

B2B MARKETING: AN INBOUND METHODOLOGY

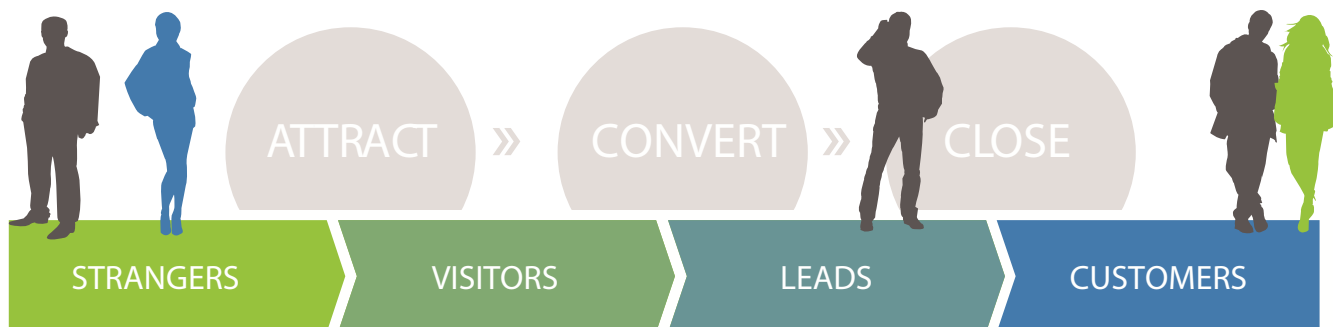


The best way to grow your business by attracting, converting, and closing prospects looking for the right opportunity.

A PROVEN B2B MARKETING METHODOLOGY FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

Since 2006 inbound marketing has been shown to be the most effective marketing method for doing business online. For B2B businesses, outbound marketing techniques like buying ads and third party email lists in hopes of generating leads has become increasingly ineffective as serious buyers have taken to the web to find and compare products and services that interest them.

Inbound marketing focuses on creating quality content that pulls serious buyers toward your business opportunities, where they naturally want to be. By aligning the content you publish with your ideal customer's interests, you naturally attract the kinds of buyers your sales team can convert and close.



THIS DIAGRAM YOU SEE ABOVE LAYS OUT THE THREE ACTIONS B2B COMPANIES MUST TAKE IN ORDER TO GRAB THE ATTENTION OF PROSPECTS AND BRING THEM INTO THE SALES PROCESS.

WHAT IS INBOUND AND HOW DOES IT APPLY TO B2B MARKETING?

Inbound marketing is all about creating content specifically designed to appeal to your ideal prospects. By doing so, inbound weeds out the tire-kickers and focuses squarely on attracting the qualified, serious buyers.

MAJOR THEMES:

CONTENT CREATION:

Creating targeted content that answers your prospects' basic questions while sharing that content with everyone who takes interest in your opportunity.

LIFECYCLE MARKETING:

Recognizing that prospects go through stages as they interact with your company, and that each stage requires different marketing actions.

PERSONALIZATION:

The more you learn about which leads represent the most qualified candidates over time, the better you can personalize your messages to their specific needs.

MULTI-CHANNEL:

Inbound marketing is multi-channel by nature because it approaches prospects where they are, in the channel they choose to interact with you.

INTEGRATION:

Content publishing and sales analytics tools all work together like a well-oiled machine, allowing you to focus on getting the right materials out to the right people at the right time.

THE THREE B2B MARKETING ACTIONS OF THE INBOUND METHODOLOGY

1. ATTRACT



As a B2B company, you know you don't want just any traffic coming to your site—you want the right traffic. You're not just looking for leads; you want the kinds of qualified leads your sales team can close on.

So who are these ideal customers and partners? In inbound, we refer to them as our buyer personas. Buyer personas are holistic ideals of what your ideal customers are really like, inside and out. Personas encompass the goals, challenges, pain points, common objections, as well as personal and demographic information shared among all members of that group.

In short, your personas are the people around whom your entire marketing plan is designed.

Some of the most important tools to attract the right people to your site are:

- **BLOGGING**

Inbound marketing starts with blogging. A blog is the single best way to attract new visitors to your website. In order to get found by the right prospective business owners, you must create the kinds of educational content that answers their questions and has an emotional impact on their decision-making process.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Today, the social web is an extremely important space to share content and valuable information with fans and followers. Engaging with prospects in this social space puts a human face on your brand and establishes trust and transparency with those who are considering your products and services.

- **SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)**

Serious prospects begin their buying process online, usually by using a search engine like Google to find opportunities and answers to questions. It's crucial for B2B companies to have a prominent position in search engine listings, especially when competition is steep. To get there, you need to carefully pick keywords, optimize your site pages, create content, and build links around the terms your ideal customers are searching for.

- **PAGES**

You must optimize your website to appeal to and speak with the serious prospects in a position to invest. Transform your website into a beacon of helpful content to entice the right users to visit your pages.

2. CONVERT



Once you've attracted visitors to your company website, the next logical step is converting those visitors into leads by gathering their contact information. At the very least, you'll need their email addresses in order to reengage with them further down the road. Contact information is the most valuable currency there is to the online marketer.

In order for your visitors to offer up that currency willingly, you need to offer them something unique and valuable in return. That payment comes in the form of original content like eBooks, whitepapers, and tip sheets—whatever information would be valuable to your idea buyer personas.

Some of the most important tools in converting visitors into qualified leads include:

- **CALLS-TO-ACTION**

Calls-to-action are buttons or links that encourage prospects to take action. This could be downloading a whitepaper, attending a webinar, or any other downloadable content piece. Without strategically placed calls-to-actions designed to be enticing, you simply won't generate any leads.

- **LANDING PAGES**

When a website visitor clicks on a call-to-action, they should then be sent to a landing page—a place where the offer in the call-to-action can be fulfilled. The landing page contains a form visitors use to submit the contact information your sales team can use to start a conversation with them. This is the point where visitors typically become leads.

- **CONTACTS**

It's important to keep track of the leads you're converting in a centralized marketing database your sales team can use to engage with leads appropriately. Putting all of your data in one place helps make sense out of every interaction you've had with your contacts—be it through email, social media, a landing page, or otherwise.

3. CLOSE



So, you've attracted the serious buyers to your site and converted them into leads. Closing them and growing your business is the last step. Accomplishing this high investment purchase takes a combination of timing and the right resources to pass onto the buyer.

Tools to close B2B leads include:

- **LEAD SCORING**
You've got contacts in your system, but how do you know which ones are ready to speak with your sales team? Using a numerical representation of sales-readiness, you can take the guesswork out of the equation and make sure leads are being engaged at the right times.
- **EMAIL**
The buying process can be a long one. With such a significant investment involved, prospects often move through this process slowly to ensure they're covering all the bases. Visitors who fill out landing pages and receive content might be curious, but not yet ready for a sales call. For these situations, a series of emails focused on delivering useful, relevant follow-up content can build trust and help prospects prepare themselves for purchase.
- **MARKETING AUTOMATION**
This process involves creating email marketing and lead nurturing tailored to the lifecycle stage of each lead in your system. If a visitor downloaded a whitepaper on a certain topic sometime in the past, you might want to send that lead a series of related emails they would find helpful. On the other hand, if they chose to follow you through social media to visit certain parts of your page, you'll probably have better results by changing the message to reflect their different interests.
- **CLOSED-LOOP REPORTING**
How do you know which marketing activities are bringing in the best quality leads? How do you evaluate your sales team to see if they're being effective in closing them? Integrating with your CRM system allows you to analyze how well your marketing and sales teams are playing together.

A BETTER WAY TO STAND OUT TO SERIOUS BUYERS

The inbound marketing methodology covers each and every step taken, every tool used, and every lifecycle stage traveled through on the path from prospect to customer. Whether you're just starting to market your products and service to other businesses, or are an established B2B company looking to break into new industries, this system lets you create and deliver content that appeals precisely to the right businesses at the right times.