



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Take your brand and business to the next level by building it for scale with best-in-class applications and sage brand strategy from marketing maven and entrepreneur Michale J, MacDonald.

Michael J. MacDonald



Michael J. MacDonald is an accomplished entrepreneur, brand architect, and marketing expert hailing from ___, NYC. Despite facing adversity while growing up in public housing, Michael discovered his passion for computers at the age of 14, which led him to create local flyers and eventually delve into web development. Michael's entrepreneurial spirit and desire to expand his skillset eventually led him to explore photography and carve out a niche in the nightclub scene.

In his 30s, Michael's mindset shifted to more longterm interest, as he began taking equity in companies. Eventually this dedication, led him to co-create the highly successful financial media powerhouse, Earn Your Leisure (EYL), along with associated ventures such as Invest Fest and EYL University. However, the birth of his first child in 2022 proved to be a pivotal moment for Michael, sparking introspection around his legacy. Michael has since transitioned into a more public-facing role where he is quickly becoming a beacon for personal branding and mentorship. As he travels the world, he shares his entrepreneurial journey and imparts wisdom to emerging business minds and creatives.

Michael's vast experience in branding and business development has been lauded by major outlets such as Black Enterprise, underscoring his mission to leave an indelible mark in the industry. From ventures like Market Mondays to EYL Network, Michael's work has been instrumental in establishing him as a prominent figure in the world of entrepreneurship and marketing.

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Personal Branding 101

Today, professional personal brands play a crucial role in the success of businesses. These brands help distinguish owners in competitive industries to boost customer trust and connectedness, enhance brand awareness, and increase sales. When executed correctly, a personal brand effectively captures your unique selling proposition (USP) by magnifying your personality, passion, and expertise in one strong brand narratives. Moreover, personal brands enables business owners to swiftly grow a connected audience.

According to recent marketing studies, nearly **75 % of consumers are more likely to trust** owners' who've established a personal brand. **67% of Americans are willing to spend more** on products & services of personal brands, while **82% believe "companies are more influential** if their lead executives have a personal brand that they know of and follow ([BBG, 2022](#)).

GETTING STARTED

Developing a personal brand can be a daunting task, and it's understandable to feel apprehensive about it. However, the fear of being judged or failing could be holding you back from reaching new heights in your business. To begin, it's important to confront these anxieties and embrace your uniqueness. Remember, your personality, perspective, and knowledge are all valuable assets that, when presented effectively, can have a significant impact on your business growth and success.

FIND YOUR VOICE

Now that you have conquered your fear, it is time to identify what sets you apart from others in your field. Determine why people like and trust you, and develop a unique selling proposition (USP) or competitive edge. Begin by listing your personal and professional skills, accomplishments, and personality traits. Ask friends, clients, or colleagues for feedback to gain insight into what makes you stand out.



DEFINE YOUR WHY

Your interests, passions and experiences are important and can serve as the basis of your brand content. What is your why? Start developing this by writing both short term and long term mission and vision statement for your brand. Sort through what you would like to achieve and who you would like to impact to develop your overarching goals.

BRAND IMAGE & IDENTITY

Your brand's image is shaped by non-visual elements such as reputation, perception, and the feelings it elicits from your target audience. On the other hand, your brand's identity is comprised of visual elements such as your logo, color scheme, tagline, typography, and website and social media design. These elements help distinguish and make your personal brand memorable.

STRATEGIZE YOUR SUCCESS

Strategizing your success begins with choosing which channels you will use to gain relevance, share your content or reach your audience. A personal branded website is critical for communicating your brand story and offers; however, social media, podcasts and search engines also allow your audience to connect.

Developing Winning Products & Services

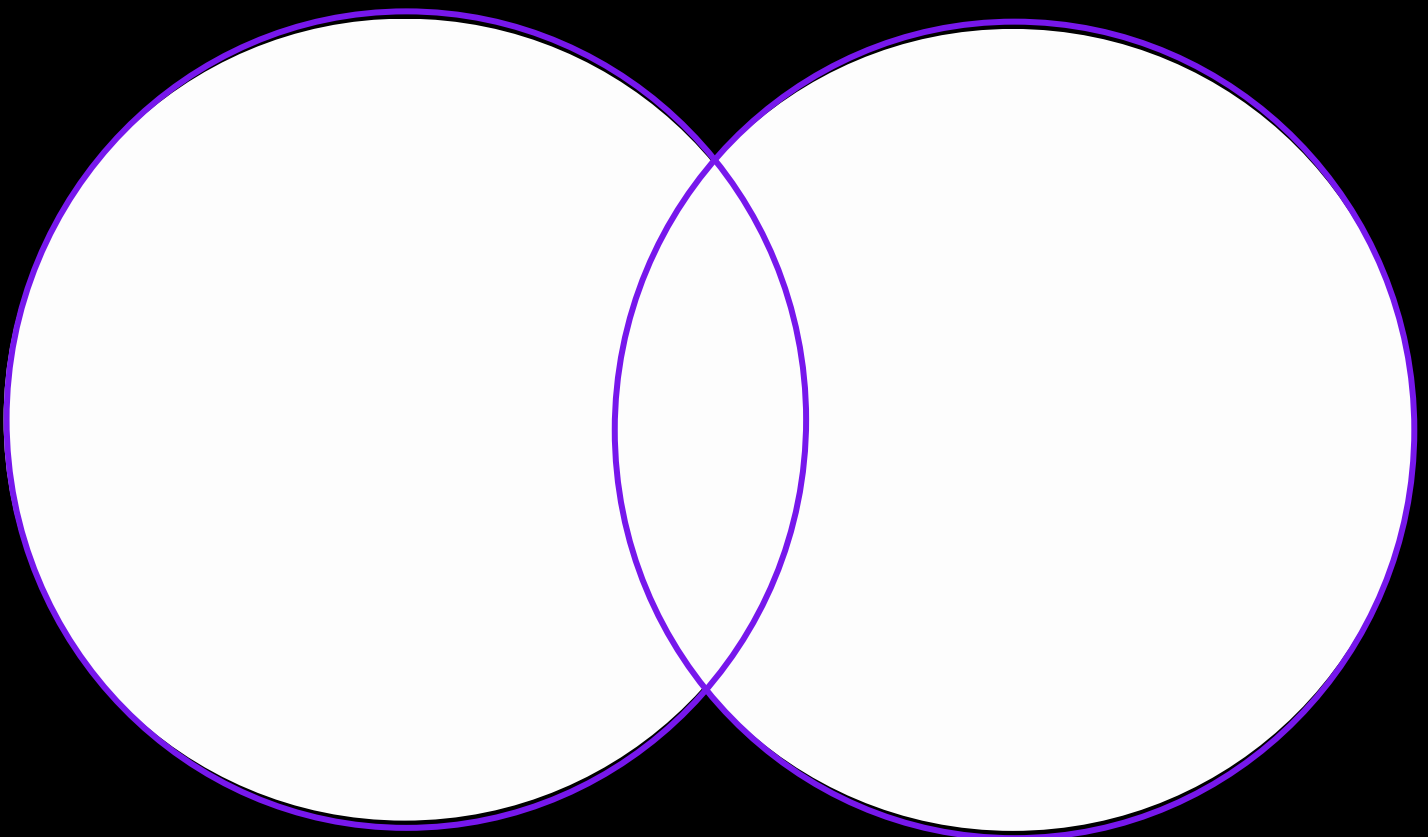
If your brand does not yet have products and/or services, this exercise will help you discover alignment and synergy between what you do and viable offerings that your audience may engage with. Follow the steps below to begin the journey into refining your brand's focus and creating winning products and services that resonate.

1. Determine your area of expertise or passion, and focus on that as a guiding principle for product or service creation.
2. Understand your audience by conducting thorough market research to identify their needs, preferences, and pain points. This will help you create meaningful services or products that resonate with them.
3. Brainstorm a broad list of products and services ideas that align with your expertise and your audience's needs. Consider both physical and digital options.
4. Prioritize and validate your ideas by assessing their feasibility, market demand, and alignment with your brand. Test your concepts with a small sample audience for feedback.
5. For physical products, design and create prototypes that are visually appealing and functional. For digital products, choose the correct platforms for dissemination.

**Your Passions
& Interests**

**Feasible Products
& Services**

**Your Target Audience's
Interests**



The Power of Podcasting

Consumers desire a strong connection with the brands they support, leading to organic advocacy and brand growth. Podcasting helps create an immersive experience allowing your unique personality to shine through and connect with the audience. It allows you to delve deeper into topics you're passionate about through incorporating media elements such as music, sound effects, and interviews.



AUTHORITY & CREDIBILITY

By consistently providing valuable and well-researched content, you can establish yourself as an authority in your field, niche or space. Becoming an authority in your lane positions you to become a subject matter expert, thought leader, or voice of reason. Being recognized in these positions can lead to opportunities for speaking engagements, collaborations, and even consulting or coaching services related to your niche.

BUILD A LOYAL AUDIENCE

Podcasting can help you connect with like-minded individuals who are interested in the same topics. It helps create a sense of community around your content, where listeners become engaged and even interact with you directly. Podcasting fosters a sense of community among your listeners. Through comments, emails, social media, or even live events, you can directly interact with your audience. This engagement can provide valuable feedback, suggestions, and a deeper understanding of your listeners' interests. Growing a dedicated listener base can create loyal fans and consumers. They may actively promote your content, attend live events, buy merchandise, or support you through paid platforms. This fan base can be a valuable asset for the growth and sustainability.

CREATE MORE CONTENT

The most popular podcasts are between 20 to 40 minutes long. There isn't a specific rule that dictates how long your podcast should be; however creating long form content allows for the massive opportunity of repurposing the content. Putting in the work for one podcast can result in blog posts, 'hot take' video clips or snippets or even follow up Q &As. This extends the reach of the content across different platforms.

REVENUE & MONETIZATION

Your branded podcast can open the doors to networking opportunities with other experts, creators, and influencers in your field who may also cross-promote or feature your brand and business. As your podcast gains popularity, you may have the opportunity to partner with sponsors or advertisers who want to promote their products or services to your audience. This can be a significant source of revenue. Additionally, you can offer premium content or memberships for a fee. This could include early access to episodes, exclusive bonus content, or access to a private community. If your podcast has a strong brand and following, you can create and sell merchandise or promote services related to your content. This might include branded apparel, books, courses, or other products.



Step 1: Find Domain Name & Handles

Choosing and registering a domain name is the first step in establishing your online presence. This crucial step shapes your brand identity and determines how your business is perceived in the digital realm. Your domain name is a vital component of your brand, and it's often the first thing people notice when they interact with your business online. It should precisely reflect your brand, making it effortless for customers to recall and associate with your products or services. A well-designed domain name can help build trust and credibility with your audience, creating the impression of a stable and established business.

1. Go to www.namecheckr.com.
2. Enter Desired Brand or Business Name
3. Initiate Search
4. Review Availability (Green check = available, Red X = taken).
5. Check Domains (click provided links).
6. Check Social Handles that match Domain choice (click provided links).
7. Consider Variations if names are not available across site and platforms.
8. Record Available Names.



Step 2: Register Domain & Hosting

Domain hosting is what makes it possible for your website to be accessible on the internet. After designing the website on your local computer, it needs to be stored on a server that is connected to the internet 24/7 for others to access its files such as HTML, images, and videos. Domain registration locks in your name and domain hosting makes your site accessible. GoDaddy.com provides domain registration, website hosting, and other website-related services. They are known for their user-friendly domain registration and website building tools.

1. Go to hostingmjm.com and create an account.
2. Search your domain available name from Step One and add to your cart for two years. Next, add a hosting plan and set up your hosting account
3. Follow any additional prompts on Go Daddy to secure domain & hosting.



Step 3: Setup Custom Domain Email

Now that you have a registered your domain with hosting, it's time to get your custom domain email. Your domain specific email gives your contact information instant validity and a professional feel for your audience. Google Workspace offers an administrative panel for managing Google services within a business or organization. This console allows you to manage your user accounts and set security policies, and more for your team.

1. Go to www.googleworkspace.com to get your custom domain email and console.
2. Choose a plan (Basic, Business, or Enterprise) that suits your needs based on how many email accounts you and your team may need.
3. Create your custom email address. Ex. hello@yourdomain.com
4. Complete the purchase process and provide billing details
5. Follow prompts to verify ownership of your domain. This may involve adding a TXT record to your domain's DNS settings.
6. Access your domain registrar's DNS settings on GoDaddy or wherever your hosting is to add the MX (Mail Exchange) records provided by Google to route emails through Google's servers.



Step 4: Setup E-Commerce Store

E-commerce platforms allow you to sell your products or services online. While there are many platforms out there, WooCommerce, a WordPress store integration is the most superior option. With WooCommerce, you can modify the look and feel of your store using themes, and you have control over various settings related to products, taxes, shipping, and more. In addition, it is free, open-source and supports a wide array of payment gateways, like Stripe.

Shopify is a close alternative due to ease of use, as it is known for its intuitive and user-friendly interface. It doesn't require advanced technical skills and can be up and running in a matter of minutes. If you're a beginner or utilize Shopify already, proceed.

1. Go to www.wordpress.com and set up an account.
2. From your WordPress dashboard, go to Plugins > Add New.
3. Search for "WooCommerce" and click "Install Now"
4. Once installed, click "Activate" to activate the plugin.



Step 5: Setup Sales Funnels Account

Sales funnels are a series of steps that guide potential customers through a conversion process to achieve a desired action, such as making a purchase. Creating sales funnels has never been easier thanks to progressive software like ClickFunnels which helps businesses create sales funnels for their products or services. It provides tools for building landing pages, sales pages, and managing marketing automation. This platform offers a variety of pre-designed funnel templates that cater to different business types and goals, which can be further customized to fit your specific needs. With ClickFunnels' drag-and-drop editor, users can easily adjust and organize funnel elements, including landing and sells pages, forms, buttons, and more.

1. Go to funnelmjm.com and sign up and choose a suitable pricing plan.
2. Once you've signed up and logged in, you'll be directed to your dashboard.
3. Click the "Create New Funnel" and choose between the Cookbook Builder, for beginners. It provides pre-designed funnel templates to achieve your goal.
4. Use the drag-and-drop editor to customize your chosen template.
You can add and modify elements like headlines, images, videos, forms, and more.
5. Set up your funnel pages. Most funnels have multiple pages (e.g., opt-in page, thank you page, sales page). Customize each page to guide users through the funnel process.
6. Connect Your Domain by going to Account Settings > "Custom Domains"
7. Setup Email integration, to collect leads by going to Account Settings> "Email"
8. Connect your payment gateway (e.g., Stripe) so you can process payments.



Step 6: Setup Email Marketing Automation

Email marketing and automation platforms allows businesses to create and manage email campaigns. They provides tools for designing, sending, and analyzing email marketing campaigns. Mailchimp is a leader in the space and allows users to create and send email campaigns to their subscribers. This is crucial for businesses to communicate with their audience, promote products or services, and build customer relationships through personalized and targeted emails.

1. Go to emailmjm.com and create a free account. With your free account you can send emails to 1000 contacts a month. Should you have more contacts or grow quickly, adjust accordingly in the "account" tab.
2. Check your email inbox for the confirmation link to activate your account.
3. Once logged in, you'll be directed to your dashboard where you'll manage your future campaigns and lists.
4. If you have an existing list of subscribers, you can import them into Mailchimp and create lists to segment them by going to "Audience" > "Create Audience"
5. Next, go to the "Campaigns" tab and click "Create Campaign" to design and send your first email.



Step 7: Setup Project Management Tool

Project management tools are equipped with a range of benefits, including but not limited to task management, project planning, resource allocation, collaboration and communication, document management, time tracking, risk management through reporting and analytics, integration with other tools, client collaboration (in some versions), and mobile accessibility. These features provide a comprehensive framework for managers and team members to track project progress, manage workload, and ensure timely completion of projects. Additionally, it enables effortless communication and collaboration among team members and external clients. Teamwork is a stellar project management and collaboration tool that helps teams organize tasks, communicate, and track progress on various projects.

1. Go to the www.teamworkmjm.com and create an account .
2. Check your email for a confirmation link, click to activate.
3. Setup your account by providing information about your business like name and size.
4. Once logged in, you'll be directed to your dashboard where you'll manage your projects and tasks.



Step 8: Customer Communication Platform

Communicating with your becomes increasingly important as you scale your business. Implementing a customer communication platform can help you take your business from good to amazing. Slack is a collaboration platform for teams. It organizes communication into channels, allowing users to send messages, share files, and integrate with other apps. It's known for its real-time collaboration features, search functionality, and flexibility in customization. Teams use Slack to streamline communication and enhance teamwork.

1. Go to www.workspacemjm.com
2. Click on the "Get Started for Free" button.
3. Enter your email, create a password, and provide your team's name.
4. Create Workspace: Click "Create Workspace."
5. Check your email for a verification message and follow the instructions.
6. After verification, customize your workspace by inviting members & creating channels.



Step 9: Setup Content Selling Platform

Podia.com is an online platform that enables creators to sell digital products and services, including online course creation tools, email marketing capabilities, custom landing and sales pages, and affiliate marketing support. It provides a space for creators to monetize their content and expertise, with options like paid memberships for exclusive content and resources. Podia is an invaluable resource for individuals and businesses looking to sell digital products and services online.

1. Go to communitymjm.com and click "Start Free Trial" or "Get Started." Create an account by entering your name, email, and password.
2. Choose between the "Free", "Mover" or "Shaker" plan that best suits your business.
3. Set up your store by naming it.
4. Set up your payment method using Stripe or PayPal to accept payments.
5. Start adding products like online courses, memberships, digital downloads, etc. Provide details like title, description, and pricing.
6. Familiarize yourself with the dashboard and explore additional features like email marketing, analytics, and more.



Step 10: Payment Processing Platform

Stripe is an online payment processing platform that allows businesses to securely and efficiently accept payments through its API or pre-built plugins. Stripe collects and processes payment information, verifies transaction details, processes payments, and transfers funds to the business's Stripe account and linked bank account. Stripe does not charge any setup fees, monthly fees, or hidden fees. You only pay per successful transaction at 2.9% + \$0.30 per successful transaction

1. Go to www.stripe.com the Stripe website.
2. Sign up and provide business details.
3. Access the Stripe Dashboard.
4. Complete account setup and preferences.
5. Add business and bank details in Settings.
6. Integrate Stripe into your platform.
7. Optionally, test transactions in a sandbox.
8. Go live by switching to "Live" mode.
9. Ensure compliance and security.
10. Monitor transactions and access reports in the Stripe Dashboard.



Step 11: Set Up Virtual Phone Account

Virtual phone systems provide a professional business phone number, remote work capabilities, call routing, automated attendants, voicemail and transcription, call recording and monitoring, analytics and reporting, integration with business tools, scalability, cost savings, and enhanced customer service. These features streamline communication, support remote work, and improve customer interactions, leading to improved business efficiency and professionalism. Open Phone is an all-in-one phone system for your team's business calls, texts, and other points of contact.

1. Go to www.phonemjm.com and sign up with your email and password.
2. Verify your email.
3. Choose a phone number (local or toll-free).
4. Provide basic business info.
5. Set up your profile.
6. Add team members if needed.
7. Download the mobile app (optional).
8. Customize settings as desired.
9. Add payment method.
10. Start making calls and sending messages.



Step 12: Setup Podcast Hosting Platform

Podcast hosting and monetization platform provides podcasters with the tools and infrastructure they need to produce, promote, and profit from their content effectively. These platforms help to streamline podcast creation, management and distribution of content and promotion aspects for revenue generation. RedCircle is a powerful platform that offers distribution to popular directories, monetization tools, brand partners, detailed analytics, promotional tools, and collaboration features. It also supports dynamic ad insertion and provides automated transcription services for accessibility and SEO.

1. Go to www.podcastmjm.com and create an account.
2. Create Show (Name, Description).
3. Add Episodes (Upload, Title, Description).
4. Customize Settings (Cover, Branding).
5. Monetize (Donations, Sponsorships).
6. Promote (Social Media, Email).
7. Analyze (Downloads, Demographics).
8. Engage with Audience (Comments, Messages).
9. Collaborate with Guests.
10. Optional: Premium Content (Subscriptions).



Step 13: Setup AI Content Resource

You can optimize your content creation process, improve productivity, and maintain a compelling online presence by utilizing OpenAI's sophisticated language model, Chat GPT. This revolutionary tool enables automated generation of diverse content, from blogs and product descriptions to emails and social media posts in a chat interface. Additionally, ChatGPT can assist in scripting engaging video content and provides creative sparks for brainstorming sessions. These capabilities can assist in maintaining your streamlined content; however, it's crucial to review and fine-tune generated content on ChatGPT to align with your brand's voice and messaging.

1. Go to www.openai.com and create a free account.
2. Verify Your Email by clicking the provided link.
3. Explore ChatGPT dashboard for content creation.
4. Compose a prompt with context or instructions.
5. Start Conversation with a user message.
6. Engage Alternately with user and assistant messages.
7. Review and Edit generated content.
8. Retrieve Content for use in your project.



Step 14: Setup Digital Asset Cloud Storage

Cloud storage is a service that allows you to store and access digital data, such as files, documents, photos, and videos, over the internet. Instead of storing files on a physical device like a computer's hard drive or a local server, they are stored on remote servers maintained by a cloud storage provider. This service allows you and your team to share files and access them from anywhere at anytime. It is important as a business to have all of your assets such as your logos, graphics, videos, fonts, audio and stock footage readily accessible. Dropbox and Google Drive are both popular cloud storage services. Dropbox provides 2GB of free storage and paid plans for more space, while Google Drive offers 15GB of free storage shared across Google services, with additional storage available through Google One. Choose the solution that is most suitable for your needs.

1. Go to www.google.com/drive
2. Sign in with your custom domain email managed by Google or create a new Gmail account
3. Once signed in, you're in Google Drive and can begin uploading your assets
4. Click "+ New" to upload files or create new documents.
5. Create folders to keep files organized.
6. Right-click a file or folder to share with others.
7. Install the desktop app for file syncing or download the mobile app for on-the-go access.



Step 15 : Build a Personal Brand Website

A well done personal brand website seamlessly displays your expertise, client portfolio, testimonials and offerings. This site should tell a succinct story while expanding, your digital footprint, cementing credibility, help you collect data from your growing audience and increase sales conversions through your connected funnels.

1. Value Proposition: Clearly state who you are and what you offer.
2. Professional Photo: Include a high-quality headshot.
3. Bio/About Me: Share your background and expertise.
4. Portfolio/Work Samples: Showcase your best work or projects.
5. Testimonials/Social Proof: Display endorsements or case studies.
6. Contact Information: Provide easy ways to get in touch.
7. Content/Blog Section: Share valuable insights and knowledge.
8. Social Media Links: Include links to your professional profiles.
9. Clear Call-to-Actions: Guide visitors to take specific actions.
10. Branding Consistency: Align design with your personal brand.
11. Responsive Design: Ensure compatibility with all devices.
12. SEO Optimization: Improve visibility in search results.
13. Analytics Integration: Track website performance and user behavior.
14. Privacy Compliance: Include privacy policy if applicable.
15. Newsletter Signup: Encourage subscriptions for updates.

Website Breakdown

Branded Logo

Call to Action #1
"Work With Me"Professional
HeadshotMedia Features
or Client LogosCall to Action #2
"Apply Now"

Client Portfolio

Second Headshot

Bio/About Me

Call to Action #4
"Free Download"Call to Action #3
"Start Now"Call to Action #5
"Subscribe"

Contact Information

Social Media Links
Policies & Terms

GTM Strategy

Now that you've created all of the necessary assets, accounts, funnels and integrations- it's time to go to market with a plan. This plan is your Go -to- Market Strategy developing a go-to-market (GTM) strategy and it is crucial for introducing a product or service to the market effectively. It involves understanding your target audience, defining your value proposition, and creating a plan for reaching and engaging customers. Here are the steps to develop a comprehensive GTM strategy:

Market Research & Segmentation:

- Identify your target market and customer segments.
- Understand their needs, pain points, and preferences.
- Analyze the competitive landscape to identify opportunities and challenges
- Clearly articulate what sets your product or service apart from the competition.
- Highlight the benefits and value it brings to customers.

Distribution Channels:

- Decide how you'll deliver your product or service to customers (e.g., online sales, retail, direct sales).
- Develop partnerships or collaborations with distributors or retailers if needed.
- Define your sales approach (e.g., inside sales, field sales, online sales).
- Train your sales team and equip them with the necessary resources

Sales & Marketing Strategy:

- Define your sales approach by thinking through your customer sentiments and price.
- Train your sales team and equip them with the necessary resources and tools.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that includes digital marketing, content marketing, social media, and traditional advertising.
- Create compelling content that resonates with your target audience.
- Outline customer acquisition tactics (e.g., lead generation, inbound marketing).
- Develop strategies for customer retention and loyalty (e.g., customer, loyalty programs).
- Define key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the effectiveness of your strategy.

Marketing Blueprint Vol. 1

For valuable insights on creating an effective marketing plan for your brand, look no further than the "Marketing Blueprint Vol. 1" by Michael J. MacDonald. This e-book covers a variety of topics, including how to optimize your presence on popular social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. Additionally, it offers best-in-class tools for effective campaign creation, understanding analytics & algorithms and the importance of data collection.