

# Niche News

## INSIGHTS

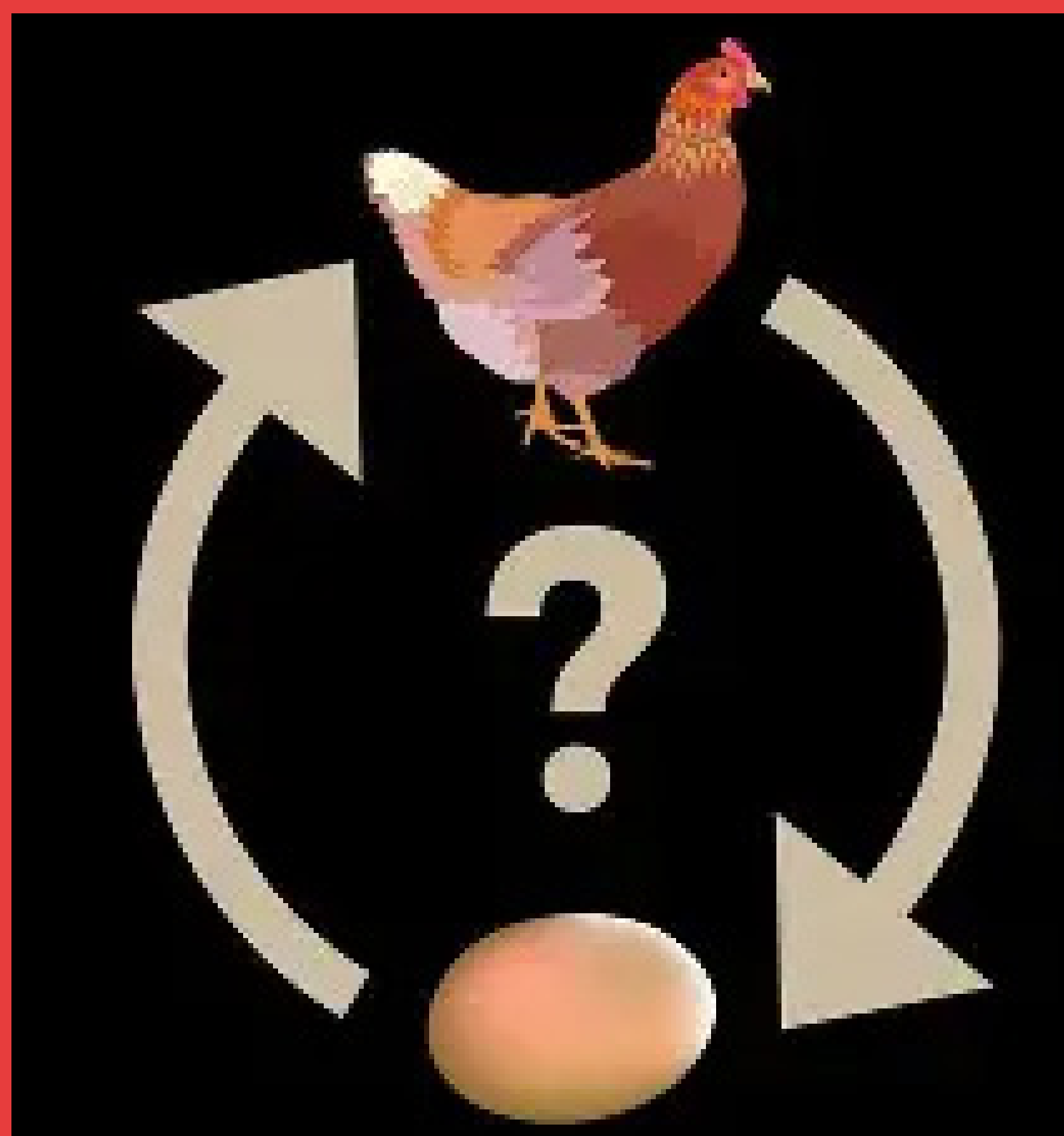
### WOMEN IN BUSINESS CALL TO ACTION



## Women In Business

Welcome to this special edition of our newsletter, where we shine a spotlight on women driving change in business and entrepreneurship.

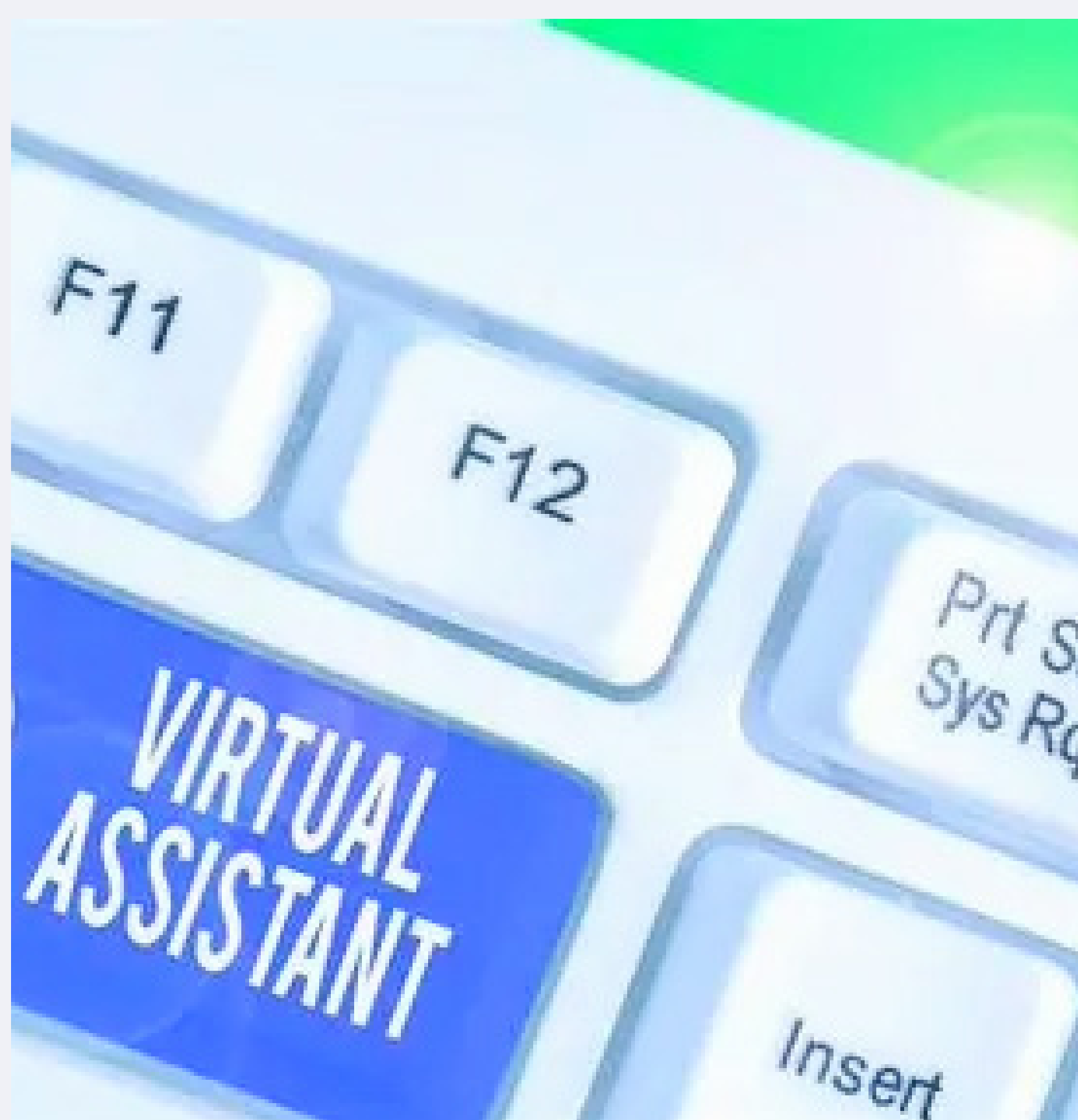
By sharing knowledge, resources, and experiences, we can help close that gap and support the next generation of women leaders.



## What Came 1st, Sales or Marketing?

It's the classic chicken-and-egg debate of the business world: what really comes first – sales or marketing?

Whether you lean toward sales-first or marketing-first, the goal remains the same: building trust, delivering value, and creating sustainable growth.



## Virtual Assistant & Return On Investment

We dive into how Virtual Assistants (VAs) can transform your business. Whether it's saving time, streamlining operations, or boosting marketing efforts, a skilled VA is more than just extra hands – they're your secret weapon for growth.

Think of your VA not just as support, but as a partner in achieving your business goals.

## Women in Business



Before we begin, I'd like to note that this article references statistics from the Rose Review and Prowess: Women in Business. I also wish to acknowledge that I am aware of the controversy that has, at times, surrounded the tobacco industry – including British American Tobacco – and the negative spotlight it has received. That said, my intention here is not to debate the industry itself, but to share my personal experience working with one of the largest FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) organisations, highlighting the professional and business insights gained from that environment

As part of their gender equality programme, I was honoured to be part of their Women in Tobacco initiative. I would travel to different British American Tobacco (BAT) sites, including Southampton and get engaged in site tours, tobacco manufacturing methods and integrate with other women in the industry, including those from competitors! This initiative was all about supporting fellow women in the industry, training for senior leadership roles and promoting women.

To be clear, this article is not written as a “get at men” slur. I worked closely with my male counterparts and enjoyed the role I was employed to do, working alongside them. However, it is well reported that in today's society, women are being celebrated for the skills and foresight they bring to business. I am an advocate for girls and women in the world of work and will always support their endeavours. Society's impression of female workers has improved slightly, but there is still quite a distance to travel towards total gender equality.

Women who have undergone some form of enterprise training are twice as likely to be engaged in entrepreneurial activity.

Women in business in the UK face unique challenges and opportunities, with significant progress in representation and support networks available to foster female entrepreneurship.

There are different ways of defining women in business;

- 1) Female led companies - 19.1% of active UK companies are female led, almost one million companies.
- 2) Self-Employed Women - There are 1.6 million self-employed women in the UK, they comprise 37% of all self-employed workers
- 3) Female Entrepreneurs - In 2022, women in the UK established over 150,000 new companies, more than twice as many as in 2018. Female-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) - The UK government's definition of an SME is any company with less than 500 employees and includes those business with 0 employees (i.e. the business owner is the only person working in the company).
- 4) Women on Boards - In January 2022, 42.6% of FTSE100 directorships were occupied by women and around half of all new FTSE100 board appointments were women (47%).

I would love to gain your feedback, whether you are a woman in business, parent a female in business or you are a man reading this article, please get in touch and share your personal insights.



# What Comes First, Sales or Marketing?

Controversial Opening: Marketing Comes First, Sales Close the Loop

Is that my opinion? Absolutely. But let's be clear – saying “marketing comes first” is not the same as saying “marketing is just advertising.” In fact, through marketing, I can explain exactly why that isn't true either.

In nearly 30 years of business, this debate has followed me everywhere. It's the classic chicken-and-egg question of the business world: what really comes first – sales or marketing?

Some of my clients and peers believe:

- Sales is marketing (they're one and the same)
- We need more sales to afford marketing (treating marketing like a luxury)
- Or my “favourite”: marketing is the least important role in an organisation – always the first department cut in a restructure. (I've yet to see anyone sack the finance department first!)

Some argue sales are the heart of a business, because without revenue, nothing moves forward. Others insist marketing lays the foundation, creating awareness and demand before a single deal can be closed.

Think about it: how do you sell your product or service without talking about it first? Where do potential customers go to find you?

## Perspective One: Sales Come First

Supporters of this view believe sales fuel survival.

- Sales validate the business idea immediately
- Direct conversations reveal what customers really want
- A skilled salesperson can generate revenue even without brand awareness

In short: Sales keep the lights on. Cash flow comes before scale.

## Perspective Two: Marketing Comes First

This perspective sees marketing as the essential foundation.

- Marketing builds visibility and awareness – people must know you before they buy
- It warms up leads, making sales more like relationship building, less like cold calling
- Strong marketing creates credibility and trust that sales alone can't deliver

In short: Marketing fuels momentum. It creates the conditions for sales to thrive.

## Where They Meet

The truth is, it's not about one coming before the other. It's about how they work together:

- Marketing creates the stage
- Sales closes the loop
- Together, they form the engine that drives sustainable business growth

Your Turn

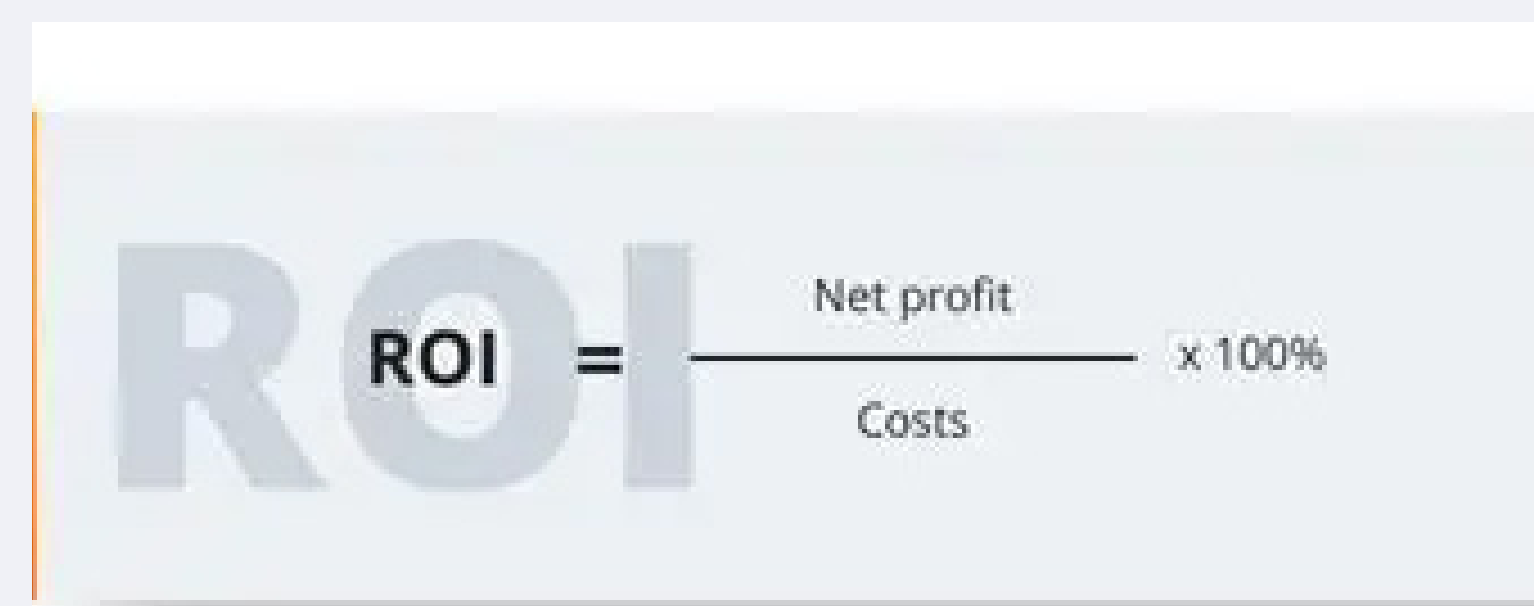
Which one do you believe comes first in business growth – sales or marketing?

Reply to this newsletter (or connect with me directly) and share your thoughts. I'd love to feature some of your perspectives in the next edition of Niche News.





# Return on Investment Is a Virtual Assistant Cost Effective



The diagram shows the formula for Return on Investment (ROI). It features the letters 'ROI' in a large, light blue font. To the right of 'ROI' is an equals sign, followed by a fraction. The numerator of the fraction is 'Net profit' and the denominator is 'Costs'. To the right of the fraction is 'x 100%'. The entire formula is enclosed in a light blue rectangular box with a thin orange border on the left side.

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{\text{Net profit}}{\text{Costs}} \times 100\%$$

## Virtual Assistants & ROI: Challenging Misconceptions

Let's tackle two common myths:

1. You don't need a budget for marketing.
2. Virtual Assistants are an expensive luxury.

## Marketing Budget

It's a misconception that you can grow a business with zero marketing budget. Early in my career, I was told marketing was a luxury – only for profitable times.

Yes, organic marketing exists:

- Social media posting
- Networking
- Word-of-mouth referrals
- Partnerships

Technically, these can be free – if you do all the work yourself. But remember: your time has value. Every hour you spend on marketing is time taken away from revenue-generating activities.

## Virtual Assistant Services

Linking back to marketing: the “no budget” approach often shifts the cost onto your time, slowing growth and limiting opportunities. A Virtual Assistant (VA) changes that equation.

## How a VA delivers ROI:

1. Low labour costs - no payroll, taxes, insurance, office space, or equipment.
2. Pay-as-you-go - only for the hours/tasks you need.
3. Efficiency = revenue - freeing you to focus on growth.
4. Time leverage - if your hourly rate is £100 and a VA's is £30, outsourcing saves £70/hour. Free up 10 hours/week and potentially gain new customers.
5. Prevent missed opportunities - timely follow-ups and no lost leads.
6. Systems & reminders - CRMs, automations, and workflows capture every sales opportunity.
7. Reduced overheads - VAs implement tools and processes, saving time and money.
8. Workflow optimization - direct savings weekly, huge impact yearly.
9. Marketing ROI - consistent content creation (social posts, newsletters, blogs) without hiring a full-time marketing team.
10. On-demand scalability - a VA flexes between admin, customer support, and marketing as needed.

## The Bold Truth

Hiring a VA is not an extra expense – doing everything yourself is what costs you. Time lost, opportunities missed, and energy drained all hit your bottom line.

Think of a VA as your solution, not just a helper. Your ROI comes from:

- Time saved
- Opportunities captured
- Overheads avoided

## Conclusion

Niche VA Services provides tailored solutions for Business Administration and Marketing needs. Free up your time, scale efficiently, and boost your revenue – without the stress of doing it all yourself.

Get in touch today for financial and resource freedom.



**TOP TIP** - Automation reduces human error, ensures consistency, and keeps projects moving even when you're busy.