Hiring in The DARC Ages

Are the Right People on Your Marketing Team?

Digital Citizens | Analytical | Reach | Content Creators

An Excerpt from *Inbound Marketing*

A Marketing Book by Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah

Picking and Measuring Your People

The rules of marketing haven't changed much since companies such as Procter & Gamble, Coca Cola, and IBM perfected the craft of interrupting their way into customers' wallets using outbound marketing. As we have shown throughout this book, the era of interruption-based marketing is coming to an end because people have become much more efficient at blocking out these traditional methods of marketing and have become equally as efficient at finding *trusted information online.*

The next several decades will usher in an era of inbound marketing. Just as P&G, Coca Cola, and IBM built huge companies because they became really good at outbound marketing, a new wave of successful companies will be built around inbound marketing. Will one of those companies be Yours?

What does this change mean for your marketing staff? Simply put, your hiring criteria need to change and your way of measuring performance needs to change along with it. The following is a suggested framework called DARC for hiring and developing inbound marketing savvy employees.

D = Hire Digital Citizens
A = Hire for Analytical chops
R = Hire for Web Reach
C = Hire Content Creators

Hire Digital Citizens

Do you know people who happen to be handy around the house and who are as good with wrenches and pipes as they are with saws and wood? It seems like you either have the "handyman" gene or you don't. We think the Web is similar in that way. Some people seem to really "get" it and are naturally curious about it and others aren't. One way we've heard people categorized is as follows:

- What RSS reader do you use? Can you show it to me?
- What blogs do you read?
- Do you rank first for your name in Google?
- Do you use Delicious? Can you show it to me?
- Do you have a blog? Can you show it to me?
- Do you use Facebook or LinkedIn? When was the last time you updated your profile?
- Do you use Twitter? Can you show me?
- Do you have a channel on YouTube? Can you show it to me?

If your prospective hire gives you blank stares or a lot of "I was planning on setting that up," then you don't have a Digital Citizen on your hands.

Hire Analytical Chops

The good thing about inbound marketing is that everything is completely measureable. No longer do you have arguments about how XYZ or ABC major account found your product. You know whether it was a Google search (and which term the account used), a link from another site, a discussion on LinkedIn Answers, or others. The old saying, "I know I'm wasting half my marketing budget, but I'm just not sure which half" is no longer true in the inbound marketing era.

Modern marketing organizations must analyze all of this great information in order to make better decisions. This means that when you bring on new hires, some of them should be very Analytical. It's difficult to figure out if someone is Analytical from a standard interview, so to test for it, you should have your prospective hire bring to the interview his or her favorite spreadsheet with pivot tables, and show you some counter-intuitive insight that came out of the spreadsheet model in graph format.

Hire for Their Web Reach

Over the years, it has been common practice for companies to hire sales representatives who have a Rolodex full of contacts in their industry—their contacts can help them short circuit the sales process. In the era of inbound marketing, it's become just as important for marketers to have a Rolodex, but not the same type of Rolodex as a sales person's. This new type of Rolodex is called Web Reach.

Good inbound marketers today are cultivating their own personal network of loose (e.g., blog subscribers, Twitter followers) and tight (e.g., Facebook friends) connections within their industry through the Web. Good inbound marketers often have their own blogs, Twitter feeds, Facebook accounts, LinkedIn accounts, and so on. Just as we discussed earlier in the book about corporate reach, individual inbound marketers, too, have Reach. If you hire a marketer within your industry that has a large Twitter following or a popular industry blog, your company dramatically extends its reach because that marketer opens up new channels into the top of your funnel.

Similar to the other inbound marketing criteria, Reach is a little difficult to tease out in a typical interview, so you should do some online research about the candidate, and ask pointed questions when you are both in front of a computer during the interview—yes, marketing interviews should include a session where you and the interviewee are online together.

The following are some of the questions you might ask to determine if potential new hires have significant Web Reach:

- •How many subscribers to your blog? Do you talk about our industry on your blog or about personal stuff?
- •How many Facebook followers do you have? Do you talk about our industry at all on your Facebook account?
- •How many LinkedIn followers do you have?
- •How many Twitter followers do you have? Do you talk about our industry on your Twitter account?

Compare a prospective hire's Reach to that of other candidates and your company's own reach to see if you can open up the top of your funnel by bringing this person on board.

Web reach is relatively hard to acquire and is very valuable. Most organizations underestimate both of these assets. If you can become skilled at evaluating an individual's Reach, you'll be able to snap up some high-quality talent that is relatively undervalued in the marketplace. Eventually, all companies will figure this out, so there is a short-term window for you to take advantage of the situation.

A great example of a company that understands the value of Web reach and is actively recruiting for it is American Express. They recently had the brilliant idea of hiring Guy Kawasaki to start writing for them on the American Express blog. Guy is an author, entrepreneur (www.alltop.com), and investor who was an early blogger about these topics, and because of his remarkable content, he's built up a huge following, including over 70,000 blog followers and over

	LinkedIn Followers	Twitter Grader	Facebook Group	Blog Subscribers
Jane CEO	200	0	10	0
Joe CMO	300	80	50	0
Marvin PR	400	90	60	10
Linda Marketing	500	99	90	3000

Figure 12.1 Guy Kawasaki's Reach Being Leveraged By American Express

100,000 Twitter followers. Most of Guy's new, *remarkable* blog content is now written for American Express. In addition to American Express getting great content, Guy posts a note on his blog (See Figure 12.1) and on Twitter pointing his 170,000+ subscriber/followers to the American Express blog. American Express is greatly benefitting from Guy Kawasaki's reach!

Hire Content Creators

As we have discussed, inbound marketing starts with creating *remarkable content that spreads virally in the social* mediasphere, attracts links from other sites, and drives up your rankings in Google. This remarkable content turns your web site from a small town like Wellesley, Massachusetts (one highway) to a large metropolis like New York City (many highways, many airports, many train stations, many bus depots).

Your next marketing hire, therefore, should be someone with great writing skills, preferably an existing journalist looking to make a career change, rather than a technical writer of manuals. Before hiring this person, we recommend you test them by paying them to write a blog article for you (approximately $200). You should measure the effectiveness of this article by seeing how many links it attracted, how many views it got, and how many comments it received relative to other blog content you have produced.

Another interesting skill to have in-house is someone who can Create remarkable video content for you. If you want to stick your toe in the water with video, you could hire an intern from a local university who is majoring in film or use someone internally who has basic technical skills and a Mac. You can buy this person a video camera for $250 and send him or her off to work. If you want to test potential recruits for aptitude, just ask them to show you other videos they have made and have posted to YouTube.

Developing Existing Marketers

Many professional marketers today are so steeped in the traditions and skill-sets of outbound marketing that it can be difficult to get them to learn new skills. It's very hard to teach someone to be analytical or to become a good content creator if they're not trained that way early on, but you can make an attempt at improving people's inbound marketing knowledge. You can send people to the Inbound Marketing Summit or Inbound Marketing University, you can point them to this book, or you can direct them to some thoughtful bloggers who talk about inbound marketing.

In many cases, you will find that the employees you have who are Digital Citizens will start shining more brightly than your more experienced veteran outbound marketers.

Tracking Your Progress

In baseball, a "five tooled" player is one who can field, throw, hit for average, hit for power, and steal bases—an ideal player! In inbound marketing, an ideal hire is a "four tooled" player: a Digital Citizen who is Analytical, has Web Reach, and who can Create *remarkable content. Will it be* easy to find D, A, R, and C in spades? Probably not—there just are not a lot of them around yet! If you have a very small business, then you want to try to get as many of these qualities in one person as you can. If you are in a slightly larger business, you can specialize a bit by hiring some folks who are analytical and others who are content creators as an example.

If you are like most companies, you do not have a huge budget to go out and hire lots of new people, so it pays to have more of your current team do some of the work. Some of these skills are hard to measure (e.g., Analytical), but others are easy to measure. We suggest you create a Reach Grader grid for your organization where you track your executives' and your marketers' individual Reach and how it changes over time. See Table 12.1 for a good example. The Reach Grader is the type of tool that should be updated and posted on a monthly basis. All of this information is public, so you might as well pull it together and let all employees consume it on an ongoing basis. It will create a strong incentive to improve.

Table 12.1   Reach Grader Grid Measuring Employees' Web Reach

	LinkedIn Followers	Twitter Grade	Facebook Grade	Blog Subscribers
Jane CEO	200	0	10	0
Joe CMO	300	80	50	0
Marvin PR	400	90	60	10
Linda Marketing	500	99	90	3000

Table 12.2 Marketing Grader for Employees

	Digital Citizen	Analytical	Reach	Content Creation	Score
Joe CMO	2	8	2	1	13
Marvin PR	5	7	3	5	20
Linda Marketing	7	2	8	7	24

On the Content creation side, you should track each piece of content's impact on the funnel. For example, if you have two people writing blog content, you should track which person's article drew in more new visitors who ultimately ended up buying your products or service. This is the type of information that should be publicly available in your company—the mere act of making it public will create incentive for improvement.

In terms of how to evaluate marketers in their annual review, you might think of creating a different model similar to the one in Table 12.2 (Marketing Grader), where you and your peers rate each employee on a scale of 1 to 10 for each of the inbound marketing criterion. The Reach and Content creation columns can be derived squarely from the data while the analytical and Digital Citizen data are a bit more subjective.

Each company is a little bit different, so we suspect you'll want to add other criteria to the list along with the ones listed below—perhaps some of the items from Jack Welch's leadership 4E's below might be good additions.

What gets measured gets done. If you track these inbound marketing criteria and tie them to raises, you'll develop competitive advantage for your company over time.

Inbound in Action: Jack Welch and GE

We've always been big fans of legendary General Electric CEO, JackWelch. Jack ran GE for 30 years, during which time he increased the value of the business 30 times and turned it into the most valuable company on the planet. In Jack's books and lectures (he is a senior lecturer at MIT these days), he credits much of his success with his hiring/evaluation criteria for his employees. Jack spent 50 percent of his time on talent acquisition, evaluation, and development. He had four criteria he used for evaluating talent at GE:

Energy—Individuals with energy love to "go, go, go." These people possess boundless energy and get up every day ready to attack the job at hand. High-energy people move at 95 miles-per-hour in a 55 mile-per-hour world.

Energizers—These people know how to spark others to perform. They outline a vision and get people to carry it out. Energizers know how to get others excited about a cause or crusade. They are selfless in giving others the credit when things go right, but are quick to accept responsibility when things go awry.

Edge—People with edge are competitive types. They know how to make the really difficult decisions, such as hiring, firing, and promoting, never allowing the degree of difficulty to stand in their way.

Execute—This is the key to the entire model. Without measurable results, the other "E's" are of little use. Executers recognize that activity and productivity are not the same and are capable of converting energy and edge into action and results.

Just as Jack Welch spent much of his time recruiting talent, evaluating performance, and developing performance using his 4E's, we recommend you use the DARC criteria to evaluate potential marketing recruits, evaluate marketing employee performance, and develop your staff. Because we are at the beginning of the inbound marketing era, getting people in your company who possess these characteristics, evaluating them along these criteria, and developing these qualities can give you a competitive advantage. Ten years from now, everyone will be looking for inbound marketing mavens, so now it is the time to put these people in place and develop your existing people along these lines.

To Do

1. Increase the percentage of time you allocate to recruiting, evaluating, and developing inbound marketing mavens.

2. When hiring new marketers, use the DARC criteria: Digital Citizen, Analytical, Web Reach, and Content creation.

3. Evaluate yourself, your staff, and executives using the Reach Grader grid shown earlier. Show changes over time.

4. Measure your staff over time using the Marketing Grader grid shown earlier. Tie improvement to compensation.
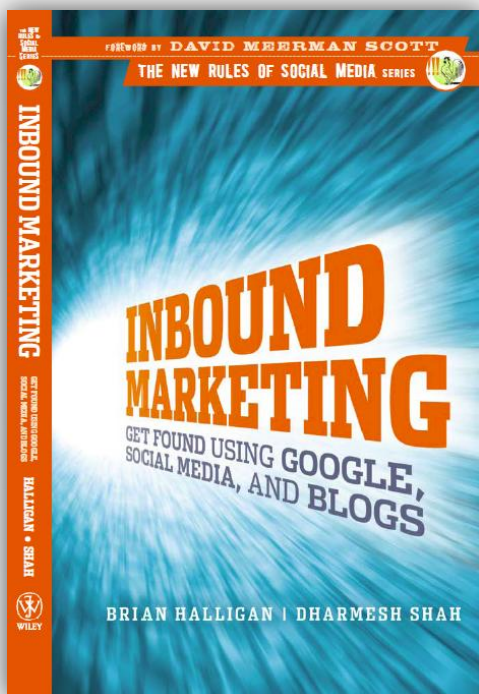
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Inbound marketing-focused businesses have a 61% lower cost per lead.

And expensive traditional "outbound" marketing methods (like cold-calling, email blasts, advertising, and direct mail) are becoming increasingly less effective.

Inbound Marketing is a how-to guide of actionable steps to get you and your business found via Google, the blogosphere, and social media sites.

Learn how to …

- Improve your rankings in Google to get more traffic
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Brian co-founded [HubSpot](#), an award-winning marketing software company, and coined the term "[inbound marketing](#)". Prior to starting HubSpot, Brian worked as a venture partner at Longworth Ventures where he worked with many small businesses helping them build scalable sales and marketing machines. Brian spent 4 years at Groove Networks where he joined pre-revenue as VP of Sales and grew the business to a $20m annual rate until being acquired by Microsoft.

Prior to Groove Networks, Brian worked at Parametric Technology Corporation where he worked in a variety of sales, marketing, and channels functions for over a decade. Brian's most interesting role at PTC was in starting the Pacific Rim organization while living in Hong Kong in 1993. Five years later, Brian was SVP of the Pacific Rim for PTC where he built an $80 million business and had 200 employees. Brian holds a BSEE from the UVM and an MBA from MIT's Sloan School of Management.

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Prior to HubSpot, Dharmesh was founder and CEO of Pyramid Digital Solutions, an enterprise software company selling to large financial services companies. Pyramid was a three time winner of the Inc. 500 award and an industry leader in providing innovative web applications available to millions of consumers. The company was acquired by SunGard Data Systems in 2005.

Prior to Pyramid Digital Solutions, Dharmesh held a number of technology management and development positions. Dharmesh also runs [OnStartups.com](#), an online community for entrepreneurs, which is one of the top 10 most read startup blogs and receives over a thousand visitors a day. Dharmesh holds a B.S. in Computer Science from the University of Alabama and an M.S. in the Management of Technology from MIT.