

Introduction to
**INBOUND
MARKETING.**



noboundsdigital

What is **INBOUND MARKETING.**

Inbound marketing is about using marketing to bring potential customers to you, rather than having your marketing efforts fight for their attention. Sharing is caring and inbound marketing is about creating and sharing content with the world. By creating content specifically designed to appeal to your dream customers, inbound attracts qualified prospects to your business and keeps them coming back for more.

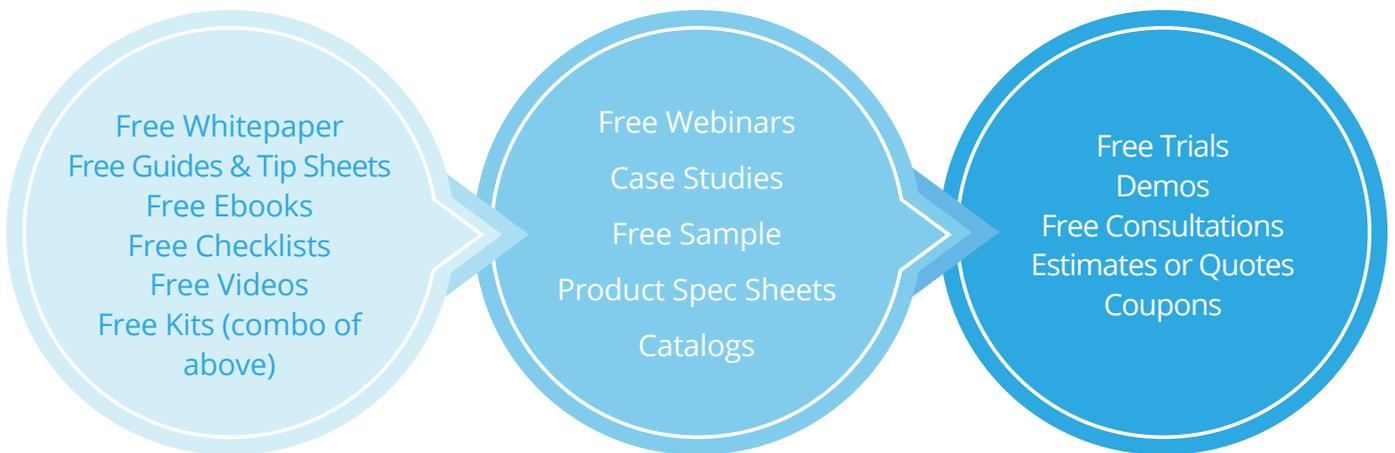
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WHAT IS INBOUND MARKETING?

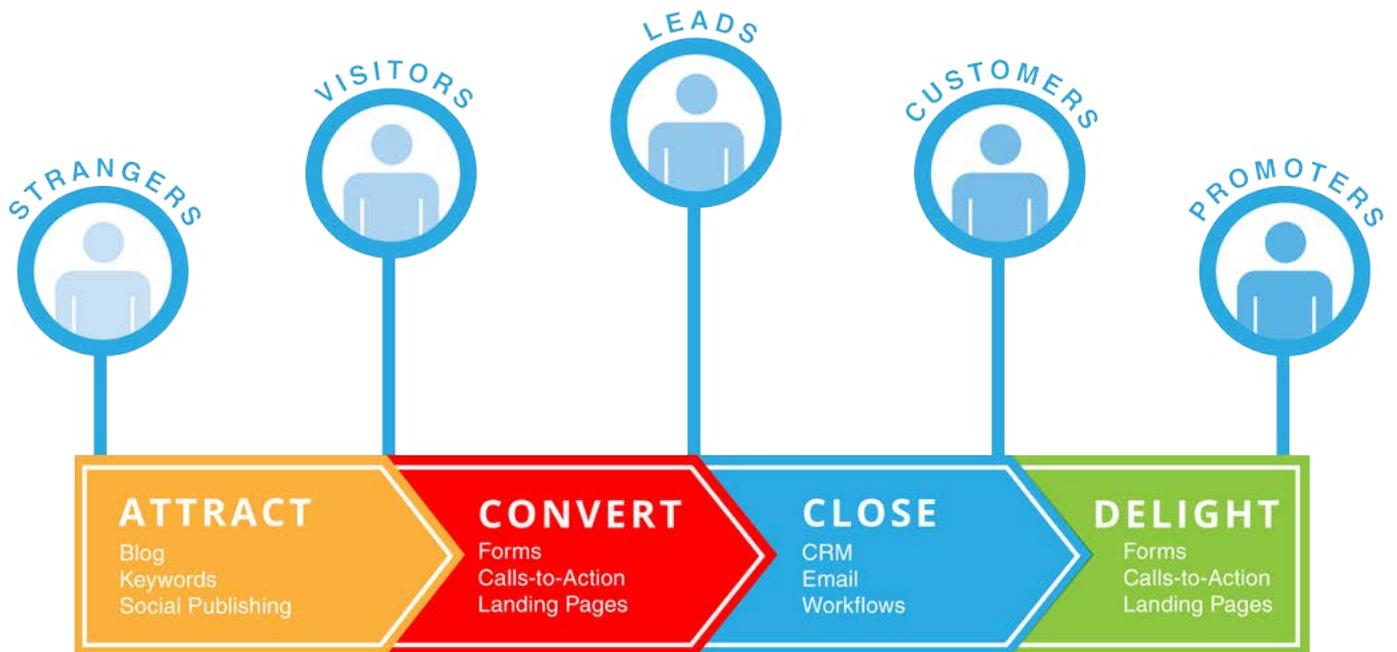
Are you finding that your marketing efforts aren't as effective as they once were? Or do you just need another channel to find new business?

Inbound marketing is about attracting potential clients who have self-selected themselves. Let me explain...

If you're running a direct marketing campaign, you're likely targeting a group that you believe is interested in your products or services. Inbound is even more targeted because you are attracting prospects who are necessarily looking for solutions somewhere along your sales cycle or, as Hubspot explains it, the buyer's journey.



If someone searches for your product or service on Google, which they are no matter whether you are manufacturing products for the aerospace industry or managed care services for seniors, you want to show up front and center and have content that compels the prospect to learn more about you.



THE INBOUND METHODOLOGY.

The inbound methodology can be best described as the process of turning strangers into leads, leads into customers, and customers into brand promoters. There are four stages in this process, each requiring a different approach.

- Attract
- Convert
- Close
- Delight

Stage 1: Attract.

This is where the difference between inbound and outbound marketing shows the most. In outbound marketing, even the most precise marketing efforts have some element of “spray and pray.” In inbound marketing, the focus is on the quality, not quantity - by defining an audience of people who are interested in your products or services and that you serve best. To define that audience and tailor the content to their liking, we create buyer personas.

What is a buyer persona?

You need to know exactly who you're trying to attract to get the best results in the Attract stage. A buyer persona is an imaginary person who best describes your ideal target: their sex, age, occupation, marital status, etc. In addition to demographic information, the most effective buyer personas include a psychographic profile including what their typical day at work and at home looks like.

Here's an example buyer persona for a purchasing agent:

Purchasing Agent Alex



I am a...

Purchasing agent looking for low total cost of ownership

Internal Notes

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Roles | Purchasing agent, young married, dual income no kids, enjoys travel. |
| Goals | Purchase products and services with a low total cost of ownership, achieve other business goals just as first to market, become the purchasing manager. |
| Challenges | Slow job growth rate, 2%, makes promotion opportunities rare, time constraints to research best product options. |

Demographics

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Age | Late 20s to early 40s. |
| Income | The median annual wage for buyers and purchasing agents was \$58,520 in May 2014. |
| Education | The vast majority of employers require buyers and purchasing agents to have a bachelor's degree. Most entry-level positions require some form of on-the-job training. Certifications, through Next Level Purchasing or the American Purchasing Society, are common. |

Story

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Story | <p>Being a purchasing agent is a 40 hour a week, sometimes more, desk job though there is some travel to trade shows and meetings with suppliers. Purchasing Agent Alex is the one phone and email every day with suppliers, potential new customers, colleagues in the purchasing department, and coworkers in other departments who has submitted purchase orders. While Alex works in a conventional, sometimes bureaucratic work environment, he does work mostly independently and has authority to make decisions depending upon the size of the purchase.</p> <p>As a purchasing agent, Alex prides himself on his integrity, attention to detail, and ability to work with others in and out of his organization.</p> <p>Purchasing Agent Alex usually doesn't have many responsibilities outside of work but enjoys traveling or going out to dinner with his wife and spending time with friends.</p> |
|--------------|---|

Once you've created buyer personas, you have the information that you need to craft content and other marketing assets appealing to them.

- What are their goals in life and at work?
- What are the problems they are facing and how could your product or service help them save time or money?
- What questions might they have about the product?

Now that you've got that covered, it's time to get on with the Attract stage.

One of the most successful ways to attract potential customers at this stage is blogging. If you don't already have a blog on your company's website, it's time to make one. Here you'll post information that's relevant to your buyer persona. Not convinced? Consider these statistics:

- B2B marketers that use blogs receive 67% more leads than those that do not.
- Marketers who have prioritized blogging are 13x more likely to enjoy positive ROI.
- By 2020, customers will manage 85% of their relationships without talking to a human.
- Companies who blog receive 97% more links to their website.
- Blogs have been rated as the 5th most trusted source for accurate online information.

Source: <http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/business-blogging-in-2015>

At this stage, you aren't advertising your products or services just yet but building awareness for the problems that you solve or even more general issues that your buyer personas face.

Content may be King, but promotion is Queen! To get your content in front of your buyer persona, you'll need to drive targeted traffic to it using search engine optimization, social media marketing, and email marketing among other strategies to promote your content.

Stage 2: Convert.

Now that you've attracted people with your content, it's time to convert visitors into leads. A lead is a potential sales contact that you have their email, phone number, or some other means of communicating with them.

How often and at what places do you give strangers opportunities to become leads? Chances are you should have more opportunities than you do!

One of our first steps with any website is to audit the existing content on a website, determine whether someone is in the awareness stage, decision stage, or ready to make a purchase if they were viewing that information, and make sure that there is an appropriate offer. "Get a quote" is a great call to action on your services page but not so much on your careers page.

Stage 3: Close.

A lead on its own doesn't have much value unless you nurture it right. In the Close stage, your goal is to turn leads into customers. At this point, you're nurturing your lead to the point of purchase. This is the process of winning over leads that aren't ready to close the deal yet and hopefully turning them into customers.

Using CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software can make this stage easier by keeping track of your leads, analyzing their behavior, and assessing the right time to close. We use the free Hubspot CRM, <http://hubs.ly/H03nYzm0>, and recommend it to our clients.

Stage 4: Delight.

Finally, the Delight stage turns your customers into promoters. Your customers are your best sales agents. Treat them right, keep your company top of mind, ask for referrals and you'll get the best conversion rates of any channel hands down.

With inbound marketing, the sales cycle doesn't stop when someone becomes a customer. The final goal is to delight your customers to the point where they'll share your content on social networks, forward your website to a vendor, or help promote your company in another ways. At this stage you should send occasional emails tailored to your customers interests, engage with them on social media, promote products they might be interested in based on their previous purchases, and so on.

■ Cold-hearted cold-calling needs to stop.

There is a reason why there are hundreds of memes about how much telemarketers suck. People don't like being hassled, and they don't like wasting time on things that are of zero interest to them. Instead of making them resent your company, thrill them with great content they'll happily hit the share button for.

■ Why should my company switch to inbound?

A picture is worth a 1000 words, an infographic is worth at least 3500. Here are the differences between inbound and outbound marketing in a nutshell:

INBOUND vs. OUTBOUND marketing

What are the main differences between these two marketing concepts?

Customer-oriented

Choosing techniques to help customers get what they want and need.

Two-way communication

Interactive communication with customers through social networks and other media channels. Feedback is sought and appreciated.

Cheaper

Leads generated through inbound marketing cost 62% less than outbound marketing leads.*

Permission-based

Customers choose company's content by following its social media profiles, visiting its blog or website, etc.

Valuable content

Customers are offered interesting and relevant content in form of white papers, infographics, blog posts, e-books, etc.

Marketer-oriented

Choosing techniques most convenient for the marketer.

One-way communication

Communication is one-way, no feedback.

More expensive

Leads generated through outbound marketing cost 62% more than inbound marketing leads.*

Interruptive

Advertisements interrupt customers in some way - TV commercials, telemarketers, spam, etc.

No valuable content

There is rarely any content valuable to customers. Focus is on advertising products and/or the company, not on entertaining and/or educating customers.

*Source: Hubspot

■ You caught my attention, what's the next step?

Let's learn more about your strengths and weaknesses online. Register for a no obligation site audit today.

NO BOUNDS.

Honestly.