



# Guide to Inbound Marketing

Aligning your Sales & Marketing  
to Create Growth in 2018.

## Aligned

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“ 75% of B2B businesses say generating traffic and leads is their biggest marketing challenge. (Hubspot) ”

“ 93% of B2B companies say content marketing generates more leads than traditional marketing strategies. (Marketo, Forbes) ”

“ 96% of visitors who come to your website aren't ready to buy (yet). (Marketo) ”

“ 71% of email marketers say email list segmentation is the most effective way to personalise lead nurturing. (Ascend2) ”

“ 68% of B2B companies will use landing pages to nurture new sales leads for future conversion. (Marketing Sherpa) ”

## INBOUND AT A GLANCE

“ 91% of users believe marketing automation is “very important” to successfully marketing across multiple channels. (Marketo) ”

“ 92% of B2B buying processes start with an online search. (Pinpoint Market Research and Anderson Jones PR) ”

“ 79% of top-performing B2B companies have been using marketing automation for three or more years. (Pardot) ”

“ 48% of businesses say most of their leads require “long cycle” nurturing with many influencers. (Ascend2) ”

“ 80% of marketers using automation software generate more leads; 77% convert more of those leads. (VB Insight, APSIS) ”

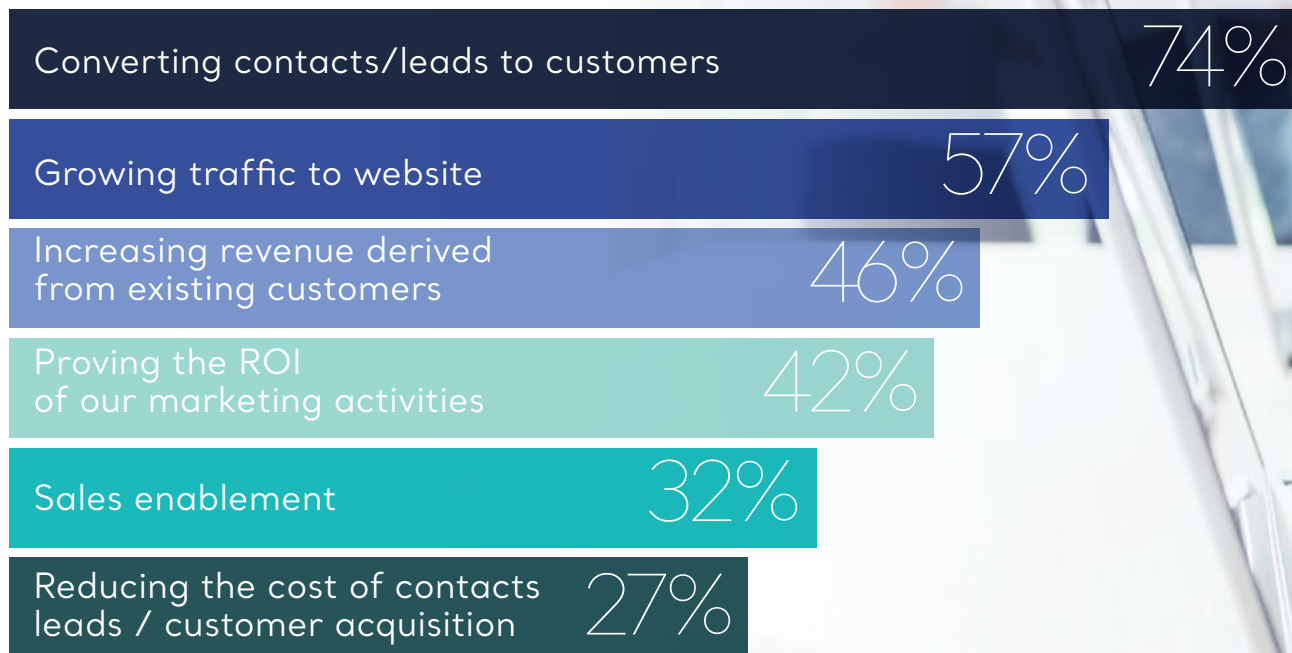
# Why Inbound?

Lets first look at why aligning your sale and marketing strategies is so important to increase sales in B2B companies in 2018.

Priorities for B2B companies marketing tell a story. Converting contacts to leads and customers is one of the main priorities for all marketing / sales strategies.

How do we achieve this? One way is with inbound marketing.

What are your company's top marketing priorities over the next 12 months:





# What is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing is a marketing strategy that uses all of your company's platforms to deliver inbound qualified leads and opportunities that your sales can use to increase conversions. It's one of the best ways to create an actual return on investment module for your marketing campaigns and ensures your campaigns are focussed on creating opportunity with

Inbound marketing is focused on attracting customers through relevant and helpful content and adding value at every stage in your customer's buying journey. With inbound marketing, potential customers find you through channels like blogs, search engines, and social media.

Unlike outbound marketing, inbound marketing does not need to fight for potential customers' attention. By creating content designed to address the problems and needs of your ideal customers, you attract qualified prospects and build trust and credibility for your business.



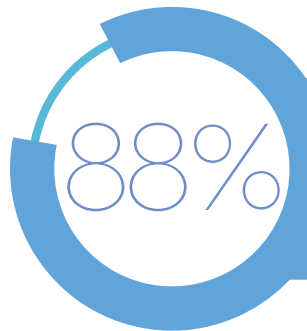
of B2B marketers say lead generation is their most important marketing goal for **2018**

# What is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing is “the process of generating interest and engagement in your company by providing value to your potential customers and then turning that interest and engagement into a mutually beneficial business relationship.”

While the “Mad Men” era of marketing was focused on outbound messages — advertising, commercials, and billboards — today’s marketers must have diversified campaigns that mix a traditional outbound strategy with emerging inbound tactics. Inbound tactics draw the buyer to you by providing real value. Marketers do this by creating relevant and compelling campaigns to attract and convert leads. These campaigns can be found while searching for information online or among social networks.

Many of the most popular marketing trends that have emerged in the last ten years are anchored in inbound marketing. Social media, content marketing, SEO, PPC, and now the Internet of Things — all of these essential marketing techniques are a part of a well-rounded inbound marketing strategy.



of inbound marketers believe their organisation’s marketing strategy is more effective than past traditional strategies. (Hubspot 2017)

“  
3x  
Per dollar spent, content marketing generates approximately 3x as many leads as traditional marketing. (Demand Metric 2018)  
”



# What is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing revolves around content. By creating a wealth of helpful, relevant content and hosting it on your site or third party sites, you can bring in qualified prospects who are looking for information to address their pain points and needs.

This content includes blogs, social media, white papers, eBooks, videos, infographics, podcasts, and more — which gives you plenty of options to choose from when it comes to creating supporting content that your audience will enjoy.

“

72%

Targeting users with content relevant to their position along the buying process yields 72% higher conversion rates. (Aberdeen)

”

# Social Media

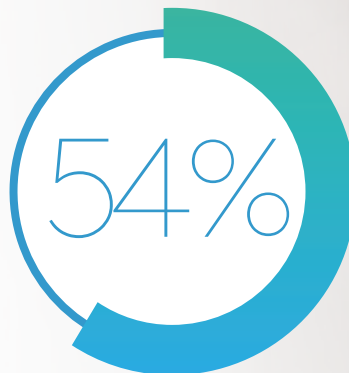
Social media isn't just changing the way we play, it's changing the way we work, too. These channels have been co-opted for inbound marketing over the past few years for a number of reasons.

The growth in more targeted professional sites like LinkedIn gives B2B companies a channel for lead generation through both paid and organic posts.

Perhaps more importantly, social media drives traffic and awareness through both your own posts and through sharing. This provides a platform for distributing content, and acts as a form of social proof to buyers who are in the midst of the research cycle. Buyers who are interested in your product or company are likely to check out multiple channels to get to know your brand.

Lastly, as buyers begin to expect more personalised buying experiences, many companies are turning to social media for its ability to foster one-on-one relationships, joining relevant conversations and engaging on an individual level.

54% of B2B marketers said they've generated leads from social media. (Pardot 2017)





# Search Engine Optimisation(SEO)

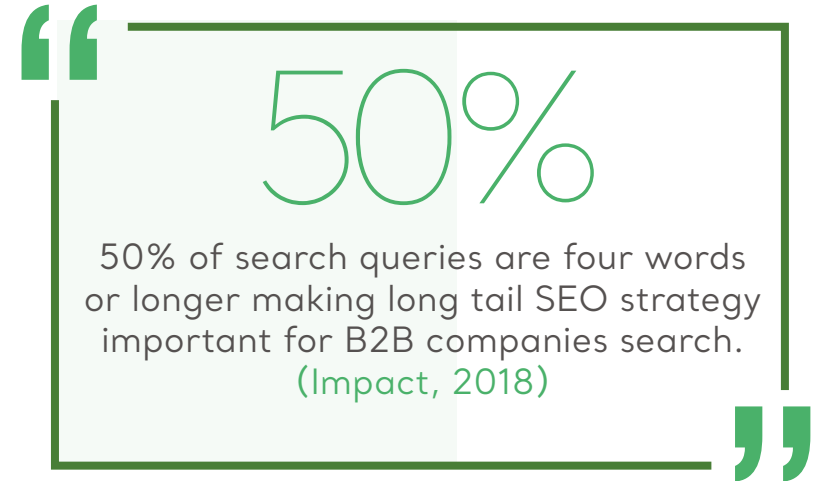
Another popular (and proven) inbound marketing tactic is search engine optimisation (SEO). If you want to bring visitors to your website, your company needs to not only be findable through search, but should also rank among the top search results. To do this, you need a store of quality content, inbound links, and a website that's optimised for relevant keywords (see page 12 to see how SEO has been impacted by Google's recent changes to keyword search). This ensures that your website receives plenty of inbound traffic through organic search. Brainstorm and research common search terms being used in your industry and create a hit list of topics.

Stumped on where to start? Ask yourself what questions buyers are aiming to answer when they are looking for solutions like yours. Industry forums and conferences are great places to gauge the conversation going on in the marketplace. You can also use free tools like Google Trends and Keywordtool.io to prioritise top keywords. One sometimes overlooked area is your website's technical performance. Fast, error-free sites will rank most favourably. There are dozens of free tools out there that will help you test your site for speed, broken links, and other hidden issues that may be negatively impacting your site traffic.

There are 2.3 Billion active social media users - 31% of the world's total population. (SmartInsights)

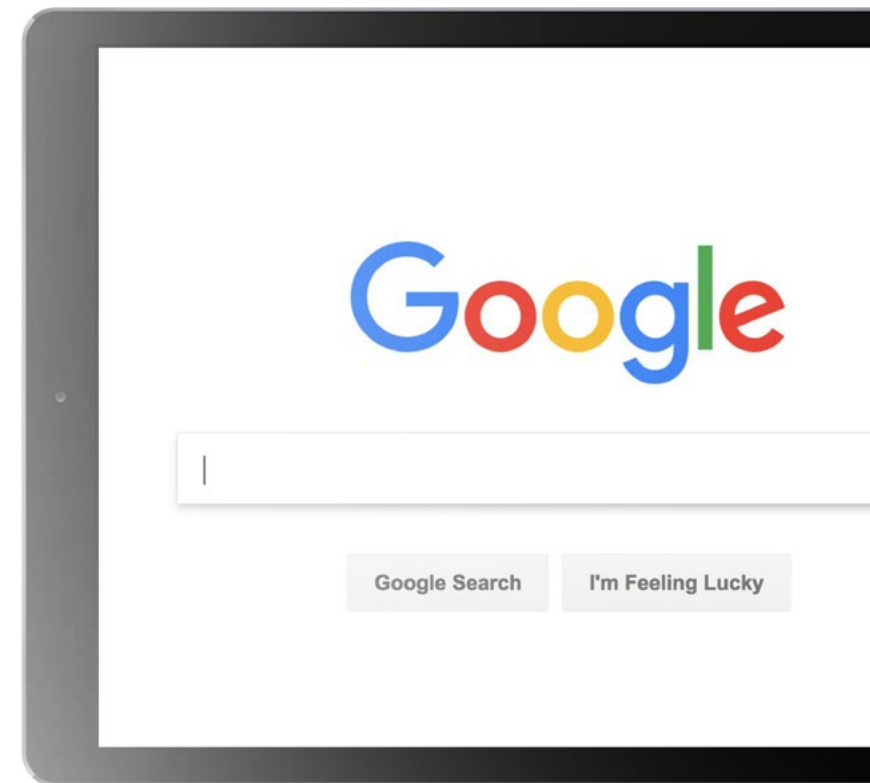


31%



50%

50% of search queries are four words or longer making long tail SEO strategy important for B2B companies search.  
(Impact, 2018)

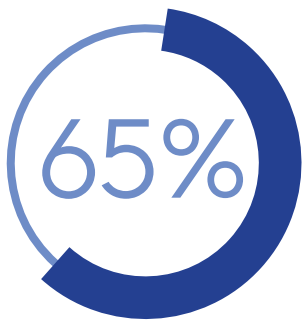


# Pay-Per-Click Advertising (PPC)

Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising goes hand in hand with SEO when it comes to an inbound strategy, and is a great way to supplement your SEO efforts.

While SEO focuses on your organic search efforts and takes some time to achieve results, PPC advertising can give your company a search presence no matter how high you rank on search engines — you just have to be willing to pay for it.

Running ads on partner sites, search engine results pages, social networks, or relevant industry websites can be a great way to drive qualified traffic to your site. Don't forget to keep the offers helpful and relevant to attract the most attention!



65% of B2B companies have acquired a customer through LinkedIn paid ads. (HubSpot)



# IoT

The Internet of Things (IoT) is the newest frontier of inbound marketing. Wearables like the Apple Watch and the FitBit are connecting people in new ways, and present unique opportunities for savvy marketers to tap into buyers who are more on the go than ever before.

Designing a website that is responsive to being viewed on a variety of devices, creating content that can be consumed on multiple platforms, and smart-response forms that can be filled out on one device, but will update preferences and details across all devices are areas that marketers should be considering.



“

7x

By 2020, there will be 7 times as many connected devices as there are people on the planet. - CNN Report.

”



## Run a Quick SEO Checkup with These Free Tools

- Google PageSpeed Insights
- SERPs Rank Checker
- Google Webmaster Tools
- Moz Open Site Explorer

# What will Inbound marketing do for my company?

Inbound marketing costs **62% less per lead** than traditional outbound marketing. Inbound has become a vital component for B2B companies marketing strategies. Investment in outbound techniques has become less important to CEO's of B2B companies in recent years. Websites have become the gatekeepers of sales, marketing teams KPI's are being set by sales teams, the building of databases to market specific products towards over a period of time has become a forefront of B2B sales. Inbound plays a vital part in the alignment of those goals and challenges.

Let's take a look at the benefits of an inbound marketing strategy.

**“**  
**2x** Creating Brand Awareness. B2B brands that connect with their buyers on an emotional level earn twice the impact over marketers who are still trying to sell business or functional value. ([LinkedIn, 2017](#))  
**”**

According to Google and Millward Brown Digital's 2014 B2B Path To Purchase Study, **90% of B2B researchers who are online use search specifically to research business purchases.** Buyers are looking for the major players in your industry, the most common concerns or issues about your product or service, and the best insights into the purchase and implementation process. Your company needs to be in those search results, and inbound marketing helps you get there.

Creating helpful content targeted toward these initial industry searches increases the odds of a customer finding your company, simply by creating more pages for them to

stumble across. In addition, search engines will crawl this content and determine that your website and content are relevant to industry searches.

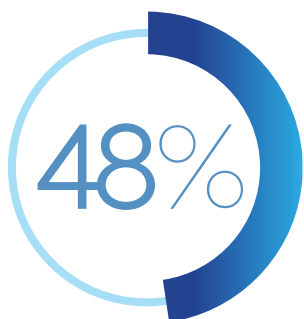
Promoting your content through channels like social media will also add relevancy and give you greater reach. Since inbound marketing typically revolves around helpful content for your target audience, it also builds your credibility and expertise in your space. When done properly, you'll gain a reputation as an expert in your community, and your audience will help amplify your content to their own network. This, of course, introduces your brand to new potential customers.



# Building Relationships

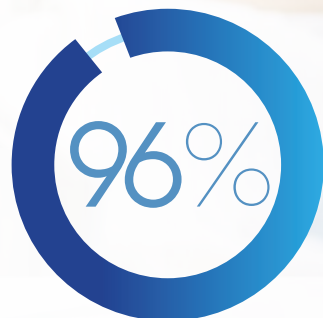
Even after a buyer has conducted their initial research on your industry, they may not be ready to make a purchase immediately. Particularly in the B2B space, where purchasing cycles are often long and complex, the odds are better that they will continue to conduct research, absorbing relevant content and educating themselves before reaching out to a sales rep.

Your content provides the perfect opportunity to create a relationship with these buyers by offering insights, tips, suggestions, and answers to their questions and quandaries. As a trusted authority in your industry, you position yourself as one of the top solutions and will be the first that buyers reach out to when they want to make a purchase.



**48%** of businesses say most of their leads require “long cycle” nurturing with many influencers.  
(Ascend2)

**96%** of visitors who come to your website aren't ready to buy (yet).  
(Marketo)

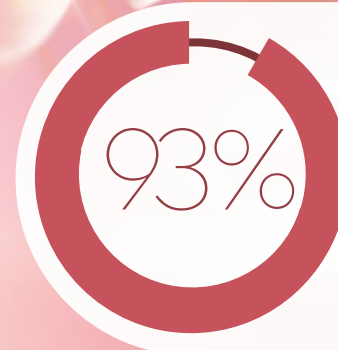


# Generating Quality Leads

“ 75% 75% of B2B businesses say generating traffic and leads is their biggest marketing challenge. (Hubspot) ”

In addition to the more influence-based benefits mentioned above, inbound marketing can definitely help you generate more leads to fill your sales pipeline. These leads will often be more qualified and further through the sales cycle than leads brought in through traditional outbound marketing tactics like direct mail or cold-calling.

By using gated content (content that can only be downloaded by completing a form), companies can gather data on a prospective buyer and better tailor their marketing messages and sales pitches. In addition, these leads will have a better understanding of your industry, business, and what they're looking for in a product or service — meaning that your sales team won't have to waste time educating them when they enter the buying cycle.



93% of B2B companies say content marketing generates more leads than traditional marketing strategies. (Marketo, Forbes)



# How Do I Create A Sales and Marketing Strategy?

Companies with a tightly aligned Sales and Marketing strategy (SLA) find that inbound marketing practices provide the highest quality leads by **66%** when compared to only **15%** of quality leads provided by outbound methods. (Salesforce 2017)

66% Inbound marketing practices

15% Outbound methods

So how can you go about creating your own inbound strategy?

The first step is to manage your expectations. If you've never done inbound marketing before, this will mark a huge paradigm shift in your marketing. It will take time to refocus and structure your marketing efforts, build your audience, and start seeing results.

But if you lay the appropriate groundwork for your strategy, you will start to see more buyers engaging with your company and more leads flowing into your database.

How does an inbound strategy look? (Hubspot)



# Laying the Groundwork

The mistake many companies make is to jump right in and start creating content without a solid plan in place. While there's something to be said for enthusiasm, this often results in an unfocused approach that buyers struggle to engage with. When planning out your content, it is important that it follow two key rules.

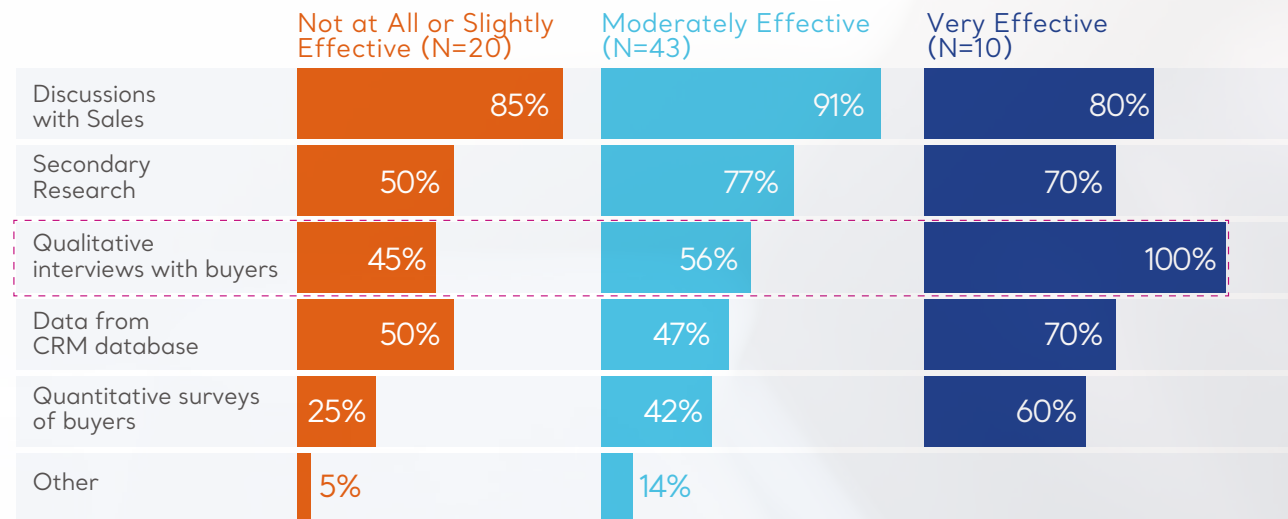
First, content must be helpful, not promotional. Of course, your creation and sponsorship of the content will create brand equity, but when it comes to the meat of it, ask yourself, "will my audience find a particular piece of content helpful and relevant?" If the answer is no, you shouldn't create it!

Second, your content needs to be personalised to your audience. If your content is too generic or broad in scope, your audience will lose interest — or worse, never look at the content in the first place. Plus, while broad content might attract a large audience, it likely won't be the right audience for you, creating a lot of noise to sort through in order to find the most qualified prospects.

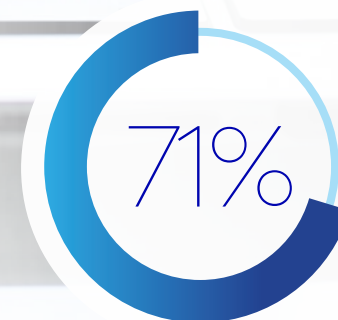
So how can you make sure your content hits the mark? Here are two techniques to consider (worksheets for each are provided in the appendix):

## Sources of Buyer Intelligence for Persona Development by Effectiveness Using Personas

Where do you get the buyer intelligence to develop your personas? % of Respondents



Companies that use buyer personas effectively base their personas on research with buyers, especially qualitative research [ITSMA Online Survey 2014](#)



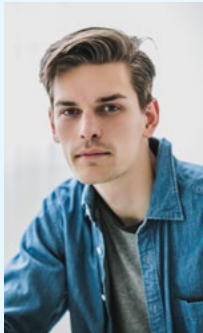
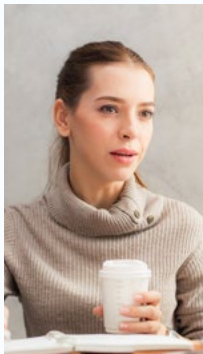

Buyer Personas: 71% of companies who exceed revenue and lead goals have documented Personas. (Salesforce, 2017)



# Buyer Personas

Creating buyer personas is still an indispensable part of understanding your audience. Examine your current customer base and look at the traits your customers have in common. Use these traits to build a fictional persona of your ideal prospect. Making the persona as detailed as you can will help ensure that you are creating the most personalised, relevant content possible. Have fun with it and develop a few different personas to represent different characters in your user base. Who are your researchers, your decision makers, your influencers? Try modelling them after real customers for a more authentic feel.

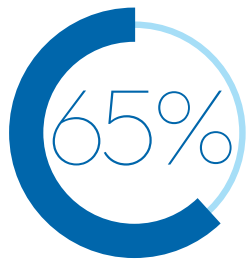
Map Your Content to the Sales Funnel: You should be providing the right content, at the right time. In order to accomplish this, take an inventory of all the content you have available and determine which stage of the sales cycle the content is most relevant to. This will help you distribute each piece of content to its target audience. For example, blog articles discussing industry trends are great for top of funnel prospects, but long-form content like white papers and buyers guides might be better suited for a prospect closer to the end of the buying cycle.

Buyer Persona	Onboarding Req	Funnel Content
 <p><b>SDR SAM</b>            Age: 20-35            Income: \$30-£60K            Industry: Tech/Real Estate /Finance            Reports to: Sales Manager.            Responsibilities: lead scoring, closing deals, initial onboarding.            Goals: Hit targets, minimise admin</p>	<p><b>SOLO</b></p> <p>Onboarding requirements:            Webinar            Call on request            Reduced email sequence  <b>Converts in 21days</b>  <b>LIV \$505</b></p>	<p><b>How to sell more</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next Action Sales Bootcamp</li> <li>• Get Sales Done ebook</li> <li>• Handling Sales Objections</li> <li>• State of Sales Report 2017</li> </ul>
 <p><b>MANAGER MARY</b>            Age: 28-55            Income: \$40-£80K            Industry: Tech/Real Estate /Finance            Reports to: Sales Director, CSO.            Responsibilities: Assigning leads, managing sales team, assigning targets, reporting.            Goals: Efficiency, clear objectives, good communication.</p>	<p><b>SMALL TEAM</b>  <b>2/10 users</b></p> <p>Onboarding requirements:            Discovery call            Webinar            Check-in call            Full email sequence  <b>Converts in 21 - 54 days</b>  <b>LIV \$1680</b></p>	<p><b>How to manage a sales team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tips for managing remote sales team.</li> <li>• 6 steps to sales and marketing alignment</li> <li>• Choosing the best CRM guide</li> </ul>
 <p><b>BUSINESS OWNER BOB</b>            Age: 35-65            Income: \$50K            Industry: Tech/Real Estate /Finance            Motives: New product dev, family            Pains: Data entry, reporting, time management.            Business goals: Expand Market, 3x revenue in next financial year.</p>	<p><b>LARGE TEAM</b>  <b>20/100 users</b></p> <p>Onboarding requirements:            Discovery call            On-site onboarding            Account Manager            Additional sales resource  <b>Converts in 21 - 54 days</b>  <b>LIV \$5080</b></p>	<p><b>How to hire great salespeople</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 22 characteristics of great salespeople.</li> <li>• Choosing the best CRM Guide</li> <li>• Customer case study</li> </ul>

Persona Example

# Getting Started with Content Creation

Before we get too far into content mapping and promotion, let's go back to square one. Since inbound relies hugely on content, it's important to decide exactly what type(s) of content you'll be creating. Here are a few that we recommend:



**65%** of marketers planned to increase their use of blogging in 2017. ([Social Media Examiner](#))

## Blog:

Starting a company blog is a great way to position your business as a thought leader (and it can give your content a nice SEO boost). Your blog can become a wonderful resource to those looking for more information about your industry, which can help you build a community around your brand while also bringing in new prospects.

It's also a great way to stay in touch with the customers who are more likely to become your product evangelists. There are a number of free blogging tools out there to help you create an amazing, easy-to-manage blog. Our personal favourite? Industry powerhouse Wordpress. Wordpress easily integrates with your website (in fact, you can build your whole site on Wordpress if you want!), your marketing automation system, and your other favourite web tools. In fact, it even has a number of SEO plug-ins available to help you maximise your posts.

13x

More likely to enjoy positive ROI if correctly prioritised blogging practises are in use.

431%

More indexed pages for websites with blogs than those without.

70%

Of customers prefer to understand a company via posts opposed to ads.

126%

Increase in lead generation with a blog compared to small businesses who don't.

78%

Believe that companies who create interesting content are intrested in building relationships.

97%

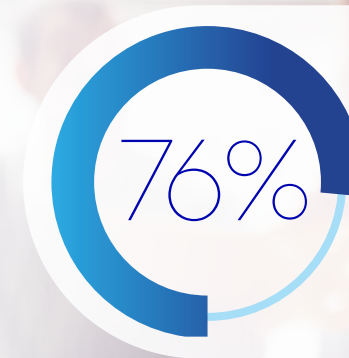
More inbound links to websites with blogs than those without.



# White Papers or eBooks:

Creating long-form pieces like white papers along with a company blog allows you to offer higher value content that can be gated behind a form. This gives you the opportunity to deliver a valuable resource to your audience while also collecting lead data that can contribute to your demand generation efforts.

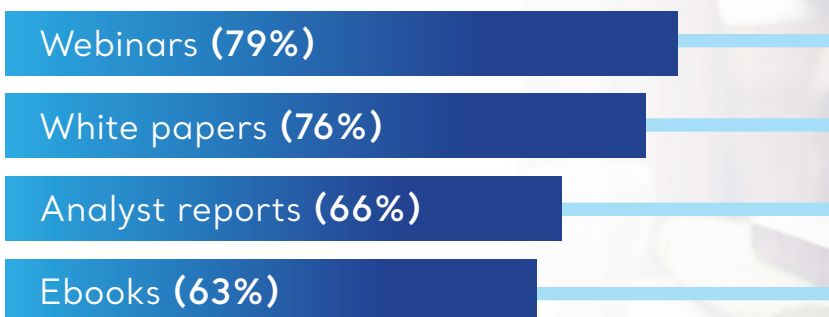
Place gated content throughout your site, collecting it in a resource library, but also strategically pairing it as a companion piece to related pages and blog posts. This will help you drive continued engagement. These assets are also great for promotion on third-party sites like industry newsletters. You can also create your own list of opt-in subscribers, and send them your latest content.



A content offer has a 76% chance of conversion in a well structured and targeted LinkedIn inmail campaign  
([Linkedin, 2018](#))

## Webinars:

B2B buyers are most likely to share their name and email address in exchange for..  
([DemandGen](#))



Current trends dictate that webinars are always gated behind a form, so this is another great opportunity to collect valuable lead data while also providing a unique learning experience and a chance for leads to engage with your company. If your goal is to position your company as a thought leader, educational webinars are a great way to demonstrate your knowledge of industry trends and best practices. Pair this with a multi-stage strategy that offers product information or a demo after the thought leadership webinar. This will give the most interested customers a low-pressure opportunity to move forward with the sales process.



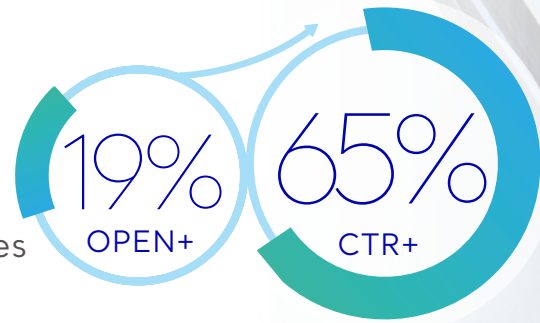
## Infographics:

37% of marketers said visual marketing was the most important form of content for their business, second only to blogging (38%). ([Social media examiner, 2017](#))

Visual content has grown in popularity, and will only continue to grow as the marketplace becomes more crowded with content. Buyers are looking for content that is easy to digest and doesn't require a large time commitment — and infographics fit the bill perfectly. These are very shareable, and can be posted to your blog or shared with relevant industry blogs to extend their reach. Ask your partners, industry contacts and others to help you gain traction.

## Video:

Using the word "video" in an email subject line boosts open rates by 19% and clickthrough rates by 65%. ([invodo](#))



Video is a powerful force for marketing, and can be indispensable for breaking down complex ideas into an easy to digest format. With the many video platforms that exist to help you edit, share and track your content, it is easier than ever to collect lead data and integrate it directly into your CRM. Not only is video good for lead generation, it's also a great way to connect with buyers on a more personal level. The advent of live-streaming through platforms like Facebook and

Periscope has given marketers a whole new way to interact with an audience live, and watch them tune in in real-time. In a world where instant is everything, this makes video a powerful tool. Not to mention the fact that videos are one of the easiest types of content to digest — just sit back, relax, and enjoy the show! Organisations that use video get 41% more web traffic from search than those that don't.

# Promoting Content

“ 75% 75% of B2B businesses say generating traffic and leads is their biggest marketing challenge. (Hubspot) ”

Once you've decided on the types of content you'd like to create, it's time to build and promote them. Content promotion involves a combination of SEO, PPC, and distribution over marketing channels like social media and email. Let's take a closer look at how your promotion efforts might be impacted by current SEO and social trends.



80% of B2B leads come from LinkedIn

(LinkedIn 2017)



94% of B2B marketers use LinkedIn to distribute content.

(LinkedIn 2017)



# Optimising for Search Engines

SEO is getting smarter. Gone are the days when predicting the next algorithm could make or break your ranking, and keywords were the be all and end all for websites working their way up the results page. Now, like the technology behind it, the act of searching is changing, and Google is adding new tools and features to ensure that people find the information most relevant to their query in every instance.

Take the new 'rich text' answers appearing at the top of the results page for certain search terms. These are pulled from the site that Google has determined to have the best answer or information for the searcher's question through a complex system of keywords, key phrases, and markers of legitimacy. Increasingly, this combination is how Google determines rankings on its search pages. There is a growing emphasis on quality of information, as well as quantity (and authority) of the publications who link to a piece of content, making it harder to predict how well a page will do in search results.

Keywords are still important however, and likely always will be. Once you've identified the keywords that you would like to target (which can be as simple as deciding which terms are most relevant to your company or product offering, and assessing the pain points that you are trying to address), be sure to sprinkle them throughout your content, including in your page's navigation name, in order to encourage search engines to rank your content higher than your competitors. Do not use your keywords excessively or you risk getting flagged by Google and penalised (a good rule of thumb is to keep your SEO keyword density at about 5% of your overall content).

Including keywords in your page name, title tag, header tags, and image ALT tags are great ways to increase the keyword load on your targeted page without going overboard. It's important that you also make an effort to attract inbound links to your website, which can help your ranking on search engines. Building strong connections with authoritative online sources is critical for increasing your credibility, as Google continues to strengthen its focus on quality over quantity. Just keep in mind — while it's important to employ SEO tactics so that your content gets found, it's more important than ever to write quality content that your visitors will find compelling.

# Sharing your content

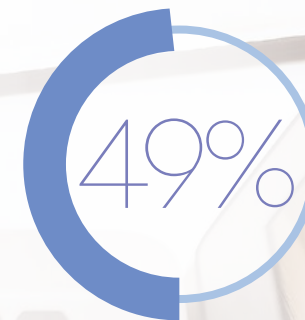
**72%** 72% of marketers believe content creation is the single most effective SEO tactic. (Acend2, 2018)

Once you have all of your new content, it's time to share it. Promote it through social media campaigns, emails, webinars, newsletters, even paid search and display ads — just make sure you consider what's right for each channel and take care not to be too intrusive! Launching your new content can be both soft (i.e. placing a link at the bottom of one of your email campaigns or on your homepage) or hard (a Facebook update or Tweet alerting your followers to it). For content like white papers, you can even use a fresh display ad, email campaign, or a paid search campaign to drive downloads more aggressively. It's important to carefully monitor paid advertising so that you don't overspend or fail where your ROI is concerned.

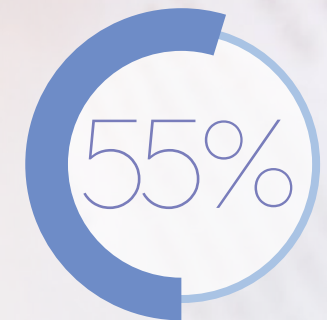
While it's fantastic if 20,000 people download your new white paper on "Paid Search Best Practices," you've missed the mark if none of those leads turn into paying customers. Capping frequency in your campaigns is an easy way to make sure you're keeping your spend in check Retargeting, which means using a service that targets display ads to people who have already visited your site, can also be a great way to encourage the right customers to engage.

In an environment dominated by digital, marketing automation and other marketing technologies are an important part of a successful B2B strategy. With the limitations of inbound marketing presented above, it is important for marketers to build a marketing machine than covers the entire sales cycle. Inbound marketing is most effective when paired with a solid lead maturation plan, and marketing automation can help to keep leads flowing seamlessly, from click to close.

Marketers that employ both inbound and marketing automation as a part of the same marketing strategy are eliminating friction in their sales cycle and seeing great returns when it comes to ROI. Marketing automation works alongside your inbound marketing strategy to help you create an efficient, revenue generating pipeline of leads.



On average **(49%)** of companies are currently using marketing automation



with more than half of B2B companies **(55%)** adopting the technology.

(Salesforce 2017)

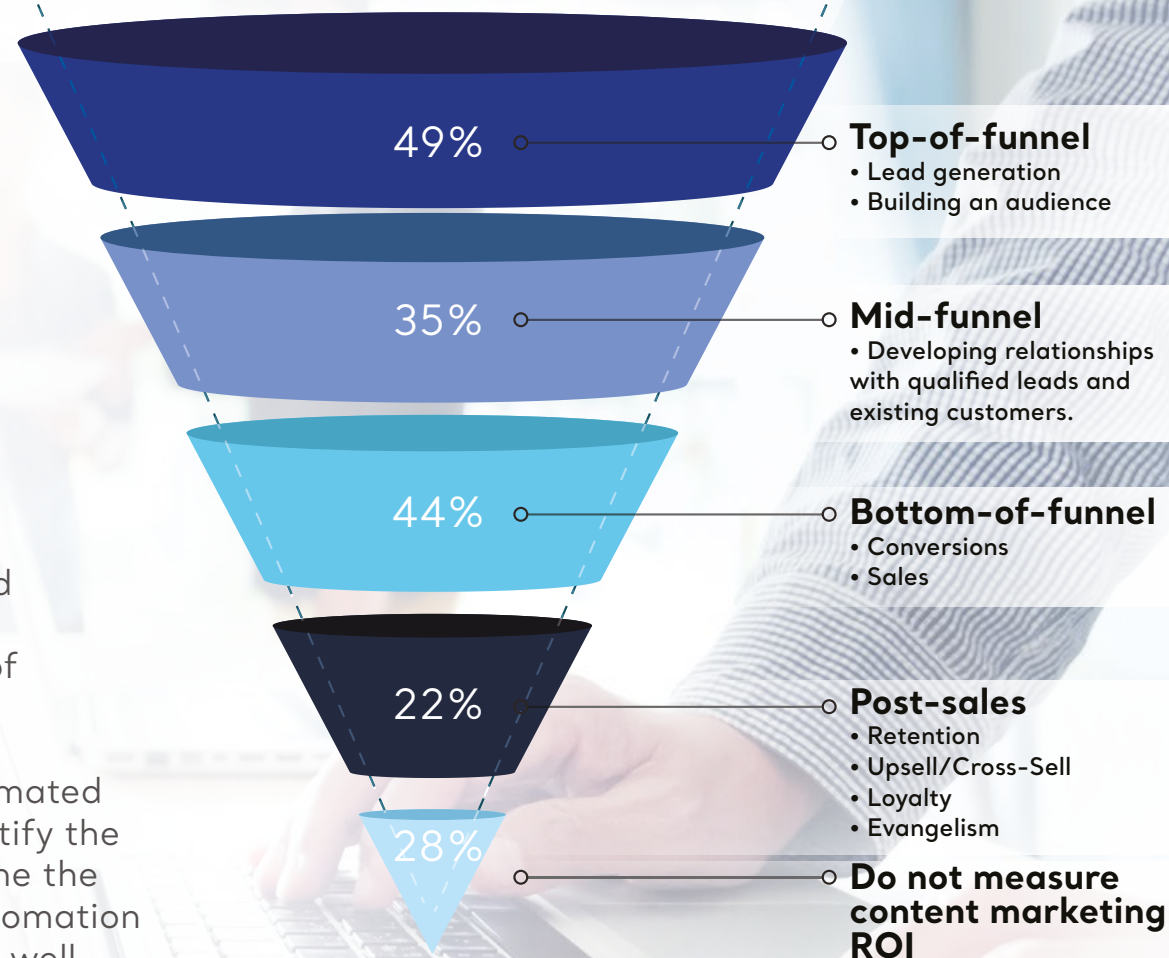


# Identifying Qualified Inbound Leads

As previously mentioned, inbound marketing is a fantastic way to fill the top of your sales funnel with leads. When your readers click, convert, and download, you're driving leads for your sales reps to follow up with later. However, inbound leads aren't always the best quality. If you are casting a wide net with highly shareable content, you will likely attract some people who aren't serious prospects. Competitors may download your content out of curiosity, someone's role, budget or industry may mean they are not the right fit for your product, and job applicants are frequently on websites downloading content while researching possible employers. With no way to weed these leads out from the rest, your sales reps could end up wasting valuable time, souring their opinion of inbound marketing.

Fortunately, marketing automation comes with automated lead scoring and grading modules that help you identify the hottest leads without lifting a finger. You simply define the characteristics of your ideal lead, and marketing automation will assign every inbound lead a grade based on how well they fit that criteria. A lead score simultaneously gauges their interest level in your company. This blended model allows you to pass on only the most qualified leads to your sales reps, while also identifying the leads that need to be nurtured to a sales-ready state.

## Phases of Buyer's Journey Where B2B Marketers Measure Content Marketing ROI

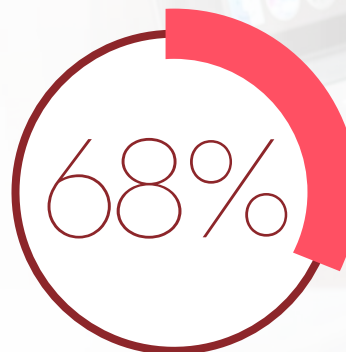


# Collect Data through Forms and Landing Pages

Once you've established your inbound marketing strategy with the proper groundwork and a store of relevant, targeted content, you can utilize landing pages and forms to start driving leads into your sales funnel. Forms are an easy way to collect information from leads, and can be included on a website, in a blog post, or on a landing page. With marketing automation, form submissions can also trigger score and grade adjustments. You can build up prospect profiles using progressive profiling, which allows you to display new form fields to prospects based on the data points you have already collected.

Landing pages are a great place to host any long-form content that can be used to encourage conversions. With limited navigation and targeted content, you not only cut down on bounce rates, you also drive visitors deeper into your site, increasing the amount of time spent on your website. When it comes to inbound marketing, landing pages are an invaluable tool.

Nurture Leads That Aren't Sales-Ready 68%  
of B2B companies will use landing pages to  
nurture new sales leads for future conversion.  
(Marketing Sherpa)





# Collect Data through Forms and Landing Pages

So what do you do with the leads that aren't quite ready to be passed onto sales? If you're only employing an inbound strategy, many of these leads would just slip through the cracks. But not with marketing automation. Automation allows you to set up automated engagement campaigns to help nurture cold leads to an educated, purchase-ready state — without having to have a sales rep involved.

Lead nurturing campaigns consist of a series of emails or other engagement offers sent to a prospect at a specific time or after a designated action has taken place, meaning that the messages they receive will always be highly targeted and relevant. Setting up multiple campaigns means you can shift a prospect from one campaign to another based on their level of engagement. Campaigns can be targeted by area of interest, role, industry, geography, or any number of other factors that help you target each individual's unique interests. This allows you to effortlessly take a lead that may have otherwise been ignored, and work with them to shape them into the perfect prospect.



# Always Stay in the Loop

Inbound marketing alone leaves you somewhat in the dark in terms of a prospect's behavior or intentions. Are they showing buying signals? Are they ready to speak to a sales rep? Marketing automation, on the other hand, will alert you or your sales reps in real time when a prospect takes a certain action (like visiting your pricing page) or reaches a designated point in the nurturing process. This allows you to reach out to them at the perfect moment to start a sales conversation.

In addition, automation data syncs seamlessly with your CRM. This means you and your sales team will never have to jump between platforms for prospect data. You will always have a complete profile of your prospects, right down to the last action they took and the pages they've been looking at on your website.

Accurately Calculate — and Improve — Inbound ROI Despite its rapid rise in popularity, inbound marketing remains a little murky when it comes to the true return on investment. Without the proper systems in place, it's not easy to track the download of a piece of content all the way through the sales process or understand which assets are making the biggest impact on closed-won deals. Marketing automation provides ROI reporting to help you determine what's working and adjust your content and campaigns for maximum impact.

Automation tags visitors to your site and readers of your content, allowing you to understand just how your content and inbound marketing efforts affect their purchasing decisions. You'll be able to see how inbound guides your prospect's journey through the funnel, attribute revenue to the first touch campaign once deals have closed, and tie revenue to marketing spend. Having this insight will not only keep you accountable with your inbound strategy, it will also help you improve your strategy over time so that you can create the ultimate inbound marketing machine.



Traffic Sources Overview	
Direct Traffic	3,097.00 (40.49%)
Search Engines	2,910.00 (38.04%)
Referring Sites	1,642.00 (21.47%)

“70%  
70% of the buying process is now complete by the time a prospect is ready to engage with sales.  
(Sirius Decisions)”



# Conclusion

Marketing may be changing, but inbound strategies are here to stay. With more and more competing messages in the marketplace — from the thousands of social messages sent each day to the rise in videos and visual content — marketers have had to start taking a smarter approach to attracting their buyers' attention. This has led to a an increased focus on in inbound tactics and intelligent, targeted outreach, which help you reach buyers who increasingly control their own destiny.

Combining inbound marketing with marketing automation can help your marketing team maximise lead generation efforts and sales opportunities while minimising costs. And by using both inbound and automation, no stage of the sales cycle goes untouched, so you're never missing any important steps in the buying journey.

# Aligned

Thanks for reading

# Aligned

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