

A TACTICAL GUIDE TO LAUNCHING A DIGITAL PRODUCT

# MARKETING

## FOR PRODUCT PEOPLE



BY JUSTIN JACKSON

# *Marketing for Product People*

---

**A TACTICAL GUIDE TO LAUNCHING  
A DIGITAL PRODUCT**

JUSTIN JACKSON

Nerd North Inc.  
Vernon, BC

Marketing for Product People Copyright © 2016 by Nerd North Inc.

# Contents

Hello world	1
Define your goal	ix
<b>PART I. BUILD SOMETHING PEOPLE WANT</b>	
<b>1.</b> How success works	13
<b>2.</b> Finding your audience	19
<b>3.</b> Research	29
<b>4.</b> Target their pain	37
<b>5.</b> How to set a price	45
<b>PART II. HOW TO SET UP YOUR WEBSITE</b>	
<b>6.</b> Website basics	50
<b>7.</b> Setting up Segment	57
<b>8.</b> Using Mixpanel	67
<b>9.</b> Using Google Webmaster Tools	79
<b>10.</b> Using Google Analytics	85

### PART III. BEFORE YOU LAUNCH

- |            |  |     |
|------------|--|-----|
| <b>11.</b> | Focus on your email list                 | 99  |
| <b>12.</b> | The landing page cheat sheet             | 105 |
| <b>13.</b> | How to write blog posts that get noticed | 113 |
| <b>14.</b> | How to build an email list               | 121 |

### PART IV. LAUNCHING YOUR PRODUCT

- |            |                            |     |
|------------|----------------------------|-----|
| <b>15.</b> | How to build a street team | 129 |
| <b>16.</b> | Your launch plan           | 135 |
| <b>17.</b> | Your launch checklist      | 141 |

### PART V. AFTER YOU LAUNCH

- |            |                                     |     |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>18.</b> | How growth works                    | 145 |
| <b>19.</b> | Get more leads                      | 153 |
| <b>20.</b> | Guide your leads through the funnel | 167 |
| <b>21.</b> | Close the deal: ask for the sale    | 183 |
|            | Closing thoughts                    | 191 |

## Hello world

In 1983 my family got a Commodore VIC-20. One of the first things I did was create a "Hello World" application in BASIC. Ever since then, I've wanted to make stuff with computers.

From an early age, I loved that technology enabled individuals to create something and share it with the world. When I was eleven I sent Apogee Software a \$44 check in the mail for a game called Commander Keen. This is what the order form looked like:

### HOW TO ORDER "GOODBYE, GALAXY!"

In the United States, order directly from Apogee Software. To order the entire "Goodbye, Galaxy!" saga, send \$39 (includes \$4 shipping, etc.) to:

Apogee Software  
P.O. Box 476389  
Garland, TX 75047

Important: Be sure to specify disk size, and if you have VGA, EGA, or CGA.

Or call toll free during business hours:  
1-800-GAME123 (1-800-426-3123)

pg 2 of 18

These indie developers in Texas distributed this shareware game on Usenet groups and bulletin boards. Crazy enough, kids like me found them and bought them!

When we talk about marketing, we're really talking about the ability to get our product into the hands of customers. Before modems, bulletin boards and the Internet, this was difficult. The problem was distribution: software was sold in retail stores and distributors were the gatekeepers.

Today, distribution has been democratized. There are still gatekeepers (like Apple and their App Store) but the barriers to entry have been lowered. There's no better time than now to build and launch your own product.

## WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

---

This book is for people who want to earn an income from the products they create. I wrote it specifically for these three stages:

1. Those who want to build a product, but haven't found an idea.
2. Folks who are building a product, but haven't yet launched.
3. People who have launched, and are looking for their first 100 customers.

These tactics will also be useful for startups and teams to review together.

You can build things; this book will help you share those creations with the world.

## IS MARKETING NECESSARY?

---

We've all heard stories about people who built something and had it magically succeed.

One example is the story of a 29 year-old developer named Dong Nguyen. In May 2013, from his home in Vietnam, he quietly released a mobile game called Flappy Bird. It existed in obscurity for six months, registering only a handful of downloads.

Suddenly, on February 1, the game's popularity exploded. Flappy Bird was discovered and downloaded by millions of people. It climbed to the top of the iTunes and Google Play charts. It was rumored that Nguyen was earning more than \$50,000 a day in advertising royalties.

He claimed multiple times that he hadn't done any paid acquisition to boost the game's rankings. If he became a success without marketing, why can't we?

## UNICORNS AND OUTLIERS

---

First, we have to admit that Nguyen's success is unusual. Most top-charting apps are made by Apple, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Netflix and Pandora. These are companies with serious marketing muscle.

So while it's *possible* for an indie app to climb the charts to number 1, it's also very *unlikely*. Even harder? Making money. The analyst firm Gartner recently stressed that:

Less than 0.01 percent of consumer mobile apps will be considered a financial success by their developers.<sup>1</sup>

1. [www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2648515](http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2648515)



My goal is to help more makers to earn an income for the things they create. It's possible, but we're not going to get there by following unicorns. Instead, we need to follow marketing principles that have been tested, and are replicable.

## SURVIVOR BIAS

---

Our tendency as humans to only focus on successful examples (while ignoring the hundreds, or thousands of failures) is called *survivorship bias*.

“The behaviors of winners are remembered and dissected far more thoroughly than those of losers, and given greater weight.”

– *Freakonomics*<sup>2</sup>

How many other developers submitted apps, and did not achieve Dong Nguyen's success? Likely thousands.

In fact, a French developer had published a very similar game to the Google Play store in 2011, called Piou Piou. The gameplay, graphics, and mechanics are almost identical and yet it did not meet Flappy Bird's fame.

2. [freakonomics.com/2009/09/17/survivor-bias-on-the-gridiron/](http://freakonomics.com/2009/09/17/survivor-bias-on-the-gridiron/)



*Flappy Bird (2013) vs Piou Piou (2011)*

The problem with our bias towards *winners* is that winners can't really teach us anything. Dong Nguyen himself doesn't know why Flappy Bird became a hit. What did Dong do *right* and the thousands of other developers do *wrong*? We don't know, and therefore can't extrapolate a winning formula from his experience.

"If you group successes together and look for what makes them similar, the only real answer will be luck."  
– Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*

## YOU CAN INCREASE YOUR ODDS

---

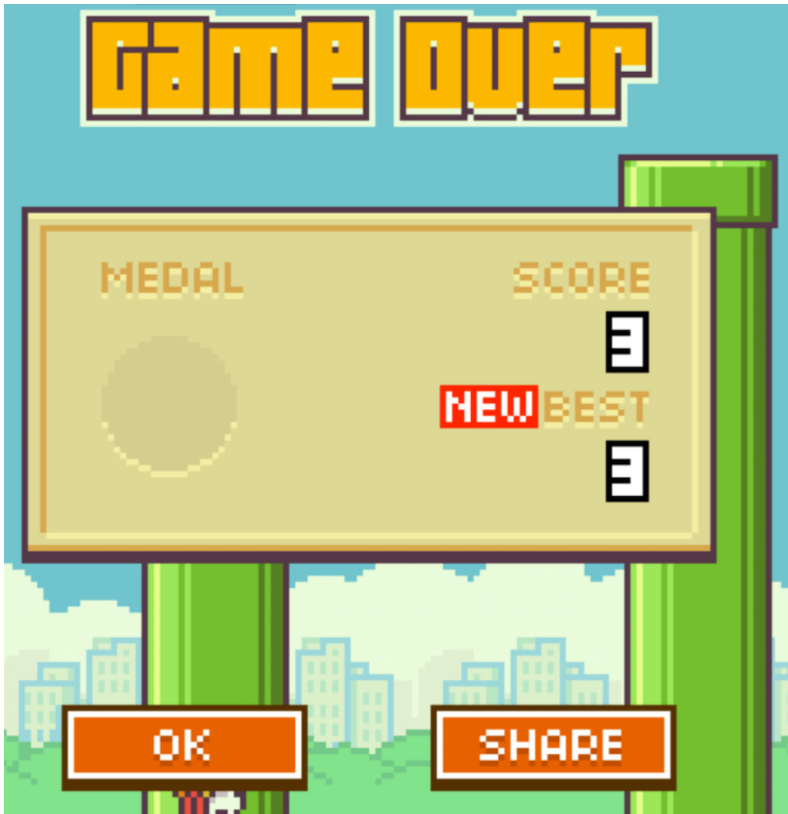
If it's all about luck, then why bother?

Because when you build something and *tell people about it* you increase your odds of success. That's what marketing is: amplifying your message so that your product has a better chance of being discovered.

Let's go back to Flappy Bird. While Nguyen may not have done

a lot of *traditional* promotion, he was running an amazing guerrilla marketing campaign.

Most casual games start out easy, and get more difficult as you play. This allows new players to slowly build mastery over time. Flappy Bird was different, it was *immediately* hard. Every time you died, you saw this screen:



*When you die in Flappy Bird, you can share your frustration on Twitter*

The game's unexpected difficulty surprised people. It was unusual. Human beings are wired with the desire to share

things that are unique. Nguyen gave them an easy outlet to do this: the “Share” button.

I first heard about the game when popular Vine personalities began featuring it in their videos. Soon after my friends started challenging me on Twitter to beat their score. It may have been unintentional, but Nguyen achieved the dream of every app developer: he got people talking about his game.

You too can increase your odds of success by following this simple checklist:

- Build something people want.
- Tell them about it.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

---

The first section of this book is called *Build Something People Want*. While it’s aimed at people who are still looking for an idea, the principles apply to every marketing stage.

If you’ve built a product, but haven’t yet launched, you should start with the *Lean Marketing Stack*. After that, continue to the section entitled *Before You Launch*.


The biggest part of the book is called *After You Launch*. It contains numerous tactics you can try once your product is public, with the aim of helping you get your first 100 customers.

Before we get started, I want us to be honest with each other. I’ve already told you my goal:

- To help more makers earn an income from their projects.


What's your goal? We will explore that question in the next chapter.



 **Justin Jackson** @mijustin · Aug 21  
Just sent an email update to my list about [@marketingdevs](#).

If you're not on the list, you can subscribe here:


**New book: Marketing for Developers**



[Get a free chapter](#)

Share your name and email address with Justin Jackson

---

 **Marketing4Developers**  
@marketingdevs  
ju\*\*\*\*\*@ne\*\*\*\*\*.com

### *An example of a Twitter Card embedded in a Tweet*

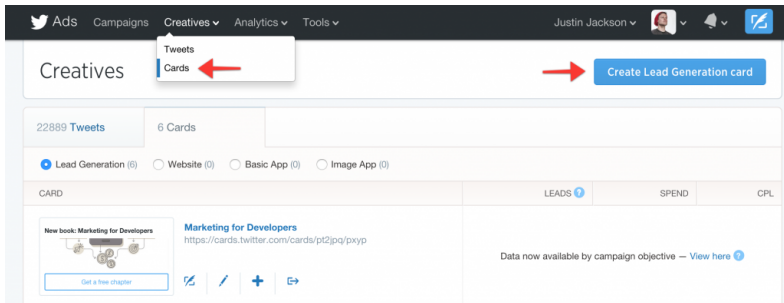
When someone clicks *Subscribe* (or in the example above, “Get a free chapter”), it automatically subscribes them using the email address they have registered with Twitter. It’s one-click subscription!

To create a card you’ll need to sign-up on Twitter’s advertising platform:

<http://ads.twitter.com>

You’ll also need to provide a credit card (don’t worry, you won’t be charged unless you buy ads).

Once you’re in, go to *Creatives* >> *Cards* in the main menu. Click *Create Lead Generation Card* to get started.



*Create a Card by going to the Creatives menu*

When creating a *Card* the first three fields are straightforward:

- **Short description:** this is the text that will appear about your call-to-action. In my example, I have “New book: Marketing for developers”
- **Card image:** upload an image (800px x 200px work best) to grab people’s attention.
- **Call to action:** the label you’d like to have on your button. Example: “Subscribe now!”
- **Privacy policy URL:** this should link to your website’s privacy policy. If you don’t have one, you can use a site like Terms Feed<sup>2</sup> to generate it.
- **Card Details (Fallback) URL:** you’ll also need to provide a fallback form (hosted on your website) for cases when a user isn’t logged into Twitter.

Now you’ll need to connect your *Card* to your mail service provider. In this example, I’m connecting it to a MailChimp form.<sup>3</sup>

- **Data settings (optional):** expand this part of the form.

2. <https://termsfeed.com/privacy-policy/generator/>

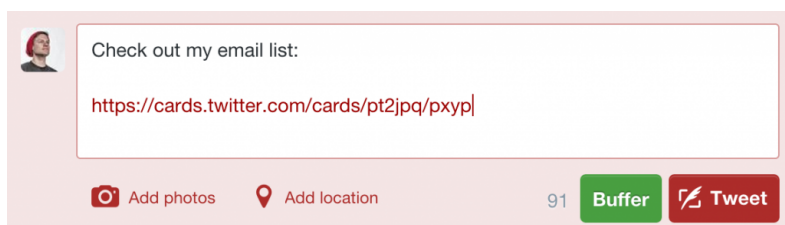
3. For more information, visit MailChimp’s help section: <http://kb.mailchimp.com/integrations/twitter/use-twitter-lead-generation-card-to-grow-your-list>



- **HTTP Method:** choose *Post*
- **Submit URL:** in this field, enter the URL that MailChimp gave you. Example: `marketing4devs.us1.list-manage.com/tweet-subscribe`
- **Add another hidden field:** add a value called `id` in the *Key* column and then enter the ID MailChimp gave you in the *Value* column.

Now all you need to do is give your card a name, agree to Twitter's terms of service, and click *Create Card*. You're all set!

To use it, just paste in the card's URL when you compose a tweet:



### *Using a Twitter Card in a tweet*

I've also found it helpful to "pin" this tweet, so it's the first thing people see when they visit my profile page.<sup>4</sup>

## SEND EMAIL REGULARLY

---

How many times have you received an email that says, "We've launched!" but you can't remember who the company is, what they're building, or why you signed up?

4. See an example of a pinned tweet here: <https://twitter.com/marketingdevs>