

Twitter Thread by [Noah Kagan](#)



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We grew Mint from 0 to 1 million users in 6 months.

2 years later, Mint sold for \$170 million.

Here's how we got those first million users■

But before I get there, here's the quick background:

- I joined as employee #4
- #1 personal finance tracker
- Mint sold to Intuit for \$170M in 2009

I found Mint and was like...

"HEY this is dope!"

So I pitched the founder on why I should be his Director of Marketing.

He laughed at me.

"You've never even worked in marketing."

Good point.

But I wrote out a 6-month Mint marketing plan and launch strategy.

He hired me on the spot.

If you want a job, show don't tell.

We had a problem though.

We had no product and 0 users.

My 1st job?

Get 100,000 users in 6 months.

Here's how we did it:

Step 1: Deadlines are everything

Yes, your 5th grade Math teacher was right.

I also learned this from Zuckerberg.

→ Always set measurable deadlines

For Mint: 100K users in 6 months

Then you can reverse engineer how to get there.

Step 2: Who is the customer?

Ok, you're probably thinking @noahkagan this one is obvious!

Everyone is the customer because everyone wants more money.

Wrong.

You need to make this super specific.

So I went to a million coffee shops and asked people questions.

Examples:

- Current financial strategy?
- Need help with most of your finances?
- How would your ideal personal finance tool work?

Our target customer: Young professionals + personal finance nerds

Step 3: Make No Product Look Sexy

We didn't even have a product.

But I needed to build hype somehow.

Hype = Collect emails from people that fit our demographic

Here's how we did this:

- 1) Monthly newsletter with financial tips
- 2) Content marketing aka Blogging

Our target customers loved personal finance blogs.

But very few startups were blogging at the time.

So we built a blog with articles they'd love.

| |
|---|
| Don't Let Credit Cards Pwn You During Your College Years |
| HOWTO: Choose a Federal Student Loan Consolidation Lender |
| HOWTO: Jump Start Your Credit History While You're Young... |
| HOWTO: Be Savvy with Credit Card Balance Transfer Offers |
| The Age by Age Guide to Personal Finance Basics |
| HOWTO: Stash Your Cash at the Right Places |
| An Introduction to The Supremely Fun 529 College Savings Plan |
| The Four Terrible Money Mistakes We Make With Our Kids |
| Moneyhack: How to Secure Your Computer for Online Banking |
| Four Different Methods to Paying Your Credit Card Bills On Time |
| The Three Banking Regulations/Laws That You Should Know |
| A Minty Way to Keep Track of Your Daily Spending |
| HOWTO: Tackle Your Debt in Five Simple Steps |
| 20 Don'ts to Credit Repair |
| Ask the Blogosphere: The Allowance Debate |
| Ask the Blogosphere: What is a sound financial lifestyle? |
| How much should I save for my kid's education? |
| Use to have 3 bills, now have 15, what to do? |
| The Advantages and Disadvantages of a Jointly Held Account |

- 3) Can I pay you \$1,000?

At the time, no one was sponsoring smaller finance blogs.

So I'd email the writers with sponsorship offers for \$1,000.

It worked well and drove lots of email sign-ups.

Lesson: Search for undervalued marketing channels

The result?

When we launched we had 100,000 people on our email list.

In 6 months, we crushed our 100K goal to the tune of 1 million users.

Retweet the 1st tweet give an internet friend the tools to jumpstart their next biz:

<https://t.co/VTpCxRkYzi>

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— Noah Kagan (@noahkagan) [June 22, 2021](#)

Follow me [@noahkagan](#) for more threads about marketing and helping build AppSumo from \$0-\$85M in revenue.

To recap:

- 1) Set measurable deadlines
- 2) Talk to customers: who are they and what is the problem?
- 3) Build hype (or collect emails) by targeting places where they hang out online

Bonus: Use undervalued marketing channels like niche influencers