



A Guide to Marketing Automation



B2B Marketing Automation



An Intro to B2B Marketing Automation

Discover inbound marketing automation

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The New Lead Generation System

All companies need regular new orders to survive. If your business is to grow, you probably need new customers too.

You may have an online presence, you may employ salespeople or perhaps you advertise in trade publications, or attend trade shows and events?

If your salespeople cold call, you may have noticed that results aren't what they used to be. Advertising in traditional publications doesn't work like it used to either.

Perhaps you rely on referrals? Referrals are great but are not a reliable, scalable source of regular business enquiries. You are dealing with intelligent people – specialists and experts who know what they want – and you are selling them complicated solutions with long sales/buying cycles.

Your buyers are empowered by 24/7 access to online information and these bright people now self-educate at the point of purchase – to the extent that they often no longer need or want to talk to salespeople.

Only 29% of people want to talk to a salesperson to learn more about a product, while 62% will consult a search engine.



68% of B2B Customers Prefer to Research Independently Online - Meaning the Battleground for reaching B2B clients is clearly online.


This is the Era of the Empowered Buyer

Most businesses still fail to recognise that the power has irrevocably shifted from the seller to the buyer. They are stuck in an outdated paradigm. Over time the switch from outbound to inbound marketing has been profound. We are now in a new era.

This is the era of the empowered buyer.

- 93% of all B2B purchases start with an Internet search.*
- 84% of buyers engage in online information consumption and education.*
- By a factor of 3:1, B2B buyers say that gathering information online on their own is superior to interacting with a sales representative.*
- 59% of buyers explicitly indicate that they do not want to interact with a salesperson as their primary source of research.*

* According to Dan Tyre and Todd Hockenberry's 2018 book *Inbound Organisation*.



This whitepaper aims to introduce the concept of '*inbound marketing*'– the new system your business must adopt in order to adapt to the way today's buyer's research and select new products and services – and to introduce the benefits of *marketing automation* technology.

Introducing the Inbound Methodology

Inbound ('content') marketing is about understanding your customers, their aspirations and their challenges.

The key is helping your customers rather than selling to them – understanding exactly how customers research their purchases and then investing in creating engaging, helpful, and educational content which is very easy for them to find when they need it.

Inbound marketing effectively eliminates the most time-consuming and low-value activity in the sales process (cold-calling and prospecting) and replaces it with an investment in content creation.

The medium-term result is warmer, more relevant, inbound enquiries from better-educated prospects.



**This is not Magic.
This is a System.**

There is a process for creating a predictable flow of inbound enquiries from content. This is not a quick fix, but sellers now provide toolkits for managing and automating this marketing process, which makes it easier.

The most important thing to recognise is that a consistent commitment to creating high-quality, helpful, online content is now essential to building a predictable, systemised approach to lead generation and sales.

"Content Marketing costs 62% less than Traditional Marketing and generates about three-times as many leads"
- (Demand Metric)

With an inbound marketing strategy, you will increase your ROI in the medium term and put clear distance between yourselves and your competitors – especially the ones who focus on offline marketing or short-term tactics.

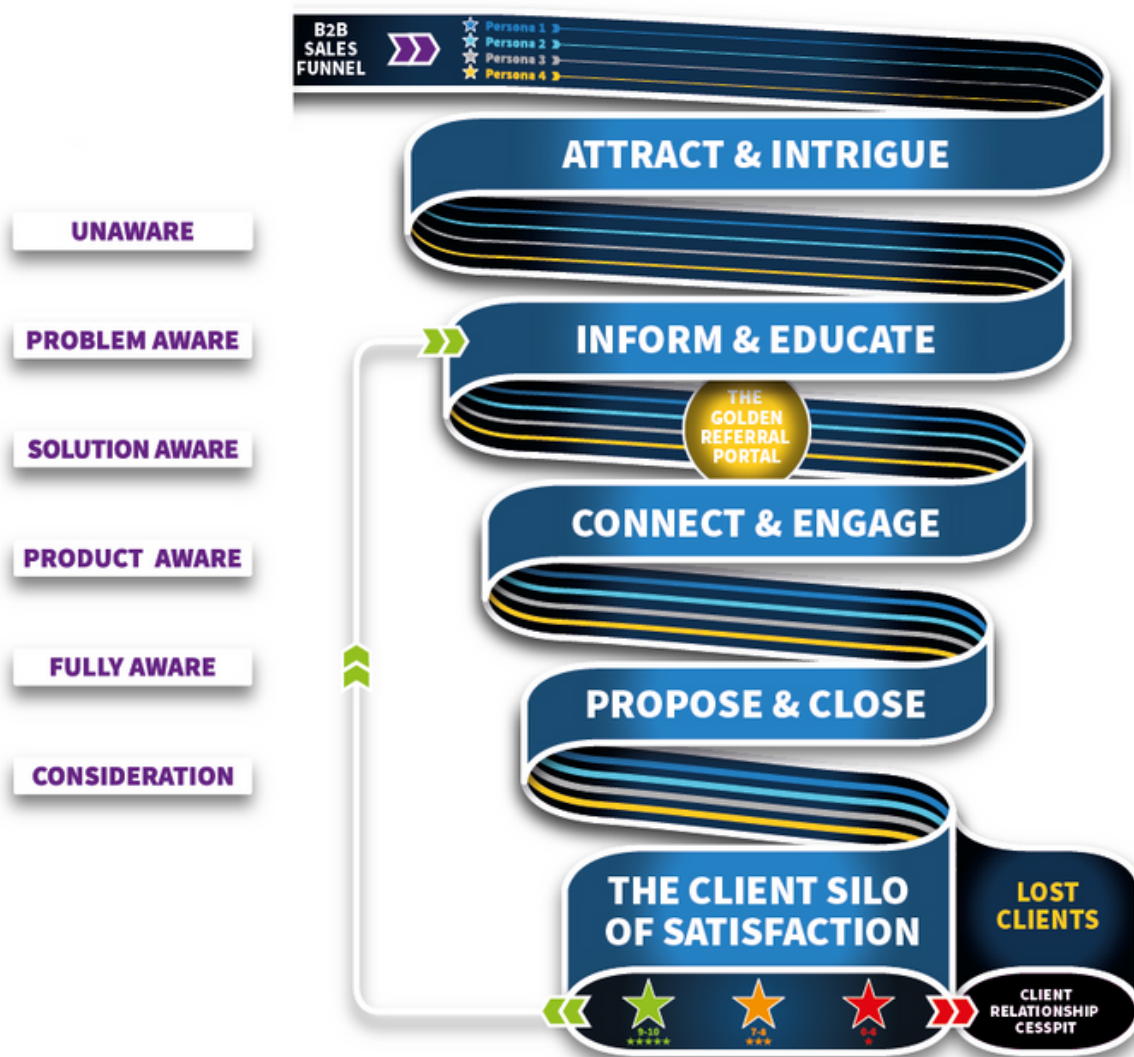
Inbound marketing is an intelligent approach to understanding the modern, empowered buyer. This is all about building a strategic, competitive advantage based on your ability to help buyers understand their needs and their choices.

"Companies that automate lead management see a 10% or more increase in revenue in six to nine months' time."
- (Strategic IC)

We no longer talk about your sales cycle.

We talk about your buyer's journey.

If you are still thinking 'sales cycle' when your competitors are thinking about the buyer's journey, you are engaging in outdated thinking and you run a very real risk of being out maneuvered.



This whitepaper will address specific challenges your company will face when starting your journey to the new marketing paradigm and how you can overcome these obstacles while blending the best of what you have now into your new, buyer-centric marketing strategy.

Getting the Right Traffic to your Website

Most businesses already have a business website. Some worry about how much traffic their website attracts but traffic alone is a vanity measurement metric – like focusing on turnover rather than profit.

Getting The Right Traffic To Your Website

The goal is to attract the right visitors and for the right visitors to qualify themselves as leads. Traditional marketing tactics rely on outreach – meaning you must make efforts to interrupt the potential customer and pitch to them – whereas Inbound makes sure that the leads are coming to you.

Creating relevant, up-to-date content via your website gives bright people researching your field a reason to engage with your business online instead of your competitors.

Your prospects are searching for valuable information to help them in their buying decisions right now. Focusing on producing significant volumes of quality content can make a huge difference to the volume, but more importantly, the quality of your website visitors.

With the right content, inbound marketing brings the right visitors to your website.

The Three Pillars of Inbound Marketing are:

Attract Convert



Delight



Which is ideally how you want your website to work.

Your job is to think about:

- What problems are your customers having?
- How can your products/services resolve these challenges?
- What issues can you help with whether they buy from you right now or not?
- What are their buying triggers?

You need to see the content you create as an educational tool for your prospects and offer them relevant, helpful information. It is key that your content remains focused on helping the prospect solve problems – rather than pitching your services.

Inbound marketing blurs the line between helping and selling. It helps you boost the traffic to your website and establishes you as a thought leader.

This positions you and your business as someone that your prospects can trust.

When your prospects see how helpful and valuable your information is, they may take the next key step. They may cross the anonymity threshold and reveal who they are and what they are interested in.

Once your prospects have subscribed to your content, you have permission to deliver a stream of useful information to them over weeks, months or even years. This process will both educate and inform while building the relationship with your business.

Over time the right website visitors will return time and again to consume quality content – content which is problem-and-solution focused, straight-talking, accurate, useful and completely devoid of hyperbole and sales spiel.



"Companies that published 16+ blog posts per month got almost 3.5X more traffic than companies that published between 0-4 monthly posts."

(HubSpot, 2019)

Building your Brand and Brand Awareness

Few brands get to be household names. But to be a successful business you may not need to. You just need to become the leader in your market segment(s).

Your goal is to build the value of your brand. Once upon a time building a brand might have been a recipe for spending millions. Inbound marketing is a far more targeted approach, however.

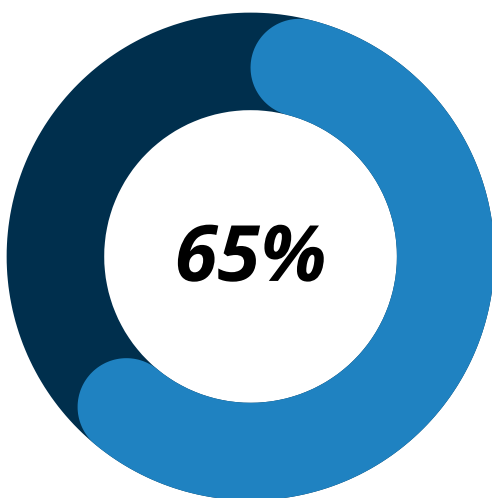
Your brand value is built through building trust within your community. Brand awareness is crucial for any marketing strategy but especially for companies like yours because, in your market and your community, trust is the currency that matters most.

Being seen to grow a network of followers in any market is a sure sign of trust. You become credible when your followers and evangelists share your thoughts and want to be seen to be associated with your content.

Inbound marketing means creating quality content and promoting it through different distribution channels:

- Creating useful blog posts that resonate with the audience.
- Publishing insightful guides that solve problems.
- Designing Whitepapers that get to the heart of an issue.
- Making videos that explain and educate.
- Designing informative infographics
- Building interactive tools and calculators that empower your customers to evaluate the impact of potential decisions accurately.

You are offering valuable information to your prospects which means that they will share it with their colleagues, associates, and friends – which helps you by building your business and brand reputation as a firm that can be trusted.



Nearly 65% of B2B marketers' content marketing programs are more successful than a year ago.

(Source: Content Marketing Institute)

Lead Generation

Every business could do with more leads. The real challenge isn't creating leads however – it's creating well educated, well qualified, warm leads.

Inbound marketing and marketing automation can help with this challenge. We've talked about attracting more potential 'right customers' to your website but how do you separate the leads from the visitors?

Using content offers or gated content will help you distinguish the people who are really interested in your services from casual browsers.

B2B sales cycles can be long, from a few months or even years. Why not make sure you are talking to the right people now by creating irresistible content for the early stage of their buying journeys?

A content offer is a foundational piece of content – typically a guide, whitepaper, free audit, or tool - you would promote with the aim of encouraging people to cross the anonymity threshold to reveal their name and disclose contact information such as their email address.

Nobody likes to hand over their email address if they believe that their inbox will be full of spammy, promotional rubbish for weeks afterward.

For this reason, it pays to build trust by providing real value, before asking for an email address.

Handing over your email address is something nobody does lightly. It has to be a win/win for both parties. In order to feel safe crossing the anonymity threshold your prospect must feel that the value your content offer contains is significant and trust that you will not become a pest as a result.

Creating high-quality content for your content offer is time-consuming.

Once this investment is made, promoting your content offer is critical.

It's an Investment

Once this investment is made, promoting your content offer is critical.

If your content offer is a whitepaper that can be downloaded from a landing page, then the whitepaper can be advertised, promoted by email or broken down into several smaller blog posts (samples that lead to a landing page for the opportunity to download more).

These blog posts can in turn be promoted by social media posts in LinkedIn, Facebook Twitter, or any other relevant platform.

Lead Nurturing

You are extremely unlikely to find a prospect who wants to buy the first time that they speak to you.

We have already identified that we must work to separate leads from random website visitors, but every lead will be in a different place when they contact you. Some will be further along their buying journey than others.

You may employ people to follow up leads manually but how do they know how close to becoming a customer each lead really is?

Unless they have modern technology at their disposal, the answer is almost certainly "They don't". The adverts people respond to, the social media posts they read, how they behave on your website, the blogs they read, the emails they open (and the emails they don't), the links they click on all give you clues about how far through their journey they are and what information they might find useful next.

If your salespeople don't have this information they can't know what each lead needs to move closer to becoming a customer.

They are selling 'Blind'.

Legacy CRM systems are often completely disconnected from all of this information. They rely on a human to interrogate a customer and record the information they get back – something salespeople are notoriously bad at.

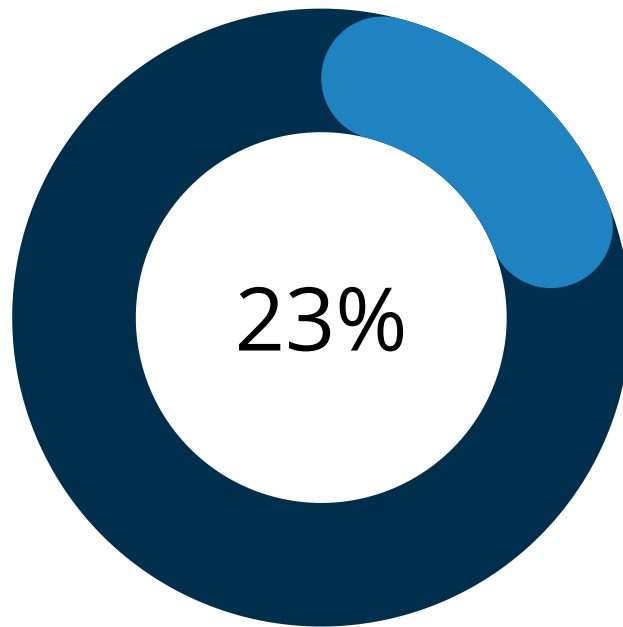
This kind of thinking comes from an old-fashioned paradigm – a time before buyers used the internet to research as heavily as they do now.

As a result, it is fairly typical to have a huge array of marketing tools, each providing a small part of the information required and no single system being able to take advantage of all of the information.

With marketing automation, you can use automated systems and strategic follow-up to nurture the leads without the fear of losing touch. You can also do it without having to rely on a salesperson to remember to follow up.

A marketing automation system will know if a prospect opened an email, if they visited a landing page, if they downloaded a whitepaper (and if they didn't).

Customised strategies can be triggered automatically by these actions. If someone's behaviour makes it clear they are interested in a specific product, you can deliver a follow-up campaign tailored to that product without requiring an employee to remember to do it.



Nurtured leads experience a 23% shorter sales cycle

Source: Customer Experience Matrix

Once the automation is set up, lead nurturing systems can run unattended while you can focus on other aspects of your business or marketing. When your lead shows signs that their interest is deepening or that they have self-educated to the point where a conversation would be appropriate, your lead nurturing system can identify that behaviour and schedule a call for a salesperson to follow up this warm, educated lead in person.

Intelligence

Sometimes salespeople can find it hard to follow up effectively with a prospect if they don't know what they are interested in and where that person is in their buying journey.

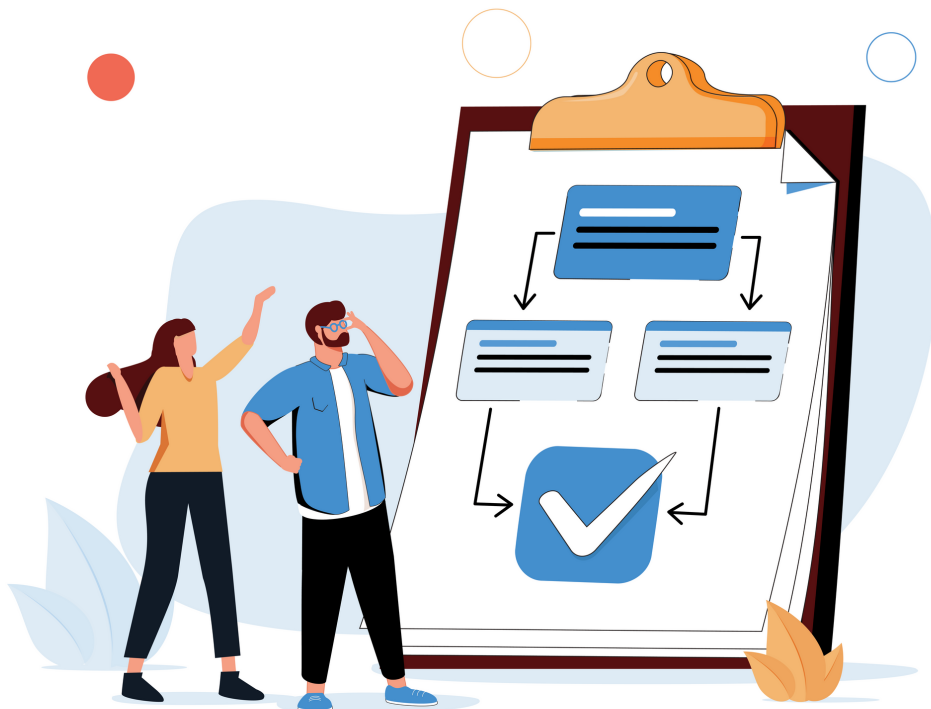
Leads can feel cold to an uninformed sales person, even if they have been interacting with your marketing for weeks or even months. As discussed, your sales people could be selling 'blind'?

Marketing automation can empower your salespeople and make them so much more effective.

By tracking every contact's activity on your website from the moment they land on it and by knowing which pages the prospect visited and when, your team can now see opportunities that were previously hidden.

This means every call can be personalised to a far greater level.

As the relationship deepens, you will be providing your sales people with new insights by showing them which blog posts the prospect has read, which guides they have downloaded and which emails they have opened and read.



Sales Enablement

Many sales teams spend a lot of time on the phone with unqualified leads, speaking to people who aren't ready to buy – which is very time consuming and inefficient. This time could be spent with more qualified leads instead.

Some buyers will move far more quickly than others through their discovery, research and decision-making journey. The secret is in knowing who is reaching the latter stages of the journey and engaging at the right time.

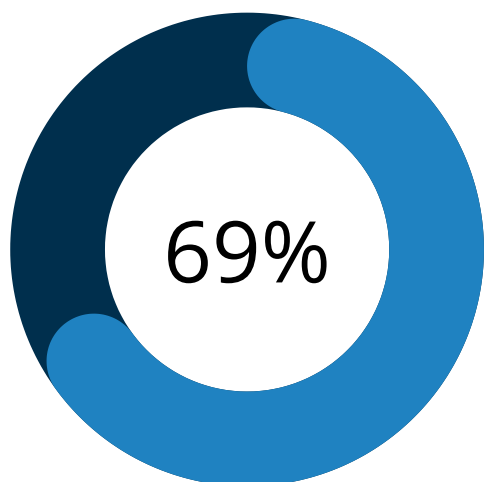
The inbound marketing methodology – combined with marketing automation technology – provides insights to bring to the surface those most responsive to your marketing and nurturing. Once these educated, warm leads have been established, more technology can be brought into play to help salespeople become even more effective.

Inbound also makes your offline marketing more valuable by empowering you to turn lukewarm leads into warm prospects and then buyers – across platforms over time.

Automation doesn't have to end once a warm lead is engaged by your sales team.

The ability to use automated follow-up processes (and workflows) means your salespeople can automate more of their work. They can become much more effective.

New tools enable salespeople to interact in chat sessions, send follow-up email sequences automatically, to know when their emails are opened and to embed video and other rich content easily and quickly in these communications.



69% of marketers say converting leads is their top priority.

(HubSpot, 2017)

Bridging the Online/Offline Gap

This new approach to marketing may seem daunting. Creating and organising content for your buyers and then marketing that content may require a significant investment of time.

No matter what the return on that investment – and it is typically a significant return – you may well be thinking about the marketing you do today.

Some of it still works (to varying degrees) and you don't want to transition away from the old ways immediately, even if the results aren't what they used to be.

Moving to an inbound model of lead generation is not something you do overnight.

Inbound marketing can co-exist with traditional offline tactics to improve results

If you place an advert in an industry magazine and someone sees that ad but they aren't ready to buy yet, what are the odds of them saving the advert and coming back to you in a couple of months' time when they are ready to buy? Not very high.

Inbound marketing can build a bridge between this tried and tested (albeit increasingly less effective) old-school approach and your new inbound thinking.

Suppose your ad gave your prospects an online place to go to find more information – such as a special landing page on your website?

You could make an offer to these visitors in exchange for them disclosing their email address and permission to send additional information that would be of value.

This would then allow you to follow up with an automated process over time in order to nurture your new lead with valuable and relevant content..

Businesses that nurture leads make 50% more sales at a cost that's 33% less than leads that aren't nurtured.

Source: Hubspot - State of Inbound 2018



39% of Marketers say providing the ROI of their marketing activities is their top marketing challenge. (HubSpot, 2018)

Traditional marketing is hard to measure. How can you improve your marketing if you can't measure the success of the various tactics you use?

Even digital marketing presents challenges. Many businesses have adopted multiple disparate digital marketing and measurement technologies over time and still found that it is time consuming and very hard to prove what is working and what isn't.

Most people don't like things that can't be measured and improved. Neither do we. Too often marketing is seen as an almost random series of disconnected promotional events. It has to become a co-ordinated, systematic and professional process. Inbound marketing and marketing automation can help with this.

Our goal with inbound marketing and marketing automation is to build a process-driven system to produce a steady, scalable flow of warm and well-educated leads.

This system can be broken down into component steps that can be measured and the whole process analysed for improvement opportunities.

When properly implemented, marketing automation should easily provide insights that allow you to understand the relationship between the different parts of the marketing and sales processes.



Each stage is measurable. By adopting the inbound methodology and marketing automation technology you can:

- See how well your promotional activity attracts attention to your content.
- Measure how well your content leads visitors to engage further and how many choose to trust you with their email address.
- Monitor how well your email follow-ups are received and how many further visits to blogs or website pages are generated as a result.
- Discover how many whitepapers are downloaded and even how many links in those whitepapers are clicked on as the document is read.
- Quantify how many sales opportunities have been created as a result of these interactions.
- Easily split test landing pages, calls to action (CTA's) and emails to continually improve results.
- Segment campaigns to give more granular reporting.
- And finally, you can measure how many customers and how much business these activities have generated.

Marketing automation tracks all this information for you from the minute the buyer visits your website to the moment they decide to buy from you.

You can easily see what is working and you can use it to continually optimise your marketing.



Next Steps

Now you have read about the impact that these systems can have on your sales and marketing and your business, it's time to do something about it and start setting up your own inbound system.

Most of your competitors haven't bought into this strategy yet, so why not create a competitive advantage for your business?

No matter how complicated your products or services are, we can explore with you how to integrate inbound marketing and marketing automation into your marketing strategy.

A great way to take the next step is to invite yourself along to one of our marketing automation breakfast events where you can join a small group of like-minded (and non-competing) businesses to discuss how marketing automation could work for you.

Visit our website and check out our events page for more details.

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