

# HOW TO GET YOUR FIRST 100 CUSTOMERS

## 10 TACTICS TO USE AFTER YOU LAUNCH

Justin Jackson  
Marketing for Developers  
[www.justinjackson.ca/marketingfordevelopers](http://www.justinjackson.ca/marketingfordevelopers)

< PREVIOUS NEXT >

Before I get into these 10 tactics...

# A STORY ABOUT IRON MAIDEN

In 1980, Iron Maiden was a brand new heavy metal band. They were about to release their first full-length album. They had just one problem...

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To do that, I'm going to talk about Iron Maiden.

In 1980, Iron Maiden was a brand new heavy metal band. They were about to release their first full-length album (their first official product let's say). They had just one problem...

## IRON MAIDEN: **TOO CUTE FOR METAL**



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The band's manager, Rod Smallwood, described them as "big teddy bears."

To me it looks like they should be on the cover of a romance novel or something.

Metal is supposed to be hard! Metal is supposed to be edgy. It's supposed to be bad-ass.

He went looking for an image, a brand, he could use to make the band seem more bad-ass.

## IRON MAIDEN'S NEW BRAND: **EDDIE**



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He found the answer in an illustration by Derek Riggs. Something the band started calling Eddie the Head.

## EDDIE MADE IRON MAIDEN UNIQUE



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Eddie became Iron Maiden's unique brand. The band members themselves weren't scary, but Eddie was. Seeing Eddie on a shirt was surprising: it jolted you.

When I was a kid growing up in the 80's, I wanted an Iron Maiden shirt so bad. I came from a pretty religious home, and I wasn't allowed one.

For a lot of kids, Eddie was their gateway drug into the band. It's what got us listening to their music for the first time.

# WHY AM I TALKING ABOUT THIS?

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One thing that worries me about our culture, is that we're always looking for the formula to success.

We say: "just give me the steps, and I'll follow them!"

But following the steps aren't enough.

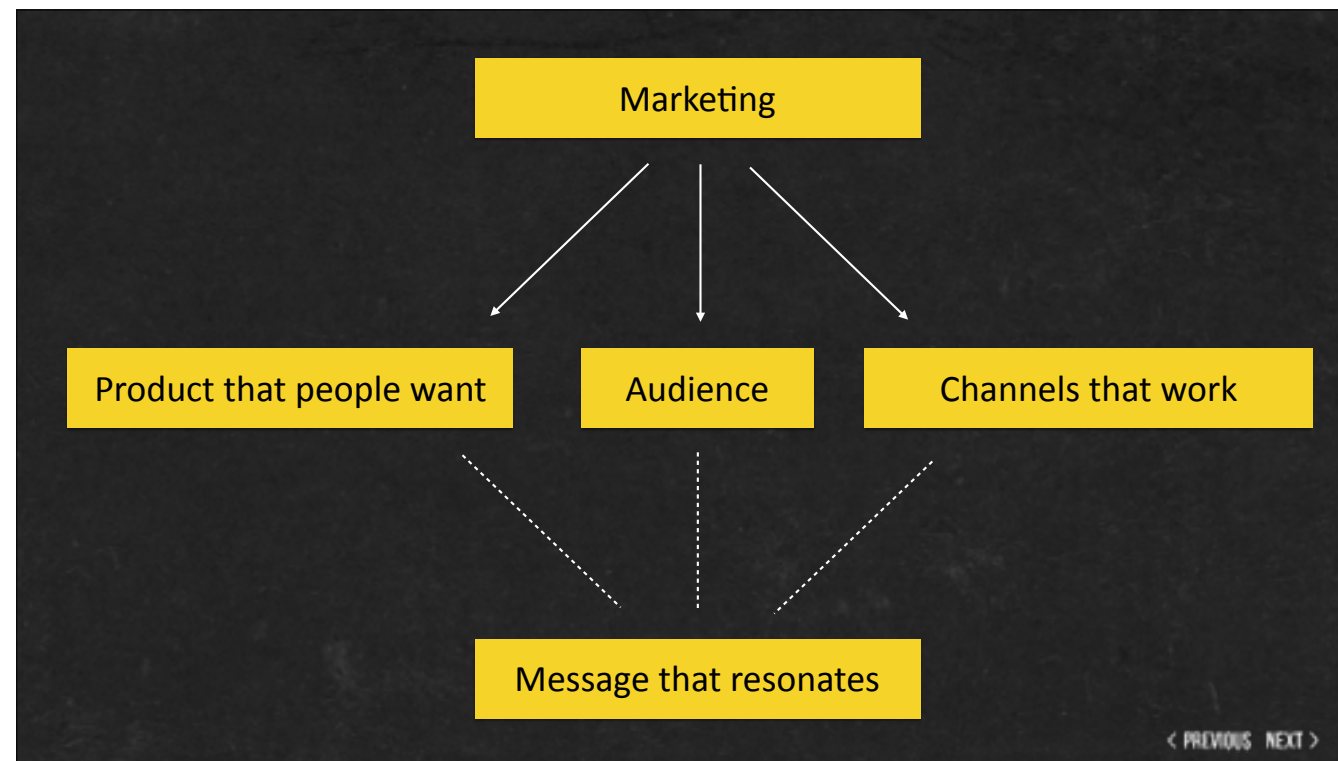


# MARKETING HAS DEPENDENCIES

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Marketing has dependencies.

You can't just sprinkle some marketing tactics on your product and expect to succeed.



See first of all, marketing is dependent on you having:

1. A product that people want
2. An audience that's reachable
3. Effective channels for reaching that audience

And having a message that resonates is dependent on everything above.





It's like your product is hidden behind this door. Marketing is convincing people to open the door.



But in any market there's multiple products.

How do you convince people to open yours?



Uniqueness.

# UNIQUENESS IS YOUR PRODUCT'S GATEWAY DRUG

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When we're talking about getting your first 100 customers, uniqueness is your product's gateway drug.

Humans gravitate towards things that are unique, surprising, or unexpected.

Let me give you an example that applies to you specifically as developers.

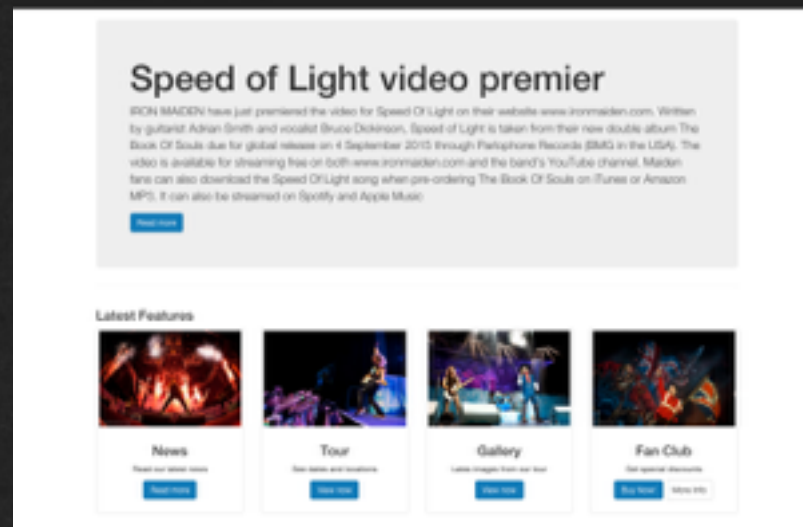
# THIS IS IRON MAIDEN'S WEBSITE



This is Iron Maiden's website. Look at it! It's bad ass. It's metal. It's uniquely them.

This next slide is what Iron Maiden's website would look like if engineers like us had built it.

# THIS IS MAIDEN'S SITE **ON BOOTSTRAP**



Bootstrap! I took Iron Maiden's website and I re-created it in vanilla bootstrap. Look how it ruins everything. And yet this is how you and I are building our marketing pages: we're slapping Bootstrap on them and making them look like every other website in the world.

## THREE WAYS TO BE UNIQUE

1. Bake uniqueness into your product (Balsamiq)
2. Use your own personal uniqueness (DHH)
3. Create unique branding (Rovio - Angry Birds)



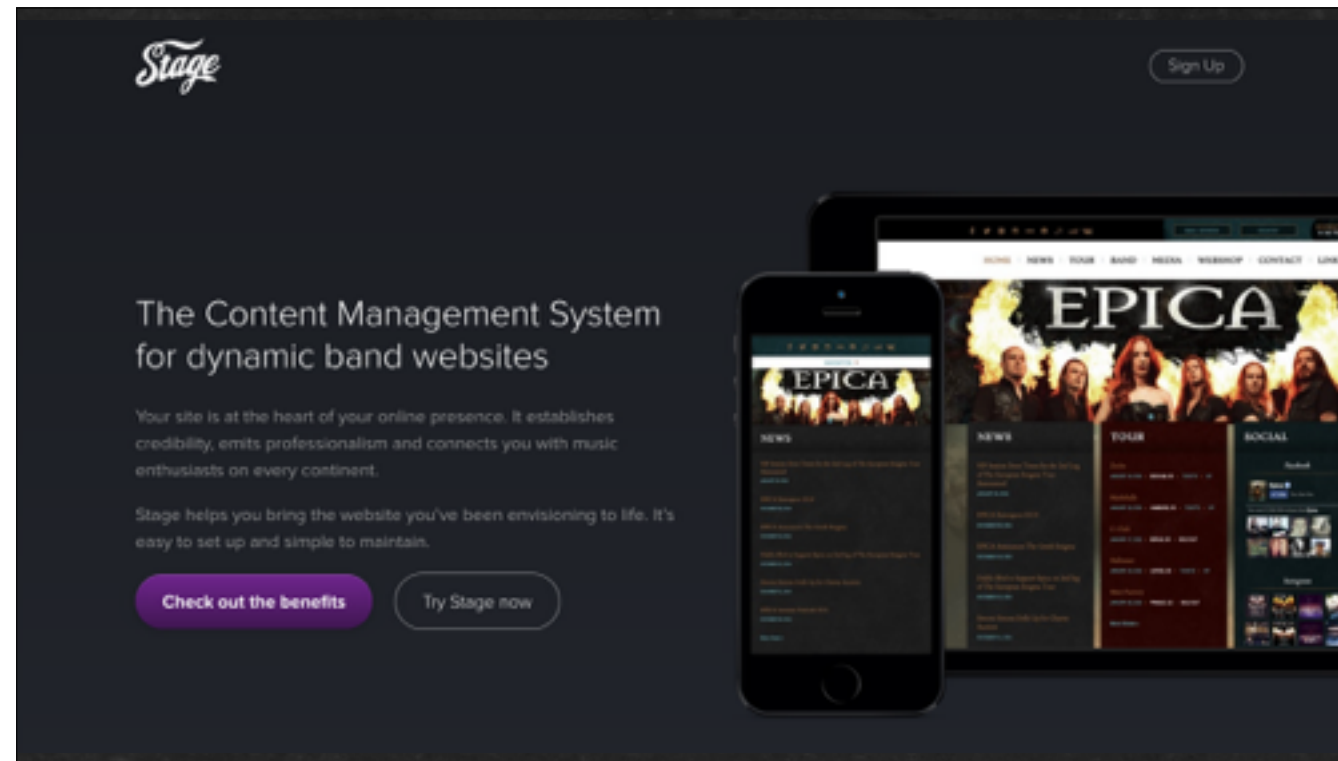
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# LET'S TALK ABOUT TACTICS

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So all that stuff needs to form the foundation of what I'm going to talk about next. If you can't get that stuff right, none of this is going to work.



For each of the tactics I'm going to share with you, I'm going to use Benedict's app Stage CMS as an example.

His target audience is bands running as a business. (As in all members earn a significant amount of money from the band, preferably doing this full time).

His biggest challenge is finding a place where they usually hang out online... they're doing most their socializing with fellow musicians on tour and backstage at festivals.

# 7 TACTICS FOR GETTING MORE LEADS

After you launch, your biggest need will be filling the top of your marketing funnel with leads. Here are 7 tactics to get your started.

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## #1. RANK HIGHLY ON A LIST

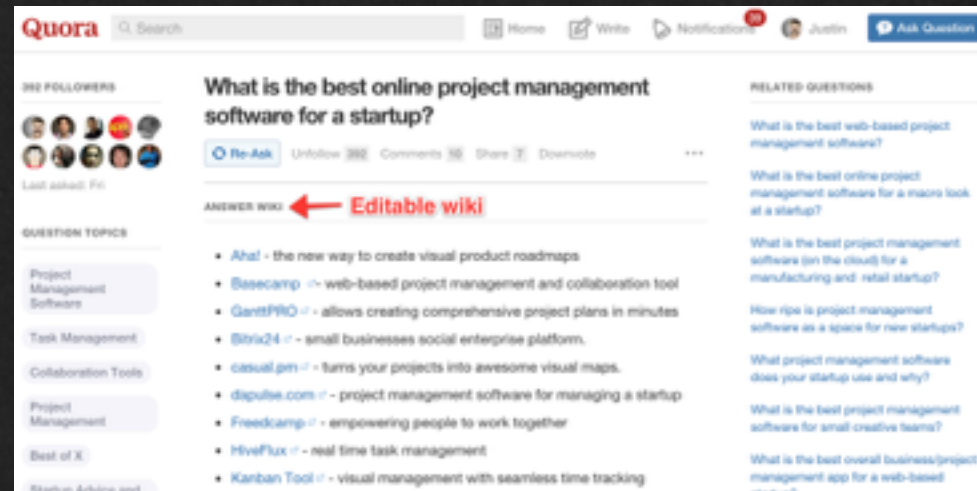
Most of the internet's major properties are ranked lists:

- Google
- iTunes App Store
- Reddit
- Product Hunt
- Quora threads

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If you're able to rank highly on a well trafficked list that can bring you need leads.

# LIST HACK: QUORA



Quora is one of the most underused marketing channels for startups.

People searching on Quora have intent. When they ask “What is the best project management software?” they’re obviously interested in making a decision.

A lot of questions will have these Answer Wikis with lists at the top. Crazy thing? You can edit these!

I did this for one my consulting clients, and it increased inbound leads from Quora by 3x.

Please refresh this page to receive new updates.

## 9 FOLLOWERS



Last asked: 7 Jul, 2018

## QUESTION TOPICS

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)

Musicians

Websites

Edit Topics

## QUESTION STATS

Views 954

Followers 9

Merged Questions 0

Edits

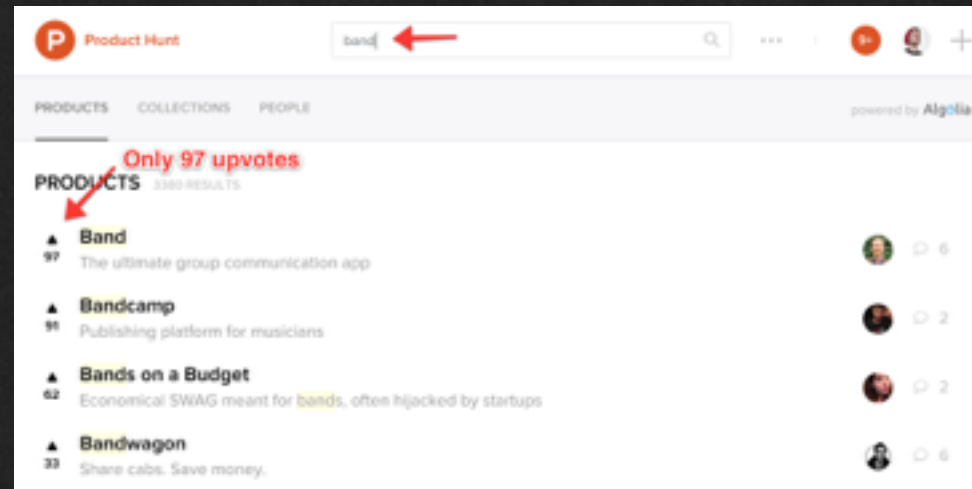
## What's the best hosted solution/subscription service for a small band website?

Re-Ask Follow 9 Comment Share Downvote

ANSWER WIKI IS A COMMUNITY EDITED WIKI. REVIEW BEFORE EDITING. Guidelines

**B I U H 44**                                          

# LIST HACK: **PRODUCT HUNT SEARCH**



A lot of people are using Product Hunt as a product search engine.

You can rank highly for different search terms if you keep getting people to upvote your submission, even if it's old.



## LIST HACK: **GOOGLE IMAGE SEARCH**

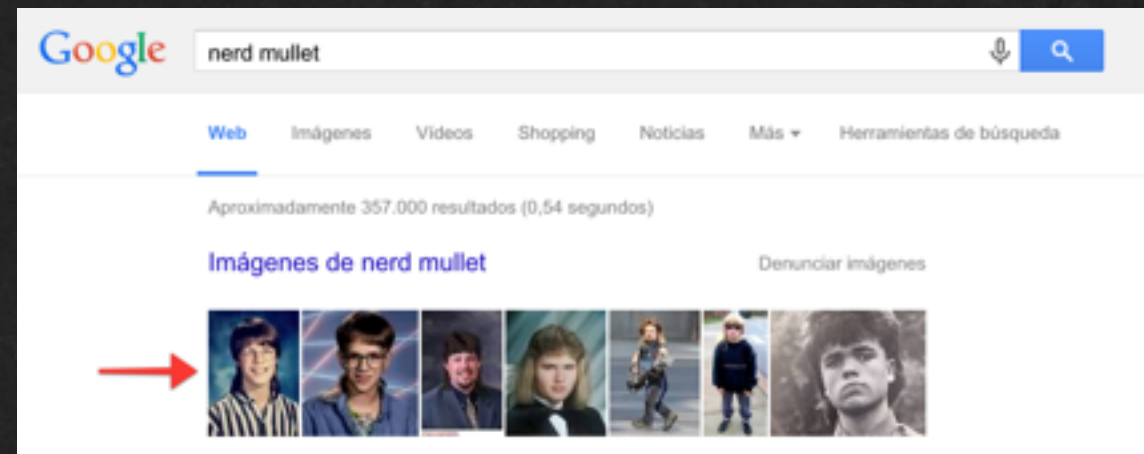
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Everyone knows that it's difficult to rank highly for certain keywords on Google.

You know what's a lot easier? Ranking highly in Google Images, which shows up at the top of most searches.

In this case I took my grade 9 picture, saved the filename as justin-jackson-nerd-mullet.jpg, and then included it in a post with alt text "Justin's nerd mullet"

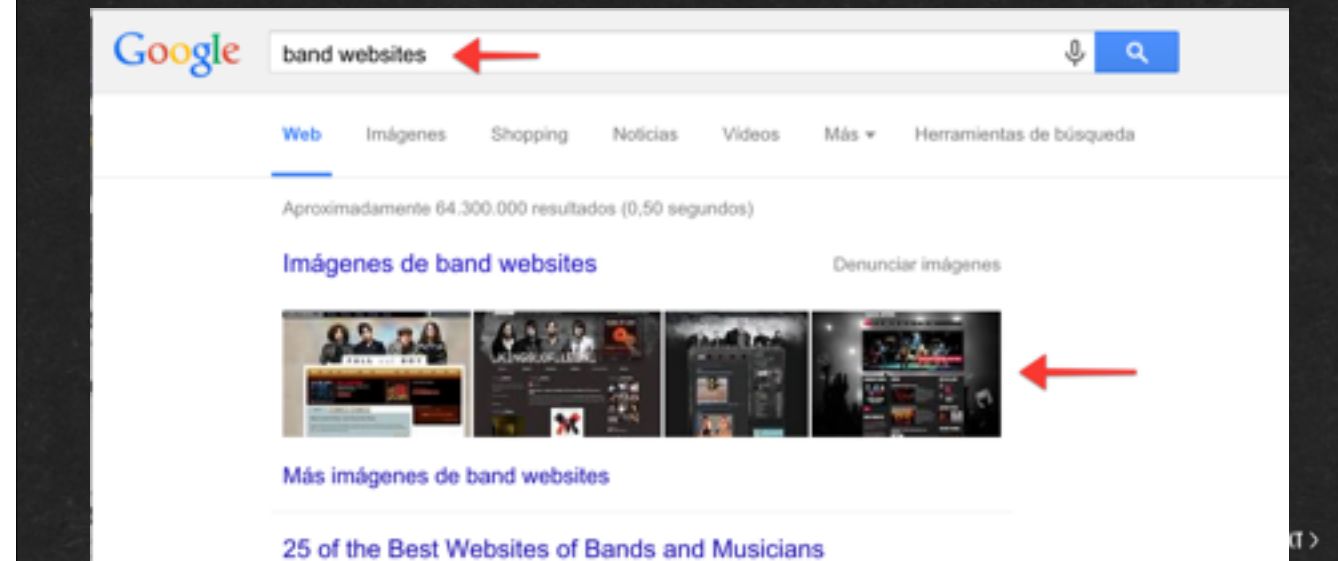
# THIS IS ME IN **GRADE 9**



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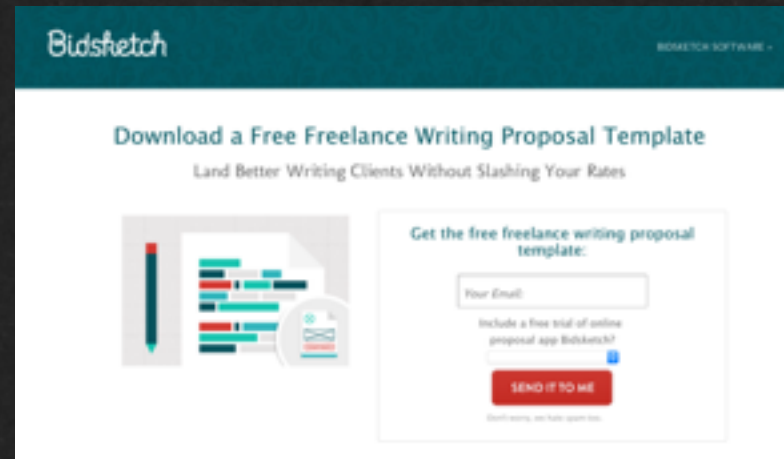
```



There's three steps to this:

1. Create your image. Make sure it's not too big so it loads fast.
2. When you save it, use the keywords in your filename.
3. Create content about the topic. In Benedict's case, the page could be called: "Examples of band websites."
4. Insert the image you created in the content.
5. Use alt text to describe the image (both for accessibility and for keywords).
6. Use a title tag (for hover) with a description of the image.
7. If you're really nerdy, you might want to add image-specific tags to your sitemap.

## #2. CREATE A FREE TOOL THAT NATURALLY LEADS TO YOUR PRODUCT



The screenshot shows the BidSketch website with a teal header. The main content area is white and features the heading "Download a Free Freelance Writing Proposal Template" with the subtext "Land Better Writing Clients Without Slashing Your Rates". To the left is an illustration of a document with a pencil and a bar chart. To the right is a form titled "Get the free freelance writing proposal template:" which includes an email input field, a checkbox for "Include a free trial of online proposal app BidSketch?", and a red "SEND IT TO ME" button. Below the button is a small disclaimer: "Don't worry, we hate spam too."

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Reuben Gamez gives away free downloadable proposal templates.

You have to enter your email to get them, but they look great. This is an awesome way to get to new leads.

**Manage your band finances**

Keep track of what your band is making and spending with this free Excel sheet.

**Free download**

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)

MEMBER		WEEKS	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	TOTAL
1	MEMBER	1	100	100	100	100	400
2	MEMBER	2	100	100	100	100	400
3	MEMBER	3	100	100	100	100	400
4	MEMBER	4	100	100	100	100	400
5	MEMBER	5	100	100	100	100	400
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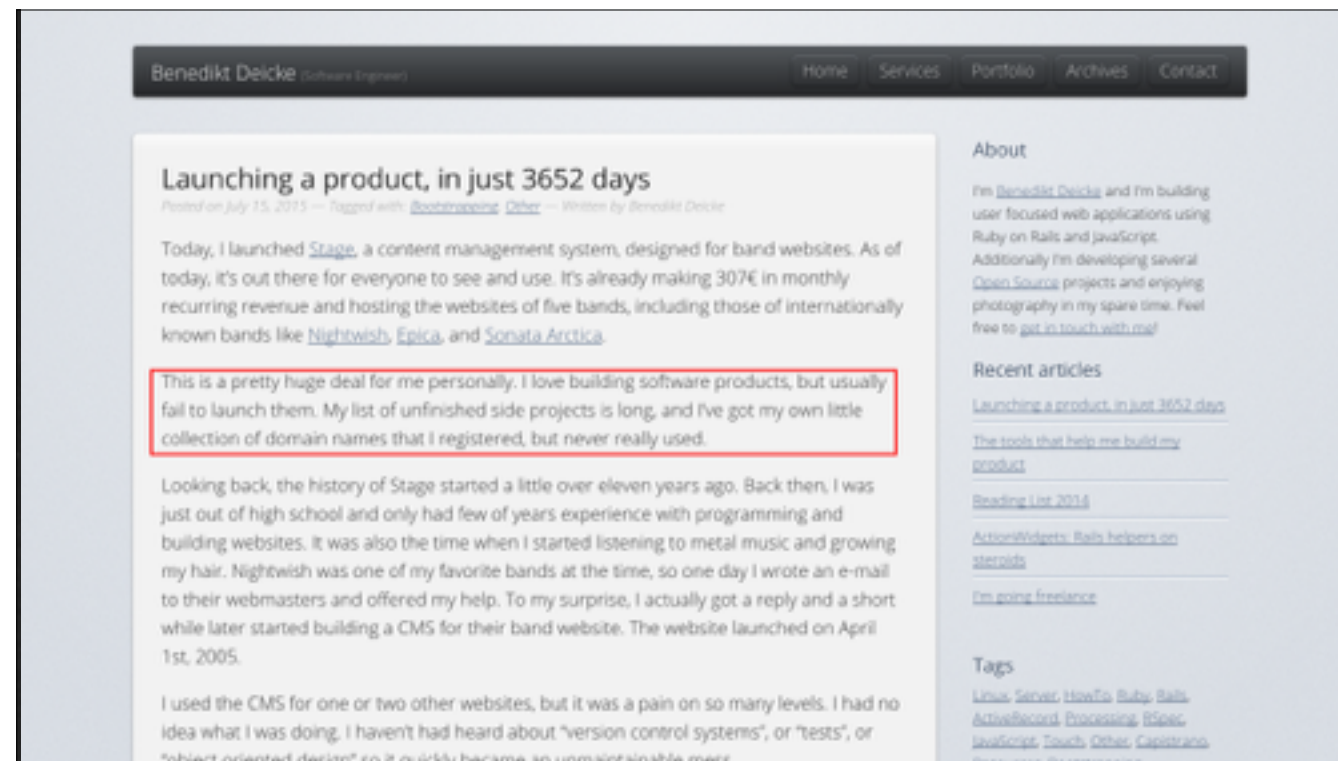
## #3. WRITE A SURPRISING BLOG POST THAT GETS PEOPLE INTERESTED



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Sacha Greif wrote this great piece that compares the results you'd get from his competitor (Fiverr). Look at that subheadline!

It got people talking, and generated new trials.



Benedikt wrote this blog post and it has some elements of good post that could get some attention.

It's a cheeky title: Launching a product in just 3652.

I think the best part of this post is the vulnerability he shows in the second paragraph. Vulnerability is one way to be unique and to get noticed. People respond to it.



## Why you should treat your band like a startup

Posted on Aug 30, 2015 — Tagged with: [Bootstrapping](#) [Other](#) — Written by Benedikt Deicke

Your band has the potential to provide you with a full-time income. The challenge for most artists, is they need to think more like a business. Business doesn't need to be scary, there's really only one formula you need to know:

`revenue - expenses = profit`

The profit is important, because it's the part you and your band gets to keep.

→ [Read the full article](#)

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Here's an idea for a new blog post Benedikt could write.

One idea is he might want to write it on Medium. Posts like this can get a lot of traction on Medium, and can get a lot more reach.

I think it would also do well on <https://www.reddit.com/r/WeAreTheMusicMakers>

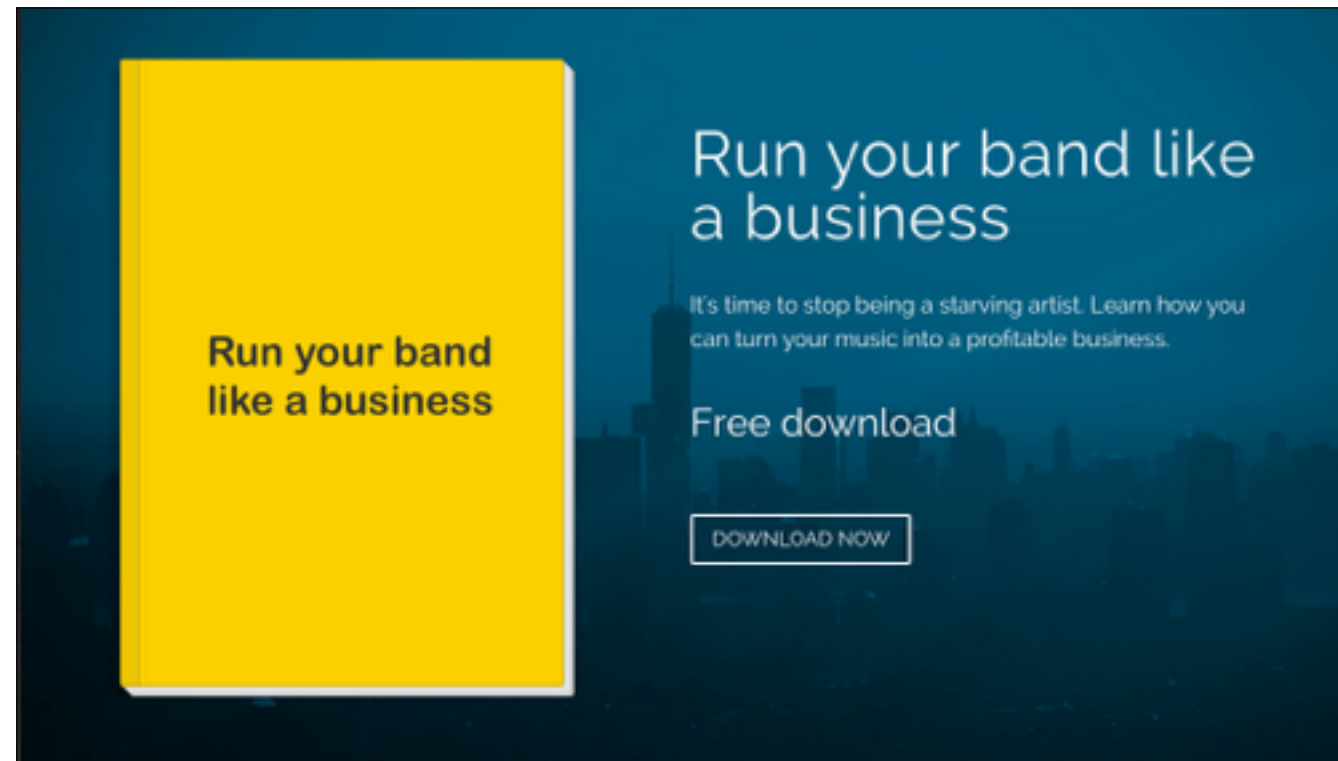
I think a topic like this would also do well on Hacker News.

## #4. GIVE AWAY AN EBOOK



Intercom wrote this book on Product Management, and I see it being shared everywhere.

Again, to get the book, you need to enter your email address.



One thing Benedict could do is create a downloadable ebook called: "Run your band like a business"

## #5. ASK FOR REFERRALS

Hi [name],

It looks like you've been using [my product] for a couple of weeks now! Thank you, I'm glad to have you as a customer.

You seem like you're well connected in the [industry name] circles. Do you know anyone that could benefit from [my product]?

If so, could introduce them to me?

Cheers,  
[your name]

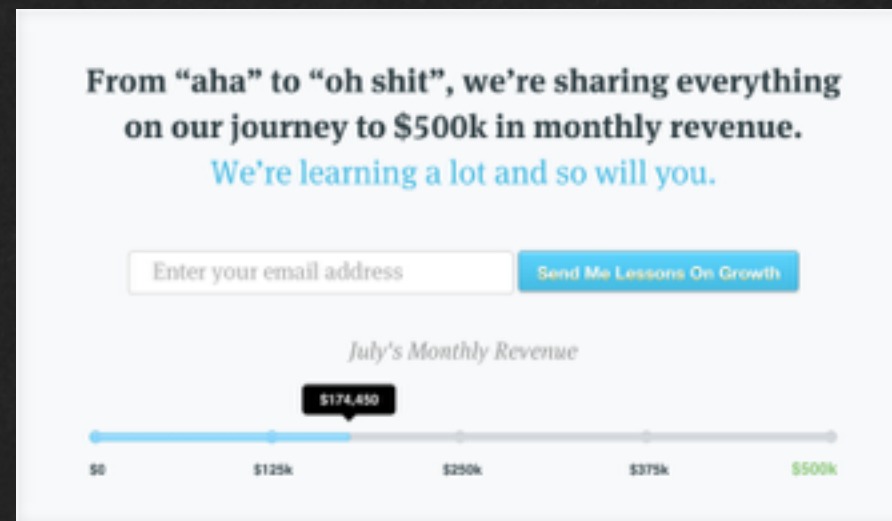
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Benedict already has paying customers:

Once you have 1 customer, you can ask them to refer you to more customers.

This is an easy habit to get into: just send an email to every new paying customer asking if they know someone else that would benefit from the product.

## #6. SHARE A JOURNEY



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Groove did a series of blog posts on how they went from \$28,525 to \$100,000 in monthly revenue.

They hit their goal, and now they’re sharing their journey to \$500k.

And they’ve hit over 50,000 email subscribers this month from these posts.

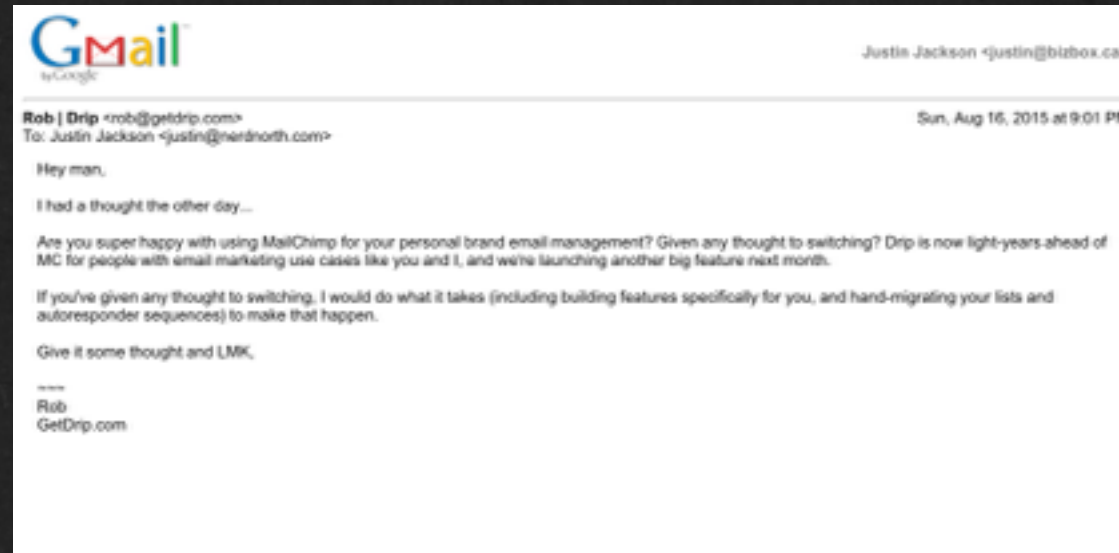


I think Benedikt could do something similar, but with a twist.

One of his users is this band called Nightwish. And they produced their own documentary in 2013 that has nearly 50,000 views.

So their sharing their own story. I think you could approach and ask if you can sponsor the next one, put your logo and website at the beginning. I'm guessing that a lot of other bands are watching documentary, so it could be a good channel.

## #7. EMAIL PEOPLE YOU KNOW



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If you've been building relationships with people, why not email them directly?

If you actually emailed a list of people you knew would benefit from your software, you very likely could get 100 customers just like that. We're always looking to do things like ads and content marketing, but talking to people you know is a great way to get your first customers.



# 2 TACTICS FOR GUIDING LEADS THROUGH THE FUNNEL

After you have leads, you need to guide them through your funnel.

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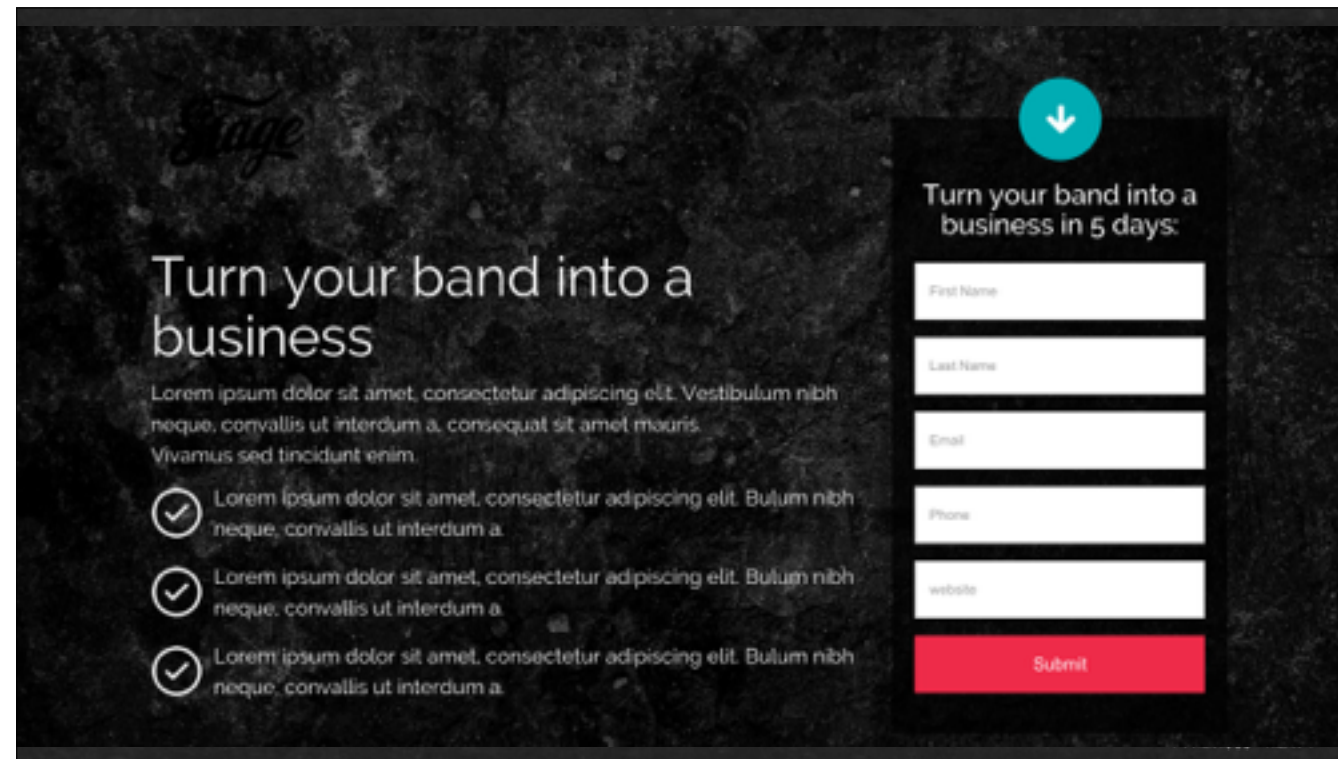
## #7. WRITE AN EMAIL COURSE



This is the highest converting method I've used with my consulting clients.

Email courses work best if they're 5–7 days of content.

Build a relationship over time. These emails can be really personal .People can consume the emails it bite-sized chunks



The image shows a dark-themed landing page for a brand called "Stage". The background is a dark, textured grey. In the top left corner, the word "Stage" is written in a white, cursive script. The main heading, "Turn your band into a business", is in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below the heading is a paragraph of Lorem Ipsum text. To the right of the text is a white form with five input fields: "First Name", "Last Name", "Email", "Phone", and "website". A red "Submit" button is at the bottom of the form. Above the form is a teal circle with a white downward arrow. To the left of the form, there are three bullet points, each with a white checkmark icon and a line of Lorem Ipsum text.

Stage

# Turn your band into a business

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Last Name

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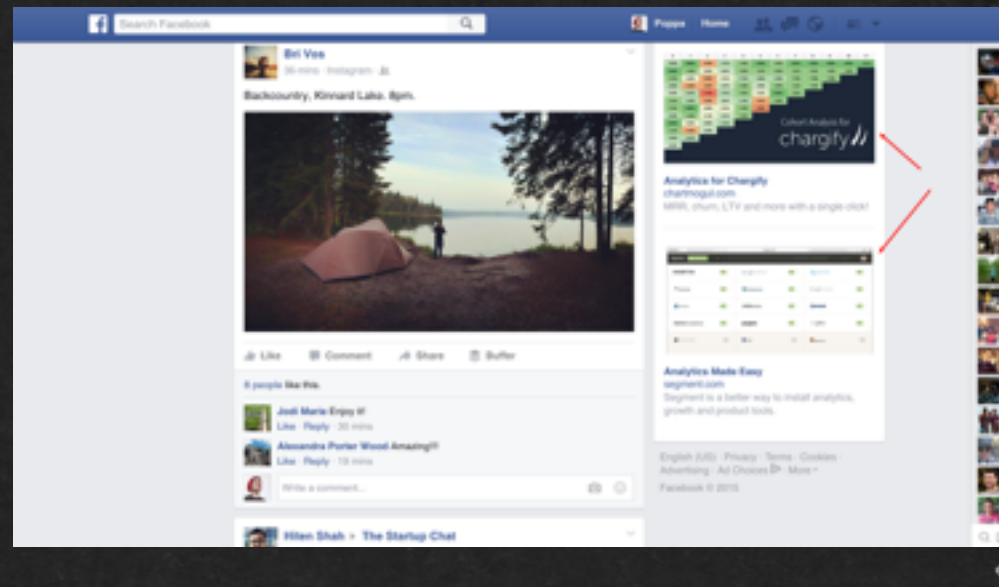
Phone

website

Submit

The same content Benedikt would use for an ebook is what he would use in an email course.

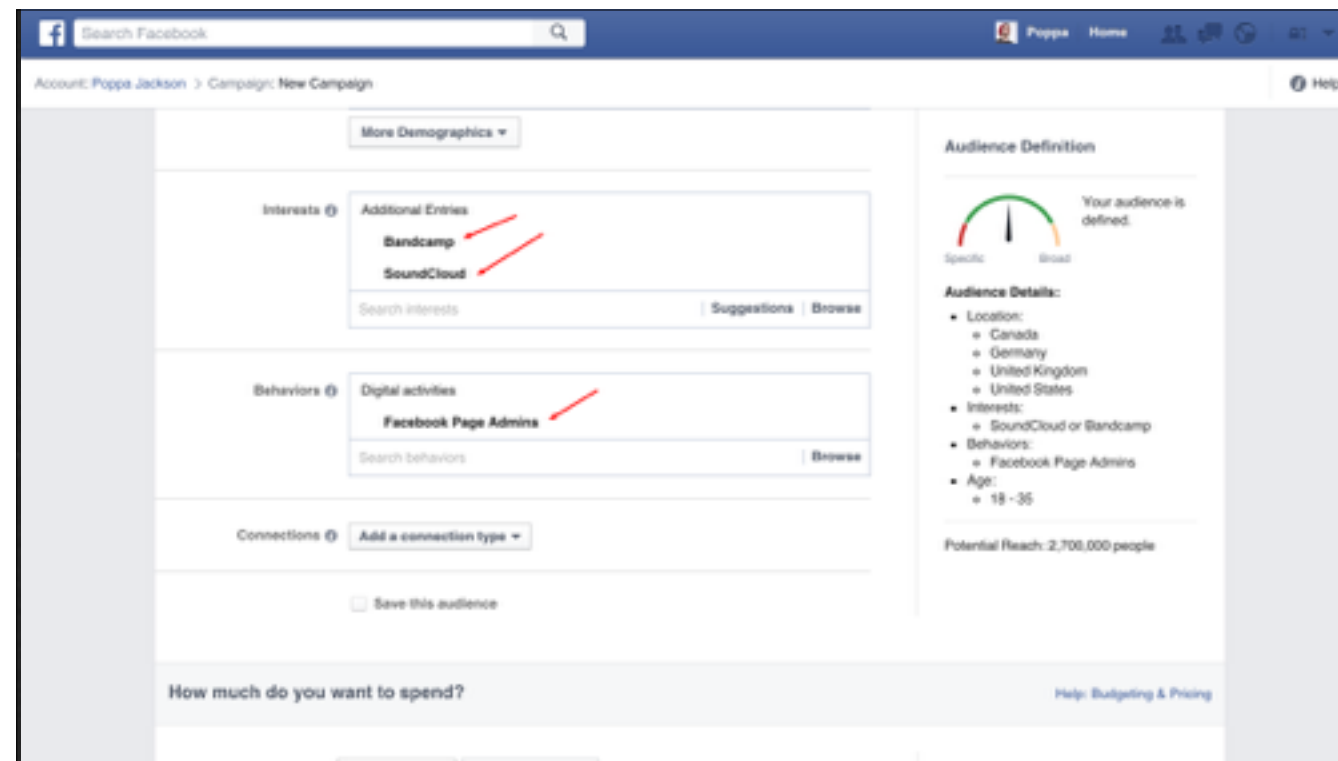
## #8. USE RETARGETING ADS



Retargeting (or “remarketing” as Google calls it), is a way to remind people of your product, long after they’ve left your web page.

**A lot of people don’t make decisions the first time they visit your website.**

The easiest way to get started with retargeting is on Facebook’s ad platform. They’ve developed good tools for building ads, and most campaigns are approved with minutes of being launched.



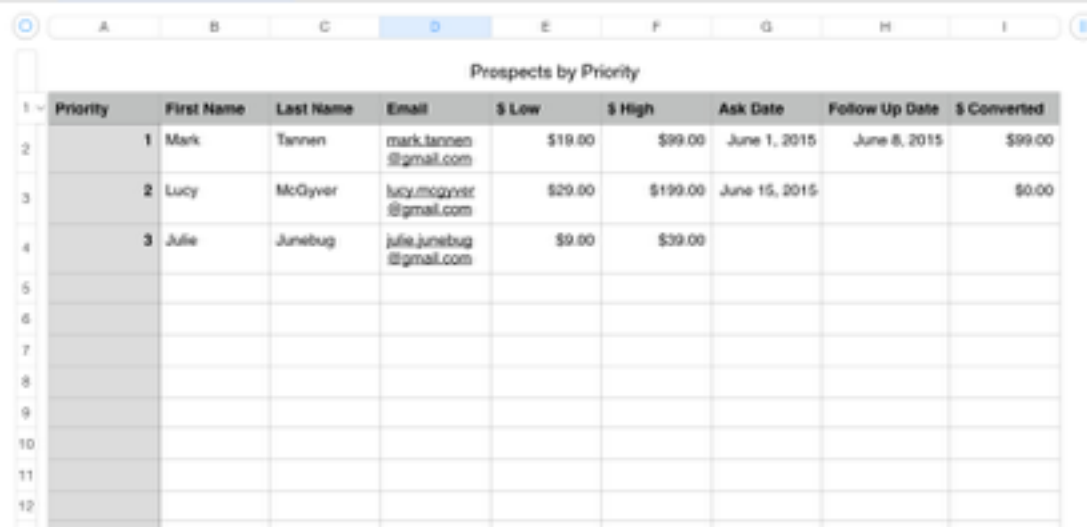
Maybe retargeting would work for Benedikt's audience.

He might actually want to experiment with regular Facebook ads, because so much of his audience is on Facebook. He might want to target a few different filters.

# **2 TACTICS** **FOR CLOSING THE DEAL**

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## #9. FOLLOW-UP WITH YOUR LEADS.



The screenshot shows a spreadsheet application with a window titled "Prospects by Priority". The spreadsheet has columns labeled A through I. The data is organized as follows:

	Priority	First Name	Last Name	Email	\$ Low	\$ High	Ask Date	Follow Up Date	\$ Converted
1	1	Mark	Tannen	mark.tannen@gmail.com	\$19.00	\$99.00	June 1, 2015	June 8, 2015	\$99.00
2	2	Lucy	McGyver	lucy.mcgyver@gmail.com	\$29.00	\$199.00	June 15, 2015		\$0.00
3	3	Julie	Junebug	julie.junebug@gmail.com	\$9.00	\$39.00			
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									

At the bottom right of the spreadsheet window, there are navigation buttons: "< PREVIOUS" and "NEXT >".

My first day in the software business, my boss gave me a list of customers who had signed up for a trial and asked me to call them.

Follow up with your leads.

Most vendors don't do it, and it's the most effective way to secure a sale.

One way to do it is keep at list of prospects that are ranked by priority.

## #10. ASK FOR THEIR MONEY

### HOW TO ORDER "GOODBYE, GALAXY!"

In the United States, order directly from Apogee Software. To order the entire "Goodbye, Galaxy!" saga, send \$39 (includes \$4 shipping, etc.) to:

Apogee Software  
P.O. Box 476389  
Garland, TX 75047

Important: Be sure to specify disk size, and if you have VGA, EGA, or CGA.

Or call toll free during business hours:  
1-800-GAME123 (1-800-426-3123)

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< PREVIOUS NEXT >

I think one thing we need to practice as people who make software is "ASKING PEOPLE FOR THEIR MONEY."

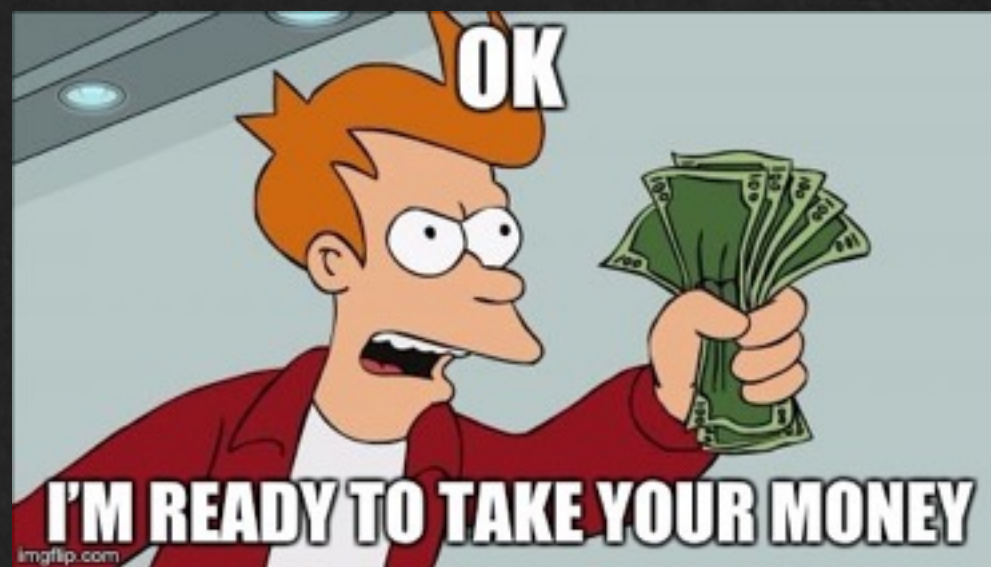
We used to be really good at this. I remember sending a \$44 to Apogee for Commander Keen in 1991. They were good at asking for money!



**SHUT UP AND TAKE MY MONEY**



imgflip.com



# THANK YOU

<http://devmarketing.xyz/microconf>

@mijustin

[justin@nerdnorth.com](mailto:justin@nerdnorth.com)

## Marketing for Developers

by Justin Jackson



*A guide to marketing your software, apps, and digital products*