inbound marketing guide

one-size-fits-all marketing strategies don't exist

WHAT'S COVERED

OUR EXPERTS

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Your site visitors are humans (not numbers). They have needs, interests, and their own questions. But the real question is 'Are your website, content, and social channels providing the answers they are looking for'?

SEAN ROYER,
INBOUND SALES & MARKETING,
SENIOR STRATEGIST

outbound vs inbound marketing.

Inbound marketing is everything outbound marketing isn't.

✓ It's using marketing tactics to draw leads in.

✓ It's providing prospects with information to make an informed decision they can feel good about.

✗ It's NOT blasting a large number of people with TV ads, cold calls, flyers, etc.

✗ It's NOT contacting people who have never shown interest in your business or solution.

Essentially, inbound marketing is attracting people who are interested in your product or service by helping them solve a problem. Why waste resources bombarding people who don't need your solution with advertisements? By providing valuable information to cunsumers at the right time in their buyer's journey, you're helping people solve their problem using your solution—at a fraction of the cost.

the buyer's journey.

the buyers journey

———— The steps a consumer will go through while choosing a product or service to purchase.

1

Awareness Stage

The consumer has encountered a problem and they want to fix it. For example, Jan's company is growing and they've decided to get a project management software. It's her responsibility to research the options, so she starts by googling, "best project management software for small businesses," or "what to look for in a project management tool." Blog posts, ebooks, white papers and more can help educate Jan on her options so she can decide which features are the best fit for her company.

2Consideration Stage

Once the consumer has researched potential solutions, they're going to consider thier options. Jan will look at a few different project management tool benefits and features pages, FAQ pages, download content about the features of each product, and possibly request a demo. At this point, she will narrow down her options to a few project management tools that best fit the needs of her

3Decision Stage

At this point, the consumer has weighed their options and made a decision which company has the best solution. The consumer may reach out to a salesperson to discuss pricingor request a trial of the solution before purchasing. Jan will visit the pricing pages, read case studies, or start a free trial before making her final decision. At the end of this stage, her team will have a new product management software.

03

inbound sales
methodology.

Attract

The attract phase involves creating content to get potential customers to your site. This content is meant to educate the consumer and get them to take the next step in the buyer's journey. The content should be educational but not product-specific or brand-specific just yet. Think blog posts about a topic related to your business, a [content strategy with a pillar page and topic clusters](#), and social media posts that will attract your buyer personas.

the inbound methodology

The steps a business goes through to get consumers to choose their product over a competitor's.
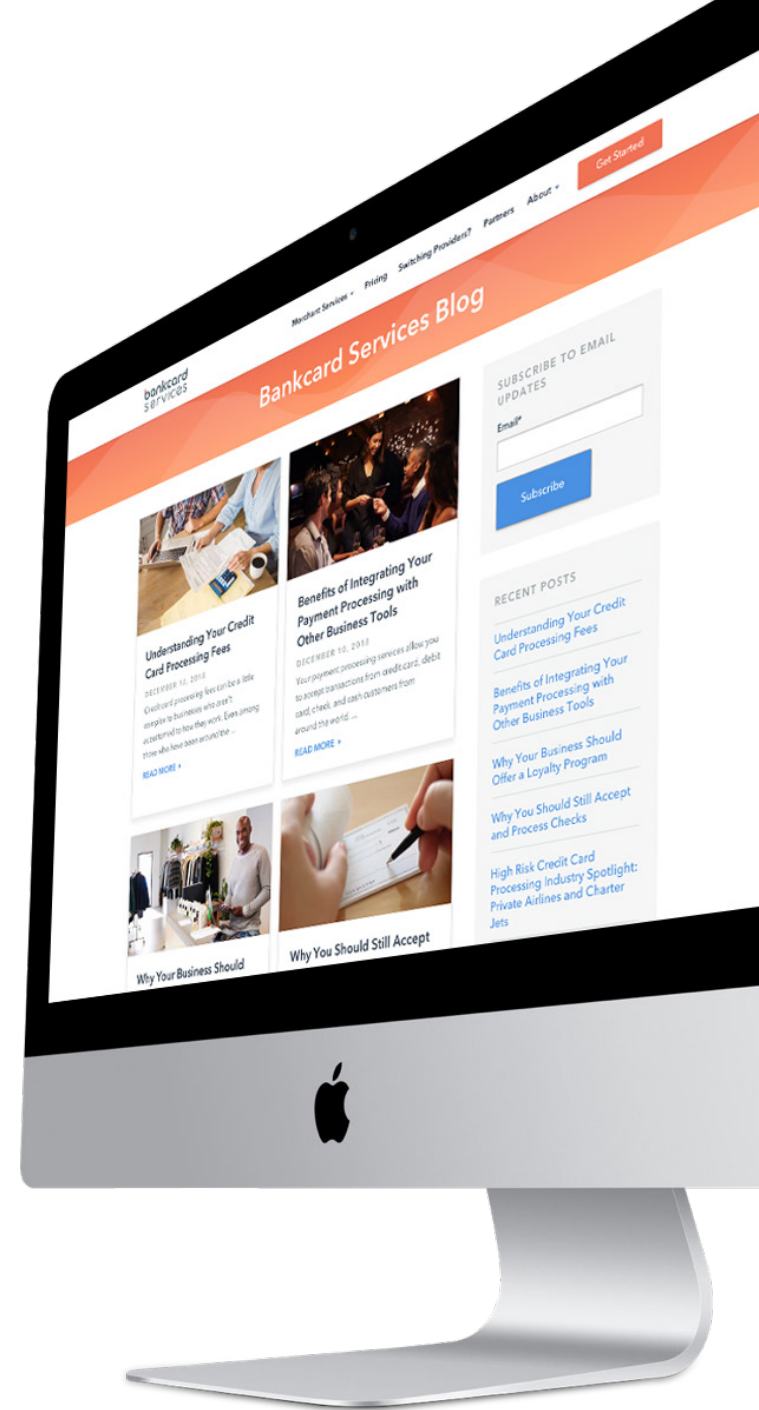
Convert

Once your organization has attracted a potential customer, the next step is to get them to convert (give you their contact information). There are many ways a lead can convert, from filling out a form for more in-depth content, to messaging your sales team through live chat (or even setting up a meeting for a live demo). The goal is to start a conversation about the options the consumer has to solve their current problem. Once you have their information, you can better target your marketing efforts to address where they are in their buyer's journey, their pain points, and other personalized factors.

Close

Once you've attracted the right person and they've converted, now's the time to close. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, work flows and other tools help convert opportunities into customers. If they've gone through the other stages and haven't closed yet, use a well-timed email campaign full of decision-stage content to further educate and persuade them to buy.

Delight

After a lead becomes a customer, you don't just forget about them—you delight them! Keep serving them what they want by sending a survey, asking what can be better. Provide top notch customer service and they'll keep coming back. Happy customers will tell their friends and colleagues about you and would be delighted to give you a testimonial.

how to set up an inbound marketing campaign 🧡

Establish SMART goals

How do you know if you're successful if you haven't decided what success looks like for you? Enter SMART goals. SMART goals are the most important part of an inbound marketing campaign. Establishing SMART goals is the obvious first step, because you need intention in order to create a strategy to reach those milestones. Each part of your strategy should be tailored to meet the goals you set forth at the beginning.

WHAT MAKES A GOAL SMART?

S - SPECIFIC

M - MEASURABLE

A - ATTAINABLE

R - RELEVANT

T - TIMEBOUND

When creating a goal, it's important to follow these parameters to know if it's valuable to your company. For example, if your goal is "I want to increase leads." Ok, that's a good start but by how much? And how long will it take? A better goal would be, "I'd like to increase the number of marketing qualified leads to 25 per month in the next six months." Pick a number and a time frame that's attainable for your business, based on your history. Creating goals that aren't SMART is just a fast track to failure. The right SMART goals can set you up for measurable success that you can feel good about.

Create Buyer Personas

A buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer. [Buyer persona information](#) can include age, gender, income, personality traits, and more. You can discover who your buyer personas are through research and interviewing your customers.

Your buyer personas reveal:

1. Where your ideal customer hangs out (do they use Facebook, email, LinkedIn?).

2. How they like to buy (through a salesperson, online, etc.?)

3. Where they get their information (publications, colleagues, podcasts?)

Getting to know your buyer persona allows you to know their pain points and buyer behavior. That way, you'll be able to create content based on your findings that speaks to your ideal customer.

Knowing who your buyer personas are also dictates who might be a less-than-ideal customer. Some companies will even create a negative buyer persona, which is made up of demographics and psychographics that are disqualifiers for your product or service. The goal is to avoid spending too much time selling to people who are not a good fit for your services (students, researchers, competitors, etc).

Create Assets for Conversion Path

Once you build your buyer personas, your goal is to create content that will lead prospects through the inbound process, attract, convert, close, and delight). Each stage of the buyer's journey should involve content that has the goal of moving visitors on to the next stage. Think about the information that your buyer persona will need at each stage of their buyer's journey. Create high-value content based on your persona's needs and they will happily fill out a form to access your content. It's a win-win: they get helpful information, and you get their contact information to help move them along in their buyer's journey.

Analyze and Adjust

Analyze your data at each step of your campaign. Consider what worked well and what did not. Did a blog post didn't get many views? Your buyer persona might not be interested in that topic. Did your CTA not get many clicks? It may need to be rewritten or redesigned.

how to do inbound marketing with hubspot

Inbound Marketing Software

HubSpot's [inbound marketing software](#) has a comprehensive suite of tools that work together to improve your inbound marketing efforts through lead intelligence, marketing automation, and more. It's also available to sync with your HubSpot or Salesforce CRM, so your salespeople can take note of every touchpoint before reaching out to a potential customer.

Get Certified

If you're new to HubSpot, or if you just want to learn a little bit more about inbound marketing, [HubSpot's free certifications](#) are made for you. Each certification is comprised of bite-sized classes that cover topics like inbound marketing, email marketing, content marketing, and more.

Your Dashboard

Your marketing dashboard allows you to see all of your marketing efforts at a glance. Decide which metrics are important to your business and add them to your dashboard. You can also click into any report to dig deeper.

Marketing Automation

Marketing automation allows you to do the work once and continue to reap the benefits. Create targeted marketing using automated workflows that include drip emails, lead scoring, list adding, and more, to best meet the needs of your personas.

Data and Reporting Features

Since all forms, CTAs, content, and more are contained in the HubSpot marketing portal, it's easy to track and measure important metrics using the reporting tools. This is extremely beneficial for marketers because they can analyze the conversion paths that leads take to become customers, see what's working and what's not, and improve based on cold, hard data that all lives in one place.

Lead Intelligence and Lead Scoring

Knowing where your lead is in their buyer's journey is important—you don't want to reach out to them prematurely or prioritize the wrong lead. This is where lead intelligence and lead scoring come into play. Every action a lead takes adds or subtracts points to a lead score and the leads with the highest scores should be prioritized (as they're further along in their buyer's journey). For example, visiting a pricing page is worth a lot of points, but visiting a careers page subtracts points. You're also able to decipher a lead's pain points or interests based on the content they've downloaded or webinars they've watched.

the future of inbound marketing

Conversational Marketing

Consumers are burnt out on cold calls and mass emails. They want an on-demand personalized experience, not another hoop to jump through before they can speak to a salesperson. Conversational marketing is already changing the game—live chat and bots allow your website visitors to speak with someone ASAP, or find what they're looking for without having to fill out another form. Don't get us wrong—forms are great, but when your website visitor just wants to convert, why make it complicated? Conversational marketing can cut out the middleman and get your lead on the path to becoming a customer as fast as it takes to send a text.

Conversational marketing is also a great way to delight your customers. According to HubSpot Research, 90% of consumers rate an "immediate" response as important or very important when they have a customer service question. Serve your customers faster

Use of Video

When it comes to content, the key is to figure out what your personas enjoy most by experimenting with formats and seeing which gets the most engagement. Incorporating video is becoming more and more popular; it's a highly engaging platform that is well-received by consumers. If video is an engaging format for your buyer persona (s), it can be incorporated into every step of the buyer's journey by integrating it with social media strategy, offers, and even web copy.

Content Strategy

The days of throwing a ton of content onto the Internet and hoping it'll stick are over. Did you know that [91% of content gets no traffic from Google](#)? If your content is part of that 91%, that's a lot of money to be throwing down the drain. Modern, content creation needs to be strategic. Creating a solid content-based SEO strategy will allow you to rank on Google.

Content strategy should be based on quality rather than quantity. If you adjust your strategy to focus on creating quality content that has value, you will be on your way to increasing your search engine ranking.

Natural Language Search

As Siri, Alexa, and Google Home become more and more a part our of daily lives, SEO has to change in order to keep up. More likely than not, your voice assistant will pull an answer from the featured snippet (aka "[Position Zero](#)") at the top of the search results page. Optimizing for featured snippets will become more important as voice search becomes ubiquitous. According to [ComScore](#), 50% of all searches will be voice searches by 2020.

When using [natural language searching search](#), the user is more conversational

untilizing "question words" (who, what, when, where, why and how). For example, when text searching, you would type, "Elon Musk," to see information about the SpaceX entrepreneur. When voice searching, you might say, "Who is Elon Musk?" (See the difference?) Start creating content optimized for natural language search by adding question words into your titles and H1s.

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leads take to become customers, see what's working and what's not, and improve based on cold hard data that all lives in one place.

Smart Content

Consumers in each stage of the buyer's journey use websites differently. It's frustrating when you're a customer of a company and their website is still trying to sell you their product. With smart content, your website will be able to recognize a customer and only give them content they actually want. For example, instead of showing them a top of the funnel offer like an ebook, it will show them a user guide for your product. Smart content allows you to serve your leads and customers what they want, when they want it—delight them!

the agency team
you'll love.

Have questions on the best inbound strategy to reach your goals?

We're here to help!

Grab a time on our calendar that works best for you!

let's talk

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