

# The Top 10 Tips to Maximize Earned Media

A Social Press Kit White Paper





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Marketing (n.): The action or business of promoting and selling products or services. In its original form, “marketing” was akin to a recommendation by a family member or friend. Since then, it has evolved into a machine of advertising, the Internet, display targeting, email, apps, and beyond. But a core aspect of marketing remains that captures its original form: earned media. An individual or community willing to speak to or share about your brand, in order to reach, influence, and activate other individuals and communities.

Digital marketing can be broken down into three categories: owned media, earned media and paid media. Owned media consists of your owned web presence, including your website and social media pages. Earned media includes the shares, mentions, and reposts by your network of supporters. Finally paid media, which includes display ads, retargeting ads, and paid influencers, helps to drive traffic and exposure for both your owned and earned media.

While there is often time an individual or team dedicated to managing your owned media channels, and your organization can choose to spend a tangible budget on paid media efforts, earned media is often left as the last or forgotten priority. This is because it is the most difficult to measure, and at its core, it is a very organic channel of media exposure. We’ve become overly reliant on paid media to reach our audience. But earned media is essentially the online equivalent of word-of-mouth marketing. Without it, you cannot achieve the level of involvement and engagement necessary to build your cause or company brand.

You can build your earned media through press mentions, a good SEO strategy to get in front of the right audience, and getting reposts, positive reviews, and recommendations from your current users or followers. If you have a sound earned media strategy, it can help not only build your brand but also grow your reach exponentially. In this paper, you will learn about some of the core aspects of earned media, and how to cultivate and maximize it for your organization.

## Find Your “Unpaid Influencers”

When you think about your company or brand, think about the problem you are trying to solve or the need you serve. What existing conversations exist in these areas? What is the topic or issue-area that when it comes up, you want people to instantly think about your organization? Identify that conversation and then start to contribute to what’s already happening in that space.



### Tip 1: FOCUS YOUR OFF-PAGE EFFORTS

It’s important that your organization or brand is supported by mentions by other sites. First, research digital outlets that your target customers and supporters would also be interested in. Develop content that aligns with those entities, and then approach them about hosting or sharing your content. This not only builds your audience, by supporting SEO and increasing exposure, but also helps establish credibility.

### Tip 2: IDENTIFY INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

Think about the current leaders in the topic and issue areas related to your brand. Find ways to engage them by commenting on their posts. Not only can you possibly interest and engage them in your work, you will also make yourself visible to their existing following. If you are targeting the right people, their existing followers should be target customers for your organization as well. Since nonprofits represent something more than a product or service, there are certain celebrities and influencers that may be willing to support your organization pro bono. Therefore, be sure to ask them directly if they will share your organization or cause.

### Tip 3: GET THIRD-PARTY ENDORSEMENTS

Focus on building relationships with third-party journalists and bloggers. Their un-biased recommendation can be extremely powerful for an organization. Remember though that what is reported is beyond your control; so make sure you are ready to put your reputation in “outside” hands or to respond accordingly.

## Encourage & Facilitate Social Sharing

People are twice as likely to trust friends or family recommendations over traditional brand ads. The validation and viral exposure that comes from increased social sharing is invaluable.

### Tip 4: CREATE SHARE-WORTHY CONTENT

We live in a world of information overload. In fact, the average individual is exposed to 200 newspapers worth of impressions every single day. Create content that is eye-catching, quality content that draws people to not only stop to read or watch, but also inspires them to share with their personal networks. High-quality images and video are becoming increasingly necessary for someone to pause from their never-ending scroll and take in what they are presenting. Content should also be valuable to the person on the other end: be it beautiful content or useful information. This is what takes an “ad” and turns it into something that will take on a life and an audience of its own.

### Tip 5: MAKE IT EASY TO SHARE

With all of the content out there, especially on social platforms, the shelf life of a non-promoted post is just a few minutes. Make it easy as possible for people to share so you are able to stay visible to a large audience. This means that every article and email touch-point should have a button, a widget, or even a simple written ask for people to share with their personal networks. Equipping your base of supporters with ready-to-share content [using a tool like Social Press Kit](#) can turn followers into advocates and brand ambassadors.

### Tip 6: ENCOURAGE & ACKNOWLEDGE

There are many creative ways that you can inspire your current supporters to share. Social media competitions that involve “tagging” friends or creative competitions for free products or prizes can be the extra push that your following needs. Referral programs that reward new customers and the referring customer can be a win-win method of spreading your brand.

If you’re not able to offer giveaways or prizes, or if you are a nonprofit entity that is not in a place to spend on these efforts, publicly acknowledging your super-fans, mentioning them or thanking them can encourage continued engagement.







## Be a Share-Worthy Company

A seemingly obvious but often overlooked strategy for earned media, is to be an organization people want to share about and are willing to tie their names to!

“In the same way we often help people we care about, we are inclined to help brands when we feel like we *know* them.”

### Tip 7: DON'T MAKE EVERY TOUCHPOINT ALL ABOUT YOU

Instead of thinking literally about your product, service or mission, think about your larger brand and the lifestyle implications of your brand narrative. What other types of content and information are valuable to your supporters? People may be less inclined to share when they think they are always helping you push a product or a donation ask. Track what content does well with your supporters, and see what other types of content and brands your followers are drawn to.

### Tip 8: PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL SUPPORT

In every customer service interaction, be conscious that you are building your brand and reputation, and with it, the likelihood your supporters will advocate for you. In the same way we often help people we care about, we are inclined to help brands when we feel like we “know” them. If a customer or supporter gives you feedback, either positive or negative, in a public forum like an online review board or on social media, respond to them as if they had called your customer support team directly! It's important to address that individual's needs, but is also a public platform to show other viewers that you are both responsive and involved.

## Join the Conversation

The most successful digital marketing efforts take on a human-approach: identifying the causes and topics people care about, and having human interactions with those communities.

### Tip 9: PARTICIPATE

The number of times that a post has been shown to an audience, also called impressions, and reach have been common marketing metrics since the rise of social media. However engagement, including likes, comments, shares, and clicks, is becoming even more important. A large part of this involves building relationships with your audience through social conversations. Make sure that you are replying to mentions of your organization, as well as your larger sector or industry conversations.

### Tip 10: ENABLE EMPLOYEE ADVOCATES

Social sharing and recommendations are a small ask of your staff, who likely already have a commitment to your organization. Even those who are not part of your marketing team can easily share with their likely entirely untapped professional or social networks. Give them the content and tools not only to share on their personal social accounts, but also to speak on behalf of the brand. Company trainings, housing written and graphic content in a single hub like a Social Press Kit, and providing share-worthy company information can make them feel empowered to represent your organization in the digital world.

## Social Press Kit

*Strength is in your Advocates.*

<http://www.thesocialpresskit.com>

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