



What Do Taylor Swift, AI Chatbots, and OnlyFans Have in Common?

A Marketing Tactic That Can Make Your Business Competitor-Proof

Here's a crazy story that I just came across recently: In 2011, Seattle Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch scored a touchdown in a game against the New Orleans Saints. Fans in the stands absolutely rioted. They cheered and pounded their feet so hard that they accidentally caused a magnitude 2 earthquake.

It was a wild one-off phenomenon — until Taylor Swift fans blew the Seahawks out of the water.

In July 2023, Taylor showed up in Seattle for her “Eras” tour and got fans dancing. Their moves registered as a *2.3 magnitude earthquake*, .3 more than the previous one. How insane is that?

Taylor Swift gets a lot of hype, but I think her “Eras” tour will go down in history not just as an incredibly lucrative service (she’s supposed to rake in more than \$2.2 billion) but as a piece of marketing genius.

Why Taylor Swift Sells

People are obsessed with Taylor Swift for a reason. The way she markets herself makes fans feel highly connected to her, and that’s by design. When Taylor had her mom walk through a crowded concert and hand out backstage passes for a VIP “T-Party” with her and her parents, she’s tapping into a vast need right now: **People are starved for social connection.**

Rates of loneliness have been going up since the 1970s, and studies show that today, about 60% of people feel lonely regularly. On average, we have

fewer friends and spend more time in isolation. The involuntary solitude has gotten so bad that experts are calling it a “loneliness epidemic” and a “crisis.” There are many reasons for it, but the fallout is that we’re all craving personal relationships right now.

You can see that craving everywhere once you start to look for it. It’s not just Taylor Swift fans swapping “friendship bracelets” with random strangers at concerts. People are also buying everything from beer to hotel stays on the advice of social media influencers who they think are their friends.

“Ultimately, what matters is that people are craving relationships right now — and if you offer them a taste of that connection, you’ll set yourself and your brand apart from your competition.”

How Influencers Cash In on Friendship

Influencer marketing is experiencing rapid growth right now because it gives people a sense of connection. Ordinary people on Instagram and TikTok love influencers. They don’t perceive them as acting or playing a character like their favorite TV celebrities. They see them as real people who just happen to be able to grow a massive social following.

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In the eyes of their audience, these influencers aren't pretending — they're presenting their real lives, and that genuine connection sells.

We can find more extreme examples, too. In the last few years, we've seen a new generative AI industry rise up, and some people are using that AI to create chatbots that counteract loneliness. For a few dollars a month, you can subscribe to a service like CarynAI ("Your Generative AI Girlfriend") or Replika ("The AI Companion Who Cares") and pay to have a conversation with a customized AI model. More than 10 million people have already joined Replika and created AI "friends" there.

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The insanely popular website OnlyFans is an even more extreme case. The company launched in 2016 and quickly began attracting creators and subscribers. In 2022, its revenue passed \$1 billion! Profits at the company jumped 20% from November 2021 to November 2022 alone. Today, over 200 million people are registered for the site, and it has more than 1,000 employees.

OnlyFans hosts a lot of NSFW (not safe for work) content, so you might be tempted to chalk that popularity up to the fact that sex sells. But logically, that doesn't make a whole lot of sense. You can get that kind of content for free at a thousand other places on the internet. So, why would you shell out a monthly fee?

People do it because they're not really paying for content; they're paying for a relationship with the creator. A large portion of the revenue OnlyFans brings in isn't even from pictures or videos — it's from direct message conversations. Collectively, people have paid millions of dollars to have conversations with the guys and girls posting on OnlyFans.

This all stems from a lack of human connection in our society. Fear of rejection and a shortage of social skills on the part of many people probably play into that missing piece. Ultimately, what matters is that people are craving relationships right now — and if you offer them a taste of that connection, you'll set yourself and your brand apart from your competition.

Leverage Connection to Win More Business

Let me be clear: I'm not suggesting you make a connection with your clients through an NSFW OnlyFans account! But you should use your marketing to establish a personal relationship with them. This is arguably one of the most important things you can do as a business owner, which is why I've been pounding the relationship marketing drum since starting Newsletter Pro in 2011.

If you've ever wondered why we insist on having our writers spend at least 15 minutes a month interviewing you, gathering your personal stories, and ghostwriting in your voice, this is the answer! Once you build that personal relationship, it will serve you whether the economy is good or bad, regardless of which competitors come into your space.

Let's think about Taylor Swift again because she knows just how vital this is. In 2019, she continued to build her personal relationship and connection with her fan base by releasing private diary entries inside her "Lover" album. In an even more shrewd marketing move, she only included a quarter of the diary in each album. If you wanted the entire thing, you had to buy four copies of the content! That sounds crazy, but thousands of people did it (including several people I know) because they feel THAT connected and loyal to Taylor Swift.



Think about that for a second. When was the last time you bought two or three of the exact same piece of content on purpose? Have you ever? That's the power of building a relationship. You'll get more repeat business and referrals and secure an ironclad position in your marketplace so competitors will have a very tough time breaking through. So, how do you build a Taylor Swift-level connection? It's not as difficult as you might think. It only takes three steps.

3 Steps to Connecting With Your Clients

1. Articulate who you are and what you stand for.
2. Create personal, relationship-building content.
3. Share that content across multiple media platforms.

Step 2 is the most important of these three steps — and it's surprisingly easy to do. You might feel as if your family life, hobbies, and interests are too specific to you to matter to other people, but in reality, you don't need a direct one-to-one connection to succeed. Here's what I mean.

I'm a dad to five boys, and I write about them all the time in my newsletter, emails, and other content. I also get messages from parents who connect with me about my kids. And you know what? Those parents don't all have five boys! Some of them have two boys and connect with me over having kids of the same gender. Others have three, six, or 10 kids and connect with me over having a large family. Heck, I've even had people reach out to tell me, "I can relate to you because we both had kids really young" — even though they had their first baby at 25, and I had mine at 16. Starting at 25 is young for them, so that's close enough!

I know sharing personal stories in your marketing content can feel awkward, risky, or even unprofessional,

but it's what people want to hear. Those stories help them get to know, like, and trust you. When I told the story of my nasty custody battle here in the newsletter, I got approximately 185 positive emails, texts, and phone calls expressing support. Numerous people told me their own sad stories, and my heart broke for them because I know that pain. I got exactly two negative responses from people who thought sharing the story was unprofessional.

Personally, I'll take that ratio any day.

How to Write Content That Gets Results

As you're creating your personal content, remember these cardinal rules:


1. Don't be boring.
2. Be authentic.
3. Communicate regularly and consistently.
4. Go multichannel.
5. Focus on helping people.

With that simple formula, you can and will create raving fans. Your stories, experiences, hot takes, and personality will set you apart from your competitors. Almost anybody can come in and copy your business model. The secret magic in your back pocket is you, your team, and your brand. Use those things to help your business grow and thrive regardless of what's happening in the economy.

- Shaun



3 Creative Ways to Boost Your Open Rates, Phone Calls, and Referrals



Have your phones gone quiet lately? Maybe your email open rates aren't as high as you'd like them to be, or your unsubscribe numbers are creeping upward day by day. If that sounds familiar, we can probably diagnose what's going on with your business: You have a lead problem — and you're not the only one.

According to the Lead Generation Institute, 80% of marketers think their lead gen campaigns are almost entirely ineffective. Yet businesses spend an average of \$198 per lead, and 53% of them allocate more than half of their marketing budget to bringing in new clients. If you're spending like that and still feel your campaigns are failing, you're flushing money down the drain.

It's hard to say exactly what went wrong at your company. Maybe you're using an outdated content marketing strategy, sending the wrong emails, or missing the mark with your referral program. Whatever the issue, here are three creative tactics that might help solve it.

1. REVAMP YOUR CONTENT MARKETING WITH THE SYMPTOM STRATEGY. Most small-business owners focus their content marketing on the problems they can solve for their future customers. A dentist's content, for example, might explain how they can help people with periodontal disease. This tactic works, but you can make it even better.

To reach a wider audience, consider pivoting to focus on your customers' symptoms. In the periodontal disease example, that might mean using an article in your print newsletter to cover swollen gums, bad breath, or that nasty taste a reader could have in their mouth. This approach brings in more leads because it resonates with people who have a problem but can't put a name to that problem yet. For a B2B example, just look at the first paragraph of this article. We used this strategy on you!

2. SPIKE YOUR EMAIL OPEN RATES WITH VALUE-ADDED MESSAGES. Many businesses make the mistake of sending nothing but sales emails. Not only is this a turnoff for potential

leads, but it can also negatively impact your email deliverability. To grow and maintain an active email list, you should send interesting, valuable, community-based content regularly.

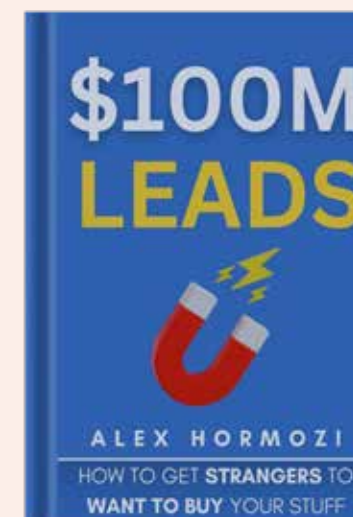
Our team discovered this in the process of creating our email newsletter product. It turns out that sending interesting, valuable content instead can push ALL of your open rates significantly higher. People will click on that content, and when Microsoft and Google see your content-based emails are being read, they'll allow more of your sales through their spam filters. You'll get even better results if you segment your email list and only send your sales emails to people who you know are interested in what you're promoting.

We're currently working on an advanced tactic that leverages this idea and the symptom strategy. Soon, our email campaigns will tailor themselves to every person on your list. When they click an article about a symptom, our system will add them to a new sales funnel and push more content about that symptom their way.

3. BRING IN MORE REFERRALS BY 'THINKING SMALL.' Epic, multi-month referral programs that incentivize referrals with cars or vacations are fantastic, but they aren't your only option. If you aren't getting enough referrals, try thinking small: Offer a small prize and make spreading the word about your company easy.

For example, you could offer a free T-shirt to a random subscriber who forwards one of your emails to a friend. That contest has a low barrier to entry, it's cost-effective (if 20 people share your email to win a \$10 T-shirt, you'll reach 20 new people for 50 cents each!), and it will make the winner a raving fan.

If you're struggling to bring in leads, test out these strategies in your small business — and when they work, don't forget to track those new leads in your CRM system! If you don't have a CRM, call our team at 208.297.5700 and ask about our email newsletter. As a thank you for getting on the call, we'll give you a high-quality CRM system and pay for the first six months of service. It's that important!



READY TO UNLOCK THE SECRETS TO LIGHTNING-FAST LEAD GENERATION?

Read '*\$100M Leads*' by Alex Hormozi

Acquisition.com founder Alex Hormozi is a master of lead generation. He has scaled and sold seven different businesses across multiple industries since 2013 — most recently cashing out a licensing company for \$46.2

million. Building and growing those businesses taught him the importance of finding and converting quality leads and the trade secrets to do it. Now, he's sharing those secrets with small-business owners like you in his new book, "\$100M Leads: How To Get Strangers To Want To Buy Your Stuff."

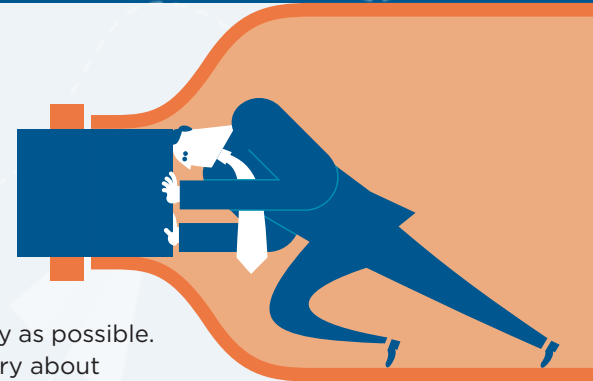
In the book, Hormozi breaks his lead generation advice into eight "never-go-hungry playbooks," covering topics like lead magnets, content marketing, paid

ads, affiliate marketing, referral programs, and more. He offers tips for everything from how to market to a cold list to crafting the perfect call to action. (It should include two parts: what the lead should do and why they should do it immediately.) In a video promoting the book, Hormozi said the referral playbook is the most valuable of all.

"Fundamentally, you could sell one person your product and never do any other marketing again for the rest of your life," he said. "If that product is good enough, then that person will tell five people, and those people will tell five people. It is the single highest-compounding way to advertise: Let your customers advertise for you."

"\$100M Leads" is the sequel to Hormozi's 2021 book, "\$100M Offers: How To Make Offers So Good People Feel Stupid Saying No." Consider this your sign to check out both. If you put Hormozi's techniques into action, you could follow in his millionaire footsteps in 2024.

How to Break the Bottlenecks Holding Your Business Back



One of entrepreneur Steve Jobs' life mantras was "focus and simplicity." Back in the late 1990s, he explained it to Business Week: "Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple," he said. "But it's worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains."

Jobs' point goes beyond the design of the iPhone! The most successful entrepreneurs know that simple processes are the key to faster business growth and higher profits. The more straightforward and easy-to-follow your processes are, the easier it will be for your team to perform, your leads to convert, and your partners to refer.

Just as efficient processes can boost your business, inefficient ones can hold you back from growth. To prevent that from happening, you should assess all of your policies regularly. Look for bottlenecks in your sales funnel, delays in your onboarding process, and friction in your referral system. If you notice responsive leads tend to take twice as long to get back to your team during a particular step in your sales process, for example, consider that a bottleneck. Dig in and look for the problem below the surface.

- **Is the step too difficult?** Try to lower the amount of effort required.
- **Is it too time-consuming?** Look into whether your team can pick up the slack to reduce the strain on your customer.
- **Is it confusing?** See if you can reword your instructions or use different questions to produce better results.

Left untouched, these issues can cause delays that cool your leads and ruin your sales. That's why you should aim to take as much off of your customer's plate as

reasonably as possible. Don't worry about the industry standard. Instead, do your best to make doing business with you effortless and painless, even if that means going above and beyond your competition.

We recommend taking advantage of every tool and opportunity available. That means considering not only policy changes but also outsourcing, delegation, automation, and other technological solutions to your customers' problems. You might think you're saving time or money by doing everything in-house, but that's almost never the case. When you try to handle something outside of your expertise, you will probably either:

1. Never do it at all, because you don't actually have the tools.
2. Or do it wrong and waste far more money than you "saved."

You're better off hiring an expert or automating the process with AI. Just make sure that you jump into outsourcing and automating with a system. To get the best output, be crystal clear with your new IT company, content writer, or digital ads manager about your goals, how you'll measure your progress, and what will count as success in your eyes. The more detailed your instructions are, the lower your risk will fall, and the better their performance will be.

As business winds down for the holidays, consider following Steve Jobs' example and removing friction for your team, your customers, your prospects, and yourself. If you break through those bottlenecks and barriers to growth, you'll be surprised by how much your business thrives.

"Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long."

-Psalm 25:4-5

**THE
WORD**



Retention Tactics That Fuel Sales Growth

As an entrepreneur, I like to be in the middle of the action — not in a boardroom. But, once a year, I hold an annual planning meeting with the members of my sales team. We get to spend a full day figuring out how to grow the business and find new retention tactics — something every entrepreneur loves.

These are the topics we discuss in the meeting:

- Annual targets and their evidence of success
- Attrition plan and goals
- Lead generation strategy and goals
- Content strategy and its evidence of success
- Referral strategy and goals

If you are a business owner, you should pay special attention to the second point on the above list: attrition plan and goals. Many companies fail to include this in their marketing and sales planning strategies, and they generate very few retention tactics. As a result, they struggle to build a solid customer base.

The Retention Problem

I found out years ago that growing a company is extremely difficult if you're constantly losing customers. To be clear, I'm not suggesting your goal should be to keep 100% of your customers. But you do want to keep a vast majority of them. Starting with a plan to minimize customer attrition allows the rest of your marketing to grow the business. That way, you aren't trying to make up for lost customers before adding new ones.

Understand the Numbers

When I work with entrepreneurs who aren't growing fast enough, it's typically due to an unknown or inaccurate

attrition rate that suffocates their growth. And unfortunately for them, knowing that number may be the most critical step to increasing their business's growth. The reason is because two primary things happen:

- The longer a customer has been with you, the more money they spend with your business.
- The longer someone is your customer, the more opportunities you have to get referrals.

These reasons make sense for most entrepreneurs and are enough to make business owners focus on decreasing customer attrition. For those who like numbers, here's some attrition math:

- Number of customers = 500
- Desired annual growth rate = 33%
- New customer goal = 165 new customers per year, or 14 new customers per month

On the surface, these numbers seem totally achievable. The problem is that I left out one crucial factor: monthly customer attrition. In this case, it's 2.4% or 12 customers per month.

Suddenly, the required 14 new customers per month is now 26 new customers when you factor in the customers you lose each month. If you aren't factoring in attrition, when you finally look up at the year's end, you'll have only grown by 24 customers. This is only 0.4% per month or a 4.8% annual growth rate.

When you understand how destructive attrition can be to the growth of a business, you can see why it's the

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second item on our marketing meeting agenda. Your attrition KPI (key performance indicator) is incredibly important for growing your company by more than a few percentage points yearly. But few people know their business's attrition rate, and even fewer have a plan to fix it.

Take the Necessary Steps

The first step is to realize that simply having a good product or service isn't enough. Thanks to the internet, people have more data and nearly unlimited choices for other providers, including no provider at all. If you are reading this and are in a small niche like I am, you're not immune.

Newsletter Pro has competitors, but they all provide templated newsletters. On the other hand, we provide ghostwritten and custom newsletters. However, a customer choosing to move to a templated or no newsletter is still a factor in our attrition. If you're someone with massive competition, finding and utilizing better retention tactics is necessary if you want long-term growth.

The next step is to build a relationship. I first learned this when I was in the dry-cleaning business. I found

that customers I interacted with the most and built a friendly relationship with handled problems differently than customers I barely knew. When a customer I didn't know called with a problem, they were getting ready for a fight. They would talk down to me and occasionally yell.

That was not the case when someone I had a relationship with called with a problem. The conversation was totally different. In those cases, we discussed the issue and fixed it together. Once I realized the relationship was the key, my goal became having a relationship with as many customers as possible. The vehicle I used to build those relationships was a newsletter.

Work Toward the Solution

As you track your attrition numbers, remember that a program like this takes time. You should start to see results from your efforts in six months — and good results within a year. Like any relationship-building campaign, you don't become best friends overnight. But if you are committed to growth — and ultimately higher profits — ensure you have a budget and a plan for customer attrition. Done correctly, it will be a turning point for your company and its growth in the new year.