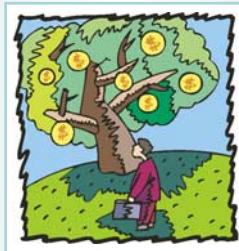


25 Ways  
to Give a  
Booster Shot  
to Your  
Long-Term  
Small Business



ANN GOODHEART

---

*This user-friendly, inexpensive Acrobat PDF ebook provides 25 great ideas that can be adapted to any small or mid-sized business. Just because your company is not in the Fortune 500 list doesn't mean you can't make a splash with promotion and advertising. And let's face it, these days if you don't splash around on the surface, you might go down for the final count. Don't go without a fight! Ann Goodheart's ideas are easy to implement on a shoestring and will make you think of new ways you can adapt ideas you've used before and give them a new spin.*

All of us get tired of working at our jobs, even those of us who are entrepreneurs. We need a booster shot (ouch!) once in awhile to get us moving in a new direction.





## **LEAPING ANTELOPE PRODUCTIONS®**

**Books and Multimedia for Learning, Exploring, Accomplishing, Planning**

Leaping Antelope Productions® books are available for sales promotions, premiums and fund-raising use. Special editions can also be created to specification. For details, contact the publishers at Leaping Antelope Productions®, 1-888-909-LEAP, [www.leapingantelope.com](http://www.leapingantelope.com).

### **25 Ways to Give a Booster Shot to Your Long-Term Small Business.**

Copyright © 2004 by Leaping Antelope Productions®. Developed in the United States of America. All rights reserved. No part of this ebook may be reproduced in any printed form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems without permission in writing from the publisher, except by a reviewer, who may quote brief passages in a review. Published by Leaping Antelope Productions®, 1-888-909-LEAP, [www.leapingantelope.com](http://www.leapingantelope.com).

**Notice of Liability:** The information in this ebook is distributed on an “As Is” basis, without warranty. While every precaution has been taken in the preparation of the book, neither the author nor Leaping Antelope Productions, shall have any liability to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the instructions contained in this book or by the products/services described in it.

---

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ann Goodheart is a 25-year veteran of the printing and publishing industries. Her career has spanned many facets of communication: teaching, copyediting, developmental editing, graphic design, marketing, sales training, commercial printing and customized information products.

Ann and her husband have been self-employed for 17 years. They grew their commercial design and printing business from their personal savings of \$50,000 to a company with a 1/4 million in sales per year. They are currently expanding their company into an area they call “trapeze information.” They reconfigure their clients’ information so that it flies with ease from print collateral to ebook to customized book to websites to sales presentations.

Part of Ann’s role in their company is to advise clients on the effective use of their information management, printing and publicity budgets. She has assisted many types of clients, from small businesses to high-tech startups, in enhancing the effectiveness of their sales messages in print.



25 Ways  
to Give a  
Booster Shot  
to Your  
Long-Term  
Small Business

---

**W**hen my husband and I started our small business in 1987 we were filled with enthusiasm about the prospects of publicizing, marketing and growing sales of our company. But as the years went by, it became more difficult to come up with new and creative ideas for revitalizing our business. We weathered three recessions and our company grew slowly. Over time we came to realize that other small companies went through the same cycles...growth, treading water, downsizing, followed by new growth and unexpected bursts of innovation.

We always had an overall garden plan, but sometimes our plan sprouted some unidentifiable plants!

And so these ideas from my own experiences and those of other small business owners are offered to you. Don't lose heart if your small business is not moving in the direction you wish. It CAN change. You are the best person to alter the direction. After all, isn't that one of the reasons you started your own business? You want to be a leader!



Here are some ideas to get you started on your own garden plan.

---

*Is your company a service business, a product business or both?*

## **1) Offer a product if you are a service.**

For example, a company that installs hardwood floors for their main business decided they could offer their clients floor-cleaning products. After every installation, they dropped off a complimentary catalog with a small sample of their product and a catalog for the consumer to reorder. This second business was lucrative and kept their name around for customer referrals.



My hairdresser offers beauty supplies in her salon. She stocks the typical shampoos and hair sprays, but she also carries makeups and aromatherapy candles. She has the products packaged in different colored netting and tied with a tag with her company name, list of services and other vital contact information.

### **Ask yourself these questions:**

*What product could I offer my clients that will keep my company name handy and reinforce the main service I offer?*

*Are there quality products that I can buy wholesale but brand with my company image as a second profit center?*

*Can I extend this profit center with a product website that also lists my services?*

---

*Is your company a product business, a service business or both?*

## **2) Offer a service if you currently offer a product.**

A local bakery decided that their line of mini-bagels would be great for company breakfasts. They sent a mailer to local businesses and offered to do an onsite breakfast free for one week if booked for four weeks throughout the year. As this business increased they sold their contact list to a local caterer. *The caterer is still ordering bagels from them!*

The owner of an auto parts store in my community decided he would like to be able to offer a service to his customers. Now he has an employee on site to respond to emergencies. If you drive in with a broken tail light, he'll sell you the proper part and his employee will install it for you for a nominal fee.

### **Ask yourself these questions:**

*What service might be a natural extension of my product?*

*What service would assist me in researching my clients' needs for new or existing products?*



---

*Look around...keep your mind open for new product ideas.*

### **3) Start a completely new product line.**

The owner of a local paper store noticed that his customers were coming from many different sources. He sold to printers, but also to artists as well as to folks who were pursuing arts and crafts. He joined up with two of his best customers, an artist and a local printer and they created a line of scrapbook journals. They sold the journals in his paper store, but also to other stores in their region.



**Ask yourself these questions:**

*What new product can I create from existing assets and inventory?*

*Can I get another business, one of my clients, or one of my vendors to help me get this new product line off the ground?*

*Will the idea take too much time from my current business or will it be an easy extension from what I'm currently doing?*

---

*Have you gotten a little too comfortable behind your computer?*

## **4) Go out and talk with your customers.**

When was the last time you dropped by or made an appointment to visit your top customers? Bring a 5-question survey with new ideas for company expansion and get some help from your customers. Is this idea for a product or service something they would use? You will be surprised at the great ideas that are generated. Customers love to help when asked.

If you think your customers would be put off by the formality of a written survey, just work your questions into your chit chat. It doesn't have to be formal to be effective.



**Ask your customers these questions:**

*What can we do to improve our service to you?*

*How do you see your company expanding or changing in the next few years? In which areas could our company assist in these changes?*

*What is your greatest daily challenge?*

*If we offered this product or this service (fill in yours!) would these new products/services be useful to you?*

*What is the best aspect of our company's relationship with yours? The worst aspect?*

---

*I need \$\$\$ and you want me to do what?*

## **5) Give your customers a gift.**

A gift for your customers doesn't have to be something huge or expensive. Just think about what your customers might use that would keep your name out in front of them. A local dentist gives out a special child's toothbrush and a mini book about Tommy Tooth (and how he brushes his teeth) to every child who comes to her office. Both items have the dental office information imprinted on them. *Guess which children want to go the dentist!*

It's surprising how goodwill gestures make a lasting impression on your clients. Last year during the holiday season, my express courier came by with a glass coffee mug filled with treats. The treats are long gone, but I still have the interesting globe mug (which emphasizes their global reach!) with their company logo and phone number. So when I need courier services I just pick up my coffee and call them.



---

*Why reinvent the wheel? Go to a wheel convention and research!*

**6) Start a forum to discuss your challenges and ideas with other business owners.**

A hotel owner was unhappy with the bookings at her hotel. She was reluctant to create a forum with hotel owners who were competing for her business so she started an online discussion group instead. The purpose of the group is to come up with business-generating ideas for the small hotel. Over a period of time she was able to use many of the ideas to create new business for her hotel. The forum grew into a website and she now gets secondary income from businesses that want to advertise to this elite group.



**Ask yourself these questions:**

*What ideas can I adapt that someone else in my industry is using with success?*

*Do I just need to let off some steam or do I really want or need to take action to improve business?*

*Are the challenges I'm facing typical to others in my industry or do they represent an important industry trend/s?*

---

*No time to get new leads? Have them come to you instead.*

**7) Offer a free seminar, but have products or services available for sale.**

A local real estate agent needed more listings to build her business. She joined up with a mortgage broker to create an informative new seminar: **10 Steps to Selling Your House for Top Dollar.** They took out a full page ad in the paper and then they nervously waited. Sixty people showed up for the first seminar. It was enjoyable but they didn't generate any listings. One week later they received calls from 8 people which materialized into 4 listings for homes. The net result was over \$150,000 of commissions.



Eventually the mortgage broker was able to use some of the leads as well. After all, the sellers of the previous homes needed to buy new ones!

**Ask yourself these questions:**

*What event could I sponsor at my business that would bring people in, offer them something valuable and give them an opportunity to become acquainted with me and my business?*

*What type of get-together would further the goals of my business?*

*How many leads do I need to generate to fulfill my business goals?*

---

*Do you find yourself giving free advice? Use your talent to market.*

## **8) Create and give away a free ebook on your website.**

A financial consultant wanted more business but he was reluctant to cold call to develop leads. He wrote an informational ebook on how to select a top financial consultant. At the end of the ebook he listed his information and, with their permission, some testimonials from several of his best clients. He gave this book away free on his website, but it turned out to be a very useful method to attract new clients. The first year he was contacted by 5 new clients, with individual portfolios of over \$80,000 each. He eventually developed the ebook into a more detailed print book, which is selling as well.

### **Ask yourself these questions:**

*What expert advice can I offer others?*

*Are my writing skills sharp enough to do this myself or should I enlist a ghostwriter?*

*How can I structure my ebook so that clients will trust my expertise and hire me as a consultant?*



---

*Why go solo? Get a team together and make news.*

**9) Offer a joint promotion with another business.**

The owner of a golf pro shop noticed that many of the women who shopped in his store were buying gifts for their husbands or fathers who were golf enthusiasts. He went to a local baker and asked for his assistance to create a cake designed in the shape of a golf course. They created a little flyer with a photo of the cake. For purchases over \$350 his customers received a free golf cake for their husband's birthday or other special occasion. *The golf cakes were such a hit that the editor at their city's newspaper wrote an article about these two seemingly unrelated businesses resulting in even more business!*



And it didn't stop there. Customers of all ages were asking about the cakes. Eventually, the golf shop owner and the baker were catering children's events. Capitalizing on the uptick in interest in golf for kids, they created a birthday event...the golf party was born! Pros associated with the shop came to the party to teach kids golf tips and play with them. Special kid-friendly golf gear from the bricks and mortar store was added to the package and the baker catered the event.

---

*Do you know how seeds travel? Get your customers to plant them.*

## **10) Enlist your customers help with your promotions.**

A jeweler complained that his business was too seasonal. He wanted to attract more business throughout the year so he offered an unusual promotion. Every time a young couple bought their wedding rings in his store, he gave them a special gold envelope with a certificate.

This certificate was for their bride's parents or grandparents to bring in *their* rings for free cleaning or repair, but there was one catch. They had to bring them in on the month of *their* anniversary. In many cases, the groom purchased the same service for his parents as well!

This unique promotion worked and helped the jeweler establish ongoing business relationships with his customers and their families.



---

*Seeds planted? Plants grown? Time to cross-pollinate!*

## **11) Cross market your company product line or services.**

Every customer that comes through your door orders different products and services from you. Sometimes customer inertia sets in. He or she forgets about the total line of products and services you offer. Gentle reminders don't hurt.

The owner of a housewares store noticed that her customers were creatures of habit. Some customers bought bath items from her, but not kitchen items and vice versa. Now she has targeted coupons that her shop clerks put into every bag. For the bath customers, they have been instructed to put in a coupon promoting a kitchen item, for the kitchen lovers, a coupon for luxury bath salts. Within a month she saw an 8% increase in her business just from existing customers!

**Ask yourself these questions:**

*What can I do to ensure that my customers are aware of all the products and/or services I offer?*

*What incentive can I offer to persuade my return customers to try a service or product that they haven't yet tried?*

---

*Don't forget to smell the roses!*

## 12) Take the weekend off.

This suggestion might seem ridiculous, but sometimes we small business owners get a little too close to all our problems. Working day and night is productive at times, but without down time it's difficult for our overworked brains and bodies to come up with new ideas.

A colleague of mine mentioned that her best ideas come to her when she is doing something completely different than her normal activities. She keeps a tiny notebook in her purse to jot down these random thoughts so that when she's back at work she can roll them into her business plans.

Thousands of new products and inventions are inspired by nature. *So go take that walk in the park!*



---

*Connect with your local community.*

### **13) Sponsor an activity in your community and use it for networking.**

A sports equipment company sponsors a soccer tournament for a number of area high schools. They give away sports T-shirts and send a press release to their local newspaper so that they get maximum coverage for this big ticket giveaway. But the expense is worth it for the community contacts they cultivate.

Sports are not the only type of activity that can bring people together. Food events and book events are popular as well. In fact, one of the events that gets press every year in my community is sponsored by a bookstore. They prepare ads and press releases so that everyone knows that on the week of October 1st, 25% of their profits will go to funds for local libraries.

Librarians, school teachers and parents love this event and these are the folks who influence book purchases!

#### **Ask yourself these questions:**

*What unique event can I sponsor that would heighten awareness of my business?*

*What activities or events would bring together my target audience of ideal customers?*

---

*Networking takes time, but pays off.*

## 14) Join the Chamber of Commerce.

There are many benefits to joining your local chamber of commerce. Most chambers have regular networking get-togethers. In addition to meeting potential clients at these meetings you may also meet influential bankers and community influencers who can help your business.

A case in point—the owner of a hardwood flooring company was going through a slump with his business. He joined the chamber and attended meetings for about six months. He met and cultivated new clients, but he also met a banker who helped him refinance some of his outstanding debts.

His business picked up in a few months, but during the downturn he had networked with real estate agents, interior designers and owners of construction companies. All these contacts got to know him and eventually referred business to him.



---

*You have to ask questions if you want answers.*

## **15) Create a questionnaire to get new product or service ideas.**

The owner of a daycare center was looking for more value-added services she could offer her clients. She created a one-page questionnaire and asked her clients to evaluate her current roster of services. In addition she sent the questions out to databases of clients from other daycare centers outside the sphere of her business.

At the end of the list of questions, she left a comment box. A number of respondents listed interesting ideas in their comment boxes, but there was one comment in particular that caught her attention.

In another area of the country onsite telecommunications was making it possible for parents to pull up the daycare center on their computers to see their children during the day. At the beginning, she thought this would be too expensive a service for her to fund. But she immediately got 20 clients to sign up for a one-year trial and she used those monies as a down payment for the system!



---

*Sometimes even the self-employed need to change careers.*

## **16) Change your business into another type of business.**

Sometimes no matter what you do, the services you offer are not perceived as valuable anymore. Just think of how ice companies were frozen out of the market once refrigeration burst on the scene!

After the dot-com bust, the owner of a high-end TV-entertainment system store was hurting for business. He tried to offer innovative financing, but in his area the market seemed to have dried up.

Faced with inventory that wasn't moving and the clock ticking with no customers coming into his store, he came up with a unique solution. His family and friends thought he was crazy.

He used his savings, took out a home equity line and bought all his existing inventory. With the help of his landlord (who was worried that he might go bankrupt and not pay off his existing lease!), he reconfigured his large store into private sound proof rooms. Each room had an entertainment system. He packaged this new business like a private dinner theater. Eventually he marketed to local businesses who needed private meeting rooms for video presentations as well.

*His first customers were a group of college buddies whose wives were tired of hearing Monday Night football at home!*

---

*Want to stand out? Don't be afraid to do something silly!*

**17) Create an innovative business card and drop one wherever there is an opportunity.**

I'll never forget the fun business card I picked up at the last Chamber of Commerce meeting I attended. On the front of the card were two bent over skeletons. The copy read: "This is how we looked before Dr. Lisa Grant's chiropractic sessions." On the back of the card it read: "This is how we look after Dr. Lisa Grant's chiropractic sessions." The photo on the back of the card was a vintage movie photo of Katherine Hepburn and Cary Grant!

I wasn't the only person who noticed this funny business card and the play on names that Dr. Grant had used. Her name, business address and other vital information was positioned on the back of the card as well.

This card achieved the three major functions of a great business card:

- Makes the company or consultant name memorable
- Contains all important contact information
- Is interesting and therefore not frequently thrown away!

---

*Go back in time to view the future differently.*

**18) Review your past history (before you started your business) to farm ideas to revitalize your business.**

A restaurant owner had been serving traditional Italian-American food to his customers for 20 years. He loved his customers and his business but lately his zest for it all had been waning. He thought about selling his business but he decided it was too drastic a step. He was still too young to retire.

At night he couldn't sleep. He kept reviewing his life and wondering whether he could feel enthusiasm again. This personal crisis started him thinking about experiences he had had as a child. His grandmother, who had been born in Rome, was a masterful chef. He had so many fond memories of sitting around the table with his family and eating the delicacies she had lovingly prepared. He realized her influence was the major reason he had started a restaurant in the first place.

So he went on a quest to uncover her recipes. At the beginning he thought he was doing this just for himself and to give a legacy to his family. The project became a passion. Going through her cookbooks, journals and researching his family history gave him a renewed interest in his life's path. In the end, he ended up having a Roman recipe night once a week in honor of his grandmother!

---

*Would you like some ice cream with your pie?*

## 19) Upsell, but do it tactfully.

Can you imagine the difference in profits a restaurant would make if every customer answered yes to the question above? I was personally reluctant to try this technique when my husband and I first started our business. I guess I thought it would be perceived as too pushy. As time went on, I watched other business people use this technique successfully so I started to slowly incorporate it into my repertoire and lo and below profits went up 10%! Here are two observations for achieving a bull's eye upsell without alienating your clients:

- **List or suggest different, more expensive options but offer an incentive/s to the customer for choosing one of those options.**

For example, if a customer asks for a quote for 500 units of your product, supply that quote but also supply a quote for 750 units at a discounted unit rate.

- **Never make your customer feel uncomfortable if she or he does not choose a more expensive option.**

Recently my husband and I went out for a modest celebration dinner. The waitress tried to upsell us on a very pricey wine and when we did not say yes, she made us feel uncomfortable. I would have come back to that restaurant and spent more on another occasion but I think in the future I will spend my money elsewhere!

---

*There's a perfect teddy bear for every grandchild.*

## **20) Focus your attention on your customer's needs. Then fulfill them.**

A friend of mine told me this interesting story about searching for a special teddy bear for her granddaughter. She went to two stores downtown and wandered around for about half an hour in each store. No one offered to help her in her quest and after looking at the bears available, she couldn't really find what she wanted. In the third store, the clerk stood there momentarily asking if she could use some help but then he walked away. She picked up a few bears that were cute, but she felt somewhat uninspired so she left.

Finally in the fourth store, the store clerk smiled when she heard what she was looking for and brought her into the toy section where there were lots of different bears to choose from. In fact, there were so many colors and styles it was going to be difficult to select just one bear!

The clerk asked her about her granddaughter. What was her favorite color? How old was she? In the course of their conversation, my friend mentioned that her granddaughter was taking ballet lessons. "Wait here just a minute," the store clerk said.

"This just came in," she said as she presented my friend with an exquisite ballerina bear dressed in a pink tutu with pink ballet shoes. My friend fell in love with the bear! It was too perfect to leave at the store. She paid twice the amount she was planning to spend, but she had no regrets.

---

*Why didn't I think of that?*

## **21) Offer a bonus to employees who come up with creative ideas.**

One of my clients is thrilled because she finally has the best employee team she's ever had. She decided to encourage a monthly brainstorming meeting. These meetings turned out to be profitable pizza parties because her employees shared ideas for making more money and streamlining current business practices.



In fact, she mentioned to me that recently one of her employees shared an inventory formula that he had used in a previous unrelated industry. They tried the new formula and found after several trials that this new forecasting tool made it possible for them to keep a tighter rein on their inventory than before. This idea ultimately saved her company thousands of dollars a year by ensuring that they did not overshoot their orders or run out of stock.

Even small suggestions can sometimes yield cost savings. One employee took the time to analyze all their supply purchases for paper towels, toilet paper, soap, as well as paper clips, file folders and other disposable office supplies. She took the yearly expenditure chart, went to a closeby warehouse store and negotiated a 25% discount on purchases with them.

My client was in a position to use these increased revenues to start a profit sharing and bonus program. She's happy with these results and so are her employees.

---

*Benefit from the experience of those who came before you.*

## **22) Get yourself a mentor/mentors.**

If you are fortunate enough to have anyone in your family who has had a similar business to yours and who you can turn to for sound advice, you should count your blessings. When my husband and I started our business, no one in our families had worked in our industries before. It took us quite a while to realize that it wasn't a good idea to be working on a desert island with no one else to turn to for advice!

Then we found out about SCORE, Service Corps of Retired Executives. We couldn't believe it when we read about it. Here was a pool of retired executives across the country who would help you with business challenges by offering FREE confidential advice!

At the beginning we hesitated. After all, as an entrepreneur you have pride and a certain level of stubbornness. Maybe you feel that no one could possibly understand your business better than you do. Do you remember that great Gershwin song—*It ain't necessarily so?*

One of the best things we ever did for ourselves was find a SCORE mentor who had had his own company in our industry. It was such a relief to talk to someone who understood our challenges at the nuts and bolts level and who could offer concrete suggestions for improved sales and practices.

<http://www.score.org>

---

*If only we had followed that advice...*

## **23) Fine tune your financial team.**

When we first started out, an influential businessman offered this unsolicited advice to us. “There are three very important people you must seek to help you on your path to success...an honest accountant, a banker who understands small business, and a trustworthy lawyer.

It was years later in the middle of a scary business crisis that these words resounded in our ears. We had gone through three bookkeeping/tax services, three bankers and two lawyers by that time. We took stock of our situation and realized that we had left ourselves unprotected by not developing a team who would work with us and for us with integrity and the level of detailed followthrough needed to solve problems.

We started all over again. We sought out a new tax service, looked for bankers who were small business and community savvy and a lawyer who specialized in our industry. But how did we find these great new team members? We asked lots of questions! After asking family, friends, colleagues, clients, chamber members our business mentor and even some of our competitors, certain names kept popping up. Armed with our list of potential new “candidates” we set up time for information-gathering meetings and we chose the new individuals and companies.

Our financial life has been smoother ever since we took the time to consciously fine tune our team.

---

*Give a prize, gain an audience.*

## **24) Sponsor a fun contest.**

Sometimes doing something for fun can help you gain an audience, and eventually, new customers.

The owner of a dance studio was looking for ways to build awareness of her services and location. She came up with a fun idea for a contest and sent a press release to her local newspaper.

“Name our new dance and win \$500! Visit us at our location on November 10th. Our students will perform our unnamed dance for you. A panel of community judges will be in attendance and will select the final dance name from the entries.”

The rest of the press release provided some history of her business and the art of dance. At the end of the release, she asked potential attendees to register at her website to reserve a seat for the event.

She received over 625 responses! The day of the performance it was a mob scene. People were packed into the studio. The students danced their new dance, the attendees scribbled their entries on the slips of paper and the judges judged. A good time was had by all!

By January of the following year the owner of the dance studio garnered a substantially increased enrollment for her school. Her big splash event had paid off.

---

*The knowledge of others is always at your fingertips...*

## **25) Buy a business book once in awhile.**

Shame on you if you're a business owner and you've never picked up a book to help you come up with new ideas! (OK, please excuse me, but earlier in my career I was a school teacher!) Maybe you're just not an avid reader and the idea of buying and studying a business book feels like going to school again.



Thousands of new business books come out every year on every imaginable topic. Some are appropriate for CEOs of major companies, but many are more industry or small business specific.

And if you feel you learn best by attending seminars or just surfing the internet, allow yourself some time each week to research events or sites that might prove valuable to you now or in the future.

### **Ask yourself these questions:**

*What information would be most valuable to me at this time? Sales, marketing, accounting?*

*Do I need an inspirational book or a book with practical tips I can apply in my business?*

*Should I look for an industry specific book? Are there any authors in my industry whose advice I respect? Is there an industry seminar I would like to attend?*

---

I hope this ebook has been easy on the eyes and has been a springboard for ideas to adapt to your own business.

My goal was to offer you quality seeds as you think creatively about ways to revitalize your spirits and your small business.

I'd love to hear about ideas you've tried from this ebook or other ideas you are willing to share with entrepreneurs like yourself. Please write to me at **[anngoodheart@leapingantelope.com](mailto:anngoodheart@leapingantelope.com)**.

If you are looking for ideas on managing desktop design and printing, check out the following link:

*[Alleviating Prepress Anxiety: How to Manage Your Print Projects for Savings, Schedule and Quality](#)*



**LEAPING ANTELOPE PRODUCTIONS®**

Books and Multimedia for **L**earning, **E**xploring, **A**ccomplishing, **P**lanning

[www.leapingantelope.com](http://www.leapingantelope.com)