

212MEDIASTUDIOS

Inbound Marketing 101

An eBook by

212 Media Studios



INTRODUCTION

Inbound marketing is a relationship-building strategy. Its purpose is to connect your business to current and potential customers by sharing relevant content that will continually draw back your specific buyer persona(s) for more. Inbound marketing also provides opportunities to answer questions, have conversations, drive traffic to your website, generate leads, and ultimately create customers who become champions for your company.

We like the term “inbound marketing” because it encompasses the big-picture marketing strategy. But some of the tactics involved have been around longer than the term. Even if you’re not aware of inbound marketing, below are a few examples of its techniques that you may be familiar with already.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Making changes to your website and internet presence can help people find your products via search engines. If a potential consumer is looking for something you offer, good search engine optimization (SEO) increases the chance of your website showing up in higher-level search results.

Blogs: Blogging is a big component of inbound marketing. Blogs offer your business the opportunity to create relevant content that consumers crave. Blogging can provide value to your consumer by answering questions, offering knowledge, and building awareness of industry news or new products and services. Excellent blog content also improves SEO, which increases traffic to your website.

Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat, and other platforms can be used to gain customers. Look at your buyer persona(s) and determine which social networking platforms they frequent most. By placing your content on these platforms, you meet your audience in a comfortable, relational environment. You create a sense of trust with your potential buyers. By providing relevant content, you increase traffic to your site and exposure of your brand. As a bonus, excellent social media engagement, particularly on Google+, can benefit your search ranking.

Calls-to-Action (CTAs): CTAs are ultimately what you want your consumers to click on once they arrive on your website, read your emails, or engage with your blog. The CTA will take a potential customer one step further into the sale process. CTAs offer people special content, such as eBooks, infographics, or other industry-specific resources, in exchange for basic contact information.

Content Marketing: Content marketing is a compilation of inbound tools, such as blogging, eBooks, social media, and newsletters. By creating valuable and high-quality content through these platforms, you'll answer your customers' questions. This strengthens your brand message and credibility, making it more likely for customers to return to your brand.

Still not convinced? Here are some statistics from [Hubspot](#) showing why inbound marketing is a great strategy:

- According to Social Media B2B, companies that blog generate 67% more leads than those who don't.
- ContentPlus published a study stating that blogs provide websites with 434% more indexed pages and 97% more indexed links. These indexed pages and links increase rankings on search engines.
- HubSpot has done research demonstrating that 75% of users never click past the first page of search results. This makes increasing your SEO critical if you want to drive people to your website.
- Search Engine Journal indicated that inbound marketing leads cost 60% less than those gained by outbound marketing tactics.
- The Content Marketing Institute reported that 80% of those in position to make decisions for their business prefer to receive information gradually, through a series of articles (or blogs, newsletters, etc.), rather than through ads.



Why it WORKS

What makes inbound marketing so effective and popular? Here are three ways inbound marketing impresses:

Two-Way Communication: According to [PR Newswire](#), 93% of consumers use online tools to plan their retail purchases.

According to [Demand Gen Report](#), more than half (51%) of B2B buyers rely on content to research their buying decisions, but they prefer shorter, interactive content that educates rather than sells.

Cost-Effectiveness: According to research by HubSpot's 2017 State of Inbound publication, inbound marketing delivers higher quality and lower costs per lead versus outbound strategies. The same report found that 46% of respondents believe that inbound marketing delivers a higher ROI compared to only 12% for outbound marketing. In fact, inbound places 54% more leads into the marketing funnel than traditional, outbound marketing.

Furthermore, when asked which source provides the highest-quality leads, a staggering 59% checked "inbound marketing" compared to only 16% for outbound marketing.

Lead Generation: The theory of inbound marketing sounds great, but it's another thing to actually see lead generation as a direct result of inbound practices. Business is conducted on results, not ideals. Fortunately, inbound has an excellent track record in real-world business.

According to HubSpot's 2017 report, 71% of all marketers will increase or maintain their inbound marketing budgets for the coming year. Clearly, this indicates that marketers are choosing and sticking with inbound marketing, based not on a whim, but on results.

Inbound gains leads cost-effectively, and leads tend to be higher-quality than those from traditional sources. This is particularly true of search engine optimization (SEO). For instance, Advanced Web Ranking notes that the first position on Google desktop and mobile search has clickthrough rates of 34.36% and 31.35%, respectively. Clearly, it pays to optimize your organization's location in search. Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising also delivers high sales conversion rates, thanks to the power of targeting.

How it WORKS

The inbound marketing process is designed to move leads through the four stages of the inbound marketing funnel: attract, convert, close, and delight. Every action is meant to aid one or more of these goals. Blogging, for instance, can be used to attract visitors, but can also nurture leads toward sales closure. Consider the four steps of the marketing funnel:

STEP ONE: ATTRACT

More than ever before, consumers and businesses are researching potential purchases online. You might have experienced this trend first-hand by using your smartphone to browse Google or Amazon reviews of a product before purchasing. Young generations are especially likely to conduct online research before making sizeable purchases.

Inbound marketing excels at making your organization attractive to potential customers by using the following digital channels:

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): SEO may be the most important aspect, since it improves your ranking in consumers' organic searches. Internet users rarely look beyond the first few pages of results. Thanks to SEO, your Seattle coffee shop, which originally ranked on the tenth page of results for the search "Seattle coffee shop," might begin showing up on the first page—leading to higher visibility.

Social Media: Social media can make your brand more available and attractive. Remarkably, 71% of consumers are more likely to make a purchase based on a social media reference ([HubSpot](#)) and 84% of CEOs and VPs say they use social media to help make purchasing decisions ([Webbiquity](#)). With statistics like these, it's no wonder that social media is vital to modern marketers.

Website and Blog: Whether people Google your organization or enter your URL, they will ultimately end up at your website or blog. Once a visitor is on your site, it's important to keep him/her there. This effectiveness can be measured by bounce rate, which is the percentage of visitors who leave your site immediately after viewing only one page.

STEP TWO: CONVERT

Attracting a visitor to your brand isn't enough. To generate leads, you must acquire contact information. This is where content becomes a critical aspect of inbound marketing strategy. Offer relevant resources in exchange for contact information via the following tools:

Calls-to-Action (CTAs): These digital buttons prompt visitors to take action by clicking to download your offer. CTAs can be placed on your website, blog, emails, social media, or even PPC advertisements. CTAs should use brief, punchy text that captures attention and encourages action.

Landing Pages: After clicking a CTA, users arrive at a landing page, where they receive a description of the offer and fill out a form with basic information such as name, email address, and industry/profession. Once this landing page information is submitted, the new lead enters your marketing database.

Thank-You Pages: After submitting the landing page form, leads have access to the offered content, which is usually presented on a thank-you page. Inbound marketers often use these pages as an opportunity to welcome the lead and begin nurturing the relationship.

STEP THREE: CLOSE

Lead Nurturing: The next stage of inbound marketing focuses on making leads even more sales-ready before attempting to close. Do this by offering more targeted content and a regular email newsletter. Maintain a weekly list of top leads who have been nurtured to sales-readiness.

STEP FOUR: DELIGHT

The inbound marketing relationship doesn't end when a lead becomes a customer. Continue to engage your consumers and offer valuable content, encouraging them to become loyal brand advocates based on their positive experiences with your company.

CONCLUSION

Are you excited about the potential to grow your business using inbound marketing? For more guidance and tips on marketing and trends, follow the 212 Media Studios [blog](#) and check out additional resources at www.212mediastudios.com.

An illustration on a blue background showing a laptop with hands typing on the keyboard. The laptop screen displays a video player with a play button, a document with text, and another document with a redacted area. To the left of the laptop is a yellow pencil and a notepad. To the right is a spiral notebook with a yellow pencil resting on it.

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