



# INBOUND MARKETING

HOW IT'S DONE AND WHY IT WORKS

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*in Language You Can Understand*



marketveep  
MARKETING MADE HUMAN



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# Introduction

If you've ever made a cold call or spent a fortune on an advertisement, you've probably thought to yourself, "There has to be a better way to do this."

TV, radio, and print ads are mostly ignored; cold calls are met with skepticism at best, and the old marketing playbook as a whole doesn't seem to work in this age of information and big data.

The term "inbound marketing" is accredited to Brian Halligan—the co-founder and CEO of HubSpot. Although it didn't become a buzzword until the 2010s, inbound marketing has been in practice for decades, maybe even centuries. We just didn't have a name for it yet.

Inbound took off in the digital age because it matched up well with people's online habits. People crave useful information; they always have and likely always will. As a result, marketing has almost become a simple matter of placing useful information where your customers can find it when they need it. Instead of seeing an ad or receiving a cold call, customers can convert on their own time while doing research online.

In other words, it's easier, less expensive, and more effective to  
***let customers find you on their own.***

# Inbound is Different than Traditional Marketing

The best way to understand inbound marketing is to compare it to outbound marketing. Outbound, or “traditional,” marketing is probably already familiar to you. It includes television advertisements, print advertisements, billboards, telemarketing, door-to-door sales, networking at trade shows, and even sending email blasts. Digital advertising also goes under the outbound umbrella, though it can still be a valuable tool for some businesses.

Outbound marketing encompasses any marketing effort in which a company initiates an interaction with a customer. **Outbound marketing is interruptive by practice.**

When you do inbound marketing, you let the customer initiate the interaction online. People do still respond to traditional advertisements, but most will look online when they need to find an answer to a question or solve a problem.

Instead of interrupting people’s lives with cold calling and ringing the doorbell, inbound marketers place digital content online and **let customers engage on their own**. This is done strategically over multiple channels using the content you’ve produced. Content is hosted on blogs, websites, social media pages, and even online publications.

The term “content” can be used in a broad sense. It may represent a written blog post, a video, a social media post, a downloadable eBook, or even a warm marketing email. Once a visitor engages, you give them a chance to become a lead through a conversion opportunity, such as a contact form, a button, or even a chatbox.

**68% of inbound marketers believe their strategy is effective, and 1/3 of marketers think outbound marketing is overrated <sup>1</sup>.**



# The Inbound Marketing Methodology

Like any business strategy, inbound marketing has a structured plan of action.

This is called the **"inbound marketing methodology."** As described by HubSpot, the four stages of the inbound marketing methodology are :

**"Attract," "Convert," "Close," and "Delight."**

Each stage of the methodology is designed to convert a buyer to the next stage. Conversions occur when someone views your content, clicks a button, fills out a form, contacts you, shares one of your social media posts, or otherwise interacts with your business.

## BUYER PERSONAS

To make the methodology more effective, inbound marketers develop buyer personas. Buyer personas are semi-fictional representations of your ideal customers. Most companies have multiple buyer personas, but the number you'll have will depend on your business and whom you sell to.

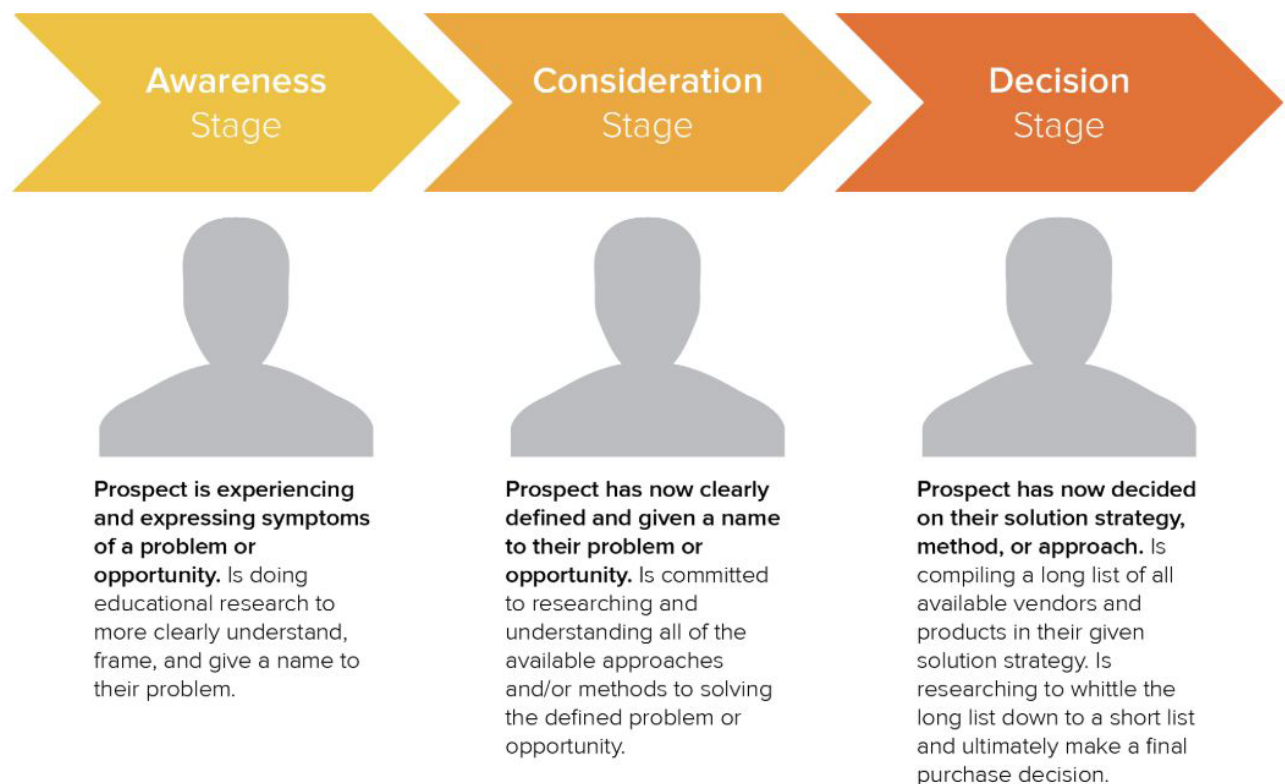
A buyer persona is more than a demographic profile, however. When creating buyer personas, you also consider customer motivations, patterns of behavior, and goals in addition to information like age, gender, and income. The more detailed you get, the better off you'll be.

Once you have buyer personas, you can craft all of your marketing materials with them in mind. They become your target audience. You can also segment your leads based on buyer personas so that the right messages always get sent to the right people.

# THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

Inbound marketing also takes the buyer's perspective into account. Their experience is called "the buyer's journey." It's the organic process buyers go through to become aware of a business, evaluate its services, and make a purchase. There are three stages of the buyer's journey:

- **Awareness Stage:** The buyer realizes they have a problem.
- **Consideration Stage:** The buyer defines their problem and searches for ways to solve it.
- **Decision Stage:** The buyer compares solutions and chooses one.



Ideally, you want to be the one to help your buyer define their problem and find a solution (the solution being your product or service). By doing so, your buyer will progress through the inbound methodology naturally.

Each stage of the methodology has a set of strategies that work best. You may already be familiar with strategies like blogging and email marketing. What you may not know is how they fit into inbound marketing, and what that looks like in practice.

# Inbound Marketing in Practice

It's crucial to recognize where each strategy, and each piece of content, fits into the methodology. For example, if someone is looking for information online, they usually won't want to look at a product comparison or pricing information just yet.

In this eBook, you'll learn how each strategy fits into the inbound marketing methodology and how they work.

## ATTRACT:

### Reach the right people

When creating content for this stage of the methodology, remember that you aren't trying to market your business directly. In many cases, you won't want to mention your business at all. People at this stage aren't necessarily looking for a product or service to purchase; they're looking for help, information, or entertainment.

The attract stage is all about getting your content in front of the right people and building trust. In doing so, search engines and social media will become your new best friends, as these are currently the best ways to get found online. With only a website, a blog, and a few social media handles, you're ready to start marketing!

**Content marketing costs 62% less than outbound marketing, but it generates more than 3X as many leads <sup>3</sup>.**

## Here are the strategies you should employ:

### BLOG POSTS

Blogging is like the bread and butter of inbound marketing. Each post helps you rank for relevant search engine results and educate your audience. You can blog about any topic you think might be pertinent to your prospective buyers but remember: Each blog post should be written for their direct benefit, not necessarily your own.

It's usually a good idea to blog on a schedule, even if you can only produce a few articles per month. Blogging can be slow to gain traction when you're starting. This causes some businesses to abandon their blogs soon after starting, but don't let it discourage you.

Some of your posts may fare better than others, but blog content tends to compound. It will remain online for as long as your website exists. The more you blog, the more opportunities you'll have to get eyes on your website. You can even share your blogs on social media or via email to increase traffic.

### SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

If you want your blogging strategy to be effective, you need to couple it with an SEO strategy. Some parts of SEO are technical and require the talents of a web developer, such as backlinking and web page design. However, there are other strategies that any content writer can incorporate.

When you write blog content, pick out the topics and keywords your buyers are searching for. Write your blog posts with these in mind.

To get relevant traffic on your website, you want to rank on the first page of Google's search results for a few of the most relevant keywords and topics. You'll need keyword tracking and on-page SEO software to do this, but the benefits are worth it.



## SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Love it or hate it, social media is here to stay. However, you may not wish to use every social media site. Identify the platforms that are most relevant to your business and claim handles on them using your company name. Consider which platforms your buyer personas are using. For example, some B2B businesses may wish to use LinkedIn but not Facebook or Twitter. Ensure that your company pages are branded and consistent, so there's no confusion about who you are and what you represent.

When posting to social media, share a mix of your content and relevant content from other sources. Use hashtags to attract the right attention. It may take you some time to get followers, but if you're sharing good content often, you'll gain them. Once you've amassed some followers, you'll get more views and conversions on your content.

## WEBSITE DESIGN

If your website isn't attractive and easy to use, visitors won't spend that much time on it. Thankfully, you don't need to break your budget to get a great website. Websites that are built for conversions don't need too many bells and whistles. You can achieve great results with an attractive design, a few well-placed buttons and forms, some sharp text, and a responsive navigation bar.

To get the best results, you should start creating your website, design it to convert visitors, and use it as the centerpiece of your digital marketing campaign.

You'll also need to choose a content management system that works for you. The most popular content management system in the world is WordPress, but you can also build a website on HubSpot. If you use HubSpot for your other marketing needs, your website can integrate with every strategy.



# CONVERT:

## Turn visitors into leads

For marketers, the conversion stage is where the magic happens. After viewing some of your content online, a visitor has decided to click on a button and give you their contact information. They have now been converted into a lead.

To get someone to convert, you need to give them an incentive for doing so. Often, that incentive will be a content offer, which is a more in-depth piece of content than, say, a blog post. But you can also offer them a free analysis, a product demo, a consultation, or a simple means of contacting you. Whatever you choose as your conversion opportunity, make sure it's something your ideal customer would want.

**Here are the necessary components for converting leads:**

## CALLS-TO-ACTION

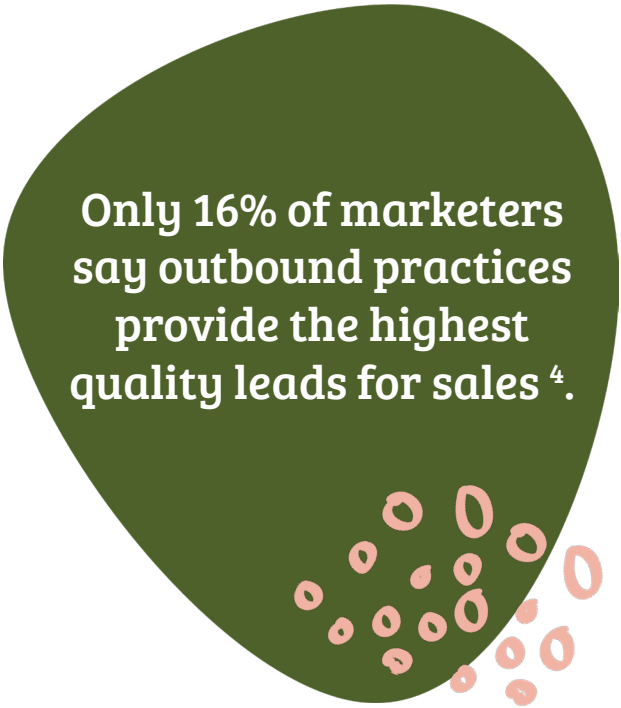
In its purest form, a call-to-action, or CTA, is a button that can be just a link or even plain text, but “calls” out for the user to complete an action. For example, if you go to the New York Times website right now, you’ll see a CTA in the top right that says, “Subscribe Now.”



CTAs have become so customary on websites these days that you probably don't even notice them anymore, but they're powerful tools.

The language within the CTA should provide a clear example of what will happen when you click. A CTA that says, “Click Here” won't be very compelling. But a CTA that says, “Get Our Latest Report” might be. Typically, a CTA will lead to a landing page that contains a form to fill out.

You can create simple CTAs like the ones mentioned above or more complex CTAs that feature images, graphics, or even GIFs and videos. Experiment with your CTAs. Whichever type gets the most clicks in its context is the one you should stick with.

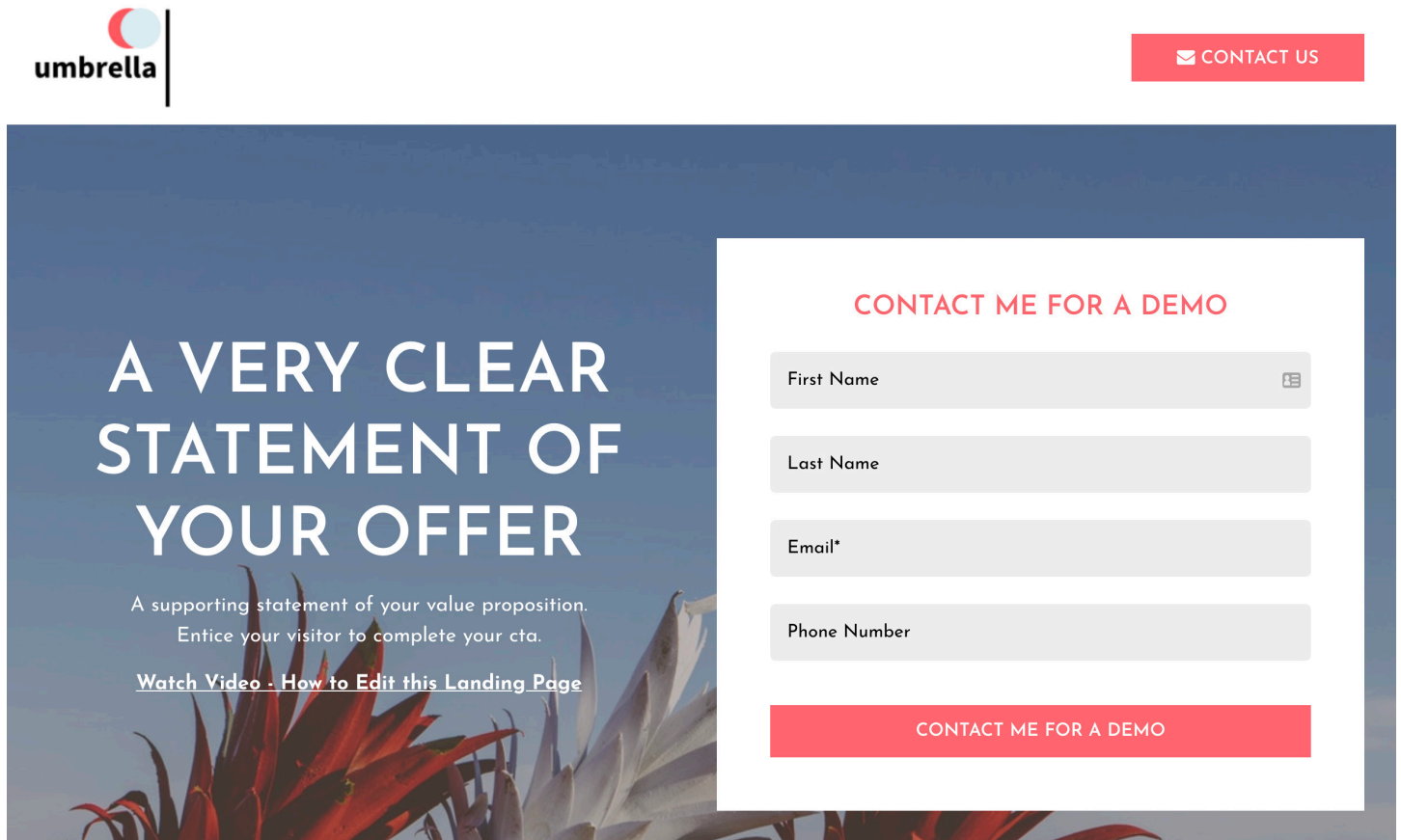


**Only 16% of marketers say outbound practices provide the highest quality leads for sales <sup>4</sup>.**

# LANDING PAGES

Landing pages are like regular web pages, but they are designed for a specific purpose: to capture contact information. Typically, a CTA will lead to a landing page with a content form neatly presented alongside some informative text and images. Unlike other web pages, website navigation is disabled to encourage the visitor to fill out the form.

For example, here's what one of the landing page templates available with HubSpot <sup>5</sup> looks like.



The screenshot shows a landing page for 'umbrella'. In the top left is the 'umbrella' logo, consisting of a red and blue circle and the word 'umbrella'. In the top right is a red button with a white envelope icon and the text 'CONTACT US'. The main content area has a dark blue background with a close-up image of a red and white flower. On the left, the text reads: 'A VERY CLEAR STATEMENT OF YOUR OFFER' in large white letters, followed by 'A supporting statement of your value proposition. Entice your visitor to complete your cta.' and a link 'Watch Video - How to Edit this Landing Page'. On the right is a white form titled 'CONTACT ME FOR A DEMO' in red. The form contains four input fields: 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email\*', and 'Phone Number'. At the bottom of the form is a red button with the text 'CONTACT ME FOR A DEMO'.

The landing page should provide the visitor with a clear explanation of what they'll get by filling out the form and why it benefits them. Everything you put on your landing page should be geared to achieve your overall goal of getting someone to submit the form. You can get creative on your landing page with both branding and messaging.

## CONTACT FORMS

Contact forms may seem simple enough, but they require you to make some foundational choices. First, you need to identify how much information you need from your visitor and why. If they're signing up for a blog subscription via email, you probably only need a first name, last name, and email address. But if they're reaching out for an inquiry, you may want to find out who they are.

Fields like, "What best describes you?" and "How can we help you?" help segment your contacts and score your leads. But keep the length of your contact form in mind. If the visitor is trying to access a content offer, they may not want to tell you their entire life story.

If you use HubSpot, you can also create smart forms. These forms change depending on who is viewing them. If someone who had previously filled out a form is revisiting your site, you don't want to ask them for the same information. A smart form will automatically insert different form fields so you can gain new lead intelligence when they fill out another form.

## CONTENT OFFERS

If you want one of your visitors to fill out a contact form, you have to offer them something in exchange. Content offers are a great way to capture leads during the awareness stage. They aren't pieces of sales material. They're filled with information that your visitors can use whether they buy from you or not.

Content offers can take many forms. Some of the most popular formats are eBooks, infographics, checklists, templates, and how-to guides. Some businesses create interactive online tools that visitors can use after they fill out a form, such as website graders, SEO checkers, or blog topic generators.

# CLOSE:

## Turn leads into customers

At this stage, sales and marketing teams need to work together. Just because a visitor has become a lead doesn't mean the marketer's job is over, and even though a lead hasn't become a customer doesn't mean a salesperson's job hasn't started yet.

Converting leads into customers requires lead segmentation, and identifying those leads that are sales-qualified. Using smart CRM, marketers can identify sales qualified leads by enrolling them in email workflows and seeing how they respond. For example, if a lead receives an email for a free demo or consultation and they sign up, it's fair to say they are sales-qualified. They are then handed off to the sales team.

**When sales and marketing teams work together, companies see 38% higher sales win rates<sup>7</sup>.**

# Here are a few of the strategies marketers can use to help salespeople:

## Sales Collateral

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Sales collateral that can boost sales and maximize conversions includes video content (e.g., webinars, how-tos), case studies, sales PDFs, testimonials, white papers, FAQ sheets, and sales decks.

## Aligned Messaging

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Transparent pricing, quick responses to sales insights/requests, and cross-departmental communication will result in more qualified leads for your company.

## Email

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Marketers can use email to direct leads down the sales funnel, readying them for an encounter with a salesperson. Some of the most effective email collateral includes email sequences, workflows, newsletters, surveys, promotions and content offers.

## Lead Segmentation

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Marketers can segment leads based on various criteria (persona, lifecycle stage, NPS score, level of engagement) so the sales team is well-equipped with the data they'll need to connect with a lead and convert them into a customer.

## A Shared CRM Platform

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A shared CRM platform helps promote sales and marketing alignment by providing common access to a common tracking/reporting system, product info, and customer histories.

## CRM Workflows

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Automated CRM workflows take much of the legwork out of tasks like segmentation, identifying qualified leads, following up with prospects, and dividing leads into different buckets based on their behavior and their persona.

## Agile Campaigns

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By keeping their campaigns agile, marketers can accommodate feedback from the sales team and make changes on the fly.


# DELIGHT:

## Turn customers into promoters

Marketing doesn't end when a lead becomes a customer. Regardless of your business, your existing customers can be some of your best sources of new revenue. If you offer a service, you can market to customers to move them to a higher tier. If you sell a product, you can market them add-on features or service plans.

But delighting customers is more than marketing. It means providing them the types of responses they'd expect from a company they trust. Customer support and customer engagement are crucial, but you can also expose your positive company culture to garner additional interest and stay top of mind. What's more, if your customers truly believe in your business, they may promote you on their own.

**Here are a few strategies you can use to delight customers:**



**Gartner Research estimates that companies can increase revenue by as much as 20% by marketing to existing customers <sup>8</sup>.**

## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Today, there are plenty of examples of how businesses use social media to gain a name for themselves. For example, Wendy's is notorious for its sarcastic responses, and JetBlue uses Twitter as a customer service platform.



Other businesses use their social media accounts to generate brand awareness and show off their company culture. Engaging with and responding to your customers is an easy way to delight them.

## SMART CONTENT

If your customers need to login via your website to access your product or service, you don't want them to see the same thing a new visitor might see. Using smart content, you can greet them and route them directly to your essential services, such as your login page or a customer support chat window. Additionally, you can feature upgrades, add-ons, or other offers they might be interested in.

## EMAIL OFFERS

When you're doing inbound marketing, you send different types of emails to different types of leads. The same is true for your customers. Delight your customers with email updates about fun things your team is doing. Send them offers for add-ons and keep them aware of any changes or updates to your products or services.

## ONLINE CUSTOMER SUPPORT

Most people will avoid a phone call if they can, which is why people love online customer support. If you don't have the luxury of having a chat window open at all times, there are numerous online chat services available to help you handle customer questions, including chatbots.

You can also accept email queries, set up a system for support tickets, or go the old-fashioned route and create a hotline (as long as the number is on your website).



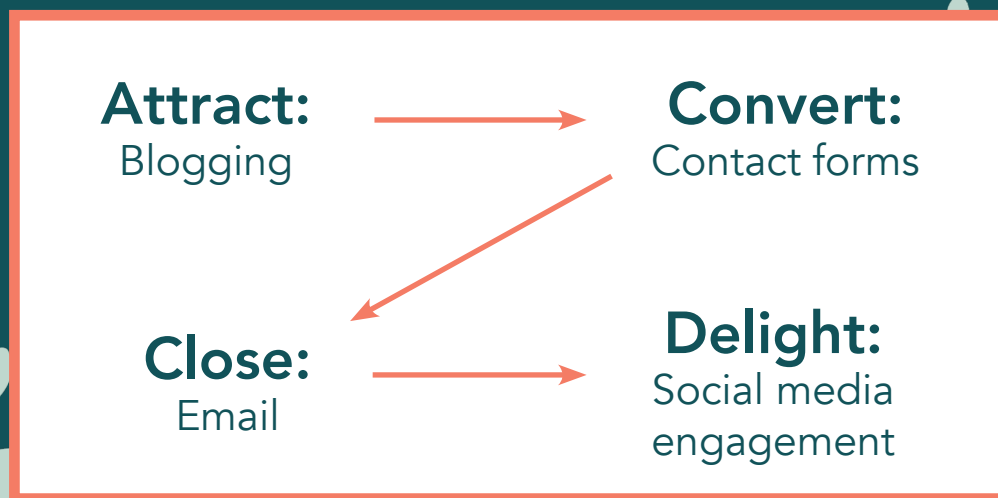


# Getting Started with Inbound Marketing

If this seems like a ton of information, you're right. It is. Inbound marketing has a lot of moving parts that work together to drive leads to your brand. Luckily, you don't have to implement every one of these strategies at once to get started with inbound marketing.

If you have at least one strategy in place for each stage of the methodology, you're off to a good start. The rest can be added later to make things more efficient.

**A fundamental inbound marketing strategy might look like this:**



You'll need to set goals and establish a schedule, such as how many blog posts you'll write per month.

It may take some time before you start to see traction. Some companies see results within a month or two, but most will need to keep at it for a good 6-9 months before they see results that are worth reporting about. Some may take even longer, but the rewards are undeniable.

All the content you produce will stay on your site for as long as you allow it to. It will keep bringing you leads and can be re-purposed later for new promotions. The more you add to your website, the more authority you'll build and the better chance you'll have of showing up in organic search results.

If you stay consistent with your efforts, you can grow your web traffic exponentially and convert several times more leads than you did before.

# About Us

## **Our company is a marketing love story.**

Market Veep was born out of a passion for helping businesses reach a broader market, get more leads, and improve their sales and marketing alignment. We believe that people are the most important part of any business. The human factor is what influences our marketing method, business philosophy, and company culture.

Not only do we want our clients to be successful and our team to love coming into work every day; we want our company to stand for something positive in the world.

If you're looking for a close-knit team of marketing professionals who are driven, collaborative, and a little silly, then you've come to the right place. We dive deep into the data and use frequent touch-points to keep you agile, generate meaningful leads, align sales and marketing, and evangelize customers into lifelong advocates.

We want our clients to be delighted, plain and simple.

**"Marketing Made Human" isn't just a slogan for us; it's a lifestyle.**



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