

What is Inbound Marketing?

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Marketing has entered a new business model phase. The industry has transformed from “intrusive” marketing, like ads, email campaigns, junk mail, and cold calls, to “permission” marketing – a strategy focusing on creating quality content that pulls people toward your company and product or service. The basics of inbound marketing are acting more like a publisher with content, social media, and search engine optimization. “What to publish” ranges from blogs to videos to presentations to photos to press releases. “The where” is everywhere your target reader is.

There are several reasons why so many companies are shifting to an inbound marketing strategy.

- A brand can easily determine its return on investment by tracking how many visitors its website is receiving, the source of new leads, the strongest keywords, and the most successful pieces of content.
- These analytics can often encourage continued improvement of the strategy.
- Creating a piece of content on your website offers longevity that can positively impact your business for years to come.
- Earning the attention of prospects by continuously offering context in your content helps build a relationship with your company and that can turn in to a potential lead.
- Costs for inbound marketing strategies are less than those of traditional marketing.

Your company website is the gateway to your readership. You don’t want just any traffic to your site, you want the right traffic... the people who are most likely to become leads, and, ultimately, happy clients. These are the people around whom your whole business is built.

Some of the most important tools to attract the right users to your site are:

- **Blogging**- This is the single best way to attract new visitors to your website. In order to get found by the right prospective customers, you must create educational content that speaks to them and answers their questions.

- **Social Media**- You must share remarkable content and valuable information on the social web, engage with your prospects, and put a human face on your brand. Interact on the networks where your ideal prospects spend their time.
- **Keywords**- Your clients begin their buying process online, usually by using a search engine to find something they have questions about. Make sure you're appearing prominently in their searches. To get there, you need to select keywords, optimize your pages, create content, and build links around the terms your ideal prospects are searching for.
- **Pages**- Optimize your website to appeal to and speak with your ideal prospects. Transform your website into a beacon of helpful content to entice the right readers to visit your pages.

Inbound marketing takes time, resources, and a lot of patience...especially for small business owners or marketers. If you're on a shoestring budget, start by creating your social media profiles and building an optimized blog, posting regularly. The blog will serve as the central hub for all of your inbound marketing efforts.

While it is clear that businesses are gravitating towards inbound marketing, some are moving more aggressively than others. Those who move first are more likely to reap the benefits of this new era of marketing.