

Living In Your Niche! © by Ernest F. Oriente, The Coach {Article #65}

The idea of living in your niche is a concept we developed in 1996 when we launched our business coaching service. As a result of using this strategy, we have worked with more than 500 clients and their companies in eleven countries around the world, all by telephone. In addition, we found this concept to be so successful for our coaching business that we began to teach our clients how to do the same for/with their own companies and organizations.

To understand the principles of living in your niche for your company you first need to answer these questions:

- ==>>Who are your best clients/prospects?
- ==>>Will it be fun to work with more of these clients/prospects?
- ==>>Can you easily find/locate more of these clients/prospects?
- ==>>Will these clients/prospects pay full price for your products/services?
- ==>>Can you identify any painful consolidations, shifts or changes within this industry/profession?
- ==>>Can you identify any profitable trends, developments or opportunities within this industry/profession?
- ==>>How well are these clients/prospects served by your competitors within this industry/profession?
- ==>>Can you build powerful strategic alliances?

Once you have answered the above questions, the principles for living in your niche are carefully explained below. Is living in your niche easy? Yes! Just stay focused, follow the principles as explained and watch your sales/profits soar!

Writing industry/professional articles: A key element and the foundation for living in your niche is to write a free monthly article. This article is designed to position you and your company as experts within the profession/industry of your clients/prospects. This monthly article should be 700-1000 words long and once you get rolling, a new article will only take an hour or two to complete. This article can now be sent to your clients/prospects by E-mail/fax/mail, inserted into a multi-formatted newsletter, sent to targeted industry/professional publications, placed at specific industry/professional websites, used as a foundation for training, placed into a workbook when making a speech, etc. Once you begin writing a new article each month, you can use and re-use this intellectual capital, over and over again.

Tip From The Coach: Have several people within your company proofread each new article. This proofing-reading step will ensure your articles are accurate, timely and communicate a concise message. A word of caution...this article is not designed to be a commercial about you and your company. By sharing industry knowledge, insight, trends and tips your clients/prospects will remember the expertise you provide.

Placing free articles: The next step for living in your niche is to have these free articles placed where your clients/prospects will see and read them. Here are some examples of where you would want to have your articles placed:

- ==>>In the magazines/publications where your client/prospects will read it
- ==>>At four or five of the most popular websites within the industry/profession of your clients/prospects
- ==>>As part of an industry/professional newsletter
- ==>>Mentioned within an industry list-serve or E-zine

When your articles are placed with this kind of industry visibility, the reader {think “your clients/prospects”} will read what you have to share on two levels. On the first level they are going to read your articles, be impressed with what you have to share and will contact you and your company for more information {think “qualified buyers and sales!”}. On a second and deeper level, the people reading your articles will perceive that you and your company must be experts within your field, which is why your article was selected over other authors and companies {think “more sales!”}.

Tip From The Coach: Industry and professional organizations are always looking for quality articles that will speak to their members/readers {think “clients and prospects”}. Call the Executive Director or Publisher for the organization that your clients/prospects belong to and ask for their publication guidelines. In addition, ask for their editorial calendar and preferred methods of submitting articles. Once you have this information, you can then tailor and submit your articles in a timely manner. Remember, because your articles are free for publication, you have a much greater chance of having them printed/placed.

Joining industry/professional committees and the Board of Directors: To further live in your niche, joining key industry/professional committees is another way to gain increased exposure for you and your company. This form of exposure adds industry/professional credibility and will allow you to further leverage the visibility of your products/services. Once you have participated in several committees, becoming a member of their Board of Directors is

another invaluable part of selling in the 21st century. As a Board member you and your company carry added clout, a high level of industry/professional exposure and the ability to see/watch/anticipate future trends. As an added benefit, by being able to spot future trends as an industry Board member, you and your company will be able to better anticipate your strategic plans and will be able to provide better advice/guidance for your clients/prospects. Plus, you can capture these future trends in your next free article, further leveraging the principles of living in your niche.

Tip From The Coach: Industry/professional organizations will always have a variety of committees to join. Ask the Executive Director where you can make the most impact and which committees will have the most clients/prospects as participants. To maximize your time and effort with these committees, attend several committee meetings before deciding which committee to join. Remember, some committees will be much more valuable than others. Find the best committees to participate in and become a significant contributor/leader.

Hosting free teleconference calls: Technology is making it quick, easy and cost-effective to host teleconference calls for five-100+ participants from around the country or around the world. Invite your clients/prospects to join a free monthly teleconference call led by you and those within your company. Here are some sample topics/ideas for a teleconference call:

- ==>>The information covered in your most recent article
- ==>>An industry-specific focus group
- ==>>Pressing legal issues
- ==>>An invitation to speak with you and other Board members
- ==>>New marketing ideas
- ==>>Internet trends impacting their industry/profession
- ==>>A discussion on how to increase revenue/profits
- ==>>A well-known industry author or speaker

Tip From The Coach: Industry teleconference calls are designed to be highly interactive and must honor the best principles in adult learning. To receive a list of the 30-steps/skills required before, during and after a teleconference call, send an E-mail to ernest@powerhour.com with "Teleconferencing...Train-The-Trainer" in the subject line.

Speaking at industry/professional events: Another way to live deep within your niche is to be invited to speak at industry/professional trade shows, conventions and executive meetings. These are high visible and well-attended events where you can further establish the expertise of you and your company. In the tradition model, you will be invited to speak on a particular day and time for this upcoming event. Honoring the principles of 21st century selling, you may be invited to participate as a virtual speaker/presenter, leveraging the technology available today. As a virtual speaker/presenter you will prepare in the exact same manner as you would for a traditional in-person speech/presentation...without the cost/hassle of having to spend hours/days traveling back and forth to this event. Being a virtual speaker/presenter is a high-leverage opportunity to give lots of speeches/presentations to groups of clients/prospects around the world, without the inconvenience of living on an airplane.

Tip From The Coach: Pop quiz...where do industry/professional organizations find world-class speakers/presenters? By reading the free monthly articles sent by people just like you! This is one more reason to author an article specifically written for the clients/prospects you most want to reach.

Creating an E-mail newsletter: It's now time to create your E-mail newsletter, to further expand your visibility within your niche. Why should your newsletter be sent by E-mail? Because it's a free way to be/stay in touch with your clients/prospects on a regular/frequent basis, it's easy for readers to forward your newsletter to others within their company/profession/industry and nearly-instant delivery means you can share leading-edge information/news...as quickly as it's happening. Once you decide on the frequency of your newsletter here are some examples of what to include in it:

- ==>>Your free monthly article
- ==>>An update from a recent committee meeting
- ==>>A summary of today's Board of Directors meeting
- ==>>An invitation to a free teleconference call
- ==>>The location/day/time of where you will be speaking in-person or as a virtual presenter

Do you see the pattern? The power of living in your niche means you can maximize the impact of your newsletter by using it to showcase the steps we discussed earlier in this article.

Tip From The Coach: As the foundation for attracting new coaching clients within our six niche industries/professions, we provide a free newsletter for each group of clients/prospects. As we move from newsletter to newsletter for each of these six niches, these are the minor tweaks we make:

- ==>>We change the title of the newsletter
- ==>>We change the title of the free article
- ==>>We customized the content of the article, specific to their industry/profession
- ==>>We revise the author's note of each article
- ==>>We include an industry-specific E-mail signature line at the end of each newsletter

Here's the fun part. Once the newsletter is completed for our first niche, it takes less than 15 minutes per newsletter to make the minor tweaks for our remaining five newsletters.

Tying in your website: A great deal can be said about the marketing of your website. For the purpose of this article, how will you answer the following website questions as they relate to living in your niche?

- ==>>Does your website instantly speak to your clients/prospects?
- ==>>Can a website visitor find articles that speak to their industry/profession?
- ==>>Does your website mention your involvement with their industry/professional committees and/or their Board of Directors?
- ==>>Can a website visitor register for your next free teleconference call?
- ==>>Can a person easily subscribe to your free industry/professional newsletter?
- ==>>Will a website visitor be able to review your schedule of in-person and virtual presentations?
- ==>>Does your website engage your clients/prospects and require specific steps/forms of action?

Tip From The Coach: Do you again see the pattern? A client/prospect reads your article in this month's industry/profession magazine and goes to visit your website. They instantly see and read that you live in their world and understand the concerns/issues/problems of their industry/profession. As a result, they contact your company and become a client {think-sales!}. Or, they subscribe to your free newsletter as a result of visiting your website and become a prospect for the future {think-future sales}. Either way, you are honoring the very best of push-pull permission marketing.

Building strategic alliances: Once all of the steps outlined in this article are in place, building strategic alliances is the last and most important step for living in your niche. Just to clarify, strategic alliances are:

- ==>>Fun
- ==>>Easy to develop
- ==>>Flexible
- ==>>Low cost
- ==>>Win-win
- ==>>Create high-visibility within your niche
- ==>>Are very profitable

Here are some examples of win-win strategic alliances:

- ==>>An alliance with a book publisher within the industry/profession of your clients/prospects
- ==>>An alliance with a non-competing company, who sells to the same clients/prospects you are targeting
- ==>>An alliance with a non-competing E-mail newsletter that has subscribers who are your clients/prospects
- ==>>An alliance with a non-competing website that your clients/prospects visit frequently
- ==>>An alliance with the association/organization that serves the industry/profession of your clients/prospects
- ==>>An alliance with a magazine/publication that is read by your clients/prospects
- ==>>An alliance with a person who is an important center-of-influence within this industry/profession

Tip From The Coach: Remember, the goal of living in your niche is to be very visible within the industry/profession of your clients and prospects. This means you want to select strategic alliance partners that will add more value and visibility to your company/organization. In turn, you must be clear on the value and visibility you bring to your alliance partner. Think high-impact, high-visibility and win-win!