HOOKED
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Stevan R. Browning, a long-time marketing executive and avid childhood fisherman, is CEO of Browning and Associates, a marketing consulting firm that helps people grow their businesses, boost profitability, and forge closer relationships with their customers.

Throughout his career, Steve has been responsible for successfully managing marketing, sales, finance, and business teams for many companies, large and small, including Visa USA, National Warranty Corporation, Custom Branded Networks, Thomas Electronics, and others.

His mastery of marketing communications as well as his extensive knowledge and experience as a sports fisherman provided the inspiration for this book, the outgrowth of his fascination with the similarity of the two disciplines. With Hooked, Steve imparts to the reader a quick and easy way to learn the basic strategies for selling their products successfully.
WHO SHOULD READ THIS BOOK AND WHY?

*Hooked* is a simple guide to successful marketing that takes the reader back to the fundamentals of marketing—who, what, where, when, why, and how. *Hooked* is intended for small business owners, entrepreneurs, and beginning marketers with minimal or no experience.

Steve demystifies the art of marketing in this lighthearted guide. You’ll learn proven techniques to help you identify, attract, and connect with your audience, pique their curiosity, and motivate them to take action. In the beginning, it will take time and effort. But be confident in knowing you can become skilled in using these techniques to attract not only more customers to your business, but the right customers, the customers you need to grow and prosper.
NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

In a competitive marketplace, you need to do more than simply keep your existing customers happy. To grow your business, you need to bring on new customers and that means effective marketing. *Hooked* portrays marketing in a way that any small-business owner or entrepreneur can quickly understand and grasp the importance of marketing even at its most basic level.

The skills and techniques used to illustrate the sport of bass fishing may not be entirely accurate in the eyes of a skilled fisherman. I have used some personal knowledge of the sport to add a level of credibility. Additionally, I have taken creative liberties where needed to best align the story and characters with the fundamental steps and principles of marketing. As you begin to implement the tools provided in the book, you will gain a greater understanding of the value of marketing. Although you may not immediately grasp every element needed for success, with time, study, and help from an experienced mentor, you will learn and appreciate them.

—Stevan R. Browning
THE FAMILY REUNION

Meet Bob, head of a large family that loves good food and good company. Their all-time favorite dish? Fresh fish. But not just any fish.

“Mmmmm-mmmm! Freshwater, largemouth bass, grilled with garlic, butter, and lemon pepper. Absolutely nothing finer,” purred Bob, as he tucked his napkin under his chin. “Mary, you’re still a genius,” he added, as his wife took her seat.

“Thanks, hon,” she replied. “Which reminds me—have you had a chance to think about the idea I mentioned a couple weeks ago? You know, the one about catching fish for our big family reunion dinner?”

Bob mumbled something and nodded pensively while chewing a forkful of fish. The truth was he was a little concerned. Over twenty-four years of marriage, Bob had never been shy about expressing his opinion about his superior fishing ability and his bragging had put him in a tight spot.

“It’s all about instinct,” he would say. “Some of us have it and some don’t. You can learn the basics pretty quickly,
but when you reach a certain level, there’s just an intuition that can’t be taught.”

Two weeks earlier, Mary had finally had enough of listening to this sort of thing.

“Okay, hotshot, here’s your chance to really show off,” she had said one fine spring afternoon. “Our family reunion is coming up real soon and we need to figure out dinner. How about you catch enough largemouth bass to feed everyone? I’ll grill it, and you’ll become a legend!”

“Done deal,” Bob had replied. “Start planning the menu. You think your Uncle Roy would like Cajun rice?”

Now, as Bob was enjoying his dinner, he began to worry that there were just a few more weeks to go before the reunion. His battered pickup truck was running a little tired these days and so was he. His fishing skills had always been basic at best—good for a conversation starter or a funny story to tell at the bar. He would have to catch enough bass to feed twenty-nine people or the centerpiece of their reunion dinner would be take-out pizza.

“Bob, is everything okay? You seem a little quiet tonight,” said Mary.

“All good,” he replied. “Kind of a hectic work day, that’s all.” Then his face lit up in a broad smile. “Hey, thinking about fishing reminded me of my old pal Jack Cranfield from high school. Haven’t seen that guy in years. Wonder what he’s up to?”

“You should give him a call.”
“Yeah, it will be good to catch up.”

Bob knew he needed professional help and Jack could be the answer to his dilemma. His old friend was not just an accomplished fisherman, but also a *Bassmaster*—a title reserved only for the most renowned anglers. The last time Bob had seen Jack wasn’t in high school, but on an ESPN special. They had drifted apart over the years, but had never completely lost touch.

Mary was out the next morning, so Bob dug up Jack’s number and gave him a call.

“Jack? Hi, it’s Bob here. It’s been a long time! How have you been?”

“Bob! Great to hear from you, I was just talking about you the other day. How’s Mary? How are the kids?”

“Everyone’s doing great, Jayme is starting college this fall and Henry is a starting pitcher on the team. But I have to tell you the real reason I’m calling. Once again, my big mouth has gotten me into really big trouble and I need a favor.”

“Name it,” said Jack.

“Well, it’s kind of embarrassing, but I was running my mouth about my amazing fishing abilities and Mary finally called my bluff. So now we have a family reunion coming up in few weeks and I’m expected to catch enough fresh fish to feed the entire family.”

“Ouch,” said Jack. “Any particular kind of fish?”
“Largemouth bass,” replied Bob sadly. “You know me, Jack, I’m just a weekend warrior. I can paddle out on the lake and catch a few on a quiet afternoon, but there’s no way I can bring in enough for a huge family event. I could really use your help on this. Would it be okay if I asked you a few questions about fishing?”


“Okay, let’s start with some basics. Where can you find freshwater largemouth bass?”

“Well Bob, largemouth bass live in freshwater lakes, streams, and ponds.”

“Aha! Blake’s Pond is pretty close to us, I can get over there and get started this weekend.”

“Not so fast, Bob, I think you’re overlooking a few important details. How big do you need the fish to be? I’m sure we’re talking four or five pounds, right?”

“Absolutely,” replied Bob. “Mary has a really simple recipe, just grilling with some butter, garlic, and a few spices. We’ll need some decent-sized fillets.”

“Okay,” said Jack. “So you’ll need to find a lake, stream, or pond that not only contains largemouth bass, but a lot of them that are over four pounds. If I remember right, Blake’s Pond was pretty small. You’re not likely to find many largemouth bass that are over four pounds in that little puddle. I think Blake’s Pond would be a waste of time and money.”
“You’re right,” said Bob. “Let’s think this one through a little more. What’s the best environment for heavier bass? Maybe a stream?”

“Well, let’s see, largemouth bass like warm, still water that’s not too deep and is reasonably clear,” said Jack. “They’ll thrive best in spots with lots of places to hide, like reeds and brush. That pretty much rules out any of the flowing streams near you. Your best spot would be a big lake. Isn’t Lake Guntersville pretty close to you?”

“Well, not exactly,” said Bob. “We’ve camped up there, but it’s a two-day drive from our place.”

“Shoot, that’s right,” said Jack. “Are you still driving that ’62 Chevy pickup? The blue one with the cool hood?”

“Still got it,” replied Bob. “It’s on its last legs, though. I’m not sure if that would make it all the way out to Lake Guntersville. I think the gas alone would be a fortune.”

“Yeah, that’s not gonna work at all. It takes too long to get up there, it’ll cost you money, and your old truck may not make the trip anyway. I think the risks are just too high for Lake Guntersville.”

Bob sounded dejected. “What am I gonna do? I think I’d better just come clean and tell Mary we’ll be having pizza.”

“Come on, it’s not hopeless, we can figure this out, we just have to do a little homework,” said Jack. “You have a map handy? Let’s get that out and work out some options here.”

“Okay, hang on, I have one in my den,” said Bob. He put down the phone, rummaged around for a moment, and
then returned with an old gas station map. “Here we go,” he said.

“All right, so let’s start by focusing on the travel. We’ll figure out how much you can afford to spend on gas and how far that old truck can travel and still get you back safely—within the time you have for a fishing trip.”

“I’d feel comfortable taking the truck out for a half-day at a time,” said Bob. “You have to pull over and check the radiator pretty often if the weather is warm. Let’s say 200 miles.”

“Okay, we can work with that. So take that map and locate where your home is. Then cut a piece of string that represents the distance you can travel—within your budget and allotted time frame,” said Jack.

“All right, give me a minute here. Got it.”

“Perfect, now take that string and tie a pin on one end and a pencil on the other. We’re going to stick the pin in the map where your home is located. Then stretch the string out and use the pencil and string to draw a circle around with your home in the center of the circle. Is that working for you?”

“Yep, this is a neat trick,” said Bob. “I’ve got a lot of options here in my travel range.”

“Good, now let’s see how many lakes are in that circle that have warm, still water that’s not too deep,” said Jack. “It’s even better if they have a reputation for good bass fishing.”
“This is great, I don’t know how I missed this,” said Bob. “We’ve got Best Lake to the east, about sixty miles away. Oh, and we have Great Lake to the north, almost at the edge of the circle on the map. That place is awesome, it’s pretty quiet, really beautiful woods nearby, and just a great place to relax.”

“Great Lake sounds good,” said Jack. “But are you fishing for fun and relaxation, or are you on a mission to catch lots of the right fish in time for your family reunion?”

“Yeah, you’re right, I guess I’d better focus on catching fish, not spending the day relaxing in the boat,” said Bob.

“That reunion is coming up soon and time is getting tight,” said Jack. “Remember that you’re on a deadline and you still have to think about bait. I think you should go for Best Lake. It’s closer, so that means you can fish longer and more often. Plus you’ll spend less on gas, so you can save a little money and apply that toward buying better bait. You’re going to need the right bait if you planning on catching the really big ones.”

“Nice,” said Bob. “You’re really thinking this through for me. So now we know where to fish, how we can get there, how long we can fish, and how much we can spend on bait. I think we’re ready to get moving!”

“Yeah, we’ve got a good start, but hang on a minute,” said Jack. “A friend of mine has fished at Best Lake before and she says that lots of people fish for largemouth bass there, but only a few come home with fish that are close to
five pounds. Most folks come home with the wrong fish, small fish, or no fish at all.”

“You’re kidding,” said Bob. “Why is that? What’s the problem?”

“It’s kind of a long story,” said Jack. “We’ve got more homework to do figuring out the bait. I have to get off the phone to take Tom to his ball game. Can you give me a call tomorrow and we’ll talk more?”

“Sure thing,” said Bob. “Thanks, Jack, this is really saving my bacon…”

CHAPTER I TUTORIAL: HOW BOB’S FISHING CHALLENGE RELATES TO MARKETING

When Bob accepts Mary’s challenge to catch enough largemouth bass for the family reunion, he takes on a task very similar to those who market products and services. And as we see, it’s going to be a bit more complicated than Bob initially thought. So he seeks the advice of his longtime friend, Jack Cranfield, a Bassmaster who will be Bob’s guide throughout the process.

Interestingly, as we’ll learn, many of the secrets to catching largemouth bass are equally effective in reeling in a business’s prime customers. Let’s explore some the parallels presented in chapter 1.
GOALS

In fishing, it is important at the outset to establish your goal. In Bob’s case, his primary goal is to serve freshwater largemouth bass at the family reunion. In marketing, your goal is the purpose toward which a campaign is directed—for example, the successful launch of a product or service. Once established, we need to refine that main goal with more specific objectives.

OBJECTIVES

Our story defines Bob’s: his wife needs enough fish to feed twenty-nine people. She needs the fish in time for her family reunion. She needs a specific species of fish (freshwater largemouth bass). And she needs the fish to be big—preferably four to five pounds. Likewise in marketing, it is essential to identify measurable, defined, simple objectives, in order to determine what actions are needed to attain them. And you have to do it within your limitations. Let’s take a look.

LIMITATIONS

Skills. Bob’s fishing skills are limited. His stories about fishing are more brag than fact. Bob needs professional help and turns to his old friend, Jack Cranfield, a Bassmaster.
Your marketing organization (if you have one) may be a small group without the in-house skills or expertise needed to meet your goal. So you might consider working with a full-service marketing and design vendor who can save you time and money by advising you on the best courses of action and what to avoid.

_Time._ We learn in the story that Bob’s fishing will be limited to five weeks or less from the initial challenge date. He must catch the fish he needs in time for the family reunion. In a similar fashion, you should develop a schedule for pursuing your marketing objectives. You may find you have a limited amount of time or strategic window within which to launch your product or keep pace with competitors.

_Travel._ Bob’s travel is restricted both by time and distance. Bob needs to fish often, but his old truck has a limited range, within 100 miles of his home. Your potential customers might be located far from your office, and travel is time-consuming and expensive. You may be limited in your ability to have face-to-face meetings with faraway prospects. Or delivery could be a factor. It may be more cost-effective and convenient to focus on prospects that are closer to you.

_Cost._ Bob is not only challenged by distance and his truck’s condition. He needs to conserve money to help pay for the bait and tackle required to complete the effort. Cost is an issue for all businesses, especially in a tight economy. It’s important to allocate your available resources judiciously.
to get the highest return on investment for your limited marketing budget. Again, here is where a marketing pro can help.

Let’s move on to see how Bob tackles these and other issues.
Choosing the Right Bait

Bob could hardly wait to give Jack a call. For the first time in weeks, he was actually looking forward to the family reunion, and he was eager to learn more expert tips from Jack.

“Hi, Jack, it’s Bob. Is now a good time to talk?”

“Sure, Bob, I’ve been expecting your call.”

“Jack, I have to admit I couldn’t sleep last night—or focus on anything at work today. All I can think about is bait. You’ve got me curious. Why is it so important? I’ve been fishing my whole life and have never had to worry about bait.”

“Right,” said Jack. “Can I ask how many and what kind of fish you usually catch on a weekend outing?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, Bob, fish are not really that much different than you and me when it comes to menu choices. When we were in school, I remember you refused to get within five miles of Chinese food. But if a scent of barbecue hits the air, you’re all over it. Am I right?”

“Yeah, you’ve got me on that one.”
“Well, fish are really no different,” said Jack.

“Really? I guess I never realized how selective fish are. I always thought a cricket or grasshopper was all that was needed.”

“Well, Bob, you couldn’t be more wrong,” replied Jack. “Just about every species of fish has different tastes when it comes to what they eat. What makes them different from you and me is that their tastes are driven by nutritional desires, not by commercials for greasy, heart-stopping burgers that we can’t resist. But in any case, if you want to catch fish, you need to learn something about their food choices. So the short answer is yes, bait is important—very important.”

“Jack, this all makes sense, but I’ve caught largemouth bass before using crickets and grasshoppers, so I really don’t see where my bait choice is an issue.”

“Those choices are fine, but you could do better,” said Jack. “Look at it this way: if Mary’s not home to broil you a juicy steak, you’ll settle for a bologna sandwich if you haven’t eaten all day. Mr. Bass is similar. If he’s really hungry and a tasty grasshopper happens to be close by, he may just make a quick snack of it. But give him a choice between a tiny grasshopper or a juicy minnow and there’s no question: Mr. Bass is having minnow for dinner. And there’s one other problem you’ll need to consider when it comes to bait choices.”

“Really? What’s that?”
“Bob, just about every freshwater fish in North America eats grasshoppers and crickets.”

“That’s great! I can catch lots of grasshoppers and crickets right in my own backyard.”

“Well, hold on a minute. Did you ever stop to consider that this maybe why you’re catching all kinds of fish, except largemouth bass? I’d be willing to bet you catch more crappie and perch than largemouth bass. Am I right?”

“How did you know, Jack?”

“Crickets and grasshoppers are basically barbecue to crappie and perch. Small fish prefer small, tasty prey and these bugs are two of their favorite foods. So if there is a crappie or perch around, the likelihood of Mr. Bass dining on a cricket or grasshopper is pretty remote. Not only are crickets and grasshoppers small, they don’t swim well either. When you place a cricket or grasshopper on your hook, they look more natural to the crappie and perch—making them a top menu item. And you wind up coming home from your weekend trip with a stringer full of crappie or perch and no bass.”

“That makes sense,” sighed Bob. “So what should I do? I need to catch largemouth bass, not crappie or perch, and they need to be big ones. How am I going to do that?”

“Bob, that’s why you called me. Do you recall all the thought we put into understanding where you should go fishing?”

“Yes.”
“You’ve got to consider everything from water temperature, clarity, depth, and vegetation, right?”

“That’s right,” said Bob.

“Well now, we need to apply the same disciplined thinking to bait,” said Jack. “If you want to catch largemouth bass, you’ll need to know what they prefer to feed on, right?”

“Of course,” replied Bob.

“Okay, well, you’re in luck. You don’t get to be Bassmaster without spending a lot of time studying them. Since you have very little time and your budget is tight, I’ll get straight to the point. You might want to grab a pencil and start taking notes because this is important,” said Jack.

“Okay, all set.”

“Largemouth bass are considered a game fish. This means they like to feed on the move. Unlike catfish and carp, they’re not bottom feeders. They don’t want someone else’s leftovers; they’ve got to have live bait. They like large water worms, small snakes, medium-size frogs, small crappie, perch, and minnows.”

“So to lure them in, I’ll need to use the bait that a largemouth bass wants and is familiar with,” said Bob.

“You’ve got it,” said Jack. “But more importantly, if you want to catch a bass that’s over five pounds, you need to use bait that is not only attractive and familiar, but is also too large for small bass or other fish. At the same time, the bait can’t be enormous. You want a large bass to see it as a buffet—not a competitor. In my experience, I have found
that largemouth bass between five and ten pounds really go for very large worms or frogs that are about an inch in height. They also love minnows around three and a half to four inches in length.”

“Wow, those are some pretty big treats, Jack.”

“That’s right, and it’s a key part of our strategy for catching the bigger ones,” said Jack. “If the bait is small, you will attract the wrong size fish. You don’t want to spend all your time and bait money on fish that are too small. And most often, small fish won’t be where the larger fish are anyway.”

“Why’s that, Jack?”

“It’s pretty simple: large fish eat small fish. Think about it. If you’re a two hundred-pound man, you won’t mind being around a ten-pound baby lion. But when the lion grows to five hundred pounds, you start to look more like lunch than a zookeeper. Fish are no different. The little ones avoid the bigger ones. So if you’re catching lots of small fish, there is an excellent chance that the big ones are somewhere else.”

“Wait a minute, Jack. Last night, we said that largemouth bass prefer warm, still water that’s not too deep, is reasonably clear, and has lots of places to hide like reeds and brush. If I seek out this kind of location but wind up catching only small fish, what should I do?”

“That’s a good question. What do you think you should do?”
“I think I’m completely stumped.”

“Okay, Bob, I know this is going to come as a big shock, but the answer is really simple,” said Jack. “But rather than getting into that tonight, let’s talk again tomorrow. I have an hour we can spend chatting then.”

“That sounds fine, Jack, I have to dash off too. Thanks again for your help. I’ll call you tomorrow around this same time.”

CHAPTER II TUTORIAL:
CHOOSING THE RIGHT BAIT IS CRUCIAL

As we discover in this chapter, choosing the appropriate bait to lure the fish, or customer, isn’t so simple. It all hinges on knowing who you’re going after and what they’re most likely to respond to. Let’s see how this is accomplished:

TARGETING

All fish—and all potential buyers of your product—are not the same. In order to get your prospect to bite, you first have to clearly identify and profile your target so you can select the best bait, or message, that will work.

For Bob, the target is freshwater largemouth bass, four to five pounds in weight. Good start, but he needs a more detailed profile: they like warm, still water that’s not too
deep and is reasonably clear with lots of places to hide like reeds and brush. They are a game fish—not bottom feeders like carp and catfish. They prefer live active bait. They feed in the early morning and late afternoon.

Who is your ideal customer? Identify the perfect prospect who would help your business succeed and grow, now and in the future. Then add to the profile. Create a description of that customer’s unique characteristics. Consider their demographics, geographic locations, buying patterns, creditworthiness, purchase history, income, and other criteria. The more focused you become, the more effective you will be.

**MESSAGING**

In order for Bob to catch the right kind and size of fish, he must select bait that freshwater largemouth bass are attracted to. Furthermore, the bait size should restrict the desire of smaller fish or the wrong species of fish from consuming his expensive bait and wasting precious time and money.

Marketers must clearly answer four key questions for their prospect before they develop their bait or message:

1. Is the product or service what I want or need?
2. Why do I need the product or service I’m being offered? (Solves a problem, meets a need, or resolves an issue).

3. What will I obtain from the product or service should I acquire it? (Solution or outcome).

4. Does the product or service really work or satisfy my needs? (Provide proof, such as a story or case study).

Once you’ve determined the answers to these questions, you’ll have an effective blueprint for crafting a primary message to use in all your marketing materials (ads, Web site, brochure, e-mail campaign, press releases)—giving you just the right bait to attract and hook your target.

Let’s see how Bob makes out with this approach and what he might have overlooked.
Bob awoke early the next morning to golden sunshine and a warm, pleasant breeze.

“What a beautiful day!” he said to himself. “Perfect weather for trying out some of Jack’s new fishing techniques. I think I’ll take the day off and go out to the lake. Jack is in for a surprise when I call him tonight.”

He loaded up his old truck, hooked up his boat and headed out to the lake. On the way up, he made a short stop at the local bait shop and picked up some large minnows and small frogs.

_This should do the trick_, he thought. _All I have to do now is find a spot with warm, still water that’s not too deep, is reasonably clear, and has lots of brush and other spots for the fish to hide._

Bob felt the week’s worries lift off him as drove through the gently winding pass. At one o’clock, he arrived at the lake, launched his boat, and puttered his way to the north end of the water. It wasn’t long before he had found a perfect spot.
“This is great, I can’t wait to get started,” he said to himself. “Mary will be amazed when she hears that I’ve already caught a load of fish weeks ahead of schedule.”

Bob grinned, baited his hook with a good-sized minnow, then cast it into the reeds.

“All I have to do now is relax and wait for Mr. Largemouth.”

He popped the top on a can of soda, snapped his umbrella up, and kicked back for a relaxing day. Within minutes, he was pleasantly snoozing and dreaming of schools of enormous fish.

Bob awoke by the sound of a speedboat rushing by. He glanced at his watch and was surprised to see he had been asleep for over an hour. And he was even more surprised when he noticed there were no fish on his line.

“Unbelievable! I guess that minnow got away,” muttered Bob as he reeled in the line. “I should have a five-pounder ready for the grill.”

He pulled up the line and was amazed to see that the minnow was still on the hook.

“This can’t be right,” he said to himself. “I’ve done everything Jack told me to do. I’m at the lake he recommended, fishing with a big minnow, and the spot I found simply could not be better. What in the world could I be doing wrong?”

Bob decided to give it another try.
“I guess I just need to be patient,” he said. “I’ll cast the minnow back out and give Mr. Bass a bit more time. That should do it.”

Two sodas and a Twinkie later, Bob was still staring dejectedly at his fishing line. His imagination was running wild and he started to worry. Things were just not working out as planned.

“Okay, no need to panic,” he said to himself. “I may not be a pro, but I’m a pretty decent fisherman, and I hardly ever come home without a few on my stringer. I think I’ll go back to what’s always worked for me. I have a few crickets and grasshoppers with me, so I’ll bait up my second pole with those and see what happens.”

Within a few minutes, a little crappie had taken the bait on the second line. Bob reeled him in, but he was too small to keep. So Bob released him and cast out his line once again. In less than five minutes, there was another tug at the line. This time, it was a two-pound perch.

“Wow, that’s a nice perch, but they have so many small bones, they’re almost impossible to eat,” Bob said to himself, as he unhooked it and tossed it back.

The second line kept Bob so busy that he almost forgot he was supposed to be fishing for largemouth bass. He checked his line and was disappointed to see that the minnow was still there.

“This is weird, I’ve been out here for hours!” he said. “I’ll have to call it a day soon. Mary thinks I’m at work and Jack is expecting me to call him this evening.”
He tried replacing the minnow with a small frog to see if that did the trick. But just as he was casting the line into the reeds, he felt another tug on the second pole.

“Unbelievable! Another crappie! If only I had bragged to Mary about what a great crappie fisherman I am…”

After catching several more crappie and perch, Bob realized his time was up. He reeled in his line and released his remaining frogs and minnows. Then he pulled up anchor and headed for shore.

“Jack has a lot of explaining to do,” said Bob as he made the drive home. “I followed his instructions to the letter and didn’t get so much as a nibble.”

Bob pulled into his driveway, untied the boat, and slipped in the back door just as he did every day when he got home from work. Mary didn’t suspect a thing.

“Hi, babe, how was work today?” she asked.

“Oh, fine, nothing special, just another day on the job,” replied Bob.

“Hon, the weekend is coming up,” said Mary. “Are you planning on fishing this Saturday? There are only a few weekends left before the family reunion. You’d best get started soon, don’t you think?”

“Mary, you worry way too much,” chirped Bob. “I’ve got this handled.”

“Right, I’m not at all concerned,” replied Mary. “I know you’re one of the best.”
I wish I felt the same way, thought Bob as he reached for the phone and dialed Jack.

“Jack? Hi, it’s Bob, and boy, do I have a lot to tell you.”

“What’s that, Bob? Did you have a rough day?”

“No, it was a beautiful day, so I decided to take some time off and try out some of the new fishing techniques you’ve been teaching me.”

“Great, how did that work out for you?”

“Well, to be honest, not so well, Jack,” said Bob. “I did everything you told me to do. I went to the right lake, bought the right bait, and found the perfect spot. But to my surprise and disappointment, I didn’t catch a single largemouth bass.”

“I see,” said Jack. “So tell me all about it.”

“I just did! Not so much as a nibble.”

“No, I mean give me all the details.”

“Details? What details?” said Bob. “I put a fat minnow on the line, cast it out into the reeds, and waited. In fact, I fell asleep for almost an hour and nothing happened. I tried the same routine several times and each time, nothing. So I switched from minnows to frogs and still nothing. I hate to tell you, Jack, but these techniques just don’t work.”

“Hold on, Bob, it’s not the techniques you’re having trouble with,” replied Jack. “We’ve got several other factors in play here that you’re not considering.”

“Other factors? What do you mean? There’s more?”
“Yes, Bob, there’s more,” said Jack. “So let me ask you a question.”

“Sure, ask away,” replied Bob.

“Okay, let’s say I were to give you all the ingredients you need to make a three-layer German chocolate cake. Then I set you up in a gourmet kitchen with everything you need to make the cake. Now, before you jump to a conclusion, I want you to consider this: I gave you the ingredients, and I put you in the kitchen. But I did not tell you how to mix the ingredients, how hot the oven needs to be, or how long the cake needs to cook. Knowing this, how do you think your cake will turn out?”

“It would be a mess,” laughed Bob.

“Right, I agree. Now, what if I did exactly the same thing for Mary. How would Mary’s cake turn out?”

“Jack, you’ve had Mary’s cake, so you know it would be nothing short of amazing.”

“Exactly. Why do you suppose that is, Bob?”

“That’s simple! Mary has cooking skills I don’t have.”

“Precisely.”

“And your point is…?”

“My point is that having the right ingredients and a great kitchen does not make you a gourmet cook—any more than having the right bait and a great location makes you a championship fisherman,” replied Jack.

“Aha…so I guess I got a bit ahead of myself today,” said Bob.
“Yes, just a bit, but your experience was a great teacher,” said Jack. “Today, you applied what you learned, but more importantly, you realized there are things you still need to learn. Now, tell me what else happened while you were fishing?”

“That’s about it, Jack. Just one other thing—I used my second pole to fish with crickets and grasshoppers,” said Bob.

“And how did that work out?”

“It was great! I caught lots of small crappie and perch. I mean, it was like they were almost jumping in the boat! I was catching one fish after another,” said Bob.

“Good, that’s important to know.”

“Why is that important?”

“Bob, do you remember where we left off with our conversation last night?”

“Let’s see…I think I asked you what would happen if I found a perfect location and all I caught were small fish?”

“Sounds a lot like what happened today, right?” said Jack.

“Yep, I was in a perfect spot and all I could catch was small fish,” sighed Bob.

“Right—and that being the case, what should you have done?”

“I don’t know, Jack, I don’t think we discussed that last night.”

“Exactly. So today, you decided to begin fishing before you were fully prepared. I’m not scolding you here, I just
want you to understand that there’s a lot more to becoming a Bassmaster than most people think. I know your big dinner is coming up, and you feel you need to get started right away, but trust me, Bob. You will catch many more fish if you’re fully prepared before you get started. So please be patient.”

“Yeah, I guess that makes sense,” said Bob.

“Okay, now let’s pick up where we left off last night,” said Jack. “What happens if you’re only catching small fish? The answer is so simple that most folks overlook it. You just need to move to another spot. Think about it like this: you and Mary are out on the town one evening and you have an urge for a great steak. You start looking around for a nice steak house, but you’re in an unfamiliar part of town. Suppose Mary spots a nice-looking place, and you pull over to check it out. The building looks good, the tables are well set, and the aroma from the kitchen is delightful.”

“Everything sounds perfect,” said Bob.

“Yes, you can’t wait to sink your teeth into a tasty T-bone, but while you’re waiting to be seated, an unruly motorcycle gang pulls into the parking lot,” said Jack. “This doesn’t seem like a crowd that you and Mary would be comfortable with. Just as they reach the entrance, you and Mary decide to slip out the side door to avoid them. In the end, there was nothing wrong with the restaurant—it was their customers that made you uncomfortable and drove you away. Largemouth bass are no different.”
“They don’t like biker gangs?” asked Bob.
“No,” chuckled Jack. “The point is, you need to keep moving from spot to spot until you find the location where the fish you want to catch gather. Remember our discussion last night about how large fish feed on small fish?”
“Yes,” said Bob.
“So if you’re catching lots of small fish, the large fish may not be in that exact spot—but you can bet they’re not far away.”
“Why would you say that, Jack?”
“Like I just said—larger fish eat smaller fish.”
“Wow, Jack, that makes perfect sense! You have completely restored my faith.”
“Great, Bob, you’re a good student. But I’m sorry, I’m out of time for today, so we’ll have to continue our discussion tomorrow.”
“Okay, Jack, that sounds great.”
“Bob, before I hang up, I have one last thing to ask you about your fishing experience today.”
“Sure, Jack, what’s your question?”
“What time did you go fishing?”
“I got to the lake at about one in the afternoon. I fished a few hours and left for home a little before four.”
“Excellent, that’s good to know!”
“What? Is there something wrong?”
“Bob, I really have to go, but think about it like this. If you wanted to go to a football game, wouldn’t you want
to arrive just before the game started and be there for the whole game?”

“Yes, of course. So I guess you’re saying timing is important, right?”

“Right.”

“Oh, enough said,” replied Bob. “Tomorrow, we’ll talk about when to fish. Bye for now.”

CHAPTER III TUTORIAL:
THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING FULLY PREPARED

In this chapter, armed with knowledge imparted by Jack, Bob can’t wait to get out on the lake, thinking he’s going to catch a mess of largemouth bass. He’s got the right lake, the right bait, but after several hours fishing, Bob is perplexed that all he has to show for it are a few smaller fish and no largemouth bass. After talking again with Jack, he discovers he was not as fully prepared as he thought he was. And because of that, while he might have been in the vicinity of largemouth bass, he wasn’t fishing in the exact spots that would allow him to catch them.

In marketing, a lot of time and resources are wasted on campaigns that fall just short of the mark. Why? Because of a failure to assess current market conditions and make adjustments to fine-tune and focus your efforts. Think about where your best customers are likely to be found and where they shop and live. Consider ways to reach out to the
highest numbers of these prime prospects while minimizing squandering resources on those who aren’t interested. Every product and service demands a different approach, but you’ll be surprised at the effective solutions you’ll come up with by taking the time to think your situation through.

Bob learns an important lesson. Get all available input. Now let’s see what else Jack tells him that will put him on the path to the success he’s been seeking.
Thursday was a busy, frustrating day for Bob. It all started when his crew showed up twenty-five minutes late for work, missing an important delivery. As a building contractor, Bob knows that his job requires a lot more than simply being a skilled craftsman. To be successful, he needs to meet and exceed every customer’s expectations.

Since Bob’s crew had arrived late, nobody was on hand when the delivery truck arrived carrying the Thompsons’ new dishwasher and double oven. After hundreds of kitchen remodeling jobs and years of experience, Bob knew that nothing gets a client more excited than seeing their new appliance in place sooner than expected.

“Appliances give a kitchen its personality,” he would say. “They let people know that a job’s completion is just around the corner.”

Timing the delivery and installation of the new appliances ahead of schedule was one of Bob’s trademarks and a key success factor for his business. Now he had missed a real opportunity to impress a new customer. He
took a seat in the half-finished kitchen and asked his crew chief, Will Cook, to come over.

“So what happened this morning, Will?” he asked quietly.

“There’s really no excuse,” replied Will. “I met the crew early this morning at the coffee shop just like we do every day, but for some reason today, we just lost track of time. I’m really sorry. We’ll work a little longer today to make up the time.”

“Will, making up the time is not what’s important,” said Bob. “The weekend is coming up fast and if those appliances aren’t installed, Mrs. Thompson is going to feel like we’re slacking. Do you see my point?”

“I really do, Bob,” said Will. “I know that timing is everything, and I can’t believe we missed this one. I feel like a real rookie. If there’s any way you can set up another delivery later today, the crew and I will stick around as long as it takes to get these appliances installed and working.”

“Thanks, Will, I appreciate it. Let’s try to make it happen.”

It was late in the evening when Bob finally returned home and sat down to dinner with Mary.

“Bob, you look wiped out,” said Mary. “How did it go today? Are you okay?”

“Yes, I’m fine, hon, just one of those days,” replied Bob as he dug into his pasta. “I guess sometimes I assume my crew knows more than they do. After years in this business, you would think Will and the team would understand
how important timing can be. I’m pretty sure they do, but sometimes, they just fail to connect the dots.” Bob’s voice trailed off and he took a sip of iced tea.

“Well, Bob, I guess that’s why you’re the boss,” said Mary. “And speaking of timing, you were planning to go fishing again this weekend, right? The family reunion is coming up fast.”

“Definitely,” replied Bob. “I’ll be heading out to Best Lake. The weather is supposed to be beautiful, and I can’t wait to get started.”

“Wow, I’m glad Mary brought that up,” Bob said to himself after dinner. “I’ve been so distracted by work issues today that I forgot that I needed to call Jack. I’d best do that now.”

Bob had a seat in his den, picked up the phone, and dialed Jack.

“Hi, Jack, it’s Bob,” he said. “Sorry for calling a bit later than planned. Have you got a few minutes to chat?”

“That’s okay, Bob, I’m home alone tonight so we can talk as long as you like,” said Jack. “You sound a little bit tense tonight. What’s got you so uptight?”

“Work,” sighed Bob.

“What’s going on?”

“Well, Jack, it’s a long story…”

Bob told Jack all about his hectic morning and the missed deliveries as Jack listened sympathetically.
“The thing is, I can’t believe after all the jobs we’ve done, working together all these years, that my crew didn’t realize how important timing is to our success,” he concluded. “Especially Will, who’s usually on top of everything.”

“Well, don’t be so hard on Will,” said Jack. “You have to remember that he’s focusing on construction rather than on managing the customer. My guess is he is depending on you to keep the customer happy, just as you’re depending on him to manage the crew and the building inspector.”

“Yes, you’re right,” said Bob. “It’s my fault. I should have told Will and the crew last night how critical installing the appliances today would be.”

“Ouch, now you’re making me feel bad,” laughed Jack.

“Really? How is that?”

“Well, Bob, you’re a professional and it was important for you to make sure that your crew was aware of how critical timing is.”

“Right, but now I’m confused,” said Bob. “What does this have to do with you feeling bad?”

“I’m a professional too and it never occurred to me until we spoke about fishing last night that I haven’t said anything about timing,” said Jack. “Let me explain that now.

“Bob, when you were telling me about your afternoon fishing experience on the phone yesterday, we discussed the conditions, location, bait, and what to do if you were only catching small fish,” continued Jack. “But we never discussed timing.”
“What does timing have to do with fishing?” asked Bob.

“Well, just as timing is important in your business, it’s also important in mine,” replied Jack. “Let me show you what I mean. Can I ask what times of the day your family eats?”

“Well, I usually have a light breakfast around 7:00 while Mary is rounding up the kids for school,” said Bob.

“Okay, what about lunch?” asked Jack.

“Sometime between 11:30 and 1:00, depending on work,” said Bob.

“I see. And how about dinnertime?”

“Mary, the kids, and I usually have an evening meal together at around 6:30,” said Bob. “But I’m still having trouble connecting all this to fishing.”

“Well, Bob, largemouth bass are a lot like you and me when it comes to feeding habits,” said Jack. “Fish follow a pattern much like you and I do. Over the years, fishermen have studied the feeding patterns of different species of fish, and we use what we have learned to boost our chances for success.”

“What have you found out?” asked Bob.

“When it comes to largemouth bass, they really like the early morning hours, beginning just before sunrise and lasting about an hour afterward,” said Jack. “So if you’re not on the lake before dawn casting your bait, you may well miss out on a big opportunity to find a school of hungry largemouth bass ready and waiting for your tasty offering.”
“So you have to be out there at mealtime?” asked Bob.

“That’s right,” said Jack. “Just like you and me, once they’ve eaten, bass are not much interested in food until later in the evening. Not to say that a largemouth won’t nibble at your bait if it looks tasty enough—any more than you would pass up a Krispy Kreme donut if it found its way into your workshop. But the chances of your chasing one down after having a satisfying breakfast are not that high.”

“I see what you mean,” nodded Bob.

“Mr. Largemouth is not much different,” continued Jack. “He may not go looking for a treat, but if you’re fortunate enough to cast one on top of him, you might get lucky.

“Another great tip about the feeding habits of largemouth bass is they like to spend the heat of the day in deeper water or hiding in a nest sleeping the afternoon away,” added Jack. “So the next best time to find them hungry comes about an hour before dusk. You may have your own fishing schedule in mind, but you won’t be as successful as you can be if you change your fishing times to fit the feeding patterns of the fish you’re trying to catch. Do you see what I mean?”

“That makes a lot of sense,” said Bob. “Now I realize that my midweek trip was poorly timed. I arrived at the lake around 1:00 and left at about 4:00 in the afternoon. Sounds like my timing couldn’t have been much worse.”

“Unfortunately, that’s right,” said Jack. “But the good news is now you understand the importance of timing, as well as location, bait, and environmental conditions.”
“Yes, Jack, I think I do,” said Bob. “So what’s next?”

“Now it’s time to test what you have learned,” said Jack. “I’d suggest you stop by the bait shop on the way home tomorrow and pick up some five-inch rubber worms in multiple colors. Tell Jerry at the bait shop to set you up with some slip sinkers and hooks as well.”

“Got it,” said Bob.

“Then, go gas up your truck, hook up your boat, and prepare it for your first real fishing trip,” said Jack. “Once you have everything ready, have dinner and get to bed early. I want you out on the water at Best Lake before sunrise on Saturday morning.”

“Okay, sounds like a plan,” said Bob.

“Great,” replied Jack. “And when you’re finished for the day, give me a call.”

“Okay, will do,” replied Bob. “One more thing before you go, Jack. What am I supposed to do with the rubber worms?”

“Don’t worry about the rubber worms,” said Jack. “I’ll explain those and give you some casting techniques for using them when I talk to you Saturday evening. Bye for now.”

CHAPTER IV TUTORIAL:
TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Now that Bob knows which lake is best for him to fish in and where in the lake he’ll most likely locate bigger
largemouth bass, he must determine the best time to fish to make the most of his available time, control costs, and maximize his results. In fact, in this chapter, Bob learns an important lesson about timing in his own business when his contracting crew misses a key delivery of appliances that could displease one of his customers.

This is reinforced when Jack informs him his timing for catching largemouth bass is off the mark—that in the afternoon, when Bob was out there, they like to spend in deeper water to escape the heat of the day or hide in a nest sleeping the day away. Early morning before sunrise, Jack advises, is the ideal time to fish, with evening dusk being the best alternative.

Timing is also critical when it comes to marketing your products and services. With a good understanding of your customers, their locations at various times, where they are in the purchase cycle, and where and when they shop, it’s much easier to calculate the best time to reach out to the most promising prospects. This could be a certain time of day, a particular day of the week, or even a particular season. Put yourself into the shoes of your typical customers and objectively envision how and when you might be more likely to respond to your message.

Now let’s see if this new intelligence works for Bob.
What a difference a day makes! After all the stress and tension on Thursday, Will and the crew had managed to wrap up their appliance installation early Friday morning. Mrs. Thompson was so excited to see her kitchen remodel proceeding ahead of schedule that she was on the phone telling all her friends about the outstanding job Bob’s company was doing.

Bob could not have been more delighted when he left the job Friday. With disaster averted, the weekend looked like smooth sailing. Bob was thrilled with anticipation as he thought about hitting the lake early the next morning. With the workweek behind him and visions of fat, hungry bass in his imagination, Bob hopped into his pickup and set off toward Jerry’s Bait Shop.

After a quick stop at the local 76 station to gas up his truck and top off the oil, Bob arrived at the shop. He ambled into the main entrance and caught a glimpse of a familiar face on the magazine rack near the cash register. It was Jack, smiling broadly on the cover of the latest issue of *Bassmaster* magazine as he held up a huge largemouth bass.

Bob couldn’t believe he was being coached by one of the sport’s absolute best. How could he go wrong now?

Jerry, a tall, fit man sporting a bushy moustache, looked up from the main counter and greeted Bob cheerfully.

“Hi ya, Bob, good to see you again! Planning on doing a little fishing this weekend?”

“You bet, Jerry, I can’t wait,” said Bob. “It’s been a tough week and I really need some time to relax, plus I have a tall order to fill.”

“Well, the relaxing part I understand, but what is the tall order?” asked Jerry.

“Well, Jerry, it seems I bragged one too many times about what a great bass fisherman I am and Mary finally had enough and called me on it. Now I have to catch enough largemouth bass to feed twenty-nine people at our family reunion coming up in a few weeks. So I have to get busy catching dinner or else my name is going to be mud.”

“Wow, that is a tall order,” said Jerry. “What’s your plan?”

“I have a secret weapon,” Bob replied.

“Yeah, it had better be a good one,” laughed Jerry.

“Oh, it’s the best. You see that picture of Jack Cranfield on the cover of Bassmaster magazine?”

“You bet I do. That guy is the best there is. I’d love to meet him someday.”
“Then you’re in luck,” said Bob. “Jack is my best friend from high school, and he’s personally coaching me.”

“You’re kidding!” gasped Jerry. “Do you really know Jack Cranfield?”

“Yes, I really do, and after this dust settles from the family reunion, I’ll invite Jack over for a barbecue to thank him for his help and I’ll invite you as well so you can meet him. Maybe we can all go fishing together.”

“Gosh, Bob, that would be amazing,” said Jerry. “So all that aside, what can I do to help you today?”

“Jerry, I need some bait for largemouth bass,” said Bob. “I’ll need large minnows, plus a few frogs and rubber worms.”

“You got ‘em. I’ll go get the minnows and frogs, and while I’m gathering the live bait, you can look over the rubber worm selection on aisle 2.”

“Great, thanks, Jerry.”

Jerry disappeared into a room in the back of the store and Bob started looking over the selection of rubber worms. He was surprised to see dozens of options. Jack had told him to get some five-inch worms in different colors, but he never realized there would be so many choices.

As Bob rummaged through the worm selection, Jerry returned to the front counter and said, “Finding what you need over there, Bob?”

“I’m not quite sure, Jerry, there are so many choices!” replied Bob.
“Don’t let that throw you, Bob. I’ll be right over and give you a hand.”

Jerry finished ringing up a couple of local fishermen, then stepped over to aisle 2.

“Okay now, Bob, so what lake are you planning to visit this weekend?”

“I’m off to Best Lake,” Bob replied. “After looking over my resources and timing, Jack suggested Best Lake would be a prime location.”

“Well, it’s not the lake I would have selected, but then I’m not on the cover of *Bassmasters*,” chuckled Jerry. “So if Jack Cranfield said Best Lake is the place, that’s exactly where I would go.”

“So why is my fishing spot so important when it comes to choosing the right color worm?”

“I know it sounds a little ridiculous, but there’s an article in that magazine where Jack explains it in detail,” replied Jerry. “It seems that water clarity, as well as how sunny and warm the day is, along with a dozen other things, all have an impact on color choices. In the article, Jack recommends you take along a mix of worms: some really dark ones, some light-colored ones, plus a few that are sort of flashy. So here are the three I would choose.”

Jerry picked out a nice variety of worms, tossed them into a small paper bag, and handed it to Bob.
“Perfect, I’ll take those,” said Bob. “Jack also said something about slip sinkers and hooks. Do you know which ones he’s talking about?”

“I sure do,” said Jerry. “Step over here to the hook and sinker counter and I’ll get you all set up.”

A few minutes later, Bob had all the gear he needed and was ready to settle up. As Jerry rang him up on the cash register, Bob asked him to toss in a copy of *Bassmaster* magazine.

“I want to read what Jack has to say about color choices for rubber worms,” he explained.

“Great idea, Bob,” replied Jerry. “*Bassmaster* magazine is to a bass fisherman what the Bible is to a preacher. You should have the latest edition in your tackle box if you plan to be serious about bass fishing.”

Jerry waved to Bob as he walked out to his pickup.

“Good luck!” he said. “Hope you catch a stringer full and I’ll be looking forward to that barbecue.”

Bob arrived home at 5:30 p.m., hooked up his boat, and began loading up his fishing gear. Thirty minutes later, everything was packed and ready to go.

“Perfect!” Bob said to himself as he loaded in the last ice chest. “Nothing left to do but spend some time with Mary, get a good night’s sleep, and dream about being the next great Bassmaster.”

As Bob walked in the front door, Mary caught a sparkle in his eye—something that was missing the night before.
“So how’s the remodel going over at the Thompson house?” she asked.

“It was fantastic,” said Bob. “Will and the crew pulled off a miracle. After I picked up and dropped off the appliances last night, Will and the crew stayed on the job until they were all in place. Mrs. Thompson could not be more pleased.”

“That’s great!” replied Mary. “So what are your plans for the evening?”

“Tonight, I want to enjoy dinner with you,” said Bob. “The kids are all out, so let’s you and me go out for a relaxing dinner, then turn in early. I want to be out on the water tomorrow by 5:30 a.m.”

“Dinner sounds good to me,” said Mary. “How about that new Italian place?”

It was still dark and cool outside when Bob’s alarm clock began buzzing at 4:00 a.m. Saturday. Bob literally jumped out of bed. He simply couldn’t wait to get to the lake.

After a short ride, Bob arrived at the lake at 4:45 a.m. To his amazement, five other boats were already there waiting to launch. But Bob noticed that this wasn’t the usual crowd. These were all pros. The boats were top of the line, and most every angler wore a fishing vest that was covered with patches from top fishing gear manufacturers.

As Bob launched his boat, a husky fisherman wearing a white cap stepped over to greet him.
“Hi there, my name is Tommy Spencer,” he said. “Are you new to the Bassmaster circuit?”

Bob was shocked. Here was another well-known angler treating him as though he was a fellow professional.

“No,” replied Bob. “I’m just an amateur out for the weekend.”

“Well, you could have fooled me,” replied Tommy. “Usually, anyone that shows up out here this early is a serious fisherman. The amateurs I know are usually sleeping when the fish are biting and fishing when the fish are sleeping. What brings you around here at 4:45 in the morning?”

“Well, I have a tall order to fill,” explained Bob. “My buddy Jack Cranfield is coaching me, and he wants me on the water before sun up.”

“That’s terrific! Jack is a great friend of mine,” said Tommy. “We’ve been competing with one another for years in Bassmaster events around the county. If you listen to Jack Cranfield, you won’t be classified as an amateur very long.”

“Thanks, that’s really good to hear,” replied Bob.

“Well, time to get out there,” said Tommy. “It was nice meeting you, Bob. Maybe I’ll see you later and we can compare our catches for the day.”

“That would be great,” replied Bob. “What time will you be docking?”

“I’ll probably be pulling out a little before 8:00 and heading over to Denny’s for breakfast. Care to join me?”

“You bet,” said Bob. “I’ll meet you back here at the dock.”
“Sounds good,” said Tommy. “Good luck, I’ll see you in a few hours.”

Bob cranked up his boat and headed off to find the perfect spot, remembering Jack’s tips as he puttered around the lake. After selecting a great place to get started, Bob baited up his hook and cast a tasty-looking minnow out near some reeds. Seconds after the bait entered the water, he saw a splash and a tug at his line. Just like that, he had one. Bob was so stunned at how quickly he got a bite that he almost fell out of the boat.

After playing the fish for a few minutes, Bob pulled him up into the boat. It was a three-pound largemouth bass. This one was a bit small, but a strong indication that the tips Jack had been passing on could pay off.

Bob baited his line again and cast out near a dead tree. His line sat untouched for ten minutes, which felt more like an hour to Bob. Then, suddenly, the fishing pole flexed, and he had another bass. As Bob began reeling in his second catch of the day, his line became tangled in the dead tree’s branches.

“Come on, stay with me, big boy,” muttered Bob as he struggled with the fish. “Here we go.”

A minute or two later, Bob had brought in his second fish of the day. It was another largemouth bass, but still a little too small.

“Three and a half pounds,” sighed Bob. “I guess this is a step in the right direction, but it’s gonna take fifty of these
guys to feed twenty-nine people. I really need to catch some bigger fish.”

Within minutes, Bob grew impatient, pulled up his anchor, and started looking for another spot—hopefully, one with larger fish. There a gentle glow was appearing on the horizon when Bob found his new fishing spot and dropped in a freshly baited hook. His line settled quietly into the water and...nothing happened. A few more casts brought similar results, and Bob began to worry.

“I can’t waste my time here,” he said to himself. “I’m supposed to meet Tommy in less than two hours.”

Once again, he pulled up the anchor and began exploring the lake. He was delighted to find a nice spot next to the bank that was surrounded by rich vegetation.

“Okay, this spot should really do the trick,” he said to himself. Bob placed a nice fat minnow on his hook and cast off into the lake. Only seconds after his line hit the water, Bob felt a tug. He set the hook, quickly reeled in his catch, and pulled up an enormous crappie. Ordinarily, Bob would have been thrilled with his catch—but not today.

“Sorry, pal,” Bob said, tossing the fish back. “I’m after bass today. You’re just gobbling up bait and wasting my time.”

Bob tried again and again, but only and brought up a half-dozen crappie before giving up. Now his excitement was turning to frustration. He took a deep breath, poured a cup of coffee from his thermos, and tried to think of another approach. What would Jack do in this situation?
The sun was easing over the horizon when Bob finally decided to call it a day. He turned back toward the dock to meet Tommy for breakfast.

“Guess all I can do is head back home, spend a little time relaxing with Mary, and come back tomorrow morning for another try,” he said to himself.

When Bob arrived at the dock, Tommy was already there with his boat loaded up and ready to go.

“Hey, Tommy, am I late?” shouted Bob. “Sorry if I kept you waiting.”

“No, Bob, I came in early,” Tommy replied. “I found a really hot spot this morning and caught five really big bass right away, then a bunch of smaller ones. I tossed the little guys back and kept these big ones.”

Tommy held up a string filled with largemouth bass ranging from four to six pounds.

“Wow, that’s amazing!” said Bob. “I started out doing really well myself, but everything I was catching was too small. Then I changed locations and caught nothing. Then I changed again and all I caught was big crappie.”

“Yeah, I’ve had days like that myself,” said Tommy. “Why don’t you load up your boat and we’ll head over to Denny’s for a bite and talk this through.”

“Okay, sounds great,” said Bob.

Tommy and Bob arrived at the coffee shop and grabbed a booth near the window. Tommy saw that Bob was looking downcast and he couldn’t wait to start talking about the
morning’s catch. The waitress was still pouring his coffee when he said, “So I’ll bet Jack already told you how to catch bigger fish, but in the excitement of the morning, some important tips might have slipped your mind. Before you feel bad, you should know that this happens to all of us. That’s why we have professional mentors and coaches. Let me see if I can jog your memory a bit.”

“That would be great, fire away, Tommy,” replied Bob.

“Okay. Have you and Jack discussed bait?”

“Yes, I told Jack I usually fish with crickets and small worms,” replied Bob.

“What was Jack’s response?”

“He said that crickets and worms are one of the favorite treats for crappie and perch.”

“Well, I agree with him there,” said Tommy. “What else did he say?”

“He told me largemouth bass are a game fish, and that they like large minnows, frogs, small snakes, and worms.”

“I agree with him on this as well,” said Tommy. “So what else did he tell you?” The cheerful waitress stepped up to the table and smiled at the two fishermen.

“Are you gentlemen ready to order?” she asked.

“Yes, I’ll have the eggs Benedict,” replied Tommy.

“I’ll take the breakfast sampler with eggs over easy, hash browns, and sourdough toast,” said Bob. The waitress took down their order and disappeared.

“So where were we?” asked Bob.
“You were just about to tell me what else Jack had said about bait selection,” replied Tommy as he took a sip of coffee.

“Hmmm. I don’t really remember anything else,” said Bob.

“Well, there is one more important thing,” said Tommy. “It’s so important that overlooking it might have kept you from catching bigger fish this morning.”

Bob was intrigued.

“Really? What did I overlook?” he asked.

“Since Jack is your coach, I don’t want to interfere with his instruction,” said Tommy. “Let’s see if I can get you to come up with the answer yourself.”

“Thanks, I appreciate it,” said Bob. “Ask me a few questions and let’s see what we can come up with.”

“Okay, here we go,” said Tommy. “I see you ordered the breakfast sampler. What made you choose that particular item from the menu?”

Bob looked at Tommy with a puzzled expression.

“Uh…I’m a big guy. I eat large portions and I like variety. But what does that have to do with what Jack has taught be?”

“Okay, hang on a minute, and I’ll repeat your answer back to you,” said Tommy. “You’re a big guy, and you like to eat large portions. Think about that. Did Jack mention bait size when you were talking about fishing techniques?”
Bob smacked his forehead with his hand. “You’re right! He did! Jack said I’d need larger bait to catch bigger fish. It completely slipped my mind! Instead of changing locations this morning, I should have changed bait sizes first.”

“Well, I can’t say for sure that it would have changed anything for you today, but in my professional opinion, that would have been the first thing I would have tried,” said Tommy. “And I’ll bet Jack would have done exactly the same thing.”

“You’re right, Tommy, I can hear Jack saying the same thing right now,” exclaimed Bob. “Boy, I really blew it. I was right in the sweet spot this morning and a simple bait change could have made all the difference.”

“Don’t be overly critical of yourself,” said Tommy. “This takes a lot of experience. Remember that both Jack and I are professionals.”

As Tommy and Bob finished off breakfast, Tommy asked Bob about his plans for the rest of the weekend.

“I think I’ll just head home from here,” said Bob. “I want to spend some time with the family this evening and then I’m planning to call Jack and tell him about my day. Plus, Jack had me purchase some rubber worms and slip sinkers. I’m not sure what those are for, but I am sure Jack will enlighten me.”

“Oh yeah,” commented Tommy. “Rubber worms are a Bassmaster’s secret weapon, but how you use them will
either accelerate your success or have you heading back to the dock with an empty stringer.

“Presentation is everything, so listen closely to what Jack has to say,” he added. “Now I’m off to meet up with the family, Bob. It was really nice meeting you. I’m sure I’ll see you again soon. And good luck with that fish fry.”

CHAPTER V TUTORIAL:
PUTTING WHAT YOU’VE LEARNED TO THE TEST

In this chapter, Bob, now a bit wiser about when to fish, excitedly packs his gear and arrives at the lake before sunrise, trying to be on the fish’s schedule rather than his own. And it works. He quickly catches a few largemouth bass. Unfortunately, they are kind of small—keepers, but not nearly the size he’ll need to feed twenty-nine people. Beyond that, he is only able to catch crappies, perch, and other smaller fish. He confides his frustration to Tommy over breakfast who asks him if the bait he was using was large enough to attract bigger fish. Bingo! Bob had forgotten that important detail.

Let’s apply this to marketing. You know who your customer is. You’ve determined the best time and place to reach them. You’re using the right bait (message) to entice them. But you’re still not getting the response you know you could. Some are biting, but they’re not the bigger fish and the greater quantity you’re after.
As Bob found out, maybe your bait isn’t large enough; that is, your message doesn’t convey a big enough promise or isn’t as powerfully expressed as it could be. There are many ways to correct this. You could run a special promotion to pique interest, like offering a low introductory price, a premium with purchase, or a buy one/get one sale. You could make your campaigns more provocative and attention-grabbing, like producing a video, sponsoring events, or optimizing your presence on social media. A good creative advertising and design firm can help you devise strategies and produce materials that cut through the clutter and get your message heard.

As you read on, you’ll discover there are other effective and cost-saving approaches you can take to boost your marketing success.
After a delicious and educational breakfast with Tommy Spencer, Bob arrived home just in time to greet Mary on her way out to drop their son, Henry, off at baseball practice.

“Hi, hon! I can’t believe you’re already back from fishing,” said Mary. “I’ll be back in just a few minutes. I’m going to take Henry over to the ball field, then I’ll come back and make you some breakfast.”

“Oh, no rush, babe, I’ve eaten already,” Bob replied.

“Wow, really? You are full of surprises this morning!” Mary exclaimed.

“Oh, you have no idea. When you get back, I’ll tell you all about my trip.”

“Okay, it’s a date. I can’t wait!”

While Mary was away, Bob backed his boat onto the driveway, cleaned it up a bit, and got everything ready for another early morning. He could hardly wait to get back on the water. For the first time since he started his project, he finally felt confident.

When Mary returned, she and Bob sat down to enjoy a cup of piping hot coffee on the backyard deck. Bob’s eyes lit up as he began to speak.
“Mary, this morning was amazing. I got to the boat launch at 4:45 a.m., and to my amazement, I had to wait in line!” Bob explained excitedly. “There were five boats ahead of me. While I was waiting my turn to launch, I met Tommy Spencer, a top angler and good friend of Jack Canfield’s. Tommy invited me to join him later for breakfast. Can you believe that? Here I am, just an average guy, invited to join a celebrity for breakfast. I just knew it was going to be a great day!” He continued, “When my turn to use the ramp came, I launched my boat and headed out to find the perfect spot to fill your order. If you check the freezer, you’ll see a couple a small fries ready and waiting.”

“That’s great,” said Mary. “But I am surprised to see you home so soon. We’re going to need a lot more than two fish to feed the family. Shouldn’t you still be fishing?”

“You know, Mary, that’s what most people think, but a skilled fisherman knows that it not about how long you fish, it’s about fishing at the right time. In fact, that reminds me of something Tommy said to me this morning. He said amateurs are usually sleeping when the fish are biting and fishing when the fish are sleeping.”

“Okay, if you say so, hon, you’re the fisherman, I’m just the cook. Whether you fish all day or just a few hours, it’s fine with me as long as the freezer is full in time for the family reunion.”

“Don’t worry,” said Bob, “I’ve got this under control. With professionals like Jack and Tommy in my corner, the sky is the limit!”
“Okay, hot shot,” Mary teased. “Whatever you say. Now how about helping me trim the shrubs and mow the backyard since you’re home early?”

“Sure thing, honey,” said Bob, mentally kicking himself. What was I thinking telling Mary I only need a few hours fishing, he asked himself. Now instead of spending relaxing weekends fishing and snoozing in the boat like I used to, Mary is going to start expecting me home to do things around the house!

After he finished with the yard work and Mary left to pick up Henry, Bob decided to give Jack a call to talk about his morning on the lake.

“Hi, Jack, it’s Bob. Do you have time to chat?”

“Hi, Bob, I sure do. I’m actually in your neighborhood. Would you like to meet at Starbucks on Fifth Street and Main?” Jack answered.

“I’d love to. I can be there is fifteen minutes. Does that work for you?”

“Sure does,” Jack replied.

“Great,” said Bob. “I’m on my way!”

Bob was so excited he could barely contain himself. As he arrived at Starbucks, he saw Jack was already waiting with two coffees on the table.

“Hi, Bob. If I recall, your favorite is a vanilla latte with nonfat milk. Did I get it right?”

Surprised, Bob answered, “Gosh, Jack, yes, you did! But I should be buying you coffee for all the help you’ve given me.”
“No way!” replied Jack. “I am having as much fun teaching you as you’re having learning. So tell me, how was your fishing trip this morning? Did you catch anything?”

“Jack, this morning was amazing. I caught a few keepers. They are a bit small, but it’s a good start. What’s even more exciting is that I met a friend of yours,” said Bob.

“Oh, who’s that?” asked Jack.

“I met Tommy Spencer.”

“You’re kidding! He was out there?”

“Yeah, he sure was, and what a great guy. We had breakfast together at Denny’s.”

“Wow, Bob, that’s great. Tommy is a champion’s champion. He’s won more Bassmaster tournaments than most pros have fished in!” Jack exclaimed.

“That’s really impressive, Jack. You know, I had a great morning on the lake, but I still have some questions. I’m planning to be on the water tomorrow morning just before sunrise. And I have to say, of all the things you’ve taught me, the tip to start earlier has made the biggest difference. This morning, I barely got my hook wet before I got my first largemouth of the day. I was stunned at how quickly I got a bite!”

“That’s great,” said Jack. “Timing is so important, and most amateurs have no idea how one simple change like that can make such a difference.”

“Yes, it does!” said Bob. “After my first catch of the day, it took a bit longer to hook number 2, but this one was
worth waiting for. He wasn’t a five-pounder, but he was close to the mark. I was so excited when he took my bait, but my excitement quickly turned to anxiety."

“Why’s that?” asked Jack.

“I had just set the hook and this bad boy headed right into the submerged trees and brush. I tugged and pulled for what seemed like forever. Right when I was sure he was going to break free, he came out of the brush. But trying to free him got me thinking, *What would Jack do?*” he explained. “So I’m asking you, is there some special trick or technique that would prevent my catch from becoming tangled in the brush? Is there a better way to break the fish free than tugging and pulling?”

“That’s a good question, Bob. You’re starting to think like a professional. Before I answer your question, tell me about the rest of the day.”

“After landing the second one, I realized the fish I was catching were too small. I wanted so badly to catch bigger fish, I probably didn’t think things through as thoroughly as I should have. Instead, I hastily hauled in my anchor and starting looking for another spot to fish.” He continued, “Once I got settled in a new location, I dropped in a freshly baited hook. As the sun began glowing on the horizon, I became a clock-watcher rather than a fisherman. All I could think about was how I needed to get back to the dock by eight o’clock to meet Tommy. Rather than thinking about
what you have been teaching me, I impatiently pulled in the anchor once more and headed out to find a third spot.” “So what happened?” asked Jack. “Well, after wasting fifteen minutes of quality fishing time, I found what appeared to be another great spot. It had everything. There were reeds and brush, and it had still, clear water close to the bank. I just knew this was going to be a gold mine. I quickly placed a nice, fat minnow on my hook and cast it off near the bank. Seconds after my bait hit the water, pow! I had a bite. I set the hook and starting reeling, only to discover that what I had caught was nothing more than a large crappie. Jack, any other time I would have been excited by that catch, but not this morning. I was fishing for largemouth bass and this guy was wasting my time and eating my bait. I tried over and over, but just kept catching crappie after crappie. I got frustrated, so I pulled in the anchor, stored my gear, and headed back to the dock to meet Tommy.” “Bob, you are such a great student!” Jack exclaimed. “You are learning how to apply so much of what I have taught you, and you’re intelligently questioning what does and doesn’t work. These are really positive signs. Let’s talk about what worked and didn’t work today and explore why it didn’t work and what you can do about it. I’m pretty sure with just a bit of coaching, your outing tomorrow will be more fruitful.” “Sounds good to me,” Bob answered. “I’m all ears.”
“Let’s start with your first spot of the day: the one where you caught the two keepers?”
“Okay, sure,” said Bob.
“So when you caught the first fish, which bait were you using?” Jack asked.
“I was using a large minnow.”
“What do you mean when you say large?”
Bob thought for a moment, then answered, “Well, I would say the minnow was maybe two and a half or three inches long.”
“Okay, so compared to that fish you caught, would you say your minnow was a mouthful, or could the fish have taken a larger minnow?”
“Oh, by all means, he could have taken a much larger one.”
“What about fish number 2? About the same?” asked Jack.
“Yes, about the same.”
“So in your opinion, Bob, would you say your minnow was a meal or a snack?”
“I see where you’re going with this. Tommy asked me a similar question at breakfast,” said Bob.
“Really, what did he say?” Jack asked, intrigued.
“Well, I ordered the breakfast sampler with eggs and a side of sourdough toast. When he asked why I ordered what I did, I told him it was because I’m a big guy who likes large portions and variety. It was then I smacked myself on the forehead and said out loud that I should have used
larger bait. I can’t believe I forgot that you had told me the same thing earlier this week, Jack.”

“That’s okay,” Jack assured him. “With more time and practice, these skills and techniques will become second nature to you. What’s important today is that you revisited the experience and understood how to improve. So tomorrow if you are fortunate enough to find a hot spot, practice patience, think about what’s working and what’s not, and make adjustments as needed. If your first adjustments don’t improve your results, make more. It will take time to discover what works best, but with diligence and perseverance, you’ll find the formula of the day and catch the fish you want to catch.”

“Thanks, Jack,” Bob said sincerely. “I know this is going to make a real difference.”

“No problem, Bob. What are friends for?” said Jack. “Now, let’s talk a minute about how to prevent getting caught up in the brush like fish number 2.”

“Okay,” Bob said, leaning forward. “You really have my attention now. It seems to me that the best fishing is near or actually in the areas where dead trees and brush are really thick. If I’m right, getting tangled is going to happen more often than not. Am I right?”

“Well, Bob,” Jack countered, “to the untrained eye that would likely be true, but for a professional, it is easily overcome.”

“Really?” replied Bob.
“Yes, really. Do you remember me asking you to buy some rubber worms and slip sinkers?”

“Yes, I do, and I have them in my tackle box right now.”

“Great. You’ve come far enough that I can let you in on a professional secret. Are you ready for this one?”

“You bet,” replied Bob. “I can’t wait!”

“Surprisingly enough,” explained Jack, “Professional fishermen don’t use live bait.”

“Wow, really?”

“That’s right. We all use artificial bait. With artificial bait, it’s easy to have exactly what you need when you need it. You can carry various sizes, colors, and shapes. You can have baits that float, bait that swim, baits that crawl, and bait that fly. You can adjust your bait for the environment you’re fishing in and for the type of fish you’re trying to catch. Learning to use rubber worms correctly is going to completely change your entire bass fishing experience.

“To a bass, a rubber worm can look like a worm, a snake, a minnow, lizard, or a dozen other tasty treats. With a slip sinker and a rubber worm, you can rig your line to be virtually tangle-resistant. The slip sinker sets in front of the worm and the line moves freely through the sinker. This lets the sinker ride directly against the worm when you’re reeling it in, so the worm sinks to the bottom. When you stop reeling, the sinker goes to the bottom, but the worm floats up. This creates the illusion of a real worm or snake swimming freely. If you rig your worm in such a way that
the barbed end of the hook is buried into the body of the worm, your hook won’t catch on weeds or brush like the open hook used with live bait. This will allow you to cast your bait further into the brush where the fish are nesting. With practice, you can have the worm crawl though brush, weeds, and reeds, over limbs and rocks to really get the bass’s attention. If you carry multiple colors, sizes, and shapes, you can make adjustments until you find exactly the right formula for the fish you’re after.”

“Jack, this is the most powerful thing you have shared with me yet!”

“Yes, it is, but for it to work, you need to understand and apply everything I have already taught you. The rubber worm by itself is just a piece of plastic, but when you do everything else correctly, it truly is a Bassmaster’s secret weapon.”

“I understand,” said Bob.

“Here is what I want you to do tomorrow. Get to the lake early just like you did this morning. Find yourself a great location to get started. Start out using your live bait just as you have been doing. I want you to fish in the first location for about forty-five minutes. If you don’t catch any bass, move to another location and do the very same thing. Repeat this process until you catch a reasonably sized bass of three or four pounds. Hopefully, finding this spot will happen quickly. Once you’ve caught your first bass, fish in this location for the rest of the morning. While still fishing
with your live bait, I want you to practice fishing with a rubber worm too. I have a rod and reel in my truck made just for worm fishing. I’ll lend it to you for a while so you can see how it works.”

“That’s great,” answered Bob.

“I already have it rigged to be virtually weed-proof, so look closely at how it’s done so you can repeat it with a different worm when you need to. If you catch a bass with the rubber worm, change to a larger one and cast it for about twenty minutes. If you catch another bass, it will likely be a bigger one. If you don’t get a bite, change to a different color and test that for about twenty minutes. Each twenty minutes, change the color or reeling technique until you discover what works best for the day. Chances are, while you’re learning how to use the rubber worm, you’ll catch a few on your baited line as well.”

“Wow,” said Bob. “Sounds like I’ll catch way more fish with your advice!”

“Just remember, Bob, skill and practice make a huge difference, but sometimes, you can do everything exactly right and still come up empty-handed. That’s just how it is. But if you trust your training and consistently improve your skill, success will come more often than not,” Jack encouraged.

“Jack, this is so insightful. I can’t wait to get back out on the water.”
“I can’t wait to hear how it goes. I’ll grab you that rod and reel, but then I’ve got to get going. My wife is expecting me home in time for a night out. I’ll be home all day tomorrow, though, so call me when you get back from fishing.”

Bob thanked Jack, loaded the rod and reel in his truck, and headed home to spend the evening with Mary and the kids. After a thoroughly satisfying dinner, Bob settled into his favorite chair with his new copy of Bassmaster magazine from the bait shop to read Jack’s article on worm-casting techniques.

**CHAPTER VI TUTORIAL:**

**LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES AND TRY DIFFERENT THINGS**

In this chapter, Bob tells Jack about the mistakes he made (like using bait too small) and the issues he’s encountered (like getting his line caught in the reeds). Jack assures him this is all part of the learning process and tells Bob: “Think about what’s working and what’s not, and make adjustments as needed. With diligence and perseverance, you’ll find the formula of the day and catch the fish you want.”

Then he astonishes Bob by confiding that pro fishermen don’t even use live bait. They use artificial bait like rubbers worms of different sizes, colors, shapes, and movements in the water. And they use them with slip sinkers and a
bait-hooking technique so the line doesn’t get snagged in the reeds. Jack encourages Bob to hone his fishing skills by trying different combinations of bait in different locations to find the right formula.

And that’s great advice for marketers. Consider testing your marketing strategy on a small group of prospects, carefully measuring their reaction and responsiveness to a variety of offers. Focus groups and trial marketing initiatives can help you get a sense of what will be most successful. You’d be surprised how adding a single word to a headline—like “New!” or “Improved”—or sweetening an offer with a discount or free shipping can boost response. So be flexible, patient, and imaginative. Try different media. Vary your message. Eventually, you’ll hit on the right combination.
After a good night’s sleep, Bob once again awoke just before the alarm clock, turning it off so it wouldn’t disturb Mary. He quickly jumped into his fishing attire, filled his thermos with fresh coffee, jumped in his truck, and headed out for another day of fishing. He arrived a bit earlier than the previous morning in hopes that he could get a better place in line at the boat launch. As Bob arrived at the boat launch, he was surprised to see three other boats lined up, waiting to launch.

“Wow! What time did you guys get here?” Bob asked two of the other anglers.

They chuckled and one answered, “We’re not the early risers you think we are. We’re from out of town, so we camped here last night.”

“Oh, okay,” Bob sighed. “I feel better now. So what’s your plan of action today?” Bob asked one of the other fishermen.

The fisherman replied, “I think we’re in for a warm and windless day. I plan to start out with a black rubber worm and fish a bit deeper than I did yesterday.”
“Sounds like a reasonable approach,” said Bob. “I was thinking of something similar, but with a purple worm. I guess we’ll just have to try our own ways and see what works.”

After conversing with the other anglers, Bob finally got out on the water and headed off to a spot he saw on Saturday, but didn’t have time to explore. When he arrived at his fishing spot, he quickly tied his boat to a dead tree. He then baited a hook, with a considerably large minnow and dropped it over the side of the boat. About twenty-five minutes passed and nothing moved. Not his line, not his boat, not the wind, or the water. The other fisherman was right. There was not a breath of wind on the lake and the water was as warm as toast.

Thinking about what the angler said, Bob decided to reel in his line and reset the float so his bait would go deeper. Only a few minutes after this subtle change, he felt a tug on his line. Rather than get overly excited, as he was prone to do, he decided to wait and watch. He wanted to reel it in, but he could hear Jack’s voice echoing in his head, telling him to be patient, so he poured another cup of coffee and waited. The next five minutes felt like an hour, and just as he was about to cave in and reel his line in to check the bait, the float went under completely.

Bob jumped to his feet, spilling coffee everywhere. He grabbed his pole and pulled sharply to set the hook. His patience had paid off. He had his first catch of the day on the line. As he started reeling, he soon realized he had a big
one. The drag on his reel began to hum as the fish pulled at the line. He was so excited he wanted to jump out of the boat. Another four minutes of struggling passed before the fish finally tired enough that Bob was able to get him in his net. *Wow,* he thought to himself. *This guy is a monster!* He pulled out his scale and soon learned he had landed a five-and-a-half-pound largemouth. Jack’s voice played in his head once again, telling him to stay in the spot where he caught his first big fish. He placed the fish in his live well, baited his line with another large minnow, dropped the line in the water, and reached for Jack’s rod and reel.

Bob opened his tackle box and pulled out a big purple worm. He fastened the worm over the hook just as Jack showed him and immediately cast the worm over the reeds, landing it on a big, flat rock. *Whoops!* Bob thought. *That was farther than I expected it to go.* Since he had never used a professional worm rod before, he had no idea how smoothly and efficiently it would cast. *Oh well. I guess I am going to find out sooner than I had planned if this weed-proof thing really works.* He was skeptical, but soon discovered that he could retrieve his bait without so much as a snag. Everything Jack told him had worked exactly as he said it would.

Bob cast the bait once again, but this time with no thought or concern for becoming tangled. His focus was now on learning how to make the bait look real. He recalled Jack’s article in *Bassmaster* Magazine and remembered that
by reeling slowly, the bait would sink. If he paused during retrieval, the slip sinker would sink to the bottom, allowing the worm to float upwards. If he made sudden jerks on the line, the worm would move quickly like a small snake. If he jiggled it lightly, it would look more like a big worm. The more he practiced, the more it became natural, which Jack had assured him would lead the fish to believe the rubber worm was real.

Just as Bob was really getting into casting, his baited line almost got pulled out of the boat. He quickly set the worm rod aside and reached for his other rig. Soon after, he landed another largemouth. This one was not quite as large as the first one, but it was a good four pounder—a keeper in anyone’s book. Things were really starting to look up. Jack’s training was starting to pay off. He baited his line once more, dropped it over the side, and reached for the worm rod. He made cast after cast, slowly perfecting his technique. He began to realize that with the worm rod, he did not need to wait for the fish to come to him. Instead, he could take his bait to the fish. With that in mind, he untied his boat and moved a few yards further into the brush. He just knew there were more and bigger fish nesting around the sunken logs and brush. Additionally, he decided to change to a brighter colored worm. He pulled out an orange worm because it was the opposite of the purple one he was currently casting. He cast the new worm and waited about fifteen minutes. Nothing. Recalling Jack’s instructions, he
changed his reeling technique. He had been reeling fairly quickly before, so he decided to reel slowly, adding a few sharp and sudden jerks every few yards. On his third cast with the new reeling technique, Bob got a strike, which is what bass fisherman call it when a hungry fish grabs the bait and starts swimming away. He was startled when the fish took his line and jerked back on the rod too quickly, pulling it completely away from the fish. Boy, that was dumb, he thought. I truly am an amateur. Jack had clearly outlined in his article that when the fish first took the bait, he needed to let the fish run with it. Give him more line. Make sure the fish really had taken his bait. Then, with one swift tug set the hook.

Feeling a bit frustrated with himself, Bob decided to set the worm rod aside long enough to check the bait on his other rod. Sure enough, his minnow had gotten away. He placed another large minnow, dropped it over the side, and picked the worm rod back up for another round. He cast his worm over on a large rock and slowly began to pull the worm off the rock into the water. The worm had no more than fallen into the water when it took off like a jet. Bob was shocked, but allowed the fish to run with the bait for about ten yards before sharply snapping back on the rod.

Presto! He had a really big one tugging hard at the line. The fish started to fight. He had never felt a fish tug so hard before. At first, the fish swam directly away, pulling at the line. Had it not been for Jack setting the drag on
the reel properly before loaning it to Bob, the fish would have broken the line, but the drag worked perfectly. When pulling away did not work, the fish swam directly toward the boat. Bob quickly reeled in the excess line. After a good ten minutes, the fish finally tired and Bob was able to get him close enough to haul him into the boat. He could not believe his eyes. This was the biggest fish he had ever caught in all his years of fishing. This fish was actually the size of the ones he had always bragged about catching, but never really caught. He put the fish on the scale and his heart almost stopped. It read eight and three quarter pounds. In that moment, Bob realized that he could accomplish his goal. They were going to be enjoying the fish he caught at the family reunion dinner. Furthermore, he envisioned himself, with proper planning, training, and practice, becoming a Bassmaster.

CHAPTER VII TUTORIAL: GAINING KNOWLEDGE, IMPROVING YOUR SKILLS

In this chapter, we see Bob graduate from a novice to a more advanced bass fisherman by trying different techniques and strategies, being patient, and making the proper adjustments. Using a slip sinker and rubber worms, he learns how to fish off the bottom with the worm floating upwards, make sudden jerks on the line so the worm moves like a small snake, jiggle it lightly so it looks more like a
big worm, and change the color to one that works better under current conditions. And he’s rewarded with more and bigger largemouth bass than he’s ever caught.

Apply these same principles to your marketing campaigns. Put your plan into action. Whether it’s print advertising, online advertising, broadcast, direct mail, blogging, or any other form of customer-facing communication, it is important that you have the ability to respond quickly to changes in the marketplace. Making adjustments on a timely basis increases the opportunity for higher yielding results over the life of the effort. All it takes is patience and a commitment to try new things.
Over the next few weekends, Bob continued his Saturday and Sunday morning fishing adventures. Each weekend became more successful than the one before. The skills Jack was teaching him were becoming second nature to Bob. His ability to locate and catch the right type and size of fish he wanted were close to magical. He filled the freezer with more than enough bass for the reunion and was eagerly awaiting to tell his family about all his fishing experiences and the great people who helped him achieve his goals.

On the afternoon of the reunion dinner, as the members of Bob’s family were finishing their meal and preparing for a slice of Mary’s award-winning apple pie, Bob stood up at the head of the table, tapped his glass, and began to speak.

“I truly hope you enjoyed today’s amazing fish dinner. As always, Mary’s cooking skills have delighted us all. Now that we have all had our fill, I have a confession to make. I know many of you must be thinking that I am either an amazing angler, having caught enough fish for such a large group or that I have been fishing for months to make this happen. The truth is, it was neither.”
He sighed, “Just over a month ago, I was bragging to Mary what a great fisherman I am, a story she’s heard all too often, when she called my bluff. She knew I was telling her a fish story. In other words, I had taken creative license and expanded on the truth a bit. This seems to be a common trait amongst weekend anglers, but this time, Mary wasn’t going to let me get away with it. She said, ‘Okay, big shot. We’re having a family reunion in about a month and just about everyone in the family loves fresh fish. I want you to catch enough fish to feed us all.’

“Not only did she want me to catch enough fish for everyone, she wanted and expected me to catch her favorite: freshwater largemouth bass. Well, being the proud guy I am, what could I say? I was hooked, I gladly accepted the challenge. As soon as Mary left the room, though, my heart sank down between my knees. I was terrified. Boy, had I put myself in a real spot.”

Bob continued, “Now, I’ve enjoyed fishing for many years. But realistically, if you added all the largemouth bass I have caught in the last ten years combined, there would not have been enough to feed all of you. I was really in a jam. Then, Mary said nothing about the topic for days, so it seemed to me she had forgotten about the challenge. I’ll admit, I felt a little relieved. But then, that Friday evening at dinner, she brought it up again, and I knew I was on the hook, so to speak.”
“I was agonizing over how I would get myself out of this mess, when I remembered that my old high school friend Jack was a *Bassmaster*, the best of the best in the sport. Surely, he would be able to give me some pointers. I called him the next day, and as soon as he stopped laughing at me, he agreed to help.”

Bob looked around the table at his family and confessed, “So the truth about today’s feast is this: Yes, I did catch all the fish we enjoyed today. And yes, I did catch them in less than a month. But the fact is, it was my decision to call professional help that made all the difference. Without Jack’s knowledge and experience, this would have been a pizza party, not a fish dinner. Because of Mary’s challenge and Jack’s help, we have had one of the best meals I could have imagined. Keep this in mind. When you have an obstacle and you don’t have the knowledge and skills to overcome it, seek professional help. You’ll be glad you did. I know I am.”

**CHAPTER VIII TUTORIAL: MEASURING SUCCESS AND STRIVING TO SUSTAIN IT**

Bob is on a roll. Because he understood his limitations and sought help, he achieves greater success than he’s ever imagined. He realizes that with the right resources, proper
planning, and expert advice, he can make his goal a reality. Armed with knowledge, skills, and a more deliberate approach, each weekend becomes more productive until he’s achieved his goal of a full freezer of fish for his family reunion.

Determine the effectiveness of your marketing initiative by measuring take-up rates (the percentage of people who buy), customer repeat business, and profitability. Once you’ve hit on the right combination of elements on a test basis, roll out your campaign on a larger scale. Keep abreast of changing market conditions and adjust accordingly. And remember, working with the right professional can help unlock the full potential of your marketing strategy.

To help you apply what you’ve learned in this guide to marketing your own product or service, the following worksheet has been developed. Filling in each section with information related to your specific challenge will give you a clear picture of what you’re setting out to accomplish and how to achieve it.

Best of luck and hoping you have an abundant catch!
### Marketing Initiative

**What are your goals and objectives?**

- **Goal:** An observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved within a more or less fixed timeframe.

- **Objectives:** A specific result that a person or system aims to achieve within a time frame within the available resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limitations</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your marketing organization (if you have one) may be a small group without the in-house skills or expertise needed to meet your goal. Consider working with a full-service marketing and design vendor.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your marketing goals must closely align with your business strategy. The overall time frame for your marketing plan is usually defined for the long-term that is broken down into series of smaller steps that are required for achieving a long-term goal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel is time-consuming and expensive. If your business is local in nature, it may be more cost-effective and efficient to focus on prospects that are closer to you.</td>
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</table>
**Cost**
Cost is an issue for any businesses, especially in a tight economy. As a business for profit you need to get the highest return on your investment. The total money, time, and resources associated with achieving your marketing objectives must be carefully consider and controlled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Targeting</strong></th>
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</table>
| *Type of Customer*  
To be most effective you must be able to answer truthfully: *Who will be most receptive to what I have to offer?* Who would be your ideal customer? | *Type of Customer* |
| **Customer Profile**  
Create a description of your ideal customer’s unique characteristics.  
Consider your customers’ demographics, geographic locations, as well as buying patterns, credit-worthiness, purchase history, income, and other criteria. | **Customer Profile** |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Market Research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic Location</strong>&lt;br&gt;Consider limitations (if any) posed by your location. You may be limited in your ability to have face-to-face meetings with faraway prospects or delivery cost could be a factor. Think about where you can best interact and engage with your target audience. Each business will be different; think about the impact your customer’s location will have on your overall success.</td>
<td><strong>Geographic Location</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Conditions</strong>&lt;br&gt;Think about the operating environment where your best customers are likely to be found. The environment creates both risk and opportunity.</td>
<td><strong>Market Conditions</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Segmentation**
Breakdown your customer profiles into more detailed, granular slices to get a deeper view of them, and a better understanding of their needs and potential. The more focused you become, the more effective you will be.

**Timing**
With a better understanding of your customers, their locations, and where they are in the purchase cycle, consider the best time to reach out to the most promising prospects. Ask yourself when will your target audience be most receptive to your message?
**Messaging**

How does your offer meet the needs of your target audience?

Clearly, consistently answers four key questions for your prospect:

1. Is the product or service what I want or need?
2. Why do I need the product or service I am being offered? (Solves a problem, meets a need, or resolves an issue).
3. What will I obtain from the product or service should I acquire it? (Solution or outcome).
4. Does the product or service really work or satisfy my needs? (Provide proof, such as a story or case study).
### Approach
In the prospect’s mind, the looming question is, “What’s in this for me?”
In your approach, talk about the challenges your prospect is faced with. Explain how your product or service will solve these specific problems. Educate your prospect about how this product or service will help them to achieve the final outcome desired. To strengthen your approach, offer case studies, testimonials, and other proof of how you have accomplished this for others.

### A/B Testing
Consider testing your marketing strategy on a small group of prospects, carefully measuring their reaction and responsiveness to a variety of offers. Focus groups and trial marketing initiatives can help you get a sense of what will be most successful.
**Measure Results**

Determine the effectiveness of your marketing initiative by measuring take-up rates, customer repeat business, and profitability. Working with the right professional can help you unlock the full potential of your marketing strategy.
When I founded Browning and Associates, I envisioned a company that could help people create practical ways to grow their business, boost profitability, and forge closer relationships with their customers. To make this vision a reality, I brought together a diverse team of professionals, all of whom share a deep commitment to working closely with clients to drive success.

Trust and experience are fundamental in choosing business advisors who are right for you. Even if you’re running a small company, your organization is comprised of a complex set of people and processes that work together and affect one another. The people you want advising you should have deep expertise in every aspect of business. That’s why professionals who have excelled in multiple capacities can help you make the most of your business resources—and the opportunities they offer.

At Browning and Associates, we are easy to approach, always eager to share our knowledge, and bring enthusiasm and integrity to every project—large or small.
It is our belief that in everything we do, every contact we make, every effort we put into building our business, we must maintain the firm conviction that we are advancing through helping others advance.

We have more than thirty-five years of experience in marketing, business development, sales, and operations management for top companies. With this expertise, my team of experienced business professionals and I will share the priceless wisdom and knowledge we have gained to provide upfront guidance that helps you avoid the pitfalls that so many businesses encounter including:

- Clarify and fine-tune your business objectives
- Optimize your budget expense management
- Identify legal requirements and set up protections
- Align marketing communication to your strategy
- Marketing campaign design and execution
- Design and create compelling marketing collateral
- Web site development, programming, and hosting
- Professional copywriting and editing
- Broadcast quality corporate video production
- Sales and promotional video animations
- And much more…

There has never been a better time to take the first step in growing your business. Browning and Associates
can empower you to attract new customers, discover new opportunities, and unlock new revenue over the long term. There’s no risk or obligation: your first consultation is free.

For more information, visit browningandassociates.com.
You can have the most ground breaking product or service in the world, but if you’re not an effective marketer, no one will know—and no one will care.

As a small business owner or entrepreneur, you know that you need fast, easy, and effective ways to successfully reel in new customers. Every business is different, but there are core sales and marketing needs that are common to almost every company. By applying the right thinking and insightful strategy, you can deliver cost effective campaigns that build brand value, communicate your message, and attract the customers your business needs to grow and thrive. *Hooked* demystifies the art of marketing by using the story of Bob, a novice fisherman, who finds that, although he thinks he knows a lot about fishing, his eyes are opened to reality when he accepts mentorship from his experienced friend. Learn along with Bob how targeted application of skill and knowledge increases results exponentially…and how you too can put your bait in the right place to make the catch you need.

Stevan R. Browning, a long-time marketing executive and avid childhood fisherman, is CEO of Browning & Associates, a marketing consulting firm that helps people grow their businesses, boost profitability, and forge closer relationships with their customers.