



How to Create the Ultimate Lead Magnet for Your Freelance Business

Summary Handout

Foundational Concepts

A lead magnet (sometimes called a "buzz piece" or "bait piece") is a valuable, relevant and useful informational marketing piece that's intended to generate leads for your freelance business.

The classic use of this tool is to ask prospects for their contact information in exchange for your lead magnet.

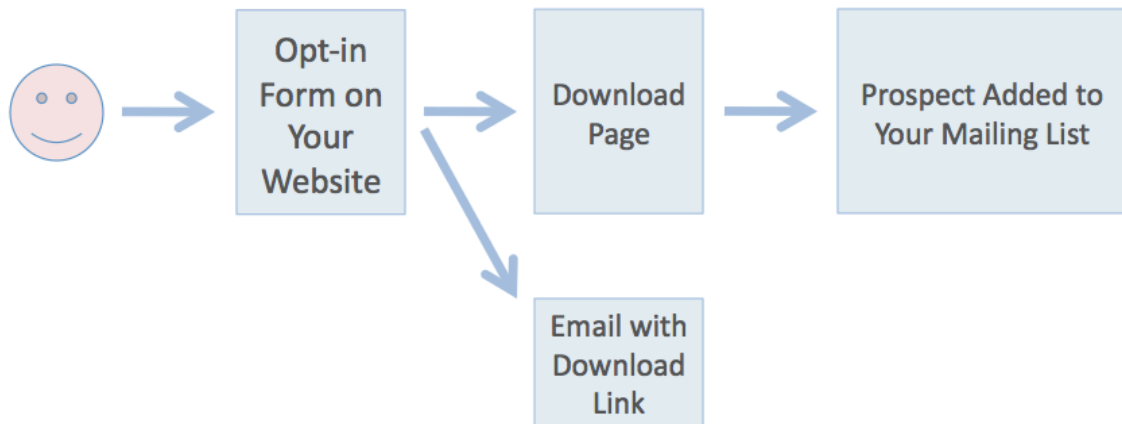
A lead is someone who could potentially hire you. But you don't yet know enough about these leads or their situations to determine how likely they are to become clients.

For our purposes, a prospect who downloads your lead magnet is considered a lead. By requesting your lead magnet, a prospect has:

- a) indicated interest in the topic of your lead magnet, which should be tied to the services you provide,
- b) indicated interest in potentially hiring you and is requesting your lead magnet to learn more about you, or
- c) both!

You'll still get some tire kickers and curious "downloaders." But for the most part, the people who download your lead magnet are leads.

Here's an illustration of the typical lead magnet process:



Lead magnets can also be used as lead-nurturing tools to stay in touch with prospects that aren't yet ready to hire you. They can be broken up into multiple articles and other resources. And they can be combined into a larger educational resource (a book, e-book, presentation, etc.).

It's important to remember that your lead magnet doesn't need to contain "mind blowing" content for it to be effective. Instead, your goal is to showcase enough insight, advice or ideas to demonstrate to your prospect that:

- a) You know your stuff.
- b) You can potentially help them.

Why They Work So Well

There are a number of good reasons why well-conceived and well-written lead magnets are so effective. They can help you:

- Generate leads.
- Position yourself as an expert (or the obvious choice).
- Give prospects a taste of your work and how you think.
- Stay in touch with longer-term (not-yet-ready) prospects.
- Build trust and credibility with prospects.
- Make it easier to take someone from cold prospect to paying client.

Common Challenges

Feeling Overwhelmed

Creating a lead magnet can feel overwhelming. Where do you start? What should it be about? How long should it be? When will you find the time to put it together?

Overthinking

Believing that the content has to be long. Or that it has to be 100 percent unique, mind-blowing and high-impact. Many freelancers spend an inordinate amount of time deliberating on the topic, format and all the moving parts.

Topic Not Congruent

Choosing a topic that's not congruent with your services or the realities of your target market. For example, creating a lead magnet about how to write Facebook ads for an audience that either doesn't do much (or any) Facebook advertising. Or targeted to people in an organization who aren't tasked with social media marketing.

Format Not Congruent

Using a format that's not convenient for your audience. For instance, a 28-minute video for an audience that rarely watches anything over two minutes long.

Trying to Convert the "Unconvertible"

Trying to convince readers that they need what you offer instead of focusing your message on target markets and audiences that already hire freelance creatives in your profession.

In this execution plan, I'm going to show you how to overcome these common barriers. I'm going to show you how to pick the best lead magnet topic and content, how to get it done faster, and how to leverage this asset for maximum impact in your freelance business.

And it all starts with picking the right topic for your lead magnet. I'm going to list the 7 essentials of a powerful lead magnet. And in the next few lessons I'm going to go deeper into each one of these essentials.

The 7 essentials of a powerful lead magnet:

1. Relevant to your audience
2. Useful to your audience
3. Tied to services you provide
4. Congruent with your core differentiator(s)
5. Would make an ideal prospect want to check you out further
6. Tantalizing title
7. Easy to consume

The 7 Essentials for a Powerful Lead Magnet

Essential #1: Relevant to Your Audience

Sounds like common sense, but it's too easy to lose sight of your audience and what matters most to them. Just because a topic is getting attention in the media or industry press doesn't mean that it will be useful, relevant or interesting to your audience.

This is just one more reason to know to whom you're marketing (your target market). Because if you don't know—or if your target audience is *everyone*—your message won't be on point. It will be diluted, generic and not very useful.

Target market refers to a group of prospects you can best serve. There are many ways to slice that, one of the most common being by industry. However, industry is not the only way to look at your target market. There are other attributes to consider, including:

- Demographics
- Psychographics
- Common desires, needs or challenges

Examples:

- I work with clients in the hospitality industry (target market based on an industry).
- I work with CEOs to ghostwrite their thought leadership content (target market based on an audience).
- I specialize in direct response email marketing (target market based on services you offer).
- I'm the engineer who thinks like a marketer (target market based on your background, experience or expertise).

Don't really have a specific target market? Spend sometime clarifying that. And even if you have several, try to pick one audience for this lead magnet.

You should also define the actual role you're targeting (and the daily challenges and sources of pain they face).

Examples: Put yourself in the shoes of a marketing director, CEO or founder, creative director, sales VP, etc. What are they facing as it relates to what you do? Because ultimately they're trying to figure out how to make their job easier.

If you already have clients, as you narrow down your lead magnet topic ideas, run that short list by them and see what they think. See if the topic, title and rough outline resonate with them.

Essential #2: Useful to Your Audience

Relevant and useful usually go hand in hand, but not always. Your lead magnet must show not just that it's relevant, but also that it has a utility to it, even if that "utility" is to help prospects understand how you think or how you do your work.

Strategic or Tactical?

Should your lead magnet focus on strategy or tactics? It depends. First, take into account the type of work you do.

Example: A consultant who helps technology companies expand into the Latin American markets is providing a very strategic set of services. That's very different from a designer who works with industry associations to design and lay out their conference materials.

Second, take into account the people you normally work with and where they are in the organization. In the previous example, the business development consultant would probably go after CEOs and senior executives. The designer might be going after the marketing director or executive directors of these industry associations, depending on their size.

Third, consider the size of organizations you're going after. Generally speaking, the bigger the organization, the lower down the chain you can go. And the smaller the organization, the higher up the chain you can go.

How do all these variables impact your topic? If you're going after higher-level people in the organization, AND if your services and expertise are more strategic in nature, you'll want to pick a topic that's higher level and would appeal more to a senior executive.

However, if you're going after middle management or lower, AND if your services are more tactical in nature (website design, marketing communications, many types of research, bookkeeping, software development, etc.), you want to go with a topic that's a bit more tactical and practical.

New or Transactional?

Something else to consider: Are your services considered new or innovative within your target market?

Example: You create mobile apps for small businesses that help clients turn prospects into customers and develop greater customer loyalty. That's more of a "new" thing for that kind of audience. So your topic should take that into account.

Opposite Example: You write marketing communications for healthcare companies. That's an everyday transaction for marketing managers and directors in those companies. So there's little need to get into great detail about the work you do.

Other Factors to Consider

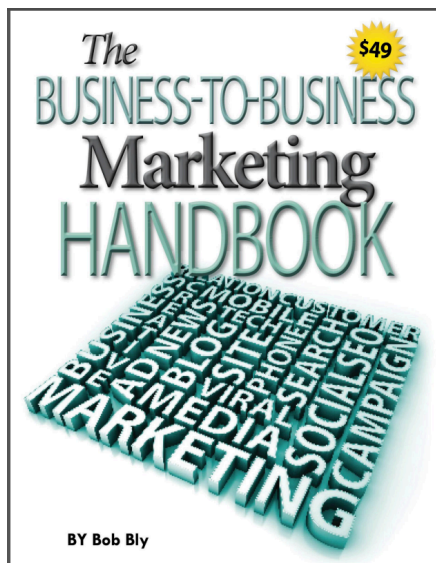
What information have you found your prospects are typically lacking?

Alternatively, what information would be useful and/or showcase your knowledge and expertise?

Example: Hubspot's "The Marketer's Pocket Guide to Writing Well."



Example: Bob Bly's "The Business-to-Business Marketing Handbook"



Example: Kim Gusta's "11 Tough Questions for Hiring a Copywriter"



11 TOUGH QUESTIONS FOR HIRING
A COPYWRITER

Great Writing
Just Isn't
Enough.

Find the right
technology
copywriter with this free checklist.



DOWNLOAD CHECKLIST

Example: Angus Stocking's "Long Sales Cycles and Skeptical Customers are Good Things: Information Marketing in Infrastructure"



Long Sales Cycles and Skeptical
Customers are Good Things:
Information Marketing in Infrastructure

This report helps executives and
managers in infrastructure firms
to better understand their online
marketing options for better
infrastructure marketing campaigns.

A report by Infrastructure and Angus W. Stocking, L.L.C.

GET YOUR FREE REPORT
ON INFORMATION
MARKETING IN
INFRASTRUCTURE!

My white paper, *Long
Sales Cycles and
Skeptical Customers are
Good Things*, will help you
to implement a winning
online strategy that's
proven effective for
infrastructure purchasers.

Ultimately, you're looking for the right balance between relevance, utility and having something that's good enough to "ship." With some audiences, it's going to be nearly impossible for you to give them something that will blow them away. And if you try to brainstorm the perfect topic, you'll never create and launch your lead magnet.

You want a topic that addresses a common question or knowledge gap. But again, don't fall into the trap of overthinking this. Don't try to create something revolutionary. Even something that arouses some curiosity or gives a prospect a better sense of who you are and how you work would be good enough.


Essential #3: Tied to the Services You Provide

You could focus on one or two things:

- a) **Bigger picture.** Something that falls under the general "umbrella" category in which you work. Example: You're a business writer who works with senior executives to ghostwrite books and other thought leadership content. Your work falls under the bigger "marketing" umbrella. So you pick a topic that's related to both marketing and executive thought leadership.
- b) **Tactical.** Something related to the actual work you do (more of a do-it-yourself topic). Example: How to structure the best speech. Or how to organize your ideas for an article. Or how to determine if a ghostwriter will be a good fit for you.

Tactical Example: Casey Demchak's "How to Create Core Message Platforms"

Get FREE Access NOW!

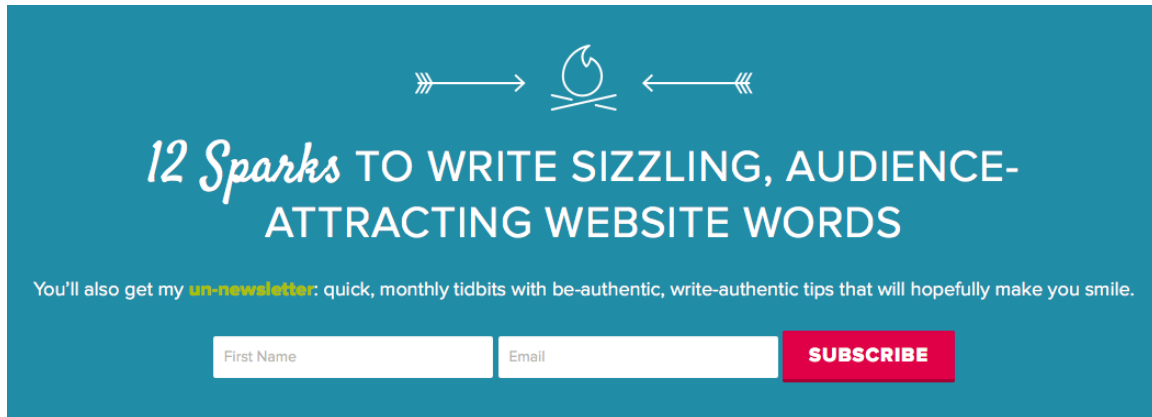
 As a FREE BONUS you'll instantly receive my Special Report on how to create Core Message Platforms

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

Tactical Example: Deidre Rienzo's "12 Sparks to Write Sizzling, Audience-Attracting Website Words"



Essential #4: Congruent with Your Core Differentiator(s)

It's also important to somehow (directly or indirectly) showcase, highlight or *stress* your expertise and what makes you different.

Questions to ask yourself as you think about your lead magnet topic and content:

- Does it help get the prospect one step closer to hiring you?
- Does it show (directly/indirectly) how you're different?
- Does it show (directly/indirectly) how you're better?
- Does it show (directly/indirectly) how you think or how you approach your work? (philosophies, professionalism, what it's like to work with you, etc.)
- Does it show (directly/indirectly) your personality? Remember, people buy from people. So be yourself!
- Does it show (directly/indirectly) that you know your stuff?
- Does it show (directly/indirectly) that you know your prospect's world?

Example: Tess Wittler's "52 Content Ideas for Residential Contractors"

52 CONTENT IDEAS for Residential Contractors

Helping Contractors Answer the Question,
"What Do I Write About?"



Inside, you'll get 52 Content Ideas for your blog, eNewsletter and more!

1. Get 22 new ideas for making "construction talk" interesting for your audience.
2. Get 3 valuable ways to share your projects so they are inspirational and captivating.
3. Get 6 interesting ways to use dates on the calendar to grab readers attention.
4. Plus, Get 6 BONUS IDEAS and TIPS!

[Click Here - It's FREE](#)

[Legal Information](#)

Example: Laura Beth Studio's "10 Design Tips for Reaching and Retaining Donors Without Breaking the Bank"

10 DESIGN TIPS FOR REACHING & RETAINING DONORS —WITHOUT BREAKING THE BANK!

Get yours free now and start doing more with less.

We'll also send you e-news updates with design-savvy advice.

First Name

Email

SEND



Essential #5: Would Make an Ideal Prospect Want to Check You Out Further

Remember: Prospects will download your lead magnet for different reasons. Yes, they might be looking for someone or comparing freelancers, but they might also just be curious about you.

Whatever the reason, a good lead magnet will make the prospect feel good about taking the next step. For instance, calling or emailing you (in the case of someone actively looking), or keeping your information handy (in the case of someone without an immediate need).

You're always trying to move prospects closer and closer to working with you. A good lead magnet helps do that.

Again, run your final topic ideas by a client and trusted colleague to make sure it resonates with them.

Essential #6: Tantalizing Title

Your title is extremely important because it's what *sells* your lead magnet. You might have great copy to help promote it. But that's not enough.

Your title must be:

- Clear
- Imply relevance
- Imply usefulness / utility / value
- Generate curiosity

And again, it does not have to imply that it contains mind-blowing information! But it should be tantalizing enough to make the prospect give up his email address to get it. Some examples:

- "10 Design Tips for Reaching & Retaining Donors Without Breaking the Bank"
- "The 5 Biggest Blocks to Writing a Monthly Newsletter (and How to Overcome Them)"
- "The Web's Most Powerful Tool for Influencing Technology Buyers...and the Big Mistake 9 out of 10 Marketing Directors Make When They Try to Use It"

Essential #7: Easy to Consume

There's an overwhelming amount of content already out there. And in many markets, prospects aren't necessarily hungry for more information. Keep that in mind as you craft your lead magnet.

Give them enough to be useful. But resist the temptation to give away the farm (less is often more). Try to avoid e-books, mini courses and long-format reports.

Immediacy: Design so they can consume it immediately. Consider going with a very short report or a checklist, cheat sheet, tip sheet or resource list.

Example: Digital Marketer's "The 10-Minute Social Media Audit"



Example: Melonie Dodaro's "Cracking the LinkedIn Code Cheat Sheet"



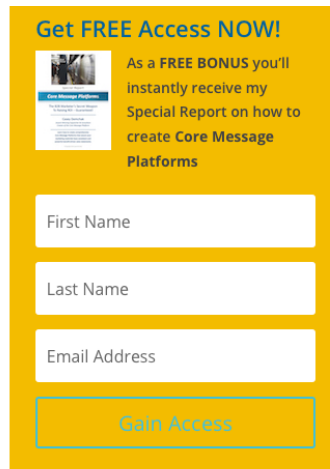
We respect your privacy

How to Create Your Lead Magnet

#1: Pick a Lead Magnet Type

First, decide which approach you'll take with your lead magnet. Below are some good options to consider.

How-To



Get FREE Access NOW!

As a **FREE BONUS** you'll instantly receive my Special Report on how to create **Core Message Platforms**

First Name

Last Name

Email Address

[Gain Access](#)

Problem/Solution



Long Sales Cycles and Skeptical Customers are Good Things: Information Marketing in Infrastructure

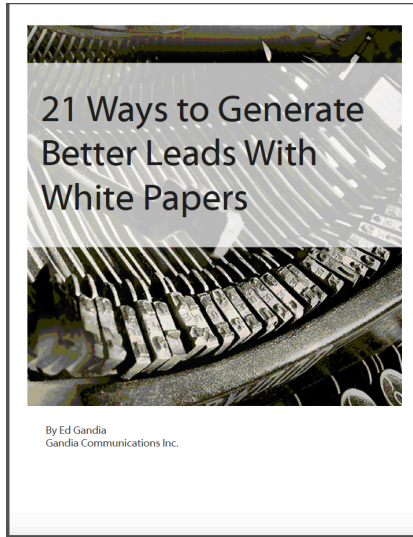
The report fully identifies and explains the information flow in today's infrastructure sector and provides the reader with a proven marketing campaign.

A report by Infrastructure editor Ryan W. Shilling, L.S.

GET YOUR FREE REPORT ON INFORMATION MARKETING IN INFRASTRUCTURE!

My white paper, *Long Sales Cycles and Skeptical Customers are Good Things*, will help you to implement a winning online strategy that's proven effective for infrastructure purchasers.

Numbered List



Checklist

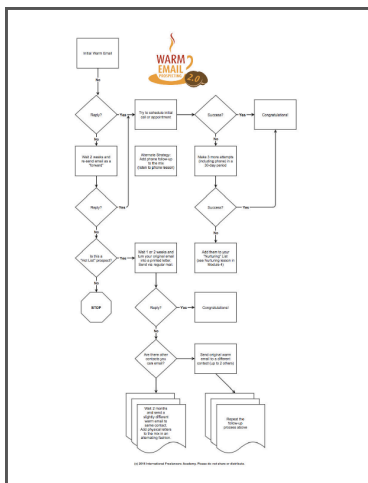
Download My **SEO Audit Checklist**

It contains 21 points, and can be read in *just 5 minutes*. Apply every step to increase your traffic!

Enter your email address

GET ACCESS

Process Map



Tip Sheet or Resource Guide

**FREE VIDEO
RESOURCE
GUIDE FOR
ONLINE
BUSINESS
OWNERS**

14 SIMPLE PLANNING,
FILMING, AND EDITING
TOOLS TO SIMPLIFY YOUR
VIDEO MARKETING

[YES, I WANT IT!](#)

Template

**Generate
Hot Freelance
Writing Leads
with This Simple
Email Template**



FREE TEMPLATES |



**15 FREE INFOGRAPHIC
TEMPLATES IN POWERPOINT**

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Tool



**Free
DM ROI
Calculator**

Instantly calculates DM
response rates



Bob Bly
Copywriter

**NEED
GREAT COPY?
CLICK HERE
NOW**

To use the free DM ROI Calculator and get additional free tips on direct marketing, enter your name and email address below.

Name

Email

We promise not to sell or share your email to anyone.

Quiz, Assessment or Audit



HubSpot

NORTH AMERICA 888 482 7768

FREE DOWNLOAD: THE 3-STEP MARKETING AUDIT

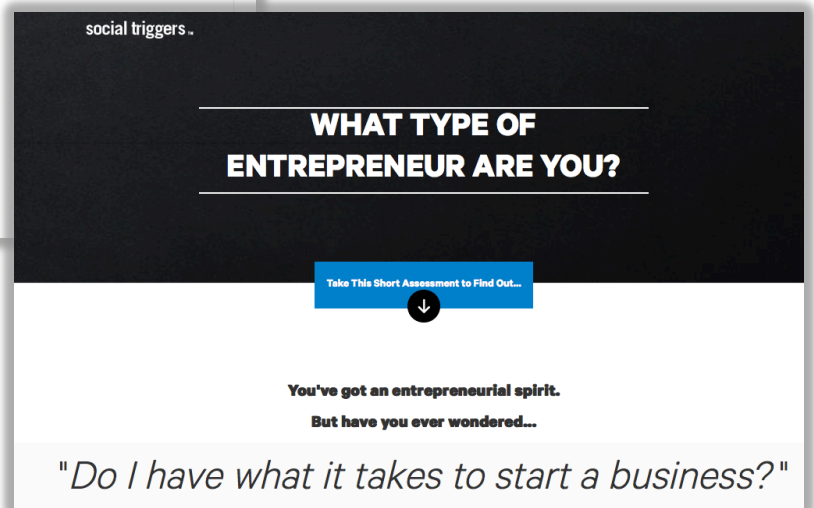
How to Use Customer Data to Recharge Your Marketing

Many decisions are made based on "intuition." But what we do in sales and marketing can't be made on gut alone. Instead, our marketing strategies should be paired with objective trends found within **data**.

That's where a Marketing Audit comes in -- the process of analyzing strategies, goals, activities, and results to ultimately improve your marketing campaigns. By conducting a marketing audit using this 3-step guide, you will:

- ✓ Uncover opportunities and inefficiencies that you didn't know existed.
- ✓ Quickly change direction and strategy by knowing what worked - and what didn't.
- ✓ Identify trends and insights to fuel your sales process.
- ✓ Develop highly-effective lead scoring and nurturing programs.

Get Your Free Copy



social triggers.

WHAT TYPE OF ENTREPRENEUR ARE YOU?

Take This Short Assessment to Find Out...

**You've got an entrepreneurial spirit.
But have you ever wondered...**

"Do I have what it takes to start a business?"

#2: Decide on the File Format

PDF is usually your best bet. But you could also go with video, audio or a combination of all three, depending on your topic and audience.

Go with a format that will be easy and fast for you to produce. And remember: Less is often more. No need to give away the farm. The busier your target audience, the shorter, more easily consumable your lead magnet should be.

#3: Brainstorm Topic Ideas

Carve out 30-60 minutes of uninterrupted time. Every idea makes the list at this point; no prejudging.

Sift through industry or trade magazines for ideas and inspiration.

Go through my free resource: "23 Creative and Non-Boring Ideas for Your Next Newsletter or Blog." You'll find it in the Bonus Resources section of the *Get Better Clients Academy* portal.

Test your short list of ideas with your clients. Again, you're NOT looking for revolutionary ideas—give up on that! Instead, try to come up with a new twist on an old or common idea/theme...or a different way of framing the issue.

#4: Select Your Topic

Narrow down your ideas to your top three and make a decision. Resist the temptation to "optimize" (to find THE best idea). Better to start with one than agonize over the decision and do nothing.

This won't be your last lead magnet. So save the other ideas for future lead magnets, newsletter articles, guest blog posts you author, etc.

#5: Give It a Strong Title

Sometimes it's easier to start this whole process by creating the title first and using the title as your guide for outlining and drafting your lead magnet.

Your title needs to (implicitly or explicitly) communicate value. Best bets for title formats:

- How-to ("How to Create a Powerful...")

- Numbered list ("5 Ways to...")
- Identifying the lead magnet format in the title ("worksheet, cheat sheet, audit, calculator...")
- Using an identifier for the target market and/or position in the organization you're going after ("The marketer's guide..." "...for creative directors" "...Tech Marketing Campaign Checklist...")

To get inspiration when brainstorming title ideas, do an image search on Google for "Cosmopolitan magazine covers" or "Reader's Digest magazine covers."

The writers who craft these headlines get paid very well to do what they do. Copy their structure and replace their words with yours.

#6: Format and Design Your Lead Magnet

Consider hiring a designer. Barter services if you need to. A great-looking lead magnet will make a better impression.

Other Tips

- Mind-map your ideas before outlining.
- Outline once you have everything mind-mapped.
- Break down your lead magnet project into weekly milestones.
- Focus on taking daily action.
- Don't wait until you have a full day; do a little every day.
- Give yourself a hard deadline and work backward.

Technology Needed

- Email service provider (MailChimp, Constant Contact, etc.).
- Add opt-in box to your website's sidebar.
- Add opt-in box or call to action to articles and/or blog posts on your site.
- Create a landing page for your lead magnet to use in marketing campaigns.

Next Steps

- Come up with one simple step you can take today to kick-start this process.
- Do it before the day is over.
- Schedule another simple task (30 minutes or less) for tomorrow.
- Set a deadline for publishing your lead magnet and get to work on it today.