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# Overcome Overwhelm: Get Clients, Add Leverage, Increase Profits

by Sandra Martini

For Engaged Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners



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### OVERVIEW

Overwhelm is one of the top causes of business failure. We become so overwhelmed with what to do, so seduced by bright shiny objects, that we fail to ask AND answer the one question which will move us forward the fastest: “What do I do next?”

And to properly answer that question, you have to know which growth stage your business is currently in. Only then can you make decisions and take action from an informed place.

### Table of Contents

Identifying Overwhelm	3
The 3 Stages of Business	5
Level 1: Getting Clients	5
Level 2: Adding Leverage	9
Level 3: Increasing Profits	10
What It Means	12
Next Steps	12

## Identifying Overwhelm

Do you find yourself working more than you should for a fraction of the results you're anticipating? Running here and there thinking the next seminar, program, home study course, event or teleseries is *the* answer?

Before we can begin to manage or overcome our overwhelm, we first need to identify it. What type of overwhelm are you currently experiencing? (Note that it may be, and likely is, more than one type.)

1. **Too Much To Do** – Everywhere you turn, something or someone is clamoring for your attention. You “should” send out that solo email, you “should” follow-up with that promising prospect, you “should” create that new program, you “should” finish your bookkeeping, and you “should” update your website. The list is never ending. And, that’s a good thing. When you’re a business owner, there *should* be lots to do. Embrace it. We’ll talk about how to manage it in a bit.
2. **“Where do I start?” or “What next?”** – An offshoot of “Too Much To Do”, “Where do I start?” rears its head when there’s a project looming and there are SO many moving pieces. Which one do you tackle first? Which one will give you the greatest feeling of moving forward without taxing your energy? Which steps do you know how to do and in which order? Again, it can feel never ending – only here, it’s not a list, it’s more a jumbled mass of wires, something you need to unravel before you can figure out where to start. Exhausting. We’ll discuss how to manage it in a bit.
3. **“Do I have a viable business?”** – Perhaps the most overwhelming of all the overwhelps is knowing whether or not what you’re doing will “succeed” (you define what that means). Will all your efforts be for naught? Will you live your desired lifestyle without being eligible for debtor’s prison? Will your dreams take wings or will you forever be struggling to get clients and create the passive revenue that “everyone” talks about?

Okay, now that you know the top 3 types of overwhelm, you likely immediately identified with 1, 2 or even all 3 of them. So what’s next?

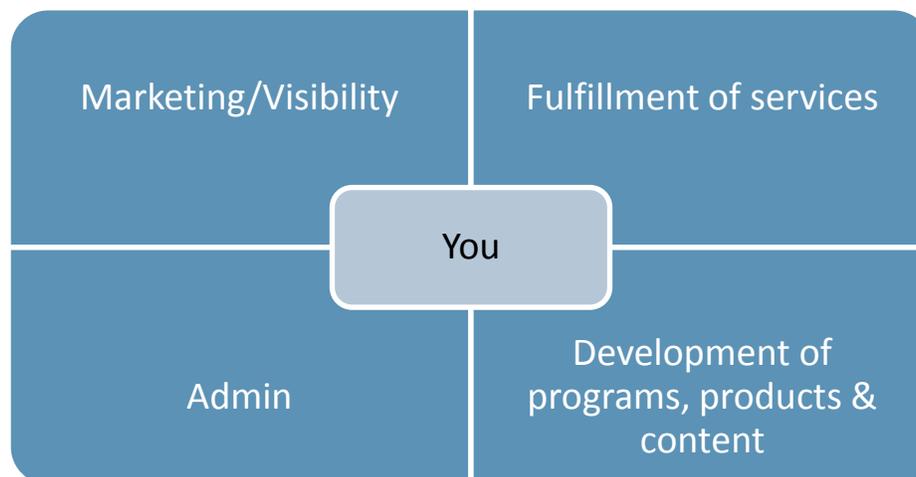
## How do you manage the overwhelm?

As a solo entrepreneur or micro/small business owner, it’s critical to acknowledge that you can’t do everything. Even if you’re currently the only person in your business, it’s impossible

for you to assume sole responsibility for every task that needs doing:

- Program, product, service creation
- Bookkeeping
- Invoicing
- Prospective client follow-up
- Lead generation
- Affiliate management
- Content creator (ezine, social media, solo emails, blogs, direct mail, teleclasses and so much more)
- Marketing
- Fulfillment (delivery of service)
- Web support
- Graphic designer
- Advertising
- Info (a.k.a. “sales”) pages
- Sales (nope, not the same as marketing and it’s important to recognize the difference in your business)

**In essence, all of the above can be broken into four quadrants – what I call the Golden Rule of Business Success:**



### **And the mistake that most business owners make?**

Regardless of where they currently are in business, they give all four quadrants the same time and attention. THIS is the primary cause of overwhelm – trying to do all things equally and simultaneously as you’re constantly seduced by new and brighter shiny objects.

Once you accept, truly accept that there’s one of you and that one person (yes, even when you hire a fantastic assistant/team) can’t do all of the above and expect to have any type of a life outside the business, you can move forward in managing your overwhelm.

Are you ready to take the next step?

In order to manage your overwhelm, you must know which stage your business is in and what your priorities are as a responsible business owner in that stage.

## The 3 Stages of Business

Every business goes through 3 separate and distinct stages – truthfully there are 4, but everyone tends to merge 1 and 2 together so it makes sense to treat them as a single stage.

Level 1: Foundation and Getting Clients

Level 2: Adding Leverage

Level 3: Increasing Profits

It's critical to note that "length of time in business" has absolutely no, make that ZERO, bearing on what level your business is in. It's a matter of reaching certain goals or levels, totally irrespective of "time in business".

Now let's break these down:

### Level 1: Foundation and Getting Clients

Level 1 is where most business owners start. . .and stay. Often until they close their doors. I don't tell you that to be all "doom and gloom", but rather so you can avoid the pitfalls of so many before you.

#### The Need:

Increase industry visibility & credibility as you get clients/earn revenue

What often happens however is that Level 1 business owners want to achieve success quickly – become profitable, earn 6 figures, host a high level program or offer high level consulting services, all when no one knows who they are or whether they're even going to stay around.

While this is true for most businesses, it's much more so for online-based businesses. There's such a low investment for becoming an online business that people are starting and closing

them daily.

Level 1 business owners are often easily seduced by those who cater to opportunity seekers – simply because they’re so anxious to generate revenue. As a result, many Level 1 business owners end up deep in debt with very little to show for it.

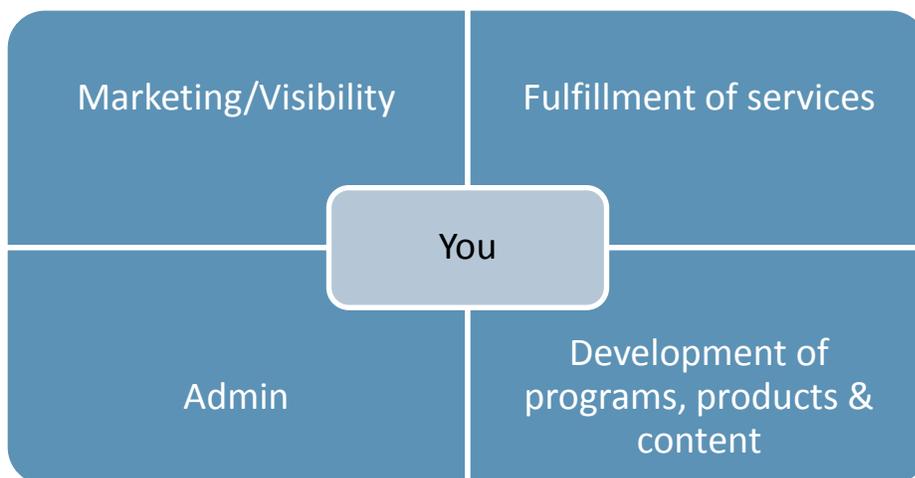
**A Level 1 business owner is defined as someone who needs clients. Period.**

If you’re wondering, or worried, about where your next client (or mortgage payment) is coming from, you’re currently in Level 1.

#### **A few things to note:**

- This report will focus more on Level 1 as that’s where most business owners are.
- There’s no shame in being in Level 1 – even if you’ve been in business for several years. You didn’t understand the levels or what to focus on in each and you will by the time you’re done reading this report and that knowledge will move you out of Level 1.
- The only way to graduate from Level 1 is to embrace that you’re currently in it and take the steps I share with you.
- Most importantly, R U N from anyone who promises you “6 figures in 60 days” or any other similar slogan. They’re likely preying on your desire to grow quickly.

Remember this graphic from a few pages ago?



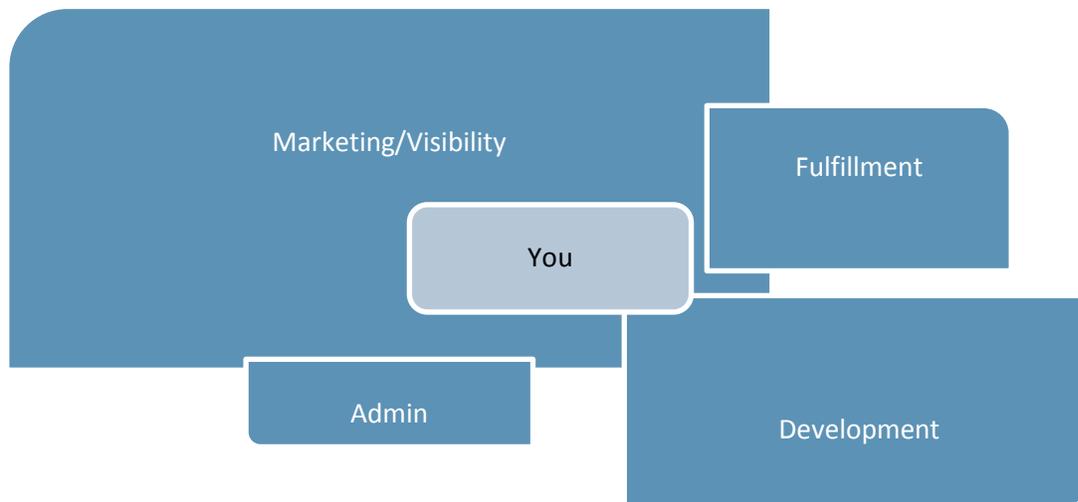
As a Level 1 business owner, spending your time evenly divided between marketing/visibility,

fulfillment of services, admin and program development equals a sure recipe for failure.

Yes. . .FAILURE.

You're not there yet.

**Your time should be spent as follows:**



Take a good long look at the difference in the two graphics. As a Level 1 business owner whose primary business responsibility is to Increase Visibility & Credibility AND Get Clients, you want to spend a minimum of 75% of your “working” hours on Marketing & Visibility activities.

### What are marketing and visibility activities?

- ✓ Consistently sending out an ezine
- ✓ Hosting free teleseminars/webcasts
- ✓ Participating in telesummits
- ✓ Being a guest on others' teleseminars
- ✓ Speaking at events
- ✓ Website “free taste” or giveaway
- ✓ Sponsorships – getting and giving
- ✓ Posting and sharing videos
- ✓ Consistently participating in social media
- ✓ Consistently “contacting” your readers so you remain top of mind
- ✓ Article marketing
- ✓ Consistently posting to your blog
- ✓ In person networking
- ✓ Online forums or Facebook groups
- ✓ Attending events
- ✓ Picking up the phone and calling
- ✓ Press releases
- ✓ Guest blogging on others' sites
- ✓ Posting and sharing audio newsletters
- ✓ Hosting/Being a guest on radio shows
- ✓ Sending snail mail gifts, cards, lumpy mail

And SO much more. . .

Now, before you go deep into “Too Much To Do” overwhelm, let me stop you and say, you don’t need to do all of the above. In fact, you shouldn’t be doing it all.

Pick no more than 3 things which resonate with you AND your ideal clients and do them CONSISTENTLY. Once you have those nailed down, add something else.

It’s about consistently layering things on. It is not about burying yourself in overwhelm trying to be all things to everyone in the visibility world.

### **Ordinary Things, Done *Consistently*, Create Extraordinary *and* Consistent Results**

Print this phrase out, tape it somewhere you’ll see it DAILY. And then follow the guidance: do ordinary things and do them consistently.

While in Level 1, we’ve already discussed that at least 50% of your “working” time should be spent focused on marketing and visibility activities, this is true no matter what you do or which industry you’re in.

Before we leave Level 1, let me share THE biggest mistake that I see with Level 1 businesses: It’s attempting to host a membership or continuity program. Level 1 businesses typically don’t have the list size in order to do this successfully.

#### **An all-too-real example:**

Mary, a coach, decides to create a membership program for \$47/month. She’s excited. Just 100 people in it and she’ll receive \$4700/month consistently.

Mary has 1,000 people on her list and an open rate of 30% (this is higher than the average of most businesses).

Mary’s average list conversion rate (people on her list who invest and sign up for her programs) = 2% (again, a little higher than average).

So . . .

List size of 1,000 x 30% open rate = 300 readers.

Average 2% conversion rate x 300 readers = 6 people who will likely invest.

Now, you may think that 6 members x \$47 each/month is a good deal. But remember that Mary will have to provide everything she guaranteed and likely outsource some of the work.

Chances are this program will not be profitable and Mary will find herself working very hard for less than \$300 in gross revenue/month.

It's critical to understand that what you do while in Level 1 will build the foundation of your business – rush things and your business will be like a castle in the air: pretty and without a foundation, ready to be blown here and there by every little hiccup in your client base or the economy.



Set things up so that you have a solid foundation and your business has



the ability to survive anything: the economy, your vacations, your family's desire for attention, unanticipated expenses. . .you name it – no more castle in the air.

Note that many businesses never graduate from Level 1 to Level 2 and the primary reason is because they're so focused on the future that they fail to address the present. It's a chronic case of living "as if" and never "as is".

Now that you know the primary reason businesses stay at Level 1 or, worse, fail, you can take action to prevent that happening for your business.

Once your foundation is established such that you have a steady stream of clients and earning revenue is not your single most primary goal, your business is ready for Level 2: Adding Leverage.

## Level 2: Adding Leverage

You know you've reached Level 2: Adding Leverage when you're serving clients, earning revenue and spending way too much time working in your business and not enough living your life.

You've created a job for yourself.

### The Need:

Add leverage such that revenue doesn't depend solely on your personal actions/involvement.

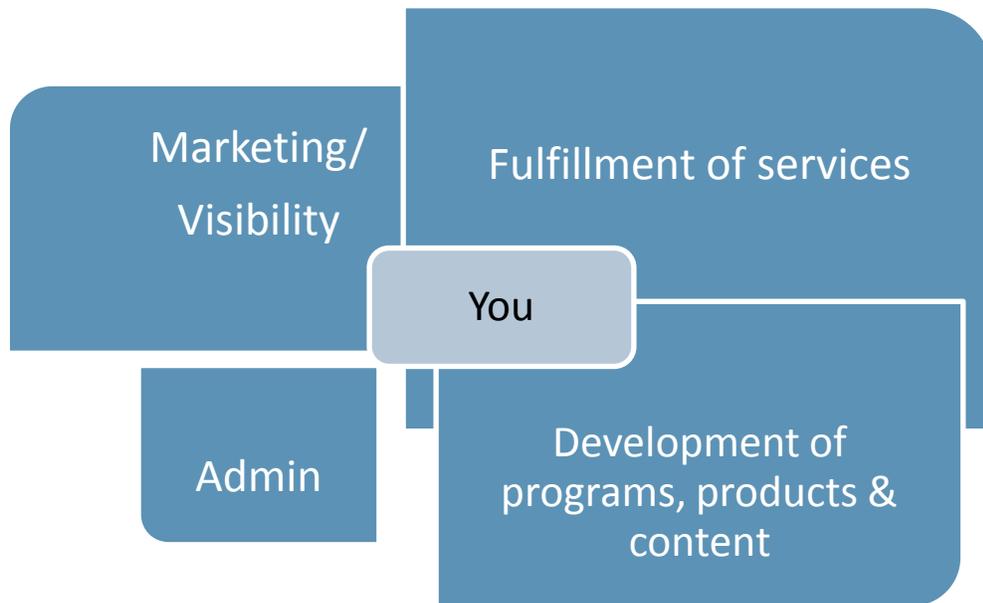
It's time to add some leverage so you can continue to receive the revenue, even increase it, while optimizing your time and, dare I say it, even reacquainting yourself with friends and family.

**Leverage can look like several different things, depending on your business. Some examples:**

- Group programs
- Membership/Continuity programs
- Products
- Fixed term membership programs
- Certification programs
- Team support
- Group virtual days
- Teleseries
- Live events
- Virtual events
- Licensing content
- Joint ventures/partnerships

Notice what's not on the list. Private programs, 1-on-1 clients. That's not to say that you abandon those offers, far from it. You simply want to add more leveraged programs, products and services so that you're not "on" all the time.

Remember the "Golden Rule of Business Success" I shared with you earlier? Where Level 1 has the Marketing and Visibility quadrant being the biggest? Well Level 2 businesses look more like this:



You start out totally focused on Fulfillment – delivering services and programs to your clients – and eventually realize that something’s got to give and you can’t work anymore than you currently. That “something” is where you realize it’s time to focus more on leveraged program development.

Adding leverage to your business is about serving more clients with less of your personal time. The key is to do that without sacrificing your Extreme Client Care™ practices.

In fact, it’s even more important that you take great care of your clients as they’ll be watching to see if your added leverage costs them your attention, and thus their experience with you.

Many a business owner has added too much leverage at the expense of client care and found their businesses reverting to Level 1 (Building a Foundation and Getting Clients), or worse.

By incorporating systems throughout your business, you gain leverage while ensuring that your Extreme Client Care™ practices remain prevalent in your business.

### Level 3: Increasing Profits

You know you’ve reached Level 3: Increasing Profits when your business is humming along. Your clients are happy, you have plenty of well-paying clients who appreciate what you offer and refer you to others, your team is doing their job and it’s time to focus more on the bottom

line.

### The Need:

Ensure your dream business is fully optimized to maximize profits on a consistent basis.

It's all about "tweaking" and optimizing your business so that you keep as much as possible.

### During Level 3, you'll focus on:

- Reducing expenses
- Maximizing tax deductions
- Creating passive revenue
- Strengthening partnerships

Level 3 allows you to create a legacy business which supports your desired lifestyle for life. . .and beyond.

## WHAT IT MEANS

Entrepreneurial overwhelm is one of the most common reasons for business failure – we don't list it as "overwhelm" per se, but it's the underlying cause. Overwhelm creates paralysis, it results in us searching for a "magic pill" or other quick fix and it takes our focus off what we should be doing.

The key to overcoming overwhelm is to understand where your business is in its growth stage AND act accordingly. Stop acting "as if" and act "as is". Understand the attention and tasks which would best serve your business today to ensure a strong tomorrow and take action on those.

## Recommendations

Identify your immediate next steps based on which level your business is currently in and take action. If you're unsure of your next steps and want some personalized mentoring and guidance, please email me at [Sandy@SandraMartini.com](mailto:Sandy@SandraMartini.com) for a no cost, no obligation Get Acquainted call.



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Escalator Marketing™ was created by Business Growth and Marketing Expert Sandra Martini as an alternative to the marketing pyramids and funnels which fail to address the need for a comprehensive approach to marketing and business growth.

An approach which includes marketing, visibility, credibility, Extreme Client Care™ and programs designed to support your clients as they grow – of you being the natural choice for your clients in all stages of their business and life.

Sandra Martini provides practical, personalized and forward thinking advice to engaged entrepreneurs and small business owners in all industries.

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