

HOW TO **JUMPSTART** YOUR INBOUND MARKETING PROGRAM:

10 STEPS TO GET MORE LEADS



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If you have more money than brains, you should focus on outbound marketing. If you have more brains than money, you should focus on inbound marketing.

GUY KAWASAKI
FORMER CHIEF EVANGELIST, APPLE
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B2B MARKETING IS CHANGING...ARE YOU?

Not all that long ago, outbound marketing ruled. We promoted products and services in ads on TV and radio, in trade journals and newspapers. We mailed promotional flyers and brochures to prospects and clients. Participated in several tradeshows every year. Faxed and overnight-mailed press materials and scheduled press tours. We hosted conferences and sponsored seminars.

Outbound marketing is still an essential component of the marketing mix but times have changed—for some very compelling reasons. The Internet has forever affected the way buyers and sellers find and interact with each other, and has spawned the most dramatic shift in marketing since the invention of the television. Inbound marketing is its name and it's already changed the game.

WHAT EXACTLY IS INBOUND MARKETING?

Simply put, inbound marketing focuses on pulling prospects and customers toward your business and its products. The Web is the key. Every day, more and more of your prospects and customers are on the Internet evaluating products and services. They need to find you there. These days, your Web presence can't be an afterthought. And it can't end with your website either.



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ACCORDING TO THE 2014 HUBSPOT SURVEY:*

Marketers who have prioritized blogging are 13x more likely to see positive ROI. On average, companies who used inbound tactics reported a cost-per-lead that was 93% less than those who only used outbound marketing.

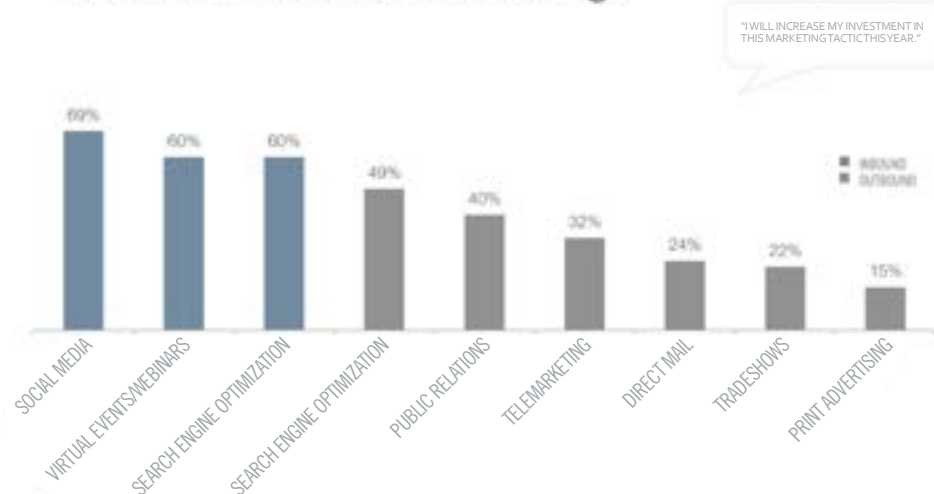
The really great news for B2B companies? Inbound marketing is proving to be one of the most cost effective means of lead generation and one of the easiest to measure ROI.

IT'S NO WONDER MORE B2B MARKETING COMPANIES ARE SHIFTING MONEY THEIR INBOUND MARKETING BUDGETS.

The survey respondents ranked inbound marketing practices as their primary lead source. Trade shows, paid search, direct mail and telemarketing were ranked far lower.

With SEO, blogs, and social media playing ever growing roles in business buying decisions, failure to incorporate inbound marketing into your marketing programs can mean the difference between growth and stagnation.

B2B marketers are shifting their budgets toward inbound marketing.



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The Inbound Marketing Ecosystem

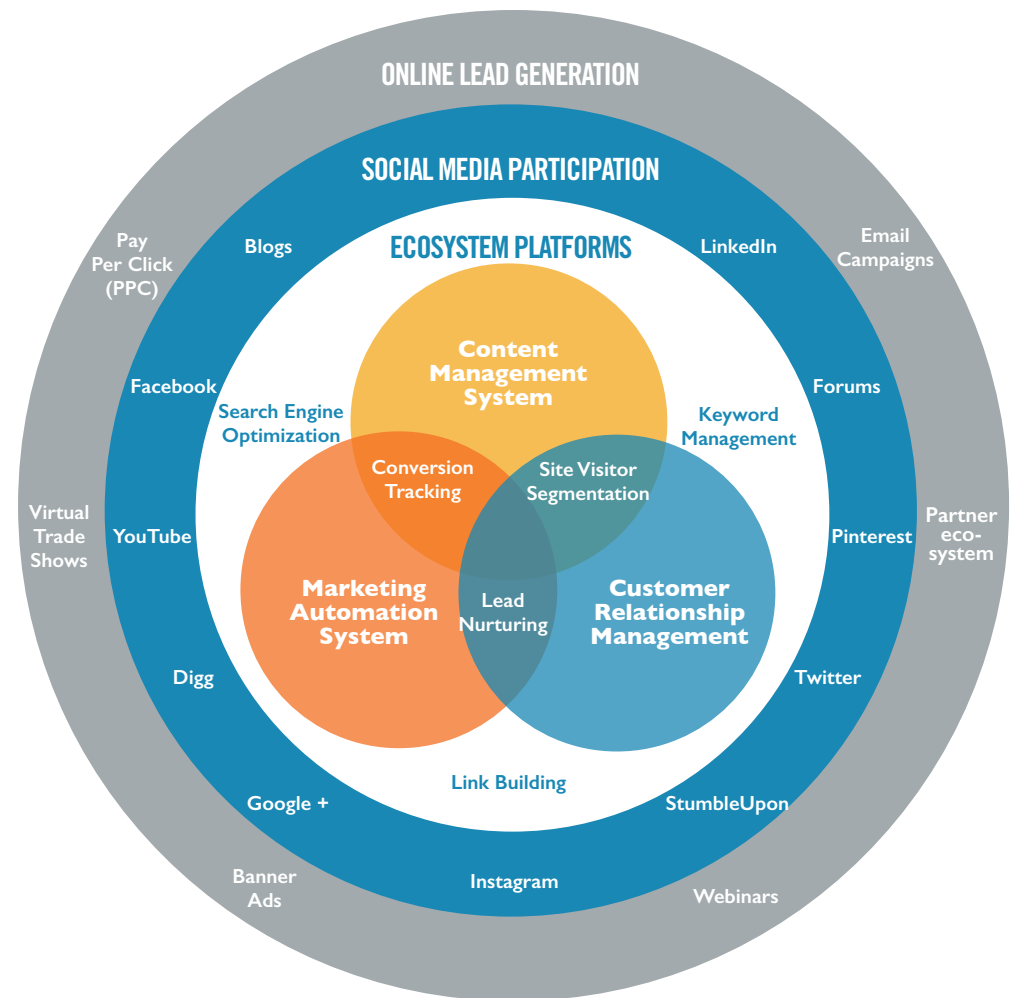
There are several processes, disciplines, and technologies involved in Inbound Marketing, but it doesn't have to be a daunting task. Many options are available to start small and inexpensively, and grow in functionality as your business grows. The key is to think of them as interconnected components from the outset to avoid costly and painful integration problems later. As in any multi-part system, some elements can exist independently, and some processes can be done manually. But to effectively scale and to accurately monitor and measure, the components need to be integrated. This chart shows the foundational building blocks of an integrated Inbound Marketing Ecosystem:

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS)

This is the heart of your web presence. It is a platform that manages your website(s), blog content, landing pages, calls-to-action (CTA's) and informational assets. A CMS allows you to easily make changes to your website content. Without a CMS, you're always at the mercy and timelines of your IT guys.

There are a wide variety of CMS - ranging from simple and easy to use to highly sophisticated and robust. Many of the most popular CMS are Open Source, meaning the basic code is free but if you want support and added features you'll pay for it. Some of the most popular Open Source CMS include WordPress, Joomla, and DotNetNuke.

HubSpot started as a proprietary CMS with Marketing Automation capabilities (see Marketing Automation System section below) and evolved their offering to allow clients to use their own CMS while taking advantage of Hubspot's extensive MAS functions.



The Inbound Marketing Ecosystem (Cont.)

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CRM)

The informational heart of your sales and marketing intelligence about your customers and prospects, your sales pipeline and your market and product segmentation. [SALESFORCE.COM](https://www.salesforce.com) has become the 800 lb. gorilla in this market (and is highly integrated with many of the CMS and MAS) but there are many others, ranging in cost and complexity from [ACT!](#) to [MICROSOFT DYNAMICS](#) to Oracle's Siebel. The key is to ensure you have a platform that is adopted and used by Marketing AND Sales, and that is, or can be, integrated with the other two platforms.



MARKETING AUTOMATION SYSTEM (MAS)

This is where the activities and campaigns that generate inbound traffic are created, managed and tracked. From email campaigns to Pay per Click (PPC) and Banner Ads, Webinars and promotions; all your online marketing activities and campaigns (which would otherwise be handled on an ad hoc basis), can be managed and measured in your MAS. The Marketing Automation System provides the visibility and performance analysis needed to effectively assess ROI and manage your inbound marketing budget. Often this is the last system to be implemented, but it is essential to scaling the inbound marketing function. Only by integrating the MAS with your CRM can you effectively close the loop and understand customer and prospect responses to your various marketing campaigns.

The Marketing Automation System market originated to support the marketing programs of Fortune 1000, and had a very heavy emphasis on managing email campaigns. [MARKETO](#), [ELOQUA](#), [SILVERPOP](#) and [EXACTTARGET](#) were all sophisticated email campaign managers that have added varying degrees of inbound marketing and social media management over time. [HUBSPOT](#) and [PARDOT](#), on the other hand were founded to provide Inbound Marketing management functionality, driving and tracking web visitors and web-based leads.

With these platforms in place, your business can begin building and layering the SEO, Lead Generation, and Social Media programs needed to fuel the inbound marketing machine.

Note: Two major marketing automation platforms, Pardot and Eloqua, were acquired by Salesforce and Oracle (respectively), for a total of more than \$3.5 billion – compelling evidence of the growing importance of inbound marketing management tools.



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THE 10 STEP INBOUND MARKETING PROGRAM

Whether you've already begun incorporating inbound marketing or are just getting started, here are the 10 key steps to building and growing a lead generation machine.



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STEP 1: GRADE YOUR WEBSITE

How clearly does your site tell visitors who you are and what you do? Are the visuals clean and compelling? Does it support your overall brand image? Look at the content you have “above the fold” - that part of the website visible without scrolling down - versus “below the fold”. (The term is borrowed from the newspaper industry. The best articles are always placed above the natural fold because they get the highest visibility.) In a web browser, this visual cut-off will vary based on the viewer’s screen size, resolution and browser configuration.

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS FOR YOUR SITE TO DO QUICKLY, COMPELLINGLY, AND ABOVE THE FOLD:

1. SAY WHO YOU ARE
2. SAY WHAT YOU DO
3. ENTICE THE VISITOR TO LOOK FURTHER

WORDS MATTER — “WHAT IS INTUITIVELY OBVIOUS TO THE CASUAL OBSERVER - ISN’T.”

Do you provide information according to the interests, point of view and vocabulary of various buyers and influencers? For example, technology companies often fall into the trap of thinking their audience is all IT and “techies”. Their website copy is full of technical details and acronyms that explain HOW they do what they do, but fall short on simple descriptions and business benefits. But what about the business decision maker who is looking to solve a business problem before going to the internal IT department? What about the person in Finance who is trying to understand the cost trade-offs between various alternatives?

By positioning your website to speak to these multiple audiences and where they are in the buying process, you will be elevating your brand awareness and positioning your company as a business partner rather than a widget provider.

The same is true for industry specific expertise. If your company has particular experience solving problems in specific industries - say so! Talk about the issues and use the terms common in that industry but still keep it simple and focused on the business benefits. Then go further with case studies, demo’s and examples that will resonate with visitors from that sector.

Without content that speaks to specific stakeholders - in their language - a critical opportunity in the sales process is lost.

TOO MANY WORDS = BAD

Don’t confuse needing more content with needing lots of copy. Website visitors scan! Break content into small, easy to scan chunks with links and offers to encourage more exploration.



STEP 2: IMPLEMENT A WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS)

Unless you have a dedicated website team, a CMS is an essential platform to allow you to manage the content on your website. Wikipedia defines a web content management (WCM) system as a CMS designed to simplify the publication of web content to web sites and mobile devices — in particular, allowing content creators to create, submit and manage content without requiring technical knowledge of any Web Programming Languages or Markup Languages such as HTML .

A CMS provides the core platform where all your website text, images, videos, and other information assets are housed and managed. With a CMS, your marketing department can keep your website content fresh and can easily add, change and test content and offers without needing to know web programming, or involving your IT department.

There are many open source and proprietary CMS, each with pros and cons based on your website objectives. WordPress is one of the most widely used. (Originally created for blogs, it has evolved into a rich suite of functionality for hosting even sophisticated websites). HubSpot goes further, providing not just Content Management, but also tools to manage Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and other inbound marketing campaign activities in a single location. Joomla and DotNetNuke are also highly robust platforms that support extensive customization but also require more advanced IT support.

STEP 3: CONVERT YOUR WEBSITE TO AN ENGAGING, INTERACTIVE RESOURCE

Your web presence doesn't replace your sales force but potential prospects are checking you out via the web long before they are ready to talk to a salesperson. So, like a good first date, your website needs to ease into the relationship with high level - getting to know you - information, while being interesting and providing easy hooks to entice visitors to delve deeper, and come back for more.

TMI = TURN-OFF

Too Much Information will cause visitors to leave in search of more easily consumed information, likely from your competition. Web visitors are like window shoppers - they are visually scanning - so use bold headlines and short, punchy text to give the gist of a topic. Then offer options for more - your blog, videos, demos, newsletters, even live chat. Save the lengthy pieces for White Papers and Case Studies.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP = TURN-ON

What do you know that your prospects and customer don't - but should? What do you have to say that is informative, interesting or even fun that will help create a connection with your prospects and customers? White papers that look at industry trends and provide meaningful analysis of the issues. Case studies with real life examples of how problems were solved with specific ROI. Research that provides context and depth. These are the topics you should focus on. Give them insights and they'll keep coming back for more.



STEP 4:

ACTIVELY MANAGE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

The most compelling website in the world is worthless if your prospects can't easily find it. Search engines decide your page ranking in keyword searches based on complex (and proprietary) algorithms. Exact formulas aren't known (to keep cheaters from gaming the system) but there are two basics: keywords and inbound links.

KEYWORDS THEN LINKS - IN THAT ORDER

To figure out your most effective keywords, don't assume. You might be surprised which keywords your prospects are using to research the problem you solve. Ask your existing customers how they started their search. Assess your competitors' keywords, and compare their page rankings to yours. You can even map your keywords to your sales funnel. Early stage evaluators will use less targeted and sophisticated terms than more educated buyers. Getting to the early stage "browsers" requires more time and effort to nurture until they are ready to buy, but you'll be the one influencing their evaluation journey - instead of your competition.

After determining your best keywords, go back and optimize your website content and programming to reflect the words you want to rank highly.

LINK BUILDING

Inbound links play an enormous role in determining how search engines rank your site. Search engines assess your relevance - or authority - for given keywords based on the sites that link to you. The more - and the higher the authority - of sites that link to you, the higher your reputation becomes. Remember when your mom told you that you'd be known by the friends you have? Well it's true for your website as well. If you have no friends, then not many people are going to know who you are, and the search engines will think you aren't important enough to rank highly. If you have a bunch of friends, but they're sketchy (paid links for example), search engines will also shy away. But if you develop links from quality sites - like supply and distribution partners, industry directories, social media sites, media outlets and industry publications, then your reputation will rise accordingly.



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STEP 4: ACTIVELY MANAGE SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (CONT.)

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR SEO:

This doesn't happen overnight and it isn't a one-time process. Like getting in shape, this is a lifestyle change. It'll take a while to reach your goals, and once there, you'll have to keep at it. But the rewards are so very satisfying as you see your website traffic increase and your sales funnel expand.

[GOOGLE ANALYTICS](#), [GOOGLE WEB MASTER TOOLS](#), and [ADWORDS](#) are free and essential starting points to understanding and monitoring your keywords and your website's performance. Other tools like [CLICKY](#) and [MOZ](#) are low cost enhanced tools for tracking and comparing your performance - and your competitors', helping you better manage your inbound marketing performance. Large e-commerce and more sophisticated web programs will leverage web analytic tools like Adobe's [OMNITURE](#).

DO's

- Continually add new, relevant content to your site
- Use video and demos to convey key points and increase visitor participation (Video has a significant positive impact on your reputation building)
- Check that your page titles and content support your keywords.
- Create a clean sitemap to facilitate search engines crawling your site
- Make sure all your pages are SEF (Search Engine Friendly) with URLs that include the keywords for that page
- Create alternate text tags for your images and videos to support your keywords
- Check to be sure you don't have broken links or duplicate page content (both earn negative points with search engines)

DON'T's:

- Try to create hidden pages with all your keywords - you'll get penalized
- Try to stuff keywords into copy - you'll get penalized
- Expect immediate results. Search engines crawl periodically so it can take some time for your effort to pay off.



Step 5:

CONVERT VISITORS INTO LEADS

If you aren't selling products directly through your website, you still want to get to know who is visiting, what they are interested in, and where they are in the buying process. Only with this information can you nurture them with more information and offers, keeping them engaged until that exciting moment when they are ready to talk to a salesperson.

PREMIUM CONTENT = CONVERSION POINTS

Beyond your Contact Us page, what types of information, resources, tips, and offers are you providing to get visitors to “convert” and give you their precious contact information?

The types of thought leadership content mentioned in Step 3 are the hooks. Offer visitors compelling information, and they will give you their contact information to get it. Website visitors are neither dumb nor naïve. They realize that you are “giving to get” and that the goal is for you to earn the right to contact them in the future with additional information that they may think is valuable.

A good rule of thumb is to ask for contact information when you are providing useful data (not sales materials) and meaningful offers. 3rd party research, White papers, How-To Manuals - these are all good examples of premium content that you use to help build a relationship with your site visitors.

Once you have created your conversion points, are you measuring which ones work best - and trying new ones? Are you trying different pages and different visuals to promote your offers?

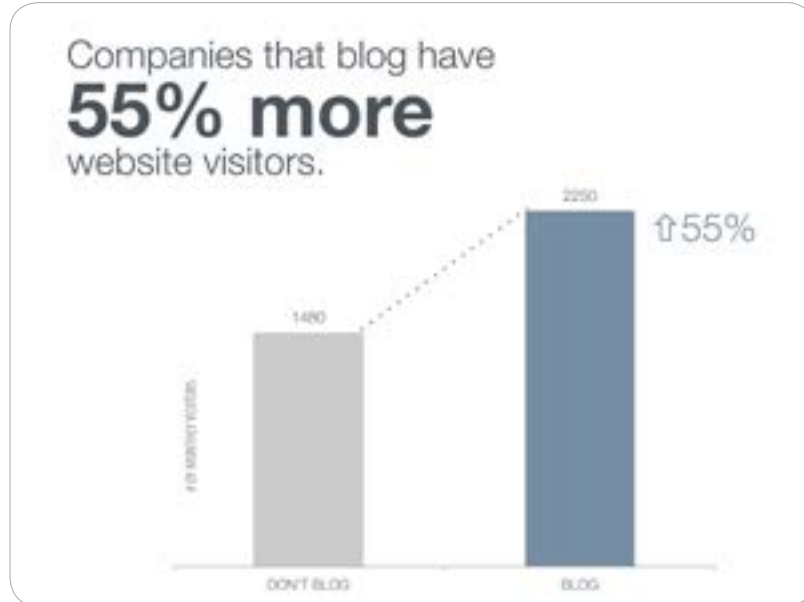
This process of actively working to get to know your site visitors, and then continuing the conversation with them through drip marketing campaigns is called lead nurturing. Use targeted email programs to encourage return visits to explore new website content. This continuous loop of targeted outbound emails to promote and track repeat inbound visits is best managed through a marketing automation system that interfaces with both your CMS and your CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system. [PARDOT*](#), [HUBSPOT*](#), Marketo, and Eloqua are some of the leaders in marketing automation solutions that range from robust and affordable to highly sophisticated and massively scalable.



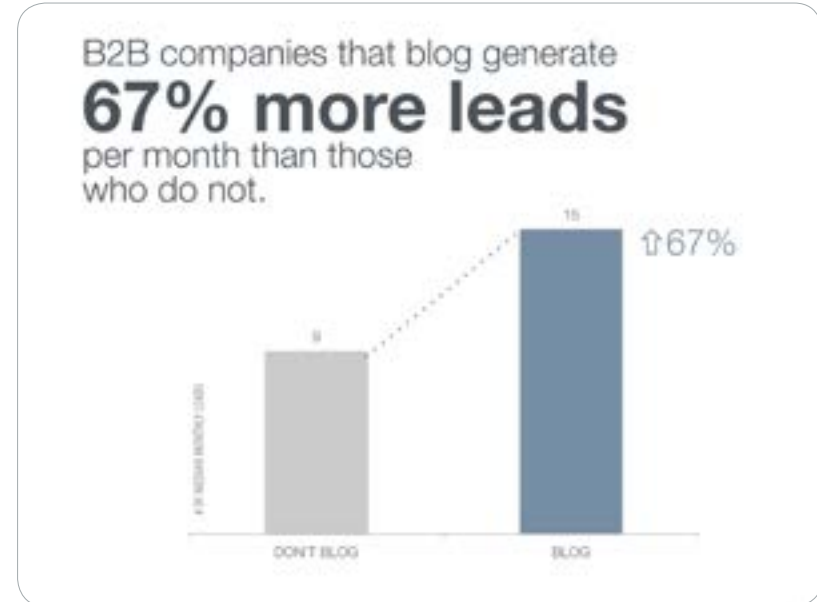
Step 6:

START BLOGGING – NOW

If your company doesn't blog, and you dread the thought of creating a content monster that must continually be fed, look at it this way:



AND
THIS
WAY



Blogging doesn't have to be rocket science - unless you're in the rocket business. It does have to be relevant and interesting to your audience. For most blog content, more isn't better, unless it's visuals that help get the point across, and frequency, which keeps you top of mind.

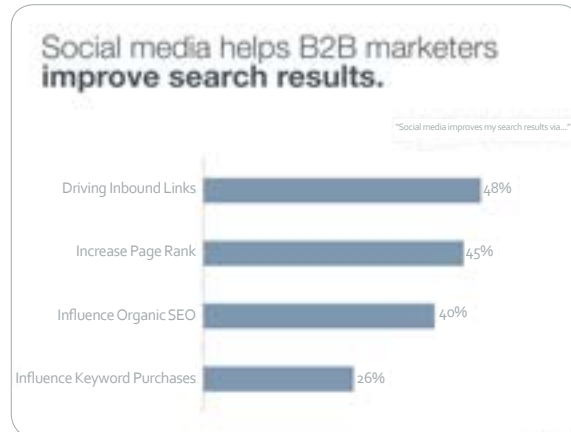
If you already have a blog but aren't seeing growth in your readership, interaction with your posts, or an increase in leads, then it's time to reevaluate and take a fresh approach - to the topics, the tone, the frequency or perhaps the writer(s).

Your blog is step one on the road to social media. One of the key reasons blogs increase website traffic and lead generation is because once you have an interactive resource, visitors will start sharing your information with others - sending your content out to other blogs and other sites - creating Internet breadcrumb trails that lead back to you. These trails help increase your inbound links, which increase your reputation with search engines, which improves your organic search rankings.

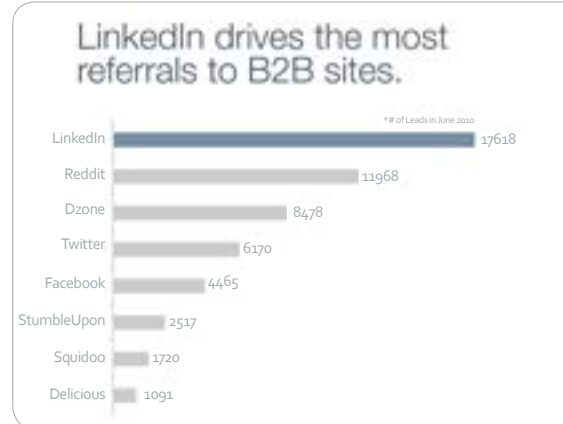
Step 7:

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR B2B

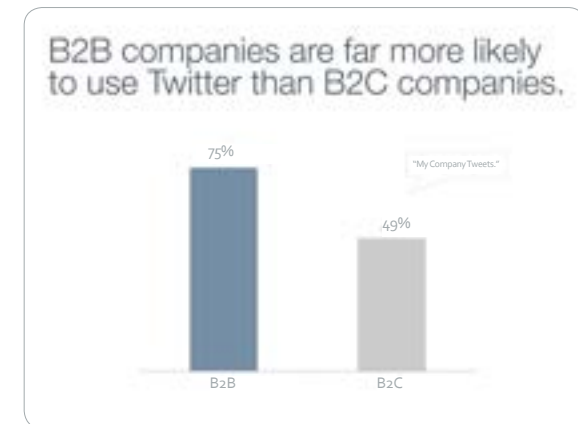
CONSIDER THIS CHART:



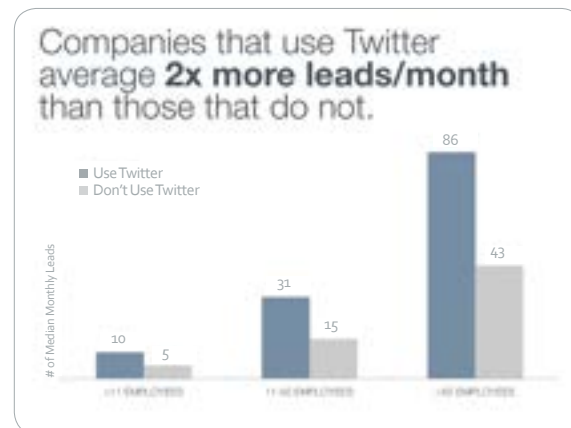
...AND THIS ONE:



NOW ADD THIS FACT...



...TO THIS FACT...



THE CONCLUSION IS COMPELLING.

Social media is a fact of B2B marketing and to ignore it is to ignore a key source of leads. Whether you personally Tweet or maintain an active LinkedIn account, a sizable and growing segment of your market does.

Every company still needs to evaluate which social media outlets yield the best results and highest ROI, but the good news is that on-line marketing channels have more tracking and analysis capabilities than most traditional outbound marketing programs.

STEP 8: THINK BEYOND



Social media sites are just that: social. They need to be active AND interactive to be effective and productive. Evaluate your programs for their effectiveness in engaging both customers and prospects. Are you posting your company blog to your targeted social media sites? Are you using these sites to provide helpful information and links to new content on your website? Are you sharing industry news and events of interest to your prospects and customers?

Are you creating a dialog with your connections or just using these as new channels to shout about your products. If it is the later, you may be building some brand awareness, but you aren't leveraging their real power to make meaningful connections, drive website traffic or generate additional inbound links. In short, if you use social media sites like "free advertising", you'll quickly become ignored and lose the real power of these site to help you engage with and learn from your prospects and customers.

As social media becomes more integral to your overall marketing efforts, you'll want to increase your ability to monitor and engage through social media, measure the ROI, and tailor your efforts based on audience and channels. While an excel spreadsheet might suffice to begin with, you'll soon be searching for Social Media Monitoring and Engagement tools to help you manage this process. This article from [SOCIALMEDIA.BIZ](#) provides a good overview of the top players and also lists many of the others that provide low cost points of entry.

STEP 9: PLAN. TEST. MEASURE. ADJUST. REPEAT.

It's amazing how many companies preach this but don't practice it. Often they don't know what to expect and it's trial and error. So they dip a toe in just to see what will happen. But when nothing big happens soon, they abandon the effort saying, "it doesn't work for our business".

Creating an effective inbound marketing program takes time to build. Creating benchmarks and consistently tracking your performance against those Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) is the only way to know if you're headed in the right direction. Each time you add a new element to your program - a new Pay Per Click campaign, a new set of Keywords, a new landing page, a new call to action - you should test it and measure the results. Then adjust as you see how different words, visuals, and user experiences are impacting results. As was said earlier, on-line marketing channels have more tracking and analysis capabilities than most traditional outbound marketing programs. That's the good news. There are many free and low cost tools that are very helpful for companies just getting started. Marketo's Workbook [THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO MARKETING METRICS AND MARKETING ANALYTICS](#) is an excellent resource on the subject.

It's more effective to start small, define your initial objectives and learn than it is to jump in with both feet and a fist full of marketing dollars but no clear plan. As you grow and your content, programs, campaigns and channels grow, it gets more challenging to keep everything in synch and more sophisticated tools are needed to manage the scale and complexity of it all. But that's the right kind of problem to have.



STEP 10:

SEEK HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

From just getting started, to improving the performance of your existing program, you know if you need help. Inbound marketing's ROI is too high to not have it performing optimally for your business, so don't waste valuable time.

Marsden & Associates helps clients at each stage of the inbound marketing life cycle - from vendor selection of your key platforms, to design and implementation of an interactive website with strong SEO, to the development of an appropriate social media position, to creating compelling premium content that generates conversions, to building lead generation and nurturing programs.

Whether it's a specific campaign or an overall program, a tune up or a complete overhaul, we have the tools and the expertise to deliver measurable results for your inbound marketing programs.

To learn more about how Marsden Marketing can put your inbound marketing program on track, give us a call at **678.360.0019**.

Or, **click here** to send us a note.

We look forward to talking with you!



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