

E-COMMERCE GROWTH
CHANNELS FROM

FOUNDER INTERVIEWS - DEEP DIVE

by



STACKED MARKETER

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WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS DEEP DIVE

We're shaking things up! Since launching Insights, we've done one deep dive a month where we focused on individual brands. To start off 2022, we're bringing a different kind of deep dive...

We spent over 300 hours reading through 181 detailed founder interviews, trying to identify the acquisition channels that consistently worked for them.

After that, we analyzed each channel, identifying the key aspects behind why it works for founders.



Who this deep dive is for

If you are a marketer who has to drive sales for e-commerce brands, this deep dive is a must read.

With around 100 examples of marketing tactics, strategies, and growth hacks, across a wide variety of niches - this deep dive will help you start 2022 the right way.

Yes, we don't just say which channels worked, but we bring you concrete examples of what worked and to what extent.

Let's dive in!



Growth channels for e-commerce

We have sorted the growth channels based on how many times founders mentioned that they worked.

Care to venture a guess on what's arguably the most effective channel for e-commerce? Let's see...

1. Facebook Ads (worked for 32 companies)

If you want to direct people to your e-commerce site, Facebook Ads can often be the best channel to use. Yes, even after everything that happened with ATT in 2021.

However, how do you get started advertising there? We've noticed a recurring pattern of businesses getting started with custom/lookalike audiences. Take Snappies (\$1.5K/mo), an e-commerce brand that sells hats:

For any entrepreneurs in eCommerce, Facebook ads are incredibly powerful. The problem a lot of people have starting out, including myself, is nailing down the targeting to make it profitable. With so many targeting options and variables, it's hard to know what's working and what's wasting your money.

I didn't start to see real results until I used custom audiences based off past customers or newsletter signups. My advice to entrepreneurs getting burned from Facebook ads is to wait until you have a list of reliable contacts (customers, signups, website visitors) and then target audiences based off those lists via lookalike audiences. At the end of the day it takes a lot of trial and error, so don't be afraid to lose some money testing your ads. ([source](#))

4. Email list (worked for 26 companies)

Your email list can be a huge driver of sales. Hush Blankets (\$2m/mo) is selling blankets to reduce anxiety, and email has been one of their best sales channels:

Email has been huge for us too, which we know most stores don't tackle. Automations, winback campaigns, retargeting, thank you follow-ups, etc, not only help drive branding **but have increased sales dramatically.** ([source](#))

How do you attract people to your email list though, and after you attract them, what kind of content do you send? We've identified 3 main approaches founders use in order to attract website visitors to their list:

- Win a prize
- Giveaways
- Discounts

Win a prize

We've seen a lot of founders use Spin-a-Sale or similar plugins for this. **BruMate (\$1.1M/mo)** is selling alcohol drinkware accessories, and they've used this approach successfully:

5. Influencers (worked for 25 companies)

When you reach out to influencers, there are 2 things to consider:

- What kinds of influencer to reach
- What to post

What kinds of influencer to reach

Our analysis has shown that e-commerce companies have more success with B-list influencers. **Plain Jane (\$50K/mo)** is a set of CBD (cannabis) products, and they're an example of this:

We've found success **with micro-influencers, influencers,** and, more recently, SEO.

The hard part with any social media influencer strategy is to find people that correctly target your demographic. **At first, we paid anyone who offered to promote us. Big mistake.** Once we got past the trap of obvious botnet accounts, we still weren't always making money off of our influencers.

On Instagram, an account with 100K followers is often worth less than 10K followers if your brand doesn't align well with the influencer. Over the course of a few months, we took the time to really understand our target demographic and how to find influencers that would work well with our brand.

We've also found success by partnering with influencers who focus on creating quality content **and limit the number of products they review.** If you go to someone's page and all they have is product reviews, beware..

15. Content marketing (worked for 12 companies)

What kind of content is likely to work with e-commerce? We've seen 2 main types that work well:

- Stories
- Personal content
- Lifestyle content

Stories

NOVO watch (\$16k/mo) is a hand-made maker of watches for men, and they've used the power of story to get new customers:

It seems the best way to attract customers is the story. Customers are smart and if the story isn't authentic they'll see that.

What do we do that's different? Why would they find value in our product over someone else's? Authenticity is simple: write, create and say what you really mean. Don't make anything up.

Our videos are well done and I find that helps to spread the message. Here's a few great examples:

Making a watch in 60 seconds [link](#)

Finding the Suffield [link](#)

Other growth channels to pad (but not lead) new customer acquisition

The marketing world changes fast, and some newer acquisition channels that still have potential, and are trending upwards are not mentioned as frequently yet. For this reason, we do want to set aside a short section with channels that we think should be tested, with explanations why.

TikTok

It's been the most downloaded app for just about all months in 2021. It just surpassed one billion users. Tons of e-commerce focused features. So it's no wonder we have to put this to the top of the list for "other growth channels" for e-commerce.

TikTok is still in its infancy when you compare it to Facebook Ads but it's well worth exploring.

SMS (or push notifications)

First-party data. While email is a great channel, 2021 has clearly shown that more first-party data is good for brands.

It's a balancing act, because you don't want to overwhelm your audience but you should certainly have SMS (or push notifications) in your e-commerce marketing strategy for 2022.

One example we'd like to give you is actually from our very first deep dive, on Snow. They are one of the brands who have been very active with SMS campaigns for over a year now.

Newsletter ads

Last on the list, something we are certainly biased about but we've seen how powerful newsletter ads can be. We've seen their power as advertisers, and as publishers.

It's almost impossible to get higher quality traffic than from an **editorial newsletter**. And that's probably the key: avoid newsletters that do a 3 line summary any bot could replicate. Instead, go for newsletters that have a personality in their content.

We do count our Stacked Marketer newsletter in this group, but other suggestions we'd have for e-commerce brands are:

- Morning Brew
- The Skimm
- The Daily Upside
- The Peak
- 1440
- Dense Discovery

If you're an e-commerce brand, hit them up and see if they fit your budget.

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