

THE FUTURE OF MARKETING

What Will Your Marketing Look Like
_____ in 2017? _____



INTRODUCTION



If we could see the future,
marketing would be a heck of a lot easier.

Imagine knowing which online channels your prospective customers would be hanging out on a year or two from now; or knowing what types of content those prospective customers would be consuming.

Armed with these future insights, you could spend less time trying to understand your target audience and more time engaging that audience.

Or imagine knowing ahead of time which emerging technologies would end up having the biggest impact on your bottom line. You wouldn't have to worry about figuring out which tools you should be investing your time and energy into. If you could see the future, you'd just know.

Unfortunately—and I know this may come as a shock—our engineers here at HubSpot have yet to master the whole time travel thing.

So for now, we'll need to continue to analyze past performance in order to inform the marketing we do in the present.

That doesn't mean, however, that we can't make some informed predictions as to the way things are headed.

INTRODUCTION (continued)



Inbound marketing, after all, is “future proof,” in the sense that it sits beneath all of the changes that can (and do) occur. As new networks and technologies emerge—and existing networks and technologies evolve—we can incorporate those changes into the inbound methodology of attracting, converting, closing, and delighting.



In this guide, we’ll explore some of the biggest marketing trends that you’ll be likely to encounter in the next few years, along with some tips for how you can capitalize on them.

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According to a study from the [Leapfrog Marketing Institute](#), **93%** of CMOs agree that they are under more pressure to deliver measurable ROI (return on investment) today than they were just a few years ago.

What's more, a recent [State of Inbound](#) survey shows that “proving the ROI of marketing activities” is the number one challenge marketers are facing.

Well hardly a novel concept, data-driven marketing is becoming less and less of a “nice-to-have” and more and more of a necessity. Marketing isn't something that you can haphazardly throw money at any more; all investments need to be accounted for and tied back to the bottom line.

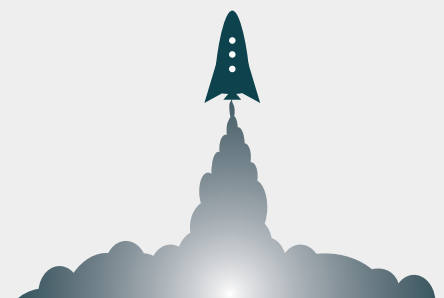
In the past, marketers often relied on gut instincts and personal preferences in order to make decisions. When faced with questions like, “Which color should we use for this?” or “Which bit of text should we use for that?,” the answer was usually something along the lines of, “Whichever one we feel like using.”

In the future, data--not opinion--will inform marketers every step of the way.

So, when faced with questions like, “Which color should we use for this?” or “Which bit of text should we use for that?,” the answer will be something along the lines of, “We'll use the one that performed better in [the A/B test](#).”

Today, businesses around the globe are embracing a more scientific, quantifiable approach to marketing. And this approach requires collecting and analyzing data. Lots of data. To quote astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson:

“Any time scientists disagree, it's because we have insufficient data. Then we can agree on what kind of data to get; we get the data; and the data solves the problem.”



Or, as Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once noted:



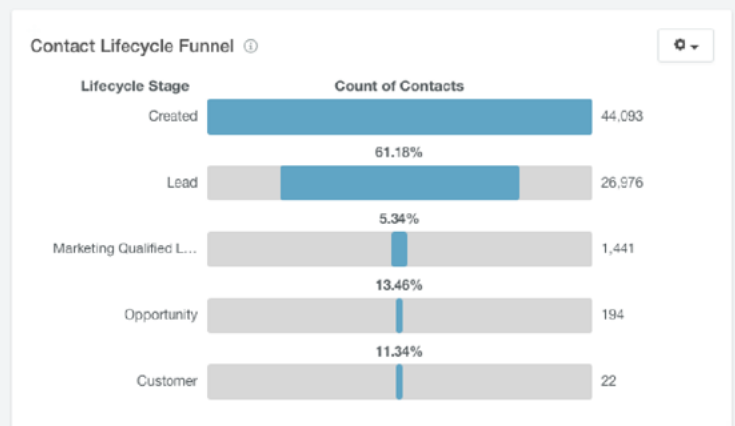
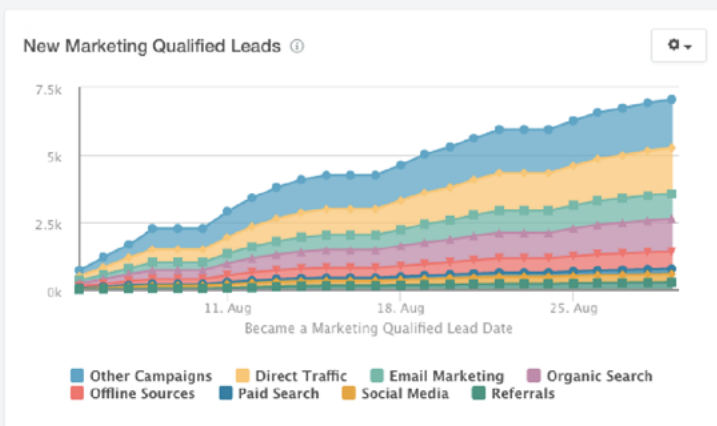
“It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.”

Historically, marketing has been heavy on the theories and short on the facts. But since the advent of marketing analytics software, which can measure website visits and CTA clicks and conversion rates and more, the art of marketing has been gradually transforming into a science.

In order to maximize engagement and, ultimately, drive more business, marketers need to scientifically analyze what’s working and what isn’t.

The first step: **Make some observations.**

Monitor the metrics that are important to your business and report on those metrics regularly.



(Screenshot: [HubSpot's Reporting Add-On](#))

Some of the metrics we like to report on at HubSpot include:

- **New Marketing Qualified Leads** - How many of your leads are ready to be passed off to your sales team, and where (e.g., organic search, direct traffic, social media, etc.) are those leads coming from?
- **Contact Lifecycle Funnel** - How are your contacts distributed throughout your funnel? (i.e., What percentage are leads? What percentage are marketing qualified leads? Opportunities? Customers?)
- **Blog Leads by Original Source** - The people who convert on your blog ... where are they coming from? (e.g., organic search, direct traffic, social media, etc.)
- **Contacts by Conversion** - How many contacts are converting on your most popular pages? What types of conversions are most common for each page? (e.g., contact to lead, lead to marketing qualified lead, etc.)
- **Lead to Customer Conversion Rate** - What % of your leads become customers?
- **Contacts by Persona** - How many of your contacts belong to each of your buyer persona groups (assuming you have more than one)?

Note for HubSpot customers: You can view all of these metrics (and more) in a single dashboard using our new [Reporting Add-On](#).

Once you've developed some benchmarks, or a baseline of how your marketing machine is operating, you can start asking questions, such as: "Why is this metric always so low on this day?" or, "What caused this huge increase in this metric? (And how can we repeat it?)".

From there, you can start forming—and testing--some hypotheses.

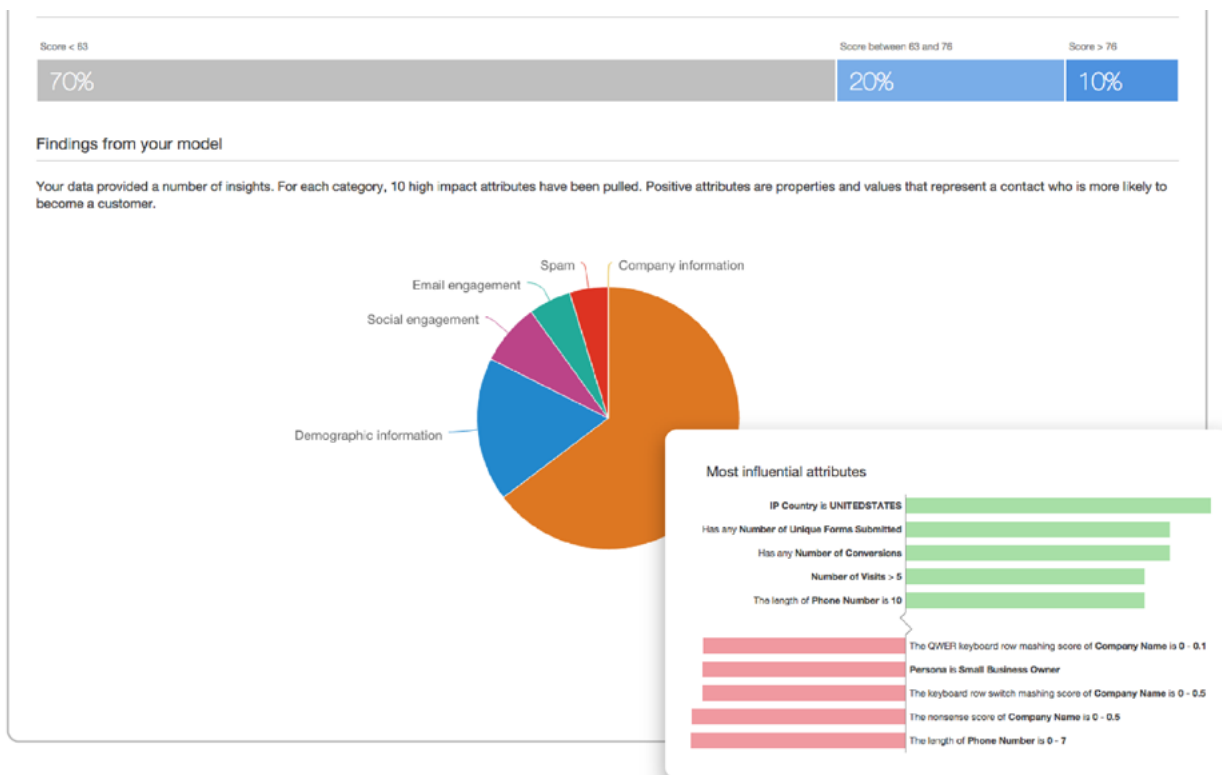
At HubSpot, for example, our blogging team recently had a hunch about what might happen to certain metrics if they increased (or decreased) their publishing frequency. So, [they tested it](#).

Ultimately, the more you can learn about who your customers are, and how your marketing/sales funnel is performing, the better you'll be at predicting which of your new leads will have a high likelihood of becoming customers.

The tricky part, of course, is bringing together all of the relevant data and crunching the numbers.

Predictive lead scoring technology can take a lot of the guesswork out of this process.

With HubSpot's [Predictive Lead Scoring](#), for example, we sort through all of your contacts, compare attributes from engaged and unengaged contacts, and then generate a model that rates your contacts on how likely they are to convert.



By identifying which of your leads have a high probability of converting, you can narrow the focus of your personalization efforts even further (more on that next) and arm your sales team with the content and context they need to close deals.

According to a study from [Janrain](#), nearly three-fourths (74%) of online consumers get frustrated with websites when the content they see on the page has nothing to do with their interests.

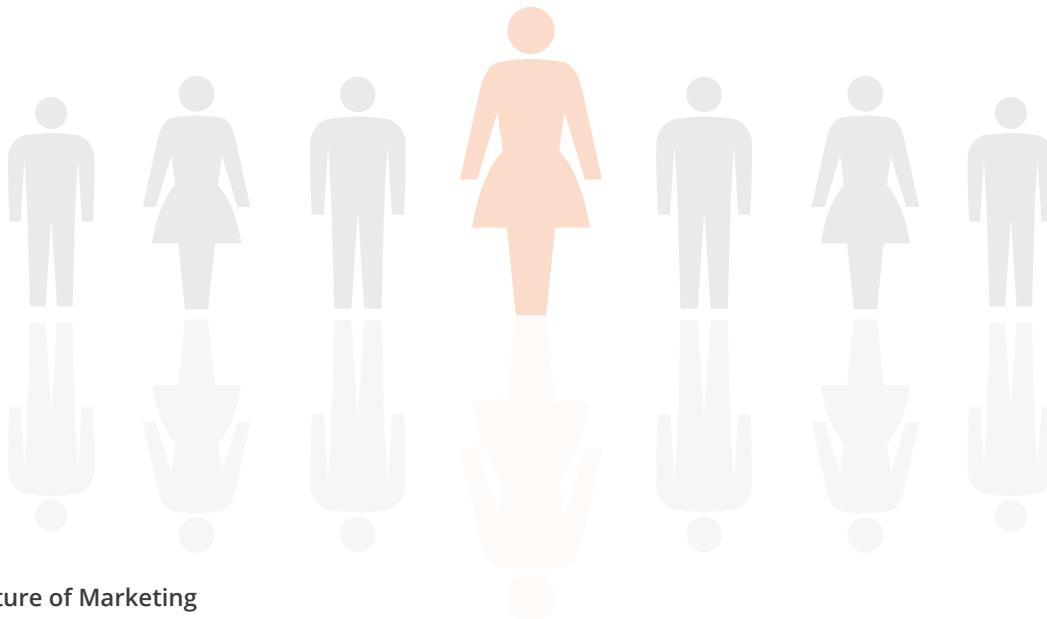
This is just one indication that the traditional, one-size-fits-all approach to serving content is on the decline.

In a world where music streaming services like Spotify and Pandora allow listeners to create personalized playlists and radio stations, and commerce websites like Etsy and Amazon provide shoppers with personalized purchase suggestions, it's becoming more and more imperative for marketers to incorporate personalization into their strategies.

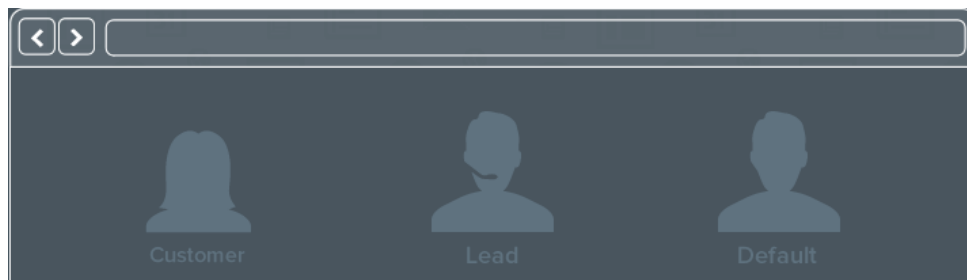
And no, we're not just talking about adding first names to the beginnings of emails ([although that can potentially help you increase your click-through rates](#)).

The goal of personalization isn't to creep people out by showing how much of their personal information you can spit back at them; the goal is to provide people with an experience that reflects their past preferences and behaviors, and that anticipates what they are going to want or need next.

For example, if someone downloads your ebook on "X", and then downloads your ebook on "Y", you can send them a personalized email containing your ebook on "Z".



Of course, personalization isn't limited to email (or ebooks). Using smart content, you can personalize your homepage, landing pages, site pages, forms, and calls-to-action (CTAs). And you can target the content you display based on anything you know about your contacts and visitors, from their location and referral source to where they are in the buying process.

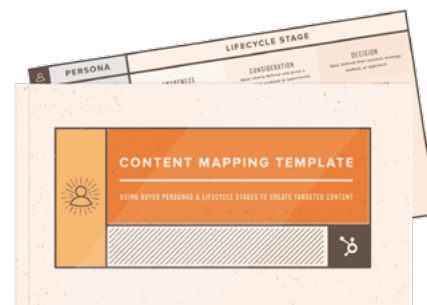


Using smart content, you can ensure that customers, leads, and first-time visitors all have different experiences, which are tailored to their specific circumstances.

So, how do you figure out what content to show each of the different groups you're targeting?

It all starts with creating buyer personas: representations of your ideal customers. By identifying the core characteristics and preferences of your prospects, and understanding their goals and pain points, you'll be able to figure out the topics (and formats) that really resonate with them.

And if you need a little help, we've got you covered: you can download our free [Buyer Persona](#) and [Content Mapping](#) templates.



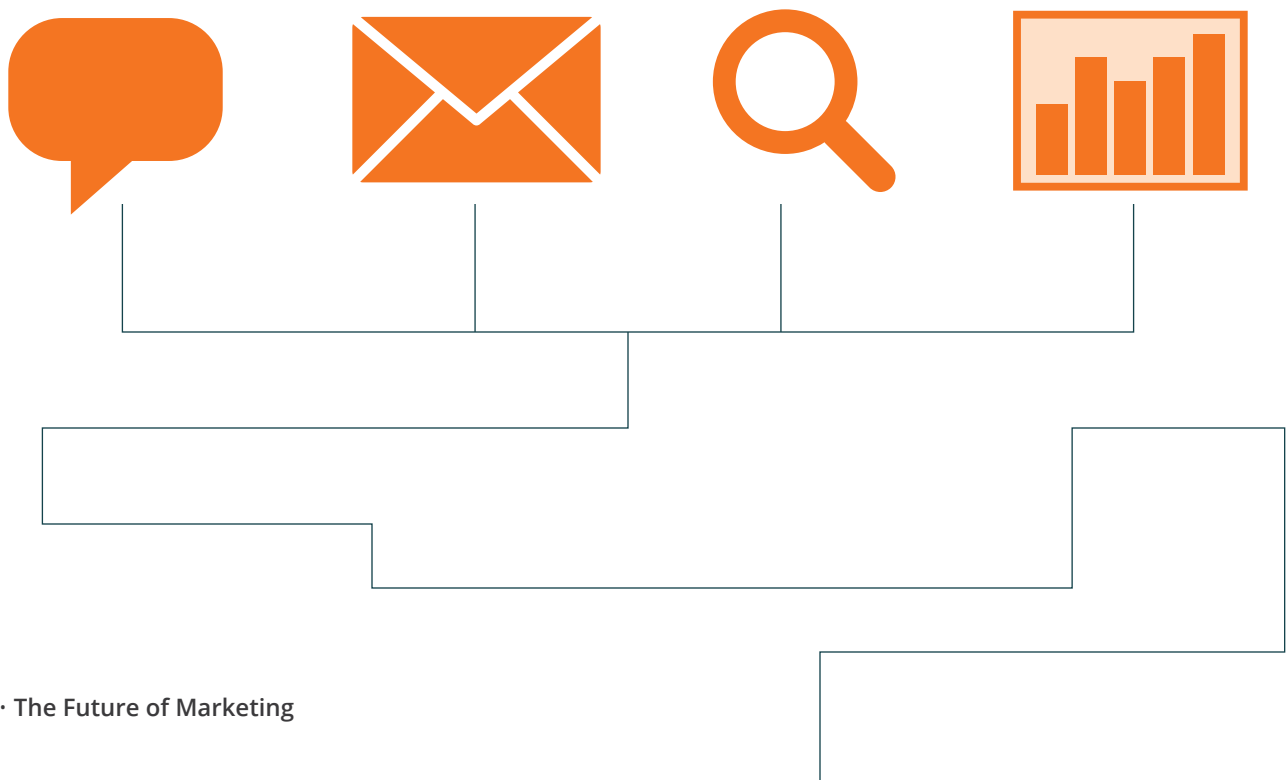
In the olden days, your marketing channels and tactics existed in silos. You did your search engine optimization (SEO) over here, and your social media marketing over there, and then you did your blogging someplace entirely different.

The problem with this setup, of course, is that it's nearly impossible to get all of the different technologies being utilized to communicate with one another. When you're working with a "Franken-system," i.e., a system that's hobbled together from bits and pieces of different technologies, there's no easy way to get a holistic view of your marketing.

Since the advent of integrated marketing platforms, the headaches surrounding Franken-systems have started to disappear. Using an all-in-one system, you can manage your SEO, social media, blogging, landing pages, CTAs, email, marketing automation, and analytics all in one place.

Instead of logging into eight different software tools, you can log into one.

What's more, with an integrated marketing platform, there's no risk of getting confused by disparate naming conventions or different ways of calculating certain metrics. Instead, everything is streamlined.

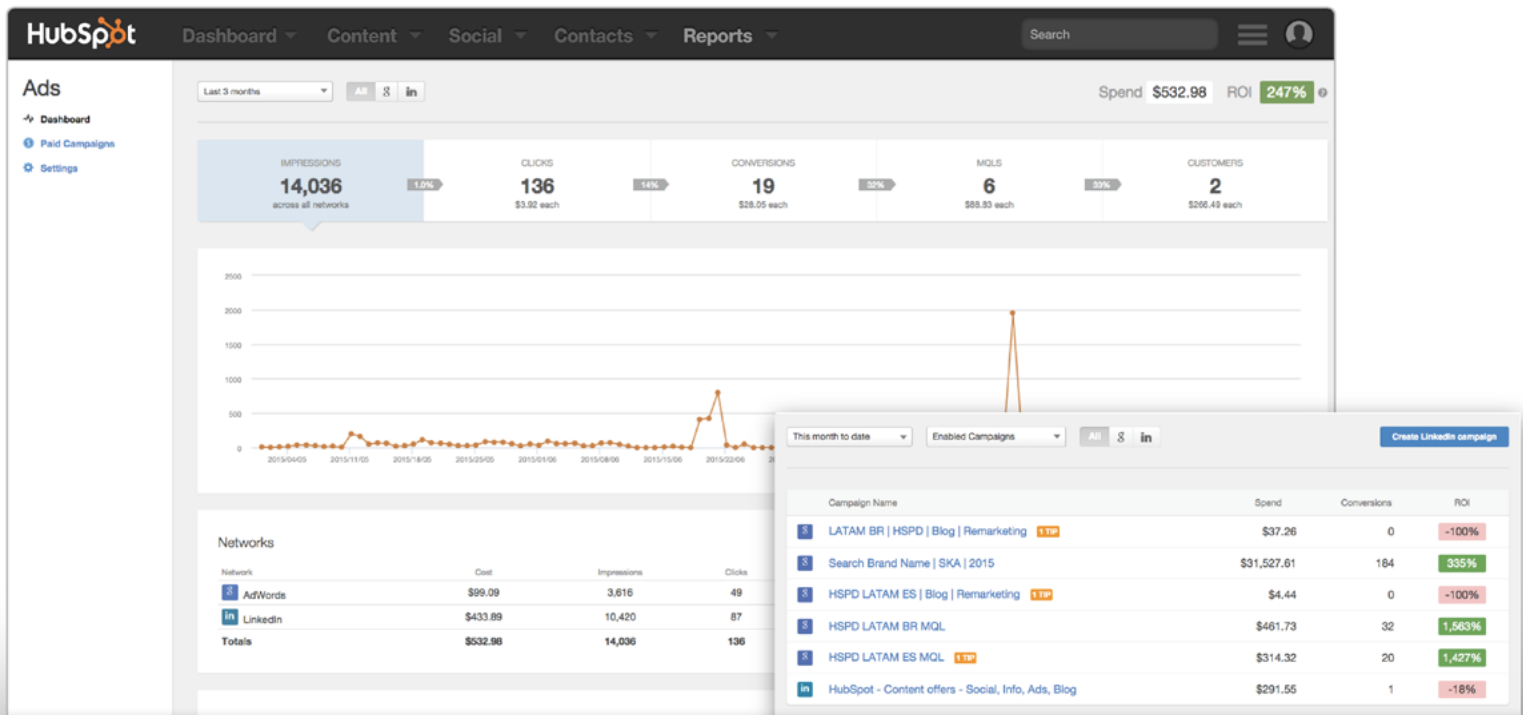


One of the pieces that's been largely missing from the marketing integration puzzle? Paid advertising. But of course, that's going to change.

Now, for you inbound marketing purists out there, you might be thinking to yourselves, "Paid advertising? That's against the rules!"

The reality, however, is that businesses looking to jumpstart their growth can benefit from paid advertising ... provided they use it correctly. That means developing a comprehensive list of keywords you're trying to target, doing research to figure out how competitive those keywords are, and—of course—tracking your conversions so you know what's working and what isn't.

Keep in mind, however, that with paid advertising, you're really only *renting* your audience: Once you stop putting money in, the ads disappear and so does the audience.



Note: If you're a HubSpot customer, you can easily integrate it into your marketing platform with our [Ads Add-on](#). Using the add-on, you can create ad campaigns, measure conversions and return-on-investment (ROI), and optimize ads to improve performance all from within HubSpot.

To be clear, you don't need to invest in paid advertising. (And as you'll learn in the next section, the world of online advertising will be undergoing some serious changes in the not-too-distant future.)

However, if you do want to supplement your inbound activities with some paid ads, keeping a tight integration with the rest of your marketing software will make life a heck of a lot easier.

Of course, this isn't just true for paid advertising. In the future, your sales and services technology will also be integrated into an all-in-one solution.

Imagine being able to see billing data alongside website site traffic data, or being able to trigger email workflows based on help-desk submissions. In the future, tighter integrations between marketing, sales, and services tech will make this possible.

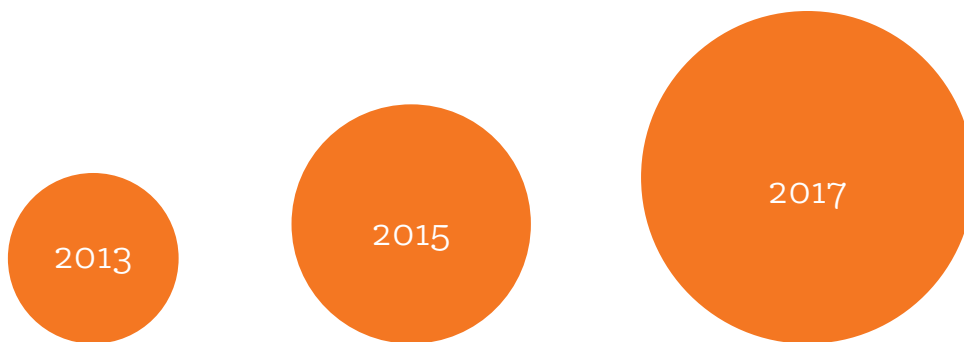
(Note for HubSpot customers: you can start making this a reality with the [HubSpot Connect integration platform](#).)



Back in 2013, the total amount spent on native advertising, according to [BI Intelligence](#), was \$4.7 billion.

In 2015, it was estimated that native ad spend reached around \$11 billion.

And in 2017, that figure is projected to reach about \$17.5 billion.



Native Advertising Revenue (U.S.)

“Traditional” online advertising, on the other hand, will have several hurdles to contend with in the next few years.

Google, for example, has already started blocking video ads (made with Adobe Flash) in its Chrome browser. (Or, more accurately, the updated browser pauses Flash ads from loading automatically, so users can decide whether or not they want to engage.

Apple, meanwhile, now lets you download apps that block ads in its Safari browser--a move that’s causing quite a stir.

A \$70 billion mobile-marketing industry hangs in the balance, according to [The Wall Street Journal](#). If fewer and fewer iPhone and iPad users are seeing ads, publishers will be making less and less money. The stage will be set for a new model to take over.

Ever notice one of those “sponsored by” or “brand publisher” or “paid post” tags on an article you’re reading? That’s an example of native advertising in action.



Instead of interrupting people, native ads are designed to fit naturally into the publications (or other media) people are enjoying. The ad is the content, and vice versa.

In addition to “sponsored stories” appearing in publications both new (e.g., BuzzFeed) and old (e.g., *The New York Times*), examples of native advertising include:

- sponsored videos on popular YouTube channels
- sponsored discussions on Reddit
- sponsored products on Amazon

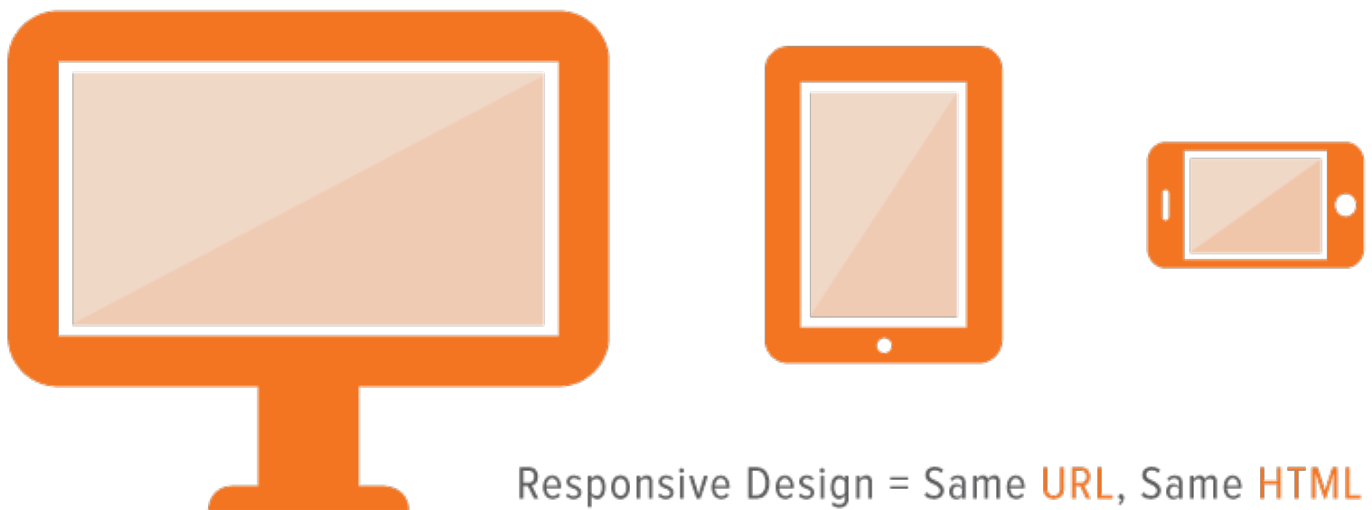
When used correctly, native advertising offers marketers an opportunity to expand their reach without interrupting anybody. Thinking of launching your own native ad campaign? These blog posts can help you get started:

- [How to Build a Successful Native Advertising Campaign](#)
- [The Science Behind Why Native Ads Work](#)
- [Why Your Native Advertising Campaigns Will Fail Without Inbound Marketing](#)

Since the release of its “[Mobile Friendly](#)” update in 2015, Google doesn’t just consider mobile optimization an important factor for user experience, it uses mobile optimization as a ranking factor.

When it comes to optimizing your website for search, and to providing a consistent experience to visitors who are accessing your site from a variety of different devices, [Google recommends using responsive design](#).

With responsive design, content automatically adapts to different screen sizes and orientations. The technology also employs the same HTML and uses the same URLs across all devices, which makes it easier for search engines to crawl and index your website’s pages.



Best of all, responsive design can adapt to new, internet-enabled devices as they appear on the market.

While once confined to clunky computers, the internet is now available across countless devices; from phones, tablets, and wearables, to smart TVs, refrigerators, and cars. According to [The Internet of Things](#) report from the MIT Technology Review, in 2017 we can expect there to be more than 20 billion internet-connected devices in the world.

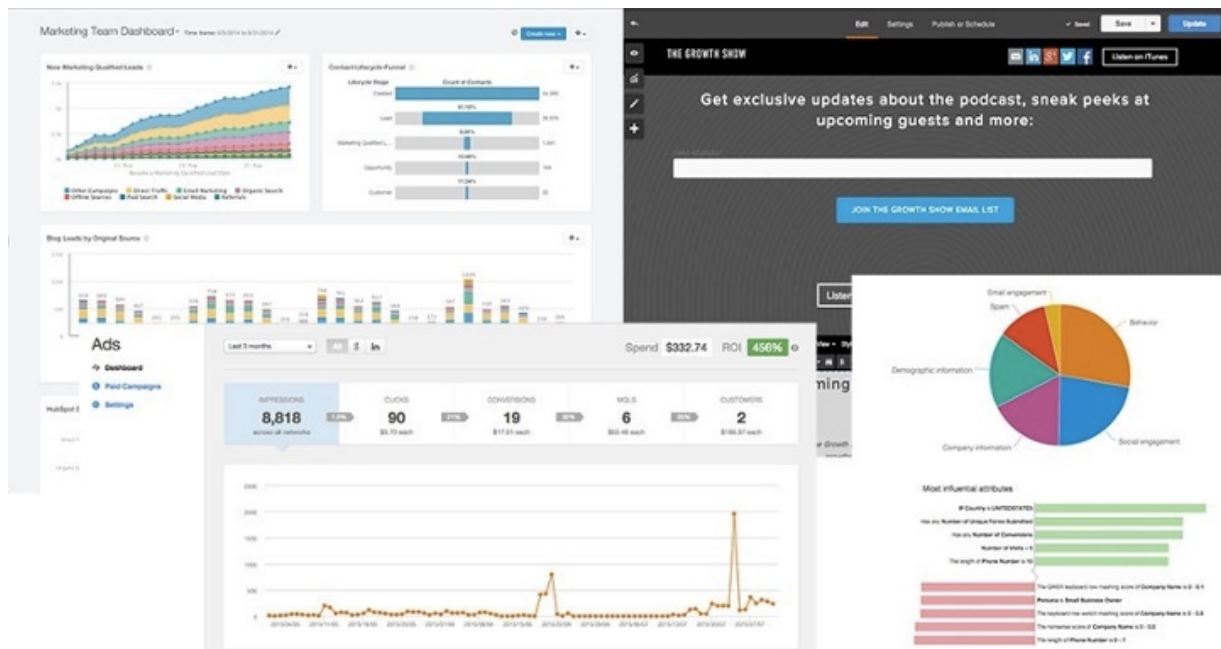
Are you ready for the future?

THANKS FOR READING



The future of marketing can never be known for certain. But by studying and learning from the past, and by investing in the latest technological innovations, we can prepare ourselves for the years ahead.

Want to take a closer look at the new marketing and sales tools we've been cooking up at HubSpot? [You can check them out here.](#)



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