



19 Deciding on your niche

What is a niche?

A niche is a specific targeted focus on a pre-selected customer group. A niche can be an area of your expertise or professionalism that you sell to a targeted customer group with a particular demographic profile. It can also be a particular angle you have given to your business that homes in on a specific target customer group with very clear problems that need solving.

Why do you need a niche?

‘The eagle that chases two rabbits catches neither’

You can dominate your portion of the market

It is better not to be a jack of all trades and master of none. Select a niche group of people who you are going to concentrate on as this will give you much more chance of domination within that specific area. You can become the known expert in that niche. It concentrates both your marketing efforts and your expertise.

People love experts

Experts are seen as people you can trust. If your relationship or marriage was going through a difficult patch and you needed some external help, wouldn't you rather consult an expert on relationships than somebody who practised general counselling? You can feel safer with a specialist.

Don't spread yourself too thinly

When what you sell potentially can be offered in a different way to a wide selection of people it can result in spreading yourself too thinly. Being too broad can mean that you end up having to work harder to sell yourself and your services. Once you are clear about your niche you will find it a lot easier to explain to people what you do. You will end up facing less competition and if you are good, your name will travel fast.

Your challenge

Selecting a niche does need a lot of thought as it will be the foundation on which your marketing plan will be built. Don't just go with the first idea you think of. Take your time and study your market and customer research.

When you decide on that niche you need to be sure that the niche you choose is one where there is a strong demand. Not only do you need to go fishing where the fish are biting but you also need to go armed with bait to attract them. Once you have found a hungry crowd with a problem you can solve, your only challenge then is to attract them.

What makes a niche successful?

- A niche group of people with a common problem.
- A demand for a solution coupled with the ability and willingness to pay.
- A large enough number of these people to support your business.
- An easy-to-track-down target customer that you can afford to contact.
- Utilising your own personal skills and strengths. If you are good at something you will most likely enjoy it too, which will make it easier to sell.
- Having the experience working within that niche and understand the market place and the people. People like to buy from people who have seen and done it before.
- Others operating within that niche indicating a demand for it.
- Being able to offer something better, different and more appealing.
- Learning from others in the marketplace already working within that niche.
- Finding an opportunity to be an innovator. If there is a low level of competition and there is a market for your products and services, then you are onto a winner.

DECIDING ON YOUR NICHE – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

Get some coloured pens and a flip chart and write down your thoughts

- ▶ Your strengths and skills.
- ▶ Your best and most enjoyable customers to work with.
- ▶ Your broad area of business and expertise.
- ▶ A number of narrower areas you could work in.
- ▶ All you know about the lives and challenges of your customers.
- ▶ Identify customer groups with particular problems.
- ▶ Do your research with these groups to find out what their problems are and what they would buy.
- ▶ Select the five top problems that these groups have.

- ▶ Describe a number of potential niche groups.
- ▶ Look and see if they are easy to find. Are they part of an association, club, networking groups? Do they subscribe to particular magazines or publications?
- ▶ Decide what you could sell them that would solve their problems.

Examples of niches

A coach who helps people who are facing retirement plan an exciting new life.

A credit control company which helps small business owners get their debtors to pay.

An HR consultant who helps people recently made redundant plan their life change positively.

A financial adviser who helps young people in their first job plan their financial future.

A freelance PA who works virtually with sole proprietors in the retail trade.

A garage which helps local female drivers with their car maintenance problems.

How to use your niche

Once you have your niche you can then start to promote yourself as the expert. Everything you do from now on will be focused on creating the bait that will attract more and more of your niche customers. Your aim will be to become ‘famous’ for your expertise in this niche. Get people to talk about you and recommend you to others.

Think niche and focus