

# The small business guide to marketing on a budget



tide

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## CHAPTER 1

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# How to define your marketing strategy

Before you start promoting your business, you need a plan. Without a clear roadmap towards your goal, you won't know which marketing approaches and activities to use.

### **Which is why you must set clear goals first.**

What are you hoping to achieve over the next 3, 6 and 12 months?  
What are your quarterly and yearly goals?

Short-term goals often have specific numbers attached to them, such as number of new customers, deal size, revenue etc.

Long-term goals include these sales and revenue numbers, but they're also impact-driven. In other words, how much of the total addressable market are you hoping to penetrate?

### **What do you want your brand to be known for?**

Figure out what these goals are. Work backwards from there. For example, within the next year, you may want to:

1. Generate £1 million in annual recurring revenue (ARR)
2. Generate 100,000 readers to your blog a month
3. Become a world-class brand in your industry

With those goals defined, you can start putting together your plan.

## Creating buyer personas

If you haven't documented a clear definition of who your best customers are, now is the time to do so.

Buyer personas is a visual representation of your customers and audience. They include insights on demographic profile, interests, challenges and goals.

For example, footwear brand **Munro Shoes** have created personas for each segment of their target audience. As you can see below, this **includes a snapshot** of key information that matters most to their brand:

BRANDI TYLER


<p><b>PROFILE</b>    Narrow Feet</p> <p><b>GENDER</b>    Female</p> <p><b>AGE</b>        36</p> <p><b>LOCATION</b>    Los Angeles, CA</p> <p><b>OCCUPATION</b>    Receptionist; \$38k</p>	<p><b>MOTIVATIONS</b></p> <p>Brandi gets very emotional about shopping for shoes in retail stores because she rarely can find a pair that fits her narrow feet. Recently, she's turned to online shopping to avoid the hassle of shopping in stores. Brandi found Munro after Googling "narrow width shoes" and reading other reviews online about the company.</p> <p><b>GOALS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Needs an SS (4A) width shoe</li> <li>▪ Would like to purchase several pairs to fit occasion, style, and color</li> <li>▪ Hoping to find that she doesn't have to sacrifice style or options when searching by fit</li> </ul> <p><b>FRUSTRATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not being able to filter available shoes by width</li> <li>▪ Getting far fewer options when she applies width filter</li> <li>▪ No other recommended shoes when she's looking at a pair she particularly likes</li> </ul>
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**"It's SO difficult to buy shoes that fit my feet."**

**REAL MUNRO CUSTOMERS**

"My whole life has been a choice between fit and style - when I was younger, I went for style & my feet killed me. As an adult, I tried for fit & the styles were for 95 year olds. This shoe is the 1st time I could get both."

"I wear a 4A and I have struggled my entire life finding shoes narrow enough for my feet and more so in recent years. I stumbled onto this Munro brand sandal and was shocked to find it comes in up to a 4A width and it actually fit and is like wearing a glove! I now have two pairs in different colors."

"Love these slides so much I went out and bought two more pairs. I have very narrow feet and they fit perfectly. They're very stylish and I get compliments whenever I wear them."



These insights are important for several reasons:

1. Demographic data provides better targeting, especially when advertising on platforms such as Google Ads and Facebook.
2. Understanding customer motivations and goals allows you to align your offering with where they're going and desires to achieve.
3. Other qualitative insights, especially testimonials, provide you with the exact language that your customer is using. This means creating content and creative that show you "get them".

- **Location**
- **Age**
- **Gender**
- **Education**
- **Job role**
- **Income level**
- **Relationship status**
- **Language**
- **Publications they read**
- **Influencers they follow**
- **Motivations**
- **Concerns**

When putting together your buyer personas, look to gather as much of the following data as possible:

**Don't guess or assume the facts behind this data. Instead, talk to your customers. Get on the phone, or talk to them face-to-face.**

Conducting customer interviews is one of the fastest ways to generate insights "straight from the horse's mouth". You might be surprised by what you find.

## Competitor research

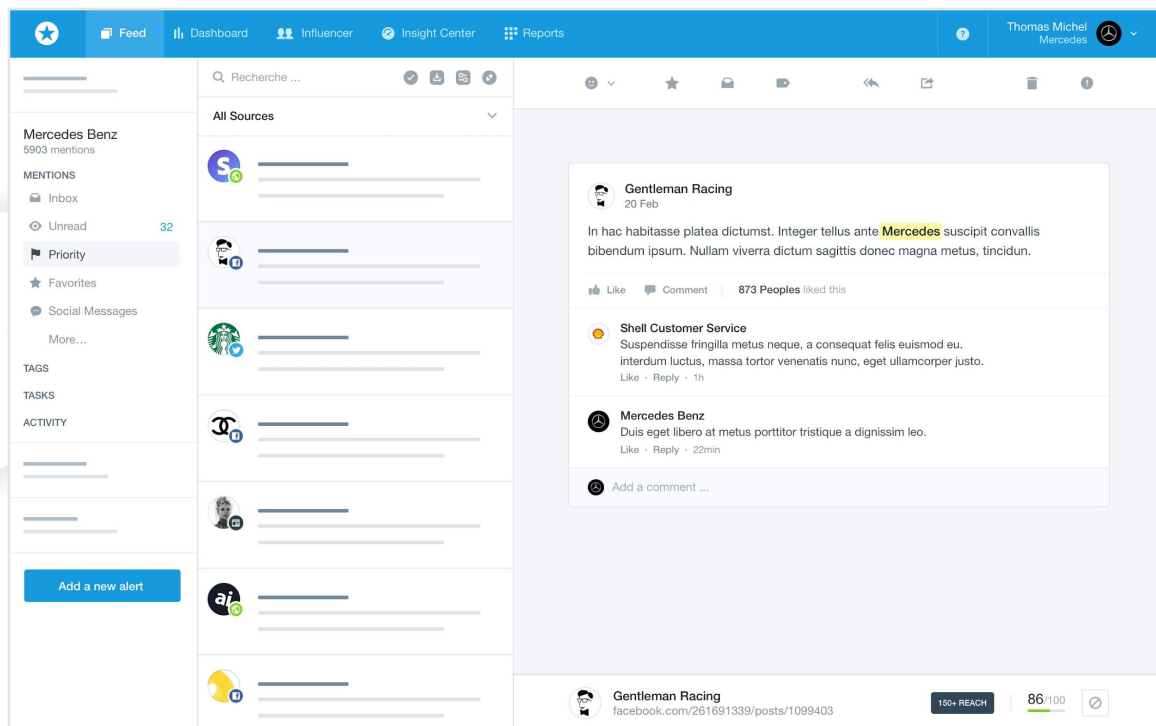
With your customers clearly defined, it's time to see what your competitors are doing to attract them.

Even if you believe you're the only brand offering what you do, you're going to get competitors eventually.

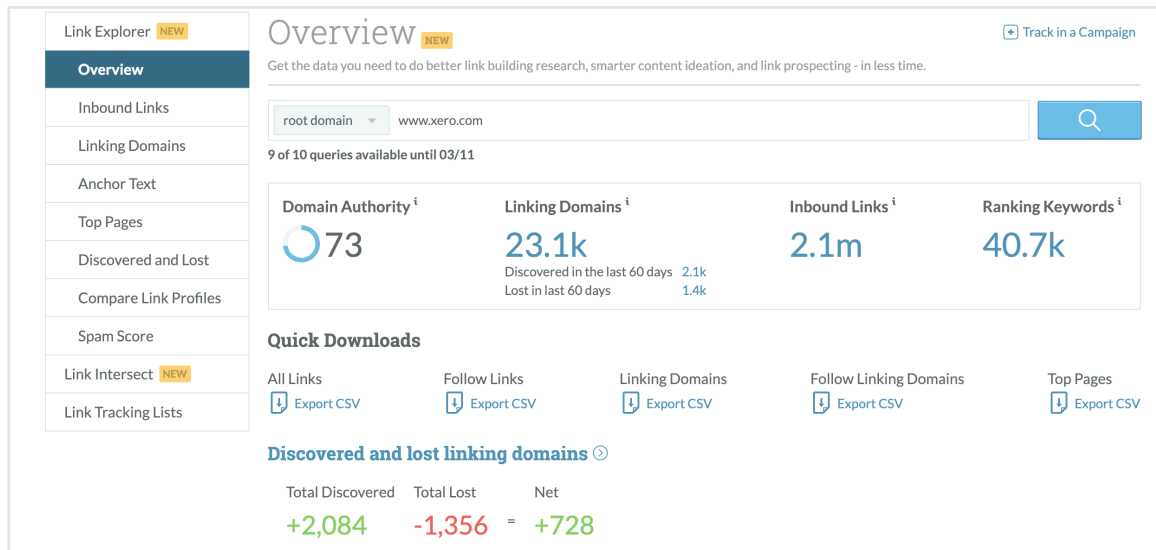
Running effective competitor research will help you look for untapped opportunities and find ways to do things better than them.

**There are several ways you can generate competitive data:**

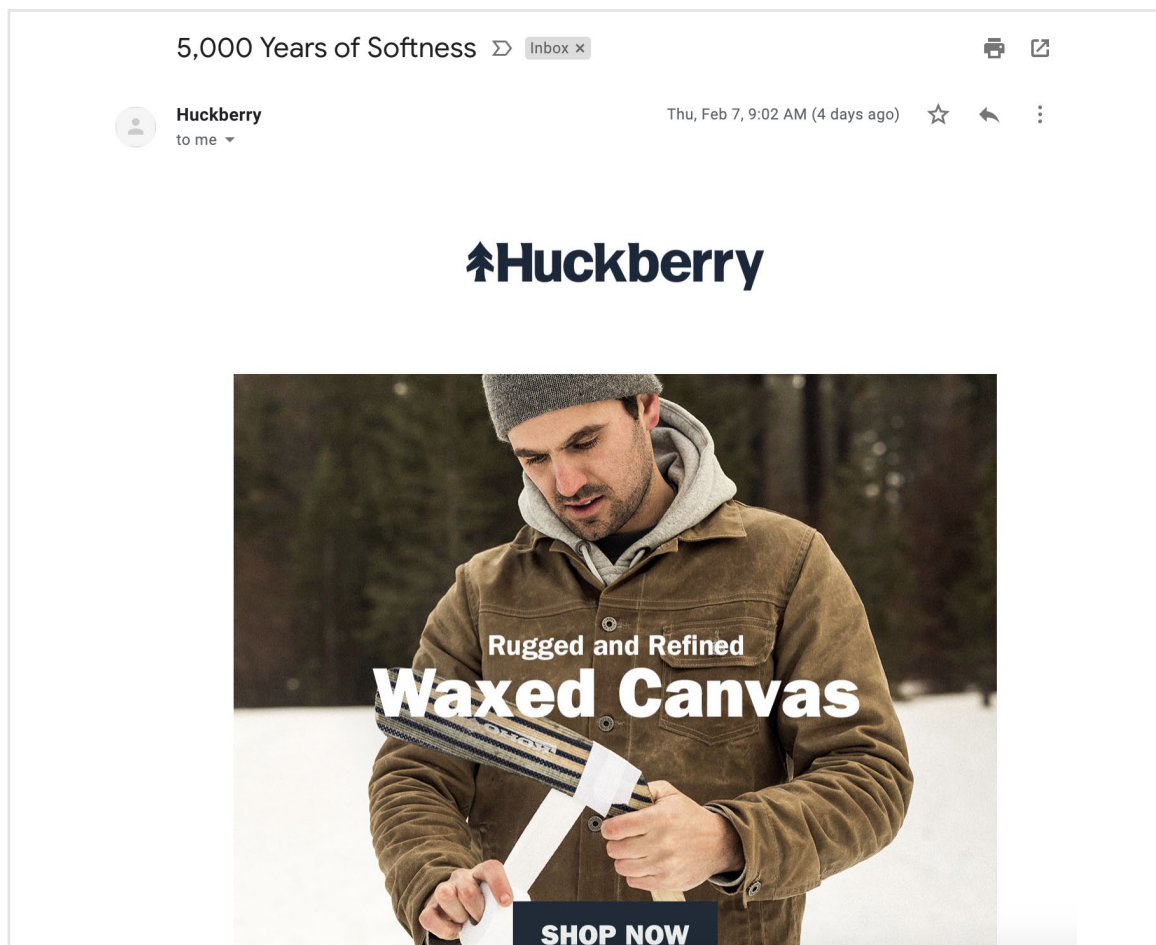
1. Use **Mention** to listen to what they're talking about (and what people are saying about them) on social media:



2. Use an SEO platform, such as **SEMrush** or **Moz**, to uncover which keywords they're targeting on Google:



3. Sign up for their email newsletters to see how they're nurturing their existing customers and leads:



4. Explore their website, blog and social media profiles. Look at what kind of content they're putting out, the language behind it and the offers they use on their website.

Don't be afraid to buy their products or services. For example, if you're a SaaS platform you could sign up for a demo or trial of your competitor's platform. This will show you what their sales process is like, as well as the USPs behind their platform.

## Finding the right channels

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With key insights on both your customers and competitors, you can begin choosing the right marketing channels to attract new customers.

Thanks to the internet, there are dozens of potential approaches to choose from.

**The big question is, which do you focus on in the early days - especially when you're on a tight budget?**

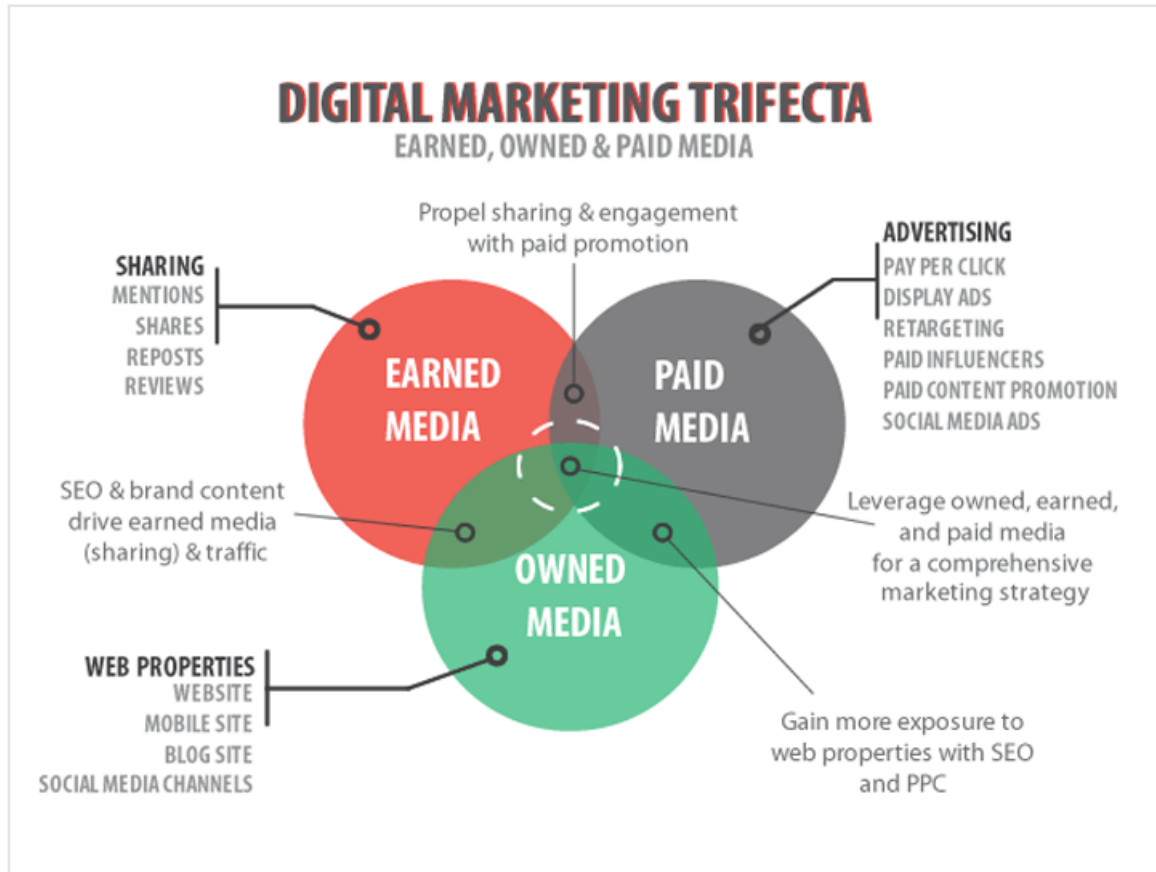
The first mistake to avoid is investing in a channel because you feel you should be there. Many business owners, for example, believe they should be on every social media platform. The problem is, they don't have the resources to invest in them. In turn, this leads to ineffective activity and poor results.





First, let's segment each channel into **the following buckets**:

1. Owned Media
2. Paid Media
3. Earned Media

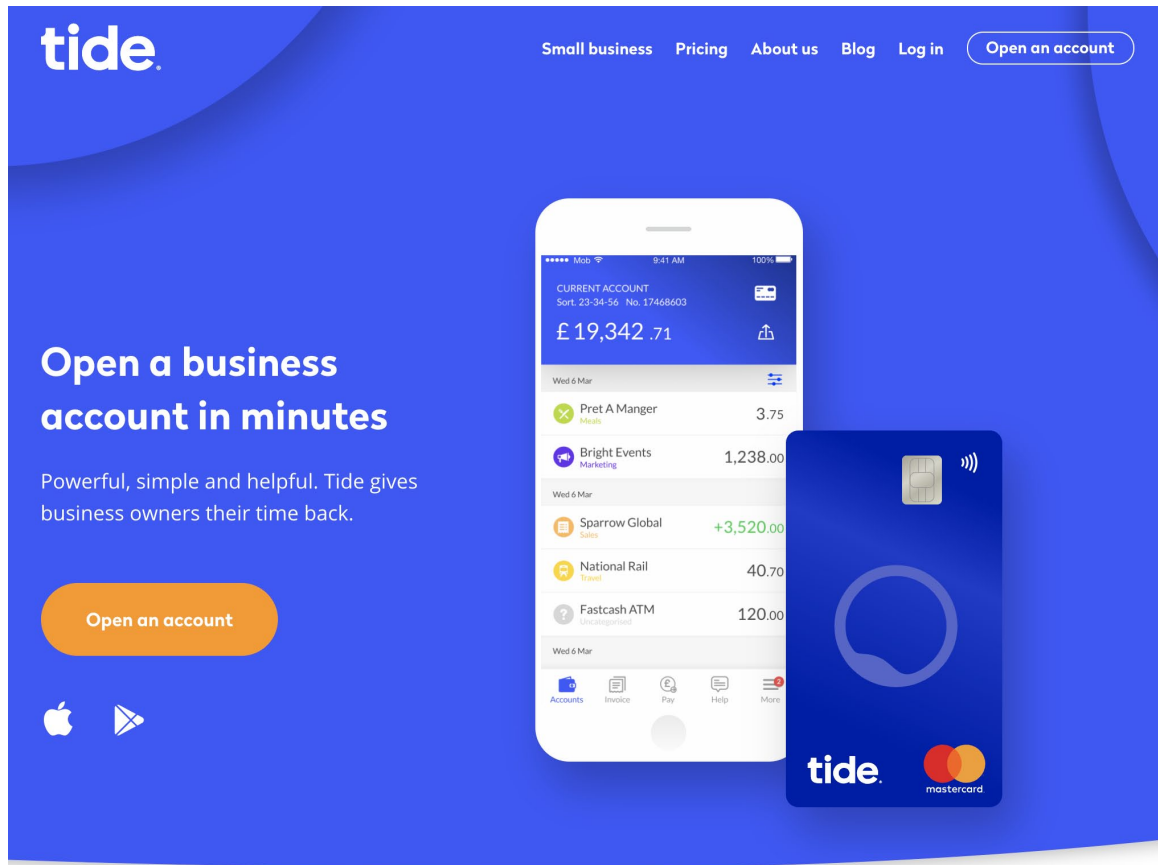


**Owned media** includes the channels and assets you control. This means your website, social media profiles and email list.

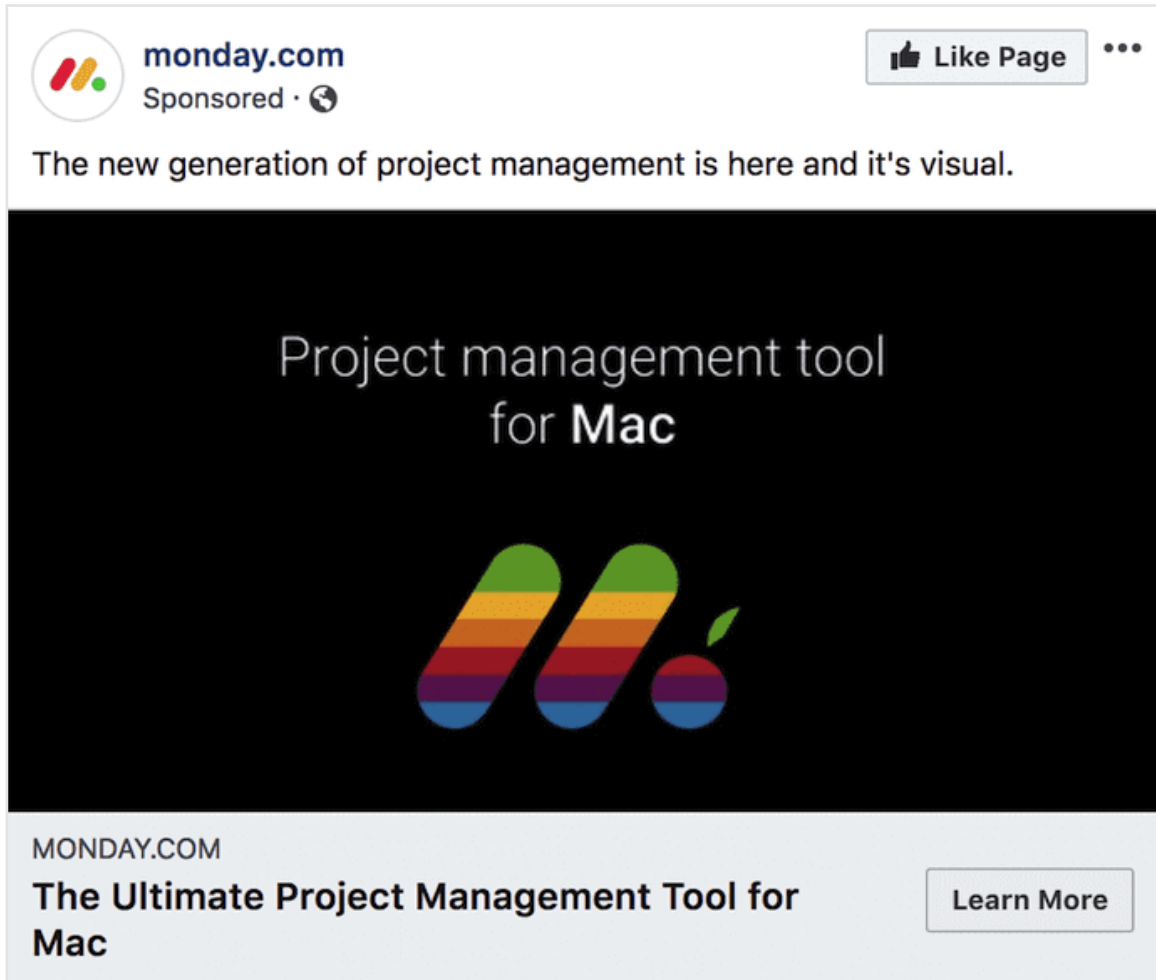
**Paid media** is comprised of advertising channels where you must pay for results. For example, Google Ads works on a pay-per-click (PPC) basis. While Facebook Ads can charge you based on impressions or conversions.

Finally, **earned media** includes press coverage, social mentions and shares, as well as reviews on third party websites. Influencer marketing also fits under this umbrella.

For example, at Tide, we use our **blog** and **website** to educate potential customers on all various small business topics. We've also built our home page to convert those visitors into new members:



Here's an example of what paid media looks like on Facebook. [This ad](#) from Monday.com is designed to convert you from an observer into a customer:



This is a screenshot of a Facebook advertisement for Monday.com. The ad is presented in a white-bordered frame. At the top left, there is a circular profile picture of the Monday.com logo, followed by the text "monday.com" and "Sponsored ·" with a globe icon. At the top right, there is a button that says "Like Page" with a thumbs-up icon and three dots. Below the header, the main text of the ad reads "The new generation of project management is here and it's visual." This is followed by a large black rectangular area containing the text "Project management tool for Mac" in white, and a large, stylized logo that combines the Monday.com logo with the Apple logo. Below this black area, there is a light gray section containing the text "MONDAY.COM" and "The Ultimate Project Management Tool for Mac". To the right of this text is a button that says "Learn More".

monday.com  
Sponsored ·

Like Page

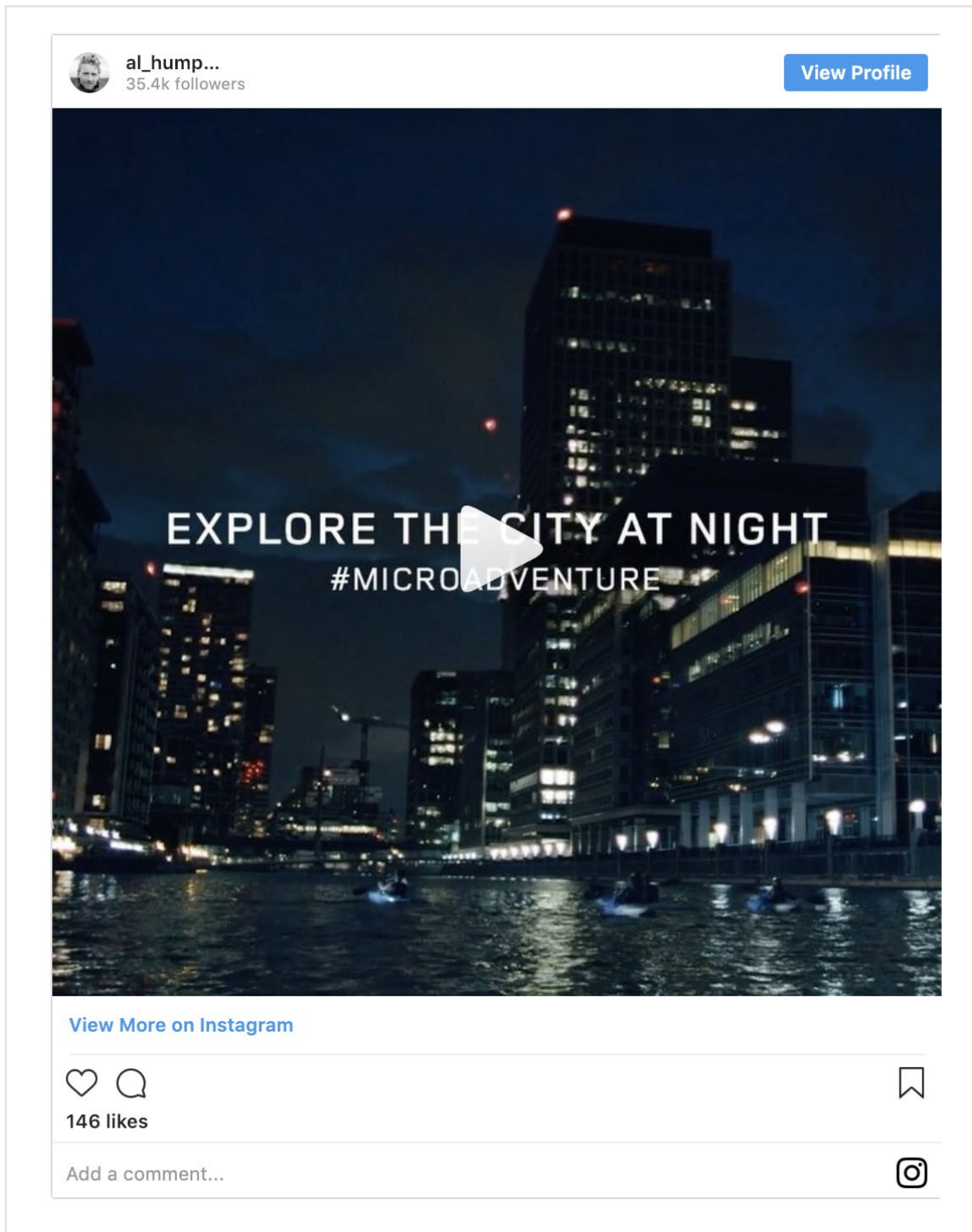
The new generation of project management is here and it's visual.

Project management tool  
for Mac

MONDAY.COM  
The Ultimate Project Management Tool for  
Mac

Learn More

Then there's earned media. Here, adventure thought leader Alastair Humphreys worked with Land Rover to promote the concept of "microadventures" alongside their cars:



The rest of this guide will cover each area in greater depth. For now, consider using a **2:1:1** ratio when selecting your channels. That is: two owned channels, one earned and one paid.



## CHAPTER 2

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# Creating a website & content that converts

Now you know who you're targeting, who you're up against and where you can find the best customers.

Before you start investing in external channels, you must first create a hub for your marketing efforts.

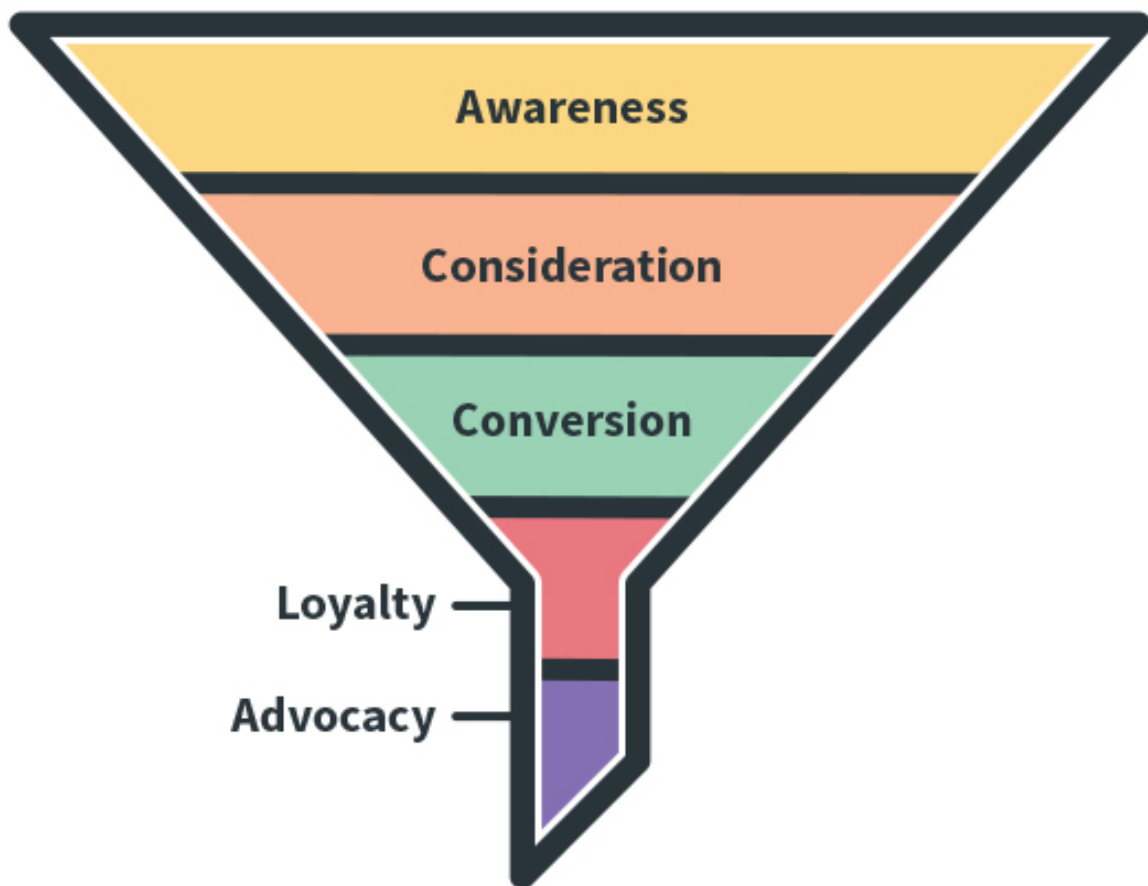
This comes in the form of your website and the content you create on it.



Many business owners make the mistake of focusing on making their websites look good. Design is the main focus, when actually it should be on conversions and generating customers.

Don't get me wrong: good design is still important. But it must serve the function of your website, that is to generate new customers.

First, you need to understand the nature of the marketing funnel. Here's what the traditional **marketing funnel** looks like:



**Let's break down each stage and explain what they stand for:**

- 1. Awareness:** Your potential customer is aware of the problem you solve. At this stage, they're doing their research and looking for more information about how to solve that problem. This is where your content strategy comes in, which we'll get to later.
- 2. Consideration:** After doing their research, they're now evaluating all their options. At this stage, they'll be looking at your pricing, features and offers to determine the right fit for them.
- 3. Conversion:** This is where a lead turns into a customer. This is done by using sales processes (with the aid of a strong sales team) or self-service checkout experiences.
- 4. Loyalty:** Once you've acquired a customer, you must do your best to keep them. Retention is key for sustainable business growth, and this can be done through personalised customer service and over delivering on value.
- 5. Advocacy:** When customers turn into raving fans, they'll spread the word for you. Most often this will happen organically, especially if your brand has gone above-and-beyond to delight your customers. But you can incentivise them with advocacy programs and referral marketing systems.

In this chapter, we'll explore what a high-performing website looks like and how it covers each step of the marketing funnel above. You'll also learn how to create content that guides customers through each step.

## The psychology behind high-performing websites

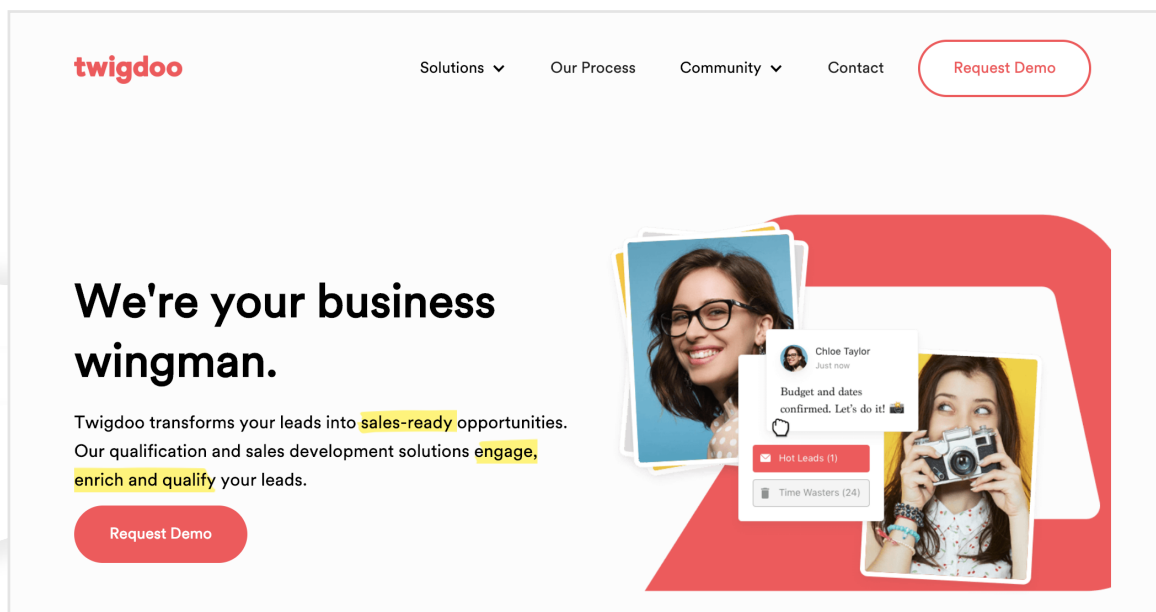
It doesn't matter if you're starting from scratch or already have a website. You can still use these principles to generate great results.

Use the principles covered in this section to test new copy and elements on your website. Use Google Analytics and tools like **Optimizely** to track conversions and how well the changes are performing.

### 1. Make your value proposition clear

As soon as a visitor lands on your home page, they must know exactly what value you can provide them with.

In other words, you must make your unique value proposition the first thing visitors see. Here's how Tide member **Twigdoo** put this in action:



The headline and subheading are made instantly clear. By skimming the 24 words above the fold (the area you see without having to scroll), you understand:

1. The reason they exist (they're "reason why")
2. What they do and how they do it
3. The benefits you'll get as a customer

Even if you've never used a platform like theirs before, it's clear to see why you'd want to check it out.

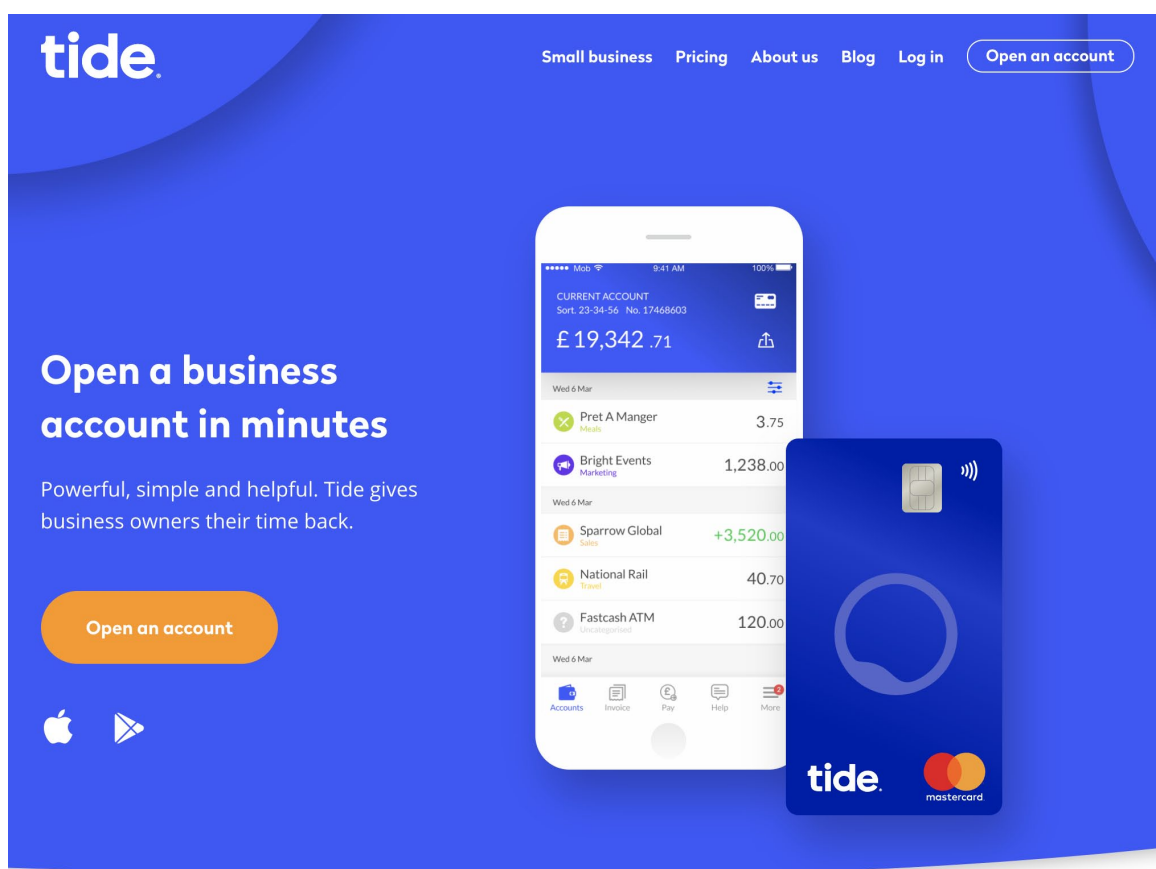


## 2. Specific calls-to-action

Another thing that Twigdoo do well is **including a single call-to-action below their value proposition.**

Even if someone is ready to buy right away, they still need to request a demo. Most SaaS platforms do this when they understand the importance of strong onboarding, and aligning their features with the specific needs of the customer.

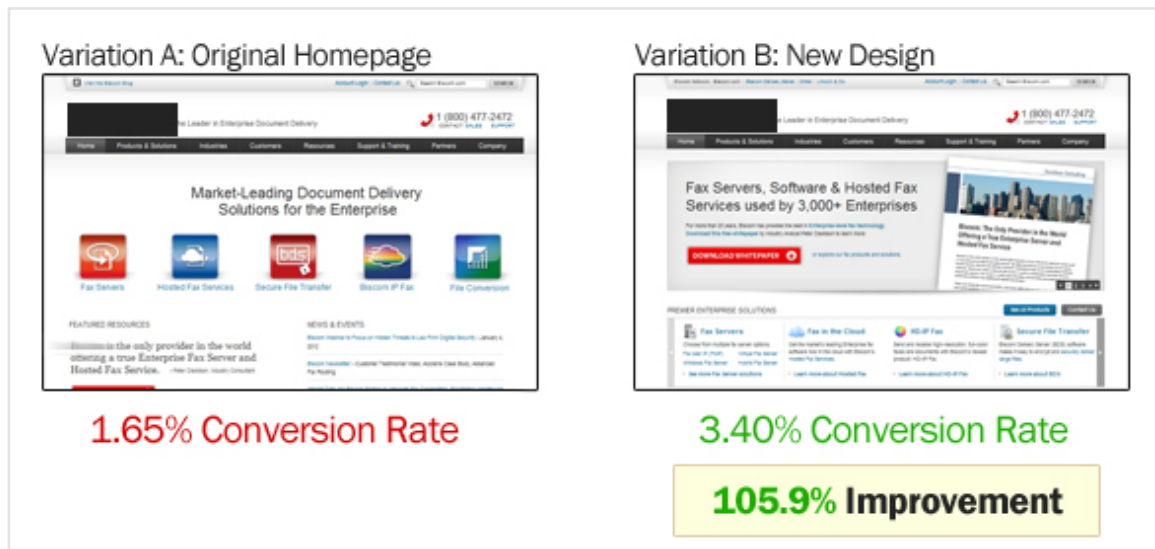
At Tide, we do this a little differently. Because our goal is to simplify the business banking world, we've built our entire process around simplicity. Which is why all calls-to-action lead to opening a business account with us:



You'll also notice how the colour of the call-to-action contrasts against our brand colours. This is because we want to draw the eye towards the next step of the relationship with us. If people are viewing our home, product or pricing pages, it's likely they're interested in taking that next step.

**Sign up with Tide in minutes.**  
**Click here to open your business account today.**

Testing new calls-to-action can be incredibly effective. In fact, HubSpot **featured a company** who increased their conversion rates by 105.9% simply by testing a new call-to-action on their homepage:

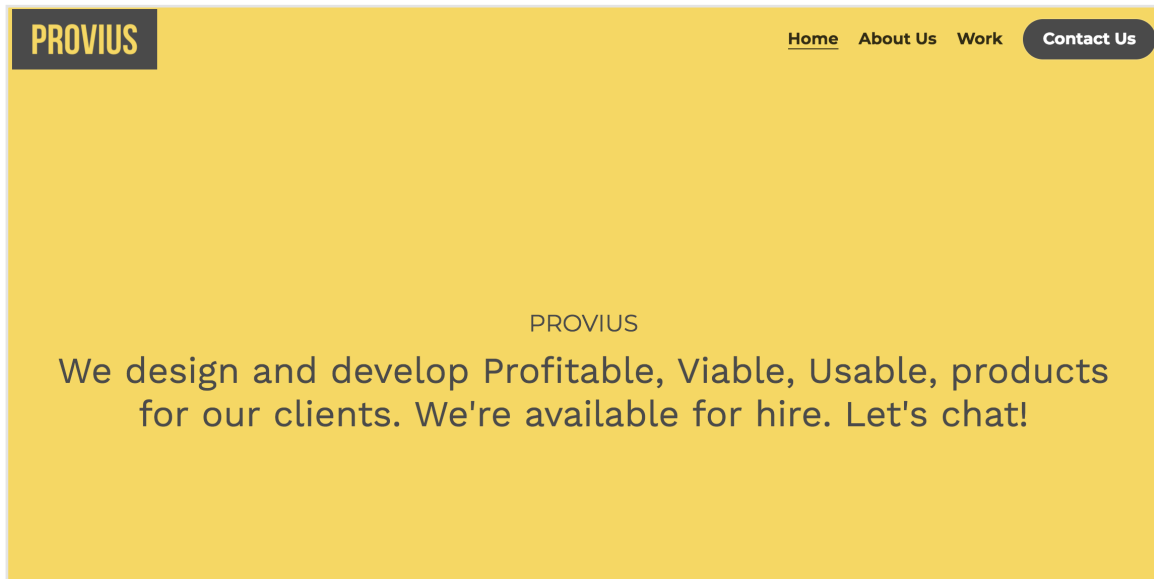


Experiment with new calls-to-action to see how it improves conversion rates. Don't be afraid to test new offers. For example, if people aren't buying right away, consider offering a free trial, demo or consultation.

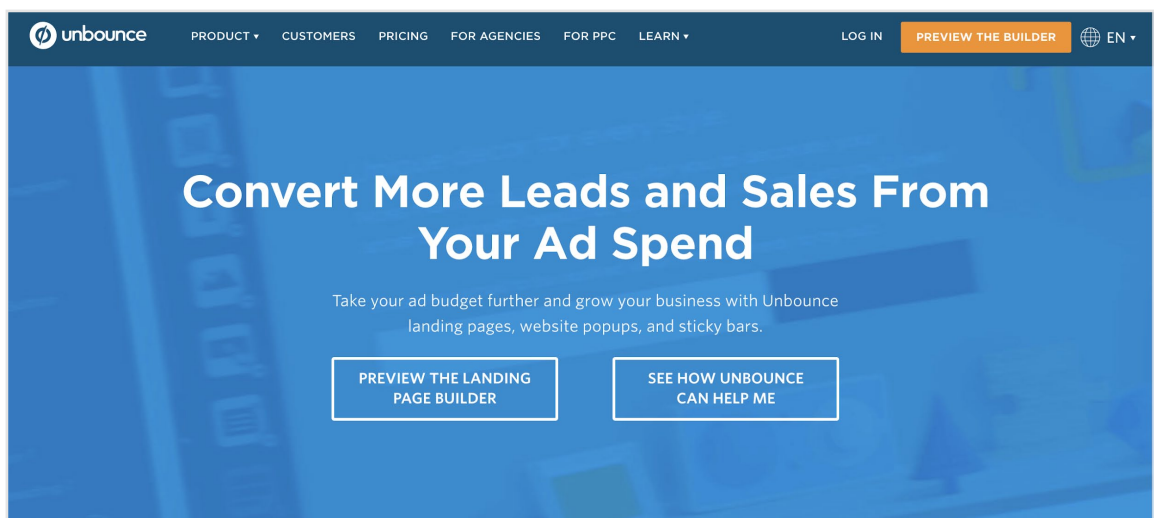
### 3. Benefit-driven headlines

Your headline is the first thing your visitors will see when they land on any page. This is especially important if you're running paid media campaigns that lead to dedicated landing pages.

Tide members **Provius** take a unique approach to this. **They use the headline above the fold to provide as much information as possible about what they do**, who they help and what you should do next:



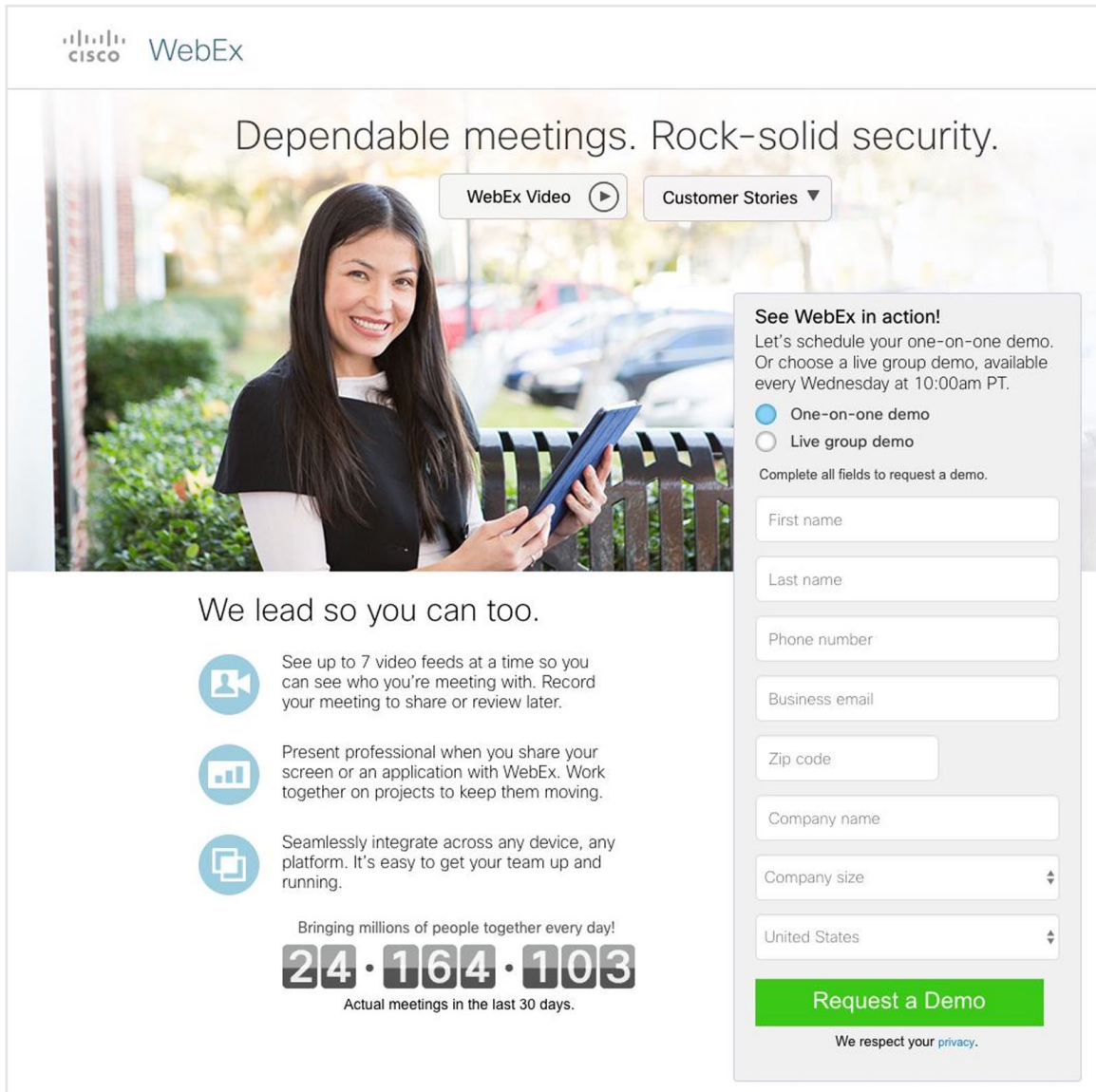
You can take a more traditional approach and use your headlines to outline your benefits or core value proposition. For example, landing page platform **Unbounce** uses a headline that directly communicates the benefits you get from using their platform:



Use your headline to quickly grab the attention of your visitors. Write copy that outlines why they should continue to investigate what you have to offer.

#### 4. Reducing friction to take action

It's likely you've come across a landing page that looks like this:



**WebEx**

## Dependable meetings. Rock-solid security.

[WebEx Video](#) [Customer Stories](#)

**See WebEx in action!**  
Let's schedule your one-on-one demo. Or choose a live group demo, available every Wednesday at 10:00am PT.

☒ One-on-one demo  
☐ Live group demo

Complete all fields to request a demo.

First name

Last name

Phone number

Business email

Zip code

Company name

Company size

United States

**Request a Demo**

We respect your [privacy](#).

**We lead so you can too.**

- See up to 7 video feeds at a time so you can see who you're meeting with. Record your meeting to share or review later.
- Present professional when you share your screen or an application with WebEx. Work together on projects to keep them moving.
- Seamlessly integrate across any device, any platform. It's easy to get your team up and running.

Bringing millions of people together every day!

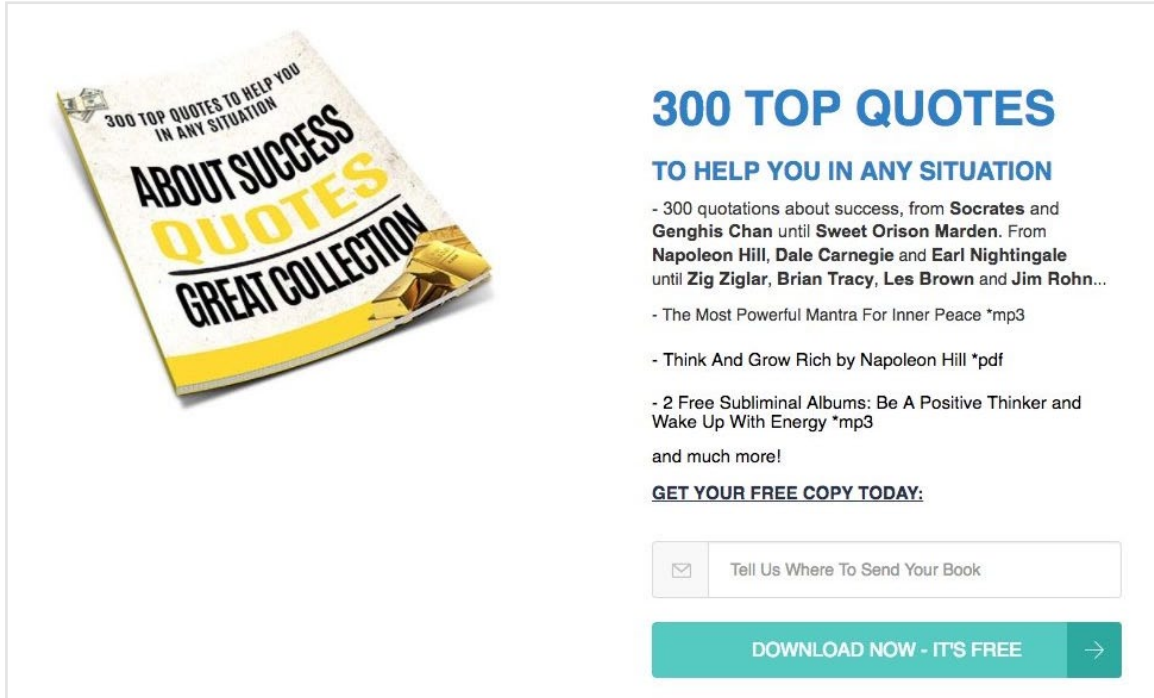
**24 • 164 • 103**

Actual meetings in the last 30 days.

The amount of fields to fill can be overwhelming. Sure, you can generate a lot of information about your leads. But this is usually at the cost of conversions.



Instead, top performing landing pages and websites use forms with **fewer fields**:



**300 TOP QUOTES**  
**TO HELP YOU IN ANY SITUATION**

- 300 quotations about success, from **Socrates** and **Genghis Chan** until **Sweet Orison Marden**. From **Napoleon Hill**, **Dale Carnegie** and **Earl Nightingale** until **Zig Ziglar**, **Brian Tracy**, **Les Brown** and **Jim Rohn**...
- The Most Powerful Mantra For Inner Peace \*mp3
- Think And Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill \*pdf
- 2 Free Subliminal Albums: Be A Positive Thinker and Wake Up With Energy \*mp3

and much more!

**GET YOUR FREE COPY TODAY:**

**DOWNLOAD NOW - IT'S FREE** →

Consider using forms with several fields only when someone is making a purchase or requesting a consultation. When offering content, such as an eBook, use one or two fields max: email and name.

### 5. Social proof

People want to know what others are saying about your product or service. According to **Nielsen**, **92% of consumers believe suggestions from friends and family more than advertising.**

Social proof can come in many forms. The three most common are:


1. Testimonials
2. Case studies
3. Third-party reviews

For example, Tide members **Bounce** use testimonials from various personas on their front page to show what people love about their service:

### Don't just take our word for it


“

My favourite thing about Bounce is that instead of just reading about how to help myself feel better, I find I have actually LEARNT how to do it, I remember it and I can put it into practise. Life changing stuff. Thanks a million Bounce!

  
**Chloe Upton**  
Graphic designer


“

I had anxiety and related issues last year. I wanted daily mindfulness practice, but meditation and things like Headspace do not work for me. This, however, absolutely does. Thank you!

  
**Tim Elliott**  
Marketing Strategist

“

I found that speaking to Bounce everyday has definitely improved my daily outlook, and reminds me to take a breath and think of things as they are, and not let my anxiety get in the way of my life!

  
**Kristina Chapman**  
Community Manager

Then there's **Pottery & Pints**, another Tide member, who relies on the reviews from their Facebook page to build their social proof:



When it comes to generating and optimising conversions, these five areas are fundamental. Of course, there are other approaches you can test over time, including:

- Including discount information e.g. “25% off for the next 2 days”
- Testing different call-to-action colours
- Improving the website experience for mobile users
- Including logos such as security seals to boost trust

No matter what you test, you must continuously strive for better results. Make experimentation a regular practice.

## Creating value-driven content

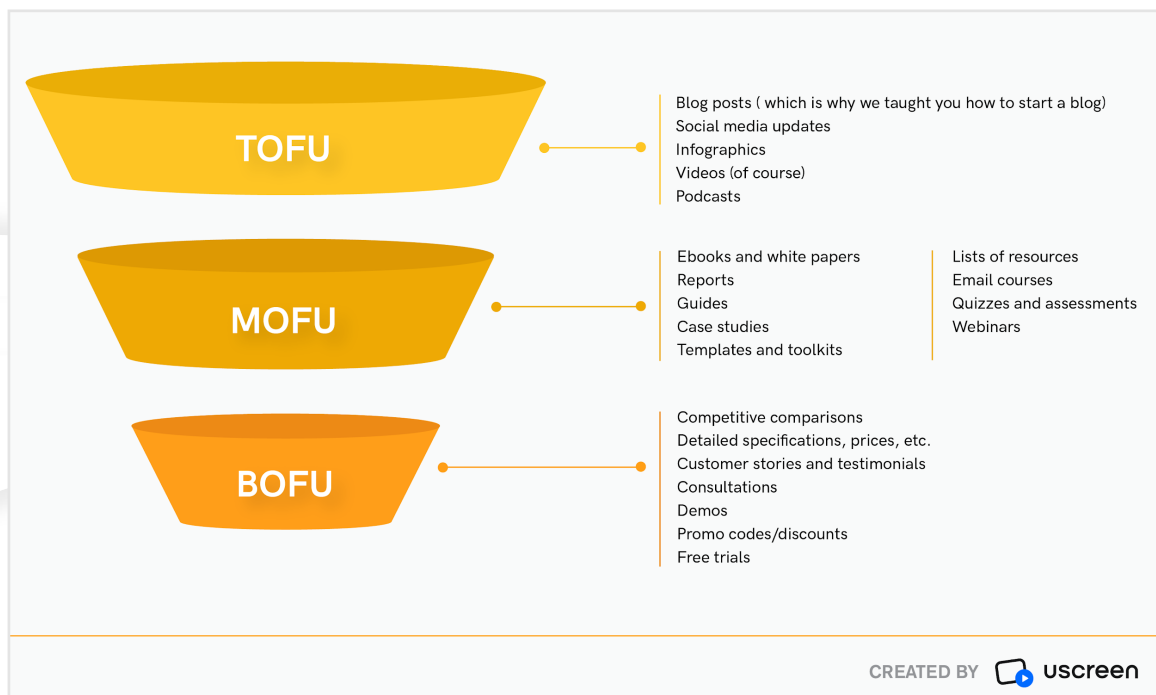
Your audience isn't always going to be ready to buy right away. And depending on how well they know your brand, you'll need to build trust and deliver value up front.

The question is, how do you do this in a way that doesn't break the bank?

The answer: **value-driven content**.

Value-driven content comes in the form of blog posts, eBooks, infographics, videos and other formats. Their goal is to educate and entertain your audience in a way that builds trust and nurtures them down your marketing funnel.

Earlier, we covered what the traditional marketing funnel looks like. When it comes to attributing content, it looks a **little different**:



Let's break down each stage of this content marketing model

- 1. TOFU (top-of-funnel):** Topics tend to cover non-product related pain points. For example, a CRM platform might create content that teaches sales reps how to be more effective at their job. Or a clothing brand can create content around style guides and customer stories.
- 2. MOFU (middle-of-funnel):** Topics at this stage will be more product-focused. For example, the same sales brand above could create an eBook about the importance of a CRM-driven sales process. They'll talk about their product, but do so in a way that truly adds value.
- 3. BOFU (bottom-of-funnel):** Content at this stage will help move leads from "Consideration" to "Convert". Here, the goal is to build trust and give everything a lead needs in order to make the right decision for them.

Here, we'll break down each stage of the funnel, as well as the content that you should be creating.



## 1. Top-of-funnel content

TOFU content **tends to be incredibly value-driven and accessible in nature**. Formats include:

1. Blog posts
2. Infographics
3. Video
4. Social media content
5. Audio (e.g. Podcasts)

The purpose is to help build awareness and trust by leading your best foot forward. That is, your expertise, knowledge and stories that add value to your audience.

For example, at Tide, we do this by creating content that feature our members as well as how-to guides on specific business topics:



### Meet Jamie, from our Financial Crime team

February 21, 2019

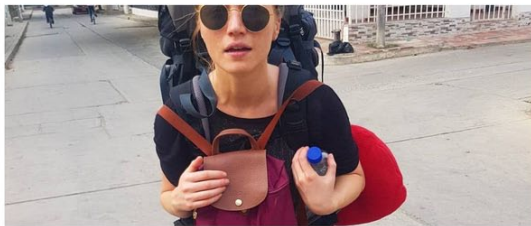
[Meet the Tide team](#)



### What is Agile? And why we use it at Tide...

February 20, 2019

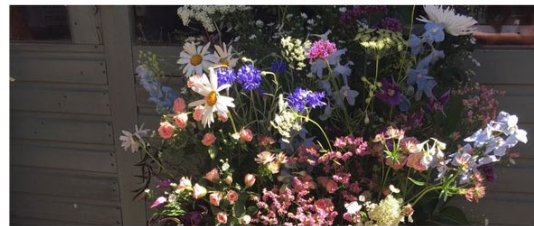
[Tide update](#)



### Meet Rosanna, from our Product team

February 15, 2019

[Meet the Tide team](#)



### Kate Lindsey, the eco-friendly florist who knows how to make romance blossom

February 14, 2019

[Member Spotlight](#)

Tide member **Eximo Marketing** uses their blog to cover topics on marketing and thought leadership on running a business:

[Strategy](#) [Training](#) [Speaker](#) [About](#) [Friends](#) [Blog](#) [Contact](#)


## Marketing For Your Start Up


08/11/2018 Conferences

The start up scene is bouncing at the moment in the UK and Ireland. Given the nature of the two economies, I suspect that's always been the case, but now we've got cool terms like 'start up', 'founder' and 'growth hacking' floating around, so the hard work seems much cooler!

This week I was invited by Ulster Bank to run a workshop for their Entrepreneurial Spark programme. This course is aimed at start ups to help support them through the difficult early days. It provides mentoring, office space, a community and expert speakers to help them develop their business.

Investing platform **Wealthsimple** do a great job on their blog. Not only do they provide how-to content, they also tell stories from their customers and thought leaders within the finance space:

[The Details](#) [Magazine](#) [Sign in](#) [Start investing](#)



## How to Get Thrown Down a Flight of Stairs for £300

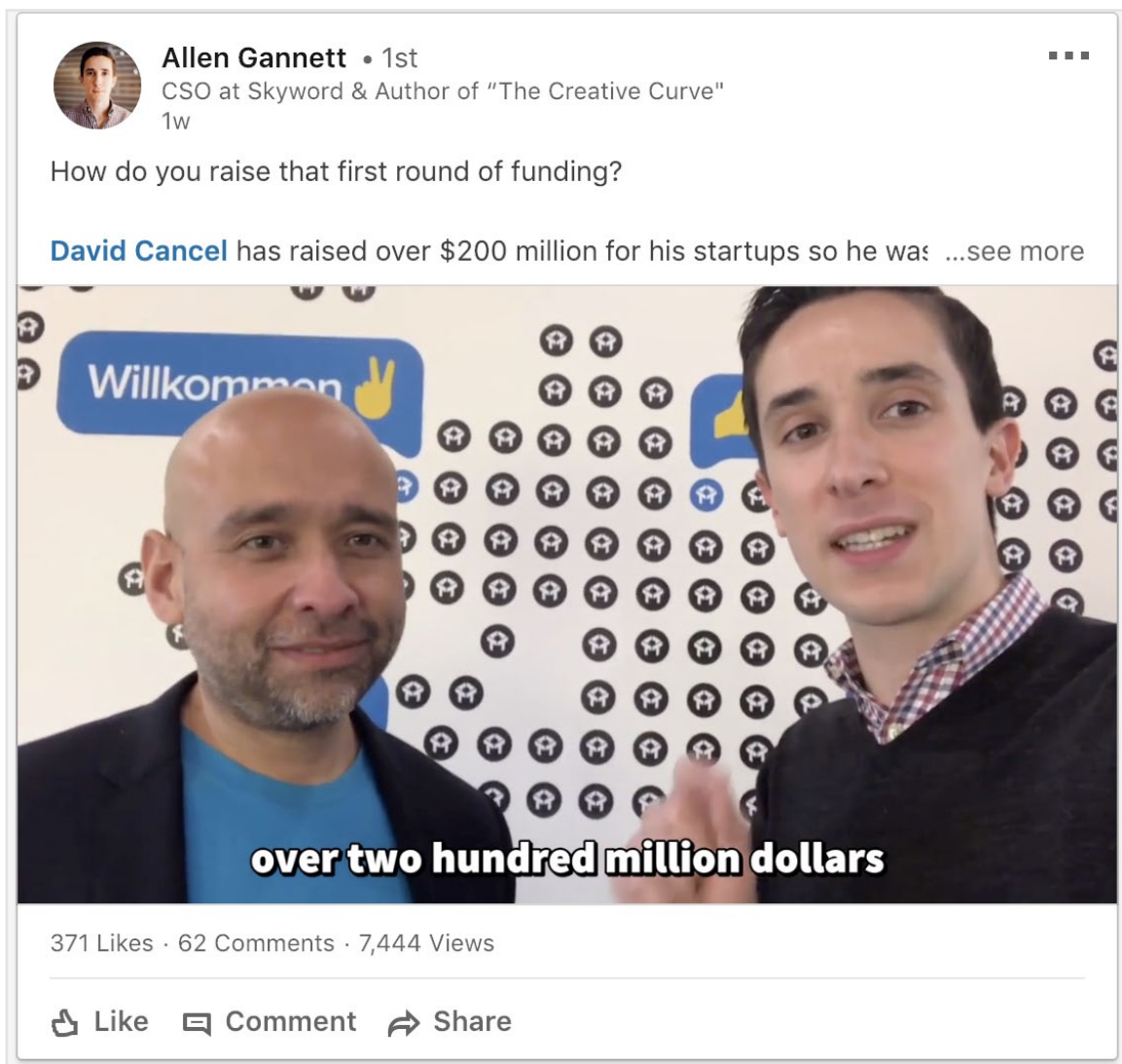
Nash Edgerton, the accomplished stuntman (The Matrix movies, Mission: Impossible II, Superman Returns), and newly minted director (FX's Mr Inbetween), on the economics of being a human punching bag.



Blog content isn't the only format you can use to add value. Video is also important for small business marketing.

The great news? It's no longer expensive to produce. In fact, depending on the platform, all you need is an iPhone and a good story to tell.

For example, CSO at [Skyword](#) and author of [The Creative Curve](#), Allen Gannett, uses LinkedIn video to share quick one-to-two minute videos of other thought leaders he's met with, providing short but valuable "knowledge bombs" for his audience:

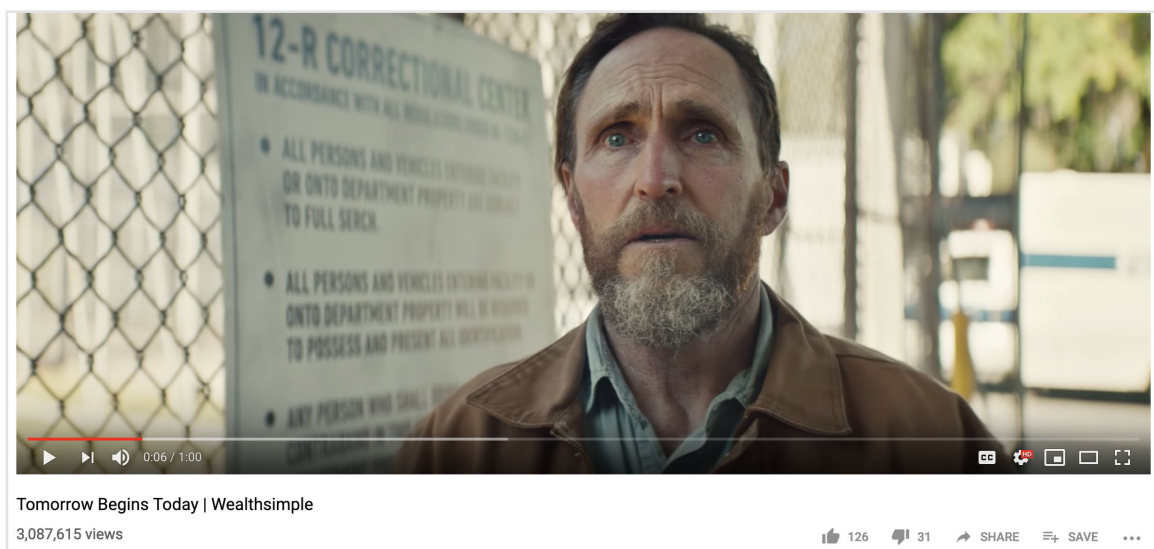


If you want to get fancy, you can create high-quality videos for **YouTube**. Not only can you embed these on your site, but use the **second-largest search engine** in the world to tap into a wider audience.

For example, Brian Dean uses YouTube to repurpose his blog content into engaging, fun and educational videos around various SEO topics:



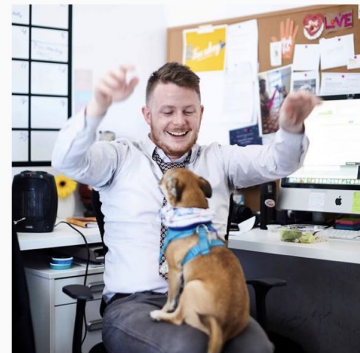
Alternatively, you can create documentary-style videos to tell stories and capture an audience who believe in what you believe. Which is exactly what **Wealthsimple** have done:



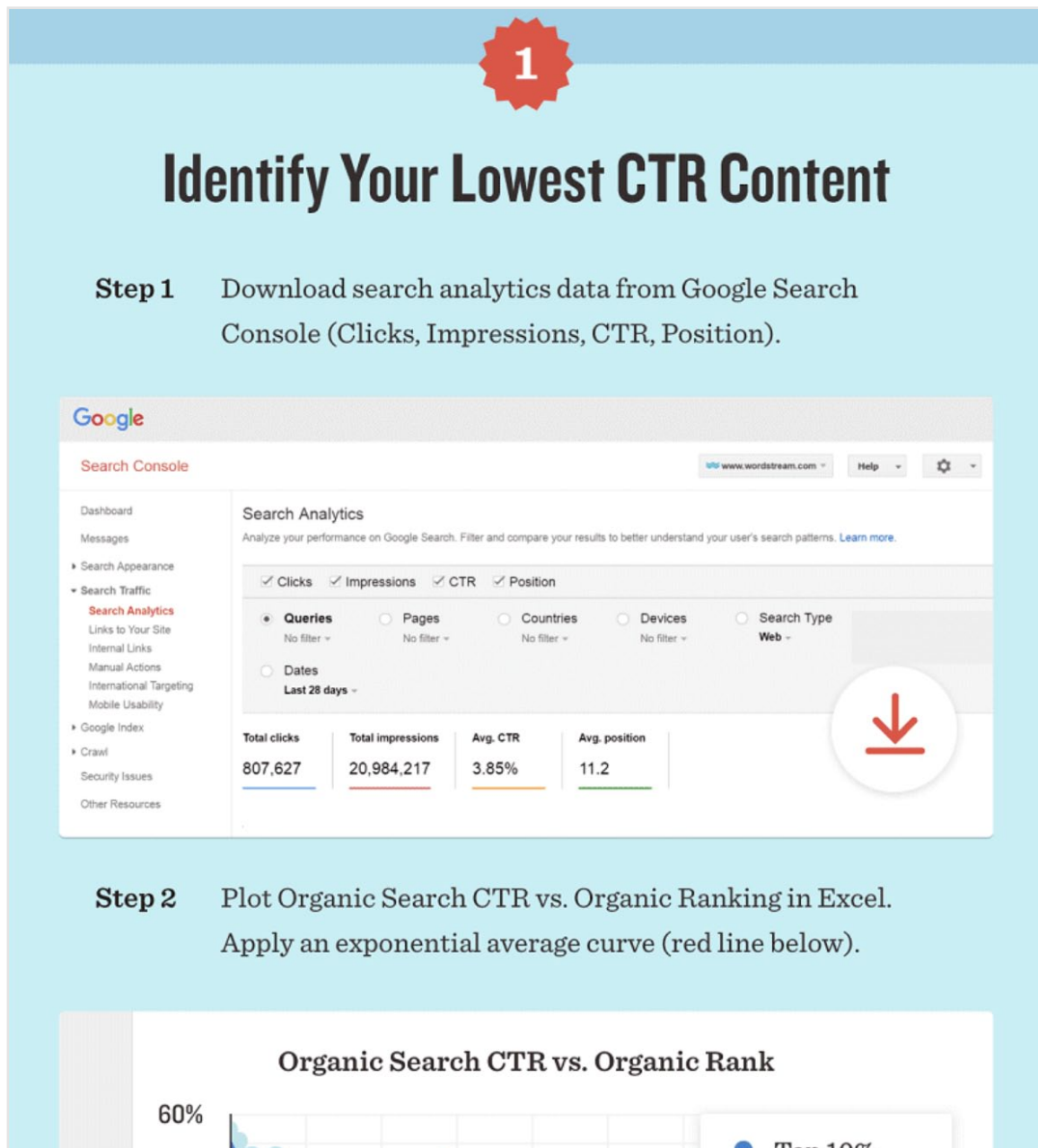
With over 3 million views, this is **testament to the power of storytelling** on a platform like YouTube.

You're not limited to just blog posts or video content. Here are a few other ideas for top-of-funnel content to get you started:

- **Podcasts:** Tell audio-driven stories with your team, or interview other experts and thought leaders in your space about their experiences.
- **Instagram:** You don't need a visual product to create visual content. Use Instagram to feature your products, tell stories or show off your culture (which is exactly what B2B brand Ontraport do:)



- **Infographics:** Collect data and tell engaging and **visually beautiful stories** around them:



## 2. Middle-of-funnel content

Once you've attracted your audience, it's time to capture their details with MOFU content.

MOFU content usually comes in the following formats:

1. eBooks
2. Email courses
3. Worksheets
4. Quizzes
5. Giveaways
6. Templates

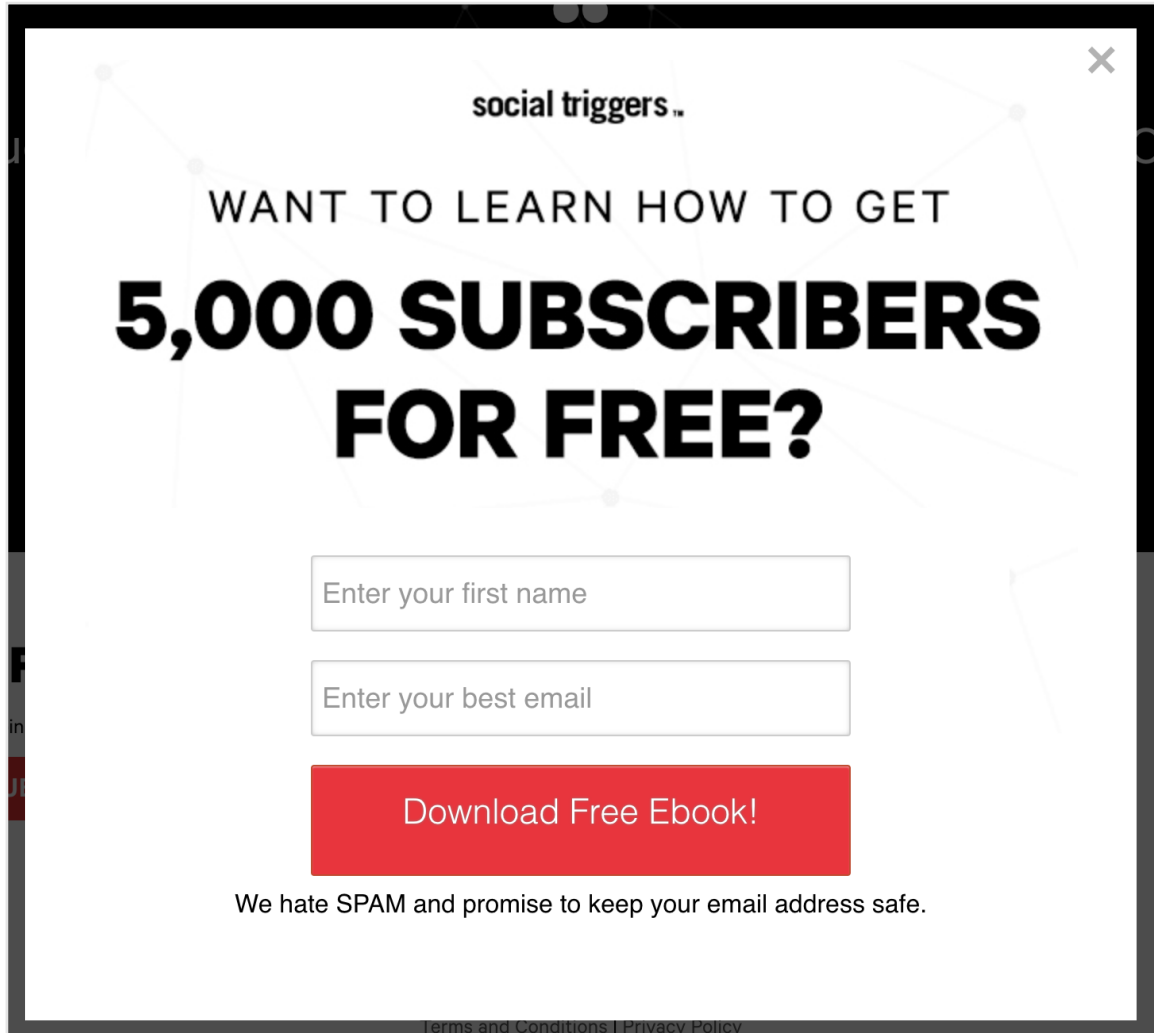
Because they're designed to capture lead information, they tend to have a high perceived value. But you must make sure you deliver actual value in the content you create. If it's not useful or entertaining, your results will suffer.

For example, this very eBook you're reading now has everything you need to start marketing your business on a budget. All we ask is for you to enter a few details in order to download it.





Another great example comes from [Derek Halpern](#), who offers an eBook on how to get your first 5,000 subscribers. All you need to do is enter your name and email address and it's yours:

The image shows a lead magnet form for 'social triggers'. The form is white with a black border and a close button (X) in the top right corner. The background features a faint geometric pattern of lines and dots. The text on the form reads: 'social triggers', 'WANT TO LEARN HOW TO GET', '5,000 SUBSCRIBERS', 'FOR FREE?'. Below this are two input fields: 'Enter your first name' and 'Enter your best email'. A red button with white text says 'Download Free Ebook!'. At the bottom, it says 'We hate SPAM and promise to keep your email address safe.' and includes links for 'Terms and Conditions' and 'Privacy Policy'.

Middle-of-funnel content is **key to nurturing your audience into customers**. Depending on your business, this might take a few days or even months.

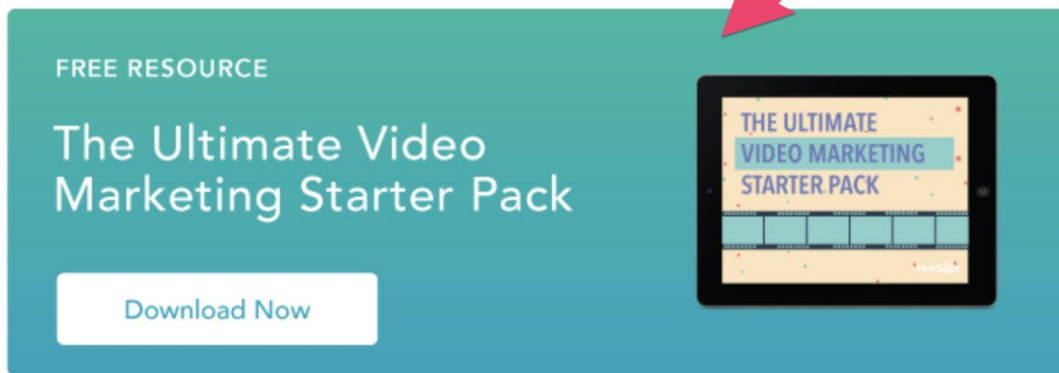
Which is where marketing automation comes in. Once someone enters their details, you can keep in touch with other useful information until they're ready to buy.



Here's what an example marketing automation workflow might look like:

1. A visitor finds your blog post from a Google search
2. They read the blog post and see a call-to-action for a relevant eBook download:

As you embark on the quest to find this man's significant other, you're led through beautiful environments, such as an evergreen forest, a bustling city, a serene ocean, and even the cosmos. And with **more than 300 storylines in this video**, you can either help the man reunite with his lover or come to grips with losing her forever.



3. The call-to-action takes the visitor to a dedicated landing page:



4. The user fills out a short form to access the content:

**DOWNLOAD THE STARTER PACK TODAY:**

FIRST NAME\* LAST NAME\* EMAIL \*

Tide Banking me@tide.co

☐ SUBSCRIBE TO HUBSPOT'S MARKETING BLOG

☐ SUBSCRIBE TO HUBSPOT RESEARCH

We're committed to your privacy. HubSpot uses the information you provide to us to contact you about our relevant content, products, and services. You may unsubscribe from these communications at any time. For more information, check out our [Privacy Policy](#).

DOWNLOAD NOW

5. The user is then automatically sent emails over time for other relevant, value-driven content

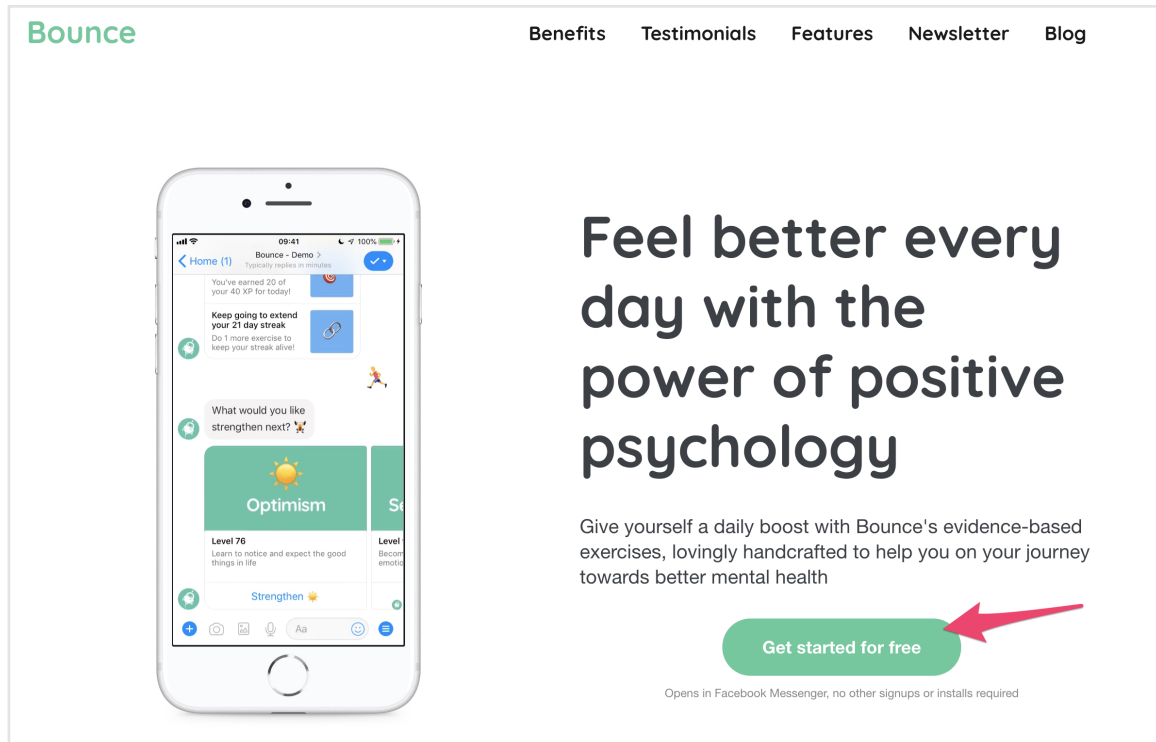
With a simple content funnel like the one above, you'll start generating leads and subscribers to nurture into customers.

### 3. Bottom-of-funnel content

Eventually, your audience will be ready to make a purchase. If you're in the retail, ecommerce or other B2C space, you might find this happens quickly.

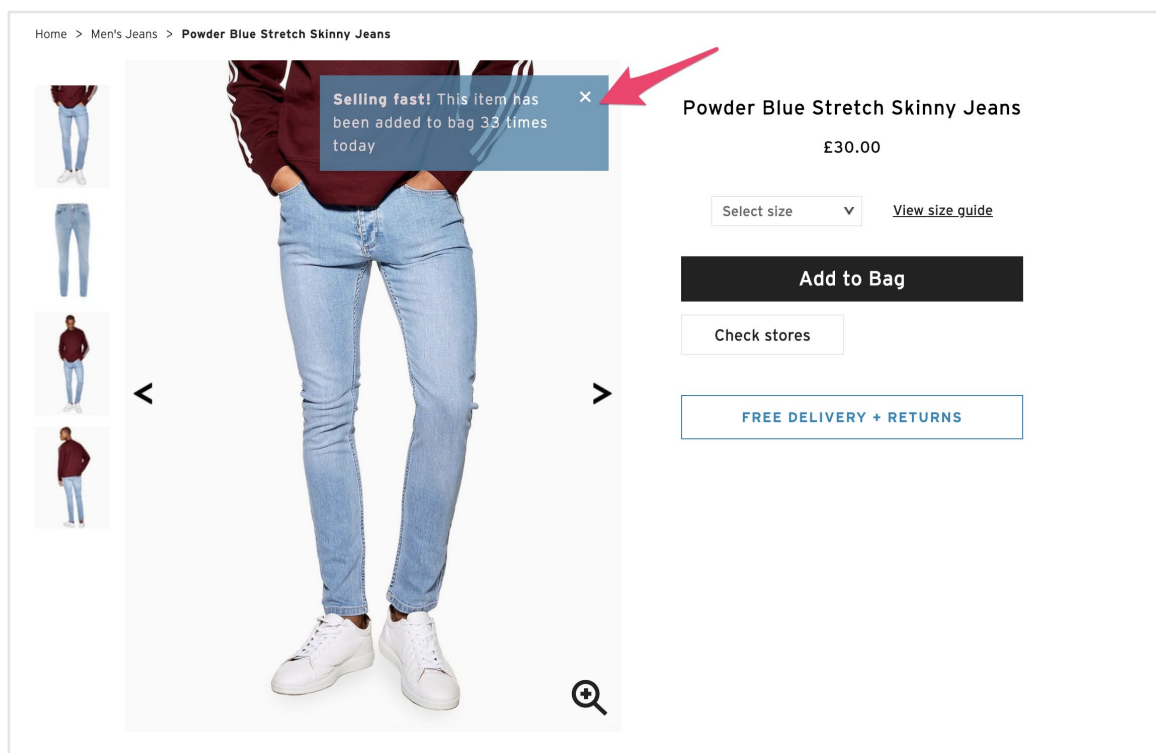
For low-ticket items, or products with very little risk, the time it takes to get from awareness to conversion can be short. Therefore, **BOFU content will usually come in the form of product pages or sales letters.**

Tide members **Bounce** offer a free service. Which is why all they need is a simple, one-page website to convert visitors into customers:



In the ecommerce space, your product pages are going to do most of the talking. Include the elements we talked about in chapter 1, as well as social proof and attractive images.

**Topman** do a great job of this. They spark urgency using social proof triggers that shows how many people have recently purchased an item:



For more complex offerings, you'll need to get more sophisticated. BOFU content that helps prospects make a decision include:

1. Competitor comparisons
2. Pricing sheets
3. Technical specifications
4. Onboarding
5. Demos, trials and consultations

Again, it all depends on your offering. For a SaaS company, offering a free trial might make sense. However, if you're offering a service that requires a large time and/or budget investment, you'll want several conversations (and consultations) to demonstrate value and prove the value you'll deliver.

By tackling all stages of the funnel with effective content, you'll create an engine that educates, converts and builds your brand over time. The key is to do it in an entertaining or value-driven way, tell stories and capture lead information.

### **A quick note on distribution & SEO**

Over time, your website will start ranking for specific keywords on Google. By creating the best content on a topic, you're more likely to rank for those target keywords.

To cover SEO would take an eBook in itself. To get you started in the right direction, here's the workflow and topics you should be focusing on:

1. **Keyword Research:** Find the right target keywords and the search volume behind them. Understand the intent behind each keyword. In other words, is someone searching to learn about something or buy something? Tools such as [Ahrefs](#) and [Ubersuggest](#) can help with this.
2. **Competitor Research:** Who is ranking for those keywords? How competitive are those terms? Will you need hundreds of backlinks to rank or just a few dozen?
3. **Technical SEO:** Make sure your website is mobile responsive and loads quickly.
4. **On-page SEO:** Include relevant keywords within your content. Use proper formatting, including title tags and meta data.
5. **Link Building:** Backlinks to your website are one of the biggest ranking factors. Having a link building approach that generates over time will help you rank.

To learn more about SEO, [check out this guide from Moz](#).



## CHAPTER 3

---

# A quick guide to earned & paid media

So far, we've tackled ways you can use your owned assets to drive awareness and capture new customers.

In the next chapter, we'll cover some free and actionable tactics to distribute that content and capture an audience quickly.



For now, let's take a quick look into the world of earned and paid media. To recap, here's a definition of the two:

1. **Earned Media:** PR, influencer marketing and reviews. These are things that are often outside your control, but can be influenced.
2. **Paid Media:** Marketing channels that require an investment to get started. The best digital paid platforms provide flexibility to get started with a small budget.

**Let's get stuck in.**

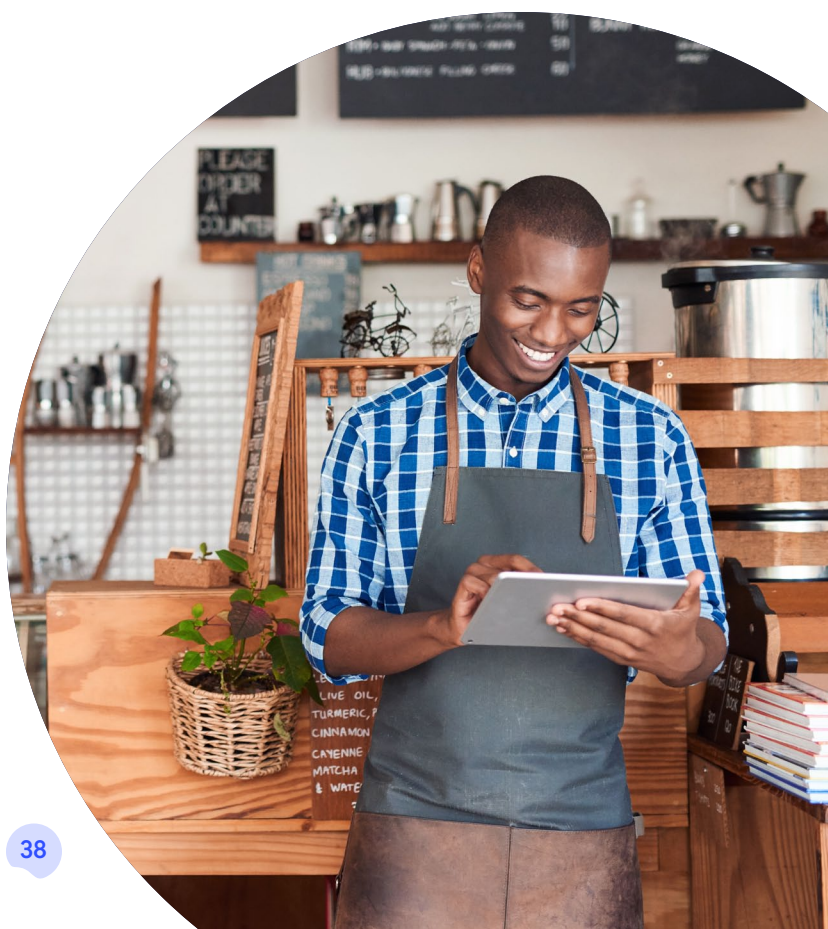
## Generating buzz & advocacy with earned media

---

The term “earned media” can be a misleading one. It implies other people have control over these channels and happens only if you're lucky.

This is simply not true, as there are several ways you can take things into your own hands. In this section, we're going to focus on three of the most affordable earned media approaches:

1. Digital PR
2. Influencer marketing
3. Guest blogging





## 1. Digital PR

Traditional PR used to mean writing a press release and sending it to journalists for them to “pick up”.

Those days are over, as this tends to add very little value to everyone involved. For the publications and journalists, they add little value to their readers. And you don't generate the results you deserve.

Instead, take the value-driven approach we covered earlier. **Put yourself in a journalist's shoes and figure out what they care about.**

Luckily, you don't have to guess what this is. Thanks to platforms like “**Help a Reporter Out**” (HARO), you can browse media opportunities with a daily email from journalists looking for relevant sources.

If you have a unique story or angle to provide, then you have the option to reach out and offer it to them.

For example, if you provide products or services related to nutrition or self development, the **following request** might suit you:

### 1) Summary: What To Do If You're Tired All The Time

Name: Missy Wilkinson Thrillist

Category: Biotech and Healthcare

Email: [query-6bvq@helpareporter.net](mailto:query-6bvq@helpareporter.net)

Media Outlet: Thrillist

Deadline: 4:00 PM EST - 28 November

Query:

Pretty simple topic--the summary says it all. If you're a medical professional, please explain the most common reasons people have problems with low energy, and share some solutions.

Simply reach out to the email provided and share your stories, data and experiences. **No more spray-and-pray PR approach needed.**

Best of all? The service is free. While there are paid plans, you don't need to spend a penny to get started.

## 2. Influencer marketing

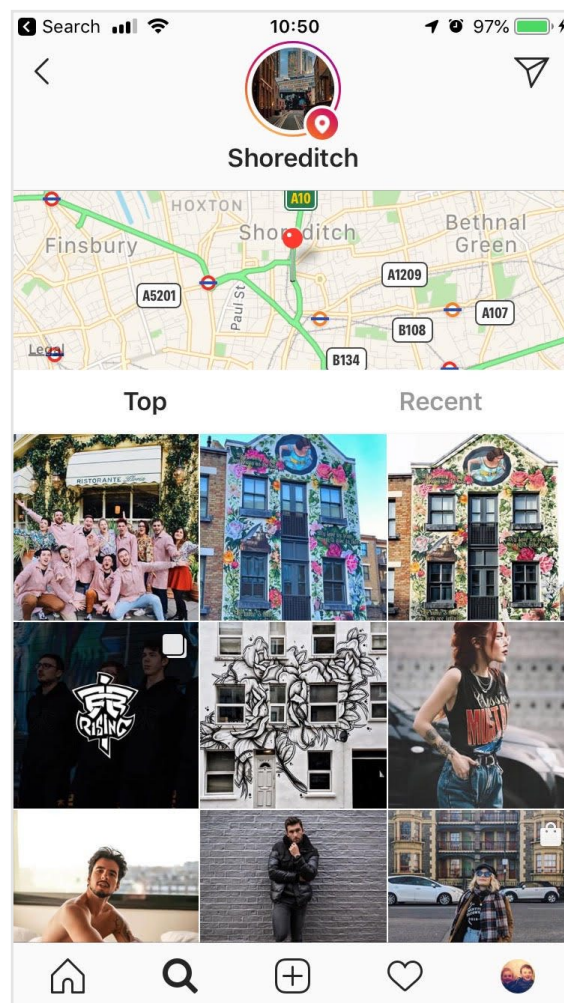
The term “influencer” has become a buzzword in recent years. But it's effective, and for good reason.

The concept is simple. On social media, there are several prominent influencers who have a large and engaged audience. It's likely that several of these influencers create content relevant to what you have to offer.

There are several ways you can approach influencer marketing:

1. Establish relationships yourself
2. Use a network or marketplace

For the former, this requires searching for keywords, hashtags and locations relevant to what you offer. For example, if you're a burger restaurant in Shoreditch, you could head to Instagram and search for the “Shoreditch” location tag:

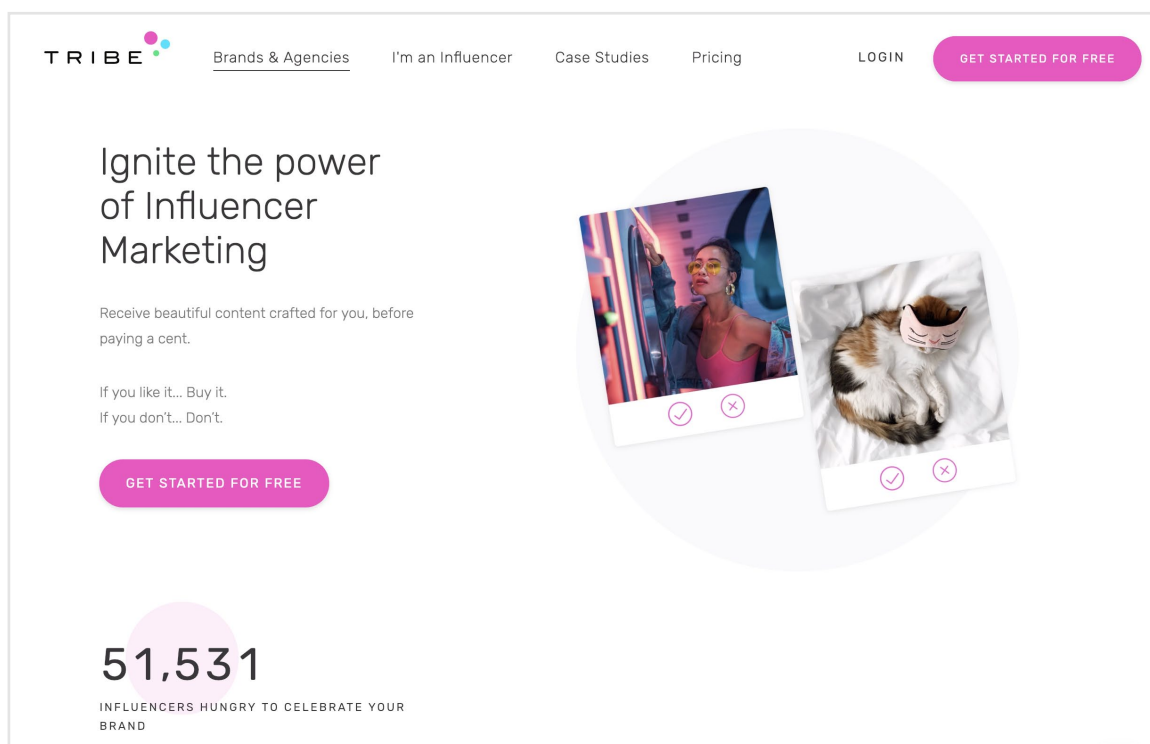


Go through the top posts and identify the individuals behind them. If they're local, create relevant content and have a loyal, engaged audience, they're likely to make great potential partners.

You can build relationships by using the following activities:

1. Engage by liking, sharing and commenting on their content
2. Get them involved with the content you're creating
3. Invite them to try out your product or service for free
4. Reach out with a paid opportunity to sponsor your brand

Alternatively, there are platforms that connect influencers with brands like yours. For example, **TRIBE** provides a self-service platform where you can identify the right influencers and collaborate on content with them:

The image is a screenshot of the TRIBE platform's homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the TRIBE logo on the left, followed by links for 'Brands & Agencies', 'I'm an Influencer', 'Case Studies', and 'Pricing'. On the right side of the navigation bar are 'LOGIN' and a pink button that says 'GET STARTED FOR FREE'. The main content area features a large heading 'Ignite the power of Influencer Marketing'. Below this heading is a sub-headline: 'Receive beautiful content crafted for you, before paying a cent.' followed by two lines of text: 'If you like it... Buy it.' and 'If you don't... Don't.' Below this text is another pink button that says 'GET STARTED FOR FREE'. To the right of the text is a circular graphic containing two polaroid-style images. The first image shows a woman with short dark hair and yellow face paint, holding a glowing blue object. The second image shows a white cat with orange patches lying down. Both images have a checkmark and an 'X' icon at the bottom. At the bottom left of the page, there is a large number '51,531' and the text 'INFLUENCERS HUNGRY TO CELEBRATE YOUR BRAND'.

The best part is, **if you don't like the content they create, you don't pay for the campaign.** This reduces the risk of investing in the platform while ensuring you're getting a service that's right for you.

The approach you choose will depend on your budget. When starting out, we recommend manually building a handful of strong relationships before scaling up.

### 3. Guest blogging

Guest blogging is where you truly take earned media into your own hands. Here's how it works:

1. Reach out to editors at target publications
2. Pitch topics
3. Create content
4. Get published

This means spending time to create your own content, but it's well worth it. To find the right publications, search Google for terms like "your industry + contribute" or "your industry + guest post".

Then, look at their about page or LinkedIn company page to find the right editor. Use a service such as [Hunter.io](#) to find their email address.

When reaching out, it's important to have some of your own content ready first. This will show them the quality of your writing before committing. Once they've responded, then it's time to pitch your topics.

When pitching topics, **focus on those that align with what the publication wants as well as your value proposition.** Look at the most recent posts to get a feel for what these are.

Once you have a topic secured, it's just a matter of writing an article like you would for your own blog. Submit it and voila -- you've taken digital PR into your own hands!

## Starting paid media on a budget

---

Google and Facebook Ads can provide a flood of traffic to your brand at a positive ROI. But when you're starting on a small budget, it's important to start on a small scale.

In this section, we're going to cover the following areas:

1. Google Ads
2. Facebook Ads
3. Emerging channels

You'll learn what makes effective advertising on the two biggest ad platforms online today. Furthermore, you'll learn how to test on other, smaller platforms to tap into an audience with little saturation.



## 1. Google ads

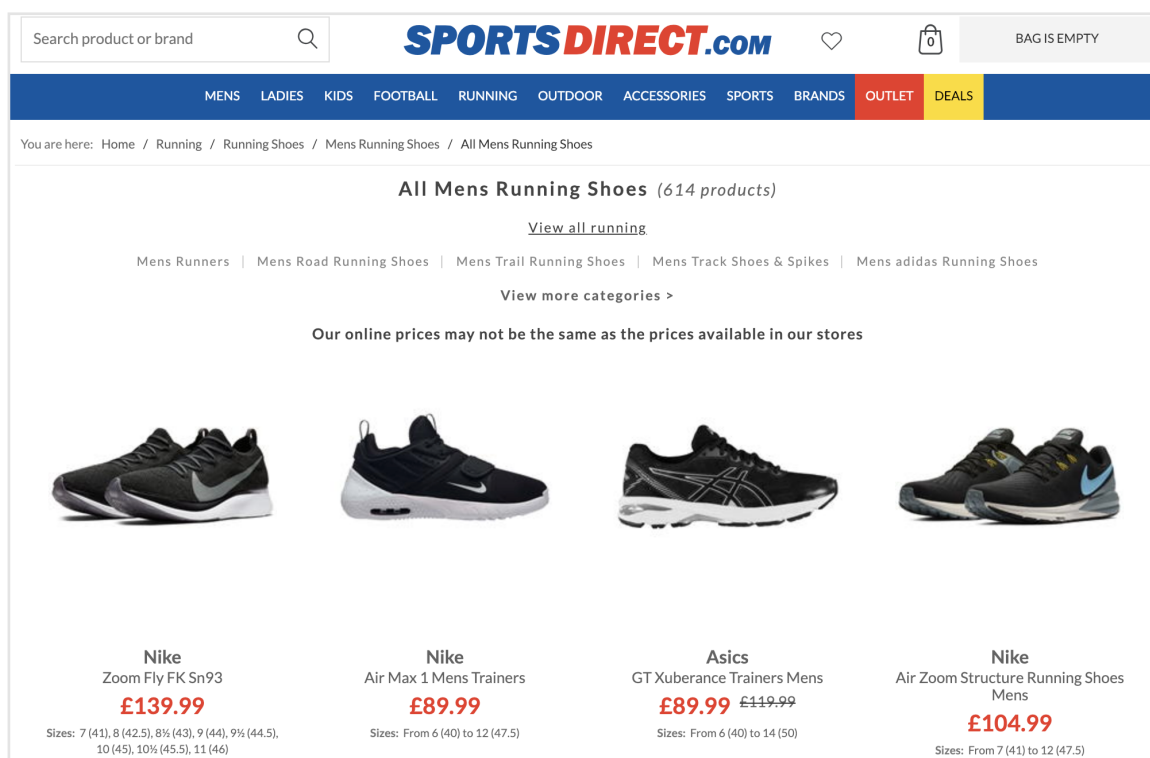
The process behind Google Ads is simple:

1. Someone searches for a relevant keyword
2. The user is served relevant ads
3. Brands pay whenever someone clicks their ad

But there are several mechanics in play that make it slightly more complex for advertisers. For example, Quality Score is a factor that affects your cost-per-click (CPC).

The best way to get a high Quality Score? **Make your target keyword, ad copy and landing pages as relevant as possible.**

For example, someone searching for “nike mens running shoes” is very clear on what they’re searching for. Therefore, you should make sure you’re sending them to a landing page that gives them just that:



Start by testing several broad keyword terms. Then, to reduce your CPC, move your highest performing keywords into their own ad groups. This will improve the Quality Score of your ads while dramatically improving your ROI.

Ready to become a Google Ads wizard? [Check out this guide from AdEspresso to learn more.](#)



## 2. Facebook Ads

Facebook Ads work a little differently than Google Ads. For a start, they're incredibly visual in nature.

As a result, you can get far more creative. And thanks to the powerful targeting features, you can focus each offer to specific buyer personas.

The key to effective Facebook Ads is to **use creative that stops people from scrolling and grabs their attention**. The best way to do this is with strong imagery.

For example, this ad from [WebSummit](#) uses vibrant colours and flat design to stop users in their tracks:

**Web Summit**   
about 6 months ago 

Austrian Startup? Exhibit at the world's largest technology conference. Enter your mobile number to apply. Lisbon, November 2016.



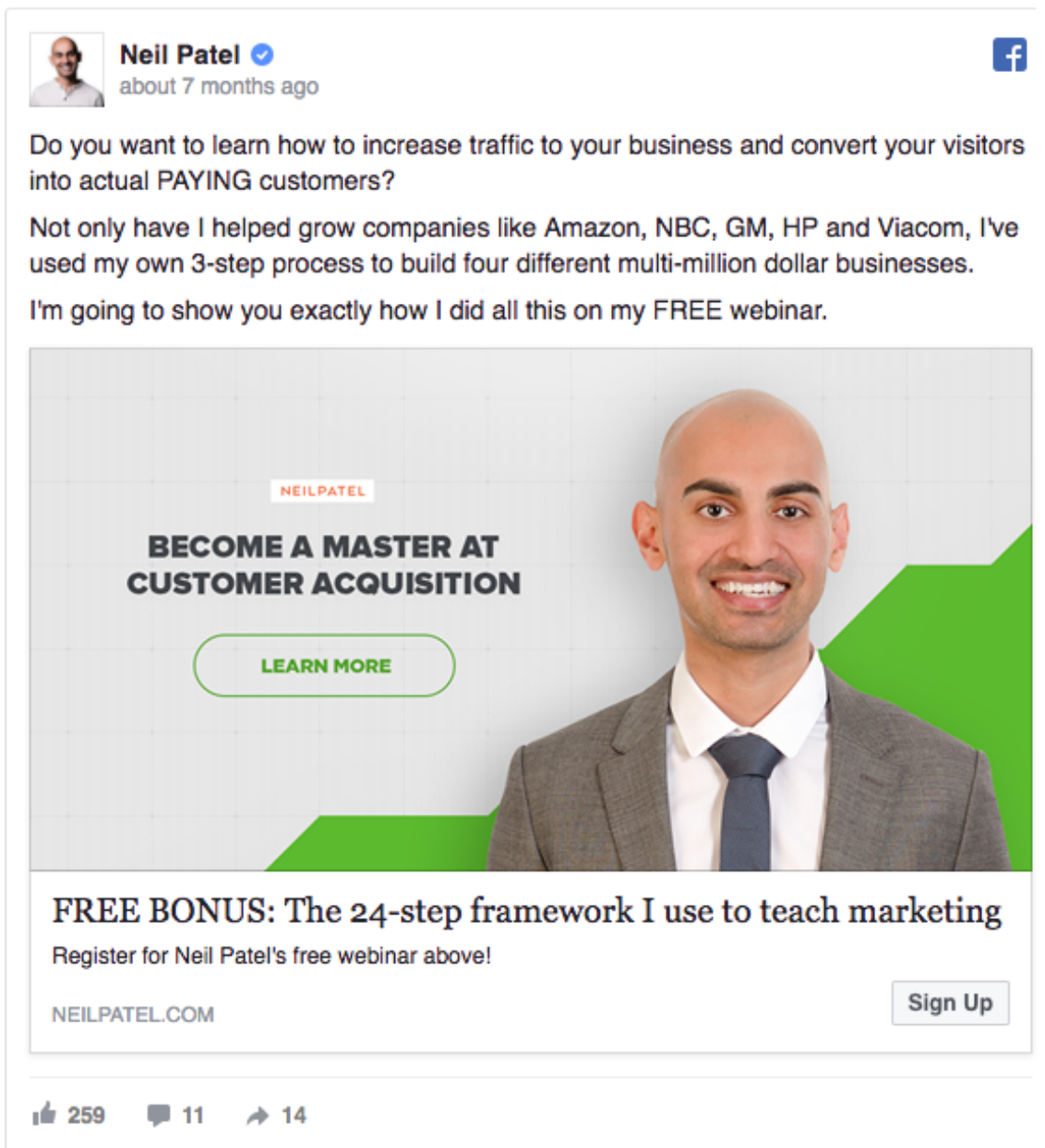
**Austrian Startup? Global Ambition?**  
Enter your mobile number to apply for ALPHA at Web Summit. Lisbon, November 2016.

WEBSUMMIT.NET [Apply Now](#)

 23  1  Share

Once you have their attention, you'll need to keep it using effective copy. Do this the same way you would with your website. Use your headline to outline benefits and why people should continue reading. Include a clear call-to-action to show what users must do next.

Neil Patel uses social proof in his copy by listing his achievements and who he's worked with:



A screenshot of a Facebook post by Neil Patel. The post includes a profile picture of Neil Patel, his name with a verified badge, and the text "about 7 months ago". The main text of the post asks if the reader wants to learn how to increase traffic and convert visitors into paying customers, mentions his experience with companies like Amazon, NBC, GM, HP, and Viacom, and offers a free webinar. Below the text is a large image featuring a portrait of Neil Patel on the right and a graphic on the left with the text "BECOME A MASTER AT CUSTOMER ACQUISITION" and a "LEARN MORE" button. At the bottom of the post, there is a "FREE BONUS" section, a "Sign Up" button, and the website "NEILPATEL.COM". Engagement metrics at the bottom show 259 likes, 11 comments, and 14 shares.

**Neil Patel** ✓  
about 7 months ago

Do you want to learn how to increase traffic to your business and convert your visitors into actual **PAYING** customers?

Not only have I helped grow companies like Amazon, NBC, GM, HP and Viacom, I've used my own 3-step process to build four different multi-million dollar businesses. I'm going to show you exactly how I did all this on my **FREE** webinar.

**NEILPATEL**

**BECOME A MASTER AT  
CUSTOMER ACQUISITION**

**LEARN MORE**

**FREE BONUS: The 24-step framework I use to teach marketing**  
Register for Neil Patel's free webinar above!

NEILPATEL.COM **Sign Up**

👍 259 💬 11 ➦ 14

He then highlights the offer he's giving away: a free framework with lot's of value. Use these principles to drive affordable, targeted traffic to your website, content and product pages.

Want to learn all you need to know about Facebook Ads? [Check out this guide from Oberlo.](#)

### 3. Emerging platforms

Finally, there are several emerging ad services available on prominent platforms. The three to pay attention to are:

1. Twitter
2. Quora
3. Reddit

For example, Twitter is perfect for offering eBooks and other content to attract top-of-funnel traffic at affordable prices:




You can target people based on the hashtags or accounts they follow, providing you with specific targeting to those who are most interested in your content.

On **Quora**, ads come in the form of a simple text-only format:


Sponsored by Whatfix

**Ease user onboarding.**  
Whatfix helps new users get onboard seamlessly with interactive walkthroughs.  
Start your free trial.  
[Learn more at whatfix.com](#)


Finally, you can use **Reddit** Ads to attract users interested in specific topics and subreddits:

 Join the 178k people in the r/smallbusiness community [GET STARTED](#)


9

 **Promote your business, week of February 11, 2019**  
Posted by u/Charice 1 day ago  
42 Comments Share Save Hide Report


2

 **Share your own small business experience, week of February 11, 2019**  
Posted by u/Charice 1 day ago  
6 Comments Share Save Hide Report


13

 **3 ECOMMERCE CONVERSION TIPS**  
Posted by u/Ashanzerotter 3 hours ago  
Comment Share Save Hide Report


159

 **I feel like i'm endlessly planning, yet taking no action**  
Posted by u/holdthebaby 19 hours ago  
45 Comments Share Save Hide Report

6

 **Hey entrepreneurs! If you're tired of your 9 to 5 work day, you may be in the market for a source of passive income. How about Amazon FBA? It's NOT multi-level marketing. It's NOT a "get rich quick." It's a real, exciting way to earn passive income through eCommerce. Get 50% off your first month!**  
**PROMOTED** · u/Jungle\_Scout 25 days ago from junglescout.com  
[junglescout.com](#) [LEARN MORE](#)  
Comment Share Save

7

 **Starting US branch of small European IT company - what do I need to do and what should I watch out for?**  
Posted by u/xrscx 3 hours ago  
4 Comments Share Save Hide Report

Both Quora and Reddit work much like Twitter. Targeting is based on interest and demographic data, ensuring you're attracting people who are most interested in what you have to offer.

Whichever channel you use, **be sure to test on a small scale first**. Spend £100 to £250 and measure results before scaling up. Get your targeting right to maximise results.

## CHAPTER 4

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# Six marketing tactics to test today

You've learned all about the three core marketing categories, and how to use them when running your small business on a budget.

**But you might be hungry for more approaches, tactics and techniques.**

Here, we'll share six actionable tactics you can try out today, without the need to break the bank or spend huge amounts of money.

You can set these up in a day, measure results over time and decide whether to double-down later on.



## 1. High-impact networking

---

When most people think of networking, they picture roundtable breakfasts or events where people swap business cards, never to be heard from again.

Networking the right way involves doing your homework first. Before you even attend an event, you must evaluate it against the following criteria:

1. Is it truly relevant to my business?
2. Are there interesting companies that can help me reach my goals?
3. Is a large amount of attendees within my audience?
4. Can I access them before the event happens?

The last one is key. Not only will it help you to justify your attendance, **but you can build relationships before the event happens.**

To do this, you could ask the organisers for a list. But chances are you'll need to pay for access. If this is the case, there are several other ways to uncover this information:

1. Head to Twitter and search for the event hashtag
2. Look on any relevant communities owned by the event organisers
3. Check out the sponsors and exhibitor list to find potential business customers

Once you've found them, use platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter and email to reach out. See if they'd be willing to grab a quick coffee with you during the event.

Do this consistently and you'll have dozens of appointments set up without the need for a spray-and-pray approach.



## 2. Build a referral program

Your existing customers are one of the best sources of new customers.

Not only have you already built trust with them, **but their friends and family are highly likely to fit your buyer personas.**

Incentivise them to spread the word with referral programs. These incentives can include:

1. Discounts on products and services
2. Free product
3. Money off for both you and those they refer

We'll cover tools to help you build systems to make this easy in the next chapter. For now, be sure to include information on your website, or tell customers about your referral program face-to-face.

## 3. Run competitions

Competitions have huge potential to go viral.

By giving away your products or services in exchange for email addresses and social shares, you tap into the wider network of your audience while giving them the chance to get something for nothing.


For example, **Little Secrets** used contests (powered by **KingSumo**) to give away 60 bags of their product for free:



The image shows a contest page for Little Secrets candies. On the left, there's a photo of two bags of candies: 'DARK CHOCOLATE PEANUT' and 'SEA SALTED PEANUT'. The main text reads 'Win 60 Bags of Little Secrets Candies for Easter'. Below this, it says '\$125 VALUE' and '1 WINNER'. A countdown timer shows 4 days, 6 hours, 18 minutes, and 14 seconds. The text continues: 'Easter is a time for family, friends, and hiding candy... NOT corn syrup and artificial colors or flavors in your food. That's why we are giving away 60 bags of our Little Secrets candies that don't contain any of that gnarly stuff. You can hide some bags for your friends & family to find, or hide them all for yourself ;-). Just answer the qualifying question below and enter your best email address to join the contest.'

When someone enters, they're given the option to secure more entries by sharing on Facebook or email:

# Win 60 Bags of Little Secrets Candies for Easter


 5 18 27 45

DAYS HOURS MINUTES SECONDS

You have **1 confirmed entry**

Get **3 more entries** for every friend you refer

1

 Share

2

Share Lucky URL

<http://sharelittlesecrets.cc>

This generated an estimated annual return of 27x their original investment. Not only that, but they grew their list of email subscribers by 56% in 7 days.

## 4. Collect user-generated content

People are already talking about your business on social media. Why not use that content for your own marketing?

This is exactly what user-generated content is. For example, search for your business on Instagram to find users who have shared content of your products, service, event or offering:



108 views

**andernoo** Loving the presentation from my new business account, good job @tidebanking .  
Launching my company properly next year, so... more

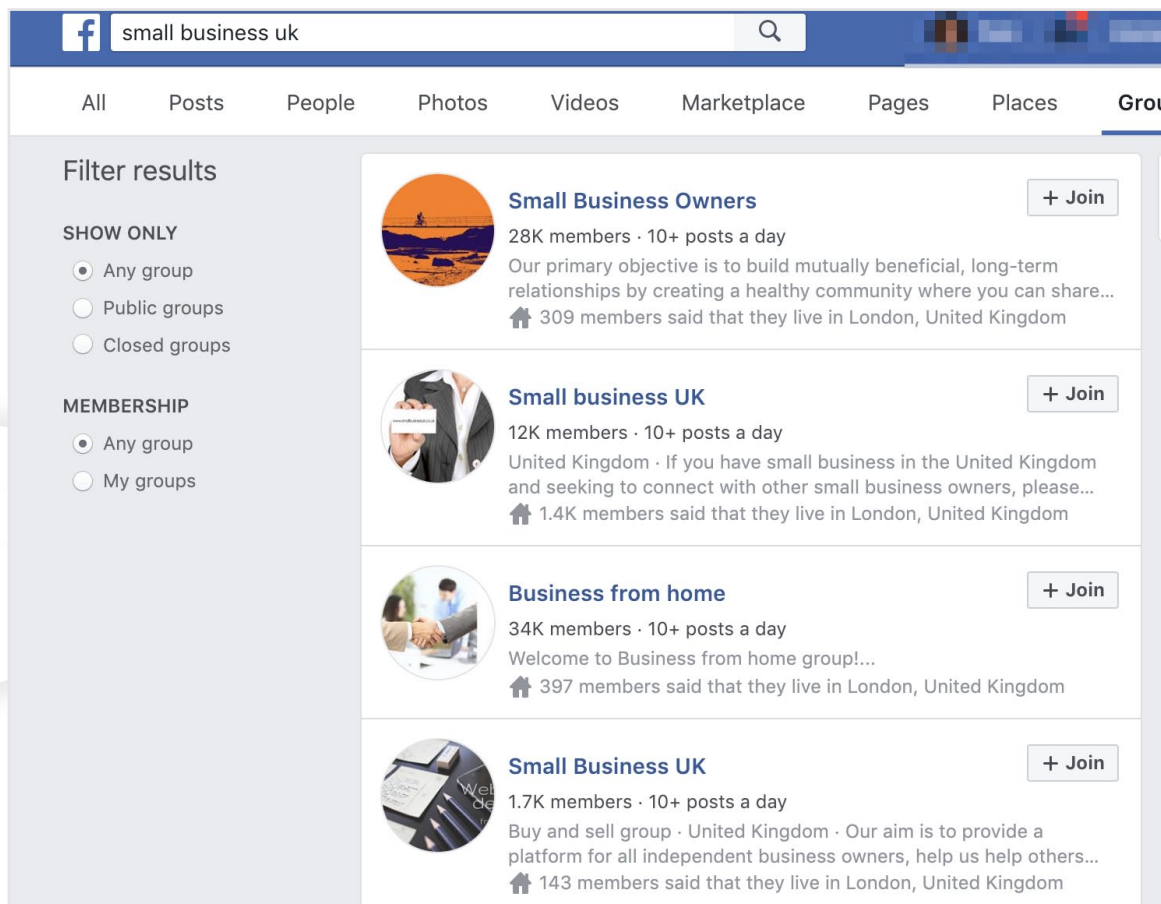
Reach out to these users and ask them for permission to use their posts. Feature them on your website, product pages and share them on your own social platform.

**Sign up with Tide in minutes.**  
**[Click here to open your business account today.](#)**

## 5. Engage in online communities

There's a community on any topic you can think of. Thanks to platforms like Reddit and Facebook Groups, your audience are having engaging conversations on relevant topics around your industry.

To find these communities, head to the sites mentioned above and search for a relevant keyword. For example, here's a list of Facebook Groups for small business owners in the UK:



Identify the groups with a large number of members and regular, daily discussion. The top result from our list above fits the bill.

Now you've found the right communities, how do you drive new customers? **The best way is to engage in discussion over time and share your content to add value.**

For example, the top performing content on this Facebook Group provide specific, actionable advice to their core audience of marketers:

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from Juraj Zamborský, dated February 5 at 7:01 PM. The post title is "SENDING SLACK MESSAGES AT SCALE" with three speech bubble icons. The text reads: "Phantombuster recently released completely new APIs that allow you to send out personal messages to members of the slack group. This is huge! ... [See More](#)". Below the text is a grid of nine software tool cards, each with an icon, a title, and a brief description. The first two cards, "Slack Channel User Extractor" and "Slack Message Sender", are highlighted with a red border. The grid includes tools for Instagram, Medium, Facebook, and LinkedIn. At the bottom of the post, there are 57 reactions (likes, love, wow, haha) and 99 comments. The interaction bar shows "Like" and "Comment" buttons.

**Juraj Zamborský**  
February 5 at 7:01 PM

SENDING SLACK MESSAGES AT SCALE

Phantombuster recently released completely new APIs that allow you to send out personal messages to members of the slack group.

This is huge! ... [See More](#)

**Instagram Auto Follow**  
Automatically follow a list of Instagram profiles

**Instagram Auto Liker**  
Automatically like a list of Instagram Profiles and/or of Instagram Posts

**Medium Auto Clapper**  
Automatically Clap a list of Medium Articles

**Slack Channel User Extractor**  
Extract the names, emails and all other publicly available information of one of your Slack workspaces

**Slack Message Sender**  
Automatically send DMs to some or all members of a Slack Workspace.

**Facebook Group Extractor**  
Scrape Facebook profiles, names & information from members of Facebook groups

**Instagram Hashtag Collector**  
Extract the most recent posts for any hashtags or

**LinkedIn Network Booster**  
Add profiles to your network and get in touch using a

**LinkedIn Search Export**  
Coll...

57 99 Comments

Like Comment

The key is to repurpose your content within the context of the group. If they encourage how-to content, create a condensed version of your blog post. If Q&A posts perform best, ask questions relevant to the community.

Before promoting anything, **spend plenty of time contributing to the conversation and becoming a “known name” in the group.**

## 6. Expert positioning

---

We talked about how to network at events. What if you were to shift the dynamic and became an expert in your industry that people came to see?

Building your personal brand is an effective, long-term way to build trust with your audience. People connect with other people. Putting your face out there will help your customers build that personal connection with you.

Beyond creating value-driven content ([see chapter 2](#)), there are several ways you can do this:

1. Become a speaker and give keynotes at events
2. Create video content with you as the main subject
3. Host podcasts where you interview other thought leaders
4. Collaborate with other experts
5. Become a guest on other people's podcast and YouTube shows

No matter which channel or approach you choose, be sure to always build value. Use the principles we covered in chapter 2 to create value-driven content with you as the expert behind it.





## CHAPTER 5

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# Affordable marketing tools

The approaches, strategies and tactics shared in this book may seem overwhelming. Especially when you're doing it all yourself.

Luckily, there are several tools and platforms that can help you take care of everything at scale.

To wrap up this guide, we'll share the most affordable tools to help get you started and generate new customers at scale.

## 1. Mailchimp

Your email list is one of your most valuable assets. Create attractive and engaging emails for them with ease using Mailchimp.

Out of the box, Mailchimp provides drag-and-drop email creation features, as well as workflows for email automation.

### Create an email in a few steps

#### 01 Drag and drop

Our drag-and-drop email designer makes it easy to switch up content and layouts to create an email that brings your brand to life.

[Start creating your own](#)

#### 02 Manage your content

#### 03 Edit photos

#### 04 Work collaboratively



**Pricing:** Starts at \$10 /MO (Free plan available)

## 2. BuzzSumo

With BuzzSumo, you can search for relevant keywords related to your business and find new topics for your content. Not only that, but it provides data on social shares and influencers around those topics.

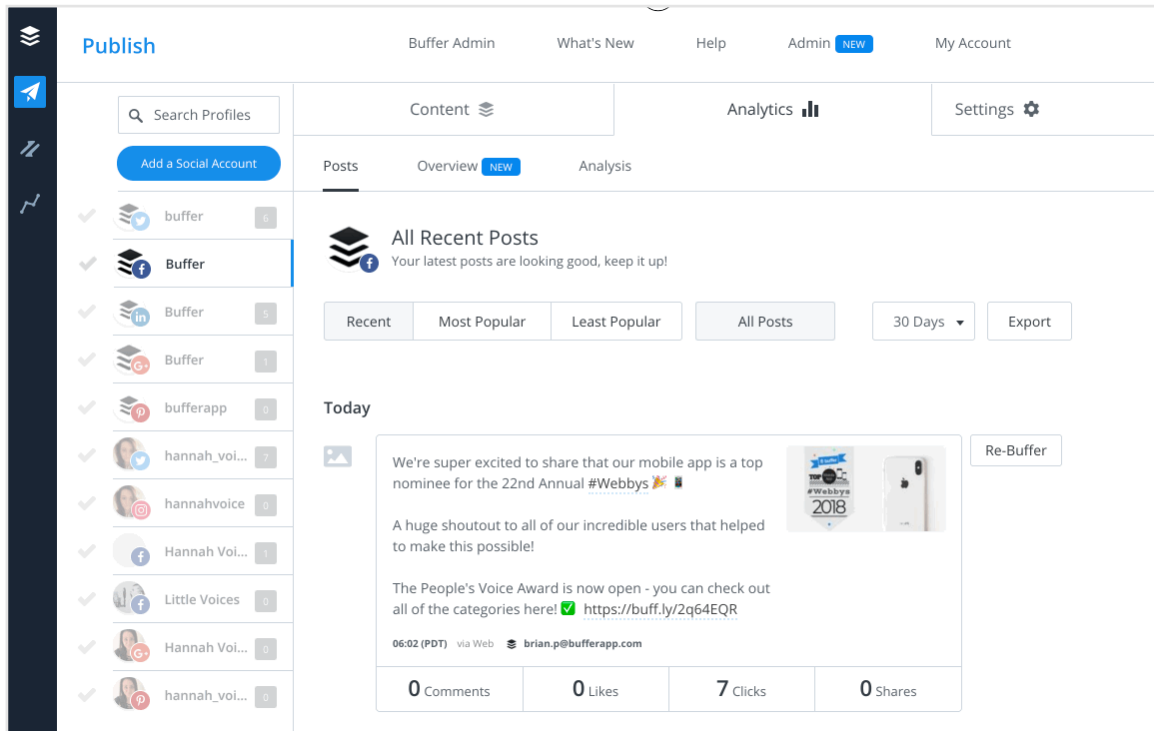
The screenshot displays the BuzzSumo 'Backlinks' interface. On the left, there are filters for 'Filter by Date' (ranging from 24 Hours to Specific Range) and 'Filter Domains' (Include/Exclude). The main area shows a search for 'buzzsumo.com' with a 'Search' button and an 'Options' dropdown. Below the search bar, there are settings for 'Target' (Links to any page on this domain) and 'Results per domain' (All results). A table of backlinks is displayed, sorted by 'Total Engagements'. Each row includes the backlink title, author, date, and a series of colored circles representing social media engagement metrics: Facebook Engagements, Twitter Shares, Pinterest Shares, Reddit Engagements, Number of Links, Evergreen Score, and Total Engagements. The table lists five backlinks, with the first one having 14.1K Facebook Engagements and 14.2K Total Engagements.

Backlink	Facebook Engagements	Twitter Shares	Pinterest Shares	Reddit Engagements	Number of Links	Evergreen Score	Total Engagements
25 Strategies To Generate Blog Post Ideas Today - Master Blogging	14.1K	34	2	0	3	2	14.2K
Planning your blog content - actionable tips - Citizen Affiliate	12.1K	16	0	0	1	1	12.1K
Lies, lies and more lies. Out of an old Tacoma house, fact-checking site Snopes uncovers them	9K	201	0	159	5	5	9.3K
Megtévesztő magyar híroldalak listája 2019	8K	35	0	0	1	0	8K
Facebook Marketing Strategy: What We Learned From 43 Million Facebook Posts	3K	1.5K	74	0	145	19	4.5K

**Pricing:** Starts at \$99 /MO (Free features available)

### 3. Buffer

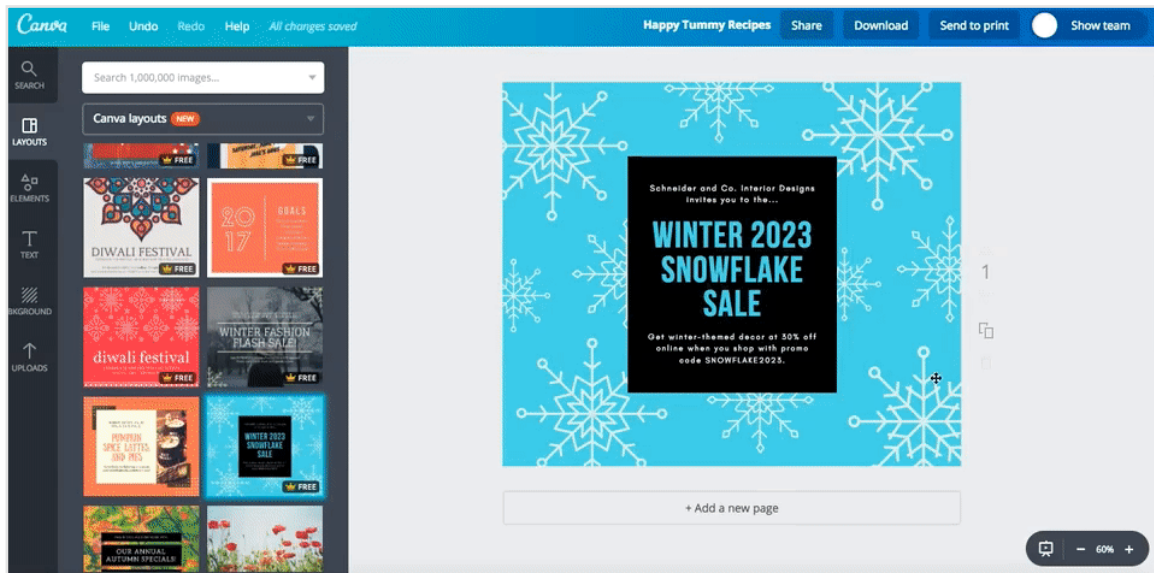
Automate your social media scheduling using Buffer. Simply connect your social profiles, create your tweets and set a posting schedule. No need to manually post several times throughout the day.



**Pricing:** Plans start at \$15 /MO (Free plan available)

## 4. Canva

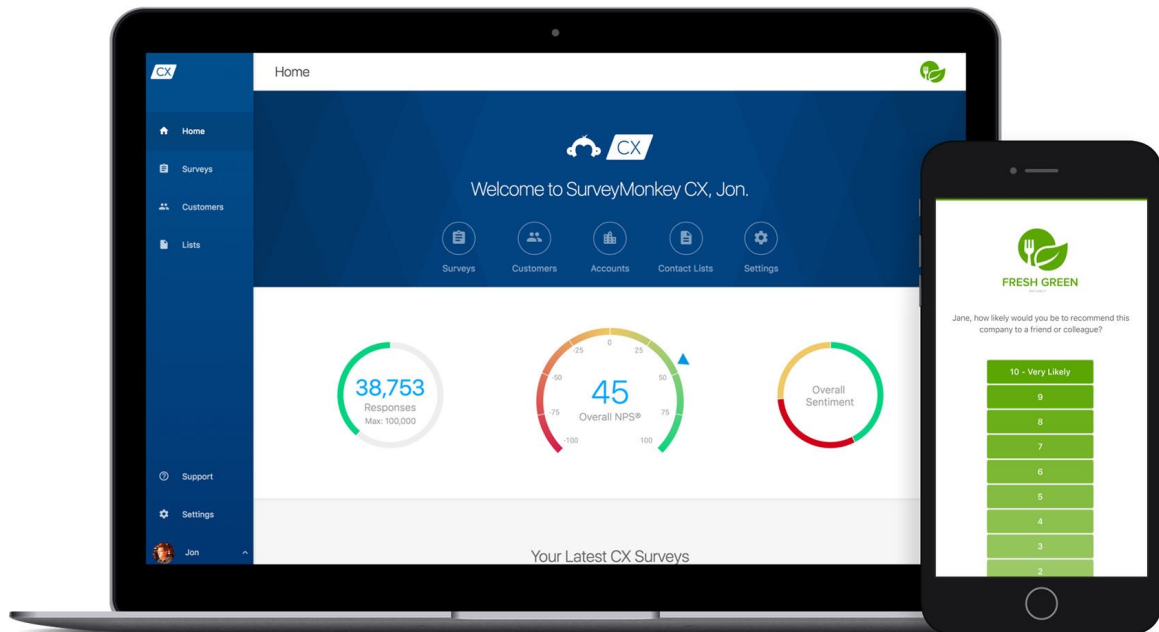
Design can be expensive, especially when you're creating visual content on a daily or weekly basis. Canva makes it affordable, providing a platform that even non-designers can get their heads around.



**Pricing:** Plans start at \$12.25 /MO (Free plan available)

## 5. SurveyMonkey

Getting data on your customers will help you create better products and marketing to attract them. SurveyMonkey allows you to build surveys and collect that data at scale. Use their drag-and-drop builder to create a fluid survey experience.

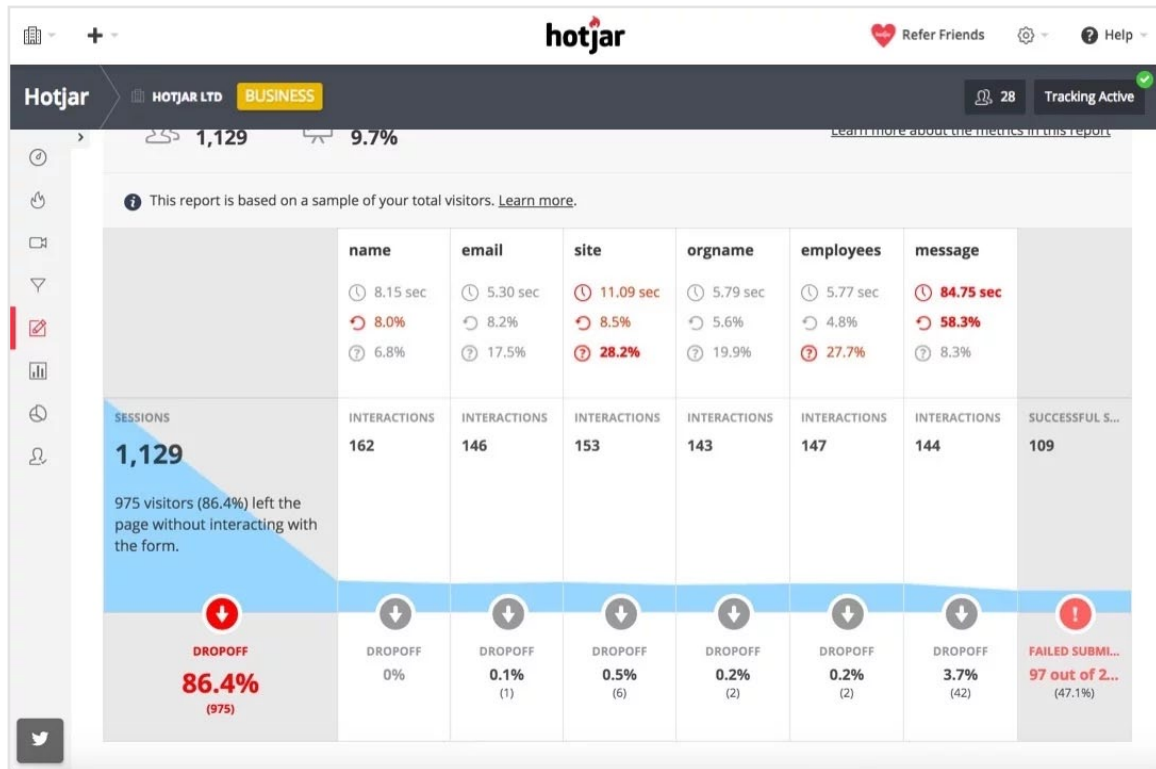


**Pricing:** Plans start at \$37 /MO (Free plan available)



## 6. HotJar

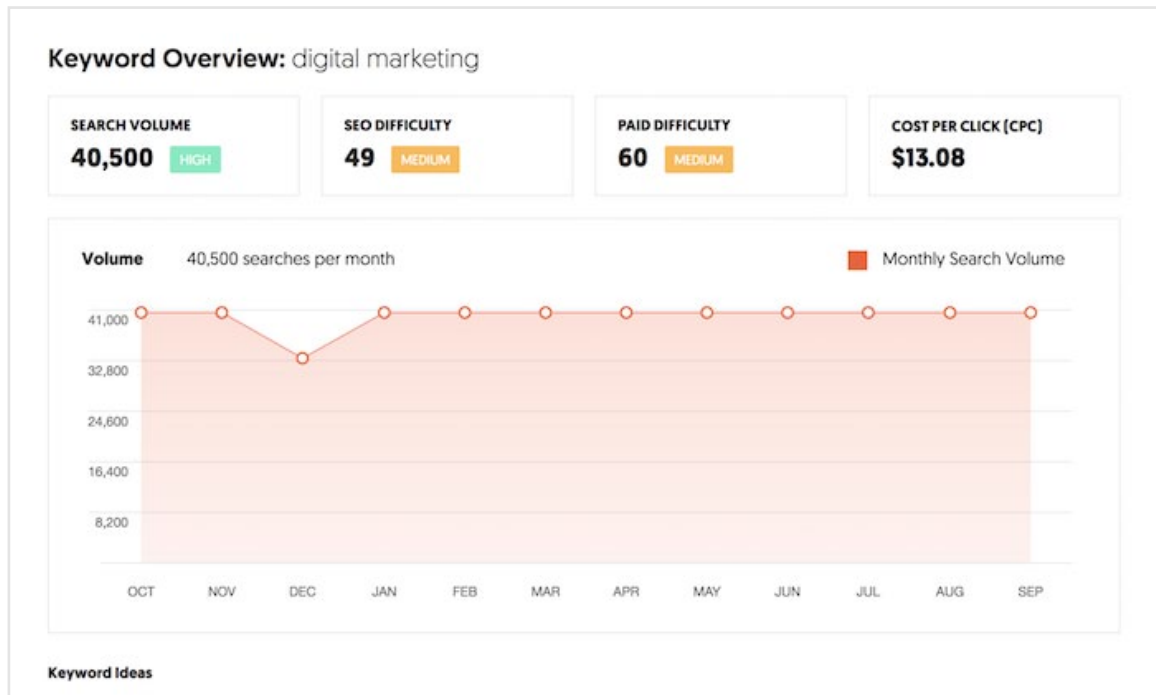
To get the most out of your website, you must first understand how users interact with it. Which is where HotJar comes in, providing features that provide you with heatmaps, visitor recordings and conversion analytics.



**Pricing:** Plans start at \$29 /MO (Free plan available)

## 7. Ubersuggest

Good SEO starts with great data. Ubersuggest is a free tool from Neil Patel that provides you with all the keyword data you need, from monthly search volume to the level of competition you're up against.



**Pricing:** Free!

## Conclusion

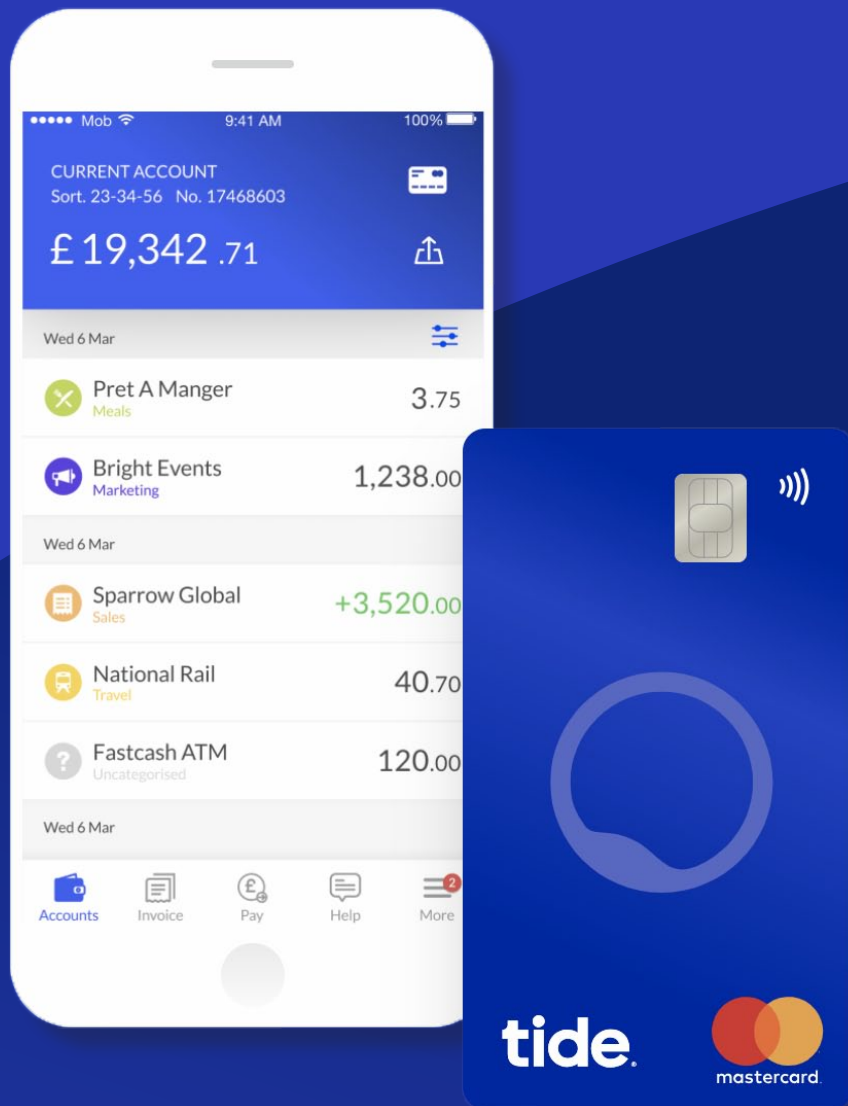
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In this guide, you've learned how to put together a marketing strategy that you can test on a small scale without having to break the bank.

The first, and most important step, is to fully understand your customers. By understanding their motivations, language and where they go for information, you can better attract them.

Once you have your buyer personas, it's just a matter of attracting them on the channels where they're found. Get your owned, earned and paid house in order to attract new customers at an affordable ROI.





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