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**Which marketing tactics  
work for web hosting  
companies and under what  
circumstances?**



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Each presenter signs a speaker agreement certifying that their presentation will be educational and not a sales pitch.

Attendees have a right to report speakers not adhering to the policy.

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# About eBridge

- Marketing agency specializing in B2B technology – especially SaaS, IaaS, PaaS, Hosting and Cloud
- Attended HostingCon since 2005
- Exhibited at HostingCon since 2008
- Spoken at HostingCon every year since 2008
- Managed tens of millions of dollars of online media
- Web Hosting M&A division at [thehostbroker.com](http://thehostbroker.com)

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# Services

Technology your strength? Marketing not so much?  
Let **eBridge** make it simple.



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Which marketing tactics still work for web hosting companies and under which circumstances?



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# Audience Polls



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# Agenda

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- Background Info

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- Marketing Tactics

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- Case Studies

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- Conclusion

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# World's First Banner Ad



- AT&T placed the first banner ad in 1994 (Kanarick & Timmons, 2014)
- Achieved a 44% click-through-rate (Greenfield, 2014)
- Current click-thru-rates are  $<0.2\%$

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# Industry Consolidation



- “Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google, IBM, and Microsoft control over half of the worldwide cloud infrastructure service market” (Longoria, 2015)
- EIG has acquired a fleet of hosting brands in recent years, but has slowed since acquiring Constant Contact (Burt, 2016)

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# One Stop Shop

- Increasingly, customers want an all-in one platform for a website vs just hosting
- Searches for branded terms like “Wix” or “Weebly site builder” are on the rise, while searches for generic terms like “hosting” and “email hosting” are on the decline (Weebly, 2016)

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# Implications for Marketers



- Marketing of “solution platforms for the SMB” Ex Weebly
- Few very large players = opportunities for niche play
- Consider offering managed solutions (WPEngine)
- Value of local vs overseas customers & quality
- Implications on valuation for declining revenue

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# Prerequisites for Effective Campaigns

- Compelling UI
- Conversion tracking
- Competitive offering
- Sufficient exposure
- Increasing ARPU allows for a higher CPA = more choice
- Effective landing pages
- Positive reviews
- Smooth checkout
- Support

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**WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR  
MARKETERS?**

**MARKETING TACTICS**

# Google AdWords

Included tactics:

PPC ads & the display network

Suggested monthly budget:

\$8K to \$12K plus management time / fees



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# Google AdWords

## Pros

- ✓ Highly targeted
- ✓ Strong buyer intent
- ✓ Easy to start and stop
- ✓ Ideal for local or international campaigns

## Cons

- ✓ Very competitive
- ✓ Large budget needed
- ✓ Tracking is challenging for longer sales cycles
- ✓ Susceptible to set and forget

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# Media Campaigns



## Included tactics:

Banners, sponsored listings, hosting directories, forum stickies, advertorials, podcasts, display ads, programmatic, email and newsletter campaigns

## Suggested monthly budget:

\$3,000+

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# Media Campaigns

## Pros

- ✓ Immediacy of traffic
- ✓ Lots of options
- ✓ Can often be paused
- ✓ Easy to test different offers and landing pages

## Cons

- ✓ Ad fatigue
- ✓ Difficult to achieve an ROI with an unknown brand
- ✓ Tracking is challenging for longer sales cycles

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# Retargeting

## Implementation:

Can be done via Google or 3rd parties

## Suggested monthly budget:

Min \$500 (limited by site traffic)

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# Retargeting

## Pros

- ✓ Generates view-through conversions
- ✓ Very targeted
- ✓ Generally considered to have a good ROI

## Cons

- ✓ Reliant on initial traffic.
- ✓ Doesn't reach new users.

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# Organic Social Media

## Included tactics:

Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn.

## Suggested monthly budget:

\$500 to \$2500 for management plus resources to create content



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# Organic Social Media

## Pros

- ✓ Provides a “face” for the company
- ✓ Brand perception and thought leadership
- ✓ Potential for external linking to aid SEO

## Cons

- ✓ Hard to track ROI
- ✓ Time consuming
- ✓ Social media algorithms can limit reach of posts

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# Paid Social Media

## Included tactics:

Ads on social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

Can also include paid 3<sup>rd</sup> party management for thought leadership programs

## Suggested monthly budget:

Variable

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# Paid Social Media

## Pros

- ✓ Extensive targeting options
- ✓ Less expensive than other advertising channels
- ✓ Encourages sharing and brand interaction
- ✓ Flexibility to start and stop campaigns and change ad creative

## Cons

- ✓ Increasingly competitive
- ✓ May require a different strategy (with supporting resources) than other advertising channels
- ✓ Can easily get lost in the clutter
- ✓ Variable success

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# SEO



## Included tactics:

Onsite content and structure optimization, blogging, external link building, press releases, off-site interviews, external reviews, link sharing via social media.

## Suggested monthly budget:

Min of \$2500/month + resources to create content

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# SEO

## Pros

- ✓ Free high-quality traffic once the foundation is laid
- ✓ Good organic rankings will support paid search efforts if run together
- ✓ Some SEO tactics may also have other benefits such as expanding brand awareness

## Cons

- ✓ ROI is medium to long term
- ✓ Large budget needed to move the needle
- ✓ Traffic volume is not usually enough to grow aggressively
- ✓ Without a niche focus, it's extremely difficult

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# Content Creation



## Included tactics:

Press releases, blogging (own and guest), whitepapers, case studies, articles, interviews, webinars, hangouts, adding pages to your site, newsletters and knowledge base development or enhancement.

## Suggested monthly budget:

Min of \$500/month

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# Content Creation

## Pros

- ✓ Thought leadership
- ✓ Good for SEO
- ✓ May have long shelf-life (evergreen content)

## Cons

- ✓ Time consuming and ongoing
- ✓ Expensive and medium to long term ROI
- ✓ Can be very hard to measure a direct ROI
- ✓ May require very specific knowledge

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# Local and industry specific groups/events

## Included tactics:

Sponsorships, trade shows booths, tables, and speaking engagements.

## Suggested monthly budget:

Min \$500 and up



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# Local and industry specific groups/events

## Pros

- ✓ Very targeted
- ✓ Usually low price point to participate – especially if hyper local
- ✓ Higher conversion rates likely

## Cons

- ✓ Manual process
- ✓ Likely lower volume (lacks scale)
- ✓ Results tracked offline

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# Case Study #1

- Mid-sized hosting company who's primary offerings are Shared and VPS hosting.
- Plans come with an optional site builder and full suite of collaboration tools.
- Looking to target small-mid sized businesses in North America.
- Monthly budget: \$5,000

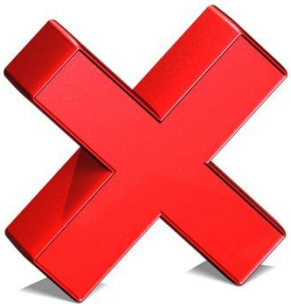
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# What won't work?

## Google AdWords

Too competitive, not enough budget.



## Local and industry specific groups/events

CPA too expensive relative to potential revenue.

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# Best Bets

## Media Campaigns

Reach new customers on highly targeted sites.

## Retargeting

Maximize revenue from organic traffic and paid campaigns.



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# Other Options to Consider



## ➤ Organic Social Media

Challenging to achieve positive ROI, but almost a requirement in today's environment.

## ➤ Paid Social Media

Potentially successful but budget better allocated to media campaigns.

## ➤ SEO

Hard to achieve short-term ROI.

## ➤ Content Creation

Hard to achieve short-term ROI.

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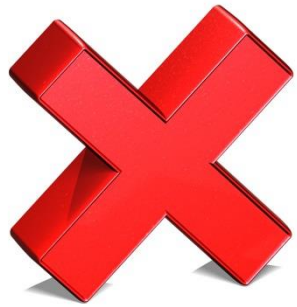
# Case Study #2

- Mid-sized hosting company who's primary offerings are Managed, Dedicated, and Cloud hosting.
- Brand is relatively unknown and product offering is undifferentiated.
- Looking to target mid-large sized local businesses
- Monthly budget: \$10,000

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# What won't work?



## Google AdWords

Expensive CPC, very competitive

## SEO

Won't work as a short-term strategy

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# Best Bets

## Local and industry specific groups/events

Establish relationships with local decision makers.

## Content Creation

Provides value for B2B customers.



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# Other Options to Consider



- **Retargeting**  
Maximize revenue from organic traffic and paid campaigns
- **Organic Social Media**  
Not an ideal medium for B2B
- **Media Campaigns**  
Not enough brand awareness for positive ROI and tough to find local opportunities
- **Paid Social Media**  
Not an ideal medium but may work for some
- **SEO**  
May work as a medium-term strategy

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# Conclusion

- Right mix of tactics requires a measured approach but no one size fits all
- Increase ARPU
- Reversion to local marketing
- Focusing on a niche

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# Questions??



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