

VIDEO 1: WHAT IS INBOUND SALES?

Hey folks, I'm Mark Roberge, Chief Revenue Officer at HubSpot and Senior Lecturer at Harvard Business School. Welcome to the first Inbound Sales training class. In this first video, I'll introduce you to the Inbound Sales Methodology and provide you with an overview of our training program and certification.

Are you ready to learn about Inbound Sales? Great. Let's dive in.

To understand inbound sales, we need to start with buyers and how their behaviors have changed over the years.

Imagine for a moment what it was like to buy a product before the internet existed. Back then, buyers really needed salespeople in order to make a decision. Salespeople held all the cards. They had answers to the key questions in the buyer's mind. Things like:

- What is included in your offering?
- What does it cost?
- How does it compare to other competitors?
- Who else is using your offering? And do they like it?

The internet changed the buyer/seller relationship. Now, the needed information that the buyers use to make a purchase decision is just a click away. The power in the buying and selling process has shifted from the seller to the buyer. The buyer process has transformed.

Okay, so if the buying process has transformed, should your sales process transform to match today's empowered buyer? Of course it should.

This is why we coined the term inbound sales. This is why we are offering this free training to you.

Inbound sales transforms sales to match the way people buy. That's it.

Whether we are talking about an inbound lead or a targeted outreach, a big company or small, a complex sale or simple; inbound sales applies. Inbound sales transforms selling to match today's empowered buyer.

As we begin this transformation, it is important to understand the two philosophies that drive inbound selling.

1. Inbound sales teams base their entire sales strategy on the buyer rather than the seller.
2. Inbound salespeople personalize the entire sales experience to the buyer's context

By incorporating these two philosophies into your company's sales process, you're well on your way toward transforming to an inbound selling model. Inbound sales provides a competitive advantage for your company. Most importantly, it creates an experience your buyers will love.

So where should you start in this transformation to inbound sales? Great question. I will address this topic in the next video.

Before we head there, I want to comment on the scope of this course. There are many factors of inbound selling, from hiring salespeople to executing an inbound sales process to properly using technology. This course will focus on the best practices of inbound selling for the individual salesperson. Each class will provide actionable tips that you can apply on your next sales call.

Join me in the next video where we'll cover where to start with the inbound sales transformation.

VIDEO 2: HOW DO YOU START DOING INBOUND SALES AT YOUR COMPANY?

Welcome back everyone. As we discussed in the last class, inbound sales is based on two important philosophies:

1. Inbound sales teams base their entire sales strategy on the buyer rather than the seller.
2. Inbound salespeople personalize the entire sales experience to the buyer's context.

The first step in transforming to an inbound sales model is to understand the way your customers buy your service. This process is often referred to as the buyer's journey.

Legacy sales teams that struggle with inbound sales skip the buyer's journey step. Instead, legacy sales teams start by defining their sales process. For example, they may define their sales process as:

1. Prospect
2. Demo
3. Close

As legacy salespeople begin executing this self-serving sales process, they focus more energy on checking the boxes their sales manager laid out for them than listening to the buyer and supporting the buyer through their process. The seller and buyer feel misaligned. Furthermore, the process delivers minimal value to the buyer. Buyers don't want to be prospected, or demoed, or closed. These steps add zero value to the buyer. If the salesperson cannot add value beyond the information their buyer can find on their own, the buyer has no reason to engage with the salesperson at all.

Inbound sales teams avoid this issue by starting with the buyer's journey. To define the buyer's journey, think about how buyers become aware of, evaluate, and purchase your service. You may already have an intimate understanding of your buyers such that the you can outline the stages of the buying journey with ease. If

not, conduct a few interviews with customers, prospects, and other salespeople at your company to get a sense of the buying journey.

We recommend the following framework for the buying journey.

1. Awareness
2. Consideration
3. Decision

During the Awareness stage, buyers identify a challenge they are experiencing or an opportunity they want to pursue. They decide whether or not the goal or challenge should be a priority. In order to fully understand the Awareness stage for your buyer, ask yourself:

- How do buyers describe their goals or challenges?
- How do buyers educate themselves on these goals or challenges?
- What are the consequences of inaction by the buyer?
- Are there common misconceptions buyers have about addressing the goal or challenge?
- How do buyers decide whether the goal or challenge should be prioritized?

During the Consideration stage, buyers have clearly defined the goal or challenge and have committed to addressing it. They evaluate the different approaches or methods available to pursue the goal or solve their challenge. In order to fully understand the Consideration stage for your buyer, ask yourself:

- What categories of solutions do buyers investigate?
- How do buyers educate themselves on the various categories?
- How do buyers perceive the pros and cons of each category?
- How do buyers decide which category is right for them?

In the Decision stage, buyers have already decided on a solution category. They create a list of specific offerings in their selected category and decide on the one that best meets their needs. In order to fully understand the Decision stage for your buyer, ask yourself:

- What criteria do buyers use to evaluate the available offerings?
- When buyers investigate your company's offering, what do they like about it compared to alternatives? What concerns do they have with your offering?

- Who needs to be involved in the decision? For each person involved, how does their perspective on the decision differ?
- Do buyers have expectations around trying the offering before they purchase it?
- Outside of purchasing, do buyers need to make additional preparations, such as implementation plans or training strategies?

The answers to these questions will provide a robust foundation for your buyer's journey. You may alter the Awareness / Consideration / Decision framework for your business. You may change the names of the stages. You may add a stage. However, you want to make sure you address the questions before throughout the buying journey. We will walk through examples later on in this class.

Once the buying journey is defined, the next step is to build your sales process. Unlike legacy sales teams that build the sales process first, inbound sales teams build the sales process after the buying journey has been defined. Inbound sales teams build a sales process that supports the buyer through their journey. As a result, the salesperson and the buyer feel like they are aligned, rather than at odds with one another, through the buying and selling process.

In order to build your sales process, ask yourself what your salespeople can be doing at the Awareness, Consideration, and Decision stages to support the buyer. We recommend the following framework for your sales process:

1. Identify
2. Connect
3. Explore
4. Advise

Inbound salespeople identify “strangers” who may have goals or challenges they can help with. These “strangers” become “leads”.

Inbound salespeople connect with these “leads” to help them decide whether they should prioritize the goal or challenge. If the buyer decides to prioritize the goal or challenge, these “leads” become “qualified leads”.

Inbound salespeople explore the goals or challenges with these “qualified leads” to assess whether the salesperson’s offering is a good fit for their context. If the salesperson’s offering is a good fit for the qualified leads’ context, these “qualified leads” become “opportunities”.

Inbound salespeople advise these “opportunities” on the ways in which their offering is uniquely positioned to address the buyer’s context. If the buyer agrees the salesperson’s offering is best for them, these “opportunities” become “customers”.

The Identify-Connect-Explore-Advise framework should guide you as you develop your sales process. Similar to the buying journey framework, you may alter this framework for your business. You may change the names of the stages. You may add a stage. However, you want to make sure you stay focused on supporting buyers through their journey. We’ll walk through examples later in this video. Before we close out this class, we need to understand the details of the second philosophy of inbound sales: personalizing the entire sales experience to the buyer’s context.

In order to understand the second philosophy of inbound sales, we’ll walk through each step of our sales process framework, comparing the approach of legacy salespeople versus inbound salespeople.

During the Identify stage, legacy salespeople are unaware of which buyers are active in a buying journey. Legacy salespeople identify buyers they believe are a good fit for their offering and start calling those buyers randomly.

However, many buyers are already in the Awareness stage of the buying journey before they engage with salespeople. These active buyers are the best buyers to target first. But legacy salespeople fail to differentiate active buyers from passive buyers.

Inbound salespeople prioritize active buyers ahead of passive buyers. Inbound salespeople start with the buyers that are already in the awareness stage of the buying journey. These buyers may have recently visited the company website, filled out a form, opened one of the salesperson’s emails, or left a clue of their need in some other way.

Inbound salespeople use all of the clues available to them to determine who might need their service. They find the blogs their buyers are reading. They read those blogs and comment on those blogs. Inbound salespeople find the LinkedIn groups their buyers ask questions in. They join those groups. They answer their questions. Inbound salespeople follow the thought leaders in Twitter that their buyers follow. They retweet insightful comments and content. Inbound salespeople may even contribute to their own company's blog.

Not only do these activities help inbound salespeople identify active buyers, these actions also position inbound salespeople as thought leaders with their buyers. As inbound salespeople engage with buyers, they have more authority, credibility, and trust than legacy salespeople. Over time, more and more buyers reach out to inbound salespeople for guidance and advice, and to learn about how the salesperson can help them.

Only after all active buyers have been identified, do inbound salespeople focus on identifying passive buyers. Inbound salespeople use information online to understand as much context as possible about these passive buyers before they reach out.

We will dive into the Identify best practices in detail in Class #2.

During the Connect stage, legacy salespeople focus their prospecting efforts on cold emails and cold voicemails. These cold outreaches highlight the same generic elevator pitch and entice the buyer with an offer to see a presentation. When legacy salespeople actually get buyers on the phone, most of the effort is spent qualifying them on the size of their budget and their authority to spend it.

However, modern buyers do not rely on these messages from salespeople to learn about products and services. This information is readily available online whenever buyers are interested. And modern buyers are not ready for a presentation at this stage of their journey. They want to have a two-way conversation with an expert who can help them frame their goal or challenge.

When inbound salespeople reach out to buyers, they lead with a message personalized to the buyer's context. This context could be the buyer's industry, their role, their interests, or common connections. In the opening outreach, inbound salespeople make an offer aligned with the Awareness stage of the buying journey. For example, inbound salespeople may make an offer for a free consultation or an ebook about the challenge area the buyer is researching. When inbound salespeople get a buyer on the phone, they identify the buyers' interests and priorities and offer helpful advice. They ask buyers about specific goals and advise them accordingly. They develop trust with buyers by showing a genuine interest in helping.

We will dive into the Connect best practices in detail in Class #3.

During the Explore stage, legacy salespeople transition into presentation mode the moment a buyer expresses interest. But at this stage, legacy salespeople do not understand the buyer's context well enough to deliver a value-adding presentation. Because the buyer context is underdeveloped, legacy salespeople revert to a generic presentation, outlining information buyers already have access to.

Inbound salespeople transition into exploratory mode when a buyer expresses interest. Inbound salespeople recognize they do not have the level of trust and understanding with the buyer to deliver a personalized presentation. In fact, inbound salespeople are not even sure whether they can help the buyer at this stage.

Instead, inbound salespeople leverage this initial buyer interest in order to develop additional trust and uncover deep buyer goals through an exploratory conversation. They leverage the buyer's initial interest and their own credibility as a thought leader to probe deeper into the buyer's specific goals and challenges. As experts, inbound salespeople can assess whether they can help the buyer efficiently and more thoroughly than a prospect can on their own. Through proper positioning of value and the right questioning process during the Explore stage, inbound salespeople help prospects conclude when they are the right solution for their needs. In effect, they guide their prospects to the right conclusions.

We will dive into the Explore best practices in detail in Class #4

During the Advise stage, legacy salespeople deliver the same presentation and same case studies to all buyers. Legacy salespeople might do some light discovery around buyer needs - just enough to know there might be interest. Then, they usually revert to auto-pilot and deliver their standard presentation. Examples of standard presentations include:

- A generic PowerPoint deck illustrating the company background, product advantages, and two most popular case studies
- A product demonstration flow of the same features presented in the same order emphasizing the most common value propositions
- A generic ROI study that the legacy salesperson shows to all buyers

However, the modern buyer has already seen the generic slide deck, the product videos, the two most popular case studies, and the ROI analysis. The modern buyer struggles to connect the company's generic value proposition with their specific challenges. The legacy salesperson fails to help the buyer make these connections.

On the other hand, inbound salespeople tailor the presentation to the buyer's context, leveraging the information gathered during the exploratory process. During the exploratory conversation, inbound salespeople discover that the buyer can be helped, wants their help, and needs their help and is prioritizing the prospect's goals that they are uniquely positioned to help with. The inbound salesperson simply tailors the presentation to explain why they are uniquely positioned to help. Examples of tailored presentations include:

- A PowerPoint deck emphasizing only the value propositions aligned with the buyer's needs, using the buyer's terminology. The deck may also include the case studies best aligned with the buyer's industry, role, and need
- A product demonstration illustrating only the features important to the buyer, in order of importance to the buyer
- An ROI analysis customized to the buyer's metrics and business
- A proposal or contract that spells out a client's goals, agreed upon scope of work, and metrics that indicate success

By uncovering the buyer's context and tailoring the presentation accordingly, inbound salespeople add tremendous value to the buyer's journey beyond the information available online. Inbound salespeople serve as a translator between the generic messaging found on the company's website and the unique situation of the buyer.

We will dive into the Advise best practices in detail in Class #5

We've covered a lot in this class. Remember these themes as they'll be coming up again in the remaining classes.

Inbound Sales transforms sales to match the way people buy. The two philosophies that drive inbound sales are:

1. Inbound sales teams base their entire sales strategy on the buyer rather than the seller.
2. Inbound salespeople personalize the entire sales experience to the buyer's context

In the next video, we will apply these inbound sales concepts to specific businesses.

VIDEO 3: EXAMPLE COMPANY #1

Welcome back folks. In the past two classes, we defined inbound selling. We learned the importance of starting the inbound selling process by developing your buyer's journey. We walked through a step-by-step approach to developing your buying journey and sales process. In this class, we will apply this process to a fictitious recruiting firm. We will call the firm Tyre Recruiting.

Tyre Recruiting has 10 employees, all of which are on-staff recruiters except for their CEO. Tyre Recruiting helps companies find salespeople to hire. The firm targets U.S.-based companies with less than \$100M in revenue. The firm focuses on the technology and healthcare sectors. Recruiters at Tyre Recruiting need to find companies that fit their target profile and convince the company to hire the recruiter to source sales candidates. The CEO of Tyre Recruiting decided to use the inbound sales methodology to drive their customer acquisition process.

As we discussed in the first two classes, the first step in implementing the Inbound Sales Methodology is to develop the Buyer's Journey. Starting with the Buying Journey ensures that your salespeople are aligned with the buyer throughout the process. We will use the Awareness-Consideration-Decision framework to develop the Buying Journey.

During the Awareness stage, the potential buyer becomes aware of a hiring goal or challenge. The most common challenges that Tyre Recruiting's target buyers experience are:

1. Attracting top quality sales candidates
2. Keeping pace with the sales hiring goals
3. Maintaining their cost per hire at a scalable level

In order to frame their challenge, the potential buyers turn to their industry peers, executives within their company, and their board for advice. They also research the challenge online in blogs, ebooks, and other content.

During the Consideration stage, buyers define the solution categories they could use to solve the challenge, which are typically either hiring an outside recruiting firm or hiring an in-house recruiter. Buyers develop the pros and cons of each category for their context.

During the Decision stage, buyers generate a list of the outside recruiting firms that might be a good fit for their context. They leverage similar sources that they used to conduct the original research; their industry peers and online content. Buyers develop evaluation criteria to decide on the best firm. They meet with each firm to assess fit and make a decision.

Once the buyers choose a firm, they negotiate the agreement, often with their legal counsel and someone from the finance department. Finally, buyers sign the contract and begin the work with the firm.

With the buying journey in place, we can now develop the sales process. We will use the Identify-Connect-Explore-Advise framework.

During the Identify stage, recruiters at Tyre Recruiting listen for inbound leads on the website, practice social selling with potential buyers, attend networking events, and research passive buyers in LinkedIn.

During the Connect stage, Tyre recruiters reach out to these buyers via email and voicemail. They share content about the three common recruiting challenges their buyers have at the awareness stage. This content is in the form of eBooks, blog articles, webinars, etc. If the context on the buyer suggests interest in a particular challenge, the recruiter concentrates the content on that challenge. They offer buyers free consultations to discuss these challenges further. If the target buyers are active in social media, the recruiters engage with them through those mediums as well.

During the Explore stage, Tyre recruiters explore which recruiting challenge is most pressing and why. They understand the perceptions the buyer has on inside recruiters versus outside firms as well as which type of outside firms might be best for their needs.

During the Advise stage, Tyre recruiters advise the buyer on properly framing their challenge. They advise the buyers on the decision between an in-house recruiter versus an outside firm, given the buyer's context. They advise the buyer on the evaluation criteria they should use to select a firm given their context. The recruiter illustrates to the buyer why Tyre Recruiting is the ideal fit for their context. The recruiter supports the position with case studies and ROI analysis tailored to the buyer's context. Finally, the recruiter negotiates the final terms with the buyer.

VIDEO 4: EXAMPLE COMPANY #2

Hi there. I'm Dan Tyre, Sales Director at HubSpot. I'll be walking you through an example for each of the five classes in the certification course. I'm employee #6 at HubSpot, working in direct sales, sales management, and executive sales leadership positions. I have a 30-year business career, including five start-ups. I'm an angel investor, I'm an advisor and have a fair amount of board level experience.

So, let's walk through an example. This is a fictitious company called CoGrow Marketing. CoGrow Marketing is a 15-person design and marketing agency.

CoGrow provides a full array of marketing services from digital marketing to traditional advertising. They exclusively work with established professional service firms like consulting, attorneys, and accounting.

CoGrow has been a Certified HubSpot Agency partner for 2 years and recently became a Gold level partner because of the excellent work they do for clients. Their goal is to grow to a 50-person firm within the next 5 years. To do that, they need to grow their client acquisition rate. They recently hired a second full time salesperson so that their owner can focus on building the team instead of prospecting and closing projects and retainers.

Their two salespeople are called “New Business” people to describe their sales professionals, preferring not to use the word sales.

CoGrow learned inbound selling from HubSpot’s Partner training and through the coaching they received from HubSpot’s sales team. So, they are long time practitioners of the Inbound Sales Methodology. Using the Inbound Sales Methodology put a structure to the no-pressure, educational approach they’ve always taken when finding new clients. They also generate 350 leads per month through their own inbound marketing efforts.

As a reminder, the first step in implementing the Inbound Sales Methodology is to develop the buyer’s journey. Starting with the buyer’s journey ensures that your salespeople are aligned with the buyer throughout the entire process. And one of the first things CoGrow did when they became HubSpot Partners two years ago was define their buyer’s journey from the Awareness stage through the Consideration stage to the Decision stage.

So during the Awareness stage, Co-Grow’s potential buyer realizes that the old ways of getting new clients for their professional services firms are getting less and less effective. They started realizing that younger, more aggressive companies are beating them online.

The most common challenges that CoGrow’s target buyers experience are:

1. Learning about new opportunities in their geography well after competitors are already talking to them.

2. Having an outdated website that doesn't reflect the scope, quality and impact of their work.
3. Their website and sporadic marketing efforts have little impact on their sales efforts.
4. Partners no longer have sufficient time to prospect for new business. Plus, lower level associates do not have the skills and experience to find and close new businesses well.

Partners at professional services firms have historically relied on their larger clients and other trusted peers to find and hire marketing agencies. As a result, they often go with the agency who's been around as long as they have - as these agencies have the best relationships with local media outlets. But, more recently, they've realized that these firms aren't digitally savvy.

Because they are getting outranked in google and out-talked about on LinkedIn and Facebook by smaller competitors, professional service firms are trying to figure out new ways of marketing. They are increasingly relying on younger employees who are digital natives and social media savvy when looking for new ideas or for a new agency. These younger employees start and end their searches online.

During the Consideration stage, professional service firms define the solution categories they could use to solve their challenge. Their first step is to usually assign a marketing-savvy associate to go and research options and report back what they've found. The associate usually recommends starting a blog where every partner contributes. The more savvy ones suggest investing in marketing software and online advertising to build traffic, capture and nurture leads. They then weigh pros and cons of building a team in-house versus distracting the partners with marketing efforts versus hiring an agency to do everything for them. Like any buyer embarking on a new initiative, they weigh the pros and cons of each solution given the context of their own situation.

During the Decision stage, these professional services firms generate a list of software companies and agencies that might be able to help them. The junior associate starts making inquiries with these companies. After eliminating the ones that don't seem to understand the challenges of marketing professional services firms, they ask a short list of companies to come and present their capabilities to a

few of the senior partners. They create a short list of evaluation criteria that encompasses what the associates and senior partners think is important.

Once they whittle it down to three firms, they ask for proposals from each so they can compare and contrast things like scope, learn a little bit about the different ways to attack the problem, and the effort required from the firm and cost. They choose a firm based on a vote from the senior partners. They often attempt to get a slightly better deal by telling the chosen firm that they're still considering the other two who are both less expensive. But, while there is usually one or two partners who are fixated with cost, they usually go with the firm who will provide the most value. After having a conversation about scope, fees and expected results, and a revision to the proposal, they typically sign the contract.

With the buying journey in place, CoGrow executes the inbound sales process and secures their marketing retainers with these professional service firms.

During the Identify stage, the owner and their new business people evaluate every inbound lead they generate on their website as soon as they get it. However, they don't wait for their prospect to find them on search engines or stumble upon them on their social media profiles. They also proactively identify great fit professional services firms and connect with the principals and associates on LinkedIn, Facebook for Business, and even Twitter. The new business person on the team engages their employees by asking them to help with market research as well as their opinion on content as they are producing for CoGrow's website.

During the Connect stage, CoGrow prioritizes their recently converted inbound leads because they're significantly easier to connect with. They connect with these leads more than 50% of the time and 75% of those calls result in an initial exploratory meeting. They also automate call scheduling when a professional service firm employee completes a "request a free consultation" form. They automate this using software that automatically sends an email to the prospect with a link to schedule time in their calendar directly. This process earns them even higher connect and conversion-to-opportunity rates.

The new business team also engages early stage buyers proactively by engaging them with questions and content. They produce content that matches the challenges of their buyer persona: an associate at a mid-market professional

services firm. They do an annual survey that validates the common marketing and sales challenges of professional services firms. In fact, their research validates that newer professional service firms win more business as a result of their online marketing efforts. They also have content that shows how professional service firms with more than 3 partners blogging get more clients than ones who don't. They also have content that nurtures partners and associates of these firms by showing them the work and results they've achieved for their professional service firm clients. Whether they're marketing to a law, accounting or specialized consulting firm, they put a special emphasis on how they help market the "quality, breadth and impact of their work".

This content is in the form of eBooks, blog articles, recorded videos, case studies and research reports. This content works very well to engage both associates and partners in professional services firm - helping them realize they have some serious catching up to do. But, the content also nurtures them effectively by giving them comfort that there is a way to catch up and start winning new clients again.

In fact, it works so well, that CoGrow waits until most of these earlier stage prospects request a call. Sometimes, when the pipeline isn't as full, they'll proactively offer free consultations to buyers. If they need to drum up business, they can also send custom website grade reports that show professional service firms the mistakes they're making on their website. After two years of creating content, they have no shortage of ways to initiate dialog with their buyers. Because they focus on professional service firms only - while most agencies try to be all things to all people - they have a leg up when it comes to connecting with their buyers online, through email and when they connect by phone.

During their Exploratory Conversations, CoGrow Marketing explores which marketing challenges are most pressing and why. They critique the firm's current website and online marketing initiatives -- all while educating on best practices. They ask about goals the firm has and whether the website is helping or inhibiting their ability to achieve them. They talk about the results that other firms are getting who are following best practices. They begin to quantify the impact of achieving the goals and discuss the investment required to implement the right strategy. They talk about what help and involvement they'll need from the partners in order to successfully implement the marketing strategy and how critical that will be to the success of the marketing efforts. They discuss the time it takes to start seeing

results and whether that will allow the firm to achieve their short term growth goals. They discuss longer term growth goals and how success will impact the lives of their partners' families and their associates' careers. They talk about the other ways that the firm is considering fixing their marketing mess and the pros and cons of these different approaches. They confirm the process that the partners would like to follow in working through a plan and what they think of their firm so far compared to the others they are considering. They talk about how they run the rest of their new business process and why it's important that the partners work with the new business team to ensure they create the right plan within the right budget that achieves the goals they want to achieve.

And finally during the Advise stage, CoGrow recaps all of what they learned in the Explore stage, effectively framing the firm's challenges, goals, timeline as well as the plans they've discussed. They advise the partners on the effort required to achieve the goals and why certain experience and skills are critical -- skills and experience that CoGrow has. They ask what evaluation criteria the firm is going to use to choose an agency. Then, they walk through the evaluation criteria they recommend a professional services firm should use given their context. Then, they rationalize the two to make sure the firm values CoGrow's unique capabilities and focus. The new business team confirms that the buyer believes CoGrow is the best choice for their unique needs. Lastly, CoGrow confirms that they are indeed the front runner and best choice. If so, they ask when the partners will discuss and vote on their decision, so they can book a meeting to sign the contract after that. Before the meeting wraps up, the new business team discusses and also sets a date for their kickoff workshop where they will announce to the entire firm their new growth plan and engage the entire team in helping them.

We'll dive deeper into how CoGrow executes each of the methodology stages in the next classes. See you there.