



THE B2B INBOUND MARKETING PLAYBOOK

WHAT EVERY INBOUND
MARKETING MANAGER
IN B2B SHOULD KNOW

INTRO

This ebook will show you the ins and outs of Inbound Marketing, and everything that the Inbound Marketing Manager should be doing and thinking about on a day to day basis.



Before reading, it's important to understand the attract, convert, close, and delight sales structure.





BUYER PERSONAS

Buyer personas are absolutely key to the success of any Inbound Marketing campaign. Whether you work in B2B or B2C, the current marketing world is based around treating the consumer as a human.

Building your buyer personas in very granular detail will allow you to understand the issues and challenges that your customers are facing, and use that insight to create content and information which provides value and helps them succeed.

Furthermore, even when you're at the point of knowing the pain points and main challenges your prospects face, you have to understand how they consume their content, in what format, and where should you try and engage them. Everything should be set up to make it as easy as possible for your perfect customer to find your content and engage with it.

Tip: Use a buyer persona template to build out your personas, but don't rely on them exclusively. Make sure you speak to your marketing team, your sales team, and your actual customers!

GENERATING AND MANAGING LEADS

Where is your next piece of business going to come from, and how are you going to make sure that it's managed correctly? Inbound Marketing management is all about lead generation and lead management.

Let's start with lead generation: Are you creating valuable content that will generate leads through your website? Your website must be set up to ensure any unknown visitor coming onto your site is provided with:

- Content they find valuable and educational
- A pleasant user experience
- Opportunities to convert (tell you who they are) and find out more

Your website must act as your best salesperson, as well as the best friend of your website visitor. The visitor should go away from your site feeling as if they've received the information they wanted to research and appreciating your company as a leader in the industry - ultimately as the perfect business for them to deal with.

In order to do this, you need to have valuable content. Well-considered and thought-out eBooks, white papers and how-to-guides work well to engage your visitors – but valuable content can also be video or graphics or process templates - anything that is going to help your potential customer in their day to day life.

WHAT IF YOU'RE ALREADY GENERATING A STEADY AMOUNT OF LEADS EACH MONTH?

At this point, you need to ensure you're managing these leads correctly. Many Marketing Managers believe that the responsibility of the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system is purely down to the sales teams, many Sales teams don't believe that the Marketing team does very much at all!

However, the two need to work together to ensure that marketing activity and sales activity are aligned. 'Smarketing' is a term that combines Marketing and same language, the same positioning, and providing a consistently high level of value. The management of this must start in the CRM system.

One of the most important and effective things you can do from the start is define your marketing and sales lead stages. The standard marketing stages

might be as follows; Contact, lead, Marketing Qualified Lead, Sales Qualified Lead, Opportunity, Customer; but at what stage should sales start managing leads? The sales cycle will also have its own stages depending on the industry and company; things like demo, trial, proposal sent, negotiations are all common things to see.

Where is that information stored and kept up to date? Again it brings us back to the CRM system. From the webpages a person has visited, which emails have been sent, which industry they are in and what their budget is, the CRM system is the central hub of information that should provide as much information as possible to make every single interaction with every lead as relevant and as specific as possible.

Tip: If you're looking to bring together your marketing and sales teams, have a workshop meeting to agree the lead stages, this is one of the most important things you need to agree and achieve.



MARKETING AUTOMATION

HOW CAN IT HELP?

The number of different things an Inbound Marketing manager has to think about and juggle at any one time is enormous. Imagine that one 7.5 hour day will consist of anything from checking the latest lead status, dealing with partners suppliers, assessing the website performance to see whether another call-to-action is needed, building website landing pages, writing content, scheduling or engaging on social media, building engagement emails, managing the internal communications to different department heads, reporting on various campaign performances and creating the overarching marketing performance report for the Chief Exec's board meetings.



WITHOUT MARKETING AUTOMATION

A visitor lands on your website, and downloads an eBook. Without marketing automation you would get a notification of this, but then you'd have to remember two days later to follow up with that visitor, as well as manually change the CRM record to update their lifecycle stage to MQL, as well as send an email to a sales person to keep an eye on them.

Tip: Marketing Automation needs planning and strategy, the most successful marketing automation tools are the ones that have had lots of planning and testing to see what works best for your company. Start with a whiteboard, or something called LucidChart, this will allow you to draw our exactly what you want to happen and when.

WITH MARKETING AUTOMATION

A visitor lands on your website, and downloads an eBook. Now, an automated email is sent to the prospect receiving the eBook, also offering other valuable pieces of content. The contact is put on a marketing workflow, which will offer them a piece of content every seven days for the next month, ensuring that they aren't sent an asset which they've already read or downloaded. Their CRM record is automatically updated, and the salesperson is assigned and notified. This person will also get notifications as and when the contact comes back to the site. Lastly, if the visitor comes back X times, the salesperson will automatically get an email advising them to make a call, with a list of the exact pages that they have visited and content the content they viewed.

Which approach puts your sales team in a better position to sell?



LEAD NURTURING AND SCORING

Remember, not every visitor to your website is ready to buy as soon as they land on your site:

LEAD NURTURING: As an Inbound Marketing Manager, you should be looking to nurture your leads once they've shown interest; to nudge them along by providing piece after piece of valuable content which enhances their opinion of your business.

LEAD SCORING: You've got a large number of leads coming through the system, and you're nurturing them accordingly to try and push them through the sales funnel, but how are you going to know who to try and contact first? Who should you prioritize?

Lead scoring is a technique used to give each individual in your marketing contact database a score based on their behavior and interaction with your business. For example, a contact who visits your website regularly over several days, viewing the pricing page and also clicking on your emails is much more qualified than a contact who last visited your site three months ago.

You need to set up a lead scoring system early, so that you can prioritize exactly how, when and who you try and engage with in a structured order.

CONTENT CREATION

Content creation is essential to inbound marketing success.

No exceptions. If your marketing tools are your Ferrari, then your content creation is your fuel - it isn't going anywhere unless it has something moving it forward.

BUT WHAT CONTENT SHOULD I WRITE? WHO SHOULD WRITE IT?

All valid questions, and while every organization is different, there are some tips and advice we can share.

WHO'S CREATING THE CONTENT?

If you're creating content in-house, the input into ideas, themes and the content itself must be spread across different people in different roles. Use your sales team, use your product team, use your board members. The amount of different views and aspects you can get the better. If they don't have time to write it themselves, make it easy for them, record them talking about the topic, and then someone else can write the actual copy and get them to review it.

HOW DO I DECIDE WHAT CONTENT TO CREATE?

Firstly, remember that buyer persona workshop you did at the start? Use this as a starting point. You need to ensure that your buyer persona's challenges or pain points are addressed in the content that you create, otherwise it will not resonate. Be specific with the content you create, be it video, eBook, blog, white paper or infographic.

Secondly, consider the value of Search Engine Optimization

Creating great content is fantastic, but if no-one is going to find it, what's the point?

A famous quote you'll hear in the SEO world is:

“If you want to hide a dead body, hide it on the second page of Google”.

Tip: Use a content matrix and content calendar to plan out everything. Your matrix should focus on what content you have related to each persona, allowing you to identify any gaps; while your calendar should focus on what content you have going out over the next three months, and exactly what steps need to be achieved to get the content live.

SOCIAL MEDIA

What is your instant reaction as soon as TV ads come on? You either fast forward, or if the remote is too far away, you look at Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat for 3.5 minutes.

You HAVE to be where your potential customers are right now, not five years ago. If they're on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat channels, you have to be on there too. Don't write off Facebook because you think it won't work. Don't write off Instagram because you think it won't work to sell.

You need to be active on all of these channels in order to reach the highest audience possible. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn all have different audiences, and you'll see different levels of success when using these different channels.

But what does that mean for an Inbound Marketing manager?

Firstly, you need to be creating social media posts specifically tailored for each social media channel. Don't write one post and create one image and expect to use exactly the same thing on each platform. Secondly, you need to be monitoring performance constantly, checking what's working and what isn't. Having an understanding of what tweet got the highest amount of clicks, or what Facebook post got the highest amount of likes is crucial. It lets you then deep-dive into those

successful posts. What time was it posted? How many characters were involved? Did you include an image or a video? What was the topic of the post?

Once you have a better understanding of what is working well, you can base your next social posts on that information. Whereas previously you may have been putting all your posts out at 9am, it may be the case that no-one is on social platforms that time, so a 1pm lunch time post may gain more traction.

Tip: Use a social media matrix to get on top of your social accounts, this will allow you to see exactly what is going out, and plan out your next posts on all channels.



SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISATION

Getting SEO right can have huge benefits for your organization; being able to rank higher, and more frequently on Google can bring new business right away. Initially, you want to decide what keywords you should be ranking for, but remember that this needs to be focused not on the things that you think you should be ranking for, but the things that your potential customers would be searching when conducting their awareness stage research.

Create a long list of short-tail keywords which explain what your business offers and the problems you can solve; as well as long-tail keywords, which do the same thing, but are much more specific. For long-tail keywords you want to be really specific so that you have a really good chance of ranking number one on Google if someone searches that term.

Once you have this list you need to be creating the following based on those keywords:

- **WEBSITE PAGES** – have you heard of growth-driven design (GDD)? Rather than spend a huge amount of time, energy and stress building 50 website pages all to go live on a certain date at a certain time, you spend your time more wisely. Launch your new 15 page website and build up the new web pages you need over time; For example build two web pages a month for the next year. This is a much more efficient, cost-effective and less stressful way of building your website.
- **BLOGS** – your blogs need to focus on things that will help, educate and support your customers in a time of need. But remember, they must be SEO focused. If they aren't SEO optimized with the correct Headers, Page Titles, Meta Data etc, who's going to find them after the initial social media push?

REPORTING

If you are an Inbound Marketing Manager, or aspiring to become an Inbound Marketing Manager, we expect that a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for your campaign goes a little bit like this:

- Web visits
- Landing page views
- Leads
- Opportunities
- Customers

Spend the time mapping out your KPIs, looking at exactly where you can get the information and whether the information is really needed.

Tip: Set up your reporting so that it's easy to collate. Spend the time to understand what data is relevant and how your technology can help you generate the reports you need. Learn Google Analytics and set it up so that each month or week you can simply go in and pull the numbers you need.

THE TOOLS

The tools you're using for your Inbound Marketing journey could make or break your success.

As your business grows, you'll start needing more and more bits of technology in order to grow. Starting off with your website and social media tools, to your marketing automation and CRM tools, you'll need to make sure that all of these tools integrate well. There's no point in using an awesome social media tool, if you can't tell within your CRM system if a potential customer has been interacting with you on Facebook.

These tools are just the start, as you grow, you'll need email tools, creative tools, landing pages, forms, as well a wide range of sales tools available.

Tip: Try and minimize the amount of tools that you have to integrate, or link together to get the most out of them.

CONCLUSION

Inbound Marketing is great because it gives small and medium sized businesses real opportunities to fight against the big players in the game. But it takes consistency, persistence, creativity, quality and most importantly - investment. Not just financial investment, but the investment of time from multiple stakeholders within the business.

Resist the temptation to cut corners in order to make short term financial gains. Make sure you optimize absolutely everything you do, from a tweet, to a blog, to a piece of downloadable content. The tools are out there to make sure that every single decision you make can be optimized using your data, your knowledge and your experience. By using all of this data to make your marketing decisions, you increase the chance of doing more of what works, and less of what doesn't.

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