

Video #1:

Why I Used to HATE Marketing — And How I Found a Faster and Easier Way to Attract Clients

Hi, I'm Ed Gandia. I'm a freelance copywriter and marketing consultant.

And just like many of you, I got my start as a copywriter through AWAI. In fact, almost exactly 10 years ago, I was sitting in this very same spot—here in my home office, at this same desk—cracking open AWAI's Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting.

I was in software sales at the time. I was earning a six-figure income. I was doing well. But my wife and I had just had our first child, and I was determined to go out on my own. I wanted to create my own schedule, play by my own rules, and run my own show. I didn't want someone else to dictate my future.

So that Friday afternoon in early March of 2003, as I started going through the AWAI program. I really felt that this was my ticket out of corporate slavery.

But by the end of that year, I was starting to get nervous. Because I had gone through the entire program, gone to my first bootcamp, done a massive direct mail campaign to find copywriting work...

And I still hadn't landed my first client.

Now ... what really worried me is not so much that I hadn't landed any paying copywriting work. What troubled me was that this was NOT the first time I had experienced this kind of disappointment.

By this point in my career, I had had my share of failures and setbacks in sales and marketing. And I was starting to wonder if I even *belonged* in this business.

I mean ... I had even made a promise to myself a few years before that I would never, ever sell or market anything for a living.

And to explain why I had done that, and why I had started to develop a love/hate relationship with sales and marketing, I need to take you back to my college days. Because that's when I first told myself I would never, EVER work in this field.



Let Me Take You Back to That Dark Day in My Past...

So I'm sitting here in this Marketing 101 class in college, and the professor makes this ridiculous statement about how selling is a great profession. And then she said something that made me really mad. She said, "You guys better get used to that idea, because statistically, more than 80% of you will end up in a sales job right out of college."

I was mortified! That's not what I signed up for. I was a Finance major. I wanted to work in the finance department of some big company, trading currencies or futures and options.

You know, the cool stuff people in finance talk about at a cocktail parties!

I don't know where this professor got that statistic, but she had to be out of her mind. There was no way a Finance major with my grades was going to end up in sales. Not a chance!

But you know what? I was really worried. Because there had to be some truth to what she was saying. And then I got mad. And I remember promising myself that day that I would never take a sales job. That was so beneath me!

We'll Hire You ... If You'll Sell for Us

Fast-forward a year later. It's the early 1990s. We're in the middle of a recession. And I'm about to graduate from college. Yet I can't find a finance job anywhere. And I mean, I'm looking EVERYWHERE! The campus career center. The classified ads. I'm making calls. This was before the Internet, so there was no Monster.com or LinkedIn. But I'm looking through all the channels available, and there are NO jobs in finance for someone right out of college.

But guess what DOES turn up? That's right. A bunch of sales jobs. Many of them sounded impressive. But I soon found out that they were all just sales jobs in disguise. The term "management trainee" was in vogue at the time. And that was code word for degreed retail salesperson.

Home Depot had a ton of management trainee openings. So did Enterprise Rent-a-Car. I turned my nose at all of them. There was no way I was working retail. I mean, that was worse than selling!

But as graduation got closer and closer, I started to panic. I had bills. I had student loans that would soon come due. I needed an income. Looking back at it now, that was pretty stupid and prideful of me. But I was a young kid; I didn't know any better.



So I swallowed my pride and interviewed with anyone who would interview me. Including Enterprise Rent-a-Car. A trucking company. The U.S. Government. A supplier of electronic parts. Most of them sales jobs.

But guess what? None of them would take me. So here I was, finally agreeing to take whatever I could find. Even it involved selling. But none of them thought I was good enough. Talk about a slap on the face!

Peddling Fire Hydrants

Well, eventually someone hired me—a company that sold water-main pipe, valves and fire hydrants. I know it's hard to believe, but there are companies out there that actually SELL fire hydrants!

Soon after I started, I was on the road, selling to underground utility contractors. These are the guys that actually install the pipe and hydrants I sold. But here's the thing. I wasn't given much. I had to find most of my own customers. And you know how my employer expected me to do it? By cold calling.

But not the cold calling you may be thinking of. I'm talking about REAL cold calling. Basically, getting in the car, driving around town, and looking for construction jobsites so I could talk with the foreman or superintendent and try to develop some form of rapport, hoping that this would somehow lead to a sale sometime in the near future.

But it gets better. My employer was very conservative and old-fashioned. And they expected all of us to wear a shirt and tie every day. Better yet, my company car was a Ford Taurus!

So you can imagine this 23-year-old college grad, driving around in a Taurus, getting stuck in the mud in construction projects, and walking around with a dress shirt and tie... trying to make friends with a guy on an excavator who doesn't have time for you or to push your car out of the mud.

That's what I call street-level selling! I mean, when I promised myself in college that I would never sell for a living, I wasn't even thinking about this kind of selling. This was a real nightmare!

Do It Again, Kid!

It gets even better, though. It turns out that, after a couple of years, I had actually done a good job growing sales in my territory. So my employer transferred me to Atlanta, Georgia to open a completely new branch for the company. We had NO



relationships in that market. No customers. No name recognition. So here I was again, cold calling all over town. Except this time, I was in the Deep South.

Let me tell you what DOESN'T work in the South: having some young punk with a Hispanic last name, dressed up in a shirt and tie, driving a Taurus into jobsites, handing out credit applications, and trying to charm a contractor enough to make a sale—even though the contractor has always bought all his pipe and fire hydrants from his best friend of 18 years!

Jumping Ship Didn't Help

As you can imagine, it didn't take me long to get sick of that business. So in early 2000, I decided to go to an industry where the money was great and I wouldn't really have to sell because the stuff sold itself (or so I thought).

I went into the technology industry. I landed a sales job for a company that sold hardware, software and professional IT services.

I don't know why, but I thought that all I'd do was take orders. I mean... we were in the middle of the technology bubble of the late 90s and early 2000s. Everyone in high-tech was making big money. I just thought it was easy.

Well... it WASN'T! Here again, I was handed nothing in the way of existing customers. I had to go out and find my own. And here again, that meant cold calling.

Now, at least this time I wasn't driving all over town looking for jobsites. But I was calling on a MUCH harder person to reach: Chief Information Officers (or CIOs) of Fortune 1000 companies.

These people are IMPOSSIBLE to get a hold off these days. But even back then—and again this was in the year 2000—getting them on the phone required divine intervention! I would spend ALL DAY cold calling, trying to land 15-minute appointments.

My success rate was better than most. On average, I would talk with the CIO about 20% of the time. And about 5% of those conversations turned into an appointment. Which meant I had to make 100 calls just to get ONE appointment. If you've ever made cold calls, you know that making 100 calls a day will just plain beat you down!

An Embarrassing Moment

And then, I hit rock bottom. It was after a long day of non-stop cold calling. I hadn't landed a single appointment that day. I was exhausted.



My wife and I were out to dinner with another couple, some really good friends of ours. And during our conversation, the topic of our parents came up. My friend's wife was talking about her dad and how he worked at this company as the IT Director. I actually recognized the name and realized that I had unknowingly cold called her dad earlier that day.

I actually remembered the conversation I had with him. I had interrupted his day with my call. It was obvious he was annoyed, but he was still courteous and he listened to what I had to say. I didn't get an appointment. But during dinner with our friends, I remember thinking, "I have to find a better way of doing this. Here I am cold-calling my good friend's dad, interrupting his day. How embarrassing is that?!"

I felt like a total failure!

Determined to Find a Better Way

So I started researching options. I read a ton of books on cold calling and street-level prospecting. And it was through that process that I uncovered a series of ideas and strategies that changed the course of my career and my life.

One the strategies I uncovered was particularly effective for me because it encompassed the few positive aspects of cold calling—namely, the ability to choose the organizations and people you want to target... the ability to do it on a moment's notice... and the ability to quickly determine if the prospect is interested in talking further.

But it didn't have all the unpleasantness of cold calling. I didn't have to deal with the pain of personal rejection. And after just a few days of experimenting with different approaches, this new strategy began giving me results.

It's Helped Me Land Clients Faster and More Cost-Effectively

This method I'm talking about costs almost nothing. Yet it can help you land clients quickly! Since becoming self-employed, I've started using this method again sporadically. And it's allowed me to generate great leads and land a number of well-paying gigs.

It's also helped me to do outbound prospecting cost-effectively and to land work quickly when my pipeline is drying up—without the misery and pain of cold calling, or the time investment of other prospecting methods.



Not only that, but I've used this method to connect with important people—including a number of bestselling authors and high-profile business personalities—and to develop good relationships with them.

It's not direct mail. It's NOT social media. It's not networking. It's something different...

It's email prospecting.

No One Does It This Way!

Now, I know you probably think I'm crazy to suggest "email" as my weapon of choice. Especially if your email inbox is always overflowing. Or maybe you've tried email prospecting in the past and not have much success.

Or maybe you have doubts that something as simple as email could actually work. (I mean, I realize that email just doesn't sound as "sexy" as the latest social media or SEO hack.)

But the fact is, I've rarely seen anyone prospect with email the way I do it. When done right, email prospecting is probably **the fastest, easiest and most cost-effective way to find and land high-quality clients.**

That's because email prospecting, the way I do it, bypasses the three biggest reasons so many self-employed professionals hate marketing:

1. The fear of rejection
2. The time it takes to market your services through traditional means
3. And what I call the "tool du jour" confusion

I've already explained the first reason so many of us hate marketing and selling, which is the fear of rejection and even the "yuckiness" of having to sell yourself and your services.

But the second reason so many solos hate marketing is **the time-intensive nature of the process.** I mean, it just never ends! You have to promote your business constantly. If you don't, you'll quickly get caught up in that dangerous feast-or-famine cycle. Yet finding time to do this on a weekly basis is hard.

The third reason is not one that's talked about that much, but I think we're very quickly getting to a point where this is going to be a big topic of discussion. I'm referring to what I call **the "tool du jour" confusion.**



Not a day goes by where I don't get hit with an article, email or blog post talking about some tips, technique or technology I need implement right away if I want clients to find me and hire me.

Every time you turn around, someone's preaching about the latest and greatest social media tool.

Or a new, must-have plug-in for your website. Or some "ninja" YouTube strategy you *must* implement immediately.

But really ... who can keep up with all that stuff? And even if you DID keep up with it and actually implemented all these things, by the time you do so, they're already outdated.

It's the most ridiculous thing. It creates an incredible amount of confusion and fear among independent professionals who are simply trying to figure out how to land more and better clients on a limited budget and with a limited amount of time.

The email prospecting approach I've developed **bypasses these three big obstacles to marketing your business effectively and consistently.**

And in tomorrow's installment of *The Writer's Life*, I'm going to peel back the curtain on this system. **I'm going to show you my actual email prospecting blueprint**—and what you need to do to make it work for you.

In the meantime, I'd love to hear from you. What do you think about what I've shared with you here? What keeps you from marketing your services better and more consistently?

Go ahead and post your comments and questions below. And feel free to share this link with others who may find this training series useful.

This has been Ed Gandia, have an awesome day!

