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Essential Digital Marketing Tools – Categories

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Introduction

Why a guide to digital marketing tools?

As marketers today, we're fortunate to have a huge number of free and low-cost tools to give us insight about our customers, competitors and market. These online services also help us compete by enabling our businesses to communicate with our audiences with automated, relevant real-time communications integrated across desktop and mobile and digital plus traditional marketing channels.

Success in acquiring new customers through digital marketing goes to the businesses who are most successful in exploiting the main inbound marketing channels to get visibility and leads. These channels include search, social media and email marketing, all fuelled by content marketing. Although using these channels is really competitive, many free, and paid tools are available to improve targeting and review and improve the effectiveness of online campaigns. But, the challenge is, that there are SO many tools in different categories that it can be difficult to know which are available and which offer the best features.

But where do you start when deciding on the best types of services to use? There's a challenge with the sheer number of tools which vary enormously in cost and quality and new challenger tools can sometimes do a better job than the established tools. Larger businesses and brands will require 'enterprise' services with a full-feature set which can be used across teams and smaller businesses will be looking for simpler, lower-cost or free services.

This guide will recommend the best types of tools and the most popular alternatives in each category based on our experience and talking to other marketers.

How is this guide structured?

To help highlight the range of great services available, this guide and the infographic on the next page recommend the categories of tools you should consider and highlights the most popular, most capable tools. Rather than simply categorising tools, we have also grouped them across the Smart Insights RACE Planning framework for managing digital marketing so you can review where you could make better use of the tools across the customer lifecycle. [Download high-resolution version of the infographic for printing.](#)





How have we selected the categories and tools?

We use many types of digital marketing services and insights tools to run and improve SmartInsights.com. We believe in Actionable Analytics to 'practice what we preach' and love to try out new tools when they are suggested to us. To make this guide and our infographic more 'actionable' we have structured it around our RACE planning system to ensure it covers the range of services that can be used to improve the effectiveness of

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your digital marketing activities across the whole customer lifecycle.

Our infographic was inspired by [Scott Brinker's Marketing Technology landscape diagram – now updated for 2016](#), which does an excellent job of defining 'enterprise' tools for managing digital marketing, but can be difficult to read because of the sheer number of tools. Also, we wanted to add to it by including more low-cost and free 'hands-on' insight tools which are important for managing activities like Search, Social media and conversion rate optimisation (CRO). These don't tend to be included on Scott's landscape. We also wanted to highlight the most popular, well-regarded services, particularly those which can be used across all sizes of businesses rather than being limited to the biggest brands.

How are the top 5 services selected and ranked?

We wanted to help marketers by giving them an idea of the best tools available in each category based on our experience of the tools we have used. We know from giving Keynotes and training workshops that there is always a lot of interest when tools are recommended, so for years, we have been wanting to bring these all together.

So our recommendations are based on our personal experiences, recommendations from other marketers and other sites that rate tools in a more analytical way or by structured ratings based on the 'voice of the crowd'. Within each category we have ranked services in this order based on:

- ✓ 1. The most popular tools by volume of usage – so widely used, freemium or lower cost tools tend to be ranked most highly except in categories of enterprise tools.
- ✓ 2. Services we use or are familiar with and are rated highly by tools review sites.
- ✓ 3. Services suitable for small and mid-size businesses with limited tools budgets.

So think of the order as based on the opinion of one friend or colleague to another. Since we are keen to make the list as objective as possible, we have tapped into online services that help compare tools and Martech services. These vary in their quality and coverage. Some ratings services such as Forrester and Gartner tend to focus on more expensive 'enterprise' services in some categories only while others like G2Crowd, Trust Radius, Capterra and Alternative.To are good, but are often limited by the categories they cover and the number of reviews submitted.



Let us know how you find our Tools recommendations!

We really hope our guide opens your eyes to some categories of insight tools you weren't aware of, or makes you aware of some tools you haven't tried before. Even better if they rock your world and help you boost your online leads and sales.

If you'd like to recommend a tool since it has helped you, or you think we've missed a key tool do let us know. Or maybe your business offers a digital marketing tool or service. that you think we and our members know about, do get in touch, we'd love to know about them.

Do let us know about the digital marketing tool or service you recommend by:

- ✓ **Contacting our help desk team through our Contact Us form**
- ✓ **Adding it to our Digital marketing services marketplace or gain leads via our Content Partnership**
- ✓ **Posting your recommendation in our members' Digital Marketing Answer's community under the relevant category.** Or via social media.

About Smart Insights

Smart Insights provides actionable marketing resources to help businesses succeed online. More than 130,000 members use our blog, free marketing templates and weekly Digital Marketing Essentials newsletter to follow best practices and keep up-to-date with the developments that matter in digital marketing.

Thousands of Expert members from over 80 countries use our premium planning and management templates, guides and video courses to map, plan and manage their marketing using the **Smart Insights RACE Planning framework**.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Strategy development and planning templates

Our Expert members use our actionable resources to help them Plan, Manage and Optimize their digital marketing

- ✓ **Digital strategy toolkit.** This template contains a full workbook to create a digital marketing strategy to Reach-Act-Convert and Engage your audience.
- ✓ **7 Steps Digital Strategy guide and course.** Step-by-step guidance.
- ✓ **Example digital marketing plans.** An example online marketing plan and blank template using the Smart Insights RACE Planning framework.

Learn more about Expert membership

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1 REACH

1. Site audience comparison tools

What do these tools do?

They provide marketers with industry and competitor intelligence to help inform decisions (e.g. new markets, new content strategies). Some of these tools also provide powerful segmentation capabilities. Typically, they do this either by aggregating Internet Service Provider data, panel data or a mixture of the two.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

✓ Competitor benchmarking, search and content strategies, audience segmentation, market size and geo and demographic data; whether you're launching a new product, entering a new market or wishing to understand what's driving competitor growth, these tools can provide the relevant information to help inform key decisions. They're often used to support business cases, helping to identify opportunities and threats in the competitor landscape. See the Smart Insight's post for more on the capabilities of competitor intelligence.

Key things to consider before purchasing and when using these tools:

✓ **The majority of these tools require significant investment.** They also provide huge amounts of raw data. It's important to recognise that getting the most from these tools requires dedicated resource; agencies and brands with dedicated analytics teams will likely glean the most value from these tools. Although limited, some (e.g. SimilarWeb) have a free version and most, if not all, will provide free trials.

✓ **Accuracy isn't guaranteed.** Bear this mind especially if other sources of data are limited when informing key decisions. If testing tools from this category, compare the metrics in each tool with the data in your web analytics (they won't match exactly). Making these checks periodically is recommended once you've invested.

✓ **Data collection options.** Due to the way these tools collect their data, there continues to be questions over the accuracy of the mobile statistics provided. Make this a key point of discussion with any of the providers you speak to in this category.

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1.1 SimilarWeb

		Free version provides top-level benchmark of site visitors without need for trial. Chrome extension.
Why do I need it?		Comparing the number of visits between sites can help make the case for more investment. You can also learn about acquisition tactics from the breakdown in traffic sources and keywords how your competitors are driving visits to their site.
What makes it stand out?		Free version is most useful for benchmarking of the other contenders in this category. It also has insights on the number of mobile app users.
Key features		✓ Free version compares visits between sites broken down by channel ✓ Paid version compares organic and paid keywords including not provided ✓ Review most popular pages and campaign strength (paid version) ✓ Mobile app engagement (paid version)
The Smart Insights view	Best in class	We think this is now the best free benchmarking tool with the paid service offering good visibility. As with all of these benchmarking services, you have to review the accuracy of the sample. In the case of SimilarWeb it's based on browser toolbars and extensions. <i>Disclosure:</i> SimilarWeb are a Content Partner of Smart Insights.

1.2 Alexa

		Free forever but limited without paid subscription. 7-day free trials available for all plans. 3 tiers for plans; Basic, Insight and Advanced. Monthly subscription. Toolbar extension for Chrome.
Why do I need it?		Compare the visits to a domain across to monitor and benchmark against competition.
What makes it stand out?		Easy-to-use tools as part of Amazon. APIs can be integrated to validate own analytics software, but also allow comparisons against competitor sites.
Key features		✓ Competitor intelligence to benchmark against competitors ✓ Onsite intelligence to improve upon own site performance and highlight issues through site audit tools
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	This is a great tool for a quick look at a site domain, providing it is getting a decent traffic volume. Tools and visualisations are very easy to use, and although the free version offers limited insight, it can give indicative data. For smaller sites, free tools can offer little data however. The paid-for tool offers a large variety of additional data to go into greater depth. Remember that like competitors, although based on a sample of millions of Internet users, data is only representative of users who have downloaded one of the browser extensions.

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1.3 Google Analytics Benchmarking

 Free to all Google Analytics users. Requires enabling in Google Analytics.	
Why do I need it?	A free feature within Google Analytics which enables a top level view of the number of visits within category.
What makes it stand out?	Based on most accurate figures - recorded directly by Google Analytics across many sites within a specific category, although actual visits not known.
Key features	☒ Benchmarks provided in category for visits and engagement (based on bounce rate)
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool This is a neat feature in Google Analytics which you may not been aware of since it was re-introduced in 2014. It isn't rated top since it doesn't aim to show the absolute number of visits. Read a Smart Insights article on how to set it up and use it.

1.4 Compete

 No free trials available. Paid plans only with tiered functionality according to subscription: Intro, Advanced and Enterprise. Monthly or annual payments.	
Why do I need it?	Monitor online competition, benchmark performance against industry, and discover new business opportunities.
What makes it stand out?	Great data visualisation built on Millward Brown research – dashboard but also for drill-down up to 2 years past. Offers cross-discipline insight.
Key features	☒ Understand audience share of website ☒ Reach, engagement and loyalty metrics for a domains ☒ Build upon SEO and SEM strategies ☒ Keyword and click data for domains
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 tool This service offers a great depth of cross-industry data to businesses with multi-functions e.g. sales, marketing, analysis, research etc. It is a key tool for larger businesses with multiple users and need for data driven campaigns and competitor monitoring, and agencies covering a variety of clients with different requirements. It comes are a high cost though, but does include training and support to get the most from the tool.

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1.5 Experian Hitwise

		No open access trial. Paid service for large organisations looking for demographic information and understanding of customer journeys.
Why do I need it?		Provides benchmarking of websites with detailed audience breakdown Understand audience behaviour across different websites and devices
What makes it stand out?		Access to demographic information. Good quality keyword data for comparing paid and natural keywords
Key features		✓ Benchmark visits to sites across different sites broken down by channel ✓ Understand competitor strategies for affiliate marketing, display and search ✓ Understand customer journeys through upstream and downstream visits
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	Hitwise has no insight available for non-customers. It's strengths are a good quality sample based on collaboration with ISPs and integration of audience data. Hitwise has become part of a broader marketing suite.

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2. Digital Analytics tools

What these tools do

Traditionally, these services were known as 'web analytics' tools since they focused on measuring and reporting on visitors to websites including the source of the visits and the sequence of interactions on a site. Today they have broader scope including recording mobile interactions and linking to customer databases and other services, so are known as 'Digital Analytics'.

Why are they important for digital marketers

The website is still at the heart of most online interactions with a business, so understanding which media sources have driven visits and the outcomes of these visits is still important. Today, digital analytics systems are an important part of business reporting either in their own right, or through integration with other systems.

Key things to consider before purchasing and when using these tools:

- ✓ **Accuracy.** Google Analytics uses sampling for larger sites which is less accurate than recording each visit.
- ✓ **Reporting and analysis options.** For example, ease of creating customer databases.
- ✓ **Recording of individual customer data.** This is restricted in Google Analytics for privacy reasons.
- ✓ **Mobile reporting and analysis.** Tools differ in their degree of mobile reporting.
- ✓ **Integration with other data sources.** Integration with media services, customer data and business intelligence are key issues in larger organisations.

2.1 Google Analytics

		Free tool up to limit of ten million hits per month.
Why do I need it?	Reports on traffic sources for visits to a website and how visitors interact with different pages on site to understand customer journeys. When customised it will report on business outcomes such as leads and sales	
What makes it stand out?	Free! Simple usability and interface. De facto standard in	
Key features	✓ Reports on traffic sources, behaviour and conversion ✓ Campaign tracking of links enables ✓ Segments enable you to understand behaviour of visitor groups	
The Smart Insights view	Best in category You will almost certainly know this tool unless you have only worked for businesses that use the paid Adobe or IBM-Coremetrics services. We're fortunate to have such a capable free tool to understand our traffic sources and visitor behaviour. The main limitation is for larger businesses where visits per month number in the hundreds of thousands to millions where sampling will occur meaning that absolute numbers aren't available. In this case, you will have to consider the next option.	

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2.2 Google Analytics Premium

	From a minimum of \$150,000 per year Standard Google Analytics is effectively a free forever trial
Why do I need it?	Larger organisations benefit from no restrictions on visits recorded, lower latency on reporting time plus availability of support.
What makes it stand out?	Improved capacity is the main difference
Key features	Additional features beyond standard Google Analytics: ✓ Roll-up of data from across multiple properties (useful for companies with many country or brand sites) ✓ Larger capacity for custom dimensions and metrics and improved attribution ✓ Improved integration for import and export of advertising and customer data
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Most larger organisations who have not committed to Adobe or IBM Analytics will find investment in GA Premium necessary for improved capacity, accuracy and data integration options.

2.3 Adobe Analytics

	Fee only service No trial Part of broader Adobe Marketing Suite
Why do I need it?	For advanced analysis and reporting of Digital Marketing, particularly for a large organisation with different business units.
What makes it stand out?	Flexible customisation to fully assess customer journeys and media investments. Integration with other data sources including CRM systems.
Key features	✓ Reporting of website audiences and on-site customer journeys ✓ Customer 360 option ✓ Predictive Intelligence option
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We've included Adobe Analytics at position 3 since it is a well-established, popular product formerly offered as Omniture. It is used widely in larger organisations who were looking for account management and improved data ownership when Google Analytics premium was unavailable.

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2.4 Kissmetrics

	Trial only Separate, free Google Analytics dashboard app (recommended)
Why do I need it?	Tracking of interactions with individual prospects and customers to enable targeting. A lower cost alternative to Google Analytics Premium removing need for sampling in free version of Google Analytics.
What makes it stand out?	Segmented conversion tracking and cohort analysis API to integrate with business reporting, CRM and dashboards
Key features	✓ Segmented conversion tracking ✓ Reporting on content and journey behaviour of individual registered users ✓ Simple dashboard for monthly review and Powerful reports for business reporting ✓ Simple re-targeting options through promotional banners
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool The cost of this tool will preclude many smaller businesses from using it. However, we use it at Smart Insights for the deeper insights it gives us, especially the ability to review and target individual customer interactions which are not practical with Google Analytics. <i>Disclosure:</i> Smart Insights are a Content Partner of Smart Insights.

2.5 Mixpanel

	Free trial available Paid service
Why do I need it?	Recording of individual interactions with a site from individuals.
What makes it stand out?	Mobile site interaction and testing tools and mobile remarketing including push notifications.
Key features	✓ Recording of individual interactions as events ✓ Mobile analysis and remarketing ✓ Cohort-based retention analysis
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Chartbeat is closest to Kissmetrics of the 5 tools reviewed here since it has recording of events which can be related to individual visitors, prospects and customers. It differs in that it has a suite of tools for optimisation of mobile sites and apps. For businesses which are reliant on understanding and following up on mobile customer behaviour the mobile tools in Mixpanel are the main differentiator.

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SEO Tools

There's a huge amount of diversity when looking at the range of SEO tools available. Most SEO professionals will have their preferred tool suite; it's not uncommon for larger SEO teams to have an enterprise tool (to provide a holistic view of SEO performance and reporting) supported by several single purpose tools. In some instances, such as in link management, more than one tool may be beneficial; such is the inability for any one tool to provide the complete picture for that specific aspect of SEO management.

Before making a purchase decision, consider the following:

- ✓ **Your SEO strategy, objectives and KPIs.** What do you need to focus on, how will this be measured and which tools meet these requirements? It's easy to end up paying for functionality that may not be needed.
- ✓ **Are there integrations available with analytics or data visualisation tools?** Make sure you can access the data your integrations require.
- ✓ **Scale.** Many tools charge by the number of domains and/or keywords that you wish to track. Ensure future sites/micro-sites and additional campaign keyword tracking is included or budgeted for (where possible).

Finally, whilst many tools will provide generic historical data on keywords, bear in mind that tracking ranking performance (a given keyword for a given website) will only start when the tool set up is complete. The same is true for new keywords that are added.

We've broken SEO tools down into 4 categories: keyword research, rank tracking, link management and technical and site crawling tools.

3. SEO Keyword Analysis Tools

What do these tools do?

Keyword research is an important, on-going requirement of SEO and content strategy. A good keyword list will help ensure your website's pages are found in Google for relevant user searches that match your site's content.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

There are lots of factors which contribute to a strong keyword strategy. The most basic is finding a balance between high searched for keywords and the levels of competition for visibility on those keywords. Other important factors include: seasonal opportunities, new keywords, your competition's keyword strategy and how paid search strategies (for both you and your competition) support your SEO efforts. It's also important to understand the context of a keyword; whether its informational or transactional.

Key things to consider before purchasing and when using these tools:

- ✓ It's common for a mixture of free and paid-for tools to be used when building keyword lists. Be careful not to rely on a single source, you may miss out on opportunities.
- ✓ It's important to validate your keywords to ensure the context and their use is as intended. You can use content discovery tools (e.g. BuzzSumo) to help with this.
- ✓ A good list of keywords does not guarantee success. The ultimate goal is to achieve a high relevancy between your keyword, your web page content and the user's search intent. You'll therefore need to understand, plan and map out how your keywords will be used on and across your website. Some of these tools can help identify the keyword and landing page strategy your competitors are using.



3.1 Google Keyword Planner

	Free with an AdWords Tools Need a Google Account or Gmail
Why do I need it?	To discover profitable keywords that you can target and craft into an SEO or online marketing strategy around.
What makes it stand out?	Easy to use and full of alternative keywords to help diversify your Keyword list.
Key features	✓ Easy to use ✓ Easily Exportable Data ✓ Endless Filters ✓ Huge Database of Alternative Keywords
The Smart Insights view	Best in Category We think it's a great tool to develop a greater detailed Keyword list with some creative and intuitive suggestions. The "Competition" tab also offers additional insights, allowing you to determine the most effective course of action. The only question mark we have about the Keyword Planner, is how reliable the data is pulled in for the Average Monthly Searches.

3.2 Google Trends

	Free, no log-in needed
Why do I need it?	Google Trends helps you understand a users search behaviour. An example would be targeting GoPro Hero3 (As stylized by the company) vs GoPro Hero 3. The latter has a considerably higher search volume, despite not being the official name of the product.
What makes it stand out?	The ease at which it is to interpret the date makes Google Trends really stand out as a go to tool for Keyword Research.
Key features	✓ Presentation of Data ✓ Ease of use ✓ Very powerful tool when used in conjunction with Keyword Planner ✓ Developing topical content ideas
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool We find Google Trends is a great, top-level tool to show seasonal trends on generic searches and helping to understand your audiences search behaviour in different countries. It's also useful for developing topical content ideas, thanks to it's Stories Trending Now function and 'New searches'.

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3.3 SEMrush



Free to use, however limited data provided whilst not logged in.

Paid version, which is available over three pricing plans, allows for increased results per report, increased projects and historical data as you go up the price structure.

Why do I need it?

SEMrush is a competitive research and business intelligence software that provides analytic reports on websites' SEO, paid search and link-building activities, as well as a powerful toolkit that offers all the necessary metrics regarding their competitors.

What makes it stand out?

It is one of the most powerful platforms for conducting in-depth, competitive-landscape analysis – 35 different tools and reports provide general information about websites' activities, from organic and paid search to social media.

Key features

- ✓ Deep and comprehensive organic competitor and keyword research in 28 languages
- ✓ Overall data on competitors' AdWords, PLA and video advertising campaigns
- ✓ Monitoring of your national, regional and local search engine positions for any keyword
- ✓ Technical website audits
- ✓ Ideas for improving SEO performance for certain pages of your website, based on SEO tactics of your competitors

The Smart Insights view

Recommended Tool

We find SEMrush to be an extremely powerful tool, with an incredibly comprehensive dataset and the ability to see keyword ranks and projected organic traffic for any website.

One-point worth noting, is there is a slight disparity between search volume for exact match on SEMrush and Google's Keyword planner. It's usually pretty insignificant, but certainly something to be aware of.

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3.4 Bing Keyword Research Tool

	
Free to use	
Why do I need it?	Targeting Ads on Bing
What makes it stand out?	If you're targeting Bing users, (Typically based in the US and Canada, less tech-savvy and 35+) it's the best tool to get data.
Key features	✓ Easily Exportable Keyword List ✓ Relevant Keyword metrics ✓ The Keyword Research Tool only uses historical data from the last 6 months for recommendations, meaning there are no averages
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Bing Keyword Tool is a simple tool to use and offers great insights and info around keywords to target, throwing up different ideas to that of Google, making it a great additional tool in any keyword research. The only reason it isn't rated higher up on the list, is because Bing is considerably less popular than Google and tends to have an older demographic, meaning their data may be a redundant for your campaign.

3.5 UberSuggest

	
Free tool	
Why do I need it?	For understanding variations in search behaviour for generic terms, e.g. for 'mobile phones' which qualifiers are added after the term, e.g. 'cheap', 'latest', etc.
What makes it stand out?	You can select different languages to see how the qualifiers change so these can be targeted in AdWords. Useful for a top-level comparison between languages.
Key features	✓ Shows 'suggestions' from Google's 'omni' search box so you know which to target ✓ Lists suggestions in order of popularity ✓ Groups suggestions alphabetically
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool This is an established tool (5 years+) which is ad funded. KeyWordTool.io is a more usable recent competitor, but payment is needed for meaningful analysis. Both tools may be limited in future by Google's decision to shut down the Google Autocomplete API in 2015. However, both are still functional in spring 2016.

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4. SEO Ranking

What do these tools do?

A category of tools dedicated to tracking the rankings of your keyword list(s) for all the major search engines. They show the position in the search results pages (SERPs) between 1 and 100. Many provide rank tracking for international markets and have, more recently, diversified to provide additional functionality too.

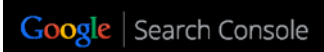
Why are they important to digital marketers?

The argument for a specialist web ranking tool is rooted in the accuracy, flexibility and breadth of keywords that these tools can track. A specialist web ranking tool should provide greater precision and quality of web ranking results, at a lower cost than tools offering a broader suite of functionality. Free trials of all the leading tools will allow you to test this before purchase.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ What functionality do you need? The more advanced custom settings (such as proxy rotation in AWR) and large keyword volumes that can be tracked won't be required by many digital marketing teams.
- ✓ At relatively low cost, bigger SEO teams and agencies will find it useful to have a dedicated web ranking tool. These tools are good to combine with other SEO and content marketing tools and the white label reporting is also useful.

4.1 Google ranking position reporting

		Free tool within Google Search console and Google Analytics
Why do I need it?	To see how your top keywords are ranking in Google – see example . In Google Search console and in Google Analytics if configured. See our 7 Steps guide to SEO for details.	
What makes it stand out?	Google's own data in a slick interface. Can be exported for search intent - gap analysis. See our Gap Analysis spreadsheet for details.	
Key features	✓ Average position is shown across the last 90 days ✓ Compare clicks and CTR against number of impressions (search volume) ✓ Compare variations in CTR between countries	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool This is an excellent tool for boosting search visits. We use this to find out which terms are outside the top 3, 5 or 10 results and 'tweaking' titles, headings, copy and backlinks with the aim of boosting them higher.	

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4.2 Moz



30-day trials available to Moz Pro which gains access to this and other tools. Standard or Medium subscriptions charged monthly thereafter.

Why do I need it?	To collect search engine rankings for pages and keywords, and stores them for later comparison.
What makes it stand out?	One of the biggest names in SEO software, browser-based and offers access to rankings over time across Google, Yahoo!, and Bing to see which efforts are making the biggest impact, as well as receive notifications of changes in rankings.
Key features	✓ Check keyword performance across major search engines to assess traffic those keywords have generated ✓ Track performance compared to competitors ✓ Competitor analysis; explore Domain Authority, link metrics, anchor text, and title tags for insight into ranking position and to highlight keyword improvement opportunities
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool Most recommended for SMEs with in-house SEOs, this is a valuable tool for understanding and building SEO strategies around keywords and page rankings. Gaining access to the other Moz tools through the Pro subscription is a useful bonus that can work to support SEO strategy as part of 1 data set rather than combining multiple tools. It has robust data but smaller limits on keywords than some solutions.

4.3 Advanced Web Ranking



30-day trials available after which 4 monthly subscription packages are available including one for agencies.

Why do I need it?	To quickly download rankings for thousands of keywords. Offered both as a desktop tool and SaaS cloud solution to give in-house SEOs and larger sites, data sets of SEO information in a user-friendly interface; rankings, analytics, links, social metrics, keyword and competitive research.
What makes it stand out?	Offered both as a desktop tool and SaaS cloud solution to give in-house SEOs and larger sites, data sets of SEO information in a user-friendly interface; rankings, analytics, links, social metrics, keyword and competitive research.
Key features	✓ Accurate ranking data ✓ Produce white label reports ✓ Integrate analytics data ✓ Developer API ✓ SEO auditing tools ✓ Monitor social media exposure

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The Smart Insights view**Top 5 Tool**

This service is offered both as a cloud and a desktop solution with different limitations depending on the route taken. The tool therefore offers pros and cons depending on the nature of the business - recommended to best suited to in-house SEOs and larger sites.

4.4 Search Metrics



Enterprise SEO analytics platform – pricing quoted for on a bespoke basis.

Why do I need it?

Delivers enterprise SEO and content marketing analysis, recommendations, forecasting and reporting.

What makes it stand out?

The data sets available within Searchmetrics are the most comprehensive and deep datasets available for enterprise SEO's.

Key features

- ✓ Searchmetrics Suite combines content optimisation, SEO (desktop, mobile, local), competitor research, and on-page optimisation and site architecture
- ✓ Quickly add the tool to any site for an in-depth look at metrics, including relevant back-links, ranked keywords, industries, mobile optimisation, and more
- ✓ Cross-discipline use of the product includes features for development, design, content strategy, UX, IA as well as SEO and paid search

The Smart Insights view**Top 5 Tool**

The customer reviews of the Searchmetrics tool reads that it is a complex tool that requires significant time in getting used to the platform and training users. It isn't software that a novice can pick up and use – it is best recommended for experienced SEOs.

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4.5 SEM Rush

	Pro, Guru and Business monthly subscriptions as well as custom plans.
Why do I need it?	Easy to use tool to help build and optimise content and advertising strategies though SEM and display campaigns.
What makes it stand out?	Available through the cloud, it provides a good selection of tools for building SEO campaigns at a mid-price.
Key features	✓ Competitor insights into display advertising, organic and paid search, and link building ✓ Keyword and domain authority tools ✓ Projects can be managed globally to track competitor metrics, keyword rankings, and on-page performance
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool This tool offers a good selection of SEO tools to help build strategies based on competitor performance, backlink analysis and keyword research. It is seen as a simplistic 'no frills' kit compared to some other software. SEMrush offers 'branded' reports using a company logo, but it will still be evident that SEMRush was used to generate the reports.

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5. SEO Crawling

What do these tools do?

They are essential for maintaining good technical and structural health of your website. They crawl your site looking at every link, image and piece of CSS to provide a detailed report of technical SEO recommendations. These include: identifying dead links, heavy re-direct use, missing meta data and creating XML sitemaps.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

They are often a conversation starter between the digital marketing and web development or technical teams. A healthy website structure is important not just to the user experience but also to the search engine crawlers. These tools are an inexpensive way of helping to identify the target areas for maintaining or improving your website structure's health. Especially useful for larger site's where it's unrealistic for this to be done manually.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ These tools are inexpensive, however some of the functionality may be provided by other tools you're already using (e.g. the site crawl included within MozPro).
- ✓ These are more technical tools and, whilst very easy to run, will benefit from being used by someone with technical experience. Therefore, the process you have internally for managing the on-going technical structure of your website, and how these tools are used, is one of the key factors to consider.
- ✓ There are plenty of custom options for setting up these tools. Therefore, consider how you'll use this tool on an on-going basis. How often will you crawl the whole site vs. certain key sections. You can speed up each crawl by disabling functionality (e.g. excluding external links or images) as well as restricting redirects or removing parameters from urls.

5.1 Screaming Frog's: SEO Spider

		Free for indexing sites with less than 500 pages A single payment is needed for access to the paid version unlocks all of it's features
Why do I need it?	Provides an overview of your site by crawling through all the internal pages looking for key onsite elements, including the number of pages, titles and meta descriptions, right down to if there are any broken links.	
What makes it stand out?	The sheer depth of detail provided and it's ease of use, makes it stand out as leader of the pack. A lot of the tools in this category are particularly tricky to use, however Screaming Frog manages it with relative ease	
Key features	✓ It finds duplicate pages with duplicate content ✓ Tracks the Meta Robots tag so you can find the noindex, nofollow problems ✓ It tracks the page depth level ✓ Shows the internal and external links per page, highlighting which are followed and no followed ✓ Keyword Elements such as their title, description and length	
The Smart Insights view	Best in Category Screaming Frogs SEO Spider Tool really is a must have for anyone doing a site audit or an SEO professional. It indexes the entire site, whilst creating spreadsheets with all of the important SEO elements.	

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5.2 Google Sitemaps

		Free when you sign into Google search console.
Why do I need it?	Allows for your Sitemap to be submitted to Google	
What makes it stand out?	It helps your site to be indexed and crawled by Google's bots.	
Key features	✓ Allows you to view which sitemaps are discovered by Google or which sitemap files have been previously submitted by you or someone from your team. ✓ Users can see the status of the indexing	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool	An essential item to any Search Engine Optimisers toolkit, helping a site be crawled and indexed by Google's bots, by letting them know which URL's to visit.

5.3 Bing Sitemap Generator

		Free with a Windows live ID login
Why do I need it?	It takes care of generating XML Sitemaps	
What makes it stand out?	It helps your site to be indexed and crawled by Bing's bots by being compliant with sitemaps.org for websites running on Internet Information Services (IIS) for Windows® Server as well as Apache HTTP Server.	
Key features	✓ Create two types of Sitemap, the first being a comprehensive Sitemap of URLs seen in server traffic. The second being a Sitemap dedicated to URLs that have changed recently. ✓ Allows you to control exactly what gets added to the Sitemap	
The Smart Insights view	Recommend Tool	Bing Sitemap Generator is a detailed Sitemap generator, allowing for full control over what is detected to allow for any Disallow and Allow directives inside your site's robots.txt to be read, whilst skipping any URL patterns that shouldn't be added.

5.4 XML Sitemaps.com

 XML-Sitemaps.com Sitemap Generator		Free up to 500 pages One off payment for access to unlimited number of pages
Why do I need it?	A tool to provide the creation/generation of your own websites sitemap that can be submitted to Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines to help them crawl your website better.	
What makes it stand out?		
Key features	✓ It's very fast and reliable and free for sites under 500 pages ✓ Generates XML, RSS, HTML and Text sitemaps. XML sitemaps are produced in accordance with the standard protocol in use by Google, Yahoo and MSN. ✓ Follows robots.txt file for including/excluding files/folders, as well as allowing you to set parameters separately. ✓ Manual and/or automatic operation. ✓ Excellent support in the form of a detailed FAQ, tutorials and forum, if you're stuck about anything	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	A really simple, reliable tool, which can do the simple tasks as well as the more complex ones with ease. The 500-page maximum rule is a little limiting if you're not wanting to pay, however if you're willing to dig into your pockets for the extra \$20+ you can create multiple sitemaps up to 50,000 pages, in compliance with the Google Sitemap protocol.

5.5 Yoast: XML Site Generator

		Free with the Yoast wordpress plugin
Why do I need it?	Generates an XML sitemap for your website.	
What makes it stand out?	It generates an XML sitemap that "talks" to your SEO plugin. Meaning that if you noindex a page, preventing it from showing up in Google, it might still be in your sitemap. This won't happen with the Yoast plugin.	
Key features	✓ Comes as part of a huge package of SEO tools ✓ Generates new Sitemaps with ease	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	Yoast is a wordpress plugin that acts as a jack of all trades for Search Engine Professionals, by containing tonnes upon tonnes of features that integrates well with the Wordpress interface. The Sitemap Generator is a great addition to the Swiss Army Knife of Wordpress SEO, by being easy to use, quick and reliable.

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6. SEO Backlink Analysis

What do these tools do?

They use crawlers to find all the backlinks (a link from one website to another) to a given domain. Backlink profile history, anchor text and the quality of each link are some of the information provided. These tools compete principally over the size of their backlink database as well as on price and the provision of extra features.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

There are two key reasons to use these tools. More obviously, backlink acquisition and management remains one of the essential ranking factors of SEO. These tools help to identify backlink opportunities from your own domain as well as providing backlink details of your competitors. The second is for pro-active avoidance of and recovery from link penalties which can significantly impact the SEO traffic into a website.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ What task are you undertaking? It's likely that many of the paid for tools will provide the functionality required for your link building activity (Ahrefs is thought to have the biggest backlink database). Therefore, take a trial of the top 2 or 3 tools you're considering and compare the results you get, the ease of use of the tool and the relative costs. Paste
- ✓ If you're an agency or tackling some kind of penalty, you'll likely want to start with one tool, export the results and upload those links into another tool – or combine them in an excel document. No one tools sees everything.
- ✓ If you are working to remove a penalty, the accuracy of the tools automatic categorisation of links (okay vs. suspect vs. toxic) is an important consideration, especially when (potentially) dealing with thousands of backlinks.

6.1 Bing: Inbound Links Tool

		Free to use with a Windows Live ID login
Why do I need it?	Shows the number of Inbound Links coming into your site.	
What makes it stand out?	Fast, reliable and easy to use, the Inbound Links Tool provide a myriad of data to help better understand your backlinks.	
Key features	✓ Clicking a link will bring a pop up window, showcasing more information about the link ✓ You can export up to one million inbound links in one go from the main page, or up to 20,000 for each individual page. ✓ Data is easily understood by being turned into charts	
The Smart Insights view	Best in Category	By opening a popup window displaying the URL that contains the link to your site and showing the anchor text, the Bing Inbound Links Tool provides huge amounts of insight to your links. Very simple to use, and an extremely large limit on the amount of links exported, makes this a powerful tool.

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6.2 Google: Sample Links Tool

 Available free in what used to be called and is still called by many 'Google Webmaster Tools' under the 'Search Traffic', 'Links to your site' menu when signed in and your site has been verified with Google.	
Why do I need it?	Shows a sample of links to your site Google deems authoritative.
What makes it stand out?	It's directly from Google, but unfortunately isn't representative.
Key features	✓ Top 1,000 domains that have links to pages on your site. ✓ Shows number of pages linked to ✓ Also shows internal links
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Since Google rules SEO it's important to check what they consider authoritative links to your site, although you should also consult the other sites in this section.

6.3 Majestic

 Limited access with Free version Paid options offer unlimited access to data	
Why do I need it?	It provides information for link building, reputation management, competitive link analysis and website traffic analysis.
What makes it stand out?	Majestic has created the largest commercial Link Intelligence database in the world, making it a reliable source for your backlinks.
Key features	✓ Easy-to-use interface, simply by putting in your URL, you'll instantly get all of the information tailored to your site. ✓ A summary of all information necessary for a link building strategy is available for your use, including External Backlinks, Referring Domains, Trust Flow and Citation Flow. ✓ Ability to download data and create reports with all necessary information ✓ They have developed their own metric for rating website's trustworthiness (Trust Flow) and the influence/popularity of the site based on links (Citation Flow). ✓ Free backlink explorer for websites you already own and limited number of free reports ✓ Functional Plugin

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The Smart Insights view**Recommended Tool**

Majestic is a go to tool for a lot of SEO's, due to it's easy to use plugin for a snapshot of a websites metrics, also has an enviably large links database.

The vast amount of data available is also superb, however can be a little overwhelming if this is your first time using software like this. The level of detail, is great for someone looking to do a backlink clean up/create a disavow and for developing Backlink Audits.

6.4 Open Site Explorer



Free with limited access

Free 30-day trial

Paying for the Tool opens up more data

Why do I need it?

An analysis tool for daily backlink checks and link profile overview

What makes it stand out?

Enables you to analyse the competition and find out about their link building strategies.

Key features

- ✓ Provides Social Metrics, along with the more general metrics such as Domain Authority and Page Authority, which have become industry standard
- ✓ Incredibly simple to use and easy to understand
- ✓ Mozbar Plugin

The Smart Insights view**Top 5 Tool**

A name synonymous with SEO, Moz has grown from a Consultancy to a product/software creation company, developing some of the most well known tools which many SEO professionals use in their day to day work. It's become almost the industry standard to check your links using Domain Authority and Page Authority, ensuring you will be getting a reliable source of data, which you can manipulate with numerous filters

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6.5 Link Research Tools

		Free trial Paid for content
Why do I need it?	A tool for conducting link research on your own website and as well as competitors sites, whilst also including tools for market research to find link building opportunities.	
What makes it stand out?	Link Research Tools has over 20 individual tools to provide all of your link building needs, with industry-leading SEO software, fresh and comprehensive backlink data and rich, relevant SEO metrics.	
Key features	✓ Hosted SaaS so no software is needed to install ✓ A large portfolio of tools to combat all of your link building necessities ✓ Allows you to easily audit a competitors backlinks ✓ Can easily handle large scale, data driven link building projects	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Link Research Tools, is a truly great tool for most notably it's ability to research links opportunities and auditing competitor backlinks. It's not perfect, as the interface is a little clunky and some of large reports can take a couple of hours to complete. But other than that, it's a very powerful tool to make the most of link building opportunities.	

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7. AdWords Paid search analysis

What do these tools do?

These services provide competitor intelligence specifically for paid search; helping to identify your opportunities and uncover the strategies used by your competitors. The more extensive, enterprise level tools also provide sophisticated bid and campaign management across search, social and display channels.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Understanding the competitor search landscape is a key element to driving successful paid search activity. In Google AdWords, each user search triggers an auction between advertisers. Therefore, understanding the relevant keywords to bid on is important as is the keyword and bid strategies of your competition. Trend, gap and successful ad copy analysis are other useful features to help advertisers maximise an increasingly expensive, yet high intent driven marketing channel.

Key things to consider before purchasing and when using these tools:

- ✓ There's huge benefit to using competitor intelligence tools, especially given the likely share of your budget that's spent on paid search advertising. However, relying on competitor intelligence alone can result in missed opportunities if you're driving offline conversions (i.e. certain keywords lead to offline but not online conversions). The same considerations should be taken when making bid management decisions.
- ✓ When using tools such as Adthena, consider setting up automated reporting to help highlight key changes in the search landscape, including brand and trademark infringements and increases in bid costs.
- ✓ The AdWords platform (and the more powerful AdWords Editor tool) is a powerful tool, however brands or agencies managing large accounts may find it limiting. Relieving repetitive tasks, managing the scale of hundreds of campaigns and using sophisticated techniques (e.g. portfolio bid optimisation) are all benefits of using enterprise level software.

7.1 Wordstream

		Free tool - AdWords Performance Grader Paid service for optimising AdWords and Facebook
Why do I need it?	To review the effectiveness of your AdWords campaigns and identify improvements.	
What makes it stand out?	The AdWords Performance Grader gives similar free advice to the Bidcops service which we feature next. The optimisation advice is based on a quick weekly review and recommendations.	
Key features	✓ '20 minute work week' Provides optimisation advice ✓ 'Social Ads' analysis feature for Facebook Advertising ✓ Managed service option also available	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Wordstream is best known for its Performance Grader, but the paid service offers more granular advice which could reduce the need for an agency for a small to large agency.	

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7.2 SEMrush

	
Free trial	
Why do I need it?	SEMrush is a competitive research and business intelligence software that provides analytic reports on websites' SEO, paid search and link-building activities, as well as a powerful toolkit that offers all the necessary metrics regarding their competitors.
What makes it stand out?	SEMrush is one of the most powerful platforms for conducting in-depth, competitive-landscape analysis – 35 different tools and reports provide general information about websites' activities, from organic and paid search to social media. You'll also have access to: 120,000,000+ keyword databases for 29 countries including historical data.
Key features	✓ Comprehensive organic competitor and keyword research in 28 languages ✓ Overall data on competitors' AdWords, PLA and video advertising campaigns ✓ Monitoring of your national, regional and local search engine positions for any keyword ✓ Technical website audits ✓ Ideas for improving SEO performance for certain pages of your website, based on SEO tactics of your competitors
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool SEMrush is the most widely used tool in this category since it covers both organic and paid search analysis. It isn't as capable as some of the other tools in deep AdWords analysis, but we rate it top since more information is provided in the free version.

7.3 Spyfu

	
Limited free analysis for any competitor domain Paid service	
Why do I need it?	To review competitor activity including keywords targeted and ad copy used.
What makes it stand out?	Large database indexing over 4 billion results across 68 million domains.
Key features	✓ Find profitable keywords ✓ Eliminate bad keywords ✓ Find the best ad copy
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Like SEMrush this tool also focuses on organic and paid results, but it was originally developed as a PPC tool.

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7.4 Bidcops

	
Free tool	
Why do I need it?	To provide a quick review of inefficiencies in an AdWords account to identify improvements.
What makes it stand out?	Useful diagnostics highlighting where you can improve budget wastage, clickthrough rate and conversions. Minimal configuration - simply provide your AdWords account details.
Key features	✓ Save time on AdWords reporting with a report produced in 30 seconds ✓ Save money quickly finding keywords wasting your budget ✓ Increase AdWords conversions finding the best keywords to maximise traffic and conversions ✓ Compare quarter-on-quarter and year-on-year AdWords performance
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We recommend this tool if your AdWords account hasn't been audited recently and you need to identify improvements. It can also be used for top-level reporting on a longer time scale.

7.5 Adthena

	
Paid service No free trial, demo only.	
Why do I need it?	Adthena describe their service as the 'leading source of Competitive Intelligence for Search, enabling marketers to boost online acquisitions by understanding the threats and opportunities they face in PPC'.
What makes it stand out?	This is delivered through a dynamic view of their whole, relevant search landscape and their competitors' movements within it including keywords, competitor movement, ad copy analysis, mobile performance and more.
Key features	✓ 'Market Insight': Measure competitor Share of Voice, Spend, CPC and more ✓ 'Head-to-head'" Compare competitor keyword performance side-by-side ✓ Ad-copy analysis: Identify top traffic ads and competitor ad testing patterns ✓ Automated reports: Save time with our fully automated suite of competitor reports.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Arguably the most powerful tool in this category, but rated at #5 since most suited to enterprise budgets and limited availability of free tools and trials.

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8. Influencer outreach and management

What do these tools do?

These tools are especially useful for content marketers who are regularly producing content and need a structured and scalable way of managing their outreach efforts. They help to identify the types of site and key people within your niche that may link to or share your content in order to help amplify your message or content. Tools such as Kred, Klout and Followerwonk (Twitter specific tool) focus on assigning scores to online users, surfacing those who are likely to be most influential for your given content, search or topic.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

They help digital marketers to identify, analyse and contact relevant PR, blogger and other key influencer contacts, usually with the aim of creating backlinks or sharing content.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Unlike other categories, there is a mix of functionality and whilst there is some overlap, the tool(s) you likely choose will depend on how advanced your influencer outreach program is.
- ✓ All outreach tools are only as good as the process that's powering them. Ensuring the assignee field, adding notes and systematic tagging can help prompt key details about previous outreach attempts and/or follow up information gathered over the phone (for example).
- ✓ Just because these tools enable large list building and make outreach easy, question whether this will yield the right results. A small, hyper targeted list is often more successful. Whilst some of these tools enable distribution of your content and the use of email templates, successful outreach requires the personal touch.

8.1 Followerwonk



Free basic subscription available with premium plans available for additional functionality and users.

Why do I need it?

Helps you to explore and understand your Twitter following for growth through research and analysis tools. Connect with influencers and prospects, search and compare users.

What makes it stand out?

The ability to search for Twitter users by relevance to a keyword and compare them based on various, identify authoritative users to promote content, monitor most engaging tweets, and then search, sort, and download the results. The application also enables the user to follow other profiles – highlighting any that may already be following.

Key features

- ✓ Search Twitter bios
- ✓ Compare users to show audience overlaps
- ✓ Analyse users based on authority, following size etc.
- ✓ Track follows or unfollows
- ✓ Sort users depending on priority

The Smart Insights view

Best in category tool

Followerwonk is a great addition to understanding your Twitter following in more detail but is limited to only Twitter, so should be used in combination with other social media monitoring tools to supplement overall insight. As part of the MOZ suite of apps, this tool comes with good credibility.

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8.2 Buzzstream

		14-day free trial available with the choice of 3 further premium plans.
Why do I need it?	A relationship and outreach CRM tool that allows you to manage and grow a large volume of outreach campaigns across website of relevance.	
What makes it stand out?	This tool allows you to quickly bookmark websites that may have contributors who are relevant to your content. It gleans all of the necessary contact information to contact them as part of an outreach programme, and shares this information as a centralised database for a team to use. Users can also use saved templated communications as a time saver for outreach.	
Key features	✓ Collate contact details for influencers as you browse websites ✓ In-app sending of personalised, relationship-based messaging ✓ Manage relationships and share notes with a project team	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool	This is a very handy tool to help identify, collate and share potential influencers in the execution of outreach programmes. It can help you speed up process of identifying and making contact with potential site for link building, and as it is done in an editorial manner, any links obtained will not face Google penalty.

8.3 Traackr

		Pricing is not disclosed. Only paid options are available.
Why do I need it?	Influencer marketing platform to search cross-platform and websites to reach people who are influential in relation to your content.	
What makes it stand out?	Similar to Followerwonk, this tool allows users to search for and identify influencers by relevance to a keyword and build up a profile – highlighting the most relevant metrics to help priorities prospects.	
Key features	✓ Identify top influencers in any niche conversation ✓ Build up profiles around key metrics important for prioritising ✓ Monitor influencers to allow relevant engagement ✓ Create plans using the tool data ✓ Monitor the relationships - generate targeted & actionable reports	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	This is a very comprehensive tool that allows you to find, monitor and plan influencer resonance. It is similar to Twitterwonk, but where that tool is only limited to Twitter, Traackr is across all platforms online. Given no pricing information is available, it seems that this tool is high end and therefore may be best suited to larger businesses.

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8.4 Onalytica

		Pricing is not disclosed. Only paid options are available.
Why do I need it?	Outreach marketing platform to seed content to potential influencers.	
What makes it stand out?	This platform allows publishers to upload content and using an algorithm to match the proportional usage of nouns used against an aggregate of what an influencer has posted on Twitter over the past 12 months. This then returns the most relevant influencers to outreach to.	
Key features	✓ Monitor influencer feed ✓ Devise influencer profiles ✓ Content seeding ✓ Network maps ✓ Gain real-time alerts ✓ Reporting	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	This tool appears to automate the process of identifying potential influencers. Similar to high-end tools like Traackr, there is no pricing but this presents an interesting tool that may be useful for larger businesses to seed content and create buzz.

8.5 Klout

		Free trials available on request. Paid plans only available after requesting a bespoke quote suited to product and business requirements.
Why do I need it?	Helps to identify and target groups of influencers, and assist with outreach programmes, content creation and social campaign reporting.	
What makes it stand out?	Within 1 platform, users are assigned a Klout Score, which is a high-level measurement of cross-social network influence so that brands can segment a group of trusted influencers to offer exclusive content to in order to generate earned media around a product launch or event.	
Key features	✓ Easily identify and target groups of top influencers for outreach marketing ✓ Offer influencers exclusive rewards and exclusive content ✓ Trusted influencers share their excitement and generate earned media for the brand ✓ In-built campaign reporting	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	This tool allows a brand to look more deeply at whom it should target and build relationships with as part of an influencer marketing strategy. Using the metrics, brands can prioritise accounts based on their interests but also those of their audience to get a more holistic view of relevancy to their content. It is a complex tool, crunching millions of social media accounts, so its pricing is a little hidden as it can be customised to a business' needs.

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9. Data management platforms and audience profiling systems

What do these tools do?

A DMP is a place to store, sort and act upon multiple sources of online and offline data. This includes first party data which the marketer collects on their site or through other customer interactions and on third party data pre-integrated into the platform, or data purchased from branded providers or lists. Users of a DMP can import known (i.e. an email address) or unknown (e.g. a cookie) data and use this to define audiences or segments. The DMP will then find new customers (i.e. similar audiences) for you to target and buy ads for. The final role they play is to then instruct ad networks and websites who to target, with what (message) and where.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Because of the access they have to data vendors, DMPs can open up highly targeted (pre-defined and custom) audiences that would otherwise be hard to reach at scale, estimating the price and reach of marketing to those users up front. They can also aggregate call, web analytics, CRM and cookie data helping to hyper target your media spend.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

✓ **Do you really need a DMP?** For example, Google and Facebook are essentially walled DMPs and, for many brands, are a good place to start (note: Google and Facebook control and manage your data). A simple use case for a DMP might be to drive more efficient spend of programmatic media; a DMP would help efficiently exclude existing customers.

✓ **How do you currently buy media?** If you're using an agency, they may recommend a DMP. However, if you're working with multiple agencies you may want to bring a DMP in house so you can coordinate and optimise your media spend across multiple media buying points.

9.1 Cxense

		Paid service. 30 day free trial.
Why do I need it?	'The Cxense DMP gathers data from a wide range of sources such as sites and applications, subscription data, CRM, ERP, CMS, and analytics systems and analyzes the data to produce meaningful insight and segments'.	
What makes it stand out?	It also offers modules for site personalisation as well as on-site search, although this isn't appealing if you have solutions for these already.	
Key features	✓ Data capture on site ✓ Cross-platform ✓ Real-time	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We don't have direct experience of this platform, but have rated it top for value since Forrester recommend in their Wave report on DMPs: ' <i>Consider Cxense if you want a competitive offering at a good price</i> '. It notes that the majority of its advertisers and clients are outside the US.	

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9.2 Krux

		Paid service with demo
Why do I need it?	'Krux's next-generation Data Management Platform (DMP) helps you zero in on and connect with your customers more efficiently, no matter which channel they are on or which device is in their hands'.	
What makes it stand out?	Measure the ROI and effectiveness of your marketing initiatives using the Nielsen+Krux joint solution for Multi-Touch Attribution.	
Key features	✓ Optimize media investment through global frequency management and smarter spend allocation across channels. ✓ Expand reach through lookalike modeling to find new prospects who behave like existing customers. ✓ Optimize media execution through A/B testing and sequential messaging.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Forrester recommend in their Wave report on DMPs: <i>"Consider Krux if you value agility and innovation from an independent vendor"</i> .	

9.3 Neustar

		Paid service.
Why do I need it?	Fuel your strategic marketing planning with accurate customer, geographic, and market data	
What makes it stand out?	Scale - 220 million adults and 120 million households; Depth -15,000 offline and online predictive attributes from third-party data sources across various industries and Accuracy - continuously corroborate our identity data with billions of anonymized daily transactions.	
Key features	✓ Customer intelligence and targeting ✓ Media intelligence ✓ Marketing analytics	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Forrester recommend in their Wave report on DMPs: <i>"Consider Neustar if having a single view of your customer is a priority"</i> .	

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9.4. Adobe Audience Manager

	
Paid service	
Why do I need it?	It's a data management platform that helps you build unique audience profiles so you can identify your most valuable segments and use them across any digital channel.
What makes it stand out?	It's a data management platform that helps you build unique audience profiles so you can identify your most valuable segments and use them across any digital channel.
Key features	✓ Segment analysis tools ✓ Buy and sell (anonymous) second and third-party data in the Audience Marketplace ✓ API for integrating with other enterprise IT
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Forrester recommend in their Wave report on DMPs: <i>"Consider Adobe if you want all options: a full stack plus an array of integrations"</i> .

9.5 Oracle Data Management Platform

	
Paid service	
Why do I need it?	Data management for 360 degree view of customer and their journey across online and offline channels plus integration with other features of the Oracle Cloud.
What makes it stand out?	Use Oracle ID Graph that connects active cookies, mobile IDs, emails, registrations, and social IDs across platforms.
Key features	✓ Audience data management - In one consolidated view, marketers can access all of their marketing data to build and refine key target audiences to use in numerous campaign scenarios. ✓ Audience Data Marketplace - with more than 30 branded data providers for 3rd party data, marketers have access to nearly 700 million anonymous customer profiles and 40,000 data attributes. ✓ Integrations with Oracle Eloqua and Responsys plus DSPs for media campaigns.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Forrester recommend in their Wave report on DMPs: <i>"Consider Oracle if you're looking for a complete data management suite"</i> .

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10 Page engagement tools

What do these tools do?

These tools help assess and improve the effectiveness of website design including different page template types such as home page, landing and campaign pages.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

These tools can help digital marketers improve conversion and goal completion rates, while reducing the need for IT support and ensuring brand stakeholders are kept happy with the consistent design (look and feel) of the pages built. They may also help reduce the amount of design input required once a template is agreed.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ **Scale.** Understand how much time your team are spending on managing and creating landing and campaign pages. Are you operating at a scale to benefit from these tools?
- ✓ **Are there other benefits you can leverage?** For example, developing custom PPC landing pages testing different copy, images and call to actions.
- ✓ **Be clear on the levels of reporting and customisation you require to deliver your objectives.** These are two areas which differ significantly between the tools in this category.
- ✓ **Finally, when testing and optimising bear in mind that you'll need enough traffic to ensure the tools can run the experiments.** The greater the volume of traffic, the quicker you'll have results.

10.1 Google Page analytics

	A free Chrome extension that integrates with Google Analytics - download. Also available as a report within Google Analytics (Behaviour menu).
Why do I need it?	The Page Analytics Chrome Extension allows you to see how customers interact with your web pages, including what they click and don't click. Use these insights to optimize your website layout, improve user experience, and increase conversions.
What makes it stand out?	It's useful to have a visual assessment of how users interact with key web pages so you can understand whether call-to-actions are effective.
Key features	✓ Overlays clickthrough and goal outcomes achieved for each link web page. ✓ Pageviews, Unique Pageviews, Avg time on page, Bounce Rate, and %Exit plus number of active visitors displayed for reference as you browse pages ✓ Can segment by different standard audience types, e.g. mobile users, returning users ✓ As with other extensions can be switched off when not needed.
The Smart Insights view	Best in category We highlight this as a tool in Google that you may not be aware of, yet offers some of the functionality of paid services. What's not to like!

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10.2 Hotjar

		Free trial and a free personal 'basic' version with limits on sample size (number of page views)
Why do I need it?	Hotjar is an all-in-one analytics and feedback tool helping you to truly understand your web and mobile site visitors.	
What makes it stand out?	Other tools in the category don't all provide insights from prompting visitors with polls.	
Key features	✓ Heatmaps: Visualise your visitors clicks, taps and scrolling behavior. ✓ Recordings: Eliminate guesswork with recordings of real visitor behaviour on your site. ✓ Polls: Understand what your visitors want and what's preventing them from achieving it. ✓ Funnels & Forms: Find the biggest opportunities for improvement and testing by identifying on which page and at which step most visitors are leaving your site.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	This is a relatively new tool, but we prefer it to some of the existing services since it also enables questions to be asked on some pages for qualitative feedback. We subscribe to this service for this reason.

10.3 Clicktale

		Paid service with demo.
Why do I need it?	Clicktale show customer behavior and intent across key touchpoints: web, mobile and apps. Clicktale's deep drill-downs get to the heart of the "how" and "why" behind customer behavior.	
What makes it stand out?	A good 'all-in-one' contender with heatmaps, session replays and form analytics	
Key features	✓ Data-rich heatmaps: see what visitors are clicking on ✓ Session replays: Visualize exactly what your visitors are experiencing ✓ Conversion analytics: discover what's working (and what's not) in your funnel and forms. ✓ Advanced insights: Surface key data, error reports, and trends to get clear direction on improving customer experience and increase conversions.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	Described by its vendors as 'The world's #1 enterprise-class experience management platform', it is aimed at larger organisations, so is more expensive to subscribe to than some platforms. It is a well established service with the benefit over some other surface in that it combines session replays with heatmaps.

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10.4 Crazyegg

	Paid service Free 30 day trials
Why do I need it?	To review heatmaps, scrollmaps and overlays of when people click on your site.
What makes it stand out?	A simple service with good usability and visualisation for different forms of heatmaps.
Key features	✓ Heatmap: Where people click and where they don't ✓ Confetti: Clicks are segmented by referral types ✓ Scroll map: Shows how far down the page visitors are scrolling
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We're not convinced of the value of paying for a service when Google's InPage Analytics provides similar functionality. However, you may want to subscribe during redesign projects.

10.5 Tealeaf

	Demos available on request
Why do I need it?	To highlight points in the customer journey on a desktop or mobile site where visitors are abandoning a process - typically in a checkout or cart.
What makes it stand out?	Highlights potential problems which lead to revenue loss, so can be used to increase conversion and average order value.
Key features	✓ cxImpact captures a page-by-page, browser level recording of each customer session which is replayable and searchable ✓ cxOverstat provides overlays to show visitor intent and action ✓ cxView aggregates captured data to highlight most common issues and how they change through time.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool A different type of service to the others in this category which is described as highlighting 'Customer Struggle'. The insights it generates can yield significant savings on abandoned transactions and application errors so it is a widely deployed tool in large, transactional businesses.

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11. Content Management Systems (CMS)

What do these tools do?

These tools form the building blocks of your website. They're the platform upon which your website's pages are designed and built. You have a choice between proprietary or open source platforms (we cover these in the next category of blogging tools many of which can be used as CMS), both of which can be developed upon or enhanced by using libraries of code – often known as widgets or plugins.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Simply put, most websites are now built using a CMS. They're widespread thanks to how they enable non-technical members of digital teams to publish and manage content. Processes for publishing are easy to set up, as are user permissions and versioning. A CMS provides a framework for a website, often with site infrastructure and SEO features built in. This helps a CMS deliver a brand consistent experience.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Before making a licensing or purchase decision, it's important to understand your development roadmap. These tools involve high switching costs and your criteria on which to base a decision could vary greatly in a year or more, affecting the decision you make.
- ✓ The cost of bespoke development and the degree of technical and account support are important factors. Is the platform based on a PHP or .Net framework and how does that match up with your existing in-house or agency resource? Also be clear on the level of customisation you'll require i.e. page templates.
- ✓ Consider whether you need a cloud service, an international solution (i.e. managing and publishing to global websites), the level of enhanced security required as well as the e-commerce solutions needed – these will determine the type of CMS required and if an open source or licensed solution is the better fit. Ongoing support and licensing costs are also major considerations.

11.1 Episerver



Paid enterprise service. Demo only.

Why do I need it?	Common to category: for content management to publish and edit web pages and create desktop and mobile experiences.
What makes it stand out?	Powerful web content management lets you create content quickly with drag & drop, optimised for any device and personalised to each visitor. Combines content with commerce so you can increase engagement and promote the right products and drive more sales.
Key features	✓ Create content directly on-page and see your experiences come alive, just as any visitor would ✓ Drag and drop blocks, media, videos, forms or pages onto a desired area ✓ Personalize blocks and pages to show visitors tailored messages, optimised for any device automatically ✓ Connect with your existing Marketing Automation, CRM and Analytical tools for multi-channel experiences ✓ Get an instant view of how effective your experience is by performing A/B tests on pages, products, promotions, text and design element
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool <i>A popular tool across B2B and B2C sectors including retail.</i> <i>We cannot recommend a specific CMS in this category since detailed requirements, integration and cost/benefit analysis is needed in this category.</i> <i>Disclosure: Episerver is a Smart Insights Content Partner.</i>

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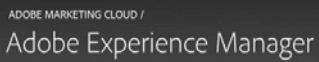
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11.2 Sitecore

		Paid enterprise service. Demo only.
Why do I need it?	Common to category: for content management to publish and edit web pages and create desktop and mobile experiences.	
What makes it stand out?	Personalisation and	
Key features	✓ Content editing and publishing ✓ Landing page creation ✓ Commerce management options	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool <i>We cannot recommend a specific CMS in this category since detailed requirements, integration and cost/benefit analysis is needed in this category.</i> <i>Disclosure: Sitecore is a Smart Insights Content Partner.</i>	

11.3 Adobe Content Experience Manager

		Paid enterprise service. Demo only.
Why do I need it?	Common to category: for content management to publish and edit web pages and create desktop and mobile experiences.	
What makes it stand out?	Offers to deliver cross-channel and customer lifecycle personalisation.	
Key features	✓ Content editing and publishing ✓ Landing page creation ✓ Commerce management options	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool <i>We cannot recommend a specific CMS in this category since detailed requirements, integration and cost/benefit analysis is needed in this category.</i>	

11.4 Acquia

	Paid enterprise service. Demo only.
Why do I need it?	Common to category: for content management to publish and edit web pages and create desktop and mobile experiences.
What makes it stand out?	Integration / built on open source service Drupal meaning that it is popular across categories including Charities, Higher Education and Government
Key features	✓ Content editing and publishing ✓ Landing page creation ✓ Commerce management options
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool <i>We cannot recommend a specific CMS in this category since detailed requirements, integration and cost/benefit analysis is needed in this category.</i>

11.5 Oracle WebCenter Content

	Paid enterprise service. Demo only.
Why do I need it?	Common to category: for content management to publish and edit web pages and create desktop and mobile experiences.
What makes it stand out?	Different focus to other services in this section: Enterprise Document management also suitable for internal portals, i.e. intranets and extranets.
Key features	✓ Content editing and publishing ✓ Landing page creation ✓ Commerce management options
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool <i>We cannot recommend a specific CMS in this category since detailed requirements, integration and cost/benefit analysis is needed in this category.</i>

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12. Blogging Tools

What do these tools do?

The clue is in the category name; they're used to write and publish blog articles! In fact, this category name has become misleading since many services like Wordpress and Drupal can now be used to create entire sites.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Blogs are common on many commercial sites now from retailers (customer magazines) to B2B services. The quality of the free, open source options like Wordpress mean potentially large savings compared to CMS. Some offer the option of open source plus service and account management.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Don't just assess your current needs, but consider what you may want the tool to support a year + ahead. For example, will you want to add personalisation, perform AB testing
- ✓ Assess the range, quality and frequency of updates for the plug-ins and themes available with the platform can be used to extend the functionality of your site.
- ✓ Think of the availability of designers and developers familiar with these platforms. Wordpress developers are far more common than Drupal for example.

12.1 Wordpress



Free to download and use. However you'll need to pay for server capacity via a server provider and you may need to pay someone to implement it if you have a large or complex site.

Why do I need it?

Wordpress is the largest self-hosting blogging tool in the world. The open source nature of the system means it is free to use and has incredible customization options.

What makes it stand out?

Wordpress's key strength is its customisability. A massive suite of plugins and themes means you can build a Wordpress site to do just about anything. In that respect it is a far more useful solution for those wanting more advanced options compared with simpler paid web platforms like Square Space. The fact it's free is also a bonus, but remember it'll probably require staffing costs to implement.

Key features

- ✓ Fully customizable with a huge array of themes (designs and page layouts) and plugins for different functions to allow it to be used for a wide range of functions.
- ✓ Effective content management system complete with content calendars to scheduling content.
- ✓ Offers several useful SEO tools for optimising your on-site SEO.
- ✓ Hosted service on Wordpress.com can be used for smallest businesses. Larger businesses can use a managed service like Wordpress VIP.

The Smart Insights view

Best in Class

We are HUGE fans of WordPress since we have used it as the CMS for our site since launch, so we'd certainly recommended it to any digital marketers, with one proviso. You need an internal capacity to implement the system. If no one on your team has worked with Wordpress before and you aren't planning on bringing anyone in with that expertise, then a simpler CMS is for you. IF you do have that resource in place, then great, Wordpress is among the best in the business and free!

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12.2 HubSpot Blogging

 Why do I need it?	Hubspot's CMS comes as part of HubSpot's marketing software package. There are free trials for those wanting to try before they buy.
What makes it stand out?	If you're in the market for a CMS, HubSpot's product is great place to start. It is optimised for SEO and mobile by default, so you don't have to use plugins to set these things up. Built in task management capabilities and content calendar make great for anyone wanting to get started with content marketing.
Key features	Its usability and built in features are what really make Hubspot's CMS stand out. You don't have to mess around installing other systems to optimise for mobile and help you perfect your SEO. A visually simple content slander with the ability to assign tasks across your team and organise your team is another major advantage. ✓ Content calendar with an ability to organise campaigns and assign tasks ✓ Comes with a variety of blog post blueprints to help you get started ✓ In-line editor lets you see exactly how your post will look when live.
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Hubspot's CMS is great for small businesses wanting to get started with content marketing. It integrates very well with Hubspot's other products, so if your leaning towards purchasing HubSpot for any of its other Marketing software products then going with its blogging tool is probably wise. If your looking to get advanced then it isn't the most customizable platform, so may not be for you. That said, its default tools for content management, SEO and blog templates aren't to be sniffed at. <i>Disclosure:</i> HubSpot are content partners of Smart Insights.

12.3 Movable Type

	An easy to use and capable CMS, perfect for bloggers who don't need bags of complicated add-ons, it works with little set up and has an intuitive user interface.
Why do I need it?	An easy to use and capable CMS, perfect for bloggers who don't need bags of complicated add-ons, it works with little set up and has an intuitive user interface.
What makes it stand out?	Movable type positions themselves as a simple and easy way to start managing your content. The usability is a big plus, and whilst its not quite as plug and play as Hubspot, the software does pretty much work straight out of the box, so you won't have to waste time on complicated installation. The intuitive interface is great for people starting out with blogging, and the ability to track edits and have multiple editors makes it great for coordinating work a across a team.
Key features	✓ Easy to set up and use ✓ Easy to track edits and coordinate multiple editors ✓ Responsive support team
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Although its key feature is its usability, Moveable type also boasts a decent list of plugins for customization. That said, the list of plugins is not as long as for WordPress or Drupal, so if you need advanced customization options it may not be the CMS for you. It's not the best for handling multimedia content or interactive content, but if your just looking to get started with a highly useable blogging tool and not need flashy add-ons then it's a good choice.

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12.4 Expression Engine



Expression Engine costs \$299 dollars for a licence, then you'll also have to pay for a hosting provider. To be able to access the software support team you'll need to pay monthly, with plans from \$49 to \$1,999 per month. There is also a free version with very basic features

Why do I need it?

ExpressionEngine is great value for a paid CMS system and offers a lot of functionality. The template structure allows any HTML, CSS, JavaScript or PHP, meaning it is extremely flexible and capable if you have the right developers in place.

What makes it stand out?

ExpressionEngine comes with a big bundle of administrative features that are extremely useful if you're planning on doing more than just running a simple blog. It has admin logs, site membership functionality, searchable content forums, a blacklist/whitelist module, SQL and extension manger. The ability to customise is second only to Wordpress (and arguably better than Wordpress when it comes its templates system).

Key features

- ✓ High degree of customizability
- ✓ Thriving community based of users who can help with questions
- ✓ Simple admin interface for the end user

The Smart Insights view

Top 5 Tool

ExpressionEngine is a highly capable and flexible CMS which is great for those who are a bit more advanced in their content marketing efforts and want to do more than just start out with blogging. The draw back is that it doesn't have the usability of the simpler providers and like Wordpress you'll need a coding background to understand how to use all the features. Developers have to learn the tinplating language, which shouldn't be a problem but will slow down the implementation process.

12.5 Drupal



Drupal is free and open source. But don't forget you'll need to pay for hosting.

Why do I need it?

Drupal is an extremely capable CMS with great customization features and has a huge pool of plugins to draw from. A well-developed permission structure allows the management of content and publishing times across a team without wasting time.

What makes it stand out?

Drupal is one of the widely used CMS in world. It is used as the framework for 2.1% of all websites world wide, and has a community of over 1 million members. The fact that it is free is a nice bonus, and its integration tools make it perfect for complex sites.

Key features

- ✓ Great range of plugins and extension modules.
- ✓ Integrates well with many other web services and CRMs
- ✓ Extremely flexible and scalable

The Smart Insights view

Top 5 Tool

Drupal is a great solution if you have the resources in place to use it. It certainly doesn't lack for functionality or customizability. Some of the word's most popular sites like BBC news and Amnesty International use it. However it is often difficult for new users to get their head around, and it is not something that just works 'out of the box', you will need internal resources to implement it.

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13. Content curation and authoring tools

What do these tools do?

This category should be considered a toolbox for content marketers in its own right; many of these tools offer specific functionality to curate and publish content from different sources and due to their low or free cost models, will be widely used by content and social media teams.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Content marketing continues to grow in importance with brands investing more in both content generation and distribution. These tools help with a wide variety of tasks for content generation from ideas for headlines and blog articles to easy-to-use image and video tools and grammar checking.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ The tools we've listed in this category are a useful starting point but there are dozens of others, with new ones appearing all the time. It's useful to ask your content team what tasks they do on a daily basis and/or find repetitive. The chances are there is a tool to help.
- ✓ Whilst many of these tools come with a small price tag, it's easy to rack up a long list of tools that are rarely used. Consider using these tools, where appropriate, within your publishing processes to formalise their use. Some tools have browser extensions (such as Check my links). Their always on prompts can be helpful to ensure adoption. Alternatively, ask your content team to share their favourite tools with the wider team.

13.1 Evernote

	Free version gives a good suite of features. Plus and Premium options give more uploads
Why do I need it?	Evernote is the best tool available for managing memo's and reminders. It combines an easy to use and simple user interface with some really useful features.
What makes it stand out?	Evernote is the closest you'll get to having a digital version of your brain. It's Google for the web of your life. You can save notes, files, images, webpages and more, all in a way that is easy to retrieve without knowing exactly where you put it.
Key features	✓ Works seamlessly across devices. Great experience on mobile ✓ Allows you to make notes and attach images, webpages, recordings and more in different categories ✓ Great collaboration features allow teams to work effectively together
The Smart Insights view	Best in Class Evernote is a fantastic tool, which we love. It is one of those tools that you find so useful you almost forget its there but if you couldn't use it you'd be lost. It's great for increasing productivity and allowing you to work efficiently on a mobile device. We recommend it for people working in any area of marketing. We haven't found the need to pay for the paid version and feel guilty about it.

13.2 IFTTT

		Free
Why do I need it?	IFTTT is a nifty automation tool. It can automate all sort of processes really quickly and easily, with no faff whatsoever. Only problem is a lot of it isn't really relevant for marketing, so don't get distracted and start getting it to dim the lights and play Barry White every time your better half enters the room!	
What makes it stand out?	The ease of use and massive array of 'recipes' really makes the tool stands out. Many recipes can be set up with just a few clicks, and there are 282 (and counting) channels connected to the platform, so it can work with all sorts of platforms and networks.	
Key features	✓ Thousands of pre-created 'recipes' makes it easy to automate a huge variety of tasks ✓ The huge range of channels which work with the platform allow it to work with a massive array of platforms.	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool	We think IFTTT can be really useful and great fun. It's not designed as a marketing tool, but you can set it up both to share your content automatically to a range of network, and to streamline and automate the process of gathering relevant content to keep you up to date with industry trends. Its totally free, so its worth taking a look and seeing what daily marketing tasks you can have it automate for you to save you time.

13.3 Scoop.it

		Free version for personal use, paid options for businesses.
Why do I need it?	Scoop.it is a content curation tool that finds content according to your own specifications. It integrates with social platforms and marketing automation systems to help share the content you curare with a wide audience	
What makes it stand out?	The Scoop.it bookmarklet lets you publish content you discover with ease. The suggestion engine can be really effective at finding quality content within your niche when you don't have the time to find it yourself, and you can add your own sources so you can be sure of reliable content.	
Key features	✓ The Bookmarklet tools allow the scheduling of posts with only a few clicks, saving you time. ✓ The suggestion engine saves you time buy finding quality content to share. ✓ Integrates with all major social networks, WordPress, Drupal, Marketo, Hubspot and more.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	Content aggregators like Feedly can be great for sourcing content, but scoot.it is a content curator. It is better at finding really relevant content and means you end with posts of a higher quality. It is great at integrating with loads of platforms which means a lot of sharing processes can be automated to save you time.

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13.4 Cronycle

 CRONYCLE		Currently in free beta testing. Will be paid once launched.
Why do I need it?	Cronycle is a platform for content discovery, creation and curation. First, monitor the web for relevant articles using powerful filters and feeds, then annotate those articles to create proprietary content by yourself or in teams.	
What makes it stand out?	Cronycle is an all in one service for content marketing creation – Feedly with powerful filters, Pocket in teams and Evernote with annotation features.	
Key features	✓ Research niche subjects for content pieces on any platform - whether an event, webinar, written content, interview, video etc ✓ Easily search trusted sources for recent articles related to specific keywords ✓ Surface the best articles and get feedback from your team ✓ Annotate articles with commentary related to your project ✓ Curate a 'mood board' for complicated ideas	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool If you want to curate content but don't have a lot of time, Cronycle is a really useful tool. The ability to set it filters so you only spend time seeing content that matters to you can save you a lot of time. The fact it works great on mobile devices means you can do content curation whilst on the move, utilising time that might otherwise be dead. It's worth a try whilst its still in free beta, but with lots of content curation tools on the market it remains to be seen if its offering is unique enough to justify charging for use when there are highly capable free tools.	

13.5 Feedly

		Free
Why do I need it?	Feedly is the most popular RSS and blog reader, and a really powerful tool for aggregating content within your niche for sharing with your audience or keeping you up to date on the latest trends	
What makes it stand out?	With 15 million users, Feedly has loads of great pre-created feeds you can start following to keep up to date with all sorts of different areas. It is particularly strong on marketing and tech related content. If you're not happy that no existing feed covers your niche then it's really easy to set one up.	
Key features	✓ Thousands of pre-created feeds. ✓ Easy to set up new feeds unique to you. ✓ Integrates with Social Networks for easy sharing ✓ Can save pages to Evernote for reading later.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We use Feedly for keeping up to date with the latest developments in the digital marketing sector, and the ability to break it down into different feeds for SEO, AdWords, Social Media etc. makes it great for finding relevant and up to date content on particular fields. The only downside is that being based on RSS feeds the content you see is only as good as what is being published on the blogs you follow, so sometimes you get irrelevant content when the blogs you follow publish content out of the niche they occupy.	

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14. Landing page creation and testing tools

What do these tools do?

These tools will help you design and test pages which improve the conversion rate to lead.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Lead generation is a key goal of digital marketing in many sectors. By testing landing page layout, headlines and copy you can increase lead volume and so potentially sales using cost-effective techniques. By hosting test pages on the servers of suppliers you should be able to bypass the need for agency or IT department involvement to get test up-and-running rapidly.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Ease of use of setting up tests
- ✓ Integration with CRM systems you use or plan to use
- ✓ Quality of templates which can be amended - layout, field-level data collection options and style needs to be suitable for scale of business and sector. Today most are mobile-responsive.
- ✓ Account management for use by multiple users in agencies and larger organisations

14.1 Unbounce



Paid service with monthly and annual pricing options based on number of unique visitors and key features available.
Free trial.

Why do I need it?

Service offers creation and testing of landing pages for B2B and B2C markets.

What makes it stand out?

Established service with 200+ page templates plus integration with leading CRM services.

Key features

- ✓ Dynamic text replacement (e.g. to increase relevance of headlines for PPC ads)
- ✓ Wordpress, HubSpot, Marketo, Infusionsoft, Mailchimp integrations
- ✓ Multi-user and client management for agencies and large organisations

The Smart Insights view

Leading tool in class

We recommend this tool based on its ease of use, range of integration and account management and administration features suitable for use in agencies and large organisations.

14.2 LeadPages

	
Paid service No free trial, but 30-day money back guarantee	
Why do I need it?	To test hosted landing pages to increase leads.
What makes it stand out?	Costs and features more suited for information marketers in smaller businesses. Positioned as 'With our simple templates, you can create opt-in pages that instantly send your subscribers free content bribes (or "lead magnets")'
Key features	✓ 70+ different landing page templates ✓ HubSpot, Market and Salesforce integration in top plan. Wordpress integration in all. ✓ 5 sub-accounts in the top plan
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Another fully featured tool which is competitively priced (with unlimited number of landing pages or views), but without a monthly pricing option at the time of review (quarterly, annual or 2-year billing options).

14.3 Instapage

	
Paid service with annual plans Free 30 day trial	
Why do I need it?	As with the other tools, to create and test landing pages
What makes it stand out?	Speed of page setup. Clickthrough pages which are designed as an introductory funnel between the product or service you are trying to sell and a conversion. Specific web page and thank you page features.
Key features	✓ Range of page types ✓ 100+ mobile responsive templates ✓ Salesforce and Infusionsoft CRM integration. Wordpress and extensive email system integrations.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Another solid alternative to Unbounce suitable for mid to large organisations, but with fewer CRM integrations.

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14.4 Ion Interactive

	
Paid service Demo only	
Why do I need it?	To build and test content marketing campaigns for lead generation more efficiently.
What makes it stand out?	Based on developing a content marketing programme rather than testing individual pages.
Key features	✓ Landing page optimisation ✓ Pages can include these interactive content assets quizzes, assessments, calculators, configurators, solution builders, interactive white papers and interactive infographics ✓ CRM integrations with HubSpot, Marketo, Oracle, Salesforce and Demandbase
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool This service started with a similar positioning to the other tools in this category, but now focuses on it's interactive content marketing capabilities. However, it can still perform tests and optimisations. We've included it as a premium service supporting marketing of a wider range of assets for larger enterprises.

14.5 Optimizely

	
Paid service with a range of limited free forever plans	
Why do I need it?	For creating sophisticated tests beyond landing pages across multiple audience types. Capability to change page elements using visual editor not possible in most other services in this category.
What makes it stand out?	A suite of tools that is more sophisticated than most others in the category. The ability to change page elements without coding is valuable for many other page template types on a sites
Key features	✓ Visual editor enables testing of page elements without coding ✓ Test experiment variations to visitors and users by ad campaign, geography, cookies, or a variety of other dimensions. ✓ iOS and Android app A/B and multivariate testing ✓ Separate personalisation option
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool It may be surprising that we have rated this as fifth in the category. If we had rated it a few years ago, it would certainly been higher. But as its enterprise capabilities have grown, so has the cost meaning that it is relatively costly for medium to large businesses and the other options are more realistic for smaller businesses.

See category 19 AB and multivariate testing services for other tools similar to Optimizely



15. Digital Asset Management

What do these tools do?

They act as a storage solution of your image, audio and video files with sophisticated features for managing and searching your digital assets at scale.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

They provide a single storage solution for digital assets that everyone within your business or team can access, providing essential features such as role-based permissions and bulk import/export, as well as more sophisticated functionality such as image or video expiry management and auto-tagging templates for more effective and speedy file management.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ A DAM tool won't be a solution for a messy shared folder or server structure. These tools are only as effective as the process of file management that governs their use. It's important to have rules for categories, versioning, file naming conventions and folder structures (to name a few) to ensure a DAM can add value.
- ✓ To get the most from a DAM tool it's important it integrates with your other software. You don't want to be constantly uploading and downloading files from your DAM and importing or exporting them into your other tools. This can be done automatically with the right integrations.
- ✓ Whilst most DAM tools come with powerful bulk import functionality, take time to plan your ideal asset structure and be prepared to start from scratch. It's easier to scale up at the beginning than it is 6 months into using a DAM.

15.1 Adobe Experience Management

 Adobe Experience Manager Paid for tool	
Why do I need it?	It's a comprehensive content management solution for building websites, mobile apps and forms. And it makes it easy to manage your marketing content and assets.
What makes it stand out?	It is an extremely easy to implement tool that helps you create, manage, and optimize digital customer experiences across every channel, including web, mobile apps, digital forms, and communities.
Key features	✓ Very easy to pick up and go ✓ Lots of online courses if you get stuck ✓ Customisable widgets for a personalised feel to the dashboard
The Smart Insights view	Top of Category Adobe Experience Management is an extremely easy tool to use, even for beginners, with it's drag and drop approach, for delivering that consistent message across all of the devices and touch points, your customers want to engage with. It's also a very sturdy piece of software too, which make you feel more secure when making changes, thanks to it's multiple confirming steps.

15.2 Wistia



Free version, only allows for 5 videos a month with wistia branding overlayed
Paid version starts at \$25 a month, with increasing benefits, right through to \$300

Why do I need it?	Professional video hosting with analytics and video marketing tools.
What makes it stand out?	Wistia has a myriad of tools that really set it apart from the crowd, such as Calls to action, Email collectors, video heatmaps and engagement graphs, allowing you to see on no uncertain terms, what works well and why.
Key features	✓ Easy to configure and embed videos onto the site ✓ The heatmaps are really effective at showing, at what part your video was paused/skipped/replayed. ✓ Customisable colours on your video player, ensuring it stays within the design of the site
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool The straight-forward, user friendly user interface is great. The available tools are robust with enhancements made regularly. The reporting features are well presented and easy to understand, which gives great insight into how your video content is being consumed.

15.3 Vimeo



Free version is HD-free
Paid for version for use in business can cost in excess of \$200 a year

Why do I need it?	It's very similar to YouTube, by which users can upload and watch videos. However, what sets Vimeo apart, is how it focuses on much longer videos, such as short films or even full length movies.
What makes it stand out?	Vimeo also focussing in, on delivering the users their content, without the incessant need for adverts making noise and distracting the audience from your message.
Key features	✓ Uploading content, is fool-proof meaning you don't need any technical knowledge in order to use it. ✓ Managing your content is also easy
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool Vimeo is incredibly simple to use, with even the least tech-savvy of user able to navigate the site, upload a video and edit the preferences. Where it falls short is the lack of insights and analytics, compared to some of the aforementioned tools.

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15.4 Uberflip



Free trial available
Paid

Why do I need it?	Uberflip is a content marketing platform, used to aggregate all of your content
What makes it stand out?	In a nutshell it gives marketers the ability to easily create an entire content experience, without the need for IT. It seamlessly integrates with WordPress and has very simple drag and drop features that make it simple to develop customized streams of content.
Key features	✓ Draws together all existing social channels into one hub, preventing readers from being distracted by other content and keeping them in your site. ✓ Provides easy to use conversion tools in the form of Call to Action tiles, including option to use these for gated content. ✓ Great metrics to help compare different pieces and types of content, see what is converting and improve. Graphs etc., very visually appealing
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Uberflip, does a great job of centralising all of your content into one hub, giving you more control over what your content does and when.

15.5 Placeit



Free to see mockups
Paid to download

Why do I need it?	Placeit does one thing very well, creating instant Phone/Computer/Tablet/Smartwatch mockups and demo videos.
What makes it stand out?	They have an enormous selection of options to generate self-proclaimed fancy mockups and high quality product images of your apps being used in realistic environments.
Key features	✓ Incredibly easy to use ✓ Saves time and money on designers ✓ Huge library of devices
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool When it comes to advertising your app or website, having high quality mockup of your app being used can drastically increase downloads and usage. Importantly, it save all that time and effort that invariably comes with spent hours upon hours digitally placing screenshots of their products onto images of a phone, tablet, and/or computer; it takes even longer if you do all three.

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16. On-site push notification

What do these tools do?

Enables desktop custom messages (e.g. light boxes or banners) or push notifications (e.g. for apps on mobile) targeted to user segments defined by various selection criteria. Many tools also offer a/b and personalisation functionality too.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

These tools can be powerful aids to conversion rate optimisation. Delivery of customised content and notifications for different types of site user goes beyond a/b testing which traditionally seeks to optimise a single page (the belief being that the best page you can present a user will vary depending on the type of user they are). There are a wide range of use cases from pop ups on your blog to help generate more opt in leads to support or incentive messaging on your checkout pages to drive conversions and sales.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Pop up messaging and push notifications can quickly become frustrating for the user. Therefore, try to identify the key moments when this messaging will really add value to your visitors. A good example would be support for trial users of an online service who you wish to convert to paying customers.
- ✓ A big advantage of these tools is the ability to custom target messages and content to different types of users on site without the need for developers. However, be careful not to rely on these tools for key functionality your site should offer as standard (use cases could include recommendations for which page the user should visit next, similar products to consider, etc). Content sitting within these tools won't be visible to the search engines.

16.1 Hellobar

		Paid, with free trail
Why do I need it?	Hellobar is a nifty tool for adding notifications to your site, which can be handy for growing email subscribers or highlighting new content or offers.	
What makes it stand out?	Hellobar is easy to use and comes with A/B testing features so you can test your messaging and optimise the copy for maximum conversion.	
Key features	✓ Can configure messages to be unobtrusive or be full pop-ups. ✓ A-B testing feature help you optimise your copy ✓ Build in analytics allows you to review impressions and conversions.	
The Smart Insights view	Best in Class Often push notifications or pop-ups can be annoying and obtrusive. Hellobar lets you create notifications that gently nudge your visitors without annoying them. It's reasonably priced and easy to set up, so we strongly recommend it if you're considering implementing push notifications. <i>Disclosure:</i> Smart Insights are happy users of the paid service.	

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16.2 BrightInfo



Paid

Why do I need it?	Brightinfo is a tool for targeting your web visitors with dynamically generated and personalised interactions. Great for featuring content and boosting conversions.
What makes it stand out?	Brightinfo gives you a huge range of options for featuring content across your site. Brightinfo's algorithm analyses audience behaviour and displays the best matches to individuals, helping to keep them reading and boosting time on site. The fact it automated a lot of the process means it saves you time whilst increasing your web traffic.
Key features	✓ Automated content discovery ✓ Real time audience profiling ✓ Big range of display options
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool Brightinfo offers a great way of engaging your audience and serving them relevant content to keep them on your site. It's quite expensive compared to other tools, but for the price you get its impressive ability to automatically find the content relevant to a certain person and show it to them in all kinds of different ways. It also allows dynamic content re-targeting off your site, on social media platforms like Facebook, giving you a way to stay on your visitors' radar even after they've left the site.

16.3 Evergage



Paid

Why do I need it?	Evergage is a personalised notification tool with a huge range of capabilities. You can use it as a personalisation tool for promoting relevant content, for promoting the most relevant offers for visitors and to enhance your customer on boarding process.
What makes it stand out?	Evergage is different to other solutions in the range of services that it offers. Solutions are broken down by industry and function, so you can select the exact service most relevant to your business type. E-commerce sites in particular can make great use of Evergage's ability to promote the most relevant offers and product pages to individual customers.
Key features	✓ Behavioural tracking for gauging the intent of your visitors ✓ Can deliver personalised messages and experiences ✓ Can conduct A/B and Multivariate tests to help optimise your messaging.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Evergage has a massive suite of features to allow you to boost leads and convert customers via personalised notifications. It is great for e-commerce businesses that haven't already got a personalised notification provider. For smaller sites which don't need an all singing all dancing solution it's probably over-kill, but for enterprises it is certainly worth reviewing.

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16.4 Bounce Exchange

 Paid	
Why do I need it?	Bounce exchanges use behavioural automation software to react to your users 'digital language'. Then it triggers campaigns to guide your customers down the conversion funnel.
What makes it stand out?	Bounce exchange's behavioural automation software is patented, so you won't be able to get that level of real time customer analytics anywhere else. It even detects when a users is moving their mouse towards the back button and can serve them an 'exit capture overlay' to attempt to convert the visitor or keep them onsite.
Key features	✓ Patented behavioural automation algorithm for boosting conversions. ✓ Constantly being optimised with 50,000 A/B test run monthly. ✓ Customized automation unique to your business
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Bounce exchange are market leaders in behavioural automation and delivering personalised campaigns. They're really only for the bigger enterprises, as their pricing isn't designed with smaller business in mind. They've got some flak in the past for presenting users with highly negative opt out choices, which present a false dilemma. For example readers of Elle had to select 'I'm not interested in protecting my skin' to opt out of proving their email address'. So if you do use them make sure they don't implement any campaigns that could end up annoying your customers.

16.5 Sale Cycle

 Paid	
Why do I need it?	Salecycle is a re-marketing tool which allows you to re-connect with your customers and tempt back customers who've dropped out of the sales funnel, thus boosting your conversion rate.
What makes it stand out?	? SaleCycle's On-Site Remarketing and Email Remarketing solutions enables you to reconnect with consumers who abandon their shopping cart, booking or application form with dynamic, personalized messages in real-time
Key features	✓ Remembers booking form information and reminds customers who left the website what their original intentions where, so they don't have to re-enter information ✓ Delivers personalised messages both on site and via email.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool If your typical customers journey involves a customer conducting research, coming to the site several times and possibly checking out competitors, implementing Salecycle is something you should consider. Their personalised re-marketing options could a give a big boost to your conversation rate. Whilst there are plenty of tools that offer re-targeted email messaging, salecycle combines this with personalised on-sight messaging that remembers customer's preferences.

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3 CONVERT

17. Personalisation for Ecommerce

What do these tools do?

Attempt to deliver the right message at the right time to the right person by understanding your visitor by applying (potentially a number of) data sets to form segments of users.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

The intended benefit is to provide a shortcut for each website visitor, surfacing products and content that best meets their goals or that they are most likely to be interested in (what message do we serve, when, how and to whom). If successful, this should mean you have a better chance of each user finding what they are looking for; improving their experience. This in turn potentially leading to a greater number of conversions.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ The biggest pitfall to avoid is rushing in to fast and too big without a plan. The segmentation and personalisation criteria means the possibilities are endless. Resist and start small. Perhaps start with personalising the experience for customers who you already know.
- ✓ Not all users respond to personalising their on and offline experiences the same way. For more on this, read the [Rich Relevance Cool vs. Creepy report findings](#). Users may become suspicious if personalisation goes too far or if you've been unclear with how user/customer data will be used when they've provided it.

17.1 Evergage

 Paid	
Why do I need it?	Evergage offers a wide range of ecommerce solutions including a highly capable set of personalisation tools. Targeting, recommendations, testing and analytics all come as part of the package.
What makes it stand out?	Evergage offers deep behavioural data and advanced analytics, as well as real time segmentation and response. Evergage can also leverage an informal peer network called Evergage Tribes so visitors can browse products and content based on what people similar to them are reading or buying.
Key features	✓ Generates personalised product and content recommendations ✓ Automated promotion means products can be automatically promoted to visitors based on their individual behaviours. ✓ Real time reporting lets you measure campaigns with up to the minute stats.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Evergage is certainly among the best ecommerce personalisation providers out there. In our view it's the best available for overall value. The number of features offers can make it a bit trickier to set up and start working with than other platforms, but this is a very minor drawback.

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17.2 Barilliance

	
Paid	
Why do I need it?	Barilliance is a tool for delivering a personalised shopping experience for your ecommerce store.
What makes it stand out?	Barilliance offers personalisation across every step of the purchase journey, with real time web personalisation, card abandonment emails and personalised product recommendations. They also provide training, guidance on rule creation and account management as part of the cost, setting themselves apart from other providers.
Key features	✓ Personalised retargeting emails and linkage of email with site visitors ✓ Real time web personalisation ✓ Personalised product recommendations.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Barilliance offers an integrated suite of products that enables eCommerce sites of any size to deliver a personalized shopping experience during every step of the purchase journey. We've rated them highly since they are a good value option with a range of personalisation options and have good integration with email targeting unlike some providers. <i>Disclosure:</i> Barilliance are a Content Partner of Smart Insights.

17.3 Marketizator

	
Free account for less than 10,000 visits per month. Paid for more than that.	
Why do I need it?	Marketizator offers a 3 in 1 solution with 100% focus on conversion rate optimization. Its aim is to provide the marketers the right technology to make it possible to apply complex ideas.
What makes it stand out?	Marketizator covers three essential features at a lower price than its direct competitors. It is easy to implement in a few minutes, and you can start tests right away.
Key features	✓ Covers Surveys, A/B testing and personalisation ✓ Has a single login to use all 3 features, minimising the affect on page load times ✓ Offers personalised exit intent pop-ups.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Marketizator is a nifty solution in that it offers 3 different tools in one package. In terms of web personalisation it isn't quite as capable as some of the higher end tools, but it is considerably cheaper, so in terms of ROI it is a good choice for smaller or medium sized businesses. The free trail is also perfect for one-person microbusinesses that aren't yet generating huge amounts of traffic but need to build in some web personalisation to grow their user base. <i>Disclosure:</i> Marketizator are a Content Partner of Smart Insights.

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17.4 Salecycle

	
Paid	
Why do I need it?	Salecycle provides a range of behavioural marketing solutions. They specialised in personalisation solutions, which deliver on-site remarketing to individual customers
What makes it stand out?	Unlike other solutions, Salecycle focuses on remarketing to make sure you convert as many leads as possible. It offers onsite remarketing, email remarketing and SMS remarketing, which isn't offered by most other provides.
Key features	✓ Personalised on-site remarketing ✓ Personalised email remarketing ✓ Personalised SMS remarketing
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Salecycle doesn't offer as many personalisation features as some of the other providers, and its analytics aren't as capable as some of the other tools listed here. However if a simple and reasonably priced solution for personalised retargeting is what you want, then it's the ideal solution for you. If however you want to achieve personalisation across all parts of the customer journey then you'll need a different solution.

17.5 Monetate

	
Paid	
Why do I need it?	Monetate powers multi-channel personalisation for some of the words best brands. It's a top of the range personalisation solution whose strength lies in it's ability to coordinate the personalisation across channels.
What makes it stand out?	Monetate allows you to create tailored customer experiences across web, email, and mobile apps. You can personalize the entire shopping experience. Customize navigation assets, banners, badges, heroes, and more
Key features	✓ Create, manage, and analyse tailored customer experiences in one easy-to-use solution. ✓ Lets you bring together first-party data from sources like your CRM and POS, and combine them with real-time behavioural and contextual observations. ✓ Analytics package lets you Measure every experience against custom KPIs and create clear and simple reports help prove the ROI of your efforts.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Monetate is a extremely capable personalisation solution which is perfect for larger businesses able to invest in a top of the range piece of software. Combining a huge range of personalisation options with capable analytics allows you to optimise your site and boost your conversion rate.

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18. Ecommerce cart recovery

What do these tools do?

They use email and site notifications to drive users back into a site (usually the checkout pages) with the aim of driving incremental transactions by reminding customers of the products or services they abandoned.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

With initial customer acquisition becoming increasingly expensive, brands have focused their efforts in trying to re-engage and convert those users they've already spent money acquiring and/or who have already expressed some level of interest in a product or service. Cart abandonment is the use of remarketing at the closest point to conversion i.e. once a user has added something to their cart but fails to check out.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ It can be difficult to assess if sales resulting from cart abandonment tools are incremental. Make sure any tests you run can give as clear an indication as possible as to whether you are rescuing sales you would otherwise have lost.
- ✓ Carefully consider the customer contact strategies you have in place to avoid bombarding your hottest leads.
- ✓ Constantly test your cart abandonment program. Results will likely diminish as more time passes since the item(s) were added to a users' cart. This should be tested along with subject lines, calls-to-action and email content.
- ✓ Many brands offer an incentive (e.g. a discount) when using these tools to help secure the sale. Be careful with how this is used; can lead to shaping customers' behaviour (deliberately abandoning a purchase to receive a discount).

18.1 Cloud.IQ

 Free trial Paid	
INTEGRATED MARKETING APPS	
Why do I need it?	Cloud.IQ offers a range of marketing apps, helping recover online sales
What makes it stand out?	The main differentiators to other cart recovery platforms, is how they cater for a much wider market, making it suitable for anyone from start-ups to large enterprise clients.
Key features	✓ Help with setting up and optimising your remarketing campaign ✓ No on-going contract or transaction fees ✓ Superb customer service ✓ On average, users see an increase of 5% on turnover ✓ Free site audit before upgrading
The Smart Insights view	Best in category A tool which is perfectly suited to tackle issues from start-ups right up to the largest of enterprise clients. They have one of the best customer service teams, with 24 hours a day, 7 days a week access to conversion experts, who offer support on anything from remarketing queries to personalization issues. <i>Disclosure:</i> Cloud.IQ are a Content Partner of Smart Insights.

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18.2 Salecycle

		Paid
Why do I need it?	Salecycle provides a range of behavioural marketing solutions. They specialised in personalisation solutions, which deliver on-site remarketing to individual customers	
What makes it stand out?	Unlike other solutions, Salecycle focuses on remarketing to make sure you convert as many leads as possible. It offers onsite remarketing, email remarketing and SMS remarketing, which isn't offered by most other provides.	
Key features	✓ Personalised on-site remarketing ✓ Personalised email remarketing ✓ Personalised SMS remarketing	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool Salecycle doesn't offer as many personalisation features as some of the other providers, and its analytics aren't as capable as some of the other tools listed here. However if a simple and reasonably priced solution for personalised ecommerce cart recovery is what you want, then it's the ideal solution for you.	

18.3 Optilead

		Paid
Why do I need it?	Real-time solutions for online cart abandonment recovery	
What makes it stand out?	By connecting your business to abandoned shoppers instantly, Optilead can increasing recovery conversion rates.	
Key features	✓ Activity Tracking ✓ Email Integration ✓ Lead Scoring ✓ Lead Distribution ✓ Real Time Delivery ✓ Retargeting and Remarketing	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool Optilead have become specialists in the fields of Retail, Travel, Insurance, Utility, Telecoms and Financial. <i>Disclosure:</i> Optilead are a Content Partner of Smart Insights.	

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18.4 Fresh Relevance

		Paid
Why do I need it?	To tackle cart and browse recovery emails, making them clean and simple.	
What makes it stand out?	By scraping live web-behavioral data from your eCommerce site, Fresh Relevance are able to create a profile of an online visitor's recently browsed/ carted items. Where you can then re-market these very items to the customer who hasn't converted via targeted recovery emails like the one pictured above.	
Key features	✓ Unlimited real-time live content ✓ Multiple trigger types and testing for better ✓ Customer Profiling Made Simple	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool This service is perhaps better known for its web-based recommendations, but also offer cart and browse abandonment and automated daily emails. Integrations into a wide range of Email service providers.	

18.5 pure360

		Paid - Monthly Rolling Contracts
Why do I need it?	A digital marketing suite that allows you to redefine email, create better campaigns, and transform your digital marketing results.	
What makes it stand out?	A unique combination of a powerful, data-driven marketing suite and best practice framework, which delivers results across email, mobile, web, and social.	
Key features	✓ Build great emails with our drag & drop editor ✓ Excellent account management ✓ Easily integrate your existing business systems ✓ Simple yet powerful reporting suite ✓ Automation, personalisation, and targeting tools	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Pure360's email platform is PureResponse and features a relational database, so it can store transactional data for marketers who would like to segment on the basis of individual purchases that a customer may have made. Making it an interesting proposition for those who haven't found what they're looking for in the aforementioned tools, due to it's ability to segment so specifically. <i>Disclosure: pure360 are a Content Partner of Smart Insights.</i>	

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19. AB and Multivariate tools for structured experiments

What do these tools do?

A/B tests allow you to run one or more different versions of a call to action, a hero banner or other page element against each other compared to a control version. Multivariate testing enables you to test multiple elements at the same time, however requiring more traffic and more time spent on set up.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Improving leads or sales through driving more users down the conversional funnel is the primary goal of these tools. They simplify the process of running these tests, allowing control over the test variables (e.g. how much traffic is sent to the various test versions), provides statistical analysis of the outcomes and provides comprehensive reporting.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ You need enough traffic to test each variant in order to achieve statistical significance (i.e. complete the test and determine a winner). This is unlikely to be a problem for your high traffic pages or for testing the click through rate of your campaign landing page. However, traffic volumes may be an issue in the conversion funnel which is where these tools can bring the greatest value leading to a long time for test to complete (many weeks or months in the worst cases).
- ✓ Not everything needs to be tested so be careful not to fall into that trap. Setting up and running a test requires time and resource, as do interpreting and acting on the results. Ensure each test has a clear rationale and hypothesis.

19.1 Convert



15-day free trial, but after this 3 tiered subscriptions; Big Agency, Small Agency and Business.

Why do I need it?

Allows A/B and multivariate testing using a visual WYSIWYG editor after the addition of asynchronous code.

What makes it stand out?

SaaS application allowing unlimited projects and users, and seamlessly imports Google Analytics goals.

Key features

- ✓ Multi-domain A/B and multivariate testing and tracking, development tools for jQuery, JavaScript and CSS, with comprehensive reports
- ✓ Create and edit tests quickly, test e-commerce products and category pages
- ✓ Integrates with Google Analytics for real-time data and extended segmentation

The Smart Insights view

Best in category tool

The easy integration with Google Analytics is a handy addition to this tool that is not evident from others, but which will enable the reporting of tests and the website behaviour from the same interface.

Disclosure. Smart Insights are a satisfied customer of Convert.com.

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19.2 Visual Website Optimizer



Free trial for standard plans but enterprise plan also available on bespoke quotation.

Why do I need it?

Allows A/B and multivariate testing using a point-and-click editor after the addition of asynchronous code. Client side only.

What makes it stand out?

Client side software that can be use to test full and fractional factorial MVT depending on the requirements. Simple and intuitive to use requiring little technical skill. The tool also offers additional products such as behavioural targeting, heatmaps, usability testing etc. giving a holistic view within the one platform.

Key features

- ✓ Target and experimentation tools
- ✓ Research and user feedback
- ✓ Analytics and reporting including heatmap reports
- ✓ Targeting and personalisation

The Smart Insights view

Recommended tool

This tool is one of the market leaders within smaller businesses and therefore offers the usual features expected from an A/B or MVT tool. It also includes a feature called 'The Idea Factory' which is a repository of best-practices ideas to test to help users get the most from their subscription if they are lacking expertise to devise tests themselves.

19.3 Optimizely



Free basic subscription but bespoke quotations available for larger enterprise plans.

Why do I need it?

Allows A/B and full factorial multivariate testing with easy integration.

What makes it stand out?

Unlike Convert, this tool cannot be self-hosted and appears to only be offered as a self-service tool. Although plans can be customised at enterprise level, there is no full-service option available.

Key features

- ✓ Easy installation with visual editor
- ✓ Testing tools – A/B and MVT
- ✓ Personalisation experimentation
- ✓ "Always-valid" analytics – to see results at any time

The Smart Insights view

Top 5 Tool

The basic subscription is limited in functionality offering restricted access, but the only other option seems to be the customised plan. There is therefore no clarity on the price of premium subscriptions since today this tool makes most of its revenue from larger enterprise businesses and therefore their tool is less likely to focus attention on servicing the smaller end of the market.

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19.4 Maxymiser



No free trials offered and no standard pricing publically available.

Why do I need it?

Seen to be the leading provider of cloud-based software for testing and personalisation, Maxymiser offers a wealth of sophisticated tools and a significant knowledge-base.

What makes it stand out?

Since the acquisition by Oracle, it is now part of the Oracle Marketing Cloud, which means it is integrated with other products and can be used simultaneously for closer testing and analysis if required. It does however mean that it come at a higher price.

Key features

- ✓ A/B and MVT tools
- ✓ Content personalisation
- ✓ Mobile and app optimisation
- ✓ Customer insight data
- ✓ Big data integration (CRM)
- ✓ Can integrate with most analytics providers

The Smart Insights view

Top 5 Tool

This tool is possibly the best-known and most sophisticated tool for larger companies that require a more bespoke testing approach. It allows HTML emails to use the functionality and test design, and has the option of integrating with its CRM platform to collate and analyse big data for greater insight.

19.5 Adobe Target



Adobe Target

No free trials offered and no standard pricing publically available.

Why do I need it?

A comprehensive enterprise A/B, multivariate testing and personalisation platform working across all devices.

What makes it stand out?

Similar to Maxymiser, Target is now part of the Adobe Cloud which offers full integration with Adobe Analytics and content management products. Includes visual editor for micro-tests.

Key features

- ✓ A/B and MVT
- ✓ Automated personalisation tools
- ✓ Mobile app optimisation
- ✓ APIs can integrate Target with data from web analytics,
- ✓ CRM, partner and other 3rd parties to enable further customised segmentation and targeting.

The Smart Insights view

Top 5 Tool

Target is popular with larger ecommerce sites for the real-time automated self-learning personalisation engine.

It allows you to use pre-set or customised rules, including visitor location and specific audiences based on real-time data. Target also has an extensive range of out-of-the box targeting rules for you to choose from. Most recommended for larger enterprise businesses given the cost.

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20. Ecommerce management

What do these tools do?

They provide a platform for online retailers to sell their products and services online; they create a 'digital store front' to enable products in different categories to be search, browsed and purchased.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

To maximise conversion, an online shopping experience needs to be simple and easy for the user, secure at the point of payment and robust so as to deal with both high volumes of product and traffic. E-commerce management tools were designed for this specific purpose and have a number of features that other platforms (i.e. a generic content management system) do not.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ **Implementation and running costs.** There are (often large) costs associated with development, maintenance and migration from these tools. Be clear on these up front. Also, understand the programming language (Java, PHP and .net are the most common) of each solution and their impact on future costs and your internal/agency resource.
- ✓ **Scalability.** It's important that a clear development pipeline is in place to ensure the right platform is chosen, therefore future proofing (as far as possible) for additional requirements. A steering committee should help with this.
- ✓ **How will you host your e-commerce platform?** Cloud based services offer flexibility and require less up front investment. Physical on-site hosting provides a greater degree of control over your data and its privacy.

20.1 Magento



Free with the Community Edition
Free demo's available on various options

Why do I need it?	Magento Commerce is the leading provider of open omnichannel innovation.
What makes it stand out?	Used by over 20% of the worlds websites, this detailed ecommerce platform is built for people with professional web development experience, usually tending to Medium to Large sized organisations
Key features	✓ SEO ✓ Marketing, promotions and conversions ✓ Site management ✓ Catalog management ✓ Catalog browsing ✓ Product browsing ✓ Checkout, payment and shipping ✓ Order management ✓ Customer service
The Smart Insights view	Best in category Magento is one of the most recognised names in the crowded shopping cart scene, and for good reason. The extensive list of features it offers is second to non, making it the go to name in Ecommerce platforms.

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20.2 Woothemes



Some free themes and extensions available
Paid options are also available

Why do I need it?	WooThemes is a provider of high quality WordPress themes,
What makes it stand out?	One of the plugins WooCommerce, offers some powerful shop facilities to your website, powering 30% of all online shops. It's great for both, developers and store owners, due to it's ease of use.
Key features	✓ Payment Gateways included as it Woocommerce comes bundled with myriad of payment options ✓ Easy to configure shipping options ✓ Automatic tax calculations ✓ Tracking stock levels and shipments ✓ Integration of various extensions to build your own databases ✓ Onetime payment
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool WooThemes and the WooCommerce plugin are a great alternative to Magento, granted it isn't quite as powerful as Magento. But for the non-web developer, the seamless cohesion with WordPress makes it hard to ignore. Certainly the best option, if you're looking for any easy way and cheap way to implement

20.3 Shopify



14 Day Free Trail available
Monthly payments ranging from \$9 - \$179 depending on what you're looking for

Why do I need it?	It has almost everything you need, to run your own ecommerce store, with something for everyone. From if you're planning to run your store fully online or from a brick and mortar.
What makes it stand out?	They have one of the most extensive and thought-out dashboards of any ecommerce platform and as previously mentioned, have something for everyone. From POS software for iPads to Content Management Systems for your site. It has free and paid for options for all
Key features	✓ Ease of use ✓ Lots of integrations ✓ Wide range of professional looking themes, both free and paid ✓ Simplistic Inventory Management ✓ Level 1 PCI DSS compliant, in other words your data is secured
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool With the extensive tools at your finger it is one of the best hosted solutions for creating an online store. Arguably the best for anyone with a physical store, thanks to the POS systems they have implemented.

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20.4 Prestashop

		Free
Why do I need it?	PrestaShop is an opensource shopping cart, that provides everything you need to get started with an ecommerce venture	
What makes it stand out?	It's completely free to set up and open source, and offers a tremendous amount of templates to modify the look of your site. It's main benefit is the amount of data you can pull out of Prestashop.	
Key features	✓ Solid SEO ✓ Easy to navigate add-ons ✓ Mobile Compatability ✓ Detailed Statistics ✓ Free to set up	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool A great platform to use if you're looking to start up an ecommerce site and love getting your teeth into the nitty gritty of data. Watching your net profit margins raise in real time would really spur you to get the most out of your site. This is what sets it apart from the competitors. The only negative about prestashop is to be careful if you're a small merchant selling a couple dozen to a couple hundred items online, it's easy to see how developer fees, extra support, add-ons, hosting, and processing fees would quickly end up costing	

20.5 Actinic

		Free Trail Paid options available
Why do I need it?	A shopping cart software has effective and useful administrative tools to manage every aspect of your eCommerce website.	
What makes it stand out?	It's standout feature is the web-design features and an administrative dashboard with great functionality.	
Key features	✓ Great graphic design ✓ Simplified stock and order management	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool If the other tools don't suit your needs, Actinic does the key things very well and has some of the best designs. However, it lacks some of the more common features that would entice customers to your shop and add to their online experience.	

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21. Customer reviews and ratings tools

What do these tools do?

They enable marketers to collect and request product and customer service reviews. Some tools also curate conversations happening on social media for brands to use as social proof on their websites.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Reviews have become essential to buying and selling online with customers trusting customer reviews over 10 times more than descriptions or claims made by the brand itself (eMarketer, 2010). Reviews can also benefit a brands' search marketing efforts.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ If you're not asking for and responding to customer reviews, your brand is almost certainly being discussed somewhere without you. It's far better to be part of the conversation (even if you're tackling negative issues) than to be without a voice.
- ✓ Customers expect the odd bad review (there's evidence to suggest customers don't trust reviews that are all positive). It's the balance of good to bad reviews that's important.
- ✓ Are you making the most of your reviews? They're powerful for SEO product listings, PPC ads and as navigational filters (i.e. ranking products using customer feedback)

21.1 Trustpilot

 TRUSTPILOT		14 Day Trail available Free accounts are available Paid comes in three packages, Lite, Pro & Enterprise
Why do I need it?	A customer review platform, designed and created with the client and their goals in mind.	
What makes it stand out?	Trustpilot focuses on transparency to ensure trust is built and retention is sustained. Achieving this by giving businesses the tools needed to collect reviews, acquire new customers, foster relationships, and extend customer reach.	
Key features	✓ Customer Service is outstanding ✓ Industry standard for features on offer ✓ Trustbox Widgets which can be embedded on your site ✓ Ratings can be pulled through by Google for any PPC campaigns	
The Smart Insights view	Best in Category The industry standard in customer reviews and rating tools, TrustPilot provide a level of transparency which is clear to both users and businesses.	

21.2 Feefo



Free trail available
Paid options available

Why do I need it?	Feefo gives you a complete understanding of your customers' experience.
What makes it stand out?	The ability to manage all of your customer ratings and review from the dashboard
Key features	✓ Provide Google with ratings data so that product ratings show up in Google's results pages ✓ Reports and analytics ✓ Social sharing ✓ Customizable rating displays ✓ Ratings can be pulled through by Google for any PPC campaigns
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool Feefo is a well respected customer review tool, which offers a little more control over the feedback and reviews shown. The dashboard allows you to manage who sees what and in what format, whether that be through Percentages, Star Rating, or Text.

21.3 Yotpo



Free option available with the Lite
4 Paid options on offer too

Why do I need it?	To generate reviews from customers
What makes it stand out?	Helps businesses collect 9x more reviews, with its Mail After Purchase (MAP) feature. The company says that it can generate reviews from 10% of a business's customers simply with the use of data-driven, automatic emails.
Key features	✓ Widgets available, which have shown to improve on-site conversion by 2.5x ✓ Uses user generated photos to help market your business ✓ Facebook and Twitter integrations ✓ Reviewers are incentivized to respond
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool Yotpo tends to generate more reviews than any other "review" site, in part due to the incentives sent their way in the way of coupons to respond. This of course, tends to mean a slightly more favourable review, meaning you may be missing critical feedback.

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21.4 Bazaarvoice

	
Paid	
Why do I need it?	To extend the online marketing potential of the customer voice to shopping portals, natural search, offline channels.
What makes it stand out?	The ability to respond to product reviews is incredibly simpler and more efficient process.
Key features	✓ Customers sent a post-interaction email, to encourage feedback ✓ Conversion Impact Report shows your Conversion Rate, ✓ Questions & Answers section on the product detail pages gives another way to add SEO-rich content
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Bazaarvoice, provides a good service similar to the aforementioned, but with added data and easy responses. It's pricetag is a slight deterrent, however the analytics available may outweigh your decision.

21.5 Reevo

	
Paid	
Why do I need it?	Reevo provide an honest, impartial and trusted review collection platform to some of the largest global brands.
What makes it stand out?	Manage all the user ratings and reviews from one dashboard and it's ability to run reports.
Key features	✓ Reviews and ratings management ✓ Customer insights ✓ Reports and analytics
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Reevo is a fairly standard review site, with easy functionality and additional data and reports which can be pulled through the simple to use dashboard.

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22. Call tracking (AdWords and other paid media)

What do these tools do?

Call tracking can dynamically change the phone number a customer sees based on the campaign or channel they've engaged with. For example, some tools enable calls prompted by AdWords campaigns to be shown within Google AdWords. This can help to bridge the gap between how your digital activity is driving offline leads.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

With the competition for online media placements inflating cost-per-click in Google AdWords, Display and Programmatic marketing it's important to be able to prove the returns from investment in digital media.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Options and quality of integration with other systems, especially analytics and CRM systems
- ✓ Google has improved it's [own call tracking in AdWords](#), somewhat reducing the needed for these services
- ✓ Who will take ownership; they may be classed as digital tools (or paid for by the digital tools budget) yet be implemented or used by other teams such as development, I.T or customer service. These tools need an owner to champion adoption.
- ✓ A clear process is needed to ensure these tools don't impact other areas of marketing.
- ✓ Range of countries supported

22.1 Infinity

		Paid service with demo
Why do I need it?	Identify which marketing source has led to a phone call.	
What makes it stand out?	Granular reporting, range of integrations and number of countries supported.	
Key features	✓ Call tracking reported to campaign, Ad Group and Keyword level in Google Analytics ✓ Integrations with Google, Omniture and Webtrends Analytics and the 4 main tag managers	
The Smart Insights view	Best in category We don't have personal experience of this service, but have rated it top since it is available in 50 countries including North America, most European countries, plus a selection of Latin America and Asia Pacific countries and is top-rated in the Google Analytics App gallery call-tracking category.	

22.1 Convirza



Paid service with Demo.

Why do I need it?	Where additional insight on call quality and lead scoring is needed.
What makes it stand out?	Focus on call tracking actions in addition to call-tracking including lead scoring and marketing automation integration
Key features	✓ Call tracking for AdWords, Doubleclick, Acquisio and offline media like direct mail. ✓ Lead quality scoring ✓ Bid management based on lead quality and value
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We've included this tool for its focus on assessing the value of leads and then acting on them rather than its call analytics features. Given this, its most suited for enterprise applications. Second highest rated in Google Analytics App category.

22.3 Response Tap



Paid service with demo and trial

Why do I need it?	Where additional insight on call quality and lead scoring is needed.
What makes it stand out?	Visitor-level call-tracking. Like Convirza this service considers lead value
Key features	✓ Visitor-level call-tracking with the capacity to link multiple visits. ✓ Integration with CRM system based on potential value ✓ Salesforce integration.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We're unsure why this tool isn't listed in the Google Analytics app gallery. It is a UK-focused service used by large UK brands and agency.



22.4. CallTrackingMetrics.com

Paid service with demo	
	
Why do I need it?	Price-competitive option - see the site for pricing plans.
What makes it stand out?	US-based, relatively wide range of CRM integrations
Key features	✓ Local and toll free tracking numbers available in 71 countries. Offering premium local and toll free vanity numbers. ✓ Integration with Google Analytics, HubSpot, Wordpress, Salesforce, Kissmetrics and Marin Software ✓ Call tracking for offline channel
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Although this service doesn't have the enterprise lead-scoring features and analytics integrations of some other services it does have a good-level of reporting options including agent-based and client-level reports.

22.5 CallRail

Paid service with demo	
	
Why do I need it?	Price-competitive option - see the site for pricing plans.
What makes it stand out?	US and Canada only service
Key features	✓ Rapid configuration of new numbers and custom routings ✓ Integration with Google Analytics, HubSpot, Wordpress, Salesforce, Kissmetrics and Marin Software ✓ Call recording and agency call-tracking
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Like CallTrackingMetrics this service publishes pricing. The main difference at a practical level is that fewer countries are supported.

23. Live chat

What do these tools do?

This category has a range of tools that deliver a better experience to customers or enables better support as customers work through the consideration stages before a purchase.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

IP geo-location can help brands and marketers deliver a more relevant experience through surfacing localised content based on the users' location (i.e. store location). Call tracking can dynamically change the phone number a customer sees based on the campaign or channel they've engaged with. This can help to bridge the gap between how your digital activity is driving offline leads. A Forrester report found that 44% of people considering an online purchase thought live chat to be one of the most important things a website could offer

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Who will take ownership; they may be classed as digital tools (or paid for by the digital tools budget) yet be implemented or used by other teams such as development, I.T or customer service. These tools need an owner to champion adoption.
- ✓ A clear process is needed to ensure these tools don't impact other areas of marketing. For example, IP geo-location and re-direction tools can have negative impacts upon optimal customer experience, SEO and PPC if incorrectly managed.

23.1 Olark

	
Free plan available Paid plans for more options	
Why do I need it?	To talk with your customers now with beautiful, easy to install live chat software.
What makes it stand out?	It's beautiful design and customisation makes it a fun tool to use
Key features	✓ Analytics ✓ Customisation ✓ Chat rating system ✓ Off-line Messaging ✓ Ecommerce Platform Integration
The Smart Insights view	Best in Category The gorgeous interface and superb addition of visitors being able to rate the chat, means you can collect satisfaction data. Their pricing isn't unreasonable either, however if you want to remove branding it's a little more costly.

23.2 Tawk.to

		Free
Why do I need it?	Tawk.to lets you monitor and chat with visitors on your website or from a free customizable page	
What makes it stand out?	It does everything very well and is free!	
Key features	✓ Monitor Site visitors in real time ✓ Answer chats from mobile ✓ Engage with visitors via triggers ✓ Customize site with widgets ✓ Localize greetings ✓ 1 minute set up time	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool The ease of which it is to add this to your site is incredibly. In addition the real time information adds value for your visitors. You will be able to monitor where the online visitors came from, their country, their ISP and IP addresses. The ability to chat to concurrent visitors, also means there's no need for a massive team of support staff.	

23.3 Liveperson

		Free trail available Paid
Why do I need it?	Liveperson transforms the connection between brands and consumers.	
What makes it stand out?	The ability to monitor and approach customers directly is critical, if you can reach your customers while they are making critical buying decisions	
Key features	✓ Excellent analytic tools ✓ Customer data is pulled through that you can use in PR campaigns ✓ Real time reporting ✓ Respond on mobile ✓ Great support ✓ Integration with Facebook and Salesforce	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended Tool A tool which is capable of increasing ROI and customer loyalty, it's certainly something worth taking a look at. The integration with Facebook and Salesforce is a real benefit too, allowing you to successfully hone in on specific markets.	

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23.4 LiveChat

	
Free Trail Paid	
Why do I need it?	The fastest way to help your customers
What makes it stand out?	A feature that sets them apart from their competition is the new ticketing system. Offline messages go directly into this channel and can be handled more easily by your team with different statuses
Key features	✓ Ticketing system lets support staff now how far along the funnel customer is ✓ Show your company's logo and a photo of the operator (optional) ✓ Visitors can request a transcript immediately
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Livechat just works really well and is surprisingly fun to use. A simple interface and set up are also advantageous. One thing worth noting is how LiveChat bills you per concurrent user meaning one seat can be used by multiple agents, which is particularly advantageous if your team works in shifts.

23.5 TouchCommerce

	
Paid	
Why do I need it?	TouchCommerce is the leading innovator in omni-channel engagement solutions, including mobile chat solutions.
What makes it stand out?	TouchCommerce es real time customer data to target and personalize online customer engagement, because of this we deliver higher sales conversion and better customer service.
Key features	✓ Live Agent Engagement ✓ SMS support ✓ Self Service Engagement
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool A very solid tool, which you can engage with customers across multiple channels, from social media, to SMS to live on site.

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4 ENGAGE

Social media management tools

There has been significant changes in this category of tools over the past few years with a lot of consolidation and evolution of features. We've broken social media tools into three; social media publishing, listening and campaign tools.

However as with some of the other categories, it is possible to invest in enterprise social media tools which provide all of these features as standard with some also offering enhanced customer service and social media advertising tools.

The likelihood of your brand needing an enterprise level social media tool will depend on the maturity and importance placed on your social media channels. Key questions to ask include:

- ✓ Is your brand spending significant budget on social media advertising? If so, how is this managed at the moment? Is your analytics and tracking providing what it needs to? (Enterprise tools often provide enhanced social media analytics.)
- ✓ Are you publishing large amounts of content? If so, how are your scheduled future posts handled? Can the tools you use currently publish to all the platforms you're active on?
- ✓ Do your customers use social media as a key customer service channel? If yes, you may be receiving a high volume of inbound questions and queries which requires a tool with strong workflow functionality and which integrates with other customer service tools you're using.

24. Social media – publishing focus

What do these tools do?

They enable easy management of publishing content and responding to conversation over various social media platforms through column based dashboards with search/filter functionality. Freemium tools such as Hootsuite and Tweetdeck are two popular examples.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

These tools bring all the social media conversation from platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Instagram into one place. This saves huge amounts of time as it reduces the need for social media teams to visit each brand profile on each platform. It's also quick and easy to follow trending topics, competitors or search for specific keywords (e.g. campaign hashtags).

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ **Do you really need to upgrade from the free version?** Simple publishing and responding to conversation tasks are well catered for by free tools. If multiple users or teams are involved or integration with CRM or customer service tools are needed, then upgrading beyond the free versions might be necessary.
- ✓ **Know your requirements.** Ask your social media team for the restrictions they currently face with any free tools they're using. Do the tools you're evaluating help solve those problems or save time elsewhere? Do they publish and manage all the platforms your brand is active on and are you able to bulk upload content and manage editorial or content calendars within the tool?



24.1 Hootsuite

		Free, pro (paid) and business options
Why do I need it?	Hootsuite can connect with over 35 social networks, and is a great tool for simplifying the processes of posting to social media and listening to your audience on social.	
What makes it stand out?	Hootsuite is a market leader in terms of the number of platforms it can connect to and features it offers, even in the free version. Scheduling tools make post content to multiple platforms easy, whilst it's social media monitoring tools have handy filtering features so you can drill down and find out what's really being said about your brand.	
Key features	✓ Manage all your social networks and schedule updates for future publishing ✓ Hear what your audience is saying about you with social media monitoring tools ✓ Analytics let you see what works and what doesn't	
The Smart Insights view	Best in Class	Hootsuite is a great tool for scheduling posts and keeping on top of your social community. Although its not as intuitively easy to use as Buffer, it can be learnt easily and offers integration with more sites than most other social sharing tools.

24.2 Buffer

		Free and paid options
Why do I need it?	Buffer is an ultra-simple social sharing tool that saves you time by eliminating the need to share to different platforms separately.	
What makes it stand out?	Buffer is beautifully easy to use and intuitive. It also has an accompanying chrome extension allows you to schedule the sharing of any page with just a couple of clicks.	
Key features	✓ Schedule post across all major social networks quickly, with the ability to tailor sharing schedules to each networks. ✓ Chrome extension makes sharing easier- It auto-fills part of the post. ✓ Analytics tools let you review how your posts perform.	
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool	Buffer is perfect for SMEs starting out with social media marketing. Intuitive design and effective scheduling tools mean its great for managing your social accounts when saving time is a priority.

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24.3 Sprout Social

 Paid – but has free trial period	
Why do I need it?	Sprout Social gives you access to social tools designed to help you schedule and publish content across all your social networks, monitor all your channels and give you valuable analytics data.
What makes it stand out?	The automated Sprout Queue fills in the gaps around campaigns that you've scheduled, whilst a collaborative calendar allows your whole team to pull together in managing the content that is published.
Key features	✓ Social monitoring tools let you track keywords in Twitter and monitor hash tags on Instagram. ✓ Analytics tools tracks clicks, shares and lets you create presentation ready reports easily. ✓ Collaborative calendar facilitates teamwork
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Sprout Social is considerably more expensive than Hootsuite or Buffer, but it does offer features that the other tools do not. If your social media department is only one or two people then you may not need its full suite of features, but if you are part of a larger organisation then the more advanced scheduling and analytics tools are highly valuable.

24.4 Viralheat

 Paid	
Why do I need it?	Viralheat helps manage multiple social media campaigns, and is designed to help drive better optimisation.
What makes it stand out?	Viralheat's listening tool lets you monitor conversations about your brand across a huge range of social networks. As well as allowing content scheduling across all major social networks, it also helps you source relevant content.
Key features	✓ Social listening tools let you create 'Smart Streams' for you social channels to identify trends. ✓ Allows responding to mentions within the platform ✓ Can configure email alerts to notify when key metrics change significantly, letting you respond quickly in a crisis.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool The monitoring tools provided by viralheat are probably its most powerful feature. The ability to see sentiment analysis and export data to excel is really useful for marketers in larger organisations. If your just looking for a content scheduling tool, then viralheat is not necessary, but if you're serious about monitoring social channels and using data to optimise your posting then viralheat is a good choice.

24.5 Falconsocial

	
Paid.	
Why do I need it?	Falcon social is social media management tool designed for larger organisation. It lets to listen, manage and publish content using a collaborative content calendar.
What makes it stand out?	Falcon comes into its own on the collaboration and management side of things. Its governance tools are ideal for executives, as you can assign different permission levels to allow collaboration without endangering security.
Key features	✅ Collaboration features allow the creation of teams, the assigning of different permission levels and the review of who made what posts and comments. ✅ Employee advocacy tools encourage the sharing of your content and foster a community of engaged employees. ✅ Brand governance tools keep brand messaging in line, even across social channels.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Falcon social is only really useful if you work for a big brand, as otherwise its suite of features will go unused. If you do then it's probably the best tool available, as it's designed specifically with big brands in mind. If managing a big social media team is an issue for you, Falcon Social could be the solution you've been looking for.

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25. Social media – listening focus

What do these tools do?

Offer comprehensive search or “listening” functionality for keyword(s) and phrases with advanced query set up. Most of the tools specialising in this category have subscription based services with a tiered structure based on the volumes of searches or results required or the amount of historical data you need access to.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

These tools go beyond basic brand mention alerts and are powerful research tools offering deep insight into conversation about your brand, your competitors or your industry. Deeper and wider indexing of results, sentiment analysis, crisis management and customisable dashboards and reporting differentiate these tools from those offered for free.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Sentiment analysis is still far from perfect. Some tools enable override options so you can validate or correct sentiment analysis for reporting purposes.
- ✓ Depending on the security settings of an individual's profile (applies to groups too), don't expect these tools to be able to see all your brand or keyword mentions on Facebook. If those mentions are blocked to you, they're blocked to the tools too.
- ✓ The building of accurate and complex queries requires some skill with Boolean logic. You may want to factor in a service level that includes initial set up or on-going support. Be warned the editing of queries can quickly go wrong.

25.1 Socialmention

socialmention ★ Free

Why do I need it?

Social mention is a simple and free tool for seeing what people are saying about your brand online. It tracks what people are saying across Twitter, Facebook and 100 other social sites, all in real time.

What makes it stand out?

Some listening tools might work with just Twitter or just the main few social networks, but social mention comes over 100 social media sites, leaving no stone unturned. It gives scores for passion, reach and sentiment, showing at a glance what people are saying about your brand.

Key features

- ✓ Combs 100+ social sites
- ✓ Scorecard assesses the online passion for your brand.
- ✓ Topic-based email alerts can be set up.

The Smart Insights view

Best in class

In our view you can't beat the value of social mention. It's free yet it has a great range of features and looks at a vast range of sites. That said its user interface is quite clunky, it's filtering options aren't great and sometimes the queries generate returns that won't be relevant to what your searching for. For that reason it is not really an enterprise ready tool, but its perfect for conducting social listening cheaply.

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25.2 Talkwalker alerts

	
Free	
Why do I need it?	Talkwalker Alerts provides an easy and free alerting service that gives you email updates of the latest relevant mentions on the Web directly to your email box or RSS feed reader.
What makes it stand out?	Talk water helps you monitor the web for new content about your brand without having to constantly be searching for it. You can configure emails to come through daily or weekly, so you can save time and not get overwhelmed by alerts, which is a problem with Google Alerts.
Key features	✓ Emails daily or weekly depending on preference ✓ Can filter to give all mentions or just the ones it thinks most relevant
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool Talkwalkter alerts is a great free alternative to Google Alerts that lets you keep up to date with mentions without getting overwhelmed by a constant barrage of updates. If your managing the social listening of a larger organisation then it doesn't have the capabilities you will require, but it's a great free tool for smaller businesses without dedicated social listening departments to use.

25.3 Buzzsumo

	
Free option with strict usage limits. Paid options for uncapped usage. Paid option has a free trail.	
Why do I need it?	Buzzsumo is a tool for analysing trends, listening to what people are saying about your brand and assessing how well your content is doing across social platforms
What makes it stand out?	Buzzsumo shows at a glance the number of shares a given bit of content has received across Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest and Google+. It is great for researching what content will work well with your audience as well as discovering to how your current content is going down.
Key features	✓ Identify influencers within a given niche ✓ Discover how your content is performing across social networks ✓ Save searches, export data and create alerts.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Buzzsumo is a highly capable tool and one of the best available for assessing how your content is doing across social sites. The ability to discover influencers in any area is also really useful for any one looking at influencer outreach. Our one criticism is sometimes we've noticed discrepancies in the data on the number of shares it thinks a piece of content has and what we've found from the LinkedIn or Facebook API. However this is very rare and generally speaking the data is very accurate.

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25.4 Sysomos

		Pricing information is not available without request. Products are available as standalone or collectively through the 'SET' offering.
Why do I need it?	To collate key insights from social data, capture relevant conversations in one application, and report behaviour such as when content goes viral or new breaks.	
What makes it stand out?	Pulls together multiple facets such as analytics, social listening, influencer marketing, paid for advertising campaigns, and conversation from blogs, Twitter, social networks, message boards, wikis and major news sources.	
Key features	✓ Social media analytics based on complex queries pre-built in advance ✓ Identify and engage with influencers ✓ Integrates with multiple social media channels ✓ Can be used to optimise paid for campaigns	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool The Sysomos tool is available as separate products but also complete as a comprehensive solution, although pricing or subscription terms are unclear. Integrating geo-demographic, key influencers and sentiment it helps businesses to understand more of their social activity rather than simply monitoring it.	

25.5 Social Crawlytics

		Free
Why do I need it?	Social Crawlytics is a free alternative to Buzzsumo for assessing the number of shares your content or anyone else's content has received. The only downside is that since Twitter shut down its share count API last year it can't be used to find out the number of shares in Twitter.	
What makes it stand out?	Social Crawlytics provides an easy to way to see how your content is performing and see the most shared authors in given areas. It also has a chrome extension to make checking social shares just a click away on any site.	
Key features	✓ Monitor, schedule and analyse social sharing metrics in one intuitive dashboard. ✓ Find out where your competitor's content is being shared and promoted. ✓ Discover most shared authors is given areas	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool The social crawlytics chrome extension makes analysing content quick and easy, so is great as a time saver. The lack of Twitter share counts isn't social crawlytics fault, it used to have it but they lost the ability when Twitter shut down their share API. However it is still frustrating not to have the Twitter data.	

26. Social media – campaign tools

What do these tools do?

Offer flexible campaign and advertising tools for running campaigns on all the major social media platforms.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

They provide a quick and easy method for setting up customer engagement campaigns, from templates for quizzes, surveys and sweepstakes to white label options with full CSS editing and iFrame functionality. These tools can focus on a number of campaigns goals (e.g. driving engagement or collecting leads) and have powerful social sharing features out the box but with custom options ensuring each campaign can be tailored accordingly.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Whilst these tools provide a quick and easy option for many brands, ultimately these tools act as a third party between you and the customer limiting your control of the customer journey (vs. something custom built on your site, for example) and, potentially, your (free) access to remarketing data.
- ✓ You will need some design resource to brand even the basic, template campaigns. In addition, CSS skills are needed for the fully customisable options. The companies offering these tools can provide these services at a cost.
- ✓ Most are available on month by month pricing models with discounts for annual plans. Pricing can rise steeply and are typically based on entry volumes (of the campaigns you run) and brand community size. Be clear on the total costs up front of all likely scenarios. (Be careful - what starts as a quick and inexpensive campaign can quickly become costlier than planned).

26.1 Shortstack

 SHORTSTACK		Free trial available with 4 further premium plans for enhanced features.
Why do I need it?	A self-service platform to build engaging campaigns for social, web and mobile such as sweepstakes or voting contests. Boost engagement and also use to capture leads.	
What makes it stand out?	The platform features more than 30+ widgets, 30+ themes, and 90+ templates to build contests and sweepstakes, special offers, landing pages, custom forms and host them. The tool integrates with Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.	
Key features	✓ Ready-made templates and themes ✓ Easy to use editor ✓ CSS editor to customise further ✓ Custom URLs ✓ White label options ✓ Fan-gating	
The Smart Insights view	Best in category tool This tool helps businesses of all sizes build campaigns from the ground up, through templates and drag-and-drop functions, but can also build campaigns in-house for businesses. It presents a great tool for quickly and easily launching social media campaigns without	

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26.2 Spredfast



Pricing is not available without bespoke requests.

Why do I need it?	Social media management system that enables companies to monitor, manage and measure cross-platform social media initiatives.
What makes it stand out?	Through an easy-to-use interface, this tool breaks tasks up into easily accessible tools; to start and store connections made, curate the best social content to republish, target audiences, create promotions and schedule content.
Key features	✓ Social media management ✓ Social listening and analytics ✓ Social content curation ✓ Content marketing ✓ Broadcast TV integration ✓ Real-time marketing ✓ Social care ✓ Social commerce ✓ Social sponsorship
The Smart Insights view	Recommended tool This is a great tool for businesses that need to harness their social content and to use social media to both better understand an audience but also manage better their customer service via listening tools. It offers scheduling tools that can be used with reports that

26.3 Woobox



Free plans with limitations but paid plans give extra functionality.

Why do I need it?	Easily create powerful contests, sweepstakes, coupons, and more to grow fanbase and amplify marketing.
What makes it stand out?	This tool offers businesses the ability to create and launch social marketing campaigns, but also have functionality to streamline Facebook advertising with ad tools.
Key features	✓ Create easy to use social campaigns ✓ Paid for plans include the Facebook advertising tools ✓ Easily integrate with selected 3rd party tools
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Like Shortstack, this tool is available for free and offers businesses the ability to create and launch social campaigns. For paid for plans, bigger businesses can remove the restrictions and also take advantage the inclusive Facebook advertising tools.

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26.4 Pagemodo

		Tiered pricing plans for small and large businesses as well as agency.
Why do I need it?	Social marketing platform for small businesses to create a consistent and engaging visual social media presence. Modify Facebook pages by improving cover photos, adding custom tabs, creating contests and scheduling posts.	
What makes it stand out?	This tool offers businesses the ability to create and launch social marketing campaigns as other tools do, customise Facebook pages and schedule content, and also set up Facebook advertising.	
Key features	✓ Facebook advert designer and targeting ✓ Cover photo creation ✓ Contest designer ✓ Custom tab builders ✓ Post designer ✓ Post scheduler ✓ Twitter header designer	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	This tool is best aimed at smaller businesses to help them to manage Facebook pages, but users can also easily share branded and coordinated content across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, email, print collateral, and other platforms.

26.5 Tab Foundry

		Free plans with limitations but paid plans give extra functionality.
Why do I need it?	Easily build quizzes, sweepstakes, games, photo contests or custom tabs for Facebook pages.	
What makes it stand out?	Businesses don't have to use pre-determined layouts to launch Facebook campaigns – users are given full control over look and feel, and widget design.	
Key features	✓ Create easy to use social campaigns with the drag and drop editor ✓ Capture new leads ✓ Convert traffic from other social networks to Facebook fans	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	Like other social marketing campaign tools, Tab Foundry is available for free and offers businesses the ability to create and launch social campaigns. This tool offers greater flexibility in terms of design however, and therefore may be the most suited to use at agencies on behalf of clients.

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27. Online customer service tools

What do these tools do?

They speed up, collate, structure and simplify in and out bound customer service communication. They provide an easy to use interface but also permit responses direct to and from a users' email address.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Customer questions and service team responses can be used to build FAQs, they integrate with social media and can categorise complaints by topic, by platform and by a number of other filters, providing brands with a better understanding of their customer service issues. They also improve workflow between team members. Overall they are aimed at improving the quality of customer service.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ It's a big exercise to transition to one of these tools. Run a pilot with some of your best customer service team members on a subset of your customer base. This increases the chances of success and the resulting advocacy will be powerful when rolled out to the wider team.
- ✓ The functionality offered can be overwhelming. Be clear on what you will and won't adopt at the beginning. If at all possible, 'resource up' to manage the rollout of the tool. Lack of time to get to know the platform and the pressures of keeping up with the constant in-bound comms are key causes for a lack of tool adoption.
- ✓ There are plenty of customisable brand and design features with these tools to provide a seamless experience. It's important that the look and feel of any website features adopted are consistent and appears trustworthy to the user (the url, the branding, etc).

Note that [Desk.com](https://www.desk.com) from Salesforce is another major contender in this category.

27.1 Zendesk

	
Paid service with demo.	
Why do I need it?	To provide a workflow management system to answer customer queries and to build a knowledgebase to reduce the need for support requests requiring a human response.
What makes it stand out?	Combined email response and knowledge base supporting multiple channels.
Key features	✓ Inbound ticket requests from any channel — email, web, social, phone, or chat ✓ Knowledge base ✓ Livechat and email management options
The Smart Insights view	Best in category We've selected Zendesk as top since it's the market leader amongst standalone customer service SaaS solutions and supports the widest range of channels.

27.2 Help Scout

	
Paid service with 15 day free trial.	
Why do I need it?	As with other tools in this category: To provide a workflow management system to answer customer queries and to build a knowledgebase to reduce the need for support requests requiring a human response.
What makes it stand out?	Started as a service for managing response to queries via email, but now includes full range of services such as a knowledge base.
Key features	✓ Email response and workflow management via Email or web browser ✓ Simple knowledge base creation tool ✓ Context-sensitive help via 'Beacon'
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We have used Help Scout since it was an email response service with options to respond in the browser, since then it has grown with us and we now use its Knowledge base feature.

27.3 Get Satisfaction

	
Paid service with demo.	
Why do I need it?	As with other tools in this category: To provide a workflow management system to answer customer queries and to build a knowledgebase to reduce the need for support requests requiring a human response.
What makes it stand out?	A different type of service to the more standard 'Helpdesk' solutions in this category which is described as a 'Customer community' where questions are answered by a combination of support and other customers. Can also be used to crowdsource new product ideas.
Key features	✓ Community-based support ✓ New product development ideas ✓ Integration with other Helpdesk services.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We've included Get Satisfaction here as an established service which uses an alternative model for support which is most relevant where there are high volume of technical enquiries, e.g. mobile phone companies and software products. Just acquired by Sprinklr at time of writing.

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27.4 Freshdesk

	
Paid service with demo.	
Why do I need it?	As with other tools in this category: To provide a workflow management system to answer customer queries and to build a knowledgebase to reduce the need for support requests requiring a human response.
What makes it stand out?	A similar ticket-based help-based service to Zendesk which differentiates itself on its simplicity, ease of setup and boosting service agent support through automations and game mechanics.
Key features	✓ Multichannel help desk ✓ Self-service 'customer portal' ✓ Agent productivity tools
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We don't have experience with Freshdesk, but it has many large corporate customers, so is used within larger organisations.

27.5 Groove

	
Paid service with demo.	
Why do I need it?	As with other tools in this category: To provide a workflow management system to answer customer queries and to build a knowledgebase to reduce the need for support requests requiring a human response.
What makes it stand out?	A similar service to Help Scout with a simple web-based service plus knowledge based and email integration.
Key features	✓ Web-based email response ✓ Knowledge base ✓ Third-party integrations
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool A similar service to

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28. Marketing cloud, Digital Marketing Hubs for CRM and campaign management

What do these tools do?

The aim of a Marketing Cloud or Digital Marketing Hub service is to help brands to manage all points of contact between themselves and the customer through the customer life cycle; from lead to customer communications to develop loyalty and repeat purchase.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

One of the key promises of a CRM tool is the ability to provide a single '360 degree' customer view. This requires integration of all a brand's platforms which hold some sort of customer data. This single view, allows an accurate understanding of the customer and tight controls over how the brand manages its relationship and communication with that customer

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Many of these Cloud services have been built by acquiring different services, so walkthroughs of common marketing campaign and 'always-on' 'use-cases' is essential to select a sufficiently integrated system that aligns with, or improves existing workflows. That said, 'Marketing programme orchestration' is a key selling point of these cloud services.
- ✓ A CRM tool holds some, if not all, of the most valuable information about your customer. Be clear on the data security, recovery and back up procedures of your potential CRM provider.
- ✓ A CRM tool can help bring all the data together but you won't maximise its value unless you're capturing the right data in the first place. Is the data you have actionable and does it enable you to build a better relationship with your customers? Try to identify the key moments and opportunities in your customer contact strategy and the data needed that will help you capture your customers' attention at those key moments.
- ✓ Is a lower-cost email service provider option (see section 29) sufficient for your business? These Cloud services are premium services which may be cost-prohibitive for a smaller business. Many ESPs and Marketing Automation systems now offer similar functionality and have the same data storage model.

28.1 Marketo

		Paid service. No interactive demo.	
Why do I need it?		A single service to manage customer lifecycle marketing from acquisition to retention and growth. Suitable for B2C and B2B implementation.	
What makes it stand out?		Engagement marketing platform offers a range of tried-and-tested cross platform support for lead generation and nurture across desktop web, mobile apps, email, display and social media.	
Key features		✓ Predictive analytics and audience insight for increased relevance delivered by on-site and email personalisation. ✓ Multi-user team planning and collaboration tools ✓ Transparency on security and server up-time	
The Smart Insights view		Top 5 Tool Although not labelled a 'cloud service'. We have selected this as one of the top services to consider in this category since it is one of the best established platforms which is suitable for businesses for a range of sizes. Services tend to be have been developed rather than acquired by other technology vendors. This is not the case with some of other 'Cloud services'. <i>Disclosure:</i> Marketo are Content Partners of Smart Insights.	

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28.2 HubSpot



Paid service. Free Marketing Grader and CRM tools

Why do I need it?	A cost-effective customer lifecycle marketing platform suitable for mid-size company B2B marketing.
What makes it stand out?	A platform focusing on B2B Marketing Automation using content marketing.
Key features	✓ Integrated marketing automation and integrated sales service ✓ Organic blogging and content marketing platform ✓ Integrated analytics service making it easier to identify improvements than some services
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We have rated this highly in this category since it is a more widely-used, more cost-effective suite than other services (but with a higher fee than the ESP options in section 29 of this guide). It also includes a free contact management 'CRM' service and other free tools. It is most suited to B2B marketing in comparison with the other tools selected in this category. Historically HubSpot is most focused on organic inbound marketing, rather than paid media. <i>Disclosure:</i> HubSpot are Content Partners of Smart Insights.

28.3 Salesforce Marketing Cloud



Paid service.

Why do I need it?	The Marketing Cloud service which is accessible to smaller businesses.
What makes it stand out?	Platform now positioned as offering interactive management of cross-channels customer journeys. However, this 'Marketing Cloud' is an integration of amalgamation of separate services.
Key features	✓ Customer journey 'orchestration' for planning 'always on' marketing activities and campaigns ✓ Integrated customer data management and workflow across sales and marketing ✓ Predictive intelligence and display remarketing
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Salesforce is THE original Software-as-a-Service Marketing cloud service which legitimised the category. However, as the name suggests, its initial provenance had a focus on Sales rather than Marketing Engagement and content marketing is why we haven't rated it top. Pardot B2B Marketing Automation was acquired as a separate service which with time is becoming more integrated with the Marketing cloud. Salesforce also ExactTarget emailing system since Email wasn't a strength of the original Salesforce service.

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28.4 Oracle Marketing Cloud

		Paid services for large-medium enterprises.
Why do I need it?	The strength of this service is integrating online and offline communications channels. So it's main focus isn't inbound marketing.	
What makes it stand out?	As with other 'Marketing Cloud' solutions, this is an integration or amalgamation of separate services, which were well regarded by analysts such as Forrester and Gartner before they were integration.	
Key features	✓ Marketing orchestration for integrated campaign planning ✓ Data management for 360 degree view of customer and their journey across online and offline channels using Oracle ID Graph that connects active cookies, mobile IDs, emails, registrations, and social IDs across platforms. ✓ Capable Multivariate testing platform based on the acquisition of Maxymiser.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Oracle is a leading marketing cloud contender because of its acquisition and integration of well regarded platforms for integrated marketing including Eloqua, a well-regarded Marketing Automation service which mainly focused on B2B activities plus Responsys email and campaign management and Blue Kai, a data management platform (DMP).	

28.5 Adobe Marketing Cloud

		Paid services for medium-large enterprises.
Why do I need it?	The strength of this service is integrating online and offline communications channels. So it's main focus isn't inbound marketing.	
What makes it stand out?	Like Oracle Marketing Cloud, Adobe Marketing Cloud is positioned as offering 'cross-channel marketing orchestration'.	
Key features	✓ Design and automate customer experiences across channels, from one-off campaigns to triggered email or personalised web messages, with a graphically rich interface. Adobe Experience Manager is Adobe's CMS (other cloud solutions don't include this). ✓ Deliver one-to-one messages across inbound and outbound channels through a dynamic and centralized offer catalog and optimise spend through Adobe Media Optimizer. ✓ Adobe Audience Manager Data management platform to build audience profiles to segment and target across any digital channel.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Adobe is well known for its services covering the whole of digital marketing, so we have included its cloud offering in the category. It is rated relatively low compared to the others since its service is based on its acquisition of Neolane in 2013 meaning that it doesn't have the customer data management pedigree of others in the category. At the time Adobe explained that 'Neolane will become the sixth solution in the Adobe Marketing Cloud, complementing the existing Analytics, Target, Social, Experience Manager and Media Optimizer offerings'. These are still effectively separate services, but with deeper integrations being developed through time.	

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29. Email marketing service providers (ESPs)

What do these tools do?

They facilitate the design, build and send of transactional and marketing based email. There are hundreds of tools in this category, so it's the most difficult category to choose just 5! We have selected those which are simple and most popular and focus on email sending.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

These tools can send hundreds of thousands of emails within a short space of time, customising the content based on the segments defined by marketers in the wider email database. Permissions, dynamic content, subject line and content testing, integration with other tools (e.g. a CMS or digital asset management tool) and audience segmentation are all features of good ESPs.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ What's your current level of email sophistication? It's easy to buy in to functionality that is beyond your current levels of capability. Mastering the basics should be the priority. Setting up advanced customer contact strategies takes time and resource as does crafting content for multiple audience segments. These will also require higher-level plan.
- ✓ How will your data be managed? It's important there's a robust process to manage your data. Lead generation (from your call centre, stores or website) need to be integrated with your ESP. Your databases need to talk to each other to ensure audience segments are updated and permissions are effectively managed. Make sure you're compliant with local laws (e.g. the US Can Spam Act 2003) which govern what you can and can't do with customer data

29.1 MailChimp

MailChimp

Paid service, but with 'free forever' service up to 2,000 contacts and 6,000 emails a month. Higher plans needed for automation.

Why do I need it?

To broadcast and track emails with options for marketing automation.

What makes it stand out?

Best known for its free and competitive plans for small businesses, it now has capabilities meaning it is used in businesses of all sizes.

Key features

- ✓ Simplicity and ease of use for broadcasting and simple segments
- ✓ Range of email templates
- ✓ Integrations with Ecommerce systems: Magento, Shopify and Woocommerce

The Smart Insights view

Top Tool in category

We've rated this top in category since it's where many small and medium businesses start their email marketing due to the free options available. It used to be limited in segmentation and triggered emails, but now offers similar services to more expensive systems.

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29.2 ConstantContact

		Paid service with 60 day free trial. Higher plans needed for automation.
Why do I need it?	A more established competitor to Mailchimp with low-cost plans.	
What makes it stand out?	Low cost plans and ease of use	
Key features	✓ Contact management ✓ Customisable templates (higher plans) ✓ Additional features: Live events, trackable coupons, social sharing and online survey tools.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool The most established ESP service here. Basic features and usability are similar to Mailchimp so consider the cost and value of additional services you may grow into using.	

29.3 GetResponse

		Paid service
Why do I need it?	To send and track email newsletters campaigns cost-effectively.	
What makes it stand out?	Competitively priced with good usability. Autoresponders (simple marketing automation included in entry level plans).	
Key features	✓ Additional features such as landing pages and webinars in higher plans ✓ No long term contracts, cancel anytime. ✓ Multi-user accounts, dedicated IP addresses and deliverability consulting for top packages	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool Consider this service for the range of related digital marketing services it offers and the facility to scale as your business grows. <i>Disclosure:</i> GetResponse are a Content partner of Smart Insights.	

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29.4 Infusionsoft

	
Paid service	
Why do I need it?	If you're looking for an email marketing service with sophisticated triggered emails that are easy to set up.
What makes it stand out?	The 'flagship feature' is the drag and drop marketing automation. Cost-competitive for this feature.
Key features	✓ Drag and drop marketing automation ✓ WYSIWYG editor ✓ API for integrating with other systems
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We've included this service in this category since it has good, basic email marketing features, but more advanced 'drag and drop' digital marketing tools.

29.5 Act-On

	
Paid service.	
Why do I need it?	If you're looking for an email marketing service provider that offers other digital marketing functions.
What makes it stand out?	Where Pricing is based on the number of active contacts in your database, not the size of your entire database
Key features	✓ Advanced list management and segmentation ✓ Personalisation and dynamic content for more relevant emails ✓ Multi-user account management
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool This service could equally feature in the Marketing cloud service since it also has other inbound marketing tools.

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30. Voice of customer (VoC): Feedback and Surveys

What do these tools do?

They go beyond the quantitative insight of analytics tools and provide a deeper layer of site visitor feedback. Tools in this category are growing in popularity and include general website feedback, crowd sourced product opinions and exit survey functionality.

Why are they important to digital marketers?

Web analytics can provide the what, the when and the how, but struggle to deliver the why and the rationale which explains the numbers from your analytics tool. VoC tools can run continuously in the background, be focused on specific pages or be time based, gathering detailed feedback on barriers to conversion, design issues, user confusion – all useful and actionable insight for marketers.

Key things to consider before purchasing and using these tools:

- ✓ Be careful not to request too much data. Just like users are put off by surveys that are pages and pages long, feedback forms and exit surveys should be as short as possible to collect the insight you're wanting to capture.
- ✓ Response rates can be low so bear this in mind if wanting to capture specific insight on a campaign or product (volumes may be an issue). Incentivising responses can help to increase uptake but may also skew the responses to a less representative sample.
- ✓ You may want to experiment with different capture methods, both the way feedback is requested (i.e. on-site pop-ups, vs. tabs vs. email) and the data fields (i.e. drop downs vs. free text fields) used.

30.1 SurveyMonkey

	
Paid service. Free up to 100 responses (10 questions)	
Why do I need it?	For traditional customer or site visitor research prompted by email or on a website.
What makes it stand out?	Simplicity and the free option
Key features	✓ Skip logic, filters and cross-tabs (paid versions) ✓ Range of export options. ✓ Local language support
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We've rated this top since it's the best known survey service, popular thanks to its free option and the paid versions are a modest price.

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30.2 Polldaddy

	
Free service, unlimited with branding. Paid services without branding	
Why do I need it?	A great tool for quickly creating stylish customer or site visitor surveys.
What makes it stand out?	Ease of use and style of templates.
Key features	✓ Great drag and drop question editor ✓ Range of 19 question types including support for Matrices / Likert questions. ✓ Good range of export options including Microsoft Office options.
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool We love this tool for quickly creating stylish surveys with a range of questions types. The free version isn't restricted, apart from the presence of branding. We believe it's easier to use, is better for more advanced survey options and provides better reports than the better known Typeform tool. <i>Disclosure:</i> Smart Insights has been a subscriber to the paid service for 3 years.

30.3 Typeform

	
Free options.	
Why do I need it?	To produce simple, interactive looking surveys.
What makes it stand out?	Simplicity and quality of its interactions, particularly for mobile devices.
Key features	✓ No volume restrictions on free version ✓ Branded thank you page on paid version ✓ Calculation and skip logic on paid versions
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool A highly rated new entrant suitable for user-friendly consumer surveys on mobile. It is less suited to research or more complex surveys than the two preceding options in this category.

30.4 Hotjar

		Free trial and a free personal 'basic' version with limits on sample size (number of page views)
Why do I need it?	Hotjar is an all-in-one analytics and feedback tool helping you to truly understand your web and mobile site visitors.	
What makes it stand out?	Other tools in the category don't all provide insights from prompting visitors with polls.	
Key features	✓ Heatmaps: Visualise your visitors clicks, taps and scrolling behavior. ✓ Recordings: Eliminate guesswork with recordings of real visitor behaviour on your site. ✓ Polls: Understand what your visitors want and what's preventing them from achieving it. ✓ Funnels & Forms: Find the biggest opportunities for improvement and testing by identifying on which page and at which step most visitors are leaving your site.	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	This is a relatively new tool, but we prefer it to some of the existing services since it also enables questions to be asked on some pages for qualitative feedback. We subscribe to this service for this reason.

30.5 Confirmit

		Paid enterprise service.
Why do I need it?	An enterprise VoC option for large scale surveys deployed across multiple segments, product categories, business units or countries.	
What makes it stand out?	Confirmit covers the range of the Voice of the Customer process, from program definition and design to analysis, reporting, and action management.	
Key features	✓ VoC programme management ✓ Survey ✓ Reporting and workflow management	
The Smart Insights view	Top 5 Tool	We've included this service as an example of an enterprise-level VoC option.

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Your feedback please

Feedback and recommending new tools

We really hope our guide opens your eyes to some categories of insight tools you weren't aware of, or makes you aware of some tools you haven't tried before. Even better if they rock your world and help you boost your online leads and sales.

If you'd like to recommend a tool since it has helped you, or you think we've missed a key tool do let us know. Or maybe your business offers a digital marketing tool or service. that you think we and our members know about, do get in touch, we'd love to know about them.

Do let us know about the digital marketing tool or service you recommend by:

- ✓ **Contacting our help desk team through our [Contact Us form](#)**
- ✓ **Adding it to our [Digital marketing services marketplace](#) or gaining leads via our [Content Partnership](#)**
- ✓ **Posting your recommendation in our members' [Digital Marketing Answer's community](#) under the relevant category.** Or via social media.

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Smart Insights provides actionable marketing resources to help businesses succeed online. More than 130,000 members use our blog, free marketing templates and weekly Digital Marketing Essentials newsletter to follow best practices and keep up-to-date with the developments that matter in digital marketing.

Thousands of Expert members from over 80 countries use our premium planning and management templates, guides and video courses to map, plan and manage their marketing using the **Smart Insights RACE Planning framework**.

