

Transformational Inbound Marketing:

Your Secret Weapon for
Acquisition and Retention


Marketo®

Introduction

Inbound marketing is a proven and powerful earned strategy for creating brand awareness and generating leads. With inbound marketing you can attract people to your brand through great content, which serves to engage customers. You are not buying attention like you do with paid programs—you *are earning attention*.

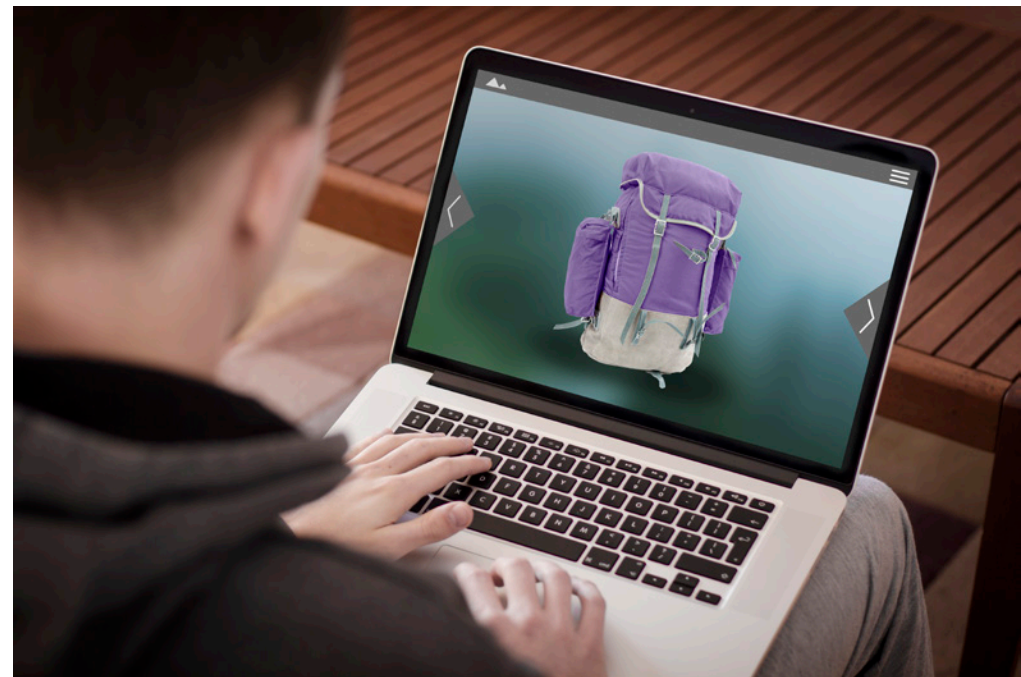
For marketers today, inbound marketing is more necessary than ever. Why? Buyers are not just reading catalogs and going to malls—they are online—and spending more time doing their own research prior to making contact with potential vendors.

Why does this matter for you as a marketer? You need to ensure potential buyers find you—or they may find your competitor's product or service first! According to Marketo's research, 93% of buying cycles start with an online search, and 88% of clicks come from organic search. Buyers agree that higher search engine ranking correlates with a better product or brand. And with inbound marketing, you can be found! So, it is critical to think about your inbound strategy to educate buyers and help create brand preference.

With that being said, traditional inbound marketing approaches have some limitations. They can be very focused on only acquisition and lead generation. They can also be broad and not very personal. Today's buyers are sophisticated and expect an ongoing dialog with a brand on their terms.



93% of buying cycles start with an online search, and 88% of clicks come from organic search





Transformational Inbound Marketing and What Makes It Effective

Transformational inbound marketing goes beyond traditional inbound marketing. Unlike traditional inbound marketing, transformational inbound marketing leverages valuable content to attract and retain customers throughout their entire lifecycle, not just before they are a customer, but even after they become one. Transformational inbound marketing goes beyond traditional methods with a greater emphasis on personalization and relevance.

Transformational inbound is comprised of:

1. Valuable content that is entertaining, educational, or inspirational, created to nurture buyers throughout the customer lifecycle
2. Two-way communication: marketers listen and respond to buyers in a relevant, personalized way
3. Attracting customers via content, social, SEO, blogging, and paid techniques
4. Combining paid programs with traditional inbound tactics to amplify and increase reach

At its core, transformational inbound marketing focuses on the customer lifecycle, while traditional inbound marketing focuses on the initial interaction. Instead of creating content that is broad-reaching, transformational inbound seeks to listen and respond to your buyers' needs with a more personalized experience.

Fortunately, when a buyer is actively seeking information or passively looking to be entertained and educated, their "anti-marketing" shields go down and you can begin to engage and build a relationship with them. When done correctly, this approach offers dramatically better results than traditional marketing techniques that rely on interruption marketing.

Why Traditional Inbound Marketing Alone Isn't Enough

On its own, traditional inbound marketing can cast too wide of a net. You may connect with a lot of potential prospects, but will they keep you in mind when it actually comes time to buy? Are you creating content that is relevant to your buyers' wants and needs? Inbound gives you a wide reach, which is an important part of any marketing strategy. However, at a certain point, it becomes necessary to enhance your approach. You need to extend your focus beyond acquisition, embark on a two-way

conversation with your buyers, and add a paid element to your programs for a full-funnel view of inbound.

On its own, traditional inbound marketing strategy doesn't allow for specific audience targeting nor does it drive people to action. Once you're out of sight, you're likely out of mind. You need paid tactics to both extend your reach and help re-engage inbound leads. In addition, effective lead nurturing, scoring abilities, and technology enable you

to carry out these strategies effectively. Plus, you need to think about what happens after your buyer becomes a customer. You need to continue building that relationship.

At Marketo, we take a full-funnel view of marketing, which moves from awareness building to lead nurturing, with scoring in between, and then to customer retention. Let's take a look at how to take a multi-faceted, transformational approach to inbound marketing.

MARKETO'S FULL-FUNNEL VIEW OF MARKETING



Awareness



Scoring



Lead Nurturing

Your Inbound Marketing Team

Getting started with inbound marketing requires a documented plan as well as an adequate staff and budget. For your inbound efforts to be successful, you need to be consistent. Simply writing one blog post, when someone on your team has the time, isn't going to cut it.

Inbound marketing isn't sustainable without proper planning and resourcing. You must designate a team for inbound marketing efforts, whether it's in-house or outsourced. In addition, you will need to analyze and measure your efforts to continue to improve. We suggest putting together an inbound marketing team consisting of the following people:



Content Marketing Manager: Content is the fuel that powers all of your inbound marketing campaigns. It's vital to have at least one person devoted to content marketing. This person needs to have subject matter expertise in your industry, be a talented writer and editor, and be an experienced project manager.



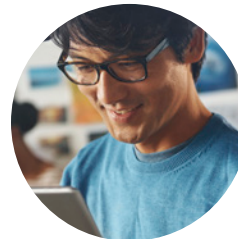
Social Media Manager: Regular social media posting is central to a good inbound strategy, which is why it's important to have a team member devoted to this channel. This person will be responsible for posting your content on social in an informative but entertaining way. This role may or may not handle paid social media as well. Look for someone that is passionate about communication and relationship building. Also consider looking for someone who is a "social native" (aka has social media ingrained in her blood!)



Website/Conversion Manager: Someone needs to be devoted to managing the user experience of your website and how it drives conversions. This person will make sure that your website is SEO-optimized and that you are hitting all of the right conversion points. Your website manager is also in charge of creating any personalization campaigns you may create using your marketing automation platform.



PPC and Ad Manager: Managing ads and PPC (pay-per-click) is a full-time job on its own. You will need a team or individual to perform consistent keyword research and track which placements bring the greatest ROI. This person is in charge of all of your paid ads and may also be in charge of paid ads on social.



Marketing Automation Manager: This person is in charge of your marketing automation platform—deploying emails, creating scoring rules, implementing lead scoring, and tracking analytics. Your marketing automation manager will assist and amplify your inbound efforts by creating programs and keeping your leads engaged.

A successful inbound strategy has a number of components that help you grow your reach. In the following sections we will go through each inbound tactic to consider for this purpose.

Content Marketing: The Foundation of Transformational Inbound

Helpful and engaging content is the backbone of any successful inbound marketing program, regardless of whether it's organic or paid.

Content helps you reach potential customers and develop a relationship with them over time. The key to building trust is to educate customers before you try to sell them a solution. Your content must help your audience see how they can overcome their challenges and achieve their aspirations. This content can take many forms—blog posts, ebooks, infographics, webinars, slide decks, videos, and so on.

Here are some ways for you to get started creating great content to support your inbound and outbound programs:

Building Personas

The most successful content marketing teams develop personas for their content. Who are your customers? Do they come from different industries? What are the pain points of their specific positions? Creating a persona for each customer helps your team develop content that engages these customers. Depending on your customer base, develop as many personas as needed. To get the information you need to create your personas, reach out to current customers, sales, customer service teams, and other stakeholders throughout your organization.

Aligning to Buying Stages


Once you create personas, start outlining buying stages. Understanding each stage of the cycle will assist you in writing content that is helpful, no matter where consumers are in the buying process when they stumble upon your content. Your buying stages should align to your sales cycle, and by using your content you can slowly move your buyers from the top of your funnel to the bottom.

Developing Brand Voice

Take a moment to think about your brand and how it conveys who you are. It's important to document your brand voice to maintain consistency across all channels in the content you create. Consider character, tone, language, and purpose when putting together your voice. Think about how this voice might change when trying to engage unique personas.

Having a Diverse Content Mix

Determine which types of content to produce. There are many different kinds, from whitepapers and ebooks, to case studies, videos, and blogs. Mix them up to meet the needs of your customers at various stages of the buying cycle. Also keep in mind that content is no longer just words. Great design is an important part of content marketing, so it's important to consider how to implement this final step. Will you create an in-house team, or will you work with a design agency?



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Getting Creative About Content: The Three Rs

It can be tough to create enough content to fuel *all* of your inbound campaigns. To keep content fresh and create it efficiently over time, follow Marketo's three Rs of content marketing: reorganize, rewrite, and refresh.



Reorganize:

Use one larger content asset as a starting point for smaller blog posts, infographics, or slide decks.

Rewrite:

Revisit old content. Over time, the information may not be relevant or up to date. You want to remove old content since having outdated assets on your site can reflect poorly on your brand.

Refresh Design:

Design trends change. Make sure your ebooks, infographics, and other content evolve with the times.

Educate customers before you try to sell them a solution. Your content must help your audience see how they can overcome their challenges and achieve their aspirations.





Search Engine Optimization: Expand Your Reach

The next crucial component of inbound marketing is search engine optimization. SEO tactics enable you to raise your ranking on search engines, which equates to more visits from potential customers. At its most basic, SEO is about organizing website content so search engines can understand it better. However, there are many aspects to SEO. Here are a few of the top considerations you need to get started:

Authentic Content

As search engine algorithms continue to evolve, they increasingly favor high-quality, unique content. Create content that is genuinely helpful for your customers and is worth sharing. Including images and other visual aspects tends to increase rankings because of image-based search engines like Google Images. Make sure you have a great place to merchandise your content, like a resource page. This helps your content get indexed and found.

Keywords

Perform keyword research to find the terms that indicate that customers are most likely to convert. When selecting keywords, consider your business goals, the opportunity for traffic, and competition for the same terms. You may want to create a keyword document for your team to reference.

Once you have selected your keywords, make sure to create content that maps directly to these priorities. For example, at Marketo the keyword “marketing automation” is a high priority, therefore we focus on creating ebooks, blogs, and other content to support this goal.

On-Page SEO

Use keywords strategically in page titles, headlines, URL structures, and meta-descriptions, but avoid keyword stuffing by making sure the use of keywords is natural. The time it takes for a page to load also affects your page’s ranking.

Links

When users link to your page using your keywords, Google considers your site a more reputable resource for these terms. Link authority, preferably from external sources, is one of the most important ranking factors.

By creating authentic content that people want to read—whether it is on your blog or in your resources center—you will naturally attract more inbound links. Additionally, make sure you keep in contact with the influencers in your industry. Having them link back to your content is a great way to boost your SEO.

Social Media: Your Brand Voice

Social media boosts the visibility of content and gives your brand another way to engage customers. It's an important part of inbound marketing because it serves as a way to promote content, educate customers, and engage them in conversation. Social can be both organic and paid.

But don't forget that social channels are, well, social. Make sure that you are not only educating your audience, but that you are also entertaining them and creating a two-way conversation. Choose the right content for the right platform and you are on your way.

Know Your Audience

Research the channels your customers use and focus your efforts on the platforms that are most likely to be useful to them. Take time to get to know which of the big social players your audience prefers. Consider Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Slideshare, Tumblr, and Instagram,

to name a few. And make sure you are posting the appropriate content for each platform. For instance, a fun, top-of-funnel video may work best for Facebook, while a more data-focused report may work better for LinkedIn.

Provide Value and Stay Conversational

While some networks are more business-oriented than others, social audiences are online to connect with peers. Brands need to provide value on social that keeps customers around. Be conversational and educational and keep promotional content to a minimum.

Keep the 80/20 rule in mind when getting started on social media. Only 20% of your content should be promotional. The other 80% of your content should be entertaining, conversational, and educational, or share what other people are doing. Social is about interacting with other organizations, so engage with customers and other companies.

Paid Social

Social is definitely a place where you can leverage paid tactics to amplify your organic efforts. As organic reach on all of the social networks continues to decline, we encourage you to invest in promotional posts.

Not only do promotional posts on the major social networks enable you to extend your reach, but each social channel also offers sophisticated targeting so that you can personalize and segment your audience.

When you use paid social media, it is best practice to create a call-to-action (CTA) that goes to a landing page with a form. You want to make sure that you are collecting leads' information if you are paying good money to be found!

By adding paid to your organic inbound social efforts, you can get the right amount of amplification for an impact!



GETTING
STARTED ON
SOCIAL MEDIA

20%
PROMOTIONAL



80%
ENTERTAINING, CONVERSATIONAL
AND EDUCATIONAL



Website: Convert Incoming Leads

Proper conversion is a key element to inbound marketing. Once you bring in visitors, you need effective strategies to collect customer information so you can get in touch with them later. Gaining access to this information requires a number of website strategies.

Calls-to-Action

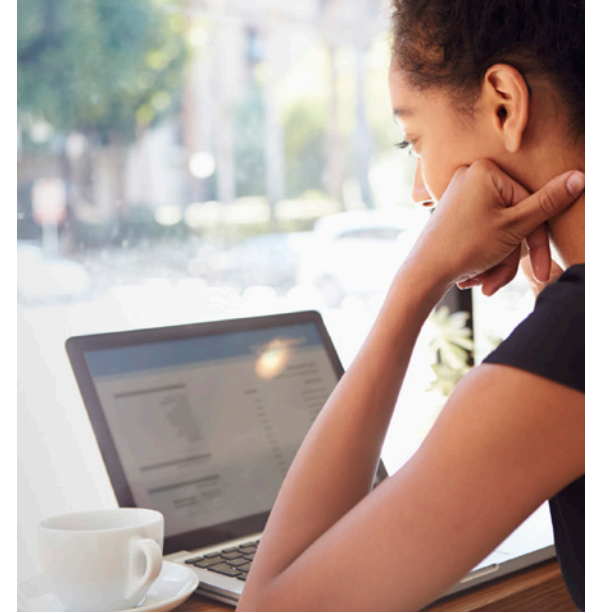
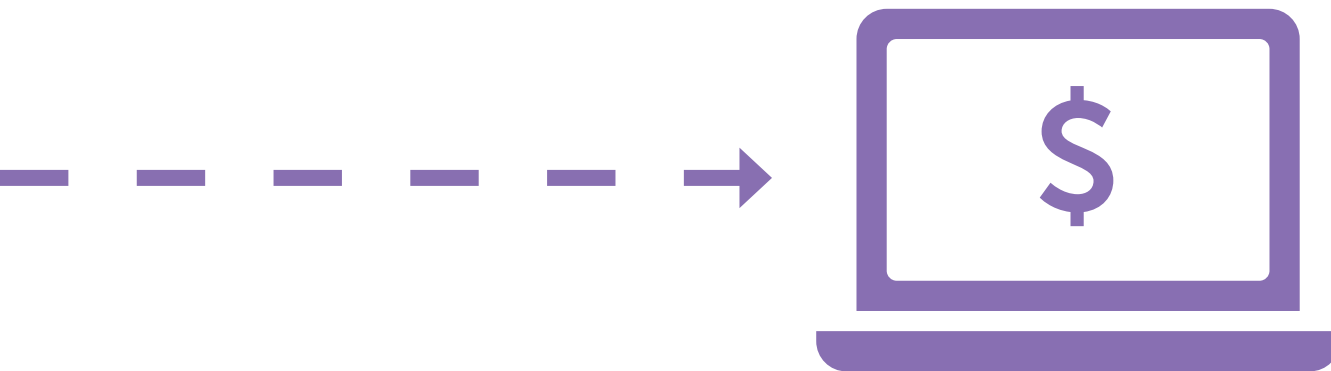
CTAs drive action by encouraging visitors to download a content asset, sign up for a demo, or even chat with a sales representative. However, the design and placement of CTAs make a big difference in how many conversions you receive. Be sure to test your CTA placement throughout your website to determine the best CTA location, color choice, wording, and so on.

Forms

Calls-to-actions often lead visitors to a form to gain important information, such as your newest ebook or a product demo. But not all forms are created equal. According to Marketo's A/B test on conversion rates for short and long forms, shorter forms with five fields or fewer had the highest conversion rate. While more data may seem better, there are other ways to obtain additional consumer information that won't sacrifice lead intake.

Usability

There should be a clear path to conversion on your website. Determine how intuitive your site is. Structure your pages so that important sections are easily seen. Try a heat-mapping tool to discover how users interact with your site and determine if anything needs to be changed.



Paid Strategies: Amplify Inbound

As discussed in the beginning of this ebook, you can truly transform your marketing by amplifying your organic inbound efforts with paid promotions. Let's take a look at a few paid tactics to consider in conjunction with your organic inbound marketing strategies.

Content Syndication

By employing a content syndication vendor, a website that aggregates content based on the user's topic preferences, you can get additional eyes on your content and your brand. Content syndication is a paid program where the vendor posts your ebook or report and gates it with a form. You then receive all of the leads who filled out the form to get your content. Be careful about what content you use on syndication channels and always test what works best.

Paid Email Programs

Within your industry, there are likely many organizations that will send an email to their database list on your behalf. For instance, at Marketo, we often use vendors like Content Marketing Institute, Marketing Profs, or American Marketing Association that send content out to their subscribers. You then get the leads that interact with your content.

Native Ads and Retargeting

Native ads are paid advertisements that integrate seamlessly into the surrounding content. Many publications now offer the opportunity to create native content, including *The New York Times*.

Through ad retargeting programs, once a person visits your website you can serve them ads on various websites and affiliate networks, making their web experience much more personalized. By using a marketing automation tool that syncs with the major social networks, you can now deliver personalized retargeting ads on all of the social sites.

Paid Search and PPC

Search engine marketing is similar to SEO except that marketers pay to promote ads by targeting specific keywords, known as PPC advertising. Paid ads generally appear above the organic results on search engine results pages and on the side of the page.

Marketing Automation

Marketing automation, a category of software that streamlines, automates, and measures marketing tasks and workflows so companies can grow faster, has additional capabilities that can increase the effectiveness of inbound marketing campaigns.

Once you have a lead in your system, what's next? By using marketing automation, you can achieve a full-funnel inbound marketing strategy.



Personalization

Using the right tools, companies can create personalized journeys for both current and prospective customers, which will make the user experience for individual visitors more valuable. Real-time personalization (RTP), through your marketing automation tool, enables businesses to use the information they know about prospects to create targeted experiences. Customers are all unique, so targeted journeys increase the likelihood consumers will find a service relevant to their needs. Here are some tips for utilizing personalization:

Send the Right Message: RTP software identifies site visitors based on attributes like buying intent, behavior, and geographical location. Within milliseconds, the program loads appropriate content based on these markers, showing new CTAs, landing pages, and other relevant copy.

Be in the Right Place at the Right Time: Personalization tools aren't just useful on your website. They can draw users into your website through PPC advertising or paid promotions on social networks.

Gain Data: RTP tools log the behavior of anonymous visitors, too. When an anonymous customer submits her information, you will already have access to her behavior and browsing information from before she was in your database.

Recommend Content: You can also use content recommendation engines to ensure customers see content most relevant to their interests and learn more about these interests as leads continue to engage with content on your site. RTP software is often capable of using information gleaned from consumer visits to predict future behavior.

Marketing Automation Capabilities





Lead Scoring

Once you have leads in your database, it's time to do something with them. However, before you attempt to close sales with your new contacts, it's important to score them based on sales readiness. Many leads won't be ready to talk to a sales rep just yet. According to Gleanster Research, only 25% of leads are immediately sales-ready. Another 25% can be eliminated as opportunities altogether. You need to account for these numbers before you dive in. Here are some criteria to use for scoring leads:

Fit: Is the lead someone who could reasonably purchase your product? Does his demographic and profile fit your target customer? For instance, is the size of his company similar to those you usually work with? Use the BANT method (budget, authority, need, timeline) to determine whether a consumer is in the position to purchase your product or service.

Interest: Use behavioral and engagement data to determine how interested the lead is. Has she downloaded multiple pieces of content or simply visited your website a few times? Combined with fit, this helps you determine whether the lead is ready for sales or needs to develop a relationship with your brand first.



Lead Nurturing

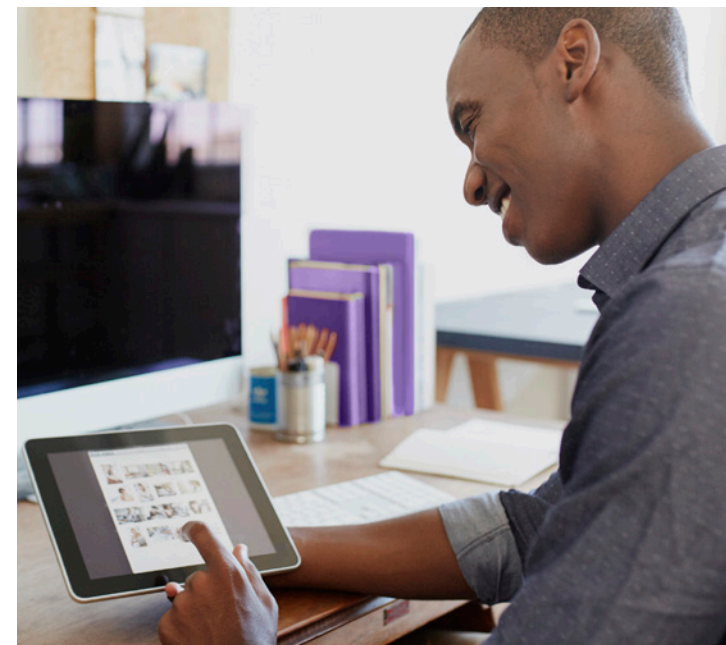
Once you score your leads, you can identify those who are a good fit (and ready) for your products or services and send them to sales. But there are many leads who won't quite be ready to buy; these leads will have to be nurtured.

According to Marketo's research, lead nurturing generates 50% more sales-ready leads. Lead nurturing can take your inbound marketing tactics to the next level. Here are a few must-haves for nurturing your inbound prospects:

Trustworthy: The primary purpose of a nurturing campaign is to win the trust of potential customers. Make sure leads have actually opted in before sending them communications.

Relevant: Send content that is useful for each lead. To improve relevance, segment your database to make sure each contact is receiving messages appropriate to their position and industry. Many companies segment their lead nurturing tracks based on persona, industry, company, and even interest. Test multiple segmentation techniques to determine what works best for your audience.

Multi-Channel: Your customers don't use just one channel. Take multiple communication platforms, including mobile devices, into consideration. Make sure that your lead nurturing emails are mobile responsive. Also consider nurturing your leads through other channels besides email, such as social media, your website, and external events.



Measurement

The final pieces of the inbound marketing puzzle are measurement and optimization. As with any campaign, marketers need to go back and look at metrics to determine what worked and what didn't. You can use this information to tweak campaigns and improve. Here are some metrics to consider when it comes to your inbound marketing strategy:

Website Traffic

Measure growth of organic website traffic. Determine how this increase in site visits correlates with the growth of leads and revenue. How many new versus returning visitors are there? Using tools like Google Analytics, you can also track referring sources. How many website visitors are coming in from inbound channels like social media?

Social Engagement

Measure the growth of engagement on social channels rather than the number of followers. Engagement is a better metric for performance and outcomes. Determine how many people are actually

interacting with your content on social. What are they sharing? What are they commenting on? Which type of content are they filling out forms for? By measuring actions rather than just followers you can see how effective your inbound efforts are at engagement.

Leads, Opportunities, and Revenue by Source

Which campaigns or channels generated the most leads, opportunities, and revenue? Did one ebook perform particularly well? Does consistent blogging bring in a lot of new site visitors? How are your paid programs on social doing? This information is necessary to honing your inbound efforts.

Percent of Leads from Inbound

Don't just measure the overall growth of leads in your pipeline; you want to know exactly how many leads come from inbound channels. It's important to know the original source of leads, not just the source of the visit when they converted. Look at each channel individually. For instance, how is organic search performing? Are you ranking for the desired keywords?

By measuring actions rather than just followers you can see how effective your inbound efforts are at engagement.



The Ultimate Inbound and Outbound Program Checklist



INBOUND MARKETING

- ☐ **Content marketing:** Creating educational and thought leadership content to fuel your inbound marketing and move leads through your sales funnel.
- ☐ **SEO:** Search engine optimization is how you increase the likelihood of ranking high in the search engine results.
- ☐ **Blogging:** Blogging is a great way to build your brand, establish thought leadership, and engage prospects over time by getting them to subscribe to your posts and by pointing them to other content of interest.
- ☐ **Social media:** Sites and networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and more niche-oriented venues are conduits to prospective buyers and serve as places where you can make them aware of your expertise and content.
- ☐ **Forums and online communities:** Participating in online discussions is a way to learn which issues are top of mind for prospects, while also positioning yourself as a valuable resource of information.
- ☐ **Ebooks:** For many companies, ebooks are the bread and butter of their inbound marketing programs. Ebooks should tackle various topics in a conversational, easy-to-understand way.
- ☐ **Visual content:** Snack-sized content in a visual format helps you engage busy prospects that may not have the time to read your ebook or report.



Online Campaigns:

- ☐ **Banner and display:** An advertisement appearing on a website.
- ☐ **Virtual events:** A tradeshow, conference, or meeting online.
- ☐ **Webinars:** A presentation or workshop delivered over the web to educate prospective buyers.
- ☐ **Sponsored newsletter and emails:** Allows you access to a target audience that might not otherwise be reached.
- ☐ **Content syndication:** Allows you to target an audience with your content that you might not have otherwise reached.

Offline Campaigns:

- ☐ **Tradeshows:** In-person exhibits that offer the chance to display your solution and interact one-on-one with prospects.
- ☐ **Roadshows:** A series of marketing events staged at multiple locations to generate interest in your company's ideas or offerings.
- ☐ **Direct mail:** Advertising sent to a prospect's home through a mail service.

- ☐ **TV and radio advertising:** Using the radio or TV to deliver a scripted message to attract new clients.
- ☐ **Outdoor advertising:** Advertising that appears while you are in transit or participating in an activity outside of your home in order to drive awareness or encourage a specific CTA.
- ☐ **Print advertising:** From flyers, to newspapers, to magazine ads, print advertising includes all advertising found in printed media.
- ☐ **Targeted events (e.g. dinners, sporting events):** A direct selling opportunity to a specific audience.
- ☐ **Appointment setting:** Making calls to qualify leads and to schedule calls between them and sales reps.

Marketing Automation:

- ☐ **Personalization:** Creating 1:1 conversations with buyers once they come to your website using personalization tools.
- ☐ **Lead nurturing:** The process of building relationships with qualified prospects regardless of their timing to buy, with the goal of earning their business when they are ready.
- ☐ **Lead scoring:** A shared sales and marketing methodology for ranking leads in order to determine their sales-readiness.

Conclusion

Transformational inbound marketing is a strategic way to earn trust and gain leads. Now that the buyer's cycle has fundamentally changed, companies need an inbound strategy to raise awareness about products and services and promote themselves as leaders in these areas. Customers start to form an opinion of brands early on. An inbound strategy helps ensure the right leads form a positive perception of the brand.

Inbound is a crucial part of a healthy marketing mix, but it's not a complete marketing strategy on its own. Having a full-funnel approach to transformational inbound marketing, by using paid programs and marketing automation tools, helps you drive those inbound leads to become actual customers.





Marketo (NASDAQ: MKTO) provides the leading marketing software for companies of all sizes to build and sustain engaging customer relationships. Spanning today's digital, social, mobile and offline channels, Marketo's® customer engagement platform powers a set of breakthrough applications to help marketers tackle all aspects of digital marketing from the planning and orchestration of marketing activities to the delivery of personalized interactions that can be optimized in real-time. Marketo's applications are known for their ease-of-use, and are complemented by the Marketing Nation™, a thriving network of more than 250 third-party solutions through our LaunchPoint™ ecosystem and over 50,000 marketers who share and learn from each other to grow their collective marketing expertise. The result for modern marketers is unprecedented agility and superior results. Headquartered in San Mateo, CA with offices in Europe, Australia and a joint-venture in Japan, Marketo serves as a strategic marketing partner to more than 3,000 large enterprises and fast-growing small companies across a wide variety of industries. For more information, visit **marketo.com**.

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