



creative brew

a guide to
inbound marketing
essentials for business ePaper

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We have developed this whitepaper especially for business owners and CEOs to demonstrate how a new marketing practice – “Inbound Marketing” – can empower companies to take advantage of the changing business environment that the Internet has brought upon us.

As the Internet has evolved, marketing on the web has also been forced to evolve. 2010 saw the marketing world truly change in a way we haven't experienced since 1973 when the Internet was first invented. Today we can't simply rely on a great website and planning to get found by search engines anymore.

In its early days the web experience was one of unrelenting email spam, page upon page of flashing banners begging for clicks and even outright deception enticing consumers to spend. Today the web has turned into something more targeted, less scattershot and more subtle. Web surfers are now looking for more than our advertising; they want information, entertainment, social interaction and most importantly trust. Companies that deliver this kind of content will get their business.

In this Whitepaper we will show you how to embrace a new approach to marketing called “Inbound Marketing”. Your customers are increasingly moving online and to remain relevant so should your marketing efforts. We will show you how the Internet and the social web has brought about a new way to generate and track new leads and grow revenues.

In our experience there is no doubt that by planning and implementing an Inbound Marketing Strategy you will be able to increase your qualified sales leads and ultimately sales.

“Search engines, blogging and other Internet trends have fundamentally transformed the way people and businesses purchase products, but most small businesses still use outdated and inefficient marketing methods – like print advertising, telemarketing and trade shows – that people increasingly find intrusive and screen out.”

BRIAN HALLIGAN, Co-Founder & CEO, Hubspot

How does an Inbound Marketing Strategy help you grow your business?

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Inbound marketing is a methodology that allows you to generate more leads and opportunities for your business, while at the same time building a community around your brand.

Whether you know it or not your potential customers are searching for your businesses' product and service. How well are you doing at guiding them along the path that leads them to find what they are looking for, your solution to their needs?

All too often, websites aren't converting traffic into leads, or even being found in the first place. By aligning with what your prospective customers are actually looking for online, and then giving them compelling offers that offer value, you can have a holistic inbound lead generation system to increase sales and drive business growth!

Inbound marketing has three key functions for your business – get found, convert, and analyse.

> **GET FOUND**

Create, optimise, and promote your content and get found.

> **CONVERT**

Nurture leads to gain more customers, win more sales.

> **ANALYSE**

Make marketing decisions, focus on what works.

Looking back, we can see how during the first phase in the evolution of the Internet, Google changed forever the way we interacted with the Internet. In a short time we became accustomed to search, search and more search. As a result our lives and businesses are now increasingly dominated by online activities.

Consumers are tired of mass marketing – think advertising, letter boxes full of direct mail, TV and radio. Consumers have learned to switch off when messages are “pushed” towards them, and increasingly they don’t trust these forms of advertising.

The emergence of the social web and communities (think facebook & LinkedIn) represents the second phase in the evolution of the Internet. People are increasingly relying on their personal and business networks to help navigate and research the Internet which now has Google seriously questioning the future influence of search.

Consumers are interacting with their peers, exchanging ideas, asking questions and seeking recommendations through their “social” networks online.

The information superhighway is turning into a conversation superhighway.

This phenomena is driving sales and represents a new frontier in marketing. Successful companies are identifying these new media trends and building relationships with buyers, and not bombarding them with one-way marketing messages.

Inbound Marketing has recently emerged as a new and more complete approach to being found by the Internet savvy consumer market. While having the same goals as traditional marketing – generate sales leads and enable your sales team to convert them to customers – the difference lies in the way businesses generate leads and retain customers.

“Old-school marketers are used to one-way marketing communication and a sales approach that talks at the customer rather than with the customer. That just doesn’t work anymore.”

NEWT BARRETT, contentmarketingtoday.com

Inbound Marketing is the practice of bringing warm, qualified leads into your sales funnel rather than reaching outward or broadcasting to cold, questionable targets. Broadcast marketing by its nature is like using a shotgun. You aim it roughly in the right direction (ie. general target demographic), pull the trigger and hope that you hit the right audience.

Of course, you're also paying to hit some unwilling bystanders (non-target demographic) but that's unavoidable. You then trust that the people you have hit will react to your efforts – Inbound marketing turns this approach upside down.

Inbound marketing involves discovering where potential customers are searching, positioning yourself correctly so they'll find you and discover whether you have what they are looking for.

Inbound marketing should be seen as an ongoing process and commitment that will be well rewarded. By developing an inbound strategy you will find a new source and connection with your customers with results directly proportional to commitment.

We don't recommend that inbound marketing completely replace other forms of your marketing efforts and we will show you examples of how integrated marketing campaigns can take advantage of both inbound and outbound marketing strategies.

Most importantly inbound marketing can be measured and justified by demonstrating a positive ROI. By implementing an integrated strategy you will:

- Increase brand awareness through social media, content creation and SEO.
- Capture leads through attractive offers and incentives and effective landing pages
- Convert the "hottest" leads to customers with lead nurturing campaigns
- Continue refining the process by analysing results and adjusting your strategy and content

Ultimately inbound marketing is largely about building relationships, we invite you to join us in a conversation via our blog and/or social media sites. You can find these by visiting our website creativebrew.com.au



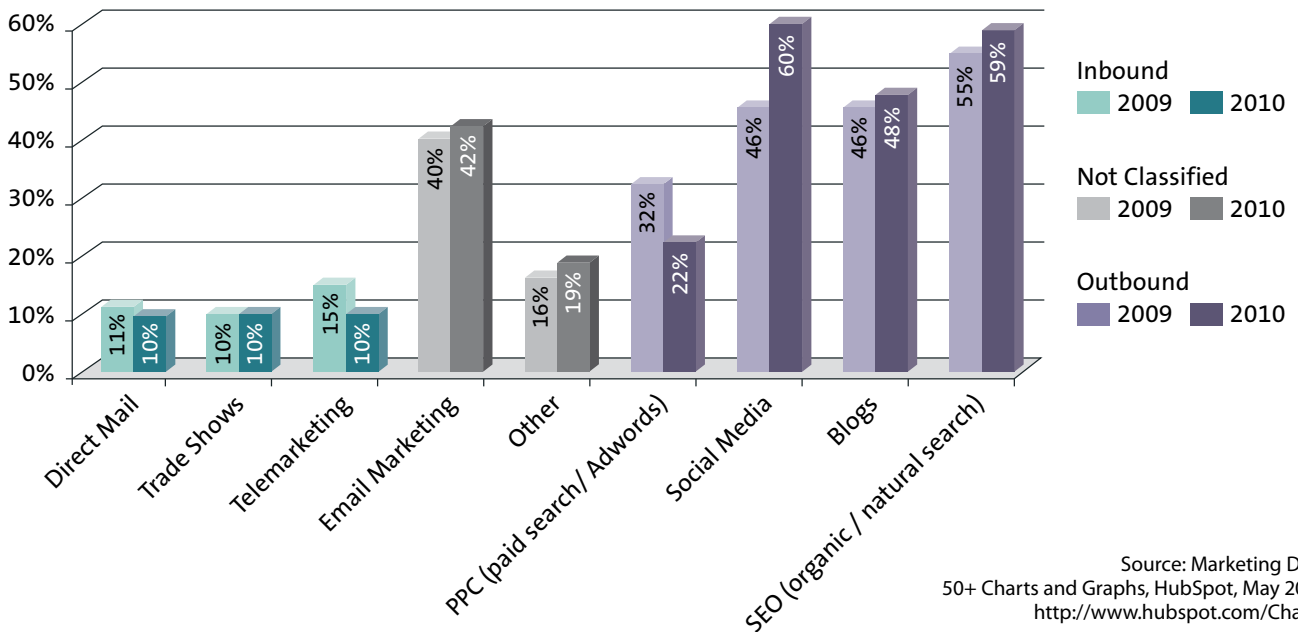
I don't have to tell you how choc-o-block today's marketplace is. To acquire more sales leads, the first aspect of your marketing that needs to be addressed is your brand awareness. People must be able to find out about you before they will buy from you. If they aren't buying from you they're probably buying from your competition – so your number one aim should be to expand your reach on the net.

While over the past 5 years your focus would have been on search engines, pay-per-click advertising and email marketing to reach your audience, there is no doubt today that market trends and economics dictate you must find your target market online using inbound marketing techniques such as blogs, social media and SEO.

While search forms a crucial part of getting found, online advertising and even email blasts are losing their effectiveness unless they are employed in a targeted way. Outbound techniques increasingly fail to resonate with people unless your strategy incorporates inbound elements.

The chart below shows that mass marketing both online and offline is losing popularity to inbound marketing techniques such as blogs, social media and SEO.

Sources of Leads That Have Become More Important in the Last 6 Months



Source: Marketing Data: 50+ Charts and Graphs, HubSpot, May 2010, <http://www.hubspot.com/Charts/>

Your ongoing commitment to maintain your new relationship with your potential customers is vital. When you first begin to attract visitors to your website, blog and social media venues be sure that you plan and budget for maintaining your new relationship with your followers by consistently posting helpful, interesting content and by engaging with them directly through comments,

The challenge you face today is not, “how do I get the most people to buy my product?” but “how do I really listen enough to people so that I am able to serve their needs?”

Don't think about how to invent a story that will make more people buy, focus on how to tell “your” true story and create something of real value.

Your aim is to engage and retain your new brand advocates and then begin to move them down the sales funnel towards becoming customers.

The trend is for business/brands to increasingly adopt some of the many social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn as a means of staying in touch with their customer base, (as shown in the figure to the right). From the beginning you should be monitoring what's being said about your brand and respond promptly. Always address negative comments directly and steer the conversation in a more positive direction. Engage and thank your followers for positive comments and answer their questions. This is a vital part of your inbound strategy.

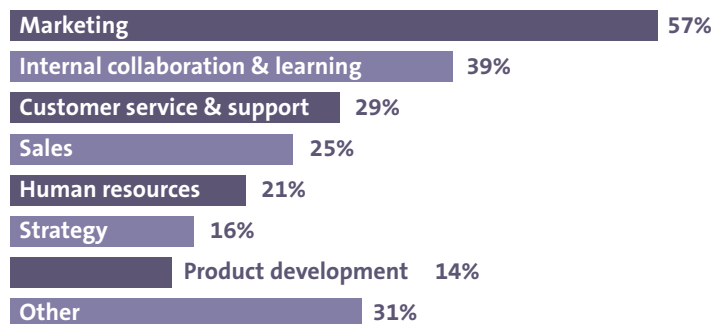
A positive brand reputation and a strong focus on customer service will drive new sales, repeat sales and customer retention. By providing high quality content and engaging and promoting via social media, you can accomplish both tasks. Your efforts will create networks of informed and interested people which has a distinct advantage when it comes to capturing leads, converting and retaining customer loyalty.

Be sure to follow these 7 rules for social engagement:

1. Know your audience
2. Outline a Strategy and clear goals
3. Develop a voice
4. Create useful and meaningful content for your target market
5. Maintain brand consistency
6. Integrate offline and online activities
7. Remain focused and dedicated

Effective inbound marketing is all about inviting you potential customers in for a chat instead of broadcasting to an increasingly ever-reluctant audience.

Business areas for which professionals worldwide use social media*, August 2009 (% of respondents)



* Includes blogs, chat, discussion boards, microblogs, podcasts, ratings, social networks, video-sharing, wikis, etc

Source: Mzinga and Babson Executive Education, 'Social Software in Business', 8 September 2009.

To find leads and convert them into sales you must understand what your customers want and make it easy for them to obtain something they value. Providing an opportunity is the key to generating qualified sales leads through inbound marketing.

Content creation, SEO and social media provide the opportunity for your content to be found. It stands to reason that if a potential customer is interested in what you have to say – your content – then they are in actual fact a “warm” lead.

The next step is to capture these warm/qualified leads by offering them something they value. Through having identified your typical customer’s needs it becomes easy to ask for a small commitment from them and gain their contact information in exchange for something they value. Make it easy for them to sign up for a free product promotion or service, discounts or event and always use a well designed landing page to increase your chances of getting their details.

Once leads are registered you can then begin to nurture them and move them down the sales funnel. Depending on your product or service you can use follow-up calls, seminars or additional content such as e-papers to monitor their interest and provide them with the right information that turns them into a paying customer. Finding the right mix of offers, valuable content and landing page strategy is expedited through analysing your web traffic data.

The Inbound Marketing process for lead generation:

- Create valuable offers and discounts that will attract visitors and compel them to sign up
- Create call-to-action graphics or buttons that convey the offer and entice clicks to a landing page
- Use landing pages that further induce the visitor to sign up or register for the offer
- Follow up converted leads with lead nurturing campaigns and sales calls
- Optimise lead conversion by measuring and analysing results from offers and landing pages
- Organise and analyse leads using customer relationship management software

“In the end, the winner is content. Good content, sharable content, and consumer-driven content will allow us all to have a broader spectrum of information and, for the marketer, an easier way to connect with their base.”

AARON KAHLOW,
CEO & Co-Founder, Online Marketing Connect

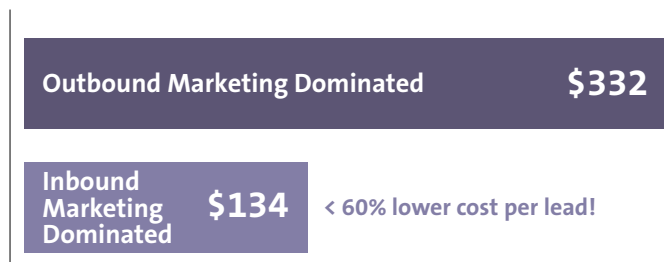
Cost per lead – inbound vs outbound

Our experience and recent data shows that inbound marketing produces more quality sales leads at a lower cost per lead than traditional (outbound) marketing efforts. Respondents to a HubSpot Survey who spent more than 50% of their budgets on inbound marketing channels reported an average cost per lead of \$134, while those who spent the majority of their budget on outbound marketing channels had an average cost per lead of \$332, a 60% difference.

Ultimately, inbound marketing is about building relationships online. When a business works with the “social” aspect of the Internet and attracts people to their blogs, videos and other content, they build an army of loyal followers. Through their social networks this army spreads the word about you.

Inbound marketing leverages this “viral” effect, raising brand awareness and your reputation with far less expenditure in media costs compared to conventional advertising and marketing. With an ongoing inbound marketing focus both lead conversion rates and customer retention rates increase since these loyal customers are highly likely to recommend your products and services to their peers.

Average cost per lead



The world wide trend shows companies are increasing their budgets for inbound marketing compared to traditional marketing budgets. According to a recent HubSpot survey, 88% of marketers surveyed either have maintained or increased the amount of money spent on inbound marketing compared to last year. In many cases, this represents a diversion of budget from traditional to inbound, so overall budgets may not be increasing.

Ultimately any lead generation strategy should result in a positive return on investment.

Unlike conventional marketing one of the principal advantages of inbound and Internet marketing is that you can measure the results easily. By driving potential customers to your lead capture forms you can isolate and measure the effects of your marketing campaigns on sales by:

- **Analysing website traffic**
the general interest level generated by your brand awareness and brand reputation efforts

- **Monitoring lead conversions**
from a casual website visitor to a sales lead

- **Monitoring sales conversions**
from a sales lead to a customer

- **Monitoring retention rates**
from a one-time customer to a loyal, repeat customer

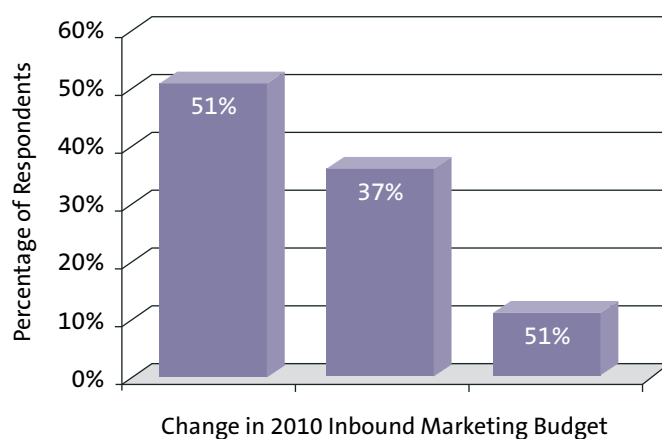
- **Monitoring for the best strategies and tactics**
which content topics, offers, social media and landing pages generate the best results

- **Measuring online sales performance**
if you sell via e-commerce

It is also possible to measure sales lead conversions with sales performance, preferably using some form of Salesforce™ automation software.

To compute your ROI, make sure you account for the personnel involved in your inbound marketing efforts plus any external costs such as software and any outsourced marketing costs.

2010 Inbound Marketing Budgets Compared to 2009



Source: Marketing Data: 50+ Charts and Graphs, HubSpot, May 2010

The following three case studies quantifying the benefits of inbound marketing on lead generation and sales. These examples are provided by our friends at Hubspot who provide a powerful all-in-one inbound marketing software solution which we proudly support.

See www.hubspot.com for more Hubspot cases studies.

Energy Software Company

- > Increased organic traffic 17x in 6 months
- > Attracted over 350 leads in the last 6 months
- > Developed strong email marketing campaigns
- > Achieved a ~ 15% conversion rate for landing pages

[Read more about this case study >](#)

Healthcare Solutions Company

- > Increased organic traffic by 420% in 6 months
- > Attracted over 210 leads in the last 6 months
- > Achieved a 14% total conversion rate for 17 landing pages
- > Saved on spending for paid search

[Read more about this case study >](#)

University

- > Doubled organic traffic in 6 months
- > Attracted over 1,200 leads in the last 6 months
- > Reached 100% conversion rate on 2 landing pages
- > Accumulated 6,000 links from over 1,300 domains

[Read more about this case study >](#)

“What we really need is a mindset shift that will make us relevant to today’s consumers, a mindset shift from ‘telling & selling’ to ‘building relationships’.”

JIM STENGEL
Former Global Marketing Officer, Proctor & Gamble

As social media quickly moves from an emerging form of communication to the mainstream, business owners and CEOs need to be concerned with the potential for disaster if they turn their work force loose on social networks. So, just like in the old days when companies had to figure out how to deal with email, now they have to figure out how to deal with Facebook and all other new media venues.

As part of a comprehensive inbound marketing strategy and plan we recommend that you create a social media policy for your company. A social media policy outlines for employees the corporate guidelines or principles of communicating in the online world.

By creating procedures and policies to handle both positive and negative feedback and real-time requests for information you will be in a position to react professionally. There is no question about it, you will be judged by your transparency, responsiveness and the quality of every piece of content and every engagement in social media.

A second valid concern is productivity. If your staff is busily chatting with their friends all day on Facebook what rules should you put in place that doesn't kill the ability of your team to form relationships with new visitors and existing customers?

“ Until recently, a vast majority of marketers were exploring this unfamiliar terrain without a compass – or strategy – to guide them... many ignored proven marketing principles. They launched their social initiatives by creating blogs, Twitter and facebook accounts without a plan or purpose. Not surprisingly, these initiatives failed for many.”

SERGIO BALENGO, Research Director, Marketing Sherpa

We hope that you have found our Inbound Marketing whitepaper inspirational. Now that you have a better understanding of the value of inbound marketing you should continue to build your knowledge and look at ways to apply it to your business.

When you are ready to act, look at hiring an inbound marketing agency that is skilled and experienced in the areas outlined – to assist you in developing your strategy, put the wheels in motion to get your company found online and to begin generating new sales leads.

We are an inbound marketing agency keen to establish relationships with customers who want to succeed in inbound marketing, and we hope that we can create one with your company.

If you would like to discuss how inbound marketing can work for you, then please feel free to contact us on tel: 8677 2248 or email us at: info@creativebrew.com.au

“Human beings are far more likely to communicate ideas and information with others when they are emotionally engaged. Find the key issues that concern your audience and then inculcate them within your marketing plan to get an emotional response.”

MAKI, doshdosh.com