

Shortform | Book

 shortform.com/app/book/expert-secrets/1-page-summary

1-Page Summary

Imagine you have a product or service that can change people's lives—one that can help them reach their most ambitious goals financially or personally. If you don't know how to effectively market it, your idea won't make a difference in anyone's life. Russell Brunson aims to solve this problem with *Expert Secrets*, a how-to guide for creating excitement for your idea that turns potential customers into lifelong buyers.

Brunson made his name selling online marketing tools specializing in *sales funnels*—preset buying experiences that guide online visitors to additional sales opportunities. He's the author of *DotCom Secrets*, in which he outlines his funnel system, and *Traffic Secrets*, in which he expands on more tips for online selling. He also runs ClickFunnels, a software company offering training and tools to incorporate funnels into online businesses.

In this guide, we'll give an overview of the main "secrets" Brunson discusses, focusing on how you can tap into your audience's emotions to create loyal customers. Along the way, we'll examine the human instincts that drive purchasing decisions and how other sales experts advise you to close a sale.

Find Your Market

Brunson writes that to successfully launch a business, you must start by solidly identifying your market. Until you know who you're aiming for, you can't effectively come up with details for your offer.

(Shortform note: Brunson aims his advice mostly at companies targeting individuals as end-users and customers, so his recommendations on how to examine that market may not be as relevant to business-to-business companies. Instead, companies aiming to provide goods or services to other companies might be better off examining other factors—in *Competitive Strategy*, Michael Porter writes that the primary factor a business should consider is whether a market is controlled by a limited number of suppliers (such as chip-manufacturing industries that rely on just a few rare-earth miners). For businesses like this, the end-user isn't as much of a concern.)

Determine Your Core Market

First, identify your core market by figuring out which of three basic human desires your product appeals to: wealth, health, or relationships. Brunson argues that every purchase is an effort to enhance one of those areas of the buyer's life. Therefore, figure out which of these your idea appeals to.

He further argues that within these categories, the most important thing people seek is *status*. He writes that when people are looking to improve any aspect of their lives, the question they're asking themselves is whether a purchase will increase their status in the eyes of others.

Other Theories of Core Human Needs

The three basic human desires Brunson mentions are a simplification of a more widely accepted set of human wants—Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This ranks five needs that humans seek, starting with those that are most important to survival and continuing to those that people seek once their basic survival needs are met:

- Physiological needs (food, water, shelter, clothing, sex)
- Safety needs (employment, health, property)
- Love (friendship, intimacy, family)
- Esteem (status, freedom, respect)
- Self-actualization (the desire to live up to your potential).

Brunson's three desires essentially summarize these five: *Wealth* and *health* desires relate to both *physiological* and *safety* needs, while *relationship* desires align with the need of *love*. His emphasis on *status* corresponds to Maslow's category of *esteem*.

Brunson doesn't mention anything that specifically corresponds to Maslow's need to self-actualize, but we might infer that this need touches on each of the desires Brunson mentions, if we see each desire as a way a person can live up to their potential.

Brunson's advice to appeal to just one of these categories aligns with that of other marketers—in Positioning, Al Ries and Jack Trout write that the simpler your message, the better, because the human mind can only process a few ideas at once and is programmed to filter out any information that might exceed its working capacity.

Brunson also advises that when determining your core market, you should **consider whether people within that market are passionate about that aspect of their lives**. Look for signs that would indicate passionate fans: Does this market have active communities using blogs, online forums, and so on? Do they use unique terms that people outside the market won't know (like nicknames or shortened versions of terms)? Do they participate in events, such as conferences or workshops? Does the market have already established experts and celebrities, indicating a thriving subculture?

Further, consider whether people within this market have money and are willing to spend it. If you want your company to be financially successful, Brunson cautions that you shouldn't target people who either don't have money or aren't interested in spending it to improve that aspect of their lives.

Another View on Identifying Your Market

In *12 Months to \$1 Million*, Ryan Moran agrees that the first step in developing a product is identifying your market, and he suggests that you start by considering communities you belong to or are familiar with. For example, you might be involved in outdoor sports groups, which can give you insight into their concerns, trends, unique vocabulary, and so on, as well as whether they have discretionary money and are willing to spend it.

Another advantage of becoming familiar with these aspects of a group is that you can leverage that knowledge later, during your sales presentation, to establish a connection and encourage your audience to identify with you. In *Public Speaking for Success*, Dale Carnegie writes that one way to do this is to use in-group terms, like making a physics joke when addressing a group of scientists, much like Brunson recommends.

Specialize Within Your Core Market

Brunson advises that within your core market, you identify the submarket you want to reach (for example, within wealth, you might focus on real estate investing), and further, the niche within that submarket (you might focus, for example, on short-term rental investing).

Finally, within that niche, figure out what category you can create that you can dominate. **Brunson emphasizes the importance of creating a new category within your niche rather than competing within an existing category**, because existing categories will already have a market leader and it's generally not possible to dethrone an established leader. Instead, look to become the market leader in your own new category.

To create a new category, look for customers who are unhappy with the offerings they're using now—people who will readily complain about a company, product, or service and who are actively looking for a better option. If you come up with a solution to fit their needs and answer their dissatisfaction, you have a ready-made market that you can dominate. Then, position your offer as different from what's already out there. Brunson cites the example of Dove, who positioned themselves as “not soap” even though their product was quite clearly soap. They created a new category of “moisturizer soap” that set them apart from their competition.

Specializing Versus Mass Marketing

The debate over whether a company should cater to a small category of consumers, as Brunson advocates, or try to appeal to as large a market as possible through mass marketing—basic messaging about your brand for a general audience—has been a longstanding topic in the world of marketing.

In *Purple Cow*, Seth Godin comes down on the side of specialization, writing that businesses can only stand out in a crowded marketplace by tailoring their offering to the needs and desires of a specific niche. He argues that the era when mass marketing was effective—during the 20th century, when television and newspaper publications had a monopoly on advertising messaging—has come to an end, and in today's world, consumers are too accustomed to ads to give any of them much attention. Further, he writes that consumers have so many options (and are often satisfied with them) that it's increasingly difficult for new companies to stand out (mirroring Brunson's note that established market leaders are hard to topple).

Instead, Godin advises, as Brunson does, that you seek a niche category that's less likely to have an established leader and where people are dissatisfied with their current products—as Dove did in Brunson's example.

However, not everyone agrees. In *How Brands Grow*, Byron Sharp argues that the notion that mass marketing no longer works is flawed. He says that mass marketing is still the most effective way to increase awareness of your offerings, and that when you try to target a small demographic, you'll inevitably limit your reach—and thus limit your potential for sales.

In the end, the debate might come down to what kind of product or service your company is offering, as one marketing approach might be more appropriate for certain businesses than the other.

Start a Movement

Brunson writes that to launch a business that changes people's lives—and also makes you lots of money—you'll need to launch a *movement*, not just a product. The movement is what will inspire people to adopt your ideas and become lifelong customers. **Your product is merely the tool to support the movement.**

He writes that every successful movement has three elements:

- A charismatic leader
- An inspiring vision
- A new opportunity

We'll examine each of these three aspects, and how you can bring them into your movement, in the following sections.

Why Are Movements Compelling?

Movements motivate people because they combine our instinct to be part of a group and our desire to be part of a greater purpose. Brunson's three essential elements of movements summarize many of the themes that others name as basic characteristics of movements: Movements typically have a leader, a collective identity (aligning with Brunson's *vision*), and a common cause or vision (aligning with his *new opportunity*).

Some argue, though, that movements, particularly social movements, often don't have a single leader but instead are most effective as grassroots collections of action. However, few dispute that movements with charismatic leaders can get more traction because recognizable leaders can draw public attention to their cause. These are the movements Brunson models his advice after.

Brunson's advice to focus on starting a movement for your company rather than a social movement aligns with a marketing approach called *movement marketing*, which encourages business leaders to focus not on their specific service or product but instead on a cultural or social change. In this approach, your product becomes a tool for solving a larger, society-wide problem (aligning with Brunson's advice to see your product as a tool). For example, your product might be affordable eyewear, but your focus will be on the larger problem of people who need glasses but are unable to afford them—a problem for many lower-income people. By focusing on this problem, you can position your company as the standard-bearer for a better world, linking your product positively in consumers' minds.

Become a Charismatic Leader

Brunson writes that people may check out your business because they're curious about your product, but it's your personality and their relationship with you that will convince them to stay.

Therefore, he advises that you create an attractive public personality and then build a relationship with your customers—specifically, one in which you act as an expert who can guide them to achieve their goals.

(Shortform note: Marketers often refer to this type of leader as an influencer—someone whose opinion (usually publicized on social media) is highly valued and who can convince others to make purchases because of that. Many businesses now conduct influencer marketing by hiring these influential people to recommend their products. Some have called this the contemporary version of celebrity marketing. Brunson's advice to publicly develop your personality might be seen as advice to become your company's personal influencer.)

Inspire Your Followers

Brunson notes that leaders of movements are inspirational. Thus, to attract people to you and your message, aim to inspire them: Encourage them to dream big and aim for high goals, and calm their fears by helping them see hope that they can achieve the goals they want.

Also, **make them feel you're on their side against their enemies**. Show them that you care about their struggles, can identify with what they're going through, and want to help them vanquish their enemies. Help them understand that *they're* not responsible for their past failures but instead, the previous systems and tools they used were flawed. This will create an "us versus them" mentality through which they'll see themselves as part of your team, and which will foster loyalty to you.

The Dangers of the "Us Versus Them" Mentality

Leaders often appeal to an "us versus them" mentality to inspire their teams by making them feel part of a "winning side." This approach taps into the instinctive desire of people to feel part of an in-group—an instinct that evolved because of the survival advantages it brought.

While appealing to this mentality can increase a company's popularity—either with customers or employees—some warn that too much of this attitude can harm society as a whole. When people are encouraged to see others as enemies, it can lead to political polarization that makes it hard to govern, prevents consensus, and even enables dictators to hold power by invoking a fear of outsiders.

The danger of this mentality is typically associated with political movements, though, not business movements, and thus, Brunson's advice seems unlikely to cause societal upheaval. Still, business leaders may want to be careful about pushing too hard to base their company on an "us versus them" attitude—or on their own personality, as Brunson also recommends. When a founder's star power becomes too large, it can backfire on them: Even if a leader starts out aiming to inspire their followers in a positive fashion, their company can come to be seen as a cult, which can bring in negative press and lead to an unhealthy working environment.

Become an Expert

Your customers will stay loyal to you and your company if they see you as an expert who can guide them toward their goals. To become an expert they'll trust, learn as much as you can about your field. Read, go to seminars and events, and even start a show or podcast, which will enable you to interview experts you otherwise wouldn't have access to.

Once you've developed expertise, it's time to get people to see you as the expert you've become. To do so, Brunson advises that you **share your message consistently and frequently**. Publish daily for at least a year. This will help you develop a unique voice that will set you apart from your competitors.

It will also ensure you work through the initial phase of putting your message into the world—the phase when you haven't fully developed your voice and your posts aren't high quality yet. He writes that everyone goes through this low-quality phase, but not to worry: In the beginning, you won't have a large audience, so few will notice. By the time you've attracted a sizable audience, you'll have developed an effective voice and a strong message.

Where to Start When Developing Expertise

Brunson's advice to commit to your project for a long period of time may not only be the best way to *convey* your message but also may be the best way to *develop* that message.

In *The Talent Code*, Daniel Coyle notes that people who commit to mastering a skill or field of knowledge over a long period of time are far more successful in developing that expertise than people who commit to shorter time frames—even *when putting in less practice or study*. He theorizes this is because people who've committed long-term see the project as part of their identity, and thus get more out of their practice sessions. He notes that when long-term commitment is combined with a lot of practice, success rates skyrocket.

Thus, if you commit in advance to developing your expertise for a lengthy time period, as Brunson recommends, you may get more out of the seminars, events, reading materials, and so on that you absorb.

What Should You Publish?

Brunson notes that the idea of publishing every day can be intimidating because people often don't think they can come up with content daily. He offers some tips to get past this difficulty.

Make it easy: Instead of creating lengthy, original content full of teaching or marketing materials, simply document your thoughts: things that are important to you, your journey, your process, what you've learned, and so on. This is still original content, but it's easy to come up with.

(Shortform note: The advice to unload your thoughts daily has become a widely accepted approach to building a following. Social media experts note that you can then get more mileage out of any content you come up with, without further effort, by publishing it in different formats on different platforms—you can start by publishing something on your blog, then refer to it on various social media channels and link to it in an email newsletter. Techniques such as these not only make daily publishing an achievable goal but also help decrease the anxiety people feel when faced with the need to message that frequently.)

Be a little strange: Don't shy away from saying things that are slightly unusual or controversial. No one gets rich by being ordinary because run-of-the-mill ideas don't attract attention and people won't pay for them. Brunson notes that even if some people don't like your message because it pushes boundaries, that can work in your favor: When

people are vocal about their dislike, they can bring even more attention to you. However, he cautions that your message shouldn't be too off-the-wall because if you appeal to a too-narrow niche of consumers, the mainstream will view you as too weird and won't pay attention. He advises that you find the sweet spot between "strange enough" but "not too strange."

(Shortform note: When a company seeks attention by saying or doing strange things, it's engaging in *buzz marketing*, in which it tries to create word-of-mouth publicity through unusual ad campaigns. While Brunson warns not to be too strange so people don't consider you too far outside the mainstream, some warn of another danger of buzz marketing: If people see too many buzz marketing campaigns, they'll recognize them as a trend and will see your campaign as unoriginal—in other words, you'll *become* the mainstream. This is what happened with marketing techniques like pop-up and banner ads, which were considered groundbreaking in the early days of online marketing but are now considered annoying.)

Offer a Vision of a New Identity

Brunson writes that to create a movement that attracts people, you have to offer a vision of an idealistic future in which your customers are better versions of themselves. This vision should be one of both achievement and transformation, and Brunson emphasizes that it should be more than a mere improvement plan—it should **prompt your audience to envision a completely new identity for themselves**. For example, instead of selling an exercise plan that merely shows people how to do better sit-ups, help your customers envision themselves as masters of their health and bodies. This will engage them emotionally and turn them into lifelong customers.

To encourage your customers to envision this new identity, Brunson recommends that you create a manifesto stating your company's vision in an inspiring way and helping your audience see themselves as part of a group with special characteristics. One way you can do this is to name the kind of customer who uses your product and describe them—for example, for Brunson's company, ClickFunnels, his manifesto said, "A Funnel Hacker is a new breed of entrepreneur..." and it went on to describe "funnel hackers" as people who "define their own identity" and "create their own luck."

You can take these statements a step further to foster a sense of belonging by creating swag, such as t-shirts or mugs, that sport "I am" statements mirroring your manifesto (such as, "I am a Funnel Hacker" or "I create my own luck").

The Link Between Identity and Behavior

Brunson is not the first to observe that the best way to change your behavior is to adopt a new identity. In *Atomic Habits*, James Clear agrees, writing that if you want to change your behavior, you should focus on who you want to become rather than what you want to achieve. Clear goes further to note that behavior (specifically, habits) and identity are interwoven: As much as a new identity inspires new habits, those new habits will solidify your new identity (if you run daily, you're a runner).

Brunson focuses more exclusively on the line of causation from identity to behavior, but we might infer that he'd agree that behavioral changes resulting from a new identity serve to strengthen that new identity. His advice to create swag for your customer is based on a similar underlying principle, in that both habits and swag serve as routine, daily reminders of the new identity a person has chosen.

Offer a New Opportunity

The third element of a movement is a *new opportunity*, which is the product or service you'll offer to solve your customers' problems. Brunson writes that you must ensure this idea isn't merely an improvement on an existing product, but instead is something entirely new and original—this is how you'll create and dominate an original category, as discussed earlier.

Brunson argues that **unless your product creates a new category, you won't create a movement that engages people and creates fans**. He notes that Steve Jobs didn't just offer a faster or bigger CD player, but instead created a new category—a way to carry your entire music collection in your pocket (with an iPod). If he'd merely developed an improved music player, he wouldn't have inspired the following he attracted.

Possible Limits of New Markets and New Identities

In many aspects of Brunson's advice, he emphasizes the need to set your company apart from competitors in any way possible, and as such, his advice to create a completely new category with your opportunity aligns with his advice to help your customers create a completely new identity. It's worth noting that Steve Jobs's product creations not only created a new category but helped his customers envision themselves as part of a new identity—one in which they saw themselves as Apple users who feel good about themselves and their choices under this identity.

However, while Brunson advises that you use your innovation to create a new market, not all business experts agree creating a new market is necessary—some argue that there's enough unmet demand within existing markets to ensure success for your innovation. In *Competing Against Luck*, Clayton Christensen writes that to come up with an idea that can lead you to success in any market, look for ways people creatively tackle tasks for which there's no sufficient solution yet. These DIY solutions can reveal problems for which there's a ready customer base, and even if this isn't in a unique field, any innovation you develop to meet this customer need can bring you success

Structure Your Idea in a Framework

Brunson writes that to be successful, **you can't just sell a product, but instead you must sell a product within a framework**—a set of predictable steps your customers can follow to achieve their goals using your product. This framework will be so integral to your product that it will be inseparable from it—without the framework guiding customers, your product won't be nearly as powerful and your customers won't be as interested.

He cites his own marketing tool as an example. His company, ClickFunnels, sells software to help online businesses create sales funnels that upsell additional products. What makes the software stand out from competitors are the frameworks—predictable, repeatable steps—helping customers incorporate this software into their businesses.

To develop frameworks for your product or service, first research existing successful frameworks. Find successful people and find out what they did to reach success. Often, they'll talk freely about their process in interviews, podcasts, live events, and so on.

Then, take the elements of those processes that appeal to you and incorporate them into new frameworks designed for your specific goal. Test your framework on yourself and make adjustments as needed. Name it, as this makes it easy for people to recognize and remember it.

Finally, test your framework on other people to ensure it works for them, too. Initially, don't charge people to use your framework—at this point, your goal isn't to make money but instead, to perfect your framework, get experience, and build a track record that shows your framework is effective.

Using Frameworks for Frameworks

Businesses have been using frameworks for years to both develop and execute strategy—by following an established system of rules, they can more easily make decisions or carry out business processes.

Brunson's innovation is to apply frameworks to customer experiences rather than business processes. The underlying principle is the same, though: By following a predictable set of steps, both customers and businesses can achieve their goals faster than if they were figuring out how to use a product each time they worked with it.

In the same way that Brunson says that when creating a framework, you should adopt elements from other successful frameworks, business consultants also recommend that companies looking to adopt frameworks examine the multitude already in existence. Whether you're looking to design new products, analyze your industry's strengths and weaknesses, become more customer-focused, or manage complex projects, a framework likely exists for a similar problem. Successful frameworks are often examined in the same forums Brunson recommends you look into—blogs, websites, and podcasts frequently post information to help companies strategize.

In fact, frameworks exist for each step of Brunson's advice on how to create frameworks. There are frameworks that can help you research other companies' frameworks, test your framework, and even name your framework. Ultimately, no matter what you're trying to accomplish or what step you're on, you can streamline your process by examining how others have approached a similar challenge.

Use Stories to Sell Your Product

So far, we've examined Brunson's advice on how to create your product and your company. We'll now turn to Brunson's thoughts on how to *present* your product and company in a way that will excite customers and turn them into lifelong users.

Brunson writes that **to effectively engage your customers, you need to tell them not only about your *product* but also about the *story* behind it**—the problems you faced and how you came up with your idea to solve them. By sharing this story, you'll help your audience understand the “aha” moment that hooked you into your idea emotionally, and it will likewise hook *them* emotionally.

Brunson emphasizes that this is the only way to spur them to become customers, because **people make purchasing decisions when they're *emotionally* invested in an idea, not when they *logically* understand it**. Thus, even if they mentally understand and agree with your concepts, they won't adopt them if they're not emotionally involved, and your company won't change their lives.

Why We Buy Emotionally

In Pitch Anything, Oren Klafl also writes that to convince people to buy your offer, you must appeal to their emotions. He writes that people don't make decisions with their neocortex—their “thinking” brain—but instead with what he calls their “croc brain.” This is the most primitive part of the brain, and it processes information before any other part so that it can filter out threats and look for opportunities that can aid survival. It only engages the neocortex to think through complex decisions when it decides that new information is worth paying attention to.

Klafl writes that *desire* is one of the urges that spurs the croc brain into action, and he notes that one of the ways we can spark desire is to present a puzzle. Humans instinctively like figuring out puzzles because we like a bit of a challenge. He also writes that we're drawn to tension, because tension indicates consequences and importance. Brunson's “aha” moment incorporates both of these: It presents a tension-filled puzzle (the problem you were initially trying to solve) and offers a solution. By engaging your audience in this puzzle-solving exercise, you can engage their emotions and thus, their croc brain, which will pave the way for the rest of their brain to get on board with your idea.

To tell a story about your product, Brunson outlines a set of steps—a framework that's proven to be an effective way to convey the important details of your product and get people excited about it. He calls it the “Epiphany Bridge.”

(Shortform note: Brunson doesn't explain his term *Epiphany Bridge* but we can infer that the *bridge* is the infrastructure, in the form of a story, that brings a customer from a place of reluctance to a place of eagerness to purchase your offer. The *epiphany*, naturally, is the moment of sudden understanding they experience regarding how to solve a problem or challenge. In literature, an epiphany is often used as a turning point in a story, and Brunson's use of the term aligns with that purpose, as it's aimed at bringing about a turning point in their behavior.)

The Epiphany Bridge

Brunson's Epiphany Bridge framework has five parts, and he writes that it's useful not only because it inspires excitement but also because it allows you to go into as much or as little detail as you need when presenting your idea. If you have an hour-long training session, you can review each of the steps in detail, but if you only have 60 seconds, you can give a quick overview of your product by focusing just on the broad concepts of each step, but your message will still be effective.

(Shortform note: Flexibility of your sales message is important because it allows you to engage potential customers at different points in their purchasing journey. People who aren't familiar with your product haven't started their journey yet and probably won't be as open to a long presentation, so a quick “elevator pitch” highlighting the main things you

want them to know would be the best approach. People who are attending a training session have already committed to at least considering your offer, and so will be more inclined to listen to a long speech.)

The five parts of the Epiphany Bridge are:

1. The introduction
2. The journey and conflict
3. The new opportunity
4. The framework
5. The successes

Brunson notes that the steps of this framework are similar to many traditional storytelling structures, which start by introducing the hero's original world and then bring in antagonistic forces, failed attempts at success, helping characters, struggles (both internal and external), and finally, resolution and success.

(Shortform note: In *Wired for Story*, Lisa Cron explains that the human instinct to follow stories that have these traditional elements comes from an evolutionary need to learn about dangers. As humans evolved, we developed storytelling strategies that aligned with how our brains process information, and as a result, we've learned to pay attention to stories that follow a somewhat predictable structure—one that Brunson's techniques adhere to.)

Part 1: The Introduction

Start by telling your audience your framework's name and then giving some background about what your life was like before you came up with your idea (your "original world," in storytelling language). Mention the problems you faced—both externally, like financial struggles, and internally, like having a fear of never reaching your potential. Brunson advises that the problems you name should be similar to problems your audience faces, so they'll identify with you and your process.

Finally, mention some things you did to try to resolve your problems but weren't successful at (for example, maybe you tried selling dog-training services but couldn't get your business off the ground).

(Shortform note: This step is aimed at helping your audience identify with you, which many sales professionals agree is the key to encouraging sales. In *New Sales. Simplified.*, Mike Weinberg writes that the problem with most presentations is the salesperson launches into a speech focusing on the company and its products rather than on the customer and their needs. Customers will instinctively resist this kind of pitch because it won't seem relevant to them. Brunson's method of naming the challenges they've faced and exploring the fact that, like you, they've struggled to overcome them is a time-tested way to shift the focus onto them and prevent that resistance.)

Part 2: The Journey and Conflict

In this step, you'll describe the inspiration that started you on the path toward your idea. For example, maybe someone asked you why you aren't targeting pet stores, and that got you thinking about the potential of that business model.

Then, describe the obstacles you faced—perhaps your attempts to contact pet stores were ignored, or your initial classes went poorly.

Also mention in this step what you stood to lose if you failed—the stakes of your story. Were you close to being evicted from your apartment? Would you not be able to afford grad school if you couldn't develop this source of income?

(Shortform note: This step is where, in terms of storytelling, you jump out of Act 1 and into the more active Act 2, where you purposefully start working toward a goal (prompted in Brunson's structure by an outside suggestion), and you increase the tension (Brunson's "stakes"). This keeps your story moving and also keeps your audience attentive, as they may lose interest unless they sense increased risks to your character.)

Part 3: The New Opportunity

In this step you'll discuss the epiphany you had that led you to your solution. You'll talk about the expert who guided you to your aha moment, the realization itself, and the new opportunity you developed based on this epiphany.

For example, you could tell them about the zookeeper who taught you how to speak an animal's language, and your aha moment when you realized that if you could teach others how to speak *dog*, your dog training classes would take off. Then you'd describe the dog dictionary you wrote and the audiobooks you recorded as part of your training classes.

(Shortform note: This step aligns with the "midpoint" of a traditional storytelling structure, which is when, halfway through your tale, you reveal a momentous discovery that marks the point when your main character shifts from reactive to proactive. At the midpoint, your hero recognizes the truth of their situation and how to work toward a solution. In Brunson's structure, this realization, or epiphany, likewise tells of the moment where you stopped reacting to the hand you were dealt (as in the previous step, where you were still making poor choices that led nowhere) and instead came up with a new idea that allowed you to take control of your situation—your new opportunity.)

Part 4: The Framework

Here you'll describe the framework you've developed to accompany your product. You'll start by outlining it in broad strokes, touching on its goal and the main steps needed to achieve it.

Brunson warns that if you're using this Epiphany Bridge to sell your product to potential customers, you shouldn't go into further details in this step. Outline your framework's strategy but not the specific tactics and techniques within it. Only describe the specific techniques to customers who have already purchased your product.

(Shortform note: Oren Klaff likewise advises that when describing your offer, you should only mention the highlights so as to grab your audience's attention but not overwhelm them with details that won't appeal to their primitive croc brain. He recommends that you structure this overall description in a slightly different way than Brunson does, using this format: "This is for [target customers] who are unsatisfied with [current market options]. My idea is a [new product or category] that provides [key benefit]. Unlike [competitors], my idea [has these key features]." While this structure doesn't touch on the steps your customer would take to adopt your idea, it's another way to give a brief overview of your idea's functionality and purpose.)

Brunson argues that withholding information is not just a way to protect sales, but more importantly, it's a way to convince people to adopt your ideas. It's a quirk of human nature that if people are told everything they need to know upfront, they'll listen, nod, and then go on about their lives as usual. It's only when you create excitement and desire but *don't* tell them everything they need to know that they'll be motivated to fully buy into your program.

Thus, he writes that the only way to create true, lasting excitement for your product is to withhold the details of how it works.

(Shortform note: Psychologists offer some reasons why withholding the details of your offer may increase your audience's interest: It can cause cognitive dissonance—mental discomfort that occurs when you harbor conflicting emotions or thoughts. In this case, your customer will feel, on one hand, desire to find out more and, on the other hand, frustration at not knowing more. When people have this sort of mental discomfort, they instinctively try to fix it, which may lead them to pursue your idea so they find out more and therefore resolve the frustration they feel.)

Part 5: The Successes

In the final step, talk about how your framework and product have helped you achieve your goals, both internal and external.

Then, lastly, discuss how your framework has helped others—this offers the ultimate proof of your concept. People are likely to be skeptical of any service or product if you can only show that it's worked for *you*—they'll assume you have special circumstances that helped it be successful (for example, maybe dogs in your training classes pay attention to you because you naturally smell like raw beef—it's only when you can point to others who successfully trained their dogs using your dog-language lessons that your program will seem credible).

(Shortform note: Weinberg agrees that an important characteristic of a good sales story is that it's reality-based. If your story isn't backed up by a provable track record, it won't capture your audience's attention. He notes that another drawback of pushing a sales message that's not backed by experience is that it can be embarrassing and demotivating for salespeople to deliver—they don't want to be associated with a message that sounds phony any more than your customers do. By mentioning the success of others, you can

position your idea as reality-based and you can tap into what Robert Cialdini calls, in Influence, your audience's desire for social proof: the human instinct to decide what's right based on what others think.)

How to Sell to a Large Audience

Brunson notes that if you're able to present your frameworks to a large audience—for example, at a live event or through a webinar—you can supercharge your business by selling a high volume at once. **He cautions that you must use different strategies when addressing a large crowd.** Since you can't ask questions of your audience as you would when speaking to one person or a small group, you can't respond to their individual answers, concerns, objections, and so forth.

(Shortform note: While it can be harder to present to a large audience because you can't respond to individual questions, some experts note that large audiences can have advantages, too. People in large groups feel more anonymous, and so are more likely to sit back and let you present without interrupting—unlike in a smaller group where you might have more trouble staying on course. Large audiences can also have more energy, especially at an event where they're expecting to have a good time. Ultimately, there are pros and cons to presenting to either audience size, and the important thing is to be prepared with a presentation appropriate for each.)

Brunson offers a number of tips to help you succeed in a large gathering:

Focus on Just One Thing

Brunson writes that instead of trying to address all possible reasons your audience should want to use your product, you should **focus on just one thing—aim to change just one belief they hold**. He argues that if you get them to believe one central idea, all their other objections and concerns will disappear, and they'll be eager to purchase your product.

The central belief you should focus on is getting them to believe that the only way to be successful in whatever pursuit they choose is to use your product. This is where the uniqueness of your product matters—if you've come up with an opportunity different from any existing solutions on the market, you can convince your customers that the only way to success is through you.

(Shortform note: One reason to follow Brunson's advice to convey just one message is that doing so will help people remember your presentation better. Studies show that people routinely forget the majority of what they hear in presentations within a few days. But by focusing on changing one key belief, you increase the odds that your audience will retain the lesson you taught them since they don't have other thoughts competing for space in their long-term memory. Further, by highlighting one core belief, you can focus your audience's emotional attention on it and your message of change, and emotions enhance memory because they convince your brain this message is worth paying attention to.)

Offer Three Secrets

Brunson also advises that you create three “secrets” that address three possible false beliefs that potential customers often hold.

These false beliefs are:

I can’t see how this framework will work: This is when people see a characteristic of your framework they don’t fully understand. For example, they may be unfamiliar with a sales technique (like network marketing) or a product type (like a sales funnel).

My internal obstacles will keep me from using this framework effectively:

Sometimes people think they lack a skill or characteristic that the framework requires. For example, they might assume they need to be highly computer literate in order to use your service.

My external obstacles will keep me from using this framework effectively: People might face challenges in their daily lives that they feel will keep them from success. For example, they might be working two jobs and not feel they have spare time, or they don’t think they have logistical access to a certain customer base.

Fears as a Reflection of Identity Conflicts

Ultimately, each of these fears reflects an identity problem: the customer’s belief that their identity doesn’t fit with your product. The things they don’t understand about your idea, such as network marketing or sales funnels, might be things they’ve heard of but associate with other types of people—people they don’t identify with (for example, outgoing or experienced salespeople).

Likewise, when people believe their internal or external traits will prevent them from using your product effectively, they’re assuming success can only happen to a different type of person (one who doesn’t face the same pressures they do and thus one they don’t identify with).

This problem lies at the core of much customer resistance to product purchases, because people won’t behave in ways that conflict with their identities, even if they consciously know that changing their behavior will benefit them. Brunson’s efforts to address these fears, then, can be seen as part of his advice to help them envision a new identity for themselves—an identity of someone who can overcome the types of challenges they face.

Brunson writes that you can address each of these fears by creating a “secret” that highlights the benefits of your product and alludes to how easy it is to overcome these fears. He advises writing each of these secrets as a “how to” statement, such as:

- How to attract new customers in four easy steps
- How to copy your competitor’s playbook in five minutes
- How to get more out of your long-term customers without any more effort

These “secrets” address customers’ fears of not understanding how your framework works, not having the skills to pull it off, and not having the tools to do it effectively.

(Shortform note: Brunson doesn’t detail why he advises using “how to” statements, but psychologists have noted their effectiveness in engaging an audience and encouraging confidence in a task. The simplicity of the statements makes it feel as if the underlying principle is easy to learn, and the simpler you can make your product seem, the more success you’ll have in selling it—people instinctively shy away from complexity because it threatens us with uncertainty. This is why short, simple messages that can be boiled down to a single sentence or slogan (like the “secrets” above) best hold customers’ attention.)

Close Strongly

Brunson writes that when your presentation is over, your audience will only remember the last thing you’ve shown them. This means if you outline your product’s elements one by one, they’ll only remember the last one you discuss. Often this one element is not compelling enough to get them to make a purchase.

Instead, Brunson advises that as you review your product’s elements, you add them one by one to the same slide so that at the end of your presentation, the last slide you show the audience lists the full collection of the offer’s elements. Then, add up the value of each of those elements and post it so they can see the complete value of what they’d receive by purchasing your product.

In this way, your audience will be left with a feeling that your offer is a great value with a lot of parts to it, and they’ll be far more likely to buy it. Brunson writes that once he used this technique instead of closing his presentation with more traditional sales techniques, his sales skyrocketed.

(Shortform note: The traditional sales techniques Brunson refers to typically include ending with a call-to-action (a request that they take the next step, whether that’s purchasing your product, signing up for your newsletter, attending another event, and so on), a memorable quote, a case study or anecdote, or a visual image (such as a running timer, to emphasize a deadline). Brunson’s strategy implies that ending on any of these notes will separate your customer’s attention from the elements of your presentation that matter most. Thus, while these endings might result in a pleasant feeling of closure or an enjoyable speech, they won’t spur sales, which is, as Brunson emphasizes, the ultimate goal of your sales presentation.)

Guided Tour