The *MONEY'S* in the *FOLLOW-UP*

Your Follow-up Cash Plan

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Introduction

You've realized the importance of follow up… but that's only the start of your story. Now you need to create a follow up cash plan – one you can use with every campaign.

Setting up a good plan that is **flexible** yet **consistent** contributes more to becoming an authority figure – one who people naturally and automatically turn to – than any other single strategy.

Using your follow up plan with every campaign ensures you make **the most profit possible** out of all the work you do and every product you create.

In this Special Report, we're going to take a detailed look at what makes a top-notch follow up plan – and why. Understanding not just the `what' or 'how', but also the `why' makes it easy to implement and adapt your follow up methods to any online (and offline) marketing situation.

Exactly What Is "Follow Up"?

In talking to website owners about follow up, some surprising assumptions emerged. Some people thought "follow up" was something you do only after a product has been delivered. One defined follow up as "troubleshooting problems when they don't like your product". A third defined it as: "Bugging people to buy your next product."

One common belief held by this group of newer marketers was that follow up was being aggressive, or indulging in "hard sell" tactics.

In other words, these particular respondents were far more comfortable politely sending a letter to their list, waiting for the sales, and then accepting (with disappointment) a fraction of the results expected – or indeed possible!

Internet overwhelm, distraction and not having "six pairs of eyes and hands and any employees" were also offered as reasons for not implementing a regular follow up routine.

One or two of this group admitted to sending a reminder a few days before their introductory offers were about to end. (And that's a good follow up tactic – a lot of potential customers simply forget about your offer, especially when you're not consistent in maintaining the relationship). But they also admitted that they had "no particular reason" for sending that follow up letter – and indeed didn't do it every time.

Sending a single "this offer is about to end" is not using a follow up plan. It's like only putting eyeliner on one eye; then wondering why your prospective new employer looks at you funny during your job interview (before hiring your perfectly groomed rival to become the new TV anchorwoman).

Follow up is not an area you can choose to ignore. Inconsistent, spotty or hit-and-miss follow up efforts brand you as inexperienced and unreliable. They weaken your credibility.

Consistent follow up routines and practices encourage people to have confidence in you. They brand you as a seasoned professional, and strengthen your reputation and web worth.

Consistent follow up routines produce tangible, consistent results!

Beyond Consistency

Do you know why Olympic athletes are able to achieve such superhuman results? It's because they not only train systematically until they are consummate experts: To them, that's only the basics. Once they've become the absolute masters of their sport, they then spend an equal amount of time refining the smallest details and addressing the most minor weaknesses until they shave milliseconds from their fastest times, or add millimeters to their highest jumps.

They do all this because, at the Olympic level, even a millisecond or millimeter can mean the difference between a Gold Medal… or coming in fourth and "falling off the podium".

Now, you certainly don't have to invest the years that an Olympic athlete invests in order to become a successful marketer. But adopting Olympic-level work ethics and focus when it comes to your follow up habits really will help you get miles – not millimeters – further ahead than many of your peers.

Here are the 7 hallmarks of a strong follow up plan. It should:

1. **Take familiar, consistent steps**, presented the same way in the same format every time, so that people "recognize" and welcome your email or letter, when it arrives.

2. **Feel helpful – not intrusive** – to your site visitor or list member. It should make everything easier for them.

3. **Bring you a consistently predictable profit ratio with every campaign**

4. **Have measurable results** you can track and improve upon

5. **Run on autopilot**, requiring minimal investment of time and effort from you.

6. **Solidify your reputation** and boost your credibility.

7. **Help your visitor move through the follow up process** smoothly and easily.

Especially in its latter aspect, a good follow up plan is much like your sales funnel. That smooth flow is absolutely crucial to creating all the good things like:

- An aura of professionalism
- A reminder you're absolutely reliable and know what you're doing
- A "branded" presence for you and your product line

Thinking Like Your Customer

One of the most helpful things you can do for your unique customer is to think as if you were in his or her shoes.

Try this exercise:

1. Print out the worksheet on the next page. If you don't have access to a printer, just take a sheet of paper and draw a vertical line through the center.

2. Ask yourself: What are some of the reasons you find yourself missing product offers?

3. Write your answers down in the left-hand column. (Don't skip this step!)

4. Look at your list of answers. Think about your specific, ideal customer. Ask yourself for each separate question: "Would she feel the same? Would this be her reaction in this situation?

5. Write down what you think your customer's answer would be in the right hand column

Keep this list handy and refer to it when you are deciding which follow up tactics to incorporate into your unique follow up plan.

What are some of the reasons you find yourself missing product offers?	What are some of the reasons your unique customer might find herself missing product offers?

One good side effect of actually taking the time to perform an exercise such as the previous one – it **challenges preconceptions**. And these are the sort of assumptions that can stop us from taking actions we need to take.

For example, if you dislike "hard sell" tactics, you may assume that "bombarding" your list with multiple emails is harassing, because you yourself are put off by people who do that. But filling out the worksheet above may help you realize that there are times you actually did want to buy a product… but you couldn't find the email and had forgotten to bookmark the link. In fact, you really wished the product seller would send a "reminder"… but the moment passes, and you don't buy.

If that marketer had sent you the reminder, would you have considered she was "harassing" you? No. Because you:

(a) already thought the product was exactly what you needed and/or

(b) you trusted that particular marketer enough to purchase, based on past positive experience.

The people who you find "pushy" and aggressive most likely really do overdo it. They're going for the one-time score, the big sale – and they've forgotten the most important rule of all…

Balance

The missing ingredient you will only find in the best follow up plans is "balance". It involves being:

- In tune with your unique customer
- Sensitive to timing– being able to accurately gauge how receptive your customer is to repeated contacts
- Aware of rhythm in your marketing transactions, and fitting into the flow, instead of forcing your way upstream

How do you find all these things out and apply them – practically?

While part of it is just through really knowing your customer, other parts involve following simple, time-honored conventions – ones that do the work for you. And you can also outsource and automate portions of your follow up.

In short, there's really no need for you to have six pairs of hands at all!

Putting It Together

Here are 7 proven ways to set yourself up to be well-received as a trusted professional and expert, whenever you present your follow up offers... Ways to help you achieve that all-important balance…

Deliver What You Promise

This one is so simple, it's a no brainer! And, of course, you'd love to deliver a product that everyone raves about. But you might not, at first… because of inexperience or – worse – going for the quick buck.

Products that fail to fulfill due to **inexperience** are often not the result of shoddy workmanship at all, but more often of well-meaning but fatal mistakes like:

- Misjudging your market
- Failing to fill the right gaps
- Missing hidden opportunities to improve your product
- Poor sales material and copy – often over-promising what can actually be achieved or delivered
- Failing to help the customer move smoothly through the sales process

Products that fail to fulfill because one is greedily going for the quick buck are the ones that give you complexes about seeming "aggressive": Because their creators invariably are aggressive and over-persuasive – and you're terrified of seeming that way.

But that isn't you. Right? You're going to be one of the marketers whose emails list members love to open – because they know they are going to get something of true value inside.

2. Help Them Keep Moving Through Your Process

A vital part to polished, flawless delivery is setting your sales funnel – and your follow ups – to help your customer move easily through your process. This includes:

- Trusting
- Buying
- Receiving

- Delivery
- Post delivery contact (the one step missed more frequently than any other by less successful marketers)
- Maintenance (maintaining and nurturing a relationship is essential… especially right after a sale)
- Diversion (channeling your customer easily and naturally to your next upgrade, OTO or new offer)

3. Remove the Bumps and Glitches

What should you be watching out for, in both your sales funnel and follow up process?

Anything that interrupts the "flow". In other words, any "bump" they can "trip" over.

It's absolutely vital you give them nothing to stumble over, nothing to catch their attention and divert their thoughts, on the way to your "buy" button or new offer.

In your sales funnel, you are moving them through your selection of ever-more-expensive offers as smoothly as if you had sent them off on a water slide. Nothing should stop their swift, smooth descent to the pool at the bottom.

It's the same with your follow up tactics and practices.

4. Provide them with Access – to You

Yes, you can use a V.A. (personal assistant) and/or a Help Desk to automate your follow up – but do test and track to make sure your system works smoothly. If you do provide a Help Desk, you can offer warm and friendly access to you by other means:

- Writing or providing a new, free Special Report that reads just as if it was written personally to your customer
- Inviting them to follow you on Twitter, and responding to their tweets (it's fast!)
- Having a well-organized blog with regular entries; each one speaking about and offering solutions to their problems
- Offering helpful mini email courses, which come with warm, personalized letters from you

- Keeping the tone personal and casual – while providing valuable information they desperately crave

And this should all start with your **initial contact**.

5. Automate as Much as You Can

You've heard the phrase: "Why reinvent the wheel?"…

Well, it particularly applies to creating your follow up strategies. We've already spoken about hiring V.A.s and using services like Help Desks. The one caution to add to this is "test them thoroughly" before leaving them to "run themselves".

Always leave a "back door" strategy for customers who really have a problem with a product you've sold. Automation or not, there are times a personal email is in order.

6. Outsourcing is Good

One way you can really make the most of your follow up lies in allowing specialists to take over some segments of your business – especially follow ups. Just make sure that whoever you contract speaks with your voice and represents your interests (while delighting your clients).

Follow up professionals you can use include:

- Copywriters
- V.A.s

6 tips for finding a competent V.A.:

- **Always check references**. Phoning is better than emailing.
- **Pick one who specializes** in the areas of business you want them to handle
- **Recognize that you won't be their only client –** most V.A.s have more than one.
- **Expect confidentiality –** but don't assume. Most of the time, especially with well-established VA.s, you don't have to worry: Their business reputation absolutely depends on their discretion, and it's in their best interests to protect your interests. However, don't be shy in asking if they would mind signing a confidentiality agreement, if you think your business warrants it
- **Try before you buy –** Oh, you'll have to pay, alright: But what I really mean is, start them off with small, single projects, until you're sure that they really do deliver.

- **Remember your VA is not a mind reader –** Do make sure both of you communicate clearly about what you expect from each other.

It takes time to build up a symbiotic rapport with your V.A. – but she is not your employee: She's your contractor. If you are fortunate enough to click and connect with the right assistant on a personal as well as professional level, make sure your relationship remains on a basis of professionalism and respect.

2 tips for finding the right copywriter:

The advantage of using a professional copywriter, when you are a newer marketer, lies in the fact that they are thoroughly familiar with the follow up process.

- Many of the above V.A. tips can be applied to hiring a copywriter
- Some V.A.s also specialize in copywriting certain items, and are often – but not always – less expensive than copywriters

7. Start Preparing for Follow Up Right From your First Contact

As you interact with potential customers, online or off, be cognizant of follow up subjects or opportunities from the word `go'.

For example, if her first contact with you is a query about your niche subject or product, use the question she asks as the basis for a follow up email, or a topic in any follow up mini course you decide to produce.

If you are meeting her in person at a conference, for example, make a mental (or physical) note of anything she says that would not only work as a topic, but serve as a personal touch to include in any letter you decide to later send.

Always be looking for opportunities or subjects for follow up. This allows you to appear to be really connected to your potential client; to be the person who is constantly thinking about their problems, and how to solve them…

…because you are!

Section II. Follow Up Techniques

1. The Email Series

Every marketer should have a series of follow up emails ready to go before they launce a product.

Purpose – To remind the person who has signed up for your free special report or video, or for your free mini course, who you are and why you can help them. (It goes without saying that you do promote your product – or if they've already bought, your next product, OTO or upgrade.)

A good number to send is 5 follow up emails and 1 promotional one which finally promotes your new paid product.

On the following page, you will find a template outline for a follow up email series that can be used consistently after every free report or video download…

Follow Up Email	When to Send	Content
#1	1-2 days after download	Thank them for downloading your report (mention it by name.) Reassure them that they can contact you if there was any problem. Go on to share a single tip that follows naturally from the report subject. - Promote your new paid eBook – but just casually – perhaps even a "You can find more information in my new eBook: [URL link, taking them to your sales page]
# 2	2-3 days after #1	Ask them if they've had a chance to download your Special Report yet. Continue the conversation with another high value tip, following the format of # 1. It should feel like a one-on-one conversation and flow smoothly and informally. Let them know you are happy to answer any questions (and be sure there is some form of contact info included).
# 3	7 days after #2	Highlight the single best benefit of the free report they received, including the page number where they can find its information in the original report. Elaborate on how to make the most of this benefit or feature.
#4	10 days after #3	Focus on a question or objection you think your correspondent may have had about the information outlined in your report. Overcome it. Make sure it's a subject that will also help overcome any resistance they may be holding to future purchases on this subject
#5	4 weeks after #4	Send a letter offering a bonus – perhaps a video or audio file. Set up an actual sales page for the bonus and let them know other people have to buy it. This bonus should help them feel they really received great value for signing up

What you have been doing over this month-long series is helping your customer feel supported and important. The email course should provide tips that are really valuable – and should make her feel that she is getting special attention and insider information the general public can't access.

After you've completed this email series, you then send a straight **promotional email** – still keeping the informal, one-on-one tone – promoting your paid eBook (or video, MP3 file, or whatever it is the free report promoted).

Do you forget about your client when this particular sequence is finished? Of course not! If you offered your subscriber special pricing on your paid product in the promotional email (another way to help them feel valued) send a **follow up email** to your promo email, 48-24 hours before any special pricing expires. This email should be a friendly reminder that the special pricing is going to expire soon.

Optional: Add a "**last chance" email**, the morning of the day the special pricing expires.

Once this is concluded, do you drop the client contact cold? Of course not. You will most likely begin the whole sequence again with the next new freebie for the next new paid product – perhaps in video or audio format, this time.

Although to you there is a separate, repeating sequence for each product, to your subscriber it should feel like friendly, ongoing, helpful conversations.

Your goal is to make them look forward to hearing from you. Set this up correctly and you'll never need to worry about making the "hard sell".

2. The Personal Follow Up

You can follow up with an email if you meet a potential client (or expert you'd like to guest on your blog or web show) in person, perhaps at an event such as a conference.

Send an email telling them how glad you are to have met them at [name of event]. Touch up on <u>one thing they said during your actual conversation that stayed with you</u>. (See the value of being aware of follow up opportunities from the start of your first contact?)

Don't hesitate to add one or 2 sentences letting them know what you can do to help them get ahead. List the 3 best specific benefits of your product or services, then close by reminding them how to keep in touch with you.

(Most people send these by email, but a good rule to follow is… if the contact was in person, send them a snail-mail letter – their address should be on the business card you made sure you asked for.)

Of course, what you're doing here is simple networking. The "formula" approach to these contacts doesn't mean you value subscribers less – it means you're focusing on how to reach and help them more. You're making sure you don't miss opportunities to be available, to be there for them.

3. The "Blast from the Past" email

One follow up opportunity you shouldn't neglect is to contact past customers who have bought from you – especially it it's been quite a while. Send them a friendly, straightforward email promoting one of your products that they haven't bought.

This isn't quite the same as your follow up series: This is a single email re-opening contact with someone you've let slip by the wayside… but it's a proven fact that <u>it is far easier to sell to someone you've already sold to</u> than to "cold call" on strangers!

It may not be too late to remind them who you are and why you can help, but it's true: No relationship thrives on neglect – they wither.

Make no mistake: Relationships need to be nurtured.

Always be looking for opportunities to bring something special to your list. And don't make it a paid product every time – give away enough "treats" and friendly advice that you set yourself up to be looked at as your subscribers' favorite resource person in your niche.

4. The Newsletter Strategy

It goes without saying that you shouldn't just use one delivery method for your follow ups (**i.e**. emails). No matter how good your email series' are, if that's all your subscribers ever see, they're more likely to tune out.

One of the best ways to stay connected to your subscribers and customers in between email series and freebies is by producing a regular newsletter or ezine. But how do you do it in a way that makes them actually want to read, and not just say: "Oh, a newsletter… I'll look at it later."?

Here are some tips…

Make it personal – Follow your best practice of still speaking to only one "ideal customer, one-on-one.

Use a Template – This has 2 major advantages: Not only do you not have to worry about layout and design, you just "fill in the blanks", and it soon becomes a routine task you'll find easier and easier to tackle every week (or fortnight… or month…) Which leads us to…

|Send It Out Regularly – Another key element of follow up success is consistency. That means not only being consistent in design, so people know where to find their favorite sections, but consistency in when the newsletter comes out. It doesn't really matter if it's twice a month or once a week – stick to it, so people know what to expect.

Make Sure it Suits Your Style – Your newsletter doesn't have to be a fancy-schmancy HTML template, packed with graphics and colors (unless that's what your clients respond to the best). It can be as simple as text based email format. |

So how do you "differentiate" it in your subscriber's mind?

Simple: Your subject line. Make it consistent – something like "Mary's Weekly Newsletter" – followed by the **issue number** and **weekly topic**.

5. Don't Forget the Snail

One method most online marketers ignore is using snail mail for their follow ups – yet it can be an effective way to bring yourself fresh to mind. If subscribers have gotten in the habit of ignoring your emails and newsletter, this may bring them back into the fold, so to speak, simply by setting you apart from the crowd.

One way to be original with your snail mails to send them a brightly-colored postcard. Postcard mailings don't cost as much as you may think; and there are many companies willing to work with you on a price.

(You can get started right now for as little as $22 with Uprinting.com.)

What can you do with snail-mail postcards?

- Offer a deep discount on one of your high end products
- Invite them to a webinar or teleseminar (follow up with email, closer to the event – "Did you receive you personal invitation?"
- Send them a "tip of the month" they can file in an index card box
- If they are a past customer, simply thank them for their business. If you like, add a link to a free Special Report just for them. (Release it generally later on in the year).

Of course, tracking your campaigns to see if they're effective is vital – particularly when you're outlaying actual cash (the one drawback with snail mailing).

10 Focused Follow Up Tips

Your follow ups should:

1. Always help your subscriber or customer easily take the next step through your sales funnel

2. Help build a relationship with your customer

3. Contain high value content designed to really help your customer or subscriber

4. Be conversational, friendly and informal

5. Never contain "hype" (over inflated, slick `sales language')

6. Always focus on your contact and her problems and burning needs

7. Follow a sequence – and that sequence should always follow a rhythm

8. If you use telephone follow up, never phone before your subscriber has received valuable freebie tips, reports or mini-courses. Phoning after initial contact is not usually successful

9. I hope this is a given for you, but do automate your follow up emails with an autoresponder service such as Aweber. If you really have trouble getting the hang of autoresponders, that's where a V.A. who specializes in handling them is worth her weight in gold!

10. Outsource as much as you can. Don't try to do everything yourself – that's the fastest way to confusion and chaos. Planning your follow ups from the beginning of every campaign is really the way to go.

10 Biggest Follow Up Mistakes

So far we've focused on what to do with your follow ups. Let's take a quick look at the 3 biggest mistakes…

1. **Being erratic and inconsistent.** This is the biggest follow up sin – and the one most likely to brand you as unprofessional and leak away your subscriber's trust.

2. **Letting too long a time go by without contact**. People forget you. Easily. (They're so bombarded with emails nowadays!)

3. **Being too formal**. People want to connect with someone they feel like they are "chatting" with. They want enjoyable contact – not a formal lecture.

4. **Being a pest.** Regular follow up is one thing – but nobody wants to be bombarded with emails before they've even had time to digest the last one. Remember that balance and rhythm we spoke about. If you don't feel you don't have a good handle on email timing, stick to never sending out emails more than once a week.

5. **Disappearing.** This is as unwise as being a pest. It usually happens when you're overwhelmed, and focusing your attention on other things. People forget you – do you really want Josephine Reader glancing at your email and saying "Who on earth is Mandy Marketer?" before hitting the delete button? The way to avoid this is – you guessed it – creating a follow up plan and sticking to it

6. **Ignoring certain subscribers.** Don't speak disparagingly of "freebie seekers" and pour all your energies into promoting only your high-ticket items. Today's freebie seekers are often nothing more than new marketers with small budgets. A surprisingly high percentage of these will stick with it and become your golden "repeat customers". Get them as faithful fans now, before they discover anyone else's products. Help them feel you were the one who gave them their start – the one who truly cared, and helped them. But the bottom line? Cover <u>all</u> your product price ranges and customer profiles.

7. **Not focusing on your customer's needs**. It's surprisingly easy to veer off track! Remember the age-old winning question they'll be asking as they read your follow ups… "What's in it for me?"

8. **Focusing on features, not benefits**. Another trap it's ridiculously easy to fall into.

9. **Not focusing, period**! Another variation of this is to send emails flitting from subject to subject, all over the place. While each follow up email or newsletter can focus on different topics, each should have their own theme. Ruthlessly cut out anything you find that is off topic – you can always save it for future emails, if it's a real gem.

You can be erratic and scattered in a lot of different ways, as you can see from the previous tips. But having a good follow up plan (and sticking to it) should solve them all!

Overcoming Your Fear of Selling

I've heard again and again from online entrepreneurs who "hate the selling part". What they really mean is… they are mentally comparing themselves with dinnertime telemarketers and aggressive sales people. They want to be liked – not avoided. They want to be respected – not viewed as cheesy or shady.

These are good points, and if you come off like one of those telemarketers who keep talking at the speed of light past "no thank you", you won't get very far!

The key is to develop a sales and follow up style that is right for you – one that feels natural… because if you don't feel natural and at ease, your subscribers won't either.

One thing that really helped me was to shift my focus – by deliberate re-framing – from "Oh no, I'm pushing products on these people!" to "I can help them by showing them exactly what they need to solve that problem!"

It feels good to help. And when you are promoting a product you believe in, one that you know your subscribers and customers will enjoy and can really use, it feels wonderful!

Follow your plan, make the most of every opportunity – and be the sort of professional people will emulate and admire.

You see, when it's successful – and profitable – follow up can be fun!