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THE INTERNET MARKETING NEWSLETTER



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17.5 POWERFUL CONTENT MARKETING SECRETS (That Drive Wicked Traffic!)

First, there is no one magic trick that will skyrocket your blog's growth overnight. But rather, there are a lot of little things you can do, that when combined, will lead to steady continuous growth – the kind of growth that seems to take on a life of its own.

Here's the mindset to have when it comes to your blog and content marketing in general... you are continuously *experimenting* to see what works, and constantly *learning* from your audience.

It's rather simple...

Experiment – did it work? And if so, how can you make it work even better?

And learn – who is my audience? What do they want? What do they fear? How can I become so valuable to them, they turn to me and my blog for advice and help?

Now that you have the mindset, let's get into the tips, in no particular order whatsoever:

1: Learn Everything You can About Your Audience

We already talked about this, but it's so important we need to go deeper.

Where is your audience coming from, both physically and mentally?

By physically, we mean what brings them to your site. Is it an ad? A blogpost? A mention somewhere on the web? Social media?

Where your readers come from plays a large part in what they expect from your blog.

That's why some bloggers set up separate squeeze pages for each traffic source, so they can custom tailor it to their audience.

And where are they mentally when they hit your blog? Did they just discover they have a problem and they're looking for solutions? Are they looking to be entertained more than informed? What are they looking for, and why are they there?

If you can, interview your readers. You might get them on Skype, send them a questionnaire, ask questions on your blog, etc.

Ask things like:

What are your biggest challenges in <your niche>? You're looking for the pain points you can help solve.

What have you done to overcome these challenges? This will show you how determined they are.

How do you find the information you need? This tells you where and how they are looking

What content format do you prefer? Video, written, audio, etc.

You don't have to interview a lot of people to find the answers. In fact, according to research experts you should see a pattern emerging after just 5 interviews in the same audience segment.

Your goal of course is to learn as much about your audience's needs and desires as you can. It's not always about building buyer personas – after all, not all of your readers will be 37 year old college educated women with 2.4 kids and a \$200,000 mortgage.

2: Get a Bird's Eye View of Your Blog

Buzzstream put together a list of questions that will give you a good view of your content marketing strategy and help you identify your weak points.

You might go over this list of questions every 3-6 months and make sure you are still on track with your blog.

1. Who is your audience? <dog owners>
2. What are you offering them? <tips on dog training and care>
3. How will they find you? <through guest blog posts and social media>
4. Why will they care? <I give great tips they can use immediately>
5. How will they interact? <they will watch videos and read blog posts>
6. What will be their next step? <signing up for my dog training course>
7. Why do they share it? <it's great info, entertaining and awesome dog photos, too>
8. They might not share it if... <it's too dry>
9. A solution for this is... <inject plenty of humor and personality>

3: Use Your Competitors to Find Your Audience

Finding your target audience can be difficult. But then again, who says you have to reinvent the wheel? Just find out what is working for your competitors, and you can often use the same sites and techniques to drive targeted traffic to your own site.

First, make a list of websites that are closest to yours in topic and intended audience. If you don't know them, try searching Google using your top keywords. Or use this Google query (related: yourcompetitorwebsite.com)

Next, enter the competitor's domain on SimilarWeb.com to see where their visitors are coming from, which social networks they use, total visits, traffic by countries, search traffic and more.

4: Learn About Your Competitors' Social Media Activity

Use <http://www.fanpagekarma.com> and <http://buzzsumo.com> to find out:

- What is their average engagement rate?
- How often do they post?
- When are they posting?
- What types of posts are they posting?
- And most importantly - what is their best performing content?

Discovering what's working for others can shorten your own learning curve dramatically.

You can also use <http://likealyzer.com> to get metrics on likes, growth and engagement.

If you want to analyze their Twitter account, use <https://www.twitonomy.com> to find their average tweets per day, total retweets and favorites, as well as how many tweets contained hashtags, links, mentions and so forth.

To learn about their SEO performance, you can use <https://seranking.com> for backlink research and more.

5: APP Your Content

Keep readers on your content longer by using this formula:

Agree: Begin with something your readers agree with. "These days politics are scary and unpredictable."

Promise: Show them you have an answer, creating a contrast between what is and what could be. "But there is something you can do that will put your mind at ease and keep your politicians in line."

Preview: Show them what will happen when they read your content. "In this blogpost, I'm going to reveal the 3 steps to easily making your elected representatives actually listen to you and act in your best interests."

6: Stand Apart From the Crowd

The fact is, more content is published every minute of every day. It's not enough anymore to have great content – you need content that stands apart from the crowd. It's got to deliver value in a unique way with a radical new perspective.

Some tips to help you:

Try new content formats. For example, try an infographic instead of an article, or perhaps make a video.

Put a lot of thought into your headlines and make them really pop. If you can trigger emotions, curiosity, or a burning need to know what's in your article, you've got a good headline.

For the content itself, either present something no one else has presented, or present the content in a way no one else has. I know, it's a tall order but it's something to aspire to.

Tell stories. It's hard to go wrong if you become a great story teller. In fact, people

will revisit your blog just to read your new stories.

Give stuff away. It could be pdf's, prizes or whatever. Try creating info packed posts, and then giving away pdf versions of those posts for people to refer to later.

Take a stand. Don't be afraid to express your opinions and back them up with evidence, facts, stories, etc. Having strong opinions you're not afraid to voice can be one of the quickest ways to get your content shared and build yourself a loyal audience.

7: Use Great Headlines

According to CopyBlogger, 8 out of 10 people will read your headline, but only 2 out of 10 will check out your post. Yes, headlines are THAT important.

To get your copy read, write at least 5-10 headline variations that each incorporate at least two of the following: Curiosity, urgency, uniqueness, usefulness, specificity and news.

Choose the best 2-4 headlines and promote your content on social media using the different variations. After a few hours see which one gets the most engagement, and keep that headline.

As much as you might be tempted, don't use clickbait headlines. When people see your post doesn't line up with your headline, they'll click away.

8: Call in the Bucket Brigade

Keep your readers reading buy using this old sales letter trick. Insert words and phrases that naturally pull the reader into the next sentence, and the next, and the next...

Examples:

- "Here's what I'm talking about..."
- "You might be wondering..."
- "I know you think this is crazy..."
- "Here's why..."
- "Meanwhile..."
- "On the other hand..."
- "But here's the really strange thing..."
- "Want to know the best part?"
- "And yet..."
- "But that's just part of the story..."
- "As it turns out..."
- "No wonder..."
- "Sadly..."
- "What does this mean for you?"
- "I couldn't believe what happened next..."
- "Best of all..."
- "By the way..."

9: Focus on Making Content that can Go Viral

Now, some folks will tell you that you can't predict what will and what won't go viral.

Companies have spent fortunes trying to make viral content. Sometimes they succeed, and many times they don't.

So how can you, a solo entrepreneur, increase your odds that your content will go viral?

According to Jonah Berger, author of *Contagious*, there are six principles to making viral content:

Social Currency – People want to feel smart and cool, like they're on the 'inside.' We share things that make us look good.

Triggers – Which gets more word of mouth – Corn Flakes or Disney? Be Disney, and remember that top of mind is also tip of tongue.

Emotion – The higher the emotion, the more it gets shared. Remember, when we care, we share.

Public – There are always people who will jump on board the latest trend. Think if it as, 'Built to show, built to grow.'

Practical value – the more valuable and useful content is, the more it tends to get shared. Think of it as, 'News you can use.'

Stories – Stories are like Trojan horses, coming in under the radar in the guise of entertainment, when really they are delivering a message

You don't have to hit all six principles, but the more you do hit, the more likely your content will go viral.

10: Use Great Images

I hate to tell you this, but odds are the images you're using now aren't helping you. In fact, they might even be hurting you.

You already know that great images enhance a great post. But for this to happen the images need to be relevant and interesting. A stock photo of models in business attire staring at a laptop won't cut it anymore.

Best bets: Take your own photos. A photo of you holding something relevant or being in a relevant place will do wonders. People love to see who they are reading, especially if it is a REAL shot and not some studio photo that's been photo-shopped to death.

Source HIGH quality free images, and be choosy. It pays to spend that extra time finding just the right picture.

Here's a list of 21 sites with 'breathtaking free stock photos' to get you started.

<https://blog.snappa.io/free-stock-photos/>

Don't have free time to find great pics? Hire a graphic artist on Fiverr to do it for you. They already have great sources and a knowledge of where to find what you're looking for.

11: Build Relationships with Your Fellow Marketers

Your fellow bloggers and marketers have the ability to send vast amounts of traffic to your blog. But before this will happen, you've first got to build real relationships with them.

This means reaching out and connecting without expectation of receiving anything.

Think of it as making friends because that's exactly what it is.

If and when they later send you traffic, cool. But in the beginning, focus solely on building the friendship.

So how do you go about becoming friends? Here are a few tips...

- Follow them on social media
- Engage their content on social media with likes and comments
- Share their content on social media
- Leave valuable comments on their blog posts
- Subscribe to their newsletter
- Ask them how you can help them with whatever they're doing at the moment. For example, you see a blogger talking about their latest product they're creating and you're a whiz at video editing – ask if you can help them edit their videos. Yes, for free.
- Do interviews with them for your own blogposts, podcasts, products, etc.
- Buy their stuff and let them know you bought it
- Meet them on Skype, or for coffee, or at a conference

12: Open a Twitter Account for Your Blog, Get 1,000 Followers Fast

If you don't already have a Twitter account, go ahead and get one for your blog.

Then focus on getting 1000+ followers in the first week or so. The key here of course is to get targeted followers, not just anybody. You want folks interested in your niche.

You already know who your target audience is. Now make a list of Twitter accounts they are likely to be following.

You can either find the Twitter accounts of your competitors to see who is following them.

Or you can do keyword-based targeting using an app such as: <http://narrow.io/>, <https://statusbrew.com/> or <https://www.crowdfireapp.com>.

Use the 'copy followers' menu to add the Twitter accounts from your list. Follow those people who look like a good match. After a day or two, you can unfollow those who did not follow you using the same app.

13: Use Pinned Tweets for More Engagement

You can stick one of your tweets at the top of your profile page. Then when anyone visits your profile, they will see this particular tweet.

Make it a good one – something that points to your best or most recent piece of content.

Doing this simple: Visit your Twitter profile and select the tweet you want to feature. On the bottom right of the tweet, click the three dots. Select “pin to your profile page.”

Refresh your page and you should see your new pinned tweet.

14: Embed Tweets for More Engagement

Just one click is all it takes for your readers to engage with your posts when you embed your Twitter updates.

Plus, an embedded tweet is a sign of social engagement, further extending your Twitter reach. And it's easy to do.

Simply login to your Twitter account and go to updates.

Select the tweet you're going to embed.

Click on the three dots at the bottom right of your tweet.

From the drop down menu, select “embed tweet.”

Copy the code and insert it into your blog post.

15: Use Buzzsumo to get Your Content Shared

Asking random people to share your content won't work. But asking people who have already expressed interest in your topic AND shared content on that topic can work really well.

Here's what you do:

Create a list of articles that are similar or related to your content.

On Buzzsumo, paste the links to each article one-by-one. Click on “View Sharers.” This will show you everyone who shared the content.

Yes, it's a paid feature, but as of this writing you can try it for free.

Add these people to a list and approach them on Twitter.

Here's where it gets tricky: If you send out the same tweet to too many people too quickly, it's going to look like spam. Instead, create variations of your tweet and send them out over a period of time.

Your goal: To make contact with these folks, hopefully to become friends and get them to comment on and share your content.

16: Mention Sources, Get Retweeted

You'll usually get extra engagement when you mention others on Twitter, and it's easy to do.

When you share a new post on Twitter, include one or two source handles. This way they will be notified, and will hopefully like or retweet your update.

First, search Twitter for the handles of your resources. Create several headline variations for your tweets, adding just 1-2 handles to each.

Share your tweets at different times of the day. You can use Buffer to schedule your tweets.

17: Get Retweet Momentum

'Just Retweet' is a platform for getting other people to retweet your content. Your goal here isn't to buy random tweets - it's to choose the right people to retweet for you.

You can set up requirements such as interest and minimum number of followers, so you don't have just anybody retweeting.

Just having a few of these people retweet for you can give your freshly published content the momentum to reach a broader audience.

Register at <http://JustRetweet.com>. You'll immediately be given some points you can use to submit your own tweets.

Click 'submit tweet' and fill out the fields. Select the criteria of your retweeters and click submit. Retweeting should start soon. Be sure to measure engagement see if it drives traffic to your blog.

If this works well for you, rinse and repeat each time you post new content.

17.5: Piggyback on Successful Giveaways

Well-known bloggers generate thousands of subscribers by giving away free, downloadable content. Their audiences are highly engaged and relevant, and you can capitalize on their success.

Here's how:

Create a list of successful giveaways in your niche. For each giveaway, find the link and enter it into Buzzsumo to see who shared it on Twitter.

Create your own giveaway that is related to both your field and the popular giveaway.

Let the people who shared the big giveaway know about yours, either via Twitter or email.

Write something like, "I saw you shared <popular giveaway> and I thought you might also enjoy <your giveaway>."

17.75: Accentuate Your Personality

This is a bonus tip that applies to every single piece of social media and content marketing.

In fact, this could be the actual bedrock of your entire marketing endeavor.

You know how people always tell you to be YOU because YOU are the only YOU there will ever be?

And that by being "you," rather than copying other people, you have an edge of your own?

Well...

This is true.

And it's also NOT true.

Because what if the real you is simply a nice, polite, mild-mannered person who doesn't stand out in any way, doesn't have any strong opinions, and just likes for everybody to get along?

While there is absolutely nothing wrong with having this type of personality (many, MANY of us have this type of personality) there is a problem:

- You won't stand out from the crowd by simply being 'you.'
- Rather, you will blend right into the crowd and never be noticed or seen again.
- So what can you do?
- Pick three things about your life.
- Three things that really stand out.
- Maybe at one time you were in the military.
- Or you grew up in a super poor neighborhood.
- Or you were a farm kid.
- Or you were a cop. Or you cleaned sewers. Whatever.
- Maybe you adore video games. Or shopping. Or travel.
- Maybe you collect quotes. Or old books.
- Or maybe you paint, or garden, or ride motorcycles, or jump from airplanes.

Pick three things.

Now incorporate those three things into your persona, your blogging and your marketing.

You could be the Harley rider who does needlepoint and volunteers at the homeless shelter.

Maybe you're the retired cop who loves woodworking and brags about how smart your dog is.

You could be the dairy farm kid with 9 pets who considers herself an expert at choosing the wrong mates.

You could be the diehard Yankees fan who bakes cookies and fixes cars.

Congrats.

You now have plenty to write about and make yourself memorable.

How so?

You can work your hobbies, interests and past history into your content. This

makes the reader feel s/he is getting to know YOU, as well as your content.

There is a connection there.

You become a **REAL** person they can relate to and **REMEMBER**.

This one little trick can make the difference between people visiting your blog once and becoming a diehard fan.

You're providing memory anchors for them.

Here's an example:

Let's say in the past week you've been doing a **LOT** of reading about marketing.

You've visited a dozen blogs.

You've learned a lot.

But all those blogs and all those posts – don't they just sort of run together now? Except...

Except for that one blogger who related everything to her desire to own a cat ranch on the moon.

HER you remember

See? It works.

This month we only had time (and room) to talk about your content and using Twitter to drive traffic.

Next month we'll give you more tips on using Facebook and other means to get you and your content noticed, loved and shared across the Internet.

Use these tips and you'll be building an audience and a mailing list faster than you ever imagined possible.