

Video 1: Why are conversions important to inbound marketing?

To review, a conversion is defined as a moment when a website visitor takes a desired action. Ideally, this will occur throughout the visitor's lifecycle. In this way, the inbound methodology is less about a visitor's distinct start and end point. Instead, think about the inbound methodology as the process of adding value at every stage in your customer's buying journey. Conversion, and the information gathered at those points, is about knowing who's getting value from your resources. Understanding who you're talking to allows you to continue to supplement their online and buying experience in a human, helpful, and holistic way.

So besides helping you gather information about potential leads, opportunities, and returning customers who engage with your content, why is it important to keep an eye on your conversions? The answer, in short, is data.

Conversion is one of the marketing areas you'll encounter that's intrinsically tied with data. That's because conversions are only tangible if they can be measured. Think of conversion data as a way to incrementally check on the health of your strategy and inform you if and when there needs to be changes. It allows you to ask your inbound marketing strategy and areas like your content strategy, conversation promotion, and lead nurturing efforts fundamental questions like, is this working as expected? Or, is there anything I could do to improve this process? By starting to answer these questions with data-backed answers, you're taking speculation out of the equation. Numbers, after all, don't lie.

Conversions also allow you to start thinking outside the box when it comes to how you're interacting with your website visitors. Traditional landing page or blog post conversion paths, for example, can be static resources that need to be updated every now and again but still manage to facilitate a one-to-many value add for your website audience.

Designing touchless conversion paths can be your best friend, especially if you're thinking of scaling your business. These types of conversion opportunities, when done correctly, never remove the personalization from the experience. The correct use of brand voice and tone on areas like your forms, landing pages, blog posts, buttons, and pop-ups, coupled with optimization processes, can help ensure you're still tailoring your content to speak directly to the visitor.

As technology continues to advance, the way people choose to interact is likewise evolving. According to a [recent study](#) by Facebook, one-to-one messaging is becoming a preferred way to communicate across generations. 56% of people would rather message than call customer service. This demonstrates the beginning of a paradigm shift for marketers and sales representatives. How do you continue to automate and drive impact in one-to-many interactions while still creating a personalized experience?

Experimenting with different formats and tools, from forms to chatbots, is a great way to look at the types of interactions and conversion points that work best for your buyer personas. You'll discover some methods and conversion paths that don't perfectly align with what you're trying to accomplish. On the flip side, you could uncover new ways of interacting with your website visitors and making their experience that much better.

Video 2: How to build an effective conversion path

You can use conversions to check on the progress of your inbound marketing strategy and ensure you're aligning with your online audience in a helpful, human, and holistic way. Conversion paths are just that — a path. They're steps carefully crafted to lead your website visitor through your site, to help them interact with the variety of content at their disposal.

The first step in building a conversion path is to create awareness. You need an element to attract visitors to your offer. This can be flashy, like a red button or a pop-up form, or subtle, like a little chat icon in the lower right corner of your homepage. Your website visitor is coming to your website page for a reason. They may even have a specific question. The first conversion tool you use to attract their attention needs to show them you have the answer, or at least showcase you've got value to add to their experience.

This brings us to step two: Determine your end point. If you're linking to and redirecting your visitors directly to a PDF via a CTA button, then that's a single-step conversion path. Often, however, there's an ultimate goal for your website visitor to complete a series of steps. If you're creating a multi-step process, where is your conversion path attempting to guide the visitor? What is the most important action that they take? Identifying your end goal early on can be critical to the long-term success of your conversion path and any future improvements it might need.

If you're using the traditional landing page conversion path, you're probably looking for more contacts to complete that final step of filling out a form than just clicking the initial button that attracted them on the page. But this will vary depending on the tools at your disposal and which ones you want to use. A button could take visitors to a meetings link, for example. A pop-up notification could take visitors to a form. A simple chatbot could bring someone to a knowledge base of resources. The possibilities are endless.

The third step in building your conversion path is to chart your course. You have an element that kicks off the conversion path, and you've identified where you want the visitor to end up. Now you need to design the experience that occurs in between. Think about ways to create the best flow between elements on your site, and really tie the experience together. Don't be afraid to experiment with different combinations of tools as you work out what's best for your buyer personas. Landing pages might work best for certain offers, but you might find methods like messaging apps or live chat are also great ways to deliver content and delight visitors.

This brings us to step four: Analyze. Ideally, after the conversion, your visitor has their question answered, is off to enjoy your offer, or has left delighted. Your work doesn't stop there, though. Now it's time to take a step back and get a health check on how your conversion path is performing. After about four weeks, check in with your reporting. Does the amount of visitors converting align with your expectations or goals that you set for this specific conversion path? If it is, great job! If it's not, think about ways you could experiment and optimize, or improve, the way the conversion path is set up.

So, now you've crafted your conversion path, but now how do you ensure you're choosing the right conversion points to tie together your conversation, promotion, lead nurturing, and content strategies? When building your conversion paths, it's important to consider the following areas: value proposition, relevance, urgency, clarity, anxiety, distraction, and optimization strategy. Let's dig into each one.

First, you have the value proposition of your offer. If it's a content offer, you need to create the type of content your buyer personas are looking for. Choosing a format can be difficult, so when creating your content offer, consider your SMART goals. Remember, SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely. What is the outcome you want to achieve with this piece of content in the short term? Where do you see it fitting into your long-term strategy? Alternatively, how does this content likely fit into your visitor's goals and where they are in the buyer's journey? Likewise, consider what format would likely provide the best experience.

Think about the value of the content you're producing as well as what resources it will cost to make. You don't want to invest a lot of effort into a piece that ultimately doesn't have a place in the larger narrative your company is trying to tell. How much time and resources can you reasonably set aside to create this piece of content? How will you promote it to the world once it's created?

Each content format will take a distinct amount of time and resources to build. Creating an engaging podcast is different than producing a blog post or publishing an ebook. When thinking about the conversion path or call-to-action you want to build for your content, consider the value it's adding to your visitor, lead, opportunity, or customer. This will help you determine how much information you can reasonably ask for in return for this offer.

Not every conversion is monetarily transactional, but there is an element of exchange. In marketing, contact information is the currency that helps you hit your lead generation goals. With this in mind, think of the price tag you're placing on your content. Price it too high and no one buys. Price it too low and you might not get the type of information that can help you identify necessary information to get a sense of who is converting and why. It's all about balance. You want to ensure you're creating the content that makes people want to convert without adding any additional obstacles that could stand in their way. Knowing what type of information you'll want in exchange for a piece of content informs you on the best way to deliver it. Similarly, knowing the value of your offer can help you determine how many steps your conversion path can reasonably have.

But that's only a piece to the puzzle. Relevance is also a piece to consider when building your conversion path and determining which conversion tools to use to deliver your offer. Ask yourself the following questions: who are you trying to target with this offer, what are you trying to accomplish, when should the offer expire, where should it live on your site, and why would your personas want to engage with this offer? Where does this specific conversion opportunity sit in the buyer's journey? Immediately offering a demo with a longer form might not be most effective to someone who has just landed on your site and is still in the awareness stage. Similarly, more qualified visitors might not be as interested in pop-ups offering content that answers industry-level frequently asked questions. It's about knowing what information your visitors want to see and when they want to see it.

In the context of conversion path building, urgency is defined as how compelled your visitor feels to take the desired action. Oftentimes, buttons can create this sense of urgency with the use of action-oriented phrases, such as "download now," "start your trial," or "join today." Urgency is about taking a step into your visitor's shoes and seeing how you're currently framing the offer. What value is your visitor critically missing if they don't click the button, enter their email into the pop-up, or fill out the form? Based on the relevance and value proposition of the piece of content, does it make a difference if they download today, tomorrow, or in a month?

When a visitor looks at your conversion tool — your button, form, or live chat icon — how well are expectations set about what will happen if they take that action? Clarity is about making the transaction clear. A best practice, particularly for landing pages, is to use any accompanying copy or images to summarize what the offer contains or what your visitor can hope to gain from that offer.

If you're asking for an anonymous visitor's email, that visitor is likely experiencing some minor anxiety. While many marketers today follow the inbound methodology, there's plenty of concern of exactly who will have access to a lead's information once it's in your hands. This can be a bit tricky to counteract, but strategies like directly linking to your company's privacy policy can help mediate this stress. You want to make sure you minimize elements that could cause your visitor, lead, or customer to hesitate and wonder if they should be completing the conversion. You want to guide them down the path of "Of course I should download this offer, this is remarkable content!"

Look! Up in the sky, it's a bird, it's a plane! Actually, it's a distraction. When building an effective conversion path, you need to consider what might be preventing people from taking that action. In the context of landing pages, it's considered a best practice to remove the navigation bar from the page so that visitors focus only on the content and conversion at hand. Similarly, adding too many buttons to a page or pop-ups across your site could create a distracting and confusing experience. When building a page or adding a conversion opportunity, think about what you can do that makes the conversion point stand out from the rest. How you do so will depend on the specific tool you're using, but experimenting with elements such as design and location can help you inspire visitors to take that action and connect with the offer.

This brings us to the last one, optimization strategy. This is where you swap to a more data-driven mindset. How do you plan on measuring the success of the conversions on this offer? Will you be looking at measurements like form submissions, clicks, or views? Are you planning the content to be relevant long enough to conduct A/B experiments on? If you are, make sure you're keeping a tally on conversions over time, not just at the beginning or end of the proposed experiment. If not, are you basing your conversion path on any conversions that have proven successful in the past? Having a data collection plan will be key to improving your content strategy because this data will help you inform your conversion optimization efforts.

Often, you'll find some of areas will inform the action you take in others. Using these areas as a guiding framework, you'll start to craft a well-planned and effective conversion experience. Paying attention to these key areas can help you create a variety

of conversion opportunities for your online audience. Landing pages work well, but they aren't the answer for every need that's bringing your persona to your site. By asking these questions, you're laying the groundwork for a diversified experience that will cater to the preferences of your audience. You want to ensure you're offering the types of content interactions people want, and sometimes, that might not always align with what's the most intuitive.

As you might have guessed, conversion can take a variety of formats. Across your website, you can have buttons, landing pages, blog posts with buttons, forms, pop-ups, live messaging, meetings links, or chatbots, just to name a few. Each can contextually function as the right tool. The exact combination of tools or how many conversions you want is not an exact science and is highly contextual depending on what you want to accomplish.

A tried and true conversion path that aligns well with the inbound methodology is the landing page conversion path. This usually includes an attention-grabbing call-to-action button, which redirects to a landing page tailored to speak directly to your website visitor. An optimized form usually sits above the fold and acts as a gate to the offer. After filling out the form, the anonymous visitor, now considered a known lead, is redirected to a thank you page where they can then download the offer and access the navigation back to the rest of the website. This method is typically used as top-of-the-funnel lead generation for a variety of offers, from ebooks to demos.

That said, think of your site in terms of your funnel. By using only one type of conversion that targets only one kind of offer, you're only harnessing a portion of the possible traffic. If you're not offering the type of conversion your visitors expect, it might be time to experiment and repackage your offer differently. Diversifying your conversion points and investing in ongoing conversion optimization ensures you're using data to gradually widen your net and make the most out of your website traffic.

Video 3: What is conversion optimization?

Hi there! I'm Jorie with HubSpot Academy. You may have heard of conversion optimization. But what exactly does it mean? Let's take a look under the hood of conversion optimization, and discuss where it fits into the inbound methodology and how to ensure you're using the method to its fullest capabilities.

Conversion optimization, also known as conversion rate optimization, is the process of testing hypotheses on elements of your site with the ultimate goal of increasing the percentage of visitors who take the desired action.

Conversion optimization is about data and experimentation. As marketers, you may be used to reusing your content. Repurposing can prevent duplicate efforts and identify evergreen pieces of content your team creates. The same could be said for your website design and user experience. Your website is not a static resource but rather an organic ecosystem for your buyer personas to interact with your resources. As traffic ebbs and flows to your site, optimization helps you evolve with it.

Conversion optimization is more than just crunching the numbers. It's about adopting a mentality to always be growing as the needs of your buyer personas change. You can always find ways to improve your website experience. Conversion optimization takes speculation out of your decision making by providing concrete data on how your visitors are reacting to your experiments. By using data as your feedback mechanism, you can start to gather valuable insights about what your visitors like, rather than what you think they should like.

A key principle here at HubSpot Academy is to always be learning, and that's exactly what you should be doing when it comes to your conversion optimization.

Think of your site as a large conversion funnel for your traffic. Optimization is about widening the scope and reach of every stage of that funnel and making the most of the traffic already coming to your site. As you scale, your website needs to be a well-oiled machine that you can count on for maximum efficiency. This means shifting your focus from exponentially increasing lead generation to increasing the amount of movement from one stage to the next.

But where does this fit into the inbound methodology?

Conversion optimization can fit into any stage of the inbound methodology. Have you ever heard the saying, “if it’s worth doing, it’s worth measuring”? Likewise, if it’s being measured, it can be optimized. Customers are interacting with your site at every stage of the buyer’s journey. So whether its an anonymous visitor or a known customer, you should always be looking at your website and promotional channels with an empathetic eye and user experience top of mind. To limit the optimization process to a single stage is to silo its impact.

Speaking of impact, how can conversion optimization affect your ROI, or return on investment?

Think of your marketing or sales funnel. At a high level, your funnel is composed of a series of steps that define the unique stages a visitor will go through with your company on their way to becoming a customer. No matter how many steps you have or what you call them, the overall shape remains the same. Wide at the top and narrow at the bottom.

This is because with each stage, you’ll experience a bit of drop off. Not everyone will choose to convert or continue along the buyer’s journey. They might not be ready to buy, or they got the information they were looking for — the reasons vary. But it’s rare to have the same amount of visitors start at the top of your funnel and complete the entire journey. This affects your cost to acquire a customer, or CAC. The more resources your company is spending to acquire a customer, the lower your return on investment.

If you’re considering your company’s bottom line, you could take two approaches. You could invest more resources and more time, exponentially driving up the amount of traffic coming to your site to increase revenue. This would increase the amount of people in your funnel and therefore the amount of people moving through your funnel. But long-term, this tactic could negatively impact your cost to acquire a customer and your return on investment. Another option is to increase the chances of your current traffic choosing to convert and move down your funnel. Over time, this has the potential to drastically lower your cost to acquire a customer and positively impact your return on investment. So which strategy do you choose?

It’s important to keep in mind that conversion optimization is an iterative process. It’s not a set of quick-win tactics, so you likely won’t see results overnight. As a method, it means more than simply changing CTA buttons from green to red. Think of conversion optimization as a way to look at the wider picture of continuing to provide value to your customers and systematically improving it one piece at a time.

Video 4: How to implement conversion optimization?

Interested in conversion optimization?

Much like the scientific method, a problem-solving approach scientists use to mediate bias and answer questions, conversion optimization is an iterative and replicable process. It contains five steps: define your objective, establish your baseline, form a hypothesis, design your tests, and analyze your data. Let’s run through each of these a little more in depth.

Defining your objective may seem simple at first, but this is often an overlooked step in conversion optimization. This step requires a three-pronged approach. First, define your goal. Where does this experiment fit into your long-term or short-term goals? What performance metrics, such as OKRs (objectives and key results) or KPIs (key performance indicators), is this experiment attempting to influence? Ultimately, the goal of conversion optimization is to squeeze the most action out of your website traffic, but understanding where each of your experiments fits into the larger picture will help you quantify your efforts to key stakeholders.

Step into the shoes of your buyer persona. Look at your conversion opportunity with new eyes. Write down the problem you think your persona is having that’s causing them to turn to your content. Write down anything you think might be affecting their conversions. You might even consider sending a survey directly to users to see what influenced their decision to convert on an opportunity. This type of data will become key when forming your hypothesis later in the process.

Narrow down the page element you want to experiment on first. You can start with the design of the conversion opportunity itself, such as how many form fields you're using, or the verbs you're using in your buttons. You could also choose to start your experiment on areas that frame the conversion opportunity, such as any supporting images, links, headlines, testimonials, social proof, or more. Where you start your experiments is up to you. However, you don't want to experiment on multiple areas of a conversion path at once. While that may seem time effective, later on when you need to analyze your results, it will be difficult to definitively say which change affected your outcome.

The next step in the conversion optimization process is to establish your baseline. Take stock of the current performance of your conversion. Try to figure out what your current data is telling you before trying to fix it. If you're working with a landing page or blog post and its form, what's the current conversion rate? If you're working with a call-to-action button, what's the view-to-click ratio? Write down this conversion rate and save it somewhere you'll remember and can access later.

After taking this step in your conversion optimization process, it's time to form a testable hypothesis. Ask yourself questions like, "Is the traffic coming to this page the right kind of traffic?" "Does the eye path direct someone to the target action?" And "Is the page confusing, overwhelming, or distracting?" Outline the question you're trying to answer about the numbers you're seeing first. Then, think about the observations you made while defining your objectives. In clear, simple language, write a hypothesis statement about what you think will happen. You can use the format, "by making X changes, the conversion rate will increase by Y because it fixes Z problem."

Let's look at an example. Say you're working for a marketing agency, and you're trying to increase the conversions on your services inquiry page. You take some time to study the page and decide that you need to establish credibility that backs some of claims seen there. A good hypothesis for this situation would be something along the lines of: By adding testimonials and photos, the conversion rate will increase because it gives social credibility to our work and makes us seem more genuine to cold prospects coming to our website to sign up for a consultation. This hypothesis outlines the change you're making: Adding testimonials to the page. And the problem you're testing: lacking genuineness. Now it's just a matter of testing it out.

The fourth step in the conversion optimization process is designing and running tests. As you've already identified the conversion to test, now it's time to make the adjustment that you outlined in your hypothesis. Six factors typically affect conversions: the value proposition of the offer, the relevance of the content, the clarity of the conversion path, visitor anxiety, distraction, and urgency. With those six areas in mind, almost any element on your site, from headlines to copy to testimonials, that affects user behavior can be tested on. Remember — you only want to test one element at a time to ensure your data is accurately demonstrating impact.

After making the change, establish a schedule to benchmark your experiment. Periodically record its performance and compare it to the baseline you recorded earlier. Are you noticing any trends over time? Depending on your page traffic volume, let your test run for at least four weeks. On average, this ensures your data is statistically significant enough to draw accurate conclusions.

Finally, we get to the fun part, analyze your data. Did you see a noticeable conversion lift on your variation page? Did you see an improvement in bounce rate? Now is the time to determine if the prediction and hypothesis you made is correct. Look at your final data set and compare it to the benchmarks you've been collecting throughout the process. What are the trends in your reporting and analytics? What are they telling you?

If your hypothesis turns out to be correct, great! You're one step closer to determining what really works for your website audience. If not, that's okay too! Take the insight you've gained and use it to form a new hypothesis. Conversion optimization is a continuous process. You start with the element that you think may be preventing the most visitors from converting and run through the method to try to improve their experience. After analyzing that data, if you find the conversions now align with your end goal, you could choose to move on to improving another page or conversion opportunity. Alternatively, you could choose to keep experimenting on the same conversion path. You don't have to stop at just one experiment. You might continue to rework pieces that get the most visitor focus, such as headlines, subheaders, or paragraphs could be the key to maximizing conversions in the long run. This is particularly important if you're working on areas of your site that currently

provide the most qualified conversions. What's most important is that you're always learning as much as you can about your website traffic.

To review, conversion optimization is the consistent, structured, ongoing process of improving your website over time. It's not just about quick wins or changing button colors. Rather, it's about digging into the psychology of why people do or don't convert. Conversion optimization is about identifying what factors you can control in your visitors' experience with your website and how to pull the right levers to make it that much better. The result? A smoother buyer's journey and more effective inbound marketing strategy.