly - because one of the most popular (and biggest grossing) 'characters' of all-time was a mish-mash of other characters.

And secondly, as such, he wasn't even an original idea...

And this relates to developing a product YOU can sell online.

Does it have to be original? Nope. In fact, arguably you are much better off trying to develop something based off the back of something that is already doing well...

And even better if you can COMBINE two 'already good ideas' into one killer product.

Maybe you see that cycling gloves are 'hot'. And you also see that some other material is selling well in another, different market... let's just say 'memory foam'. You then COMBINE these two (non-original) ideas...into one 'new' product.

But is it new? Nope.

Just as the HULK was a combination of two existing ideas...our memory foam cycling gloves aren't really 'new'...or maybe they are.

(By the way: I'm using 'memory foam' gloves as an example....a bad one!).

Fact is, HULK is one of the biggest 'sellers' of all time.

So...

What two ideas can you combine?

The 'Breakthrough' Flashlight!

I was 'harmlessly' browsing the Web on my mobile telephone...

And what do you know? An advert appeared that went something like this: *"Breakthrough flashlight for Manchester residents takes market by storm!"*

Manchester flashlight? Alright, so I work in marketing, so I realised what was going on... ...the 'advertiser' was using my mobile phone's location to target its adverts. So I clicked through.

Then comes the *big spiel* on how this flashlight is the dogs-whatsits...and how my life will be forever changed if I use it.

Not a bad product to be fair. And not a bad advert, either.

But here's the thing...

These flashlights are big sellers on both eBay and Amazon. And...all this advertising is doing...is selling a product that is ALREADY HOT... in 'other ways'.

The advert states that they are selling 20,000 per month! Whether that's true, I don't know. But it wouldn't surprise me if it was.

Here's my point: Every entrepreneur doing 'decent' numbers on eBay and Amazon soon comes to realise there is a whole other World out there.

And, it's a World where you can sell MORE than you can on eBay and Amazon.

What is this World? Planet Earth! In short, by advertising 'elsewhere', you can reach many, many more people....than you can just by using 'E and A'...

Google. Facebook. Instagram. YouTube.

And don't even get me started on retail!

Alright, so how does this affect you?

Well, for 99% of people, it probably doesn't. You're best off sticking with eBay and Amazon. And forgetting the rest.

But - you'd probably struggle to sell 20K of anything (in terms of number of units) on eBay and Amazon - if you're talking about ONE product.

To hit those kinds of numbers, for a single product, you have to cast the net wider.

But anyone doing decent 'numbers' for a single product....should, at some point, think about selling that product in 'other ways'.

By doing so...well, you'll only increase your 'pwofits'. After all, you've already proven it 'sells'; now you merely have to get more eyeballs on the proven winner.

And these days, there are plenty of ways of doing that. "expands market of their fly fishing reel by advertising in many more ways to change their life FOREVER!"

Zara's Biggest Success Secret

The World's wealthiest 'geezer'? Is no longer Bill Gates. Nor Warren Buffett. Nor that Mexican guy that no-one has heard of.

No...it is now... Amancio Ortega.

One of my all-time favourite entrepreneurs.

Never heard of him? He's the owner of the massively successful ZARA chain of fashion/home stores

Now, although there was a lot that went 'into' building his rather sizeable fortune (and that's putting it mildly!), there was one thing that I really 'stole' from him a few years ago.

It relates to the way ZARA (his clothing store) sells and markets its clothes.

You see, unlike most fashion retailers... they don't create their merchandise months in advance...then hope people will buy. Nope.

The genius of Zara was that they found a way TO RAPIDLY TEST WHAT PEOPLE WANTED TO BUY.

Then, WHEN they found that out...when they KNEW what people were 'biting' on...through 'live' testing in their shops...they would produce more of the 'winners'...and drop the 'losers'.

It's a simple, but brilliant strategy.

Fail super-fast.

And rely only on what the market tells you it wants. I do the same online...and I highly recommend the same for you.

Take 10 products....

Buy one sample of each.

Throw 'em up for sale. See which sell...and which bomb.

Then - simply continue with the 'winners'... and drop the losers like you'd drop a Ryanair sandwich.

In Ortega's case, he found a way to very quickly test products, getting 'real-time' market feedback. It's a perfect model of 'giving people what they want'. He did. In real-time. For millions of different clothing products!

The lesson? Simple...

Test lots of products SMALL. Find out what works - what sells - 'on the cheap'. Drop the losers. Then keep running with the winners.

It's the ultimate strategy. And it's simple. Done right, it is absolutely infallible.

A GUARANTEED 'mon-ee-maker'.

Absolutely. It worked for one guy.

Apparently...he is now so wealthy, he food shops EVERY DAY at Waitrose!

Don't Sell Boat Trips On The Beach

Unbeknownst to my dearest subscribers (yeah, that includes you)...

...your editor is currently still on an extended bank-holiday break.

Where? In Spain...

I've been writing these emails all the same, and generally doing the odd bit of work...here and there.

And, I'll be back soon enough.

But in the meantime, let me relate something I've just seen. It's a series of businesses... all crammed next to each other... on the sea-front.

They are all offering the same product/service. Which is? A boat trip.

The same trip, and probably 'done' with very similar boats.

And...they all have the same prices! So, how on earth do you get any business?

Why should anyone choose your trip over any other? Now, perhaps you can see where I'm going with this...

You see, you can say the same thing about certain products/markets online.

Let's call 'em 'boat trip markets'...

How many sellers of black scarves are there on eBay, for example? Tons.

So why buy a black scarf from YOU on eBay...when there are 101 other sellers with practically the SAME product?

(You can simply replace 'black scarf' with a lot of different products...and you can see my point). Everyone offering the same thing! At the same price!

What to do?

It's really simple to get around this...

You see, I have an infallible secret to completely destroy this problem. Not only does it destroy it...but it STAYS destroyed! So how do we do it? Simple!

You simply don't enter these kinds of markets at all!

That's right. So, in the case of the boat trip businesses...you do NOT start a boat trip business!

You sell something else on the beach- front.

Maybe...I dunno know...carrot-oil massages that make you go even browner than brown. And - this is the key - it's 'something else' which is HARD to copy. Hard to duplicate. Do that...and the problem goes away.

Sell something unique. Which is hard to duplicate. Something specific to you...which only YOU sell.

- you don't have to worry about a rival boat trip opening next door. Because even someone comes in with a 'knock-off' product, it still won't be exactly the same.

And that's what you want - because what YOU sell...is then ONLY available from YOU.

So if someone wants to buy...where do they have to buy? From you! Comprene?

Market Preferences, Not Personal Preferences

And so the football season is upon us! Love it or loathe it, the mon-ee in 'the game' is now off-the-charts...

And, I can only see the figures increasing! And why? Simple: because the market is prepared to pay!

You'll hear many people complain about how footballers are over-paid...

Yet when so many people are prepared to pay to watch them...live...and on TV...and because so many people want to pay for the goods they are associated with... ..their wages are actually fair. Why?

Simply because the 'market' is prepared to pay these sums...in one way or the other.

Now...a common complaint I often hear from customers goes something like this (non-football related!):

"I don't LIKE XYZ product that you have featured/told me about/emailed about". We publish a number of newsletters that feature 'hot products' in some form...as I'm sure you know. Yet people sometimes state they don't 'like' the products in them.

LIKE? This is an error. Why? Because people are taking PERSONAL preferences over MARKET preferences!

In short, what you 'like' (or don't like)...what you 'want to sell'...are largely irrelevant. What really counts - what only counts - is what the market wants to buy. That's why your 'likes' don't count...

I'll repeat: What counts is what the large majority of people in your market LIKE...not you!

Anyone selling online should have this permanently inscribed above their desk...or, preferably, into their forehead (so it's easily seen each time one looks in the mirror).

Are you taking your PERSONAL preferences to be more important than MARKET preferences? It's a common mistake, and often a fatal one...

Can't wait to get my season ticket this year. Just £10K - for a seat at the pie van at the back of the stands!

Check The 1-Stars

What's one of the great things about Amazon? The reviews...

But what about BAD reviews? What if someone leaves a review on your product...which is patently and obviously wrong?

What can you do? This kind of thing - a 'bad' and unfair review - can kill your product in an instant. ESPECIALLY if it's a new product with zero reviews.

But here's the thing...

You can actually learn a lot from the reviews left on Amazon products. What can you learn from an Amazon product review(s)? A lot!

And this applies whether you sell on eBay, Amazon, or simply from your own website...

Simply put, this can help you understand the mind of your customer!

Let's say you're selling some garden pruning tools...

Yet, your knowledge of pruning is limited. And, you hate gardening. No problem. Grab a piece of paper. Then find the best-selling items in this niche...

Then, 'comb' through the reviews...and see what the 5-star reviews have in common.

What are people saying they really like about the product? Done that? Fine.

Now, check the 1-star reviews.

What are these people saying they DISlike about the product? Do this, make notes...and before you know it, you'll have everything you need.

Everything you need to both SOURCE a product for that niche...(because now you know what people really want)...

And, everything you need to write great sales copy for that niche.

Alright...over to you...

The Hand-Made Niche Can Be A Winner

I was talking to my brother the other day about you can can pick up a great HAND-MADE leather diary on eBay. (A nice unique product).

Now, I realise you've probably never shopped for a hand-made leather diary on eBay...but stick with me here!

Yes, you can get some beautiful leather diaries, hand-made, and with thick parchment-like pages. It's a product you would STRUGGLE to find in the shops. (Or on any other online shopping site).

But this is the kind of thing that eBay is great for...

...unique and interesting products - that you struggle to find elsewhere! Right? OK, so we all know this.

But going back to our leather diary...

I noticed something interesting in the descriptions selling these things. Because they say something like... "Hand-made in the UK!" Yes, these things are being made in the UK, with real leather...and by hand. (They ain't cheap either - you can pay up to £70 for one).

And that brings me onto today's point...

Hand-making stuff!

Now, mostly people will simply poo- poo this idea....

Maybe they'll consider it to be too difficult...or too time-consuming.

But for the right person, this could be a great opportunity.

Quick 'real-life' example for ya'...

Our leather diary guys...if they sell 10 of these a week...at £70 each...well, you can do the maths yourself. Not bad, right?

But here's the thing...

If you want to 'tackle' the whole hand-made opportunity, it really must be in a niche you enjoy. I can't say exactly what to sell, because there's lots of options.

Basically, the opportunity is simple: you 'hand-make' a product. Then you sell it. Heck, you could even make 'em 'on demand' as the orders came in (meaning little stock required). Leather diaries, meditation benches, and engraved wedding gifts. (Three really quick ideas off the top of my noggin!)

If you have the skill for a 'trade' of some sort, then this is definitely an opportunity.

And even if you don't...chances are you know someone (or can FIND someone) with some sort of manual skill. It could be anything. As long as people are buying it!

A neglected, but absolutely viable opportunity this one... But not for everyone! Then again - is there any such thing as an 'opportunity for everyone'?

20 New Products Launched – How Many Won?

Last month, I launched a whopping 20 new products.





Some of those have started to sell...

But a lot of them also didn't sell.

Some of the products I've already dropped.

Why? Well, it's OK if a product sells, but if it's selling hardly anything at all (maybe one a week), then I will drop it.

That means we're left with around 6 'winners' from the 20 or so that were launched...

<input type="checkbox"/>	Respond to questions		Nerve Pain Neuropathy Supplement - with ALA, B6, Magnesium and More Relief Diabetes (3 variations)	4 recommend... Add recommended	£8.95 to £29.95 Buy it now	2,970	116	Eligible Add multi-buy	Promoted Your ad rate 12.3% Suggested ad rate 7.5% Edit promoted listing	4	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Edit		Dog Muscle Monstas Weight Gain Builder Food Supplement UK Seller (3 variations)	2 recommend... Add recommended	£19.95 to £44.95 Buy it now	29,984	238	Eligible Add multi-buy	Promoted Your ad rate 12.3% Suggested ad rate 6.3% Edit promoted listing	0	16
<input type="checkbox"/>	Edit		Electrolyte Tablets For Hydration, Keto With Added Vitamin C, Cystine No Powder (3 variations)	5 recommend... Add recommended	£6.99 to £14.99 Buy it now	29,995	71	Eligible Add multi-buy	Promoted Your ad rate 8% Suggested ad rate 7.5% Edit promoted listing	0	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	Edit		High-Strength Zinc Bisglycinate (Chelated) Vegan Tablets 25mg Premium Zinc (3 variations)	3 recommend... Add recommended	£4.99 to £12.99 Buy it now	29,994	58	Eligible Add multi-buy	Promoted Your ad rate 12.3% Suggested ad rate 9.5% Edit promoted listing	0	1

That's, what, a 30% win rate?

Which I'm very happy with!

Remember: winners can run and make money for years to come. And losers don't cost you very much to try.

I've got products I'm been selling non-stop for EIGHT years!

And they are still producing a monthly income.

OK, now a really important point...

What was it that made the difference with these products?

I mean...why did the winners win and the losers LOSE?

This is a big, fat, important question.

The new neuropathy supplement was a winner. So was the dog supplement. But why did these products win?

Why did they sell?

And why did something like the lion's mane mushroom NOT sell very well?

Why weren't there 18 winners or 18 losers?

Is there really a perfect answer?

I don't think there is.

And that's why you have to test out different things to see how they go.

But I will offer some suggestions now as to why these have won and why the others failed.

The biggest reason why the winners 'won', in my opinion, is simply this: **the winners are all unique.**

For example: the electrolyte tablets. Well, they've got added vitamin C, which a lot of electrolyte tablets don't have. So it's unique.

The zinc product here is a zinc *bisglycinate*, which is a premium form of zinc. Again, there's not that many of them.

The nerve pain product...well, there aren't many nerve pain products on the market, are there? Again, it's a unique product.

So really this is a common thread that runs through these; these products are unique. In marketing parlance they have a 'USP' (Unique Selling Proposition).

Here's something else...

When it comes to the losing products...

I wrote off 12 of the products quite early. Why?

Well, I'm doing this as a full-time business. That means I have to have things that really work well. But here's the thing...

What I *should* have done was try different titles, different variations, maybe different images, different branding, just to see if I could get those 'losers' going. But like I said, I didn't have time. So I just threw them away.

You know, a lot of people launch a product on eBay with a certain title, and then it doesn't sell.

But if you have a certain title and it doesn't sell, you should **always try and list it again with a new title. Often, you can find it then does actually sell after all.** A lot of people don't do that. And if they just changed the title a bit, they might do a lot better.

I should try and experiment with different titles to see how they go as well.

Let's look at an overview of the account now...

Our sales on this account are now hovering around £13K a month...

Join eBay Academy and get set up for selling success

Choose from a range of free online courses designed to help you build and grow your brand. [Learn more](#)

Unread messages

5

Awaiting dispatch

12

Sales (31 days)

£12,944.15

Predicted seller level

Top Rated

Tasks

[Print labels and post](#)

12

[Post within 24 hours](#)

5

[Read unread messages from eBay members](#)

2

Suggested actions

[Add recommended item specifics](#)

15

[Respond to item not received case](#)

2*

[Finish setting up your Shop to help improve conversion](#)

6

Sales



Today

£325.12

Last 7 days

£2,955.96

Last 31 days

▲ 12.6% £12,944.15

Last 90 days

£34,167.70

The last 90 days we did £34K, so if you work it all out...that means our sales are up about 20% in the last month or so (compared with the average of the last 90 days). The reason for that increase is simple...

Simply because of I've added NEW products!

This just shows the power of adding new products.

Fact is, adding new products is really the main way to grow an eBay business (or Amazon business or any other business).

In truth, there are only a few ways you can grow any business...

Jay Abraham is a marketing guru from the USA. And he says that there are actually only three ways to grow any business.

The first way is to simply get more customers.

Secondly, you can add more products...

And thirdly...you can increase the amount of money you get from each customer.

But with online marketplaces...it's a bit different.

When it comes to online marketplaces...really the only way to increase sales or grow businesses is to **add new products**.

Sure, you can do things like increasing conversion rates. But that doesn't necessarily make that much difference.

You can maybe increase the average order value (the amount you get per customer by offering bulk deals).

But the real needle mover is adding new products

Let's say you're an online seller whose turnover is £600/month. And you're thinking, "How do I get to £6,000 pound a month?" The simple answer is to have 10 times as many products!

This is the main thing with marketplace selling.

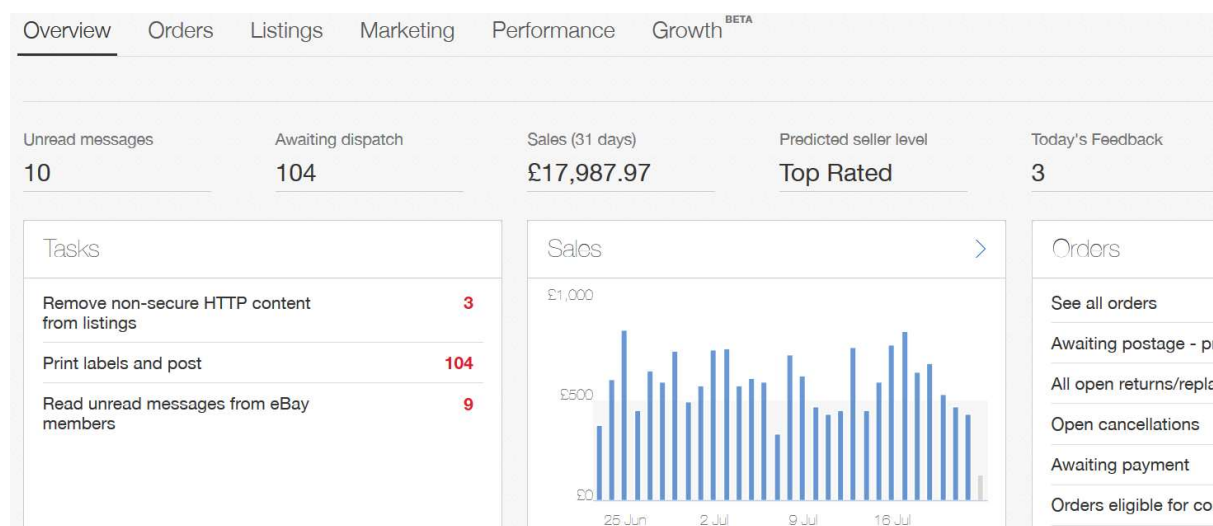
Now, if you are looking at other types of selling - say selling through your own website - it's a different kettle of fish.

With your own website, you can use things like email marketing, better advertising, more product promotions to old customers...there are more leverage points. Whereas if you're just selling with a marketplace, you don't have as many opportunities to grow your business – other than adding new products!

More On Launching New Products

So I'm sitting here looking at my eBay sales. We have a couple of different eBay accounts. The main one, on which we're selling supplements, had sales of about **£13,500 last month...**

But here's the thing...this month, sales have gone up to **£17,987.97**. That's a significant rise of about 30%! Moreover, in the next few weeks, I expect that figure to rise to £20k. That's a huge rise; about 50% in only 8 weeks!



So how on earth have I done this?

The 80-20 Rule...

Well, it comes down to testing...and testing a lot of *different products*. That's what I'd like to talk about now...

I can tell you exactly how many products I tested, how many worked, and how many failed.

I launched 14 NEW products on this account, over about a month's time. That actually requires quite a lot of effort. Plus, I've got other things to do. So I wasn't doing this full time.

I had 6 failures and 8 winners.

Keep in mind that "winner" is subjective, of course. We'll define it as anything that sold more than 5 units. That's about 57% of products tested that ended up being winning products.

That means nearly half of the products I launched **actually failed!** And that's coming from someone who has a ton of experience with eBay and selling online!

Someone else might expect to only get a 25% success rate. So if you try out 4 products, only 1 might end up being a success.

Of course, it's also possible that you try out 6 products and none of them end up working out. But that could just mean that products #7 and #8 that you try might end up being winners for you (and that still brings you to a 25% success rate).

That's a key thing with online selling. Really, that's the case with any kind of selling...be it online or on the phone or even door-to-door. That's even the case with dating! You could go through 10 prospects and nothing works out, and then the next few do.

This is a critical point for you to keep in mind. You could easily try 4 products that don't work out. But it might be the 5th one that will prove to be a winner.

The other thing to keep in mind is the variance across those products we consider "winners."

If I take a look at the 8 products I considered winners, they brought in about 50 total sales yesterday. I'm going to try to get that up to 60-70 daily sales. But within all those products, there are only **two products** that are actually doing all the heavy lifting. So 2 out of 8 are bringing in the biggest sales!

It's the Pareto Principle (also known as the 80-20 rule) on display. 80% of your profits are likely going to come from the top 20% of your products.

So what are these products?


One that I haven't actually fully launched yet, but am projecting will do *extremely* well based on early testing, is **apple cider vinegar**.

This will be in capsule form, however, rather than the liquid. If you've ever tasted the actual liquid, it's pretty disgusting (at least I think so). But the capsules are easy to take.

This is the kind of product I mean (from **hollandandbarrett.com**).

Holland & Barrett Apple Cider Vinegar 400 Tablets 300mg £16.49

★★★★★ 4.0 (35) [Write a review](#)



Select Size:

400 Tablets ▾

64 rewards for life points
SKU: 002942

£16.49
£0.04/Tablet
✓ In Stock

Quantity:

- 1 +

☒ Deliver one time only

☐ Subscribe to Repeat Order [Learn more](#)
On *future orders* get the best price* plus 5% off & free delivery.

The other product is something called **ashwagandha**. This is something coming into stock soon. It's a stress relief product that has been my tip of the year (for a few months now). We've tested it and it has sold quite quickly.

It's a stress relief, adaptogenic herbal supplement. If you read up on it, it's quite a remarkable supplement.

So these are the two products (out of 8) that are really taking off.

This is just on eBay, of course. The success rates are likely going to be the same selling on other platforms like Amazon as well, however.

Now, my success rate for those 14 products was just under 60%. Depending on your experience, you might only find 1 winner out of 4 products, or maybe even 1 winner out of 10 products.

That being said, if I had the time to launch 100 products, would that ratio stay the same? Would I find success with 57-60 out of those 100 products? I'm not sure. But it's very likely that I wouldn't find 60 products that I'd want to sell.

On the other hand, if you did have the time to launch that many products and found 60 products that only sold a single one each day, and just made 3 quid profit on each...you'd be making £5,500 per month. That's £65,000 per year in profit.

Not too shabby!

Turn It Into A Lifestyle

Have you ever been on a diet? No? Alright, if not...I bet you know someone who has. Right?

And it goes something like this...

The dieter wants to lose weight.

They look around...for a diet that can help them. Our 'dieter' gets all excited about this new way of dieting. This way is 'the one'. Truly!

It minimises fats, carbs...and biscuits... leading to a fat-burning furnace that disintegrates fat upon contact. The dieter tries it. And it starts to work! Great. However they only carry on for a few weeks. They lose a few pounds...nothing that major. And then...they return to their old ways of eating.

Before you know it they are the same weight as they were before.

No real progress was made. What's going on here? I'll tell you! A diet is - almost by definition - a TIME-LIMITED way of eating.

You 'diet' for a set period of time.

And then you eat 'normally' again.

And this is where everyone goes wrong!

You cannot diet. Instead...you must turn that new 'diet' into a new LIFESTYLE. HUGE difference. A diet is time-limited. A lifestyle is just WHAT YOU DO ALL THE TIME. By adopting the 'diet' as part of your lifestyle - you integrate it into your life, and it becomes the NEW NORMAL.

Alright, so what does this have to do with business opportunities?

In short - you must not look at an opportunity as merely an opportunity! You must look at it like a new lifestyle! An 'opportunity', like a diet, sounds almost time-limited. You'll get quickly in and out. An example...

You believe there's a great opportunity in selling a beauty product online. You quickly import a few and sell them. Great! But in a six months, competition arrives and sales slump. You need a new diet! (Or is that opportunity?) Now, consider another option...

You decide to enter the beauty market. You commit to working on sourcing 15 products. You write sales copy for them. You find some great suppliers. You setup a website and get some testimonials. You do everything you can to build this into a real business. You start going to beauty trade-shows. You start talking to customers, so you can fully understand them....

It's no longer an 'opportunity', but a real business. It's no longer just a diet. It's been fully integrated into your life.

Your new life is one of being a beauty entrepreneur and beauty business owner...not just an opportunist. In short - look to build something that becomes a constant in your life, rather than something like a time-limited 'diet'!

One final point...

This is WHY sticking to a niche which you really ENJOY selling in...is KEY.

In short, if you find a 'diet' where you ENJOY EATING THE FOOD...you are much more likely to stick with it.

Hopefully you catch my drift. In short - don't diet. Find something you enjoy. Something which becomes an integral part of your life. And then do that – permanently!

Pigeons Are Better Than Us At This

I've spoken about pigeons before...

They're simple, cretinous creatures. But they ain't half useful for 'hoovering' up your sandwich crumbs from besides the park bench!

Anyway, on Sunday I caught up with an old friend, and whilst waiting for them, nearly came to blows with a rather brazen pigeon...

Damn thing would just walk right up to my shoes...with zero fear. Head bobbing all the way...a la 'Uncle Albert' (from Only Fools & Horses).

And do you know what a pigeon does all day, dear reader? No? Well, I'll enlighten you. They look for food. They eat it. And then they take an occasional c*ap to dispose of it.

And that's about it.

In short, the pigeon has a sole goal. His whole life is based around the relentless search for food.

Alright, he may sit on the odd windowsill for a bit...

But his thoughts pretty much revolve around: where is my next left-over burger bun going to come from?

Now, imagine our pigeon had another goal - maybe to get his wings clipped. And maybe he has another goal on top of that - to get his claws manicured, and also to get his beak cleaned. Every day he has a new list of goals piling up.

Would his search for food be as effective? Unlikely.

Alright, here's my point...

When you have a 'sole focus', you end up much more effective in what you do. If you're busy juggling multiple goals - then there's a danger of going hungry. One minute you're looking at importing.

The next, you're looking at retailing.

And then - you decide you need a pedicure.

Pigeons might not be the planet's greatest achievers...but they are good at what they do.

And most of us could probably benefit from a bit of their 'sole focus'.

Market Depth And Breadth

Yesterday I was rattling on about markets... ..and why your sole goal online should be to appeal to one DIRECTLY. Remember: only the opinion of your market really counts!

Today, I want to talk about two 'aspects' of any online market...

The first is market breadth. And the second is market depth.

'Breadth' refers to the sheer size of the market. In the case of Pete Andre's (see yesterday's email), it's huge - as there are tons of cretins out there that would love to listen to him whine on about the latest frozen bakery product.

Real-life practical example...

The DIET market is one of staggering BREADTH...

Why? As every man and his dog is on some sort of damn diet! So, there are a lot of people who you can sell to.

The market for shotguns is of much lesser 'breadth'; there aren't many people willing to drop dough on these things.

Alright...

And secondly: there's market DEPTH... broadly speaking, the degree of desire in the market. The greater the depth, the more people will pay for product 'X' in the niche.

Going back to the diet market - there's also huge DEPTH...

For example - in the case of losing stomach fat...people will pay big dough for a solution (for example liposuction costs a bomb - and people line up and pay it!).

Mortgages are another example; you'll pay big dough (over time) for this product. It's also a market with huge breadth, as most people 'buy' one (no wonders banks are so rich).

Needless to say, the greater the breadth and depth, the better the market!

But which is best?

Good breadth - lots of people willing to buy...or good depth... people willing to pay a lot for a solution?

Well...to complete the picture, we have to add a third 'factor'...

In short, the level of competition. Needless to say, the lower the level of competition, the better the market. If it then has good breadth and depth...bingo. Unfortunately, of course, the markets with huge breadth and depth and already cornered. The competition is rife!

What to do? Surely the best markets are those with decent breadth and depth...and yet without too much competition. So we want to find the 'intersection' point...

The 'sweet spot' if you will...

...where there's decent breadth (plenty of people who want to buy)...plenty of depth (people will spend the dough)... and finally where there's not too much competition.

Examples? Ah-ha! That's not my intention today. Rather, it's to let your mind 'juice' and bubble up, so perhaps you see, hear or remember something that fits these criteria. What about it?

This Will Separate Your Product

Not sure whether you've heard of them or not...

'Five Guys' is a 'new' (to me and to most people in the UK) 'burger bar'...

Basically, it's a bit like McDonalds...on steroids.

You can easily pay £15 for a burger and chips. But, the 'quality' is higher. Real burgers. Real chips. But still as 'fast food'.

Now, after a bit of research, it's clear it's a tremendously successful business...in fact, they do about a billy-un a year in sales! But is it really any different from the rest?

Here's a few things they do...

Firstly, they cook everything FRESH...in front of you.

Secondly...they even have the name of the farm that supplies the potatoes...right there in the restaurant (I guess it varies by week). Then they have the actual bags of potatoes lined up in front of everyone. Also - the chips come in an attractive little cup. And the whole meal comes in a sturdy brown bag - without any markings, but with a quality feel to it.

The whole 'restaurant' looks expensive with quality fittings and furnishings.

Now, I'm sure 'Five Guys' fans will rave about how much better the food is than anywhere else...

But bear in mind - it's a lot more expensive.

What really makes the difference?

To me - it's in the presentation. Really, it's just burger and chips!

But the whole experience makes you want to pay more.

And that brings me onto something that's incredibly important.

You see....what if the burger was instead presented to you in a plastic bag...in a B&Q car park, served up by a guy with 'BO' and one 'tuth' in his gob...would people still be raving about it? Point is, the PRESENTATION here is key.

And, increasingly...online...I think this is very important.

You see, these days there generally is NOT much 'between' products.

Most are pretty much the same...whatever the niche. That's why HOW you present your item is so important. (By the way: if you're near a 'Five Guys' it's worth going in to see how they do it).

I'm NOT talking about the 'photos' you use here...

It's the box packaging, the labels, the name of the product, the whole 'feel' of what you are selling. And then the pictures as well.

What would most people rather buy? An incredibly well presented product that looks the part, and comes from a 'professional' company...

Or a squashed-up burger served by a guy with BO?

Whatever you want to sell, this is well worth thinking about.

Belief Determines The Result

So last Friday I was in London for a 'business meeting'... The meeting passed by all A-OK... ...steak was munched on, beer was 'swilled'...strips clubs were visited...and so on... (Well, maybe not the last one, well, OK, we did...)

But it was what happened on my way back home that was so extraordinary. You see, as I walked back - there he was!

An old friend of mine...crossing the road...right in the middle of London, just after rush hour!

What were the odds? I was only in London for about five hours... And - my friend 'usually' lives in Spain...and was just visiting!

It had to be a mill-yun to one shot. Or at least 100K-to-1.

And, I'd not seen this guy for about three years!

Pretty amazin' coincidence to say the least.

Anyway...as we embraced (I knew I should have 'got it out of my system' in the strip club!), we got chatting about 'stuff', as you do... I mentioned something from our past, and my friend said something that quite surprised me...

It was something like this: "How do you know that BELIEF is true?" I was a little taken aback! But he was right. And that's the point I want to make today...

This has nothing to do with online selling (although in a way it has everything to do with it!) Simply put: how do you know that what you believe is actually TRUE?

Let me be more concrete...

For example - let's say YOU BELIEVE you can't sell XYZ product...because the market is too competitive. That's only a belief, right? But is it true or false? Well, it's neither!

Really it's only an assumption...

Let's take something else:

Let's say YOU BELIEVE you can't write some good 'copy' for your listing's description (but you've never even tried!)

Once again...it's purely a belief - one that really only exists between your ears! How do you know for sure it's true?

And so it goes on...

Point is YOUR 'beliefs' can really determine what you do or don't do... ...and even what you can or can't do... And yet they are only that: BELIEFS!

How do you know whether they are really 'true' or not?

Just like my old friend said - how do you know that what you think, believe or know about yourself...is really true?

Do you just believe something - good or bad, limiting or depressing, without really knowing the truth about it? And how might that be holding you back?

It certainly made for some interesting 'thoughts' on the train journey home. And at the very least, it helped stop thinking about that damn strip club...

Make Sure Your Bait Is Right

Dave got up, and looked at his cats.

It was always a struggle... getting them to eat. He'd been experimenting for years trying to find the right food for them.

He'd tried sawdust, peanut butter, marshmallows and even mince pies.

But it never quite worked out.

Some days, they'd kind of 'poke' their noses at the dinner Dave had prepared...before turning away to watch 'Dancing on Ice' on the couch.

Other times, they'd simply reject the food altogether.

Then, one day...a miracle occurred. Dave met a butcher who told him a secret...

"Here we go Dave - try these..."

He gave Dave some tuna chunks. Dave had never thought about using these before. He got home that night, eager to try them out. And for the first time ever, the cats nearly bit his hand off!

They were loving the food. They wouldn't leave Dave alone.

Dave realised he'd been using the wrong bait for YEARS. All those failed experiments!

If he'd only used the RIGHT BAIT!

What's my point...with respect to the above story? Simple.

Until you have the right 'bait', you won't attract the customers you want...or any customers at all.

If you are selling...anything...do you REALLY know what people want, in that particular market? I'm sure some of my readers know... but I bet not everyone does.

If you're selling a 'stop snoring' product...do you REALLY know what people want in that market? You might think you know.

But do you, really?

You can go bash about for years trying to sell certain products to certain markets...

But if you don't really know what the people 'in' that market want... you're making things hard for yourself.

Reminds me of an anonymous friend of mine...who picked me up in an expensive Porsche. "Now we'll finally get some action!", he said.

If you get the right bait, you'll find it much easier to sell products, services or anything else. How to find the right bait?

Through experience, through being a 'consumer' in the market you're selling to...and through research (Amazon reviews are a great place to start).

Age-Ify Your Product

'Shameless eBay traders hawking quack diet potions to children as young as THREE' ...

...was the headline.

The article was on the DailyMail.co.uk website recently.

It concerns a 'new' diet product that was being offered on eBay, called...

...JuniorSlim.

'The Mail' claim it's being priced at £43 a bottle, and is targeted at youngsters. Now...this probably isn't the kind of product I'd want to sell.

And...I don't recommend targeting a product like this...at kids.

(Just stop giving the kid doughnuts, will ya!).

But here's the thing.

Targeting a product like this to a specific segment of a 'market' can be a very good idea.

SeniorSlim, anyone?

How about...

Post-Baby Slim

Before-Marriage Slim

Before-Holiday Slim

Over-40s Slim

And so on? Isn't this kind of thing more appealing than a product that just offers to help you slim down?

It's likely to have a lot less competition too...

And it doesn't just apply to diet products...

In truth, lots of products can be 'targeted' this way to specific market segments...

By age. By profession. By life-event. And so on.

It's a powerful strategy to use, and one that is well worth thinking about.

Find The Reason It Sells

Little story for 'ya...

A few months back, I imported XYZ product from China...

I was impressed with the overall demand in this niche...and I was NOT impressed with the existing competition. (By the way: two great points for any market you choose to go into!).

So I imported 'my' product. Stuck it up for sale. And it's done pretty well - especially on Amazon.

But here's the thing...

There are both eBayers and Amazonians who are selling more than I am. Come on, people! Surely, the 'Kommando' should be at the top of all the rankings!

Yes and no...

You see, it turns out that the 'other sellers' are doing a few things I'm NOT doing (at least not yet).

For example - their packaging is better. Their past sales history (on eBay) is stronger. And their reviews...which have been 'bought'... are also better.

What to do? Well, I'm thinking about it!

But here's what I'm getting at today...

If you see someone selling something online...and they are doing it 'on the regular'...it must be working. And? Well, you must work out THE REASON why their product 'works'...if you want to enter the same niche.

Some time ago, a customer of mine emailed to say they 'couldn't sell' a particular kind of product. But you could clearly see OTHER sellers doing extremely well with the SAME thing online.

You have to ask: what's the REASON WHY this is working for others? (And possibly NOT for 'moi'?).

The REASON a particular product 'works' must, in short, be *identified*.

Is it the packaging, the price, the sales copy, the market itself, the lack of competition...? Find out!

Why is this important? Because when you discover these REASONS... only then can you really blast YOUR product past the competition.

If, for example, you know that people are primarily buying product 'X' because of the quality of the sales copy used to sell it...you can work on that.

If you know people are buying because of the great IMAGES used to sell that product...you can work on that. Heck, people might be buying for multiple reasons.

But without really knowing why your market is buying, you won't sell your MAXIMUM. Find out the REASONS WHY your market/people buy the product/s they do.

And then DIRECTLY appeal to these 'REASONS' with YOUR product! Simple!

Pavarotti's Secret

Why did Pavarotti earn so much more than an 'average' opera singer?

Was he really that much better? I doubt it. You see, he was part of something called '*The Superstar effect*'...

This 'effect' was something I was reading about recently...

It concerns how people in whatever 'niche' can end up earning far, far more than someone who they are only a LITTLE bit better than...

Take opera singing...

Pavarotti earned mega bucks. But I bet you could find someone... out there...somewhere...with very similar talent. Yet, they came nowhere near his earning power.

Or how about golf... Tiger Woods might not be 50 times better than someone who is 50th in the World at golf...but he earns DISproportionately more...

This is the 'Superstar effect'.

According to economist Sherwin Rosen (who wrote about it w-a-a-y back in 1981), the 'Superstar Effect' refers to how:

"Small differences in talent at the top of the distribution will translate into large differences in revenue." It doesn't take a genius to see how this can translate into today's World of online selling.

If you sell on eBay and Amazon...and get your listing to the TOP of Page 1...you will earn far, far more than someone at the bottom of page 2.

Their product may NOT be much different from yours. And relatively, in the search results, they are 'only' one page behind you!

But the difference in results can be HUGE! Disproportionately so.

This is HUGELY important.

And something that few people appreciate...

Alright, so the 'superstar effect' 'works' with the online marketplaces too...

But what does this mean to YOU? And can you 'pwofit' from it?

Firstly: it means to ONLY sell items that you believe have a GOOD chance of being 'superstars' in their NICHE. Practically (taking Amazon as an example), this may mean 'zeroing' in on items with LESS than two pages of competing similar products...

By concentrating on these kinds of products - with only around 30-40 competing items - you stand a MUCH greater chance of being the 'superstar' in the niche. (Compare this with something like Playstation game controllers...where there are 101 pages of very similar products!).

Secondly: it may also mean creating 'spin off' versions of your main product - to help 'crowd out' the competition. (Something I've noticed some of the Chinese sellers doing on Amazon).

This may help you 'take over' the niche to secure your superstar position.

How can you become the 'superstar' in your niche?

Or perhaps a better question is: *Which market can I choose where I can become the superstar?*

Find a 'hot' market where you can be the superstar. Is there any better 10-word formula for winning online than that?

Source It By Country

I'm a scruffy son-of-a-gun...

...or so people tell me...

Let me explain...

You see, these days I rarely see clients/customers/suppliers 'at work'...so I just dress in well...anything... All the crap stuff (like Primark) is my territory at work.

Anyway... I've been meaning to buy something decent for a while. So, on Saturday I stopped in at Manchester's vast 'Trafford Centre' shopping venue. And as I was rifling through the sets of Y-fronts and wife-beaters I usually buy...

...I noticed a nice 'piece' in a certain shirt shop.

This shop gives off a 'gentlemanly English' type vibe (you know the kind)...yet, when I checked the label... can you guess? Made in Vietnam! I wished they'd never said! Almost instantly: they'd popped my desire balloon.

It was the equivalent of meeting a hot date, then realising it was 'A Bruce Jenner'. So I moved on.

But the little anecdote provides me with some 'meat' for today's email...

Now, I'd never have guessed that these shirts were made in Vietnam. But if I were a clothing entrepreneur, or wanted to be one - I've now got a good start on sourcing a similar kind of item. No? OK...so you might be thinking: "Fine - but Vietnam's a damn big place!"

Well - relax.

And exhale.

Because if you head to Alibaba.com, you can now perform a search 'by country'.

So, you could easily search for 'dress shirts' and then choose 'Vietnam' as your country. (Incidentally, I just tried it... and got a fair few results from Vietnam).

And here's the thing...

This 'label secret' can be applied to most products in lots of different niches. Simply inspect a competitive product. Check the label. And then see where it's made. A lot will be 'Made in China'.

But - you might even find a few 'Made in the UK' (funnily enough, I also found one of those on Saturday - for a cosmetics brand)...

Heck, if you're a scruffbag like me - you don't even need to buy the product. You can simply 'go retail' and check things this way. Whatever you're looking at sourcing, this handy hint may help set you on your way...

Sell A Knock-Off (Legally)

Aldi...

I've got to get there at some point. Heck, maybe I'll go tonight...

But did you know? According to the DailyMail.co.uk, Aldi have a new skincare cream out. And at just 7 quid, it is supposed to rival similar products that cost almost £300.

Apparently, both creams (the 7 quid Aldi special, and the 300 quider) contain caviar.

The author of the DailyMail article was 'so desperate' to try it, that she scrambled to the front of the queue to get samples when it was released to the beauty press. (Give ME that 7 quid cream!)

The conclusion is that the Aldi cream, whilst not quite as good, is still a decent alternative - for about 3% of the cost!

Anyway...

This email isn't about face creams per se. It's about creating 'cheaper versions' (and knock-offs) of already-popular products.

Now...you have to be a bit careful with this. You don't want to infringe on a patent, or copy a design that's somehow 'owned' by another company. Nor do you want to break any other laws. But certainly, for certain products in certain niches (skincare being just one!) this is a viable strategy.

Simply put... You find a hot-selling product in a niche. You look at what it IS (what it contains, what it does, etc.) Then you create a lower-priced version of it.

Then...you sell that online.

How to start? Look on Amazon. Or any of the big retail sites (Boots.com, DIY.com, etc.). Find the big 'branded' items that are selling well. See what makes 'em tick.

Then go and source an equivalent.

Be SURE: to test this on a small scale first. As you don't know what will happen.

Still...companies like Aldi (and countless more) do this kind of thing all the time. Maybe something to consider?

Secret Sauce For Amazon

So there I was, on Friday night...filling up the old car with some fuel...

I glanced down - and, lo and behold - there was an advert 'peering' up at me...

It was one of those...you know...they have them on the fuel nozzles these days...

And what did this advert say?

"Within a week we took six bookings directly from our fuel nozzle adverts." - Keith, Local Business Owner.

In short, it was an advert which advertised the fuel nozzles as an advertising opportunity. It then showed me a cheesy looking picture of the toothy 'Keith', in a hard helmet.

Now...call me sceptical...but the chap in the helmet didn't look at all like a 'Keith'. In fact, he looked about as much like a 'Keith' as my six-year old niece.

There was something about him that was very 'un-Keith' like (the fact that the pic looked like a stock image that you can buy online didn't help either).

And this is what I want to talk about today...

We've all seen 'testimonials' when it comes to online marketing. And you've no doubt seen them in 'business opportunity' promotions.

They usually go something like this: "I made £100K in six minutes!...whilst eating my cornflakes!" - John, England.

Or "It's brilliant! It made me richer than Bill Gates...and it all happened overnight!" - Mike, UK.

In other words - not only are they fake, but they are obviously fake! Problem is - when a dodgy copywriter comes to write a 'fake' testimonial, it's actually one of the hardest things to do. Why?

Because you can't fake authenticity!

You can't fake 'realness'.

It has to come from the heart, and something in your mind knows whether something is real or not.

It's like people...you can spot a phony when you meet one, but you don't always know why. It's intuition.

OK, so where am I going with this? Well, as you know Amazon is big at the moment, and one of the KEY drivers for sales on there is your REVIEWS.

But here's the thing...

You can't really 'fake' reviews. Sure, you can ask people to 'help' you review a product, but that doesn't work. Why? Because again, people can see they ain't real. They have to be REAL reviews. And the only way to get them is? To offer really good products.

Here's the formula to serious online Amazon sales:

- 1) Find hot market
- 2) That isn't too competitive
- 3) Introduce a *HIT-HOT product into that niche.
- 4) Collect amazing reviews
- 5) Watch sales take off.

OK, that's only five steps and about 22 words. Simple enough? And yes - really, that's about it! It's worth going over those five simple steps. As there ain't much more to it than this.

A Market You Should Swerve

Clothing isn't a market I'd recommend for the vast majority of sellers....

Too many returns...too many sizing issues... and lots of stock required.

But here's something interesting.

Some of the biggest sellers of clothing online are KOREAN. Well...strictly...they're not really Korean. They're often from China...but sell 'Korean STYLE clothing'. And if you type in 'Korean' on eBay, you get a massive 163,000 or so results of 'stuff' for sale (and a lot of it is clothing).

Now...

All this 'foreign-country-stuff' gave me an idea.

What if you type something like 'Italian' into eBay? And then: What if you choose 'Italian' sellers only? That would get you Italian items...sold from Italy.

And this could be a great way to source 'niche' (and unusual) items.

In fact, I just tried it. I typed in 'Italian', then selected sellers based in Italy only (you can do this using 'Advanced' search on eBay's home-page. Scroll down and choose 'Items Located In' whatever country you want.)

And straight off the bat...I found an Italian seller of a... **"GENUINE ITALIAN LEATHER HANDBAG MADE IN ITALY"**

Straight away: this is a potential product. From here, there's a chance we can contact this seller...and use them as a 'wholesale source'.

Now, I'm not going to go into all the details of this...and all the ins-and-outs of doing this... in this simple daily email.

But I DO believe this is a good way of sourcing UNIQUE and INTERESTING products. Find items by country.

Find sellers in those countries already selling their items successfully into the UK... And then...well...go from there!

Beware Of False Conclusions

"Don't upgrade!"

He said...

And as I crunched down into my muesli, I wondered how many other people make this mistake...

Let me explain...

One of my favourite hobbies is listening in on other people's conversations (as well as stealing underwear from washing lines).

And that's exactly what I did the other day...in a local eaterie.

The two guys in question were debating whether to upgrade to Windows 8 (I'm sure you've seen the offers of the upgrade on your computer...I have anyway!)

Anyway - apparently this chap upgraded.

And he didn't like it...because the 'font size is too small!'.

Now, I'm not a real PC expert, but I know you can easily change that; it isn't a problem with Windows 8, but with his specific PC display.

So now this guy has concluded that Windows 8 is rubbish.

In short, from one (faulty) piece of 'data' he's drawn a poor conclusion, which he is now spreading to his muesli-munching mates.

And here's the thing...

Problem is - we all have this tendency; we tend to make fast (and wrong) conclusions based on small 'bits' of not-very-reliable data.

Take the guy who lists something on eBay...let's call him Dave.

He sees a product that's 'hot'.

Gets some samples.

And tries to sell it.

And - What The Heck!

It doesn't sell...

Dave then concludes one of three things:

1) The product doesn't sell.

2) eBay 'doesn't work'.

Or - if he's smart...

3) This particular product, presented in this way, at this price - didn't sell!

And the third option is often the case. Often, though, the tendency is to 'throw the baby out with the bath water' and say to yourself:

"This online selling stuff is rubbish!" - all based on one (slim) piece of not-very-reliable data. Just because Dave had one 'dud' sale.....doesn't mean he should 'bin' the idea entirely.

It just means this product, this time, at this price, with this description/picture...didn't sell.

It could actually be for one of 101 other reasons.

The big danger is drawing a broad, sweeping conclusion from one piece of data.

See how this works?

And it can work the other way too...

If you sell one product, one time - you can might quickly conclude you're a genius! When it could have been one of 101 different factors...

What I'm saying is simple:

Avoid drawing broad conclusions from a small amount of 'DATA'

(That's Dart-er as our American friends like to say).

Whether it's good or bad...this applies to lots of things...

It might not be the product. It might be the description. Or the price.

Or the site you sold it on.

It might not be that Amazon.fr (the French site) is rubbish; it might just be the particular product you chose to sell.

Are you drawing bad conclusions from not much data?

An Honest Description?

Most of the 'online descriptions' you see for products online are poor...

Boring, turgid and dull.

Anyway - an article in the Mirror.co.uk last week revealed an online listing that had gone 'viral' - because of the way the description was written. It was written by a woman. To sell her car.

And it was brutally honest - for example... "I bought it for £6000 and then found out I'd been sold a CAT C car. I won't lie to you, that p****d me off.

I crashed it within the first week with some minor damage to the bumper which I haven't bothered to fix."

And so on...

Now - this is no doubt an HONEST description.

But is this kind of brutal honesty actually effective in getting you more sales? Yes - this kind of thing can 'work'.

But there's a trick to it. Something that's very difficult to get right.

In short, the self-inflicted criticism you use in your sales copy cannot be a 'deal killer'.

Example...

You're selling a mobile phone. Something you've imported from China. You probably do NOT want to say: "Look - this phone is decent, but you cannot hear anything when you use it!"

That's a 'deal-killer' criticism.

And, obviously it will cause sales to crash - in fact, they won't ever get off the ground. (And you should probably ask your supplier for a refund...).

But if you said...

"These phones are great, but they admittedly do NOT have all the flash features of the Apple iPhone...

They don't have the flashy 'Apple' box. They don't give you access to the Apple store and Apple Music. And nor do they give you the Kudos of owning an Apple phone.

But if you want a solid mobile with access to 1,001 apps, and 511 music channels...a phone which has 90% of the other features of the iPhone - this is the phone to get. And best of all - you can have it for 1/4 of the cost of an iPhone!"

This is probably MORE powerful than just bashing people over the head with HOW GREAT THIS PHONE IS.

But it gets better...

Because you can easily TEST this 'method' for yourself. How? Simple!

Whenever you're selling a product, setup TWO listings.

Everything is pretty much the same, EXCEPT for the description.

Try one that's ALL GOOD...and another that's ALL GOOD...but which also has some criticisms thrown in.

But...as I've hinted at above...just make sure you don't go overboard.

Don't kill the deal.

Rather - be honest about the obvious shortcomings...shortcomings that your customer is probably already thinking about anyway.

I'd be interested to hear of your results. And you may well be surprised with the outcome.

The £1K Suitcase Secret

Ever heard of 'Tumi', the luggage brand?

Me neither - well, not until last week, when I was walking through Heathrow airport...

That's when I spotted a stand they have in Terminal 5...selling their wares.

Intrigued, I noticed there were no prices on any of the goods. (Never a good sign!)

Anyway, there happened to be another shop in the terminal which DID have their prices...

So...how much for a relatively large piece of HAND luggage?

Over a grand!

And that's hand luggage...not a big case. I don't know about you, but that sounds rather a lot for a box that carries around your undies. No?

But here's the thing...

'Tumi' are catering to a specific audience; the wealthier traveller who wants a distinguished piece of 'fashion' in bag form. They then sell directly to that particular 'punter' by setting up their stand where they can fish for them - in one of the Europe's 'wealthiest' airports.

Here's my point...as it relates to selling online (in our case)...

You want to 'design' your product specifically for a chosen audience.

In Tumi's case - expensive luggage for the wealthier traveller...sold right where they're likely to be!

Let's take an online example...

As an example...let's say that you want to sell on Amazon. And, you want to sell diet products.

What you don't do is this: Go to Google and search for 'diet products to sell'.

And then find some supplier with a diet product.

No. No. No.

Far better: you go on Amazon. You research. You find what's selling. You find what people like. You see what people don't like. You check tons of reviews.

You get to know your audience FIRST.

And then you DESIGN your OWN product SPECIFICALLY for 'em.

This way: you're designing your product specifically for Amazon diet buyers. You're 'reverse-engineering' the whole thing.

Finding out what they really, really want. Then designing your product to fit.

Now, this is the BEST possible scenario. A product made SPECIFICALLY for a specific target audience.

But...is it necessary?

No, it's not. You can do fine with 'off the shelf' products.

But I'm talking 'higher-level player' level selling here...

What I'm saying is the ideal is to 'design' something specifically for an audience - NOT to sell a product, but design something geared specifically to EXACTLY what people want.

You don't 'have' to do it. But if you're up and running and want the best results, this is the most effective approach. Of course, it applies to all products, markets and niches...

And no...I didn't buy a 'Tumi'. I'm more of a BHS man.

How To Become A Clone

So here I am back in the UK...

And I'm positively 'brimming' with new ideas...

(I almost forgot how good 'travel' is for opening the mind).

Anyway, one thing I notice when I travel is this: The people in any particular country are often 'carbon copies' of each other.

Here's what I mean: If you go to country 'X', you'll find many of the people there like similar things... whether that's food, or TV shows, or music. And what's more - they will believe the same kinds of things.

And...they behave in similar ways.

They'll have a certain 'World view', and a certain masculinity (if male - at least I'd hope!) or femininity.

Fact is, that 'spreads' and replicates across the population...creating 'copies'.

I'm not denying people's individuality here, just saying this is what I believe. And if you look at the UK, it's the same...

Does this sound familiar?

At 18, you are 'expected' to go to University, and choose a subject which will prepare you for a career ahead that is not only lucrative, but which will also afford you (and your parents) some respect.

At 22, you're expected to get a 'good job' that will provide a firm foundation for your life ahead. A solid career...with a big 'Blue Chip' firm that has your best interests at heart (!).

Around your late twenties, you're expected to 'pair off' with another member of the species for reproduction. Naturally, she is likely to be from the same country, probably the same area etc., and will have undergone a similar life path (so far).

There will be a 'white wedding' where you'll spend lots of cashola.

Kids come next - probably two.

By now, you enjoy reading either 'The Telegraph' or 'The Mirror'. Your favourite TV shows are Coronation Street (but you NEVER watch it), and you are partial to a little 'Strictly Come Dancing' as well. You believe Eastenders is a 'depressing TV show'. (You only watch it because 'your other half' has to have it on.) Owning a home is a great idea. Mortgages are the done thing.

You believe Rolex watches are good, and that Porsche cars are desirable. You only buy Gillette shavers and try and eat four portions of vegetables per day. (Trying to make it six, but don't know how anyone can eat that much green stuff).

You like Starbucks (skinny latte) and muffins (double choc). Your holidays are usually in Lanzarote or Majorca. And you believe that 'Zee Germans' always get up early to capture the best sunbeds.

Your next goal is to see the kids get a good education before a comfortable retirement in Australia, where you'll whittle away your time cooking sausage sandwiches 'on the Barbie' whilst indulging in your newly-discovered favourite hobby of gardening.

You'll be using Factor 178 sun-screen as you read somewhere you'll get skin cancer if not.

Alright, you may 'scoff' at my little description here, but no doubt a percentage of people reading this will identify with it - at least not in yourself, but in someone you know...

And if you went to China? The above would change, but again - it would apply to a LARGE percentage of the population!

(For example - change Lanzarote to Thailand etc., change Starbucks to KTV etc). You behave in a certain way. You believe in a certain way.

You are a clone.

In short, society is like a huge 'boa constrictor' that wraps around you...moulding you into a certain form.

OK, so where am I going with this?

Simply put, if you're not very careful, you'll find yourself constricted into a certain 'model' that's set out for you before you were even born. Your particular society...wherever it is...acts like a boa-constrictor...forcing you into a certain mould.

"Come off it, Oliver!" you might say.. "I like Strictly Come Dancing!"

Fair enough, but the problem with the boa constrictor is that is unlikely to lead you to 'think differently'.

And so when it comes to doing this kind of stuff...selling online as a small independent entrepreneur?

Well, the boa constrictor probably won't like that. He'll try and 'squash' you back into the 'normal' and comfortable mould.

You can see 'clones' more readily when you travel; in different countries, the clone is different, but it's still a clone. Thinking the same way. Believing the same stuff.

What about you? Has the 'Boa Constrictor' put you into a mould...so you're unable to 'think differently'?

And do you even know that there's a boa constrictor wrapped around you, 'constricting' you into a pre-defined shape? Three questions...

What does he make you believe? How does he make you think?

What does he make you do...on a day-to-day basis?

Three questions worth thinking about... preferably before you suffocate!

Two Ideas From Abroad

As I've been 'flitting' about Asia in the last week or two, I've seen numerous great business ideas...

In fact, every day I get about three! I'd hate to say the West is 'finished' and that the East is now where the action is...

...but perhaps I'd not be far wrong.

There's definitely a 'dynamism' in places like China that seems to be somewhat lacking back home.

Anyway...

The first 'good idea' I've seen (apart from all the products!) is a 'handy' phone. This phone solves a common problem...

Numerous times I've landed in foreign hotels, only to realise I am paying a fortune to use my mobile phone (not just for calls, but for Internet data), as soon as I get outside the hotel's 'Wifi' boundaries.

No more!

This 'fweebie' phone comes in with your hotel room. And it lets you make free calls...and gives you free data...for as long as you stay....wherever you go in the city. Great idea. (No more horrendous 'roaming' mobile phone bill when you get home - as you can do it all for no charge with this local phone!).

No doubt the hotel pay for this...but the best bit is the phone also sends you offers from local retailers...

So they are probably making mone-e from both the hotel AND local retailers.

I've not seen this in the UK...but I think it's a great idea.

SECOND idea: more mundane and more 'old-school'...

In Hong Kong, I was 'accosted' by a Bangladeshi gentleman who tried to sell me a custom suit. I didn't buy the suit, but did buy a custom shirt. (After his 'bunglish' attempts to sell me ridiculously over-priced fake handbags).

Price for the custom shirt was about £35, and it is superb. Perfect fit, and great material. (Although I ain't washed it yet!) Anyway, he freely told me that he DOESN'T make the shirt or suits himself...a Chinese tailor round the corner does that for him.

You could definitely get a tailor like this to provide shirts and suits shipped to the UK. You could advertise 'custom shirts' on eBay (in the UK) - and then get them sent direct to your customer (the customer provides the measurements - which is easy enough). Best part: you will get loads of re-orders. To give you some idea, I've already ordered another five shirts!

So, eBay would generate 'leads' (as well as some sales), and then you'd follow up from there.

Final idea...a much bigger project...

A company called 'Mercari' is operating around Asia. Basically, it's a VERY popular 'App' you download to your phone.

This 'app' then lets you interact with people who are local to you, who have 'stuff to sell'. A bit like eBay, but it's all done from your phone.

And it is all done directly with other people right from the app.

The reason it's done 'by phone' is that more and more people - especially in Asia - are SOLELY using their phones to buy stuff online! (And it's getting like that in the UK too - did you notice?). This could be done in the UK.

Basically, an app that lets people hook up with each other to buy/sell LOCAL goods - all from your phone.

The 'app' would show you (on a map) people who are local to you, who have items for sale (for example, furniture).

This separates it a bit from eBay...and, I have to say: in Asia, this could easily wipe eBay out of the continent altogether!

NOTE: just found out 'Mercari' are launching in the USA...but the UK market is still open by the looks of it. Alright, so there's just three ideas for you. That's on top of the hundreds of product ideas I've seen so far...and which I will update you on at a later date...

Customise Your Product To Win

I'm shortly going to be selling a new product online...

Now, when I say 'new product'...this is going to be a big project in a certain niche.

It's something I've been planning for a while.

And yes...I'll be selling this item on both eBay and Amazon.

But here's the thing...

There's already plenty of competition in this particular market.

There are already plenty of sellers 'chomping' at the pie, all with very similar stuff.

What to do? Simple! (Or not!).

There are a few things I'm going to do...two of which I'll touch on now.

Heed these points. Because they can be applied to most products in 'competitive' niches...

FIRSTLY: I'm putting a killer 'brand-name' on my product...not a huge big deal, but most of the existing products on the market in this niche are actually very boring. Yes - you can do this too...in whatever niche market you're considering.

Secondly...and the main 'point' I want to discuss today...

I'm going to CUSTOMISE the product. This idea 'hit' me just a couple of weeks back...

In short, we can label our products differently than our competitors. I'm NOT talking about just slapping a label on the product. I'm talking about having multiple 'labels'...so people can pick and choose which they prefer.

And that means we can offer cool designs...whereas everyone else offers something that's pretty generic. In short, we can 'customise' it - and make the product 'our own' through 'better' labelling. Now, I realise this is a bit vague, but I can't go into too much detail here either.

My point is simple, however...

Whatever your product is, chances are it can be 'customised' in some way.

By this - I mean you can make it your own by changing/adding something to it. It could be that you add a 'cool' label/s to it...

It could be that you package/'bolt on' something extra to it...

It could be that you add a 'killer' name to it...

It could be that you find a way of offering multiple colour options...

And so on. Point is - you 'customise' it to separate it from the rest of your boring competition!

Quick example...

Let's say you want to sell iPhone cases. (A bad market choice because of the competition).

But instead of just selling a boring black case...if you follow the tips above...you could...

CALL your case a cool name..."The Pazaz case"...or something (!)... LABEL/BOX it differently...maybe put it in some cool packaging that no-one else has!

OFFER UNIQUE COLOURS...colours no-one else has...

PACKAGE it with a unique cleaning cloth...

And so on. See the HUGE difference in doing this... versus just selling a boring black case?

Unfortunately, there is really no set formula here. All I can do is hint at what to do (with the points above).... ...and also ask you:

What can you do to 'customise' your product, and make it stand out against the rest of your 'boring' competition? In today's increasingly competitive online markets, this is a question that demands an answer!

The END Of Online Selling?

I want to look now at an article I read which I thought was *absolutely brilliant*.

This article also highlighted a lot of things that I know to be true from personal experience. It just brought all these observations together into one cohesive theory.

It is an economics-based piece from America. However, we can definitely apply the information to what we do as online sellers. **Here's the scoop...**

Socio-Economic Developments

The article states that labour participation in men under 35 years old is dropping significantly – to the tune of 9%. That's a staggering number, and a very serious problem. And it's very scary to think about in regard to an economy that size.

Young men simply *aren't working* like they used to.

No one can really say with any certainty why this is happening or what to do about it. But I do think that the trend they've identified is absolutely accurate.

And this leads me into the kinds of products you should be selling online...

The first thing to note is the amount of **free and low-cost entertainment** that is now readily available to anyone and everyone. You don't have to look far to see people glued to their phones. Historically, we've never seen anything like it.

You can go on YouTube and watch endless amounts of videos, absolutely free. You can subscribe to Amazon Prime for a very low cost and just order box set upon box set. Video games that cost millions to develop can be played for FREE!

One that I mentioned in last month's issue is *Fortnite*. It makes tons of money from endless game upsells. People get addicted to this and play for 12 hours per day.

This affects everyone, but let's focus on men specifically (which the article clearly stated are greatly impacted by the trend). They are working less and less and can get free entertainment to fill their leisure time.

If you wanted to go to the cinema in the past, you'd have to actually go there and pay quite a bit of money for it. Now, you can watch hundreds of movies for virtually nothing on YouTube, get them incredibly cheaply on Netflix, or just straight up pirate them online for free.

That's the first half of this theory that tries to describe the current state of society and life: you can spend a lot of time entertaining yourself for NO MONEY.

Now we get to the second half of the theory...

Most of my subscribers are older men. But if you think back to your younger days, you may have been focusing on dating and starting a family. You may have even gotten married at a fairly young age.

These days, this is actually more of a rarity.

Not that long ago, if you wanted to find a mate you'd have to focus on your local area. You'd probably go down to the local pub and meet someone.

Today, there are a lot more options. You have social media like Facebook and Instagram. You have dating websites. You don't have to focus on your local area anymore. You can literally meet people online on a national level...or even international.

A guy has all these options now. But, so does a woman. In years past, both genders would have to focus on their own **local network** – family friends, local area – yet now those options have been blown out of the water. There are so many more people to sift through.

Whereas before, a woman would have to choose from a potential pool of 10-20 men, now there are literally potentially thousands.

As it turns out, in this scenario – in dating and marriage – the 80/20 rule applies for men. A small selection of men have all the options because everything is based on first impressions (whereas women have a lot more options).

In the past, men would use consumer goods to elevate themselves socially. For example, men of a certain age might buy a leather jacket to make themselves look cooler. Or they might purchase a specific type of car to elevate themselves to a certain social status.

This may not be something you'd do today, but I'm sure you could image a time when you would consider something like this.

The author describes this as a form of **signaling**. You are **using consumer goods to signal** to the outside world that you have arrived – that you have reached a certain social status and have a certain social value.

The argument is that consumer purchases are to signal certain things to other people as much as they are to please yourself (if not more so).

I realise this is all a bit vague...

So now let's put all these things together, and it gets really interesting...

You have a population of guys where 95% don't have the social life or social proof to show off online to attract female mates. On the other side, women are going to naturally gravitate towards the 5% that do have that certain lifestyle that they can show off (online).

It's similar to selling online really, where 95% of all sales are going through the top echelon of sellers.

The rest of the 95% of guys don't see any "value" in buying consumer goods to signal their social value as they would have done in the past. **The result: a collapse in men buying goods!**

Let's say I'm a bloke that's at the bottom of the food chain when it comes to the dating game – I'm foul and repulsive and there's really nothing very attractive about me. There's no point me buying a leather jacket that costs £200. There's no point in me buying the latest iPhone. There's no point in me buying a razor of shaving. There's no point in me learning anything new or progressing.

What's the point? Why bother? The top 5% are going to get all the spoils.

I'll just play video games instead!

So out of 100 guys, the guy that is last in the social structure (we'll call him #100) thinks to himself "You know what? Twelve hours a day...I'm just going to play video games or entertain myself on YouTube."

In the past, this would be pretty difficult. There wasn't the option to entertain yourself.

So, this is a perfect storm in the dating world where the top echelon gets the most reward while there is a ton of free entertainment for everyone else.

The authors of this article are proposing that this is a reason that labour is dropping so fast amongst young men. And I completely agree that these factors are certainly a part of what's happening.

It's a worrying problem if you stop and think about it. What's going to happen? Well, this is certainly a threat to consumption - IF the male consumer no longer sees a value in consuming. If consumer goods no longer hold a "value" in social signaling, then consumption will cease.

They will no longer buy anything for social value. No leather jackets. No cars. They will only focus on buying the rudimentary things such as *chicken and rice!*

And maybe a nice comfy chair so they can sit around and play video games for 12 hours a day.

There would be no need for them to purchase anything else. And they wouldn't be able to anyway because they won't be working.

This theory may sound a bit wacky. But this is really what is happening when it's taken to the extreme. I can certainly see this being the case and it also plays into my theory of online selling – where the 95/5 rule is certainly in effect. The top 5% get all the spoils.

Everyone else drops out!

Crazy? Don't bet on it. There's a strong argument that this is what we are seeing.

So now that I've been ranting for a little while, let's get into what this has to do with selling and the types of products that are going to sell in this type of environment...

What to Sell!

First, I don't want to be completely alarmist. Consumerism isn't going to die out. And if it does, that's decades away.

But the fact remains that online **entertainment** is going to be a huge focus of what people buy going forward. Just look at how many people are buying things in this space. Anything that can occupy people's time and help them get over their boredom is going to be huge going forward. **Absolutely huge.**

It's going to be particularly huge among the male demographic. Again, look at *Fortnite* (video game), which I mentioned last month. It plays perfectly into this and has become an unbelievable money- making machine in the space of months. We've never seen growth like this because it plays directly into this scenario of getting people **hooked on online entertainment.**

Now, I realize that most of us aren't going to go and develop video games. But I *am* going to mention another category that I think you should consider concentrating on.

I recently purchased an American information product about selling on Facebook. I'm an information junkie. I don't just publish, but I consume it as well.

This product features many successful 'Facebook' sellers. According to these successful sellers, we want to focus on selling products that you could describe as "narcissistic"; products focused on self- gratification. And I couldn't agree more!

So, what are these types of products more specifically?

First, there are beauty products. These are huge on social media.

They are narcissistic products, right?

A big product is tooth whitening. There is a company called *HiSmile Teeth* who sell on Facebook and Instagram. It is a \$60million per year company that just sells tooth whitening products via Facebook and Instagram. It has literally only been around for a few years.

Another one is *Gymshark*, which has gone from \$100 to \$100million in four years on Facebook and Instagram. They basically just sell tight clothing that shows off your body. Again, a **narcissistic product.**

Another example of a successful product was one for weight loss for older women. Again, a **narcissistic** beauty element.

Health foods are another hot product. You may not think of it as a narcissistic product but oftentimes it really boils down to staying in good shape (more so than actually being healthy).

This really struck me from the seminar. And this is exactly where I am going to be concentrating.

These are the type of people that have huge followings. They constantly shop for the latest and greatest product to improve their image. And now only are they buying these products, but they're also sharing what they purchased with the people that follow them on social media.

Mark Bolland – you may know him as Mark The Lazy B from some of our previous products – spoke about beauty products in our first issue. He's having a lot of success in this space. And right now, there is a perfect storm to be able to make fortunes in this space.

Another example which isn't beauty related but *is* ego related is *Tough Mudder*. If you haven't heard of it, Google it. It's basically an assault course for adults.

Why are people participating in *Tough Mudder*? There are probably a few reasons. But would it be a stretch to believe that there is a 'narcissist' element of being able to finish a *Tough Mudder* event, so you can then show off your photos on social media?

I won't go claiming that narcissism is the *only* reason that people participate in *Tough Mudder*. But honestly, why else would people want to inflict so much pain on themselves? Isn't that a bit strange?

Not if you consider that it's ego-driven!

The space for health, wellness, ego gratification, it's huge right now. And mark my words, it's only going to get bigger and bigger and bigger.

And then...one day...it'll probably implode...but we'll all be retired by then!

So, this month I'm going to look at these types of products. But also keep an eye out on your own as these are the trend to get into.

Again, the article I read struck me deeply because it really does play deeply into everything I've been seeing as it related to selling online.

Now, that's a bit of a contradiction, as I just said that there are a lot of people dropping out of the social ladder and just focusing on entertainment. And that's still true. But the narcissism is strong at the top of that ladder and the people trying to break into it. It's really two extremes.

There are the people showing off their narcissism and then there are the guys who sit at home playing video games. I'm not saying that playing video games automatically means you've dropped out, by the way. I'll play the occasional video game myself. It's just part of the overall trend.

And to make one final point: look at things like AI and virtual reality. These social drop-outs can now go and create a *fantasy life* for themselves. I think it's entirely possible that large portions of the population will entirely drop out of the labour force – and real social life – and run to the fantasy worlds they've created for themselves.

So, this has been a longer introduction than usual! But it's absolutely fascinating what has been developing in society. And there are fortunes to be made from these developments...

...by either providing entertainment to the outcasts (maybe it's actually the majority at this point) or by providing narcissistic gratification to those at the 'top' of the social ladder!

Dave vs. Dave

Dave woke up and noticed the sun was out again.

That would mean more sun-cream, the need for a hat, and a mounting air-con bill. Never mind. Soon, he'd been in his car and on the way to work. His car was expensive to run, mind you. And it had a nasty habit of attracting rather a lot of attention.

The leather was also sticky when it got hot. One thing (amongst many) that Dave didn't enjoy was having to 'unstuck' his sweat-soaked shirt at the end of a journey.

Never mind.

At work, he had plenty to do - in fact, rather too much. Sure, he made plenty of dough and worked for himself, but he always had something to stress about. What to do with all the orders that were coming in? What if everything collapsed around him one day?

But never mind. He could do some research to take his mind off things. He had to trawl through hundreds of products to find one that he thought could sell.

That would take up hours of his time. Yet at the end of the day, he could go to the gym. It was hard, sweaty work and it was also painful. Did he really have to slug around these large meaty weights, and run to nowhere on a treadmill? And what if that big bodybuilder came in again? That would mean Dave would have to make awkward conversation with him.

The next day, Dave got up and it was a very similar day...

The sun was out. Great. He could finally work on his tan! And how much better life seemed when the sun was shining.

Soon, he could drive his luxurious car to work, in air-conditioned comfort, whilst admiring the glances from people who'd look on enviously. Dave got a kick out of that. He had loads to do at work - but that was great, as he enjoyed seeing tons of dough come in, seeing everyone work hard producing great products.

He also liked to see customers enjoying the stuff he was selling as the orders steamed in. Dave sat there, grinning like the proverbial 'Cheshire cat'...

But the fun didn't stop there...

You see, Dave also had some research to do. Dave saw the research as a treasure hunt - his hunt for a new big-winning product that would increase his wealth. And then?

He'd get to the gym, where he'd exercise to relieve stress, prolong his life and get a rush of endorphins. Dave saw it as a way to get more healthy, and it was also a good way to meet new people.

But still - he had to talk to that awful, toned bodybuilder!

Which Dave are you?

Is 'finding products to sell' a chore, or an adventure? Is setting up a website a 'chore'...or is it the start of something potentially great? Is getting in contact with a supplier scary...or is it pushing yourself out of your comfort zone to gain valuable experience? I'm not saying to be 'Pollyanna' in everything you do...

But it could be worth asking ourselves - at least every now and again...

Which Dave am I?

Vietnam Or China?

The email below was written in 2016. Vietnam has since risen to become a increasingly formidable competitor to China.

So I'm away at the moment, on a kind of holiday/work trip...

And I was recently in Vietnam... and next week I'll be in China...

So, what about Vietnam? We always think about China as the 'best' place to source products. But did you know? Vietnam is 'factory home' to Adidas and Nike... two of the biggest 'consumer' goods manufacturers in the World...

And wages are reckoned to be half those of China in certain parts...

The Vietnamese economy and skilled labour forces is growing at break-neck speed. Could it be a China beater?

Anyway...I touched down in Ho Chi Minh city, and I headed out one day to one of the 'wholesale' markets to get a feel for it all...

I picked up a shirt - white, if you must know - and ended up buying two for £8 each.

I'm sure I got the 'foreigner' price, but it was a damn nice shirt - the material was very unusual, unlike anything I'd seen before in the UK.

So, what were they paying...if they charged me £8? Let's guess at £4 a shirt... OK, but then what are they being manufactured for? What would you pay for 'em in bulk? £2? It wouldn't surprise me. And again, this is a quality shirt.

If you picked it up in the UK and it said '£39.99' you wouldn't be surprised at the price.

At all.

The clothes/textiles industry is huge here...

I've also noticed some 'high-end' clothes brands whose labels now say 'Made in Vietnam'. It's quite amazing to think what they are paying for a jacket that they charge £300 for back in the UK. The mind boggles!

But it's not just clothing...

For example: if you walk around Ho Chi Minh city for a while, it's clear the Vietnamese love 'supping' a small coffee. And believe it or not, Vietnam is the World's SECOND largest coffee producer! (After Brazil).

I drove out of the city also - and it's there that you'll find 'Industrial Zones' dedicated to companies producing goods (amongst other things).

Unfortunately, I didn't have time to explore properly, but maybe you don't need to...

You see, there are some websites (that admittedly I've not used - yet!) which maybe able to help.

For example: <http://www.vietnamesemade.com>

<http://www.vietnamexportsimports.com>

<http://www.made-in-vietnam.com/>

But a warning...

Firstly - I'd look here mostly for fashion/shoes (if that interests you – although it's not a market I really recommend and one I've discussed before).

And secondly - tread cautiously as always, as these trade sites may not have as much protection as Alibaba.

And most importantly...

NEVER buy anything 'branded' from these sites! There will be fakes kicking about for sure. Stick to 'non-brands' as always.

OK, so next week I'll be in China, where hopefully I'll report back with some 'interesting' news! (Just hope I don't end up on the toilet as usually happens there :())

The Golden Pearl

A man walks up to you...

And tells you that he is close to passing away, and that he wants to tell you a secret before he does... The secret is that he knows there's a gigantic pearl hidden in a field somewhere.

The pearl is worth a fortune. Anyone who finds it will be instantly 'doughy'.

But to get to the pearl, you will have to dig and find it.

And here's the thing...

You'll have to use a special, golden trowel to get to it. Intrigued...you ask him for more details. He tells you the pearl is lost in the field - but that it is DEFINITELY there. It is worth 5 meely-un pounds. Immediately, your mind is racing. If you can find this pearl, you'll be set!

And so the generous old man hands over the trowel, points you in the direction of the field and moves on his way...

Aha! You think. This is it! My big chance! Just one thing...you look down at the trowel and it's not very big. You've not seen the field yet, but promise yourself that - even if it's massive - you'll keep digging to find the pearl. Even if it takes you six months, a year - or even two years of hard labour - you'll find it. You pull out the map and make your way to the field.

Aha! You say. Here it is - just over this ridge!

And then hits you... The 'field' isn't really a field - it's a gigantic valley full of grass. And it's miles long. Probably 5,000 acres! Your heart sinks at the task ahead.

This is going to take much longer than you expected. In short...

How many of us set out to start a business - knowing the 'pearl' is out there - but then give up when we realise the TRUE scale of the task in front of us? And then QUIT?

When someone realises that the task 'at hand' may be larger and more difficult than initially ASSUMED...

...their enthusiasm wanes...collapses... and then often disappears entirely.

It's EASIER to crack open a beer, and sit under a tree - rather than hunt for the pearl. (Even if you KNOW the pearl exists and is there in front of you - somewhere!)

Ask yourself - did you believe the 'field' was just an allotment - like 'Arfer Fowler' used to have? And did you then quit when you realised 'Arfur's' allotment was actually more like the size of five Wembley stadiums? And that the 'digging' was going to take longer than you initially assumed? Yet if the pearl is there - and it does exist - when will you start digging?

Sure, you might be able to hire a big shovel, or even a JCB...

But that doesn't change the fact that you have to dig - and keep on digging - until you hit the pearl.

Go For Huge Markups Please

Perhaps you've heard the name 'Ralph Lauren'...

It's a famous fashion brand. You can find it in all the 'posh' stores (and some of the not-so- posh ones too).

Anyway...the other week, I was 'out and about', and for some reason...I started to think about these 'fashion brands'.

More specifically... I was thinking about the 'high-end' brands that can charge hundreds (or thousands) of pounds for a single piece of clothing.

Now, to be fair...

Ralph Lauren aren't really 'top-end'. But still, the owner of the company... a Mr. Ralph Lauren...has become exceedingly wealthy off the back of his business. In fact, he's in the top few hundred wealthiest people on the planet. What gives

The BRANDED fashion business is a fantastic business to be in...if you think about it...

You might charge £500 for a suit that only costs £30.

And what's more, the product always wears out or 'goes out of fashion'...meaning he needs a new one...

Plus, you can build a huge line of products to create more sales.

But the biggest benefit of all is this...

The MARKUPS. They are huge!

At least with the 'expensive' brands. No wonder they make so much dough!

Now, I'm obviously NOT going to recommend trying to start your own high-end fashion brand here...

But the point I want to make today is simply this: Look for products with the BEST possible margins.

Sounds obvious. But how do we do this?

For us...as online sellers...there are CERTAIN products that are more likely to give you great margins.

Info products are one, but they generally aren't sold on eBay and Amazon.

Private label products are the others, and this really encompasses a huge variety of products...

It could be beauty creams. Sprays to calm down your pet. A sofa cleaning paste. Or a health supplement. The key is that these kinds of products offer much better margins than most. Compare these kind of product with, for example, a television (which might sell for twice what you paid for it), and it's no comparison.

OK, so you've probably heard us mention these kinds of products before...

So let me ask you another question...

What else can you do then to INCREASE your markups/margins? So once you've got a product that's selling - what else can you do to increase your margins? Well, on Amazon it gets easier to do this... eBay not so much so. Why?

Because on Amazon, you can use REVIEWS to increase your margins. In short, when you get good reviews...and hopefully you will...you can 'use' those to increase your prices.

This is totally 'fair' - because if your product does have great reviews, you can naturally charge more for it! And that's obviously going to help your 'pwofit' margins.

Final question... How about combining these two strategies?

Selling a high-margin product, and getting great reviews on it?

'Atta boy!

Biased Reviews

There was a 'snippet' on Radio One yesterday...

...all about the singer Adele. I'm sure you've heard of her.

And as you may or may not know, she's got a new album out.

Now...with 40m albums already sold, there's a good chance this one will sell too! (Incidentally it's Amazon's #1 selling item of the moment, too).

Anyway, this 'snippet' on Radio One was all about Adele's early critics. There were LOTS. And they were reading out their comments...which basically amounted to "She will never make it."

This was back about six years ago, before she sold about 39m albums.

Now, cut to the Telegraph.co.uk...

They recently published an article which criticised Amazon's review system. The title of the article says it all: "Call me a snob, but Amazon's idiotic reviews are useless."

The author of the article believes most of Amazon's reviewers are idiots, who don't know what makes a 'good' product...so the reviews are thereby worthless.

Both of Adele's critics, and the Amazon critic were/are wrong. Why? Because 'critics' aren't the average man or woman. 'Critics' are usually over-educated snobs who have never actually worked a real job in their lives.

They usually study arty-farty degrees, come from privileged backgrounds, and have never sold a single product. They then impose their own perspective of what makes a 'good' product (or film etc) on everyone else.

And their own perspective is just as 'biased' as everyone else's!

The bias just comes from a different angle. The 'judge' of a good product is, surely, what the majority make of it. And even if you believe the majority are 'dumb' - they're still the majority. And if they like it and think it's good...they must be right.

Because their sheer numbers out-vote your opinion. Take 100 people. They try your new 'coconut oil'... 90 like it. But 10 critics don't - they say it isn't creamy enough. Who's right?

Surely the 90 - because what if they don't like cream? In short, without going too philosophical on a Friday morning.... who can possibly determine what is 'good' or isn't?

Anyway - here's the point for today...

Whilst you can um-and-ah about what makes a good product before you decide to sell it, you won't really know how people will like it, until you release it.

Rental Income From Online Real Estate

The email below was written before 'Amazon Aggregators' became a thing, and who went onto raise £10bn+ by buying Amazon companies – pretty much based on the concept you'll read about below.

=====

Property...property...property...

Isn't it 'as safe as houses'?

Isn't it the 'new pension'? So they tell us...

But isn't it all a bit over-valued these days, too? You stick 200K 'in' (if you're lucky to have that sum hanging around).

And you'll get about 9K back a year.

If that. That's about £750 a month.

Not bad, but for the amount you invested - it's p*ss poor. (Yes, I know you are supposed to 'leverage' it, but let's not go there for now).

But how about this instead? You invest a small amount - maybe a couple of hundred quid. You test a concept. It works. You invest some more - maybe a few grand. And then you cream off £500 a month for years to come.

And all through the 'new' property.

Except there is no tenant. There are no faulty boilers. No over-grown gardens, and no new roofs. This is the 'real estate' of the future - a powerful Amazon listing.

Think about it...

If you have your own, unique product on Amazon with good reviews and a decent margin, you've got your own 'piece of prime property' - on one of the World's most trafficked websites (where buyers come with their wallets open).

The 'rent' you get from it might vary from £100 per month up to 10K per month.

But it's pretty much continuous - and it's very much an 'asset' like a house or flat. (Albeit 'virtual').
So where am I going with this?

Simple...

This 'virtual Amazon real estate' could well be the 'property' of the future...

An income stream that can last for years, and which you 'own' like a property asset.

Key is - to get your own! Don't worry - this ain't a sales pitch. But I think a lot of people don't view things like this. They'll see the 'hard work' of setting up their piece of 'real estate'...without realising the potential pay-off.

Yet, now is as good a time as any to build your own 'virtual real estate'.

This applies to eBay as well...

Whether it's eBay or Amazon...

Key is: a strong product that sells well. Ideally with great reviews.

In a long-lasting market...one that will still be around 10 years from now. Work hard on that product. Get the listing up...

And then 'collect rent' for years to come off that listing. £500 a month. £1K a month. Or whatever. Pretty much continuously.

It's a LOT better return than a two-up-two-down in Norwich! Have YOU started building your own 'virtual real estate' yet?

Walk Away From The Internet

There's no marketing 'tip' or idea today...

Just a simple idea and 'thing' that I did this weekend.

Maybe you'll find it of some use!

You see, if you're anything like most people these days... ..you've probably got a bit of an Internet addiction. The news. Email. YouTube. eBay. Amazon. Google. And all the rest. And what does this lead to?

Ultimately, it may well lead to a LACK of 'inspiration'.

A LACK of 'creativity' and of good ideas...as you start to look at things in the same way each and every day...

It may even lead to a feeling of 'overwhelm' as you suffer from information overload.

What to do? So, this weekend a friend of mine called me up and asked: "Do you fancy going for a walk?" Seemed simple enough.

After all...walking was something I've practiced for at least a few decades...so it didn't sound too difficult. (Always a bonus).

But this wasn't a walk around the block. It was a multi-hour 'marathon' (of sorts), way out in the countryside. Amongst mud, rivers, and even a few wild animals. And how good it was to be out 'in nature'!

This was something I used to do, a few years back. But, swamped in 'Internet stuff' (like most of us), it was something I don't do anywhere near often enough these days. It was totally refreshing.

And, I'll bet I'm more likely to now come up with 'good ideas' this week...as I've taken more of a break from everything. (Ideally I could have done this for the whole weekend...but didn't). So, a rather tangential question this Monday: When was the last time you got out into the country? Into 'nature'? This month? This year?

I'm sure there are a few people reading this now who do it regularly. But I bet that most of us hardly ever do this.

Yet it's a GREAT thing to do...at least once in a while. Get out into the country, into nature, out amongst the trees and the frogs. *Especially* in these tech-heavy times.

Maybe you won't be able to go now until next weekend - but either way, it's well worth a punt. It clears your head. Gets you off the Internet for a day. And it unclogs your mind, making a 'breakthrough' that bit more likely. (It also doesn't cost you a penny...except for a bit of fuel).

Country Walking - yes, a HUGE SECRET that few people will ever discover!

Yet something that few of us do enough of.

PS Also works great to lose a few calories, as an added bonus.

The Psychic Life Of A Would-Be Online Seller

I've got a strong interest in psychology...

And I think the 'interest' was first triggered from being in sales and marketing. (Where we all know that 'psychology' is hugely important). But regardless of where this interest came from, it's here to stay.

Anyway...you may have heard of a chap called Sigmund Freud, who was the father of 'Psycho Analysis'.

So just yesterday I was reading a 'FWEE' eBook of his (downloaded onto my Kindle), called...

"A General Introduction To Psychoanalysis"

And at the start of the 'book' (which are really a series of lectures), Freud is talking to some doctors. And he tells them: "You have been trained to reduce the functions of an organism and its disorders anatomically, to explain them in terms of chemistry and physics and to conceive them biologically... ..but no portion of your interest has been directed to the psychic life, in which, after all, the activity of this wonderfully complex organism culminates."

Freud here is talking about illness...and how it isn't just limited to physical 'anatomical' problems, but how the mind can play a huge role. (Witness, for example, the placebo effect).

So, what does this have to do with selling online?

Well, how about I rephrase it like this: "You have been trained to reduce the functions of ONLINE SELLING in terms of 'systems' and 'step-by- step' instructions... ...but no portion of your interest has been directed to the psychic life, in which, after all, the activity of starting and running a business actually happens." What I'm really getting at is this:

How many of us simply look for a business 'system'...rather than also realising that how you mentally approach things plays a HUGE role?

In the same way as Freud would treat an 'illness' as both a body and mind 'condition'... ...more and more of us should treat a 'business plan' not just as a series of steps, but as having a huge 'mind' component as well.

For example...

Maybe you're interested in selling on Amazon. You buy a course to get some 'steps to take'. But here's the thing...

Once you get those 'steps to take', you don't implement them, or if you do, you give up very quickly.

Or, you don't lay out a clear 'plan of action' as to what you should do and when - and you DON'T STICK TO IT.

What I'm saying is that we should all appreciate how much all of this is a 'mental' thing - and not just try to reduce everything down to: "Yes - just take these steps and that's it!"

Unfortunately, this maybe the hardest thing of all - getting YOUR 'mental game' right. So, quick question for you for today... For your current business...or for the last business 'system' that you bought...how much time did you spend on your 'mental game'? On planning, on persistence, on speed-of-implementation, on what happens if things don't work out...and so on?

Maybe we should all start to think more about the connection between a 'system' and the mind that implements it. Freud would be proud!

At Least Three Suppliers Please!

I've been on the hunt...

After last week's 'illness-lurgi' debacle, I'm raring to go again.

And I've been looking at importing some new products (from China), including one in the 'car' niche...

So I saw the product I wanted, and got in touch with several suppliers through Alibaba.com...

The idea is, quite simply, to sell this product on Amazon.co.uk using 'Fulfilment by Amazon'. I'll also put it on eBay. Anyway, here are the rough quotes I got for this 'car' product...

- Supplier 1 - price \$35

- Supplier 2 - price \$25

- Supplier 3 - price \$19

The product APPEARS to be the same, or very similar. Sure, there may be some difference in the quality between these. But look at those price differences!

I could give you further examples in different niches, but I don't think I need to.

Point is simple...if you had ONLY contacted 'Supplier 3', and your competitor contacted 'Supplier 1', you'd be stuffed.

No amount of 'great marketing' would get you out of that one.

He'd be paying almost HALF the price for the same product!

You could literally have the best pictures in the World...the best 'copy'... even great reviews - and yet you would struggle greatly IF you 'jumped' at Supplier 3 only.

And this doesn't JUST apply to product suppliers and manufacturers...

It can apply to everything from packaging tape to your business' gas and electric.

Get this wrong ENOUGH...and you'll be skating on very thin ice.

And that's IF you've even got a business left to 'skate' with!

Simply put, always contact at least THREE suppliers for ANY product you are sourcing. The more, the better. You may well find large differences in price (as I often do).

Differences that can LITERALLY make or break your business! If you only ever contact one supplier, how do you know whether you're being spanked or not?

You don't!

*****The SILVERBACK Principle!*****

This is an article that I've wanted to write for a while...

...but I've not had the time to put it all down on paper.

Until now.

This is arguably THE most important principle of online selling that you'll find anyone talk about, anywhere.

This is so, so important...

And yet you never hear anyone talk about it..

The remarkable thing about the principle I want to discuss is its *universality*.

This principle applies in nature...it applies to dating...it applies to professional sports...and it absolutely applies to online selling.

I call it *The Silverback Principle*

If you fully understand and then use this principle, you will understand more about the online marketplaces than 99% of other sellers.

And if you really 'get to grips with it', you'll understand a huge amount about...well...everything!

But firstly – let me take you to back around 9 years...

I was holidaying in Uganda.

It was early morning – around 5am, and a van pulled up outside the lodge I was staying at, on the shores of *Lake Burundi*.

The driver had told us to 'make sure you're on time'. We had a long journey ahead of us.

Where were we going? I was about to experience the trip of a lifetime...something that few people on the planet ever get to experience.

I was there to see the Silverback gorillas.

In their natural habitat...deep in the mountains.

I still remember gazing at one of these impressive beasts as he munched down on the local greenery...right there in his natural habitat....something that very few people will ever get to see...and a memory that will live with me for the rest of my life.

But what does this have to do with anything?

The most successful *Silverback Gorilla* that human beings know of was called *Titus*. He was known as the *Gorilla King*, allegedly siring more offspring than any other (known) Silverback. According to Wikipedia:

“Titus sired more children than any other gorilla on record and by 2004 controlled the largest known gorilla troop in the world.”

Now, here’s the interesting thing.

There will be a fair few silverbacks out there at any one time...but many of them *won’t* get to reproduce.

And many of them *won’t* get to lead a troop.

These poor outcasts will move from group-to-group, ever-hopeful that they’ll be able to *break in*.

Many fail...leaving only **a few privileged silverbacks to take most of the spoils. (NOTE: emphasis added!)**.

In short, a FEW silverbacks get MOST of the rewards.

They get most of the access to females. They sire the most offspring. They get access to the best food. And they control the biggest troops.

A select few make hay...whilst most get virtually nothing!

Now, let’s look at this table. It outlines the earnings for the *top tennis players in the World*.

TENNIS				
SCOREBOARD SCHEDULE RANKINGS PLAYERS				
ATP				
Points Earnings				
ATP Rankings - Earnings				
Rank	Player	Country	Points	Earnings
1	Novak Djokovic	Serbia	11,260	\$5,014,654
2	Dominic Thiem	Austria	9,125	\$4,785,024
3	Alexander Zverev	Germany	4,650	\$2,533,357
4	Daniil Medvedev	Russia	5,890	\$1,637,187
5	Pablo Carreno Busta	Spain	2,130	\$1,469,972
6	Rafael Nadal	Spain	9,850	\$1,443,172

And then we move down the rankings...to just outside the top 100...

100	Jeremy Chardy	France	860	\$233,994
101	Roberto Carballes Baena	Spain	649	\$233,144
102	J.J. Wolf	United States	492	\$232,779
103	Pablo Andujar	Spain	1,024	\$232,108

Note how the player who's ranked at 100 makes a LOT less than the World's best player – 'Silverback' Novak Djokovic!

Djokovic earned a total of \$50.6 million in **2019** and has made an impressive \$143 million in **prize money** singles and doubles combined. Feb 14, 2020



www.foxbusiness.com/sports/novak-djokovic-money

When you factor in endorsements as well as prize money, *Djokovic's* (the number one) earnings are **200 TIMES** greater than someone who is only 99 places behind him (globally, out of 7 billion people!).

Now, let's look at another table. This outlines the distribution in online dating through the dating app *Tinder*.

	Age	% Match	Age Match	Age Recommend
Attractive Guy	26	22.6	24.5	23.7
Unattractive Guy	34	0.5	28.9	23.9

Here you can see an 'Attractive Guy' matched with 22.6% of females that uncovered his profile.

Yet the 'Unattractive Guy' only got a 0.5% match rate.

In other words, the 'silverback' got **45 TIMES** the results when it came to online dating!

Are you starting to see what I'm getting at here?

Now, some anecdotal online selling data...

I can tell you from numerous projects that a really hot item – *a leader in its niche* – can sell 100 units a day. But a similar product...which doesn't quite make the grade...might only sell 3-4 units a day.

That's a difference again of THIRTY times!

Are you noticing a pattern here?

I'll state an important line from earlier, here once again:

*Many will fail...leaving only **a few privileged silverbacks to take most of the spoils.***

And that one line of text should be indelibly burned into the consciousness of every online seller.

Because it's of paramount importance.

Today, more than ever.

Let me put it in simple and blunt terms.

Today, it's all about being THE Silverback in YOUR niche!

This is one of the implications of the *Silverback Principle*. You either die without offspring...or you die, having lived like a King.

This is the brutal, hard-core reality of the natural World.

The Internet amplifies the *Silverback Principle*.

But it did NOT create the Silverback Principle.

It's just that the Internet amplifies it.

Now today...more than ever...if you're a failing Silverback...it's making it worse.

But if you're a *Titus* – it's making things better than ever!

Let's zero in on the *Silverback Principle* and online selling now.

I just mentioned that the Internet *amplifies* the *Silverback Principle*. How and why?

Here's why: via the **expansion of the availability of options.**

By massively expanding the availability of options, the internet amplifies the *Silverback Principle*.

Let me show you how...

Consider a local shop. Previously, that shop would serve...local customers. And it would serve *only* those customers. And, those customers would come to expect a certain **standard** from that shop.

But here's the thing...

That shop could survive because **it was the only choice people had.** In short, there would often be no other available options. And guess what's happened now?

There are millions of available options...all READILY ACCESSIBLE!

Heck, even with *Silverbacks* there would be limited options. The limit would be determined by geography...after all, even the biggest silverback in Uganda would be no threat to the bigger and badder silverback in *The Democratic Republic of Congo*.

Are you now seeing how the Web is the ultimate 'ground-zero' for the *Silverback Principle*?

It removes distance and hence gives practically unlimited options.

If I want to buy a new chainsaw...previously, I'd pop down to the local shop. Now, I can go online and find something *better and cheaper*.

Not only that...but – and this is key – even when I go online, I can find the very best chainsaw with a few clicks – GLOBALLY, if I wanted to!

As such there will be a *Chainsaw Silverback* who will WIN...

With all the other chainsaw sellers getting the scraps.

OK, let's round this up...

What does this mean to you...practically?

Let me summarise what I think the main implications are (at least those that the average seller can act on *practically*)...

- 1) Whatever you sell, your goal is to get your product to page 1 – preferably as close to the top as possible – and **become THE silverback in your niche!**
- 2) It's easier to do that if there is NOT already a silverback seller who's found his footing (aim for NEW markets where there *isn't* an established silverback).
- 3) Once again: once you start selling a product successfully in a market, aim to become the silverback!

One final thing...

No Silverback stays on top forever. Even the legendary *Titus* was ultimately de-throned by his own son.

Likewise, no product will stay a leader in its niche forever. Ultimately, another *Silverback* will come along and de-throne it – *but that 'new' silverback must be better, bigger and stronger than what's already out there.*

If that's the case – that new silverback will take over - and reap practically ALL the rewards for itself!

As in nature...as it is online!