

5 helpful marketing tools for startups

By [Ashleigh Butterworth](#)

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Incredible products and services are only one piece of the puzzle when it comes to taking your startup to the next level. An often overlooked and missing piece for many businesses is its emphasis on its marketing resources from the get-go.



Ashleigh Butterworth | image supplied

It's very easy to let marketing fall by the wayside during the initial set-up phase, especially if you don't think you have the budget to focus time and energy on these efforts. But, when you set a good foundation using an updated and relevant marketing mix, the long-term results can be astounding.

According to Ean Barnard, head of brand at Finch Technologies, getting traction and punching above your weight is a critical outcome for any startup.

"When looking at tools for your startup, remember that you are in a fast-paced world. There is no reason to get married to your marketing stack at this stage, so look for lean, quality tools at the right price that allow your team to punch above their weight, and easily scale up," says Barnard.

Here are five helpful marketing tools that will make it easier to get the word out about your brand – regularly, affordably and creatively.

1. Canva - image creation

Talking about your business to friends and family might come naturally, but how do you communicate your brand message in a creative way to your customers? A social media post without an attractive design angle will just get lost in the heaps of

posts on anyone's newsfeed. In contrast, a well-thought-out post with an engaging on-brand image can see much better results.

According to [HubSpot](#), Facebook posts with images receive 2.3X more engagement than those without images.

Canva is a suitable app for startups because its free package offers so much value, and scales well for teams when you get a paid subscription. The app is available both on mobile and desktop. If you don't consider yourself a design guru, don't stress, they have thousands of templates for you to choose from.

2. Keyword planner - SEO tools

Search engine optimisation (SEO) might be a foreign concept if your startup is not directly digital in nature, but it can be one of the most valuable tactics to ensure you stand out in a crowd. If you need some guidance, there are great starter courses through platforms like Udemy and Clickminded that will help you get started.

The next step is to optimise your keywords, a good starting point is using Google Adwords keyword planner, it's a shortcut around paid tools like Mangools (which is far more in-depth). Although the main intention of Google's keyword planner is for paid adverts, it also allows you to search keywords, evaluate the competition and decide which ones you should include in content pieces going forward. When you can set aside a bit more moola towards SEO, then Mangools is a level up with deeper insights on keywords.



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3. Rytr – Content writing

Don't consider yourself the next J.K Rowling? If writing doesn't come naturally to you, but you know what you want to say, then it might be time to invest in an AI content writing tool.

Rytr is one of the best tools for those faced with writer's block, whether it's writing a blog post for your website, an email newsletter, a Facebook advert, or a product description. Select your tone, section keywords, and creativity level and let Rytr do their magic. Their results don't always come out perfectly, but use what's relevant or try different keywords to see what works best. If you are unsure about using this paid-for service, then try out their free plan and see whether it's going to be a tool that takes some of the workload off.

4. Buffer – Social media scheduling

You've created authentic, engaging and creative content, but you've lost track when it comes to posting your content regularly on each platform. Scheduling is a crucial part of social media management, you want your content to go out regularly, on the right platform and at the right time.

If you've outgrown Facebook business manager and require a more dynamic social media scheduling tool, then Buffer is an affordable go-to app for startups in South Africa. The app is easy to use and assists with streamlining content all in one place. On the app, you are able to plan, collaborate and publish posts, as well as analyse social media performance.

5. MailChimp – newsletter

We've all been there - sending out email newsletters manually. So let's kick that archaic process to the curb and set up a brilliant email campaign strategy for your startup.

According to [Smart Insights](#), on average newsletters have an open rate of 29%, which is fairly high in comparison to organic social media engagement. There are several email marketing platforms to choose from, but the two key features South African startups should look out for are pricing and usability.

According to Dominique Sandwith, co-founder of Cape Town-based marketing agency Yellow Door Collective, your most valuable asset is your network and building up a database of people you can share your product or service with is a key marketing function. With MailChimp, you can easily connect your account to your website and collect subscribers as well as promote it via your social networks.

The newsletter platform is excellent for beginners, with easy-to-navigate tools, and constant reminders on best practices e.g. when creating a subject line, a sidebar reminds you of character count and emoji use. The app has several different pricing points, each with added features.

As Tiësto says: “let’s get down to business” and transform your startup marketing strategy with these helpful tools.

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