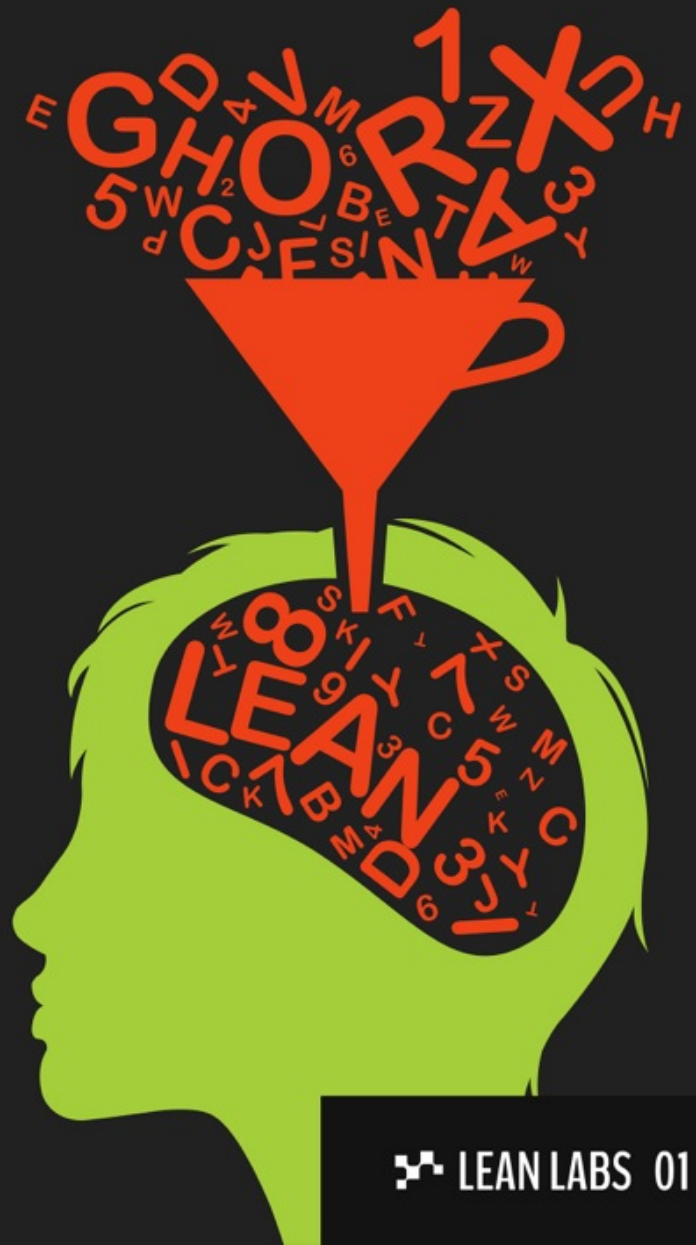




PREPARING SALESPEOPLE FOR INBOUND MARKETING SUCCESS

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PREPARING SALESPEOPLE FOR INBOUND MARKETING SUCCESS

Congratulations! You've decided to get started with your company's first Inbound Marketing campaign. And, you want to prepare your team for the launch - especially your Sales team. After all, they need to know how you will be communicating with their prospects. And how Inbound works, for them. If your Sales team doesn't use Inbound Marketing properly, you'll fail to reap many of its benefits.

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EVERYONE'S A WINNER.

Your sales team stands to reap significant benefits from well-executed Inbound Marketing. Here's how to explain the benefits to the sales team:

(For more on execution, download [Conquering the Inbound Marketing Mountain.](#))

INBOUND MARKETING IS A WIN-WIN... WIN!

1) The sales team wins.

The most important goal of the Inbound campaign is to deliver highly qualified leads for your Sales team.

Leads that come through the Inbound Marketing Funnel are closer to “ready-to-close” when they are handed off to sales because their most important qualifying questions have been answered by your Inbound Marketing content.

2) Prospects win.

Prospects spend lots of time researching solutions and companies before they contact a company to address specific needs. They don't want to be sold yet, they just want to understand how to fix their problems or achieve their goals. Your Inbound Marketing campaign does this beautifully, giving prospects the information they are looking for online without “being sold”, and only transitioning to Sales when the

customer is ready. Prospects see your company as a thought leader. Your company becomes a trusted source of knowledge and value, which helps prospects “drop their sales guard” when they personally connect with the Sales team.

3) Your dirty little secret: YOU WIN

Prospects learn that your business provides the expertise, products, and services they need. They then connect with Sales and more frequently close, compared with traditional marketing campaigns. It also helps you retain customers as you continue Inbound Marketing post sale for customer satisfaction and retention.

The most important goal of the Inbound campaign is to deliver highly qualified leads for your Sales team.

THE RULE OF ATTRACTION.

The Sales team is probably already familiar with Personas, the Sales Funnel, & Content from traditional marketing, even if they're referred to as the "target audience", "pipeline", and "sales offers".

Inbound marketing uses these concepts for “attraction” marketing rather than constantly “pushing” your way into your customers’ view, with ads and traditional pitching.

In traditional marketing, we have a target audience.

Inbound Marketing campaigns market to “**personas.**” Personas represent groups of real buyers who are excellent candidates for your products, services, or solutions.

Just like “targets,” you will know the concerns, needs, and interests of personas. And, the Inbound campaign prepares your brand to “get found” online, where Personas look for information that addresses those issues. (For more information on personas, [click here to download “Develop LEAN Personas that Work!”](#))

SALESPEOPLE FOCUS ON FILLING AND CLOSING THEIR SALES PIPELINE.

With traditional marketing, businesses gain prospects through ads (or prospects toss their cards into a fishbowl, or fill out a “contact us” form online, or appear on a purchased list). Then, your sales team contacts those prospects. Often the prospects are not qualified - which of course is not a great use of your salesperson’s time to try to convert them. Prospects that happen to qualify enter the sales pipeline and eventually get closed. Inbound Marketing simply automates and replaces the prospecting and lead generation parts of the pipeline.

INBOUND MARKETING TAKES THE FORM OF A LEAD GENERATION FUNNEL.

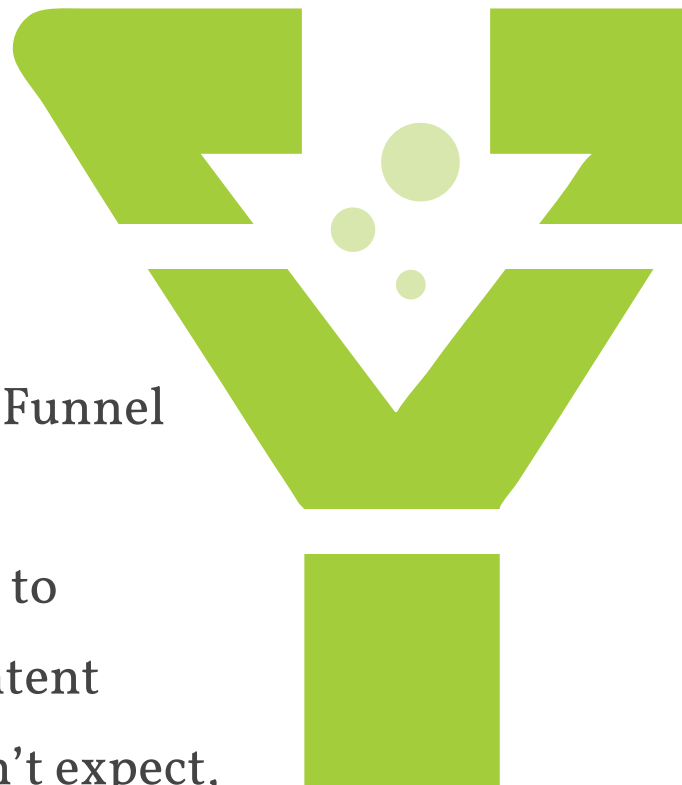
The Funnel offers targeted content that provides prospects answers they seek, addresses their concerns and objections, and ultimately results in highly qualified leads, at the bottom of the Funnel.

Digging deeper into the funnel:

The Inbound Marketing Funnel consists of a Top, Middle and Bottom.

The Top of the Funnel replaces traditional prospecting.

Information that is downloaded from the Top of the Funnel demonstrates your company's expertise and is simply designed to be helpful. Top of the funnel content delivers value that prospects don't expect,



because content at the Top of the Funnel is not promotional. If your company was a mortgage company, you'd be offering content like "How to pick the best loan" or "The Top 5 loan programs for 2014", or "7 Tips for getting the best rate on your Mortgage."

Your prospects are able to self-educate, become familiar with your company, and come to understand what you offer without feeling like they are being sold. Your brand is not pitching them, but instead offering genuine value. The exposure/attraction process has begun!

The top of the funnel must avoid "going for broke" by offering content that "closes the sale." It is unlikely that such content exists, because what customers really want is simply answers to their questions and to understand the value you can offer them.

It is important to help your sales team understand that, just because prospects are reading Top of the Funnel pieces, they do not need to be contacted. Instead,

prospects at the top of the Funnel have entered a workflow and have become targets for the Middle of the Funnel content offers.

Content at the Top of the Funnel is not promotional.

Salespeople will not be required to overload themselves with pitching unqualified prospects, b/c the Inbound campaign is flowing and filtering for them.

Your Middle of the Funnel offers prospects brand-specific information.

Once your leads have their base questions answered and know what you do, qualified prospects will want to know how you do it. Middle of the funnel content describes what your company offers and how it serves customers better than competitors. Your unique value proposition becomes a major part of the message. Yep,

you are talking about yourself and doing a bit of “selling” here, but in a very non-threatening way. Customers opt in for this content because it helps them solve their problem, and in doing so they become leads that begin to hit the sales team’s radar.

Middle of the Funnel content works great because it demonstrates why your product or service solves their problems, but without pitching them. Examples of Middle of the Funnel content include case studies and expert applications of your products, budget implications of using your products, toolkits, customer stories, reviews, etc.

Middle of the Funnel content demonstrates why your product or service solves their problems, but without pitching them.

More qualified leads will begin to make requests for offers from the Bottom of the Funnel.

Offers from the Bottom of the Funnel don't close the sale, but they do show you who your qualified leads are. Bottom of the Funnel qualified leads have received content from the Top and Middle of the Funnel and are still coming back. They've self educated, demonstrated their continued interest and *Now* it's time for the sales team to act!

Bottom of the Funnel offers consist of interactions like "free consults", "trial offers", "onboarding interviews", joining webinars, getting a quote, and other opportunities for your salespeople to engage, qualify, and close, and then delight.

The strength of Inbound at this point is that "pre-sold" leads hit the sales team and have indicated that they're both interested and "closable."

Bottom of the Funnel offers consist of interactions like "free consults", "trial offers" etc.

The Funnel is based on the buying journey.

The buying journey, is the pathway customers take from “Point A: They know nothing about you” to “Point B: They understand the value you offer” to Point C: “Deciding when and why to buy from you.” This funnel is different for every company: At each major step in the journey, customers arrive at decision making points where they seek information to help them decide what next step to take. Your Inbound Marketing content helps your prospects make decisions and go to next steps in the buying journey.

Traditional marketing messages are often interruptive and tuned out by prospects. But, not Inbound messages.

With Inbound Marketing, content is genuinely helpful. All the information helps move prospects through the Inbound Marketing Funnel, transforming prospects into qualified sales leads.

When considering ideas that turn into content (i.e. topics), the goal is to stand out from the competition, compel interest in your products and services without pitching, and make prospects want to know more about you. Providing useful, unbiased information helps targeted personas get to the next step in the customer journey. It demonstrates your knowledge, expertise, and care for your customers.

Interview your salespeople when developing your content strategy. Find out what questions and objections they regularly encounter when working with prospects. Use the questions and answers, and the information that helps overcome objections, as

important input to developing content that helps prospects understand your company's expertise and what to expect as a customer.

Working with salespeople for content strategy helps earn their buy-in for Inbound Marketing while at the same time helping develop your top of the funnel offers and sales funnel.

Providing useful, unbiased information helps targeted personas get to the next step in the customer journey.

YOUR BUSINESS OBJECTIVES.

Identify the metrics that you use to define success and share it with your salespeople.

Inbound Marketing takes advantage of a new generation of awesome automated tools to measure performance of online marketing campaign.

Demonstrate how you'll monitor how the campaign is performing. You won't "set it up and forget it", but instead you'll use metrics to continually optimize your campaign.

(For more on metrics, download [*Conquering the Inbound Marketing Mountain*](#).)

Identify which metrics are most meaningful to your Sales reps. Look at the numbers with them in full transparency, and listen to feedback on what's happening in sales encounters. This will show you what content needs remain unaddressed or could be improved. This will also help you understand the ratio of prospects-to-leads-to-sales that come through the Inbound Marketing Funnel and ultimately drive the growth of your business.

ADDITIONAL METRICS TO TRACK INCLUDE:

- *Traffic to the website.*
- *Engagement with the content you offer such as: Page views, downloads, shares, registrations, sign-ups & subscriptions, and the frequency of clicks to subsequent calls to action appearing at the end of content you publish.*
- *Increased mentions and coverage of your products and services by third-parties.*
- *Social discussion and survey results of your products and customer satisfaction.*

It's important to establish baseline metrics and then measure against them post-launch either monthly or quarterly on a consistent basis.

Determine which metrics the salespeople find most important and create a strategy to improve those metrics.

Showing your commitment to the numbers will let salespeople understand Inbound as a marketing tactic that will be built, measured, and optimized over time to drive sales growth.

INBOUND TOOLS.

Provide effective internal communications tools that allow the Inbound campaign to amplify within your company's sales and marketing community.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE TOOLS INCLUDE:

- *Internal wikis that let salespeople share how they address obstacles.*
- *Internal Q&A forums for Sales, to promote deeper understanding of the Inbound campaign.*
- *Sharing results from Surveys of Customers (as well as surveying leads that did not buy) to understand where you can improve.*
- *Communications tools inside your CRM, for scoring, tracking, and reporting.*
- *Listening tools to understand what customers are asking for and the information they're finding elsewhere on the web.*

The internal tools will organize your goals, reasons for using Inbound, and serve as a repo of all of your developed content in a central location.

Remind your colleagues that Inbound is a marketing tactic that will be built, measured, and optimized over time to improve, based on what works and what doesn't work in your marketplace. Enable your team to submit feedback based upon their experiences of what they encounter when talking to prospects, and then act on that feedback.

INBOUND TRAINING.

You've already "sold" your sales team on Inbound and you have developed content that is ready to share with the world. Now it's time to get back with your sales team and prepare them for the launch.

PUT TOGETHER A TRAINING PROGRAM THAT IS WELL-ORGANIZED AND ONGOING.

- *Run a test with a small number of reps, ideally your top reps, to find out what training works and what doesn't work, before you roll out training to the entire Sales team. If you start with your top reps, you are likely to get buy-in from the rest of the team, and adherence to the program.*
- *Shape the program to match the people, place, time, and habits of the sales team.*
- *Avoid limited training that ends at launch. Integrate new findings into training as the program evolves.*

Training includes explanations of:

- *Why Inbound works.*
- *How to use Inbound most effectively to close more new business.*
- *Defining the Inbound Marketing Funnel.*

- *Plans for content.*
- *Plans for lead scoring, lead nurturing, the best ways to follow-up, and more.*

Through training you can also recruit collaborators to help define personas, document the buying journey, produce ideas for content, and build support for your Inbound program. In the end, training will help you achieve full buy-in to the Inbound campaign as well as a cultural change of how customers want to perceive the buying process and the right way to “sell” to them.

MEASURING SUCCESS.

Share the numbers from your Inbound Marketing campaign with your salespeople. Shows the team how you're generating leads. Together you can evaluate lead quality and volume and also compare the ability and energy of closing inbound leads vs "traditional" leads.

To confirm the funnel is working as planned, confirm that salespeople are taking over the right leads, at the right time. Once the process works, you can focus on simply scaling up the volume of leads. More Inbound content will increase site rankings and traffic, and let you market directly to your target personas. Inbound Marketing leads to more sales productivity as it allows salespeople to focus on only qualified leads.

As your company grows, you'll continue to optimize personas, the buying journey, your funnel, lead scoring, and closing methods.

STAY IN MOTION AND BUILD MOMENTUM!

Stay focused on growing and optimizing your Inbound Marketing campaign over time, based on what you learn from your marketplace.

Inbound Marketing allows salespeople to focus on only qualified leads.

Engage your sales team.

Recruit them to help build-out the program:

- *Continue to get inputs from the Sales team regarding new questions prospects ask that can be addressed with Inbound content.*
- *Ask salespeople to constructively critique the Inbound campaign.*
- *Start involving salespeople in the growth of the campaign. Recruit engaged Sales colleagues to survey customers for content ideas, developing new offers, participating in videos, Q&A's, Webinars, social interactions, or most awesomely, post-sale customer delight campaigns.*
- *Continue updating and sharing results with the Sales team.*

Determine which metrics the salespeople find most important and create a strategy to improve those metrics.

Ultimately, you don't want to just launch Inbound Marketing. You must nurture Inbound Marketing like you nurture your leads, with frequent attention, monitoring, and experimentation to find what works best. Commit to try new ideas, measure how they work, learn what to do next, and win.



The end...

or is it the beginning?

Need a hand with Inbound Marketing?

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Credit: Shout out to Rick Burnes from HubSpot, whose presentation '*An inbound marketer's guide to product marketing*' at Inbound 2013, inspired some of the concepts that appear above.

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