

50 Ways to Make Your First Sale

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CHAPTER 1

Make Friends on Facebook

One of the easiest and fastest ways to make your first online sale is by leveraging the power of Facebook. This social media powerhouse has two separate mechanisms for you to launch your brand. They are:

Your Personal Facebook Profile.

Your Brand's Facebook Page.

You're probably familiar with your own Facebook profile. However, Facebook Brand Pages are a totally different beast and should be operated in a different way. Lets get into how you should operate both your personal profile and your brand page during the early stages of your new online store.

Your Personal Facebook Profile

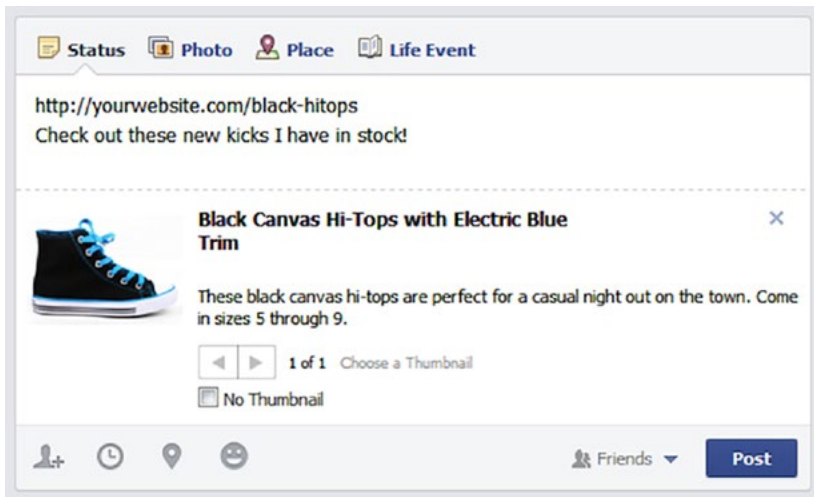
This will be your best friend during your first months of starting up. However, you have to treat your Facebook profile with a lot of respect. Otherwise you will lose friends and potentially lose your account.

There is nothing wrong with doing a little self-promotion on your personal Facebook profile. Your friends and family will likely love to see what you're up to as long as you don't overdo it. Sharing products with your personal Facebook profile is very effective, in fact, studies show that upwards of 62 percent of people read such posts.



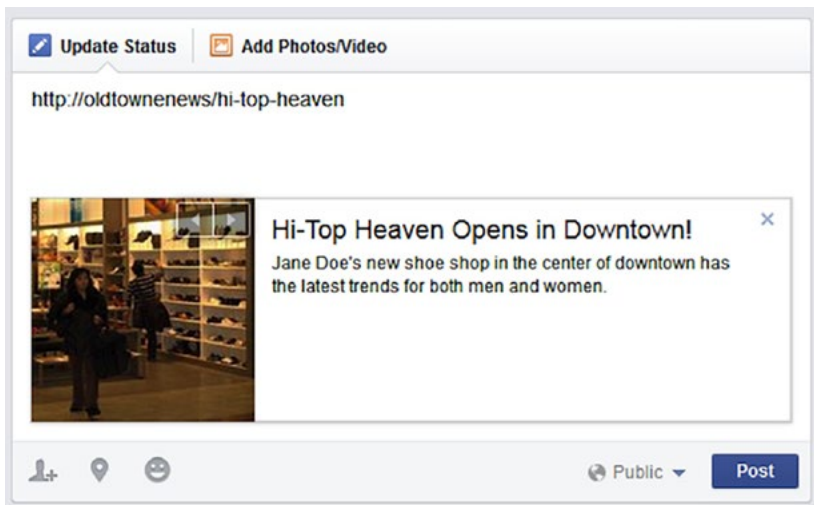
Source: *Sociable Labs*

A good rule of thumb is to update your profile about once a day with either a link to a product from your online store or website.



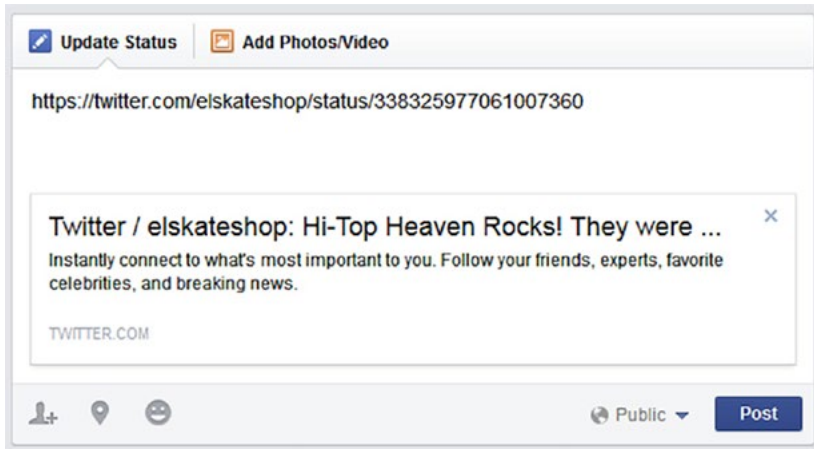
The screenshot shows the Facebook status creation interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Status', 'Photo', 'Place', and 'Life Event'. Below these, a URL is entered: <http://yourwebsite.com/black-hitops>. The text of the status reads: "Check out these new kicks I have in stock!". Below the text, there is a product image of a black canvas hi-top shoe with electric blue laces. The product title is "Black Canvas Hi-Tops with Electric Blue Trim". The description says: "These black canvas hi-tops are perfect for a casual night out on the town. Come in sizes 5 through 9." Below the image, there are navigation controls: a left arrow, a right arrow, "1 of 1", and "Choose a Thumbnail". There is also a checkbox for "No Thumbnail". At the bottom, there are icons for adding people, a clock, a location pin, and a smiley face. On the right, there is a dropdown menu for "Friends" and a blue "Post" button.

You can also share a press mention about your business.

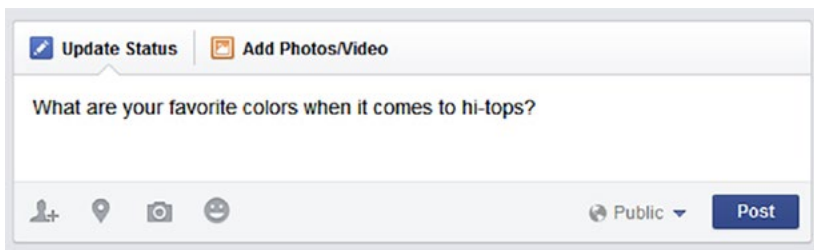


The screenshot shows the Facebook status creation interface. At the top, there are tabs for "Update Status" and "Add Photos/Video". Below these, a URL is entered: <http://oldtownenews/hi-top-heaven>. The text of the status reads: "Hi-Top Heaven Opens in Downtown!". Below the text, there is a photo of a shoe store interior. The description says: "Jane Doe's new shoe shop in the center of downtown has the latest trends for both men and women." At the bottom, there are icons for adding people, a location pin, and a smiley face. On the right, there is a dropdown menu for "Public" and a blue "Post" button.

Or a link to a tweet from a fan, friend or family member.



Another idea is you can post a survey or ask a question.



Also, maybe about once a month share your “about us” or “story” webpage. The story about your business is a great form of social currency, so spend time crafting a good story. From time to time you might also want to paste in the text about your story from your website instead of just pasting the link. The reason for this is that more of the text will show up on your friend’s feed, thereby delivering more of the story right off the bat.

Now it’s still possible that once a day is too much for your friends and family. You will have to be the judge of how much is too much. If you need to tone down your posting frequency because of complaints or loss of friends, then consider scaling it back a notch.

Finally, remember to keep using your personal Facebook profile for what it’s meant for. Continue to share photos, news articles, liking people’s posts and being a normal user. Don’t switch over to “business only” mode. All you are

going to do differently is occasionally posting something relevant about your new business.

Your Business' Facebook Page

Facebook Pages are designed for businesses, brands, and other types of organizations. Facebook only wants you to promote your business through your Facebook page. That's why we stress that you should keep business promotion through your personal Facebook profile to a minimum.

With Facebook Pages, only people who have Liked your Facebook page will see your updates. In a sense, these people have given you permission to advertise to them. This is a very key point about online marketing these days – permission marketing is much more effective than the old days of spamming everyone under the sun. The good news is that with a Facebook page, you're in good company, with over 70 percent of B2C companies acquiring a customer through the social platform.



Source: [Hubspot](#)

You will promote on your Facebook page exactly like how you do it on your Facebook profile with posts and links to products, PR mentions, and stories about your business. However, a better way to get deeper engagement on Facebook is to post updates on things that are not directly related to purchasing one of your products.

A great way to get more Facebook page engagement is to post:

- Industry trends and news
- Funny, cute, and high-quality photos (that you have a legal right to publish)
- Uplifting stories
- Inspirational Quotes
- Fun polls or surveys

Although some of these updates won't have anything to do with your brand per se, they will bond a stronger relationship between your brand and those that have "Liked" your Facebook page. What you are doing here is strengthening your fan base, which generally pays dividends down the line.

Here's the key: Do not overly promote your brand and your products - only post a couple times every day. Most importantly, be sure to respond to comments and keep the conversations going.

Since a portion of your Facebook friends will also be fans, be sure that you don't post the same content on both your profile and page on the same day. Always change up what you're posting to keep your Facebook campaign fresh from every angle.

At first, there is a large likelihood that your Facebook page won't have as much of an effect as your profile. But the important thing is to keep it updated often. Years down the road, this effort will pay off. The reason for this is because you will be nurturing a marketing list - a powerful marketing strategy that we'll talk about extensively in this book.

Now that we have gone over the difference between profiles and pages, let's get into some actionable stuff you can do right now:

- 1 Create a list of all your family and friends. Go through your Facebook page and email contacts one by one. We suggest putting their names and email addresses in a spreadsheet.
- 2 Reach out to each person with a personalized email or Facebook message. You don't have to ask them to buy your product, but simply ask for their feedback. Even ask if they will write a testimonial.
- 3 A few days later, ask each friend and family member to Like your Facebook page. You may not want to send a spammy all-inclusive

email to everyone, but actually take the time to message each person individually.

- 4 At a later date, ask them to post a message about what you are doing on their Facebook feed. Don't forget to give them information on where they can purchase your products.

Check out 10 more Facebook Pages optimization strategies [here](#).

Now if you are incredibly lucky, this initial marketing campaign might be enough to ignite your business into an overnight success story. However, chances are it will simply be a good introduction to a wide audience of people, and it will likely cause you to make your first sale.



CHAPTER 2

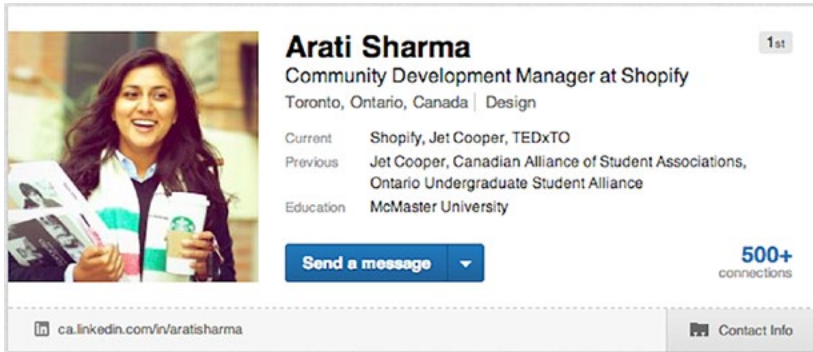
Network on LinkedIn

Think of **LinkedIn** as your professional Facebook profile. Depending on what you're selling, you may find yourself spending as much time on LinkedIn developing your business as Facebook.

Now the advantage of LinkedIn isn't necessarily just making direct sales. It's also about expanding your network and creating a wide array of opportunities.

Hopefully, you already have a LinkedIn profile and have been managing it over the years. If not, no worries, go ahead and sign up for one now.

How to Make Connections on LinkedIn



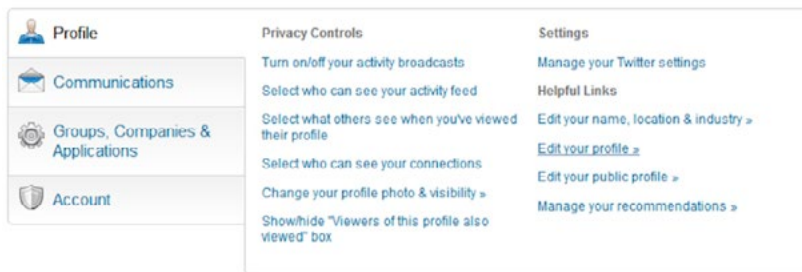
Like Facebook, LinkedIn is a social network, but instead of “friending” people, you simply “make a connection”. Obviously, the more connections you have, the larger audience you can broadcast to. Ecommerce merchants should expand their network as much as possible. Here are some ways you can increase the number of connections:

- 1 **Use LinkedIn’s “Add Connections” feature** – When you are logged into your LinkedIn account, you can click on “Contacts” and then “Add Connections”. This feature will scour your email contacts and make suggestions of people you may want to connect with on LinkedIn.
- 2 **Go through your old business cards** – If you’re like us, you probably have collected hundreds (if not thousands) of business cards over the years. LinkedIn is a great place to put those business cards to use.
- 3 **Add your friends and family members from Facebook** – Doubling up on people from multiple networks may seem counterintuitive. But when you’re marketing your product or service, it’s the number of “touches” that count before someone decides to do business with you. By having some of your Facebook friends as LinkedIn connections, the familiarity of your message will become more prominent with them.
- 4 **Every time you meet someone new add them to LinkedIn** – In your day to day operations, you’ll likely be emailing people that you do business with. If you have established a good rapport with them, search for them on LinkedIn and try to make a connection. If you feel comfortable doing this with certain customers, you may want to add

them as well. Having them see your accolades, awards and credibility may strengthen their trust in you and your business.

It's really important to only make connections with people you know or have met in the past. Don't add people you don't know or have no connection to at all. Not only does LinkedIn frown upon adding people you don't know, it also lessens the effect for when you broadcast your messages.

How to Complete Your Profile



Your LinkedIn profile is basically an online resume. You're going to want to fill out your past job experiences and of course, what you are up to now.

A lot of people will read your "summary". So spend time crafting something engaging about your new business venture. Here are some things you can do to spice it up:

- **Tell a story**– Stories are much more fun to read than your typical resume jargon. Humans have evolved to remember things via story telling.
- **Clearly express your unique selling proposition** – It's vitally important to clearly convey to people why your online business is different and stands out from the rest.
- **Tell people how they can help you** – At first this advice may sound a little self-serving. But in a networking environment it's perfectly acceptable to let know people know what kind of customers you're looking for. Doing this actually increases the power for other people to conduct effective networking with you. They will know who to

send your way, and you'll likely want to know who to send their way. For example, if you ran an online skateboard store you could say "The ideal customers for me are teenagers looking for their first skateboard setup".

A QUICK NOTE ABOUT POSTING UPDATES

The one thing that differentiates LinkedIn updates from Facebook updates is that they are seen as professional messages. On Facebook, people post whatever is on their mind, so an update doesn't always hold much weight. When someone sees your update on LinkedIn, generally your network will take it much more seriously.

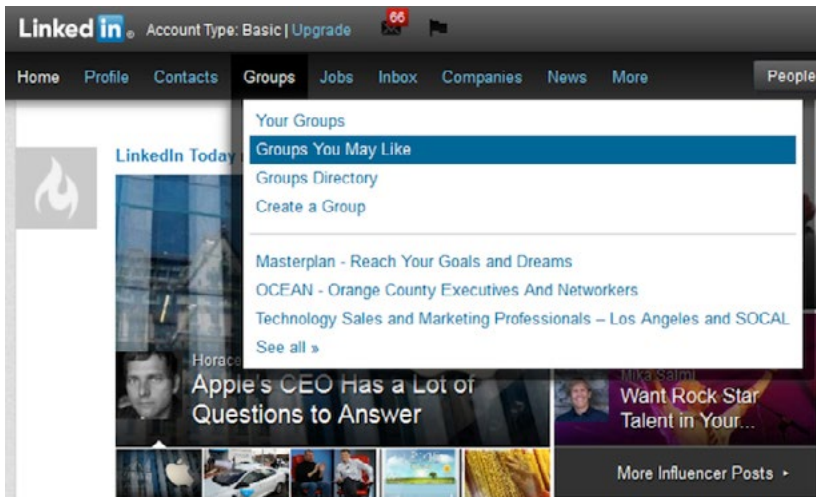
The Three Things You Should Post on LinkedIn:

- 1 Links to your product web pages** – Since you're in the business of selling something, feel free to post links to your products. It's totally acceptable to do this because this is business and that's what LinkedIn is all about. Like Facebook, you probably want to keep your updating to some sort of a minimum. Don't get into the habit of spamming your network.
- 2 Content that your network will find valuable** – LinkedIn is a great place to share useful content that your network will like. This can be from any online website or blog. Spend some time collecting good articles, infographics and videos that your network will appreciate.
- 3 Your own content** – As you build your online presence, a smart thing to do is to create digital guides to inform and educate online visitors. Buyer's guides, infographics and instructional videos are forms of marketing material that you can share on LinkedIn.

Finally, when you're posting updates be sure to write a description in addition to including links to your website. Conversational blurbs tend to get more engagement from your network than sales pitches or boring product descriptions.

How to Get Started with LinkedIn Groups

Browse LinkedIn's suggestions for "Groups You May Like" and join groups that are very active. If you're like us, as soon as you join a group and peer through the latest discussion, you'll be eager to put in a couple of words. And that's exactly what you're going to do here. You're going to educate people as unbiasedly as possible.



Here are a couple tips to make LinkedIn Groups go the extra mile for you:

- **Don't Spam** – To remain a long standing member of a group, you're going to have to fit in. Generally groups don't like people who come in and overly promote their business. Over time, your group will bring and refer business to you (that's the point of networking).
- **Join Discussions Frequently** – Spend time every day adding your thoughts to a current discussion. Show that you are the expert in your area and always remain unbiased.

Depending on the groups you join and the nature of your products – you might unearth gold mines of future customers or at the very least your first one. For example, if you run an online shop that sells kayaking equipment, find a few kayak enthusiast groups and share some knowledge. It's really that easy. Treat these groups and connections with the utmost respect to yield

years of return in the form of customers and referrals, out of which you might just get your first sale.

Networking On LinkedIn 101

You've probably heard that networking is an important thing to do at some point in your life. While of course that's true, there are a few things you need to know about networking to make it effective. Here are 4 tips to help you network on LinkedIn:

- 1 Find the best groups that work for you and stick with them.**
As you go out and interact with groups in real life or online – some groups are going to create synergy and some aren't. Figure out what groups work for you and ditch the ones that get you nowhere.
- 2 Continuously meet with the same people so they remember you.**
The more people see you on a repeated basis and know what it is you do, the easier you come to mind if the opportunity for them to refer you arises. It may sound incredibly obvious – but we can't stress how important and powerful familiarity is when it comes to networking.
- 3 Don't network sporadically.** It's easy for people who are beginning to network to go out and try a gazillion different groups. Don't do this. Find a few groups and stick to them. This will conserve your energy and again help out with the familiarity factor mentioned above. And above all, ask other long-time networkers what groups work well for them.
- 4 For networking to become effective, it takes time.** After your first couple weeks of networking, you may feel that it's not worth it. You need to stick with it for at least a few months. Be sure to follow up with people and continue to meet with your groups. Professional networkers will tell you that networking is the only form of advertising or marketing they ever do.

These rules apply for both the offline and online world. The important thing to remember is that you should only network with online groups that are active online. Don't waste your time with people who have just joined up once and haven't visited in months.



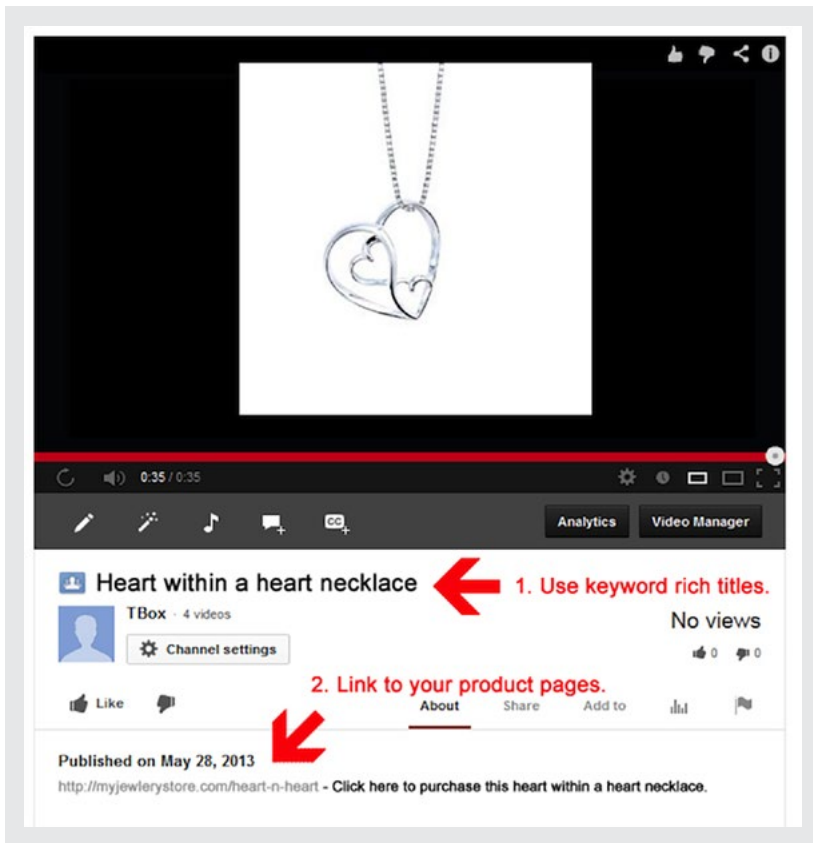
CHAPTER 3

Get Busy on YouTube

YouTube usually ranks around the second or third most popular search engine on earth. It provides a powerful tool for business owners and has an unlimited amount of creative ways in which you can drive traffic and sales to your ecommerce store.

One of the main advantages of YouTube, is that your video will be included in Google and YouTube search results. Each video you create is a piece of inbound marketing content that will help you sell for years to come. You can also use YouTube videos on your own website to help communicate the benefits of your products.

How a YouTube Video Helps You Sell



It's all about product videos. Let's say you **sell jewelry online**. Create a short video showing off a unique piece that you carry. For example, let's say you sell a piece of jewelry called "heart within a heart." To help drive online sales of this item, you could create a video showcasing the design, material and luster of this piece of jewelry.

When you upload your videos to YouTube, there are three things you need to pay close attention to:

- 1 The Title** – The title of your video is what will bring the targeted customers in. So be very mindful of how you title your video.

Think of keywords your target customers may be searching for to find your products.

- 2 Link Back to Your Product Pages** – In the description of the video, be sure to link back to your product pages. That's how you can get the casual YouTube video viewer to become a customer.
- 3 Your Tags** – Tags are a good way to attract YouTube users by interest. They also act as keywords that help people find your video. The important thing to remember with tags is to list your most important tags first.

How to Make YouTube Videos

The number one road block to starting with YouTube comes from people's fear of video editing. Lucky for you, video editing has never been easier. Here are some simple ways to create your own videos with no experience or big upfront costs.

IPHONE EDITING

Honestly, you can go to town and shoot pretty decent video with your iPhone, edit the video and upload it to YouTube without ever having to use a computer.

- **iMovie** – We recommend trying this app first. iMovie's learning curve is really easy. It puts out great looking video and gets you on your way quickly. The app is currently priced at \$4.99 - which honestly is a joke, considering how powerful a tool like this is.
- **Reel Director** – Just as easy to use as iMovie and at \$1.99 – it's worth having a back-up video editing app.

If you are an Android user, there are plenty of video editing apps out there. **Magisto** and **VidTrim** are some of the popular apps on the market.

ONLINE VIDEO EDITING

If you want to avoid dealing with apps and downloading software altogether, you can edit video entirely in the cloud these days.

- **YouTube Editor** – Good old YouTube has a simple online video editor that allows you to do transitions and text.
- **WeVideo** – Another online option that works on any browser and it excels at collaborating with other people who may be working with you.

DESKTOP VIDEO EDITING

If you're a Mac user, again we suggest using iMovie (but not the iPhone app version). It's a free application that makes video editing a breeze. If you're a PC user - we've personally always been a huge fan of **Camtasia**. Not only is it video editing software, it does screen recording as well. It's similar to iMovie in that it has an easy learning curve.

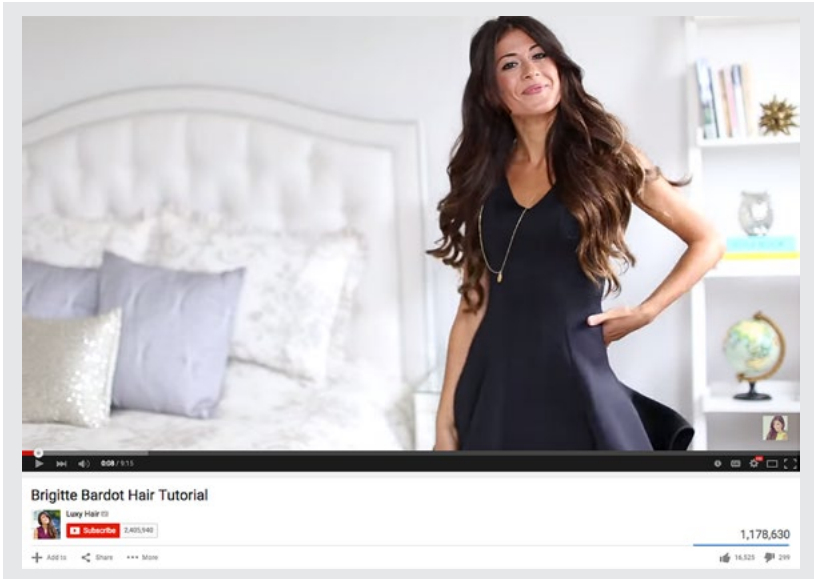
What Kind of Content Should You Produce?

This is where you can really open up the creative floodgates. The most boring thing you can do is simply film your product and talk over the video. “We have this widget in red, blue and black. Please click the link below to buy it.”

But we understand that it will come down to a battle of creativity vs. how much time you have to make videos.

If you decide to really invest time into making an awesome YouTube channel and dedicate a lot of time and energy into it (and yes, it will take a lot of time and energy), you may find this will be your go to marketing source for years to come. In our opinion a YouTube channel is as powerful as having your own Cable television channel.

Trust us though, it's all well worth the effort. For example, Luxy Hair who sells hair extensions online has built a **million dollar business** built primarily off the back of providing helpful and engaging content on YouTube.



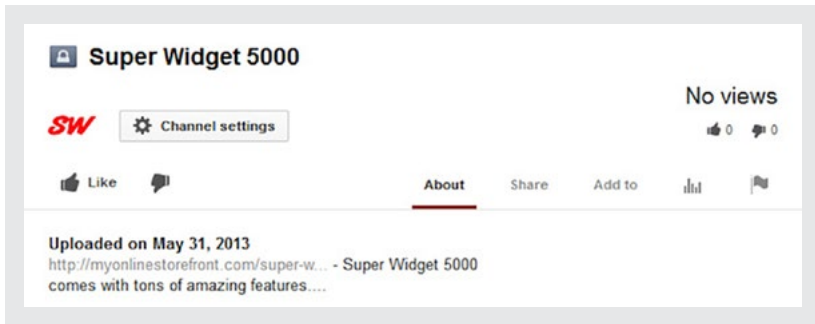
In general, some categories of content for you to consider are:

- **Educate** – Chances are you know a lot about your products and the world surrounding them. Produce videos such as visual buyer's guides, compare and contrast demonstrations, and "how-to" videos.
- **Solve Problems** – One of the main reasons people conduct searches on YouTube is to find a solution to a problem. Instructional videos always make great video content. You could probably go on for years showing your customers how to solve problems through videos.
- **Interview Professionals** – In some cases, great content can be created by interviewing professionals in your industry. If you're in a sporting goods industry, usually interviewing professional or even amateur athletes can make great content. But even professionals in woodworking or cosmetic industries have very valuable things to say to your audience.
- **Describe Phenomenal Products** – If you have some truly newsworthy products in your inventory, then go ahead and create videos explaining the amazing features of these products.

YouTube Power Tips

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR FREE LINKS

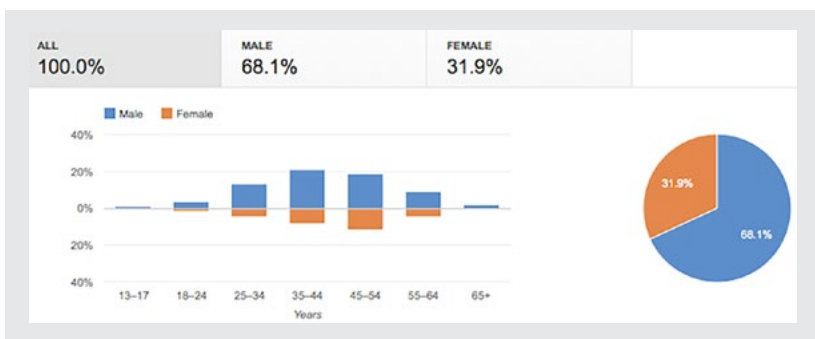
Be sure to link to your product or category webpage inside your YouTube description.



Not only does this help direct YouTube traffic to where people can buy your products, it also helps with your search engine optimization efforts.

TRACK YOUR VIDEO PERFORMANCE WITH YOUTUBE ANALYTICS

With **YouTube analytics**, not only can you monitor your views over time, but you can also get to the bottom of things like the source of traffic, your audience demographic, as well as your how well your video retains attention.



KEEP YOUR INTRODUCTIONS SHORT AND GET TO THE POINT

It's a common newbie mistake to produce long and dramatic branded video introductions. By all means brand your introductions by displaying your logo within the first few seconds on your video. But get straight to the point. Get to your message quickly - no longer than 3 seconds into the video.

Studies have found that people's attention spans drop off very quickly when watching videos. So don't have really long videos. Try to keep them below two minutes in length unless you are producing an educational video. Either way, video content is one sure way to rake in that first sale.



CHAPTER 4

Spark Conversations on Twitter

Twitter can be a powerful tool to help online store owners grow their business. Without investing too much time or money, you can easily drive traffic to your ecommerce store. It's also a great way to engage with your customers once your business is up and running.

But before we get into how you can use Twitter to make some sales, let's first talk about some important account setup housekeeping.

Setting Up Your Account the Right Way

PROFILE PHOTO

You should make your profile avatar your business logo. When it comes to branding, it's important to be consistent across all your online properties to avoid confusion.

YOUR BIO

This is the perfect location for your company tagline or value proposition. Keep it short and sweet and don't be afraid to have some fun.



Black Milk Clothing uses the tagline of “Give me nylon or give me death.” It's fun, concise, and quickly describes the company's vision statement while connecting their community with a single anthem that unites them.

YOUR WEBSITE

Always link to your homepage in your Twitter bio section.

YOUR BACKGROUND

Backgrounds can be used in many useful ways. You can either choose to use large branded artwork or provide an image that displays contact or support

information. If you have design resources, go nuts and create something beautiful. But if you're running on a budget or time constraints just keep it simple. A plain background is just fine, or you can add some information about your business.

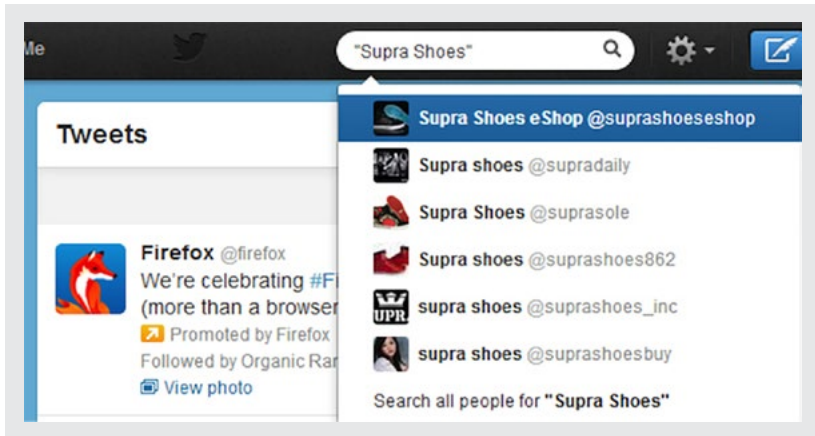


In this example, we're showing some basic contact information placed in the upper left hand corner of a Twitter background.

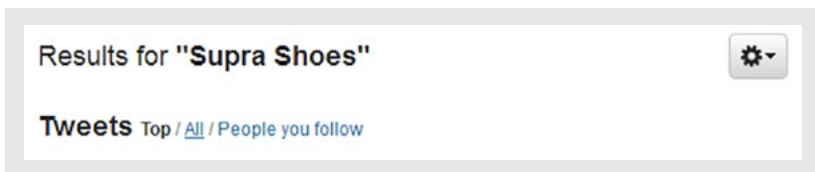
Direct Engagement

Twitter has an amazing real time search feature. You can listen to anyone's Twitter conversation - a feature that can help you increase sales. Here's an example, let's see who is talking about Supra shoes:

Simply type "Supra Shoes" into Twitter's search field:



The result will be a real-time result of people that have mentioned the word "Supra Shoes" in their Twitter conversation(s).

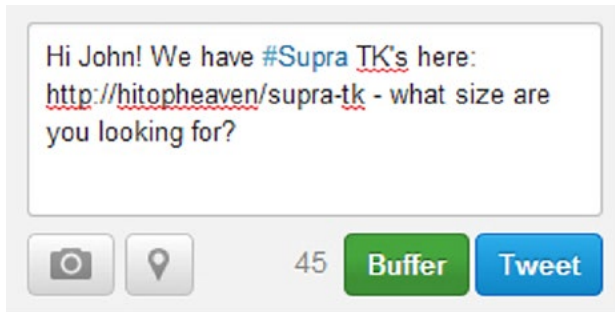


This will display almost everyone that has tweeted about Supra Shoes. At this point you can scour the results and pick someone to have a conversation with.

Here are some things you can approach them with:

- **Offer coupons** – If you find someone who has just purchased a similar product that you sell, you can offer them a coupon for the next time they are in the market for a similar product.
- **Ask them about their purchase** – If they have just purchased an item you sell, you might want to ask them about their experience to learn why they bought from your competitor. If they bought it from you - thank them and see how they're enjoying the product.
- **Send them links to your products** – if you discover someone discussing their interest in a particular product, feel free to send them a link to what you have to offer.

You might want to include a hashtag of the product brand name in your tweets. This will allow people who search for the hashtag to find you among results easier. For example:



You only want to do direct engagement a few times a day. It can be considered spam if you do it too much. As a matter of fact, we highly encourage that you read through Twitter's spam policies here.

Whatever you do, don't spam every person that mentions one of your products on Twitter with links to your product pages. That's a gross misuse of Twitter and is considered spam. It will make you an awful human being.

LISTEN AND CONVERSE

If you read almost any blog post about **how to use Twitter effectively** for your business, the most common advice is that you need to "listen". Most of these articles write about how to listen if you're an established brand.

The idea is to engage people on Twitter who are talking about your brand and respond to them appropriately to build customer loyalty.

For someone just starting out you want to listen in a different way. Chances are no one is talking about your online store just yet.

SO WHAT DO YOU LISTEN FOR?

Use Twitter as a public platform to show that you are an authority and genuinely help people.

Solve problems and lend help – Listen in on people who might be having problems that you can help out with. Think of keywords that might indicate

that someone is having a problem that you can solve, and type them in the search field. By helping people solve problems, you can build your follower count with people who are active in your industry. This will make them more susceptible to becoming future customers.

Discuss the current state of your industry – By joining in on conversations surrounding industry events, changes and news, you can establish yourself in the “who’s who” of your niche. This will open the doors for partnerships, networking and as a business that happily accepts referrals.

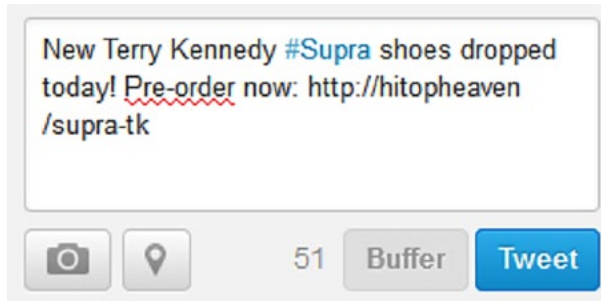
Show brands that you like – If you sell multiple brands, you can always show off brands you like and give the brand a little mention by using the @ and # characters. Not only does this publicly announce that you carry these brands, you’ll also strengthen your relationship with them.

Share Interesting and Useful Content

The single most powerful thing Twitter is good for is to disseminate valuable or interesting information. Based on your niche you should tweet out articles, pictures and videos that your audience will enjoy. This is a great way to start up conversations with other Twitter users who are interested in the same type of things your online store offers.

For example, if you operate an online surfing shop, you would want to tweet out links to videos of amazing surfing clips a few times a day as well as amazing surf photographs.

Occasionally throw in a tweet about some of your most enticing offers with links to the product page. And as always, throw in a hashtag representing the keyword or brand name.



Finally, you may want to tweet out coupon codes. They may get picked up by Twitter searchers and spread like wildfire.

To further amplify your tweets and go viral these **tips** will definitely come in handy.

How To Behave on Twitter

The general rule of thumb in the world of social media is to not overly promote your business. Think of communities like Twitter and Facebook as online cocktail parties. You wouldn't bust into the middle of an ongoing conversation with an opening like:

"Visit Hi-Top Heaven for the best deals on hard to find hi-tops, sneakers and today's most fashionable trends!"

Instead, you would gradually start a conversation and let what you do unfold naturally. As you start to build a following you'll experience the profitable benefits of followers first hand. In fact, a follower is **72 percent more likely to purchase from you**. One more reason to keep your eyes peeled to your newsfeed.



Pinterest

CHAPTER 5

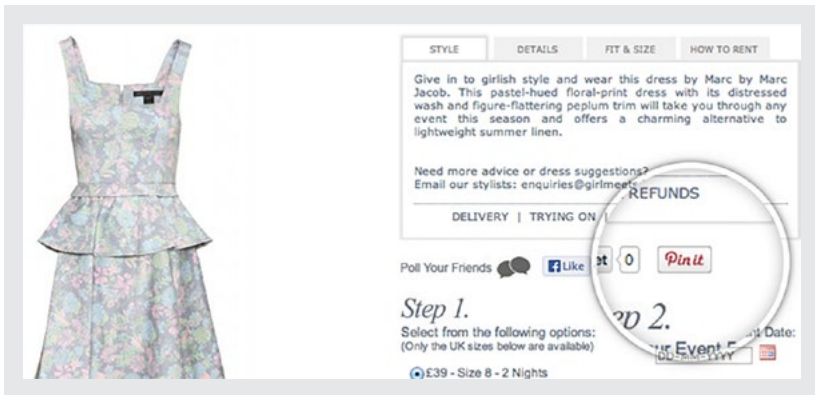
Inspire with Pinterest

Pinterest is a great new visual social platform that is increasingly becoming a powerful source of customers for online store owners.

Since it's primarily a visual experience, it's a great place for your product photos to shine. However, you must have a few creative bones in your body to get it to work. The effort is well worth it though, especially considering that visitors referred from Pinterest are **10 percent more likely** to make a purchase from you.

Use The Pinterest Button On Your Website

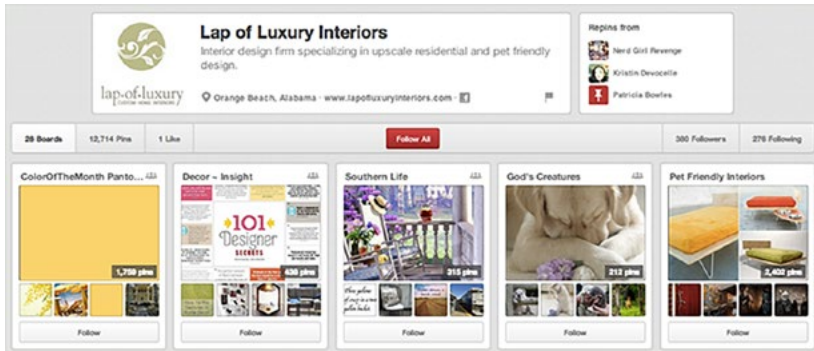
The easiest thing you can do to drive brand awareness and eventually sales to your website is to let your visitors do the “pinning” for you. By installing the Pinterest pin button to your product pages, your website visitors can post images from your online store to Pinterest. This is a great strategy since you’re getting a third party endorsement from outside your company. You can get the code to add the button [here](#).



Creating An Account For Yourself And Your Business

This is an important distinction and you’re going to want to do both. As the founder of your company your social network will be interested in what you have to pin. Additionally, you should create a Pinterest account for your company [here](#).

The goal here is you can double down on your Pinterest activities by being both an individual user and business on Pinterest. You’ll quickly find the limitations of both and surely will want to take advantage of both account types.

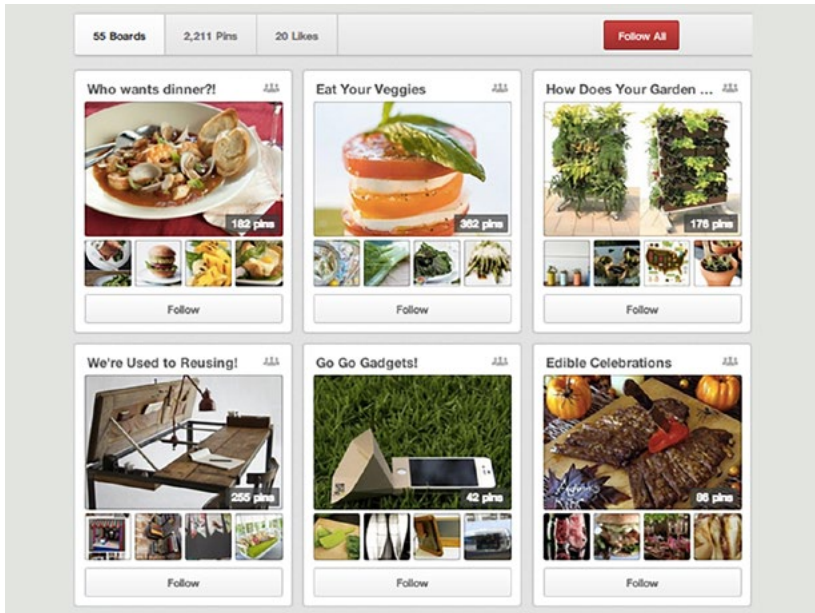


Creating “Smart” Boards

When you pin an image in Pinterest, you can assign it to a “board.” It’s better to create boards that focus on a specific theme. For instance, if you run an online surfing shop, you might want to create one specific board on “1960’s Longboards” and another called “Classic Fishes” (fishes being specific retro surfboard shape).

It turns out that when you assign themes to your boards, you tend to attract more interest. To give you some ideas for your online store, you could create boards representing:

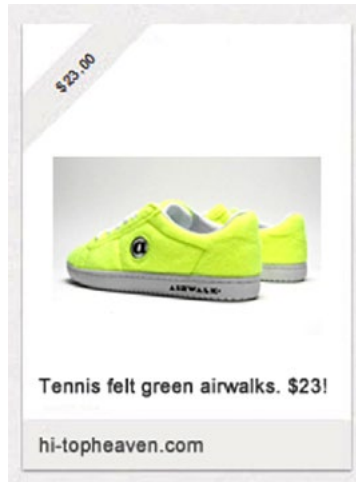
- Holiday gift ideas (Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day etc.)
- Back to school
- Specific themed vacations
- Clothing ensemble themes
- Gifts for your boyfriend



When you get really popular you can let your customers contribute to your boards.

ADDING PRICES TO PINNED IMAGES

For certain items that are always in stock, you might want to add a price to your pin of that image. To add a price simply add the price with a “\$” sign and corresponding value in the description.

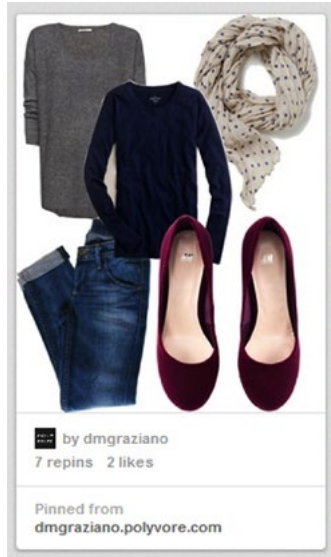


We want to reiterate that it's important that you only add prices to pinned products that are regularly in stock. The last thing you want to do is have people coming from Pinterest disappointed that the items they so excitedly saw on your board is out of stock.

Your Strategy Should Be To Inspire

The power of Pinterest lies in its ability to get people to discover amazing images, videos and products. Instead of just plastering your Pinterest boards with product images, your goal should be to inspire potential customers with the products you sell.

If you're an online fashion boutique, it's all about presenting your clothing in a way that gives potential customers an idea for an ensemble they would want to create.

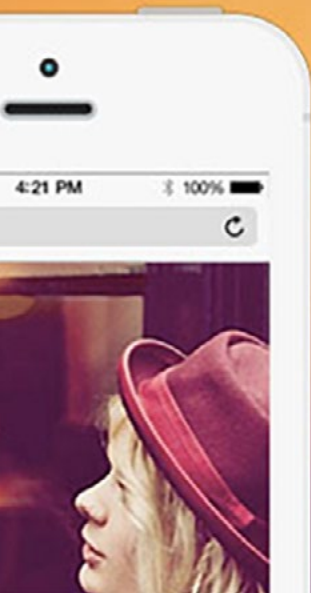


The above ensemble was designed to give fashion ideas to Pinterest visitors. Try creating groups of products that can inspire potential customers. If you're good at creating these groups, you'll strengthen your brand's authority in your niche.

Other Crafty Things You Can Do with Pinterest

- **Create a testimonial board** – If you receive hand written testimonials from customers, snap a photo of them and pin them to a dedicated board for testimonials.
- **Use hashtags** – Just like Twitter, Pinterest allows hashtags. For specific subjects, be sure to use hashtags. For example, if you run an online store specializing in women's dresses you might use hashtags like: #formalwear, #prom, #fallfashion.
- **Host a contest** – You can promote a contest where your fans and followers can create boards about your brand or around the products you sell. This is a great way to generate interest in your brand and get other Pinterest users involved.

There are probably a thousand or more ways to spin your Pinterest marketing to generate online sales. However, the best way to find out is to get your hands dirty and start pinning, start generating traffic, and the more visitors you get, the more likely one of them is bound to give you your first sale.



Instagram

CHAPTER 6

Work It on Instagram

What makes **Instagram** so popular is that it's basically Facebook boiled down to its single most engaging function: **sharing photos**. Throw in some brilliant photo filters and you've got one of the fastest growing online communities to date. And of course, Instagram is also a great marketing tool for your business with a lot of potential for getting you that first sale. So, let's discuss just how you and your business can benefit from Instagram.

Delight the World with Your Photos

The whole point of “Instagraming” is to take photos that will generate some sort of positive and viral reaction. The worst thing you can do on Instagram as an online retailer is to upload thousands of white-background product pictures and hope to get tons of traffic.

Boring!

No one will follow, like or comment on an account that does that.

This is an upload from **Sharpie**, a photo that is both motivating and has smart product placement. Motivating and positive are great themes for Instagram content.



Here is another great use of Instagram – **Active Mailorder** (and online action sport retailer), uses Instagram in this upload to advertise an upcoming video premier at one of their shops. The artful and comedic execution is something to take away.



How to #Hashtag

Knowing how to “hashtag” is key to getting more exposure on Instagram. It’s a great way to attract people from all over the world to your account page. The key to “hashtagging” though is to use a mixture of broad and specific terms for your hashtags.

For example, say you posted a photo of your best-selling limited edition Air Jordan basketball hi-tops, you might want to use the hashtags: #kicks #sneakerheads #jordans #airjordan #ballin #hi-tops #sneakers #nike.

If you ran an online kayaking store, and you posted a photo one of your sponsored kayakers doing some amazing whitewater kayaking you could use the hashtags: #kayaking #extremekayaking #snakeriver #kayak #rapids #whitewater #class5. You would also include the name of your sponsored athlete as a hashtag.

Keep using 5 - 10 appropriate hashtags and you’ll notice people increasingly liking your photos.

Photo Tips

Instagram doesn’t let you link to your online store from individual posts (they only allow you to link in your bio). So you have to be clever about how you get people to know what you do.

One way to get people to your store is to watermark your images with your domain name:



One thing to keep in mind about Instagram is that it will crop your images into a square. So if you are going to watermark your images, be sure that you don't put your domain name in any corner of your photo. Take a look at what happens to the photo above once it's cropped into a square:



The next thing you may consider testing is to put in coupon codes on your photos.



Frequency

You should be conscious of how often you post on Instagram. The general rule of thumb is to only post a few times a day. However, some people are very successful posting once an hour. In these cases, these posters are successful because they have exceptionally good image content.

You'll have to test to see what works best with your audience. Keep track of your follower count closely. If too many people start unfollowing you, then it's probably a good idea to tone down your posting frequency a bit.

Run a Contest with Instagram

Instagram is a great tool to build buzz around your product which not only can help your brand go viral, but also lead to that holy grail of that first sale you're after. Getting started with running a contest on Instagram is pretty simple:

- Choose an incentive (prize)
- Pick a campaign hashtag
- Create a contest "theme"
- Aggregate and display the photos online

Not to worry if you don't have the know-how to grab your contest photos from Instagram's API, luckily there are plenty of tools out there that do just that for you. A few we recommend that you get to know are:

- **TINT**
- **PIXLEE**
- **Statigram**
- **Olapic**
- **Venueseen**

Incentivizing your Instagram account through contests is a fantastic way to build engagement and build a loyal following who'll have no problem spreading the word about your products for you.

A Final Word About the Secret to Instagram

Though it may appear to be just a mobile photo sharing app, Instagram is being used by small and large brands alike to generate enormous amounts of sales. For example, **Black Milk Clothing** uses Instagram to create user-generated content it then adds to its product pages.

BlackMilk FREE Standard International Shipping REGISTER LOGIN CURRENCY \$0.00 AUD

SHOP ▾ HALLOWEEN HOGWARTS STAR WARS MIDDLE EARTH SESAME STREET MASS EFFECT ABOUT MUSEUM BLOG SEARCH

ART NOUVEAU LEA DRESS - LIMITED
\$95.00 AUD

Sliver Leia. Art Nouveau. You're welcome.
Composition: 82% Polyester, 18% L'CAAM
Washing: Please hand wash cool.
Designer: James Lillie
Made in Australia

XS
S
M
L

Add to Cart View styling options

Shipping Rates Size Chart

Australia (Domestic)	
Express Post	FREE
All other countries (International)	
Carrier	\$18.00 AUD
Standard (Not Avail. in All Countries)	FREE

Please note: Customers outside Australia may also be liable for any customs and import duty, quotas, permits, product restrictions and other local requirements.

Pricing is based on 1-10 garments, larger orders require a custom quote.

Tag your photos using #blackmilkartnouveau/leia on our Facebook or Instagram. How do I tag pics?

Use Instagram with the intent to engage your followers with something fun, entertaining, and eye-catching. Otherwise, you'll end up putting mediocre content out there that won't attract interest from others, much less their hard-earned cash for your goods.

The image shows the Tumblr login interface centered on a dark blue background with a starry, galaxy-like pattern. At the top, the word "tumblr." is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. Below it is a white login form with two input fields: "Email" and "Password". The "Password" field has a small question mark icon to its right. Below the form is a blue button with the text "Log in" in white. At the bottom of the form area, there is a link that says "Sign up for a new account" in a smaller, lighter font.

tumblr.

Email

Password

Log in

[Sign up for a new account](#)

CHAPTER 7

Tap Into Tumblr

Marketing with Tumblr is a lot like marketing with Instagram. The idea is to wow people with your images and attract a large and loyal following who'll not only purchase your products but become evangelists for your brand. And just like with all social media communities, what you don't want to do is overly promote all the time. To be successful on Tumblr means you have to master the art of posting creative and inspiring content that makes an emotional connection with people.

Here's how to use Tumblr to bring sales to your ecommerce store.

Creating a Tumblr Name and Picking a Specific Theme

Before you blindly sign up for your Tumblr account, spend some time strategizing your marketing angle. You should really make your Tumblr blog ultra-specific and highly thematic. This will help make your Tumblr blog resonate more with people which will create more viral shares, backlinks and followers.

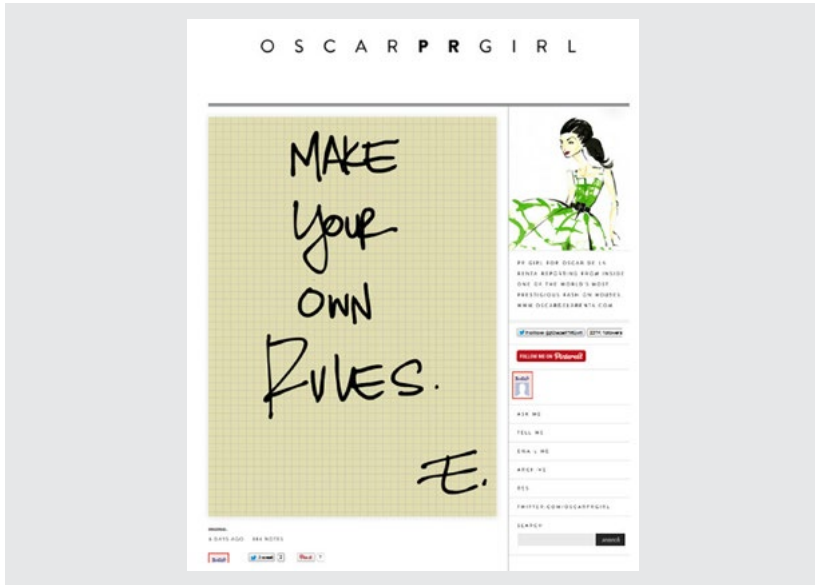
There is no point in rebuilding your own company blog on Tumblr – you should use Tumblr as a very creative offshoot for your brand. This will keep the content unique and attract die-hard followers.

Plan ahead by writing down 10 to 20 posts that can solidify your theme. Ask yourself: “Will I be able to consistently come up with content that fits with my theme?” If the answer is “yes”, then you’re ready to create your account. If not, ask some trusted peers – they might have some great ideas.

When you create a Tumblr account, you’re going to do something a little out of the ordinary. You’re going to want to name your Tumblr blog something creative, most likely without including the name of your business in it.

For example some popular Tumblr blogs have names like:

- **OCD**: Obsessive Corgi Disorder. A blog of corgi dogs.
- **Awwccupy Wall Street**: A Tumblr blog that showcases the Occupy Movement’s cutest protesters.
- **Oscar PR Girl**: A Tumblr blog that takes you behinds the scenes of the Oscar de la Renta fashion brand.

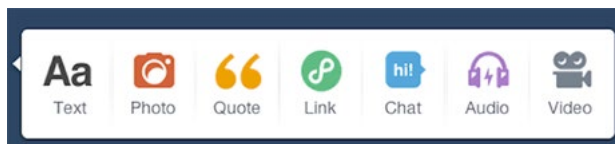


Oscar PR Girl is a Tumblr blog that shows a behind-the-scenes look into the Oscar de la Renta designer brand.

Again spend time thinking of a fitting name before you rush into creating your account. The payoff might be several-fold if you're somewhat patient.

Adding Content and Tagging on Tumblr

As a micro-blogging platform, Tumblr is a lightweight platform that lets you add content almost as quickly and seamlessly as writing a tweet on Twitter. Simply select the icon describing the type of content you want to add and you're good to go.



Like Instagram, you can attract more people to your Tumblr blog by using tags effectively. You should pick tags that not only describe what your

picture is about, but also think about categories and themes your photo may be associated with. For example, if you upload a stunning photo of a dog catching a Frisbee at the beach (let's say you operate a pet toy store), you might want to use tags with the names of: pet toys, super dogs, dogs, summertime, jumping dogs, Frisbee.

There is a loose rule of thumb that you shouldn't use more than 7 to 12 tags on Tumblr. Not only does it seem to bring in the most optimal number of traffic to your blog, but any more is considered spamming.

How Tumblr Fits in Your SEO Strategy

One great reason to use Tumblr is that you can strategically try to rank on the first page of search engine results by creating keyword rich titles for your Tumblr posts. Say you already rank on the first page of Google for "Neon Green Tennis Shoes," you could try to claim more first page real estate by creating a Tumblr post called "A Collage of Neon Green Tennis Shoes". However, you wouldn't duplicate the content that's on your original blog post. You would instead create an entire new post, but have the same keyword in your Tumblr title (Neon Green Tennis Shoes).

You can use this same strategy for many of your social media and blogging accounts that you may be using across the Internet.

Tumblr also allows you to create meta descriptions and image alt tags. Remember, meta descriptions are the little snippets on search engine results pages that live under your page titles. It's a good idea to craft a couple engaging sentences to try to entice search engine users to click on your results.

Be sure to fill out your image descriptions (alt tags) for your Tumblr photos. These image descriptions are what search engines use to understand what your images are about. By filling out these descriptions, your images will appear in image search results like Google Images and Bing Images.

Getting the Cool Kids to Buy

The majority of Tumblr users fall under the category of 18-34 years in age, which means it's a young crowd that's too cool for Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter. So if you want to capture their attention and get them to visit your

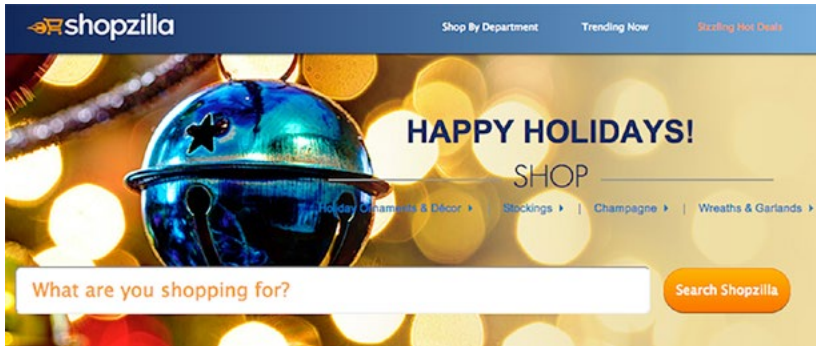
store in hopes of turning them into customer, create content that resonates with them and popular culture. If you can do that and crack the code for going viral, you're sure to generate enough buzz to not just get your first sale, but ultimately build that business of your dreams.



CHAPTER 8

Comparison Shopping Engines

As an online retailer, comparison shopping engines are obvious places to get your products in front of the masses and see who bites first for that glorious first sale. Sites like Google Shopping, Shopzilla, Bing Shopping, Nextag and Pricegrabber have millions of shoppers searching for the best prices on online products – so surely you’re going to want to get some of those shoppers over to your online store.



Having your products listed in these engines can have a very quick response in terms of immediate business. Almost all of these shopping engines require you to “pay to play”. Regardless, we want to discuss these channels as something you should look into early on to get some business momentum.

How They Work

Generally, most comparison shopping engines work the same: you upload a CSV (Comma-Separated Value) file to their website feed – and they will put your products in their engine. This can be done by putting your products in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (or any spreadsheet for that matter) and saving it as a CSV file.

A	B	C	D	E	F
Manufacturer	Product URL	Image URL	Product Title	Description	Price
ACME	http://www.yourwebsite.com/hammer	http://www.yourwebsite.com/ima/hammer.jpg	Hammer	A hammer to get things done.	9.99
ACME	http://www.yourwebsite.com/saw	http://www.yourwebsite.com/ima/saw.jpg	Saw	Saw your way to freedom!	9.99
ACME	http://www.yourwebsite.com/shovel	http://www.yourwebsite.com/ima/shovel.jpg	Shovel	Great for digging!	9.99

In these files you will specify typical product information such as:

- Product title
- Price
- Description
- Image location

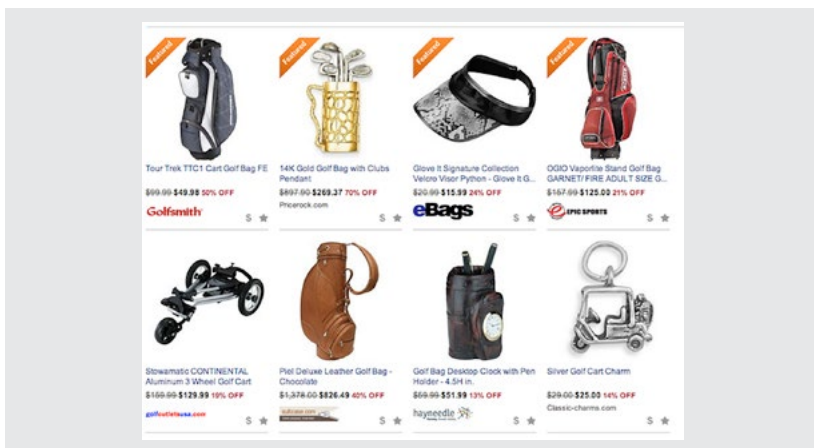
Depending on which shopping engine you are submitting to, they will have different requirements for how you should format your CSV file. It's pretty easy, and you will get the hang of it in no time.

Once your product data is submitted and processed by the comparison engines, they will display your product on their website to a huge online audience of shoppers! Generally, when a shopper clicks on your listing, you are charged for the click and the shopper is sent to your website to hopefully make a purchase.

So yes – you are basically paying for window shoppers. But think of it as a highly targeted advertising campaign, where people have been filtered before clicking on your ad. And because they have been filtered, it's a much better place to put your money than say in an untargeted website banner ad.

The Problem with Comparison Search Engines

Depending on your business strategy, comparison shopping engines might force you to do something you really don't want to do, lower your prices.



This gets into a really dicey world and it's important to understand three critical things before you ever go down this road:

- 1 If you decide that you want to be the “low price leader” in your industry, you generally end up fighting a war racing to the bottom.

The bottom being rock bottom prices. You can really hurt your business by restricting much needed cash flow.

- 2 Your brand tends to highlight your unique selling proposition as the “cheap website”. And the problem with that is you will have many other competitors who are doing the exact same thing (having low prices) – resulting in a position where you don’t stand out.
- 3 If you think about the type of users that use these shopping engines, they are typically bargain hunters, who are not always the best customers to have. All they tend to care about is who has the lowest price – and will jump ship to another competitor as soon as a “better deal” comes up elsewhere.

Is There a Way Around This?

In order to get the benefit of comparison shopping engines and still not go down the “cheap road” is to select certain products to be “fed” to these engines. There are two types of products you can do this with:

- 1 If you sell something completely unique, that no other online shop sells – well then you’re in luck. Obviously add those items to your product feed, and don’t bother lowering the price on them.
- 2 Select a few items that you don’t mind slashing prices on. Not all your items – just a handful. And every few months rotate them with new items. This way you can attract new customers that hopefully they will stay loyal for years to come.

Which Engines are Free and Which Ones Cost Money?

FREE COMPARISON SHOPPING ENGINES

- 1 **The Find** - In addition to showing product and price comparisons, **The Find** can help shoppers discover new products with personalized results.

PAY-TO-PLAY COMPARISON SHOPPING ENGINES

- 1 Google Shopping** - **Google Shopping** is probably the largest and best known comparison shopping engine. Products submitted to Google Shopping will also be displayed on standard Google search results and are integrated with Google's pay-per-click platform, Adwords.
- 2 Next Tag** - **Nextag** has been in operation since 1999 and has as many as 30 million visitors each month. Nextag is consistently a top performer for traffic and conversions on CPC Strategy's quarterly review of leading CSE's. You can list products, event tickets, real estate, and even travel bookings.
- 3 Price Grabber** - In addition to presenting products on its site, **PriceGrabber** has a market research tool, Market Report, that allows retailers to track consumer purchase and product pricing trends. When you list your products on PriceGrabber, you'll also be listed on Yahoo Shopping which is a nice added bonus.
- 4 Shopping.com** - **Shopping.com** is part of eBay's family of companies and is another great channel for merchants to put their products in front of perspective buyers. Shopping.com also partners with The Find, another CSE on this list.
- 5 Shopzilla** - With about 40 million monthly visitors and a pedigree dating back to 1996, **Shopzilla** is one of the best choices for ecommerce merchants looking for some extra sales. This comparison shopping engine has an impressive 100+ million products listed.
- 6 Become.com** - **Become** is another leader in the CSE space, allowing thrifty shoppers to compare prices, read or write product reviews, and simply search for the best possible online shopping deals.
- 7 Pronto.com** - With about 70 million product listings sorted into various retail verticals and millions of visitors monthly, **Pronto** certainly merits consideration for any retailer's 2013 CSE campaigns.
- 8 Amazon Product Ads** - Amazon isn't technically a comparison shopping engine, but they work in a similar fashion. When you register for **Product Ads** you can upload your products manually or via FTP. Amazon will then create ads for your products using the

information provided in your product file. When you set your budget, your ads will go live and you'll pay-per-click.

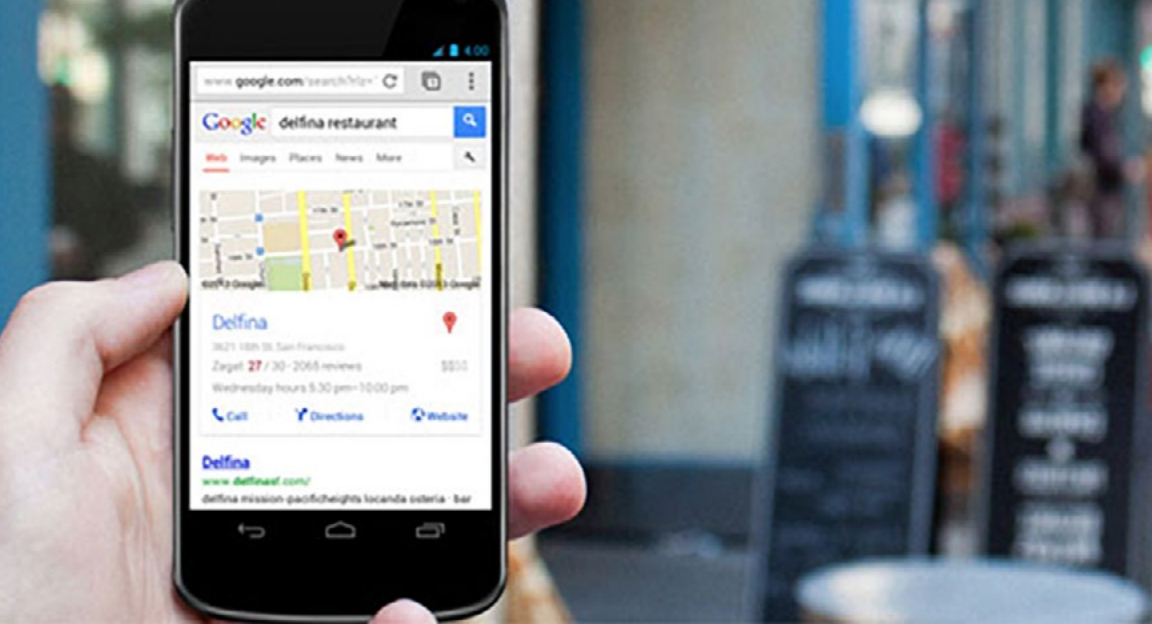
Which Engine Should You Choose?

Certain comparison shopping engines will have a better ROI (return on investment) for your business than others. The only way to know which ones will yield the best return is to try each one.

Certain sites will work better for the types of products that you sell over others. For example if one engine has a lot of competitors then you have a good idea that the targeted traffic you need is there. On the other hand, if there are no competitors there might not be the traffic you need, but you'll get all the sales if there are any.

One thing to keep in mind is to not pull out early. It will take time and focus to understand these marketplaces. As you get more comfortable working with these engines, you will hone your skills on how to market and price your products.

Finally, realize that online shoppers may click on your listing, come to your site, leave and come back another day. So it's important to understand that you might get charged a few times for the same customer to finally make a purchase which is why you should stick around for a while. Chances are they will come back to the same engine to find your website when they are ready to make a purchase.



CHAPTER 9

Get On Google Places

Google Places is Google's answer to the good old yellow pages, and yes even if you haven't made a dime, you're going to want to be found on Google Places. Somewhere along the way Google realized that a lot of mom-n-pop shops really don't have time (or knowhow) to build a strong web presence. Yet they deserve an easy way to be found in their search engine. That is, after all, what Google's #1 job is: to make sure people easily find what they are looking for. And of course people look for local businesses and organizations on the Internet.

You can only have a Google Places account if “**you make in-person contact with customers**” according to their guidelines. So if you are running a 100% online business where you never meet with customers, then we suggest you go to another chapter.

So What is Google Places Exactly?

Google Places is simply a Google account any business can sign up for. It's completely free. Once you sign up, you will be asked to fill out your business information such as address, business description, and contact info.

When someone uses Google and performs a geographical based search, Google will display results of local businesses that match the intention of the searcher's query.

Here is an example:

The screenshot shows a Google search for "Record Store Denver CO". The search results are displayed in a list format on the left, and a map of Denver, CO is shown on the right. The map has several red pins indicating the locations of record stores. A red arrow points from the text "These are Google Places results." to the map area.

Record Store Denver CO

Web Images Maps Shopping More Search tools

About 32,400,000 results (0.44 seconds)

Record stores Denver, CO - Yelp
www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Record+Stores&find_loc=Denver%2C+CO
 Reviews on Record stores in Denver Twist & Shout, Wax Trax Records, Independent Records and Video, Second Spin, Atomic Records, Growler Records, Black ...

Vinyl record stores Denver, CO - Yelp
www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Record+Stores&find_loc=Denver%2C+CO
 Reviews on Vinyl record stores in Denver Wax Trax Records, Twist & Shout, Independent Records and Video, Second Spin, LP Hound's Vinyl House, Atomic ...

Music store Denver, CO - Yelp
www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Music+Store&find_loc=Denver%2C+CO
 Reviews on Music store in Denver Twist & Shout, Fleisher Hinton Music Company, Independent Records and Video, Wax Trax Records, Music Gear Guys, ...

Twist & Shout
www.twistandshout.com/
 Score: 24 / 30 136 Google reviews
 2508 E. Colfax Ave. Denver ... - Advanced Search

Wax Trax Records
www.waxtraxrecords.com/
 Score: 23 / 30 77 Google reviews
 Vinyl - Contact Us - About Us - Tell Someone

Independent Records and Video
www.beindependent.com/
 7 Google reviews

2508 E Colfax Ave
Denver
(303) 722-1943

638 E 13th Ave
Denver
(303) 831-7246

937 E Colfax Ave
Denver
(303) 863-8668

Map for Record Store Denver CO

← These are Google Places results.

Google Places: The telephone book of the 21st Century

Google Places can deliver amazing results for business owners that have a local place of business.

Disadvantages of Google Places

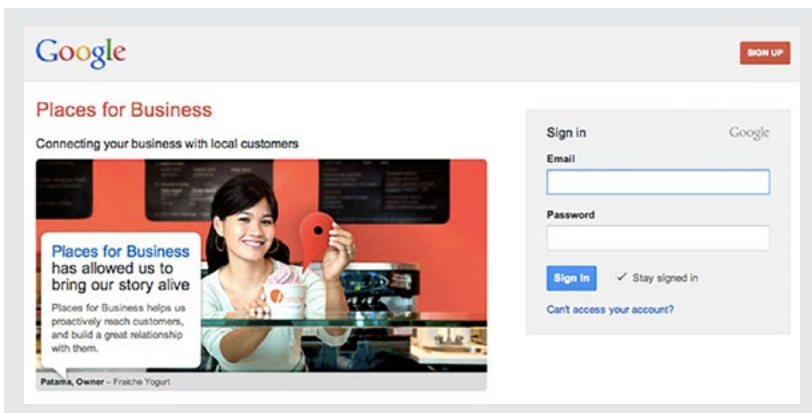
There is one issue that you need to be keenly aware of: spam, spamming and spammers. You see, spammers have realized the power and potential of Google Places. They quickly learned that exploiting it can bring in wonderful free traffic from multiple entry points.

The way they did this was they would create fake addresses all over the geographical territory they wanted to cover to gain multiple spots in the search result. Google has since made Google Places very difficult for spammers and has probably gone overboard with who can and can't show up in the results. This brings us to Google Rule #1:

Rule #1: Don't ever think you can pull a fast one over Google. Just play by the rules and you'll usually end up better off.

How to Sign Up for Google Places

The first thing you're going to want to do is sign into your Google account (Gmail, Google Plus, etc.) and then go [here](#).



Go ahead and fill in all the pertinent information about your business. Be sure that you are accurate. A good tip is to copy and paste the information from your website so that you don't make any entry errors.

Really Important Details that You Need to be Aware Of!

Google Places is a great thing for business owners, but you have to be very cautious and play by their rules. Here are some important tips you need to be aware of:

Basic Information

Please note that changing your address or business name will require additional verification via mail or phone.

* Required Fields

Country: *

Company/Organization: *

Street Address: *

City/Town: *

Province: *

Postal Code: *

Main phone: *

Email address:

Website:

Example: (004) 234-5678 [Add more phone numbers](#)

Example: myname@example.com

Example: http://www.example.com

4169487725

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[Fix incorrect marker location](#)

Use your actual business name as the name of your business. We know this sounds very obvious, but certain people are going to try to sneak in keywords in this field which will just get you banned from Google Places.

- Do not use a P.O. Box or virtual address as your business address.
- Don't make more than one Google Places account for your business.

What if I am running my business out of my house?

This is okay, but you have to be very careful here. If you don't allow people to visit your residential address for business, you must hide your address.

If you don't conduct face-to-face business at your location, you must select "Yes, this business serves customers at their locations" under the "Service Areas and Location Settings" section of your dashboard, and then select the "Do not show my business address on my Maps listing" option.

We really emphasize that you follow these specific instructions laid down by Google. It will determine whether or not you show up.

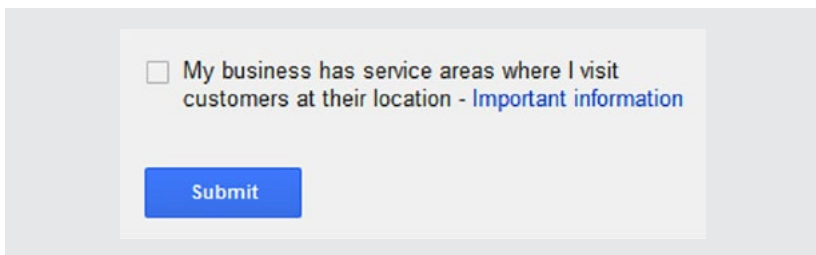
We also highly recommend that you read through Google's guidelines on Google Places – just to be sure you're not planning on doing something that will get you banned from their **results**.

Now here is the most important part: Your Category.

Before you begin, don't fill out just any category, make a list of your top three most important categories that describe your business. Then prioritize that list and enter your first and most important category into this field.

Your category might not auto-complete, so spend a good amount of time trying to find the category that best describes your business. We can't stress enough how important this step is to get right. It will determine what kind of customers Google will send you, essentially, you're telling Google who you want to visit your website or call you.

Finally, Google would like to know if you drive or deliver items to people in multiple geographical locations.

A screenshot of a Google Places form. It features a checkbox with the text "My business has service areas where I visit customers at their location - Important information". The text "Important information" is in blue. Below the checkbox is a blue "Submit" button.

It is really important for Google to know if you are a business on wheels. This checkbox is their way of knowing if your business is in compliance with their guidelines. So if this fits your business, then check it. Remember, if you're running a **home-based business** and you don't allow customers to come to your home, then you will have to check this box. Otherwise, you can't have a Google Places listing.

Soon you will get to a step that asks you to verify your business.

Verify by phone or postcard

To make sure you're authorized to manage this business on Google, we need to verify your association with this business. [Why verify?](#)

The easy way out is to verify by phone. But, don't do that. We highly recommend verifying by postcard because it signifies to Google that your business actually exists at the location you say it does. That's really important for them to get right, and so if you do the mail verification, we have this belief (and other search engine professionals do too) that you'll be rewarded for this extra wait.

Getting More Traffic from your Google Places Listing

Finally, here are some tips to **optimize your listing** so that you can open the floodgates to local traffic giving you more visitors to turn into prospective and ultimately paying customers.

- 1 Spend the time to fill out your Google Places profile to completeness.
- 2 Add photos and videos of your business.
- 3 Write lengthy descriptions.
- 4 Encourage customer reviews and feedback.
- 5 Integrate with Google+



CHAPTER 10

The Yahoo! Bing Network

Since you're running an online store, buying ads on the Internet must seem like a pretty obvious way to make your first sales. And this is true – it's just that depending on your industry, online advertising has become hyper-competitive.

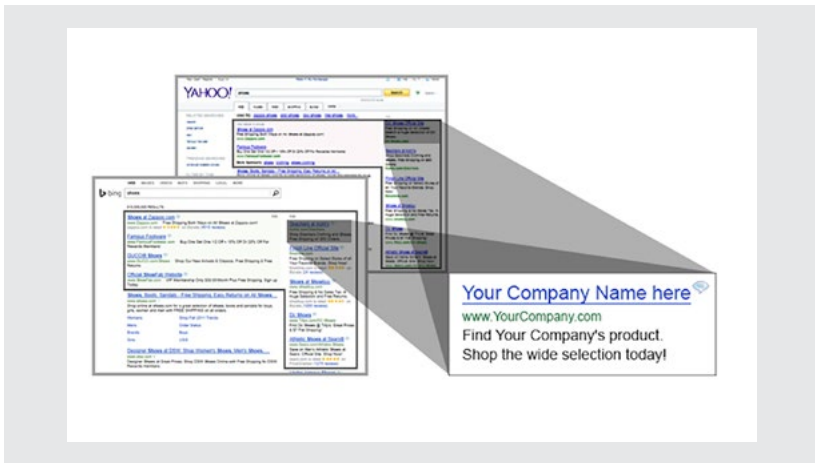
Now, if we had written this guide in the 1980's – we would have told you to put a small ad in some magazines, do a few trade shows and call it a day. But boy, how things have changed.

Nowadays, the obvious places to buy ads can take you for a wild ride, leaving you penniless at the end of the ride. And that obvious place we're talking about is Google.

Google revolutionized advertising by providing the first 100 percent measurable (well almost) advertising platform known to humankind with Google Adwords. Combining the fact that you can know your exact ROI (return on investment) and Google's massive search volume, Google Adwords has become a very competitive place for online businesses to spend their advertising dollars.

And that's why we're pointing you in the direction of a slightly less competitive, cheaper and friendlier network: **The Yahoo! Bing Network**. We're hoping by opening up this as an alternative, it'll let you get started and get sales results far more quickly.

Why is it Called The Yahoo! Bing Network?



At one time, each of these search engines / online mega-communities had their own individual advertising networks. And from our personal experiences, we really liked Yahoo!'s advertising platform. It wasn't that competitive and had very reasonable CPCs (cost-per-click).

The only problem with Yahoo! (and especially Bing), was that they just couldn't drive the volume of traffic that Google Adwords did. And that was

a problem for people who had found a better return with these networks. Because if you're getting a better bang for your buck, wouldn't you advertise with them more?

At some point Bing and Yahoo! decided to join forces to battle it out against Google. And that's why it has the hybrid name.

What is this Cost-Per-Click Business?

Most search engines use the cost-per-click advertising model (also called pay-per-click). It's as simple as it sounds, every time someone clicks on your ad, you are charged for the click.

You start your CPC advertising campaign by choosing keywords that search engine users will potentially search for. When they do, your ad will be displayed somewhere on the results page. If you wrote compelling advertising copy, chances are someone will click on your ad and will be taken to your online store.

The cost of the click is determined by a few factors:

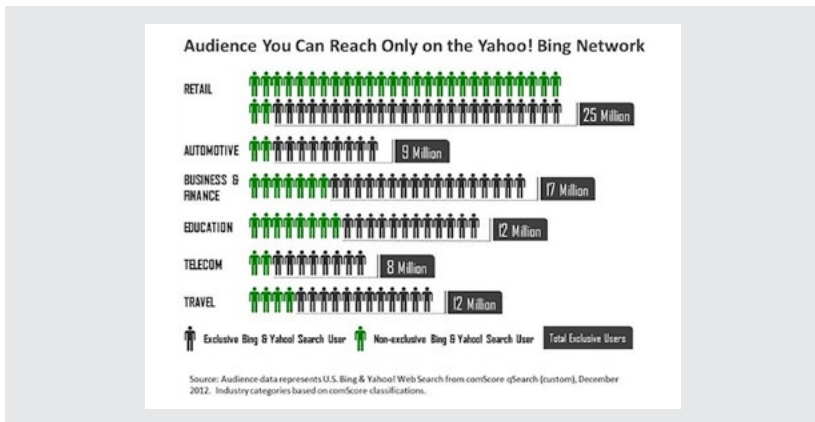
- **Your Specified Maximum Bid** – For every keyword you select to return your advertisements, you are allowed to set a maximum amount you will pay for a click. That way, you can keep your costs under control when things get competitive.
- **Your Quality Score** – Google Adwords was the first to introduce the concept of quality score. Generally, the longer you stay on the network as a paying customer and the better you are at improving your click-through rate (the number of clicks on an ad divided by the number of times the ad is shown), the lower price you will pay per click.
- **The Keywords You're Bidding On** – Some keywords are very expensive per click. Phrases like “DUI attorney” and “real estate” can have double digit CPCs. The niche and industry you're dealing with will determine what price range you're looking at.

Hopefully this doesn't sound too overwhelming. This advertising system is really a beautiful thing for businesses. It allows you to thoroughly test your

advertising copy, landing page design, and advertising concepts – because 30 years ago advertising was no different than throwing darts at a board.

How to Get Started

Before getting started, here's a look at some demographic data to give you insight into what people are searching for on the Yahoo! Bing network.



Now the Yahoo! Bing Network make it pretty easy for you to get going because they want your money. However, we have provided some steps to help you get the most out of your advertising dollars:

STEP 1 – SIGNING UP

To sign up for the Yahoo! Bing Network, go to this [link](#). You're going to need to have a credit card on hand. You might want to do a quick Google search for some "Bing Advertising" or "Yahoo Advertising" starter credit first. Sometimes your web hosting company will have provided you with a discount code or coupon that you might still have access to.

STEP 2 – CHOOSING KEYWORDS

The first thing you're most likely going to do is come up with a list of hundreds of keywords that you want to bid on. We don't suggest doing this for your first time out. Instead, pick about 5 keywords that reflect the most popular products you sell, and also pick 5 keywords for more obscure items.

For example, let's say you sell iPhone cases. You might sort your list like so:

POPULAR KEYWORDS AND PHRASES:

- 1 Pink Hello Kitty iPhone Case
- 2 Pink iPhone Case
- 3 Strong iPhone Case
- 4 Unbreakable iPhone Case
- 5 Scratch-Proof iPhone Case

OBSCURE KEYWORDS AND PHRASES:

- 1 Otter Box iPhone Case
- 2 Otter Box
- 3 Banana iPhone Case
- 4 Mr. Potato Head iPhone Case
- 5 iFoam Case

The reasons we think it's a good idea to make these two types of groups are:

- It will keep your introductory campaign manageable. Too many keywords the first time out will most likely cause you to throw in the towel early. Costs can run up and meager returns will probably be the result.
- You can see what works for you better: A) highly competitive keywords that yield lots of clicks (which are more expensive, but produce more sales). Or B) Less volume, but highly specific clicks that might produce better ROI.
- Testing and analyzing different advertisements later on is much easier when you are only dealing with ten keywords.

STEP 3 – CREATING YOUR ADS

A common mistake is to make one generic ad to serve all your keywords. Instead make specific ads for each keyword you are going to bid on. In general, the more specific your ad is to the searcher's intention, the higher the click-through rate will be.

There are some important things to remember when crafting your headline and copy:

- Your headline (the first line of the ad), should include the keyword you're bidding on. This generally converts visitors into customers much better because it matches the searcher's intention.
- For your ad copy you might want to consider your unique selling proposition or see what the other advertisers are not saying. You might be able to attract clicks because of what they are lacking.

STEP 4 – CHOOSING WHERE YOU WANT TO SEND THEM

Most people the first time out will send their CPC traffic to the home page of their website. As an online merchant, we recommend you send them directly to the product page related to the keyword they searched for.

Let's use the "Pink Hello Kitty iPhone Case" as an example. Instead of sending them to <http://mymobilephonecase.com> you should send them to: <http://mymobilephonecase.com/pink-hello-kitty-iphone-case>. The purpose of doing this is that the less clicks it takes the person to arrive at a purchase point, the higher your website conversion rate will be.

You can specify where you want your CPC visitors to go by pasting the URL of your choice into the "destination URL" field.

STEP 5 – TEST

Testing can be fairly tough for people who are not too analytical and nerdy. If you can figure it out, we highly recommend that you implement conversion tracking (sometimes referred to as goal tracking). Basically, this means every time someone from a Yahoo! Bing advertisement purchases a product from your website, Yahoo! Bing is attributed with that sale. This is how you accurately measure your ROI.

Conversion tracking also allows you to know what keywords make the most sales, which ads drive the most customers, what products people like the most...the list goes on. Conversion tracking completes this knowledge circuit so you can hone your campaigns and can earn more profit.

If you have the ability to paste in HTML code on your “Thank You” page, the page customer go to after they complete a sale, then you can implement conversion tracking.

A Final Important Word of Advice

CPC advertising requires your full attention. Most serious online businesses are running ads 24/7 – 365 days a year (and 366 on leap years). So you need to login to your account at least once a day to monitor the progress of your campaign. If you’re the type of person that “sets it and forgets it”, then you’re going to be in for quite a surprise.

But it’s worth it, CPC advertising will sharpen your business chops and make you that numbers person that you were meant to be. It will force you to be analytical about how your business works and will ignite new ideas for you to test and try out until you get in front of the right person for that first sale and then grow exponentially from there.



CHAPTER 11

Get Search Engine Optimized

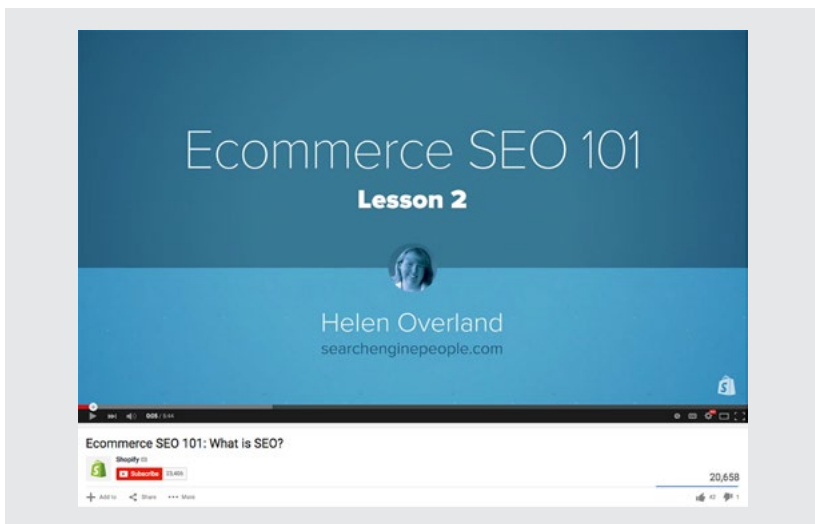
Search engine optimization (SEO) is considered by some as the holy grail of Internet marketing. If you're lucky and your website appears for all sorts of searches in Google (and other search engines), then you are the blessed receiver of free Internet traffic, which hopefully will bless you with a great deal of sales.

People who come to your online store because of a search query generally want to see what you have to offer. You didn't interrupt their day to get in front of them, they sought you out. That's a huge difference in the kind of

traffic you can get, and because of the gravitational nature of search traffic, it generally converts into business better.

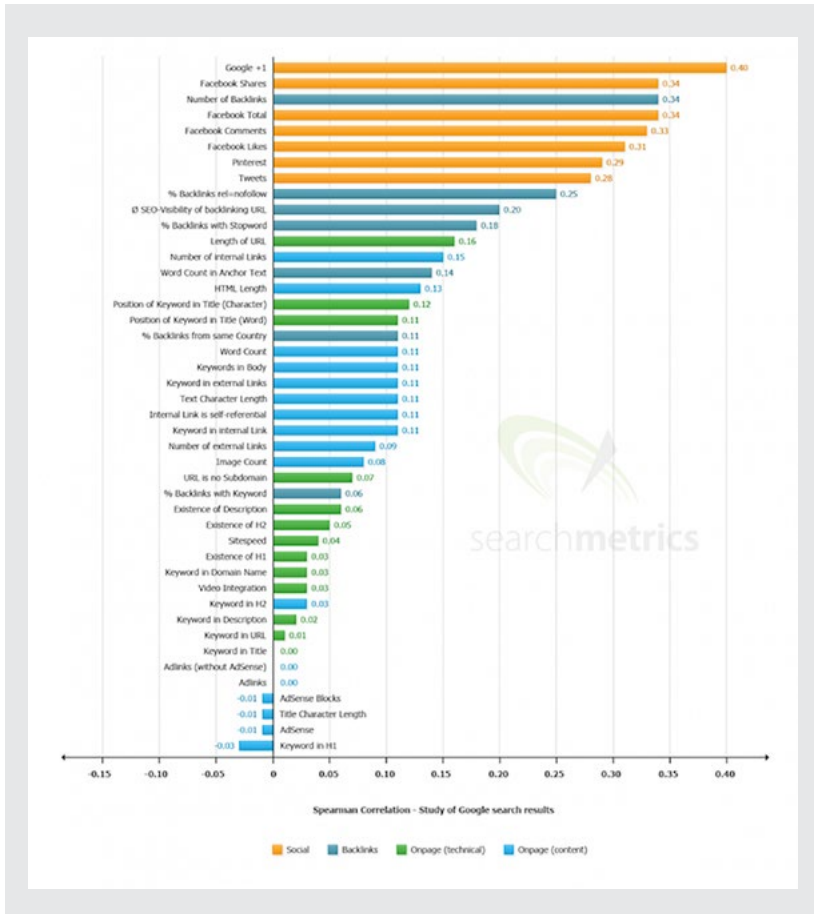
That's why so many businesses obsess over search engine optimization. It provides a really good return on investment and it has a lasting effect. A pay-per-click advertising will only last as long as you can afford to have the ad up, whereas your search results listing will generally stay up as long as your website is operational.

What is SEO?



How Does Google Determine Who Shows Up First?

The ability for your online store to appear high in Google's results depends on many factors. A [study by Search Metrics](#) ranked various factors that contribute to Google's ranking algorithm:



However, as you're probably just starting out in an effort to nab that first sale, here's a general list of ranking factors in some order of importance:

- How many “natural” links point to your website from other sites
- The authority your site has in its niche
- The trustworthiness of your website
- The age of your domain name
- How your website is optimized in terms of site structure and “on-page” elements

Let's go over the ranking factors so you understand how it works.

Natural Links

When another website links to your website, it's a huge event in search engine optimization. It's such a big deal that people will pay for links. But we don't recommend you buy links. Doing so can get you banned from Google and other search engines.

But since it's such a huge driver in terms of ranking, many businesses fiercely fight for links to their website. There are two ways to get links:

- 1 Seek out backlinks opportunities. Find places that let you link back to your site and form relationships with other websites so you can effectively ask for a link back.
- 2 Create a website that naturally gets linked to.

It's much more worth your time to build a website that stands out so much, that people all over the world naturally link to it. By making a unique and a remarkable experience, people will want to tell others about it, and that usually means people will link to it.

Better yet, Google's algorithm is tailored to sniff out this type of natural linking and rewards sites that appear more "organically" popular than sites that seem to have been manipulated with links that seem like false endorsements.

So how do you get these natural links? Here's how:

- **Get online press coverage** – News websites and online journals tend to have some of the most valuable backlinks in the eyes of the search engines. You'll need to hunt down relevant websites and ask how you can submit a press release.
- **Be unique in every way** – Whether it's product differentiation, remarkable customer service, or awesome return policies. Strive to build a better business than your competitors by offering a more unforgettable experience.
- **Create valuable and buzzworthy content** – Whether it's your product descriptions, your buyer's guides, or your blog, good content gets linked to.

- **Keep doing steps 1 through 3 continually** – This activity is not a “set it and forget” task, rather It’s part of your marketing machine that needs to keep humming 365 days a year.

Authority

The easy thing about building authority is if you perform the steps in the last section, you’re most likely building authority. Authority means your website knows what it’s talking about. You are the expert in your niche. There is no better way to do this than to run an unbiased blog, with useful information that isn’t trying to sell all the time.

Here are a few ways to build authority for your website:

- **Explain how to do something** – Any activity related to your product can have “how-to” content created around it. Solve your customer’s problems and you’ll get more customers.
- **Be the expert, not the salesperson** – In order to become an authority, you need to come from a genuine place. You have to stop for a second and communicate to your audience without trying to make a buck. This makes you more credible and trustworthy.
- **Build a strategy to get all the research traffic** – Internet searchers are usually researching something. Think of everything that can be researched in your niche or industry and provide amazing content on it. It’s really not that hard to do, it just takes some time to write it down.

Trust

Building trust is pretty straightforward. We’re going to assume you’re not in business for malicious reasons and you’re not planning on bait and switching people. So, obviously when people arrive on your website, their spam software doesn’t blow up with alarms and warnings. There are also a few other things you can do to build trust:

- **Add testimonials** – You can think outside the box when it comes to testimonials. For example you can embed tweets from customers and get testimonials from well-respected people in your industry.
- **Show security badges** – This can be a really to implement. Often times, your web host will provide you with SSL certificates (which adds the “s” for “secure” in front of http), and other security features that you can display on your site to show your customers that your site is secure.
- **Provide guarantees** – To show people you mean business, consider devoting a lot of real estate on every page of your site to show a guarantee. Usually, this tells the customer that you’re confident in your service to a point that you will go the extra mile for them if anything goes wrong with their order.

The Age Of Your Domain Name

The longer your domain name has been around and up, the more history it has with the various search engines. And because of a longer established history, and assuming you’ve been providing a good user experience for those years, search engines tend to reward websites for good behavior.

Site Structure and On-Page Optimization

This was originally all that was involved when it came to SEO. It had to do with how easy search engines can “crawl” and index your website, and whether you have logically created pages and sections that follow some sort of hierarchy (meaning categories and sub-sections). Here’s the order in which you should conduct on-page optimization:

- Make sure all your title tags have unique content. Do not duplicate title tag content.
- Make sure that you have a way to navigate by text links only. This is incredibly important.
- Make sure you are using H1 heading tags in your source code. The content wrapped by the H1 tags should match your title tag content for the page in question.

- Use original images and describe what the images are about with alt tags.
- Keep iframes to a minimum
- Have your content live on your domain

The above list is all you really need to hone in on, especially when you need to focus your time and resources early on. Also, there are **tons of resources** on this topic if you want to learn more about how to check your on-page optimization yourself.



ANALYTICS

CHAPTER 12

Learn from Web Analytics

Knowing why visitors on your site are purchasing or not purchasing your products could literally mean the difference between staying alive as a business and growing, or dying an early death with no sales to your name. Analytics (for short) will show you what your customers are doing on your site, on which web pages they leave your site, and in some cases how long they have been a customer.

Measuring Website Traffic

The most common “barometer” that analytics provides is that it can measure how much daily, monthly or yearly traffic your website has. Many website owners tend to focus on this macroscopic metric to determine how well their site is performing. This can be a deceptive metric to focus on because it doesn’t necessarily tell you if your site is increasing revenue, average order size, or returning customers – which tend to be more important metrics to watch when running an ecommerce business.

You can easily build more website traffic simply by paying for Google AdWords traffic and send it to your home page, or by posting lots of engaging blog posts. This doesn’t necessarily mean it will translate into sales. The beauty of good website analytics is that it can clue you into what does and does not work in terms of growing your online business.

Basic Analytics and Web Stat Software

Almost all websites will come with a default “website statistic” software package that is already installed. Usually you can access these statistics through your website control panel. The two most common web statistics packages are Webalizer and AWStats.

Both of these web statistic packages are pretty bare bones. They will tell you the number of visits and what the top entry pages are. They also go into some basic geographic demographics and what websites are your top referring sources.

The one major advantage of both Webalizer and AWStats is that it reads your website’s log file - so it counts every visit. Other analytics packages use a JavaScript snippet that you place on your webpages to detect traffic. These programs only detect traffic of visitors that have JavaScript enabled – which is approximately 95% of the internet browsing population.

Google Analytics is the most popular free JavaScript based web analytics solutions. It provides a lot more depth and clarity as to what visitors are doing on your website. It can detect:

- What city your visitors are from.
- Virtually unlimited amount of entry pages and exit pages.

- The average duration visitors spend on your site. How many people “bounce” away without ever looking at another page of your site.
- You can find out where nearly all your website traffic comes from. There is no limit on the number of referring websites, search engines or social media sources.

Landing Pages

A very useful report to look at in Google Analytics is your top landing pages. For ecommerce it's a great way to see your most popular entry pages and also to learn how visitors found those pages. For your top landing pages, ask yourself:

- Was it because the webpage naturally ranks high on Google?
- Are you driving most of your PPC (pay-per-click) traffic to that page?
- Is another website linking to it?

Landing Page	Acquisition			Behavior
	Visits [?] ↓	% New Visits [?]	New Visits [?]	Bounce Rate [?]
	38,214 % of Total: 100.00% (38,214)	82.17% Site Avg: 82.14% (0.04%)	31,400 % of Total: 100.04% (31,388)	64.07% Site Avg: 64.07% (0.00%)
1. /grip-hardware-p-4455.html [?]	5,525	88.89%	4,911	69.52%
2. /blank-skateboard-deck-with-free-grip-p-368.html [?]	741	72.20%	535	53.58%
3. /shuttlebug-backpack-p-4460.html [?]	622	88.91%	553	75.08%
4. /blank-skateboard-deck-with-grip-p-110.html [?]	611	75.45%	461	52.37%
5. /venture-profile-skateboard-truck-p-air-p-182.html [?]	569	88.75%	505	69.24%

To find out this information go to Behavior > Site Content > Landing Pages and be sure to click on the “Secondary Dimension” button and select “Source”.

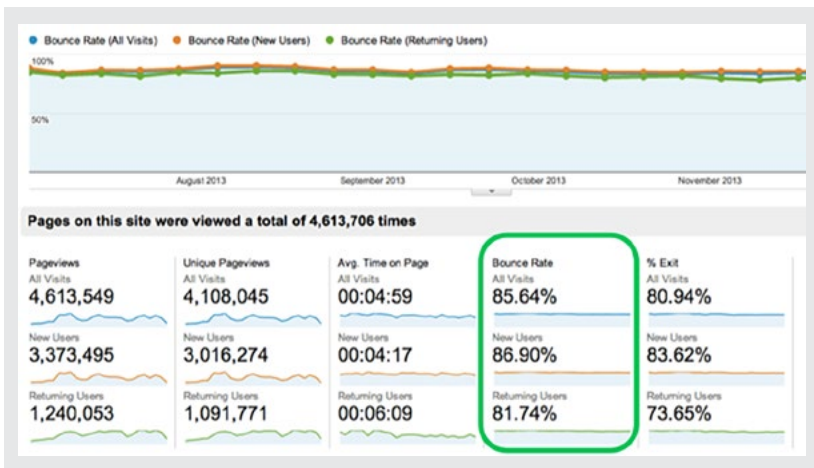
- With this information, you can make decisions like:
- Improving the SEO of pages that create more profit per order.

- Reaching out to other websites to link to certain webpages.
- Change the page copy to “sell” better – assuming they are not performing up to your expectations.

Be sure to also check your top content to simply see what pages on your website get the most views. They may not necessarily be your top landing pages.

Bounce Rate

Bounce rate measures how many visitors come to your site and immediately leave. If you have a high bounce rate, that usually means visitors are not finding what they are looking for or your offer just isn't for them.



For ecommerce this can be a tricky metric to understand. A high bounce rate may mean that you have a lot of shoppers comparing prices and leaving, or perhaps you're not providing enough information for the visitors to purchase. However, if you have an enormous inventory, then chances are you're naturally going to have a high bounce rate since you might be attracting a lot of visits from search engines.

One trick you can try is to employ live chat software to ask visitors if there is anything they need help with during their visit. This may clue you into what is causing visitors to bounce.

Customer Tracking and Advanced Metrics

There are analytics packages available that do more comprehensive customer analytics for ecommerce retailers. For example, KISSmetrics provides special ecommerce tracking that can help you with:

- **Conversion Funnel Analysis** – For instance your checkout process can be seen as a conversion funnel. Customers enter the first checkout page with their shopping cart full and a certain percentage of them leave your site as paying customers. Conversion funnels help you identify which step of the checkout process seems to cause the most friction for your customers. By knowing this, you can fix possible issues that hopefully make checkout easier or less confusing for your customers, thus yielding more sales.
- **Average Order Value** – Being able to quickly see how your average order value varies over time is very helpful for retailers. Ideally, you want to increase your average order value as you continue to grow your business.
- **Lifetime Value Calculations** – As you grow and you become more invested in retaining customers, it's very helpful to calculate the lifetime value of your customers. That is: how much does the average customer spend with your business during the entire lifetime they are a customer? Knowing this value helps you calculate how much you can spend on marketing and advertising.
- **Real Time Analytics** – Having a viewport to see how individual customers navigate and take actions on your site in real time is an extremely helpful tool. This bird's eye view helps you quickly identify any trouble zones visitors may have navigating your site or during checkout.

Spend Time with Your Analytics Software

Analytics gives you a record of what's going on your site 24 hours a day. By spending time in your analytics account you can make great gains in terms of how to fix your website and grow your business. So the more time you devote to digging into your analytics, the more insights you'll come to. In the analytics world there is a saying that says without analytics, "You're driving

blind”. So don’t crash, do your due diligence and keep at it, who knows how quickly those insights will translate into real-time sales to get your business off the ground.



CHAPTER 13

Be Accessible on Mobile Devices

Unless you've been hiding under a rock, the amount of people browsing the web on mobile devices (tablets and smartphones) is **increasing at an incredibly fast rate**. Unfortunately, many ecommerce websites and platforms were built with only the desktop browsing experience in mind, and if you're one of them, you can kiss a fair deal of new sales good-bye.

One way to gain an edge on your competition and be accessible by consumers on whatever device they decide to use is to make sure your current website is mobile friendly or create a separate mobile site. If your

mobile presence is optimized well, you may pick up many more sales for simply being convenient to visitors and returning customers.

First, Check Your Current Ecommerce Site on Mobile Devices



You may be in luck and your current ecommerce store is already optimized for mobile web browsing. In order to be sure of this, make sure you check your site on the following devices:

- Apple iPhone
- Apple iPad
- Various Android Smartphones – Android makes up approximately half of the smartphone market. However, the mix of different phones and operating system versions makes Android a very inconsistent browsing experience - so check thoroughly.
- Finally, try a couple different android tablets

And when we say check your site, we mean really go through every possible path. Do the following:

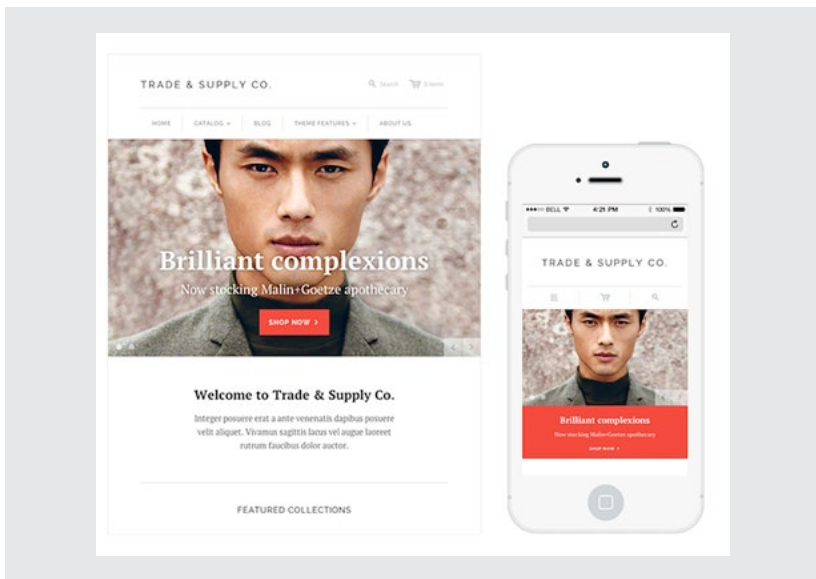
- Conduct a multiple product purchase.
- Conduct a multiple product purchase and test a coupon code.
- Test your contact page. See if it sends out a message and check to see if you get it.

- See how your product images zoom and pop out (if you have pop-out functionality installed).
- And repeat all of these tests on different mobile browsers (Chrome, Safari and any default mobile browser that may come preinstalled on the device you're testing).

How to Make a Mobile Site

If for whatever reason your current ecommerce site doesn't work well with the mobile web, there are a couple routes you can take.

REBUILD YOUR WEBSITE WITH RESPONSIVE DESIGN IN MIND



Responsive design is simply web design that expands and contracts nicely for different devices, whether you view the websites on a desktop computer, smartphone or tablet. A good web developer can usually tweak your website code to make this happen. In some cases your site might be coded in such a way that responsive design isn't really possible.

You're also going to want to take a closer look at how your buttons, forms and other interactive elements work with your mobile users. In most cases if

you optimize these elements for mobile users, it will work fine with desktops users as well.

This would also be a great time to simplify your checkout process to make it's easier for both mobile and desktop users. Generally, making your checkout process painless results in more sales.

REDIRECT YOUR MOBILE VISITORS TO A SUBDOMAIN

If you can't build a "one-size fits all" responsive website, you can build another website structure that resides in a separate subdomain. For example if your website is hi-topheaven.com, you can make a mobile friendly website that resides in m.hi-topheaven.com.

By inserting a simple redirect statement in the <head> of your home page, you can redirect anyone on a mobile device to your mobile websites.

The goal would not be to build a completely new website where you would have to reinsert all your copy and images. Instead you would build a new mobile friendly website structure that can "call" the same images and copy that you keep current on your main website. That way you won't be responsible for managing two different websites every time you need to update your inventory.

Depending on what ecommerce platform you're using, check Google to see what other "etailers" are doing for their mobile solutions. Plenty of other business owners have already gone down this path and have most likely vetted good solutions for your store.

The important thing here being that it's no secret that consumers are increasingly turning to anything but their desktop to browse the web, which means if they stumble upon your site, it better satisfy their need to browse through touch and make a purchase on their tablet or mobile device, otherwise, you'll be missing out on a lot of sales. Something that can't be good when you're trying to make that first crucial sale, so make it a priority.



CHAPTER 14

Get Product Reviews

This is the online guerrilla marketing method of PR. There is a unique benefit of getting product reviews from other websites that helps increase brand credibility and trustworthiness in addition to word-of-mouth marketing.

Here's how to start.

Start by Creating a List

You're going to want to spend a lot of time on Google searching for all the sites that would be a good fit for reviewing your product. Chances are your initial searches will lead you into more searches, so prepare to devote a good chunk of your day to this.

Perform Google searches like (but, replace “widget” with your product):

- widget blog
- widget reviews
- submit my product for review
- widget intitle: “product review”

replace the word “widget” with a word that describes your product

As you are performing these searches, list the URLs of all the websites you come across that might give you a review. Depending on how you like to work, you may want to contact them as you come across them, or simply list all the ones you can find first. We think it's a good habit to go ahead and contact them as soon as possible so you can quickly gauge a return on your efforts.

One important thing that can happen as a result of doing this work is that you will make relationships with bloggers in your industry. These relationships can be very important and beneficial for years to come. When you approach a blogger be sure to be very genuine and treat the conversation as you would a real-life business or networking relationship.

For starters, don't send out long canned emails. Start your first email out short and conversational. For example:

Hi I'm Sean Work and I invented an espresso machine that can grind and brews fresh espresso drinks in your car so you can have uber-fresh lattes on the way to work. I would like to send you my mini machine so you can try it out.

Sometimes we even like to take an even simpler approach. We just start with a very simple subject line in our email message:

RE: Question

And then we go on to write a very simple email:

I wanted to ask about having a really cool product reviewed. Just curious about the steps involved. Thanks!

- Sean

People who run busy websites love short emails from people. Long emails equate to more work. Breaking up the conversation into bite size chunks goes a long way.

A List of Review Sites

Below is a list of sites that review products. By no means is it comprehensive. Depending on what you are selling, some of these sites might be in the wrong niche. The point here is really to show you the type of sites to look for, just so you get a feel for it.

- makeuseof.com
- newmommymedia.com
- mylittlereviewcorner.wordpress.com
- [2wired2tired](http://2wired2tired.com)
- mommypr.com
- thanksmailcarrier.com
- thereviewbroads.com
- daddoes.com

If you are selling electronics or software, then consider submitting your product to CNET.com.

We suggest trying hard to find blogs that are related to what you are selling that normally don't do reviews. There are a few reasons why:

- 1 They probably won't charge you to review your product.
- 2 Review sites can have a bad rap with Google. Anytime you pay for a review and a link is given – there's a chance Google will penalize you.
- 3 A lot of review sites usually don't focus on a niche which means there really isn't a dedicated audience learning about your product.

We really do wish we could give you an awesome list of sites where you could just plug away at asking for reviews. But the point is that this just takes digging. Every product is different and every online world surrounding a

product type is vastly different. To see what we mean, have a look at the example below where a maternal clothing brand is being reviewed on mamablog.com.


ANNEE MATTHEW MATERNITY GIVEAWAY

November 18, 2011 by Mama B 59 Comments

When I was still nursing Lucas, I was always on the look out for cute, functional nursing clothes. Apparently, *cute*, is a lot to ask for because all I managed to find was frumpy. That actually goes for a lot of maternity clothing, the cute stuff is far and few between. I was recently introduced to Annee Matthew, a [trendy maternity and nursing clothing shop](#). Maternity clothes trendy? Cute? AND functional? Check, check, and check at Annee Matthew!

Keep scrolling down for a BIG giveaway!

Here are a few pieces that I absolutely love. I love that they are transition pieces, for use before, during, and after pregnancy, so you really get the most bang for your buck.



How Reviews Can Help With SEO

One of the major factors that determine how high your website ranks on search engines like Google is the number of other websites that link back to your website. Getting bloggers or other websites to review your products is a great way to “build links” back to your website. And of course the benefit of this is that it will increase the amount of free traffic your website receives from search engines.

There are a few tips you should be aware of when you go on your product review quest to make sure you get the most bang from both a SEO and PR perspective. Chances are you will be able to discuss how you want your links to look in the review. If you get the opportunity to specify your links and link text then keep these tips in mind:

- Choose your link text wisely – It’s normal for people to link back to your website with link text that is simply your domain name (ex: <http://mywebsite.com>). You should ask them to occasionally change the link text to the keywords that you want to rank for on the search engines. For example if you want to rank for “cheap widget” then your link text should be “cheap widget”.
- For more targeted marketing, link to your product pages – An often overlooked practice is not linking to specific product pages. For example you might sell a “green widget” and have a specific webpage for “green widget” located at <http://mywebsite.com/green-widget>. Having reviewers link to these specific product pages will help these pages rank higher for specific searches.

So give this exercise a bit of elbow grease and see where it gets you. The best way to manage this is to spend a good 15 minutes a day contacting websites and blogs on your list. You’ll get through it in no time.

Reach Out to Video Bloggers

Video blogging is at an all-time high right now. As you’re conducting your searches, you’ll probably come across some video reviews.

Take note at who are the most popular video reviewers out there for your product type. Simply look at the view count on their videos to gauge how influential they are.



Usually video bloggers and reviewers make it pretty easy to find out how to contact them. Look for links to their website or just skip to the end of their video to find out how to reach them.

At some point in your dialogue with the video blogger or reviewer, ask if they will link to your product page in their video description. They may say no, but it's worth a shot.

Once the News Gets Spread

One thing you'll want to keep in mind is to take note that when a review gets published that you've replenished your stock or have a plan in mind to fulfill the orders coming from all that extra traffic. Always be ready to capitalize on publicity and satisfy customer demand. All you need is that one product review and you're well on your way to your first sale and beyond.



CHAPTER 15

Write a Press Release

There is a lot of debate whether or not press releases are worthwhile for new and upcoming ecommerce merchants anymore. We have heard good arguments on both sides, and to be perfectly honest, for most online store owners it's one of those tactics that could be a hit or miss, but if it hits, it could result in a major press launch for your brand. For example, **BeardBrand** launched their store and never looked back literally the day an article about beard grooming for men mentioned them and was published in the New York Times.

Companies like Apple, Microsoft, and Coca-Cola can send a news release and two seconds after it hits the wire, there are headlines in every paper and on every TV station in the world. Sadly, this isn't the case for you and your online store. You can spend \$500 to send a press release to tens of thousands of news outlets and be ignored by every single one of them. Crickets. But even if a press release doesn't generate coverage, there are benefits, including backlinks and showing up in Google when someone researches your company. There is also the possibility of getting coverage and sales, so for some merchants it's worth a shot. Here's what you need to know.

Be Newsworthy

This is a little obvious, but you need something newsworthy to issue a press release, otherwise who cares? Have a look at Canadian ecommerce company [Well.ca](#) and their impressive list of awards for which they've garnered significant media attention:



The image shows a screenshot of the Well.ca website. The header features the Well.ca logo (a pink flower icon) and the text 'Well.ca'. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'Investors', 'Press', and 'Jobs'. The 'Press' link is highlighted. The main content area is titled 'Awards' and lists several awards:

- [Retail Council of Canada Honours Excellence at STORE Conference>](#)
- [Country's Best Online Retailers Win Honours in Canada Post E-commerce Innovation Awards](#)
- [27 Finalists Announced in the 2013 Canada Post 'E-commerce Innovation Awards'](#)
- [Canada Post Reveals 2013 E-commerce Innovation Award Finalists](#)
- [Well.ca Wins Best Online Retailer in eCommerce Innovation Awards](#)
- [The Deloitte Technology Fast 50™ Companies-to-Watch](#)
- [KPMG & Backbone Magazine Pick 20 Web 2.0 Award](#)
- [IDC Ten Canadian Healthcare Solutions to Watch](#)

To help you get your creative juices flowing, here are some potential press-worthy topics you can consider:

- Ecommerce store launch
- New product or service
- Contest, competition, survey or poll
- Changes to shipping and delivery policies
- Free samples
- Sponsorship of a charity
- Major sales
- Receiving an award
- Customer success stories

Elements of a Good Press Release

- **Heading:** This needs to be strong. People are interested in how a business expands, who it sells to, and how much money it makes. Craft your headline with a strong title that grabs a reader's attention right away.
- **Sub-heading:** A single sentence summarizes the entire content of the press release. It can be just as important as the heading because it gives readers a taste of the content to follow.
- **Opening paragraph:** The opening paragraph has to be strong and include pertinent information, namely what the press release is about, who it affects, and why they should read or act upon it. If you talk of an event or launch, you also need to mention when it will take place.
- **Middle paragraph (/s):** These add weight to the article and can include testimonials, statistics, research details, and case study excerpts.
- **Conclusion:** This is a summary of the article and must include either a call to action or details of where more information on the subject matter could be found.
- **Boilerplate:** Include a brief company profile and contact information.

It's important to include your company logo or a relevant image with every press release. The better the image, the more real estate it might get in print or online. Also, traditional press releases always conclude with # symbols underneath the last line to signify the end of the release.

Sample Press Release

<INSERT LOGO>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Opportunity Knocks on Laser Shooting Robot's Door

Luxury hand-made laser shooting robot specialists expand their business to Europe.

San Francisco, California – January, 2012

Lasershootingrobots.com, the leading manufacturer of luxury hand-made laser shooting robots in North America today announced it would be expanding to Europe. The company, which prides itself on crafting unique one-of-a-kind laser shooting robots for residential and commercial projects, will tie up with Chuck Norris Metal Workers (CNMW) to manufacture and ship its products to Europe.

“We are thrilled to partner with CNMW and showcase our products in the leading laser and robot regions of the world”, says owner and CEO of Laser Shooting Robots, Brad Lambert. “Their passion and dedication to making quality robots is already well known. It’s an honor to be able to design alongside their team.”

Laser Shooting Robots has been producing hand-crafted robots for North American clientele since 2003. The company revealed that CNMW has already integrated the company’s software and sales tools as of October of this year, and while the robots will be manufactured locally, the designs will continue to be developed in San Francisco.

Yves Rochard, president of CNMW had this to say, “We are delighted with our partnership with Laser Shooting Robots and look forward to introducing their product to the European market. There is a synergy between our two brands that we feel will result in a profitable relationship for both of us. We have already integrated their sales tools into our website and will begin manufacturing, and shipping Laser Shooting Robots as of February 2012.”

To learn more about the merger, expansion plans, or to book an interview, contact Jackie Mason at 1.234.5678 or email, jackiem@lasershootingrobots.com, or visit the website at www.lasershootingrobots.com.

About Laser Shooting Robots

1 or 2 paragraphs about the company

About Chuck Norris Metal Workers

1 or 2 paragraphs about the company

#

How To Submit A Press Release

Many businesses choose to hire a local public relations firm or a PR freelancer. They will know the ins-and-outs of your local press outlets as well as the online ones. Here is how you can find these professionals:

- **Your business networking groups** – If you have been attending local business networking groups, chances are some of the members work in the local PR scene. If not, ask some of your group members if they know of any PR agents.
- **Craigslist** – Post a “Gig” in the Craigslist Gig section and title your post “Looking for a Local PR Professional”. Chances are you will receive a dozen replies by the end of the day.
- **Google search** – Obviously if you do a local Google search by typing your city and “PR” or “Press Release” you will find some professionals ranking on the first page.

If you want to get started without professional help, there are plenty of services that offer easy and inexpensive distribution. PRweb.com is a popular option, and they have many options for releasing online press releases.

From Press Release To Orbit

If you're starting an online retail business that is truly remarkable, a good press release can be all the spark you need to blast your business into outer space, where you won't find martians, but could potentially get that first sale (and many more) you're thirsting for. This is why we keep reiterating that you should focus on being different, newsworthy and exceptional from your competition, that is the key "secret sauce" in all of these strategies and tactics.



CHAPTER 16

Pull a PR Stunt

As an online retailer you have two choices to go about your day-to-day operation:

- You can sell stuff.
- You can build a fun and unforgettable brand with cult followers - and sell a lot more merchandise.

Which would you rather do?

PR stunts are the ancient version of the viral video. They are loads of fun and help bring tons of attention to your brand if executed well. And best of all, they drive tons of links from authority news sources – which is great for SEO.

Now you may not have the nerve to do a PR stunt, but if you think you do, then read on.

The Buttons of Buzz

In his book **Buzz Marketing**, author Mark Hughes lists the six buttons of buzz as:

- The Taboo
- Unusual
- Outrageous
- Hilarious
- Remarkable
- Secrets

When pushed, these buttons get people talking about your brand. You don't have to push all the buttons at once for a PR stunt to work. You just have to nail one of them.

There is no better way to explain these buttons than to go over some examples:

CHANGE THE NAME OF A CITY



Half.com was able to change the name of Halfway, Oregon to Half.com for one year. This publicity stunt got the startup business publicity from the New York Times and even the attention of Katie Couric. Changing the name

of a city to your brand name would be an example of a remarkable stunt. Remarkable in the sense that people will remark about it to their peers, and it will be remarkably expensive.

VOMIT AND SNOT FLAVORED JELLY BEANS



A classic PR stunt done by Jelly Belly was to create **outrageous flavored jelly beans** during a certain time of the year. Not only did people actually eat them but even more people told everyone around them about these weird jelly bean flavors.

GET NAKED



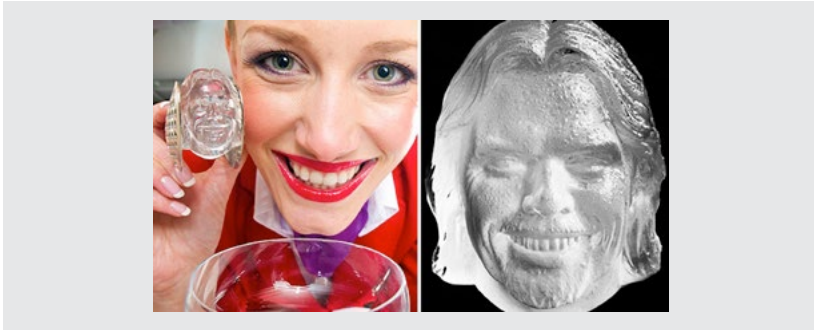
Italian entrepreneur, Enrico Frare put a full page ad in a Milan newspaper where **he posed nearly nude**. His message was that every day in Italy an entrepreneur almost loses his shirt. This was his economic commentary pertaining to the difficulty of businesses getting credit from Italian banks during current times. Posing nude is obviously taboo, and when combined with an underlying message, it will always attract attention and more importantly, press coverage.

INVITATION ONLY



Some publicity stunts can run a couple of years and still be highly effective. Facebook and Gmail started off by invite only. In each case, by creating scarcity and a great product – they were able to make outsiders want in. Making secret clubs can be a genius way to create unrivaled amounts of demand. Nike also does this with their SB (Skateboarding) shoes by creating very limited releases that sell for hundreds of dollars a pair.

WHY HAVE BORING ICE CUBES?

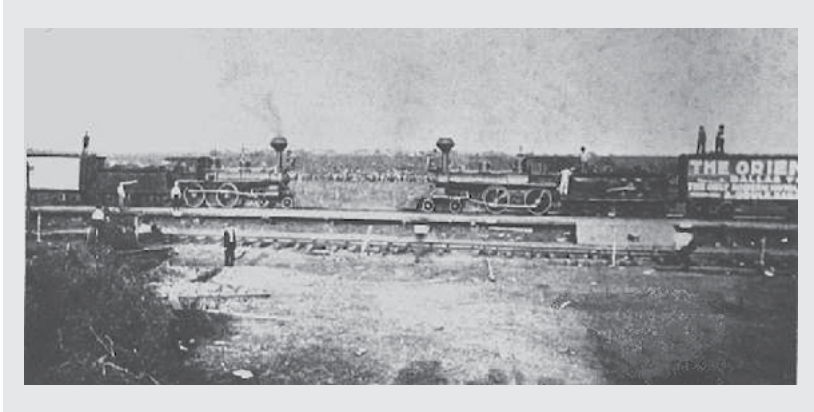


And when it comes to hilarious PR stunts, no brand does it better than Virgin. For years the team at Virgin has been pulling stunts like putting Richard Branson looking ice cubes in airline beverages. It's worth spending an evening reading over everything Virgin has come up with – it's a course in itself!

Always Perform a Sanity Check First

If you think you have the world's greatest publicity stunt idea, be sure to run it by some of your trusted friends first. Some publicity stunts can go terribly wrong and end your business instead of boosting it.

Back in 1896, the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway wanted to attract some attention by having two steam trains go head on with each other on the same track. From a publicity point of view it worked like magic – more than 40,000 people showed up to watch the collision. Unfortunately, when the trains collided the boilers exploded sending debris at the crowd - killing three people.



But Aren't PR Stunts Pricey?

Sure, the examples above are from relatively large brands with big marketing budgets. But that doesn't mean you can't come up with some remarkable publicity on a low budget. Remember the good old New York City subway flash mob (Frozen Grand Central)? That just took a couple hundred willing participants and a video camera.

Finally - Keep Going

If you find that your brand has the knack for publicity stunts, well then keep doing them. You'll find that when you keep the momentum of good PR up, the rewards are just too good to pass up. Not only will you garner plenty of attention and public curiosity, but hopefully you'll get people who are interested in purchasing your products to pay attention.



CHAPTER 17

Sell a Unique Product

Standing out from the crowd is one of the best ways to move merchandise. Especially if you're in a crowded space where your competitors sell similar, if not the exact same products.

Sell Purple Cows

Seth Godin, a famous contemporary marketer, wrote a book called **Purple Cow**. The basic premise of the book is that you do something so unique and different that people will naturally have to tell others about it.

Let's say you sell something that gets a lot of attention and people start purchasing it. For instance, we can go back to our example of the neon yellow tennis ball textured sneakers.



As people start buying these shoes – their peers will naturally ask:

“Where did you get those?”

And of course, they will refer them to your online store. It will be a word of mouth referral from a third party that is not affiliated with your business – the best form of marketing there is.

Some Purple Cow Product Examples

If you've ever spent time lounging around a beach, you know that the perfect complement for relaxation is a nice cold beverage. A company called Reef, makes this genius **sandals with a bottle opener** in the sole.



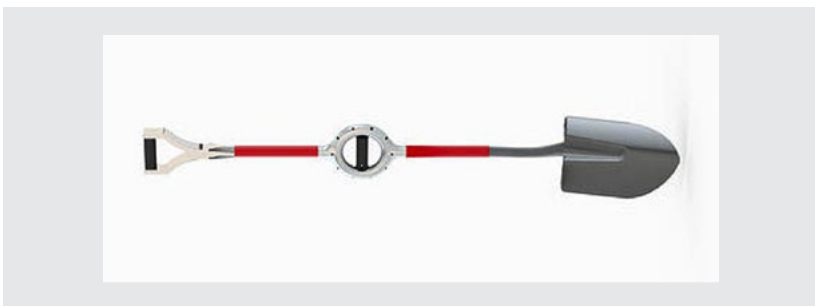
When these sandals came out, every college frat boy in North America mentioned these flip-flops at the first party of the year.

Think Geek is an online retailer that specializes in Purple Cow merchandise. Their entire brand is dedicated to the niche market of “Geekdom” – so you might not “get it” when you see some of their products. But that’s actually perfect because they are only trying to target a very specific group of people. For instance, you might not understand why you would want a “Useless Box Kit” – a box that when you turn it on, it closes and it turns itself off.



A ridiculous product like this happens to be one of their best sellers. Go figure. Naturally the words “Think Geek” will get muttered when anyone sees this box and that good old word of mouth magic will happen once again.

Now Purple Cow products don’t have to be gimmicky either. This shovel by **Bosse Tools** is a great example of a simple tool that has been reinvented and gets talked about a lot.



They re-created the shovel, with a rotating handle in the middle to make back breaking work much more ergonomic and easier.

What If You Don't Make Your Own Products?

If you don't make your own products –that's okay. You'll just have to source specialized items for resale. And there is a smart way to do this. Instead of buying specialized inventory outright and hope it sells, simply place these products on your site and allow visitors to pre-order or request more information about them. This will let you gauge how much demand there is for these products.

You can also start creating your own line of products. You might have some really good ideas for new products that are innovative and remarkable. Introducing new products like these can not only increase your profit margins but it will give your brand more social currency. With that you always want to be giving your fans and customers something to talk about, breaking out of the clutter, especially when you're first starting out is most of the battle. So if you can do that, that first sale won't be too big of a problem.



CHAPTER 18

Interview an Industry Influencer

Bloggng is a secret weapon for any online business because it brings in longtail search engine traffic for years to come. The funny thing is a lot of business owners never get around to this low hanging fruit because it takes a few hours of focus to write a post.

A great way to produce easy and very exceptional blog content is to interview someone important and well known in your industry. For those of you who are running an outdoorsy or sporting goods related online shop – this can be a gold mine.

Most vendors sponsor professionals and amateurs to help endorse their product. Interviewing these people is a win-win, because it gives the interviewee more exposure and you get to give the inside scoop to your audience. Imagine selling sneakers online and getting the opportunity to interview the reigning king LeBron James himself.



Questions You Can Ask:

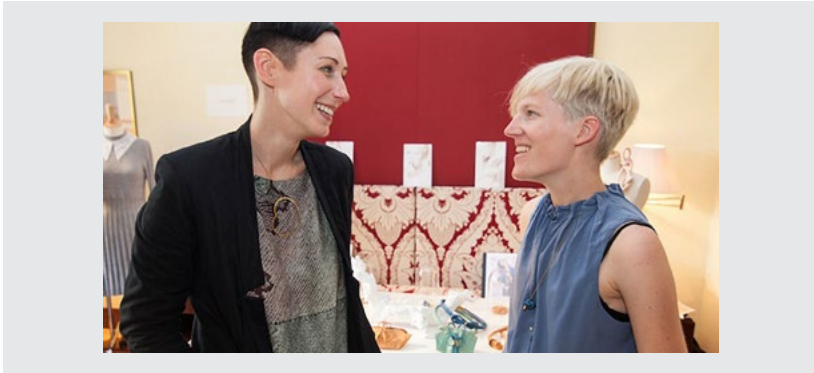
The hard part of doing an interview post is coming up with good questions. Here are a few questions of interview questions segments by industry:

SPORTING GOODS

Obviously you might have a hard time getting the attention of a NBA basketball star, but reaching out to up-and-comers like promising high school athletes and amateur sports stars can do wonders for your blog. Especially if any of them ever make it to the pros.

- What has been the biggest challenge thus far in your career?
- Where do you see the future of this industry / sport / hobby heading?
- What advice do you have for young people who hope to make a living in this sport?

COSMETICS AND FASHION



Right now there are a lot of super popular cosmetic and fashion bloggers on YouTube. Simply type in “cosmetic tutorial” or “fashion tutorial” and you’ll immediately see them. These are great people to interview because many of them have become quite popular over the past year.

- What styles do you see coming back in style?
- What are some timeless articles / accessories / pieces that will always work?
- What’s the future of this industry / world?

ELECTRONICS, GADGETRY AND TECHNOLOGY

If you operate an online store in this genre, it may seem tough to find people to interview – but it’s not! Again, there might be a few YouTube personalities that your niche adores. Additionally, you may want to reach out to vendors and conduct interviews with some of the top designers.

- What are some of the coolest inventions you’ve come across?
- What are some exciting technologies for the future that you’ve had a glimpse of?
- Ask about cool modifications, tips and techniques.

The trick with coming up with interview questions is to just start writing. Once you get a few questions down, you’ll naturally think of more questions. Finally, you can always copy questions from other interviews that have been done in your industry. Chances are they will work for the people who you plan on interviewing.

Step It Up with Video

If you have the resources, take interviewing to the next level by doing video interviews. Not only will they be potentially more viral, you can always transcribe the audio into text and create a blog post that will help with your website SEO. Obviously, you would want to embed the video at the top of the blog post so people can still watch the interview.

Finally, remember to post your videos to YouTube. YouTube is another search engine and you can link to your website from the video for extra SEO power.



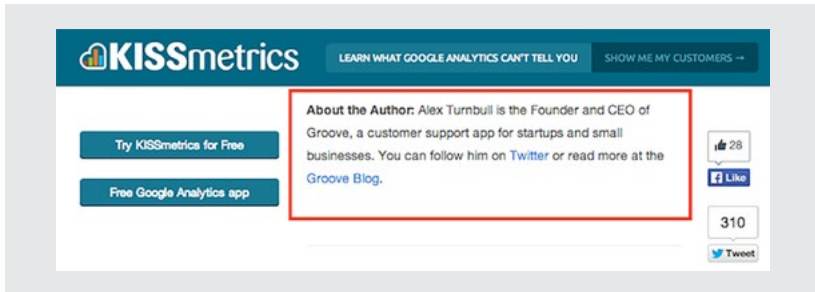
CHAPTER 19

Write a Guest Post

One of the easiest ways to get some internet buzz is to write guest blog posts for various websites that are relevant to your niche. The beauty of guest blogging is that most blogs gladly accept guest posts because it helps them keep their content fresh.

The only condition is that you write them a really good post without flat out advertising your own business. We use guest bloggers at **KISSmetrics** and **Shopify** to regularly publish content that's fresh, relevant, and exciting for our readers.

Here's an example from KISSmetrics:



Here's an example from Shopify:



The Benefits of Guest Blogging

When you write a guest post, you're able to leave a short bio at the end of your post that mentions who you are and what you do. This is the appropriate place to plug your business. So here's the first important tip, If you write an amazing and incredibly engaging post, most readers will want to know about you and what you do.

With that said, guest blogging is only beneficial to those who put 110% effort into their article. If you're just going to gloss over a topic and not provide any real value to the readers, then you'll be wasting your time.

Now, the most obvious benefit is that you'll get to explain to new prospects what it is that you do in your bio. The bigger the blog, the more prospects will get to learn about your business.

There is also a secondary benefit that really helps with driving online traffic and that is the backlink you get to leave in your signature. As we have discussed in previous chapters, search engines use the number of links that point to your website as an indication of how popular your website is and also how relevant it is for certain keywords. In general, the more backlinks you have pointing to your website, the higher you can rank for certain keywords.

Here's an example of a signature:

John Smith is the owner and operator of hi-topheaven.com – rare & vintage hi-tops. He is a basketball fan, freak and fanatic and happens to know EVERYTHING about hi-tops.

What Kind of Blogs Should I Approach?

The first thing to do is to create a document or a spreadsheet to keep track of all the blogs that you want to target. We recommend something like this:

Blog	Contact	Topic	Status
ballerblog.com	mike@ballerblog.com	The History of Air Jordans	First Draft Sent
fullcourtpress.com	john@fullcourtpress.com	--	Sent intro email
sneakerbigheadz.com	contact form	--	Sent intro email

Do a Google search of blogs that are related to your niche or industry. As you come across these blogs, list them in your spreadsheet or document.

One very important thing to keep an eye on is how often the blog posts guest written articles, and when the last post was published. If the blog hasn't been updated with new content within the past couple of months, then that's a good indication that the blog isn't very popular. A blog that is updated very

frequently usually means the blog is working for their business and thus a valuable asset – these are the type of blogs you want your content on.

You also want to primarily guest post on blogs related to your niche. The reason being that not only will the audience be more targeted, but it will help search engines look for linking relationships based on relevant niche groupings. So if your website fits nicely into the same niche as the blog you're posting on, the search engines will generally boost the links to your site with more “umph”.

Some search engine professionals will tell you to look at the “page rank” of a blog. That's not necessary. If you can gauge that the blog is frequently updated, and there are a lot of comments – then you know you have found a healthy online community that you should probably get in front of.

Finally, you may want to sign up for an account on myblogguest.com. This website will match you up with blogs that are looking for guest posts.

How to Write a Good Guest Blog Post

There are a few tricks to writing a good guest blog post that will resonate with readers. Let's go over some of them now.

Write Conversationally – a lot of people will jump into “school” mode when they attempt to write their first guest posts. And the problem with this is it creates the “term paper effect”. Basically your article is going to read like an essay and it will just be boring.

When you switch to a writing style that “talks” to the reader, then you can create more engagement with your words. Use words like “you” and “your”, and pretend that you are talking in front of an engaged group of real people. Your post will come off much more interesting.

Use Visual Aids – All text and no pictures makes you a boring guest author. Anytime you can use an image or a video to substantiate what you are talking about, you'll add a ton of value to your article.

- **Diagrams** – Communicating visually is by all means a great way to increase the value of your article. Anytime you can use a diagram to

make explaining what you're talking about easier to digest – then do it!

- **Video** – Just about any video you find on the internet is able to be embedded into a blog post. You don't necessarily need to know how to embed a video into a blog post, but simply copy the link to the video in your article and let the blog editor know that you want them to embed that video.
- **Don't use stock photography unless you have a reason to** – It's very easy to start plastering your article with images of stock photography. Pictures of corporate people smiling and giving hi-fives, we've all seen it and it just looks cheesy. Occasionally, there is a good reason to use a stock image, but unless you're using the stock image to help explain something – you're better off leaving them out.

Give Actionable Information – The greatest sin you can make when writing a guest post is to simply gloss over a topic. You know, dancing around the details and just giving brief overviews. Your number one priority when creating a guest post is to give the readers as much value as possible. **That's why it's always easiest to write “how-to” and “recipe” posts** – they always provide value and you don't have to worry if it will work.

Details – The devil's in the details. Details are a great way to build your credibility with the reader. The more detailed information you can provide, the more they will appreciate your effort.

Leave an Impression, Don't Forget Your Signature

After you burn yourself out writing your first guest post, you'll probably forget to focus on your signature. It's a common mistake. But this is a huge disservice to your business. Follow these tips to get the most out of guest blogging:

- **Change your links and keywords once in a while** – A lot of guest bloggers will use the same signature over and over again. It's a good idea to link to different parts of your website using keywords that best

match what those webpages are about. This will help build the SEO up for different parts of your website.

- **Create a Google Authorship Profile** – You will want to get a Google Plus account and learn how to create a Google Authorship link for your signature. This will insert a picture of you in the Google search results when web surfers stumble upon your guest post. Experts have found that results with Google Authorship images next to them get clicked on more often.
- **Give your readers a discount** – You can leave a coupon code in your signature for a special deal. This will help you test the effectiveness of your guest blogging and hopefully drive some extra sales.

Some Final Words on Guest Blogging

Guest blogging is hard at first, but as soon as you get into the groove of it – you'll find that it's an excellent form of online marketing. It builds powerful relationships, boosts your website SEO and builds authority for your brand. Don't overlook this strategy because it has helped many online businesses rise in popularity very fast resulting in a surge in sales that any business would welcome.

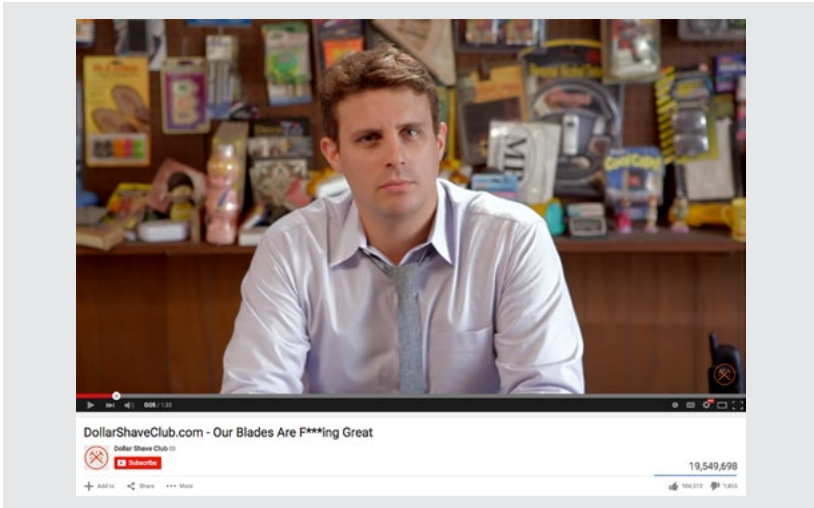


CHAPTER 20

Create a Viral Video

Creating a viral video that works is no easy task. However, they are fun and worth doing if you have the budget or skill-set. Nothing will get you more creatively in touch with your brand – and nothing will unveil the true voice of your brand more than a great viral video. That’s why you should try them. Anytime you spend energy unlocking the boring out of your brand, it’s always well worth it.

Watch this video that Dollar Shave Club created and you’ll instantly understand how this video has shaped the culture, values and voice of this company:



How to Be Viral

There are a few ways to make a video viral – and it doesn't always mean you have to be funny. Of course, humor works really well. Below are five characteristics that viral videos can fall under:

- 1 Surprising (unexpected)
- 2 Interesting
- 3 Intense
- 4 Positive
- 5 Actionable (practically useful)

Let's go over each one of these characteristics with real videos that worked.

Blendtec is a company that makes very robust blenders. For their viral videos they blend unusual items like mobile and tablet devices. Their first video now has millions of views on YouTube. The beauty of these videos is that promoting the product in a surprising and unexpected way works for them. However, sometimes being too promotionally direct about your product will make your viral effort backfire.



National Geographic did a very simple video discussing the world's population, using interesting comparisons to show how big that number “7 billion” really is. This video has clocked over 2 million views.

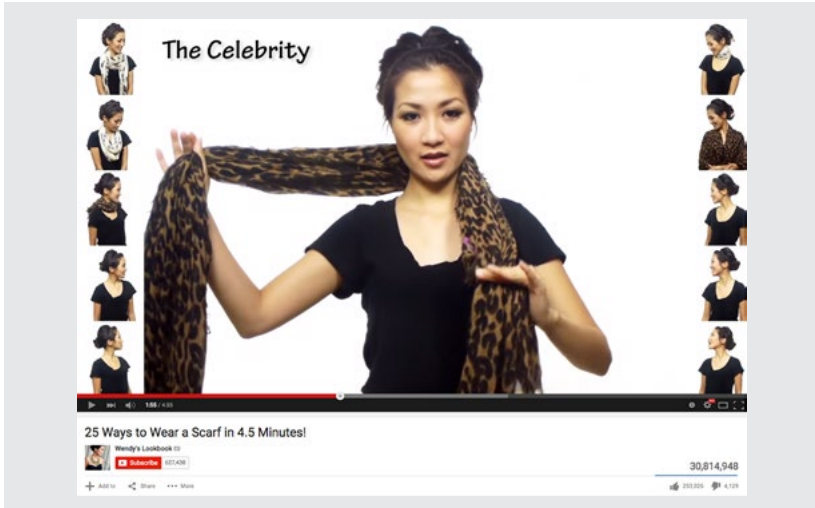


GoPro is a company that has used their product to produce very intense videos. Each video they put out gets their customers and prospects excited. From being right in the middle of a wave barrel, to seeing what it's like in

the first person to do backflips on a snowboard - GoPro videos keep people glued for hours. Most of their videos have each gotten several millions of views.



Finally, wendylookbook.com created a very actionable video called “25 Ways to Wear a Scarf in 4.5 Minutes!” If you’re a fashion ecommerce merchants, you need to watch and learn from this masterpiece - and note it doesn’t have super high production value.



What it Takes to Go Viral

Just having a funny video or all the right components in your video to make it go viral, doesn't mean anything will happen. YouTube's Trends manager, Kevin Allocca, says it takes two groups of people to make a video go viral:

- 1 **Tastemakers** – People of influence who take new, interesting or funny things and share them with a larger audience. The most common example of this is when a well-known celebrity Tweets or shares a link to a viral video. For example when high school senior Jake Davidson created a video attempting to woo Kate Upton and ask her to the prom, **it blew up all over the media** when she replied directly to him on Twitter.



- 2 Participators** – These are people who incorporate or do something new with your video, like make a parody of it. For example, everyone loved the hit and catchy song “Somebody that I Used to Know” by Gotye, but the YouTube community took it to a whole other level with a steady stream of parodies.



These groups of people are the catalyst that makes videos spread like wildfire. You should find tactful ways to get your content in front of the right influencers in your industry, so that your video has the fuel to take off.

Don't Forget to Have a Clear Value Proposition

Now, if you're lucky you may come up with the funniest video of all time, but if you don't incorporate a clear message of what your value proposition is, then it may be all for nothing. So basically, viewers of your video need to know the single most important benefit of what you have to offer.

Don't just slap your logo and website address on your video and call it a day. Think through your video and see if you have clearly expressed your value proposition. Then, survey people to see if they can determine what your value proposition is. Try to get around 40 responses.

Be Prepared for Ideas to Come at Any Time

Often times, your idea for a great viral video will come when you least expect it. The best way to handle these disruptive situations is to simply grab your mobile phone and jot down the idea in your note taking application.

Be sure to thoroughly examine your vision and write down every detail that you see in your mind. Whatever you do – don't gloss over the idea by writing down a few incomprehensible notes. It's the small nuances of your vision that might really put the polishing touches on your video.

Then email it to yourself for review later. Try to come back to it a few hours later when you have time to devote to the idea. Setting aside time to review your idea is worth it. If the video does well, you'll be glad you invested those fifteen minute to look at it.

If at First You Don't Succeed...

Chances are you're not going to hit a grand slam the first time out. So make it a company effort to put out a good video every quarter or bi-annually. It's great for building brand culture and deconstructing what your company is really about, on top of it all, it's a great deal of fun. The best thing about this strategy is that with relatively low risk and investment, you can be playing on the same playing field as the big boys both in terms of exposure and if you're lucky, sales..



CHAPTER 21

Start Your Own Blog

Starting a successful blog can be the easiest and cheapest way to attract thousands of new customers. All it comes down to is how well you can create valuable content for your readers. If you put the time and creative energy into blogging, it can pay dividends for years to come.

The beauty of blogging is that once you've created a great piece of timeless content, the search engines will bring you traffic to that page for the lifetime that page exists. So it's a worthwhile endeavor since it's really a way of planting seeds of future growth for your business.

Creating Exceptional Content

Many corporate business blogs will usually pump out very boring content that doesn't get much attention. So don't look to them for examples. Articles like "XYZ company's fifth birthday office party" and "A day in the life of an XYZ employee" just doesn't do much for attracting new customers. However, creating exceptional blog post topics is quite easy. Let's go into how you can create a list of topics that will win you traffic and new customers.

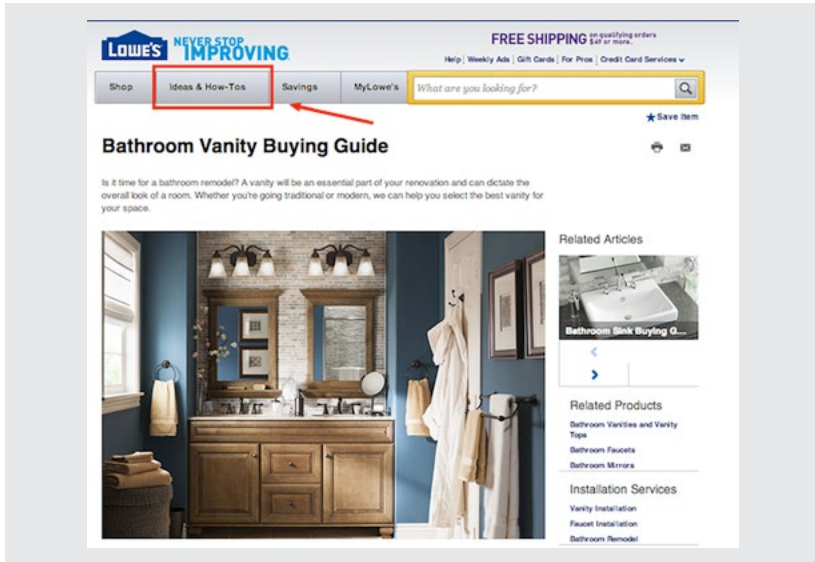
WHAT ARE SOME COMMON QUESTIONS YOUR CUSTOMERS ASK?

Answering common questions in the form of long detailed blog post always makes great content. Look through old emails to see what recurring questions arise. You can also survey your customer using [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) to help fish for content ideas.

CREATE "HOW-TO" CONTENT

If you want to jump right into making content, then the easiest type of content to tackle is "How-To" posts. Just explain how to do something that's a common task for your customers. For example, Lowe's does an **exceptional job** at providing "how-to" content that helps its target customers maintain and beautify their homes. When you visit, you'll find posts like:

- How to Install a Toilet
- How to Operate a Chain Saw
- How to Make a Poinsettia Bloom Year After Year



In the end, what you are trying to achieve is to be the online authority of your subject matter. The beauty of this is it builds trust with online visitors. This helps to convert them into lifelong paying customers.

Be sure to use a lot of clean photos, images and diagrams to help communicate within your blog posts. And if you feel up for the challenge, give video blogging a shot to up the ante.

Make Sure Your Blog is SEO Optimized

Before you get too far into blogging, you're going to want to make sure that your blog is optimized for the search engines. Here are the few things you need to look out for:

- **Title Tags** – Title tags are the holy grail of on-page SEO. First, you're going to want to make sure that they are present on every page of your blog. Simply look for the title tag in your source code. View the source code of all your webpages and look for "<title>", that's the title tag code. If it's in your source code that's a good thing. The next thing is to make sure the title of your post is inside <title> and the </title> tag. This means search engines can index the page for their results.

- **Meta Descriptions** – The meta description is used in search engine results to give extra descriptions for each result. Look for the code: `<meta name="description" content="` in your source code. Again, this means you have meta descriptions present on your web pages. The next thing is to see if there is a description present within the `content=""` part of your meta description. Hopefully you see a couple of sentences describing what the page is about. If you don't, you're going to want to make sure you fill those out.
- **Block Duplicate Content** – The golden rule when it comes to on-page SEO is to make sure that you limit repeating the same textual content on multiple URLs. The way to do this on a blog is to make sure your blog home page isn't posting the entire textual content of each post. So make sure your settings are only showing snippets from the posts on the blog home page. Also, make sure you block your comments pages in your robots.txt file because they are usually duplicates of your blog posts.
- **Check Your Text Navigation** – Search engines find their way to content by following hyperlinks. Make sure you can navigate to your blog from your main website home page via text links. If you can do that, then so can the search engines.

Frequency

Blogging is something that you should commit to on a regular basis. As a matter of fact, the more you blog, the more the search engines will crawl your website. Additionally it can raise the importance and authority of your website in the eyes of the search engines. This leads to increased traffic and obviously more business.

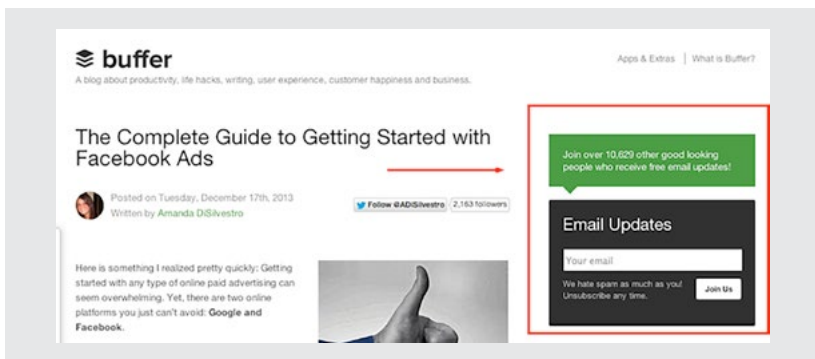
The number one mistake most entrepreneurs who engage in blogging make is that they start off strong and then completely stop. It's important to keep the show going as it will be a main source of free internet traffic after a few months. Unfortunately, a lot of business owners are too impatient to wait for the effects to kick in.

One way to solve this problem is to look at your blog as a resource rather than a burden. If you create content that solves your customer's problems,

you can use your blog content as a solution resource that you can send to customers or employees that have questions.

Promotion

The best way to promote your blog content is through your marketing lists which you build through a simple sign-up box prominently displayed on your blog. If you've been building your marketing lists, you probably have a decent audience to help spread your content to the masses.



Be sure to post your content to Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn the day your content is published. Keep tabs on what time of the day most of your social media followers are logged into their accounts so you can increase the likelihood of them seeing the content in their own feeds.

Another little trick to help promote your content is to link to other articles when references or citing information. You can reach out to the authors that you linked to and ask them if they can share your content with their audience. You'll find that often times; they will have no problem giving your content a tweet or Facebook share. And of course, this is another great way to build business relationships.

We highly recommend blogging if you have the knack for it. It's one of those marketing strategies that can potentially bring in the biggest share of customers, not only can you build authority and genuinely help people with content they appreciate, but you'll see how quickly they reciprocate with a purchase or two.



CHAPTER 22

Write a Controversial Blog Post

Creating controversy is one way to get your brand to race out in front of the masses and garner some serious consumer attention. But it has to be done carefully and artfully. Shooting from the hip and making outlandish statements will most likely do more harm than good. But if you're up for it, let's look into how you can successfully pull off this publicity.

First Let's Talk About Your Audience

Very few businesses have the ability to please everybody. Popular soda companies even have a group of people who loathe their brand – health food fanatics. So taking a side is quite alright. In some cases it's a great strategy to build a cult following for your brand.

If we go back to the early 1980's, there was a computer company that fiercely looked down upon the enormous and well-established IBM computers. That company was Apple Computers. By picking a fight with the “Goliath” in their industry, they were able to garner support from an audience who felt for them through their highly controversial Super Bowl ad in the year 1984.



The point is: picking a side and really showing that you're different than the competition can arm you with very loyal followers that make great customers for life. And a relatively easy way to do this is to write controversial blog posts.

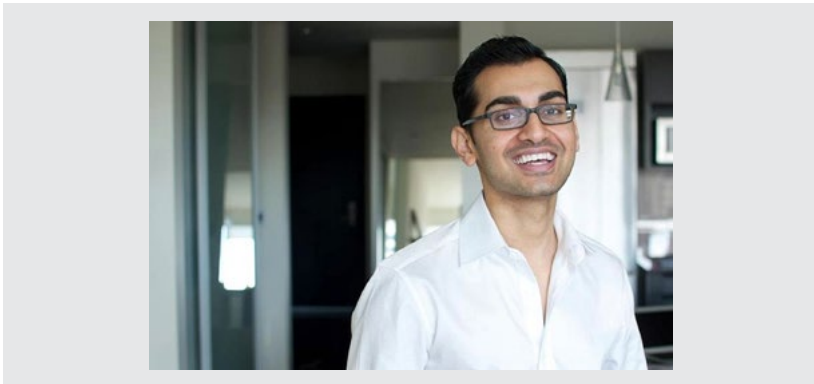
We're going to go over some angles of attack you can use when writing controversial posts:

The Basic Recipe

Target something in your niche that is obviously headed in the wrong direction and discuss its flaws and what a better solution might be. You might want to have a “pow-wow” with other industry heads first to sanity check your idea.

The beauty of these types of blog posts is they get emotional for you the author and in-turn strike emotion in other people. That’s how you make real connections and thus create a cult following.

An Example: The Internet Challenge



In 2007 Jason Calacanis, a well-respected and successful internet entrepreneur, made a statement saying that he felt SEO was, well to put it nicely, “malarkey”. His statement didn’t look favorably on the SEO marketing industry.

A young SEO marketer named Neil Patel (photo show above) wrote a famous blog post called **“Open Challenge to Jason Calacanis”** where he made a simple bet:

“So to you Jason, I offer the following challenge: I can take your blog and increase your daily search traffic by a minimum of 10 to 20% after 30 days of putting my changes into effect. I will NOT be doing anything “shady” or unethical and will even point out all the changes that will be made to your blog. You can even have your own designer/programmer make the changes

to your blog; I will even layout everything for them using step-by-step instructions.

As well as increasing your traffic I would like to educate you about SEO and what it is really about. There are tons of great and ethical SEOs that help companies increase their traffic without doing anything against the guidelines of search engines.”

As you can see, Neil played an angle where he rallied his entire industry on his side. This got people talking – which is the essence of buzz marketing and great PR. He goes on to say:

“If you win, I can post about the fact that SEO is really an over-rated science and actually have proof to back it up. If I win, you post that SEO is awesome, and again with the proof to back it up.”

Jason accepted. Sure enough within a few months Neil was able to lift Jason’s blog traffic. This publicity stunt through a simple blog post, helped make Neil famous and he has since done quite well for himself.

Strategy 1: Compare and Contrast

If you know something is downright ugly in your niche or notice a great disparity between two things, you can always write and compare and contrast post to prove your point.

This approach is almost full-proof because you’re going to have to cite your reasoning for each point. In essence it will sanity check your post for you since you’ll have to look through all the evidence, rather than writing a purely opinionated post straight from the gut.

If you don’t have the stomach for more intense controversy, you can stick with compare and contrast posts as a regular form of controversial blogging.

Strategy 2: Pick a Fight

One angle is to take a stab at a bigger and well-established competitor. If you can identify some of their short-comings, you can expose this in a blog post.

A great way to find some shortcomings is to check Google and Twitter for unhappy customers and interview them.

In Google simply search using the terms “Expletive + Company Name”. With Twitter, use their [advanced search page](#) and spend time trying to find something negative about the company. Notice at the bottom of the Twitter search you can select the “unhappy face” parameter which actually does a good job of finding people who are upset in their tweets.

Strategy 3: Dispel Myths

Uncovering myths in any subject matter always gets attention and backlinks. If you’re knowledgeable enough to disprove a common misconception, then definitely start doing it. In these cases, you want to be the first publication to unveil these crucial findings. What will happen is that you’ll be the main article everyone links to when they start arriving at similar conclusions.

Here are some example “Myth-busting” blog post titles for various niches:

- **Skateboarding:** Why the Notion That WD-40 Destroys Your Bearings is a Myth
- **Basketball:** Basketball Shoes Actually Lower Your Vertical Leap
- **Running:** Throw Away all Those Old Running Shoes – They’ve Been Ruining Your Body for Years

Be Prepared

If you get good at writing controversial posts, you may find this as a regular tool to boost your brand awareness and attract powerful backlinks for SEO resulting in major traffic and if your website is optimized for conversion, tons of sales. It’s actually a very easy publicity stunt because you can do it from behind your computer in your pajamas. But beware; you’ll most likely attract counter-attacks. So be prepared to fight.



CHAPTER 23

Create a YouTube Channel

Having a **YouTube channel** can be one of the strongest marketing and sales tools you'll ever own. If you think about it, it's like having your own cable channel with your programming promoting your business playing on it 24/7 and the best part is that it's completely free.

But the barrier for most business owners is simply the ability to produce videos and really having the time to make them. But that's what we want to get out of your head. So don't think: "Well if I have some free time, I'll try to make some videos."

Thinking that way will never get your channel going. You need to set aside time to produce video. And the way you really need to shape your mind is to think of these videos as your bread and butter. If they become instrumental towards driving your business growth, you're going to make sure you get them done.

Think Like You Run a Cable TV Channel

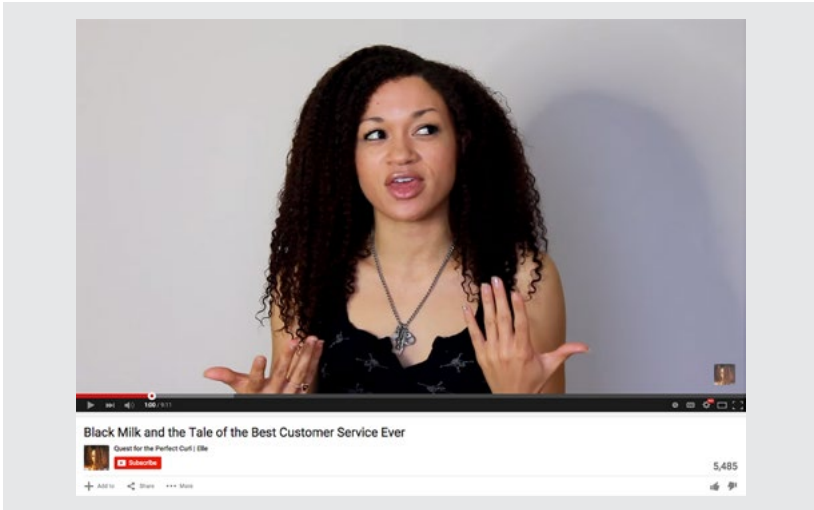
Your YouTube channel is basically a free cable TV network. You can produce and air as many shows as you want, whenever you want. It's really an awesome marketing tool if you devote time and energy to it. The trick is to keep producing videos consistently without ever stopping. There are just too many added benefits for you to not keep your YouTube channel up and running.

Here are some ideas on what kind of video content you can produce on a regular basis:

- **Weekly educational videos** – The most obvious way for any online business is to produce weekly (or daily if you can swing it) videos that educate your niche. Whatever it is that you sell, you're most likely an expert on the subject and you have a lot of inside information to give your audience. If you sell skateboards, explain how to do certain skateboarding tricks. If you sell jewelry, explain how to properly clean rings and necklaces. If you sell art, explain how to frame pictures or keep art safe from degradation from ultraviolet light. You know you can go on forever when you get to talk about your business's subject matter. All you need to document all this content that already resides in your brain is a mobile phone that shoots video.



- **Testimonials from customers** – Every once in a while you can throw in a video testimonial from a happy customer. These are really powerful because it's so easy to fake a written testimonial. Plus as you collect this video content, you can embed them on different pages of your website to help increase conversions. Imagine seeing really powerful testimonials during your checkout process? Feel free to incentivize happy customers and try to persuade them to send you a video testimonial.



- **Product reviews** – This is another easy kill. You can do comprehensive video reviews of products you sell and embed them on your product pages. Your efforts will pay double because you'll also get search engine traffic to your YouTube videos.



CREATE A PROGRAM SCHEDULE

A really important technique for maintaining your broadcasting frequency is to create a program schedule. What it does is keep you accountable to make sure you keep producing video content in a consistent manner. You may want to display your program schedule publicly to put that extra pressure on yourself to keep your viewers happy.

Video	Status	Air Date
How to frame posters the RIGHT way.	Complete	7-Aug
How to protect artwork from ultra violet light degradation	Editing Footage	14-Aug
Selecting the right art drawer system	N/A	21-Aug
How to verify artwork authenticity	N/A	28-Aug

Finally, a great way to make sure you get video produced every week without fail is to delegate this work out to someone else. If you have employees or are willing to pay youngsters in your area, it's a great idea to try to build a process that someone else can follow to easily make videos for your channel.

6 YouTube Channel Tips

- **Branding** – One thing you should take advantage of when you create your YouTube channel are the branding options they provide.
- **Channel icon** – This is basically your profile picture. Generally the best thing to do is to use your logo to keep your branding consistent.
- **Channel art** – Not as necessary, but it would be wise to upload artwork or photographs that works well with your overall brand strategy.
- **Create a Trailer** – Trailers are fun ways to introduce your channel to people. One of the easiest things to do is to create a montage of video clips that shows some of the “best-of” moments from your channel's previous videos. Try to entice people into subscribing to your channels with a great trailer video.
- **Link Overlays** – You are allowed to overlay four links to social media websites and one to your own web property. The best thing to do is to

only link to your own website and leave out the social links because they will be an added distraction.

- **Create Custom Thumbnails** – You should create custom thumbnails to help advertise your channel videos. Create artwork that is consistent with your brand and that draw attention. Otherwise, you'll end up with default thumbnails provided by YouTube that will add random visual noise to your channel.

Promoting Your Channel and Your Videos

By default the search engines will start indexing your videos and they will bring you a little bit of traffic at first. But you can do some extra pushing to get your videos circulating and your channel popular:

- **Incorporate videos in your email newsletter** – The beauty of creating video content is that it becomes easy filler for your other marketing channels. You'll definitely want to promote each video for certain days of your newsletter mailings.
- **Incorporate videos into your blog** – You can use your video as a single blog post and transcribe the audio of the video into text for your blog article.
- **Attach videos to your email signature** – If you make videos that you are extremely proud of, attach them to your email signature. This is an overlooked marketing opportunity, because the one-on-one emailing you do as a business owner provides a lot more engagement for the recipient. And since you most likely email several times a day, you'll rack up hundreds if not thousands of video views before you know it.
- **Promote your videos through your social media outlets** – Each time you product a video, be sure to promote it on your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn profiles. Make sure to use hashtags to denote any product types or brands you mention in your video.

The benefits of video can take a while to kick in. But when they start kicking in, they are a game changer for your business. So put in the effort and try

your best to produce quality and beneficial videos. Your business will thank you for it.



CHAPTER 24

Build Your Email List

There's no question how important email marketing is when it comes to adding to your bottom line, in fact, **research shows** that for every dollar spent on email marketing, companies made on average **\$40 back**. When compared to other channels, email subscribers are more responsive, they have a stronger connection with your business, and they buy more of your products.

And every subscriber counts. Whether you're gaining one per week, one per day, or one per minute.

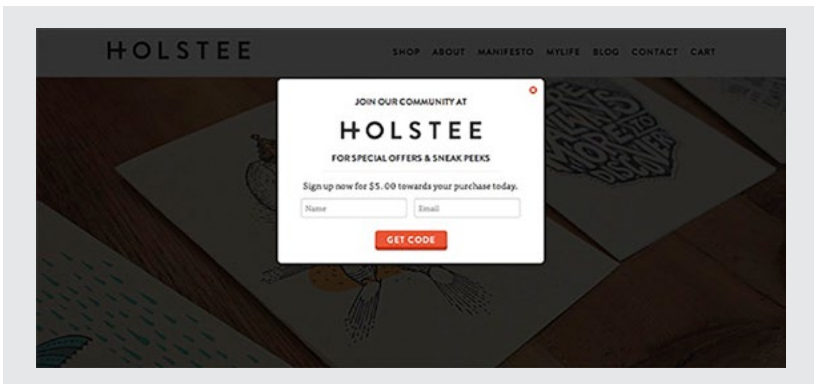
But how do you go about getting people to join yet another newsletter - not to mention actually buying your stuff once they've signed up?

At the end of the day you need the right mix of incentives, sign-up forms and high quality, valuable content.

Let's take a look at how to put all these ingredients together so you can drive more sign-ups and sales.

Choose the Right Sign Up Incentive

The first stage of building your mailing list is choosing the right incentive, or 'ethical bribe', to offer people in exchange for joining your list. For example, **Holstee** offers customers \$5.00 of their purchase when they sign up.



This step is all about getting permission to follow up with your potential customers over time.

There are lots of options you can choose from - the key is to make sure it's something that's compelling. For most ecommerce businesses, this is usually an immediate discount or the promise of getting future discounts and information about special, members-only sales delivered by email.


There are also a number of email marketing and incentive focused apps and services you can use to help make this step easier like Incentivibe and ViralSweep for example.

Another good incentive is a free piece of content that your target customer would find valuable and would put your subscriber into a buying frame of mind. Here are a couple of ideas to get you started.

- A women's clothing store could create seasonal fashion guides to help women learn the latest trends and how to coordinate outfits and accessories - specifically, outfits and accessories they sell.
- A bookseller could offer sample chapters of their latest / best sellers.
- A musician could offer a free MP3 download of their new song.
- A photographer could offer a free high-resolution wallpaper download.
- No matter what industry you're in, coming up with a compelling incentive is an effective way to kick start your list building efforts.

Create High Converting Landing Pages

Once you've decided on your incentive, your next job is to create a landing page - sometimes called a squeeze page. A squeeze page is simply a page on your website that is 100% focused on getting people to subscribe to your mailing list. Here's what we mean:



The screenshot shows a landing page for 'THE SCROOGE STRATEGY'. At the top left is a logo featuring a pink piggy bank with a dollar sign on its face, followed by the text 'THE SCROOGE STRATEGY' in green. Below the logo is a headline: 'Tired of the same old savings advice? Learn how to save hundreds of dollars per year'. Underneath the headline is a video player with a play button and a title 'Start Saving Money - The Scrooge Strategy'. To the right of the video player is a list of benefits for a 'FREE 7-day quickstart course': 'How to save 20% on restaurants', 'How to travel internationally w/steep discounts', and 'Proven savings strategies for travel, shopping, rent and mortgages'. Below the list are two input fields for 'Name:' and 'Email:', and a blue button labeled 'Start saving money now'.

Why do you need a landing page? You can use it in a variety of ways to help build your list.

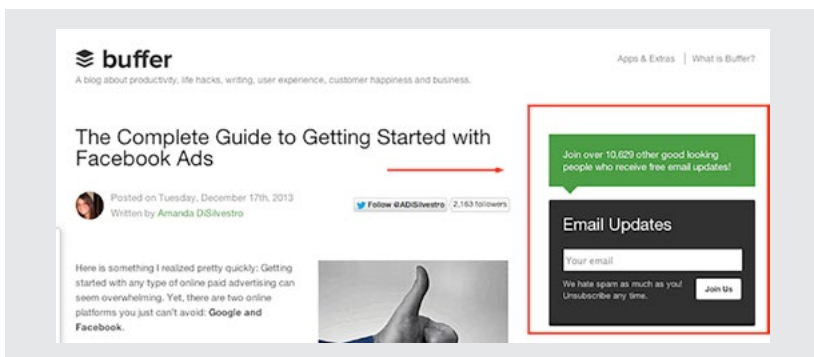
- Add it as a link in your social profiles.
- Advertise it using Google AdWords and Facebook Ads.
- Link to it in blog posts.
- Link to it in emails (within the body or email signatures).
- Essentially, it's just an easy to reference page that you can get people to and convince them to subscribe. It has no distractions - no other objectives.

Your landing page content should include a persuasive headline, some text or a video about your incentive and the benefits of joining your mailing list, and an opt-in form.

Everything else - like your sidebar - should be removed.

Place Strategic Opt-in Forms

Aside from your landing page, the most important element for driving opt-ins on your website is strategically placed opt-in forms. Opt-in forms are just a fancy word for the email sign-up boxes.



Popular email marketing software solutions will have handy opt-in form generators that will provide you with a snippet of code that you can just drag and drop into various places around your site.

Here are some of the more popular services:

- **Mailchimp**
- **Aweber**
- **Constant Contact**
- **Campaign Monitor**

While it may sound excessive to add multiple opt-in forms to your website, it's really not. If you had eye-tracking analytics on every visitor to your website, you would find that they do not look at every part of your website, from header to footer.

They may just look at the content on a blog post or your about page, your navigation menu, or your sidebar. Hence, you need to make sure that any one spot they look at has a conversion point for your mailing list - an opt-in form.

So where should you place an opt-in? Here are good places to consider.

- **Your header / navigation bar.** This can be an email field with simple text like 'join', 'subscribe', 'sign up', 'get updates', 'get exclusive discounts', 'get our free fashion guide', etc.
- **Your sidebar.** This can be just an email field or name and address field with a sentence about your free incentive and what your mailing list has to offer.
- **Your About Page.** After you tell visitors about your business and the benefits of your products, get them to connect and learn more by subscribing. This can be just an email field or name and address field with a few sentences about why people should subscribe.
- **At the bottom of your blog posts.** If people make it to the end of your blog post, chances are they enjoyed your content and are ready to take action. Having a strategically placed form here gives them a clear option for what to do next.
- **Your website footer.** Let's say your visitor bypasses all of the above fields. If they do make it to your website footer, they're still interested. Capture them as subscribers.
- **Your checkout page.** One of the best ways to build your list is to simply make sales. The services mentioned above all have

integrations, whether it's their own or a third party app, that will allow you to add customers to your email list after they make a purchase.

Most visitors will be blind to a few of these spots so having multiple forms is important.

Also, if you run a brick and mortar store, don't forget about offline opportunities. Email service providers provide apps that allow you to capture subscribers in-person. One such app is Chimpadeedoo from MailChimp which lets subscribers enter their email address on your iPad or Android tablet. Even if you're offline, it will collect the email addresses and import them into your MailChimp account the next time you're online.

Stay in Touch

As you start growing your mailing list, you need to make sure you're staying in touch with your subscribers. The last thing you want is to build up a great list, not email them for months, and then have them either not open your emails or unsubscribe because they've forgotten all about you and why they joined in the first place.

You have two options for keeping your subscribers interested in your business. The first is to send regular, manual updates, such as newsletters, information about your industry that your customers would want to keep up-to-date about, or links to your latest pieces of content. Preferably this would be high quality content that has independent value but that also has sales and conversions in mind. This option is best for businesses who have new things to talk about on a consistent basis.

The second option is to put your customers in an autoresponder series. This is a series of emails that you set up in advance and scheduled to send to new subscribers within a specific timeframe as they join your list.

Your first email to your subscriber would have the incentive you promised - the discount, free guide, link to a download, etc. The next email, sent a few days later, would follow up with the subscriber, asking how they liked the incentive. The next email, sent a few days later, would let subscribers know about some products and services that will be of interest based on the free incentive they received.

This option is best for businesses who have pretty static products or simply those who want to automate their sales funnel in a set it and (almost) forget it kind of way. I say almost because if you do have updates to your products and services, you'll want to update your autoresponder accordingly for future subscribers.

Bring it All Together

When it comes down to it, building your list is all about getting permission and providing value. To get permission, think about what incentives or high quality content you can create in order to drive sign-ups. Once you've got people joining your list, focus on sending your subscribers a balanced mix of more high quality content with occasional sales and promotional messages mixed in.

Delight people in their inbox and their sure to repay the favour by delighting you through purchasing your products.



CHAPTER 25

Advertise on Facebook

This is where the power of your Facebook page will become more apparent, especially when it comes to helping you generate sales.

Facebook advertising has a unique advantage over almost all of the other internet advertising channels, which is that is you can target your ads by:

- Age
- Gender
- Interest

Currently pay-per-click advertising networks like Google Adwords and The Yahoo! Bing Network can't target this type of demographic and interest level. For an ecommerce business this is incredibly powerful in terms of direct targeting.

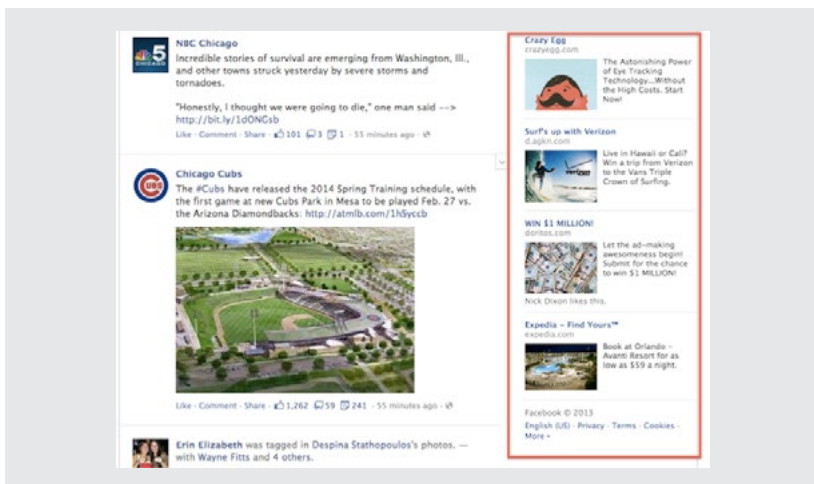
But before you get overly-excited and decide to throw your entire advertising budget into Facebook, you must understand that people on Facebook are there to interact with their friends, not necessarily to buy products.

When you're advertising and marketing, always consider the intention of the target audience with regards to the website your prospects are on. For instance, people using Google are a good advertising fit because they are on Google actively searching for something. Therefore it's a perfect venue to grab their attention.

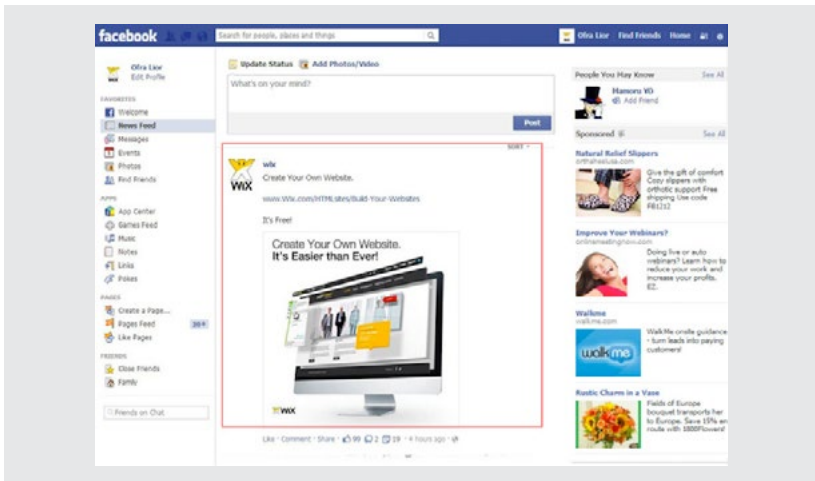
The 4 Types of Facebook Ads

Over the years, Facebook has gone on to experiment and release a variety of different advertising options. The four that have worked the best for them have continued to stick around. They are:

- **Marketplace Ads:** These are the most standard Facebook ad type and are usually the starting point for many small and medium sized businesses.



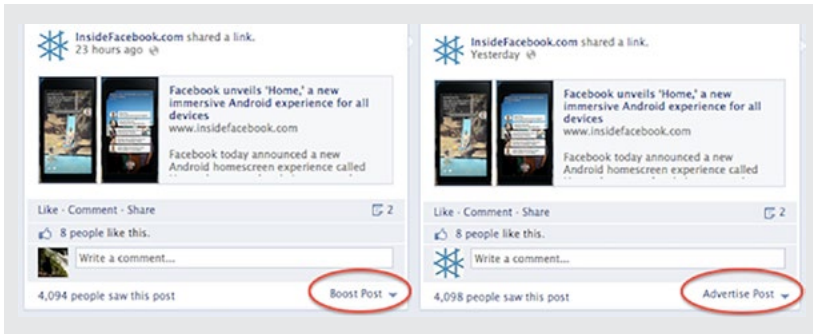
- **Page Posts Ads:** These ads show up on a user's news feed. Known as native advertising, the ads appear and blend seamlessly into a news feed like any regular status post.



- **Sponsored Stories:** These ads help people engage with brands that their friends like, and only show up in a user's news feed if a friend has engaged with the company recently.



- **Promoted Posts:** The funny thing with Facebook is that even when you post an update, it doesn't necessarily reach your entire fan base. If you want to reach everyone, you need to boost the percentage of the audience you reach - which of course costs money.



How To Build Your Facebook Ads The Right Way

There is a chance that your product will sell like hot-cakes using Facebook advertising. The best thing to do is to start out by attempting direct sales. This will get you used to the Facebook advertising platform.

Below, we're going to go through the steps in which you should think about creating Facebook advertisements. They'll guide you through a strategic way of thinking about your target customers and corresponding advertisements so that you build a better suited campaign.

STEP 1 – DETERMINE WHAT YOU WANT TO SELL

Do you want to focus selling one particular item? Or let people select from a category of items? Because you can create more than one ad and you can send them to specific pages on your website. Remember, you probably want to send them to the page where they can buy the item without making them have to click through unnecessary steps.

For introductory purposes it's probably best to focus on selling one particular item -probably a product that you have the largest margin on. That way you can afford to make mistakes and learn from them.

STEP 2 – WHO IS THIS PRODUCT FOR?

Let's think about your target market. Who is this product for? Teenagers? Male teens? Does location matter? What are their interests? What products would they be interested in? Jot down these characteristics for all your possible personas.

STEP 3 – SELECT AN IMAGE

When you create your Facebook Ad, you're allowed to include a small image. We suggest not just using your brand logo as your advertising image, however, you can always test this. Simply start by using a clean image of the product.

Consider picking out a product that is an attention getter. For instance, products that have vibrant colors or products that tend to sell well are good candidates for your first ad.



The image of these neon felt tennis shoes is an example of a vibrant, eye-catching product that may convert a bit better than more generic products.

STEP 4 – CREATE COMPELLING COPY

Creating your Facebook ad is much like creating a PPC (pay-per-click) ad for Google. You will need to craft a headline and some trailing copy.

1. Headline: include brand name & benefit. → Enjoy Dansko Comfort
zappos.com

Look great in the hottest Dansko styles on Zappos! Fast free shipping and returns.

2. Copy: Add more benefits, and perhaps an enticing offer like free shipping. ↑

Again, this is the time to think about your personas. Reflect back and think about what language your target customers use. If you have been taking notes on how your customers talk about your products, go back to them and see if you can use any of that language in your copy. Remember, you want to speak like them.

STEP 5 – LET YOUR AD RUN FOR A WEEK OR TWO

The interesting thing about Facebook Ads is that they “wear out” fast. That’s because they are presented to the same group of people continually. Every time someone from your target group logs into Facebook, they are probably seeing your ad.

A good rule of thumb is to change up your ads every one or two weeks. Set a reminder on your phone or in your calendar to check back on your Facebook ads once a week. Be sure to record their performance in a spreadsheet or in a text file so that you can review which ads work.

What If Direct Sales Don’t Work?

This is to be expected. Again, people are on Facebook to interact with their friends. If you’re selling and making a return, then that’s great! You should double down on Facebook advertising by creating more ads for different products.

However, the power of Facebook ads is that they are really good for generating demand, and there are a couple ways to do this with the platform. The first way is to simply use Facebook advertising to get people to Like

your Facebook page. There is a genius reason for this; by getting them to Like your page, you can remarket to them for a much longer period of time (because people who will Like your Facebook page will see your updates), which can be a more effective use of your advertising budget.

The second way is to have them sign up for your email newsletter. As we said in previous chapters, email marketing is a safer bet when it comes to building your marketing list. Chances are your email list will out-live any social networking list years down the road.

Now the trick with getting people to sign up for your newsletter is to only find people who really want to hear what you have to say. There is no point in trying to lure people into signing up for your newsletter if they don't really want to read it. All that will happen is that you'll waste advertising budget on people who don't care about your brand and they ruin your email subscription performance.

You need to create a value packed newsletter that really benefits your target audience. What's compelling about it? Why would people want to read it? If your newsletter doesn't have an angle yet, something unique that makes it attractive, then consider getting them to Like your Facebook page for now.

For example, let's say you own an online kayaking store. You could run an ad to get people to receive your "Advanced Guide to Sea Kayaking." The ad could have them Like your Facebook page to receive the guide or alternatively you can get them to sign up for your email newsletter to get the guide. Either way, they will probably be interested in your Facebook updates or email subscription because it will include more advanced practices when it comes to kayaking. And of course you would highlight that your newsletter will continue to have more advanced tips, articles and must have information in future mailings.

This is a great method to keep these customers and evangelists on the forefront of their minds when it comes to your brand and their interests.



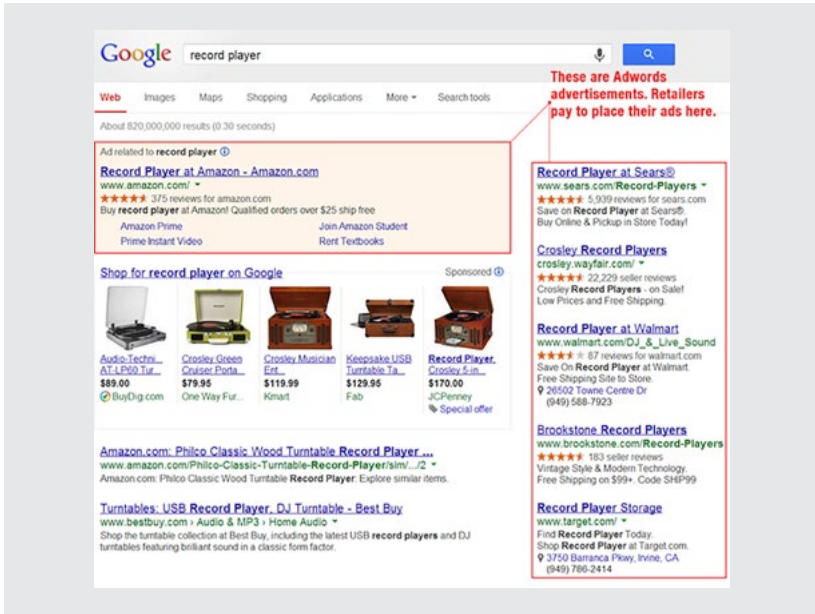
CHAPTER 26

Pay for Google Adwords

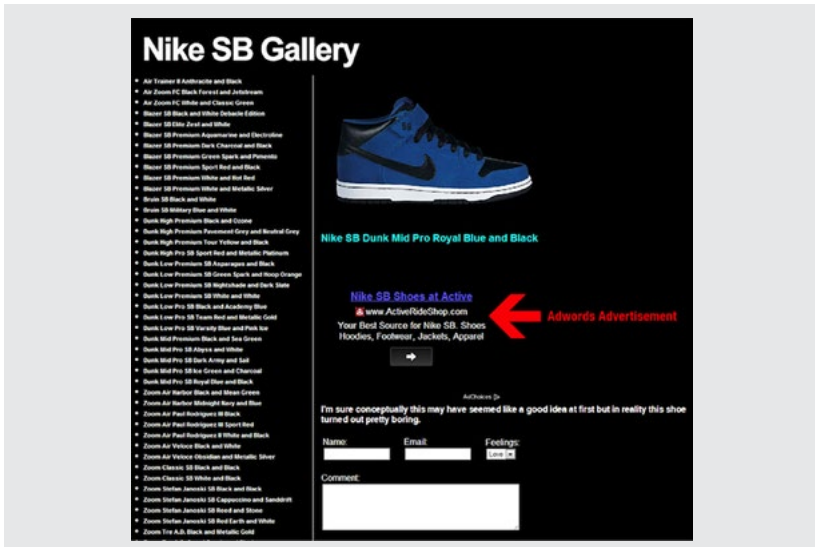
Adwords is Google's advertising network that allows online retailers to place advertisements on nearly every Google search results page, YouTube video and partner website.

No other advertising network will give you faster sales results than Adwords. The reason for this is that your ad can be on the first page of a Google search query in less than five minutes after signing up.

Below are typical locations for Google Adwords units on a search results page:



Your advertisements can also show up on Google’s content network which places your ads on websites wishing to monetize with Google AdSense.



The way it works is very simple. You tell Google what ads you want to show up on their results page based on keyword searches from their users. Every time someone clicks on your Adwords advertisement, Google will charge you for that click. The costs of clicks vary on your bid amount and the price other advertisers are willing to pay for the same keywords.

The Basics

To start advertising, go to adwords.google.com. They are quite helpful at getting you started and whisking you into the world of pay-per-click advertising.

The anatomy of an Adwords advertisement is very simple, but it's also very important that you understand the components that make up an ad and how they play a role towards converting business.

The screenshot shows the configuration interface for a Google Adwords advertisement. On the left, there are several input fields:

- Headline:** My Headline
- Description line 1:** Engage the searcher here
- Description line 2:** and get them to click on your ad!
- Display URL:** your.website.com
- Destination URL:** http:// your.website.com

On the right, there are two preview boxes:

- Side ad:** Shows the headline "My Headline" in blue, followed by "your.website.com" and the description "Engage the searcher here and get them to click on your ad!".
- Top ad:** Shows the headline "My Headline" in blue, followed by "your.website.com" and the description "Engage the searcher here and get them to click on your ad!".

- **The headline** is probably the most important text. It's the first line in your advertisement that is colored blue like a hypertext link. A good headline will determine if a searcher will click on your ad or not. You're going to want to test a lot of headlines to hone in on what works best for increasing click-throughs on your ads.
- **The description** plays a slightly minor role compared to the headline. You can also test different descriptions to help increase interest in your offering.
- **The display URL** is simply your website address. It can be different than your destination URL, which is the webpage you send your ad traffic to.

The headline, description and keywords are your testing “levers.” You’re going to spend a lot of time adjusting them to see which combinations bring you the most profit.

Let’s get into how you can use Google Adwords intelligently, so that your budget turns into profit.

Start Small

There’s no reward for wasteful spending.

Before you choose 1,000 keywords and a budget bigger than you can handle, it’s best to start with a small and manageable campaign. The key with Adwords is to hone your skills before scaling. You need to learn what works and what doesn’t work for your business.

So, start by choosing a few items that you know will probably move without much persuasion. Next, select a handful of keywords and create a couple of different ads for each item.

- 1 Make an ad group for each type of product you sell** – The more specific, the better. For example, if you sell shovels, make an ad group for “snow shovels” and one for “gardening shovels”.
- 2 Create at least two ads for each ad group** – You are going to want to test these ads out against each other. This will be critical for scaling and improving your profit later. We will discuss this more further along in this chapter.

By starting with a few ad groups and a few keywords, managing and testing your campaigns will be much easier. If you try to test too many ad groups at once, it’s very easy to get overwhelmed and make poor decisions.

Choosing Smart Keywords

Once you feel you have Adwords down, think about setting up some smart ad groups that may convert better for you.

YOUR BRAND NAME

If you have a somewhat popular brand name by now, and your brand name is closely tied to your main product – or is actually your product (like the Roomba robotic vacuum cleaner, for example), then you should create a specific ad group around keywords related to that name. Here are some keywords that you might want to group into a branded ad group:

- Roomba
- Roomba Vacuum
- Roomba Robot
- Roomba Vacuum Cleaner

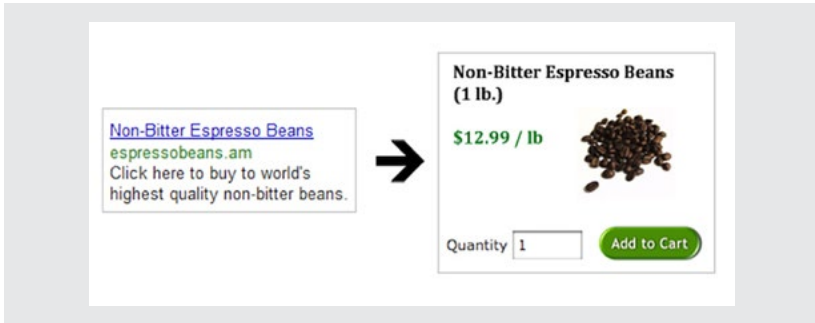
Branded keywords generally convert the best and provide the highest return on investment of any keywords you can choose.

SURVEY YOUR CUSTOMERS

Every time you convert a prospective customer to a paying customer, ask them: “Why did you choose to do business with us?” The goal of this question is to find out what made these new customers decide to trust your business with their hard earned currency. Hopefully, you’ll collect a wide array of answers over a long period of time. You’ll begin to notice some recurring patterns in the answers you get. Use the language your customers use as your keywords and advertising copy.

The reason for this is that this language is unique to your online store and how you do business. Chances are it will convert really high and there will be less competition for these keywords.

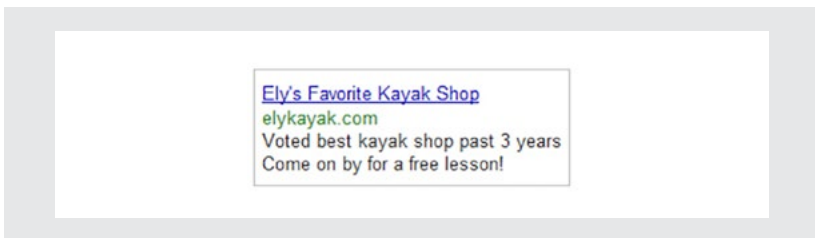
For example, let’s say you run an online coffee bean store. And from surveying your customers you find out that a lot of customers came to you because they heard you sell “non-bitter espresso”. This would be a unique keyword finding and could be a great ad campaign to get more customers looking for this style of espresso beans.



In the example above, using the language your customers use makes for great Adwords campaigns. Be sure to send them directly to the buy-now page related to your ad.

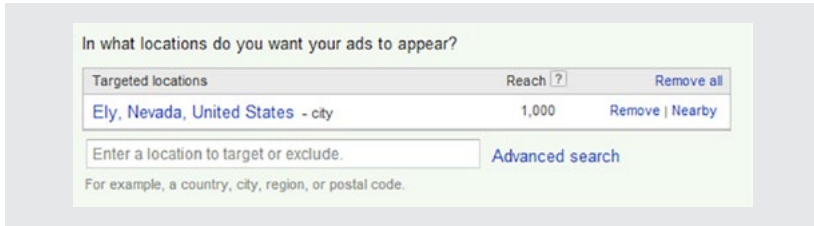
ADVERTISE LOCALLY

You can take advantage of your geographical location by advertising to local customers exclusively. Not only can you tailor your ad copy to target a specific geographic area, you can also set your Adwords preferences to target customers in a certain radius.



In the example above we're targeting kayaking enthusiasts in Ely, Nevada

To adjust your geographical settings, go to Campaigns and then to Locations and you can designate your geographical preferences.



Additionally, you can advertise locally and choose specific keywords like:

- Specific products with serial numbers
- Specific brands that are high in demand

You may end up cornering your local market on these products and even unseating large retailers. Spend time testing a locally targeted ad group. You may find a lot of ways to exploit your local presence.

A Note About Choosing Competitive Keywords

In every industry, there are a group of keywords that drive a lot of traffic and cost a lot of money to bid on when it comes to Adwords advertising.

These keywords are usually a race to the bottom.

Unless you have a really big budget and are masterful at Adwords, it's best to pick a smarter strategy to gain a positive ROI (return of investment). Otherwise, what will happen is you'll blow through your advertising budget and make the worst mistake possible when it comes to advertising on Adwords, quitting altogether.

The problem with stopping and starting Adwords advertising is that you'll ruin your quality score. Quality score is a metric Google gives advertisers and generally, the better your quality score, the better position and rates you'll get for your ads. Google likes to reward advertisers that stick with their program and don't jump ship.

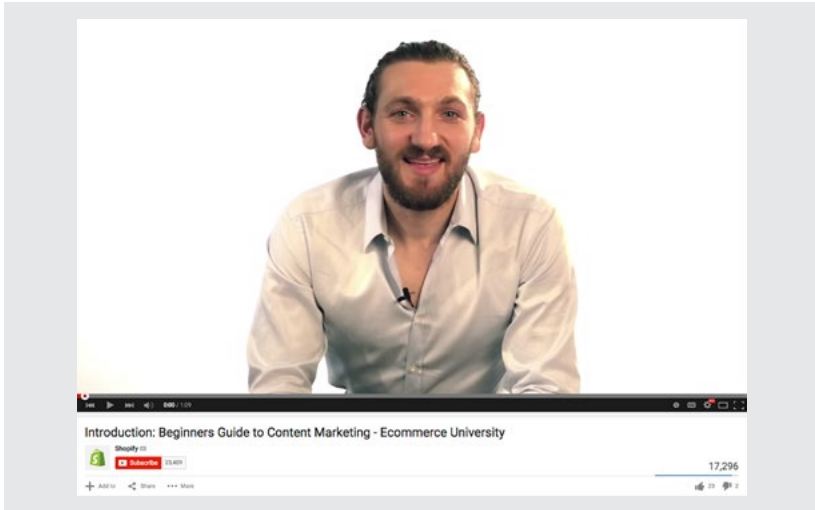
What if You Sell Something Unique and Relatively Unknown?

Having your own product that is new and hopefully revolutionary is the best marketing position to be in. Ironically, it can be more difficult to market on Google Adwords since the Adwords audience already knows what they are searching for. And if they don't know about your products, they aren't going to be searching for it.

But that doesn't mean you can't get any success from Adwords. You just need to approach it a little differently.

- 1 Survey your existing customers** – Ask them why they like your product and try to find out what problems it solves for them. Those answers will likely contain useful language that will help you craft your Google Adwords advertisements. For instance, if you're selling fuzzy neon-green tennis ball material shoes, your customer might tell you that they like their "feet to stand out".
- 2 Determine the benefit of these products** – Similar to surveying your customers, determining the benefits of your unique product can help you craft keywords and specific campaigns to help solve problems.

Content marketing is another great tool to help raise awareness of products with no active sales volume. Here's the first video of a series of 15 that goes in-depth into content marketing for beginners, with a heavy focus to help merchants selling items with no search volume.



Tracking Conversions

This is an extremely important part of doing pay-per-click advertising correctly. A conversion means that someone clicked on your Adwords advertisement, came to your online store and actually purchased from you. Conversions are the most important metric that governs what keywords you choose and what advertising copy you run with.

Let's say you're running an ad group for shovels:

Ad Group	Keyword	Headline	Description Line 1	Description Line 2	CTR	Conversion Rate
Shovels	Shovel	The World's Best Shovels	Shovel Town - Selling shovels since	1660. America's 1st hardware store	15%	7%
Shovels	Heavy Duty Shovel	The World's Best Shovels	Shovel Town - Selling shovels since	1660. America's 1st hardware store	18%	5%
Shovels	Snow Shovel	The World's Best Shovels	Shovel Town - Selling shovels since	1660. America's 1st hardware store	7%	0%

By tracking conversions, you see that even though the keywords “Heavy Duty Shovel” has the highest click-through rate (CTR), it actually has a lower conversion rate than the keyword “Shovel”.

After doing some math, you realize that you're actually losing money on the keyword “Heavy Duty Shovel”. In this case you have a few options:

- 1 **Wait** – Be sure enough time has elapsed before you know that the keyword isn't profitable. If you make your decision too soon (say within 24 hours), you're not getting enough data to support your decision.
- 2 **Pause the keyword** – Let's say a couple weeks have passed and your keyword just isn't performing – then it's probably time to pause it. This will put a stop to your ad from being served when someone on Google is searching for the keyword "Heavy Duty Shovel".
- 3 **Create a new ad group and ad** – Maybe you know this is a great item that should sell well. Perhaps it just needs more attention and refinement. In that case, create a new ad group for this specific merchandise and craft a more specific ad. In most cases, using the specific merchandise name as a keyword and as the headline results for better ad performance.

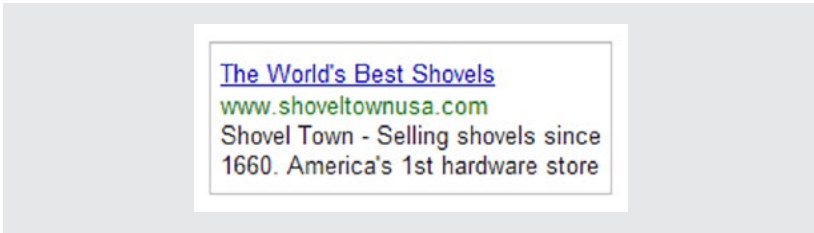
As you can see, without knowing the conversion rate of your keywords and advertisements, you won't know your return on investment. Therefore it's vitally important that you set up conversion tracking.

Testing

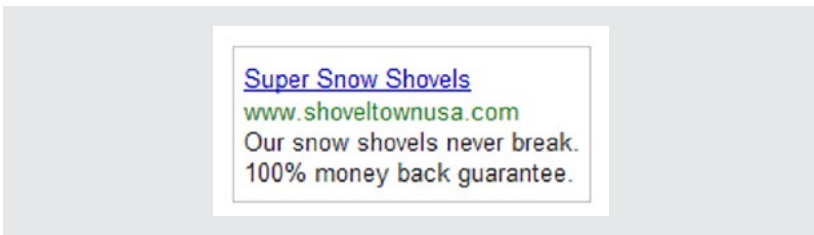
The beauty of conversion tracking is that it allows you to test new keywords idea and advertising copy. The general goal of your Adwords campaign should be to iterate on new ads and keywords that outperform your old "guesses".

For example, for a particular ad group, you can have two ads running simultaneously for the exact same keywords. Over time you'll notice that one ad will lead to higher conversions than the other. When this happens, you may want to consider pausing the lower performing ad and switching to a new ad that hopefully outperforms the current winning ad.

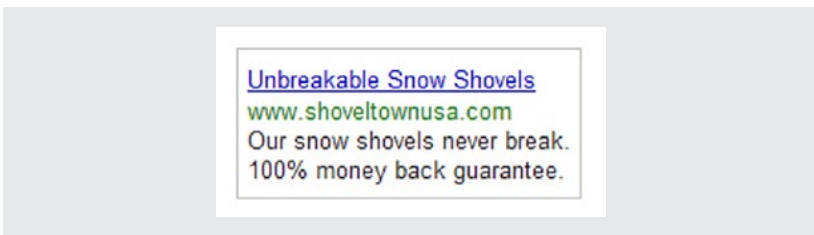
For example, let's go back to our shovel example. Let's say you have been using the same generic ad in all your ad groups:



You can run a competing ad to try to ascertain which one results in more conversions. You then decide to craft a more specific ad for your “snow shovel” ad group:



After a week you find that this second ad has a much better conversion rate than the generic ad. What you would do is pause the generic ad and run a new competing ad like:



The idea is to keep running this competition amongst your ads so that you continually get better and better conversions and thus profit. This entire world is about honing your campaigns for maximum profit.

The Entire World at Your Fingertips

The truth about Adwords is that it gives you access to the entire world's search audience (because you can place yourself on any Google search results page). It's just a matter of how intelligently you craft your campaigns so that you can make it profitable.

Our advice is to start out slow and careful, but don't quit. Stick with it and keep testing new ideas. And don't forget that you're not only advertising to sell your products, you're gaining new customers, some of them for life!



CHAPTER 27

Buy Banner Ads

Banner ads can work magic when it comes to selling products online, but like every form of marketing, they have to be done right. First, let's look at one of the most well known issues with buying banner ads.

The Problem with Banner Ads

Once you understand what the problems are with banner ads, you can more creatively make ones that will work.

The inherent problem with banner ads is that in order for someone to click on an ad, you have to disrupt what the visitor was doing in the first place. Right off the bat, you're creating friction with the person you're trying to

target. If you think about it, web surfers are most likely doing one of three things:

- 1 Engaging in social networking
- 2 Researching something
- 3 Trying to enjoy a video

Most ads don't help web surfers with any of those three things listed above. That's why the new age of internet marketers avoid disruptive marketing and focus on "inbound" marketing instead.

The second problem with banner ads is that they slow down website and computer performance, which make them another drag for the web surfer. That's why so many people have now installed ad blocking software.

3 Easy Tips For Successful Banner Ads

The key to making banner ads that work is to understand the problems we mentioned above and to really think about how you can get attention or help the web surfer out with your ads. Here are a few ideas on how to do just that:

- 1 **Only put your banner ads on relevant websites** – If you plaster your ads everywhere possible on the Internet, you're going to be paying a high price for poor ad performance. Therefore, only choose websites where your target audience hangs out. The more niche the website, the better.
- 2 **Be creative while addressing the web visitor's problems** – It sounds obvious, but plenty of retailers put the bare minimum of creativity into their ad artwork. What's going to get someone's attention? What will your target audience care about? This ad from Volkswagen is both fun and creative:



- 3 Test** – The first banner ad you ever put up should be the only case where you see if it sticks. From there you need to iterate on your message, destination pages and artwork. You need to measure and keep track of what ads have the best effect with your web analytics.

It's not only a video game, it helps drive home their message that the Golf can make it through an unexpected route.

Banner Ad Placement

Now that you understand that creative ads often perform better than boring ads, the next ingredient to banner ad success is determining what websites to place your ads on, and where on those sites your ad should be located.

Before you ever make an ad, the first thing you should do is create a list of 10 to 20 websites and blogs where you would love to see your ad displayed. You'll probably target websites where your "ideal" customer hangs out.

Some of these sites may let you advertise with them directly. Look for links near the bottom of these sites that say "advertising". Contact the website owner and ask them what their rates are – even if they are already posted. The idea is that you want to start a slow and natural conversation with them. These people are most likely key influencers in your niche, and it's much more important to develop a great business relationship with them – then just getting a great deal.

The F Shaped Pattern

Most web surfers scan webpages in an **"F" shaped pattern**. They read from left to right usually scanning the very top of the webpage first, return to the left column and scan the middle – again from left to right. They finally return back to the left column and scroll down from there.



So naturally, based off this behavioral pattern, the best place for your banner ad is probably in the top left corner or simply the top of any website. This is a good rule of thumb, but the truth is that every website will have its own ideal location based on the layout, colors and other calls to action on the site. Find out what location performs the best by asking the website operators.

Landing Pages

You should give some thought as to where you send your banner ad traffic. Depending on what your banner ad message is you can send them to:

- **Your home page** – We rarely recommend sending traffic to your home page. If your advertisements are more about your brand in general, then sending traffic to your home page is acceptable. But don't expect it to convert into sales!
- **A category page** – If your advertisement has to do with one of your categories of products then send the traffic to your category page. You might want to pre-sort your products on your category pages to either show the lowest priced items first or the most popular items first.
- **A product page** – If you're advertising a specific product, then definitely send them directly to the product page. 99% of the time this will result in higher conversions.
- **A promotional page** – In some cases you may be giving something away or having people enter a contest. In these cases, don't make them do work to find the promotion, just send them to it directly.

How to Buy Banner Ads

There are two primary ways to buy banner ads. You can deal directly with the website, or work with an ad network. Here's a rundown on each option:

ONE-OFF BANNER ADS

Depending on your industry, you may know of some niche websites that are very popular and have an advertising program. Reach out to the operators of those sites and find out what their advertising rates are. In some cases, these sites can be the best bang for the buck when it comes to banner ads.

Another thing to think about is how you can become a resident advertiser on these sites. The longer you advertise on these sites, the deeper the relationship you can build with their loyal visitors. This is when you need to think about how your ads change with time and what themes you want

to run with. If you can freshen up your ads every month, and make their visitors smile, then you're going to strengthen your brand with those visitors.

AD NETWORKS

For more of a shotgun spread approach, you can join an ad network. Ad networks are middlemen between you and the websites your ads reside on. The benefit is that you'll have access to more websites with less work. The downside is that you might not get the best rates, and you don't get to build a close relationship with the website operators.

Here is a list of some popular website advertising networks:

- buysellads.com
- web.blogads.com
- chitika.com
- infolinks.com
- zedo.com

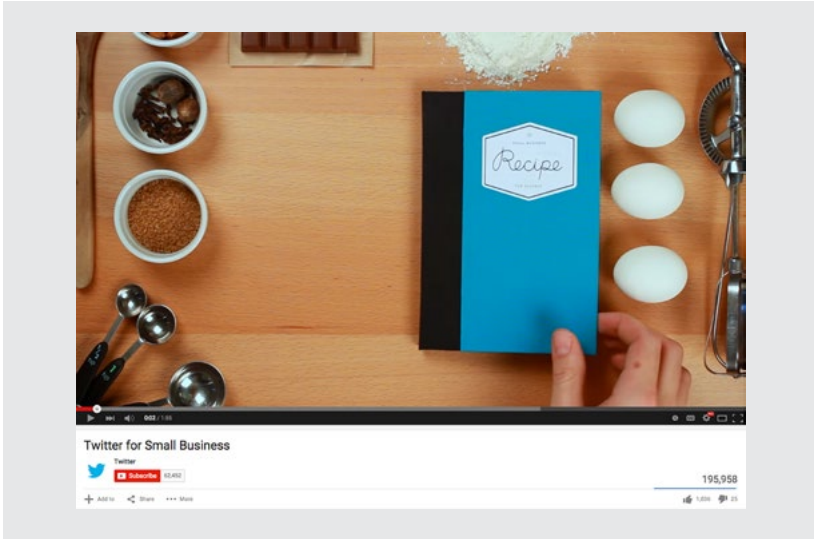
We recommend exhausting the first approach of building close relationships with publishers directly. If you still need more advertising spread, begin by contacting ad networks and find out which network is the most suitable for your needs.



CHAPTER 28

Promote Your Tweets

What if we were to tell you that a follower on Twitter was 72 percent more likely to make a purchase from you? You'd probably do anything to figure out how to get as many followers as possible. However, the reality is that growing a large Twitter following can be a formidable task to take on. It can sometimes even take years to build a large and loyal following. However, luckily for you, there is a way to pay to get in front of more Twitter users – and that's through the Twitter advertising platform. Here's a quick video that Twitter put together that gives a brief overview of how Twitter Ads can help small businesses:



Getting Started With Twitter Ads

What makes Twitter Ads quite interesting is their targeting options. It's best to **sign up for an account** and investigate all the targeting options yourself, as there's a lot to check out. Before you do that, here's a rundown:

Twitter is similar to Facebook advertising in that you can target users by:

- Interest
- Gender
- Geography

However, one major difference is that Twitter allows you to also target by:

- Keywords in the timeline
- Keywords in the search results

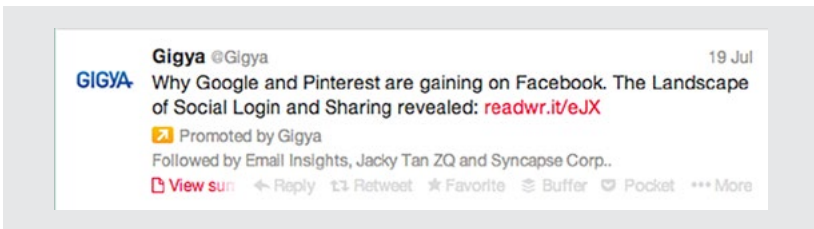
Twitter has a unique cost-per-action model: You pay only when users follow your Promoted Account or when they retweet, favorite, reply or click on a link in your Promoted Tweet.

There are three types of Twitter advertising promotions you can choose to partake in:

- 1 **Promoted Accounts** – Twitter will suggest accounts to follow to its users. One way to squeeze onto this list is to pay to be a promoted account.



- 2 **Promoted Tweets** – You can also wedge your tweets into the timelines of Twitter users by paying for this targeting option.



- 3 **Promoted Trends** – Twitter will list the top trends in their user's geographical area and interest domain. You can also pay to be in this trend list. However, this option tends to be a bit pricey.



Promoted tweets probably have the most useful effect for smaller online retailers out of the three options listed above. Tweets have a lot of flexibility in terms of how you can create engagement, excitement and curiosity, ultimately having prospective customers visit your landing page and converting. You really can draw a lot of power from tweets alone.

Since you can have a far greater reach with a promoted Tweet over tweeting normally, you might want to try these tactics:

- **Ask a question** – Great for market research, starting conversations and exposing your brand to new potential followers. Think of engaging questions that are both fun to answer and target your niche. Say for instance you sell sporting goods memorabilia. You can start a conversation about what professional sports star should be traded to a specific team this year. That way you get the attention of highly devoted fans and their dreams for the season.
- **Tweet a coupon code for a highly demanded product** – If you have a supply of a rare, but highly demanded product, a sponsored Tweet with a coupon code is a great way to bring more attention to your store since you can advertise to a much larger audience. Not only will you increase your follower count, you can engage in very detailed public conversations about the product and your store. This is a great way to connect with future customers on a deeper and more personal level. When other Twitter users see your conversations you also begin building a closer, more trusting relationship with them as well.

- **Promote a contest** – If you have a clever idea for a contest, using Twitter advertising to get the content buzz out is a good idea. Remember, you'll be able to reach more followers and you only pay for actions taken by people who interact with your tweets. In theory, you could create tweets that act more like billboards that help with branding your contest. This could result in lower advertising costs since you're not instigating actions like retweets, follows or clicks.

Reserve Time to Manage Your Twitter Account

With all these tactics listed above, the most important thing is that you can respond to tweets, mentions and direct messages in a timely manner. As a matter of fact, if you can respond to them instantly, you'll achieve much better results from Twitter advertising.

So with that said, you'll either have to set up your social media monitoring tools to allow you to be alerted at any given moment or hire a social media manager to do this work.

You can also use this to take advantage of bigger retailers who may be using Twitter advertising. There is a chance that they are "sleeping on the job" so to speak. You are allowed to engage their customers and prospects who have been left unattended to. That's why they say the most important thing to do when using Twitter as a business is to "listen".

Test, Test, Test...

Twitter is a very interesting universe where you can employ all sorts of marketing tricks. Spend time testing your Twitter tactics out and once you've found something that works, kick it up notch with Twitter Advertising. For instance, try testing branded hashtags (#) and mentioning (@) key influencers in your industry. You may unlock some interesting opportunities that will become key marketing secrets you'll hold dear for years to come.



CHAPTER 29

Get a Booth at a Market

We know that farmers markets, flea markets, and even pop-up stores might not sound like the savviest ways to sell products, especially if you're focusing on building an online business. But nothing beats speaking to potential customers one-on-one and selling to them directly, especially early on when you're still building your company and you'll do next to anything to get that first sale. The one thing you'll learn from running an online business is how important it is to get customer feedback to see what they like and don't like about your products and how you promote them.

That's why we think it's a good idea for people who are starting ecommerce businesses to try selling in the physical retail world. You'll quickly get an idea of what people think of your product and your brand. And you might even make some good money along the way.

Get Ready for Some “Dirt-ache”



Farmer's markets and flea markets in particular are hard work. It's no joke. The hardest days we have ever worked in our life were running booths at flea markets. Here's why:

- **They start pretty early** – Chances are you'll be getting up at the crack of dawn, loading your car or truck with your tents, chairs, display cases and merchandise.
- **There is a lot of manual labor** – Aside from standing on your feet most of the day, sometimes in pretty hot weather, you are responsible for lugging around merchandise and equipment as well as setting it all up and tearing it all down.
- **You end the day filthy** – There is no way around this. One day at the flea market will get you dirtier than a full day of gardening. So if you're planning dinner arrangements afterwards, make sure you have enough time to go home and clean up.

Finally, consider having someone help you or at least come by to relieve you at some point in your day. If you are looking after a booth all by yourself and you need to go to the restroom, well, you either have to risk leaving your

booth unattended, asking your neighbor to watch over your stuff or worse, holding it in.

Now for the Good News

Aside from all the hard work and dirt that comes along with running your own flea market booth, you may come out making a decent chunk of cash at the end of the day (which will definitely be deserved) and most importantly you'll obtain one-on-one feedback with real people.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING: GET PEOPLE TO SIGN UP TO YOUR MARKETING LISTS

The worst mistake you can make when operating a booth is not getting the people you meet on your marketing lists. The sooner you can build your marketing lists, the better shape you will be in down the road. As matter of fact, building your marketing lists should be a top priority every day you're in business, no matter what you're doing. These lists will be incredibly valuable years down the road when they are full of thousands of people. So start building them now.

Here are some tips for building your lists out in the real world:

- **Have people Like your Facebook page on the spot** – If you have a good conversation with someone at your booth, ask them to Like your Facebook page on their mobile phone. If they don't have Facebook on their phone, ask if you can get their name to reach out to them later.
- **Have people friend you on Facebook** – This is a little bit dicey depending on the type of person you are. If you are a pretty light Facebook user that doesn't expose a ton of personal stuff on your Facebook profile, sometimes is a good idea to have your customers friend you. Facebook profiles have the ability to market a lot stronger than Facebook pages.
- **Collect email addresses** – We would go as far to say that emails might be more important than Facebook fans and friends. Simply because email will always be around while social networks may come

and go with popularity. If you are really thinking long-term, building your email list might be the smarter strategy.

Some Financial and Administrative Stuff

Some cities will require you to have a business license in order to operate a booth at one of these events. Additionally, the organizers usually charge a fee to rent a space at their event. These costs are usually pretty minimal and are always cheaper than opening a store front.

Depending on the disposable budget you have for your business, it's definitely a good idea to stock up on some physical signage and business cards.

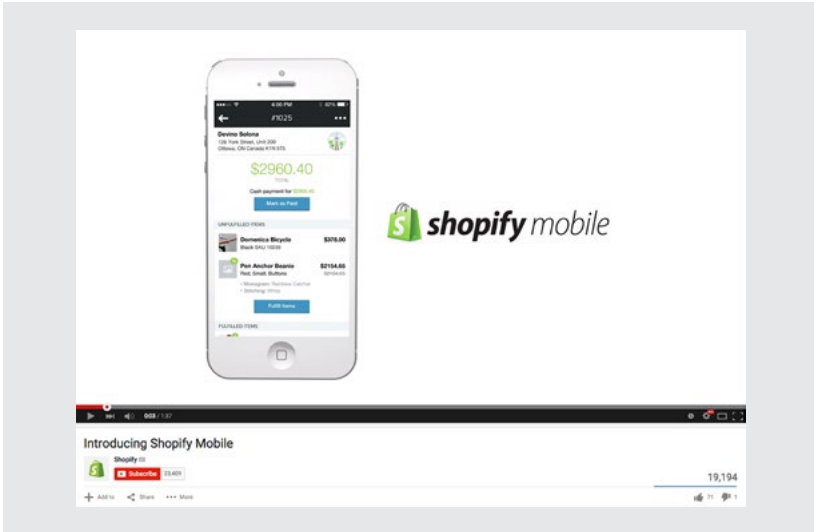
Since you're coming in as an online merchant, be sure to brand your domain name. Remember, you're building a brand not just a business. So get that domain name out in front of people and make sure your domain name is on:

- Your business cards
- Your booth sign
- Any flyers or coupons

How to Accept Payments

Nowadays, it's important to accept various methods of payments. Most booth operators simply accept cash because they don't even have an online presence. Since you're main business in online and you accept credit cards through your online store, there's no reason you shouldn't accept credit cards at a farmers market, trade show, flea market or pop-up store.

If you run your ecommerce store on Shopify, simply use the **mobile card reader** to accept payments right from your iPhone or iPad.



What if Your Products are a Flop?



Say, after a few weekends of selling your products at the market, you find that most people just don't seem interested in what you're trying to sell. Assuming you've gotten enough feedback, you might want to consider closing up shop and focusing more on your online efforts.

Perhaps the demographic at those markets is the wrong niche. Generally, people there are usually looking for a super deal and only come with a little

cash on them. Maybe your product is too high-end or expensive for them. So don't be discouraged – and remember:

- **Your Target Audience or Customer Base** – For the people who did resonate with your product - did they match your target persona? Did the experience help define your target personas better? Keep painting a picture of these ideal customers in your mind!
- **Feedback** – Are you learning what real people like in terms of your product selection? What inventory can people do without? If you're selling your own product – what did people like? What did they dislike? Carefully record these findings for future product development.

Remember to get people to give you feedback. Maybe they are the wrong customers for your product, that's okay. They still might have excellent feedback on what you're trying to do.

The Ultimate Goal with Selling in the Physical Retail World

It's possible to devise a strategy where you employ people to man booths all over your country. That could be an interesting model that works for moving your product. However, most people will find that after a summer of hitting up the markets, the grind really isn't very scalable for growing a business. But trying to make millions from selling your products at a flea market isn't the point. The point is about getting used to selling your products for the first time, getting to know your first customers. It's about getting real feedback, understanding the emotions people have when they first see your product. Listening to the language they use, taking in the overall customer experience.

You'll appreciate your first customers, your first sales and the marketing lists you built. And most importantly, the feedback you received from real people who were willing to discuss what they liked and didn't like about your product.

Selling in a physical retail setting? Check out Shopify's **iPad POS System** to easily sell your products and process payments.



CHAPTER 30

Local Business Networks

In this chapter we're going to get into the nitty-gritty of how to effectively network in the real world to get results, and by results we mean sales for your business.

If there is anything we want you to take away from this chapter is, then it's the first rule of business networking: "Give other business owners' referrals (a.k.a. business) and they will do the same for you."

Pretty simple right?

It's just good business karma.

Local Business Networking Groups

In almost every city around the world local business networking groups exist. The most common example of these groups would be your local chamber of commerce. Typical chambers of commerce will meet several times a month for various events such as new business openings, speaking engagements and small business workshops.

Over the years, niche networking groups have developed in order to increase the effectiveness of local relationship building. Some common networking groups include:

- **LeTip** – LeTip groups meet once a week and only one business per category is allowed (to avoid competition within the group). Members are required to either provide a business referral or do business with a member each week. This helps members understand what each other's businesses are – thus catalyzing the networking effectiveness of the group.
- **BNI** – Business Network International is similar to LeTip, but has groups outside of North America. The group mechanics are very similar in operation to LeTip.
- **Your local chamber of commerce** – The beauty of your local chamber of commerce is that they connect you with your city's movers and shakers. These relationships can be hugely effective.

How Can Business Networking Groups Help Your Business?



In a nutshell, the bigger your professional network, the more trusted referrals you'll get. When we say "referral", don't just think of a referral as an interested first-time home buyer or someone who needs a gentle dentist. A referral can also be a local person looking for certain products that you sell.

Now you can network day and night and get zero benefit out of it. Simply collecting thousands of business cards won't ignite explosive growth. However, if you network the right way, it might be the only form of marketing you ever do. Many professional networkers will say this time and time again.

Here are 6 key strategies toward successful networking:

- 1 Be memorable to other business owners** – When you attend these groups you need to be memorable. One of the easiest ways to do this is to have a very unique and creative business card. Alternatively, experienced networkers will have a silly poem as a tagline: "When you're bathroom becomes a bummer, just remember Pete the Plumber!" You don't necessarily have to be "cheesy", but you **MUST** find a way to be memorable.
- 2 Find businesses in your network that compliment your own** – If you own an online jewelry store, you should partner up with local businesses that are in the wedding industry. By referring business

to your power partners (which is WAY easier to do than to refer business to non-related businesses), the greater the chance your power partners will refer you business in return. Makes sense right?

- 3 Find out which networking groups are effective** – Not all groups are going to be good at delivering business. When you start attending business networking groups in your area, ask other business owners what other groups they like. Over time you'll notice a trend of what groups seems to deliver the best value.
- 4 Frequent these groups once a week** – The only way anyone is going to remember who you are, and more importantly, what you do, is if you show your face regularly. The more you show up, the more referrals you will get.
- 5 Identify the superstar networkers** – In every networking group there will always be “superstar” networkers. These are business owners that really understand the value of synergizing and helping other businesses out. What you want to do is identify these superstars and develop a good relationship with them. Generally these people will have been in the group the longest, and will have the most influence within the group.
- 6 Keep going** – The reward of networking doesn't happen overnight. You will need to devote a good few months for it to really take effect. This goes back to giving people in your networking group time to know who you are and what you do. Also, you'll need time to deliver your first referrals too. But once you get your networking mojo down – it can pay off immensely.

How Does This Help My Quest For Global Domination?



As you grow and your business scales, local business networking may not fit into your weekly regimen. But when you're starting off, it's a great way to get your local community aware of your business. Especially if you have a brick-and-mortar location. In certain metropolitan areas, developing your local strength can be a huge portion of your revenue.

However, as you get busier, you'll notice that business networking takes time. You'll have to make the call as to whether or not you can fit networking into your schedule and if it's worth it to your bottom line. Many established businesses will send employees to networking groups to maintain a presence in the local business community.

Whatever you do, get out there and give networking a shot. It's a great way to create opportunities for your business that sitting behind a computer can't get you.



CHAPTER 31

Go to a Meetup

Meetups are a great way to meet local entrepreneurs. Networking with local business and/or tech people can pay off big time. You'll get to learn from experienced people who know the ins and outs of the industry. There are plenty of ways to find a local meetup. Your first destination should be Google to search "your town __ meetup". You can also go to [Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) for keywords like "startups" and "tech" to see who else is working on an online venture in your area.

When you attend your first Meetup, here are a few things you can do to make the most out your experience:

- **Cross promote online** – Exchange coupons with them for future mailings or simply write about each other's businesses in your emails.

- **Tweet and share each other's content** – Going back to the rule about business karma – help your local online business buddies by sharing their content online on sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. They will repay you for it by doing the same.
- **Guest blog** – One great way to spread awareness of who you are and to get some SEO (Search Engine Optimization) benefit while doing it, is to write guest blog post for other people's business blogs.

The one big benefit from going to tech or online business Meetups is that you meet people who have experience. The knowledge and people they know can be very valuable in your own startup quest.

Start Your Own Meetup



One thing that can really boost the awareness of your online business is to host your own Meetup. Now you don't want to make the focus of your Meetup about your business. What you want to do is to create a reason to meet with local people in your area who might have an interest in something related to your business.

Here are some examples to help illustrate what you can do:

- If you own an online kayaking store, you might want to organize a weekly kayaking Meetup at your local river or marina.

- If you operate an online shoe shop that specializes in high-top footwear, you can host a Meetup that is a 2-on-2 basketball tournament. Offer a trophy and a free \$100 gift certificate for the winners.
- If you own an online jewelry shop, you can host a jewelry making Meetup.

You may find that running your own Meetup is a faster way to network since you will be the hub of all the activity. But there are few important things to remember:

- 1 **It will take nurturing** – You will need to update your Meetup page often, reply to comments, and make sure your group is happy. You'll probably want to spend a few hours a week answering questions, responding to comments and updating your calendar of events.
- 2 **Don't make it about your business** – Create a Meetup that provides value for the attendants. That's what will keep people coming back and spreading the word.

How To Start

Remember how we said to always be building your marketing lists, a great way to spread the message about your Meetup is through your marketing lists (Facebook, Twitter and your email newsletter). Hopefully by now, you have a few good sized lists that you can market to about your Meetup group.

It might also be wise to reach out to your network of friends and family to kick-start the first few Meetups. They can add to the attendance and help facilitate ice breaking.

Be sure to fill out your Meetup profile to 100 percent completeness. This will help target people who are searching for new Meetups. Meetup.com will also market to people on your behalf who they think might be interested in what you have to offer. They will use the data you input towards this marketing, so take advantage of it.

Meetup Metrics



One really nice feature of Meetup.com is the group statistics they provide. These stats are a great way to monitor the health of your group. Here are three important metrics you should watch:

- 1 **Member joins** – This keeps tabs on how well you’re attracting new members and how your audience is growing.
- 2 **Attending** – Knowing your RSVP counts over time is a great indication on whether or not your group has that “viralness” that you should shoot for.
- 3 **Total and Active Members** – By tracking joins and leaves you can get a sense of how engaged your group is. Keep in mind that Active Members are more important than Total Members. Keep an eye on your “Active Member” count, make sure that number is growing.

By monitoring these stats you can determine ways to improve your group’s activities, location and meeting times. For instance, you may want to try:

- **Changing the day of the week** – Which days of the week work better for your group members? Maybe Mondays are too busy for most people as well as Friday. Perhaps weekends are the sweet spot.
- **Changing locations** – Locations are a huge factor to the success of a Meetup group. At first you may want to try many different locations. However, later on, you may find that switching locations is disruptive to your group’s growth.

- **Changing times** – Having events at 5pm on weekdays might make it really hard for your members to attend. Try testing different times to help narrow in on that sweet spot. Again, changing times too much down the road may throw members off.
- **Changing the event format** – Remember, the goal is to provide the most value for your group. What can you do to make sure your members get the most out of your Meetup? Be careful of trying to pack in too much because you might spread the event out so thin that the overall value received becomes very mediocre.

And Finally, A Couple of Secret Tips

First, you need to be careful about having your group become too directly related to an individual person, simply because the group becomes “Jane’s Group” or “John’s Group” and less about the brand. This can become a problem if “Jane” or “John” leave the company or can’t attend the Meetup anymore.

Lastly, many people have found that January is a huge month for new member signups. So whatever you do, make sure your groups meets in January and doesn’t die out because of the Holidays.

We can’t emphasize how powerful Meetup.com is to spread your brand’s awareness and generate sales. We highly recommend you give it a shot if you have the time and a creative approach to weekly events.



CHAPTER 32

Sell Wholesale to Other Retailers

Sometimes you'll find that selling directly to consumers may not be your forte or hasn't yielded the same results you were expecting.

Before you give up, you might want to consider moving up the supply chain and start distributing your own products (or even other products from other companies) to other retailers. Usually, due to the increased volume you'll be selling, your revenues will grow much faster, but it is a different kind of business and it takes some getting used to.

The hidden advantage is not only do you open the possibility of growing your cash flow, you are allowing other businesses to take part in the

marketing of your products. They will talk about your products to their customers and hopefully spread the word about it through their own internet marketing activities.

It may be a bit trickier to control the marketing messages once you're in this stage –but that's just a little growing pain that has to be felt when scaling.

Create Different Pricing for Different Customers



Now you'll have at least two different types of customers: consumers and retailers. The golden rule is:

Don't undercut your retailers.

This means that you should always sell your products to your retailers at a lower price than you do to your consumers. So if you sell widgets for \$20 on your public facing website (where ordinary consumers make purchases), make sure you sell widgets for \$10 to your retailers so they can make a profit.

Also, keep in mind that If one day you decide to blow out a bunch of inventory and post a huge sale on your website, you might make some of your retailers upset. Especially if they just bought a lot of inventory from you at a higher price than what you're selling to the public.

Minimum Orders

In order to achieve selling volume to increase your revenues, you're going to probably want to enforce a minimum order rule. This means retailers (wholesale buyers) must buy a minimum amount of product or dollar value when placing an order. This allows you to discount your products since they have to buy in bulk.

Advanced Wholesale Pricing

Some companies take it a step further and would start offering pricing tiers to their retailers. For example:

- If you buy 100 units, you pay \$10/unit.
- If you buy 500 units, you pay \$9/unit
- If you buy 1000 units, you pay \$8/unit.

The idea here is to encourage larger orders and more revenue. It's probably wise to start out with something simple and see how your business adjusts to this new way of distribution.

It's going to be tempting to allow retailers exceptions when it comes to placing minimum orders. You'll have to be the judge of this. You might want to be lenient for new retailers who have signed up for your wholesale program. You can offer "no minimum order" on your first purchase to incentivize sign ups.

But it's probably a good idea to stick to your guns after the initial grace period. If you always let people buy small orders at a discounted rate, just be aware that it might have detrimental impact on your ability to stay in business.

Allowing Other Retailers to Dropship



Another way to speed up your wholesale business is to allow other online retailers to dropship your products. If you're new to the concept, we highly recommend reading another one of our Ecommerce University guides, **"The Ultimate Guide to Dropshipping."** But in short, the way it works is, their customers purchase your products from their website and you ship the products to their customers.

The retailer will most likely pay you a slightly discounted price for the item since you didn't have to pay for any of the marketing of the sale.

Obviously this can be a tricky system to set up, but it's worth spending some time over a spreadsheet to see if it's a profitable business decision for you. If you think about it, there are tons of online shops out there ready to sell your products if you have a dropshipping program available.

Some Final Words on Selling to Other Retailers

In many ways, starting a wholesale distribution business means you've reached the big time and can focus your efforts more on your B2B relationships. Take some time to think it through and seek out some expert business advice. It may be wise to consult a business coach who is familiar with this territory. Learning from other's mistakes is way better than paying for your mistakes.



CHAPTER 33

Take Your Business On the Road

A fun and productive way to see the rest of your country while looking to make that first sale is to showcase your business in other locations.

Now granted, this strategy is better suited for more established businesses, it's still a viable option for those just beginning as well. By going on the road you may find different pockets of culture that appreciate your offering more than in your immediate geographical region. It's also something companies like **Warby Parker** are experimenting with as a way to reach a completely new audience. The company's **Class Trip** tour had them going around the nation on a school bus bring their entire line of eyewear to the offline world.



Image Source: what-the-font.blogspot.ca

In fact, many great businesses were built on the road. It can be an enlightening experience and will open you up to many possibilities that you just can't get staying put. You'll create new business relationships and get brand evangelists that you would never find normally.

But First – You Have to Be Somewhat Social

A lot of magic that happens on the road are the small run-ins you have with individuals. It could be when you're filling up for gas or pulling into a hotel - you never know who you are going to run into, and that's exactly the point.

If you're not the type of person to start conversations with strangers then this activity will be self-defeating. However, if this is right up your alley - then this adventure can be the start of small business empire.

Here are a few examples of successful businesses that started out of vehicles:

- **Nike** – Started out of the car of Phil Knight. A **green Plymouth Valiant** to be exact.
- **Stussy** – A lifestyle clothing brand that originated in Laguna Beach, CA. Like Nike, Stussy started out of car – just a decade later.
- **Pangea Organics** – They didn't start out of a car, but a van rather. They sold soap and now have a strong skincare brand.

Make a List of Trade Shows and Community Events

If you have decided to go on the road, the next thing you need to do is make an itinerary of places and events to go to on your travels. Answer these questions first:

- How long can you be gone?
- How much budget do you have for your trip? Don't forget fuel costs.

Next, make a list of tradeshow, meet-ups and business networking mixers that are on your route. Be sure to email the organizers to see if there are any potential registration pitfalls that may keep you from attending.

If you live in the United States, you might want to visit these sites:

- localharvest.org – This website lists all the farmers markets across the United States.
- tsnn.com – Trade Show News Network is your one stop resource for everything trade shows. Not only do they cover the United States, they list shows that are held all over the world.
- meetup.com – We dedicated Chapter 31 to Meetup.com. Meetups are usually free to attend and are popular all over the world.

Selling in person? All you need is your iPad and [Shopify's POS Software](#).

Deck Out Your Vehicle

While you're on the road, you're going to pass thousands if not hundreds of thousands of automobiles. You might as well turn your car in to a billboard for your business.



The example above is a bit extreme, but you get the point.
 (image credit: <http://www.trendblast.com/city/san-francisco/mobileretailvan>)

There are plenty of “auto wrapping” businesses available these days. Just Google the words “Vehicle Wrap” and chances are there are a few outlets in your city that provide the service. Here are some tips you should keep in mind before you wrap your vehicle with something overly wild and unreadable:

- **Focus on your domain name** – Consider only using your domain name and forget your business name. Cut out the <http://www> part as well. Just use: yourbusinessname.com. Everyone knows how to use the Internet these days.
- **Don’t get too wild and decorative** – True, it may attract more eyeballs, but those same eyeballs might get lost in a sea of crazy and incomprehensible artwork.
- **Have a value proposition** – If you’re going to include any other text on your vehicle, let it simply be your value proposition. What’s a short and memorable benefit of doing business with you?

The Traveling Checklist

Before you set out on your journey, there are some crucial things you must remember to bring to ensure success.

“MUST HAVES”:

- Laptop with charger
- Mobile phone with charger (check about roaming charges)
- Business cards
- Pop-up tent
- Foldable chair
- Company banner (more than one can't hurt)
- Medical insurance
- Basic medical kit
- Hand sanitizer
- Inventory (if you need to ship orders from the road)
- Portable printer
- Post-it notes and a pen
- A suit / dress clothes
- Dress shoes
- Breath mints

“IF YOU CAN SWING IT”:

- iPad or Tablet
- Extra credit card (for emergencies)
- Car power inverter (to charge electronics while driving)
- A good camera (for Instagram, Facebook and Tumblr)
- Wireless internet plan

And When You're Finally On The Road...

Try to stick with at least half of your itinerary. If the trip doesn't seem like it's giving you much benefit at first, and you're eager to get back to home base – realize that sometimes it's the second half of the trip that makes it valuable.

But in the end you'll have to make the call. That's really what being a good business owner is about: being able to make good decisions.



CHAPTER 34

Deploy a Sales Team

Sometimes getting that first sale is a quick endeavour. But sustaining growth in sales quickly makes you realize how tough it can be to be a one-person sales team, especially if your product requires a little more convincing than traditional consumer goods.

The obvious question that you'll probably have next is: How can I afford a sales team? The answer is that your sales team has to be designed to not only pay for itself but also bring in additional revenue and customers, so it's all about how you design your team. Think of your sales team as miniature stores that act independently and each bring in their own revenue.

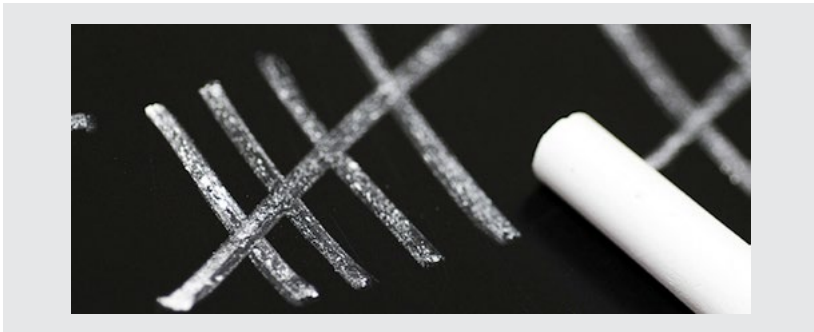
So how do you design a sales team to do this?

Determine Your Sales Goals

Considering that you may bring on a few sales people, what kind of sales numbers do you want to hit each month? Remember the entire point of creating a sales team is to achieve financial growth. So you need to figure out what your first financial goal will be, then work backwards and see how much you can pay your sales team to get to that goal.

This math will be iterative. You'll have to spend time adjusting numbers to see what wages, commissions and number of salespeople will work with your goals.

Commission Pay Structure



Next, you're going to want to create a wage structure which incentivizes your team to create business. Here's a basic structure:

- **Base rate** – Trying to hire salespeople for commission only jobs tends to be pretty difficult. And without having tried the job first, there is no way of them knowing if your company provides the support and resources they need to make sales.
- **Commission** – Typical sales people will make a percentage of the revenue they bring in. You'll obviously have to do some math to see what you can afford to pay in terms of commissions. The general rule

of thumb is: the higher your commission, the more motivated your sales team will be to go the extra mile.

- **Bonus** – For sales people who really knock it out of the park for a given month, you may want to consider offering an additional payment bonus. This is a great way to lure sales people towards certain sales goals you have set.

The beauty of a sales team is the fact that they have to be somewhat independent. It's up to them to make sales.

How Do You Get Your Sales Team to Make Sales?

Obviously, just having people sit in your office or warehouse all day is not going to stir up any business. You'll need to make a plan for them to follow so they can create business. Here are a few ideas:

- **Twitter** – Encourage them to build relationships on Twitter to help build customers and evangelists. You'll have to tell them that it will take time and not to be too aggressive. Most importantly, they should design their twitter profile to have a unique title at your company. For example, their Twitter bio should say “The Happy Man at XYZ Co.”. The idea is that they aren't labeled “Sales at XYZ co” or “agent” or “representative”. The last thing you want them to do is scare off their prospects.
- **Reaching out to Past Customers** – One of the easiest ways to stir up sales is to reach out to customers who haven't purchased in a while. Remember, you essentially paid for these people to become customers in the first place. Don't let them slip through the cracks! Just give them a gentle reminder that you're still in business to serve them.
- **Provide Live Chat or a Toll Free Number** – By simply making it easier for customers to buy from your site, you can increase sales. Let your sales team “man” the live chat and phone lines to help customers buy from you and teach them to upsell! Upselling is the art of enticing customers to add more products to their order.

- **Check your Email Marketing Replies** – A common place for untapped business are from people who reply to your email marketing campaigns. Perhaps you should also think about making your email marketing a bit more interactive to stir up conversations with customers.
- **Events, Tradeshows and Networking** – Like we talked about in previous chapters. Live events are great places to generate business. Your sales team should be a perfect fit for these events. With a sales team your company can hit more events during the week than you could ever do by yourself.

Hiring the Right Sales People



This is the hardest part if you've never done it before. If you put an ad out for a job position, you'll likely receive hundreds if not thousands of responses. So how do you find the best talent?

- 1 **Look for previous sales experience** – Sales is extremely tough because it requires a great deal of emotional armor. Great sales people can face being rejected 100 times in a row and can keep trucking. Therefore, only a select few are really cut out for sales. If this your first time creating a sales team, only hire seasoned sales people as they'll be able to teach you a thing or two.
- 2 **Call their old employer** – Checking references is tedious, but it's the best way to weed out the winners from the losers. For people who

apply for your sales position that don't list references to their old job, just throw those applications in the round file.

- 3 Check their LinkedIn profile for recommendations** – This can be another way to cut down your applicant list. If they don't have any LinkedIn recommendations, you can eliminate them from the running.
- 4 Don't hire green salespeople** – You'll find plenty of people who will say "Yes" to everything you ask and are even willing to work for commission only – yet have no prior sales experience. You probably want to stay away from these people. In the end they won't make any sales and will waste your time and energy. It may be tempting to hire people willing to work for free – so if you really want to try it, be prepared to hire 100 of them! Because only a few of them will make any sales.
- 5 Provide generous compensation** – Since you're looking for the best, reward them with decent if not stellar pay. Again, this can be in the form of high commissions. It's worth it. These people will be essential to growing your revenue and more importantly your customer base.

Be Nurturing

The worst thing you can do is hire your sales people and then tell them "to figure it out" or "I hired you so I don't have to do this work". In order to achieve the greatest amount of success you will need to be available to answer questions, point them in the right direction and give them ideas on how to sell more. You'll need patience at first and you'll probably have to work "overtime" to get the team to gel.

But again, if you look at this as an investment (like going to get a MBA), then you should understand that it's not automatic and it will take some elbow grease on your part. As soon as you start hitting your sales goals, consider promoting your best salesperson to be a sales manager. This way he or she can take over the nurturing task and also onboard new sales people.



CHAPTER 35

Get Going with Tradeshows

Trade shows can have a profound impact on your business, especially if you're the manufacturer or source of your own products. Even if you're simply reselling products created by other companies, you can achieve a good amount of success at a trade show. If ever you have trouble finding something pertinent to you, a handy resource to look up trade shows that might be relevant is the **Trade Show News Network (TSNN)**. Not only will you open yourself up to some on-the-spot sales, but hopefully, you'll be able to build lists of highly interested prospective customers while you're there.

Should You Get A Booth?



Depending on the trade show, floor space can be quite expensive. That's actually why trade shows have become so popular. The trade show organizer is basically renting otherwise cheap floor space for upwards of \$1,000 a square foot.

If it's your first time going to a particular trade show, you might want to come as an attendee and not as an exhibitor. That way you can get a feel of the trade show to see if it would be a good fit for your business strategy next year.

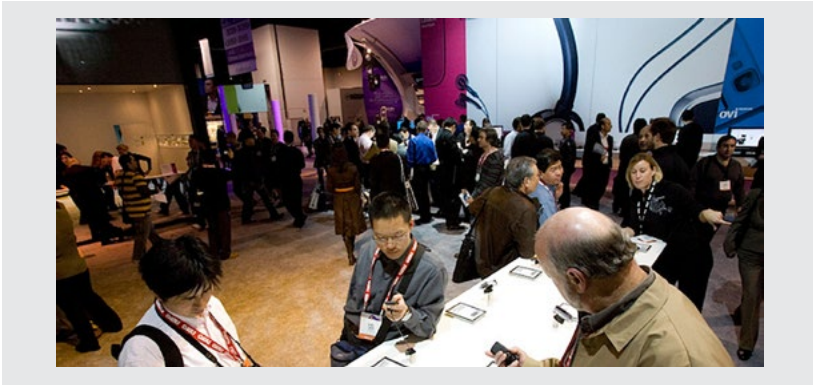
However, if you know there will be a lot of attendees that would be perfect customers for your business, you may want to just bite the bullet and rent a booth. And if you're the manufacturer of your own products, trade shows are a great place to book large orders with retailers from all over the world.

Consumers At Trade Shows

If the trade show is more consumer oriented instead of just a bunch of industry "heads" getting together, not only will you be able to make sales at the show, you can add highly interested people to your marketing lists.

Trade shows attract some of the most targeted customers than any other event you can think of. These people are perfect evangelists for your brand and you should treat them very well.

Start by Making them Happy



Consider stocking up on items like stickers, t-shirts, pins and other promotional items that consumers might appreciate. But think creatively, what would your target consumer really like? You want to give them something they will talk about.

After you have given out your swag to these lurking evangelists, get in the habit of having them Like your Facebook page on the spot, or get them to sign up for your mailing list. Remember, these are people you want to keep marketing to for years down the road. So bring a laptop with you so that you get people to sign up for your newsletter or Like your Facebook page.

If you're selling products at your booth, consider giving your new customers an instant discount for a Like or an email sign up. Don't get overly excited about sales at the trade show and forget to add them to your lists, being able to remarket to them will bring you much more revenue in the years to come.

Industry Networking

Trade shows are really about networking and building relationships with the right people in your industry.

Here are some of things to look out for at a trade show:

- **Manufacturers / companies that white label** – We can't emphasize the power of branding enough. If you can provide your customers

with high quality products that have your brand label on them, you'll find this strategy to be much more effective than selling other people's products in the long run. Generally, you'll have better margins and you'll be able to spread brand awareness with every product sold that has your logo on it.

- **Competitors** – Find out who your competitors are and talk to them. Building a persona of your competition is usually a good thing to do. Find out how you match up to them and in what areas your company is lacking.
- **Power Partners** – Look for companies that don't directly compete with you and that you can synergize with. Think of ways where you can partner and run cross promotions. Try to find big companies that might give you a spot on their newsletter or will run a cross-promotional campaign with you. The key is to approach them with an offer they can't refuse. Consider crafting an entire cross-branded email for them so they don't have to do any work but send it to their list. If it's a success, get them to run it on their Facebook page.

What If There Are No Trade Shows In My Niche?

This might be the best scenario that could happen. Why? Well, you might want to consider starting the first trade show in your industry.

Starting a trade show is the ultimate authority power play. It shows that you're the leader in the industry and will make you the hub of all activity and information.

BUT AREN'T THEY EXPENSIVE TO START?

No one said that your first trade show has to be in Las Vegas. Most trade shows start out small. Call your city and see what local venues they have available and what rates they charge. Even local hotels and event centers might have affordable conference space they can rent to you. You'd be surprised at what is available if you spend some time looking.

You may find trade shows are such a valuable event for your business that you might go to them every couple of months. It's definitely worth a look into, so make sure to check them out.

Selling in person at Trade Shows? All you need is your iPad and **Shopify's POS Software** to easily sell your products and process payments.



CHAPTER 36

Go Door to Door

This might be one of the most overlooked startup marketing techniques out there. It actually can work for digital, subscription, and physical products. Simply, go door to door and introduce yourself as the founder, creator or “insert creative name here” of your company. It’s a technique that more and more companies are **surprisingly** turning to in order to win customers over.

But People Hate Door To Door Salespeople

Yes they do, and maybe you do too. It’s no secret that through various mediums, we’ve built a negative stereotype of what it means to be a salesperson. But try putting it to yourself this way, you’re not going around

selling, you're going around introducing yourself and sharing what you do. That's all. You'll be surprised by the wide variety of responses you'll get, and even though it might be a slim percentage at first, the number of people who appreciate what you do and are willing to hand over their hard-earned cash for your products or services.

When you knock on your neighbor's door, you are approaching them not as a salesperson, but as a neighbor. You can open with this pitch:

“Hi, My name is _____. I'm your neighbor and I just wanted to introduce myself.”

As the conversation gets going, it might become natural for the topic of what each other's profession is to surface. That's the perfect time to introduce your brand, but don't try to sell them. Simply show them what it is you sell during “working hours.”

Now it's important not to do this for completely self-serving purposes. The idea is as a business owner and hopefully future leader, is that you want to become a community pillar. So this strategy is only for those of you who genuinely like your neighbourhood and want to get to know the people in it. These genuine relationships will repay you tenfold.

But, Do All This Just To Talk To A Dozen People On My Block?



You can take the “neighbor” strategy citywide. Simply go door to door and let people know that you have started a business in their town and leave them with something creative and memorable. Be really clever with this. For example:

- During the winter holidays you can leave them with some mistletoe.
- At the beginning of summer, hand out BBQ matches. They’re cheap and can be nicely bundled.
- Bring them a list of 10 awesome things they probably don’t know about their community. For instance, check to see what discounts the local utilities companies offer. Find out all the little details that can benefit local residents and compile them into a **nice flyer**.

Whatever you do, don’t just leave a flyer on their doorstep without meeting them. Then you are just trashing their doorstep and giving them more work to do, because now they have to throw away your flyer. As a matter of fact, don’t leave anything on their doorstep without meeting them. The point is to make a personal connection.

We want to leave you with this final thought, there are probably tens of thousands of people in your town alone. Imagine if you could turn all those people into raving fans? So start thinking about how you can engage these local evangelists.



CHAPTER 37

Use Print Ads

In the age of online advertising where you can calculate your return on investment to the penny, suggesting print advertising may seem quite unusual. Especially when magazines are getting extremely thin and newspapers are going out of business.

That's exactly why we're suggesting it.

If there has ever been a greater time for print advertising, it's now. In other words, it's a print advertiser's market. Believe it or not, in many circumstances you can practically call the shots when it comes to negotiating rates.

Why Print Advertising?



Think print is dead? **Think again.** For many magazines and newspapers print advertising is less expensive than it was a decade ago. That's simply because a lot of advertisers have moved most of their budget into online advertising.

Naturally, as the demand for ad space has diminished, so have advertising prices. This is not the case in every single instance, but by and large this is true across the print advertising world.

Depending on your niche and what print outlets are relevant to your business, this can be a goldmine of opportunity for you to not only get exposure to the right audience, but put a **creative spin** on how you want your brand to be recognized.

What Kind of Advertising Opportunities Should You Look For?

The smartest thing you can do is survey your customers and ask them what magazines and newspapers they read regularly. This will give you a strong indication of where you should advertise. But, most of you haven't made a sale yet so you don't have any customers, so here are a few things you can do to pinpoint the perfect publication for your business:

START LOCALLY

Not only will local publications be less expensive, but you can take advantage of the fact that you're local as well. You can run ads that resonate with locals, whereas with national or international advertising, you just can't get the same effect.

CHART READERSHIP VS. COST

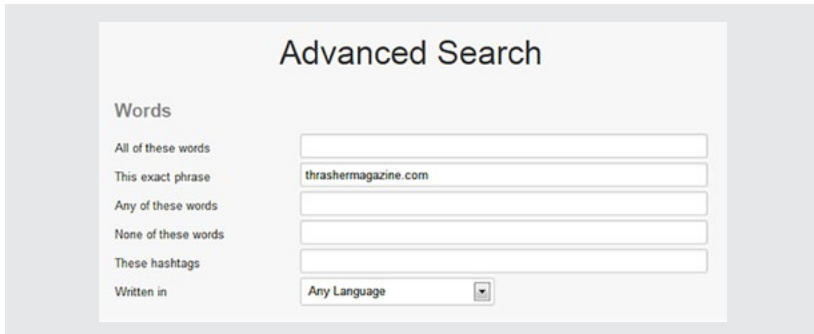
You're going to want to chart which publications have the highest readership numbers along with their advertising cost. Determine which publications have the lowest cost corresponding with the highest readership numbers. Those are going to be the newspapers and magazines with the best bang for the buck. Of course you will have to also weigh which publications will be the best match for your business. The more niche specific and relevant the publication is to your business, the better the effect it will have.

For example, if you were debating whether to run an ad in the Wall Street Journal or Adventure Kayak Magazine (assuming you own an online kayaking store), you probably would want to advertise in Adventure Kayak Magazine since that's what your target audience reads.

CHECK THE TWITTERSPHERE

A great way to see if anyone actually reads the publications you're thinking about advertising in is to see if anyone is tweeting their articles. Chances are these publications will have an online component, so you can do a Twitter search to see how often people talk about them. Another good thing to do is to check their Twitter follower count to see how popular they are.

In the example below, we're going to see how frequently people talk about or link to "thrashermagazine.com" (Thrasher is a skateboarding magazine). First we must navigate to <https://twitter.com/search-advanced> to perform our search:



Advanced Search

Words

All of these words

This exact phrase

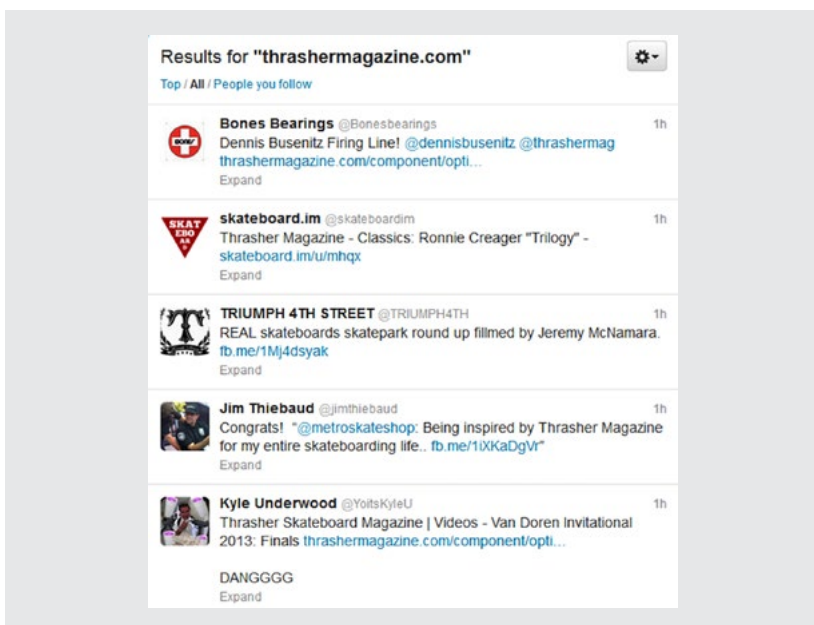
Any of these words

None of these words

These hashtags

Written in

After entering the domain name in the exact phrase field, we hit enter and we get the following results:



Results for "thrasher magazine.com"

Top / All / People you follow

Bones Bearings @Bonesbearings 1h
Dennis Busenitz Firing Line! @dennisbusenitz @thrasher mag
thrasher magazine.com/component/opti...
Expand

skateboard.im @skateboardim 1h
Thrasher Magazine - Classics: Ronnie Creager "Trilogy" -
skateboard.im/u/mhqx
Expand

TRIUMPH 4TH STREET @TRIUMPH4TH 1h
REAL skateboards skatepark round up filmed by Jeremy McNamara.
fb.me/1Mj4dsyak
Expand

Jim Thiebaud @jimthiebaud 1h
Congrats! @metroskateshop: Being inspired by Thrasher Magazine
for my entire skateboarding life.. fb.me/1iXKaDgVr
Expand

Kyle Underwood @YolitsKyleU 1h
Thrasher Skateboard Magazine | Videos - Van Doren Invitational
2013: Finals thrasher magazine.com/component/opti...
DANGGGG
Expand

We can see that people are talking about this magazine quite frequently (a few times an hour), so this is a good indication that a good amount of eyeballs read this magazine.

Some Tips for Diving into Print Advertising

- 1 Plan for the long haul** – The number one rule when it comes to print advertising is that you have to stick with it for a while. Don't expect sales to come pouring after your first ad. It's more about branding and generating demand over time.
- 2 Create special promotion URLs** – Create URLs that will help you track the effectiveness of your ads. These URLs will not give you an exact number of people who saw your ads, but they do give you a relative measure of how effective your ads are.
- 3 Don't clutter your ad space** – One of the biggest habits of new entrepreneurs is to try to squeeze in as much information into their ad as possible in order to take advantage of every millimeter or real estate. Well it doesn't work – and actually ruins the effectiveness of your ad. Instead advertise one promotion. Having a clear and concise offer will generally yield much better results. Otherwise you're just going to confuse people.
- 4 Don't wait until the last minute to create your ad** – You should come up with your first draft a week before the deadline. Chances are you're going to have to reformat your artwork or you may come up with an even better idea for a better ad. Give yourself some breathing room – you'll thank yourself for it.
- 5 Never pay full price** – To find out the price of an advertisement in a magazine you go to their website and check the rate calendar in their media kit. There you will see something called "Rate Base" which is the guaranteed audited circulation, and then prices for varying sizes of ads depending on volume of buy. Big discounts go to advertisers who commit to 6-12 issues. Now you have to talk to a sales person to negotiate the rate. The first quote you get is called the "open rate," and you can usually get them at least 30% lower than that. You should always negotiate a better rate, nobody expects you to pay what is listed on the website, or even their first quote. Listed price is \$100,000 for a full-page ad, you can probably get them down to \$50,000 for a one-off. We have negotiated to pay only 30% of the listed price before, so we can't stress this enough: never pay full price.

- 6 Don't pay extra for color or bleed** – So many advertisers don't know this, but magazine ad departments are ripping everyone off with bleed charges, and charging extra for 2-color, 4-color, and more. These charges come from the days when it would actually cost more to print full bleed (they would lay ads out by hand) or in full color. Nowadays with printing technology it makes no difference, so never pay extra for color or bleed.
- 7 Negotiate position** – While you're negotiating rates you will need to consider where your ad will appear in the magazine or newspaper. This is an important conversation since you probably don't want the last 30% of the publication. Be prepared to negotiate first 50% of the magazine, you will get more eyes and you will be placed among more reputable brands.
- 8 Beware of buying remnant ad space** – If you call up an ad department shortly before they go to print you can often buy highly discounted ads. This can be a good strategy for some merchants, but others beware. When you buy remnant ad space you will not have a say on positioning and will likely end up at the back of the magazine.

Remember, many great businesses were built on print advertisements. So don't count them out just yet. The entry point into online advertising is extremely low, but advertising in the right print publications can add a lot of legitimacy to your business through increased brand recognition and trustworthiness which you should see translate into a boost in sales activity. Again, as we've mentioned throughout this chapter, there has never been a better time to pick up reasonably priced print ads.



CHAPTER 38

Sponsor an Event

Sponsoring events is an age old form of marketing that can be really hit or miss. A lot of larger companies will send their “marketing team” out with a table and a banner and call it a day. This “throw it and see if it sticks” approach will probably get you nowhere. With that said, we’re now going to show you how to make the most out of sponsoring an event and how it can lead to some serious sales on your end.

Picking the Right Events



You'll get a lot of offers, whether by mail, email or in person, to attend events all over the country. But instead of randomly selecting any event, you really want to know if the right attendees will be present. You know – attendees that will make loyal customers and raging evangelists.

Here's a simple recipe for picking the right events:

- 1 Place priority on events where consumers will attend** – At the end of the day, these are the people you really want to talk to. This is where you can collect feedback, add to your marketing lists and make real relationships with future evangelists.
- 2 Pick events where people will actually be interested in your business** – This may sound obvious, but if you just go to some local fundraiser, you're probably not targeting your ideal audience.
- 3 Sort by cost** – Most events will charge for a table and for other extras like banner space. Sort all the data you have collected and go to the events you have time for based on a priority of which events will be the most beneficial. It's easy to casually select events without really looking at all the information you have. But don't be lazy – think about what's going to work best for your business.

Event	Date	Consumers Present?	Cost	Setup Details
Springfield 5K	21-Apr	Yes - about 5,000	\$100	Table
Springfield Mud Run	8-Jul	Yes - about 1,000	\$250	Table and tent
Springfield Hospital Heartathon Mixer	8-Nov	Maybe? - 150	\$50	Share a table

Charting up-coming events and getting a little information about them can save you from wasting your time and focusing on what events are the most beneficial for your business.

Demo Your Products

A lot of entrepreneurs make the mistake of coming to the event with just a table, a banner and some flyers. If you run an ecommerce business, bring products to sell. Having tangible merchandise that can wow event goers and that they can even purchase from you brings you much closer to gaining lifetime customers.

Bring a laptop or tablet with you, so that consumers can make purchases at your table and become registered customers at the same time.

Now, if you produce your own products than product demonstrations are a must. Your job is to expose your product to the world so make sure it's there at the event!

Give Them Something to Talk About

At any trade show or event, you can choose to have a boring and typical table like everyone else has – or you can have the table that stands out. As a matter of fact, don't bother attending events or trade shows without having an awesome spread ready to go first.

So what do you do? What do you bring?

- **Bring your Purple Cow products** – These are the products that get people talking. You want to be able to start conversations with people and build relationships on the spot.
- **Tell Your Story** – It's important to address why you started your business. Hopefully you have an inspirational story that you can tell

event goers. We recommend watching a Ted Talk done by Simon Sinek entitled: **Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Action**. It's about how the best businesses like Apple Computers operate differently by the way they communicate their company purpose. A lot of people who watch this video completely redefine how they approach business after watching it.

Collect Email Addresses And Facebook Likes



As you engage people at the event(s), for the people that seem really interested in your story or your products – ask them to Like your **Facebook page** on the spot or join your **mailing list**. You can also try to incentivize more Likes with giveaways:

- Free stickers
- Coupon Codes or Discounts
- Free beverages – what better way to keep an event going by giving away free liquids for Likes. You might be the most popular table at the entire venue, and you're marketing list might skyrocket.

Remember what we said earlier: You're there to build relationships with future customers and people who will become die-hard evangelists of your brand, not to mention make a few on-the-spot sales while you're at it. So with that in mind, make sure to design your table, pitch and your marketing around relationship building.



CHAPTER 39

Distribute Flyers

Perhaps the oldest form of marketing next to the shop sign would have to be the flyer. Even with the popularity of Internet marketing, flyers and direct mail are still effective ways to make sales, especially that tricky and often allusive first one. The beauty of a flyer campaign is it's easy and inexpensive to test for effectiveness.

Start with a Sample Test

If you're not sure if you want to spend the energy doing door-to-door flyer campaigns – you can easily test to see if it's worth engaging in.

- 1 Create a flyer** – Start with something really simple and to the point. Less is more. Less is also much easier to test and makes a great baseline. Try promoting a sale, a specific item, or an event. For example if you run an online kayaking store, then offer free kayaking lessons. Whatever you do, don't just promote your URL and hope for sales to come in.
- 2 Print out 100 flyers** – 100 pieces is a good number to give you results to make an informed decision later on. It also won't take too long to distribute.
- 3 Go door-to-door** – Delivering 100 flyers will take a good portion of an afternoon.

The easiest way to see results is to check your sales over the next month. You can look at your billing and shipping zip codes to see if they match the area your flyers were delivered to. You might want to keep checking a few months later to see if any more sales trickle in.

Alternately, you can use a special URL or a coupon code to track your flyer efforts. For example if you want to offer a discount to residents in your city, you can send them to a URL like: www.yourdomain.com/city-name or give them a coupon code like "CITYNAMEYEAR".

Depending on how many sales derive from your campaign, you'll be able to determine if it's worth scaling. In many cases, just a few sales out of 100 are usually worth justifying future flyers campaigns. Don't forget that some of these customers will be repeat customers, so the investment upfront should pay off more down the line.

Scaling



If you want to try a larger flyer campaign and cover more ground, it's good to think of it as a mini science project. Before you make a new flyer with a new promotion you should try the exact same flyer again, this time sending it to 10 times the number of new prospects than before.

The reason for this is simple: with an expanded reach, you have even better data on how effective your baseline flyer is. If you send the flyer to 1,000 homes, you'll have a more accurate conversion rate of that first flyer.

You're also going to want to hire someone or a company to deliver the flyers. At 1,000 homes – it's no longer worth your time to kick rocks. There are a lot of businesses that do flyer delivery for you – so simply do a Google search to see who offers the service in your area. Of course this will increase your costs and you might not get the same results. And that's exactly why it's so important to test and measure.

Testing Your Flyers

The next step is testing your flyer. Over the next few campaigns, test things like:

- **Copy** – Change the wording of your flyer.
- **The Offer** – Try a more compelling offer.
- **More than one offer** – Try multiple offers, but be incremental when adding offers. Your tests will be much easier to gain insights from.

Only change one thing per campaign. If you change too many elements on your mailing piece at once, you'll have a hard time knowing what has the biggest effect. Later on when you get your flyer testing "chops" down, feel free to do big bold changes to see if you can make a bigger impact to your bottom line.

Going Purple Cow

Now, what if you completely got rid of the plain old paper flyer and did something really unique? For example, what if you put an envelope with a bow on it, and nicely placed on your prospects front porch?



And inside, you wrote a personalized note explaining that you are also from the neighborhood and you've started up a small online business down the street.



Remember, building a strong loyal local following is worth its weight in gold. Especially if you have a local brick-and-mortar store. Going the extra mile with your mailing pieces is certainly worth the effort.

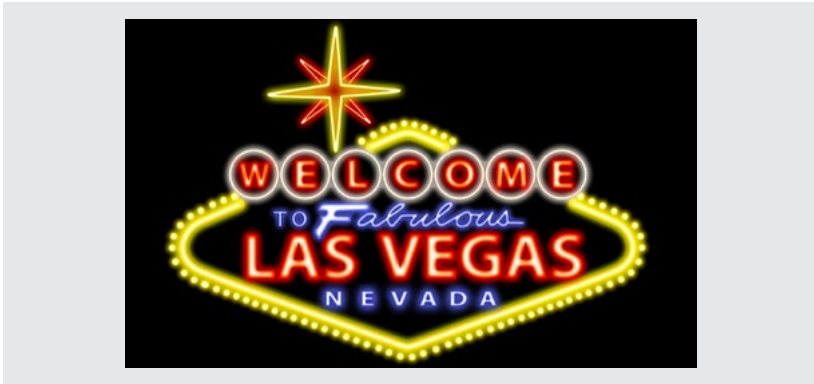


CHAPTER 40

Advertise Outdoors

If you're really hungry for that first sale and traditional online methods aren't yielding any results, offline methods like billboards can be your holy grail. Not only can they persuade the public that your brand is large and well established, it can target large amounts of potential customers on a daily basis. However, Internet marketers are usually afraid of outdoor advertising because it's hard to track its effectiveness with web analytics. But in some cases, and if you have the money, it could be worth a shot.

Billboards 101



Since no one is going to take the time to stop and examine your billboard message in detail, you'll have to remember these things:

- 1 **Limit your word count** – Don't write sentences and definitely don't write out paragraphs. Make your message quick and concise.
- 2 **Focus on branding** – More than anything, billboards are a branding strategy. Your logo and domain name should look good and readable.
- 3 **Emphasize your domain name** – Make it big as possible so grandma can read it. Lose the "http://www." Everyone knows how to use the internet these days. Even grandma.
- 4 **Don't try to be clever** – There is nothing wrong with a "genius" billboard. We've all seen them. But if passers-by don't "get it" right away, then you've lost them.

Location, Location, Location

A poor strategy would be to randomly advertise on billboards around your city. Ideally, you want some geographical context when picking your location. For example:

- **An Online Kayaking Store** – In this case you would want to try to find outdoor advertising next to kayaking launch sites and roads that approach bodies of water.
- **An Online Hi-Top/Sneakers Store** – Here you would want to advertise near parks, basketball arenas, and possibly city centers.
- **A Fashion Related Online Store** – For this case, you would want to advertise next to major shopping malls and college campuses.

As you've probably guessed: you want the kid going to the basketball court every day, the girl that hangs out at the mall, and the kayaking fanatic who's always driving to the local stream – to see your message on a regular basis. It's all about maximizing impressions.

Mobile Billboard Advertising



A new form of outdoor advertising is mobile billboards. The beauty of these is that they solve the problem of not being able to get the location that you desire. You can hire mobile billboard services to drive around the locations you want to be seen at or simply park on strategic intersections.

Not only that, they can cruise around major events that may be perfect targets for your brand. If you run a sporting related website, you might want to have them lurk around the local sports arena during playoff season.

You can also wrap your own automobile in an advertising skin and drive around to conduct some tests. Try parking in strategic locations and see

if you get any lift in website traffic. Be careful of letting the vehicle wrap companies do the wrap design for your car. Sit down with your graphic designer and come up with some concise, uncluttered vehicle wrap concepts first.

A Final Word on Advertisement Design

Tacky graphic design can do damage to your brand image. Good looking design can instill trust and authority towards new prospects – so don't skimp on the design of your outdoor advertising. Remember, you're not just building a business, you're building a brand, so think about how you want to look to the rest of the world.

Hopefully, at this point in your business journey you've partnered or hired a good graphic designer or someone with a good eye for design. This is a key secret that most small business owners fail to realize and what could mean the difference between you making your first sale or not making any sales.



CHAPTER 41

Tell Family and Friends

Your network of friends and family will most likely be your easiest first sales. You may not want to sell to them, but consider that every time someone else has your product in their hands, you've increased the chance of something very important happening: the opportunity for social currency to take place and word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing to kick into effect. That is, every time someone has your product in their hands, there is a very real chance that they will:

- Tell someone else the benefits of your product.
- Tell someone where they can find the product.

- Verbally deliver your brand name.

These three actions we listed above are a lot more powerful than if you go out and advertise your product yourself.

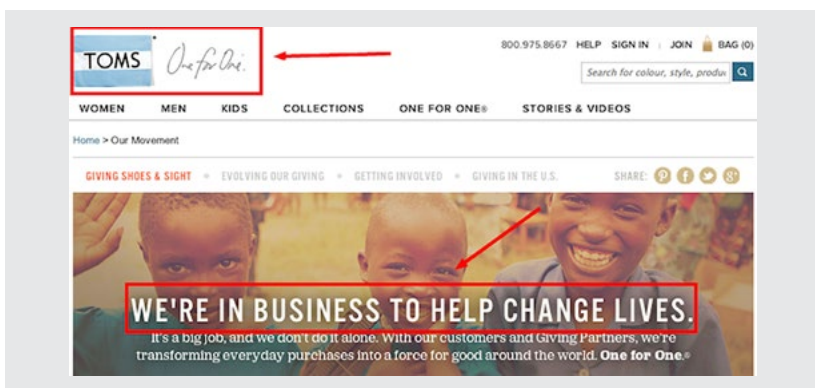
The key lies in the third party validation of your products and your brand. To put it simply: do you believe what advertisers are telling you in a television commercial? Or do you trust what your closest friends and family members recommend to you?

The more you can get people who do not work for your brand to evangelize your products for you, the greater the chance of success you will have. We would go as far as to say that should be your ultimate marketing goal for the life of your company.

And the more your friends and family know and use your products – the more social currency they will have when telling other people about your products.

A great way to give your friends and family awesome social currency to use – is to give them something newsworthy to talk about. What's special and unique about your products or brand? What makes you different, remarkable or great?

For example, **Toms Shoes** gives one pair of shoes to someone who is shoeless for every pair of shoes they sell.



Obviously, having the effects of social currency take place as soon as possible is in your best interest to getting your business off the ground.

Your First Lesson in Targeting and Demographics

Since your friends and family are mostly likely made up of people who are of different genders, ages, interests and personalities – your first marketing campaign will have a scattered effect that might not yield much return, but that's okay.

This is actually a very important moment in your business development. It's important to take note which people your product resonated the most with. Was it mostly women? Was it an older crowd? What you need to start doing is creating **personas** that fit your product offering.

To build your personas, figure out what your typical customer looks like. Write down their age, gender and their interests. Start to determine what kind of personalities like your products.

As you refine your personas and target demographic over time, you can launch more specific and relevant marketing campaigns that will yield better returns.

Get Testimonials

The image shows a Facebook review for 'Leven's Coffee Company' in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The review is by Charity White, dated January 13, 2011, and is a 5-star review. The text of the review is: 'As a connoisseur of decaf...I have tried many. Many can be flat tasting, or watery tasting. Or like cigarette butts. Or like flat watery cigarette butts! I tried Leven's Peruvian Decaf with greatest anticipation. My review...Leven's did not let me down one bit! I was thrilled to try a decaf that had the flavor but not the punch of our dear caffeinated friend. My only pitfall was that I did not add the recommended amount of beans to achieve my personal desired strength. As a nursing Mom, I am pleased to know I have good decaf to turn to when I have met my quota of regular caff for the day but still have that yummy coffee craving!'

Now we want to talk about testimonials in a little more detail.

Your friends and family have a unique value that no other group really falls into. And that is, they are the easiest and cheapest ways to get awesome testimonials for your products. It's so easy that people forget to ever do it.

Simply ask your friends and family (one by one again) to write you testimonials of your product and more importantly: your brand. These testimonials will come in very handy one day for your website and other marketing material. Just imagine if you had a unique testimonial on every page of your website.

Having your friends and family write you testimonials will require them to really get to know your product. It might inspire them to buy one for themselves. But really, the intimacy they achieve with your product gives them more social currency to use when they talk about it with other people. It's like having the world's best trained salesmen roaming the earth for you.

One Huge Problem with Friends and Family

Although your family and friends will be your best evangelists for spreading the benefits of your products – they also can be the worst source of feedback.

Simply put, your family and friends don't want to hurt your feelings. They will naturally tell you things you like to hear and tell you "you're doing a great job... keep doing what you're doing". This actually can be the worst possible advice.

Getting feedback from people you don't know is the best navigational tool you'll ever come across. You will want to develop an addiction to getting feedback from real customers and people you don't know personally.

Now this doesn't mean your friends and family can't write the best testimonials. They will indeed and they will write them more passionately than almost anyone else. But for real feedback, you want to listen to the cruelest of unsatisfied customers.

The Second Lesson on Targeting and Demographics

Your products most likely will not have mass appeal. That's why getting real feedback from all kinds of people will be very important. Some people will hate your products, some people will find flaws and of course some people will absolutely cherish them.

The important lesson is to start to understand who your products are for and who they aren't for. It's also why we like to say: "Love thy Haters."

They will increase your profits. How? Because you'll know not to waste advertising money and energy on them.

The real important point we're trying to make is that you need to start understanding your target audience and how to get people to evangelize your brand for you. These are long term strategies that the best entrepreneurs and businesses focus on for ultimate success. It is what separates the best from everyone else.



CHAPTER 42

Participate on Forums

Participating in online forums can be an amazing way to get your business in front of the right audience. Frankly it can be one of the best forms of online marketing there is. The only problem is that it's incredibly easy for forum marketing to backfire and cause more harm than good.

The Temptation

As soon as an entrepreneur has a new product to sell to the world, most of them want to blast, spam and annoy every one they can, and as fast as they can. Because it's a "numbers game" right? Wrong.

The first thing you have to do is get that age-old saying out of your head. We have a strong suspicion that phrase or way of thinking is the cause for more failed online businesses than anything I can think of. In fact, businesses that thrive in today's connected world tend to have a customer-centric or "you-centric" approach rather than a "me-centric" approach, that is out to provide value and genially help customers with their problems. If you haven't already, be sure to read Jay Baer's new book "[Youtility](#)".

The temptation with forums is that since they contain some of the most rich and targeted environments to market your products, you're going to want to come screaming in, telling everyone what you have for sale. This will generally get you banned from the forum faster than you can say spam.

Never Spam Anyone, Anything or Any Website

The first rule of online marketing is to not spam. You must treat these carefully built communities with the highest respect. You're in their house. You wouldn't go into a coffee shop and plaster their walls with flyers without permission would you? The same thing goes for the online world.

But it's easy to fall into the mindset of a spammer. You don't have to face your victims in the flesh. You may not even understand the annoying consequences of what you're doing. You might even start to get away with it for a while. The important question that you should always ask yourself is: "Is this good for the brand?"

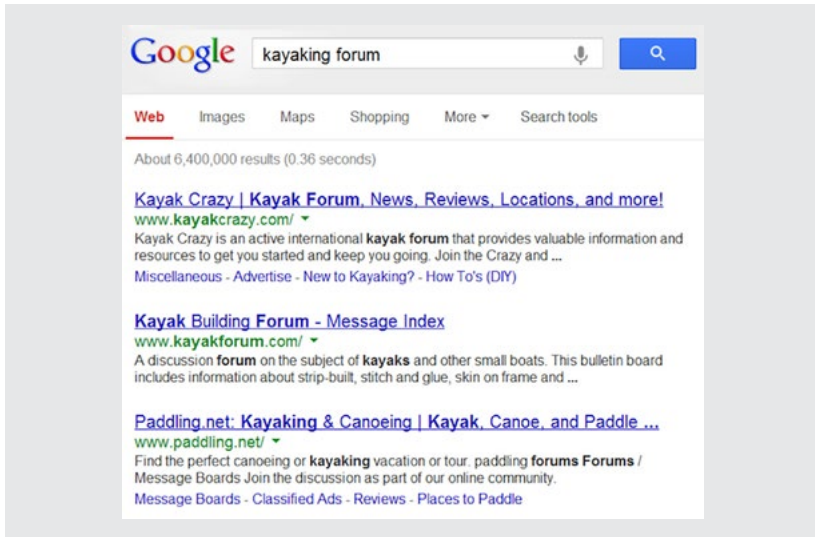
When you start to think of your business as a brand, then you'll begin to understand why spam hurts your ability to grow your business.

How to Find Forums

Finding forums is very easy thanks to good old Google. Simply conduct Google searches like:

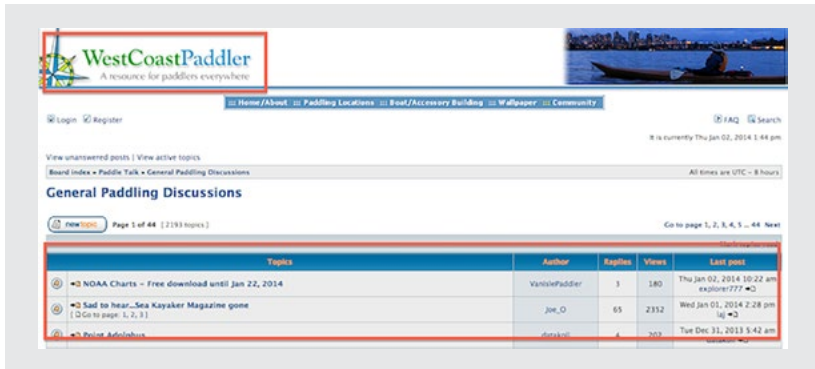
“[your industry] + forum”

“[your industry] + message board”



Or pick a few popular product types you sell and use those words in your forum search. Hopefully, Google will spit out dozens of popular forums related to your industry or niche. Before you spend time setting up profiles in these forums, be sure to see if they are active. Google will keep results in their search engine of forums that may have been dormant for years. Quickly weed out those forums and keep note of them.

How to Become a Cherished Member of a Forum



Once you find forums that consist of your target audience, be prepared to go through a long initiation of becoming a part of the tribe. Leave all your business and salesperson thoughts behind and let the community transform you. Be prepared to give in to their culture and their way of doing things, this will be a transformational journey that will prepare you to be the best business leader you can be in their world.

Let's get into the process of carefully going about this:

- 1 Sign Up** – This is the easy part. Sign up for accounts at the forums of your desire. Fill out your bio and “about me” sections. Upload a real photo of yourself. But refrain from putting up links to your ecommerce website. Just let the community know that you are a real person first.
- 2 Read and Listen** – Spend a couple hours a day reading the discussions that are happening on these forums. Get used to the community and take notes on what they like and what they don't. Not only are you getting introduced to the local tribe, you're doing market research too. Find out what kind of spam they don't like. Find out what pisses them off. Some forums will be more particular than others. The main point is to learn as much as you can from your audience. Remember, these are your future customers.

- 3 Help** – After you feel comfortable with your new community and you know your way around your new hangout, feel free to help people. Helping people by responding to their questions and providing information to them will make you highly respected in any forum. So long as you're not pushing your own content or links to your website. Be as unbiased as possible and help them as genuinely as you can.
- 4 Promote the Right Way** – Once you feel that you have developed real relationships with members of the community and you are truly one of them – then slowly let your business be known. Start by going back to your bio and link to your website. When you feel really comfortable and if the forum allows it, create a signature that either links back to your website or provides a way to solve problems for the community.

By tapping into a already passionate community that's the perfect target market for your product, not only is all the time and effort worth it when it comes to forums, it's almost equivalent to a goldmine when it comes to finding your early customers when starting out. So make sure to keep at it.



CHAPTER 43

List on Craigslist

Perhaps the easiest way to launch any business is through [Craigslist](#).

Started in 1995 by Craig Newmark, Craigslist has been providing the world a (nearly) free marketplace to sell just about anything.

For someone starting out a business Craigslist can be a godsend. It's really the closest thing to free advertising there is and probably should be utilized by more mainstream businesses as well.

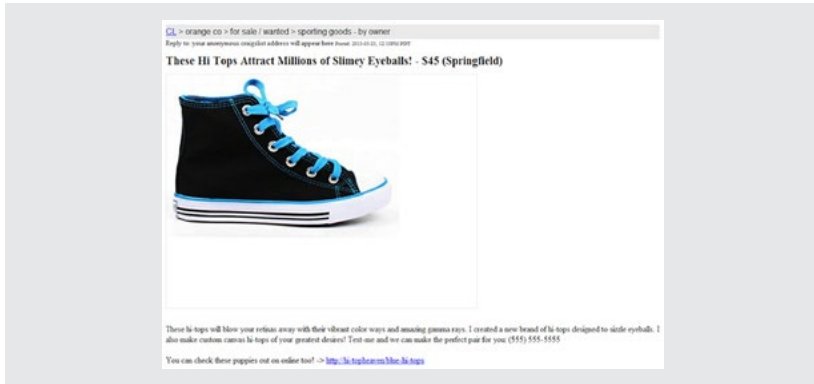
How to Start Selling on Craigslist



The first thing to do is to locate the most geographically relevant Craigslist subdomain that is closest to your neighborhood. Craigslist is all about dealing locally. Just because you may be selling most of your products online, it doesn't mean you can post on every Craigslist subdomain there is. We'll get into why that's important later.

If you navigate to the **Craigslist** homepage, you will see a list of cities (or counties) sorted by state or province. Find the city that you live in or live closest to. Click on the most relevant city, and on the next page you will see a heading that says "for sale" right in the middle of the page. Click on "for sale" and you will be brought to a page that lists everything that is for sale in your city.

Now it's time to post your product, and this is where the magic happens. Take this hypothetical post we created for example:



There is a ton of opportunity at this posting point that so many people simply ignore. Here are some tips to make the most of it:

Spend time creating creative post titles, there is no reason to post boring titles.

- Have fun writing funny or clever product descriptions. Your words are a method of customer engagement. Have a sense of humor and more people will be willing to connect with you.
- Upload clean, non-blurry images, show multiple angles, and let them see what you're selling.
- Make it easy for them to reach you. Leave a phone number where they can text you. Texting is more effective when reaching out to customers than expecting them to reply via email.
- Finally, link to your product page. Since Craigslist posts last for months, you might get repeat online buyers by adding in that simple link.

What if You Don't Want People Coming to Your House?

If you're just starting a **home based business**, and you don't feel comfortable having strangers coming over – that's okay too. There are plenty of solutions for selling locally before you set up a brick and mortar store, such as:

- Set aside time during your day for people to meet you at a busy public location. In front of your public library, civic center or coffee shop can make a good location to do visible business.
- Have a friend or family member accompany you during your “store” hours.
- Offering local delivery, if you don’t mind driving to your customers’ home.

How to Avoid Being Flagged (How to not Spam Craigslist)

Since Craigslist is such a wonderful, almost-too-good-to-be-true marketplace, you should really respect their rules so you can keep conducting business on Craigslist. Naturally, since Craigslist provides free listings to just about anyone, most business people will see that this is as a source for infinite return on investment. They will try to spam or “carpet-post” on this service to milk as much business as possible.

Of course this has caused the Craigslist team to be incredibly tough on spammers or people who try to take advantage of their marketplace. So, with that said, treat Craigslist with the respect it deserves.

Here are few tips to keep in mind:

- Don’t post multiple ads for the same product.
- Over posting in general, tends to get flagged and removed.
- Try not to be a posting “hog” – people who seem to go crazy with Craigslist tend to get banned.

Basically, you want to stay somewhat under the radar so that you can keep using this free service for years to come. We would recommend to always use different post titles and description paragraphs for each listing you create.

After you get comfortable using Craigslist, consider switching to a “dealer” as your business gets more established. The reason for this is to best fit the description of who you are – which Craigslist appreciates.

Giving Away Freebies for Branding Purposes

One way to build your marketing lists is to use Craigslist to give away “freebies”. One of our favorite methods is to give away free stickers. You can post stuff that you are giving away for free in the free category under the “for sale” section. We would also take advantage of this area as a great place to really advertise your local business. One tactic we like to employ is to make fun posters that tell a story about your brand and upload them as an image to your post.

If you can afford to give away free products in exchange for emails or feedback, you might find this is a great, ultra personal way to build your first brand evangelists. Since most of your responses will be local, you can easily meet people and have one-on-one conversations about your product. The social currency one receives from meeting the founder of a business usually travels a lot farther than does a social media relationship.



CHAPTER 44

Give Out Coupon Codes

Coupon codes can be a pretty handy tool to attract new and repeat customers. However, it's important to make sure discounting fits into your overall brand strategy.

Racing to the bottom to become the “low-price” leader can have a disastrous effect if you're not careful. Sometimes, it's better to not lower prices and wiser to devote your energy to providing outstanding service and an overall unique brand experience.

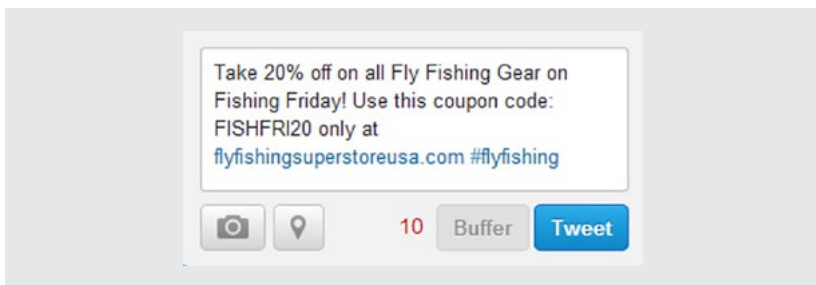
In any case, running an ecommerce business is all about experimentation and finding out what works best. Let's go over some of the ways you can use coupon codes to attract and delight customers.

Go After New Customers with Coupon Codes

If you're hungry to make your first sales and you're more into experimentation than having rigid brand development standards, then here are a few ways to competitively go after new customers.

TWITTER

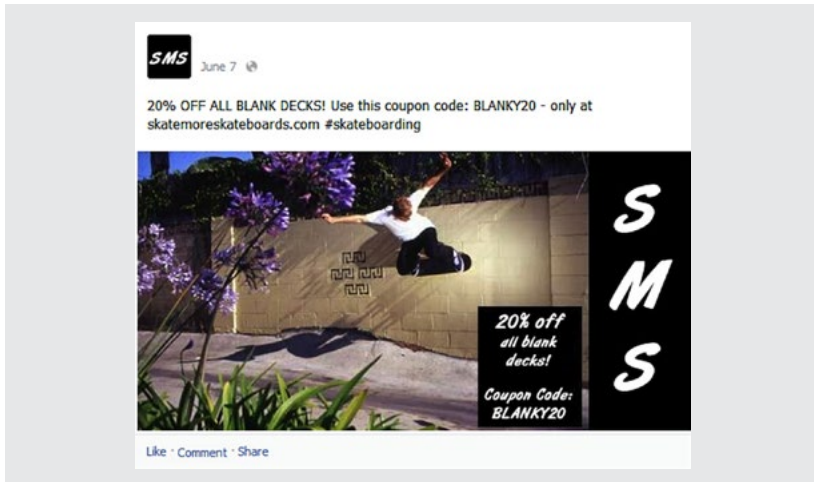
For your most popular items, simply tweet out coupon codes and append a hashtag for the keyword or brand name that is associated with these items:



You may want to tweet out your coupon codes a few times a day to get them more attention. Be sure to switch up your tweet sentences so you're not duplicating tweets.

FACEBOOK

Facebook now allows you to use hashtags as well. But in order to get a better Facebook response, upload a photo of your product along with a short message regarding the promotion.



How To Use Coupons Without Hurting Your Brand

Although we are warning you about developing a culture of discounting, that doesn't mean coupon codes can't be used occasionally or even intelligently. Here are some ways to use coupon codes without hurting your brand.

INVENTORY THAT JUST WON'T MOVE

This is the most obvious place to use coupon codes. Nothing is more dangerous than sitting on inventory that won't sell. In this case you can create coupon codes targeted to move these items. You can either give a straight percentage discount on individual items or make them free when a certain dollar amount is reached on an order.

For example: "All orders over \$100 get a free toaster cover. Use coupon code: TOAST100"

SHOWING CUSTOMER APPRECIATION

Customers who have remained loyal are any business's best friend. This is simply because it cost so much more to acquire new customers than to keep

old ones. A great way to show your appreciation is to email old customers coupon codes to show thanks for their continued support of your brand.

REWARD NEW CUSTOMERS WITH AUTOMATIC DISCOUNTS

One way to build customer loyalty is to automatically apply discounts towards their first purchase with your business, but without telling them upfront. Alternately, you can waive their shipping fee for first time purchases. Surprise is a great tactic to make lifetime customers.

Marketing On Coupon Code Websites

If you're really itching to get your online store known and get that first sale, you may want to put your coupon codes on websites that get a lot of traffic from coupon seekers. The drawback is that these websites target people looking for the lowest prices and aren't necessarily looking to become brand followers.

Here are a few websites that you can market your coupons on:

- **RetailMeNot** – You can submit your coupons here: <http://www.retailmenot.com/submit.php>
- **Coupons.com** – This website emphasizes their ability to target mobile shoppers.
- **Slickdeals.net** – Has been around since 1999 and provides a free, user driven deal sharing site for coupon collaboration.

If you're going to experiment with giving coupons out, think about how they fit into your overall business strategy. Also, check your local consumer protection laws on coupon expiration dates and usage rules.



CHAPTER 45

Do Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing can be an amazing sales channel for an online retailer. A lot of your success has to do with the type of products you sell and how well you pay your affiliates.

How Affiliate Marketing Works



(Source: <http://www.cj.com/what-is-affiliate-marketing>)

The basic premise is that you let other people market your products and send you website traffic. In return, you pay them a percentage of any sales that are made that originate from their efforts.

This is done usually by giving them special hyperlinks that they can post on their website. These hyperlinks usually contain an ID code which helps to track their efforts. Here's an example of what an affiliate hyperlink may look like:

<http://myonlinetailwebsite.com/blue-widgets/?affiliate-id=123456>

In this example, a blogger might put this link on their blog to try to get their readers to click through to your “blue widget” page and hopefully buy something. If the visitor who clicks on this link actually buys something, affiliate tracking software will automatically (usually – depends on what system you are using) pay your affiliate a percentage of the sale.

Sounds Great! When Can I Get Started?

At first glance it sounds like the answer to every online retailer's dream: let anyone in the world market your products and give them a cut of the sales. With enough volume, you can't lose. Well the truth is affiliate marketing has some sticky issues – so you really have to align your stars just right to make it work.

DETERMINE HOW MUCH OF A “CUT” YOU CAN AFFORD

You'll have to do some math to figure out how much of a percentage you can afford to give up to do affiliate marketing. Can you part with 5% of the total revenue that comes from a sale? How about 10%? The higher the percentage, then generally the more affiliate traffic you will receive.

If you're really interested in setting up an affiliate program, you may want to raise your prices to allow margin to pay affiliate marketers.

Joining an Affiliate Marketing Network



The easiest thing to do is to sign up for an affiliate marketing network like **Commission Junction**. They provide a marketplace where your affiliate program will be advertised to other affiliate marketers. They also provide the tracking software for your affiliates so you don't have to build your own tracking system. In some ways this is better because it takes care of the trust issues. Affiliates are always suspicious of whether or not they're getting credited for the sales they generate. By having an intermediary take care of transaction tracking and payments, the fear of being cheated is alleviated.

Affiliate networks will also take a cut of your sales or charge fees to use their network. You'll have to weigh this additional cost to see if you can afford it.

Be sure to check out these webpages of other affiliate networks that are out there:

- **Commission Junction**

- [ShareASale](#)
- [LinkShare](#)
- [Affiliateprograms.com](#)

Building Your Own Tracking System

If you don't want to use an affiliate network, you can build your own tracking system. For example Shopify shops have **plugins and modules** that you can install to start your own affiliate marketing program. It's just up to you to advertise your program well enough to get affiliate marketers to join.

There is a lot to be said for independent and home grown affiliate marketing programs that are trustworthy and pay well. You may find that news will spread quickly about your program and attract hungry affiliate marketers who appreciate the high payouts and less "red-tape".

Why You Shouldn't be Stingy Towards Your Affiliates

If you think about how much you spend on advertising, you may find that giving bigger percentages to your affiliates is equivalent to how much you spend on advertising. Additionally, don't forget that affiliates are not only bringing you sales, they are bringing you new customers.

Think about how much one customer will bring in over the lifetime of your relationship with them, it's worth spending more up front to acquire that customer.

Finally if you have an army of affiliates sending you traffic because you're generous, your daily revenue may jump several-fold. It's important to do the math to see what kind of scenarios affiliate marketing will provide. So get out a spreadsheet and see if affiliate marketing will be the blast your online business has been waiting for.



CHAPTER 46

Build Relationships with Suppliers

It's no secret that as an online business some of your most powerful alliances are with your suppliers. Too often, retailers forget to reach out for help from their suppliers. In this chapter we're going to go through some of the ways you can put your suppliers to work for you.

Build A Relationship with Your Suppliers



Before you go on a spam blasting tear asking all your suppliers for help, be sure you've developed real relationships with key people at each company. These relationships will be very valuable down the line and can help your business grow in more ways than one.

The easiest thing to do is to email your sales representatives and start some genuine conversations. Ask them if they have:

- Any good deals on inventory
- Products they may want to liquidate
- Specials of the month

But only do this if you're actually interested in ordering from them. They will really appreciate someone asking them for business, because they usually spend the day cold calling. This will definitely make you more memorable and they will be more likely to do you favors.

Next, be sure to share their Facebook statuses and retweet their tweets. So follow both the vendor's social media profiles and those of the sales representatives. This is a good way to get on their radar so you can soften them up for what's next.

Get Them to Link to Your Website

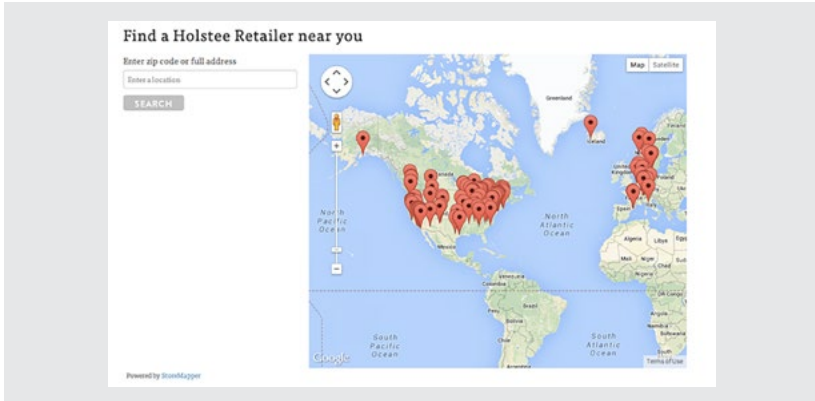
A great place to get trusted links is from your suppliers. As a matter of fact it's one of the most obvious link building strategies for businesses to engage

in. Most suppliers want their products to move, so showing people where they can buy their product is kind of a no-brainer for them.

Some suppliers, usually bigger ones, won't link to online stores to make sure they keep all their customers happy. And that's fine. That's why you shouldn't forget to ask your smaller suppliers for backlinks, especially the ones that are just starting out. They are usually more inclined to do so and don't have the bureaucracy in place yet, the kind that make website changes nearly impossible.

Ask to be on Their Store Locator

One incredibly obvious place for your suppliers to advertise your store information is on their store locator. Most suppliers will have a store locator on their website. Your job is to make sure you're on there! Not only will it send you natural online referrals, it will also boost your website's SEO. For example, [Holstee](#) lists all its retail partners to help customers know where else they can find their products.



But don't just stop at getting one link to your website. Ask them to link to the specific product page or category page that relates to the vendor's products. Also ask to have your social media profiles listed – like your Facebook page and Twitter profile.

Ask if You Can Guest Blog or Provide Content for Their Newsletter

Since you are probably well versed on the ins-and-outs of your vendor's products, you're probably a good candidate to provide some insightful information to their consumer base. Ask your vendors if you can guest post on their blog, perhaps write an instructional or "how-to" post. Additionally, see if they can put the same content in their newsletter.

Hopefully, they will say yes and you'll be able to link back to your online store, and be able to siphon some new customers that way.

Bottom Line on Vendor Relationships

When you boil it down, the better relationships you build with your vendors the more likely they are going to think of you first when they need to refer someone to a dealer. Additionally, by having regular communication with your vendors, you'll be the first to know of discounts and specials which you'll definitely want to keep on top of, as they can greatly boost your profit margins.



CHAPTER 47

Demonstrate Trust and Security

A major hurdle all small online retail businesses have to face when they are just starting out is getting consumers to trust doing business with them.

Demonstrating trust and security doesn't even apply just to small and medium sized ecommerce stores, but in fact impacts retailers as big as Target, whose information got **hacked and resulted in compromised credit card information for over 40 million consumers**. Generally, here are some common questions (based in terms of fears) consumers have with unknown online retailers:

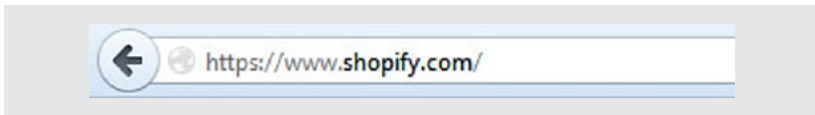
- Is the site secure for credit card transactions?
- Will my data get hacked and will my personal information be in the hands of criminals?
- Will they charge my card for more than what I agreed?
- Will I ever see my items?
- What if I get the wrong color, size or items? What happens then?

Generally, by stomping out these common fears you can increase your sales and build a loyal customer base. Here's how:

Display Your SSL Certificate Badge

In this day and age it's nearly impossible to do online commerce transactions without the use of SSL (Secure Socket Layer). SSL means that your customer's online experience is encrypted and safe from hackers while they are shopping online. However, SSL doesn't protect the customer's data that you store in your website database – that's an issue for another day.

You can easily see if your online commerce site is using SSL by making sure that you see “https” in the URL bar during checkout.



To take full advantage of your SSL, you should display your SSL provider's badge on your website. Simply find out what company is providing your website with SSL and look for the website badge they offer. There are various SSL and third party services that are in the business of authenticating that online stores are safe. Below are some common badges from these services, in addition to other trust companies like Norton and the Better Business Bureau:



You can test placing the SSL badge around your website to see if it increases sales. Try putting it in the checkout region of your website, or just put it somewhere visible on every page of your website.

A lot of professionals who specialize in CRO (conversion rate optimization) will perform tests where the only thing they change is the location of the SSL badge on an ecommerce website and measure the effects it has on sales. You can also perform the same test, just carefully measure your results – it’s a great habit to get into.

Provide an Awesome Return Policy

Nothing builds trust better than an awesome return policy. Zappos is the king of awesome return policies. They introduced the “Free Shipping & Free 365 Day Returns” guarantee early on in their rise to internet stardom.

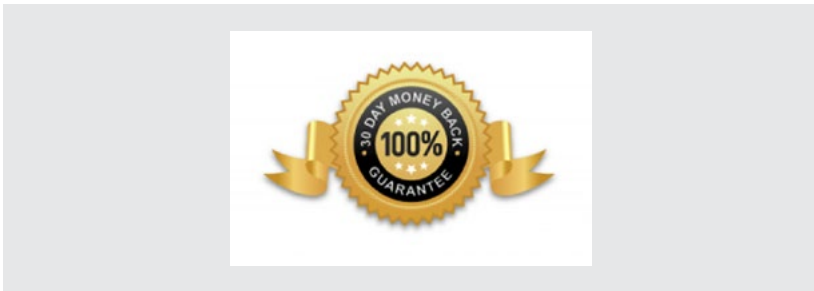


Having a return policy like Zappos says to potential customers: “We believe in our service so confidently, that we know you’ll love doing business with

us.” By giving your customers no reason to say no to your service, how can you not make that first sale.

Guarantees

Guarantees are another great way to build trust with new customers. Especially if you’re selling your own line of products. You can test making your guarantee big, bold and highly visible on your website to see if it has an effect on sales.



Just make sure you actually honor your guarantees and that you have a solid system in place to respond to guarantee inquiries.

Show Your Reviews from Review Sites

If you’re already known for stellar service and great online shopping experiences, chances are some of your customers have written positive reviews for you.

One tactic is to place these positive reviews throughout your site to help instill trust with customers along the way. It might be the little nudge that gets customers to complete checkout more often.



CHAPTER 48

Think Global

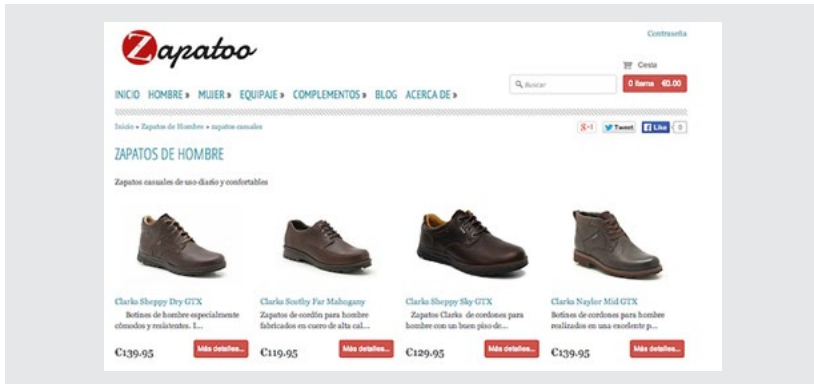
Most ecommerce merchants get their first sales locally and in their native language. Heck, some successful online stores never stray away from one language and only ship to their home country. While there's certainly nothing wrong with that, you should know there can be huge benefits of thinking global early on in the process of building an online business. Here we will share a few strategies to consider while starting your company.

Low-Hanging Fruit

Let's assume that you run a U.S.-based online store, in such a case, another ideal language for you to target would be Spanish. Presently, there are **38**

million people who speak Spanish in the United States. That's almost 12% of the entire U.S. population.

Now, the beauty of this strategy is that you'll pick up search engine traffic for searches conducted in Spanish. And of course, you can build loyal customers that appreciate your effort to provide a service that is easy for them, similar to companies like **Zapatoos**.



So, where do you start? Here's a three-step process to help you get going:

STEP 1 – CREATE A SUBDIRECTORY CALLED /ES/

It's best to create sub directories for each language you wish to target. Depending on how your ecommerce platform is structured, you may have to create new product pages with the copy translated into Spanish.

An example subdirectory would look something like this: <http://example.com/es/>

STEP 2 – DO NOT MACHINE TRANSLATE YOUR COPY

Google will penalize websites that use machine translations (like copy created from Google Translate). If you're not well versed in the language you are targeting, hire someone to provide written translations of each of your product pages. **Odesk.com** is a great place to find someone who can translate your webpages for you at an affordable price.

STEP 3 – USE THE CORRECT HREFLANG TAGS

HREFLANG tags tell search engines that you are creating duplicate content (which is bad for search engine optimization), but for the specific purpose of providing information in another language. In the case of targeting Spanish speakers within the United States, your HREFLANG tag should look like:

```
<link rel="alternate" href="http://example.com" hreflang="es-us" />
```

Place this tag in the head of every page in your /es/ subdirectory.

You can use online tools to generate the correct HREFLANG tags for your website (if you want to target different languages and/or countries). This is a great tool for generating such tags: <http://www.internationalseomap.com/hreflang-tags-generator/>

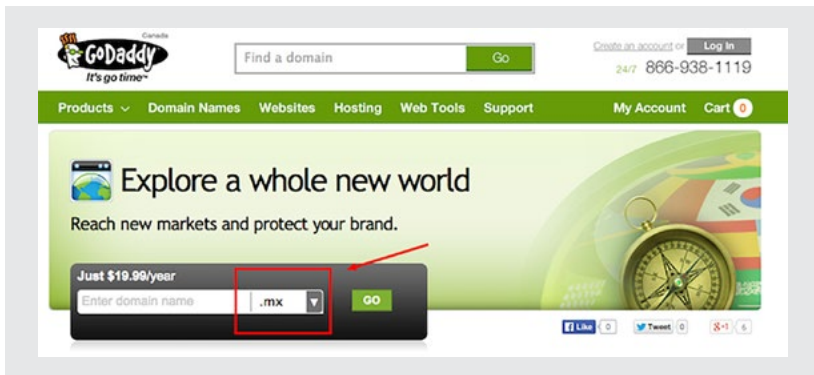
Targeting Customers in Different Countries

The first step is to simply expand your shipping options to allow for international orders. You'll find that a small percentage of new sales will originate outside your country. Take extra caution because more fraudulent orders will arise when shipping outside your country. Be sure:

- That the billing and shipping addresses match.
- Require CVV3 (the three or four numbers on the back of a credit card).
- Don't accept checks.

You may even want to refuse business from certain countries that are notorious for fraudulent orders. The energy, cost and time required to process chargebacks and loss of inventory is usually not worth doing business in certain regions.

Going Global



The more advanced strategy is to create new websites for each country you wish to target and purchase the TLD (Top Level Domain) of that country. For example:

- **A Website Targeted for Mexico** – You would use the same domain, but get the .mx CCTLD extension (CCTLD stands for Country Code Top Level Domain). So your domain might look like: `www.domain.mx`

Naturally, all your content should be in the native language of the country you are targeting. Again, don't machine translate your content. Hire a native speaker to translate all your copy, including your meta tags (title tags, meta description and alt tags).

Search engines and the people in those countries generally prefer using websites that represent their home country. Of course this gets extra tricky because you'll either have to decide if you want to set up an office in that country, or simply ship from the country you're currently based out of. The one disadvantage for your customers is that their shipping costs will be inflated if you choose the latter.

However, if you're in a really niche market and you're one of the only suppliers of the merchandise you carry, then this strategy can work quite well. Either that or your business has become so large by now, that you can afford to set up shop in multiple countries. If that's the case, you're well past your first sale and probably well-versed with everything we've talked about in this guide.



CHAPTER 49

Get Things Done

When you're first starting out, it feels like the entire weight of the world is on your shoulders. You're likely wearing more hats than you can juggle, all the while scrambling to prioritize what deserves your immediate attention. However, if you want to make your first sale, or any sales for that matter, eventually you'll come to a realization that you can't do it all, and that you'll need some strategies on how to properly manage your business and yourself when you're building a company with more than one person.

Running a business is really about expanding your own mind and boundaries. There are a lot of comfort zone issues you'll have to deal with in order to get to the next level. For example you might be worried that other people won't pack orders nicely, forget inventory, or be rude to customer via email or phone.

These are common fears for growing “etailers”, but that can easily be remedied with a few systems changes and ways of thinking:

You Are Not Your Business



The first thing you must do is remove yourself from the business. Your business doesn't have to be perfect and its performance has nothing to do with you as a person. People won't judge you if your business has flaws. This is a really important thing you must understand in order to let your business grow and flourish by generating sales.

The reason why is because whenever you're looking to grow, you will fail a little – and things won't always be pretty. But you'll have to be comfortable with these realities. It will be the only way you'll know what works and what doesn't. And that's exactly how you know which direction to move your business in: by experimenting, failing and trying again. An excellent book that goes over the correct entrepreneurial mindset in detail is [The E-Myth Revisited by Michael Gerber](#).

Create Checklists and Recipes

The best way to hand over your day-to-day “work” and make sure that quality stays as high as it can be is to create checklists and recipes for your employees. Well documented procedures help create a system of consistency. But checklists are even better. By actually having your employees check-off

each step of a process, it helps to eliminate missteps and also provides a system of accountability.

It may seem very time consuming and tedious at first, but checklists will be the key to growing a successful business that scales. Think of checklists as great multipliers of future revenue. Even if you are still running a one person operation, you may find that building checklists now will improve your operation immediately. And when you decide to bring additional people on, you'll already have them ready to go.

If You Want Something Done Right, Have Someone Else Do It



Again, getting into the habit of correcting everyone else's mistakes or doing a majority of the "work" at your business yourself, is a one way road to disaster (or the road of never making any sales). If you find employees making repeated mistakes, your job is to fix the business design flaw that is causing that mistake.

It might not be the employees fault. You may need to provide resources or tools to make the job easier and foolproof. Streamlining and improving efficiency usually solves these types of problems.

As a business owner, you are not supposed to be the "technician", the customer service rep, the order packer, or the shipper. Your number one priority is to continually grow the business and you do that by:

- Constantly implementing better business design

- Identifying and hiring talent
- Creating amazing culture at your company
- Creating and executing the brand vision

Plan an Improved Business Design

To move into a more entrepreneurial mindset, the first thing you need to do is plan an improved business design. How are you going to grow? What systems do you need in place? What talent do you need? Can you outsource virtual talent?

Create a plan of growth by answering questions like the ones listed above. It's also very important that you assign goal dates to get these business design features implemented. Keeping yourself accountable to growth timetables is the real secret sauce of successfully getting that first sale and beyond.



CHAPTER 50

Be Persistent

At this point, we hope you have tried a whole bunch of different strategies to get your first sales with your online store. It's possible that you are implementing ideas simultaneously and find it quite overwhelming, especially when you have no or few sales to show for your efforts.

Here we're going to give you a little advice on how to make managing multiple tactics easier for you to manage, so that you can optimize both your business and your time. Ultimately, we hope by doing so, not only will you see results more quickly, but become profitable while you're at it.

Step 1 – Test, Measure and Repeat



If you engage in any marketing or sales activity, measure your results carefully. Running a business is very much like a science experiment. It's really easy to run around and test out different strategies and tactics and assume you'll remember how effective they were. But remember, recorded numbers don't lie and they can't be forgotten.

Getting into the habit of recording and measure your business experiments will really season you for growth. Often times, reviewing your business data will give you insight on what else you should try for the iterations of the same experiment. This is usually how breakthroughs are made.

Now you're always going to feel too busy to do this tedious activity. But this is actually what business is. It's about making informed decisions that lead to brand growth. Running around frantic all day, with a "business as usual" attitude is not entrepreneurial and doesn't lead to growth.

To help you gain a better understanding of this crucial topic, we highly recommend that you read **"The Lean Startup" by Eric Ries**. In the book, he not only shares his own experience building **IMVU**, but a tried and true methodology for building businesses that grow.

Step 2 – Picking What Works



If you've done your due diligence and have taken the time to record your business experiment findings, you'll have a good idea of what works and what doesn't. It's easy to say to yourself – let's do all the sales and marketing activities that proved beneficial. But before you commit to that, you might want to pick the top few (maybe even the one thing) that not only worked the best for you, but seemed to work the most naturally for you.

Anything that goes with your natural “work flow” is probably the process that works best for your business. Trying to do sales and marketing activities that have caused friction to your natural work flow tend to be self-defeating.

For example, you may find calling old customers who haven't ordered in a while financially beneficial for your business, but it's also very time consuming and sometimes upsets old customers. Alternatively, making cute photo-ops of your product and “Instagramming” them drives the same amount of business. In this case you should stick with Instagramming. Anything that creates negative energy in your organization should most likely be avoided.

With that said, double down on your best sales and marketing activities, and figure out ways to make them better.

- Is there a way to streamline or automate parts of the process?
- Can you hire people to do this work?
- What would make this process easier for you and your company?

We all know that overwhelming yourself with too many activities will get you nowhere. Keep these things in mind:

- You get the best results when you focus on one thing. All your energy and attention goes to that one process and therefore has the highest chances of success. Humans are **naturally bad multitaskers**.
- Employees do their best work when they focus on one thing. Trying to get them to do many things yields mediocre results.
- Your energy is limited. Respect yourself and design a business that has longevity. Don't design a company of frantic culture and ridiculous expectations. Businesses like that "burnout" and employees leave.

Step 3 – Growing



The idea with the first two steps is that you have picked a few sales and marketing activities that are the easiest activities that drive the most revenue and gotten you your earliest sales. They come natural to you and your business and make your customers and employees happy.

Before you go back to experimenting with new strategies and tactics, try to scale your primary activities further. These activities have the most recorded data and you simply understand them the best. Your best bet is to take them as far as you can. Ask yourself these questions:

- How can I grow my business using only my primary sales and marketing activities?

- What's the ROI (return on investment) of adding employees to help scale these activities?
- If I automate or streamline any part of the process, will I increase revenues?

The idea here is that focus and persistence is the best formula for marketing and sales success. If you know what works best for your company and you focus on scaling and improving those activities, you'll generally end up in a better situation. Then once you've got more capital, employees and a sound method for expanding into activities, then you're ready to move on and try new methods. Just remember, start with an experiment, note down the results, optimize what works, discard what doesn't and repeat. With that you'll be well on your way to building the business of your dreams.

Glossary

We use a lot of terms you may not be familiar with in this guide, so here are some simple definitions to help you out.

Affiliate: A publisher or site owner that forwards qualified web traffic to an online merchant on a pay-for-performance basis is called an affiliate in the context of online marketing.

Affiliate Links: A universal (uniform) resource locator (URL) that includes an affiliate's identification number and additional information that makes it easier for merchants to track affiliate activity is an affiliate link.

Amazon: In the retail context, Amazon is a multi-national online retailer with a market capitalization in excess of \$128 billion U.S. as of January 2013. Amazon also hosts a marketplace wherein other Internet purveyors may display and sell products, and offers several software-as-a-service and infrastructure-as-a-service solutions for business.

Application Programming Interface (API): An API is a protocol created to allow separate software solutions to communicate over a relatively simple interface. Developers will often use APIs to connect or integrate systems and services.

Authorization: A payment card transaction performed specifically to determine if the payment account has sufficient funds to complete a given transaction.

Authorized Distributor: A manufacturer-approved or -designated distributor able to sell products in quantity to commercial customers like Internet retailers.

Authorized Retailer: A manufacturer-approved or -designated retailer able to sell products directly to consumers.

Better Business Bureau: A non-profit organization in Canada and the United States that is focused on trust in advertising. The organization responds to consumer inquiries about business reliability, and accredits businesses. Accredited online merchants may display a Better Business Bureau badge.

Bing: Microsoft's search engine, Bing, displays results in response to a user's search query. The site uses a complex and secret algorithm to select which sites to display in response to a particular search. Bing also offers a pay-per-click advertising platform, and allows merchants to offer a discount to shoppers.

Blog: A blog is an online journal or publication that includes relatively short, discrete articles, called posts, that are typically organized by date with the most recent posts first. Frequently, blogs allow readers to add comments to posts. The term blog is a combination of "web" and "log." At first, blogs tended to be personal journals or opinion sites, but the term has come to include an array of different types of publications. In the ecommerce context, blogs are frequently used as a marketing tool, and may be included in a merchant's social media or content marketing campaigns.

Bootstrapping: In business, bootstrapping is the concept of self-funding a new company, meaning that a business pays its operating expenses either with profits or from its founder's own investments, rather than accepting external capital.

Bounce Rate: An Internet marketing term used to describe the percentage of site visitors that arrive at a single page on a given website, and then leave (bounce) from that same page without visiting any other page on the site.

Brick & Click Store: A retail outlet or business with at least one physical location and at least one ecommerce enabled website.

Brick & Mortar Store: A retail outlet or business with at least one physical location.

Business Structure: A company's legal status or organization. Often refers to incorporation.

Call-to-Action: A phrase, button, link or other site element that specifically asks a visitor to take some action, including purchasing a product, registering, subscribing or similar.

Canonicalization: The practice of selecting preferred URLs for a specific set of content. Many modern sites allow content to be accessed from a number of URLs, including URLs that may contain session or query information. Canonicalization helps to manage which of those URLs search engines index and credit.

Canonical URL: The canonical meta tag that directs search engines to index the preferred URL for site content that is available from multiple URLs.

Capture: The process of securing payments from a payment process after an authorization.

Comma Separated Values (CSV): A file type that stores data values. CSV files are often used to transfer product feeds.

Content Management System (CMS): A software solution that makes it possible to create, edit, maintain, publish, and display content on the Internet from a single interface or administration tool. In the online retailing context, a CMS may be used to manage a store's product catalog.

Conversion: A marketing term that describes when a user or visitor completes some action or achieves some marketing goal. More specifically, conversion is often used to describe when a site visitor converts to a customer, making a purchase.

Cookie: A very small file saved on a user's computer or mobile device for the purpose of storing information related to the user's interaction with a particular site.

Corporation: A distinct legal entity and business structure, wherein the business is separate from its shareholders.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM): A software solution specifically devoted to organizing, synchronizing, and automating a business' customer relationships.

Directories: Sites that list and link to other sites, including online stores, are referred to as directories.

Discount Code: A series of numbers and/or letters that an online shopper may enter at checkout to get a discount or other special offer. Discount codes may also be called coupon codes.

Distributor: A distribution business that inventories products from a number of manufacturers and sells to many retailers. Often distributors are able to offer shorter lead times than manufacturers and may sell in smaller quantities. It is common for distributors to charge a premium over a manufacturer-direct price for the service and convenience provided.

Domain: The root address for a web page.

Dropshipping / Drop Shipping: A fulfillment strategy wherein the retailer does not actually inventory the drop shipped product, but instead passes the shipping address to either the manufacturer, or a distributor that actually ships the purchased items directly to the customer.

eBay: A online auction and shopping website, best known for its consumer-to-consumer sales. Many online merchants also use eBay as a sales channel.

Ecommerce: Buying and selling products over electronic networks, including the Internet or mobile applications. The term may apply specifically to electronic transactions or more generally to the online retailing and online business.

Exporting: The practice of selling items to wholesale or retail customers in another country.

Fraud: Intentional deception for the purpose of gain.

Fulfillment: In ecommerce, fulfillment is the process of completing an order. The term may also be applied to third-party companies that inventory products and ship orders on behalf of an online store.

Google: The leading search engine provider, Google displays search results using a complex and secret algorithm that considers many factors. The company seeks to show its users the best possible results. Google also provides other services, including a pay-per-click advertising network, payment processing solutions, product discovery tools, and an excellent analytics platform.

Google Keyword Tool: A free keyword suggestion tool included in the Google AdWords Platform. The tool uses data from the many searches conducted on the Google search engine to suggest keywords for a given URL and category.

Google Trends: A search engine tool that shows how often a particular term or keyword is searched for on Google. Results are shown in a relative scale, making the tool well suited for comparing keywords or phrases. Trends will also show where searches came from and how search volume for a particular keyword has changed over time.

HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language): A markup language specifically created for displaying web pages and applications in web browsers. Like other markup languages, HTML annotates a document, describing its layout and syntax.

Inventory: The value or quantity of a retailer's current stock of products.

JavaScript: A scripting language – ECMAScript – used to make web pages interactive and dynamic.

Landing Pages: In the online marketing context, a landing page is a single web page that is displayed in response to a particular call to action. Landing pages are often shown in response to a link in a pay-per-click ad, a link in an email, or a specific URL shown in offline advertising. Landing pages include content meant to meet the expectation set with the link a visitor clicked.

Limited Liability Company (LLC): A business structure that blends some of the best elements of a partnership and a corporation.

Linking Root Domains: In search engine optimization, when site A links to site B one or more times, site A is said to be a linking root domain. Linking root domains — in the plural — are the total number of unique sites that link one or more times to a given website.

Liquidator: A company that purchases closeout products for the purpose of resale.

Listing Fees: Marketplaces and online auction sites, like eBay, may charge a nominal listing fee for posting products.

Logistics: The management of products or other resources as they travel between a point of origin and a destination. In ecommerce, logistics might describe the process of transporting inventory to a merchant or the act of shipping orders to customers.

Long Tail: Posited in the October 2004 issue of Wired Magazine, the Long Tail is Chris Anderson's idea that markets and marketplaces, especially online, are moving away from mainstream, broad-appeal products toward niche products. In ecommerce, new retailers may find it easier and more cost effective to focus on niche products.

Long-Tail Variations: In search engine optimization and pay-per-click advertising, Long-Tail variations are keywords similar in meaning or root to other high-volume keywords, but less competitive. Long-Tail variations are often employed when a business is just starting out and cannot gain traction or afford to bid on top performing keywords.

Long-Tail Traffic: Website traffic derived from Long-Tail variation keywords or from niche searches and keywords in general.

Manufacturer: A company that makes goods for the purpose of sale.

Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP): The price at which a manufacturer recommends that retailers sell a given product.

Margins: The difference between what a retailer pays for a product and what the retailer's customer pays for the product. Margin calculations may consider only the cost of the goods sold or may take into account overhead and other variable costs.

Minimum Order Size: Manufacturers or distributors may require retailers to place orders that meet a minimum value or unit count. This requirement would be the minimum order size.

Multi-Channel Retailing: Retailing products through more than one channel where channels include online stores, online marketplaces like Amazon, physical stores, physical catalogs, and similar.

Net Profit: The difference between a business' revenue and its costs – all of its costs. Net profit may be thought of as the money left over after every bill is paid.

Niche: A distinct market segment.

Organic: In the context of search engine optimization and search engine marketing, organic results are those listings search engines show because of their relevance to a query, not because a site owner paid for an ad or paid to be featured.

Outsource: The process of contracting work to external, third-party organizations.

Overhead: The ongoing expenses associated with operating a business.

PageRank: Google's proprietary page ranking system that places emphasis on inbound links as a means of determining how important a given page is. PageRank can be measured on either a ten-point or 100-point scale.

Patent: Protection for some forms of intellectual property, granting the inventor exclusive right to manufacture, use, or sell an invention for a certain number of years.

PayPal: Founded in 1998, PayPal is a leading, worldwide payment processing company. The service can process payments for merchants.

Pay Per Click (PPC): An online advertising model wherein advertisers pay only when a prospect clicks on an advertisement and is directed to the advertiser's website. Google's AdWords platform is an example of pay-per-click promotion.

Per-Order Fee: When a manufacturer or distributor drop ships an order directly to a customer on a retailer's behalf that manufacturer or distributor may charge a per-order fee for processing.

Profit Margin: The difference between what a retailer pays for a product and what the retailer's customer pays for the product. Margin calculations may consider only the cost of the goods sold or may take into account overhead and other variable costs.

Quantitative Metrics: In online marketing, quantitative metrics are those measures that may be represented as numbers. Click-through rates, visitor counts, and time-on-site are all examples of quantitative metrics.

Qualitative Metrics: In online marketing, qualitative metrics seek to measure the quality of a customer interaction, and may be subjective in nature. A retailer, as an example, may implement a new product review campaign, compare reviews written before and after the campaign, awarding each review a qualitative score, and then use the relative scores to decide if the campaign was successful.

Reseller: A company that purchases goods or services for the purpose of resale not consumption. In web economics, a reseller may also be a form of affiliate marketer, promoting a rebranded service.

Retailer: A company that sells directly to the end consumer.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM): Online marketing aimed at increasing a given website's visibility on a search engine results page (SERP) by both optimizing the website for indexing and purchasing ads or paid inclusions.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): The process of making a website easier for search engine bots to index and categorize.

Search Engine Results Page (SERP): A search engine web page displaying the list of responses to a particular search query.

Shipping: The process of physically moving merchandise from a point of origin, like a retailer's warehouse, to a destination, like a customer's home.

Social Media: Internet-based tools or websites that facilitate sharing of content, opinions, links, images, or videos between people.

Social Media Marketing: A branch of Internet marketing aimed at promoting products or service via social media. It may be thought of as web-based word-of-mouth marketing.

Sole Proprietorship: A business structure wherein a single individual both owns and runs the company. For the most part, there is not legal distinction between the owner and the business.

Split Testing: In online marketing, a testing model that has marketers simultaneously test two variables (often labeled A and B) in order to discover which variation in web page or ad content or design produces the best possible result.

Supply Chain: A network or system of businesses involved in moving a product from its manufacturing point to the customer. In online retailing, the supply chain usually represents the distributor and manufacturer of a product.

Trade Show: An exhibition created so that manufacturers and distributors may show or demonstrate new products or services.

Traffic: In Internet marketing, traffic represents the number of visitors a particular page or site receives.

Usability: The relative ease of navigating, reading, or otherwise interacting with a website or web application.

Vertical: An industry segment made up of similar business and customers.

Wholesale Price: The price manufacturers, distributors, or other wholesalers charge retailers for products.

Wholesaler: A manufacturer, distributor, or similar that sells to retailers.

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He started his professional journey as structural engineer for the International Space Station and Space Shuttle programs. As the engineering needs for these historic programs began to decline, he decided to do something completely different. Instead of jumping over to another engineering project, he started an online skateboard shop. This is where his skills of ecommerce optimization, web development and internet marketing were honed.

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