

# The Free Company T-Shirt

The word “free” is one of the most persuasive and powerful words in the English language. In business, it’s a great word to use when it comes to marketing to people. People love the idea of getting free stuff. One of the best and easiest ways you can build brand awareness, boost customer loyalty, and grow your business is by giving away free company swag. But take note: not all swag is created equal. Don’t make the mistake of wasting money on stuff that the average person ultimately just ends up throwing into a junk drawer and forgetting about— like notepads, pencils, stress balls, etc. Give away free t-shirts instead. Why? Because people will actually wear them.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Free Company T-Shirt:

- [The Free T-Shirt From InVision](#)
- [The Free T-Shirt From Trakio](#)
- [The Free T-Shirt From When I Work](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Create a few initial design options for your company t-shirt. Once you’ve decided on a final design, have your first batch of shirts made and sent to you using an online retailer or local brick-and-mortar shop.

**Step 2:** Start sending or giving your new t-shirts out to friends, prospects, social media followers, customers, and anyone else who requests one. Want to go the extra mile? Automate the entire process using one of the recommended tools listed below.

**Step 3:** Follow up with everyone and ask them to send you photos of themselves wearing your t-shirt, or have them share it with you on Facebook or Twitter. Collect the photos and put them on a page on your website.

### Recommended Tools

- [Startup Threads](#)
- [Printfection](#)
- [Google Forms](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How Free T-Shirts Made Me Over \\$500K](#)
- [How TeamSnap Uses Swag](#)
- [Give Swag To The Right People](#)

# The Welcome Email

First impressions are everything. These days, you have to spend as much time nurturing new relationships and building loyalty in the digital world as much as you do in the physical world. Consumers want to buy from companies that make them feel like they’re getting the same hands on, personal, “mom and pop shop” experience and attention online as they would if they were to actually walk into your business and meet you face to face. When you take the time to send every new customer a personalized welcome email, it not only gives you the opportunity to start nourishing a new relationship, it also gives you the chance to give new customers that personal, human touch they still look for when interacting with a business they haven’t bought from before.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Welcome Email:

- [The Airbnb Welcome Email](#) (Source: [VERO](#))
- [The Basecamp Welcome Email](#) (Source: [VERO](#))
- [The Buzzsumo Welcome Email](#) (Source: [VERO](#))

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Decide what you want your welcome email to say, how you want it to make new customers feel, and what you want it to achieve. Do you want to make them feel excited? Do you want to help them be successful? Do you want to send them a special new customer offer? Remember: this is your chance to make a great first impression.
- Step 2:** Craft your welcome email in your email client. Decide whether you want to send a plain-text or html welcome email. Both are fine—it just depends on your business, your customers, your style, and your preference.
- Step 3:** Automate the process so you don’t have to manually send out a welcome email every time a new customer comes on board (most email providers have detailed steps on how to do this).

### Recommended Tools

- [MailChimp](#)
- [Vertical Response](#)
- [Campaign Monitor](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [21 Welcome Emails to Inspire You](#)
- [How To Write An Effective Welcome Email](#)
- [7 A/B Tests For Welcome Emails](#)

# The VIP Beta Launch

Remember in Tip #1 when we told you that everyone loves free stuff? Well the same is true when it comes to exclusivity. It's great to feel like you're part of a special group that not everyone has access to. Smart business people know this. It's why you can open your wallet or purse right now and probably find one or two VIP membership or reward cards to a local gym, clothing shop, or grocery store. If you're in the early stages of starting your business or launching a new product, one of the best ways you can build up hype and acquire customers fast is by offering exclusive early access to a limited amount of people. It's what we call the VIP Beta Launch, and it's how most new startups today are able to get so much instant attention and see such fast growth.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the VIP Beta Launch:

- [The Invite-Only Inbox By Gmail Launch](#)
- [The Beta Program From Dropbox](#) (Source: [NextShark](#))
- [Spotify Canada Early-Access Launch](#) (Source: [Reddit](#))

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Think about how you want your beta launch to work. How many people do you want to sign up? What will you offer people who sign up (beta products, early access, a free account for life)? Formalize your plan.

**Step 2:** Use one of the recommended tools below to build a simple landing page that includes: (1) a description of your new product or business, (2) information about your beta program, (3) an opt-in form to capture information.

**Step 3:** Start promoting your new business or product everywhere you can think of. Write a press release, email your friends, share the news on social media, talk about it networking events—do whatever you have to go to get people to visit your opt-in page.

### Recommended Tools

- [LaunchRock](#)
- [Prefinery](#)
- [Unbounce](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [Skip Perfection & Launch Early](#)
- [How To Get Beta Signups For Your Startup](#)
- [Where To Submit Your Beta Startup](#)



# The HARO Brand Buzz Boost

When you're in the early stages of growing a business or launching a new product, getting press and building buzz is essential. Fortunately, you don't have to hire an expensive public relations firm or pay thousands of dollars on advertising in order to get the word out about your new business or products. There are a lot of inexpensive options you can take advantage of. One great way to build brand buzz without having to spend a dime is by leveraging yourself as a thought leader or expert on a particular subject with the help of a service called Help A Reporter Out (HARO). HARO helps you connect with reporters and bloggers who need sources and quotes from industry experts for the stories they write. It's a great way to get your company and products in front of people.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the HARO Query Email:

- [Request From a Wall Street Journal Writer](#)
- [Request From an Associated Press Writer](#)
- [Request From a Forbes Writer](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Sign up for an account at [helpareporter.com](http://helpareporter.com). With a free account, you'll get free queries sent to your inbox 3 times each day. With a paid account, you can set up keywords preferences, build a profile, and get alerts sent early.
- Step 2:** Look through queries and find opportunities that will allow you to leverage yourself as an industry influencer. Use tools like MOZ or Buzzsumo to determine if the website where your quote will be shared on is reputable and has enough visitor traffic to make it worth your time.
- Step 3:** Once you've picked a query, respond to with your quote and a short bio and a link to your website.

### Recommended Tools

- [HARO](#)
- [Moz](#)
- [Buzzsumo](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [The Complete Guide To Using HARO](#)
- [How To Get Exposure Using HARO](#)
- [Getting Publicity with HARO](#)

# The Education-Focused Email Series

People want to work with companies that can help them solve their problems. One of the best ways you can differentiate from your competitors, grow your email list, and boost conversions is by showing people that you're willing to go out of your way to help them. A great way to do this is by offering a free email course that potential customers can stumble upon and subscribe to when they are looking for answers to their questions. It's also another great way to build loyalty and trust with people, because it gives you the opportunity to position yourself as someone who is genuinely interested in and committed to helping solve problems and provide solutions, and less as someone who is obsessed with trying to make a quick buck.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Education-Focused Email Series:

- [The User Behavior Course Product Psychology](#)
- [The Quick Tips Course From CoSchedule](#)
- [The Scheduling Crash Course From When I Work](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Decide on a topic for your course. Your topic should relate to your industry and the problems your business or products help solve. It should also have some SEO power behind it, so perform some keyword research using [Google Adwords' Keyword Tool](#) before making the final decision about your topic.

**Step 2:** Write the lessons for your email course (no more than six). Start with an introduction, then go deeper as the course progresses. End the course with a strong call-to-action that helps people understand what to do next.

**Step 3:** Create a drip campaign for your course using one of the tools below, then promote it by sending an email, writing a blog post, creating a landing page, and sharing it with your social media followers.

### Recommended Tools

- [Drip](#)
- [ConvertKit](#)
- [AWeber](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [Guide To Creating An Email Course](#)
- [How To Create A Self-Paced Email Course](#)
- [How To Be Sure Your Emails Get Delivered](#)



# The Promise, Not Features Headline

Headlines are extremely important when it comes to websites—some might say even more important than the rest of the copy you put on your homepage. Why? Because your headline is often the first thing people notice when they land on your homepage—it’s another “first impression” opportunity. In a lot of cases, it only takes the average person about 15 seconds or less to decide whether or not to stay on your website or continue their search elsewhere. Crafting the right headline can help you keep visitors on your page longer—long enough to convince them that you have the solution they’ve been looking for. If you want to start testing how different headlines perform, write one that offers a specific promise.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Promise, Not Features Headline:

- [The Headline From Rejoiner](#) (Source: [Quick Sprout](#))
- [The Headline From Salesforce](#)
- [The Headline From Trunk Club](#) (Source: [Quick Sprout](#))

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Write a list of 25 potential headlines to use on your site. Try to avoid writing headlines that describe what your business is. Instead, write ones that describe what your customers get as a result of using your products or services. Your headlines should be between 5-9 words.

**Step 2:** Pick your best 2-3 headlines and perform some preliminary research to determine which one performs best. This can be done by using a tool like Optimizely. For a less expensive test, create two tweets that both go to the same site but use a different headline for each. Track which one gets the best click-through-rate.

**Step 3:** Add the winning headline to your homepage. Perform new headlines tests from time to time.

### Recommended Tools

- [Optimizely](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Headlines Plugin From KingSumo](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How To Write Headlines That Convert](#)
- [David Ogilvy's Best Selling Headline](#)
- [Characteristics Of Converting Headlines](#)



# The Lean Homepage A/B Test

When you're in the early stages of launching your business, you want to try to spend as little as possible to get your operation up and running. That's why it's fairly common for new business owners to make the mistake of thinking that once the first version of their business website is finally complete and up and running, it never has to be touched again. But if your business is one that heavily relies on business from online consumers, you can't afford to neglect your website in this way. It's essential that you take time to learn about the people who visit your website in an effort to find out what it is that ultimately influences their decision to convert or not convert. Thankfully, there are a lot of inexpensive tools out there that make performing A/B tests on your website a breeze.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Lean Homepage A/B Test:

- [Call-To-Action A/B Test From USTREAM](#) (Source: [Optimizely.com](#))
- [Navigation Menu A/B Test From Formstack](#) (Source: [Hubspot.com](#))
- [Headline Copy A/B Test From AWAYfind](#) (Source: [Unbounce.com](#))

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Pick two areas of your homepage that you could A/B tests on. Examples include your headline copy, the placement, color, or language of your main CTA button, the items in your navigation menu, or the entire homepage landing page itself.
- Step 2:** Use one of the recommended tools listed below to build individual experiments for each of the areas of your website you wish to test. Each tool provides helpful resources that you can refer to when setting up your test.
- Step 3:** Push your experiment live. Let it run for no less than a week, review the results you get, then make changes to your site accordingly.

### Recommended Tools

- [Optimizely](#)
- [Unbounce](#)
- [Google Analytics](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [The Ultimate Guide To A/B Testing](#)
- [A/B Testing For Beginners](#)
- [71 Things to A/B Test](#)

# The Quick Feedback Request

Unfortunately, when it comes to doing business with people online, you just don't get the same level of interaction that you would if you were selling them your products or service face-to-face—at least not automatically. When you interact with someone in person, you can easily sense or observe things like confusion, hesitation, or excitement. If you sense that a person is unwilling to buy from you, you can engage with them and ask them why they feel they way they do. That level of interaction is an important part of business growth, and it needs to happen online too. One great way to start interacting with people and learning from them online is by implementing tools that encourage and invite your website visitors to provide feedback with you.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Quick Feedback Request:

- [The Feedback Request From GQ](#) (Source: [Qualaroo](#))
- [The Feedback Request From TomTom](#) (Source: [Qualaroo](#))
- [The Feedback Request From The University of Alberta](#) (Source: [KISSmetrics](#))

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Think about what kind of questions you wish you could ask your website visitors. For example, maybe you want to know if your homepage copy makes sense. Or maybe you want to know what reservations people have about buying products from you. Write your questions down in a document and pick one you'd like to start with.

**Step 2:** Create an account for one of the recommended tools below. Once you have your account set up, build your form. Make sure the question (or questions) you include in your form are easy to understand.

**Step 3:** Publish your feedback form and start gathering feedback by sharing your form on social media or boosting traffic to your website. Interpret the data you get and decide if there are changes that could be made.

### Recommended Tools

- [Qualaroo](#)
- [Survey Monkey](#)
- [Form Stack](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [The University of Alberta Case Study](#)
- [Best Ways To Get Customer Feedback](#)
- [How to Create Customer Feedback Loops](#)



# The Personalized Call-To-Action

As mentioned in Tip #7, A/B testing is a great way to learn more about how your website visitors think and why they make the decisions they make. Just like headlines, there’s a lot you can test when it comes to call-to-action buttons. You can run tests on things like color, location, size, and shape, but you should also take the time to run tests on copy—the actual words you use to try to get people to convert. To differentiate from competition and get people to actually click on the buttons you include on your website, you have to think about your industry, your customers, and the problems your products or services help solve. You can’t just use the same language everyone else uses in their CTA buttons—like “Buy Now” or “Sign Up”. You have to dig deeper and get more personal.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Personalized Call-To-Action:

- ["Start Scheduling" CTA From When I Work](#)
- ["Start Designing" CTA From Canva](#)
- ["Become a Driver" CTA from UBER](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** identify, or segment, the people that you want to reach out to. Start with customers who have canceled or stopped doing business with you sometime within the last 60-120 days.
- Step 2:** craft your email. To make it as lean as possible, go plain-text. You can always add the bells and whistles later. You can send your email manually, or use one of the automation tools we list below. You’ll have the best chance of persuading your former customers to come back aboard if in the email you (1) highlight any new features you’ve added, (2) give them a special offer, (3) include a strong CTA (call-to-action).
- Step 3:** Send the email off, see if anyone bites, and make adjustments accordingly based on the results you see.

### Recommended Tools

- [VWA](#)
- [Crazy Egg](#)
- [Canva](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [Optimize Your CTA's for Conversion](#)
- [How To Boost CTA Conversion Rates](#)
- [Mastering The Call-To-Action](#)

# The Handwritten Thank You Letter

We live in a pretty technology-driven world. We rely heavily on technology to be successful in our personal and professional lives. That being said, at the end of the day, we’re all guilty of feeling nostalgic at one point or another about certain tendencies and routines of the past. In business and in life, saying the words “thank you” can be extremely meaningful and powerful for all parties involved. One of the best ways you can boost customer loyalty and land new customers is by expressing appreciation and gratitude to those who choose to buy from you and work with you—after all, your business can’t survive without your customers. If you really want to impress and surprise your new customers, send them a handwritten letter or card thanking them for their business.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Handwritten Thank You Letter:

- [The Handwritten Letter From CoSchedule](#) (Source: [Heather Smith](#))
- [The Handwritten Letter From When I Work](#)
- [The Handwritten Letter From Stride](#) (Source: [Zapier](#))

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Compose a few templates you can use when it comes time to write a thank you letter to a new customer. Include a few spots in your letter where customization/personalization can be added.
- Step 2:** Develop a process or plan for sending out thank you letters to new customers. Your letter should be sent within a week of your new customer coming on board. If your business is still small, you can handwrite and send the letters yourself, or have one of your employees help you. If you’re growing too fast to send manually, hire a freelancer to help you, or use one of the recommended letter-writing tools below.
- Step 3:** Buy materials if needed (cards, pens, envelopes) and start sending out your thank you letters.

### Recommended Tools

- [MailLift](#)
- [Handiemail](#)
- [oDesk](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [The HEX Case Study](#)
- [5 Steps to a Great Handwritten Thank You](#)
- [The Found Art of Thank-You Notes](#)

# The “Get Right To The Point” Landing Page

Sometimes people don’t need to be sold on all the features you offer. Sometimes people don’t need to land on a fancy website full of photos and design components and smooth parallax functionality to decide if they want to buy from you. Sometimes they want a more simple experience. Sometimes when you’re selling to people online, all you really need to do is get right to the point. That’s why running A/B tests on your homepage on other landing pages is worth your time—you could find out that your customers don’t need to see all the junk you think they need to see in order to convert. In fact, sometimes all that junk just makes for a lower conversion rate. If you haven’t been seeing the conversion numbers you expected, try simplifying your website and get right to the point.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the “Get Right To The Point” Landing Page:

- [The Homepage From Neil Patel](#)
- [The Homepage From Groupon](#)
- [The Homepage From MailChimp](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Create an account for one of the recommended tools below and spend time learning how the tool works.
- Step 2:** Decide how to want the simple version of your landing page to look. Decide what you most want people to do when they land on your site. Do you want them to give you their email address? Sign up for a free account? Try a demo? Your answer will help you determine what the main focus of your new landing page will be.
- Step 3:** Create your homepage variant using one of the recommended tools below and track the conversion rate for this version of your homepage vs. your original. Based on the results, decide which version to keep going forward.

### Recommended Tools

- [Optimizely](#)
- [Unbounce](#)
- [LeadPages](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [12 Landing Page Essentials](#)
- [Why “Simple” Websites Are Better](#)
- [20 Creative Landing Pages for Inspiration](#)



# The Lean Social Branding Design Technique

These days, you don't need to hire an entire marketing or design team in order to compete with the big guys—in fact, we recommend that you try your hardest to keep things at your startup as lean as possible for as long as possible. That being said, if you do decide to take our advice and hold off on hiring someone to help you with the occasional design projects that pop up from time to time as you grow your business, you're going to have to pick up the slack yourself. Creating brand-consistent graphics for your social media accounts is one design project that you can't afford to neglect. Fortunately, there are a lot of tools out there that make it possible—and even easy—to create professional-grade branding graphics that will help you build trust and connect with more prospects.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of Social Branding Designs:

- Coca-Cola on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Autosend on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Whole Foods on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Decide what type of message you want to portray through your social media designs. These are the graphics that appear on your Facebook page, Twitter profile, LinkedIn company page, and any other sites you've decided to create a presence on. Your designs should incorporate your logo and any other imagery that is consistent with any other marketing material you've already created.
- Step 2:** Create your first round of graphics using one of the recommended tools below. We recommend giving Canva a try first. If needed you can find size dimensions and best practices in the recommended reading section.
- Step 3:** Once your graphics are correctly sized, upload them on all of your social media accounts at the same time.

### Recommended Tools

- [Canva](#)
- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Social Image Resizer Tool](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How to Design Social Media Images](#)
- [The Essential Social Designs Cheat Sheet](#)
- [Tools For Creating Social Media Images](#)

# The Screencast Product Demo

Did you know that our brains process visuals 60,000x faster than text? With that fact in mind, it's no surprise that videos have become one of the primary ways new and existing businesses educate consumers on their products and services. Thanks to video hosting sites like YouTube, Vimeo, and the plethora of video creation software tools that now exist, it's never been easier for businesses to create and share high-quality videos with people online. Unfortunately, it's not always easy to know where to start. If you want to start experimenting with creating videos for your business, start with a product demo video. Most businesses that have an active presence online have product demo videos. Why? Because they're helpful, they're easy to make, and they're great conversion tools.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Screencast Product Demo:

- [The Product Demo Video From BaseCamp](#)
- [The Product Demo Video From ZenPayroll](#)
- [The Product Demo Video From Zapier](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Think about what you want to focus on during your demo. For example, you could provide a broad overview of your product, or you could focus in on a particular feature that you know people need help understanding how to use effectively. Write up a preliminary outline for your demo.
- Step 2:** Next, write a script for your product demo. Since only your voice will be included in the video, you can read from it word for word when it comes time to record. Your script should also include cues that help remind you what to show on your screen as you give your demo. Go through your entire demo 1-2 times before recording.
- Step 3:** Use one of the tools below to record your demo. When it's ready, upload and share it on your website.

### Recommended Tools

- [Jing](#)
- [Camtasia](#)
- [Google Hangouts](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How To Use Jing](#)
- [How To Use Camtasia](#)
- [How To Use Google Hangouts](#)

# The Promotion-Driven Godzilla Blog Post

As a rule of thumb, you should never create a blog post (or any piece of content) that you can't promote. It's a waste of time. For that reason, when it comes time to think of your next blog post idea, it's can be helpful to start at the end and work your way back. You need to write blog posts that people actually want to read, but your posts also have to be good enough to make people want to share them with others too. Enter the Promotion-Driven Godzilla Blog Post. You've likely seen these types of posts before as a reader of blogs—these are the monster posts that you come across and can't help but think to yourself: "wow this is amazing stuff! They're usually 2,000 words or more and they are packed full of tips, resources, and other useful information. It's time for you to write one.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Godzilla Blog Post:

- [The Email Marketing Post From VERO](#)
- [The Google's 200 Ranking Factors Post From Brian Dean](#)
- [The Free Image Sources Post From Buffer](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Find a great blog post on a topic you'd like to write about that already exists—one that has been linked to and shared hundreds or thousands of times. You can figure this out using a tool like Buzzsumo.
- Step 2:** Read through the post and ask yourself: could you make it better by adding more depth to it? Or by updating it with new information? If you think you can, start working on writing your own post. Warning: do not plagiarize someone else's work. Your goal is to provide something better that is ORIGINAL. No one likes a cheater.
- Step 3:** Compile a list of websites, blogs, and people you can send your post to once it goes live. Then publish your post, and send emails out to everyone asking them to share the link and help you promote your new post.

### Recommended Tools

- [Penflip](#)
- [Buzzsumo](#)
- [Boomerang For Gmail](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [VERO's Epic Post Breakdown](#)
- [The Skyscraper Technique](#)
- [How to Get More Traffic From Every Post](#)



# The Elevator Pitch Explainer Video

How many times have you been asked to tell someone about your business? How long does it usually take you to describe it to people? Five minutes? Two minutes? How about 30 seconds? In business, time is money. If part of your journey of launching your business involved writing a business plan or pitching to potential investors, then you know how important things like brevity and your choice of words are when it comes to describing your business. You have to be confident that if you walked into an elevator with someone and they asked you what you did, you could describe it by the time the doors opened again. The same speed, precision, and consistency needs to take place when you're pitching people online. So how do you do it? By making a stellar Explainer Video.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Explainer Video:

- [The Explainer Video From Spotify](#)
- [The Explainer Video From Airbnb](#)
- [The Explainer Video From Dollar Shave Club](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Think about what you want your video to look like and how you want it to make people feel. Spend a few days watching explainer videos from other videos and jot down some notes about what you like or don't like about them. If you'd like someone else to create your video for you, use one of the recommendations below.
- Step 2:** Write an first-draft script for your explainer video. Keep in mind: your video should be no longer than two minutes, it should tell a story, have a voice, and it should compel people to take some sort of action after the video ends. If desired, read up on other explainer video script best practices. Then finalize your script.
- Step 3:** Begin work on the actual production of the video. Revise, make edits, and finalize. Upload when complete.

### Recommended Tools

- [iMovie](#)
- [Video Brewery](#)
- [Wyzowl](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [Create Your Own Promo Video for \\$100](#)
- [Write a Killer Explainer Video Script](#)
- [Advanced Guide To Explainer Videos](#)

# The Editorial & Social Calendar Strategy

To implement successful marketing strategies and campaigns for your business, you have to have a plan. When it comes to participating in social media communities and blogging for your business, the worst thing you can do is be inconsistent. If you’ve made the decision to invest your time and money into using social media and blogging as marketing and conversion tools, you have to go all in. You can’t half-ass it. If you’re still relatively new to social media and blogging, or if you’ve been neglecting either lately, one of the best ways to get back on the right track is by using editorial and social media publishing calendars. Calendars not only help you plan ahead and save time, they also force you to think more about your customers and the types of content you want to create and share.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Editorial & Social Calendar Strategy:

- [The Editorial Calendar From Buffer](#) (Source: [Buffer](#))
- [The Editorial Calendar From CoSchedule](#) (Source: [Buffer](#))
- [The Annual Editorial Calendar From Forbes](#) (Source: [CoSchedule](#))

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Sign up for one of the tools below. You can create editorial calendars using a pencil and paper or a program like Excel, but if you use one of the tools we list, you can automate some of your efforts and end up saving even more time.
- Step 2:** Begin building your calendars. Think about what types of updates you’d like to share, how often you’d like to publish, and when you’d like to share content with your followers. Ideally, you should publish content on days and at times when you know your followers are listening. To determine that, you’ll need to dive into analytics.
- Step 3:** Keep updating your calendars. Try to get to the point where you’re working 30 days ahead of schedule.

### Recommended Tools

- [Buffer](#)
- [Edgar](#)
- [CoSchedule](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How To Quadruple Your Traffic](#)
- [Guide To Choosing a Content Calendar](#)
- [How To Promote Your Blog On Social](#)

# The Surprise First, Ask Second Guest Post

One of the most effective ways to boost website traffic, build brand buzz, and connect with new potential customers online is by guest posting on other popular and reputable blogs around the web. That being said, you have to do it right. For guest posting to be helpful in any way to your and your business, you have to choose opportunities wisely. A good way to do so is by thinking not in terms of the new links you could get as a result of your efforts, but in terms of the new relationships you could establish instead. Want to avoid sending out cold guest post requests to people? Stand out by mentioning them in a blog post on your site first before sending your request. Not only will it perk their interest, it will show them that you're interested in relationships, not links.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of Guest Post Outreach Email Templates:

- [The Guest Post Outreach Email From Me \(Sujan\)](#)
- [The Guest Post Outreach Email Template From Quick Sprout \(Source: \[Quick Sprout\]\(#\)\)](#)
- [The Guest Post Outreach Email Template From Groove \(Source: \[Groove\]\(#\)\)](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Use Buzzsumo and Twitter to make a list of potential blogs you'd like to write a guest post on. Look for blogs that relate to your industry or target audience. Only choose reputable blogs that regularly update their site with new posts. Find email addresses for the person you'd like to send your guest post request to.

**Step 2:** Read a few blog posts that have been recently published on the site you want to guest post on. Jot down the topics covered on the blog, the writing style, and anything else you notice. Come up with 3-5 topic ideas.

**Step 3:** Mention the company, site, or person you want to work with somewhere in your next blog post. Then send an email to the contact you found and share the post with them. Add in your guest post pitch and see if they bite.

### Recommended Tools

- [Twitter](#)
- [Buzzsumo](#)
- [Boomerang For Gmail](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How To Be The Best Guest Blogger](#)
- [The Help Scout Guest Blogging Case Study](#)
- [The Groove Guest Blogging Case Study](#)



# The Trigger-Based Customer Email Series

It's tempting to feel like your job is done once you make the sale, but if you're at all interested in customer retention and repeat business, your work is far from over. Thanks to the widespread adoption and use of email and smart devices, you have the opportunity to continue nurturing customers relationships long after the initial sale in ways that were never before possible. Most businesses today attempt to collect email addresses from prospects and customers as an additional way to connect with them after they've made a purchase or left a store or website, but if you haven't ever done so for your business before, now is the time to start. One of the best new ways to nurture leads and build customer relationships today is by sending out trigger-based emails.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of Trigger-Based Emails:

- [The UBER Welcome Email](#) (Source: *Hubspot*)
- [The Modcloth 6 Months Together Email](#) ((Source: *Hubspot*)
- [The Amazon Experience Email Series](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Think about the lifecycle of your customers. What information do they need in order to be successful and at one point in time do they usually need or ask for that information. If they haven't converted yet, how can you persuade them to take the next steps? These are questions that will help you write your trigger-based emails.
- Step 2:** Review the recommended tools below and decide which one will work best for you. Sign up for an account and spend time learning how the platform works and what is needed from you before you can launch your trigger-based customer email series.
- Step 3:** Use the documentation and resources provided in the tool you chose to create your trigger-based emails.

### Recommended Tools

- [Autosend](#)
- [VERO](#)
- [Customer.io](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [Lifecycle Email Campaign Examples](#)
- [What Is a Trigger-Based Email?](#)
- [The Amazon Trigger-Based Emails](#)

# The Industry Influencer Blog Post

When you want to learn more about a particular topic, process, strategy, or industry, where do you usually go? If you're like us, you look for experts and try to learn from them. If you've been blogging consistently week after week but you're not seeing the results you were hoping for, it's time to try something new. One strategy we use to drive more traffic to blog posts and reach new audiences involves publishing what we call Industry Influencer Blog Posts. These are round-up style posts that include original advice, tips, and experiences from real experts who have agreed to chime in on a particular topic or question. They're are great for building new relationships with influencers who are willing and able to help promote your content and bring new readers to your blog.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Industry Influencer Blog Post:

- [The Marketing Predictions Post From Forbes](#)
- [The SEO Post From Ahrefs](#)
- [The Blogging Post From Buffer](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Come up with your topic and think of one question you can send to your list of contributors. The trick is to make your question be easy to answer, but broad enough to allow for a wide variety of interesting answers.
- Step 2:** Build a list of people you'd like to reach out to for your blog post. Then, create a Google Form that you can send to your list that includes your question and a spot for them to leave their names, titles, and company websites. For example, here's a [form](#) that I (Sujan) created and used to gather quotes for a [recent post](#) I published.
- Step 3:** Send out emails to influencers telling them about your topic and asking if they'd be willing to participate. You can send them individually, or all at once using a tool like Streak. Collect answers and create your post.

### Recommended Tools

- [Google Forms](#)
- [Streak](#)
- [Buzzsumo](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How To Create a Survey Form With Google](#)
- [How To Use MailMerge In Streak](#)
- [How To Use Buzzsumo To Find Influencers](#)

# The Social Proof Confidence-Booster

Social proof is a type of conformity. It’s the concept that people decide to do what they think others are doing in an attempt to reflect what they view as correct behavior. In business, social proof can be an incredibly powerful tool when it comes to influencing purchasing decisions. Whether you realize it or not, most business websites you visit today display some sort of social proof in an effort to boost conversions. You can (and should) use the same strategy to try to persuade more people to convert when they land on your page. Sure, you might not have as many users as Facebook or send your products to customers in every single country in the world, but you can still come up with and display on your website social proof that relates to your business in some way.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of Social Proof Statements:

- [The Social Proof From Basecamp](#)
- [The Social Proof From Buffer](#)
- [The Social Proof From Help Scout](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Think about what kind of social proof statement or visual you can display on your website. For example, you can share customer testimonials, the number of products you’ve sold, the number of customers or followers you have, how many cities, states or countries you ship products to, or review ratings for your products or services.
- Step 2:** If you don’t have a designer or web developer on hand to help you illustrate your social proof statement, use a tool like Canva or PowerPoint to make your graphic. Incorporate your new graphic on your homepage.
- Step 3:** If desired, create a few different versions of your social proof statement and A/B test using Optimizely.

### Recommended Tools

- [Canva](#)
- [PowerPoint](#)
- [Optimizely](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [Using Social Proof to Drive Conversions](#)
- [Use Social Proof to Influence Visitors](#)
- [The Psychology of Social Proof](#)



# The Progress Bar

Along with social proof statements, it’s also safe to say that you probably regularly see and are influenced by progress bars that have been places on the websites you visit each day—even if you don’t always consciously notice them. It’s another great tactic that businesses use to get people to do things like buy a product, complete a profile, or make it through an onboarding process. Why do progress bars work so well? There’s actually a fair amount of science behind it, but the gist is, as humans we feel the need to complete unfinished tasks. In fact, our bodies even reward us for completing tasks by releasing endorphins. As a business owner, you should take the time to capitalize on this idea by incorporating progress bars somewhere on your website.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Progress Bar:

- [The Blog Setup Progress Bar From Ghost](#) (Source: *Ghost*)
- [The Referral Progress Bar From Referral Saasquatch](#) (Source: *Referral Saasquatch*)
- [The Mobile Checkout Progress Bar From Under Armour](#) (Source: *Smashing Magazine*)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Think about where you could add a progress bar in your conversion process. Could you build a progress bar that helps users determine where they are in the setup process? Or perhaps you could you build a progress bar to show them what else they need to do in order to use your product or service successfully.

**Step 2:** Work with a designer and a developer to start working on the look and functionality of your progress bar. Your progress bar should update as your user or customer completes the assigned tasks you’ve included.

**Step 3:** Test your progress bar, try to break it, fix any weak areas, then push it live.

### Recommended Tools

- Odesk
- [Guru](#)
- Your internal developer and designer

### Recommended Reading

- [The Importance of Rewards](#)
- [The Power of The Progress Bar](#)
- [Gamification Marketing Strategy](#)

# The Beefy Customer Testimonial

You can spend all day talking about how great your products and services are, but at the end of the day, the people you're trying to sell to are more likely to be influenced by what other people say about you, your company, and your products. That's why most business owners go out of their way to gather customer testimonials and encourage happy customers to write reviews about their products or their business as a whole. Testimonials can be powerful conversion tools! The problem is that everyone has figured this out, and as a result, everyone now includes testimonial text blurbs in strategic places around their website. That's why we recommend you take the time to create beefier customer testimonials in the form of videos, case studies, and spotlight blog posts.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Beefy Customer Testimonial:

- [The Customer Testimonial Video From ZenPayroll](#)
- [Case Study Blog Post From Zapier](#)
- [The Customer Testimonial Video From When I Work](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Create a list of 5 happy or loyal customers you could reach out to for a testimonial. Decide whether you want to create a video testimonial, a case study, or a blog post. Consider asking your customer for their preference.
- Step 2:** Come up with an outline for your testimonial interview. If you decided to move forward with the blog post or case study, write up a few questions and send them to your customer to answer. If you decided on the video, coordinate with your customer and find a day/time that you can record them on video.
- Step 3:** Put your customer testimonial together and when it is complete, place it prominently on your homepage.

### Recommended Tools

- [iMovie](#)
- [Google Forms](#)
- [PowerPoint](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How to Create Captivating Testimonials](#)
- [Tips For Creating a Great Case Study](#)
- [Why Your Testimonials Are NOT Working](#)

# The Live Chat

You can learn a lot about your business by talking to your customers. It seems like such a simple concept, but you'd be surprised if you knew how many business owners fail to actually take the time to have honest, open conversations with their customers. It's true! As a result, they end up making decisions based on assumptions—assumptions that aren't always correct. If you want to grow your business and gain a better understanding of your customers, their pain points, their objections, and their needs, you need to take the time to actually talk to them. Unless you see your customers in person on a regular basis, you need to be more proactive when it comes to communicating with them. Putting live chat on your website is one great way to get started.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the Live Chat:

- [Live Chat on IndiGo Car Hire](#) (Source: [Zopim](#))
- [Live Chat on Disruptive Advertising](#) (Source: [Olark](#))
- [Live Chat on Xero](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Sign up for one of the recommended tools below. Read through the onboarding and setup documentation to learn more about how to use the tool you choose.
- Step 2:** Before you implement live chat on your website, you need to decide who on your team is going to be in charge of managing and responding to live chats, when you're going to make the live chat available to your visitors, and what your goals are (what do you want to learn from customers?). You should also come up with some clear guidelines that people can follow or refer to when responding to live chats.
- Step 3:** Launch live chat on your site, let your customers know the feature exists, and see how the first week goes.

### Recommended Tools

- [Zopim](#)
- [Olark](#)
- [Userlike](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [25 Customer Chat Tips](#)
- [Getting Started With Zopim](#)
- [Getting Started With Olark](#)



# The Tell Your Story, Sell More Products Method

Everybody loves a good story. In business, telling a good story can lead a potential customer to pick you over one of your competitors. Thanks to advances in technology and the popularity of sites like YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Snapchat, and others, it has never been easier to create and share stories with the entire world. As a business owner, it's important that you take the time to develop a compelling brand story that you can share with people—it's an essential part of building your reputation and helping people understand why you do what you do and how your business came to be. Telling your brand story is also a great way to build trust and remind people that at the end of the day, your business is managed and run by real humans.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of great brand stories:

- [The Story Behind TOMS Shoes](#)
- [The Story Behind CustomInk](#)
- [The Story Behind Sweet Leaf Tea](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** Spend an afternoon thinking about what led you to start your business, who was there to help you, and how you felt. Jot down a few pages of notes and create an initial outline for your brand story.

**Step 2:** Decide how you want to tell your brand story. Some brands choose to create an entire infographic-like timeline that illustrates how their business came to be. Others like to tell their brand story on video, or with a combination of words and photos. Write the first draft of your brand story and gather any supporting materials you'd like to include (quotes from others, old photos and footage, old logos, etc).

**Step 3:** Publish your brand story somewhere on your website. Then start sharing it with your network.

### Recommended Tools

- An iPhone
- [iMovie](#)
- [Splice](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [How to Write Brand Stories](#)
- [25 Killer Resources to Learn Storytelling](#)
- [Tell Your Brand's Story](#)

# The Responsive Design Conversion Strategy

Your business website might look great on a computer, but how does it look when you try to access it from your smartphone or tablet? Ten years ago—and maybe even five—it didn't matter much, but these days, if people can't easily view your products and services from their mobile devices, you risk losing them to a competitor who has taken the time to make sure their website is optimized for every type of viewing experience. If you haven't gotten with the times yet and made some serious changes to your website in order to cater to the mobile habits of the general public, you can't afford to wait any longer. It's time to implement a responsive design for your website.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of Responsive Design:

- [Responsive Design From Skinny Ties](#) (Source: *Digital Telepathy*)
- [Responsive Design From The Boston Globe](#) (Source: *Digital Telepathy*)
- [Responsive Design From Mashable](#) (Source: *Digital Telepathy*)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

**Step 1:** If you aren't familiar with responsive design, go through the recommended resources listed below.

**Step 2:** Make a plan for launching an updated website that can be easily viewed on any device. If you even have a website yet and you can't afford to hire a developer, there are plenty of website platforms you can find online that offer responsive themes. If you do have a website already, determine what needs to happen in order to make the changes. Set a timeline for yourself and your team and decide on an official launch date for your updated site.

**Step 3:** Work with your internal developers to update your website, teach yourself along the way, or hire a freelancer to help you complete the project.

### Recommended Tools

- [Webflow](#)
- [Edge Reflow](#)
- [Restive.js](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [50 Examples of Responsive Design](#)
- [2014 Guide to Responsive Web Design](#)
- [9 GIFs That Explain Responsive Design](#)

# The “Unboxing” Video

Remember how excited you were as a kid to open presents on your birthday? If you’re a business owner who sells physical goods and products to your customers, your goal should be to work as hard as possible to create the same experience when your customers finally get your products in their hands. But you shouldn’t stop there. You should also make an effort to create that same level of excitement for your prospects—the people who have never stepped foot in your store or even heard about your products or business before. So how do you do it? One great way is by creating “unboxing” videos for your products. An unboxing video is kind of like a product demo video, but it should be a little more fun, a little less serious, and a little more exciting.

## Examples of Use .....

Here are a few real-world examples of the “Unboxing Video”:

- [The BookBook Video From IKEA](#)
- [The Naked Lipgloss Unboxing From Urban Decay](#)
- [The iPhone 6 Unboxing Video From Apple](#)

## How To Implement This Tip .....

- Step 1:** Watch a few unboxing videos on YouTube to get an idea of the kinds of videos people are producing. Most unboxing videos you’ll find are made by consumers, as opposed to brands, which is great—because it’ll give you the unique perspective needed to make a video that your customers will get excited about.
- Step 2:** Write a script and a brief summary of what you want to happen. Do you want to actually physically unbox your product on camera while you talk about what makes it so great? Or would you rather talk on screen and cut in and out of photos or footage of your product? Think about what your customers would want to see.
- Step 3:** Begin production on your video. You don’t have to hire professionals. Finalize it and put it online.

### Recommended Tools

- An iPhone
- [iMovie](#)
- [Splice](#)

### Recommended Reading

- [The Magic Behind Unboxing on YouTube](#)
- [The Lucrative World of 'Unboxing' Videos](#)
- [The Best Product Videos Ever](#)