

What is the Lean Marketing Stack?

Before you start marketing your Software as a Service you need to have two things in place:

1. Product / Market fit
2. Analytics and tracking

We'll talk about product / market fit in a different article. In this piece I want to focus on the the Lean Marketing Stack.

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The Lean Marketing Stack is the base infrastructure you'll need to market your SaaS. It includes three fundamental tools:

- Your website
- Basic analytics
- Your email list

The sooner you start collecting data, the better decisions you'll be able to make. How will you know if your campaign is a success if you don't have any metrics?

Remember, there's always a chance that your product will get traction before you expect it. I've spoken to hundreds of developers who had their product featured on Hacker News or Product Hunt before they were ready. They had no way to track conversions or have people sign-up for a waiting list. Don't miss out on these opportunities!

Also, building a basic website now will force you to answer important questions. These include, "Who is my product for?" and "Why should they care about my product?" Writing a simple landing page helps focus your product development on what users want.

How much will this cost?

If you're looking to save money, you can use these providers and pay nothing:

- **Website hosting:** GitHub Pages
- **Analytics:** Google Webmaster Tools, Google Analytics, Segment, Mixpanel
- **Email list:** MailChimp

In this PDF, we'll cover the basics of setting up the Lean Marketing Stack. If you'd like to set up more detailed analytics, you should get the full version of [Marketing for Developers](#).

Your website

If you don't already have a website for your product now is the time to build one. It doesn't need to be fancy, expensive or take a long time to create. A simple landing page will do to start.

Domain set up

My recommendation is to organize your domain structure like this:

- **yourname.com** – marketing site
- **app.yourname.com** – production server for your web application
- **staging.yourname.com** – staging server for your web application

Keeping your marketing site separate from your app will help keep your visitor data clean: it clearly delineates between your app's users and people visiting your marketing page.

If you haven't found a good domain name yet, tools like [Hover](#) and [Lean Domain Search](#) offer great name recommendations.

Content Management System or plain HTML?

I'm a fan of both! If you think you're going to start blogging right away, use a content management system (CMS). Otherwise, a static HTML site will work fine.

If you're hosting a simple static site, I highly recommend [GitHub Pages](#). You host your files directly from your GitHub repository; when you push your changes they go live on the web. GitHub also offers hosting on its global Content Delivery Network free on this platform.

Which content management system should I use?

I've worked for large consulting companies and small startups, and almost all of us end up using WordPress. It's a great CMS for marketing sites. It's flexible, has great integrations, and you can host it almost anywhere.

Do not manage the hosting yourself! A good hosting service like [WPengine](#) or [Pagely](#) might feel expensive, but will save you hours of administration time. [Site Ground](#) is another good option and is less expensive.

If you'd rather not use WordPress, consider trying [Squarespace](#). It's powerful, simple to use, and starts at \$8 per month.



Thinking about hosting is one of the rabbit holes that developers fall into. Yes, you could probably do it yourself, cheaper and better. As a product creator, your most valuable asset is your time. If you can save time by hiring an existing tool, you should!

Site design

Marketing sites built by developers have a telltale design: they use the default [Bootstrap](#) theme. As a developer, fiddling around with a design isn't the best use of your time. Here are some good resources for site templates:

- **HTML themes:** [Wrap Bootstrap](#), [ThemeForest](#)
- **WordPress themes:** [Wrap Bootstrap](#), [ThemeForest](#), [Levels](#)
- **Other options:** [Carrd](#), [LeadPages](#), [Unbounce](#), [Squarespace](#), [Levels](#)

The goal here is to communicate who your product is for and how it solves their pain. Once you're making sales, you can invest more money into your marketing site. In the meantime: keep it simple!

Analytics

Marketing is about testing, analyzing the data, and iterating. To do this well, you're going to need metrics that tell you who is buying and why.

First step: set up Google Webmaster Tools

At one point, Google's webmaster tools were only marginally helpful. Nowadays, it is the only place to see which search terms people are using to find your site. You should install this right away because the more data it collects, the sooner you'll get valuable results.

Second step: install Segment

Every time I'm on a project and skip this step, I end up regretting it. [Segment](#) describes themselves as "a single hub to collect, translate and route your customer data." It allows you to easily add new tracking snippets to your site without having to go in and change your code each time. It also stores your historical event data and automatically loads that data into the new tools you choose. Now, instead of interacting with multiple APIs, you only need to work with Segment's.

Note: if you tried Segment in its early years and were disappointed I'd recommend trying them again. They've solved their data leakage and latency issues.

Their free tier for developers will give you up to 1000 MTU/month, perfect for a new project.

For a detailed explanation on how to set up tracking events in Segment, you should get the full version of [Marketing for Developers](#).

Third step: install Google Analytics and Mixpanel

Once you have Segment installed and tracking data, you can set up other integrations. For analytics, Segment features over 38 tools.

While you can definitely explore some of these in the future, I'm going to recommend that you start with [Google Analytics](#) and [Mixpanel](#). Both of them are free (Mixpanel has a free tier for developers) and both cover the essentials you'll need for tracking goals, funnels, and cohorts.

(Want step-by-step instructions on this? Get the full version of [Marketing for Developers](#).)

Last step: mailing list

Nathan Barry once told me:

"My email list is my most important asset."

Most people will visit your website and leave, but if you can get their email address, you'll have additional opportunities to contact them.

We'll talk about setting up email forms, squeeze pages, and drip sequences later on, but for now let's talk about choosing an email provider.

To start, I recommend you use MailChimp. It's free for up to 2,000 subscribers, has many built-in integrations, and features an easy-to-use automation tool.

Those are the basics. What's next?

If you're about to launch your SaaS, I highly recommend you read the entire *Lean Marketing Stack* section of [Marketing for Developers](#): www.devmarketing.xyz.

In those chapters, I'll explain how to set-up more detailed tracking events in Segment, Google Webmaster Tools, Google Analytics and Mixpanel.