

Success Mastermind

Defining Your Niche & Effective Messaging that Stands Out

Have you ever wondered...

What programs should I offer?

What should my free opt-in gift be?

What words should I use on my home page and website?

I'd like to give talks, but what should I talk about?

How do I get more people interested in my offerings?

Answering these questions will be easy once you define (or refine) your niche and get really clear about what your ideal clients care about most - and how they talk (and think) about their struggles.

Here's what you're going to discover in this Training Handout:

- What is a niche?
- How to define your niche
- If you already have a niche, how to refine it further
- How to use messaging (the words on your website, emails, and talking to people in-person) that stands out and attracts clients to work with you.

What is a niche?

Niche is used in the marketing world, and it's a combination of who you serve (also known as your target audience) and the problem you solve.

Target Audience + Problem You Solve = Your Niche

Example target audience: between the ages of 30-45, moms with young children

Example problem you solve: weight loss resistance

You may find that you've defined your target audience, but not the problem you solve. Or, you may find that you've defined the problem you solve, but not your target audience. We want you to do both!

While choosing a niche is something that you most likely know you “should” do, you may find it challenging to zero in on that one perfect group that you want to focus on. And, you may feel resistant to choosing a niche because you don’t want to leave anyone out – or miss out on the revenue you could bring in from other types of clients.

There are two things I want to share about choosing a niche.

#1 Choosing a niche does not mean you have to turn away other clients.

For example: At Marketing for Health Coaches, our niche is health coaches. However, I’ve also worked with a business coach, a physical therapist, and a life coach. I didn’t turn these clients away because they weren’t health coaches. I felt a connection with them and believed that my team and I could help them grow their business.

If a lawyer or real estate agent approached me about working with them, I would refer them elsewhere because I don’t have expertise in their line of work.

#2 Choosing a niche will actually allow you to make MORE money, not less.

When you determine your niche and get very clear on who your audience is and what they desperately want help with, you will become a client magnet.

How does this work?

When you know who you are serving, you will start to speak and write in a way that makes your ideal clients feel that you are speaking directly to them. They will feel that you know them, understand them, and have the expertise to help them.

You will be able to get clear about...

- What your offerings should be
- What to write about in your newsletter or blog
- Who to connect with when you are networking and where to network
- Who to form referral or joint venture relationships with
- What to speak about (and where to speak) when you give live talks or teleseminars
- What areas you want to research and learn more about

The reverse is also true.

If you don’t know what your niche is, it is very difficult to effectively create offerings, write articles, or network. You may find that you are working hard, but seeing little results.

This is because you’re not clear who you are speaking to and who you want to attract.

Choosing or Refining Your Niche

Now that we are clear on why having a niche is crucial to the success of your biz, I'm going to share an exercise to help you zero in on your niche.

Note: If you already have a niche that you focus on, for example weight loss, use this exercise to further refine exactly what types of clients you want to work with.

ACTION STEP: Answer the questions below on another piece of paper or document.

1. Who do you love working with?

If you've started working with clients, these are the people who you find easy to work with and who get great results. They're open to making changes and follow through on your recommendations. These are the people who willingly write you a success story and rave about you to their friends, co-workers, and family.

2. What do people continually ask you about?

Think about your clients, potential clients, friends, co-workers, people you meet networking and in the community and the questions that come up repeatedly. Look for themes and 1-3 areas that seem to be the biggest pain points for people.

3. If you've started working with clients, what types of clients do you seem to attract more easily and in higher abundance?

These are the people who come to an initial strategy or breakthrough call already knowing that they want to work with you. Who are they? What are they struggling with?

4. What message or information do you want to get out in the world?

Think about areas you feel passionately about.

5. What is your story?

Often our niche is related to something we struggled with and overcame.

Find where your passion & clients' needs intersect.

Should you ignore what clients want and just go with your passion?

The answer is yes and no :). Yes, you should go with your passion. But, no, you shouldn't ignore what clients want. If you focus on a niche that you're excited about, but one that no one wants to spend money on, you'll always struggle to get clients.

The good news is that I believe you can have BOTH. It just takes a little digging to find where the two areas (what clients want + what you're passionate about) overlap.

The answers to the 5 questions above are like puzzle pieces, that you can fit together to start to determine your niche (both your target audience and the problem you solve). By combining these different elements, you'll be able to begin to determine an area of focus that...

- Is fun, easy, and comes naturally to you, so work is a pleasure
- Taps into what people want, so you can easily enroll clients
- Draws upon your passion and/or compelling story, which is what will keep you motivated and driven as you build your business. Choosing a niche that doesn't interest you is a recipe for disaster!

ACTION STEP: Looking back at your answers to the questions above, zero in on where there's overlap. Draft your niche (or niches if you're focusing on more than one area).

Confirming Your Niche & Creating Messaging that Stands Out

You now have a draft of your niche. But before you move forward, we want to make sure that you're headed in a direction that will bring in clients and money. We also want you to have messaging that attracts your ideal clients.

To do this, go out and speak to at least five people who fit your ideal client profile. (If you have more than one niche, start with one of them. You'll repeat this process for each niche.) Interview your 5 people using the protocol below. This process of gathering information about your ideal clients is something I learned from one of my mentors, Derek Halperin.

When you speak to your five people, notice themes that come up. You're looking for something that comes up repeatedly. Make sure you're zeroing in on a major pain point, not just a minor inconvenience. It should be something that they're thinking about on a daily basis, and ideally it should be something they've spent money on in the past - or at least are interested in spending money on.

Important note: It's vital you speak with the RIGHT people...

For example, if you don't want to focus on weight loss, be sure that you speak with at least 5 people who don't have weight loss as their main pain point. If you speak with people for whom weight loss is their big pain point, don't count their responses. If you speak with people who just say things like "I want to be healthier" or "I want it to be easier to get dinner on the table," these are not big enough pain points and they're likely not ideal clients and therefore you won't want to include their responses. All of this to say that you may end up needing to speak with more than five people in order to get responses from five ideal clients.

Once you've spoken with five people who truly are ideal clients, it should be easy to zero in on your niche and your messaging. Identify the main pain points that came up in at least four of the five conversations you had. Find where there's overlap between what they want and what you're passionate about helping people with.

How to Conduct Your Interviews

It is important that you don't skip this. It may take you a bit out of your comfort zone, but it will be worth it and I have a feeling you will actually have fun with it. (I have surprisingly loved doing this!)

This exercise will help us determine what your audience cares about and what they will be willing to pay for. We want to make sure you're targeting the right people, offering the right solution, and using the words that these real people use in your marketing – so your offerings SELL.

First, find 5 people to interview.

(Remember, you may need to interview more than 5 people if some of the people you speak with initially aren't "ideal" clients.)

Who do you want to interview?

Think about what type of person you're looking to attract. Get specific. What kind of person would really want this? What sort of person might struggle with the issue you're solving on a daily basis? Who is this person, what do they do, and where do they hang out?

Where to find people to interview

- Do you have existing clients and prospects? Do you have an email list, website or Facebook page? These can all be great ways to find people to interview.
- Who do you already know who might be interested in this? They could be your friends, colleagues, business associates, or maybe, members of an online community.
- Who could you talk to who could refer you to someone who is a good fit for your product or service?
- Where do your prospects already hang out? What websites do they visit? What communities already exist where you can find them? Facebook groups or forums on topics related to your niche are good options.

Qualify them before you interview them

If you're reaching out to people on a forum, email list, or Facebook page, you'll want to qualify them to make sure you're interviewing the right people. First ask, **"Is anyone struggling with X right now? I am looking for some insights for something I'm working on."**

If they reply and seem like a good fit, set a time to talk over Skype, on the phone, or in person. You must be totally clear that you're just chatting with them. You just want to learn. Never try to ask for a sale right now and be sure they know you're not trying to sell them anything.

Interview questions

The biggest mistake people make at this stage is asking the wrong questions. At this stage, you're trying to learn from them and find out what they care about, NOT confirm your current ideas.

Take notes! We will want to use the exact words they use.

Open with 3-4 minutes of banter. Don't jump straight into business. Ask them about their day so far. Get friendly for a few minutes, then transition into the interview. ("So I was hoping to talk to you today about something I've been working on...")

Ask big questions. Start out asking the biggest, broadest questions about your topic as possible. Get them to talk about what's most interesting to them, and listen for the words they use naturally. Big questions help you find your way to specific questions, based on their responses.

Interview Questions:

- What is your biggest concern around your health and wellness?
- And how is that affecting you on a daily basis? (And then try to dig a bit deeper into what they say, so we can learn how [insert the big challenge they mentioned earlier] is affecting their work, personal life, relationships with others, relationship with themselves/confidence).
- How would you LIKE to feel? (We want to see what words they use. Do they say "energetic" or "confident" etc...)
- I know that [insert the big challenge they mentioned earlier] is your biggest concern around your health & wellness. Is there another concern around your health and wellness that is also affecting you in a big way? (Here you're trying to get at a secondary concern.)
- Have you ever spent money on improving your [insert the challenges/pain points they mentioned earlier] before? Was it a good experience? Why or why not? (If they haven't spent money on this in the past, ask if this is something they would spend money on getting help with in the future. Make it clear that you're not trying to sell them anything.)

Avoid leading questions. The big temptation at this stage is to get the answers you want to get, either on purpose or by asking leading questions. Getting the wrong answers will hurt your entire business, because you'll end up trying to promote something people don't really care about – or using wording that doesn't attract clients.

[NOTE: Encourage them to go deeper. A great technique to do this is to use strategic silence. When they say something you're intrigued by, say: "Oh, really? How interesting!" and then get quiet, look interested and expectant. They will almost always fill the silence with some profound insights they wouldn't have expressed otherwise. Try this. You'll be amazed what you were missing out on by responding too quickly.]

Note that people often use "**proxy words**" to mask their real desires. Most people don't fully understand their own motivations, so it's your job to access them.

For example, if you ask most people why they want to lose weight, they will say they want to fit into their clothes. That might be true, but it's superficial. Most people, when pressed, have deeper reasons. Or, people might say they want to eat healthier so they have more energy, but that's not the real motivator.

Challenge your interviewees to dig deeper. If they say they want to lose weight, ask them:

- "What would it mean for you to lose weight?"
- "How would it make you feel?"
- "What would your day be like if you lost weight?"

Replace "lose weight" with what THEY said they want. "Lose weight" is just an example.

Always dig deeper. Most first answers will be vague. Investigate and figure out the specific details. You can dig deeper by asking:

- "Can you say more about that?"
- "Can you share more?"
- "What other challenges do you have?" Or "What else are you struggling with?"

Start to notice what themes are repeated amongst the people you interview. If you're not seeing any themes or you're not hearing pain points that are BIG enough for people to want to pay for support, interview a few more people.

A Final Step

If you're currently working with clients or have worked with clients in the past, look back at their Health History, intake form, and/or your notes from their initial consultation. Notice any themes you see repeated over and over. (Try not to go on memory and be sure to look at your notes and forms.) Focus on looking at the files for clients who were "ideal" clients to work with.

Make note of the following:

1. What was/is their biggest pain – their main motivation for coming to see you and work with you?

I recall from my health coaching days that often people had many areas they wanted support with, but there was usually one main reason they decided to

work with me. This main reason is something that was causing them enough frustration that they were willing to invest in working with me.)

2. What words did they use to describe what they were experiencing? What words did they use to describe what they wanted support with?

I'm here to support you with this!

I don't expect you to complete this prior to our next call. For now, make note of any questions you have about the exercises above, so I can answer them on our call and you can feel confident completing this. (Feel free to also post on the Facebook Group.) I recommend you work next week to schedule your interviews and complete them in the next 3 weeks.