

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING TODAY

ADVICE FROM INBOUND MARKETING PROS



WhiteSpace



How to Improve Your Inbound Marketing Today

by Murray Sye

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Murray is a marketing professional with over twenty years worth of experience, the last five of which spent working as an online marketing specialist, helping independent business grow and thrive by leveraging the power of the internet.

Murray's creative advertising and design agency WhiteSpace, is a Certified HubSpot Partner, practicing the strategies and methodologies of Inbound Marketing. He is a creative strategist, proficient in marketing communications with a demonstrated record of achievement in developing integrated internet strategies including: brand positioning and logo development, website redesign, content creation, organic search engine optimization (SEO), social media integration and blog writing.

His digital marketing and creative agency specializes in serving strategic and tactical direction to small and mid-sized, and socially responsible businesses.



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“92% of companies who blogged multiple times a day, acquired a customer through their blog.”

HubSpot State of Inbound Marketing 2012

Table of Contents

What Is Inbound Marketing?	4
Is This eBook Right For Me?.....	5
HubSpot’S All-In-One Marketing Software	6
Expert Advice To Improve Your Marketing Today	7
The Experts on Content.....	10
The Experts on SEO.....	17
The Experts on Public Relations	22
The Experts on Twitter	28
The Experts on Lead Generation	33
Chat With WhiteSpace To Get Tips Specific To Your Business	38

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What Is Inbound Marketing?



**Business
Blogging**



**Lead
Management**



**Email
Marketing**



**Search Engine
Optimization**



**Social
Media**

Inbound marketing is a set of marketing strategies and techniques focused on ‘pulling’ relevant prospects and customers towards a business and its products.

Inbound marketing is becoming widely accepted because it compliments the way buyers make purchasing decisions today—using the internet and related media to learn about the products and services that best meet their needs. Inbound marketing tools include blogging, content publishing, search engine optimization, social media and social networks.

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IS THIS EBOOK RIGHT FOR ME?

Not quite sure if this ebook is right for you? See the below description to determine if your level matches the content you are about to read.

INTRODUCTORY

Introductory content is for marketers who are new to the subject.

This content typically includes step-by-step instructions on how to get started with this aspect of inbound marketing and learn its fundamentals. After reading it, you will be able to execute basic marketing tactics related to the topic.

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate content is for marketers who are familiar with the subject but have only basic experience in executing strategies and tactics on the topic. This content typically covers the fundamentals and moves on to reveal more complex functions and examples. After reading it, you will feel comfortable leading projects with this aspect of inbound marketing.

ADVANCED

Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject. After reading it, you will feel ready not only to execute strategies and tactics, but also to teach others how to be successful.

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HUBSPOT'S ALL-IN-ONE MARKETING SOFTWARE

HubSpot brings your whole marketing world together in one, powerful, integrated system.

- ✓ Get Found: Help prospects find you online
- ✓ Convert: Nurture your leads and drive conversions
- ✓ Analyze: Measure and improve your marketing
- ✓ WhiteSpace is a HubSpot Certified Agency

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EXPERT ADVICE TO IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING TODAY

Including Expert Advice From:



Content

Jay Baer, Founder of Convince & Convert and Author of *Youtility*

Ann Handley, CCO at MarketingProfs and co-Author of *Content Rules*
Jay Acunzo, Director of HubSpot's Content Team



SEO

Dharmesh Shah, Co-founder and CTO at HubSpot

Stephanie Chang, SEO Consultant at Distilled



Public Relations

Dan Lyons, Marketing Fellow at HubSpot

David Meerman Scott, bestselling author of *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*
Katie Burke, Media and Analyst Relations at HubSpot



Twitter

Laura Fitton, HubSpot Evangelist and Author of *Twitter for Dummies*



Lead Generation

Jessica Meher, Head of Enterprise Marketing for HubSpot
Oli Gardner, Co-founder and Creative Director of Unbounce

“ “What if you could have global experts
join your marketing team for a day?
Now you can ...” ”

Even if you work with talented marketers on your team, chances are you've wondered what it would be like to have an international expert in Content, SEO, Twitter, PR, and Lead Generation in your midst. Now, the wait is over — we've assembled an industry-leading list of experts in inbound

marketing to give you strategic and actionable tips to help you attract, convert, engage, and delight prospects, leads, and customers.

At the end of this ebook, you'll know how to consistently create remarkable inbound marketing that drives leads and customers — all from advice from some of the most talented marketers in the industry.

Let's get started.

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THE EXPERTS ON CONTENT



Chapter 1

THE EXPERTS ON CONTENT

The core ingredient of a sound inbound marketing strategy is highly useful, shareable content that comes in the form of blog posts, ebooks, videos, case studies, guides, presentations, and more. Without spreadable content, it's hard for marketers to get noticed in search engines and social networks, much less spread those key messages you desperately want to convey. However, creating blog posts and offers without purpose or process does not a customer make. We asked our experts to give us advice on creating compelling content that converts: Jay Baer, Founder of Convince & Convert and Author of *Youtility*, Ann Handley, CCO at MarketingProfs and co-Author of *Content Rules*, and Jay Acunzo, Director of HubSpot's Content Team. Use the following tips to help define your content's purpose, consistently produce engaging content and then reap the traffic and lead generation rewards.



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Strategy: Set a Solid Foundation for Your Content

Courtesy of Jay Baer, Founder of Convince & Convert and Author of Youtility

1 Understand why you're making content.

Remember, the goal isn't to acquire eyeballs, it's to drive behavior that builds your business.

2 Understand how to measure success.

The goal isn't to be good at content, the goal is to be good at business because of content. Measure accordingly.

3 Create Youtility.

Smart marketers focus on help, not hype. If you create truly, inherently useful content, your customers and prospects will reward you with their attention and their loyalty. See YoutilityBook.com for more on that topic.

4 Market your marketing.

You know what happens when most content is “launched”? Nothing. Because content marketers too often treat the fact that the content is completed as the end of the journey when, in fact, it is the beginning. Build marketing and propagation plans for each piece of your content.

5 Make it a process, not a project.

You're never “done” with content marketing and creating Youtility. Your customers' needs change. Technology changes. Competitors make moves. Once you start your content journey, you'll never finish.



Strategy: Don't Shy Away from the Big Questions

Courtesy of Ann Handley, CCO at MarketingProfs and co-Author of Content Rules

1 Strategy before tactics.

Answer the bigger questions about your content — the “who, what, why, when, how, where” of your content. Who is this for? Why are we creating it? What do we want them to do? What do we want them to do after that? Where will this go?

2 Solve or share, don't shill.

Solve problems for your customers; share resources with them. Don't shill your products. Rather, view the world through your customer's eyes: How does your product or service help them? How does it shoulder their burdens, ease their pain? Your content should be packed with utility, and created with honest empathy for the pain points of your customers. One way to do this: Make your customer the hero of your story.

3 Ask: Would your customer THANK YOU for your content?

Too often we default to content that is sub-par just to get it out the door — asking yourself whether a customer would thank YOU for your content is a good gut check before you ship it.



4 **Get ready for the long haul.**

You need staffing and systems in place to support content as an ongoing effort, not a one-and-done campaign.



5 **Your voice is your brand.**

Your voice should be as distinctive as your visual branding — if you masked the visual elements of your content, would your customers or prospects still recognize it as being from you?

Tactics: Easily Create Remarkable Content Again and Again

Courtesy of Jay Acunzo, Director of HubSpot's Content Team

1 Create for someone, not for everyone.

Content that aims to appeal to everyone appeals to no one. Have a very specific target audience in mind and [know their pain points](#) before writing or creating anything. You don't speak to each person in your life in the exact same way (your customers, your friends, your new acquaintances, etc.), so why would you write or create content for everyone in the exact same way?

2 Rely on an idea pipeline.

The most prolific creators aren't always generating new ideas from scratch to publish that day. At HubSpot, for instance, we rely on a spreadsheet where both unique ideas for future posts and recurring themes or concepts for series are housed. This is quite literally a list containing thoughts like "series: explore one emerging social network per day for 5 days" or "unique post: how marketers can turn one blog post into 20." I call this The Well — you dip into it whenever you're pressed for time or experience writer's block. These thought starters get you most of the way there whenever you need a little boost of creativity.

3 Make it visual.

Much of the content that gets shared within social media channels like Facebook, Pinterest and Google+ includes photos, animated GIFs or designed copy. Extract some of the best ideas from your written content and [create visuals](#) to represent them to extend the reach of content you've already created. This boosts your return on the investment you already made in creating that content originally. (Bonus: your boss will thank you.)

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4 Keep it short whenever possible.

There's beauty in simplicity, but the impetus is always to over-complicate something. Fight that urge! People are fragmented across millions of sites and alerts, they're busy, and they're distracted. With so much content out there, you have to be laser-focused on creating content that will [resonate with your audience](#). (For the sake of my own advice, I'll stop there.)

5 Implement an editorial process.

Getting amazing content out the door is even more difficult if your team lacks a solid [editorial process](#). Make your life easier by investing the time to iron out the procedures and timelines associated with authoring, editing, designing, proofing and promoting content. You may feel the need to start creating right away, but taking a moment to plan out the lifecycle of content at your company helps make it easier to replicate efficiently. You'll earn back that time spent planning and then some in a matter of days — I promise!



THE EXPERTS ON SEO



Chapter 2

THE EXPERTS ON SEO

Search engines have become a core resource for individuals looking for a business, product, or service. Over the years, online search has reduced the need for traditional means of searching, such as yellow pages. Your business needs to adapt to the changes of the new consumer searching landscape.

Businesses no longer need to spend thousands of dollars on advertising in directories and magazines. Every business with a website has the potential to get found by more customers online through search engine optimization (SEO) and inbound marketing. Need help with your SEO efforts? Enter our experts: Dharmesh Shah, Co-founder and CTO at HubSpot, and Stephanie Chang, SEO Consultant at Distilled. Whether you have already invested in an SEO strategy or are just getting started, these quick tips from our experts will help you gain a stronger understanding of all aspects in the SEO process.



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Strategy: Solve for the Humans

Courtesy of Dharmesh Shah, Co-founder and CTO at HubSpot

1 **Solve for click-through-rates (CTR) — not just rankings.**

Make sure you've set up [Google Authorship](#) appropriately to increase click-through-rates.

2 **Check your typography (font-size, spacing, etc.).**

Too many web pages have tiny font sizes that make the content unnecessarily hard to read.

3 **Regularly check your traffic from SEO and ensure it hasn't fallen off a cliff.**

Especially do this if you've made site-wide changes recently.

4 **Test your calls to action.**

Make sure they're getting enough clicks to warrant the real-estate they take up. Generally, users want to see content — not calls to action — so you pay a price for having them. Make sure the price is worth it.



Tactics: Use Technology to Squeeze Out More SEO Juice

Courtesy of Stephanie Chang, SEO Consultant at Distilled

1 Identify problem pages by number of links.

Use [Screaming Frog](#) and [OpenSiteExplorer](#) to identify top linked to pages that result in errors (302, 400, 404, 500 HTTP status codes).

- *On OpenSiteExplorer:* Enter your domain, select the “Top Pages” report, and look at the HTTP status codes.
- *On Screaming Frog:* Select “Advanced Export” on the menu to export a CSV of “All Links.” For top linked to pages, select the “Internal” tab and sort by “Outlinks.” Then review the HTTP status codes.

2 Identify and fix chained 301 redirects using [IIS SEO Toolkit](#).

Chained 301 redirects happen when URL 1 is redirected to URL 2, and then URL 2 is redirected to URL 3. Multiple chains of redirects pass less link equity, so it’s best to go back and ensure that URL 1 redirects to URL 3 and bypass URL 2 altogether.

IIS SEO Toolkit is also useful in identifying other technical errors, like site speed, duplicate keywords, and broken links by pages.

3 Parse [server logs](#) to identify internal linking opportunities (and much more).

Understanding how Googlebot and other search engines are crawling your site is essential in:

- Making sure Google is crawling the pages you want it to crawl (and if the pages you want crawled aren’t being crawled at all or often enough, then go back and check the internal linking to those pages)



- Making sure that Googlebot is not wasting its crawl allowance crawling unimportant pages
- Gaining an understanding of what pages Google deems important/not important on your site

4 Implement [schema](#) to get rich snippets.

Getting rich snippets have been shown to significantly increase CTR and traffic.

5 Improve the site speed of your website.

A faster site makes your website visitors happy and is considered an organic search ranking factor. For more information, check out Distilled's guide to [speeding up your site](#).



THE EXPERTS ON PUBLIC RELATIONS



Chapter 3

THE EXPERTS ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

When it comes to PR, most companies and executives want more coverage. But how can you increase your reach in the short term? Is the secret time? Money? An agency? Divine intervention? We asked three experts for their advice to help any business improve their media relations: Dan Lyons, marketing fellow at HubSpot, formerly a technology editor at *Newsweek* and legendary reporter at *Forbes*, David Meerman Scott, bestselling author of *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*, and Katie Burke, Media and Analyst Relations at HubSpot. Use the tips below to develop your plan, effectively target reporters, and ultimately improve your marketing reach



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Strategy: Rethink Your Plan

Courtesy of David Meerman Scott, bestselling author of [The New Rules of Marketing & PR](#)

1 **Stop waiting for media to tell your story.**

Under the old rules of PR the only way to get published was for your press release to get “picked up.” Now, every company is a just-in-time and just-right publisher, so don’t wait for big news — write a release when your company appears at a conference, lands a new client, wins an award, or introduces a new product — don’t wait for someone else to tell your story. Tell it yourself.

2 **Speak directly to your buyers.**

Instead of creating content to cater to a handful of reporters, create press releases that appeal directly to your buyers to help prospects find you and shorten your sales cycle. Write releases replete with keyword-rich copy, and use words and phrases your customers or potential customers would use. Describe how your product solves a critical challenge or benefits the end user — doing so will help optimize your release so potential customers can find you.



Strategy: Make Your Outreach Lovable

Courtesy of Dan Lyons, Marketing Fellow at HubSpot, formerly a Newsweek editor and legendary reporter at Forbes

1 Personalize your pitch.

Know what beat the reporter covers and what kind of stories she likes to tell. Read some of her recent stories and come up with an angle that you think will appeal to her. If possible, meet key reporters in person and build relationships with them. If the pitch you're sending out begins, "Dear media representative," don't bother hitting send.

2 Be accessible and helpful.

Very few PR people actually do this, but it's a great way to jump to the top of a reporter's list of favorite PR contacts. Be the PR person that a reporter knows and trusts, the one who can always get someone on the phone for a quick quote on deadline.

3 Pick favorites.

Scoops and exclusives are mother's milk for journalists. It's how they move up inside their newspaper or blog. Instead of pitching the same story to a long list of reporters, consider choosing one reporter — the one you think matters most — and give the story to her as an exclusive.

4 Don't pitch a product — pitch a story.

Journalists are in the storytelling business. They're trying to entertain readers. That means a story should work the way a movie or a novel would work. The story needs a protagonist. It needs conflict and drama. It needs setbacks and obstacles. Think in terms of archetypes: the underdog who takes on a bigger rival, the hero who fails but refuses to quit and bounces back.



Tactics: Tell a More Compelling Story

Courtesy of Katie Burke, Media and Analyst Relations at HubSpot

1 Start writing.

If you're waiting for the next big event, don't — start telling your company's story today by creating releases for any and all noteworthy events and post them to your site, ideally along with a blog post, photo, or video.

2 Check all your releases for readability.

Does each release include keywords your buyers actually use? Is it clear what problem you are tackling or how your company can help end users? If not, rewrite — reporters don't like decoding what you're saying anymore than customers do.

3 Show link love.

Optimizing your press strategy also means making it easy to find the award, promotion or event you're promoting. Add links to ensure it's easy for people to find you and purchase your products, particularly if you're sending the release out on a wire service.

4 Focus on quality, not quantity for outreach.

Instead of blanketing one thousand reporters with "Dear Sir" emails, focus instead on creating tailored, personalized pitches to a small group of journalists covering your space.

5 Optimize and test your emails.

Like a great marketing email, the ideal pitch is concise and includes a compelling title, great content, a clear call to action based on personalized information about the recipient. Copy and paste any documents into

the text of the email when possible, and link directly to any relevant documents. Leverage emails that work to inform future emails, and discard emails that don't produce results — marketing emails aren't the only things that need customization!

6 Use social media to build your story.

Following your favorite journalists on Twitter and Instagram in particular can help inform your pitching without being invasive. Check out what they are talking about, share and promote their content (even when it doesn't relate to you) and offer to be helpful and responsive on relevant story ideas.

7 Newsjack.

When appropriate and relevant, newsjacking can be a fantastic way to get coverage for your business if you know how to do it well. Check out David's [free ebook](#) for more specific tricks and tools.

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THE EXPERTS ON TWITTER



Chapter 4

THE EXPERTS ON TWITTER

Twitter is deceptively simple: 140 characters, several ways to interact, share and connect with strangers, and a pretty simple basic landing page at [twitter.com/\(your username\)](http://twitter.com/(your username)).

As a result, it's not always easy to see the fastest ways to build real and lasting influence there. Having had a ringside seat for six years of the Twitter for business gold rush, and from her experience leading the team that wrote *Twitter for Dummies*, here are Laura Fitton's five best tips to build up your influence on Twitter. While most can be summed up in just two words (be useful!), let's review a few things you can do right now to build lasting Twitter influence.



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Strategy: Be a Real Human on Social Media

Courtesy of Laura Fitton (@pistachio), HubSpot's Inbound Marketing Evangelist and co-author of Twitter For Dummies

1 Be clear.

Get REALLY clear on who the account is meant to serve and what it is meant to give them. "Follow us because we are awesome" simply doesn't fly on Twitter. How would your parents describe the account to friends at a dinner party? Yes, I'm suggesting you go right ahead and put words into their mouths with a simple "mission statement."

2 Be useful.

It's not about you — take every piece of content, quote or idea you plan to share on the account and flip it around so that it is much more about the reader than about the company posting to the account. If you're sharing a blog post, don't tweet the title, tweet a question about the reader, a juicy stat or an amazing quote from the article.

3 Be open.

Are you following people back? At the very least you should be trying to follow your customers, prospects and other contacts so that they feel welcomed and have a private way to reach out to your company via direct message. It's a small thing but it really makes people feel like insiders to your success, which is hugely powerful and important.

4 Be unselfish.

Not just when you're responding to people, but in the first place. Are you reading other streams and retweeting other people's stuff, or are you only pushing your own material? Are you following and thanking your biggest fans, and amplifying their voices? Are you actively following, supporting and promoting people you don't know yet but with the intent



of getting to know them?

Gary Vaynerchuk is a shining example of this. Look how much work he put into [19 Up and Comers to follow on Twitter](#). Chris Brogan followed suit with his own [10 people you should know—and why](#)—series of tweets. But here's the deal. BOTH of these guys have done this kind of thing day in and day out since they started and it is precisely WHY they're so big now. These guys are unselfish talent scouts investing the time it takes to find unsung sources of value and then throwing their clout behind promoting others.

5 **Be complete.**

Be the best source you possibly can be for the value proposition you outlined in step 1. Make sure your profile photo, bio/description, cover picture, background picture and landing page (page the URL in your profile leads to) are all completely filled out and consistent with what the account is looking to deliver.



Tactics: Make Small Tweaks on Twitter to Drive Big Changes

Also by *Laura Fitton (@pistachio)*

1 Update your Twitter bio to more clearly showcase your purpose.

For example: _____ (type of person) _____ should follow @ourusername on Twitter in order to get _____ (simple, clear statement of what's in it for the READER) _____ .

2 Gut check your content before publishing.

Before posting anything on any of your social platforms, gut check it against your mission statement, and then ask, "What's in it for the reader?" Now, craft the copy for your "share" accordingly.

3 Use the golden rule of following.

Review your list of followers and follow back everyone who seems to be a real human actually following your account.

4 Delight others with surprise shout outs.

Find one voice every week who rocks that your customers and prospects don't know but should and promote those voices on your blog and social channels.

5 Make your profile look professional.

Run through this checklist and fix what you can, right now: Avatar photo, cover photo, URL, bio, background image.



THE EXPERTS ON LEAD GENERATION



Chapter 5

THE EXPERTS ON LEAD GENERATION

Generating leads — both high in quantity and quality — is a marketer's most important objective. A successful lead generation engine is what keeps the funnel full of sales prospects while you sleep. To help you shape up your own lead generation efforts, here are four tips from Jessica Meher, Head of Enterprise Marketing at HubSpot, addressing each component of a successful lead generation campaign.

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Strategy: Create Content, Landing Pages and Forms that Leads Can't Refuse

Courtesy of Jessica Meher, Head of Enterprise Marketing at HubSpot

1 Create irresistible offers.

When an offer is exclusive, scarce, informative or in high demand, it becomes more desirable. Whether they are whitepapers, free trials, memberships, sales promotions, or downloads, these irresistible elements can overcome a lead's typical friction, doubt, or concern. These elements work because they trigger a physiological reaction that makes an offer more valuable. People need to perceive the value of your offer to be greater than what you're asking for in return. The higher the perception of value, the more irresistible the offer.

2 Include compelling calls-to-action (CTAs).

If your CTAs aren't effective at capturing people's attention and persuading them to click, then it makes the offer useless. In a world where every brand is fighting for consumer attention, it's critical that prospects choose your offer over your competitors. Use clear, concise and actionable copy and captivating design elements to make CTAs pop on your website.

3 Optimize landing pages to convert visitors.

What's great about landing pages is that they direct your visitors to one particular offer without the distractions of everything else on your website. Visitors are on a landing page for one and only one purpose: to complete the lead capture form. Be sure to remove distractions — confusing copy, busy design, and the main navigation — to keep visitors' attention focused on completing your landing page form.

4 **Reduce anxiety for visitors to complete forms.**

While it's key to create a bit of anxiety to get people to want to fill out a form, once they are actually filling it out, there shouldn't be any hesitation to submit it. Optimizing form length, button copy and security seals when dealing with sensitive information will all help drive conversions and quality leads on your website.



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Tactics: Use Specific Language and Design Elements to Drive Conversions

Courtesy of Oli Gardner, Co-founder and Creative Director of Unbounce

1 Use urgency to encourage conversions.

A simple way to improve the conversion rate of your landing pages is to add urgency statements. Some examples include:

- “Limited seats” on a webinar registration landing page: Add a simple statement that says there are a limited number of spots left for your webinar to help persuade fence-sitters to register. In reality there is no limited number of seats. Expedia does this really well by letting you know there are only X seats remaining on the flight you are trying to book.
- “Limited time offer” on an ebook landing page: Some ebooks are free, some cost money. By adding a statement saying, “Free for a limited time—then \$14.95,” you will encourage people to download it right away. Again, you won’t ever put a price on it in reality—it’s just a psychological urgency device.

2 Use numerical social proof.

Similar to the webinar and ebook examples: show the number of webinar registrants or ebook downloads. This will trigger an innate herd mentality that makes people want to participate so they don’t miss out on something special.

Social proof can be represented by the number of Likes, Shares, and Tweets that a particular piece of content receives. The more something is shared through social networks, the more likely people will want to participate.

3 Use the three principles of conversion centred design.

If you have a form as the conversion goal on your landing page, make it more noticeable by:

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- Encapsulating it in a bounding container
- Using color and contrast to differentiate it from the rest of the page
- Adding directional cues (such as arrows) that point to your form to direct the gaze of your visitors

4 **Make your call-to-action (CTA) descriptive.**

The arch-nemesis of lead gen form conversions is to use the word “Submit” on your button. To optimize your landing page, use a descriptive statement that describes exactly what will happen when it’s clicked. For example: “Download your free ebook now.”

The CTA above clearly illustrates that you will be receiving a free ebook, what that ebook is about, and the value you will gain from downloading it.

Make sure that the headline on your landing page matches the description on your CTAs. You don’t want your visitors to feel as if they won’t be receiving what you have promised them.

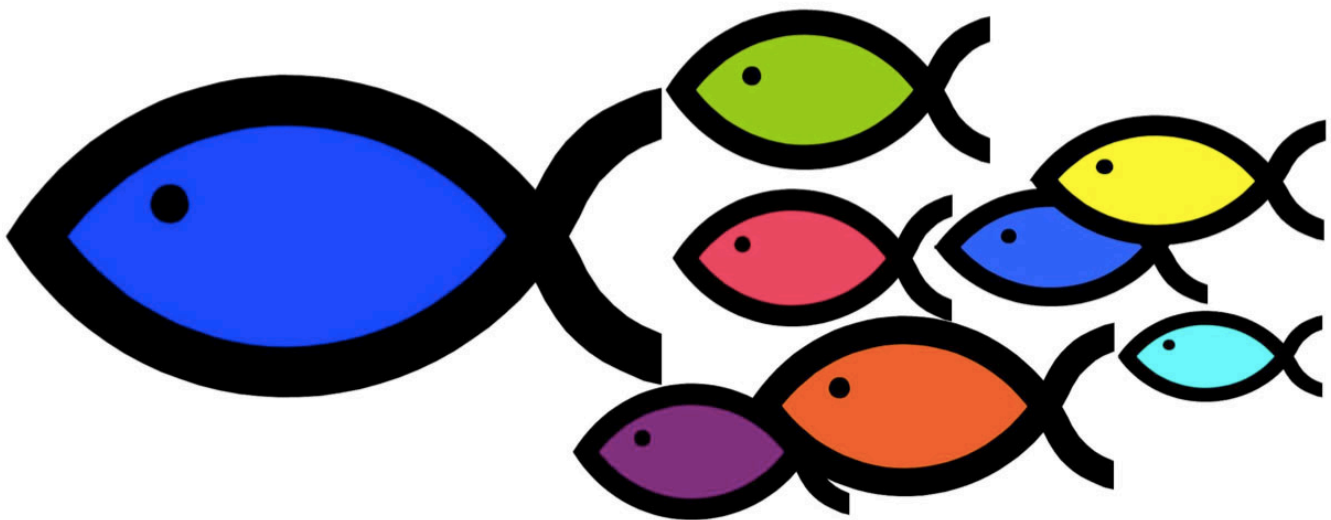
5 **Match your headline to your ad CTA.**

This is the concept of message matching, and it improves conversions in two ways:

- *The human factor:* by matching your headline with the CTA of the link that brings visitors to your landing page, you are confirming that they made a good click.
- *The machine factor:* if you are doing pay-per-click advertising, your content be more relevant, rank higher on search results and match the corresponding ad.

CHAT WITH WHITESPACE TO GET TIPS SPECIFIC TO YOUR BUSINESS

How can you make the most of these tips?



Simply give us a call the old-fashioned way at **416 449-9559**
to speak with one of our inbound marketing specialists.

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