SEARCH FOR THE MAVENS

Achieving the Masses through your Early Adopter

PURSUIT OF YOUR PERFECT CUSTOMER

Knowing my Early Adopter

Why an Early Adopter?

Early adopters can lead you to PMF because **they're happy with 80%**. That's why they're the perfect first users*. [*]
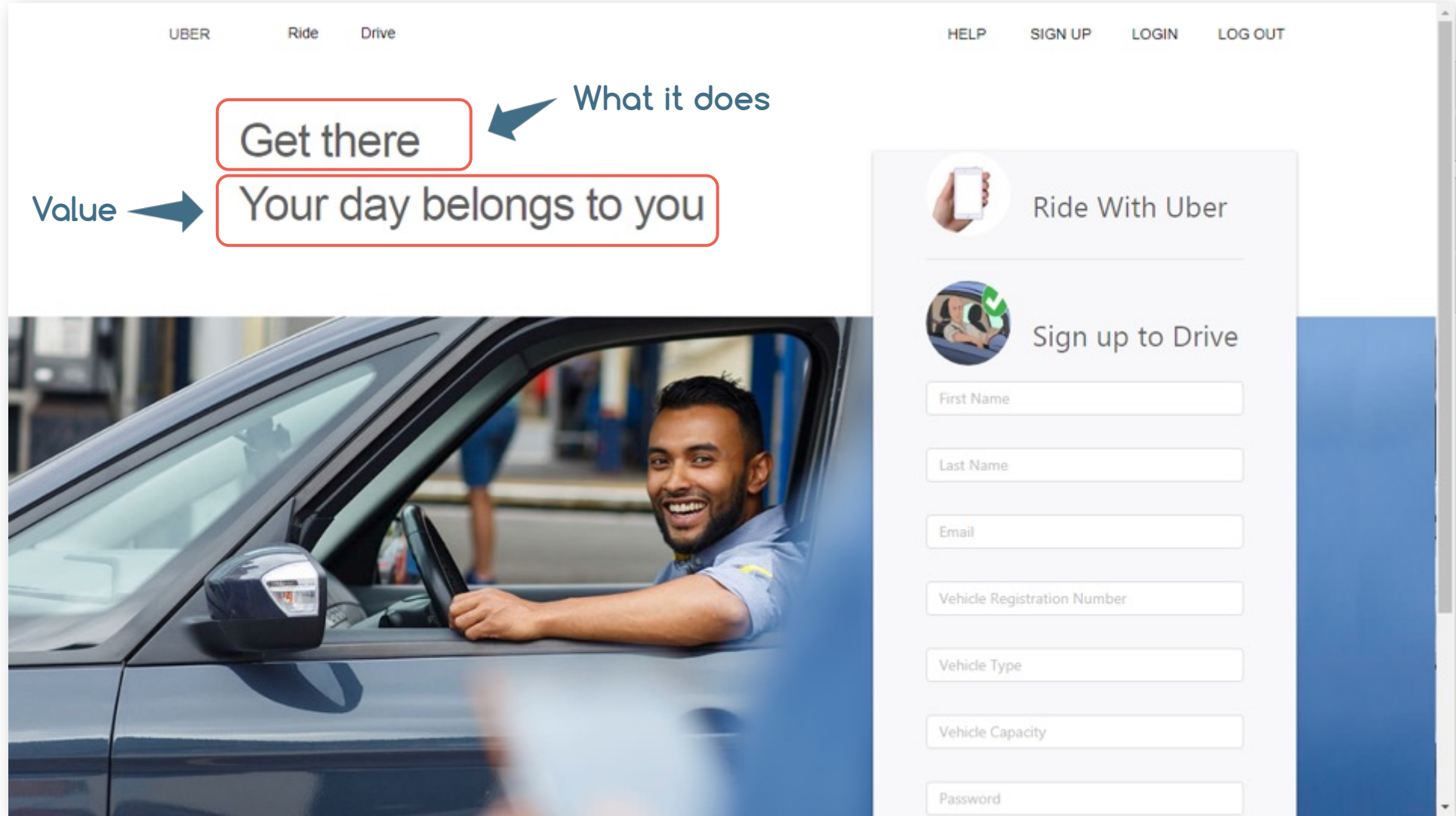
The key to the last 20% lies in feedback. Early adopters care about the problem, so they will not hold back with their opinion

The feedback should be targeted at decreasing the time it takes a user to understand product value a.k.a. "aha moment" to an absolute minimum.

On the other end, you need to turn up **how often users experience product value** to an absolute maximum.
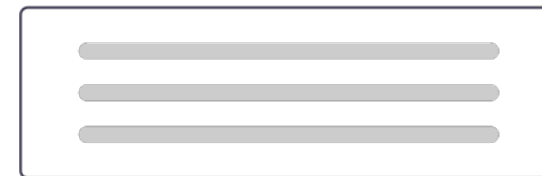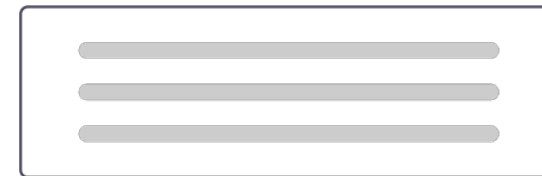
MAJORITY OF CONTENT APPROVED FROM KEVIN INDIG- https://www.kevin-indig.com/early-adopter-marketing-startups-get-first-users/

Value & What it does

Value & What it does

Show the app
and
What it does
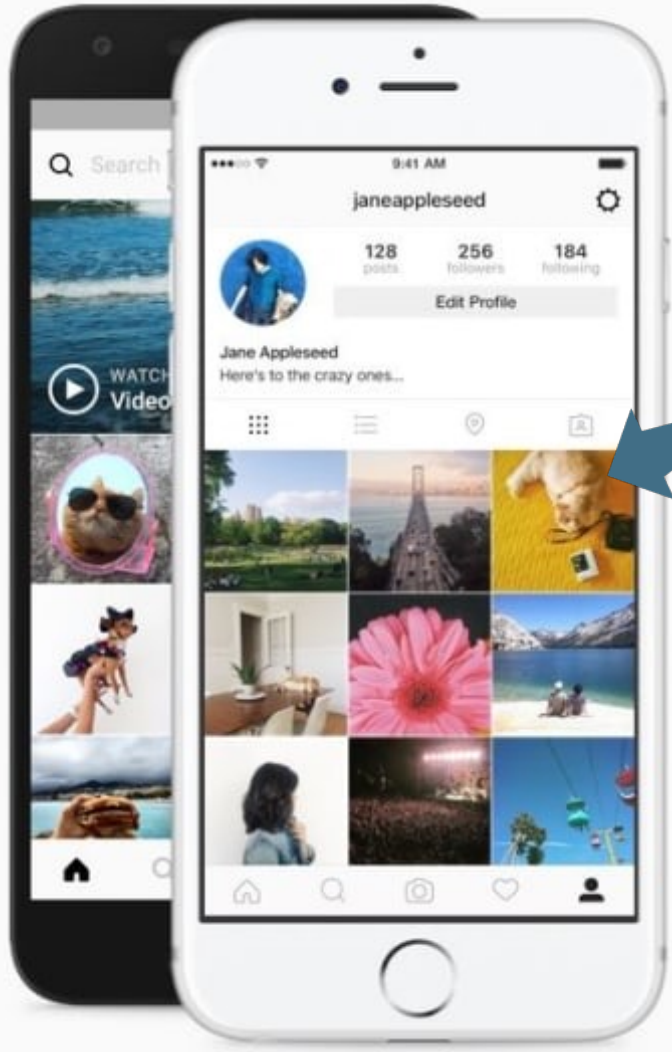
Value & What it does

Want a big jump in revenues? ← Value

Blaze your trail with the world's #1 CRM platform for sales. ← What it does

Value & What it does – Bad Example

This is more than just a thought.
This is your great idea!

Turn your tech idea into the perfect purpose venture

fruition
TECHNOLOGY LABS

Value & What it does – Ok EXAMPLE

ODC → What's yours?

Early adopters help you to discover the growth channel for *your* business

Acquiring the first users is always a little all over the place, also known as the shotgun approach. But once you've achieved product-market fit, you will (read: should) know what channels to focus on for growth.

The ideal channel for growth is a mix of product, business, and market. Brian Balfour calls it product-channel fit*, the idea that every product has an **(ODC)** <mark>optimal distribution channel</mark>. Early adopters can point you in the right direction by analyzing where they came from and asking them directly.[*]

There's an important component to growing through that channel: the Northstar metric. It's the one number **that everyone should work on going up. Like a rising tide lifts all boats, the Northstar metric** moves everything else up. It's the KPI for growth.

North Star Metric Examples
By Ward van Gasteren - www.growwithward.com

Facebook	Monthly Active Users (MAU)
Spotify	Time spent listering
amazon	Number of purchases per month
airbnb	Booked nights
LinkedIn	Monthly Active Users (MAU)
WhatsApp	Messages Send
Quora	Number of answers to questions
Uber	Rides per week
HubSpot	Weekly active teams
slack	Daily Active Users (DAU)

NorthStar Metric

Facebook
MAU – monthly active users

Airbnb
# of bookings
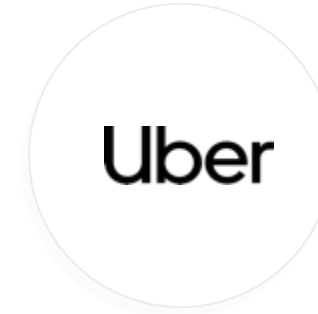
UBER
# of completed rides

- Your business model will give you a hypothesis for what the Northstar Metric could be, but early adopters verify it.

- Dissect how they move through the AARRR funnel

Acquisition   Activation   Retention   Referral

Study your AARRR

Your business model will give you a hypothesis for what the Northstar Metric could be, but early adopters verify it.

Dissect how they move through the **AARR funnel** (*acquisition, activation, retention, revenue & referra*l) to find the one metric to focus on

For example, a Chinese restaurant owner opens his restaurant in San Jose. After 3 months his business is still quite poor, so he simply blames that people in San Jose don't like to eat Chinese food (impossible!).

- The truth is that many startups make the same mistake of thinking if something doesn't work, it must be everything, or they just guess the wrong reason why their business is not working. Like any website or app, a restaurant relies on many things to be optimized. It needs to have a good location. The storefront needs to look good so customers want to go in. When users are in, customers need to feel comfortable with the interior, and they need to be sold on the content in the menu. Moreover, when they go through the menu, they need to feel comfortable with the price point. Also, the user will obviously rate their experience in terms of the service, the taste of the food, etc.

- So, while 1 restaurant owner will conclude that people don't like Chinese food. Another store owner that knows AARRR- will find out maybe it's because his storefront doesn't look interesting enough, his price point is too high, or what not.

- The truth is, any part of a customer's experience and its details from walking pass the store-font, to going inside, finding a seat, ordering, eating, paying, and leaving the restaurant, are all very crucial to the restaurant's business.

  Case Study: Michelin 1 star restaurant chain called Ding Tai Fong focuses on every part of the detail. They optimize everything. They are so detailed that when you are paying for the bill, the cash change they give back to you is always new so that you don't get your hands dirty. So they have someone who goes to the bank every morning to get brand new cash to start the day off. It's something as subtle as this, but this way, people love their whole experience from beginning to end and come back again or tell their friends.

Study your AARRR

Website Case Study:

StartitUp is getting 1000 visitors/month **(Acquisition)**, and our **Activation** (conversion) is 70%, so that we are getting around 700 users/month.

Out of those 700 users, only 20% of those users are coming back after their first visit **(Retention).**

Out of those 20% (140 users), only 10% are paying **(Revenue),** so that we end up with 14 users paying each month.

Out of the 700 users, about 10% of those are referring out service to their friends **(Referral).**

Study your AARRR

1. StartitUp has a good **Activation** (conversion) rate of 70%, which means we are dealing with a real problem and we have a real solution, and we also have a convincing landing page.

2. We want to get more signups, so we look to improve our **Acquisition** (visitors) by adding more acquisition channels or work on SEO to try to get more users.

3. We then look at our ==Retention,== and saw that our ==Retention== is pretty horrible at 20%, so we build some extra features like email newsletters and gamification to get users to come back so that we have another chance to monetize them. But we realize users are not coming back to our service because our service somehow isn't delivering the value promise we made - it doesn't solve their problem or it's not clear how to use our service. We also create a better tutorial feature to help users get started with the guide so they can properly reap the benefits from StartitUp.

4. We also see that we are not doing a very good job converting users into paying customers ==(Revenue),== so we look at our price structure and our pricing page to see if we are not doing a good job communicating, or if we can build a stronger pricing plan with the main pricing plan that we want people to buy highlighted.

5. Finally, we check to see why we are not being recommended ==(Referral)== to friends and see if we can put in some social sharing features to increase the number of referrals. This could also be that our service doesn't have any referral value since it's not good enough.

Study your AARRR

However, for a startup, we don't need to focus on all of the 5 metrics during the [MVP (Minimum Viable Product)](#) phase. The 2 most important metrics we want to monitor and optimize right now are **Activation** and **Retention** (Retention is King! - If people like using your product and they return to use it, then you will be successful).

These are the 2 main metrics that will determine whether or not you have built a service that people need. A good **Activation** tells you that your UVP and landing page is convincing and that you successfully get the user to go through with 1 use cycle post logging in. Good **Retention** tells you that your MVP actually delivers the UVP to the customers.

If you plan to start charging immediately, then **Revenue** will be one that we want to monitor as well. **Acquisition** and **Referral** are not immediate, but they are the engines to drive new customers to your website, so do keep them in mind when building your **MVP.**

http://startitup.co/guides/374/aarrr-startup-metrics
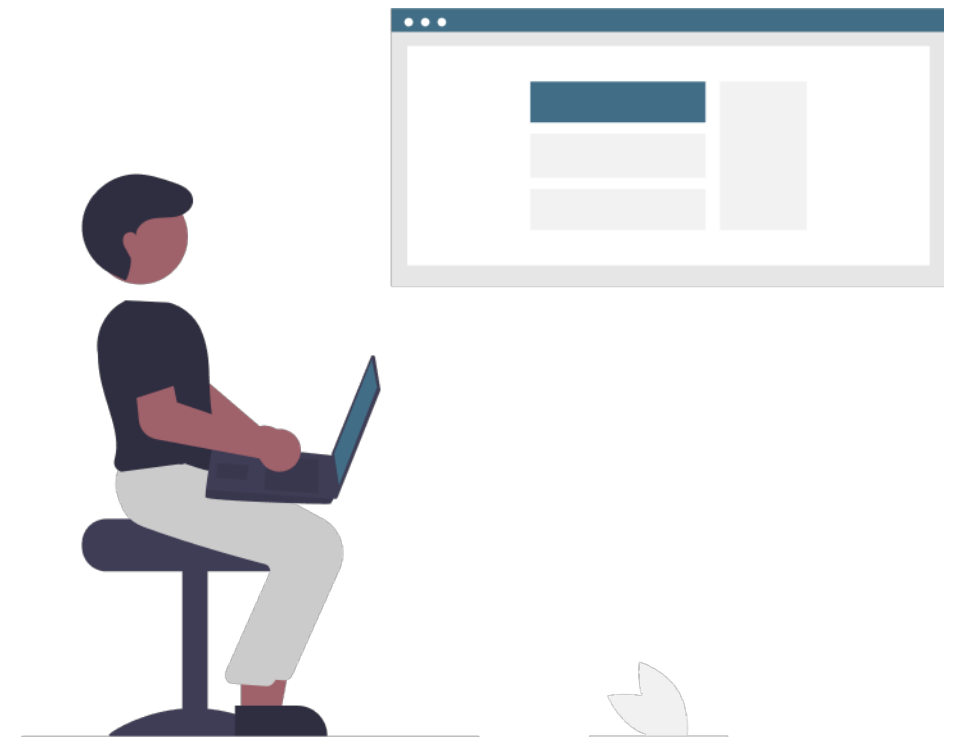
Study your AARRR

Example Conversion Metrics

Category	User Status	Conv %	Est. Value
Acquisition	Visit Site (or landing page, or external widget)	100%	$.01
Acquisition	Doesn't Abandon (views 2+ pages, stays 10+ sec, 2+clicks)	70%	$.05
Activation	Happy 1st Visit (views X pages, stays Y sec, Z clicks)	30%	$.25
Activation	Email/Blog/RSS/Widget Signup (anything that could lead to repeat visit)	5%	$1
Activation	Acct Signup (includes profile data)	2%	$3
Retention	Email Open / RSS view → Clickthru	3%	$2
Retention	Repeat Visitor (3+ visits in first 30 days)	2%	$5
Referral	Refer 1+ users who visit site	2%	$3
Referral	Refer 1+ users who activate	1%	$10
Revenue	User generates minimum revenue	2%	$5
Revenue	User generates break-even revenue	1%	$25

http://startitup.co/guides/374/aarrr-startup-metrics

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THE RISE OF THE MAVENS

Achieving the Masses

Mavens at Work

- Early adopters help you to get the big masses

- **Word of mouth** is the most powerful force in marketing and the best **WOM** comes from so-called "Mavens".

- "The word Maven comes from the Yiddish, and it means 'one who accumulates knowledge'. In recent years, economists, have spent a great deal of times studying Mavens, for the obvious reason that if marketplaces depend on information, the people with the most information must be the most important." (from Malcolm Gladwell's book "The Tipping Point")

- They care about a market and its problems so deeply that it seems crazy to you.

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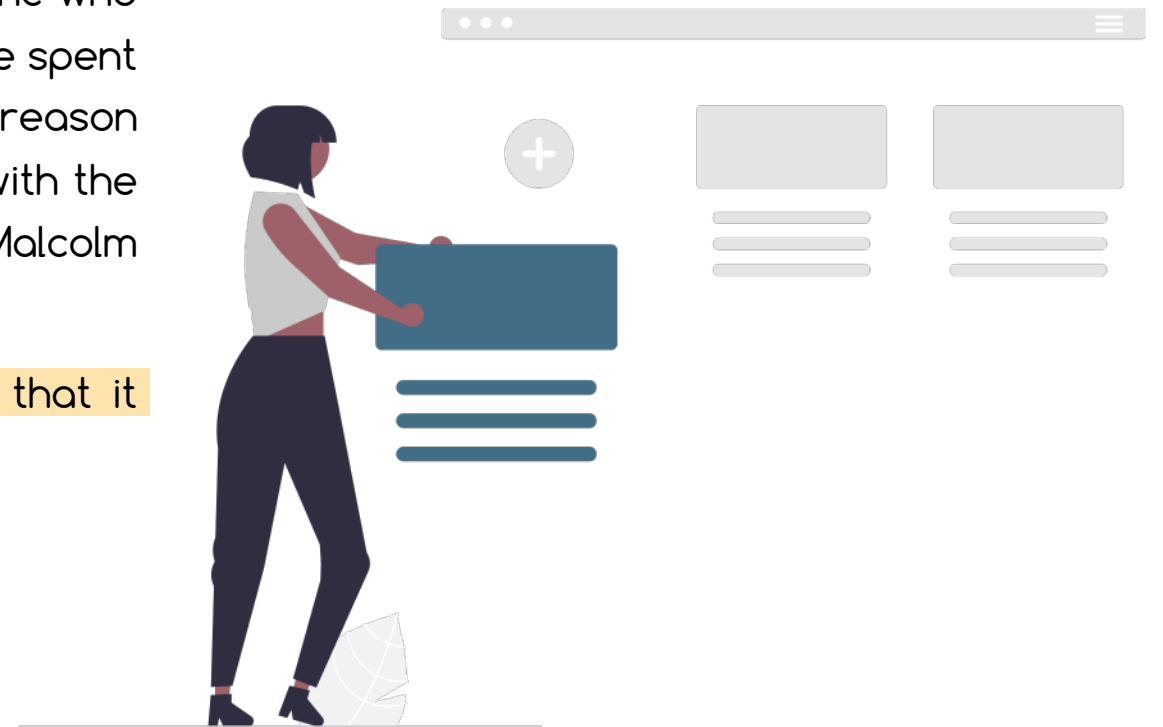
Mavens at Work

Mavens are :

- Opinion leaders in the community

- The respected

- Thoughtful people who watched and analyzed what those wild Innovators.

- Educated

- Financially well to do

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Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

Innovators

Early adopters

Early Majority

Late Majority

Laggards

The Big Scary Chasm in Question

2.5%   13.5%   34%   34%   16%

Smaller chasm
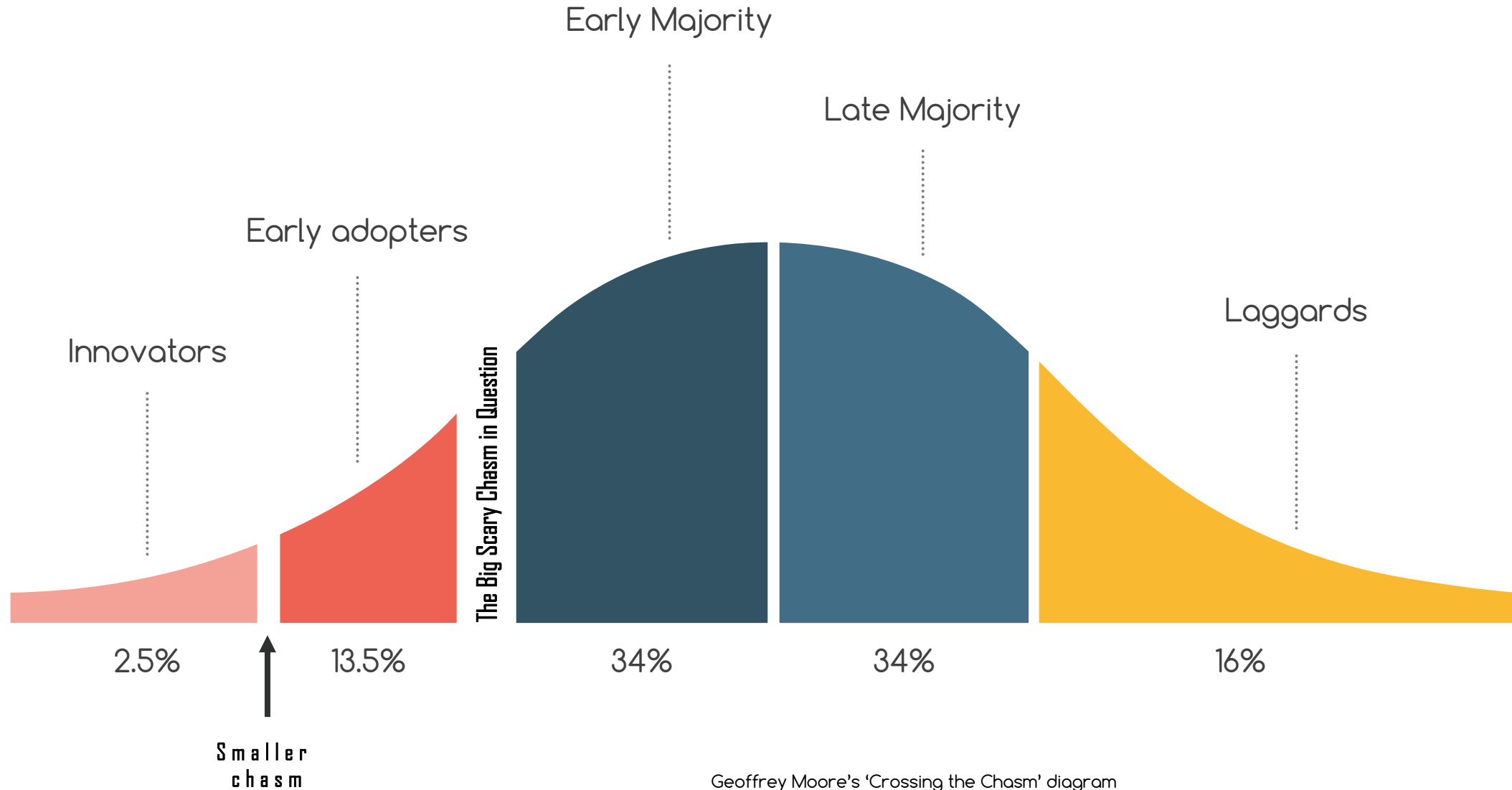
Geoffrey Moore's 'Crossing the Chasm' diagram
Circa 1991

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THE HUNT FOR THE EA-MAVENS

Moving towards disruption

Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

Communities

- Subreddits
- Slack channels
- Web forums

Are all the perfect platform to identify early adopters and engage with your target audience.

I wrote about the many benefits of using communities for growth, but they're also valuable in the pre-scale phase.

The goal is to become a **power user**, which has three benefits:

- Credibility which you can use to advertise your product later on
- You get in touch with other power users who become advocates of your product
- You get a lot of exposure to your audience, which helps you understand their pains, needs and wants
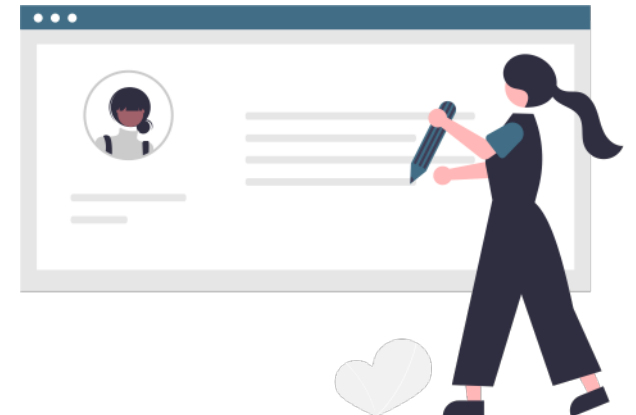
Finding a community is easy. Just google for

"[target audience] community"

"[target audience] forum"
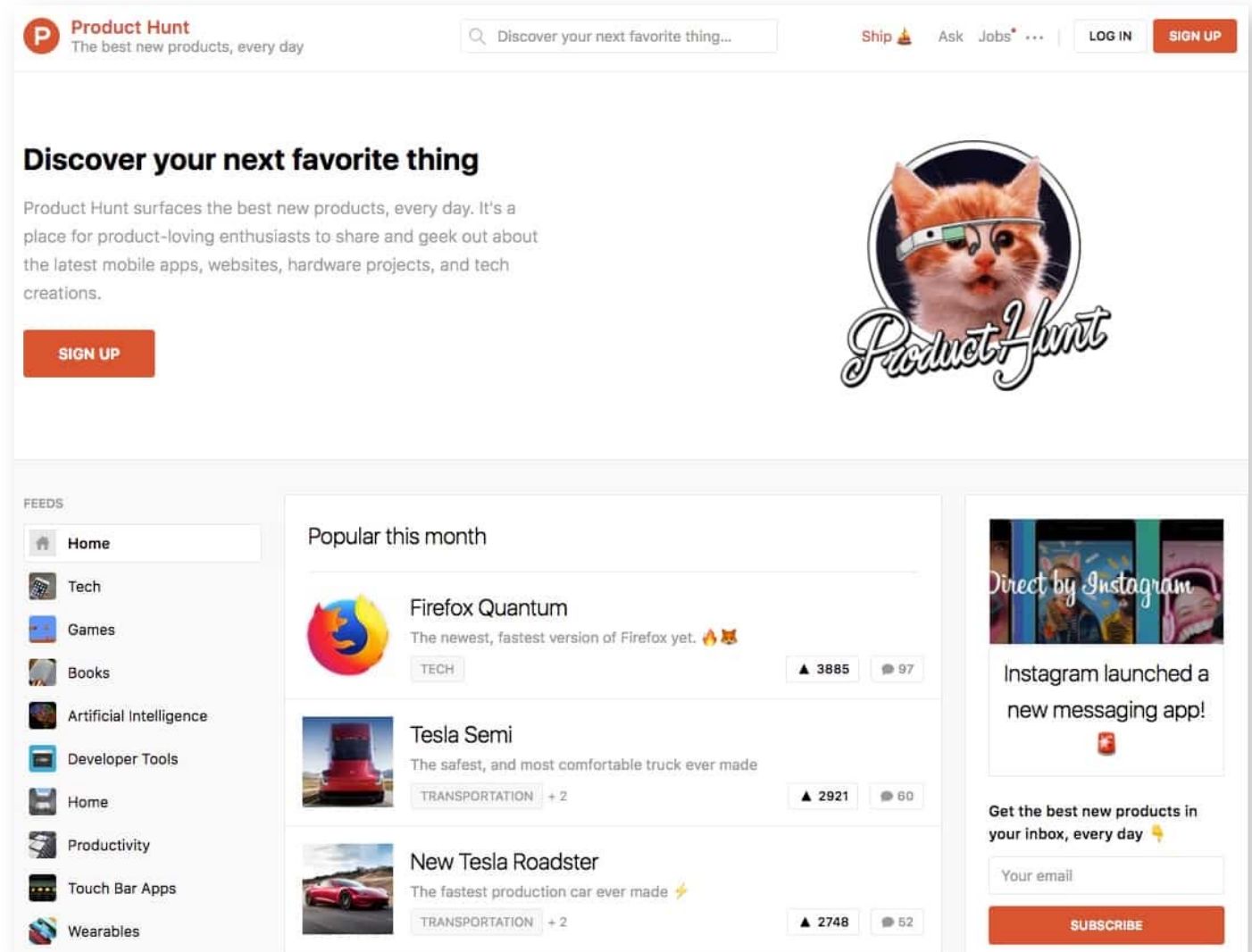
"[target audience] slack channel"
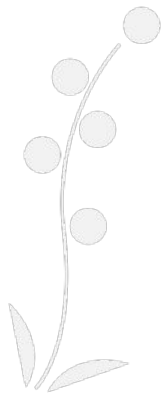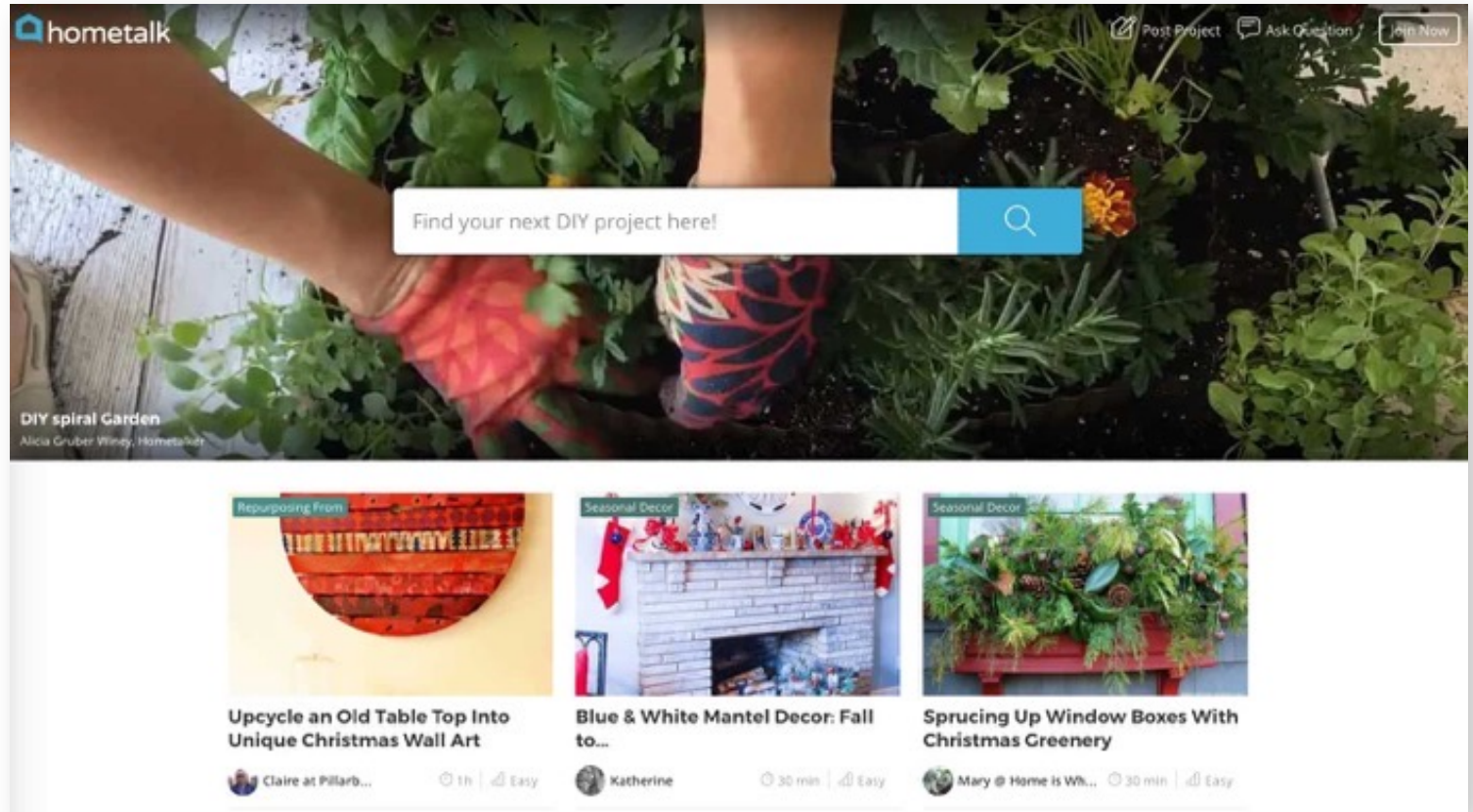
"[target audience] Reddit"

Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

If you're in SaaS and want to sell to startups good communities for you would be ProductHunt, Angellist, Hackernews, or Indiehackers.
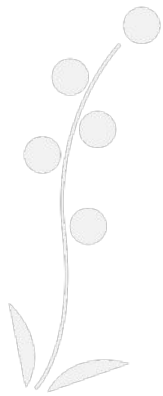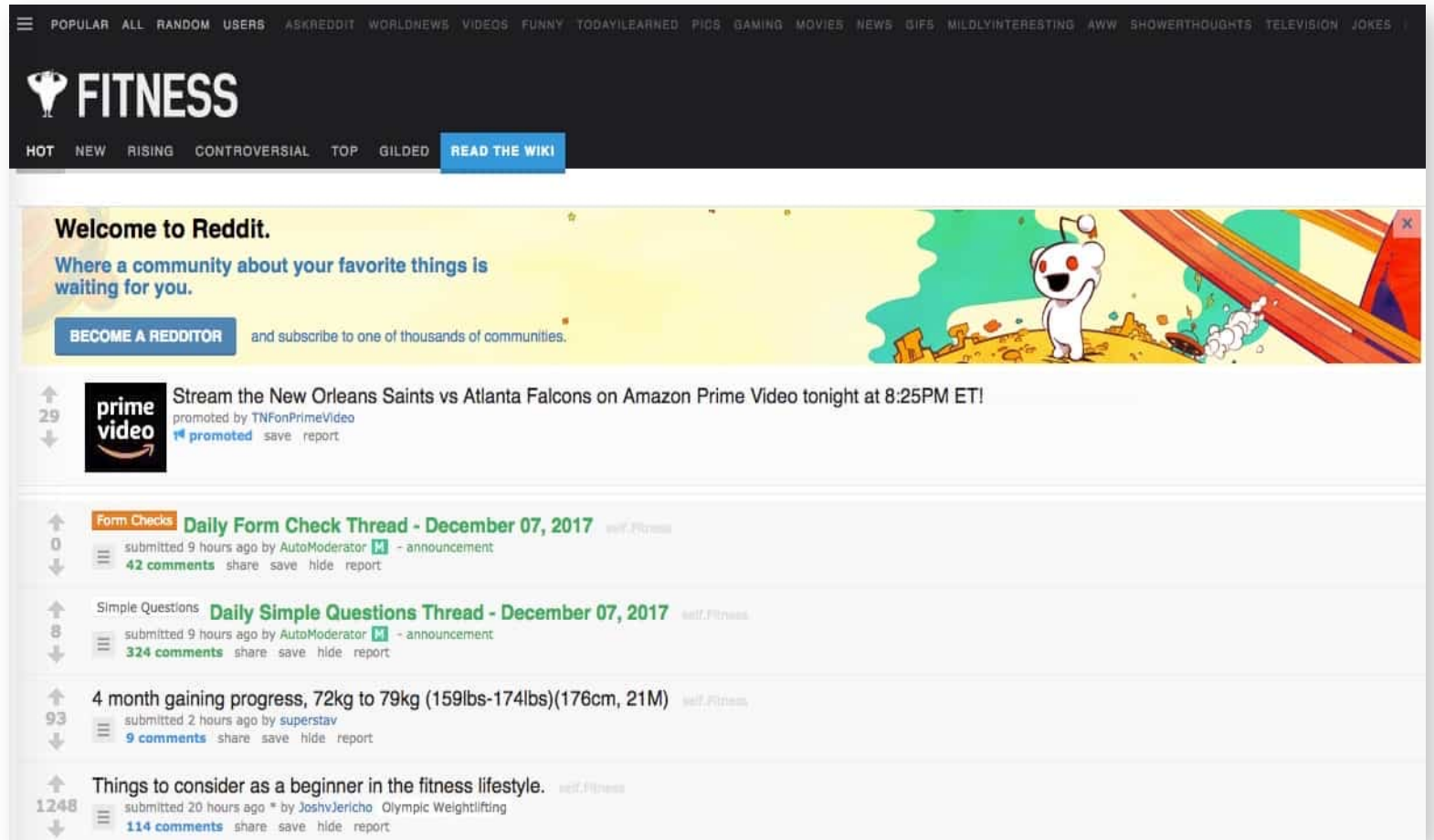
Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

If you're in hardware and want to sell a new tool to DIY enthusiasts good communities would be Hometalk, Magazine, or Instructables.

Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

If you're in nutrition and want to sell to hobby athletes good communities would be the Crossfit forum, the Fitness Subreddit, or the T-Nation forum.

Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

Finding communities is easy, becoming a power user is hard. You get there by helping other users out, answering questions, and sharing good content.

Once you are a power user, you *can* start to mention your startup here and there. But even *more* powerful is reaching out to other power users and asking for their honest opinion about your product. The results of someone else than yourself advocating your product are always better. So, build strong relationships with other power users.

Airbnb understood the value of an existing community. They eventually took that to a max by crossposting their offering to Craigslist #piggybacking. This was not an early adopters move – it was a growth at scale tactic – but it started with becoming a part of the community first. [*]

There is a second type of platform for communities: social networks.

Social networks

The biggest social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat) are not tied to a specific topic. They're mirrors of our society in digital form, which is good and bad for acquiring early adopters. Good, because that means you get the broadest access possible. Bad, because you have to find and address sub-groups in those networks.

Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

Traffic spikes from Facebook group postings
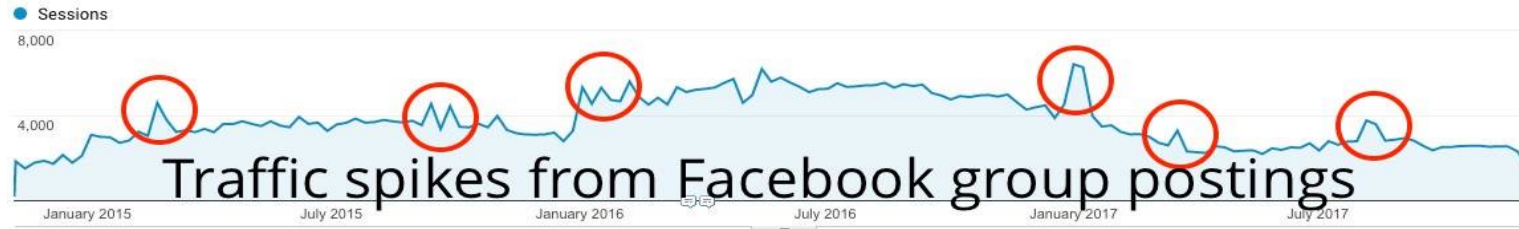
Groups

I've leveraged Facebook and LinkedIn groups many times for traffic and promotions (see screenshot below) but you have to know *how* to not burn your fingers.

First, follow the **rules** of the group and watch how power users behave. Some groups forbid advertising because it gets messy and spammy really fast, so emulate what others do.

You're not there to *exploit* the group but to **become part of it**. That includes using your real account, no fake accounts! Use a professional, casual picture. Avoid "stiff suit pictures" with forced smiles and "party pictures".

The worst thing you can do when joining any community is to advertise. Instead, follow Gary V's rule: jab, jab, jab, right hook. Deliver value and then, after a long time, ask for something.

Second, do the same as when participating in any other community: **be active** (power user) and **document** your target audience's pains, needs and wants. Listen closely and write down what the users talk about. You'll quickly see emerging patterns and problems. That's the gold you're after!

BREAK

Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

Hashtags

Instagram and Twitter Hashtags are great ways to monitor the content and conversation around a specific topic.

Create a spreadsheet for collecting qualitative research. Data you should store is Look at the hashtags your audience is using and in which context. Save the users details (like nicknames), so you can reach out to them later. Start with one hashtag and then expand from there by looking at what else people use.

Some tools can speed up the process, though not cover it completely.
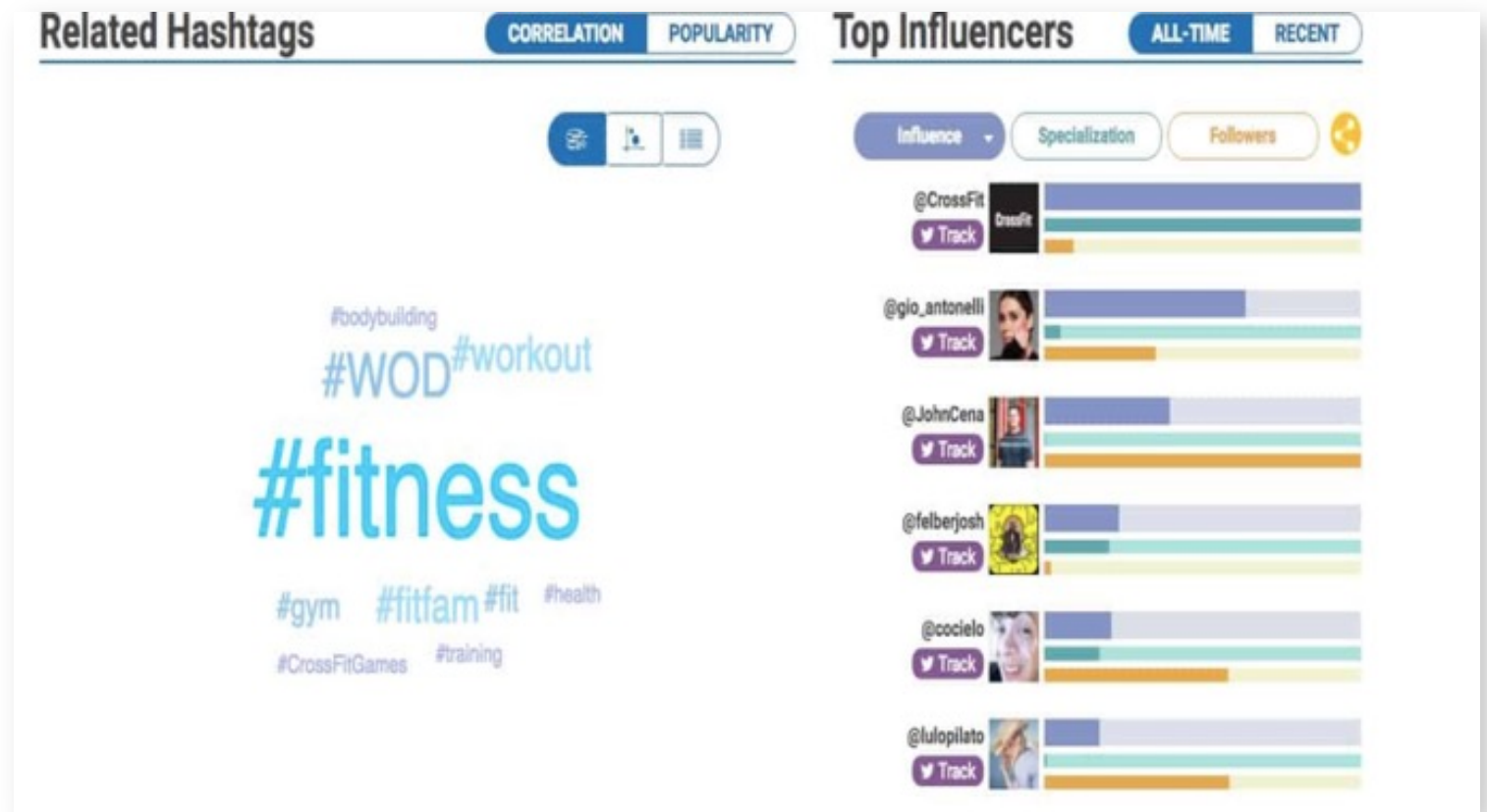
Don't Fall in the Chasm, dude

Influencers

Influencer marketing is the word of the hour and can be a viable tactic to get early adopters (exception: very dry, high-priced B2B products).

The role of influencers in getting early adopters is not paying or reaching out to them but analyzing their followership. The concept is to understand a market by looking at its thought leaders and then reaching out to their followers.

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Click To Tweet

You can use free tools like Followerwonk, Foller, Allmytweets, Sociograph, or Facebook Insights for the analysis.

Followerwonk* is a neat tool to analyze Twitter accounts. Use the search function to look for certain words in people's bio. As described in the Hashtag section above, explore the optimal terms by starting somewhere and seeing what else people use.

Play around with the user list by sorting it after "Social Authority" and "Followers". [*]
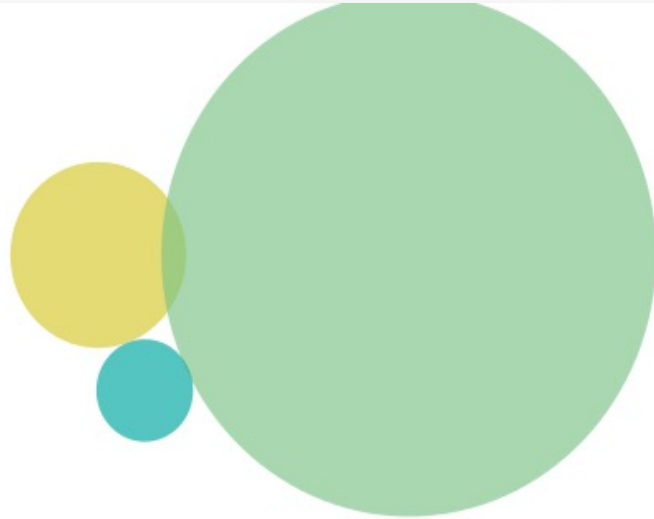
468 users followed by stationhouston
3,706 users followed by FruitionTechLab
142 users followed by ycombinator

followed only by stationhouston »	433	*10.1%*
followed only by FruitionTechLab »	3,670	*85.7%*
followed only by ycombinator »	141	*3.3%*
followed only by stationhouston & FruitionTechLab »	35	*0.8%*
followed only by stationhouston & ycombinator	0	*0.0%*
followed only by FruitionTechLab & ycombinator »	1	*0.0%*
followed by all three	0	*0.0%*
combined total friends	*4,280*	

StationHouston

Social Authority:	52
Followers:	2,954
Time on:	3.29 years
Retweets:	29.0%
@Contacts	5.0%
URL tweets:	69.5%

Fruition Tech Labs

Social Authority:	36
Followers:	2,976
Time on:	5.80 years
Retweets:	40.0%
@Contacts	4.0%
URL tweets:	55.0%

Y Combinator

Social Authority:	70
Followers:	1,036,568
Time on:	9.06 years
Retweets:	25.0%
@Contacts	5.0%
URL tweets:	69.5%
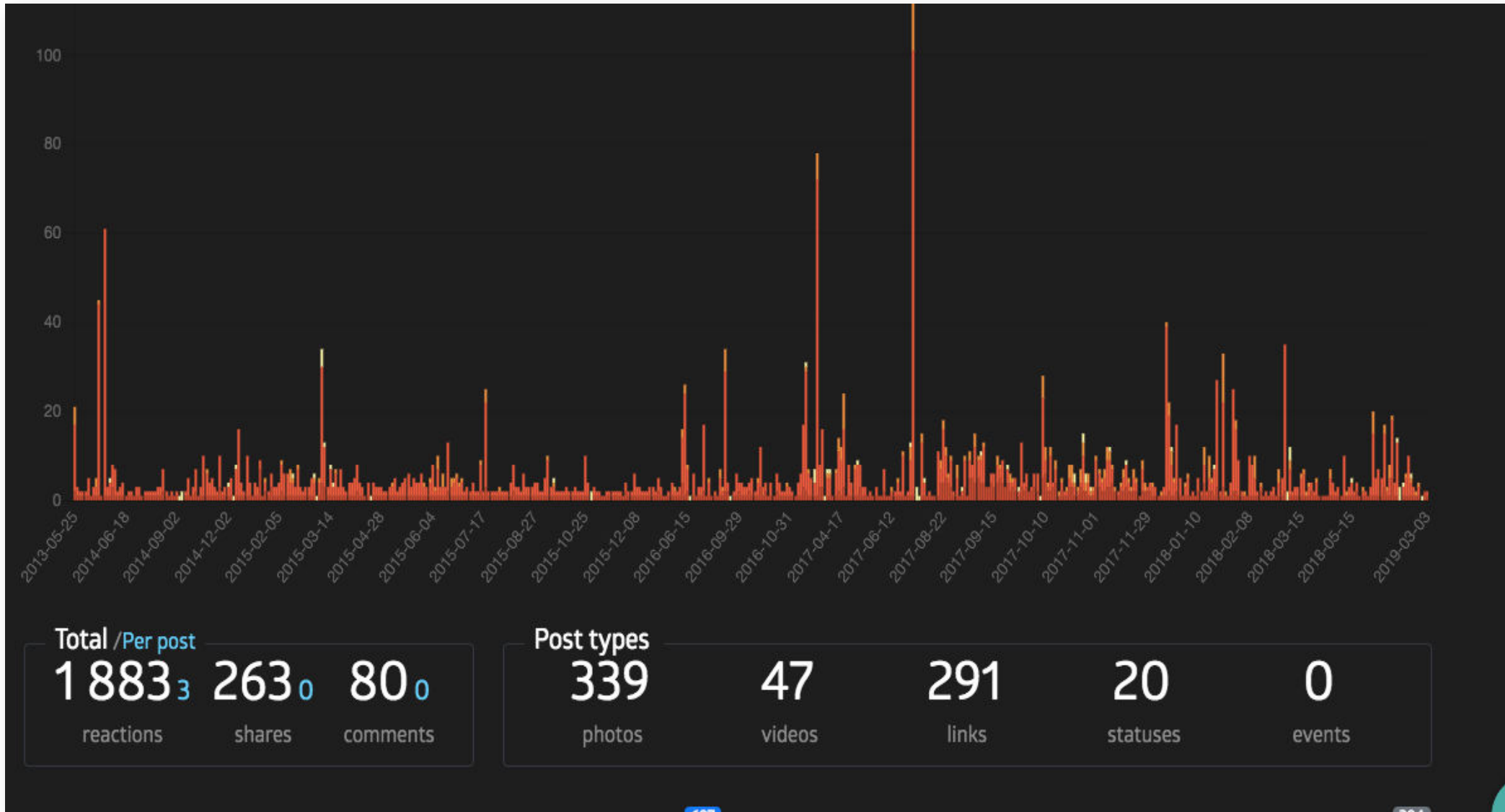
Showing 1 - 50 of 2,497 results (order by relevance)

No filters					tweets ⬥	following ⬥	followers ⬥	account age ⬥	Social Authority ⬥
follow	**DEAN** @deanfluence	Perth, Western Australia			1,700	6,276	199,512	5.42 years	77
	kick ass dad & husband. CMO. pizza lover. startup fanatic. dad joke pro. **growth hacker.** probably cooler on social media than in real life.								
follow	**Growth Hackers** @StartGrowthHack	Around the world ✈			18,523	114,449	143,246	1.69 years	74
	Grow your startup or SMB with https://t.co/QDOgbXK6pk. **Growth** Hacking	Content Marketing	SEO	Social Media	PR	Emailing	ASO	A/B Testing	Funding..								
follow	**Nicolas Babin** @Nicochan33	Fra							
	Rare combination of technology, #marketing & #management. #Agile #**growth** hacker #mentor #transformer. Focus on #gamification. https://t.co/0IpHWFuR93								
follow	**Troy Osinoff** @yo	NYC			16,901	90,523	307,623	9.20 years	71
	Entrepreneur, **Growth Hacker**, Author, Investor, built some stuff too..... Fan of #Knicks & #Giants (IG/Snapchat: Troy)								
follow	**OG Mack Drama** @mackdrama1017	LAV LOS ANGELES ARIZONA VEGAS			366,540	35,634	43,415	7.13 years	70
	CEO 1017 Brick Squad Mafia @powertalk_w_og @Revohloo @mackdramarecord Influencer **Growth Hacker** Writer Radio Host/DJ #Cloud #BigData #MafiaGang #EmpireFox								
follow	**Jonathan Castro** @jonathan71b	Caracas			373,322	6,179	25,250	7.61 years	67
	Fundador de @LaCuadraU y @Bemoebius / Social Media Researcher / **Growth Hacker** / @SocialGest Ambassador.								

Play around with these

Foller allows you to analyze any Twitter profile for topics, mentions, hashtags, and followers. The mentions give you more insights into the followership of influencers and the most used hashtags help you identify patterns. [*]
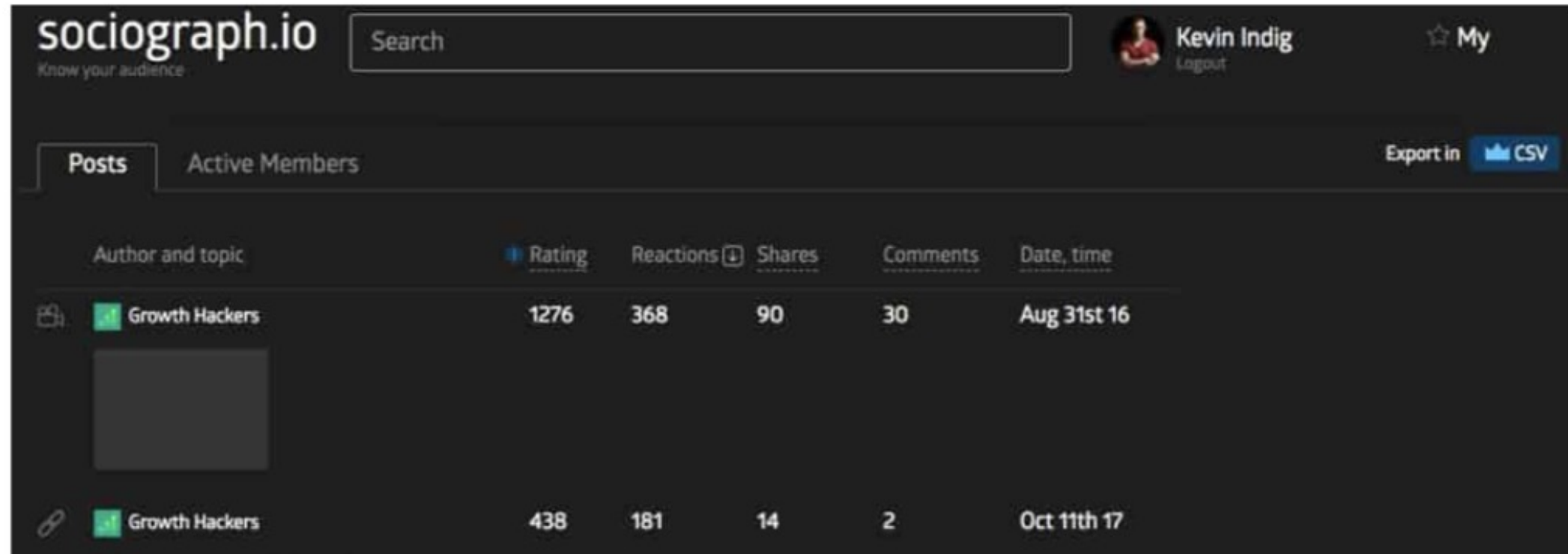
Sociograph.io is a (partially) free Facebook groups and pages analytics tool. It gives you very valuabel insights into the most shared or commented on posts within a group or on a page. Reverse engineering what works within a community couldn't be easier.

Blogging

Within 20 days of launching, Ryan Hoover grew ProductHunt to 2,0000 users with guest posting*. He reached out to big publishers, like FastCompany, and pitched them articles like "The Wisdom Of The 20-Minute Startup". [*]

Once again, doing things that don't scale ultimately leads to success. Ryan not only used that mantra for marketing but for the product itself: he updated the list of new startup for quite a while by hand. [*]
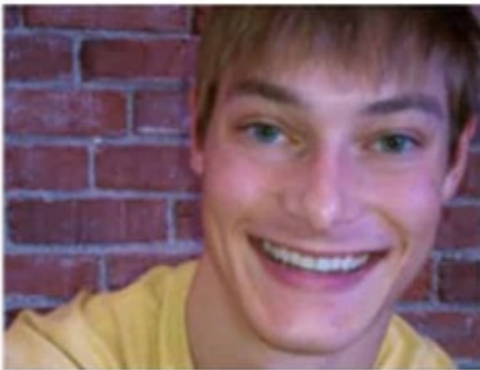
Announcing Product Hunt
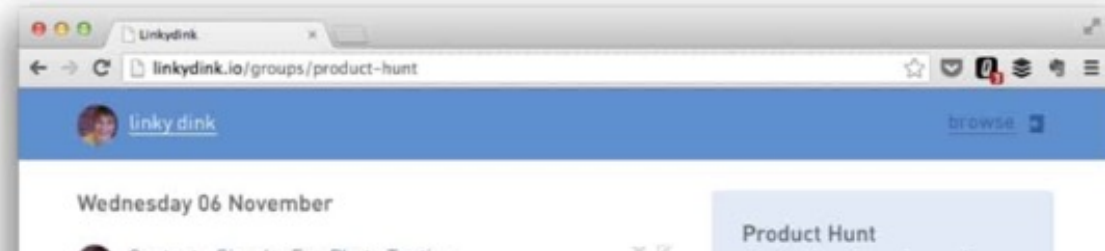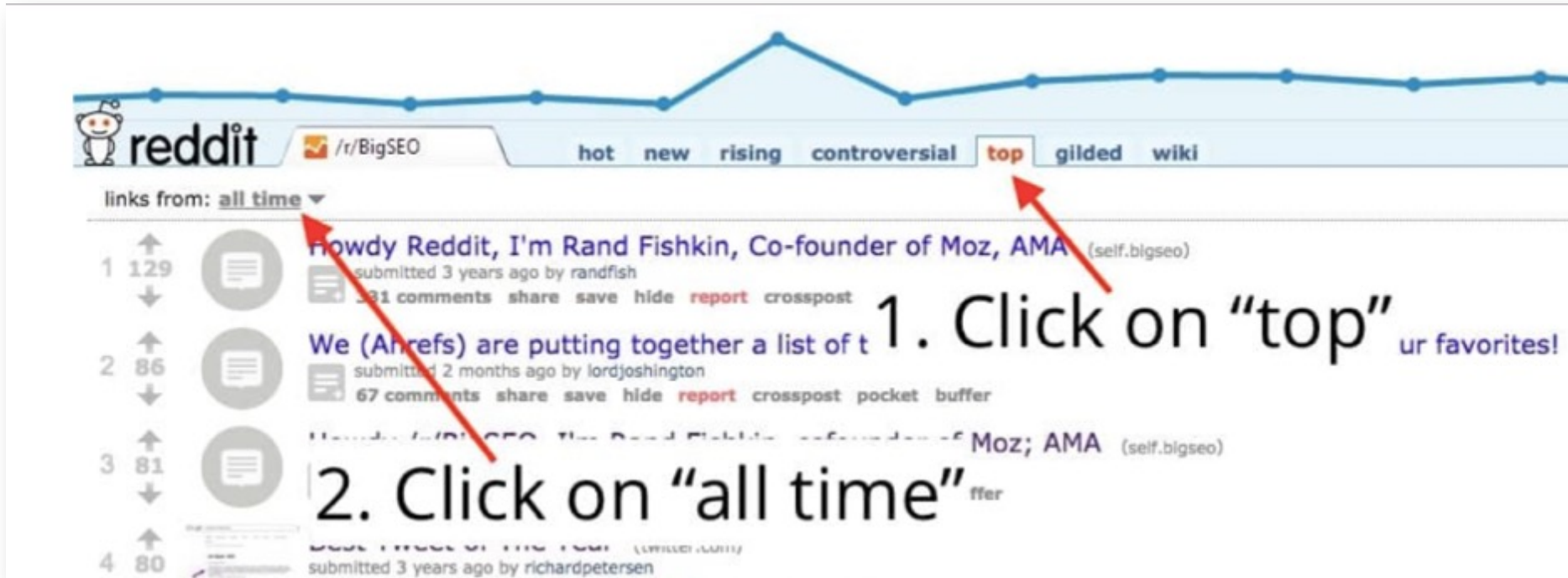
Having content on your own site when starting to publish on other sites. You want people to discover you through other blogs but they're not going to stay if your site is naked. Make sure you have at least 5 high quality-pieces before looking outwards.

For either guest blogging or publishing on your own site, you can use Reddit to find topics and content that worked well in the past for **inspiration**. Go to a Subreddit that fits your niche/industry and check out the Top content.

Email

For some businesses, direct outreach might be the only way to get early adopters. But I want to suggest *every* startup to use Email as an acquisition vehicle.

As Des Traynor, co-founder of Intercome just recently wrote:

"*So all day every day I'd email people to tell them about Intercom, show them what Intercom might look like for them, and hear their feedback. I did this 100% by hand and if I was to do it all again today I'd still do it by hand. Honestly.*" [*]

There are three audiences for Email:

1. A previously built audience

2. Your LinkedIn network

3. Strangers

Leveraging a previously built audience

In best case, you've have built an email list before you started a company. This is the best position to be in because you already have trust and can simply spread the word in the next email you send out.

The size of the list doesn't matter. If you have a qualified list of 50 people and 40 sign up it can be worth more than having a list of 1,000 subscribers and 0 sign-ups.

If you're reading this article and plan to start a startup in the future, build your Email list *now*. Put out curated content, like Tech Bound, not necessarily your own stuff.

Using Linkedin to leverage your network

Just as you should build an email list before your startup, you should build a network in your target industry.

The number one networking platform is Linkedin. It has a function to export all of your contacts email addresses, which you can then reach out to.

Soft launch

"

Not launching is painful.
Not learning is fatal.

said Dropbox founder Drew Houston.

On April 2007, he launched Dropbox on Hackernews*. [*]

(Pay attention to the feedback Houston gets on product and presentation – super valuable!)

Almost a year later, Dropbox launched on Digg and grew the beta waiting list **from 5,000 subscribers to 75,000 in one day** (15x).[*]

What happened in these 11 months that made the Digg launch so successful? Drew Houston iterated on the feedback he got from the Hackernews launch! That's exactly what soft launches are for: **iteration**.

For startups, there are no big launches with confetti and champaign – only soft launches. That means announcing your product on platforms like ProductHunt and Hackernews and launching an email campaign. Successful startups are not bombs – they spread like a virus. Soft launches just get the ball rolling.

The key to a successful soft launch is meticulous planning. Posting on startup sites and Reddit is not enough. You need to become a member of the community first!
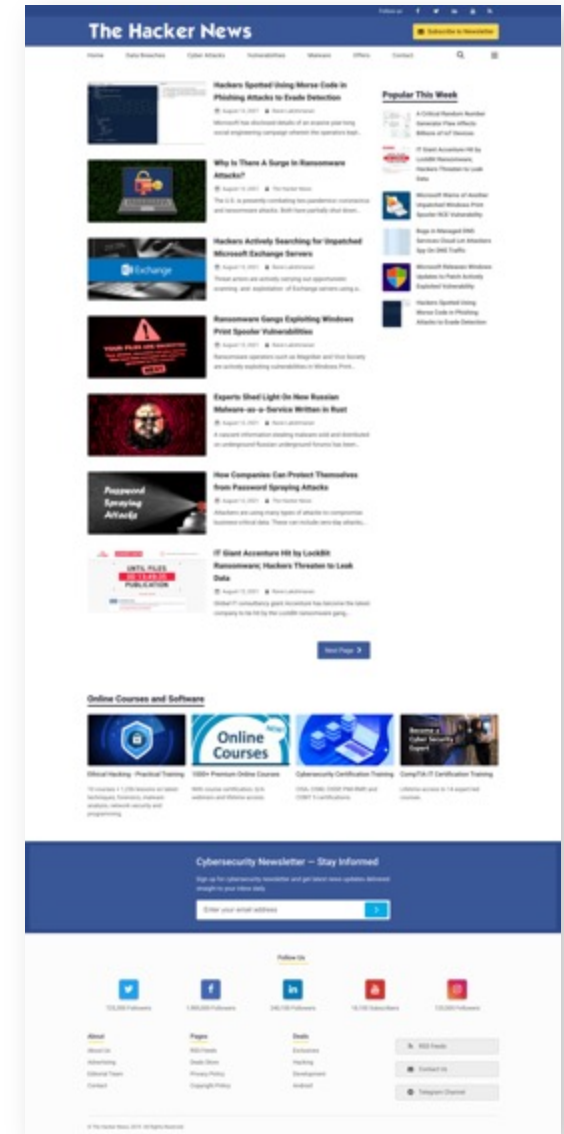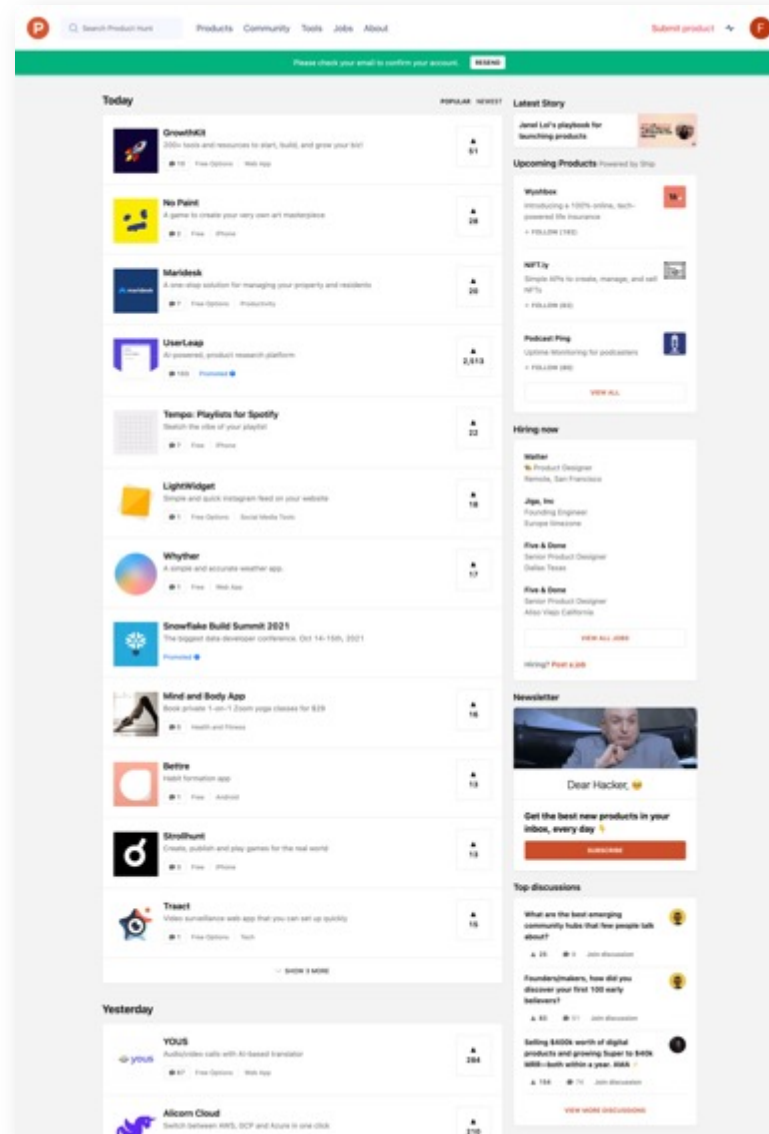
First, Identify the most important platforms and become a part of their community.

Examples:
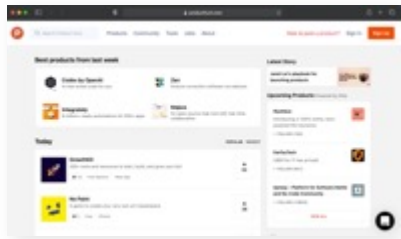
ProductHunt

Hackernews

Indiehackers

Bootstrappers
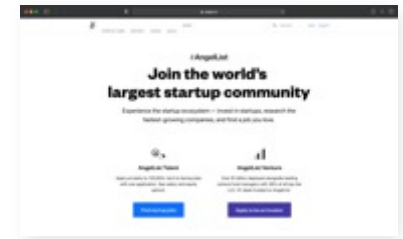
Angellist

Betapage
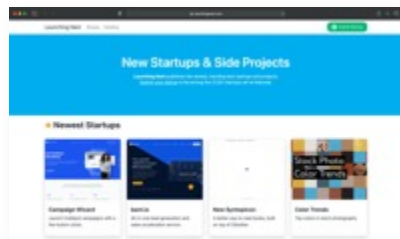
Launchingnext

Netted

Springwise

Betalist
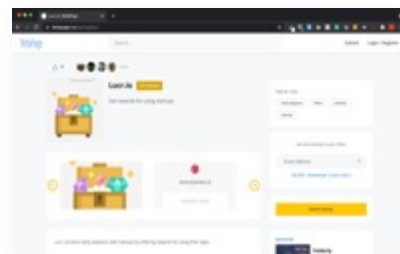
Lucr

Publicly
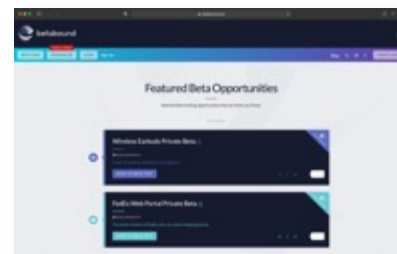
Beta Bound

Second, find the right Subreddits for your market and become a part of their community, as well.
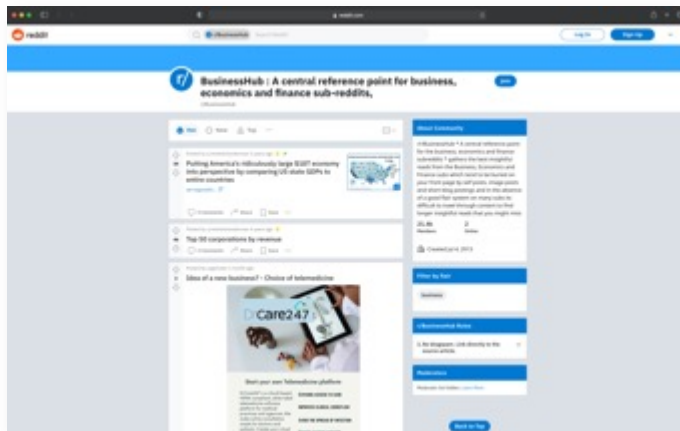
Examples:
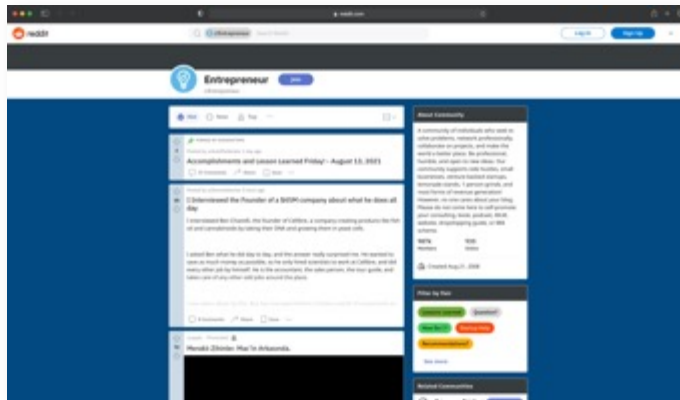
Entrepreneur
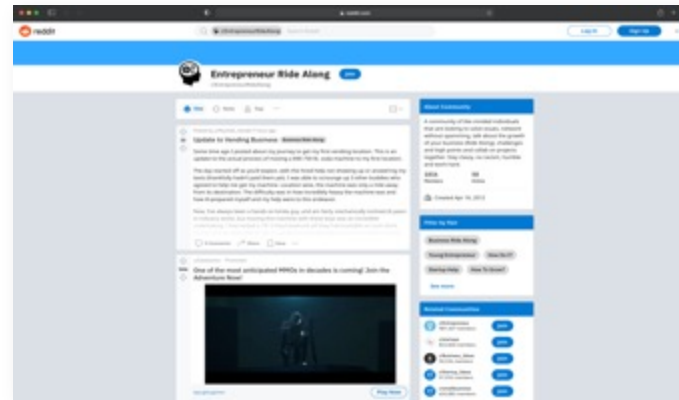
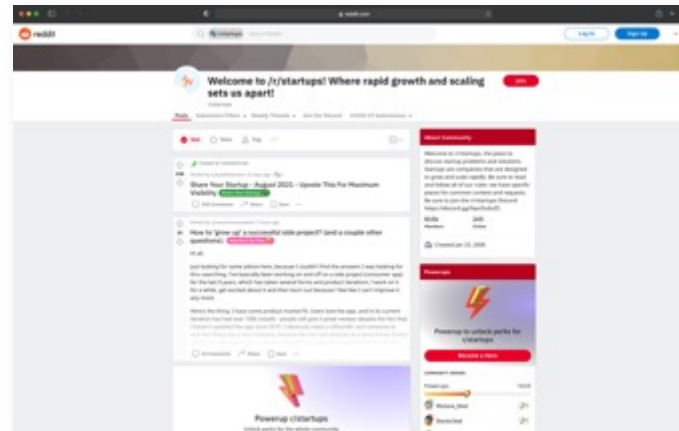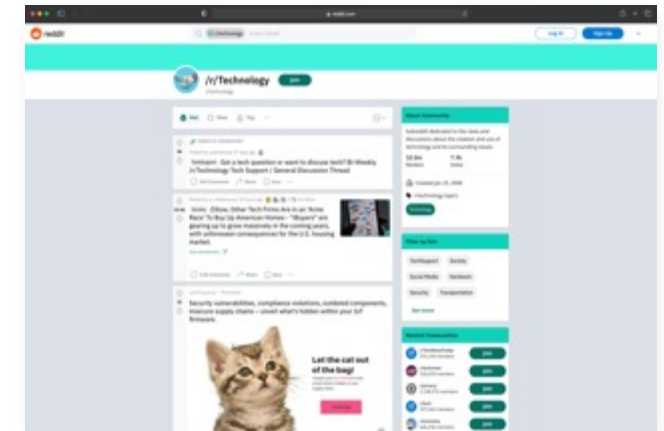Entrepreneur Ride Along

Design critiques

BussinessHub

Startups

Technology

Third, plan a "launch week" to stretch your "buzz" as long as possible. A week is the best time span for reaching as many people as possible while not becoming boring. So, post on roughly one platform per day.

Fourth, a "call to arms". Announce your launch in your newsletter, social media and friends and family. Mobilize your followership to help you with up-votes and social shares during the launch.

Fifth, launch.

Sixth, right after you launched, respond to comments and mentions on Social Media. Repost, engage, and answer questions.

Speaking Engagements

Video: show your product and how it's used. You can use that video later on for launches on Product Hunt and social media. Make sure it's of high-quality but not longer than 5 minutes!

Value proposition: Users need to grasp the value ("Aha Moment") within milliseconds. Most of that should be transferred by a "Hero Shot" or the video but to be on the safe side, describe the core values with text.
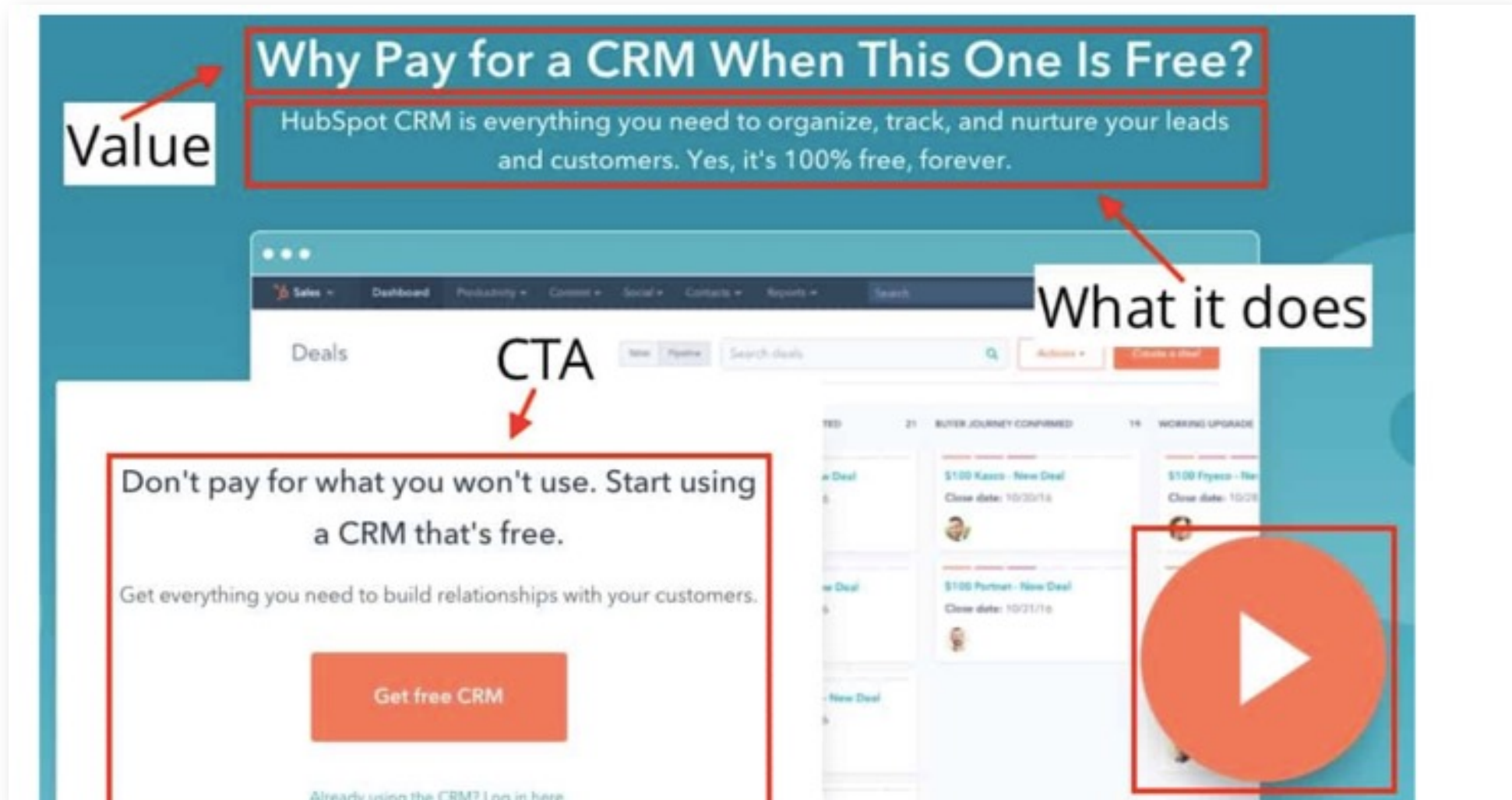
Call to action: tell people what to do on the landing page.

Layout & Design: Do not stuff the landing page with garbage. Anything that has no value has no right to be there. Use a lot of whitespace to give each element room to breathe. In case of doubt, look at how sites like Amazon or Apple design their landing pages.

Social proof: Show people that other people like your product. That can be a testimonial or a "like" button that shows the (high) amount of likes. A study by Qubit Digital* found that social proof has the biggest impact on revenue for online shops. I'd argue that this is the same for any kind of conversion. [*]

Value & What it does

Value & What it does

Value & What it does

Early Adopter Marketing Checklist

This checklist is an add-on to the article "Early Adopter Marketing - How startups get their first users".

If you seek a detailed description of the here mentioned tactics please read the article. For the sake of functionality, this checklist is kept as brief as possible.

1 COMMUNITY	2 SOCIAL MEDIA	3 BLOGGING
4 EMAIL	5 SOFT-LAUNCH	6 MISCELLANEOUS
7 YOUR SITE		

Investor Readiness Programs

Market Research & Research Report

Creating a Stronger Value Proposition

Developing Your Business Strategies

Building an Effective Sales Channel

A Cohesive Team

Early Adopter

4 Steps to Build

Full Start-up Program Package (4 Steps)

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