

MANUFACTURE GROWTH IN 2016

*An introductory guide to inbound marketing
for the manufacturing industry.*

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CHAPTER ONE

Emerging Trends in Manufacturing

Recent manufacturing trends are catching companies off guard who are unfamiliar with digital marketing. The following trends can be applied and enhance a manufacturing company, if using the proper marketing channels.

SMAC Stack

Much acknowledgement is being brought to manufacturing companies in recent year, driven by SMAC—social, mobile, analytics and cloud. The SMAC Stack is becoming essential to successful marketing and is the next step of the traditional "4 P's of marketing": product, price, placement, and promotion. With SMAC stack, you can reach a greater audience, one that is technology savvy and expects their vendors to be, as well.

Greater Capital Investment

While the economy is making a slow crawl back to boom times, recent government and industry reports show an uptick in capital investment funding. Manufacturers are focused on capturing value through innovation, which means they're wisely investing capital in upgrading their plant, equipment, and technologies that will keep them a strong player in the market.

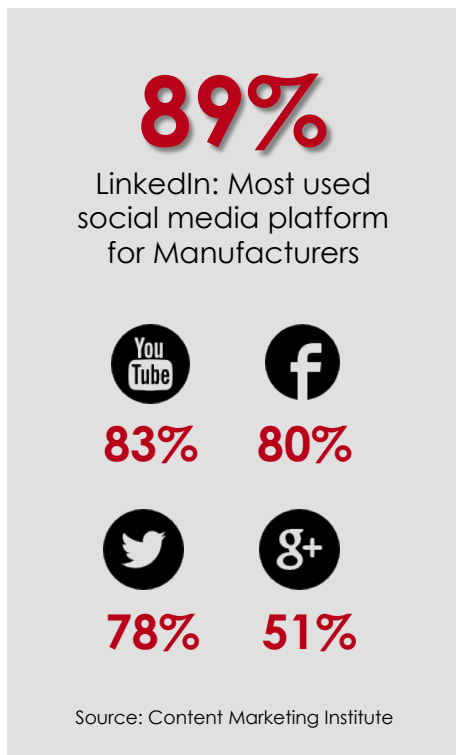
“Next-Shoring”

In today's market, customers want manufactured goods customized and fast. That's why a growing number of manufacturers are "next-shoring" - developing their products and positioning themselves closer to the demand. It allows manufacturers to quickly get their products on the shelves and into their customers' hands. The faster it moves means less overhead in storage and transport, which results in less costs to the manufacturer.



Increase automation and job opportunities: the IoT revolves around machine-to-machine computing. Think "cloud computing" and automation. It's mobile, virtual, and offers instant connection. By but automating so many things, it also frees up talent to work on innovations such as R&D, which increases job opportunities.

Consumers expect products on-demand and to spec. The Internet, social media and big data are forcing manufacturers to become more customer-centric. With the rise of smart factories, manufacturers will increasingly look towards manufacturing equipment that is adaptable and flexible to appease the needs of consumers, while saving waste and downtime.



Social media is no longer just a place to share status posts and selfies. It is changing traditional B2B and B2C models. Now with social media, businesses can communicate directly with their customers, in real time. The average customer is constantly comparing products, and then selecting or buying, all within a short moment on their smartphone or tablet. You must maximize your presence on a variety of social media channels in order to be seen and heard as the thought leader in your industry.



CHAPTER TWO

Reaching New Customers & Selling In Today's Economy



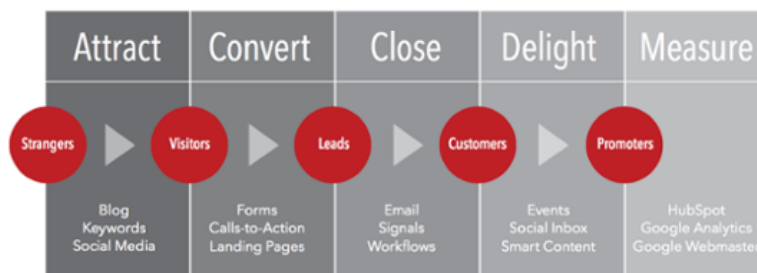
IDENTITY + EXPERIENCE

Your manufacturing brand is more than a logo and a website, it's your **identity**. How your customers feel about the product and experience is more important than ever. Manufacturer's who create a superior experience from the first time a prospect interacts to what happens after sale is closed, is crucial to manufacturers. Creating a **consistent, relevant** brand **experience** in 2016 will set your manufacturing company apart from the rest just focused on making a sale.

“ In 2016, manufacturing sales and marketing teams will become one and the same. ”

The process that prospects use to select new manufacturing/ industrial vendors was changed, **knowledge is power**. Manufacturers who fail to realize they're not in control will lose market share in an already competitive industry. Adapt your marketing efforts to incorporate inbound techniques and watch your brand awareness and delighted customers increase.

In a nutshell, inbound marketing is helps prospects find the right information at the right time, to drive them to take action. Inbound marketing doesn't end after they become a customer, brand evangelist can promote your brand even further. Delighting your customers every step of the way is key.



Inbound methodology has two **fundamental concepts: buyer's journey and buyer persona**. Understanding the buyer's journey and identifying your buyer personas the guess work out.



Buyer Personas – Why do I need those?

A great way to reach new prospects is by defining your “ideal customer,” called a persona.

Your manufacturing company may have more than one "typical" customer. There is no magic number when it comes to identifying personas but the more personas you can clearly define, the better. Think about: his/her needs, pain points, and how they like to receive their information to start.



Each persona should include:

- Role (title, skills required, knowledge, reports to)
- Goals (Responsibilities, successes)
- Challenges (biggest)
- Company (industry, size)
- Watering holes (publications, associations, social networks)
- Personal background (age, family, education)
- Shopping preferences (internet use, interact with vendors)
- Photo representation

You might be wondering how you will get your hands on all this information. This is where the data collection and "Internet of Things" comes into play. Using information you have, such as age, income, education, location, and story, you can better pinpoint your customers' pain points and how you can ease them. Using this information, you can build a persona that defines the customers you're trying to reach.

Lets break down a possible buyer persona for a manufacturing customer of yours.



Meet Bob, The Business Owner

Target Buyer Persona: Bob Business Owner

Personal Background:	Role: Owner of a Manufacturing Company	Company Information:	Goals and Challenges	Shopping and Industry News Preference:
Age: 45-65 Family: Married with children in college Education: College Degree	Job Measured: staying ahead of competition, efficiency, employee productivity Skills Required: People management, analysis, key decision maker, industry knowledge Manages: CFO, COO, General Managers	Industry: Manufacturing Yearly Revenue: \$20-50 Million Employees: 100 employees	Success Means: growth, wealth, providing jobs for the economy. Value Most: family, success Biggest Challenge: Ability to be innovative, growing pains as expanding Biggest Objections: switching to a complex system that is hard to train employees	Preferred Communication: Phone and email Use internet for buying research: Much Gets updated industry news: Specific manufacturing publications Industry Publications: Trade Magazines Association: Industry trade groups. Social Networking Sites: LinkedIn and Facebook



Pro Tip: Survey your customers to get information you wouldn't be able to get otherwise. Compile all of the information received and reference it when creating your buyer personas.



Closer look at your buyer's journey

Inbound marketing focuses on three stages of the buyers journey (Awareness, Consideration, and Decision). Each stage is a key part of a prospects research and learning leading up to a purchase. To move a prospect through their journey enable them with educational materials instead of a sales tactic.

Your persona Bob, is experiencing symptoms of a problem and has began to self-educate, he is in the **awareness stage** of the buyers journey. Producing relevant to answer his questions and establish your thought leadership through educational offers like an eBook, blogging, and social media.

Bob has found the offer posted on your website, appreciates the free, unsolicited advice and downloads the offer. He has now entered the **consideration stage**, where he has a clearly defined problem and is looking for a variety of solutions. Here you position a solution by offering premium content (free eBook, whitepaper, checklist) that addresses a specific problem. Bob exchanges his email address, company name and a few other tidbits for the offer, this information will help you understand more about Bob and what he is looking for. Bob has given permission to communicate with him.

Finally, Bob has reached the **decision stage** of his journey. He has a short-list of vendors. Instead of your company selling to him, you continue to send him materials that keeps the ball in his court. You can use email-marketing and personalized content to help his decision process. Guess what, Bob likes you, you have a new customer!

Peaking Your Prospects Interest Using Offers



So we know that we have to take a prospect along a buyers journey. You want to offer Bob different types of educational material based on what stage he is in.

In the Awareness stage, try an offer like “Fact of Myth: Beginners Guide to Understanding Factoring Turnaround Time For (xyz) Product” This is catchy and answers a broad enough question that most of your customer have in the beginning stages of a sale.

As Bob moves into the consideration stage, your offers will get more specific and detailed. As your offers get more detailed, you can ask Bob harder questions like company revenue or company size, questions that will help you create a personalized experience for Bob. As Bob reaches the decision stage, he is confident in what he wants and you have built trust and industry leadership.

PERSONA	Buyer's Journey Offers		
Bob Business Owner Bob needs a vendor with a turnkey solution due to limited staff. He will need financing. He's a hands-on leader who values real-world experience and partnerships.	AWARENESS	CONSIDERATION	DECISION
	Fact or Myth: Beginners Guide to Understanding Factoring Turnaround Time For Our Products [Whitepaper]	Checklist on The Top 5 Facts to be Aware of When Switching Manufacturing Vendors [Checklist]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Request a quotePhone Assessment Of Commercial Property Needs



Pro Tip: Mapping out your own buyer's journey will allow you to understand the specific needs and frustrations buyers go through. Try this exercise and understand how you can best meet those needs. It's time to “walk a mile in their shoes”.



CHAPTER THREE

Content Marketing



Source: Content Marketing Institute

Content marketing cuts through all the noise on the Internet and helps you get found online by future prospects and customers.

What is content marketing? It's a marketing program that focuses on creating, publishing, and distributing content for your target audience, with the ultimate goal of attracting and retaining customers.



Pro Tip: Use social media to promote your videos, premium content (ebooks, whitepapers, tools) and photos.

Optimizing Content

One of the easiest ways to educate prospects and market your manufacturing company is through optimized content: your blog, your company's website, and your social media presence. Invest in strong content to manufacture growth this year and beyond.



Strong content answers your prospects' questions and helps solve problems. It builds and showcases your company's reputation as an industry leader.

Content Marketing Institute recently reported that **80%** of business decision-makers **prefer** to get **information in a series of articles** instead of an advertisement. Produce relevant content to become a respected thought leader in the manufacturing/industrial industry.



Social Media

“ *Customers don't want to be sold to; they want to be educated.* ”



Blogs

Informative, well-written, even fun articles deliver information your prospects want and need to make smart decisions. You may know a lot about your prospects, but they know a lot about you, too.



Visual Content

According to HubSpot, by 2020, customers will manage 85% of their relationships without talking to a human. That means they are doing their own research about your company before they e-mail or call a live person.



Premium assets



Blogs: What's the big deal anyway?

Every time you post a blog, you're attracting interested visitors to your site. Write a great blog and they'll send it to their friends, gaining you even more visitors. Adding additional, valuable/ relevant content to your site also helps with search engine indexing, which can boost your organic search engine rankings.

Why blog:

- Blogs have been rated the 5th most trusted source for accurate online information. Blogs can be informational and technical, depending on your audience.
- According to HubSpot, B2B companies that blog generate 67% more leads per month than those that don't.
- Blogs give websites 434% more indexed pages and 97% more indexed links. This translates to higher rankings in the search engines and more traffic to your website.
- Google loves new, fresh content. The more you blog, the more likely your site will rank high in the search engines.

What to blog

Before you begin, consider your audience and your specific manufacturing industry. Look back at previous customers and the buyer personas you've already created.



Things to consider:

1. Pain points
2. Stage in buyer's journey
3. Is it relevant
4. Tone

Next, consider your industry and what you bring to the table as a manufacturer. What sets you apart? What are you really proud of and want to showcase? Perhaps it's your facility or facilities that you want to highlight. Other times, it's your product or your processes.

Blogs don't have to be a wall of text. You can reach prospects in a variety of ways, including video blogs or a great image portfolio. Try out different content to see what works best for your buyer persona.

Common Manufacturing blog topic:

- How-to guides
- Technical (safety)
- Informative, educational

Visual Content (YouTube)

The 2015 B2B Manufacturing Content Marketing Report published by Content Marketing Institute showed that **87% of manufacturers are creating videos**. In fact, video is listed as one of the most effective content marketing tactics for manufacturers.

You don't need a million-dollar production budget, but you do need to start with a goal. Think about what you'd like to accomplish with your video and use it as part of a strategy with your other marketing arms.

Video Content Generates Leads By:

1. Thought leadership
shows that you've got your finger on the pulse of your industry.
2. Gives your prospects a virtual tour of your facility, your product, or processes making them more comfortable with your company and methods.
3. Customer testimonials
Build trust and loyalty
4. Value proposition
Showcase what sets your company apart





CHAPTER FOUR

Inbound Your Trade Show Experience



Despite the digital revolution, nothing beats face to face interactions, like at a trade show. Trade shows are an especially great marketing tool for the manufacturing industry. To really maximize your impact, try putting an “inbound spin” on these tried-and-true outbound marketing tactics.

Steps for Maximizing Inbound Marketing at Trade Shows

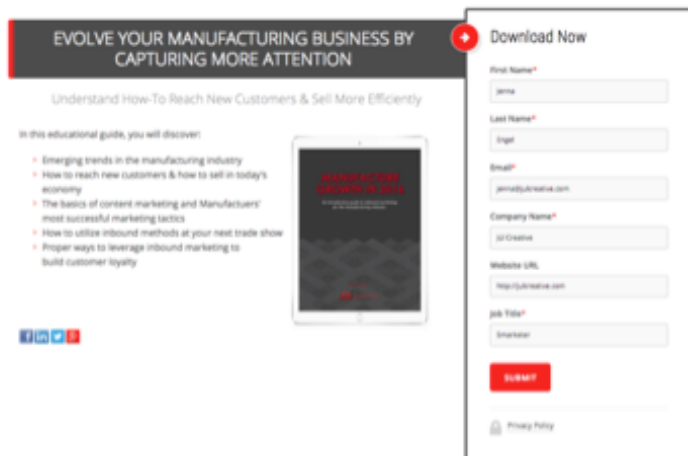
Step 1: Define your goal

The first thing you'll want to determine is your goal. Do you want to increase new leads and sales? Drive traffic to your site? Build your social media following? Once you've determined your ultimate goal, you must then decide how you'll measure it. Metrics can help you track your success and calculate your ROI.

Step 2: Create a landing page and Call-To-Action

Create a dedicated landing page for resources that your prospect's can download. This will allow you to grab important contact info, while displaying your desire to educate rather than rush to a sale. Your landing page should be tightly connected with your campaign. You may want to offer a giveaway, such as an eBook, whitepaper, or even a discount on a product or service you offer. You made offer the free resource using a call-to-action.

For example, you would create a memorable call to action that leads a prospect to the offer on a landing page. To get the offer, they have to fill out the form (below to the right) once they fill out this form it will send them to a thank you page where they will download the offer.

A detailed view of the 'Download our eBook!' form. It includes a red circular icon with a white arrow. The form has fields for 'First Name*', 'Last Name*', 'Email*', 'Company Name*', and 'Website URL'. Below these fields is a red 'DOWNLOAD' button. At the bottom, there are links for 'Privacy Policy' and 'Terms & Conditions'.

Step 3: Get Social (media)

Create a hashtag specific for your event. Start a conversation in person and continue it online. Encourage people who stop by your booth to tweet or tag photos with the hashtag.

Ask for their feedback:

- ✓ What did they like about your trade show presence?
- ✓ What do they want from your business' content or services?

This is valuable feedback that you can incorporate into your marketing strategy. It can also help build loyalty.

Step 4: Follow up on those leads!

You've created a great trade show presence, you've used inbound marketing techniques to draw prospects in. Don't delay in following up with these prospects and converting these leads to customers. Let's take a look at how to do that.

For example, you generate hundreds of leads at a trade show. That's great – if you can effectively follow up on all of them in a timely manner. You can accomplish this, by using the inbound marketing technique:

1. Upload the leads into a CRM
2. Funnel them into different buyer personas
3. Create an automated process to follow up with the leads post-trade show.



CHAPTER FIVE

Leverage Inbound Marketing to Build Customer Loyalty

Communicate Consistently With Inbound Methods

One method to build customer loyalty are promotional emails and newsletters. Consider guiding your customers through their journey as users of your product with a different, customized set of promotional emails and newsletters. Encourage them to keep visiting your site for new, need-to-know info that will keep them on top of industry trends.

Interact with them and continue to get feedback to improve. Use social media to complement products and keep in touch.



Personalized website experience

Now that your customers view you as a valuable, trusted resource, delight them with a tailor-fit experience. Contextual websites adapt to each visitor's unique needs, they are called smart websites. Through smart websites, you can anticipate products they may be interested in and help guide customers to information they find valuable. In this way, you can roll out the red carpet and show them that they are a very important customer.

The manufacturing industry has changed and grown in the last decade, and so has manufacturing marketing. While there is no one-size-fits all marketing plan, by staying abreast of emerging trends, developing valuable content, and using effective inbound marketing techniques, you can be assured to stay ahead of the curve.

Left With a Feeling of
Wanting More?

Jul Creative is an full-service Inbound marketing agency. We specialize in creating, educating, and converting leads into delighted customers through strategic planning and awesome content.

Let's Chat



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