

SUMMER
EBOOK

~~READING~~

WRITING



story by **ADRIANNE MACHINA** | illustration by **SETH REXILIUS**

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hhh...The lazy days of summer are here at last. There's nothing better than sitting in the shade with a good book. I have lots of recommendations for good books. My recent favorite is "The Big Leap" by Gay Hendricks. The book is about how to break through your self-imposed limitations, or as he calls it, your Upper Limit Problems, so that you can create your best life every day and feel great all the time.

Which brings me to one limitation I see with clients all the time: They don't have good offers to give away, and they don't believe they can create them on their own. I'm going to challenge you on that belief. I think you can put together a pretty good offer on your own. Instead of reading this summer, are you up for taking on the challenge of writing?

Not a full-length novel...just an eBook of 10 to 30 pages.

GREAT OFFERS LEAD TO BETTER WEBSITE CONVERSIONS

You will never have good conversions on your website if you don't have good offers to give away. A good offer is something of value that people are willing to submit their email address or other contact information for in order to obtain.

Free consultations are still probably the most popular call to action, but your website visitor has to be pretty qualified in order to want to meet with your team in person. While that may make your salespeople happy, it also means you are missing out on lots of opportunities because you're getting to the game so late – and the prospect might already have a preferred solution provider.

AN EBOOK IS A GREAT OFFER

What most companies are lacking are the top-of-the-sales-funnel offers. These offers are aimed at people who know they have a problem or set of symptoms, yet they haven't identified a specific solution. Maybe what they know is that:

- » QuickBooks is running slow – or –
- » Payroll is costing them too much – or –
- » No one is using their CRM system

What they are looking for is how to remedy that situation. They might not even be looking to buy something new yet. This is your opportunity to plant a seed, to start to get them dissatisfied with their current situation. By educating your readers on their options, you can get them to see the possibility that your solution might get them there faster or with a better end result than staying with the status quo. And because you've gotten their email information, you don't have to close the deal in the first interaction. You can keep nurturing them and answering their questions until they are ready to buy.

ANYONE CAN WRITE AN EBOOK

It just takes a little thought, time, and discipline. Having your own eBook specific to your company will give you a better educated prospect, a differentiated position amongst your competitors, and a great offer you can use in your ads and on your website to convert visitors and viewers into leads.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT EBOOK?

- » **A Fabulous Topic** – Ask your frontline sales and service people about the issues clients ask about all the time. Or talk to your project managers about the rules they enforce working with clients. Often the marketing group doesn't have great insight to the day-to-day problems our salespeople and consultants face. Look at blogs you've been writing – and that your competition has been writing. The easiest eBooks to write are lists – Top 10 Ways, 7 Steps, 14 Principles, etc. Also look at areas where you provide a competitive differentiation – or where you can take a contrarian approach.
- » **A Curiosity-Provoking Headline** – The main purpose of a headline is to get people to be curious enough about what's inside the eBook to be willing to exchange their email address for the information you are providing. Make it good!
- » **Subtlety in the Sales Pitch** – Your eBook cannot be entirely a product pitch. If someone has concerns about moving to the cloud, explain when moving to the cloud is NOT a good idea, even if your solution is entirely cloud-based. If you're writing a book about getting higher CRM adoption rates, don't make the eBook only about Microsoft Dynamics CRM; give them clever, insightful ideas you've seen work that they can use whether they switch to you or not.
- » **Helpful Advice** – Give advice from a place of truly helping. Put yourself in their shoes. Would you read this? Would you find value in this advice? Would you give this to your best prospects today (if they were still in the beginning stages of their search) to help them with their decision process? Make sure you explain terms and acronyms that may be unfamiliar to the reader.

The point is to shift the relationship you have with your market so that when the time comes for them to change their situation or software, they'll think of you first.

- » **High Perceived Value** – Even if your eBook is free, it shouldn't look that way. Add artwork and branding; design a cover yourself or use a professional if necessary. Customers will be more likely to download and read your eBook if they believe they are getting something of great value for little cost.
- » **Focus** – Stay focused on one topic. You are better off covering one subject in depth rather than a high level summary of a lot of topics. You can always write another eBook to cover another topic.
- » **Simplicity** – Your market is looking to you for easily accessible answers, not the next great American novel. Find the balance between delivering on the content you've promised and overwhelming your prospects with too much information.

How long will it take? Some companies can crank out an eBook in less than a week. I've written one over a weekend. Others take months to develop. Once you've decided to write one, stay committed! The point is to shift the relationship you have with your market so that when the time comes for them to change their situation or software, they'll think of you first. 🌀

Adrienne Machina is a marketing consultant with a great [reading](#) writing list for this summer. Want to see what's on her list? Contact her at Amachina@tornadomktg.com.