

— *Planning For the Future* —

A SMALL BUSINESS' GUIDE TO INTELLIGENT GROWTH



AUTHORS:
John Jantsch
Bill Doerr
Clementina Esposito
Tema Frank
Brad Hanks
Will Young





Growth. It's the goal of every business. Entrepreneurs are never satisfied. It's a trait that makes them successful.

But uncontrolled growth can mean disaster for businesses. We've all seen businesses in our communities that have bitten off more than they can chew just because they saw an increase in sales. Within a few years, the increased overhead began to choke the business out, and the next thing you know, the business dries up.

To avoid this, your business must focus on growing strategically. You may hear it referred to as "Scaling Up." Before you can grow your business, you must know that you have the structure to bring in all of your new customers.

This eBook is written to give you the guidance you need to grow your business intelligently. Within these pages, you'll learn:

- **How to leverage marketing channels to grow.**
- **6 keys to rapid growth**
- **The dangers of excessive growth**
- **How to use remarketing to grow your business**
- **How to leverage partnerships to expand your reach**
- **Tools and favorites from the Duct Tape Marketing team that can help you market your business better.**

Enjoy!

Channel Leverage is the Key to Growth

By John Jantsch



Just a few years ago, there were only a handful of channels through which to market. Now there are dozens. So how can you use them to grow your business when there are so many to use? The key is leveraging these channels.

I've been writing a lot about growth lately as I believe it's the one area of marketing that's changed the most in recent years.

How you create awareness, build trust, invite trial, convert leads, generate repeat sales and ultimately turn customers into raving fans has changed at a rate that invites a whole new way of thinking about growth.

When I started this blog back in 2003, there were perhaps six marketing channels available to businesses. Online marketing was just becoming a thing, and few realized that this device called a blog would become the foundation of a new channel itself called content marketing.

Today's marketer has at least sixteen channels to choose from and most feel the pressure to participate in all. For a complete list of my take on marketing channels check out this post - [The Single Most Potent Marketing Tactic of All](#)

Just say no

In my mind, the scattered and fractured nature of new and evolving channels is the root cause of a great deal of stalled growth for many businesses.

Trying to jump into every new channel just leads to frustration – particularly when



many of these channels show little promise for the unique objectives of most businesses.

A far better path is to set a goal of finding your primary channel and go to work on amplifying that path.

For example, by default, many organizations generate a significant portion of their business via sales efforts. It's simply the nature of most small businesses as the owner/founder is the chief sales, hustler.

As these organizations gain some traction, they ultimately hit a plateau and start to branch out into other marketing channels in search of more leads.

In some cases, this simply leads to more growth, but experience tells me it often leads to more frustration.

When you view a new channel as just another way to grow you run the risk of muting the success you've already created.

You keep at your sales efforts, but now you're scattered a bit trying to figure out how to generate leads with content marketing or through influencer outreach.

Then add channel leverage

A far better approach is to build on your success.

What if you looked at content marketing as a way to make your sales efforts more effective.? What if you armed your sales team with customer videos and research data in the form infographics?

What if you found places your sales team members could contribute content? What if you jumped into the speaking channel by finding places your sales team could present or set up online webinars conducted with existing clients, prospective clients, and sales team members?

The point is that instead of looking ways to get into more channels, find ways to blend new channels into what already works.

This strategy of confluence allows you to see immediate gains in something that is already a proven winner.



I believe this mindset shift has the power to change the currently scattered and fractured thinking so prevalent today in marketing circles.

Optimize for profit

When you adopt a channel leverage approach, you'll spend far less time trying to figure new channels and opportunities out and far more time working in ways to support your goals and objectives.

When it comes to growth – less is much more.

Eventually, you'll start to test and hypothesize inside of new channels in ways that are not simply focused on growth, but on profit.

You'll begin to obsess not over new shiny objects, but on things like conversion rate optimization and its very close cousin – profit.

This is a call to find your primary channel, perfect your growth there, and then simply experiment with ways to leverage that success through the convergence of other channels.



6 Keys to Growing Your Business In the Next Year

Bill Doerr and Clementina Esposito

If your child, young pet or garden wasn't growing...what would you do?

- **Nothing**
- **Hope they started to thrive without YOU making any changes**
- **Ask yourself, "Am I adequately feeding and hydrating?"**
- **Consult a pediatrician, veterinarian or expert gardener?**

The alphabetized list makes the choices seem obvious. You'd go with C & D and, yet, many business owners often choose A & B hoping for a miracle.

In a public corporation, growth reflects and depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities of others. But growth in your business is 100% under *your* control. It reflects, to a large degree, the decisions *you* make and actions *you* take to generate growth.

6 Keys To Increased Growth

Working with small business owners has taught us that growth is a fairly predictable outcome assuming you utilize six (6) keys that foster it. If, however, you choose to ignore these 6 keys stagnation and decline are likely results.



The true key to growing your business is having a plan and sticking to that plan throughout the year. Duct Tape Marketing Certified Consultant Bill Doerr and Clementina Esposito discuss the ways to grow your business in a short time (just one year)



Here are six (6) keys you can leverage to realize significant growth in your business in 2016:

1. YOU

The ultimate source of energy, leadership and direction for your business

2. Opportunity Pipeline

The quantity and quality of prospects you're attracting

3. Average Case Size

What someone spends, on average, with you

4. Purchase Frequency

How often someone does business with you

5. Selling Efficiency

How quickly you can help someone make a decision to buy from you

6. Profit Margin

How much of each dollar remains with you after all costs have been covered

Growth . . . Begins With Y-O-U

Your business is alive with the energy you feed it. Growth reflects that you're feeding yourself *and* your business well. When your business is easy for clients to consume, and they like it, they want more. Therefore, you need to be well fed and growing to feed your clients well too! If you're seeing shrinking customers, profit margins, inspiration and support... take care of yourself first. And take it from there.

Failure to thrive in your business may be the first and best indicator that you're failing to thrive personally. New York Times bestselling author Michael Port—if you haven't read [Book Yourself Solid](#) or [Steal the Show](#), move them to the top of your list — teaches that business problems and personal problems are interchangeable. **Ditching the dichotomy between what's going on in your personal and professional life may be the fastest way for you to accelerate growth in both areas.**



A Small Business Growth Success Case Study

One client, the owner of an independent automobile repair facility, asked, “How can I best grow my revenues and profit?”

After learning what he was already doing to do that, he discovered his greatest opportunity for growth would come by focusing on 1 of the 6 keys mentioned above.

To achieve truly significant growth in his business, he focused on growing revenues from each service he offered.

This made sense because he had a decent number of returning customers who were loyal to his business.

We began with one of his smaller offerings: “oil changes”. We started with his facts:

1. **His customers drive, on average, 15,000 miles / year.**
2. **He changes their oil every 5,000 miles.**
3. **He charges \$35 for an oil change.**
4. **He performed, on average, 3 oil changes per customer per year.**
5. **Oil changes alone generated \$105 from each customer (3 X \$35 = \$105).**

We suggested he advise his customers to change their oil every 3,000 miles rather than every 5,000 miles – a practice that is trending in popularity. As a result, his customers are changing their oil, on average, not 3 but 5 times a year (15,000 miles / 3,000 miles = 5 oil changes).

Without increasing his fees, he’s now generating \$175 per customer per year -- 5 oil changes X \$35 = \$175

Finding a way to increase his customers purchase frequency produced a significant growth – 67% -- in revenue for this one line item alone.

Significant improvement in any one area in your business that’s failing to thrive will generate significant growth.

Another Valuable Lesson Learned

At a practice development workshop, the instructor asked, “How many of you want to learn *new ideas*?”



All of our hands went up.

“How many of you want to learn *how to generate more revenues?*”

Again, all of our hands went up.

“How many of you believe that learning new ideas will, alone, generate more revenues?”

No hands went up!

That instructor taught 2 important lessons. First, there is a direct correlation between the prospects you're seeing and the revenue you're generating. Second, to increase revenues, you need to see more people, see 'better' people (those that buy more from you).

Ideally, you do both.

The instructor also said, ***“If all you learn today is how to see TWICE as many people in the future as you are now, you'll be making TWICE as much money!”***

Technically that's true but unlikely. It's easier said than done. A more realistic path to growth comes from consistent improvement in each of the 6 keys to growth cited above.

Consider this . . . improving each key by only 5% produces a synergistic effect and an overall business growth rate of 28% annually -- as this chart demonstrates:



Growth Made SIMPLE

If you intend to grow your business in 2016, commit to leveraging each of the 6 keys cited above and develop a plan to use them to unlock your business growth potential.

Remember -- *modest* changes, applied *consistently* and *conscientiously*, produce a synergy that will help you grow your business *substantially* in 2016.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

1. **Growth of you, personally and your business, financially is necessary for the benefit of both.**
2. **Factors that drive revenues and profit are readily known and 100% under your control.**
3. **Focused, conscientious action can improve any or all of the growth factors cited above.**
4. **A simple 5% improvement in each factor, achieved consistently, generates significant growth**



Bill Doerr is a connector who loves to connect clients with good people, great ideas and superb services. He collaborates with other providers in 'projectships' that combine "the best of many for the benefit of all". His firm, **SellMore Marketing, LLC**, specializes in helping financial advisors build their referrals and revenues so they can afford the lifestyle of their choice. In college, Bill walked wolves (it's a long story) and is an instrument-rated, private pilot – a capability he's actually used on several occasions (apparently successfully, too!). He is a certified Duct Tape Marketing consultant and the author of [Marketing Insights](#) – a one page, bi-weekly client letter popular with professionals seeking to market their expertise without selling their souls.



Clementina Esposito is a communications developer and the creator and chief of The Clementina Collective. She helps smart, creative professionals communicate who they are so they can get where they want to go. If you'd like to learn more about Clementina, [click here to read her blog and subscribe if you like what you see](#)



Growth Could Kill Your Company!

By Tema Frank

When Alina Martin took over her father's small company in 2007 it had been ticking along, growing slowly for several years. The company, Danatec, sold paper-based course materials for corporate trainers to use in safety training of employees. Martin could see that online learning had potential. Her father wasn't convinced, nor were her salespeople. How could you possibly call something training if the trainer wasn't in the room with the person being trained? Martin persevered. It took a couple of years of experimentation before it really took off, but once it did, things went crazy! Growth tripled in three years and was running at 27% when I spoke to her.

Sounds like a dream situation, but many companies that grow quickly eventually crash and burn. The skills and practices that created their success just can't sustain it.

So what goes wrong in these growth situations? Let's consider the 3P Profit Formula™: Promise + People + Processes = Profits. Often as companies grow they struggle with all three Ps.

Promise

The promise is your brand, and, as the recent Volkswagen scandal showed us, it can be destroyed quickly if a company isn't living up to the standards its customers expect. But with fast growth, that promise can be diluted. Sometimes growth companies lose focus: they want so much to keep growing that they take on clients that they shouldn't or expand into new lines of business that are not good fit for their customers.

Sometimes they do the opposite, and hyper-focus on the formula that made them successful. But as the world around them changes, they may be unable to adapt to the new reality. Kodak was a classic case of this. They actually developed the first digital camera, but buried the idea, fearing that it would hurt their film business. That decision cost the company its life.

Others become arrogant; the fast growth convinces them that their customers will always be there. But as they grow, the customer focus that won that business in the first place can slip, priming customers to fall into the open arms of a competitor.



Excessive growth can be deadly for a small company. Tema Frank outlines such a case, and how you can avoid it and grow your company intelligently.



photo credit: epSos.de



People

Your business success is influenced by many different types of people: prospects, customers, employees, funders, suppliers, distributors and even the public at large. As you grow, all of these relationships can be strained.

Despite Danatec's clear success, Martin found that some staff were still resistant to the changes. Most people dislike change, so how do you get their buy-in? Sometimes even company owners resist change: if something has been working well enough, why should they risk doing things differently?



It is crucial to involve your employees right from the start of the growth management process, so they will have a sense of buy-in and commitment to the new vision. Being open and honest with your staff will help. Remember when your 4-year old kept asking why, why, why? It's not just kids who want to know why; we all do. If we understand the reason for something, we are more likely to accept it. Martin says that any employee is allowed to question a decision, but she expects them to have an alternative answer and explanation of why they think it would be better.

Growth also strains employees physically. Typically they'll be working long hours while the company struggles to hire and train enough staff. It can be frustrating when overworked colleagues are late answering questions or getting their part of a process done on time. This pressure often sucks companies into hiring the wrong people, just to get more bodies on staff. But bad co-workers can be even worse for morale than overwork. There may start to be problems with staff turnover if staff feel that they are no longer the close-knit, supportive team they once were.

Suppliers may have trouble keeping up with a high-growth company's needs. Customers don't care that it's the supplier's fault that you couldn't get their product to them on time. They'll be upset with you, not the supplier. Distributors or franchisees can also hurt your reputation. It's tempting to seize your moment of popularity to keep on growing without doing proper screening or training of these partners. But think about it: when you go to your local McDonalds and get bad service you blame the McDonalds company, not the local franchise owner.



Process

When I called Martin for our scheduled interview, nobody answered the phone. Nor did it go to voice mail. Over a year and a half, calls for tech support jumped from about 10 calls a day to 100. There just weren't enough people to answer all the calls. The order entry process also needed to be totally rebuilt because it simply wasn't scalable.

As Martin put it, "things break" when you grow that quickly. "When you are growing," she notes, "you are continually reinventing the process."

As hard as it can be to find the time, when your company is growing quickly you must regularly check to make sure you're still meeting your promise to your customers, you've got the right people in place, and that your processes are keeping up with the sales.



Tema Frank is a customer experience & digital marketing pioneer. She launched her first website in 1995 and in 2001 founded [Web Mystery Shoppers](#), one of the world's first companies to do remote usability testing of websites and web-related customer service. Her podcast, [Frank Reactions](#), focuses on customer experience in the digital era. Listen to it at <http://frankreactions.com>, on [iTunes](#) or [Stitcher](#). Tema has helped

Bank of America, the Government of Alberta, the Royal Bank of Canada, and many small organizations improve their online & offline customer experience & marketing. She'd love to meet you on Twitter [@temafrank](#) or by [email](#).



Why You Should Use Remarketing Tactics to Grow Your Business

By Brad Hanks

What is remarketing?

Remarketing is a way to reconnect with potential customers who have visited your website. Whether you realize it or not you have probably been remarketed to before. Have you ever been to a website and then started seeing their banners everywhere? That's remarketing.

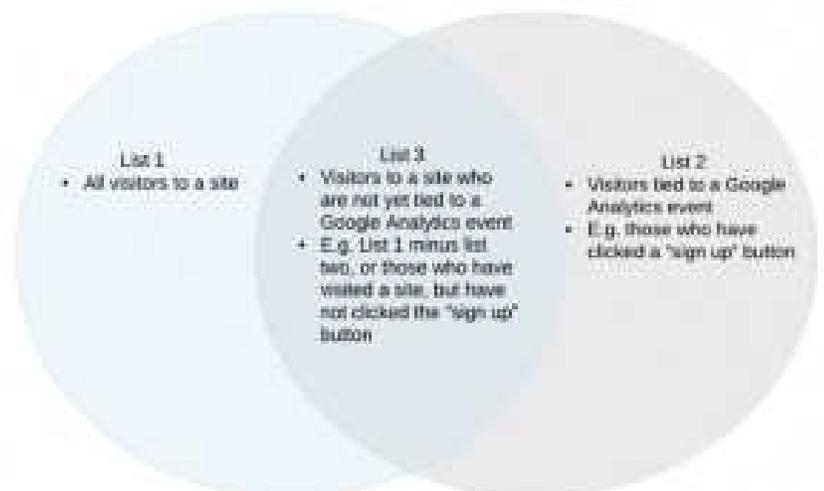
Previous to your visit, the company that owned that website set up remarketing tag that allowed you to be tracked. (A step-by-step remarketing guide is [here](#).) When you left their site, you were shown banners from other sites. These sites collect a small fee every time you click on a remarketing banner.

Now here's the point — you want to be there with a banner ad when the customer is ready to make a purchase decision. Remarketing is a really effective way to spend marketing dollars because it reconnects previously interested customers with your website to encourage them to make a purchase they weren't ready to make during their first visit.

Why does remarketing work?

If you've got the whole wide world to market your company to, why not start with the people who have already shown interest in your product? In terms of your return on effort, you have already spent time and money on acquiring these customers. With remarketing you can be very specific about who you target as well. For example, you can only show banners to people who have been to your site but haven't signed up yet.

Remarketing is the practice of targeting people that have already visited your website but may not have finished an action. They are an audience that, if you want to grow your business, you can't afford to miss out on.



How do I make remarketing work for my business?

Knowing what remarketing is and how to implement a campaign isn't enough. You need to understand how your business model affects the way you message to your customers and how to measure success. You need to know if you are making money. There are a lot of businesses out there that could benefit from remarketing. In order to cover most businesses without having to write a dissertation, I am going to group them into three of the most popular businesses: SaaS, eCommerce, and Services.

SaaS Remarketing

Software as a service, or SaaS, sell their software on a month-to-month or annual basis through the website or mobile interface. If you're a SaaS company, you may just need a simple banner with your name on it to keep yourself top of mind as a business owner goes through their day. You could also include a conditional discount to your audience that takes them to a discount page that can only be found by clicking on the remarketing banner. You could also present additional information on the subject matter related to the software you provide. For example, if you are offering accounting software, you advertise a whitepaper download on how they could be saving more in taxes.



Because SaaS companies charge a subscription, you could spend remarketing dollars on getting users to sign up for a free trial and make your money back when some of them convert to payment. If you know that the average payer sticks around for 2 years, you can back that out to see how much you can afford to pay for each remarketing click. The period of time you allow for payback determines how aggressive you can be with your cost per acquisition. You may be looking for a 3, 6 or 12-month break even point on your spend. If you know that most customers renew, you can afford to lose money up front.

eCommerce Remarketing

If you're selling a physical product online, keep your remarketing banners very image heavy. You want to show the product they were looking at on your site. If you sell a lot



of different products, this means a lot of work up front. It might make sense to start with the most highly trafficked product pages to start and maybe only to people who abandoned a shopping cart. Once you start to see it working you can scale your effort to other products with less traffic. Be agile in the sense that you implement a little, test a little, implement some more and test some more.

Because you are selling a physical product, you need to consider your margins when marketing a product. Still, a remarketing customer is the lowest hanging fruit out there. If budget dollars are tight, make sure to spend money here first. Since you went to the trouble to setup the remarketing by product, you will now reap the benefits of that hard work by being able to figure out what kind of products have the highest ROI.

Services Remarketing

If you are a brick and mortar company offering a service, some visitors might not have been ready to call when they were at your website. However, if you follow them around with your name and number, you are more likely to present your information at decision-making time and get a call. I recommend have a separate remarketing number for attribution purposes. You will want to know what business came from remarketing banners so you can compare the jobs you get from those banners compared to how much they cost you.

Most service customers do research before they make a purchase decision. Your potential customer will be impressed by the fact that you are “all over the internet”. Another thing to remember is that you only have to pay for banners that get clicked on. By leaving the phone number on the banner, there is a chance that you will get some freebies. I really like banner advertising because you can bid higher on clicks to get more exposure (a lot of people may never click, but just call you right from the ad).

People calling on the phone almost always end up having a person come out to give them a bid. Driving more phone calls is a win-win situation for your business and marketing budget. You will want to make sure that you add the call extension to all your remarketing text ads. It makes it simple for them to make a call right from the ad on their phone.



Final thoughts

You can control how many times a visitor sees your remarketing ads every day. I prefer to set the total impression count to 5 per day. You want to remind people to come back but you don't want to annoy them. You dive into more details on Adwords remarketing from Google [here](#).



After bailing on a PhD program in Economics almost a decade ago, Brad Hanks has worked as a digital marketer in every capacity. After playing a key role in the growth at Lucid Software, Brad has ventured out on his own to help start [ZipBooks](#), a [free accounting software](#) program for small businesses. Brad is passionate about helping small businesses be successful by giving them the tools and advice that they need to help themselves. You can get more [small business tips at ZipBooks' blog](#). Brad is the proud father of three lovely daughters who love math and science!



Why creating an eco-system of partner businesses is worth the effort

By Will Young

[Partnership marketing](#) can be really effective for small businesses who want to get in front of new relevant audiences. It involves creating collaborations that are relevant to the customer. This last bit is crucial. Relevance can mean that there's compatibility between what both businesses sell. Or compatibility in their culture, ethics and beliefs.

If the collaboration adds value to your customer base, beyond the core product or service you sell, this can really help provide a point of difference. So how do you get rolling with this?

Using email to reach a captive audience

Email marketing is still one of the best ways to get customers to buy. It gets the reader's undivided attention. The beauty of using email within partnership marketing is in the numbers. It is highly measureable and you know exactly how many people you can reach. This makes setting up fair, reciprocal agreements easier. Also, when you're stumped for something to tell your email list, having partners to talk about helps with ideas for email content.

The goal is to get your brand in front of a new audience. It needs to be done legally. Don't think about swapping consumer email lists with partners. It's about getting each partner to send a message to their own email list in a socially intelligent way that introduces the recipients to other partner's brand.

Let's break down the types of email activity you could execute:

The "look what I found" email

Perhaps the simplest message to deliver. It involves telling the reader how you've recently discovered this fantastic new brand you wanted to share with them. In the same way you might tell a friend about a great new product you've discovered. The



One of the best ways to grow your business is not by simply capturing new leads, but instead by growing your professional network. Will Young has more on how you can make new business partners and why it is important.

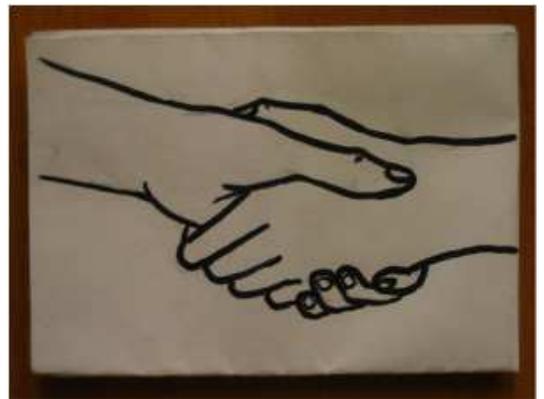


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value in this is in you telling the reader something that they didn't already know about the partner's brand. So you need to go beyond simply introducing the partner's brand and tell a story about why the brand is interesting.

The “competition” email

This communication goes a step further and also offers the chance for the reader to experience the partner's products/services for free if they enter and win a competition.

Keep the email message focused on a simple, single call to action and in doing so, give your partner the chance to shine.

The “special offer” email

Similar to the competition this activity involves providing the email reader with a special offer that you have secured, from the partner brand. Like the competition activity before, it's still important to communicate the value of the partner brand to the reader. Providing an offer alone won't work nearly as well. Tell the reader why you've teamed up with the partner and let them in on the deal.

The “freebie” email

This is a neat one, and works in two ways. The first way is simply telling the reader to contact your partner with a special code in order to enjoy a freebie. The second way involves telling the reader they will get a freebie supplied by the partner if they order from you within a given time frame.

The “random act of kindness” follow up email

This is almost identical to the second freebie example, except you don't communicate anything over email initially. For a select group of customers, you automatically give them a freebie supplied by your partner, as a random act of kindness, when a customer orders. Then you follow up with those customers via email and ask what they thought of the freebie, to get the email recipient thinking about the partner brand and encouraging them to go on and buy or subscribe to the partner's email newsletter.



Putting this into practice

Follow these steps and you'll be collaborating in no time:

1. Identify 6 businesses that offer compatible products/services to your business.
2. Identify 6 businesses that share your business mindset, ethics and culture.
3. Come up with two or three activities you could do with each business, which would involve emailing both your and their list of subscribers
4. Plan your partner emails. You might send one every two months in order to blend partner messages into your own brand messages, offers etc.
5. Be clear on your partner agreement. Fair collaboration doesn't need to involve paying each other, but it does require being fair. So if you think you'll be taken for a ride, walk away.
6. Approach the partners with your ideas and see how many you can get on board!



This post was written by [Will Young](#), CEO and Co-founder of tech start-up [rais](#). [rais](#) is a customer intelligence and CRM platform for small retail businesses, who want to better harness their customer data but don't have the time or resources to do so.





Monthly Favs

Every month I like to collect some of my favorite links and tools to help take your marketing efforts to the next level. Here are my monthly favs.

[Notablist](#) - Search engine of over 4 million newsletters for design inspiration

[Teleprompter](#) - Tool that makes it easier to create videos by reading from a script

[Kiwi for Gmail](#) - Turn Gmail into a Mac desktop email client

[Cast](#) - Tool to record, edit, host and promote your podcast

[Keyword Generator by URL](#) - Free tool from RankActive allows you to see what you keywords your content is optimized for

[Snappa](#) - one of the easiest online graphics tools you will ever use

[dapulse](#) - Simple, graphical project management and collaboration tool

[Teachable](#) - Great platform for creating and selling online courses.

[start A FIRE](#) - interesting way to embed your content recommendations into any shared link

[TeuxDeux](#) - Simple, good looking to do list maker

[NewShareCounts](#) - Simple way to get Twitter share counts back - works with common plugins

[GitBook](#) - Simple writing and collaboration tool based on the popular GitHub tech

[Adobe Post](#) - Adobe jumps into the online graphic editor game

