

THE SME
MARKETING GUY



THE MARKETING FLYWHEEL

TURN CUSTOMERS
INTO CASHFLOW



Quick Intro...

Funnels get you sales, but they don't build lasting momentum. That's where the marketing flywheel changes the game. Instead of chasing leads, you create a cycle where every customer fuels the next stage. From awareness through to advocacy. This ebook shows entrepreneurs how to connect funnels to flywheels, remove friction, and build compounding growth. If you're ready to stop starting over and start creating sustainable revenue, this is your playbook.

The 3 Things You'll Learn...

01 From Funnels to Flywheels



Discover why funnels still matter but fall short and how flywheels turn one-time conversions into ongoing momentum that keeps fuelling awareness, trust, and sales on repeat.

02 Removing Friction for Faster Growth




Learn how to identify bottlenecks, smooth customer experiences, and build systems that reduce drag, so your flywheel spins faster and delivers more profit with less effort.

03 Turning Customers Into Champions



Explore how loyalty and advocacy loops transform happy customers into marketers, creating referrals, repeat sales, and reviews that build trust and revenue far beyond paid campaigns.

A woman with dark, curly hair is looking down at a laptop screen. The image is dimly lit with a blue tint. The text is overlaid on the image in white.

Funnels are powerful for campaigns but limited at the finish line, and introduces the flywheel as a cyclical model that turns customers into the ongoing momentum for sustainable growth

FROM FUNNEL TO FLYWHEEL

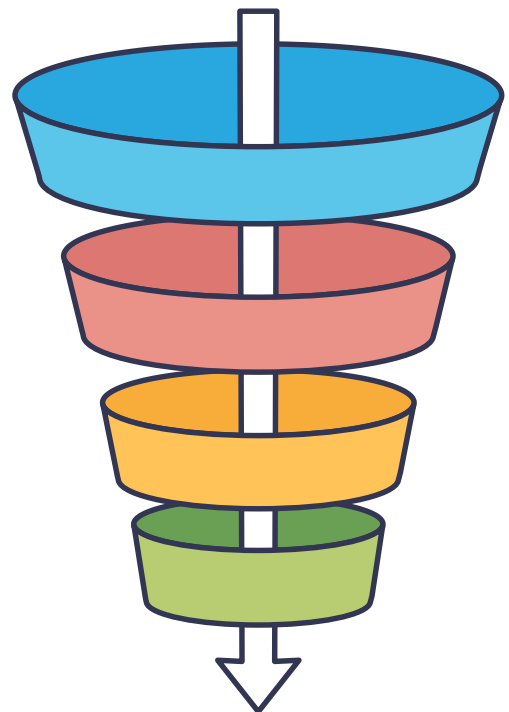
The sales funnel has been marketing's favourite model for decades and with good reason. It's simple, logical, and makes it easy to see how strangers become customers.

The Classic Sales Funnel: What It Got Right

At its best, the funnel is:

- **Clear:** awareness at the top, conversion at the bottom.
- **Campaign-focused:** perfect for launches, lead generation, or promotions.
- **Measurable:** you can see where people drop off and optimise the flow.

That's why our sales funnel playbook, "Create The Perfect Sales Funnel: Proven Paths To More Leads" exists. It's to give you the tactical precision you need when you're driving specific outcomes.



Master Your Own Sales Funnel

Before we go further, make sure you've explored our Create The Perfect Sales Funnel: Proven Paths To More Leads Playbook. It's the tactical partner to this guide, giving you the step-by-step structure to build campaigns that move people from awareness to conversion. Think of that playbook as your toolkit for getting results now, while this one shows you how to make those results last longer and spin into sustainable growth.





Where Funnels Fall Short

But here's the weakness: funnels stop at the sale. They don't show you what happens after conversion... loyalty, repeat purchases, referrals etc. Which means:

You're always paying to refill the top

Customer relationships get cut short

Growth feels like starting over again and again


And over time, that becomes expensive, exhausting, and unsustainable.

The Flywheel Mindset: Growth That Spins

The flywheel offers a smarter view. Instead of seeing conversion as the finish line, it turns the customer journey into a loop:

- Awareness feeds consideration
- Consideration feeds conversion
- Conversion feeds loyalty
- Loyalty feeds advocacy
- And advocacy sends new energy right back to awareness

The more delighted customers you have, the more momentum your business carries forward, without always starting from scratch.



The marketing flywheel works by turning awareness, consideration, conversion, loyalty, and advocacy into a continuous cycle where each stage fuels the next, creating compounding growth

THE STAGES OF THE FLYWHEEL

If the funnel is about moving people down, the flywheel is about keeping them moving forward. Each stage doesn't just lead into the next, it powers it. Let's break down the stages of the marketing flywheel and how you can make each one spin faster.



When you design with the flywheel in mind, growth stops being a series of stop-start campaigns and becomes a self-sustaining system.



Awareness: Lighting the Spark

Your first job is to make sure people know you exist, but awareness today isn't just about shouting louder, it's about being discoverable.

Organic reach (SEO, social media, PR) keeps your brand visible over time

Paid reach (ads, sponsorships, influencer collabs) accelerates your visibility

Mix the two for balance: organic builds trust, paid creates speed

Campaign examples: blog content that answers customer questions, social reels that spark curiosity, or PR coverage in a trade publication.



Don't just push content, create "discovery moments." Partner with trusted platforms, communities, or influencers so your brand feels like it belongs. One mention in the right podcast or niche blog can be worth thousands of random impressions. Awareness that feels earned carries more weight than awareness that's bought.



Consideration: Nurturing Interest

Once someone's aware of you, the real work begins, showing them you're worth their time and money.

Provide useful information that educates, not just sells

Highlight proof points: testimonials, reviews, case studies

Create comparison guides or FAQs that address objections upfront

Campaign examples: a webinar that explains industry trends, a downloadable buyer's checklist, or a behind-the-scenes email series.



Map every objection a buyer might have — then answer it upfront. Go deeper than price: address fears like “Will this work for me?” or “What if I choose wrong?” Weave answers into guides, testimonials, or explainer content to build trust and remove friction before it grows.



Conversion: Turning Interest Into Action

This is where the energy you've built up gets channelled into results: sales, sign-ups, or bookings.

Make the process smooth and friction-free (no clunky checkouts)

Use strong calls to action backed by proof

Offer time-limited incentives when appropriate

Campaign examples: an optimised landing page with social proof, a targeted ad campaign with a clear offer, or a retargeting sequence that closes the loop.



Treat your checkout like your best salesperson. Test, refine, and strip friction. Every extra field or second of delay drains energy. Use heatmaps or A/B tests to find sticking points, and counter them with reviews, guarantees, or urgency signals right where they're needed.



Loyalty: Creating Repeat Buyers

Winning a customer once is good. Keeping them is where the real growth lives.

Invest in a great post-purchase experience

Personalise follow-up emails and recommendations

Reward repeat business with loyalty programs or early access

Campaign examples: an onboarding sequence for new users, an anniversary discount, or a VIP-only event.



Surprise and delight beats discounts. Discounts train customers to wait; delight trains them to stay. A handwritten note, early access, or even a simple personalised message creates a memory your competitors can't replicate. Loyalty is built in the small human touches that make a transaction feel like a relationship.



Advocacy: Turning Customers Into Champions

The final stage is what makes the flywheel spin faster than any funnel ever could — customers bringing in more customers.

Encourage reviews, testimonials, and user-generated content


Launch referral programs that make sharing rewarding

Celebrate your community and let your customers feel like insiders

Campaign examples: a “refer a friend” discount, a customer spotlight on social media, or a branded hashtag that sparks sharing.



Make advocacy feel like a badge of honour. Create ambassador programs, insider perks, or early-access groups where sharing your brand makes customers look good too. Advocacy spreads when people feel they're part of something exclusive, and it's even more powerful when it lifts their personal brand as well as yours.



“Growth isn’t about pushing harder, it’s about removing friction so your flywheel spins faster on its own

KEEPING THE FLYWHEEL SPINNING

A flywheel only works if it keeps moving. In business, that means building momentum while cutting out friction. Every stage of your flywheel should add energy. That means awareness feeding consideration, consideration leading to conversion, and so on. The smoother the motion, the faster growth compounds.

Why Momentum Matters

Funnels give you bursts of energy. A campaign runs, it wins or fails, and then you reset. Flywheels, on the other hand, thrive on compounding energy:

- Every happy customer adds power.
- Every referral brings new awareness.
- Every repeat purchase builds stability.

Growth is no longer stop-start. It's continuous.

Removing Friction at Each Stage

Momentum slows when customers face obstacles. Your job is to reduce the drag.

Awareness

Don't confuse people with mixed messages. Clarity builds recall.

Consideration

Make it easy to compare and trust your offer.

Conversion

Strip away extra steps, clunky forms, or slow load times.

Loyalty

Deliver on your promises; broken expectations create churn.

Advocacy

Don't make sharing hard! Give customers tools to spread the word. How life or business improved as a result.



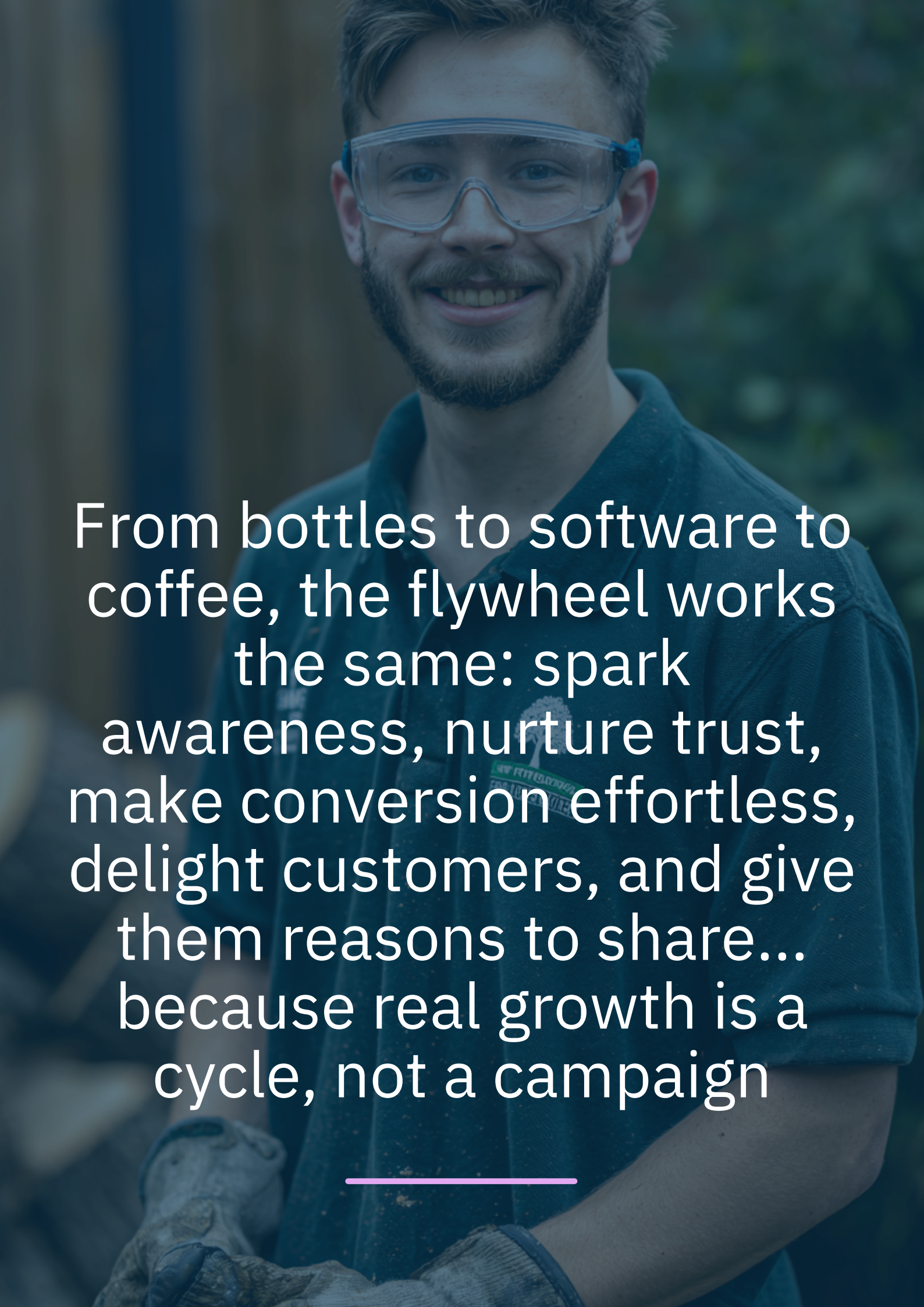
Measuring Spin: Key Metrics for the Flywheel

How do you know if your flywheel is spinning fast or slowing down? Look for signals at every stage:

Awareness	Website traffic, impressions, reach.
Consideration	Time on site, content engagement, demo requests.
Conversion	Conversion rates, cost per acquisition.
Loyalty	Repeat purchase rate, churn, NPS (Net Promoter Score).
Advocacy	Referral numbers, reviews, user-generated content.



The key isn't tracking everything, but spotting where momentum is strongest and where friction is killing your spin.

A man with a beard and safety glasses, wearing a dark polo shirt with a flywheel logo, is smiling. The background is blurred. The text is overlaid on the image.

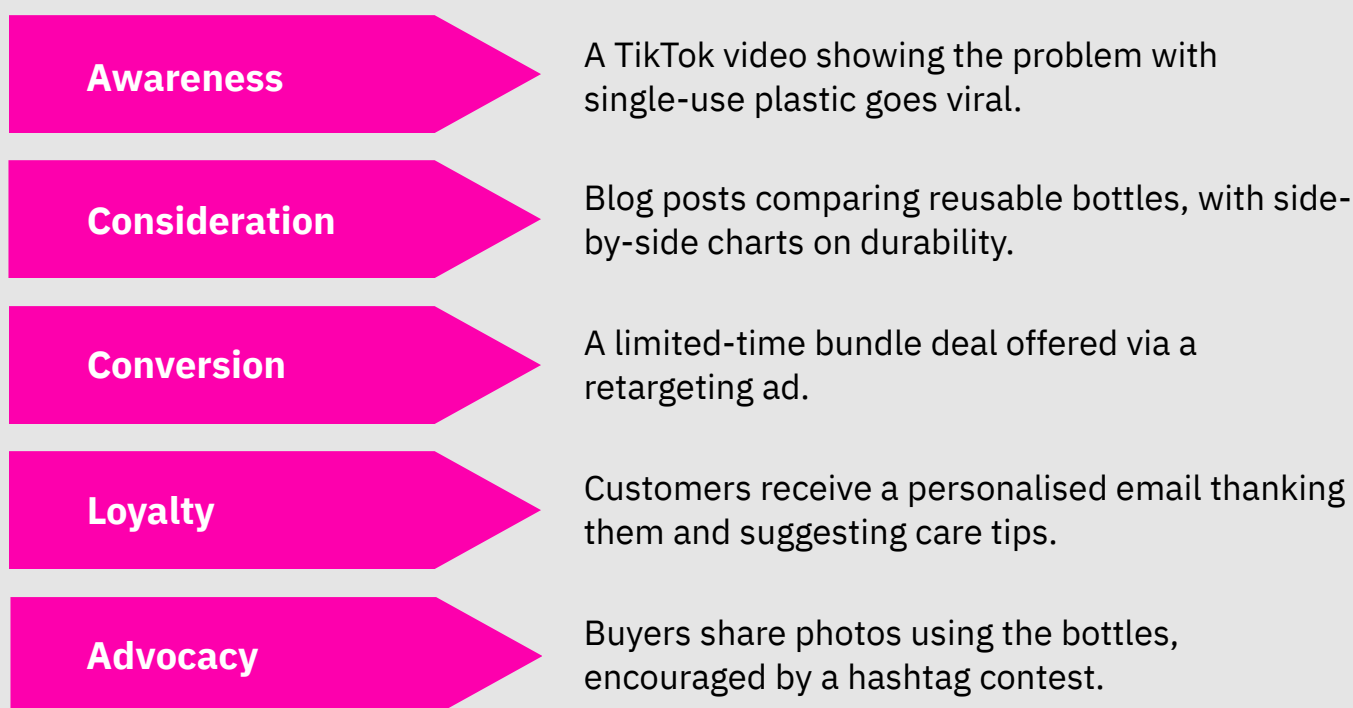
From bottles to software to
coffee, the flywheel works
the same: spark
awareness, nurture trust,
make conversion effortless,
delight customers, and give
them reasons to share...
because real growth is a
cycle, not a campaign

CAMPAIGN BLUEPRINTS YOU CAN STEAL

The best way to understand the flywheel is to see it in action. Below are three blueprint examples: one for B2C, one for B2B, and one for a local business. Each one shows how awareness, consideration, conversion, loyalty, and advocacy flow together into a self-sustaining cycle.

B2C Example: Eco-Friendly E-Commerce Brand

Imagine a start-up selling reusable water bottles...

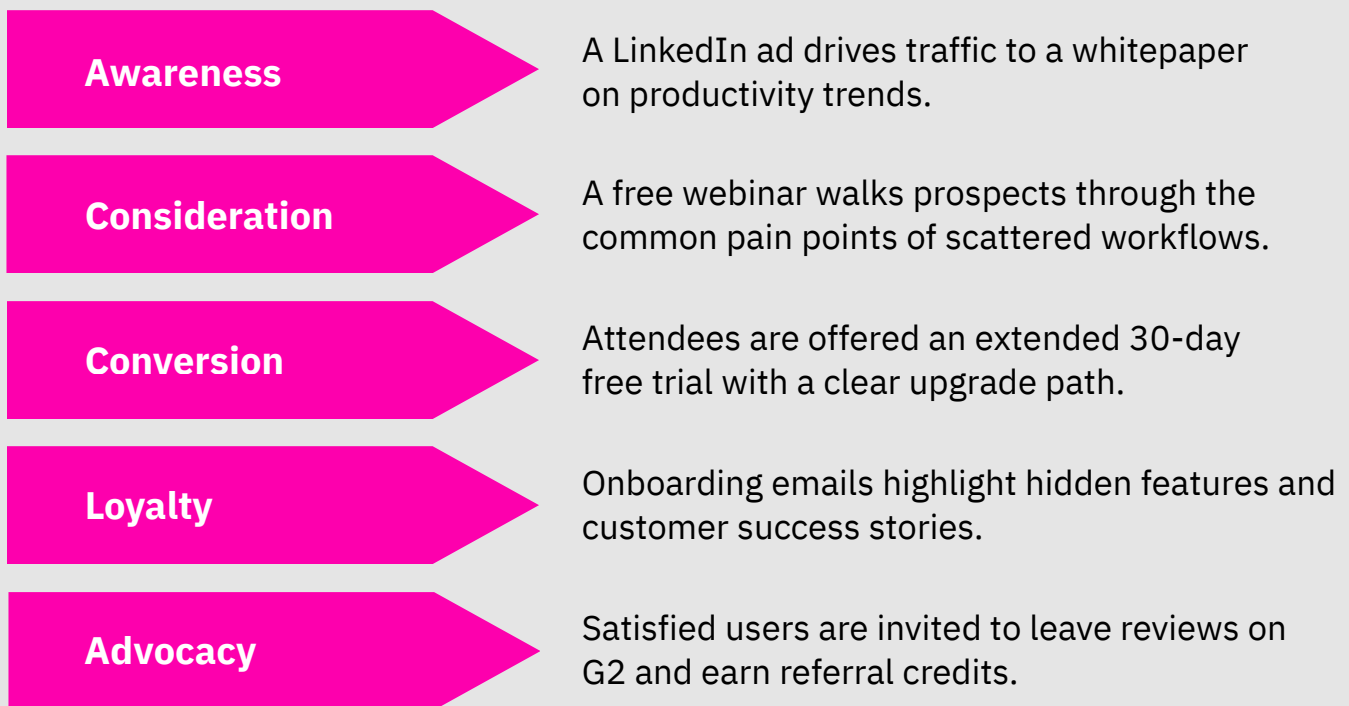


Takeaway: The campaign isn't just about one sale. It builds a movement where customers become the megaphone.



B2B Example: SaaS Company With Inbound Marketing

Now picture a software tool for project management...



Takeaway: In B2B, trust is king. The flywheel ensures education doesn't stop after sign-up, it turns users into advocates.



Local Business Example: Independent Café

Finally, think about a small café in a busy neighbourhood...

Awareness

Instagram reels showcase latte art and behind-the-scenes baking.

Consideration

Customers see glowing Google reviews and mouth-watering menu photos.

Conversion

A loyalty card offers “buy 5 coffees, get the 6th free.”

Loyalty


Regulars receive personalised offers via WhatsApp or email (“your favourite pastry is back!”).

Advocacy

The café encourages selfies in front of its mural, tagged with the shop’s handle.

Takeaway: Even tiny touches, like a loyalty card or a mural wall, keep the wheel spinning at street-level.

The flywheel isn’t limited to big corporations or endless budgets. Whether you’re selling bottles, software, or flat whites, the same cycle applies: build awareness, nurture trust, remove friction, delight customers, and give them reasons to share. That’s how momentum becomes unstoppable.



Turn your funnel into a
flywheel by mapping
what you already do,
fixing drop-offs,
adding loyalty and
advocacy loops, and
refining until growth
powers itself

BUILDING YOUR OWN FLYWHEEL

By now you've seen how the flywheel works in theory and in practice. The next step is building one that fits your business. It doesn't have to be complicated, in fact, the simpler you start, the faster you'll feel the momentum.

Step 1: Map Your Current Funnel

Start with what you already know.

- Write down how customers currently move from awareness to conversion.
- Note the campaigns, platforms, and content you already use.
- Identify the biggest points where prospects drop out. Think of this as sketching the "before" picture.



Don't just map the journey from your perspective. Walk it as if you're the customer. Click the ads, fill the forms, abandon a cart, and even phone your own business. Seeing the funnel through their eyes exposes friction points your reports will never show.



Step 2: Spot Drop-Offs and Bottlenecks

Look at your funnel and ask: where are we losing energy?

- Do people ghost after the first enquiry?
- Do carts get abandoned at checkout?
- Do customers buy once but never return?

Customer surveys or short exit interviews are gold. They'll tell you exactly why momentum stops.



Don't just map the journey from your perspective. Walk it as if you're the customer. Click the ads, fill the forms, abandon a cart, and even phone your own business. Seeing the funnel through their eyes exposes friction points your reports will never show.



Step 3: Add Loyalty and Advocacy Loops

Here's where the funnel turns into a flywheel.

- Create one action after purchase that delights (welcome emails, thank-you notes, personalised offers).
- Build one easy way for customers to share (referral links, social hashtags, review prompts).

Make these actions effortless... no one wants to jump through hoops to be loyal.



Design loyalty and advocacy so they feel like a natural extension of the purchase, not an extra task. If a customer has to jump through hoops to claim a reward, momentum dies. Build sharing and delight seamlessly into the experience, the easier it is, the faster your flywheel spins.



Step 4: Test, Measure, Refine


Your first flywheel won't be perfect. The power comes from iteration.

- Track one or two key metrics at each stage.
- Test small changes (faster checkout, better onboarding, clearer CTAs).
- Refine based on what removes friction and what adds spin.

Think of this as oiling the gears... small tweaks keep the wheel smooth.



Your flywheel doesn't need to be complex to be powerful. Start by connecting what you already do, then add the pieces that turn customers into repeat buyers and advocates. Every improvement adds more spin, and soon you'll have a growth system that powers itself.

A group of diverse people, including a woman with curly hair in the foreground, are smiling and talking in a meeting. The image is overlaid with a dark blue gradient.

Small tweaks to your
marketing flywheel,
reduced friction, and
consistent refinement
turn customer
momentum into
sustainable growth

PRO TIPS & ACTION PLAN

You've seen the theory, the stages, and real-world examples. Now it's time to make the flywheel yours. This chapter gives you advanced tips, smart shortcuts, and a simple action plan you can start today.

Pro Tips for Small Budgets

You don't need deep pockets to build momentum.

- **Focus on organic content that compounds over time.**
- **Turn customers into your marketing team through referrals.**
- **Double down on free tools like Google Business Profile and email lists.**

If you can't outspend competitors, out-care them. Small, human touches often create more loyalty than big-budget campaigns.



Treat constraints as creativity fuel. When money is tight, every decision forces you to innovate, to make content that spreads because it's worth sharing, to build loyalty through care instead of cost, and to turn one delighted customer into ten more. Small budgets don't just limit you; they sharpen your marketing into something lean, personal, and unforgettable.



Pro Tips for Scaling Businesses

When growth is already happening, your focus shifts from survival to sustainability. At this stage, the challenge isn't getting noticed, it's keeping your systems, customers, and brand experience consistent while you grow.

Invest in automation to keep the wheel spinning smoothly


Scaling means more moving parts, and the processes that worked at 100 customers may break at 1,000. Automate repeatable tasks like onboarding emails, customer service FAQs, or lead nurturing so your team can focus on higher-value activities.

Build layered loyalty schemes that reward long-term engagement

One-off discounts won't cut it. At scale, you need tiers, perks, and experiences that deepen over time... from VIP access and exclusive events to rewards that celebrate milestones like anniversaries. Make loyalty feel like progress, not repetition.

Track advocacy metrics as carefully as revenue

Reviews, referrals, and user-generated content aren't vanity signals; they're leading indicators of brand health. At scale, advocacy can slash acquisition costs and drive organic growth, but only if you measure and encourage it with the same discipline you apply to sales.

A photograph of two young women standing side-by-side in front of a brick building with a window. The woman on the left has long, wavy reddish-blonde hair and is wearing a dark t-shirt and a dark apron. The woman on the right has blonde hair tied back and is wearing a dark t-shirt and a red apron. The image has a blue tint and a semi-transparent white text overlay in the center. A thin pink horizontal line is located at the bottom center of the page.

Audit your customer experience quarterly, mystery shop your own business, analyse support tickets, and review journey data, so you catch the issues that slow momentum before they snowball



Want to turn this Playbook into practical use? (and ask AI to help cheat)

1) Open ChatGPT and start a new chat.

2) Upload this Playbook by hitting the + button.

4) Copy and paste the below into the dialogue box (editing the relevant part)...

“You are my Sales & Marketing Director. First and foremost scan my website: [enter url] to understand what I do, my brand and my tone. I’ve attached the playbook “The Marketing Flywheel: How to Turn Customers Into Cashflow” - please ensure you follow it’s theory, guidance and advice.”

followed by any of the below prompts (editing the relevant parts)...

Awareness: Lighting the Spark

- “Give me 10 content ideas that answer the top questions my target audience asks about [industry/product].”
- “Draft an SEO-optimised blog outline for [topic] that positions my brand as a trusted expert.”
- “Write a 30-second TikTok/Reel script that sparks curiosity about [problem my product solves].”

Consideration: Nurturing Interest

- “Create a comparison table between my business and my top 3 competitors, highlighting trust-building proof points.”
- “Write a customer FAQ page that removes friction for people considering buying [product/service].”
- “Turn this testimonial into a story-style social post that addresses a common objection.”

Conversion: Turning Interest Into Action

- “Audit this checkout page for friction points and suggest 5 improvements.”
- “Write three urgency-driven email subject lines to push people to complete their purchase.”
- “Create a retargeting ad that reminds people of [product] using a mix of social proof and incentive.”



Loyalty: Creating Repeat Buyers

- “Draft a welcome/onboarding email sequence for new customers of [product/service].”
- “Suggest 5 low-cost ‘surprise and delight’ ideas I can use to keep customers engaged without discounts.”
- “Write a personalised anniversary thank-you email for customers who bought [product] one year ago.”

Advocacy: Turning Customers Into Champions

- “Create a referral program concept that feels like a badge of honour rather than a discount code.”
- “Draft a social media post template for spotlighting a happy customer.”
- “Write an email asking customers to leave a review that makes them feel valued, not pressured.”

Become a ChatGPT Prompt Master

In this Playbook, entrepreneurs learn how to create prompts that save time, spark ideas, and sharpen results. From marketing posts to admin tasks, you’ll master practical ways to use AI daily and build a reusable prompt library to streamline their business...

Available NOW in the Vault.



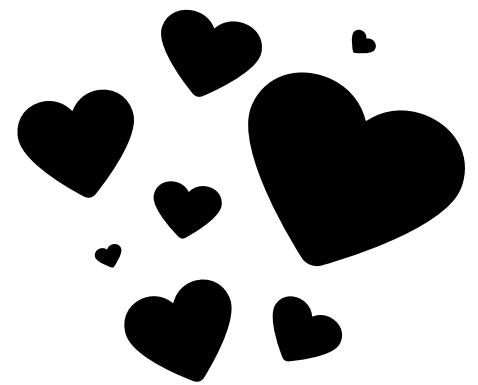


From Motion to Momentum

A flywheel doesn't spin itself, it needs a push. The good news is, you already have everything you need to start: your funnel, your customers, and your ability to refine. The only difference now is how you see growth: not as a straight line, but as a cycle that builds momentum with every win.

GO FOR IT!

Don't wait for the perfect system. Don't overcomplicate it. Start with one moment of delight, one referral, one friction point removed. Each small push adds energy and soon you'll feel the wheel turning on its own. Action beats theory. The brands that win aren't the ones who read the playbook, they're the ones who put it into motion. Funnels will help you win campaigns. But flywheels? They help you build legacies. Go for it.



The secret to selling without selling is to treat every interaction as a trust deposit. Educate first, prove second, invite last; when value leads the way, sales follow effortlessly.

WHO IS THE SME MARKETING GUY?

The SME Marketing Guy is built around a simple idea: marketing should be accessible, practical, and actually make a difference to your business.

I'm Ed Carney, a commercially focused marketer with over 25 years' experience working within fast-paced, high-growth businesses, partnering with senior teams to drive real commercial results. I've built and delivered digital marketing, PR, brand propositions and strategic marketing plans, alongside CRM systems and AI-led automation, generating over £1m in annual revenue impact and achieving 400%+ ROI.

Everything here is based on real-world delivery, turning complex ideas into clear, practical marketing that generates enquiries, strengthens your pipeline, and supports growth.

The SME Marketing Guy is my way of making that experience available to small businesses without the cost, complexity, or commitment of a traditional agency. You can take the strategies for free and apply them yourself, or work with me directly to put them into action in a way that fits your business and your budget.



If you'd like help putting any of this into action within your business, The SME Marketing Guy can work with you directly to implement it in a way that's practical, focused, and aligned to your goals.

Whether you need support refining the approach, prioritising what to do first, or getting everything set up and moving, you don't have to figure it out alone.

If that sounds useful, get in touch and we can have a straightforward conversation about how to move things forward.

DISCLAIMER

This playbook has been created by The SME Marketing Guy to provide small businesses with clear, practical marketing guidance. Every effort has been made to ensure the content is accurate, relevant, and useful at the time of publishing.

Marketing is always evolving, and results will vary depending on your business, market, and how the strategies are applied. This guide is designed to offer proven, real-world insights, but should be used as a practical resource rather than a substitute for tailored advice.

The SME Marketing Guy is not liable for any decisions made based on this content or for any outcomes resulting from its use. You are encouraged to adapt the ideas and approaches to suit your specific goals and circumstances.

If you'd like support putting any of this into action, you can get in touch directly to discuss your business and how it can be applied.