



THE ALANIZ GUIDE TO

Inbound Marketing



ALANIZ 

A New Vision for Marketing

The growth of the Internet has changed sales processes dramatically.

Up to 80 percent of the business to business (B2B) purchase process is completed before the buyer considers contacting the vendor.

Yet companies have been slow to adapt their marketing and sales strategy to this changing environment. Inbound marketing is the solution.

The idea behind inbound marketing is simple:

To create educational content that pulls people toward your business to learn more about your products or services.

In this white paper, you'll get an introduction to the fundamental methodology of inbound marketing and learn how your company can utilize it to meet your sales and revenue goals.

THE INBOUND MARKETING METHODOLOGY



Inbound and Marketing Automation, Adoption, and Growth

It is difficult to underestimate the power of the web in today's market. Buyers increasingly use the web first to extensively research companies and products before they directly contact a supplier. Inbound marketing allows you to use this power to your benefit.

“Sales may not be waning because of shortcomings in staff. It may be due to the fact that your marketing strategy and sales methodology haven't adjusted to changes in customers and their purchasing process. Today 80% of B2B purchase cycles are completed before buyers consider contacting the vendor and, even then, they are loathe to do so.”
(Source: Forbes)



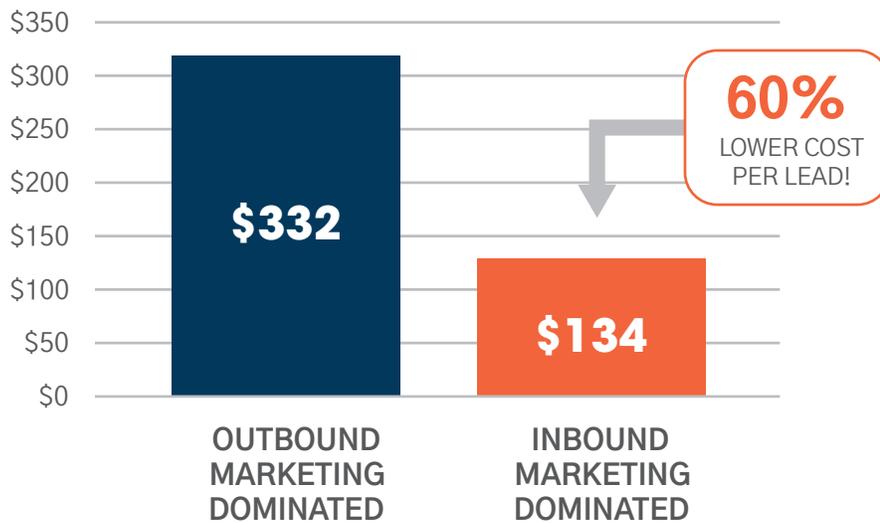
The adoption rate of inbound marketing, supported by marketing automation software, is staggering. Some 62 percent of B2B IT firms now use marketing automation, and the growth rate overall is forecast at 22 percent annually. (Source: Advertising Age)

Further, 60 percent of marketers will increase their budget for marketing automation software in the next year. (Source: Exact Target).

Among the many factors driving this shift to inbound marketing, a major one is ROI.

Companies that spend more than 50 percent of their lead generation budget on inbound marketing report a significantly lower cost-per-lead. (Source: HubSpot) Inbound marketing costs 62 percent less per lead than traditional outbound marketing. (Source: Mashable)

AVERAGE COST PER LEAD



SOURCE: SURVEY OF HUNDREDS OF BUSINESSES: HubSpot.com/ROI

Inbound Marketing Is A Natural Approach

Inbound marketing has some important capabilities that make it a powerful profitability driver.

- **ACCOUNTABLE:** Every facet of inbound marketing can be measured for effectiveness and impact on identified key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs include website traffic, lead volume, conversion rates, additions to pipeline, cost-per-lead, cost to acquire a customer, churn rates and customer lifetime value.
- **AGILE:** There is no one-size-fits-all approach to inbound marketing. Each channel, campaign, content piece and persona can be tested and optimized for success. New strategies can be added to the mix as they are developed and tested.
- **COST-EFFECTIVE:** Marketing leaders can identify the most effective strategies, sources and channels that optimize KPIs and double down on the most effective ones.
- **SCALABLE:** Once processes have been identified and refined (including human capital needs, training and technology), they can be reproduced and adapted to new markets, products and changing conditions.
- **CUSTOMER CENTRIC:** Inbound marketing a natural approach to attracting and retaining customers due to the overwhelming adoption of mobile and social tools and the changing customer journey favoring research and conversation prior to buying.

- **INTEGRATED:** Sales and marketing technologies, such as marketing automation and CRM integration, are driving new levels of cooperation and communication between sales and marketing professionals. This makes it possible to optimize the entire sales funnel and sales process.
- **MEASURABLE:** With inbound marketing, every interaction and engagement can be measured across all channels for lead generation, optimization, and management.

“Inbound marketing helps monitor results of marketing along multiple steps of the process.”



Inbound Marketing vs. Content Marketing

There is some confusion of terminology between content marketing and inbound marketing. They are different. Content is the fuel for inbound marketing, while inbound marketing leverages your content to progressively track each potential customer to determine their interests and challenges. Once they have a clear picture of this information, inbound marketers can provide exactly the right information to the right prospect and nurture them through the sales process to the point of hand-off to the sales team.

Inbound marketing brings together many aspects of marketing into one system, allowing you to build a marketing engine that is reliable, measurable, and highly scalable. Inbound marketing also supports your traditional marketing and PR initiatives.

INBOUND MARKETING INCLUDES:

- Keyword research & SEO
- Website usability and functionality
- Mobile optimization
- Blogging
- Social media
- Personalized calls-to-action
- Progressive profiling of all website visitors
- Visitor segmentation and lead scoring
- Email marketing
- Automated notifications to sales
- Email nurturing
- Persona development
- Competitive analysis
- Integrated analytics for your content

The Inbound Process at a Glance

The inbound marketing process is neither a formula nor a static plan. Rather, it's a series of strategic conversations that begin with understanding your company's goals, challenges, resources, and needs. Let's explore exactly how to implement inbound marketing.

1) COLLABORATIVE REVIEW

A collaborative review is a live meeting (perhaps even several meetings) of internal stakeholders. It is designed to provide an accurate picture of the company's goals and a clear vision of how to meet and exceed them. Without this first step, the entire engagement is at risk of failing to meet expectations. To kick off the inbound marketing process, answer several key questions to get a collaborative conversation started. For example:

- Where do you want to be three months, six months, one year from now?
- What is your sales process and how well is it working?
- Are sales and marketing on the same page? If not, why?
- How are you using technology in the marketing and sales processes?
- Who are your buyers and how well is your message received by them?

“61% of B2B marketers send all leads directly to sales; however, only 27% of those leads will be qualified.”
(Source: Marketing Sherpa)



2) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

This step sets the course for all digital marketing efforts in order to achieve your company's goals. It involves in-depth research to determine:

- Assess the market and competitive landscape
- Map buyer's journey and engagement
- Create messaging matched to each buyer persona
- Deliver content required for multiple campaigns
- Generate demand for revenue growth

Arguably, the most important component of this step is developing buyer personas. A buyer persona is a fictional character that represents your ideal prospect. It is an archetype, not a specific customer profile, although it usually contains some demographic information like a profile does.

More importantly, your buyer persona is an in-depth composite of the characteristics, behaviors, and motivations of your ideal customer. When complete, it will help you understand the motivating beliefs, fears and secret desires that influence a customer's buying decisions.





Channel Partner Calvin

- ⊙ Age: 35–55, mostly male
- ⊙ C–Suite Executive, Director, Sales
- ⊙ Mostly technology industries, well–established
- ⊙ Type A personality, direct, authoritative

Goals

- **Expand portfolio of services, particularly cloud,**
- **Be indispensable to customers,**
- **Larger client companies.**

Values and Concerns

- Responsiveness
- Security
- Commitment to success
- Be knowledgeable for customers
- Sell upmarket, with suite of complimentary products

Objections

- Can make more money with traditional technologies
- What's the ROI, need examples from real life
- Our website doesn't adequately describe our services

Fears and Challenges

- Doesn't know enough about cloud to sell well
- Is not an IT person, doesn't have the language or deep understanding of the industry
- Need answers to their customer's concerns
- Need to provide added value to customers, not just the usual services

SAMPLE PERSONA FILE

Not knowing your buyers has a ripple effect throughout the entire inbound marketing process:

- Your brand and message will likely be off target
- Your content marketing strategy may not be relevant to buyers
- Your campaigns may target the wrong markets with inappropriate messages and timing
- You will likely capture a significant amount of unqualified leads

**“Only 36% of B2B marketers rate their organization’s content marketing as effective.”
(Source: Content Marketing Institute)**

3) CONTENT MARKETING

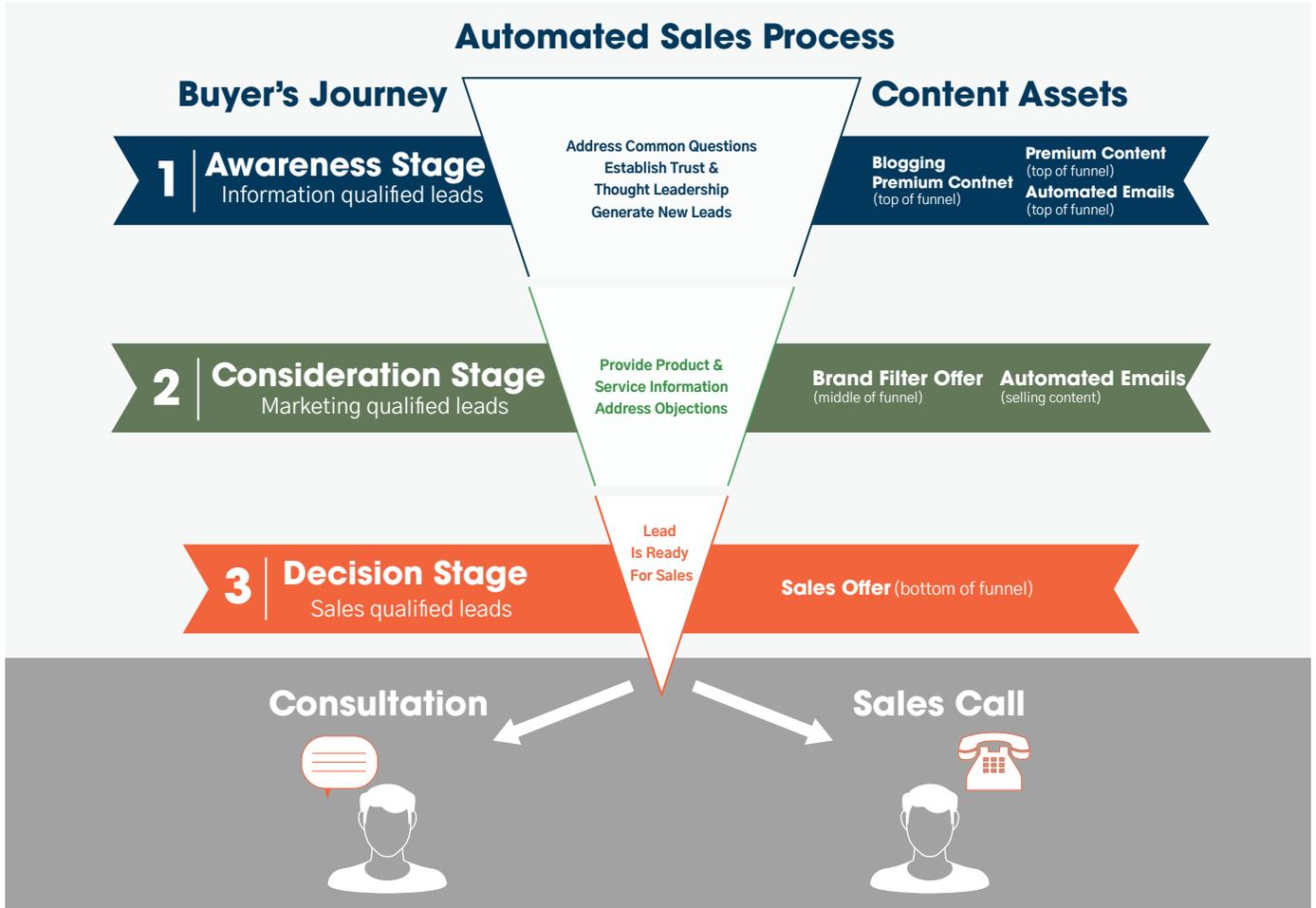
Content has many forms and purposes in marketing as a whole. Blogs, white papers, videos and social media updates attract potential buyers into the top-of-the-funnel when they exchange their contact information for educational resources. Further down the funnel, content keeps leads engaged and interested. It answers their questions and assists sales and marketing in qualifying them. As we get to the Close and Delight stages, content is equally important in customer satisfaction, retention and upsell opportunities.

The fundamental components of content marketing include:

- Goals and timelines
- Products and markets
- Personas and buyer’s journey stages
- Previous marketing strategies and activities
- Available content resources (consisting of previously crafted in-house content)



With this information in hand, tools such as content maps, content audits and editorial calendars can be created.



MAPPING THE BUYER'S JOURNEY WITH MARKETING AUTOMATION AND CONTENT ASSETS

Because content marketing is a lynchpin for all digital marketing, the frequency and consistency of publishing content are important key performance indicators (KPIs) that should be included in monthly reports.

4) DEMAND GENERATION

The explosion of digital content channels, including blogs, social media, video, podcasts, SMS text and websites, has resulted in highly selective content consumption. Ideally, demand generation gets your company's content to the right people in the right place at the right time.

The main goals for demand generation are:

- **Brand Awareness.** Getting found online more easily and more often than competitors.
- **Discovery.** Being the most prominent solution potential customers discover when searching for solutions like yours.
- **Lead Generation.** Automation qualification in place of cold calling every potential customer.
- **Market Creation.** In new markets, this means educating your target audiences, helping them confirm that their problem is real and that solutions exist.
- **Market Share.** If your target audiences already know they have a problem, ensure they aren't turning to competitors to fix it.

5) LEAD MANAGEMENT WITH MARKETING AUTOMATION

Data shows as many as 50 percent of your leads are qualified but not ready to buy, even if your marketing team has carefully targeted them with demand generation campaigns. That's when marketing automation and lead nurturing kick-in.

Drip campaigns are the most common type of lead nurturing today, but they are quickly being replaced by personalized 1:1 marketing. In drip campaigns, marketers send out periodic emails following a conversion event that allows you to follow up with more information pertaining to the original offer. Usually, the number of emails and intervals between them are set up evenly (once every five business days, for example) to align with the average sales cycle of your product or service. You can personalize drip emails based on the data you have captured in your demand generation forms and send content that gradually influences leads toward sales-readiness.

Drip campaigns are fine, but they aren't responsive. They don't catch leads at the moment they are thinking about buying something or doing research. They're a blunt instrument compared to personalized content, but they do have a place in staying in touch and staying top-of-mind.

The trick with lead generation today is to treat automation like it's not automation at all.

Marketing Automation Workflow Image Courtesy of HubSpot

SIMPLIFIED DIAGRAM OF A MARKETING AUTOMATION CAMPAIGN



With personalized content, marketers set up workflows that contain logical branches; for example, a lead who downloads a white paper about the inbound marketing process is likely interested in reading blogs covering the same topic. If the lead clicks on a blog call-to-action (CTA) that leads to a Lead Nurturing Guide, send them a personalized thank you email with links to similar resources.

“Companies with mature lead generation and management practices have a 9.3% higher sales quota achievement rate.”
(Source: CSO Insights)

6) CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Customer relationship management enables marketing and sales teams to work together through lead intelligence to optimize the sales process. In this step, you'll need to:

- **Define and Redefine Lifecycle Stages:** As leads move through your sales funnel, their concerns and needs change. They may have come to your website with problems to solve, and each time they return they may be closer to making the final decision to purchase. By taking into account the number of visits to your site a lead makes, you can offer information that gradually becomes more product-centric. This way you don't scare off someone who is just browsing, and you won't miss the chance to connect with someone who is ready to make a purchase.
- **Implement Lead Scoring:** Before marketing passes leads along to sales, they must be graded in terms of actions taken that indicate sales readiness. The most effective way for putting together an effective lead scoring strategy is to work your way down the sales funnel and get marketing and sales on the same page as to what qualifies as a sales qualified lead (SQL). Explain to sales the whole lead generation and scoring processes, then ask, “When does a lead actually become sales qualified?”

- **Develop New Segmented Lists:** The more offers you have on your website, the easier it will be to ask visitors new questions via forms for creating segmented lists. Determine which questions are commonly used by sales to qualify leads and add them to forms required to access the new offers you create. This will allow you to create segmented lists for a targeted and personalized web experience.

7) REVIEW PERFORMANCE AND REVENUE

Company executives want to know how many customers and how much revenue the company has acquired from marketing campaigns.

Here's how to break it down in reports:

- **Traffic, leads and conversion rates:** A monthly summary (called a scorecard) shows the raw data for each metric versus the projected goal for each KPI. Track the content published each month to ensure compliance with the plan.
- **Campaign-based metrics:** Evaluate the effectiveness of individual campaigns like special promotions of products/services via blogs, email, PPC, and social media. Compare channels and optimize for continuous improvement.
- **Lifecycle stages:** Use smart lists and workflows that move leads from one lifecycle stage to another based on lead behavior and scoring. Create a report that shows the movement of leads through the funnel.

How to Get it Done: Building or Outsourcing Your Inbound Marketing Team

An inbound marketing team requires people with diverse skill sets. Depending on the size of your company, there are 5 to 7 different roles required, including:

- Strategist
- Project manager
- Brand journalist
- Marketing technologist
- Graphic designer
- Web developer
- Social media specialist

BUILDING AN IN-HOUSE INBOUND MARKETING TEAM

A \$50 million+ company may have many of the above skill sets available on staff. If not, the first step is to recruit them. In either case, the next step to deploying inbound marketing is to train the team in inbound marketing methodology. Some marketing automation software firms have extensive training available with the purchase of their software service. Others let their customers learn for themselves.



HIRE AN INBOUND MARKETING AGENCY

More commonly, companies hire an inbound marketing agency to leverage their experience and expertise and to maximize the benefits of the marketing automation software. Hiring an agency brings a few added benefits.

- **Accelerated onboarding:** An agency will have the skill sets trained for inbound marketing and ready to deploy sooner than recruiting, hiring and training them in-house.
- **Lower staffing costs:** An agency will be able to distribute personnel costs across multiple projects and customers, leaving you with the resources necessary for your program at a fixed rate month by month. Hiring in-house incurs recruiting costs and higher risks and variability of staffing costs.
- **Higher quality output:** A reputable agency has specialists on staff able to constantly refine and test their skills to the ever-changing market. Ongoing training and external competition helps keep them accountable to a high level of performance across multiple projects. In-house operations, particularly in smaller companies, will not have the supervision or tracking that offer visibility or accountability.

If you're a \$10 million company with a \$250,000 marketing budget, you will have to figure out your budget for all those different roles. However you do it, it's important to know you need these people in place. If you just say, "I'm doing inbound marketing," and only go at it 10 percent of the way, it usually fails, and then your funding gets cut. That makes it hard to come back afterward and say, "No, really. It's going to work. Just give me another try."

Many companies with \$10M–\$50M in revenue outsource all or part of their inbound marketing. The key advantage in outsourcing is that you get the experience of an entire team of experts who are ready to hit the ground running, for about the same price as a single highly-skilled marketing professional.

And unlike consulting companies that give their sage advice and then leave the work to you, inbound marketing agencies supplement your in-house team in executing your inbound marketing strategies.

BLENDING PROGRAMS

Some organizations implement blended programs. The high-level strategy and direction are guided by the in-house CMO or executive staff member and the execution of the program is run by the agency. Companies with ample content will also provide a content director to make sure the best content (use cases, customer stories, product data, etc.) is available to the agency for use in videos, infographics, blogs, newsletters, etc.

Because you're creating a volume of content, it's not unusual to include product managers, sales, and legal in the approval process. If you really want it to work, it's important to get all those people in one room to talk about why you are transitioning from a company that does marketing in a very product-centric way to a more user-centric way.

Whether you do all your inbound work internally or partner with an inbound marketing agency, getting buy-in for your inbound marketing efforts is important because you need people from different internal teams on board.

About Alaniz Marketing

Alaniz is a marketing agency located just over the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. We work with companies to develop and execute multichannel marketing campaigns that produce measurable results and revenue growth.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE



STRATEGY



BRANDING



ADVERTISING



DIGITAL MARKETING



WEB DEVELOPMENT



PUBLIC RELATIONS

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