

# Ways to incorporate inbound into your marketing routine

What may have once seemed like a fleeting buzzword is here to stay. “Inbound” is a marketing approach that focuses on attracting potential customers through content that is relevant and helpful (not interruptive). When customers find you via blogs, search engines and social media, interactions are more meaningful. Thus, you attract more qualified prospects and build trust and credibility in your business.

Successful inbound marketing doesn't have to cost thousands of dollars, and it doesn't necessarily require fancy software. By following a few key guidelines, you can successfully incorporate inbound marketing into your existing strategy and quickly net quality prospects.

## Identify your ideal customer

Driving traffic to your website is a good start, but driving the right traffic to your website is the goal. To target the right potential customers, the first step is to determine exactly who your ideal customer might be. Creating buyer personas (semi-fictional representations of the ideal customer you're trying to attract) will help you to pinpoint precisely who you want to get to your website ... the ultimate inbound goal. Creating buyer personas can be done with research and a bit of guesswork.

## Know where your audience hangs out

Once you've pinpointed your buyer personas, research where your ideal customers hang out. To use social media as an example, it can be tempting to open an account on every social media platform. However, if your ideal customers tend to migrate toward a particular platform, it's best to focus your time there.

## Attract customers to your site

So now you know who your target customers are and where they're hanging out. Now what? How do you harness that traffic to your website? Here's where content creation comes in – it's the heart of inbound. Create content (blog posts, whitepapers, videos, podcasts, brochures, etc.) that offers solutions to your targets' problems. The goal here isn't necessarily to sell your product or service outright, but to prove you're a valuable, informative and knowledgeable resource. Creating quality content is absolutely key.

## Convert website visitors into customers

Once you've gotten visitors to your site, the next goal is to keep them on your site. Create next logical steps, or calls-to-action, for visitors so they know where to go next. For example, if visitors read a blog post, offer clear and visible links to additional relevant content. Also consider utilizing plug-ins (there are many free resources available) to build forms on your website. Forms allow visitors to sign-up for a newsletter or blog, and are a great way to capture information from site visitors.

## Track your traffic

Use analytics tracking data, like a free Google Analytics account, and see which pages on your site are popular and what visitors are doing when they're on your site. This information is helpful as you work to curate your content for ideal customers.

Once you've identified your prospects, keep tabs on them (CRM software can be helpful), and continue to nurture your leads. Learn what sort of content your target audience prefers, when traffic volume is the highest, and what it takes to see engagement. Social media channels and many email distribution platforms, such as MailChimp, offer free analytics that are extremely useful.

## Follow up!

Remember, once you've turned your prospects into customers, inbound isn't over! Keep delighting your customers with relevant and useful content. After all, a positive review is the best marketing out there.