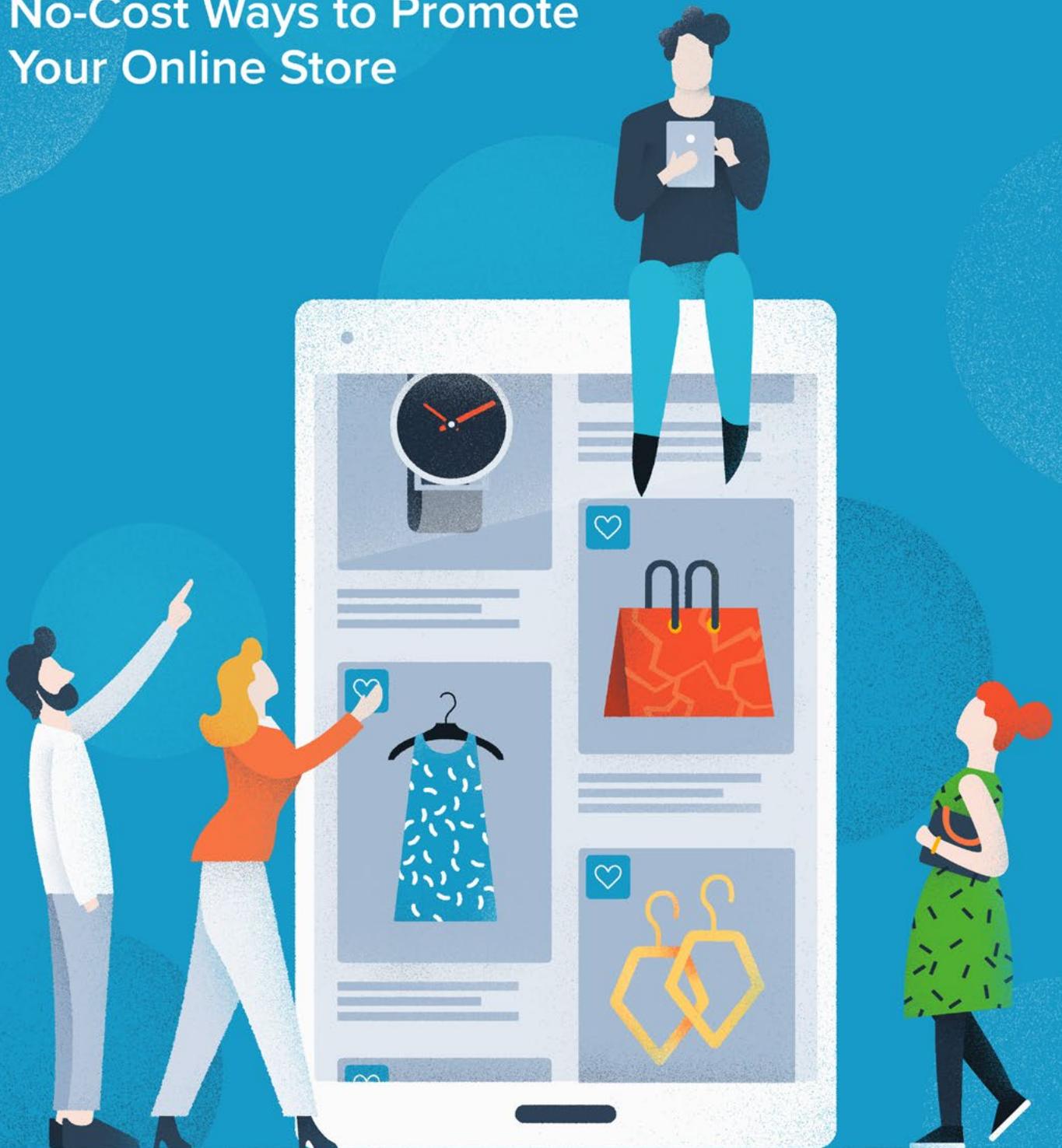


# Free Traffic

No-Cost Ways to Promote  
Your Online Store



# Table of Contents

## Introduction

### **1. Identify Potential Partnerships**

Understand Different Types of Online Influencers

Brainstorm Collaboration Ideas with the Right Types

Conduct Deep Research to Find Partner Prospects

Build a Contact List and Begin Outreach

Chapter 1 Takeaways

### **2. Build a Digital Network**

Be a Guest Contributor on Up-and-Coming Websites

Appear on Relevant Podcasts

Join Discussions on Social Media Groups and Forums

Create Referral Partnerships and Cross-Promote with Other Companies

Chapter 2 Takeaways

### **3. Build a Physical Network**

Be a Vendor for Local Events

Get Involved with Relevant Local Meetups and Events

Scope Out Opportunities for Public Speaking

Chapter 3 Takeaways

### **4. Create Extraordinary Content**

Maintain a Quality Blog

Vary Your Content

Promote and Distribute Whenever Possible

Chapter 4 Takeaways

## **5. Expand, Track, and Analyze**

Adopt a Multi-Channel Strategy

Use Social Media Analytics

Install Google Analytics on Your Website

Chapter 5 Takeaways

## **Conclusion**

# Introduction

**Congratulations on your shiny new ecommerce store!** Now it's time to generate traffic to rack up sales.

If you've been doing your research, you've probably heard some generalized advice for getting more traffic. Maybe someone has told you that the best strategy is to optimize your website for search, start a YouTube channel or Facebook page, or write some quick blog posts and press releases.

While [marketing strategies](#) like this can have impact, they're rooted in a sense of idealism, and they can't guarantee you'll get exposure. Who's to say that your SEO work will actually get you to rank above your biggest competitor in a Google search? How long would that even take?

That's why we're not going to focus on these kinds of broad, vague, and imprecise strategies.

We're going to focus on advice that gives you immediate results, not strategies that rely on hope or vague timelines.

This ebook will provide you with actionable tactics, approaches, and strategies that connect you with the right audience. We'll include realistic timelines for you to plan and gauge your effort, networking strategies to build strong relationships within your industry, and the specific skills you'll need to successfully execute these ideas.

No idealism. No BS. Just sweat equity.

**With the right work, time, and people on your team, you can see incredible growth in traffic and revenue in less than a year – potentially more than many budding ecommerce brands will see in their lifetime.**

**1**

# Identify Potential Partnerships

Search engine optimization (SEO) can take months to send any qualified visitors. Social media ads can cost a ton of money and are often challenging for the average store owner to set up and manage without hiring a marketing agency or a specialist.

I'm not saying that it's ineffective to use tactics like SEO and paid advertising through platforms like Facebook Ads and Google AdWords. In fact, they can bring incredible results, and most ecommerce store owners use these more advanced and expensive strategies to drive a ton of traffic and sales. If you're not familiar, I strongly encourage learning more about these tactics. Here's our [beginner's guide on Facebook advertising](#) to get you started.

**But the thing is, most online marketing tactics require investment and months of research, implementation, and optimization before you see any traffic – and even then, nothing is guaranteed.**

But there's more to marketing than just driving paid traffic. Plus, many new business owners can't wait that long to take their company to the next level, nor do they have the budget to run a year-long Facebook marketing campaign.

So, what do you do?

**You drive free traffic by working strategically with online influencers.**

Essentially, an influencer is a person, group, or company that has social clout in your industry and niche. They have a strong online following, and they're able to capture people's attention, start conversations, and build strong engagement on their websites and social media channels. When an influencer talks, people listen.

Influencer marketing, which is currently a popular and effective [marketing trend](#), involves partnering with influencers who promote your store. In exchange, you might send them samples or cross-promote their work. These collaborate marketing efforts should be mutually beneficial.

Before you brainstorm different influencer marketing strategies, you need to find influencers who have the right goals, audiences, and engagement levels to suit your brand.. Once you find them, you'll need to reach out to them in a way that clearly communicates the value of the partnership opportunity without landing in their spam or deleted folder.

To find truly effective and mutually beneficial influencer marketing opportunities, you'll need to search the vast corners of the internet to find the pockets where your ideal audience is spending time. These pockets can be virtually anywhere, from other ecommerce stores who can potentially be partners to a LinkedIn group or dedicated subreddit.

One of the key considerations here is to avoid high-traffic influencers. These influencers will have hundreds of thousands of followers, and they'll want money before they promote your store, instead of building a true partnership. Instead, you'll want to look for 'micro-influencers' and 'up-and-comers'.

**In this chapter, we'll discuss the main types of online influencers and their key characteristics, how you can brainstorm ideas for the perfect influencer marketing strategies with the right ones for your brand, and some ways to reach out and start building relationships with them.**

# Understand Different Types of Online Influencers

To successfully secure influencer marketing agreements and avoid wasting time, you'll need to hone in on the right opportunities with the right people. That's why your initial research stage is critical.

First, we'll identify the different types of online influencers and the key benefits they can bring to the table for different types of ecommerce businesses. Through this lens, you'll be able to identify specific people to work with and how exactly your brand can benefit.

## Aim for Micro-Influencers and Up-and-Comers

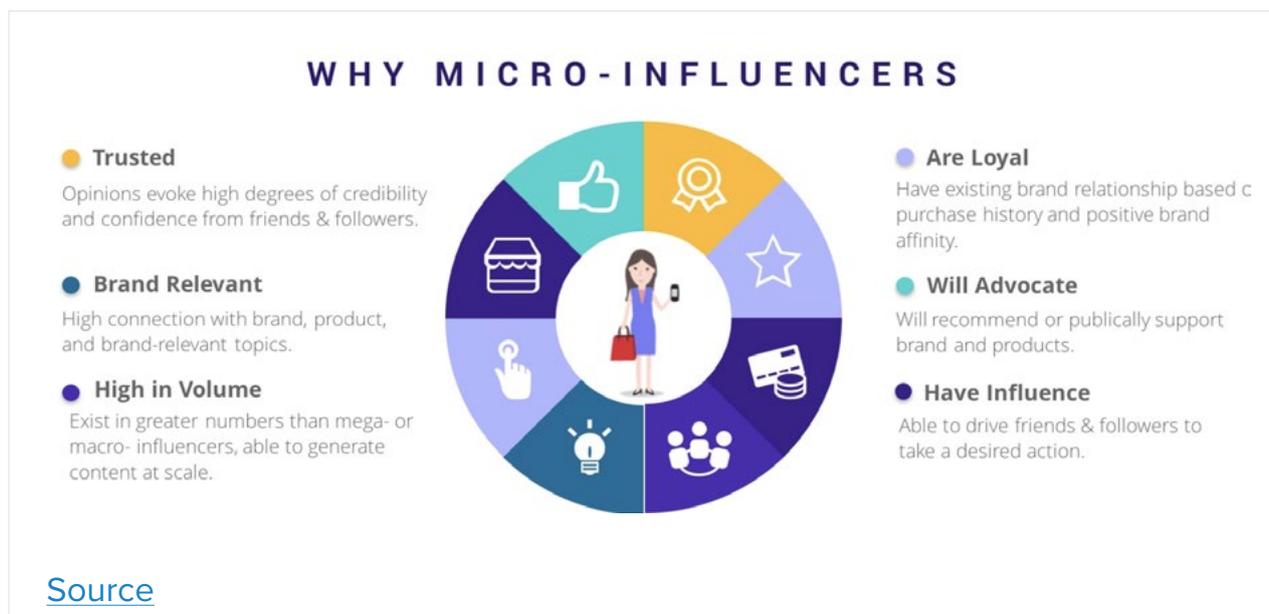
You've likely heard the term 'influencer' being used to refer to the biggest names in an industry or niche. At least that's the definition that has been bestowed upon them from the mysterious forces in marketing departments around the world. The term itself suggests an imbalance of power and authority.

While it's true that these powerhouses have a lot of clout and can help to grow your traffic, it's also true that many interactions are like paid advertising: it's a one-way street where your brand is blasted out based on what you can afford.

When you're looking for a more grassroots kind of strategy that doesn't involve hundreds or even thousands of dollars spent toward piggybacking on the fame of a household name, your time and resources are better spent looking for micro-influencers and 'up-and-comers'.

**Micro-influencers:** Hyper-specific influencers with a lower follower count (roughly less than 25,000) but immensely engaged audiences.

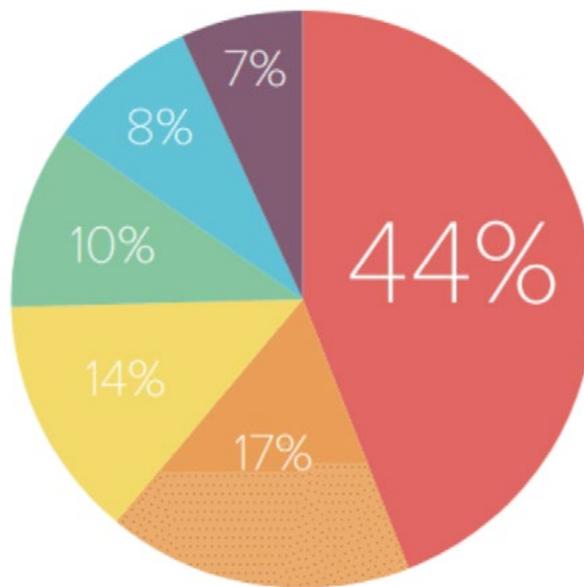
The graphic below highlights why it makes sense to partner with micro-influencers rather than mega social media stars:



Collectively, the strengths enable micro-influencers to not only attract audiences, but make them take action – perhaps that’s why [82% of consumers](#) are very likely to follow a recommendation made by micro-influencers. This makes micro-influencers the ideal partners when it comes to influencer marketing.

Celebrities and popular influencers expect monetary compensation from the brands they endorse. On the contrary, micro-influencers truly love the brands they collaborate with. An [industry survey](#) found that content creators look at a variety of factors when teaming up with brands. Here are some insights:

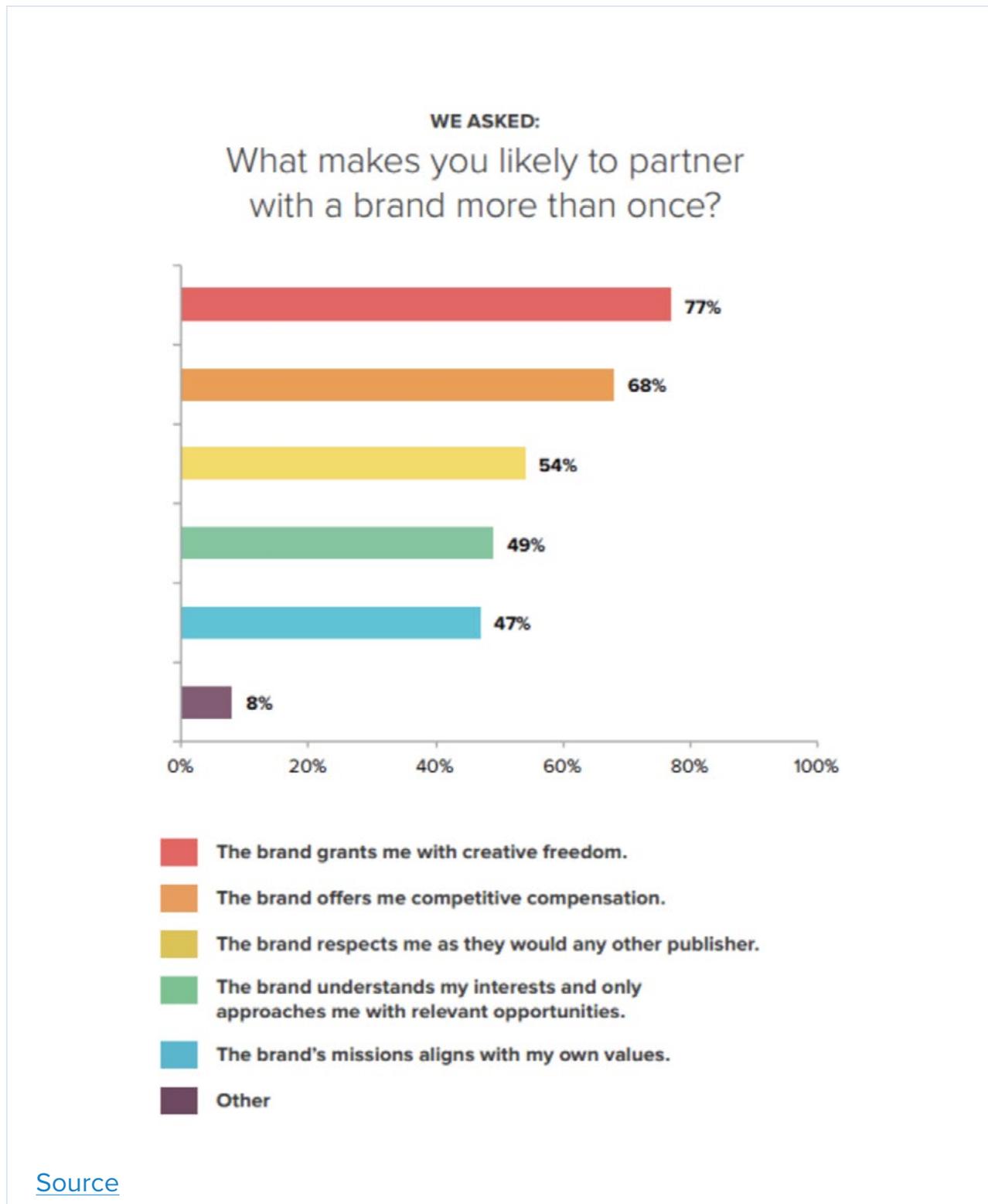
**WE ASKED:**  
What most motivates you  
to work with a brand?



- The opportunity is relevant to my audience.
- The opportunity allows me to provide an exclusive or new experience for myself and/or my audience.
- I like the brand.
- The opportunity will help with my own promotion.
- I am an expert within the subject area of the campaign or brand.
- Other

[Source](#)

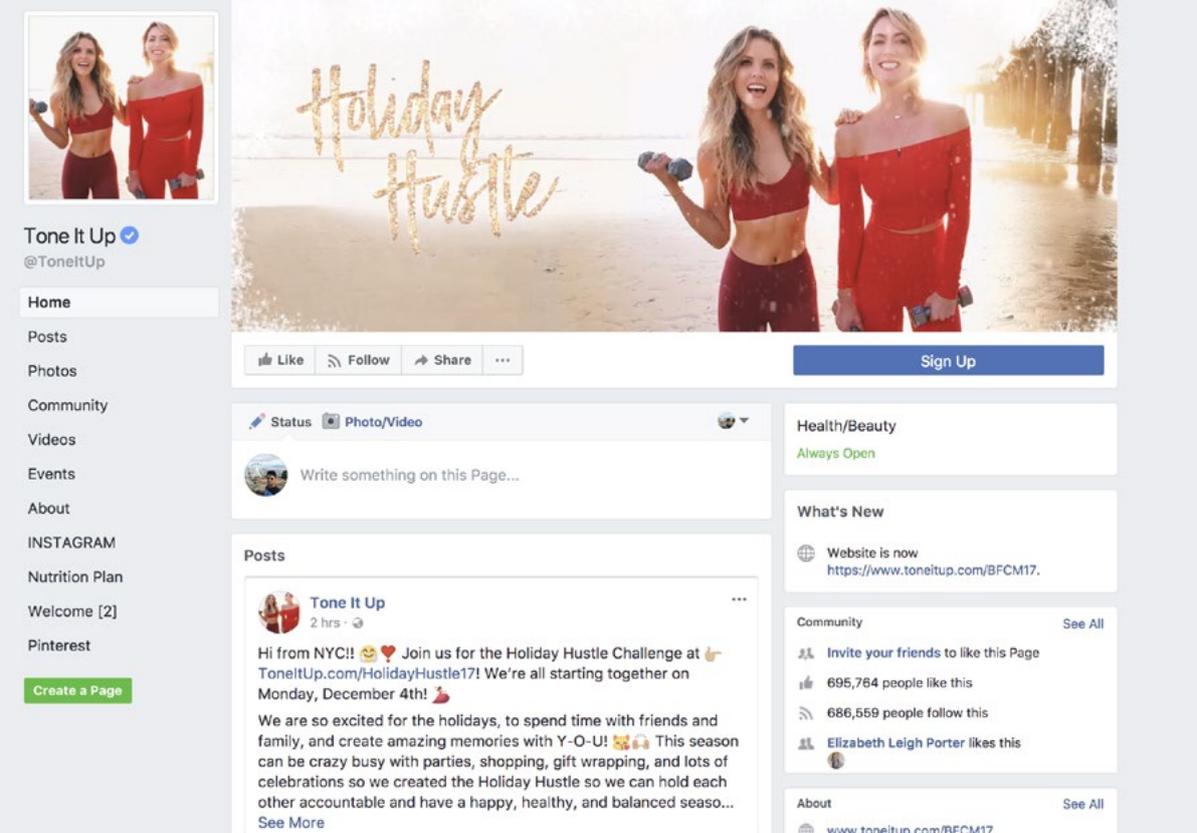
When asked what motivates them to partner with a brand more than once, here's what they said:



Based on responses from this survey, it's evident that a good portion of content creators value creative freedom and providing their audiences with relevant content above monetary incentives. Content creators are looking for mutually beneficial marketing opportunities that help them nurture and build relationships with their audience while still aligning with their own personal and professional goals.

**Up-and-comers:** Just as the name suggests, these influencers are in the early stages of their growth, but they're on the trajectory to be big influencers. When you partner with these influencers, both parties can benefit from the exposure when they cross-promote one another's brands. Similarly, both parties can be invested in building an audience together as opposed to a new brand just trying to leverage an established brand.

Generally, up-and-comers will have an independent website and a following of 25,000+ on social networking sites. For instance, Karena & Katrina of Tone It Up are two up-and-coming fitness influencers. They have more than 100,000 followers on Facebook and Pinterest and over a million on Instagram. They also have a website that they update on a regular basis.



The image shows a screenshot of the Facebook page for 'Tone It Up'. The page features a cover photo of two women in red athletic wear holding dumbbells, with the text 'Holiday Hustle' overlaid in a gold, cursive font. The page layout includes a left-hand navigation menu with options like Home, Posts, Photos, Community, Videos, Events, About, INSTAGRAM, Nutrition Plan, Welcome [2], and Pinterest. The main content area displays a post from 'Tone It Up' dated 2 hours ago, announcing a 'Holiday Hustle Challenge' starting on Monday, December 4th. The post text reads: 'Hi from NYC!! 🥰❤️ Join us for the Holiday Hustle Challenge at ToneItUp.com/HolidayHustle17! We're all starting together on Monday, December 4th! 🎉 We are so excited for the holidays, to spend time with friends and family, and create amazing memories with Y-O-U! 🐾👩🏻💪 This season can be crazy busy with parties, shopping, gift wrapping, and lots of celebrations so we created the Holiday Hustle so we can hold each other accountable and have a happy, healthy, and balanced season... See More'. The right-hand side of the page shows a 'Sign Up' button, a 'Status' section with a 'Write something on this Page...' prompt, and a 'Health/Beauty' category with 'Always Open' status. Below that, a 'What's New' section lists the website URL 'https://www.toneitup.com/BFCM17'. A 'Community' section shows '695,764 people like this' and '686,559 people follow this', along with a recent post by 'Elizabeth Leigh Porter'. An 'About' section at the bottom right provides the website URL 'www.toneitup.com/BFCM17'.

[Source](#)

Because they have a larger following and a bigger online footprint than micro-influencers, up-and-comers often charge a fee for branded influencer marketing campaigns. That said, they love creative freedom and presenting fresh ideas to their audiences, just like micro-influencers do.

**Quick Tip:** As you're building your contact list later, label each contact as a micro-influencer or an up-and-comer. This can help define their audience, scope, and potential partnerships.

## The Different Faces of Online Influencers

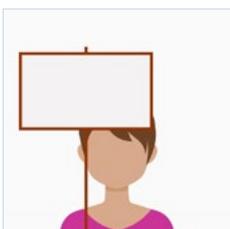
Online influencers reach out to their audiences in many ways, whether it's by taking audiences behind the scenes or showcasing a brand's products during their globetrotting adventures. Half of the time, store owners aren't even aware that they require help in the decision-making department, which is why we want to explore the different faces of online influencers and how they play into our worlds.



**The Adventurer:** Someone who enjoys traveling to new, unusual, and fascinating places. They are known for posting some of the most stunning and beautiful photography on social networks. Examples of such influencers include extreme sports enthusiasts, mountain climbers, and wildlife photographers.



**The Instructor:** These micro-influencers bank on the power of 'edu-tainment' to connect with audiences on a more trivial level than other types of micro-influencers. DIY experts, fix-it enthusiasts, remote tutors, and life-hackers who use Snapchat, Instagram, etc. in creative ways fall into this category of micro-influencers.



**The Activist:** Influencers of this kind see the need for change and devote themselves to doing something about it. To utilize their influence though, you'll need to go into conversation with an open mind. Civil rights leaders and LGBT community supporters are a few examples of such influencers.



**The Entertainer:** People love entertainers because of their personalities. They're often witty characters, commenting on pop culture (music, movies, etc.) or making humorous skits. One example is community-based comedians. However, not all entertainers are funny. They may also be confessional, influencing people by sharing parts of their lives.



**The Disruptor:** Disruptors have an open mind and willingness to explore uncharted territories. They love to work with businesses that further the debate and help them take creativity to new levels. Examples of disruptors include virtual reality enthusiasts, electric car racers, and cryptocurrency reporters.

## Qualities To Look For in Micro-Influencers and Up-and-Comers

When you start your search for potential influencer marketing opportunities, you'll likely feel like you're swimming in an abyss of blogs, websites, and social media accounts. To find your brand's best options, you'll need to be observant, detail-oriented, and purposeful. In other words, you're going to need to put on your 'internet stalker' hat: let's face it, we all have one lying around here somewhere.

The best influencers share the following character traits:

**Credibility.** Micro-influencers and up-and-comers are experts in their niche. These personalities should ooze this in their online presence, and answer the questions that their audience is asking. If you can't trust their opinion and outlook, they probably aren't suitable for influencer marketing partnerships.

**Likeability.** The most successful influencers are the people you can imagine yourself having a coffee or a beer with. Their personalities are authentic, engaging, captivating, and inspiring – and this is part of the draw for snagging and keeping their audience base.

**Ingenuity.** Many influencers pave the way to their success by offering a unique or creative take on the status quo. They're invested in solving problems or making improvements in their niche, and their strategy for doing so often involves open-mindedness and curiosity for exploring new perspectives, tools, and strategies.

**Passion.** It should be pretty obvious that they love what they do. In a sense, passion is a culmination of all of the above qualities that manifest into their unique presence. A passionate influencer motivates their audience while they experiment and collaborate to achieve their own vision.

Apart from the general feel of their channel and the persona they convey, you'll also want to examine key characteristics of their channels and content that qualify them as micro-influencers and up-and-comers. These details include posting habits, views and audience engagement, content quality and the like.

The most identifiable traits typically include:

- Regular content publishing (blogs, videos, podcasts, etc.) at least once a week, with the last item published no later than a week ago
- A highly-engaged audience including likes, comments and other interactions, and shares if the channel permits
- Decent or high-quality web design, photography, video and/or audio clips

Look at the evolution of their content. How long ago was their first publish date? What's the progression of views and interaction since then? Look for spikes in engagement that indicate that an up-and-comer has crossed the threshold of growth and popularity.

For YouTube personalities and vloggers, look at their channel and see how their views have grown from video to video. For other types of content, see how many more likes, comments, and shares they've gotten along their timeline since they first started out.

Check to see if your prospective partners are already involved in influencer marketing. Have they recently started promoting products, brands, or other individuals? A fresh step into the promotion realm is a huge window of opportunity and a great indicator of crossing the threshold. It's also a perfect sweet spot for you to propose an influencer marketing opportunity before the influencer's demand is so high that they jack up their prices for participation.

Above all else, **be picky**. It may take some time to find the perfect influencers, but they're more than worth the wait if they reflect and amplify the strengths of your brand.

# Brainstorm Collaboration Ideas with the Right Types

Now, it's time to propose some influencer marketing opportunities to the right content creators.

Before you make any moves, you'll want to think about which types of influencers mesh well with your brand and how specifically you can work with them. Viewing the research phase through this lens will help you find influencer opportunities with people who really fit your brand.

Consider strategies like:

- Voicing your brand by publishing content on their blog or appearing as a guest on their podcasts
- Sending samples with handwritten notes to have your products reviewed
- Pitching a giveaway or contest involving your products
- Meeting up and promoting at a relevant event (if you're local)

Keep in mind that this is by no means an exhaustive list. While you're thinking about your own brand's personality and goals, and learning about the influencers in your niche, keep an open and creative mind to dream up new and original collaborate marketing opportunities. Uniqueness is a goal, not just a side effect – standing out is an asset for building quality partnerships and generating excitement and engagement from your future customers.

## Build Your Own Branding Database

We've discussed that it's critical to align your company with influencers who share the same values, traits, and goals. But how do you know it when you see it? By being clear on your own [brand identity](#), in explicit terms.

**Before you start your external research, do some internal research.**

Map out the key elements of your [ecommerce store's brand](#) and where you see yourself in the long run by asking yourself questions like:

- What are my brand's core values and mission statement?
- What benefits do we offer to our customers?
- What's my brand's personality? Fun, professional, educational, etc?
- What makes us different from the competition?
- What are the visual elements of the brand? Colors, fonts, visuals like photos and illustrations, etc?
- Who are our ideal customers?
- How do we immediately communicate to customers that we're the right choice?

Make sure to **write all of these answers down**. That way, you'll always have a reference sheet to ensure that every move you make is working toward your ultimate goals. It's essential to understand your brand before proposing influencer marketing opportunities. In the next phase of looking for specific influencers to reach out to, you'll be able to include these terms in your searches on various channels, platforms, and tools to find influencers who align with your brand. Think of this section as a critical thinking exercise for foundational brand-building.

Think of this section as a critical thinking exercise for foundational brand-building.

While your brand can be built and honed for all of eternity, we'll start with three main elements: basic keyword research, hashtag research, and brand personality traits.

**Quick Tip:** Create a brand identity spreadsheet to organize all of the terms you come across during this phase of research. That way, you'll be able to easily copy-and-paste them into your searches on your quest for finding influencer marketing opportunities.

## 1. Basic Keyword Research

If you're familiar with [search engine optimization](#) (SEO), you've likely heard of keyword research. For any online endeavor, keywords play a massive role in how search engines work, and how they choose to display specific web pages when people type something into a search bar.

**You could say that keywords are part of the language of the internet. Simply put, researching and using the right keywords across all forms of your online presence can result in more traffic and exposure.**

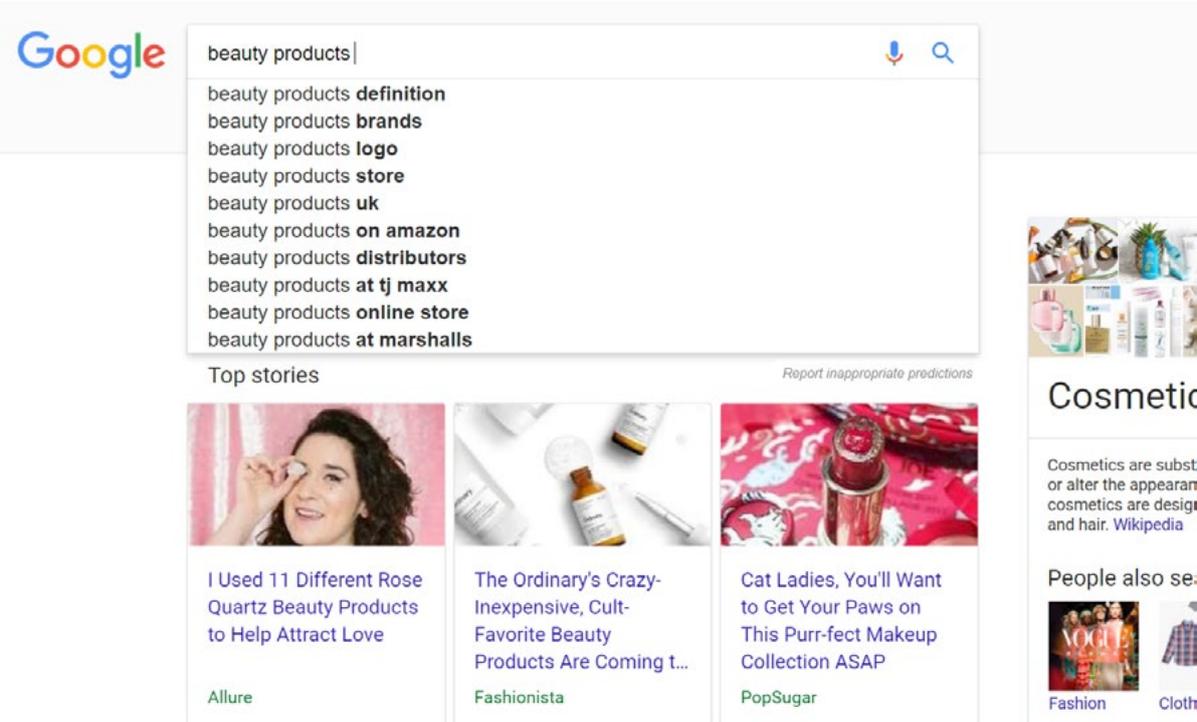
This same concept applies to finding partners for influencer marketing opportunities. When you use precise keywords in your search to find influencers on various platforms, you'll get more relevant results that align closely with your brand. You can cut through the clutter to find good influencers more quickly and easily.

You're also likely aware that keyword research can be a massive beast to tackle when you're using traditional SEO strategies like website optimization or paid advertising tools. While it can be helpful in the long-run, SEO strategies typically don't offer immediate traffic benefits. So for right now, we'll only cover the basics of keyword research and how you can use it in the context of snagging influencer marketing partnerships.

As you're skimming through hundreds of keywords, use the relevance litmus test. Ask yourself: is this 100% relevant to my brand? If a user searches for this keyword and lands on your site, will they find exactly what they're looking for?

## Google Search Suggestions

Google can be pretty darn helpful for suggesting keywords, because its suggestions are based on the top searches related to your initial keywords in the geographical region you're in when you conduct the search. Type in the main keywords, then examine the dropdown suggestions.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface for the query "beauty products". The search bar contains the text "beauty products" with a microphone and search icon to the right. Below the search bar, a dropdown menu lists several suggestions: "beauty products definition", "beauty products brands", "beauty products logo", "beauty products store", "beauty products uk", "beauty products on amazon", "beauty products distributors", "beauty products at tj maxx", "beauty products online store", and "beauty products at marshalls".

Below the suggestions, there is a "Top stories" section with three articles:

- I Used 11 Different Rose Quartz Beauty Products to Help Attract Love** (Allure)
- The Ordinary's Crazy-Inexpensive, Cult-Favorite Beauty Products Are Coming t...** (Fashionista)
- Cat Ladies, You'll Want to Get Your Paws on This Purr-fect Makeup Collection ASAP** (PopSugar)

On the right side, there is a "Cosmetic" knowledge panel. It includes a collage of cosmetic products, a definition: "Cosmetics are subst... or alter the appearan... cosmetics are design... and hair. Wikipedia", and a "People also see" section with two related topics: "Fashion" and "Cloth".

At the bottom left of the screenshot, there is a "Source" link.

You can also look at the bottom of the page, which shows variations that don't necessarily start with the words you entered into the search bar.

### Searches related to beauty products

beauty products **online store**

beauty products **names**

**list of** beauty products

**best** beauty products **of all time**

beauty **product brands**

**coming soon to sephora 2017**

**new makeup** products **2017**

**new makeup releases 2017**



[Source](#)

**Quick Tip:** Google suggestions are based on your current region by default, but you can change the settings if you plan to sell internationally and want to see suggestions for another region. Underneath the search bar, click 'Settings' → 'Search Settings' then scroll to the bottom of the page. Go to 'Region Settings' and select the region you want to see suggestions for.

**Region Settings**

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Current Region	<input type="radio"/> Andorra	<input type="radio"/> Armenia	<input type="radio"/> Bahrain
<input type="radio"/> Afghanistan	<input type="radio"/> Angola	<input type="radio"/> Australia	<input type="radio"/> Bangladesh
<input type="radio"/> Albania	<input type="radio"/> Anguilla	<input type="radio"/> Austria	<input type="radio"/> Belarus
<input type="radio"/> Algeria	<input type="radio"/> Antigua & Barbuda	<input type="radio"/> Azerbaijan	<input type="radio"/> Belgium
<input type="radio"/> American Samoa	<input type="radio"/> Argentina	<input type="radio"/> Bahamas	<input type="radio"/> Belize

[Show more ▾](#)

## [Übersuggest.io](https://ubersuggest.io)

Übersuggest is another awesome tool for keyword suggestions. Just type in your main keywords and it will return hundreds of related keywords, sorted alphabetically.

über suggest

Web
English / United States

100%

Keywords found 334
Word Cloud
Keywords selected 0

beauty products | a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h | i | j | k | l | m | n | o | p | q | r | s | t | u | v | w | x | y | z | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9

<input type="checkbox"/>	Keyword
<input type="checkbox"/>	▼ beauty products
<input type="checkbox"/>	▼ beauty products online

## 2. Hashtag Research

If keywords are the language of the internet, hashtags are the language of social media. Hashtags offer the same benefits as keywords: you can use them to find exactly what you're looking for. The added benefit of hashtags is that they're directly clickable, which helps you to connect with other accounts and users without the guesswork that SEO-style keyword research might involve.

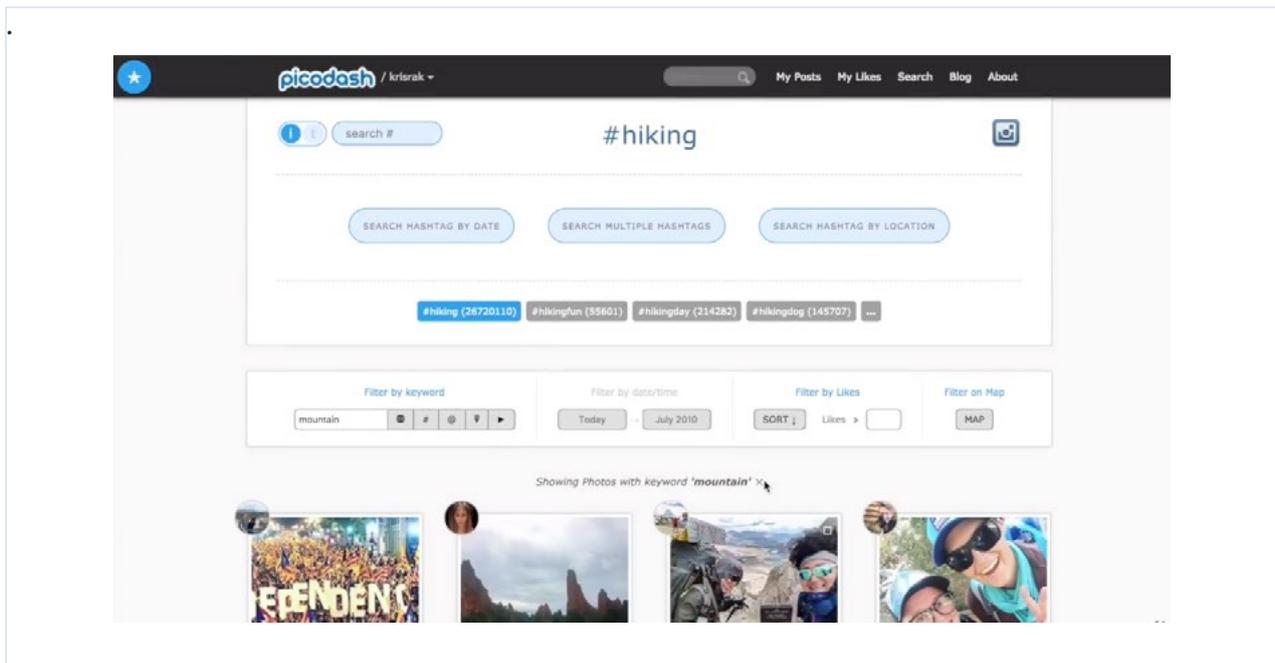
And there's no way around it: you need social media and social media needs you. Having a list of go-to hashtags can help you find the pockets where users are really engaged around your niche, and can be a speedy way to identify the influencers who are the center of conversation in those pockets. If you search for a popular and relevant hashtag, you'll often find promising influencers who are using them. Then you can evaluate these accounts to see if they'll be a fit for influencer marketing.

To make sure you find all the best hashtags, you can use some hashtag research tools. They'll tell you popular trending hashtags around your niche so that you don't have to guess. Plus, once you know the good ones, you can use them regularly in your own social media posts.

### [Picodash](#)

Picodash is a cheap tool (\$8 a month for the basic plan) that lets you search Instagram hashtags. When you type in a hashtag, you'll see several results for related searches as well as the volume of users who've posted with that hashtag. You can drill down by keywords within the post, location of the users, user profiles, date and time posted, and even likes and comments.

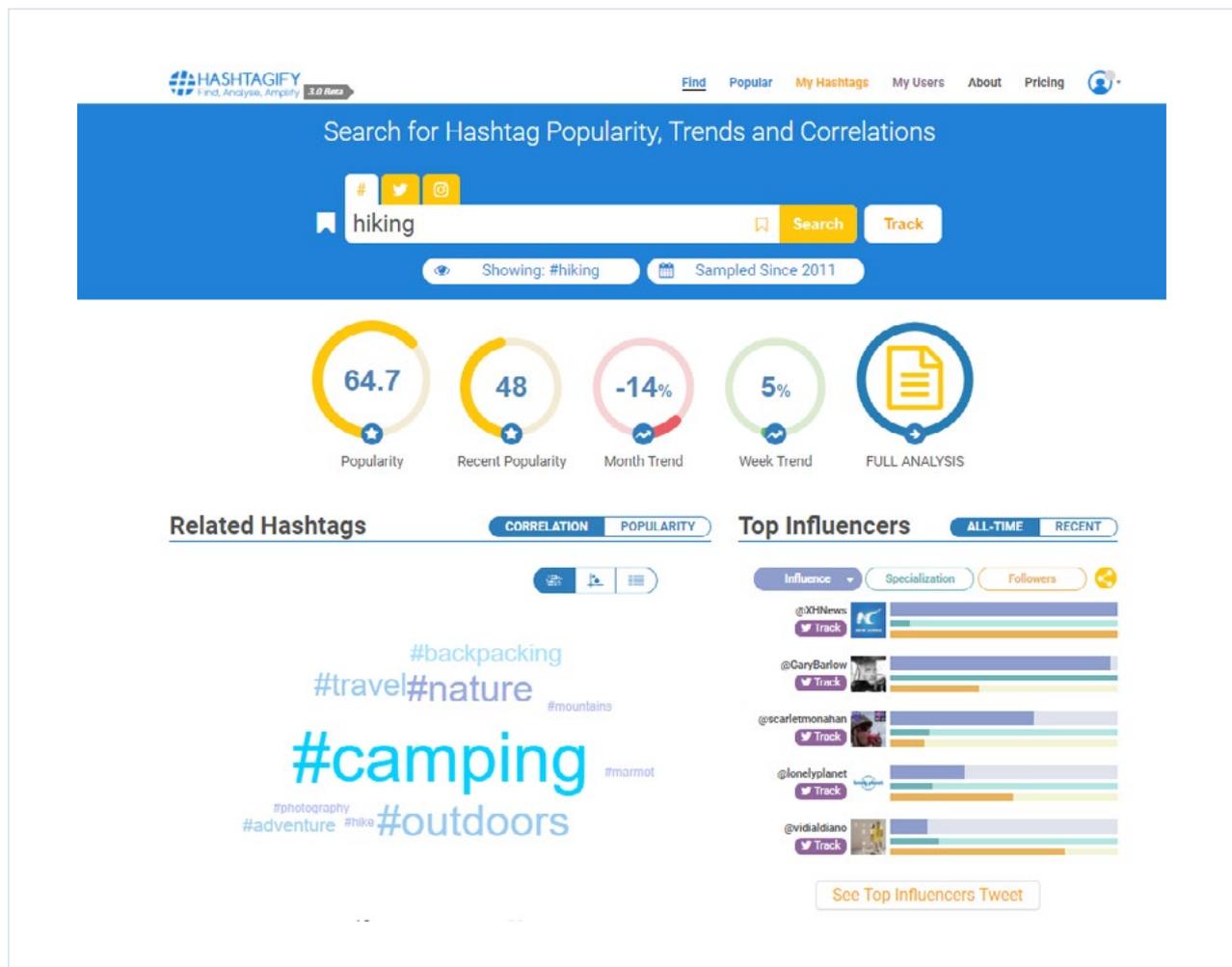
Say you're an outdoors store selling hiking gear. You can type #hiking and filter by keywords like 'mountain' or 'camping' to see how popular the results are, and which hashtag variations are being used.



## [Hashtagify.me](#)

This is another great hashtag search tool. This one includes Twitter in addition to Instagram. You can use the free search functionality to see if it's helpful, then sign up for the basic membership for \$9 a month.

It shows results based on popularity, recent popularity, how the hashtag is trending this month or week compared to last, and top influencers related to these hashtags. Conduct a few searches related to your brand and investigate these influencers who use the hashtags. You might find a few golden partnership opportunities!



### 3. Brand Personality Traits

What's your company like? What are the main draws that will attract your ideal customers, and what are those customers like? What are their interests and needs, and what kinds of brands do they prefer to do business with?

Think of a list of adjectives and nouns that represent your company's philosophy, ideals, and goals, as well as those of the ideal customers you'd like to attract.

Words like:

- edgy, fringe
- eccentric, offbeat, alternative
- free-spirited, spontaneous
- hippie, bohemian
- opinionated, controversial
- educated, intellectual
- empowering, inspiring, motivating
- eco-friendly, green, sustainable
- creator, designer, producer
- disruptive, innovative
- leader, trend-setter

**Once you have a list of these words, you can include them in your search engine and social media searches to help find promising influencers. Chances are, they've used the same types of terms to describe their own web presence (or you'll find that others have used these terms to describe them).**

For example, if you're an eco-friendly makeup company looking for someone to [review your products](#), you can search a term like 'eco-friendly beauty product reviews' You might find an influencer who aligns with your values and thus, the perfect candidate for an influencer marketing campaign.

## Connect the Dots: How Your Brand Fits with Theirs

Now it's time to explore the different types of partnerships that are available. You could even come up with some of your own if you're feeling inspired.

Back to the beauty brand example. Say you're looking to be included in videos, but you see that there are different types of videos and you're not sure which ones are the best fit for showcasing your products.

Take a look at some common types of beauty videos, and which brands and products they might fit snugly with.

**Style guides and lookbooks.** Special seasonal lines and products, like spring and fall makeup collections.

**First impressions.** Unique or innovative products, so that influencers can reveal it to their audience and position it as a possible new trend.

**Unboxing.** Subscription box brands, so that audiences can 'experience' the excitement of the unboxing process and explore the product offering.

**Do-it-yourself (DIY).** Beauty supplies or skin/hair care ingredients, so that you can pitch the influencer a DIY project that involves one or more of your products.

**Tutorials.** Virtually any type of product: unique/innovative or more common products, so audiences can see the final result in action.

These concepts can also apply to channels like blogs, podcasts, social media posts, and other types of content. For example, style guides, gift guides, and lookbooks are often curated with several brands and published on websites and as downloadable PDFs.

## Contests, Giveaways, and Joint Promotions

Aside from having your products tested, reviewed, and featured in relevant content, you can also try pitching special events like contests or giveaways for your products.

A common influencer marketing technique is to offer the influencer a coupon code that their audience can redeem. Give them a free sample of your product to include in a contest or giveaway, or use their channel as an entry into your own contest (for example, commenting on their social media post counts as an entry into your contest). This is a great way to cross-promote: your brand promotes the influencer, while the influencer promotes your brand.

Take for example [Shoes of Prey](#), a shoe brand that lets users design their own shoes. The company teamed up with Blair Fowler, a then-16-year-old beauty vlogger who agreed to host a giveaway on her YouTube channel. In the video, [she showed viewers the pair of custom shoes](#) she designed for herself, along with a quick tutorial for how to use the website to build their own designs

**The result: over half a million video views, coverage on Business Insider, The Wall Street Journal, and Media Gazer, and sales numbers that permanently tripled!**



The image shows a YouTube video player. The video frame displays a woman with long brown hair and pink nail polish, holding a black shoe with a gold zipper. The background is a pink room with two colorful, polka-dot lamps. Below the video frame, the title "Design Your Own Shoes Giveaway!!!!" is visible. The channel name "Julcystar07" is shown with a "Subscribe" button and "1,752,479" subscribers. The video has 756,033 views, 4,686 likes, and 716 comments. The video progress bar shows 1:35 / 9:41.

[Source](#)

Other influencer marketing ideas might include:

- Having the influencer curate a special product collection, labeling it with their name, and including it on both of your sites, content, and marketing materials
- Offering them a cut of sales for a product or promotion in exchange for mentioning it
- Strategic product placements in their social media posts

**Quick Tip:** Whenever you get an idea about a new niche or audience segment that might be able to connect with your brand, write it down. This master inspiration list should evolve and stay with you forever – no matter what stage your brand is in, new ideas for growing your network will never become obsolete.

## Conduct Deep Research to Find Partner Prospects

At this point, you can identify different types of online personalities, and your hamster wheel is turning over the right ones to partner with and the specific types of partnership opportunities you might benefit from pursuing.

Now it's time for some good old-fashioned research: digging into the web to actually find influencers. I'm not going to sugar coat it. This will involve getting lost in the depths of the interwebs for several hours. But since we've nailed down some context and you know what you should generally be looking for, you're geared to make the most of your time invested.

In this section, we'll discuss how to scour some of the top channels, platforms, and tools for finding potential partners, including:

- Web searches on Google and YouTube

- Social media searches on Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest
- Specialized search tools like Right Relevance and Feedly

## Google

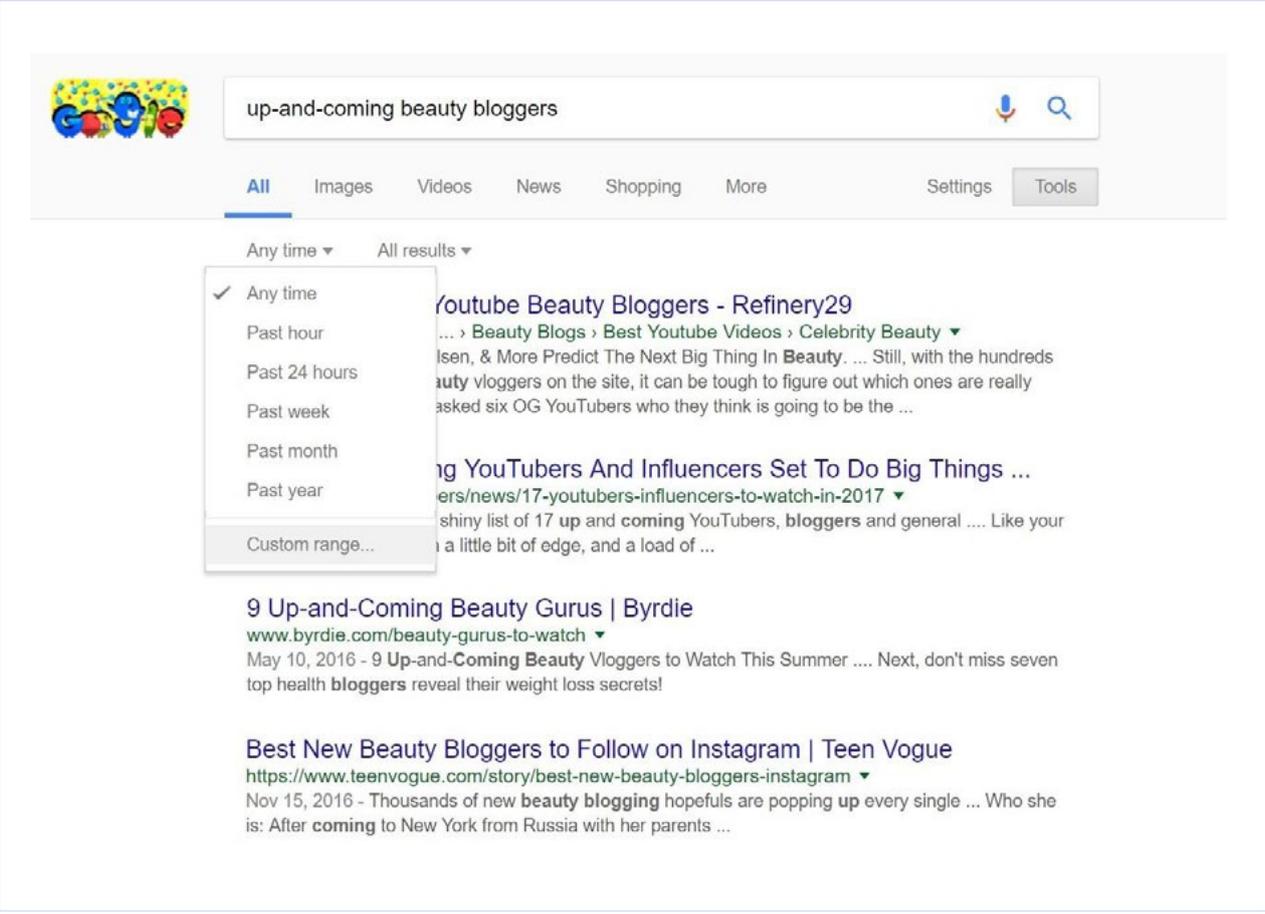
Start with some targeted Google searches to find curated lists that can steer you into the right direction. If you're unsure of who exactly you need to be reaching out to, this process will help. As you scan through your potential influencer marketing candidates, you'll be better able to visualize how partnering with them may or may not work.

Say you're looking for up-and-coming beauty bloggers. Use keywords focused around 'up-and-coming' and 'new,' and then mix-and-match different brand identity terms you developed in the previous sections.

Search for queries like:

- **up-and-coming** beauty bloggers
- **new** beauty bloggers
- **promising** beauty bloggers
- best beauty blogs **right now**
- **edgy up-and-coming** beauty bloggers
- **creative new** beauty bloggers
- **growing eco-friendly** beauty bloggers

In a Google search, click 'Tools' → 'Any time' dropdown to make sure your results are recent. Try results from the past six months, as the crossing the threshold has a critical time factor. An up-and-comer from a year ago has probably either sank or swam by now.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "up-and-coming beauty bloggers". Below the search bar, the "Tools" button is highlighted. A dropdown menu is open under "Any time", showing options: "Any time" (checked), "Past hour", "Past 24 hours", "Past week", "Past month", "Past year", and "Custom range...". The search results are displayed below the dropdown menu. The first result is "Youtube Beauty Bloggers - Refinery29" with a snippet: "... > Beauty Blogs > Best Youtube Videos > Celebrity Beauty ... lsen, & More Predict The Next Big Thing In Beauty. ... Still, with the hundreds beauty vloggers on the site, it can be tough to figure out which ones are really asked six OG YouTubers who they think is going to be the ...". The second result is "ing YouTubers And Influencers Set To Do Big Things ..." with a snippet: "ers/news/17-youtubers-influencers-to-watch-in-2017 ... shiny list of 17 up and coming YouTubers, bloggers and general .... Like your a little bit of edge, and a load of ...". The third result is "9 Up-and-Coming Beauty Gurus | Byrdie" with a snippet: "www.byrdie.com/beauty-gurus-to-watch ... May 10, 2016 - 9 Up-and-Coming Beauty Vloggers to Watch This Summer .... Next, don't miss seven top health bloggers reveal their weight loss secrets!". The fourth result is "Best New Beauty Bloggers to Follow on Instagram | Teen Vogue" with a snippet: "https://www.teenvogue.com/story/best-new-beauty-bloggers-instagram ... Nov 15, 2016 - Thousands of new beauty blogging hopefuls are popping up every single ... Who she is: After coming to New York from Russia with her parents ...".

**Quick Tip:** Google search operators are your friend. For example, if you keep seeing high-profile influencers instead of up-and-comers, try using an operator like the minus sign (-): type '-best' to show results that don't contain the word 'best'. [See a full list of operators](#) to supercharge your searches.

Don't stop at page 1 of the search results. Dig into 3-5 pages for each search you do to make sure you're not missing any good results. Just because these personalities haven't made it to the front page doesn't mean you shouldn't consider them for influencer marketing. In fact, if they're in the early up-and-coming phase, they won't be on the first page yet!

As you're digging deeper, vary your search requests. Replace the word 'blogger' with other types of content creators like:

- vlogger
- YouTuber
- journalist
- photographer

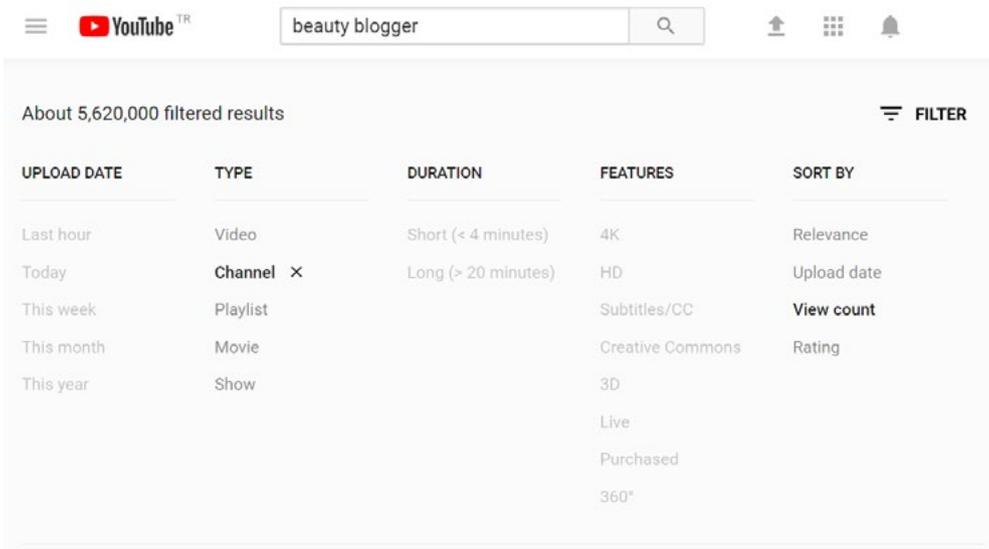
## YouTube

Depending on your industry, vloggers might be an ideal route. This is especially true for the beauty, health and fitness, and entertainment industries. According to Think with Google, [62% of consumers](#) watch product review videos before making a purchase, so you can score big if your products get a cameo.

YouTube searches will be different from Google searches in that you won't find the same helpful curated lists and articles as you do using Google. With YouTube, you're best off searching channels and videos individually.

Like Google search, use filters. Click the 'Filter' option at the top right corner. Try filter options like:

- "Type: Channel" to search by user.
- "Type: Video" to see videos that have gone viral and crossed the threshold for the user.
- "Sort by: View count" – scroll down past the high-profile channels and videos, as these are most likely already online influencers. Look for channels and videos with views in the thousands or tens of thousands.



The screenshot shows the YouTube search interface for the query "beauty blogger". The search bar contains the text "beauty blogger" and a search icon. Below the search bar, it indicates "About 5,620,000 filtered results" and a "FILTER" button. A table of filter options is displayed, with columns for Upload Date, Type, Duration, Features, and Sort By. The "Type" column is currently set to "Channel" with a close icon (X). The "Sort By" column is set to "View count".

UPLOAD DATE	TYPE	DURATION	FEATURES	SORT BY
Last hour	Video	Short (< 4 minutes)	4K	Relevance
Today	<b>Channel</b> ×	Long (> 20 minutes)	HD	Upload date
This week	Playlist		Subtitles/CC	<b>View count</b>
This month	Movie		Creative Commons	Rating
This year	Show		3D	
			Live	
			Purchased	
			360°	

## Instagram

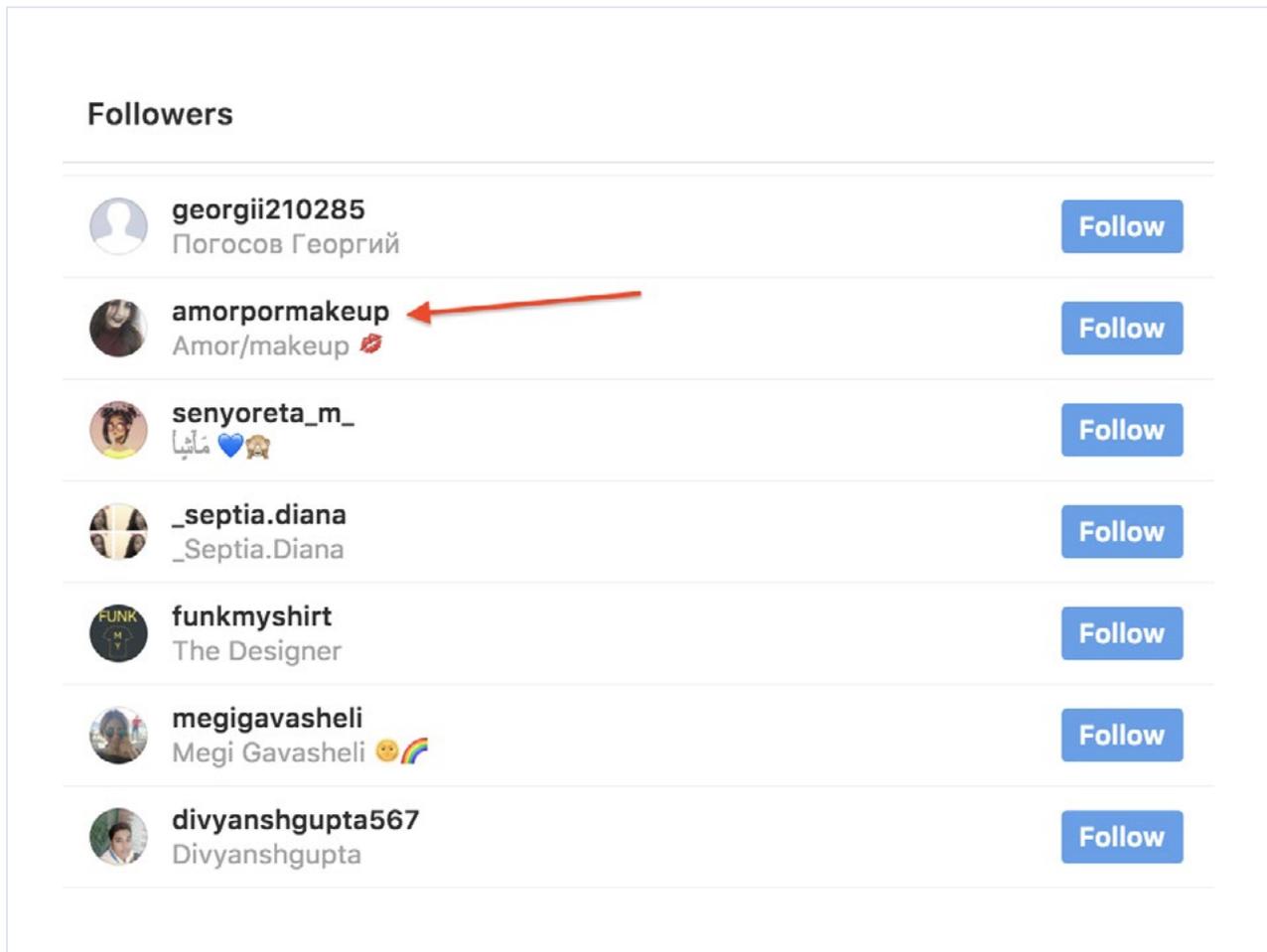
Both micro-influencers and up-and-comers love Instagram. For them, it's a valuable channel for communicating with their audience where it's less about dialogue, and more about photo and video sharing. An image and a few words can convey a lifestyle, take the audience on a journey, and allow the community to witness and experience the unique things Instagram influencers get to see in their reporting.

**You can find all types of [influencers on Instagram](#). Of course, the ones you look for will depend on the niche you're targeting. Here are a few helpful tips to help you with your search.**

### Look Among Your Fans

There's a good chance that your ideal influencer is already following you on social media. You can find him/her by exploring your list of followers, and checking out the user profiles which seem relevant to your brand. The easiest find is their profile photo or username.

For instance, if you're selling cosmetics or makeup items, you might want to check out followers with 'makeup' or 'make up artist' in their username.

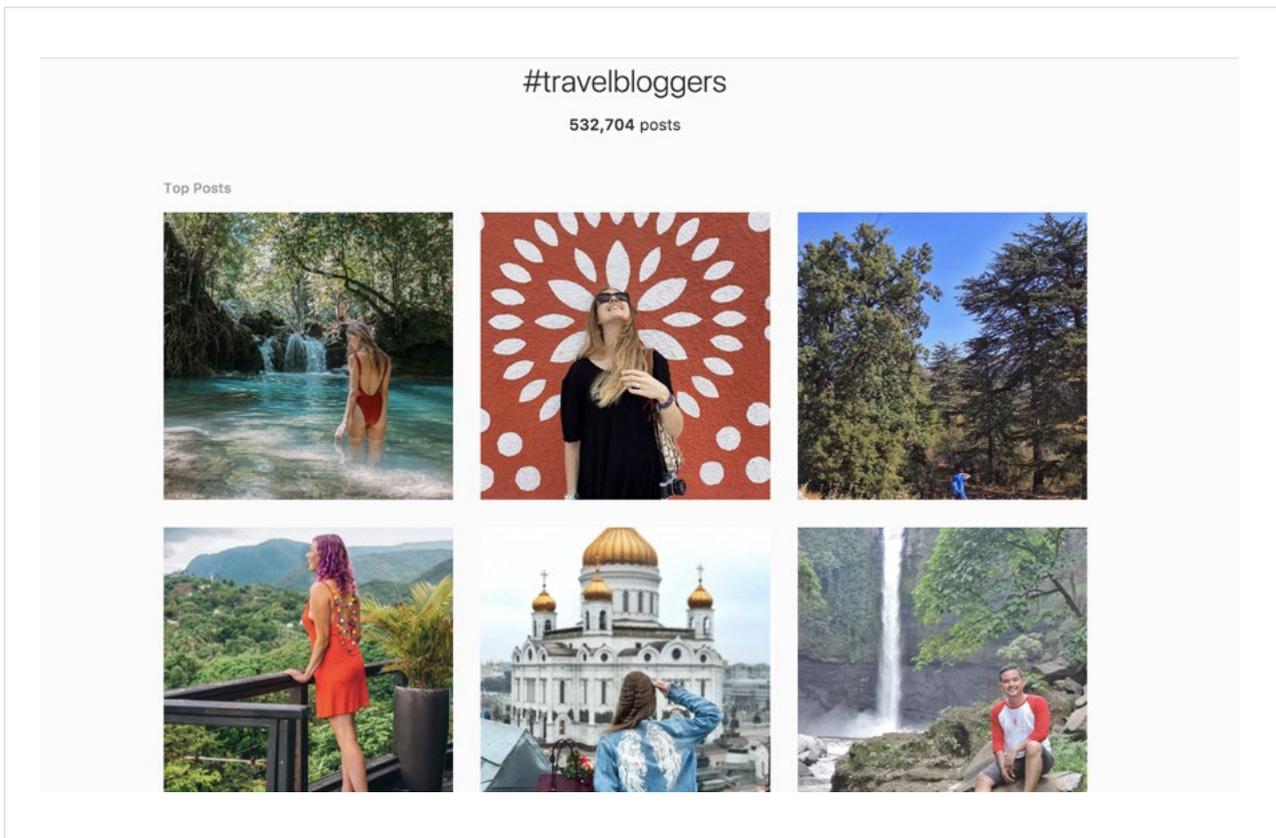


The above list contains someone whose username is [@amorpormakeup](#) who could be a potential influencer for an ecommerce store selling beauty products.

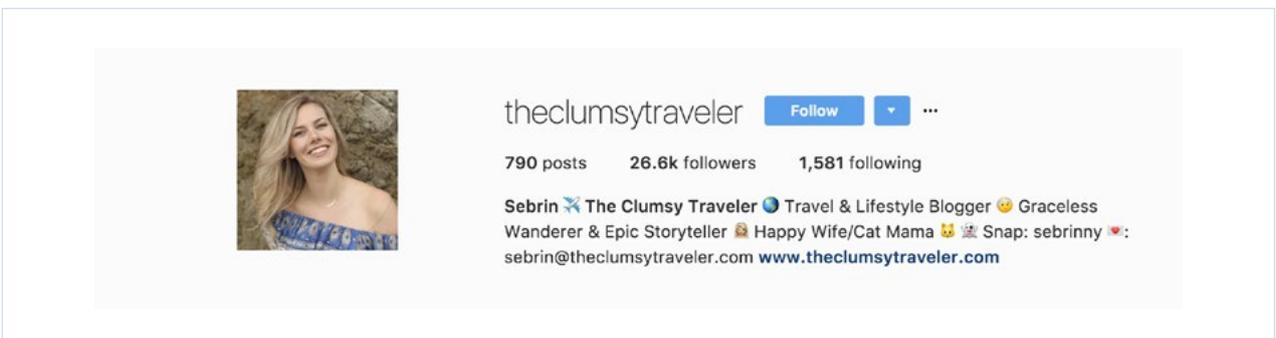
If the influencer has less than 30,000 followers and minimum press coverage but high audience engagement, you've probably spotted a micro-influencer.

## Use hashtags

One of the easiest ways to find relevant influencers on Instagram is by conducting a hashtag search. For instance, searching for the hashtag [#travelbloggers](#) will lead you to the micro-influencers and up-and-comers associated to that hashtag.



One of the search results is an image of Sebrin Elms, a travel and lifestyle blogger with more than 25,000 followers. She could be an ideal influencer for an ecommerce store selling travel gadgets or lifestyle products.



Sebrin also has a blog, and a quick search on Google for her blog's name reveals she has been featured in a variety of online publications. We can deduce from all of these details that she's an up-and-coming adventurer, and might be an excellent partner for influencer marketing campaigns if her web presence and values align with your brand.

## **Snapchat**

Home to a plethora of social media stars, Snapchat has become more of an influencer network in recent times. Snapchat influencers are creative, self-made digital celebrities who have a close-knit relationship with their followers. They're skilled with Snapchat's features and understand the importance of leveraging emojis and animated lenses. You'll find all sorts of influencers on Snapchat including entertainers, advocates, instructors, and more.

We've listed below some tips to help you find the right Snapchat influencers for your marketing campaigns.

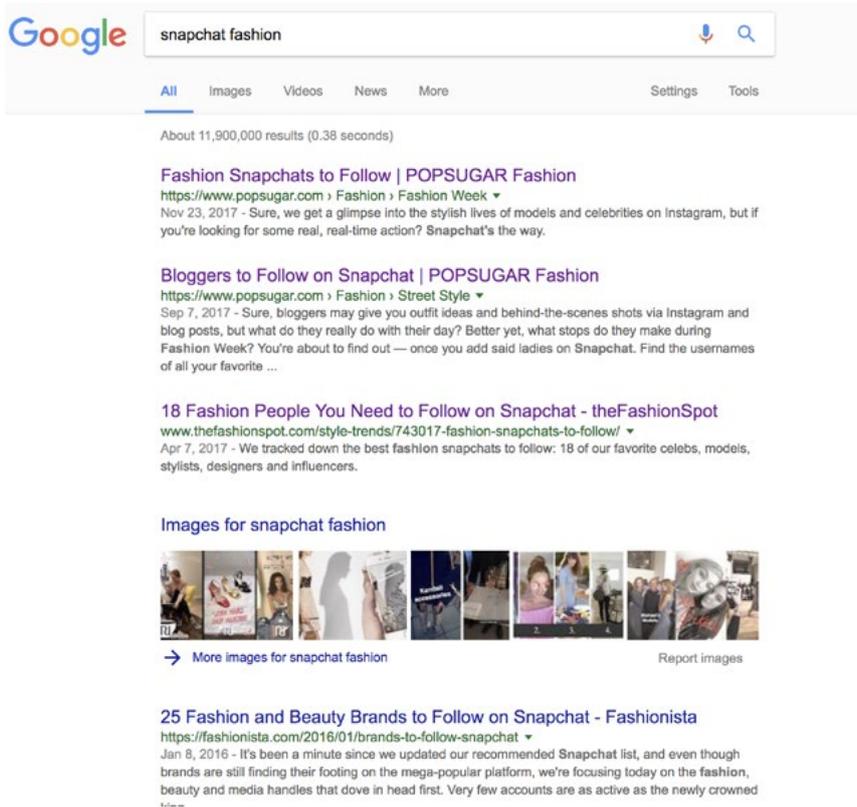
### **Perform a Google Search**

Because Snapchat doesn't offer details of users the way other social networking sites do, it can be challenging to find relevant micro-influencers and up-and-comers. Instead of battling Snapchat on your smartphone searching for influencers, a better option is to use Google.

Search for the following strings:

- list of [industry name] influencers on Snapchat
- Snapchat [industry name]
- [industry name] influencers to follow on Snapchat
- best [industry name] Snapchat accounts to follow

To give an example, if you sell maxi dresses, you can search for ‘Snapchat fashion’ in the search engine. Here’s what Google returns for this search:



The screenshot shows a Google search for "snapchat fashion". The search bar contains the text "snapchat fashion" and the Google logo is on the left. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "All", "Images", "Videos", "News", and "More", with "All" selected. The search results show "About 11,900,000 results (0.38 seconds)". The first three results are from POPSUGAR Fashion, theFashionSpot, and Fashionista, all providing lists of fashion influencers and brands to follow on Snapchat. Below the text results, there is an "Images for snapchat fashion" section with a grid of 12 small images. At the bottom of the image grid, there is a link "More images for snapchat fashion" and a "Report images" link.

Several publications have curated a list of fashion influencers to follow on Snapchat. It's in these lists that store owners can find the right influencer to partner with. For instance, if you click on the second result in the list - i.e. 'bloggers to follow on Snapchat' - you go to POPSUGAR Fashion. The site presents you with a list of online influencers in this niche.

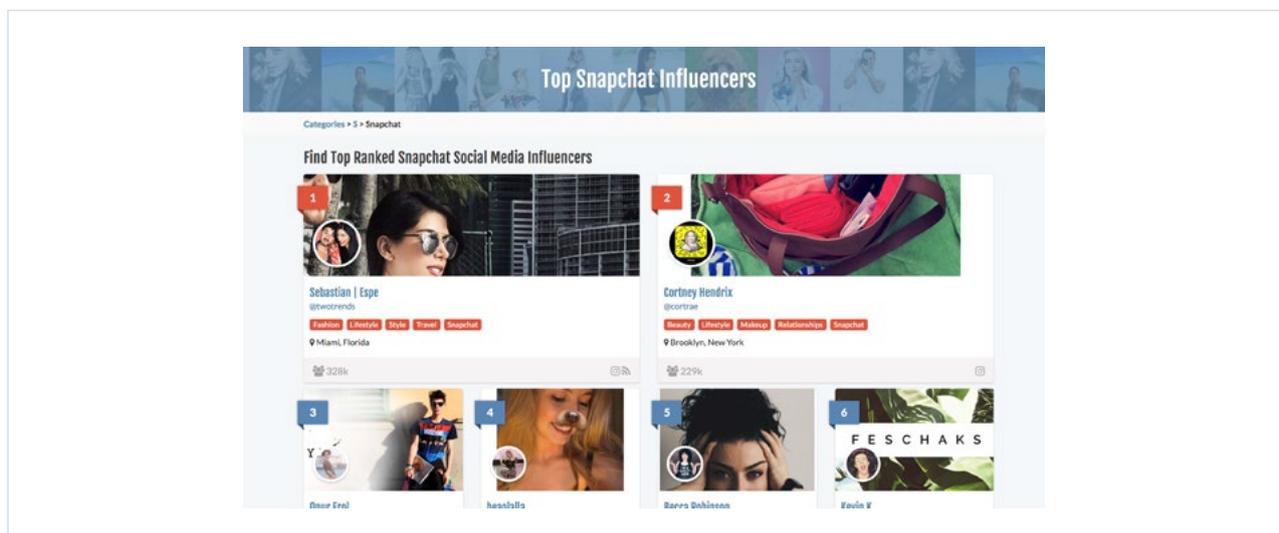
## Go to an Influencer Marketplace

One of the most effective ways to discover relevant Snapchat influencers is to use influencer marketplaces. These are technology platforms that use artificial intelligence to connect brands interested in reaching new audiences with content creators who produce highly shareable content.

### [Influence.co](https://www.influence.co)

Some influencer marketplaces allow you to filter search results by industries like food, fashion or technology. Others offer platform-specific filters. Therefore, you can limit your search to influencers who work on Snapchat.

For instance, Influence.co has an individual category for Snapchat influencers.



Additionally, you also get to see the interests of influencers in these marketplaces, which gives you an idea of whether or not the influencer will be suitable to be a part of your influencer marketing strategy.

In most cases, you'll be able to comb through an influencer marketplace and dig up Snapchat profiles related to your niche. However, you'd be required to pay a sum to reach out to those influencers through the integrated tools.

For instance, the PRO version of Influence.co provides you with 5 influencer contacts per month and unlimited results per search, but you have to shell out \$24.95 a both to use these features.

If your budget allows, go for the paid option as the entire process becomes quite convenient. Otherwise, you have to look up the influencer's contact information in Google and reach out to them via email. We've left a few outreach templates in the next section of this chapter.

**Quick Tip:** Think creatively about potential partners, as some influencers can be the right fit for ecommerce brands in different industries. For instance, an up-and-coming fashion blogger could also be an adventurer, which makes them an ideal choice for a clothing store as well as a travel-products brand.

## Pinterest

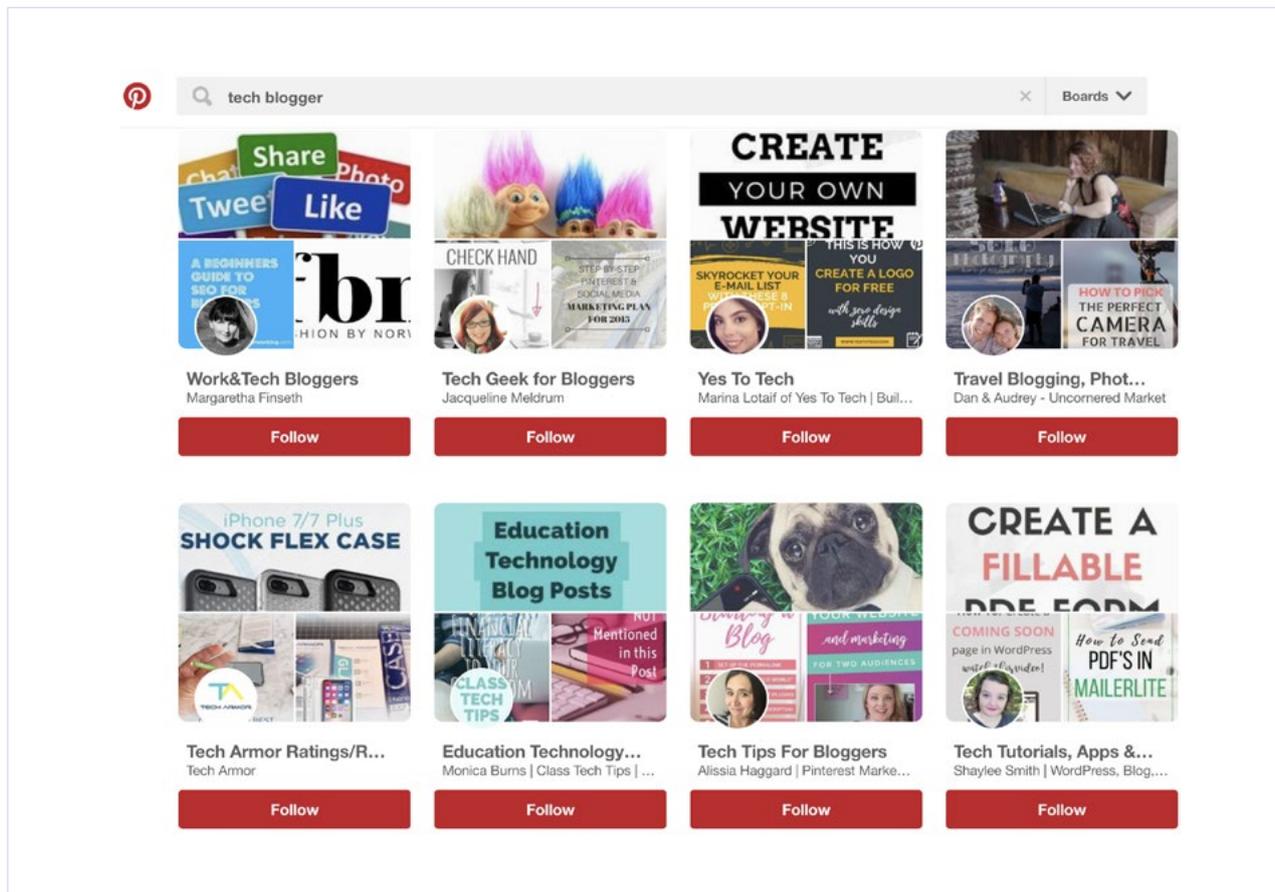
Pinterest might not be as popular as Instagram when it comes to influencer use, but it's still a platform worth considering. According to an official stat from Pinterest, [93 percent of users on Pinterest use it to plan purchases](#). Even more noticeable for ecommerce brands, 87 percent stated they've purchased a product after coming across it on Pinterest.

Although some pinners make it apparent on their profiles that they're open for collaboration, here's how to dig deep into the platform to find additional partnership opportunities:

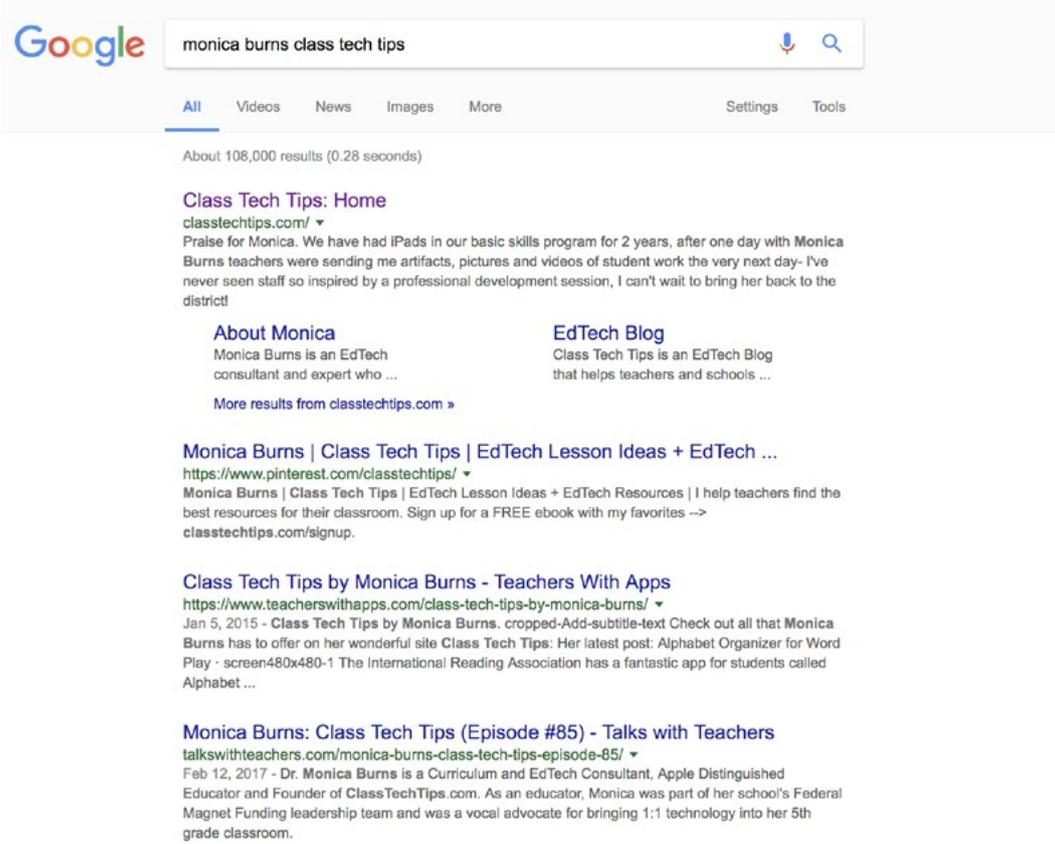
### Spy On Relevant Pinterest Boards

Collaborative boards, or groups, are owned by one account who gives one or more pinners permissions to add pins to the board. Pinterest's search function allows you to search any keyword with the 'boards' filter applied, so you get to see just the boards that exist on the site for your entered keyword(s).

**For instance, if you search for tech bloggers with the boards filter applied, Pinterest presents you with several boards set up by tech companies, up-and-comers, and micro-influencers. Look up the board owner's profile (some have their sites mentioned too) to see if they're a potential fit for your influencer marketing campaign.**



One of the boards for the above search is Educational Technology Blog Posts by Class Tech Tips. It's owned by Monica Burns of Class Tech Tips.



The image is a screenshot of a Google search results page for the query "monica burns class tech tips". The search bar at the top shows the query and the Google logo. Below the search bar, there are tabs for "All", "Videos", "News", "Images", and "More", along with "Settings" and "Tools" options. The search results indicate "About 108,000 results (0.28 seconds)".

The first result is "Class Tech Tips: Home" from classtehtips.com. The snippet reads: "Praise for Monica. We have had iPads in our basic skills program for 2 years, after one day with Monica Burns teachers were sending me artifacts, pictures and videos of student work the very next day- I've never seen staff so inspired by a professional development session, I can't wait to bring her back to the district".

Below this result are two columns of text: "About Monica" (Monica Burns is an EdTech consultant and expert who ...) and "EdTech Blog" (Class Tech Tips is an EdTech Blog that helps teachers and schools ...). A link "More results from classtehtips.com" is provided.

The second result is "Monica Burns | Class Tech Tips | EdTech Lesson Ideas + EdTech ..." from https://www.pinterest.com/classtehtips/. The snippet says: "Monica Burns | Class Tech Tips | EdTech Lesson Ideas + EdTech Resources | I help teachers find the best resources for their classroom. Sign up for a FREE ebook with my favorites --> classtehtips.com/signup".

The third result is "Class Tech Tips by Monica Burns - Teachers With Apps" from https://www.teacherswithapps.com/class-tech-tips-by-monica-burns/. The snippet reads: "Jan 5, 2015 - Class Tech Tips by Monica Burns. cropped-Add-subtitle-text Check out all that Monica Burns has to offer on her wonderful site Class Tech Tips: Her latest post: Alphabet Organizer for Word Play - screen480x480-1 The International Reading Association has a fantastic app for students called Alphabet ...".

The fourth result is "Monica Burns: Class Tech Tips (Episode #85) - Talks with Teachers" from talkswithteachers.com/monica-burns-class-tech-tips-episode-85/. The snippet states: "Feb 12, 2017 - Dr. Monica Burns is a Curriculum and EdTech Consultant, Apple Distinguished Educator and Founder of ClassTechTips.com. As an educator, Monica was part of her school's Federal Magnet Funding leadership team and was a vocal advocate for bringing 1:1 technology into her 5th grade classroom."

Enter her name in Google and you'll see she has a decent online footprint. If you sell tech and gadgets like common computers and accessories, she could be a potential collaborator who helps you reach new audiences.

## Use Google

Just as in the case of Snapchat, you can use Google to find relevant Pinterest influencers. Try the following search strings:

- “Industry name” Pinterest influencers
- Pinterest influencers for “industry name”
- List of “industry name” influencers on Pinterest

For instance, if you’re selling subscription snack boxes, you can search ‘food Pinterest influencers’ on Google. Here’s what you get in return for this search:

### On Pinterest, Food is King | TapInfluence

<https://www.tapinfluence.com/on-pinterest-food-is-king/> ▼  
 Sep 26, 2012 - On Pinterest, Food is King. By Guest Influencer. Share. On Pinterest, Food is King. Food and drink is the most popular and commonly shared category on Pinterest [source], a tasty morsel of information that food brands should be thrilled to hear. Why? Well, considering Pinterest drives more traffic to ...

### 6 Ways Food and Beverage Brands Can Maximize Their Influencer ...

[www.adweek.com/.../jessica-hubacher-ignite-social-media-guest-post-food-beverage-i...](http://www.adweek.com/.../jessica-hubacher-ignite-social-media-guest-post-food-beverage-i...) ▼  
 Mar 16, 2017 - When people are looking for recipes and new foods and drinks to try, they no longer search through traditional recipe books and magazines. They go to Pinterest; they look at recipe videos from Facebook pages like Delish, Get in My Belly and Tasty; and they search for specific recipes on Google. They read ...

### 15 Food Bloggers You Should Follow on Pinterest - Taste and Tell

<https://www.tasteandtellblog.com/14-food-bloggers-you-should-follow-on-pinterest/> ▼  
 Jan 22, 2013 - Are you on Pinterest? If not, you should be. I am an addict. I'll fully admit it. But I can get sucked in – it is so easy to find great things on there!! Today, I am sharing with you 14 food bloggers that you should be following on Pinterest. These are some of my all-time favorite bloggers, and they all have a great ...

### 8 Best Pinterest Accounts for Food-Lovers | Bon Appetit

<https://www.bonappetit.com/trends/article/8-best-pinterest-accounts-for-food-lovers> ▼  
 Mar 7, 2013 - Pinterest is the place for unending buffets of photographed food: Here's 8 drool-worthy accounts you'll want to follow.

### Pinterest Influencers | HelloSociety Blog

[hellosociety.com/blog/tag/pinterest-influencers/](http://hellosociety.com/blog/tag/pinterest-influencers/) ▼  
 Meet husband and wife co-pinner Ruslan and Olya originally from Kyiv, Ukraine. They just moved to beautiful Krakow, Poland with their daughters, Mirosława and Jaroslava. They are a very creative family. Ruslan loves design and photography. Olya likes everything related to crafting, food, and fashion! When they're not ...

### Top Food Influencers & Popular Blogs on Socialix

<https://socialix.com/food-influencers> ▼  
 Food Influencers. Who hasn't checked out Pinterest or a blog when cooking dinner? The web is full of useful information and food is no exception. Food bloggers are some of the most engaging content creators with their ability to inspire others and build a firm loyalty with their fans or followers. Social media networks such ...

It's likely that you'll find a good list of influencers on one of the sites displayed in the search.

## Tools that Can Help

There are dozens of tools that can help connect you with the best people for your influencer marketing campaigns. Here are just a few of the free or cheap ones:

### Right Relevance

This tool lets you search for popular content. By default, it is set to display results by time for any given search query. Users can see a list of 10 articles at a time. Sorting and filtering options include filter by time (today, current week or current month), filter by location, sort by relevance, filter by topic score, video views only, and use influencers.

The benefit of using Right Relevance is that it presents you with a list of results free of cost. For instance, if you search for superhero toys, here's what you see in the tool:

The screenshot shows a website interface for 'SUPERHERO TOYS'. At the top, there is a search bar with 'superhero toys' entered. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs for 'ARTICLES', 'INFLUENCERS', 'DOMAINS', and 'CONVERSATIONS'. The 'ARTICLES' tab is selected, showing 16 articles. A filter bar allows filtering by location (e.g., 'San Francisco CA') and a 'Use Influencers' checkbox. A 'Topic Score' slider is set to 100. On the right, there are tabs for 'Current', 'This Week', and 'This Month', with 'Current' selected. Below the filter bar, there are two article cards. The first card is titled 'Soroptimists offer the Treasure Valley a chance to give Christmas gifts to seniors and foster kids' and is from 'idahostatesman.com' (2 days ago). It includes a photo of a Christmas tree and a fireplace, and a snippet of text: 'soroptimists help get gifts to Idaho seniors and foster kids | Idaho Statesman Mobile & Apps The deadline for delivering gifts to a drop-off location for Treasure Valley seniors and foster kids is Friday, Dec. 8. The Associated Press The deadline for delivering gifts to a drop-off location for Treas...'. The second card is titled '12 Superhero Toys That Are Super Hard To Explain' and is from 'blog.hobbydb.com' (11 days ago). It includes a snippet of text: 'Superheroes have long been one of the most popular subjects for toys'.

The site that posted the article is also mentioned. See if you can spot any new names to focus outreach efforts on.

## [Feedly.com](#)

Feedly is an RSS reader that allows you to manage all your content preferences in an easy to understand platform, saving time on research while also giving you access to all the latest industry news.

Type the topic or keyword you want to find related blogs for into the search box. Feedly then gives you suggestions on websites that have been tagged by other users with that keyword. For instance, if you search for golf accessories, here's what Feedly shows:

What sources do you want to follow?

golf accessories × English ▾

#golf #sports #sport

RESULTS

 **Golf Digest**  
5K followers / 85 articles per week  
We share advice on how to play, what to play and where to play. Think Young, Play Hard. Tweets by @CoryBradburn and  
1K 🔥 Tiger Woods outdrove Dustin Johnson "half the time" in round with...  
#golf #sports FOLLOW

 **www.espn.com - GOLF**  
2K followers / 26 articles per week  
Visit ESPN to get up-to-the-minute sports news coverage, scores, highlights and commentary for NFL, MLB, NBA, College Football,  
#golf #sports FOLLOW

 **Hooked On Golf Blog**  
2K followers / 1 article per week  
The #1 Blog In Golf  
4 🔥 2017 Christmas Golf Gift Guide – Holiday Golf Gift Guide For You P...  
#golf #sports FOLLOW

Clicking on a website's name will open a window within Feedly that shows the rest of the content published on that site. To visit the website's homepage, click on the site's name again. You can then conduct outreach by emailing the site owner or editor. The search function is free to use.

# Build a Contact List and Begin Outreach

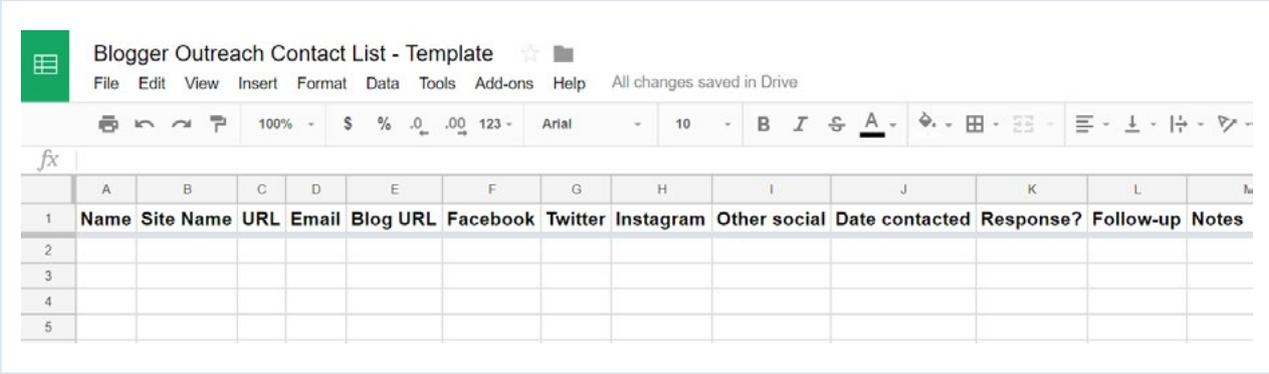
In classic public relations style, make a ‘media list’, or a detailed Excel or Google Drive spreadsheet of everyone who could potentially form a part of your influencer marketing strategy.

**Start with 50 influencers** for your first round of outreach.

Include fields like:

- Name
- Email address
- Website name and URL
- Social media accounts
- Date you first reached out
- Whether they responded and when
- Any notes or ideas that stick out about how you can work together

Keep your spreadsheet organized and actionable by dividing contacts into tiers or categories, which can be done by creating multiple tabs in the spreadsheet file. For example: high, middle, and low priority tiers based on how beneficial the partnership initially looks, or categories for different types of influencer marketing ideas like guest blogging or podcast appearances (which we’ll discuss in-depth later in the chapter).



The screenshot shows a Google Sheet interface. At the top, the title is "Blogger Outreach Contact List - Template". Below the title is a menu bar with "File", "Edit", "View", "Insert", "Format", "Data", "Tools", "Add-ons", and "Help". A status bar indicates "All changes saved in Drive". Below the menu is a toolbar with various icons for editing and formatting. The main area is a spreadsheet with columns labeled A through M. The first row (row 1) contains the following headers: "Name", "Site Name", "URL", "Email", "Blog URL", "Facebook", "Twitter", "Instagram", "Other social", "Date contacted", "Response?", "Follow-up", and "Notes". Rows 2 through 5 are empty.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	Name	Site Name	URL	Email	Blog URL	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Other social	Date contacted	Response?	Follow-up	Notes
2													
3													
4													
5													

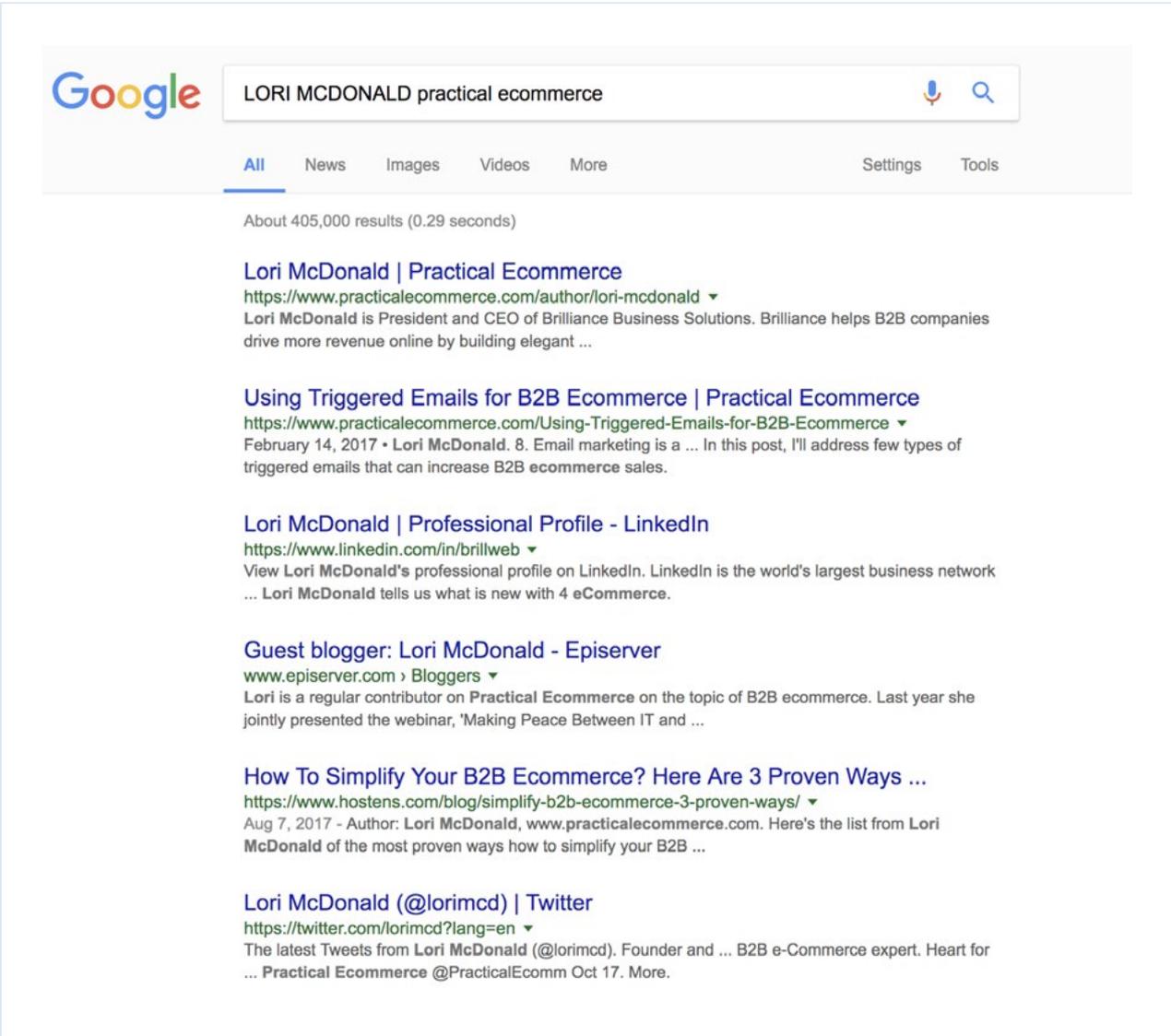
**Quick Tip:** [Download our ready-made Google Sheets template here.](#)

## Nurture from Cold to Warm Contacts

Now that you've identified who you're going to target and put them all into a single, searchable, organized file, the next step is to make contact. Depending on who you're pitching, these influencers could be receiving hundreds of requests a day, so you need to make sure your first contact stands out from the crowd.

**A generic email pitch from a random source will most likely be sent straight to the trash, and blasting their social media feeds with pitches is a great way to get blocked. The key is to get noticed and build a relationship with the influencer, so when it comes time to pitch your influencer marketing idea, it won't be completely out of the blue.**

Influencers who contribute to those sites are often active on multiple channels, which means you'll have plenty of opportunities to start engaging with them. Searching for the site owner's/author's name along with the publication's name in Google should reveal the platforms he/she currently uses. For instance, you'll get the following results if you search for Lori McDonald of Practical Ecommerce.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the query "LORI MCDONALD practical ecommerce". The search results are as follows:

- Lori McDonald | Practical Ecommerce**  
<https://www.practicalecommerce.com/author/lori-mcdonald>  
Lori McDonald is President and CEO of Brilliance Business Solutions. Brilliance helps B2B companies drive more revenue online by building elegant ...
- Using Triggered Emails for B2B Ecommerce | Practical Ecommerce**  
<https://www.practicalecommerce.com/Using-Triggered-Emails-for-B2B-Ecommerce>  
February 14, 2017 • Lori McDonald. 8. Email marketing is a ... In this post, I'll address few types of triggered emails that can increase B2B ecommerce sales.
- Lori McDonald | Professional Profile - LinkedIn**  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/brillweb>  
View Lori McDonald's professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world's largest business network ... Lori McDonald tells us what is new with 4 eCommerce.
- Guest blogger: Lori McDonald - Episerver**  
[www.episerver.com](http://www.episerver.com) › Bloggers  
Lori is a regular contributor on Practical Ecommerce on the topic of B2B ecommerce. Last year she jointly presented the webinar, 'Making Peace Between IT and ...
- How To Simplify Your B2B Ecommerce? Here Are 3 Proven Ways ...**  
<https://www.hostens.com/blog/simplify-b2b-ecommerce-3-proven-ways/>  
Aug 7, 2017 - Author: Lori McDonald, www.practicalecommerce.com. Here's the list from Lori McDonald of the most proven ways how to simplify your B2B ...
- Lori McDonald (@lorimcd) | Twitter**  
<https://twitter.com/lorimcd?lang=en>  
The latest Tweets from Lori McDonald (@lorimcd). Founder and ... B2B e-Commerce expert. Heart for ... Practical Ecommerce @PracticalEcomm Oct 17. More.

The results reveal the author has a presence on Twitter and some other channels.

## Follow all of your target's feed and channels and actually become a fan.

Comment on their blog posts. Like, comment on, and share their social media posts. Contribute to discussions they may be leading on other channels. The best comments add relevant information to the influencer's content, while giving you a chance to demonstrate your expertise and shared interests. Here's an example:


**PracticalEcommerce**

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### 5 Must-haves for 2017 Holiday Sales

SEPTEMBER 21, 2017 • PAMELA HAZELTON



The 2017 holiday shopping season is around the corner. Selecting products and deals to spotlight — beginning November 1 — is key for most online businesses. Grabbing the attention of your store's target audiences, however, goes beyond deep discounts and free shipping.

There's time to implement five must-haves before Halloween has come and gone.

#### Collect User Generated Content

User generated content ranks higher than ever, especially with younger shoppers. Product reviews, user-submitted photos and videos, and testimonials are the best way to sway shoppers to click the add-to-cart button. If your product line lacks a good amount of quality feedback, there are a few workarounds.

- *Send one-time, follow up emails* to customers, asking for a product review. If you've never sent such requests, target those who have purchased in last 90 days. Offering a special coupon or prize entry in exchange for an honest review is good incentive.



**Pamela Hazelton**

Bio • [RSS Feed](#)

- [4 Pointers for Holiday Email Marketing in 2017](#) »
- [12 New Ecommerce Books for Fall 2017](#) »
- [6 ways to optimize Amazon listings](#) »


Sign up for our email newsletter

SIGN UP

#### Leave a Comment

Spot on about user-generated content. Another thing retailers can do is ask customers to upload photos of themselves using their product along with a branded hashtag.

**Quick Tip:** If the website has a newsletter or mailing list, sign up for it. When they send you the first email, send them a quick reply to let them know how much you appreciate their content, or use the opportunity to draw a soft connection to your brand. I don't recommend going for a hard sell unless there's a strong opportunity related to their newsletter content.

Does your target create great content? **Use your own channels as a promotion tool.** If you're creating your own blog content (which we'll discuss a bit later), you can link to their blog posts as reference pieces, share them on your social media and tag them in the body of the post, or go straight for a shout-out to let them know you appreciate their work. You can use your personal social media account to do all that, but I highly suggest using your branded company account for the following reasons:

- The host is more likely to notice a branded account rather than a personal account
- You can do a shout-out and increase its visibility by putting up a sponsored post for a few days.

It's an easy choice, especially if the branded account has more followers.



Sharing this content is beneficial for everyone involved – up-and-comers will appreciate you sharing their content and growing their network, your customers will appreciate interesting and relevant content from a reputable and reliable source, and you'll save time that you would have otherwise spent writing original content.

A word of warning when engaging with the influencer: don't overdo it! You want to present yourself as a respectful contact who can make valuable contributions. If the blogger starts engaging back with you, consider it a success. If you don't get any response, there's no need to worry. The most important thing is that you're giving them a chance to start seeing your name.

**Quick Tip:** As you're exploring their online presence and looking for ways to warm up the relationship, pay attention to their opinions, tone, style, and subject matter. If anything sticks out or inspires you, add it to your spreadsheet notes.

## Create Outreach Templates and Tweak Accordingly

If you haven't already pitched a marketing opportunity during the previous stage, get working on your outreach strategy. **If you're planning to send an email, it should be unique and attention-grabbing while immediately communicating your brand's personality and value.**

While each outreach email should be tailored for a specific target, start off by building broader templates that you can later customize for each recipient. Here are some templates you can use to get started.

## Let Them Know You Featured Them

Whenever you feature an up-and-comer in some of your own content, make sure you let them know about it. This can be a great way to introduce yourself and can help build a connection to your brand. **What better way is there to build a connection than by instant flattery?**

For this kind of outreach message, a straightforward subject line works best. Something like “Hi Sam! We featured you in one of our most popular posts” will increase the chances of your mail is opened.

Make sure you thank them and let them know that both you and your customers appreciate their opinions.

Hi [name],

I just wanted to let you know that I've been a big fan of your blog since [time]. It's always full of great ideas that are really useful for people in our business.

I'd like to share with you a recent blog post I made on my e-commerce store that featured you. I mentioned your opinions about [topic]. Many of my customers have already commented on how great your ideas are.

I know you're much more knowledgeable about [topic] than me, so I was hoping you'd take a look at the post here [link] and let me know if there are any mistakes or any ways I can improve it.

Thanks!

[your name]

## Start with an Introduction

The most common way to contact an up-and-comer is through a simple introductory email. You don't want your email sent straight to the spam folder, so **start with catchy subject line that grabs your target's attention**. A great example is something like "Hey - great post about natural face masks!".

Complimenting their work and mentioning how they provide value is a good strategy when appealing to less experienced bloggers and newer websites. Make sure you keep the tone personal and friendly so they know it's not just another cookie cutter pitch, and keep the content simple and to the point. Let them know you're looking to start a relationship with them that will be mutually beneficial for both parties, but try to avoid being pushy.

Hi [name],

My name is [your name] and I'm from [your business]. I've been following your blog since it started back in 2015.

I particularly enjoyed your recent post about [blog topic]. I think you brought up some great ideas, so I shared them with my store's email subscribers.

If you're interested, I'd love to talk to you about collaborating on a project about [topic idea] that would bring value to both your audience and my customers. I've already got a few ideas that I'd like to run by you if you have some time this week.

Feel free to contact me by e-mail or at [social media].

I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Thanks,

[your name]

## Ask for Their Opinion

**Up-and-comers want to know that their opinion is valued.** Asking them for their feedback on your own ecommerce website is a great way to engage them while validating their efforts. If any of the content on your store contains research, opinions, or unique insights that you think might interest your target, simply let them know that both you and your audience would value their input.

Like the previous example, it's always a good idea to compliment your target on their work. However, with this style of outreach, it can be even more effective to remind them of your own value. Let them know that their 'expert opinion' will be shared with both your customers and other influential members of your community.

Hi [name],

My name is [your name] and I'm from [your business]. The other day I came across your blog post [post title] and I was really impressed by some of your insights.

I recently made a post on my e-commerce store's blog that discusses some of the issues you brought up. It already has over [number] comments and has been shared on social media [number] times.

Being a blogger yourself, I'd love to know your opinion on [topic]. I'm sure you're very busy, but if you're interested, you can check out the post at [link].

Thanks,

[your name]

## Offer a Sneak Peek

Up-and-coming influencers appreciate the chance to get news before their competition. If your store is planning to launch a new product or you become aware of a new development in your industry, **try offering an exclusive sneak peek to your target**. It will make them feel special and go a long way towards growing your relationship.

The key to effective sneak peek outreach is making sure that the news is something the target can use on their own site. Visit their site to see what they've written about in the past. Take note of which topics appeal to their audience, so you'll have a good idea of what kind of sneak peek will be most valued.

Hi [name],

My name is [your name] and I'm from [your business].

I just found out that [news].

As a popular [topic] blogger, I thought you'd appreciate being one of the first to know. If you'd like a heads up when [news] or just want to have a chat about it, feel free to contact me anytime.

Thanks,

[your name]

## Ask for a Product Review

If you have the resources, **consider offering bloggers a free sample in exchange for an honest review**. This is a common request that many up-and-comers will receive, and a common strategy for companies to get product reviews. As with most outreach emails, you should be direct, but not demanding. Let them know that you appreciate their opinion and all you expect is an honest review.

A really effective strategy for free sample outreach is to send the target multiple samples. Give them one sample for their own personal use and some extra samples to give to their audience. They will undoubtedly appreciate your generosity and this simple gift could go a long way towards solidifying your relationship.

Hi [name],

My name is [name] and I'm from [your business]. I really enjoy your blog and I often share your insights with my own customers.

I'm contacting you because I have a great new product that I think your audience would appreciate. I was hoping I could send you a sample so that you can review it on your site.

I'd be happy to send one for you and a few extra for you to give to your audience.

If you're interested, please let me know!

Cheers,

[your name]

**Quick Tip:** Keep your template bank organized and accessible by adding all of your templates into a single spreadsheet or word processing file. If you prefer multiple files, keep them all in a single folder.

# Chapter 1 Takeaways

**Dig deep into the web to identify 50 influencers to work with.** Instead of chasing high-traffic influencers, go for smaller-scale micro-influencers or up-and-comers who are more genuinely interested in influencer marketing opportunities. To do this, you'll need to spend several hours brainstorming ideas and conducting online searches using the steps and tips mentioned above.

As you find promising leads, add them to a spreadsheet like our [outreach contact list template](#), along with notes that include any inspiration you have about how to work with them. For the outreach process, build email templates and tweak them to customize to each recipient.

To manage the workload and keep the whole process organized, put special attention into developing your own reliable system. Ensure that the same types of information are stored in the same place, so you're not drowning in misplaced data. Consider creating a dedicated schedule where you work on research and outreach for two to three hours each day to avoid burnout and allow time for your strategy to evolve with the new information you find.



**2**

# **Build a Digital Network**

You've investigated your different partnership opportunities and learned how to dig deep to find and reach out to the right potential partners. **Now, we'll get into the details of moving forward with those relationships once you've secured them.** If it interests you, you may even manage to land a guest writing opportunity on their blog or an opportunity to appear on their podcast. Guest posting can help you use your voice to speak directly to your partner's captivated audience.

But guest posting and podcast opportunities may be harder to come by when you're just starting out. Fortunately, there are many more ways for you to grow a strong digital network where you're building residual referral traffic back to your site.

While you work toward getting your name out there, it's important to also tend to the smaller threads for spinning your digital web. For example, you can create profiles on social media platforms and forums so that you can contribute to your niche's discussion on current events, trends, questions, and the like (with a link back to your website once you've gotten people's attention, of course).

You can also work with other brands that are a good match for your own, creating mutually beneficial referral and cross-promotion programs where you're encouraging your audiences to do business with the other brand too.

**In this chapter, we'll discuss creating content with your ideal influencers. This could include guest posting on their blogs and appearing on their podcasts. We'll also cover how to become a part of your niche's conversation on social media and forums, as well as how to design and secure referral and cross-promotion partnerships with other companies.**

# Be a Guest Contributor on Up-and-Coming Websites

Once you identify potential guest posting sites and start reaching out to them to establish a relationship, start working on your pitch. Most young websites allow people to contribute authentic, original content on topics that are relevant to their visitors. While competition for the guest contributor spot is low, **you still have to practice proper guest posting etiquette.**

Below is a list of essential rules to follow.

## Before the Pitch

### Make Note of the Host's Guest Posting Guidelines

If you truly want to contribute to a website, don't send out a blind pitch. Most websites now have a guest writing guidelines page that explains everything the host requires when it comes to being featured on their blog. Spend a good 10-15 minutes on this page to get familiar with the host blog's expectations.

Usually, the guest posting guidelines page will tell you the topics the website accepts, the number of links allowed, maximum or minimum word count, and lots of other details. Here is an example:

## WANT TO WRITE FOR US? GOINFASHION.NET

So basically we have a few **Guest post guidelines** that you cannot do without:



- Again, post contents must be related to **Fashion/Style/Beauty/Fitness/Makeup/Image styling/Home Decor/Travel Tips**.
- Content must be the Guest blogger's own original piece.
- Contents having too many grammar or spelling mistakes will be rejected.
- All submissions must be of at least 800 or more words.
- GoinFashion makes it mandatory to have images accompany the Guest Post. They have to be your own photos or at least copyright free. Please include credits wherever applicable. And of course they have to be relevant.
- GoinFashion will of course give you credit as the author of your post. You are allowed 1 link (no-follow) in your byline which will be displayed at the bottom of your guest blog post. This must not be an affiliate link or point to an E-Commerce site.
- We also allow 2 external links (again no-follow) which can be inserted at beginning or end of the blog Post (Links to any porn site will be removed immediately)

It's worth mentioning that some guest posting sites don't share a link to their writing guidelines directly on their homepage. This is intentional. These sites want new guest bloggers to come to them from a referrer or able to find their guidelines on their own.

Therefore, make it a point to do a quick search on Google if you can't find guest posting guidelines on a website's homepage (don't forget to scan the footer and sidebar while you're at it). You can use the following search strings to determine if the website has any guidelines page:

- [site name] guest post guidelines
- [site name] guest post by
- [site name] become a contributor
- [site name] calling guest writers
- [site name] submit your post

If none of these search queries get you results, email the editor to double-check if there are any guest posting guidelines to follow.

### **Learn the Voice of the Publication**

Is it witty? Is it serious? Does the author usually give a back story? What's the [reading level](#)? Knowing the publication's voice helps your guest blog post fit right in and not seem so out of place to its visitors. But how do you adopt someone else's tone?

You'll need to carefully look at its existing tone and subject matter so you can try to mimic it.

For instance, if you want to contribute to [Nerd Marketing](#) – a blog about ecommerce marketing – or a similar publication, go through the articles it has published. Then choose a topic and write a piece in Nerd Marketing’s tone, style, and formatting. Once you’re done, compare it with the original article on website.

Adopting voice takes time and practice, and sticking to a specific one may be easier for you.

### **Brainstorm Some Ideas**

Since you’ll get some time between the relationship-building stage and the actual pitch, here’s what to do during that phase: make a list of interesting titles.

“Interesting” has a few qualifications when it comes to guest posting:

- 1.** The title should be unique and intriguing.
- 2.** The title should leave the visitors wanting more.
- 3.** The title should include noteworthy information like an achievement or social proof of your successes.

For example, here is a blog title that amazes:



## 24 Father's Day gifts under \$50 for nerdy, geeky, and fun-loving dads

24 fun ways to show Dad how much you love him without emptying your bank account

0 COMMENTS

Our editors review and recommend products to help you buy the stuff you need. If you make a purchase by clicking one of our links, we may earn a small share of the revenue. Our picks and opinions are independent from any business incentives.

That title would intrigue someone on a budget, and make them want to know more. It also has numbers as proof that shoppers can buy 20+ father's day gift items under \$50.

So, forget that idea of pre-writing headlines and putting them up for grabs to the first taker. Instead, spend a decent amount of time and brainpower to come up with fresh titles.

**Quick Tip:** If all else fails, and you still can't come up with an interesting title, you can always use a headline generator like [Inbound Now's Blog Title Idea Generator](#) for some quick inspiration.

Another thing you can do is visit Q&A sites like [Answers.com](https://www.answers.com) and [Quora](https://www.quora.com). Search for a topic, see what questions people normally ask, then see if you can make a related headline.

### **Write Once, Format Twice**

Be meticulous when you pitch your idea to guest posting sites. Over half the editors are likely to decline a pitch if it includes grammatical mistakes - regardless of how good the idea is. If you didn't pay attention to the quality of your pitch, they think you won't pay attention to the quality of the final submission either.

Editors don't have time to fix spelling and grammar issues in your pitch – respect their time. Send them a perfectly formatted pitch and a well-crafted post that they will only need to upload and publish on WordPress or whichever CMS they're using.

It's better to submit the post once you've gotten the editor's approval, though in some cases sending it along with the pitch could work in your favor. Whichever option you go with, make sure to edit it correctly before pressing the send button. Again, attention to detail is essential when it comes to guest posting.

A good guest blog post should:

- **Be of decent length:** Long-form pieces look much better than 300-words (and research shows that [they get more engagement](#), too). Shoot for at least 1000-1500 words. Double-check the guest posting guidelines as they might specify a word count.
- **Contain visuals:** Use images, infographics and custom screenshots to add meaty and unique value to your post.

- **Include internal linking:** Imagine the warm and fuzzy feeling the editor will get when you link to some of their best pieces in your post. Best practice is to balance the ratio of internal and external links.
- **Contain “open loops”:** Plant small seeds within your piece to bait user comments and engagement on the post after it’s published. Never underestimate the power of a blog that can create a conversation.

Lastly, don’t forget to include an author bio – that’s the golden ticket for including a link back to your website. Check the guest posting guidelines or ask the editor about their bio rules and guidelines, like how many links you can include and whether it should be in first person (“I am...”) or third person (“He/she is...”).

If the site permits, don’t be afraid to promote yourself. After all, that’s the point of guest posting. Include another link to a helpful, related resource like John McIntyre did for his [Shopify guest post](#) about automated email campaigns.



### About The Author

John McIntyre is the founder of [ReEngager](#), a done-for-you ecommerce email marketing agency. ReEngager helps ecommerce companies increase total sales by 15-30% with email marketing. [Download 7 responsive ecommerce HTML email templates here](#) (one template for each campaign in this blog post) and increase your store’s revenue with email marketing today.

Once you've completed the bio, be sure to give it a second look to ensure you haven't overused pronouns. A good idea is to replace some occurrences of these pronouns with your name to streamline the flow.

**Quick Tip:** If you want some help, [Generatorland.com](https://generatorland.com) offers a useful tool for writing a dynamic and compelling author bio.

## After You Get Published

### Comment & Engage with Readers

You studied the voice of the host website, came up with an appropriate title, and meticulously formatted the post. That's a lot of work, so give yourself a pat on the back for getting your guest blog post published.

But what now?

Many store owners will stop here. In certain scenarios, it's the right frame of mind to be in. However, if you leave the contributed piece on its own, you might miss out on a number of traffic-related benefits of guest posting.

**So, instead of disappearing from the scene, start responding to readers' comments on your guest post.**

Most websites use [Disqus](https://disqus.com), a networked community platform that allows you to comment on posts using your Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Disqus account.

0 Comments    Shopify Blog    1 Login ▾

♥ Recommend    ↗ Share    Sort by Oldest ▾

LOG IN WITH    OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

Be the first to comment.

You can sign up for free. A Disqus account gives you control over all your commenting activities.

Of course, expect the best and worst. You can't please everyone online. And if visitors leave negative feedback, don't take it personally. Always aim to create healthy discussions and engage with your readers.

To make it easier on your part, you can create templates of your replies – generic ones such as:

***“Thank you, [name], for reading my post. I’m glad this is helpful to you. Here’s a post from my site that helps to answer your question more clearly: [www.yoursite.com/blog](http://www.yoursite.com/blog).”***

When you actively reply to people's comments and show your experience, it makes a no-brainer for them to visit your site. Moreover, others who are reading through the comments get to see how knowledgeable you are, so they too are likely to visit your website. This is a great way to maximize the benefits of guest posting.

**Apart from your own comments, consider bringing your own commenters to the party too.**

Here's another thing I'm not going to sugar coat: a single guest blog post is essentially useless if it's not part of a bigger buzz, conversation, or series. So encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to hit that comment section. Start by leading them to those convenient 'open loops' you planted during the writing process.

By generating a buzz, you'll impress your publisher. And that's incredibly important, as it could secure you future guest posting opportunities on the site.

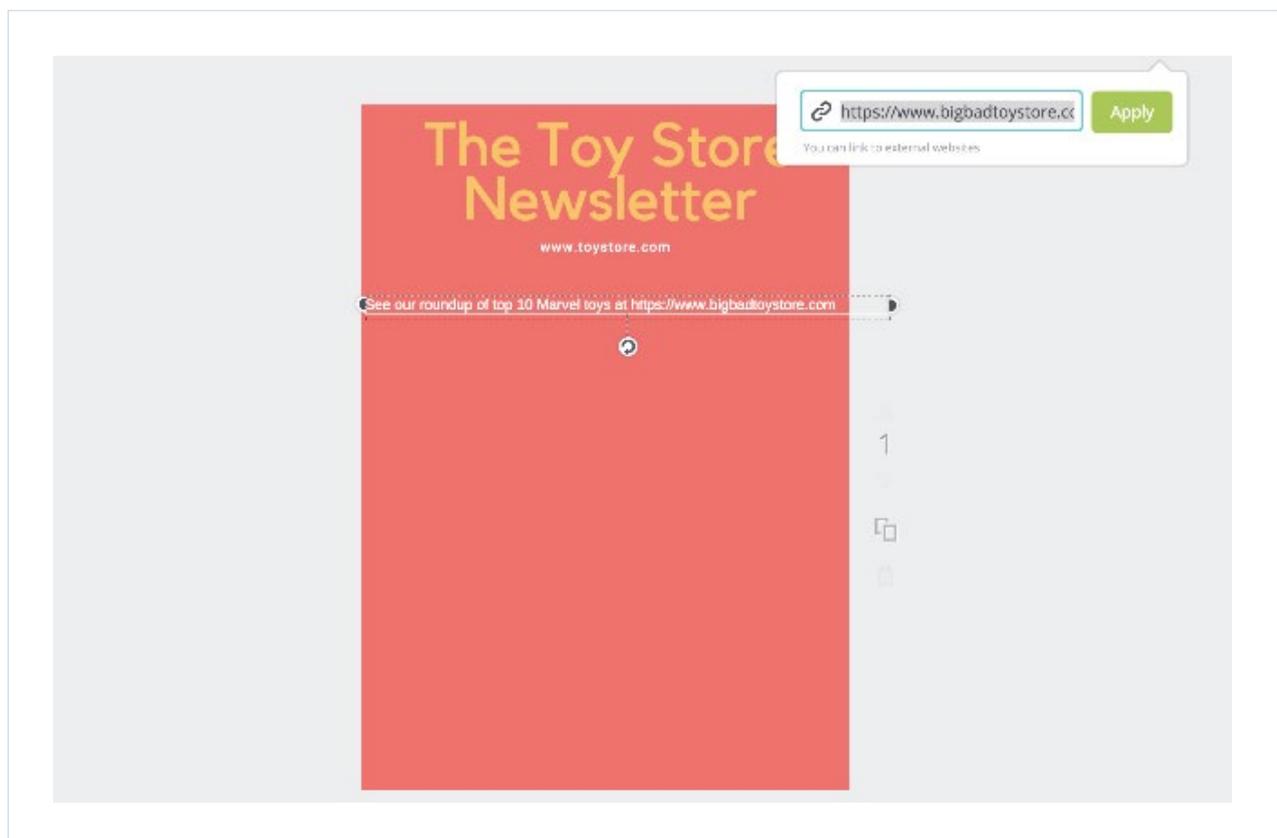
**Quick Tip:** If you're an evil mastermind, you can make note of your intentional open loops and any thought-worthy points as you write. Then, you can send them to your street team as inspiration for what they can comment on. Boom!

## Include the Guest Post in Your Next Newsletter

Research shows that people are [five times more likely](#) to see a message in an email than on Facebook.

So let's say instead of plugging in custom content into your [email newsletter](#), you integrate in your guest blog post. In many cases, your subscribers might better relate to your guest posting on another website than the usual updates they receive through your newsletter.

If you have access to an email marketing software and a newsletter template, you just need to make slight adjustments to the content. But if you're new to the concept of [email newsletters](#), tools like [Canva](#) and [Adobe Spark](#) will allow you to create an eye-catching, customizable newsletter with their free newsletter maker.



Also, you can Google ‘free newsletter templates’ to see more options. Most pre-formatted templates are designed to be compatible with popular email clients, including Gmail and Outlook.

In the newsletter, let the readers know that you’ve done some guest posting for another website. Write an enticing excerpt for the post and leave a link to the original post.

The advantage of sending a guest blog post in an email newsletter is that you get to personalize the content around it. For instance, you get to address each subscriber by their own name, as well as leave your two cents on the rest of the content that’s going out.

### **Get Included in RoundUp Posts**

A quick Google search can help you find related roundup posts that list articles by other store owners. Try these queries:

- [Main keyword of your guest post] blog roundup
- [Main keyword of your guest post] blogs this week
- [Main keyword of your guest post] top 10 posts

Then, just reach out to the websites publishing those roundups and ask to be featured in the next one. This is a great way to get a better ROI for your guest posting.

# Appear on Relevant Podcasts

As with guest posting, being featured on podcasts is a great way to drive traffic for free. And with more than [50 million monthly podcast listeners](#) in the US alone, the time to begin talking on shows has never been better.

In this section, our aim is to provide a roadmap for finding up-and-coming [podcasts](#). We'll also list examples of podcasts from different industries. Finally, we'll share best practices for creating an effective podcast pitch.

Let's get started.

## How to Find Relevant Podcasts

### Google Search

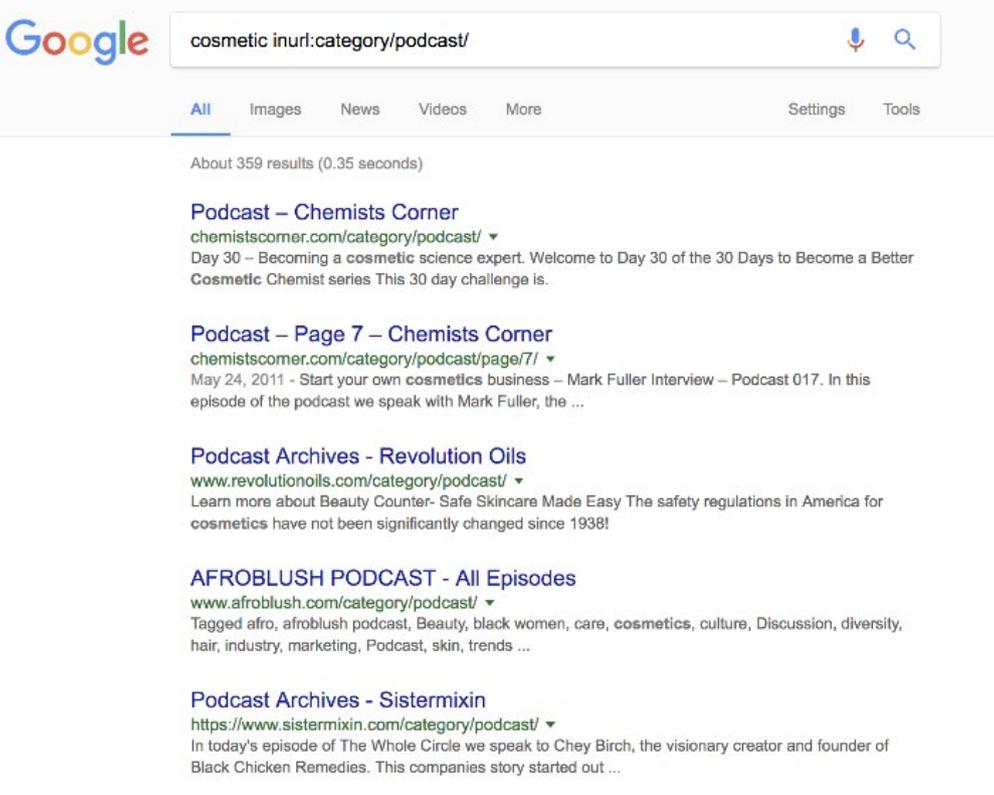
Naturally, the hunt for podcasts starts with opening Google and running a search for the following keywords:

- [Your niche] podcasts
- [Your niche] new podcasts
- [Your niche] ecommerce podcasts
- [Your niche] online store podcasts

You could also try using Google advanced search operators, like I mentioned earlier. Try strings like:

- [Your niche] inurl:category/podcast/
- [Your niche] inurl:/podcast/
- [Your niche] intitle:podcast
- [Your niche] intitle:podcasts

Going back to the example of the ecommerce store that sells cosmetics, you could do something like this:



Google

cosmetic inurl:category/podcast/

All Images News Videos More Settings Tools

About 359 results (0.35 seconds)

**Podcast - Chemists Corner**  
chemistscorner.com/category/podcast/ ▾  
Day 30 - Becoming a cosmetic science expert. Welcome to Day 30 of the 30 Days to Become a Better Cosmetic Chemist series This 30 day challenge is.

**Podcast - Page 7 - Chemists Corner**  
chemistscorner.com/category/podcast/page/7/ ▾  
May 24, 2011 - Start your own cosmetics business - Mark Fuller Interview - Podcast 017. In this episode of the podcast we speak with Mark Fuller, the ...

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Learn more about Beauty Counter- Safe Skincare Made Easy The safety regulations in America for cosmetics have not been significantly changed since 1938!

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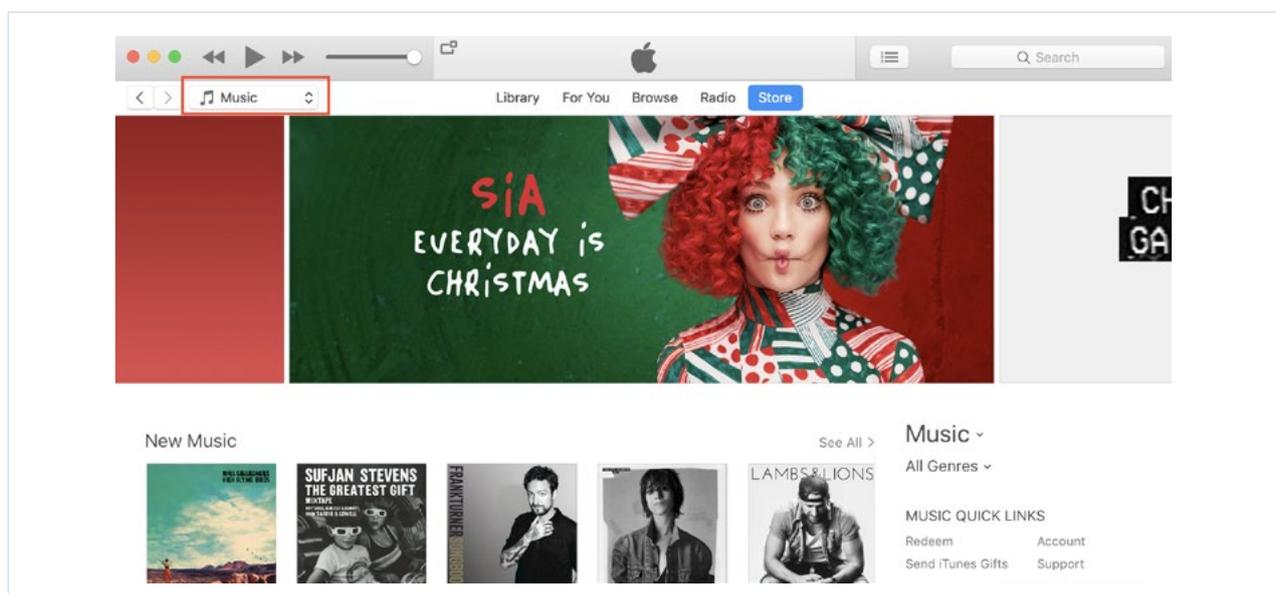
**Podcast Archives - Sistermixin**  
https://www.sistermixin.com/category/podcast/ ▾  
In today's episode of The Whole Circle we speak to Chey Birch, the visionary creator and founder of Black Chicken Remedies. This companies story started out ...

**Quick Tip:** Make a new tab in your outreach contact list spreadsheet that's dedicated solely to podcasts. If podcasts will be a big part of your efforts, consider a separate spreadsheet with more segmented, organized tabs by priority or topic.

## Look for Up-and-Coming Podcasts on iTunes

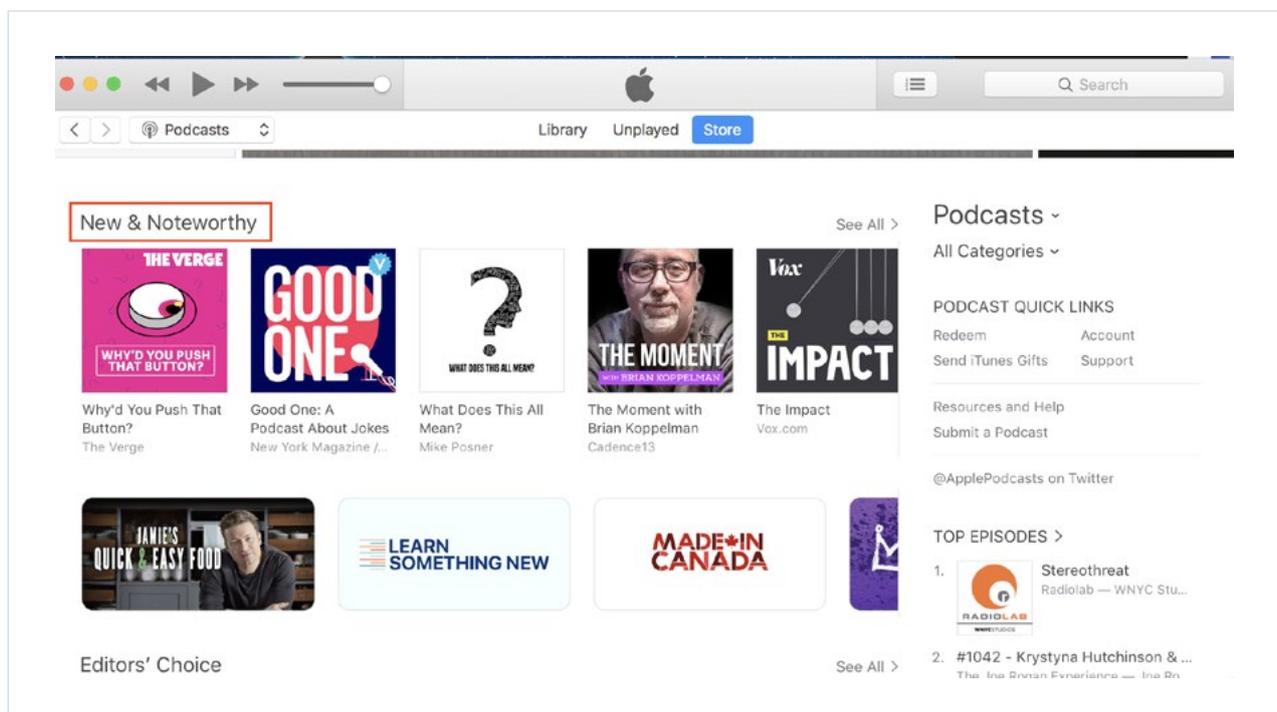
iTunes Store has a podcast section that lets you browse, find, and subscribe to podcasts in different categories, most of which are free. Follow these steps to find upcoming podcasts in iTunes:

1. Open iTunes on your computer.
2. Click on the tab that says "Music" on the top left of the screen.
3. Scroll down and click on the "podcasts" option.



On the right side of the screen that opens up, you'll find an option to navigate categories. Choose a category related to your business to find relevant podcasts. Alternatively, you can type in a keyword related to your niche in the iTunes search bar for the purpose.

**Quick Tip:** Check out the 'New & Noteworthy' section. While they're usually high-traffic podcasts, you may see some up-and-comers who have caught one of their first glimpses of going viral. In any event, this is also a strong section to get ideas and inspiration from. As always, write down new ideas in your spreadsheet.



Once you've made a list of podcasts that you're interested in, it's time to contact the host. Doing so requires you to visit the host's website and find their email address/contact information. Fortunately, iTunes provides a link to the main website or magazine that owns the podcast or has rights to it.

Podcasts > Business > Management and Marketing > Ben Cummings: eCommerce Entrepreneur | Online Business | Marketing | Amazon Marketplace & Shopify Expert | Online Store



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### Ecommerce Secrets with Ben Cummings

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▲	NAME	TIME	RELEASED	DESCRIPTION
1	Episode #245 – Do You Have This ONE Trait That I've Observed ...	18 min	Nov 21, 2017	Ecommerce and Amazon strategies for ... <a href="#">i</a>
2	Episode #244 – Do This Most Powerful Exercise to Grow Your A...	10 min	Nov 16, 2017	Ecommerce and Amazon strategies for ... <a href="#">i</a>
3	Episode #243 – Here's Something REALLY Cool That Amazon Ju...	14 min	Nov 15, 2017	Ecommerce and Amazon strategies for ... <a href="#">i</a>
4	Episode #242 – Are You Holding on to Your DUD Amazon Produ...	14 min	Nov 9, 2017	Ecommerce and Amazon strategies for ... <a href="#">i</a>
5	Episode #241 – Big Big Moves by Amazon Ahead of Black Friday...	8 min	Nov 7, 2017	Ecommerce and Amazon strategies for ... <a href="#">i</a>
6	Episode #240 – Do You Have a RANKING or a LISTING Problem?...	30 min	Oct 10, 2017	Ecommerce and Amazon strategies for ... <a href="#">i</a>
7	Episode #239 – Is THIS the Highest Yielding Asset in Your Amaz...	7 min	Sep 28, 2017	Ecommerce and Amazon strategies for ... <a href="#">i</a>

Click the “website” link in the bottom left corner of the screen to go to the host's main website. Ideally, you'll be able to figure out who to contact. But if you don't see an email address or contact form, try searching for the host in Google or on social media.

## Look at a Podcast Directory or Amazon to Discover Hidden Gems

Consider looking at a podcast directory for more ideas. The following podcast directories are another great resource to discover up-and-coming podcasts:

1. [Podcasts.com](https://www.podcasts.com): Navigate [podcasts.com](https://www.podcasts.com) using 'Channels' or go through the recommendations first.
2. [Podcast Alley](https://www.podcastalley.com): Access categories with a drop-down menu or visit the hosts' website.
3. [Stitcher](https://www.stitcher.com): The directory organizes the podcasts as 'stations' that people can browse and listen to.

Identify relevant podcasts, then read their about page to figure out who to contact. In addition to a podcast directory search, you can visit Amazon to see if any authors have published books related to your business. Because authors are often invited as guests on podcasts, you may be able to find a podcast that features authors who you might be able to work with. Then, use Google and iTunes search to see what podcasts they've been featured on to expand your choices.

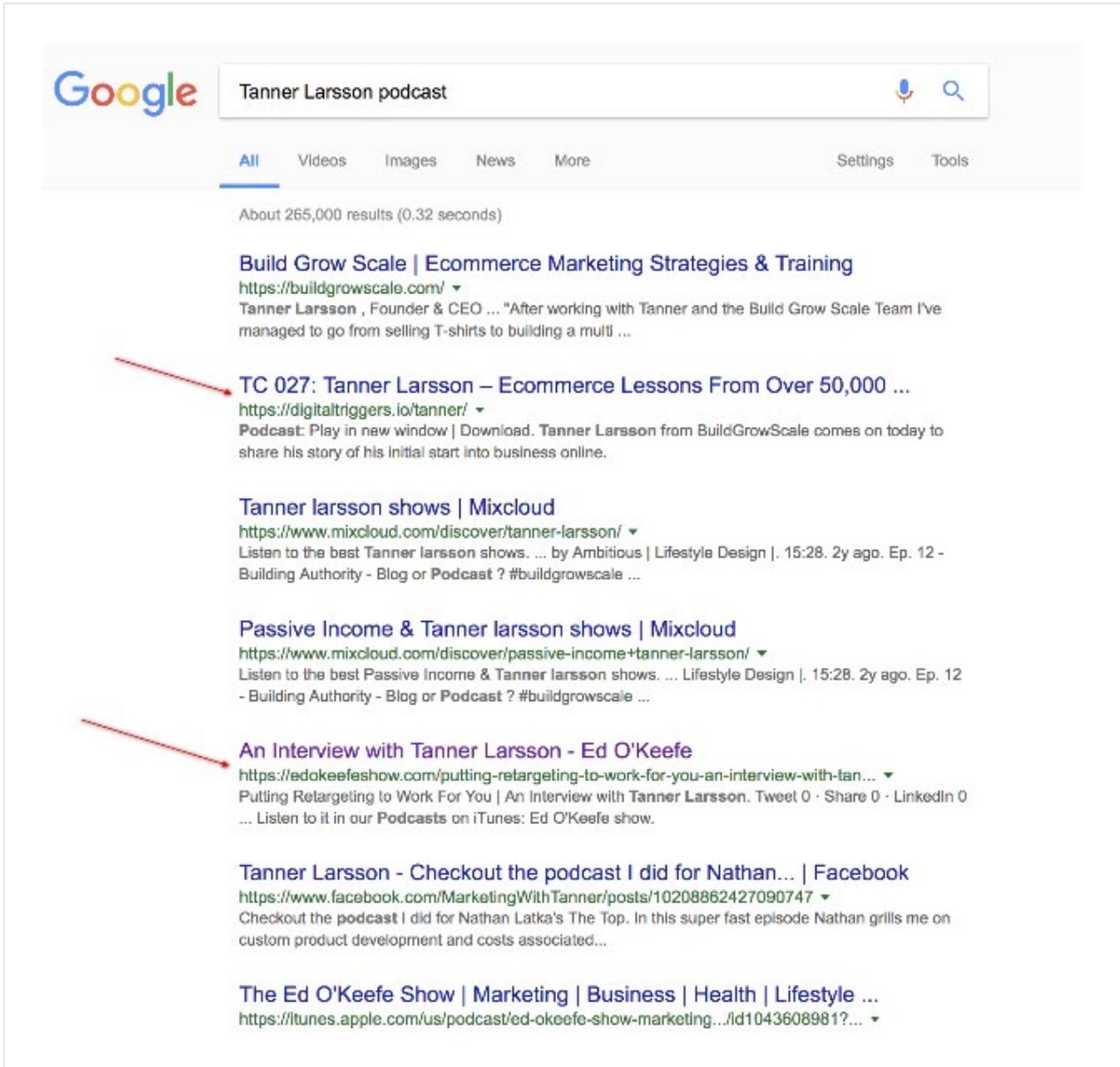
For instance, if you search for 'ecommerce books' on Amazon, it displays the following results:

The screenshot shows the Amazon website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Amazon logo, a search bar containing 'ecommerce books', and various utility links like 'Departments', 'Your Amazon.com', 'Black Friday Deals Week', 'Gift Cards', 'Registry', 'Sell', and 'Help'. A 'FREE SHIPPING on over 100 million' banner is also visible. Below the search bar, it indicates '1-16 of 30,687 results for "ecommerce books"'. The results are sorted by 'Relevance'. On the left, there's a 'Show results for' sidebar with categories like 'books', 'Kindle Store', and 'Web Marketing'. The main content area displays several book covers. One prominent result is 'Ecommerce Evolved: The Essential Playbook To Build, Grow & Scale A Successful Ecommerce Business' by Tanner Larsson, published Oct 3, 2016. The book cover features a green and black design with a shopping cart icon and the text 'ECOMMERCE EVOLVED'. The price is listed as \$18.95, with a note about free shipping on eligible orders. The book has a 4.5-star rating from 100 reviews.

Assume you want to know if Tanner Larsson, author of *Ecommerce Evolved: The Essential Playbook to Build, Grow & Scale a Successful Ecommerce Business*, has made any podcasts appearances, you'd search for keywords like:

- Tanner Larsson podcast
- Tanner Larsson podcasts
- Tanner Larsson ecommerce podcast

The first option returns the following results in Google Search:



The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the query "Tanner Larsson podcast". The search results are as follows:

- Build Grow Scale | Ecommerce Marketing Strategies & Training**  
<https://buildgrowscale.com/> ▼  
Tanner Larsson , Founder & CEO ... "After working with Tanner and the Build Grow Scale Team I've managed to go from selling T-shirts to building a multi ...
- TC 027: Tanner Larsson – Ecommerce Lessons From Over 50,000 ...**  
<https://digitaltriggers.io/tanner/> ▼  
Podcast: Play in new window | Download. Tanner Larsson from BuildGrowScale comes on today to share his story of his initial start into business online.
- Tanner larsson shows | Mixcloud**  
<https://www.mixcloud.com/discover/tanner-larsson/> ▼  
Listen to the best Tanner larsson shows. ... by Ambitious | Lifestyle Design |. 15:28. 2y ago. Ep. 12 - Building Authority - Blog or Podcast ? #buildgrowscale ...
- Passive Income & Tanner larsson shows | Mixcloud**  
<https://www.mixcloud.com/discover/passive-income+tanner-larsson/> ▼  
Listen to the best Passive Income & Tanner larsson shows. ... Lifestyle Design |. 15:28. 2y ago. Ep. 12 - Building Authority - Blog or Podcast ? #buildgrowscale ...
- An Interview with Tanner Larsson - Ed O'Keefe**  
<https://edokeefeshow.com/putting-retargeting-to-work-for-you-an-interview-with-tan...> ▼  
Putting Retargeting to Work For You | An Interview with Tanner Larsson. Tweet 0 · Share 0 · LinkedIn 0 ... Listen to it in our Podcasts on iTunes: Ed O'Keefe show.
- Tanner Larsson - Checkout the podcast I did for Nathan... | Facebook**  
<https://www.facebook.com/MarketingWithTanner/posts/10208862427090747> ▼  
Checkout the podcast I did for Nathan Latka's The Top. In this super fast episode Nathan grills me on custom product development and costs associated...
- The Ed O'Keefe Show | Marketing | Business | Health | Lifestyle ...**  
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/ed-okeefe-show-marketing.../id1043608981?...> ▼

Red arrows in the image point to the third result ("TC 027: Tanner Larsson – Ecommerce Lessons From Over 50,000 ...") and the fifth result ("An Interview with Tanner Larsson - Ed O'Keefe").

It's clear that the author has appeared on a couple of podcasts to give ecommerce lessons. You can browse through the host's website to see if they have spots open.

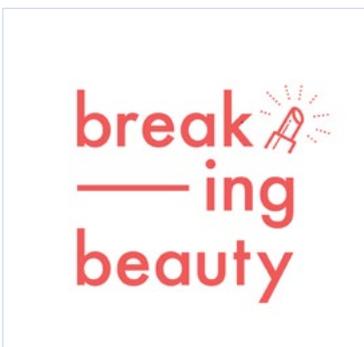
## Examples of Podcasts

Let's take a look at some up-and-coming podcasts in different industries.

Even if you decide not to pitch these specific podcasts, listen to a few episodes to get an idea of how podcasting works, what kind of people are invited to contribute, and what kind of topics are regularly discussed.



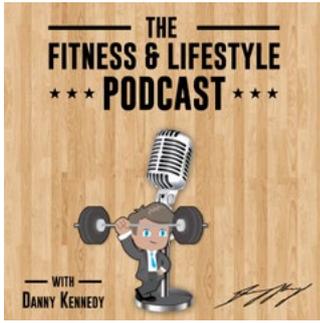
[Fashion Hags](#) is a biweekly podcast where funny and charming millennial hosts Abby, Evan, and Katie discuss insider information from the fashion industry. They do a great job at making serious fashion topics interesting, informative, and approachable.



In [Breaking Beauty](#), longstanding editors Jill Dunn and Carlene Higgins present the ideas behind some of the most popular beauty products on the shelves. They highlight how people got into the industry and converted little ideas into big success.



In the [EcomFire Podcast](#), hosts Klint and Ben interview entrepreneurs and examine tips for starting an online business. If you're currently involved in things like dropshipping, Amazon FBA, and affiliate marketing, this podcast could be a good chance to share your experience.



[The Fitness and Lifestyle Podcast](#) is a weekly fitness and nutrition podcast in which host Dan Kennedy interviews guests and offers advice on all aspects of health, fitness, business and lifestyle in an informative and inspirational way.



[How I Built This](#) is a podcast about innovators, entrepreneurs, and idealists. Host Guy Raz examines the successes and failures of some of the biggest companies and brands in the world. Although not technically an up-and-coming podcast, each episode contains a special segment where he interviews small and independent business owners – a fantastic opportunity for anyone looking for wide exposure.

**Quick Tip:** Choose at least five truly awesome podcasts to subscribe to and listen to regularly. Not only will you learn more about the industry, but you'll become more familiarized with what you think is awesome in terms of style, subject matter, unique insights, and delivery – which will in turn make it easier to be *awesome*.

## How to Pitch Yourself as an Interviewee

Creating a podcast takes time.

For example, Jessica Rhodes of the ‘Rhodes to Success’ podcast says that [it takes 12 to 16 hours](#) of work for a podcaster to plan, produce and promote their show.

Podcasters simply don’t have the time to search through hundreds of pitches looking for the perfect guest to interview.

As with guest posting, you need to create a pitch that stands out. Explain to the podcaster who you are, why you’re interested in their show, how you are qualified to speak about topics in their industry, and what value you can provide their audience.

Successfully pitching a podcast takes a lot of effort. You might be turned down numerous times before you get your first opportunity. But having a great pitch can help you get there faster.

Let’s look at seven steps you can follow to create a great email pitch that will work for any industry.

### 1. Write a Clear and Interesting Subject Line

The podcaster is probably sorting through hundreds of emails a day, so you want a subject line that makes your request clear. Let them know you’re making a podcast pitch and give them an idea of your topic.

A good subject line for an ecommerce store owner pitching a beauty podcast would be:

**“Podcast Idea: Beauty Secrets I Learned while Living in India”**

Try to avoid subject lines longer than this, as you want the whole subject to show up in their inbox.

## 2. Introduce Yourself

Tell the podcaster who you are, your background, and what business you're in. If you have any unique traits or interesting stories that make you stand out, this is a good time to let them know. Remember – they're probably busy, so you want to keep your introduction short and sweet.

Here's an introduction that might pique the interest of a beauty blogger:

***“Hi [name],  
My name is [your name] and I work at [your business]. I'm a big fan of your show, and I'd love the chance to be a guest. I recently returned from a year living in India studying the beauty and fashion industry there.”***

## 3. Pitch Your Topic

It's time for the hook. You need to come up with an idea for a topic that is suitable for your target's podcasting style and provides value for their audience. It's a good idea to focus on just one topic, but if you have some alternative ideas, you can mention them too.

You should also let the podcaster know that you're open to discussing other topics. They may not be interested in your ideas, but they may be interested in you.

Here's an interesting pitch:

***“While I was in India I discovered an amazing recipe that women use to create an all natural makeup remover. It uses a mix of products that you can get at any Indian food market. I think this would be a topic your audience would really love to hear about. I'd also be interested in talking about any other topics related to the beauty industry in India.”***

#### 4. Emphasize Your Value

Podcasters want to know that you're going to bring value to their [audience](#), but they also want to know that you'll bring value to them personally as an up-and-coming podcaster. It's a good idea to mention that you'll be promoting the podcast to your own community. Include details like your own audience and places you've been featured.

This is a good example that shows value:

***“If you're interested in interviewing me, I'd be happy to share the interview with my own audience. I currently have [number] customers signed up to my store's mailing list, and I think they'd all be interested in hearing your podcast. My store was recently featured on the [blog name] blog, and I'd be happy to let them know about the interview too.”***

## 5. Talk about Your Audio Equipment

This is one step that is often overlooked when making a pitch. Podcasters hate low audio quality interviews. At best, they'll get complaints from their audience about the audio quality. At worst, they won't be able to use the interview.

Most interviewers use a program such as Skype or FaceTime to conduct interviews, so make sure you've got a copy of them. Also, make sure you have a good internet connection, a quality headset, and most importantly, a good quality microphone. This will be an up-front investment, but you can get a starter mic like the Samson Go Mic for as low as \$35.

**Quick Tip:** Check out Search Engine Journal's helpful article on the [10 best podcasting microphones](#) to balance quality with budget.

If you have all those, let the podcaster know:

***"I usually use Skype for interviews. I've got a fantastic Shure microphone and a high-speed internet connection, so I'm sure we could produce a high quality interview."***

## 6. Include Your Calendar and Contact Details

These details are important for the podcaster to be able to contact you, but they can also help the podcaster learn more about you and your audience. Including a link to your business and your social media details lets them see that you are both serious and professional.

**Quick Tip:** When scheduling a call, consider sending a link from an online calendar service like [Calendly](#) or [ScheduleOnce](#) to streamline the process and avoid any delays caused by back-and-forth emailing.

Here's a good example:

*“If you’re free, I’d love to schedule a call with you sometime this week. Here’s a link that shows when I’m available [link]. You can also check out my website here [link] and my social media feeds here [link].”*

## 7. Sign Off

Keep it simple:

**“Thanks for your time. I’m really looking forward to hearing from you.  
[your name]”**

# Join Discussions on Social Media Groups and Forums

I know, I know: you've heard this advice before. But being a part of your industry's discussion has withstood the test of time. Even before the internet started to dominate the way we communicate, there were networking parties, social hours, and the like. In these gatherings, the most interesting and valuable people were the ones who were invited to other events and introduced to mutual contacts – not the ones wearing sandwich boards to promote their business.

**While the medium has changed drastically in the modern age, the process, goals, and outcomes remain timeless.** Social media groups and online forums are similar to these 'old-fashioned' networking events as they provide a convenient e-gathering place for people who are relevant to your industry. And just like these events, it's not just about physically being there, but by making a *meaningful contribution*.

It's human nature to want to know more about people who are driving the conversation forward. Online, this instinct shows itself when we find a user interesting. We click through to their profile to investigate further and see what other interesting stuff they've put out.

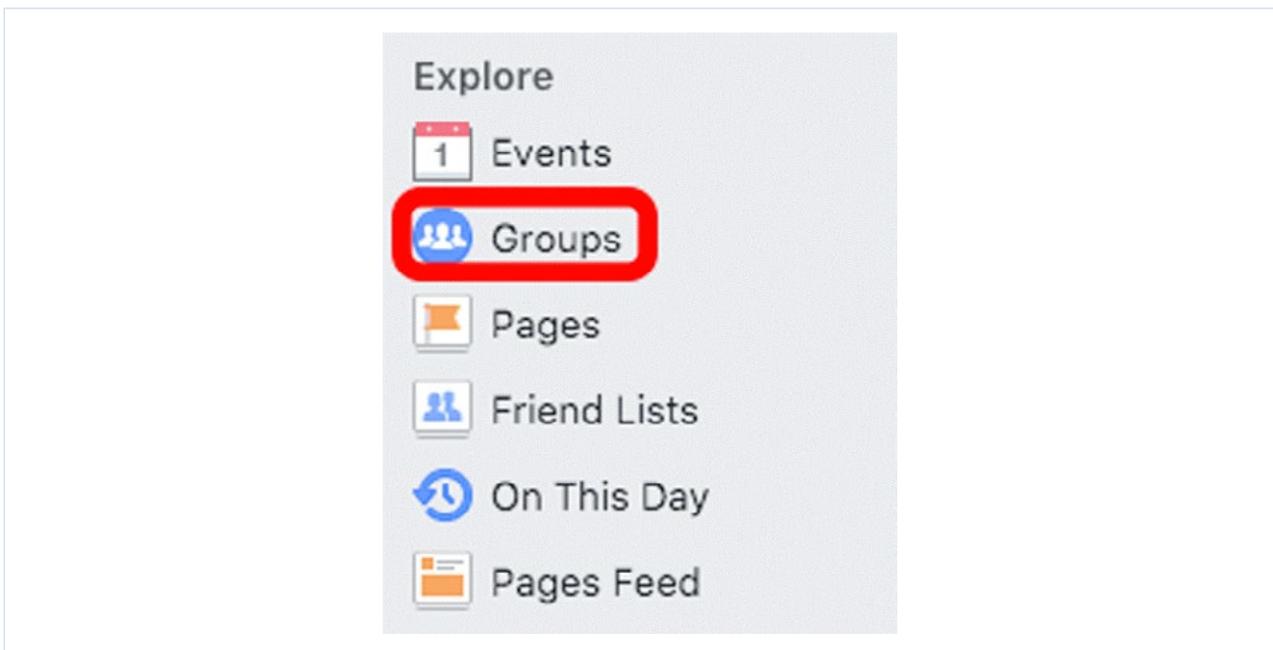
So the purpose here isn't necessarily a hard sell. With every useful comment and post you make, you're building equity in your own credibility. And that investment has a huge payout in the long run.

**In this section, we'll look at how to join useful social media groups and forums, and what to do once you've become a member so you can generate genuine interest in yourself and your brand.**

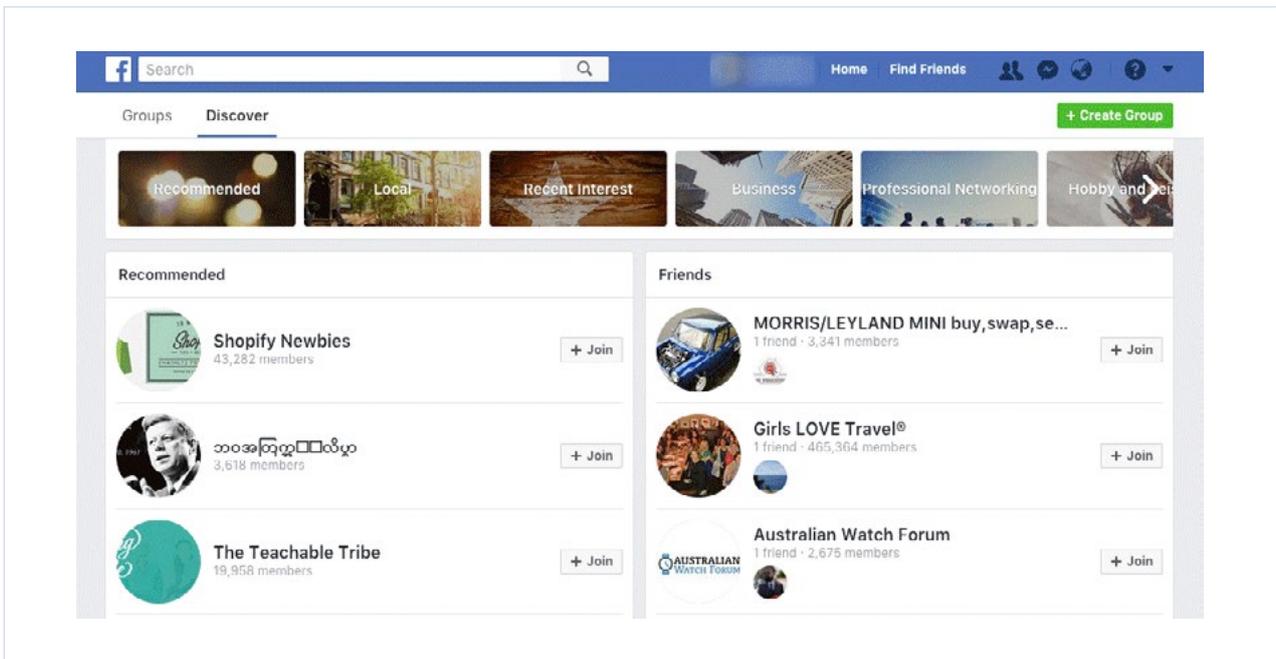
## Join a Facebook Group

With [over two billion monthly active users](#), Facebook is the biggest social media platform in the world. Traditionally, Facebook activity has focused on social connections. However, more and more people have started using [Facebook groups](#) to create valuable business relationships.

To find a group relevant to your business, log in to your Facebook account and click on 'Groups' in the Explore sidebar.



On the Discover Groups landing page, you'll be presented with suggestions for groups to join. You can browse through groups in different categories and you can click on the group link to get more information about the group.



If you can't find an appropriate group to join, you can use the search bar to look for groups. Simply search for '[your industry] groups' and you should be presented with some good options. For instance, if you sell travel products, you can search for 'traveling groups.'



You might notice that some groups are ‘Open’ and some are ‘Closed’. In open groups, content is viewable by anyone. In closed groups, admins must approve new members and content is only visible to other members.

You can learn about the group’s philosophy and rules by reading the description in the ‘About This Group’ section. If you find a group you want to join, click the ‘Join Group’ button. You might have to answer some questions in order to be accepted, and approval may take anywhere from a few minutes to a few days.

The screenshot shows the Facebook search interface for 'europe travel groups'. The search bar at the top contains the text 'europe travel groups'. Below the search bar, there are navigation tabs for 'All', 'Posts', 'People', 'Photos', 'Videos', 'Shop', 'Pages', 'Places', 'Groups', 'Apps', 'Events', and 'Links'. The 'Groups' tab is selected and highlighted.

On the left side, there is a 'Filter Results' section with two sub-sections: 'SHOW ONLY' and 'MEMBERSHIP'. Under 'SHOW ONLY', there are radio buttons for 'Any group' (selected), 'Public Groups', and 'Closed groups'. Under 'MEMBERSHIP', there are radio buttons for 'Any group' (selected), 'Friends' groups', and 'My groups'.

The main content area displays a list of search results for travel groups. Each result includes a group profile picture, the group name, member count, post frequency, and a brief description. A 'Join' button is visible next to each group entry.

- EUROPE Backpacker / Traveler**: 15K members · 10+ posts a day. Description: Europe · PLEASE READ: We welcome all new members to the "EUROPE Backpacker / Traveler" group. This group, which is...
- Gay Uk France Europe Travel**: 10K members · 10+ posts a day. Description: Join at least 18 years old Gay Uk Usa France Germany Italy Spain Gay Europe Travel Advertising articles Do not upload.
- Europe & Paris Travel**: 815 members · 3 posts a day. Description: Paris, France · Europe & Paris Travel created by Светлана Цветкова & Daniel Barrett. United Virtual Worlds. <https://www.facebook.com/...>
- Travel to Eastern Europe, the Balkans and former USSR**: 5.6K members · 5 posts a day. Description: Are you planning to visit Eastern Europe, the Balkans or countries of former Soviet Union? Or maybe, just like us, you're interested in the...
- Travelling in Europe**: 1.2K members · 3 posts a day. Description: 1.you will be ban for posting sex and nude videos, 2. Do not spamming money marking ads, 3 Do not spamming videos like 5...

On the right side, there is a language selection menu with options for English (US), 日本語, Español, Português (Brasil), and Français (France). Below this, there are links for Privacy, Terms, Advertising, Ad Choices, Cookies, and More, along with the Facebook © 2017 copyright notice.

Once you've been accepted into a group, take some time to read through recent posts and get a feel for how the group works. Take particular note of what kind of posts are popular and what kind of topics are being discussed.

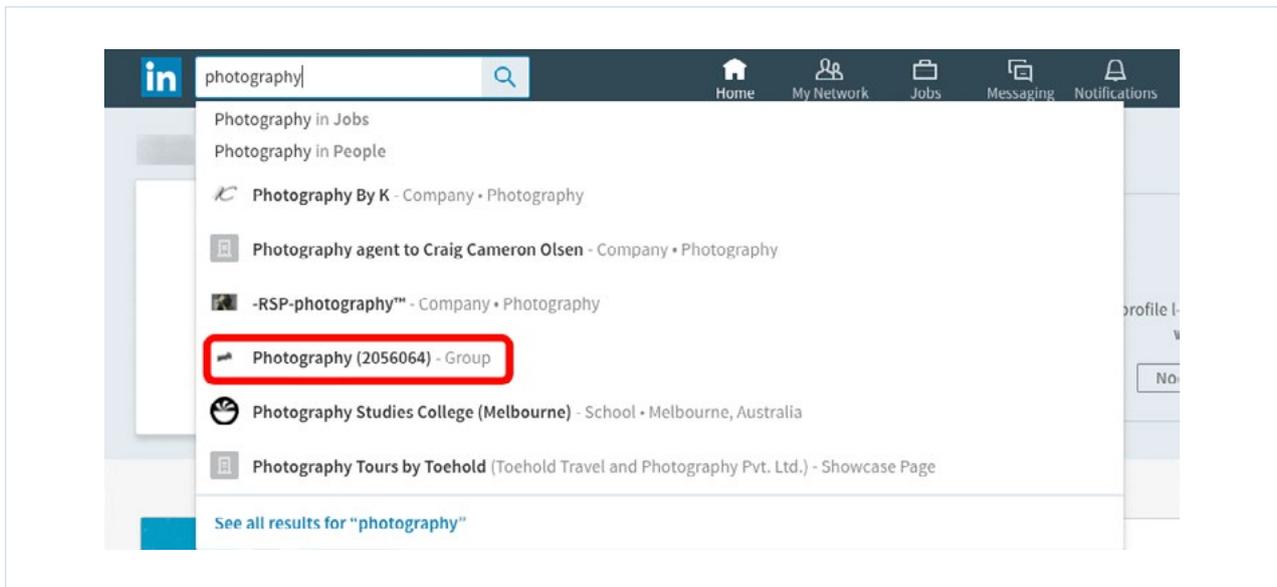
**Quick Tip:** On your homepage's left sidebar, you can rearrange your groups to help minimize the clutter and put the most important ones first.

## Join a LinkedIn Group

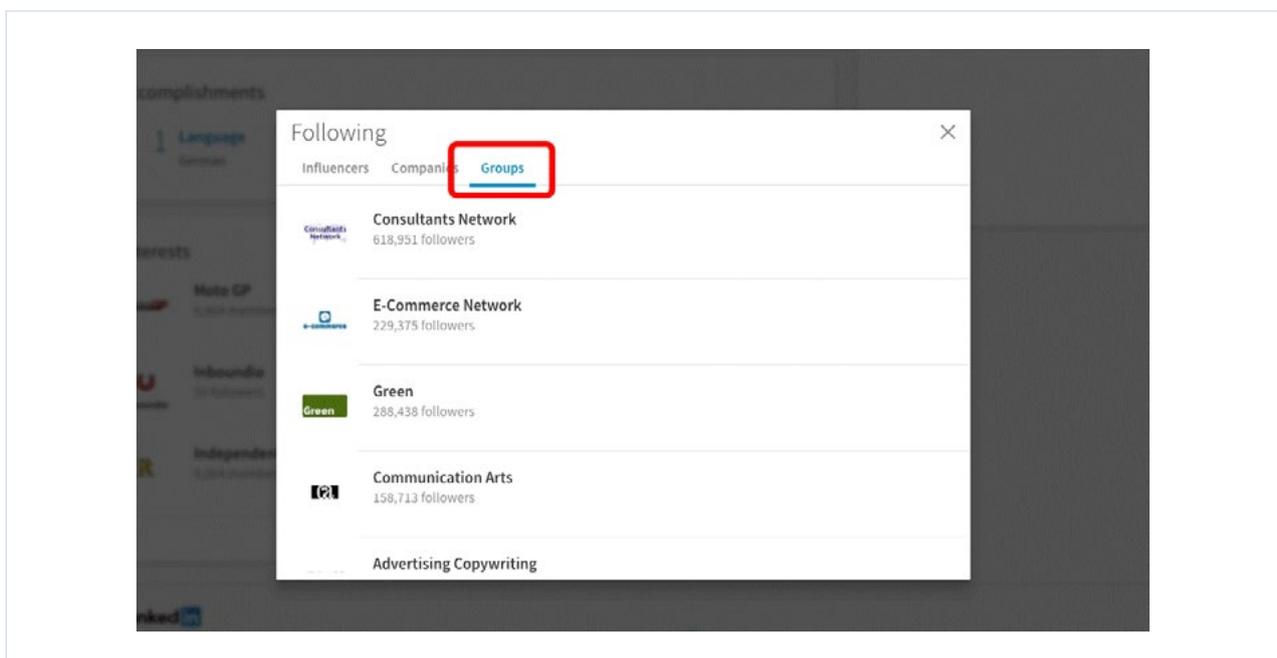
Although LinkedIn has fewer users than Facebook, it can be a better choice for business owners who want to connect with other professionals on a personal level. Unlike Facebook, members participate on LinkedIn for the sole purpose of growing their business network and furthering their career. In fact, it's estimated that [more than 80% of B2B leads](#) generated on social networks come from LinkedIn.

There are two good ways to find relevant LinkedIn groups.

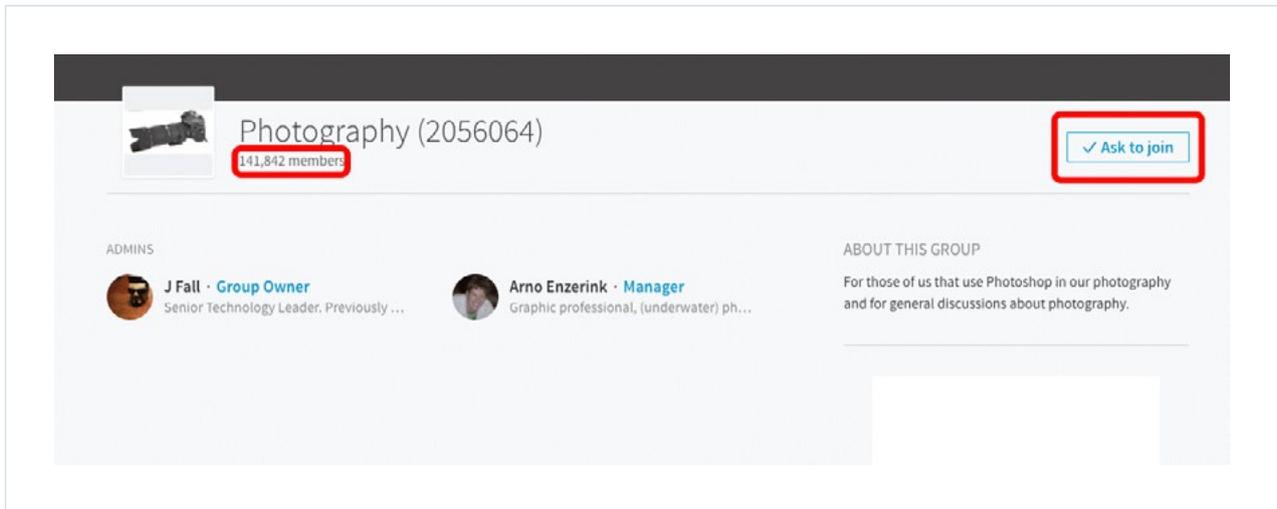
The first way is to use the search bar. Enter any keywords that are relevant to your industry and look for results that are marked 'Group'. For instance, if you sell camera accessories, you might want to look for photography related groups – such groups' audiences would likely be interested in your offerings.



The second way is to go to the profile of one of your connections and see which groups they are a member of. You can find their groups by going to their page, scrolling down to 'Interests', clicking 'See More' and clicking the 'Groups' option. Most LinkedIn groups are public, so even if you can't read the posts, you can learn about the group and request membership.



Once you've found a group to join, click on the 'Ask to join' button. Like Facebook groups, you usually need to be vetted by a moderator before being allowed access to the group.



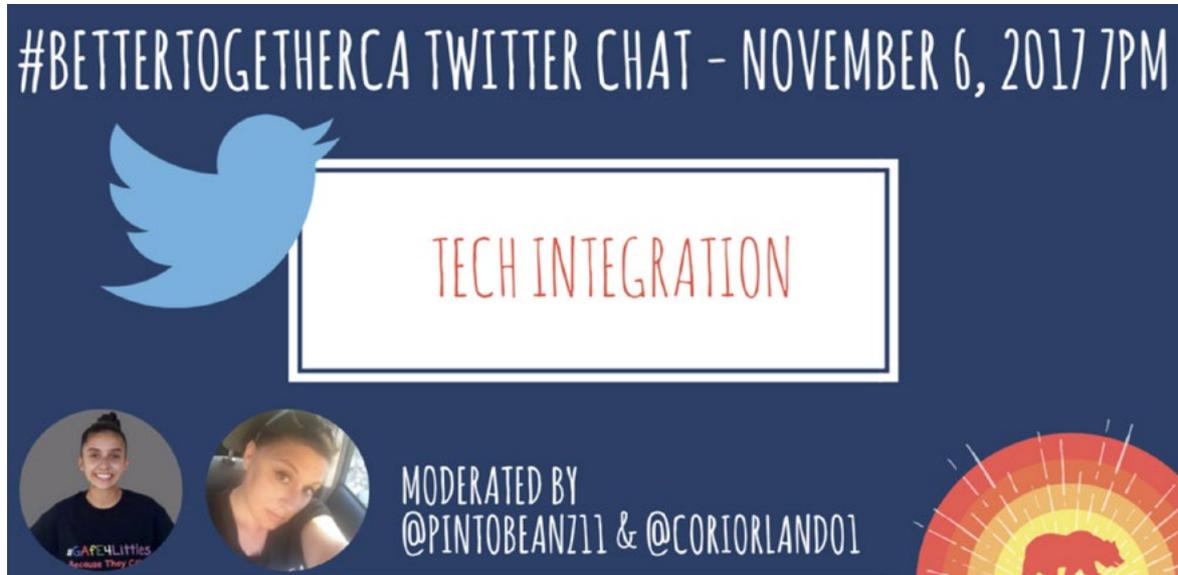
**Quick Tip:** You can join up to 50 LinkedIn groups, so be choosy: look for groups that are closely relevant to your goals with lots of group engagement and relatively high members.

## Join a Twitter Chat

[Twitter](#) is optimized for one-off posts rather than long back-and-forth discussions, which can make it hard to find the right time to engage with relevant people in your industry.

One solution is to join a Twitter chat, which is when a group gathers at a designated day and time to take part in a discussion. Twitter chats usually last for a set duration of time (eg. one hour), and participants use a specific hashtag when posting.

The most common way to find a Twitter chat is to follow influential people in your industry and see which chats they are participating in.



[Source](#)

Another way is to look at Twitter chat scheduling sites such as [TweetReports](#) or [Twubs](#) and search for Twitter chats you might be interested in.

The screenshot displays a 'CHAT SCHEDULE' interface for 'TODAY'. It features a central vertical timeline with a 'TODAY' label. On either side of the timeline are chat event cards, each with a Twitter icon, a hashtag, a title, a 'Your Time' slot, and a frequency/duration. In the top right corner, there is a notification box showing '93' likes and a 'Tweet' button.

Hashtag	Title	Your Time	Frequency/Duration
#4THJKT48BERKARYA	JKT48 4th ANNIVERSARY	3:00am to 1:45am	Every: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 01:00 am to 11:45 pm (Asia/Jakarta)
#ALCALADEGUADAIRA	Cosas de Alcalá de Guadaira	8:00am to 7:45am	Every: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 12:00 am to 11:45 pm (Europe/Madrid)
#EEM2015	EEM2015	8:00am to 7:45am	Every: Sun, Fri, Sat 12:00 am to 11:45 pm (Europe/Paris)
#BILLIONAIREBOARDGAMERS	BILLIONAIRE BOARD GAMERS	9:00am to 9:00pm	Every: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 12:00 am to 12:00 pm (Europe/London)
#JEKA999	Buy airtime	9:00am to 7:45am	Every: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 01:00 am to 11:45 pm (Europe/Brussels)
#CAPRICORNFMSUMMER	Capricorn FM Birthday	7:00am to 6:45am	Every: Fri 12:00 am to 11:45 pm (Africa/Harare)
#VENDRESONBLE	Vendresonble	8:00am to 7:45am	Every: Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri 12:00 am to 11:45 pm (Europe/Paris)
#EMBRYONE	Embryone	9:00am to 8:45am	Every: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 12:00 am to 11:45 pm (Europe/London)
#THEMINDFULCHARM	The Mindful Charm	9:00am to 8:45am	Every: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri 12:00 am to 11:45 pm (Europe/London)
#ICEEASTMIDSAWARDS	EMMAS 2017	9:15am to 8:45am	Every: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 12:15 am to 11:45 pm (Europe/London)

There are no specific rules or requirements for joining a Twitter chat. All you have to do is show up, contribute, and follow up with people who could be valuable connections. You can then consider partnership opportunities, like creating a referral partnership with them to drive traffic (more on this in the next section).

**Quick Tip:** Once you've spent some time exploring and participating, you'll have an idea of the types of conversations that are happening in your industry. Then you'll be able to fill in any gaps by hosting your own Twitter chat.

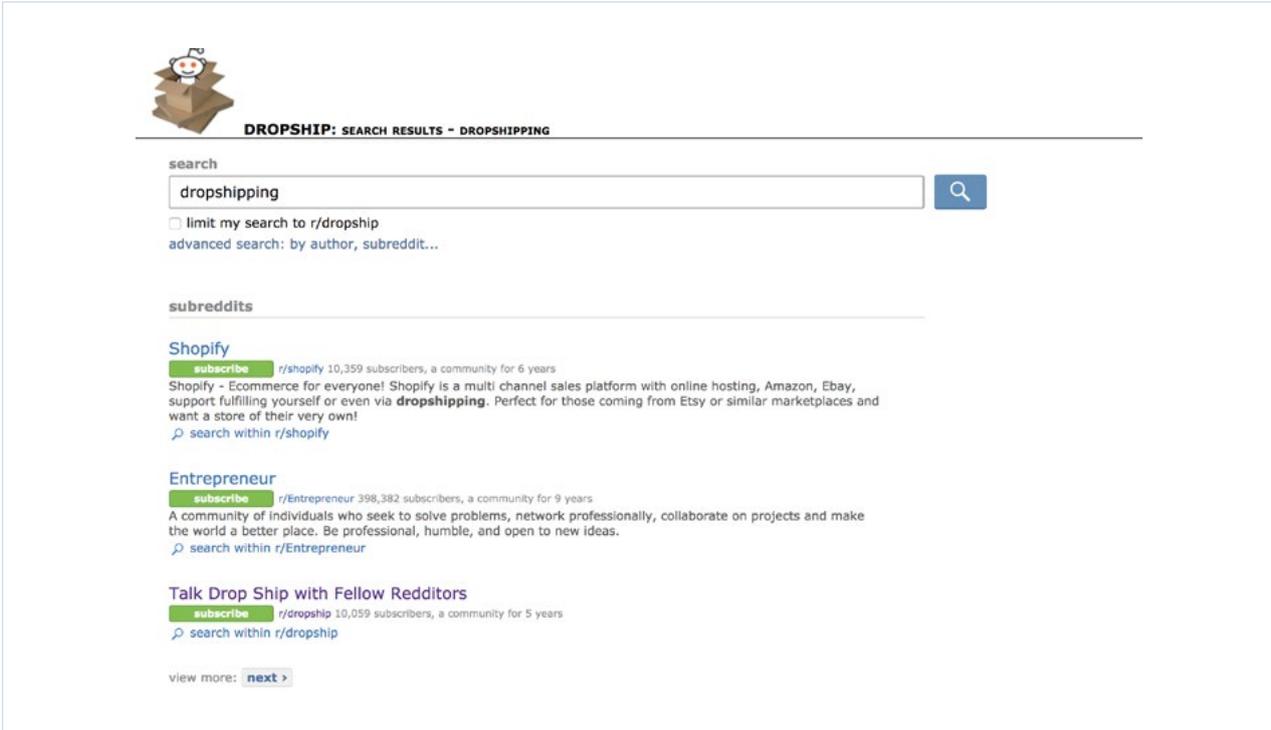
## Join a Discussion Forum

Discussion forums are a form of social media that was around long before Facebook and LinkedIn. Sites like [Reddit](#), [Quora](#) and [Digg](#) are places for people to gather and share information, news, and opinions.

The biggest difference between these discussion forums and the other social media sites is that members of these sites are usually anonymous. Discussion forums can be great for making business connections, but you have to be extra careful choosing who you engage with.

Reddit, the self-proclaimed 'front page of the Internet' is a good discussion forum to start because of the wide variety of discussions available.

To find a discussion to join, enter a relevant keyword in the search bar and look for an appropriate subreddit (a forum with a specific topic).

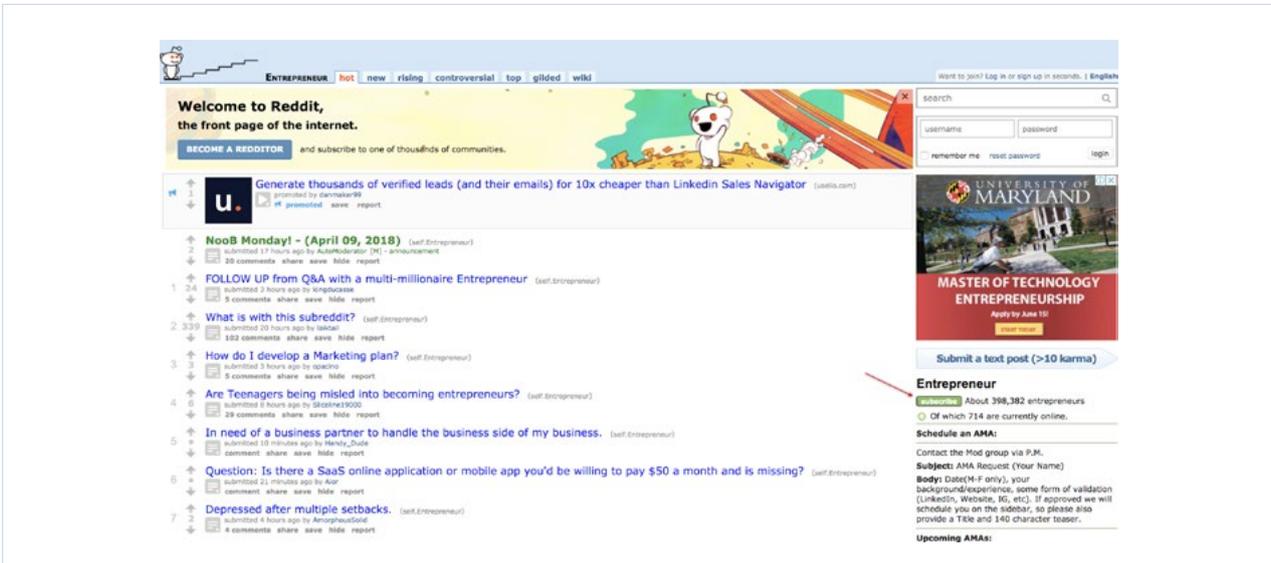


The screenshot shows the search results for 'dropshipping' on Reddit. At the top left is the Reddit logo. The search bar contains 'dropshipping' and a search button. Below the search bar, there are options to 'limit my search to r/dropship' and 'advanced search: by author, subreddit...'. The 'subreddits' section lists three results:

- Shopify**: [subscribe](#) r/shopify 10,359 subscribers, a community for 6 years. Description: 'Shopify - Ecommerce for everyone! Shopify is a multi channel sales platform with online hosting, Amazon, Ebay, support fulfilling yourself or even via **dropshipping**. Perfect for those coming from Etsy or similar marketplaces and want a store of their very own!' Search within r/shopify.
- Entrepreneur**: [subscribe](#) r/Entrepreneur 398,382 subscribers, a community for 9 years. Description: 'A community of individuals who seek to solve problems, network professionally, collaborate on projects and make the world a better place. Be professional, humble, and open to new ideas.' Search within r/Entrepreneur.
- Talk Drop Ship with Fellow Redditors**: [subscribe](#) r/dropship 10,059 subscribers, a community for 5 years. Search within r/dropship.

At the bottom, there is a 'view more: [next >](#)' link.

Once you've clicked on the link to the subreddit, you can see a list of recent discussion topics. In the sidebar, you can find information about the group and you can read the group rules. If you choose to participate in the group, you can click the 'Subscribe' button to be automatically updated of any changes.



The screenshot shows the front page of the r/Entrepreneur subreddit. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'ENTREPRENEUR' and various filters like 'hot', 'new', 'rising', 'controversial', 'top', 'gilded', and 'wiki'. Below the navigation bar is a 'Welcome to Reddit, the front page of the internet.' banner with a 'BECOME A REDDITOR' button. The main content area displays a list of recent posts:

- Generate thousands of verified leads (and their emails) for 10x cheaper than LinkedIn Sales Navigator** (submitted 11 hours ago by danmak99)
- Noob Monday! - (April 09, 2018)** (submitted 11 hours ago by subredditor [M] - announcement)
- FOLLOW UP from Q&A with a multi-millionaire Entrepreneur** (submitted 3 hours ago by kingpucase)
- What is with this subreddit?** (submitted 20 hours ago by laklar)
- How do I develop a Marketing plan?** (submitted 3 hours ago by spacyn)
- Are Teenagers being misled into becoming entrepreneurs?** (submitted 8 hours ago by SAGSINE19200)
- In need of a business partner to handle the business side of my business.** (submitted 10 minutes ago by HenryJade)
- Question: Is there a SaaS online application or mobile app you'd be willing to pay \$50 a month and is missing?** (submitted 21 minutes ago by Aoi)
- Depressed after multiple setbacks.** (submitted 4 hours ago by AmorghauGold)

On the right side, there is a sidebar with a search bar, login fields, and a 'Submit a text post (>10 karma)' button. Below that is the 'Entrepreneur' subreddit information, including the number of subscribers (398,382), a description, and a 'Schedule an AMA' section with instructions for submitting an AMA request.

## How to Participate in Social Media Groups and Forums

Social media groups and forums have a specific etiquette you'll need to follow if you want to be successful at making connections and growing your digital network. The most important thing to remember is that social media networking is a two-way street in which participants are expected to give and receive. It's bad etiquette to ask members for something before offering the group something first.

### 1. Read the Group Rules

Each group or forum has a unique set of rules for participation, so the first thing you need to do when joining a new group is to make sure you're familiar with all the rules.

Here's an example of the group rules from the [Reddit Entrepreneur forum](#):

---

Only text posts are allowed, this is to encourage discussion. If you have links to share, please describe them in the text and lead the discussion.

If you post about your business or startup, but don't give any information, ask any specific feedback questions, or provide a guide for discussion, your post will be deleted. Use the guidelines on the submission page for ideas on how to guide the discussion.

---

Text posts require 10 comment karma. If you don't have enough karma to post a text post, comment and provide useful content on others links. It is VERY EASY to attain 10 karma; ***please don't message the mods asking for a waiver.***

---

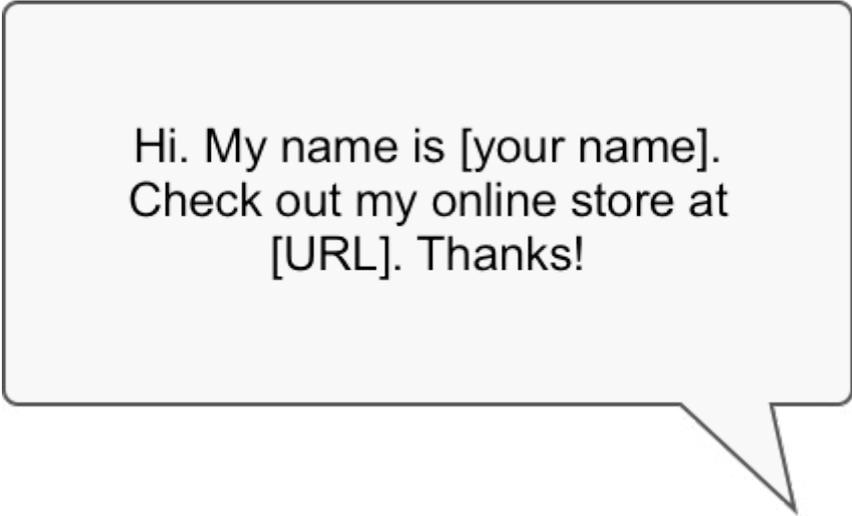
Rules are enforced by group moderators. If you break the group rules, you could be liable for a penalty such as having your post removed, or being temporarily or permanently banned.

## 2. Introduce Yourself

Many social media groups and forums require new members to introduce themselves before posting, but even if it's not a requirement, you should make a good first impression by posting a friendly self-introduction.

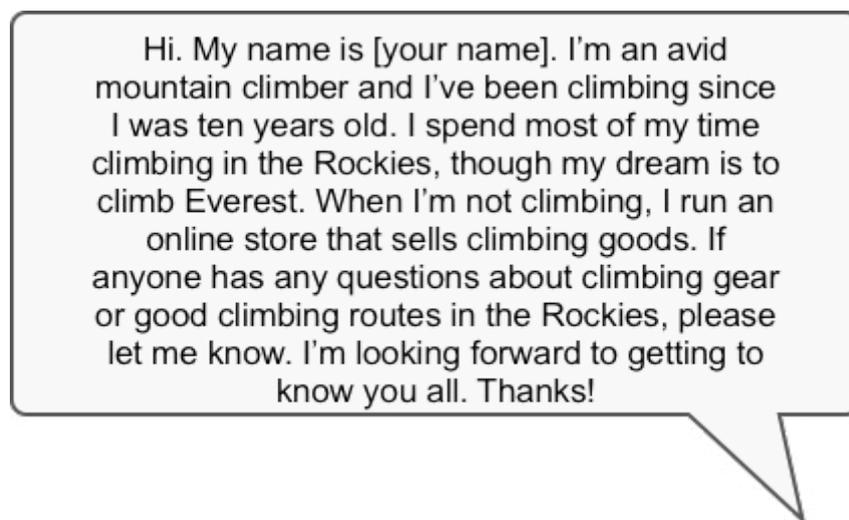
Even though your ultimate goal is to drive traffic to your store, you shouldn't jump straight into self-promotion. Keep your introduction short and simple, and focus on the value you intend to bring to the community.

Here's an example of a bad introduction that may get flagged as spam:



Hi. My name is [your name].  
Check out my online store at  
[URL]. Thanks!

Here's a much better example that the owner of a climbing goods ecommerce store could use when joining a Facebook mountain climbing group:



This introduction is informative and friendly, and lets members know you can provide valuable contributions to the group. It may even prompt members to ask about your online store.

### **3. Comment on Discussions**

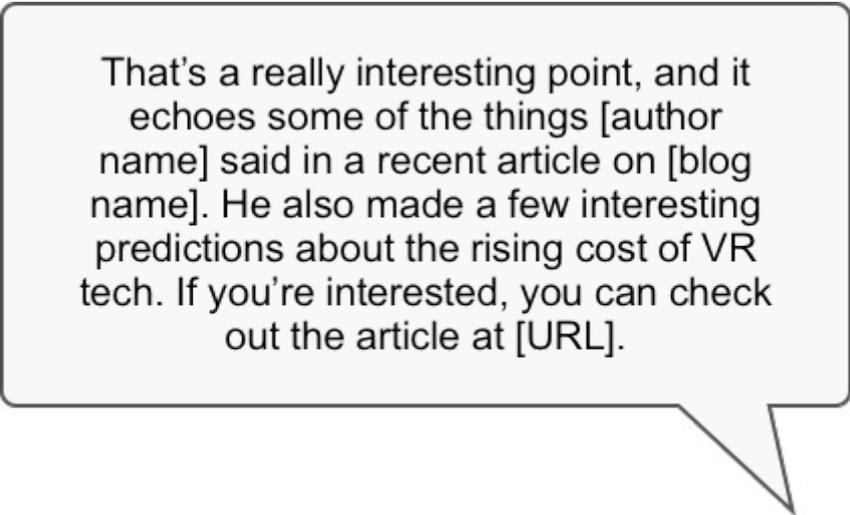
Before starting your own discussion topic, it's a good idea to make informative contributions to discussions that are already underway. By providing helpful and insightful advice, you can establish yourself as a community member who can provide value. This is important when you start directly engaging with specific individuals as they will be more inclined to connect with you if you are known within the group.

As with all interactions on social media groups and forums, you should try to provide value with your comments. Here's an example of a comment that is polite, but provides little value to the discussion:



That's an interesting point.  
Thanks for posting.

Here's an example that the owner of a tech goods ecommerce store could use to provide value to a LinkedIn discussion on Virtual Reality technology:



That's a really interesting point, and it echoes some of the things [author name] said in a recent article on [blog name]. He also made a few interesting predictions about the rising cost of VR tech. If you're interested, you can check out the article at [URL].

This sort of comment will promote more discussion and hopefully attract the attention of members of the group.

#### **4. Start Your Own Discussion**

Once you've established yourself as a valued contributor to the group, you can start to grow your own influence by starting your own conversation. When creating a new discussion topic, consider the goal of your post – do you want to provide useful content for the group, highlight your own value, or even strengthen connections with another member by promoting them?

Different types of posts work well in different groups, and once you've spent time contributing to discussions, you'll have a better idea of what works best in your situation. Don't forget to keep the discussion moving forward by continuing to respond to comments and answering questions.

Here are some post ideas to consider:

##### **Create custom content for your group.**

Although creating custom content that provides value for your group can be time-consuming, it can be effective for promoting discussion and displaying your knowledge. If you already have original content from your ecommerce store website, you can repurpose it to suit each social media group or forum.

For example, the owner of a travel goods ecommerce store could post an original article to a travel group titled "Ten things you need to take on an overnight flight", containing lots of "insider information" that group members would find useful.

### Share news from your industry.

Sharing news about changes and trends in your industry is a great way to provide value to the community without having to create new content yourself. However, it's important to make sure that the news is relevant and taken from a reliable source.

Only sharing news sourced from other sites can actually hurt your reputation, so balance these kinds of posts with plenty of your own original content. You should also double-check the group rules for linking to external sources.

### Teach members a new skill.

If you have valuable skills in your field, social media groups and forums provide the perfect place to show off your expertise while providing free value to group members. Teaching posts should focus on providing useful knowledge without expecting anything in return. If your group allows posting images or videos, this can be a good opportunity to get your face out there, not just your name.

A great example of teaching members a new skill would be the owner of a car parts ecommerce store posting a video that teaches members of a car fan club group how to change their brake pads.

### Create lively debate.

People on social media love to express their own opinions, so posting a comment about a controversial issue can be a great way to create debate amongst group members. You have to be careful when choosing a topic or expressing an opinion though, as you run the risk of alienating members.

Asking a question or posting a quote from an influential person in your industry can be effective for creating debate in Twitter chats where there is a character limit.

### Ask for advice.

Social media groups and forums rely on the give-and-take of value. While sharing your expertise can provide value to others, asking for advice can be just as effective for creating connections with other members. Most people will be more than happy to help you, and simply thanking them could lead to continued dialogue with influential group members.

## 5. Engage with Your New Connections

The ultimate goal of participating in discussions on social media groups and forums is to establish connections that will help drive traffic to your store. As with guest posting, these discussions could help you show off your expertise and drive traffic to your store. Once you've established yourself as an authority within the group, you'll need to take the next step by engaging with your connections on a more personal level. You can message them, set up a phone call, or even invite them out for coffee to start discussing ways in which you can help each other grow your businesses.

## A Shining Example: Eric Bandholz of Beardbrand

Eric Bandholz of [Beardbrand](#) has mastered this strategy. If you take a look at his [Reddit account](#), you'll find hundreds of posts and comments on other posts. He's accrued more than 50,000 karma points, which users earn when their posts and comments are upvoted by other users. (So that means Eric has gotten more than 50,000 upvotes. He's kind of a big deal.)



Eric Bandholz

u/bandholz

53,620 Karma ⓘ

I am a husband, father, entrepreneur, YouTuber, world traveler, and designer. Founder of /r/beardbrand.

He's active in 10 communities and moderates three, including the [r/beardbrand](#) community he created for his company.

### ACTIVE IN THESE COMMUNITIES

-  [r/Entrepreneur](#)  
360,530 subscribers
-  [r/beards](#)  
139,816 subscribers
-  [r/videos](#)  
17,142,258 subscribers
-  [r/CFB](#)  
329,423 subscribers
-  [r/malegrooming](#)  
47,578 subscribers

● View more

### MODERATOR OF THESE COMMUNITIES

-  [r/beardbrand](#)  
244 subscribers
-  [r/urbanbeardsman](#)  
216 subscribers
-  [r/hackerbreakfast](#)  
13 subscribers

Here are just a couple of his more recent posts:

↑ 210 ↓  You don't have to BLACK HAT to be successful in business! [Best Practices](#) (r/Entrepreneur)  
submitted 23 days ago by [bandholz](#) [Creative Director](#) to [r/Entrepreneur](#)  
51 comments share

↑ 921 ↓ [Fresh haircut helps show of my wavy ginger beard.](#) (r.redd.it)  
submitted 1 month ago by [bandholz](#) [VENDOR/SPONSOR & YEARD](#) to [r/beards](#)  
57 comments share



You can tell just by skimming through his activity on the site that he's genuinely interested in adding to the discussion. With his business expertise, he's a valuable contributor to the entrepreneurial communities he's active in. And obviously, with that fluffy beard, he truly belongs in those beard communities.

**Quick Tip:** List out some words that represent your brand and your own personal expertise, like 'technology' or 'entrepreneur'. Then type them into the search bar to find the best communities to participate in and top Redditors to interact with.

# Create Referral Partnerships and Cross-Promote with Other Companies

When you're growing an ecommerce business, it's common to think of all other companies in your industry as competitors who are constantly trying to steal your customers away. However, once you get past this mindset, you'll find that many of these companies are actually potential allies.

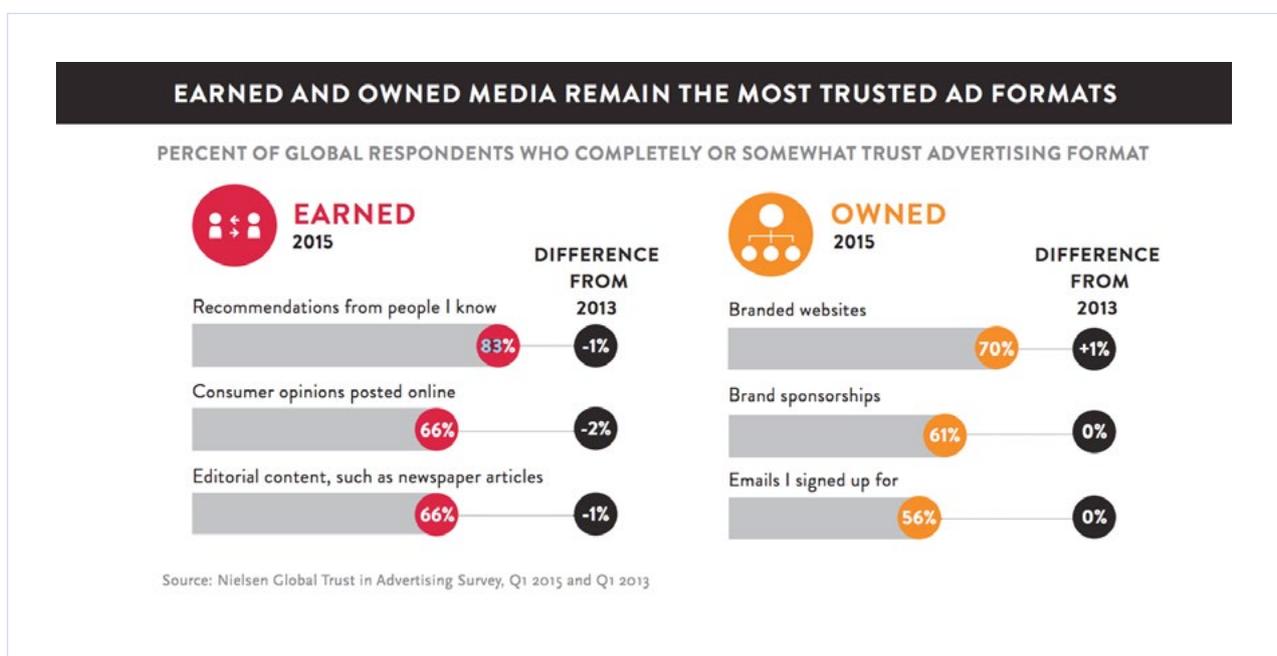
**By creating referral partnerships with businesses that complement rather than compete with your own store, you'll have access to mutually beneficial avenues of growth that wouldn't be available when working alone.**

This may involve referring customers to a partner when they're looking for products you don't sell, cross-promoting products or services, or even co-producing original products or content.

No matter what kind of program you undertake, the key to a successful referral partnership is that both parties benefit and grow together. A good partnership will:

**Keep your customers happy.** When customers are looking for a product or service you don't provide, they will appreciate being directed to a referral partner who can provide what they're looking for.

**Inspire trust.** A [Nielsen survey](#) on advertising and trust found that referrals are the most trusted form of advertising across all demographics, outdoing all kinds of editorial content, brand sponsorship, and all forms of ads. Therefore, if you can get referrals from a company with a trusted reputation, referral customers will be more likely to trust your business.



**Lower running costs.** A referral partnership allows companies to pool resources such as market information, content, and talent. Something as simple as guest posting on each other's sites and sharing blog posts, images and videos with a referral partner could help both businesses save money on content marketing.

**Give access to a warm audience.** Partnering with a complementary business will give you quick access to a new set of qualified customers that have a history of buying products related to your niche.

**Grow your business.** [A study by Heinz Marketing](#) found that not only do 86% of companies with referral programs see growth, but referred customers have a higher lifetime value.



[Source: Business Builders Group](#)

## Types of Businesses You Can Partner With

The first step in creating a successful referral partnership is deciding what kind of business you want to partner with. It doesn't make sense to partner with a competing company – e.g. a green tea subscription box company partnering with another green tea subscription box company – because there's no benefit to either of your businesses. You'll just be competing to sell the same products to the same customers.

Instead, focus on finding companies that add value to your business. These companies could sell products that complement your own products, sell products in the same niche, sell products to a similar audience, or could even offer a service rather than a product.

Here are some ideas for businesses you can partner with:

### **A business in the same industry which sells complementary products**

This is a popular scenario because potential [referral marketing](#) partners are easy to identify, and you should both be targeting the same audience. All you have to do is think about what kind of products people commonly use with your product.

For example, if you run an ecommerce site that sells high-end gaming PCs, you should ask yourself what products gamers use when they play video games (a mouse, a keyboard, a chair). An ecommerce store that sells high-end peripherals would make a great referral partner for your business.

**A business in a different industry which sells to the same audience**

This scenario requires a little more research as you'll be looking for companies outside your industry. A good way to find potential referral partners is to start by creating a profile of your ideal customer, identifying all the products this customer uses and needs.

For example, if you run an ecommerce store that sells school uniforms, you should ask yourself who uses your product (in this case, it would be students), and what other products this customer needs. Some possible partners could be stationery stores, sports equipment stores, and shoe stores.

**A business that sells similar products to a similar audience**

This scenario is a little more difficult, as you need to look for a business selling products that are similar enough to appeal to each other's audience, yet different enough so that you aren't competing. You can often identify potential partners by keeping track of customer requests for products you don't currently stock.

For example, if you run an ecommerce store that sells new camera lenses for modern digital cameras, you might notice that your customers often ask about used, vintage, and rare lenses. A great referral partner would be an ecommerce store that exclusively sells old lenses, as their customer base will most likely include people who are also interested in new camera equipment.

## A service business that complements your ecommerce business

This scenario requires thinking outside the box. To identify a potential referral partner, you'll need to consider how and why people use your product. In particular, you'll need to focus on the situations in which your product is used, rather than the kind of people that use your product.

For example, if you run an ecommerce store that sells travel luggage, you should ask yourself when people use your product (when they travel), and what service businesses operate in that industry. A good referral partner would be a travel business that focuses on airline tickets, accommodation, and tours.

**Quick Tip:** To help think of some unique ideas, just try a Google search for '[your niche] ecommerce partnerships'. Doing this search for 'beauty' brings up a partnership between a [beauty brand and a singer retailing beauty products through Spotify](#). Now that's creative.

## Types of Referral Partnerships You Can Set Up

The next thing you'll need to think about is what kind of partnership you want to create. The options available depend on factors such as what kind of products you're selling, what kind of business you've chosen to partner with, and how much risk each partner is willing to take.

Let's take a look at four popular referral program examples and see how they could be applied to businesses from the previous section.

### **A fee-based referral partnership**

This is a good option for ecommerce businesses because it's easy to organize, easy to maintain, and can be quickly dissolved if it doesn't work out. In this kind of partnership, your partner receives a finder's fee or referral bonus for each customer they send to you who ends up making a purchase.

Using a previous example, an ecommerce store that sells new camera lenses could opt in a fee-based referral partnership with your store selling used lenses. Your partner could add a banner advertisement or a link in their email newsletter with this simple message:

***“At [store name], we focus on selling the newest camera lenses. But if you're looking for a great deal on used lenses, we recommend checking out [partner's URL].”***

Anytime one of their customers uses the link to purchase a vintage lens, they'll receive a small percentage of the sale, while you'll get a referred visit.

### **A cross-promotional partnership**

This is another popular option for ecommerce businesses as both partners will be creating promotions that appeal to the same audience. However, it requires more commitment than a fee-based partnership. In this kind of partnership, partners can run concurrent special promotions, list promotional products on each other's stores, offer samples to each other's customers, or even create promotional bundles that include products from each store.

For example, a high-end gaming PC store could partner with a business that sells gaming chairs and offer a special discount package – get 15% off both a new computer and a new chair when you buy them together.

Here's another example:

# WIN THE MOTHER LOAD

## ENTER TO WIN A STUNNING MOTHER'S DAY FEAST PLUS A YEAR OF FULLY-LOADED HAPPY HOURS!



**A 12-MONTH COCKTAIL HOUR EVERY MONTH SUBSCRIPTION, WITH BOXES FULL OF INDIE CRACKERS, SPREADS, SNACKS AND MORE!**

**ZABAR'S BRUNCH FOR UP TO 10 PEOPLE, SENT DIRECTLY TO YOUR LEADING LADY, JUST IN TIME FOR MOTHER'S DAY!**

**A MOM-TASTIC CASE OF WINE! OPEN A BOTTLE AT BRUNCH AND SAVE THE REST FOR THOSE HAPPY HOURS!**

**ZABAR'S**  **Fatherly**  **Tablet** symphonyspace **YINEPAIR**

**ENTER NOW ►**

Source: [Conversio](#)

Each partner contributes something to the offer to make it lucrative.

### **A co-marketing partnership**

This option requires a large amount of trust and commitment. You won't just be referring customers to each other, you'll be combining your resources to create marketing material and content that can be used by both partners. This kind of partnership could include sharing content from one another's social media pages, guest posting on one another's sites, co-creating content, and combining marketing campaigns.

For example, a school uniform ecommerce store could partner with an online stationery business to create a joint 'back to school' advertising campaign. Both businesses will be able to save time and money by creating complementary marketing materials that can be sent to the same audience.

### **An online – offline referral partnership**

This option requires the most work as you'll be partnering with a different kind of business. However, it has great potential as your business will be exposed to a very different audience. In this kind of partnership, you can refer customers to service businesses or stores that don't have an online presence and work together on cross-promotion and marketing.

For example, an ecommerce luggage business could partner with a travel company and create a luggage giveaway competition. Your company can supply a free luggage set for the travel company to give to a lucky customer. In return, they can write a glowing recommendation of your luggage when creating the promotional materials for the giveaway.

## How to Identify and Contact Referral Partners

By now you should have some idea of what kind of business you'd like to partner with, but it's a good idea to narrow your list down further. If you refer a customer to a partner and they have a bad experience, it's going to reflect poorly on your own business, so you need to look for a company that shares your values and that you can trust.

An ideal partner should satisfy the following criteria:

- They complement rather than compete with your business.
- They are large enough to add value to your partnership but not so large they won't consider working with you.
- They have a sizeable and active audience.
- They have a good reputation.
- They have similar brand values to your business.

**Quick Tip:** [SimilarWeb](#) is a free online service you can use to analyze a website's traffic, audience and engagement to help you identify good partners.

When you're looking for companies to partner with, the best place to start is Google. You can use search terms such as:

- '[target industry] online store'
- '[target industry] ecommerce store'
- '[target industry] [your location]'

You can also search for partners on popular marketplaces such as [Amazon](#), [eBay](#), and [Etsy](#).

Once you've identified a possible referral partner, you can reach out to them by email, social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), or through the customer portal on their site. Here's a basic template you can use:

Hi [NAME],

My name is [YOUR NAME] and I'm from [YOUR SITE]. We're a rapidly growing e-commerce business that [SHORT DESCRIPTION] with a similar customer base.

I just wanted to connect with you to see if you might be interested in discussing a referral partnership. I've done some research into [PARTNER COMPANY'S BUSINESS] and I think there's a lot of potential for [DISCUSS THE BENEFIT TO THEM].

If you're interested in setting up a call or getting together for a coffee, I'd love to discuss some ideas with you.

Thanks,

[YOUR NAME]

An outreach message should include a short introduction of you and your business, a brief summary of why you're contacting them, and an invitation to set up a call or a meeting to discuss a possible partnership.

# Chapter 2 Takeaways

## **Vary your strategies and presence to build a comprehensive online network.**

Secure guest contributor positions and podcast appearances with key micro-influencers and up-and-comers. Follow the influencer's guidelines and general etiquette, and nurture the blog and podcast even after it's published. Promote it on your own channels, repurpose and redistribute when possible, and engage with people who interact with it.

Join social media groups on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media platforms, as well as web forums like Reddit, Quora, and Digg. Be real and relatable while making every single interaction meaningful – don't just peddle your products or try to self-promote that you're an "authority" or a "guru" (unless you want to make people think you're just a stuck-up jerk).

Partner with related businesses to create referral and cross-promotion opportunities, like a luggage brand partnering with a travel company to get business from soon-to-be travelers, or a gaming PC brand partnering with a gaming chair brand to offer a package deal. While the most obvious partnerships will cost money, there's a lot of room to get creative.

**3**

# **Build a Physical Network**

You know that old saying: “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” And the more recent amendment: “It’s not who you know, it’s who knows you.” Cliché as they might be, it doesn’t mean that they’re not true.

The evolution of the digital world has really transformed the way we can meet people, build partnerships, and grow our businesses. But there’s simply no replacing the value of a grassroots, on-the-ground presence when you have the opportunities. It’s human psychology: being able to interact in-person is a faster way to build trust, figure out whether a relationship is meaningful and useful, and communicate easily and more effectively.

To build a physical network, look into events, meetups, and conferences involving your industry and the people who comprise it. If you have the budget, you might want to consider traveling to attend any of these events, like the annual Shoptalk ecommerce conference in Las Vegas.

While these ecommerce conferences are a world of their own in terms of networking and education, you might be surprised at all of the smaller, more localized opportunities you can find to build relationships that are just as strong.

**In this chapter, we’ll discuss in-person network-building strategies like being a vendor for local events, getting involved with meetup groups and similar events, and attending or speaking at industry conferences.**

## Be a Vendor for Local Events

Just because you're running a business that sells products primarily through an online store, it doesn't mean you should focus all your efforts on online marketing, promotion, and sales. Taking your business into the physical world by becoming a vendor for local events is a strategy that is often overlooked by ecommerce store owners, yet it gives you a number of distinct advantages over ecommerce businesses that stay completely online.

For instance, you get to:

### **Market to ideal customers.**

If you attend a local event with strong ties to your industry, you'll have convenient access to a warm, qualified audience of people who are often ready to purchase. For example, if you run an ecommerce store which sells organic health supplements, becoming a vendor at a local farmer's market will give you a chance to show your products to an entire audience of people who are interested in healthy, organic foods. Just one successful vendor event could drive many new customers to your online store.

**Interact with your audience.**

Local events give you an opportunity to meet face-to-face with customers. It's much easier to answer questions about your products and address any potential objections through a friendly conversation rather than by email. You can conduct market research by talking with customers, learning more about what they desire and what drives them to make a purchase. Face-to-face interaction will help overcome any trust issues they might have with buying products online. You'll be seen as a real person, not some faceless internet business.

**Get the word out about your business.**

When done correctly, becoming a vendor at a local event can be a cheap and effective way to boost brand awareness. Handing out business cards and flyers, conducting a raffle or giveaway, and giving out free samples can help get your business known in your local area. You'll also have the opportunity to connect and network with other small business owners in an area, which could lead to lucrative partnerships in the future.

**How to Find & Pick Vendor Events**

The kind of local event you should join depends mainly on what kind of products you're selling. In general, you should focus on finding events that are related to your industry. If you're running an ecommerce store that sells sportswear, you'll have more chance finding potential customers by becoming a vendor at a local marathon than you will at a local Christmas fair. On the other hand, a local Christmas fair might be a perfect event for an ecommerce store selling toys.

You should also take into consideration the size of the event. If you own a small ecommerce store selling bamboo sunglasses, you might have trouble being accepted as a vendor at New York Fashion Week – but you can always start smaller with a New York street festival.

The final point to consider is the cost of becoming a vendor at a local event. Many events require vendors to pay a fee, which could be anything from \$20 for a local school festival to thousands of dollars for a trade event in a major city. You'll also need to pay for transportation to the event location, wages for staff or helpers, and costs related to setting up your booth and display. If it's an event where tens of thousands of people regularly attend, the potential ROI might make it worthwhile to invest in a booth. But if you're unsure about the value of attending the event, it's a good idea to start with cheaper local events.

Now that you have a better idea of the type of event you should attend, let's look at some popular ways to find local vendor events.

### **1. Ask Friends and Family**

Many people often overlook the simplest way of finding great local vendor events – word of mouth. Ask your friends, your family, your neighbors, your mailman, and anyone else who might know of events in your area. Most people will be more than willing to help, and you might learn about potential opportunities that you hadn't previously considered. For example, local non-profit organizations such as the [YMCA](#), [Rotary Club](#) or [Lions Club](#) may let you join vendor events that are usually only advertised to members.

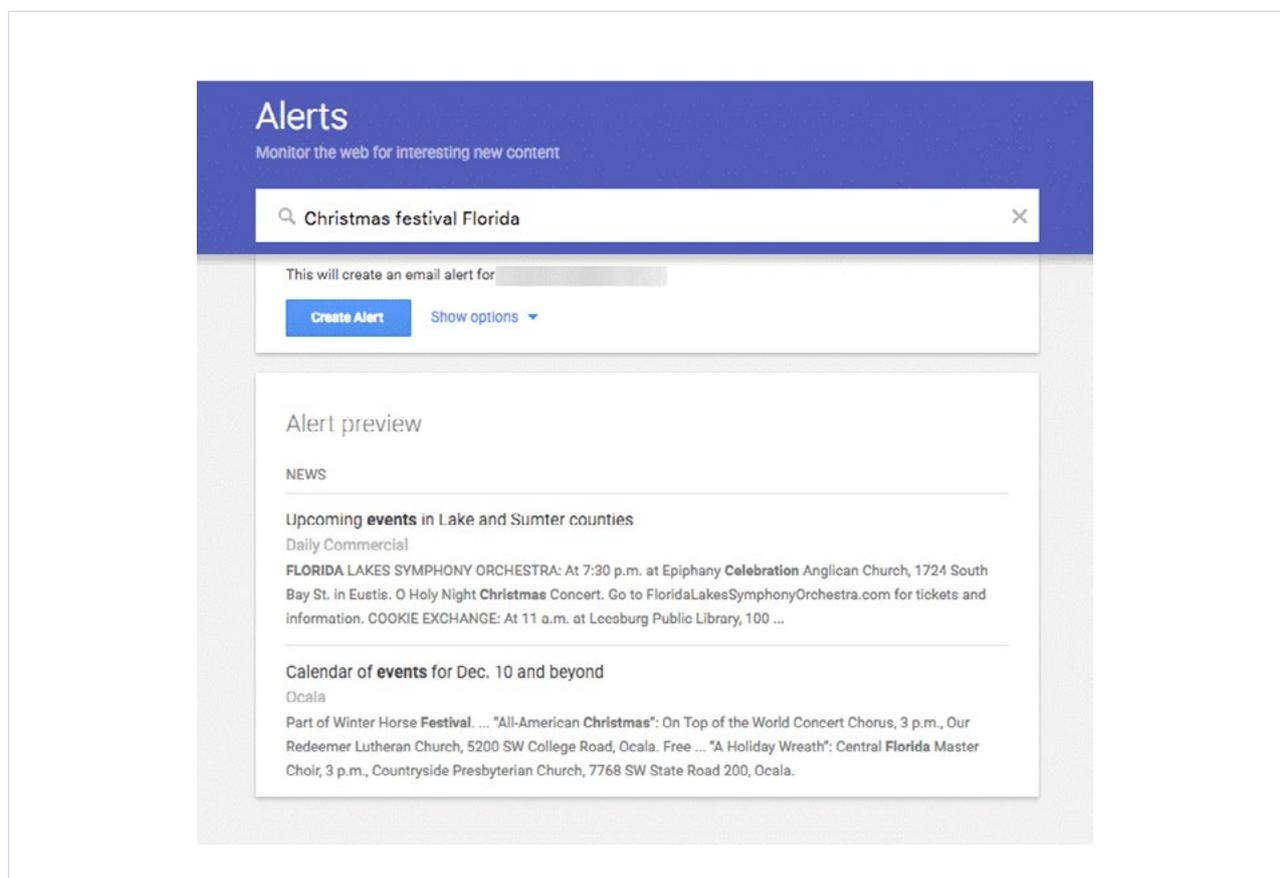
## 2. Use Google

Almost all vendor events will have their own event site or be listed on an industry site. Searching for generic terms such as ‘local vendor events’ or ‘vendor events near me’ will give you too many results, so focus on searching for more specific terms.

Here are some examples:

- ‘[your industry] events [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘vendor events [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘trade shows [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘chamber of commerce events [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘local events [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘festivals [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘craft fairs [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘wedding events [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’
- ‘church events [your area / your city / your state / surrounding areas]’

Once you've found some search terms that work well for your industry, you can set up [Google Alerts](#) to notify you about industry news in your area. You can choose how often you'd like to receive updates, and once the update arrives you can skim through it looking for news about industry events.



### 3. Contact Your Local Business Association

Your local small business association or Chamber of Commerce is a great source for local vendor events. Not only will they have information about events you might like to attend, they'll also provide you with contact information for who you need to talk to about joining the event. When you contact a business association, it's a good idea to ask if they have a newsletter or mailing list you can join so you'll automatically be informed about future events.

### 4. Join Social Media Groups and Forums

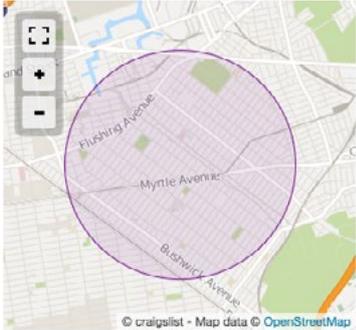
We've already talked about joining social media groups and forums for connecting with influencers and potential partners in your industry. These sites can also be great places to learn about local vendor events. On social media sites like [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), search for accounts belonging to local business associations, the Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood community groups, schools, churches, local media (newspapers, radio, tv stations), and your local tourist board. Some other useful sites are [Nextdoor](#), which is a private social network for your neighborhood that often lists local events, and [Craigslist](#), which has dedicated sites for local communities around the world.

[reply](#) [prohibited](#) Posted 24 days ago [prev](#) [next](#) [print](#)

★ **12/1-12/14: Pop up Christmas market at the Bushwick Marketplace (54-57 Wyckoff Avenue)**

We are looking for artists , designers , crafters, artisans .If you are looking for space to sell your merchandise and items , please contact Julie Erinc at [\(show contact info\)](#)

- do NOT contact me with unsolicited services or offers



© craigslist - Map data © OpenStreetMap  
Wyckoff at Villoughby  
[\(google map\)](#)

fest/fair  
outdoor  
sale  
venue: **Parking lot**

**Quick Tip:** Think old school: Some events still use traditional advertising methods such as local newspapers, magazines, mail advertisements, and brochures. Before you throw away your pile of junk mail, take a look through it and you might find some useful information about local vendor events.

## Tips for Making the Event a Success

Many of the most popular vendor events sell out months or even years in advance, so make sure you get started as soon as possible for events you really want to attend. And once you're in the spotlight, consider taking the following measures:

**Ask the right questions.** Before contacting the event coordinator, make a list of all the questions you want to ask. How much does it cost? Do I need to leave a deposit? How many people usually attend the event? What kind of people attend the event? How many vendors attend the event? What do I need to supply? Will I have access to power and WiFi?

**Attend with a partner.** If the event is particularly expensive, consider sharing a vendor booth with another local business or a partner. If the event is already booked out, try contacting confirmed vendors to see if they'd be willing to let you share their space.

**Drive visitors to your site.** The purpose of becoming a vendor at a local event is to create more awareness of your ecommerce store, so make sure all your promotional material includes your site's address. You can offer special discounts to event attendees who sign up to your [mailing list](#) or even have a giveaway contest (such as one of your products or a gift certificate) which requires people to visit your store to enter.

**Network.** Before and after the event, you'll have time to meet other vendors. Make sure you exchange contact information so you can talk about future events and business opportunities in your area.

**Quick Tip:** Consider aggregating and connecting all of the contacts you get from these events, like a special Facebook group just for event vendors.

# Get Involved with Relevant Local Meetups and Events

We've already looked at a variety of online networking strategies ecommerce businesses can use to connect with like-minded people, such as email outreach and joining social media groups and forums related to your industry. However, it could take months of back-and-forth emails to find, qualify and pitch potential business partners when you're working completely online.

At meetups, people attend because they're specifically looking for new contacts to grow their network. In the time it takes to have a cup of coffee or eat a meal, you'll be able to introduce yourself, ask questions, learn about other businesses, and hopefully build a strong foundation for future endeavors.

Here are some other benefits of getting involved in meetups:

**Receive (and give) referrals.** In previous sections, we've discussed how important referrals are for growing your business. The primary purpose of local business meetups and networking events is the exchange of trusted referrals. The more time you spend contributing to meetings, the more referrals you'll receive from other members. You might find that referrals from local members could be more cost-effective than any other kind of marketing.

**Learn about your industry.** Local meetups are the best place to learn about upcoming events, industry changes, and potential opportunities in your community. By speaking with other members, you'll often learn about opportunities well before non-members, giving you a big advantage over your competitors.

**Get advice.** Many up and coming ecommerce businesses are run by single owners or a small team. When you get into trouble, it can be hard to find people to talk to. Many people who attend local meetups and business events are experienced entrepreneurs who will be happy to listen to your story, offer you advice, and teach you ways to improve your business.

## How to Find Local Meetups and Events

We've already looked at ways to find local vendor events, and many of those strategies will also work well for finding business meetups. In addition, here are some more great sources for finding networking opportunities.

### 1. Your Local Chamber of Commerce

This is the best place to start for finding meetups in your local community. Give your local office a call and they'll happily tell about upcoming networking opportunities that will let you connect with other business owners and influential people in the community. Many chambers also offer business training, professional development, and mentoring opportunities for businesses, and costs for becoming a member are usually reasonable.

### 2. SBA Community Groups

The Small Business Administration is known for giving out small business loans, but they're also a great resource for business advice, training and learning about local events and networking opportunities. You can find more information about local events by looking at their [events page](#).

The screenshot shows the SBA.gov website's 'Find Events' section. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the SBA logo and links for 'Business Guide', 'Funding Programs', 'Contracting', 'Learning Center', 'Local Assistance', and 'About SBA'. Below this is a search bar with a 'Find Events' button and a 'Feedback' link. The search filters include 'Enter Zip Code', 'Set Your Distance' (set to 200 Miles), and 'Select Date Range' (set to 2017-12-11 to 2018-01-11). A 'Refine Your Search' button is also present.

Two event listings are displayed for December 11, 2017:

- Access to Capital for Small Business Owners - Workshop (Conroe)**: Scheduled for December 11, 2017, from 8:30 am CST to 11:00 am CST. Location: 505 W Davis St, Conroe, TX 77301. It is an SBA Sponsored Event. Description: This is a no cost financial and education workshop for small businesses or new start-ups in need of finance options and business advice. In this session, speakers and lending experts will discuss ... Registration Required | Website
- Credit, Borrowing and Business Planning Strategies:** Scheduled for December 11, 2017, from 9:00 am EST to 12:00 pm EST. Location: Center for Academic Success (CAS) CAS Rm 452, Union, NJ 07083. It is a Resource Partner Event. Description: Whether you're already in business, or not.... It is always wise to take steps to improve your credit score, improve your bankability and plan for the next 12-24 months ahead. At this seminar, you ... Registration Required | Website | Contact Number: 908-737-4220

### 3. Business Network International

[BNI](#) is a global business referral organization with the purpose of providing opportunities to develop long-term, meaningful relationships between business professionals. With over 8,000 chapters around the world, there's a good chance you'll be able to find BNI networking events in your local area.

**Find A Chapter**  
Enter Location or Postal Code  
New York →

**Operational Chapter**  
● Core Group  
● Future Chapter

**The Abundance Chapter ●**  
Tuesday 7:00 AM  
To Be Determined  
New York NY US  
Chapter Details

**Albany - New Core group ●**  
Tuesday 7:30 AM  
100 Somewhere St  
Anywhere NY US  
Chapter Details

#### 4. Eventbrite

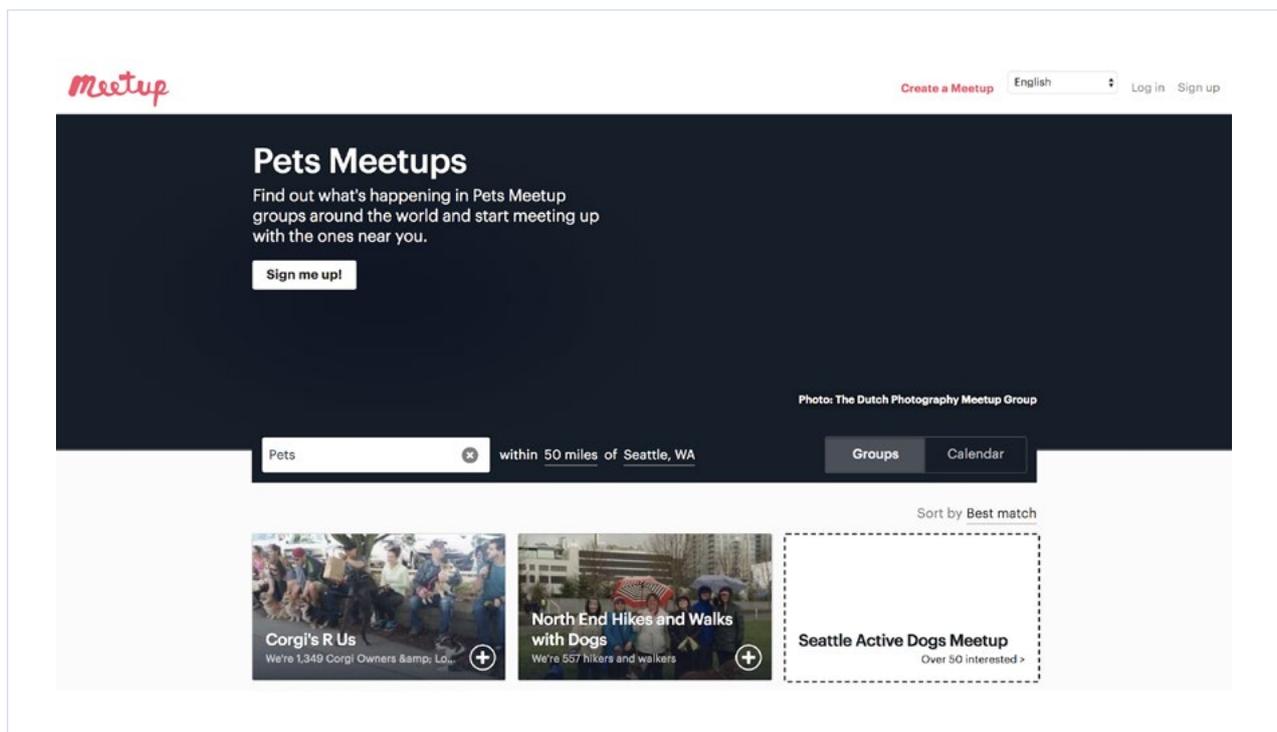
[Eventbrite](#) is most commonly known as a site for purchasing tickets to local events, but it also has a large database of meetups that is searchable by industry and location. Enter a relevant phrase in the search bar (eg. 'ecommerce') and you'll be shown all the networking events in your local area.

#### 5. Co-working Spaces

Overlooked by almost all business owners, co-working spaces are not only places for people without an office to get work done. They're a fantastic place to network with other similar minded entrepreneurs, learn about opportunities in the area, create partnerships, and build relationships.

## 6. Meetup

[Meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) is a social networking site that lists meetups for people who want to connect and share ideas. The site allows you to search for meetups in a particular city. In addition, you can find meetups related to a particular niche such as tech and fashion by choosing the relevant industry category. For instance, if you run an online store that sells dog food, you can search for pet-related meetups in your locality.



## How to Successfully Participate in Local Meetups and Events

Once you've identified some meetups that you'd like to join, it's a good idea to work on your face-to-face networking skills. It's important to present a good image to other attendees while making the best use of your time. You don't want to be that person who runs around handing out business cards to everyone in the room, yet nobody can remember your name or business the next day.

Here are some useful strategies to help you succeed at local meetup.

### 1. Be Memorable

If you want to gain some clout with others in your industry, it's important to be memorable to other business owners. You can do this by creating unique business cards, interesting promotional material, or simply telling a memorable story when you introduce yourself. Above all, be 'real' and avoid forcing promotion of yourself or your brand. As I mentioned earlier in the digital networking chapter, people naturally gravitate toward interesting and relatable people. Trying too hard to sell your products or look important will likely be more of a repellent.

### 2. Offer Your Unique Value to the Group

Every member is expected to contribute to local meetups and events, and if you can find a way to offer unique value, you'll quickly become an integral part of the group. A good place to start is your knowledge of ecommerce. If most other members of the group own brick-and-mortar businesses, it could be a great opportunity to discuss running an online business, using social media, creating content, and conducting online outreach. If they're interested, of course.

### **3. Focus on Businesses that Complement Your Own**

If you're running an ecommerce store that sells baby clothes, it's probably best to avoid spending too much time networking with the local fishmonger. They might be a good contact in the future, but initially, you'll have more success focusing on businesses that are related to your industry. For example, people who work with children (such as the local pediatrician or kindergarten owner) could be a great source of referrals.

### **4. Be Specific When Asking for Referrals**

At local meetups, members are expected to give and receive referrals. To get the best referrals, you should try to be as specific as possible. "I'm looking for people who might be interested in buying work boots from my online shoe store" is unlikely elicit much useful information from group members. "I heard that a new factory will be opening in town next month and their new employees will probably need some great work boots. Does anyone have any contacts in the management group of the new factory?" is much more likely to get a response.

### **5. Promote Each Other's Content**

Some group members will be running businesses that are so different from your own that it will be hard to find common ground. This doesn't mean you can't be useful to each other. A simple way to help another business is to share and like their posts on social media, write a review on their Yelp page, or become friends on LinkedIn. If they don't currently use social media, helping them set up a Facebook account could be a great way to get some positive exposure within the group.

## 6. Know When to Persist and When to Move on

It's important to regularly attend meetups to become known in the area and to build a solid network. Even if you attend every week, it could take months for you to see the rewards. However, if you find that the group is just not effective for delivering business, it's a good idea to look for another group that will be more beneficial to your business.

**Quick Tip:** Bring a small notepad and take notes as you're meeting new people. Include a memorable trait about the person to help you remember them, along with any ideas about working with them. This way, you won't wake up the next morning with a confusing pile of business cards.

# Scope Out Opportunities for Public Speaking

Attending local conferences and meetups is a great way to build brand awareness and meet potential partners. If you get a chance to become a conference speaker, it's even more beneficial. The good news is that those who organize conferences at a smaller scale are open to featuring up-and-coming businesses.

So if you aren't 'big enough' to be invited for a TED Talk, you can always try for an invite to TEDx.

**TED** event  
vs.  
**TED<sup>x</sup>** event

**What's the difference?**

**TED:** A TED event is put on by the official organization itself.

**TED<sup>x</sup>:** A TED<sup>x</sup> event is an independently organized local event. x= independent

**BOTH:** Speakers give carefully prepared talks, demonstrations, and performances on a large variety of topics. The purpose is to spark conversation, foster learning, inspiration and wonder.

Source: <https://www.ted.com/participate/organize-a-local-tedx-event/before-you-start/what-is-a-tedx-event>

Maybe you speak on a subject that's relevant to your industry, or your session is a demo of your product offerings. Whatever the scenario, you not only get a platform to showcase your knowledge, but you'll also have an opportunity to do some self-promotion, would could drive more traffic to your online store.

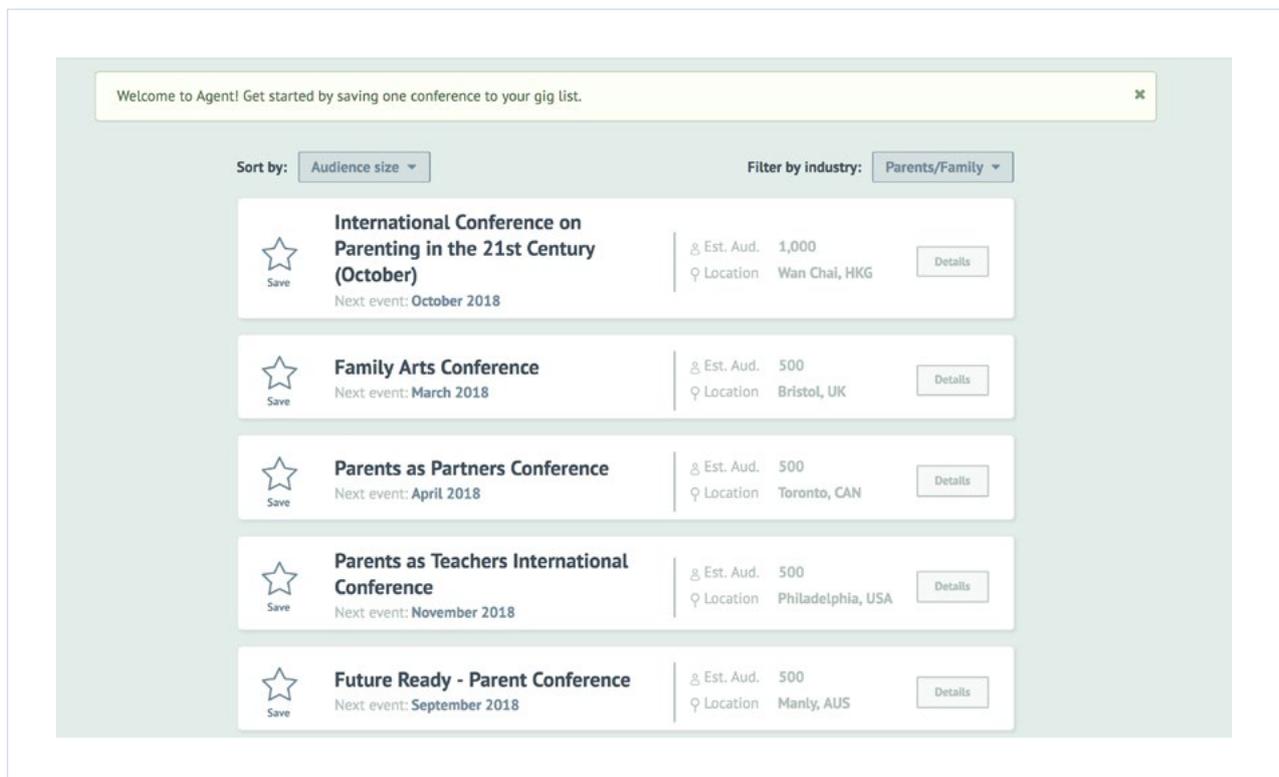
### **How do I actually find such opportunities?**

I'm glad you asked. First of all, enquire about conference speaker opportunities from the professional connections you make at local meetups and conferences. Of course, you'll have to convey your unique value proposition. Perhaps you have significant experience on the subject. Maybe you have a fancy ecommerce store. Maybe you have attained serious results with what you want to speak on.

Once you've leveraged your network, explore the following avenues to add more gigs in your database:

## Agent

What if you had a tool that presented you with a list of events in your industry and gave you the contact information for each? Well, that's exactly what [Agent](#) is. The tool offers a list of 1,000+ events, all categorized by date, size, and genre. Additionally, it provides the contact info for the conference or point person, making it easy to reach out to them.

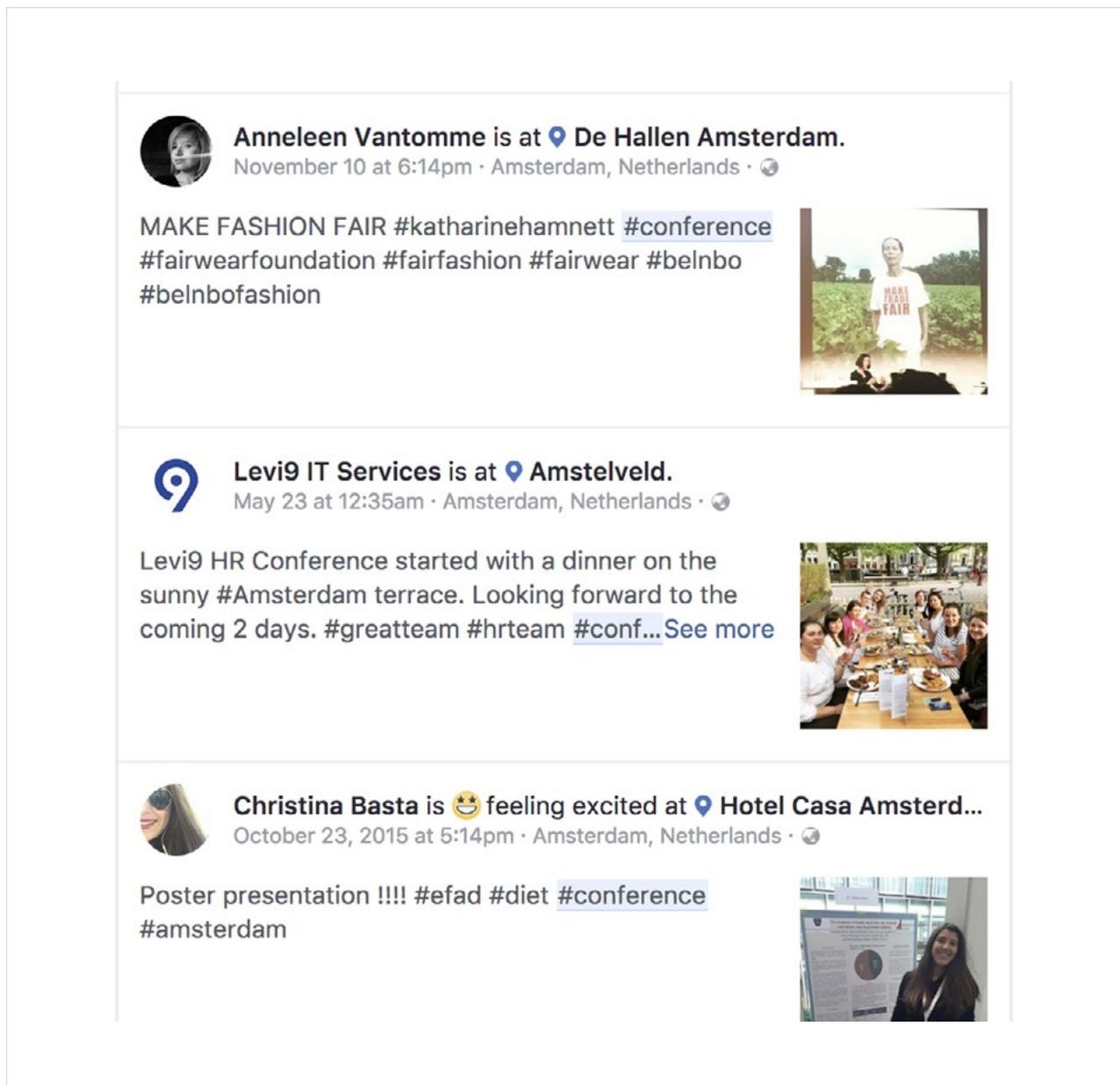


No other tool offers such results. Thus, if you're looking for a simple and straightforward way to find a public speaking opportunity, take Agent on a test drive.

## Facebook

When using Facebook, not only should you keep an eye out for posts and ads that mention a conference, but you should try searching for them. This can be done with the use of hashtags.

Here's the type of results you'll find when you search for #conference:



The image shows a screenshot of Facebook search results for the hashtag #conference. It displays three posts from different users, each with a profile picture, name, location, date, and text content. The first post is by Anneleen Vantomme, the second by Levi9 IT Services, and the third by Christina Basta. Each post includes a small thumbnail image related to the content.

**Anneleen Vantomme** is at **De Hallen Amsterdam**.  
November 10 at 6:14pm · Amsterdam, Netherlands · 🌐

MAKE FASHION FAIR #katharinehamnett #conference  
#fairwearfoundation #fairfashion #fairwear #belnbo  
#belnbofashion



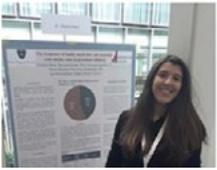
**Levi9 IT Services** is at **Amstelveeld**.  
May 23 at 12:35am · Amsterdam, Netherlands · 🌐

Levi9 HR Conference started with a dinner on the sunny #Amsterdam terrace. Looking forward to the coming 2 days. #greatteam #hrteam #conf... See more

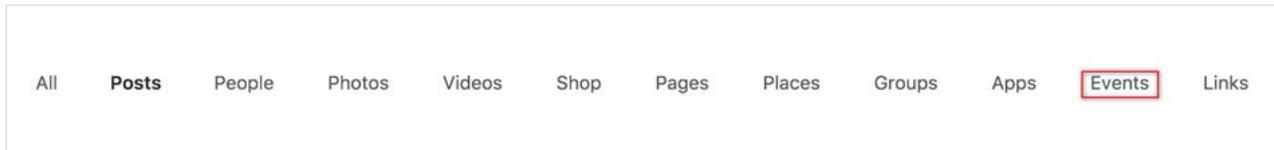


**Christina Basta** is 😄 feeling excited at **Hotel Casa Amsterd...**  
October 23, 2015 at 5:14pm · Amsterdam, Netherlands · 🌐

Poster presentation !!!! #efad #diet #conference  
#amsterdam



Also, don't forget to look for more conferences in the Events tab:

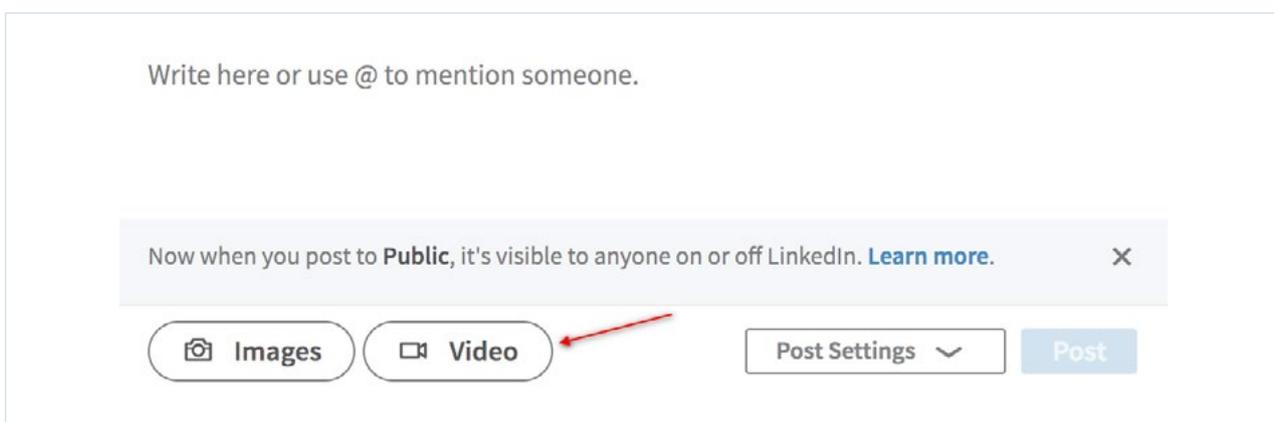


It looks like someone posted about a fashion conference in Amsterdam, so what should you do? Google it to see if it's a conference that could benefit your business.

## LinkedIn

Look at your competitors, colleagues, and other professionals who have the same target audience as you do. Check their LinkedIn profile and websites to see which events they've attended as a conference speaker. Then, you can contact the organizers of relevant events and pitch yourself, as well.

If you've spoken at a conference in the past and have a recording of it, add that under your summary so organizers can view it immediately after reading your pitch. LinkedIn allows you to include full-length videos. The point is to let them scrutinize a little so they know you're knowledgeable.



In addition, take advantage of LinkedIn Publisher. You can publish either original content or republish any content you've written on other websites. Blog posts you publish here will appear second on your profile page – between your summary section and headline box. Assuming you blog about topics you want to speak about, this will further strengthen your credibility as an expert in your industry.

### Conference Directories

If you're looking for more organizers to get in touch with, try conference directories. [Conferize](#), AllConferences.com and Plancast are web-based directories, listing just conferences. Open these websites, create a profile and wait for conference details to be delivered right to your inbox.

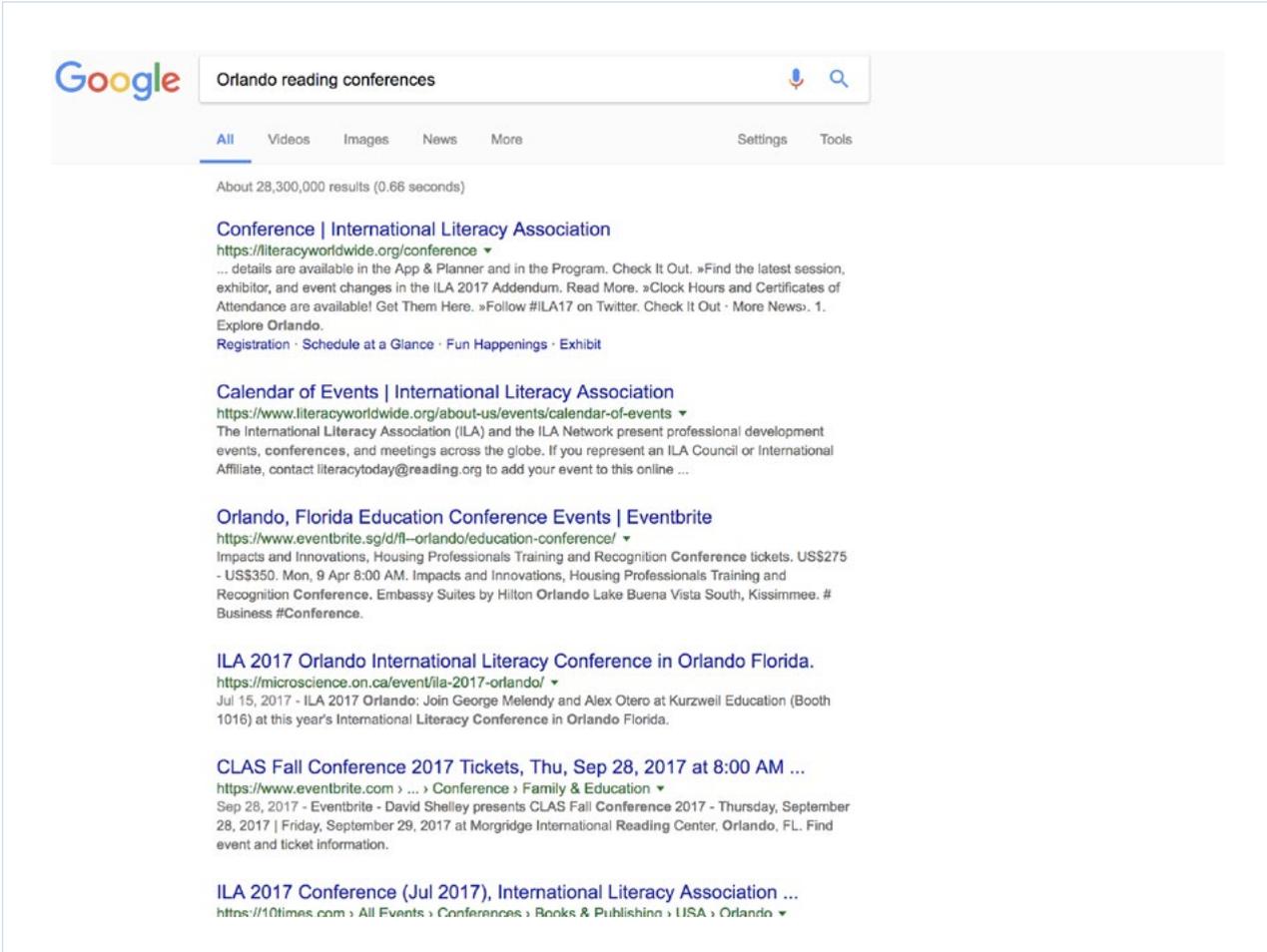
**Quick Tip:** Check out [EventsinAmerica.com](#) to find trade shows, meetings, conventions and conferences.

### Google

It's rare for Google to let someone down, so use it. As someone who has never done public speaking before - and no, college presentations don't count - you'll want to search for realistic conferences and events before you begin shooting for the stars.

**Think local, regional and state.**

For instance, if you live in Orlando and you're an online book retailer you could search: 'Orlando reading conferences' or 'Orlando book events'.



The image shows a Google search interface with the query "Orlando reading conferences". The search results are displayed on a light gray background. The first result is "Conference | International Literacy Association" with a URL to literacyworldwide.org/conference. The second result is "Calendar of Events | International Literacy Association" with a URL to literacyworldwide.org/about-us/events/calendar-of-events. The third result is "Orlando, Florida Education Conference Events | Eventbrite" with a URL to eventbrite.sg/d/fl-orlando/education-conference/. The fourth result is "ILA 2017 Orlando International Literacy Conference in Orlando Florida." with a URL to microscience.on.ca/event/ila-2017-orlando/. The fifth result is "CLAS Fall Conference 2017 Tickets, Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 8:00 AM ..." with a URL to eventbrite.com. The sixth result is "ILA 2017 Conference (Jul 2017), International Literacy Association ..." with a URL to 10times.com.

Google

Orlando reading conferences

All Videos Images News More Settings Tools

About 28,300,000 results (0.66 seconds)

**Conference | International Literacy Association**  
<https://literacyworldwide.org/conference> ▼  
... details are available in the App & Planner and in the Program. Check It Out. »Find the latest session, exhibitor, and event changes in the ILA 2017 Addendum. Read More. »Clock Hours and Certificates of Attendance are available! Get Them Here. »Follow #ILA17 on Twitter. Check It Out · More News». 1. Explore Orlando.  
Registration · Schedule at a Glance · Fun Happenings · Exhibit

**Calendar of Events | International Literacy Association**  
<https://www.literacyworldwide.org/about-us/events/calendar-of-events> ▼  
The International Literacy Association (ILA) and the ILA Network present professional development events, conferences, and meetings across the globe. If you represent an ILA Council or International Affiliate, contact [literacytoday@reading.org](mailto:literacytoday@reading.org) to add your event to this online ...

**Orlando, Florida Education Conference Events | Eventbrite**  
<https://www.eventbrite.sg/d/fl-orlando/education-conference/> ▼  
Impacts and Innovations, Housing Professionals Training and Recognition Conference tickets. US\$275 - US\$350. Mon, 9 Apr 8:00 AM. Impacts and Innovations, Housing Professionals Training and Recognition Conference. Embassy Suites by Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista South, Kissimmee. # Business #Conference.

**ILA 2017 Orlando International Literacy Conference in Orlando Florida.**  
<https://microscience.on.ca/event/ila-2017-orlando/> ▼  
Jul 15, 2017 - ILA 2017 Orlando: Join George Melendy and Alex Otero at Kurzweil Education (Booth 1016) at this year's International Literacy Conference in Orlando Florida.

**CLAS Fall Conference 2017 Tickets, Thu, Sep 28, 2017 at 8:00 AM ...**  
<https://www.eventbrite.com> > ... > Conference > Family & Education ▼  
Sep 28, 2017 - Eventbrite - David Shelley presents CLAS Fall Conference 2017 - Thursday, September 28, 2017 | Friday, September 29, 2017 at Morgridge International Reading Center, Orlando, FL. Find event and ticket information.

**ILA 2017 Conference (Jul 2017), International Literacy Association ...**  
<https://10times.com> > All Events > Conferences > Books & Publishing > USA > Orlando ▼

Can you spot the big, national conferences in search results? Those are the ones to ignore when you're just starting out. Scroll down further and look for local, niche conferences that would like to work with a fresh face. Ideally, you'll find such conferences beyond the first page of search results. Here's the third page result for the above-mentioned search:

### Istation - Conferences and Presentations

<https://www.istation.com/About/ConferencesPresentations> ▼

**Conferences** and Presentations. Mark your calendar for upcoming **conferences** and presentations featuring Istation's insights, results, and new products. January; February; March; April; May; June; July; August; September; October; November; December ...

### Virginia State Reading Association

<https://www.vsra.org/> ▼

The International Literacy Association (ILA) recognized VSRA with the Award of Excellence, the Advocacy Program, and the Community Engagement Achievement Award during the 2017 annual **conference** in Orlando, Florida!

### NSTA Conferences & Professional Development

[www.nsta.org/conferences/](http://www.nsta.org/conferences/) ▼

NSTA **conferences** offer the latest in science content, **teaching** strategy, and research to enhance and expand your professional growth. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to collaborate with science education leaders and your peers. Each year, NSTA hosts a national **conference** on science education (in the spring), ...

### Home - Beyond School Hours XXI

[beyondschoolhours.org/](http://beyondschoolhours.org/) ▼

February 21-24, 2018 - Orlando, Florida. Features. Schedule · For 21st CCLC Programs · Keynotes · Pre-**Conference** Leadership Institute · Site Visits · Grade-Level **Reading** Panel Session ... The nation's premiere **conference** for educators and leaders serving K-12 students in afterschool, summer and beyond.

### Annual Returns to Orlando | American Libraries Magazine

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/.../ala-annual-conference-returns-orlando/> ▼

Jul 20, 2016 - Highlights of the speakers, sessions, and library technology featured at the ALA Annual **Conference** and Exhibition in Orlando, Florida. ... holding a few belongings. The **teacher** asks the class which of their own possessions would be so meaningful that they would have to take them on a similar journey.

And you want to know what other business owners are searching for, scroll down to the bottom of the page and you'll find searches related to "Orlando reading conferences."

## Searches related to orlando reading conferences local

**international literacy association conference 2018**

**international reading association (ira)**

**national reading conference 2017**

**literacy conferences 2017**

**literacy conferences 2018**

**ila 2018 conference location**

**national reading conference 2018**

**reading conferences for teachers 2017**

This section is a blessing in disguise. Here, you'll see all the related keywords you'll need to continue your research in the Orlando area. Once you get what you require from local cities, explore region and state.

### **Prepare a List**

Start a spreadsheet with dates, links and contact information. Fill in the details and repeat the process until you have 10 feasible events to start with, based on your budget and availability. Taking targeted, focused action is what will get you noticed!

Once you know the details, you can see when organizers are taking speaker applications. Best practice is to start reaching out months in advance in order to generate significant interest in your speaker profile.

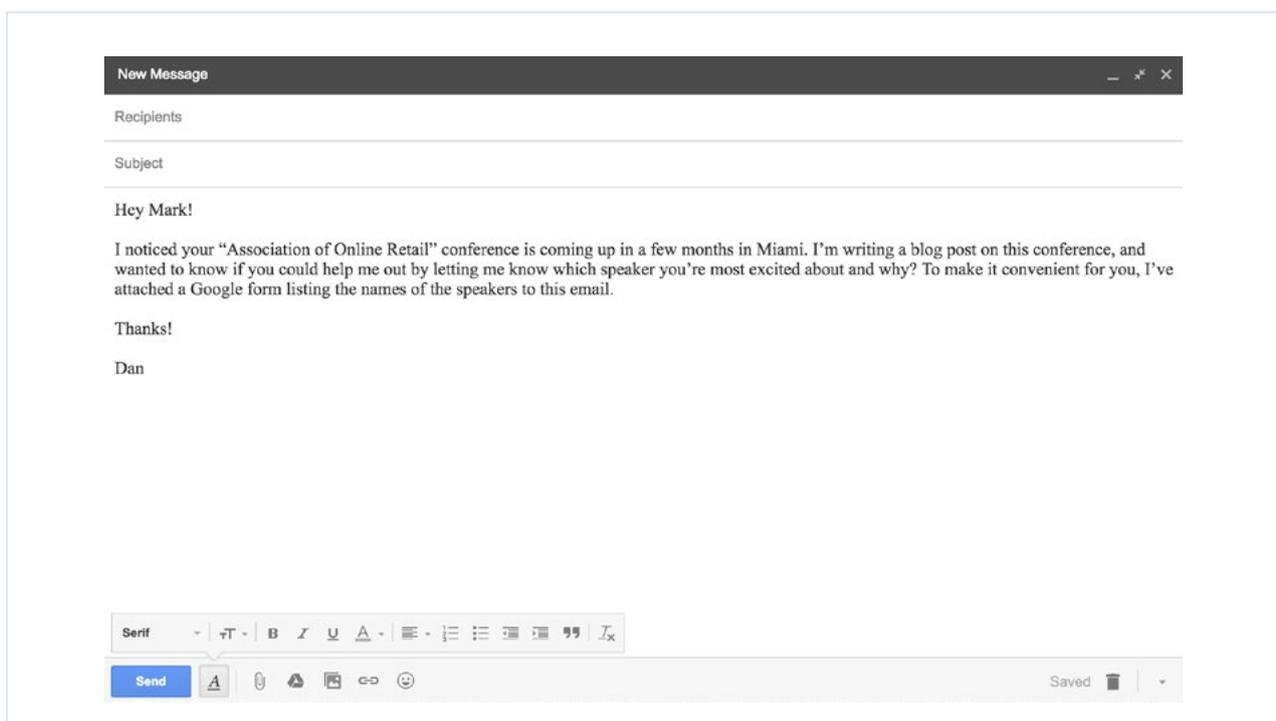
## Reach out!

Don't copy and paste the same template to every one of the organizers you intend to contact. That's the quickest way to get blacklisted and to never hear back from someone. Also, you're developing a relationship so don't pitch in the first email.

What to do instead:

- Keep the initial message short.
- Inquire about the conference.
- Ask intelligent questions.

Here's a script you could use:



If you receive a positive reply to this email, you should reply back to thank them. Also, you can sneak in a “P.S – looking for more individuals to fill up the panel?” message. This approach is natural and friendly, and it shows your interest without making you look desperate. It also puts the framework in place for you to build a valuable professional connection later on.

Ultimately, you should attempt to make contact 3-6 months in advance. Some conferences book out shorter – some longer. This is why it’s important to reach out to decision makers with plenty of notice.

**Quick Tip:** Keep a section in your spreadsheet to list the responses of these event organizers. Depending on your responses, consider making a new tab or separate spreadsheet for events that require follow-ups or should be shelved until next year.

## Chapter 3 Takeaways

**Do your research to scope out 50 events, meetups, and conferences where you can vend, network, and speak.** I understand that it's likely physically impossible for you to find time for all of those, which is why the next step is to narrow down the list.

After you've sent out your messages and emails and allowed two weeks for responses, trim your list based on costs, your own availability, and whether your application or inquiry was accepted for vending or public speaking engagements.

To find these opportunities, conduct online searches and tap into your existing industry resources. For local events, try contacting your local small business association or Chamber of Commerce. For national and even international events (why not dream big?), you can try consulting conference directories and social media, as well as online tools like Agent.

Similarly to the previous researching techniques we've discussed, give yourself several hours to scope the right opportunities, keep your findings organized in a spreadsheet or program, and set yourself a daily schedule until your research is completed.

**4**

# **Create Extraordinary Content**

In 2008, people spent an average of [2.7 hours](#) per day browsing digital media. By 2015, this number grew to 5.6. People are spending a lot of their time online, and it's estimated that [one-fifth](#) of it is spent consuming content. For an ecommerce brand, well-executed content creation can be the captivating element that means the difference between a sale and a bounce.

According to [Demand Metric](#):

- 60% of consumers like to read relevant content from companies
- 82% have more positive feelings about a brand after reading their custom content
- 70% feel closer to companies because of content marketing



Not only do consumers strongly value great content, they're starting to expect it as the status quo. Frankly, I find it weird to stumble across a company that doesn't have some sort of content strategy, even if it's not a comprehensive content marketing plan.

If you're not sure where to start with content creation, try blogging regularly. But not just any blogging – it has to be interesting, relevant, timely, and helpful. You should be answering the questions that your potential customers are asking, and provide them with strategies to help accomplish whatever they're looking to accomplish.

Content creation can also include videos, case studies, research papers, custom graphics and infographics, podcasts, webinars, and online courses. And once you spend the time developing all of it, promote and distribute it whenever you find a place where it naturally fits. (Spamming out anything, including your content, is always a bad idea.)

**In this chapter, we'll discuss how to go about writing blog content at least once a week, how to plan and create other types of valuable [content](#), and strategies for content promotion and distribution that gets you customers instead of enemies.**

## Maintain a Quality Blog

It's easy to visualize the value of writing blog posts for an online publisher, but when you run an online store, is there still any gain from blog content?

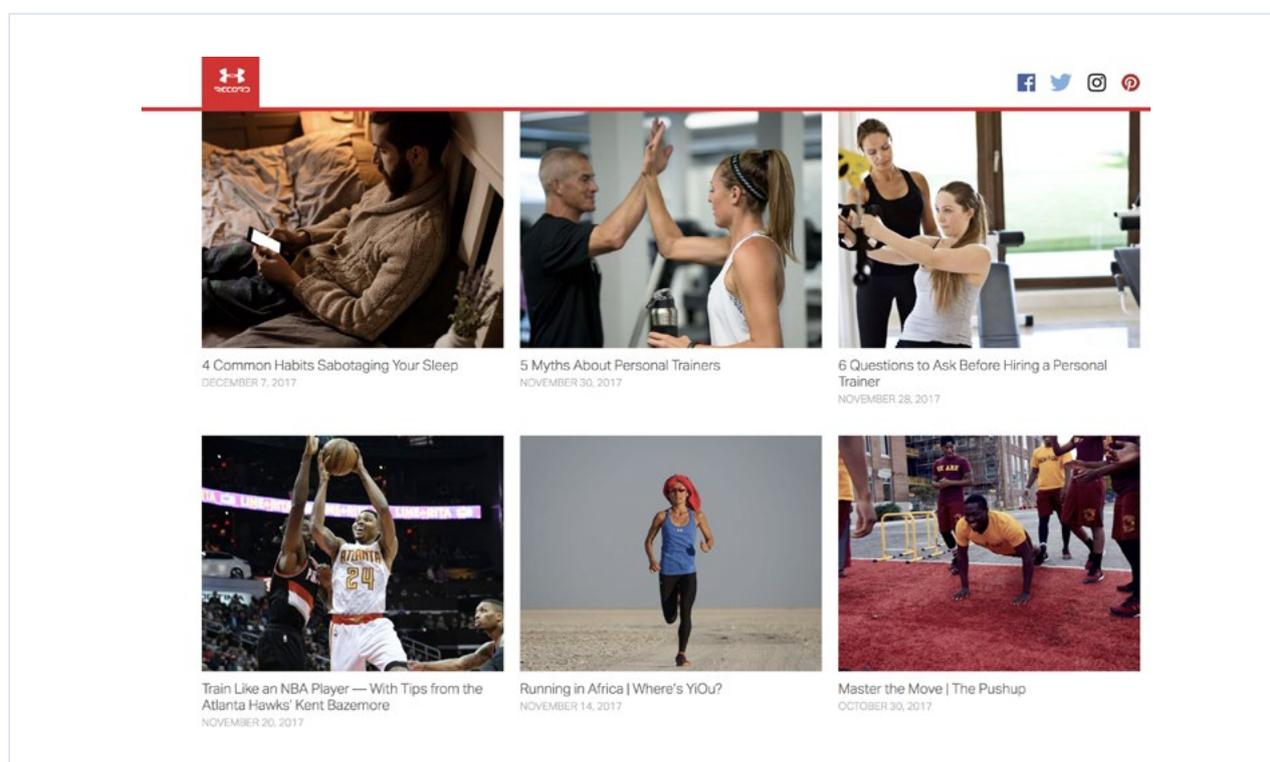
Apparently, there is. Adding a [blog to your ecommerce site](#) can drive web traffic in ways that paid advertising can't. With companies that blog getting [55% more web visits](#) and [81% of buyers conducting online](#) research before making a purchase, you could attract several eyeballs through your blog that will gain you the recognition of consumers as well as of other industry authorities.

Need proof? Like any ambitious online retailer, ZAGG, best known for its line of mobile screen protectors, wanted to drive more traffic to its website. To achieve this goal, ZAGG prioritized content creation and regularly posted high quality content on a blog, which they named the ZAGG-Blog.

After launch, ZAGG discovered that people who were less familiar with their brand were indeed consuming their blog content. After less than two years of blogging, ZAGG earned 172% ROI from direct sales. In addition, the ZAGG-Blog contributed to [more than 10%](#) of ZAGG's website traffic, about 60% of which came in the shape of new visitors.

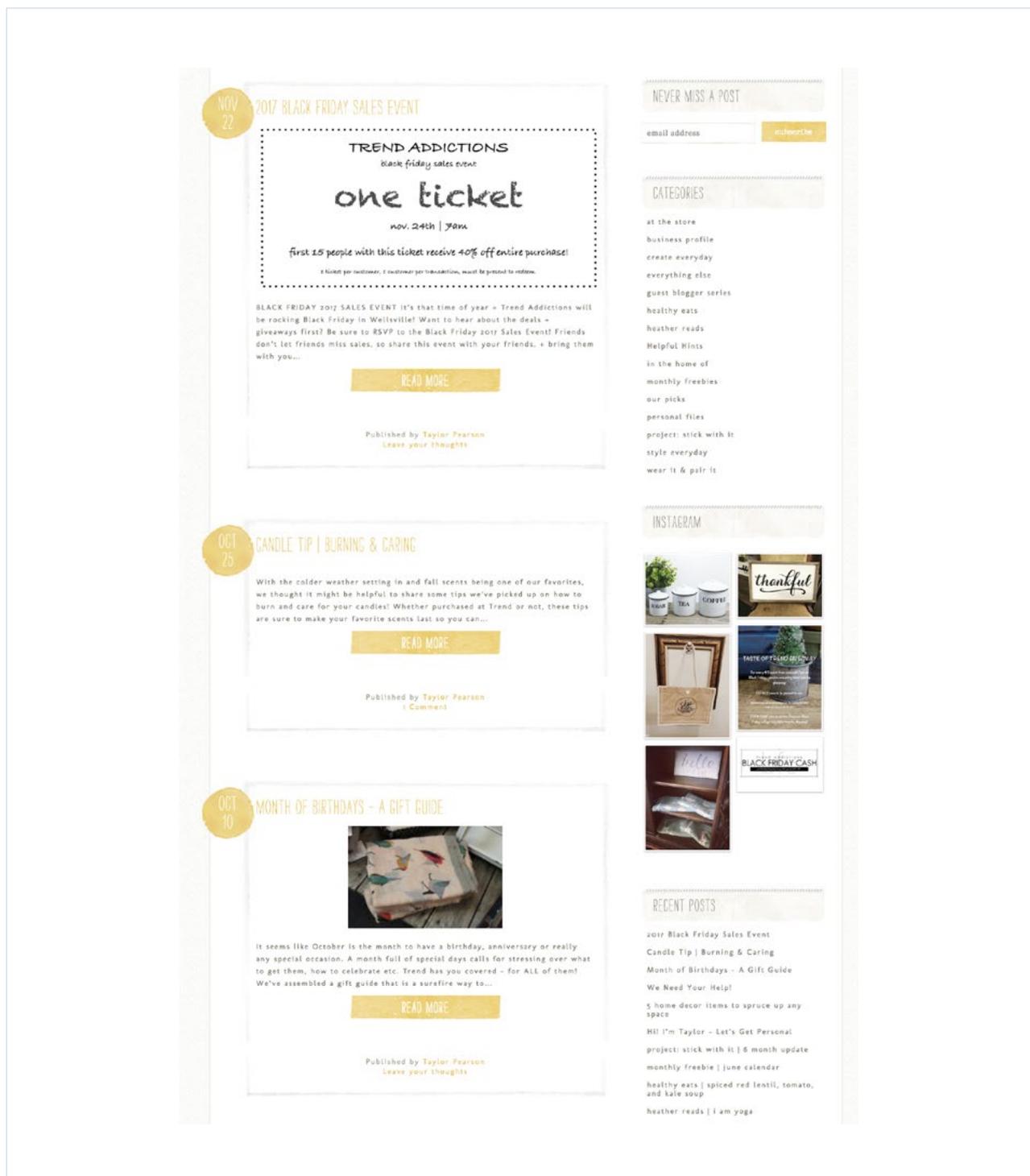
## How Often Should You Blog?

2-4 posts per week is an ideal blogging schedule to follow when you're just starting out. It's a smart and effective way to gain web traffic without stressing yourself out over content creation, and you also don't overwhelm your target audience with a plethora of posts. Innovative sports brand Under Armour follows this posting schedule to increase brand awareness and drive traffic to its ecommerce site.



1 post per week can work in your favor if you're looking to build anticipation in your site visitors. Because you get a sufficient amount of time to conduct research, you can produce top-notch best-of-the-best blog posts that include everything from case studies to industry-related examples. If you don't have a lot of time and resources to allocate to content creation, writing a blog post once a week is sufficient.

Writing a blog post or two each month can help build trust in your brand as you publish only when you have something worth talking about. With enough time on your hands to conduct research and perhaps interview customers, you might be able to produce actionable content that offers new perspectives or techniques. NY-based retail boutique Trend Addictions follows this posting schedule.



## How to Craft Killer Blog Content

It's challenging to get your voice heard when you're not as big as Amazon or eBay. This is where blogging can work its magic: writing a blog post can establish you as a more knowledgeable resource than the rest. Of course, the quality of your blog content matters. Here are a few blog writing tips to keep it top notch:

### Select a Captivating Blog Topic

When it comes to content creation, you have to come up with a title that people will want to click on. Thankfully, the internet is full of inspiration right at your fingertips. To make brainstorming even easier, find and bookmark 5 high-quality ecommerce blogs in your niche.

These can be blogs operated by small retailers to competitors and everything in between. Write down the headlines of their popular posts, and repurpose them based on your own industry and target audience.

**Quick Tip:** Use a Google Sheet to keep track of your favorite websites. You can also include the blog title and URL of the post to speed things up (instead of manually typing in the URL every time, you can just click the URL to open the relevant blog post).

Here's an example: Let's assume you sell consumer electronics and your target audience is the same as Best Buy. What do you do?

Find popular articles on Best Buy's blog.

This can be done in two ways:

- **Manually:** The number of social shares and comments on a post can give you an idea of its popularity.
- **Using a tool:** Tools like EpicBeat and BuzzSumo enable you to see what blog post is performing the best on a particular website.

For instance, enter Best Buy's blog URL in BuzzSumo to see the most popular content based on the number of Facebook [engagements](#) and other similar metrics.

The screenshot shows the BuzzSumo interface for the URL <https://blog.bestbuy.ca/>. The results are sorted by 'Total Shares'. The top three articles are:

Article Title	Author	Facebook Engagements	LinkedIn Shares	Twitter Shares	Pinterest Shares	Number of Links	Total Shares
Microsoft Surface Studio arrives at Best Buy   Best Buy Blog	By Brad Moon – Mar 29, 2017 bestbuy.ca	3.8K	0	2	0	-	3.8K
10 surprising ways appliance technology has changed to make your life easier   Best Buy Blog	By Leonard Bond – Sep 29, 2017 bestbuy.ca	1.2K	0	21	0	-	1.2K
Best Buy Holiday toy contest 2017   Best Buy Blog	By Erin Lawrence – Nov 3, 2017 bestbuy.ca	1.1K	0	23	4	-	1.1K

Using the article “10 surprising ways appliance technology has changed to make your life easier” as an example, create your own title that is relevant to your audience and your website. Like this:

- The Evolution of Appliance Technology: An Insider’s Perspective
- Appliance Technology to Watch Out for in 2018

See what you did there? Best Buy’s blog gave you an idea, and you created a title. Your competitor essentially inspired part of your content creation strategy.

Tools make it easy to know what topics are popular/trending, but they’ve a price tag associated with them. Your best bet would be to analyze the number of comments and shares on a post to figure out if a similar kind of title would attract visitors to your site.

### **Write an Epic Post**

A compelling title is an integral aspect of a high-quality post, but it’s also important to ensure the content that follows is equally good. We recommend writing at least a few posts yourself, just so you can get used to blogging before you bring writers on board. Plus, no one loves your brand as much as you do, so you could potentially write a better post than anyone else.

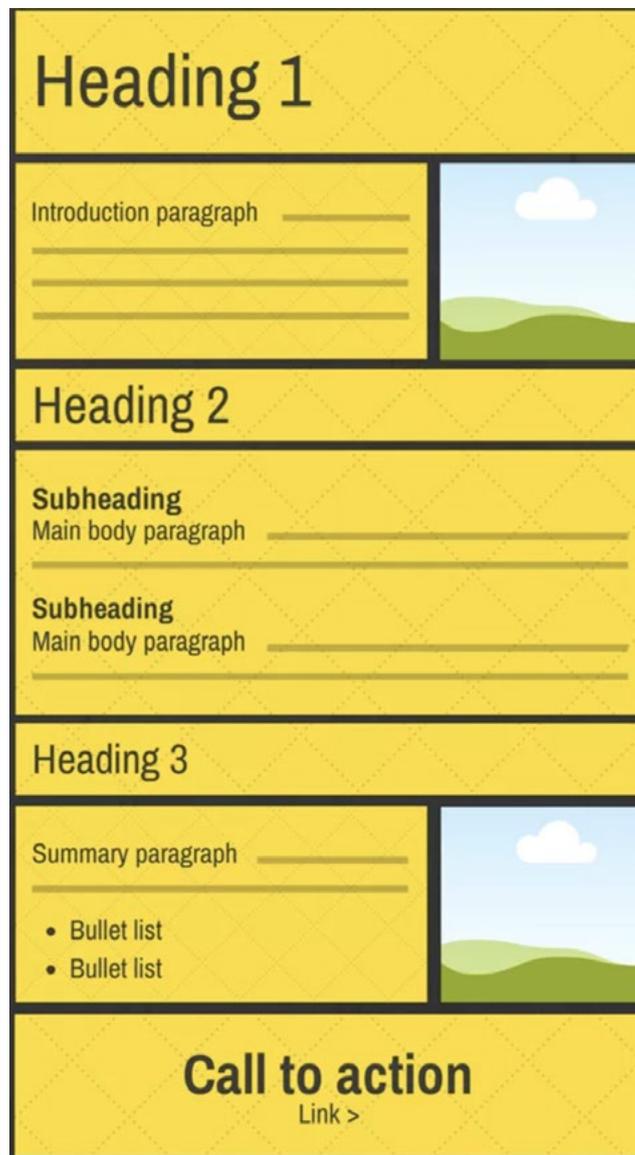
How you do this will vary from individual to individual to some extent as each store owner has their own style and voice – however there are some basic rules of writing epic blog content that might be worth keeping in mind.

**Rule #1** Grab Attention with a Startling Introduction

A reliable way to grab visitors' attention is by leveraging an amazing or startling fact in the opening. Take some time to research stats and facts that illustrate the importance of what you're going to write about. For instance, a post about iPhones can start with: "Every minute, 395 iPhone units are sold worldwide. That's over 23,000 iPhones sold each hour!"

**Rule #2** Make the Text Snackable

The content should be easy to read. Make it digestible with subheadings. Use italics and bold when appropriate. Avoid making it a link-fest. Insert videos and/or images to illustrate your point, or just to enhance its visual appeal. Also, use a call-to-action to tell visitors what you'd like them to do next i.e. buy your product, subscribe to your newsletter, etc. Here's an image illustrating the anatomy of a snackable blog post:



Source: [Yell Business](#)

### Rule #3 Address All Pertinent Questions

It's crucial to ensure that you've fully addressed any burning questions your readers may have. In other words, your blog post shouldn't leave any question marks behind. One way to handle this is to put yourself in the shoes of your average reader. Think about their pain points, then go through your blog content to see if it addresses those areas. Try to cover everything to the best of your ability.

### Rule #4 Make it Flow Nicely

The best writers are those whose content can be read fluidly, and they organize so that their paragraphs are unambiguous in meaning and manageable in size. Stylistically, content flow is accomplished by smooth connections among ideas and concise sentences. If you find it challenging to string sentences together, you're not alone. It's difficult for a lot of folks. Fortunately, there are several tools you can rely on to improve your content flow. Here are a few free options:

- [ZenPen](#): If you're finding it difficult to stay focused while writing a blog post, give ZenPen a shot. It's a distraction-free writing software that's designed to help you put words down without having to stress about formatting right away. It does this by creating a minimalist writing zone that's free of distractions.
- [Cliché Finder](#): Think your content might sound a little cheesy? Identify opportunities where you can get in more specific wording using this cliché tool.

If you aren't already blogging, you can always start a new blog. If you select a viable topic, you might even be a little shocked by how quickly it generates traffic.

# Vary Your Content

Content creation includes so much more than blogs. Today’s online consumer enjoys all kinds of content, from infographics to videos to [ebooks](#). Change up your content creation strategy by creating different content types. This will keep your consumers engaged, entertained and educated.

[Econsultancy](#) put together a brilliant Periodic Table of Content Marketing (plus fifty points for an awesome graphic that scored them tons of residual referral traffic).

**The Periodic Table of Content Marketing**  
An overview of the key elements of content marketing

**A seven-step guide to success**  
 1. Take some time to define a strategy.  
 2. Figure out the formats you plan on using.  
 3. Think about the content types that will appeal to your audience. Do your research. Brainstorm ideas. Create.  
 4. Share your content across the key content distribution / social platforms.  
 5. Track the key metrics, and map these to your goals.  
 6. Be aware of the main sharing triggers. Be sure to work the emotions.  
 7. Always double check your work.

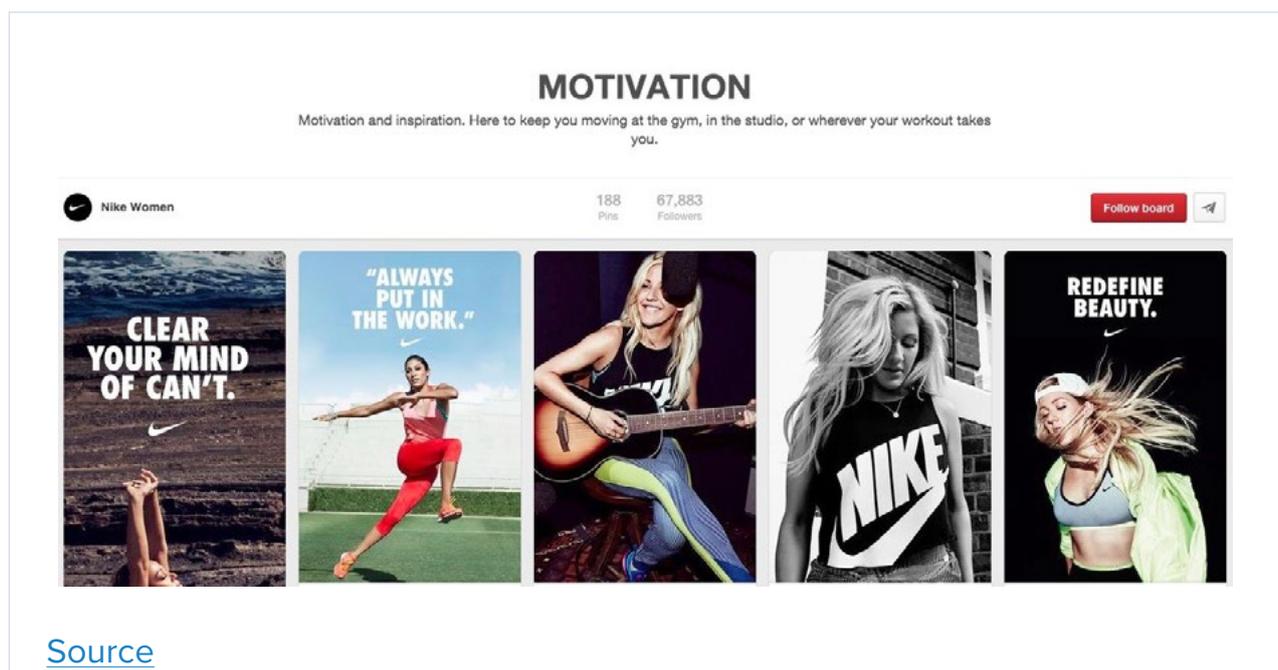
1 <b>Cs</b> Content strategy	10 <b>Sh</b> Showroll	19 <b>Wb</b> Webinar	28 <b>Da</b> Data	37 <b>Te</b> Templates	46 <b>Rc</b> Research	55 <b>De</b> Debates	64 <b>Fa</b> Facebook	73 <b>Gp</b> Google+	82 <b>Ig</b> Instagram	91 <b>Br</b> Brand	100 <b>Tw</b> Twitter	109 <b>Un</b> Unbelievable	118 <b>Aw</b> Awe	127 <b>Do</b> Device	136 <b>Cd</b> Credit	145 <b>Di</b> Disrupting
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3 <b>V</b> Video	12 <b>Im</b> Image	21 <b>Re</b> Reviews	30 <b>Ti</b> Timesaving	39 <b>Mm</b> Mindmaps	48 <b>An</b> Analysis	57 <b>Ch</b> Checklists	66 <b>Re</b> Reddit	75 <b>Ps</b> Punch sites	84 <b>Ad</b> Advertising	93 <b>Sm</b> Social	102 <b>Sq</b> Search queries	111 <b>Un</b> Unbelievable	120 <b>Se</b> Search optimisation	129 <b>Fc</b> Fact-checking	138 <b>Ct</b> Calls to action	147 <b>Fd</b> Fierce feedback
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## Custom Graphics & Infographics

If you're like most people, an image, video or graphic is going to be much more appealing than text, which is why [53% of content marketers use visuals](#) in 90 to 100% of their content. According to that same study, the visual with the highest engagement is infographics. You should definitely include visual content in your content creation strategy.

When it comes to creating graphics to support your other branding and promotional efforts, a little bit can go a long way. Custom images can be used anywhere, from your website's hero, interior pages, and blog posts to social media and email newsletters.

Nike is a great example of an ecommerce brand using simple custom graphics to merge products with their customers' lifestyle. Take a look at their 'Motivation' [Pinterest](#) board, which features a series of branded images of athletes in action in their Nike gear with superimposed motivational quotes.



**Quick Tip:** For brand recognition and traffic opportunities, don't forget to include your company's logo (and possibly URL) on each piece of content you're creating.

## Infographics

Turns out that consumers really love infographics. One study showed that they receive [three times more likes and shares](#) on social media than other content types. While B2B brands may see more benefits or relevant applications for infographics, they can also provide some useful promotional and educational opportunities for consumer brands.

For example, you can create one to show which brands are selling the most for a particular season or year, global/national uses or popularity of a certain product or category, the evolution of a specific type of product or category, or the results of a study or survey – just to name a few ideas.

Subscription beauty box company [Birchbox](#) created an infographic that illustrated poll results about women's face, hair, and body preferences and opinions. Here's a preview:



Here's part of another infographic developed by nail, fashion, and beauty company [CND](#) (Creative Nail Design). This "The History of Nails" infographic was created to promote their products and generate excitement for an upcoming New York Fashion Week.



[Source](#)

Ideally, you have an in-house graphics person or team who can help with visual content creation, or maybe you even have some graphic design skills yourself. If you don't, there are a number of convenient tools to help create infographics for cheap.

Here are a few:

- [Venngage](#) – The limited version is free, but you can sign up for the premium version at \$19 per month or \$190 per year.
- [Infogram](#) – Similarly, Infogram offers a basic account for free, and the next step up is a Pro account for \$19 per month.
- [Piktochart](#) – Free to sign up and use basic features, and the Lite account is \$15 per month.
- [Canva](#) – Offers a collection of free images and premium images for \$1. You can also upload your own visual elements.

Depending on your business, you might have a natural opportunity to create more infographics, in which case a membership is worth the investment.

**Quick Tip:** Infographics are traditionally a way to deliver research and statistics in the form of numbers, ratios, and percentages, as well as timelines. Take note of whenever you're dealing with this type of information, as it could potentially make for a good infographic.

## Videos

Videos offer an incredible ability for customers to really understand your products and your platform, which in turn translates to more conversions and sales. Statistics show that consumers can be as much as [85% more likely](#) to purchase a product after watching a video about it.

What are the other benefits of video? Well, it's more shareable, clickable, captivating, and descriptive than other content types. Visitors stay longer on your page and help boost consumer confidence in your brand. Not to mention Google and social media platforms like Facebook [love it](#).

Here are some ideas for how to incorporate video into your content creation strategy:

**Showcasing a product with the use of storytelling**, like luxury, designer playing cards company Theory11 does in its amazing video "[The Mystery Box](#)." (Don't be deterred by the high production value. You can tell stories on a budget too!)



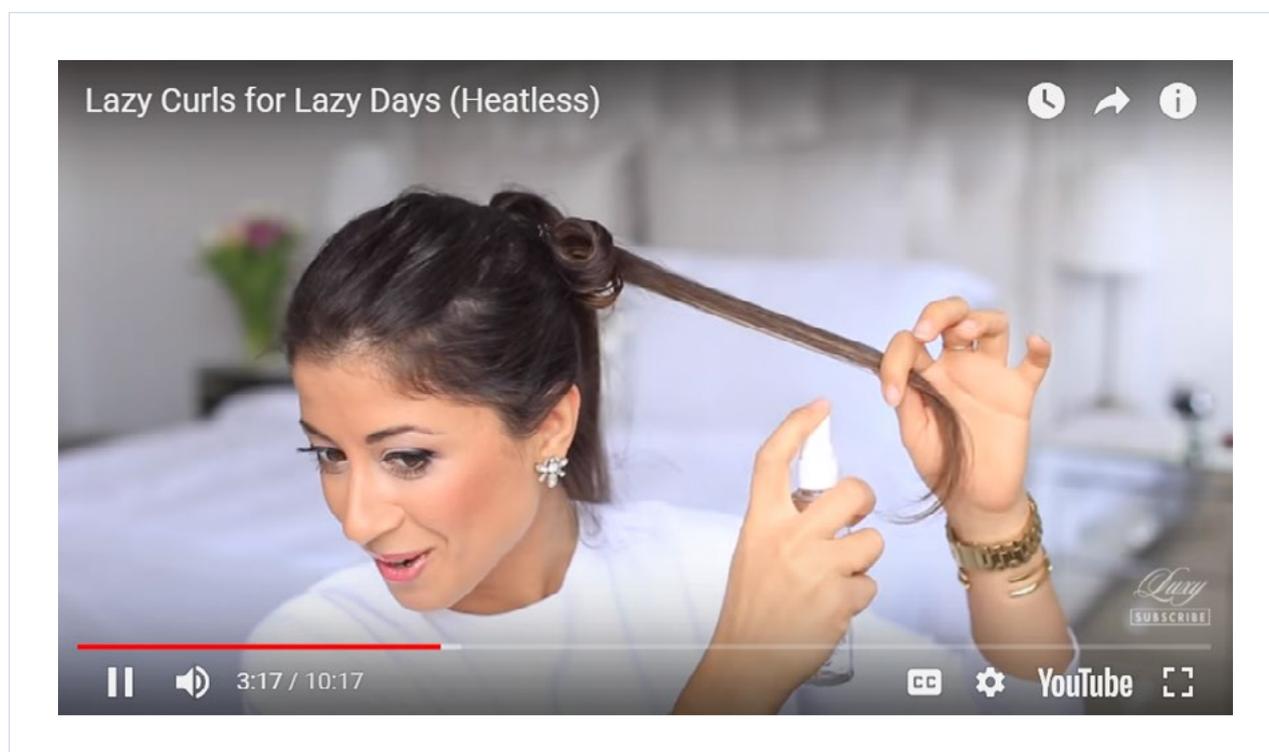
**Highlighting a particular product feature** in an entertaining way, like [Blendtec's](#) “Will it Blend?” campaign that showcases how powerful the company’s blenders are. This campaign is quirky, entrancing, and has landed nearly six million views on one video alone: the iPhone 6 Plus video. (Spoiler alert: Yes, it blends. And it hurts to watch.)



**Product reviews and selection advice** like [Right Channel Radios](#) does for each of its CB truck radios. These videos are cheap and easy, and have allowed the company to beat out the competition by providing more value and showcasing their extensive product knowledge.



**Add value with free tips and advice**, like clip-in hair extensions company [Luxy Hair](#). The brand offers great value-adds with weekly tutorials that offer hair styling tips for their visitors. It's worth noting that Luxy Hair built a seven-figure company with just YouTube marketing.



**Quick Tip:** Don't limit yourself to these types of videos. For example, plenty of brands have gained viral success from producing a video that's just as quirky as their brand is. Entertainment value is as good a reason as any!

## Interactive Content

Kapost found that interactive content generates two times more conversions than its lazier cousin passive content.

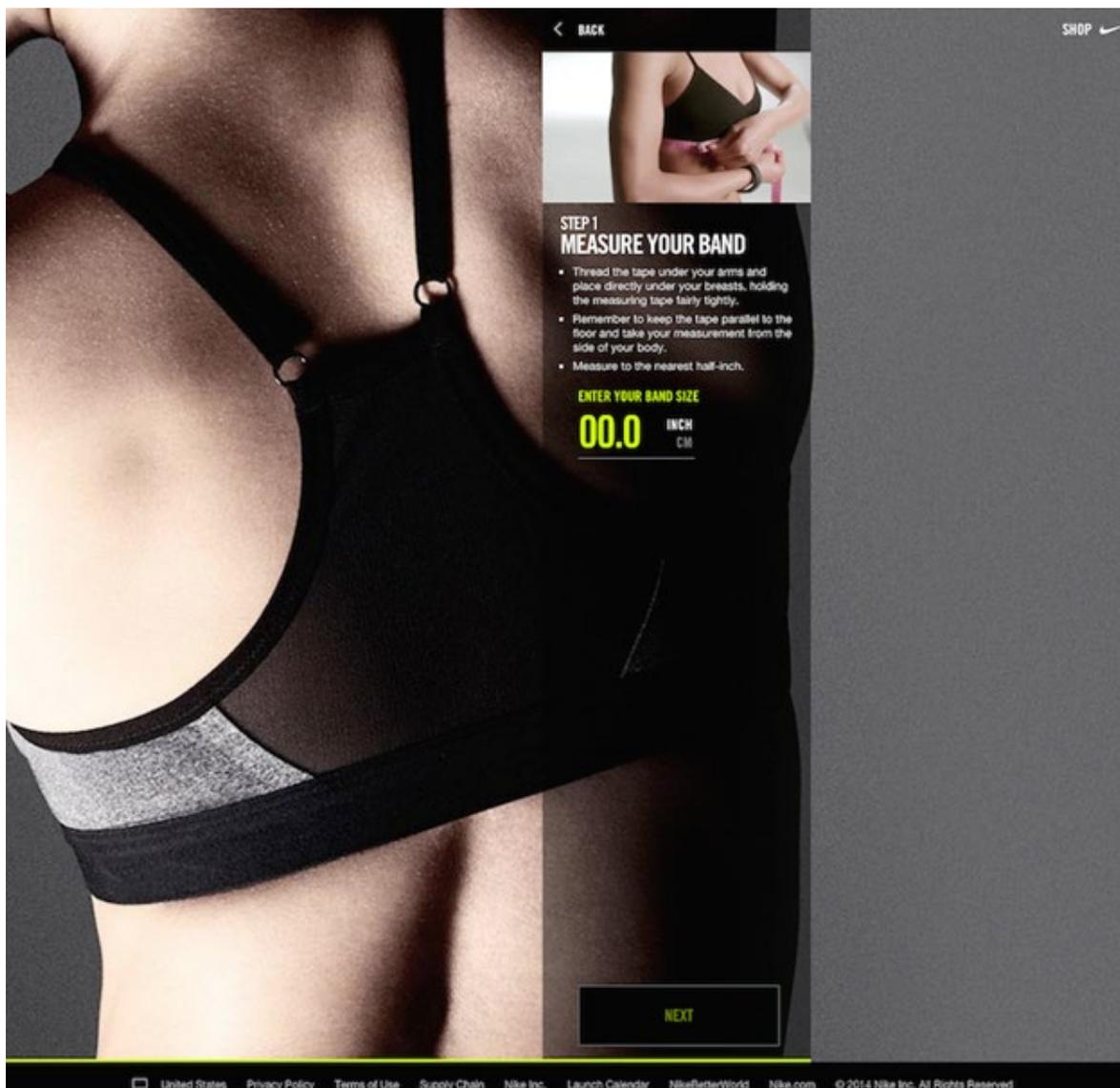
Interactive content is more than just a pile of text, JPG, PDF, or video. It involves active participation from your audience – things like dynamic illustrations of your product or having your customer input personal information to see how your product would impact them directly. More traditional forms of interactive content might include polls, quizzes, assessments, and calculators where customers input information for things like product recommendations.

Bellroy is a “carry goods” store that specializes in items like wallets, bags, and cases for things like phones and laptops. They use a clever animated slider that visitors can adjust to show how their wallets fill up versus a traditional, bulky wallet.



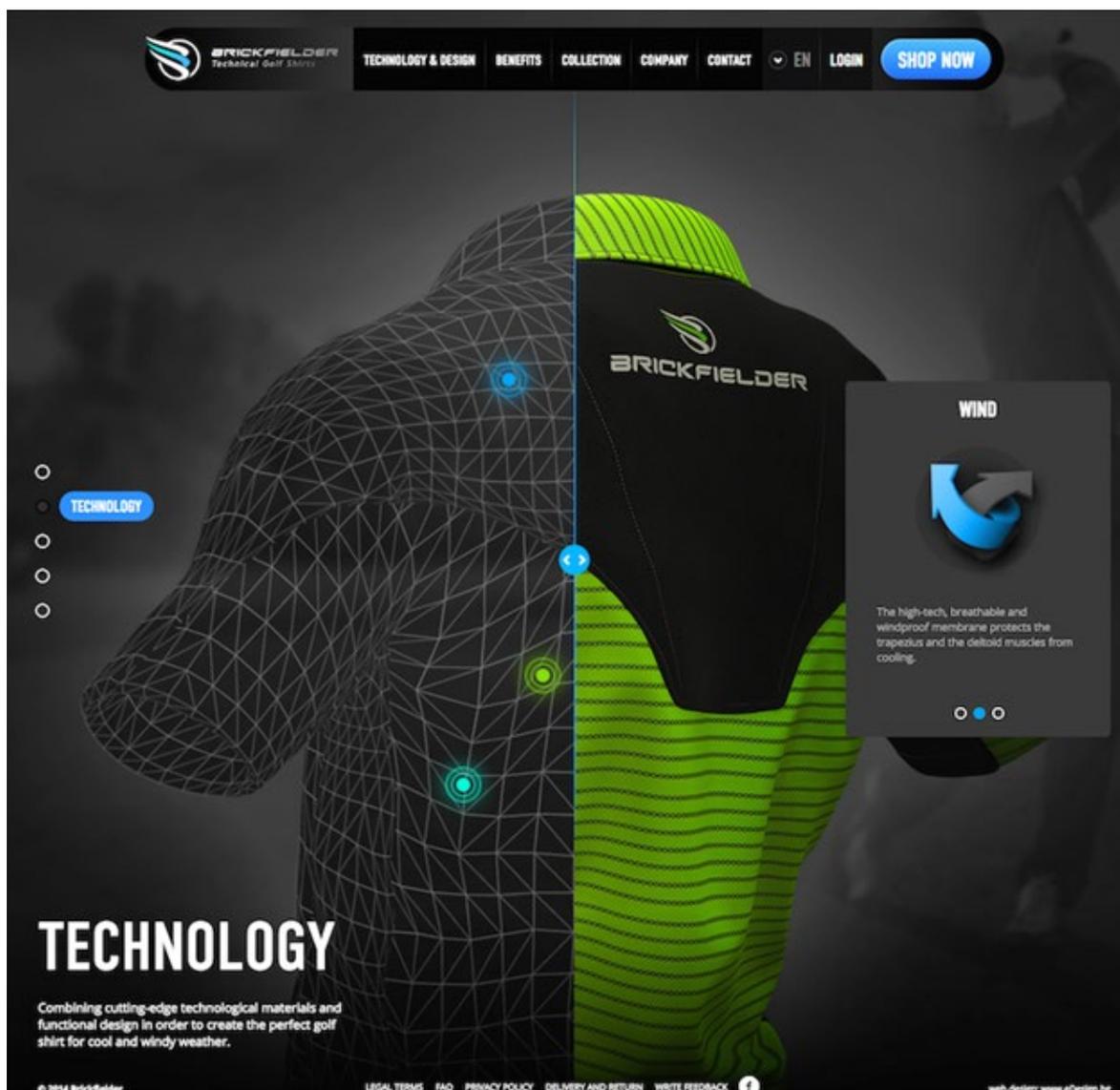
[Source](#)

[Nike's 360 Fit](#) system offers a tool for women to enter their measurements for help finding the perfect-sized sports bra. This includes a video series of mini tutorials that helps them accurately record their measurements.



[Source](#)

[Brickfielder](#), a UK-based golf apparel company, uses a sophisticated scrolling and swiping tool that allows customers to learn about their clothing's technology as they explore the product.



[Source](#)

## Ebooks & Guides

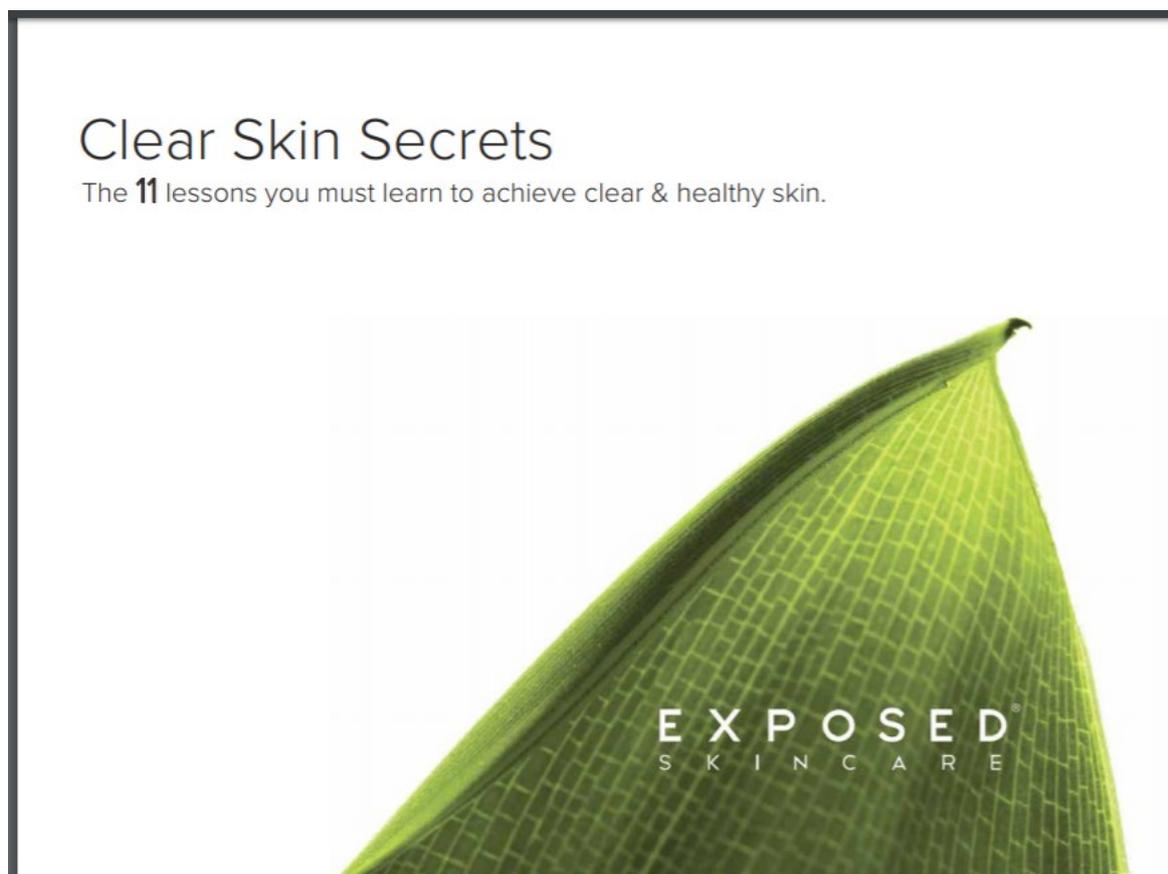
To write an ebook or guide, you'll need a strong writer, a strong designer, and a strong idea. For this type of content creation, it's just as important for it to look good as it is for the idea to be helpful for your audience.

In an ecommerce setting, ebooks and guides might function best as an accent to the product. Generally speaking, you might consider an ebook to be a longer, more detailed guide.

Different types of ebooks and guides might include:

- A fashion or beauty brand can release an ebook or guide for the year's hottest trends
- A pool supply company may create a guide for proper pool care in northern U.S. states
- A jewelry brand can create an ebook or guide discussing different types of gems or stones
- An outdoors retailer might release an ebook or guide for the best places to hike or camp at a particular time of the year
- Any brand can create a gift-buying guide for the holidays

Take for example [Exposed Skin Care's](#) ebook, "Clear Skin Secrets."



[Source](#)

**Quick Tip:** Because of the extra time and resource investment for creating this type of content, be sure to promote it whenever it's appropriate. See Chapter 5's multi-channel marketing section for more ideas.

## Case Studies & White Papers

Research- and results-driven content like case studies, white papers, and ebooks are especially powerful for B2B brands, as they provide in-depth information that businesses are looking for before they make larger, more complex business investments that have long-term implications for the company. In a B2C environment, it's a great idea to integrate this sort of content into your content creation strategy. However, for smaller-ticket items, most consumers don't need (or want) to do the extensive research that businesses are more typically looking for.

When researching for their upcoming purchases, [B2B buyers said](#):

- 78% use case studies
- 77% use white papers
- 67% use ebooks
- 67% use third-party and analyst reports

Which types of content have you used during the past 12 months to research B2B purchasing decisions? (Check all that apply)



Key elements of a case study include:

- A focus on one particular customer that has used the product your case study focuses on.
- Telling their story from start to finish, including details about who they are, what their business problem was, and the impact of the product.
- Discussion of specific strategies to solve the problem. If there were any failed attempts with other products, include those for bonus points.

Key elements of a white paper include:

- Identifying a key problem that your customers face, and describing it in relatable terms.
- Describing potential approaches and solutions, as well as their limitations. You may or may not wish to promote your brand directly, as some white papers are more for educational purposes than a “hard sell.”
- Statistics and research whenever possible to back up points made. Opt for professional, credible sources like research firms and government agencies.

For example, if you're selling something like skin care products, you could publish a white paper that discusses scientific evidence for certain ingredients in your products. Or you can publish a case study of long-term results from using a certain type of ingredient over others on the market.

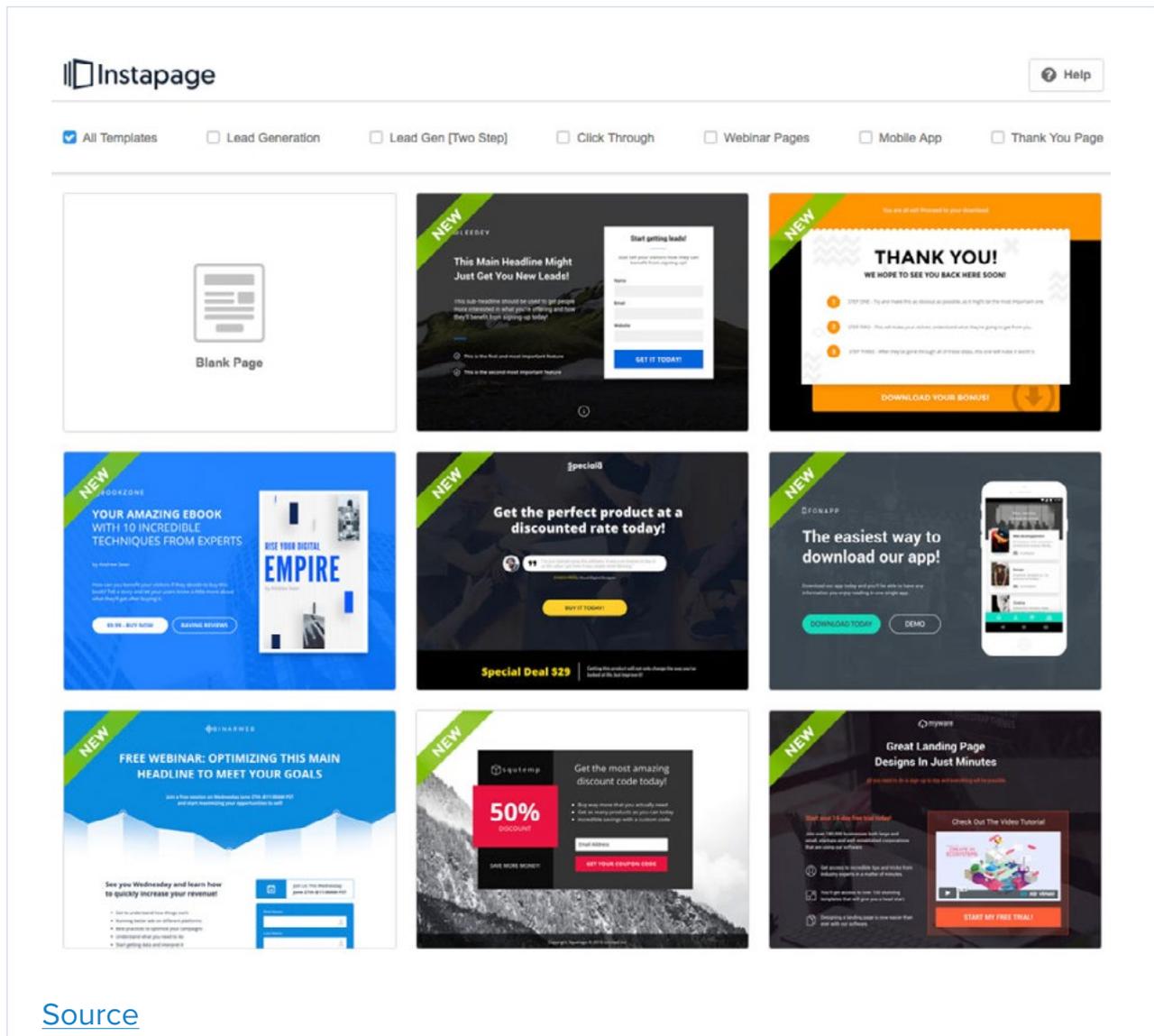
**Quick Tip:** The information from these types of content can be repurposed for other mediums. For example, a case study can be made into a video or discussed on a podcast.

## Landing Pages for Content Downloads

When your content creation strategy involves high-level content like downloadable ebooks, case studies, and white papers, consider offering them through a gated landing page. This means that the visitor will have to fill out a form with whatever information you choose before they have access to download the content. This way, you have their email address for your newsletter, special offers, or other email communications.

Typically, these forms are simple, and at the very least they include the visitor's name and email.

If you don't have the bandwidth to do this internally, you can use a web service like [Unbounce](#) or [Instapage](#) to develop landing pages easily and without any necessary coding experience.



Source

# Promote and Distribute Whenever Possible

[Content marketing](#) can be a cost-effective lead generating strategy for any ecommerce business. According to [a study by Demand Metric](#), content marketing generates more than three times as many leads as outbound marketing, even though it costs 62% less than traditional methods.



Unfortunately, many inexperienced ecommerce store owners overlook the **marketing** aspect of content marketing. They spend a lot of time on content creation, creating informative blog posts, articles, videos, images, and podcasts that are tailored specifically for their audience, then sit back and wait for people to rush to their store.

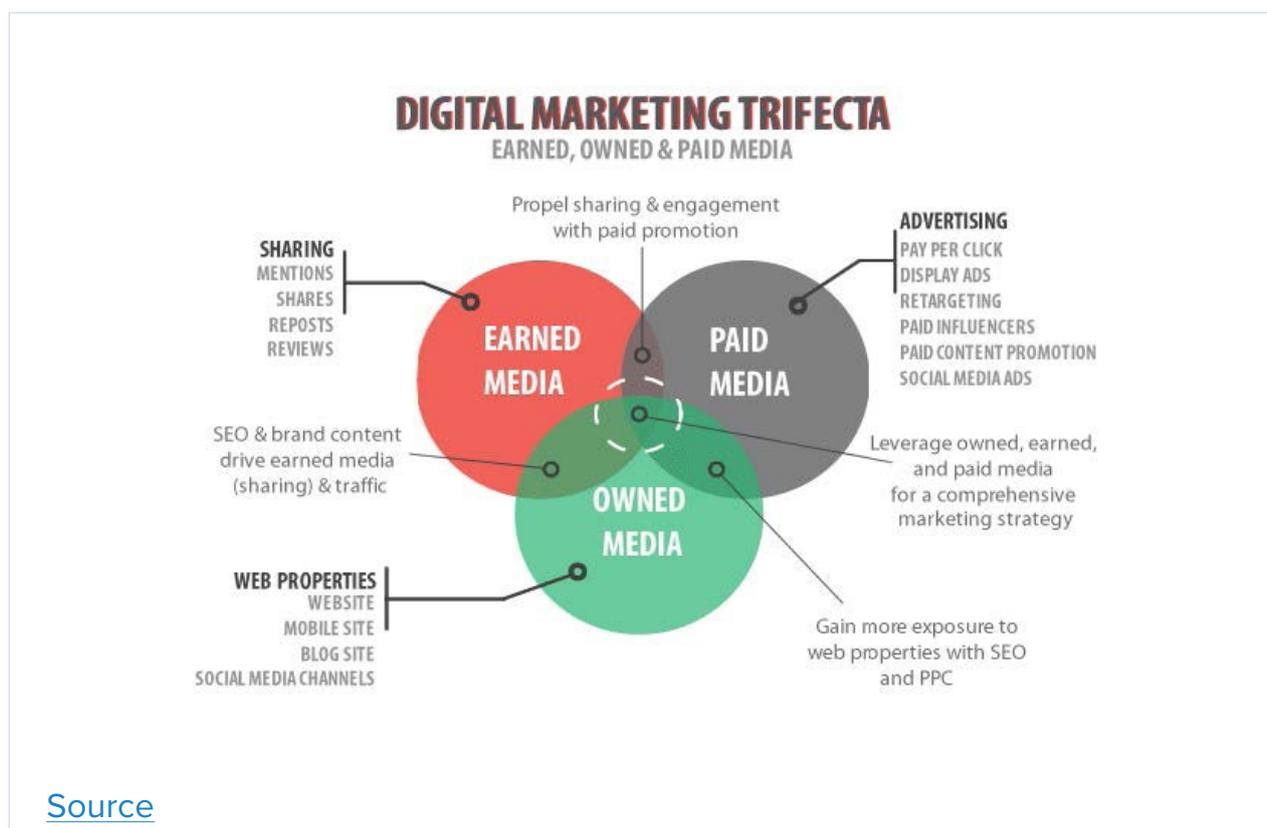
Here's a reality check. Unless you're extremely lucky, this strategy won't work. Without a solid content distribution and promotion plan, it's not content marketing – it's just content creation – and it will be lost among [the millions of pieces of content that are published around the world every minute](#).

In fact, many professional marketers agree that content distribution and promotion takes more time than content creation itself. Expert marketer and entrepreneur Derek Halpern [suggests following the 80/20 rule](#), with 20% of your time devoted to content creation and 80% of your time focused on content promotion and distribution.

In this section, we'll look at some free (or cheap) ways that you can promote and distribute your content, to help increase your audience and drive new customers to your store.

## Content Distribution Channels

Almost all content distribution is done in one of three channels: **owned media** (channels that your business controls, such as your ecommerce website, mailing list, blog), **earned media** (channels where your content is shared, but you are not the owner and you haven't paid for publicity) and **paid media** (such as paid Facebook ads and promoted tweets, PPC (pay-per-click) advertising).



While you're still in the process of building an audience for your store, owned media and earned media are the channels you should focus on. They're more cost-effective and considered less biased than paid media.

We've already talked a lot about popular channels like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and influencer marketing, so let's take a look at some strategies for using less common owned and earned media channels to distribute and promote your content.

## Promote Content through Your Email List

Email is still considered [the most effective tool for marketing](#), with studies showing that [it's 40 times more effective than Twitter and Facebook](#) combined. This means it's a perfect medium for content promotion.

One popular strategy is to send a regular newsletter to your customers that includes content from your store blog. You can include excerpts or summaries from both past and present content, and include a CTA that allows readers to learn more by clicking through to your site. It's also a good idea to include social sharing icons that allow people to engage with your content straight away.

The timing of your newsletter depends on how often you're creating content. If you're only creating one new piece of content a week, you probably only need to send a newsletter once a month. If you're creating new content daily, you could send out a newsletter that highlights the most popular content from that week.

Here's a beautiful example that [Harry's](#), a shaving products ecommerce store, sent to their customers with links to some helpful content.

## HARRY'S

### Do you wash your face?

NO



#### Why washing is worth it.

One man's journey to answer the question, "Why should I use face wash?"

[READ MORE](#)

YES



#### How to wash smarter.

Find out what ingredients remove the dirt from your face without damaging your skin.

[READ MORE](#)

### Put your best face forward.

Our new Daily Face Wash combines the benefits of a foaming wash and a gentle scrub. Now with a freshness you can feel.

[SHOP FACE WASH](#)



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161 Avenue of the Americas, Floor 8, New York, NY, 10013

[Unsubscribe](#)

CONTACT

[help@harrys.com](mailto:help@harrys.com)

888 212 6855



[Source](#)

**Quick Tip:** If you've gotten any emails from gated content from Chapter 4, now's the time to use them. If email marketing is a sound strategy for your brand, consider more ways to gather emails, like a popup window offering to sign up for your newsletter.

### Answer Questions and Solve Problems

People love content that solves problems and gives advice, which is why things like how-to articles, buying guides, product reviews, and top ten lists are [some of the most shared content on the web](#).

If you have some content that solves a problem, question and answers sites such as [Yahoo Answers](#) and [Quora](#) are fantastic (and easy) channels for distribution. All it takes is three steps:

- 1.** Find people who are asking questions that your content solves. You can do this by searching those sites using keywords related to your topic. Look for questions that are recent. Anything more than a few weeks old will most likely be inactive and ineffective for promotion.
- 2.** Give complete answers. Short answers come off as spammy and less trustworthy, while detailed answers let you show your expertise and have a greater chance of being upvoted.
- 3.** Link to the original content (your website) for additional information and further resources.

[Marketing on sites like Quora](#) is a great way to get free exposure for your store. It's important to be regularly active on these sites, as you'll start to gain more recognition, which will help drive more people to your website.

Here's a good example of a question an ecommerce cycling store owner could answer while promoting bicycle safety content from their blog.

Answer written · Bicycles · 2014

### Is wearing a helmet while riding a bicycle needed? Or a fancy thing?

 Randal Foster, Man of all work...  
Written Jun 17, 2014

I submit for evidence these pictures: This was from a reasonably fast single-person crash (me, grabbing a handful of brakes after slipping on an oil-and-water slick turn) at about 30 km/h (19 mph).... [\(more\)](#)



[Upvote](#) **219** [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) **9+**

[f](#) [t](#) [s](#) [..](#)

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[Source](#)

## Submit Your Content to an Aggregator

Content aggregators are media sites that collect and compile content from other websites instead of producing their own content. Aggregators are generally considered a win-win strategy – visitors can see a large variety of content in one convenient location, and creators get to promote their content to a wide audience.

There are numerous free and paid content aggregator sites that accept content submissions, but many are either full of spam or have a very limited readership. Some poor quality aggregators can even hurt your Google page ranking. But if you submit quality content to a good aggregator, it can be helpful for driving visitors to your ecommerce store.

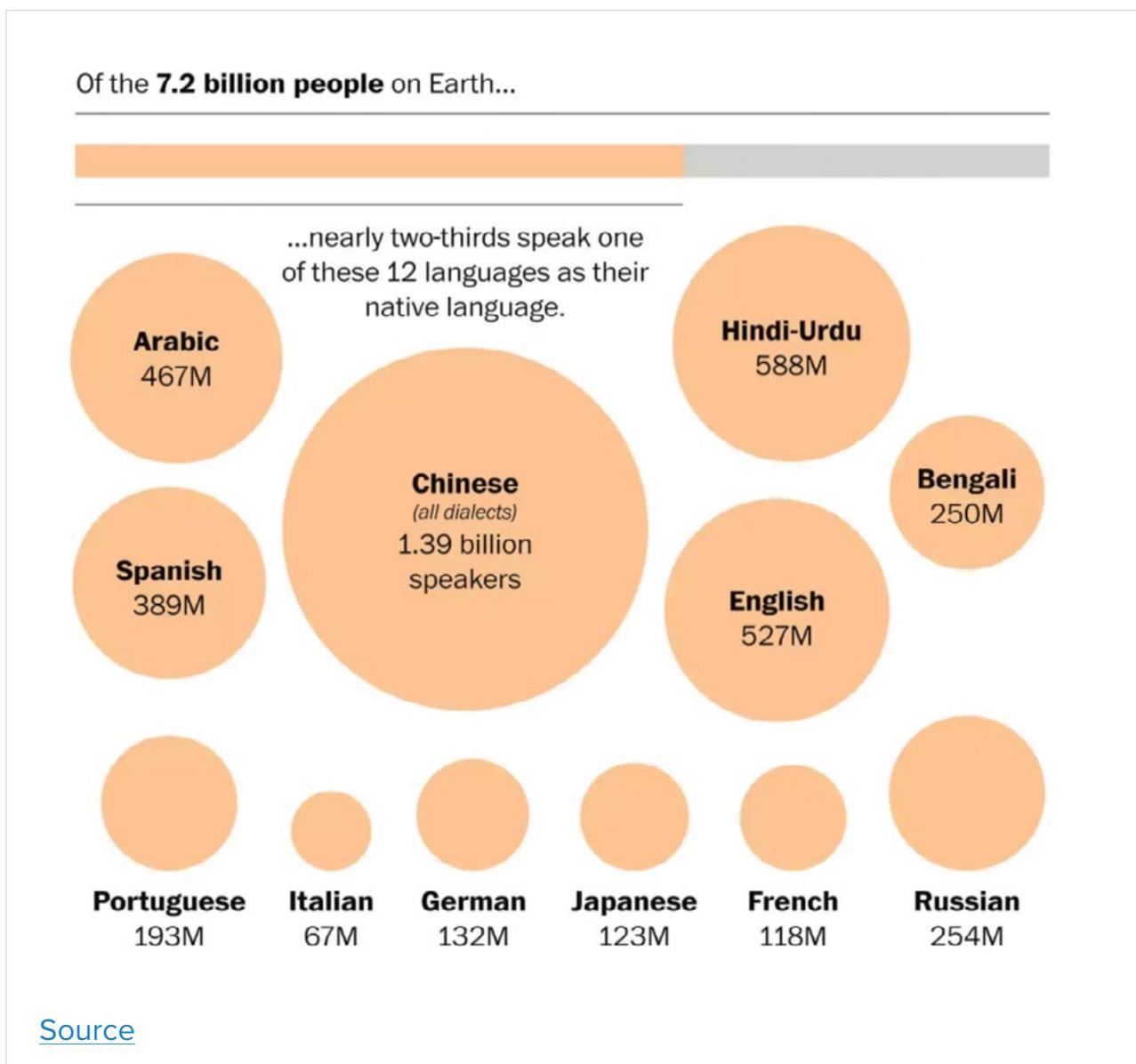
For most aggregators, submitting content is as simple as registering an account and providing a link to your content. However, it's a good idea to study the site before joining and go through their submission policy.

Here are some well-regarded aggregators to consider:

- [Alltop](#) is one of the most popular content aggregators, with a large audience and broad topics. This is a very competitive site, so it's important to submit your highest quality content. You can submit content by clicking on the submission button on the bottom of the page.
- [Blogarama](#) is "the oldest blog directory" and has even more categories than Alltop. Once you've created an account, you can quickly submit multiple pieces of content.
- [BizSugar](#) is another free aggregator that allows you to submit and tips to their community. It has a small business focus, so you'll need to submit content related to the business side of your ecommerce store.

## Target Non-English Blogs and Social Media Networks

Just because you're publishing content in English, it doesn't mean you have to limit yourself to an English-speaking audience. Only 4.8% of the world's population are native English speakers, which means there are billions of potential customers reading content in other languages.



Some non-English blogs and social media networks will accept English content, and for the others, you can use a translation plug-in like [Transposh](#) to automatically translate your content into multiple languages.

To find non-English blogs or English blogs based in foreign countries, you can use a simple Google search. A search for 'Italian fashion blogs' lead to [this list of the Top 80 Italian Fashion Bloggers on the Web](#), which could be useful for a beauty products ecommerce store owner looking to get exposure in Europe.

### Top Italian Fashion Blogs

Rank	Blog Name	Facebook Fans	Twitter Followers	Alexa Rank
1	<b>Vogue Italia</b> <a href="#">+ Follow</a>  <i>vogue.it</i> Italy <b>About Blog</b> - Discover Vogue.it for the latest trends of fashion shows , fashion, beauty and shopping. Read all the latest news about celebrities and stars. <b>Frequency</b> - about 84 posts per week <a href="#">View Latest Posts</a> -  GET EMAIL ALERTS Enter email <a href="#">Subscribe</a> OR Subscribe using <a href="#">g+</a> <a href="#">f</a>	2,305,351	1,089,043	33,404
2	<b>MDV Style</b> <a href="#">+ Follow</a>  <i>mdvstyle.com</i> Milan <b>About Blog</b> - This blog by Mariano Di Vaio is a digital magazine, a source of inspiration to millions of people in Italy and in the World, dedicated to men's passions: from fashion to sport, and also travel, music and movies. <b>Frequency</b> - about 1 post per week <a href="#">View Latest Posts</a> -	3,204,217	129,131	373,935

Here are some social media networks that are popular in non-English speaking countries that could be useful for content promotion:

- [WeChat](#) and [Weibo](#) are the two most popular social media networks in China.
- [Cyworld](#) is a social network with an almost entirely South Korean audience.
- [MiGente](#) is a social network similar to Facebook but focused on Latin America.
- [VK](#) is a social network with a large community in Russia and North Asia.

You're now equipped with a number of tools and tactics you can use to drive free traffic to your website, now you just have to focus on the ones that are the best fit for your ecommerce store and will provide you with the most visits.

**Quick Tip:** In Chapter 5, we'll discuss using tools like Google Analytics, which can show you traffic stats like which countries and cities your site visitors are in. This can help guide an international shipping or dropshipping strategy if you choose to expand.

# Chapter 4 Takeaways

Content creation is key to driving traffic to your store. **If you have the skills and/or resources, publish at least one blog per week, along with other forms of custom content like graphics, videos, and ebooks.** Today's online shopper has been spoiled by killer content everywhere they look, so content creation is a great way to be able to captivate your audience and stay in the game against your competition.

If you don't have the internal or hired manpower to consistently create grade-A content, stick to the mantra of quality over quantity. It's better to create great content less often than it is to constantly churn out mediocre content. Your content creation strategy should focus on addressing real problems, questions, and issues among your audience base.

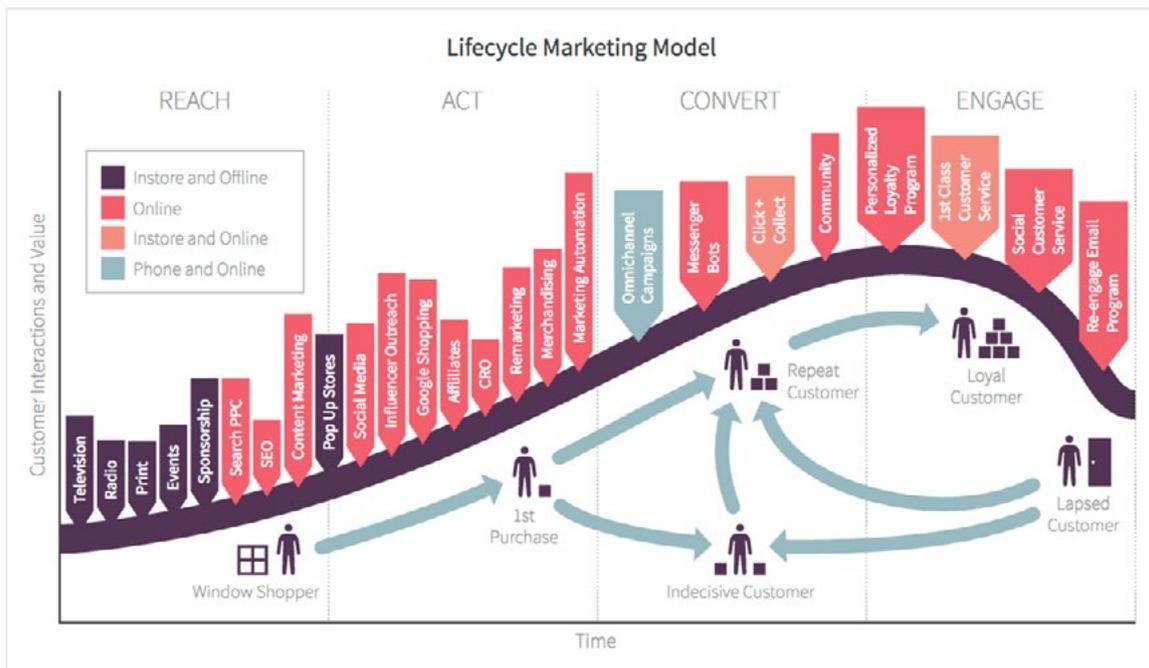
Remember that content promotion and distribution is just as important as content creation. Once you've created great content, distribute it as often as you can – without spamming, of course. Consider a content marketing strategy where you're promoting via email, submitting to content aggregators, and using it on social media and forums as a way to answer relevant questions and score some referral traffic back to your site.

**5**

# **Expand, Track, and Analyze**

You’ve scoured the web looking for digital and in-person partnerships and networking opportunities. You’ve planted the seed for creating quality content that really showcases how awesome your brand is. Now it’s time to make sure you’re covering all of your bases by expanding your strategy and tapping into the incredible power of analytics.

Adopting a multi-channel strategy can be a critical way for you create a smooth and dynamic experience for your visitors. Research shows that buying behaviors are incorporating a slew of channels, like scoping out a product in-store, doing lunchtime online research via search engines and social media, and ultimately buying a similar item a week later from their iPhone while lying in bed.



[Source](#)

And to make the most of your multi-channel strategy, as well as all of the other strategies we've discussed so far, you'll need to get familiar with your performance data. Content analysis is essential if you want to drive traffic to your store effectively, as it can inform your marketing strategies and tell you what's working and what isn't.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have some pretty impressive built-in content analysis functionality. Social media analytics tools show you things like demographic data of your followers and which of your posts have gotten the most activity. There are also some great third-party tools that compile more extensive data, or help you crunch the numbers in more meaningful ways.

Then there's the mother of free content analysis tools: Google Analytics. It allows you to drill down into hyper-specific information – even which browser or OS your desktop and mobile visitors came from.

**In this chapter, we'll discuss the key tenets of a multi-channel strategy, along with how to use content analysis tools, social media analytics and Google Analytics to track and optimize your performance.**

# Adopt a Multi-Channel Strategy

Some people might come across your content in a guest post, while others might read your product description on social media. Visually impaired people might have access to your content through your podcast. When you are a huge producer of content and your target audience lies beyond Facebook, you have unique problems that other store owners might not understand.

Incredibly, a multi-channel content strategy is an effective solution to the problem. One master plan can encompass all areas of your store's online presence, including blog content, guest posts on other websites, social media postings, and more.



Leaving paid channels out, you can develop a smart, integrated content strategy for all other channels. Here's how to do that:

### **Create Audience Personas**

Before posting content you must have a clear understanding of the types of customers your brand deals with and the behaviors of key [segments](#) you aim to target. In the ecommerce universe, personas refer to fictional characters developed to represent the different types of people that might visit your website.

In most cases, they're synthesized from answers collected from surveys. For instance, a merchant can send out an email survey that questions subscribers on their browsing habits, device usage, attitude, etc. If you have an already established ecommerce store, there are content analysis tools you likely already have in place that can help you gain a better understanding of your potential and current visitors.

Content analysis tools can help you gather insights on your potential customers. Some examples of tools include [Google Analytics Audience Reports](#), if you have Google Analytics set up for your website, as well as [Facebook Insights](#), which as some robust information on [psychographics](#) of your target audience.



## Conduct a Content Audit

Your content analysis should include auditing your content to see how it's performing. This step addresses all the free marketing channels. This is the point where you use all details from your persona to conduct a content audit of your current situation. A content audit could help you determine where you can make the most impact with content marketing.

The idea is to map out what assets need to be created from scratch and what you need to effectively repurpose your story to distribute on other channels. Ask yourself:

1. What platform do I have to create and distribute our story (e.g. blog, Facebook page, etc.)?
2. What changes do I need to make in order to repurpose this story (e.g. do I need to shorten down a blog post in order to post in on Facebook)?
3. What can I do to speed up the process? (e.g. do I need to hire freelance writers, social media curators, etc.)?

Out of this content audit will come some prioritization, and more tactical things needed to execute a multi-channel content strategy.

### **Set Up a Content Calendar**

For better or worse, multi-channel content marketing works successfully when it's a bespoke affair, carefully planned to deliver tangible business results and custom-built to captivate your audience over the long term. But just because the content process is a little fragmented doesn't mean there aren't a few tried-and-tested solutions you can use to keep your content marketing engine running at peak performance.

And for ecommerce companies, there's no better structural hub than a well-organized content calendar. When your content strategy is laid out on one calendar, it becomes easier to focus on deadlines, keep yourself organized, and be more productive. Planning ahead can also result in higher quality content by providing you with ample time for research and publishing.

Assuming you see the logic of setting up a content calendar, the next step is to determine what information you want to track.

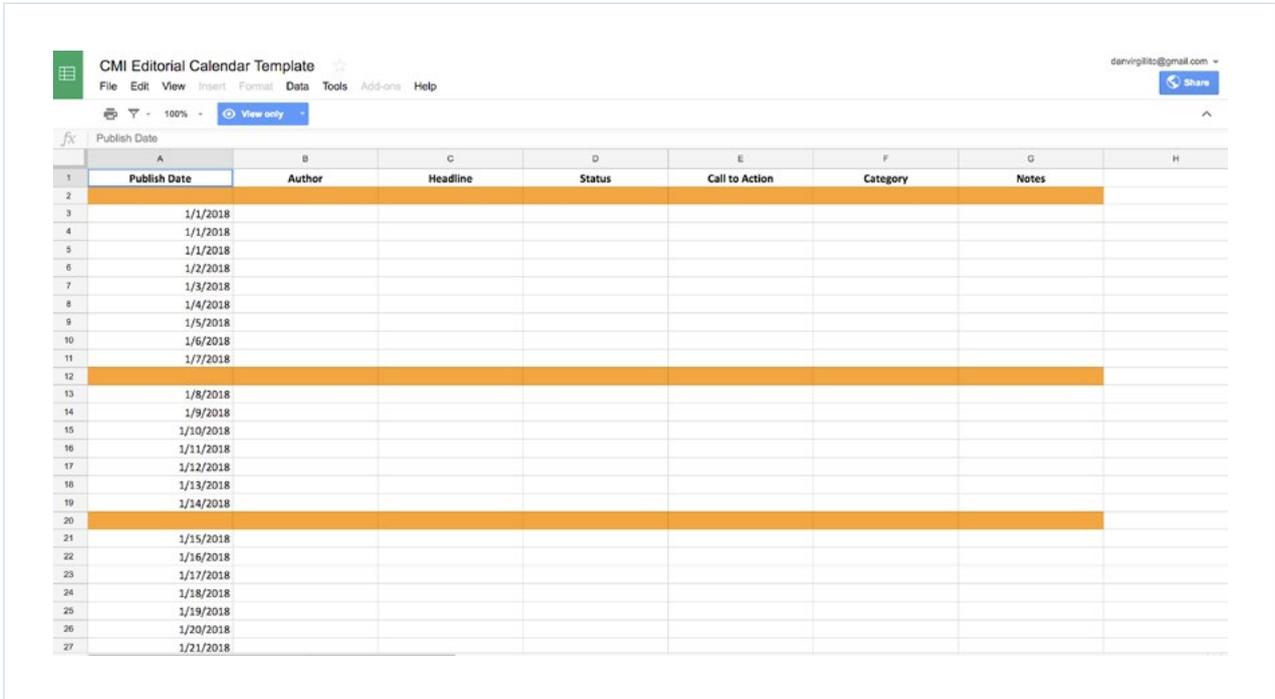
For instance, alongside the publication date you might want to include:

- Headline or title of the content piece
- Author name
- Status of the content asset (i.e. in draft, submitted, under review, etc.)
- Content format (is it a blog post? A social media update? A video?)
- Target audience
- Distribution channels (email, social, etc.)
- Expected progress against KPIs

We advise only using categories that are absolutely necessary and removing any extra fields. If [the spreadsheet](#) you use for the content calendar is too cluttered or large, it could deter you from using it.

Additionally, there are plenty of free calendar templates out there. We've listed a few handy ones below.

## [Content Marketing Institute's Excel Calendar](#)



The screenshot shows the 'CMI Editorial Calendar Template' spreadsheet. The interface includes a title bar with the file name, a ribbon with menu options (File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Data, Tools, Add-ons, Help), and a status bar showing 'View only' mode. The spreadsheet grid has columns A through H and rows 1 through 27. The data is organized as follows:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Publish Date	Author	Headline	Status	Call to Action	Category	Notes	
2								
3	1/1/2018							
4	1/1/2018							
5	1/1/2018							
6	1/2/2018							
7	1/3/2018							
8	1/4/2018							
9	1/5/2018							
10	1/6/2018							
11	1/7/2018							
12								
13	1/8/2018							
14	1/9/2018							
15	1/10/2018							
16	1/11/2018							
17	1/12/2018							
18	1/13/2018							
19	1/14/2018							
20								
21	1/15/2018							
22	1/16/2018							
23	1/17/2018							
24	1/18/2018							
25	1/19/2018							
26	1/20/2018							
27	1/21/2018							

CMI or Content Marketing Institute offers a content calendar that consists of four worksheets: a highlight of important dates, description of a specific blog posts, content type and another for listing additional content types. The layout is pretty simple but you can customize it to include any additional field that's relevant to your content marketing goals.

## Hootsuite's Social Media Content Calendar

Week	Network	Time	Content Type	Topic	Copy	Link	No.
<b>WEEK 1</b>							
<b>FACEBOOK</b>							
		7:00 AM	New Blog Post	Silent Video	Are you optimizing your video for viewing without sound? You should be.	<a href="http://ow.ly/Nu5C30c57ZV">http://ow.ly/Nu5C30c57ZV</a>	
		10:00 AM	Curated Content	New Features	Infinite Snaps, loops, and a magic eraser? Woah.	<a href="http://ow.ly/DHev30c5d9B">http://ow.ly/DHev30c5d9B</a>	
		12:00 PM	Video	Music Resources	Don't risk your video being removed or your account killed. Here's the full list of free resources: <a href="http://ow.ly/zjK530bHuj2">http://ow.ly/zjK530bHuj2</a>	(insert video file link)	
		3:00 PM	Promotion	Product Launch	Liftmetrics   Hootsuite Impact   New name and offerings to help you measure and maximize ROI: <a href="http://ow.ly/nx530bKiqN">http://ow.ly/nx530bKiqN</a>	<a href="http://ow.ly/nx530bKiqN">http://ow.ly/nx530bKiqN</a>	
		5:00 PM	Live Video	News Update	A lot happened of social media updates happened this month. Let us know your reaction to these ones.	(include CTA link)	
<b>LINKEDIN</b>							
		6:00 AM	New Blog Post	UTM Parameters	You don't need to be a programmer to track key indicators of ROI like website traffic, leads and conversions.	<a href="http://ow.ly/GSK30c5dLF">http://ow.ly/GSK30c5dLF</a>	
		9:30 AM	Curated Content				
		11:45 AM	Video				
		1:30 PM	Promotion				
		4:15 PM	Education				
<b>TWITTER</b>							
		5:45 AM	New Blog Post	Instagram Hacks	So, you think you know everything about Instagram? We bet you don't know these 44 hacks: <a href="http://ow.ly/aktF30c5d0O">http://ow.ly/aktF30c5d0O</a>	<a href="http://ow.ly/aktF30c5d0O">http://ow.ly/aktF30c5d0O</a>	
		7:15 AM	Curated Content				
		10:30 AM	Video				
		1:00 PM	Promotion				
		3:45 PM	Evergreen Blog Post				
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>							
		7:30 AM	Original Image	Logo Cookies	Owl we want to do is eat these cookies. How many Owlys do you see? **	(insert image file link)	
		9:45 AM	Curated Image	Owly Toronto	Psst... we opened a new nest in Toronto last week (and Owly is having a hoot of a time)!	(insert link to original image)	
		12:30 PM	Video				

The second useful content calendar is a social media content calendar from Hootsuite. This should cover all of the social media communication you'll use to promote your posts, organized by time and date. It will solve some of the biggest problems that ecommerce marketers face – ignoring certain channels, missing important events, and breaks in publishing. While social media engagement can't be planned in advance, social media publishing can be, which is where this calendar is a blessing in disguise.

## WebpageFX's Editorial Calendar

The screenshot shows a Google Sheets spreadsheet titled "Blogging Editorial Calendar Template". The main content is a weekly calendar grid for "Editorial Blogging Calendar - Day 4". The grid has columns for days of the week (Sunday to Saturday) and rows for tasks and notes. The tasks are: "Share this post on social media", "Brainstorm ideas for future posts", "Share your first post on social media again", "Second blog post", "Share post on social media", "Brainstorm ideas for future posts", and "Establish your blogging schedule (every two days, once per week, etc.)". The notes include "ng Content: 12 Ways to E", "Required: How WebpageF", and "Establish the person in charge of maintaining the schedule". A red bar at the bottom of the grid says "Add calendar items to Blogging Schedule tab. Weekly notes may be added above." Below the grid is a section for "Coming Up Next Week" with dates from Sunday 12/24/2017 to Saturday 12/30/2017 and tasks like "Blog post", "Share new post on", "Share historic post on", "Share latest post on", "Blog post", "Share new post on", and "Start outreach campaign to promote and build". To the right of the grid is a sidebar with sections: "Webpag", "Blog Post Idea", "What's going on in your industry that you w about?", "Ask someone in your company to try their fi", "How has your company changed in the last", "Click here to add your own blo", "Tip of the Day", "Twitter has a page of 'best practic", and "Helpful Resour", "3 Steps to Identify Blog Topics that are Re".

Editorial Blogging Calendar - Day 4						
Today						
Sunday 12/17/2017	Monday 12/18/2017	Tuesday 12/19/2017	Wednesday 12/20/2017	Thursday 12/21/2017	Friday 12/22/2017	Saturday 12/23/2017
Share this post on social media	Brainstorm ideas for future posts	Share your first post on social media again	Second blog post	Share post on social media	Brainstorm ideas for future posts	Establish your blogging schedule (every two days, once per week, etc.)
-	-	ng Content: 12 Ways to E	-	-	Required: How WebpageF	Establish the person in charge of maintaining the schedule
-	-	-	Author: You	-	-	-
<p><i>"What you do after you create your content is what truly counts." - Gary Vaynerchuk</i></p>						
Coming Up Next Week						
Sunday 12/24/2017	Monday 12/25/2017	Tuesday 12/26/2017	Wednesday 12/27/2017	Thursday 12/28/2017	Friday 12/29/2017	Saturday 12/30/2017
Blog post	Share new post on	Share historic post on	Share latest post on	Blog post	Share new post on	Start outreach campaign to promote and build

This is a robust calendar that not only tracks pieces of content week after week, but also provides spaces for downloadable assets and brainstorming. Therefore, it's intended to be the single source of truth for all your marketing and publishing activities. There's even a field for establishing your blogging schedule, which could change during certain times of the year, such as during the holiday season.

**Quick Tip:** Be coherent across your content distribution channels; aim for a consistent look, feel and tone of voice. Implement it through when you're engaging with users on a one-to-one basis. Adapting to the platforms you use to get your messaging across is important, however, so is maintaining a consistent brand identity.

## Address Personas

Looking back at the channels listed in your content calendar, certainly not every channel will reach every persona. So for every channel being considered, you need to identify which personas will be served.

Once you've listed your target channels on the calendar, look at it holistically. Perform a content analysis and adjust your strategy if needed. You may find that you have listed channels that fail to reach your most critical personas. Or, you may find that you're attempting to address too many personas through a single channel – and it seems wise to split them. For instance, Target has multiple Twitter accounts used for general news, style updates and discounts.

The screenshot shows a Twitter search interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'All', 'News', 'Images', 'Videos', and 'More'. To the right are 'Settings' and 'Tools'. Below the tabs, it says 'About 21,900,000 results (0.63 seconds)'. The search results are as follows:

- Target News (@TargetNews) | Twitter**  
<https://twitter.com/targetnews?lang=en>  
 8318 tweets • 1647 photos/videos • 39.3K followers. "Beat the holiday hustle! Tick off those last-minute to-dos with quick tips—and awesome deals—from Target... <https://t.co/RwUSkg3liID>. <https://t.co/wZbkDHgIR7>"
- #TARGET - Twitter Search**  
<https://twitter.com/search?q=%23TARGET>  
 On Dec 15 @MarshaCollier tweeted: "#Target Buys Same-Day Delivery Service w.." - read what others are saying and join the conversation.
- Target (@Target) | Twitter**  
<https://twitter.com/target?lang=en>  
 51.5K tweets • 6643 photos/videos • 1.94M followers. "One week to go! Which is your favorite stocking stuffer? "
- Target Style (@TargetStyle) | Twitter**  
<https://twitter.com/targetstyle?lang=en>  
 The latest Tweets from Target Style (@TargetStyle). The freshest mix of fashion, beauty and home that won't break the bank. <https://t.co/EHqqpRWSg0> | <https://t.co/JEajs5qqMw> | <https://t.co/cbobA3qsPp>.
- Target News on Twitter: "Style level: Envious. Investment: Less than ...**  
<https://twitter.com/TargetNews/status/882686901966303232>  
 Jul 5, 2017 - Target News Verified account. @TargetNews. The official Twitter handle for @Target company news, partnerships, events, A Bullseye View stories and more. [Target.com/abullseyeview](https://target.com/abullseyeview). Joined July 2011 ...

## Use a Dashboard to Coordinate Efforts

Tools such as [Sendible](#) and [Hootsuite](#) allow users to monitor multiple channels and engage with audiences through a single interface. Not only does this result in time saving, it also helps keep things organized and track conversions. These tools often also have built-in social media analytics tools.

Increasingly, ecommerce brands are also looking to integrate distribution channels into CRM systems and this is particularly important for companies offering customer service. Instead of having to start the conversation again every time a visitor uses a new channel, the process can be much more efficient when the conversation history is available.

## Measure Your Results

After setting up your multi-channel content strategy, it's time to do some content analysis. Review your data to identify which channels are performing better and which could use more focus. This will help allocate time and resources more efficiently for the next campaign. Although it can be challenging to measure the effectiveness of your campaign with full precision, analytics do a pretty good job at providing deep insight on campaign performance. The next sections explain how a content analysis can help optimize your content strategy.

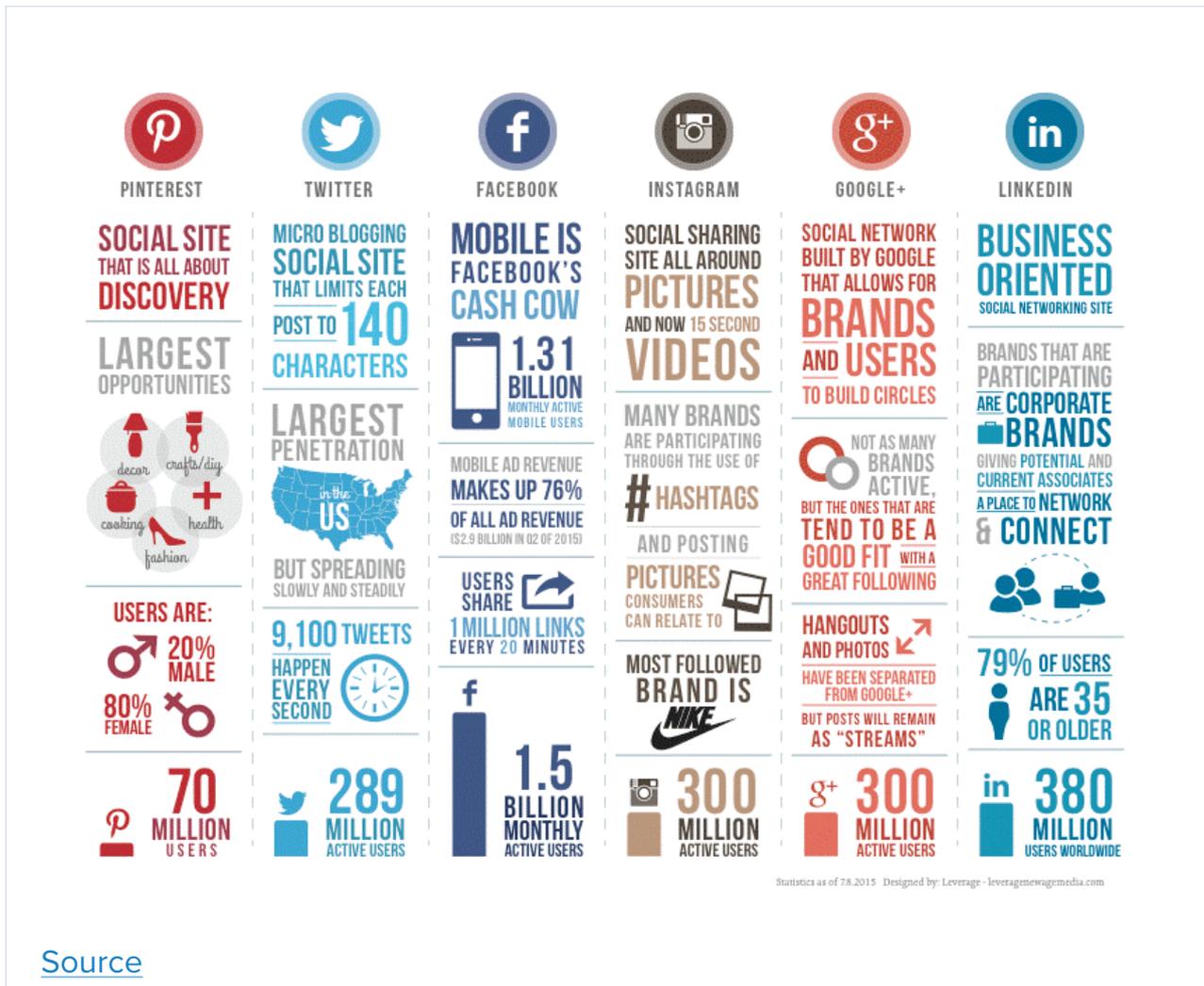
# Use Social Media Analytics

Social media can be an effective channel for driving free traffic to your ecommerce store, but it requires more than just regular posting. Many inexperienced owners focus all their time on creating large amounts of content and distributing it to their audience, without taking the time to properly analyze how the content is performing.

One of the best things about using [social media for marketing](#) is that it's easy to track a variety of metrics that show how content is being consumed by your audience. Many platforms have a number of content analysis and social media analytics tools. Analyzing these insights allows you to do three important things:

**1. See which content is working (and which isn't).** These [social media tools](#) can go a long way in helping you perform a qualitative content analysis. You may notice that people are engaging with your content by giving it likes or shares, but what does this really mean? Does this engagement result in more visitors to your site? Is your video content performing better than other kinds of content? Does the time of day you post content affect user engagement? Are you reaching the right audience, or are all your likes coming from people who are not part of your customer base? Social media analytics tools can help you answer these questions.

**2. Compare how each social media platform is performing.** Every social media platform works differently. Twitter is good for short, text-based content, while Instagram focuses mainly on visual content. Pinterest has an audience which is predominantly female, while LinkedIn has a professional audience which is mostly over 35 years old. What this means is that different kinds of content will work better on certain platforms. Social media analytics helps you compare results across platforms. This will help you discover the best combination of content and platform for engaging your audience and driving them to your store.



**3. Help you better allocate your time spent using social media.** Social media analytics tools can help you decide where you should be focusing your time and effort. For example, if you're spending four hours a week on Facebook and LinkedIn, yet most of your referral traffic is coming from Facebook, you'll need to rethink your LinkedIn marketing strategy. If you think LinkedIn still has potential for your business, it might be beneficial to spend some extra time working on your LinkedIn engagement. On the other hand, you might decide it's more beneficial to stop working on LinkedIn and focus all your time on Facebook.

**Quick Tip:** If your content analysis tells you anything notable or useful, put them into a social media spreadsheet or document. This way, you'll always have it on hand to reference it when you're making posting decisions.

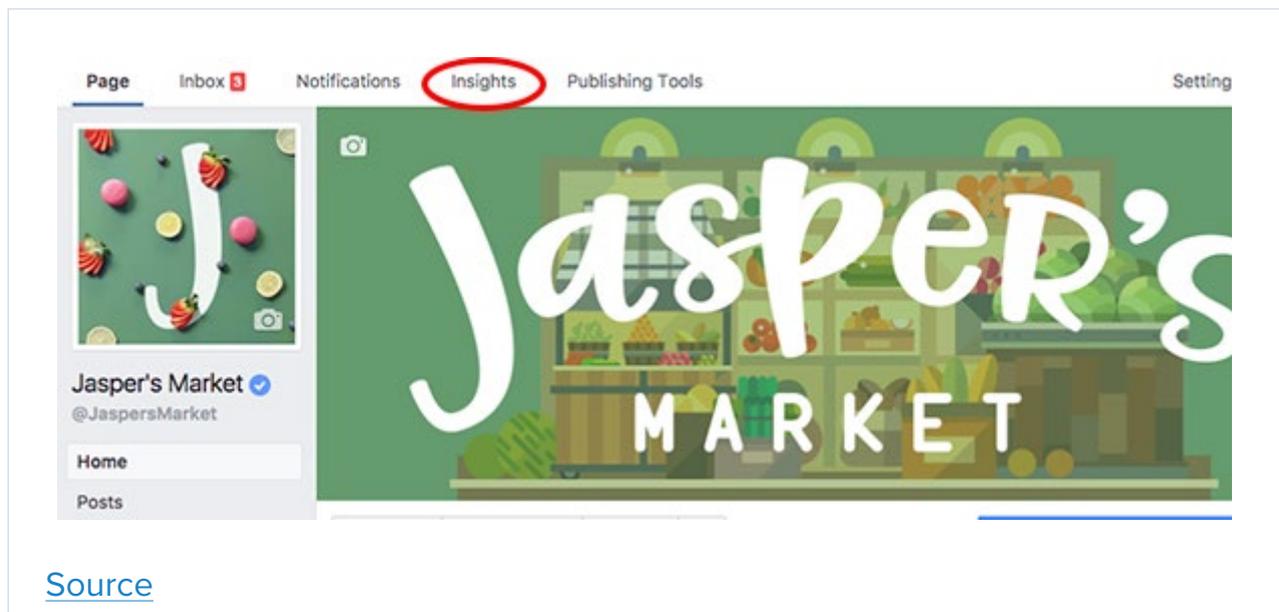
## How To Monitor Social Media Metrics

Each social media platform comes with a built-in content analysis system that lets you monitor metrics for free. Many of the metrics are common to most platforms, such as likes and visits. Metrics can be divided into two categories – post-level metrics (the data from each individual post) and page-level metrics (the overall data from your social media account).

Let's take a look at how to monitor metrics on three platforms – Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

### Facebook Metrics

You can use [Facebook Insights](#) to find metrics for your Facebook page. To access Insights, click on the **Insights** tab on your business page.



On the **Overview** page, you can see basic metrics such as Page Views, Page Likes and Reach. You can also export your data to an Excel or .csv file to make viewing easier. Under the Overview tab in the menu, you can select other pages such as **Posts** or **Events** for more detailed information.

Here are some **post-level** metrics you should focus on:

- **Likes:** Likes are the easiest way for your audience to engage with your content. Likes are a sign that your content is working, but they're not as important as comments.
- **Comments:** Positive comments are a good sign, indicating that people like your content enough to take the time to write about it. You want to try to avoid negative comments, although negative comments can be useful for discovering things to improve.

- **Referral Traffic:** This is the most important metric for ecommerce store owners. You want to drive your social media audience to your store, so it's important to focus on content that is good for referrals.
- **Shares:** Shares are important for reaching a new audience. If you can get your own audience to share your content with their friends and family, it can be a fantastic source of free traffic.

Here are some **page-level** metrics you should focus on:

- **Page Views:** The more people who are visiting your page, the more exposure for your business. However, you want to make sure you keep visitors on your page.
- **Engagement Rate:** This is a better metric for seeing how you're performing overall. This metric compares the number of people who view your content with the number of people who like, share or comment on your content. A higher number means people like what you're posting.
- **Video Metrics:** Videos are a popular kind of content, but it's important to see whether people are watching your videos to the end, or just for a few seconds.
- **Page Fan Growth:** The more fans you have, the healthier your business will appear to others.

## Twitter Metrics

You can [use Twitter Analytics](#) to find metrics for your Twitter page. To access [Twitter Analytics](#), log into your account and go to the Twitter Analytics page.

The screenshot shows the Twitter Analytics dashboard for the account 'Rock/Creek'. The dashboard is divided into several sections:

- Account home:** Shows the account name 'Rock/Creek' and a 'Page updated daily' indicator.
- 28 day summary:** A row of six metrics with small line graphs showing trends:
  - Tweets: 32 (+39.1%)
  - Tweet impressions: 55.5K (+56.3%)
  - Profile visits: 1,005 (+21.2%)
  - Mentions: 97 (+1.0%)
  - Followers: 12.3K (+406)
  - Tweets linking to you: 14 (+68.9%)
- March 2015 - 9 days so far...:** A section for monthly performance.
  - Tweet Highlights:**
    - Top Tweet:** earned 16.2K impressions. Text: "Looking for advice on training for your first 50k #ultramarathon? Yep, we have that. [MDEQ] bit.ly/17E3D1N".
    - Top mention:** earned 172 engagements. From @RootsRated: "A (Not So Very Hidden) Gem in the Scenic City bit.ly/1FXQWia @Marmot @RockCreek @chattanoogaofun pic.twitter.com/CHDyzXRPJ7".
    - Top Follower:** followed by 60K people. User: @TheFlashidaRose. Text: "I AM SHEPowerful".
    - Top card Tweet:** earned 1,035 impressions. Text: "See why the Osprey Aura & Atmos Packs Win 'Editor's Choice' Awards [MDEQ] bit.ly/18Pos9E".
  - March 2015 Summary:**
    - Tweets: 9
    - Tweet impressions: 30.4K
    - Profile visits: 313
    - Mentions: 33
    - New followers: 118
    - Tweets linking to you: 12

Source

On the **Analytics Home Page**, you can see a summary of your Twitter activity from the last 28 days. If you click on the **Tweets** tab, you can see engagement data for each individual tweet. If you click on the **Audience** tab, you can see useful information about your audience such as interests, income and buying habits.

Here are some **post-level** metrics you should focus on:

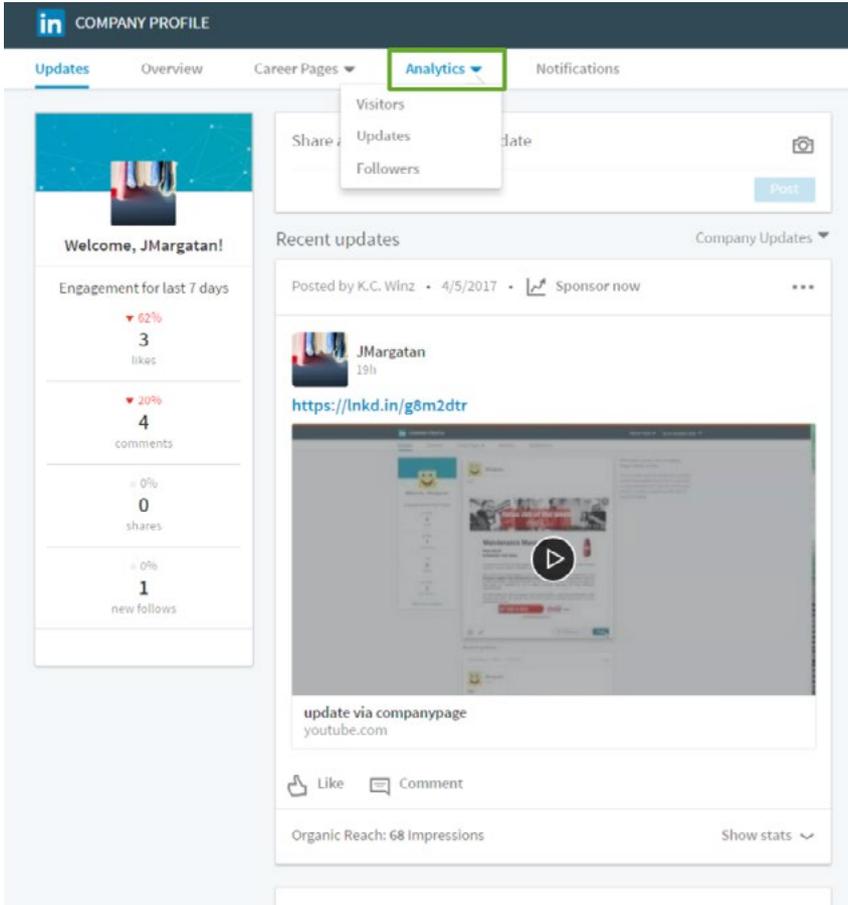
- **Tweet Engagement:** This metric shows how many people are seeing your content. This can be a little deceptive – you want this to be high, but you also want to make sure people are engaging with your posts.
- **Retweets:** This shows how well your tweets are performing. The more your tweets are shared, the more chance they will go viral.
- **Tweet Likes:** Likes mean that people are enjoying your content. The more likes, the better.
- **Replies:** Many people use Twitter because retweeting is fast and easy. If you're getting replies, it's a sign that your content is worth talking about.
- **Referral Traffic:** As with Facebook, this is an important metric as you want to drive people to your store.
- **Tweets Linking To You:** This is a really positive metric, as a high number means lots of people are talking about your business.

Here are some **page-level** metrics you should focus on:

- **Follower Growth:** You want as many followers as possible, but you want to make sure they are quality customers. People who are not really interested in your brand will never become customers of your store.
- **Profile Visits:** This is a good metric as it indicates people are interested enough in your content to seek out more information about your business.

## LinkedIn Metrics

You can use [LinkedIn Analytics](#) to find metrics for your LinkedIn page. To access LinkedIn Analytics, click on the **Me** icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage. Below **Manage**, select your company page and click the **Analytics** tab. On this page, you can see important reach and engagement data. Under the Analytics tab, you can also choose **Visitors**, **Updates** or **Followers** for more detailed information.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'COMPANY PROFILE' page with the 'Analytics' tab selected. A dropdown menu is open under 'Analytics', showing options for 'Visitors', 'Updates', and 'Followers'. The main content area displays engagement metrics for the last 7 days: 3 likes (62% decrease), 4 comments (20% decrease), 0 shares (0%), and 1 new follow (0%). A recent update is shown, posted by K.C. Winz on 4/5/2017, featuring a video player and a link to a LinkedIn profile. The update has 68 impressions and is categorized as 'update via company page' from youtube.com.

[Source](#)

Here are some **post-level** metrics you should focus on:

- **Impressions:** This is a good guide for how many people are seeing your content, but it's not as important as engagement metrics.
- **Interactions:** Just like Facebook and Twitter, interactions suggest that people are interested in your content and your brand. Even if they're not ready to visit your store, interactions are a guide that they are warming to you.

- **Clicks:** This is more important, as more clicks mean more engagement (and hopefully more people purchasing your products).

Here are some **page-level** metrics you should focus on:

- **Engagement Rate:** This is a very important metric as it gives you a good idea of how your audience perceives your content. A good engagement rate suggests that your content is valuable to them.
- **Reach:** You want your content to be viewed and shared. This metric shows how many people are being exposed to your content in their feed.
- **Page Views:** High page views mean that people are interested in your business. They've read your content and are intrigued enough to view your page.
- **Visitor Demographics:** Most people on LinkedIn are professionals, but it's still important to make sure your content is being viewed by the right people. For example, if your content is aimed at women, you want your demographics to be predominantly women.

## Tools for Monitoring Instagram & Snapchat Metrics

On Instagram, only those who've created a business account can access the analytics feature. Hence, store owners who are using their personal profile for selling or promoting their products and services need to bring in at least one or two tools to access everything. For Snapchat, a third-party analytics tool is a necessity as there's no built-in analytics feature available. With that in mind, here are some useful tools for monitoring Instagram & Snapchat analytics.

### Union Metrics

**#cheese** is your top hashtag.

Of the hashtags you use most, **#cheese** received **51% more engagement** than your average post. Consider using it and your other top hashtags more often for more likes and comments on future posts.

**+51%**

ENGAGEMENT

See all hashtag performance →

---

**@deliciousDC12** is your biggest fan.

Of the **1,562 people** who have recently interacted with your posts, **deliciousDC12, dessertviews and pancakepiggy** are your biggest fans. If you don't already, give them a follow or take a look at their photos.

**1,562**

FANS

Analyze your audience →

1st	2nd	3rd
 <b>Deli DC</b> @deliciousDC12 38 likes 31 comments	 <b>Dessert First</b> @dessertviews 36 likes 12 comments	 <b>Pancake Pig</b> @pancakepiggy 36 likes 11 comments

---

**Your average post receives 126 likes and 5 comments.**

Analyze all posts →

Below are your recent posts in order of most to least engagement. Your top post received **428 likes** and **20 comments**. Look for patterns in high and low-performing posts to decide what to post next.

Union Metrics does a free Instagram account checkup to evaluate your performance. Though the report isn't as comprehensive as others, it provides handy nuggets of data for Instagram account owners. It lets you determine which hashtags to place in your posts, what type of content to post less or more of, and the best time to post. In addition, it gives you high level summary of your top followers and reminds you to interact with them.

### [Snaplytics.io](https://snaplytics.io)



Snaplytics is the market leader for Snapchat analytics. It allows users to track key metrics including views, open rates, completion rate, and average number of screenshots per Snapchat story. Other tidbits offered by the app include competitive benchmarking and the source through which followers stumbled upon a company's Snapchat account.

**Quick Tip:** Get in the habit of pulling your reports monthly and making comparisons to previous months, even if you're not convinced that there's much to see. Consistent social media monitoring can help you catch any spikes or interesting findings while they're happening as opposed to in hindsight.

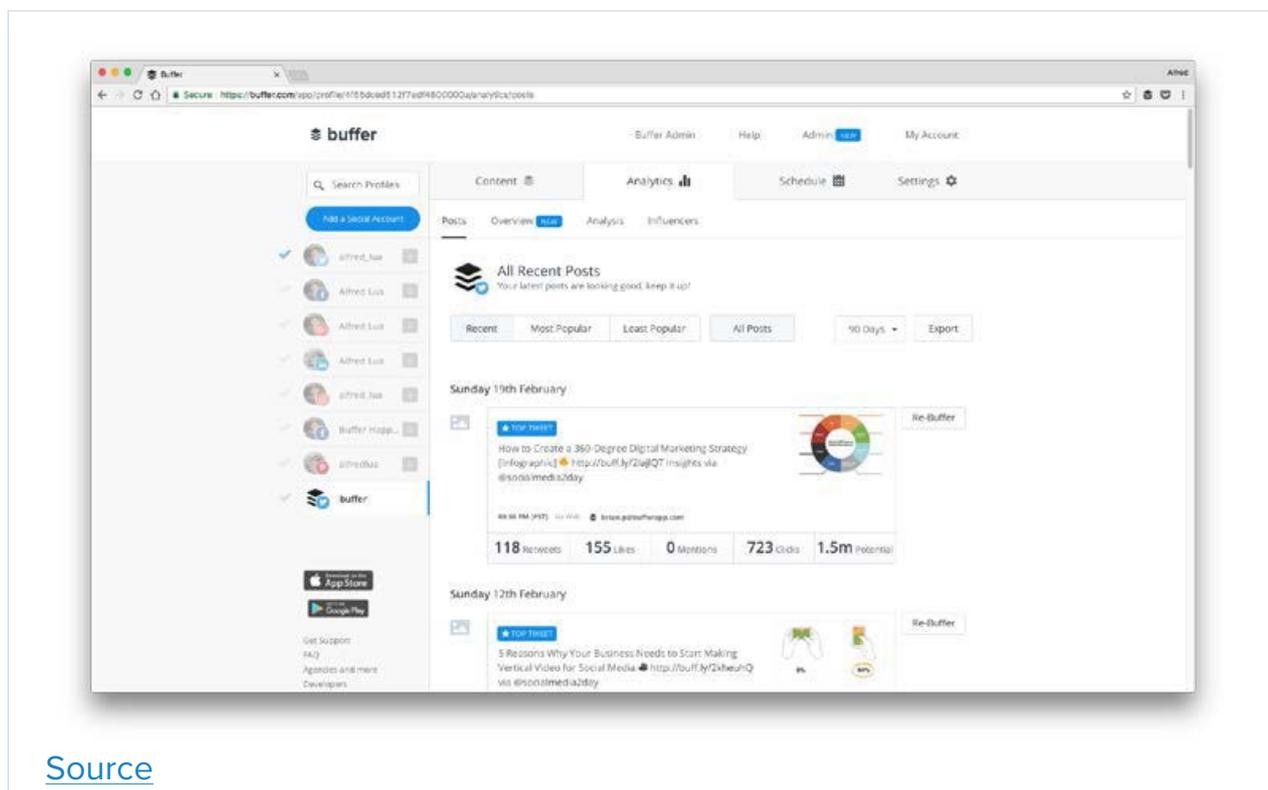
## What To Do With Your Data

The first thing you should do is bring all your content analysis data together. You can do this by importing all the important metrics into an Excel spreadsheet.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Storyline	Avg Reach Per Post	Avg Engagement Total	Avg Likes Per Post	Avg Comments Per Post	Avg Engagement Rate	Avg Shares Per Post
1							
2	<b>Total Baseline (Avg)</b>	3881.26	258.64	122.57	77.98	6.05%	18.90
3	Recipe	2303.08	99.37	62.08	5.75	6.07%	14.82
4	Giveaway	13184.17	1272.50	469.38	548.83	7.17%	61.96
5	Brand	3068.03	127.64	93.44	9.36	5.28%	7.53
6	Lifestyle	2315.40	96.70	78.60	11.10	5.90%	2.60
7							
	Type of Post	Avg Reach Per Post	Avg Engagement Total	Avg Likes Per Post	Avg Comments Per Post	Avg Engagement Rate	Avg Shares Per Post
8							
9	<b>Total Baseline (Avg)</b>	3881.26	258.64	122.57	77.98	6.05%	18.90
10	Status	12305.67	902.33	354.00	511.17	6.25%	36.67
11	Photo	3763.68	255.68	125.89	68.67	6.37%	20.03
12	Link	2437.76	154.48	65.84	43.84	4.62%	9.88
13							
	Day of Post	Avg Reach Per Post	Avg Engagement Total	Avg Likes Per Post	Avg Comments Per Post	Avg Engagement Rate	Avg Shares Per Post
14							
15	<b>Total Baseline (Avg)</b>	3881.26	258.64	122.57	77.98	6.05%	18.90
16	Monday	2981.60	206.47	98.93	43.50	6.23%	19.90
17	Tuesday	5979.38	413.75	193.59	159.25	5.78%	26.03
18	Wednesday	4412.16	296.34	129.16	87.31	5.79%	23.03
19	Thursday	3434.70	188.73	101.70	36.73	6.02%	10.70
20	Friday	2704.25	218.21	107.57	82.89	6.65%	13.86
21	Saturday	2237.24	104.00	67.06	6.71	5.62%	11.00
22	Sunday	5107.21	348.14	137.93	109.86	6.23%	28.29
23							
	Time of Day	Avg Reach Per Post	Avg Engagement Total	Avg Likes Per Post	Avg Comments Per Post	Avg Engagement Rate	Avg Shares Per Post
24							
25	<b>Total Baseline (Avg)</b>	3881.26	258.64	122.57	77.98	6.05%	18.90
26	Morning	4143.38	288.03	134.50	92.42	6.09%	19.59
27	Afternoon	2958.21	152.24	79.32	25.18	5.86%	16.58
28	Evening	1212.00	70.00	48.00	4.00	6.52%	8.00
29							
	Paid/Unpaid	Avg Reach Per Post	Avg Engagement Total	Avg Likes Per Post	Avg Comments Per Post	Avg Engagement Rate	Avg Shares Per Post
30							
31	<b>Total Baseline (Avg)</b>	3881.26	258.64	122.57	77.98	6.05%	18.90
32	Paid	6763.44	396.02	191.97	85.41	4.88%	31.20
33	Unpaid	2440.17	189.95	87.87	74.26	6.63%	12.75

[Source](#)

Alternately, you can use a third party app which will compile data from all your social media platforms. [Buffer](#), [Cyfe](#), and [Quintly](#) all have free plans that let you see major engagement stats for all your updates.



[Source](#)

Once you've compiled your data, you need to set a performance baseline for each metric on each channel. To do this, you'll need to take data from an extended period of time (three months is usually enough) and find the average performance of each metric.

As you add more content, you can perform a qualitative content analysis to see how it performs compared to your baseline. If your content consistently performs under your baseline, you know you need to change what you're doing. If your content performs above the baseline, it's a sign that your content is working effectively.

# Install Google Analytics on Your Website

We've spent this entire ebook talking about driving traffic to your store, but it's critical that you're also tracking your efforts to see what's working and what isn't.

Google Analytics is a life-saver when it comes to qualitative content analysis research. It offers some comprehensive reporting options so that you can really drill down into your data and turn a bunch of numbers into meaningful, actionable conclusions.

In this section, we'll discuss how you can use Analytics to perform a content analysis and tweak your strategies, as well as how to install [Analytics onto your ecommerce store](#).

## How Analytics Helps Drive Traffic

The main way you can use your content analysis data to drive traffic is to look at the results from specific strategies you've implemented or channels you're using. If the strategy is resulting in sales and you're getting a strong ROI for your efforts, you know to double-down. If it isn't bringing you enough results to justify the amount of effort or money you're investing, you know to adjust or ditch it.

Your analytics data can help answer questions like:

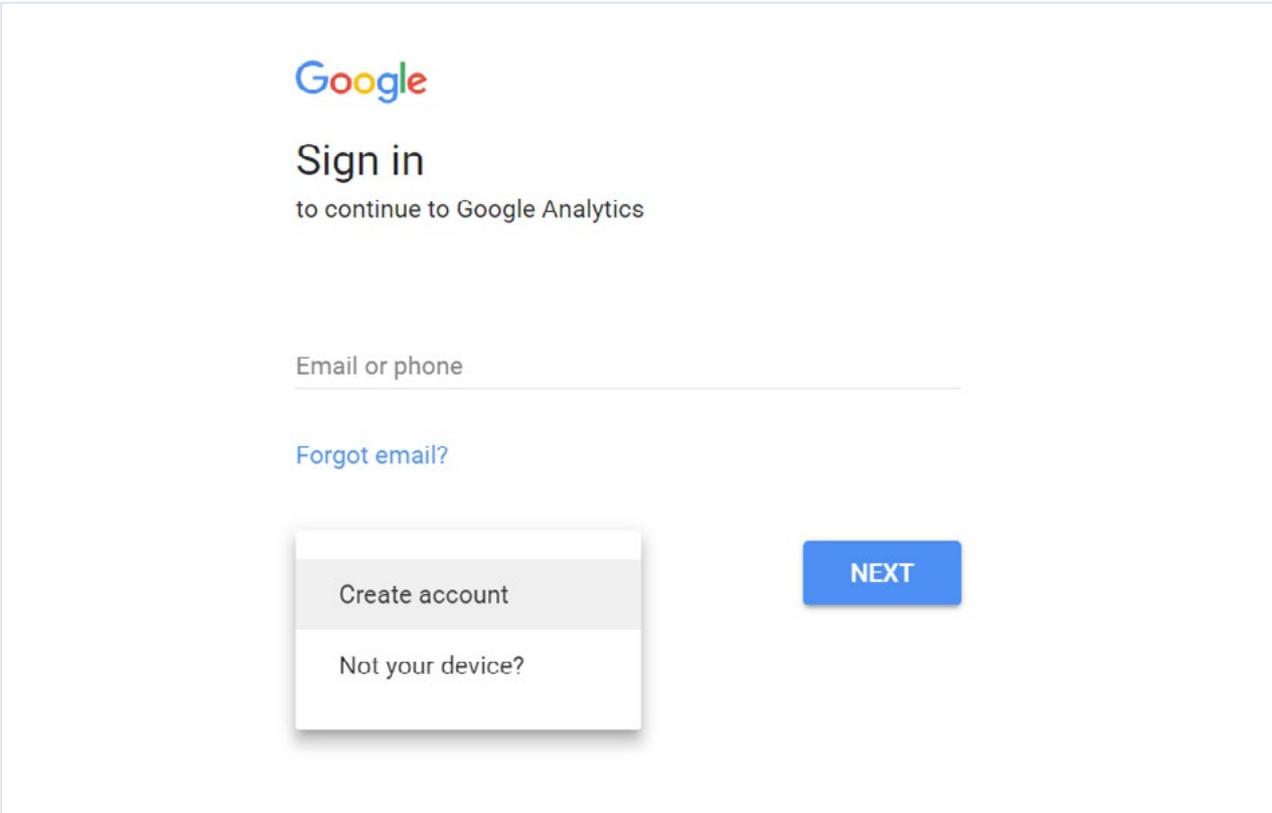
- Where are my visitors coming from?
- Of these visitors, how many are converting to sales?

- Which strategies and channels have the highest conversion rates?
- Which strategies and channels bring the highest revenue? The highest order values?
- Which are my top landing pages? My top exit pages?

## How to Install

### 1. Sign Up for Google Analytics

Go to [www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics) and click 'Sign In' → 'Analytics' from the top right dropdown menu. If you already have a Google Account and you'd like to connect it to your Analytics account, use it to sign in. If you don't already have an account, now's the time. Click 'More options' → 'Create account'.

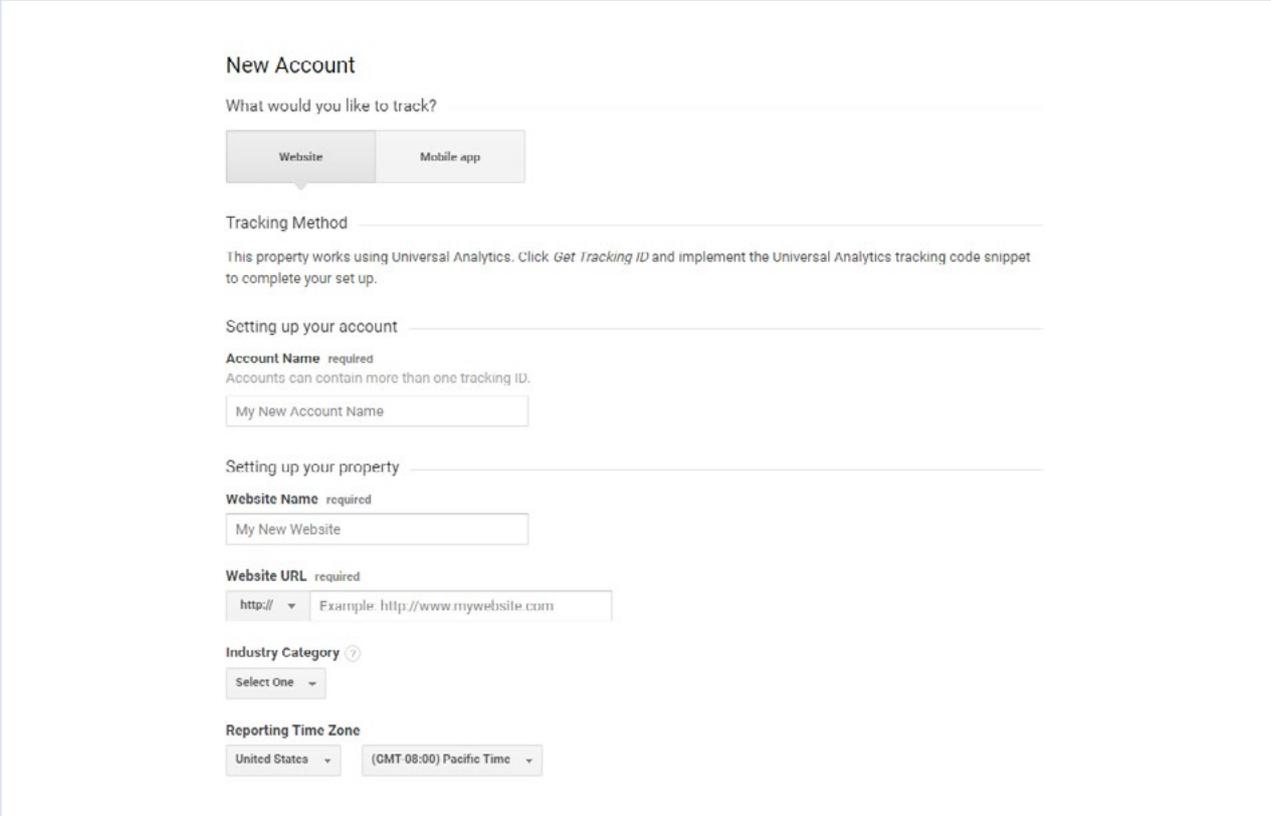


The screenshot displays the Google Analytics sign-in interface. At the top, the Google logo is followed by the text "Sign in to continue to Google Analytics". Below this is an input field labeled "Email or phone". A link for "Forgot email?" is positioned below the input field. To the right of the input field is a blue "NEXT" button. A dropdown menu is open below the input field, showing two options: "Create account" and "Not your device?".

Choose an email address, fill out the form, and create your account. Then, return to the Analytics login page and log in.

On the next page, click 'Sign up,' then fill out the form on the next page:

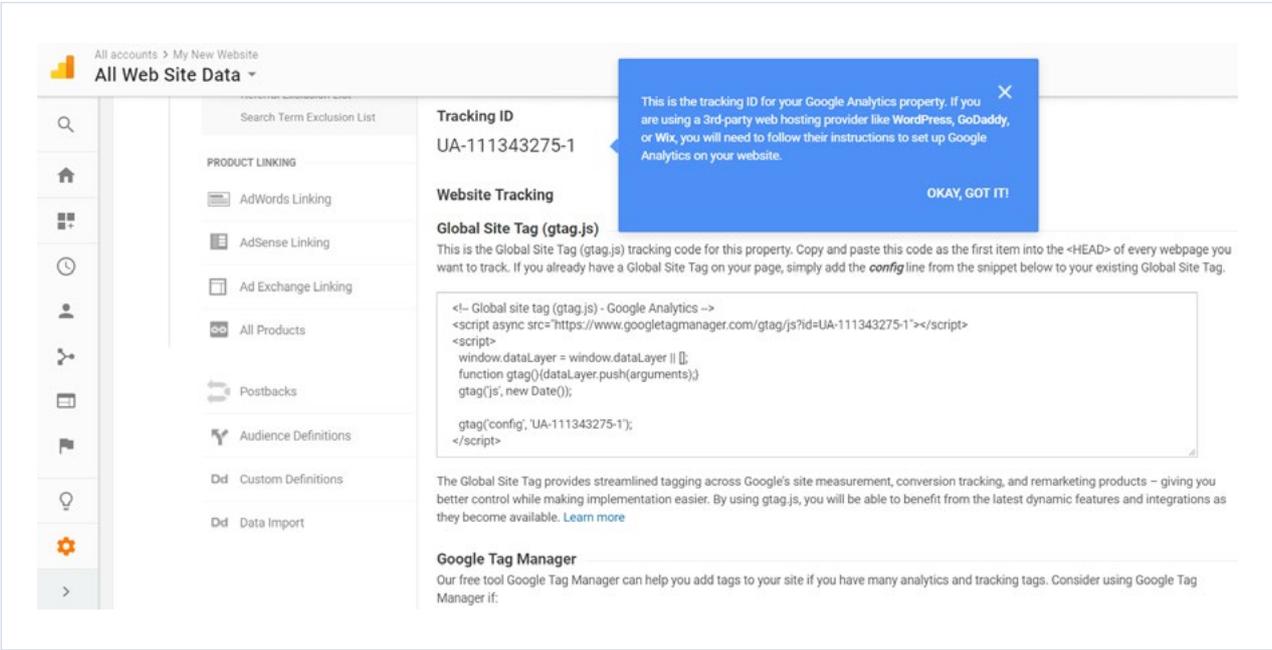
- Select that you'd like to track your website. If you have a mobile app too, you can do this process again.
- Name your account, which will be the main account under which you can connect and track up to 100 properties, including other sites and your mobile app, if needed.
- Enter the site's name, URL, industry category, and time zone.
- Select your preferred data sharing settings and click 'Get Tracking ID'.



The screenshot shows the 'New Account' setup page in Google Analytics. The form is titled 'New Account' and asks 'What would you like to track?'. There are two buttons: 'Website' (selected) and 'Mobile app'. Below this is the 'Tracking Method' section, which states: 'This property works using Universal Analytics. Click *Get Tracking ID* and implement the Universal Analytics tracking code snippet to complete your set up.' The next section is 'Setting up your account', which includes a required 'Account Name' field with the placeholder text 'My New Account Name'. Below that is 'Setting up your property', which includes a required 'Website Name' field with the placeholder text 'My New Website', a required 'Website URL' field with a dropdown menu set to 'http://' and an example 'http://www.mywebsite.com', an 'Industry Category' dropdown menu set to 'Select One', and a 'Reporting Time Zone' dropdown menu set to 'United States' with '(GMT 08:00) Pacific Time' selected.

## 2. Get Your Tracking Code

Now you'll be taken to your Analytics dashboard. On this screen, you'll see the Global Site Tag that you'll need to paste into your website or ecommerce platform's backend.



The screenshot shows the Google Analytics interface for 'All Web Site Data'. A blue callout box highlights the Tracking ID: UA-111343275-1. Below it, the 'Global Site Tag (gtag.js)' code is displayed in a code editor. The code is as follows:

```
<!-- Global site tag (gtag.js) - Google Analytics -->
<script async src="https://www.googletagmanager.com/gtag/js?id=UA-111343275-1"></script>
<script>
  window.dataLayer = window.dataLayer || [];
  function gtag(){dataLayer.push(arguments);}
  gtag('js', new Date());

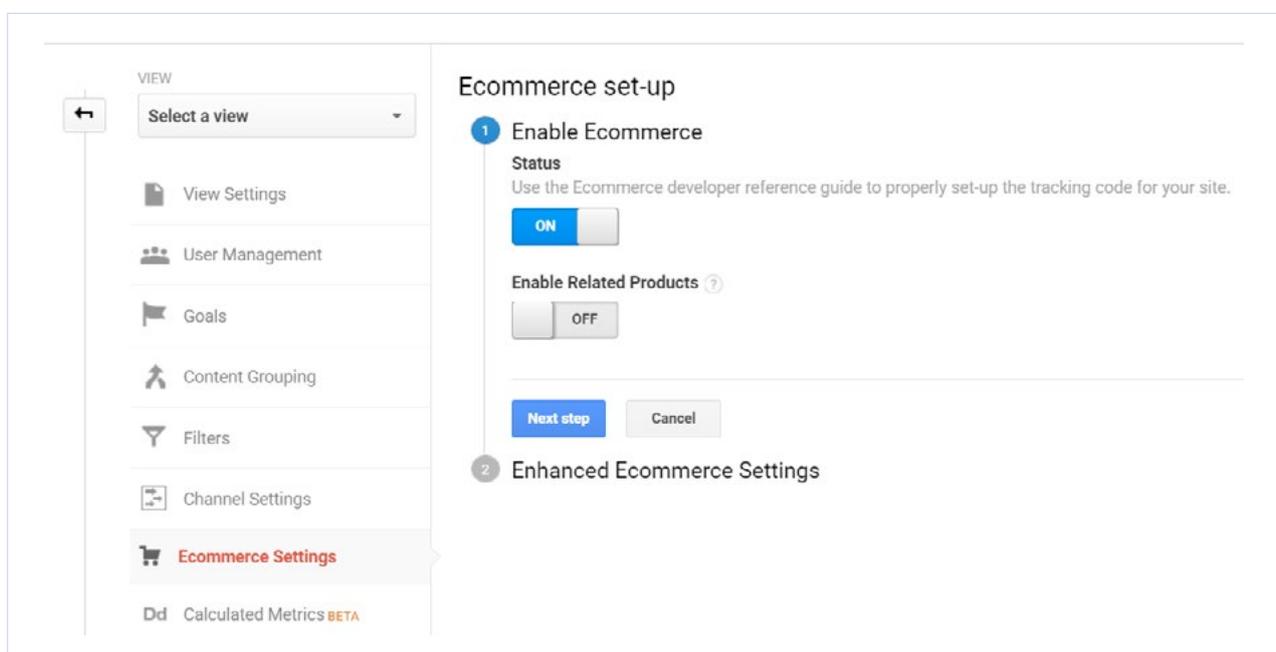
  gtag('config', 'UA-111343275-1');
</script>
```

The callout box text reads: "This is the tracking ID for your Google Analytics property. If you are using a 3rd-party web hosting provider like WordPress, GoDaddy, or Wix, you will need to follow their instructions to set up Google Analytics on your website." The code editor also includes instructions: "This is the Global Site Tag (gtag.js) tracking code for this property. Copy and paste this code as the first item into the <HEAD> of every webpage you want to track. If you already have a Global Site Tag on your page, simply add the **config** line from the snippet below to your existing Global Site Tag."

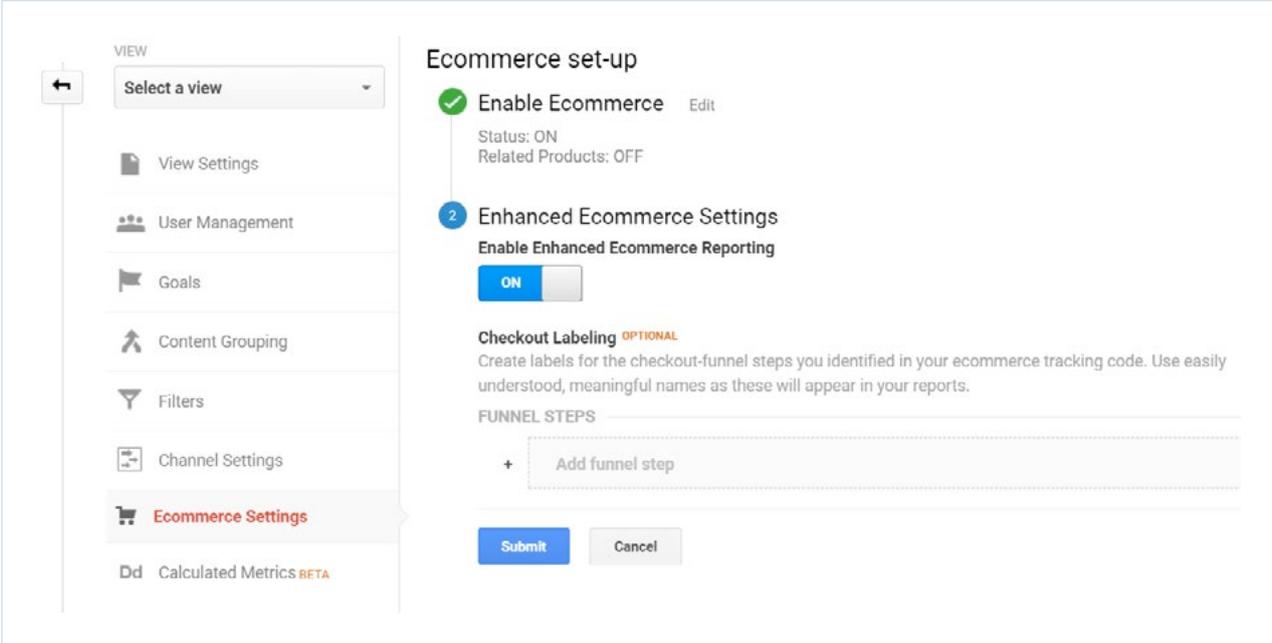
**Quick Tip:** Note the blue callout that says: "If you are using a 3rd party web hosting provider like WordPress, GoDaddy, or Wix, you will need to follow their instructions to set up Google Analytics on your website." This also applies for specialized ecommerce platforms, as they typically have a simple setup process for Google Analytics.

### 3. Enable Ecommerce

To enable ecommerce tracking functionality in your Analytics account, go to 'Admin' (the gear icon at the bottom of the navigation panel). Under the third column titled 'View', select 'Ecommerce Settings'. Toggle the '1: Enable Ecommerce' button to 'ON'. Then click 'Next step'.



On the next screen, enable '2: Enhanced Ecommerce Settings' by toggling that on too, and click 'Submit'.



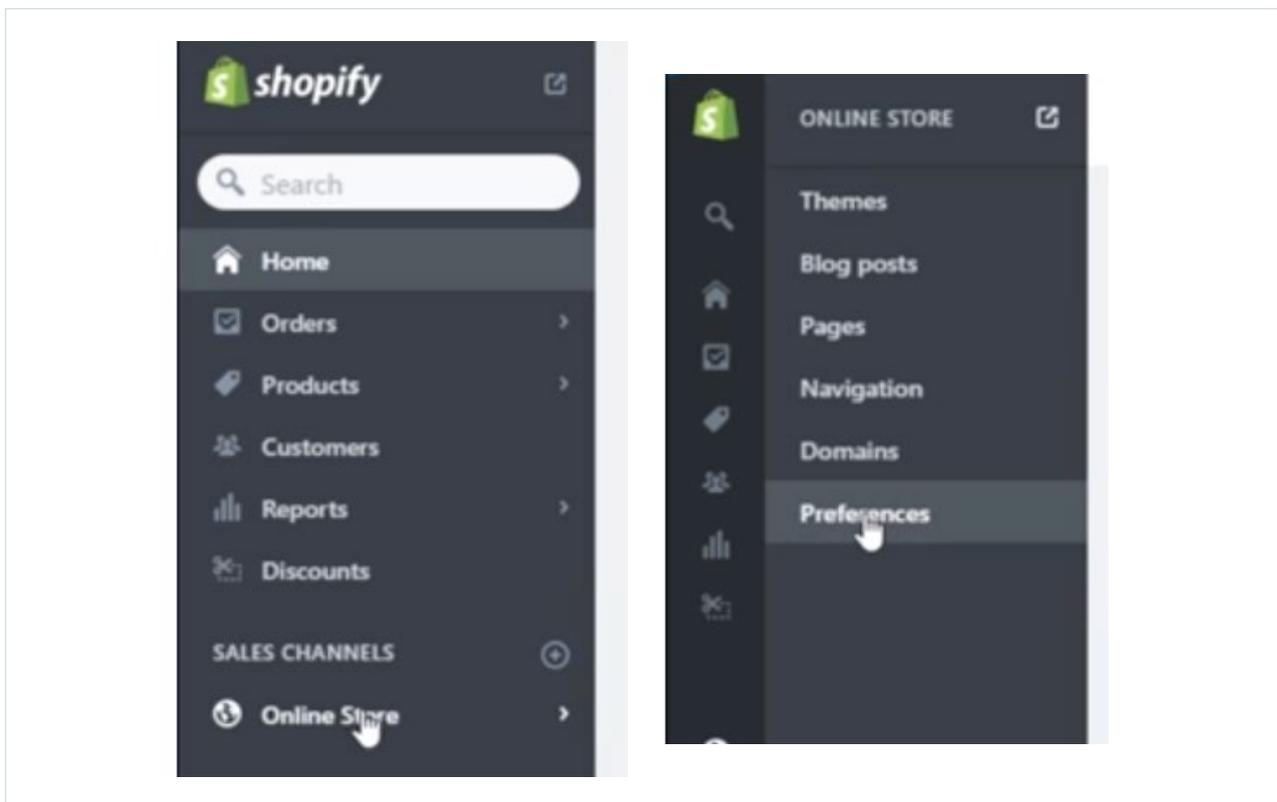
The screenshot displays the 'Ecommerce set-up' configuration page. On the left is a navigation sidebar with a 'VIEW' dropdown set to 'Select a view'. The sidebar menu includes: View Settings, User Management, Goals, Content Grouping, Filters, Channel Settings, **Ecommerce Settings** (highlighted), and Calculated Metrics BETA. The main content area is titled 'Ecommerce set-up' and contains the following sections:

- Enable Ecommerce** (with a green checkmark icon and an 'Edit' link):
  - Status: ON
  - Related Products: OFF
- Enhanced Ecommerce Settings** (with a blue '2' icon):
  - Enable Enhanced Ecommerce Reporting**: A toggle switch is currently set to 'ON'.
  - Checkout Labeling** OPTIONAL: A section with a description: 'Create labels for the checkout-funnel steps you identified in your ecommerce tracking code. Use easily understood, meaningful names as these will appear in your reports.'
  - FUNNEL STEPS**: A section with a dashed border and a '+ Add funnel step' button.
- At the bottom of the main area are two buttons: 'Submit' and 'Cancel'.

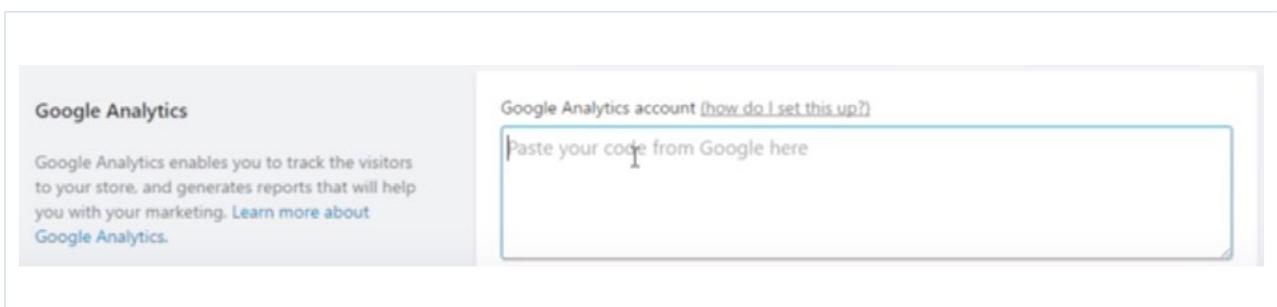
Now that your Analytics account is set to read incoming data, it's time to tell your website to send that data to Analytics. This part takes place on the backend of your site or platform.

#### 4. Connect with Your Shopify Store

If you're on Shopify, it's easy to [integrate Google Analytics](#) into your site. Log in to your [Shopify Admin](#) account. In your navigation panel under 'Sales Channels', click 'Online Store' → 'Preferences'.



Paste your Global Site Tag into the Google Analytics code box and click 'Save'.



## If you don't have a Shopify Store

If you aren't on a specialized ecommerce platform and there isn't an extension or plugin for linking Analytics, consult your developer (or hire one for the job). This is because each transaction has a separate ID, which should update dynamically in the tracking code. The [manual coding process](#) can become a complex and confusing rabbit hole without the help of a professional, so it's well worth the investment.

**Quick Tip:** Keep a section in your spreadsheet to list the responses of these event organizers. Depending on your responses, consider making a new tab or separate spreadsheet for events that require follow-ups or should be shelved until next year.

## Navigating Your Analytics Account

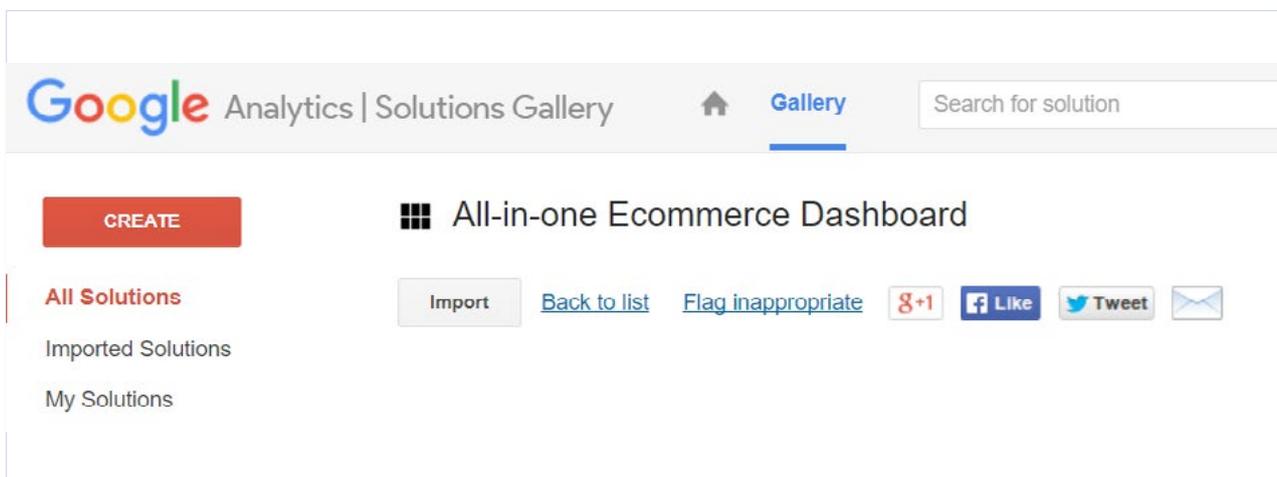
Let's break down the main tabs you'll see in the navigation panel, the features of each, and how you can use apply this content analysis data to your business strategy development and analysis.

### Customization

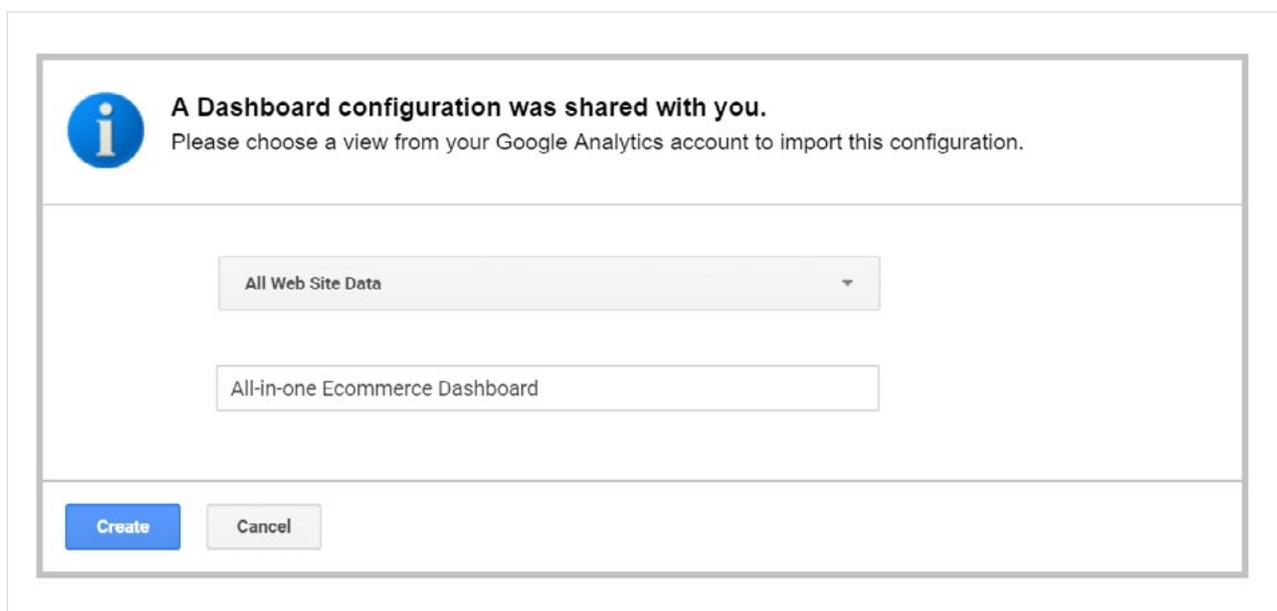
The templates for customized dashboards, reports, and alerts that you've created or added.

These can be an incredible time-saver, and there are some fantastic pre-built options out there that you just add to your account very easily. The [Google Analytics Solutions Gallery](#) has tons to choose from. Once you find one you like, importing it into your Analytics account takes just a few clicks.

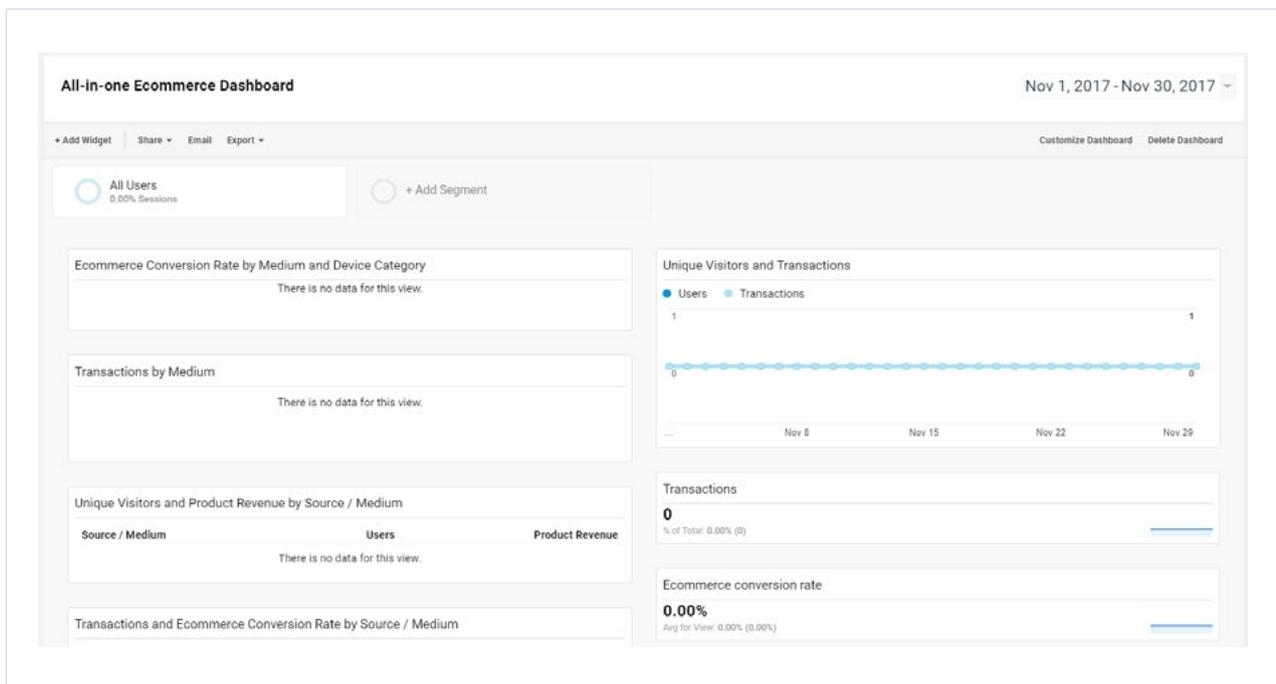
Click 'Import'.



Select the account and property you'd like to add it to and click 'Create'.



This is how the All-in-One Ecommerce dashboard will appear when you click it from the Dashboards section:



Some other helpful ecommerce dashboards and reports include:

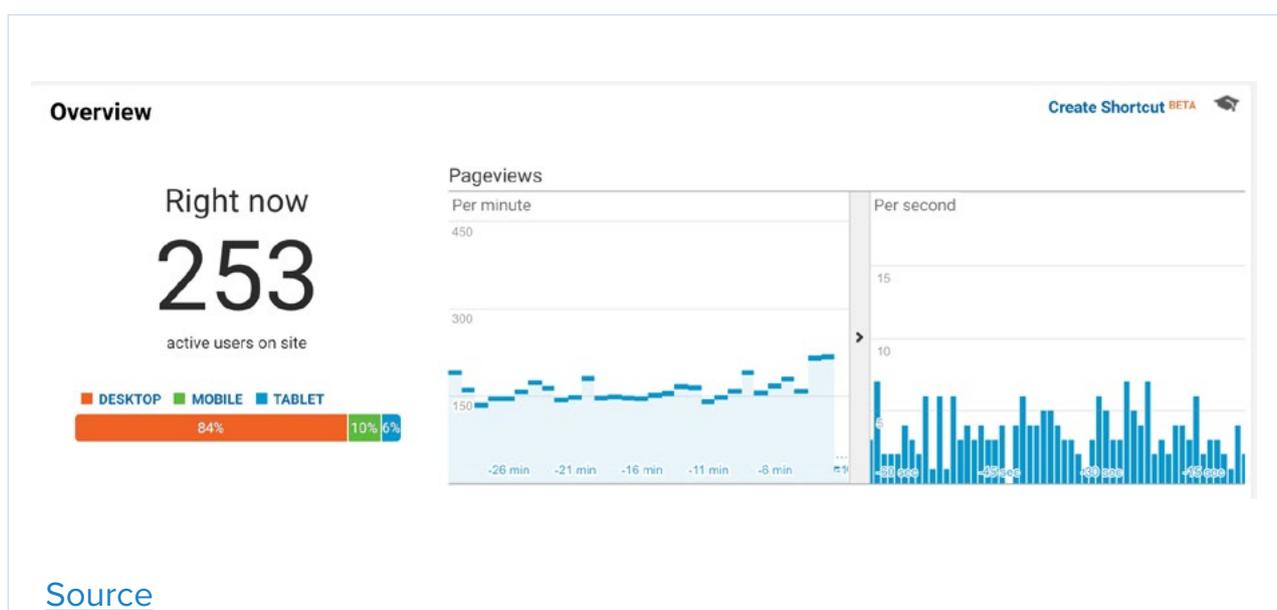
- [Perfect Dashboard](#)
- [Email Dashboard](#)
- [Mobile Ecommerce Dashboard](#)
- [Customer Acquisition Report](#)
- [Referral Traffic Revenue Opportunities Report](#)
- [Performance by Time Report](#)

**Quick Tip:** The Solutions Gallery offers more than just dashboard and reports. It also offers goals, segments, audience definitions, channel grouping, and attribution models. Browse the gallery to see what you might benefit from adding to your repertoire.

## Real Time

A look at the activity on your website that's happening right now.

You can use it to see how effective a current promotion, sale, or newly-released piece of content is performing, or see how your site performs at certain times of the day. A pretty cool feature, though it has a tendency to feed that little neurotic voice inside every entrepreneur. You know, the one that prefers to ditch your responsibilities and just spend the whole day watching the numbers fluctuate.

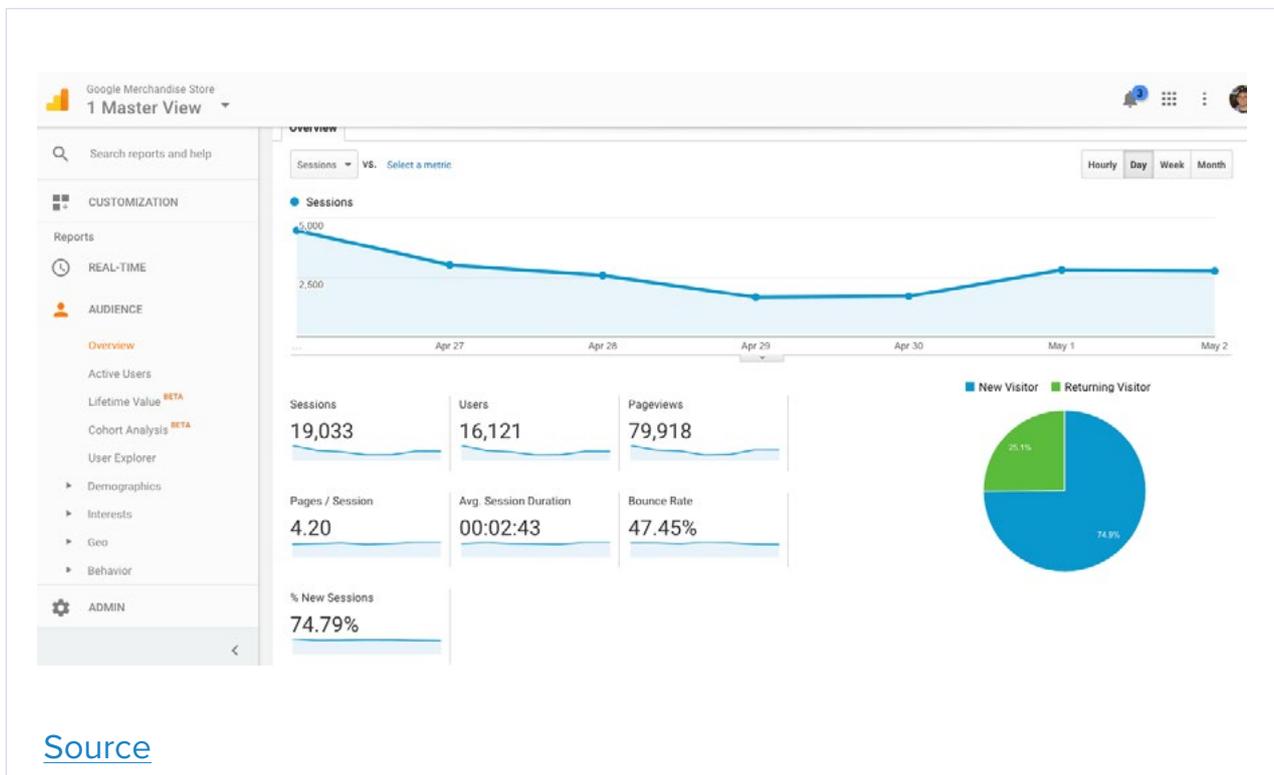


[Source](#)

## Audience

Who's visiting your site, including demographics, interests, lifetime value, and even the browser and operating system they visited from.

When it comes to content analysis research, it's important to look at at who's visiting your website and how they're interacting with your content. You can see your new or returning visitors, bounce rates (number of visitors who left without visiting a second page), how often a visitor came to your site, how many pages they visited during each visit (called a 'session'), and how much time they spent on each page.



## Acquisition

How your visitors found your site, examining traffic sources like organic and paid traffic, referral traffic, social media, AdWords, and special campaigns.

This tab is important because it tells you how people found your website - meaning it can inform your content analysis research and marketing strategies. If you landed guest posts and podcast visits, or joined social media groups a forums, you can look at the 'All Traffic' → 'Referrals' section to see which of these sources generated traffic. You'll also likely find some unexpected traffic sources that you may be able to capitalize on moving forward.

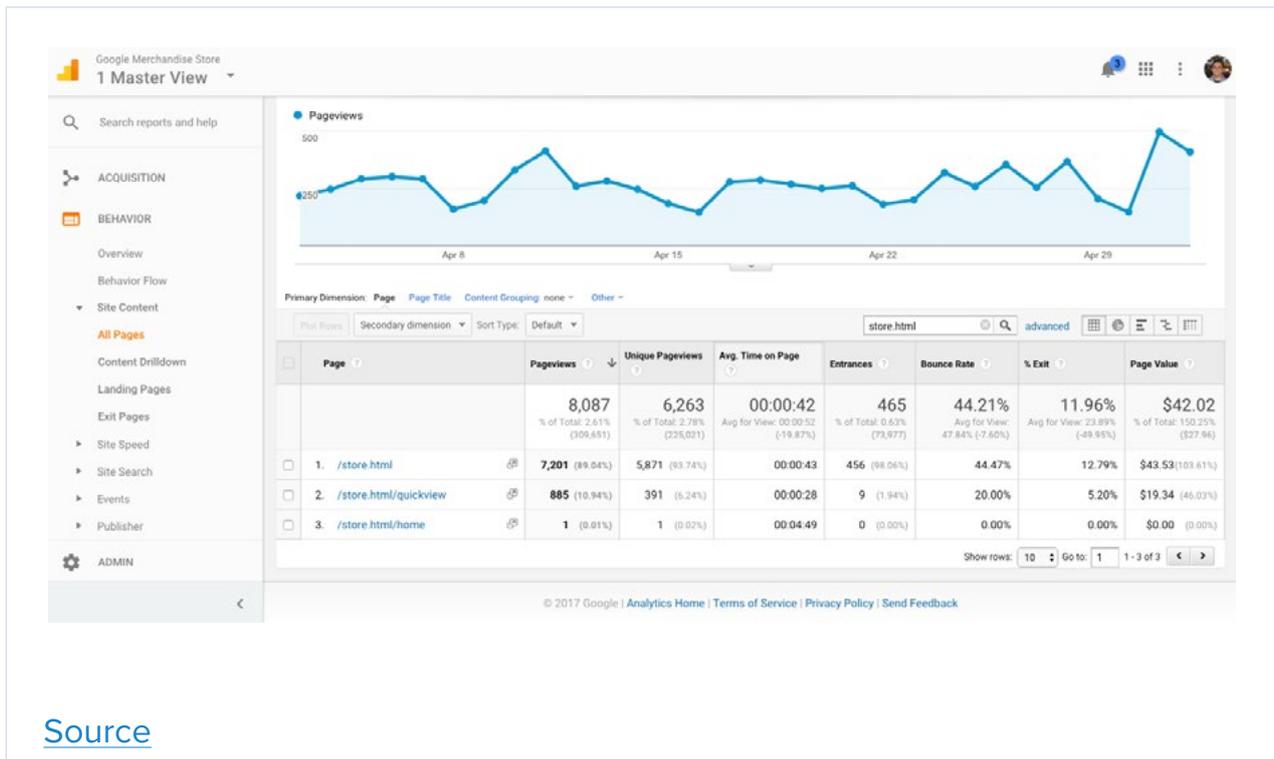
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <sup>?</sup>	Acquisition			Behavior		
		Sessions <sup>?</sup> ↓	% New Sessions <sup>?</sup>	New Users <sup>?</sup>	Bounce Rate <sup>?</sup>	Pages / Session <sup>?</sup>	Avg. Session Duration <sup>?</sup>
		<b>206,977</b> <small>% of Total: 100.00% (206,977)</small>	<b>68.91%</b> <small>Avg for View: 68.82% (0.13%)</small>	<b>142,619</b> <small>% of Total: 100.13% (142,437)</small>	<b>71.56%</b> <small>Avg for View: 71.56% (0.00%)</small>	<b>1.42</b> <small>Avg for View: 1.42 (0.00%)</small>	<b>00:02:17</b> <small>Avg for View: 00:02:17 (0.00%)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. <a href="#">organic</a>	<b>139,215</b> (67.26%)	75.75%	<b>105,451</b> (73.94%)	74.76%	1.32	00:02:00
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. <a href="#">(none)</a>	<b>32,998</b> (15.94%)	69.05%	<b>22,785</b> (15.98%)	64.39%	1.46	00:02:29
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. <a href="#">referral</a>	<b>15,828</b> (7.65%)	54.28%	<b>8,591</b> (6.02%)	66.72%	1.76	00:03:07
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. <a href="#">email</a>	<b>7,180</b> (3.47%)	21.39%	<b>1,536</b> (1.08%)	57.79%	2.04	00:04:17
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. <a href="#">social</a>	<b>4,298</b> (2.08%)	42.25%	<b>1,816</b> (1.27%)	73.62%	1.49	00:02:32

[Source](#)

## Behavior

Information about your site and how visitors interact with it, like which pages they're visiting and how they're performing.

This data shows you similar information as Audience, except through the lens of page performance instead of what visitors are doing. For example, you can see which pages have the highest bounce rate, which can signal that it needs some work. It also shows the speed and load time of each page so you can improve pages that are suffering from these factors.



Source

## Conversions

When it comes to content analysis, you don't just want to see who's on your site: you want to see whether their visits are turning into sales. This tab contains an 'Ecommerce' section, which is what you enabled during the setup process. The tab also shows results for special goals (like filling out a form) and funnels (a user process that involves multiple steps) that you've set up, as well as ecommerce data.

In the Ecommerce section, you can examine each of your products to see which ones are being bought, in what quantities, and how much revenue they're bringing in. Under the 'Transactions' section, you'll find transactional data like revenue, shipping, tax, and quantity information. This data can provide insights into strategies like quantity discounts and [free shipping](#) for minimum order values. In the 'Time to purchase' section, you can see how many days and sessions it takes to purchase items, starting from your most recent campaign through to the purchase.

Primary Dimension: Product Product SKU Product Category (Enhanced Ecommerce) Product Brand

Secondary dimension

Product	Sales Performance				
	Product Revenue	Unique Purchases	Quantity	Avg. Price	Avg. QTY
	\$126,766.85 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (\$126,766.85)</small>	1,115 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (1,115)</small>	1,123 <small>% of Total: 100.00% (1,123)</small>	\$112.88 <small>Avg for Visor: \$112.88 (0.00%)</small>	1.01 <small>Avg for Visor: 1.01 (0.00%)</small>
1.	\$2,904.00 (2.29%)	24 (2.15%)	24 (2.14%)	\$121.00	1.00
2.	\$2,783.00 (2.20%)	23 (2.06%)	23 (2.05%)	\$121.00	1.00
3.	\$2,581.00 (2.04%)	29 (2.60%)	29 (2.58%)	\$89.00	1.00
4.	\$2,403.00 (1.90%)	27 (2.42%)	27 (2.40%)	\$89.00	1.00
5.	\$2,314.00 (1.83%)	26 (2.33%)	26 (2.32%)	\$89.00	1.00
6.	\$1,958.00 (1.54%)	22 (1.97%)	22 (1.96%)	\$89.00	1.00
7.	\$1,870.00 (1.48%)	16 (1.43%)	17 (1.51%)	\$110.00	1.06
8.	\$1,848.00 (1.46%)	12 (1.08%)	12 (1.07%)	\$154.00	1.00
9.	\$1,716.00 (1.35%)	13 (1.17%)	13 (1.16%)	\$132.00	1.00
10.	\$1,694.00 (1.34%)	13 (1.17%)	14 (1.25%)	\$121.00	1.08

[Source](#)

## Continuing Education

If you've poked around in Analytics, you can see that there's a virtually infinite amount of configurations and opportunities to get really, really deep into your qualitative content analysis research. So keep doing your research to expand your knowledge on how you can become an Analytics wizard and magically transform data into sales.

**Quick Tip:** [Google's Analytics Academy](#) offers free courses, and you can also check out this list of [21 free tutorials](#).

# Chapter 5 Takeaways

**Brainstorm and outline a plan for site promotion through one additional channel that you haven't tapped into yet.** Even if you're still in the 'theory' stage of implementing the strategies we've discussed, you should have a good idea of which channel might benefit you based on the research you've done and what you can infer from your audience's preferences and behaviors.

Eventually, you'll want to master the multi-channel experience by delivering an intuitive and immersive experience for your shoppers – one that perfectly complements the way they want to purchase online.

Once you've stepped into the 'action' stage of creating this experience, prioritize content analysis. You can look to your social media analytics to confirm or disprove the theories you've put into place. Did your guest post from Chapter 2 bring in hundreds of new visits? See if you can write another one on that site, or one on a similar site. If it fizzed out after much ado, don't sink any more time into that site and move onto a different strategy that worked.

If you haven't already, I recommend that you drop everything and install Google Analytics on your site right now! Every passing minute is precious performance data that could go toward bringing more eyes and more dollars into your store.

# Conclusion

In this ebook, we've covered how to:

- Examine your brand and audience to brainstorm and outline specific strategies for accomplishing your goals
- Perform deep online and offline research to find the potential partners and opportunities that can help make it happen
- Contact these people and organizations using communication tactics that help you to be seen and heard among the crowd
- Build an interconnected web of contacts and promotion for your brand, website, and personal industry relationships – both online and offline
- Create helpful, engaging, and entertaining content to build and solidify your brand identity
- Install and use various analytics tools to look closely at your performance data, so you can constantly adjust, add, or nix your efforts based directly on what you're getting back from them

While we dug pretty deep, the reality is that we've only just scratched the surface. As you do more research, gather more information, and try more things, you'll find that it's an infinite process of lather, rinse, repeat.

So as you lay each brick of your ecommerce empire, remember to stay flexible, creative, and open to new ideas. It's incredible how fast you can grow once you hit the sweet spot, but you can't do it with your eyes closed.

**Until we meet again, happy growing!**

