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The Customer Academy Promotion Playbook

How to Drive Adoption and Engagement of Your Customer Education Program

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info@northpass.com

Introduction

You got leadership buy-in for your academy (major props!), set goals, built your team, implemented your LMS and are getting ready to rumble. Yay! 🥳

What's next?

Getting your customers to start learning. That means, it's time to market your academy!

This playbook will dive into the fundamental challenge all learning teams face when it comes to academy adoption & engagement, and more importantly, strategies you can use to overcome it.

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⚠️ **The Problem**

Academy Adoption & Engagement.

The quest for highly engaged learners has always been a priority for learning teams launching and expanding their customer academies. This task can seem particularly overwhelming for non-marketers not accustom to the ever-expanding list of promotional outlets, from email to social media.

In the simplest of terms, academy adoption is hard because people are constantly bombarded with emails, notifications, beeps, buzzes, video pop-ups and all the jazz that comes with being a member of society.

Breaking through the noise to let them know that a new course is available or that you're launching an academy can seem near impossible.

At the same time, learning isn't exactly a habit for most people, which poses an obvious challenge when launching an academy. Very rarely will you have "learning" at the top of someone's to-do list… until you launch a campaign that gets their attention.

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🌱 The Solution

To overcome the challenge of driving adoption and increasing engagement of your customer academy is clear. You need a strategic **academy adoption plan.** Have no fear, we're going to help you make it happen.

We've set out 9 strategies for you use to get your customers pumped about your customer academy.

Ready? Let's go! 🚀

Academy Invitation

|

Success Story Post

|

In-app Inactivity Nudge

|

Partner Event

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yakademy CRM

Welcome to YakCRM Academy!

Hi Alexa,

Start your journey with YakCRM off on the right foot. You have a ton of resources in YakCRM Academy to help you be successful. The Top 5 YakCRM Best Practices course is where many of our customers like to start.

Start the Course

You got this! 💪
The YakCRM Team

9 Ways to Promote Your Academy

1. Send an Email (or 10)

This is about as bare bones as it gets, but the good-old email is still an effective way to get people to engage with your academy.

Think of emails as air support—they'll always be there—and use them to let people know about new courses, changes, how to activate their account and more.

General emails about your learning program to your database is a good first step, but don't stop there. You should be able to easily set up automated email workflows to contact your learners exactly at the right time, with the right content — directly in your LMS.

For example, set up an email to automatically go out when someone enrolls in a course or gets stuck on a knowledge check (quiz) for a certain amount of time.

That said, don't go full-on robot. 🤖

While automating your emails will save you time, don't totally strip away the human touch and make it obvious you're sending bulk emails.

Pro Tips to Send Awesome Emails

✓ **Send emails regularly**
Keep people engaged with your emails—for example, when a new course goes live or they haven't logged in for an extended period of time.

✓ **Segment your audience**
If you have the resources (and we know this isn't always easy), segment your audience to ensure you're delivering relevant content.

✓ **Make the goal clear**
Keep your CTAs concise and on point to make it abundantly clear what action you want someone to take. Additionally, put CTAs throughout the email so that people can click where they want.

YakCRM Team   09:37
Welcome to YakCRM Academy! Let's get ...

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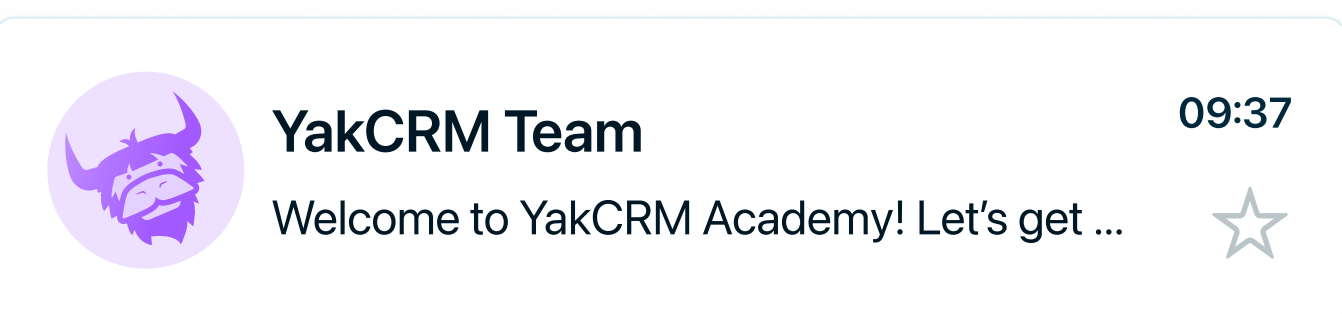
2. Be Social in More Ways Than One

When it comes to marketing your academy, use ever channel to your advantage, including social media.

You need to think of academy promotion the same way your company thinks about any other marketing or sales promotion—your campaign needs a goal. It can range from increasing awareness to driving academy signups to course completion or new course enrollments. Be specific.

While promoting your academy through social media may seem like a low-touch way to increase engagement, remember that 99.9% of your learners use it. Posting on these channels gives you an effective way to get in front of the people who matter most.

Plus, by delivering the message via social media, you open the door to community engagement, comments, and organic conversations.
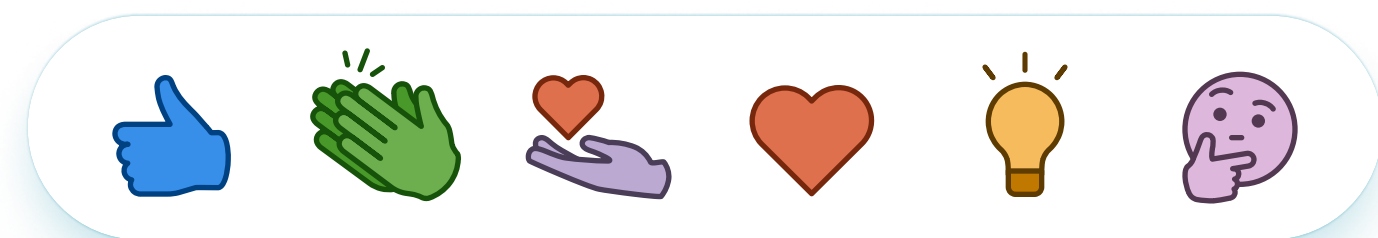
Pro Tips to Stand Out on Social

✓ **Join the conversation**
Don't just post and run. Stay on the platform and engage with your community by replying to influencers, customers, and related posts.

✓ **Make posting a habit**
Posting regularly increases your channel's visibility across the board. That said, don't get stuck posting about the same thing in the same way—mix up the post types and messages. Share who you are as a brand, but don't forget to be human.

✓ **Keep it on the platform**
People want to consume content on the platforms. So, don't focus on linking to your website, blog, or eBook (yeah, we get the irony, too). Instead, create content that's meant to be consumed in totality on the platform.

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3. Use Paid Ads to Reach Your Customers

We know.... ads don't always get the best rap, but hear us out.

A strategic ad campaign can be a great way to get the word out about your academy and break through the noise. (Most people aren't ignoring your organic tactics; they're just busy.)

The way you go about promoting your academy via paid ads relies on the data you have available, and therefore, can take shape in different ways:

First-party Data

Target your learners with strategic messages about new courses, certifications, and other exciting news to keep your academy top of mind. (You already have data on these people.)

Third-party Data

Target broader audiences that align with your goals to push people to your academy. For example, a SaaS company could target existing customers on LinkedIn with an ad promoting the benefits of the academy.

Pro Tips for High-converting Ads

✓ Export your customer list (or other learner data) into your ad platform.

✓ Tell learners why they should enroll or engage with your academy.

✓ Use social proof to increase learner engagement.

YakCRM Promoted
4 October at 9:41 · 🌐

Take your CRM expertise to the next level with YakCRM Certified Administrator online course! Led by industry experts this comprehensive course will teach ...

yakademy
CRM

New Certification Alert!
YakCRM Certified Administrator®

Get Certified

👍❤️🎉 247

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↪ Share
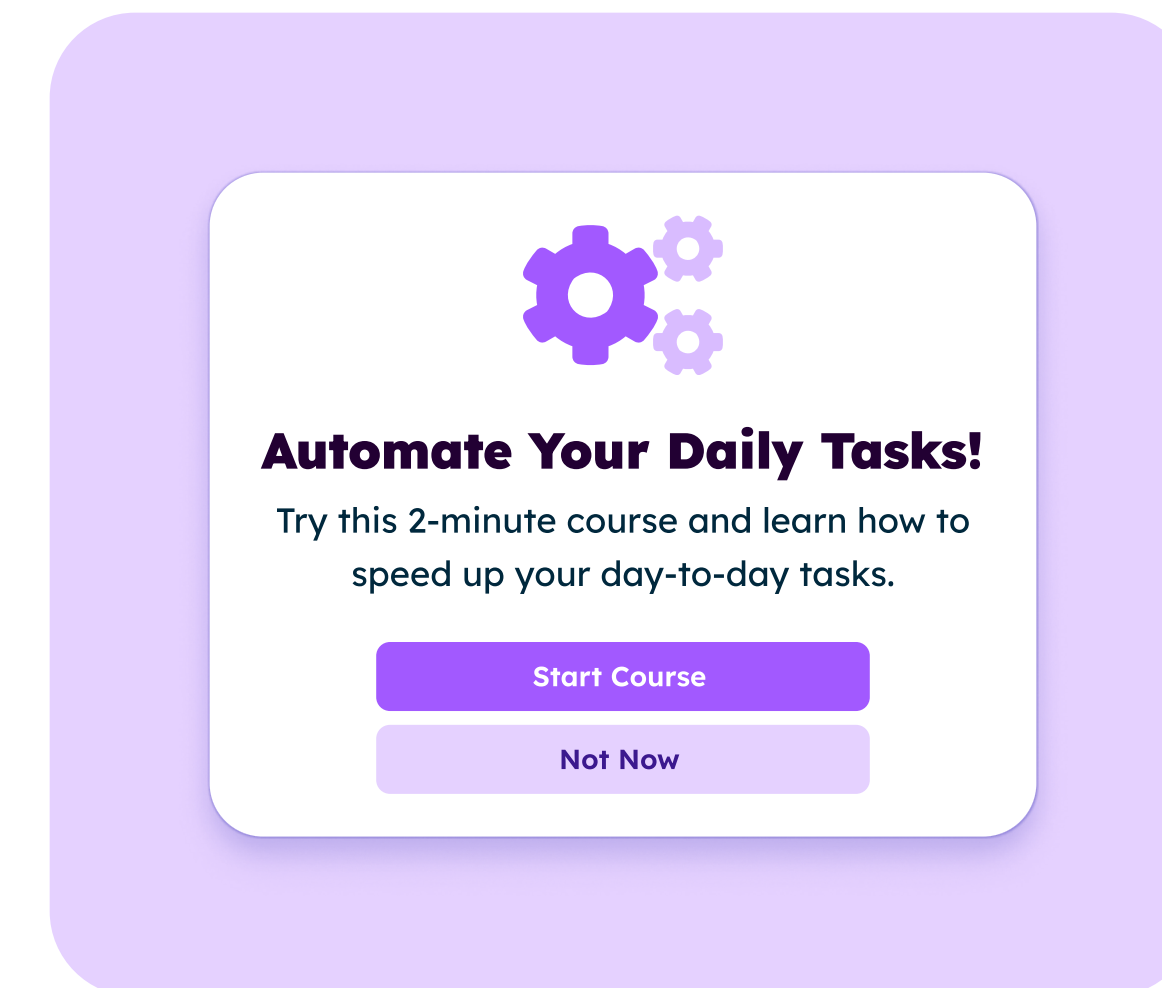
4. Turn on In-app Messaging

The name of the game in online (or hybrid) learning is convenience. At the end of the day, everything you do, including your LMS, aims to make learning a seamless part of peoples' lives.

In-app messaging delivers timely and relevant notifications to your learners when they're in the learning mindset. Use this to your full advantage.

For example, when a new customer logs into your app or software for the first time, configure a message to pop up that points them to their first course.

Welcome to YakCRM Academy!
Here's a course to help you get Yakkin'

Take 2-min Course

Not Now
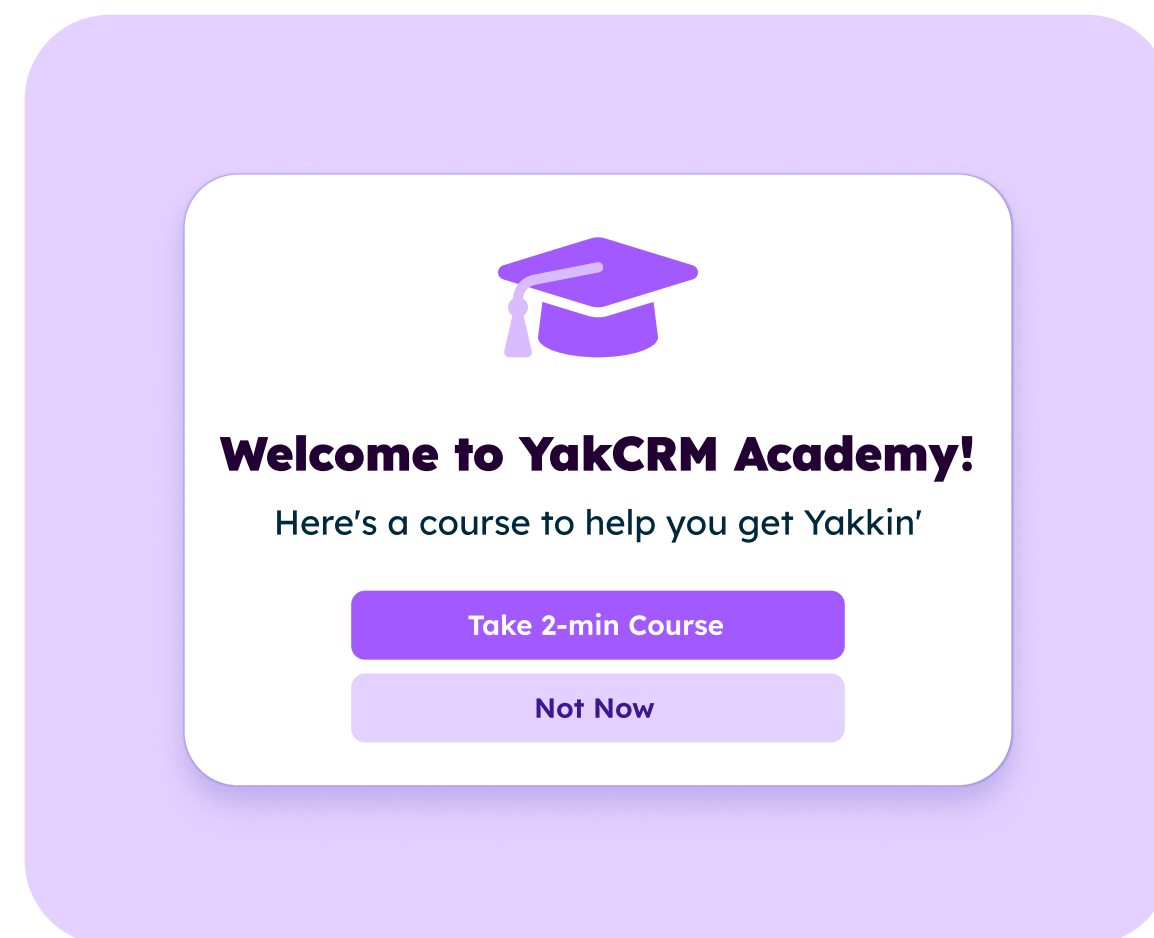
Similarly, if someone's struggling with a course, use in-app messaging to direct them to related content that helps them get over the hump.

Automate Your Daily Tasks!
Try this 2-minute course and learn how to speed up your day-to-day tasks.

Start Course

Not Now

Other Examples of In-app Messaging

✓ A banner at the top of the page when you launch a new course.

✓ A message when a learner reaches 50% in a course.

✓ A note to nudge a learner to continue their learning path.

5. Crown a Few Champions

Why's word-of-mouth and influencer marketing so effective today? Because people trust their peers more than they do anyone else. **#SorryNotSorry**

Use this as leverage when launching your academy.

Find a select group of learners and turn them into academy power users — think of this as a beta test of sorts. Your goal is to get a few people pumped about learning and seeing its benefits.

Then, use those people as megaphones (literally, get video testimonials). When other people hear about the benefits, they'll listen.

Pro Tips for Finding the Best Champions

- ✓ Make sure your champions fit your ideal learner persona, like a customer with a high lifetime value.

- ✓ Find the most dynamic people. If they're not engaging on camera and when promoting your academy, no one will listen.

- ✓ Research their social following. Do your best to ensure they (or their company) have a strong social following — and be sure they agree to share their experiences throughout their social media and email list.

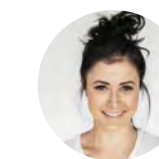**Michael Martinez**
5 Days ago

★★★★★

I completed all the onboarding courses in YakCRM Academy within one week after signing up. Now, I can use the software to make a real impact in my day to day. It couldn't be easier!

James Barnes
james_discovers

❤ 💬 ➤   🔖

Liked by **YakCRM** and **546 others**
Now, I'm #certified to @yakcrm.
#yakcrm #yakcrmacademy #loveit

Kate Brown
@just_katie

Wohoo I just became a #certified Yakker at @YakCRM!

5:25 PM · Sep 1, 2022 · TweetDeck

6. Create a Learning Culture

You can create the best academy and have the best team running the show, but if you don't create a culture of learning—internally and externally—you won't get far.

From an internal standpoint, throw a party with your team on launch day and invite the entire company. Let them know what you're up to and how the academy can help them. For big and small teams alike, having these extra mouthpieces will help spread the word much quicker.

From an external standpoint, make learning a habit.

ALAINA LOORI

VP, Global Customer Success

HackerRank

All new customers go through academy training during the onboarding process. As a result, we're no longer spending time on 1:1 training, which has created more efficiency for the team.

Do this by getting people into your academy ASAP. Make it easy to get started. Take one short course or watch one video, the sooner you can get them to see that the academy is for them—and not for your bottom line—the easier it'll be to maintain organic engagement.

We'll say this loud for everyone in the back: Everything you do must be about your learners.

Pro Tips to Create a Learning Culture

✓ **Show how it's fun**
We've all suffered through boring online training, so you'll need to show them how it's fun. Let them know that showing up is worth doing.

✓ **Rewards, rewards, rewards**
Give out virtual badges or real prizes as learners progress through their learning paths. People will do a lot for some free stuff. Branded sunnies, anyone?

✓ **Get leadership involved**
Start from the inside out. If your team is all about online learning it'll be easier for customers excited about it. Start by getting your leadership team on board. Their excitement will trickle down to the rest of the company and customers.

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7. Get on Stage (or Screen)

Your quest to drive academy engagement doesn't have to be one you go on alone—you likely have some partners, industry influencer, or customers who'd love to go on stage (or screen) with you.

For example, get on stage at a relevant conference with a partner, influencer or customer and talk about the impact of your academy.

By doing so, you're inserting trusted expertise and getting in front of a large and highly addressable audience of people looking to learn about exactly what you're talking about—they wouldn't have shown up otherwise.

Pro Tips to Host the Best In-person or Virtual Events

- ✓ Give them a reason to show up live. Engage your audience during the event with polls, games, live chat, etc., include them in your conversation.

- ✓ Give them a reason to stay. At the beginning of every event, make it clear what attendees will gain from tuning in.

- ✓ Record it—**36% of attendees watch always-on webinars**.
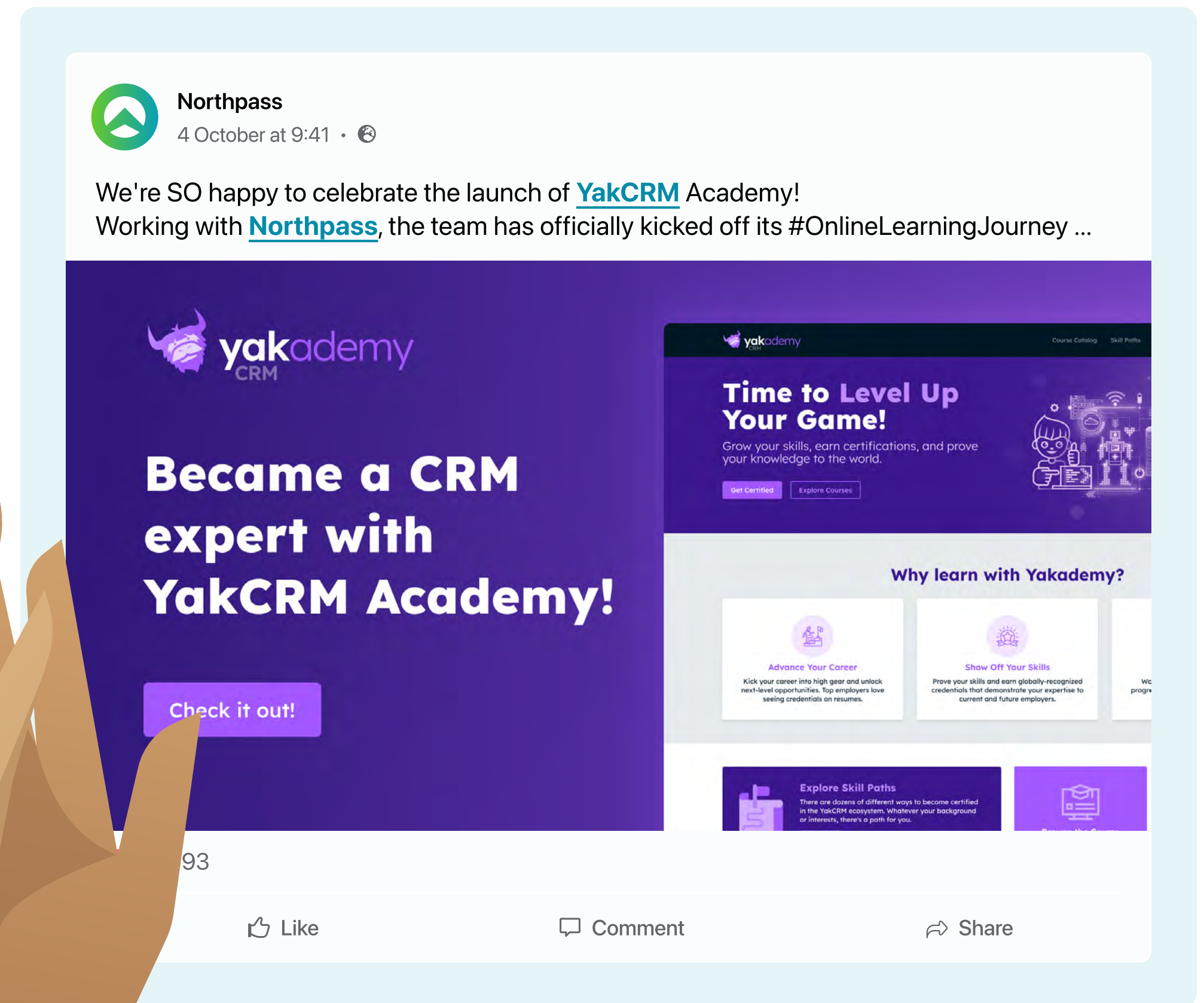
info@northpass.com

8. Co-market with Your LMS Vendor

Again, don't launch your academy alone; others are going on this learning journey with you. When your academy launches, see if your LMS vendor will post about it, too.

Not only is this a great way to foster a relationship with the vendor, but it also extends your reach because you're gaining access to their audience.

Continue this relationship in the future with case studies and related launches, like a new certification course.

Remember: **Not every marketing effort has to be about getting people through your academy's door—creating buzz is just as valuable.**

Northpass
4 October at 9:41 · 🌐

We're SO happy to celebrate the launch of **YakCRM** Academy!
Working with **Northpass**, the team has officially kicked off its #OnlineLearningJourney ...

Became a CRM expert with YakCRM Academy!

Check it out!

93

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↪ Share

9. Keep the Party Goin' 🎉

Online learning is a game of repetition.

Do it right and your customers will keep coming back for more.

Keep using analytics to improve your academy and see what courses are resonating with customer and where they're getting stuck.

It may seem obvious by this point, if you can't maintain adoption, what's the point?

Don't stop promoting your academy after launch. Keep your promotion strategy rolling throughout the lifetime of your academy.

Pro Tips for Maintaining Academy Engagement

✓ Automate as much as possible. For example, make sure you set up automatic emails to go out when there's a new course, inactivity or something else that may hinder long-term engagement.

✓ Take advantage of built-in analytics to ensure you're making the right improvements and evolving your academy in the smartest way possible.

✓ Keep track of how your learners respond to your tactics. What are they responding to and what are they ignoring? Take note of both and evolve your strategy accordingly.

DAVID O'BRIEN

Director of Customer Support

AgriWebb

"We had a full investment from the teams involved [for our academy launch]. We needed marketing, we needed product, we needed service, and we needed sales all involved to make it successful.

"Without Promotion, Something Terrible Happens… Nothing"

Above all else, remember this P.T. Barnum quote (the one above). Of course, he was talking about lions, tigers, and bears, but it applies to your academy, too. Without consistent and timely promotion of your academy, people won't use it (or at least not as much as intended).

Why?

- They're busy and bombarded online
- Learning isn't a habit

Luckily, an academy adoption plan can break through this noise, and over time, create a habit of learning that'll benefit both you and your learners. What's not to love?

Email and Social Media Writing Tips

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Writing content to promote your academy isn't rocket science, so don't overthink it. Leading up to your academy's launch and far into the future, email, and social media will be your friends.

Here are some tips for creating the most impact with these channels.

✉️ Email Copywriting Tips

Have Some Fun with the Subject Line

"Our Academy is Live" isn't going to get anyone's attention. Depending on who you're trying to engage, you could be competing with hundreds, even thousands, of emails.

So, when you're writing your subject line, don't be afraid to have fun. Something like, "Psst… Our Academy is Live" is better than the one above. Oh, and we freakin' love emojis, especially 🚀.

Get to the Point

No one—and we mean no one—wants to read a long email. It's why microlearning always wins. Keep your emails to 250 words or less (the less the better) and break them up into short-and-sweet sentences. Assume the people seeing your emails have less than 10 seconds to read them.

Make the Goal Clear

While you know exactly what you want your audience to get out of your email, unless you have telepathy, that message won't automatically translate.

So, when you're writing your email, obsess about its structure and make it clear what you want them to get out of it. (If you do have telepathy, please reach out to us. We're interested in a collab.)

Make it Personal

No, not in a bad way. Ask yourself who you're sending the email to and what they need to know by the time they're done reading it. (This is the way you should be thinking when creating courses, too.)

Tailor your subject line and copy to their learning goals and why they should be excited. Do not, under any circumstances, make it seem like you're sending out a mass email (even if you are, which is totally chill with us).

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Social Media Tips

Write for the Platform

Nine times out of 10, people are coming to social media platforms to consume quick tidbits of information. Cater to this by getting your message across without linking elsewhere.

While including a link at the bottom of the post or in the comments is acceptable, don't rely on them clicking it. Instead, deliver the entire message in the post.

Experiment

You don't know what you don't know. Just like you'll be investing in experimenting with your academy to figure out what's working—and what's not—you should do the same with your marketing strategy.

Test different mediums, messaging and creative to figure out what resonates with new and existing learners.

Get Creative

Put yourself in your learners' shoes and think about the sensory overload they deal with whenever they scroll through one of their social accounts.

It's easy to blend in, so take the steps—even the smallest ones—to stand out. This doesn't have to be a major lift or resource drain, either. Creating a simple animation or adding a little color to your image for your post can go a long way in catching the attention of your audience.

Think Outside the Box

Don't fall into the trap of "there's only one way to do things." Social media is a big world and offers a variety of ways to get your message in front of your learners.

Sure, traditional posts will likely make up most of your academy marketing strategy, but don't discount others ways to engage—think sliding into their DMs on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Bonus tip

Keep a swipe file. As you're scrolling through your social feeds or clearing out your inbox, take note of awesome content.

Did a subject line catch your eye? Sweet.

Did you find yourself scrolling back up to an ad? Heck yeah.

Screenshot these examples and put them in a folder so that when you need inspiration, you have a mountain of it ready to dig through.

Want to learn more? Send us a message at info@northpass.com and we'll be in touch.