



AFFINITY MARKETING

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Business



WORD OF MOUTH

Affinity Marketing is the process of turning client referrals from **passive to active**. It's a point-by-point strategy to take control of the conversation, help your clients bring in the people they care about and **serve those people best**.

Every gym owner knows it: Word-of-mouth advertising is the best advertising.

So why aren't your best clients dragging their spouses, coworkers and best friends into your gym?

Because they're not salespeople.

The traditional customer-referral process is too passive. If we wait for our clients to do our marketing for us, we'll starve.

I teach the Affinity Marketing strategy to gym owners around the world. It's effective for many reasons:

- Gym owners attract the right clients.
- The new clients already have strong bonds with current clients.
- The process doesn't feel like "selling."
- The process makes current clients feel great.

Affinity Marketing is a win for everyone—the gym owner, the coach, the client and the client's connections.

If you care about your clients, you have to care about what happens to them outside the gym. That means you have to care about what they eat, where they work and what they do. In turn, that means you have to care about their environments, their family lives and their workplaces. Taking greater care of your clients means broadening your care to include all these things. And expanding your care



WHAT IS AFFINITY?

means expanding your business—if you follow the process in this book.

You already know you should market your business. Affinity Marketing is a powerful tactic that will help you do that by replicating your best clients.

What Is Affinity Marketing?

“Affinity” is a measure of how much a person knows, likes and trusts you.

We can sort your clients—and potential clients—into groups or “audiences” according to their affinity.

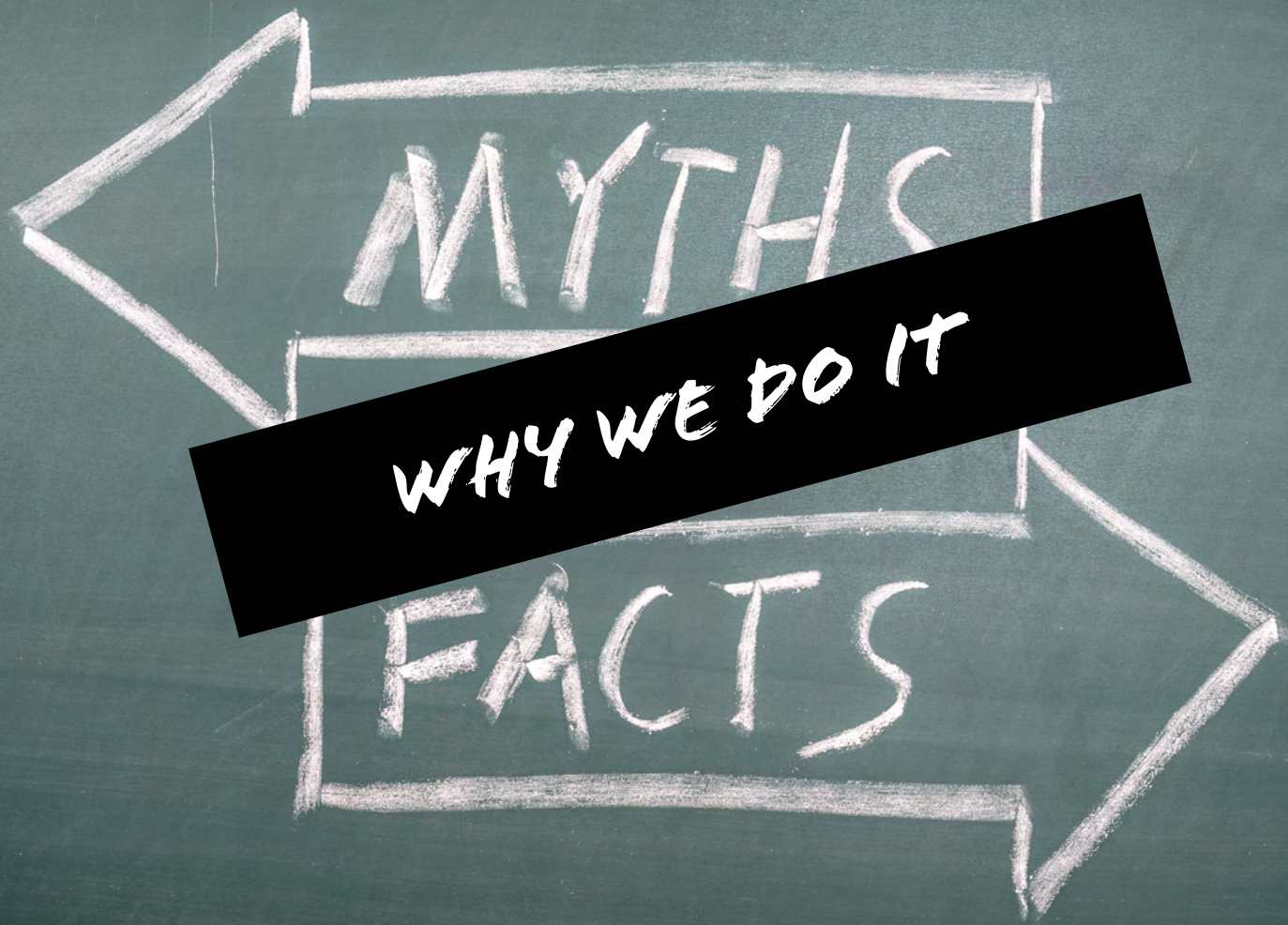
- Your current clients have the highest affinity.
- The people they live with have the next-highest affinity.

- Their coworkers have heard all about you and your crazy workouts. High affinity.
- And some of their friends and neighbors have also asked about you. Affinity.

So how do you get the people connected to your current clients signed up? By starting—and guiding—the conversation with your members.

You’ve probably heard of the “funnel” approach to advertising. We’re going to do the opposite: We’ll focus on the people most likely to buy first, then the people who are next most likely to buy.

We’ll start by identifying your best clients, then approach the people to whom they’re most closely connected. Then we’ll follow the same method to get to the next-highest “affinity” group, and the next, and the next.



We use Affinity Marketing because:

1. It's **faster**.
2. You **waste less time** talking to disinterested people.
3. It's **easier to talk to a fan** than to a critic.
4. Affinity Marketing doesn't add clients one at a time; it **multiplies them**.

At Two-Brain, we teach marketing in three phases: Affinity, then organic, then paid. All are important, but Affinity Marketing makes the others more powerful because it's a force multiplier. Every new client has connections. When you gain new clients, you gain their families, friends and coworkers. You gain access to the teams their kids play on, the neighborhoods where they live, other golfers, etc.

When we gain a new client, we'll talk about goals and explore ways to help the people closest to him or her. What we won't do is immediately jump to advertising to find

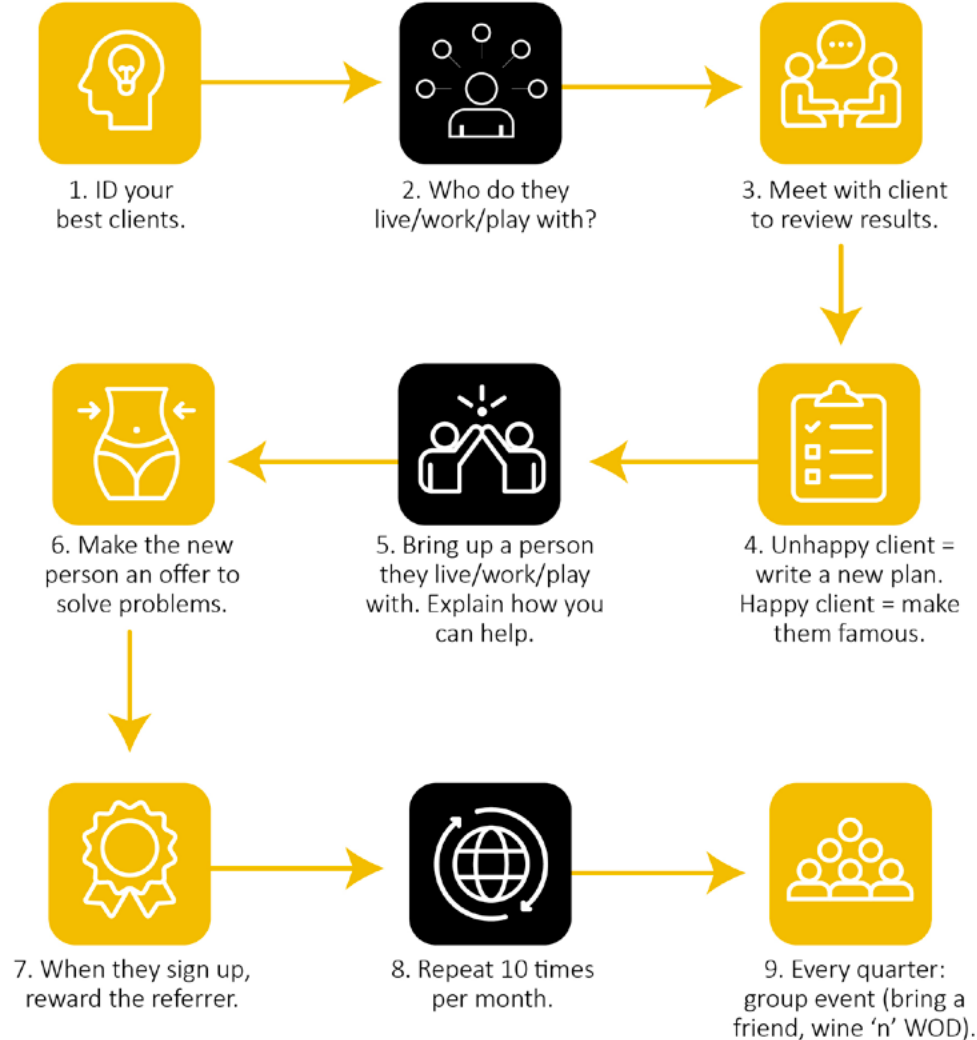
the next client. Ad platforms have the power to attract the attention of strangers. But you can do a lot more—for free—by leveraging your own connections first.

In general, your marketing focus changes as your business changes.

- 0-5 clients: Organic conversations.
- 5-15 clients: 1:1 referrals.
- 15-50 clients: Affinity Marketing and easy media publication.
- 50-150 clients: High-converting website, two to three social-media platforms, lead nurture strategies, advertising (collectively called a "funnel").
- 150+ clients: Global sales process.

Each level builds on the one before. And referrals never stop working. Affinity Marketing should happen with every client no matter how many you have.

THE STEPS



Here are the steps to great Affinity Marketing:

1. Identify your best clients.
2. Think about the people they live, work and play with.
3. Meet with clients to review their results on your program.
4. If they're unhappy, write a new plan. If they're happy, make them famous.
5. Bring up one of the people they live, work or play with. Explain how you can help this person.
6. Make the new person an offer to solve problems.
7. When the new person signs up, reward the referrer.
8. Do this 10 times every month.
9. Once every quarter, run a group event like Bring a Friend or Wine 'N' WOD.

Repeat this process every month until you have enough clients.

SEED CLIENTS



Step 1: Identify Your Best Clients

Your best clients are really the driving force behind your business. This is the Two-Brain version of author Mike Michalowicz's exercise to figure out who they are.

Take out a blank sheet of paper. Draw a vertical line down the middle. Write two headings at the top of the page: Joy and Money. You'll write a list of names under each heading.

On the first list, record your top 10 clients by how happy they make you. This is the Joy list. On the second list, record your top 10 clients by the amount they pay you. This is the Money list.

Which names appear on both lists? These are your Seed Clients—your very best clients—according to Michalowicz.

AFFINITY MARKETING CHEAT SHEET

	Client	Family	Coworker	Friend	Hobby
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Step 2: Find Their “One Degree” Connections

Before meeting with clients, pull out a blank copy of the Affinity Marketing Cheat Sheet (above, with printable version on Page 15). Fill in as many of the squares as you can for each Seed Client. Write names in each cell, or, if you don’t know specific names, write descriptions, such as “law firm” or “book club.” You don’t need to show the Cheat Sheet to the clients; it’s for your use.

Client—List your Seed Clients first. After you meet with them, you can move on to other clients.

Family—Name the people closest to your best clients (probably the people who live with them): spouses, parents, kids.

Marketing to strangers is called “advertising.” It’s useful at the right time, but you can grow your microgym to 150 clients without it. At worst, starting with referrals and Affinity Marketing will make your advertising ROI better later. Here are your priorities for marketing, from easiest to hardest:



CURRENT CLIENTS



FORMER CLIENTS



EMAIL LIST



ORGANIC AUDIENCES
(FACEBOOK, ETC.)



REFERRALS
(AFFINITY MARKETING)



STRANGERS
(PAID MARKETING)

Affinity Marketing with current clients is your No. 1 priority.

Coworker—List the people who work with your best clients. This column could also contain complementary service professionals. For example, if your client is a personal trainer, the Coworker column could include nutritionists or physical therapists. These are people with whom your best clients share a workplace.

Friend—These are the people with whom your clients spend their free time.

Hobby—List the people with whom your best clients enjoy their favorite pastime. They could be other golfers, other members of the Rotary Club, other parents at the hockey rink.

In Step 2, your job is to add at least one name or description in each category before you meet with your client. We’ll use these names in Step 5.



STEP 3: GOAL REVIEW

Step 3: Book Goal Review Sessions With Clients

You must create a culture of referrals: a series of regular meetings in which clients are asked, “How can I help your spouse/coworker/teammate?”

In a coaching business, you should be reviewing your clients’ progress regularly anyway. Your Affinity Marketing conversation will become a natural part of these meetings, which we call Goal Review Sessions.

You identified your best clients in Step 1. You should schedule Goal Review Sessions with all clients, but start with your Seed Clients. If you have any trouble setting up a formal meeting, just invite a client for a

cup of coffee or say “got a few minutes?” right after class.

When bringing new clients in to your business, use Goal Review Sessions to add value. Schedule the check-ins right at intake so new clients know they’re coming and consider them “part of the service.”



MAKE 'EM FAMOUS!

Step 4: Update the Plan or Make Them Famous

This is the actual script we use in Goal Review Sessions. Practice it five times with each of your staff members to become confident. It's not a sales pitch; it's your best offer to help.

- First question: "Has your overall goal changed since you started/since our last Goal Review?"
- Second question: "What is it now?"
- Third question: "Are you happy with the progress you've made?"

A client's responses to your questions will determine how you proceed.

Path 1: "I'm Not Happy With My Progress"

If the client says, "No, I wish I were making faster progress," it's time to introduce an objective measure. You can use any metric the client cares about.

Then make a new prescription. Honestly ask yourself, "If money wasn't an issue here, what would I tell the client to do?"

Say, "Here's what I would do in your shoes." Lay out the prescription. Ask, "How does that sound to you?" before the money talk.

Then say, "Let's try this for three months and meet

here again to re-test your progress. OK?"

When the client agrees, spell out the pricing options.

If the client says, "I can't afford it," simply ask how much of the plan she can afford, and then say, "If my budget was \$200 per month and I wanted to get as healthy as possible, I'd prioritize these two things." Obviously, sub in the exact number she gave you. Meet again in three months and repeat the process.

Path 2: "I Am Satisfied With My Progress."

First, congratulate the client. Then have him tell his story. Have your camera ready.

"Fantastic! I'd love to brag you up a little. I think the entire gym family should know your story. You ready for a short interview? Less than three minutes—I promise."

Bring out your camera. Ask these three questions:

- "What brought you to our gym in the first place?"
- "What are your new goals?"
- "What's your favorite part of the gym experience?"

Later, share the video on your social-media channels later with a link back to your on-ramp program.

Step 5: Bring Up a High-Affinity Connection

Thinking about the Cheat Sheet you filled out in Step 2, bring up a high-affinity connection. This could be a family member, coworker or friend. Remember: You don't need to show the Cheat Sheet to the client.

If the Cheat Sheet reveals multiple connections, ask, "Who has helped you most in this journey?"

Sometimes it's necessary to guide the conversation with your current client even more by explaining how you can help a connection. Here are some examples:

Family

The Family column contains the people who are closest to your clients. They're connected by love: the parents, children and partners of your clients. Usually, these are the people who live with your clients. How can your service help them?

Example: "Tom, I know you want Alice to work out, but she hates the gym. Do you think she'd do a workout with you?"

Offering your service to a person in your client's family should flow naturally into a Goal Review Session.

Coworkers

This column contains people who work with your best clients, in the same field, or even in closely related fields—investment advisors and bankers, for example.

What fitness or health challenges do these people share? Bad diets? Stress? Lack of sleep? High workload? Boredom? How can your service help them?

Some ideas:

- Team-building, stress-reducing sessions for groups of coworkers.
- "Lunch and learn" sessions and "brown-bag seminars" in workplaces. (When you go off site, remember this: Your top priority is to collect email addresses.)

- Complementary service packages—for example, personal training and salon services packaged to help clients feel and look great. Both businesses win!

Friends

What do your clients do for fun? Where do they go on weekends? With whom do they play? Don't forget your own connections: Think about the people you used to work with (or maybe still do). Whom do you hang out with on the weekends? How about your kids? Who are the other parents at soccer games?

How can you help these people? Bring up at least one other person in the client's life who can benefit from your service. Ask, "How can I reach this person?" Usually, the client will volunteer to make the introduction for you.

Your approach should always be, "Here's how I can help solve their problem." But this is actually the hardest referral to earn because you don't know what problem the "friend" is trying to solve. If you know the name of your client's best friend but you don't know the friend's biggest problem, skip to the Hobbies column below.

Hobbies

Where do your best clients go after they leave you? With whom do they go? What problems do members of the group share? The Hobbies column is a very lucrative one because you're identifying connections based on common problems. How can you help members of a group who all have the same issue—like trying to feed young hockey players properly?

Remember, the Hobbies column is extremely open to your influence. When you're not at your business, where do you go? Who else goes to the same spot? If the question "where you do work" doesn't come up, bring it up. If a new friend asks you about your service more than once, he or she wants to buy from you. Your job is to make it easy; don't make the person beg. Invite him or her to your business and schedule a time to meet. Take the lead. Make it a date.



Step 6: Offer to Help

After you've brought up a high-affinity connection, this is your opportunity to "thank up"—to find an excuse to approach a new high-affinity client. Ask, "What can I do to thank that person?"

Your offer could be a joint personal-training session with your client or a body scan or even a nutrition program. Ask the client how to contact the friend (get a phone number or email), and then get in touch right away. Like this: "Hey, Bill, I was just talking to Mary, and she gave a lot of the credit for her success to you. Thanks for supporting her. I really appreciate it. As a thank you, she suggested a 30-minute PT session. When can we get together?"

Always finish with a question. The next email should contain a link to book the appointment, which is really a No-Sweat Intro/consultation.



STEP 7: REWARD

Step 7: Reward the Referrer

You want to create a “referral culture,” so reward the right behavior from your clients. But don’t bribe people.

When a client refers a friend and the friend signs up, give the referring client a meaningful gift. Not a free month. Do something more thoughtful that solidifies your connection: Find the client’s favorite sports team and order a T-shirt. Get a gift certificate to a favourite local restaurant. Surprise and delight them.

But don’t offer a discount or free month if clients refer friends. That almost always backfires. First, your best clients don’t need a free month. Only your cash-sensitive clients will be interested. And cash-sensitive clients have cash-sensitive friends. Second, put yourself in the shoes of the potential new client. How do you feel when friends try to make a commission off you?



Step 8: Repeat 10 Times Every Month

You'll notice 10 rows on the Affinity Marketing Cheat Sheet. You should do Affinity Marketing with 10 clients every month.

Repeat the process until you have enough clients. If you're not training people 40 hours every week, use the non-training hours to get more clients.

Every month, you should fill in one new Cheat Sheet completely. Use the worksheet on the next page to ensure you follow all the steps with the contacts identified in Step 5.

Affinity Marketing Summary

Date: _____

	Client	Referral	Relationship	Contact Date	Action	Result	Reward
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							





STEP 9: RUN A GROUP EVENT

Step 9: Go for the Group

“Free trials” of your service can work if you use them very sparingly and seed the “trial” group with evangelists.

Once every quarter—not more—run a “bring a friend” type workout. Make the workout really easy to teach. Pick something that will make everyone feel as if he or she accomplished something at the end. Don’t crush anyone. Put everyone on a podium as he or she completes the workout. Take a lot of pictures.

Most importantly: Book consultations with all attendees before they leave. Never wait for someone to ask you, “How do I sign up?” Make sure you collect contact info as well.



SUMMARY

The process is simple, inexpensive and incredibly effective:

- Use Affinity Marketing with Seed Clients first.
- Then use Affinity Marketing with every client.
- Repeat the process and look for new connections in each Goal Review Session.
- Use Affinity Marketing with all new clients on intake and at Goal Review Sessions.
- Repeat forever, and add paid ads if referrals ever slow.
- Use Affinity Marketing with new clients won through ads.

It's a mistake to jump right to advertising. Talk to your clients first and work with warm leads. You can help the people close to your clients, and you don't need a costly ad to attract them.

You just need to care enough to help them.

**NEED A PLAN TO GROW YOUR
FITNESS BUSINESS?**

A MENTOR CAN HELP.

[BOOK A CALL](#)

