the marketing pod

GET THERE FASTER: STRATEGIC MARKETING FOR HIGH-GROWTH BUSINESSES



GET READY TO GROW_

Securing investment for your business isn't easy, but once you get that all-important funding, you can start taking your organisation to the next level. You're poised and ready to put your plans into action, but which area should you focus on first to maximise your growth?

Investors don't part with funding lightly - so any investment you receive shows they believe your business has potential to deliver a significant financial return.

Now is the time to demonstrate your business's worth, but first, you will need to overcome some of the most common hurdles facing high-growth businesses.

Our changing energy infrastructure means that companies with the right capabilities to enable that change are thriving:

- There are 869 high-growth energy companies in the UK
- Of these, 250 are scale-ups and 39 are academic spin-outs
- They are most likely to be based in Scotland or London
- It's an equity-heavy sector - £3.2bn has been raised and £1.7m in grants has been received.
- An additional £4.1bn has been raised by 1220 high growth companies in the UK who are focused on 'Clean Energy Tech'.
- Most of these tech companies are in the 'seed' or 'venture' stage, so there is plenty of room for growth.[1]

1 Beauhurst

As you've been focused on securing investment, it's possible that you've neglected some of the activities that will help you sustain the momentum you've achieved so far - such as brand building, market presence and lead generation. So you might find that, although you're well-known in investment circles, there is work to do on extending your reach and increasing acquisition rates. You could be missing opportunities to reach large numbers of potential customers. And while you might have best-in-class products and services on offer, if customers aren't aware of them, you'll struggle to boost your sales.

Even if you're fairly well-known within your market, once you have investors on board, you need to focus on building your brand equity quickly. This way, your organisation will be as valuable as possible when it's time for you to make your next move.

At The Marketing Pod, we've worked with numerous fast-growing businesses in the energy technology sector and we believe that the best way to maximise the value of your brand is by investing in marketing. And we're not the only ones that understand the influence effective marketing can have on business growth - a recent study of high-growth businesses found that one in five were investing 20% or more of their annual revenue into marketing.

So, if you're not already focusing on your marketing, you could be limiting your organisation's growth. Not sure where to start? We've packed this guide full of tips on how you can follow in the footsteps of some of the world's leading high-growth businesses.

"Marketing is more than the sum of its parts, and the firms that grow the fastest understand this."

Hinge Research Institute



HIGH-GROWTH BUSINESSES DO MARKETING DIFFERENTLY_

High-growth businesses spend more on their marketing than their competitors - but where does all this investment go?

Hinge Research Institute's 2019 High Growth Study contains valuable insights into the marketing strategies of some of today's fastest-growing companies. The study includes over 1,000 businesses that experienced a 20% or higher compound annual growth in revenue over a three-year period, and in this time they *grew 5x faster than their average peers.* So when you're planning your organisation's next steps, there's a lot you can learn from these businesses.

When it comes to marketing, successful high-growth businesses make the following areas their key priorities:

Differentiating from their competitors

Almost 60% of high-growth businesses said that *differentiation* was their top marketing priority. They understand that, in a crowded marketplace, it's vital for their organisation to stand out. Customers must understand what makes Kiwi Power unique - why should they choose your products or services over those of your competitors?

Salesforce is one of today's fastest-growing B2B brands - they increased their brand value by 24% in just one year, from £4.8bn in 2018 to £6.1bn in 2019[2]. Their CEO, Marc Benioff, believes that "the most important rule in marketing [is] the necessity to differentiate your brand"

Establishing a place in the market

High-growth organisations often have several subject matter experts on their team - people who really understand the products or service they provide and the industry they're working in. By promoting these experts and sharing the insights they can provide, they establish themselves as 'thought leaders' and specialists in their field. There's a range of ways you can do this, from creation of content for white papers (that can be repurposed for multiple channels) or by speaking at industry events.

If you don't have a cohesive idea about what your brand is, what it means to the world, what the offering means in the world, it is hard to break through.

Michelle Peluso, CMO at IBM



Did you know...?

Experts including BloombergNEF predict a massive increase in utility-scale battery storage over the next decade. The outlook for the battery storage industry is certainly rosy **for those who capture the market**.[3]

Identifying the best ways to reach customers

Engaging your target audience is crucial when you're trying to fast-track your growth, as it's by developing a real connection with your customers that you'll see sales soar. The most successful marketing contains carefully crafted messages that show a deep understanding of customers' needs, motivations and pain points. But even the most effective marketing messages won't work unless they reach their intended audience. It's for this reason that high-growth companies make it a priority to determine which channels their customers and prospects actually use, and then focus on these channels.

THE MARKETING POD & AMP CLEAN ENERGY_

One of the latest high-growth energy businesses to partner with us is AMP Clean Energy, a distributed energy company with innovative solutions to help businesses fund and develop green energy projects.

The brief

After a series of company acquisitions, the AMP Group consolidated all of its subsidiaries under one brand - AMP Clean Energy. They were then keen to rebrand, in order to ensure that the new brand was clearly articulated to the market. The Group's existing relationship with The Marketing Pod meant we already knew each of their businesses well, so they asked for our strategic support with rebranding.



Our approach

We provided AMP Clean Energy with end-to-end support throughout the rebrand process, including:

Engaging with key stakeholders

With a number of different businesses coming together under the new AMP Clean Energy brand, it was important for everyone to feel involved in the organisation's evolution. We facilitated on-site workshops with employees across different businesses and departments to get a well-rounded view of their proposition.

Redefining their position in the market

In consolidating their subsidiaries under one business, AMP Clean Energy was significantly boosting the service it could offer its customers. We needed to ensure the new brand was fully reflective of its increased capabilities, so we used the insights we gained from facilitating the workshops to identify AMP Clean Energy's key strengths and future aspirations. This enabled us to determine its ideal brand personality.

Bringing the new brand to life

Once we had agreed on this new positioning with AMP Clean Energy's key stakeholders we developed a new logo and colour palette, along with new messaging for each of the company's core services. We then updated AMP Clean Energy's existing collateral with the new visuals and messaging, and created a set of multi-channel customer communications to inform their customers about the rebrand.



The results

With our support, AMP Clean Energy successfully boosted its brand equity by bringing all of its businesses under one roof. AMP Clean Energy has since been acquired for over £52m by Asterion Industrial Partners.



Linda Taylor, Group Marketing Director at AMP Clean Energy, said:

"The team at The Marketing Pod were fundamental in delivering our AMP Clean Energy brand to market in December 2018. They provided us with research-driven, employee and customer-led engagement and strategic support that enabled us to consolidate six brands into one and launch a new market-facing position for the Group.

"The Marketing Pod also worked closely with us across all customer touchpoints from redesigning all our collateral, creating our pre and post communications and assisting with our digital and social media strategies. Following the rebrand, they helped facilitate our annual marketing planning process and ongoing are enabling our transition to a marketing-led organisation. They are not an extension to my team, but are my team!"

BRING YOUR BRAND TO LIFE_

Now you know how some of the fastest-growing businesses approach their marketing, you can take strategic steps to ensure your marketing is setting you up for success.

Here are our top tips:

1. Get to know your customer

Before you do anything else, you must ensure that you fully understand your customers. This is critical to your strategy and planning - building a clear picture of the people you're targeting will not only help you to articulate how your current offering can help them, but it should also be used to inform new product or service development. When you're growing quickly, decisions must be made rapidly and having this information to hand should help you to move in the right direction

So we recommend undertaking as much **market research** as you can to discover exactly what's happening in your customer's world - the results may surprise you.

You can do this through:

- **Interviews and surveys** - to provide both qualitative and quantitative insights
- **Scrutiny of your Google Analytic**s - how do online customers interact with your brand?
- **Keyword research** - what are your customers searching for online?

Key questions you should know the answers to:

- **What are your customers' pain points?**
- **Where can you find them?**
- **What do they think of your business?**

A key part of your research should be **customer journey mapping** - creating a visual representation of the process your customers or prospects go through when buying with your business. This might be much more complex than you expect. A customer may not go straight to the URL you provide on a leaflet, for example - they might search for you on social media, head to your homepage, or call your sales team.

By mapping out the customer journey, you can refine your interactions with your customers at each touch point and understand how to get them seamlessly to the end goal - a sale.



2. Set your business apart

Now you understand your customers, you need to evaluate your offering through their eyes. This will help you to differentiate your organisation from your competitors.

Start by reviewing your **market positioning** - is it clear that you can offer your customers something that your competitors can't? If not, your brand might need to be refined, to ensure you stand out from the crowd. Competitor research is a useful way to identify what's already on offer. Combine this insight with your customer research to carve out a more distinctive position within the market.



In our experience, high-growth businesses are often able to articulate their offering to investors, but can be less adept at communicating their customer offering. When you're looking to grow your business quickly, you need to be able to speak your customers' language - and this begins with a strong **value proposition**.

While your customers may be 'businesses', it's important to remember that you're speaking to the people within those businesses. So your value proposition should tell them how your product/service can benefit them, and why they should buy from you rather than your competitors.



TOP TIP_

You should be able to summarise your brand's value proposition in a single sentence - if you can't, it's not clear enough.



3. Take a strategic approach

Now that you've defined your position in the market and your value proposition, you may find that you need to adjust your **visual identity** and/or your **tone of voice** to ensure they accurately reflect your brand. If so, you should do this before you carry out any marketing activity. Taking this step back will ensure that all the marketing you do going forward gives your customers a consistent message about who you are and what you can offer.

Your customer research should always inform your wider marketing plan. Revisit your customer journey maps to identify which touchpoints require your attention first - did mapping reveal that your **website** needs to be optimised for engagement and conversion, for example? You should also refer to your customer profile to ensure that you have a presence on all of the **channels** that your audience is using.

Every business will have a different set of initial priorities, but many high-growth organisations find that while they're ready get started, they have a lack of content they can share. Content is critical in the B2B arena - in fact, **58% of B2B marketers successfully used content marketing to nurture leads in 2019**[4] - so content creation should be high on your list of priorities. But just like the rest of your marketing, your content needs to be carefully planned, to ensure it's timely, relevant and engaging for your audience.



58% of B2B marketers successfully used content marketing to nurture leads in 2019.[4]

4. Test and learn

Once your campaigns are live, you can start learning more about your customers and refine your approach accordingly. Any activity you carry out on digital channels will provide you with a wealth of data on the people who see and interact with your brand. By harnessing this data you can continually optimise your marketing to maximise your returns.

In fact, research has shown that the companies that grow the fastest are those that use **analytics** - companies that use customer analytics extensively see profit improvements 126% higher than their competitors who don't.[5] So make sure you're constantly monitoring and learning from the data you're collecting.

Simple A/B testing - creating two versions of an ad, landing page, or other marketing asset with just one varying element - can give you valuable insight into what resonates with your audience.

When you're aiming to grow quickly, you don't have time or money to waste on ineffective activity - so this real-time insight can help you to make swift, strategic marketing decisions.

"Marketing transformations are ongoing - they never end. It's about continual improvement"

Diana O'Brien, Global CMO at Deloitte



EXPERT SUPPORT FROM AN AGILE AGENCY_

Any business has the potential to fast-track its growth, but when you're concentrating on client services it can be hard to dedicate the time to optimising your marketing strategy. This is particularly true if you don't have an in-house marketing team, or if your marketing team is very small.

Many of the investor-backed businesses we've worked with sought out our support because they were keen to keep their OPEX costs low, so they needed an agency that could act as an outsourced marketing team. As a result, we've refined our services to provide a solution that resolves some of the biggest marketing challenges facing high-growth organisations. Here's how we can help you if...

...you need marketing expertise, but you don't have an in-house team

You don't need to spend time and money recruiting a marketing team - our team of B2B marketing specialists have expertise across the full range of marketing and PR services, so you can turn to us for advice on everything from digital to content marketing.

...you need to start building brand equity, quickly

We'll make getting to grips with your business our first priority, so we can hit the ground running when it comes to establishing your position in the market.

"I was impressed with the speed with which they understood the complexities of our organisation and our market, very quickly grasping our objectives, product set and strategy."

Douglas Greenwell,
Group Strategy and Marketing Director, Danwood
(backed by Apogee)

...you don't have time to create a marketing strategy (or carry it out)

Whether you're looking for strategic advice and consultancy or you need hands-on support to deliver your tactical activity - or both! - we're here to help.

"We have really benefited from working with The Marketing Pod...our market profile has increased significantly and we have had some great feedback following the launch of a number of propositions."

Jon Slade, CEO,
Ensek (backed by LDC)

...you need marketing that delivers tangible results to show your investors

With our bespoke Insights Dashboard, you can see how your online and offline campaigns are performing in real time. And the results should keep your investors happy - we have a proven track record in supporting high-growth businesses to boost both their revenue and their reputation, including:

amp CLEAN ENERGY
limejump
DUCO
Constructionline
DANWOOD
Viridor
ENSEK
inenco





WE'LL HELP YOU GET THERE FASTER_

Talk to the team today:

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