



SYKES STRATEGIES

19 CHANNELS FOR TRACTION & GROWTH

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19 CHANNELS FOR TRACTION & GROWTH

These marketing channels should be reviewed every quarter - identify which channels best fit given the current stage of your business and adapt. The ongoing and continual review of these channels should be a core part of your long-term sales and marketing strategy.

01. EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing is one of the best ways to reach out to decision makers directly. It is a personal channel and messages from your company sit next to emails from friends and family. Email marketing works best when it is personalized, entertaining, informational and educational. Drip-fed email sequences are highly effective for cold and warm email outreach. Email marketing can be tailored to individual customer actions so that every communication is relevant, timely and automated.

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Effort = Minimal, Short-term

Benefit = Immediate, Tactical

02. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Business development (BD) is the process of creating strategic relationships that benefit both your company and who you partner with. With business development, you are partnering to reach customers in a way that benefits both parties. This involves finding strategic partners and building business development pipelines to approach and retain these potential partners (See: **Affiliate Program**).

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Effort = Moderate, Long-term

Benefit = Immediate, Strategic

03. INFLUENCER OUTREACH

There are already many influencers with large networks that match your ideal customer. These influencers can be associations, businesses or individuals - such as blog and group owners that already have large subscriber bases that align with your ideal customer profile. By reaching out to these influencers you can form long-term profitable relationships that can be combined with **Business Development and Affiliate Program partnerships**.

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Effort = Moderate, Long-term

Benefit = Immediate, Strategic

04. COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community building involves building a community of prospective and current customers by providing solutions to common questions, support and advice to challenges found within your industry/niche.

Communities can be built leveraging popular social networks (like LinkedIn and Facebook Groups). Building community networks generates goodwill within the community, establishes your business as an authority within your niche and helps to keep your business top-of-mind when they are looking to buy.

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Effort = Significant, Long-term

Benefit = Delayed, Strategic

05. SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM):

Search Engine Marketing is paying to have your website listed above or beside organic search engine results. Google is the largest search engine in the world, however alternative search engines such as Yahoo, Bing and DuckDuckGo offer more competitive pricing and differing audience attitudes.

Search Engine marketing is an excellent channel for both B2B and B2C marketing.

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Effort = Minimal, Short-term

Benefit = Immediate, Tactical

06. SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Industry events are an excellent venue for speaking engagements or wherever there is a group of people in a room that share a common industry or practice. Speaking engagements help to position you and your company as an authority and build brand awareness (See: **Trade Shows**).

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Effort = Minimal, Short-term

Benefit = Immediate, Strategic



07. TRADE SHOWS

Trade shows are a great way to showcase your products in person. These events are often exclusive to industry insiders and are designed to foster interactions between vendors and their prospects.

Early on, this traction channel is an excellent opportunity to build interest in your products and services without having to outlay the large expense for a booth. There are many ways to accomplish this without a large cash outlay - such as being a guest speaker on a topic relevant to the audience (See: **Speaking Engagements**).

As you become more established and renting a booth is feasible, trade shows can be used as an excellent opportunity to make major announcements, sell to big clients, seal partnership deals and an ongoing and integral part of your sales funnel.

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Effort = Minimal, Short-term

Benefit = Immediate, Tactical

08. LEVERAGING EXISTING ONLINE PLATFORMS

This can include online business directory listing (review) sites, app stores (Apple & Android), browser extensions (Chrome & Mozilla) and social question and answer sites (Quora) offer a large communities (and excellent SEO ranking).

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Effort = Minimal, Short-term

Benefit = Immediate, Tactical

09. ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

This includes developing and building a community around a popular social platform such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest or YouTube. These platforms contain a huge community of users that can be in the hundreds of millions of users that can be used to drive awareness prospects to your business. (See: **Community Building**).

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Effort = Substantial, Long-term

Benefit = Delayed, Long-term

10. AFFILIATE PROGRAM

An affiliate program is an arrangement where you pay people or companies for making a sale or getting a qualified lead. Affiliate programs are a very effective method provide monetary incentive based on a specific action (for example % commission of sales). Affiliate programs are a core traction channel for many successful software companies and offers the opportunity to inexpensively build your salesforce by leveraging networks and salespeople working in complementary niche markets (See: **Business Development**).

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Effort = Moderate, Long-term

Benefit = Delayed, Long-term

11. SALES FUNNELS

A sales funnel is primarily focused on creating a process that lowers the barrier to purchase by assisting the user through a specific process. Sometimes sales funnels are one-on-one, hand-holding prospects through the sales process but can also be automated to increase conversion from prospects to customer.

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Effort = Minimal, Tactical

Benefit = Immediate, Long-term

12. ENGINEERING AS MARKETING

Offering (online) tools and resources that help address a need within your community. Developing useful tools like cost calculators, widgets (chrome extension), educational microsite or wiki's to address a specific need within your community is a low cost development option to help get your company in front of new potential customers.

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Effort = Moderate, Tactical

Benefit = Delayed, Long-term



13. VIRAL MARKETING

Although one of the more difficult marketing channels to successfully launch, it consists of growing your customer based on encouraging your customers to refer new customers. This can take a number of forms, from educational and informative media (Infographics) to simply providing a benefit to a user (discount, early access, or membership perks) by referring a new user. Literally the term “going viral” means that for every user you acquire, they bring in at least one other user to your business.

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Effort = Minimal, Short-term

Benefit = Immediate, Strategic

14. CONTENT MARKETING

A very popular catchphrase used today, it is simply the process of developing online content (such as blog posts) that offer relevant and useful information to your community and prospective clients. Content marketing is a solid long-term strategy to build brand awareness, drive new visitors to your website and improve overall SEO (See: **SEO**).

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Effort = Significant, Long-term

Benefit = Delayed, Long-term

15. PUBLICITY

Publicity is about getting your brand into the marketplace through traditional media outlets such as local and international news, newspapers, magazines and TV. Most common method for software companies is being featured in well known websites and blogs within the industry. This can take the form of news releases (when a new feature is released) as well as forming relationships with reporters that focus on topics within your industry. Once published by well known media sites, there is the opportunity to establish credibility and authority on your site by referencing media publications (“also seen on”) on your landing page.

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Effort = Significant, Long-term

Benefit = Delayed, Long-term

16. UNCONVENTIONAL PR / GUERRILLA MARKETING

A very popular catchphrase used today, it is simply the process of developing online content (such as blog posts) that offer relevant and useful information to your community and prospective clients. Content marketing is a solid long-term strategy to build brand awareness, drive new visitors to your website and improve overall SEO (See: **SEO**).

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Effort = Moderate, Long-term

Benefit = Delayed, Long-term

17. SEO (SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION):

Another highly effective (long-term strategy) is improving your search engine ranking for specific keywords so when prospects search for keywords or terms that apply to your business, the results shown in the search engine position your website in the top results. Although specific tactics can be taken to improve search engine ranking, by simply taking action on these channels - **Content Marketing, Leveraging Existing Online Platforms, Community Building, Authority Outreach** and **Viral Marketing** will naturally, organically and safely boost your online search results.

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Effort = Significant, Long-term

Benefit = Delayed, Long-term

18. OFFLINE ADS

Even though online marketing has exploded over the last 10 years, advertisers still spend more on offline ads. Industry publications that offer a specific readership that matches your customer profile can be highly effective. Offline ads can include print media (magazine, newspaper, yellow pages), TV, radio, billboards and direct mail. With less businesses investing in offline ads, there are more opportunities for better price breaks and more competitive pricing.

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Effort = Moderate, Long-term

Benefit = Immediate, Strategic

19. SOCIAL & DISPLAY ADS (PPC)

Social and display ads are those advertisements that you see when you visit popular social networks (YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) and most websites on the Internet.

Facebook Ads are excellent for B2C and LinkedIn Ads are excellent for B2B.

ReTargeting is the process of identifying a user who has visited your website or online publication and using a major ad platform that “follows the user around” so your ads are shown to them long after they have visited your website.

An often forgotten medium is creating a direct relationship small to medium online platforms (ex: blogs & websites) whose audience matches your customer profile and creating a direct ad relationship with them (this can also include having your advertising inserted into their weekly or monthly newsletters and emails).

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Effort = Minimal, Short-term

Benefit = Immediate, Tactical

HOW TO IMPLEMENT INTO YOUR BUSINESS

Not all of these channels will be applicable to your business right now. The current growth stage of your business combined with your strategic and short-term goals will help to identify which of these tactics best suits your business.

As your business grows and its needs change, it's important to review this list every quarter to determine which channels best suit the current environment. We can help you identify, develop and implement each of these traction strategies for whatever stage of growth your business is at.

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