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## How to Grow Newsletters

MAR 13, 2023 | by Ethan Brooks



by [Trends](#)

### So you want to build a newsletter biz?

Great. You've come to the right place.

We've spent thousands of hours untangling the newsletter business like no one else.

This report is packed with lessons we've learned from growing our own email list to 2m+ readers and millions of dollars in annual revenue.

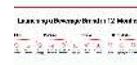
It's also filled with the wisdom of dozens of other successful newsletter publishers — from Morning Brew to Axios to AppSumo and more.

The media landscape is more important (and more competitive) than ever before

### Latest Research



How Successful Newsletters Grow



How Two Trendsters Launched a Beverage Company From Scratch in 12 Months



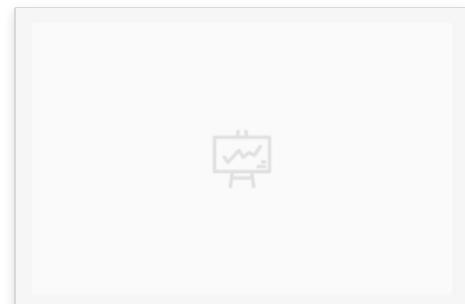
Launch Your Product to a Crowd of 15m People on TikTok



How To Build Operational Processes as a Solopreneur

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audiences) than entire news organizations.

This guide will show you how to be one of them. How to stand out, grow, profit, and influence like never before.

**You're about to learn from the industry's best**

We spent ~2+ years interviewing the most successful founders and operators in the newsletter space, like:



[Jordan DiPietro](#), who spent 12 years building products at Motley Fool, and now leads HubSpot's media team.



[Ryan Deiss](#), founder of DigitalMarketer. Shark Tank star Daymond John says that Ryan's companies "practically own the internet."



[Codie Sanchez](#), the VC who grew her newsletter following to 10k readers in 30 days, and has used it to generate millions in investment funds.



[Tyler Denk](#), employee No. 2 at Morning Brew, who led their growth and product efforts from 100k to 1.5m subscribers.



[Noah Kagan](#), founder of AppSumo, which generates nine figures a year from its newsletter.



[Alejandra Matos](#), senior director for audience development at Hearst (and before that, Wirecutter)



[Hamish McKenzie](#), co-founder of Substack (and previously the lead writer at Tesla).



[Dan Oshinsky](#), who led the newsletter teams at BuzzFeed and the New Yorker.

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**We distilled their knowledge into a universal model...**

We call it “The Newsletter Engine,” and it’s the key to building a profitable media business (in any industry).

Want to know a secret? **You don't need a big audience to build a big newsletter business...**

And having a big audience won’t guarantee success either.

Instead, you NEED to know how the business model works; How all the pieces fit together.

What are the options for monetizing an audience? And how do you decide which to take? How much is a reader worth? And how do you create something people love to read?

The newsletter engine answers all these and more. And it works for every newsletter. Other types of media businesses too. Over the next several chapters



**Download the guide as a PDF**

The Expanding Market for OTC Consumer

Audio Tech

Please enter your email address and get the pdf file.

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Email Address

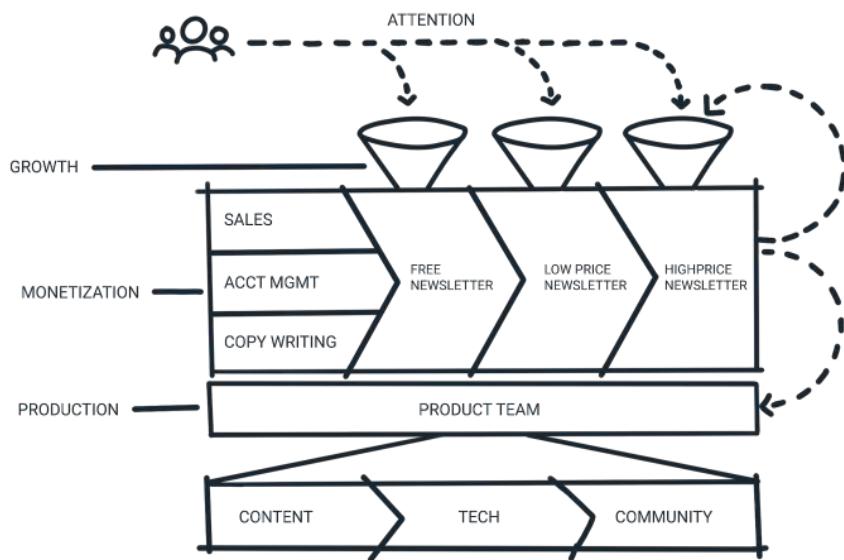
**Continue**



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In the following section, we'll break down:

- How to get attention across free, paid, and audience-driven channels
- Step-by-step funnels for converting that attention into new subscribers
- Tips on activating readers and minimizing churn
- Best practices for tracking which growth funnels are working best
- And more...



But before we dig into the specifics, let's look at the overarching idea behind growth of any kind...

## AIDA: Turning Attention Into Action

When you get right down to it, growing your newsletter is all about attracting eyeballs and convincing people to sign up.

A common framework used to describe this process is AIDA:

- **Attention** — Readers become *aware* of your newsletter.
- **Interest** — Readers become *interested* in your newsletter.
- **Desire** — Interest changes to *desire* as they form positive opinions of your

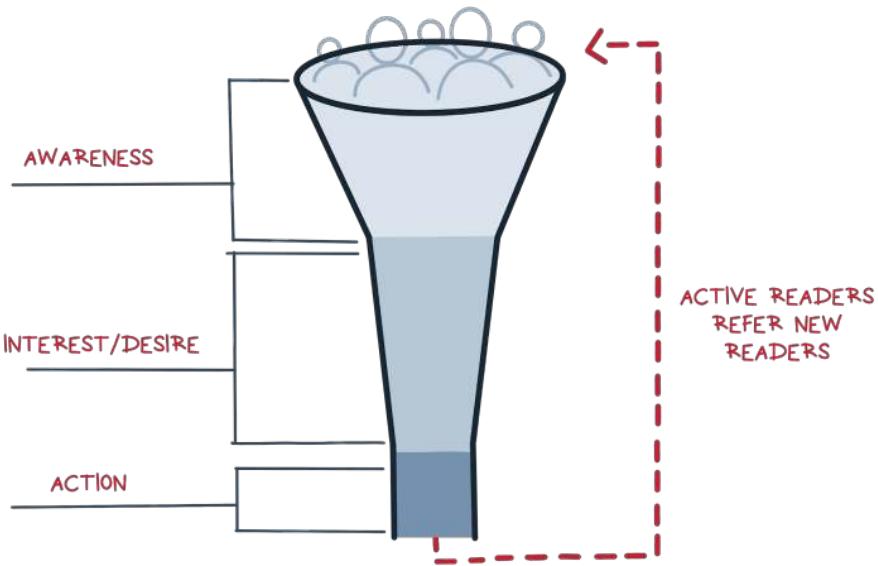


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For some subscribers, the process is extremely fast, with only a few seconds passing between the moment you grab their attention and the time they hand over their email.

Others may need to see your work several times before finally signing up.

That's why many people talk about growth as a funnel. Often, there are far more people at the top of the funnel (*aware* of you) than there are at the bottom (signed up).



The goal of your growth strategy is to get as many of the right people into that funnel as possible, and to optimize the efficiency of your funnel. (No one likes a leaky funnel.)

Notice we said the *right people*. Like pouring diesel into your Tesla, fueling your newsletter engine with the *wrong* types of readers is a waste of time and money, and a great way to ruin the machine.

## Differentiating between qualified and unqualified leads...

**Qualified leads** are those that fit your target audience. They have a high chance of



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**Unqualified leads** don't fit your target audience, and often enter your funnel when your marketing is either unclear or offers incentives that aren't aligned with your brand.

For example, at Trends, we write primarily for operators and founders of businesses with \$100m+ potential. We also have a few other "personas" such as investors and employees of tech companies that just like staying up to date on the latest news.

Anyone who fits these profiles would count as a qualified lead. By contrast, high school students, who aren't in the industry and (typically) haven't founded companies, would be unqualified leads.

Even if we could reach thousands of high school students extremely cheaply with a funny ad, and get them to give us their email address, it would be a waste of money since they don't fit the group we're targeting with our paid newsletter.

This is crucial because it dictates the kinds of growth tactics you use.

Giveaways, for example, can attract lots of leads. But they can be more trouble than they're worth if the bulk of those leads end up being people who don't care about your newsletter and just want the gadget you're giving away.

## Choosing the Right Growth Tactics

We'll get into specific growth tactics in a moment, but first, let's zoom out and look at the big picture. When it comes to growth, you have three main levers you can craft your strategy around:

- Time
- Money
- Audience

Early on, when you have no growth budget, time is your biggest asset, and you



As you generate revenue or raise funding, you might be able to spend money on marketing. We'll talk about tactics like paid ads, paid search, and influencer marketing, as well as the key metrics you should track to make sure you're getting a good return on your investment.

Once you start spending money, data and analytics become essential. We'll discuss the key metrics you'll want to track, like the cost of acquiring readers and their lifetime value, as well as how to calculate those.

Over time you will build one of your strongest growth engines ever: your audience.

If cared for properly, your existing audience will not only be the first ones to buy a product from you, but they'll encourage their friends and colleagues to do the same, growing your list through word of mouth.

In the following section, we'll unpack growth opportunities in the following areas:

## 1. **The Time Lever: Growing Your Audience for Free**

- **SEO / Blogging**
- **Social Media**
- **Earned Media**

## 2. **The Money Lever: Paid Growth Tactics**

- **Figuring Out Your Target CPA**
- **Paid Ads**
- **Paid Search**
- **Influencer Marketing**

## 3. **The Audience Lever: Building Referral Programs**

But first, we need to cover one more key concept of your growth strategy:



## The Importance of Attribution

Attribution is the process of identifying where your readers are coming from, and what actions they are taking.

This essential process helps you figure out which marketing funnels are working best and, by extension, where you should be spending more of your time and money.

If you are building a newsletter, here are key variables to consider about your audience's engagement:

- Where did they come from?
- How much did it cost to acquire them?
- Are they opening the email?
- Are they clicking on ads or other calls to action inside the newsletter?
- Did they buy your paid newsletter(s)?
- Are they enjoying the email or referring other readers?

A good email service provider will track opens and click-through rates, telling you which of your readers are most engaged. But determining where people come from often takes a little extra work.

Here's how:

**Ad Trackers:** Many social media platforms have a “tracking pixel” or a snippet of code that you can embed in your site or newsletter that allows you to analyze traffic you get from that platform.

The way you install these will vary depending on how your site is built, but each platform offers instructions (below).

Even if you have no ad budget, you should install tracking pixels for any platform you think you might one day advertise on. Pixels give you insight into what kinds



We'll get into the specifics of paid advertising in the paid section, but one other thing to know about pixels upfront is that you can use them to set up "conversion actions" — things you want readers to do on your site.

You can learn more about the various pixels, including instructions for installation, and conversion trackers at these links:

- [Meta Pixel](#)
- [Twitter Pixel Helper](#)
- [LinkedIn Insight Tag](#)
- [Pinterest Conversion Tag](#)
- [Google Conversion Tracking](#)

**Pro Tip:** You can snoop out which pixels competitors have installed to get an idea of where they're advertising.

Several tools can show you which tracking pixels websites are using, such as:

- [BuiltWith](#) — a freemium tool that shows the technology used to build a website.
- [Ghostery Insights](#) — a paid tool that tracks scripts and pixels on any site.

Check out the pixels on *Morning Brew*'s site:

## LinkedIn Insights

[LinkedIn Insights Usage Statistics](#) · [Download List of All Websites using LinkedIn Insights](#)

The LinkedIn Insight Tag is a piece of lightweight JavaScript code that you can add to your website to enable in-depth campaign reporting and unlock valuable insights about your website visitors and for conversion optimization of ads.  
Conversion Optimization

## Facebook Conversion Tracking

[Facebook Conversion Tracking Usage Statistics](#) · [Download List of All Websites using Facebook Conversion Tracking](#)

Conversion tracking functionality from Facebook, allows a user to track advertisement clicks.  
Conversion Optimization

## Twitter Website Universal Tag

[Twitter Website Universal Tag Usage Statistics](#) · [Download List of All Websites using Twitter Website Universal Tag](#)

A tool from Twitter that makes it possible for advertisers to track website conversions and manage tailored audience campaigns.





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Twitter ads conversion tracking code.  
Conversion Optimization · Conversion Tracking

pixels

## Twitter Analytics

[Twitter Analytics Usage Statistics](#) · [Download List of All Websites using Twitter Analytics](#)  
A tool that helps website owners understand how much traffic they receive from Twitter and the effectiveness of Twitter integrations on their sites. Includes Twitter Conversion Tracking.  
Conversion Optimization

## Global Site Tag

[Global Site Tag Usage Statistics](#) · [Download List of All Websites using Global Site Tag](#)  
Google's primary tag for Google Measurement/Conversion Tracking, Adwords and DoubleClick.

## Bing Universal Event Tracking

[Bing Universal Event Tracking Usage Statistics](#) · [Download List of All Websites using Bing Universal Event Tracking](#)  
Universal Event Tracking (UET) is a simple and powerful campaign measurement solution that allows you to track key conversion goals important to your business.  
Conversion Optimization · Retargeting / Remarketing

## Pinterest Conversion Tracking

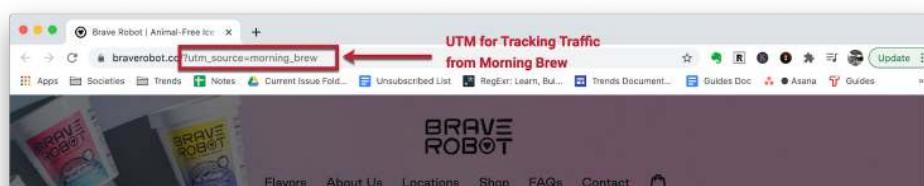
[Pinterest Conversion Tracking Usage Statistics](#) · [Download List of All Websites using Pinterest Conversion Tracking](#)  
Tag that allows you to track actions people take on your website after viewing your Promoted Pin.  
Conversion Tracking

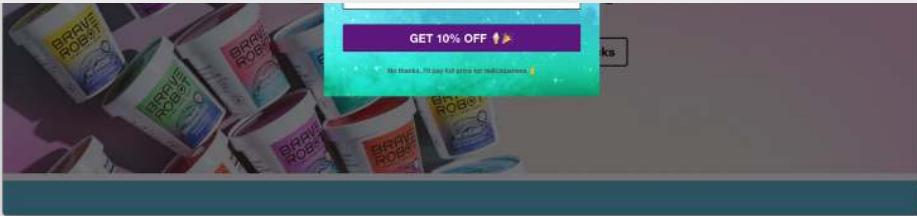
**UTM Parameter:** Another way to monitor where your website traffic comes from is through the use of UTM parameters, which allow you to easily create a custom URL without building a whole new page on your website.

Simply tag an existing page with a unique tracker (called a UTM parameter) to create a custom URL, then share it with a specific group of people and your analytics dashboard will tell you how many people visit that unique URL.

Check out this example from one of *Morning Brew*'s advertisers:

The ice cream company Brave Robot has created a unique URL using a UTM parameter. Whenever *Morning Brew* links through to the Brave Robot website, they do so using this URL so that Brave Robot can count exactly how many people come to them from *Morning Brew*'s link.





Several tools make it easy to work with UTM parameters:

- **Google's Campaign URL Builder** will automatically create a custom URL for you using info you supply.
- **Google Analytics** can detect UTMs, showing you how much traffic flows through each, and where it goes.

With that, let's look at each of the major growth levers you have at your disposal, and some key tactics within each.

## The Time Lever: Growing Your Audience for Free

You don't need money to grow a newsletter. You need attention.

Early on, nobody knows about you. So the most important thing is to focus on making high-quality content, and getting other people to talk about it.

While building a great product is the foundation of a successful newsletter, it alone will not guarantee your success. You need people to talk about you and tell your story; that's what most free marketing strategies are all about.

### You've probably heard of Paul Revere...

... the American colonist who rode through Boston to warn patriots that the British were coming.

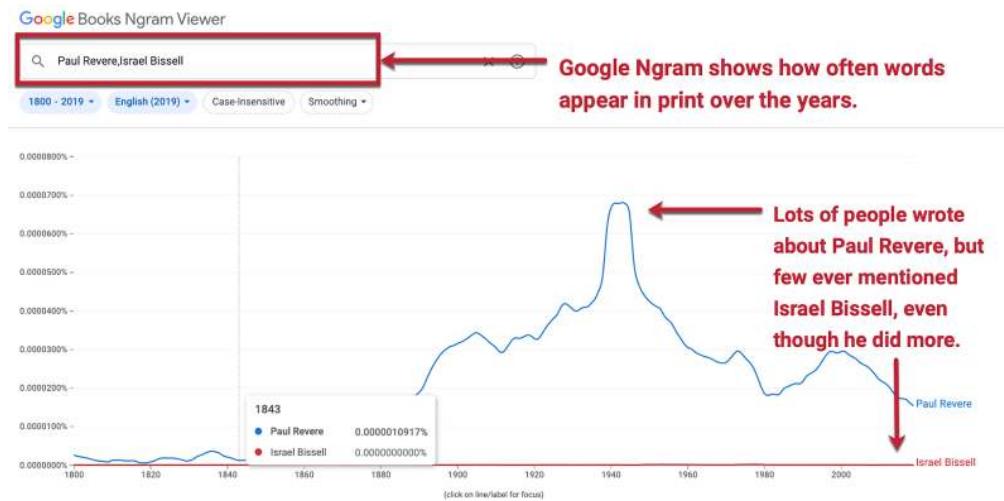
But chances are you've never heard of Israel Bissell, who also rode that night (along with three others), traveling nearly 30x further than Revere.



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Ride. The other riders were largely forgotten.

**The dirty little secret to media success:** You don't have to be the biggest or best, as long as the right people are talking about you.



**Google Ngram shows how often words have appeared in text over the last two centuries.**

Jacob Donnelly, founder of *A Media Operator*, says his newsletter got its biggest bump in sign-ups after Sean Griffey, CEO and co-founder of *Industry Dive*, gave him a shoutout:



Sean Griffey  
@seangriffey

...

Got to have a drink yesterday with @JayCoDon of A Media Operator fame.

If you don't subscribe to his newsletter, you should.

(And he played it perfectly by telling me that I was his 2nd leading referral source behind the Morning Brew crew. Game on)

[amediaoperator.com](http://amediaoperator.com)

11:25 AM · Jan 31, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 18 Likes



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source: [TWITTER](#)

Delia Cai, author of *Deez Links*, says her list exploded when *Morning Brew* mentioned her newsletter:



Source: *Deez Links* newsletter

So how do you get people to talk about you?

In technologist Kathy Sierra's talk "Building the Minimum Badass User," she says that if you can **help your readers be more impressive** to the people they care about impressing (their partner, boss, clients, etc.), they will talk about you.

When you make your newsletter truly *essential*, you attract superfans like Rob Allen. A few years ago, after missing a crucial piece of news that lost his company \$1m, Allen scoured the web looking for a way to stay up to date (and, hopefully, impress his boss).

He found *Morning Brew*, and became so enamored with it, he's gone on to become one of the *Brew*'s highest referrers, getting 4k+ people to sign up for it.

Here's an exercise many newsletter operators never take the time to consider:



## 2. What format will make it easiest for them to do that?

The most effective free growth tactics revolve around this idea of getting others to talk about you by providing value:

1. **Blogging/SEO:** Blogging starts with understanding what topics people care about and which keywords they search for online, then crafting the best result for those people.

2. **Social Media:** Posting to social media is meaningless unless people engage with and share your content, boosting it out to their friend networks.

3. **PR:** Getting trusted media outlets to mention you and your work.

Let's dive deeper into each of these to understand how they work.

## 1) Blogging/SEO

If you write about anything that's evergreen — basically anything other than daily news — SEO can offer a huge opportunity to gain readers long term.

In *Doing Content Right*, a guide to digital marketing, *The Hustle*'s Steph Smith distills much of her expertise on blogging and content marketing, including ~20k words on SEO alone.

"SEO is the most underrated tool in the publisher's toolbox," Steph says. "[It] is the most dependable way to grow your audience consistently."

Here's an example. If you want to get 30k page views on your website, you have a few options:

- **Have your post trend on Hacker News:** A front-page listing will often land 30k clicks in a day. The problem is, this isn't predictable — you have to get lucky.

- **Pay for clicks:** Using paid traffic, you can get consistent traffic — but even at the



- **SEO:** By publishing several articles that rank on search engines and drive daily clicks — whether it's 3k articles that each get 10 clicks, or 30 articles and 1k clicks — you build “bedrock” traffic that consistently trickles in day after day.

*The Hustle* started this way, winning early attention with eye-catching stories like “Confessions from the Scammy, Underground World of Kindle eBooks” ([parts I, II, and III](#)), and “The Soylent Challenge: 30 Days without Food”, which still bring in hundreds of page views a day.

In this section, we'll unpack some of Steph's best advice on SEO, along with newsletter-specific examples collected from around the web.

## TL;DR

SEO is often made to sound more complicated than it is. People try to game the system, using hacks to boost their rankings, but these aren't necessary.

At the end of the day, SEO is just a process of understanding what information people are searching for, and providing it to them in as clear a way as possible.

While there are lots of factors that go into Google's rankings, they can be boiled down to:

1. **Relevance:** Is this page what the reader *intended* to find?
2. **Credibility:** Can the reader trust your page?
3. **Usability:** How do readers interact with your page?

Google's goal is to provide the best results for what people are trying to find. If you align your content with this goal, it will naturally rise in the rankings.

Make sure you're publishing your newsletter articles on a website somewhere. Ideally your own website, since publishing on platforms like Substack helps *their* SEO, not yours. For more on good website-building options, refer to the technology chapter of the product section.



articles' relevance, credibility, and usability.

## Relevance: Understanding Search Intent

People use search engines to solve problems. If you want your article to rank high on a search engine, then it needs to solve a problem. More specifically, it needs to solve the precise problem that the reader *intends* to solve — something known as “search intent.”

When you understand the problems people are trying to solve, you can make your content more useful than anyone else’s and maximize your odds of ranking well.

Luckily, if you know how to look, search engines like Google will help, telling you:

- What do people care about?
- How many people care about this?
- Is it becoming more or less popular?
- What type of solution are people searching for?
- What existing solutions are there?

In the following section, we’ll show you inside secrets that will help you uncover the answers to these questions so you can create outstanding articles people love and share.

### What do people care about?

The most effective way to figure out what people care about is simple — let them tell you!

People all over the internet are searching for and commenting on things they care about, and if you pay attention, they will literally tell you what they want to know more about.

One great place to understand what people want is Reddit.

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Sort the posts by all-time top posts...

A screenshot of the r/gardening subreddit homepage. At the top, there's a green header bar with the subreddit name "Gardening, Plants, and Agriculture." and a "Join" button. Below the header, there's a navigation bar with options: "Hot", "New", "Top", "All Time", and "...". A red box highlights the "Top" and "All Time" buttons, with a red arrow pointing to the "All Time" button and the text "Sort by top all-time posts" above it. To the right of the navigation bar is a green "About Community" button.

... then look at what comes up. Each post title offers a clue about topics people might want to read more about.

A screenshot of a top post from the r/gardening subreddit. The post title is "Dragon fruits on my rooftop garden" with 50. k upvotes. The post includes a link to i.imgur.com/v9KFtL... and a small image of the post author. Below the title is a large image of a man in a blue kurta standing on a rooftop garden, holding a white basket filled with ripe dragon fruits. The background shows city buildings. At the bottom of the post are interaction buttons: "1.2k Comments", "Share", "Save", and "...".

A screenshot of another top post from the r/gardening subreddit. The post title is "My grandpa says we "need to get the word out" about how beautiful his Crepe Myrtle is." with 44.9k upvotes. The post includes a link to u/carbearnara 3 years ago and a small image of the post author. Below the title is a large image of a large, dense crepe myrtle tree with vibrant pink flowers against a clear blue sky. At the bottom of the post are interaction buttons: "1.2k Comments", "Share", "Save", and "...".



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928 Comments Share Save ...

Posted by u/Effulgence\_ 2 years ago 🌱

44.2k Hubs deployed and said I could build a garden to keep me busy. Never built anything before, did my best and can't wait to show him.



965 Comments Share Save ...

32.4k I'm having trouble identifying this plant

imgur.com/oJ7p1x...



361 Comments Share Save ...

Taking it one step further, click through to read the comments on each post, and sort those by most popular too.

SORT BY BEST ▾

Best

Top

New

Controversial

Where

Old

View discussions in 2 other communities

Sort comments by top-rated

↑ Abnormal points · 3 years ago

↓ That's f Controversial te envious that you live in a climate you can grow them on your roof.

Do you ever partially freeze them before eating? It kind of gives it a custard texture if you like an alternative snack in the summer. Congrats on your harvest!

For example, on the dragon fruit post, we quickly see many people are fans, either experimenting with growing them or wishing that they could.

↑ cant\_dance Zone 9B (California) 112 points · 3 years ago

↓ I live in the San Francisco Bay Area and my dragonfruit plant started fruiting annually after I draped it over a deck railing. I noticed I only get fruit on the bottom of the segments that I draped over the rail.



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You can also search [Subreddit Stats](#), which highlights the most popular posts of all time on any subreddit.

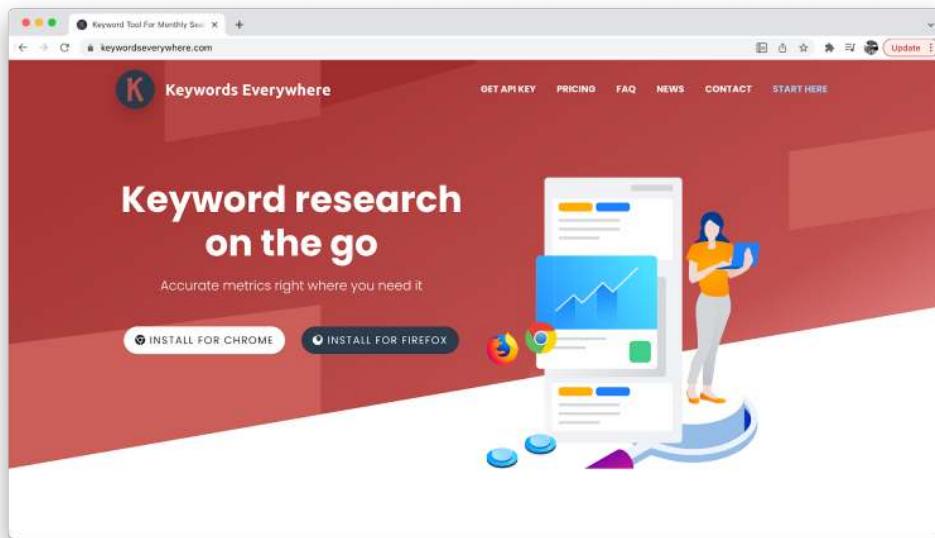
We now have a few ideas for topics people seem to care about. With a little brainstorming, we're ready to move onto the next step: figuring out how many people care about a topic.

*(Pro Tip: This also works in brainstorming ideas for viral content, as our founder Sam Parr discusses below.)*



## How many people care about this?

The next step is to understand how many people are searching for something. One great tool for checking search volume is [Keywords Everywhere](#), a simple browser extension.



Once installed, Keywords Everywhere will automatically tell you how many other people are searching for whatever you type into Google.



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About 30,800,000 results (0.73 seconds)

Videos

- How To Grow Dragon Fruit | FULL INFORMATION  
YouTube - Urban Gardening  
May 8, 2020
- How to Grow Dragon Fruit (Part 1) | Soil, Sun, Water ...  
YouTube - Epic Gardening  
Oct 23, 2018
- Top 5 Don'ts in growing dragon fruit. (My own experience)  
YouTube - eastbyomarais  
Aug 31, 2019

→ View all Feedback

People also ask

- Is dragon fruit easy to grow?
- How long does it take for dragon fruit to grow?
- What is the best way to grow dragon fruit?
- What climate do you need to grow dragon fruit?

trends

Find long tail keywords for "How to grow dragon fruit"

Trend Data for "how to grow dragon fruit" (Global)

Jan 2020 Apr 2020 Jul 2020 Oct 2020

Searched Interest

Ads - Shop how to grow dragon fr...

Titan Obelisk - Flower Support... \$39.95

Dwarf Fruit Tree \$69.99

Summersalt The Sidestrike ... \$95.00

Export CSV Add All Keywords

In the image above, we see that ~12k people/mo. search for information on how to grow dragon fruit. The tool will also give you an understanding of what adjacent queries people are searching for.

Google how to grow dragonfruit - Go...

google.com/search?q=how+to+grow+dragonfruit&liz=1C5CHFA\_enPTB51U855&oq=how+to+grow+dragonfruit&sa=...

Avg 11.9M (CPC 0.16) Competition 3.08 (Search 8.3M)

All Videos Images Shopping News Settings Tools

About 16,900,000 results (1.29 seconds)

Showing results for how to grow dragon fruit

Search instead for how to grow dragon fruit

Videos

- How To Grow Dragon Fruit | FULL INFORMATION  
YouTube - Urban Gardening  
May 8, 2020
- How to Grow Dragon Fruit (Part 1) | Soil, Sun, Water ...  
YouTube - Epic Gardening  
Oct 23, 2018
- Top 5 Don'ts in growing dragon fruit. (My own experience)  
YouTube - eastbyomarais  
Aug 31, 2019

View all Feedback

People also ask

- How long does it take for dragon fruit to grow?
- How do you grow dragon fruit at home?
- Can you grow dragon fruit in America?
- How often do you water a dragonfruit plant?

trends

Find long tail keywords for "how to grow dragonfruit"

Trend Data for "how to grow dragonfruit" (Global)

Jan 2020 Apr 2020 Jul 2020 Oct 2020

Searched Interest

Keywords Everywhere shows you similar adjacent searches that are also popular

Related Keywords

KEYWORD	VOLUME	CPC	CAP	TREND
how to grow dragon fruit from seed	1,000	0.11	3.11	
how to grow dragon fruit in pots	1,000	0.11	3.47	
how to support dragon fruit plants	1,000	0.11	3.84	
how long does dragon fruit take to grow	100	0.07	3.44	
how to prune dragon fruit from cutting	200	0.11	3.41	
how to grow dragon fruit indoors	210	0.08	3.41	
how to grow dragon fruit in australia	70	0.07	3.23	

## Is it becoming more or less popular?

As you can see in the image above, Keywords Everywhere gives us a rough idea of how searches are trending.

We can get a more precise idea by going to [Google Trends](#), and entering the search term there:

how to grow dragon fruit

Search term

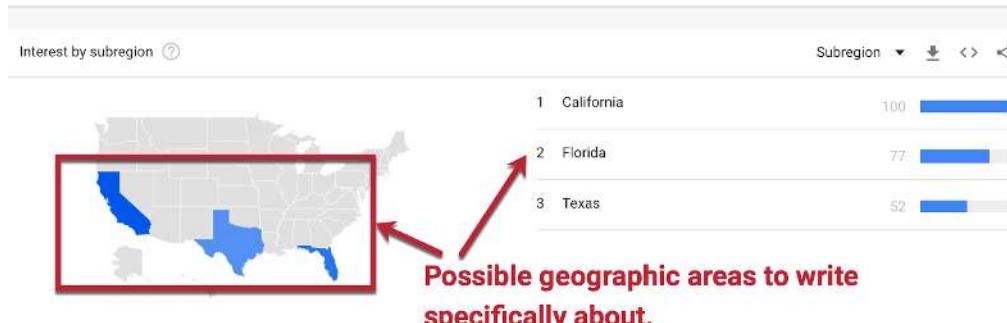
+ Compare

United States Past 12 months All categories Web Search

Interest over time



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## What solutions are people searching for?

Now that you have a topic in mind, it's imperative that you provide readers with the right solutions. **Even the most well-crafted articles will not rank if they aren't targeting the right intent.**

There are a few different types of solutions people search for when they use a search engine:

- **Informational:** They're searching for information of some sort. These queries can typically be rephrased as a 5WH question (who, what, when, where, why, or how something happens).
- **Navigational:** They're trying to reach the website for a specific company and use a search engine to do so.
- **Transactional:** They are looking to *do* something. For example, if someone searches “Convert PNG to JPEG” it’s because they’re trying to complete that action and in search of a tool to help them achieve that. They’re not looking for an



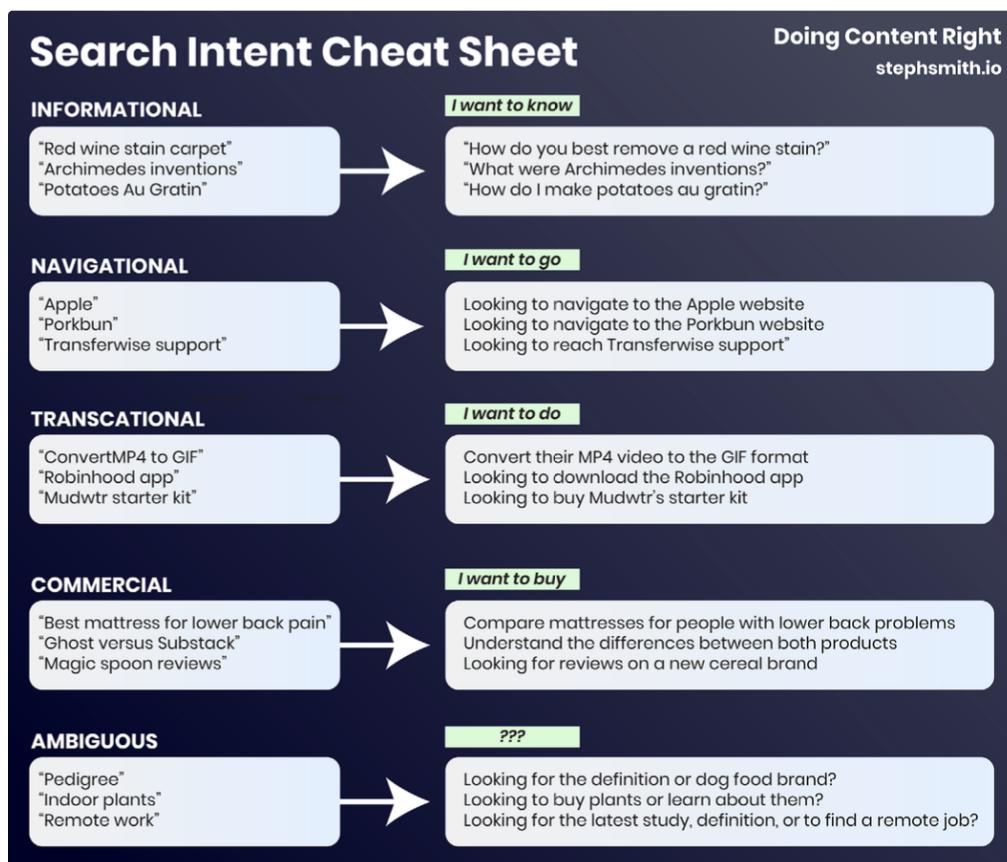
# Trends

- **Commercial:** They want to buy something specific, but are in the research phase. If they are ready to buy X, they would fall into a transactional query.

When you understand the intent behind people's search terms, you can ensure that you're creating content that serves a person's query and, therefore, is more likely to rank.

This is often the most overlooked part of SEO, and helps avoid wasting time targeting search terms that aren't aligned with a user's intent.

For example, instead of targeting the navigational query "apple" with your teardown of Apple's business model, you will search for a more aligned informational query.



## What other solutions exist?

Another thing to consider doing as you're trying to get your articles to rank is to look at the current search results for the terms you're targeting.



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authority) — but reading through those result articles can show you what Google is already ranking for your target keyword and give you ideas on how to make yours better and stand out.

**Main competition**

www.bhg.com.au • Garden - traffic (us): 3900/mo keywords (us): 88  
How to Grow Dragon Fruit: Pitaya Growing & Planting Tips ...  
Dec 2, 2020 — Dragon fruit plants - also known by the names pitaya, strawberry pear, cactus fruit , Kaktus madu, Night-blooming cereus and Belle of the night - ...

www.gardenloversclub.com • cacti-succulents • dragon... - traffic (us): 10.80K/mo keywords (us): 242  
Dragon Fruit Plant Care: Guide On How to Grow Dragon Fruit  
Dragon fruit is an exotic cactus that is found in Asia, Mexico, and parts of South America. It is not grown in North America, which is why the plant is not as ...

www.masterclass.com • articles • how-to-grow-dragon-... - traffic (us): 0/mo keywords (us): 0  
How to Grow Dragon Fruit From Seeds and Cuttings - 2020 ...  
Nov 8, 2020 — Cut a ripe dragon fruit in half and scoop out the black seeds. Wash off the fruit flesh and pulp from the seeds and lay out the seeds on a moist paper towel for at least twelve hours. Plant the seeds. Sprinkle the dragon fruit seeds across the soil surface and cover with a thin layer of soil.

youshouldgrow.com • Gardening - traffic (us): 1700/mo keywords (us): 111  
How To Grow Dragon Fruit At Home | You Should Grow  
Dragon fruit, also known as Pitaya, is a vining cactus, so you will need to provide a sturdy support in your container. Otherwise, the cactus will grow over the edges ...

balconygardenweb.com • how-to-grow-dragon-fruit-gr... - traffic (us): 800/mo keywords (us): 10  
How to Grow Dragon Fruit | Growing Dragonfruit (Pitaya)  
Dragon Fruit Information. Dragon fruit, also known as pitahaya or pitaya, belongs to the cactus family. It's a climbing cactus and needs support for growing. The ...

Images for how to grow dragon fruit  
cactus tree seed califonia plant backyard

Report images

View all

www.hgtv.com • Outdoors • Flowers and Plants • Fruit - traffic (us): 890/mo keywords (us): 105  
How to Grow Dragon Fruit From Seed | HGTV - HGTV.com  
Aug 12, 2019 — If dragon fruit has intrigued you, the small seeds scattered throughout its flesh can be sprouted easily and grown into a dragon fruit plant of your ...

www.thekohsamuguide.com • growing-dragon-fruit - traffic (us): 0/mo keywords (us): 0  
How to Grow Your Own Dragon Fruit - The Koh Samui Guide  
As a cactus, your dragon fruit wants really good drainage. It prefers mildly acidic soil, into which I chuck some earthworm castings (ph neutral) when I'm feeling ...

www.gardeningknowhow.com • Dragon Fruit - traffic (us): 350/mo keywords (us): 47  
Pitahaya Dragon Fruit: Tips On Growing Dragon Fruit Trees  
Jan 1, 2021 — How to Grow Dragon Fruit. Dragon fruit trees can be started from seeds, but it may take as long as seven years for the plant to produce fruit.



## Lower competition keywords

from seeds	Vol	CPC	Cmp	Trend
how big is a dragon fruit	50	\$0.03	0.46	Up
why my dragon fruit turn yellow	20	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon fruit plant bunnings	0	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon fruit seeds benefits	0	\$0.00	0	Up
how many seeds does a dragon fruit have	0	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon fruit companion plants	0	\$0.00	0	Up
us hardiness zones 10-11	0	\$0.00	0	Up
pruning a dragon fruit	0	\$0.00	0	Up
can dragon fruit grow in seattle	0	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon fruit seedlings not growing	0	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon fruit not bearing fruits	0	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon fruit development	0	\$0.00	0	Up
ants on dragon fruit	0	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon fruit plant care indoors	0	\$0.00	0	Up
dragon plant diseases	0	\$0.00	0	Up

Find PASF keywords in bulk

Keyword	Vol	CPC	Cmp	Trend
how to grow dragon fruit from seed	1,900	\$0.15	0.51	Up
how to grow dragon fruit in pots	880	\$0.14	0.65	Up
how to grow dragon fruit plant	720	\$0.07	0.88	Up
how to grow dragon fruit from cuttings	480	\$0.09	0.49	Up
how to grow dragon fruit at home	320	\$0.02	0.26	Up
how long does it take to grow dragon fruit	210	\$0.05	0.15	Up
how to grow dragon fruit indoors	170	\$0.09	0.6	Up
how long to grow dragon fruit	90	\$0.28	0.11	Up
how to grow dragon fruit in australia	70	\$0.07	0.28	Up
how to grow dragon fruit in texas	50	\$0.17	0.69	Up
how to grow dragon fruit in india	0	\$0.00	0	Up
how long does it take to grow dragon fruit from seed	0	\$0.00	0	Up
how long does it take to grow dragon fruit from cutting	0	\$0.00	0	Up
how easy is it to grow dragon fruit	0	\$0.00	0	Up

One other benefit of installing Keywords Everywhere: If your original search term is too heavily contested, meaning that you'll have a hard time ranking high on Google results, you'll see similar search terms that might be easier to win.

Search intent is something you can act on immediately to make better content today. But the other two legs of the SEO stool — credibility and usability — must be built up over time. They're just as critical. Failing at one will keep you from ranking altogether.



# Trends

Domain Authority is the term Google uses to describe how trustworthy or credible a website is.

As with so many things on Google, there are lots of components that ultimately go into your domain authority, and Google doesn't share all of them publicly (in order to keep people from gaming the system).

But one of the most important factors in boosting your domain authority is the number of other sites that link to you.

So one key strategy in building a strong SEO foundation is to develop backlinks from other reputable sites.

**There are two different types of backlinks though, and only one will help you...**

... They are called "follow" and "no-follow" links.

- **Most links are "follow" links** — search engines count on these to show how credible or popular a certain website is. The more of these you get, the better.
- **But some links, like those from user-generated content, are "no-follow" links** — search engines have decided that these are simply not strong enough to prove your domain authority, and no matter how many you get, it won't help your SEO.

If you look at the code of a webpage, you can tell whether the links are follow or no-follow. On many user-generated content sites, like Medium, Facebook, or Quora, links are automatically no-follow because the owners of those platforms are basically telling Google, "We're not sure how credible this shared content is."

It's crucial to understand this so that you don't waste your time developing links that do nothing for your SEO.





# Trends

**follow.**

It also got me a free two-day trip to NYC, a front-row seat to NASDAQ's closing bell, tons of cool gifts, connections with incredible people, and the world's softest sweater.

```

<p id="f205" class="iu iv gf iw b he jn ix iy hf jo iz ja jb jp jc jd je jq jf jg jh jr ji jj jl cr ew" data-selectable="true">
    And believe me — "
    <em class="jw">you want </em>
    <a href="https://shop.morningbrew.com/products/the-brewneck" class="cx js" rel="noopener" data-selectable="true">
        <em class="jw">this Brewneck sweater</em>
    </a>

```

You build your domain authority by developing high-quality links to your website by using things like:

- **Your other web properties** — If you own another website that's been around for a few years, you can add a link from there to your newsletter archive to boost its credibility.
- **Guest posts on other websites** — Use the outreach methods from our earned media section to contact other bloggers, and write content for their sites that includes links to yours.
- **Interview on other websites or podcasts** — When others interview you, they often link to your work. More on how to land these in the earned media section of this chapter.
- **Community link directories** — lots of websites function simply as directories, collecting and curating links to other sites in a specific category. Find those related to your field, and submit your site to them.
- **Competitive research** — using tools like **Ahrefs**, you can see where your competitors' links are coming from and decide whether any of those sources might be worth contacting for interviews, guest posts, etc.

Ahrefs – SEO Tools & Resources

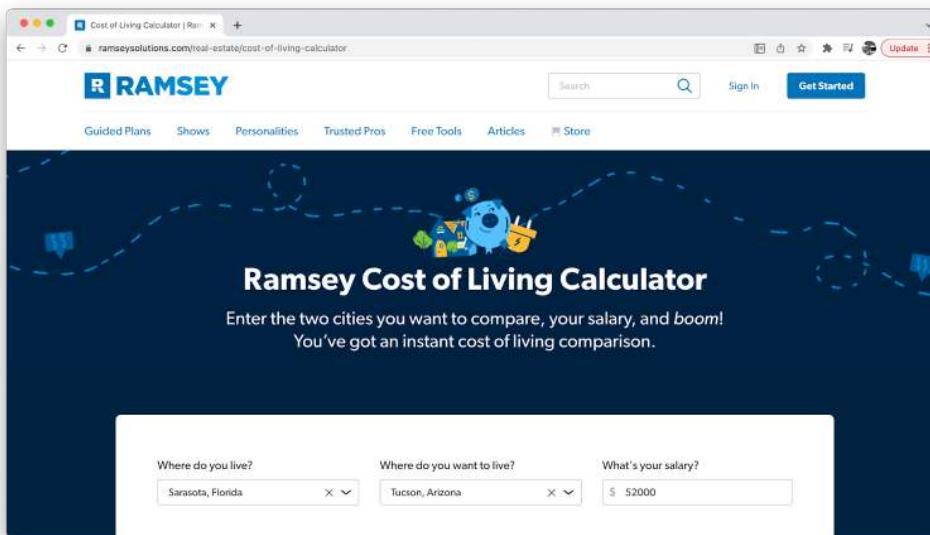
Sign In Sign up

Everything you need to rank higher



# Trends

- The “skyscraper technique” — Related to the idea of competitive research is something known as the **skyscraper technique**, wherein you find a piece of competing content with lots of backlinks, create something way better, then ask everyone linking to that page to link to you instead.
- Custom-built tools readers love and link to — Depending on your industry, you can create a tool that readers use, and let it live on your website. For example, personal finance author Dave Ramsey offers pre-built tools for comparing the cost of living in different cities, planning accelerated mortgage payments, and paying off student loans.



Google will *guess* whether your page should rank based on your relevance and credibility. They will even test you out by temporarily placing your content on the front page of the results.

But whether you stay there relies on the last piece of the puzzle: usability.



# Trends

Broadly speaking, usability is the combination of how well your site functions, and what people do when they land on it.

- **How well your site functions:** If your site doesn't load fast enough, or if it doesn't work well on mobile, Google sees that as a usability problem and will not rank you as high.
- **People's behavior:** If people land on your site and immediately bounce off, Google assumes it's because your site isn't very good, and eventually ranks you lower.

Similar to credibility, usability is something that evolves over time. You're always working on it. Google offers some tools to make sure you stay up to date on your site's usability issues, and we recommend that you begin learning how to use each of them:

- **Google Search Console:** This tool is specifically designed to help you manage your search visibility. It's where Google will alert you of any major SEO issues, and also where you can submit new pages to be indexed by Google.
- **Google Analytics:** The other major insights tool from Google, make sure this is installed on your site in order to see how users behave, and where they come from.
- **Test My Site:** A site auditing tool that will test how fast your mobile site loads, and offer suggestions for improvement.
- **PageSpeed Insights:** Another tool that will analyze how fast your website loads, and offer tips on how to speed it up.
- **Lighthouse:** This tool is built in to all Chrome browsers, and offers feedback on 10 key SEO metrics that Google tracks

## 2) Social Media



# Trends

- It offers top-, middle-, and bottom-of-funnel content that can get readers to join your list.
- Even if people don't join your newsletter, when followers engage with your social posts, social media platforms alert their friends, growing your potential reach.
- Followers who like, click, or reshare also trigger your tracking pixels, enabling you to reach them with other messaging (like paid ads) later.

The following section compiles some of the best insights from *The Hustle*'s social media maestro, Alex Garcia.

## TL;DR

Social media is a chance for you and your company to show that you're culturally relevant, flex your voice, and build real connections with the people who are superfans of your product.

## Using Social Media to Draw Traffic

While social media is *primarily* a top-of-funnel tactic, meaning its main purpose is to grab people's attention, it can also serve as a mid- and end-of-funnel medium.

By using different types of posts, you can grab people's attention, build interest and desire, and ultimately prompt them to take some important action, like signing up for your newsletter.

The trick lies in understanding the culture of each platform and using a healthy ratio of top-, mid-, and bottom-of-funnel posts to avoid seeming spammy. We recommend 70%/20%/10%, like so:



# Trends



Let's take a look at examples of each type of post...

**Top of Funnel:** These are the witty, culturally relevant posts that simply catch people's attention, drive likes and shares, and work their way around the web, acting as a megaphone for your brand's voice.

One newsletter that's great at this is *Morning Brew*. They're a regular part of the conversation on Twitter with funny, timely posts like these:



6:01 PM · Jan 2, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

69 Retweets 13 Quote Tweets 1K Likes

These tweets often work more because of what they don't say. Without using any



# Trends

- They're culturally relevant
- They have a sense of humor
- They know what year it is 😊

Funny posts are one way to do top-of-funnel because they get liked and shared widely.

**Middle of Funnel:** These posts are all about building value and trust. This is where your smart, info-heavy posts go. Repackage your newsletter content for social, or create custom stories that even your newsletter readers don't see.

For example, around the time that Airbnb IPO'd, *Morning Brew* shared the early story (complete with email screenshots) of founder Brian Chesky struggling to raise money.



Back in 2008, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky was introduced to 7 prominent investors in Silicon Valley

he was trying to raise \$150,000 at a \$1.5M valuation

5 rejected him and 2 didn't respond

The company is now likely to be worth over \$100 billion after today

to Brian, Joe, Nathan

Joe, Nathan

Thank you for the introduction. Brian g~~s~~ for the delayed response. We've had a chance to d~~s~~ something we would do here -- not in c~~a~~tely don't think that it's the right opportunity for~~e~~. The potential market opportunity did not seem l~~i~~

7/30 to Brian

Brian

partner. First, it's not in one of our prime 5 target markets so it's a~~s~~ so, since it's not an area where we are currently investing, getting~~u~~ the expertise that would be best for your company.

We decided yesterday to not take this to the next level

We've always struggled with travel as a category

ation is to keep us posted. If you get to the point of a Series A inv



# Trends

187 Retweets 56 Quote Tweets 1.2K Likes

Remember, if you can help readers impress the people they care about impressing, they'll talk about you.

Look at how some of the *Brew's* followers retweeted this story in an effort to inspire their own respective audiences, exposing thousands of new eyeballs to *Morning Brew*.

## Readers re-tweet in an effort to help their own audience

**Izahidn** @izahidn · Dec 11, 2020

This is why you have to believe in your product because there are people out there who will try to derail you, though it might not be intentional.

**Morning Brew** @MorningBrew · Dec 10, 2020

Back in 2008, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky was introduced to 7 investors. He was trying to raise \$150,000 at a \$1.5M valuation. 5 rejected him and 2 didn't respond. The company is now likely to be worth over \$100 billion after today.

**Davey Haughton** @yevad... · Dec 11, 2020

Vision, persistence, and patience are the qualities required for success even in adversity and this is why you never give up, ever... success stories often times comes with setbacks and even failures. Indeed, Every No gets you closer to a Yes! #Airbnb

**Morning Brew** @MorningBrew · Dec 10, 2020

Back in 2008, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky was introduced to 7 investors. He was trying to raise \$150,000 at a \$1.5M valuation. 5 rejected him and 2 didn't respond. The company is now likely to be worth over \$100 billion after today.

**to Brian, Joe, Nathan**

Thank you for the introduction. Brian, for the delayed response. We've had a chance to do something we would do here -- not in Europe. I really don't think that it's the right opportunity for us. The potential market opportunity did not seem like Brian, Joe, Nathan

**to Brian**

partner. First, it's not one of our prime 5 target markets so it's a no, since it's not an area where we currently invest. Getting the expertise that would be best for your company. We've always struggled with travel as a category. When is it keep us posted. If you get to the point of a Series A round, we recognize its one of the top e-commerce categories but it's been a look.

Another great way to build interest and desire among your readers is to share insights directly from members of your team.

We do this at *The Hustle*, boosting posts from our writers in order to keep readers connected to our team.

**The Hustle** @TheHustle · Apr 25

On this day: In 1947, President Harry S. Truman inaugurated a 2-lane bowling alley in the White House's West Wing.

In 1950, a White House Bowling League formed with teams of groundskeepers, Secret Service agents, and other staff.

**The Hustle Retweeted**

**Zachary Crockett** @zzcrockett · Apr 24

Ever wonder what happens to leftover soap at hotels?



# Trends

I promised a company that's on a mission to repurpose them.



thehustle.co

**The surprising afterlife of used hotel soap**

Hotel guests leave behind millions of half-used bars of soap every day.  
A nonprofit is on a mission to repurpose them.

4

8

28



*Morning Brew* does this well, too, retweeting behind-the-scenes stories from *Brew* reporters and even the co-founders. These shares achieve a few things at once:

- Delivers valuable info straight to their audience
- Creates a sense of human connection between readers and the newsletter
- Helps employees build their personal following and influence

That last one is key because influential writers are an asset to the newsletter. They help spread ideas, and can get people to act when it's important.

You'll do a better job attracting strong writers to your newsletter if they know that working with you will help them build their personal brand and audience.

Two screenshots of tweets from the Morning Brew Twitter account are shown. The first tweet is from Kinsey Grant (@KinseyGrant) on Dec 18, 2020, with a photo of her. The second tweet is from Alex Lieberman (@businessbarista) on Dec 23, 2020, with a photo of him. The third tweet is from Austin Rief (@austin\_rief) on Dec 28, 2020, with a photo of him. All three tweets are Retweets of other users. Below the tweets is a large blue graphic with the text "FOUNDER'S JOURNAL".

# Trends



let's talk about this week's column!!  
@pscp.tv

62 303 2K

Show this thread

**Bottom of Funnel:** These posts are specifically designed to get people to sign up.

Use them sparingly (~10% of the time) to avoid burning out your audience.

Check out this one from *Morning Brew*. They don't just ask people to sign up; instead, they hook readers with a story, then place the call to action (C2A) at the end of the thread.

**Morning Brew** @MorningBrew

We asked some of our readers for their pandemic dating stories for tomorrow's special dating/relationships newsletter.

Sneak peek: "Went on a date with a girl I met online. We met up at an outdoor bar and she brought her dog with her. (1/3)

2:03 PM · Dec 18, 2020 · Twitter Web App

1 Retweet 3 Quote Tweets 72 Likes

**Hook 'em  
with an  
engaging  
story**

**Morning Brew** @MorningBrew · Dec 18, 2020

Replying to @MorningBrew

I thought it was a great idea at first until she "went to the bathroom" 30 minutes into the date and never came back. We met on a dating app so I didn't have her number yet to call her. (2/3)

1 24

**Morning Brew** @MorningBrew · Dec 18, 2020

And so, as of 3 months ago, I have a new golden retriever named Alex :)"

(2/3)

You're going to want to get this newsletter:

**C2A**



# Trends

Morning Brew | [Subscribe](#)

The daily email newsletter covering the latest news from Wall St. to Silicon Valley. Informative, witty, and everything you need to start ...

 [morningbrew.com](http://morningbrew.com)

3

1

38



Polina Marinova, author of *The Profile* newsletter, does a great job of this. In the example below, she takes a shoutout from The Rock and turns it into a call to action:



Polina 

@polina\_marinova

...

The Rock is part of The [@ProfileRead](#) club! Are you?

Improve your content diet by learning from the most successful people & companies every Sunday morning.

Sign up here: [theprofile.substack.com](http://theprofile.substack.com)



Dwayne Johnson  @TheRock · Dec 24, 2020

Big mahalo  to @polina\_marinova for her Profile Dossier on my 56th favorite subject - myself.

I really enjoyed this read and think you all will too - especially the parts about my arrests as a teen for theft, fighting and check fraud 

Enjoy 

[theprofile.substack.com/p/dwayne-the-r...](http://theprofile.substack.com/p/dwayne-the-r...)

9:00 AM · Jan 15, 2021 · Twitter Web App

43 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 468 Likes

Remember, social media is designed to be, well... social! People like following people, not "brands."

Some brands forget this and just use their account like a megaphone. Even with large followings, they don't see the same kind of engagement as smaller, more



# Trends

For example, *TheSkimm* is a juggernaut of a newsletter, with ~7m email subscribers and 216k+ followers on Twitter, but they use their account mostly to post stories, not to take part in the conversation.

As a result, even though they have more than 2x the *Brew*'s following, they see much lower engagement.

Check out this example below. Over the course of a week, most of their posts got only a handful of likes. The most popular tweet (on MLK Day) took two seconds to compose, but it's human and people connect with it.

Seventeen likes is not many at all, especially for a brand with 200k+ followers. But when you consider that it's ~3x-4x their typical engagement, the point is clear: being authentic and personable is the way to go with social media.

 **theSkimm** • @theskimm • Jan 19 ...  
...  
We gotchu. Meet the No-Bra Bra from [@Wearlively](#). It's super supportive, but so comfy...you'll forget you're wearing it. Say 'bye' to tight, strict, and structured and 'hi' to movable, flexible, light AF. Get it here: [skimmth.is/3sCHTCJ](http://skimmth.is/3sCHTCJ) #ad

**(that doesn't hurt),  
okay? A bra (that  
doesn't hurt)  
is what I want.**



1 1 4 1

 **theSkimm** • @theskimm • Jan 19 ...  
...  
Tomorrow marks the end of an era, one the country is just starting to process. In the meantime, the government is focused on a singular goal: ensuring the next era begins peacefully. Read about the security measures being taken ahead of [#InaugurationDay](#) 45:





# Trends



Security, COVID-19, and Four Guys Named Paul | Daily Skimm  
Check out what's going on with security, COVID-19, and four guys named Paul in your Daily Skimm.  
[theskimm.com](http://theskimm.com)



## Topics to follow

Tweets about the Topics you follow show up in your Home timeline

Stephen Colbert



Colin Kaepernick

Trevor Noah



Dan Levy

Jimmy Kimmel



Lin-Manuel Miranda

[More Topics](#)



theSkimm @theskimm · Jan 18

Skimm HQ is observing Martin Luther King Jr Day. No Daily Skimm today. We'll be back in your inbox on Tuesday.



theSkimm @theskimm · Jan 15

On this week's episode of #SkimmThis, we break down how the House's latest #impeachment of President Trump was different from 2019's. Plus we explain the details of the US's updated #COVID19 #vaccine distribution plan. Listen here.



Skimm This: New Year, New You, New Impeachment on Apple Po...  
Show Skimm This, Ep New Year, New You, New Impeachment - Jan 14, 2021  
[podcasts.apple.com](http://podcasts.apple.com)





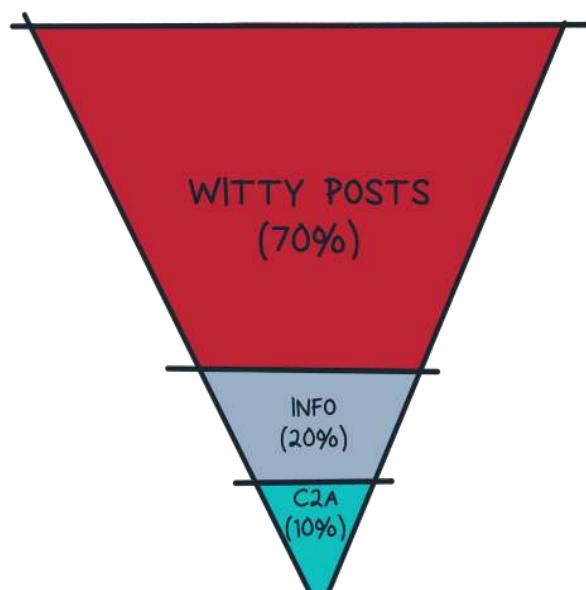
# Trends

To make sure you're tracking the people who land on your site from your social posts, be sure to set up your tracking pixels using these sites:

- [Meta Pixel](#)
- [Twitter Pixel](#)
- [LinkedIn Insight Tag](#)
- [Pinterest Conversion Tag](#)
- [Google Conversion Tracking](#)
- [YouTube Enhanced Tracking](#)

## Best Practices

- **Post 4x-5x/day on each platform:** If something highly relevant is happening in your industry or the news, then post more. Caveat: You need to post *valuable* stuff. If you post for the hell of it, your posts will become noise, and people will tune out.
- **Post on-platform:** When you post your content on the actual platform, rather than using a third-party scheduler like Buffer or Hootsuite, you get a boost from platform algorithms, leading to more engagement.
- **Find the right ratio:** Don't overwhelm people with too many bottom-of-funnel calls to action. A good ratio is 70/20/10, top/middle/bottom.



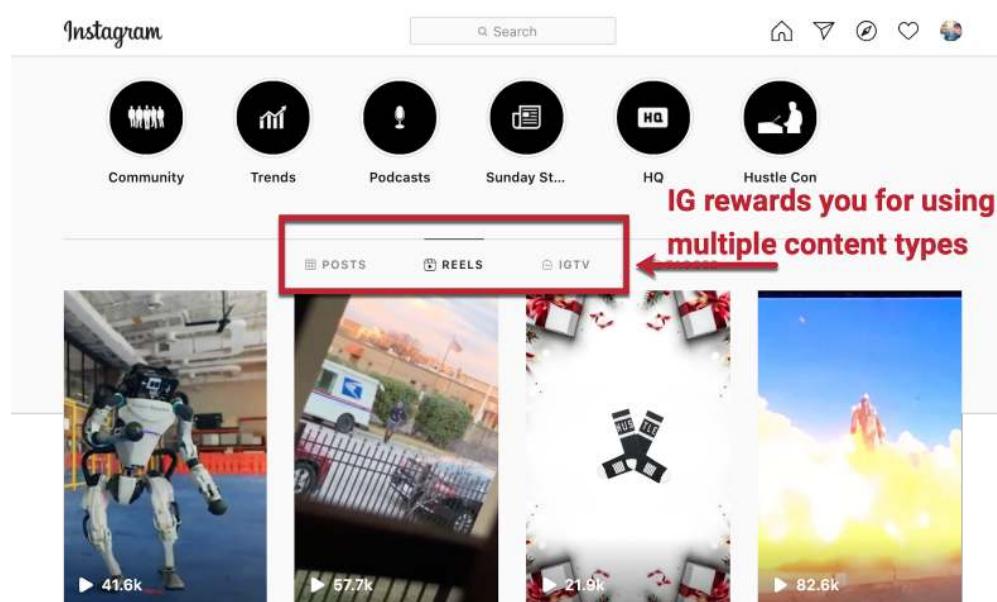


# Trends

- **Social is a long-term play:** Early on, don't worry too much about converting people. Focus instead on building connections with people, and learning the landscape.
- **It's about more than likes:** Don't limit yourself to vanity metrics. Instead, look at how many of your landing-page visitors are coming from posts, and what percentage of them are converting.
- **Build community:** Pay attention to (and interact with) the 50-100 people who frequently engage with your posts. Talking to these people regularly will do wonders for the social media algorithms, and they'll be stoked to hear from you.
- **Plan your day:** Posting 4x-5x across multiple platforms adds up to a lot of storytelling each day and a lot of content to create. Build a checklist of stories you need to post based on what people engage with the most.

## More Tips — Instagram

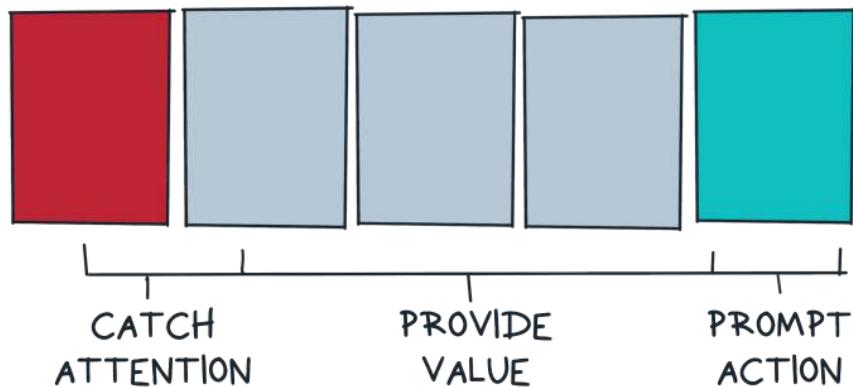
The main thing to know about Instagram is that their algorithm rewards you for using all of their content types. If you limit yourself to just posting timeline photos, you'll get a fraction of the visibility you would receive if you experimented with photos, stories, IGTV, and other features.





# Trends

Features like carousel photos are an opportunity to tell an entire story. Don't waste them by posting a haphazard photo series. The first photo should act as the punchline, setting the hook and catching the viewers' attention. The rest should tell a story, taking the reader on a journey that ends with them realizing they need to sign up for your newsletter.



## More Tips — Twitter

It's best to think of Twitter posts as falling into one of two buckets:

- **Timely:** Something happens in the news and you riff on it in a smart or funny way, picking up engagement and showing that your brand is culturally relevant.
- **Informative:** Something more evergreen, like a surprising or interesting tweet thread (remember, arm your readers to impress their friends).

Both are important, but of the two, threads are hands down the best way to grow your engagement.

One theory for this: When people expand the thread to read it, Twitter counts that



# Trends

with it unless they like or retweet it.

So, similar to a carousel story on Instagram, when writing threads, make sure the first one sets the hook and offers an irresistible promise of a story that makes people click to expand. Then deliver.

Few people do this better than *Hustle* alum [Trung Phan](#):



Trung Phan @TrungTPhan · Sep 2, 2020

When [@elonmusk](#) sold Paypal (and cashed \$165m), one of the first things he did was cold call a rocket expert (Jim Cantrell).

Below is the text of the greatest cold outreach ever.

"I'm Elon Musk, I'm an internet billionaire, I founded PayPal and X.com. I sold X.com to Compaq for 165 million dollars in cash and I could spend the rest of my life on a beach drinking Mai Tais, but I



# Trends

At the time it seemed like an unusual adventure with an unusual person. I had no way of knowing where all of this would lead and my small part in history. I am humbled by the experience in all honesty.

## Draws response from big names



Trung Phan @TrungTPhan · Sep 7, 2020

- The call is a masterclass in the Public Narrative rhetorical technique:
- Story of self (personal story = "internet billionaire")
- Story of us (collective story to show shared purpose = "multiplanet species")
- Story of now (urgent story that needs action = "Russian rockets")

I'm Elon Musk, I'm an internet billionaire, I founded PayPal and X.com. I sold X.com to Compaq for 165 million dollars in cash and...

Story of Self

...I could spend the rest of my life on a beach drinking Mai Tais, but I decided that humanity needs to become a multi-planetary species to survive and...

Story of Us

I want to do something with my money to show that humanity can do that and I need Russian rockets and that's why I'm calling you."

Story of Now

Elon Musk and 2 others

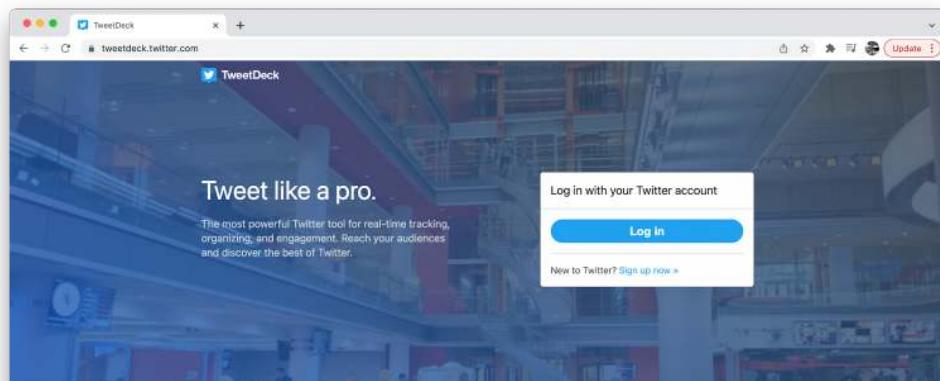
96



## Planning Tweets

As mentioned above, it's always best to post content straight from a platform, rather than using a third-party content scheduler.

The one exception to this rule is TweetDeck, which was created as a third-party tool but is now owned by Twitter. You can use it to plan content and keep track of your mentions, and even reply to people directly, all from one dashboard.





## For more on Twitter Strategy...

Check out these resources:

- [Harry Dry's 6 keys to sharing content on Twitter](#)
- [How to grow like Sahil Bloom](#)
- [Keys to high growth Twitter threads](#)

## When to Hire

Social media takes a lot of bandwidth to do right. While there are certainly solo operators who are successful without a dedicated social media manager, it can pay dividends to hire someone to focus on this role.

You'll know it's time to start or grow your social team if you:

- **Want dedicated social for multiple products:** For example, at *The Hustle*, we use one catch-all social account to engage with people who read our daily email, our paid subscription *Trends* service, and our other products (podcasts, this guide, etc.).

If you want each product to have its own dedicated social handles, and to perform well across multiple channels, you'll want to think about dedicated managers who can own the channels for each product.

- **Want to dominate specific platforms:** To truly dominate a platform — posting great content, responding to readers, and being first to comment on important threads from other influencers — you basically need to live inside a platform. So if you identify a single platform with lots of potential for your brand, and you want to go hard, consider a dedicated hire.



# Trends

When it comes time to hire for your first social media manager, you're looking for four things:

- Perspective
- Empathy
- Storytelling ability
- Understanding of culture



## Doing Community Right on Social

To wrap up this section, remember: Social media is supposed to be social.

While it's great if it funnels traffic to your landing pages, you're missing out on major leverage if you don't carry on a conversation with people on these platforms.

Some of our most popular tweets have nothing to do with business at all...



The Hustle  
@TheHustle

...

Let's settle this.

R/T for In-N-Out

Like for Whataburger



# Trends



4:50 PM · Nov 16, 2020 from Austin, TX · Twitter for iPhone

557 Retweets 279 Quote Tweets 9.6K Likes



**The Hustle** @TheHustle · Nov 16, 2020

Replying to @TheHustle

@Whataburger Texans really showed up

10

2

93



**Austin Winter** @A\_Winter6 · Nov 17, 2020

Replying to @TheHustle

As a company founded in CA, it's amazing to see the love (and truth) in this poll. #texasforever

1

1

3



**Sam Parr** @theSamParr · Nov 18, 2020

Texas is cool.

Whataburger is not.

Serial killer Henry Lee Lucas was from Dallas. Is he cool too?

smh

1

1

1



Show replies



**Phil** @philbert53 · Nov 17, 2020

Replying to @TheHustle

Five Guys better than both.

**Hustle staff**

**chimes in**

Random local hole-in-the-wall burger place probably better than any chain.

**Have a**

**conversation**

Examples:

JG's, Jake's or Keller's in north Dallas

Heidi Ho Burger in Alamogordo, NM

Tops Choice Burger in Navarre, FL



**chris** @knofun · Nov 16, 2020

Replying to @TheHustle

Clearly lots of likes from people who've never been to in-n-out 🤷

21

2

55



**The Hustle** @TheHustle · Nov 16, 2020

This could be true too.

Perspective is everything





# Trends

THE MORNING BREW DOES A GOOD JOB OF THIS, TOO.



Morning Brew ☕ ✅  
@MorningBrew

...

Favorite stock of all time:

Stock I dislike:



**Prompt  
interesting  
conversation  
among  
followers**

Stock that grew on me:



Most overrated stock:

Most underrated stock:



The G.O.A.T. investment:

Comment/quote with your answers

3:03 PM · Jan 5, 2021 · Twitter Web App

6 Retweets 28 Quote Tweets 182 Likes

Having that dialogue is valuable when things are going well. But it's absolutely indispensable for those rare occasions when your audience is upset or giving you feedback.



## 3) Earned Media

Earned media is a fancy term for getting other content creators to talk about you.

Whether it's a guest appearance on a podcast, an interview on TV, or even simply mentioning your brand in an article, this channel is powerful because it grows your reach quickly.

**It doesn't happen by accident though (there's a reason they call it "earned").**



# Trends

Most importantly, you need to be able to get the attention of busy journalists. In this section, we'll cover the tools and skills needed to stand out.

## TL;DR

The key to landing media coverage from other companies is to remember that their main goal is serving their audience, not promoting you. Therefore, you need to come up with compelling stories their audience will love, and pitch them in an interesting way.

## How to Reach Out to Journalists

PR doesn't happen by accident — you need to reach out to journalists with compelling story ideas.

This process breaks down into three steps:

- Understand who your “look-alikes” are
- Build your media list
- Reach out to people on your media list with story ideas

Your look-alikes are companies you admire that get a lot of press and are a lot like you without being direct competitors.

For example, Patagonia's look-alike could be Toms: both companies are driven by similar values, but they don't compete over the exact same market.

The image contains two screenshots of website banners. The top screenshot is for the brand TOMS, featuring a photograph of several healthcare workers wearing blue scrubs and masks. The text on the banner reads "TOMS GLOBAL GIVING COVID-19". Below this, there is a smaller text block stating: "As of April 1st, we're directing one third of our net profits to the TOMS COVID-19 Global Giving Fund.\* This fund supports long-time Giving Partners on the frontlines of the global health crisis, meaning that with every TOMS purchase, so are you." At the bottom of this banner is a "Learn More" button. The bottom screenshot is for the brand Patagonia, showing a photograph of a protest or rally. The text on the banner reads "We're in business to".



# Trends

Study the journalists and publications that cover your look-alikes, and compile them into something called your “media list.”

## Here are three ways to build your media list...

You don't need complex tools to build your media list. Feel free to copy our [media list template here](#), or make one of your own. Then use the following steps to collect names and contact info for journalists who may be interested in your story:

### 1. Search Google News for Stories About Competitors or Look-alikes (\$0)

The screenshot shows a Google News search results page for the query "Toms Shoes". The results are displayed in a grid format with four news items per row. Each item includes a thumbnail image, the source (e.g., Tom's Guide, Lululemon), the title of the article, and a brief summary. The fourth item in the grid is partially cut off on the right.

Source	Title	Summary
Tom's Guide	On Cloudmonster review	A good long run shoe - One of the most cushioned On running shoes - Responsive - Lighter than other long-run shoes...
Tom's Guide	Lululemon launches its first female-only running shoe ...	'Blissfeel' will cost \$148, putting it at the more everyday range of the running shoe market, where performance shoes can cost upwards of \$200...
FootBandNow	Women Canvas Shoes Market Size, Growth Drivers And ...	Converse, Nike, Levi's, Adidas, Keds, PONY, H2Z, Zosdam, Puma, Kappa, Crocs, Vans, Seirra, Toms Shoes, XTEP, Wanter, Anita, NOVESTA
dotLA	Fashion Tech Works Opens New Coworking Space for Emerging Designers	The panelists included Liz Heller of TOMS shoes, Ashley Crowder of VNTANA and Kristine Ipsutjeja of Madison Innovative Materials...

Read the articles, searching for key information about the journalists who wrote them, including:

- Contact info
- Hints about what the journalist likes to write about
- What their audience responds to

This will help when you craft your custom pitch. Sometimes, journalists will put



## About the Author



**Ali Smith**

Ali Smith is a fashion and lifestyle blogger and an editor at 9to5toys. She has a unique perspective on fashion and is always watching for the newest and freshest trends. Her blog and Instagram is <http://alismithstyle.com/>. Contact her at [ali@9to5mac.com](mailto:ali@9to5mac.com).

Other times, their social media profiles or personal websites will offer information on how to get in touch.

Aisha Mbowe

@AishaMbTV

Nightteam Reporter [@7news](#) Former Anchor/ Reporter [@fox61news](#) [#TernAlum](#)  
[#DMV](#) Gambian Have a story idea? [Tweet me or email ambowe@whdh.com](mailto:ambowe@whdh.com)

📍 Boston, MA Joined March 2014

741 Following 2,727 Followers

This is because most of them want to hear story pitches that are worthwhile. For those times when a journalist's info isn't easy to spot, tools like [Hunter.io](#) or [Voila Norbert](#) can help.

Put this information, along with notes and links to relevant articles, into your media list. All of this will help you when it comes time to get in touch.

## 2. Set a Google Alert (\$0)

You can also use Google Alerts to stay updated on journalists who are writing about topics in your industry. Simply go to [google.com/alerts](http://google.com/alerts) and type in a search phrase. Once created, Google will send you a regular email with all the new



# Trends

You could set alerts for:

- Competitors
- Your industry name
- Key people you want to keep tabs on, and more...

When a new article is published that mentions that thing, it will land in your inbox.

This is especially powerful if you operate in a seasonal industry, as it will give you an idea for when publications like to write about your topic. That knowledge pays dividends and can help you stay ahead of your competitors when doing outreach.

### 3. Use Paid Tools, Like 'A News Tip' (\$0-\$400 per month)

Tools like [Anewstip](#) compile databases of journalists, the topics they write about, and their contact information. A free membership can help you turn up sources the same way Google News can, but still requires you to do some internet sleuthing to collect contact information. A paid membership, which ranges from \$200 to \$400 per month, gives you access to contact info right on the site.



# Trends

The screenshot shows a news article from Tom's Guide. At the top, there are two small profile pictures: one of a person and another of a shoe. Below the images are buttons for 'General Assignment News' and 'Comments'. There are also links to 'Pitch / Send press release', 'View email address', and 'View phone number'. A 'Related article' section is present with a link to 'Money Saver: Huge sale on TOMS shoes' and its URL. The main article title is 'The On Cloudmonster is a monster shoe, with monster cushioning — and I loved it'. Below the title is a link to the full article and a small image of a blue TOMS shoe.

## Nitty Gritty: How to Make the Most of Podcast Appearances

One of the most interesting operators in this space is Codie Sanchez, founder of the *Contrarian Thinking* newsletter, which she grew to **10k+ subscribers in 30 days** with no paid traffic.

Now, more than two years after founding, the newsletter is much, much larger.

One of her most effective growth levers, especially early on, was appearing on podcasts. To make the most of those opportunities, she does **not** just appear on a podcast hoping people will look her up afterwards and join her mailing list.

Instead, she:

- Focuses on doing a killer interview and providing tons of valuable answers to a podcaster's questions.
- Mentions one of several high-quality lead magnets she's developed (whichever are most relevant to the audience she's speaking for).
- Offers podcast hosts a prewritten follow-up email they can send to listeners after the show with links to downloads, custom coupon codes, and any other special offers they have for that particular audience.

According to Sanchez, there are a few tricks to effective cold outreach. Check out the audio below to hear her talk through her approach.



## Wrapping Up: Remember These Best Practices

- **Say interesting things in public:** What do you believe, that others *likely* agree with but no one ever talks about? Tapping this well, and using it to share interesting or controversial opinions with the world, is a great way to get attention. For Sanchez, her social media (LinkedIn) presence is one of her biggest drivers of podcast invites.



Codie A. Sanchez • 1st  
Investor | Advisor | Entourage Effect Capital  
Owner | Editorial

•••

Down Markets Can be GREAT for Brands.

This week, I thought we'd debunk one fallacy using an example of two of our really strong EEC brands **Cann Mr. Moxey's**.

Fallacy: Down markets are terrible for brands.

Fact: Down markets are terrible for bad brands.

--> Consumers are either moving towards pleasure or away from pain. <--

Always.

So you could imagine, in a 10 year plus bull market – safe to say they were moving towards pleasure.

In a global pandemic with 20% unemployment safe to say most are moving away from pain.

What does this mean for you as a marketer of your product? It means be cognizant of the way you are selling. Let's talk about how... **#brands**  
**#cannabis**





# Trends

## Reactions



Like Comment Share Send

- **Niche down to go big:** Pick a relatively narrow area of expertise that you speak about publicly. This makes it easier for media operators to understand what your angle is, and how you might be interesting to their audience. Build authority there, then branch out.
- **Don't just pitch big media:** There's less competition to land stories in smaller pubs. In his book *Trust Me, I'm Lying*, Ryan Holiday argues that landing press in smaller publications can eventually get you a spot in larger ones, since many large media outlets watch the small ones for story ideas.
- **Target at least 50 people** for your media list. Adrian Salamunovic, author of *Free PR*, says that you can see response rates as high as 7% if you execute your pitch well.
- **For even more on PR** — including tips on how to hire and train for this role — check out our complete solo founder's guide to PR in the bonus section of this guide.

## 2. The Money Lever: Growing Through Paid Acquisition

As you move into paid acquisition, the most important thing is knowing how much each reader is worth and the maximum amount you should pay to acquire them (something called your target cost per acquisition, or target CPA).

If you're able to acquire readers at or below your target CPA, then there are only two real limits on how fast you can grow:



# Trends

including founder goals, existing revenue, product development, and access to cash.



Kolby Hatch

1:18 PM Nov 13



Access to cash is a big one. If you know you could spend \$1m profitably in the next 48hrs, good luck finding \$1m cash.

- The “Law of Shitty Clickthroughs”: This law states simply that, over time, all marketing strategies ultimately result in shittier and shittier clickthrough rates. Customers initially respond to novelty. Once the novelty of a marketing tactic wears off, ad performance degrades and you’re on the hunt for a new way to catch people’s attention.

Before you’re ready to explore the most popular paid tactics — like paid ads, paid search, and influencer marketing — we need to discuss the most important part of paid acquisition: your target CPA.

## Figuring Out Your Target CPA

Simply put, your target CPA is the price you can pay for each reader without going broke. To calculate it, you need to first understand:

- The revenue an individual reader brings your newsletter (known as customer lifetime value, or CLTV)
- Your desired payback period — how soon will you break even on your investment?

## Customer Lifetime Value

The lifetime value of a reader is the amount of money you can expect to earn from them.



more active they are, the more money they're worth to you in either subscription revenue, or advertiser revenue.

**CLTV is the most important metric in paid marketing because it tells you how much you can spend to obtain a new reader.**

## How to Calculate CLTV

For an ad-supported newsletter charging on a cost-per-open basis, there are a few variables involved in calculating CLTV:

**1. Revenue Per Open (RPO):** How much money you make each time someone opens the email. This is an approximation, since each client pays a slightly different price depending on budget and the type of ad they're buying.

For example, if you charge advertisers \$40 per thousand opens, then your revenue per open is four cents:

$$\$40 / 1k = \$0.04 \text{ per open}$$

This means that any time a reader opens the newsletter, you earn four cents.

**2. Open Rate:** Next, you need to consider how often any given reader can be expected to open the newsletter. In an ideal world, every reader would open every email, but of course, that's never the case. Instead, you have a range, where some readers open often, and others not so much. Here's one way to handicap it...

	Low-Value Reader	Medium-Value Reader	High-Value Reader
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%

**3. Time:** As time goes on, you send more and more emails — meaning more and more opportunities for people to open — and, as long as they're still subscribed and opening, readers' CLTVs continue to climb.



# Trends

medium-, and low-value readers would have opened, like so:

	<b>Low Value Reader</b>	<b>Medium Value Reader</b>	<b>High Value Reader</b>
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%
Emails Sent	10	10	10
Emails Opened	1	5	8

Because you know how much you earn each time they open an email, you can calculate how much these readers are worth at any given point in time.

For example, after two weeks, the values of each would look like this:

	<b>Low Value Reader</b>	<b>Medium Value Reader</b>	<b>High Value Reader</b>
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%
Emails Sent	10	10	10
Emails Opened	1	5	8
Revenue Per Open	\$0.04	\$0.04	\$0.04
Value of Reader	\$0.04	\$0.20	\$0.32

This value would continue to go up for as long as each reader remains subscribed.

	<b>Low Value Reader</b>	<b>Medium Value Reader</b>	<b>High Value Reader</b>
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%
<b>Emails Sent</b>		<b>Emails Opened</b>	
10	1	5	8
100	10	50	80
200	20	100	160
300	30	150	240
400	40	200	320
500	50	250	400

By combining your open rates and revenue per open, you can see how the value of each reader continues to grow over time.

	<b>Low Value Reader</b>	<b>Medium Value Reader</b>	<b>High Value Reader</b>
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%
<b>Emails Sent</b>		<b>Value of the Reader Over Time</b>	
<b>Value of the Reader Over Time</b>			
10	\$0.04	\$0.20	\$0.32
100	\$0.40	\$2.00	\$3.20
200	\$0.80	\$4.00	\$6.40
300	\$1.20	\$6.00	\$9.60
400	\$1.60	\$8.00	\$12.80
500	\$2.00	\$10.00	\$16.00



# Trends

If you know roughly how long readers stay active on your list, you can use the concepts above to determine your CLTV.

For example, if you happen to know that all readers typically stay active for ~18 months (about 400 emails if you're sending five per week), then you can use that to identify your CLTV.

	Low Value Reader	Medium Value Reader	High Value Reader
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%
Emails Sent	Value of the Reader Over Time		
10	\$0.04	\$0.20	\$0.32
100	\$0.40	\$2.00	\$3.20
200	\$0.80	\$4.00	\$6.40
300	\$1.20	\$6.00	\$9.60
400	\$1.60	\$8.00	\$12.80
500	\$2.00	\$10.00	\$16.00

If you know this, then you know you must acquire high-quality readers for less than \$12.80 in order to be profitable.

But how much less?

**Once you know your CLTV, there are two ways to choose your target acquisition price...**

- By setting a desired “payback period”
- Or by choosing a desired profit margin

The payback period is how long you want it to take to earn back the money you spent to acquire a customer. It's the break-even point.

In our example so far, if you paid \$3.20 to acquire a highly engaged reader, then your payback period would be roughly five months (20 weeks, sending five emails per week).

	Low Value Reader	Medium Value Reader	High Value Reader
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%



# Trends

300	\$1.20	\$6.00	\$9.60
400	\$1.60	\$8.00	\$12.80
500	\$2.00	\$10.00	\$16.00

You can aim for whatever payback period you like, but our research shows that three to six months is fairly standard for ad-supported newsletters; up to 12 months is standard for paid subscriptions.

On the other hand, you may base your decision on your target profit margin. Let's say for the sake of argument that you would like a 100% margin between the price you pay for a new reader and the value they ultimately deliver.

Based on a CLTV of \$12.80, your target CPA would be exactly half of that (\$6.40) giving you a 100% profit margin.

	Low Value Reader	Medium Value Reader	High Value Reader
Open Rate	10%	50%	80%
Emails Sent	Value of the Reader Over Time		
10	\$0.04	\$0.20	\$0.32
100	\$0.40	\$2.00	\$3.20
200	\$0.80	\$4.00	\$6.40
300	\$1.20	\$6.00	\$9.60
400	\$1.60	\$8.00	\$12.80
500	\$2.00	\$10.00	\$16.00

Target CPA  
CLTV

## Putting It Into Action

Once you have the target CPA figured out, you can use it in several concrete ways.

To begin with, channels like Facebook and Google charge based on CPC models, and allow you to set the rate you're willing to pay.

If your target CPA is \$2, and you have an (impressive) conversion rate of 50% on your newsletter's landing page, then you can pay up to \$1 for a click (your CPC), since roughly one of every two clicks will get you a new reader.

Aside from helping to set CPC budgets, having a target CPA can help you renegotiate prices with ad partners, and analyze where you're getting the best bang for your buck.



## Paid Ads

*“As to methods there may be a million and then some, but principles are few. The man who grasps principles can successfully select his own method. The man who tries methods, ignoring principles, is sure to have trouble.”*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

When most people think of paid acquisition, they think of paid ads.

Paid ad platforms are like iPhones — every year a new one comes out.

It's not possible to say where the most valuable readers come from, or where the best deals are, because every time someone does, *everyone* buys ads there, driving prices up and clickthrough rates down.

To succeed with paid acquisition you need to understand the *principles* so that you can get out of the herd and pick your own methods.

In this section, we'll go through those principles with help from Scott Nixon, the general manager of *The Hustle*'s daily email.

## TL;DR:

Paid ads are all about one thing: your target cost per acquisition.

If you can bring in new readers at or below that cost, you're in great shape, but your work is never done — the growth manager handling paid ads is on a never-ending quest to beat the best performing ad.

## Funnel

Paid ads can be used at the top, middle, or bottom of the funnel. They serve as a reliable way to get attention, and you use them to direct visitors through to



# Trends

Collectively, the text and images that make up an ad are known as “creative” — like creative assets — and companies are always testing new kinds of creative to see what works best.

Platforms like Facebook Advertiser, Pinterest Ads, and Reddit Ads allow you to upload your creative, set your own budget, and track how ads are performing. Ultimately, the ones you choose will depend on who you’re targeting, and where they hang out online.

## Most newsletters tend to start with Facebook Ads...

Originally it was because Facebook was inexpensive, but now, the main reason advertisers start there is because Facebook has the best audience targeting of any platform currently available.

Not only does this help you to reach *exactly* who you want to reach, but Facebook will also give you data on who clicks which ads, which helps you better understand your audience.

You can then take those insights and apply them to other ad platforms.

When it comes to newsletters, there are a couple schools of thought on how to make paid ads as effective as possible:

- Send readers straight to a squeeze page that prompts them to enter their email address.
- Send readers through to valuable content that builds awareness and value.

You’re not limited to one of these; you can use both. Let’s look at a couple of examples from well-known newsletters, starting with *TheSkimm*.

According to Facebook’s Ad Library, *TheSkimm* has experimented heavily with Facebook ads.

Ads from theSkimm  
~2,000 results

The Skimm has tested  
2k+ ads on Facebook

All Ads Issues, Elections or Politics



# Trends

The first two ads feature Maria Sharapova, while the third features Tamron Hall. Each ad includes a play button, a microphone icon, and a 'Listen Now' button.

**Left Ad (Maria Sharapova):**  
Started running on Jan 20, 2021  
ID: 119383806713523  
This ad has multiple versions. ⓘ

**Middle Ad (Maria Sharapova):**  
Started running on Jan 20, 2021  
ID: 846021789298203  
This ad has multiple versions. ⓘ

**Right Ad (Tamron Hall):**  
Started running on Jan 20, 2021  
ID: 262857711925560  
This ad has multiple versions. ⓘ

**S theSkimm Sponsored**

This week on Skimm'd from the Couch: Tennis champion Maria Sharapova shares what she was like as a competitor, how she turned pressure into motivation, and why she's a fan of 'dressing for the job you want.'

**S theSkimm Sponsored**

This week on Skimm'd from the Couch: Tennis champion Maria Sharapova shares what she was like as a competitor, how she turned pressure into motivation, and why she's a fan of 'dressing for the job you want.'

**S theSkimm Sponsored**

Recently on Skimm'd from the Couch: Journalist, TV host, and executive producer Tamron Hall on embracing life's unexpected moments. Plus, how she turned an early-career demotion into motivation. Tune in each week for go-to advice to own your career.

**Skimm'd from the Couch**

**Tamron Hall**

**SPOTIFY.COM**

**Listen Now**

4 ads use this creative and text

**See Ad Details**

They use a handful of interesting tactics to grab people's attention, build interest and desire in the newsletter, and ultimately get them to sign up.

Let's start by investigating this very simple ad for their financial newsletter, *Skimm Money*:

**S theSkimm Sponsored**

Sign up for our Skimm Money newsletter

We've got all the tips you need to live your best financial life.

theSkimm

THESKIMM.COM

Skimm Money newsletter

**Grabs attention, builds interest, then prompts action**

The conversion funnel is very short. After grabbing readers' attention with promises of a better financial future, anyone who clicks is sent straight to this page where they're prompted to input their email address:



# Trends

## Sign up for the Skimm Money newsletter.

The diagram illustrates a funnel-shaped sign-up process. On the left, a white box contains the text: "Every Friday, we break down how the week's headlines affect your wallet. And give you can't-miss advice to help you live your best financial life." Below this is a form with a red border containing fields for "Enter your email" and a yellow "Subscribe" button. A red arrow points from the text above the form to the "Subscribe" button. To the right of the form is a smartphone displaying the Skimm Money newsletter. The phone screen shows the headline "Oh hey, Friday the 13th. We're not superstitious, but we are a little anxious. And we heard it's good luck to catch up on this week's money news." Below this is a section titled "Headlines, Skimm'd" with a bullet point about Pfizer's vaccine news. A red arrow points from the text above the headline to the "Headlines, Skimm'd" section. The background of the entire diagram is green.

In another example, they use bold colors and very slight movement on the screen (just a blinking line) to grab readers' attention before sending them through a very similar funnel.

*(Pro Tip: Just because this color scheme and movement worked once doesn't mean they'll work again — ad creative needs to be tested over and over.)*

The image shows a vertical advertisement for theSkimm. At the top, there's a small logo with a green 'S' and the text "theSkimm sponsored". Below that is a quote: "'Coundn't ask for a better wake up...coffee and theSkimm!' - A Skimm'r'. The main title "News in 5 minutes" is displayed in large, bold, black serif font. At the bottom, there's a call-to-action "Swipe up to sign up for free" and a "Learn More" button. The background of the ad is yellow.

*This animated ad draws your eye with a simple green line that flashes below the "5 minutes" text.*



# Trends



**A much more complex animation, with moving characters and scrolling text.**

**Very creative.**

Readers who click are taken to a landing page similar to the one below.

Each of the examples above shows how ads can be used to drive people straight to a landing page — a very short conversion funnel.

Short conversion funnels work well for free newsletters where you're simply trying to capture an email address. For paid newsletters, email capture is often a



# Trends

In this example, we'll look at a paid newsletter company — *The Motley Fool* — whose ads sit at the top of a much more complex and nuanced funnel. For example, check out this brilliant ad that the *Fool* ran recently:

The Motley Fool  
Sponsored

Tesla? Just a distraction from the REAL story.

↑

TESLA

↑

Super timely  
ad creative

FOOL.COM  
Forget Tesla. Here's a Bigger Story.

Learn More

This ran on a day when Tesla, which had been trading at an all-time high, suddenly dropped 7%+.

Think back to our section on social media as we analyze what's working here:

- It's extremely timely and uses a huge Tesla logo, which everyone in their target



# Trends

- It hooks you with the promise of a story. The headline and description here force even the best-informed readers to say, “*Hmmm... What's up with that?*” You almost can't resist clicking.

If you click, the story continues with this article landing page:

Can you see how the *The Motley Fool* team is building interest and desire?

Recall earlier in this section where we said that the key to getting readers to engage with your brand is figuring out what your readers want most and giving it to them.

The *Fool* is promising to let you in on something most people don't know about. Something that *could* make you rich.

What could be more interesting than being rich and knowing more than everyone else?

They don't reveal the technology immediately, though; instead, they present you with an email sign-up form.

EXCLUSIVE RESEARCH OUR TEAM OF ANALYSTS HAS PUT TOGETHER ON THIS tantalizing tech, and hear more about how to get the names of a handful of stocks our team believes are positioned to capitalize on



# Trends

before it really takes off!



Enter your email address

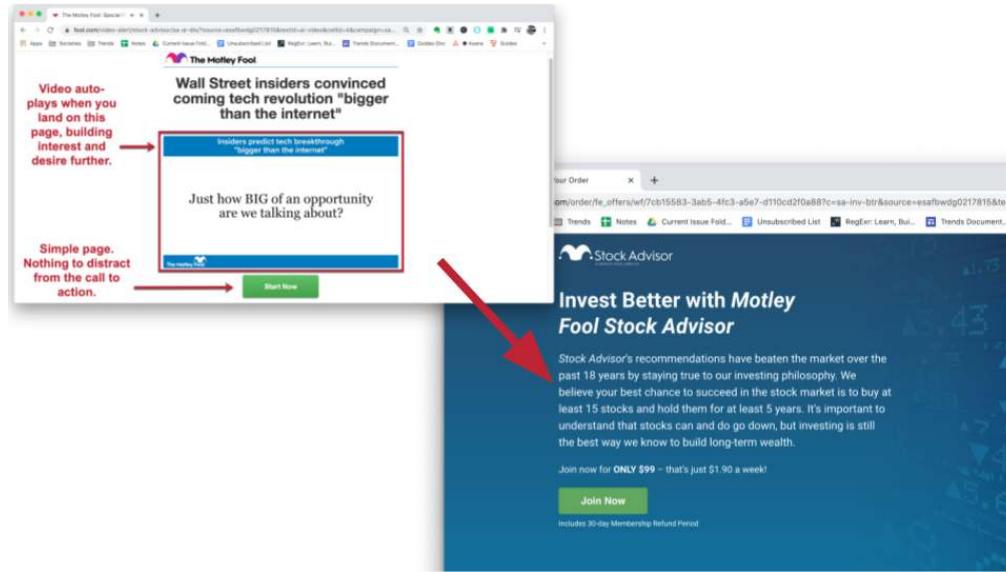
Learn more

If you fill out the email sign-up, two things happen:

- You're taken to another page, one step further in the funnel to their paid newsletter.
- You receive an email, which again, is designed to lead you to their paid newsletter.

Notice how this is beginning to resemble the paid subscription sales flow from the monetization chapter?

This page is simple and designed to move you through to the next, which is a sales page.



If you do get distracted and try to click off the page, a time-sensitive pop-up appears, working once again to create a sense of urgency. This type of pop-up is often called a "bounce modal" since it's designed to keep users from bouncing off the page.



# Trends



Meanwhile, if that doesn't get you, the email in your inbox might. It uses similar copywriting to promise a free report if you click through.

And today you can hear about this incredible technology.

I've packed the details into a free investor's report.

Simply click the button below to find out why everyone is so excited.

[Click here to view your free report](#)

And if you're listening to the talking heads in the financial media jabber on about all of the biggest and most obvious companies...you may be missing the

And where do you think that leads?

Right back here, to the intermediary sales page:

Video auto-plays when you land on this page, building interest and desire further.

Simple page. Nothing to distract from the call to action.

Wall Street insiders convinced coming tech revolution "bigger than the internet"

Insiders predict tech breakthrough "bigger than the internet"

Just how BIG of an opportunity are we talking about?

Start Now

Your Order

Invest Better with Motley Fool Stock Advisor

Stock Advisor's recommendations have beaten the market over the past 18 years by staying true to our investing philosophy. We believe your best chance to succeed in the stock market is to buy at least 15 stocks and hold them for at least 5 years. It's important to understand that stocks can and do go down, but investing is still the best way we know to build long-term wealth.

Join now for **ONLY \$99** – that's just \$1.90 a week!

Join Now

Includes 30-day Membership Refund Period

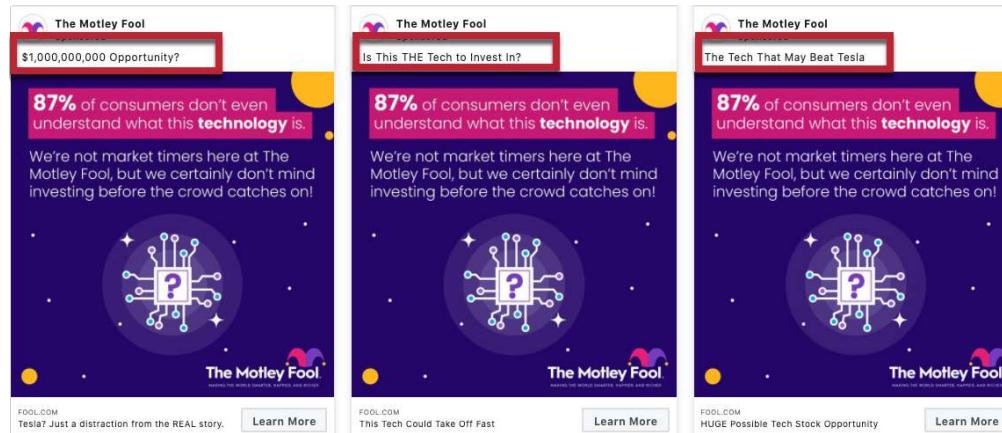


# Trends

their audience, and are likewise undoubtedly continuing to test and refine the process.

But once the landing pages and emails are set up, you can test dozens of different ads to try to bring people into your funnel.

Each of the following leads into the exact same sales sequence we just reviewed...



Look at how the headlines and descriptions are all a little different.

Ad platforms make it easy to test as many different types of ads as you want, but here's one thing you should always keep in mind...

## Is an ad bringing in qualified traffic?

Qualified leads are people who are not only likely to sign up for your newsletter, but likely to read and share it as well.

This is crucial in any marketing scheme, but especially one you're paying for.

Raffle off a Tesla and you may get tons of people signed up to your email list. But if they only sign up because they want a Tesla — not because they want to read your newsletter — then you're wasting your money.

Similarly, you may find a really clever ad that gets lots of people to click and sign up, but if those people don't become active readers, then you've wasted your



## Attribution Tips

Similar to social media, you'll want to be sure you set up ad tracking for the platform you're using. This ad tracking usually just injects a small snippet of code into your website that allows you to monitor who clicks through to your site from a specific platform, and what actions they take.

Below are the support pages for tracking setups on the main self-serve ad platforms:

- [Meta Pixel](#)
- [Twitter Pixel Helper](#)
- [LinkedIn Insight Tag](#)
- [Pinterest Conversion Tag](#)
- [Google Conversion Tracking](#)
- [YouTube Enhanced Tracking](#)
- [Quora Pixel](#)

## Best Practices

Here are some key best practices from our interview with *The Hustle's* Scott Nixon.

- **Start with Facebook:** Facebook has the best audience segmentation and targeting features of any platform right now. When you start here, you'll learn a lot about who your audience is, which can save you money across other growth tactics.
- **Borrow ideas from competitors:** Tools like [Facebook Ad Library](#) allow you to search by brand name and see the types of ads your competitors are running.
- **Test a lot:** Run new tests each week. Even when you find an ad that works, you should start lining up new creative to test. Eventually, even the most effective ads will stop working, and there's always room to perform better. Test things like:



💡 **Term:** How often subscriptions renew (monthly, annually, every two years, etc.). For example, you could test \$99/yr. against \$150 for two years and see which is more successful.

💡 **Ad copy and design:** Constantly push yourself to beat your best designs.

- **Ownership:** You need someone who owns the ad experiments and is responsible for reporting on them.
- **Daily review:** Every day, the owner of your ad tests should be reviewing progress and analyzing what is/isn't working.
- **Track results (but not too much):** You should have a central repository for tracking the tests that are in-progress, their hypotheses, and outcomes. But inputting this data cannot slog down your growth team. Learn to strike a balance between doing and reporting



## Nitty Gritty

Paid ad campaigns typically take one of two forms:

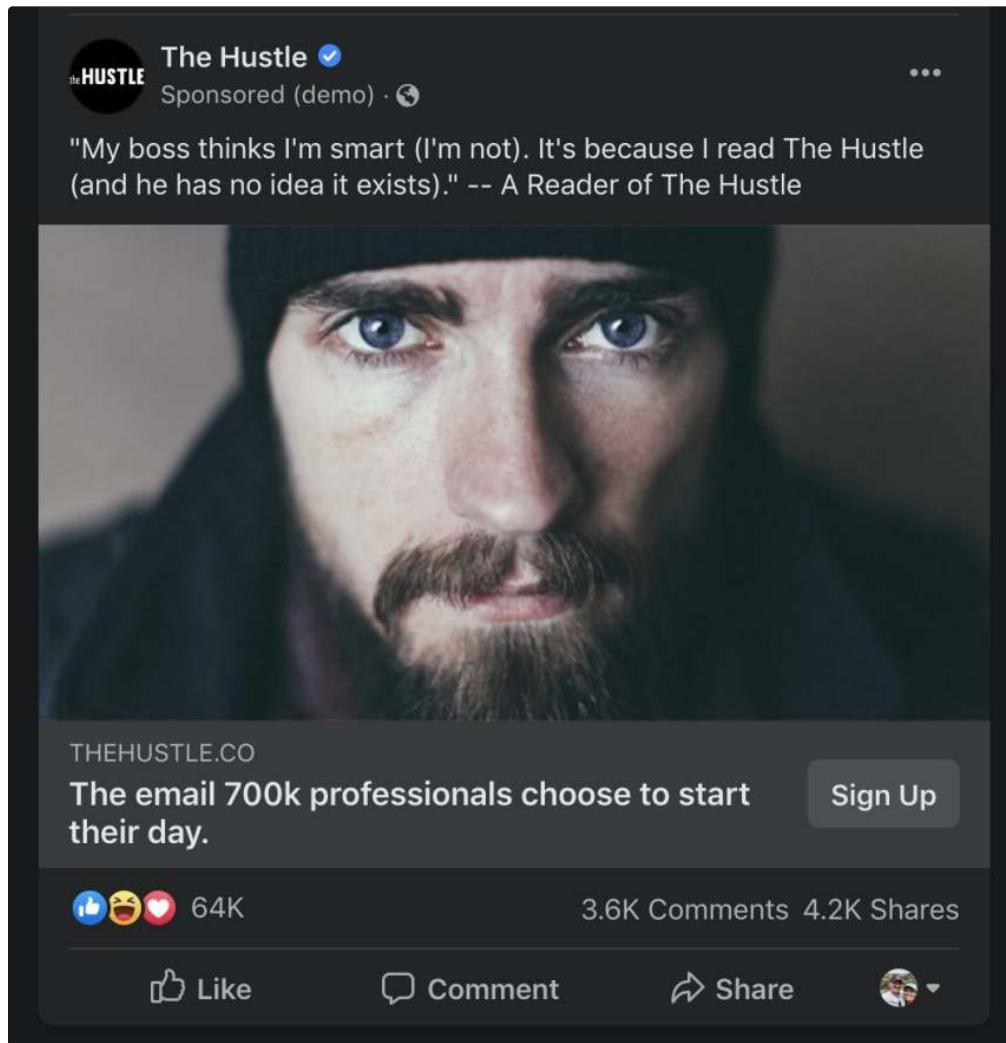
- **Cost Per Click (CPC):** Typically, you'll start here, using this model to test your ad creative until you're confident you've found one that attracts the right kind of attention and gets your ideal readers to click through and sign up at or below your target CPA.
- **Cost Per Mile (CPM):** Once you've identified highly effective ad creative, it tends to become more cost effective to pay on a CPM basis. For a single price, your ad is displayed to 1k people, and you hope as many as possible convert. As with all things in advertising, this depends on your product and needs to be tested.



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## Beat Cold Man

Back in the day, *The Hustle* had a single, unstoppable ad. His name was cold man, and he converted readers like no one else.



Every company has their own “cold man” — the ad that supposedly can’t be beat.

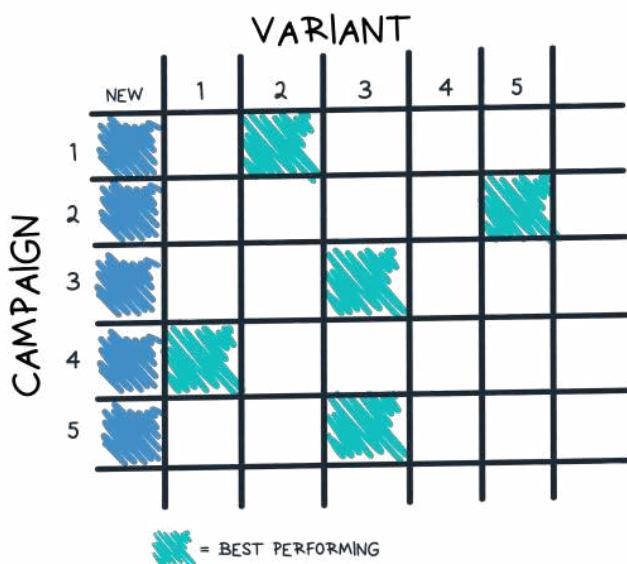
And yet, the goal of a paid acquisition team is to try new things with the goal of beating that all-time winner.

Your “cold man” represents the top of one peak, but you’ll never find the next unless you ditch it and try something new. When you do, like us, you’ll find that “cold man” can always be dethroned.

At any given time, you should be running a series of campaigns. Each campaign will have a few variations of the same general ad type — among those variants,



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Each week, you want to introduce at least one new test with the goal of beating the best variant you've found so far.

When things go well, take what you learn and apply it to your other campaigns, making your ads a constant work in progress.

## How to Know When You've Cracked A Platform

As part of your ongoing testing, you'll eventually diversify and try new platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, Quora, etc.

Because every audience is different, and the way they engage with each platform is different, each new platform will require a new round of testing.

Some, you'll find, simply won't work for you or your audience. But you'll know you've cracked a platform when your acquisition cost is at or below that all-important target CPA. That's when you can step on the gas.



## When to Cut Bait



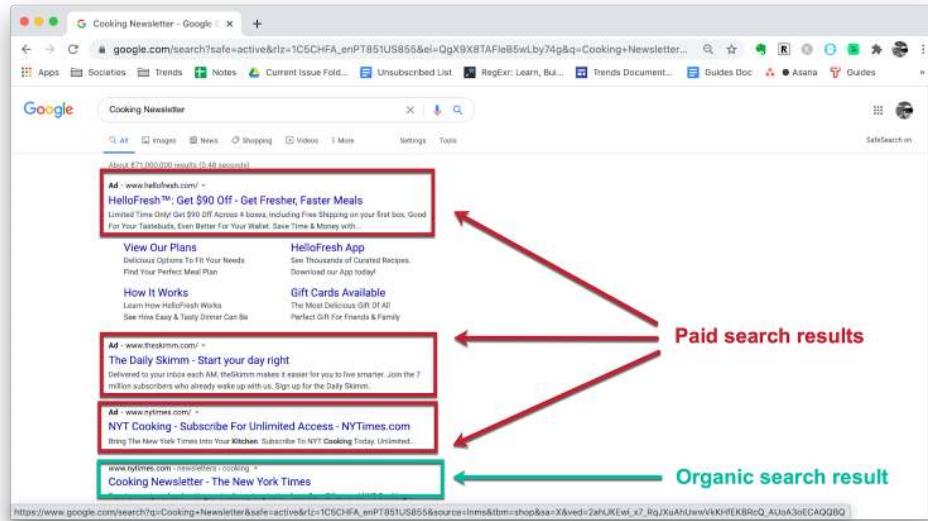
# Trends

how to think about when to cut bait on a platform or partner.



## Paid Search

Paid search ads are the sponsored listings at the top, sides, and sometimes bottom of results on search engines like Google and Bing:



The two big players are Google Ads and Microsoft Ads, which manages paid search for Bing and Yahoo). In this section, we'll break down the key insights newsletter founders need to know to approach this growth tactic well.

## TL;DR

Paid search is an effective way to get in front of people who are searching for very specific keywords *right now*. To get the best bang for your buck, target niche or “long tail” keywords with little competition. Give campaigns two to three weeks to show results, and if they’re not working the way you’d hoped, cut them.

## Funnel



## The difference comes down to interest vs. intent...

With ordinary ads on Facebook, you target people based on what they're *interested* in. If they list baseball as a hobby, for example, and you write a sports newsletter, you might choose to target them with your paid ads.

They will see your ads at various times in the future, whether they're reading about sports, or just reading the weather.

## With paid search, you're paying to get in front of someone who's searching for something *right now*.

Every time someone searches for something on Google, something happens behind the scenes: Google has a near-instantaneous auction, and companies bid on the ability to advertise their website at the top of the results.

In a fraction of a second, Google decides who the winner is, based on:

- How relevant the company's website is to the search
- How much a company is willing to pay if their ad is clicked
- The quality score of the website itself, including the quality of the user experience
- The CTR of the ad

Each winner's ads are displayed as paid search results, and if a reader clicks on them, the advertiser pays a fee to Google.

## We'll get into the funnel in a second, but first, let's talk about paid search strategy...

One of the biggest mistakes newsletters make when starting a paid search campaign is targeting broad keywords in the hopes that they will bring in lots of clicks.

Broad keywords are bad because:



# Trends

wrong people.

The hardest thing about targeting broad keywords is that the broader the term, the more difficult it is to accurately predict someone's search intent.

For example, check out these top search results for "best newsletter."

A screenshot of a Google search results page for the query "best newsletter". The search bar at the top shows the query. Below it, a red box highlights the search volume information: "Volume: 2,400/mo | CPC: \$6.05 | Competition: 0.15". A red arrow points from the text "Broad search terms can be expensive, and can force you to compete against unrelated brands" to this highlighted area. The search results list several items:

- Create Beautiful Newsletters - in Minutes & Get More Business**  
Newsletter Templates That Match The Look and Feel of Your Business. Try Free. Our Modern, Mobile-Optimized Templates & Drag-and-Drop Editor Make it Easy for You. Drag and Drop Editing. Real-Time Reporting. Easy to Use.
- Email Templates**  
Mobile Responsive, Flexible and Functional, Easy to Edit.
- Beautiful Templates**  
Over 400 Beautiful Templates, Ready-to-Use.
- Tracking & Reporting**  
Real Time Tracking and Reporting to Help You Measure Your Success
- Your Business Support Kit**  
Offering a Support Kit w/ Guidance, New Ways to Boost Business, & More!
- The Daily Skimm - Free daily newsletter**  
Delivered to your inbox each AM, theSkimm makes it easier for you to live smarter. Join the 7 million subscribers who already wake up with us. Sign up for the Daily Skimm.
- Campaigner - Powerful Email Marketing - campaigner.com**  
Personalize Your Emails, Nurture Leads And Close More Sales. Get better results with...
- Email Marketing Services 2021 - Compare All The Top Brands**  
Maximize Open Rate & Get Special Offers from the Top Email Marketing Providers!

Notice that one newsletter advertises here, but the rest of the results are for email marketing platforms, indicating that when people type this term in, their *intent* is often to find a newsletter building tool, not a newsletter to read.

**The other problem with targeting broad search terms is that they tend to be expensive.**

Let's say you run an investing newsletter. It might be tempting to target this as a search term, since it seems like it will bring in the types of readers you want.



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The top results are major players with huge ad budgets, meaning the price of competing here is going to be really high — perhaps higher than the total LTV of each new reader you end up winning.

Volume: 1,000/mo | CPC: \$4.54 | Competition: 0.59 |

All News Images Shopping Videos More Settings Tools

About 228,000,000 results (0.48 seconds)

**Competition is high, as is the price of placing an ad for this keyword**

**Ad · www.fool.com/** Motley Fool's Latest Picks - This Week's Triple-Buy Alert

This "Triple Buy" stock could be like buying Berkshire in 1992. Get your free report from The Motley Fool today. See Before Buying 1 Stock. Don't Miss Your Chance. Sent Directly To You. Motley Fool Community. Where Smart **Investors** Go. Fool-Proof Stock Picks.

**Ad · www.daytradereview.com/** Top Rated Stock Newsletters - Beat the S&P 500

We did a deep analysis of 100 stock picking services. Here are our findings and #1 pick. Ready to find better stocks to **invest** in? Here is our top rated **investment newsletter**. View Guides. In Business Since 2017. Detailed Trading Reviews.

**Ad · www.investoradvisoryservice.com/** (877) 962-3554

**Hulbert Investment Newsletter - 11 Times Award Winning**

Hulbert Honor Roll names IAS as Top-Performing Growth Stock **Newsletter**. Free Sample Issue. Expand Your Financial Base with a Company That Understands **Investments**...

**Ad · www.banyanhill.com/** No. 1 Stock Pick for 2021 - Expert Reveals Top Investment

Ian King's No. 1 stock of 2020 was Tesla. Followers made over 735%...in just over a year.

But let's say that inside your newsletter, every once in a while, you talk about penny stocks. That opens up possibilities for much more niche paid search terms that are more likely to end up being profitable for you.

Take a look at the example below — not only does it get 4x as many searches as the broader “investing newsletter” search term, but competition and cost are both lower.

Volume: 4,400/mo | CPC: \$2.05 | Competition: 0.22 |

All News Shopping Videos Images More Settings Tools

About 3,210,000 results (0.44 seconds)



# Trends

## People also ask

What are the cheapest penny stocks? ▼

Can I get rich off of penny stocks? ▼

What are the best stocks under \$1? ▼

Is it illegal to short sell penny stocks? ▼

*Feedback*

[www.timothysykes.com](http://www.timothysykes.com) › 101 Stock Basics ▾

## 10 Penny Stocks Under 10 Cents - Timothy Sykes

Nov 30, 2020 — 3.1 World Series of Golf, Inc. ( OTCPK: WSGF) 3.2 Fiore Cannabis Ltd. ( OTCQX: FIORF) 3.3 Daniels Corporate Advisory Company, Inc. ( OTCPK: DCAC) 3.4 BioTech Medics, Inc. ( OTCPK: BMCS) 3.5 County Line Energy Corp. ( OTCPK: CYLC) 3.6 Medical Marijuana, Inc. ( 3.7

Resort Savers, Inc. ( 3.8 Optec International, Inc. (

★★★★★ Rating: 5 · 3 votes

Of course, you need to be careful with these niche search terms, too. Sometimes they can be quite expensive.

**best investment newsletters australia**

Volume: 50mm | CPC: \$0.49 | Competition: 8.7 | Adwords

About 43,300,000 results (0.51 seconds)

Ad - [www.wallstreetsurvivor.com/newsletters/ranking](#) - **Best Stock Newsletter of 2020 - Stock Picks Average 78% Return**

We subscribe to dozens of **investment newsletters** & compare results. See the **best** of 2020. 5 of this newsletter's stock picks have doubled in 2020 and 21 of 24 picks were profitable. See Recent Stock Picks. Rankings Updated Monthly. Top stock was up 720%. Get the full details here.

Ad - [www.fool.com/](#) - **2020 Top Stock Picks - The Motley Fool's Stock Picks - fool.com**

Worried about the market? We're doubling down on these stocks. Diversify Your Portfolio with Guidance from the Motley Fool. Motley Fool Community. Fool-Proof Stock Picks.

Ad - [www.personalcapital.com/](#) - (855) 855-8005 **Personal Finance - Join Over 2 Million Users**

Easy & Convenient Portfolio Tracking. Free Investment Checkup. Start Now! Personal Advisor Support. All Accounts in One Place. Full Fiduciary Commitment.

Ad - [www.goldmansachs.com/briefings](#) - **BRIEFINGS Newsletter - Goldman Sachs**

A Weekly Email Newsletter from Goldman Sachs About Trends Shaping the Global Economy

**best investment newsletters canada**

Volume: 30mm | CPC: \$2.71 | Competition: 6.41 | Adwords

About 27,200,000 results (0.51 seconds)

Ad - [www.wallstreetsurvivor.com/newsletters/ranking](#) - **Best Stock Newsletter of 2020 - Stock Picks Average 78% Return**

We subscribe to dozens of **investment newsletters** & compare results. See the **best** of 2020. 5 of this newsletter's stock picks have doubled in 2020 and 21 of 24 picks were profitable. Rankings Updated Monthly. See Recent Stock Picks. Get the full details here - Top stock was up 720%

Ad - [www.powerzero.com/](#) - **Get Leads From David McKnight - Financial Planning Prospects**

Our automated sequences nurture prospects along their Power of Zero education journey. Get access to video, audio, & scripts for the flagship Power of Zero education journey.

Ad - [www.investoradvisoryservice.com/](#) - (877) 962-3554 **Hulbert Investment Newsletter - 11 Times Award Winning**

Hulbert Honor Roll names IAS as Top-Performing Growth Stock Newsletter. Free Sample Issue. Expand Your Financial Base with a Company That Understands Investments...

Ad - [www.fool.com/](#) - **Motley Fool's Latest Picks - This Week's Triple-Buy Alert**

This "Triple Buy" stock could be like buying Berkshire in 1992

**Similar search volume, and even some of the same advertisers, but very different prices.**

Moving on down the funnel, paid search follows many of the same rules that paid ads do. Namely, that you want to follow the AIDA framework to build interest and desire, and to prompt action.

Here's a look at one of the *Fool's* landing pages from the search above.





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The image is a composite of two parts. On the left, a laptop screen shows a snippet of a newsletter. It includes a red box around a list of stocks and a red arrow pointing from the text above to the list. The list contains:

- Netflix, up 27,42%
- Amazon, up 1,692%
- Apple, up 2,34%

Below this, another red box encloses an "Enter Email Address:" input field and a "Continue >" button, with a red arrow pointing from the text above to the input field. To the right of the laptop, a person's hands with red-painted fingernails are shown typing on a black keyboard.

**Build desire**

**Prompt action**

## Best Practices

- **Use Google first, then Microsoft:** Bing knows that Google is the dominant player in the search engine wars (right now). They make it easy to import all of your Google settings straight into your Bing account. So refine your audience and bidding strategy on Google, then copy it over to Bing with one click.
- **Trust Google's automated bidding strategies:** Google offers a series of **automated bidding strategies** that use machine learning to figure out which of your ads perform best, and then optimize your ad spend based on your budget and goals.

## Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is not new, it's just more accessible than ever before. The internet and social media platforms have given rise to hundreds of thousands of micro-influencers, each with the ability to reach a specific audience.

It can be hit or miss, but when it hits, it can hit big.

The classic example comes to us not from newsletters, but from basketball. After Adidas turned him down several times, Nike signed Michael Jordan back in 1984 with a goal of selling \$3m worth of shoes in four years.

As it turns out, they were aiming a tad low. By November of 1986, less than two



# Trends

decades after Jordan had stepped off the court for good — Nike's Jordan brand had its first \$1B quarter.

Brands like *Morning Brew* generate most of their referral traffic from YouTube influencers, and Ryan Carr, one of our growth experts at *The Hustle*, says that working with micro-influencers should be a top focus for newsletters in 2022.

Austin Rief 🍔verified @austin\_rief · Jan 7  
If you ran paid marketing at [@MorningBrew](#) and you could only sponsor 1 influencer to get 50,000 new readers, who would it be?  
196 24 391

Austin Rief 🍔verified @austin\_rief · Jan 7  
@MrBeastYT - the people have spoken...  
6 1 122

In this section, we'll break down some best practices for experimenting with this marketing channel.

## TL;DR

The effectiveness of an influencer campaign often comes down to the quality of the influencer's "read" — how well they read the ad. The more genuine enthusiasm an influencer puts into their ad-read, the better the results.

Whenever you can, work with influencers who are actually fans of your brand. Their audience will know.

## Funnel

One of the reasons good influencer marketing can be expensive is because influencers themselves are essentially replacing (and shortcircuiting) the entire funnel.

They are using their platform to grab attention, loaning you the trust they've already built with their audience, and urging people to take action.



# Trends

Take a look at this example from Packy McCormick, founder of the *Not Boring* newsletter, who we've worked with as an influencer to sell Trends.



**Packy McCormick** @packyM · Aug 27, 2020

...

Trends reports + community are go-tos for writing & growing Not Boring.

Now I'm trying to prove out two trends of my own:

1. Tweeting is a real career
2. Not Boring is overtaking  
@stoolpresidente & @APompliano in the finfluencer game

Time for a thread 🌱🌱🌱

3

6

36



**Packy McCormick** @packyM · Aug 27, 2020

...

psyche

But [@TheHustle](#) is helping me turn tweeting & writing into a full-time thing and offering a 14 day trial for \$1 if you sign up at the \*special not boring link\* 😎

See if you can read all the reports in two weeks 🏃

**Not Boring | Trends by The Hustle**

The Trends premium weekly report helps you understand market trends poised to skyrocket and how you can pounce. Join the ...

[trends.co](https://trends.co)

3

6

17



The tweet links straight through to a Trends sign-up page. Notice the custom URL; this allows us to track all the sign-ups that come from Packy's efforts.





# Trends

Expand your network, and discover the next big business idea before it explodes.

The Trends **premium weekly report** helps you understand market trends poised to skyrocket and how you can pounce. **Join the private network of 5k+ builders, founders, and investors** spotting tomorrow's trends.

Your email address:   
[JOIN OUR COMMUNITY](#)



The network is amazing. Where else do you see founders of 9...  
Few places bring together so many engaged builders around...  
Great community helping each other out and making...

Let's look at some best practices for working with influencers:

## Best Practices

- **YouTube > Podcast Reads:** YouTube (and video in general) works well for driving people to a landing page, since people tend to consume video while sitting at a computer. Influencer podcast reads, on the other hand, are often consumed while people are doing other things and aren't as effective.
- **Test When You Can:** If you can do a small test with an influencer to get an idea for how engaged/aligned their audience is, that's ideal.
- **Work with the Influencer:** These are professional content creators, so rather than giving them a cold script, challenge them to come up with a message their audience will respond to, and give them room to experiment.
- **Custom Landing Pages:** We've found it works great if you can customize landing page copy to greet audiences from individual influencers.

## Nitty Gritty

While influencer marketing is always hit or miss, when it goes right, it's often because two things happen in tandem:

- Alignment: their audience is looking for a newsletter like yours.



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Often, you don't have a ton of insight into these beforehand, so pricing for influencer marketing arrangements generally takes one of three forms:

- **Cost Per Acquisition (CPA):** You pay the influencer for each person who actually signs up. This is more common for influencers with smaller audiences, since it's harder to predict how many people will actually convert.
- **Flat Rate:** You pay a flat rate no matter how many (or how few) people take action. This is more common with bigger influencers, who often work through agencies.
- **Blended Flat Rate + CPA:** You'll see flat rate minimums with CPA deals over a certain threshold, too. For example, a flat rate of \$5k for the first 100 sign-ups, then \$60 for each additional sign-up. This structure incentivizes the influencer to work harder — if you do it right, your blended CPA is much lower.

In the case of a flat rate deal, the decision often comes down to an educated guess.

Do your due diligence by looking at the type of audience they have, average engagement (i.e., views, likes, downloads) on their posts or podcasts, and project how many sign-ups you'll get based on varying conversion rates.

Compare these to your target CPA to decide whether a test is worth it.

## 3. Audience-Based Growth

As your audience grows, it becomes its own growth lever, and your readers can help spread your message even further.

In this section, we'll explore referral programs, and show you how they can be one of your most effective, and least expensive marketing channels.

Done well, they can be an incredible source of low-cost, high-quality subscribers — *Morning Brew*, for example, generates ~30%+ of sign-ups from their referral



But most people are not *Morning Brew*.

In fact, most newsletters have terrible referral programs because they don't actually understand the game they're trying to play.

Let us show you how to tackle this like a pro...

## TL;DR

**The most important thing you need to know** is that the vast majority of your readers (90%-95%) will never take part in your referral program. If you structure it right, that's perfectly fine. It's not supposed to reach everyone.

Instead, your referral program is designed to:

- Get as many readers as possible to make one referral.
- Appeal to the “whales” in your audience who can refer hundreds or even thousands
- Stack prizes in such a way that your cost per acquisition goes down as you win more and more sign-ups

## The Funnel

In paid advertising, all the costs are located at the top of the funnel; you pay to catch people's attention whether or not they take action and sign up.

With a referral program, all the costs are located at the bottom of the funnel. You pay for prizes that readers only earn by getting people to sign up.

Many newsletters set these up haphazardly, picking random prizes they think people want without understanding the economics of this growth lever. As a result, many referral programs fall flat.

To learn more, we spoke with Louis Nicholls, co-founder of SparkLoop.

SparkLoop offers referral software specifically for newsletter creators, and



workweeks).

Few people in the world have peered behind the scenes into as many successful referral programs as he has.

## Should every newsletter have a referral program?

Not necessarily. There are two traits that can predict whether a referral program is a worthwhile investment for you:

- **The Size of Your List:** To some extent, referral programs are a numbers game. You can't get everyone to participate, so you need to hit a certain threshold before building one makes sense. Similarly, you need to make sure you design your prize tiers to match the size of your list. More on both of these below.
- **Your Audience's Social Sphere:** How many of your readers know other people like themselves? This is an important question because it will dictate whether your audience is capable of sharing your message broadly. For example, if you write for college kids, most of them know tons of other college kids. Great. But if you write for divorce attorneys, they might only know a handful of others in their field, and even then, they may not be eager to share information with them.

## When should you start a referral program?

While you can technically start at any time, they make the most sense for audiences of 30k-50k and up.

The reason is that only a small minority of your audience will ever participate. So you need a critical mass before the time and effort needed to run the program really makes sense.

The exception is if you're trying to build a culture of sharing into your newsletter experience. Then, you can start as early as you like.



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Expect 5% of readers to participate, Nichols told us. “You can reach for 10%, but 5% is a solid baseline.”

Rather than hoping to get everyone to make dozens of referrals, smart newsletters set up their prize tiers to spur two types of action:

- Inspire as many people as possible to make at least one referral (and it will typically be only one)
- Catch the attention of the “whales” in your audience — often readers with an audience of their own — who can make many referrals, and get them to do that.

You can think of this as a barbell strategy, where you have many readers at one end of the scale who are making a single referral, and a handful at the other end who can drive hundreds, or even thousands, of sign-ups.

## **How should you structure the referral program for success?**

This is where we start to get into psychology, economics, and how to motivate people to act. Incidentally, those are all things that are studied in the field of game theory, which is why we sometimes say that a referral program is a “game.”

There are three popular ways to structure a reward program:

- **Milestone Rewards:** In which readers win prizes for hitting certain referral goals (for example, branded stickers for three referrals, a keychain for five, coffee cup at 10, etc.).
- **Prize Draw Giveaway:** In which there is one large prize (like a Tesla), and each referral a reader gets earns them one entry into the drawing for the prize.
- **First Across The Finish Line:** In which you set a goal (say, 100 referrals) and the first person to achieve that wins a prize.

Notice how each of these is designed to appeal to different types of people and



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A milestone program, for example, appeals to ordinary people because it feels approachable. The barrier to entry is low, and each reader is not competing against others for any of the prizes.

By contrast, speed-incentivized events, like a first-across-the-finish-line giveaway, appeal more strongly to whales, who know that they could drum up entries fast by talking to their existing audience.

**The most successful option** is typically a combination of these, Nichols told us, with a milestone program that's always running, and giveaways layered on every one to two months.

## Best Practices

In order to drive home the best practices, let's look at the case study of *Morning Brew*'s referral program. First, some quick stats. Their program:

- Is built on custom software (outlined [here](#))
- Helped take their list from 100k to 1.5m in 18 months
- Now accounts for ~30%–35% of their 2.5m+ subscribers

### Share Morning Brew → Earn Rewards



\* The apparel, drinkware and keychain can only be shipped within the US

Now, you might see that last bullet and assume that more than a third of *Brew* readers are referring people. Not so!

According to interviews with key members of their team, as of 2019:

- ~290k of their 2m+ readers (just one in seven) had referred at least one person
- ~75k (less than 4%) had referred three or more people



So this bears repeating: Most of your readers will never participate in your referral program. You need to set it up so that that works to your advantage.

## **Let's take a closer look at those prize economics...**

Notice that the very first prize requires three referrals. But the vast majority of referrers only ever refer one person.

Know what that means?

That's right — free growth.

Of the ~290k people who've referred at least one person, only ~75k reached the three-person prize tier, meaning the *Brewlanded* ~215k+ new subscribers absolutely free.

That's what we mean when we say that understanding the economics of this game can work in your favor.

## **Notice that their first prize isn't even a physical product.**

It's access to an exclusive weekend newsletter. Now technically, that newsletter still costs them something, because they have to pay a writer to create it.

But it was smart of them to focus on digital products with low distribution costs.

You could probably do even better by offering your readers:

- Access to an exclusive Facebook group (no need to pay writers to create content for it)
- A downloadable book or e-course with some of your best ideas
- Shoutouts on your social media accounts or in the newsletter itself (bonus: this builds a sense of community among readers)

The big point here is that your prizes need to be both desirable and economically



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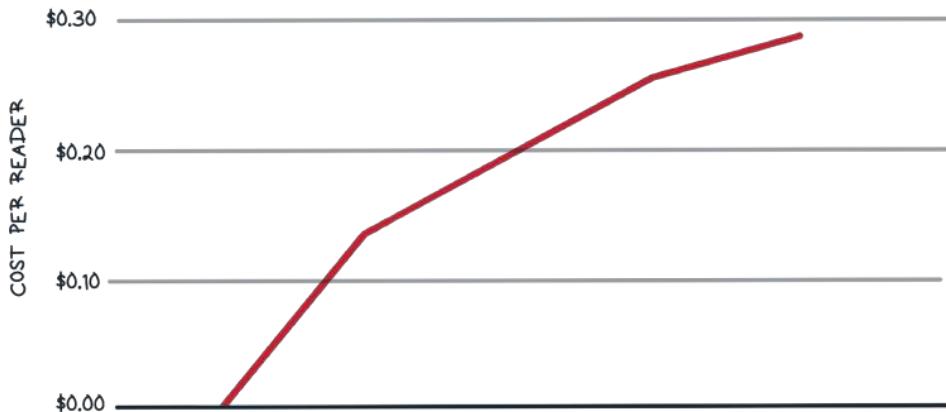
The cumulative costs of your prizes need to come in at or below your target CPA.

In the table below we've compiled some sample data based on the *Brew's* program that shows how to calculate the cost for each new reader inside a referral program:

Readers Referred	Prize	Cost of Prize	Cumulative New Readers	Cumulative Cost	Cost Per Reader
3	Secret Newsletter	\$0.00	3	\$0.00	\$0.00
5	Stickers	\$1.10	8	\$1.10	\$0.14
10	Bottle Opener	\$2.50	18	\$3.60	\$0.20
15	Mug	\$5.00	33	\$8.60	\$0.26
25	T-Shirt	\$8.50	58	\$17.10	\$0.29

As you can see, the spacing between the prize tiers and their respective costs to the company are such that the actual cost per reader grows by a smaller and smaller amount at each stage.

## Cost Per Reader



This is good. But in an ideal world, you would choose prizes in such a way that the price per reader actually goes down as ambassadors work their way up the prize ladder.

You have two ways to do that:

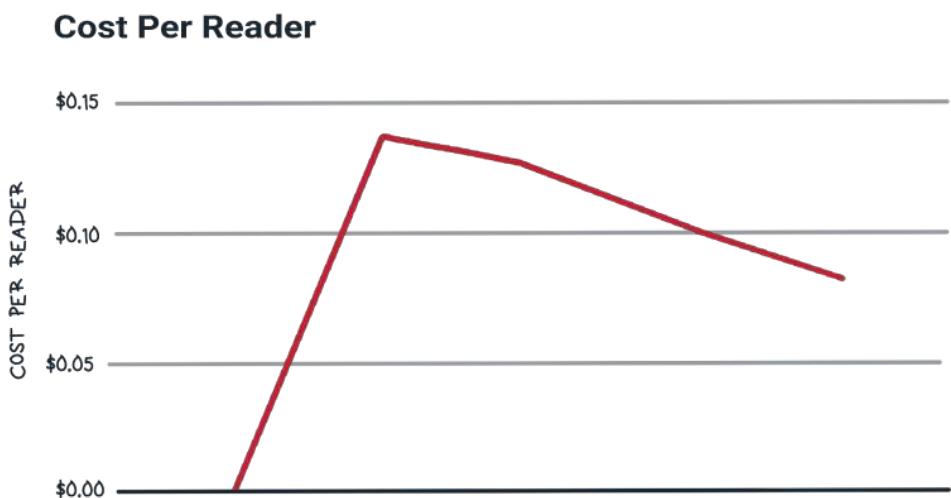


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If we adjust the *Brew's* milestones, the data could look like this:

Readers Referred	Prize	Cost of Prize	Cumulative New Readers	Cumulative Cost	Cost Per Reader
3	Secret Newsletter	\$0.00	3	\$0.00	\$0.00
5	Stickers	\$1.10	8	\$1.10	\$0.14
<b>20</b>	Bottle Opener	\$2.50	28	\$3.60	<b>\$0.13</b>
<b>50</b>	Mug	\$5.00	78	\$8.60	<b>\$0.11</b>
<b>100</b>	T-Shirt	\$8.50	178	\$17.10	<b>\$0.10</b>

Meaning that, after the initial cost of the stickers, their CPA would fall at each progressive step.



Would someone really refer 100 people just for a T-shirt?

You bet your ass they would.

Don't take our word for it. Here's a direct quote from Rob Allen, who was one of the *Brew's* highest-referring "whales." He referred 4k+ people as part of his mission to get their crewneck sweater:

"Was it a weird obsession? Yes," he writes. "Did my girlfriend think I was nuts to keep refreshing my referral stats? Duh. But the simple fact was it was a game, and I wanted to win. So that's what I set out to do."



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## How to get people excited to share...

Once you have a referral program in place, the final step is to activate it — you have to get people excited about sharing.

Check out how *Morning Brew* does this using their social media channels, custom swag, and a little creativity.

In this case, they've created some limited-run joggers.

The image consists of two parts. On the left is a photograph of two men standing side-by-side. The man on the left is Elon Musk, wearing a black t-shirt and grey joggers with the 'MORNING BREW' logo. The man on the right is Kanye West, wearing a bright orange zip-up hoodie over a black t-shirt and grey joggers with the 'MORNING BREW' logo. They are indoors, standing in front of a glass door. On the right is a screenshot of a tweet from the official Twitter account of Morning Brew (@morningbrew). The tweet reads: "Get 5 friends to sign up for the Brew \*this week only\* to snag a pair of Brew joggers". It includes instructions on how to find a unique referral link in the inbox. Below the tweet is a reply from a user named 'altonloveys' with the note 'US only'. The tweet has 3,912 likes and was posted on October 21. There are also standard social media interaction icons like heart, comment, and share.

From back when these two weren't as controversial as they are now...

Their designers worked some magic, riffing on a culturally relevant visual (like this photo with Elon and Kanye – NOTE: This campaign was made before either of these guys were so controversial. Times change. Keep that in mind when planning your own content).

Then (a subtle but genius move) they direct everyone to their inbox. *Morning Brew* could easily post a link in their bio that takes people straight to their ambassador page. But by doing this instead, they:

- Get more eyes on that day's advertisers, potentially boosting clicks
- Remind people about the referral program and train them to use it from their inbox



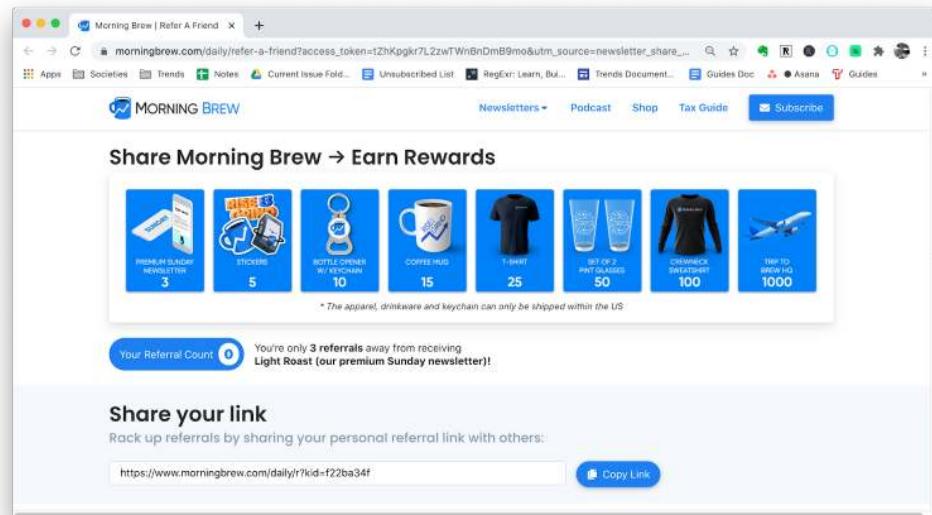
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## A word on the technology involved...

*Morning Brew* built their own referral platform from scratch. As Tyler Denk told us, they preferred to build custom software whenever they could because it made them less reliant on third parties.

The needs are relatively simple. You need to be able to:

- Assign a unique ID to each user and give them a referral URL
- Track whether someone signs up using another user's referral URL
- Ideally, give referrers a place to get their link and check their prize status



If you don't want to build custom, you can use third-party referral tools. Some options recommended by various operators in the space include:

- **SparkLoop**: Perhaps the most popular referral software, they integrate easily with different ESPs (for example, they are automatically included with ConvertKit) and currently run seven of the 10 largest newsletter referral programs in the world.
- **GrowSurf**: Used by Packy McCormick to **build around his Substack newsletter** (since Substack doesn't currently offer this feature – though they have **something similar**).



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ups, they implement a double opt-in process, verify email addresses using NeverBounce, and maintain a blacklist of anyone who's caught trying to hack the system.

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