

# THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO INBOUND MARKETING

Since its inception in 2005, inbound marketing has grown to become the chief marketing technique for online business relations. It is about drawing people to your company naturally and organically.



powered by search

BEGINNER

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For business leaders, Powered by Search is a trusted digital marketing partner alike in developing and executing customized, high ROI-focused strategies that turn consumer intent into high quality leads. We provide a comprehensive range of inbound marketing services, including search engine optimization, paid search marketing, conversion rate optimization, content marketing, social media marketing, web design and development, and ROI analysis.

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We are accredited as a Google AdWords Partner, Better Business Bureau member, and Google Engage for Agencies member, and have been featured in the Globe & Mail, Financial Post, Toronto Star and CTV. Learn more about our award-winning digital marketing services at [www.poweredbysearch.com](http://www.poweredbysearch.com).



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### BEGINNER



Beginner content is for marketers who are getting their feet wet for the first time. These readings offer introductions to key concepts and instructions regarding their application. If you are just entering the inbound world, feel free to also check out our [beginner's guide to inbound marketing](#).

Intermediate content is for marketers which already have a basic marketing understanding and are looking to ascend to the next level. These readings go past the fundamentals and offer higher levels of tips and strategies.



### INTERMEDIATE

### EXPERT



Expert content is for advanced marketers, or those wishing to become advanced. These readings offer the highest level of tips, strategies, and advice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 2005, inbound marketing has grown to become the chief marketing technique for online business relations. It is about drawing people to your company naturally and organically. As opposed to traditional marketing methods of buying attention through advertisements, cold calling, and distributing flyers, inbound marketing focuses on earning your audience's interest. This is achieved through the creation of quality content through mediums such as blog posts, whitepapers, SEO, social media marketing, podcasts, videos, and other valuable content that will attract your target audience. You're not "buying, begging, or bugging" your audience for attention, you're taking the time to provide something of value so that you can earn their attention, and more importantly, keep it.

Hubspot's Inbound Marketing Methodology is an intricate process that targets potential customers at different levels of product and brand awareness. This guide will break down the process to help you better understand:

1. What the methodology is
2. How the methodology works
3. Why it will improve your business' performance

## Breakdown of the Inbound Marketing Methodology

The 4 stages of the inbound marketing methodology are 'Attract', 'Convert', 'Close', and 'Delight'. Following these steps will steer consumers away from being strangers and toward being promoters of your brand! At each stage there are specific methods by which this conversion is achieved. It is important that your marketing actions are timely and targeted, and this is what the methodology aims to help you do.



## ATTRACT

As with most budding relationships, the first requirement is attraction. As a business, your goal is to attract individuals who you have a realistic potential of becoming valued customers. These individuals are called buyer personas. All your inbound marketing actions should be taken with them in mind. They are the lifeblood of your business.

Attracting your buyer personas requires a focused inbound marketing strategy that starts with quality content creation. This content needs to not only draw your persona's in, but compel them to transition to the next step of the conversion process.

### Tip: Buyer Persona

A buyer persona is your ideal customer, and you should know them inside and out. How old are they? What problems does he/she face in their job? What common questions does he/she have about your industry? Who does he/she report to in the company? What does he/she do for fun? How do they typically seek out solutions to their problems? What is he/she passionate about? You can answer these questions by conducting buyer research studies consisting of questionnaires or interviews. Don't assume you know your persona. Do your research.



”

When someone picks up your marketing materials you have 30 seconds or less to convince him or her that you can help. The Buyer is saying, you better tell me something from the beginning that blows my mind, changes my world, or makes me say, where have you been all my life?

”



## Blogging

Start a company blog that is integrated with your main website. Blogging is one of the best methods to succeed in the “attract” stage of the methodology. A blog allows for consumer engagement with your brand. Blog content can include industry tips, trends, reviews, comparisons, and even visual content such as videos and infographics. Give a voice to your company, and let blogging be your mouthpiece. Your blog should educate and engage your buyer personas in a way that speaks to them. Use the language they use, address their dissatisfactions, and offer resolutions.

### Tip: Publishing Schedule

Create a publishing schedule for your blog content. This will help keep your ideas organized and your updates consistent. Companies that blog get 55% more traffic and 70% more leads than companies that don't. Keep on top of your blogging initiatives by downloading our customizable editorial calendar!

## Social Media

Cultivating and maintaining a social media presence is also crucial for attracting visitors to your business. It not only acts as another great resource to share and promote your outstanding content, but is also key for humanizing your business. Your social media profiles can be more relaxed and casual than your main website, and are a great place to show off the personality of your brand and the great people who run it. Take the time to build and nurture your business relations on social media. This will build added trust, transparency, and authority for your company. If your ideal customer is on social media, your business should be to. Occupying the same digital space as your target audience is integral for a successful inbound marketing strategy.

## Keywords

Optimize, optimize, optimize. In order to drive qualified traffic to your site you need to rank prominently in search results, and achieving this largely comes down to keyword optimization. To do so you need to know what your targeted buyers are searching for and utilize those keywords in your content. In order to rank you need to place your keywords in the places that search engines crawl. This includes the URL, page title, H1 header, body text, alt text for images, and tags. Keywords help search engines determine what a page is about, making it easier to provide relevant results to searchers. Not only will doing these things improve your rankings, but it will appeal more to your personas when they navigate to your content. Do not throw keywords into your content that is unrelated to the context of a piece of work. This will not only annoy potential consumers, but also negatively affect your page authority with search engines.

### URL

Uniform resource locator. Aka the web address that leads to your content.

### Alt Text

Alt text is an attribute which helps search engines identify images.

### Page Title

This is the name that you give to a webpage. It appears in bold in a search result.

### H1 Header

This is an HTML tag that defines the main header of your webpage.

### Tags

A tag is a word or a set of words that describe what your content is about.

## Pages

Not only should you optimize your website with keywords, but it should also be optimized in a way that visually and interactively appeals to your buyer persona. Using pleasing images and graphics, having a user-friendly navigation, as well as interconnected links throughout your website are key to optimization. While keywords will help users find your pages, usability and attractiveness will keep them there.

In addition to on-page SEO via keyword optimization, it is also important to generate outbound links. These are links on other webpage's that lead to the pages on yours. Having outbound links gives your website authority, which affects your rankings on search engines. These links, however, need to be built on credible websites. Having a bunch of random links will do more harm than good.

## CONVERT

Once you have successfully attracted visitors to your site by following the above guidelines, the next step is to convert them into marketing qualified leads (MQLs). In order to nurture an MQL you will need to obtain their contact information. Contact information is currency to the inbound marketer. The challenge is going about obtaining it. Traditionally when you want something, you need to give something in return. The same rules apply to the inbound marketer seeking contact information from targeted consumers. You need to offer something of value to your buyer persona for them to be willing to provide you with their contact details. This "something of value" comes in the form of content, which includes whitepapers, eBooks, webinars, reports, and any other educational material that your audience would find valuable.

**Tip: MQL's**  
Essentially, an MLQ is a lead that is ready to be transferred to the sales funnel.

## Calls-to-Action (CTA's)

CTA's are buttons or links on your website that entice visitors to take action that will enable them to access one of your valuable resources. This action, for example, can be to "Download an eBook" or to "Attend a Webinar". Make your CTA button enticing by using eye-catching graphics and clear and compelling wording so that visitors will not only see it, but also be willing to click on it.



## Landing Pages

Once your visitor clicks on your CTA, they should be directed to what is known as a landing page. This is the stage at which the exchange process is fulfilled. The landing page should include a form for your visitors to fill in with their contact details. This form should be optimized for ease of use. Some common fields include name, email address, company, and role.

After submitting the form your visitors will have access to the resource highlighted in the CTA and you will have a new lead! You can now begin having a more targeted conversation with your buyer persona, leading them further along the buying process.

## Contacts

As you continue to generate new leads it is important to keep track of them. Creating a marketing database will help you keep track of which interactions you have already had with certain leads and what the appropriate next steps will be in your marketing efforts. Will it be an email marketing strategy? Social media? Marketing automation? Keeping your contacts organized will make the lead nurturing process efficient and effective!

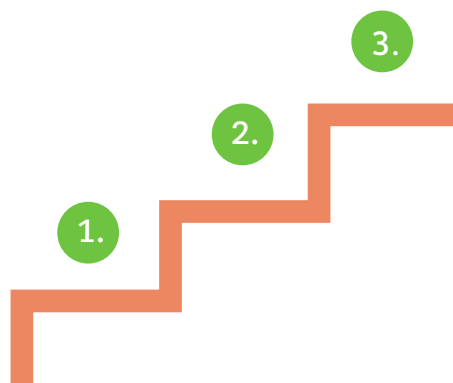
## CLOSE

The next step in the inbound marketing methodology is closing your leads and turning them into happy customers. Because your goal here is consumer focused, this process is typically a joint sales and marketing effort. Your leads should be sales qualified and at the point in the purchases funnel where they are ready to invest in your products or service.

There are a few tools that will help you push your leads that last little bit to becoming customers.

## Lead Scoring

Lead scoring is a tactic by which you assign a numerical value to the sales-readiness of a lead. You can determine a prospect's readiness by tracking their behaviours and web activity to determine their level of interest in your brand. You can use this score to determine the what marketing or sales initiative should be taken with different groups of leads.



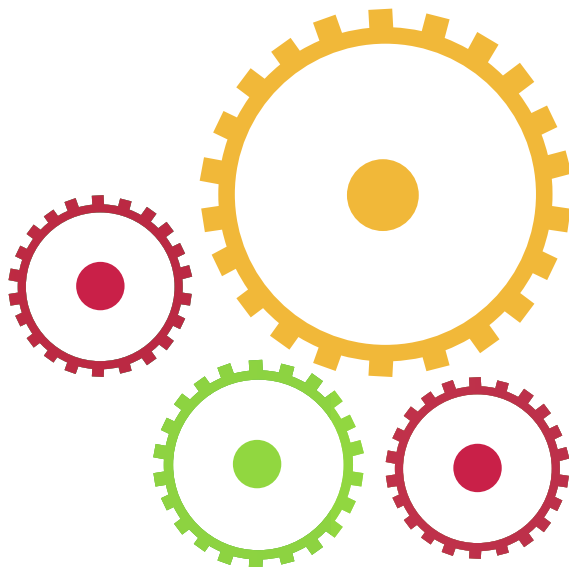
## Email

Another method for guiding your leads to becoming customers is by engaging with them through email. This is a good tactic for leads who have interacted with your content, but have not yet made the move to buy. Your goal is to build their trust in your business so that they can make the final leap. Sending a progression of emails with relevant, engaging, and helpful content is a great way to achieve this.



## Marketing Automation

Target your communication efforts with marketing automation. It is the union of email marketing and targeted sales. This is one of the most effective ways to nurture your leads. It involves the development of a tailored communication campaign through email and social channels. Depending on where your leads are in the marketing funnel the context of your messages will vary. You can determine the appropriate message for each lead by taking stock of how they have interacted with your business. Have they downloaded a whitepaper on a certain topic? Have they liked your Facebook page? Attended a webinar? With this information you can modify your messages to the interests of your leads, thus building your relationship with them in the hopes of closing them as customers.



## Closed-loop Reporting

This step is critical for determining how well your marketing and sales efforts are working. Have your sales team regularly report to you and the rest of the marketing team with the status of their leads. This will help you understand where the best leads are coming from and conversely, which efforts have been weaker. Integrating this with your customer relationship management (CRM) software will give you insight on how well your marketing efforts are working with the efforts of the sales team. With this data you can work on refocusing those efforts that are less successful to create a strong conversion strategy.

### Tip: CRM

System for managing your interactions with existing and future customers. It manages, automates, and harmonizes all of your marketing and sales efforts.

## Delight

With inbound marketing you don't abandon your customers after they have made a purchase. You not only want to keep them as customers, but you should also want them to become promoters of your products or services. Your goal is to establish brand loyalty. To do this you need to continue to show your customers that you value them and have not forgotten about them.

You do this by continuing to engage with your customers through content that will delight them. Highly targeted calls-to-action, interaction on social media, and email and marketing automation are some of the most effective strategies you can use to achieve this.

By delighting your customers you create greater sales opportunities - not only with your existing customers, but also with those that they share their positive experiences with!

## CONCLUSION

An inbound approach to online marketing will undoubtedly give your company a competitive advantage.

While there are multiple facets to this approach, they will pay off - not only in the financial sense, but also in the sense of building strong, long-lasting relationships. This second takeaway has become an integral part of the success of contemporary business, and inbound marketing has proven itself as the very best way to accomplish this. It is the best because it truly cares about the consumer. Inbound marketing is all about responding to your customers needs and questions. In order to do so effectively you need to know your buyer personas through and through. This personal quality of inbound marketing is what sets it apart and makes it so successful. It is about recognizing your customers as unique entities as they go through the buying process and interact with your company. More than anything, inbound marketing shows that you don't have to be in your consumers faces for them to find you.

It's organic, it's natural - it works.



## Connect with us!

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