

# OFFLINE MARKETING SUCKS?

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## **PART I**

Many of you already know me, and also know that I call things as I see them. I tend to not pull punches, and more often than not mix in my perverted/strange sense of humor into almost everything I do.

Well, hopefully this report won't disappoint!!! I won't BS around and get straight to the point of this report, as I am sure you have better crap to do than read through a bunch of pointless babbling about how great I am, yadda, yadda, yadda.

***So what the hell am I writing about this time??*** As you may know, I have been doing "offline" marketing for the past 4 years, and have more experience than I care to in the field. I also own [www.localbizbuilders.com](http://www.localbizbuilders.com), a community forum dedicated to the offline niche. So what you are about to read will most likely come as a bit of a shock...but...

### **Offline Marketing Sucks.**

Clear enough for you? I will repeat myself...**Offline Marketing SUCKS.**

Is there money in it...yes. Can you land big dollar websites...yes. BUT, think about it for a second...if you are not careful, you can easily fall into the trap and end up being simply just a webmaster with some marketing and SEO skills trying to get local business owners with no clue to pay you money that they don't have!!!

Of course there are many different "Avenues" of the offline niche:

- you have the email(stupid cash cow deal)
  - you have just web design(nothing new here is there?)
  - you have the SMS aspect, which is great but still revolves around sales
  - web design
  - hosting
- & many more avenues.

...and the list goes on. All of these things are nothing new, what is new however is that now internet marketers are focusing their efforts on local businesses and forcing "Graphic Artists" to either move on or learn some marketing skills.

The issue lies here....**SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS DON'T HAVE SHIT FOR MONEY TO SPEND ON YOUR SERVICES.** It can be like pulling teeth to sell them more than just a web site revamp or design. **THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND NOR CARE!!!**

Of course they want more business, but they are not yet willing to spend the money to get it. The cost in *time* that you have to spend to educate these people

does not compute out to a profitable job in the long term.

Yes there is money in the niche, but it revolves HEAVILY around web design more than general marketing if you market yourself that way. Do you really want to be a web designer? Is that what your ultimate goal is? If so, stick with the offline niche and keep doing what you are doing, you will do well.

Look, I know we can all make some cash selling an autoresponder setup, or doing hosting, and even web design/seo. My point here is that the effort required to sell a local business is hardly worth it at times and you will find yourself pulling out your hair trying to find ways to extract more money from your clients.

Come on, do you think that "Claire's Boutique" has \$1500-\$3000 to give you when Claire is barely making rent???? Granted, she could probably benefit from a well layed out and effective website, but I am pretty sure she much prefers to *pay her bills* so she can stay afloat a month or two longer!!

Look, most small business owners are completely satisfied with a basic yahoo, verizon or even intiut website. They most likely will cave at some point and spend a few dollars a month for a site because everyone and their brother told them they NEED one. What no one told them was how important it is to have an EFFECTIVE one. So they toss one up that was designed by their brother's girlfriend's cousin who is "pretty good with computers". They are satisfied via their ignorance. And this is the same person we are supposed to convince to give us money????

The other popular train of thought is to go after companies with lots of money. Supposedly, lawyers, accountants, doctors, etc all have money just sitting there in a drawer waiting for you to walk in and build them a site. Again, you are now a web designer with some seo skills if you follow the popular models. Can you grab these accounts...of course you can, if you want to design for a living.

The whole lure of jumping to the "offline" niche was the lure of "easier" money. If you work hard, you make money, and you have less competition to fight with. SEO is easier(of course search requests for *YourTownPizzaPlace* are anemic at best), but really, you are now working 5 times harder and getting paid 3x less than you are worth...**and** have to deal with people all day!!

Sounds like a winner to me!!

I know what I am saying is harsh, and there are some people doing very well in this niche. Hell, I do well in this niche. But when you step back for a minute...does it really seem worth it? Most people got into the offline niche as a byproduct of the incestous IM market. Everyone got lured into IM because they wanted to make money online...and now we work offline? I don't get it anymore. Lets call things as they are...offliners are internet marketers that couldn't make

shit for money online because they lacked the focus and determination. Offline was an easy lure to make them sound like a pro to local yocals. Am I right?(I DO include myself in this generalization)

Offline marketing. Know who's making money? Same as online...the people making products that teach you how to make money. Think about this....before Andrew C. posted on the Warrior Forum about OFFLINE GOLD...was there an offline niche? Nope. There were those of us doing local web design...his post just gave us a fancy new title and a small twist on an old profession. It lured people into a new market where we could utilize our massive IM knowledge to benefit our local small businesses.

I am guilty as charged. I have been a big seller of the offline niche. I have promoted it constantly over the last 2 years, and I work it every day.

The reason I got into this niche was more so because I am a fan of small business at heart, and I honestly wanted to help small business owners succeed. I felt that by doing what I was doing I could make a difference. ***What I learned was that 85% of all small business owners can't even afford to help themselves.***

## PART II

Ok, so you read PART I and think either

- a)I'm an asshole
- b)I have a plan
- c)Both the above

I vote c. lol. My point in PART I was to drive home a point. That point is that many in the offline niche get into it with great intentions, but soon realize they have been demoted to strictly web designers in their local markets.

Our vast IM knowledge goes unused in the profitable sense due to the fact that small business owners do not have the money to spend to help themselves, lack the insight needed to put your skills to use, and/or refuse to change with the times.

I see it everyday. I have my finger on the pulse in my community when it comes to small business. I have tons of contacts and talk to people daily about the market.

Business owners are in "safe" mode. They do not have the money to properly invest in what they need to better themselves. Its just not there.

As "offliners", the approach we have been using will not work going forward and sustaining for years to come. Granted, if you just want to design sites then keep doing what your doing, but with the free tools available today, a greater majority can do that on their own...

As stated, I got into this years ago to not just make money(very important of course!!) but to help small business owners. Although I am doing VERY well for myself, I still find myself just designing sites with some seo and some very basic stuff like video. Nothing ground breaking. All my customers are very happy, but when I start talking about doing more...they shut down due to cost issues...and I wont work for free.

There are some "offliners" that do well and land good accounts(as I have done occasionally), but they are the exception, not the norm.

The market has changed because the economic climate has changed. The way we all do business has changed. The things we spend money on has changed. Our priorities have changed. So why haven't we changed our approach?

What we should be doing is coming up with ways that benefit the business owner without much effort on their part(or ours) and produces US income at a reasonable rate. This "way" should be automated to a degree, and lessen the cost burden for your services. Something that benefits both parties and in the end

does one thing that will make you and the owner happy...MAKE SALES.

But finding the right clients is not as easy as most make it out to be. Getting to your target demographic is key, as well as having the right message. The basic principles of marketing will tell you that targetting the right message to the right demographic is crucial(and kinda obvious). The old addage of trying to sell ice to an Eskimo rings true here.

But let's be honest with ourselves. Most of us live in smaller cities where there is not a lot of companies that can afford to dish out the cash we desire/deserve. Yes they are out there, but few and far between for some of us. I myself do not live in a huge city, and I can count on one hand the amount of really profitable businesses that can afford me.

BUT, the number of businesses that COULD USE my services to really boost sales is numerous. So here lies the rub...we have a small percentage of businesses that CAN afford us, and out of that percentage, a portion of them will choose you provided you pitch your services properly, but the people who need you the most can't afford you. There is also a group that regardless of price wont do anything to help themselves out of ignorance or just plain being stubborn.

I know that saying that offline marketing "sucks" is probably a bit over the top, but it is supposed to get you thinking. Look, I have been doing this a long time and it helps support me and my family. Hell, I wouldn't have the LBB forum up if I didn't believe that there was "gold in them there hills".

What's frustrating is the mentality that we tend to have(I am generalizing, I know not EVERYONE thinks this way)...in that we *undervalue our services and think way to small*. We think like sole-proprietors not like businesses.

WE are in business to make money. Most of us are also doing this because we believe that our services will help add value to our clients. I myself believe in small business and think that our country was built on small business, and if we don't work hard to preserve it we will be all shopping at Wal-Mart's and Home Depot's for everything in life.

***Let's suppose we can get away with saying that this niche doesn't "suck", but that our mentality towards the niche "sucks".***

Let's think about this. What does a small business owner want? Well here are some answers from owners themselves:

- *What we need seems straightforward: We need vendors who partner with us to provide a high quality product or service in the time frame they promise and who do so with little oversight.*
- *A vendor, partner, supplier whose mission is to care, care enough to listen, listen enough to know their needs, able enough to customize their abilities*

*to fit the needs of their client, the small business.*

- Great question! I want a vendor who does what he/she says he/she can do, at a reasonable price, and is in touch with me at agreed upon times.*
- I think small businesses want to look big. Maybe not corporate big, but bigger than two guys in the garage working 12-hour days to keep the business afloat*
- Large corporations have marketing departments that generate sophisticated campaigns to fuel the growth of the business. Small businesses generally DO NOT.*
- In general, small business owners want to do what they love and get paid for it. To that end, if the business is large enough that it can afford delegate our outsource operational tasks, I think small business owners want people, products, and services who can take over and do a competent job without too much hassle (especially when it comes to sales, marketing, bookkeeping, etc.).*

Source: <http://smallbiztrends.com/2008/12/what-do-small-businesses-want.html>

These are just a few answers. There are thousands more. As small business owners, we must wear multiple hats and worry about everything. Some companies can afford to have an organizational staff that can take some of the pressure off, but most take it all on themselves...and MARKETING is something they all need!!! They don't know where to begin, and usually throw crap at the wall to see what sticks, and when nothing does...they give up and think all advertising and marketing "sucks".

A person/company that comes in and promises them 1<sup>st</sup> page on Google for their keyword or keyphrase is good, but really, there are so many other variables that this really doesn't help them. (of course at parties it feels good to say you are number one for "Shinola Shoe Shiner"!)

Web Design and SEO is only a small part of the offline equation and to be honest, it is not the first thing to really go after.

The problem is that most business owners just don't "Get it". And can't comprehend how spending money for your services can benefit them, hell, they have probably been burned before! We know what needs to be done...but convincing them is not easy, and not something I want to do!

Even on simple jobs they have this sense at times that YOU are supposed to do all the work while they sit back and watch...even if you explain it ahead of time. Hell, half the time its like pulling teeth to get them to send you content and pictures for their site!! They want minimal if any involvement in THEIR OWN BUSINESS.

So where does this leave us? We have great services, we believe in what we are

doing, we want to add value to clients, we can outsource, we can do the work ourselves, WE can do anything.

## **PART III**

So here's where I am going with all of this in a nutshell...

We must stop thinking small. For those of you happy with the \$250-\$1000 site redesigns after hours of educating your customer...you can stop reading, this is not for you.

Look, there is nothing wrong with the above type of "offliner". Shit, over half of my business is this type of customer. But to be honest, when I sit down and do the math, it really doesn't pay out in the end..and ultimately my time could be better spent.

Now, in the nature of full disclosure, I do have a sales rep that works (now) on strictly commission(10%) that goes out and warms up my customers, so this has dramatically reduced the amount of time I have to spend "qualifying" clients. But its still not something I am a fan of.

Maybe I have a cynical view here because I have been doing this so long, but because of the length of time I have been doing this...I have seen the changes as they progress. And I don't like it for the small biz owner...but I see MORE opportunity for us.

I myself have gone through some progressions over the years. I started out just designing sites, then as I got more into the marketing aspect I changed my business model to reflect that. But now it appears that things are going backwards again, and biz owners just want "a web presence" because they don't understand anything else. I understand that not ALL owners are this way, what I am saying is that we all tend to gravitate towards those types of businesses because for most of us they seem attainable. Maybe lack of confidence is the problem, or fear of going after bigger fish, I don't know.

So what am I going to do?(and this is just me and in no way am I suggesting this to anyone)...

I am changing my mentality and completely revamping my business.

***There are TWO major issues with business owners when it comes to selling them our services:***

#1. Ignorance: They don't know what they don't know. Trying to educate them is time consuming and frustrating, and can often times be a fruitless task

#2. Money. Most don't want our services because they can't afford it! Heck, they stop listening when they know right off the bat they can't afford to do what you are offering. (I know I do the same thing)

My plan going forward is multi-pronged, but I plan on addressing these two major issues.

I will start with issue #2 first since I think this is more important. If a biz owner thinks they can't afford me, they won't listen or even try to get educated as they will just shut down.

To tackle this issue, I am raising my prices on all services!! Yup, raising them. BUT, what I plan on doing is making all of my services available on credit. They will now be paying more, but will be making monthly payments. This takes a bit more effort on my part, but with Quickbooks and a bit of organizational skill, this is an easy task. Even a simple program like Quicken will work as well, as will PayPal subscriptions. So now I have eliminated the price barrier.

In order to justify my pricing, I need to PROVE what I do will work for them, so I am also changing my mentality back to where I was a few years ago. I will be more of a consultant first, and service provider second. I want to be able to go into a business, spend an hour or more with a customer, and be able to fully analyze what they currently do, what they sell, their USP(if they have one), etc. I want to know their business so that I can help them better MARKET themselves.

The "web" is only a portion of their business. Driving visitors, then converting them into customers is key here, and the web can "help" do that, but is only a portion of the equation.

I intend to offer a complete marketing package that will revamp their sales and marketing strategies, or implement ones if their isn't any.

Now Issue #1 is education. I am focused on building training materials to better educated potential clients on the benefits of whats possible. This comprises of many things, including case studies and showing them the tools that are available to better market their business. SAMPLES work really well and can get an owner fired up!! Visual stimulation is key here.

Getting my "Educational" message to them will be easy, as this is where my sales person comes in. My entire "education" will be on a dvd that she will drop off at certain businesses, *and* it will be on the website.

Now, although my educational plan comprises of many things, one of the key ones to explain is INTERNET MARKETING. I know there are a lot of people reading this that are either inexperienced or rusty on the IM side of things, and our core understanding of internet marketing is the backbone of of this side of our business! I know some here would rather not talk about this, but its a fact of life. Our IM experience is what drove us here(most of us). The tips and strategies in the IM world need to be applied to offline ventures.

I have said many times we need to think out of the box. How many people here would go crazy if I started a thread and posted this:

**I have produced something that would:**

- =help small business owners by providing something useful that can increase their sales**
- =be something that was automated**
- =require no "face to face" selling or cold calling on my end**
- =be something that required little to NO effort on the part of the biz owner**
- =and most importantly...make everyone money!!!!**

Sounds good right? Well if that product existed, wouldn't that be "out of the box"? My plan of "going big" is just the tip of the iceberg for me. I plan on coming out of this "recession" the premier spot in my area (and by area I am not just talking about my town) for marketing online and off.

I also have plans for expansion. I intend to create something that can be expanded and used by other "offliners" in their businesses. No more will I bow down to the low hanging fruit for a fraction of the costs, I will be the one growing the fruit!

I have studied my best customers and found out what they want and how to get it to them. They are my target market. HOWEVER, I will also still have a "package" for the low hanging fruit type of customer, but one that requires no effort on my part and yet something that I make money on.

## PART IV

Ok, so I have given you a little bit to chew on up till now, and 90% of the above is from a series of posts I made on the LBB Forum. I modified it a bit to adapt to this report, but it is all honest feedback on how I feel, and the way I see the market.

I don't want to appear all doom and gloom, but I also don't like sugar coating anything. I constantly see people in this niche, both on the LBB Forum and the Warrior Forum that are just not getting accounts, and seem lost, and some even frustrated.

As usual, the "lure" of easy money sucks people into the "offline" vacuum, and people end up getting discouraged because they were led to believe something that really isn't true.

There is a lot to this niche. With IM, you can sit behind a computer completely anonymous to the world, and if you fail...only you know it. With the offline niche, it requires you to put yourself out in YOUR local area, so if you fail....people know it and know you. That is very scary to some!!

So let's look at local markets...

You have your two types of clients, small mom-n-pop operations, and then you have your medium to big sized businesses that are still locally owned. I will exclude the big box stores and large chains as they are not our target audience.

Each type essentially needs the same things, just on different scales. The main difference is the budget, and education. Let's face it, a larger company or business, to get "large", had to do some marketing, even if it was by accident. They had to have spent money along the way and got results. A smaller company...maybe, but unlikely.

So most people in this niche target the smaller companies. They do this because they are attainable. Usually the owner is in the place of business, or is easy to reach. Most smaller businesses either have no website, or one that really sucks, so it's easy to go in, spout off about design, seo and you will look like a friggin hero. I say "So What!!". What is their budget? You will have good odds of getting the web design business, and MAYBE a slice of the SEO business for them, but when all is said and done you worked pretty darn hard and got paid half of what you could have. The smaller biz owner won't want to spend the required money to really reap the total rewards of what you can do, so you'll end up just designing/redesigning their site and get them on page one of Google. Yippee. They now have a pretty site, and all 130 people a month that MAY be looking for their specific keyword can find them...then what?

My point is that doing web design is great...but if you don't do the things required

to help the small business owner CONVERT prospects into paying clients then you failed. Yeah, you made money, but your service is a LIABILITY. You cost them money!!

The same thing goes with the larger companies if you're not careful, but you have better odds of them paying you to do what is necessary.

Let me repeat the above...**If your services do not make your clients money, then you are a liability.**

## **PART V**

So what's the plan then? I can't sit here and tell you what to do, and I won't promise you all kinds of easy cash into your bank account. I will leave that to the others who want to preach the benefits of their latest greatest "system".

What I can do however is to show you what I am doing, and you can decide on your own whether it's right for you or not.

Now, in the interest of full disclosure, I would like to say that this is the precursor to my [Offline Domination](#) course. The things I am going to cover here will be covered more in-depth within the course, plus just about everything else you can imagine!

I am going to outline exactly what I am doing going forward...

For 2010 and beyond I plan on automating my business as much as possible, and spending my time going after larger clients that "Get it", and have the money to spend so as to allow me to help market them. MY services WILL generate a great ROI(return on investment) and will also have a residual cash flow for me each month.

### **Here is exactly what I plan on doing:**

- I am creating educational video's that are designed to help small business owners market themselves. These videos will be comprised of Camtasia based tutorials on the different FREE tools a biz owner can use to promote themselves. I will also have some explaining how to develop their USP(unique selling proposition) and how they can differentiate themselves in their markets. These video's will be available for free upon sign up for my email list
- To satisfy the "low hanging fruit", or customers who just want the basics, I will have a complete package set up that allows them to have full hosting, and they will get to pick from 50 different WP templates. All they will have to do is submit their info and PAY, then I will contact them to set up a brief meeting. At this meeting(and they will know this ahead of time), they will need to have all of their info together. My goal being that when I walk out of that meeting, I can go back to the office and have ALL of the info required to build their site. They will also be set up on reoccurring billing for the hosting, and any other add-on services they decide they want after speaking with me.
- To make life easy, I will have a second package that is also automated. This package will consist of a social media blitz for the client. This is a bit more advanced, and requires that the client have a site that is effective. But the package will include a blog, video, articles, email autoresponder set up and implementation, and submissions. Meaning that we will use the TrafficGeyser approach(I don't use TG or SENuke) to continually blast out

video and articles to the top places online. This will certainly drive traffic as it will dominate the keywords/phrases they want, and in conjunction with a direct response blog where I can track visitors, this will be very effective. The great part about this is that is a MONTHLY service, which means monthly residual income.

- The last package will consist of the one above PLUS. The plus is that I will set up an appointment and personally consult with the business owner. We will sit down, analyze their sales processes, develop their USP, and integrate all of that into how they do business. This includes revamping their site, training employees, putting metrics in place to continually analyze stats, and also to train staff if needed. Part of the consulting fee will also be to continually improve promotions, and help come up with new ideas.

The goal of each of these packages is obvious, and the final package is for the upper end clients who will absolutely reap the true rewards of marketing.

My website will help recruit new clients, and the video's will help to qualify them. Of course they will all want the final package, but most will not be able to afford it. However, the package costs will be set up so that companies can make payments. The up front payments will be enough to cover my initial time, with the subsequent payments taking over from there. I will have 100% control of all assets provided until payment is complete. Not that I don't trust biz owners, but het, shit happens and I don't want to lose out.

The last package is where you will get your "fame and fortune". Finding a company that is willing to allow you to do what you are qualified to do is just what everyone needs to build a kick-ass portfolio. Imagine finding a business that will give you the reigns to do your magic!! Tell me that taking a business and making them MONEY because of your efforts wouldn't feel great!! And these types of success stories will do wonders not only for your self esteem, but will exponentially grow your business. Regardless of how much you charged, if the business made the cost you charged back plus 2,3 or even 4 times that amount...you would be able to write your own ticket!!!

Really, we are marketers. As marketers we need to be able to provide a value to our clients. That value is measured many different ways, but the most important is how much money they make off of your efforts. If they don't see themselves making money...well, your services will not be all that important to them.

Look, we, as IM'ers, have all purchased products that sold us on the fact that we "could make money". Why did we buy them? Because we believed, based off of what we read and saw that it would be possible if we bought that product. Biz owners are no different. They ALL want to make money...so show them how!! If they were capable of doing it themselves they would have been already doing it, so you need to position yourself to be their go to person. Its that simple.

One of the biggest complaints I hear from "offliners" is that is very tough to educate the biz owners on WHY they need our services. Trust me, I hear you!! I have been down that road and refuse to travel that direction again. The ones that want to be educated...well that's different, but for the most part I will not spend countless hours trying to educate someone who doesn't really care or want to learn. They either want more business and are willing to pay for it, or not. Its really that simple.

In my above "packages", I have a solution for all businesses, and they have room to move up if they like. Just want a web site? No problem, pick from my templates, send me your info and a logo...and poof! You have a website.

Want a website and drive traffic to it? No problem, pick package two.

Want to propel your business to the next level and boost sales dramatically? Sure, pick package three.

It's all very simple, and I, in my new plan, am not leaving anyone out. I am just changing where I am focusing my energy. Trust me, it takes just as much work to do a simple website for a local mom-n-pop as it does to do a full marketing campaign for a larger company. The only difference is the money you make!!

Now I am not going to sit here and tell you ANYTHING will be easy. As with any business you have to work at it. I am just trying to get a point across that we all need to change our mentality and stop thinking we have no choice but to relegate ourselves to web designers only. WE ARE MARKETERS. So let's market. For those of you not part of the Offline Domination email list you have missed out on my totally awesome video's. Ok, they suck, but I try, lol.

In no way am I trying to convince you of anything, but if you feel so inclined, and are not on the list, I would sign up, it is free.

But if you are sick and tired of being on email lists, just go to the [Offline Domination Blog](#) and watch some of the video's. See if it is something you might be interested in.

I will explain the course a bit here just in case. Offline Domination is a complete ecourse designed to help you grow your business. It will consist of all of the info you need to set up and grow your business.

The whole course will reside in the LBB Forum in the Arsenal section. This course is not free, but existing Arsenal members will in no way pay full price(trust me, the cost of your lifetime Arsenal Membership ++ will be deducted), and those who are not Arsenal Members will gain full membership with the cost of this course.

The course will not end. It will grow each week, and because it will be in a forum environment, we will all be able to gain feedback off of others.

The purpose here is to have every person who is in the course succeed. I can't do the work for you, but I can certainly kick you in the ass from time to time!! There will be enough info on a regular basis to help you succeed...the rest is up to you. PLUS, I won't just be covering one single aspect of this niche....I will be covering ALL of them!!! I know we all have different talents and skill sets...so there will be something for everyone!!

Anyway, take a look at the [Offline Domination Blog](#)

Let me know what you think. I hope you found this report at least entertaining, lol. I don't expect you to agree with what I said, all I ask is that you take some of it into consideration!!

I am not, nor will I ever be...some form of ninja guru of the offline world. I am just a hardworking blue-collar dude that enjoys helping biz owners and making money at the same time. I will never, and have never, forced my opinions on anyone.

I try to be honest, and I have never been one to bullshit anyone. With that said, I hope you managed to pull something from this.  
Thanks for reading,

Keith Boisvert  
[www.localbizbuilders.com](http://www.localbizbuilders.com)