

KEO Marketing MARKETER'S GUIDE



FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF INBOUND MARKETING



Insight
Selling

EDUCATION MARKETING



Inbound
Marketing

LEAD GENERATION



Outbound
Marketing

ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING



Content
Marketing

MOBILE • LOCAL • SOCIAL



Marketing
Automation

LEAD NURTURING



Four Essential Elements of Inbound Marketing

Inbound marketing is one of the most effective means of lead generation in the online world. It is a strategic method of drawing customers to a company's products and services through providing content where and when the prospects want it and then nurturing them through the sales process.

According to Hubspot.com, 92.3 percent of the companies that adopted an inbound marketing strategy showed an increase in website traffic and 40 percent of them saw an increase of at least 75 percent.



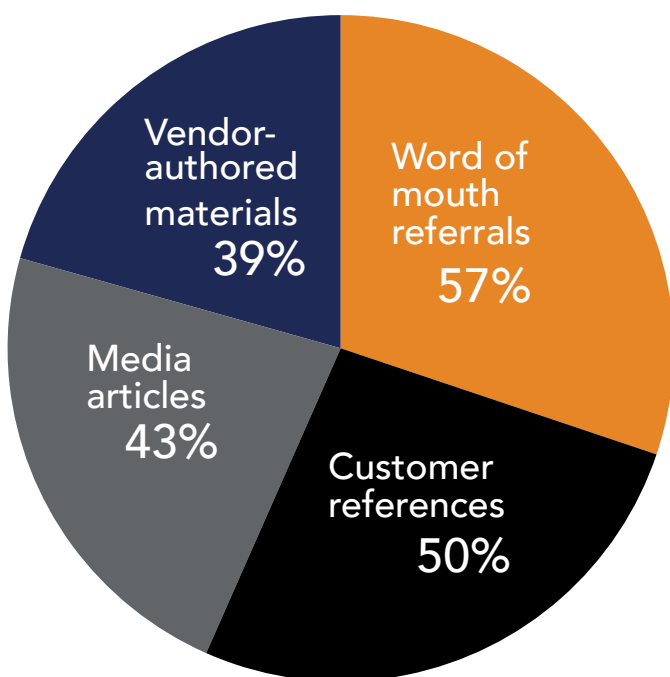
But there is more to inbound marketing than merely creating a different style of content. It is a complete integrated method of outreach, nurturing and follow-up that works with the prospects. Here are four elements of an inbound marketing strategy that will help your inbound campaign be a success.

1. A MULTI-FACETED OUTREACH PLAN

A business to business (B2B) business must develop a multi-pronged plan to reach the prospects that have been defined. Creating a few blog posts and eBooks and then posting them to your website is not enough anymore because most businesses are doing that. With more sophisticated search engines analyzing every bit of data for ranking criteria and relevance, just cranking out more content does not produce good results. The outreach must be more strategic. It has to reach the target audience both directly and indirectly; meaning, through other forms of communication such as their friends/associates, PR, third-party articles, handed to them by salespeople, etc.

A good outreach plan exploits the methods through which audience members prefer to receive information and utilizes the multitude of touchpoints to reach the target audience from many different directions.

Hubspot.com recently performed a study of the sources of information that principals within a B2B business (CxOs, VPs, Directors, etc.) relied upon when making purchase decisions. The ranking of informational priority breaks out like this:

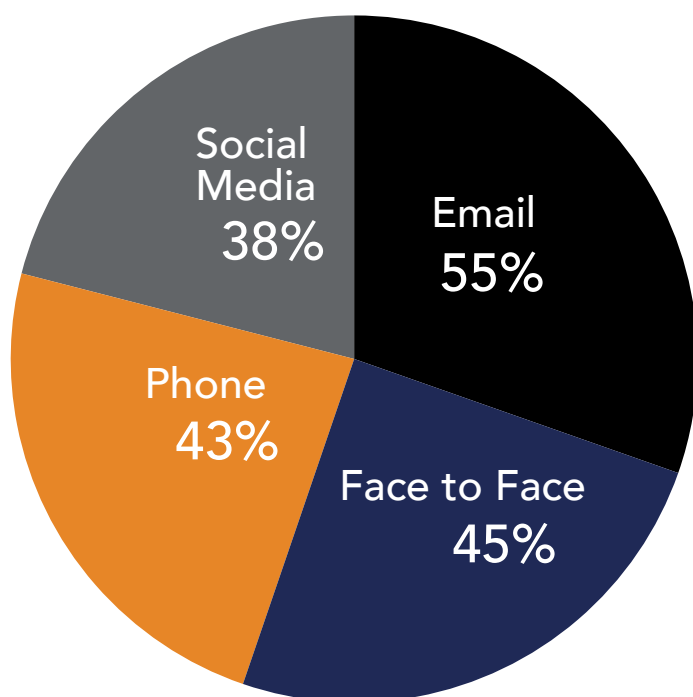


Word-of-mouth, customer references and media articles are highest and vendor-authored materials come in fourth in priority. This means that a multi-faceted outreach program is imperative.

An impactful B2B outreach strategy must connect with the targeted audience, but also must:

- **connect in a meaningful way with the audience's references**
- **stimulate the customers to talk about it**
- **be of such interest that the media will refer to it in their articles/communication vehicles**

This includes the methodology for outreach. The same study asked what method B2B principals used to communicate the most. It broke out like this:



This indicates that an important part of the communications plan is follow-up. A good lead-nurturing plan is part of the inbound marketing strategy and it includes sending out periodic emails. If email is the most popular form of communication within CxOs, then value-filled emails are a good way to communicate and ultimately achieve conversion.

2. A BROADER CONTENT-CREATION STRATEGY

Content creation must evolve into a methodology that incorporates a large number of methods for creating content. This method should do at least two things:

- Produce a steady stream of content so that the search engines rank it and the target audience finds it valuable and
- Influencers become sourcers and contributors

It must include:

Created



This is original content that is created from scratch. This included content items such as eBooks, blog posts, infographics, articles and slideshares.

Collaborative



A topic is chosen and some of the best thought leaders are invited to help by contributing their input to the content.

Curated



This is “round-up” style content. A topic is chosen based upon external reference (such as an article) and then the content is created based upon that the research. This includes references and links to the resources on the web.

Legacy



This involves repurposing content that already exists into different assets. For example, video or audio recorded at conventions can be turned into articles.

Develop a collaborative content-creation strategy.

Depending on the size of the business, content-creation becomes a process created in silos; different groups create different parts of content and none of it connects with any other. This is seen when, in multi-divisional corporations, product collateral is created by the product experts while web site content is created by the web developers in another building in another state. As B2B companies must maintain a level of brand consistency, the content cannot be so different that it confuses or misleads the audience. Therefore, managers must develop a set of collaborative-departmental policies and processes to create consistent content.

A collaborative strategy must involve discussions with stakeholders from different content teams in order to produce a core vision for content strategy and a practical framework and supporting tools for implementing content strategy. The result will be a consistency of content which can then be distributed across the content outlets and can be adapted to fit the vehicles from websites to downloads to mobile devices.

3. A CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THAT ENHANCES THE CONTENT

Care must be taken to ensure the customer has a good experience as well as good content. If content is the “steak”, the experience associated with the content is the “sizzle”. Prospects do not recommend just your content; they recommend the complete experience which includes the content.

The days when all you had to do was create content are over. With mobile access and online advertising the viewer is influenced by the experience surrounding the content as well as the content itself. Therefore a B2B business will want to ensure the experience is a positive one.



Remember back to the first point: The highest priority method that important B2B people use is word-of-mouth referrals. Prospects who experience a high amount of frustration or obstacles when attempting to read an article (pop-up ads, lengthy sign-up sheets, etc.) are less likely to recommend the content to their colleagues. To see an example, visit any online news site to experience pop-up ads and auto-start videos.

In addition, the website experience to which the content points must be visitor-friendly. Directing the visitor to a specific landing page that delivers the correct information with a good experience will produce forwards and referrals to other important people within the target business. The experience is multi-dimensional. It includes speed of loading, mobile-friendliness and relevance of content.

4. A MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH TO SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Search engine optimization (SEO) continually evolves in order to produce better results for the searcher. Google made significant updates to the algorithm in recent years including a mobile-only preference, local search optimization and a high-speed preference. An inbound marketing strategy that optimizes content for the search engines as well as continuously monitors changes and makes adaptations will positively impact the results.

Moz.com, one of the biggest SEO consulting companies, recently conducted a survey of marketing professionals specializing in search engine optimization.

Findings that will impact SEO include:

Mobile Speed

According to Moz.com, Google has indicated that site speed is one of the signals used by its algorithm to rank pages. Pages with a longer load time tend to have higher bounce rates and lower average time on page, which will impact the search engine ranking. In addition, mobile users expect fast mobile websites.



** Pages with a longer load time tend to have higher bounce rates.*



**Pages with a longer load time tend to have lower average time on page*



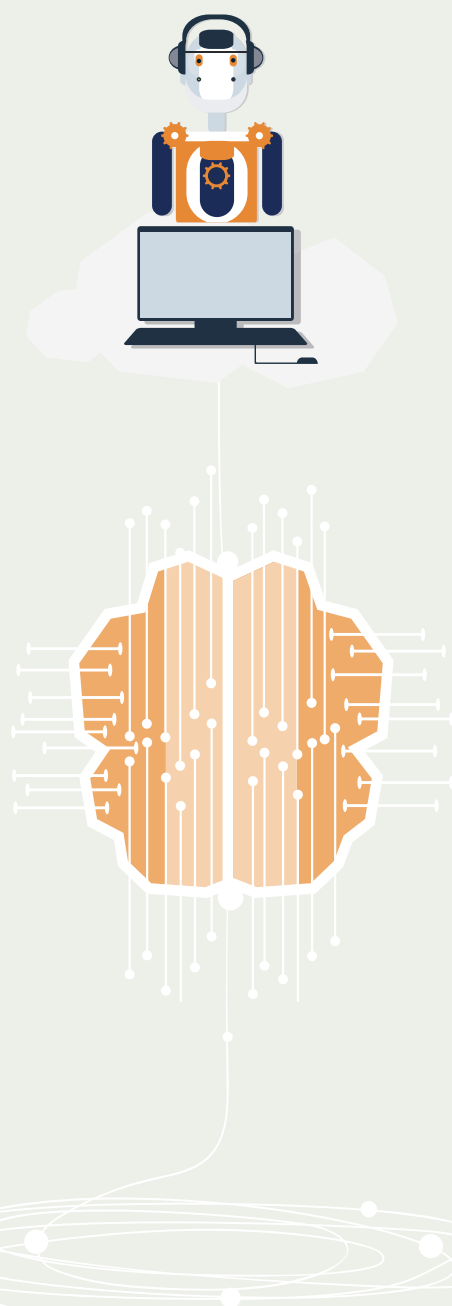
Visitors tend to abandon websites if those sites take too long to load, with 40 percent of visitors abandoning the site if it takes longer than three seconds to load. mobile devices.

Ranking Indicators Expand Beyond Keywords

Ranking criteria for displaying Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) are no longer limited to keywords, titles and description. In 2017 many features such as snippets, news, images, videos, product reviews and articles will contribute to the ranking of a page in the search engines. In addition, voice search and conversational search will impact methods of finding pages. More people are using voice search on their mobile devices, which means that optimizing for it requires longer keyword phrases.

Artificial Intelligence

The use of machine learning in search engines will impact search engine optimization (SEO) strategies such as local search, content marketing and optimizing for conversational searching. In 2015 Google introduced RankBrain which is a machine-learning artificial intelligence system that interprets the searches that people submit in order to find pages best fit the intent of the search. As more pages are clicked upon, RankBrain modifies its ranking algorithm to produce better results in the future.



CONCLUSION



A strong inbound marketing strategy is an essential element in a B2B marketing plan. Prospects are performing much more research online before contacting potential vendors. Focusing on a process of providing valuable content that educates, informs and entices prospects to visit your website and then nurtures them through the sales funnel will produce more clients at a lower cost.

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About KEO Marketing

KEO Marketing is an award-winning business-to-business (B2B) inbound marketing agency in Phoenix. The marketing agency develops and executes successful marketing strategies and plans that significantly grow business. Some of the world's largest brands have depended on KEO Marketing for marketing programs that deliver tangible and substantial results.

Led by a team of experienced marketing experts, KEO Marketing specializes in B2B marketing strategies that deliver results. Some of these solutions include website design, search engine marketing and optimization, online advertising, social media, mobile marketing, local marketing and more.

For more information and to request a complimentary marketing audit visit keomarketing.com.

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