

How you can make \$25,000 a year by being a Balloon Decorator



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Introduction and Background of the Author

I have been a professional balloon decorator for over eight years. I have also (and still do) teach a balloon decorating course throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland.

I have people travel to my courses from all round the world. I passionately believe that balloon decorating is very easy to learn. The stunning balloon displays which we provide for weddings and other special occasions are actually not difficult to learn. Anyone can learn how to make balloon displays.

However, making a living as a balloon decorator requires a clear strategy backed-up with determination and persistence. It is the intention of this book to provide you with this 'plan' to succeed. It will tell you exactly what you need to do and hopefully motivate you at the same time to take action.

I have had the privilege of meeting thousands of people in business. These business people are not just balloon decorators; they are also florists, bridal shop owners, wedding cake makers, people with greeting card shops etc. Whenever I meet someone who has their own business I always ask the same question – “**How do you get your customers?**” I have a Marketing Degree, a Masters Degree and I have spent thousands of hours attending marketing seminars, reading books by marketing experts and listening to marketing audio books. Why do I do this? I love knowing how to get customers. This is the one thing which will decide if a business will make a profit or a loss. I want anyone reading this to make massive profits. Originally the title of this book was “How to make \$50,000 a year by being a Balloon Decorator”. However, it was pointed out to me that \$50,000 might scare some people away so we changed it to \$25,000. I know you can make much more than this amount of money quite easily.

Balloon decorating is very, very simple to learn. All the displays are available on our website www.balloon-training-online.com. The real skill has very little to do with the number of balloon displays you can create. The only thing which will bring you in a fantastic living from being a balloon decorator is your ability to get customers.

There are only 3 ways to make more money in any business. Here they are:

1. Increase the number of customers you have.
2. Get them to spend more money per time they use your services.
3. Increase the frequency they use your services.

This book will primarily concentrate on number 1 above – ‘Increase the number of customers’.

I’m assuming at present you have very few customers. Perhaps you don’t have any. If that is the case this book is perfect for you. I started out exactly the same. Then, after attending a very expensive marketing course with several business and marketing gurus I used the advice given to develop a very simple strategic plan to get customers.

I was at a balloon convention a little while ago where they had giant dragons made of balloons, a 20 foot Eiffel Tower and they looked great. The problem is they are all a waste of time and money. THERE IS LITTLE DEMAND FOR THESE PRODUCTS. However, there is a massive demand for the standard day to day balloon table decorations, arches, clouds etc.

HOW TO GET ALL THE CUSTOMERS YOU CAN HANDLE WITHOUT SPENDING ANY MONEY!

I am very aware that this title seems too good to be true. When I first started I wasted thousands of pounds on newspaper advertising, leaflet drops and radio commercials etc. PLEASE DO NOT DO THIS.

What should you do instead? The marketing professionals call it ‘Strategic Alliances’. The rest of the world calls it ‘word of mouth’. Word of mouth can exist from your previous customers recommending you to their friends and family who need your services.

This is great but what do you do if you are new to the business and don’t have any customers to refer you. You must do the following - Get a list of every single hotel, bridal shop, social club (or anywhere with a function room to host parties), wedding cake maker, DJ etc and simply ask them to recommend you to their customers. It’s as simple as that. You can easily get your list from the online version of the yellow pages or any other business directory.

The penny dropped for me years ago when I realised a local social club was recommending me to all their customers who were having a party at their venue. I didn’t pay the venue a penny in commission and I was going to this venue on average once a week. Every time I went I made about \$90 profit for less than a couple hours of work.

Then, I decided to make it part of my weekly routine (usually 1-2 days) of going out to all the venues in the area where people have parties and celebrate special occasions. After that I started going round all the bridal

shops. I found that most of the recommendations became customers. Why is this? Because people like to use businesses, products and services which have been recommended to them by someone else.

The good news here is that people are willing to pay a higher price to a recommended company. People do not tend to go for the cheapest option. As I write this the average cost of a wedding is \$26,000. This would not be the case if people bought the cheapest of everything.

People perceive price and quality to be related. Of course this isn't always the case but if you are cheap it will probably be assumed that you are inferior to one of your higher priced competitors.

Story

I know someone whose turnover exceeds \$30,000. This money is generated from 6 hotels who recommend him to their customers who are having weddings / christening / parties / corporate events etc at their venue. Each hotel is worth approximately \$5000 per year. The downside is that to get 6 hotels recommending your services you may need to ask at least 60.

That means 9 hotels will say no just to get 1 that says yes. This can be disheartening and irritating. But you absolutely MUST contact these people / businesses. ANY BUSINESS WITHOUT A PLAN TO GET CUSTOMERS WILL PROBABLY FAIL.

I would suggest always arranging a face to face meeting. These are the companies you should ask to recommend your services to their customers:

- Hotels
- Social clubs / village halls / church halls
- Golf courses / rugby clubs (anywhere that people may celebrate a special occasion.
- Bridal shops
- Wedding dress shops
- Wedding invitation companies
- DJ's
- Limousine drivers
- Hairdressers (particularly ones who specialise in wedding hair and beauty)
- Wedding photographers
- Caterers
- Marquee hire companies
- Event organisers / wedding co-ordinators

- Schools (Proms are a big business)
- Car dealerships
- Local councils
- ANYONE ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF IN THE WEDDING / PARTY INDUSTRY.

We even have funeral directors who recommend us. If someone passes away we provide balloons for the family so that they can attach a note and let it go into the sky.

Hotels are very lucrative when you establish a referral system with them. But they can be difficult to persuade. I recommend starting with all the social clubs, bridal shops etc. I find local businesses run by the owner-manager are the easiest to persuade. I also find that if you approach someone who runs their own business they are more willing to help you.

Some people will want a **commission**. This is fine and if they do I would recommend 10%. However, there will be loads of people who will be happy to recommend you out of the goodness of their hearts. This is so important. Every time you get an enquiry ask the following question: "How did you get my details". This will tell you exactly who is recommending you. Never take this for granted and be sure to let these people know that you appreciate their efforts. I find a bottle of wine or even a thank-you card goes a long way especially when they recommend you for the first time.

Recommend other people. This is simple. They recommend you and you recommend them. Tradesmen use this very well. If you get a plumber in they always have a friend who is a joiner, electrician, plasterer etc.

HAVE A GOOD PORTFOLIO

Every time a potential customer makes contact make every effort to meet them at the venue where the party will be held. By doing this it gives you the opportunity to show your portfolio and show where your designs can be displayed for the very best impact. **IN YOUR PORTFOLIO INCLUDE TESTIMONIALS FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS.** This adds credibility to you and your business.

THREE IMPORTANT TIPS

1. **Provide excellent customer service.** People remember good service. Always do something (anything) to exceed your customer's expectations.
2. **Answering the telephone.** Answer the phone quickly and professionally.
3. **Dress like a business person.** Wear a suit. First Impressions are vital.

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE YOU CAN MAKE.

The biggest mistake you can make is to have no plan to get customers. Without this you are lost.

CONTACT LOCAL GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

If you look in your local paper there should be dozens of local societies such as photographic societies. Offer a special discounted rate to these groups. Attend one of their meetings.

NETWORKING GROUPS

These give you the opportunity to present your business to other business people. I regularly attend 3 local business networking groups. I enjoy them and they provide me with a good supply of customers.

DEPOSIT

Always take a deposit for anything of value you leave in the care of the customer.

NERVES

When you start meeting customers and asking other companies for referrals it is very common to be nervous. Nerves are normal. Please, please believe me when I say this will disappear the more time you spend networking.

GET EVERYONE YOU KNOW TO RECOMMEND YOU TO THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

My wife works for a very large organisation. There are over 1000 members of staff and they have an online Bulletin board. We put a free advert on the bulletin board with great success.

EMPLOYING STAFF

I like to think I have good judgement especially when it comes to employing people. Sometimes however you can employ someone who turns out bad. My advice is to get rid quickly. A bad member of staff will drain your energy. Politely tell them it's not working out and you no longer require their services.

The key to having a successful business is your ability to take action. Set a goal to call 20 new businesses that can refer their customers to you every week.

THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET ALL THE CUSTOMERS YOU NEED WITHOUT SPENDING ANY MONEY WHATSOEVER ON ADVERTISING.

Example 1

There is a bridal shop a couple of miles from me. They sell wedding dresses and also hire out suits for the groom and other male guests who need to be in formal wear. They are fairly busy and have at least 10-15 new customers through their door every day. They are open 6 days a week and therefore on average have 60-90 customers per week.

The shop is owned by a lady and she has one part time member of staff who works in the shop for 2 days a week. I called the owner and gave her a quick summary about my balloon decorating business and asked if we could arrange a quick meeting. I told her that I had a business proposition that I thought she'd be interested in which wouldn't cost her a single penny.

I arrived (very nervous as this was the first time I had done anything like this) and showed the lady some pictures from my portfolio. Then I made my proposition which I described to her as a win-win-win for everyone. The arrangement I suggested was as follows. The owner of the shop would give one of my leaflets to every single new customer who came in to her shop. I even asked her to give my leaflets to not only her customers but also the people who were simply browsing. In exchange for doing this I would give the shop owner 10% of the value of the order. If a customer spends \$300 she would receive a cheque from me for \$30.

How is this a win-win-win? Here it is – I win because I get a customer and I don't have to spend anything on wasted advertising which brings in no results. The Lady who runs the shop wins because she makes easy money for doing hardly anything. And the customer wins because people prefer to use a company that has been recommended to them by someone they know and trust.

This next point is very important. If you have someone recommending your services your customers are willing to pay more for your services.

How many customers do I get from this bridal shop? The answer is approximately 2 a month. On average the value of each order from this shop is around \$250. Therefore, she is worth about \$500 a month and she gets a nice cheque for about \$50. This is approximately **\$600** a year for hardly lifting a finger. In a nutshell this bridal shop makes me around \$6000 minus \$600 commission as just mentioned leaving me **\$5400**.

Clearly this is not enough to make you a good living so you need more bridal shops or wedding cake shops or hotels etc to refer their customers over to yourself. It really is that simple.

TAKE ACTION IMMEDIATELY

SELF DISCIPLINE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN BUSINESS AND IN LIFE.

HERE IS YOUR SPECIFIC PLAN: DO THIS NOW

Go online to your Yellow Pages / Thompson local / local directory and put together a list of at least **1000** of the companies mentioned above (hotels, bridal shops etc). Save the details into a spreadsheet or even into a Word document and call AT LEAST 20 every single week. Say to them something like this.

“Good morning, can I speak to the owner / manager..... I am a local balloon decorator. Do you mind if I pop down and see you for 5 minutes to talk about something which could benefit both of us”.

Please do not read from a script. Be natural. You will be nervous at first but use this nervous energy to your advantage. You will get better and better at calling people and selling your services after every conversation. Then, to have a great income as a balloon decorator is very simple maths. For this example let's assume that each business that refers their customers to you brings you \$2500 of business per year. Your earnings are therefore summarised in the very simple table below.

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES RECOMMENDING YOUR SERVICES TO THEIR CUSTOMERS	INCOME (ASSUMING EACH BUSINESS GENERATES \$2500 OF BUSINESS FOR YOU EACH YEAR)
1	\$2,500
2	\$5,000
3	\$7,500
4	\$10,000
5	\$12,500
6	\$15,000
7	\$17,500
8	\$20,000

9	\$22,500
10	\$25,000
11	\$27,500
12	\$30,000
13	\$32,500
14	\$35,000
15	\$37,500
16	\$40,000
17	\$42,500
18	\$45,000
19	\$47,500
20	\$50,000

The above table is deliberately simple. If you want an income of \$50,000 you need around 20 businesses in your referral system. In reality to make this amount of money you will not need as many as 20. Your customers will come back again and again and also recommend you to their friends and family. We will talk more about this later.

This is again incredibly important. For you to get 20 businesses to pass their customers over to yourself there is a good chance you will have to meet over 400.

This means there is a good chance 19 people will say "No" just to get the one "Yes". I think that when you practice this system you will be pleasantly surprised. You may find your success rate is better than 1 in 10.

Please do not be disheartened by the rejections. It is simply part of the process. Each "No" takes you one step closer to the next "Yes". Napoleon Hill's book is considered to be the all time success classic. At the heart of the book it says 'never give up'. The theme running through the entire book is that successful people are successful because they persevere until their goals have been achieved.

If we look at the entrepreneurs on the television it seems that there is some sort of 'magic spark'. This is not the case. Success is perseverance especially when things are not going well. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SET UP A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS WITHOUT COMING ACROSS PROBLEM AFTER PROBLEM.

Imagine overweight people on a diet. The first does exercise every day and generally lives a healthier lifestyle. Then (like most people) gives up after a couple of weeks. The weight they lost over the 2 weeks soon

comes back and it was a waste of time. The second person however also does exercise and lives a healthier lifestyle. They do this continuously for a year and lose a tiny amount of weight every day (say just one ounce). In a year they have lost over 20lb. The only difference between the 2 people is persistence. The same applies in business.

IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A REALLY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS AND MAKE LOTS OF MONEY YOU MUST CALL 1000 BUSINESSES TO PASS THEIR CUSTOMERS OVER TO YOU. THIS IS APPROXIMATELY 20 PER WEEK OR AROUND 3 A DAY. WHY NOT TAKE A WEEK OUT OF YOUR LIFE AND CALL 50 A DAY. IF YOU DO THIS FOR 5 DAYS YOU WILL CALL 250. YOU REALLY COULD HAVE 25 STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS IN PLACE AT THE END. EACH RELATIONSHIP COULD BRING YOU IN AN AVERAGE OF \$1000 PER YEAR TOTALLING \$25,000 PER ANNUM.

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