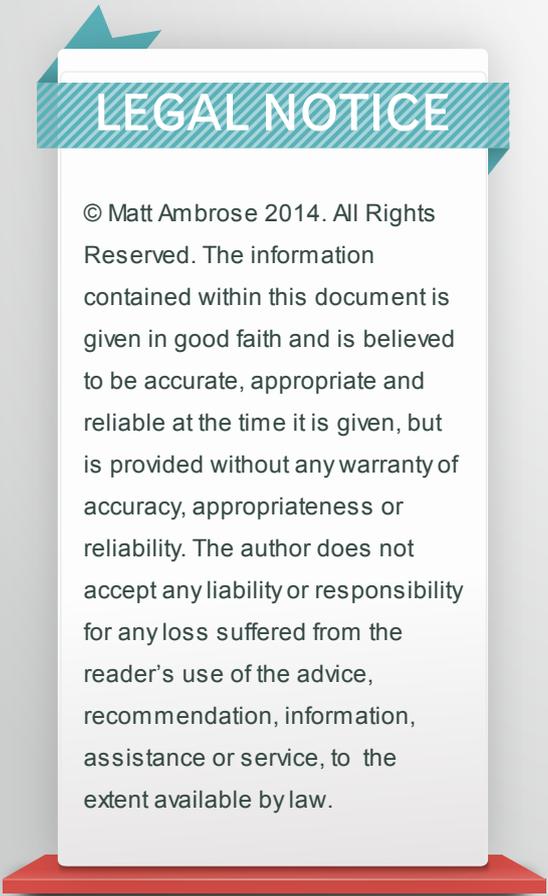


Inbound Marketing in Two Weeks



HOW TO FIND AND ATTRACT MORE LEADS FOR 61% LESS COST



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Plan - Create - Distribute - Attract - Convert

INBOUND

The irreversible shift from outbound marketing has begun. Will you join it, taking advantage of the latest tools to turn your website into a slick data driven sales machine? Or be stuck pumping out content with no clue on whether it's making you money?

“80% of business decision makers prefer to get information in an educational format rather than through advertising”²

Marketing has changed forever.

No longer can you blast out sales messages and expect people to listen. They're too busy doing their own research, checking reviews, downloading buyers guides and getting opinions in social media. They want real information that helps them make smarter buying decisions. Not a shallow sales pitch.

In fact, 57% of the sales cycle is typically over before they even contact you, such is their appetite for fact finding.¹ But rather than ring the death knell for marketing as we know it, to succeed your tactics simply have to change.

Out go email blasts, unmeasurable print ads and self praising press releases. In come blogs, eBooks, email campaigns and white papers that address prospects' in a helpful, authentic manner that build trust.

Two thirds of the buyer's journey is now in the hands of marketing, not sales

The emergence of today's savvy buyer has put two thirds of the buyer's journey into marketing's domain. What's more, success is no longer defined by who has the deepest pockets. A smaller enterprise with the right strategy can take on and beat much bigger competition struggling along with dated tactics.

So while the portcullis has slammed down on unwelcomed outbound methods, the path to bigger profits is open to those able to create and distribute content prospects love.

What is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing combines blogging, SEO, email, social media and analytics all together to create a strategy that can generate leads in a highly targeted, measurable and cost effective way.

It transforms your website from a static brochure into a hub of information; a treasure trove of information that draws prospects in, builds their trust and develops their desire to buy your product.

Such is its persuasive power that inbound marketing has been proven to generate leads for 61% less investment than the outbound methods it replaces.

Benefits of Inbound Marketing:

- It turns your website into a hub of information, rather than a static brochure
- It increases traffic from Google, social media and industry forums
- It converts more visitors into leads when they arrive
- A higher percentage of leads are converted over time
- Its measurability means less waste and more profit

Sounds great, right? Another benefit of inbound marketing is that any business can do it. You just need the right tools and strategy.



“Inbound marketing can generate leads for as much as 61% less than any other marketing method”³

This guide provides a complete inbound marketing strategy divided into 14 easy to follow steps.

No technical wizardry or expensive software is needed. In fact, all the tools are available for free or as a limited version you can upgrade once you're ready to step it up a gear.

So lets get started on building your inbound marketing machine, and discovering why its measurability and control can generate leads for 61% less than other marketing methods.

Step 1 - Run a Health Check of Your Current Strategy



You'll need to know what condition your marketing is in at the beginning if you want to track your progress.

Fire up a spreadsheet and create columns for the following:

- Number of fans and followers in social media
- Number of links to your website
- Number of pages indexed by Google
- Position in Google for your keywords
- Volume of traffic to your website
- How many leads your website currently generates

You can retrieve most of this information with free browser plugins like [SEO Quake](#) or the [SEO Moz toolbar](#).

Check out the competition

After checking your own progress, why not do some mild snooping on your competitors?

Check their stats with your tool of choice to see what you're up against and the number of social media shares, links and rankings you're going to need to become the dominate player in your industry.



A hand with fingers having different facial expressions. The index finger has a speech bubble above it that says "Follow". The middle finger has a speech bubble above it that says "Like". The other fingers have various expressions like surprise, anger, and happiness.

Follow

Like

Step 2 - Update Your Social Media Profiles

If you've somehow yet to join the social media party, create a Facebook page for your business, a Twitter account and update your LinkedIn page.

If one doesn't already exist, create a LinkedIn group for your industry where you can foster lively conversations around hot topics. When it comes to rousing debate and B2B community engagement, LinkedIn trounces a typical Facebook comments feed.

If you're a serious completionist, you could also create a Google+ page.

Pinterest might also be worth a look if you're in a sector with a large community of users, such as fashion

Make sure your branding is consistent and you've added your website address to each profile description.

Step 3 - Join the Conversation

As any performer knows, if you want your audience to love you then you must give them what they want. In marketing this means addressing your prospect's motivations, problems, fears and dreams.

But don't try to guess what those problems are. You need to listen to find out.



“90% of consumers unsubscribe because content was irrelevant”⁴

Setting up Google Alerts for your keywords is a simple way to get daily updates on the hot topics and trends in your industry. Other free tools include [Social Mention](#), [Ice Rocket](#) and [Topsy](#).

If you're ready to start investing in your inbound marketing strategy, there are plenty of paid for options for delving deeper into the social web. This includes [Radian6](#), [Buzzbundle](#) and [Brandwatch](#).

While doing your research, look for opportunities to add to the conversations about your industry. Start answering questions, sharing your own insights and offering expert advice. Then when you do pose questions of your own and share links to your content you won't be chased out of the community with raised pitchforks.

Step 4 - Engage with Thought Leaders and Influencers

Subscribing to the top 10 most popular blogs in your industry will help you keep tabs on hot topics and give you ideas on what content to produce.

As when researching discussions in social media, it's wise to start posting helpful, relevant comments. This will start to build awareness of who you are so that when the time is ripe you can contact influential bloggers directly about your new blog post or eBook without them hitting the block user button.

And it's not just bloggers with a lot of influence. Find people in social media with large followings that tweet and post updates frequently. Start following them, retweeting their updates and commenting on posts they like. This will help grow your presence, so that when you share some news of your own it will be greeted with open ears.

Step 5 - Define Your Buyer Persona

Defining your buyer persona is a step many marketers miss. And it's why many of them fail to get the best results from inbound marketing. It's little steps like this that can have a massive impact on response rates because having a buyer persona helps to ensure your content is relevant and resonates with your target customer.

You may be wondering 'what is a buyer persona'? A buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your customer. It's the characteristics that influence why how they'll respond to your content and ultimately buy your product.

A buyer persona is a summary of personal details, such as your prospect's job title, income, lifestyle, objectives, problems and other key information that influences why they buy things.

Another mistake many marketers make is to simply guess what these characteristics are. This then leads to the creation of content that's irrelevant, oversimplified or even patronising

So for the best results, you need to do some fact finding. Building on the research you did in the previous stage, you can find out more about your customers by using [Survey Monkey](#), setting up a questionnaire on your website with [4Q](#), emailing your existing subscribers or stepping away from the keyboard and interviewing customers.



“A buyer persona is a semi-fictional representation of your customer. It's the characteristics that influence how they'll respond to your content and ultimately buy your product.”

After completing your research you'll then be able to compile an impression of who your prospect is, what matters to them and what information they need that will persuade them to buy your product.

Using this buyer persona, you'll now know who you are writing to and what your content needs to appeal to if it is going to be successful at generating leads for your business.

Step 6 - Map Out Your Buyer's Journey

STAGES IN THEIR JOURNEY

This stage is known as 'content mapping' where you plot the route your customer needs to take from curious to educated, convinced and ready to buy.

To plot your buyer's journey you need to list all the questions, objections and doubts you will need to address in the sales cycle. You can then map these out as different steps in your prospect's journey through your sales funnel.

A typical journey can start with seeing your update in social media to clicking through to your website, subscribing to your content, downloading a buyer's guide and then becoming a trust infused customer at the end eager to get their hands on your wares.

AWARENESS

- ▶ The research stage where they're looking for information about their problem. Content needs to be informative, educational or entertaining, but absolutely not salesy (blog posts, infographics, Slideshares, eBooks).

CONSIDERATION

- ▶ They want to know what approaches or methods can solve the problem they've identified. Content now needs to be more in-depth and to start showing off your expertise (white papers, buyer guides, webinars, eBooks).

DECISION

- ▶ They've decided on the solution they want. Now they need to compare the options from different vendors and select the best one. This is where you have to build confidence that you offer the best solution (product comparison, case studies, spec sheets, private consultation).



Step 7 - Setup Your Blog

If you don't have a blog already, Wordpress is free blogging software that's evolved into a powerful CMS platform. It's easy to install and update, and there's a wealth of plugins to expand its functionality. Make sure you provide both email and RSS subscription options, and links to all your social media accounts.

Step 8 - Start Publishing

From completing the earlier steps, you should now have a list of hot topics, customer problems and valuable insights to write about.

Types of blog articles:

- How to
- Industry news
- Opinion pieces
- Interviews
- Infographics
- List posts
- Curations of valuable resources

What's more, people like to do business with people, not corporate drones. Don't be afraid to share some stories about your culture and your organisation. This reassures prospects you're a company run by real people, and that you don't view customers as tallies on the whiteboard.

Aim to post at least once per week and follow the 80/20 rule, where 80% of your posts are informative and 20% are sales orientated. Blogs are tools for providing valuable information of genuine value to readers. Not for pumping out press releases.



“59% of B2B marketers rate blogs as the most effective content marketing tactic. Companies that blog regularly generate 67%” more leads as a result.”⁵

Step 9 - After You Post, Promote



After you hit publish, don't just sit back and expect the traffic to arrive. Publishing content is only half the battle. Promotion is vital if you want your blogs to be read, shared and subscribed to.

So once you've hit publish, post intelligent updates to all your social channels. This means being more inventive than writing "new post" with a link. Sorry to tell you, but nobody cares about a new post. They want to know why they should take time out of their day to read it and what will they gain?

To build interest, share some amazing stats, ask a question or make a contentious comment that demands people pay attention to the link you've just shared. Many people might even retweet your update, if it's intriguing enough.

Forums can also be a goldmine for traffic. By this stage you should now be a pillar within your online communities, having posted helpful answers and insights during the research stage. Now is the time to spend some of the social currency you've accumulated.

Start a new thread in popular forums where you pose a questions and ask for opinions while sharing a link to your blog in the post. Just be subtle about it. Nobody likes to be tricked by linkbait. A slapdash spree of pasting links to your blog everywhere you can will only get your account banned and a well of potential customers sealed off for good.

"93% of B2B marketers use content marketing but only 42% believe they are doing it successfully"⁶

Step 10 - Create Your Remarkable Content

Now your blog is motoring along, it's time to build the real engine room for your inbound marketing strategy. Blogs are great for the awareness stage and getting attention in online communities. Now it's time to build on that attention by building a sales funnel that takes them through to the consideration stage and beyond.

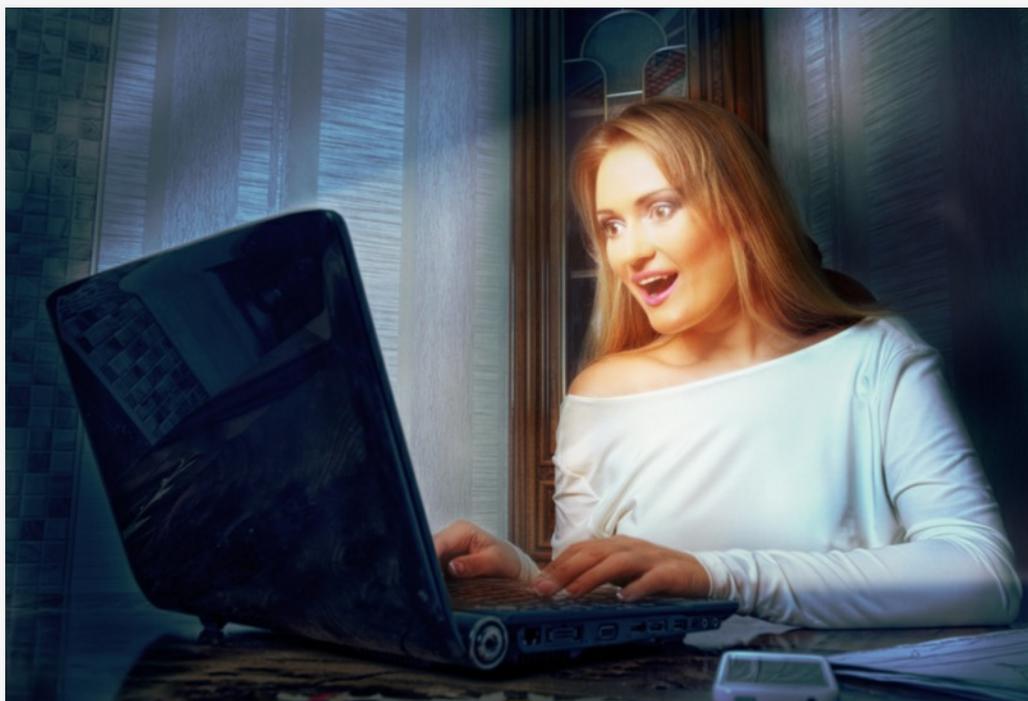
In order to get people into your funnel, you need to dangle some juicy bait to reel them in. For this, you need to create a piece of remarkable content. This is long-form content in the form of an eBook, report or white paper that discusses how to solve a problem in detail, and is packed with valuable advice your customers are going to be eager to download and devour.

Remember, the internet is already flooded with eBooks, how to guides and 'groundbreaking' reports. So if you want yours to stand out it must be high quality. Otherwise it will be another report left to gather digital dust instead of generating sales.

Consider how you can give it that extra twist that will help it stand out and make people eager to handover their email address to get their copy.

"To get people into your funnel, you need to dangle some juicy bait to reel them in."

Refer back to the list of customer problems, industry trends and hot topics you created during the research stage. Consider which of these are worthy of expanding on in a way worthy of being called remarkable.



Step 11 - Create a Landing Page

Unlike freely available blog posts, your remarkable content needs to be a little harder to get. You need to create a landing page on your website that briefly explains what its about and highlights its benefits. To gain access, prospects then have to complete an email registration box.

This stage is perfect for being able to segment prospects depending on their job title, industry, company size or other factors that influences their buying behaviour. Simply add questions for whichever factors you want to segment on and in your email marketing service of choice.

Step 12 - Create a Lead Nurturing Campaign



“Lead nurturing emails get 4-10 times more responses than email blasts.”⁷

Now your remarkable content is ready to go, you'll need a series of lead nurturing emails to follow it up. This is where the real selling begins.

Few people are ready to buy your product the first time they visit your website. But when you have their email address you can maintain contact and develop the sales process over time, taking them from curious to informed to convinced and ready to buy.

80% of sales come after the fourth contact. Most sales people give up after the first two.

Your first few emails should be educational in nature. Then as the emails progress, and recipients are advanced through the sales funnel, you can start developing your pitch.

Remember to follow the buyer's journey outlined in step 6 by providing product comparisons, case studies and other trust building content that leads them towards reaching the decision that buying your product is the smart thing to do.

Step 13 - Feed Traffic to Your Remarkable Content

If you already have decent search engine rankings and are active in online communities, you may already be able to get significant traffic to your remarkable content's landing page.

However, if you're just getting started in inbound marketing, paid advertising is a measurable, fast track way to getting traffic. In fact, if the sums add up in your favour, you can get you all the traffic you need to make your campaign profitable.

An achievable target, in inbound marketing circles, is 2% of leads generated by your campaign converting into sales.

This response rate may be unheard of in conventional advertising. But this further reinforces the power of inbound marketing to build trust and confidence over time instant of trying to get the sale on the first content. It's high measurability makes 2% a feasible target to aim for and explains why it generates leads for 61% less than other methods.

TRAFFIC SOURCES

Google Adwords is getting eye wateringly expensive. But advertising in social media is relatively cheap and getting more targeted by the day. In fact, some are hailing Facebook as the best direct response platform in a generation. Based on one recent survey, many marketers would tend to agree:

- 51% of marketers get customers from Facebook(8)
- 43% from LinkedIn
- 43% on the company website
- 36% Twitter
- 15% Google+
- 9% Pinterest

So while you're waiting for your blogging campaign to build some traction, give advertising in social media a whirl.



Step 14 - Analyse the Results and Plan the Next Campaign



It's often said that 'half the money spent on advertising is wasted, you just don't know which half'. With inbound marketing, this isn't the case.

Every click, page view and purchase is measured. This equips you to make better decisions on what parts are working and which need refining or replaced altogether to get better results.

Instead of throwing mud at the wall, inbound marketing shows you what works, delivering on the promise of applying constant improvement to achieve ever higher levels of success and profit.

Now you've reached the end of your first campaign, review all the key metrics and KPIs you listed in step one. This allows you to measure success and see what can be improved to realise the potential of inbound marketing to generate more leads for less investment than any other marketing method.

Conclusion

Consistency, persistence and analysis are the keys to success. Creating an inbound marketing strategy that generates 100s or 1000s of fresh leads takes time. While this guide uses a two week timeframe, best practise is to allow six to nine months to get consistent results, or even longer depending on the typical sales cycle for your product.

Earning trust and growing a reputation takes time. But once it's up and running, inbound marketing can convert your website into a sales generating machine that gets easier to run and generates bigger profits with each campaign. But like any machine, it needs fuel. And you will need to setup a process for creating high quality blog posts and remarkable content on an ongoing basis.

Hopefully, I've now convinced you to stop wasting time and money on email blasts, difficult to track print ads and counting tumbleweed at trade shows. Instead, focus your efforts on using inbound marketing to create pipelines throughout the web that draw people to your website to consume problem solving content that convinces them to buy your product.

About



Matt Ambrose is head copywriter at [The Copywriter's Crucible](#), a melting pot of punchy, persuasive copywriting and marketing services.

Matt's previous clients include global tech companies, a mining conglomerate and ambitious startups eager to take on the world. What they all have in common is a desire for fresh thinking and engaging copy, both of which Matt and his team are happy to provide.

Away from his laptop, Matt can be seen bombing around the countryside on his mountain bike or watching war documentaries, typically not at the same time.

Inbound Marketing Services

In this guide I provided you with the strategy for getting your inbound marketing machine rolling. In addition to the strategy, to be successful you need a constant flow of high quality blog posts, eBooks and automated emails that take prospects from curious to convinced and ready to buy.

But creating all this content on a regular basis can be both difficult and time consuming.

Why not allow us to take care of content creation for you?

I've previously worked on campaigns for some of the UK's leading inbound marketing agencies. So you gain the same premium quality content and strategic planning but with a more attractive price tag.

So if you'd like all the content requirements for your inbound campaign taken care of, get in touch for a FREE proposal on how *The Copywriter's Crucible* can drive your inbound marketing campaign's success in generating more leads for 61% less than any other marketing method:

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