




**Malton Women Council**

# DIGITAL MARKETING AND AI FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



 [info@mwc.community](mailto:info@mwc.community)

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 +1 647-391-9668



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# Understanding Your Customer

Before you consider marketing your business, take a moment to understand your customer. Why does your business exist? What problem are you trying to solve? Who is the ideal customer for your products and/or services? You can use the tools outlined below to guide you.

WHO  
IS YOUR  
AUDIENCE







## Problem Statement

A problem statement summarizes your business's reason for existence. The statement outlines the real-world challenge your business aims to solve.

Problem statements help you avoid the trap of building a product without knowing what the product is for and why people need it.



Keep your problem statement as simple as possible, so even a fifth grader can understand. Below is a template you can use:

How might we help \_\_\_\_\_ (who) overcome  
\_\_\_\_\_ (pain point) so they can achieve  
\_\_\_\_\_ (goal)

To learn more about problem statements and create yours, please visit: <https://www.antler.co/academy/how-to-write-a-problem-statement>



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## Customer Personas

A customer persona is a semi-fictional archetype depicting a specific segment of your audience. A customer persona provides a holistic view of your customers based on their similarities.

Customer personas can be developed using data from market research, website analytics, and CRM software. Personas can help you understand your customers and how they use your products and services.



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An ideal customer persona focuses on customers who are the perfect fit for your product. Components of an ideal customer persona include:

- Demographics (the who)– age, gender, income, location, education, family status, etc.
- Psychographics (they why) – interests, pain points, challenges, motivations, values, communication preferences, etc.
- Behavior (the what) – products of interest, how they came across your business, mode of payment used to buy products

Using customer personas, you can identify where your product fits into a customer's life.



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An example of a customer persona might be Sarah, a fashion-conscious trendsetter. Sarah is an e-commerce persona for an online fashion retailer. She lives in Los Angeles, California, and aims to stay ahead of online fashion trends.

To Sarah, Fashion is more than just clothing, it's about expressing herself. Sarah regularly engages with influencers on social media and values seamless shopping experiences with discounts, personalized recommendations, and loyalty programs.

	Sarah Burns
	Female, 32
	Marketer
	Marketer
	LA, California
<b>B2C PERSONA</b>	
Goals: Stay ahead of online fashion trends	
Challenges: Cannot find authentic brands	
Social media: Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok	

Source: Delve.AI

To learn more about customer personas and how to create yours, please visit: <https://www.delve.ai/blog/customer-personas>





# Digital Marketing

Digital Marketing is a type of marketing you can use to reach your customers. The five core Aspects of Digital Marketing include:

1. Content Marketing & Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
2. Social Media & Influencer Marketing
3. Paid Advertising
4. Email Marketing
5. Using Data for Optimization



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## Content Marketing and Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

**Content Marketing** – Content marketing involves developing content to drive consumer engagement and interest. Examples of content you may create include blogs and articles (Website, LinkedIn), long-form videos (YouTube), case studies, and podcasts.



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- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** – Search Engine Optimization involves making improvements to your website to increase its visibility in search engine results. Websites that appear at the top of the results will gain more traffic. You can improve a website in various ways, such as improving website content, quality, keywords, meta descriptions, subheadings, social media content distribution, and technical and structural components. You can also have other websites link to your website to improve its visibility.

Content marketing and SEO can go hand in hand. Content marketing increases your website's visibility in the media, encourages other sites to link to your content, which can boost your ranking in search engine results, and provides a benefit to customers, which can further increase your ranking.

**To take the full benefits, share your content through various distribution channels such as email, social media, newsletters, and ads.**







# Social Media and Influencer Marketing

**Social Media Content, such as Organic Short-Form Videos/Images** – Social Media Content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, and YouTube, can be used to market products, engage with existing customers, and reach new customers. Social media also provides valuable customer data that can be used to better understand your customers.



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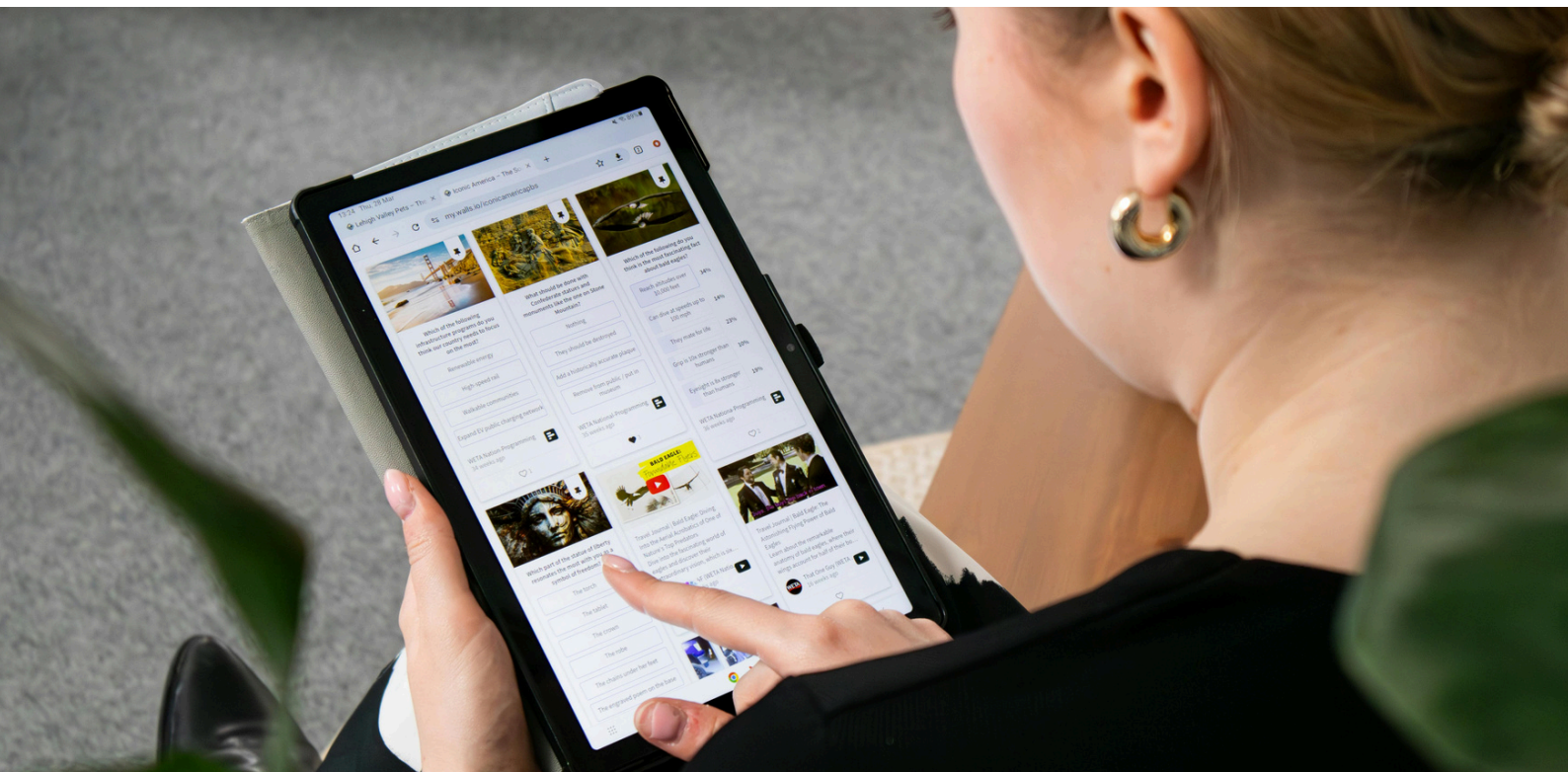


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- **Social Media Engagement** – Social media engagement encompasses the likes, comments, messages, shares, and subscriptions on your accounts and posts. To increase engagement you can use interactive posts with polls and quizzes, user-generated content, or even contests and giveaways. But engagement is about more than metrics; it's about building a community. How many positive comments did you receive? How much did you listen to and act on your followers' questions and criticisms?



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**Contracting Influencers** – You can contract influencers to promote your product on social media. Product endorsements and brand mentions from influencers can increase brand awareness, help you target specific audiences, build trust and authenticity with customers, and increase sales.



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## Paid Advertising

- **Paid Ads on Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Google Pay-Per-Click)** – Unlike organic social media posts, which mainly reach your existing audience, paid ads can help your business reach a larger target audience, resulting in leads and conversions.
- **Boosted Posts** – With boosted social media posts, you can pay to have your content reach a wider target audience compared to your existing followers.



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**Affiliate marketing** - Affiliate marketing involves using a third party (affiliate) to market your products and services. The affiliate is compensated with a commission for any business generated from their services. For example, an affiliate who is the owner of multiple websites and marketing lists can use ads to promote your product to their network. The ads can be embedded in articles, videos, images, etc. If visitors click the ad and purchase the product, you, the business owner, will need to provide the affiliate with a commission, such as 5-10% of the sales price.

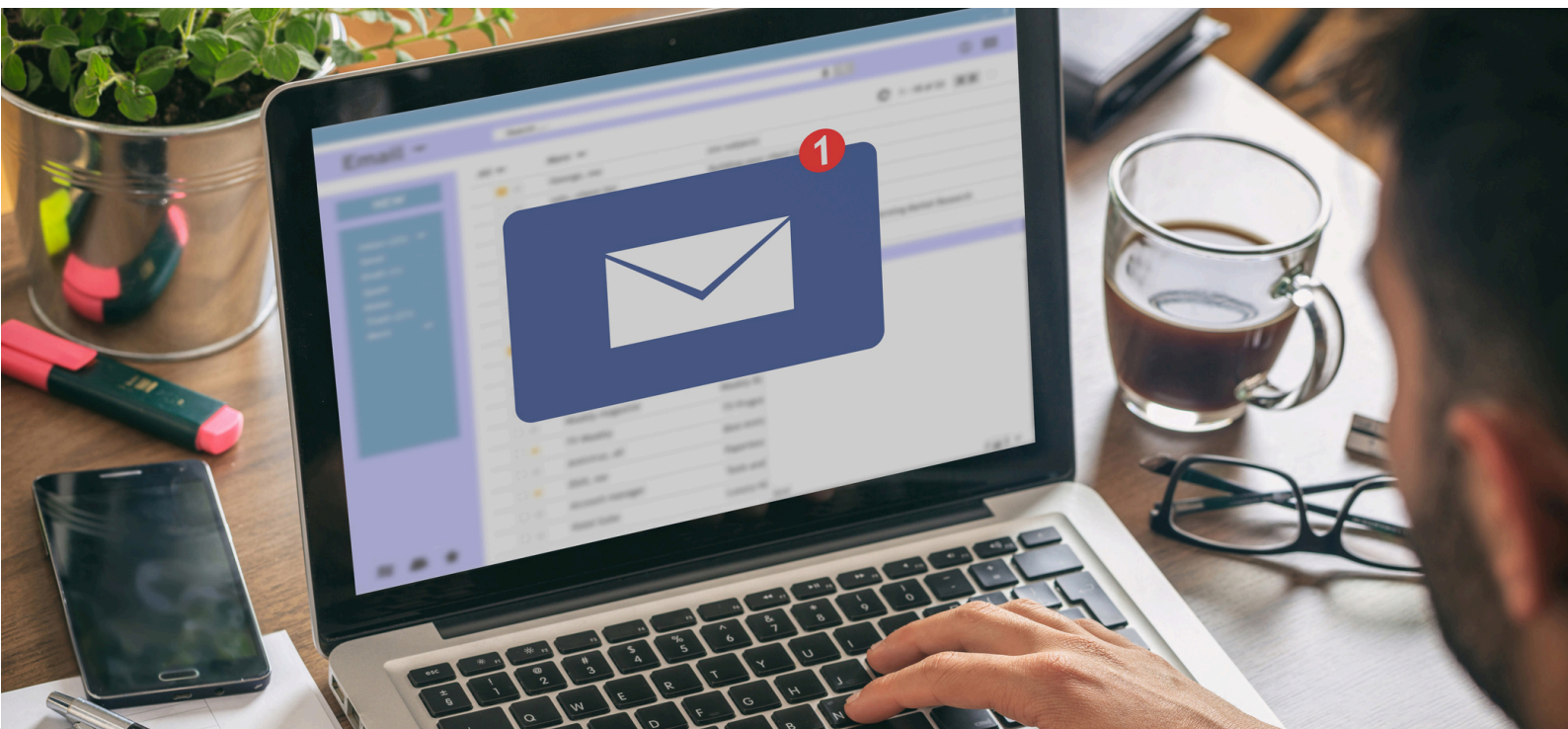






# Email Marketing

**Email Marketing** – Email marketing involves using email to promote products and services and build a relationship with your audience. Examples include newsletters, which can include information on products and services along with articles and videos, promotional emails for products and services, and lead-nurturing emails to convince a specific already interested audience to purchase your products.



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# Data for Optimization

There are various tools you can use to track your digital marketing performance and conversions.

- **Google Analytics** – Google Analytics is a web analytics service that provides insight into website performance and marketing campaigns. The data from the service can be used to improve marketing, drive traffic, and retain visitors.
- **Meta Insights (Instagram and Business Suite)** – Meta Insights offers analytical tools with data and insights into the performance of content and ads on Facebook and Instagram.
- **Customer Relationship Management Systems (CRMs)** – CRMs can help you manage interactions with existing and potential customers. CRMs can allow you to store customer and prospect data, identify sales opportunities, record service issues, and manage marketing campaigns. HubSpot and Salesforce are examples of CRMs.







# Digital Marketing Metrics

With each digital platform, you can track a variety of metrics to gauge your success. Examples are outlined below:

## Website

- Number of Clicks
- Traffic Source
- The page the customer landed on (usually the Homepage or About Us)
- Conversion Rate (# of clicks / # of actions)
- Time on Page
- Bounce Rate (left without acting)

A graphic of a computer screen with a blue border. On the screen, the text "https://www" is displayed in a large, bold, black font. A blue cursor arrow points towards the text. To the left of the screen, there is a blue outline of a house.

https://www



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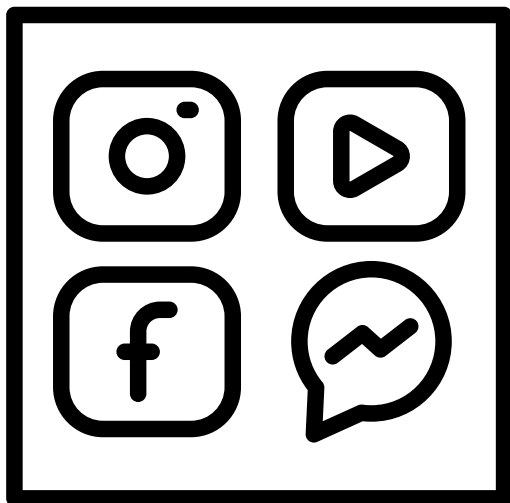
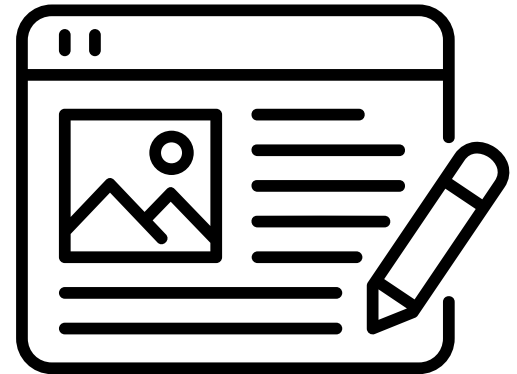
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## Blog

- Number of clicks
- Traffic Source
- Conversion Rate (# of clicks / # of actions)
- Time on Page
- Bounce Rate (left without acting)



## Social Media

- Growth of Followers
- Reach (# of views)
- Engagement Rate (likes + comments + shares / reach)
- Click-Through Rate (clicking on link in bio)
- Saves/Shares



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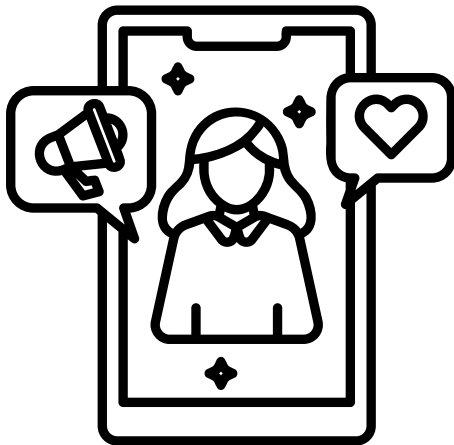
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## Paid Ads

- Impressions
- Click-through rate
- Cost per click (CPC)
- Cost per acquisition (CPA) – cost per paying customer
- Return on Ad Spend (ROAS)



## Influencer Marketing

- Engagement on Influencer Posts
- Traffic from Influencer Links
- Use of Custom Discount Codes
- Growth of Followers during the Campaign
- Sales from Referrals

To learn more about some of these digital marketing metrics, please visit:  
<https://business.adobe.com/blog/basics/digital-marketing-metrics>



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# Customer Journey Mapping

Understanding the customer journey can improve your digital marketing efforts.

A customer journey is the series of interactions a customer has with a product or service as they become aware of pain points and make purchase decisions. A customer journey map visually represents this journey with a company. The map provides insights into the needs of a potential customer at every stage and factors that motivate or inhibit their progress.



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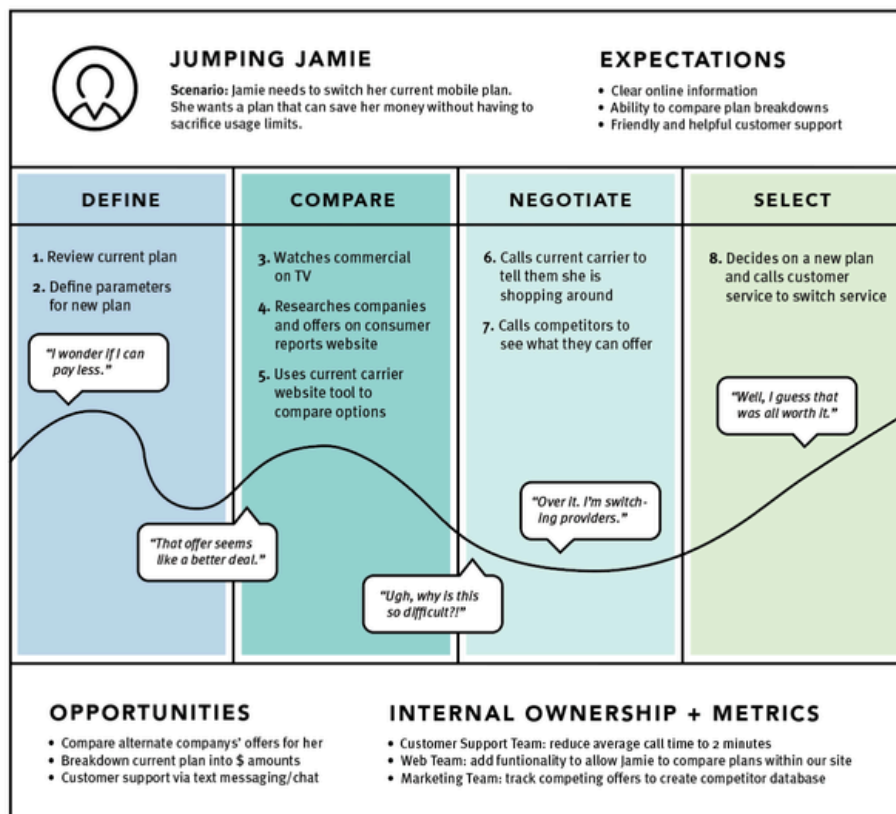


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Below is an example of a customer journey map.

## CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP *Example (Switching Mobile Plans)*



NNGROUP.COM **NN/g**

Source: Nielsen Norman Group

<https://www.nngroup.com/articles/journey-mapping-101/>

To learn more about customer journey mapping, please visit:

<https://blog.hubspot.com/service/customer-journey-map#what-is-a-customer-journey-map>



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# AI Tools for Small Businesses

As technology changes, so does the world of business. If you are not using digital marketing, you are falling behind your competitors. If you do not know about AI, you are falling behind. Below are examples of some AI tools you can use to run your business:

- **Answer the Public** – Answer the Public is a social listening tool to understand the phrases and questions people ask search engines like Google and Bing. You can use Answer the Public data to generate blog posts or content ideas.
- **Ubersuggest and Google Keywords** – Using Ubersuggest and Google Keywords you can generate content and keyword ideas, which can help with your Search Engine Optimization.







- **ChatGPT** – ChatGPT can help you with idea generation, drafting content, keyword research, email marketing, data analysis, and brainstorming for your business.
- **Google Analytics or Website Analytics** – Analytical tools such as Google Analytics can help you understand how users interact with your website and apps. By learning about website traffic, demographics, and behavior patterns, you can boost your marketing strategies and sales.
- **NotionAI** – NotionAI can help you generate a content calendar for social media and blog content.
- **Canva** – Canva can help you create visuals for your blogs and social media posts.



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- **Not Just Analytics** – Not Just Analytics is a tool to understand Instagram followers, likes, comments, and more.
- **Meta Business Suite** – The Meta Business Suite can help you create and schedule posts, manage messages, and track analytics for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp for Business.



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# Resources

- BDC Marketing Plan Template  
<https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/templates-business-guides/marketing-plan-template>  
and <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/marketing-sales-export/marketing/5-no-nonsense-strategies-attract-customers>
- BDC Templates <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/entrepreneur-toolkit/templates-business-guides>







# References

- Digital Marketing and AI – Presentation by Faria Jafri  
<https://ca.linkedin.com/in/faria-jafri> Faria is a mompreneur, a project management professional, and a sales funnel enthusiast. She serves as a Mentorship Coordinator with the Diversity Institute, helping small businesses connect with expert mentors. She is also the founder of Haami Bras, a startup focused on plus-sized breast-owners.
- Semrush SEO and Content Marketing  
<https://www.semrush.com/blog/seo-and-content-marketing/>
- Sprout Social Influencer Marketing  
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/influencer-marketing/#why-use-influencer-marketing>
- Buffer Social Media Engagement  
<https://buffer.com/resources/social-media-engagement/>
- Investopedia Social Media Marketing  
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media-marketing-smm.asp>
- Buffer Boosted Post: <https://buffer.com/social-media-terms/boosted-post>







- Investopedia Social Media Marketing  
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-media-marketing-smm.asp>
- Buffer Boosted Post: <https://buffer.com/social-media-terms/boosted-post>
- Investopedia Affiliate Marketing  
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/affiliate-marketing.asp#toc-what-is-affiliate-marketing>
- Google Pay Per Click <https://www.wordstream.com/google-ppc>
- Paid Social Media Ads <https://www.semrush.com/blog/paid-social/>
- Email Marketing <https://mailchimp.com/marketing-glossary/email-marketing/>
- Google Analytics  
<https://www.techtarget.com/searchbusinessanalytics/definition/Google-Analytics>





- Customer Relationship Management System  
<https://www.salesforce.com/ca/crm/what-is-crm/#do>
- Customer Journey Mapping Always Pan  
[https://www.google.com/search?q=Customer+Journey+Mapping+\(OurPlace+%E2%80%93+Always+Pan\)&rlz=1C1GCEU\\_enCA1160CA1160&oq=Customer+Journey+Mapping+\(OurPlace+%E2%80%93+Always+Pan\)&gs\\_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBBzM5M2owajGoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=Customer+Journey+Mapping+(OurPlace+%E2%80%93+Always+Pan)&rlz=1C1GCEU_enCA1160CA1160&oq=Customer+Journey+Mapping+(OurPlace+%E2%80%93+Always+Pan)&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOdIBBzM5M2owajGoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)
- Answer the Public: <https://neilpatel.com/blog/what-is-answer-the-public/#:~:text=AnswerThePublic%20is%20a%20free%20social,predicted%20cost%2Dper%2Dclick.> and <https://answerthepublic.com/>
- What is Ubersuggest: <https://neilpatel.com/ubersuggest/>



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- Google Keywords  
<https://www.klientboost.com/google/google-keywords/#h-how-to-use-keywords-with-google-ads>
- Customer Journey Mapping  
<https://blog.hubspot.com/service/customer-journey-map>
- TD America Small Business Resource Centre  
<https://www.td.com/us/en/small-business/resource-center>
- Antler Problem Statements:  
<https://www.antler.co/academy/how-to-write-a-problem-statement>
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