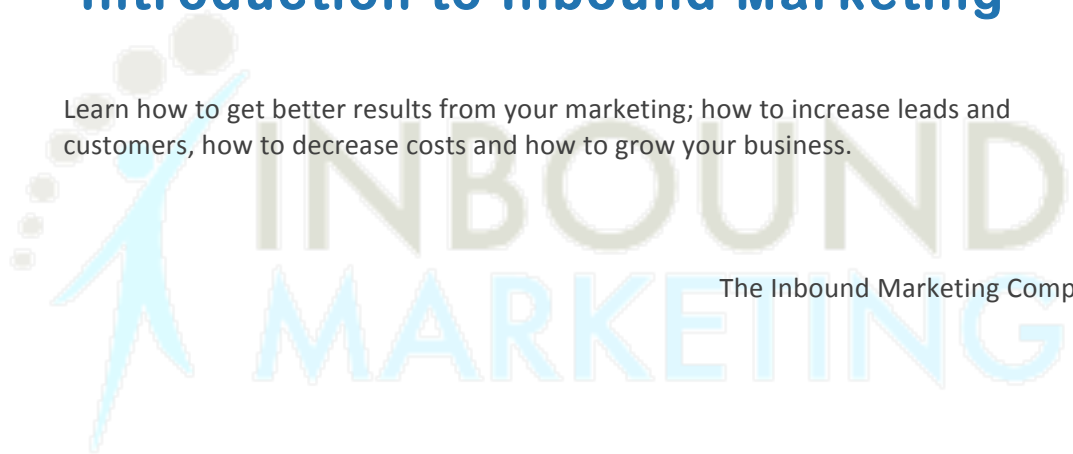


Small Business Marketing Guide: Introduction to Inbound Marketing

Learn how to get better results from your marketing; how to increase leads and customers, how to decrease costs and how to grow your business.



By:
The Inbound Marketing Company

The Small Business Marketing Guide: Introduction to Inbound Marketing is for business owners, marketing and sales personnel who are responsible for lead generation and business development, who want to learn how to improve their marketing efforts and ROI to increase qualified leads, expand their customer base and grow their business.



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OVERVIEW

The internet and rapid growth of social media coupled with a tough economic climate has many business owners asking – How do I market my business? Their traditional marketing methods are not nearly as effective as they used to be, and they need sales, NOW! In an attempt to transition with technology, many have websites, but still do not see the desired traffic or leads. Some are testing the waters with social media, but find they're only wasting their time and not seeing any tangible results. Yet others are stuck, overwhelmed and not sure what to do.

In order to survive the volatile economic climate, many companies have pulled in the purse strings and cut back on staff, with remaining staff wearing many different hats.

- What if there was an answer, a solution?
- What if you could increase leads, qualified leads?
- What if you could increase conversions?
- What if you could reduce your overheads and cost per lead?
- What would all that mean to your bottom line and the viability of your business?

The purpose of the Small Business Marketing Guide: **Introduction to Inbound Marketing** is to educate you on marketing strategies that will help your prospects find you, convert prospects into qualified leads and customers, and analyse your results to improve marketing ROI. This is the basis of the Inbound Marketing Methodology:

1. Get Found
2. Convert
3. Analyse



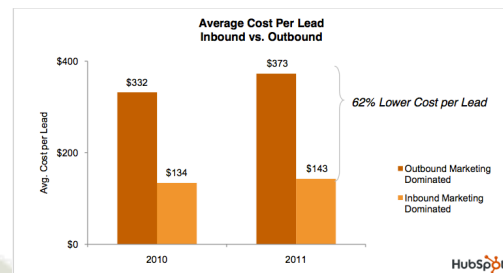
INTRODUCTION

The term 'Inbound Marketing' refers to the process of strategically marketing your business to people who want to hear from you. It means your company's online presence is positioned where your target audience is searching and where they are having conversations, providing the information for which they are looking. Inbound marketing tactics are designed to provide value, build trust and authority, which ultimately result in increased leads and higher conversion rates. Inbound marketing is also known as 'Permission Based Marketing', marketing to people who have indicated they are interested in your product or service.

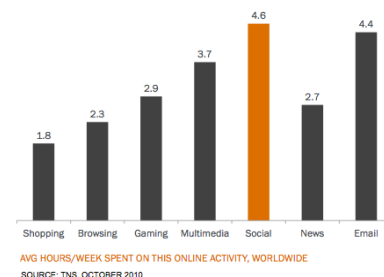
Conversely, there's outbound marketing. Outbound marketing has been the way marketers have traditionally marketed; cold calling, direct mail, spam email, non-relevant advertising. These methods are becoming less and less effective, and are very costly.

Consider these very important statistics:

- One third of the world's population is on the internet.
- Globally we conduct 4,000,000,000 searches per day.
- Almost 8 new people come onto the internet, every second.
- The average cost of a lead is 61% lower with inbound marketing, compared to traditional outbound marketing.
- People spend more time on social media, than any other online activity.
- Social media usage keeps increasing, across all age groups.

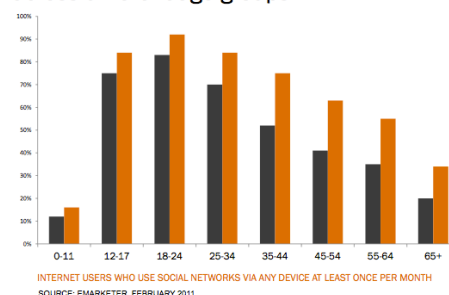


The world is becoming more **SOCIAL**.



"Marketing Takeaway: The internet and social media are cost effective channels to generate leads with usage continuing to grow in popularity across all age groups."

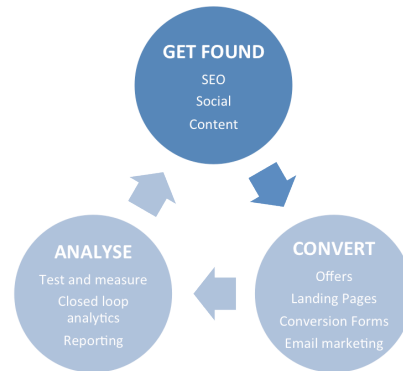
Social media penetration keeps growing across different age groups.



GET FOUND

Getting found is the first step in the inbound marketing methodology. The purpose at this stage is to market your business so that qualified prospects find you (and not your competition), when they are looking. In addition to finding your company, they must find the information for which they are looking.

You'll notice it is all about the prospect, not you, not your company. Marketers that make the switch to consumer centric marketing will be successful in building scalable, profitable businesses in the future.



Let's have a look at the process and inbound marketing tactics that will help qualified prospects find your company.

Buyer Personas

Creating personas for the people who buy from you will help you understand their pain points, needs, habits and values of the people who are likely to buy from you.

Here are some questions that will help you create your buyer personas, remember there is usually more than one persona.

- What is their demographic information?
- What is their job description and level of seniority?
- What does a day in their life look like?
- What are their pain points?
- What do they value most?
- What are their goals?
- Where do they go for information?
- What experience are they looking for when shopping for your products and services?
- What are their common objections to your product or service?
- How do you identify this persona? In other words create a name for each persona.

Keywords

The next step is to identify the keywords your prospects use when they are searching online. It's important to understand these are the words your prospects use, not industry terms, jargon or acronyms.

To help you get started, make a long list of keywords based on the answers to the following:

- Your company name.
- Brand names associated with your company and competitors.
- Your competitors' company names.
- Words that describe your product or service.
- How your target audience describes your product/service.
- How your target audience would search for their problem or need (for which you provide a solution).
- Adjectives that you can add as a prefix ie: affordable, reliable, red.
- Geographic locations - include variations of city and state abbreviations.

Once you have a list of keywords to start with, use a keyword tool like Google's Keyword Tool. Enter in all the words and urls, into the search option to find similar words to build out your list with as many keywords as possible. Filter your keywords based on; relevancy, search volume and ability to rank (difficulty, competition). And make a list of your top 10-20 priority keywords.

Marketing Tip: Remember the ultimate goal here is conversion. Lower volume, highly relevant words you can rank for may yield a higher conversion rate than words based on high search volume alone, because they may be too generic or too difficult to rank for. So choose your top keywords carefully.

Content

Once you have completed your buyer personas and keyword research you will better understand what your prospects are looking for, and what words they use. The next step is to publish content that will be of value to them. Content can, and should be, in the form of:

- Web pages
- Blogging
- Press releases
- eBooks
- Whitepapers
- Videos
- Images
- Presentations
- Emails
- Social media posts

Create a calendar in a program like Excel to plan out all your content ahead of time. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Start with your website:
 - Home
 - About
 - Services
 - Products
 - Resources (information, education)
 - Pricing
 - Contact
 - Blog
- Publish a new blog article 2-3 times per week.
- Create a new eBook every quarter.
- Get creative and create a new video every month.
- Write a new press release every month.

The key with keeping up to date with publishing content on a regular basis is to plan ahead of time, and repurpose content, rather than writing everything from scratch. For example: The month you launch a new eBook, write a press release about the book, take sections out of a chapter or feature a chapter in 3-4 blog articles. Create a simple promotion of the eBook on video – this could be as simple as a 30 second interview. If there's an event coming up, blog about the event before and after, write a press release about the event and interview the organisers.

SEO – Search Engine Optimisation

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of optimising your content with keywords so they show up in the search results. There are many companies that provide SEO services that use illegal practices to get quick results. Google is getting smarter at penalising these sites, so avoid them from the start. The best strategy is to build your SEO authority the right way. This will take some time but remember it also builds in momentum. The best tactic is to publish new content every day.

There are two parts to SEO optimisation; on-page SEO and off-page SEO. These are explained in more detail below.

On-page SEO: This tells the search engines, like Google, what the content is about. On-page SEO accounts for 25% towards your overall Google SEO rank. Here are some on-page SEO best practices:

- Choose one keyword phrase per page.
- Place your keyword in the following areas, make sure it is unique for each page:
 - URL
 - Page title
 - H1 – headers on the page
 - Body text
 - Image Alt Text
 - Tags
 - Internal links (within your website)
- Make sure the structure of your website is search friendly.
- Make sure there are no search errors or broken links.
- Submit your sitemap to each of the major search engines.

***Tip:** By creating an account on Google Webmaster you can add your website URL to check for more technical errors that may affect your SEO without having to use or pay for a professional.*

Off-page SEO: On-page SEO tells the search engines what your content is about, off-page SEO tells the search engines that you are an authority on this topic and can be trusted. This is determined by the links pointing to your content known as inbound links or backlinks. Off-page SEO accounts for 75% towards your Google SEO rank. Not all links are equal so the best strategy is to focus on quality, rather than quantity. The best tactic is to publish content daily, post it on your social media sites, blog and press release. Just by publishing relevant and valuable content you will attract inbound links. Don't get tempted to fast track your results by hiring an SEO consultant that promises to get you to the front page of search results in a short time. More often than not these are black hat tactics that may get you penalised and work against you in the long term. Google recommends publishing quality content on a regular basis and writing for your target audience, not the search engines. If you don't understand what your SEO consultant is doing, don't hire them. There's nothing secretive or too technical about SEO, so find an SEO consultant that focuses on publishing good quality content and follows the recommended guidelines set out by the major search engines.

Social Media

To be successful with social media, it's important to understand the purpose it will serve for lead generation in your business. This will help with strategy, tactics and reporting. Whether you're B2C (business to consumer) or B2B (business to business), promoting a special or directing prospects to an online store - customers first need to know you exist, and then trust you, before buying. Social media strategies should be focused on building relationships; listening, engaging and having conversations with your prospects, industry, peers and customers - this will set you up for success with; lead generation, customer conversion and referrals.

At the time of publishing this eBook there are five major social media sites, they are: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and Pinterest. It can be overwhelming at first to learn all five, so start with just one or two that are best suited to your business and do them well before starting with the others. Here is some basic demographic information about each of the five to help you choose the right social media site(s) for your business:

Facebook:

- 1 billion users across the globe.
- 53% women, 47% men.
- Average friend count is 137.
- 200 million daily visits are on a mobile device.
- The average visits per month are 40.
- The average time spent per month is 23 minutes.

Twitter:

- 127 million users across the globe.
- 59% women, 41% men.
- 54% use Twitter on their mobile device.
- 36% tweet at least once per day.
- Average time on site is 11 minutes per visit.

Google+:

- 90 million users across the globe.
- 71% are men.
- Early adopters, engineers, developers and designers.
- About 50% of Google+ users are 24 years or younger.
- 43% of users are single.
- 42% are looking for friends.

Pinterest:

- 21 million users across the globe.
- 82% of users are women.
- Predominately used to pin; crafts, gift ideas, hobbies, interior design and fashion.
- Average time on site is 16 minutes.

LinkedIn:

- 185 million users across the globe.
- 200 million companies are on LinkedIn.
- Even split of male v's female.
- 49% are over age 45.
- Predominately used to connect with other business professionals.
- ¾ of users use LinkedIn for business purposes.

Source: Mashable [<http://mashable.com/2012/03/09/social-media-demographics/>]

Here are some tips to help you succeed with social media marketing:

- **Monitor and track conversations** across the web and social media. Use the Twitter and LinkedIn search functions to find and connect with key people and companies. Set up Google Alerts to receive notifications daily of conversations and/or articles that relate to your keywords. Use social media monitoring tools like: Hootsuite, Tweetdeck or Hubspot (we use Hubspot) to track conversations about your keywords across social media. Look for opportunities to:
 - **Generate leads:** People who are looking for information, or are unhappy with a competitor's product.
 - **Increase conversions:** People sharing a problem or need for which you provide a solution.
 - **Improve customer service:** Identify happy or unhappy clients. Respond, acknowledge them publicly so others can see firsthand your level of care and responsiveness.
 - **Learn more about your competitors:** Monitor what conversations are being said about your competition.
 - **Identify new markets:** Track your target audience to learn more about their needs.
 - Stay up to date with the **latest news and information** for your industry.
- **Connect** with your prospects and customers, to build trustworthy relationships.
- **Engage** in conversations on social media to position yourself (or your company) as a thought leader in your industry.
- Promote your valuable content, in the form of, How to Guides or eBooks to attract **leads into your funnel.**
- **Avoid the hard sell!**

CONVERT

Converting your website visitors and social media connections into leads, then customers is the next step in the Inbound Marketing Methodology. First, we'll look at effective tactics for lead conversions, then we'll explore the tactics for customer conversions.

Lead Generation Offers

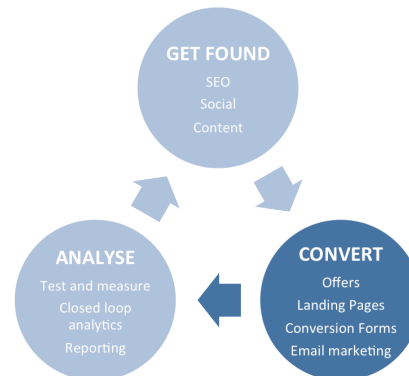
Many websites target visitors who are sales ready, with offers like: free consultation, contact us, free quote - you get the idea. But, have you thought about the visitors that come to your website who are just in the research phase and may not be ready to speak to a consultant or sales person?

These visitors are often qualified leads that aren't sales ready, and a missed lead opportunity by many companies. The value of these leads is firstly, you get the contact information of people who are interested in your product or service, and secondly, you get the competitive advantage of establishing a relationship with these leads at the beginning of the buy process, to build trust and credibility, and nurture them until they are sales ready.

Depending on your industry, leads may take from 1 day to 1 year (or more), from their initial research to purchase (buy process). During that entire process you want to make sure they know all about your company, and why it's your company they should buy from, and not the competition.

To be successful at creating these (not sales ready yet) leads, you need to take the time to understand their buy process. What information are they looking for that will help them buy from you? Think like an educator, not a sales person. To know what information your prospects are looking for talk to existing customers, and people who don't buy from you – but should. You can do this by monitoring conversations on social media, talking to people face to face, and by picking up the phone. Here are some questions to ask:

- Why did you buy from us?
- Why didn't you buy from us?
- Why did you buy from the [competition]?
- What information is important to you when deciding on the right [insert your product or service here]?
- What values and qualities are important to you when choosing which company to buy from?
- Did you know what to do when you were ready to buy?
- Were you confused at all? If so, when/where in the buy process were you confused or overwhelmed?
- At what point is price important?



The answers to these questions, and any other questions they may ask, will give you a valuable insight into what information is important to them during the buy process. Create an eBook, how to guide or webinar, that provides the answers and information for which your prospects are looking.

Types of offers that work well for lead generation are:

- Whitepapers
- Webinars
- EBooks
- Case studies
- Research and statistics
- 'How to' guides
- Presentations
- Free tools, trials, tests

Lead Conversion Forms

Before you downloaded this eBook, you filled out an online form with your name and email – this is known as a lead conversion form. By putting a lead conversion form in front of valuable content like an eBook, you, the marketer, get the contact information of people who are interested in your company. To identify how qualified a lead is, consider asking questions like; company size, annual turnover, or specifics about their need – this will help you determine which leads are better qualified and help you target your marketing and lead nurturing accordingly.

Marketing Tip: *Provide valuable information, for which your prospects are looking, that will educate them and help them buy from you. Put this valuable information behind a lead generation form to gather important lead information and qualify your leads.*

Landing Pages

A landing page is designed solely for one offer and one purpose – to convert traffic to a lead. A landing page is a page on your website. Typically you'll have a Call To Action (CTA) button on your high traffic web pages like your home and blog pages, promoting your lead generation offer. Other ways to promote your landing pages are by hyperlinking keywords to the landing page, from; other internal web pages, blog articles, press releases and social media posts. Here are some tips to increasing lead conversions on your landing pages.

- Include a title that clearly communicates the offer.
- Use the same keywords in the; advertisement, call to action, button and title.
- Have bold sub-headings and bullet points.
- Clearly communicate the value of the offer.
- List who will benefit from the offer – job title, company description.
- Clearly outline what to do next, how to receive the offer, and what to expect.
- Include a lead conversion form.
- Have content and form above the fold – in other words - the visitor doesn't need to scroll down the page.
- Don't show the menu bar – because the sole purpose is to get your visitor to take action on the offer, you want to limit ways they can leave the page. So only have content and form on the page, no links to other pages or social media sites.

Calls To Action

A call to action (CTA) is a statement that encourages people to take a desired action. Always in the written form, it can be in an image (button) or hyperlinked text. Here are some tips for successful CTAs:

- Keep it simple.
- Make it clear.
- Use relevant keywords – relevant to your prospects' needs.
- Be consistent – use the same words on the CTA, landing page and offer.
- Check that the link goes to the correct landing page.
- Double check your spelling.
- Use a verb – 'click here', 'learn', 'download', 'view', 'go'.

Thank You Pages

After your lead has completed the form, the next page that shows up should be a thank you page. This page is designed to reconvert the lead and encourage social sharing. Start with a short thank you message and then explain what to expect next. For example, if they downloaded an eBook you might say:

“Thank you for downloading The Inbound Marketing eBook, we have just sent you an email with the link to download the eBook.”

Then invite them to join you on your social media profiles and subscribe to your blog. Finally, ask them to share the “offer” with their network. Make it easy by including the social share buttons on the Thank You page.

A best practice is to show your main menu navigation bar on the Thank You page so your new lead can return to your website and learn more about your company.

Auto Responders

These are the emails that are sent out automatically when a lead fills out a page. Keep these relatively short and to the point, providing the relevant information they requested ie: link to download an eBook, webinar registration confirmation etc.

Lead Nurturing (aka Workflows)

Generally speaking, lead nurturing is the practice of nurturing a lead along the buy process. It can include a mix of tactics like; email, phone calls or in person meetings. When executed correctly emails work very well as a lead nurturing tactic. They are timely and valuable follow up emails that are sent after the initial lead conversion. The purpose is to nurture your leads with valuable information to move them through the buy process and get them sales ready – they shouldn’t be pushy sales emails.

To ensure you are successful at nurturing your leads, do your homework first and make sure you know what information your leads are looking for, and what information will help them buy. At different stages of the buy process your lead will want to learn different things about your company. First it might be about your products, services and processes. Next they may want to learn about your company, team, expertise and past clients. And finally they will want to know how to buy, for example, do they book in a consultation or order online? It’s also important to get the timing correct. If you have a high ticket item, it may take your leads 3-6 months to do their research before they are confident enough to make a decision. If this is the case, then you will want to spread out your lead nurturing emails, if it’s a shorter sales cycle, then your emails need to be closer together so you don’t lose your leads to a competitor.

Email Marketing

Email is a great tactic for lead nurturing, however, with the majority of people overwhelmed with the volume of emails they receive per day, it’s important to stand out, and provide valuable information to increase click through rates and subscribers.

Here are some tips to help you achieve your goals with email marketing.

1. **Build opt-in** subscribers (with your lead generation offers), rather than buying poorly targeted lists that can have a negative impact on your credibility and brand.
2. **Segment your lists** by leads, customers, interest areas, products purchased, company size, job title, geographic information, age of lead or whatever is relevant.
3. Send out **customised emails** that are highly relevant to the contact, this will increase your open and click through rates.
4. Have a **specific goal** for your email.
5. **Concise** - shorter emails are better.
6. **Mobile optimise your email** – make sure your email can be easily viewed and read on mobile devices.
7. **Avoid tables and columns** these don't show up well on mobile devices.
8. **Format text** rather than images for visual appeal - larger fonts and bold.
9. **More content, less design** 67% don't download images as a default setting on email.
10. **Social optimise your email** to make it easy for readers to share with their social networks and to connect with you.
11. **Test** subjects and offers on smaller lists to see which ones get the higher click thru rates before rolling out to the entire list.
12. **Pre-send a test** email to yourself and a few others on your team to double check spelling and links.
13. **Double check** your list and make sure you're sending the correct email to the desired list.
14. **Metrics** – click thru and lead conversion rates are more valuable than knowing open rates. Open rates are not an accurate metric as emails can be viewed without being "opened".

ANALYSE

As a marketer it's important to know what is working and what isn't. The term Closed Loop Marketing relates to closing the loop between marketing and sales. Identifying exactly what is driving leads and customers will help you identify which marketing efforts you should be spending more money on, and which marketing efforts to stop – improving your marketing ROI and helping you become a better marketer.



Today it's easier than ever to track your marketing efforts back to leads and customers, getting a true ROI on your marketing investment. There are many free analytics tools available such as; Google Analytics and Facebook Insights, plus many other social media and email platforms have their own built in analytics. This is great, but the problem is that it's all disjointed and you still need to create a report that pulls them all into one central location. There is a marketing software tool that incorporates all your marketing and analytics into one, the one we use and recommend, is called HubSpot. At the click of a button you can see, for example; which keywords have generated the most customers, which email campaigns generated the most leads, or which blog articles generated the most page views - these are just a few of the many metrics available.

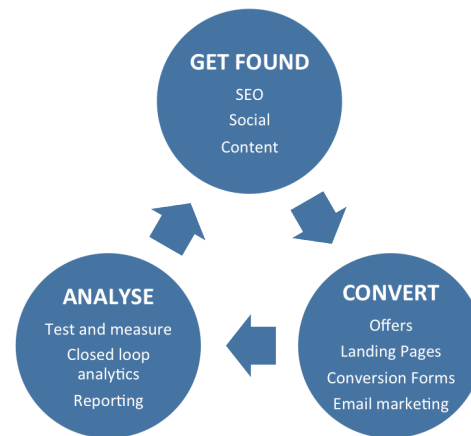
What makes Hubspot so beneficial is that it is designed for the business owner, or marketer so it's easy to use and understand. Additionally the HubSpot all-in-one marketing software is one central place for you to publish all your content, for example; host your website, publish your blog, track your lead intelligence, set up automated work flows, manage email marketing and social media – this is what makes the analytics so accurate and easy – it's all in one.

The combination of the Inbound Marketing Methodology and HubSpot all-in-one software have helped thousands of businesses not only survive, but actually thrive during the recent global economic crisis. Businesses across all industries and types; B2B, B2C, professionals, contractors, manufacturing, local small businesses and large global brands have all experienced growth and success with Inbound Marketing and HubSpot.

SUMMARY

To grow your business you first need to **Get Found** by your target audience, then **Convert** your target audience into leads and customers, and finally **Analyse** your results to identify what's working and what's not so you can improve your marketing ROI.

1. Take the time to do some research, understand your target audience and develop a plan.
2. Choose keywords your prospects use.
3. Publish educational, and valuable content regularly.
4. Use social media to build relationships.
5. Create offers that are of value to your target audience.
6. Use emails to nurture your leads and get them sales ready.
7. Don't sell to people who are not ready to be sold to.
8. Track and measure your marketing with closed loop analytics.
9. Increase leads, increase conversions, decrease cost per lead and improve your bottom line.



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Stacie Chalmers is the founder and owner of The Inbound Marketing Company, based in Sydney, Australia. She is both a Certified HubSpot Partner, and Certified Inbound Marketing Professional.

The Inbound Marketing Company's mission is to help small business grow, with better marketing practices that increase leads and customers, and decrease costs.

Stacie has structured the company so that every client deals directly with her, to ensure the highest standard of customer support, service and results. Her expertise comes from over 20 years working in a range of companies including; publicly traded companies, large private firms and small business.

To learn more about Stacie Chalmers please view her profile, and connect with her, on [LinkedIn](#).

To learn what you need to do to achieve your revenue goals this year book in a free Inbound Marketing Assessment. [theinboundmarketingcompany.com.au/inbound-marketing-assessment].

To learn more about HubSpot, or set up a free trial please reach out to Stacie directly at:

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