

ESSENTIALS FOR





Introduction

If you're reading this, chances are pretty good that you understand the importance of digital marketing. You “get” that traditional marketing methods are becoming both ineffective and expensive.

You also know that by neglecting to market your business on the web, you're going to be left behind by your competition.

That's where inbound marketing steps in. According to HubSpot, “inbound organizations are four times as likely to rate their marketing strategy as effective.” Whether your business is just getting started with inbound marketing or you just want to brush up on the basics, the essential tactics listed in this guide will serve as a solid foundation for developing effective inbound marketing strategy.



Buyer Personas

Many will argue that buyer personas are the most important part of inbound marketing. After all, you need to know who you're targeting before you develop your strategy. According to HubSpot, "Buyer personas (sometimes referred to as marketing personas) are fictional, generalized representations of your ideal customers. Personas help us all — in marketing, sales, products and services — internalize the ideal customer we're trying to attract, and relate to our customers as real humans.

Having a deep understanding of your buyer persona(s) is critical to driving content creation, product development, sales follow up and really anything that relates to customer acquisition and retention.

You could have a single buyer persona or multiple. Either way, do your research into what attributes make up your ideal customers. What is their role? What are their goals and challenges? Where do they hang out? What is their personal background? What are their shopping preferences? You can get this info from online research, interviews and other methods, but make sure you get it right, because you're building your content around it.



Keywords

Next: keywords. What is a keyword, you may ask? A keyword is a word or phrase that person enters into a search engine like Google or Bing, or a social media site like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. Why build a keyword strategy? Because customers use them to find you!

While search engines are getting smarter and topics are slowly replacing keywords in importance, the latter will always have a place in marketing strategy. So how do you know which keywords will get the most relevant people to find your business? It starts with research.

Keyword research is an ongoing process that should be followed closely. It gives valuable insight in terms of industry trends and product demand.

Comprehensive keyword research can help a business grow its organic traffic and save you from spending too much money on pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns such as Google AdWords.



Website Optimization

Once you've chosen your keywords, you can increase your website's chances of ranking for those keywords. **Search engine optimization (SEO)** is about doing just that. In order to get found, you should aim to be near the top of the first page or near the top of the first few search engine results pages for your keywords.

While you should keep this principle in mind, it is worthwhile to learn a bit more about SEO in order to better optimize your site. Be sure to avoid so-called "black hat" tactics like [keyword stuffing](#), however.

Google suggests that you design your website for visitors, and not for search engines. The home page of your site should be clear and intuitive. It should be clear.

Even though on-page SEO accounts for only about 25% of how search engines score and rank your website, it's worth tackling first since it can be improved quickly.

OFF-PAGE SEO



Refers to your site's overall "authority" on the web, which is determined by what other websites say about your site. This can take time to improve.

ON-PAGE SEO



Refers to how well your website's content is presented to search engines. This can often be improved immediately.



Content Creation

So what's the best way to attract more visitors? Content creation!

Creating valuable, remarkable content that other websites will naturally want to link to in their own content is a great way to increase your website's inbound links. In addition, you can improve your chances of attracting inbound links by sharing your content in social media and optimizing it for search results so it can easily be found.

Blogging platforms like **HubSpot** have made publishing content on the web easier than ever.

Regardless of the platform you choose, a well-constructed blog should have the following key components:

- An attention grabbing title
- Images and/or videos
- Well-written and formatted text
- A Call-To-Action (CTA)

While it's a great place to start, blog content isn't the only type of content you can be creating. Consider producing longer-form content items like eBooks, whitepapers, or research reports that can be used as lead generation offers for your calls-to-action. Also consider non-text based offers such as how-to videos, webinars, slideshows, etc.



Social Media Participation and Advertising

Marketers who can leverage social media to help distribute business content and increase the overall community of advocates for their business **can experience significant growth**. Social media allows your customers and potential customers to communicate directly with you and your employees online, and it allows interesting content to spread quickly.

While new social media tools launch every day, most businesses really only need to focus on the major players at first: Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

If it makes sense for your business, Snapchat and Instagram are two platforms zooming in popularity.

Unfortunately, platforms like Facebook are making it harder for businesses to place themselves in front of target audiences in an organic way. On the flip side, Facebook and LinkedIn have made it easier to target specific personas and groups through their advertising platforms.

For companies that are serious about building their website traffic, taking advantage of Facebook and LinkedIn advertising gives businesses **a cost-effective way to generate leads**. You only pay as much as your target audience interacts with your ads. When combined with email marketing, you'll have a potent way to attract your target personas to your most valuable content!



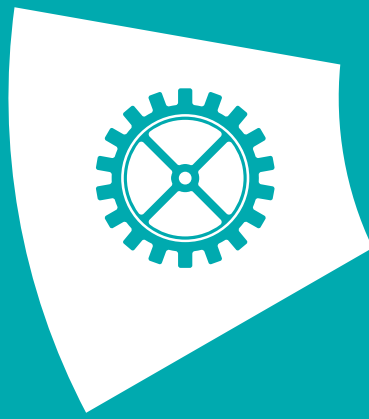
Traffic Conversion

By now, you should have already launched your blog, optimized your site for search engines, and started participating and promoting your content via social media. If it's been several weeks, by now you should start to see a spike in traffic to your website.

There's only one problem. All that traffic to your site isn't leading to any new business!

People are visiting your site, but those visits aren't leading to new customers — or even new sales leads. So, what do you do?

Simple. Focus on conversion. Focus on converting more of your website visitors into sales leads. To do this, decide on a compelling offer for your customers, create a call-to-action to promote your offer, and launch a landing page with a form for visitors to submit their information to obtain the offer. Finally, test, measure and iterate the whole process.



Lead Nurturing

According to MarketingSherpa, 73% of your leads are not sales ready.

Companies that build relationships with their leads over time have the greatest success in turning leads into customers by staying top-of-mind until the lead is ready to buy.

Lead nurturing is the process of developing that relationship with your potential customer by sending targeted, relevant, and valuable messages to them in a timely manner. The end goal is to get your leads to “raise their hand” and self-select into further engaging with your business. Forrester Research found that companies that excel at lead nurturing are able to generate 50% more sales-ready leads at 33% lower cost-per-lead.

An important part of leveraging social media for business is to understand what conversations are happening online related to your industry and recognizing where you should respond.



Mobile Optimization

The mobile device is the new TV. It's beating out television the same way television beat out radio back in the day. There are 2 billion smartphone users in the market and that number is expected to keep increasing globally.

That's a huge opportunity for marketers; it's absolutely critical to ensure your website and content are responsive and provide a good user experience on mobile.

So what should you worry about when optimizing, specifically? Emails, CTAs downloads and videos are the top four. You want everything to be viewed correctly and your prospects have easy opportunities to engage.



Analysis & Refinement

Now that you have all the right inbound marketing strategies in place, it's time to make all of them as efficient as they can be. Your main goal here is to find the best way to use all the techniques we've already discussed to get found online and generate new customers.

Here are five steps for analyzing and refining your inbound marketing strategies:

- Implement an analytics program: In order to analyze, you need the right program in place.
- Identify opportunities: Figure out what you want to improve.
- Set a metric for success: Your metric should be quantifiable and involve a set timeframe.
- Refine: Do less of what doesn't work and more of what does.
- Evaluate: Determine if you've met your success metric and act accordingly.

With the right analysis and refinement process, you can continue to make improvements that have a short-term and long-term effect.

Conclusion

In the end, the concept of inbound marketing might seem difficult and daunting. But by tackling each of these essentials, you can make it more manageable and start generating results. By addressing your target personas' pains, go forth and conquer with inbound marketing to generate more sales qualified leads and, ultimately, more customers!

**Don't have the time to implement
inbound marketing at your company?**

Find out how we can help with a free 30-minute consultation.

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