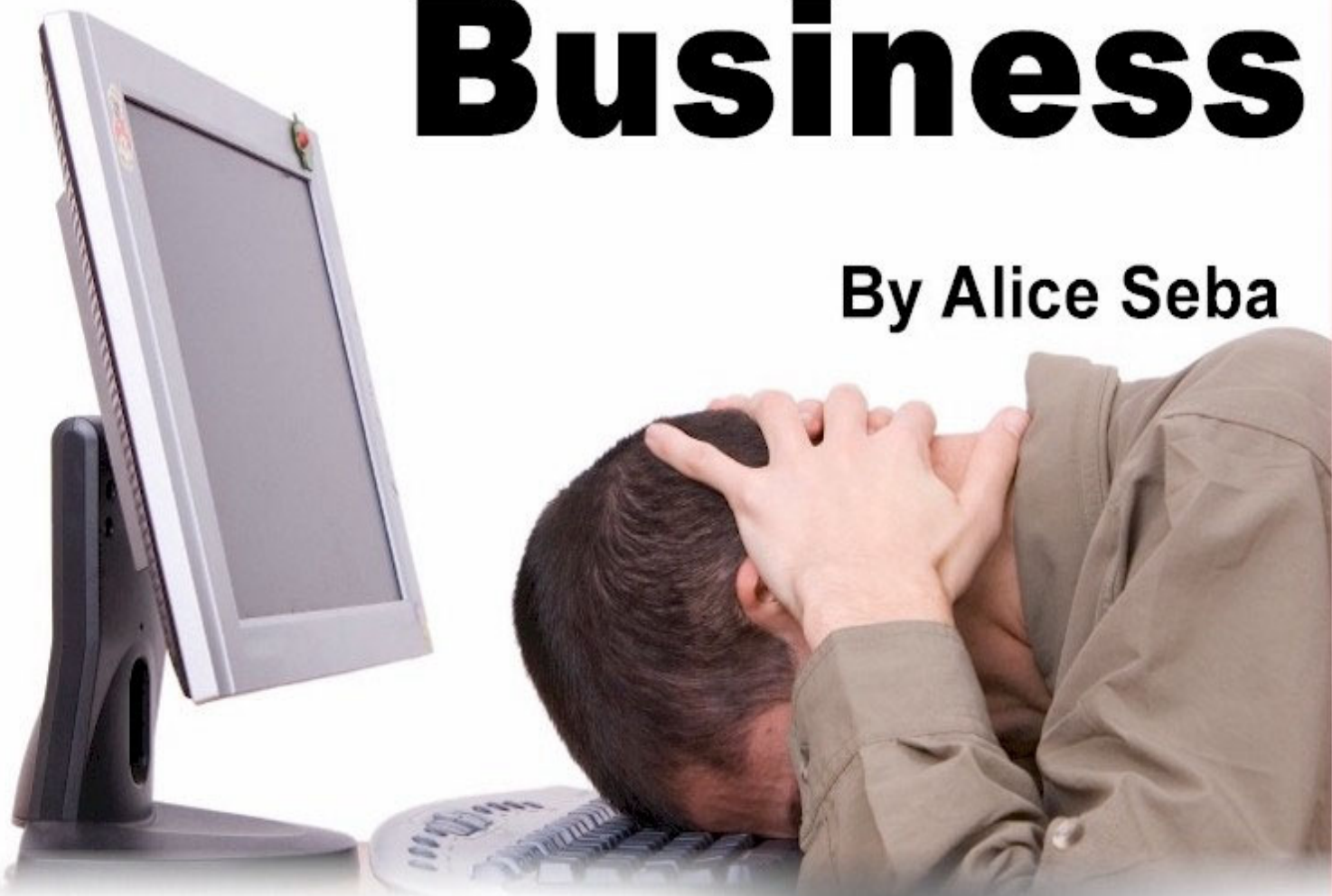


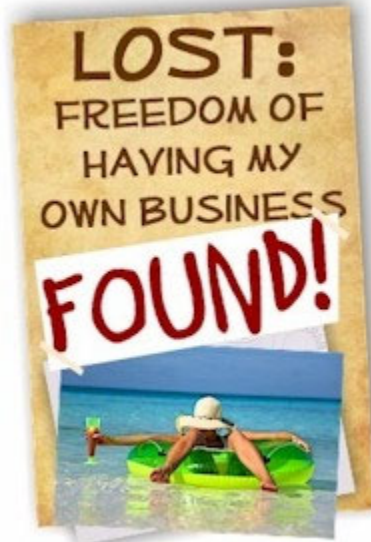
38 Easy Ways *Not* to Be a Slave to Your **Online Business**

By Alice Seba



InternetMarketingSweetie.com

Get the Freedom Back, Baby!



Many people start an online business hoping that it will empower them to have the income and time they never had before. It's all **about firing the boss and enjoying life...right?**

But then something strange happens. You start working more, seem to have less time and building that income proves to be a lot more difficult than you'd hoped. This guide includes **38 practical solutions** to help you get that freedom back and, once and for all, stop being a slave to your online business.

To make the most of this guide, read through it in its entirety first and take notes on the solutions that really speak to you. Don't worry...it's not too long and reading it through will give you a good grasp on the many options available to you. It's possible that not all the suggestions will apply to your business, but keep an open mind, because most of them will. Make it a goal to work on implementing at least 1 suggestion per day and you'll start noticing a difference to your work day and stress levels very quickly.

IMPORTANT: Even if you aren't making a lot of money right now, doesn't mean you shouldn't do this. Making these **tough decisions and investing wisely** is going to be **key** to your business growth. Living in a world of extreme overwork, little pay and no life...is NOT the way to climb your way to the top.

Now that we have that out of the way, let's get started so you can start making big changes for your business.

1. **Give up 1 JUST Email Address** (to start with): If you are still answering all your public inquiries and customer support emails, do yourself a favor and cut it out. There are many qualified people who can answer your emails for you in a professional way.

Despite what might think, customer service really **isn't rocket science**. It just needs someone who is good at listening, understands your product (something that is easy to learn), able to follow instructions and good at problem solving.

To help with the training of a new customer service person, you should create a FAQ with the answers to common support questions (besides you should already have a FAQ prepared to make your own email correspondence easier).

If you're concerned about the loss of control in seeing what's happening with your business communication, introduce a ticket system (like kayako.com or there are some free options if you search for them) where you can oversee all the communication being done for your business.

The reality is...the more time you spend answering emails, the more time you take away from developing and growing your business. If you aren't ready to give up all your public email addresses, start with one and see just how liberating it can be.

2. **Set Your Work Hours:** This is a common piece of business advice that a lot of people give lip-service to. For myself, I didn't REALLY understand the value of this until a couple of years into my own business venture. Setting your work hours increases your productivity, keeps you from burning out and forces you to maintain a normal and happy life outside of your computer which is a good thing.

Here's why setting work hours works like a charm:

- If you have a limited time to work in, you're more likely to get the tasks you've scheduled done quickly than if you give yourself the whole day to work.
 - The longer you sit in front of the computer, the more likely you are to burn out and start allowing yourself to goof off and waste time. You know what happens. You start visiting forums, dropping by Facebook, checking stats, getting lost on blogs...etc..etc.
 - If your computer is off for a good portion of the day, you can do normal things like take care of yourself, your home, see friends, go to movies...or do the things you like to do.
3. **Turn off the Computer If You Just Don't Feel Productive:** If you're trying to work, but feel distracted, tired or just don't think you're going to get much done – turn off the computer. There is no sense in tiring yourself out further getting nothing done. Even if you have a huge to do list, forcing it isn't going to do you any good. Take a break, go for a walk, take a nap, do something fun and come back when you're refreshed. You'll get a lot more done then.
 4. **Use a Paper & Pen More Often:** Getting off the computer and writing down your ideas, outlines, to-do lists on pen and paper can be highly productive. I'm not sure if it's just the change of work scenery, the avoidance of online distractions or both...but get yourself a nice notebook and use it.

What you can do on paper:

- Plan your monthly goals, weekly and daily schedules.
 - Plan blog posts, ideas for saving money for your business and maximizing your income opportunities.
 - Chart the course of a project: What needs to be done, resources needed, individual responsibilities.
 - Edit & expand on reports, articles, ebooks and sales pages. It's often much easier to see mistakes and come up with fresh ideas on paper.
5. **Be a Nicer Boss:** We've all had that boss from hell in the past. The slave driver, the irrational and/or crazy boss that nearly (if we're lucky...only nearly) drove us to an ulcer. Unfortunately, when we turn to entrepreneurship, we sometimes become that horrid boss. Don't be so hard on yourself, lower your expectations on quantity and your output in quality will improve...and it is really quality that matters. Make shorter and more well-planned to do lists. Take the time to do things right.
6. **Make Sure Your Market is Willing to Buy:** A lot of people start their business with the idea that they can "take their passion and make it a business". In some cases, it is true...but not in all. Some markets don't readily spend money (ex. teaching about frugal living can be challenging to convert into profits), so if you find yourself in this situation, you might want to consider how you can turn your market into consumers or consider other options.

If you need to rethink your market, do your homework first. A free tutorial is listed in the resources section at the end of this guide.

7. **Assess Your Per Hour Value:** It's important that you value your time. Look at how much time you're spending working now and how much money you're making to determine your per hour worth.

For example, if you're working 25 hours per week and making about \$550 per week, you're current value is about \$22 per hour.

Or if you're working 60 hours per week and earning about \$250 per week, you're only making \$4.16 per hour (YIKES).

Yes, you have to start somewhere, but in most cases, your goal is to increase your hourly value. Many of the tips in this guide will help you do this (ex. setting your work hours [#2], outsourcing your work [#8], etc.). When you understand your hourly value, you can work and motivate yourself to increase it.

8. **Outsource What You Hate / Can't Do / Is More Cost-Effective:** One way to increase your hourly value, is outsourcing a good chunk of your regular tasks. Outsourcing means providing work on a contract basis to someone else.

Suggestion #1 in this guide was to outsource your email...and that's just the beginning. Here's what else to start outsourcing:

- **Outsource What You Hate:** If you loathe doing something like bookkeeping, give it someone else to do.
 - **Outsource What You Can't Do:** If you don't know a thing about programming, don't bang your head against the wall for hours on end – get someone else to do it instead.
 - **Outsource to Be Cost-Effective:** If your current hourly value is \$22, but you want to raise it to \$35 per hour, start outsourcing tasks that can be completed for less than that.
9. **Hire a Ghostwriter:** Content is a great traffic and lead generator, but writing all your content is a real time-drainer. Hire a ghostwriter to help you generate more content for your audience.

Some people resist hiring a writer because they feel like it's a loss of voice, but it doesn't have to be. You don't need to put your personal name on all the content your company produces and when you do put your name on ghostwritten work, take the time to review it and ensure it represents you appropriately. Overall, the time you save researching and writing is worth paying for.

10. **Have Your Readers Contribute:** To help generate even more content, get your readers participating. Have them comment on blogs, forums and encourage them to submit stories, pictures, etc. Publish correspondence you get, answer your readers' questions, etc. Just don't publish anyone's name or other identifying details without permission. Not only will your readers love getting involved, you can gain more readers through the great content they provide.
11. **Partner on a Project:** Give yourself a break on your next project or product. Find a partner with complimentary skills and assets and work together. For example, if you want to create a membership site and you have the content, but she has the programming skills, why not partner? Or if you have a decent mailing list to promote to and someone else is willing to do a lot of the hard work in putting the project together, it's a win-win situation for both of you.
12. **Maximize:** Always take the time to review your business and all its successes and failures. Whether it's an advertising campaign or a website that you maintain, regularly check its performance. Or for example, if you have a product that is already converting well, work harder to acquire new customers. When you know what's working, do more of it. When you find something isn't working, get rid of it.

And yep, I'm aware that sounds like common sense, but it's always amazing to me the number of people don't do it. Instead of maximizing what they already

have, they just attempt to build more websites, create more products and never look back to see how easy it is to make more money with what they already have.

13. **Hire Your Kids:** If your kids are old enough to get some work experience, put them to work. It's a great way to bond with them, give them work experience and even teach them a bit about business. This option might have some nice tax benefits too...so check with your accountant (See #16).
14. **Hire an Intern:** Check with your local college on the possibilities of taking on an intern. Some interns work for free, in return for the work experience or they receive modest pay for their work. You get the help you need and your intern gets some experience – you both benefit.
15. **Outsource Your Bookkeeping:** It's something most of us dread...dealing with all the numbers, receipts and getting ready for tax time. It's a job that often gets put off and then stresses us out to no end...yet, it's an important part of our businesses. In order to know where we're going in with our businesses, we need to know where we've been and up-to-date books allow us to do that. Find a bookkeeper to once and for all get this off your shoulders, so you can make sound financial decisions for your business.
16. **Hire an Accountant:** In addition to having someone keep the books, arm yourself with a good accountant who will help you with your business financial planning, help you understand various tax benefits and keep you out of hot water. Having your books kept up-to-date by a bookkeeper saves you money (over having an accountant firm do it), but then having your accountant oversee everything ensures you're on the up and up and that you're on course with your financial goals.
17. **Re-Evaluate:** Just because you feel like you're waist deep into your business or a particular project, doesn't mean you have to see it all the way through. NO...I'm definitely not giving you permission to be a quitter when things get tough, but I'm urging you to re-evaluate things and make difficult decisions where needed.

For example, tip #6 mentioned target market. With the low start-up cost of an online business, many people do just dive head in first with an idea that doesn't always pan out as planned. Unfortunately, many of those people just keep at it for years, determined to make something unworkable work.

Don't be afraid to make a tough decision to start all over after a shaky start if you need to cut out certain projects or websites. Don't quit for quitting's sake, but when you can see something is just eating up too much time and resources with little hope of a good return, let it go.

18. **Build an Effective Affiliate Force:** Who said it was completely up to you to find new customers for your business? Or if you got help, you'd have to pay out a bunch of cash for a marketing manager? Start your own affiliate program instead.

You're probably well aware that an affiliate program is a program where your affiliates (who sign up for free) receive special tracking links to promote your products. When they make a sale, they earn a commission. If they don't make a sale...you pay nothing. In other words, you are paying for results only...a definite perk of having an affiliate program.

Be sure to set up your own affiliate program, provide training materials, promotional tools and motivate your affiliates into action. An affiliate force is something well worth having and takes some of the pressure off of you.

19. **Delegate Regularly:** Make it a habit to delegate more tasks to the people who work for you, your partners, etc. When you feel overwhelmed by your to-do list, there's always some stuff that could be given to a virtual assistant, writer or whomever you have helping you out. Or there might be items better suited to the skill set of a partner on one of your projects. As you plan your work, always look at the tasks you set for yourself and ask yourself – could somebody else do this instead?

20. **Plan Your Projects:** There's nothing like planning ahead to keep you on course and to avoid stress. Always take the time to plan your major projects a year in advance, so you have a very good idea of what you need to accomplish in the year. In addition, you might plan smaller projects on a monthly basis and then on a weekly basis, you can plan the various tasks you'll need to accomplish those projects. Planning ahead also allows you to more efficiently delegate (see #19) and take a lot of the workload off of yourself.

21. **Help More People at Once:** If you work one-on-one with clients, seek out ways to serve more people at once. It eases your workload and can increase your income dramatically.

For example, if you generally coach your clients one-on-one for \$100 per hour...imagine how much more help you could do and how much more money you could make if you charged for focused group coaching for 5 weeks (1 hour per week and \$250 a pop). If you could get 10 people into that group coaching, you have a revenue of \$2500 when you normally would have charged \$500 for your time. You've gone from making \$100 per hour to \$500. Not too shabby.

22. **Refuse Freebie Services & Consulting:** If you offer a service or sell information products, you'll know that people are always looking for free help. They all have long stories on why they can't afford your services, but really need them and how they will make sure they take action. By allowing these people feed on our guilt,

we also allow them to take up all our time and drag us away from the more profitable activities in our business.

But that doesn't mean you can't still help people...in fact, you can and it will build your business at the same time.

By now you know that getting content out to your prospects is a great way to generate leads for your business and helps convert your prospects into paying customers. Therefore, you should *already* have a good library of content and helpful resources readily available for anyone who needs a hand out (and if you don't, get started!).

This can be in the form of:

- Free reports
- Instructional videos
- FAQs
- Teleseminars / Webinars

...etc...etc.

The next time a freebie seeker comes your way, direct them to the free stuff. If they have specific questions, you can show them where to find the information on your website. Or you can tell them they are welcome to submit a question on your special question submission form (if you don't have one, make one – it's a good research tool to know what your prospects want) and you will try to answer their question in the future.

EVEN BETTER – Make all your public inquiry emails go through an assistant, so she can do this for you (see #1). This relieves you of the guilt (trust me, I've felt it too) and helps reduce the back and forth between very persistent freebie seekers.

People who really need help and are ready for it, will help themselves. If you have the resources readily available for them, someone who is genuine will make good use of them. For those that aren't genuine, please don't waste another minute on them.

23. **Don't Feel Any Obligation to Review Products or Consider JVs:** As your business grows, you'll likely have more and more people contacting you to promote their products, review them, etc. Feel no obligation to promote anything or even look at a product if you don't feel like it.

First of all, you have a reputation to protect. Don't promote some crappy product in the hopes that someone will return the favor (to promote your EXCELLENT product, of course!) or feeling you should help out a fellow online business owner.

Second, you have limited time. You can't review everything for the sake of being nice or whatever motivates you into thinking you should consider all offers. Just like when a telemarketer calls your home, you don't feel obligated to talk to them (I hope!), you don't need to feel obligated to consider these affiliate program pitches.

Personally, I have a submission form that I direct joint venture seekers to. It clearly states that I receive far too many offers to be able to take them all on, but I am always on the lookout for good products. I also tell them that I cannot respond to all the inquiries, so they know they shouldn't expect a reply. Sorry, but that's just the way it goes.

Finally, I have some writers that I trust on staff who can review products for my company and then write up the reviews for publishing. That means I can review more products than if I did it myself. I also indicate the reviews were done by staff members, so I don't get myself into hot water. ☺

24. **Set up Recurring Income Models:** One of the downfalls to a fledgling Internet business is keeping the income momentum from month to month. You can have a really good month of sales, but then feel challenged to keep it up for the following month. One of the ways to encourage a steady income is to incorporate more recurring payment products/services into your business. These can be your own products and/or products that you promote as an affiliate.

Some recurring income options include:

- Memberships.
- Newsletter and magazine subscriptions.
- Monthly coaching and other services.
- An online service like picture hosting, web hosting, etc.

25. **Stop Chasing Fads:** The Internet is full of opportunities and ideas. There are so many new fangled marketing ideas people try to sell to make a quick buck – some are good, some are not so good. But most of them are just fads. They might work just for a while, use questionable methods or are simply over-hyped things better left alone.

You can help keep yourself away from fad-chasing by reducing the number of newsletters you're subscribed to and eliminating most of the internet marketing related groups/forums you're a member of. It's all just noise and sometimes you need to do what you can to cut out that noise.

26. **Choose Passive Income:** If you have a service-based or an otherwise labor-intensive business, start thinking of ways to reduce this. If you're a writer for pay,

consider turning those talents into selling your own writing multiple times (ebooks and other information) instead of selling it for small amounts to another business person who will turn around and sell your writing over and over again. Be that business person making money over and over again.

Or if you sell a product, consider selling digital products (information, software) or use a fulfillment center to process and ship your physical product orders. You don't need to be spending time packaging and shipping products. Remove yourself completely from the time-consuming task of product delivery.

27. **Choose Passive Traffic:** There are many ways to generate traffic to your website. Some methods allow you to do the work once and then continue to generate traffic for a long time to come. We call those passive forms of traffic. Other methods are more labor intensive and require continuous work on your part to remain effective.

Ex.:

Passive: Search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising, content-creation and publishing, word-of-mouth (*Note:* Some of these will require maintenance, but not continued labor-intensive work to keep going).

Labor Intensive: Posting to forums, social networking, offline networking. These are the types of things you need to keep doing in order to keep them effective.

Put more of your efforts into the passive traffic category, so you can sustain your traffic more easily.

28. **Commit to a Hobby:** Hmmm...what does this have to do with business? A lot! Starting and developing your own business can become addicting and can be seen as a bit of a hobby in itself, but there is NO reason to spend all your time on your business. When you work 12-14 hour days, there is near zero chance that you're productive the whole time. Shorter hours mean increased chance of productivity (see #2), so find something else that you can commit your time to, like a hobby. If it's hard for you to do, find a team sport or a group of some kind that will have other people relying on you. It might be easier to maintain that commitment if others expect you to be there.
29. **Commit to Friends & Family:** Along the same lines as #28...and probably more important, commit to spending more time with friends and family. Organize outings, invite them for dinner...make a commitment. I bet when you started your online business, you did it saying you wanted the freedom of being your own boss. Well, you have that freedom available to you if you embrace it. Break away

from your computer and spend time with friends and family and you'll be surprised at how easy it becomes and how fulfilling it really is.

30. **Differentiate on Something Other Than Price:** If you have positioned yourself in the market as being a provider/seller with the lowest price, you've set yourself up for a lot of work. You need more clients and customers to sustain your profit goals. Not only is it a challenge to acquire more new customers, it's harder to manage all their support requests, etc.

Focus on your quality of service, speed of service, top-notch customer service...just something different than price. When you command higher prices, you don't need nearly as many customers to make your business very worthwhile.

31. **Follow up with Your Prospects:** Whenever you get a lead, a newsletter subscriber or make some contact with a potential customer, make sure you follow up. Establish a rapport with your prospects that will allow them to get to know you and your business, trust you and ultimately, want to buy from you. Your mailing list is a valuable asset. Always take the time to grow your list and USE it.

32. **Follow up with Your Customers:** Funny thing...we are always told to collect email addresses in the form of a newsletter, but many people forget about following up with their customers. Your customers are extremely valuable and should be treated as such.

Customers are valuable because:

- They have purchased once and are more likely pleased with their purchase. A happy customer is more likely to buy from you again.
- It costs much less in terms of money and time to get a customer to buy again than to try to find a new customer.

Keep in touch with your customers by giving them extra bonuses, advanced notice of products, discounts, etc. In other words, treat them right and encourage loyalty so they keep buying from you.

33. **Don't Fool Yourself about Networking Groups / Forums:** Networking and getting to know people who market online and who ultimately reach your target market can be important. It's important for sharing ideas and finding potential project partners, but it should never take up a large chunk of your day.

Let's face it, as you hop from group to group, you see the same people and get involved in the same time-wasting conversations. Sure, connecting with people helps the isolation of working at home, but set some limits. You've got work to do and a life to live.

34. **Save Headaches - Don't Go Cheap:** When buying products and services for your business, it can be tempting to go for the cheapest price. But as the saying goes, "You get what you pay for." That doesn't mean there aren't great deals to be found out there, but when something is cheap or, you have to ask yourself why. Look for quality first, price second and you'll get better results, save time in having to fix errors, etc. Of course, there are plenty of good and low cost solutions out there, but you have to do your homework.

My motto is to always "Do it Right to Start With". For example, a lot of people like to skimp on building their mailing list. They think they'll use a free service like Yahoo Groups to start with and then just switch over when they can afford the \$20 per month service. Do yourself a favor, do it right to begin with. Choose a service that doesn't put ads on your emails and that has the features you want. Besides, did you know that if you choose to switch later, most services won't allow you to simply import your list into your account? Your subscribers will have to reconfirm their subscription and essentially, you'll be starting all over.

Get the RIGHT products and services for your business...and do it the right way from the beginning.

35. **Reuse Your Stuff to the Maximum:** All your marketing materials and content are a goldmine. If they were effective the first time around, use them again and again. You might rework your advertising copy to fit a new ad campaign or repackage a few articles into a viral report. There are so many things you can do with your materials over and over again.
36. **Give it Time:** Be patient with yourself and your results. A business does take time to build. Running yourself ragged just to hit the big payoff isn't likely to do you any good and will likely wear you out.

For example, give your SEO campaigns time to take effect. Changing things over and over will make it impossible for you to tell what is producing the results you want. Be persistent, but patient on your press release campaigns. Take time to grow your affiliate force and steadily motivate them into action.

37. **Be More Casual:** Oftentimes, we get ourselves into complicated routines and do them, just because that's the way we've always done things.

For example, if you still publish a formal ezine with all kinds of formal sections and you force yourself to send out emails on a certain day...no exception, lighten up a little. There's no need to be so formal. Keep things simple, wow your readers and they'll be happy to hear from you. I'm not suggesting that you go weeks or a month without emailing, but if you email one week on a Tuesday and the next on a Wednesday, don't get too worried about.

38. **Think Abundantly & Associate with Abundant Thinkers:** One of the biggest things that can hold you back in business is clinging to a scarcity mentality. Give big in your business, don't be afraid to invest in your business and expect big results. In addition to thinking abundantly, surround yourself with abundant thinkers. Associating with those with a scarcity mindset can be very draining and you hold you back.

What Now?

There's a saying that I'm sure you've heard and that's, "Nothing changes until something changes." That change is in your complete control. If your online business has been swallowing you whole, it's time to take action.

Hopefully you've taken notes and have determined which solutions you want to apply first. Mark these plans on your calendar or your day planner and commit to making them happen. Life is just too short to spend it slaving in front of a computer all day and night.

To your great success,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Seba".

Alice Seba
Your Friend & Partner in Online Success
InternetMarketingSweetie.com

P.S. I've mentioned a variety of strategies throughout this guide and have compiled a list of helpful resources that might help you further in implementing them.

- **Target Market Research:** Here's a free tutorial that might help: Training.InternetbasedFamily.com/target.html.
- **Outsourcing Strategies:** Sign up for free outsourcing tips at OutsourcingSweetie.com/tips.html or come for a full sneak peek at

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OutsourcingSweetie.com to get all the tools you need to start outsourcing effectively.

- **Project Partnering:** A course to help you with all the ins and outs with partnering on projects -> EasyPartnershipsOnline.com.
- **Hiring Your Kids:** A useful guide to showing you how to hire your children, tax free (USA) -> HiringYourChildren.com.
- **Affiliate Program Management:** To start your affiliate program, you can sign up for free weekly tips at AffiliateManagerSweetie.com/tips.html or get the full home study course at AffiliateManagerSweetie.com.
- **Following up with Your Prospects & Customers:** Receive free email marketing tips at EmailMarketingSweetie.com/tips.html.