

blu20

2340 S Range Line Rd
Joplin, Mo 64804
888-919-1914

info@blu20.com

Author

Andrew Rice



Inbound Marketing for Manufacturers

New ways for manufacturers to improve their
online presence to attract clients and increase sales.

Issue 2 03.14.16

blu20.com



OVERVIEW

Between changes in technology and a shift in consumer attitudes, the sales game has changed. In the past, companies used marketing methods such as cold calls, advertisements and direct mailers to inform prospects about their products and services. The sales cycle and timing of marketing messages were controlled by a salesperson.

In today's business environment, buyers are more insulated and harder to reach with this type of outbound marketing approach. Now, buyers can research questions and solutions on the Internet; they can select a company based on their needs, pricing, expertise and parameters. The sales process is presently controlled by the consumer and most of the sales cycle has moved to the web. A strong online presence is now critical for organizations to reach their target audience, nurture leads and increase sales. Consequently, companies have been adjusting their marketing strategies and investing more resources into this communication medium.

This new approach of using the Internet to attract and connect with customers has been coined inbound marketing. Inbound marketing consists of transitioning a company's website from a "static brochure" to an online sales tool where businesses provide valuable content designed to answer questions and offer solutions. A website with useful information educates and engages visitors, converting them into leads. Through search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, the company's website has the ability to get found by prospects via search engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing.

In addition to creating a more effective website, inbound marketing involves using social media platforms such as blogging sites, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to build a stronger online presence. Supplementary components of inbound marketing include email marketing and public relations. Furthermore, inbound marketing is effective methodology for manufacturers.

"Inbound marketing is doing all the right things so that when people are out there on the web, they can't help but bump into you – almost by accident."

~ Mike Volpe

Inbound Marketing Features

Inbound marketers use various tactics to direct potential customers to their company's website:

- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** – By determining keywords that browsers use to look for particular information on sites such as Google, Yahoo and Bing, organizations can modify their websites to achieve a higher ranking.
- **Blogging** – By actively writing entries containing helpful and educational information, companies are able to interact with potential customers and provide assistance in a personal and engaging way.
- **Social media** – Social networking sites allow companies to provide updates and news directly to people who have chosen to follow them.
- **E-mail marketing** – Businesses can send useful e-mails and newsletters to people who have provided their e-mail addresses. These e-mails contain links to drive traffic back to landing pages on websites.
- **Public relations** – Providing useful information to the media increases a company's chance of becoming published or quoted in target media outlets. This establishes industry credibility and attracts interested consumers to an organization's website.

Generating Leads / Landing Pages

The goal of inbound marketing is not just about getting found; a key outcome is generating leads. One of the most effective ways for companies to do this is through landing pages on their websites. Landing pages provide information about a particular topic of interest to visitors and have call to actions and forms for viewers to fill out. Typically, visitors will provide their contact information in exchange for a white paper, industry research or other useful knowledge from a company. This allows businesses

Facebook is a social
networking site
where
manufacturing
companies can post
valuable industry
information and
news to fans that
follow their page.

to gauge the interest of their audience and produce qualified leads which can be nurtured and converted to sales.

Nurturing Leads / Marketing Tools

Once companies have established their leads, it is important to nurture them along the sales cycle. Organizations can do this through the following ways:

- **Social media** – Users have the option of following companies on social media threads such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. By posting valuable content on these sites, followers are able to view these updates and trust the source as a subject matter expert.
- **E-mail marketing** – After being provided with a user's e-mail information, companies can send e-mails for follow-up. E-mail topics should be educational for recipients instead of rehashed sales pitches.
- **Follow-up calls** – After an e-mail relationship is established, it opens the door to a sales contact directly via phone. Calling leads establishes a more personal relationship and more specific needs can be identified.

Lead Conversion / Increased Sales

Fostering relationships throughout all stages of the sales cycle allows companies to continuously establish credibility with their audience. When leads are prepared to make purchasing decisions, they will go to the companies who have educated and engaged them throughout the sales cycle. This will allow the company to increase sales and obtain repeat customers.

CONCLUSION

Manufacturing companies of all sizes should be effectively using inbound marketing tools to strengthen their online presence. Inbound marketing attracts and engages qualified leads, nurtures targets along the sales cycle and ultimately increases sales. Overall, manufacturers can increase sales by investing more resources into inbound marketing tools.