



The Human Side of Internet Marketing

Learn to find the right people, earn their attention, and grow through steady, thoughtful practice

Make every click more human.

SHAD EDDIE MONGRUE

Free preview · Introduction and Chapter 1
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SHELF 22 OF 32 · INTERNET MARKETING · CORE BOOK

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Every statistic, study finding and documented example is numbered and listed in the Sources, with a link to the page it came from. Each was checked word for word against its source in October 2026. Stories marked "composite example" are illustrations drawn from common situations; their names and details are not real people. Stories marked "documented example" come from the cited sources.

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An Invitation

Marketing can sound like a contest for the loudest voice. Post more. Send more. Get noticed at any cost. But there is another way to think about it: as the careful work of helping the right person recognize something useful. You make an offer, explain it clearly, and give people room to decide. That work asks for patience and attention—and it can be more satisfying than chasing a number that never seems to stay impressive for long.

The internet gives people many places to look and connect, but no single place is everybody's place. In Pew Research Center's 2025 survey, 84% of U.S. adults said they use YouTube, 71% said they use Facebook, and half said they use Instagram.¹ Those figures describe broad use, not a promise that your audience is waiting on any one platform. They are a reminder to ask who you hope to reach and where those people might be open to hearing from you.

That question makes marketing less like shouting into a crowd and more like paying attention. What do people ask before they buy? What do they misunderstand? Which details help them make a decision, and which details only make your message longer? You can learn from conversations, reviews, search behavior, and the questions people bring to you. Your first ideas may be wrong. That is not a failure; it is a reason to listen again.

Search offers one practical example of the difference between being visible and being useful. Google describes SEO as helping search engines understand your content and helping people find your site and decide whether to visit it.² Google also says that links are how it finds the vast majority of new pages.² These ideas point toward a patient kind of work: make something genuinely helpful, make it understandable, and help it find a path to the people who may need it.

Email, social media, search, and paid promotion can each play a part, but none has to carry the whole plan. A helpful page may answer a question; a social post may start a conversation; an email may offer a thoughtful next step. Paid promotion can be tested rather than treated as a magic switch. Your resources, audience, and goals matter, and results vary. A modest,

honest system is often easier to learn from than a grand plan built on guesses.

This book is an invitation to find pleasure in the craft: the small satisfaction of a clear message, a useful reply, a better question, or a decision made with less confusion. You do not need to become a different kind of person to market well. You can bring your own care, curiosity, and good judgment to the work. The aim is not to capture attention at any cost. It is to earn a fair chance to be useful—and to keep learning from what happens next.

Reasons to fall in love with this subject

- **It begins with understanding** Good marketing gives you a reason to get curious about other people's needs. Instead of assuming you know what they want, you learn to notice their questions and the words they use. That can improve your offer, but it can also change how you see the people you hope to serve. Listening is not a trick for making a sale. It is a way to make your work more relevant and your choices more grounded.
- **Clarity is a kindness** A clear message saves people effort. They should be able to tell who an offer is for, what it may help with, and what it does not promise. Clarity also helps you decide what belongs in your work and what does not. You may discover that a simpler explanation is stronger than a clever one. There is real satisfaction in making the next step easier to understand without pushing anyone toward it.
- **Useful work can travel** A well-made page, a thoughtful post, or a practical email can keep helping after you finish writing it. Search and social platforms may help people encounter that work, though visibility is never guaranteed. Google advises creating satisfying, people-first content and using SEO practices to bring searchers additional value.³ That is an encouraging standard: make something worth finding, then make it easier for the right people to find.
- **Small tests make room for learning** You do not have to treat every marketing decision as a leap of faith. You can name a question, try a modest action, and look at what happened. A result may be unclear or disappointing; that is still information, provided you do not claim it proves more than it does. This approach makes experimentation less

intimidating. It replaces the pressure to be certain with a better habit: be curious, be careful, and adjust.

- **Trust is part of the work** A relationship with an audience is something you tend, not something you own. That is especially clear with email: people need an understandable way to opt out, and businesses must honor opt-out requests within 10 business days.⁴ Respectful communication is not a decorative extra. It helps keep your promises, your messages, and your practices aligned. When people can make informed choices, your marketing has a better foundation.
- **The practice can grow with you** There is no requirement to master every channel or publish everywhere. You can start with the parts that fit your project and capacity, then improve them as you learn. A creative project may need a different rhythm from a local business; even similar projects may have different audiences. The work becomes more manageable when you choose a few meaningful priorities and return to them steadily. Progress can be thoughtful rather than dramatic.

BY THE END OF THIS BOOK, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO

- Listen for real audience needs and separate observations from assumptions.
- Write an honest offer that makes its audience, value, and limits clear.
- Map a customer journey to find confusing steps and helpful next actions.
- Use email respectfully, including clear signup and opt-out practices.
- Connect useful content and genuine participation with search visibility.
- Design modest paid-promotion tests around questions you can learn from.
- Choose measures tied to your goals and interpret results with care.

How to use this book

Read the chapters in order if you are starting from scratch. They move from purpose and listening to messaging, customer journeys, and the practical

roles of email, search, social media, and paid promotion. If you already have a project underway, you can begin with the chapter closest to your current question, then return to the earlier chapters to check the foundations.

Keep a simple working note as you read. Write down what you know about your audience, what you are assuming, and what you still need to learn. When an exercise suggests a test, make the question specific and decide what result would change your next step. You do not need a large budget or a complicated dashboard to begin practicing; a small, well-considered action can teach you something.

Treat this as a book to revisit, not a recipe that guarantees the same outcome for everyone. Try one useful change at a time when you can, pay attention to people's responses, and give yourself room to revise. If a tactic does not fit your audience or your resources, you are allowed to leave it aside. The goal is a sustainable practice that serves your project and respects the people you want to reach.

HOW THIS BOOK HANDLES EVIDENCE

This book distinguishes documented examples, which are built only from the cited facts, from composite examples, which are fictional illustrations and not reports of real people or outcomes. Numbered citations point to the sources behind specific evidence claims; they do not make every recommendation a proven result. Marketing outcomes vary, and a test may be inconclusive. The book offers general education, not a guarantee of success or personal professional advice. For legal questions about email or other obligations, consult an appropriate qualified professional.

The Joy of Being Found

A COMPOSITE EXAMPLE · NAMES AND DETAILS ARE ILLUSTRATIVE

Mara sets a small stack of handmade notebooks beside the register at her neighborhood shop. Each one has a sturdy cloth cover and pages that lie flat, the sort of thing she likes to use for sketches and lists. She has posted a photo online, but the response is a handful of likes and a comment from a friend who already owns one.

Then a customer picks one up, turns it over, and asks whether the paper can handle fountain pens. Mara explains what she knows, admits she hasn't tested that particular ink, and shows the customer a page she uses for pencil drawings. The customer looks through the notebook, smiles, and buys one as a gift.

The moment is small. No crowd gathers. No trumpet sounds from the cash drawer. But Mara has found something more useful than a burst of attention: a person with a real question, a clear answer, and a reason to decide whether the notebook fits. The customer has found something, too. That is the human purpose of marketing. It helps the right people recognize a possible match, without pretending every person needs what you offer or pressuring anyone to say yes.

Marketing starts with a person, not a platform

Marketing can sound like a contest for attention: more views, more followers, more clicks, more noise. But attention is only a beginning. The more useful question is what happens after someone notices you. Do they understand what you offer? Can they tell whether it might help? Do they have enough information to make a choice that feels right to them?

Think about a neighborhood bakery. A person who needs a custom cake for a particular occasion may care about flavor options, how much notice to give, and whether the bakery can accommodate a request. Someone

passing by may only need to know where the shop is. A useful message gives each person a fair chance to recognize relevance. It doesn't need to turn every passerby into a customer.

That distinction changes the work. Instead of asking, "How can I get everyone to look?" ask, "Who might genuinely benefit, and what would help them understand the offer?" You might learn that the bakery's clearest message is not a clever slogan but a plain explanation of how to ask about a custom order. You might learn that a repair shop should make its service area easy to find. The answer depends on the offer and the people considering it.

This is not an argument against ambition. You can want more customers, readers, or supporters and still respect their time. It is an argument for treating each number as a clue rather than a verdict. A hundred glances don't tell you what people understood. A smaller number of conversations may reveal what they need to know before deciding.

Finding the right fit can feel rewarding because it brings purpose into focus. Your effort meets a real need, and the other person can choose freely. Sometimes that choice is no. A respectful no is still better than a yes won through confusion, because it gives you a truer picture of the match.

Make it easier for people to recognize themselves

A useful message helps the reader answer three simple questions: Is this for someone like me? What does it help with? What should I understand before I decide? You don't have to answer all three in a single sentence. You do need to make the answers findable.

Start with the person's situation, not your list of features. A tutor might describe the kinds of learning support offered and explain how a first conversation works. A maker might say what a product is made for and what it is not designed to do. A writer might tell readers what kind of experience a book offers without promising it will change anyone's life. Specificity is kind. It saves people from having to decode cheerful but foggy phrases like "solutions for every need."

Then check whether the promise is one you can keep. If you can't confirm a detail, say so or leave it out until you can. If an offer has limits, explain them in everyday language. A clear boundary does not spoil a message; it helps

the right person make an informed choice. It also gives you a sturdy place to stand when someone asks a question you haven't anticipated.

Imagine a reader landing on a page that says, "Get organized at last." That may sound appealing, but it leaves a lot to guess. Does the page offer a service, a printable planner, or a class? Who is it meant to help? What does "at last" imply? A more useful version might name the item, describe how it is used, and show what a buyer can expect. The goal is not to cram every detail into a headline. It is to reduce avoidable uncertainty.

Search can help people encounter a clear offer. Google describes search engine optimization as helping search engines understand a site's content and helping users find it and decide whether to visit². Notice the two sides: machines need understandable information, and people need a good reason to continue. A page written only to attract a visit but unable to answer the visitor's questions has missed half the job.

Be findable without being everywhere

You do not have to appear on every platform, publish every day, or master every marketing tool before you begin. Choose a few places where the people you hope to reach might reasonably look, and make the experience there clear and welcoming. A local service might need a useful website page and a complete business listing. An artist might benefit from a portfolio that shows the work and explains how to inquire. A newsletter writer might need a simple description and a way to sign up by choice.

The point is not to guess that one channel is universally best. Pew Research Center's 2025 survey found that U.S. adults use a range of social platforms, with reported use varying across services¹. A broad popularity figure can tell you that a platform is widely used; it cannot tell you that your specific audience is there, that they want your offer, or that a post will reach them. Those are questions for observation and small tests.

Make the path between discovery and understanding easy to follow. If someone hears about your work in a community group, can they find a page that explains it? If they arrive through search, can they see what to do next without hunting through a maze? A clear route might be: notice a useful post, visit a page with details, ask a question, and decide. That is a path, not a trap. Each step should give people useful information and room to stop.

Links matter in that path. Google says it finds the vast majority of new pages through links, making links important for discovery². That does not mean you should scatter links everywhere or pester strangers to share your page. It means that useful work needs ways to be encountered: a link from a relevant page, a thoughtful recommendation, or a clear connection from one of your own pages to another.

Promotion can help people and search engines discover new content sooner, according to Google². Promotion might mean telling an existing community about a new guide or sharing a helpful page where it fits a conversation. Keep the invitation proportionate. A relevant note that points to genuinely useful information is different from repeating the same announcement in every room, whether or not anyone asked.

Let usefulness guide your practice

A steady marketing practice can be simple: listen, make something useful, explain it clearly, share it where it belongs, and notice what happens. Listening might mean paying attention to questions customers ask, reading reviews, or having a conversation with someone who is considering your work. Observation can give you ideas, but it does not turn a hunch into a fact. Treat your interpretation as something to check.

For example, several people might ask whether a class is suitable for beginners. That could suggest the description needs a clearer explanation of prerequisites. But there may be other reasons for the question: perhaps the schedule is unclear, or the class title sounds more advanced than it is. Ask a follow-up when you can. Then improve the information in a way that helps the next person, too.

Use small experiments when you are unsure. Try one clear version of a message, give it a reasonable chance to be seen, and decide what you want to learn. You might be testing whether people understand the offer, not whether a particular phrase wins the internet. Write down what you observed and what you still don't know. A few responses can be helpful without being a final answer about your whole audience.

This kind of work rewards attention more than theatrics. Google advises creators to prioritize satisfying content while using SEO best practices to bring searchers additional value³. It also warns that content made primarily for search traffic is strongly correlated with results searchers find

unsatisfying³. In everyday terms, begin with something worth finding. Then make it easy to find and understand.

You can be proud of a useful page, a thoughtful reply, or a clear correction even if none produces an immediate sale. Those actions build the conditions for trust, but they do not guarantee a particular result. Your audience may be small, your timing may be off, or the offer may need work. Patient practice is not passive: it means noticing, learning, and adjusting without pretending every outcome is under your control.

That is where some of the joy lives. You are not merely trying to win a stranger's attention for a moment. You are making a connection possible: one person has a question, you have something that may help, and both of you have enough clarity to decide what comes next.

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Research spotlight

Pew Research Center's 2025 survey found that 84% of U.S. adults said they use YouTube, 71% said they use Facebook, and 50% said they use Instagram¹. Those figures offer a broad view of platform use among adults in the United States. They can help you remember that social platforms are part of many people's lives, but they do not identify the best channel for a particular business, show how often someone is ready to buy, or predict whether a post will reach the people you hope to serve. The survey is a map of reported use, not a marketing plan. Use it as background, then learn about your own audience through questions, observation, and modest experiments. If a platform does not suit your work or your capacity, a large overall audience is not, by itself, a reason to be there.

A life example

A DOCUMENTED EXAMPLE

A restaurant advertising experiment

A field experiment conducted with Yelp examined digital advertising across 18,294 restaurant firms⁵. As part of the experiment, 7,209 restaurants were randomly assigned to receive Yelp's standard ads

package at no cost for three months⁵. The restaurants receiving advertising saw an average increase of 7–19% across a range of purchase-intention outcomes, along with a 5% increase in customer reviews⁵.

The results were not the same for every business. The researchers found larger gains among independent and higher-rated businesses, and among businesses with more reviews and more pre-experiment organic traffic⁵. That variation matters. It suggests that advertising can work differently depending on a business's circumstances; it does not establish a guaranteed return for any particular restaurant, let alone for a different kind of project. The study offers a useful lesson for your own choices: ask who an activity helped, what changed, and what conditions might matter. Don't take an average as a promise. Use evidence to sharpen your questions, then test carefully in your own setting.

TRY THIS

Find the human purpose

Choose one offer you want people to understand, and spend a little time making its possible usefulness easier to see.

1. Write one plain sentence naming what you offer, without trying to make it sound impressive.
2. Describe the person or situation it may suit. Be as specific as you can without claiming that everyone has the same need.
3. List the two or three questions someone might reasonably ask before deciding whether it fits.
4. Draft a short explanation that answers those questions, including one limitation or boundary if it matters.
5. Show the draft to someone who is willing to give honest feedback. Ask what they think the offer does and who they think it is for.
6. Revise one unclear part, then choose one appropriate place to share it. Notice what you learn, not only how many people respond.

Myths and honest truths

- **Myth:** More views always mean better marketing. **Truth:** Views show that something was seen or counted as seen; they do not necessarily show understanding, fit, or a useful next step. Look at whether the people you hope to help can recognize the offer and make an informed choice.
- **Myth:** You need to be on every popular platform. **Truth:** A platform's broad popularity does not prove that it suits your audience, your work, or your available time. Choose places thoughtfully and learn from what happens there.
- **Myth:** A clear message must promise a dramatic result. **Truth:** A message can be compelling because it is specific and honest. Say what you offer, what it may help with, and what you cannot promise.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Marketing helps people recognize a possible match; it does not require every person to say yes.
- A clear, honest message helps people decide whether your offer fits their needs.
- Being findable matters, but being everywhere is neither necessary nor automatically useful.
- Treat broad statistics and small response counts as clues, not guarantees.
- Make something useful, share it thoughtfully, and let what you learn guide the next step.

REFLECT

1. *Who might genuinely benefit from what you offer, and what situation would bring them looking?*
2. *What question or uncertainty might keep that person from recognizing whether your offer fits?*
3. *What small change could make your message more useful without making a promise you cannot keep?*

Nine more chapters are waiting

You've read the Introduction and Chapter 1. The full 92-page book continues with:

CH. 2 Listen Before You Broadcast

CH. 3 Make a Promise You Can Keep

CH. 4 Build a Path, Not a Funnel Trap

CH. 5 Earn a Place in the Inbox

CH. 6 Show Up Where People Look

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Sources for these chapters

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