



*A Step-By-Step Roadmap for Successfully Marketing
Your Online Store*

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Thank you so much for downloading this ebook from Bootstrapping Ecommerce! Bootstrapping your own ecommerce business from the ground up is incredibly rewarding - but hard work, too!

As you build and grow your business, there are so many skills you will learn, so many people you will meet, and so many new experiences that you will have that those themselves will be enough reward for all of your hard work and persistence!

The profits your online store will bring in are going to be really sweet, too!

The goal of this short ebook is to give you an idea and roadmap for marketing your online store. You can have the best, most prettiest store in the world, selling ridiculously awesome products, but if no one comes to visit, no one is going to buy!

It's like opening a Macy's in the middle of the Sahara desert. No one is going to come, save a few travelling salesmen!

When I first started selling things online, I had no idea about how to market a website. I started about by selling my old stuff on eBay and Amazon.

By my old stuff, I mean things like phones, computers, video games, and CDs. The sort of stuff thousands of people are already looking for, and the sort of stuff you don't really need to *market*. I'd put things up for sale and in 7 days, whoosh! They were gone, and my wallet was a little bit thicker than

before.

This experience taught me one very important thing. It taught me about the *potential that the internet has for business!* When you remove physical limitations through computers, anyone, anywhere, can reach you. Accepting payments was a cinch, and all I had to do was pack up the stuff, write an address, stick on a stamp and leave it in my mailbox for the mailman to collect.

Of course, the one thing it *didn't* teach me was how challenging it would be to sell other, not-so-popular things online!

So when a family friend finally pushed me into starting an actual online business, I excitedly dove in, setting up an account with a dropshipper, and pushing those products onto Amazon, **thinking I would start raking in cash by the bushels.**

Obviously, that didn't happen, since now, there was an important aspect I was missing in my equation - marketing - only I didn't know this yet.

I opened my first online store using Amazon's Webstore platform(which is terrible, by the way - the only thing Amazon is good for - as of February 2014 - is their amazing marketplace). The Webstore meant I no longer had to pay Amazon's fees, only a small service fee for the website and a credit card processing fee.

This is part of the old homepage that I found off of Archive.org:

At Reusable And Green, we want to help you choose eco friendly products that are safer for you, your family, and the environment. For this, we believe that the best place to start is the home, and the best place to start in the home is the kitchen! We offer green products such as reusable sandwich bags in place of plastic baggies, reusable utensils made of bamboo in place of plastic utensils, and lunchboxes made of recycled materials and stainless steel in place of paper bags and other plastic lunchboxes. To learn more about the environment and how we can do our part, check out our [How To Go Green](#) articles resource center.



I was then fortunate enough to make acquaintances with a gentleman who had his own successful online hardware store(www.homedecorhardware.com), and he was kind enough to let me visit his office a few times and pester him about how things worked.

I showed him my site - he said it was good, only that *unless I promoted the website, how would anyone come visit?*

He introduced me to Google Adwords, where I excitedly signed up for an account using a coupon, and blew over \$1000 on ads that barely brought in any returns. I had no idea about the proper way to run a campaign, just how to run ads!

After a few other failed attempts at marketing blindly, I decided to start reading up on online marketing, and became obsessed with it. I'd read 5-10 of the top blogs every day, I'd watch videos on Youtube, and I'd read every good book I got my hands on!

Ultimately, though, I got tired of the first store. I decided that the niche was too competitive, and the margins were not worth my while, and I decided to close my first store.

I said to myself that I'll research a proper niche, and will build the new store using proper, planned marketing. By that time, I had come across a blog called eCommerceFuel, which is maintained by Andrew Youderian, a successful online entrepreneur.

I downloaded and read his book, [Profitable Ecommerce](#), which was another eye opener as to how to properly run a drop shipping business, and most importantly, *how to properly choose a niche for your online store*.

The new store is the one I am currently working on is based on what I've learned from him and many other online store owners that have their own blogs, including Steve Chou of [MyWifeQuitHerJob.com](#), Leighton Taylor of [eCommercePulse.com](#), Richard Lazazzera of [ABetterLemonadeStand.com](#), and most importantly, the [Shopify Blog](#), which is hands down one of the best ecommerce blogs on the whole world wide web.

When I started my new store, I chose a proper niche, optimized for SEO

beforehand, and had a shaky marketing plan in place. A shaky plan, I figured, is better than no plan.

As the store progressed, I began adding more and more cogs to my marketing machine. I've learned that there are certain marketing tasks that are critical and must be done constantly, whereas there are other tasks can be done every once in a while.

This is the marketing plan I'm going to share with you here.

Why you need a plan

There is a saying that goes "Fail to plan, plan to fail!"

This is exactly why you need to have a solid marketing plan in place *before* you launch your store. You don't have to accomplish everything on the plan before you launch, but you *do* need to have an idea of what to do and when you are going to do it.

Your life will become much easier if you do, trust me.

Some of you might be building your store in your free time, after you get home from your day jobs. Some of you might be building your store between classes. It's **ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL** that you have a plan in place.

The internet is becoming more and more complex as each day passes. There are so many ways that people are interacting with each other across the web, and as an entrepreneur looking to promote their online business, it's so much

more important that you make sure you *put yourself where your customers are!*

Over the next few pages of this eBook, I'm going to lay out a plan for you that I used when marketing my own store. I didn't do everything in this very manner, but **this is the plan of attack I wish I had!**

None of these tasks are exceptionally difficult, either. All you need is a little bit of time and persistence and you can accomplish them.

It's also really important to understand that no one of these tasks alone can propel your store to success.

You need to do a little bit of everything and put yourself nearly everywhere your customers are - otherwise you are missing out and giving your competitors that much more of an edge!

Think of the 19 strategies I am laying out as a giant marketing machine. Each marketing strategy is a vital component in that machine. Some are large cogs, which are responsible for a lot of the movement, and some are smaller cogs, which are responsible for less.

Also, some of the strategies *are* paid strategies - which means they will require some sort of investment. Luckily, since we are bootstrappers, there's always a way to control that cost significantly.

Along with each strategy, I'll tell you what priority it should have on your

daily task list, and I'll give you some quick tips to best use each one.

How To Use These Strategies:

If you are new to ecommerce, you may find the whole list overwhelming.

Don't worry - take your time while going through each strategy. I'd recommend going through them by level of priority. Concentrate on nailing the high priority ones first, and once you have a grip on those, move on to the others.

There's only so much that you can learn from reading. The rest you will have to get by *doing*. That's how I learned it, and that's the same way you should, too!

That being said, are you ready? Great!

Let's dive in!

Strategy #1: Market research and analysis

Priority: CRITICAL

Time required: This should be the entire first phase of your business - nothing else



Before you set up your business, regardless of whether you have a product already or not, you **MUST** identify who you are going to market to. The product itself will usually define the target market.

Once you know who your target market is, you can judge how much demand there is for your product. Demand is everything. If not enough people want your stuff, is it worth your time and effort?

For example, if you are selling college football jerseys for a particular school, that's pretty targeted - you know that your customers are fans of a particular school's football team.

If you are selling a device that helps curb snoring, you know that your customers are people who have trouble sleeping because their significant

other snores a lot!

Your target market will either be fulfilling a want, or need a solution to a problem. This want or need MUST be crystal clear in your mind before you start any other marketing - because this information is how you will find and drive customers to your store.

Quick tip: It's a good idea to make ideal customer personalities, too.

An example of an ideal customer profile is: a male between 30-50 years of age, interested in sports, earning between \$50-70 thousand per year.

Do this right, and you'll find every other task easy.

Resources:

[An excellent post on Shopify on what kind of products to sell online](#)

[How Leighton Taylor of Ecommercepulse chose his product niche](#)

[An awesome infographic by Richard Lazazzera that will help you choose a product to sell online](#)

Strategy #2: Content Marketing

Priority: Very high

Time required: This is an ongoing process. You will need to set a schedule and stick to it - the intervals are up to you.



Let me repeat what every other blogger and SEO on the internet is saying right now: Content is king!

Content is King!

Long Live The King!

I'm putting content marketing right after market research because it covers a very diverse range of marketing channels. It's a combination of blogging, SEO, video, photos, and just about everything else.

Along with an eCommerce store, you NEED to have a blog that you update with some degree of regularity. It can be daily, weekly, biweekly, or even monthly. Just make sure it's regular.

More content = more search engine love - because there are that many more pages in the search engine's index, and that many more keywords that you can potentially rank for. It's a win-win.

Have a content plan in place when you launch your store - and plan for at least one year's worth of posts. If you post biweekly, that's just 26 posts - not too difficult at all.

As more and more content appears on your site, more and more people will naturally find it and link to it. A lot of the links coming to my website are just that: links that the content has earned, not ones that I have personally built.

Quick tip: When planning a content strategy, keep your ideal customer in mind. If you sell jerseys, there's only so much to write about jerseys - but there is tons to write about football and fandom and championships.

Resources:

[This is the only guide you need to read for content marketing - great stuff by Neil Patel](#)

Strategy #3: On page optimization for SEO

Priority: CRITICAL

Time required: One time effort, with regular tweaking after that



Before you build any links, before you do any kind of off-page SEO, you need to make sure your pages are properly optimized.

Brian Dean from Backlinko has put together an incredible infographic about optimizing pages for SEO over at <http://backlinko.com/on-page-seo> - the points it covers are:

1. Use SEO-friendly URLS - try to describe the product/page instead of using random numbers or letters
2. Try to start the title with the keyword you are targeting
3. Use multimedia - images, audio, video
4. Link to other websites from your page
5. Use the keyword in the first 100 words
6. Put the title in an H1 tag

7. Make sure your site loads fast
8. Use modifiers like “best, review, 2014” in your title when applicable
9. Use social sharing buttons
10. Write long, detailed content
11. Keep the bounce rate low
12. Use keyword variations in the body of the page

Quick Tip: Treat each product page and category page as a blog post where the goal is to provide content and information. You will blow away your competitors, who probably aren't doing any of this!

Strategy #4: Link Building - Guest posting & Articles

Priority: High

Time Required: Regular commitment of some time per day

Guest posting, if done correctly, will help drive a targeted audience to your website and give your store a boost in search engine rankings as well.

A guest post is an article that you write for another website or blog. It's important that that website or blog is related to yours, though! That's where knowing your target market comes into play again.

Go where your customers are already going, and put yourself in front of them. This will drive traffic, leads, and also boost search engine rankings.

Also, go for high-quality, reputable websites - not run of the mill sites that no one visits. As long as you stick to that strategy, you should be golden.

Quick Tip: Guest posting is *hard*. Not the writing, but getting people to accept your posts. Don't bombard them with emails asking for posts right away - build relationships. Read their content, comment, and value it. Then ask for a post opportunity.

Resources:

[The Kissmetrics Guide to Guest Blogging](#)

[Great stuff by Gregory Ciotti of HelpScout on how to guest blog](#)

[Brian Dean takes an out of the box approach to guest blogging that you must see](#)

Strategy #5: SEO - Link Building

Priority: High

Time required: Regular commitment on a schedule

Your content marketing efforts will bring in links, but those will be a little slow to come. It's also a good idea to build links manually to your store as well. You will achieve some of this using guest posting, but you don't want the only links to your site being guest posts.

Good ways to build links are relevant directories and resource pages, and snooping around for broken links to similar content and emailing the websites owner to link to your content instead.

It's 2014, and many people will be aghast at my mention of link building. The truth is, as an ecommerce store, you will *have* to do some measure of it - otherwise your SEO will fall behind.

Like everything else, though, too much of a good thing is bad, so don't overkill.

There are plenty of free tools available to do all of this.

Quick Tip: Only build links from relevant pages - if you sell skateboards, don't get a link from a ballet website!

[50 ways to build links to an online store - by yours truly](#)

[One of the most comprehensive lists of link building strategies on the web](#)

[A great resource put together by Brian Dean about link building](#)

Strategy #6: Email marketing

Priority: Very High



Time required: One or two hours every set interval

Email marketing is a critical channel of reaching out to customers that no retailer should ever skimp on. From the very first day your store goes live, you have to focus on collecting emails.

According to research and surveys done on the subject, email marketing has an ROI of 4300%. That's mind-boggling!

When someone gives you their email, they are signaling that they are *willing* to accept content from you and would like to hear more from you and about you!

This is a huge opportunity!

The only difficulty lies in actually getting people to give you their email address. Remember content marketing? What I like to do is set up an

autoresponder with a series of 5-7 emails that educates my customers on the product, and I've got opt in forms all throughout my store.

The opt in form specifically says: "Sign up to receive our free 7 part course on [product subject]"

I've had some decent success with it so far. So will you.

You can use providers like MailChimp(what I use and love) or Aweber(paid from the get-go, also very powerful) to collect, manage, and send emails.

Quick Tip: If you sell boring stuff, like handkerchiefs(sorry handkerchief lovers!), think about a related topic - like suits, men's fashion, or wedding planning - and make your content series about that.

Resources:

[A post by yours truly on how to get more email subscribers](#)

[The Shopify blog talks numbers and return on investment for email marketing](#)

[Aweber - one of the leading email services\(paid\)](#)

[Mailchimp is another great email service that has a free plan too](#)

Strategy #7: PPC – Google Adwords

Priority: Medium



Time required: A few hours to set up, then 20 minutes per day

Paid advertising is a very effective way to get customers over to your store or website, and there is no better way to do that than Google Adwords.

With Google Adwords, you can choose specific keywords for your ads to show for – so if you are selling Notre Dame football jerseys, you can choose that keyword to show an ad for – so the only people that see your ad are people that are actually looking for your product, and no one else.

You can also choose exactly how much you want to pay for each click – usually between a few cents to a few dollars, depending on the industry. If your bid is high and your website is relevant, your ad will show higher and more often.

That makes Adwords incredibly relevant and incredibly powerful.

Unfortunately, people don't think and search using only keywords, so the main effort you have to put in is to tweak and optimize your ads. Here lies the challenge!

Many merchants, including the gentleman I spoke about earlier depend heavily on Adwords – and after optimizing again and again, they make a generous profit and support themselves comfortably.

Adwords is a great way to test the waters and get your store some sales - even if it costs you a little more - this way, you can start interacting with customers and learning more about the market while you are waiting for content marketing and seo to take effect.

If you plan on getting in on Adwords, be prepared to invest a few hundred dollars to get ads that work running. To set up an account, head over to <http://adwords.google.com>.

Quick Tip: Google usually offers a coupon(as of this writing) for \$75 credit for the first \$25 you spend. A search for “google adwords coupon” will usually turn up this result. Just make sure to use it on a new account – it won’t work with an account that’s already been active for a while.

Resources:

[How to set up your first Adwords campaign](#)

[A great free course on Udemy on Adwords](#)

[By Perry Marshall, this is one of the best books I've read about Adwords](#)

Strategy #8: PPC - Product Listing Ads

Priority: Medium

Time required: One hour to set up, less than 5 minutes a day

Google Adwords recently introduced Product Listing Ads, or PLAs, which are shopping specific listings in search results.

Instead of the usual text ads, PLAs show the actual product image, along with the price and a promotional message.

These ads are much cheaper than traditional ads, and also tend to produce more sales, too. To set up PLAs, you will need to open a Google Merchants account(<http://www.google.com/merchants>), and submit your product feed to Google. Then head over to Adwords and set up a PLA campaign.

Quick Tip: “Visual” products tend to do very well in PLAs. I’ve seen this with stores that I’ve worked with in the past.

Resources:

[Product Listing Ads Guide For Online Marketers](#)

[A 6-part guide on everything PLAs from PPCHero](#)

Strategy #9: Comparison Shopping Engines

Priority: Medium – Low

Time Required: One hour to set up, 5 minutes a day after that

Comparison Shopping engines, such as Nextag, PriceGrabber, and ShopZilla are all effective ways to drive qualified traffic to your store.

The main advantage with these websites is that the visitors coming to your site are already in a shopping mindset!

Their models work similar to Google Adwords – depending on what category your products fall under, there is a cost per click. So every time someone clicks on your link from their website, you are charged that cost per click – usually between \$0.50 to \$2.00.

Personally, I have a love-hate relationship with these websites. They work for some markets, but don't for others. The only way you can really find out is by testing the waters. The commitment isn't too high – you need to deposit a minimum of \$50 or so and they will get you started.

Your shopping cart should have a feature built in for submitting your products to these websites, and it's pretty straightforward. I wouldn't spend more than \$50-100 to test it out, though.

Quick Tip: Your money might be better spent on Google itself, considering the fact that Google gets A LOT, LOT more hits per month than all of the

comparison shopping engines combined!

Nextag – <http://www.nextag.com>

PriceGrabber – <http://www.pricegrabber.com>

ShopZilla – <http://www.shopzilla.com>

Shopping.com – <http://www.shopping.com>

TheFind(free) – <http://www.thefind.com>

Resources:

[Steve Chou of MyWifeQuitHerJob did a study of different shopping comparison engines](#)

Strategy #10: PPC - Facebook Ads

Priority: Medium

Time required: An hour to set up, a few minutes a day after that

Facebook Ads are PPC ads that are(as of this writing) much, much cheaper than Google Ads or any other sort of PPC.

Like Google Adwords, Facebook Ads are also incredibly targeted - after all, Facebook is a giant spy machine that knows what people like, do, and their basic biodata, and they are willing to let you use this data to show them your products and services for a fee!

That was mean.

But it's the truth - and that makes Facebook an incredibly powerful advertising platform.

You can use Facebook ads to drive traffic to a Facebook page or an external website - the choice is yours. Experiment, test, and perfect.

Quick Tip: Don't try to drive sales with Facebook Ads - use them to drive awareness and email subscribers.

Resources:

[A great post by Leighton Taylor on what he learned using Facebook Ads](#)

Strategy #11: Social Media Profiles

Priority: Critical



Time Required: One hour to set up, constant maintenance after that

As an eCommerce business, you NEED to be on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Google+.

People are spending more and more time on social media, and you are really missing out if you aren't interacting with your customers on those platforms as well.

Why should customer interaction be limited to your store alone? The key to marketing success is BEING EVERYWHERE, but not being imposing.

To succeed on social media, you need a content strategy - something you should have already picked up from CONTENT MARKETING.

You can't just expect people to follow or like you and that's the end of it.

You need to share and post regular(doesn't matter how regular, just regular)

updates and content that your fans like and interact with.

Social media is more like a playground than a shopping mall - it's where you interact and sometimes show off - but don't sell directly.

For Twitter, you just need an account - nothing big. On Facebook and Google+, you can set up a special business page that people can like or follow and interact with.

Along with having the regular profiles and pages, you also need sharing buttons on your website. Each and every page of it - I prefer using AddThis, because their buttons are responsive and work great on computers, tablets, and mobiles.

Quick Tip: Never, ever hard sell on social media. Educate your customers. Make them laugh. Tell them stories. And most importantly, encourage them to share!

Resources:

[AddThis provides sharing buttons for your site](#)

Strategy #11 : Pinterest

Priority: Medium-High

Time Required: One hour to set up, a few minutes a day to manage

I've kept Pinterest as a strategy on its own because that's exactly what it is: it's in a league of its own.

According to [an infographic published by Shopify](#), the average order value of an order from Facebook is half that of an order from Pinterest. It's also the third most popular social network in the world, devoted exclusively to sharing images that people "pin" to their "boards" from all over the web.

If you have really visual products, like clothes, Pinterest is an amazing way to show your stuff off. Just make sure to have a Pin It button on your website's pages, and people can instantly share whatever they like with whoever they like.

Pinterest doesn't stop at waiting for people to pin your products. You can also maintain bulletin boards of your own that you pin anything and everything to (remember RELEVANCE), and people can follow your boards, share your pins, and favorite them.

Many big brands are running hugely successful contests and campaigns using just Pinterest.

Quick Tip: Pinterest is very commercially driven - you can even include

prices with the image. Pins with prices have been shown to get more engagement than pins without prices. Win!

Resources:

[An excellent post on Crazy Egg about utilizing Pinterest for eCommerce](#)

Strategy #13 : Product Reviews

Priority: Low

Time required: Less than an hour for every event

Product reviews are a really effective way to get a flood of traffic in one shot to your website. But it stops there - once the review is over, the traffic will probably taper off.

Reviews are great if you have your own product and you'd like to build awareness for it. If you drop ship, reviews might not have the best ROI because a lot of other people are selling the same stuff, too.

If you approach a blogger for a review, they probably won't say no - it's an opportunity to try free stuff! Sometimes, bloggers can send the item back to you once the review is done, so you might be able to send it back to your drop shipper, too.

When scouting a place to do a review, make sure that they have a decent sized blog, with a good following and a generous number of social media followers.

Best case scenario: You get a flood of orders and a giant customer database to do email marketing.

Worst case scenario: You get a nice relevant backlink.

The ROI on the worst case scenario is much lower, of course, so make sure you do the math properly before you go ahead with this one.

Quick Tip: Reviews are effective for low-cost, consumable products. If you have something like that, definitely go for it. But if your goods have lifespans of years, perhaps you could better spend your money elsewhere.

Strategy #14 : Contests and Giveaways

Priority: Low

Time Required: Less than an hour, provided you have a content marketing plan

Contests and giveaways are a chance for you to build brand awareness(much like reviews), as well as get a truckload of social media followers and email subscribers.

You can approach blogs in your niche to see if they are willing to host giveaways. In this case, it's always best to only target those blogs that have a decent following. You can check up on this using either their social media profiles or the number of comments they receive as a gauge.

The rules for entering a contest could be to sign up for your email list or follow you on social profiles, or a combination of those.

Be careful, though - once you run the contest, you will find yourself with a giant social following and a huge email list - both of which may go to waste if you don't have some content ready for them to consume!

Quick Tip: If you sell something really expensive, you don't need to giveaway the product itself - you can even do a giveaway of a gift certificate.

Strategy #15 : Growth Hacking

Priority: Critical

Time required: None, as long as you provide great service

Growth Hacking is a new term in the marketing world. It means to put your business in such a position - and have such mechanisms in your business - that your own customers become your biggest brand ambassadors.

One of the best examples of a company that has successfully growth hacked itself is Dropbox. They had a great service, and a mechanism that gave incentives to their customers to invite others. 500 MB of extra space is definitely an awesome incentive!

Ecommerce businesses can do something similar using social media - having customers upload product photos/videos, holding discussions, debates, and contests - the more buzz you create, the more people you have on board.

Quick Tip: Growth hacking is easier for software as a service(SAAS) businesses, but it's not impossible for ecommerce merchants. You just have to work a little harder to find your "viral spark." Dollar Shave Club did it with their cheeky video and awesome service put together.

Resources:

[Drew Sanocki blogs about growth hacking eCommerce](#)

[A top notch guide put together by Neil Patel on everything Growth Hacking](#)

Strategy #16 : Video Marketing

Priority: Medium



Time Required: A few hours per video

Do you know how many hits YouTube gets per month? [find out]. YouTube is a GIANT search engine. Plus, it's owned by Google, the GIANT of all giant search engines.

So marketing your stuff on YouTube is a no-brainer.

Make product videos – reviews, demonstrations, anything. Give them keyword optimized titles, write a good keyword optimized description, and link to your website(and specifically that product page) from the description.

You can even see which keywords related to your market are being searched for a lot, and create videos that tailor to those specific ones.

For example, one specific type of product that I sell gets a decent amount of searches per month. I created a review video, called it “Product Name

Review – Is It Any Good?” and put it up on YouTube.

I then forgot about it, only to see 2 months later that it had received over 3500 views! That’s crazy! Not all of those people came to my site, but my brand still got that much exposure.

You can even market your video by sharing it on social media – the more views a video gets and the more likes it gets, the higher up it will rank in YouTube.

Quick Tip: If you drop-ship, you don’t need to have the physical product to make a video – you can even do a presentation with PowerPoint and record the screen along with your voice.

Resources:

[An Excellent Post By Brian Dean On Great YouTube SEO](#)

[How LuxyHair Built A 7 Figure Ecommerce Business Using YouTube](#)

[A Post by HubSpot On Using YouTube For Ecommerce](#)

Strategy #17 : Affiliate Marketing

Priority: Low

Time Required: Very little

Affiliate marketing is having other people promote your products for a cut of the sale. To get this to work, you would install a special piece of code on your website which generates special links and code to give to other website owners.

When they link to your site using the special links and a visitor clicks that link to your site, the code tracks their visit. If they purchase anything, it records that a visitor from site so and so spent \$XX at your store.

You would then pay that website owner a commission, usually between 3-10% of the sale. There are plenty of service providers that do all of this automatically, so you don't need to worry about the nitty-gritty – just set up the software and generate links for websites.

Affiliate marketing is only good for you if you have really high margins on your products. If you are a dropshipper, like me, then your margins are already tight. Having to cough up another percentage from those already-tight margins to someone else will leave you with very little.

Quick Tip: Don't make affiliate marketing the focus of your marketing efforts. The most effective way to use affiliate marketing is to use it for roping in a customer with the first sale, and you can really profit by repeat

business – which won't come using the affiliate link.

Affiliate marketing software and providers:

[Share A Sale affiliate software](#)

[iDevAffiliate affiliate software](#)

Strategy #18 : Forums and Q & A sites

Priority: Low-Medium

Time required: Heavy commitment

Forums and Q & A sites are great places to find laser targeted customers, but terrible places to market your wares like a door to door salesman.

If you decide to participate in a forum, focus on building authority, value and trust in the beginning - and don't drop links to your site every time you post.

Once people know and respect what you have to say, they will be very willing to see what you have to sell.

The only exception is if your product can directly and immediately solve the askers problem. If that's the case, a link is acceptable - necessary, even.

For example: If someone can't sleep because their partner is immune to all anti-snoring treatments, but you have an anti-snoring panacea, drop a link - but after a good explanation and answer.

Quick Tip: Be easy with links - if you drop too many too fast, moderators will usually flag you and kick you out of the forum.

Forums are really time consuming, and personally, I find it difficult to keep up with all of the posts - so I stay out of them. Still, if you can pull it off, go for it - some people have given their business a big push using just forums.

Strategy #19 : Related industries

Priority: Low

Time required: Very little

Last but not least of this list is targeted related industries and companies to partner up for a “you scratch my back, I scratch yours” partnership. You could approach someone selling complementary products to link to your site, or talk about you on their blog, in exchange for doing the same for them.

You could even have links in each others email newsletters, or posts on each other’s social media profiles.

Quick Tip: Target companies that are small to medium sized. The big boys probably won’t even pay attention to you.

Conclusion

Now that you've gone through these strategies, I'd suggest you start implementing them bit by bit. Start with the high priority ones and work forward from there.

I'll help you set your expectations, too - don't think each one is a goldmine from the get-go. For each strategy to work, it will need time, effort, and nurturing.

It's a business, right? The same things would have applied if you were opening a brick-and-mortar store.

Looking into the future, I feel that content marketing combined with solid PPC is the way to go. 2013 was the year of content marketing, where people happily announced that SEO was dead and content was king.

I don't think SEO is dead, but in the course of marketing my own store over the last year, I also feel that just SEO alone is not enough for organic(free) traffic. Begging for links is getting harder and harder.

With a content strategy, you will automatically get more search engine visitors. When you put that together with solid PPC, a good social media presence, and a healthy sprinkling of all of the other strategies I've talked about, you've got a winning combination!

I hope that you have found this ebook useful. If you have, please recommend it to your friends and family. To have them download a copy, please ask them to [visit this page](#), where they will be able to get a copy for themselves.

If you have any questions or comments, I'd love to hear from you.

Please head over to <http://bootstrappingecommerce.com/contact/> and shoot me a message! You can also find me on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/Bootstrapecom>.

Here's to your success in ecommerce!