



# An Introduction to Inbound Marketing

What It Is, How It Works and Why You Need to Consider It.

One in a Series of Marketing Guides

**Whitehead**  
AGENCY GROUP  
HEALTHCARE MARKETING THAT CLICKS

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Unlike traditional forms of marketing, inbound marketing allows you to create highly targeted campaigns, generate more qualified leads, lower marketing costs and benefit from real measurable results.

In this guide, we will answer the following questions:

- What is inbound marketing?
- Why is it important?
- How is inbound marketing relevant to health care?
- How will inbound marketing help your business?
- What tactics can you use? SEO, blogs, etc.



## Inbound Marketing: An Introduction

If you haven't already noticed, more and more advertisers are abandoning traditional marketing in favour of online marketing. Current data shows that 86% of people skip television ads, and 44% of direct mail is never opened. This results in plenty of wasted advertising time and money.

Also, 84% of millennials (25–34 year olds) will leave websites because of advertising intruding on their experience. So, what exactly is the intention behind inbound marketing?

Well, consumers are looking for two-way communication with companies on their own terms: when they want it and how they want it.

Marketing has been forced to evolve to meet this shift in consumer behaviour and meet new standards.

Rather than pushing a marketing message out to a reluctant audience, inbound marketing attracts or pulls consumers to your business. We call this inbound marketing because it:

- Is non-interruptive
- Focuses on the need of the consumer
- Relies heavily on storytelling using video, photography and copywriting
- Makes your business easy to find online because of all the original content
- Establishes you as a thought leader with valuable resources

Companies see three times higher ROI using inbound marketing tactics. With inbound marketing, they enjoy higher lead conversion rates and increased revenues, or in the case of medical marketing, they reach more patients and build more referrals.

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- Why is it important?
- How is inbound marketing relevant to health care?
- How will inbound marketing help your business?
- What tactics can you use? SEO, blogs, etc.

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## What Is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing is the practice of attracting, or pulling, prospective customers toward you rather than pushing a marketing message out to them. Here are five of the key points that we want to achieve with inbound marketing:

1. Make your business easy to find for people who are searching for a solution to a problem.
2. Focus on the specific need of the consumer and not just self-promotion.
3. Rely heavily on the creation of original content that is of value to the consumer.
4. Be non-interruptive, allowing consumers to interact with you according to their individual needs and schedules.
5. Help you establish yourself as a thought leader and a valuable resource so that when your audience is ready to invest, they already know you and have a relationship with you.

## What Inbound Marketing Can Do for Your Business

According to HubSpot's State of Inbound Marketing 2015 report,<sup>1</sup> companies that use inbound marketing are three times as likely to see higher ROI on campaigns over traditional marketing tactics such as television, radio or print ads. Over a two-year period, companies focusing on inbound marketing tactics saw a continuous rise in web traffic, a steady increase in generated email leads and a higher number of conversion rates, which in turn led to an increase in sales revenue.

### Lower Marketing Costs

The average cost per lead using traditional marketing techniques is \$346 while the average cost per lead using inbound marketing techniques is \$135. Using inbound marketing techniques, such as search engine optimization (SEO), blogging and social media, marketing professionals saw a 61% lower lead cost when compared with their traditional marketing campaigns.

### Get Found Easily and More Often by Website Visitors

The concept of inbound marketing is based on attracting and reaching your preferred audience. To do that, you have to know who they are and where they are.

By the end of 2016, it is predicted that there will be 10 billion global mobile devices in use, making up for 60% of time spent on digital media.

Sixty-one percent of global Internet users research products online and nearly 1.2 billion of them conduct searches on Google every month.

And that's not all, especially in health care.

Seventy-two percent of users say that they looked online for health information within the last year. Seventy-six percent of patients use hospital sites and 52% of patients use health information sites.

When it comes to Internet users incorporating social media into their healthcare research, 90% of 18–24 year olds said that they trust medical information shared on social media. Forty-one percent of patients said social media would affect their choice of a specific doctor, hospital or medical clinic. Inbound marketing tactics connect you with these potential patients.

*reference:*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.stateofinbound.com/>

## Grow Your Brand's Credibility

Eighty-three percent of people will recommend a brand that they trust, 82% will use their products and services and 78% will give its new products and services a chance. To build trust, use your marketing channels to educate people, encourage two-way communication and provide ongoing value. Implement inbound marketing techniques like content marketing, lead nurturing and social media to nurture prospective patients through a process that allows them to make safe and comfortable commitment decisions.

## Generate More Qualified Leads

Conversions from well-executed inbound marketing campaigns can be as high as 14.6% as opposed to traditional practices, which only convert 1.7% of the time. When executing strategic marketing campaigns, you can foster prospective patients until they are ready to make a final decision.

## The "Trust" Factor

Inbound marketing builds trust with your audience through social media, blogging and SEO.

### Search Engine Optimization

SEO is an important factor in attracting web traffic and generating leads. The majority of Internet users never scroll past the first page of search engine results. If your business is not on the first page of results, it is likely to be overlooked.

Unique and quality content is key in increasing overall website traffic, and it also positions your business as an authority. For more on important SEO practices, read our marketing guide on 7 important SEO trends for 2016.

Important SEO tools like Google AdWords and Google Trends identify keywords and searches that are relevant to your industry. There are plenty of other tools out there that let you determine how your audience searches for information.

For example, if someone in Toronto is in need of dental implants, their search will look like "Dental implants in Toronto." Similarly, someone looking for information on how long a breast augmentation may take to heal will search "breast augmentation how long to heal." By writing articles listing these search queries as titles and blog headers, you ensure that the keywords are being used as strategically as possible since Google ranks headers and titles higher.

### Blogging

Businesses that blog generate 126% more leads than their non-blogging competitors. Blogging is essential to your SEO strategy. Every time you produce a new post for your blog, you are creating fresh content for your website. The more pages your site contains, the more pages Google bots will crawl and index: this increases the chances of consumers finding your page. As more visitors find your website, the more they will share on social networks, which in turn will bring more visitors to your blog. Attention breeds attention.

Not only will you see more traffic, but blogging allows your business to showcase your own knowledge and expertise in your field, which develops trust between you and your audiences. Consumers will visit your website repeatedly if you are producing helpful information.

Use all of your SEO keyword research to understand what your audience is searching for online and turn it into blog topics. Your objective is to provide value through an answer to a question or a solution to a problem. Questions to ask yourself: What questions can I answer for my audience? What solutions can I provide? What is my area of expertise? What problems and challenges does my audience face that I can help with?

### **Social Media**

It seems like everyone is on at least one social media network, making it a key tool in connecting with your audience. Social media has approximately 1.44 billion monthly active users. Facebook is the most popular, followed by YouTube, Instagram and Twitter; Snapchat has exploded with a younger demographic of Internet users, and LinkedIn is continuously growing as a professional networking site. Google+ still has its place in the social media world, particularly as an active presence on there helps improve SEO, and new and exciting platforms continue to emerge. Users spend significant time sharing and engaging on these networks and it can be an excellent opportunity for your business to get in on the conversation.

When creating content for social media, it is important to use the 80/20 rule: 80% of your content should be of value to your audience while the other 20% should be about you and promotion of your services. Make sure you link back to your own website but also other industry websites with relevant content that your audience may enjoy.

Don't feel that you need to be on every social media channel to be effective. Focus on two or three channels that make the most sense for your business.

Many social platforms offer built-in analytics tools to evaluate the type of content that receives the most engagement and at what times throughout the day. Make sure you go over these analytics frequently and adjust your social media strategy based on what you learn about audience behaviour.

### **A Responsive Website**

In 2013, one third of patients used a mobile-responsive website to book an appointment, and physicians frequently used their websites in office to help their patients with additional information, and/or to access patient information no matter their location. With a significant increase in mobile usage and sales over desktop usage and sales, businesses must consider making the transition to a responsive website.

A responsive website is designed to adapt to the size of the screen it is being viewed on. Depending on the aspect ratio of a browser, content is easier to view and navigate through and offers your users a better digital experience.

Finally, managing a mobile-friendly site allows businesses to focus on developing a single, strong web strategy in order to increase visibility, leads and conversions, all while keeping costs significantly low. For more on mobile usage in health care, check out our blog.

### **Offers and Landing Pages**

In order to effectively generate leads, you need to capture their contact information. Landing pages are a vital component of any inbound marketing strategy. A targeted landing page allows you to collect user information in exchange for something of high value. This is typically a longer piece of content such as a guide (like this one), a webinar or a visual presentation. The user completes a form on said landing page and is automatically added to your business' database as a new lead.

Keep landing pages focused on a single topic as opposed to multiple offers. Avoid confusion by offering your audience a clear path on what to do next: "download the guide" or "sign up for the webinar."

Use a strong headline to attract users to your form. Make it clear what you are offering, what problem you are addressing and why it is important to your audience. For example, a dental implant office in Toronto offers a free dental implant guide with relevant information for those wishing to know more about dental implants. The guide answers key questions and patient concerns, providing valuable information and highlighting the dentist's expertise in exchange for contact information.

## Lead Nurturing

Fifty percent of leads are qualified but not yet ready to make a final commitment to your business. Just because a user responded to an offer on your website does not mean that he or she will come back. Lead nurturing strategy, or marketing automation, allows your business to send automated emails to a lead in order to further nurture his or her journey through the sales funnel. Marketing automation is a key tool when maintaining engagement with a user who has shown interest and may need to be reminded of your business.

A good place to start is to design an inbound marketing strategy for each of your lifecycle stages, broken up by buyer persona. This allows you to create and serve relevant content to each buyer persona. If your audience takes action during this workflow, move them to a different list — you don't want to show continuing nurturing content to someone ready to make that final commitment.

An inbound marketing strategy would look something like this:

**STEP 1** — Web visitor becomes a subscriber

**STEP 2** — Subscriber receives a weekly newsletter

**STEP 3** — Subscriber clicks through newsletter and converts on an offer  
(\*see landing pages)

**STEP 4** — Subscriber lifecycle is upgraded to Lead

**STEP 5** — Lead is entered into next nurturing workflow

Lead nurturing emails get 4–10 times the response rate of stand-alone email blasts and have lower unsubscribe rates than traditional email marketing practices. Remember not to send all of your leads the same generic email information. Ensure that you have segmented each email according to their lifecycle within the workflow.

As previously mentioned, a local dental implant office offers its audience a free dental implant guide. Users who download the book might then receive emails that address the benefits of dental implants and invite them to an informational seminar.

Finally...

Inbound marketing is an involved process that requires businesses to cater to the needs of their consumers. By using the tactics in this guide, you can promote your content on the right channels and position yourself as a trustworthy industry leader. Give your audience what they want and they will come back for more.

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