

# HOW FREE REPORTS TRANSFORM YOUR MARKETING INTO A LEAD-GENERATION MAGNET!

## The Most Powerful, Most Overused, and Most Wrongly Used Word in the English Language!

You might have heard “free” is supposed to be the most powerful word in marketing and advertising. And you might also have heard it’s no longer true and it has outlived its impact.

Fortunately, this is not the case. It’s a myth. “Free” is alive and kicking and helping savvy marketers like you sell millions and Millions and **MILLIONS** of dollars of products and services.

So... why the myth? Well, myths do tend to have a basis in fact, and the idea for this one had to come from somewhere, right?

I mean, if it’s so powerful, why do so many people now say it’s outdated and it doesn’t work?

Great question, and I’ll share the answer with you. It’s because...

### “Most people don’t know how to use it!”

When most people want to use this incredibly powerful word in their marketing, they’ll just write it in big bold letters and slap it up in an advertisement and wait for it to work its magic.

And it doesn’t. Not even when they put it in the middle of a little star with bright colors. **YES**, something like that will indeed get the reader’s attention... but that’s it. That’s all it’s going to do if you don’t take some simple precautions. And attention alone isn’t good enough — if you ever want to make any money you must get your prospects to take action!

Make no mistake... “free” is an extremely powerful word, but if you don’t know how to wield it with precision and skill, you’re in for a nasty surprise.

Look, it’s kind of like the difference between a scalpel and a machete. Both are extremely sharp and powerful tools... but you must have the right skills to use them safely and effectively. Each is the perfect tool in its own place... but if you’re trying to perform brain surgery with a machete, you’d be wrong to conclude that’s where the problem with the operation was!

**See, here’s the secret:** there’s a perception that if it’s free, it’s not worth anything, right? How does the old saying go? “There’s no such thing as a free lunch!”

No matter how uncomfortable we find this thought and would like to think it isn’t true, it pays us to see the world as it really is rather than how we think it ought to be or how we want it to be.

And the unfortunate truth is if you attempt to get customers and clients just by giving stuff away, thinking they’ll flock to your door just because you’re handing out free stuff, you’re sadly mistaken. And an even more unfortunate truth is no matter how much your freebie is actually worth, if you don’t give your prospects and customers a reason to believe it’s worth something, they’ll still perceive it as worthless. And folks being like they are, perception is reality.

**So here’s what you do:** you give it a value. Instead of saying, “FREE widget,” and nothing more, be bold: “FREE widget, worth \$197!”

There is another thing you must do, too, and that’s sell your free stuff as hard as you sell your products. All the sales savvy and the tricks and tweaks you use in your genuine sales copy must also apply to your free gifts, especially if you’re using free gifts for lead-generation (I’ll come to that, don’t worry). It’s **NOT** enough just to say something is worth an arbitrary amount. You’ve

## CONTENTS:

The Most Powerful, Most Overused, Most Wrongly Used Word In The English Language .....	1
What Is A Free Report? .....	3
I Have Nothing To Say To My Prospects ...	3
Even If I had Something To Say To Them, I Don’t Know How To Say It .....	3
People Will Take My Information And Then Solve Their Problems Themselves .....	4
How To Generate A Fee Report; Offline And Online.....	5
Introducing...Infusionsoft .....	6
FREE Online Demo Shows You How To Get Maximum Value From Your Leads .....	7

## HOW FREE REPORTS TRANSFORM YOUR MARKETING INTO A LEAD-GENERATION MAGNET!

got to give a reason why.

If you're giving away a free diving watch with every wetsuit you buy (for example) then perhaps you don't have to work as hard; but if you're trying to get a prospect to clip out a coupon, wander down to the post-office and mail it just to get your free gift, you've got a genuine sale to make, my friend.

**Just one last worrisome thought here, just to make the whole thing really bleak:** you can be sure you will get some people who'll bite your hand off all the way to the shoulder to get whatever it is you're giving away... simply because it is free.

Heck, there are people out there who'll take anything if it's free just because it's not going to cost them anything. **You have to ask yourself this:** do you really want these people as your customers and clients?

Not if you want to make a great income and keep your sanity you don't!

Now this isn't what most advertisers and marketers will tell you, chiefly because most of them don't actually seem to know it, but giving stuff away for free in the wrong way... can actually harm your business.

Just to add to our challenge, it's not just the word being used inexpertly causing the perception that "FREE" has lost its marketing muscle.

No, the second problem is...

**"They don't give away the right thing... because they don't understand the reason for doing it!"**

Have you ever heard the phrase "loss leader?" It's not so common nowadays, but it's where supermarkets and other stores might heavily discount an item just to get customers in to the

store where the chances are high they'll then spend money on other things.

Well, giving away free stuff is the same, more or less. You're doing it as a strategic marketing tactic.

Here's a cautionary note: if you're giving away free stuff with no real thought to how it fits in with your marketing strategy you could be in a lot of trouble. Remember: tactics win the battle, but strategy wins the war. If you don't crunch the numbers and you hope to make up in volume what you're effectively giving away in discounts (which is one way you can look at freebies), you are making a BIG mistake.

But this might seem contradictory to what I shared with you above: if you give something away for free, it's got to be worth something. Then again, you don't want to lose your shirt giving out free stuff.

We know we can get people's attention by giving away something for free. **But the problem is what can we give away that:**

1. has perceived value
2. doesn't actually cost us very much (I'm the very last person to suggest you cut corners in your marketing, although there is no mileage in paying out more than you have to)
3. induces the prospective customer to buy from us (in the same way as a loss-leader gets people into the store where they'll buy more)

**I can answer all three needs with one solution:** information.

**And how do you provide that information?**

With a Free Report

**What is a Free Report?**

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## HOW FREE REPORTS TRANSFORM YOUR MARKETING INTO A LEAD-GENERATION MAGNET!

### **A Free Report is exactly what it says:**

a free source of useful and valuable information you give to your prospects.

Now, when I'm consulting with business owners and entrepreneurs and I get to the part about them giving away free reports... they usually go red in the face and act like they're going to faint or explode. Or perhaps both.

### **Here are some of the common objections I hear:**

1. I have nothing to say to my prospects.
2. Even if I had something to say to them, I don't know how to say it!
3. People will take my information and then solve their problem themselves.
4. Isn't it expensive to be sending real honest-to-goodness paper and ink all around the country?

Let's take a look at these in more detail.

### **I have nothing to say to my prospects**

This is just not true. And if it is, perhaps you're in the wrong business. Here's something you might not have thought about: you (yes, YOU), are an expert at something. If nothing else, you're an expert in the business you're in.

See, we often — and wrongly — assume what's commonplace to us is commonplace to everyone. And it just isn't.

Take me, for instance. I can talk and write reasonably intelligently about marketing and follow-up and automated follow-up systems all day and still not run out of new things to say. But put me in a room with a carp fisherman... and I won't have a clue.

### **What it all boils down to is this:**

an expert is nothing more than someone who knows more than you do about a given subject. Sure, all the "vested interests" will try to tell you differently, but this is what it really comes down to. No one who knows less than you do can possibly know the extent of your knowledge on a subject.

And to them, you're an expert.

### **Even if I had something to say to them, I don't know how to say it!**

***You (yes, YOU) are an expert at something. If nothing else, you're an expert in the business you're in.***

Guess what? This isn't true either. Here's the real truth (and most copywriters and marketing consultants will be very unhappy I'm telling you this): if you can hold a sensible conversation and make yourself understood... you can write an intelligent, valuable Free Report.

As much as copywriters like to pretend otherwise, they don't have extra brains or mystical powers bestowed upon them at birth. All they've done is realize a very powerful secret, one that when **YOU** understand it will give you the potential to make untold riches from your words.

### **So are you ready for that secret?**

**Here it is:** write like you speak.

It's true. One of the best ways to write a Free Report is to decide on your subject matter and then to write as if you were actually talking with a real person. When I write and proof my Free Report, I actually imagine that I'm talking with

## HOW FREE REPORTS TRANSFORM YOUR MARKETING INTO A LEAD-GENERATION MAGNET!

someone I know. When I do this, I find it's easier to read than if I slip into "corporate speak."

The biggest mistake business owners make when they sit down to write a Free Report or, indeed, any "official" written communication, is they get an attack of the longwindedpomposities. It's a terrible affliction with the dreadful symptoms of making you seem like a really dull and boring person.

If you find yourself nervous about "following up too much," remember the good advice I got from a very wise marketer: "If you're boring, then **ANY** amount of follow-up is too much!" Writing as you would speak will usually help you be much more engaging and genuine.

The same is true if you're nervous about writing too much in your reports. You can't make them too long... you can only make them too boring.

If you write like you speak, and narrate that imaginary conversation to your reader, you'll be fine.

I mean, how do you think I'm writing this, hmm?

**People will take my information and then solve their problem themselves.**

OK, so you know what to write and you know how to write it... and you're worried people are going to suck all the information out of you and solve their own problems.

Relax. It almost never happens. Anyone with the get-up-and-go to look for information and then tackle the problem themselves will do it anyway. Most people are lazy in this respect. They don't want to have to work to get their problems solved. They want you to do it for them.

However, even if this is a worry for you, it's a cinch to write your Free Report in a way that tells them what the answer is, but not how to do it.

Not only that, but you can also choose the topic of your Free Report so it's not something that they can do themselves.

For example, if you were a lawyer specializing in, say, avoiding paying parking fines, you could write a Free Report titled "How to Legally Avoid Paying Your Parking Fines." In the report you'd tell them the kinds of things they need to do (the what), but not all the details of the forms to fill out, the precise language to use, etc. In this case you would want to limit the information. Similarly, if you were a house-painter you could write a Free Report titled something like "How to Prepare Your Wooden Windows to Survive the Worst a Michigan Winter Can Throw at Them," and you'd tell them exactly what to do without telling exactly how to do it.

Another example would be a lawyer who specializes in adoption; Now the subject matter is so complex almost no one would consider doing it by themselves and so rather than write about the dry and complex detail, you'd perhaps write about, "The 13 Critical Questions to Ask Your Adoption Lawyer BEFORE You Hand Over a Single Red Cent." The trick here is to write the Free Report so the answers to the questions are (not coincidentally) answered by **YOUR** firm. A dentist or cosmetic surgeon might also want to take this line — because no sane person is going to try and do this stuff themselves.

The advantage of giving away information is this: because you are the expert and because you've done them a favor (by giving them something of value), they are going to feel comfortable with you and indebted to you. This last point is a psychological trigger Robert Cialdini identified as being called The Rule of Reciprocity. It's one of our most powerful social forces and smart marketers use it a lot.

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## HOW FREE REPORTS TRANSFORM YOUR MARKETING INTO A LEAD-GENERATION MAGNET!

Your new expert status and the Rule of Reciprocity means rather than ripping you off by using all this great information you're giving them and doing it themselves, they'll be coming to you eager to push money into your hands and practically beg you to solve their problems.

Incidentally, although it's the topic of a white paper all of its own, this is why it's imperative your business has a real paper newsletter. Again, this applies to all businesses. See the next section for why this apparent "cost" is actually an investment.

**Isn't it expensive to be sending real, honest-to-goodness paper and ink all around the country?**

Now we come down to it. Paper and ink cost money. So does postage. Do we really want to be spending money on these things for no guaranteed return?

The answer is a resounding **YES!**

Business is about relationships. By giving Free Reports with valuable information in them, written in a friendly, interesting way, you're building incredibly valuable relationships with everyone reading them.

Unlike other premiums you might give away with a purchase, a Free Report usually has another purpose: usually you're giving it away to get something in return. Usually that something is the prospect's contact details.

Now, you **COULD** give them away as a download on the Internet but experience shows overwhelmingly that the same things making downloads so attractive — speed, low cost, and convenience — also makes them easily disposable.

**There is NO doubt about it:** the value you get from giving a paper-and-ink report returns a value far out of proportion to its cost. Apart from anything else, with a paper-and-ink report you necessarily get the prospect's postal address, which means you can then market to them using more than just email. **This is HUGE!** I want you to re-read this paragraph over and over until you really get it.

*A living, breathing customer database gives you a powerful asset that you can use to grow your business over the years.*

### How to generate leads with a Free Report.

There are two main ways to do this and the process is much the same in each.

#### Offline

You place a direct response ad in suitable media offering the Free Report to prospects. As you've seen above, make sure you give the report a value and sell it on benefits, just as you'd sell any product. Generally, the more response mechanisms you give, e.g., 1-800 phone number, fax, clip the coupon, the more responses you'll get.

With a good Free Report aimed correctly at the target market and the ad placed in the right media, you can build huge lists very rapidly.

#### Online

You drive people to a website and on the site sell the free report in the same way you'd sell anything else: with compelling, engaging sales copy.

## HOW FREE REPORTS TRANSFORM YOUR MARKETING INTO A LEAD-GENERATION MAGNET!

Usually business owners use Pay-Per-Click advertising, natural Search Engine placement, banner ads, viral-e-books, and other on-line advertising methods to get traffic to their site.

The source of your traffic isn't too important and a much under-used method of driving traffic to websites is offline media, using small "blind" classified ads like the example below:

**"DOUBLE YOUR WIDGET SALES  
OVERNIGHT!"**

**FREE Report shows YOU how!**

[www.DoubleYourWidgetSalesOvernight.com](http://www.DoubleYourWidgetSalesOvernight.com)

This isn't hard or expensive, and it can be very effective.

How you handle the traffic once it gets to your site can make or break a campaign.

The biggest mistake you can make is to direct traffic to a "busy" looking landing page (which is just what we call the page they end up on when they type the URL into their browser) where there are lots of options and links away. Remember the sole purpose of this exercise is to get your prospects to give you their details. That's it. If you allow them to be distracted before they've done this, you've just wasted your advertising **PLUS** possibly lost a valuable customer.

So it pays to have the landing page nothing more complicated than a web-form with some brief sales copy on it telling them why they should give you their details. The more details you ask for, the more you've got to give in return and the more you've got to sell them on the idea. The only way off this page is to enter your details and click the button. The only other alternative is to type in another URL in your browser. This type of page is sometimes called a squeeze page.

One important thing here is to have a very clear privacy policy laying out in unambiguous detail how you will use their information and how you will protect it. People are understandably wary of spam and spammers, so you must build trust on the landing page.

**It can be beneficial to ask for information in two stages:** email and first name from the squeeze page, then a second page behind asking for more information in return for even more in value. On this page you give them the option of clicking elsewhere on your site, so this isn't really a squeeze page.

You need to test all of this to discover what gives you the best results. And, the best way to do that is with an automated system that does it all for you!

### Introducing... Infusionsoft

Infusionsoft is quite simply the leading marketing automation software, for small businesses, on this or any other planet.

And even when our users take advantage of only a tiny fraction of the benefits it effortlessly puts at their fingertips, they realize its incredible features make it the only marketing solution of its kind.

First, it's software, written by a hard-core team of expert marketers to be used by expert marketers. From the user's perspective it runs in an ordinary browser, so you don't have to install any software or anything tricky like that. Nope, it's Web-based... meaning we host it on Infusionsoft's own secure, backed-up and bullet-proof servers.

You access Infusionsoft over the Internet, so **YOU** always have access to your system, wherever you are. Listen... we could tell you of

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### The advantage of giving away

**information is this:** because you are the expert and because you've done them a favor (by giving them something of value), they are going to feel comfortable with you and indebted to you.

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dozens of stories about people who've picked up "hot tips" from our user conferences and have raced to their laptops and implemented strategies worth tens of thousand of dollars in hard cash within literally minutes of hearing about them!

Infusionsoft is a staggeringly powerful software system created specifically for small businesses that want to grow quickly. It effortlessly handles automated follow-up, contact management, marketing, sales, e-commerce and accounting functions.

Infusionsoft is flexible and will help you create your squeeze-page forms and instantly analyze the data. Every single one of the thousands — possibly millions — of leads you get from your marketing campaigns goes straight into the super-secure database, so it can start working for you right away.

And, of course, there's no costly hardware, no software to install, and you don't have to hire an IT guy to run it!

### How To Get Maximum Value From Your Leads

**So, once you have all these leads from offering your free report... just what do you do with them?**

Well, if you're like most businesses, you do nothing. And if you're like most of the rest, you perhaps email them a couple of times and let it go at that.

See, this list of prospects, and by extension the list of customers they become, is the most valuable asset your business will ever have.

But leads that sit in your database are as much use as unread books sitting on your shelf.

**So what do you do with them?**

Well, you market to them. You send them the Free Report and then you measure response.

And this is where it gets clever. See, it's not just the numbers of responses you're after. It's the whole dynamic, the whole demographic. If you're selling flower pots you might find you're selling 70% of your products to little old ladies in Ohio on alternate Thursdays between the months of April and June. Don't laugh. Some really strange things have been found by slicing and dicing leads like this.

**OK, so how do you do this?**

Well, Infusionsoft is an automated marketing system designed and purpose-built to perform this kind of online wizardry. From the instant your prospects hit your landing page, the power of Infusionsoft is right behind you, crunching away behind the scenes, processing your leads and reporting the results to you in any one of a myriad of fully-customizable ways.

Even better, Infusionsoft isn't some passive "number cruncher." Oh no... it's so smart it can take pre-determined actions depending on how visitors behave when they're on your site.

**And there's more...** Infusionsoft can interface directly with your fulfillment houses and your commercial printers... so your Free Reports are printed on demand and sent automatically without you even knowing about it.

**And afterwards when your prospects become customers?**

Infusionsoft handles billing, email, fax, voice-broadcast... in fact, if you've read The 4-Hour Work Week and you were wondering if a single system could run a totally "hands off" business... the answer is **YES**. If you've been using a hodge-podge of off-the-shelf software, home-grown

databases, spreadsheets, manila folders, calendars, sticky notes, or any other kind of half-baked, lame excuse-for-a-system... you can keep doing it the hard way or you can work smarter by using Infusionsoft.

It's the all-in-one sales and marketing automation software designed specifically for serious, marketing-minded entrepreneurs who want to use marketing automation to double (or even triple) their sales.

If you are serious about maintaining solid relationships with your prospects and customers, then you should be serious about maintaining their information in a database system that's not only secure and reliable, but that enables you to access, analyze, slice & dice your customer information easily.

The end result is better marketing and better customer communication, and ultimately more profit!

Infusionsoft puts virtually **ANY** business on autopilot.

### FREE Online Demo Will Show You How!

OK, you're probably wondering how you can discover more about Infusionsoft and how its automation capabilities can benefit your business, right?

Well, it's easy. Because right now you can access our online, on-demand demo absolutely **FREE!** **So here's what to do while you're thinking about it and before anything comes up to distract you: go HERE right now and watch the demo:**

[www.infusionsoft.com/demo](http://www.infusionsoft.com/demo)