# MARKETING &
# SALES BLUEPRINT

## FOR SOLOPRENEURS AND SMALL TO MEDIUM BUSINESSES

# Austin Visuals | Animation Studio 2D/3D/VR Animation

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# Introduction

After more than 30 years in marketing, working for international ad agencies and producing materials for Fortune 500 companies and new businesses alike, I know how hectic a marketing department can be.

Without a plan you can't get a realistic budget nor guide your company with your expertise. This brief book is intended to be a guide to ensure you pay attention to ALL the resources that are available and necessary to your ultimate success. I hope it helps!



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# DO THIS FIRST - IDENTIFY CUSTOMERS

**Understanding your customers is the cornerstone of an effective marketing and sales strategy.**

## Key Questions to Answer

- Who are your ideal customers?
- What are their pain points?
- Where do they spend their time online?
- What are their purchasing habits?

## Action Steps

1. Create detailed customer personas that include demographics, behaviors, goals, and challenges

- Use tools like HubSpot's Make My Persona or Xtensio to build personas efficiently.

2. Conduct surveys and interviews to gather direct feedback from your audience.

- Platforms like SurveyMonkey or Typeform can help collect data.

3. Use analytics tools (Google Analytics, social media insights) to identify trends in your customer base.

- Analyze audience demographics and engagement on social media platforms like Instagram Insights.

## Data Insight

A TED Talk by Simon Sinek emphasized, "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it." Establishing a clear "why" helps build emotional connections with your audience.

**Case Study:** Apple's success stems from connecting their products to a lifestyle and vision, not just features.
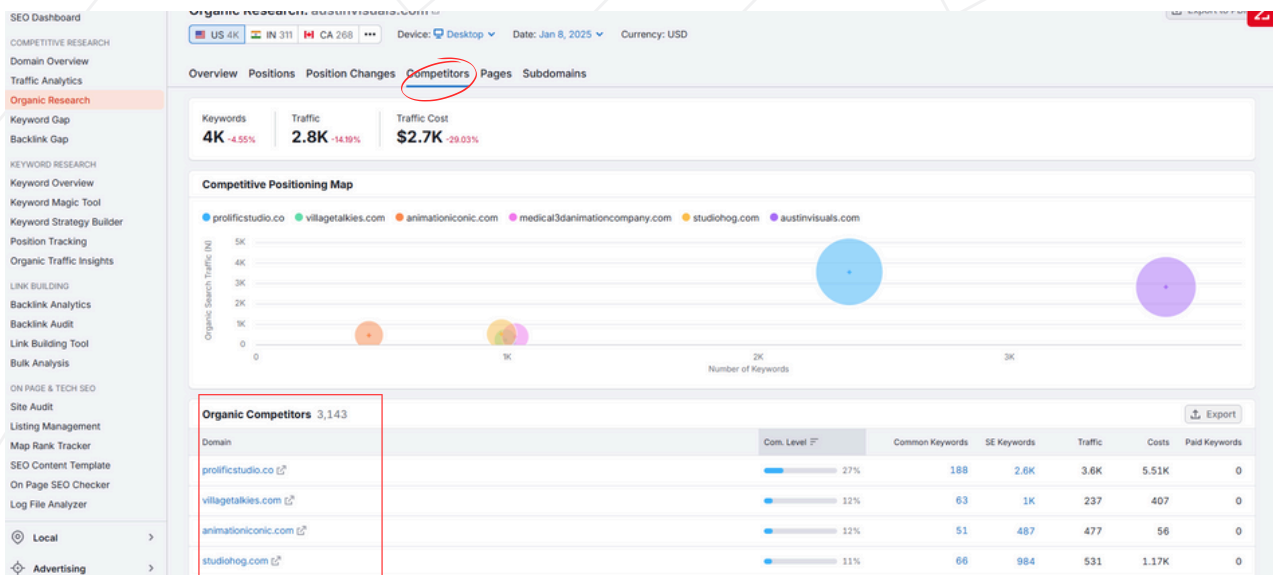
# IDENTIFY COMPETITORS

**Knowing your competition allows you to differentiate yourself effectively and identify gaps in the market.**

## HOW TO CONDUCT COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

### ✓ IDENTIFY TOP COMPETITORS

Use SEMrush, Ahrefs, or free tools like SimilarWeb to identify competitors in your niche.



### ✓ ANALYZE COMPETITOR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- What are their unique selling points (USPs)?
- How do they price their products/services?
- What channels do they use for promotion?
- Conduct a SWOT analysis for each competitor.

### ✓ BENCHMARK YOURSELF

- Compare website traffic, social media engagement, and customer reviews.
- Tools like SpyFu can reveal their paid ad strategies.

## GRAPH: COMPETITIVE MARKET SHARE

Include a bar or pie chart illustrating the percentage of market share held by each competitor. Platforms like Canva or Excel can be used to create professional visuals.

**Pro Tip:** Keep tabs on competitors by subscribing to their newsletters and following their social media channels.

# SWOT ANALYSIS

**Knowing your competition allows you to differentiate yourself effectively and identify gaps in the market.**

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| Unique Product Offering | Limited Marketing Budget |
| Established Customer Base | Inconsistent Branding |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Growing Online Market | Emerging Competitors |
| Expanding Product Categories | Economic Uncertainty |

## STEPS TO COMPLETE A SWOT ANALYSIS

- Gather input from your team or advisors.
- Use customer feedback to validate perceived strengths and weaknesses.
- Update your SWOT analysis quarterly to adapt to market changes.

**Example:** A local bakery identified their strength as "artisan recipes" but noted a weakness in "limited online presence." Their opportunity lay in leveraging food delivery apps.

# SET YOUR BRANDING STRATEGY

**Your brand is the identity of your business—how customers recognize and relate to you. It is, of course, affected by reach (the number of people who see your content) and frequency (the number of times an ad is run) or is seen. Animated logos increase visibility. [Here's an example](#) .**

## KEY COMPONENTS

- **Visual Identity:** Logo, color scheme, typography.
- **Brand Voice:** Decide if your tone will be formal, casual, humorous, etc.
- **Core Values:** Ensure your messaging aligns with your company's mission.
- **Consistency:** Use the same branding across all platforms and materials.

## ACTION PLAN

- Audit existing materials for consistency.
- Develop a brand style guide to distribute to team members.
- Test your branding with a focus group to ensure it resonates.

**Example:** Airbnb's rebranding focused on a sense of belonging, which resonated globally.

# SET YOUR BUDGET BY MONTH BASED ON SALES

**Creating a budget helps you allocate resources effectively.**

## STEPS TO BUILD A BUDGET

- Calculate your average monthly revenue.



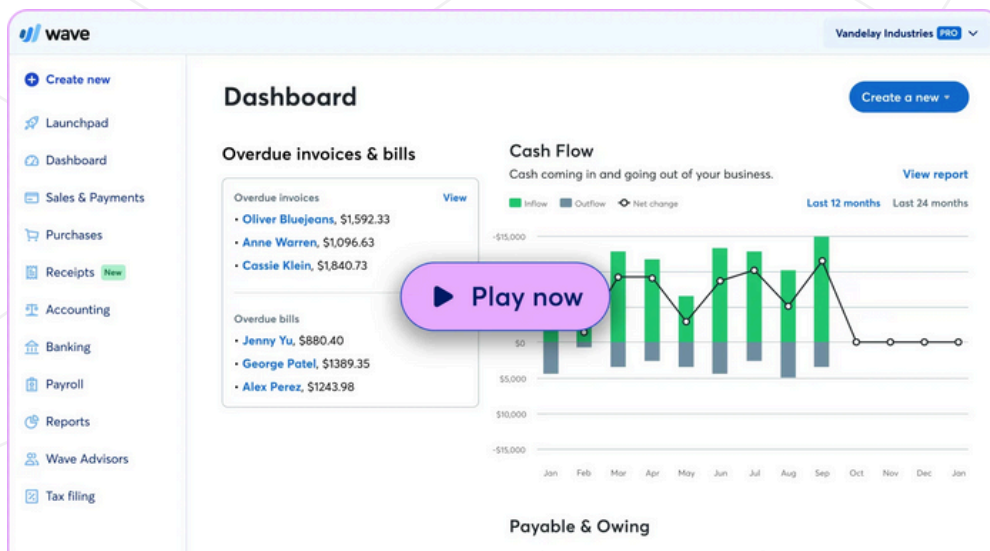- Dedicate a percentage (e.g., 10-20%) to marketing.



- Identify key spending categories (ads, content creation, email marketing).



## PRO TIP

Use free tools like Wave or Zoho to manage your marketing budget and expenses.

# TAKE A CRITICAL LOOK AT YOUR WEBSITE

**Your website is your digital storefront. Ensure it leaves a positive impression.**

## CHECKLIST FOR WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

- Is your website mobile-friendly?
- Does it load within 3 seconds?
- Are calls-to-action (CTAs) clear and strategically placed?
- Does your content answer customer questions?

## TOOLS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Use Google PageSpeed Insights to measure site speed.
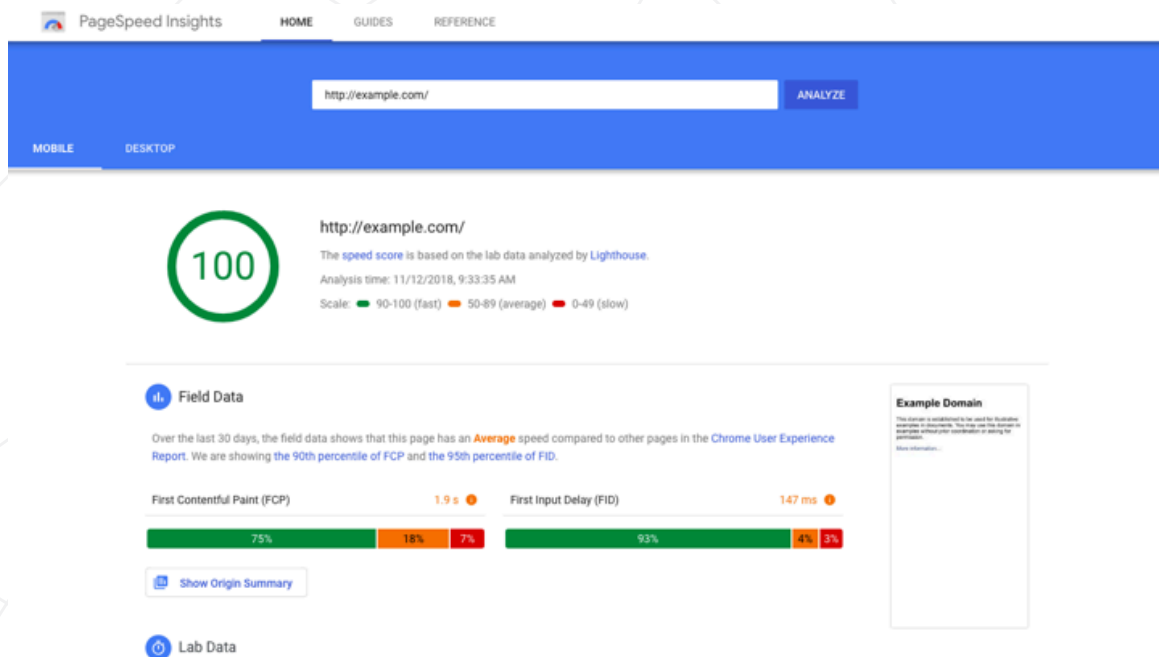


- Install tools like Hotjar to monitor user behavior.
- A/B test landing pages using Optimizely or Google Optimize.

**Example:** A consulting firm increased their conversions by 30% after improving CTA placement and simplifying their homepage layout.

# REVIEW PRODUCT STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

**No amount of marketing excellence will overcome a dated or faulty product. Analyzing your product portfolio can identify opportunities for improvement or diversification and tell you why customers prefer something else in their lives.**
**Here is an analysis for a product we are familiar with - a smart phone**

## SWOT ANALYSIS: SMARTPHONE MODEL X

### Strengths (Internal, Positive)

- Innovative Features: High-resolution camera, extended battery life, and cutting-edge processor.
- Brand Reputation: Established brand known for quality and reliability.
- User Experience: Intuitive interface and seamless integration with other devices.
- Eco-Friendly Design: Made with sustainable materials, appealing to eco-conscious consumers.

### Weaknesses (Internal, Negative)

- High Price Point: May deter budget-conscious customers.
- Limited Customization: Fewer options for personalization compared to competitors.
- Dependency on Ecosystem: Features work best only within the same brand's ecosystem.
- Availability: Initial launch limited to select markets.

**SWOT**

## Opportunities (External, Positive)

- Growing Market: Increased demand for 5G-enabled smartphones.
- Expanding Audience: Opportunity to tap into emerging markets with affordable variants.
- Partnerships: Collaborate with app developers to offer exclusive features.
- Eco-Conscious Consumers: Marketing sustainability can attract new customer segments.

## Threats (External, Negative)

- Intense Competition: Rival brands offering similar features at lower prices.
- Economic Uncertainty: Inflation or recessions affecting consumer spending.
- Technological Advancements: Rapid tech changes could make features outdated quickly.
- Regulations: Stricter environmental and privacy laws impacting production and functionality.

# STEPS TO ASSESS PRODUCTS

- Evaluate sales performance.
- Gather customer feedback using tools like NPS surveys.
- Compare features to competitors.
- Identify products that align with current market trends.

# GRAPH: PRODUCT SALES PERFORMANCE

Create a bar chart to highlight best-selling and underperforming products. Excel or Google Sheets are great tools for visualizing data.

# CREATE A VIDEO

**Video content is highly engaging and effective for communicating your message.**

## TIPS FOR CREATING VIDEOS

1. Keep videos under 2 minutes.
2. Focus on storytelling: share customer success stories or demonstrate product use.
3. Add captions for accessibility.

**To get the best quote for your video, answer the following questions:**

- Who will work on my video? Are they in the United States? Are you going to stay involved or pass me off to some junior associate?
- What is your approach to developing a concept that aligns with our goals and audience?
- Can you provide examples of similar 90-second videos you've produced?
- What is your process for scripting and storyboarding?
- How do you ensure the video maintains a clear and engaging narrative within 90 seconds?

## Production Process

- What are the stages of production, and how long does each take?
- What level of involvement will I have during production?
- Who will be the main point of contact for this project?
- Do you handle all aspects of production (e.g., filming, animation, editing), or do you outsource certain tasks?

## Audience and Goals

- How do you ensure the video resonates with our target audience?
- How do you incorporate our branding and key messages into the video?
- What strategies do you use to make the video shareable and engaging?

### Budget and Deliverables

- What is included in your pricing? (e.g., revisions, music licensing, voiceovers)
- Are there additional costs for things like stock footage, actors, or special effects?
- What are the deliverables (e.g., formats, resolution, raw files)?

### Timeline and Revisions

- What is your typical turnaround time for a 90-second video?
- How many rounds of revisions are included in the process?
- What happens if we need extra revisions or changes after the video is delivered?

### Technical Aspects

- What platforms or devices will the video be optimized for?
- Do you provide subtitling or captioning services?
- Can the video be repurposed into shorter clips or formats for other platforms?

### Metrics and ROI

- How do you measure the success of the video?
- Do you offer advice on video distribution and promotion?
- Can you provide guidance on how to optimize the video for SEO and social media algorithms?

### Experience and Collaboration

- What industries or niches have you worked with before?
- What sets your agency apart from others?
- How do you handle feedback and ensure client satisfaction?

## QUOTE

"The brain processes visuals 60,000 times faster than text." — TED Talk on Visual Storytelling That's probably why videos rank 82% more effective.
Austin Visuals has been creating videos for nearly 20 years. Here's a look at just a few: Austin Visuals 3D Animation Studio Showreel

**Example:** A fitness coach doubled their client base by creating short workout tutorial videos for Instagram.

# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT AND CHANNELS

**Never forget that Social media was meant to be "social". If you can create a fun or warm and fuzzy or "club" for people of like interests with your content and layout you' win! Social media is essential for connecting with your audience and building brand awareness.**

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT PLATFORMS

**Facebook**: Broad audience, great for ads. Optimum posting times are:

- **Weekdays:** Posting between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM is generally effective.
- **Tuesdays through Thursdays:** These days often see higher engagement, with optimal times around 9:00 AM to 3:0
- **Avoid late evenings and early mornings:** Engagement tends to be lower between 7:00 PM and 6:00 AM.

**Instagram**: Visual content and stories.

**TikTok:** Short, engaging videos.

**LinkedIn: B2B connections and professional content.**

- **Tuesdays and Wednesdays:** Posting between 8:00 AM and 9:00 AM often yields highe**r** engagement.
- **Thursdays:** Engagement peaks around **2:00 PM**.
- **Weekends:** Generally see lower engagement; if posting on weekends, early mornings around 6:00 AM may be more effective.

## PRO TIP

These recommendations are supported by Hootsuite's research, which suggests that early mornings on weekdays are optimal for LinkedIn engagement. Adjust for your customer's time zone.

# E-BOOKS

**There is no greater power than telling a story.**

Being featured in an **eBook** is a great way to boost your credibility and showcase your expertise. It helps you stand out as a thought leader in your field while building trust with readers. It's also an excellent opportunity to increase visibility and get your name or brand in front of a wider audience, especially if the eBook targets a specific demographic that aligns with your goals.

Plus, it's a cost-effective way to market yourself, as **eBooks** can be shared repeatedly, giving you ongoing exposure without recurring costs. They're perfect for telling your story, highlighting achievements, or sharing success stories in a way that connects with readers.

On top of that, being featured can help drive traffic to your website or social media through embedded links, potentially generating leads and partnerships. It also boosts your online presence, making it easier for people to find and associate you with quality content. Ultimately, being part of an eBook positions you as someone worth paying attention to, opening up new opportunities for networking, influence, and growth.

## STEPS TO CREATE AN E-BOOK

- Choose a specific topic that solves a problem for your audience.
- Write actionable, concise content divided into clear sections.
- Design using free tools like Canva.
- Promote via email and social media.
- Collect leads by offering the **eBook** as a free download in exchange for email addresses.
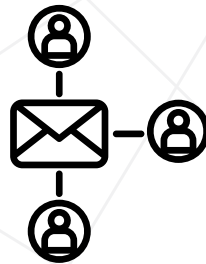
# EMAIL MARKETING

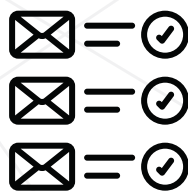**Email marketing remains one of the highest ROI marketing channels.**

## ACTION STEPS

- Build your email list by offering lead magnets (e.g., free templates).

- Segment your list for targeted campaigns.

- Use automation tools like **Mailchimp** or **ConvertKit** to schedule emails.

## METRICS TO MONITOR

- Open Rate: Percentage of recipients who open your email.

- Click-Through Rate (CTR): Percentage of clicks on your links.

**Example:** A SaaS company achieved a 20% increase in CTR by personalizing subject lines.

# BLOGS AND LANDING PAGES

**Blogs and landing pages are vital tools for driving traffic and converting visitors. There's practically no chance you'll get to the precious first page of google without them!**

## WHY BLOGS MATTER

Blogs improve your SEO, establish you as an authority, and keep your audience engaged.

## STEPS TO START BLOGGING

- **Keyword Research:** Use tools like Google Keyword Planner or Ubersuggest to find topics your audience searches for.
- **Content Calendar:** Plan at least one post per week focusing on topics relevant to your audience.
- **Structure:** Use headings (H1, H2) and bullet points to make your blogs scannable.
- **Promote:** Share your posts on social media and via email to reach a wider audience.

## EXAMPLE TOPICS:

- **"Top 10 Social Media Strategies for 2025"**
- **"How to Create a Marketing Budget in 5 Steps"**
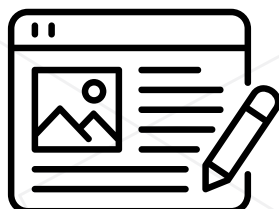
# LANDING PAGES FOR CONVERSION

Landing pages are specialized pages designed to convert visitors into leads or customers.

## TIPS FOR HIGH-CONVERTING LANDING PAGES

- **Clear CTA:** Have a single, prominent call-to-action (e.g., "Download Now").



- **Engaging Copy:** Focus on benefits, not features.



- **Visual Appeal:** Use professional images or videos.



- **A/B Testing:** Continuously test different headlines, CTAs, and layouts to improve conversion rates.

**Pro Tip:** Use tools like Unbounce or Leadpages to create and test landing pages without technical expertise.

**Example:** A digital marketing agency increased their lead capture rate by 40% by simplifying their landing page design and reducing form fields.

Don't forget to publicize "case studies". Here is an example of one of ours:

**https://austinvisuals.com/3d-wellhead-animation/**

# AI HELP

Stop resisting AI and embrace all it can do for you. Leverage artificial intelligence to save time and increase efficiency. Use prompts that are specific to your situation.

**The writing and development of specific prompts may well become the new "copywriting". It's a skill worth honing! Harvard and Texas University currently offer courses as do most universities. We are constantly learning to apply our human expertise with AI to develop content and communication for our clients.**

- **Understand Your Objective:** Clearly define what you want to achieve with your prompt. Is it information, creativity, or problem-solving?
- **Keep It Clear and Concise:** Avoid overly complex or vague prompts. Clarity leads to better AI responses.
- **Context Matters:** Provide enough background for the AI to understand the scenario but avoid unnecessary information.
- **Experiment and Iterate:** Don't hesitate to refine your prompts based on the responses you get. Iteration is key to finding the most effective wording.
- **Consider Your Audience:** Tailor your prompt based on who will interact with or benefit from the AI's response.
- Evaluate and Adapt: Continuously assess the effectiveness of your prompts and be ready to adapt as needed.

## AI TOOLS TO EXPLORE

- Copywriting: Jasper AI, Writesonic.
- Design: Canva AI, Looka.
- Analytics: Google Analytics Insights, Tableau.

**Pro Tip:** AI tools can also analyze customer feedback and predict trends using sentiment analysis.

# I'D LIKE MORE DETAILS

Maybe you're saying "I wanted to know about google adwords" and "she didn't touch on back links" or "this is too general". You can get more specific expert guidance tailored to your business needs with Austin Visuals.

**Nancy Schirm**
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Nancy Schirm, Creative Director/CMO at Austin Visuals, has extensive experience in ad agencies, PR, and creative marketing. She managed marketing and product development and physician practices for an international healthcare corporation and gained valuable experience in DC politics. For 10 years, Nancy has used her corporate and owner/developer expertise to write and produce animations for technology, energy, medical devices, construction, and start-ups worldwide with companies like Nancy lives in Dallas.

Schedule your free consultation to refine your marketing and sales strategy. Contact **nancy@austinvisuals.com** or **matt@austinvisuals.com**.