# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put Customers First for a Bigger Pay Off</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy</strong></td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a Magnetic Inbound Marketing Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idea Generation</strong></td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Contagious Content Topics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Writing</strong></td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Marry Emotion to Reason</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Distribution</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get Your Stories Seen &amp; Shared</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content Repurposing</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Generate Quality Leads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Media</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Win Fans &amp; Influence People</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEO</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimise Your SEO &amp; Future-Proof Your Website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEO</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand &amp; Implement Technical Elements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow Your Email Marketing Database in A Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metrics</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Must-Measure Inbound Marketing Metrics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue Your Inbound Learning Journey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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What is Inbound Marketing?

Inbound marketing is marketing that provides value to prospects and customers based on data-led insights. It encompasses a wide range of customer-pleasing tactics including content marketing that entertains and teaches, SEO that helps users find what they need, social media that builds relationships and metrics that provide invaluable consumer insights.

Inbound Marketers put their customers first, knowing that big profits will follow.

Inbound Marketing Means Big Business:

- **Generate Leads:** Businesses that blog receive 67% more leads than those who don’t.
- **Maximise Your ROI:** Marketers who prioritize inbound marketing are 13x more likely to enjoy positive ROI.
- **Receive More Links & Traffic:** Companies who blog receive 97% more links to their website.
- **Build Trust:** Blogs have been rated as the 5th most trusted source for accurate online information.

*This Ebook Will Help Your Business:*

- Learn how to create and implement an inbound marketing strategy from start to finish.
- Adopt customer-first thinking that helps you exceed your digital marketing objectives.
- Create content that increases your website traffic and helps attract quality leads.
- Get found by your ideal audience and create data-led and contextual messages.
- Keep your customers warmed up and engaged for when they’re ready to buy.
Email marketing, SEO, content creation, social media, influencer outreach, lead nurturing...Yes, inbound marketing encompasses them all. And let’s face it – that’s enough to inspire fear in the steeliest and most seasoned of digital marketers. With so many tactics to consider and too many leads to deliver it’s easy to lose focus of what you’re trying to achieve.

The 7 step process outlined in this chapter will help you deliver a customer-warming, prospect-loving strategy that’s achievable, realistic and bang on target.

1. Define Your Personas

Inbound marketing is all about your customers. The first step of your plan should, therefore, focus on understanding what makes your customers click, tick and get excited. Get to the heart of your customers’ thoughts, behaviors, problems, needs and desires by creating well-fleshed-out, fully-defined and real-to-life personas. Use HubSpot’s (free) Make My Persona Tool to create personas worth referencing.

2. Discover Your Customers’ Triggers

**Pain Points** – It is important to identify the pain points your customers experience and the problems they encounter to make them search for your product or service. This core insight alone can add true depth to your messages.

**Different Needs for Different Stages** – Not all of your customers have the same needs – some arrive at different points of the buying funnel. When mapping out your pain points it’s essential to add context by considering the needs and desires of your different customer types at each separate stage of the buying cycle.
3. Set Your Inbound Marketing Objectives

You will need to determine from the outset which inbound marketing objectives you would like your strategy to achieve. These should support and help you achieve both your digital marketing objectives and your business objectives. For example, if lead generation is the most important objective for your business, your inbound marketing plan should be centered around generating leads.

*Example objective:* ‘We’re going to generate 200 new leads in a quarter by attracting users to the blog via organic traffic.’

4. Create Your Content Marketing Strategy

Create a content marketing plan to form the beating heart of your inbound marketing strategy. This is how you will keep your customers engaged with your brand and nourished with rich and valuable information. This is how you will keep your name on their minds at the point when they’re ready, willing and able to buy.

**How to Create a Content Marketing Strategy:**

- **The Objectives** – Your content strategy objectives should be SMART and need to support your inbound marketing objectives. If your inbound marketing objective is lead generation, for example, your content strategy should certainly support this.

- **Competitor Analysis** – Monitor your competitor’s social media activity using a monitoring tool like Hootsuite. Sign up your competitor’s newsletter so you can partake in their lead nurturing campaigns and use a tool like Moz’s Open Site Explorer to track backlinks and discover how your competitors score on their overall SEO performance.

- **The Content** – First it’s important to define how your content will help your customers. Will it educate them? Inspire them? Entertain them? Then you can decide on the types of content you’ll create and the topics you’ll tackle. For example, will you concentrate solely on blogging or will you try video marketing and webinars?

- **Distribution** – It’s equally important to create a plan for distributing your content. Will you enlist the help of industry influencers or will you trial paid promotion options like LinkedIn advertising, Facebook and Twitter ads or third party platforms?
5. Define Your Lead Nurturing Plan
Automated email trigger campaigns and remarketing campaigns can provide the perfect means to nurture leads. It gives you the ideal opportunity to keep prospects engaged with your content, your brand and your mission. You can segment your lead database based on the action your prospects took to give you their details. You can then set about creating a series of tailored and relevant messages.

6. Establish Your Influencer Outreach Agenda
Building quality relationships with key industry influencers can help you propel the reach of your content marketing because these people hold significant reach and authority in your industry. They have already established trust and have hundreds of thousands of social media followers – followers who look just like your customers.

The Target List – Use a tool like BuzzSumo to help you identify and create an outreach list of potential influencer targets. Always give more than you take – offer value and lots of it well in advance of asking for anything back. Once you have established a true connection you can ask for a quick quote and a potential share in the politest and most humble manner possible.

Guest Blogging Plan – It’s also important to define your guest blogging approach at this stage. Research potential relevant and influential blogs in your niche and read the submission guidelines. Check out this guide ‘Influencer Cheat Sheet: How to Connect, Engage & Get What You Want’ for more tips on how to create your perfect pitch.

7. Decide How to Analyse & Report
Now that you have your inbound marketing plan in place you will need to decide upon the tools you’ll use to report on the progress of your objectives and the success of your KPIs. Will you, for example, use Google Analytics to track your goals and conversions? Will you use BuzzSumo to track the success of your content marketing and break down your shares by platform? Will you use Moz’s Open Site Explorer to monitor your SEO progress?
IDEA GENERATION:
Craft Contagious Content Topics

At some point every inbound marketer experiences that infuriating, fear inducing moment of nothing. Sure you have a few ideas for your next blog post but nothing strong enough to stir any emotion or action within your reader (yes, useless ideas). Below are just a few methods to use to help you concoct new ideas that resonate with readers.

1. Read an Industry Defining Book

Read an industry defining book to help you think in a different way and discover new and unique research for your niche topic. Think about it – everyone else in your industry is probably reading the same content, watching the same webinars and playing with the same old recycled seen-before ideas. You, on the other hand, will seek out new angles, research and case studies. Your readers will appreciate the extra effort you’ve gone to and you’ll notice a new richness and depth to your content.

Another Idea
Use Book Titles for Inspiration:

Take the name of a well known book and play on the words for your next blog post. For example in the past I’ve tried titles like ‘How to Win Fans & Influence People Through Selfless Social Media’ and ‘7 Habits of Highly Effective Digital Marketers’ which have performed quite well in terms of shares and blog traffic.
2. Use BuzzSumo for Inspiration

Find the Most Popular Content Types:

Buzzsumo is the content marketer’s ultimate best friend. There are quite a few ways you can use this to come up with content topics. Let’s explore them...

- **Trending Now** - Click on the ‘Trending Now’ section to discover the most popular blog posts for a variety of topics, including entertainment, tech, business, health, politics and more.

- **Most Shared** - Similar to the ‘Trending Now’ section, you can also use the ‘Most Shared’ section to identify the most popular posts written about a particular topic in terms of shares. Simply enter your keyword into the box provided and click ‘Search!’

- **Content Analysis** - Click on the ‘Content Analysis’ section and enter your domain name for a visual overview of how your content has performed to date. It contains invaluable information about what has worked for your brand. This includes what length of blog post works best, which topic type brings in the most shares and the most popular topic types that resonate with your audience. Perfect for concocting ideas based on data-led insights.

3. Talk to Your Sales Team

Your sales team are the ones who speak directly to your customers. It’s their jobs to understand your customers’ challenges and needs. So set some time aside to interview your team and ask them some well-thought-out questions that can help you get to know your target audience better and inspire some new customer-pleasing ideas.

Ask Your Sales Team These Questions to Gain New Insights & Ideas:

- What are the challenges our customers face?
- What problems do our customers want solved?
- What is the information our customers look for (not just the information about our products but also what industry advice do they seek)?
- Do you send content to prospects to help warm them up and add value? How do you select relevant pieces?
- Do you ever receive positive feedback?
- What kind of topics do prospects respond best to?

Need More Questions?

Read this blog post ‘7 Questions Marketers Should Be Asking Their Sales Reps’ to help you figure out more strategic questions to ask your sales team to help you craft customer-pleasing content.
Chapter 3

4. Use Google Analytics to Understand User Behaviour

A measurement tool like Google Analytics will give you a great insight into your users’ online behaviour and reading habits. You just need to know what you’re looking for to help you come up

5. Read Industry Reports & Identify Industry Challenges

One of my favorite ways for coming up with relevant content ideas is to keep an eye on industry reports that highlight specific problems – the problems that come up again and again, year after year, and yet, no one can seem to solve them. It’s a good bet that people in your industry will search Google for solutions to these problems. Set about trying to tackle these industry problems through your content – even is this means interviewing an expert in your field.

6. Attend an Industry Event

Another great way to come up with creative content ideas is to identify and attend quality industry events. Speakers often share their own experience so you can identify first hand what has worked and what hasn’t. Events allow you to pick up some new ideas for posts, along with tips, tricks, studies, stats and tools you can include within your blog posts. Keep a notebook at the next event you attend and jot down any quotes and tips you pick up along the way.

To Find Your Blog’s Most Popular Blog Posts Find the All Pages Path:

Behaviour >> Site Content >> All Pages

Filter to Display Your Blog Traffic Only:

Type in the Word Blog in the Box Provided and Click Search

Insights You’re Looking for to Inform Your Ideas:

Can you identify a pattern for your most popular post types? For example, is there a specific topic that performs particularly well? Or are there headline types that generate more traffic? For example, headlines with numbers in them or those including well-known influencer names may prove particularly popular for you. Find out and start thinking of ideas your customers will love.
CONTENT WRITING:
How to Marry Emotion to Reason

Sometimes life can suck the very zest out of you. Often people can turn into full-on zombies – lifeless, limp, zoned-out, weather-complaining, commuting-hating, what-is-this-life-anyway zombies. Your content need to make your readers feel again. Because your words aren’t just competing with your competitors’ – they’re battling against every single element of a busy, draining, need-to-be-inspired again life.

Your New Mission: Make your readers believe – twice. Once for the weight of your words and once for the shiver of your statements.

Learn how to tap into the art of persuasion and find that powerful balance between logic, emotion and credibility.

1. Subconscious Rules – How to Tap into Emotion:

People think they are rational creatures guided by rational thoughts and influenced by deeply logical arguments. Well people are wrong. Emotion shapes our decision-making process far more than the average ‘logical’ person would like to believe. Before you begin writing, consider the emotion you would like your readers to feel. If you want your readers to feel inspired, for example, ensure that each paragraph contains energy, excitement and urgency.
Tips for Tapping Into Emotion:

- **Create Stories** - Stories help people visualise and empathise with your tale.
- **Create Stars** - Let your readers envision themselves as the stars of your story – address their needs, create a familiar picture and solve their problems.
- **Address Problems** - Address real problems based on your target persona’s problems.
- **Offer Solutions** - The purpose of your content is to help your readers solve their problems – make them look smarter, more caring or more professional when they share your content with friends.
- **Share** - Share your personal story or experience to provide inspiration for your readers and lets them know that you understand their plight or predicament.
- **Access Emotion** - Tap into your own emotion while writing – if you, as a writer, feel excited you will have an easier time creating excitement within your readers.
- **Mirror Language** - Adopt your target persona’s tone while writing – choose the words your target personas would choose.

Digital Marketing Psychology Articles to Help You Tap Into the Subconscious:

- [How Digital Marketers Can Tap Into Social Media Psychology](#)
- [3 Psychology Biases That Can Make or Break Your Online Marketing](#)
- [6 Emotionally Intelligent Components of Digital Marketing](#)

2. Reason Matters – How to Master Logic:

Your prospects are naturally skeptical and the more articles that get published online, the more people begin to question their credibility and quality. You need to prove that you know what you’re talking about by backing up your content with logical statements, research, evidence and credible sources.
Chapter 3

How to Get Ridiculously Logical:

- **Survey Stats & Sources** - Back up your statements and arguments with survey figures.
- **Expert Quotes** - Add weight to your argument with a quote or statement from a credible online source.
- **Influencer Quotes** - Source and include quotes from industry influencers to add further credibility and depth to your article.
- **Get Clear** - Avoid jargon, hyperbole and ambiguity and keep your language simple and to the point.

3. Become the Real Deal – Establish Credibility:

‘Character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion,’ according to Aristotle. It has never been more important for content writers to establish credibility – people want to read content from people they trust and can believe in. If you’re an influencer, for example, or an expert in your area your blog posts will hold more weight in your industry.

How to Establish Credibility:

- **Influencer Opinions** - Connect with industry influencers and include their opinions in your articles.
- **Influencer Shares** - Once a relationship is built up with industry influencers you can ask them to share your content to add further credibility – it’s like getting a stamp of approval from those who matter.
- **Integrity** - Remain consistent and truthful throughout.
- **Personal Brand** - Build your own personal brand, guest blog on high-authority sites in your industry and grow your social media following.
- **Establish Authority** - Select one subject to become an expert on and make this the focus of your content marketing.
- **Likeability** - Be generous and add true value with your content.

Top Tip from Industry Expert:

*Bryan Adams*, Best Selling Author & CEO of Inbound Marketing Agency Ph. Creative

When we’re talking to our best friend, we sometimes recall stories about the two of you. It’s a weird phenomenon, if you think about it because you were both there at the time so why would you have to tell the story at all? We like reminiscing and we do it to strengthen a bond, to relate and to share that moment again because of how it makes us both feel.

Try imagining your audience as your best friend and, for a first draft of your content, tell them the story as if they were there – try to ‘recall moments they will respond to fondly’. The questions to ask when you read, listen or watch your own content back is, ‘How does it make me feel?’ How will it make your new ‘best friend’ feel?
Many industry experts advocate that you should place an equal amount of time into your distribution methods as your beloved content creation. Discover a few of the most powerful distribution methods available to ensure your content gets in front of the right audience at the right place.

Before You Choose Your Distribution Methods:
First you need to define your target audience, your objectives and the metrics you will use to measure the success of your content marketing distribution.

1. Reach out to Influencers for a Credible Quote
Influencers have amassed a huge social media following and hold access to and influence over your target audience. Adding an influencer quote to your article will add credibility from a trusted and well respected source and, if shared by the influencer, can significantly propel the reach of your article and brand.

Here’s How You Get a Quote from a Busy and In-Demand Influencer:
• Research the most relevant and influential influencers for your target audience using a tool like BuzzSumo.
• Build a relationship with your chosen influencer/influencers before approaching them. Remember with inbound marketing, it’s always best to give before you ask for anything back.
• Reach out to your chosen influencer with a simple tweet asking if they would mind if you sent them a short email.
• Once you’ve been given the go ahead, send the influencer a short, snappy, polite and to the point email.
• Make it as easy as possible for the influencer to contribute by stating the topic, asking a specific question and giving an approximate word count.
• To learn how to craft the perfect influencer pitch visit this article: ‘Influencer Cheat Sheet: ‘How to Connect, Engage & Get What You Want.’"
Chapter 4

Add Value When You Approach Your Chosen Brand or Influencer:

Co-writing a piece of content with a well known brand or influencer allows you to make use of their audience and reach as they're likely to share the article too. When approaching the brand or influencer you need to ensure you're adding value instantly. For example, do you have a decent sized audience they can piggyback off or will your piece allow the brand to look like a thought leader in your industry space?

Before You Choose Your Distribution Methods:

Email:
When you have completed the piece, contact the influencer thanking them for their contribution and linking them to the article, letting them know it has been published.

Twitter:
When you share your blog post on Twitter, include the influencers’ Twitter handle and let your target audience know they have contributed a worthy quote for your piece.

2. Partner With a Well Known Brand or Influencer

Partnering with a well known brand or influencer is a great option for creating whitepapers or longer form blog posts. Think about it: you invest significant amounts of time creating these in-depth pieces. It, therefore, makes sense to give it the distribution love it deserves and vastly extend your reach to the right audience.

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3. Promote on Relevant Third Party Promotion Platforms

About Outbrain:

*Outbrain* is a paid promotion platform that focuses on native audience engagement and placing your content in front of the right audience. It allows you to get your content distributed and displayed on the world's biggest and most widely read online media properties like *CNN*, *Slate* and *ESPN*. Outbrain places your content in the most relevant placements on these websites, ensuring that the surrounding content is relevant to your own and something that your target audience are actively searching for.

How Outbrain Works:

Outbrain only accepts content that offers informational or entertainment value. It works on a pay per click model, allowing you to set your budget daily. To find out more about what you can and can’t do you can visit *Outbrain’s guidelines*.

4. Submit Your Work to the Correct Content Communities

A content community is a community (or hub) that concentrates on a particular niche topic or industry. Content created surrounding this niche topic and/or industry is shared with the community. Members and readers are then invited to discuss the content and engage with community members. It’s best to first establish real relationships with community members, share content from other brands and comment on posts published by individuals before sharing your own content. Make sure you choose a content community that is relevant to your target audience.

Top Tip from Industry Expert

*Kristi Hines*, Influential Freelance Writer & Blogger tells us how she’d like to get approached for an influencer quote.

I like the direct approach via email. In one short and sweet message, ask the question, tell me where my answer will be published, and tell me when my answer is needed by. The faster and simpler it is to do, the better. Then follow it up by letting me know when the content goes live.
CONTENT REPURPOSING: How to Generate Quality Leads

Are you like the thousands of companies who feel like they’re not getting the most out of their content marketing efforts? Learn how to repurpose and repackage the words you’ve already painstakingly created, published and shared to maximise your Return on Investment, help you generate leads and reach new audiences.


Do not repurpose a single piece of content without deciding what you want to gain. First decide upon the business objective/objectives you would like your repurposing strategy to help you achieve. For example, if lead generation is the most important objective for your business your objective could be, ‘We want to generate 300 new quality leads in a quarter.’

2. What Does Your Audience Need? Consult Your Personas

Visit your **target audience personas** to gain insight into the type of content that will pique your target audience’s interests and convince them to give away their precious details. This will help you pin down a few concepts you believe will help your target personas solve their problems or appear smarter.
Chapter 5

3. Keep It Evergreen: Create a One-Topic Content Plan

If you're going to create content worth repurposing make sure it's evergreen. It's important to craft quality pieces that are timeless and won't date. How-to content makes for fantastic whitepaper content as it allows you to create an educational and useful guide. It's also important to define one topic from the outset – this will ensure your blog posts are relevant to your overall theme.

4. Choose Your Repurposing Methods/Channels

In this chapter we'll show you how to generate leads by creating a whitepaper. However, there are many other ways you can repurpose your content – these include creating a SlideShare presentation, using LinkedIn Pulse, creating a webinar or crafting an infographic.

WhitePaper Guide: How to Repurpose & Distribute Your Content:

1. Choose Your Topic

Use audience insights and a content analysis tool like BuzzSumo to determine your blog's most popular content types. This will help you choose a relevant topic that will appeal to your target audience. Dedicate a period of time (for example, a few weeks or months) to the chosen topic on your blog – this will form the bones for your whitepaper.

2. Create Your Content Calendar

Once you have your topic chosen you can map out your content calendar of activity on a simple Excel spreadsheet. This should include your topic ideas – it's best to include these in a logical and readable order from the outset as it will make preparing and editing your whitepaper easier when you get around to it. Also outline the dates you will publish your pieces.

3. Reach Out For Influencer Opinions

Identify influencers and ask for their expert opinions to add credibility to your whitepaper and increase its chance of getting shared to a wider, more influential and highly relevant audience of prospects. When promoting your whitepaper, make sure to mention the names of those who have contributed their thoughts and quotes.

4. Get Your Readers Excited & Engaged

Create buzz about your content series on social media. Let your fans know that you plan on creating a useful series of how-to articles about SEO, for example, and drop them reminders throughout the series about upcoming posts along with freshly published posts. You can even get your fans involved by asking them what articles they’d like to see in the series.
Chapter 5

5. Select, Order & Edit Your Content
Once your series is complete your articles will need to be edited and placed in a logical order. Decide if you would like to cut some of the content length of each piece or add any new insights. Add an introduction that ties your whitepaper chapters together, a table of contents, page numbers and any closing thoughts or call to actions you wish to share at the end.

6. Hire a Designer
One of the most important elements for creating a whitepaper is its readability. Roughly sketch out your idea and brief your designer on any important brand elements they need to consider. Make sure you have your whitepaper designed in your mind before you approach a designer. For example, map out any charts or infographics you’d like him/her to include.

7. Create a Landing Page
At this stage you’ll need to create a landing page that captures users’ details before you unlock the content and allow prospects to download the whitepaper. This should be clear, simple and visually appealing. It’s important to keep the design consistent with that of your whitepaper (maybe ask the same designer to create this page). You’ll need to clearly (and in as few words as possible) communicate the unique selling point of your piece.

8. Create a Promotion/ Distribution Plan
Now that you’ve created your whitepaper you need to create a plan for distributing it effectively to ensure it gets in front of the right audience at the right time. Do you plan to place your whitepaper at the top of the funnel to help capture new leads, for example? Are you going to use paid promotion on social media or stick to organic?
SOCIAL MEDIA: How to Win Fans & Influence People

The beauty of social media is that it provides an ideal opportunity to conduct a two-way dialogue between you and your target audience, making it the perfect platform for a more personalised inbound marketing experience. Learn how to draw customers toward your brand through the power of selfless social media. It’s all about giving back, stepping back and letting your customers move forward...

1. Ask Your Customers: They Know Best

Social media is the perfect place to focus on your customers – to provide a platform to ask them relevant and insightful questions and gain feedback in real-time. You can do this through the creation of short surveys and polls. Or you could even post a simple question and get people to respond. Whether you choose to provide a prize or not for filling out a survey or poll, the survey should offer value to your customers and pique their interest. For example, you could ask them to choose your new flavour of ice-cream.

Handy Survey Creation Tools: Survey Monkey, Survey Gizmo, Kwik Surveys

2. Answer Your Customers: You Know Best

Use a monitoring tool like Hootsuite to keep track of all of your social media comments and mentions – that way you can easily watch out for any questions or complaints that need to be dealt with immediately. When handling complaints or unhappy customers it’s best to face the issue head on and deal with it in the most honest and transparent manner possible. First apologise, then address the issue and then clearly convey the next step/steps to solving their problem.

Handy Template: Hi (name), address the question/query complaint, apologise where necessary, outline the next steps if any, sign off with your name.
3. Share Quality, Helpful & Inspiring Content

Get to the heart of social media psychology to discover what makes people care and share. Do your customers want to learn, do they want to look smart or do they want to be entertained? Find out and deliver through valuable and relevant content marketing. Don’t forget that content includes engaging videos (best to keep your videos short to hold fleeting attentions spans), blog posts, information-packed infographics, compelling competitions and fun quizzes.

New Motto (yes, even if you’re B2B): Have fun, give fun, be fun (because nobody needs more boring in their lives.)

4. Consider User Generated Content

Your customers are itching to get involved – to get their name announced, their picture posted, their story told and heard and shared. You, as a brand, can give them a chance to get their name out there through User Generated Content (USG). Consider creating a competition that asks users to upload a vine video using your product in a funny way, for example. Or maybe ask them to post a selfie at your restaurant or create a blog post about their experience at your resort.

Check Out These Campaigns for Inspiration: Belkin and Lego customizable cases, Starbucks’ White Cup Contest, Coca Cola’s Share a Coke Campaign

5. Get the Frequency & Timing Right

Getting the frequency and timing of your social media posts right is a fine balancing act. So what’s an inbound marketer to do? Guess, Trial and Analyse! Here’s how...
Chapter 6

1. Guess

Form insightful and calculated decisions based on what kind of messages your customers want at the right time. For example, say you sell holidays and you have just published an inspiring post about a retreat. To find your perfect posting time ask yourself when people would like to read it, for example during the work hours when they need a pick-me-up.

2. Trial

Select 3 or 4 prime times to trial for each channel. Test each time in isolation from each other over a given time period like a month or quarter. For example, on Facebook you might first want to test how people respond to your posts when they're published at 8pm – you can measure this in terms of reach and engagement. Then you can test if your reach and engagement metrics improve when posted at 6pm, when posted at 5pm and so on.

3. Analyse

Next it’s important to analyse what’s working for you. There are a variety of tools you can use to analyse the best times to publish your social media posts. For example, Tweriod allows you to run analysis on your Tweets along with the Tweets of your followers. This enables your brand to determine when you should post and when your audience are the most active and engaged. Followerwonk allows you to run a report that shows you when your followers are most active.
Your CEO innocently asks, ‘Did you read about that upcoming Google update? I presume our website is ready for it?’ – cue nodding, panic, the sweats and the frantic Googling of ‘what Google update is this now?’ The SEO world moves so fleetingly fast that digital marketing professionals can barely catch a breath, never mind a break. That's why it’s never been more important to learn how to future-proof your website.

The Overall Premise:
Although content is king, SEO is still its faithful servant. Put simply, the creation of quality content alone cannot work in isolation. You need both the relevant words and the technical tools to satisfy your users’ search queries. This is the whitehat (and customer-focused) SEO work Google will continue to reward.
Chapter 7

**STEP 1:**
Master The SEO Basics First

**Conduct Longtail (& Logical) Keyword Research:**
It’s still quite important to carry out proper keyword research for your industry. But instead of focusing on individual keywords digital marketers now need to focus on that bigger picture, coined ‘intent.’ That means you need to identify what your ideal customers are searching for – and yes, that means the phrases they choose but also the meaning behind their search queries. In essence, it’s all about making sense at the right time, in the right place to the right person.

**How to Conduct Longtail Keyword Research:**
To identify what terms and keywords your customers are searching for, you can use **Google Keyword Planner.** This tool will help you find the most relevant keywords for your website.

**Google Autocomplete** is a handy tool that helps you to find the right long tail keywords that will solve your target audience’s problems. To find yours, simply type them into the search box related to your products and services and don’t press enter. Google will then suggest keywords for you that are relevant to your business.

**Master the Basic On-Page SEO Elements**
Just because SEO has advanced so much in recent years doesn’t mean that the basic SEO elements still don’t matter. It’s still just as important as ever that you remember to fill in every meta data box available to allow the search engine spiders to make sense of your content.

**For example,** you need to ensure each page on your website has a unique page title (65 characters/512 pixels), original meta-description (160 characters or less), header tags and optimized URL. The most important thing to bear in mind is that each of these should contain your target keywords – the long tail terms your customers are most likely to search for.

**Read This to Master the SEO On-Page Basics:** 6 Steps to Help Your Blog Post Climb the Google Ranks

**Add Relevant (& Useful) Internal Links:**
Ensure you’re linking to relevant internal pages on your website as it will be useful to your customers and they’ll pass link equity to deeper pages within the architecture of your website. What counts as useful? Relevant information, stats or blog posts that add extra value for your customers.

**Get your Site Architecture Right:**
Try to keep your website architecture as flat as possible. This should be no deeper than three tiers for important pages on the website.
Create Quality Content That Answers Search Queries:

As Google continues to tweak its algorithm, it's website owners that focus on high quality in-depth content that are being rewarded. But you can never forget about the basics. Even great content can become lost if basic SEO factors are not considered. What does this mean for businesses? Whether it's on-page copy for a product page or a blog post you’re writing, you need to ensure that it satisfies the user search query. It needs to answer your customers’ questions, solve their problems and address their needs.

STEP 3: Tackle the More Technical Elements

Use Google Search Console:

Use Google Search Console to help you analyse the more technical elements of your website's SEO. You'll need to ensure you're checking for any basic crawl errors on your website. It's also important to correctly geo-target your website for the country you're operating in. And it's essential to add an XML sitemap as this will significantly improve the crawl ability and index ability of your website. Verify that you have your robots.txt file setup correctly by using the robots.txt testing tool.
Ensure Your Website is Mobile-Friendly:
Google has recently made a tweak to its algorithm to reward websites that are mobile friendly. They don’t necessarily need to be responsive; separate mobile websites are also fine. Use the Mobile-Friendly Test from Google to identify whether or not your website meets the requirements. If not, prioritise the pages to fix on your website that receive the highest volume of mobile traffic by checking in Google Analytics.

Conduct a Backlink Audit:
Ensure you disavow any poor quality backlinks to your website. As Google continues to release updates to its Penguin algorithm, you will need to pay attention to the external websites linking back to you. Any poor quality (and irrelevant) websites linking to you may result in a hefty penalty, causing your site to drop in search rankings.

How to Disavow Poor Quality Backlinks:

Step 1
Download List of Links to Your Site:
- On the dashboard of your Search Console home page, click ‘Search Traffic.’
- Click ‘Links to your site.’
- Go to ‘Who links the most’ and click ‘More.’
- Click ‘Download more sample links.’

Step 2
Upload List of Links to Disavow:
- Visit the disavow links tool page.
- Choose your website.
- Select ‘Disavow Links.’
- Select ‘Choose File.’

Additional SEO Reading We’d Recommend:
- Moz Guide: The Beginners Guide to SEO
- Rand Fishkin’s SlideShare: Why SEO That Used to Work Fails
Chapter 8

SEO: Understand & Implement Technical Elements

Technical SEO elements are a pain to master for the non-technical minded. However, they are absolutely essential to help your website rank higher and ensure you don't fall foul of a Google penalty. This chapter helps you understand the most important technical SEO elements and shows you how to implement them.

1. Add an XML Sitemap to Guide Search Spiders

What is an XML Sitemap Anyway?

An XML Sitemap is a document that contains a list of all the page URLs on your website you want Google's search spiders to crawl and index. This is for search engine spiders’ eyes only and therefore you do not need to create a beautiful page for users.

How Do I Create an XML Sitemap?

Creating your XML sitemap is a relatively intuitive process. Google recommends using this XML sitemap generator. You simply enter your website’s URL, fill out the optional fields and click ‘Start.’ The tool crawls your website and redirects you to to the generated sitemap details page. Copy and paste your sitemap URL and upload it to your Google Search Console account.
2. How to Block a Page From Being Crawled

You can noindex a page to prevent it from being crawled and displayed in search results. You can also block it with a Robots.txt file. However, a Robots.txt file tells Google not to crawl the URL but allows it to index the page and display it in search results. The best practice is to apply robots meta tags to the relevant page. This will allow your page to get indexed and enable you to tell Google not to list the relevant page.

To add a Robots Meta Tag Use the Following Code:

<meta name="robots" content="noindex, nofollow"/>

3. Apply a Canonical Tag to Avoid Duplicate Content

**What Is a Canonical Tag?**

The canonical tag is a HTML tag that tells Google that pages with the tag are copies of the original page. Canonical tags are used to help Google distinguish the original content source from its duplicate pages.

**Why Use a Canonical Tag?**

When you create duplicate content (one or more pages containing the same content as an existing page) search engine spiders get confused about which one to index. This causes a huge issue as Google divides the page’s authority. Duplicate content without the canonical tag could actually result in a Google penalty for your website. That’s why it’s important to apply a canonical tag to the duplicate pages you don’t want Google to read as the original source.

**How to Create a Canonical Tag:**

If you use WordPress and have the *SEO Yoast plugin* installed, you can quickly and easily add a canonical tag without messing with any code. To do so simply visit the ‘Advanced’ SEO section on your SEO Yoast dashboard and copy the URL of your desired page into the Canonical URL parameter.

**Example:**

Finally, you will want to click the Meta Robots Index dropdown menu and select ‘noindex’ to ensure your page doesn’t get indexed. When you save your blog post or page this information will be saved and applied accordingly.
Chapter 8

4. How to Crawl for Errors:

It is vital to regularly crawl your website for any SEO errors you might not be aware of – consider this a health check up for your SEO performance. It’s one of the best ways to ensure your website doesn’t get penalised following a Google algorithm update or new page creation.

Use an SEO Crawling Tool:

SEO crawling tools are one of the best investments you can make. They will help you identify any SEO errors that could have a negative impact on your ranking quickly and easily. Some of the best and well-known crawling tools in the SEO business include:

- **SEO Moz Crawl Test**
- **Screaming Frog SEO Spider Tool**

Identify Errors That Can Negatively Affect Your SEO:

Below are some of the most fatal errors your SEO crawling tool of choice should help you identify and alleviate:

- **404 page errors** (not good for users or search engines) – an error the user receives when a requested page cannot be found on the server.
- **Server 500 errors** (more serious – affects entire website) – probably an issue with the server rather than individual pages.
- **Duplicate page content** – could incur a Google penalty.
- **Crawling blocks.**
- **Missing meta data** (meta descriptions in blog posts, for example) or page titles.
EMAIL:
Grow Your Email Marketing Database in A Day

The value provider, the relationship builder, the sales closer, the news sharer, the brand ambassador, the deal revealer – email marketing is the ultimate multi-tasker. Let’s explore a few strategic ways you can grow your email database to help you stay top of your customer’s minds...

FIRST STEPS FIRST

Construct a Landing Page That Communicates Value

Before you begin implementing any of the ideas below, you need to create a landing page that clearly (and in as few words as possible) communicates the unique selling point of your emails.

Can your subscribers look forward to a weekly newsletter packed full of industry insights, for example?
Do you send regular emails that feature your latest discounted offers?
Or will subscribers receive monthly exclusive offers?
Increase Your Conversions & Track Your Subscriber Growth:

To increase the chances of your landing page converting, choose as few fields as possible for potential subscribers to fill out. If possible, only ask for prospects' names and email addresses. Create a goal in Google Analytics to help you track the number of new subscribers your landing page has netted you and tag the landing page's URL any time you share it in your Google tagging document.

The Questions Your Prospects Need Answered On Your Landing Page:

- What value do I get?
- What makes your emails different?
- How often will I receive emails?
- What details do I need to give?

Here's an Example of The Digital Marketing Institute's Newsletter Landing Page:

Now, Let's Start Building Your Email Subscriber Database:

1. Give Away Freebies Your Customers Want, Need & Appreciate

You can't expect your prospects to give you their well protected contact details without offering something of true value. It's one of the best ways to generate new email subscribers and propel your lead generation numbers. Your freebie needs to matter to your target audience. Options to consider offering include whitepapers, industry reports, online webinars, presentations, free career/consultative advice, etc.
2. Create an Engaging Online Competition With a Priceless Prize

Another clever way to entice prospects to give you their email details is to craft an engaging online competition that appeals to your audience's competitive nature. Examples of platforms you can use to create social media competitions include Punchtab, WizHive, Wazoku, and Rafflecopter. When you choose your preferred platform, simply create a competition that requires entrants to submit their email details to win.

3. Use Opt-In Monster Plugin to Capture Exitors

OptinMonster is a tool that allows you to create opt-in forms that appear on your website at that crucial point when your visitors are about to leave. The clever tool follows your user's mouse and pops up when they are about to click the exit button – perfect for capturing a last minute email address. Why not create a form that offers a freebie (like access to a valuable whitepaper) or gives details on why the user should subscribe to your insightful newsletter?

4. Create Your Own Opt-In Form to Capture the Details of Engaged Visitors

If you don't have the budget for opt-in monster you can create your own opt-in newsletter sign up form. To capture the attention of your most engaged readers, set your newsletter sign up form to pop up when your reader gets half way through a blog post, for example. We implemented our own unobtrusive newsletter sign-up form that increased our newsletter subscriber rate by 30% in a single month.

Design & Placements:

Keep your opt-in form subtle, small and light on content. And ensure it's easy to exit out of on both desktop and mobile devices. You will also need to carefully consider where to place your opt-in box. Your blog is a good place to start. Only place it in contextually relevant places on your website - the places your customers would expect to see it and welcome the reminder.
5. Use Sniply to Place a Sign Up Call to Action on Relevant External Sites

Do you share other brand’s content through your own social media channels? You can use a tool like Sniply to create a ‘Snip’ or banner that appears on the bottom of the web page you’re sharing. The user is presented with a call to action of your choice – at the Digital Marketing Institute we’ve created a Sniply banner to promote our newsletter. When the user clicks on the ‘Sign Up Now’ page they are directed to our newsletter sign-up landing page and encouraged to join our subscriber list.

How to Use Sniply:

Sniply is super easy to use. Simply copy the URL of the link you plan to share and paste it into the Sniply box provided. Click ‘Create Snip.’ A pop up box will then appear with your new Sniply link. Copy your link and use it when sharing your article instead of the original link.

Example Digital Marketing Institute Sniply Banner:

Top Tip from Industry Expert

Ian Cleary, Founder of RazorSocial, Marketing Technology Blog

Popup’s can be annoying to users but achieve high conversion rates. To ensure I get high conversion rates and don’t annoy users I use Optinmonster which supports exit intent technology. This means that the popup will only appear when a browser is exiting the site. Using this popup and the split testing functionality has helped me achieve high conversion rates.

An advanced tip to get further conversion is to do popups specific to blog posts. For example, on a blog post create a popup which offers something directly related to the content on the blog and this will typically get very high conversion rates.
Chapter 10

METRICS:
3 Must-Measure Inbound Marketing Metrics

There are far too many metrics to measure, figures to decipher and Google Analytics paths to navigate your way through. That’s why we’ve streamlined the process for you and chosen the top 3 metric types that every business, no matter how big or small, can benefit from measuring.

Here are the most important questions you need to ask yourself:

- How engaged are people (customers, fans and prospects) with my brand?
- How many people are taking the action I want them to take?
- Is my organic traffic improving?
- Are high authority sites linking to my site/who’s talking about my brand?
- Am I getting the best and most relevant results with the time and resources my team are investing?

Deciding upon the perfect metrics to measure will depend on your company and your individual digital marketing goals. However, there a few basic metric types that every inbound marketer will need to learn how track. Below are the ones we believe are most meaningful:

1. Conversion Rates:

Conversion Rates are one of the most important metrics any inbound marketer can measure. That’s because conversions measure the number of customers or prospects who have taken a desired action on your website. For example, an Ecommerce website might measure conversions in terms of a purchase, while an insurance company might measure conversions in terms of the number of people who have filled out a contact form. Conversions can also take the form of softer lead generation tactics like whitepaper downloads.
Chapter 10

First Set Up Your Goals in Google Analytics:

1. Login to your Google Analytics account.
2. Click Admin (in the header).
3. Go to View and select Goals.
4. Give your Goal a name e.g. Whitepaper Download (ensure this is intuitive and easy to remember).
5. Select the Destination button and click Next Step.
6. Under Goal details, set the Destination equal to your thank you URL e.g. /thank-you.
7. Select Value > On and attribute a monetary value to your goal e.g. $10.
8. Click Funnel > On and enter the URL of your contact form.
9. Select Required > Yes.
10. Click Create Goal.

Once your Goals have been set up and your customers have started to convert (for example, when people start downloading your whitepaper), you can access your Conversion Reports in your Google Analytics dashboard.
To Access your Conversion Reports:

1. Login to your Google Analytics account.
2. Click Conversions (on the left hand navigation bar).
3. Select Goals to view a quick summary of the total number of goal (or conversion) completions made on your website.

2. Website & Blog Traffic

It’s important to track both your website traffic and blog traffic month-on-month to ensure that all of your inbound marketing efforts (including blogging, guest posting, connecting with influencers and social media activity, etc.) are paying off and resulting in more Unique Page Views.

To View Your Site Traffic Over a Specific Period:

1. Login to your Google Analytics account.
2. Click Behaviour on the left hand navigation bar and select Site Content from the dropdown menu.
3. Select All Pages.
4. To view your website traffic over a set period, click the date box on the upper right hand corner of the screen.
5. Enter your chosen date range and click Apply.
6. You will be presented with a visual graph displaying your website traffic growth over the set period of time you have chosen.
7. The table below your graph will show you the most popular pages of content on your website in terms of Unique Page Views, etc.
8. From here you can isolate and measure your blog traffic (read the directions below to find out how).
How to Isolate & Measure Your Blog Traffic:
1. Click the search box at the top of the table and enter the term ‘blog’.
2. Click the search icon.
3. To view your blog traffic over a set period, click the date box on the upper right hand corner of the screen.
4. Enter your chosen date range and click Apply.
5. You will be presented with a visual graph and accompanying table displaying your blog traffic growth over the set period of time you have chosen.

Engagement Metrics
Engagement figures can significantly expand your reach by ensuring your content is getting shared and talked about amongst the right audiences (your fans’ like-minded friends). You can easily measure the number of shares your content is receiving using a content analysis tool like BuzzSumo.

How to Use BuzzSumo to Track Your Social Shares:
- Login to your BuzzSumo account.
- Click on the Reports tab (on the top bar of the screen) and select Content Analysis.
- Enter your blog domain into the text field and click Search.
- Select your desired date range at the top left hand corner of the screen and click Update.
- Your average shares for that period will be displayed on the top right hand corner of the screen.

Top Tip:
Create a new search to compare your desired time period to a previous time period this way you can assess if your share count has increased like you desired.
Now that you know how to create and implement a powerful inbound marketing strategy, it's time to get started...

Begin by identifying your inbound marketing objectives, defining your target personas and following the steps outlined in this ebook.

You'll find everything you need to know about how to draw your customers toward your brand through quality content marketing, social media, SEO, email marketing and analytics.
NEED INBOUND MARKETING CAREER ADVICE?
Book a free digital marketing careers consultation today by emailing consultation@digitalmarketinginstitute.com or calling +353 (1) 531 1200. Tell us your preferred time and we'll help you calculate your next career steps.