



■ Building a Data-Driven Digital Marketing Strategy from Scratch

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Building a business is electrifying, isn't it?

No words could ever describe the thrill of seeing your idea coming to life.

But once all the work leading up to a launch day finishes, as a founder, you have to face a new, terrifying challenge.

You must find a way to reach out to, attract and engage with new customers.

And ideally, do it fast. So, this is where marketing enters the stage.

Unfortunately, this is where things often go wrong. Terribly wrong, in fact. And that's all because of a single mistake — **building marketing on assumptions.**

In this guide, we'll show you how to overcome it. You'll discover how to conduct preliminary research about your market. We'll also discuss how to identify what digital channels to use to reach your audience and boost your online visibility, and when to get the utmost results.

You'll learn:

- How so many new businesses hinder their growth,
- What insights about the market to collect to avoid making the same mistake,
- Where to look for this information,
- How to structure your marketing strategy based on the market research, and finally,
- How to track and measure your success.

A quick note before we begin. Throughout this guide, we'll be sharing some insights on how to power up digital marketing strategy with data. To illustrate them, we're going to use a fictional company, *Peewee Kiwi*, as an example and mention tools that will help you to put theory into practice.



■ **The Single Mistake
Hindering Most
Businesses' Growth**

The Single Mistake Hindering Most Businesses' Growth

Almost every new business is under enormous pressure to generate growth and do it fast.

Yet, in spite of the companies' best efforts, so many of them struggle to achieve any traction and fail.

They invest all their time and resources trying to connect with the target audience. Many, however, never manage to figure out how to:

- Communicate their value proposition, and
- Convince potential users even to consider trying out their solutions.

And their mistake is focusing on marketing channels, and tactics first.

But how else could a small/medium company introduce their solution to the market and outdo bigger and more experienced competition at the same time?

The answer is by focusing on one digital marketing strategy factor most new companies ignore.

The market research.

Strategies and channels offer a way to connect with the target audience and establish online visibility (as in, make sure your brand is actually there where people are). Market research, however, delivers insights that allow achieving the best possible return.

Only by understanding the market thoroughly, can a business decide what tactics and channels they should be using.

Luckily, that's not difficult to do, given you are equipped with the right data and tools at hand.

MARKET

- **Conducting Preliminary Marketing Research**

RESEARCH

Conducting Preliminary Marketing Research

Search engines, social media or content offer an incredible opportunity to reach the target audience.

To avail of it, though, you must first uncover four aspects of your customers and the market:

- 1 Their characteristics,
- 2 How they view solutions like yours, and
- 3 The buying process they go through when seeking similar products or services.
- 4 How the competition positions themselves in the market.

Let's look at them in detail.

PART I. WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS, REALLY?

Ultimately, you want to attract customers who are going to love your product. And knowing what your potential customers really need will help you identify whether your product meets the product/market fit:

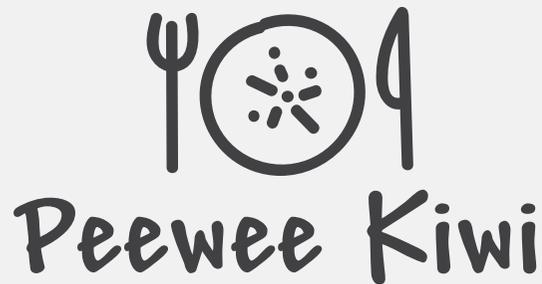
Marc Andreessen defined the term as follows:

Product / market fit means being in a good market with a product that can satisfy that market.

And you can make a quick analysis of that by looking at who actually your audience is and what it is that they need.

But to engage them and develop a strong business relationship, you need to become an expert in your audience and discover:

- Who are your customers?
- What challenge are they facing?
- What drives them crazy about it?
- How do they search for information related to their pain point?
- Where do they hang out online or offline? Are there any specific places, websites, forums, associations or events they frequent?



To illustrate this, let's pretend that you're building a company — let's name it "*Peewee Kiwi*" — that provides meal kits for cooking healthy food at home.

In the preliminary research, you identified people obsessed with healthy living as your target market. But you need to know more about them to develop a strategy that could attract those people to your brand.

And first, you need to discover what specific problem do they have.

In the case of *Peewee Kiwi*, you should ask why can't they prepare a meal at home from scratch? Are they too busy, trying to balance a demanding career with family life? Or maybe they don't know how to cook yet want to have a meal ready when their spouse comes home from work?

Next, you need to uncover what drives them crazy about the problem.

Are they ashamed of not being able to cook? Or perhaps, they're so focused with healthy living, that, in spite of having a busy schedule, they refuse to order in or eat out?

Finally, you must learn how they search for information about the problem.

Do they scout recipe sites? Are there any blogs they read regularly or forums they frequent? Or maybe they go to health and lifestyle events in their area?

To gain such insight, you might have to get closer to your target audience. For example, interview the people who match your ideal buyer's characteristics. Meet with them, hear their stories, and even, observe how they try to solve the problem, if possible.

All this information will help you a.) understand the market better, b.) create a profile of your ideal customer, c.) map out their buyer journey, and d.) identify the most significant opportunities to create a strong and relevant value proposition.

PART II. WHAT DO THEY THINK ABOUT SOLUTIONS LIKE YOURS?

What you think about your solution might not match how your audience sees it. However, it's their perception that will affect the value they'll identify for using it.

What's more, it might also introduce new alternatives for them.

For example, the audience of *Peewee Kiwi* knows that they want to live a healthier life. They also realize that one way to achieve it is by eating better food, ideally home cooked.

To understand how they think about it, **conduct an in-depth analysis of what words people use** when searching for the product online, as you should always make sure that you speak your customers' language. To get a general idea of the wording people use when searching for meal kits online, just type in "meal kits" in Google and see what phrases come up with autosuggest, or

for a more professional approach, use Google's own [Keyword Planner](#) or the [Keyword Magic Tool](#). By using the former tool we can see that people combine the "meal kits" phrase with words like "fresh," "healthy," "diet," or even "gourmet diet" when they are searching for meal kits.

Next, **you need to identify what alternatives they have apart from using your product.**

For example, our business's customers could find a local restaurant serving healthy options instead. Buy recipe books and learn cooking. They could also give up on the idea of having home cooked meals at home entirely and focus on other aspects of a healthy lifestyle.

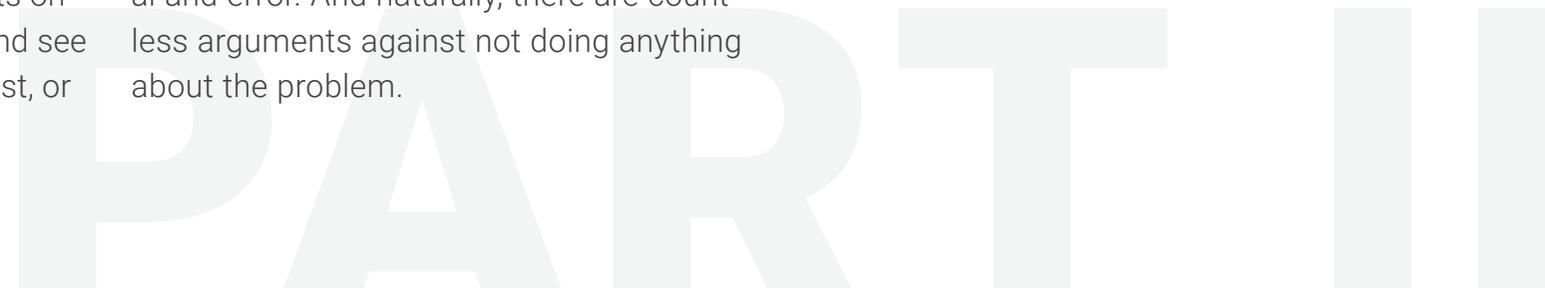
But each of *Peewee Kiwi's* alternatives carries some risks. Eating out never guarantees the healthiest lifestyle. Learning to cook could mean months and months of trial and error. And naturally, there are countless arguments against not doing anything about the problem.

By understanding that their customers see their product as a solution to live a healthier life, and why other options do not provide a similar outcome, *Peewee Kiwi* could position itself as the only true option for busy professionals.

To do the same, ask yourself:

- How would a customer describe what I do?
- What other alternatives do they have?
- How is my offering different from those other solutions?

If you don't have any direct competitors, your digital market research may stop here. Otherwise, your next step is to conduct an in-depth competitive research.



PART III. HOW MY COMPETITORS APPROACH CUSTOMERS?

Every day, countless companies reach out to your audience too. And they are already present across various touchpoints and have their online visibility covered – they publish content, run advertising campaigns, and use many other channels to convince those people to choose their products instead.

And you can use their experience to gain insights into the market too.

For one, knowing what your competitors do to position their products for the target market will help you:

See who you're battling against,

- Gain more insight into the market from their experience,
- Use their experience to identify the best paths to the market, and
- Identify opportunities they may have missed or no longer invest in.

Here are some examples of how to do it.

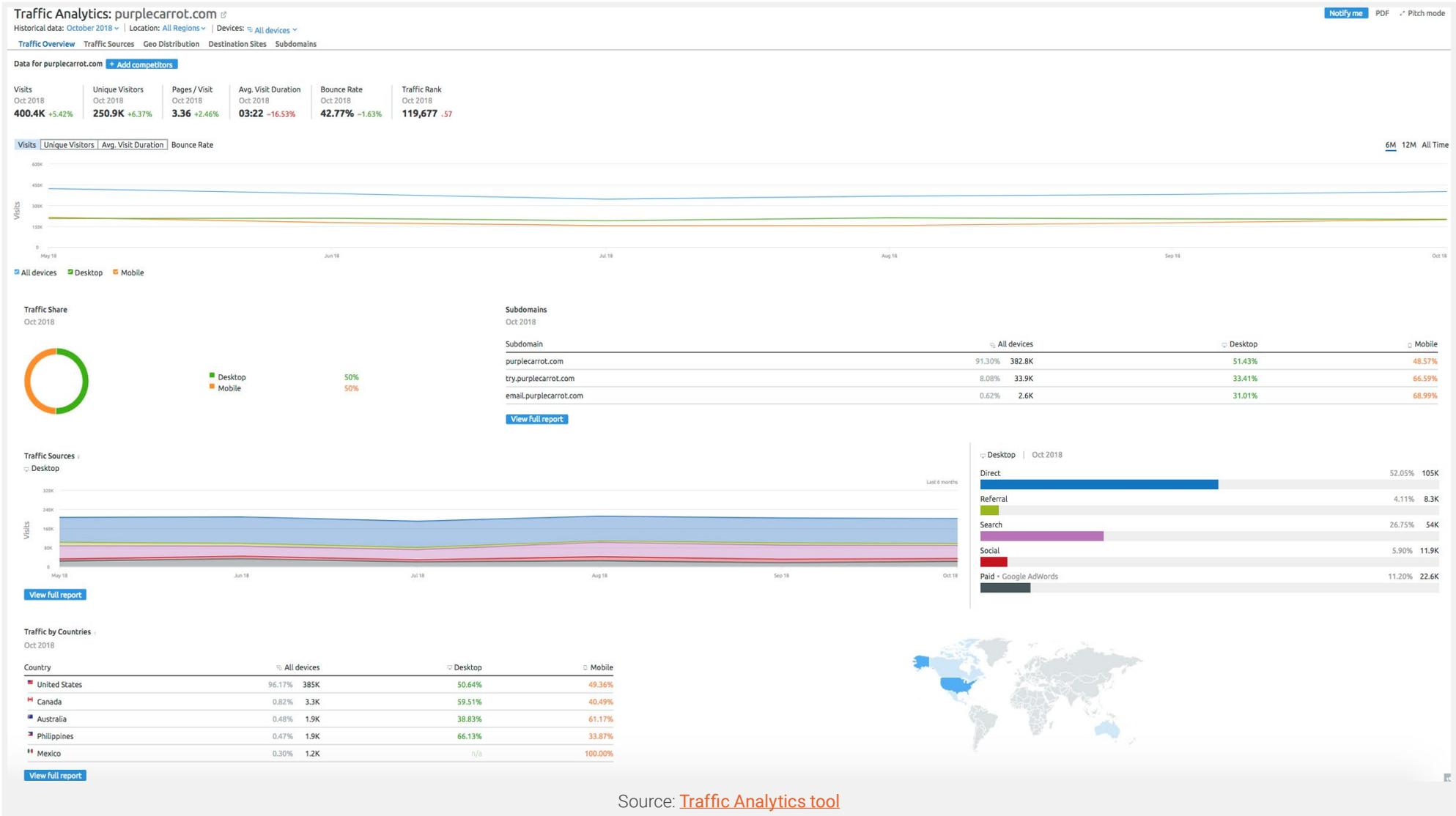
Research their overall traffic and other aspects of their online visibility.

To begin, research your main competitors' domains to learn:

- How many visitors they get to the website, on average,
- What marketing channels they use (and which ones they don't),
- What search queries drive the most traffic, and
- Who else do they battle against, among other facts.



We've run one of Peewee Kiwi's potential competitors, *Purple Carrot*, through SEMrush's [Traffic Analytics tool](#) that provides a helicopter view of its digital presence.



The tool reveals the size of the target market: 400k visits per month overall while 26.8% of them come from organic search, and 22.6k visits come from paid advertising. It confirms that they work on establishing a successful presence in the search results and also

invest in marketing heavily, and it pays off — high direct search numbers are a “direct” result of high brand awareness and, thus, successful marketing efforts.

Dashboard > Domain Analytics > Advertising Research

Advertising Research: **purplecarrot.com** ESTD

Database: United States | Device: Desktop | Date: Nov 29, 2018 | Currency: USD

Positions | Position Changes | Competitors | **Ad Copies** | Ad History | Pages | Subdomains

Filter by product title

Ad Copies 1 - 100 (398) Sort by: Number of keywords - descending

<p>Purple Carrot Meal Delivery - Nutritious Plant-Based Meals</p> <p> www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Delicious plant-based recipes and ingredients delivered weekly. Get \$25 Off.</p> <p>Keywords: 12</p>	<p>http://www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p> www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Step-by-step recipes help you prepare delicious, nutrient-packed meals.</p> <p>Keywords: 11</p>	<p>Purple Carrot Meal Delivery Nutritious Plant-Based Meals</p> <p> www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Cook nutritious, 100% plant-based meals. Fresh ingredients delivered each week.</p> <p>Keywords: 10</p>	<p>http://try.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p> try.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Everything you need to prepare nutrient-packed vegan dinners. Get \$25 off.</p> <p>Keywords: 9</p>
<p>Purple Carrot Meal Delivery Better Food for a Better Life</p> <p> www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Explore the power of plant-based meals and find your balance with Purple Carrot .</p> <p>Keywords: 9</p>	<p>http://www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p> www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Cook nutritious, 100% plant-based meals. Fresh ingredients delivered each week.</p> <p>Keywords: 8</p>	<p>Purple Carrot Meal Delivery Better Food for a Better Life</p> <p> www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Explore the power of plant-based meals and find your balance with Purple Carrot . \$20 Off Your First Week. Types: 2 Person Plan, Family Plan, TB12 Performance Meals.</p> <p>Keywords: 7</p>	<p>Purple Carrot Meal Delivery Vegan Meals for Everyone Ad</p> <p> www.purplecarrot.com/</p> <p>Meet our new plans: Quick and Easy, High Protein and Chef's Choice. \$20 Off Your First Week. Types: Quick & Easy Plan, High Protein Plan, Chef's Choice Plan.</p> <p>Keywords: 7</p>

Keywords that trigger this ad to show 1 - 7 (7)

Keyword	Position	Diff.	Block	Volume	CPC (USD)	Com.	Trend	Last Seen
purple carrot tom brady	1 → 1	0		320	1.34	0.34		6/12/2018
purple carrot recycling	1 → 1	0		90	0.77	0.26		6/11/2018
purple carrot origin	1 → 1	0		70	12.13	0.16		6/10/2018

Source: [Ad Copies](#)

Once you have a helicopter view of your competitors' marketing strategy, you can start digging even deeper. For example, by analyzing the company's keywords, you could identify topics that engage your target audience. And by doing so, avoid wasting resources on gaining this insight by trial and error.

Researching their paid and display ads copies could help you uncover their most successful value proposition. This, in turn, can reveal how they engage their potential customers.

And reviewing keywords that they bid on will help save money on testing what phrases to use in your advertising.

PART IV. HOW DO PEOPLE BUY MY STUFF?

Next, you need to discover what are your best opportunities to position your brand in front of your target audience. And for that, you need to reverse engineer your audience's buying process.

Anybody making a purchase goes through a set of steps before they complete it. Naturally, this process varies between different products or markets. However, it almost always includes these four stages — **awareness, consideration, decision, renewal**.

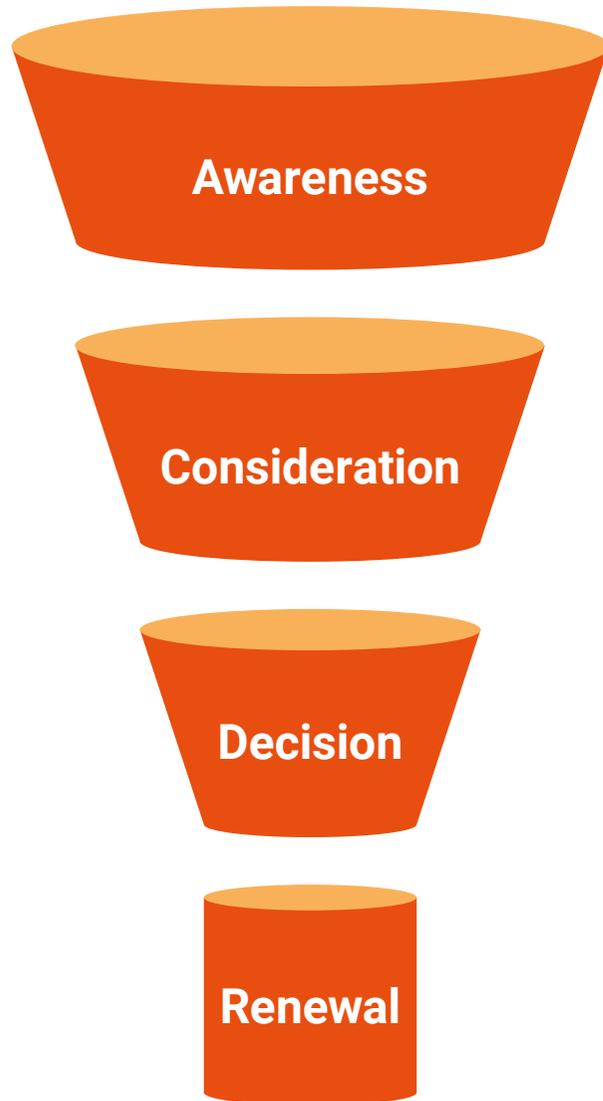
In other words, most customers would:

- Learn about their problem first, then,
- Shortlist and evaluate alternative solutions,
- Make a purchase, and finally,
- Use a solution and at some point, decide whether they want to continue using it further.

And needless to say, you need to use different marketing channels or tactics for each step.

Basically, there's a content type and a marketing channel for each stage of the buyer's journey. Of course, the precise content and distribution plan will vary from business to business, but in a nutshell:

PART IV



At **Awareness Stage** you create content that engages your target audience with your brand. What you need is to create trust among your potential customers – any brand building, let alone sales, starts with customers' trust in your business. And using the “buy now” advertising at this stage will be a waste of your budget. Your audience at this point has to familiarize themselves with your brand through content marketing – posts, videos, etc.; Social Media networks, forum discussions and so on. This is the first stage of your online visibility management efforts – the stage where your customers first meet your brand.

At **Consideration Stage** your audience should already be aware of you as a reliable and trusted brand. Now you can start introducing your product to the audience that is ready to receive more information about you and what it is that you have to offer. At this point, you can introduce a more product-oriented content and target it to your audience through more direct visibility channels – advertising, in both social media and search.

At **Decision Stage** you can use more direct marketing techniques to target your audience with a sales proposal. This is when you can actually tell your audience to “buy now”. A special offering – discounts, free perks and promotions – will be the decisive moment for your audience to convert into customers.

If you think your job as a marketer is done once you attracted a new paying customer, you'd be mistaken. The **Renewal Stage** can drive your revenue to an entirely new level – keep in mind that marketing costs for acquiring a new customer exceed the costs of ensuring the customer comes back for more products or services of yours. And the approach to convince these customers to keep re-engaging with your brand is completely different. In fact, 20% of the existing customer base is responsible for 80% of future revenue for most brands. But more on this stage below.

AWARENESS STAGE (TOP OF THE FUNNEL CUSTOMERS)

At first, you start targeting potential customers who are not yet aware of your brand, its value and strengths. This is the so-called top of the funnel audience. And when you are just starting to introduce that audience to your brand, you cannot entice them with the “buy now” approach — **people aren’t ready yet to buy from you**. You have to build trust, authority and be the go-to place to find solutions to their challenges. This is where content marketing strategy (an integral part of your online visibility) enters the game to take that audience through the various stages of the buyer’s journey.

To connect with people at the start of their journey, our brand could share information about healthy lifestyle or home cooking. And once people start recognizing your brand as a trusted and valuable source of information they are looking for to solve their problems, you can take them further down the funnel.

By analyzing ideas relating to healthy cooking, you could identify a whole range of topics to cover when marketing to those customers. To find some topic ideas that resonate the most with *Peewee Kiwi’s* target audience and that get the most traction online, you can go to [Quora](#), [Reddit](#), check out the Social Media posts that got the highest engagement on the target topic, go to [Topic Research](#) or search engines. You can **research what questions people ask across these places, or track what challenges they are facing** (people tend to share their concerns over these platforms), and use these insights as great topic ideas your brand should cover.

AWAWARE
NESS

Dashboard > Topic Research > Topic Research for your keywords Send feedback

Topic Research: healthy cooking new [Order content writing](#) [Export topic to XLSX](#)

Content Ideas Favorite Ideas

healthy cooking United States (Desktop) Search content on domain [Get content ideas](#) Favorite Ideas

Cards Explorer Overview Mind Map
Trending subtopics first
Prioritize topics by: Volume

<p>Side Dish Volume: n/a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy Healthy Side Dish Recipes : Food Network Quick and Easy Side-Dish Recipes 17 Easy & Healthy Side Dishes <p>Show more</p>	<p>Healthy Food Volume: 135.0k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Food Recipes & Ideas Healthy Recipes Quick and Healthy Recipes <p>Show more</p>	<p>Healthy Breakfast Volume: 110.0k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Breakfast Ideas: 34 Simple Meals for Busy ... 18 Fast, Healthy Breakfast Ideas 60+ Healthy Breakfast Ideas <p>Show more</p>	<p>Healthy Meals Volume: 60.5k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Recipes Quick and Healthy Recipes Healthy Dinners in 40 Minutes or Less <p>Show more</p>
<p>Brown Rice Volume: 40.5k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 Ways to Eat Brown Rice How to Make Perfect Brown Rice How to Cook Brown Rice Perfectly <p>Show more</p>	<p>Feel Good Volume: 8.1k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How cooking at home actually makes you happier 14 delicious and healthy recipes that'll keep you fe... Easy Real Food Recipes With Feel Good Ingredients <p>Show more</p>	<p>Small Amount Volume: 1.0k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Healthiest Cooking Methods Explained Healthy-cooking techniques: Boost flavor and cut c... 25 Heart-Healthy Cooking Tips <p>Show more</p>	<p>Healthy Cooking Recipes Volume: 1.0k</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Recipes Quick and Healthy Recipes 80+ Easy Healthy Dinner Ideas <p>Show more</p>

Source: [Topic Research tool](#)

Based on such insight, you could publish content discussing the elements of a healthy diet. Your long-form guides could advise busy people on how to leave healthily. And an email series could teach them some basic cooking skills, for example.

Note that all this information not only would help *Peewee Kiwi's* audience understand the problem. It'd also prepare them to use the company's products successfully.

CONSIDERATION STAGE (MIDDLE OF THE FUNNEL CUSTOMERS)

Customers at this stage will want to explore the company's offering further. Most likely, they'll wonder, how is this option better than buying fresh produce? Or, is the company providing the safest and healthiest option they claim?

To engage them, you could publish content that helps *Peewee Kiwi* build a stronger value recognition among their target audience. From comparison sheets and videos to your website copy, every content you lead your audience to from the top of the funnel stage should emphasize your brand's value and strengths. And once you target that content to your audience through various channels like PPC or social ads, you can reach those customers quickly and educate them about the product.

DECISION STAGE (BOTTOM OF THE FUNNEL CUSTOMERS)

After the consideration stage, the audience already knows and trusts your brand enough to buy from you. The only thing separating them from making a purchase is the one last step. To help them make it, consider making a special offer. In the case of *Peewee Kiwi*, free delivery could be that decisive factor. So, make sure to deliver that message through your marketing channels.

RENEWAL STAGE

As mentioned previously, there's an important stage that follows that final purchase of our product. Customer retention is essential for *Peewee Kiwi*, as the cost per new customer exceeds the cost of retaining the already existing one. A sure way to encourage our customers to come back to our brand and keep ordering food delivery from *Peewee Kiwi* is to provide an impeccable food experience. What else? You could establish a bonus program where every fifth order will be free of charge. On top of that, you could provide a special form on the website where customers who regularly purchase from *Peewee Kiwi* X times per week can add the food recipes they'd like to receive every Saturday. With customer retention, it's the small things that count!

The renewal stage comes down to providing your customers with an outstanding experience. And if your product/service requires some education, setting up a smooth learning curve will be the key to winning a returning customer.

Depending on your product and market, this process might look differently. However, its principle remains the same. You have to identify how your audience buys products like yours first. And then, position relevant information at every stage of their process.



BEST IN MARKETING STRATEGY

- **Selecting the Best Marketing Channels and Building Online Visibility Strategy**

Selecting the Best Marketing Channels and Building Online Visibility Strategy

Market research helps identify opportunities and devise a strategy to reach that market. And in this section, we'll show you how to do it, specifically.

Once again, we'll use our food company as an example to illustrate each step.

So, from the research so far, we know that our brand's customers are busy professionals. They're interested in a healthy lifestyle. And they identified eating healthy home-cooked food as the way to achieve it.

We also know that they see meal kits as a simple way to cook fresh food with little effort. Finally, we know what alternatives they have – restaurants, learning to cook or focusing on other aspects of a healthy lifestyle.

The next step is to identify and select the most effective marketing channels you can use to increase your online visibility and reach those people. **You do it in three steps:**



First, you identify the most common channels other companies use to engage this audience.

Then, you use the most popular one to test your insights about the audience.

Finally, you adjust your strategy to your findings and launch a full-scale campaign.

Let's see how it happens in practice.

STEP 1. IDENTIFY THE MOST COMMON CHANNELS TO ESTABLISH YOUR ONLINE VISIBILITY

The variety of channels you can use to target your audience is overwhelming. Your online visibility can have to do with Content, SEO, SEM, email, online advertising, PR, and other channels. They all help you position your brand in front of potential customers. But before you dive in and rush into establishing a presence on each and every one of them, think of a few things:

- Set up specific goals: are you trying to build brand awareness? are you trying to educate your audience?
- Identify your limits: do you have any time constraints? limited resources?

Chances are you don't have the time and the resources to simultaneously invest in every marketing channel out there, and actually, you shouldn't – diversification, especially from the start, can be really misleading and will only set your business into a trap.

So, below is a matrix that can give you an overview of what potential costs, targeting options and exposure each channel we discussed above can give:

Please, note that the outcome will vary from business to business, and from niche to niche

CHANNELS

	Cost	Targeting	Control	Input Time	Output time	Scale
SEO	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	High	High
SEM	Medium	High	High	Low	Low	High
Content Marketing	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High	High
Email marketing	Low	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium
Influencer marketing	Medium	High	Low	High	Medium	High
Social media	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High
Digital PR	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium	High
Offline	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium

Where

Cost — The upfront and ongoing cost to acquire users in this channel.

Targeting — The depth of ability to target different audiences.

Control — The control you have overturning the channel on/off at will.

Input Time — The upfront time required to start running experiments with this channel.

Output Time — The time it takes to start getting data around your experiments.

Scale — The size/reach of the channel.

Once you have a full overview of what each marketing channel can bring to your business, go through this brief description of the main channels you can use to reach your audience at different buyer's journey stages:

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)

Search engine optimization is a process of improving your rankings to attract more potential customers to your site. From positioning blog posts and other content for users at the awareness stage to ranking the website for people evaluating different alternatives, SEO helps you reach the target audience effectively.

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (SEM)

SEO isn't the only way to promote your brand in search engines. Another is by placing paid ads, which typically appear at the top and bottom of the search results page.

These ads work similarly to search results. They appear when a person searches for a specific keyword or a phrase. Unlike SEO, however, the pay-per-click bidding model grants you a far greater control where your ad appears.

CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing helps you establish a conversation with your audience and build a solid connection through different types of content. Blog posts, guides, eBooks, videos and many other content types allow you to add value at every stage of the funnel.

EMAIL MARKETING

Email opens a direct channel to communicate with the people already somewhat interested in your offering, as in, if people signed up for your newsletter, that means you've passed the online visibility test.

It, therefore, comes as no surprise that it is the [third most influential](#) source of information for B2B buyers. In fact, [86% of professionals](#) prefer email when communicating for business purposes.

Email marketing can take many forms. Some of your messages might be transactional, including offers, coupons or sales pitches. Others, like drip campaigns, aim to educate the audience, onboard them to your solution or increase retention. Finally, triggered email campaigns target specific buyer behavior to deliver relevant information.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

[92% of global consumers](#) trust recommendations from friends and family or word of mouth more than advertising.

And this strategy allows you to leverage the impact people your target audience considers influential might have on their buying decision to position your product as more than worth considering.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

In many ways, social media marketing works similarly to SEO. Both aim to position a brand in front of potential audiences online.

Where the two differ, however, is how this happens. SEO focuses on keywords and targets customers who seek specific information. Social media uses stories and content and social connections to achieve a similar result.

Social media campaigns also involve placing paid ads on social networking sites to promote content and generate leads.

Not all of the channels discussed above will work in your market or niche. Your first goal, therefore, is to identify the ones that do.

How, by analyzing what has already worked for your competitors.

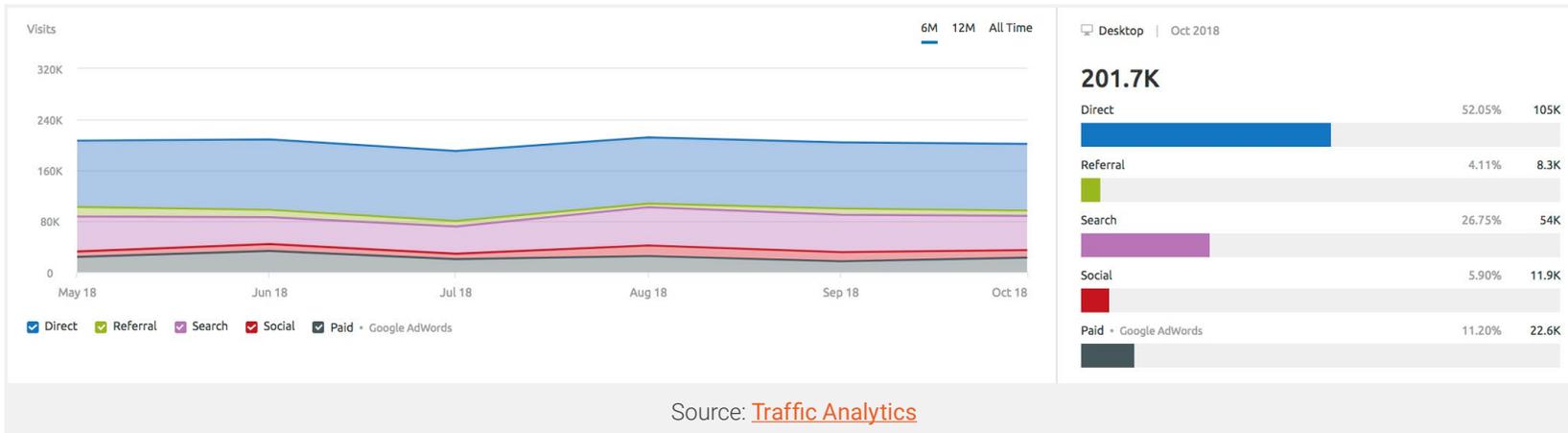
Using the [Traffic Analytics](#) in SEMrush, you can get a birds-eye view of any company's online marketing strategies.

What's more, you can also find out which ones they focus on the most. These insights can suggest where to begin with your strategy also.

Analyzing the food brand's competitors, you can see that they put a lot of effort into managing their SEO and paid advertising. Digging deeper, the data reveals that both channels drive the most visitors.

DIGITAL PR

Finally, digital PR combines various modern marketing disciplines to expand a brand's search visibility. From content to search to social media, digital PR helps brands boost its brand awareness online.



So, you can infer that to engage this audience you have to focus on both SEO and paid ads.

However, you could take an alternative approach. Since these two channels — SEO and paid advertising — seem to have high competition, you could use other marketing channels where you will have the first-mover advantage.

For instance, by quickly checking the brand’s activity across various Social media networks, we can see that *Peewee Kiwi*’s main competitor is active on Facebook and gets a lot of traction there. But its Twitter is relatively underdeveloped. So, our food company could start putting a bigger emphasis on Twitter marketing when it comes to Social Media.

Similarly, analyzing the competitors’ websites can tell how those companies engage with their visitors and generate potential customers. In the case of *Peewee Kiwi*, by looking through the competitors’ sites, it appeared that only one competitor actively builds an email list through their blog. The rest focus on direct conversions.



Search



Get free recipes

A new menu in your inbox every week

See all of our recipes

Eat

Beyond Dinner
Dinner Ideas
Food Stories
Ingredient Love

Learn

Here's How
Home Chef
How I Learned
Kitchen Toolbox
The Best Ingredients

Live

Blue Apron Test Kitchen
Cooking Pretty
Dinner Conversation

GENERAL DECEMBER 19, 2017

Mexican Hot Chocolate

A generous tablespoon of cinnamon gives this rich hot chocolate its pleasant warmth, while a pinch of cayenne adds a surprising—but welcome—touch of heat. If you don't have Raaka bars, feel free to use your favorite dark chocolate (at least 70% cacao—and bonus if it also contains any of the spices in the recipe!). Serve this up at a holiday brunch, or a simply enjoy it on a cold afternoon.



Source: Blue Apron Blog

This might suggest that engaging and nurturing potential customers in our case is a lower priority in this market. This, of course, would have to do with the fact that our business type implies

lower risks and expenditures (we aren't selling an around-the-world cruise), thus the decision-making process the customer goes through is quicker.

STEP 2. VALIDATE YOUR IDEAS

Up until this point, you've conducted a lot of research about the audience. From learning more about who they are, their problems to identifying buying behavior.

You also already know what channels can potentially engage them.

But before you turn all of those insights into a full-scale strategy, you need to validate them.

In order not to waste any resources on inefficient channels, you need to discover whether a particular insight is indeed, correct.

Run a small campaign to test a particular insight and measure how the audience responds to it. High engagement would confirm the insight. Low engagement might suggest that the audience doesn't find that particular issue important. You can benchmark your campaign performance against competitors to evaluate what's high and low engagement in your particular niche.

For example, in *Peewee Kiwi* company, you've identified the desire to balance a busy schedule with cooking healthy meals at home as the audience's key problem.

From analyzing the competitors' strategies, you also know that the two most viable channels to reach those people would be search and paid ads.

To validate this insight, you could run a series of small online ads that target this particular pain point. You could repeat this process for any other assumptions and adjust your research to the results of your campaigns.

IDEAS

STEP 3. TEST THE CHANNELS

Keep in mind that success often comes from failure (or even a few). And the favorite startup motto “fail fast” is perfectly applicable when you get to testing your marketing channels.

To get the highest possible ROI out of the channel you chose, you'll need some practice and endless experiments. And A/B testing presents a great opportunity to get real insights into what's working for your particular audience. A/B testing is basically split testing when you present two different versions of content — ads, posts, videos — to the same audience and check which version performs best. And each channel has different variables that you can put up to the test.

To run Google ads without burning your budget, you need to learn how to reduce the cost per click, while attracting only the most targeted visitors at the same time.

In SEO campaigns, you need to ensure that you select only the keywords that your ideal buyers use and no one else. Otherwise, you might attract a lot of unqualified traffic that will not convert into sales.

And so, with assumptions validated, you are ready to start learning more about your top channels.

Again, the best way to do it is by launching smaller scale campaigns first. And then, analyzing their performance to identify the best opportunities to scale them.

TEST

STEP 4. OUTLINE THE STRATEGY

Every step you've taken up until now led to this one outcome — **being able to launch a proper, full-scale marketing strategy to achieve growth.**

You've conducted the market research to understand your audience and discover how to position your brand along with their buying journey.

You've analyzed the competition to learn what channels engage your audience best. Then, you used them to validate your research and gain experience in running various campaigns.

Now, you're ready to start investing resources in achieving growth.

But unlike the companies we mentioned at the beginning of this guide, your campaigns won't be based on assumptions and guesses.

Everything you'll do should be rooted in a deep understanding of the market, coupled with experience and insight about what works and what doesn't.

OUTLINE
STRATEGY

A top-down view of a group of people in a meeting around a table. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The people are engaged in a discussion, with one person pointing at a laptop screen. There are several laptops, notebooks, and coffee cups on the table. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

■ How to Create an Efficient Marketing Mix for Your Business

How to Create an Efficient Marketing Mix for Your Business

As you're already aware, selecting the right traction channels will require gaining the market insight we've discussed in this publication first. Because, only when you know who your customers are, where they hang

out, how they think about your solution, what process they'd go to buy it, and what would deter them from doing so, you can start planning a marketing strategy to introduce your product to them.

Here is a convenient table that pinpoints which marketing channel you should use in relation to a different stage of the potential buyer's customer journey:

	Content	Email	Social	Media	Paid	Website	SEO/SEM
Awareness							
Consideration							
Decision							
Renewal							

Aligning this information with your goals and objectives (i.e. greater traffic, conversions, etc.) you can identify the right marketing mix for your business.

Using our food brand's example one more time, let's pretend that as founder, you've identified greater traffic to the site as your overarching goal.

Your marketing mix, therefore, must include channels that primarily focus on driving online visibility to your brand to build brand awareness among your target audience that will later be more likely to purchase from you. Paid Advertising and Social Media Marketing would deliver such results the fastest. SEO and content would take longer but would eventually result in a longer-lasting visibility.

A background image of a business meeting with an orange overlay. In the foreground, a woman in a striped shirt is looking at a laptop. In the background, a man in a suit is also looking at a laptop. The overall scene is professional and collaborative.

■ Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Hopefully, this publication has provided you with a good understanding of the role market research plays in business's marketing and how to uncover this data.

And we hope you've enjoyed reading it too.

For the end, let us reiterate some of its most crucial points:

- ❶ Most marketing campaigns fail because of a lack of initial market research and insight,
- ❷ To check your product/market fit and successfully promote your business, you must identify four traits of your customers and the market:
 - Who your customers are
 - How they view solutions like yours,
 - How they buy them, and finally,
 - What your competitors do to position themselves for your target audience.
- ❸ This knowledge allows you to identify the most relevant and engaging channels you place your bet on to communicate with the target audience.
- ❹ Those, in turn, will enable you to validate your research findings and launch marketing strategies guaranteed to deliver the highest possible return.

What's left now is to start researching and gaining insight into your audience to identify the most viable ways to market to them.

Good luck.



BONUS

A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a white shirt, sitting at a desk and writing in a notebook with a pencil. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange gradient. The word 'BONUS' is written in large, bold, white letters at the top, and 'CHECKLIST' is written in large, bold, white letters at the bottom.

■ Bonus checklist

CHECKLIST

How to Conduct an Initial Market Research to Build a High-Performing Digital Marketing Strategy

Step 1:

Gather insights about your audience

Answer these questions:

- Who are your customers?
- What challenge are they facing?
- What drives them crazy about it?
- How do they search for information related to their pain point?
- Where do they hang out online or offline?

Step 2:

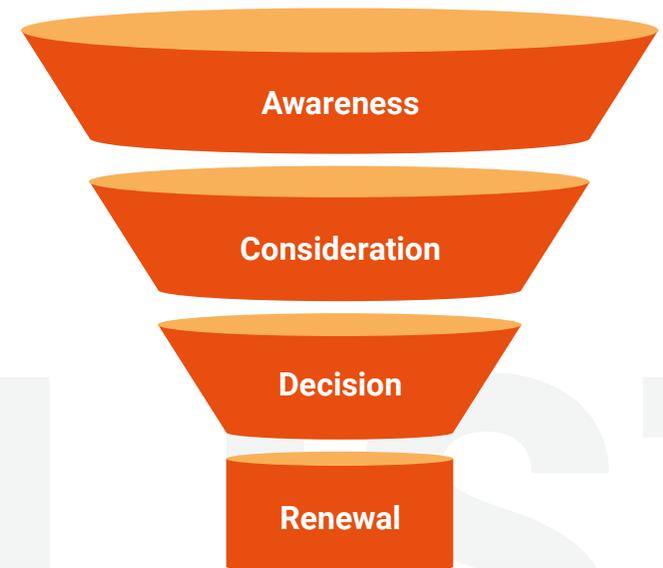
Spy on your competitor's approach to target that audience

- See who you're battling against,
- Gain more insight into the market from their experience,
- Use their experience to identify the best paths to the market, and
- Identify opportunities they may have missed or no longer invest in.

Step 3:

Define your audience's buyer's journey

How will your potential customers interact with your brand on different stages of the funnel?



CHECKLIST

Step 4:

Identify the Most Relevant Marketing Channels for Your Niche

	Content	Email	Social	Media	Paid	Website	SEO/SEM
Awareness							
Consideration							
Decision							
Renewal							

Step 5:

Create Small-Scale Marketing Campaigns to Test Channels for Performance

Pro Tip for A/B testing:

- Make small changes in the copy
- Analyze few variables
- Set up a precise time frame for running the test
- Take action based on the results

Step 6:

Launch a Bigger Strategy Based on Your Findings

NOW YOU CAN SIT AT YOUR DESK & GET INTO THE GAME!

CHECKLIST