

# THE FORCE AWAKENS USING **GROWTH HACKING** TO CREATE YOUR EMPIRE



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*"You must unlearn what you have learned."* – **Yoda**

Are you ready for some some Jedi-like truthfulness, because Yoda doesn't pull any punches. One of the biggest reasons startups fail is that they don't see themselves for what they are: regular entrepreneurs, just like the alien bartender at The Cantina on Tatooine. Instead, they see themselves as full-on tech corporations, just waiting for their inevitable profit explosions. The movie deal is done, and this is all just a flashback. "We'll be Apple in a few years, bro. All we have to do is Think Different and put in our time at the garage."

This kind of thinking leads to startups taking the wrong approach. Imagine if Luke Skywalker had taken the lightsaber from Obi-Wan and went straight to the Death Star to fight Darth Vader. What if he skipped all that wonderful Jedi training from Yoda, and just relied on what he'd seen in the holograms and heard around

the racing scrapyards? I mean, how hard can it be to work a lightsaber, right? You turn it on, it glows, you swing it around, you get bought out by Google for \$5 million – simple.

Well, consider the fact that even after all of his Jedi training, Luke still got his hand sliced off when he faced Vader. And just like a foolish Luke, if you take your brand new idea – or lightsaber – and rush it to market/the Death Star using only what you've learned from watching the Evil Empire in action, chances are you're going to lose more than your hand if you aren't versed in the ways of The Force. And that's where this guide on growth hacking comes in "handy."



## Only a Growth Hacking Rebellion Can Stop the Evil Empire

Growth hacking provides you the means to compete in a world of unlimited corporate resources, with whatever limited resources you might have. It gives you the upper hand by taking advantage of the things that you can do because you're a startup and not a giant corporation. Luke's X-Wing Fighter Squadron was able to take down the Death Star because they were small, agile and equipped with the right information, whereas bigger ships trying to go head-to-head were destroyed by the Death Star's turbo-lasers. If you play by their rules, you will get destroyed.

Growth hacking is a smarter playbook for startups, giving you a direct path to success by quickly acquiring traffic, customers, traction and sales without overspending precious time and finances. It is the Force, and the Force is strong with you – you just don't know it yet.

## How to Follow the Jedi Path to Empowerment

This guide will give you everything you need to fully utilize all of your unique advantages and start hacking some growth right away. By the time you finish, you will be able to create strategic battle plans to turbo-boost your startup out of the visionary stage, and into reality. You'll also figure out what areas of your business might need some outside help so you can streamline both timetables and costs. We've split the eBook into two parts, and not just because we love sequels. It's important that you take the growth hacking process seriously and not skip any steps. It's also important that you respond to what's happening with your company, so when we release Part II: The Growth Hacker Strikes Back, you'll be at a point in your startup where you're ready to implement the topics we discuss there. But first things first. Over these introductory chapters, we define growth hacking and go over some of the basics, including what it means to be a growth hacker. You'll learn about The Force and how a lightsaber works. Then, if you're up to the challenge, it's on to Dagobah in Chapters 4 through 6 for your Master Jedi training with Yoda.

*It's our pleasure to have you aboard, for as the great Yoda said, "Always pass on what you have learned." So, let's begin your training, and as always – May The Force be With You! Taking off in 3...2...1...*



## 1. Jedi Training

You'll learn the definition, core concepts and goals of each specific aspect of growth hacking discussed in the chapter. Not only will you learn what the concept is about, but how to recognize its place in your particular service or product, and implement it with success.



## 2. Battle Tactics

You'll get specific examples of each chapter's category, serving as your in-depth checklist of everything you need to do to achieve success within the lesson.



## 3. Defeating the Darkside

Here, you're going to put your Training and Tactics to use in our fictional "Light Saber Startup." That's right, we're starting a rebellion and taking on the Evil Empire from the ground up, and you're our co-pilot. You'll see how a startup just like yours can use growth hacking to defeat the biggest corporations, be they here on Earth or in a galaxy far, far away.

# EXPLAIN HACKING GROWTH YODA WILL

*"In a dark place we find ourselves,  
and a little more knowledge  
lights our way." – Yoda*

For anyone alive prior to 1977, "Using the Force" meant nothing before Star Wars came out. The audience learned about this ubiquitous power as Luke did – through the teachings of Obi-Wan (*"I felt a great disturbance in The Force."*), Yoda (*"You must feel The Force around you."*) and even original Bad Dad of the Year, Darth Vader (*"The Force is with you, young Skywalker...but you are not a Jedi yet."*).

Similarly, if you were to ask anyone what growth hacking was before 2010, they would have stared at you like you were a shaved Ewok. That's because it wasn't until 2010 when former first marketer at Dropbox,

marketing exec at Eventbrite and current CEO of Qualaroo, Sean Ellis, first coined the term "growth hacker" in a monumental blog post. The blog, entitled "Find a Growth Hacker for Your Startup," spoke to the unique difficulties Ellis was having hiring replacements for himself. His ideas revolutionized the way startups do business.



# Evolve You Must, Or Die You Will – From Marketers to Growth Hackers

At the time, Ellis was bouncing from startup to startup, quickly helping them point their compass towards the only goal that mattered in Silicon Valley: growth. As he'd leave on job and move onto the next, he'd field applications from marketers to fill his shoes. The problem was that these job-seekers were simply too traditional to really excel in the system he'd set up. Marketers might make excellent Fleet Admirals in the Emperor's Legion, but they'd likely fail as a solo X-wing pilot going up against the Death Star.

**Likewise, your standard corporate VP of Marketing knows all about achieving corporate objectives, varying distribution channels to streamline costs, pleasing the vendors, creating national strategic marketing plans, etc., but do you really need all of that in a startup? Instead, what you need is someone who can keep their eyes on the objective of bringing down the Death Star without losing focus trying to implicate complicated strategies.**

And in that one short blog post, growth hackers evolved out of marketers. Sure, they'd existed before (lean marketing and lean development are old concepts), but they'd never been defined as a person – just like The Force. So, what is a growth hacker? Simply put, a person who is 100% focused on growth and nothing else.

Growth hackers build strategies meant to obtain growth for the startup. If there is no component for potential growth, it does not get added to the plan. End of story. Each and every decision they make is scrutinized by one measure: how much growth did it/will it/can it create?

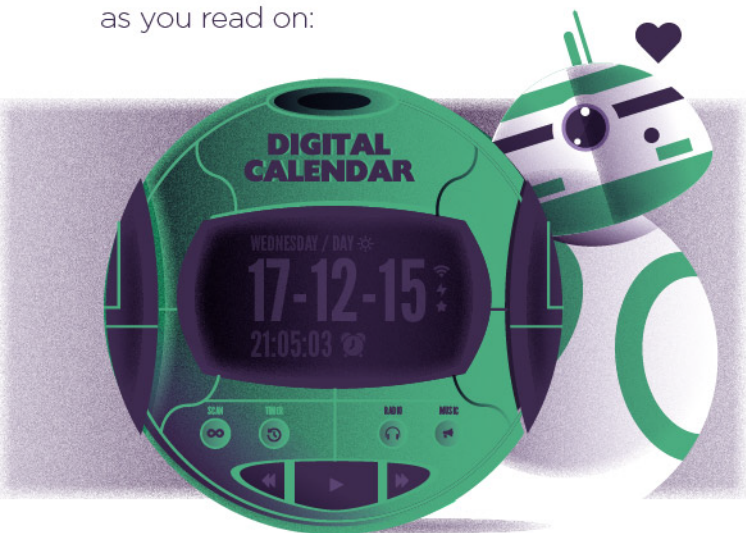
Of course, there are many aspects to startup growth, so it's not strictly black and white. There's long- and short-term growth, lateral and scalable growth, etc. These unique types of goals require different approaches. There are also conflicting aspects to growth which have to be analyzed against one another to see which generates the most gains and which can be eliminated in favor of other initiatives that have more growth-potential.

As startups continue to expand, campaigns will also have to react and "pivot" in real-time to respond to analytics coming back from customer feedback. Ideas will have to be tested, analyzed and either dropped or put through a number of iterations in order to "ABG" – Always Be Growing.



## Growth of Growth Hacking

As you can imagine, a lot has changed since 2010. You'll get an in-depth look at these concepts throughout this guide, but here are a few quick points to keep in the back of your mind as you read on:



- **Growth hacking hasn't replaced marketers – all growth hackers are marketers, but not all marketers are growth hackers.**
- **Not all growth hackers come from marketing. Many have backgrounds in coding, engineering, sales, etc. You don't need to be an expert on anything except growth, though you have to be driven enough to go out and get it.**
- **Growth hacking has evolved from a one person position, to entire teams of growth hackers running startups.**
- **Modern growth hackers are comfortable with little to no budgets, viral marketing, scenario modeling, analytics, database queries, successful landing pages, A/B testing, digital deliverables and Open Graph.**

## The Force is Strong – Conversion Magnets

Changes to growth hacking are going to keep on happening. The gap between corporate marketing and startup growth is too big to ever go back. To quickly illustrate this gap between a good marketing strategy and a great growth hacking strategy, look at the difference between creating a lead magnet and creating a conversion magnet. On the surface, they might seem the same – both grow your reach and eventually, your profits. Leads, of course, are better than random visits, why? Because they bring your target audience and therefore, are more likely to buy.

But conversions are one step beyond the lead, and that's what growth hackers are after. Skip the less effective lead and go straight for the proof positive growth that is a conversion. It's okay if you just attract people – even the right people – to learn about your product, but there's a reason the Death Star is equipped with a tractor beam. You don't just want to get them to your site – you want to keep them there and destroy them get early adopters, backers, buyers, etc.

For example, a great lead magnet is a blog. You'll get your site up in the search engine result pages (SERPs), generate more traffic and may even get a few comments or subscribers. After 200 or 300 blogs, you'll see an uptick in conversions. Great!

But if you're focused on growth, that's a long time to wait. Imagine if the Millennium Falcon had to wait 200 to 300 days before kicking into hyperdrive (granted, Han and Chewie's ship had an aftermarket propulsion system, but still!). Blogs are great for long-term leads, but you want rapid growth now. Instead of talking about what a conversion magnet looks like, let's take a look at the Jedi Hall of Fame and see some of the greats that blazed lightsaber trails before you.

# Case studies – Learn from Ben Kenobi and the Rest of the Jedi Council

Of course, the number one case study for growth hacking is always Dropbox. Why? Because the inventor of growth hacking, Sean Ellis, was a first marketer when Dropbox exploded onto the scene. Here was their problem: they had a great concept for sharing videos, content, etc., but how could they get it to spread without a large marketing budget or campaign? The answer: Self-automation.

**Dropbox had to redefine their distribution because their platform was already a redesigned product. In other words, you couldn't put Dropbox on a shelf in the store, you couldn't just email Dropbox to people without first creating a mailing list and even if you could, what would make them download and use it? The first is impossible, the second implausible and the third improbable, with the amount of time and money startups have. So, Dropbox made their product share – or self-automate – itself.**

You remember how it worked – you got Dropbox for free (if you were savvy enough, otherwise your friend sent you an invite) with a limited amount of free storage space. All you had to do to get more free storage was get your friends to use Dropbox. Since Dropbox actually relies on other people having Dropbox as well, there's no barrier or friction here. The product hacked its own growth by its very essence.

You could also gain 125MBs of storage by following Dropbox on social media. Once people saw that you could use it across multiple devices, signing up could be done on browser or desktop and sharing only required a link, they were hooked.



## Some other growth hacking success stories?



- **AirBnB:** These guys retrofitted an existing, larger market to do all the work for them. They coded scrapers to hit Craigslist, found all the personal email and location info they needed, offered integration with their site and Craigslist (native posting) and since AirBnB was better at what they did, customers started skipping Craigslist and going straight to AirBnB. Essentially, they poached CL's enormous user base, skimmed their target audience through some sick coding tricks, and then retained that audience through superior pictures, functionality, personalized experiences and a less scary way to rent your place out (or rent others').

- **Paypal:** Similarly, Paypal scaled up off of eBay, creating a bot that purchased products from eBay and then demanded that Paypal be used for payment to sellers. But when other traditional marketing failed for Paypal, they grew by spending their marketing budget in a unique way: they gave every user that signed up, ten bucks.

- **Zynga:** Once again, we see scaling up (this time off of Facebook) and a form of self-automation, this time through gamification. When you invite your friends to play, Zynga levels you up. The real genius here is that it created competition amongst friends, which played into bragging rights and vanity on social media.

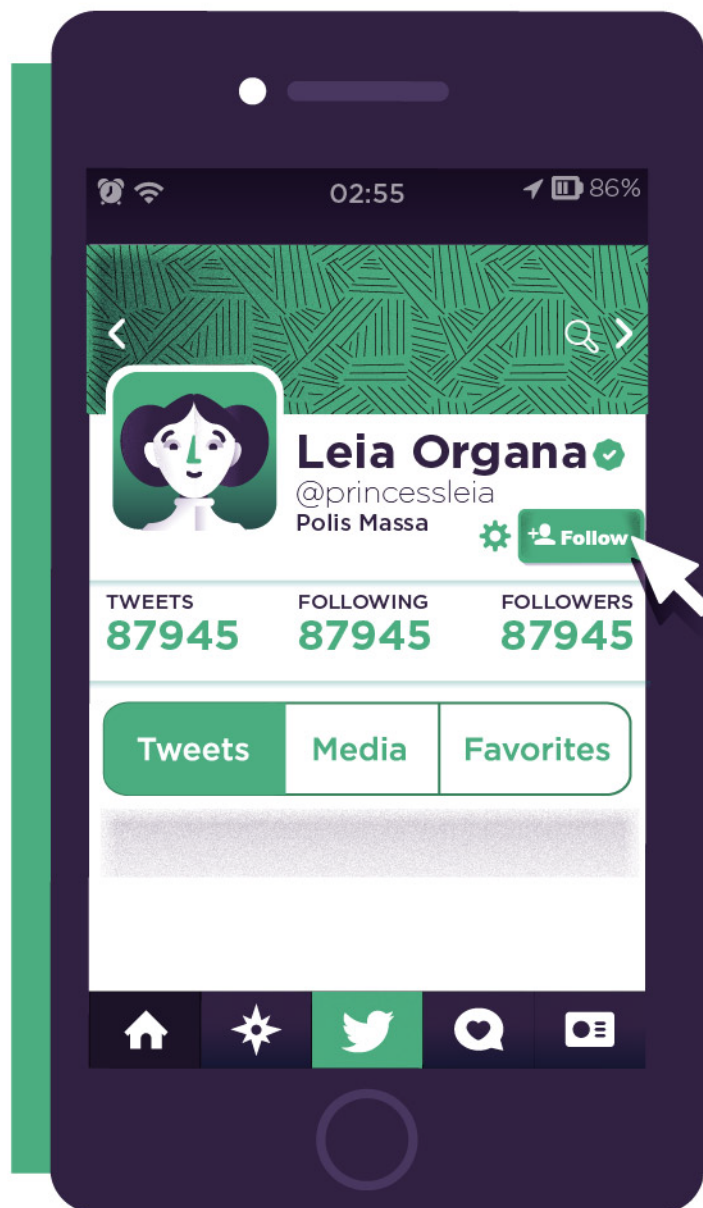
- **Hubspot:** Not only did they write the book on inbound marketing, they practiced what they preached, putting their own ideas to work and turned three customers into thousands in a short time span. Hubspot became the go-to for everything inbound marketing, including a website grader that had millions of webmasters inputting their site for a free grade. Essentially, it was an instant, free consultation with the mecca of knowledge (Inbound Hub) on the "new" marketing, and that formula skyrocketed them to success.

- **Slack:** In February of 2014, Slack launched with 15,000 users. In August, they had

171,000; November – 285,000. In February of 2015, after just one year, Slack boasts 500,000 active users daily. How? First, they defined their own market, building an “internal communication” category where none existed (even though there were apps for comms that people were using – they simply didn’t see it as a category like Slack did). They sold the market, not the product. Then, they blew away the existing competition with centralized, real-time communication, archiving and search platforms that permeated every level and type of business. Toss in a freemium model that built water cooler buzz, and Slack is now one of the fastest B2B SaaS businesses of all time, in terms of growth.

**There are thousands of other growth hacking success stories: Uber sold the lifestyle where you push a button and a car shows up. How cool is that? Twitter did in-depth analytics to find out how to keep users engaged, for example learning that if they followed 5 to 10 accounts on day one, the user would stick around on Twitter for longer (remember having to do that when you set up your Twitter? That’s why!). YouTube used embedded coding to cross multiple social media channels (plus created the second biggest search engine on the Internet in the process).**

But you’ve heard enough about other people’s success – let’s look at how you can hack some growth into your own startup and join this elite Jedi Council of growth hacking superstars.



# 2

## DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A GROWTH HACKING JEDI?



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*"A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the strongest mind."* – **Yoda**

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Just as Yoda didn't think Luke was ready for Jedi training, not everyone has what it takes to be an amazing growth hacker. In fact, some people are completely not suited for growth hacking. That's because growth hackers have a serious set of skills to match a mind frame that enables them to stay goal-oriented, while employing super-creative growth strategies. By the end of this chapter, you'll know whether you can hack it, or if you need to go out and hire someone who can.

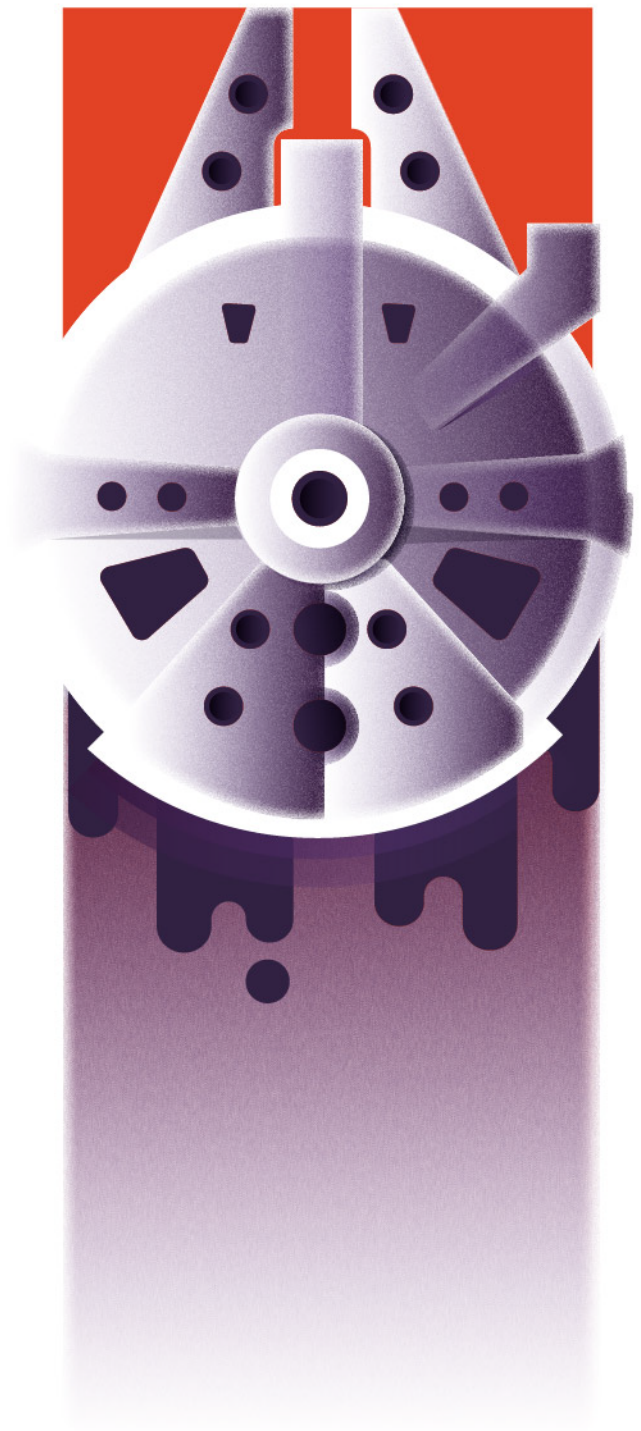
## Piloting the Millennium Falcon – The Skills that Pay the Bills

For starters, it's important to note the strong connection between marketers and growth hackers. Anakin Skywalker piloted race pods when he was a young boy, but did that make him ready to command the Emperor's fleet? Nope. Young Anakin wasn't trained or focused – or evil – enough to wear Darth Vader's helmet yet. He had a long way to go, just like run-of-the-mill marketers aren't focused on growth enough to be considered growth hackers...yet.

But the connection is there – a young pilot can command a fleet and a marketer can turn into a growth hacker. For example, most marketers have backgrounds in analytics, creative, social media and tech. If you remove everything that isn't concerned strictly with growth from those four categories, you get a direct insight into a growth hacker's skill set. For example:

- **Using event-focused analytics instead of bounce rates for analytics.**
- **Using copywriting bent on driving conversions instead of blogging to get reblogged for content creation.**
- **Launching customer engagement-focused giveaways instead of posting the latest sector-related tech report on your social media accounts**
- **Creating an amazing front-end web design for your landing pages instead of using color psychology to create your CTA buttons with your tech team**

While the sum of these skills are necessary for overall business success, some aspects are more specifically vital for growth, and these are the skills with which a Growth Hacking Jedi Master is proficient.



## Think Like a Jedi and Increase Your Analytical Capacity

If a Jedi's lifeblood is the Force, then a growth hacker's is analytics. Why? Because analytics are the quickest way to measure growth. You can try whatever you want as a growth hacker – we'll get into creativity in just a bit – but if you aren't measuring your successes, integrating your winners and dropping your losers, then you aren't maximizing your growth. In other words: You aren't hacking like a Jedi.

Every scrap of qualitative and quantitative KPI data out there not only helps a growth hacker, it shapes them. Big ideas with little to no substance are best left in the Mad Men era. Today, results and proven metrics drive the industry, especially when that industry is growth.

Every second that you aren't growing as fast as you can, your competition is growing faster. Plus, what you think is the greatest idea in the world, might not be. Analytics can not only point out bad ideas, it can show you how to make good ones better (bad ideas are okay – see below!), both of which streamline growth.

### Grasp the Present

Let's say that you roll out a freemium aimed at growing your customer base. Good idea. The only problem is that it doesn't work and you aren't growing your paying customer base, just the amount of people that use your product for free. While that certainly is growth, that isn't the growth you were looking for.

So, you do some A/B testing, adding more free features to your B channel. You analyze the final numbers and realize the pain point was too high when you first introduced the paid version in Channel A. In other words, you didn't show enough leg to really get the hook in your customer. So, you go with B, and give them that really cool feature that was supposed



to generate a buzz from users, and now your user base is up because you've lowered the pain point (i.e., gave them more stuff for free so they buy).

Were you going to do this initially? No. But the analytics helped shape you toward your desired growth, and in a much faster manner than you'd originally planned. Good growth hackers listen to their analytics and react, or pivot, in real time. Every second you aren't growing as fast as you can...well, you really should know the rest by now, young Padawan.

### Seize the Future

Growth hackers also use analytics to replicate success and predict the future. Predictions are all about analyzing correlation and bisecting the causation. Replication and prediction can even be combined. For example, if the Q2 had substantial growth because you wrote an eBook that tied into a blockbuster movie's release date, you could safely bet that tying another campaign onto existing trends would work again.

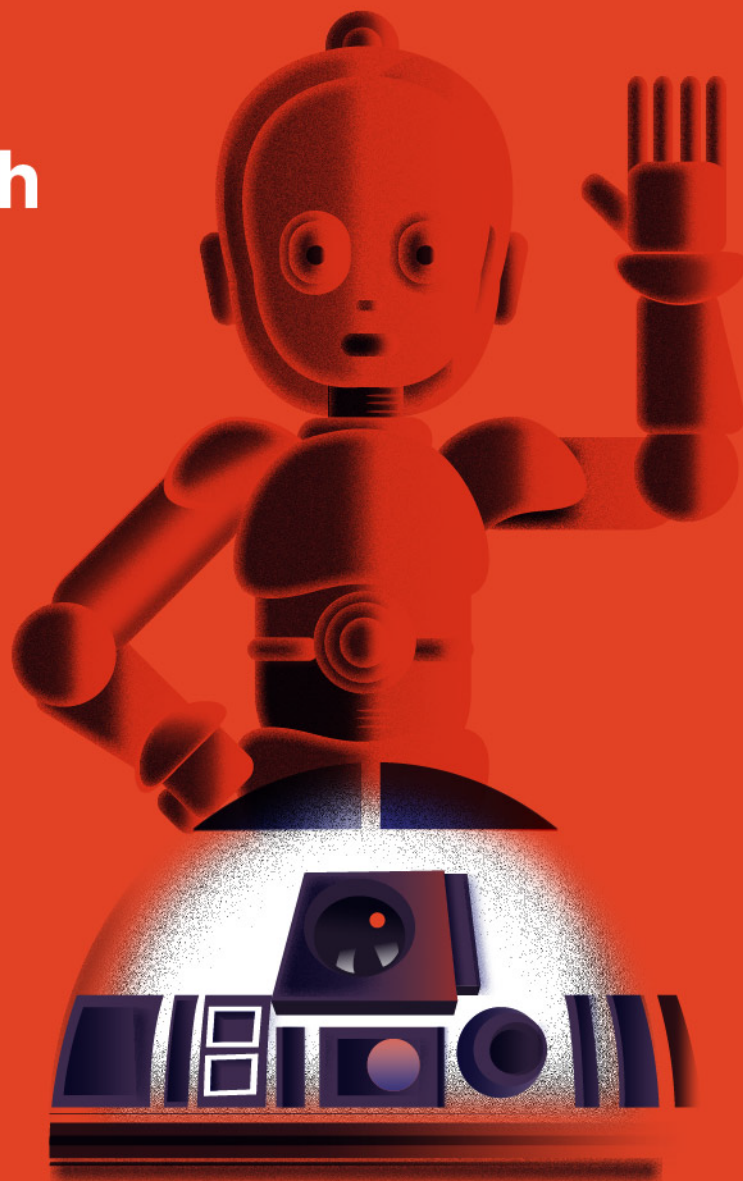
Could you tie it into a band's summer tour? An album release? A holiday? Compare your growth around similar times and events, and then put those growth hacking skills to work. Remember: Analytics not only blaze the trail ahead of you, but also leave a trail of breadcrumbs behind so you can find your way back home to past successes whenever you need a proven boost.

# Make the Droids Work for You – Coding for Growth

Most outstanding growth hackers have proficient to excellent coding skills. Why? Because one of the most efficient and quickest ways to hack growth is to build up off an existing platform (a la AirBnB and Craigslist). These build-ups typically include pretty awesome codes that scrape data and put it to use for your startup. But do you have to be a coder to hack growth? Well...

Not you, per se. But it's more than likely that you will need a coder on your team, working closely with you, if you're going to get what you want. Hey, Luke didn't save the world by himself! So if you can't code, don't start sweating just yet (if you can, then you're already a few steps ahead). The main thing to remember is that a successful entrepreneur can get his point across to everyone, no matter what, so that means if you can't code, you just have to learn to speak code.

Look, nobody understood a word R2D2 said, except C3PO. You need to be C3PO. You can understand the humans and you can understand the robots (not to call coders robots, but you get the point!). When the coder tells you they've run into "Bugfoot," you should know what that means (a bug one person saw that no one can replicate). And you should know the difference between "Code Freeze" and "Code Slush" (the former is a firm deadline, the latter its a deadline where changes made after the deadline can still sneak through into the final product). Of if your team tells you that you're asking for "Jenga Code" (knock one bit of code out and it all falls down), you should be able to realize what that means for



your risk assessment and budget. You should also learn some advanced coder slang, like "**Yoda Conditions.**" That's when you use "**if (constant == variable)**" instead of "**natural if (variable == constant),**" which gives you something like "**if 47 equals the value**" instead of "**If the value is equal to 47.**" These are coding standards in WordPress and Symfony. Lost? Speak coding you must, if success you crave. So at the very least, a good growth hacker speaks code while a great growth hacker knows and/or writes code. (Note: Being a great coder doesn't make you a great growth hacker.)

## Creative Jedi Mind Tricks

Analytics, coding – pretty straightforward stuff, all by the numbers, right? So, is that all that growth hacking is about? Absolutely not. Growth hacking is a mixture of having the right tools, but also the courage to use those tools in ways no one ever has. Remember when Luke, Han, Leia and Chewbacca all got stuck in the trash compactor on the Death Star? Chewy banged on walls, Leia tried to climb to the top of the trash heap and Han put a metal bar between the walls to stop them from compacting – none of those reactionary, simple-minded ideas worked. But Luke thought outside of the box. He reached out to C3PO and R2D2 – his coding team – and they found a solution (turning off the compacting system). Luke saved the day, with a little help from his friends.

**That's the type of creativity and fearless leadership that needs to come into play when utilizing growth hacking tools.**

In fact, creativity is a growth hacking tool, albeit one that's hard to learn. If you're creative, great – you already know the number one secret all creative minds share, and that's not to be afraid of failure. The most brilliant growth hacker never succeeds 100% of the time with their campaigns, but when they fail, they learn from their mistakes and try again, often with much better results. And then they test iteration after iteration, listening carefully to their analytics and making changes as necessary. The point is, don't be afraid to get every idea out of your head and onto paper, and definitely don't be afraid to try new things. Many ideas might be bad, but that's okay – all you need is one or two good ones to change the world.



**Jedi Tip:** A creative mindset starts as a spark in the center of a maze. Instead of finding the quickest way out of the maze, the spark travels down each and every corridor, twisting the handles of doors, even if they are locked. Sometimes, the creative mind even finds a way to unlock those doors. But if you don't have the creativity or the courage to explore that, you're not a growth hacker, you're merely stuck.

*Now, that's not to say you shouldn't follow in the footsteps of success – but you also shouldn't be afraid to seek shortcuts and stray off the beaten path. Your creativity is what is going to open doors for you, your analytics and coding are going to tell you if they're the right doors – or they all just might pull you out of the trash compactor before the Dianoga monster eats you up!*

# Ethics, The Force and the Dark Side

Just like The Force, there are two sides to growth hacking: Growth and Hacking. By its very nature, growth is positive. And hacking? Well, let's just say that hacking is a path which has led some to the Dark Side. The question of ethics in growth hacking is one that every person has to decide for themselves: *Do you want to be a Jedi Knight, or a Sith Lord?*

## **Ready to really be confused? Ask yourself a few questions to figure it out:**

- Was it okay that AirBnB scraped Craigslist's data and took Craigslist users? Or that they spammed Craigslist listers with fake emails to come list on AirBnB? Or could Craigslist have changed their coding to block AirBnB's growth hacking techniques, but didn't? Was Craigslist's Terms and Conditions violated? Is Craigslist still around? Well, did anyone really get hurt then?
- Was it okay for Uber employees to mass hire, then cancel, Lyft rides? Are both companies still around? Who suffered more, the startup company Uber, or the Lyft drivers trying to make a living?
- Is it okay for LinkedIn to mine their user's emails and send unsolicited invites to people? How about the enormous class action lawsuit brought against them for sending two extra emails to people who had already opted in for one email? Where is the line between fair and foul?
- Were the early users of Reddit fooled into thinking the site was more popular than it really was since the founders had thousands of fake accounts set up? Does it matter now, since the site is wildly popular? Who got hurt?



None of these questions have right or wrong answers, until legal ramifications or customer backlash occurs. But each is something that really occurred and often, nobody remembers but those who got burned. Where, when and if that ethical line is drawn is up to you, but we like to think that you'll heed the sage words of Yoda, who said:

“Yes, a Jedi’s strength flows from the Force. But beware of the Dark Side. Anger, fear, aggression; the Dark Side of the Force are they. Easily they flow, quick to join you in a fight. If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny, consume you it will, as it did Obi-Wan’s apprentice.”

And we all know how it turned out for Darth Vader...



"Growth hackers, begin takeoff procedure!"

What? No new and exciting gadgets? Begin standard procedures? Let's think about that for a second.



## Give the Rebels What They Want – Product Market Fit

So, what's first on this procedural checklist? It should go without saying, but if nobody wants your product, nobody is going to buy it. Unfortunately, this is a huge problem for startups: they go to market with the product they have, not necessarily the product people want. Product Market Fit (PMF) is extremely important for startups looking to hack growth, mainly because most startups don't have the money it takes to survive failure. You get one shot at this – if your product doesn't do well at first, you can't put more marketing muscle and big money behind it. You simply fail.

**With that in mind, growth hackers have to approach their product design and business plan much in the same way the rebel army had to approach growth in their ranks. If the rebel factions weren't representing what the people wanted, nobody would've joined. After all, there's not much enticing about a rebellion if it isn't worthy – no pay, high chance you get killed in outer space. Sign me up...not!**

So, how do you attain PMF? One way is to start out with an awesome product people can't live without. Make it so outstanding and flexible that it markets itself and is driven by its own instincts. Then sit back and rake in the cash. Unfortunately, that's not always so simple, but if you can do it, more power to you.

A more realistic way is to attain PMF is to accept your actuality, even if it's not your vision. This is what Instagram did. They didn't start out as a mobile photo app that put awesome filters into "everyman's" hands – they started out as Burbn. Burbn was just another social network that had a pretty neat photo feature that was actually optional. Burbn sucked, but the founders noticed that its core users were gravitating to one particular section of the platform: the photo app and filters section that formed the basis for what we now know as Instagram.

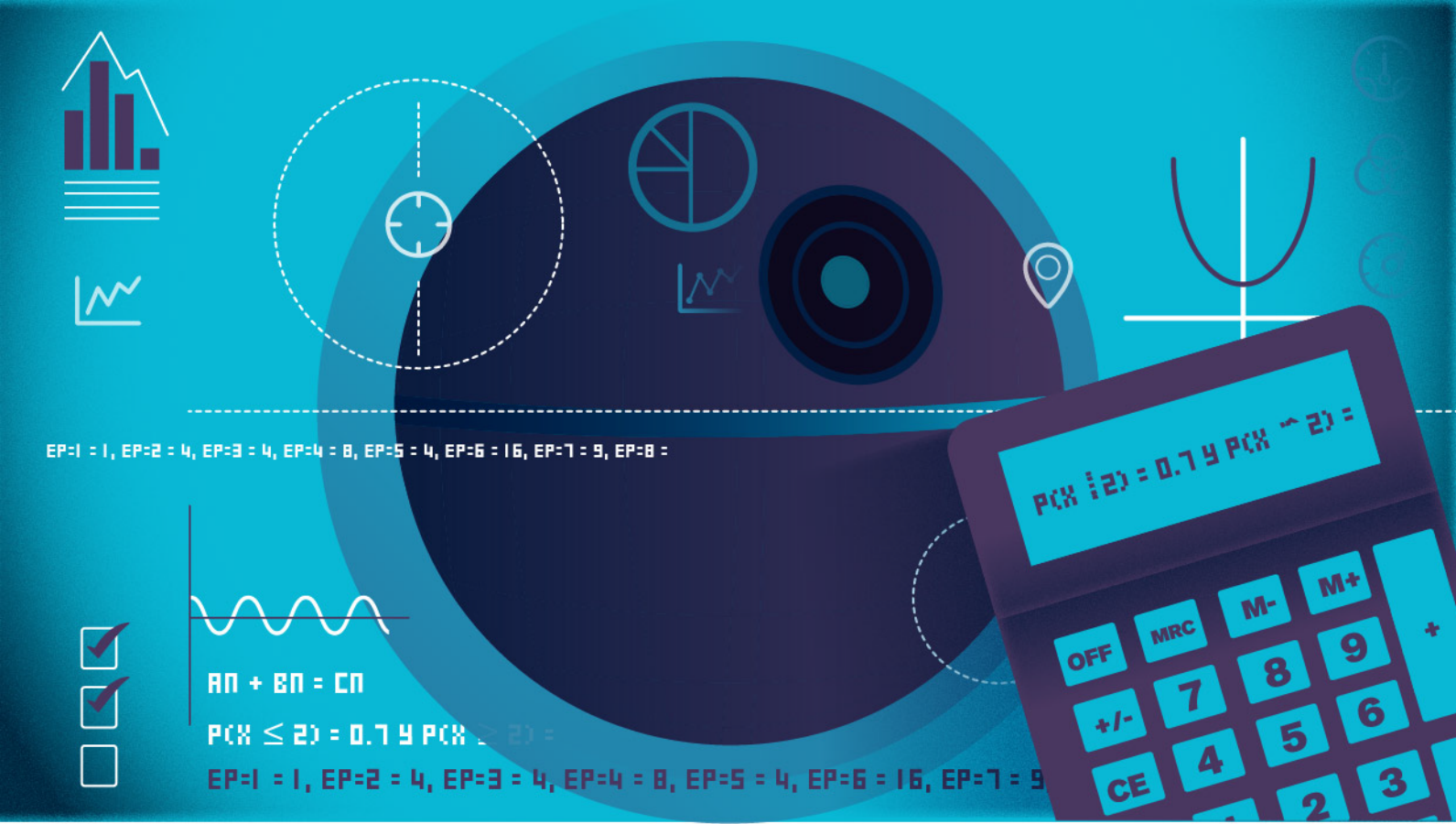
These hyper-reactionary founders accepted their actuality, reorganized, refocused and within one week of launching the new mobile photo standalone, they had 100,000 users. Within 18 months, they sold it to Facebook for \$1 billion. It does bear mentioning that the Instagram guys had \$500,000 funding for Burbn, so they could afford some time on iteration after iteration until they found their PMF. Not all startups do.

**And that's why the best way to get to your PMF is to go with a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) at first. This is simply the least complicated product you can have while still gaining customer interest (notice we said interest, not sales). What's the point of spending all of your time and money on a product that no one is even going to use? Eliminate that risk.**

If you start out with a MVP and then listen to the response of your users, you're building a product backward from the customer. You're building feedback into the product without having to put failures on the board.

That's the fastest way to attain PMF. If the leader of the rebel army went out into the middle of the village at the very start of the rebellion and his MVP was, "We're hungry because we don't get paid enough," you can easily imagine someone shouting back, "And we're cold, too!" The growth hacking rebel leader would write this down and shout, "And what else?" After visiting a few villages, his speech/product would resemble what the people want: "We're tired, cold, hungry and don't get paid enough because the Empire is horrible and must be overthrown. Here's how we're going to stop it, who is with me?"





EP-1 = 1, EP-2 = 4, EP-3 = 4, EP-4 = 8, EP-5 = 4, EP-6 = 16, EP-7 = 9, EP-8 =

$$AN + BN = CN$$

$$P(X \leq 2) = 0.79 \quad P(X \geq 2) =$$

EP-1 = 1, EP-2 = 4, EP-3 = 4, EP-4 = 8, EP-5 = 4, EP-6 = 16, EP-7 = 9

# Don't Fly Into the Death Star Without a Plan – Define Your Goals

So, budding growth hacker – let's say you have a PMF, now what are your goals? Growth? Perfect! So I guess we can move onto the next chapter. Not so fast, young padawan! Growth is certainly every growth hacker's ultimate goal, but it's not exactly an actionable goal. You can't say, "I'm going to grow by growing because growing is my goal." Growth goals must lead to the growth, not stem from themselves. Yes, that sounds a bit Yoda-ish, but let's look at it another way.

Back to our favorite rebel army – what was their ultimate goal? To destroy the Empire. But that's not actionable. How are they going to destroy the Empire? By taking down the Death Star. How? By building an army large enough to take on the fleet. How? By recruiting enough rebel soldiers. How? By going from village to village and recruiting unhappy citizens. How? We should probably travel by ship. Great, does anyone have a ship? First goal obtained: find someone with a ship.

The goals of many startups begin too heady. These types of goals aren't attainable because they aren't actionable. If I told you to take down the empire, you'd look at me like I was crazy. If I said, "Find someone with a ship," (or find someone to take our message to the people via social media), you could probably do that.

**How does this process look in real life? I want to increase the amount of time visitors spend on my website. How? By lowering pain points and friction. How? By making the site load faster. How? By optimizing code. Actionable goal obtained: optimize site coding.**

It's not that hard to break your big goals into actionable ones, and then take action – you just have to work backward from the big goals. Once you have all of your next steps all laid out, just reverse the list and do them: Get the ship, go to villages, recruit the people, destroy the Death Star.

# Call in Your Ewoks – Leverage Your Skills

So, now you have an MVP quickly turning into your PMF, your goals are defined and actionable – now what? Time to put your levers to work. What's that? Think about a lever. It's merely a tool that takes a hard task that often requires a lot of force, and gets that job done using as little force as possible.

From the outside, the Death Star looked impenetrable. But the rebels saw the two meter wide exhaust port presented the perfect opportunity for the one advantage they had (which ironically seemed like a disadvantage). The rebels' smaller fighter jets were able to get into the trench and exploit the fatal flaw of the Death Star, which had only planned for attacks from larger vessels – that was the rebel lever. Small amounts of energy, enormous results.

Whatever your leverage is, always use it first. If you're an amazing coder, tackle all your goals that involve coding first. Rethink other goals and see if you can attain them through coding. Look at how AirBnB leveraged coding off of Craigslist. Can you integrate any platforms?

- **If you have an enormous email list, start blasting out emails and signing people up.**
- **Large following on Twitter? Social media might be your lever.**
- **Have a lot of friends and family willing to hit trade and tech shows or use your product in their workplace? Unleash your Ewoks!**
- **Funding? Well, lucky you! Spend on push tactics (*Chapter 5*)**
- **Have a big network? Reach out and leverage their assets.**
- **Amazing writer? Content creation is your lever.**



The list is endless: Call in favors, use a "Powered By ..." backlink to leverage traffic – whatever you have, it's something that your competition does not. That's power. Stack your goals high and use your leverage to knock them down, moving the big boulders first. This way once things start taking off, you only have the small tasks to worry about.

## Patience You Must Have – Always Measure

So now you're tackling your goals. You're banging out big boulders left and right. Some methods work, some don't. You're moving along, innovating, when suddenly you come across a problem you've worked through before, but you've forgotten how. You may have sent a newsletter to promote your latest feature, but it could've been a blog. Wait, wasn't it both? Yes! But one performed way better than the other, which caused some loss in potential growth. Which was it, the blog or the newsletter? And how much better did it perform? Why didn't I write this down?!

**The problem above can be avoided. Not most of the time, but all of time. At least it can by a growth hacker who takes measure of every action they make. Measurement and documentation leads to a wealth of data for analysis, so get into the habit of writing everything down. What's your goal? What's your actionable measurement? What do you think is going to happen? What did happen? What did you do in return? How did people respond? Write it down. Write it all down.**

If something is worth trying, that same action is worth learning from, be it good or bad. Taking measure of every action is the only way to repeat successful strategies and avoid failures down the line. It might seem like a drag to record everything you do, but that's why work is called "work" and not "play." Don't be so eager that you forget the steps. As Yoda said, "Patience, you must learn patience!"

## Fortifying the Rebel Base – Optimize Your Operations

Now that you have some feedback starting to roll in, it's time to really start acting like a growth hacker and think on your feet. Startups don't have time to sit back and wait for the quarter to end – some other company could have you beat by then. Instead, your best friend in the world is A/B testing.



A/B testing is simply having two versions of something, seeing which works better and then moving forward with that version. In other words, it's a faster way to optimize your product and increase growth. For example, if the rebels sent in one wave of ground troops and one wave of X-Wings to attack a Scout Walker, that's an A/B test – the A channel is ground troops and the B channel is X-Wings.

**If 40% of the ground troops die before the Walker is taken out, but only 10% of the X-Wings are shot down, what wave are you going to send next time? (Don't forget to factor in monetary loss of X-Wings, # of pilots lost per X-Wing, etc.) You get the answer for optimal attack method faster with A/B testing than if you had sent in only one wave of ground troops, then waited for the next Walker, then sent in a squad of X-Wings.**

In business, optimizing your startup with A/B testing looks something like this: You're giving away subscriptions to your software on a free-mium basis, as long as the user installs your plug-in and provides you with feedback. After a month, you take that feedback and implement some of it into your plug-in. Then, you continue your original offer (your control group, or A) on some channels and offer the improvement (the B group) on others.

Which performed better? Why? Was the cost of giving away the B channel upgrade worth the growth in terms of new users acquired? Did you want undefined new users in the first place, or did you want more paid sign-ups? Does this align with your goals? Maybe it was customer retention you wanted. Time to A/B test each of those categories with the upgrade and see what your optimal business plan for growth really is.



## Do Or Do Not, There is No Try – Iterations

Okay, we're finally here! That buzzword of buzzword for growth hackers: iterations. Successive approximations. Repetition of a sequence of operations over and over again, until you get the results you want. Do it again, but do it better, and get closer to the goal each time you do it. Simple.

Still, so many startups fail to realize how important iterations are, and even if they do realize it, they fail to make the proper tweaks needed for growth. They'll find a modicum of success with the first or second try, and then stick with it, over and over again. No – you have to keep iterating, taking real data and feedback, making the tweaks you need, then trying it again. Wash, rinse, repeat.

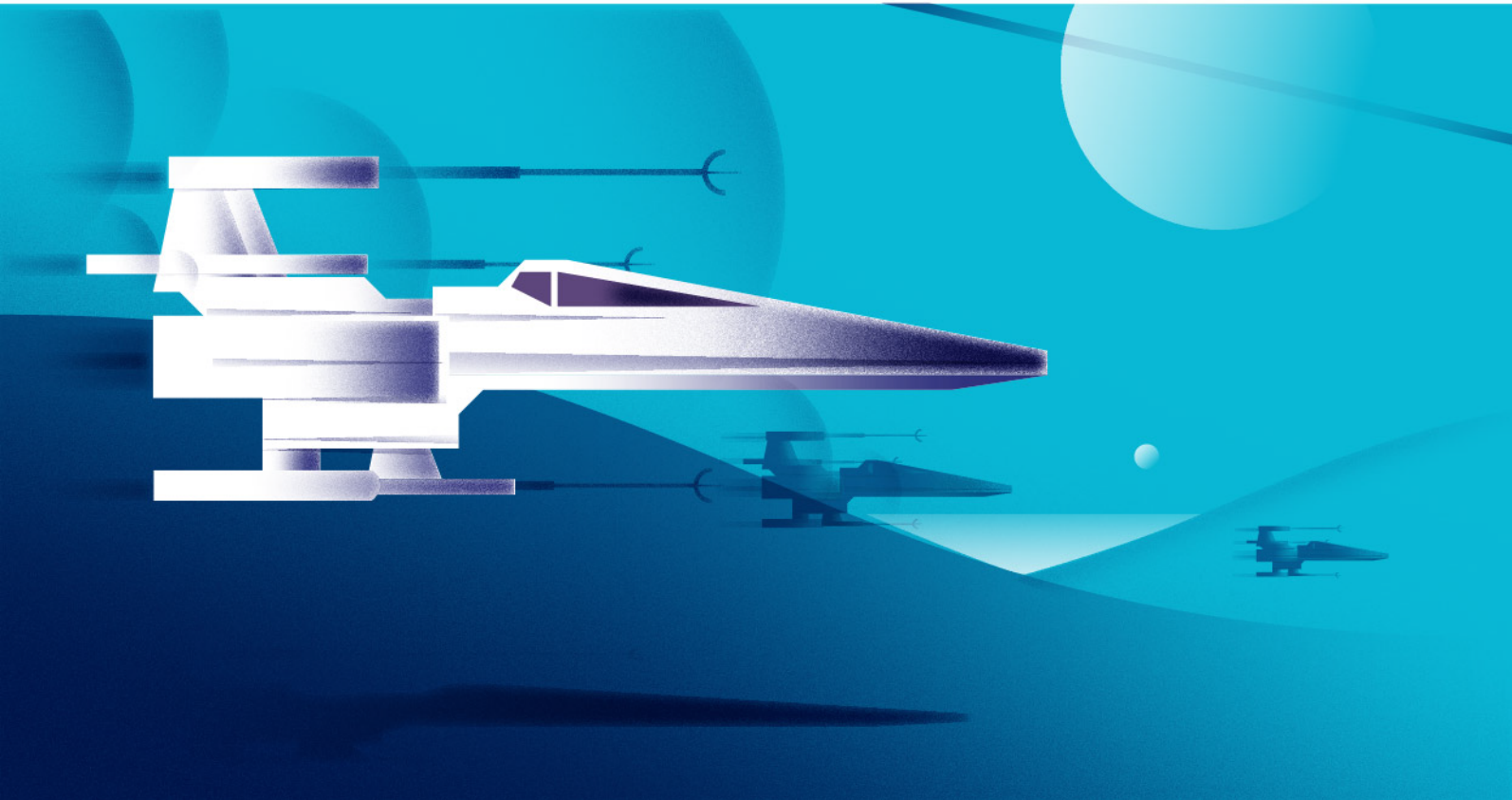
Our rebel leaders from above – if they were smart, they didn't just send in a squad of X-Wings to each Scout Walker after the first iteration, even though that was the clear winner. Instead, they kept A/B testing, iteration after iteration, inputting all the numbers from all the attacks, until they figured out that five X-Wing fighters with one regimen of ground troops resulted in an average of 1% casualties all around, while the enemy suffered 100% casualties. Doing so also saved on fuel costs by keeping excess X-Wings in the hanger, and cutting down on troop fatigue by only sending what was needed. Plus, if other Walkers attacked, the remaining troops and ships at the base could be deployed, making their overall defense all the more efficient.

Remember, the more data you have, the better and faster you can iterate. The more iterations you have, the quicker you will grow, not only with vanity metrics, but with real customer retention rates and eventually, a community of users that can't live without your product.

## Close Your Eyes, Use The Force – Pivoting in Real Time

One last note here on the process – a growth hacker has to work in real time, and be able to adjust – or pivot – as the data streams in on iterations and A/B testing. When Luke, Han and Chewy head to the Detention Center to rescue Leia, they quickly realize they're doomed without a disguise. They pivot and obtain Stormtrooper disguises. Smart.

This kind of quick thinking helped our heroes meet their goals, and it's the same type of real time pivoting that makes a successful growth hacker. Whether you're using Excel modeling and pivot tables or using Google Analytics, Optimizely and Bitly to monitor customer behavior in real time, your pivot can be as small as moving your call-to-action button from below the fold to above it after monitoring visitors via eye-tracking, or it can be as monumental as pivoting from a played out social media platform called Burbn, into Instagram. Use the Force and you'll know.



# 4

■

## TURN YOUR BUSINESS INTO A TRACTOR BEAM WITH PULL TACTICS



*"Mudhole? Slimy? My home  
this is!" ~Yoda*

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Congratulations, young padawan – you’ve made it to Yoda’s home in Dagobah! Now that you know what the growth hacking force is all about, it’s time to let Master Yoda take over for the next few chapters and give you an in-depth look at the specifics of growth hacking. In this chapter, we take a look at one of the growth hacker’s most powerful techniques – pull tactics.

Remember, we’ve split these chapters into three sections: Jedi Training, Battle Tactics and Defeating the Darkside. Use your training time wisely before setting out to crush the Evil Empire, and as always – may the Force be with you!

# Jedi Training – Pull Tactics

## • What are Pull Tactics?

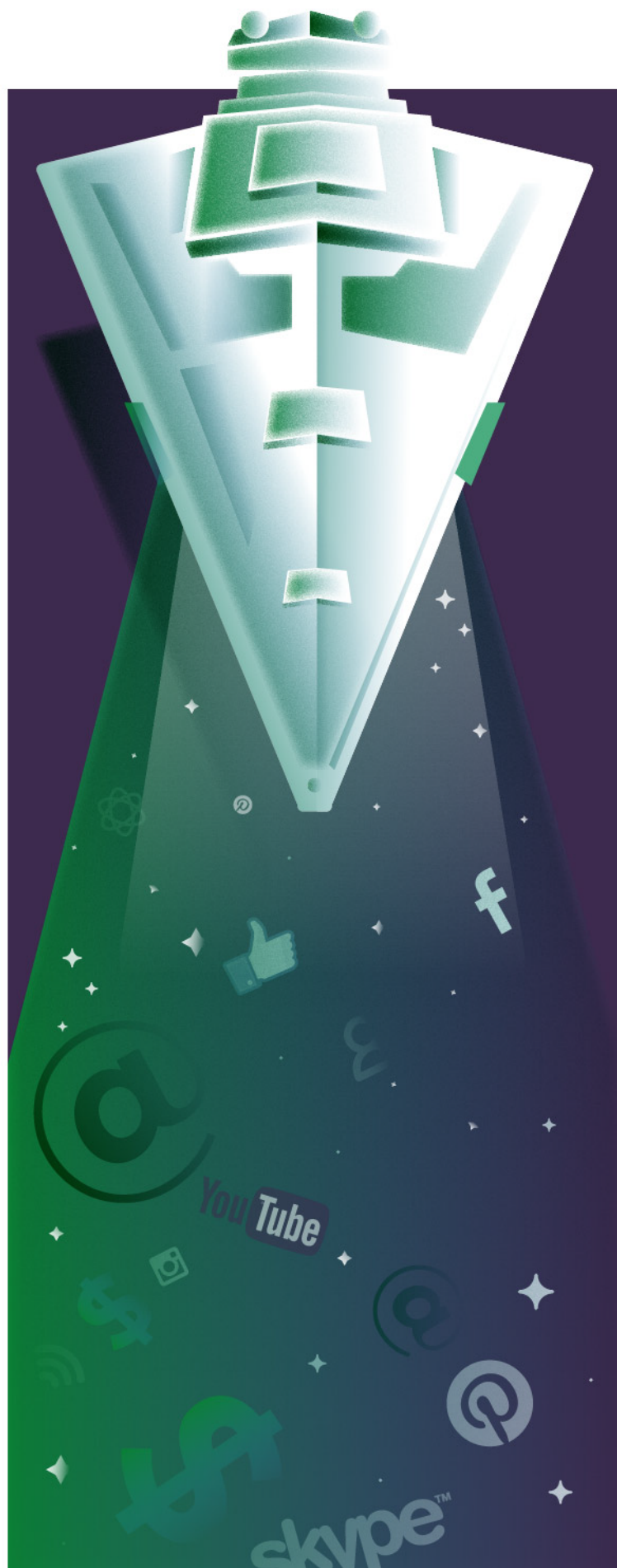
Pull tactics are exactly what they sound like: methods used to pull a visitor into your website, database or company. These are used in lieu of spending time and money seeking an audience or placing your product in front of them. Like a Jedi Knight with a lightsaber and a laser gun, pull tactics are often combined with push tactics and product tactics, which are discussed consecutively in the next two chapters.

## • The Core Concepts of Pull Tactics.

The main concept behind pull tactics should be a familiar one: Inbound marketing. This is where you set up your marketing funnels and campaigns so your leads find you. In fact, anybody seeking out anything even remotely resembling your product should wind up on your website when inbound marketing is done properly. As such, your costs aren't about customer acquisition per se, but instead, how much time and manpower you put into creating value for your brand and website. Value is the magnet working at the core of a push tactic – without value, you have no pull. Without the pull of the tractor beam, the Millennium Falcon never gets taken into the Death Star.

## • Goals of Pull Tactics.

The goal of pull tactics is simply to bring leads, users and customers into the fold by providing them with valuable information, materials, products, etc. You create this material beforehand and then (ideally) watch the audience come running to you.



Every startup should aim to utilize pull tactics that not only play to the strengths of their company, but also the desires of their audience. For example, a team of talented coders might not want to waste time on a blog. Why? Because even the simplest coding concept can get lost in translation and take 20 blogs to clarify. Instead, the coders might do better to upload podcasts or host webinars – or code a tutorial. Similarly, if your product is aimed at corporate types that are strapped for time, a three-hour webinar would be a horrible pull tactic to try – a brief infographic or abstract of a case study shared on social media would be the way to go.

You should always create goals for your pull tactics – what do you want them to accomplish? Who are you looking to draw in? The old marketing mantra of “know your target audience” is key here – your first pulls are going to be early adapters, evangelists and cheerleaders. Once your goals are created, remember to measure, analyze, pivot and iterate until you meet them or find more successful pathways to growth.

## Battle Tactics – Pull Tactics

Although obvious for online marketers, here are some of the most effective and easily implemented push tactics, as recommended by Yoda:

### • Killer Website

First and foremost, your website is your home. It's where people come knocking when they want to see you. You don't smear Wookiee crap all over your front door, do you? So don't make a crappy website. Hire a team if you can't code or spend a lot of time coding one if you can. Get the keywords in the H1 tags and URLs. Think about aspects like navigation, design, color psychology and most importantly, SEO. Target high and low competition areas and nail some long-tail keywords, especially if your Evil Empire competition has the most obvious keywords locked down like Jabba had Leia. Link internally and be concise.

And most important of all – write badass copy. We'll get into blogging in a second, but seriously – if you can't write sharp, effective, creative, captivating content for your site, outsource it. Why? Because both the back and front end of your website have to be stellar, otherwise people will be scared away by the smell of the Wookiee crap on your front door.



## • Apps

Given the tech-heavy nature of today's startups, it seems like everybody's got an app – good. Apps are amazing tractor beams for startups because everyone wants the newest app with the latest tech, even if it's just to show it off to friends.

Did you know that there was an app that cost \$999 called, "I Am Rich?" It did absolutely nothing, but eight people bought it in the United States, just to show that they were rich. That's the kind of power and draw apps have – Emperor Palpatine-like power.

Apps are generally on two marketplaces: Google Play and/or the Apple App Store.

- **Make sure you have a firm understanding of your audience before developing for both.**
- **If you're a B2B and the firms that use your software all operate on Androids, why waste time and money on iPhone devs during the critical startup phase?**
- **Plus, your niche might have a crowded platform, or one OS that generates higher AST (Average Session Time).**
- **In short – do your homework so you don't spend recklessly.**

## The Eye of the Downloader

But even more vital is how you present your app to the public. It has to have a killer name, great reviews, pro-style screenshots and most of all, provide value. It should also be easy to use and show potential for growth.

A great way to entice users is to make your app integratable, which could get you on other dedicated marketplaces such as AppExchange (a B2B marketplace for apps that integrate with Salesforce). Remember, the more your app is seen where your audience is hanging out, the more likely it will pull them in like a tractor beam. A great technique for testing your app is to launch an MVP beta in a smaller test market that is similar to your audience, but not

geographically overlapping (e.g., launch beta in Europe, launch for real in America). Go with a different name than what you're going to ultimately use, just in case it bombs (protip: make it simple and descriptive).

Set up some landing pages and spend a bit on ads. Use AdWords and some push notifications (not too many, and make opting out of them simple). A/B test with different screenshots, icons, keywords – everything. Iterations and data analysis are a growth hacker's friends. Aim for at least 3,000 users before considering collected data relevant, and always remember: Work backward from customer feedback to bring your MVP into the launch phase.



**Pro-tip:** *Don't forget that apps are like mini-websites, but even better in that they can work offline. That means you need to cross all your T's and dot all your I's because you're gaining 24/7 access to your audience. Utilize every second of it: Define micro-conversions, set event tracking and get that funnel ready for analyzing. Follow the dev's guidelines and contact Apple and Google to ask if you can be a featured app, then stay on top of analytics and iterations.*

#### • Blogging.

To be clear, blogging isn't exactly SEO, but it will play an important role in your overall Page-Rank. Blogs help get your site indexed with Google and other search engines. But more importantly, they provide value to the world (if your blogs aren't providing value and are just pushing hard sales, nobody is going to read them). Blogs are great because they can be shared on social media, via RSS feeds and even email blasts. If they are well-written and provide value, they can easily go viral (i.e., exponential growth). When that happens, you become a leader in your industry – you aren't following the trends, you're setting them. That's exciting and profitable.

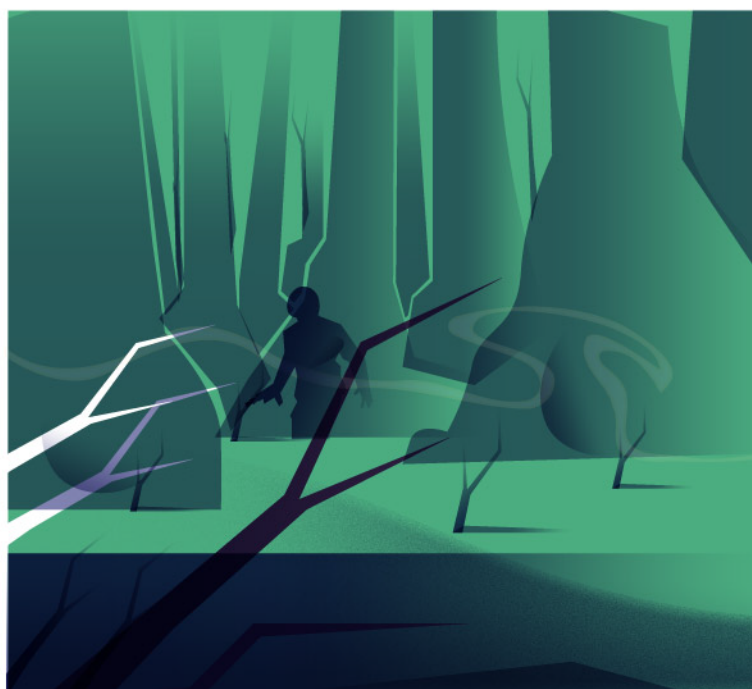
Interlace some strategically dropped info-bombs about your product launch date, company news or latest upgrade. Done properly, it will meld right into the value system of your blog, making even the hardest sell seem like you're doing your reader a favor by cluing them in. As your blog grows, you will be asked to guest blog for others, further increasing the scope of your pull tactics. Blogs are one of the top entry points to many sales funnels, and they cost nothing to make (unless you outsource them). If you're having trouble figuring out what to write, just write the kind of blogs you like to read, only from your perspective, about your niche and ultimately, selling your product or service. Remember: value, value, value, or don't bother.

#### • In-depth Materials.

Blogs can only take you so far, though. A blog about growth hacking is great. You can introduce the overall idea, like Obi-Wan giving Luke the lightsaber and telling him about his father. But when it came time for training, Luke had to go to Dagobah, where you are now. In other words, it was time to get into the thick of things with guides, eBooks, case studies and white papers.

**The simple fact of the matter is that these types of in-depth materials hold more weight, and not just if you physically print them out. Let's say two distributors are vying for your business. One links you to his blog, the other hands you a case study and eBook he's written on the subject – who gets the job? Probably the guy with the more impressive material. Why not be that guy with the impressive material? That's instant authority, which means you can create, set and drive your own market.**

Ebooks – and the like – also provide more perceived value, meaning you can ask for more in return. How many times have you entered your email to download something that you want for free? It's a small price for the customer to pay, to have all that value and knowledge – it's a huge gain for a startup to have email addresses rolling in for list-building purposes.





## • Live Presentation

Wait, what? Nobody does live speaking events as a startup, do they? Not unless it's TEDTalks or you know someone. Ah, but that's not the point, young padawan. When you give a live presentation, what happens? You prepare. You create a treasure trove of material to help illustrate your point. And since growth hacking is all about efficiency, why look at material creation as a separate entity when you can group it together and use it for both larger and smaller purposes? Streamline to efficiency.

For instance, let's say you speak at a conference pitching your product. You get two or three business cards, a few email addresses in return for a hard copy of that eBook you wrote – waste of an afternoon, right? Not to mention all the time you spent on the power point presentations, infographics, etc. Gone. Or is it? What if you upload that slide deck to SlideShare? Now you have a pull tactic working for you. Did you record yourself speaking? Now you have a YouTube video to upload. You can even cut it into parts for a drip campaign to blast out to leads.

And on the off chance that you don't bomb, you could wind up with quite a few investors, early adapters, connections and even social mentions from people in attendance. In other words, prepare to give the presentation of your life, and even if you give it to your two best friends, record it, put it online and make

everything available. Then, lie and tell everyone how great it was. Scratch that – lying is way of the Dark Side. Just keep quiet about it instead.

## • Everything else

There are tons of other pull tactics that you could use including webinars, podcasts, deal sites (think Groupon, but better), free giveaways, social media and best of all, your own personal connections. Webinars and podcasts are helpful because they imply regularity – attending a webinar or knowing when a podcast comes out puts a time stamp of authority on your product. You can even grant access to past webinars and podcasts in exchange for email addresses.

Deal sites and free giveaways are a no-brainer. Discounts and free stuff always promotes growth. The great thing about deal sites is that they cut down on your distribution efforts, since the deal is spread by the site. This works because the site gets business from your deal and you get business from the site – it behooves them to promote you, and they do. With contests, make sure there are lots of winners. You can even give people better odds at winning by sharing the entry form on their Facebook page or inviting three friends – it's all about growth and nothing spreads the word like free, cool stuff. (Protip: Don't give away pictures of your super-cute Yorkie and kitten

playing in the kitchen.) The free stuff can actually tie into a bigger part of growth hacking, and that's leveraging other people's networks. You can do this like AirBnB did to Craigslist (scrape!), or go about it another way and work with your connections.

Give away some of your services and business experiences (create a package, not just a product) on a blog that has a similar demographic to yours. All the readers have to do is get three friends to sign up, or something similar. Give top bloggers and reviewers free access to your product. There are a lot of people with huge audiences and if you make them a fan, they'll turn around and make their audiences into fans.

As for social media, if you don't know what you're doing by now, grab a guide or outsource it – there's just too much to cover in this eBook! Suffice it to say, if you've spent any amount of time in online marketing, you already know what a powerful pull tactic social media is. Share links, blogs, stories, news – a good rule of thumb is for every three "value" posts you provide, you can post once about your product or tie your product in somehow. Otherwise, your social media channel ceases being social and turns into a boring commercial.

# Defeating the Darkside

Now that you know more about growth hacking pull tactics, it's time to show how they can be implemented based on the type of startup you have. So without further ado, we're excited to present to you our super-fictional and completely made up lightsaber startup, "Brightsaver." Yes, Brightsaver is the eco-friendly choice for the modern Jedi Knight, who cares not only about saving planets from the Death Ray, but also saving it from waste and Wookie-sized carbon footprints.

The Brightsaver lasts 80% longer than standard lightsabers because of our patented Yoda Cell Battery®, which is 100% recycled and rechargeable. It's estimated that for every dark soul your Brightsaver cuts down in battle, four trees on the forest moon of Endor are saved (on

average – independent research pending). But wait, there's more! All Brightsavers are made on Endor by the skilled hands of Ewoks. Living wages are paid and profit sharing will be set up by the end of next year. A portion of all proceeds go to the Rebel Army.

So, we got our MVP in place, have our demographic (eco-friendly Jedi Knights), our competition (Evil Empire Lightsabers, Inc.) and we even cut a sponsorship deal with Yoda. We got our SEO-optimized website up and running – on a "green" server, of course – and were ready to implement some pull tactics. After careful analysis and research, here's what we tried, didn't try, and what happened:



### • Blogging

No busy Jedi has time to pour through blogs, so we skipped the typical weekly blog and just decided to blog about eco-news as it happened. We figured that this would pop up in the Jedi's newsfeeds and alerts, since they're environmentally conscious and everybody has those, right?

### • What happened

Unfortunately, we didn't take "the Force" into account. We're not sure if that's why our blogs didn't get much traction, but from the surveys we placed on our sign-up confirmation/thank you page (hint hint), it seems that most Jedis who bought Brightsavers don't read any blogs – they "sense" their news as disturbances in the Force. Our blog traffic came mostly from non-Jedis, which is still okay since they interact with Jedis and might let them know about our product. Plus, how cool is it for the average person to buy a Jedi Brightsaver? (This proved to be a huge market down the road).

We kept blogging, hoping that some of the bigger environmental sites in the galaxy would give our blogs a few re-Tweets and shares. This led to a few backlinks, but nothing wonderful. Bottom line: We began to outsource our blogs because it was cheaper and it freed up our time to concentrate on faster means of growth. Overall, we were smart not to tie our pull tactic manhours into blogging, but other startups have made their entire living on blogs – to each their own!

### • Apps

We conducted a survey of Jedi Knights that asked which technology they used. Unfortunately, smartphones didn't make the cut, so even though we had a great app idea for down the road, it would have been a mistake to spend time and money on it early on, especially now that it would take some consumer education to get the smartphones in the hands of the Jedis. Now, they're able to track their swings

(like FitBit) and make their movements more efficient with our Yoda Master Training add-on, (plus a cool gamefication we'll take about later on), but sometimes being a growth hacker means putting the really cool stuff on the shelf for a little while. When we finally rolled out the app, it made sense for us, but not during start-up. Once again, to each their own.

#### • Live Presentation

One of our founders has an uncle (through marriage) who is a Jedi, so we leveraged that into a speaking gig at the Jedi Council. Here's where we put the bulk of our manpower: spending time creating infographics, Power Point presentations and working on our presentations and demonstrations. Of course, having Yoda demonstrate the Brightsaver was a big hit and we recorded it for YouTube. We also offered to name four trees on Endor after anyone who got up and tried the Brightsaver, which 95% of the Jedi Council did (of course, we got their email addresses to send the location of the named trees). Yoda also gave free Brightsavers to anyone who was currently mentoring five or more students in the hopes that the next generation of Jedi would grow up around Bright-savers (brand recognition and giveaways).

#### • What Happened

Unlike most tech startups, we hit it big with an old school method of marketing: the live presentation. Of course, that's because we got into the Jedi Council, and our almost our entire demographic was there, but that should be a powerful lesson – a growth hacker doesn't discount methods because they seem unconventional – as long as they are the fastest path to growth, chase them. Still, our sales were a bit disappointing and our follow-up questions revealed a huge problem with our MVP – there just aren't that many Jedi Knights concerned with the environment. This was a huge shock to us and sent us back to the drawing boards. Still, it turns out the giveaways were a big success...- but not until 10 years later when it came time for the students to choose their weapons.



By then, we were an entirely different company, but that's another story!

*We had a rough time with tech and the Jedis, mostly because of them tapping into The Force. Turns out none of them used Facebook or Twitter, but what they did use was Snapchat. Why? Remember when R2D2 played the hologram of Princess Leia asking Obi-Wan for help? Secret messages that were erased after 10 seconds played right into the Jedi's wheel-house, so Snapchat was big for us.*

*It's all about knowing your audience and listening to them. With that in mind, we decided to make a few changes moving forward, and implement them with our push tactic campaigns.*

# USE THE FORCE TO PUSH YOUR PRODUCT INTO THE ENEMY BASE

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*"Through the Force, things you will see." ~Yoda*

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You've seen Darth Vader use the Force to "push" people across the Death Star bridge or through a wall, and now you're going to learn how to force – or push – your way into your audience's minds, lives and wallets. Push tactics work hand-in-hand with pull tactics – we're merely talking about them separately in this eBook to keep ideas simple clear. In the real world, successful growth hackers use pull, push and product (next chapter)marketing tactics simultaneously. Here's what you need to know.



# Jedi Training – Pull Tactics

## • What are Pull Tactics?

Push tactics are devices that growth hackers utilize to interrupt their audiences with information and offers about their companies. The simplest examples of real-world push tactics are the fragrance salespeople in department stores, spritzing visitors with cologne and perfume as they walk by the counters. The simplest example of an online push tactic is that pop-up ad you see when you visit a website – the customer isn't there for it, but they're going to get spritzed/see the ad anyways. Push tactics generally cost money to implement (as opposed to pull tactics, where the costs are more about manpower and hours). For that reason, push tactics have to be considered in terms of monetary spend/gain, in addition to growth. If a customer is only going to generate \$100 in sales, it doesn't make sense to spend \$100 to acquire them through push tactics, or any other marketing spend per customer. This is your CAC (customer acquisition costs), and it needs to be weighed against the LTV (lifetime value). In other words, don't spend more than what it costs you to get them, versus what you're going to make off of them – iterate, combine tactics and optimize campaigns to get your CAC as low as possible without hurting your overall leads, customer retention and LTV.

## • The Core Concepts of Pull Tactics.

Push tactics are all about putting your company or product into places where they might not reach organically. That ad you watch before streaming Walking Dead episodes – that's a push tactic and an interruption of your activity. Retargeting ads that pop up reminding you of sites you've visited as you browse



the web? Push tactic/interruption, though more targeted (i.e., effective) since it's triggered by cookies in your browser which select ads relevant to you. How about the email reminding you that you left that Princess Leia slavegirl lingerie in your shopping cart? Push tactic. So instead of content creation (which is generally pull tactics), you're pushing your way into someone else's creation and saying, "Hey, that's cool, but this is cooler!" Protip: If you're not cooler, your push will be lame and ignored, so make exciting stuff!

## • Goals of Push Tactics.

The goal of push tactics is simply to find potential leads wherever they are online, push your way into their activities and bring them back to your product.

Push tactics need to be handled with care. It's easy to go out there and buy ad after ad if you're a giant conglomeration, but you're not – you're a startup. So do your research and find out where your audience is spending their time, and then push your way in there – nowhere else. Are they watching live streams of Comic-Con? Get in there with some ads. Are they Tweeting all day? Buy Twitter ads.

The point here is that pushing is an aggressive marketing tactic, which makes it super-successful for growth hacking startups, since you might be going up against an established brand with an enormous marketing budget. Pushes are also great when you have a brand new product that requires customer education and brand awareness – pushing gets you there fast, and

growth hackers love fast (even at the expense of a few dollars). Remember, once you push in there, you're invasive – counter that with value, incentives, rebates, beta testing signups, rewards, eBooks, giveaways, contest entries, etc. You not only have to get the customer over the fact that

you barged in on their funny cat videos, but also address their pain points, price sensitivities and any other friction encountered on a regular basis. One option is to make your push less conspicuous, for example having your best friend who is the CEO at a tech firm nonchalantly suggest your app during a webinar, having a top blogger blog about you or getting product placement in viral Vine videos (yes, those blur the lines of push and pull, which can yield amazing results).

# Battle Tactics – Pull Tactics

**So, what are these mighty push tactics that are going to make the Empire tremble in fear?**

## • Ads

Hey, you didn't think you were going to get away from buying ads, did you? Growth hacking is a successful business plan for startups, not some miracle formula – you have to pay to play. The difference between normal ad spend and growth hacking ad spend is that you're going to spend smarter, not heavier, for growth hacking. You're going to build off of multiple platforms (e.g., AdRoll, BuySellAds, Carbon, The Deck, Tapjoy, etc.), not just Google and Yahoo! (although 83% of search traffic comes from Google, so AdWords is the number one all-around ad platform). You're also going to test ads and yank anything that's not working before it has a chance to become a money-suck. Aside from the main goal of growth, your ads

should serve to rip the buyers from the tire-kickers. You don't want to waste money on leads that are going to poke around and not buy simply because they're bored at work – you want dedicated spenders coming in at the top of your funnel and then letting your sales flow take control. To do this, you need to grab attention. Get your old college roommate who majored in fine arts and design on the phone and come up with some killer graphics. Your copy should tell a story, not just blab about your product. If you look like every other ad people see, they're going to blow you off like Leia blew off Han when they first met. Make your ad's content come to life and your brand will do the same with your sales.

## • Ad tricks and tips

**SEO:** Do your keyword research and target negative and long-tail keywords. Try to hammer on the intent behind the searches, not just the words, and capitalize on that. For example, a site about the Rolling Stones and a site about granite will both hit on “rock,” but the user’s intent when typing “rock” in the search engine is very different.

**LSI:** (Latent Semantic Indexing) keywords are powerful tools to capture intent, when used correctly (e.g., using LSI words like “rock music” and “guitar” versus “drill” and “rock mining”). Check in on the KW performance each week and A/B test along with the trends until you find a winning formula.

**Compartmentalization:** Break down all of your ads into categories so you can get the full picture on performance. For instance, create an ad for a 1-year subscription, 6-month subscription and 1-month subscription, each as a separate campaign from the other with its own budget allocation and category. See which performs better so you can understand how your audience wants to tie-in with you: yearly, semi-yearly or monthly. Adjust price points to see if that makes a difference, until you optimize your ROI on each category.

**Anticipation:** Use Google Trends to predict where searches are going over the next few weeks. Also, skip relying heavily on bidding tools since they take about two-months to return usable data. You can run them in the background, but rely on Impressions Share Reports until then. AdWord’s Bid Simulator should help you wean yourself off of standard bidding tools, so get cracking!

**Justification:** Just remember, there are ad platforms for almost every niche now. Choosing the right ones and getting to know the ins and outs of those platforms is going to play a big role in your successes. Try to find the right fit for your tech – one that will get to the right places, to the right people.

**Competition:** Also, bone up on how much your competition is spending per click – if your business plan is better, you can spend more in certain areas to steal their clients. It’s all about knowing your audience, knowing your ad spend (CAC vs LTV) and utilizing every platform you’re on to its fullest extent.

**Don’t forget your standard marketing ad tricks, but put them on growth hacking turbo blast. Qualify all of your clicks if you’re going with a PPC ad. You need actionable growth that’s real, not vanity metrics.**

**Be prepared to test everything. A/B testing and iterations based on actionable metrics are what separate the growth hacker from the marketer when it comes to ad spend.**

**Check social platforms as well: Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter – get to know each one’s demographic so you know you’re putting the ads in the right place.**



RAWHN AGRRNH  
WRAGHGRR!

#### • Direct sales and telemarketing

While these might seem a bit old school and not something a modern growth hacker would utilize, don't discount them. Just like Luke preferred to keep R2D2 because he trusted him, when something works, stick with it.

**Of course, the actual success of direct sales and/or telemarketing – and feasibility based on your LTV vs CAC – will depend on your product. You might be able to sell anything over the phone, but the costs for a phone bank campaign might not be worth the investment when you could grow faster paying for, say, Twitter ads. Further, if you're developing SaaS, going to a trade show is likely a waste of time, rather than using product tactics (discussed next chapter) for growth.**

But if you do have a concrete product and there's a brick and mortar location or online storefront where you'd do well, don't be afraid to spend a few hours pounding the pavement like our marketing ancestors did. There's a lot to be said about personal relationships with vendors and negotiating with retailers to put your products in prime position to sell.

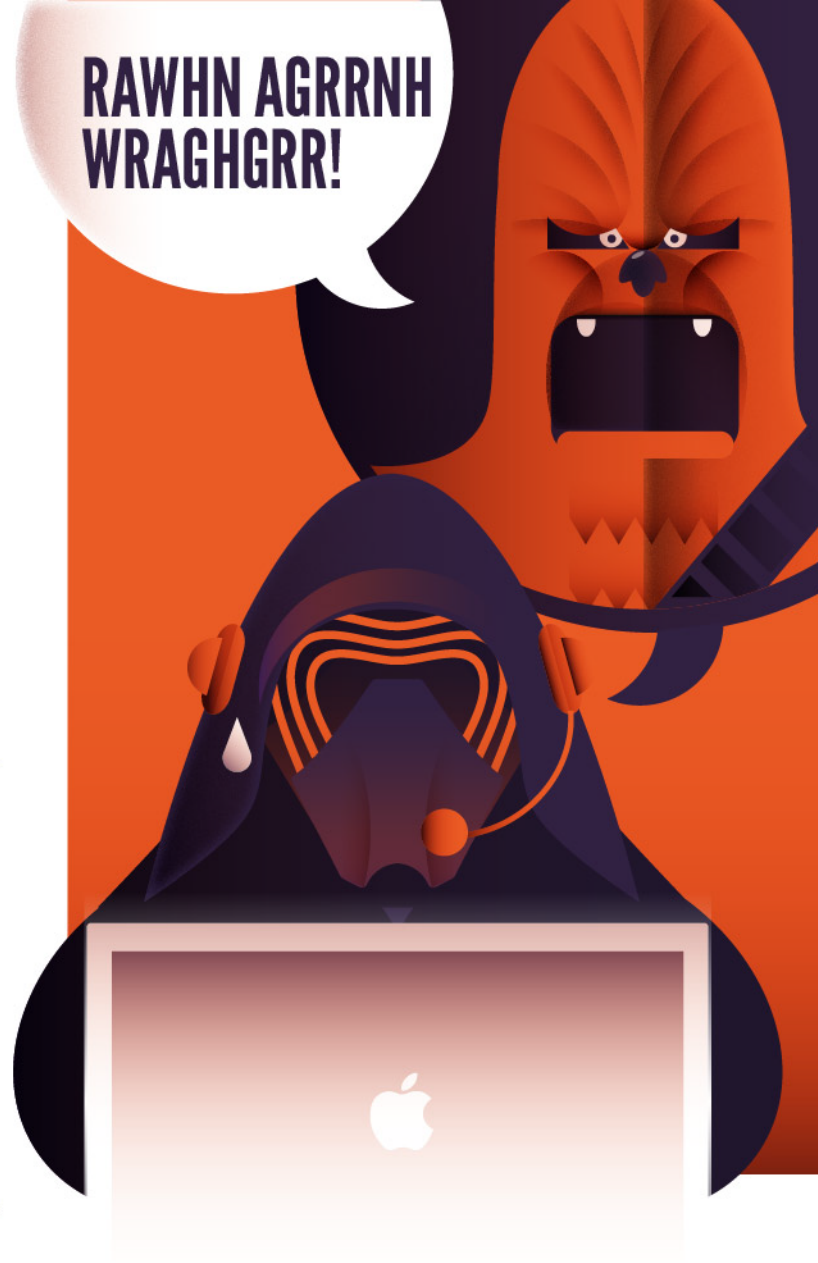
#### • Cross-marketing and trade-offs

Piggybacking off of those personal relationships, remember that in the grand scheme of things, Lando really did save Han. That friendship was real, though maybe not as real as Han's and Chewbacca's. And just like Luke and Leia had a brother/sister relationship (or Luke and Vader were father and son), there are all types of relationships to be had and made in business.

**Now, if you're Luke and you need some loving advice, you might go to your sister. If you need someone to take down an empire with you, Han is your man. Want to work out your daddy issues? Go swing a Brightsaver at Vader (yes, we just plugged our own fictional startup!). For startups trying to**

**network, the same relationship rules apply – know where your allies are strongest and weakest.**

While you aren't going to call up your competition and ask them to promote you, there are demographics that intersect all over the world. For example, if you're making nose plugs for swimmers, you might try to cross-promote with a leading swimsuit company. You're not cutting into their sales since they don't make nose plugs, and your demographics intersect, so it makes sense to help each other grow. Want a digital example? Earning bonus points for buying airline tickets with a specific credit card.



Cross-promote via Twitter or Facebook, possibly throwing in some giveaways, and have the other brand do the same. You can even both agree to send out emails informing your customers about the other company and what a great product they have. You can link to each other's websites, or sponsor links in newsletters. You can even advertise on each other's sales vids, or get more with the times and do some cross-product placement in Snapchat and Vine videos with any one of the thousands of hilarious viral stars (note that's the second time we mentioned that, hint hint). This is free push marketing at its finest.

#### • **Sponsorships a.k.a. affiliate marketing**

Affiliate marketing makes up an enormous chunk of online marketing, simply because it's a great way to leverage the work of others. For affiliates, it's also a viable source of passive income. In case you've been encased in carbo-nite by Jabba the Hut for the past two decades, affiliates are simply independent online marketers who accomplish goals you set, in return for a commission.

In a sense, they are mercenaries for hire, in your rebellion against the Empire. Need traffic driven to your website? They'll set up landing pages or write blogs that funnel leads in to you – in return for pay, of course. Want dedicated leads and email addresses for your list? Let the affiliates use their lists to weed out the bad seeds and bring you dedicated buyers.

**In short, affiliates use many of the same push and pull tactics that growth hackers do, just on their own terms, while working for one or more platforms (some on their own, some with popular affiliate networks such as Clickbank, AdMedia, Amazon and eBay Partner Network, to name a few).**

#### • **Risks ahead**

With that said, there are some dangers to affiliate marketing. For one, if you're using these marketers to vet leads for you, it's important that you vet your affiliates first. Every technique, word, infographic, color palette, etc., that they use, reflects on your company.

**They must be reliable and use white hat techniques, otherwise you're just besmirching your good name. For example, if their landing page has X-rated adult ads on it, viewers are going to link your company with them, which could alienate sizable segments of your demographic.**



Further, you need to know how dedicated and reliable your affiliates are. You don't want them becoming partners with you if they are also earning from your competition. That's a severe conflict of interest which could result in aspects of your business model being leaked out for use against you.

Plus, you don't want affiliates to find a way to send you trash leads and make off with their pay, so be sure that you not only vet them, but set strict payment parameters and goals for your affiliates. For example, having their payment benchmarks set to pay out only when a lead converts into a client is a good way to keep your mercenaries by your side during the long rebellion.



# Defeating the Darkside

The push tactics we used for Brightsaver were pretty straight-forward. Here's what we did and didn't do, plus what happened:

## • LTV vs. CAC

The first thing we did before implementing any push tactics was to figure out our LTV vs. CAC. Our Brightsavers were priced higher than standard lightsabers, but our 80% longer lasting Yoda Cell Battery® made it worth the cost. But this also worked against us in the LTV, since Jedis would have to buy new lightsabers more infrequently. In other words, the Empire's lightsabers were operating on planned obsolescence, meaning their LTVs were going to be higher than ours since Jedis had to buy a new one every three years.

**So we made an insane move by many startup standards – we tripled our prices. Why? Because Brightsavers are rechargeable and last longer. They're an investment. We decided to really tap into that as the differential selling point, since our original thought on eco-friendly Jedis proved to be wrong after some surveys and beta testing. So, we pivoted, and not just on the prices.**

Yes, we'd keep the eco-friendly blogs (since blogs didn't turn out too well anyways), but now we were going to push into markets advertising the Brightsaver as "the one, only and last lightsaber you'll ever need to buy." So we turned the concept of the lightsaber itself being "bright" and "saving" the "environment," into the owner being "bright" by "saving" money.

Now our LTV was the cost of one Brightsaver, plus future apps and add-ons. At our new pricepoint, this meant our LTV was 10,000 Druggats (equal to about 8 Nova Crystals, or \$5,000 USD) so we had some amazing margins to turn profits on, depending how we adjusted



our CACs. We could spend anywhere up to 9,999 Druggats on acquiring a customer (CAC) and still turn a profit (albeit it only 1 Druggat,, which is poor ad spend unless you're expecting a huge viral return from product marketing tactics). As always, the less we spent on acquiring (i.e., our push tactic budget per customer), the more profit we made. Still, we decided on spending more on PPC ads than the Empire did per lead, since we now had a higher LTV – this allowed us to steal their leads and eventually, customers.

### • Ad spend

Given our odd demographic, we still wound up spending less on ads than most startups hacking growth would. The Jedis used the Force for info, so ads had to be strategically placed. We went back to Snapchat and advertised on their app. We also placed ads on Waze, since we know Jedis use the app to avoid asteroid fields and Galactic traffic while speeding off to save the world. Plus, we bought some ads on YouTube videos, specifically on a channel hosting Jedi roundtables, new fighting techniques and Force Mantra Chants. In short, we put our ads where the Jedis were, intruding on their purpose for being online, in order to “push” our product on them.

We also did your standard AdWords PPC model, but we did it smart. We were able to vet our clicks by only retargeting browsers that had visited a combination of the Jedi forums, the Empire's lightsaber site and the Jedi Council's Jedi Registration License and Renewal site. This way, we ripped the dedicated buyers (i.e., Jedi Knights) from the tire-kickers (i.e., kids who wish they were Jedis). This cut down on clicks from people with no intention to buy, which saved us money since we used a PPC model.

We also thought outside of the box, placing standard billboard ads in places where many Jedi would see them: Refugee camps, the Badlands, bathroom stalls in the Jedi council and even a giant billboard on the space station at the entry point to Tatooine.

### • What Happened

Our ads turned out to be far more successful than our pull tactics, mostly because we camped ads out in places that couldn't be accessed strictly by the Force (which was why our blogs failed). In turn, we put more effort, manpower and money into push tactics than pull. We saw a faster way to grow, and capitalized on it. This won't be the same with all startups – in fact, many might be the exact opposite, with pull working better than push. Our success on the app ads eventually drove our own app sales through the roof. Our success with ad placement on YouTube and in outer space led to a spike in our direct sales numbers (especially with Yoda offering to go on tour with us).





#### • Direct sales and telemarketing

As we just mentioned, our direct sales took a huge boost from our ads, so this was a big profit area for us. We didn't do any telemarketing (since Jedis use the Force and Snapchat to communicate), so we raised our Snapchat budget and started blasting out social media posts from direct sales locations (which generated a buzz and more social mentions).

#### • What Happened

This combined our push with our pull, creating a real-time viral sensation. While the start of a few trade shows failed, by the end of the day, using well-timed Snapchats, these tactics had sales skyrocketing.

#### • Cross-promotions

Finally, we did implement a few cross-promotions, but they were strictly giveaways due to our weak performance on most social media. In short, we couldn't offer any social media value in return, since we had such little reach. But what we could offer, we did. We also had a problem here since our product is so expensive and would use up 90% of the LTV if we were to give one away, but we worked around it.

#### • What Happened

As with any giveaway, the problem wasn't giving stuff away – it's what giveaways actually led to sales. Since we couldn't give the Brightsaver away (we did hold a contest for one free Brightsaver, that required an email address for entry, plus an additional entry for every three Jedi Knights you got to enter), we gave away discounts and free training sessions with Yoda instead. The training sessions were a huge hit and scored us cross-promo partnerships with companies that had huge audiences which intersected with our demographic.

**The glove company that made Luke Skywalker's glove for his robo-hand was our best lead-creator, dumping 15% of Q3 new leads into our sales funnel, with 90% of that turning into purchases. Of course, about 70% of those purchases came at our Yoda training camp giveaways (which fell under Direct Sales), so we knew we were onto something – what that was, we had to figure out. We figured the product tactic performance would clear everything up, and it did.**

We didn't do any affiliate marketing and with good reason: Jedis are very secretive and we wanted to create a level of trust between the Brightsaver brand and our clients. We simply couldn't risk having affiliates out there communicating the wrong message to such a limited demographic. Of course, this had an added bonus a few years down the line, since when we finally opened an affiliate program for our app, marketers were beating down our doors for a piece of the action, but this just goes to show you – not every tactic is for every product, service or audience. Choose yours wisely.

# 6

## ■ LET YOUR LIGHTSABER DO THE TALKING – PRODUCT TACTICS 101



*“Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you? Hmm? Hmm. And well you should not. For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter. You must feel the Force around you; here, between you, me, the tree, the rock, everywhere, yes. Even between the land and the ship.” ~Yoda*

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Any good rebellion should be a self-propelling entity. This holds true in Luke's rebel army, with pilots volunteering their time and lives for the cause, but it also holds true with a great product that is able to market itself. Much like a rebellion attracts people by its cause and very existence, your product can be used to attract leads and clients. Will every startup's business model and product instantly market itself? Absolutely not. In fact, most won't (especially SaaS). But there are some tactics that you can implement to nudge it along, and that's what we're going to talk about in this chapter – product tactics.

# Jedi Training – Pull Tactics

## • What are Pull Tactics?

Simply put, a product tactic is when the product itself is used to attract new visitors, leads and customers. It's not a pull tactic because you're not creating content – the product is doing all the work. It's not a push tactic because you aren't actively putting the product out there – the product is getting out there on its own. The most recognizable product tactic in growth hacking is Dropbox's classic offer of free storage space to anyone who got a friend to sign up (i.e., incentive tactics). Since the product – Dropbox – pulled in new users on its own (though not quite at the "viral" level as you may have heard), it was a product marketing tactic.

## • The Core Concepts of Pull Tactics.

Product tactics are all about amplification and virality. They are used to strengthen your overall business plan by making the efforts of pull and push tactics infinitely more beneficial. This sounds confusing, but it's not. If your blog pulls in five new users and your product uses an incentive tactic to get each of those five to pull in three more users, your pull tactic (i.e., the blog) just became three times more effective. Without that incentive built into the product (e.g., invite three friends and you earn two free months of Gold member status), your pull tactic had five new signups – with the product tactic, you now have twenty. That's a K factor – or, viral growth factor – of +3, meaning one pulled viewer nets you three through your product. Getting and keeping your K factor above 0 is at the core of product tactic marketing.

## • Goals of Product Tactics.

The goal of product tactic marketing is viral growth, as hard as that is to achieve. Having a K factor of +1 is the only real way to achieve virality, but that is pretty difficult for many startups. You have to have the "perfect storm" of product, demographic, reach, pull and push tactics in place to achieve that, plus the type of genius growth hacker at the helm worthy of the title, "Jedi Master." A more realistic goal for most startups, is product marketing for amplification, no matter how close your K factor is to 0 (as long as it isn't under, which means it's time to rethink everything!). Even at a K factor of +0.2, for every 5 people brought into your funnel, your product tactics will gain you 1 extra customer, something many startups would love to have. If that doesn't sound like much, look at it like this: even with a +0.2 K



factor, 10,000 customers means 12,000 new ones, just because you've amplified with your product. Little known fact: Dropbox's K factor was actually only about +0.1, but that was enough to catapult them into the product tactic hall of fame.

**Product tactics are one of the most unique techniques a growth hacker can utilize. Drawing in more viewers, leads and customers through mostly free or low-cost techniques brings down your CAC. This means you can afford to spend more on PPC ads if your push tactics are working (which will once again drive up your overall gains thanks to the amplification of product tactics), or if your pull tactics are where your bread is buttered, you can use that money on, say, a better content creation team.**

When you amplify one aspect of your startup, the beneficial effects are felt all around, especially with a growth hacker that knows where to use that amplification to create the most ripples of sustainable, accelerated growth.

But for starters, you certainly want to know your current K factor and check up on it as you deploy various marketing campaigns. The K formula is simple:  **$A \times B \times C \times D = K$**

**A.** Take the percentage of users who share your product and multiply that by...

**B.** The average number of shares the product gets from each of those users (total shares divided by number of sharers), and multiply that by...

**C.** The number of new users you get from each share, multiplying that total by...

**D.** How many of those new users become full users. The total is your K factor.



That's your K factor. So if you have 10 users and 50% of your users share your product a total of 25 times, which brings in 5 freemium subscriptions and 1 full time subscriptions, that's 0.5 (A) times 5 (B, which is an average of 5 users sharing 5 times each), times 0.625 (C, that's how many customers each individual share brings in), times 0.1 (D, or 1 in 5 full users).

That's a K factor of +0.15. That's not viral, but it's better than no growth. Now, if you were bringing in 12 freemiums and 11 full-time users with

those same numbers and shares, your equation would look like  $0.5 \times 5 \times 0.48 \times 1.1$  for a K factor of +1.32, or well over viral.

Pro-tip: If you're not over a K factor of 1, get over it, one way or the other. Build your product until it goes viral or don't – it's not the end of the world. Chances are, you won't go viral, especially with a SaaS. They just aren't built for it. Yet how many successful SaaS startups are there? Enough. Don't stress not going viral – millions of businesses succeed without it.

## Battle Tactics – Pull Tactics

For some products, the product marketing fit will be glove-like and extremely lucrative. But not every product will be suited for this kind of marketing. How you go about creating your packaging and promotion could help you get around some of these obstacles.

### • Gamification

It's okay, you can admit it. You've sent game requests to friends in order to get more lives/tries/guesses/upgrades/etc. You probably didn't know it, but your desire for rewards, status and leveling up played right into the hands of product tactic growth hackers.

**Farmville was notorious for this, at one point attracting over 30 million new users every single day. You could also send gifts to people in Farmville and, like many other games or apps now, you had to keep coming back, otherwise your crops were going to die!**

All of this seems innocent, but when your product has these types of tactics built in, then your customers are motivated to take marketing actions on your behalf (without thinking twice about it!). In other words, you go viral and your K factor skyrockets.



### • Incentives

This is closely tied to gamification, but works as an actual benefit, more so than an imagined one (e.g., real gold versus gold in a game). As mentioned, the best example of this is Dropbox, which gave users free storage space by completing a number of actions.

**For example, they could take a tour of the product (an informed user doesn't churn) or invite friends to use Dropbox (after all, it is a file sharing system so they are going to need it anyways if they want to participate in the sharing). But it can be anything that builds incentive – giveaways, discounts, etc., as long as the incentive results in the attraction of new users (i.e., invite three people to Groupon, everyone gets 40% off).**

As you can see, the pain points are almost non-existent – as is the friction – while the benefits are palpable. This drives your user to bring other users in, utilizing their own networks. Plus, since the referrals to new leads are coming from a friend, the new leads are more likely to trust them and convert. In essence, you're using your product to leverage their networks. What a perfect segue to...

### • Leveraging user networks

Close your eyes and imagine every user that you have has a number of networks that they wouldn't mind sharing your product with. Could be for incentives, could be that your product is so amazing and life-changing – heck, it could be just because they want to be the perceived innovator, who tells everyone in their circles about the "next big thing."

**Now open your eyes and stop imagining – the dream is real. When apps ask for permission to access your phonebook, what do you think is really happening? Sure, you can now receive phone calls when the app is open, or even make phone calls from the app, but that app – and the growth hacker behind it – now has access to your phone network.**

- How about when you grant a Facebook app access to your friends list?
- What about when you import your email address book to LinkedIn to find contacts?

More examples? Sure!

- Are you leaving app ratings where all of your friends can see them? For a reward, maybe?
- Are you sharing a Facebook post to your wall to enter some giveaway?
- Do you hit the reTweet button at the bottom of that article on growth hacking you just read?

**Your networks are being leveraged because you are putting more value on the reward you're getting, than the value you put on your networks – who cares if Bob from accounting gets an email, as long as you get \$20 off, right?**





Pro-tip: You might be surprised how easy it is to access the networks of all your users with your product. One of the reasons Spotify grew so quickly is because whenever you listened to something, Spotify posted on your Facebook, which prompted your friends to possibly click on it and download Spotify themselves – that's product tactic marketing 101, using API integration to link your product with a social network.

**Another successful app is BranchOut, the biggest professional networking app on Facebook with around 30 million users. They've been successful because they use the data you input when you sign up for Facebook, meaning the user doesn't have to input any more personal information (lowering a huge entrance barrier in the personal security-crazed world).**

Just be sure that your networking is going in the right direction, i.e., toward where your demographic hangs out. Then get access to those phone, email and social contacts and networks – chances are, your users have

friends and family who are in your target audience.

#### • **Backlinks and sharing**

Finally, there are two simple product tactics that every company should be using. The first technique is a plain old backlink. "Click here to get your free trial now!" A more modern version of the backlink is the pop-up window. Ever get to a website and a chat screen pops up asking if you need help with your order? Or how about surveys – these are all forms of product tactic marketing.

The second method is called social sharing, and it's as easy as putting a widget in your emails or on your website so readers and visitors can click one button to share your content. The more shares you get, the better your chances of going viral. Sometimes, all it takes is for BuzzFeed to post about you or a similar viral-kingmaker such as Humans of New York (HONY). Always make it easy for users to share – you can even provide some incentive with giveaways, discounts, etc.

# Defeating the Darkside

The product tactics we used for Brightsaver weren't textbook, but they did net us a K factor of +0.25. Here's what we did and didn't do, plus what happened:

- **Gamefication**

Brightsavers are serious weapons used by Jedi Knights for intergalactic warfare, but that doesn't mean we couldn't use some gamefication tactics. Specifically, we built a training module into the Brightsaver that required 15 minutes of laser-shot training at least three times per week. This ensured users were actually using the product (or their crops might die!). We then linked the results to a live leaderboard, and made it simple for Jedi Knights to invite their peers to challenge them in a skills-based rating system. We tapped into that inner urge to be "the best," and let that take over.

- **What happened**

This is where almost our entire K factor came from. Jedi Knights turned out to be extremely competitive, and since you had to have a Brightsaver to accept the challenge, for every two challenges that went out, one accepted. This meant they either bought or accessed a Brightsaver. And for every four acceptances, we gained one full customer who purchased a Brightsaver.

This growth cost us a few hours programming and a few more hours per week making sure all the training data updated to the leader board. Eventually, we started doing cash prizes and that was so popular, we split it into categories (quickest, most accurate, deadliest while blindfolded, etc.). There's talk of yearly live competitions now, complete with sponsorships, endorsements, etc.





#### • Incentives

We thought about the one bond that all Jedi Knights share and that is they use the Force for good. In other words, they're all on the same side. Obviously, this means they would want to help each other as much as possible. We seized on this and created an auto-proximeter location chip in the handle of the Brightsaver. This allowed Jedis to know when other users were in the area and easily contact them for help, a potential lifesaver in a battle.

#### • What happened

This prompted users to share the product with other Jedis, creating a "word of mouth" buzz. Since the incentive was in the Jedi's own best interests (saving their lives), it didn't cost us a thing moving forward once the tech was in place. Eventually, we created an app that read the Brightsaver's range of motion and compared it with the user's activity levels, heartbeat, stress rates, etc. When everything aligned to show that the Jedi might be in trouble and incapable of activating their Lifesaver Mode on their own, the Brightsaver app automatically sent out a distress signal to all users in the area.

#### • Leveraging

We didn't have too much success with our initial attempts at leveraging networks since first, Jedis are so secretive and protective, and second, they communicate using the Force (and occasionally Snapchat). With that in mind, we decided to forego any attempts at leveraging the networks, especially since we covered that with our incentives.

**Remember, product tactics aren't going to work for every product, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't entertain the idea. When product tactic marketing does work, it is an extremely efficient multiplier for push and pull traffic, creating new users and customers without additional effort on your part. Without a good cause, the rebellion is always in danger of failing.**

# ■ WHAT'S IN STORE FOR PART II: THE GROWTH HACKER STRIKES BACK?

So now that you've gotten a good look at the nuts and bolts of the growth hackers and droids, it's time to put some of these techniques into action. During this time, you're going to make some mistakes and likely, need some help. And that's one of the best parts about having a Part II – while you implement Part I, reach out to us and talk to us!

Let us help you along and make sure you're on the right path to Jedi Mastership. Since all startups have different requirements and timelines, it's best to take a break here and get some communications going.

If you don't want to chat with us (meanies!) or you've got this down pat, here's what you're going to learn in Part II: The Growth Hacker Strikes Back. Otherwise, reach out!

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*"If you end your training now – if you choose the quick and easy path as Vader did – you will become an agent of evil." ~Yoda*

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## **Chapter 7:**

Make Customers Turn to You, Not the Dark Side – Activation

1. Jedi Training
2. Battle Tactics
3. Defeating the Darkside

## **Chapter 8:**

Freeze Them In Carbonite – Customer Retention

1. Jedi Training
2. Battle Tactics
3. Defeating the Darkside

## **Chapter 9:**

You're Going to Need More than a Lightsaber – Growth Hacking Tools

1. Jedi Training
2. Battle Tactics
3. Defeating the Darkside

## **Chapter 10:**

May the Force Be With You – What Now?

## **Chapter 11:**

Words Used in a Growth Hacking Galaxy Far, Far Away – Glossary of Terms

***May the Force Be With You.***  
To be continued...

In collaboration with

