Free
How-to Guide

Really.
MARKETING MEASURED BY SALES

HOW-TO GUIDE:
B2B INBOUND MARKETING



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Chris has enjoyed a marketing career for over 13 years both agency and client side. A heavyweight direct marketing and results driven marketer, his experience spans a wide variety of industries.

Results are his passion and he has a proven track record of creating and managing B2B marketing strategies that engage with the right decision-makers, nurture them, convert them to qualified sales opportunities and generate ROI - the most important measure of all!

As Business Director at Really B2B (a Sunday Times Top 100 firm and ranked agency in B2B Marketing's Agency League), Chris' role is to develop effective lead generation marketing strategies for our clients that deliver the all important numbers. Being highly experienced across all areas of the marketing mix, Chris likes to keep his finger firmly on the B2B marketing pulse and identifying key marketing trends, but only if they are 100% accountable for revenue generation.



Every day we experience life on the frontline of a marketing battleground, with anything from 200 to 20,000 advertising messages being fired at our senses.

Whether it's television ads, print ads, leaflets, door drops or cold-calling, we are being bombarded. But thankfully, we are relatively protected. Firstly, it's not possible for a person to process this many messages, so the majority of it simply becomes white noise. And secondly, we are finding more and more ways to combat these daily interruptions – spam filters, pop-up blockers, unsubscribe lists and call blocking.

But, what if you are on the other side of no man's land and you are simply trying to generate leads or increase sales for your business? Well, then you've really got two options. Either accept the fact that a percentage of your prospects wont see your marketing messages or, start using an inbound marketing strategy and let the marketing and sales-ready prospects come to you.



THE WHAT AND WHY OF INBOUND MARKETING

The fundamental idea behind inbound marketing is that rather than interrupting people with marketing messages, you can instead be more in-tune with their current issues, pain points and buying behaviour (using the internet to research which product meets their needs), and therefore pull them towards your company.

Buying relationships are now based on shared knowledge, trust and thought leadership, and inbound marketing is a great way to fulfil these requirements with your prospects.

By providing people with free, interesting and solution-filled content, you give them the chance to realise that you understand their needs and wants, you can offer a solution and you're not being pushy or salesy. This type of approach will give prospects the freedom to engage with your content at their own convenience and come to understand that you are the best company for them to work with.

I'll discuss inbound marketing in greater detail over the next few pages, but if you're not sure whether this new strategy is worth trying, then just be aware that "**Inbound marketing-dominated organizations experience a cost per lead 61% lower than outbound marketing-dominated organizations**" – Hubspot.

So, it might just be worth reading on...

THE ART OF GETTING FOUND



KEYWORDS

Unless you've been living under a rock with your fingers in your ears for the last few years, you'll have heard the phrase 'Search Engine Optimisation'. This is the process of making sure your website appears as highly as possible on the search engine results pages (SERPs) when someone types a keyword into a search engine.

Inbound marketing is about giving people the information they want, when they want it – targeting high-quality leads and not just carpet bombing a particular sector or market.

So, to make sure your content/company is found by people who are specifically looking for it, you're going to need to do some research on your prospects. By getting to know their needs, wants, concerns and pain points (through research with both customers and prospects), you'll be able to determine the words and phrases they would most likely type into a search engine. These will be the keywords you need to include in all your content and blog posts.

Another way to find keywords is to check out your own website traffic statistics and review how people are currently finding you - what words/phrases did they type into a search engine to locate you? On a broader scale, you should also review social media sites to see what your prospects are talking about, because these subjects and issues will likely be the basis of their next web search. For example, look at industry specific/specialist groups on LinkedIn and see what people are discussing.

Now that you have these keywords, don't rest on your laurels. There may be other words and phrases you haven't thought of, or even related keywords which have less competition from other sites. To carry out this further research, use a keyword tool such as Google Keywords. A tool like this will not only offer you keywords related to the one you have chosen, but will also review your website to provide keyword ideas as well as telling you the average number of times these keywords have been used in searches over the past 12 months.



BLOGGING AND SEO

In regards to inbound marketing, blogging is king. According to a recent marketing report "**Companies that blog get 55% more leads than those who don't**".

By creating blog posts which specifically address and solve the pains points of your prospects, you are speaking directly to them, demonstrating thought leadership and showing that you offer a solution to their problem.

Remember, it's not a sales pitch! Now that you are using an inbound marketing strategy, you simply want to write content that speaks to the prospect and lets them make their own decision. If you offer helpful and informative posts, they will come back for more.

To make sure your blog post gets the best possible exposure on the search engine results pages (SERPs), make sure you include your important Keyword or Keyword phrase in the title and sporadically throughout the text. If your post is well-written and relevant, you may find that people will want to share it with others by posting a link on their website or social media page – retweeting to their followers on Twitter or sharing with their connections on LinkedIn. These 'backlinks' to your site are taken into account by search engines and will push your post further up the SERPs for that keyword.

Once prospects reach your blog you have a great opportunity to convert them to a lead. Your blog is the key way in which to promote and drive visitors to a more detailed ebook/white paper, which will require them to provide some contact details.

As with all things in today's marketing world, make sure you are using metrics and data capture technology on your blogs so you can see not just who viewed them, but if they also clicked on the Call To Action link and visited your landing page etc.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media's position in marketing is continuing to grow and with updated metrics, it's beginning to help increase leads, sales and revenue too. In regards to search engine optimisation, social media is also vitally important because search engines such as Google take into account the level of conversation, number of followers and links in your social media posts when creating organic search results.

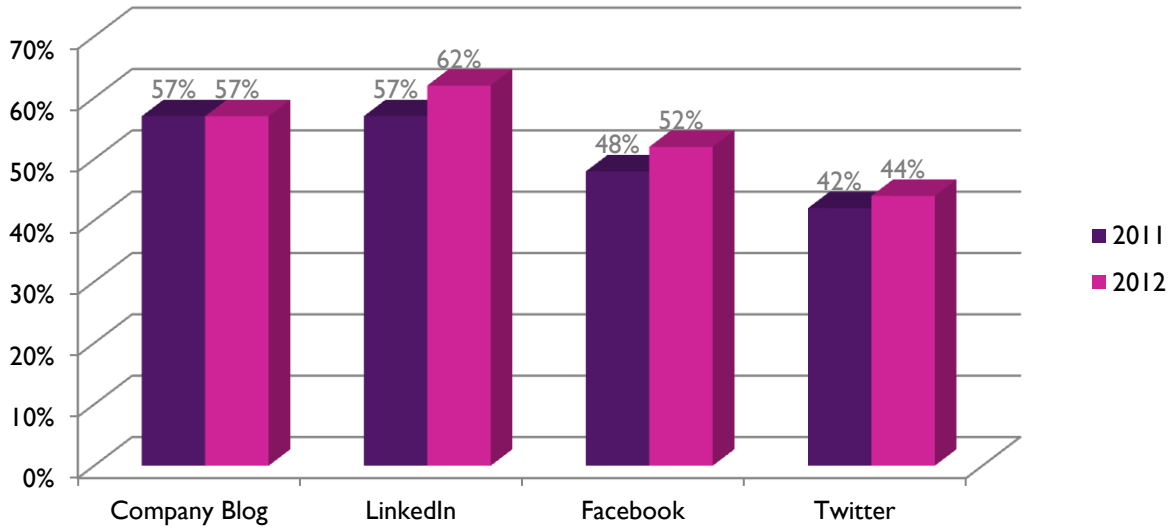
An important aspect of inbound marketing is the message you convey on your social pages. As mentioned before, it's not about the hard sell. Sites like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook are simply other opportunities for you to show your thought leadership and provide free, helpful content... all while building a 'community'. The social media aspect of marketing requires a strong foundation of followers in order for the messages/content to spread. So, be sure to start building your social network by connecting with employees, business partners, competitors, industry leaders and customers. This will then allow the followers of your followers to be influenced too and share your content.

By building a large community and generating 'Likes' and followers on your account, you'll see that prospects find you more 'trustworthy' and will be more likely to interact with you. Always remember to add a link to your website or content on your social media posts because if a follower relates to a particular post, they can simply click the link and view your site/content immediately. Also, regularly share third-party and industry-related information too as it will show that you genuinely care about offering valuable information to your prospects.

'But where are the financial returns?' I hear you cry. Well, if you've already read my B2B Marketing Survival Guide for 2013 you'll see that the real value of Social Media is in its data. Real-time behavioural data such as 'Likes', shares, industry of follower and job title of follower can be coupled with your current marketing activities and database to help you improve the personalisation and segmentation of your other communications. But, we'll discuss in more depth later just how to generate leads from social media.

In the meantime, if you want to know if a social media aspect of inbound marketing will actually work, check this out...

CUSTOMER ACQUISITION BY SOCIAL CHANNEL



- The number of companies who had acquired a customer through the main social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter) is on the increase proving this can be an effective channel in promoting your content and acquiring new business.
- In 2012, a whopping 62% of respondents in this particular survey had acquired a customer through LinkedIn

For more information on social media, keep your eyes open for our 'How-to Guide: Social Media' - coming soon.



VALUABLE CONTENT – EBOOKS AND WHITE PAPERS

So now what? How do prospects become leads and enter your sales funnel?

If your blog and social media posts have been doing their job, then people will know what to expect from your content and should be looking forward to the next piece. This is where your ebooks and white papers come into play. It'll be the same informative, entertaining and helpful text, only this time on a larger scale and they'll have to enter their contact details to get it.

This sounds like you're now going on a sales push, but that's not the case. Granted, you are now going to ask for their details, but you'll be giving them even more valuable information than before. Based on the response to your blog and social media posts, such as page views and comments, you can now tell which subjects are particularly interesting to your prospects. You'll also be able to cross-reference this information with your own prospect insight and data such as survey results and feedback to determine the most common issues. These will be the basis for your ebook or white paper content.

This was a process we used to create our B2B Marketing Survival Guide for 2013 ebook. From talking to our customers and prospects we understood they wanted to be told what to expect in the world of marketing over the next twelve months. So, we released our guidebook filled with predictions, hints and tips in late December and **we received a 23% conversion to lead rate within the first week of publication**!

On the back page of an ebook or white paper, it is also worth adding a call to action such as 'Call us to arrange a meeting' or 'Email us at this address'. The reason for this is because unlike a blog, an ebook or white paper can be printed off and placed into the hands of influencers, decision-makers or decision-making groups. This call to action means that whoever ends up reading the publication, knows exactly what they have to do to get in touch.

INBOUND MARKETING & THE SALES FUNNEL



HELPFUL TAKEAWAYS – INFOGRAPHICS & FACTSHEETS

When we say takeaways we don't mean greasy burgers and chips, we mean valuable snippets of information that leave a lasting impression on the reader's mind. Each of your pieces of content should include at least one takeaway such as a hint or tip or even a piece of statistical data that the reader can take action from in order to make a positive impact on their business. In the case of ebooks and white papers, you should be providing at least 5 takeaways per publication.

But, what if you have lots of really valuable data that you knew would lose its impact if it was scattered throughout a large publication? Then infographics and fact sheets are the way forward.

These documents use a mixture of statistical data and eye-catching images that provide the reader with a lot of priceless information in an easy to digest format, therefore getting your point across quicker.

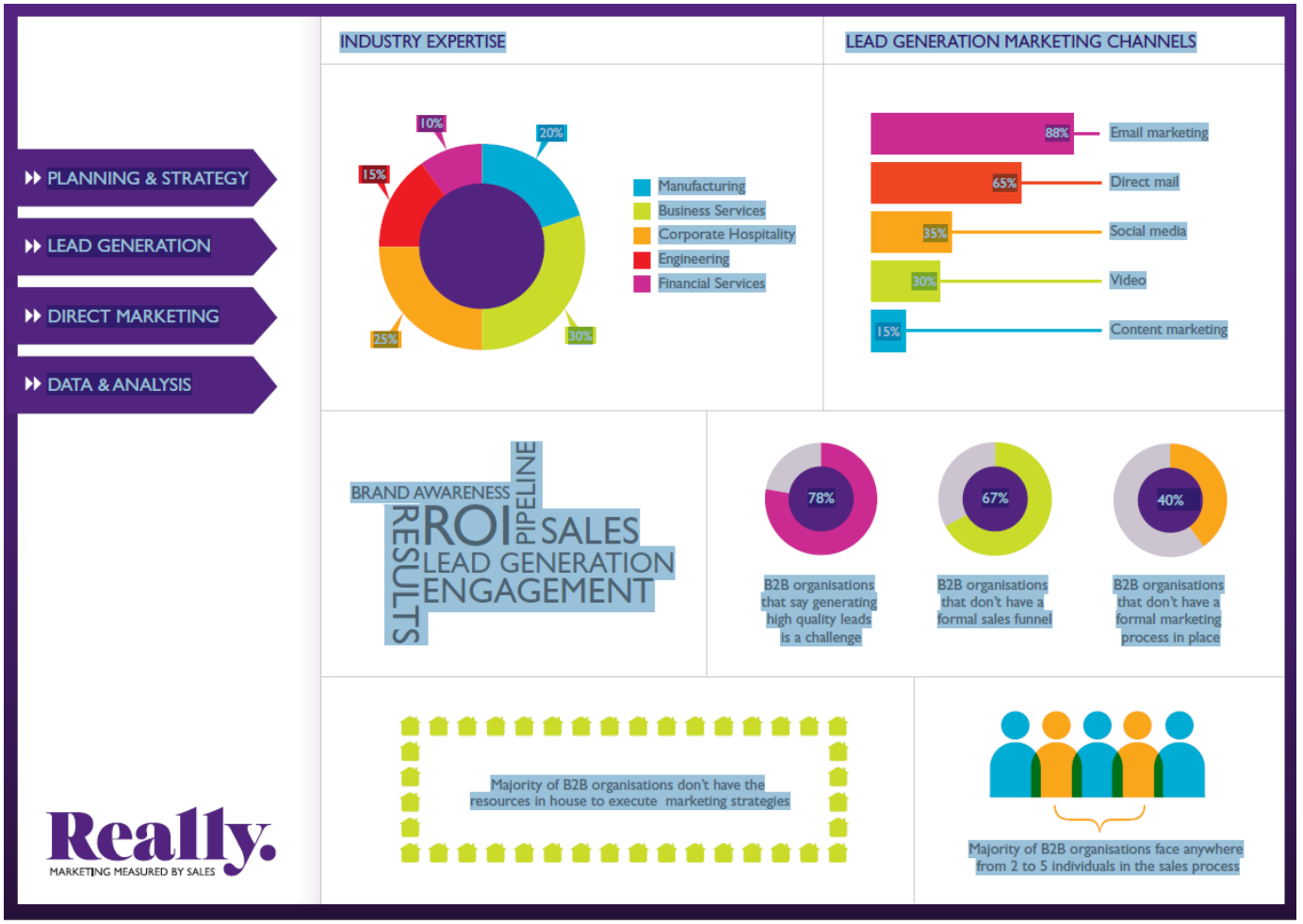
In regard to inbound marketing, these documents offer free and helpful information which you are providing simply to show thought leadership and help gain the trust of your prospects/leads. It is the ultimate symbol of shared knowledge with no obvious sales agenda. In the grand scheme of things, it will make the prospect realise that you are not only helping them, but that you also have an in-depth knowledge of their issues and pain points and your product/service is going to help them and their business.

As mentioned in our B2B Marketing Survival Guide, these pieces of content are compelling and attractive; they will increase website traffic and they can go viral. They are also excellent for SEO because as people share the information, they will link back to your site… and we know how much search engines love to see links to your site.

INBOUND MARKETING & THE SALES FUNNEL

HELPFUL TAKEAWAYS – INFOGRAPHICS & FACTSHEETS

Here is an example of one of our previous infographics:



INBOUND MARKETING & THE SALES FUNNEL



LANDING PAGES AND CALL TO ACTIONS (CTAs)

We've discussed the idea of providing prospects with great content such as ebooks and white papers in exchange for their contact details. But, what is the best way of controlling and measuring this transaction? The answer is Landing Pages.

"68% of B2B businesses use landing pages to garner a new sales lead for future conversion" – MarketingSherpa

You've starting marketing your ebook/white paper on your blog, social media and emails using a call to action such as 'Increase your sales and revenue with our new social media ebook'. When your prospects click this CTA they will be taken to your new landing page. This is your chance to convert your prospect to a lead, so every aspect of the page must be carefully considered and implemented perfectly.

Firstly, the call to action needs to give the reader a reason to a click. These few words need to offer a solution to the prospect's paint points, therefore always try to use one of your keywords/keyword phrases – 'Download our white paper and **increase your B2B sales**'.

The main body copy on your landing page should:

- Be relatively short, sharp and punchy
- Offer the key benefits of your ebook/white paper
- Inform the reader that by downloading the ebook they'll find answers to their wants and needs, such as increased quality of leads

And finally, use bullet points. Two or three short bullet points will be enough to provide your prospect with all the benefit-loaded information they need. This page is just the final push towards conversion; it's not the place for a 10,000 word thesis.

INBOUND MARKETING & THE SALES FUNNEL



NURTURING LEADS THROUGH TO SALES

So, everything has worked well so far. Prospects have engaged with your website and your blog. They interacted with you on social media pages and then gave you their contact details in exchange for your ebook. But, they're still not ready to buy. Now what?

This is when you need to start nurturing your leads. Our research on client campaigns has shown that when leads are nurtured in the right way, conversion increases by 64%. The best way to nurture a lead is with well-targeted emails offering content using real-time triggers. Emails aren't the only way to nurture a lead, but they are certainly a good way to maintain regular 'touches' and provide information on the exact subject they are looking for.

When a prospect lead downloads a piece of content or reads a blog post, you can begin to see the subjects that they are most interested in. This information means you can now tailor your next piece of content to focus more on this subject and drive them down the sales funnel while keeping them engaged.

By sending your lead this series of highly-relevant emails and blog post notifications, you can continue to build the relationship of trust and show thought leadership until they are ready to convert to a customer. When a prospect lead has engaged a number of times with your company, it's at this point that you may want to consider contacting them on the phone to qualify the selling opportunity, invite them to take part in a webinar or offer a free demonstration.

"79% of marketing leads never convert into sales. Lack of lead nurturing is the common cause of this poor performance" - MarketingSherpa

ANALYSIS & REVIEW



WHAT IS WORKING BEST

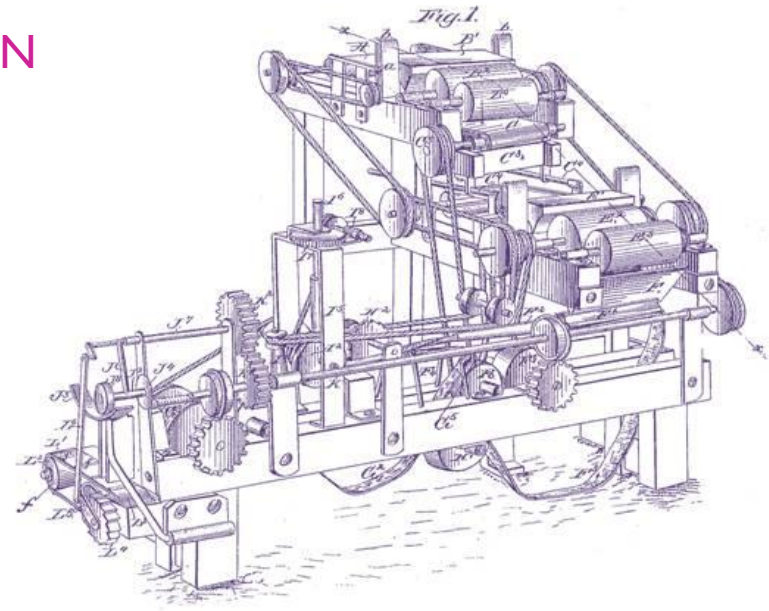
A recent report stated that **"68% of B2B organizations have not identified their funnel"**. This lack of insight makes analysing the results of an inbound marketing strategy very difficult. Only by clearly defining the parameters of your sales funnel, can you really begin to use the available metrics to measure the success of your strategy.

The analysis begins at the top of the funnel with website traffic. Is your traffic increasing? What methods did prospects use to find you? Was it through social media? Was it through a search engine? What keywords did they use to find you? This information can be used to adjust your current strategy and inform you what keywords are working best and what channels are generating the most traffic.

In the middle of the funnel you have leads - people who have given you their details in exchange for content. In order to truly analyse this section of the funnel, you also need to consider the bottom of the funnel and the number of leads who have converted to sales. By reviewing the conversion rate of leads to sales, you can determine whether your lead nurturing techniques need to be amended. How many 'touches' were needed before conversion to sale? What was the best frequency of 'touches'? Did the leads engage with all the content?

All of this data will help determine how your current inbound marketing strategy can be improved. In addition to this, you can gauge your results against the data in a Benchmark Report. These reports (such as our Email Benchmark Report) can easily be found online. By measuring your data against your competitors or industry averages, you will be able to see the areas in your strategy which need the most attention.

MARKETING AUTOMATION



Firstly, let me just clarify that if marketing automation is not used correctly, it can become a tool which simply peppers inboxes with irrelevant content. But, if it's used properly, a marketing automation tool can be an excellent addition to an inbound marketing strategy.

The basic idea is that when a prospect lead downloads a piece of content, the system automatically begins to email them in a preset frequency with content and material that is relevant to the subject of the initial download. This means that the lead is now being nurtured through the sales funnel with emails and content that interests them. This is called a 'workflow'.

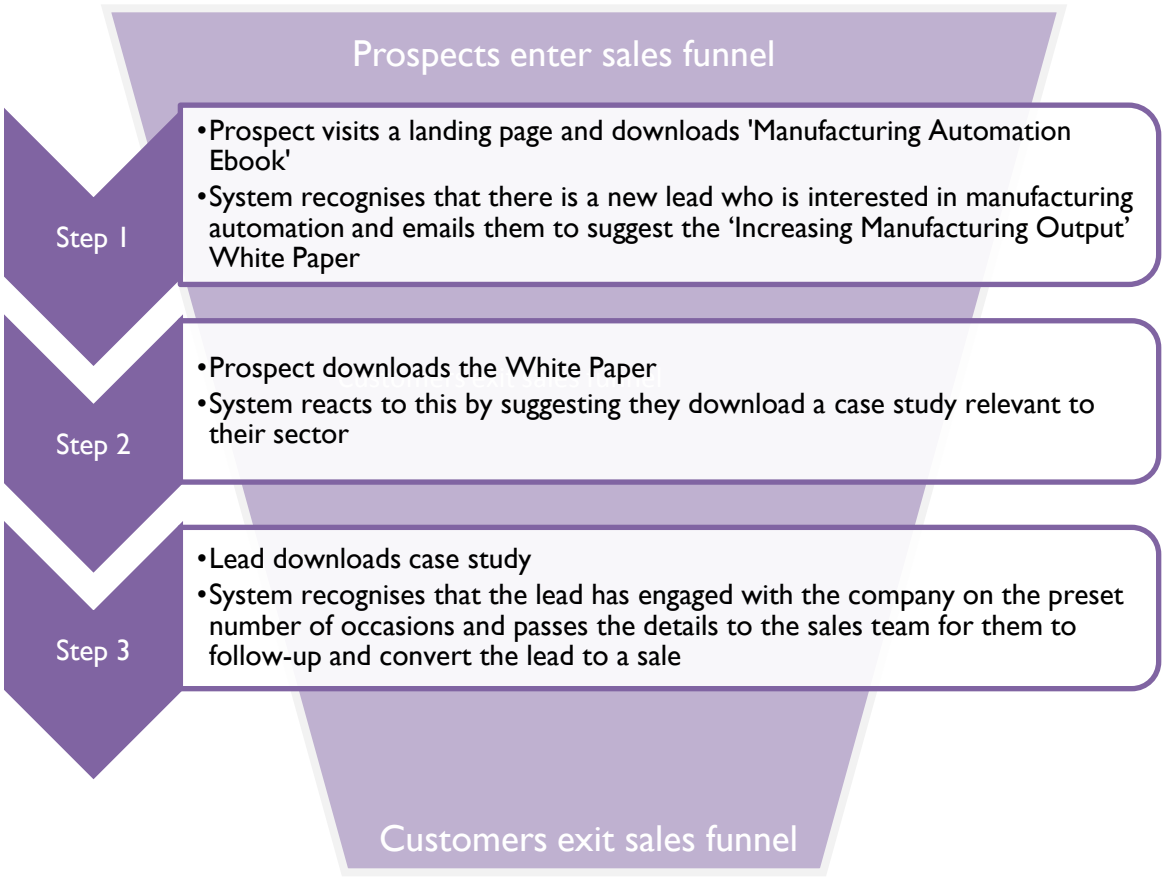
It is important to understand which workflow works best for your prospect leads;

- Manually test segments of your leads based on their job title and industry etc
- Offer related content to drive them down the funnel
- Identify the tipping point when someone engages for a second or third time and build an automated activity for future leads

When the lead has engaged with the company/website on a set number of occasions, their details will be automatically forwarded to the sales team for them to be contacted.

For a visual guide to this process, check out the next page...

MARKETING AUTOMATION



The main requirements for a marketing automation tool are the creation of lots of high-quality content on a range of subjects and the desire to measure and amend the strategy on a regular basis. As always test, test and test again!

Only with this level of involvement, will the tool work correctly and the best results be produced. Although it's called 'marketing *automation*', it does in fact require a great deal of human intervention and without it, no marketing automation tool will work.

IN OR OUT?



The important thing to remember with inbound and outbound marketing techniques is that they are not mutually exclusive. Nobody is saying that if you start using inbound methods, you have to totally disregard your outbound strategy. In fact, it's imperative that you don't neglect it because only through its combination with inbound marketing will you maximise your conversions to leads/sales.

The question is not 'inbound or outbound'? It's more along the lines of 'how much of your time and budget are you going to dedicate to each?'

The amount of data which supports the use of inbound marketing is definitely growing. You don't have to look far to see statistics like:

- 89% (of respondents) are either maintaining or increasing their inbound marketing budgets and among the 47% of respondents with increased inbound marketing budgets, the most commonly cited reason was past success with inbound marketing
- SEO leads have a 14.6% close rate, while outbound sourced leads have a 1.7% close rate
- 53% of B2B marketers have acquired a customer through Facebook, and 44% through Twitter

In light of all of the supporting information and even our own findings, if you haven't already made the move to inbound marketing then now is definitely the time.

TAKEAWAYS



- Inbound marketing-dominated organisations experience a cost per lead 61% lower than outbound marketing-dominated organizations
- Companies that blog get 55% more leads than those who don't
- Google takes into account the level of conversation, number of followers and links in your social media posts when creating organic search results
- 68% of B2B businesses use landing pages to garner a new sales lead for future conversion
- 79% of marketing leads never convert into sales. Lack of lead nurturing is the common cause of this poor performance
- 89% (of respondents) are either maintaining or increasing their inbound marketing budgets and among the 47% of respondents with increased inbound marketing budgets, the most commonly cited reason was past success with inbound marketing
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INBOUND MARKETING CHECKLIST

- ✓ Get to know your prospects' needs, wants and concerns. This will help you determine the words they would most likely type into a search engine. These will be your keywords
- ✓ Create a blog on your website and use your keywords to determine the subjects you should write about. Provide interesting and helpful advice - don't make it salesy
- ✓ Create accounts on key social media sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Carry out research and determine where your prospects are interacting most
- ✓ Using your knowledge of your prospects, write ebooks/white papers which offer a solution to their issues. Include a clear call to action on the back page of the content
- ✓ Create landing pages where prospects can exchange their contact details for your latest piece of content
- ✓ Use emails to offer content and telephone calls to nurture your leads until they become sales-ready
- ✓ Analyse your inbound marketing strategy regularly and review your conversion rates. Compare your results to competitor results published in Benchmark Reports
- ✓ Consider using a marketing automation tool, but only if you have the time and resources to create lots of high-quality content and can measure and amend the strategy on a regular basis

Really.
MARKETING MEASURED BY SALES

LOOKING FOR BUSINESS GROWTH?

If you're interested in enhancing your lead generation processes or want to discuss how inbound marketing can help your business, request a meeting with us today.

We'd love to discuss your objectives and how our range of B2B lead generation services can help support your business growth.



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