TOMORROW PEOPLE
BUILDING BRANDS, LEADS & CUSTOMERS

What Exactly is Inbound Marketing?



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Inbound marketing is a new and more powerful way to market businesses and brands.

It uses a ‘pull’ approach to attract potential customers, when they are actively searching for products and services - instead of the traditional marketing ‘push’ approach of selling to people when they may not be ready to buy or may not want what is being sold

Inbound marketing takes the different aspects used in traditional outbound marketing -

Email, PPC and SEO and adds this to content marketing, social media and advanced marketing automation technology to create a complete, measurable system that can consistently bring in more leads and business.



Five things every business-owner needs to know about inbound marketing:

Inbound marketing is very advanced and effective, but relatively simple to put into place.

Inbound marketing is proven to help businesses achieve more, in less time, at less cost - giving you a 15% increase to top line growth at 60% less cost than traditional marketing methods.

Inbound marketing focuses on ‘pull’ rather than ‘push’ marketing to tap into existing demand.

Inbound marketing can form the backbone of revenue management, creating more leads and more revenue with less effort.

Inbound marketing lets you view and analyse the results of your marketing activity - as it’s happening.

Most companies are keen to win more business whilst reducing costs. Inbound marketing allows them to do that by providing a clearer and more transparent strategy for attracting leads and winning new customers.

Why marketing isn't keeping up with business

You may have noticed that markets are changing - fast.
Marketing needs to change too.

The whole culture of the way people choose and purchase products is changing. Along with that, most businesses are recognising the need to reduce their spend whilst maintaining their profile. Companies also want to work in a more transparent way and that extends to their marketing.



What's changed?

On their own, the old outbound tactics have become less effective. This is due to the massive growth of the internet, changes in buying behaviour and to recent updates to the search engines:

1. Google has changed:
The world's most powerful search engine has raised the game for businesses everywhere. The PANDA (aka Farmer) update means that high quality content is essential.

2. Google +1 is here:
The arrival of Google+1 means that it's even more important to produce good content and be proactive in Twitter and other social networks. +1s, Likes, Follows and Shares now all play a part in search engine rankings.

3. Poor quality content just doesn't pay any more:
You need to take a more rounded strategic approach to content - across all the different channels.

4. The old SEO tricks just won't work:
The changes implemented by Google mean that your company's credibility - and its ranking over its competitors - relies on great content, SEO expertise and strategic inbound marketing approaches.

5. Your customers are online:
The behaviour of your potential customers is changing more and more. 78% of internet users conduct product research online (Source: Hubspot Marketing). With inbound marketing, you can lead the conversation and reap the business rewards.

How to find out what your customers actually want

Inbound marketing allows you to find out what your customers actually want, when they want it - and to meet that demand.

The first step in this process is understanding the demand. This is because it helps you to develop great content and get it in the right places so it is found by potential customers when they're looking for your type of product or service.

With inbound marketing you make it easy for people to find you and buy from you - instead of working so hard to sell to people when they don't want your product or service or they're not actively looking for it



The human side of selling - and buying

None of us like to be sold to. We like to feel that we have control over the decisions we make and about what we buy. It's no surprise that with the growth of the internet, the majority of internet users conduct online research when they're looking for a product or service.



From creating your audience...

This starts with a clear strategy for your content so that it matches what your buyers want at each stage of their buying cycle. By understanding what people want and creating different types of content, you then engage with people more powerfully than with traditional outbound approaches alone. You start by building up confidence in your potential customers by becoming a thought leader in your industry.



...to attracting your buyers

The thought leader approach means connecting with your potential customers online and sharing your knowledge when people are at their own stage of being ready and interested to talk about your particular product or service. Alongside this, it's essential to build up a strong and very credible online presence to create trust in your audience. You do this with case studies, customer testimonials and customer reviews. This approach is all about the specific stage your potential buyer is at and what they want.

Inbound marketing: How it works

Inbound marketing combines content marketing, social media and marketing automation to create a complete process and strategy for building audiences and generating leads. It does this through:



Content marketing

This is about creating and designing content that people want, based on demand. The content could be white papers, eguides, webcasts, mobile apps, animations and video. Whatever format it's in, the essential thing is for it to be of a high enough quality to build your profile as a trusted source of information. The other essential thing is to ensure that you have a regular flow of this high quality content on your website and your online profiles to keep the visitors and search engines coming back for more.



Search Engine Optimisation

Search engine optimisation is a natural - and very important - part of online marketing. It enables you to analyse and identify the online demand for your product or service. Once you understand the demand by seeing what people are actively looking for, you know which keywords to optimise your content for. By consistently optimising all the content you're producing, you can boost your search engine rankings and drive more targeted (and more potentially profitable) traffic to your website.



Online marketing

Online 'hubs' are where people go to find information and get up to date with issues in their industry. This type of resource may be a website, a blog, a forum, an industry publication, or a community created through social media. These are your potential distribution hubs. So send out your content to these sources and they'll help drive traffic to your website. Your content could be: press releases published in key industry publications and websites, discussions, polls and surveys on communities that your target audience use.



Lead nurturing and marketing automation

Lead nurturing and marketing automation allow you to match your content with the specific stage your potential buyer is at, whether that's "It's all new to me, but I'm interested.", "This sounds like something useful." or "I'm not sure it's for me at all, but I wanted some free information."...Whatever stage it is, your website should provide content that is relevant to the audience you have generated.

Depending on the stage your visitor is at, this could be content that gives them an overview of a specific topic, an update on an industry issue or an invitation to an online community. Marketing automation allows you to deliver the right type of content to actively nurture visitors into leads and leads into customers.



Applying technology

To ensuring that inbound marketing works effectively and consistently, you need to make it a strategy that is both repeatable and transparent. You can achieve this by using technology platforms that actually allow you to see, in all your content, what people like most and what drives the highest number of leads and sales. This technology also lets you view which channels are the most effective in bringing traffic to your website - and which traffic turns into leads and sales.

Five steps to effective inbound marketing

Inbound marketing is advanced, but it's also easy to use and relatively simple to put into place. To make it work you need to follow a methodology covering all the key aspects:



01. Listening

Research, analysis and marketing segmentation all add up to give you a clear picture of where your customers are.



02. Creating

High quality content in the right places targets the demand for your product or service.



03. Engaging

Publishing and promoting your strategic online data through social media and internet channels builds a two-way relationship between you and your potential customers.



04. Transforming

Lead management, scoring and nurturing transforms these conversations into leads - and leads into customers.



05. Growing

Analysing, repeating and updating the process gives you continuous improvement and results.

Why inbound marketing makes accountants smile

Instead of an approach that may or may not win you new leads, inbound marketing gives you a continuous flow of new leads and new revenue.

It allows you to achieve more, but spend less at the same time. Recent research has shown that inbound marketing-focused companies experience a 62% lower cost per lead than businesses that depend mainly on outbound marketing methods. This means that you could spend £20,000 on outbound activity alone - or spend £12,400 less with inbound marketing and achieve the same result.

Inbound marketing allows you to achieve more by adding a new approach to what you're already doing. It's about focusing on the demand that's already out there for your product or service - rather than spending time and effort trying to create the demand.

So you can still use the traditional outbound marketing approaches you've been working with, but apply inbound marketing as the core of your approach to increase your leads and revenue.

Want to know more about making inbound marketing work for your business? The Zoober LinkedIn community brings you the latest news and views on this innovative form of marketing. Join the community now!

Applying inbound marketing in a strategic way can lead to results such as:

- **Improved reach**
- **More visitors to your website**
- **Wider sales pipeline**
- **Heightened awareness**
- **Higher-quality leads**
- **Increased revenue Lower costs**

