

8 KEYS TO PLANNING
INBOUND MARKETING
STRATEGY

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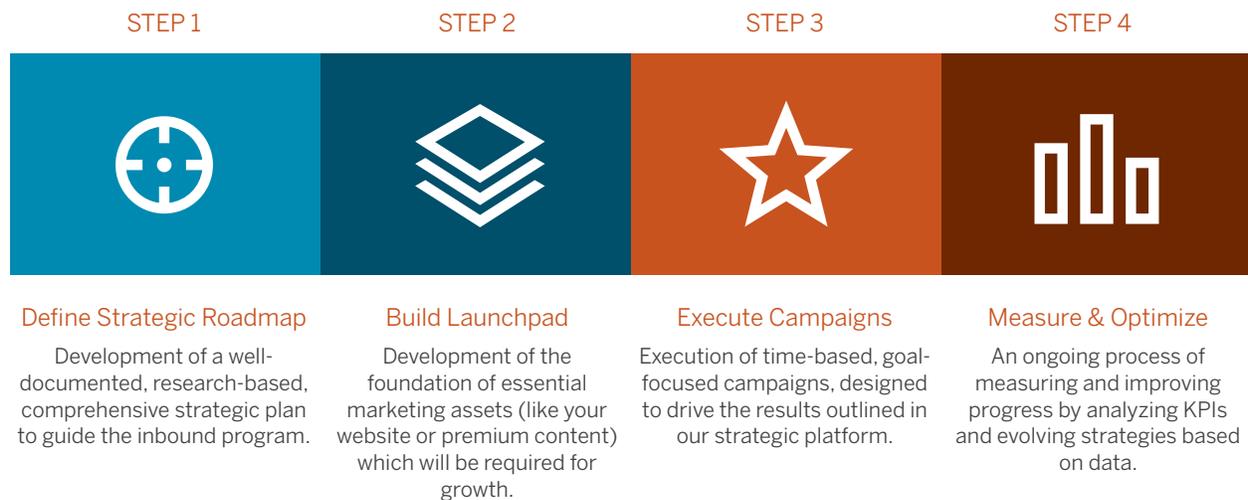
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Introduction

Just imagine planning a vacation with a budget, but no destination - or a budget and a destination, but no roadmap to help you find your way? How would you know if you're headed in the right direction or if you've made any progress? You couldn't and you probably wouldn't. However, there are still plenty of marketing initiatives that are cost-driven (as in "we need to spend some money on marketing") rather than goal and performance-driven. In response to the need for better measures of accountability, the following framework can be used to plan and implement a thoughtful and measurable approach to your marketing program.

WHAT'S A STRATEGIC ROADMAP?

The first step in a research-driven process to help B2B companies implement a measurable, financially-sound, and repeatable growth marketing program.



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Understanding The Inbound Economy

THE B2B DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

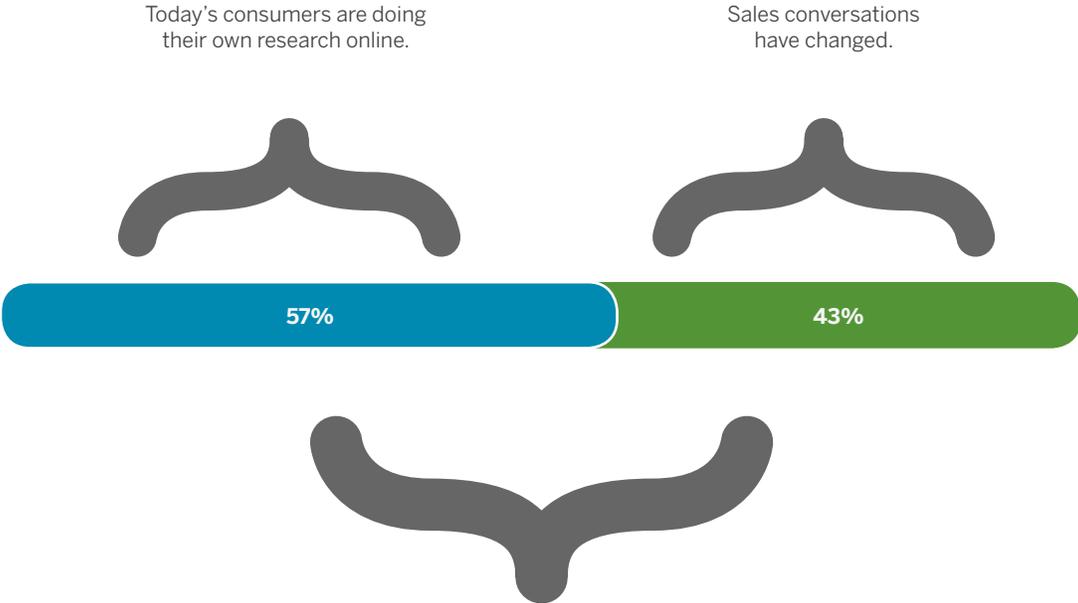
The composition of B2B buyers has changed, and so has the buying process. There are now, on average, five people required to get signoff ([Harvard Business Review](#)) on a typical B2B purchase. Those responsible are conducting research and educating themselves on the potential ways of solving their problems and creating lists of potential solution providers. The majority of this process happens early in the buying cycle, before a supplier or partner is ever contacted.

Buyers are increasingly unresponsive and tuned out to traditional advertising and cold-calling. Instead, they rely on their internal research process, referrals from colleagues, and insights from thought leaders in their industry.

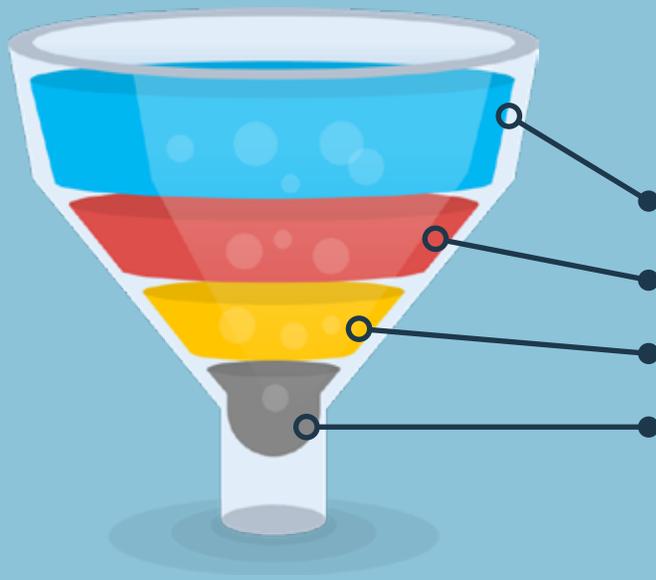
THE SALES CONVERSATION

The B2B purchasing stakeholders have changed, but so have the sales conversations. They don't want to be sold or demoed or pitched-to. What B2B buyers want is to connect with an expert who can help them solve problems, with insights beyond the features and benefits of your product or information that the buyer can easily find on their own.

For inbound marketers, connecting with a buyer has two components: a) Content and conversations that are relevant to the buyer's specific industry and problems b) Solutions and insights that are closely linked to the buyer's process (the buyer's journey).



What would it mean to your business if you connected with your customer earlier in their decision-making process?



The Buyer's Journey

- Stage 1: Awareness
- Stage 2: Consideration
- Stage 3: Decision
- Stage 4: Loyalty

REVIEWING THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

The process of bringing a lead from one stage in the Buyer's Journey to the next requires a lot of education. Lead nurturing is a way to automate this process by sharing the right content with the right people at the right time. As a lead consumes your content via your website, emails, eBooks, and other resources, they earn enough points to move on to the next stage in the journey.

At each stage in the journey, you are anticipating and answering the common questions, and positioning yourself as a trusted resource – which pays off when your prospects make their purchasing decision.

Stage	Customer Situation	Marketing Goals & Implications
Awareness	They recognize their pain, but your prospects aren't fully aware of the potential solutions. Educational offers that are vendor-neutral are important at this stage in the Buyer's Journey.	Create awareness of your product, service, or company so that your buyers begin to understand what you do and how you can help them. Content should be focused on your buyer's pain points — not your product or brand.
	Leads at this stage are looking for help defining what is important to them and choosing between several methods of solving their pain. Customers will reach out for demos, pricing, and case studies.	Resources at this stage should educate leads on the pros and cons of the alternatives, leading them towards the best type of solution.
Decision	With a well-defined problem and a clear direction, your leads are choosing the best solution provider. If they're still consuming your content at this stage, you're on the short list.	You are engaged with the decision-maker to propose a well-researched solution. Continue to educate your buyer as needed because they drive the selection process.

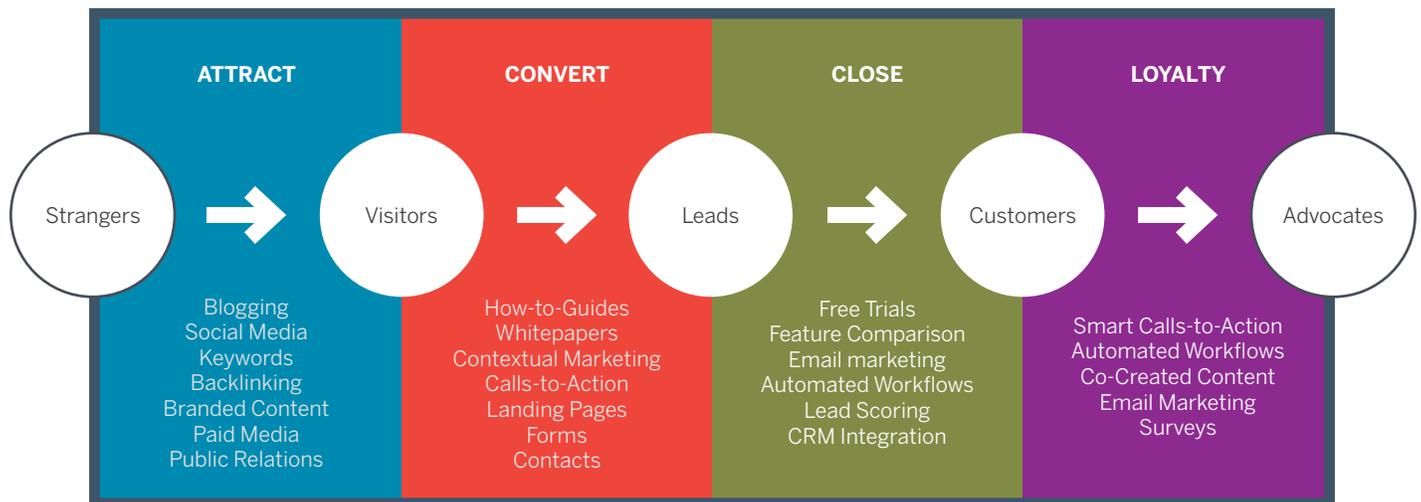
“Don’t find customers for your products, find products for your customers”
- Seth Godin

THE INBOUND MARKETING PROCESS

Inbound Marketing is all about attracting highly-targeted audiences with relevant content that is focused on solutions and insights to the customer’s problems. Outbound marketing, on the other hand, (aka traditional marketing) is all about you (your company, your brand, your product, or even just “you”) and your ability to interrupt the user to get their attention.

Control of the B2B buying process has been transferred from seller to buyer. Buyers are now in the driver’s seat and their preference is to talk to you, when they are ready.

Inbound Marketing is initiated by potential customers’ searching for a solution to their problems. An Inbound Marketing program positions you as an expert – a trusted resource with experience and solutions to solve the specific problems of your highly-targeted buyer.



8 Keys to Planning an Inbound Roadmap

Each of the following eight areas hold great potential for your company, but they are only maximized when they all work together towards a unified objective and a repeatable system. This connection happens in your Strategic Inbound RoadMap.



Understand the Measures of Your Performance

Review and benchmark your current situation so that we have a baseline to compare how you are performing today with the results of an inbound marketing approach. Measure competitive strengths to identify opportunities to improve your brand's differentiation.



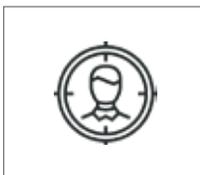
Build a Financial Model for Success and a Positive ROI

Define your LTV (customer lifetime value) and calculate the difference that inbound marketing can make with improvements to visitor acquisition and conversions. Establish a performance model that includes a return on your investment.



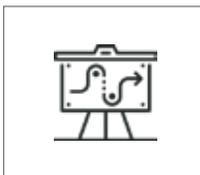
Establish KPIs to Measure Your Growth

Inbound marketing is a data-driven process. It's important to identify which metrics or KPIs (key performance indicators) will be closely monitored to measure success. Measures include user behavior, conversion statistics, and financial performance.



Select Target Audiences and Conduct Buyer Insights Research

Conduct research with buyer stakeholders and internal team members to gather insights about the perceptions and questions asked by your target customer. Develop personas (composite profiles) of your buyers to guide the development of content for each stage in the buyer's journey.



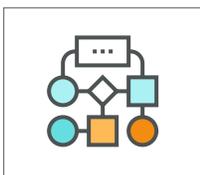
Attract New Visitors

Inbound is about being found when people start searching. You need to answer the question: "How will people find us online?"



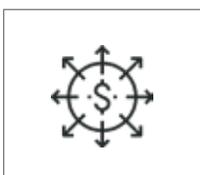
Convert to Leads

Visits to your website aren't enough to bring success. To see results you need to answer the question: "How will we convert anonymous visitors into engaged leads?"



Automated Nurturing

When a new lead is added, they're not always ready to speak with someone yet. You need to ask yourself: "How can I use education to nurture them through the process?"



Invest in Customer Loyalty

Your goal isn't a single sale. Instead, you want to increase customer lifetime value (LTV) by asking: "How can I delight our customers after purchasing so that they purchase again and tell their friends?"

Building a Financial Model for Performance

HOW MANY LEADS DO YOU NEED?

Planning and managing an inbound marketing program requires understanding how improvements at each stage of the inbound process make real financial contributions to the bottom line. The following financial model provides a practical example to compare your current financial performance with increases in visits (attracting new targeted customers) with conversions (actions to engage with your website and your brand). This model helps us come up with a financial hypothesis about your growth marketing program to answer questions related to how many leads and new customers you need to justify the financial investment that you are making in growing your business.

ROW	Step 1: Calculate LTV (Customer Lifetime Value)	Example	Your Data
A	Average Order Size	\$10,000	
B	Average Lifetime Purchases	3.00	
C	Gross Profit Margin	0.35	
D	Retention Rate (% of customers you keep)	0.75	
E	Discount Rate (on future value of cashflows)	0.08	
F	Acquisition Costs	\$500	
G	$LTV (Customer Lifetime Value) = (A \times B \times C) \times (D / (1 + E - D)) - F$	\$23,364	
	Step 2: Calculate Your Current Monthly LTV Contribution (Lifetime Profits Per Month)		
H	Monthly Website Visits	300	
J	Monthly Leads	12	
K	% Vists to Leads Conversion Rate = (J / H)	0.04	
M	% of Leads that Are Qualified (MQL)	0.50	
N	Number of Monthly MQL = $(J \times M)$	6	
O	Close Rate (% of MQL that you close to new customers)	0.75	
P	Estimated Monthly New Customers (Curent Performance)	5	
Q ¹	Current LTV Generated Per Month = $(G \times P)$		
	Step 3: Calculate Monthly Return on Investment with Increase in Performance		
R ²	Additional LTV with 5% Increase in Conversions = $(H \times (K + .05)) \times M \times O \times G) - Q$		
S ³	Additional LTV with 30% Increase in Visits = $((H \times .30) \times (K)) \times M \times O \times G) - Q$	\$31,541	
T ⁴	With +5% Conversions & + 30% Increase Visits = $((H \times .30) \times (K + .05)) \times M \times O \times G) - Q$		

1. LTV this is the amount of total lifetime profit you are generating each month at today's value
2. Additional lifetime profit generated each month with a 5% increase in visit to lead conversions
3. Additional lifetime profit generated each month with just a 30% increase in visits

How to Attract Visitors to Your Website

Inbound Marketing Campaigns are collections of marketing tactics designed to attract visitors from each of these different areas.



Organic Search Results

When people face a problem, they turn to Google. Search engines should be a primary source of traffic to your website. Content on your website should be written for your personas with best practices in SEO strategy in mind.

Direct Traffic

Visitors who type your URL into their Internet browser, or who have your website bookmarked, are considered Direct Traffic visitors. As visitors become familiar with your brand, they will connect with you directly.

Referral Sites & Guest Blogging

When someone clicks a link to your website from another website, they're a referral visitor. Links to your site (backlinks) are also considered "votes" by Google as to the trust and authority of your content. Referring sites are critical in getting found online.

Email Marketing

After a visitor becomes a lead, you can begin to send them lead nurturing emails. Each of these emails should include a Call-to-Action that directs the reader back to your website.

Social Media Engagement

People spend the majority of their internet time on various social media sites. When someone shares a link to your site on social media, you have the chance to bring visitors from that social site to your website.

Paid Traffic

Google AdWords, Facebook Ads, PPC, or any form where you're paying a platform to drive visitors to your website

Converting Leads to Visitors

Now that you've brought visitors to my site. How will you convert them to leads?



PREMIUM CONTENT OFFERS

Share valuable content on your website that prompts an informational transaction.

Most websites have a conversion problem. They attract visitors, but few are raising their hands and requesting more information. Give your audience the opportunity to give you their information by providing free educational resources that assist them in their research and decision-making process.

CALL TO ACTION

Provide your website visitors with a clear next step that you'd like them to take.

As visitors read through your website, don't leave the next step to chance. Present them with a clear and contextual next step. This Call-to-Action (CTA) should send the visitor to a landing page where they'll have the opportunity to download free content in exchange for some identifying information.

LANDING PAGES

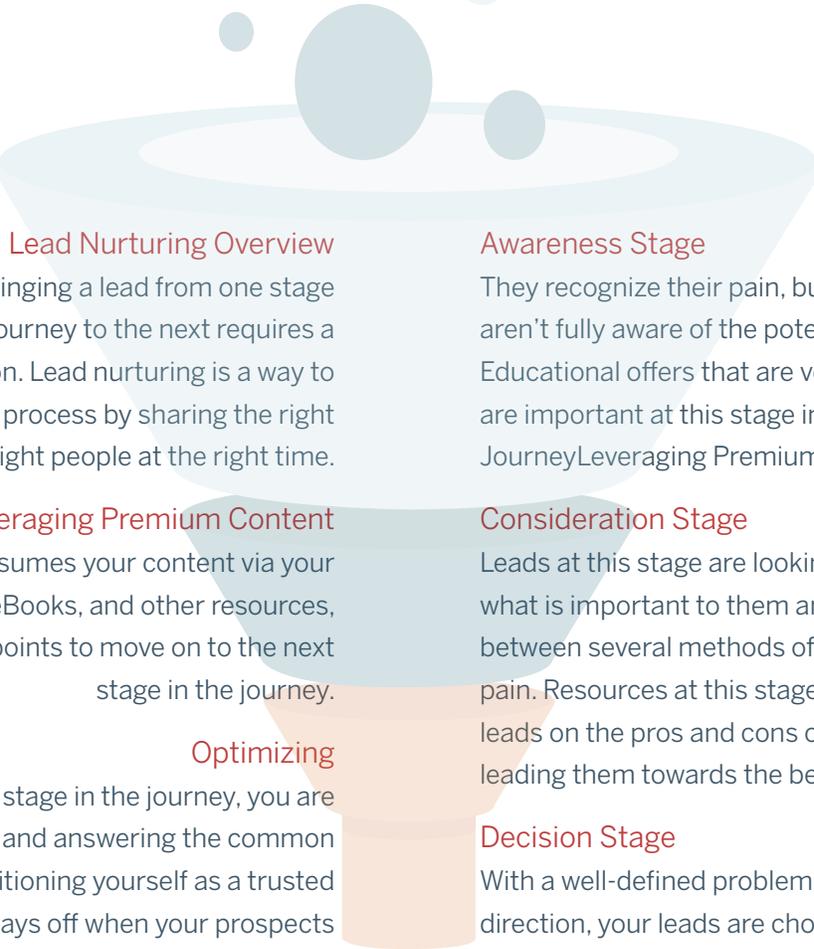
Present your offer clearly, eliminate distractions, and make it easy to sign up for your information.

The point when an anonymous website visitor shares their contact information with you and becomes a lead occurs on a landing page.

These pages should be optimized to clearly communicate the value of the content offer and make it dead simple to download.

Automated Lead Nurturing

How are we going to use automation to nurture our leads?



Lead Nurturing Overview

The process of bringing a lead from one stage in the Buyer's Journey to the next requires a lot of education. Lead nurturing is a way to automate this process by sharing the right content with the right people at the right time.

Leveraging Premium Content

As a lead consumes your content via your website, emails, eBooks, and other resources, they earn enough points to move on to the next stage in the journey.

Optimizing

At each stage in the journey, you are anticipating and answering the common questions, and positioning yourself as a trusted resource – which pays off when your prospects make their purchasing decision.

Awareness Stage

They recognize their pain, but your prospects aren't fully aware of the potential solutions. Educational offers that are vendor-neutral are important at this stage in the Buyer's Journey. Leveraging Premium Content

Consideration Stage

Leads at this stage are looking for help defining what is important to them and choosing between several methods of solving their pain. Resources at this stage should educate leads on the pros and cons of the alternatives, leading them towards the best type of solution.

Decision Stage

With a well-defined problem and a clear direction, your leads are choosing the best solution provider. If they're still consuming your content at this stage, you're on the short list. Now it's time to close the deal.



Who Are You Trying to Reach? Buyer Personas are the Key to Creating Relevant Content that Interests and Engages Your Target Customer.

Continuous Focus on Building Buyer Personas

USE PERSONAS AS FILTERS TO GUIDE ALL MARKETING STRATEGIES

Buyer personas are fictional representations of your ideal customers. They are based on real data about customer demographics and online behavior, along with educated speculation about their personal histories, motivations, and concerns. Personas influence the building blocks of your inbound marketing program. They guide the selection of targeted keywords, blog and premium content that addresses core problems that your customer is concerned with, and they influence the creation of your branded content and your website.

Your Personas Should Include a Composite Background

A detailed background helps make the persona more relatable as you are creating marketing and sales materials.

Core Functions

Each persona should include a synopsis of their functions and roles within their organization.

Common Questions Asked

Understanding your personas' questions is the first step towards being helpful through their research process. The answers to these questions will drive your content strategy.

Select Persona Groups from Your B2B Stakeholders

Before you can begin the process of narrowing down the various stakeholders and defining your personas, you'll need to do some homework on your market opportunities and take some inventory of the roles involved in a typical buying process. First, you'll need to determine the key segments that drive your financial performance. Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) is a useful metric to help you determine which opportunities are more profitable than others.

Assuming that you've decided "where" to focus your efforts, you'll need to review the various roles involved in the buying process to determine your personas.

Organizational Next Steps

1. Take inventory of the most important stakeholders involved in the buying process.
2. Assign as many roles to each title as appropriate. A person may fulfill multiple buying roles.
3. Based on the insights from your research, group your titles into persona groups.

	Buying Roles 2				Persona Groups 3		
	Sponsor	Gatekeeper	Reviewer	Executive	Persona Group A	Persona Group B	Persona Group C
Position Titles or Descriptions							
1							

Working Buyer Persona Worksheet & Process

Start with Buyer Persona Homework

While it's imperative that you get direct insights about your personas from observable feedback - that means from direct interviews or surveys or from your own team or others who have direct experience with the stakeholders. Do your best to base all of your investigations on directly observable information. However, consider that it's not always easy to get access to customer and for them to participate in an interview in a timely manner.

Your internal team has deep insights about the perceptions and behavior of your personas at the consideration and decision-stages; however, reaching them early is difficult without understanding your stakeholders, personally and the professional issues that they face outside of the buying process. We encourage you to supplement your direct research with secondary resources like industry reports or insights from professional organizations that your personas are members of. You'll find that professional organizations invest in educational information that is important to your personas and breakout sessions and seminars provide insights about trending issues in their sphere of influence.

Persona Example Workbook

Persona Name	Give your persona a name that is relevant to all of your internal stakeholders, so that when you use this name to describe a composite of your idea buyers, everyone knows who you are talking about. Be creative. Be descriptive. It's up to you.
Demographic Profile	1-2 sentences to describe "who" your persona is? Include relevant information that may inform marketers and content creators. Are the majority of stakeholders certified in a particular discipline? Write it down. Is there a specific career path or educational background that the majority of stakeholders possess? Write it down. At the top of the funnel, personal and demographic characteristics are increasingly important in reaching stakeholders early in the process. The premise is simple. The earlier in the process, the more of the focus is on the buyer, and their problems and situations - including personal and professional. Assume that 90% of the stakeholders were avid golfers? It's not too much of a stretch to consider that content about golf and the benefits to honing their professional skills might get their attention early.
Job Title(s)	Refer to your stakeholder roles to determine the titles included in this persona.
Education, Training, Certifications or Licenses	List any certifications, degrees or licenses that the stakeholder has.
Job Responsibilities	What are their objectives? What do they enjoy doing? What frustrates them most about their job?
Job Accountability	What are they held responsible for? What are their objectives and responsibilities?

Current Perceptions	“What’s been your experience with similar... products, providers, etc...” It’s important to understand the real-world perceptions of your buyers to assess the gaps between the value you believe that you offer and the reality of the perceptions of your customers.
Motivation to change	When do they seek out a new provider? Perhaps every project or need requires revisiting the initial requirements or they have new requirements and they want to find the absolutely best provider for their solution. What would cause them to change?
Barriers and Objections	What holds them back? What are their perceived barriers and objections with working with a company, similar to yours? You might discover that they really need to see case studies of companies like theirs to feel comfortable - you just haven’t made the effort to focus on building your evidence stories. This is valuable content which you can gate and request that a prospect exchange their name and email to download the full-information. Thus, there are important implications about how you design the functional aspects of your inbound marketing strategy and being thorough and curious about the users’s experiences informs your actions.
Decision-Criteria	What are the quantifiable or qualitative characteristics or measures that the stakeholder uses to determine the fit or performance of one stakeholder over another? What are their perceptions about their current options?
What’s a good cultural fit?	Culture and working relationships are critical to buyers. Use this question to better understand what makes a good cultural fit for a provider?
Where do they learn more?	In every technical discipline, stakeholders are trying to stay up-to-date on the latest trends and needs in their area of focus. Find out what groups they participate in - what conferences they attend, and even who they reach out to for a recommendation.
Success Criteria	What makes a successful project, sale, relationship? Understand their criteria. Look beyond the obvious: (on-time and on-budget) and try to understand how your service is a reflection on their professional expertise. You have the opportunity to make this stakeholder look good and be successful in their role. When you can accomplish this, you create a barrier to any other competitor entering this relationship.
Where do they learn more?	Describe how the stakeholder learns about her industry? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What LinkedIn groups are they a member of? 2. What industry groups are they a member of? 3. What blogs do they read every day? 4. Who are the thought-leaders in their industry?

Develop List of Questions for Each Stage of the Buyer’s Journey

“When you start with what’s at stake for the buyer,
 you earn the right to their attention.”
 – Jake Sorofman @jakesofofman (Gartner)

Putting it All Together

The Components of Your Strategic Roadmap



Self-Assessment

Unite the team by understanding where you are now, what marketing assets you have, and your organizational growth goals.



Buyer Personas

Discover your target Buyer Personas and the unique Buyer's Journey that each persona travels as they conduct their research online.



Build the Engine

Outline an engine for growth that converts, qualifies, and nurtures your leads with marketing automation.



Plan Inbound Campaigns

Develop a detailed content plan to attract personas by answering common questions via your blog and premium content offers.

Unite the Team with a Focus on the Customer

Successfully implementing inbound marketing in your organization requires everyone being on the same page. This means getting everyone around the table and allowing everyone an opportunity to share their perspective and share ownership.



WHAT IS OUR CURRENT SITUATION?

Goal setting requires understanding where you are today. A clear picture of your current situation can help kick start the results you will see from your inbound marketing efforts.

- What are your current website metrics?
- How many leads come through the website?
- What percentage of leads are qualified?
- What is the value of a lead?
- Can we convert resources into premium content?

WHAT'S THE COMPETITION UP TO?

Your competitor's online rank and activity is a solid source of competitive intelligence. This information helps us shape a strategy to stand apart from the pack and provides insight into opportunities for quick wins.

- Who would you consider your top 3 competitors?
- What do they do well?
- What do they not do well?
- What keyword terms would you like to rank for?
- Who ranks for them now?

Creating a Laser Focus on the Customer



WHO ARE OUR PERSONAS?

A successful GamePlan requires focus. This is why our first step is to create a limited number of core personas to focus on from the beginning.

Who are your most profitable customers?

What similarities do they share?

Are they in common industries?

Do they share common job titles?

What does a day in their shoes feel like?

What triggers their behavior to change?

WHAT ARE THEIR COMMON QUESTIONS?

Questions and problem solving drive the vast majority of search engine queries today. You need to know, anticipate, and answer your audience's common questions to start showing up in Google.

How do your persona's define their problems

What solutions do they think they need?

What solutions do they actually need?

Who is involved in the decision-making process?

What questions do your sales reps hear everyday?

What makes you different from your competitors?

Maximizing the Power of Personalization & Automation

Building the underlying engine that will drive deeper engagement and connection.



WHAT QUESTIONS NEED TO BE ANSWERED?

Each persona will receive a full lead nurturing strategy designed to educate them through their Buyer's Journey. These nurturing emails will answer common questions and address their objections, all while directing visitors back to the informational hub, your website.

What Inbound Marketing Campaigns should be planned in the Next 12 months?

What type of content resonates with our target personas?

What are the titles of several Awareness Stage eBooks?

What social media platforms will have the best ROI for our brand, based on our personas and campaigns?

HOW WILL THE SYSTEM BE SET UP?

Marketing automation tools enable you to perform powerful things when they're set up properly. We will combine our understanding of marketing software and marketing strategy to outline a system that will deliver a personalized experience for each persona.

What content will be created for each persona?

What stage in the Buyer's Journey will they focus?

What actions will impact lead score?

How will lead intelligence impact your sales team?

Outlining Inbound Marketing Campaigns

Transforming Your Website Into a Resource Destination



WHAT RESOURCES WILL ATTRACT VISITORS?

At the Awareness Stage, our focus is to attract visitors with content that answers their questions and solves their problems. This comes in the form of Awareness Stage Premium Content Offers and blog posts.

What Inbound Marketing Campaigns should be planned in the Next 12 months?

What type of content resonates with our target personas?

What are the titles of several Awareness Stage eBooks?

What social media platforms will have the best ROI for our brand, based on our personas and campaigns?

WHAT KEYWORDS SHOULD WE TARGET?

As long as there are search engines, there will be a need for effective, ethical search engine optimization (SEO). Failing to consider SEO could doom your campaigns from the start.

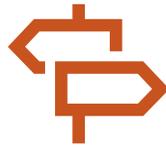
What long-tail keywords can we target?

What questions can we optimize towards?

How can we maximize local SEO?

How can we integrate SEO with effective headlines?

How can we track the ROI of our SEO work?



Utilizing Your Strategic Roadmap

At the end of the process, you'll take away a clear roadmap that details all of the elements that need to be created and the systems that need to be configured.

The Inbound RoadMap clearly lays out the action steps you need to take in order to set up your Inbound Marketing Funnel inside a marketing automation tool like HubSpot.

It also identifies the Awareness Stage eBooks that should be created to launch your Inbound Marketing Campaigns. The end result is a complete strategy created by a unified team that is 100% centered around the questions that your buyer personas are asking and their common objections.

Your Inbound RoadMap is critical for success.

revx Marketing

**Choosing the
Right Business Partner
is One of the Most Important
Choices You Can Make.**

REVX Marketing helps companies scale customer acquisition and drive profitable growth. Our clients need a strategic partner who can demonstrate accountability and a solid return on their investment.

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