



INSIDER'S GUIDE TO B2B INBOUND MARKETING: SECRETS REVEALED

Learn how-to make your outbound marketing successful
with these inbound techniques



INSIDER'S GUIDE TO **B2B INBOUND MARKETING:** **SECRETS REVEALED**

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INTRODUCTION

As competition increases in your business's space, customers are becoming leery of traditional outbound marketing. You're also unhappy with outbound media advertising methods because you don't have a way to track and measure the return on your investment, and that's a major concern. The problem is, you don't have an alternative.

[That's where inbound marketing comes in.](#)

This guide summarizes how to take your outbound marketing techniques and put an inbound spin on them. Utilize inbound marketing techniques to educate, attract, and convert qualified leads using the traditional outbound marketing techniques you're using now. Your contacts will start to initiate communication, removing the guesswork. You will no longer have to waste your time with cold-calling leads that are not yet interested in your company. Providing personalized, educational and relevant interactions to your prospects ensures that they don't feel they're being sold to; instead, they're solving problems, using your content, as they're looking for solutions. Best yet, inbound methods are measurable – and the results can be proven.

A change is coming to the B2B world, and it's starting with the marketing your business is doing. According to a 2015 study by Corporate Executive Board, prospects make approximately 60% of their buying decision prior to talking to a sales representative from any company. People are researching your product offerings well before speaking to you directly, which means a powerful shift from outbound marketing (traditional media) to inbound marketing (organic, education-based methods) needs to happen.

So, are you ready change up your marketing tactics?

We have five secrets to share to use inbound methodology to increase the ROI of your outbound tactics.

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SECRET 1: **DO YOUR HOMEWORK – INBOUND FUNDAMENTALS/UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE**

There are two main researching steps involved in a successful inbound marketing strategy, and both of them relate directly to the traditional marketing methods you may be pursuing now.

1 CREATE YOUR BUYER PERSONAS TO FULLY UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

Buyer Personas are representations of your ideal customer. Identifying these ideal customers' needs, goals, and observed behavior helps you identify the best areas to spend your time and money. You should have no more than five personas identified per business unit.

BUYER PERSONA

Fictional representation
of ideal customer
- HubSpot

2 ILLUSTRATE YOUR BUYER'S JOURNEY

The buyer's journey represents the path a potential client will take and the touchpoints they'll make on the way to purchasing your product.

AWARENESS

Awareness Stage: In today's digital age, most businesses will start the process by researching the issue they're having online. This is called the awareness stage. Your website is invaluable at this stage: it helps them identify the issue and potential causes behind it.

CONSIDERATION

Consideration Stage: The next stage, consideration stage, is where the potential client will look for solutions for their identified issue. You step in again, providing solutions. Traditionally, this is where trade shows, television and print ads, and direct mail need to be in order to make a difference.

DECISION

Decision Stage: At this final stage, the potential client has identified their problem and the solution – and they're ready to choose a provider. Your business comes in again, this time proving that they're the absolute best provider to meet the needs of the potential client.

Understanding the inbound fundamentals of buyer personas and buyers' journeys will help you reach the right audience at the right time with relevant content. Traditional marketing can be adapted by focusing on a pain point and the stage of the customer using inbound principles. "The most important part of doing anything the inbound way is to make sure you're reaching the right audience and providing value," notes John Hall, CEO of Influence & Co.



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SECRET 2: **PRINT IS NOT DEAD – IF YOU UTILIZE IT WELL**

One of the oldest forms of traditional marketing is print advertising, used by many B2B businesses. Placing an ad in a popular, related print publication can reach the right audience. Use compelling copy that addresses a pain point and adds value, prompting the reader to act.

Measure the ROI of the print ad by using a vanity url, special phone number, or a QR code linking to a landing page with a form. An excerpt from Inboundy Outbound by content management system Hubspot reads, "Because traditional ads can't be 'clicked,' they need to prompt people to act in a meaningful and trackable manner. Push interest towards a landing page for a sign-up or offer claim and you'll create a more measurable marketing event than traditional methods alone."

Track the results of each medium as the page is visited or the phone rings. Being able to evaluate the effectiveness of print ads takes extra work, but can be successful.

PRO TIP:

Add a QR code to make it easy for engaged prospect to reach your website.



A QR (Quick Response) code is a digital bar code. Once printed, a person with a smartphone can scan the code, and the phone takes them directly to a website landing page with additional online content. QR codes are easy to create using free online software.



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SECRET 3: **DIRECT MAIL IS ALMOST 100X LESS EFFECTIVE THAN EMAIL**

One of the most-used traditional marketing tactics is direct mail, the go-to option for B2B companies due to its targeted nature. But here's the problem: 45% of direct mail never gets opened, according to Vital Design. That's a scary statistic if most of your marketing budget is tied to the success of this channel.

A 2012 study published by the Harvard Business Review compared the effectiveness of three different styles of marketing campaigns: one that used direct mail and email, one that used direct mail only, and one that used email only.

	COUNT	RESPONSE RATE	AVG ORDER VALUE	\$ PER NAME MAILED	% SALES IN STORE	% SALES ONLINE
DIRECT MAIL AND EMAIL	35,000	25%	\$71.71	\$17.67	79%	21%
DIRECT MAIL ONLY	35,000	24%	\$68.62	\$16.39	83%	17%
EMAIL ONLY	35,000	23%	\$67.82	\$15.71	79%	21%

Source: [Harvard Business Review](#)

If direct mail have been working for you then make it as inbound as you can. Tracking and evaluating the success of the each mailing campaign will indicate if it is truly a positive ROI. Targeting your audience and message will ensure the right audience is sees it but doesn't mean they will. Proceed with caution.

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SECRET 4: **COLD CALLING IS OUT; WARM CALLING IS IN(BOUND)**

You've just sat down for a meal when the phone rings; it's a salesperson calling to sell you a service. You've never heard of the company, have no need for the service, and frankly, feel annoyed that this person has interrupted your evening. You now have a negative impression of the service. Does this situation sound familiar?

Prospects have more control of what sales/marketing they are exposed to than ever before. Imagine being the salesperson making those cold calls for a moment; it must be difficult to make a sale when the only information you have about the lead is a little more than their phone number. With 200 million people on the national Do Not Call Registry, it is important to get permission before you call, or you could be wasting your time. (Source: vtldesign.com)

B2B businesses can use inbound techniques like those mentioned to attract interested leads. Once a prospect fills out a form, you have an open line of communication and pertinent information (name, company, email, pain point, etc) to use in a follow-up call.

- 1 Measure Engagement:** By tracking the people who are actively engaging with your company, you know who is most receptive to sales calls.
- 2 Call Fast:** Call on an actively engaged prospect quickly; the longer you wait, the more change they have to engage with your competitor.
- 3 Open with Context:** This is where "warm calling" has an advantage: the prospect has heard of your company, and is actually interested in your service. Not only that, but the insights you have on the content they've downloaded gives your call a personal touch. Source: Hubspot's Inboundy Outbound eBook

PRO TIP:

Thought leadership pieces are key to a helpful, contextual and relevant sales follow-up call.

When making the call, you're able to offer a follow-up email with another educational piece and keep the conversation going. "When your business can not only meet a service need, but also provide additional education during the relationship, the conversation is much easier and the prospect is more likely to stay engaged," adds Alicia Westphal, Sales and Marketing Strategist at Trending Up.



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SECRET 5: **USE INBOUND FOR TRADE SHOWS**

Trade shows are staple in the traditional B2B marketing playbook. Use this time to personally interact with prospects and gain new leads. "Events are a great way to learn about potential customers and have a two-way conversation – and potentially help them accomplish their goals with your company's services," says Jenna Engel, Director of Sales and Marketing at Trending Up.

HubSpot's Lisa Toner and Eventbrite's Mark Walker recommend utilizing your marketing personas in an event scenario. When planning for your trade show or event, your personas can guide the content you bring, what you showcase, and even speakers you select. "Knowing who your event persona is and what their key challenges are will help you create event content that resonates with them and makes your event really compelling, pushing up registration and attendance." – The New Age of Event Marketing.

We've also talked about inbound methods when it comes to printed materials. Any printed content should be educational and relevant, meeting the needs of visitors to your booth. In addition, it should drive prospects to your website. Hall says, "Face-to-face meetings have and always will be beneficial to establishing trust, and having the published content to back up what you tell people in person helps reinforce that." (Inboundy Outbound, Hubspot)

PRO TIP:

Create a landing page that speaks directly to the audience you saw and spoke to at the trade show.

It should reference the knowledge you shared (in a keynote speech or takeaway piece) and offer a follow-up piece for interested visitors. This keeps the conversation going and lets you know that these visitors are very interested in your service! Time for your sales team to follow up.

Social media is a great inbound addition to your event visit. Utilize the event hashtag (#) and post photos and videos while at the tradeshow. Share knowledge you learn, trends you observe, and connect with people on social media once you meet them in person to keep them engaged with your brand.

Once the event is over, use another inbound method – email – to follow-up.



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SECRET 6: **EMAIL MARKETING IS STILL KING**

There is a myth among marketers that email is an ineffective means of communicating to prospects. However, Over 50% of respondents say they read most of their emails. (HubSpot). That's an incredibly high read-rate compared to traditional media methods. Email marketing is also personalized, and 59% of B2B marketers say email is the most effective channel for generating revenue. (BtoB Magazine)

Previously, B2B companies would send nonsegmented email to their entire database. But using these out-dated practices can make it easier for prospects to unsubscribe or even mark you as spam. "It lowers consumer trust in that brand, and reduces engagement because people are most likely deleting or marking those emails as "spam" according to Niti Shah of HubSpot.

PRO TIP:

Never purchase list or database.

It's a quick way to get blacklisted. Instead, grow your own list using the inbound methods described in this guide.

Using inbound methods helps improve response rates and, ultimately, generate more revenue. Email only to prospects who have opted-in to communication from you (such as your contacts from trade shows and events). Segment your email list and personalize your message to increase open rates and engagement. Create automated emails to nurture leads and convert them into customers.



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CONCLUSION

Traditional marketing techniques may be working for your B2B business – but unless you're measuring them in a quantifiable way, you cannot be sure. Using inbound marketing methodology makes your marketing even more effective. It's not a quick fix, but if you are consistent and provide relevant content to your ideal prospects, you will be rewarded with more qualified leads that convert to customers.



ABOUT TRENDING UP STRATEGY

Trending Up Sales and Marketing was born based on a need, like the best opportunities are. We saw a distinct need for marketing, advertising, and online dollars that focused on marketing investment – instead of marketing spend. The obvious solution was to create an agency unlike any other: one that is focused on creative ways to directly impact your lead generation, close numbers, and your bottom line.

The power behind Trending Up and our smarketing approach is data. From the strategy we employ, to the campaigns we enact, to the content we produce and the follow-through we train you to do, data is the what guides all of it.

Trending Up Sales and Strategy is an agency unlike any in the industry. We know how to talk business – especially when it comes to your bottom line. We're focused on helping your marketing team to succeed in generating more qualified leads through inbound marketing, and empowering your sales team to close more sales using inbound sales. At the end of the day, we want to give you the best return on investment possible.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Alicia Westphal, Sales and Marketing Strategist

Alicia Westphal is a sales and marketing strategist who combines the data, content, and customer delight elements of marketing into a solidified, tangible strategy to guide clients' marketing efforts. Strategic planning and persona research are her strengths.



Jenna Orrock, Director of Sales and Marketing and Public Speaker

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