

# A Short Guide to Building your Online Marketing Plan

by Sasha Blumenfeld & James Kennedy

## *The Challenge With Marketing in 2014*

Good news! The steps you need to take to uncover untold success are writ large in plain site. There are literally thousands of detailed breakdowns of pretty much every marketing strategy you could imagine available to you, free and gratis online. Sites like ...

- Mashable
- Techcrunch
- AdAge earned
- emarketer
- Brandweek
- MarketingProfs
- SmartBrief
- Altimeter Group
- MarketingSherpa
- ClickZ
- mixergy.com
- growthhacker.tv
- growthhackers.com

I could go on, but you get the idea. There is enough material in the above list to keep a small herd of marketeers busy for several life times.

**“The challenge is no longer *how* but *which* marketing strategies to approach”**

This ebook is about how to chose from the forest of available content and decide which pieces can work best for you. More importantly, it is about marshalling your resources and deciding which tactics are suits to you.

## The Name of the Game

Let's draw a line before we start and make a couple of assertions. Our goal is to

1. Acquire the attention of prospective customers
2. Convince those prospects to engage with us by offering their contact information.
3. Encourage a proportion of these to actually become a customer

Hold on? I get steps 1 and 3 but what about all of this contact information collection?

## **“Online - nobody puts out on the first date”**

Although the idea of a user alighting on your page, being convinced of your compelling offer and then handing over a credit card number is alluring, it almost never happens. In fact, potential users will need to “touch” you at least 7 times before they decide to buy. Let me say that again.

## **“Potential customers need to interact with you 7 times before they can buy”**

Going for the sale on our first date is not going to work. Much better to build trust over time, establishing ourselves as a source that can be trusted - because asking for the sale before trust has been established will just waste good leads.

Capturing contact information so that we can update our leads with useful, timely information over time is key to success. All of our strategies take this approach.

With that said, let's get to the heart of the matter. Here is a list of simple strategies that anyone can implement to build a steady flow of leads for your business. We have listed the best “low hanging fruit” that will get you the best results.

Of course, if all of this looks overwhelming, have us complete a plan and advise you on what is best for your particular company. Heck, we can even do it for you if you'd like.

## **Online Marketing Checklist**

After a lot of research and testing we have put together a basic online marketing plan for companies like yours. When putting together your own marketing plan, remember it is good to focus on one clear call to action, or goal. Do you want more ebook downloads, newsletter signups, app downloads? Make sure the same call to action is clear through all of your marketing efforts that way, you can better measure what in your plan is effective and yielding results.

## *Measurement & Testing*

What tools do you have in place to measure your visitor's activity? Analytic tools give you important information to improve your overall online marketing performance.

Are Google Analytics in place?

Also, whenever possible, implement A/B and multivariate testing in your marketing efforts. Tracking your progress allows you to make informed decisions and iterate your marketing strategy accordingly.

As for testing, we also suggest the 2 second test. It is specifically meant for websites and apps but can be implemented with any product. Let someone look at the landing page for 2 seconds and then have them turn away. Do they know what you do? There are also platforms online such as [www.crazyegg.com](http://www.crazyegg.com), that show you stats and heat maps of how your visitors engage with your product.

## *Website*

The first thing to focus on, above anything else, is your website. Many people overlook how important this step is especially when putting effort into marketing. You can do a great job on your marketing, but if leads are landing on your site and not converting you should review your landing page to see why. Does your page incite trust through social proof? Is it clear what you are offering and that it fulfills the need of your visitor?

How do you know if your website is “good”. A “good” website produces leads (email addresses, phone numbers and contact details you can use to keep in touch with those customers). A great website will be convincing enough for 1 in five visitors to do so. A bad website is one that less than 2% of visitors give up their contact details.

Social proof can be press, high profile customer logos, testimonials, accredited seals of accreditation.

We have added a link to a case study on how social proof works:

<http://www.conversion-rate-experts.com/voices-case-study/>

If you can, add live chat to your site and start talking with potential customers in real time. You can easily integrate [Olark.com](http://Olark.com) into any website. It will help increase conversion rate. Here is a case study if you don't believe us:

<http://www.proimpact7.com/ecommerce-blog/how-intuit-increased-conversion-rate-by-211-just-by-using-proactive-chat/>

Once you think your landing page is ready review Unbounce's checklist to make sure you have hit all the requirements for a strong landing page:

<http://unbounce.com/landing-pages/checklist/>

## *Region Specific Search*

Region specific landing pages can convert better. If your visitors are searching for your product or service locally, optimize your content based on their search. You can add landing pages that target the specific keywords and different languages searched. Your business should also be

listed on Google and Bing's business directories with your address and phone number, showing you have a local presence.

### *Branding and SEO*

To keep you on track and increasing your SEO you should create a content marketing calendar for the first quarter. Basically, creating a plan to keep you focused and your content fresh and useful. New content helps visitors return to your site. If you don't have a way of adding new content easily, a corporate blog could be perfect for your business to add relevant content quickly without too much knowledge of technology. When making content make sure that you pick a voice for your brand and keep within that tone throughout it all. You should also make sure that the content

Within your blog you can use different types of media such as photos, videos, infographics, and podcasts to emphasize your content. If you can, add useful tools that have your visitors engaged on your site such as rate calculators, or online tests.

Most importantly, find out what keywords your potential clients are looking for. You can use Google's free keyword planner. Use those keywords to optimize the content on your website and blog.

### *Opt-In*

Once your landing page is perfect and you are ranking on Google, how do you convert your blog or site visitors into subscribers?

Even if you aren't selling a product, in exchange for the visitor's details you can offer a free guide or information your visitors will find useful.

In the case study below, they suggest you create an overlay to come up 15 seconds after the visitor has been on the site with an opt-in form. For your older customers, send them an email asking them to opt-in to your super-awesome newsletter (set up two different drip campaigns for new and old customers).

<http://econsultancy.com/cl/blog/62406-how-to-raise-your-email-opt-in-rate-three-cro-case-studies-on-overlays>

### *Sales: Email marketing, Phone Calls & Automation*

Marketing and sales go hand-in-hand. Once you get visitors to your site how are you following up and converting them into leads and then customers? Is their information captured? Does their

visit trigger a marketing automation process?

What do you do when someone submits a form or downloads your white paper?

No matter what industry you are in, you should be contacting your leads within the first 5 minutes of signing up. This is because an average of 30% of leads coming in are ready to buy. Contact them while they still have you at the forefront of their mind and they are still by their computer. Ideally it should be by phone, but if not, email is second best.

read more: <http://hbr.org/2011/03/the-short-life-of-online-sales-leads/ar/1>

Having an automated email program setup to regularly provide leads with valuable content making them come back to your site and eventually convert them into customers is a great way to start. An automated system like this can help you score leads and know how to respond to them. For example, you see on your CRM that a lead just opened and clicked on the email “BtoB Email Marketing Tools” now you have valuable/relevant information you can use while contacting them.

How about non online based leads? Do you track the leads that call, walk in, email directly? Making sure you have a proper CRM setup makes it easy for you to get in the habit of adding all leads into the system to follow up with them accordingly.

In your email marketing consider using multiple techniques. Push marketing to contact clients when it is convenient to you. Also try touching the client each week with weekly newsletters. They should be short and provide useful information, not having you sell them something. Another good technique is the 9 word email created by Joe Polish and Dean Jackson from I love Marketing, you can read more about it here:

<http://www.streetsmartsmarketing.co/9-word-email-tip/>

Automation is also key to having a successful marketing and sales system. As your business scales, you want a system that scales with you. This means you should have a way of starting a conversation with a client as soon as they sign up regardless of the hour and then automatically score them based on their interaction. Also, creating content and scheduling it for when you want is an important time saver. There are many services to help create and manage social content such as [bufferapp.com](http://bufferapp.com), [tweetdeck](http://tweetdeck.com) or [HootSuite](http://hootsuite.com).

## *Mobile*

Mobile is the next big thing whether you like it or not. Make sure that you have mobile friendly emails, your site is optimized for mobile and tablets and your ads have a clickable phone number below to easily contact your business.

Not convinced? You can check your Google analytics to see exactly how many visitors come from mobile and tablets to your site.

## *Social*

There are many different social networks where your business should have a presence and they all have slightly different benefits. However, if you are a small company with limited resources, focus your time on just one channel where you can find the majority of your target market.

The hard part is getting a large following and then maintaining it on the same networks where you compete with friends and family for eye space. The key is to create constant, relevant, and valuable content, engaging your clients instead of talking at them.

A close-knit group of followers is very powerful.

You can start with:

## *Review Sites*

If reviews are pertinent to your business make sure you are listed on the services that people use such as Yelp, Tripadvisor, Angie's List etc. If you already have good reviews but they aren't online ask your clients to leave their comments and testimonials.

## *Facebook Fan Page*

Create a solid content plan and schedule to post daily. Consider using all of what Facebook has to offer: polls, videos and album uploads as well as their useful statistics. Facebook statistics let you know when your posts are more likely to be seen and who your followers are so that you can edit your content to them. How will you be engaging with your followers?

## *Twitter*

Unlike Facebook, Twitter can be used more often throughout the day and sometimes can lead to more customer interaction. In addition, listen to relevant conversations, create "lists" and follow and interact via "retweets", "direct messages" and "favorites" with as many "thought leaders", partners, and customers as you want.

## *Pinterest*

There are many ways you can utilize Pinterest for your business it just depends on how and what you share. You can utilize images such as infographics and new products as well as videos from youtube to better connect with your audience. Make sure that the content is visually appealing and solves a problem or inspires in some way, appealing to your industry and the hobbies or activities that your target market is interested in. You can create boards for each of your target markets, making it region specific. You can "follow" influencers, customers and partners as well as use group boards to collaborate with them - specifically influencers as they can get your content seen more.

Measure if your pinterest is working by seeing how many people repin your ideas and follow you and use google analytics to track back clicks from specific content uploaded.

### *LinkedIn*

Create a LinkedIn company page and post new content often, you can even link your blogs or twitter feed to be posted automatically to LinkedIn. You can integrate yourself within the LinkedIn community by joining groups and participating in those conversations or creating your own group (just make sure you have the time to monitor activity, add interesting topics of conversation to maintain conversation active etc.)

This is also a great place to get your happy customers to leave their testimonials and reviews.

### *Google+*

Google+ can be used much like Facebook to share engaging content such as videos, images and links.

However, you can assign different contacts into different circles sharing appropriate content with your different circles. You can take advantage of Google Hangouts to do webinars or meetings with possible partners.

You can also link your blogs with your Google authorship so that your Google+ photo shows up in the search results alongside your blog content.

You can also use SEO Site Tools for Chrome when using Google+ to help increase SEO to know where to add meta tags, keywords etc

### *Partnerships*

Find your markets “influencers”, contact them and build relationships with them. You can create partnerships or ask them to be “ambassadors” of your product or brand. In exchange you can give them something whether it be online promotion or commission per referral.

You can find them based on tweets, successful blogs, or sites presence.

### *Promotion*

Before focusing on where to spend your money, make sure you know how much you can spend. Figure out the Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), that will give you the amount you can spend on acquiring new customers. If your CLV is higher than the CA your business model is working.

There are many places you can promote your business such as paid search, sponsored posts, Facebook advertising, Twitter advertising, YouTube advertising, popular blogs, public events, traditional advertising such as newspapers, radio, television etc.

As long as you have relevant news/content you can promote your business, if not, you can pay to advertise with them.

Your online marketing plan should include both earned and paid media.

*Wrapping things up...*

It is always best to focus on a couple of different efforts at once to really spread the word and capitalize on it. Also, your marketing and sales are connected, so have a system set up that takes your leads and helps you follow through to the sale.

**“Congratulations - You read Our Book!”**

What did you think? Lets set up a Skype call so we can chat about online marketing. We love this stuff, and we always want to connect with people interested in doing more.

Email me now at [sasha@sashablumenfeld.com](mailto:sasha@sashablumenfeld.com)