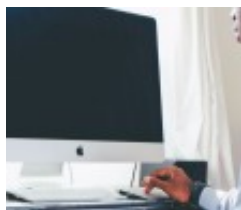


23 Marketing Tactics That Cost Time, Not Money

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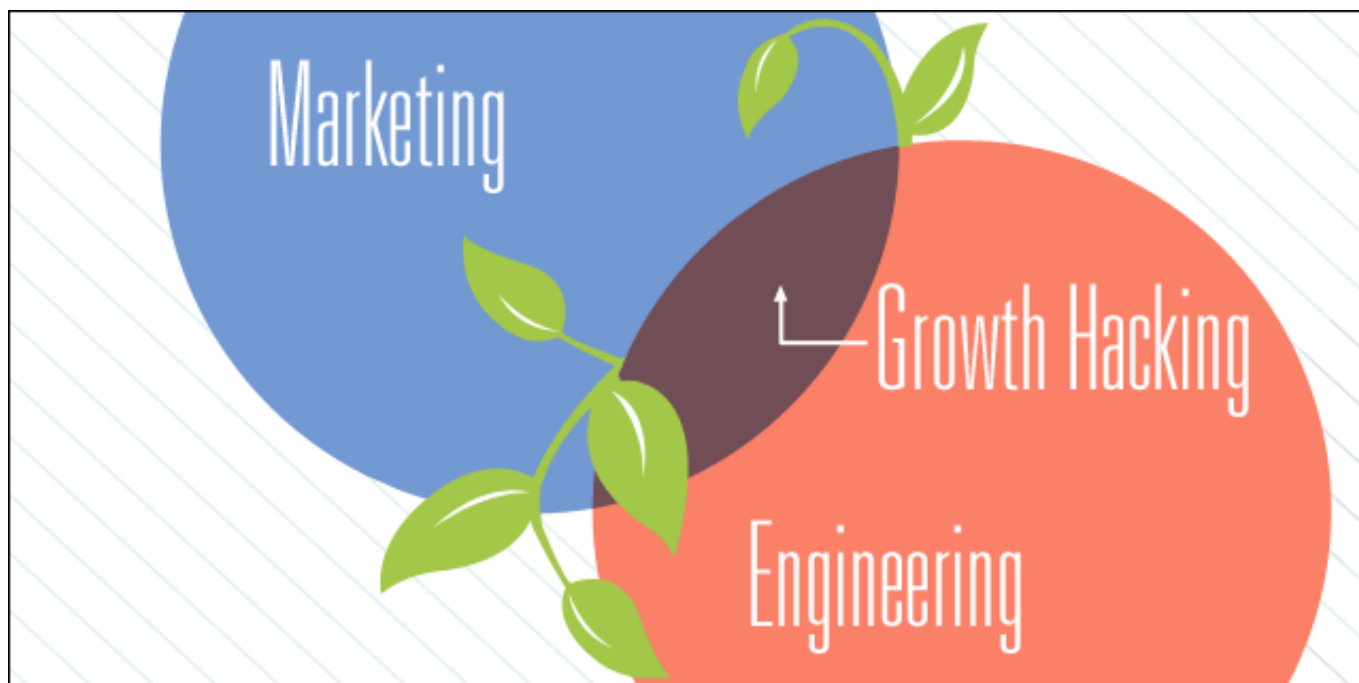


Here is the common situation of many startups. They have no money, but they have to do **marketing**.

What's to be done? Instead of focusing on costly **marketing** methods, such startups must focus on low-budget **marketing** hacks.

The beauty of growth hacking is that it engages alternate methods of growth, methods which are sometimes lower cost.

Where **marketing** and engineering meet, growth hacking happens.



Obviously, growth hacking isn't free. Strictly speaking none of the techniques in this article are "free." Anytime you involve people, employees of the company, there will be payroll and associated costs.

But here's why these methods are so powerful. They don't require a huge **marketing** budget. All you need is some time, some savvy, and the kind of focused and driven perspective that smart **marketing** requires.

1. Get Links From Your Service Providers

To rank well, a website needs high-quality backlinks. Where do you get these backlinks? Obviously, buying links is not advised. What should you do?

If you've built partnerships with service providers or business partners, you have an instant source of untapped link potential. Reach out to these service providers and ask them to link to your website.

You gain a few nice links, and all it cost you was a few minutes of emailing.

2. Search For Unlinked Mentions

Another great way to get links and boost your site authority is to look for unlinked mentions of your **brand** or company name.

If you find such mentions in online publications or websites, email the site editor and ask them to provide a link. You might discover plenty of **brand** mentions all over the web.

A quick search and a few emails later — presto. Free backlinks. The good kind.

3. Host a Webinar

Free webinars introduce your **brand** and product to a wider audience. The more appealing the topic, the better you'll attract interest.

Kissmetrics has been hosting webinars on a regular basis for a long time, with surprisingly powerful results.

Webinars take time. You've got to brainstorm topics, plan the webinar, and spread the word. The benefits, however, are top-notch.

4. Cross-promote

One explosive method of **marketing** that some companies use is cross-promotion. Cross promotion allows you to partner with related businesses who can market your services, in exchange for your **marketing** their services.

For example, if you are providing consulting services for online business owners, you may recommend that they use a certain web **designer** to create their website. The web **designer** is your cross promoting partner. This web **designer** works with business clients, and she points these clients your way for consulting services.

It's a win-win, and apart from a signed document and an easy conversation, doesn't require much work at all.

5. Be a Blog Commenter

The idea of **marketing** is to make your **brand** presence as well known as possible. One way of doing so is by commenting on blogs. Here's how this works:

- Identify the top 5 blogs in your niche.
- Read and comment on the blogs on a regular basis.
- As people see your name and associated **brand**, they become familiar with it and perhaps even curious about it.

With every comment, you're establishing a persistent **brand** presence. Just make sure you're not making dumb comments. Customers' perception of your **brand** is shaped by the quality of your comments.

6. Help a Reporter Out

Occasionally, you're going to come across some newsworthy information in your niche or business. Sign up for [Help a Reporter Out \(HARO\)](#). It's a free service that reporters often use to find stories. If you have a story you can help a reporter out, and gain publicity.

7. Create a Robust Google+ Presence

Google+ is one of the web's foremost places for building **brand** exposure. **Google** uses your business information to form a web presence in Knowledge Graph boxes and wider indexation.

The better your **Google+** profile, the better your **brand** will be featured and published organically across the web.

8. Network in Person

Don't neglect the opportunity to market in person. You'll meet great people in person whom you may never come across online.

Every person you meet is another **marketing** possibility. Obviously, you don't want to go around shoving your business into people's faces, but as the issue of work comes up in conversation, tell them about it.

The whole idea of networking is basically **marketing**. You get to introduce other people to your business live and in person.

9. Go Ahead and Run a Contest

As much as they've been sullied and scammed, online contests are still a great way to get low-cost **marketing** publicity. Giving away the cliché iPad, cash prizes, or other merchandise is an easy way to gain some viral potential and improve your **brand's** image.

10. Build a Referral Program

The best forms of **marketing** are those that you can set up, turn on, and they grow — organically, automatically, and without too much effort. A [referral program or affiliate program](#) may not work for every business, but it's worth a try.

Creating an affiliate program essentially turns your customers into a de facto **marketing** department. You don't spend **marketing** money unless they first make a sale on your behalf.

11. Tweet Up a Storm In Your Niche

Twitter is a killer **marketing** platform. With its instant reach and massive output, Twitter can produce high levels of referral traffic, plenty of **brand** exposure, and nonstop **social** buzz.

What I suggest is following at least ten influencers in your niche, following their followers, retweeting their tweets, and mentioning them in comments. As you associate with their platform, you'll begin to build your own platform.

12. Upsell Your Existing Customers

Too often, we view "**marketing**" solely as a method of gaining new customers. In reality, some of the best **marketing** happens with existing customers. [Econsultancy](#) and PredictiveIntent report that upselling is "20 times better than cross-selling."

Marketing back at your own customers is relatively easy and low-cost. The benefits are extraordinary.

13. Get Cozy With Niche Influencers

Within every industry are a group of power players. They control the conversation, shape the contours of the market, and reach a huge audience.

Make these people your friends. You don't need to be schmoozy about it. You can be direct. Providing them with a product or partnering with them on a project are simple and mutually helpful ways to grow your **brand** and ride their wave of influence.

14. Claim a Hashtag

[Hashtags](#) are the billboards of the Internet. Since hashtags are now available on every major **social** platform, you can create a hashtag for your business and use it [everywhere you post](#).

A hashtag is a searchable and interactive extension of your **brand**, and has the potential to spread virally.

15. Get More Email Addresses

Growing your email list is one of the most enduring and effective methods of **marketing**. I suggest using Hello Bar as a [simple and cost-effective way of harvesting more addresses](#).

16. Get More User-Generated Content

Everyone knows that content **marketing** is effective for inbound **marketing**. If you're not careful, however, content **marketing** can be expensive. How can you gain more content without blowing your entire **marketing** budget?

The answer is user-generated content. Motivate your existing fans and customers to tell their own story and write content, and you'll instantly open the floodgates to tons of fresh and engaging content that your audience will love. Your fans will be creating and sharing content for you.

17. Talk to Your Fans

Customers and fans love to be loved. The way you show that love is by retweeting, favoriting tweets, liking the comments, and sharing their status. Don't simply expect that your **social** media presence is going to work for you. You have to work for it, by talking to *your* fans.

They will return the favor, and engage at a deeper level.

18. Produce High-Quality Press Releases

Press releases have past their heyday as an SEO tool, but they still hold sway in **marketing**. If you use a source like PRWeb, you'll be out a few hundred bucks anytime you pop out a press release.

A source like PRLog.org, however, is free of charge. The amount of syndication you get may not be as high quality, but it's something. And, hey, it's something for nothing.

Just be sure to write very high-quality releases, and nofollow any links back to your website.

19. Hack Craigslist

Craigslist is the [59th most popular website in the world](#). **Airbnb**, [valued at 24 billion](#), used [Craigslist to skyrocket its growth](#). You can use Craigslist, too. Try using Craigslist's geographic focus to target specific areas and markets.

Make sure that you're complying with the site's terms of service. Use Craigslist in the way that it was intended. Violators will be banned from the site.

20. Blog

I can't create list of **marketing** techniques without mentioning blogging. A business blog is an indispensable strategy for online **marketing**. Use it, work at it, and make it work for you.

If you're frustrated with the current condition of your business blog, [read these 35 tips that will make it better](#). If you're struggling with traffic, [read this post](#).

21. Guest blog

If blogging is awesome, then guest blogging is doubly awesome. When you post an article on another blog, you are instantly gaining that blog's audience. The cost of guest blogging is free, less the time you spend. Create a killer article, appeal to the blog's audience, and you may be invited back to contribute more.

I've used guest blogging with incredible success. My 300-and-counting guest blogs are still paying me back in terms of referral traffic, leads, and customers.

22. Create a LinkedIn Group

LinkedIn is free, and yet it gives you incredible **marketing** opportunities. Many professionals use LinkedIn as static **social** media tool — a place to put up their resume, and not much else.

LinkedIn is so much more than an online resume. I've used [LinkedIn to publish content](#), [connect with powerful people](#), and build a **marketing** group with thousands of members.

All of this cost me zero dollars and zero cents, but the **marketing** upside has been incredible.

23. Give Free Help to Others

If you make **marketing** all about you and your business, you're going to be frustrated and unfulfilled. Try giving to others, free of charge.

Obviously, you're not a charity; you're a business. But why not give away a product, an hour of your time, or a membership for a customer who can't afford your services?

Some of the best business opportunities I've had were consulting gigs with customers who couldn't pay. These opportunities have been beneficial in ways that I couldn't have predicted.

Even today, I give away virtually all of my content without charge. Doing so is fulfilling for me personally, and it provides an opportunity for improved **marketing**.

Conclusion

Marketing doesn't have to break your bank, blow your budget, or cost you thousands of dollars. Like I mentioned in the beginning of this article, **marketing** can require nothing more than the investment of time.

Chances are, you can increase your **marketing** presence *today* by implementing one of these methods. Pick one and run with it.

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