

EBOOK:

# 8 Software Marketing Strategies That Work





# Contents

**p1** — Introduction

**p2** — Software Marketing in 2018

**p3** — 1. Blogs

**p5** — 2. Infographics

**p7** — 3. Remarketing

**p8** — 4. Referral Marketing

**p10** — 5. Educational Videos

**p12** — 6. Google Ads

**p13** — 7. Calls to Action

**p15** — 8. LinkedIn

**p17** — Conclusion

## Introduction

The modern world is built on software, so it should be no surprise that the industry is booming. In 2017, the software industry not only outpaced the U.S. economy in terms of growth but also boosted employment across the country.

With achievement comes fierce competition. High growth means there's plenty of success to go around, but only to companies that are able to scale with the demand for their services. In the marketing space, the ferocity of the competition between software companies is very apparent. Advertising spend by SaaS companies is expected to increase by **118% by 2020**, according to a report from Blissfully.

As noted by Apalan CEO Frederic Laluyaux, software companies today compete in a market that is not bound by country borders. Working on a global scale, companies must have a global reach. Multichannel marketing is a necessity.

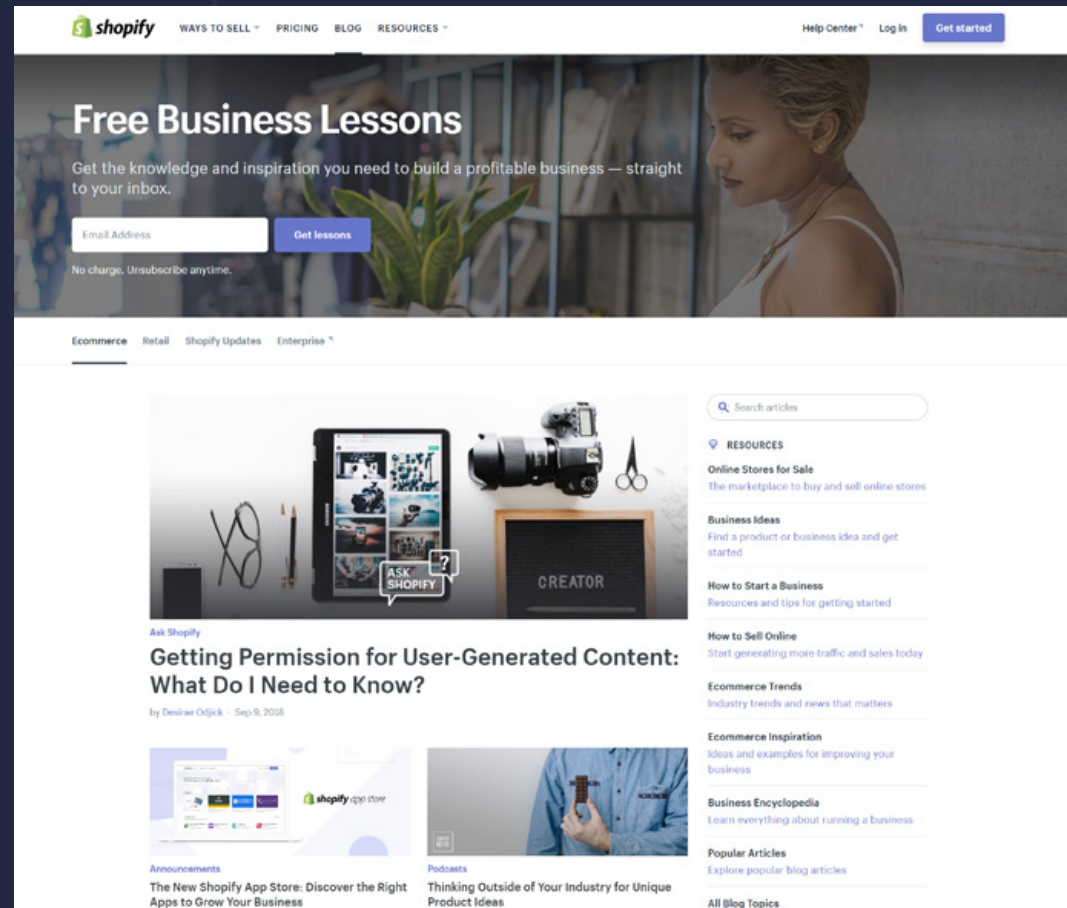




# 1. Blogs

**Blogs serve a dual function in driving business growth.** On one hand, a blog provides value to readers by answering questions, presenting solutions, providing expertise and identifying trends. On the other hand, it supports on-page SEO strategies by making the site easier to find.

Shopify has created a shining example of what a software company's blog could and should be. In addition to company announcements, readers find how-to guides, curated opinions from industry experts, podcasts and interactive Q&A sessions.



The screenshot shows the Shopify blog homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Shopify logo, 'WAYS TO SELL', 'PRICING', 'BLOG', and 'RESOURCES'. On the right, there are links for 'Help Center', 'Log in', and a 'Get started' button. The main header features a large image of a woman looking at a laptop, with the text 'Free Business Lessons' and a sub-headline 'Get the knowledge and inspiration you need to build a profitable business — straight to your inbox.' Below this is an email sign-up form with a 'Get lessons' button and a note 'No charge. Unsubscribe anytime.'

The main content area has a navigation bar with 'Ecommerce', 'Retail', 'Shopify Updates', and 'Enterprise'. Below this is a search bar for articles and a 'RESOURCES' section with links to 'Online Stores for Sale', 'Business Ideas', 'How to Start a Business', and 'How to Sell Online'. The featured article is 'Getting Permission for User-Generated Content: What Do I Need to Know?' by Desirae Odjick, dated Sep 9, 2018. Below the featured article are sections for 'Announcements' (The New Shopify App Store) and 'Podcasts' (Thinking Outside of Your Industry).

At the bottom right, there are sections for 'Ecommerce Trends', 'Ecommerce Inspiration', 'Business Encyclopedia', 'Popular Articles', and 'All Blog Topics'.





The Shopify blog provides value to existing and prospective customers. Someone searching the web for tips on starting an ecommerce site is highly likely to find answers here. In a recent article, Shopify content creator Desirae Odjick answered community questions regarding user-generated content permissions.

The strategy employed here supports SEO efforts by targeting a common question that potential customers are likely searching. Landing on the page, readers learn from an established expert, who also happens to be a Shopify representative. This solidifies in the reader's mind Shopify's expertise and thought leadership in the ecommerce space.



## Getting Permission for User-Generated Content: What Do I Need to Know?

by Desirae Odjick · Ask Shopify  
Sep 9, 2018 · 4 minute read · Leave a comment

User-generated content can help bolster your core marketing efforts, from providing valuable social proof to supplying you with gorgeous product shots to use on social media. But when you see an impressive photo that features your products, and the creator has tagged you or used your branded hashtag, do you have free rein to use the photo as you please?

It's one of the murkiest questions to answer when you're just getting started with user-generated content, and that's what we're addressing today on Ask Shopify.

**Question:**

OK, my question is regarding Instagram and Facebook. I'm finding it very difficult to find reliable info around using other people's images on my accounts. What sort of permission do I need in order to repurpose other people's photos on my store and social media? How should I get it?

**Answer:**

Being a small business without legal counsel on speed-dial doesn't give you free rein to ignore the legalities of digital content. To start, sincere kudos to you for bringing this up before diving in.

Join 446,005 entrepreneurs who already have a head start. Get free online marketing tips and resources delivered directly to your inbox.

Email Address

Get lessons

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**RESOURCES**

**Online Stores for Sale**  
The marketplace to buy and sell online stores

**Business Ideas**  
Find a product or business idea and get started

**How to Start a Business**  
Resources and tips for getting started

**How to Sell Online**  
Start generating more traffic and sales today

**Ecommerce Trends**  
Industry trends and news that matters

**Ecommerce Inspiration**  
Ideas and examples for improving your business

**Business Encyclopedia**  
Learn everything about running a business

**Popular Articles**  
Explore popular blog articles

**All Blog Topics**  
Explore all blog topics

**POPULAR**

**Rev Up Your Revenues: 10 Trending Products to Sell in 2018**

**7 Ways to Start a Business Without Quitting Your Day Job**

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# Infographics

ALL SECURITY ARCHIVING CONTINUITY MIGRATION PRODUCTIVITY OFFICE 365 GDPR

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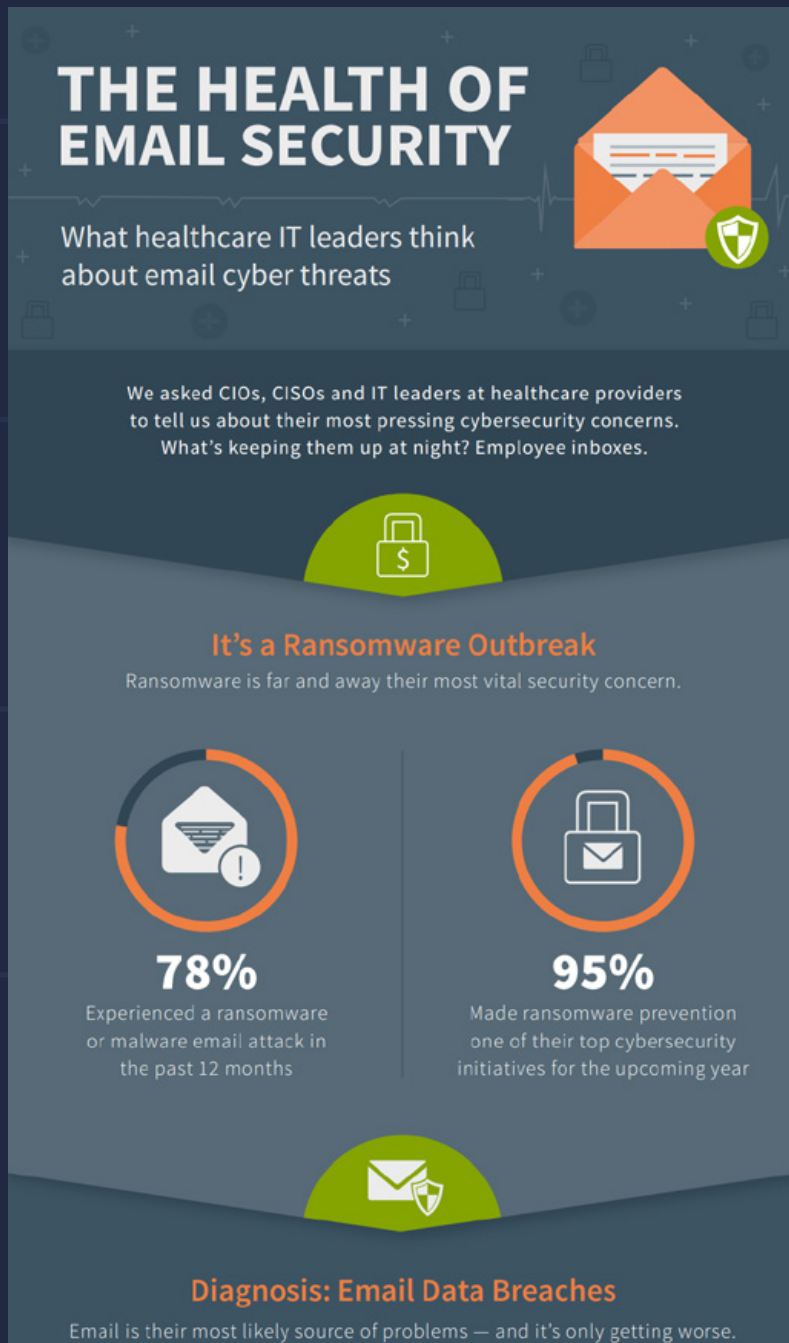
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Never Be a Ransomware Hostage  
[READ MORE](#)

## 2. Infographics

Infographics provide valuable content in a **format that is easily digested**. The format is visually engaging, and the content it displays can be comprehended at a glance. Though blogs and other long-form content are designed to provide in-depth ideas, infographics are perfectly suited for readers hunting for a quick bite of information.

Information security company Mimecast has used the format to display findings from data-rich survey results.





Mimecast's infographic series takes what could be a boring list of numbers and converts them into engaging collateral. The content is directed at potential buyers — executive leaders at businesses using cloud-based email management tools. Their infographics show that they clearly understand the needs of such a specialized audience.

Infographics can lead interested readers further down the sales funnel, while making them better qualified leads by the time they interact with the sales department. Prospective customers who arrive via a marketing channel have had more opportunities to learn about the solutions to their pain points.

**DOWNLOAD OUR EBOOK TO LEARN MORE!**

In the case of Mimecast, readers who view an infographic are then prompted to download an eBook that discusses the information in greater detail. The further down this path readers go, the more engaged they are likely to be when they become a lead.



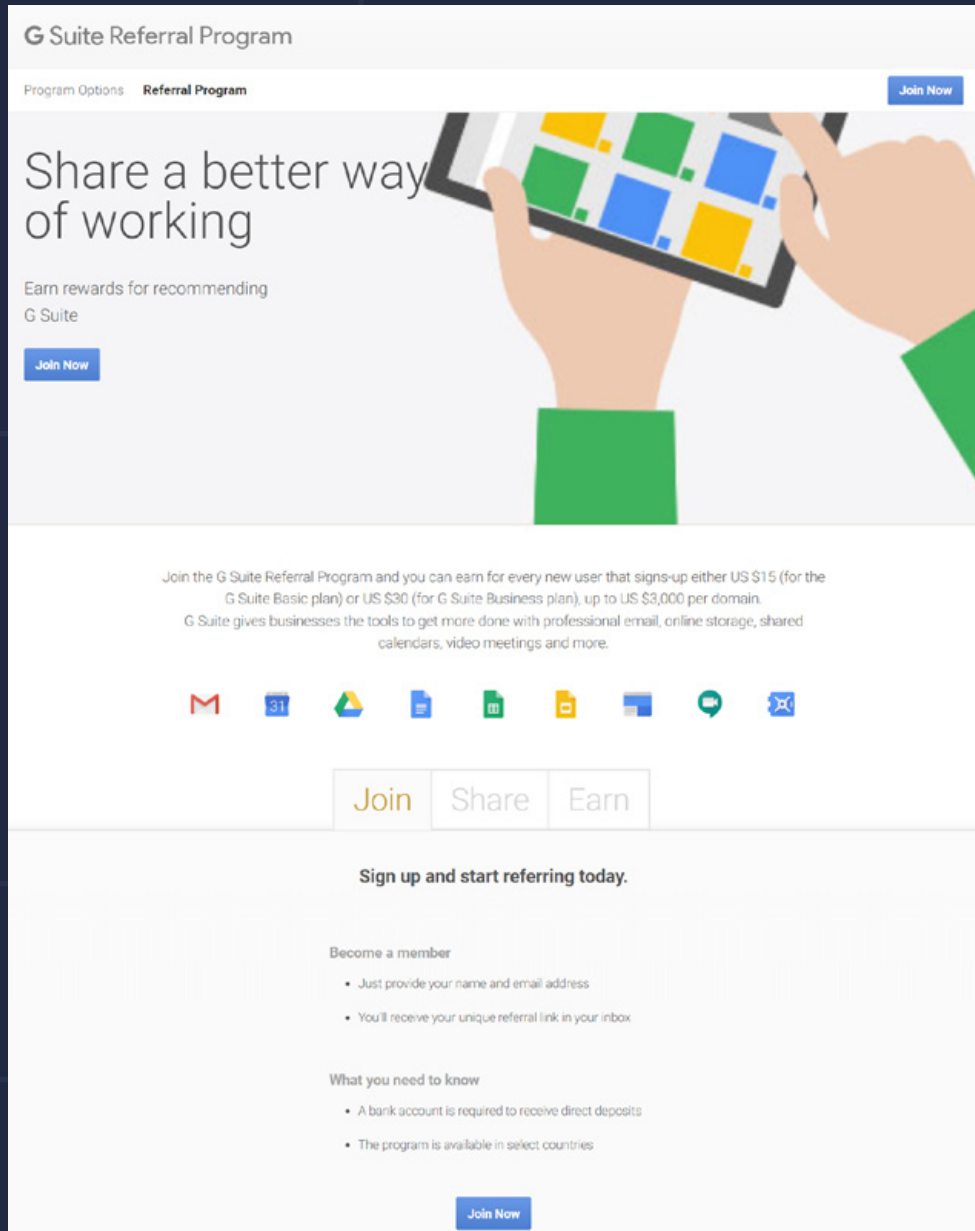
### 3. Remarketing

Companies that do not have a remarketing strategy are **throwing away earned leads**. When a potential customer arrives at a website, it is because they are looking for something specific. However, that does not mean they are ready to make a purchase. Remarketing leverages your content marketing strategy by improving your ability to engage with readers who have visited your website, opened an email from your organization or attended a webinar presented by one of your thought leaders.

Intuit Quickbooks employs remarketing in an innovative manner. The company specifically calls out to its intended audience of freelancers and contractors and offers a free trial of its services. This strategy is more likely to engage its intended audience, because it shows that Intuit understands that entrepreneurs want to try tools before they invest in them. A freelancer may have a limited budget for finance tools, so the free trial could make or break a decision to buy.



In addition to targeting readers who have already shown interest in your organization, remarketing tools also display ads to readers who have shown similar interests and patterns online. From a growth perspective, this strategy increases the number of opportunities to engage customers at multiple stages within the sales funnel.



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Join the G Suite Referral Program and you can earn for every new user that signs-up either US \$15 (for the G Suite Basic plan) or US \$30 (for G Suite Business plan), up to US \$3,000 per domain. G Suite gives businesses the tools to get more done with professional email, online storage, shared calendars, video meetings and more.



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- Just provide your name and email address
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**What you need to know**

- A bank account is required to receive direct deposits
- The program is available in select countries

[Join Now](#)

## 4. Referral Marketing

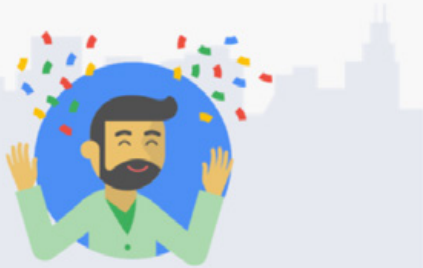
Referral marketing is a strong strategy because it adds to your overall marketing efforts without increasing costs substantially. Also called affiliate marketing, this strategy rewards **third-party marketers for generating leads on your behalf.**

As with so many other digital marketing channels, Google leads the way in this space. The company's G Suite Referral Program pays \$15 for basic plan referrals and \$30 for business plan referrals, up to \$3,000 per domain.



## G Suite Referral Program

Become the next  
success story



Get inspired by success stories from other referrers and how G Suite has helped businesses achieve more.

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See what others have to say:

1

"We know that our customers will also see huge benefits from their G Suite account."

*Evan Scoboria,  
owner of Shea Media*

2

"The easiest referral is the one you believe in."

*Bradley Charbonneau,  
owner of Likoma*

3

"It (G Suite Referral Program) didn't just change our business, it's the foundation of our business."

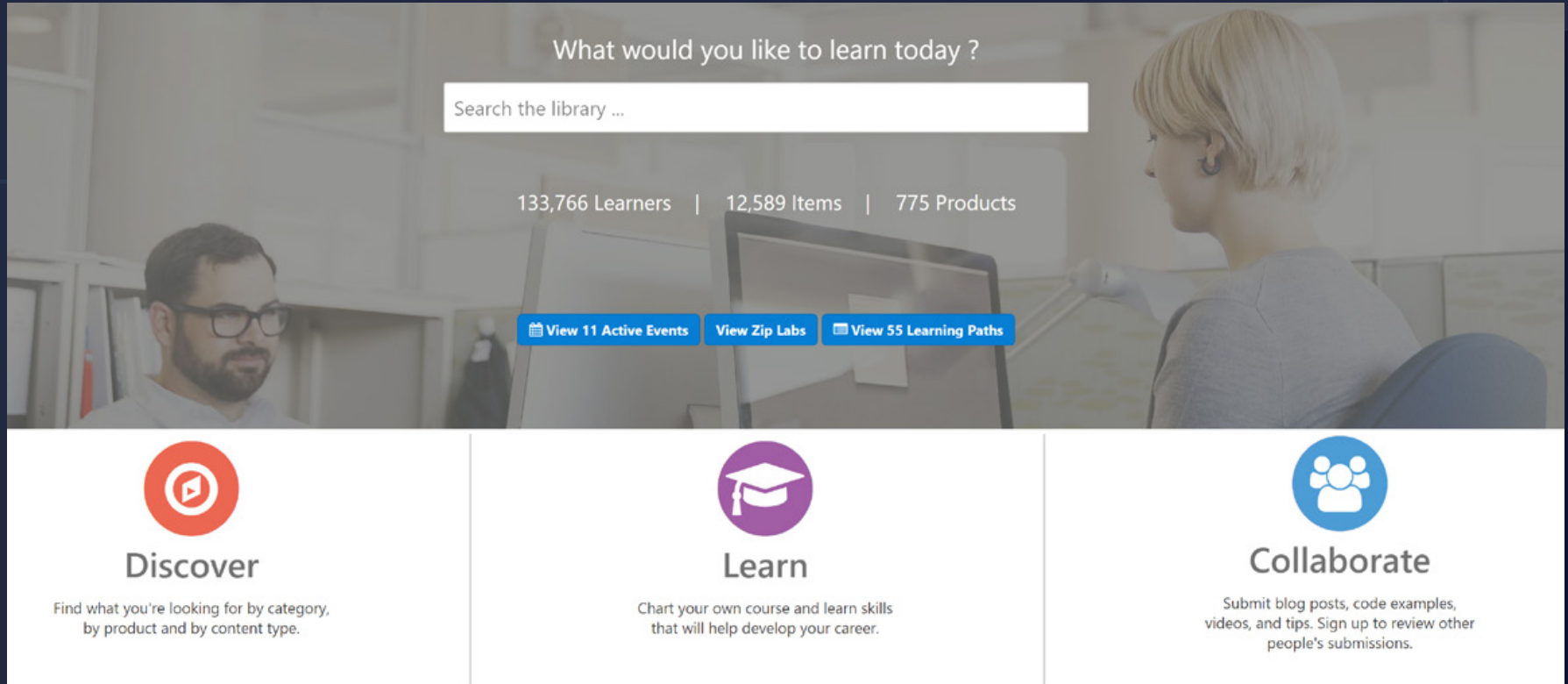
*Jon Grant, founder and  
CTO at ManagedAdmin*

Happy Sharing!  
The G Suite Referral Team

Offering cash rewards may not be possible for every organization, but it can still be an effective strategy. Companies can offer rewards such as credits toward services, discounts or rewards from partner companies.

The key to an effective referral program is **engaging regularly with your affiliates**. Successful programs equip affiliates with the knowledge and tools they need to increase their referral rates. Google provides its program members with an analytics portal for campaign tracking. Additionally, Google sends out periodic emails featuring tips and tricks.





What would you like to learn today ?

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### Discover

Find what you're looking for by category, by product and by content type.

### Learn

Chart your own course and learn skills that will help develop your career.

### Collaborate

Submit blog posts, code examples, videos, and tips. Sign up to review other people's submissions.

## 5. Educational Videos

Few people read user manuals anymore, and for a good reason. What a manual can explain in complex terms in a few pages, **a video can simplify in a minute**. Tutorials, how-to and explainer videos are essential for software companies that want to ensure their products are easy to use.

Oracle has taken educational content to the next level by creating a robust learning library. Users can search for topics, learn from industry experts and even collaborate on their own submissions.



Learners can browse topics such as big data, virtualization, hardware and more. Each section contains videos, eBooks, articles and complete courses. Importantly, users can learn at their own pace, which is important for busy professionals. Via an intuitive interface, users can see their progress, engage with other learners and visualize their educational success.

Oracle takes learning a step further by providing an active calendar of learning events. With online and in-person sessions, learners can benefit from expert advice in a variety of settings. Workshops take learners on an in-depth journey through highly complex topics. This incredible resource is one of many reasons that Oracle is a worldwide technology leader.



A screenshot of the Oracle Learning Paths website. The header reads "Learning Paths" and "Learning Paths are a collection of tutorials, videos and quizzes to quickly teach you technology and application skills." Below the header is a search bar and a "Filter" button. The main content area displays a grid of learning path cards. Each card has a title, a progress indicator (e.g., "20%"), and a "View" button. The cards cover topics like "Risks of SaaS, Oracle Integration Cloud Max You Covered", "Monitor &amp; Manage: Create and Manage Your Workspaces Offerings in Partner Portal", "Creating and Configuring the Oracle Data Integrator Standalone Agent", "Creating and Configuring the Oracle Data Integrator Collector Agent", "Extending OI Embedded Enterprise Business Processes with Oracle JET Pages and Enterprise Extensions", "Apply Oracle Database 19c New Features", "19c New Features for EXAS", and "19c Upgrade".

A screenshot of the Oracle "Find Your Next Event" website. The header reads "Find Your Next Event". Below the header is a search bar with a "Search" button and a "Reset" button. The main content area displays a grid of event cards. Each card has a title, a date range, a language, and a "Public" indicator. The cards cover topics like "Oracle Zip Labs Challenge", "Container Native Development workshop", "DevOps and Cloud Native Microservices workshop", and "Containerized Development with Docker workshop".

## 6. Google Ads

Pay-per-click advertising remains an effective marketing strategy for B2B SaaS companies because it has the ability to reach prospective customers searching for solutions online. Paid advertisements work in tandem with an organic strategy to pull in users from multiple channels. It's important to understand that organic and paid traffic cannot replace each other. In fact, Google research revealed that **89 percent** of traffic generated by ads is not replaced by organic clicks when the ad campaign is put on pause.

A great example of an effective Google Ads campaign comes from Zoho. The company provides many SaaS services, including email, accounting services and help desk software. When a user searches Google for SaaS help desk solutions, they're presented with an ad that delivers an impressive amount of information in a small space.

In this short ad, users learn that Zoho offers a cloud-based, context-aware help desk solution. Plus, they are given multiple links to choose from, depending on where they are in the buying process.

If users search for online accounting software, they're likely to find another Zoho ad. This one tells users about Zoho's free trial offer and presents links to informative collateral such as blogs, case studies and customer testimonials. By integrating their Google Ads campaign with content marketing strategies, Zoho is able to lead customers down the buying funnel at their own pace.

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## 7. Calls-to-Action

If you want your users to take action, **you have to ask**. Calls to action are an essential piece of any software marketing campaign because they lead readers to other collateral that might interest them. A CTA strategy can be employed within a blog post, landing page, or other digital asset.

A typical user experience might look something like this:



### STEP ONE:

The user arrives at a blog page via a search engine results page.



### STEP TWO:

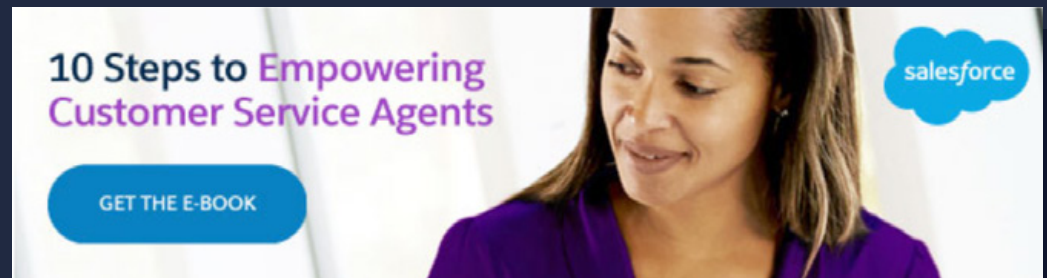
The user reads the article and sees a CTA at the bottom of the page.



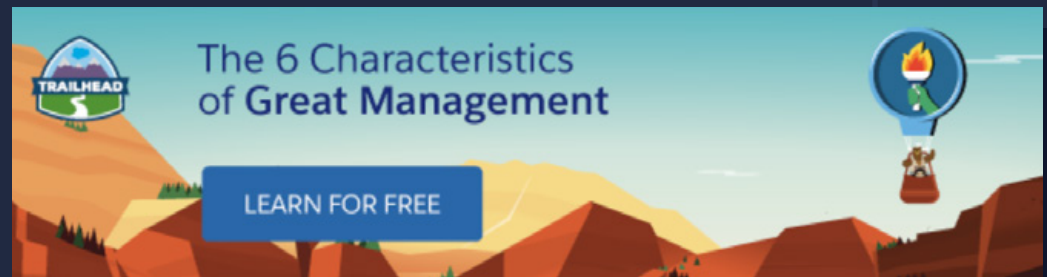
### STEP THREE:

Low-quality leads exit the page. High-quality leads click the link and move further down the funnel.

Salesforce uses a CTA strategy that targets users at multiple stages of the buying process. For example, at the end of a blog post about improving customer experience, readers are prompted to download an eBook on customer service.



Another blog post about a specific Salesforce feature ends with a CTA that directs users to a free elearning course. A CTA on another post leads to a registration page for an upcoming Salesforce event. Importantly, each CTA is matched to the content of the blog post it appears in. **The more relevant the CTA is to the content it appears in, the more likely users are to click on it.** These examples show that Salesforce clearly understands their customer buying journey.







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**Change the game: Winning with AI**  
September 13th  
New York, New York

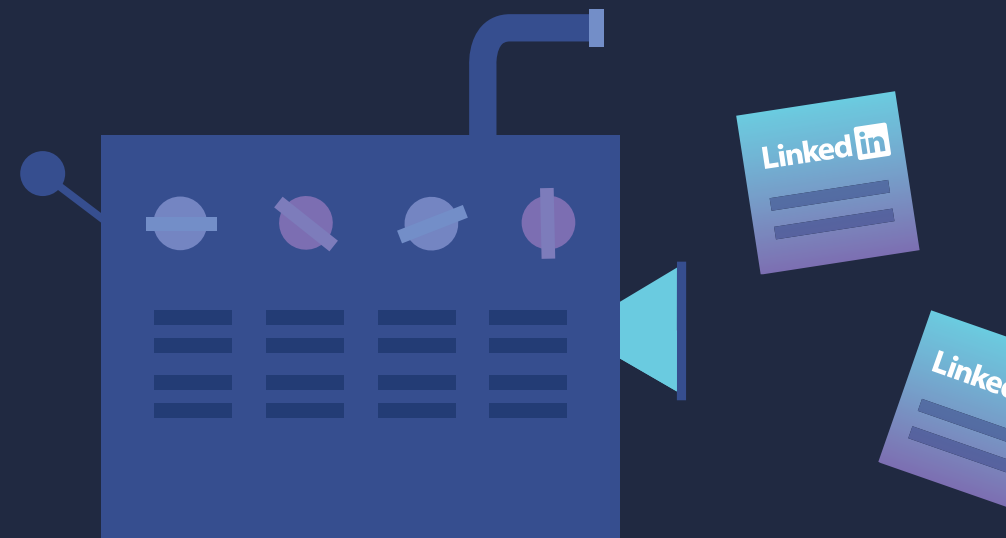
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## 8. LinkedIn

Social media is tricky to leverage in a B2B strategy because most users aren't browsing their feeds with the intention of learning about business services. LinkedIn is the exception.

Users visit the site to discover emerging trends, read the latest news and interact with their professional networks. Software companies can leverage the platform to deliver content, share insights and engage with potential customers on a more personal level. **Using marketing automation software**, companies can leverage LinkedIn alongside their other content strategies.





IBM Analytics offers a perfect example of how a LinkedIn Business page can be an effective marketing tool. In addition to information about the company, visitors find a stream of content, including blog articles, infographics, videos, animated gifs and more.

Importantly, LinkedIn makes it easy for users to start a conversation on each post and gives them the option to share content with their network. This strategy establishes the company as a subject authority while simultaneously spreading its message to a broader audience.

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## Conclusion

Software companies need to assess their marketing strategies frequently to ensure they're evolving with emerging trends.

The examples in this eBook demonstrate the variety and complexity of the marketing strategies that have proven successful in 2018, but they are neither comprehensive nor set in stone. Just as the software industry is in a state of constant change, so is the world of digital marketing. A modern blog is much more sophisticated than a blog written five years ago.

**Companies that effectively leverage a multichannel approach to marketing are better equipped to thrive in the modern marketplace.**





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