

EFFECTIVE MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

*Harnessing the Power of Co-Marketing
to Reach New Audiences*

BY JUSTIN BELLEME

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INTRODUCTION: THE POWER & POTENTIAL OF MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

You want to tell your target audience about your products or services. Getting the word out that they're available is key. But how do you do that?

Marketing professionals spend a lot of time discussing ways to generate awareness, traffic, and exposure through traditional advertising, digital promotions, and content marketing, but they often overlook one very important opportunity.

The blind spot? *Partnering with other people.*

What do I mean by that? Think of the saying "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

It all boils down to creating and fostering partnerships that are reciprocal in nature.

Really effective **marketing partnerships** are created when two or more organizations work together and support each other's marketing efforts for mutually beneficial outcomes.

Also known as **co-marketing**, marketing partnerships are win-win opportunities that offer value for everyone involved and have a tangible return on investment. To be truly effective, a partnership should have an element of relationship building so that, as both parties gain success, the relationship itself can also grow.

In the last decade, through my work as founder and lead strategist of an internet marketing agency and co-founder of an internet marketing school, I've seen amazing results from marketing partnerships. I have helped businesses scale up by growing their email lists by thousands of potential customers and by surpassing sales goals, even selling out events.

If you're interested in leveling up your business by learning the best practices for marketing partnerships, then this e-book is for you.

We'll start by covering the reasons to consider marketing partnerships to accomplish your goals. Next, we'll look at the roles of influencers, the compounding value co-marketing can offer, types of partners, and ways to work with them. To illustrate the strategy involved, I'll

draw from real-life examples and case studies from my own agency, and share some actual outreach letters and content that helped me get the ball rolling for these partnerships.

By the end, you'll have some tools, tactics, and tips to try out your own co-marketing plan.

Have questions or comments about the material covered? Email me at justin@jbmediagroupllc.com, and I'll see what I can do to help.

Oh, and in lieu of a backscratch, please share this e-book link with anyone you think will benefit from the information shared.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Belleme". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin Belleme

PARTNERSHIP MARKETING CHECKLIST

- Define your marketing goal that can be supported by partner marketing*
- Determine your campaign type*
- Create your campaign strategy*
- Build a list of partners*
- Reach out to prospective partners*
- Confirm partner participation*
- Create campaign content*
- Launch campaign*
- Follow up with partners to ensure participation*
- Track results*

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1 | THE POWER OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Maybe you're wondering about the true value of working with another company or individual. Why not go it alone?

Well, here's the thing: A marketing partnership allows you and your brand access to the network or existing audience of the partner. This increases exposure, but in a way that actually builds trust since you are borrowing some of the trust and connection the audience already has with the partner company or brand.

If, for example, your business partners up with a blogger who already has a strong personal brand that appeals to people you'd like to reach, you can gain potential customers if the blogger shares positive content about your product to their already established network. This gives you instant credibility to an entirely new audience.

“ *Think of a marketing partnership as a stamp of approval.* ”

Reaching new people on your own is challenging because it takes a lot of time and effort to build trust with people who aren't familiar with your product or service. Think of a marketing partnership as a stamp of approval. If partners are willing to vouch for you through co-marketing efforts, you can get in front of their audience and become a part of their community. It's an automatic in.

WHY IS REACHING EXISTING AUDIENCES EASIER?

You may be familiar with some of the different marketing tactics aimed at reaching new people. **Inbound Marketing** tactics include blogging, email marketing, and SEO or search engine optimization. Inbound tactics require a lot of time, research, and the ability to write high quality content.

Outbound Marketing tactics include direct mail, paid media exposure, and other forms of advertising whether that be traditional, online, or some hybrid of the two. As expected,



outbound tactics can cost a lot of money and typically require advertising or buying lists of contact information for people who might be interested in what you have to offer. These tactics also require a certain level of strategy and sophistication to be most effective.

So let's explore why reaching existing audiences is so much easier—and less expensive—than reaching new audiences.

Allow me to first explain what I mean by "existing audiences." Your business will likely have several different existing audiences. One audience can be housed on an email list or traditional mail list. Others are followers on social media. Readers of your blog or website are also an existing audience. These are people who receive and/or engage with information about your company regularly.

“When you have someone's email address, you can reach them directly for next to nothing.”

With existing audiences, email is one of the least expensive—and most cost effective—methods of communication. When you have someone's email address, you can reach them directly for next to nothing. If they already know you and like what you are doing, they are more likely to open the email and take action on the content.

“As you get less connected to your audience, you have to spend more money to reach them.”

Second to email, social media has the next lowest cost for communicating with an existing audience. However, social media is a slightly less direct connection, compared to email. As you get less connected to your audience, you have to spend more money to reach them. That's why paid media exists. Something as simple as compiling the right email list can do wonders for your marketing results, especially if customers are already familiar with your brand.

How does this connect to partnerships?

Since connecting with existing audiences uses less resources than starting from scratch (and is highly effective), it may be necessary for your company to tap into the established audiences of others. This is why you see most big brands use celebrities, corporate sponsorships, and industry partners to generate greater awareness for their products and services. These big brands are

using the established trust in celebrities and sponsors to help grow their own audience.

Smaller businesses that can't afford to hire celebrities or sponsor major events have to be more creative, and more collaborative, in order to tap into the world of marketing partnerships.

Working together with other small companies, nonprofits, and niche online content producers, you can create a variety of partner-supported **campaigns** that can help grow your own email and social media audience. Other positive outcomes of working together can include growing your brand awareness to new audiences and expanding your reach around specific promotions or events.

WHAT ARE YOU PROMOTING?

We will go into a lot more detail later about the types of campaigns and partnerships that we recommend, but for now it's important to know that some types of partnerships are free or very low cost (via sponsorships, products, or commission payments). Typically there's at least some element of time involved to coordinate and develop the partnership and execute the strategy, but in some cases that's all there is—just creativity and a little time.

SMALL BUDGET? GET CREATIVE!

Partnerships can typically be fairly low risk and high reward when done correctly. And it doesn't have to take a lot of money. There are several ways that small businesses can use partnerships to overcome the limitations of a small inbound marketing budget. When you think outside the box, you can win at partner marketing even with a very tight budget.

Two options that require an exchange of funds are engaging in what's known as content amplification (i.e. sending funds to partners for them to perform social media advertising on your behalf) or compensating the partner for participating in the campaign. We'll get into these more later, ([see page 19](#)), but rest assured that your budget does not have to be large for this to be effective.

WHAT DO SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES LOOK LIKE?

Let's say you decide you'd like to develop a marketing partnership around a particular campaign you're running.

Before you can think about developing partnerships, it is helpful to have a frame of reference about what you are looking to promote. Here are some possibilities:

- > Introduction of a new product
- > Launch of a new service
- > Expansion into a new market
- > Launch or expansion of an event
- > Distribution of educational content

Always begin by asking yourself: *What is the goal with this partnership?* The long-term goal for most marketing strategies is to attract new customers. But sometimes getting that new customer is a multistep process and closing the sale is not realistic for the initial campaign.

Short-term goals may include increasing brand awareness, building your social media following, growing your email list, supporting the launch of a new product or service, or increasing the attendance at an event.

Typically, partnerships are developed for a specific campaign, promotion, or event. However, once established, you can leverage existing partnerships for fresh opportunities as new ideas come up. For example, if you have attracted several partners to help you promote an event and then you decide to create a contest to support the event, the partners can be engaged to help promote the contest. With existing partners in place, you can move more quickly to execute and promote new ideas and campaigns.

CAPTURE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

You want to make sure your campaigns include a way to capture your target audience. Remember, you want to grow your audience, so you want to try to attract your partner's audience to become a part of your audience. There are different levels for this. If you gain a new customer from a sale, that's the highest level. Getting email addresses from potential customers is the second highest level. Gaining a social media follower is the level below that, and the lowest level is when a new audience becomes aware of you.

Even if you cannot capture a new audience member, there is still an impact. As a marketer, you understand the fact that anyone who sees your content or promotion—if it's well branded and well positioned—will have greater awareness of your business and brand. This familiarity in and of itself has value.

Still, you want to aim for the top, and aim for email address (and other contact info) when you can. Next to a sales conversion, an email address has the most tangible value. Consider creating some sort of promotion, package, or a strong piece of content that a potential new audience member would want in exchange for providing this information.

2 | INFLUENCERS

Let's begin by defining what **influencers** are. Or rather *who* they are. Typically an influencer:

- is a thought leader with a topic focus and an online audience;
- talks about a very specific subject and has a passionate, geographically distributed audience;
- can be a niche athlete or a celebrity who has found fame through a widely circulated blog; and
- uses online channels, such as blogs, social media, YouTube, podcasts, and Instagram, among other platforms.

HOW TO FIND INFLUENCERS

Getting started with influencer marketing can be a little intimidating. One of the most challenging aspects can be how to find the right influencers for your campaign.

Here are several steps to get you started.

- 1. Search for blogs.** There used to be more tools for discovering blogs, including Google Blog Search and other blog specific directories and search tools. These are mostly gone now, so the best place to start is by searching niche educational topics of interest to your target audience. Create a spreadsheet of the blogs that are a good fit, and take note of their social media accounts. You are looking for an engaged audience that is larger than your existing audience, but not so much larger that the influencer might be out of your league as a partner.
- 2. Search hashtags on social media sites.** If you have identified hashtags that are of interest to your target audience, then you can explore these on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to help discover social media accounts associated with influencers who you can consider for future partnerships.
- 3. Talk to your existing partners.** Influencers typically get to know each other, both online and in person. If you already have a few relationships in place, you can ask your existing partners, especially if they are influencers, to recommend other influencers to work with.
- 4. Research who is linking to your peers and competitors.** Exploring the websites that are linking to or posting reviews about other brands that are either your peers or competitors

can help you find influencers to work with. Some influencers will not be available if they have an exclusive relationship with a competitor, but many influencers are happy to work with competing brands.

- 5. Use a professional list building tool.** Professional tools such as Cision or other PR list building tools can be very helpful in finding influencers. Social media tools such as BuzzSumo can also be very helpful.

HOW TO SELECT THE RIGHT INFLUENCERS

Influencers can range in popularity from under a thousand followers in their audience to many millions. What you want to do is find influencers who are super focused on what your company offers and who have the right sized audience to help you stretch and grow a little bit, but aren't so large that they're prohibitively expensive or overvalue what their endorsement or review of a product is worth.

You'll also want to avoid influencers who are too broad in subject matter where their promotion of your product would only appeal to a small percentage of their fans. That doesn't help them and it doesn't help you either, so you want to try to find influencers who are a good fit for your products and services.

I find that for long-term marketing, working with a combination of influencers is going to give you the best return on investment—especially those that have a popular blog with strong SEO. If an influencer writes a blog about your products or services and they have a solid online reputation and strong potential to rank, then their blog about you could show up for keywords that you desire.

Ultimately, their endorsement could entice people looking for your products and services to visit your website. Depending on how you set it up, that might be a free link offering SEO value or it could be an **affiliate link** that's continuously giving them a commission or referral payment for anyone that follows that link and makes a purchase from your website.

I like to think that if your company is looking to communicate with a niche national audience then there's almost certainly at least one influencer you could be working with. If your company is a local service business, finding the right influencer can be a bit more challenging. In some cases however, it can work out. If you're a tourism-related business, perhaps there are travel bloggers coming through your area who want to cover you.

3 | PARTNERS HELP SPREAD YOUR MESSAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

I've found that some of the greatest values of marketing partnerships are the creative ways that social media can be used to expand the effectiveness of partner-supported campaigns. Asking partners to share content about the campaign or promotion on their social networks is a direct way to expand your reach and to tap into their audience. I have also discovered on past projects that you can often reach a partner's social media audience through paid advertising for extremely affordable prices.

FACEBOOK ADVERTISING TO COMPOUND OUTCOMES

Social media advertising, especially through Facebook, offers one of the most cost-effective channels for reaching people online. According to Moz, it can cost as little as \$1.54 to reach 1,000 people on Facebook. It can cost closer to \$30 per 1,000 people reached via TV or print advertising. These latter two mediums are often not options if you're on a small budget or if you're looking to target very specific or small audiences.

Remember that partner we talked about earlier who was going to promote a post for us? Facebook advertising can be even more cost effective when the target audience is an existing audience for a partner's page and if the content is highly engaging, such as an exciting promotion or contest. This combination of low average cost for Facebook compared to other mediums—and even lower situational cost when working with partner audiences—makes Facebook advertising for marketing partnerships so powerful.

4 | FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNERS

Since you are aligning your name and brand with that of your partner (long term or briefly), it's important to work with those who share your values and have crossover with your core target audience.

**Note: It can be challenging to work with larger partners because they often want to guard their audience from too many outside marketing messages. Personal relationships and trying to find ways to offer value before asking for help can sometimes break down these barriers.*

Let's take a look at three major categories of potential partners: peers, nonprofits, and affiliates (typically includes influencers).

PEER PARTNERS

Peers are other businesses with which you have an existing relationship. They might be part of your supply chain, your neighborhood/business district, or an informal business group you belong to, such as a business coaching group or a business association. Look for potential peer partners within business groups that are not industry specific, as well as any industry associations you have joined.

EXAMPLE + TIPS ON BUILDING PEER PARTNERSHIPS

Let's say you wrote a review of a potential partner's product on your blog and sent the link out to your newsletter and social media lists. You'd want them to do the same, right? Start by tagging them when you post on social media and link to them when you mention them in your blog. Then, next time you have something to promote you can cite your past support of their products when you reach out.

AN IDEAL PARTNER HAS:

- > A very positive reputation
- > A larger audience or fan base than you currently have*
- > An audience that directly overlaps with your target audience
- > An authentic connection to their audience
- > Partners with a limited number of other existing partners

NONPROFITS

Supporting nonprofits in the community whose mission and target audience aligns with yours is a great way to give back and often provides opportunities to get exposure. Many nonprofit organizations generate revenue by giving exposure to companies that donate money to sponsor events. It's very possible to get creative with this. For example, allow the nonprofit to run a promotion where they give away your products to their audience to spread awareness. You can also offer to make a specified donation to the nonprofit for any new social media fans that join your page during a specific period of time. Another option could be to offer an affiliate commission to the nonprofit in exchange for them sharing information about your products or services with their audience.

AFFILIATE RELATIONSHIPS

You can also work with what are known as affiliates or commission partners. In many cases these partners include influencers. **Affiliate marketing** takes place when one partner has an existing audience and they're looking to monetize that by receiving some sort of sales commission when they tell their audience about your products. This can be very effective if the affiliate/influencer has an active and engaged target audience that directly overlaps with your own target market.

OVER MONETIZATION & HOW TO AVOID IT

In the marketing world, you've likely heard the term *selling out*. Similarly, *over monetization* is when an affiliate or influencer tries to make more money than their current online audience can support. This can lead to selling out and partnering with brands that don't align with their target audience, conducting too many promotions, or otherwise being inauthentic in choosing which products and services to promote or affiliate with. Over monetization is often the result of trying to monetize too early or by having unrealistic expectations for online income. Working with the most authentic affiliates or influencers is better than working with an affiliate that is trying to over monetize their audience, because there is a risk that their list could be worn out by getting too many deals and offers.

EXPLORE UNCHARTED LANDS

I encourage you to not to just focus on the relationships you already have where you can easily ask for a reciprocal scratch on the back. You should look for ways to work with new partners and maybe even in new mediums where you haven't worked before. How can you make time for creating new partnerships and how can you fit the costs into your budget for advertising and marketing?

5 | WHAT TYPES OF CAMPAIGNS CAN PARTNERS SUPPORT?

When approaching marketing partnerships, it's also important to decide what kind of campaign you have the capacity to run. Your campaign type often comes before choosing your partner.

ONLINE SWEEPSTAKES

Online sweepstakes are one of my favorite types of partnerships. (C'mon, who doesn't love winning free stuff?) They can work really well for any sort of company selling either digital or event tickets. Sweepstakes aren't typically used by business to business companies. It often works best if you can create a large prize package made of up of your own products and those of your partners. Typically the main item is a high ticket product or a large quantity of a popular product. It typically comes from the organizing partner, but in some cases can come from an outside partner.

Once you have the main product, it's ideal to gather other items in the same product category from other brands who want to participate in this shared exposure. If you worked with ten or fewer other companies that are related, ask each to contribute a couple hundred dollars worth of merchandise and maybe a couple hundred dollars toward the advertising budget for the campaign. While this budget *typically* includes Facebook ads, there are no set rules. It can also be used for other paid social media, as well as video, digital banner advertising, or even paid blog promotions. When you come together, you can have a prize package worth \$5,000 to \$10,000 with several thousand dollars in what we call **co-op advertising** for the campaign. Examples of a larger prize packages would be a house, car, camper, or the like.

IN-PERSON OR VIRTUAL EVENTS

For nonprofits, service businesses, and businesses that sell directly to other businesses, one viable option is to create an event. Businesses, especially those with a strong educational component, can use marketing partnerships to help reduce marketing costs.



In-Person Events

In-person options can include conferences, workshops, and festivals. These can have a huge impact, but they are also expensive to put on and risky due to higher upfront fixed costs for venue rental, event staffing, supplies, etc. Also, a low turnout to an event can look bad for a business. Fortunately, co-marketing can help reduce these risks. Partners can help organize in-person events and in some cases can even be the make or break factor between success and failure. Several of our largest clients over the years have been large conferences and they have all relied on a combination of media, peer, and influencer partnerships to be successful.

Online Events

If in-person events are too intimidating, it may be a good idea to consider online events, which can be nearly free to execute and can be a good way to work with partners and have them participate in the content without having to fly them into town and set up a big, complicated, and expensive conference. One example would be a virtual conference where you set up interviews with multiple people that you facilitate through Google Hangout, Skype, or other video conference software. Virtual conferences can be pre-recorded and available immediately or delivered live and recorded for those preferring to watch them at another time. In either case, the recordings can be shared afterwards.

The screenshot displays the website for the 5th Annual Food Revolution Summit, held from April 30 to May 8, 2016. The page features a header with the event title and dates, along with a 'BROADCASTING WORLDWIDE APRIL 30TH TO MAY 8TH, 2016' banner and social media sharing options for Facebook and Twitter. The main content area includes text stating that broadcasts start on the hour at 8, 9, and 10 am Pacific Time (PDT), each lasting 45 minutes. It also provides a link to the YouTube live player and a 'SCHEDULE' button for downloading a PDF. A 'Replays' section offers a link to watch past interviews. The page is decorated with images of fresh vegetables like tomatoes and lettuce.

One way to produce this kind of event is to invite experts to talk about some important topics related to your brand. As part of the partnership, partners can promote their participation to their network. Typically partners are required send one to three emails about the virtual event. In most cases, blogging and sharing on social media are also requirements of participation. With the right partners, this can create a lot of buzz.

For an online event to be most effective, there must be some way to capture the email addresses of those who want to gain access to the content. Requesting that people register, even if it's a free event, is typically the key to making this work.

Post Event Product Bundles

You have the option of sharing email addresses of people who register to attend with those partners as well. Oftentimes the follow-up from these virtual events is a bundle for which each partner who participated in the virtual summit provides something, either a product, e-book, guide, or online course. You could market that bundle to everyone who came and participated in the summit, or even those who didn't, via email and social media. Typically the partners offer their products at a discount, leaving some room for the organizer to make a profit while making the bundle a great deal for the potential customers.

Discount Codes Increase Attendance

For live event marketing, it's a really common and great strategy to give partners discount codes to distribute to their lists. For two major conferences that we market for our clients at JB Media Group, we extend discount codes to partners including niche media outlets, influencers, and event talent with a large audience. One is a cruise-based conference for a niche audience and the other is a large conference for social entrepreneurs and impact investors in San Francisco.

In both cases, we have somewhere between 10 and 30 partners and they usually generate 5–10% percent of all the sales through a discount code. These partners help us stay in front of the right people for the conference and keep the buzz going by using email and social media marketing. Most partners also offer blog posts, podcasts, video promotions, and other methods of promotion about the event. In this way, the value for the brand goes beyond the direct sales. If one person sees the event or campaign from multiple sources, then it gives off the impression of being really popular, which in turn increases word of mouth. "I've been seeing this event everywhere. You should totally attend. It's going to be huge!"

COLLABORATIVE DIGITAL RESOURCES AND E-BOOKS

You can work together with your partner to create an online digital resource, such as an e-book or industry white paper.

In an ideal scenario, you can get multiple experts to contribute a little bit of content to a larger piece of content and then create a solid landing page about it. These experts can promote the landing page through email and social media and even paid social media. On the page, you can ask people to provide an email address in exchange for access to the e-book. In some cases,



you may even consider selling the full version of the e-book or bundle (but offering a teaser for free).

The screenshot shows a website for SNACKNATION. The main heading is "121 Proven Employee Wellness Program Ideas For Your Office". Below the heading is a photo of a group of people in costumes. To the right, there is a "Helpful Resources" section with a red box titled "How healthy is your office?" and a "TAKE THE QUIZ" button. Below that is an "About SnackNation" section with a photo of people. At the bottom, a large green box contains the text "Want to revive your employee wellness program?" and "Download this entire list of 121 employee wellness ideas as a PDF. Includes 10 bonus ideas not found in this post!". There are two buttons: "Yes, I want the PDF!" and "No, I don't care about wellness".

This kind of landing page is usually housed on the website for the organization that coordinated the creation of the resource. In some cases it makes sense to create a new website dedicated to the resource.

Typically these types of campaigns are to generate leads, so we often recommend making the collaborative document free, but requiring an email address so that you can follow up with the audience later about your paid products and services.

6 | STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

As the expression goes, don't put all your eggs in one basket. Building and maintaining partnerships takes time and effort. For this reason, I recommend creating multiple partnerships at once. This will also help to spread out your risk a little bit between partners. Some will be a great fit and really good at executing the partnership, others will be more of a stretch, and some will fall short of your expectations. Some partners will go above and beyond and may even do more than what was asked. For that reason, there's value in including enough diversity among your partners in your program. Diversity refers to a group of partners with a range of reach—including audience size, type, areas of focus, and preferred communication channels. A diverse partner program is more resilient.

ONE APPROACH: CREATE, COORDINATE & BALANCE CAMPAIGNS

One strategy to consider is putting your business in the role of creating the campaign and coordinating it. It leads to more control over the outcome. That way, if you have one or two partners who don't perform well, you might still be able to execute a successful campaign. Furthermore, because there are only so many hours in a day, it's a good idea to balance launching your own campaigns with also trying to participate in a handful of partnerships where you're doing a passive amount of work, as one of the spokes on a wheel of someone else's campaign. That way you can spread out your chance of being successful.

POISE THE CAMPAIGN FOR REPLICATION

Whether you're in the role of initiator or that of a more passive participant, partnerships can lead to the development of campaigns that you may be able to repeat year after year with your existing and new partners. Something that starts small can build into something really large and successful.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT NUMBER OF PARTNERS

How many partners are too many? It's fun to form ideas and to recruit partners, and in theory people like these kind of strategies, but when it comes down to actually following through in a timely manner, things can sometimes fall apart.

Sometimes the actual work of supporting the partnership falls to someone other than the person who said “yes” to the agreement. For example, the owner of another company may have agreed to the plan, but their marketing or social media staff who has a hundred other responsibilities would actually be the ones to follow through and execute the partnership agreement. It’s really easy to lose momentum in the execution phase and end up in a situation where you had a great idea and a great looking landing page and a great partnership, and the only people who are hearing about it are your own fans—this doesn’t make it a *true* partnership. If you want it to really work, the partners have to do their part. This is why it’s important to choose the right partners and to choose the right number of partners. Having too many can be just as ineffective as having too few.

HOW TO MEASURE PARTNER SUCCESS

It’s also important to have a way to measure the success of each partnership so that over time, you can focus more energy on the most successful partners.

Here are five ways to measure the impact of your partnership:

- 1. Branded partner coupons:** Partners can each have a unique coupon so that any sales activity can be traced back to the correct partner.
- 2. How did you hear?:** You can add the question *How did you learn about us?* to your sales process or sales follow-up. Existing partners can be added to a drop-down list or through a fill-in-the-blank text field.
- 3. Unique partner landing pages:** Each partner can have a separate page on your website for them to send traffic to. This helps track total traffic when comparing partners.
- 4. URL tracking:** Each partner can be sent special tracking codes to add to their links. This is common in affiliate marketing, but can also be created using [custom tracking codes](#) for Google Analytics as well.
- 5. Hashtags:** Campaign specific hashtags can be used to help track the social media activities of partners. In most cases, everyone on the campaign partnership would use the same hashtag.

7 | PARTNER PROMOTED POSTS

As with every tool of marketing, Facebook advertising has evolved and will continue to change. One of the opportunities that has really been working for our clients and projects lately is to go beyond your company's business Facebook page. Use your Facebook ad budget for **boosted posts** and ads on Facebook, *and* to fund **partner promoted posts** on your partners' pages.

Ask yourself: Can you work with partners and send them some money to do a post about your business and boost it to their audience? The secret is out: I have seen this strategy return some of the lowest cost per impression or cost per engagement of all the ad campaigns that I have executed on Facebook over the last few years.

WHY IS IT SUCCESSFUL?

Boosting partner posts combines two really important success factors. We mentioned the first earlier in this e-book: It's really inexpensive to communicate with an existing audience on Facebook.

The second is that since the partner is endorsing your products, you're reaching a new audience with a trusted endorsement from the partners' page. This really combines to offer a lot of power. It's sort of like an affiliate, but in some cases it doesn't require the commission. This can just be a friendly thing and it goes back and forth or part of a larger campaign where maybe you're sharing the email addresses that are captured from a sweepstakes or online contest.

Conversions

These types of promotions feel so much more authentic than simply targeting the partners' fans with your own content on your page. Across the board, they're more likely to get clicks and engagement and even **conversions** (your established goal for the campaign) because it taps into the level of trust between the partner and their audience.

And it's also less expensive. It costs less for them to reach their fans than for you to reach their fans. If you just send them the money, it's so much more affordable and a much stronger overall strategy. If you do it over time and work with the same partners over and over again, their fans get to know you better and you get multiple impressions. You can even offer your partners the same opportunity to reach out to your audience in exchange. You may even plan a whole year when you commit to spending some of your budget to promoting them and they commit to spending some of their budget promoting you and you don't even have to send each other money.



Improve Your Understanding of Digital Marketing



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Learn current best practices and effective strategies for:

- SEO
- Social media
- PR
- Online advertising
- Strategy/project management

8 | CASE STUDIES & EXAMPLES

I'm going to focus a little bit on three of our agency projects to illustrate how all of these strategies can come together for co-marketing success. We'll look at a partner supported essay contest, an event marketing example, and a cruise contest giveaway.

A) ESSAY CONTEST

The first example is for SylvanSport, a manufacturer of lightweight camping trailers. One of their new campers costs \$8,000. They had partners who came together and created an annual giveaway contest that ran for several years. We got involved in the third year.

We worked with a total of nine partners. Each of them donated outdoor gear in the range of \$200 to \$1,500 in value and some donated more than one item so they could create several different prize packages. Prize packages included gear from the partners and the grand prize included a lightly used SylvanSport GO Camper.



For the contest, we asked people to submit an essay about what they would do if they had the prize package of equipment (not the camper) for three months and how they would promote their adventure. We received 2,000 entries and scored them. The top three scores became finalists, won the equipment, and got to take their trip and execute their plan. We scored the trip executions and the top trip won a full package that included the camper itself and a few extra prizes.

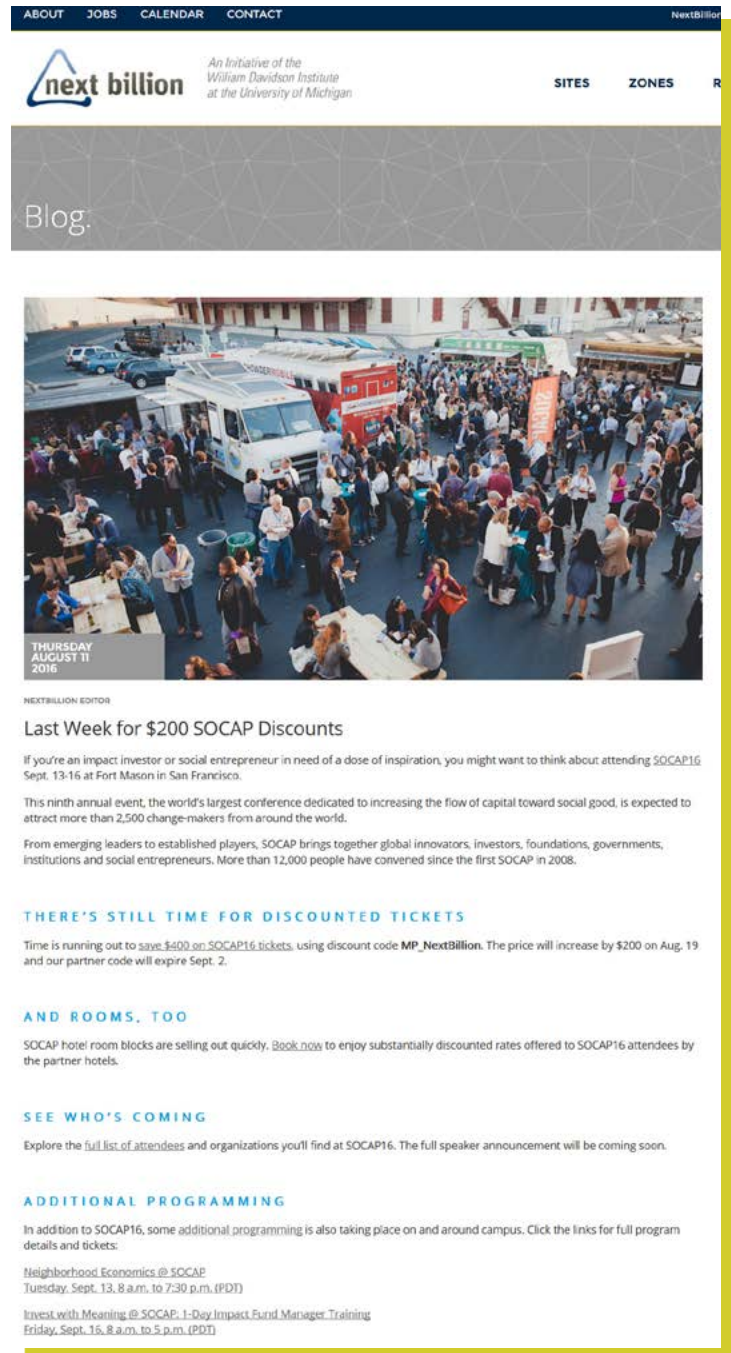
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B) EVENT MARKETING VIA PARTNER SUPPORT

One of our clients where we oversee the most involved marketing partnership campaign is the SOCAP conference, the largest international event for social entrepreneurs and impact investors. For this project we manage around 50 total partnerships with a variety of partners including blogs, magazines, podcasts, business associations, investor networks, business training programs, and other related groups that overlap with the events' various target audiences.



This image above is an example of one of our discount code promotions that we used via the media partners for the conference. This is one of their Facebook posts from July 2015, a couple months before the conference began in the middle of October. We promoted the current blog post on their site (image on right), which was a major announcement for the event, and also worked the discount code into the post. They supported the sale of about 50 tickets for the conference. Overall the partners supported the sale of around 150 tickets.

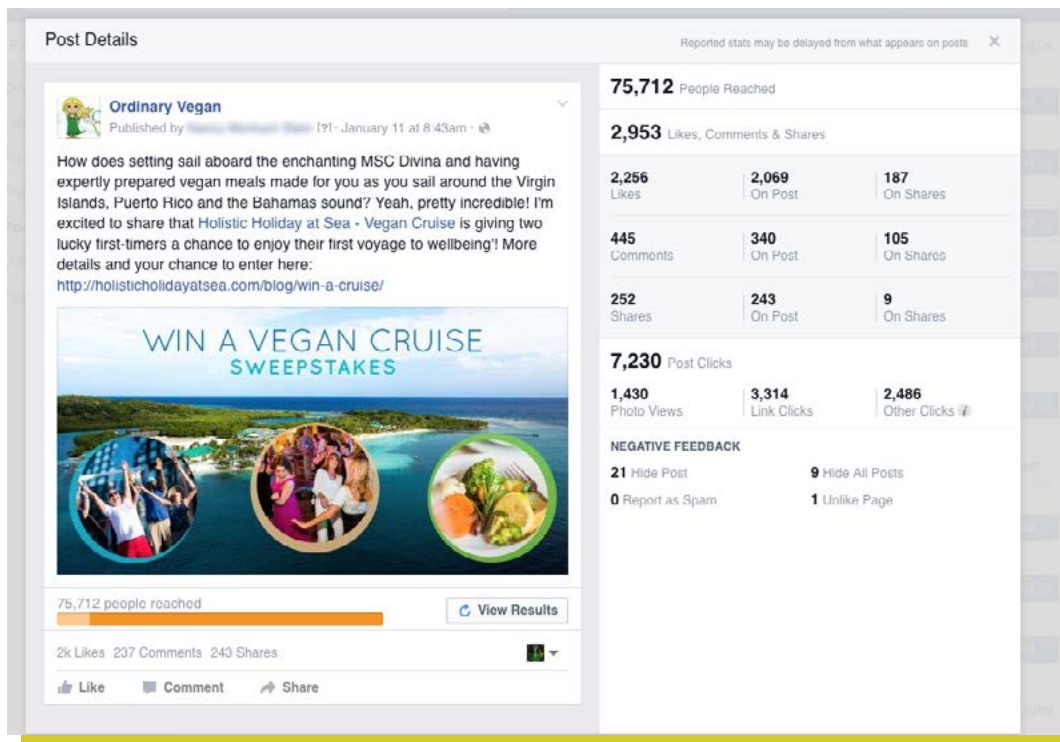


C) CRUISE GIVEAWAY

Lastly, we have a case study for our vegan cruise client. In 2010 we began an influencer marketing campaign by recruiting one successful blogger to promote the cruise happening in March 2011. Since then we have increased the program to nearly ten influencers and niche media outlets with a total of nearly two million social media followers. These outlets help us reach our target audience for a much lower cost compared to magazine ads and other paid promotional options.

Promotional partner's social media post to support the contest marketing effort. This post was boosted using the client's ad budget to amplify the effectiveness of the promotion.

Cruise contest landing page with graphics optimized for social media



This is an example from the contest we did in the fall/winter, which started in November 2015 and ended in January 2016. There was a final push in January. We sent this partner, an influencer and blogger named Ordinary Vegan, \$75 to boost. Of the 75,000 people who saw the post, about 90–95% of those people were through the paid reach. The post got at least 2,000 likes, 240 comments, and 240 shares. In total, it drove 3,300 people to the landing page. I know from doing some calculations after the contest that about half of the 3,300 people probably entered the contest.

So we gained about 1,500 email addresses via contest entries from this one post that cost us \$75. It also got 150 new page likes for Ordinary Vegan's page (at \$.50 per like). This was the money we sent to the partner, so she didn't even have to pay for it. It also earned some good equity with her followers because they were sharing a really great giveaway and promotion. We got a good return on our investment and a good return on this relationship we've been building for several years with Ordinary Vegan.

We sent \$75 to several partners, most of them got at least 500 to 1,000 clicks, but this post was the most effective and most efficient for this promotion. It was because Ordinary Vegan's page was the largest. She has 200,000 fans, while the other pages that we worked with had between 15,000 and 150,000. Also, her blog is the most general and the least niche of the audience we

had worked with, which was good because this was a very general promotion versus a super niche promotion. The other large page that we worked with was for vegan bodybuilders and it got about 900 clicks for \$50.

BY THE NUMBERS

I wanted to revisit the numbers for these three promotions. We had 2,000 entries in the SylvanSport essay contest and 25,000 people made it to the entry page. That's a little less than a 10% entry rate. We got around 20 blogs that were written about the contest from the partners and outreach, which is really great for long-term SEO.

For SOCAP, as I mentioned, partners sold about 150 tickets through partner codes, and we gave away around 50 press passes that generated over 150 articles and blog posts between our partners and the press pass holders.

For the cruise contests, we got around 20,000 landing page visits and almost 50% entered into the contest. I calculated there were nearly 500,000 total impressions on Facebook for the promoted posts on the client and partner pages, one of which was Ordinary Vegan's page with 75,000 impressions for \$75.

We spent a total of about \$1,000 in advertising on Facebook, which generated about 500,000 impressions on those ads for the cruise. As a follow-up to the contest, we sent a discount code to everyone who entered. An additional ten full priced tickets were sold that way. This is a great result because the average ticket is around \$1,800 per person and there were only about six weeks between when the contest ended and when the cruise sailed. We anticipate that more people from the contest email list will purchase tickets for future events.

9 | LOOKING FOR AN OUTSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE?

If you don't want to take my word for it, check out [this case study](#). If you click on the link, you will learn how a company that delivers snack boxes for offices created a well researched, lengthy list article that incorporated partner content and included an extended downloadable version. This educational resource was marketed via partners, social media, and email, and also led to strong SEO positions on important keywords for the company.

The screenshot displays the Backlinko website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'BACKLINKO', 'ABOUT', 'CONTACT', and 'PROVEN SEO TIPS'. The main content area features an article titled 'White Hat SEO Case Study: How To Get a #1 Ranking' by Brian Dean, last updated on Sep. 29, 2016. The article text describes how a company achieved a #1 ranking and generated \$100k in monthly revenue. A call-to-action box offers a 'Free PDF Checklist' for download. A sidebar on the right contains a 'Get Exclusive Traffic Tips' section with an email sign-up form, a testimonial from Neil Patel of Quicksprout, and 'ESSENTIAL RESOURCES' including 'How to Rank for Any Keyword' and 'The Definitive Guide to...'. A 'BACK TO TOP' button is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

10 | TIPS FOR APPROACHING PEERS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

For those new to marketing partnerships, referencing an example can often make it easier to understand who to partner with.

Let's look at a company that manufactures a camping trailer. Here are some examples of partners that they could work with:

1. Other companies in any industry association where they are a member
2. Other nearby outdoor industry companies
3. Manufacturers of other lifestyle brands that complement their product, including fashion, camping, and outdoor sports products
4. If they have a board of directors or advisory board, then the companies that these board members work for or are connected to
5. Niche media or bloggers covering the outdoor adventure industry
6. Automotive companies or car dealerships that align with their product
7. Local nonprofits, especially those working in conservation
8. Local events, such as festivals

HOW TO APPROACH THESE PARTNERS

Some of the examples above are existing relationships and it's just a matter of reaching out with a co-marketing offer or campaign idea.

Building new relationships takes a little more effort. Here are some ideas:

1. **Create a product bundle giveaway campaign.** After securing a few partners from existing relationships, reach out to new potential partners. They won't want to miss out on the opportunity.
2. **Write a review of a product and how it accompanies your product.** Share the review with your fans and then let the other company know about the review. This gesture may lead to future partnerships that are more substantial, especially if you have ideas in mind that you can share.

- 3. Ask to interview a blogger or niche media outlet for your site.** Maybe call it your “monthly blogger highlight.” This could open a door for them to review your product.
- 4. Create a list of “products we love” or “bloggers we love” to get more potential partners in the mix.** This will save time vs reviewing one blog or partner at a time.
- 5. Share content from a potential partner’s social media account on your own account.** Make sure to tag their account so that they see the cross promotion. This can be a good first step before trying a more involved campaign.
- 6. Create a way to raise funds to benefit a nonprofit organization.** Reach out to a nonprofit that you want to partner with to see if they want to be the beneficiary of your next sales campaign. This can be something like *5% of our sales this month will go to support [partner organization]*.

Outreach Examples

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY: VEGAN CARIBBEAN CRUISE

[Partner’s first name],

Hello, my name is Justin Belleme, and I am the online marketing director for Holistic Holiday at Sea, an educational vegan travel company that produces the Holistic Holiday at Sea Vegan Cruise every spring out of Ft. Lauderdale, FL. This February, we sail on our 8th annual Caribbean cruise.

This year I’m responsible for finding influential and well connected vegans in order to offer a co-promotion package. Here are the basic details, which I can expand if you are interested.

2011 Cruise Dates: Feb. 27–March 6

Expected Group Size: 1,100 guests. (For the last three years we have averaged around 1,000 guests in our group out of 3,000 total passengers.)

Co-promotion (Group Leader) Package: We offer other holistic health teachers and non-presenting professionals \$75 per person they refer, and a free cruise ticket with 15 referrals. You can get 2 free tickets with 25 referrals.

Other Ideas:

I know that you work with Vega. We have featured product samples in our on-ship bookstore in the past. I need to get final approval, but we could perhaps offer you a display booth the bookstore (a \$600 value) if

you come on the cruise.

Our presenter lineup is set for this year, but we often add last minute lectures, especially for group leaders who attract their own following to come on the cruise. Pending approval, if you are interested we could add a lecture or two to our lineup so that you could speak to your audience, and anyone else in our group interested in your speaking topics.

How You Can Help:

If you are interested in this offer, we should speak on the phone to hammer out the details. We have a comprehensive online marketing plan that I can share with you, and I am confident that with your Facebook presence and multiple websites that you could do very well promoting the cruise. We have graphics and e-newsletter templates, as well as a Facebook event based social media plan that I will send if you are interested in participating.

You can get more info about the cruise including the itinerary, current presenter line up, details about the environmentally friendly cruise ship, and our gourmet vegan cuisine on our [website](#).

This year, we are expanding our menu to include not only three gourmet vegan meals created by our own chefs, but a second vegan entree option at dinner, presented by Isa Chandra Moskowitz, who is returning for her second cruise to teach several exciting cooking classes.

Please contact me if you're interested in learning more about this opportunity. I would be honored to work with you.

PS. I personally am very into fitness and martial arts. I was a college track athlete and have been studying Kung Fu for several months. For nearly two years, I've been training kettlebells. I also have a personal fitness blog that I intend to turn into an affiliate site for kettlebells and other workout products once traffic reaches a certain level. I've checked out your websites and am very impressed with your results.

Thanks,
Justin Belleme
[Phone #]

SOCIAL MEDIA - INSTAGRAM, FACEBOOK & TWITTER

Instagram

If you can't immediately reach out through email, first comment on a few photos with positive words. On the most recent photo, comment:

"Hi @[insert channel name], we really enjoy your [insert relevant notes on content]. We are an organization that does [insert super brief description of your organization]. Look out for a message from us in your DMs!"

In the direct message (DM) platform, you will now make your appeal. The following was taken from an actual outreach with specifics redacted:

"Hi @[insert channel name], first off we love your content and your audience seems like it's really connecting with you. We are an organization that does [longer description of organization] and feel like your community would be really excellent for [insert goal of partnership]. We would love to know more about what it would take to work with you, and are looking forward to opening a conversation! How should we best communicate with you? Email?"

From there, move the conversation to email if you can and begin a discussion surrounding the desired outcome. Please note also that many mid-sized Instagram influencers like to communicate over the phone as well, especially if they are in younger demographics. This is a very quick way to build rapport.

Facebook

Try commenting on a recent post or two to build engagement, similar to Instagram.

On Facebook you can afford to be more didactic and professional, but should still retain some warmth. The general goal is to move the interaction off of social media and to email. The only caveat to that is when you specifically want to interact with a Facebook account manager at an organization and this is the best way to converse with them.

Sample Facebook Outreach

"Hello [insert name of potential partner organization],

My name is ____ and I represent [insert name of your organization]. We have noticed your page and feel like your audience would resonate with our cause.

Right now we are working on [insert campaign details, feel free to go fairly in depth] and feel like you would be an incredible partner. In general, we seek to support our partners through [insert what it is you plan to do for them in broad strokes]. *Note: This is an important element for Facebook communications, as many pages get propositioned for collaborative activity that doesn't really support them as much as it does the organization that is reaching out.*

We would love to talk to the appropriate party at [insert name of potential partner organization]. What is the best way to do this?

Thank you!

_____ "

If the initial outreach is met with silence after a day or two, feel free to follow up and ask if they got your message.

Twitter

Twitter presents a considerable challenge as you can only direct message accounts that follow you.

With that being said, the best method is to topically comment on their tweets, tweet directly at them, and ask what the best way to contact them professionally is.

After "hearting," commenting, and retweeting some of their content, tweet at them with a simple professional message:

"Hi @_____, we would love to reach out to you through professional channels to talk about some of our work. How do we best reach you? Thnx!"

11 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Affiliate Link

In affiliate marketing campaigns, it's a special URL that contains the ID or username of the affiliate partner. This URL is used by the campaign organizer to track all traffic the affiliate sends to the campaign site as a part of the partnership.

Affiliate Marketing

A type of performance-based marketing in which a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought by the affiliate's own marketing efforts.

Boosted Post

A form of paid promotion that expands an organic Facebook post to reach new audiences beyond the organic reach of the post. Boosted posts can be used to reach more of the existing audience than would be reached organically, or to reach new audiences through targeting.

Campaign

Coordinated efforts using various marketing and communication tactics to reach the promotional goals of a company or organization.

Co-op Advertising

Working together on an advertising campaign. This can include two or more companies going in together to share the costs of an ad campaign and designing ad creative that features all participating companies, or it can include trading ad space between partners on their own communications, such as emails or social media.

Conversions

In online marketing, a conversion is when a website visitor completes a process that indicates that they have converted from a visitor to a customer or lead. This can include completely filling out an online form or completing the checkout process on an ecommerce website.

Inbound Marketing

The promotion of a company or organization through content such as blog posts, podcasts, video, email, social media, and other forms designed to attract customers through different stages of the decision-making or buying process.

Influencer

Niche content expert who has attracted an audience through online content marketing. Influencers typically use blogging, podcasts, video, and email marketing to build an audience that is interested in their content. They often use affiliate marketing or sponsorships to monetize (earn commissions or get paid directly for content promotions) their influence.

Marketing Partnerships

Also known as **co-marketing** - when companies or organizations team up with each other and with influencers to create mutually beneficial marketing campaigns.

Outbound Marketing

The act of buying attention via direct mail, radio, TV ads, flyers, telemarketing, and other forms of traditional advertising.

Partner Promoted Posts

Working with a partner to send them funds to boost a post on their Facebook page to promote your campaign.

You do amazing things. More people should know.

SylvanSport // Creators of the GO Camper

It's harder than ever to compete online. The internet changes so fast that yesterday's strategies can be counterproductive today.

You deserve a team of digital marketing experts on your side.

JB Media's team of strategists and creatives can help you achieve your goals for growth with a full spectrum of digital marketing services: SEO, content creation, online advertising, social media, and public relations.

We'll get the word out about the amazing things you're doing—so you can focus on what you do best.



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