

AT HOME ON YOUR HOME PAGE

What's Ahead...

You've reached an exciting moment: it's time to put the "face" on your site! This is where the big difference between a blog and a static website comes into play.

If you are creating a blog, your Home page will mainly showcase your articles, presented as a series of excerpts, with the most recent on top. Visitors can click the title of any post that catches their interest and see the full article.

If you are creating a static website, your primary Home page content is a block of copy highlighting your target market's most poignant pain points, challenges and desires. This content is a *durable* piece of marketing that you'll refresh as you learn more about your market and strengthen your copywriting skills.

For both blog and static websites, your Home page will also include:

- an invitation to get your freebie (and subscribe to your blog or ezine) by opting in on a web form that captures visitor's names and email addresses; and
- other features to engage your audience and showcase your offers.

Quick Task Alert!

If you haven't already, download the:

- **Track-Your-Progress Checklist for Module 3**
(*Blog version or Static Site version*)
- **Freebie Guidelines**

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Strike a Resonant Chord with Your Audience *Fast!*

I'll admit I am an impatient Internet surfer. If I don't immediately grasp the purpose of a site, confirm that it aligns with my interests, and see clearly how to navigate to what I want... I'm outta there!

What about you? Have you ever Googled for a topic, clicked to a site, then navigated away within seconds because you didn't see anything you wanted to investigate further? Or has a website confused you so much that you left frustrated? Or has something about it turned you off – the language, the style or the fact that it looks amateurish?

When a web visitor leaves a site quickly it's called a **bounce**, and it's *exactly what you DON'T want* your ideal prospects to do when they arrive on your Home page.

Relevance is Key

You won't ever have a 0% bounce rate, because sometimes people will arrive on your site that really don't really belong there – they are not in your “tribe”.

The main goal of your Home page is to captivate your *target audience* and inspire them to engage. Relevance is the way you'll accomplish that.

If you want to get clients from your website, within seconds of arriving there, your ideal visitors must:

- Feel seen and understood by you,
- Perceive that you have solutions for their most URGENT KNOWN PROBLEMS, and
- Be inspired to learn more by signing up for your freebie, commenting on your posts, taking a next step with you.

Blogs and static sites captivate visitors in different ways:

- Static sites feature a marketing message as a way to inspire engagement.

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- Blogs are designed to showcase your thoughts on your market's top challenges and also deliver a *consistent flow of valuable free information* to them. The articles build credibility and trust with your visitors quickly, which leads to higher conversion – signups and sales.

As you create the content and features of your Home page, remember to **keep the spotlight on the people you serve, not on yourself or your services**. This applies to your Home page even more than your back pages.

Use keywords, relevant to your target market, in:

- the title and description of your freebie
- the name of your ezine, if you have one
- the page title
- headings
- body text that is
 - emphasized (such as bolded or in a bulleted list), or
 - early in the page (first paragraph or two).

As always, only use keywords where they fit naturally into your text. Don't overdo it.

Whenever you can, use keywords in the linked text when you link to a page from elsewhere on (or off) your site. The "anchor text" of links gets special attention from both site visitors and search engines.

Everything That's Important Goes Above the Fold

When you read a newspaper, the headlines and text above the fold are the breaking stories. They get the most attention. It's the same with websites.

What's "above the fold" – high enough on the page that visitors don't have to scroll down to see it – are the words and elements that will determine whether they stay and engage or bounce.

Different amounts of your page will fall above the fold for different visitors, depending on their computer screen size. So it's best to **have the most**

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important elements of *every* page and your calls to action well above the fold – the top 4 - 5 inches of the page – including:

- The optin box for subscribers to receive your freebie – a highly valuable, immediately downloadable free offer.
- Your featured blog posts OR the most compelling language on your static site – pain points for your market that relate to your primary or signature offer.

Take a look at an average above the fold view of my blog. See how little of it is immediately viewable without scrolling?



However, within seconds a visitor can clearly see that this site is relevant to professional coaches.

1. My company name, logo & domain are *Prosperous Coach*.
2. My UBS states that *I help professional coaches...* then, I name one of their top challenges and desires – *a highly profitable niche*.
3. My title is *Coaching Niche Success Strategist*.
4. My feature blog posts & freebie invitation have strong keywords for coaches – coaching niche, coaches, coaching business, coaching clients etc.

Also notice how my freebie /optin box is focal because of the upper right positioning, distinctive color and graphics.

The **upper right hand corner** of your Home page is the most prominent position on the page – and the **best location for your freebie invitation**.

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Ask your web designer to have your freebie optin stand out and be positioned above the fold on the upper right. Or it can go in your header, if you have room for it.

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Freebies: Why and How They Work

The single most important job of your Home page is to build your email list. Building your list makes it possible to *stay in touch* with prospects and build credibility with them through repeated contacts. Then they will trust you to help them get what they want.

In this way, your list works with your site to win you clients. And without a leads list, it's nearly impossible to sell products or fill group events on your website.

Your freebie is a **valuable giveaway that you use to entice visitors to opt in** to your list. At the same time, it helps you earn trust and credibility with your tribe. Andrea J. Lee and Tina Forsyth have called it a “pink spoon” – like the little spoons ice cream shops use to give you a taste.

No doubt you've experienced many freebies yourself. Some of them inspired you to invest in a program to go deeper in the learning and implement whatever the freebie showed you. Most likely, that happened because:

1. You understood what was being offered.
2. You wanted the outcome or transformation promised.
3. You believed it would be delivered.
4. You believed you could do what was recommended.
5. You felt motivated to invest your time and money.
6. You wanted it *right now!*

You want your freebie to inspire those same feelings. **The better your freebie is at converting people into prospects, the more successful you'll be in getting clients from your website.**

Aim to improve your “conversion rate” over time. You'll accomplish that by serving your clients well, listening to what's important to them, and applying that understanding to your freebie and marketing language.

If you are building a blog, visitors who opt in to get your freebie will also be subscribing to your blog. If you are building a static website, **I recommend that you publish either an ezine or a blog posted on a back page** of your site. So again visitors who opt in will become subscribers.

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A blog or ezine gives you a vehicle for **staying in connection with your tribe** and marketing your programs – so a static site coupled with one of these is far more powerful than the site is alone.

Can't I just give away my blog or ezine as my freebie?

If you offer a blog or an ezine, you're already giving a lot away. But in today's Internet environment, that's not enough to motivate people to opt in.

A fabulous freebie will help you build your list fast and get more people to "Yes!"

More than a decade ago when I first launched my coaching business website, ezines were a new way of delivering value and blogs hadn't made it to the mainstream yet. At that time, a simple subscription to my ezine was enough to capture my first few hundred leads.

But now, we are all bombarded by invitations. With attention in such short supply, people are not as motivated to add another subscription to their inbox.

Visitors will respond better to an immediately accessible and highly valuable freebie. Then, you'll stay in touch with them.

In actuality, even free things you offer (freebies, blog or ezine subscriptions, consults and preview teleseminars) are not completely free to the receiver. Web visitors take a risk by giving you their name and email address, and they invest their valuable time in consuming your content.

Honor the value on both sides of this exchange. I've noticed some coaches are offering free consults without requiring an optin. Not a good strategy unless you don't care about developing a leads list!

People who opt in are more emotionally invested. They are more likely to dig into what you've offered, and then reach for more support. So ...

- Give away a highly valuable freebie that leaves them hungry to know more, so they'll move naturally to the next step with you – which might be a free consult to enroll them into your first for-fee offer.
- Also give away valuable content consistently in your blog or ezine.

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- Offer your personal time at a premium price.

In general, the more committed you want your prospects and clients to be, the higher you set the investment.

At least once a month, ask them to invest at a higher level by inviting them to one of your programs. *If you don't market often enough, the folks on your list will grab all your free stuff and never step up for more.*

Call Them to Action Often

I remember, early on in my coaching business, complaining to my mentor coach that I wasn't getting enough clients. She asked me exactly what I'd done over the last six months to invite new clients to hire me. I had thought that putting out an ezine every week should have filled my practice. But I realized, *I was not asking anyone to enroll!*

If you want a steady stream of clients, consistently call them to action – ask them to engage or enroll.

A “call to action” is simply a clear invitation that implies something positive will happen once that action is taken.

- Invite web visitors to sign up for your freebie.
- Invite blog readers to share their comments on the post.
- Invite your leads to sign up for your consult, if you give one.
- Invite people in your target market to sign up for free preview calls about your programs and products.
- Invite leads to sign up for your programs.

Your most prominent call to action is your freebie optin box, with a link that clearly invites the action you want them to take – like **Sign Up Today!**

The temptation for many service providers is to bury their calls to action at the bottom of a long piece of text, or just leave them off completely. That's a BIG MISTAKE that costs signups and clients.

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Stay in Touch

You'll need an email campaign service to manage your list and communicate with your tribe, including sending out your blog or ezine to subscribers. I recommend **Aweber** (see **My Cutting Edge Resource Rolodex**) for their:

- High delivery rate.
- Great customer service and easy tutorials.
- Affordability.
- Powerful ability to include, exclude and segment different lists.

Set up your account with an email campaign service well ahead of your launch date. Give your web designer your login information for that account, so they can set up the optin box web form on your Home page.

People who sign up for your freebie are *your potential future clients*. Take good care of them. Respect their privacy. **Never disclose their email addresses, and never spam anyone!** This is not just a courtesy. It's the law.

Use a double opt-in system, and provide an easy unsubscribe link. (Any reputable email campaign company will have this built into their form.) Your homegrown list is always going to convert better than a purchased list because the subscribers are pre-qualified.

Once you have captured your visitor's email address and delivered your freebie, follow up with *a few* thoughtful email auto-responders to draw them further into the key points of your freebie. You can set these up yourself using your email campaign service. Make these emails:

- Brief, easy to digest, and valuable (not sales-y).
- Relevant to the initial opt in, so your subscriber understands why they are getting them.
- Well-timed after the initial opt in.

The idea is to continually build trust, make them happy they found you, and encourage them to think of you as their go-to resource. Create an auto-responder inviting them to set up a short "consult" call with you. Set up a free account with **Time Driver** (see **My Cutting Edge Resource Rolodex**) to make scheduling your consults easy.

If you give 5 consults every week and use a powerful enrollment process you'll have plenty of private clients who pay well and you'll easily be able to fill your group programs.

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When I ask my clients how they found me, most say something like this...

"Somehow I arrived on your site and I couldn't believe my luck because the articles I read there spoke to the biggest struggle I was having at the time – finding a niche that would bring me enough clients and income. Then, I grabbed your free ecourse and after our 20 minute consult I couldn't wait to sign up for Your Highly Profitable Niche!"

Of course, this is music to my ears because that's exactly what I hoped for. But it wasn't luck that brought them to me and inspired them enroll. **It was a well-planned series of steps – a conversion process...**

Your Freebie Is Not a Satellite Offer – It's Part of a Plan

What do we want? Clients! How do we get them? Target – Connect – Convert. To do that successfully, you need a plan.

Set up these 5 critical steps to enroll clients from your website:

- 1. Drive traffic to your site** (see Module 4).
- 2. Inspire visitors to opt in for your freebie.**
- 3. Immediately deliver value in your freebie.**
- 4. Within your freebie, point them to a:**
 - private consult or strategy session, then enroll them; or
 - a landing page with a sales process.
- 5. Keep in touch!**

People have to learn to trust you before they will make a significant investment in your services. Trust is built when someone takes a risk and that risk is rewarded with a positive outcome.

So, if you want someone who doesn't already know you to invest in your high value programs, it's important to "bring them along" by inviting them to take a series of related steps with you, where each step requires a higher risk (or investment) – and you respond to each step they take by meeting and exceeding their expectations.

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Make sure that your core suite of offers – freebie, consult and your first fee based offers – are congruent and flow one to the next like this:

Your Unique Benefits Statement relates and points to your...



freebie, which relates and points to your...



consult, strategy session or sales page...



which enrolls clients in one program...



and sets up the desire for your next offer.

The idea is to keep people moving through your “funnel” of offers so you can leverage your efforts, market less and earn more.

For example, on the next page is the potential flow of offers for three different niche markets, from UBS

- to freebie
- to consult or preview teleseminar
- to fee-based offer
- to higher-value offer.

Notice the *congruence* from offer to offer.

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For a coach that serves Sales Managers

UBS: *I help women sales managers create an inspired sales force and bring in their most profitable year yet.*

Freebie: *Is Your Sales Force Inspired for Greatness?* (assessment)

Free Consult: *Sales Staff Mini Makeover Consult*

Mastermind: *Inspired Sales Force Think Tank* (\$597/mo for 6 mos)

Next Step: *Sales Leaders Retreat* (\$1497 two day live event)

For a coach that serves Real Estate Agents

UBS: *I help Realtors attract loyal clients who refer often.*

Freebie: *3 Classic Mistakes Realtors Make with Prospects, and How to Avoid Them* (video training series)

Free Teleclass: *Seven Steps to Double Your Commissions*

Workshop: *Commission Blasting Secrets of Top Selling Realtors*
(\$697 for 6 week program)

Next Step: *The 100% Club* (Mastermind \$597/mo for a year)

For a coach that serves Financial Planners

UBS: *I help financial planners uncover what wealthy families want most from their money and win more multi-generational clients.*

Freebie: *Money Talks: What Wealthy Clients Secretly Wish Their Financial Planners Would Ask Them*
(free report & mp3 recording)

Free Consult: *Money Talks Breakthrough Session*

Private Intensive: *Get More Multi-Generational Clients*
(\$3997 1/2 day intensive 1:1 coaching/consulting)

Next Step: *Million Dollar Wealth Advisor Think Tank*
(\$9997 year long mastermind with 2 live retreats)

The core suite of offers is part of what coaches create in Your Highly Profitable Niche system. Pause now to create your own core message and suite of offers.

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7 Guidelines for a Fabulous Freebie

Notice the freebies and observe the conversion processes of your mentors.

Also notice what “competitors” do who successfully serve your target market.

When you’re new at something, modeling others sparks your own creativity and shortens your learning curve. To learn business skills faster, I always have a part of my brain turned on watching what others do.

Remember, you don’t have to be an expert to serve your target market well. But do your best to show up with a sense of authority.

If you don’t have your own “knowledge capital” to impart yet, **use your coaching skills and your fresh perspective to do one or more of these things in your freebie:**

- Fill the holes in your audience’s knowledge.
- Correct mistakes or bust myths.
- Simplify in a step-by-step “how to” system.
- Shift or transform their mindset or approach.
- Inspire or motivate them to take action now.

Here are 7 guidelines to create a client-winning freebie:

1. Focus on one very specific urgent *known* problem your target market wants to solve now.
2. Create a punchy title that grabs attention and inspires a sign up.
3. Choose a format that plays to your strengths. *(If you like to write, consider a free report, ebook, assessment or mini ecourse. If you’re good on camera, create a video or video series. If your teaching or conversation skills present well, offer an mp3 recording of a teleseminar, Q&A session, or interview.)*
4. Convey high value by delivering a generous “taste”.
5. Ask them to take action on the information you provide.
6. Make sure your freebie points to an obvious next step with you, and follow up.
7. Include a short bio and links to/descriptions of your other offers.

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“How long should my freebie be?”

A lot of people ask me that. But, it's not the length of the freebie that matters... it's the depth and value. Your freebie should be digestible in a short sitting, or if it's a series, several short sittings (for example, if you're doing a video series or mini ecourse).

Deliver great value, while also raising their curiosity and hunger for more. You want them to feel like you've been generous, but not have them walk away sated. So, you might have a 2 page assessment... a 10 page mini ecourse... a 45 page ebook... a 15 minute video... a 75 minute teleseminar... See what I mean? Consider whether *you* would want to experience your own freebie if you were in your target market.

This is another reason why focusing in on a very specific challenge, pain point or desire for your target market is much better than a broad topic. It's easier to go into depth and still have it be digestible.

Don't let fear or indecision paralyze you now. You can do this! Believe with all your heart that you have what it takes to create a valuable attention-getting freebie. Get one onto your site by the time you launch. Be willing to change it as you learn more about your tribe.

Quick Task Alert!

Pause now to answer the 10 questions on the **Freebie Guidelines** document and begin creating your Freebie.

(Your freebie does not need to be completed before your designer begins work – but plan to work on it steadily until it's done.)

If you are creating a static website, read the next section.

If you are creating a blog, skip to page 19 for tips on writing your blog content.

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Your Static Website Home Page

On a static website you only need a few (3 - 7) short, well-crafted paragraphs of text to connect with your target market and inspire them to take a next step with you.

Streamlined copy requires careful and creative word choices and flowing syntax to strike a deep resonant chord with your audience.

Your goal is to identify the gap between where people in your target market are now and where they want to be, and then invite them to take a next step with you.

It takes a little practice to think and write in an authentic way that connects with your audience, while subtly promoting you and your services in a way that invites them to take a risk with you. **You'll learn by writing to the best of your ability, testing it with your market, and then tweaking the copy as you know more.**

It helps to see examples of Home page copy on other client winning websites.

Look at the video: **Examples of Static Home Pages**. Notice how the service providers evocatively connect with the people they serve. They name the greatest known problems and desires *before* saying anything about themselves. And they clearly invite their visitors to engage.

Sharon Desjarlais, a coach who targets cranio-sacral therapists, does this beautifully on her Home page. (See the excerpt below.) Her copy is full of keywords and relevant pain points and desires of cranio-sacral therapists. And Sharon takes this a step further by using phrases that cranio-sacral therapists use, such as "tap your direction of ease", in her copy and offer titles.

Sharon has never been a cranio-sacral therapist but she has done in-the-field research to learn about what they care about. For most target markets, **you don't have to know what they know to serve them well**. But you do have to find out what they care about in order to connect with them.

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Use these guidelines to draft and finesse your static Home page copy:

- Write a headline with a larger bold font, and use an easy-to-read font for the rest of the text.
- Ask 3 - 5 direct and emotionally evocative questions, so your audience feels you understand their specific problems.
- Write as if you're speaking to one person in your target market. Use your Ideal Client Profile from Module 2.
- Use short paragraphs and bullet points.
- Do NOT talk about what you do – your tools and skills (such as coaching, NLP, emotional intelligence etc.) This is NOT the time to talk about how you help them.
- Express the specific pain they are facing and specific outcomes they are hungry to achieve.
- Then weave in just a little about why you want to help them or why they should listen to you – a sentence is all you need. Stay in the same voice rather than shifting into promotion mode.
- End with a powerful call to action. Point them to your freebie, even though it will also be in an optin box above the fold.
- Include a picture of your actual signature for a personal touch.

This copy is likely to result in a BOUNCE...

Hi I'm Joan Smith, life, relationship and career coach, and I invite you to discover your best life ever.

What is life coaching?

Life coaching is an amazing process of discovery conversations designed to draw out your wisdom and expand your understanding as you move forward on your most important life goals...

Why doesn't this kind of approach to Home page copy work well?

It's speaking to no one in particular about nothing in particular that's relevant to the reader. And it's all about the service provider and her tools – coaching.

But this approach will captivate the target audience...

Dear CranioSacral Therapist...

Discover the Simple System to Fill Your Practice and Fulfill Your Life Purpose

If you're like most light-touch practitioners, your work feels more like a calling or spiritual practice. And the thought of marketing to attract new clients probably makes you cringe.

- Do you find yourself tied up in knots whenever you talk about your work with potential clients?
- Do you secretly wish there was an easier way to transition into CranioSacral Therapy full-time?
- Do you have an energy cyst in your prosperity consciousness that's causing discomfort with money?
- Are you feeling so burned out with the day-to-day struggle that you might just throw in the towel?

These Are Common Conditions for CranioSacral Therapists. Fortunately, They Can Be Cured.

After 15 years of working with Dr. John Upledger and hundreds of gifted therapists, I've discovered the key steps you need to take to communicate joyfully with complete integrity. And naturally attract new clients to your table.

Just imagine how you'll feel in your life and your practice when...

- You have a passionate, compelling marketing message you never get tired of sharing...

This copy goes on to share more desired outcomes and a call to action.

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Quick Task Alert!

Pause now to write your own Home Page copy.

Write a first draft. Edit it once, then step away from it for a while...

When you come back to it, read the words out loud looking at it *from the perspective of the people you serve*.

Ask yourself these questions to test the effectiveness of your copy. Make a few adjustments as necessary. Don't over-think it.

- *If I didn't know me and had never been to this site before, would I feel compelled to read this?*
- *Do these words strike a deep emotional chord within me by naming specific pains and desires?*
- *Do I feel understood?*
- *Are there any words or sentences that stop me from reading?*
(Tweak or rewrite these.)
- *Do I feel called to take action? Do I want to? If not, what's stopping me?*

If you are already working with someone in your target market, ask them to answer these questions too and give you their candid feedback.

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Keep Your List Warm with an Ezine (or a Blog on Your Back Pages)

If you are building a static website, I recommend that you publish an ezine or a blog posted on a back page. Your web designer can help you set it up so it's easy to publish it to your list through an email campaign service, like Aweber.

Publishing a blog or ezine keeps your connection warm with the people that opted in for your freebie. By staying in touch with the prospective clients on your list, and *consistently* providing valuable information to them, you:

- Stay top-of-mind, so that they think of you when they are seeking solutions to their most pressing issues.
- Give them a taste of what it would be like to work with you.
- Build your credibility as an authority on topics relevant to your target market.

Plus, it's a fantastic platform to promote your upcoming events or specific products and services.

The next section of this learning guide covers your content strategy for either format. When you have finished this module, you'll have written your first several issues or posts, and gathered ideas or planned for your content beyond that.

Plan to launch your ezine or back page blog when you launch your website.

Ezines in HTML or Plain Text

If you publish an ezine, choose whether to use html formatting (with graphical elements such as a top banner, and the option to use multiple columns), or a "plain text" style. If you use an html format, designing and setting up your ezine template will be an additional task for your web designer.

Using html gives you a much more "branded" look, and more room for marketing – but it's more costly to set up and maintain. A "plain text" style ezine (which usually does include some minimal use of html) is simpler to deliver and easier to digest.

Write Your Blog or Ezine Content

The articles you write for your blog or ezine are your opportunity to build credibility and trust with your audience by *consistently* providing them with information they find valuable. This way, you stay top-of-mind with them as a resource, and give them a taste of what it would be like to work with you.

In this module you will write your launch content – a set of articles that you'll have ready to go on your launch date, so you can hit the ground running.

For a blog, prepare:

- at least one post in each category to launch with. (See the next section for more on blog categories.) This is so visitors to your blog will see a resource with some depth, not just a skeleton of your site.
- at least two more weeks of posts that you have ready to publish after launch.

For an ezine, have at least the first few issues ready when you launch your site.

Get Ready to Write

The best way to prepare for launching a blog or ezine is by reading them. Look at what's out there, decide which ones you get the most value from, and subscribe to your favorites. Choose blogs or newsletters that are relevant to your business and your market.

Watch how your model bloggers or ezine writers work:

- How often do they publish?
- How long and “meaty” are the articles? What do you appreciate about their content and writing style? How are they using keywords in their articles?
- How much do they market their own products and services? How much do they link to resources provided by others?

Get ready to do what these writers do. If you emulate the best, your blog or ezine will be a powerful marketing tool.

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Brainstorm ideas for writing topics, and create a writing calendar with your plan for 3-6 months of blog posts or ezines. If you're launching a blog, plan to post no less frequently than weekly. For an ezine, weekly or bi-weekly is best, but you can get away with monthly.

Whenever you are promoting a specific product or program, write about topics that relate to that program – so that your content naturally points to what you are promoting. If you have multiple programs or affiliate partners, set up a marketing calendar and coordinate it with your writing calendar.

From now on, maintain an idea file, and add ideas for articles whenever you think of them. Keep a digital recorder or notepad with you to capture ideas on the fly.

If you can't think of 20-30 bite-size writing topics pretty easily, it could be a sign that you don't know your market well enough or your market is not narrow enough.

Plan to re-use your articles by posting them in ezine directories and other blogs for your niche market. (More on this in Module 4.) Later, you can repurpose your writing again into products.

Quick Task Alert!

Pause now to brainstorm topic ideas. Create a writing calendar and idea file.

How to Write Content for Your Blog or Ezine

First, *review the five writing tips and two editing tips* from Module 2 (even if you remember them). **All of them apply** to writing your blog or ezine content. Reread your Ideal Client Profile to remind you what you know about the people in your target niche.

Five more key guidelines apply to writing blog or ezine content that will help win you clients:

Guideline #1 Be Useful

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Choose your topics, and craft your articles, to be *extremely useful* to people in your niche market. Show them that you understand what's important to them.

These days, most people are suffering from information overwhelm. So, aim to give them information that is exquisitely tailored to their needs – content that tells them exactly what they need to know, and saves them the effort of sifting through mountains of material to find it.

You may not always hit that mark, but at least you can give them information they can use, in easy-to-digest bites, without wasting their time.

When appropriate, also show them your vulnerability with a very short story about yourself as an introduction to the topic. Then, connect it to the top challenges and desires of your tribe.

Guideline #2 Be Consistent

Readers want fresh content, and they rely on consistency. Develop a consistent style. Train your readers to look for your new articles, by establishing how often you will publish and then sticking to that.

The most effective ezines are delivered like clockwork, on the same day of the week and time of day. Blogs can be a little more variable, but the basic frequency should be consistent.

Guideline #3 Make the Headline Compelling

The headline (or subject line) is what determines whether your post or ezine will get read. Craft a headline that sparks potent curiosity about what you have to say, or that conveys the obvious value of your topic.

Guideline #4 Make It Easy to Read

Make your articles short, simple, and scannable – structured so that a reader can pick up the main points by looking it over quickly. Then, if you captivate them, they'll read more deeply. 500 - 800 words is a good average length.

Doing this will take extra time. Generally, short and simple is *harder to write* than long and complex. But it's worth it. If your content is perceived as brief, easy to read, and valuable, your audience will actually read it.

Guideline #5 Market Consistently, With Integrity

If you only market to your list once in a blue moon, it will be a shock to your readers when it happens. It's better to market something at least once per

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month. That will train your audience to expect marketing from you – a fair exchange for the valuable content you provide them for free.

But don't overdo it. When marketing *in your articles*, keep in mind the main purpose of the article – to provide your readers with valuable information that's relevant to their most urgent known problems and goals. Any marketing should be with a light touch, and appropriate to the topic of the article.

Obviously, that rule doesn't apply when you're sending out an email that's dedicated to marketing. Just be aware and consistent about how often you send those emails.

Do ask your readers often to *take some kind of step*, even if it is only to leave a comment or click on a resource. Engagement builds a strong tribe – so call on them to engage.

Quick Task Alert!

Pause now to write the blog posts or ezine articles you will launch with.

Secondary Home Page Features

Most service entrepreneurs use a two column layout for their Home page, including a sidebar that also appears on the other pages of the site. The sidebar is thinner than the column with blog posts or marketing copy, and it holds the other features of the Home page, such as:

- For a static Home page, social network icons or badges that link to your profile or page on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or other social networks; small “banner” ads linking to featured offerings; and any awards or certifications.
- For a blog, all the above features, plus aids to navigating deeper into the content of the blog – a search box, category listing, tag cloud, recent posts box, recent comments box, or link to an archive page.

Look at the video: **Examples of Blog Home Pages**. The second half of the video covers sidebar features of a blog – some of which are also relevant to a static site. To see how a two column layout looks on a static site, view the video: **Examples of Static Website Home Pages**.

Decide what sidebar features you want on your site and write them down for your designer. If you are creating a blog:

- Choose 5 - 7 categories (or topics) to write about regularly. You can always add categories later. Each post you write will fall under one of these categories, so pick categories that cover the most relevant subject matter for your market. Keywords in your category names are helpful.
- Decide whether your Home page design will use a feature post. This is one really, really good post that serves as a “keynote” for your blog. (Or you can put several feature posts on a “carousel” like on my blog.) This is not an introductory post but rather a representation of your best, most powerful message to your market.

Using a feature post is optional. The advantage is, it helps keep your central message in front of your visitors. If you decide to use feature post, plan to write a new one about once a month.

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Here is an example of sidebar features from Lara Galloway's blog at mombizcoach.com. Notice the program ads and social network links.



The sidebar features five distinct promotional and social media elements:

- Upcoming Events:** A banner with a calendar icon and the text "Upcoming Events Click Here".
- Free Teleseminar Series:** A banner for "WOMEN (What Mom Entrepreneurs Need)" featuring a photo of Lara Galloway. It announces the "3rd Wednesday of the month" on "12:00pm EST" and provides a registration link: "www.whatommentrepreneursneed.com".
- CONNECT WITH ME!:** A section with five circular icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, RSS, YouTube, and Twitter.
- 3 Week Teleclass:** A banner titled "3 Week Teleclass 9 Secrets" with a photo of Lara Galloway. The text describes the teleclass as being "to Help You Figure Out What Your Target Market Wants From You-- And What They're Willing to Pay". It includes a "Register At" link: "www.mombizcoach.com/9secrets".
- LISTEN TO MY LATEST BTR SHOW!:** A section for "blogtalkradio" featuring a "Mom Biz Solutions with Lara Galloway... Why Mompreneurs Need a Mompreneur" episode. It includes a play button icon, a "00:00" timer, and social sharing icons for Tweet, Share, RSS, and iTunes.

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RECENT POSTS

- ☐ The Road to Success for Mompreneurs
- ☐ I'm speaking at Blissdom Canada!
- ☐ Chaos Is Normal for Mompreneurs
- ☐ The Purpose of a Mastermind Group
- ☐ How to Handle Your Taxes

Search for:

MOMBIZCOACH LIVE ON TWITTER

- ☐ yeah! ~ RT @KellyMcCormick_: The first step to getting the things you want out of life is this: Decide what you want. -Ben Stein #quote 45 minutes ago
- ☐ @whodemis aw, hang in there! 46 minutes ago
- ☐ Bouncing Back After Losing a Big Client: A Chicago-based tech outsourcing firm retools market... <http://bit.ly/gfnzMy> = Entrepreneur Mag 47 minutes ago

BLOGROLL

- ☐ Accomplishment Coaching
- ☐ Borderless Thinking
- ☐ Confident Mom
- ☐ Executive Moms Coach
- ☐ Good Tree Coaching
- ☐ Mom It Forward
- ☐ Moms Running Blog
- ☐ Musings of the Social Media Mommy
- ☐ Project Happily Everafter
- ☐ The Golden Rule Virtual Assistant
- ☐ TimeOutMom Blog

Quick Task Alert!

Pause now to decide which boxes, widgets, icons or ads you want to include in your Home page sidebar.

Write down any applicable copy and instructions for your designer.

If you are creating a blog, decide whether you will use feature posts, and write down your blog's initial set of categories.

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Get Your Designer Going

Over the three modules so far, you've been making important decisions about your website and writing content. Make sure that you've saved all your content in Word. It's time to deliver it to your designer and ask them to get started on putting your site online.

It's up to you to decide exactly when to get them going for real on your project, based on:

- your estimated time to complete your writing tasks,
- your designer's estimated turnaround time on the project, and
- your target launch date.

Of course, it's also up to your designer's schedule when they actually begin work on your site. Since you've accumulated everything they need rather than sending it to them piece-meal, they should be able to create your site efficiently.

Between your freebie and your blog or ezine content, you have some substantial writing to do. Plan to use the time your designer is working on the look and structure of your site to finish your freebie and your first blog posts or ezines.

Ideally, you'd like to be ready to launch your site the day after you finish writing. So the most efficient time for your web designer to start your site design is some time *before* you've finished all your writing tasks.

Don't just pull the trigger and leave them to it. Stay in communication with your designer throughout the process and keep track of how it's going.

Managing the Web Design Process

The process of developing a website comes with multiple learning curves. Your web designer may be the first third party provider you've worked with *in your business*. That requires management skills – something many of us have to learn by trial and error.

Your designer may not always be skilled at customer service, and they may not understand your industry or your needs. Some designers are hard to communicate with, or resistant to making changes. If you fail to track progress and communicate clearly:

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- you may suddenly realize that days or weeks have gone by without communication from your designer.
- your project costs may go out of control.
- your site may go live before the bugs are worked out of the system.

It's up to you to manage the web design process so that you get the site you want, on time and within budget. Preparing thoroughly, setting up clear expectations from the get go, and then staying current with your designer, are the keys to a successful outcome.

Take these proactive steps to **keep your project on track**:

- Arrange to be shown the design as it develops rather than when it is complete, so that changes can be made before too many hours are in the design.
- Inspect the results thoroughly before you respond. Schedule a call to go over changes. Be impeccable with your feedback (prompt, positive and constructive, take ownership of your own mistakes and judgments). Don't settle for something you don't like.
- Don't pay your final bill until you and several friends have navigated through the whole site without any hitches – preferably friends who use different browser software. Click on every link. Read every word.
- Communicate by phone whenever possible. Email is good for highly linear, step-by-step instructions, but it often creates misunderstanding when used for more general communications.
- Keep track of all verbal conversations and email agreements. Note when a request is completed. Model the kind of communication you want from your designer by always responding promptly and clarifying anything that is unclear.

If something isn't going well, provide clear, professional feedback and negotiate for the win/win as soon as possible. If you cannot resolve the issue to your satisfaction, you may have to cut the designer loose and start over with a new designer.

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Now pause and take in all that you have accomplished in this module:

- You've started to create a valuable freebie and worked out how to offer it to your visitors in a way that will entice them to join your list.
- You've written, edited, spell-checked and proofed all of your content for your Home page, including the blog posts you will launch with or the first few issues of your ezine.
- You've decided what sidebar features and widgets you want to include, and if you're building a blog you've decided on your categories.
- You've gotten your designer going on your project, and you are actively managing their work.

Congratulations! Soon your site will be ready to go live!

And that's when the fun part begins, because that's when you start using your site to connect with your tribe and win clients. I'll tell you how to start that process in Module 4.

Quick Task Alert!

Take a moment and check off all your accomplishments on your **Track-Your-Progress Checklist** for Module 3 (*Blog version or Static Site version*).

And now celebrate! You've completed most of what you need to launch your site!