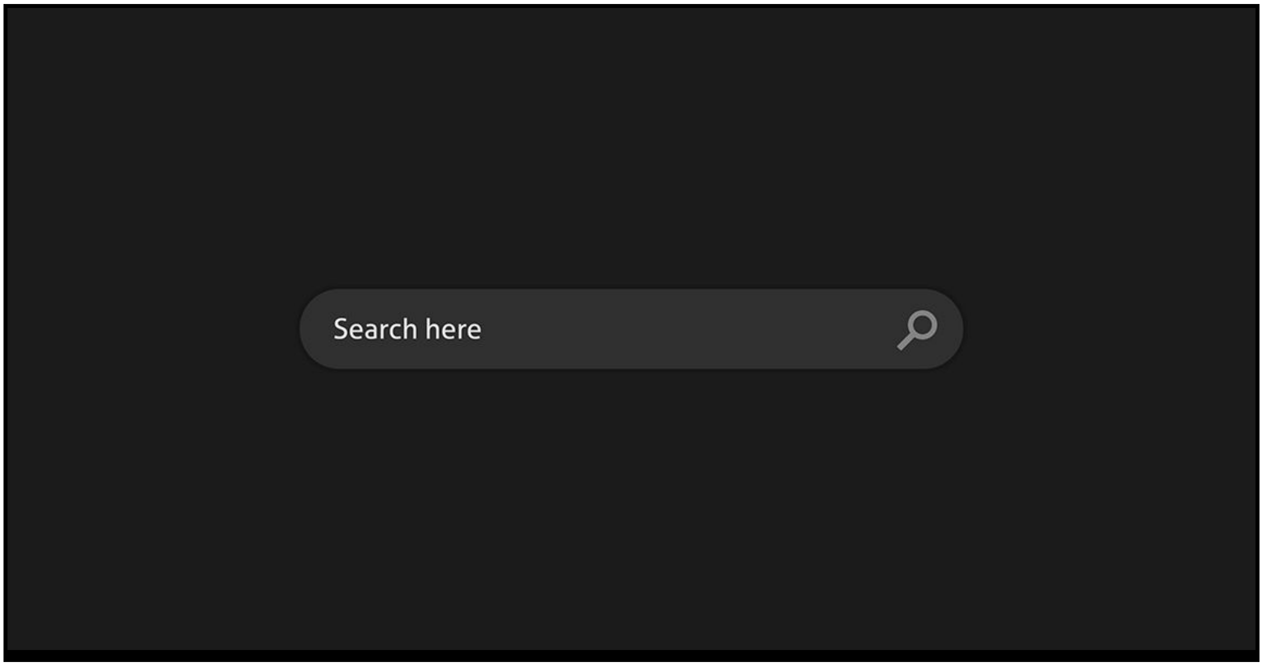
SmartBug.

Creating a Content Marketing Strategy in HubSpot



0 Introduction

Google rules the internet. Everyone knows it. If someone can't find you on Google, you don't exist, virtually speaking.

And so the marketing specialities of SEO, blogging, and link building were born. Inbound marketing in particular focuses on creating blogs and ebooks that your prospects find valuable and Google finds attractive.

Yet without a cohesive content marketing strategy, it may feel like you're just throwing spaghetti against the wall to see what sticks. One day, you're talking about the best music festivals in your area, and the next, you're covering football memes.

A cohesive content marketing strategy will tie together your efforts, allowing your team to focus on one area at a time while leveraging long-form content to attract Google and, thus, leads.

But first, a brief introduction.

SmartBug Media is one of a handful of HubSpot Diamond partners in the world and the highest-rated agency in the history of the HubSpot ecosystem. For 10 years, SmartBug has been helping businesses increase sales leads, close more customers, and enhance the reach of their brands.

In May 2013, SmartBug created *The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas*, which has been downloaded more than 4,500 times. In October 2017, SmartBug embarked on a journey to revamp this offer into a pillar page with a PDF download. SmartBug already had a bunch of blogs about marketing personas and used these posts to help form a topic cluster in support of the core topic of "marketing personas."

You can view the guide here: https://www.smartbugmedia.com/inbound-marketing-personas.

What's a pillar page, you ask? Well, the way people search has been changing during the last few years, and Google has responded with updates that favor in-depth content on websites. To that end, a pillar page is a long page (often with chapters and links to blog posts and external resources) that provides extensive info on a topic.

More info on what is a pillar page (and topic cluster) is available here: https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-a-pillar-page.

Throughout that process, SmartBug created the following guide in conjunction with HubSpot Academy, incorporating best practices and pro tips so that you can replicate the steps in your marketing efforts.

This guide is for marketers interested in implementing a content marketing strategy in HubSpot who want to learn how all of the different tools tie together and how to get from Point A (I want to do content marketing) to Point B (watch the organic leads roll in).

By following the steps in this guide, you will be able to conduct your research, set up everything in HubSpot, promote your content, follow up with leads, and evaluate the effectiveness of your content strategy.

1 Let's Get Going

Set Up a SMART Goal

As with any marketing project, you should set a SMART goal at the onset. SMART goals are:

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Timely

In marketing land, SMART goals often equate to visits, contacts, and customers (although you can also make goals around social shares, email opens, and more granular aspects).

When beginning a pillar page project, start by looking at past results and ask what you can realistically achieve beyond that.

- **Visits:** Though it might be your first pillar page, you can still look at web pages that have performed particularly well and estimate the number of visitors based off that.
- **Contacts:** Number of contacts will be a bit more tricky because you are giving away the content for free, so you can't compare to your most popular gated offer. However, if your promotional plan is robust enough, the amount of traffic might make up for the difference in download rate.
- **Customers:** Based on the number of contacts you expect to achieve, what is your typical new contact-to-customer rate?

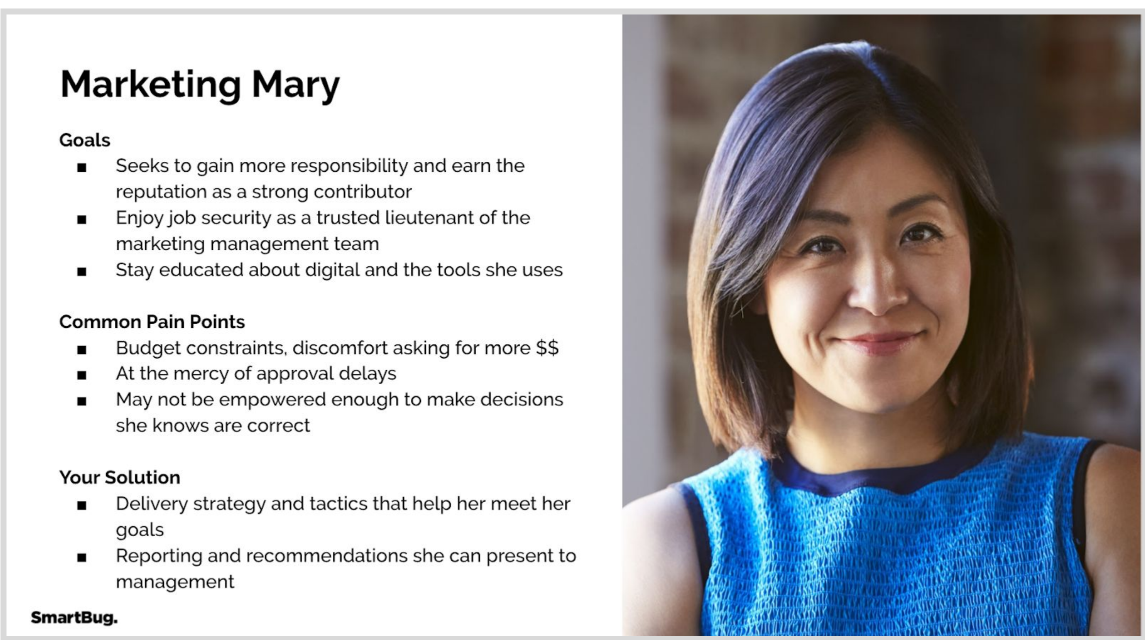
Learn more about SMART goals in the HubSpot Master Class, *The Secret Powers of SMART Goals*, here: https://offers.hubspot.com/charles-duhigg-master-class.

Buyer Personas

Buyer personas are fictional representations of your ideal buyers. Before writing content for clients, SmartBug creates buyer personas so that all blogs, ebooks, and resources are targeting, valuable to, and attracting the right person.

You can learn much more about buyer personas by downloading SmartBug's *The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas* here: https://www.smartbugmedia.com/inbound-marketing-personas.

The primary persona for *The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas* is Marketing Mary, displayed below:



Once you've developed buyer personas for your company, add them to HubSpot. Info on how to add personas in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/contacts-user-guide-v2/how-to-create-personas.

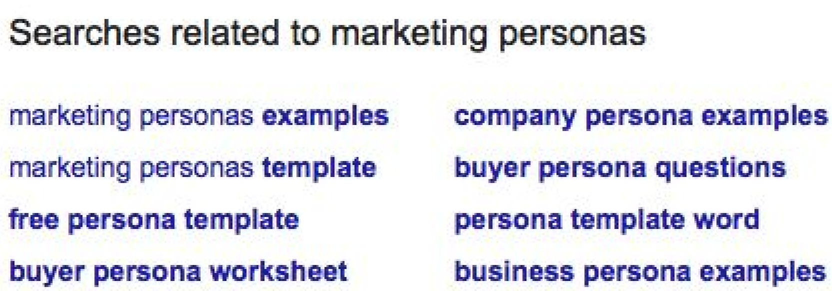
Keyword Research

Start your keyword research by brainstorming a list of keywords that you want to rank for. (A plain ol' Google Doc is fine or even Notes.) If you have a certain topic direction that is calling your time, keep it to that area of focus. Otherwise, feel free to think about various rabbit trails and foxholes when it comes to topics.

First, a quick definition: Short-tail keywords are one or two words; long-tail keywords are more than three words.

Once you're out of ideas, type each short-tail keyword into Google and scroll to the bottom of the first page, where you'll see other searches related to your key term. Add all relevant ones to your list.

For example, when searching Google for "marketing personas," these terms are at the bottom of the page:

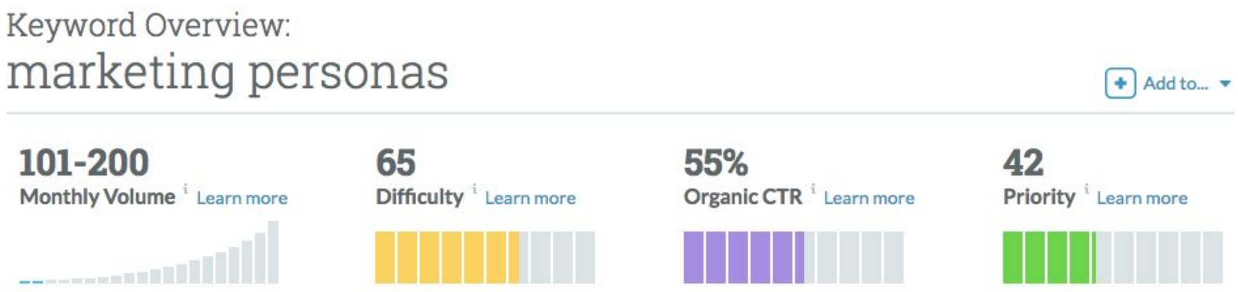


Type some of those keywords into Google as well to get even more ideas.

Now you have a decent list of keywords that will start you off on the right foot. To find even more keywords and to evaluate the effectiveness and obtainability of keywords, the SmartBug team uses Moz's Keyword Explorer. This tool shows you the monthly volume and how difficult it will be to rank for each keyword.

Info on this tool is available here:
https://moz.com/blog/announcing-keyword-explorer-mozs-new-keyword-research-tool.

Keyword Explorer brings up the following for “marketing personas”:



Start by uploading your brainstorm list into a new keyword list in Moz (or perhaps create several lists based on topic if you have many different topics to research). Then use the Keyword Explorer to find more keywords related to your term and add those to the list. (You can even search by domain to see what your competitors are ranking for to see if those are good keywords to add to your list.)

Pick keywords that have a decent amount of monthly searches and a relatively low difficulty score. From there, narrow down your list of keywords to the top candidates.

Info on how to use Moz’s Keyword Explorer is available here:
https://moz.com/help/guides/keyword-explorer.

Next, use a page ranking tool such as Moz Pro or Alexa to see which keywords your current website pages are ranking for and where they rank. Sort this into two categories:

- **Low-hanging fruit:** You have a webpage that is currently ranking between 11-30 for a good keyword, and you want to focus on getting it on the first page of Google.
- **Next-level targets:** You have a webpage that is ranking 31-100 for a good keyword, and you want it to rank better.

Info on how to use Moz Pro is available here:
https://moz.com/help/guides/getting-started.

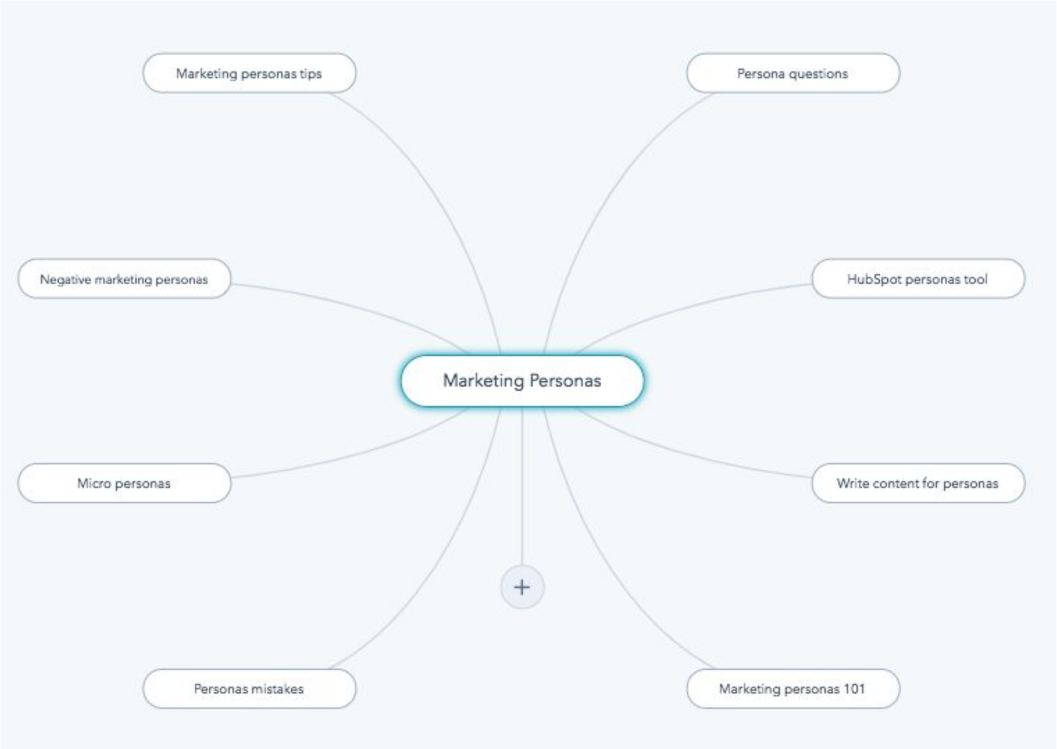
You may decide to focus all your efforts on one low-hanging fruit term or perhaps several keywords from your brainstorm with a high priority score. In either case, the above methodology will assist you in identifying keywords for your pillar page and supporting blog posts.

Content Strategy

Once you've identified the keyword (or keywords) you want to go after with your pillar page and blog posts, it's time to scour the web: Check out your top keywords in Quora and AnswerThePublic. What are people asking when it comes to that keyword? These will be great topics on your pillar page and/or supporting blog posts.

The content strategy tool in HubSpot will also help you identify blog posts to support your pillar page content with a "topic cluster." Once you type in your core topic, the HubSpot AI (artificial intelligence) engine will suggest subtopics that people might be interested in.

For example, the SmartBug team created the following topic cluster for "Marketing Personas":



From your web research as well as the content strategy tool, you'll want to define two things. First, what content will be on your pillar page? An outline or chapter headings will be helpful in nailing this down.

Second, choose your list of supporting blog post subtopics. (The content strategy tool currently supports up to 22 blog posts, but you could use as many as you want.) These topics should be related to the main pillar content but not exactly replicated on the page.

Info on how to use the content strategy tool in HubSpot is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFV1DL1Mca8.

> **Pro Tip:** Really take the time to plan your topic cluster before creating your first piece of content; you wouldn't build a house without a blueprint. To learn a step-by-step process on how to plan and create your topic cluster, go here: https://certification.hubspot.com/content-marketing-certification-course.

2 Create the Content

Admittedly, that title is a bit of an understatement—as if it's easy to just go write all of this content. It's not. It takes a lot of work.

But you have to create the content before you start implementing it (more on this later), so here's a break in this guide to indicate it's time to write.

There are numerous resources for how to write compelling copy and provide value to your audience, but be sure to check out:

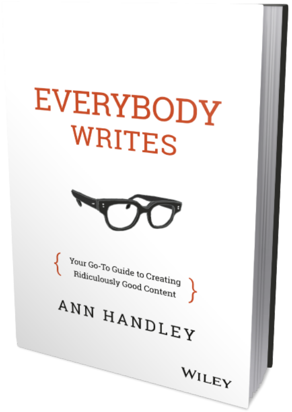
- *The Anatomy of an Inbound Marketing E-Book* (https://www.smartbugmedia.com/blog/the-anatomy-of-an-inbound-marketing-ebook)
- *4 Ways to Keep Your Blog From Boring Your Readers* (https://www.smartbugmedia.com/blog/4-ways-to-keep-your-blog-from-boring-your-readers)

- *5 Tips for Writing Inbound Marketing Content More Efficiently* (https://www.smartbugmedia.com/blog/5-tips-for-writing-inbound-marketing-content-efficiently)
- *The Most Common Copywriting Mistakes* (https://www.smartbugmedia.com/blog/the-most-common-copywriting-mistakes)
- *Content Marketing Workbook* (https://offers.hubspot.com/content-marketing-training-workbook)
    - This workbook will allow you to apply learnings from HubSpot Academy's Content Marketing Certification.

Side note: You'll also need to consider the design of the PDF version of your offer. There are many templates out there, or you can hire a freelancer if you don't employ in-house graphic designers.

HubSpot offers free marketing resources, including ebook templates available here: https://www.hubspot.com/resources/ebook.

Pro Tip: Read *Everybody Writes* by Ann Hadley.



3 Implementation

Campaign Tool

The campaign tool in HubSpot is a way to organize all of your efforts. It's commonly used to tag all of the components of the launch of a piece of content, but can also be used to group together other types of activities, such as digital efforts related to a tradeshow or promotional sale.

For the pillar page, you'll want to create a campaign to track and organize items for the initial 90-day launch. It's easiest to create the campaign first so that you can attach components as you go.

Make sure to add any key dates as well as your SMART goals to the campaign. Info on how to create a campaign in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/campaigns-user-guide-v2.

Website Pillar Page

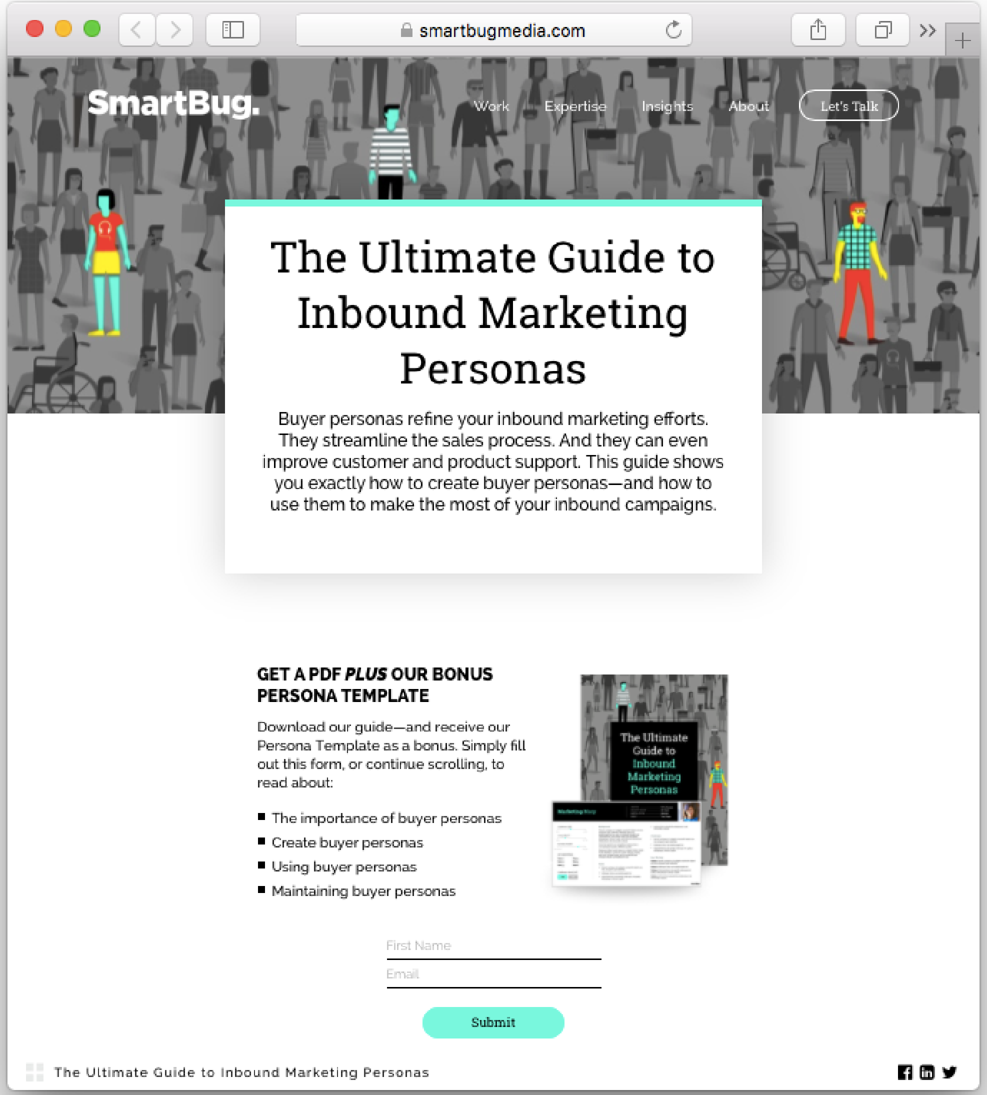
If your website is hosted on HubSpot, you will create the pillar page just like any other webpage, though you may want some custom elements because the page will be long.

Some things you may want to think about on your webpage are:

- A table of contents at the top or side with anchor links (learn more: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/articles/kcs_article/cos-pages-editor/how-can-i-add-an-anchor-link-in-my-email-or-page)
- Links after each chapter back to the top (using the same methodology)
- A definition box at the top of the page to optimize for snippet attractiveness
- Pictures and click-to-tweet messages to break up the text

To get started with your pillar page, HubSpot offers free templates for fully hosted users on their CMS available here: https://marketplace.hubspot.com/products?searchTerm=pillar+page

SmartBug's pillar page includes all of these elements:



Info on how to create a website page in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/website-user-guide.

Most of these elements can be inserted in a webpage without any hassle. Some items, however, require modification of the template. The HubSpot design manager helps non-developers create website page templates using modules.

> **Pro Tip:** Even if you aren't a developer, the HubSpot Design Certification course is helpful in understanding the design manager and how to use it for even small tweaks: https://certification.hubspot.com/hubspot-design-certification-course.

Because pillar pages can be long, user experience and readability are important. If you aren't comfortable with the design manager, you can also reach out to an agency (like SmartBug) or a freelancer for this work.

You now have a decision to make on the PDF offer download: Will the form to download the PDF be right on the pillar page? Or do you want to direct people to a landing page?

Option 1: Form on the page

File Manager

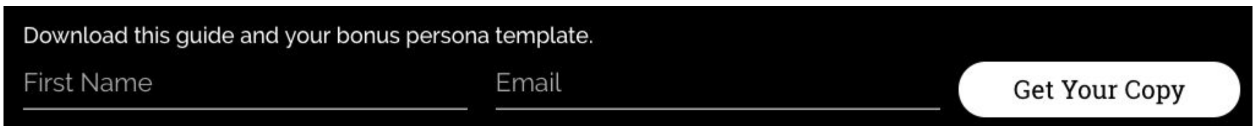
Uploading the PDF to your website is as easy as drag-and-drop with HubSpot's file manager. Info on how to upload an offer to your website in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/design-manager-user-guide-v2/how-to-upload-your-site-assets-to-file-manager.

> **Pro Tip:** Organize your folders in HubSpot by type (images, premium content, infographics, and so on) and create guidelines for everyone who uses HubSpot to reference when adding files to your system. Also make a rule that all files you upload have to have a descriptive name (not StockImage1234). This will keep your file structure clean and users happy over time.

Form
OK, now you need a form. SmartBug often recommends creating a form for each stage (awareness, consideration, and decision) of the buyer's journey and using those forms across all of your offers. This allows you to group similar offers together when reporting on funnel effectiveness.

Another option is to create a form for each type of offer: one form for ebooks, one for webinars, one for consultation/demo requests, and so on. This strategy allows you to change the questions according to the type of resource, which is sometimes necessary.

The form on *The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas* is short and simple:



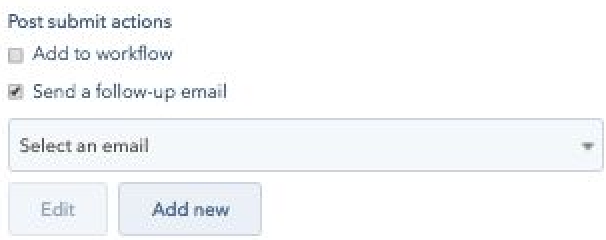
In either case, use smart fields to progressively ask questions your sales team will use to qualify the person, or that you as a marketer need to segment that lead by persona or buyer's journey stage.

Info on how to create a form and set up smart fields in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/forms-user-guide-v2.

Follow-Up Email
Leads should receive an email with a link to the offer they were interested in so that they can reference it later. HubSpot makes this easy with its "simple follow-up" email type. Info on how to create a simple follow-up email in HubSpot is available here:
https://knowledge.hubspot.com/articles/kcs_article/workflows/how-can-i-send-an-email-response-after-a-form-submission

Publish the follow-up email so that it's available to use before the next step.

> **Pro Tip:** You can't create your first follow-up email inside the email tool in HubSpot; it must be created from a landing page. If you've never created a follow-up email before, you can create a blank landing page and click on the form, and then you'll have the option to create a follow-up email from the drop-down.



Once the first follow-up email has been made, you can simplify the process by going to the email tool directly, cloning an existing follow-up email, and editing it as needed to create a new one.

Thank You Page

You could link someone straight from the form to the PDF; however, it is best practice to direct the person to a thank you page that, in turn, has a link to the PDF. This allows you as the marketer to present a secondary offer further down the funnel.

The thank you page on the personas guide offers *Mapping Content For Different Buyer Personas:*

SmartBug.

Info on how to create a thank you page in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/landing-page-user-guide-v2/how-to-create-a-thank-you-page.

> **Pro Tip:** Open the thank you page in a new tab so that the visitor can continue reading the pillar page if they wish.

Form on the Pillar Page

Once all the items for your PDF offer are lined up, go back to your pillar page and add the form to the page. On the options for the form, you'll redirect to the thank you page you created and choose your follow-up email.

> **Note:** You'll need a form module on the page, which is where the design manager comes into play. If you don't want to deal with the design manager, go with option two.

Option 2: Link to a Landing Page

If you want to instead link to a landing page, you'll still need to upload the PDF, make a follow-up email, and create a thank you page as covered under option one.

Landing Page
After everything else is ready to go, create your landing page in HubSpot.

Info on how to create a landing page in HubSpot is available here:
https://knowledge.hubspot.com/landing-page-user-guide-v2.

> **Pro Tip:** Every time you ask a lead to take an additional step, you will experience dropoff in the process. For that reason, SmartBug recommends putting the form directly on the pillar page if possible.

Link to the Landing Page on the Pillar Page
You can link from the pillar page to the landing page via a normal hyperlink; however, if you use the call-to-action tool in HubSpot, you can track the conversion rate for your pillar page, do some A/B testing on that CTA, and even see if a CTA at the top gets more clicks than one at the middle or bottom.

CTAs can be text or an image linking to the landing page; try both to see which one performs best for your pillar page. You may even want to try a hovering CTA that stays with the reader as they scroll down the page.

Info on how to create and add CTAs in HubSpot is available here:
https://knowledge.hubspot.com/cta-user-guide-v2.

CTA Tool

While we're talking about the CTA tool, let's cover what else you need it for. You'll want to create at least one text CTA and an image CTA to link to your pillar page. These CTAs will be used on blog posts and can even be used on key website pages as well.

Although the goal of your pillar page is to attract new traffic, promoting the content across your website is always a good idea to educating visitors on all the great stuff you offer.

Blogs

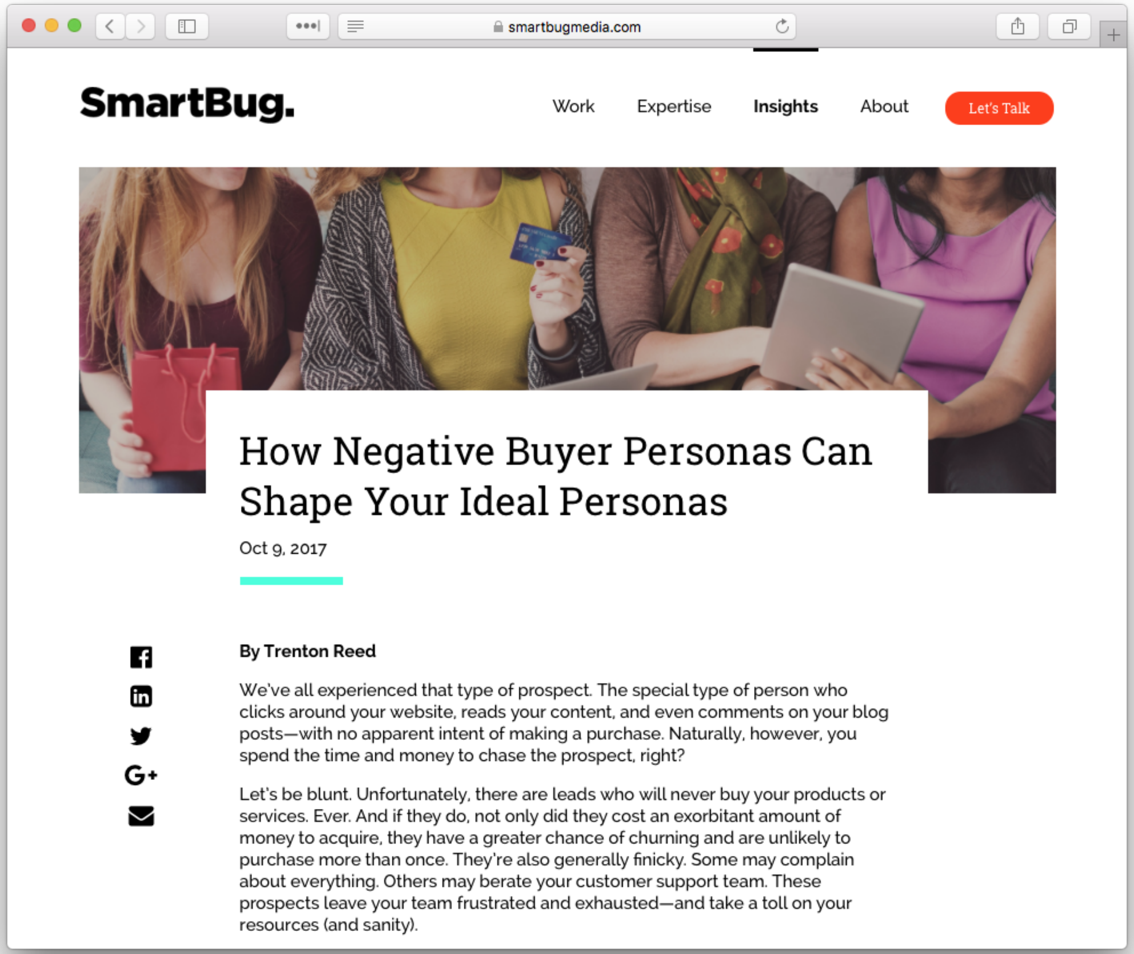
Now that the pillar page is in HubSpot, you can start to build out the blog posts that link to it. You should include at least three, but you could use as many as you want.

Remember that if you are publishing a new blog post, all of your blog subscribers will be notified. So you don't want to publish 20 new blogs all on one day because your subscribers will be overwhelmed 20 emails. Alternatively, you can space out posts using the blog schedule feature, or you could predate them so that notifications don't go out.

Every blog in the topic cluster will need at least one normal text link to your pillar page. You'll want to try an anchor text CTA (see: https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/blog-anchor-text-call-to-action-study) because these can perform really well.

The CTA on the bottom of the blog can be to your pillar page or another relevant offer as long as tightly aligns with the topic of the blog.

For *The Ultimate Guide to Inbound Marketing Personas*, one of the supporting blog posts is entitled *How Negative Buyer Personas Can Shape Your Ideal Personas*:



Info on how to publish a blog in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/blog-user-guide-v2.

Tie the Content Together in the Content Strategy Tool

Now that you've created the pillar page and the supporting blog posts, you'll want to go back into the content strategy tool and attach content to each bubble. The tool will then verify there's an internal link, and you'll be able to gather statistics about the topic cluster.

Pro Tip: Currently, the content strategy tool will only recognize text links as a successful connection—something to keep in mind as you insert links and CTAs in your blog posts.

Heatmap Software

Heatmap software, such as Hotjar, gives marketers the ability to see where and how visitors are engaging with content and how far down a webpage someone goes (especially important for these long pillar pages). Gathering and evaluating these metrics enables you to improve the pillar page over time.

Setup is as easy as installing a snippet of code in the header of your site, which can be done under Content Settings in HubSpot.

4 Promotion

You've spent much time and effort putting together your pillar page and supporting content. Now is the time to promote it!

Email

Building an opt-in email database takes time and patience, but the results are worth it in open and click rates, as well as the peace of mind that comes from knowing that you aren't spamming people.

A full email database of interested people is worth gold. Given that your new pillar page is full of amazing insights and recommendations, your email subscribers are going to want to know about it.

An email can be as simple as text saying, "We have this new resource," or it can be a fancy HTML with CSS and pretty graphics. SmartBug often sees text emails perform better, so you should consider promoting the resource to your email list twice (spread out over a few weeks or a month), once in each format.

Info on how to send emails in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/email-user-guide-v2.

Social Media

Social media is simply unavoidable at this point in the game. HubSpot makes it easy to post on your favorite channels: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google+. Your audience and the channel will dictate tone, length, and amount of posts.

You could just promote the pillar page, but ideally you should promote the pillar page and all the blog posts over time. You never know what specific topic will interest someone at a specific time.

Info on how to post on social media in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/social-media-user-guide-v2.

> **Pro Tip:** Have someone proofread your posts before they go out.
>
> **Pro Tip 2:** SmartBug recommends the 60/30/10 rule when it comes to social media posting: 60 percent of your posts should be sharing other people's content; 30 percent should be sharing your own, and 10 percent can be conversion attempts (demo requests, product pitches, and so on).
>
> **Pro Tip 3:** To keep your social media posts fresh, consider extracting snippets from your pillar page to serve as interesting social media posts (think: stats, quotes, and so on).

Pinterest and Instagram might be great places to post as well if your audience hangs out there. HubSpot doesn't currently support these platforms, so you'll need to do it old-school style.

Social Media Ads

If your social media blitz is going well, putting some advertising dollars behind it might be worthwhile. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn all have advertising options; however, Twitter and LinkedIn may be prohibitively expensive for a small test project.

To that end, try out a couple of Facebook ads and see how they do. Facebook gives you many great targeting options, and you can start with nearly any size budget.

Info on Facebook ads is available here:
https://www.facebook.com/business/products/ads.

> **Pro Tip:** If you notice a social media post performing well, consider boosting to get it out in front of more people.

Link Building / Guest Posting

Link building can be a full-time job. Seriously. And, it's part science and part art. You can spend hours and hours working on it and only get one nibble that doesn't pan out.

That being said, external links are super valuable and absolutely vital to your website. So, to stack the deck in your favor, try these tips:

1. Start with your partners. If the content you've created is valuable, they may be willing to link to it from their blog.
2. Include resources throughout your pillar page with links to other people's content. Then, after the pillar page is complete, ask those people to link back to the pillar page. Win-win!
3. Are there newsletters or blogs in your industry that would be interested in having a guest post that you would write (and link back to your pillar page)?

If you're looking for more tips on how to attain inbound links, check out this blog post:
https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/32479/32-white-hat-ways-to-build-inbound-links.aspx.

If someone says yes to linking to your content, make sure to use unique tracking URLs for the links so that you can see where your pillar page traffic is coming from.

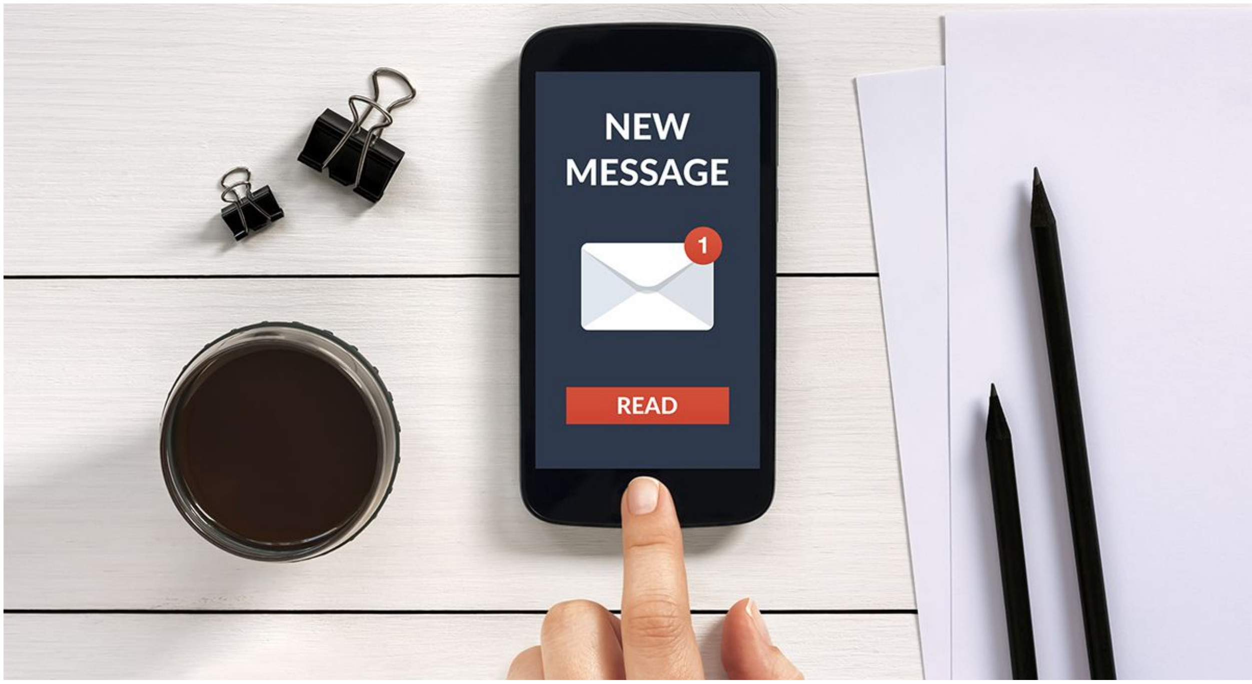
Info on creating tracking URLs in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/landing-page-user-guide-v2/how-to-create-a-tracking-url-for-a-landing-page.

News Release

A news release is an easy win for links and traffic. SmartBug uses PR Newswire for news releases; there are many other wire distribution services, such as Businesswire, Marketwired, and PRWeb.

In order to accurately attribute the traffic from the news source, make sure to create tracking URLs for every link in the release (which is usually two: one to the pillar page and one to your homepage).

Learn more about writing a great press release here: https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/press-release-template-ht.



5 Follow-Up

Lifecycle Stages (MQLs and SQLs)

For awesome sales and marketing alignment, lifecycle stages including marketing qualified leads (MQLs) and sales qualified leads (SQLs) need to be defined and agreed upon prior to beginning any marketing activities.

Often these definitions take the form of:

- **MQL:** Name, email address, in the U.S. or Canada, and some criteria such as business has “x” number of employees or business is in “y” industry.
- **SQL:** Demo or consultation request automatically indicates lead as an SQL.

You also must determine who does what when. Does sales follow up only with SQLs? Does marketing nurture MQLs? And so forth.

These definitions and responsibilities will determine what to do with your new pillar page content download leads.

The HubSpot workflow tool allows you to mark each new contact in the appropriate lifecycle stage depending on the criteria your teams mutually agreed upon. Info on how to set up workflows in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/workflows-user-guide-v2.

> **Pro Tip:** You don't need lead scoring unless your sales people are getting more leads than they know what to do with. Many companies use lead scoring because it's cool but really just need clear lifecycle stages. Skip the lead scoring unless you are drowning in leads.

Internal Email Notification

Depending on your company, you may or may not need internal email notifications when someone downloads an offer. Some marketers love seeing submissions roll in. Other marketers know that they freely can check this info in HubSpot and want an email notification to go out to the sales team only when a lead becomes an SQL.

Form notification emails can be set on the form or landing page so that an internal email address will be notified every time someone fills out that form. All you need to do is add your email address in the indicated spot.

If you want to be notified only in certain instances—for example, when a lead is an SQL or when a lead is from a company with more than 10,000 employees—workflows are your tool of choice once again. Info on setting up internal email notifications in HubSpot is available here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/articles/KCS_Article/Forms/How-do-I-send-internal-notification-emails.

> **Pro tip:** You can even set up a text notification and a follow-up task in HubSpot as well using the same workflow.

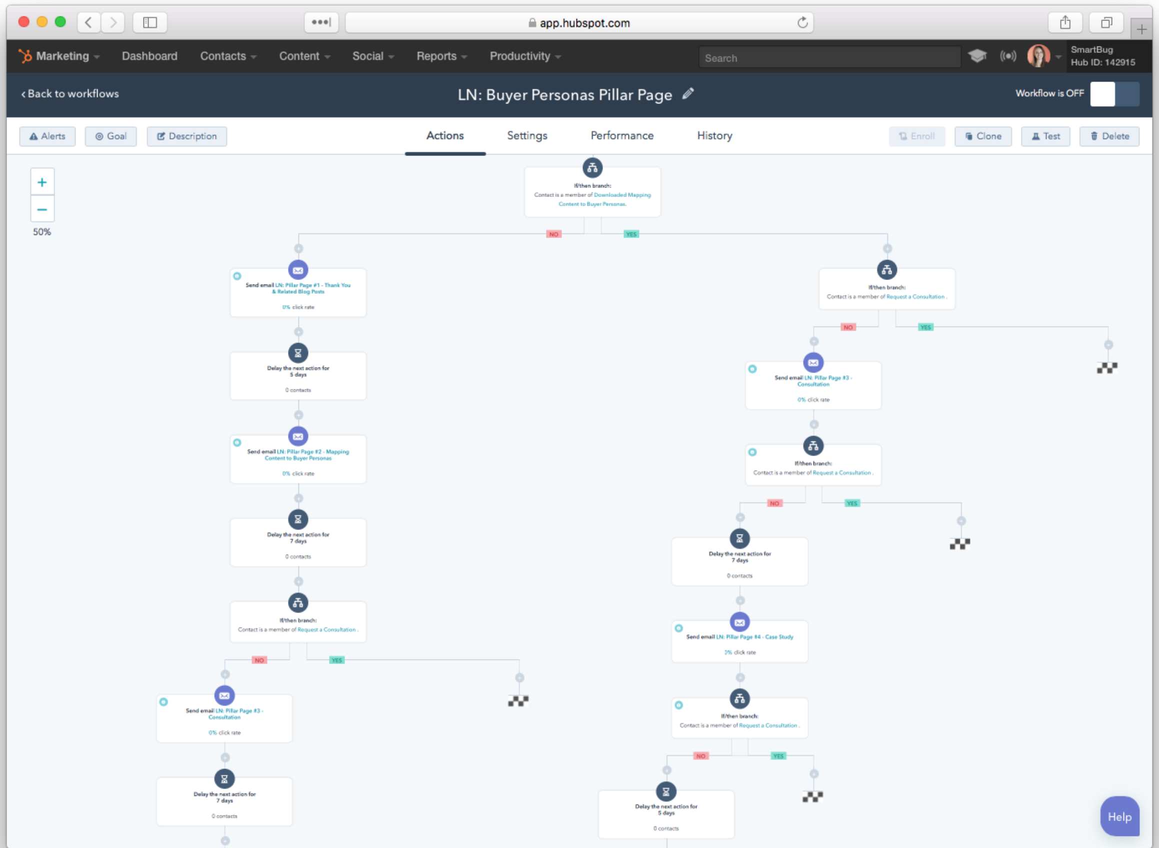
Lead Nurture

Some of your leads won't be ready for a call with sales, and that's OK. In fact, that's when inbound really shines because you aren't bugging people who aren't interested.

A lead nurture path (also called "drip emails") is a series of emails over a timespan whose goal is to continue to engage contacts with relevant and timely information.

Your sales cycle will dictate the length of a lead nurture path for your offers. In general, the longer the sales cycle, the more spread out you want your emails to be. Shorter sales cycles may need only days between emails.

SmartBug created the following lead nurture stream:



In general, the goal of a lead nurture path is to lead a contact down the buyer's journey. So if your pillar page content is Awareness, your first email(s) will be Awareness-level content (think blog posts and other ebooks on the same high-level topic). You would follow that up with a Consideration offer such as a checklist or a comparison guide, and finish with a Decision offer such as a demo or consultation request.

Lead nurtures are accomplished with automated emails created in the email tool and workflows that kick off with an enrollment criteria of filled out "x" form on "y" page.

Pro tip: Always set a goal of your workflow so that you can assess its effectiveness. Often, the goal is to become an SQL or request a demo. Remember, if someone meets that goal before entering the workflow, they won't receive any of the emails.

Also make sure to suppress customers and opportunities that the sales team are working if you don't want those contacts to get the emails in the lead nurture path. Learn more on how to suppress contacts from a workflow here: https://knowledge.hubspot.com/articles/kcs_article/contacts/how-do-i-remove-a-contact-from-a-workflow.

6 Evaluation

Campaign Analytics

The campaign analytics tool in HubSpot gives you a visual overview of how your project is performing, including sessions, new contacts, and influenced contacts.

Info on how to view campaign analytics in HubSpot is available here: https://www.hubspot.com/product-updates/in-beta-a-new-way-to-measure-your-marketing-campaigns.

Lists

When it's all boiled down, you really want to know how many leads, MQLs, and SQLs your campaign created, right?

The easiest way to report on this is by creating smart list(s) in HubSpot. A smart list will update dynamically as people meet the criteria you've defined. The other type of list is a static list, which runs only once to see who meets your criteria today. No one is ever added or removed from this type of list unless done by hand.

You could create one list based on form submission fills (which will include everyone who was already in your database, not just new contacts) and add a column to display lifecycle stage. Or, you could create one list for each lifecycle stage if you want it broken out further.

Info on how to create lists in HubSpot is available here:
https://knowledge.hubspot.com/lists-user-guide

> **Pro tip:** If you use the criteria, "filled out 'x' form" and "Lifecycle stage = MQL," you'll get people who already were an MQL before filling out the form as well as new MQLs (and you won't get people who have moved along to become an SQL). Depending on what you are looking for, you should use the "Became an MQL date" and a date range in order to get MQLs from the campaign directly.

If you have the HubSpot reporting add-on, you can create a funnel and much more. Info on how to use the reporting add-on is available here:
https://knowledge.hubspot.com/reports-user-guide-v2/how-to-use-the-reporting-add-on-in-hubspot.

Evaluate Each Component

To dig into the performance of each element of the campaign, you'll need to go into each tool separately:

- Website page
    - How much traffic has your pillar page received? Is it increasing over time?
    - If your form is directly on your pillar page, how many submissions has it received? What is the submission rate?
    - If you used a landing page, check out the number of submissions and the submission rate on that page.
    - Where is most of your traffic coming from?
    - After the campaign is running for a while, make sure to examine the ranking keywords and the inbound links under Optimization in HubSpot.
    - What links/resources are people clicking on? What's most interesting to visitors?
- Email

  - What was your open rate and click-through rate?
  - Did your text email or HTML email perform better?
- Blogs
  - How much traffic are your campaign blogs generating?
  - Where did most of the blog traffic come from?
  - What is the CTA rate for each blog?
  - Also look at keywords and inbound links on each blog.
- CTAs
  - Which of your CTAs is performing better in terms of clicks and submissions?
- Social Media
  - Which channel performed the best for this campaign (both clicks and interactions)?
  - Which message performed the best?
  - Is there a day and/or time that worked better than others?
- Lead nurture
  - How many people met the goal of the lead nurture workflow?
  - How many people clicked on each email?

Pro tip: Evaluate your metrics monthly for the first three months to optimize and improve your efforts. Some of your promotional activities will take place over time, so although there's often a boost at the beginning, you should continue to see results through the first 90 days.

Attribution Reporting

If you have the Enterprise version of HubSpot, you can also create an attribution report. This will tell you what page(s) contributed to a person converting on your offer, including first-touch attribution, last-touch attribution, and last interaction.

An attribution report allows you to see what content is getting the most "assists" so that you can focus your efforts appropriately.

Info on how to create an attribution report in HubSpot is available here:
https://knowledge.hubspot.com/reports-user-guide-v2/how-to-create-an-attribution-report

7 Conclusion

There you have it: creating a complete, cohesive content marketing strategy from scratch in HubSpot.

A few final tips:

- Don't underestimate the amount of time it will take to do the entire thing front-to-back. This is a large endeavor and, most likely, can't be done in a single weekend.
- To that end, many hands make light work. If you are able to enlist some help, whether that's internal employees or freelance writers, do it.
- If you are trying to choose between an offer that will have broad, mass appeal and a more targeted offer that will bring in less traffic but fits your buyer persona more specifically, go with the latter.
- The implementation steps in HubSpot may seem like a lot the first time you go through the entire process. It will get quicker over time, we promise.
- Get software such as Basecamp, Trello, or Teamwork to help you manage the project and stay on track.

Good luck on your content marketing journey!

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