

ECOMMERCE MARKETING 101: **YOUR BLUEPRINT FOR A GROWTH-BOOSTING STRATEGY**



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Introduction

What This Preteen Can Teach You About Marketing

We all had that one friend at school who was a genius at playing their parents. When I was a kid, that friend was Charlotte. She was a master at getting her parents to buy her what she wanted, but she never once begged them, or sulked, or threw a hissy fit. She was smarter than that.

One year, her Dad said he'd go shopping with her to let her choose her birthday present. Her budget was \$60 and not a penny over. But Charlotte already knew what she wanted. This was 1998 and the Game Boy Colour had JUST come out... at an RRP of \$89.99.

"That's a shame," I said. "I guess you'll have to pick something else."

"Just watch me," she said.

And sure enough, Charlotte had a strategy. On Saturday, she made her poor Dad follow her around town for hours until he pleaded with her to choose something. At this point, Charlotte "just happened" to spot the new Game Boy Colour through a store window.

"Those are so cool!" she cried. "I would LOVE one of them! Ah, but it's over budget. Let's keep looking."

"Oh for goodness' sake," sighed her Dad. "Just get it."

With a mind like that at 11, it's no accident that Charlotte was advising tech companies on a marketing strategy by her mid-20s. And while I'm not saying you should trick your customers

into making purchases they don't want, there's an important lesson to learn from her super sneaky pre-teen strategy, which every ecommerce marketer must nail to survive:

Know Your Buyer

Charlotte knew her Dad would place more value on saving time than saving money. She knew that if she outright asked for something, he would refuse – but if he felt like it was his idea, he might agree to it.

She had plotted the exact journey they would take together, she knew the exact outcome she wanted, and she had anticipated her Dad's reactions and objections in order to manage them in advance. That meant she could lead him, step by step, to an outcome that was good for her (she got the Game Boy) and good for him (he was free to go to the pub). Smart, huh?

eCommerce Marketing is All About Channelling Your Inner Charlotte

When it comes to marketing your ecommerce business, understanding your buyer – their needs, their journey, the language they use and their interests beyond your product – is vital. But figuring out what makes them tick is only half the battle. You then have to be savvy enough to translate that into a coherent strategy that keeps them on track, all the way to where you both want to end up. In this eBook, I'm going to show you how.

Chapter 1

How to Burrow Into Your Customers' Brains

Before you can figure out how to market effectively, you need to know who you're marketing to and how they behave.

In marketing-speak, this means you need to create detailed **buyer personas** and then map out the **buyer's journey**. Let's take a look at what this means.

How to Create Buyer Personas

A **buyer persona** is a detailed picture of the kind of person that loves what you sell. It tells you where your niche is (or where your niches are, since you might have two or three distinct target markets).

The important thing is that, even if you have more than one, each separate buyer persona is represented as a specific person. It shouldn't be "women in their 30s" or "people who work in accounts", but rather something like: "Samantha, 35 years old, Financial Director at a mid-sized firm..." plus a bunch of useful, defining characteristics about what they're interested in, where they get their information / products from, etc.

This gives you a distinct image of who you are talking to. In everything you create from now on, you need to imagine you're speaking directly to this person.

If you're unsure of what kind of persona you should craft, start by looking at two things: your current customers and the people writing reviews on your website.

Draw out particular details you see referenced, like age, location/hometown, job titles, hobbies and interests, marital status, whether they have kids and so on. This should give you a vivid pic-



ture of who you're targeting – and that, in turn will shape your messaging, the language you use, and the content you create to market your site.

The Buyer's Journey: An Overview

Few people buy totally on a whim online. Unlike walking into a shop, picking up an item and thinking "Ah, what the hell!", online buyers are distanced from your brand and what you sell.

They can't inspect the product for themselves. They can't try it out. They don't even know if it's genuinely as advertised. Generally, this will make them more cautious and means you must work harder to convince them.

For this reason, the series of steps that a buyer takes before they make a purchase – their journey to a sale – is particularly important online. Mapping out that journey is crucial in order to keep them moving in the right direction.

First, you need to figure out how most people arrive at your ecommerce site.

Bear in mind that there might be a few entry points. For example, are they finding you through Google searches of your products? Or search terms that lead them to your blog? Or are they clicking through from Facebook ads?

Okay, let's assume you have all that covered and get back to our buyer's journey.

Important Note:

if you want to use the best systems to support your venture - i.e. the ecommerce and payment platforms that are easiest to navigate, and which instil the most confidence in your users, you will need to be 100% above board.

That means you need to be properly set up as a business and set up to pay tax. If you aren't, leading platforms and payment providers just won't be able to work with you - they have rules and legislation of their own to think about. So, if you want your buyer's journey to be smooth and effective, don't shoot yourself in the foot from the outset by limiting your options! Get your paperwork in order first.

Then: where do they land when they get there? Is there a logical next step that draws them further into your site? How do they find their way to your products, and how are they ushered from one product to another?

Next: what is the checkout and payment process like? Can they pay from anywhere in the world, using their preferred method, without racking up fees? Is the system easy and intuitive to use? If there are any difficulties here, you WILL lose sales at the very last hurdle.

Okay, so that's a very basic overview. Ideally you'll have systems in place to help you derive detailed ecommerce analytics from each stage in this process, showing you where people are funnelled into your site and where they are most likely to drop off.

Armed with this information, you're not only equipped to identify the friction points in your site (bits you could do with tweaking to improve the user experience), but you'll also start to spot opportunities for introducing captivating content into the mix, tempting people into lingering longer instead of bouncing away. We'll talk more about this in the next chapter.

First, let's look at a few ways you can kickstart the buyer's journey by bringing people onto your site in the first place.



Define Your Keywords

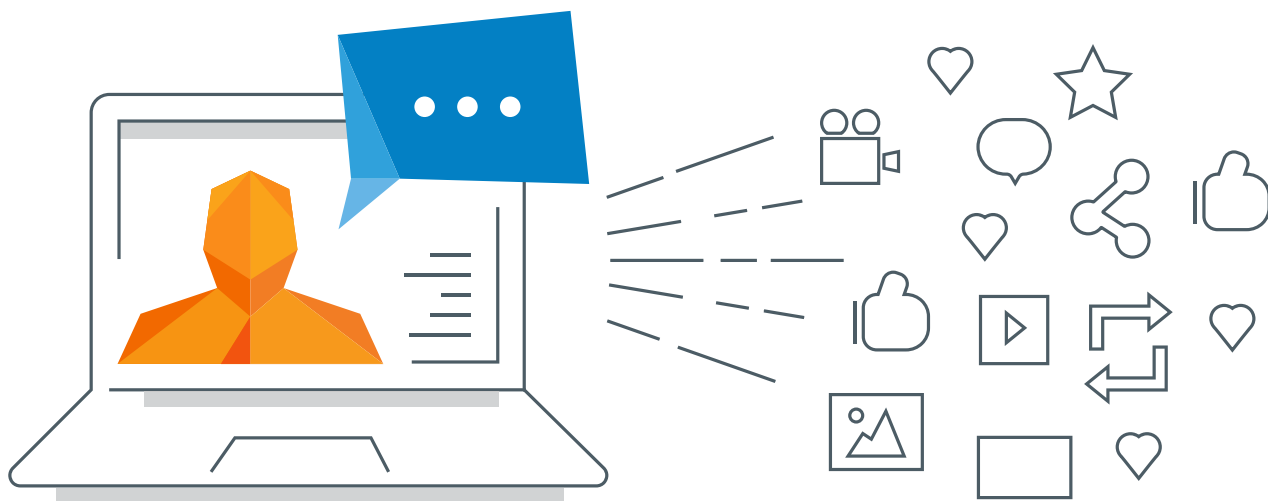
Inbound traffic is, of course, the ultimate goal. Nail your SEO and your advertising costs can quickly drop, as potential customers come straight to you.

To do that, you'll need to be super smart about the keywords you use on each page. By using a tool like [Google Adwords Keyword Planner](#) or the impressive [Ahrefs Keyword Explorer](#), you can figure out the most-searched-for terms relating to each one of your products, helping you optimise your copy on each page and push your way up the search engine rankings.

Gather Reviews

A whopping 88% of customers say that they trust online reviews as much as a recommendation from someone they know. To capitalize on this, you may want to consider integrating a review feature into your ecommerce site.

This will provide you with a valuable tool for boosting your reputation and give newbies on your site that all-important confidence in your brand.



The only problem is this: people are *MUCH more likely to write a review when they're feeling peeved* than when they're pleased. So don't wait for grumpy buyers to skew your results. If you incorporate reviews, make sure you do your utmost to guide the process, too.

For example, follow up with every buyer, nudging them to leave a review. Offering an incentive to do so, like a voucher for their next purchase, will encourage them to return AND sweeten them up a little before they bash out their response.

Get Influencers on Board

If you really want to win people over, you'll need to amplify your most important recommendations. The best way to do that is to get your products in front of the people your audience trust on this stuff. In other words, *influencer marketing*.

When many people think of "influencer marketing" they think of YouTube celebs like Zoella talking about how great some new makeup item is in a tutorial video. But in reality there are many different types of influencer marketing. It all boils down to figuring out whose opinion your audience respects and then reaching out to them.

For you, that might be someone along the lines of *Pewdiepie* or *Evan Fong* - YouTubers who became famous for nutty videos that other gamers love to watch - or popular streamers on Twitch, like *Riotgames*. These are people who have amassed hordes of loyal fans that trust what they have to say about a game or product, so if you can persuade them to use your stuff on screen, this is the best possible marketing you could hope to have.

Videos in this category fall broadly into three

categories: reviews, walkthroughs (i.e. demos where the gamer leads you through the game, showing you how it works, with commentary) and Let's Plays, where they simply play the game while providing entertaining commentary.

Outside of video, leading *gaming blogs and websites* like *Eurogamers* also make a solid platform to promote your products, while the *Gamers subreddit* is a great place to gauge where your audience are getting their news and advice, and identify bloggers that could be great influencers in your field. Here's the thing, though: anyone with a decent following is already getting spammed by people like you, so don't just add to their slush pile. Be a bit more discerning.

Create a list of people it genuinely makes sense for you to reach out to. Useful tools for this include *Socialblade*, which ranks different kinds of accounts by their popularity, and *Buzzstream*, which allows you to search for articles by relevant keyword. From there, you can look up the authors and creators to see how much clout they have in their field - for example, you might filter by their number of Twitter / Instagram / YouTube followers, or which publications they write for.

After this, choose some of the writer's most interesting, non-time-sensitive articles you think your audience might like and share them on your social networks, making sure to tag the author. Or for video, share some of the best ones, comment on them or even create an entertaining response video.

If they acknowledge this, follow up with a private message and if you get a response, you can

progress to asking if they'd be interested in having you send over some of your products to try out. Make it clear you're not trying to buy a good review, you'd just like to know their verdict... Slowly slowly catchy monkey, as the saying goes.

Social Ads

Facebook and Instagram advertising is taking over... because it works. Platforms like these are adept at slipping marketing seamlessly into your newsfeed, and thanks to features like native video and incredibly detailed targeting options, you can make sure your ads get in front of exactly the eyeballs you want them to. Perfecting this *can take a bit of* work, but considering you can start with a budget of just £1 a day, it's worth experimenting to get it right.

Bringing Back the Ones that Got Away

Last but not least, remember that your buyer's journey doesn't end when they close their browser. An abandoned cart doesn't mean you've lost the sale for good. At the same time, don't wait around for them to call you back. Take the initiative. Reach out. Set up *retargeted ads* that jog customers' minds about that cool product they were musing over last week.

Allow people to add items to wish lists while browsing, or save their carts so they don't have to hunt around for the same items next time they visit. Then, set up automated emails that nudge people to finish their transaction. In other words, make it easy for them to come back and change their mind!



Chapter 2

Laying a Trail of Breadcrumbs

If you are very, very lucky, potential customers are already looking for precisely the product you sell and searching for it using exactly the right terms, and your site is in the process of pinging to the top of Google's rankings.

Sadly, though, effort-free wins like these are the holy grail, not the norm.

It's perfectly possible your customers don't yet know the product you offer exists. It's possible that they don't even know the problem you solve is one that can be fixed - or that it's a problem at all! In these situations, you need to be smarter about how you draw them into your ecommerce site.

Rather than thinking primarily about what you want them to buy, think about how you can add value for them. What questions might they be asking that you can answer? What can you create that will educate or entertain?

While the tone and content will differ, this basic concept stands whether your business is B2C or B2B. Here are some ideas that complement ecommerce particularly well:

Product Guides & Tutorials

The biggest hurdle when selling online is, of course, building trust. How do you persuade people who have never seen, touched or otherwise experienced your product first hand that they'll like it – or even that it is what you say it is?

Photos and videos of your product are great, but in-depth demos and tutorials are even better. Make these engaging, non-corporate in tone, and focused on the specific ways that your buyers will interact with your product.

Take the [*Adobe Creative Suite*](#) site, which offers users extremely niche, in-depth tutorials through blog posts and screen capture videos, covering all



kinds of tools and effects available in Photoshop, Premiere Pro, InDesign, After Effects and so on.

People trying to figure out how to achieve a particular effect are brought into the site, where they then learn more about the cloud-hosted software – and people who have already bought into it are encouraged to stay loyal or even upgrade to get more features and programs. In this way, you're presenting a solution to a problem, not just pushing a product. And that's far more convincing for your audience than giving it the hard sell.

For example, if you offer in-game purchases, it's a good idea to create tutorial videos demonstrating how to use the extra feature, in order to achieve a particular goal. The beauty of producing videos like these is that you attract traffic from people looking for a certain outcome (e.g. how to progress to the next level faster / achieve a certain effect / customize their experience in some way) and direct them to your site to buy what they need to make it happen.

More generally, walkthroughs / demos and tutorials showing how to use or unlock a particular feature, like a new weapon in a game, means that both existing and potential buyers who want to feel they know their way around a game before they start playing have a chance to immerse

themselves. Gamers are trying to win, after all, and insider knowledge that gives them an edge appeals to their competitive nature!

User-Generated Content

If you can get existing customers to create content that shows off how great your product is for you, you're really onto a winner. These people don't have a vested interest in helping you make a sale, so their recommendations are automatically more credible and convincing than anything you might say about yourself!

While many companies struggle to attract content beyond reviews, the competitive, multiplayer and increasingly choose-your-own-narrative nature of gaming makes it perfect for user-generated content.

Top gamer personalities attract millions of fans for a reason: they can easily record visually exciting, entertaining and/or technically impressive sequences that show off their skill, wit or understanding of a game. If you can get your users to make content like this of their own and share/highlight the best stuff, this will give them the thrill of recognition while providing you with priceless marketing materials... for free.



Chapter 3

Want People to Trust You? Don't Be Two-Faced

Whether you're interacting with customers on your ecommerce site, on Facebook, on Instagram or anywhere else, people expect consistency. That means your tone of voice, the look and feel of your content and design, your response times to customer queries, and everything else related to your online identity need to match up, across all the channels you use.

This goes beyond brand experience. You also need to make sure that your promotional strategy and product availability spans all these channels, too. That likely means putting in place cloud-hosted supply chain technology to ensure your advertised stock levels are always up-to-date, and to keep track of how you're performing across different sites and channels.

Go Mobile

I can't stress how important it is to provide a great experience on mobile. With mobile commerce growing at a rate of around 130% per year, your

sales will likely suffer if you don't invest now to ensure your mobile commerce platform is intuitive, robust and flexible enough to cope with changing demand in the coming years.

Depending on your business and whether you also sell in-store, you'll need to make sure your mobile platform offers tools like click-to-call and Google Maps integration, alongside product information, delivery status and other real-time notifications.

Tailor the Experience

At the same time, bear in mind that your customers expect more and more from you in terms of tailored content, bespoke offers – and even the way you present your content and products for their demographic.

This is where having clearly defined buyer personas comes in super-handly. Let's say, for example, that you sell scripting engines and scripted AI programs, and you've figured out that your customers tend to fall into two categories: grad students working in AI research, and game developers.

Instead of creating generic messaging to cover both, why not set up two landing pages? And produce clearly delineated content aimed at each of these groups, addressing their particular interests?

By collecting a little more information during the sign-up and payment stage, or when providing gated content, you can add this nuance into your email marketing too. This means you can send out separate email campaigns with offers tailored to the needs of either student researchers, or game developers. This will grab their attention far more effectively than a catch-all campaign.



Win Their Trust

One of the biggest, and often downplayed, hurdles for a new ecommerce business is giving customers peace of mind that you aren't going to scam them. No matter how great your products or beautiful your site, if something during checkout raises concerns, they will change their mind and leave.

In fact, you might be shocked to learn that 68% of shopping carts on ecommerce sites end up being abandoned. Nearly 7 in 10! After all the hard work of getting them there!

Within that figure, more than half leave because unexpected costs crop up at the final stages, 17% get spooked that the payment might not be secure, a quarter find the payment process too

hard to navigate and 13% are irritated that the final price was displayed in a foreign currency.

These are all factors that are completely avoidable. If you're using a reliable, secure, well laid out and fully integrated payment solution - one that's specifically set up to handle international payments and lets people pay in whatever way makes them comfortable - you just won't have this problem.

That's why getting the perfect payment system set up isn't, as you might think, a purely technical issue. It's actually a marketing issue. It's the final stage in the buyer's journey you've spent so much time and effort mapping out - and the last thing you need is for the final gateway to suddenly slam shut.



**BUILDING CUSTOMER
TRUST AND LOYALTY**

Final Thoughts

Are You Ready to Go Global?

When you're a small ecommerce site that's just starting out, the idea that you could take on the Amazons of the world might seem kind of crazy.

But the fact is, with the digital landscape changing so fast, social media gaining more importance, and new tools cropping up all the time to cut out middlemen and make global transactions easier, there's no reason why you can't think big. REALLY big.

As we've seen, having a strategy is super important - but remember that this isn't fixed in stone. Adapt as you go, learning from your mistakes and successes, and building on them. It's all about testing, testing, testing... and refining, refining, refining.

The beauty of being smaller is that you're agile. You're flexible. You can have some fun with it. Try out a bunch of different Instagram or Facebook ad campaigns. See what sticks. Experiment with landing pages. Test a cool new video series. Check out your competitors' blogs and see what you can do differently, in your own voice and style, to be heard above the noise. Get cheeky with some ambitious new growth hack strategies.

So many factors that would once have kept you back are disappearing. These days, everyone's online - and shopping there is the norm. Social networks like Facebook have made it easier than ever to reach your dream customer. With the right payment processor in place, you'll be able to accept payments from pretty much anywhere in the world, at extremely low cost.

As long as you're authentic, consistent, and always thinking about how this will work best for your target customers, you have no reason not to be ambitious, creative and bold. So... what's holding you back? Go take over the world!

Ready to take your ecommerce business to the next level? Make sure you have all the basics in place first. [Check out G2A PAY's industry-leading ecommerce payment solution here.](#)

