

— 16 on 2016 —

INBOUND MARKETING PREDICTIONS

from 16 Industry Experts



ABOUT *the* AUTHOR



RAMONA SUKHRAJ

Content Marketing Manager, [@ramonasukhraj](#)

As Content Marketing Manager, Ramona approaches Marketing not only as a profession, but as a creative outlet. She has a passion for all things artistic and she strives to create content that is educational, yet quirky and entertaining as well.

Ramona has a B.S. in Marketing from the UCONN School of Business and is also a frequent contributor to HubSpot blog. Outside of IMPACT, she is a movie and pop culture buff and fierce advocate of free hugs.

Design by Christine Austin, [@ItsChristine_A](#)

TABLE of CONTENTS

- 5 **Forward**
- 6 **The New Sales Playbook** / *Brian Halligan, Mark Roberge*
- 9 **A Holistic Customer Experience** / *Brie Rangel*
- 11 **The New Definition of “Remarkable” Content** / *Arjun Moorthy*
- 14 **A More “Social” SEO** / *Erica Dube*
- 17 **Interactive Content** / *Pete Caputa, Gray MacKenzie*
- 20 **Enterprise-Level Inbound** / *Tom DiScipio*
- 22 **Artificial-Intelligence & Automation** / *Paul Roetzer*
- 25 **Sales Enablement** / *Bob Ruffolo*
- 27 **A Better Understanding of Inbound** / *Marcus Sheridan*
- 29 **Real-Time Connections** / *David Meerman Scott*
- 31 **Next-Level Personalization** / *Shawn Fitzgerald*
- 33 **Four Major Industry Shifts** / *Luke Summerfield*
- 37 **Bigger, Braver, & Bolder** / *Ann Handley*
- 39 **A New Level of Strategy** / *Kevin Jorgensen*
- 42 **Closing Words** / *Jack Carroll*

FORWARD

New year, new me.

This phrase may seem a bit cliché (*and possibly even the thing of teen-aged Instagram captions*), but in many ways, it rings true.

With every new year comes a clean slate; **a new beginning.**

For Marketers, and businesspeople in general, it often means new goals, new strategies, and exciting new opportunities to shake up their organization or industry. *2016 will be just that.*

2015 may have been the year Marty Mcfly and Doc Brown dreamed of, but in terms of Inbound Marketing, 2016 will prove to be a time of unmatched growth and innovation.

Now, you don't have to take my word for it alone. In the last few months, I've reached out to the movers and shakers of Inbound Marketing to pick their brains on what the new year will bring to our ever-evolving industry, and collected them in this book.

From the future of content to the changing relationship between Sales and Marketing, their words have been both prophetic and inspirational and I'm thankful to each of them for sharing.

So before the confetti flies or the tune of "Auld Land Syne" fills the air, use these 16 predictions to start planning your Marketing strategy for next year or simply to join the conversation. *It's sure to be a memorable one.*



THE *New* SALES PLAYBOOK

Quotes By: *Brian Halligan, Mark Roberge*



BRIAN HALLIGAN
HubSpot

Brian Halligan is co-founder and CEO of HubSpot. Prior to HubSpot, Brian was a venture partner at Longworth Ventures and a VP of sales at Groove Networks, which was later acquired by Microsoft. He has authored two books, *Marketing Lessons from the Grateful Dead* and *Inbound Marketing: Get Found Using Google, Social Media, and Blogs* which he co-wrote with Dharmesh Shah and serves on the boards of directors of Fleetmatics Group (FLTX) and the Massachusetts Innovation and Technology Exchange (MITX). Brian has been named Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year and one of Glassdoor's Highest Rated CEOs.

 [@BHALLIGAN](#)

“Next year, we’ll see Inbound Marketing really begin to rub off on the sales industry.”



“And not just because the technology and the methodology work. It’ll be because customers are demanding a better experience; a seller that understands them, their preferences, and their frustrations. Outbound sales is dying and the days of the cold calling are coming to an end. The new sales playbook will consist of a personalized approach to the buyer, and like we’ve seen proven on the Marketing side, the use of great content and insights that helps solve the buyer’s unique problems.”

Mark is Chief Revenue Officer of HubSpot Sales Products and holds an MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management. Prior to this role, he served as HubSpot's SVP of Worldwide Sales and Services from 2007 to 2013, during which time he increased revenue over 6,000% and expanded the team from 1 to 450 employees. Mark was ranked #19 in Forbes' Top 30 Social Sellers in the World. He was also awarded the 2010 Salesperson of the Year at the MIT Sales Conference. Prior to HubSpot, Mark founded and/or held executive positions at start-ups in the social media and mobile sector.

 @MARKROBERGE



MARK ROBERGE
HubSpot

“Over the last few years, we have seen organizations evolve from lightly adopting Inbound Marketing to completely transforming their Marketing strategy. These organizations, however, are finding that the exceptional experience that buyers have with their brand via Inbound is not translating into the experience these buyers have with their legacy sales processes. Legacy sales tactics are notoriously aggressive, self-serving, and spammy.”

“Modern sales organizations need to be helpful, intelligent, and personalized to the buyer’s context.”



“In 2016, organizations will look to transform their sales process so they buyers have a positive experience through their entire buying journey.”



A Holistic
**CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE**

Quote By: Brie Rangel



BRIE RANGEL
IMPACT

Brie has been helping businesses reach their goals since the early days of HubSpot and Inbound Marketing. With experience in nonprofit, SMB, enterprise, and SaaS businesses, she has a wide perspective into sensible solutions for her clients and their individual needs. As an Account Strategist at IMPACT, Brie acts as an advisor to her clients, helping them identify measurable Marketing goals and the strategies and tactics needed to achieve them. She's their day-to-day contact for all things strategy and considers their success, her own.

 [@BRIEEZYBRIE](https://twitter.com/BRIEEZYBRIE)

“In 2016, I believe Marketers will have even more of a responsibility to impact and improve the entire customer experience. From initial interest (lead generation) and the sales process (sales enablement) to delighting customers (aka retaining and upselling), smart Marketers will see the value in closing the loop and learning from meaningful prospect and customer feedback.

The traditional Marketing and sales SLA will become obsolete as the two departments learn that full integration makes the most sense for closing a sale. Marketers will also have an opportunity to lead the charge for customer feedback, such as NPS data, and use that data to improve strategy for attracting and continuing to delight customers.”



THE NEW DEFINITION OF “*Remarkable*” CONTENT

Quote By: Arjun Moorthy

Arjun Moorthy is VP of Business Development & Partner Products at HubSpot, the Inbound Marketing software leader that provides integrated tools for Marketers to generate and manage leads online. Arjun oversees the company's strategic partnership efforts, particularly with large software companies and distribution partners.

 [@JUICEMOORTHY](#)



ARJUN MOORTHY
HubSpot

“...the key to Inbound Marketing is ‘remarkable content’. But what is remarkable content?”



In 2016, “perhaps a better definition of “remarkable content” is something you offer for free which others normally charge money for...

This definition helps us realize why the eBook strategy, while still useful from an SEO standpoint, is played out. Everyone publishes eBooks with content and while some of it is still packed with insights, it's less likely that anyone charges for such material so, relatively speaking, such offers no longer seem valuable. It's time for a new type of offer.

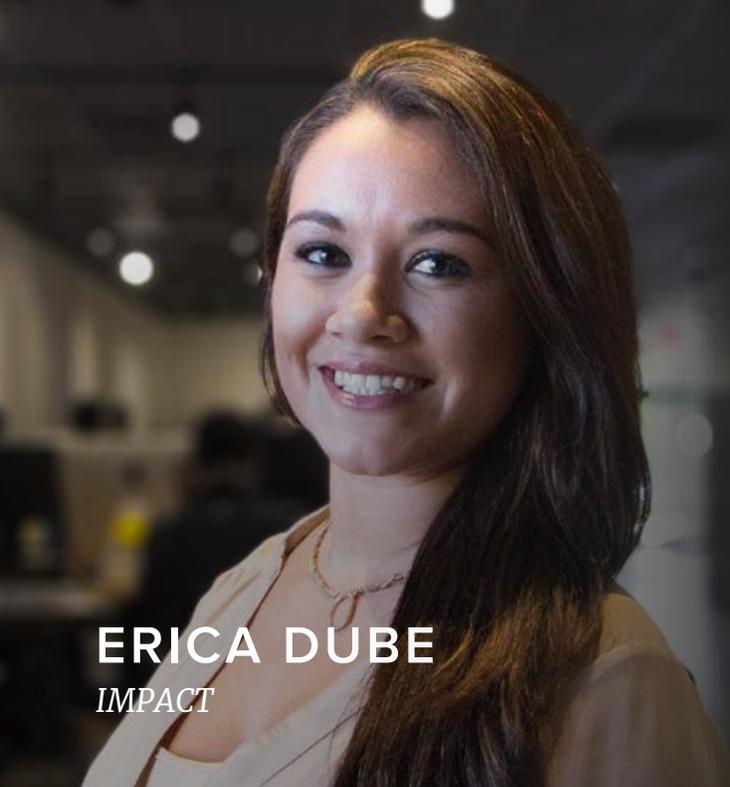
Two] things that we're experimenting with in the Agency partner program is offering prospects a portion of our professionally developed sales training program ...and a version of our highly valued Partner Benchmark Evaluation. These [interactive offers] are the new eBook.

Eventually, these strategies will also get played out... but as long as we keep this new simple definition of remarkable content in mind it'll ensure that our Marketing offers real value to prospects and customers..." ([Source](#))



A MORE “*Social*” SEO

Quote By: Erica Dube



As an Account Strategist at IMPACT, Erica is responsible for overseeing all Inbound activities for her clients, as well as the professional and intellectual growth of her team. Under her direction, her team creates unique and innovative strategies for clients to achieve success in their campaigns, and strives to find new and creative ways to help them be remarkable. She finds the relationship she builds with her clients and the dedication to their company goals one of the most rewarding parts of working in Inbound Marketing.

 [@ERICANDUBE](https://twitter.com/ERICANDUBE)

ERICA DUBE
IMPACT

“In this past year, Google and other search engines have made several updates to improve results by incorporating a more “human” element. Keeping in mind Google’s recent integration of tweets into search results and their long-standing preference for Google+ pages, in 2016, I think we’ll see social become an even bigger part of SEO.

Marketers will have to start creating content that uses attractive, click-worthy titles, instead of solely relying on the keyword research and optimization we are so used to.

Inbound has always been about connecting with your audience and understanding what they are looking for, but in upcoming years I think, we as marketers, will be able to utilize social and search tools to gather not just keywords, but more insightful data on how people browse, share, and link to content.

Changes to SEO guidelines and updates to Google's algorithm have made creating "optimized" content more and more difficult if you don't REALLY understand what your audience wants, but with the help of social, I think we can really prioritize the way they deliver the content people are looking for and improve how we get found."



Interactive **CONTENT**

Quote By: Pete Caputa, Gray MacKenzie

Peter Caputa IV is VP of Sales and founder of HubSpot's Agency Partner Program. An engineer turned Marketer turned sales executive, he joined HubSpot in 2007 and has played a key role in scaling HubSpot's revenue. Pete built HubSpot's Agency Partnership Program and manages a team of 100+ focused exclusively on helping agencies evolve their strategy, Marketing, sales and service delivery. Today, HubSpot secures 40+% of their new business from partners using the platform to deliver services to their clients.

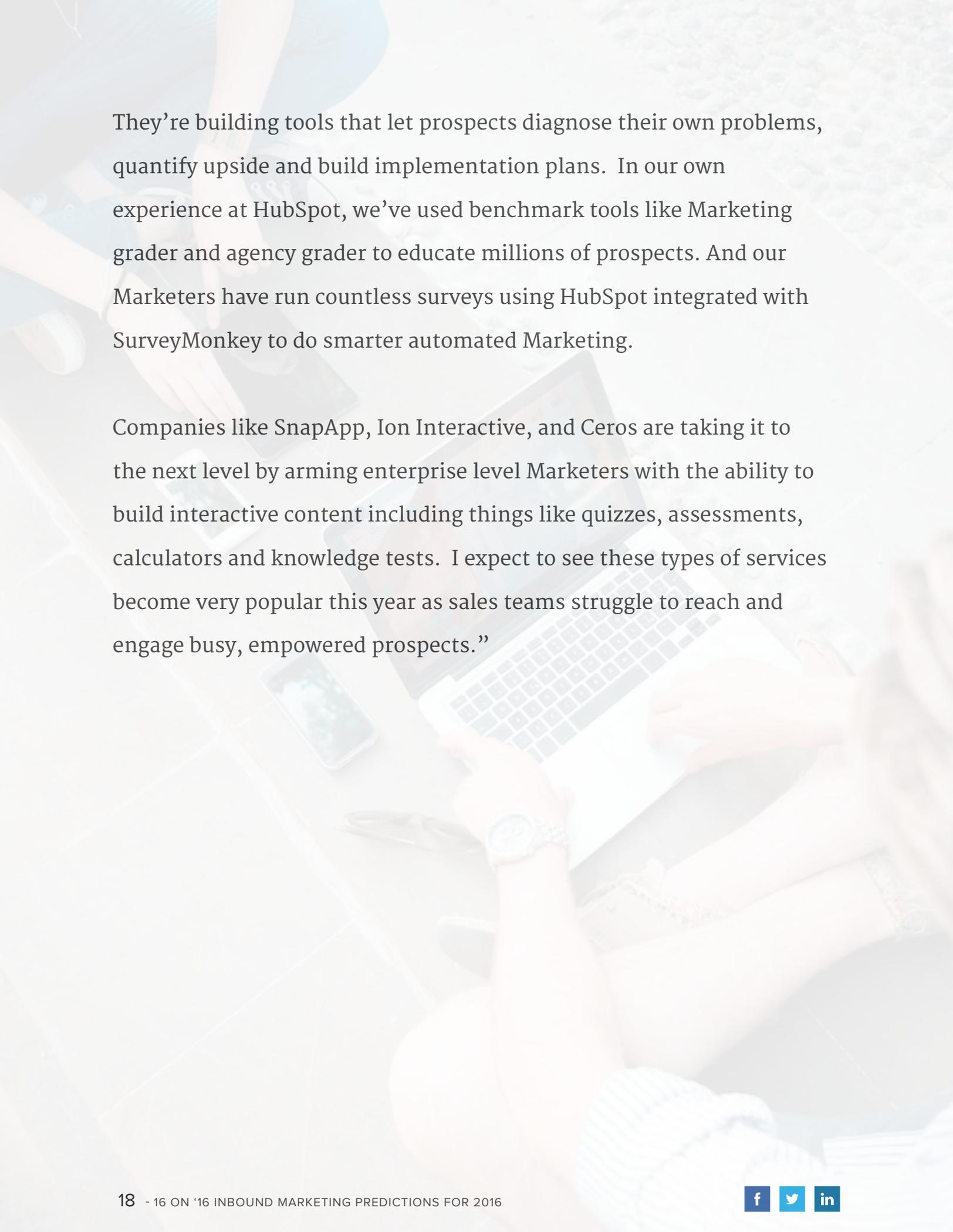
 [@PC4MEDIA](https://twitter.com/PC4MEDIA)



PETE CAPUTA
HubSpot

“Prospects are more empowered than ever before. They identify their own problems, they learn about solutions by browsing and searching, they learn what peers have done in similar situations, and they can even start to narrow down products and services that might help -- all without talking to a salesperson.

But, salespeople are still pretty necessary as buyers get closer to making purchasing decisions. Why? Prospects are not usually able to develop their implementation plan or fully calculate costs and ROI, but smart Marketers are building tools that enable prospects to do this planning and these types of calculations.



They're building tools that let prospects diagnose their own problems, quantify upside and build implementation plans. In our own experience at HubSpot, we've used benchmark tools like Marketing grader and agency grader to educate millions of prospects. And our Marketers have run countless surveys using HubSpot integrated with SurveyMonkey to do smarter automated Marketing.

Companies like SnapApp, Ion Interactive, and Ceros are taking it to the next level by arming enterprise level Marketers with the ability to build interactive content including things like quizzes, assessments, calculators and knowledge tests. I expect to see these types of services become very popular this year as sales teams struggle to reach and engage busy, empowered prospects.”



Gray MacKenzie is a co-founder at GuavaBox, an Inbound Marketing agency, and DoInbound, a project and process management tool built specifically for Inbound Marketing agencies. Gray also hosts Inbound Agency Journey, a weekly podcast sharing the growth stories of agency owners.

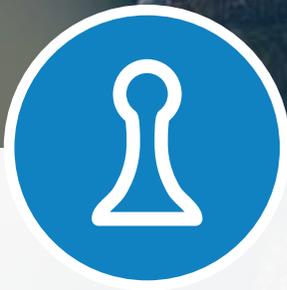
 [@SGRAYMACKENZIE](https://twitter.com/SGRAYMACKENZIE)

GRAY MACKENZIE

GuavaBox

“We’re going to see Inbound Marketing adoption continue to rise rapidly, but I believe that we’re approaching the brink of major evolution in terms of the way Inbound is executed. We’re seeing the website design process and the medium for content offers starting to change already with the growth-driven design movement and more businesses investing in interactive content offers instead of simple eBooks. As more organizations buy into the Inbound paradigm, the mediums and quality of content will take significant strides forward.

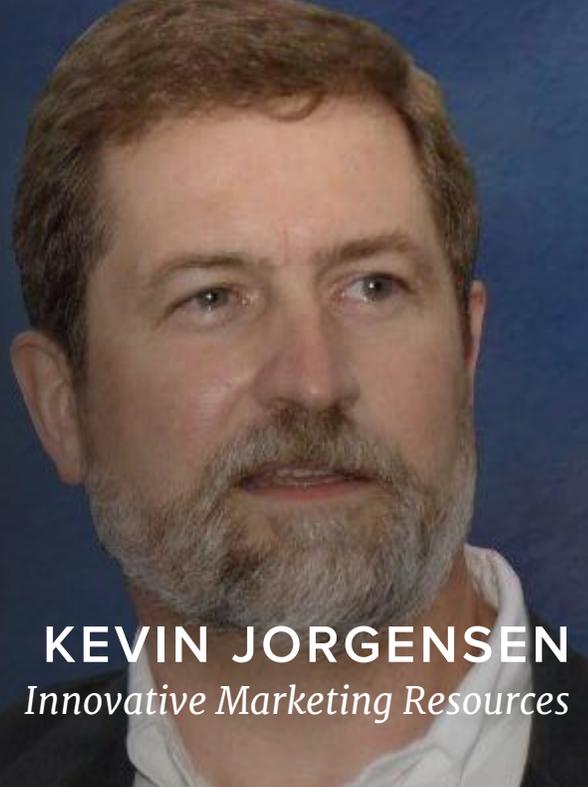
The eBook became the de facto content offer medium over the past 3-4 years, and that’s going to change quickly. Interactive tools (like ROI calculators), video, and free courses are starting to replace the downloadable eBook or white paper. I’m seeing the efficacy of these interactive content offers pay off in big ways and it’s a natural adaption to give consumers the engaging, visually-oriented types of content they want.”



A NEW LEVEL OF *Strategy*

Quote By: Kevin Jorgensen

Prior to his role as CMO at Innovative Marketing Resources and authoring the most widely used Inbound Marketing strategy, *The Content Marketer's Blueprint*, Kevin spent 15 years in the enterprise, packaged software and SaaS industries. He developed a deep appreciation for marketing and sales as business processes that can be measured and analyzed to optimize return on investment and revenue. Measurement, analysis and continuous improvement have been the guiding principles behind the growth, staffing and client services model for the agency Innovative Marketing Resources that he co-owns with business partner Joe Pettirossi.



KEVIN JORGENSEN
Innovative Marketing Resources

“Strategy will drive Inbound success in 2016 and beyond.

For the past decade, wave after wave of new technology has bedazzled customers and allowed Marketers to get by being good in silos of automation. The novelty factor, in many ways, overshadowed the need to take a comprehensive approach to attracting prospects and building relationships. You could be a great blogger or an SEO specialist or social media maven or a landing page whizz or an authority on mobile and do OK.

Being great at any one technology but lacking strategy won't work in 2016 and beyond. There's now too much demand on the buyer's attention; too much noise and too much competition for silo tactics to be effective.”

To reach new customers, build relationships with them, and grow their businesses, Inbound Marketers must take a strategic, methodical approach of market-driven improvement, using all the technology at their disposal and with deep insight into their buyers' needs and habits.



Enterprise-Level **INBOUND**

Quote By: Tom Discipio



Tom is a project management ninja and creative design guru with strong entrepreneurial underpinnings and a love for helping businesses succeed. As the CSO and Co-Owner of IMPACT, Tom engages in and shares Bob's vision of building the BEST Inbound Marketing agency. With his passion for business development and an incredible team surrounding him, Tom would say he's never really worked a day in his life at IMPACT.

 [@TOMDISCIPIO](https://twitter.com/TOMDISCIPIO)

TOM DISCIPIO
IMPACT

“With the launch of iOS 9, Apple introduced a new set of apps that are changing the way people experience the web on mobile. These apps are protecting users from seeing paid content and / or advertisements.

This tells me that major players in the pay-per space are more likely to begin shifting their budgets towards Content Marketing and Inbound efforts. This means that along with SMBs and a couple enterprise companies being the only implementers of Inbound, we're going to see a notable uptick in those mid-market and enterprise-level companies adopting the same strategies and tactics to get back in front of those mobile users they've lost through paid media.”



Artificial-Intelligence **& AUTOMATION**

Quotes By: Paul Roetzer

Paul Roetzer is founder & CEO of PR 20/20, author of *The Marketing Performance Blueprint* (Wiley 2014) and *The Marketing Agency Blueprint* (Wiley, 2012), and creator of Marketing Score.

 [@PAULROETZER](https://twitter.com/PAULROETZER)

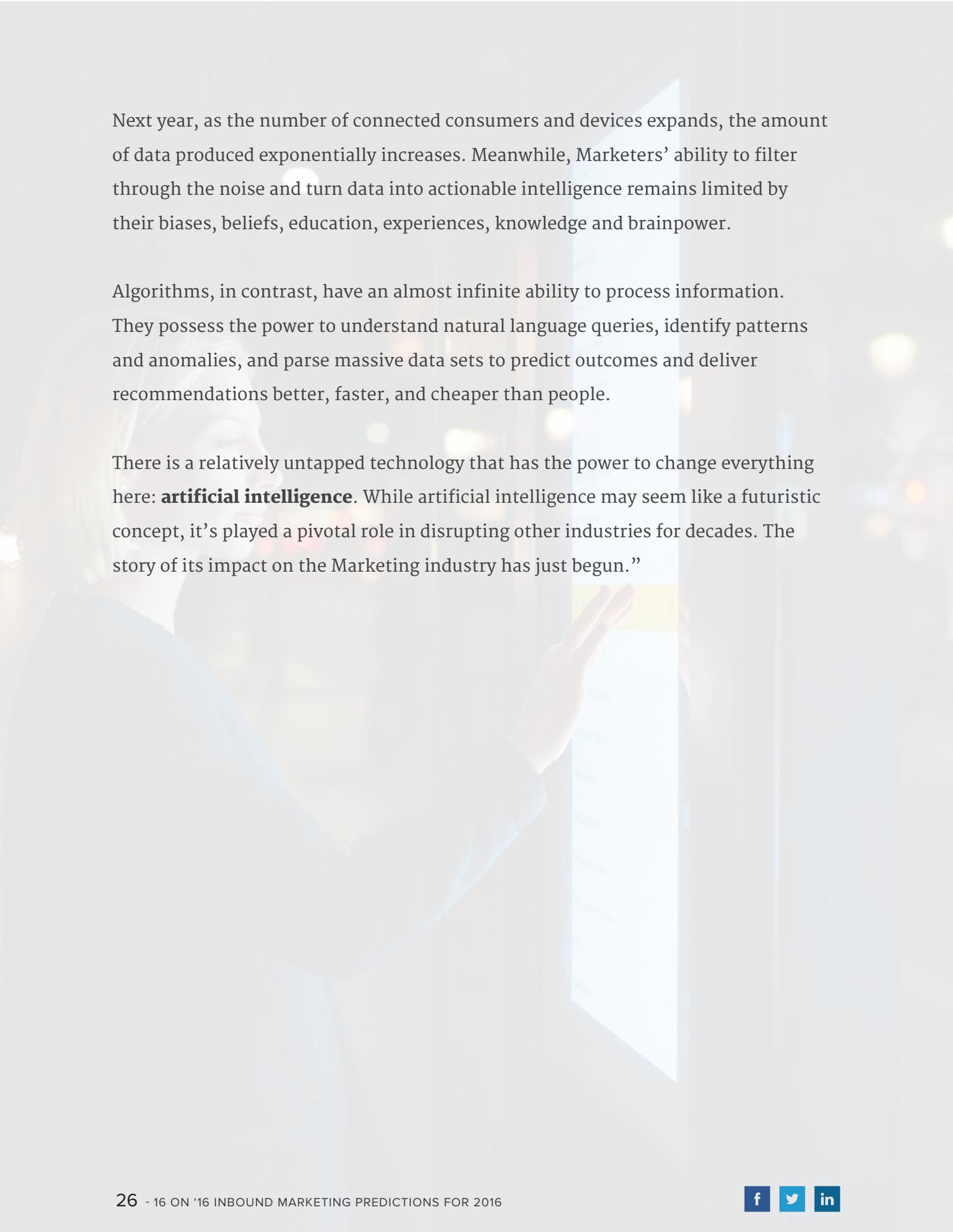


PAUL ROETZER
PR 20/20

“In 2016, Marketing automation, a key component of Inbound Marketing success, will become increasingly intelligent.”

 TWEET THIS

Automation technology has the ability to expand the value and impact of your content, capture lead intelligence, improve lead-to-sale conversion rates, drive repeat purchasing, and, most important, enhance the overall customer experience. However, the technology we see today is elementary when we consider the possibility of what comes next.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue blazer, is shown in profile, interacting with a large digital screen. The screen displays various data visualizations, including a bar chart and a line graph. The background is a blurred office or conference room setting with warm lighting.

Next year, as the number of connected consumers and devices expands, the amount of data produced exponentially increases. Meanwhile, Marketers' ability to filter through the noise and turn data into actionable intelligence remains limited by their biases, beliefs, education, experiences, knowledge and brainpower.

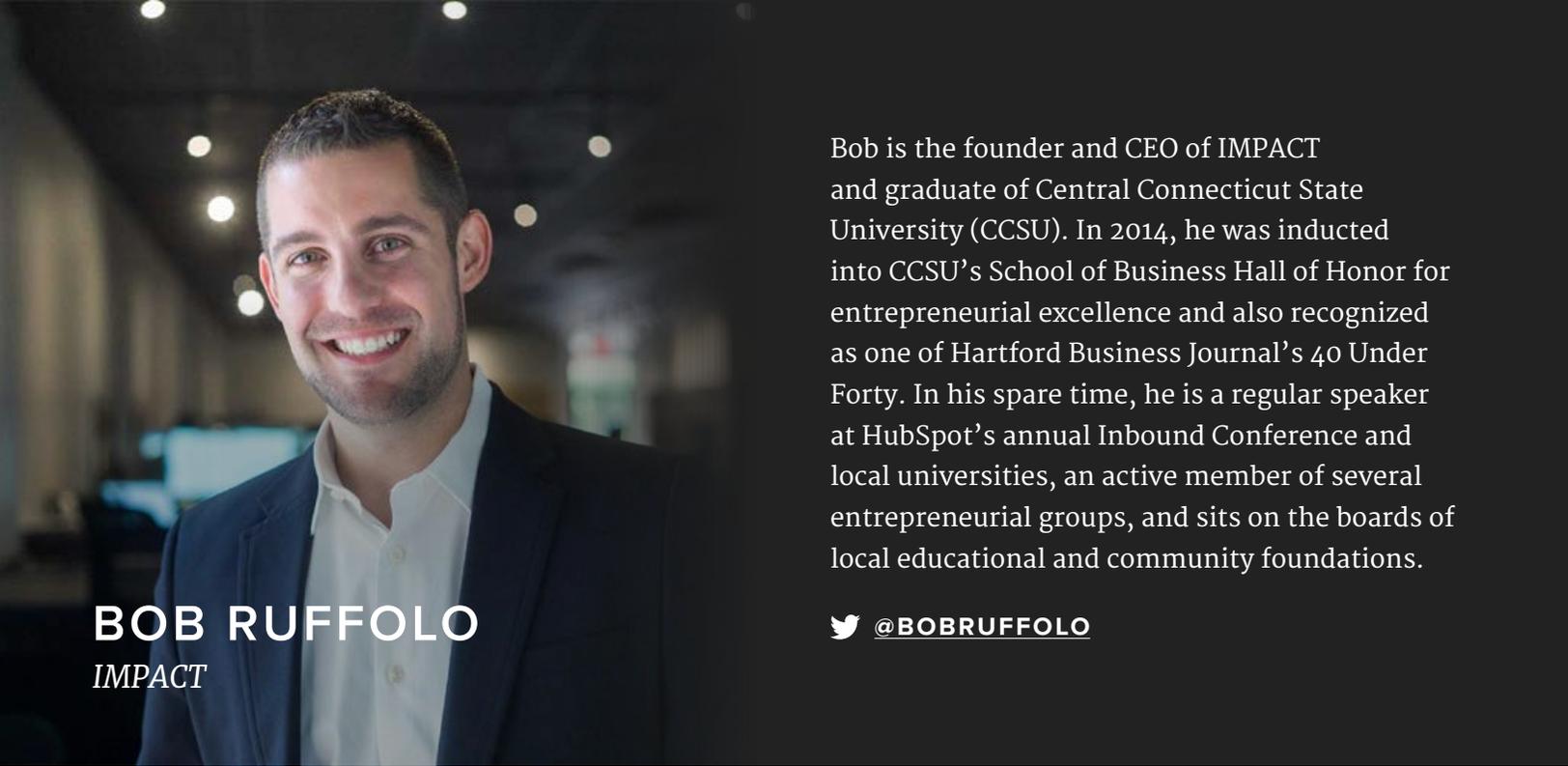
Algorithms, in contrast, have an almost infinite ability to process information. They possess the power to understand natural language queries, identify patterns and anomalies, and parse massive data sets to predict outcomes and deliver recommendations better, faster, and cheaper than people.

There is a relatively untapped technology that has the power to change everything here: **artificial intelligence**. While artificial intelligence may seem like a futuristic concept, it's played a pivotal role in disrupting other industries for decades. The story of its impact on the Marketing industry has just begun.”



SALES *Enablement*

Quotes By: Bob Ruffolo



Bob is the founder and CEO of IMPACT and graduate of Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). In 2014, he was inducted into CCSU's School of Business Hall of Honor for entrepreneurial excellence and also recognized as one of Hartford Business Journal's 40 Under Forty. In his spare time, he is a regular speaker at HubSpot's annual Inbound Conference and local universities, an active member of several entrepreneurial groups, and sits on the boards of local educational and community foundations.

 [@BOBRUFFOLO](https://twitter.com/BOBRUFFOLO)

BOB RUFFOLO
IMPACT

“I think the biggest shift in 2016 will be Sale Enablement. Unlike the past, when many would say Inbound Marketing “doesn’t work” because of unqualified leads or poor sales alignment, Inbound Marketers going to be helping their sales team close the leads they bring in. With the help of the advancements made to the HubSpot CRM and Sidekick, more Inbound leads are going to close than ever before and businesses are going to see more ROI than ever before.”

In late 2009, Sheridan started his sales, Marketing, and personal development blog—The Sales Lion. He has since grown its brand to be synonymous with Inbound and Content Marketing excellence while being featured in multiple industry publications, including the New York Times where he was referred to as a “web Marketing guru.” Today, when Sheridan isn’t giving riveting and passion-filled keynotes around the globe or consulting with businesses and brands, he generally finds himself on an adventure with his wife and 4 children.

 @THESALES LION



MARCUS SHERIDAN
The Sales Lion

“In 2016, I believe the biggest issue in this space will be two-fold:

1. Getting cross-organizational buy-in for Inbound Marketing (specifically with Sales and Management Departments)
2. Getting Sales Departments to not only appreciate Inbound for what it is, while also embracing it and helping to make it a culture within the company.

Marketers need to get much better at truly communicating what Inbound is, what its impact can be on an organization and on each individual (especially in Sales), as well as what can also happen if the organization refuses to embrace Inbound and the digital consumer of today.”



REAL-TIME *Connections*

Quote By: David Meerman Scott



DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT
Freshspot Marketing

David Meerman Scott is an internationally acclaimed sales and Marketing strategist who has delivered high-energy presentations on all seven continents and in 40 countries to audiences of the most respected firms, organizations, and associations. He has also authored 10 critically acclaimed books (including 3 international best-sellers) for professionals seeking to generate attention in ways that grow their business. Titles include *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*, *Newsjacking*, and his newest hit, *The New Rules of Sales & Service*.

 [@DMSCOTT](https://twitter.com/DMSCOTT)

“I’m fascinated by the convergence of sales and Marketing via Inbound. Today buyers dictate how they choose companies, products, and services with online content driving action. In 2016, Inbound Marketing will be how a company communicates to many buyers at once, while Inbound Sales is communicating to one buyer at a time. Both will optimized through great content and real-time connection.”



NEXT-LEVEL *Personalization*

Quote By: Shawn Fitzgerald

Shawn Fitzgerald is the Vice President of THOMASNET's Digital Marketing group, founder of the Results-Powered Marketing team, and a mechanical engineer. The THOMASNET RPM team works with industrial businesses to generate leads, penetrate new markets, and target growth goals. As HubSpot's 2014 Agency of the Year and Diamond Partner, Shawn enjoys continuing the 110+ year THOMASNET tradition of generating ways to get industrial buyers and sellers together by bringing the latest Inbound Marketing approaches to US manufacturers.

 [@SFITZGERALD9](https://twitter.com/SFITZGERALD9)



SHAWN FITZGERALD
Thomasnet

“The name of the game in 2016 is personalization.”

 **TWEET THIS**

“The recent changes to Adwords targeting via email, the further value of people over businesses in SEO, and the continued march toward specific targeting in social platforms have created new opportunities. Inbound Marketers will have more opportunities than ever to deliver the exact content that personas want when they want it. By staying helpful, these new tools will yield results and foster more engagement.”



FOUR *Major* **INDUSTRY SHIFTS**

Quotes By: Luke Summerfield



Luke wakes up each morning excited to inspire others to reach peak performance. He does this at HubSpot as the Program Manager in the Partner Growth Team, advising businesses, writing and speaking.

 [@SAVVYLUKE](https://twitter.com/SAVVYLUKE)

LUKE SUMMERFIELD

Hubspot

Certain industries are starting to get more and more flooded with content and it can be pretty overwhelming. Because of this, I think we'll see a few different shifts in 2016.

1. Content Depth and Niche

To help cut through all of the content clutter and grow loyal audiences, we will likely see blog posts that are much longer, more in-depth and focused on a very specific question or topic.

At HubSpot [we did an experiment](#) to test the effectiveness of different types and lengths of blog posts. What we found is that typically longer blog posts performed better than shorter ones. After all, Google really likes content with lots of “meat” on it.

2. The Rise of Marketing Assets

In 2016, we will see an increased focus on building more Marketing assets into your websites. Think of these as extremely useful tools, directories, assessments, etc. that are so valuable your visitors would be willing to pay for them, yet you offer them for free.

An example of a great Marketing asset we have at HubSpot is Marketing Grader. This is an assessment tool that will review your business' online presence and give you a report of what you're doing well and where you need to improve. This has proven to be not only very useful for our users, but also has helped drive thousands of HubSpot leads over the years.

3. Making Paid Advertising More Inbound

Another shift we will see more of in 2016 is the integration of paid promotion tactics within an Inbound program.

Until recently, there seemed to be a very clear line between Inbound and Outbound activities, with Advertising landing on the Outbound. Smart Marketers, However, are finding “Inboundy” ways to use paid promotion to help promote amazing content to people who really care about a particular topic. Think of paid promotion as adding “fuel to the fire” on top of all your other Inbound efforts.

4. Growth-Driven Design

My last 2016 prediction is that we will see more programs merging both Inbound Marketing activities and website continuous improvement activities such as Growth-Driven Design (GDD). In recent years, we're starting to understand that to hit peak performance, your website should not be "set-it and forget-it." Instead, you should be proactively making impactful improvements to maximize your results. GDD's combination of driving visitors to your site, then having an optimized site to convert them into leads is what's required to hit peak performance



Bigger, Braver, & Bolder

Quote By: Ann Handley

Based in Boston, Massachusetts, Ann Handley is a Wall Street Journal best-selling author, keynote speaker, and the world's first Chief Content Officer. Cited in Forbes as the most influential woman in Social Media and recognized by ForbesWoman as one of the top 20 women bloggers, Ann Handley is the Chief Content Officer of MarketingProfs, a training and education company with the largest community of Marketers in its category. She is also a monthly columnist for Entrepreneur magazine, a member of the LinkedIn Influencer program.

 [@ANNHANDLEY](https://twitter.com/ANNHANDLEY)



ANN HANDLEY
MarketingProfs

Marketers fully grok that whatever technology or tactics they are using -- Marketing automation or SlideShare, Periscope or puppet shows -- are only as good as their story.

They realize that to succeed in Content Marketing in 2016 means telling bigger, braver, bolder stories. And they realize that it's up to them to drive that point home within the organization.

What do I mean by that “bigger, bolder, braver” stuff?

A **bigger** story puts your company in the larger context of what people care about.

A **bolder** marketer upends the status quo, telling a story that hits on specific challenges your audience has (but no one else is talking about in the right way for a certain audience).

Gutsier, **braver** tone of voice and more ripped writing is a differentiator in a sea of mediocre content.”

“You can use your bigger, bolder, braver content to convert more people into your squad”



“...to align them with your company on a level that’s bigger than what you sell or what you do.

(And not everybody is going to want to be part of your squad. Which is exactly the point.)”



Closing **WORDS**

Quote By: Jack Carroll



JACK CARROLL

SalesLinks

Jack Carroll brings more than 30 years of strategic, hands-on, sales optimization experience to the amazing field of Inbound & Content Marketing. The last 25 years have been dedicated to technology and B2B consultative selling. He is a dynamic strategist, teacher, and motivator who has directly mentored and coached over 7,000 people. He has been retained by more than 105 companies, to help them improve revenue generation and profitability through better sales strategy and performance improvement.

 [@SELLING3POINT0](https://twitter.com/SELLING3POINT0)

“I’m betting the farm (my company) on Inbound Marketing in 2016. Specifically, I’m betting the farm on Inbound Marketing AND HubSpot for 2016 and for whatever more time remains of my professional life.

I have been doing what I do (sales strategy, consulting, coaching, and training) for 30+ years; mostly for divisions of BIG companies, and well-funded start-ups in the tech industry. In all of those years, other than the advent of broadband internet in the late 90s and early 2000s, I have never seen a bigger potential “catalyst for business change” than the tandem force of “Inbound and HubSpot.”

It seems to me as if they present the potential for the perfect storm. They are altering the way that Sales and Marketing have operated, by going their separate ways for my entire career in the trenches and the boardrooms of American business.

I am absolutely convinced that Inbound Marketing and HubSpot present a golden opportunity to be THE unifying force that many of us have been anticipating for years; the force that will finally unite Sales and Marketing under one roof.

The early adopters are in the Inbound and Hubspot foxholes now. I met many of them in Boston at INBOUND and saw the gleam in their eyes.

That being said, I should probably revise my first sentence to “I’m betting the farm on ‘Inbound Sales & Marketing’ as it finally happened through the power and evolution of “Inbound & HubSpot.”



WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR PREDICTIONS FOR 2016!

You've seen what the pros have to say, what do you think the new year entails for sales and marketing? Use the button below and *leave your comment on our blog.*

[SHARE MY PREDICTIONS](#)

LET'S GET STARTED

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We're showing professionals like you what works, and what doesn't in today's digital landscape. Let's strategize about some ways to take your marketing efforts to the next level.

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