



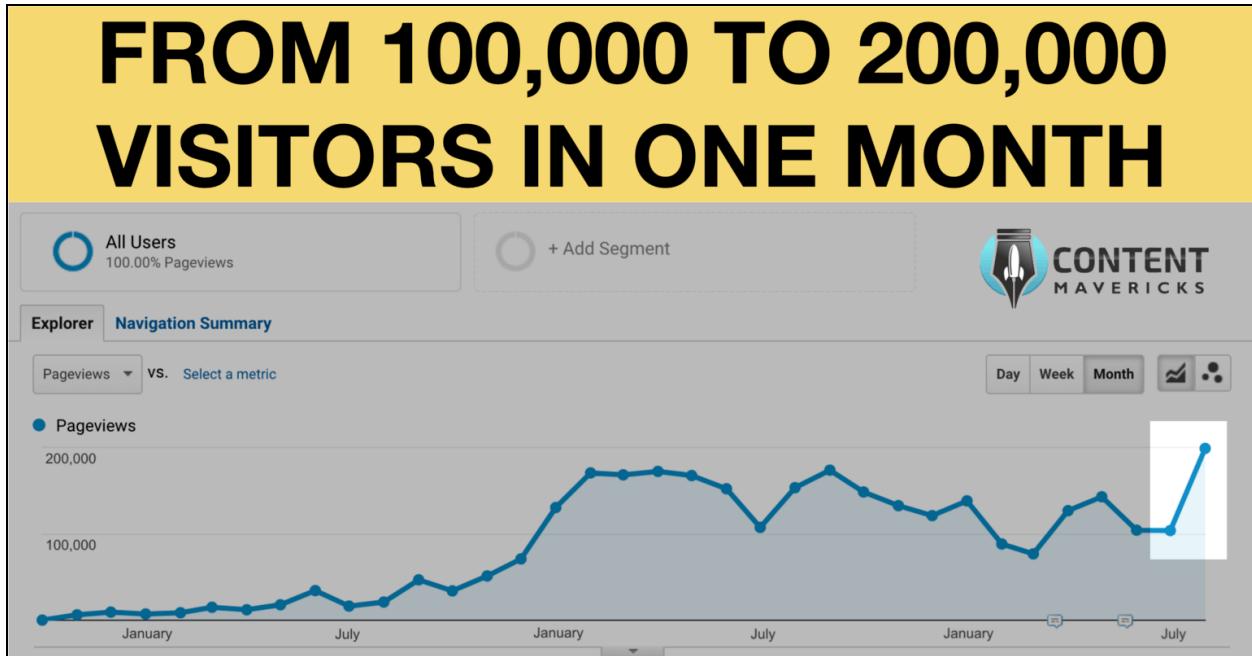
Lessons Learned Growing The Sumo.com Blog From 100,000 To 200,000 Visits In One Month

By Chris Von Wilpert

At the start of August Noah Kagan hired me to manage Sumo's whole content marketing operation.

I brought in my best people, and he brought in his best.

In August I hit the highest blog traffic month Sumo's ever had:



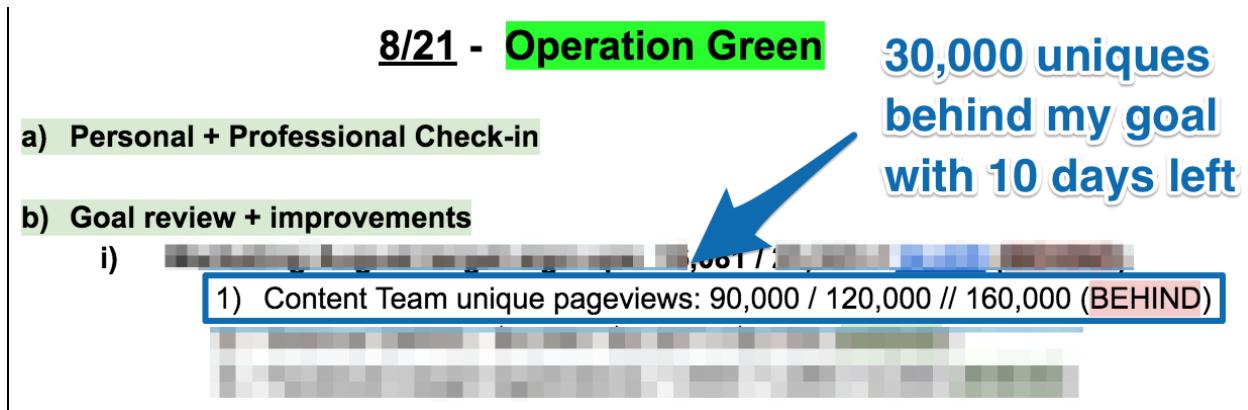
I have some lessons learned from working with Noah that can help you take your content marketing game to the next-level.



1) WEEKLY ACCOUNTABILITY.

I was given a goal in the first month to go from 100,000 uniques to 160,000 unique page views a month to blog content.

Every week I met with Noah and I was behind my goal:



By week #3 I was 30,000 uniques behind.

Every week in a one-on-one with Noah he'd ask me "Are you ahead or behind on your goal?"

Then the followup question would always be "So you're behind dawg, what are you going to do this week to get on track?"

The weekly accountability forced me to think up new ideas every week to hit my goal.

It's something you may want to apply with your employees/contractors.

The takeaway: Have one weekly team meeting and one weekly one-on-one meeting with your team leads to keep them accountable to their goal. At Sumo we have a weekly marketing team meeting at 2pm on Monday. Then at 4pm on Monday I have a weekly 1:1 with Noah.



2) MAKE MISTAKES, BUT TRACK THEM.

I made more marketing mistakes than I've ever made in my life this month.

I was testing new content promotion tactics weekly and then I'd track it all in a [Proactive Metrics Dashboard](#):

Content (OWNER: Chris)	GOAL	Week of 8/21	Week of 8/14	Week of 8/7	Week of 7/31
# of articles published	2	2	3	1	1
# of headline a/b tests	2	2	3	3	3
# of FB/Twitter posts	2	2	3	1	1
# of LinkedIn posts	3	2	2	1	1
\$ facebook ad spend	\$2,500	\$5,751.44	985.29	\$858.42	\$1,502.51
\$ twitter ad spend	\$2,500	\$3,409.33	\$1,500	\$0	\$0
# of Growth Hackers posts	1	1	1	1	1
# of FB Group posts	1	1	1	2	1
# of startup newsletter outreach emails	5	5	30	30	20
# of Twitter influencer outreach emails	10	0	30	10	20
# of LinkedIn influencer outreach emails	10	0	30	10	20
# of link outreach emails	10	0	30	10	20

Notice that these are all “proactive” metrics (aka metrics I can directly control).

Green means I hit the goal. Red means I didn't.

I'd then show it to Noah and make recommendations of activities we need to cut and activities we need to double down on.

The takeaway: Use a Proactive Metrics spreadsheet to track what you're doing every week, then track all that activity against one metric. I was tracking against unique monthly traffic every week.



3) SEO WON'T SAVE YOU IN THE SHORT TERM.

To go from 100k to 200k I couldn't just rely on SEO traffic.

It takes time to generate results and the outcomes are too variable for Sumo.

Instead I had to do a mix.

I had to go after some “SEO articles” mixed in with articles that I knew would spread quickly on social media:

To Write	Status	Type	Owner	First Draft Date	Live Date	Traffic
https://sumo.com/stories/tony-robbins-marketing	Done	Growth Study	Chris	Wed, Jul 26	Wed, Aug 2	63,091
https://sumo.com/stories/psychographic-marketing	Done	Marketing Study	Sarah	Mon, Jul 31	Mon, Aug 7	8,562
https://sumo.com/stories/shopify-marketing	Done	Growth Study	Chris	Mon, Aug 7	Mon, Aug 14	22,318
https://sumo.com/stories/headline-formulas	Done	Article Refresh	Sarah	Wed, Aug 9	Wed, Aug 16	3,247
https://sumo.com/stories/youtube-channel-growth	Done	Marketing Study	Shanelle	Fri, Aug 11	Fri, Aug 18	1,282
https://sumo.com/stories/blog-post-ideas	Done	Marketing Study	Sarah	Mon, Aug 14	Mon, Aug 21	12,671
https://sumo.com/stories/email-marketing-statistics	Done	Article Refresh	Devan	Wed, Aug 16	Wed, Aug 23	725
https://sumo.com/stories/slack-marketing	Done	Growth Study	Chris	Mon, Aug 14	Mon, Aug 28	24,078

How did I find the topics?

By analyzing:

1. Sumo and Noah's top traffic articles.
2. Sumo's customer persona.
3. The most shared articles in the industry.

The takeaway: Combine your customer personas' biggest day-to-day challenges with the most shared content in your industry to come up with unique content topics that spread.



4) TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK.

It was the first time I had to manage a team of 8 people. And it was hard.

One person had been at the company 1.5 years and had a lot of existing ideas about how things should work.

It was great having that person because I could ask them what worked and didn't work in the past.

But there was tension when I'd ask for feedback. Comments like "you're the content consultant, shouldn't you know what to do?"

I'm good, but I don't know everything.

I resolved this by sitting down with the person 1:1 and explaining that I don't know everything, but I've come to Sumo to hit a goal and I can only do that with everyone's help on the team.

Another person quit two weeks in because it was too hard. I found the best way to manage people was to make them OWN things.

I literally have a column in my spreadsheet called "OWNER" with the person's name, the content they are responsible for and their deadline.

To Write	Status	Type	Owner	First Draft Date	Live Date	Traffic
https://sumo.com/stories/tony-robbins-marketing	Done	Growth Study	Chris	Wed, Jul 26	Wed, Aug 2	63,091
https://sumo.com/stories/psychographic-marketing	Done	Marketing Study	Sarah	Mon, Jul 31	Mon, Aug 7	8,562
https://sumo.com/stories/shopify-marketing	Done	Growth Study	Chris	Mon, Aug 7	Mon, Aug 14	22,318
https://sumo.com/stories/headline-formulas	Done	Article Refresh	Sarah	Wed, Aug 9	Wed, Aug 16	3,247
https://sumo.com/stories/youtube-channel-growth	Done	Growth Study	Shanelle	Fri, Aug 11		
https://sumo.com/stories/blog-post-ideas	Done	Marketing Study	Sarah	Mon, Aug 14	Wed, Aug 23	725
https://sumo.com/stories/email-marketing-statistics	Done	Article Refresh	Devan	Wed, Aug 16	Mon, Aug 28	24,078
https://sumo.com/stories/slack-marketing	Done	Growth Study	Chris	Mon, Aug 14		

The takeaway: Make people "Owners" of specific tasks and just be there for them if they need your help.



5) WRITERS WRITE. PROMOTERS PROMOTE.

Writing is a skill, as is promotion. They are two very different skills.

Don't ask your writer to promote your content for you. At Sumo I made a content writing checklist and a content promotion checklist.

I give the first one to the writers and the second one to the promoters. These two simple checklists make my content marketing repeatable and scalable.

	Sumo Content Writing Checklist		me
	Sumo Content Tracker		Chris Von Wilpert
	Sumo Content Promotion Checklist		me

Here is a sneak peek inside my content writing checklist:

Step 2: Write Article

Follow these "15" standards for every article you write:



1. Read these comments to see what we expect: [Sumo Edited Article](#)
2. Use this to format your article correctly: [Sumo Article Template](#)
3. Make a copy of the Sumo Article Template above and change the sharing settings to “Anyone with the link” can Edit
4. Give your article 5 different headlines for us to a/b test

The takeaway: Make sure you have documented checklists for any important tasks in your business.



6) SEO IS NOT THE CONTENT MARKETING HOLY GRAIL. PAID TRAFFIC IS.

SEO traffic is magical and should be part of your overall content marketing strategy, but advanced content marketers know how to run ads to a piece of content.

You get qualified prospects to click on your ad using layered ad targeting, then the retargeting pixel on your blog article builds up your retargeting list so you can retarget people into your offer at a profit.

That is the content marketing holy grail.

Here is an example of one of the ads I'm running for Sumo:

The image shows a Facebook post from Sumo.com. The post features a profile picture of a blue crown icon, the text "Sumo.com", and the date "August 2 ·". Below the post is a preview of a blog article titled "How Tony Robbins Generates 1,000,000 Website Visitors Per Month". The preview includes a thumbnail image of Tony Robbins speaking into a microphone, set against a background of yellow gears. The main text of the post describes his marketing strategy and provides a link: "<https://sumo.com/stories/tony-robbins-marketing>". At the bottom of the post, there are social sharing options: "Like", "Comment", "Share", and "Top Comments". It also shows 366 shares and 187 comments.

Paid advertising to content is going to be “the future” of digital marketing.



The organic content marketing world is growing fierce competition. There are so many high quality content producers today, producing so much content.

How will you win? Through distribution, that's how.

When you can learn how to use paid to promote your organic, big shift!

At Sumo I'm using strategic media buys to get our content in front of the right people. Then the Sumo team retargets into a Sumo signup:

Pfft. We knew you were joking.
We could give you the whole marketing spiel, but we're all grown adults here, so let's skip to the good stuff.
You want to make money off your website. Sumo helps your online business grow. Sweet. Sign me up.
Click "Learn More", try out the tools for free, and tell us exactly what you think.
Thrilled? Email natalia@sumo.com
Annoyed? Tweet @realDonaldTrump

SUMO

Wait... so you DON'T want to grow your business?

Learn More

17K Views

Like Comment Share

2 Top Comments

Write a comment...

Marissa Marazzi This ad is amazing shoutout to the copywriter 😊
Like · Reply · 4 hrs

The takeaway: Put paid advertising behind your content. Do it. It works. I'm taking Sumo from \$5 million to \$10 million by doing it.



7) MY #1 CONTENT PROMOTION TACTIC

Every man, woman and dog wants to know it. So here it is...

Ask your Mom to share it. #thanksMom

hey Mom, I just dropped a massive article reverse engineering Tony Robbins. Can you share it with all your friends (pretty please 😊): <https://sumo.com/stories/tony-robbins-marketing>



Sumo Growth Study: How Tony Robbins Generates
Peek inside Tony Robbins' mu...
sumo.com

The trick is to ask your Mom nicely and have your emoji game on point (I went with the smooch emoji), otherwise your Mom won't share it.

Just kidding, that's not actually my #1.

I can't give away ALL my content marketing secrets but what I can tell you is this... you need to build your lists.

- Email list
- Push notification list
- Facebook chatbot list
- Retargeting list

The money is in the **lists**.



The bigger and more targeted your distribution lists are, the more people will read and share your content, so your content spreads and gets more unique traffic.

Your retargeting list won't get you unique traffic, but it will get you sales (aka the reason you're doing this whole content marketing thing in the first place).

The best way I've found to build all those lists is to use [Sumo's](#) suite of website traffic tools.

Here are a few of the ways I'm using the tools to build our lists:

- [Click Trigger](#) for “Bonus Material” at the top of every article.

Sumo Growth Study: How Tony Robbins Generates 1,000,000 Website Visitors Per Month

Peek inside Tony Robbins' multi-million dollar marketing strategy.

Last updated on Sep 23rd, 2017 by Chris Von Wilpert

Share on Facebook

Share on Twitter

Bonus Material: [Access to Tony Robbins' Tools](#)





- [Scroll Box](#) for Sumo Growth Studies after someone has scrolled 10%. I set it to only show to people who haven't seen a scroll box in 1 day and if the referrer domain is facebook.com

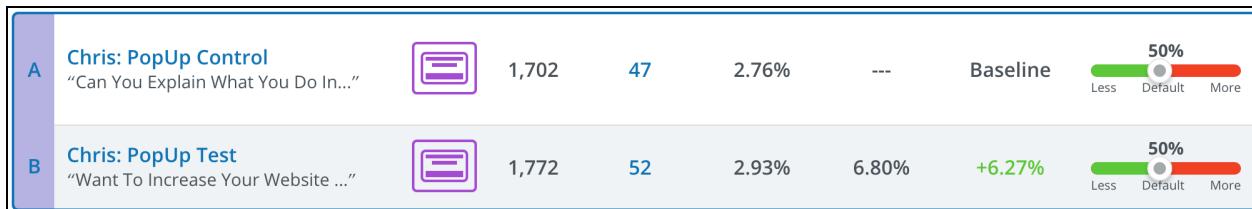
The screenshot shows a Facebook Messenger inbox. At the top, there's a message from "Want Free Access To Sumo Growth Studies?" with the text: "Get new Sumo Growth Studies reverse engineering the multi-million dollar marketing strategy of Tony Robbins, Shopify, Amazon + more by Facebook Messenger". Below this is a blue button with the text "Send to Messenger". Underneath the button, there's a profile picture of a person named "Chris Von Wilpert" and the text "Not you?".

- [Push Notifications](#) for new Sumo articles. I set it to only show after 4 seconds on Sumo's main blog page at sumo.com/stories. The rest of the time it just chills over there on the right side of the page.

The screenshot shows the Sumo Stories page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Sumo logo, Pricing, Sign Up, Log In, and a menu icon. The main heading is "Stories". A white callout box is overlaid on the page with the text "Never miss another Sumo article" and "Subscribe to receive push notification updates instantly." It features a blue "Subscribe Now" button. To the right of the callout, there's a vertical blue bar with the text "Get Notified". An orange arrow points from the text "Get Notified" towards the "Get Notified" button on the callout box. The background of the page shows various Sumo growth studies and articles.



- [List Builder Popups](#) for bonus content. I run an a/b test across Sumo's whole blog with the popup set to show after 45 seconds if a visitor hasn't seen a popup in 14 days.



I'm sneaky and use Sumo's top blog content as the bonus content on the popups. I look inside Sumo's Google Analytics over the past year and find the highest traffic articles with an above average time on page to test against each other.

After 7 days I switch out the loser and test a new piece of bonus content against the winner.

- [Click Trigger](#) for content upgrades in the body of every article.

Keenan Shaw (Tony Robbins' Demand Generation Manager) said this tool helped increase their website leads by 15%:

The screenshot shows an email from Keenan Shaw. The message content is:

Hi Bar,
Just getting back from vacation so sorry I missed your emails.
[REDACTED] is super fast and easy to implement. It gives us great flexibility with our demand generation initiatives and has helped us increase our website leads by 15%.

**Tony Robbins' Secret
Lead Generation Weapon**

Keenan Shaw [REDACTED]

An orange arrow points from the text "has helped us increase our website leads by 15%" towards the "Lead Generation Weapon" heading. A green button at the bottom encourages action:

Click here to see which free tool Tony uses to create his Welcome Mats.



Those are five of the ways I'm building our lists at Sumo.

The takeaway: Focus on building lists because they're a long term asset of the business that you can also use to promote content and drive more traffic to your blog every month.

If you want to learn more about the exact methods I use to increase website traffic (with less content), plus:

- Get access to my full content writing checklist.
- Use my content promotion checklist to promote your content.
- Replicate the content sales funnel I use to turn traffic into sales.

=> [This may be the SIMPLE CONTENT STRATEGY you need.](#)

TL;DR- I hit Sumo's all-time highest blog traffic month ever, beat the 160,000 unique traffic goal Noah set by over 20k and doubled the overall blog traffic from 100k to 200k last month.

Noah has a big cheeky "taco" grin on his face everyday now ;)

Chris "The 100K Kid" Von Wilpert

P.S. On the next page is a Q&A I did with the HubSpot community about this case study. Enjoy!



Q&A WITH HUBSPOT COMMUNITY



Nick

This is super valuable, especially the proactive metrics dashboard. I currently do something similar, but love the idea of focusing entirely on the proactive aspect. It also identifies the systems that you need in place to truly scale your business during your current phase of business.

Using article ads for content is nothing new but doing it to your own site is super smart. I'm wondering since I don't have a product that I'm using for registrations, if this approach would reduce the effective cost for registrations.

Have you run any tests to compare ads that directly drive Sumo registrations without the initial article promotion vs with? I'd be curious to see those results :)



Chris Von Wilpert

Hey Nick, thanks for the comment. We are testing a lot of ad variations right now to beat our top performing audience which is a Lookalike Audience of Pixel-Based Sumo Registrations.

We get around 700-850 registrations per day though, so we have a big data set to create highly targeted pixel-based audiences.



So to answer your question, top performing results look like this at this stage:

- Lookalike Audience of Pixel-Based Sumo Registrations
- Pixel-Based Website Visitors
- Cold Traffic



Nick

Thanks for the insight! Yeah from all Facebook Ads people I speak to, 1% lookalike audiences are the go to currently ;)

I have one other question for you... Fortunately you were in a position where there were a lot of resources to hit your goals. How do you select which activities to focus on during a given period? Just discuss with the team?



Chris Von Wilpert

Hey Nick, #1 priority is a high standard of content. Noah and I would both edit the articles until they were at the standard we wanted to post on the blog. We'd never sacrifice quality for quantity.

Every writer has a clear focus: Write 2 high quality articles per month and help with any article refreshes I give them.



Every promoter has a clear focus: Do everything on our content promotion checklist. Do 1 new content promotion test each week. Add it to the checklist if it works. Add it to the "does not work" list if it doesn't.

We focused on 2 high quality articles per week and promoting them really well.



Nick

Awesome! Thanks for the transparency and insight!



Konstantine Gegeshidze

Thx for sharing these insights, this is something I am gonna test to apply for my workflow, I assume it would make a big sense. In my workflow, I missed the point of FOCUSING on just 1 promo test each week, rather than used to run several tests, once in a month, which didn't use to work effectively and was pretty overwhelming.

I am wondering in time spent in your team:

- How much time roughly it usually takes for your promoter to do one content promo?
- How much time do you usually allocate for new promo TEST?



Chris Von Wilpert

Hey Konstantine, honestly we don't time any of it. Building a list of niche-related newsletters and reaching out to them will take a lot longer than testing LinkedIn organic promotion. So there is no standard time.

We spend anywhere from 1 week to 1 month for a new promo test. If the data looks promising after 1 week we will keep doing it, but always make a decision after looking at how much unique traffic it has driven after 1 month.



Shanelle Mullin

Super happy to see this up, Chris. You're a master of content promotion in my books.

I'm wondering, though:

1. All of these metrics and wins revolve around incoming traffic. Rarely is that the best indicator of content marketing success. Why'd you and Noah choose traffic as the (seemingly) core KPI?
2. Interesting thoughts around promoters vs. writers. I think this is a fundamental problem in the content marketing industry. People call themselves "content marketers" when really they're exclusively a writer or a marketer. It seems like you're leaning into that growing skill gap instead of searching for actual content marketers. Would love to know your thinking around that.



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks for making this happen Shanelle!

1- Noah had just come back from a month long trip to Israel and was feeling enlightened. He sent me a message on Skype saying "can you do 500k/mo uniques by Dec" and I said "yeah dawg" not knowing if I could actually hit it, but I'd give it my best shot.

I think what Noah saw was:

- 1) The Sumo blog traffic was stagnating around 100k/mo since the start of the year and not growing fast enough, so the first step was to increase traffic.
- 2) Traffic is a metric I can directly control on the blog. To have a signup goal I would need to control the marketing funnel as well.
- 3) I don't think this will be our core KPI forever. It may change from traffic to email opt-ins or free Sumo signups now we have grown traffic fast.

Overall though, Noah believes in setting crazy goals because if you shoot for the stars then you'll hit the moon.

2- I believe you are either a writer or a promoter. Finding someone who can do both at a high standard is a rare skill set. Also, most writers don't enjoy promoting and most promoters don't enjoy writing so you take people out of their zone of genius when you ask them to do both.



I think as soon as you have the resources available you should hire a content promoter to promote all your writers content. Focus on less content, but invest into promoting it more strategically.

Writers sometimes invest 40+ hours into a piece of content to make it the best piece on a topic, and it deserves to be promoted to everyone it can help.

PS- I should rename this to Writers Write. Editors Edit. Promoters Promote.

Editing is also its own skill set. Keri Morgret edited this piece you are reading now, and it wouldn't be this valuable or include any of the screenshots you see if it wasn't for her editing skillz.



Shanelle Mullin

Awesome context, my friend. Thanks!



Average Tapir

Strong post, Chris.

Two things I really appreciated:

- The value of email lists and proper segmentation
- The importance of paid social



Paid social, especially Facebook, is continuing to prove itself as an awesome accelerant.

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Thanks man. Too true, a small push with the right piece of content and right layered ad targeting will make your content "get lit".

**Kind Weevil**

Love how you show the process man. This is top notch info.

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Thanks man.

**Konstantine Gegeshidze**

Great post Chris, before I came across your post about this topic on LinkedIn, however, this one is way more informative with examples.

Loved to see:

- Example of Proactive Metrics Dashboard.



- Get Notification tip on Blog (This is something I might apply in our blog for testing)
- Tailored CTA - For content upgrade. (This is the most converting tip what I've seen so far, however, many leading blogs are still missing applying it)

Clear example of it was your last CTA sentence...

"Share this pdf on social media and tag me if you want me to send you a copy of the Proactive Metrics spreadsheet Noah and I use to stay on track to hit our traffic goal every month."

If one went through the whole post it reminds him/her that he can show his gratitude for the learning what he acquired through the post by sharing / commenting on it - HAH (that's another HIDDEN TIP in your CTA - love your posts, keep up the great work - keep following)

P.S. One quick question: How do you usually test headlines for A/B test?



Chris Von Wilpert

Great takeaways man. For a/b testing headlines writers come up with 5 different headlines and then we test them with Facebook ads.



Victor Eduoh

Wow! This is rich and deeply insightful.



What I found and admire most from hitting your target is the ingenuity and creativity, with which you approached this.

I'm wondering, were your bills going to be halved? Or, was it the pressure to deliver as a consultant among in-house staff that spanked out this admirable level of creative approach?

Anyway, thanks for documenting and sharing this. And I'd love that spreadsheet.

Hope you hit 300k next. If you do, please do well to share the details too.



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks Victor. That's what I was paid to do, so I had to deliver or Noah was going to fly me back to Australia ;) haha

Honestly, I just didn't want to let down Noah and the rest of the Sumo team down, so I kept trying to come up with new ideas to hit the goal. The weekly accountability I mentioned at the start of the post helped a lot with this.

In the weekly accountability meeting, if you're not on track for your goal then you need to say what you're going to do to get back on track. It doesn't necessarily mean you will hit your goal, but you are actively taking actions you think will get you back on track.



Paula Allen

When I read the goal Noah had set for you at the outset, it sounded impossible to reach in your first month. I mean, how did you even know enough about the company/product/audience/etc. to come up with a plan right off the bat?

Or did you just pull out your best list of what worked with other clients and start throwing everything at the new project willy nilly?



Chris Von Wilpert

I looked at Sumo's top customer case studies and built a buyer persona around the decision maker at one of Sumo's biggest accounts (Tony Robbins).

I then created a Market Map where I analyzed the top blog posts on other top marketing sites. This gave me an idea for a Sumo Growth Studies series I could come up with for Sumo that aligned with one of their biggest buyer personas.

I also had a list of promotion tactics that I used to promote [this piece of content](#) for Noah on his personal blog, OkDork before I started growing the Sumo blog. The audience for Noah's personal blog and the Sumo blog is very similar.

**Paula Allen**

Chris, huge thanks! I'm reading that OKDork post and even more light bulbs are going on. Your willingness to share how you do what you do is teaching me (and others) so much!

**Patrick Coombe**

Wow really cool case study, I just shared it. also really great blog in general I wasn't even aware Sumo had a blog!

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Thanks man.

**Average Echidna**

Love your focus on distribution. As a content marketer, I constantly feel like Owen Wilson throwing seven different kinds of smoke.



You have to keep trying new things, testing and then trying new things again. What works for one client or situation does not always work for the next one and having a mix of distribution tools in your arsenal is the best ammo -- and a list of people to distribute too is gold.

I also completely agree with you on mixing paid options into content distribution. It just takes too long now and is often not cost-effective from a time perspective to build slow organic growth without the support of paid options. Great post!



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks Katy, sounds like you've been doing this a long time and know what's up. Def need to do more than just rely on organic traffic for faster growth.



Kurt

Love the success and details of what you did, congrats!



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks Kurt



Dejan Gajsek

Man, on one point I can see how stressful it is when you're running behind but on another, it pushes you to find the right way. The question is, have you found a way to crack it and is this a scalable system or do you have to keep adjusting and find new levers to maintain the growth?

Shared!



Chris Von Wilpert

Hey Dejan, it's still too early to tell. I've only been here since August, but so far we have continued to grow traffic. Every week we are testing new promotion tactics and adding the ones that work to improve our system.



Frantic Puma

Great stuff Chris. Your content is on point at the moment dude!

Also really liked the proactive metrics dashboard. Good stuff.



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks man



Fair Eland

You guys are great at Sumo. I love your details. Thanks for sharing. I can't wait to share with my colleagues and my network. Well done.



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks dude.



Alec



Very valuable information. I am struggling to build my eBook traffic on my website currently. I love the process, this is very helpful.

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Awesome, glad you liked it Alec.

**Condemned Goosander**

Awesome stuff - some real nuggets in here. Thanks !

**Chris Von Wilpert**

No worries, with this in your top pocket you can now make more peoples dreams a reality.

**Tender Sloth**

Super Article. Without sharing the content on social media feeds, you're in trouble. What else do you work on?

I have a small consulting company where I would like to increase its presence. Should I blog to increase relevance?



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks, what else we do to promote would be another full post on it's own. There are a lot of examples and screenshots here of other traffic tactics we use: <https://sumo.com/stories/increase-website-traffic>

Without having any blog at all, it's best to start with what I've provided here. You don't need to worry about anything else until you have these 7 fundamentals in place.

I don't know if blogging will help you. To find out, I'd start by looking at:

- 1) Are your competition blogging? If so, is the content getting shared.
- 2) What common problems do your target customers have?

Combine those two things to come up with a series of topics you can cover, then write and promote one article a week for three months to test it out.

That's what I did when I first started.



Irfan Ahmed Khan

Hi Chris, such a nice inspiration for blogging & content marketing. Thanks for sharing these figures.



Chris Von Wilpert

No worries man, go get it!



Desdemona

Whew! That was good. Sharing!

But...how did you determine your budget to meet your goal? That's always the rub. Can we buy what we need? Thoughts?



Chris Von Wilpert

Hey Desdemona, it's not always a simple task to determine the exact budget you'll need at the start, so you make an educated guess and then review how you are doing against your goal every week.

You look at which activities are contributing most to your goal and which aren't. You then cut the ones not working, try to double down on the ones that are working, and test new activities.

Within a month you should have a good idea of how you are doing against your goal with the budget you started with.



You can then review if what you're doing is working, but you just need more budget to scale it, or if you need to review other activities you can test to try and hit your goal the next month before increasing the budget.



Desdemona

True, but you only had a month to hit your target! :-)



Chris Von Wilpert

2 months before I started helping grow Sumo I wrote and promoted an article on Noah's personal blog OkDork that generated 27,000 traffic in one month. So I was able to take a lot of the content promotion items I used on that article and apply it to Sumo from day #1.

What I learned from that experience I was able to apply to the 8 articles I published on Sumo in month #1 while working within the budget. It just turned out in this instance that the educated guess Noah made on the budget for the first month was accurate.



Patrick Whatman

Great post Chris! I love the "bonus material" tip - changing it out regularly for top performing content.

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Thanks man, that one is a nugget. Requires no extra content creation, just give peeps your best stuff while building your list.

**Anna**

Indeed...another great post with valuable insights. You need to invest more dollars to succeed.

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Thanks Anna.

**Akos**

Thank you very much for sharing your case study with us.

I would like to ask 2 questions:

- 1) In section 5, you mentioned that you have 15 standards for your articles, but only 4 are shown there. I'm sure some of them are top secrets, but could you share a few additional standards with us?



2) In section 2, you advised to have one metric to track against. In your case, it was the unique monthly traffic, but what other metrics would you advise to consider for a growing up content manager?

Thanks in advance!



Chris Von Wilpert

Hey Akos, here are my answers:

1- Here are three more "top secret" standards for you:

- Keep the intro short (use curiosity, social proof or a unique data point to get people interested)
- Add your content upgrade within the article wherever it makes the most sense contextually
- Use images / graphs / quotes to break up your content and help explain what you're saying

2- The other metrics I would advise to consider are:

- Email Opt-ins (setup a Goal inside Google Analytics to track number of email opt-ins)
- Sales (setup Enhanced Ecommerce inside Google Analytics to track sales against each article)



Akos

Thanks for the answers! One more thing!



What tools would you recommend for those who just launched a blog in order to find the right keywords?



Chris Von Wilpert

I'd recommend following this process if trying to map out a new content strategy around keywords. This is a process to prioritize the highest buy intent keywords with the highest search volume:

1. Enter a broad topic you want to target into Answer The Public and download the CSV file of content ideas it generates
2. Copy and paste the full list of content ideas from the CSV file into the “Get search volume data and trends” section of Google Keyword Planner
3. Download the keyword ideas CSV file from Google Keyword Planner sorted by highest monthly search volume and remove all columns except for “Keyword” and “Average monthly searches”
4. Categorize the top 100 keywords by intent using the following 3 categories:
 - i. Buy: Shows someone wants to buy something (eg: organic toothpaste)
 - ii. Learn: Shows someone wants to learn something (eg: toothpaste ingredients)
 - iii. Random: Unrelated or branded keyword (eg: colgate toothpaste)
5. Grab the top keyword from your categorized keyword list, type it into Answer The Public and download the CSV file
6. Copy and paste the “Questions” suggestions into Google Keyword Planner



7. Group the top 10 searched questions people ask on Google into sections to form the basis for your content outline



Akos

Thanks a lot for your answers! :)



Bill Widmer

Chris, this is pure gold man!! LOVE IT!



Chris Von Wilpert

Thanks Bill. You get 1st prize for sharing this post with your Mom ;)



Hans van Gent

Awesome piece Chris, lots of value from it!



Chris Von Wilpert



Thanks man.

**Stephen Jeske**

Great work Chris! Love the concept behind Proactive Metrics spreadsheet. Simple, straightforward and really useful. I would really appreciate getting a hold of a copy. :)

**Chris Von Wilpert**

You got it my man, sending you over a copy.

**Alex**

Yes please to the spreadsheet :) Thanks for sharing all this. I've already implemented a couple of ideas here.

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Sure thing Alex, just shared it with you via LinkedIn. Love that you're implementing it already.

Money follows speed!

**Liz Froment**

Thanks for this share Chris. I love how you laid it out. We're working on getting way more organized about tracking these sort of things so the proactive spreadsheet looks like something that could work really well for us. Excited to start putting some of these into action ASAP. Thanks again!

**Chris Von Wilpert**

Thanks Liz. Just sent a copy of my proactive metrics spreadsheet to you on LinkedIn. Best of luck with it.

**Roman Delcarmen**

Really useful article. I will save it to my bookmarks.

**Chris Von Wilpert**

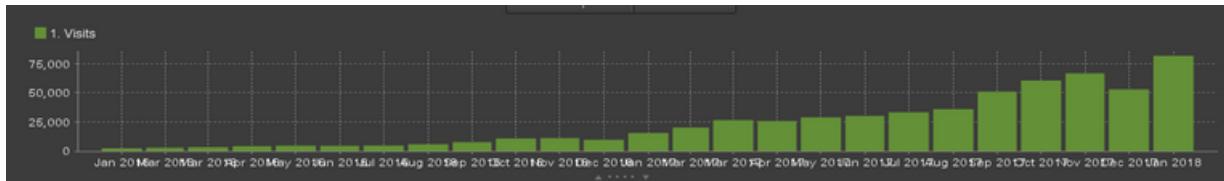
Thanks man, good luck with it ;)





Nici Sandberg

I'm on the slow-and-steady course here. I'd love to get some paid support, but nothing yet. We're struggling with #6 :) And a little bit #5. But still... not too shabby tho! (this represents 1 of 40 sites I work on)



Chris Von Wilpert

Hey Nici, I love that graph (hint: anything up and to the right, I love). For #6 one way that can help you justify spending money sending paid traffic to your content is to use this formula:

Total yearly revenue / total subscribers / 12 = Max CPL (cost per lead)

Now you have one metric you can measure your paid ad spend against (Max CPL) because you've calculated your earnings per lead and the max cost per lead you need to break even on one month's earnings.

Depending on your risk tolerance you can adjust this to 0.5x Max CPL so that you're always profitable or 3x Max CPL because you don't mind floating the cost for 90 days.