

### What is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing is the process of helping potential customers find your company – often before they are even looking to make a purchase – and then turning that early awareness into brand preference and, ultimately, into leads and revenue.

### Why Inbound Marketing Works

When a buyer actively seeks information or passively looks to be entertained or educated, their “anti-marketing” shields go down and you can build a relationship with them. When done right, this approach returns dramatically better results than traditional marketing techniques that rely on interrupting prospects. The best news? Content marketing is dependent on brains, not budget.

### Content is King

Inbound marketing relies on content to engage with prospects, so the quality of that content must be strong. You must create content that is not promotional in nature, but instead educates and inspires. In other words, you must offer content that is relevant to your prospective buyers, helping them see how they can overcome their challenges and achieve their aspirations.

### Glossary:

**Closed Loop Reporting** – A way to measure the impact of marketing activities on revenues.

**Content Marketing** – The creation and sharing of content for the purpose of promoting a product or service

**Conversion** – A specific event that represents the goal of a landing page

**Conversion Path** – A specific online path offered to web visitors after clicking on a landing page

**Conversion Rate** – The primary success metric for landing pages

**Demand Generation** – The function of a B2B marketing department that creates demand for your product or service

**Landing Page** – A web page that a user encounters after clicking on a link from a search engine, advertisement, email or other marketing vehicle

**Lead Nurturing** – The process of building relationships with qualified prospects regardless of their timing to buy, with the goal of earning their business when they are ready

**Marketing Asset** – A piece of marketing content (e.g. whitepapers, videos, newsletters, webinars, etc.) used to educate and generate interest for a company's products or services

**Marketing Automation** – The use of technology to manage and automate the process of converting prospective customers into actual buyers

### Types of content

- Articles
- Blog Posts
- Books
- eBooks
- Brochures
- Case Studies
- Demos
- Email
- Free Trials
- Images
- Information Guides
- Live Streamed Events
- Manuals
- Microsites
- Web Pages
- Online Courses
- Podcasts
- Videocasts
- Presentations
- Press Releases
- Product Data Sheets
- Reference Guides
- Resource Libraries
- RSS/XML Feeds
- Surveys
- Radio
- TV
- Web TV
- Videos
- Webinars
- Webcasts
- White Papers
- Widgets
- Workbook

**Marketing Lead** – A lead generated by marketing which has not yet been qualified as a sales prospect

**Persona** – A fictional person used to represent a specific target segment for a company; personas aid in marketing, product development, usability and other areas

**Revenue Performance Management:** Optimizing interactions with buyers across the revenue cycle to accelerate predictable revenue growth.

**Sales Ready Lead** – A lead that has been qualified by marketing based upon criteria agreed upon by both sales and marketing

**Search Engine Marketing (SEM)** – Also known as Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising; the process of paying a search engine to advertise a product or service

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** – The process of employing different tactics to improve a business' ranking in organic or unpaid search results to ultimately increase conversions

**Social Media** – Any strategy, software system or media outlet that relies on social interaction and the participation of individuals or communities to create and publish content

**Social Selling** – Also referred to as Sales 2.0, the merging of Web 2.0 technologies with traditional sales strategies, enabling salespeople to better prioritize their time and serve as experts, not just negotiators—in the product selection process

## Inbound Marketing Tactics

**Search Engine Optimization:** SEO is about increasing the visibility of your content by including keywords that help you rank high in organic search results (not paid advertisements on search engines).

The higher your content ranks in a search engine's results, the more likely someone will click through to your content.

**Social Sharing:** If someone finds your content worthy, they can pass it along through social media outlets. When someone shares your content via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or the blogosphere, you instantly – and exponentially – expand your reach.

**Blogging:** Blogs build your brand, establish thought leadership, and engage prospects.

**Social media:** Networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and more niche-oriented venues are great places to make prospective buyers aware of your expertise and content.

**Forums and online communities:** Participating in online discussions is a great way to find out what issues are top of mind for your prospects, while also positioning you as a valuable resource of information.

## Limitations of Inbound Marketing

**Wide aim:** Inbound works by “carpet bombing” the Internet with content in the hope that people will find you. This can produce a lot of leads, but many aren't qualified prospects. When confronted with too many low-level leads, many marketers scramble to run more of these same “carpet-bombing” campaigns, then wonder why they don't produce better results.

**Failure to inform people what you do:** Because appealing content avoids aggressive sales pushes, it often fails to tell prospective buyers what your company has to offer.

**Failure to reach decision makers:** It's unlikely that CXOs are going to spend time trolling the web for blogs or other content. It's far more likely that they assign this task to someone else. If you are putting too much emphasis on inbound leads without fully qualifying them – and if your competitors are reaching the decisions makers – your inbound marketing efforts may be wasted.

**Too much noise:** If you create content in a space where other companies are doing the same, prospects think “you've seen one, you've seen them all.” The solution to too much noise is not to make more noise, but to sound different.

**Too much silence:** If there are few or no people to consume your content, it's not effective to create it. Instead, you must focus on other outbound marketing channels.

**Diminishing returns:** There is no direct relationship between more content and a greater number of leads. This doesn't mean that your content won't have a long-lasting effect; it just means that each additional inbound marketing effort may not yield as much return as the previous effort.

## Metrics that Matter

**Month-over-month growth** in organic website traffic, leads, and opportunities.

**Social engagement**, not just reach.

**Lead generation** by content, channel, and initiative.

**Percent of leads** with an inbound original source.

**Forecasted conversion** through the funnel.

## What the analysts say

*“Eighty-seven percent of chief marketing officers think custom content is very or somewhat valuable. Ninety percent of consumers find custom content useful.”*

- Roper Public Affairs & Corporate Communications

*“Inbound marketing improves marketers' relevance and responsiveness.”* - Forrester Research

## Top Resources

[Beginner's Guide to SEO](#) by SEOMoz

[Inbound Marketing Blueprint for Business Owners & CEOs](#) by Kuno Creative

[Inbound Marketing: How to pull in customers without pushing ads](#) by MarketingSherpa

[Inbound Needs Outbound](#) by Ardath Albee

[Inbound Marketing for Startups](#) (Slideshare) by Rand Fishkin

[Strategies for Effective Facebook Wall Posts: A Statistical Review](#) by Buddy Media

[Social Media, Disclosure, and Ethics Policy](#) by Marketo

[Social Media Tactical Plan](#) by Marketo

[The 7 Business Goals of Content Marketing: Inbound Marketing Isn't Enough](#) by Content Marketing Institute (Joe Pullizi)

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