

# Michael Watkins

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## Summary

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Versatile digital media leader with 15+ years of experience scaling subscription platforms, modernizing web systems, and driving measurable growth. Recognized for wearing many hats, bridging technology, marketing, and operations to deliver practical, budget-conscious solutions. Skilled at vendor negotiation, CRM and marketing automation, and building high-performing teams that deliver results for businesses ranging from startups to multi-million-dollar organizations.

## Core Skills

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Budget Management · Content Strategy · Cost Reduction · CRM/ESP · Cross-functional Team Leadership · Digital Strategy & Growth · HubSpot · MailChimp · Marketing Automation · Salesforce · SendGrid · SEO/SEM · Shopify · Squarespace · Subscription/Membership Platforms · Vendor Negotiation · Web Analytics · Web Development · WordPress · Zoho

## Professional Experience

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### Lucas Digital Content and Entertainment

New York, NY

Vice President, Digital Media & Marketing

Nov 2012 - Present

- Directed strategy and operations for a portfolio of membership websites serving 20M–30M visitors annually at peak.
- Doubled paid memberships within six years, contributing to \$3M–\$4M in recurring annual revenue.
- Migrated 6+ legacy sites to scalable WordPress platforms, boosting load speed by 40%, improving security, and sustaining 99.9% uptime for up to 10M monthly visitors.
- Deployed CDNs, caching, and high-availability hosting to support traffic surges with minimal downtime.
- Reduced technology spend by ~90% through vendor consolidation (email, hosting, software), saving \$100K+ annually.
- Negotiated licensing, affiliate, and distribution partnerships, generating six-figure recurring revenue streams.
- Shifted fulfillment to third-party warehouses and automated inventory/order workflows, cutting overhead by 50%.
- Recruited and managed cross-functional teams (developers, designers, editors); oversaw hiring, budgeting, and vendor negotiations.
- Implemented automated anti-piracy and DMCA workflows, protecting IP and preserving subscription revenue.
- Delivered consistent results on lean budgets through disciplined cost controls and process optimization.

### Peoples Education Inc (now Mastery Education)

New York, NY

Manager, Digital Marketing Solutions & Web Services

Jun 2006 - Nov 2012

- Redesigned outdated websites into e-commerce platforms, enabling online purchase of state-specific educational supplements.
- Collaborated with vendors to launch geolocation-driven content delivery, tailoring products to state standards.
- Created interactive booklet preview tools (AJAX page-flipping, watermarked PDFs), increasing lead conversions by 30%.
- Developed and deployed tokenized email campaigns by state and subject, tripling open and click-through rates.
- Launched a dedicated college prep e-commerce site, diversifying revenue streams and driving incremental sales.
- Engineered real-time Ajax quoting tool integrated with inventory and CRM, allowing reps to generate instant school-specific quotes and close deals faster.
- Oversaw vendor contracts, site design, and development projects while adhering to tight budgets.
- Strengthened SEO and marketing workflows, tripling lead generation and achieving 200% ROI increase.
- Authored a 3-year online business plan that scaled web-based sales from near zero to \$1M+ annually.

## Consulting & Freelance

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### UInterview.com | New York, NY

New York, NY

Development Lead & SEO/Marketing Consultant

May 2019 - Present

- Transitioned flagship site from fragile custom CMS to WordPress, cutting downtime by 80% and reducing infrastructure costs.
- Migrated hosting, implemented CDN and caching, and optimized page loads, improving Core Web Vitals and SEO rankings.
- Directed multiple video platform transitions (custom hosting 'third-party' YouTube), ensuring smooth monetization shifts.
- Scaled portfolio from 1 site to 4 (uInterview, uPolitics, uSports, uGames) with a 5th (uTrips) in development, leveraging reusable frameworks.
- Introduced new ad integrations and revenue streams, increasing ad-generated income by 25%.
- Supervised development of Android and Facebook apps to extend audience reach.
- Benchmarked competitor news/media sites to inform design improvements and maintain a modern UX.
- Serve as long-term technical and strategic advisor, managing external developers and guiding digital growth.

### New York Data Science Academy

New York, NY

SEO & Customer Journey Consultant

Jan 2017 - May 2021

- Partnered with in-house teams to consult and retool the website twice, applying SEO best practices that improved lead capture rates by 40%.
- Optimized HubSpot implementation, automating lead tracking and follow-up workflows, reducing lead response time by 50%.
- Deployed automated chat windows for after-hours inquiries, increasing qualified leads by 20%.
- Supported hiring and onboarding of new marketing/technical staff; trained team members to effectively leverage HubSpot.
- Collaborated with designers and developers to modernize UX and branding, strengthening student trust and conversions.
- Streamlined customer lifecycle processes, directly boosting enrollment in a \$12K+ high-ticket program.

### Hand + Physical Therapy NYC

New York, NY

Web Development & Digital Marketing Consultant

Jul 2018 - Present

- Built and launched company website from scratch, redesigning branding and enabling lead generation features.
- Implemented Google Workspace for email, forms, and workflow automation, streamlining daily operations.
- Improved local search presence through Google Business optimization, boosting inbound leads by 25%.
- Provide ongoing hosting, content updates, and digital marketing support as the company's technical partner.

### Various Clients (50+)

Consultant

May 2007 - Present

- Delivered strategy, web development, and digital marketing for 50+ small-business clients across multiple industries.
- Specialized in maximizing limited budgets by creating cost-effective solutions that improved workflows, customer acquisition, and digital presence.
- Guided adoption of CRM and marketing automation tools, implementing practical systems that strengthened lead management and customer retention.

## Tools & Platforms

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CRM & Email | Web & CMS | Analytics & SEO | Advertising | Collaboration & Payments | AI & Automation

HubSpot, Salesforce, Zoho, Mailchimp, SendGrid, OEMPro, WordPress, Shopify, Squarespace, Google Analytics, Google Search Console, SEMrush, Ahrefs, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Creative Suite, Google Ads, Facebook Ads Manager, Google Workspace, Slack, Trello, Asana, Zendesk, Stripe, PayPal, RocketGate, ChatGPT, Claude Code, Midjourney