



April 1, 2011 Posted By Smart Travel Online – Steven Chester

“Get me to page 1 of Google, while emailing our customers a bi-weekly newsletter, engaging influencers on Twitter, maintaining a captive Facebook audience, capturing new leads, and putting out 3 blog posts a week.” Harsh? Yes. Familiar? Definitely.

Everything a Non-Marketer Needs to Take a Business from Zero to Hero Online

What you are about to read might be a little shocking. Why? Because it’s so freakishly long. It contains a 6-month action plan for marketing your business online and if you can read it all in one go you’re a hero or a raging insomniac. I’d recommend bookmarking it to use as an ongoing reference guide. Let the story and the course begin...

A typical marketing storyline

You’ve just been put in charge of “Internet marketing” at your new sweatshop startup (don’t worry, I live there too - replete with rusty sewing machines and fake Nike stitching patterns). What do you do? Where do you start? There are so many elements to online marketing that it’s hard to know where to begin.

It’s much more than just one job. At the very least it’s 8 distinct disciplines. I know because I try to do them all and I’m stretched to my limit.

With that in mind, I’d like to present you with:

- **A 15,000,000 pixel infographic** (that’s fifteen million colored squares, which could make it the largest infographic in history). Note how the graphic looks like a giant “i” (which is also the first letter of the word infographic). *Taps self on shoulder for the clever artistic reference.*
- **Part 1 is a cogged wheel showing 50 tasks broken down by discipline.** If you print it out you can tear off each cog or mark the little check boxes as you complete each task. **Part 2 is a six month course to teach you how to become an internet marketer** whether you’ve done it before or not. Compress the timeline if you’re a workaholic. It also contains a traffic timeline showing the effect certain actions will have on your inbound traffic growth.

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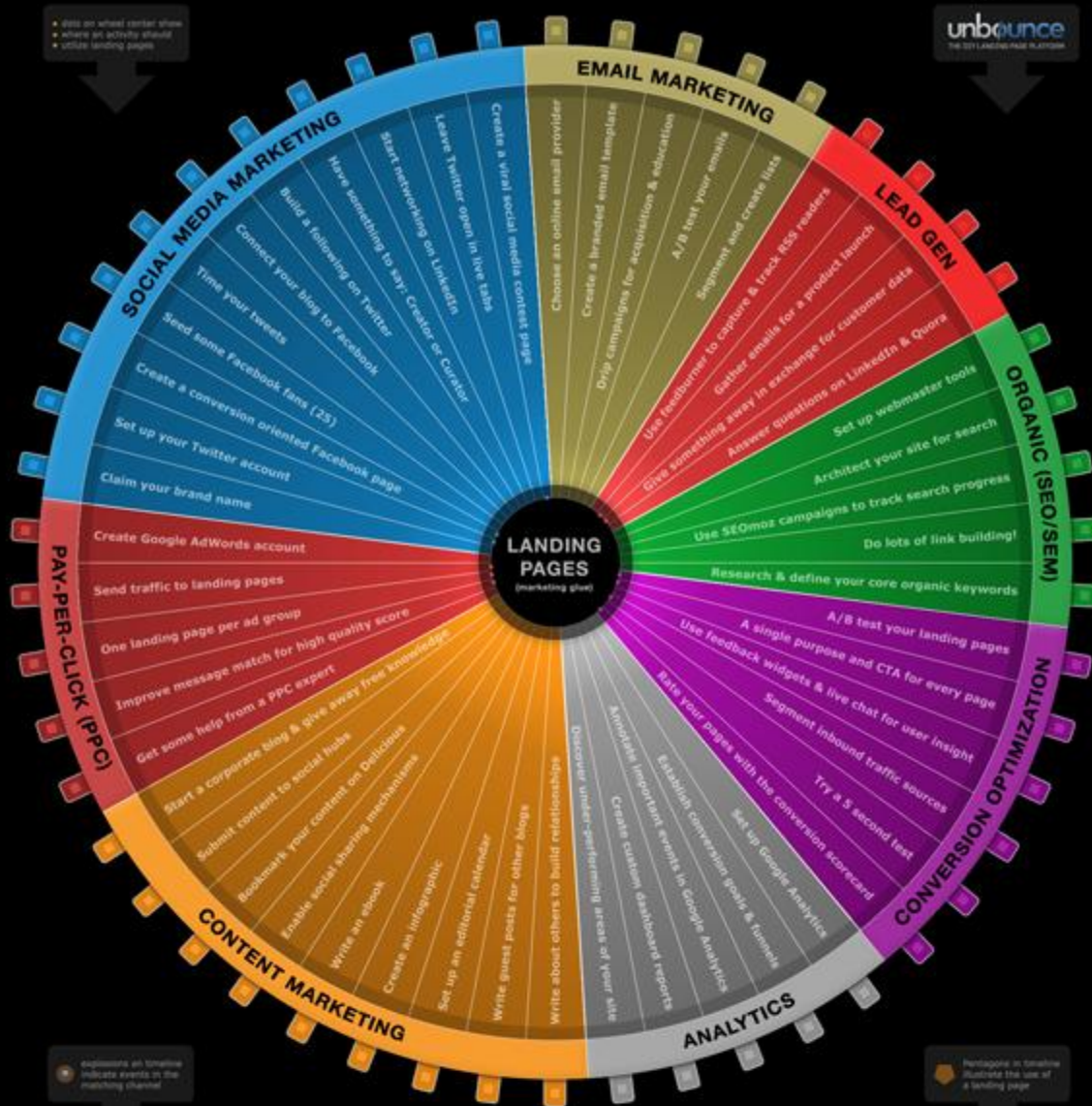
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NOOB GUIDE TO ONLINE MARKETING



| | SOCIAL MEDIA | EMAIL MARKETING | LEAD GENERATION | ORGANIC (SEO/SEM) | CONVERSION RATE OPTIMIZATION | ANALYTICS | CONTENT MARKETING | PAY PER CLICK (PPC) |
|-------------|---|--|--|-------------------|------------------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| WEEK | Timeline View Sample traffic progression showing the impact of relevant online marketing events over time. | | | | | | | |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start your marketing on day 1 and you'll build a target for future marketing efforts and organic search. Don't be afraid to give away your secrets. Establish yourself as a thought leader and you'll build a loyal following that will become advocates. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claim your brand on major networks Set up your Twitter account & Facebook | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose a brand email provider (start my content) | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a Google Analytics account and add to your site | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start a content blog (right now) | |

It takes a lot of work - although not as much as writing all this - so no whining please. In order to be successful you have to plan for the long haul. Read it, absorb it and put it into practice. Also **remember to give a shout out on Twitter (using the hashtag #noobmarketing) as you progress** through your marketing marathon (and join the discussion with other noobs).

Landing Pages as Marketing Glue

You'll notice how landing pages have been positioned in the wheel as what I call the "marketing glue" that holds your activities together. They sit in the middle of many marketing and sales funnels and do a great job of focusing your customers on what they should be doing. You don't always need them (12/50 tasks here call on them), but when you do they can make a big difference in the your conversion performance. I covered the reasoning and purpose of landing pages in an earlier guest post called "[The 12-Step Landing Page Rehab Program](#)" so I won't delve into that again, instead I'll just point out where, when and how you should be using them.

The Wheel of Marketing

8 of the core components of an Internet marketing strategy are covered here (there are more, but I have my limits). I'll give you a brief overview of each and why it's important. As an alternative to following the 6-month course you could tackle each of these channels as an independent track by following the task lists.

- **Social media marketing (SMM)**

The new darling of the marketing community still gets grumbles from the old-schoolers. Ignore them for they know not what they say. SMM is a massive topic, so for the noob guide we'll focus on a few key platforms: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn. And a few key strategies: developing a style and how to convert your social traffic.

[#1 - Claim your brand](#)

[#2 - Set up your Twitter account](#)

[#3 - Have something to say - define your style](#)

[#16 - Build a following on Twitter](#)

[#23 - Time your tweets](#)

[#30 - Create a conversion oriented Facebook fan page](#)

[#31 - Connect your blog to Facebook](#)

[#32 - Seed some facebook fans](#)

[#39 - Start networking on LinkedIn](#)

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#45 - Stay in the conversation: Leave Twitter tabs open for "live" social interaction

#46 - Create a social media contest page with viral features

- **Email marketing**

Email can be tough and unforgiving compared to other online mediums (once you hit send, your message is committed to the ether, never to be undone - except through the use of the apologetic "I screwed up" follow-up email. Instead of talking about writing emails, I'll focus your noob experience on cooler concepts like drip campaigns - which can make the difference between an actively engaged audience and a legion of prospects who've forgotten what you do.

#4 - Choose an online email provider

#5 - Create a branded email template

#17 - Set up a drip campaign for acquisition, education & retention

#24 - Segment and create lists

#40 - A/B test your emails

- **Lead Generation**

How do you do email marketing if you have no one to email? That's where lead gen comes in. We'll discuss methods for growing your email lists by writing eBook's, presenting webinars and simply by asking people to follow your blog.

#6 - Set up a Feedbumer account to capture & track RSS readers

#7 - Gather emails for a product launch

#25 - Answer questions on LinkedIn & Quora

#33 - Give something away in exchange for customer data

- **Organic search marketing**

I have to tread carefully here as the SEOmoz community is probably the most engaged and knowledgeable SEO crowd on the planet (yes I'm sucking up). Here I cover some of the techniques that I've used to be successful at managing my organic search and building a natural ecosystem that encourages link building success.

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- #8 - Set up Google Webmaster Tools
- #9 - Research and define your core organic search keywords
- #18 - Architect your blog for search - choose targeted categories
- #19 - Use SEOMoz campaigns to track your search progress
- #41 - Link building

- **Conversion rate optimization (CRO)**

Think of 5 lanes of traffic driving across a bridge. This is your inbound traffic (often paid for) wanting to cross boundaries just to reach you. If your intended destination page isn't optimized for their specific needs, you may as well knock 2 lanes out of the bridge and let the cars fall into the river. CRO is all about making sure the other side of the bridge leads to optimizeville, where there's only one thing to do and it's really obvious how to do it.

- #26 - A single purpose and CTA for every page
- #34 - Rate your pages with the conversion scorecard
- #42 - A/B test your landing pages
- #43 - Try a 5 second test
- #47 - Learn from your users using feedback widgets & live chat
- #48 - Segment inbound traffic sources

- **Analytics**

There's a reason analytics is represented by grey in the wheel. It's dull. Until you get it right that is. Analytics contain so much hidden awesomeness, that when you get it hooked up everything else becomes much easier - including getting buy-in from management to do "fancy-pants" things like CRO above.

- #10 - Set up a Google Analytics account
- #11 - Establish conversion goals and funnels
- #12 - Annotate important events in Google Analytics
- #20 - Add custom reports to your Google Analytics dashboard
- #35 - Discover under-performing areas of your site

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- **Content marketing**

Content isn't king anymore - it's more like the emperor. Content is the start, middle and end of your online marketing story and is critical to virtually everything you do. By the end of this course you'll be writing on your corporate blog, guest blogging, writing eBooks, getting your publishing schedule organized with an editorial calendar and even attempting the mighty infographic.

#13 - Start a corporate blog & give your knowledge away for free

#14 - Submit your content to social hubs

#15 - Bookmark your content on delicious

#21 - Set up an editorial calendar

#22 - Enable social sharing mechanisms

#27 - Write an ebook

#36 - Write guest posts for other blogs

#44 - Write about others to build relationships

#49 - Create an infographic

- **Paid search marketing (pay-per-click or PPC)**

PPC is the fastest way to get instant traffic to your site. However, it's hard to do well, so we'll wait until month 3 to tackle it. The majority of Google's AdWords users go bust on their free \$100 voucher with nothing but a sour taste in their mouths. I'll give you some tips on doing it right and a back up plan for letting the experts take over if you can't figure it out.

#28 - Create a Google AdWords account

#29 - Send traffic to landing pages - not your homepage!

#37 - One landing page per ad group

#38 - Improve message match for a high quality score

#50 - Get some help from a PPC expert

YOUR 6-MONTH MARKETING ACTION PLAN

Ready? Set? Go.....!

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MONTH 1

SETTING UP YOUR ONLINE MARKETING STAGE

Getting started is all about establishing your network base. Registering accounts and defining your style (always a good idea before you start yammering in a tone unbefitting your brand). This might well be the busiest month of the course, but that's how it should be. Take your excitement and enthusiasm and kick things off as fast as you can. The sooner your infrastructure is in place the sooner you can start marketing your business - and that's why we're all here.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

1. CLAIM YOUR BRAND

To avoid having your brand name taken by someone else (brand squatters with an egg avatar that are only followed by their moms are everywhere), you should set up branded accounts on the important social networks as soon as possible. Visit the following sites to claim yours, and do it today:

- [Twitter.com/youryourbrandname](https://twitter.com/youryourbrandname)
- [YouTube.com/yourbrandname](https://youtube.com/yourbrandname)
- [Flickr.com/yourbrandname](https://flickr.com/yourbrandname) (for storing your photos, graphics and infographics - for organic image search value)
- [LinkedIn/yourbrandname](https://linkedin.com/yourbrandname) (as a business hub that's bigger than just you)
- [Facebook.com/yourbrandname](https://facebook.com/yourbrandname)

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NOOB INSIGHT: Facebook is trickier than the rest as you have to complete a few other steps before you can be granted a branded vanity URL. I'll explain the necessary steps in tasks #30 and #32).

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

2. SET UP YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT



Landing Page Tip - Brand your Twitter account

Your Twitter homepage is essentially a social media landing page and has a few characteristics that you need to pay attention to for maximum conversions. Design a branded background, add a profile that includes relevant keywords, choose an appropriate avatar and for your call to action make sure you include a link to your website.

Design a branded Twitter background: The new Twitter is considerably wider than it used to be (you'll notice a lot of branded backgrounds are covered up which looks a little silly), so the primary left side branding area of your background needs to be very slim. For screen resolutions of 1280px (fairly commonplace these days) - you are limited to roughly only 108px for the core part of your branded background design and messaging. [More details on background designs for the new Twitter.](#)

If you have a little more space (customers with larger screens), you could stretch to about 200px and **do something like Shopify has done** - notice how they've balanced their top green stripe to align tidily with the Twitter app layout.

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They also do a great job establishing social proof by showing the logos of big name brands that use their platform.

Set up your profile: Describe your core value proposition in your profile description and add a link to your website in the available slot. You should use a few choice keywords in your bio as this will help people to find you via Twitter search.

Photo or logo for your avatar? If you representing your company on Twitter then how you use your logo for your Twitter avatar will depend on how many people in your company will be public representatives of the account. If it's just you, you could go with your own photo or try combining a small version of your logo beneath your photo. If you'll be sharing the role of chief tweeting officer, then it's best to go with the logo by itself. The typical method for identifying who's talking is to add your initials to the tweet - for me (Oli Gardner) I'd use ^og.

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In the past I used just the logo, but for a more personal touch (as my name has become better known in the landing page industry) I'm trying out the photo/logo mix as shown below.



What do you think of this approach?

NOOB INSIGHT: Nobody trusts accounts that have the default Twitter egg avatars. Change it immediately. It doesn't need to be perfect - just throw your logo or face up there on day 1.



SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

3. HAVESOMETHING TO SAY - DEFINE YOUR STYLE

Ideally you will be creating content via your blog, which gives you the starting point of a conversation, or at the very least, something to talk about and share. There are a three main categories of communication. Your choice of approach will come down to how much of an expert you want to be on a subject, and how busy you want your content stream to be.

- **Creators:** people who share content they've written. Let's you become known as a thought leader.
- **Curators:** Curation in the social space has been defined as "curation is the act of synthesizing and interpreting in order to present a complete record of a concept" ([Jamie Beckland](#)). To help your curation strategy and become a valuable resource subscribe to lots of relevant content and use a service like [feedly.com](#) or [Google Reader](#) to consume it - then provide insightful commentary on the content as you share it to help people gauge the value of the links you are sharing.

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