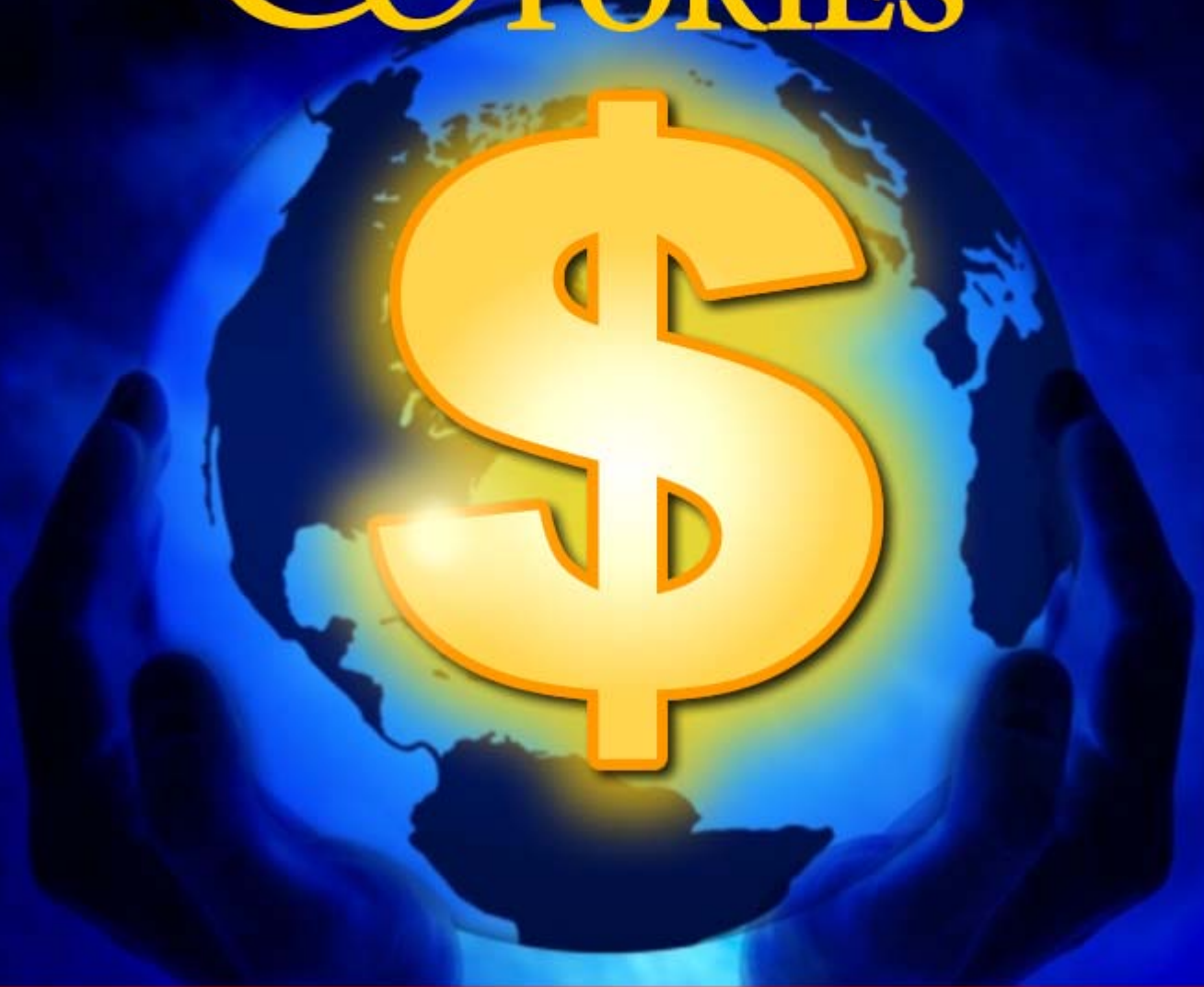


*Dan Lok*

*The World's Greatest*

**MARKETING**  
**STORIES**



## The World's Greatest Marketing Stories

### Bill Bishop CEO, Bishop Information Group, Inc.

Bill Bishop, CEO of Bishop Information Group, Inc., is the creator of the Unique Name Formula. Bill developed the process by combining his experience and expertise in marketing, advertising, public relations, sales, publishing and journalism. Bill and his team of instructors have taken hundreds of clients through the process and have worked with more than 4,000 companies over a 20-year period.

In 1998, his company launched what is now known as the Breakthrough Marketing Program. The process helps business owners develop and implement innovative marketing strategies to ensure the future success of their enterprise. The program applies the principles of the Relationship First Formula, first presented in his book *The Strategic Enterprise, Building a Better Business for the 21st Century*.

Bill's dual affinity with marketing and computers led to his pioneer work in eMarketing, marked by publication of his landmark book, *Strategic Marketing for the Digital Age*, in 1997. The book, which set up the ground rules and principles of eMarketing, was widely read in every English-speaking country in the world.

Shortly after, Bill wrote his follow-up book, *Global Marketing for the Digital Age*, which explains how to use eMarketing technology to reach customers in a globalized and ever-changing economy.

Bill is also a successful speaker and mentor. As a speaker for the National Speaker's Bureau, Bill has given keynote speeches to hundreds of audiences. He has been quoted in business, computer, and marketing publications, and his articles have appeared in more than 200 newspapers and magazines.

**Dan:** Bill, why don't we start out by you telling our listeners a little bit about your background and how you got into this business and marketing game.

**Bill:** I'm the owner of a company called Bishop Information Group. We're situated in Toronto, Canada. We work exclusively with business owners and entrepreneurs. We help them develop a marketing plan, and then carry out that plan.

I've been in the marketing business since I was about 12 years old. My father had a marketing company. I used to listen to all of his stories about his business and everything else. When I

was about 12, he asked me if I wanted to help him out. I said, "Okay." He was going to pay me \$1.65 per hour. That's not like much money in those days!

The project was a promotion for a supermarket in our city. He got me to dress up like a frog. I had this big green frog outfit, and I walked around the mall and handed out prizes and balloons to all the kids. It was embarrassing, but at least I had a mask on. It was really hot.

Part of me was thinking, "This was a dumb thing to do," but it was my first marketing project.

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About two months later, they got me to dress up like an Easter bunny in a pink Easter bunny outfit, which was even more embarrassing, and do the same basic thing. That was my start.

It convinced me there was a better way to do marketing. I didn't know what at that point, but it did get me interested. I thought, "Well, it is kind of a fun business, anyway." I did all these various jobs, part-time and so on.

I took journalism in university because writing was a skill that I had. When I got out of journalism, I thought, "Well, I don't know what I really want to do. I think marketing is something that might be interesting."

I started doing a whole bunch of different marketing jobs. In 1987, I started my own company called Bishop Information Group. That's the company I run now.

That's the background of how I got going with marketing. I've been doing it for quite a long time. I have about 4,000 clients, and I've worked in pretty well every industry there is.

**Dan:** Bill, your latest book, *How to Sell Lobster*, is a very interesting title. What does it mean? What's the story behind it?

**Bill:** Well, it's a fun title. I decided that I wanted to have something on the cover of my new book that would catch people's attention, so there's a big picture of a lobster, and it says, "How to Sell Lobster."

The idea for the book started about three years ago. I was at a family function, and I was talking about some experiences I had when I was working as a waiter when I was in University. My uncle, who's a conservative guy, was just laughing and laughing. He thought it was a funny story. I thought, "If I can get him to laugh and listen to my story, then maybe there's something here."

The story I was telling him was this. I was working in this steak restaurant. They had this contest to see who could sell the most lobsters with the steak. I asked him, "How do you suggest I sell more lobsters?" They said, "Well, just make sure you ask each customer whether they'd like to have a lobster with their steak."

I took that advice. I went out and started asking people. Most of them said, "No." I would say, "Would you like a lobster with your steak?" "No." "No." After a few days, I had sold maybe one lobster. I wasn't doing very well.

I started thinking about how could I get more people to buy these lobsters, because it seemed like a good thing to have. I looked at the menu and saw that if you took a steak and a lobster and rice and added that all together, it would cost you \$18.50.

I went out to the next table and I said, "We have this special tonight. It's a steak and lobster special with rice, and it costs \$18.50." Everybody at that table ordered it. They all said, "I'll have the special. I'll have it. I'll have it."

Over the next three months, I ended up selling 1,400 lobsters. I won the contest hands-down. I never told anybody how I had done it.

**Dan:** So you sold it as a combo. Is that correct?

**Bill:** Well, I learned a couple of things. One is that it was just about packaging, really. You see, it made it easy for them to buy it. I had just taken it, put it all together as a package, and called it "special." That makes it sound like something that isn't going to be available all the time.

**Dan:** It sounds like a good deal as well.

**Bill:** It sounds like a good deal, and it's not going to be here forever. It's a good chance to have a lobster, right?

The other thing is I realized that people were

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more comfortable buying the lobster as a special because most people, when they go out for dinner, are actually a guest of someone else.

If you're a guest and the waiter says, "Would you like to have a lobster with your steak?" you sound greedy ordering it. It's okay to order a special if you're a guest. Therefore, people felt comfortable with that. "Oh, jeez! Here's a chance for me to get a lobster, and I'm not looking greedy." Right?

**Dan:** The host is happy. The guest is happy. You are happy.

**Bill:** Everybody was happy there. The idea of the packaging and just getting into the mind of the people that are sitting around the table. That's really what a marketer needs to do, start thinking like the customer.

There were a few lessons there. It took me a few years to think about it and understand what had happened. It was also that I just tried something different as well. The way I was doing it wasn't working.

It was sort of the direct sales approach. I had to rethink my strategy. I tried it. If that hadn't worked, I would have tried something else. Luckily, I found the formula there.

**Dan:** When you look at a situation like this, it's not what you sell because the product you're selling is the same. It's how you sell it and how you present it, how you market it.

**Bill:** It's interesting. With all my clients, and I've seen it so many times, we don't change that many things. It's just a couple of little things. It's how you say it or how you package or price it, how you deliver it.

Just some very fine changes can make a huge difference in how successful you can be with something. It's different in every case. That's what makes it interesting, of course, as well.

**Dan:** Bill, what is the difference between a salesperson and a marketer?

**Bill:** The way I look at it is that most people are acting as salespeople. If I look at all the companies I've worked with and all the individual entrepreneurs, most of them are doing sales.

The analogy I use is it's like knocking on doors. You're going out. I've done this. I've done door-to-door sales. You just go from house-to-house or office to office and knock on doors. You're hoping someone will let you in. If you knock on enough doors, somebody's going to let you in. Then you present to them and so on. That's one technique.

That can happen through all kinds of methods, like doing telemarketing and so on. That's sales. On the other hand, a marketer is someone that gets people to knock on their door. They come to you.

They knock on your door. That's a much better situation because if they're knocking on your door, they're saying, "I want to work with you. I want to buy what you have." That puts you in a much stronger position.

Unfortunately, most people never get there. They don't do any marketing. They just do sales. Some people are successful at it, but they have to work really hard to make those sales.

What we do in our business is help people understand how they can be a marketer, figure out how to do a marketing plan, develop it, and get people to come to them. That's the ultimate goal of what we do. Unfortunately, most people stick with sales because they don't know how to become a marketer.

**Dan:** Bill, can you give me a real-life example, like a client of yours that was a salesperson and then became a marketer? What did he do differently?

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**Bill:** I'd like to give you my example, because it's where I learned the lesson directly. When I started my business in 1987, I was doing sales. Even though I had started a marketing company, I was doing sales myself.

I was making many phone calls. I was actively talking to everyone I could. I was doing much networking. I was asking people, "Can I come and see you?" I was out there making sales. I did that for about six or seven years. I built up a good business. At a certain point, I realized, "You know what? This is getting to be tiresome."

I wanted to go to the next level. How could I do that?

As a consultant, one of the marketing things that I knew would be good would be to write a book. I spent 18 months putting together a book on Internet marketing. It was right when the worldwide web had come out. Many of our clients were asking about it. It was an interesting topic.

I spent much time working on that book and not getting anything out of it for the first 18 months. As soon as it came out, I had all kinds of people that started calling me from all over the world. It made a change in how our business ran. Suddenly, all these people were calling us saying, "I read your book. I want you to help me."

That's basically how I continued from there on. I hardly ever call a prospect. It's mainly people calling us now, because of all the different things that we do.

What we recommend is that you impose those kinds of strategies. There are certain ways that you can put yourself out there and get people to come to you. In my case, I did it with the book.

It changed my business, and that's why I continue to write books. I give speeches. I do interviews like this and so on because people might hear this and go, "Bill Bishop sounds like an

interesting guy. Maybe he can help me. I'll give him a call." That's a much better way for me to work now.

**Dan:** Bill, talk to me about sales pitch bunker concept. What is a sales pitch bunker?

**Bill:** That's a term that I came up with. It is one of the major reasons people have to start thinking about becoming a marketer instead of a salesperson. The typical sales process that most people use isn't working anymore. It's becoming more and more obsolete. The reason is something I call the sales pitch bunker.

If you think of yourself knocking on doors, what's happening is that less and less people are opening their door. As a matter of fact, the door's getting thicker and thicker. They are, in a sense, going into a bunker because so many people are knocking on their door.

**Dan:** That's right.

**Bill:** There so many people trying to sell them something. Everywhere you turn, listening to the radio, there's advertising. You get to the office, and there are emails of somebody trying to sell you something. You've got all these letters coming in. You've got people phoning you at home.

It's a continuous barrage of people marketing to you. Psychologically, we just try to defend ourselves by going into a psychological bunker that says, "No more. I just don't want another sales pitch."

The interesting thing is when people think about their business and they think about their competitors, they're usually companies that are doing similar things to them.

In fact, when you're a salesperson, you're actually competing against every other company, no matter what business they're in, because they are competing for the attention of your prospect.

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They are banging on that person's door as well, and your prospect just isn't answering. They've gone into a bunker.

This wasn't true a hundred years ago, or even 30 years ago. With the coming of computer technology and everything, sales processes are just accelerated. There are just so many ways to market to you that people are really becoming overwhelmed.

This is a real problem for everybody because if you use a typical sales technique, you're just not going to get as many people answering the door when you knock on it.

**Dan:** It's going to get worse ten years from now.

**Bill:** I can't really see it getting any better. I can see it getting worse, because there are just going to be more and more ways to try to sell people something.

**Dan:** What can we do to get them out of the bunkers?

**Bill:** I realized this problem a few years ago and I asked myself the same question. Out of it came our idea of what we call "free value."

It seems to me it's the only way to do it. We're seeing many of our clients using this strategy, and many other companies using it to achieve success as well.

Essentially what it means is that you need to offer your prospect something of real, tangible value free to get the relationship started. You put it out there and say, "Here, this is something of value. I'm willing to give it to you with no obligation if you're willing to come out of your bunker and talk to me." That's the basic idea.

I use an analogy for that. I call it the box of chocolates. Let's pretend that, whatever you're selling, it's a box of chocolates.

If most people had a box of chocolates, they would hold up the box and say, "We've got these great chocolates. They're wonderful. They're really high quality. They taste great." You'd bring out a couple of people and they'd say, "Oh, yes! They're great chocolates." You'd do lots of advertising and all that sort of thing. It costs a lot of money.

You know you're going to make some sales, but maybe not as many as you want. There's a much faster way to sell a box of chocolates. What do you think it is, Dan?

**Dan:** Just give one piece of chocolate away.

**Bill:** Just give them a piece of chocolate. You already have some chocolate. Give them a piece of chocolate. They taste it. They experience it. They say, "Wow, I just love that chocolate! Give me the whole box." Not only is it cheaper, but it's a lot easier and more effective. You've let them experience what it is that you have.

That's the analogy. We'd try to apply that to all of our client's experiences and say, "What is it that you could give away free that would attract the attention of prospects and help you develop that relationship?" That's essentially the Free Value Strategy.

**Dan:** Plus, nowadays, people are so skeptical. With this strategy, what you are doing essentially is saying, "Listen, don't believe a word I just said. Just give it a try. It's free."

**Bill:** You don't have to do any convincing. You don't have to try to talk them into it. You're right. Many people are cynical about people selling and marketing to them, so that's got to be overcome somehow. The only way you can do that is really to put it out there and make it available to them. Hopefully, they will come out and try it and say, "This is great!"

Essentially, when you're a marketer, you're not trying to talk anyone into anything. You're just

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giving them information. You're giving them an experience. You're giving them a free sample so they can make up their own mind.

People are not interested in being sold something anymore. They want to experience it and come to their own conclusion that they want to buy it.

**Dan:** What I always like to say is, "People hate to be sold, but they love to buy."

**Bill:** Oh yes, they love to buy. You've just got to put it out there. Give them choices and allow them to make their own decision. We really think that's a key strategy. Really, we've built our whole business around that one.

**Dan:** Bill, our listeners might be thinking, "Well, Bill, what if my profit margin is thin? I can't afford to give my stuff away. It costs too much to produce." What would you say to them?

**Bill:** The analogy works to some degree, as far as the box of chocolates and the piece of chocolate. You don't necessarily have to give away your product, for example. It could be something else.

For example, you might not want to give your product away, but you might be willing to give your prospect time. You might be willing to spend time with them. You might be willing to give them advice. These are things that are not necessarily going to cost you any extra money.

In our case, we are a consulting company. What we do is we say, "Well, what I'm willing to give you free is a package." I call it a starter kit. In there is a document called "How to Create a Marketing Plan that Works" with a CD, which I give away free, that people can learn from.

I offer a one-hour starter session. It's not a sales pitch. We begin people on our process and we help them experience it. If they walk away and don't work with us, they've still carried out parts of developing their marketing plan. They

will feel at least that they got some value there. It does attract people because they can start on it. In our case, that's what we do.

**Dan:** There's no obligation. They don't have to buy anything. They can just come in and give it a try.

**Bill:** That's the key point. There can't be any obligation attached to it. A free value doesn't mean a 25% discount or a coupon or something like that. It can't be tied to a sale. It has to be completely no obligation.

It's like asking somebody out on a date for the first time. You can't expect them to pay for it. You're saying, "If you want to go on a date with me, I'll take you to a movie. We'll go out for dinner. We'll have a nice time." Right? You can't say, "I'm going to take you out on a date, but you are going to have to pay for it, or pay for half of it."

You're not going to get many dates! That's why it's important there isn't anything tied to it. It's no obligation on the other person's part. It's very valuable to them.

**Dan:** Bill, you shared a great story about a restaurant and how you used your strategy giving away a free meal. Talk to me about that story.

**Bill:** After I left the steak restaurant and started my company, I obviously had some experience working in the restaurant business. I got a restaurant as a client. They had just opened. They didn't have any customers. You know what it's like when you walk past a restaurant and you don't see anybody in the restaurant.

**Dan:** You don't go in.

**Bill:** You don't go in because you figure it's not a good place. You go on to the next place. It's busy, so you go in there. You figure that must be a good restaurant. Right? It's a real problem for someone starting something new. They don't have any customers. Because they don't have

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any customers, nobody wants to be a customer. It becomes this self-fulfilling thing.

This was the problem that my client had. We really used two strategies here. The first one was the free value. I said, "We've got to get people in here. We've got to get them to experience it."

We sent out a letter with coupons in it for free dinners and drinks at the restaurant. We sent it to places like modeling agencies and airlines, for the flight attendants and sports clubs and that kind of thing. You know, good-looking, young people.

We made the offer great. It's all free and everything. People started coming to the restaurant over about a week.

The other thing we did was hire people to stand in line.

**Dan:** You didn't!

**Bill:** We actually started a line. The other thing I know is if there is a line, people will get in it. So, I hired people. I'd say, "You wait. You go in. You hang out for a little while, then go out the back door and get back in the line again."

People are driving and walking by. They see all these good-looking people inside. They see the lineup. They get in the line.

**Dan:** Something exciting is happening.

**Bill:** After a couple of days, we didn't actually need to have these paid line people anymore.

**Dan:** Where'd you find them, Bill?

**Bill:** It was easy. They were just people I knew. Basically, we had primed the pump. The thing is, if we hadn't done that, he probably would have gone broke in a couple of months.

That place was full, with a lineup for ten years

after doing that. The way I look at it, it had a little hudspeeth there. The fact was, he had a great place and he wasn't getting any customers. We had to do something.

**Dan:** If your client's restaurant was not good, even if you used this strategy, people wouldn't come back.

**Bill:** He had a good place. He had a good chef. He had a fabulous place.

The real shame of not doing marketing and thinking of some of these ideas is the world misses some wonderful things. Just because people haven't quite found or used a few simple little techniques to get their business started or get people experiencing it. I find that's probably the biggest shame of not having a marketing plan.

**Dan:** That was a fun one! Bill, most business owners build their business around a specific product or service. I know you have a very different philosophy. You suggest we build a business around a customer type. Can you expand on that?

**Bill:** This is the key principle to how I look at every company and help them with their marketing plan.

Essentially, what most companies do is start off having a particular product or service that they've built their business around. As they grew, they might have tried to have more products and services, but the whole business is built around that.

What they do is get those products or services, and then start looking for customers. There are a couple of problems with that.

One is that it makes you into a salesperson. You're going to do sales most of the time when you think that way, because you are just trying to sell these products.

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That's one thing. The second is you're going to end up with a whole bunch of different kinds of customers. Basically, it's like, "Well, I'll sell this thing to anybody I can." Over time, you might end up with ten different types of customers, which is like playing ten different sports at the same time. It's like playing tennis and hockey and basketball. You get all of your equipment mixed up, and it gets confusing.

The third reason is the most compelling one. If you build your business around products and services, two things happen. One is they can become commoditized. Other companies might offer the same thing, and the prices start to fall. The other thing is those products and services may become obsolete. People don't want them anymore. That's what happened to me. That's where I learned this lesson.

When I was doing the marketing company, I developed this technology. It was a bulletin board system, which was a forerunner to the Internet. I had given it out to all of my clients and everything. I started to think I could build a business around offering this technology.

I started this company, and we started selling this technology. It was great. We were getting all kinds of clients. I thought this was it. We were going to make tens of millions of dollars on this.

Yet in 1994, when the worldwide web came out, just like in one day, no one was interested in that product anymore. It just went "poof," like that. It was like an overnight thing.

**Dan:** Overnight failure.

**Bill:** Yes, it was an overnight failure. It was unbelievable. Once I got over it, I thought, "Well, what did I do there?" I realized I built my business around a product. I said, "I'm not going to do that again. Let's flip it around."

"Who do I like working with? Well, I like working with business owners. What I'm going to do

is build a business that's dedicated to helping business owners succeed." That was my only mission. It wasn't about any particular product.

As soon as I did that, I started thinking very creatively. I said, "I could write books, and we could give workshops and seminars. I could create a whole process for helping them." We created software. As the years have gone on, we just continually expand. We actually have more products than ever, but it isn't the point of our business.

The point of our business is helping business owners. I call this the Relationship First Formula.

Instead of using what I call the "product first" trap, which I feel is getting to be an obsolete thing, you say, "Let's pick a particular customer type that we want to help. We'll build our whole business around helping them in any way that we can." It just opens all your creativity and gives you a much clearer vision for the future of your company.

In my case, I look ahead ten years and don't know what I'm going to be doing, but I do know that I'm going to be helping business owners. It's future-proof that way. I don't think business owners are going to become obsolete. There might even be more of them!

**Dan:** You are putting aside all of your products, all of your services. You are going into a relationship and asking yourself, "How else can I help my customers? What else do you want? What else can I sell them?"

**Bill:** Suddenly, you can start thinking of things you never thought of before. When you are in the Product First Trap, you have your product or your widget. You're not interested in thinking of anything else. You're just trying to sell that widget.

As soon as you put that aside and start to think,

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"I'm trying to help manufacturing companies," or something, you start looking at them a little closer. You think, "Oh, jeez! They have this problem, and that problem, and this problem. I have all kinds of ways I think I can help them more." Suddenly you're more helpful to them, and there's more opportunity for you to make money.

The other thing is this model works better because nowadays, the world keeps changing. It's changing faster and faster. When you're in the Product First Trap, change is the biggest enemy, because that means your product might become obsolete.

If you're using the Relationship First Formula and helping whoever, then change is an opportunity. Every time something changes, usually your client or customer needs help to deal with it. There's an opportunity now. Change becomes an ally as opposed to an enemy.

**Dan:** The other mistake I see entrepreneurs make is they try to sell to everybody instead of selling to a niche market. What's your take on it?

**Bill:** Well, that ties in with what we've just been saying. Most of my clients, when they come to me, one of the first exercises we do is look at the different types of customers they have. Usually they have more than one. In one case, I had one client who had 26 different types of customers.

The problem with that was they were spreading themselves out way too thin. Their whole business was disorganized because they were constantly going from one customer to another.

Everybody has a limited amount of money and resources to put into marketing. If you're spreading them out over 26 different types of customers, then you're not going to be effective in any of those areas. You're neither here nor there to any of those people.

That's why I believe that you've got to switch it

around and pick that one customer. Maybe it's dog catchers. Maybe it's teachers. Maybe it's nursing home administrators. Whoever. The very first thought is, "Let's zero in on those." You don't necessarily have to give up the other ones right away.

**Dan:** You start with one. Focus on just one of them and try to dominate the niche.

**Bill:** I call that your number one customer type. Just take that one and say, "Okay, we can't do them all, obviously. Let's zero in on this one and see how we do with it." That is such a successful approach that you start to realize, "I didn't really want to work with those other people, anyway."

You just become very focused. Once you become focused on one customer type, all kinds of good things happen because you are just so much clearer about what you're doing, who you're going after, and so on and so forth. I really recommend to the listeners that they have that discussion. What customer type do we want to help? Zero in on that.

**Dan:** Probably, the 80/20 rule applies here. If you look at his customer base, probably 20% of his customers contribute to 80% of his sales.

**Bill:** The thing is, when we do that exercise, the answer is always obvious because it's already their number one customer type. They just haven't been giving them the credit that they deserve.

They're hanging on to all these other kinds of customers because they're just hedging their bets, or they're afraid to give up a little opportunity. Usually, those other customers are not worth the trouble.

**Dan:** Bill, what about the "big idea?" Why is having a big idea so important to a business?

**Bill:** This is another term. Our company is called

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Big, so what we try to do is help all of our clients come up with what we call a “big idea” when they’re doing marketing.

I’ve seen people develop marketing tools like websites and brochures, and go out there and attend trade shows and do all these kinds of things, but the basic content of what they’re presenting to their market is boring. It’s flat. There’s nothing there. There’s nothing new or interesting. There’s nothing to get the other person excited. You’re just there.

What we believe is that you’ve got to really think a little harder and say, “Let’s come up with a big idea. Something that will get us all excited, that’s a really interesting story to tell, that we can tell other people and get them listening to us. Get the attention of that person that’s in the bunker. Something new that will get them interested.”

A big in my case is the lobster book. That’s why I called it How to Sell Lobster. It doesn’t have anything to do with lobsters except for that one story.

**Dan:** People might misread it as, “How to cook a lobster.”

**Bill:** It gets their attention. The book’s been out a little while. I run across people who say, “Oh, I read the book. It was great! You’re the lobster guy.” Suddenly, I’m the lobster guy. That’s my big idea, “Here’s something about lobster.” It’s just completely different. They can remember the lobster, and then they associate that with me.

I’ve had many different big ideas, but this is the current one I’m using. It just makes everything stand out. Otherwise, you’re just not going to get people’s attention.

**Dan:** The book is interesting. It’s like nonfiction, but it’s also fiction.

**Bill:** It’s a little bit of both. I’m telling my story,

these things I learned, in a narrative so it’s not just a boring, “Here’s what I did.” I’m telling it like in a novel. That’s the style of it. I thought it would be useful. People like it because it’s a short book. They get many ideas out of it and it’s easy to read.

**Dan:** Bill, do you have any marketing mentors? Who did you learn from?

**Bill:** There’s many people that I’ve learned from. I guess I would start with my dad, because he was the first marketing person I ever knew. He was really brilliant. He was great at coming up with big ideas. That was his thing. Of course, one of his big ideas was dressing me up like a frog and a bunny rabbit, but it worked! He was a terrific influence.

I worked in several different marketing companies over the years. The people that I worked with, all the senior people, all had excellent things. There’s too many names to go into.

Another person is Dan Sullivan, who is the head of The Strategic Coach. I’ve been in that program for ten years. He’s a consummate marketer, so I’ve learned a lot from him. I read all the different books.

Tom Peters is a great influence on me, and Michael Gerber who wrote The eMyth. I believe that we’re all learning from each other, so I’m always interested in knowing what the other marketing people are doing. Those are some of the people.

**Dan:** I’m just curious. How do you come up with all of these amazing names? They are so interesting. Do you have a formula for it?

**Bill:** It’s one of the things we do, obviously, when we help our clients come up with big ideas and talk about how they describe themselves. I help them package up naming it so they can tell that story and people will remember it.

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**Dan:** There's a process to it.

**Bill:** For the people in The Strategic Coach, when I worked with some of those people, we had a process called the Unique Name Formula. We helped them name their process. There's a whole way of doing it.

Essentially, you don't just come up with the name. You've got to think through the strategy first, then you can package it so people will remember it. I think that's an important part of packaging.

What we're really saying is, "There are all these ideas and things that you're doing that are invisible. The only way you can get people to remember them is to package them by naming them."

All the different stories in the book have a different name. Instead of just giving them advice, I have a name for it, like "The Lobster Strategy" or whatever.

**Dan:** Free meals. Professional Lineup Strategy.

**Bill:** Yes, the Professional Lineup Strategy and things like that.

**Dan:** Another interesting thing you talk about in the book is how to make the first sale. Tell us a story and the marketing lesson behind it.

**Bill:** There are a few ways to make the first sale. I talk about the restaurant. We had a lineup. One of the things is to give away what you're doing to a group of people, to get the club started. It's like you have this club, but you don't have any members. Because you don't have any members, nobody wants to join the club.

Whenever I create something new in our business, some new process or something, what we do is offer it either free to our existing clients or at a very low rate. We're trying to get people started.

**Dan:** To get the momentum going.

**Bill:** Get the momentum going. Get people buying it just to get it started. That works really well.

Another story I had which can apply to, perhaps, something that's going on with the listener. I had this magazine. I created a mock-up of it because I wanted to sell advertising in it. It was a new magazine.

I mocked up the magazine. I put an ad in it for a restaurant that I just made up. I made a dummy ad for it. Then I went to see the competitor of that restaurant and showed them the magazine. I didn't say anything. I just showed him the magazine. He saw this ad. He said, "Well, how much is a full-page ad?" I told him. He said, "Okay, I'll buy it."

I was like, "Whoa! I actually sold an ad."

So, I designed up the ad for the client. I took out that dummy ad and went and saw the company across the street. They saw the real ad and said, "We've got to buy an ad too, because our competitor is buying it." I sold him an ad. Once I started, all the other companies in the area wanted to advertise too, because they saw there were other people doing it.

It seems to me one of the things about human nature is if people perceive nobody wants something, then nobody wants it. As soon as they perceive people want something, they want it too. They just want to be part of it. They don't want to miss something.

**Dan:** People like to buy things that are popular.

**Bill:** They want to buy things that are popular, so you have to create a sense that it is popular. You've got to get the whole thing rolling.

A little story related to this is that when we got that magazine out, we wanted to hand them out to people on the street corners to get them reading it.

**Dan:** You hired people to pick up the magazine?

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**Bill:** It was almost like that. I had a partner. We were handing out the magazine. I noticed if somebody picked up the magazine as they were walking along, then the next six or seven people would take it, too. If somebody didn't take it, then the next six or seven people wouldn't take it.

I thought, "This is taking too long." I said to my partner, "You hand them out." I walked around in a circle. I'd walk along and pick up a paper. The seven people behind me would pick it up. Then I'd walk around again and pick it up, and the seven people behind me would pick it up.

**Dan:** You're funny, Bill. You're really funny!

**Bill:** It was interesting. There's a whole element of human psychology here. If you want to do marketing, you've got to start thinking about that. It's just the way people are. There's a herd mentality. We're all part of it. I'm part of it. I'm not saying I'm above it or anything. I'm the same way. If I see somebody lining up, I'm going to get in the line.

**Dan:** You don't even know what it is.

**Bill:** I don't even know what it is. I remember I was at Expo '67 in Montreal and there were many lineups. People would just get in a line. We got in a line. You wait for half an hour. You get to the front and realize, "Oh, my God! I've just lined up for the washroom." But it was a line up, so you got in it.

There are all kinds of strategies around creating a sense that people want something. They want what you've got. Sometimes you just have to create that sense before it exists. Once it exists, then it happens.

I've seen so many companies never get off the ground because they just didn't get that first customer and get the pump going.

**Dan:** In a way, people don't want to make mistakes. They don't want to buy something

that's not proven.

**Bill:** There are the early adopters, right? There are also the people that come after them. They're the ones that are saying, "Until it's absolutely proven, I don't even want to touch it." Most people are like that. What we've got to do is get the early adopters going. We've got to make it as easy as possible for them to do that.

**Dan:** Bill, you also teach a marketing strategy called The Three Boxes. What exactly is that?

**Bill:** The Three Boxes is probably my favorite one. It's so simple to use. Anybody can use it. The way I explain it is when I was a kid back in the 60s, I would go to the movie. I wanted to buy a drink before the movie and the people would say, "Would you like a large or a small drink?"

I would say, "Well, I'm a little kid, so I'll have a small drink." My mom was there. She said, "Well, I'm on a diet so I'll have the small drink, too."

The fact was that in those days, 80% of people always bought the small drinks. Only 20% of them bought the large ones. That was the statistic. This went on for years and years, until the 1980's.

Theater owners thought, "How can I get more people to buy the large drinks?" Someone said, "Why don't you introduce a third size, like a super size, and see if that changes anything?"

If you go to a movie now and buy the largest drink, how big is it?

**Dan:** It's like a bucket. The thing is huge!

**Bill:** Absolutely massive, right? You just can't even imagine drinking it all. The reason they do that is because 20% of people buy the small drinks, 60% buy the regular size, which is actually the old large, and 20% are buying the

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super size. By adding the super size, they now have 80% buying the old large or an even larger size. They flipped it around.

I read about this in an article in The Harvard Business Review years ago. A company had done this study. They said, "I wonder if this would work with other businesses?" They inferred that it would work with any business. It didn't matter what it was or what you were selling, the three boxes would work.

The reason they gave was if you have one size, which is what most people sell, they just say, "Here it is. I've got it. You want it." The customer then just has a choice between yes or no. They are either going to take it or not. Sometimes they say, "Well, I'll take it, but I want you to give me a deal," so they start haggling with you.

**Dan:** "I want a discount. I want more stuff."

**Bill:** You end up in that situation. If you have two sizes, that's better now. What the customer intends to do then is say, "What should I do? Should I take the large or the small?"

**Dan:** "A or B?"

**Bill:** A or B, and they are going to buy something. Most of them, 80% of them, will buy the small one. Like you said, they are careful. They are not sure. They don't want to take a big chance. They'll take the small. If you have three sizes, the whole thing changes. A person will naturally look at the super size first. It's just like, "Wow, look at that!"

It doesn't have to be size. It's just the most expensive thing. Like the most expensive car, most expensive watch, most expensive dress. They are going to take a look at it. It doesn't cost anything to look.

You look at it and go, "Oh, that's fabulous!" You look at the price and go, "That's way out my league."

**Dan:** "That thing has to be a gigantic, totally outrageous."

**Bill:** The "gigantic, outrageous" part is key. It also gets people in the door. If you have a car dealership and you put a 1948 Rolls Royce in there, mint condition, people are going to look. They want to come in and take a good look at it because they don't see that every day.

**Dan:** It's like they look at it and say, "Wow, that's amazing! Well, I can't afford it, but I can afford the one in the middle."

**Bill:** Hang on. They look at the small one. They've just looked at this most incredible, amazing thing they've ever seen in their life. Now, they're looking at the small one and it's like, "Well, this looks really small, and cheap, and basic." That's just so depressing! Right?

Their eyes go to the middle, which is the regular one. They say, "Well, I'll take that one because it's the one most people are taking." Right? They feel comfortable. They're right in the middle. They're going to take that one.

The key is if you want to sell something, most of the time, put it in the middle. Make a basic small version. Make a super size outrageous one. Most people will take the one in the middle. The other thing is, a small percentage will actually take the super size. If you didn't have it, you never would have sold it. You might as well create it. Right? That's a bonus.

The other thing is it enables you to charge more for the one in the middle. People are saying, "The super size is \$100. I'll take the one in the middle, because it's only \$10." Meanwhile, you used to charge \$5.

Now, you are charging \$10. You've doubled your price and people think it's cheaper. They think they're getting a good deal.

**Dan:** It's perception.

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**Bill:** There's a relative term. You've created this little relative market between the three products. Now, people are going to the middle one thinking they're saving money, when they're spending twice as much.

This whole Three Boxes is a fabulous tool, and it works whether you have a physical product or products that are intangible, like services or consulting. It's a neat thing. The other thing is it works even if you know that it's happening to you.

**Dan:** What do you mean? Give me an example.

**Bill:** I've done this a million times, these Three Boxes. One day, I decided I wanted to buy bocce ball. Do you know the game, bocce? I had never owned one before, so I went out to the store. Sure enough, they had them.

I noticed, "Oh, my God! They've got three sizes." They had the kid's size that was \$30. I thought I might spend \$30 on these. I saw the kid's ones. They were \$30. They had these tournament models, which were \$160.

**Dan:** For professionals.

**Bill:** For professionals. They had the adult version, the regular ones, for \$60. I'm looking these over. I'm like, "Those \$160 ones, those look cool but I don't need that. That's \$160. Then I looked at the kid's ones.

**Dan:** You are not a kid.

**Bill:** I'm not a kid, and they looked cheap. I went for the regular at \$60. I went back to the house and I said, "I got the bocce balls." They were like, "That's great." I said, "It's great, too, because I saved a whole bunch of money. They were only \$60. I could have bought these professional ones for \$160. I saved \$100." Meanwhile, I had spent twice as much as what I had anticipated.

**Dan:** You were happy about it.

**Bill:** I was happy about it because I felt I had made my own decision. I laughed.

**Dan:** Maybe the owner read your book?

**Bill:** I think so! It's being used a lot. I didn't invent this idea. I popularized it because I packaged it and I understand the principles of it. I can show people how to use the idea.

**Dan:** In fact, we see this a lot in the fast-food industries. You have the super size fries.

**Bill:** Yes. They have the super size, which is getting to be something people don't like us to do anymore.

**Dan:** Because of the movie. Right?

**Bill:** Yes. I just watched that last night. One of the things I think they can make a mistake with is that three boxes works. Four boxes doesn't. Why do you think four boxes doesn't?

**Dan:** Too many choices. You confuse them.

**Bill:** Yes. There's one other reason.

**Dan:** You want to pick the one in the middle.

**Bill:** That's right. You see, there is no middle.

**Dan:** There's no middle.

**Bill:** People get confused because there is no middle. If you could have five, now there's a middle, but you have way too many choices.

**Dan:** People can have too many.

**Bill:** It defeats the purpose. Three seems to work. It's not too many for them to think about. They'll go for the one in the middle. That's it.

Obviously, they're using it in the fast-food

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industry, but you'll see it used even when you buy gasoline. There are three prices. If you want to go on a trip, they give you three packages to look at. You take the one in the middle.

**Dan:** That's interesting.

**Bill:** What it does is it's a bit of a technique, but it's also just multiple choices as opposed to having one and saying, "Take it or leave it," which I see many people doing. The point is, people leave it. Three boxes is a terrific concept.

**Dan:** It's a great concept. Bill, we've gone through several marketing ideas, several strategies. Our listeners might be a little overwhelmed. How do they apply these strategies? How do they go about creating a marketing blueprint? What should they do first? What should they do second?

**Bill:** It is important that when you think about marketing, you don't fall into what I call the Marketing Tool Trap, which is to start producing without having any kind of a plan. You might just create a website or brochure or that kind of thing.

What I've found is many people do that, then they don't work or things change and they have to throw those brochures away or keep redoing the website. We want to stay away from the tools. We want to get the blueprint first, before we build the house.

There is a process that I've created I call the Breakthrough Marketing Process. It's a series of steps that you go through to figure out your marketing strategy. I don't want to go through all the steps right now, but there is a method.

I've created something that anyone listening, if they want, I can send to them. It's a portable document file. It's a package called How to Create a Marketing Plan That Works. It goes through the entire process and all the different steps.

Whether you end up working with me, it doesn't matter. You can read it. You can understand how the process is and try to do it yourself. Anyone that read it would be much farther ahead than someone that just started creating a brochure or something.

**Dan:** How can they get a hold of that?

**Bill:** The thing to do is either to call our company at 1 (866) 462-4446, that's our toll-free number, or email us at [info@BigInc.com](mailto:info@BigInc.com).

**Dan:** Or go to your website, [BigInc.com](http://BigInc.com).

**Bill:** Or go to our website and send us a message that you want to receive it. There's no charge for that. This is our free value. That's the key thing.

Just as a quick start, if you can't wait to get that, begin by picking that number one customer type and saying, "Let's put our product aside for a minute and see who is our number one customer type."

Start thinking about all the different ways you could help that type of customer or that person more. Think of other things. That will really help get this whole thing started with changing everything. Even if you just did that, you are going to be way far ahead.

**Dan:** Shift your focus. It's just as simple as that.

**Bill:** Totally shift your focus. A marketer is someone who thinks about what's going on in the mind of my customer. They are not always trying to sell whoever. "Anybody will buy it. I don't care. Let's think about my customer. What do they need? Maybe I need to change my business to suit their needs more." That's really fundamental Marketing 101.

When I took marketing courses, they kept drumming that into us. It's interesting. Most people don't do that. They're all hung up on their own thing. That's why it's always been the first step

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for me, because I just think that's so important.

**Dan:** Our listeners can get your books on your website as well. Correct?

**Bill:** Yes, they can do the same thing. Call, email us, or go to our website and we can get those books. Those lobster books are available through us.

**Dan:** The other book, *Strategic Enterprises*, is a good one as well. I like that book. It's more technical.

**Bill:** It's more technical, but it's got a lot more examples in it. It goes into that whole idea of the Product First Trap and the Relationship First Formula and so on.

**Dan:** You even have a step-by-step formula, as I remember.

**Bill:** There is a step-by-step formula, the same one I talk about in this other document as well. It's all one process.

**Dan:** Bill, are there any final thoughts you would like to add?

**Bill:** I really appreciate you taking the time to interview me and allowing me to speak to your audience.

I guess the one message I'd like to leave you with is we can do sales and yet, you've got to think of that sales pitch bunker as a problem. Becoming a marketer is something that all of us should think more and more about, how we can provide free value, get people to come to us and really develop relationships with us. It's making that transition from being a salesperson to a marketer.

I would like to leave everybody with, "How can we do that?"

**Dan:** Thank you very much, Bill. You were fantastic.

**Bill:** Thanks a lot, Dan.

**Dan:** Thank you. Bye, bye.

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