

Portfolio

Examples of Written Work

Showing examples of the high standard of written work produced by Gordon Goodfellow

Listed by category

All the work featured here was unique when it was written as completely original articles and content for websites, etc. All content was originally tested and passed Copyscape.

All the content was then used by their respective clients, mainly on their own websites. As a result of this the articles no longer pass Copyscape today because they have been put to use on publicly accessible sites.

Any Copyscape results which show more than one instance of an article here will indicate that this work has itself been copied and plagiarized by a third party since it was first written!

Note: Copyright is owned by the client in each case. All writing samples are for illustrative purposes only in order to show the high standard and scope of the writing, and are not for further commercial use.

Some Categories of Written Work

Here are some actual examples of written work I have produced for clients over the past six months. As you can see, they are in a great diversity of categories.

The categories are in alphabetical order.

Animal Welfare - [The Suffering of Wild Animals: Intro](#) (of ebook)

Consumer Laws - [The Legal Status of Cannabis in Canada](#)

Diet and Weight Loss - [Got a Spare Ten Minutes? Try Interval Training](#)

Digital Marketing – [A Summary of Digital Marketing](#)

Ecommerce - [How Does Amazon Search Engine Optimization Work?](#)

Employer Relations - [Four Ways to Guarantee Productivity from Your Remote Employees](#)

Health & Fitness - [Can some food help you lose weight?](#)

Horticulture – [The Beginners' Guide to Hydroponics](#)

Industry – [Diamonds Grown in Lab Conditions](#)

Medicine - [COVID-19 at Work: Important Actions You Need to Take from Now On](#)

New Age - [The Power Of Visualization](#)

Pets - [How to become the ALPHA](#)

Philosophy & Mysticism - [Swedenborg](#)

Retail & Consumer - [Alternative Sources of Finance for Real Estate Developers](#)

Survival - [The Recommended 5 Survival Food Brands](#)

Telecoms - [How Business Has Been Transformed By Phones](#)

The Suffering of Wild Animals: Intro

It is impossible not to feel for the suffering of the myriad of poor creatures who fend for themselves in the wild. Thankfully, people are now aware of the cruel realities of life and the day-to-day horrors that animals face living in the wild which constantly put their lives in peril. Huge numbers of animals are affected by this. And while the focus has traditionally been to help the creatures manage in their habitats from a conservation point of view, or with reference to their ecology, people are now realizing that these animals are each individuals, with individual needs.

Of course, as a civilized society we need to make more of an effort to prevent this widespread suffering, but most people don't know how big this issue is. Nor do we really know the right way to deal with it.

This book is highly focused on these big questions. Its aim is to provide a broader understanding of how widespread this problem is and, more importantly, address the matter head on so that something can be done to tackle it. This book is aimed at you. If you work in natural sciences or are in any way interested in the welfare and protection of animals in peril then you must read this.

The book is in three parts. Part I illustrates just how widespread this terrible suffering actually is, and how we can help, Part II sets out the ethical dilemma which impinges on all of us as fellow creatures, and Part III provides a cogent and detailed analysis of the contemporary situation from the viewpoint of the animals themselves. This is a totally new discipline which has been named Welfare Biology.

The first part of the book presents an overview of what animal suffering actually is and examines the various questions related to that; it looks at the adverse events which increasingly impinge on animals trying to survive in the wild, and of the tensions caused directly or indirectly to foment an existential crisis of suffering. It then examines some real solutions to this dilemma, and practical steps which can still be taken to prevent this calamity.

The second part of the book provides a summary of the current debate on animal ethics. It asks why some people are reticent about giving support. It attempts to dissect the arguments which seem to weigh the welfare of animals as individual beings against certain environmental positions. It examines exactly the idea of sentience in animals, and questions our pre-conceived notions about what we had always thought animals felt, especially among invertebrates.

The third part of the book asks what those in academia can do in order to best look after animals. It looks at this in the context of animal welfare, of wellbeing, and of providing true welfare for animals in the wild. Welfare biology is also discussed, with particular reference to the welfare of animals as individual cogent beings. We also see the importance of academic research into welfare biology, together with some of the latest exciting findings in this field.

The Legal Status of Cannabis in Canada

Cannabis has been outlawed in Canada since 1923, and it has been nearly eight decades from that time before its medicinal usage has been allowed, the Canadian government eventually legalizing it for medical purposes in 2001. Popular consent informed the basis of further legislation, and it was late in November of 2017 that the House of Commons passed into law the Cannabis Act (Bill C-45). This passed a second reading in March of 2018, and in June of that year the bill became law.

The law was accepted by the Senate on 19 June 2018 in a version which contained several amendments, almost all of which were passed. Accordingly, 17 October 2018 became a landmark day in Canada because cannabis had become legal in all provinces and territories, and there were large lines of people waiting outside the very first cannabis retail outlets.

A Short Synopsis of Canadian Cannabis Regulations

In Canada all adults are now allowed to possess, use, purchase and grow marijuana for recreational purposes; the age at which you are allowed to do this, and the regulations governing cultivation of the herb, differs from state to state, 19 being the minimum allowable age in all regions except Quebec and Alberta, where this is 18.

In all states a person is permitted to have in his or her possession 30 grams of marijuana; however, you are allowed to have a considerably larger quantity in your home in most states. For example, one is allowed to keep up to one kilo of cannabis at home in British Columbia, while in Manitoba there is no upper limit to the quantity of weed allowed indoors!

The law in different provinces provides differences as to where precisely a person is permitted to make use of cannabis. So Prince Edward Island allows smoking only within a private residence, while in B.C. it is illegal to use cannabis in cars, near children and in places where tobacco is similarly banned. A fine of up to \$2,000 can be levied in Nova Scotia upon those who are found in breach of their own statutes, which are similar to those in British Columbia.

Where is it Legal to smoke?

The use of marijuana differs from one state to another. Smoking weed on the sidewalk is not allowed in New Brunswick, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, and in Yukon the use of cannabis in any public place is completely prohibited.

The law in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta permits the smoking of cannabis in any place where tobacco is allowed, the only exceptions being in automobiles and anywhere children may reasonably be around. In practice this means that marijuana should never be smoked in public parks, in or near a school or school play area or sports fields.

Several hotel groups in Canada (counting the Omni and Marriott chains) have already banned smoking of conventional cigarettes, which in turn means that marijuana is also banned. Use of cannabis in Ontario is not allowed within 66 feet (20 meters) of recreational areas, day care centers or schools.

Permitted maximum Quantities of Cannabis and Similar Produce

The legal maximum limits for marijuana laid down in the Cannabis Act all refer to the product in leaf form when dried.

For the avoidance of doubt, one gram of dried marijuana leaf, as defined by statute, corresponds to the following:

- 1 cannabis plant seed.
- 70 grams of liquid cannabis.
- 0.25 grams of concentrated cannabis.
- 15 grams of edible cannabis.
- 5 grams of fresh marijuana leaf.

So from the above you are able to have in your possession as much as 150 grams of fresh marijuana leaf, 7.5 grams of concentrated cannabis, 0.21 kilo of liquid cannabis and up to 450 grams of edible cannabis.

One essential thing to bear in mind is that only cannabis bought from formally designated retail outlets is deemed to be legal, and it is a felony for one individual to sell it to another. It is illegal to provide weed to a child, although the disparate legal definitions of adult age in different states may be the cause of ambiguity.

For example, if somebody aged 19 from Quebec were to visit British Columbia and smoke cannabis with a local resident who was 18, this could theoretically lead to one or both persons being imprisoned for up to 14 years.

State laws even differ on the manner in which cannabis may be transported or delivered. Delivery of marijuana in an automobile is perfectly legal in Nunavut, provided that the product cannot be “easily accessed” by anybody within it. Cannabis may be contained in an open package in Prince Edward Island, however it needs to be out of the reach of the driver of the vehicle and of all other occupants. While in Manitoba, marijuana whilst in transit must at all times be confined to the trunk.

In conclusion, severe punishment awaits those caught with any more than five nanograms of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC, the principal psychoactive constituent) in their bloodstream while driving their car. However, there are those who point out that science does not justify this particular maximum limit, and that those who use cannabis medicinally will likely exceed this level precisely because they are regular users.

Got a Spare Ten Minutes? – Try Interval Walking

Our fitness expert explains just what a simple mix-and-match walking workout will do for you.

For lots of people, a good walk in the open air is the best way to set aside some time for ourselves and get our limbs moving. Walking (as opposed to running or jogging) is a low-

impact exercise, so people will be much more comfortable walking than with similar activities.

To maximise the fitness and weight loss advantages of any walking that you may decide to do, our fitness expert at Dave's Team talks about three magnitude levels which are involved when walking, all of which you can use to put together an easy but very effective workout.

Just pick one of your normal routes and mix it up a bit on the three levels. As an example, start off with a three or five minute warm-up (level one), build up to level two with more energy and then vary it with bursts of level three activity; after that you can take two to three minutes off in order to cool down again to level one. Make use of landmarks such as the next bus stop or road intersection to serve as your distance marker before applying a burst of energised level three activity.

As long as you keep to a regime of these three level types of activity you'll be doing your body a world of good. It's what sports scientists have called 'interval training', and this type of activity is thought to be as beneficial as normal steady exercise just over a slightly longer period. Even an average 10 minute bout of this kind of activity can make a lot of difference to your cardiovascular health and general well-being. Ensure that you're listening to your body, just to feel how good it is, and be sure to take a rest whenever you feel the need to do so.

Learn your levels

Level one (magnitude level 4–5 out of 10)

- Walk at a normal steady pace and concentrate on your posture by breathing up from the middle of your body upwards; make sure you relax your shoulders and swing your arms with your stride.
- The swing of your arms should be from your shoulder, not the elbow, and your arms should swing right out in front of you.
- The length of your stride should be determined by how comfortable you feel doing it; on planting your heel on the ground, your toes should be lifted towards your shins. Your foot will then roll naturally from heel to toe before again pushing off on a new stride.

Level two (magnitude level 6–7 out of 10)

- Walk confidently, bending the elbows to about 90 degrees and then swinging them in time with the rhythm of your stride.
- Keep the elbows close to the body; concentrate on your elbows' forward and backward motion. At no point should your legs be straight – do this so as to produce a natural and

smooth motion; be aware that a locked knee could cause a bouncing motion and wouldn't look very natural.

- As your speed increases, so will your hips rotate; allow this to take place naturally rather than moving the hips artificially.
- Lean forward a bit, ensuring that you do so from your ankles, and never the waist, as this could cause back problems.

Level three (magnitude level 8 out of 10)

- Level three is about your speed; walk as fast as you feel you are able. It might be difficult to maintain this, so keep doing it in bursts.
- Make sure that you concentrate on increasing your stride frequency, rather than your stride length; pump your arms by gently lifting your elbows behind you.
- To increase your speed, narrow your overall stride a bit and try adding a push off effort with your big toe every time you take a step, moving your foot in a continuous motion.
- From your ankles try leaning forward to give yourself a hint of being able to push quite hard against the ground. Leaning forward will also lessen your chances of accidentally overstriding.

A Summary of Digital Marketing

Different trends in digital marketing may come and go, but we need a basic definition of what digital marketing is and how it should properly be used to the best interests of any growing business. As this article will show, digital marketing (also known as online marketing or Internet marketing) is far more than merely a website or social media account. It is far more than that, and this should be understood in order to get the most from the amazing diversity of resources available which all go under this sometimes misunderstood umbrella phrase.

Different Kinds of digital marketing

There are lots of different aspects to marketing in the digital age. It's probably best to think of these as different channels, and each of these have their own best ways of doing this to achieve best results. Depending on what you are marketing, and on whether it is a product or a service, some channels will be more effective than others in getting your message across. It may be that some channels which are available will simply not be suitable for your own business. You have to make that choice.

As each channel grows in both diversity and complexity, new skills and processes will be needed to take full advantage of each particular medium. You will have to decide whether you want to learn these skills yourself or if it might be better to buy in people who are already experts in each new skill set.

Different aspects of digital marketing

As I mentioned above, digital marketing encompasses much more than just a website or social media account. We need to consider how the audience of each new channel chooses to interact with the material being presented, in order that we can manage each of these to our best advantage. Some of these will be more relevant to your business than others, while some will be totally irrelevant. You have to select what would work best for your own business, and it should be fairly obvious what would work from the start.

Here are some aspects of the digital world you should familiarise yourself with:

Devices – these are typically websites and apps, and any software which is Internet enabled. If channels are set up on these then you will probably be able to create your own channel for your own brand, and thereby be able to interact with potential customers that way.

Platforms – this is where social media comes in, and the space for this is huge and can only get bigger, as more and more tastes and interests are being catered for. Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Instagram all allow you to set up

your own channel (or channels) to use their own resources to show off your product or serve.

Digital media - these consist of a variety of free and paid communications and distribution channels for reaching audiences who will be looking for different things (and a different means of interacting) according to each medium.

Data – this is possibly the most valuable thing we have. By using your own different channels across the various online media you are able to collect data about your actual and potential customers or audience together with various metrics which are of interest to you. Note that data protection rules are taken very seriously and are protected by statute in most countries and by international treaties.

Technology – this is what we know and what we need to know in order to harness the potential of all the channels in the various media that are available for us to use in our marketing. This can be the technology needed to build a website or to successfully conduct a paid digital campaign using multiple resources.

Digital marketing by other names

Every sector has its jargon and its own buzz words. Digital marketing has its fair share. Most of it is useful, but sometimes the habit of giving something a name just for the sake of it simply causes needless confusion. The labels and jargon of contemporary online marketing are many and varied, and as the various strands of the discipline proliferate, people in different fields are calling the same things by different names, which hardly helps.

Digital marketing is a term used today for any method of using the various resources which are empowered by the Internet to get across what we want any potential audience to know about the product or service we are offering. The difference in the different terms used to describe this (such as online marketing and Internet marketing) are purely semantic. They all mean the same thing.

It would be easy to get sidetracked about the definition of something. So instead let's concentrate on the differences between *marketing* and *digital marketing*. Whereas *marketing* has been around for hundreds of years, using the resources and the technology (or lack of it) available at the time, *digital marketing* is simply marketing brought up to date. In fact, it would be strange to talk about marketing nowadays without referring to it as digital marketing.

Or to put it another way, most marketing has now become digital marketing because of the methods used. In fact, when we talk about marketing in a modern sense we really mean digital marketing.

This includes, but is not limited to, business websites, mobile apps and of course social media accounts as the three main types of marketing. There are various ways in which we can use these to get our message across. The particular medium we choose will determine

how we try to get our message across. An interior design business may use Pinterest to their best advantage, while an accountant will be best using LinkedIn. Music tutors and recording artists will make use of video, while physicists probably won't.

The Uses of Digital Marketing

There are ways of handling the different media which apply only to those media. Some would say that these are ways of manipulating the media so as to show off your product or service to its best advantage. The most obvious of these is, perhaps, search engine optimisation (SEO), which is the process and skill set required to enable your website, or individual web pages, to achieve a high ranking (or positioning) on the search engine results pages when their relevant keyword search term is entered into a search engine.

SEO has its correlatives in other fields of digital marketing. Hence the process and skill set required to achieve a high ranking for your app in the Google Play store of Android mobile apps is called app store optimisation (ASO) and so on.

All this is not to say that traditional media are not relevant to our marketing efforts any more; far from it. We should use the more traditional methods of marketing, encompassing print media, TV, radio, direct mail campaigns and even static posters, if they are applicable to our own particular sector and if that is a good fit for whatever it is that we want people to buy into.

What matters is that we integrate all these media as seamlessly as possible so that the brand is marketed to its best advantage, because in any kind of marketing it is always the brand that is most important, irrespective of the medium used to get the message across.

Wikipedia tells us that digital marketing is

the marketing of products or services using digital technologies on the Internet, through mobile phone Apps, display advertising, and any other digital mediums. Digital marketing channels are systems based on the Internet that can create, accelerate, and transmit product value from producer to a consumer terminal, through digital networks.

What makes marketing so interesting today is the sheer diversity of the media available and the extent to which this media can be used and (as some would say) manipulated to the best ends of our marketing purposes. The multichannel nature of this serves to provide different ways in which we can dress our products or services in ways which are best suited to that particular channel and in that particular medium.

The functions of digital marketing

We should not lose sight of the benefits of both digital marketing and the more traditional types, as what all forms of marketing have in coming is the promotion of the brand.

The objectives of contemporary marketing (including digital marketing) are no different from the objectives of the more traditional types of marketing. Marshall McLuhan's mantra that "the medium is the message" holds true today as robustly as it ever did. The only difference, perhaps, is that the digital version may be a little too keen to be judged according to how many followers, "friends" or "likes" something has, which is surely only an aspect of vanity displaying which is there more for the benefit of whichever social media platform utilises such things, rather than a true measure of marketing effectiveness.

So the traditional functions of marketing can be easily accommodated into the digital era. The Internet is therefore used to **identify** customers' needs, wants and aspirations. This is followed up by specific channels being able to **provide** information, access, online chat and any relevant data, secure purchase and payment facilities, and all the legal necessities that go with the purchase process. Finally, the purchaser of the product may be turned into a lifetime advocate of the brand through **customer satisfaction** from the user experience data that we glean, as marketers, from the whole sales process (sometimes called the sales funnel).

Conclusion

In conclusion, digital marketing is the informed and skilful use of online resources, within their respective channels, to the enhancement of your brand. The skill sets necessary for effective marketing are ever broadening so that it is increasingly less likely that one person within the organisation has the ability to credibly provide all roles; it is more likely that specialists will emerge who have the continued ability to enhance, optimise and manipulate existing media.

How Does Amazon Search Engine Optimization Work?

A lot of effort and thought goes into how to appease and, to a certain extent, attempt to reverse-engineer Google's algorithm. However, Google isn't the only search engine around. Amazon is also effectively a search engine as well. People selling on Amazon must know how SEO on Amazon works in order to sell more of their products. Ignorance of this means that you will certainly fail.

Acknowledged experts in the area of Amazon SEO have a wealth of information to give about this. Here is a summary of the advice that they have offered.

Amazon's algorithm is conversion-based

Whereas Google looks for relevance followed by apparent excellence on top of that relevance, Amazon's algorithm seeks out conversion rate. The days of trying to game Google are largely over as they have made their algo super-smart to those who wish to try. Keyword stuffing is so 2004. Try anything even close to that today and you may find yourself at the receiving end of one of the many updates that Google rolled out over the last couple of decades which will punish your efforts, and show you that you can't expect to do that and win.

Amazon's preference for conversion over relevance makes perfect sense: such a strategy will end up selling more product. The upshot here is that you can get away with putting as many keywords as you like into your title and description (as long as it reads well) so that it will have a greater chance of displaying when someone does a search for those keywords.

Some aspects you should concentrate on if you want to do well on Amazon include the overall health of your Amazon account, the feedback you get, low returns rate and associated metrics, your product reviews and your product pricing.

The one way that the Amazon and Google algorithms are similar is that they are both highly protected secrets. Amazon SEO specialists will sometimes refer to this as a blank page or a black box, a complete unknown.

The same specialists would probably agree, however, that there are certain things that influence the performance of your product listing. These include, but are not limited to:

- The number of product reviews you have
- The number of **positive** product reviews you have
- Product information and format; description and bullet points
- The number and quality of your product images
- Relevant keywords used in your product listing

Relevance together with performance

Of course, relevance isn't discarded as a criterion for product ranking. Amazon will put conversion performance over relevance, but relevance has to be there to start with. So you should pay attention to the following when considering both:

- Title
- Store Name
- Description
- Keywords
- Reviews (the more the better, and the more positive the better)
- Price
- Images (number and quality)
- Conversion

Your product reviews

The reviews that your product gains is of huge importance. It will often be the case that people go straight to the review section and look for feedback from existing purchasers. You need truly great reviews for your product to gain good rank and to keep it.

You should have a policy which looks after the customer from the moment they buy so that they are most likely to write a positive review. You should actively engage with customers who leave reviews and try to get the most out of this relationship. Remember that your negative reviews are valuable as well because they comprise market intelligence which you've just been provided with. Foster good relations with customers right from the start and this will help the quality of the product reviews which they choose to leave.

So your on-page SEO, taking care of the various elements of your product listing as described above, is important, and so is taking care of your customers in a qualitative sense, because doing that will enhance the product reviews which in turn lead to better ranking which lead to more sales.

Your product information

SEO has an important role in Amazon ranking, and it should be viewed with the same seriousness as you would approach SEO with Google. The higher ranking your product achieves, the more it will sell and the greater your revenue. That really is the bottom line, and it all stems from good SEO policy.

Amazon's own algorithm is based on conversion; in a page full of widgets, the one at the top will be the widget which sells most units. You should choose your keywords very carefully, as not all widgets are created equal. Some widgets will have attributes which attract people because other widgets don't feature those attributes: play to those differences as strengths and make sure you use keywords related to those attributes prominently. Always test. You want more people to click on your product than your competitors' products. Amazon will count those clicks and they will in turn inform the algorithm that determines product rank.

Your product description and all the information that goes with it will play an important part in ranking as well. Think about the format of this information, how it is laid out. Consider using a mixture of bullet points and short paragraphs. Always use high definition (HD) images. Always think of quality and what your customer expects. Check your spelling and grammar, as poor presentation will be a turn-off for prospective buyers and will impinge on your product ranking.

Customer queries

Amazon is responsible for about half of all current online sales. Clearly they have a system that works. But what enables this to work so well, and what are the details that make Amazon SEO excel? What follows are some pointers about Amazon Search Engine Optimization.

Amazon has an algorithm which seeks to match customer search keywords with the item within their database which matches the intent of the search most closely. It's all very well to say that. But what exactly goes into enabling the Amazon algo decide what those best matches are?

Is this close match based on the seller with the highest ad spend? Is it the seller with the largest brand presence? What about the prominence given to Amazon's own internal brands? Is preference given to the product that has the greatest incidence of search keyword phrases within its listing?

The answers are known to some of these, and with others the jury is still out. What is known for *certain* is that you will find success by testing and more testing. Use A/B split testing, use more complex testing or make use of the services of people who know how to do this really well.

One method which was used initially was to list a product as free at its launch; this would always get reviews from buyers, of course, because it was free. The idea was that after this free launch the product would be placed at the top ranking position and would then keep this pre-eminence.

However, Amazon saw what was happening and banned it. It was back to the drawing board as far as cracking Amazon SEO was concerned.

Amazon seeks to match the search query with the best item. The product listing has a ranking based on its keywords which is a better match than other items which are similar. So in order to rank in a better position your products must have *higher sales in relation to that specific keyword search term* than competing products.

To be able to have those sales, as a result of that prominent listing, you need those precise search term keywords in all the elements of your product listing. The keyword phrase must feature in:

- Product Title
- Description
- Bullet point lists
- Alt tags in the image
- Back-end search keywords
- Enhanced Brand Content pages

In addition, your sales copy must do all the other things that traditionally great sales copy does: it must attract the user to want to buy the product. The keywords must be placed within great copy which persuades them to buy.

Amazon's PPC can play a prominent part in Amazon SEO. We can use its analytics to track conversions based on a number of observable factors. By looking at everything which comes into play we can make actionable decisions about how to improve our Amazon SEO strategy. Which keywords work best, which to jettison from our campaign, and so on.

Also, if a PPC ad results in a click which leads to a purchase, Amazon will know to rank our product higher as a result of that conversion. We know this to be true by observing that the rank after that purchase is higher than the rank immediately before that purchase.

Those who know about how Amazon SEO works will tell you that everything in Amazon's sales environment is related to everything else. The ad which leads to the first click, the image which is able to attract the buyer and which is related to the ad itself, the price of the product and the product reviews are all related in Amazon's complex system.

The very complexity of all these elements working together is what is at the heart of how Amazon SEO works. Understanding all this is what determines Amazon SEO success. Patience and experience are important. Keyword relevance and diversity, where they should go, how they should be distributed at certain points in the copy, together with the endless testing of these various elements in combination with each other, are all necessary for ultimate success.

Amazon SEO keyword optimization

Similar to Google SEO, successful Amazon SEO is centred around keyword optimization. There are plenty of elements within a listing where these keywords can be used to best effect.

Perhaps the most obvious element is the product title. It is considered that placing the right keywords in the title is the biggest single ranking factor. Sellers should, where possible, use branded keywords here and also in the description and other elements.

It is known and accepted among SEO experts that people who search for specific brand and product names (brand keyword + product name or product number keyword) are at the final stages in the purchase process. The brand name + product name combination is known as a *buyer keyword*. The research into what they need has already been done; these people, at this stage, know the specific product item that they want.

This is especially true of a search process which doesn't seek information (like Google) but only products. Amazon is a buyer website, not an informational or advice website. The user is there for one purpose: to see products which are for sale. They're here because buying is already their intention.

It makes sense that, if you optimize for these buyer keywords, then you will have a much greater chance of making a sale.

As well as the title, you can place keywords in other elements of the product listing as well. There are plenty of opportunities to put your keyword phrase in:

- The product description
- The back-end data in your seller account
- The alt tags in all images
- The seller username

Also don't forget that there are other factors which affect ranking of your product in Amazon, apart from the way it is listed.

The product price will play its part as well. The overall impression and quality of the presentation will have a psychological impact on the potential buyer. Also the conversion rate, which plays a huge role in the product's ranking. For why would Amazon waste valuable space at the top of the results for a product which didn't sell?

Four Ways to Guarantee Good Productivity from Your Remote Employees

You want to make sure that your remote employees remain productive and responsive to their productivity targets at all times. Certainly it can be challenging to have remote employees, but it needn't be if you follow these four good bits of advice and turn your business into a success.

1: Communicate constantly

Constant communication has been known to be the foundation of business success, according to businesses who successfully do so. Good communication has never been more important, now that so many corporations have employees located in different parts of the country and different parts of the world. Your communication links need to be robust and reliable.

2: Make sure your guidelines are clear

You'll need to ensure that you have the proper rules and procedures in place for when and how employees communicate with your company. Ask for their own views about this, and they will feel more included. Before you employ remote workers make sure that the proper guidelines and expectations are in place. This will ensure that all your employees are all empowered equally in terms of what is expected of them.

3: Make use of technology to communicate

There are lots of new tools to help facilitate communication with employees, so make sure you use them to their best extent! Social media and messaging apps of various descriptions allow people to talk to one another individually or in groups. Some of these apps allow such conversations to be saved for later reference, if you need to check who said what and when (useful in any dispute). Your use of these will engage a protocol of communication with all employees so that everyone knows what is expected of them.

4: Make good use of project management software

It is sometimes difficult for employers at the start of a policy of hiring remote employees, and this is where the challenge presents itself at its most critical. If you're used to constantly overseeing people you'll feel this more, but the answer lies in allowing yourself to let go of this control. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the results of people who are left to their own devices to deliver more productive work.

There are several tools to help with this. These are **Asana, Toggl and Bitrix** and they help you to set targets for each team member, enable people to talk about the projects they're engaged in, while ensuring that these goals are sustained. Using AI, targets and achievements are displayed on a central dashboard for employees to track. Similarly, employers may see this as well and in this way can easily observe who are the more productive employees. Such methods allow you to be able to reward the more productive people who go above and beyond on a daily basis, and in this way retain them.

By the same token, employees who are not productive may also be seen, and their results verified in hard copy. In this way you can adequately improve their performance and retrain if necessary. In some cases you may find that such people would be better suited elsewhere.

Ensure your remote working is successful

Having remote employees will not be the solution for some businesses. But many, and hopefully yours, will be able to use the technology available to ensure a viable and successful remote employee policy that works for your own company.

Can Some Food Help You Lose Weight?

Unfortunately there's no quick way to lose weight. The best way to do so, however, is embark on a planned regime which considers diet, mood, activity and wellbeing as well as weight loss itself. Healthy eating has been shown to increase our happiness. An Australian research study has proved that there is a relationship between eating fruit and veg and increased life satisfaction.

Here are some foods to think about as being good for our overall wellbeing.

Fibre

Fibre will make you feel full, and this is the perfect way to go about losing weight. Fibre stays in your stomach for longer, due to fibre's increased digestion time requirements, so we feel sated for longer. This happens at the chemical level of the hormones, with the hunger hormone ghrelin actually suppressed by the presence of fibre in our diets. Fibre can be found in plentiful supply in foods such as wholegrain bread, oats, lentils, brown rice, fruit and vegetables, pasta, beans and peas.

Eggs

Eggs are a fantastic constituent of any meal during the day. Eggs are high in protein and nutrients and low in calories; they keep you feeling that much fuller for longer as well.

Leafy greens

Spinach and kale are good examples of leafy greens that are low in calories and carbs and yet high in fibre, so again this keeps us going without hunger for a long time. You can eat as much of this as you like without putting on lots of weight.

Salmon

Salmon is just amazing. It's full of oily, healthy fatty omega-3 acids and is very high in good quality protein; this plays its part in preventing conditions such as type 2 diabetes and obesity. Salmon is filling and satisfying, packed with goodness and very healthy for you. It's great to

have in any good weight loss diet. Try salmon with lots of leafy greens for a great nourishing meal and you won't feel hungry again for hours.

Nuts

A great source of healthy fats and protein, nuts make the perfect snack if you ever feel peckish between meals. But be careful not to have too much of a good thing: nuts are quite high in calories and you can go overboard with them.

Boiled potatoes

Potatoes should be boiled rather than fried to get the best of them. They contain lots of good nutrients and they make you feel full and not likely to want to eat too many of them at one sitting. You can have them baked in their jackets to preserve their fibre content to the maximum.

Greek Yogurt

Greek yoghurt makes a superb breakfast or quick snack, as it has nearly double the protein content of normal yoghurt. You can be creative with this and top it with fruit and nuts, or try some oats to give it added fibre.

Soups

There's plenty of research evidence to show that if you take an ordinary meal and instead make a soup out of it, with exactly the same ingredients, this will fill you up for longer and you will intake fewer calories into the bargain. The reason is that soups have a higher water content. You can add beans, pulses or shredded chicken to the soup for even more protein and fibre.

Apples

Fruit contains a form of natural sugar called fructose, and the fibre in apples prevents this sugar content going into your bloodstream too fast, so you'll get a nice, healthy, slow release of blood sugars. Apples contain a huge amount of fibre (one of them will have about 20

percent of the recommended intake per day). The fibre will make you feel full for longer, and this is one of the reasons why you will rarely see a case of anyone overeating on apples!

Water

Last but not least, we come to the humble H₂O. Because hunger is sometimes confused with being thirsty, next time you feel a bit peckish try drinking a glass of fresh water or some low calorie squash. You could try diluted fruit juice for a healthy alternative. If you make this into a habit you could save thousands of calories this way over the months.

The Beginners' Guide to Hydroponics

Tag: Beginner's Guide to Hydroponics

This beginners' guide to hydroponics is an introduction to the subject of hydroponics and is designed to give anyone both the basic scientific background surrounding this technology and also the practical information you need to begin your own hydroponics installation, explaining on the way why certain things are done as they are, and the pros and cons of the various methods used throughout the process.

What is Hydroponics?

Hydroponics is a type of horticulture (and a subset of hydroculture) in which plants of many different kinds can be grown completely without soil, by using a nutrient solution in a water-based medium.

The term 'hydroponics' was first coined by William Frederick Gericke from the Greek words 'hydro', meaning water, and 'ponic', meaning to cultivate or to work. Hence hydroponics, the technology of making water work in the process of cultivation.

Examples of the usage of hydroponics can be seen as early as 600 B.C. in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, but Hydroponics as it was understood as a science properly started in the early seventeenth century, when it was discovered that there were many advantages of using cultivation methods without the need to use soil. In fact, hydroponics is far more efficient than traditional forms of cultivation, in all sorts of ways.

As time went on, hydroponics developed as a technology with several different disciplines within the overall process, each with their own advantages and disadvantages relative to each other. The fact that there are different ways of going about it is to the great benefit of the beginner, who is now able and empowered to select the best and easiest methods available and to get started with minimum effort and expenditure.

The Advantages of Hydroponics

There are several advantages of hydroponics over more traditional soil-based cultivation methods. These can be outlined as follows:

Efficient Water Usage. A huge advantage in cases where water supply is very sparse, hydroponics has been measured to be up to 90% more efficient than soil-based cultivation in its use of water. This is because the process conserves water consistently in an almost closed system.

Efficient Land Usage. As well as conserving water, hydroponics makes far more efficient use of the land available for cultivation, with amazing yields of between three and ten times that of traditional methods for the same amount of land available.

Speed of Cultivation. A large number of different types of crop can be produced twice as fast as traditional methods of cultivation in a well-managed environment. This also means that the

nutritional value of the crop is twice as much, given that the time taken to grow the crop to harvest is effectively halved.

No Need for Good Quality Soil. The very nature of hydroponics means that soil quality is irrelevant as no soil is needed. This is a huge game changer in places where horticulture was previously impossible.

No Need for Good Climate. Similarly, with a system such as hydroponics which can ideally be managed indoors, there is no need to worry about whether the outside weather conditions are favourable or not; in fact, the weather itself becomes irrelevant.

Far Less Danger of Disease. Without the need for soil, the crop is in no danger of contamination or blight by earth-borne pests and disease which can destroy whole harvests with traditional methods. There are also no weeds to take care of in the process.

No Need for Chemicals. Because of the above, there is no need for using potentially dangerous chemical pesticides in hydroponic methods in order to keep down pests and eradicate weeds. Such chemicals can run off into the water table and enter the local water supply, sometimes with regrettable and long-term consequences. Hydroponics does away with that.

Minimal Work Needed. In a well ordered hydroponic process, what you have is essentially an almost closed system which needs very little maintenance; it does not require the regular drudgery of weeding and the tilling of soil. Instead, you only need to make occasional checks to make sure that each part of the system is running according to the optimal conditions which are already known and easy to apply and regulate with readily obtainable and inexpensive equipment.

Scalable System from the Very Small. You can start your own hydroponic cultivation system with a very small setup in a corner of a spare room or even a cupboard. This is ideal for the beginner, of course. Different hydroponic systems will allow different economies of scale and choosing the right type of system will determine the ease that you can scale upwards to as large a system as you like, remembering all the time that even a relatively small setup will yield much more than a comparably sized soil-based process.

The Six Types of Hydroponic System

There are six basic types of hydroponic processes and system. These are Wick, Water Culture, Ebb and Flow, Drip System, Nutrient Film Technique (NFT) and Aeroponic. Let's examine each of these in more detail.

Wick System. Considered to be hydroponics at its simplest, the wick system uses a small pump to move the nutrient solution from the reservoir to the plants housed in the grow tray. It is a passive system in that there are no moving parts. This technique is ideal for beginners; such a setup can be made as a simple DIY project and there are several ready-made commercial types available as well.

Water Culture. Sometimes also known as Deep Water Culture or DWC, this type of hydroponic system employs the suspension of net pots containing the plants in the reservoir so that the roots are constantly submerged in the nutrient solution.

Ebb and Flow. Also known as Flood and Drain, this uses a timer to activate a pump which exposes the plants within the grow tray to the nutrient solution every few minutes, after which the nutrient solution drains back into the reservoir.

Drip System. Here a timer is also used which allows the nutrient solution to be drawn through its network of drip lines. There is a 'recovery' and a 'non-recovery' version, where the excess nutrient solution is (or is not) collected back into the reservoir to be re-used. This is probably the most widely used type of hydroponic system in the world.

Nutrient Film Technique. NFT is a type of hydroponic system which works by constantly flowing the nutrient solution through the grow tray (which is usually tubular) so that there is no need for any timer. The nutrient solution then flows back into the reservoir. This system has no need of any growing medium.

Aeroponic. Like the Nutrient Film technique above, this hydroponic system does not need a growing medium, because in this case the plants hang in air. A timer controls the rate at which the nutrient solution is sprayed onto the roots of the plants. This misting of the roots happens every few minutes. Because the roots are suspended in air it is important that the power supply is never interrupted, even for a short time as typically happens in a power cut, as this will cause the roots to dry out relatively quickly.

It is considered that the wick system is the easiest hydroponic setup for beginners; the Deep Water Culture system is also favoured because of a well-known commercial variant called the Kratky method, which is easily set up and also inexpensive. [*Links to be as and when to own products rather than competitor products, of course.*]

The Chemistry of Hydroponics

All plants work by consuming carbon dioxide and giving out oxygen as a by-product. This is exactly the opposite of what humans do in making use of the oxygen in the air we breathe and then breathing out carbon dioxide, so people co-exist with plants perfectly in this symbiotic way!

In broad terms, all plants need oxygen, light, water and nutrients. The combination of these sets in motion the chemical process known as photosynthesis, which is the process in which (green) plants make use of light in order to synthesize nutrients from carbon dioxide and water. Thus plants 'drink' the CO₂ and water and give out oxygen. The process of photosynthesis in plants in general involves the green chlorophyll and generates oxygen into the air as a by-product.

The nutrients which are used in the hydroponics process contain the main elements Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium (collectively N-P-K) which all plants need to be able to grow.

All plants use sunlight in order to manufacture food in the form of sugars through the clever use of the photosynthesis process. The energy of the sunlight is stored in the green pigmentation of the leaves called chlorophyll.

The chemical reaction is, specifically:

Carbon dioxide + water + light = glucose + oxygen

The carbon dioxide reacts with the water contained in the plant roots (this process using sunlight as a catalyst). The food in the form of sugar (glucose) is created from this process called photosynthesis. The glucose is then used for respiration in the normal life cycle of the plant. Alternatively, it can be stored for when it is needed later by converting it into starch.

Given that oxygen, water and light are all more or less constants, the variables which determine the success of your hydroponics project are the nutrients you decide to use. There are several different nutrients available commercially, but they all share the same broad characteristics because they must all serve the same purpose.

The nutrients used in hydroponics can be classified into two categories which are the macronutrients and the micronutrients.

Macronutrients and Micronutrients Used in Hydroponics

In all types of hydroponic techniques both macronutrients and micronutrients play their own important part in the process, and each is as important as the other in the way that they reinforce and complement the growing process.

Macronutrients are the nutrients that plants need in relatively large amounts. Macronutrients include nitrogen (chemical symbol N), potassium (K), phosphorous (P), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg) and sulphur (S).

Nitrogen is the main plant growth food. Without nitrogen there would be no foliage; nitrogen controls the growth of the cells in both the stems and the leaves, and also determines the colours and size of the plant. It plays a vital role in protein synthesis which involves chlorophyll, amino acids and their associated enzymes.

Potassium plays a vital role in all stages of plant growth. Crucially, potassium helps synthesize sugar, starches and carbohydrates, and plays its own part in the development of the plant's stems, roots and flowers. Potassium is also important in resisting insects and bacteria.

Phosphorous is crucial in the process of photosynthesis and is part of the DNA of any plant, controlling all the plant's aspects and characteristics. A lot of phosphorous is required in the early stages of plant growth and in germination, and it is responsible in large measure for the roots of the plant as well as its seeds, flowering and fruits.

Calcium is important in the development and formation of cells in a plant, and is particularly important in fast-growing plants.

Magnesium is also used in relatively large quantities by the faster growing plants. Magnesium is vital to chlorophyll production and helps to allow oxygen to be created as part of the photosynthesis process. It is essential for vigorous and healthy plants.

Sulphur is a component of several of the amino acids which form proteins, hormones and vitamins.

By contrast, micronutrients are needed in very small amounts, but are nevertheless essential to a plant's growth and healthy development. Micronutrients include zinc (Zn), manganese (Mn), iron (Fe) and boron (Bo).

Zinc works together with other elements to help form the chlorophyll, which is any one of several related green pigments in a plant.

Manganese plays its own part in the production of chlorophyll along with nitrogen and iron.

Iron is crucial in relation to a plant's enzyme system and is all necessary for the synthesis of chlorophyll.

Boron combines with the macronutrient calcium in the development of a plant's cell membranes and the production of chlorophyll.

Other micronutrients include copper, molybdenum and chlorine.

Plants would find it impossible to build molecules or to enable the enzyme reactions which are necessary to a plant's healthy development without all these essential elements. They are all vital in a plant's healthy life cycle. The hydroponic process would not be able to compete or display its superiority to soil-based horticulture without these nutrients and without the cooperation of all these elements in their various proportions working together.

Growing Media Used in Hydroponics

The basis of hydroponics is that it is a form of horticulture which does not require soil. But in the absence of soil, plants will need a medium in which to successfully grow. There are quite a few different types of growing media available to the hydroponic gardener, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages relative to all the others.

The growing media should allow the transmission of moisture, oxygen and nutrients to the plants, especially the plant roots, and it is by its success in achieving this that any growing medium will be judged, along with its cost and ease of use. To this end, there are several growing media which are currently and popularly used.

In addition to supplying and holding oxygen, moisture and nutrients, a good growing medium should preferably be lightweight so that it can be transported easily and be easy to work with. It should be reusable and pH neutral (more about optimum pH values later), inexpensive and it should preferably be organic and friendly to the environment.

Some popular media used in hydroponics include the following:

Coconut Coir. Also known as Cocopeat, Coco-tek and Ultrapeat, this is widely used in hydroponics and is a by-product of the coconut industry, made from the husks of coconut shells. Coconut coir is able to hold and retain air and moisture well, and it is environmentally friendly, being both organic and renewable. On the negative side, it does not have particularly good drainage properties and will, according to its quality, become uncompressed over time.

Perlite. This has been used in traditional gardening methods for a long time now. It is mined volcanic glass which is treated to very high temperatures. It is very lightweight, retains oxygen very well and is reusable. However, for some hydroponic systems perlite is considered too lightweight and there can be a certain amount of dust from the material.

Rockwool has had a number of popular applications and is made by melting volcanic rocks. The resulting compound is then spun into fibrous material as it emerges from the furnace. It is inert, holds water and retains oxygen very well, and can be used in a number of different shapes and sizes. However, it is not particularly environmentally friendly as it is almost impossible to dispose of, it is prone to particulate dust and lacks the pH neutrality which is preferred in such applications.

Expanded Clay Pellets. Also known as LECA, these are small spherical clay balls which are heat treated until they expand to small pellets. This material has very good oxygen retention and is endlessly reusable. But it suffers from relatively bad water retention and is quite heavy when used in the kind of quantities which are necessary.

Growstones. These are very versatile porous rocks made from recycled glass. The material is lightweight and is more air and water retentive than both perlite and coconut coir. On the negative side, though, it is known to cause damage to some types of plant roots as it tends to cling.

Vermiculite, like perlite, is mined and treated to very high temperatures. It retains nutrients and moisture very well. But it is quite expensive, and it is known to retain too much water, although it's often used in conjunction with perlite to partially correct this problem.

Starter Plugs. These are made from naturally occurring material such as peat moss. It is ideally bio-adhesive and is good for seed germination and for plant propagation. It is, of course, organic and highly sustainable. But it can be fairly expensive and is only best used for cloning and for seedlings.

As you can see, there is quite a choice when it comes to growing media for your hydroponic system. The material you use will depend on personal preference as well as the type of hydroponic system you end up choosing.

The Best Grow Lights for Hydroponics

There are all sorts of grow lights available for use in hydroponics, and they come in a huge variety of different sizes, shapes and types. There are three main categories of hydroponic grow lights, and these are fluorescent, high-intensity discharge (HID) and light emitting diode (LED). Each type, as you would expect, has its own pros and cons.

Fluorescent. This type of grow light, because of its cost and efficiency, is the most popular among home gardeners.

There are two types of fluorescent light: compact fluorescent light (CFL) and tube-style.

Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL). These are recognizable as the inexpensive bulbs which seem to be made to any imaginable shape. They are ideal for small hydroponic installations as they don't give off large amounts of heat and can be safely put next to plants.

Tube-Style Fluorescent. These come in several different types. The T5, T8 and T12 seem to be the most numerous of these, of which the T5 are the most popular and are known for their efficiency. Tube-style lights are much wider than CFLs and are usually arranged in parallel and mounted on a fixed board.

High-Intensity Discharge (HID). HID grow lights are known to be more efficient than fluorescent lights. But they give off more heat as well, so they will quickly heat up and need constant ventilation.

High-Pressure Sodium (HPS). These emit reds and yellows of the spectrum. Because of these properties they're used more during the fruiting and flowering phases of plants, although they can also be used throughout the life cycle of any plant.

Metal Halide (MH). MH lights emit within the blue range of the colour spectrum. For this reason, these grow lights are best suited for vegetative phases of the plant life cycle.

Ceramic Metal Halide (CMH). Seeming much like conventional MH grow lights at first, CMH grow lights have a much broader spectrum range than either MH or HPS and they last quite a bit longer than either of these other two types.

Light Emitting Diode (LED). LED grow lights are extremely efficient when compared with other types of light, and they give off a great deal of light while needing little electricity to do so. They are also extremely lightweight. They do not build up much heat, and in addition many have built-in cooling facilities as well. LED grow lights consist of lots of diodes to produce their light; they can be customized to produce specific wavelength colours on the spectrum. The downside to LEDs is that they are relatively expensive (although over a long time they do pay for themselves as they need less electricity). LED arrays can also take up quite a bit of space.

Grow lights can be a large chunk of your hydroponics setup expenditure. For beginners who are on a budget, CFLs are a good choice. They work very well on smaller plants which require only a little light.

You may want to consider different types of grow lights at different phases of your plants' life cycle. In terms of matching lights to plants this makes a lot of sense. MH and CMH grow lights are best used during the vegetative phases and HP lights do better for the flowering phase.

For those with a larger budget to play with, LED grow lights are a good choice because, although relatively expensive as a one-off purchase, they pay for themselves because of their superb efficiency. They are also very wide spectrum, so they suit all phases of a plant's life cycle.

Because of the heat that your grow lights will inevitably produce, you will need to consider ventilation, for which there are various options. For those with a larger budget you may want to invest in a water chiller; this will assure your plants' optimum all-round condition.

The Best Environmental Conditions for Successful Hydroponics

You should take control of your hydroponics setup straight from the start and check regularly that everything is at its optimum setting. This covers all aspects of the hydroponics environment including such metrics as water quality, temperature, humidity, pH level and electrical conductivity.

Water Quality. The difference between water which is considered normal or optimal and water which is 'hard' can be important. You can buy water hardness test kits for less than £10. The test for hard water involves testing for dissolved solids (TDS) in the water and is measured in milligrams per litre (mg/L).

In general, water which is anything up to 60mg/litre is considered 'soft'. Between 60 and 120mg/L is considered moderately hard, between 121 and 180mg/L is hard, while water over 180 mg/L is considered very hard. City water, in its natural state out of the tap, is usually quite hard. If your city water is 200mg/L or over then it is too hard, so you'll need to consider using filtered or distilled water instead.

Best Temperature. It is considered that any temperature in the range of 68 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit (20 to 22 degrees Celsius) is acceptable.

Best Humidity levels. The optimum humidity for hydroponics is in the region of between 50 and 60 percent. During the vegetative phase, when the plants grow plenty of leaves which need lots of

water, the requirement for moisture is at its highest; in this phase they do best at levels of up to 70 percent.

Best pH Levels. The optimum pH range for most hydroponic setups is from 5.5 to 6.5; the pH is quite important for plant growth as it affects the absorption levels of many of the 16 atomic elements which are needed for your plants' healthy growth. The maximum absorption levels for these elements is considered to be at pH readings from 5.5 to 6.5, with a sweet spot at 6.0.

Electrical Conductivity (EC). Electrical conductivity measures the salts in your hydroponic system; also known as the level of nutrients in the system. An ideal electrical conductivity level would be somewhere from 1.2 to 2.0.

Because of their close association, electrical conductivity and pH meters are often to be found incorporated as one dual instrument or meter. You should measure both every few days or so.

Best Nutrient Solutions for Hydroponics

There are lots of nutrient solutions available for the keen hydroponic gardener, and the choice is basically **determined by what you are actually growing**. For many people, 'nutrient solution' and 'fertiliser' are interchangeable terms. So if you are growing spinach then you'll be wanting a different nutrient to the one you'd buy if you were growing cannabis.

There are commercially available nutrients which are specially made up which you can buy off the shelf, or you can make your own nutrients, from your own formula. You can buy pre-mixed liquid or powder nutrients which are mostly sold as concentrates, then just add the water. Larger hydroponics growers and farms tend to favour their own mixes as they know that they have very specific needs for whatever it is that they are growing, and also the larger growers tend to have accumulated that much more knowledge and experience for them to be able to make those decisions and judgment.

Pre-mixed nutrients will generally come in concentrate form and in two separate containers; one of these will contain the macronutrients and the other will contain the micronutrients. Some of the elements can react together when mixed, hence the reason for separating them. When they are safely diluted this ceases to be a problem, as they do not form the precipitates which can occur when the concentrated elements are mixed. In some cases you can buy the incompatible nutrient elements in their own single pack so that there is no danger of them mixing.

You will need a container to mix the nutrients in, a measuring container and something to stir the mixture. If there's a lid on your mixing container then you won't need anything to stir it with: you just shake it within the container as vigorously as you reasonably can. Although it can vary, the measuring quantity is generally 3.5mL of each of the concentrated form per litre. Of course, before doing anything you should read the instructions, preferably twice.

Check the pH and the temperature. Go through each of the metrics one by one and get familiar with how each one 'feels'; is there one process which demands more attention than the others? Does one aspect take more time than all the rest put together? Get to know the little quirks and turns of each aspect of the hydroponics process in sequence. Get to know the process personally; get to know its character and make it a friend!

How much solution do you want to make up? For beginners it will be small to start off with. You'll want to get a feel of things first; ideally you'll want to take things slowly, stage by stage. For people beyond the beginner's stage there are mixing drums which go up to 55 gallons.

But that is for a later post.

As with everything else, you'll want to get familiar with all the equipment and all the processes that go together to fulfil the project to its successful completion.

For more information and for some great additional resources and ideas go to [[LINK](#)].

Diamonds Grown in Lab Conditions

Diamonds which are grown in labs have exactly the same crystalline structure, optical properties, chemical composition and physical attributes as diamonds which are mined: their carbon atoms are consistently found to be of a cubic crystalline structure. The diamonds that we make in our labs cannot be distinguished from diamonds of the same quality which have been mined.

There are certainly variations in the clarity and color of diamonds created in the lab, and this is due to the growth process being very similar to that of diamonds which grow 'naturally'. To put it another way, not every diamond grown in a lab is colorless or without flaws. Exactly the same criteria (the Four Cs) are used for grading man-made diamonds which are used by the same independent labs which grade diamonds more traditionally mined from the Earth.

As opposed to cheap simulated diamonds, our own lab diamonds manifest exactly the same flash, fire and sparkly brilliance as diamonds which have been mined. Lab diamonds' brilliance and luster does not change or fade over time.

HOW DO YOU GROW A DIAMOND?

Diamonds are grown in the lab by exactly replicating the conditions which exist within the earth which cause diamonds to form naturally from crystallizing carbon.

It has taken nearly sixty years of testing and experience to produce the precise conditions in which gemstone quality diamonds are grown; indeed, the competence necessary to grow diamonds is one of humanity's greatest achievements of precision manufacturing and complex composition.

There are currently two ways in which diamond gemstones may be grown. One is by HPHT (high-temperature high-pressure) and the other is CVD (chemical vapor deposition). It is the size and color of the diamond which determines which of these methods is the best one to use.

HPHT Method: High pressure-High temperature

The HPHT process involves growing the diamonds inside huge cookers under enormous pressure. In this process, the little diamond 'seeds' are put inside a growth container with graphite then being placed over the seeds. The cooker is then heated to 1500 degrees Celsius and subjected to pressure equivalent to about 70,000 times that at sea level.

In these conditions of extreme pressure and temperature the graphite within the growth container melts to form carbon in its liquid state, which is then allowed to cool under controlled conditions to form the most robust type of carbon which is a diamond crystal.

CVD Method: Chemical Vapor Deposition

The CVD process involves growing the diamonds inside a vacuum plasma reactor. The thin plates of diamond are put in the growth container and gaseous hydrocarbon is infused into the reactor.

Microwaves of very high power then break the molecules of this gas apart. The result is that the carbon atoms then precipitate onto the diamond plates and the diamond is actually grown atom by atom.

The CVD diamonds which result then often undergo massive pressurization in order to compress the diamond. The additional pressurization will improve the diamond crystal quality, enhancing it with better light and color attributes.

Q and A

Q. Are these diamonds grown in the lab actually 'real' diamonds?

A. Absolutely. Diamonds grown in the lab are certainly very real and not fake in any way. Diamonds which are man-made in this way are 100 percent carbon and have precisely the same properties as diamonds which are mined. Lab grown diamonds recreate in the lab the specific conditions within the Earth which result in naturally occurring diamonds, these being the action of extreme pressure and heat on carbon.

Q. What time does it take to grow a diamond in the lab?

A. Between seven and ten days is what is required to grow a lab diamond of 1 carat; it takes about four weeks to create a 3 carat diamond in the lab.

If you try to speed up this process then it will likely result in the crystal fracturing. So there are speed restraints which determine how quickly this takes.

Q. Are diamonds grown in the lab verified by any third party institutions?

A. Yes. The diamonds from our lab above 0.50ct are certified and graded by eminent not-for-profit gem laboratories. The majority of diamonds we sell have been verified by IGI. We recommend only buying lab diamonds which have been certified accordingly by a similarly reputable organization.

For all diamonds we offer our clients we will share the report from the third party lab prior to purchase. These reports may be verified by going to the grading body's website and referencing the ID.

COVID-19 at Work: Important Actions You Need to Take

You can't help but notice the constant coverage of the spread of Coronavirus on the media at present.

At places of work people are particularly worried about what they should be doing and what they should be avoiding; people are concerned how these new responsibilities impinge on their working practices and even their conduct.

So how are HR departments to take the lead here? What are the crucial things that HR needs to know about Covid-19 and how exactly should they be preparing for what is to come?

Here is our own brief but comprehensive guide to what you should do and what you should not do in the workplace to prepare for whatever this virus has in store for us.

Things You Should Know

What exactly is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus (specifically and officially referred to as COVID-19) is a generic group of viruses which are referred to collectively by this name. This virus causes respiratory illness which may be mild or it may be more severe. The virus first appeared in late 2019 in China, and was announced by the World Health Organization as originating in Hubei Province in that country. By 9 March 2020 there were 647 recorded cases in the United States and more than 110,000 such cases across the whole world.

Coronavirus Symptoms

The symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) start with a persistent cough and fever, together with difficulty breathing, leading to respiratory problems which range from mild to more severe.

How Does the Coronavirus Spread?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads as a result of someone with an existing infection coughing or otherwise exhaling, which sends droplets containing the virus out into the local environment. These may land on inanimate objects such as tables, chairs, walls or any other surface, where the virus may remain active for up to 72 hours. It is thought that those who exhibit the most severe symptoms are at the most contagious stage. However, it is also

thought that people are contagious before that, during the incubation stage. Similar viruses exhibiting incubation stages as long as 14 days have been recorded.

Who are the People Most at Risk from COVID-19?

The World Health Organization tells us that all people are susceptible, but that there are those who are particularly vulnerable including older people and especially those who have a pre-existing clinical condition, including diabetes, asthma and heart disease.

Does Coronavirus have a Vaccine Yet?

At present there are no vaccines or other medical preparations available which can be used to treat COVID-19. The advice is that those who are suffering from the virus need to self-isolate in their own homes. Those who are currently being treated at a clinical care unit will remain there until considered safe enough to go home.

Are Masks Useful in Protecting People from COVID-19?

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has said that it does not recommend most types of facemasks as a preventative precaution against the new Coronavirus. Instead it has recommended that only FFR face masks be used, and that these should only be used by health care professionals working in the field or people looking after an infected individual. Such masks are useful also when people are sneezing and coughing, in that they can prevent the germs from spreading. In any event, it is necessary to dispose of such masks in a way which is clinically recognized.

What Do OSHA Standards Recommend about COVID-19?

There are some existing requirements which may apply to the prevention of Coronavirus spreading in the workplace, although there are no specific standards relating to COVID-19. OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) specifications as well as their General Duty Clause may apply here. Employers with locations in several states should be aware of the 28 OSHA approved State Plans which set out the health and safety guidelines in this context. In the state of California, for example, the Aerosol Transmissible Diseases measures are designed to mitigate diseases spread through air-borne viruses infecting workers. You should consult the laws in your own state for compliance with inter-state procedures.

What You Should Do

Make Sure You Have a Clean Office

Probably the best way to prevent disease spreading in the workplace is to ensure that your working environment is kept clean and uncontaminated at all times. In particular, all cleaning materials including hand sanitizers, soap and tissues should be in a convenient location for all employees to freely use and you should provide information such as posters in bathrooms which advise on the recommended hand washing procedures.

Employees and management alike should be provided with sanitized wipes for cleaning any office equipment and furniture such as desks, computers and phones, as all these could be the source of germs.

Communication is Important at All Times

It is so important to keep in constant contact with your workforce to let them know what is happening, when it happens. Ensure that everyone knows in advance what your plans are about stopping the spread of COVID-19 and what is likely to be expected of people at work. Be quite clear about such matters as travel policies, sick leave and working from home. You should also prepare your own Infectious Disease Control Policy for use in your own company. It is especially important to ensure that your management knows how to successfully deal with people who are working remotely.

Employees Who Feel Ill Should Be Encouraged to Stay at Home

It is important for your workforce to know and understand that they will not be disciplined for staying at home if they are feeling ill. Such isolation will obviously reduce the incidence of the virus infecting other people at work.

Impose an Embargo on Business Travel to Infected Places

You should consider banning all such travel to any area or region which has been infected with COVID-19. You should also seriously consider instructing those employees who have returned from such places to work from home and self-isolate, even though they might not exhibit symptoms at the time. They may still be incubating the condition.

Even though COVID-19 is spread right across the globe, we know that some countries are more badly affected than others. Countries which currently show a high incidence of infection include, but are not limited to, China, Italy, South Korea and Iran, so you really shouldn't plan on travelling to these countries at all. If travel there cannot be avoided then anyone who makes that journey must be told to self-isolate immediately upon their return and stay at home for two weeks. All employees should make themselves familiar with the CDC Traveller's Health guidelines for up-to-date information relating to overseas conditions.

Your company should implement a Business Continuity Plan. Coronavirus has had a huge effect on certain sectors and to a certain extent on the world's supply chain. You should be ready for anything that might affect your business and always expect the unexpected. You should factor in contingency plans to take into account the reduced number of employees and if your suppliers have difficulties of their own, which they likely will. Always explain your policies to anyone who needs to know. This includes such matters as HR policy, how pay will be affected, and what employees can expect from the company.

For example, [CLIENT LINK] recently started implementing their employees working from home. It is important that communications are kept up and for this reason our IT team need to test their existing resources so that everyone is supported at all times. It may be that all the workforce will have to work remotely, so IT will need to ensure that all bases are covered.

Check Your Local Government Announcements

You need to ensure that you are implementing the latest recommendations provided by local government. These should provide timely advice about what to do in certain situations and provide the best possible solutions to unfolding events, so monitor these constantly. Advice on matters such as working from home may change from time to time, as well as proposals for how best to handle other related issues.

What You Should *Not* Do

Avoid Non-Compliant Policies

It is very important that you do not put in place any policies which do not comply with OSHA standards, however prescient or beneficial you may think those policies are. An example of this is where some employers decided to use forehead thermometers in order to check the temperatures of their workforce. In fact, doing this is only legitimate in cases where the CDC or your local authority has already declared that a pandemic is rife in your locality. If no such declaration has been made then this use of forehead thermometers is not actually allowed in law.

Sources of information such as [CLIENT LINKS] should be consulted if you are in any doubt about the legalities of creating compliance policies for your workforce.

Avoid Large Gatherings and Meetings if this is Feasible

Viruses will spread like wildfire among large gatherings of people, so the best policy would be to ban (either postpone or cancel completely) any large meetings. Any meeting context would be included here, whether it is work related or social. Large corporate conferences

should be avoided at all costs because of all the potential ways in which germs can spread at such events.

Do Not Discriminate

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic there have been reports of racial or national prejudice due mainly to ignorance, particularly against people of east Asian appearance or origin. Employers should reacquaint themselves with the law on this matter, in particular the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. You are responsible for your workforce; you have a duty of care to make sure that people are safe from such discrimination in the workplace and that they know that they are protected in this way under the law.

Do Not Panic

In conclusion, it is only fair to say that you should prepare as much as possible for all eventualities of an ongoing event whose outcome is unknown, but whose twists and turns may occur suddenly and without warning. Knowing where you stand will mean that there will be, or should be, no panic. Show your employees that you are prepared for whatever may come. You will also put your staff at ease if you show leadership in a calm and measured way.

The Power Of Visualization

You may be aware of the adage “the body refuses to venture where the mind has not already been”. Our subconscious always has great difficulty making the distinction between the imagination and reality. So if you put an image which is very realistic in front of the subconscious mind, it will tend to trust it, and will try to work out how to bring it into existence. The subconscious then uses the power of the creative will in order to bring it to reality.

Every time you visualize properly your subconscious will use this as a bearing on how to get you closer to that very thing, how to bring this image into reality. You can best practice visualization techniques by approaching it using meditation.

The Visual Imagery Meditation

Visual imagery meditation is just a way of picturing in your mind a situation similar to a daydream, where you are part of the action. For best results you should engage all senses in order for the sensation to be as realistic as possible. By using this imagery in your routine each day you will empower the law of attraction to a much greater extent. This is exactly what you need to do:

Step 1: Knowing What You Want

You have to have an absolutely clear view about what you want to achieve in order to make this process work best. Establish what you really want and clear your mind totally. If you do not know the answer to this, then you need to consider and reconsider this same question very carefully and in completely quiet surroundings. You also want to ask yourself why you want what you are wishing for.

For example, let's say that your goal was a beach house. You need to decide the size, the shape, the number of bedrooms and whether a garage is required, etc., and specify the details exactly so that it is allowed to be a realistic objective image, rather than something that you are vaguely hoping for.

Step 2: Preparing For Meditation

By this stage it is assumed that you know what you want with certainty, and it is now time for your manifestation to take place. Prepare for this for a little while.

Meditation is possible at any time of the day, although ideal times would be immediately before meal times, when your stomach is empty.

Locate yourself somewhere quiet, wearing comfortable clothes, and ensure that nothing distracts you for the next quarter of an hour.

Step 3: The Meditation Journey

From a sitting or lying down position (you decide which is best) you should relax and allow things to get very peaceful.

With eyes closed, breathe deeply, and on each in-breath let your tummy grow fuller.

When you breathe out let your tummy go down and keep the chest as it is.

Repeat this breathing in and out for a little while, then start breathing normally again. You should feel very relaxed and calm.

Now picture yourself on your imaginary journey to the future, seeing yourself very realistically and in detail.

Now picture that the goal has become real. If your goal is to become head of your company, for example, envision yourself at the head of a boardroom table.

Imagine the social life goal. See how much you are enjoying your fantastic holiday in faraway destinations and taking part in rarified leisure activity.

Now bring this into a more real focus as if it was really happening. Use all your senses and imagine everything in every detail to make it more real.

Do this for ten minutes, envisioning the future, yourself and your desired goals.

Step 4: Ending the Meditation

Become aware that your meditation will be coming to an end soon, before it actually ends, so as not to hurry out of this reverie. Too rapid an exit can be bad for this process. You need to transition out of it, taking about two minutes or so to your fully awakened self.

Now alter your attention from inward to your outer world and note what is all around you. Lightly move the upper torso – head, shoulders and neck – and assume a seated position in one slow movement, with your eyes now open.

Use this meditation technique each and every day as a routine. It is a ritual which you should practice over and over until you have what you want to achieve.

Wrap Up

This manifestation tool, although it is extremely forceful, may take a while to succeed. Do not lose patience if at any time you feel that you are not making any headway. Rather,

persevere in this, and through time there will be very profound changes to your life, as the imaginary becomes your new reality.

How to become the ALPHA

Dogs have an innate instinct for social structure and order. A dog, by definition, is a pack animal and within this pack there is always a “pecking order”, led by an “alpha” who is literally the top dog. As leader, he or she is able to expect, and get, the best of everything that is on offer. This includes the best quality food, the most comfortable place to sleep, the most sought-after toys, and so on. This top dog is also the first to eat, the first to leave and disperse from the pack, the first to be attended to, and this primacy of rank is implicitly understood by all the other dogs, who in turn respect the top dog’s wishes. If any other dog makes an assertion which puts this primacy into question, they are reminded of the order of things swiftly and harshly.

Your dog sees your family essentially as the pack. Usually, dogs are quick to learn and understand their place at the lower end of the pack; they obey their human masters implicitly. But some dogs have difficulty with this. Those animals who are nature’s leaders may be loath to occupy this lower rung and will make challenges. Some dogs have a tendency to try to climb this hierarchical ladder or at least get closer to the top.

Unfortunately this may present a huge problem within a family which does not understand their pet’s natural impulses.

Some families, choosing to treat their pets as other family members instead of subordinates, will unwittingly tempt them to try to lead their human pack. Allowing the dogs to sleep on the bed instead of a basket can be construed as entitlement, as could allowing them to misbehave or not giving them the proper training that the dog of a lower rank would merit. The pre-eminence of the leader is not related to how big it is; even small dogs can have the huge ego of a leader. The paradox here is that very small dogs tend to be pampered as if they are the baby in the family, leading to an even greater feeling of superiority in the canine.

Because top dogs are assured of themselves, intelligent and responsive, they’ll often make good pets. Such animals tend to be caring around children and behave with strangers. In

fact, all is well until a point where another family member tries to make the dog do something which the dog sees as humbling. At this point the family pet starts baring its teeth and acts aggressively, and everyone is puzzled by this.

In a state of nature, alpha dogs have no need to accommodate any other creature, and is subject to nobody's command. All the other dogs will implicitly respect this. If this hierarchy is threatened by any other dog foolish enough to do so then the dominant dog will quickly decisively respond by growling or confronting the other dog with a warning stare. If that fails to work then the top dog will use his teeth to further enforce authority and remind the others of who's who. While entirely natural in a pack, within a human family such responses are not acceptable and can be unsafe.

Dogs instinctively need to be part of a hierarchy and to know their place in it. This provides security, the promise of continuity and guides their behavior. Most dogs actually don't want to be dominant because it's much more convenient when decisions are taken by others. However, when such leadership is lacking then the dog may well fill the power vacuum itself. If a dog has been allowed to do this then you should expect it to behave as a leader and be either benevolent or tyrannical.

When you suspect your dog is alpha then the chances are that he will likely be so. If the animal looks up to some family members but down on others then you are still faced with a dilemma. Because the proper place for a dog is at the bottom of the family hierarchy, and nowhere else.

If you need to reassert the family's own authority then you need to train your dog that it is a subordinate member, and show it specifically what this means. As a puppy, your dog's own mother taught it that she had to be obeyed and respected, and in exchange for this he was given security and freedom to grow and to play, to learn and to just be a dog. The chances are that your dog does not want to be a leader, because of the responsibility that brings with it. Instead it wants the freedom and security of its own place in the pecking order so it can simply enjoy things being normal and provided for.

How to Become Your Pack Leader

You may not know it, but your dog constantly monitors you down to every part of your body language for cues of insecurity, discomfort or weakness. If you exhibit any of these cues then it will confuse the dog and if he's inclined to dominate he will seek to assume some kind of dominant role over you.

Being top dog is a state of mind. Top dogs are quiet with their dominance and carry it off as natural. Any other dog will instinctively understand this from being a puppy. If you observe professional dog trainers they will stand upright and everything they do and say will assert their natural right to be dominant. Their authority is absolute but it is always fair, because there must be rules. Dogs will readily understand and submissively react to this authority figure.

So it would be a good idea to learn the attributes of this authority figure and apply it, walking straight and tall, with a voice which is confident and steady. Give your dog instructions, not suggestions. He'll know what the difference is. He also knows that, because you're the top dog, you're the one giving the orders and your orders must be obeyed.

This simple change in your style should, when used together with an obedience course, be sufficient to bring things back to normal at home. But if things have already gone beyond that, and if your dog has been allowed to get away with all sorts of things, and displayed all the hallmarks of frustrated dominance that go with it, then it will be necessary to go much further than just play the alpha role.

Your sudden reassertion of authority will likely cause some alarm and even threaten your dog, because he won't want to abdicate his position of authority. There's a chance he might react with greater aggression. If he's that way inclined to begin with, all his instincts will make him want to crush this human revolt which is now presented as such a threat. But you needn't worry about that, as there's a workaround.

There is little use in trying to use physical force when attempting to get your point across to your dog in this situation; your alpha dog will be able to assail you with more force and harm than you will ever be able to inflict back, and your dog knows it. Some dog training manuals say that you should use force or various other physical methods in asserting your authority, but experience shows that this will not work and could even be harmful. You do not want violence to enter into the allowed discourse.

Instead, engage your brain! You are a much more intelligent animal than he. You'll also need to stand your ground. You're about to learn a highly effective tactic, without the use of violence, which will place your dog firmly at the bottom of the family hierarchy and relieve him of alpha status. For this to work you need to involve the whole family. Each and every family member must realign themselves towards a new attitude and relationship with the dog.

You must not underestimate the importance of doing this properly. Every dog has the potential to turn nasty when the means and the circumstances enables this. You have to suppress any danger of violence in your dog by training which emphasizes that he is a dog and not a human family member. You cannot have your dog calling the shots and potentially injuring someone, or you risk a lawsuit costing millions if someone gets hurt. You could lose everything including your home and even your life if you don't start using your head!

Swedenborg

The inner organic structures which Swedenborg referred to as the “simple cortex” are the causes of emotional diseases. The brain absorbs this and by this means causes it to be a spiritual issue as well, thereby establishing Swedenborg’s thesis in the connection of the physical, mental and spiritual.

True health comes only from a good life. While evil men appear healthy, in fact they are inwardly diseased, as they carry inside the toxins of deceit and wickedness, which are the seeds of insanity. In fact, true love makes a man healthy and whole. And this can be attained by purging the mind of such negative emotions as pessimism, anger, self-pity, impatience, suspicion and all intemperate behaviour.

People should be moral and rational, see these positive aspects in others, and also try to understand those who have critical views and try to see things with their own eyes. A good sense of humour is healthy and may prevent the burden that comes from seeing things too seriously. Happiness within resides in a humble heart which recognises its own faults and thereby seeks the wisdom of Divine Providence.

The one true cause of happiness is to find a fulfilling and useful role for ourselves to the betterment of society and to improve the lot of the people around us, contributing to both their bodily and spiritual wellbeing. It is far better for a person to be thus than to be the greatest scientist or thinker of his age, if the scientist and thinker does not wish to know the Kingdom of God. Finding a useful purpose will protect against disease and evil; muscles not used in such a way would only wither and die, and those who spend their energies on vain, frivolous things will only see their bodies and minds grow torpid and useless. Such is the importance of finding a useful purpose.

Love is always the source of wellbeing and happiness; even food tastes far better when eaten in a spirit of delight and thankfulness, than when gulped down anxiously. And the greatest love is that of conjugal bliss in those who are married in the sight of God and who are useful for God and to their fellow man. It is a natural instinct to have children and to protect them as an aspect of the reciprocal Love with our partners. Thus conjugal love is enjoyed by people who turn away from sin and embrace Jesus Christ as the One God.

The signs of a truly joyous conjugal life are tranquillity, innocence, confidence growing in the relationship and inner friendship with your partner, with a will to please the other in every deed of body and mind to the other’s benefit. From this comes true happiness, blessed joy and delight in all things, good pleasure and beneficence from God.

Happiness and contentment are thereby caused when a man, with his wife and children, lives by the word of God in usefulness and internal delight, with eternal joy to look forward to.

Alternative Sources of Finance for Real Estate Developers

Do you need alternative sources of finance for your real estate development?

You may feel that alternative finance for your real estate development would be a good idea for a number of reasons. These reasons revolve around the limitations of conventional financing and the advantages of alternative funding options. Consider the following.

There are all sorts of reasons why you may find yourself wanting to seek out alternative finance for your real estate development. Conventional financing does, of course, present its own limitations, and there are distinct advantages in seeking alternatives.

You may well find that the approval process is unjustifiably time consuming. Of course, this can be annoying and can even be disruptive when your plans are composed of several stages which need to follow each other in sequence. Conventional finance is extremely time consuming when compare with the alternatives.

The long term nature of conventional financing will tend to trap you into a situation which prohibits the early closure of the loan, and enforces this will prepayment penalties (depending on the remaining term the loan has to run, these prepayments may well be up to five years' worth of interest payments). Alternative financing, by contrast, presents you with no such penalties, mainly due to their short-term attributes.

You will find that the various alternative means of financing are considerably more flexible, their lending sources much more accommodating and sympathetic to individual needs. The terms and conditions will be much more versatile.

With alternative financing you'll find a greater Loan-to-Value (LTV) ratio than with conventional sources, which will generally not exceed 70 percent. Going the conventional route means that you'll have to find more of your own money for what you need. Alternative financing will provide an LTV ratio of 80 percent.

What are the Best Sources of Alternative Financing for my Real Estate Development?

The real estate financing sector has seen a recent boom in alternative financing, with a number of reputable lending platforms now available. You will want to consider the following when searching for a lending source which is trustworthy. These include the following:

1. **Successful track record.** You should always take a close look at how long the lender has been trading. You should also check out their success rate in financing new contracts. Due diligence requires that you scrutinize these things in a volatile market; unreliable sources will not have the staying power that you should look out for.

2. **Management and Staff are experienced.** You can be sure that, if their key people are experienced, this is a good indicator of both their trustworthiness and their reliability.
3. **Loan Underwriting requirements.** You should have a look at these closely: what sort of a review procedure do they have? Is it their custom to check things like zoning laws, architectural plans, project timelines and budgetary constraints? Do they understand the demographics of a given market? Each lending platform has their own set of requirements, and you need to be sure of these.
4. **Borrower Assessment.** Alternative finance sources will have borrower assessment practices which are just as robust as their conventional peers.
5. **Quick turnaround.** You really need your source of financing to offer a quick turnaround time for a number of reasons.

Should You Seek a Bridge Loan at any Point in your Development?

Bridge loans can be very useful at the outset of any real estate plan. These can be taken out when you expect more substantial funds later but you need to make a start sooner rather than later. If you have capital tied up somewhere else then a bridge loan is also a useful option to have. Short term bridge loans are available from several online sources.

Should I Consider a Hard Money Loan for my Real Estate Development Business?

By all means. Hard money loans can provide funding which conventional lenders cannot. Real estate proposals often have assets which are not attractive to conventional lenders, although interest rates on hard loans are generally much higher than with conventional sources. Hard money loans can be used to begin the work; when sufficient work has been done to make this viable enough for conventional lenders, you can then leave the hard money loan.

What are Mezzanine Loans: Where Do I Find Mezzanine Loan Sources?

Mezzanine loans comprise loans and equity-based finance combined. You give the lender the rights to your business equity, to be exercised only if you default on payments. Mezzanine loan sources will generally seek high value borrowers with good assets. Traditional lenders such as banks can provide such funding as well as alternative lending platforms.

How Should I Prepare to Apply for Alternative Financing?

Here are some of the requirements you should consider when looking at alternative finance.

1. **Have the Correct Documents.** The proper documentation is required for alternative financing. You should have the right deeds of ownership, proof of liquidity and balance sheets.

2. **Quality of Your People.** Alternative financing sources will want to have confidence in the quality of your key personnel. This also shows your own commitment to your development idea and will inspire confidence in all stakeholders concerned.
3. **Present A Pitch Deck.** It will help your position if you have a face-to-face presentation in which you could pitch your idea to the prospective lending source. Such an approach will make your proposal seem more achievable and inspire greater confidence.
4. **Having A Plan.** Similarly, you will do well to have a renovation plan as well as an exit strategy in place when applying for funding.

Are There Any Disadvantages in Conventional Commercial Real Estate Finance?

Conventional real estate financing is highly regulated. You should bear in mind that there are considerable disadvantages in conventional real estate finance.

This includes the fact that it must fully conform to all the High Volatility Commercial Real Estate (HVCRE) regulations. In practice this means that only larger corporations with deeper pockets are accepted. Conventional commercial real estate lending sources will always favor these large firms and do not take kindly to smaller, less well established participants.

The time it takes to get approval can be lengthy, and the necessary documentation is strictly observed. You should also note that the maximum LTV ratio is usually pegged at 70 percent.

The Recommended 5 Survival Food Brands

The quality of survival food brands may, in a situation where survival is imperative, be what decides whether you live or die. The energy in food is crucial, so you need to ensure you have plenty of supplies which will see you surviving whatever emergency arises.

There are a number of things which will determine how much food you'll need. If you aim to be mobile you will need more calories for energy. Are all the individuals with you able to support themselves with their own supply of food? If that is not the case then you'll have to carry more than your own fair share. But if you plan to remain in the same location then you'll be able to store at least three days' rations quite easily.

Freeze dried food is ideal if you plan to move around or wish to save space, as this is relatively lightweight and will remain edible for over two years. You'll be able to make freeze dried meals for yourself with the correct equipment. For pre-packaged food brands, however, read on.

Wise Company 52 Serving Prepper Pack

The Wise Company 52 Serving Prepper Pack brand is also available in 60, 120 and 240 serving packs. These prepared meals contain lots of protein and come in a variety of flavors including stroganoff, southwest beans and rice, apple cinnamon oatmeal and pasta with veg. The 52 serving offers additional whey protein and a drink of orange.

The Wise Company brand is a good choice when staying at the one location or if attempting to squirrel away as much as possible in the way of food stores. The standard 52 serving pack costs around \$60.

American Red Cross 4 Person 72 Hour Food Supply

This is an emergency rations supply of survival foods recommended by the American Red Cross which, for \$109, includes food for four over a 72 hour period. On the menu you'll find such assortments as black beans and rice, cheddar and broccoli rice, macaroni and cheese, chicken and vegetable stew, and cheddar cheese grits.

This useful kit is designed so that each person gets 2,100 calories a day, which is fine if you plan to stay in one location, but you'll need more calories than that if you're to be moving around, so bring more food with you.

Valley Food Storage 1 Month Supply

For non-GMO needs or for people with special dietary requirements, Valley Food Storage has what you need. This includes gluten free and dairy free options. A typical supply for one month includes offerings such as macaroni and cheese, buttermilk pancakes, pasta primavera, fettuccini alfredo, and tomato and basil soup. It's good value, with this one month example costing just \$150.

Mountain House

Mountain House is known as a backpacker's brand of food, also ideal for survival situations. These are all meals which are freeze dried and consist of two large portions. There is a choice of meals available including homestyle turkey dinner casserole and chili mac with beef. As well as main courses, they also provide breakfast meals and snacks, including the favorite granola and ice cream sandwiches. Meals are bought individually and cost from \$7 to \$12.

Goodto-Go

Goodto-Go is quite comparable to Mountain House, but differs in that they provide a greater choice of vegetarian and gluten free dishes. Their range of meals includes Indian vegetable korma, Mexican quinoa, and mushroom risotto. The range of Goodto-Go meals cost about \$13 per meal.

To Conclude

As you can see, there are plenty of freeze-dried meals available in lots of different recipes. Before you set off anywhere, ensure that you've properly calculated the whole party's calorific requirements.

How Business Has Been Transformed By Phones

Although history has recorded that the first patent for the telephone was granted in 1876 to Alexander Graham Bell, it is also a matter of public record that several people were working on the same principles at around the same time, necessity being the mother of invention and contemporary technology its father, and so we can say with some certainty that the telephone was and is the product of several industrious and enterprising minds.

Our species has had the benefit of telephones in one form or another since the late nineteenth century, and it is difficult to visualize life without it. Today's incarnation of the phone is so much more than the simple ability to communicate the spoken word; that basic function has been surpassed beyond the understanding of anyone who lived in the late 1800s. Nowadays we are able to conference call anyone in the world who has a similar device and communicate not only in speech but with text and video, all without any seeming physical connection.

Such is the progress of our technology that we now use the phone as much more than just a tool for communicating with. So here are some of the many ways in which phones and the telecoms industry in general has transformed the way business is conducted.

Fast and Instant Communication

Before the use of the telephone, the only way in which people could communicate with each other was by letter. If people were separated by large distances, or if they lived in different countries, it would take a very long time for letters to reach them, together with a correspondingly long time for the reply to reach the original sender. The introduction of the telephone wiped out this time gap instantly, as the two parties were now able to communicate with each other instantaneously. This made doing business far easier and quicker, as decisions could be made in seconds rather than months, leading to fantastic growth in business and the economy. Business owners and managers were able to also communicate directly with anyone in their own company at times when that communication was vital.

Total Connectivity

Business owners were, with the facility of telephones, able to communicate with all aspects of their business instantly; they could speak to their warehouse managers, their accountants, their stock controllers, their production managers and their bank, all in the same hour. A similar benefit was enabled between the business owner and their clients, to the prosperity of both parties.

Everyone in the business was now available to handle any eventuality and to deal with it there and then. This easy communication is now something that we take for granted today, as business phone services enable business owners to access all aspects of their organisation very easily.

New Methods of Interaction

Before the advent of the phone there were only two basic methods of interaction between people, and these were talking face to face and the sending of letters to each other. Telephones provided an added and completely new method of communication and interaction, and the new invention found its way into new ways of interacting directly with consumers by way of advertising. Then, with the advent of television and the consumption of TV sets in large numbers of homes, direct sales became possible via phone numbers being shown with products on TV advertising campaigns. Although advertising campaigns have always been mainly about branding, there was also the possibility of direct phone sales tied to TV audiences at home.

Fuller Customer Connectivity

This new method of communication carried with it the possibility of connecting with customers in real-time. After seeing the phone number on their TV sets, people were able to speak directly with agents who had been trained in both sales and customer support to either make a purchase or to resolve any other issues. Phone landlines were now enabled solely for the purposes of customer service and sales. There was now possible a permanent connection between a company and its customers, so that the value of a new customer would now become the hugely increased value of a lifetime customer because of the direct phone line's ability to foster customer loyalty.

In Conclusion

Phones have made an incalculable change and improvement in the way that business is conducted, and the technology continues to enhance the way that business is able to move forward swiftly and with confidence.