

**A BRAVE  
A NEW**

**GENERATE  
THE RIGHT LEADS.  
BUILD TRUST.  
ACHIEVE BREAKTHROUGH GROWTH.**



# INTRODUCTION

Everyone needs new customers. And yet, finding them is more difficult now than ever. What approach will work?

In this ebook you'll discover a proven system for generating qualified leads that will fill your client acquisition pipeline — especially if you're selling a high-value product or service. We've honed this system over years of work with many of our B2B clients. Now we want to share the secrets with you.

Why would we share our secrets?

Your success is important to us. And we believe there's enough opportunity for everyone. Simple as that.

**LET'S DIVE IN!**

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### ARE YOU READY?

# THE IMPORTANCE OF GENERATING THE RIGHT LEADS

Lead generation has been around for a long time. Cold callers pretty much necessitated the invention of caller ID. But that type of shoot-then-aim approach is not what we're talking about here.





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We're talking about generating the leads that are the right fit for your business. Leads that will translate into loyal customers. This type of lead generation is more important than ever for four simple reasons.

- 1 YOU NO LONGER CONTROL THE FLOW OF INFORMATION, OR THE CONVERSATION:** In 2020, prospects can easily find all the information they need about a product without even talking with you, and they decide when to talk to you.
- 2 COMPLEX SALES INVOLVE MULTIPLE DECISION MAKERS AND YOU NEED TO BUILD TRUST WITH ALL OF THEM:** High-value and complex purchases require buy-off from numerous people and these people can be so busy you have to make it through a labyrinth of executive assistants, email, and more. It's not as easy as jumping on the phone.
- 3 TRUST IN SALESPEOPLE IS AT AN ALL-TIME LOW:** In recent surveys, sales is the least trustworthy profession. This means your salespeople will be more successful if they enter into situations where some trust already exists.
- 4 YOUR COMPETITION IS FIERCE:** According to Hubspot's Dan Tyre, companies used to have an average of seven competitors. In 2018, the average was more than 40.

All this means that finding the right leads that are an ideal fit for your unique product or service is more important than ever. If you resonate with any of these reasons, keep reading. We'll show you how to find them.

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# CAN YOU GET LEADS FOR A HIGH-VALUE PRODUCT ONLINE?

We've talked with a lot of people through the years who doubt that their website can become a consistent source of qualified leads because they have a niche high-value product. This couldn't be further from the truth.

It's true that you probably won't close a ton of sales through an online shopping cart if you sell something worth \$50,000 or above to other businesses. BUT, if this is the type of business you're in, we think you're a perfect fit for effective digital lead gen. There are a few simple reasons why.

## HIGH VALUE = LONG SALES CYCLE

Any company that has a long sales cycle needs to find ways to build a universe of prospects before they're ready to buy. Inbound marketing does just that.



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## COMPLEX SALES = RESEARCH

If you're selling something complex, then your target audience is going to do a lot of research into the right solution before they buy. A content-driven lead gen program should make that research easier for the prospect.

## COMPLEX SALES = MORE DECISION MAKERS

For the most part, no one is going to make a large B2B purchase without involving all of the stakeholders. When executed correctly, you could use a lead gen program to build relationships with all decision makers before your sales team gets involved.

## MORE TRUST = HIGHER CLOSE RATE

A lead gen program that focuses on being ridiculously helpful to prospects will create trust in your company as prospects move through the buyer's journey. This will result in a greater close rate once the sales team gets involved.

If you make an investment in generating the right leads, you'll turn your digital channels and your website into the engine for your business. Let's find out how.

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# IS ALL LEAD GEN CREATED EQUAL? DEFINITELY NOT.

Ok, so we've made the point that it's possible to generate leads online for your high-value product or service. But, not all lead gen is created equal. In fact, some lead gen approaches do more harm than good. Below we've detailed four of the common lead gen approaches that we think aren't worth your time.



## COLD CALLING

**WHAT IT IS:** Cold calling is exactly what it sounds like: identifying a list of potential clients and calling or emailing them without any prior connection with the sole goal of pitching business.

**WHY IT DOESN'T WORK:** Executive assistants and spam filters make it easy to avoid cold callers; not to mention the more important fact that no one wants to be pitched a product they don't think they need.

**WHAT WE'D DO INSTEAD:** If you have callers who you still need to keep busy, choose to invest in an inbound approach where they follow up on leads that you've attracted and are already interested in your company and what you are selling.



## LINKEDIN SPAMMING

**WHAT IT IS:** There are a lot of companies out there today who will promise you meetings with leads who fit your ideal customer profile. They work by sending out connection requests and InMail en masse and then immediately bombarding people with a meeting request.

**WHY IT DOESN'T WORK:** Making a connection just to ask for business is cold calling through a modern venue. People don't trust it.

**WHAT WE'D DO INSTEAD:** Our preferred approach on LinkedIn is two-fold. First, advertise helpful resources that someone can download if the resource helps them solve the problem they have. Second, identify some key prospects or accounts and then build actual relationships with them over time.

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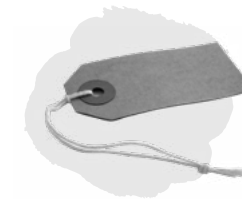
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## INVESTING SOLELY IN SEO

**WHAT IT IS:** There are SEO firms out there today who will tell you that by targeting and monitoring certain keywords in your content, adjusting the structure of your site, fixing your technical SEO, and building backlinks, you'll turn your site into a revenue machine.

**WHY IT DOESN'T WORK:** While we agree that many of the tactics above are important (although we'd take issue with just focusing on keywords rather than topics), they aren't enough to drive growth. It's only one component of success.

**WHAT WE'D DO INSTEAD:** We'd make sure you have your SEO bases covered, but instead of focusing on individual keywords, zero in on the topics you want to be known for and create a content and conversion program built around them.



## THE NEXT COOL IDEA YOUR TEAM HAS

**WHAT IT IS:** Marketers are creative people. We want to break the mold and do cool things. So, it's inevitable that every so often your team will come up with a shiny, new idea to chase because you aren't seeing results with your current efforts. Before you know it you've totally retooled what you're doing and in three months you're wondering what went wrong.

**WHY IT DOESN'T WORK:** One of the key elements of any successful marketing effort is consistency. It can be boring, and it can take a while for results to build, but if you have a sound strategy and stick to it on the execution side, you'll see results.

**WHAT WE'D DO INSTEAD:** Invest in a holistic inbound marketing approach for at least a year and then determine what to do next based on the results.

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# HOW CAN INBOUND MARKETING HELP?

The inbound methodology flips traditional lead generation approaches on their head by focusing on attracting, educating, and building trust with prospects before selling them a product or a service.

It's an approach that fits with how people consume information and make buying decisions today. And it's the approach that will help your business grow by attracting and qualifying the right type of prospects.





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## THE INBOUND MARKETING FLYWHEEL

The inbound methodology puts customers at the center of a flywheel. The focus is on being ridiculously helpful to customers, prospects, and leads in the sales process so you can turn the flywheel faster and faster to drive more growth.

In the inbound system, lead gen starts by focusing relentlessly on the service you provide to your existing customers. By providing a great experience, you will both generate referrals and proof that can be shared with prospects during their journey with you, which will in turn result in more sales, which will lead to more customers.

You get the idea.



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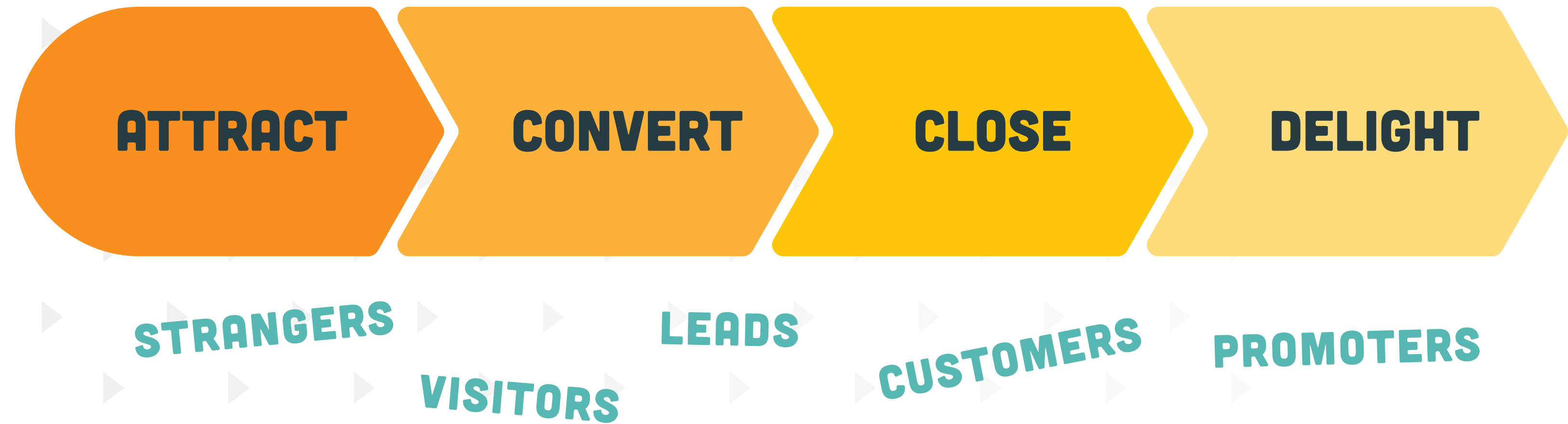
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## BEING HELPFUL FROM ATTRACT TO CLOSE

At its core, inbound marketing is about being helpful from the moment someone types a search into Google until long after they become your customer.



This process isn't about chance. It's about a disciplined process designed to attract the right customers, equip them with the information they need to succeed, and then earn the opportunity to work with them.

# PRACTICAL TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH INBOUND

In the following pages, we're going to show you practical strategies you can use in your business to move someone from a stranger who knows nothing about who you are and what you do, to a raving promoter who tells everyone about you.





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# ATTRACT



Most of the strangers that you're trying to attract aren't yet looking for a specific solution or company. It's more likely they're looking for answers.

Maybe they're struggling to solve a problem or challenge. Just as likely, they have a big new idea they're working on but they're not sure if that idea will be feasible. It's your job to answer all of the questions that are relevant to your business.

At this phase, it's a good idea to talk with your sales team and even some of your customers to understand what people are thinking about at the beginning of their buyer's journey. Remember, the attract phase isn't about selling your company. It's about answering questions and helping.

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# TACTICS TO CONSIDER

## ▶ PERSONAS

A persona is a fictional representation of your customer base. It's not one person, but a representation of a target group, or portion of your customers. Think of personas as insight into who your customers are. By taking the time to understand what your target audience truly cares about, you'll set up your whole program for success.

[LEARN HOW A BRAVE NEW APPROACHES PERSONAS HERE.](#)

## ▶ BLOGGING

Your blogging program should focus on the same topics as your pillar pages. When we're creating a blogging program focused on attracting people to a brand, we'll write out all of the questions that we know people ask during the sales process and start creating content around each item.

Your goal at this phase should be helpful content around every major question a prospect asks.

## ▶ PILLAR PAGES

Today's SEO is focused around topics. If you have in-depth content about the key topics related to the problems your prospects are trying to solve, you'll rank higher on Google. A pillar page functions a bit like a long Wikipedia page providing visitors with an in-depth and expert look at content.

[YOU CAN READ MORE ABOUT THEM HERE.](#)

## ▶ DIGITAL MEDIA

Digital media is useful at all stages of a prospect's journey with you, but at this phase we'll focus on promoting valuable content like blog posts to audiences that match the ideal customer profile of the person we are trying to reach. At the very most, we'll try to get them to subscribe to a blog. We're not trying to force them into a relationship with us here, we're just trying to pique their interest.

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### ▶ **SOCIAL MEDIA**

This phase of social media marketing should really focus on sharing out helpful content that both you and others have created.

People don't follow brands that simply talk about how great they are all day. They're looking for a brand who answers their questions. And, they'll trust you more if you share from a wide variety of trusted sources.

### ▶ **AUTHORED CONTENT**

You can write some articles or op-eds about topics that are currently relevant in your industry. Then, you or your PR agency can work to get them placed in publications that your prospects read. This will position you as an expert while also providing you with valuable content.

### ▶ **ONLINE FORUMS**

Forums like Reddit and Quora are great places to demonstrate value by joining conversations that are already happening.

Once you've found some relevant conversations, add your insight if you can provide some unique value. It's even better if you can also link back to some valuable information on your website.

### ▶ **VIDEO**

Video can be intimidating to jump into, but it doesn't have to be. At this stage you could focus on low-production talking head videos that answer key questions that your prospects ask. Consider drafting your sales team to feature in these videos so prospects are already familiar with them when they get further along in the process.

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## 3 COMMON PITFALLS

It's normal to get stuck when you're implementing an inbound marketing program. Here are three common pitfalls at the attract phase:

- 1 NOT DOING AUDIENCE RESEARCH:** The most important thing that you can do at this phase is audience research. It can be simple, but you must talk to the real people who buy your product or service. We recommend getting started by identifying a handful of your best customers and conducting a 45-minute interview. In that conversation ask them why they love you, what questions they were asking before they started working with you, and more. Be creative. You'll be surprised by the things you learn.
- 2 CHASING EXCITING TOPICS RATHER THAN CORE TOPICS:** The truth is that all of us spend a lot of time talking about the topics that are core to our work. As a result, we get bored. Then, before we know it, we've been distracted by the next shiny thing. Don't get distracted. Before you start creating content about new concepts, you need to cover all of the core questions that people ask at the beginning of the buyer's journey. The answers may seem boring to you, but they won't to the next prospect who reads them. Stick with it!
- 3 CREATING INFOMERCIALS:** Another common mistake we see is when a company inserts themselves into each and every blog post. You should definitely talk about your approach, but don't conclude every post with a call for them to contact you to find out more, etc. Answer real questions with real answers.

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## GETTING STARTED

Whether your company is in a growth spurt, stuck, or shrinking, you can use the attract phase of an inbound marketing program to your benefit. Here's what we recommend each type of company do to get started:

**GROWING COMPANIES:** Growing companies have the luxury of being systematic. Don't get pulled in by a sense of urgency. Start with your pillar pages, then build out a blogging program, then layer in digital media — or do it all at once if you have the capacity. The big thing is to build a foundation that sustains that growth for the long term.

**COASTING COMPANIES:** If you're stable, but struggling to grow, it might be good to take a step back and examine your most profitable products and services. Build a content program that answers the big questions that prospects have about those products and services so that you can jumpstart your business by attracting more people who are interested in your highest-margin work.

**SHRINKING COMPANIES:** If you're shrinking, you have less time to put a program in place than other types of companies. We'd recommend investing in a larger digital media spend up front to get more eyes in front of your content so that you can hopefully identify some prospects who want to buy quickly.



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The convert phase of your inbound program is all about getting your prospects to raise their hand for the first time.

Here's why this is important: They can read all of your blog posts and engage with you on social media, but until they give you their email address and permission to participate in a two-way conversation you won't be able to answer their specific questions or help them determine if you are a good solution to the problem they're trying to solve.

In today's world, this phase is primarily about getting someone to give you their email and phone number in exchange for some valuable content. Remember, you aren't yet asking them to say yes to becoming a customer, you just want them to opt into the relationship at this point.



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# TACTICS TO CONSIDER

## ▶ PREMIUM CONTENT

Premium content usually takes the form of an ebook (like this one) or a white paper. You'll want to topically focus on something that will help your prospect build their skills and expertise. Once you've created it, don't give it away for free. Ask someone for their email address in exchange for a download.

## ▶ LANDING PAGES

You'll need to create landing pages for all of the premium content you create. These landing pages should explain the value proposition of the ebook or white paper and then ask the user to fill out a form with their email address in exchange for the ability to download the resource.

## ▶ INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES

The internet is super flexible today. Make sure you leverage it. This could be anything from a quiz to an interactive infographic to a template — anything that someone can interact with. We prefer not to put these behind an email capture gate. It's better to let someone engage with the experience and build brand equity.

## ▶ DIGITAL MEDIA

During the convert phase of a digital program, we're focused on promoting premium content, both through targeting and retargeting, in hopes of capturing leads who are interested. Everything is about capturing the email at this stage.



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### ▶ NURTURE EMAILS

Nurture emails are automated emails that are sent after someone fills out a form. These emails should do the following:

- Highlight other valuable content that you've produced
- Provide opportunities for the prospect to provide more info about themselves
- Share the unique value that you bring
- Give prospects a chance to become a client or customer

### ▶ LEAD SCORING

You'll want to create a system that allows you to attach a numerical score to the interactions that prospects have with your company. Over time you'll be able to refine this scoring to determine at which score someone is ready to talk to a salesperson. Lead scoring will be hard to implement if you aren't using marketing software like HubSpot that allows you to comprehensively track how individuals interact with your site and other digital channels.

### ▶ EMAIL NEWSLETTERS

After someone has provided you with their contact info, it's important to stay in touch with them about new content you've produced, new happenings, and more. A good newsletter is a great way to do this. There's no reason to do it only once a month as well. Some of the best are weekly or even daily. The key here is to provide value every time it's sent.

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# 3 COMMON PITFALLS

Here are three common pitfalls at the convert phase:

- 1 TRYING TO DO TOO MUCH AT ONCE:** Don't do everything at once. Start out with a single campaign, then layer in others. Build the thing that's easiest to build, then create the more difficult (but potentially cooler) experiences down the road. Measure the most important metrics, not all of them. The companies that are the best at the convert phase are focused on shipping things, measuring results, and iterating. You'll need to embrace this to succeed.
- 2 FORGETTING DIRECT MARKETING PRINCIPLES:** Our founders Josh and Polly started out their careers in direct marketing. Direct marketing principles emphasize being specific and direct about what you want someone to do at every interaction. Whether this feels uncomfortable to you or not, it's vital at the convert phase. Be bold and clear about what you want people to do while you're trying to capture someone's email. Your conversion rates will thank you.
- 3 SENDING TOO LITTLE EMAIL:** Most companies we work with are afraid to send too much email. They think they will pester people and they'll unsubscribe. Our experience (and research) shows that too much email is a myth. It's more about being relevant and helpful in every interaction. And there is such a thing as too little email. If you only are in touch with people once per month they'll forget who you are.

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## GETTING STARTED TIP

When you're getting started, try not to do everything at once. Choose one piece of premium content and get it out in the world. Once you've had time to see how it performs, you can iterate and launch more. It's essential to not be precious about your strategy before real people interact with it. Only then will you know if it is effective.



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GENERATE THE RIGHT LEADS. BUILD TRUST. ACHIEVE BREAKTHROUGH GROWTH.

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**CLOSE**



The close phase of your program is when you'll start working with your sales team to pursue deals with your prospects.

Your job at this phase is to hand over marketing qualified leads that have either crossed a certain threshold of qualification or have specifically asked to talk to sales.

At this point, you should move beyond talking just about the problems you're solving and introduce the ways that your business solves that problem.

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- ▶ Being Helpful From Attract To Close

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# TACTICS TO CONSIDER

## ▶ LEAD QUALIFICATION

At this phase, you should be determining whether leads are marketing qualified and are ready to go to sales. Usually this occurs when their lead score reaches a certain level or they've filled out a contact form with appropriate information that demonstrates they are a viable lead.

## ▶ SALES COLLABORATION

Beyond smarketing meetings it will be important for you to constantly collaborate with the sales team. The most successful programs have marketing and sales teams that operate as one.

## ▶ SMARKETING MEETINGS

Smarketing meetings are frequent meetings in which the marketing team collaborates with the sales team to evaluate:

- The quality of leads
- Sales and marketing alignment
- Opportunities in process
- Any other important information

## ▶ CALL SCRIPTS

We recommend scripting initial conversations that align with the communications that leads have received as they've moved through the inbound marketing funnel. This will build trust in the lead's first one-on-one interaction.

If your sales team bristles at a script, at least develop an outline of the conversation or talking points for them.

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### ▶ EMAIL SEQUENCES

Much like email nurture series, email sequences are automated email series that can be sent directly from a salesperson at specific phases throughout the sales process. We recommend leveraging them whenever you have to follow up with a lead about something. Removing the manual aspect of follow-up and using analytics to determine the approach that works best for you will allow salespeople to develop relationships with more people at once.

### ▶ CRM INTEGRATIONS

Much of the work mentioned in this phase will require a two-way integration between your marketing software and your sales software.

Don't skimp here. Having a clear connection between the systems governing the two main pillars of your customer acquisition process is vital.

### ▶ DEAL PIPELINES

At this phase of the process, it will be vital for your sales team to maintain a disciplined sales pipeline that maps out the key steps in your sales process, from initial conversations to signed deal. This process should be visible to both marketing and sales so that everyone has a clear view of where all deals are at any time.

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# 3 COMMON PITFALLS

Here are three common pitfalls at the close phase:

- 1 TOSSING LEADS OVER THE FENCE TO SALES:** If you just pass leads to sales, fail to do follow-up with your sales team, and never learn whether or not they are good fits, your program is toast. Don't make this mistake. Demand a feedback loop — not just on the deals that close but on the deals they qualify and pursue. Oh, and you need to make sure they're actually doing something with the leads as well.
- 2 NO DATA FLOW TO REPORT BACK ON WHAT LEADS BECOME CUSTOMERS:** Being able to track revenue back to the channel that leads came in through is vital. It's how you'll justify and optimize your program over time. Spend the time to get the integration right.
- 3 LACK OF ALIGNMENT:** By the time a lead is qualified and sent to the sales team they'll have consumed a lot of your content and learned a lot about how you approach your work as a company. If this doesn't align with the experience they have when they interact with sales, it's going to create some serious dissonance. Alignment will only come by spending time together and building trust. You'll need to invest in that.

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## GETTING STARTED TIP

The first and best thing an inbound marketer can do to succeed during the close phase is set up regular times to connect with your sales team. These smarketing meetings should take place on a weekly basis at first. After you have open communication lines, you can probably move them back to monthly. Regardless, never stop talking. Your ability to deliver the type of leads that will close depends on continuous conversation.





**CLICK TO  
NAVIGATE**

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This ebook focuses on lead gen, but don't forget that acquiring new clients is expensive and so you should be just as concerned with keeping clients once you've acquired them.

The best way to do that is what we call delight. The most important piece of advice we'd provide in this phase is to think through carefully about how you can recycle content that was created with the goal of generating leads to delight your customers.

Most of the time no new content will be needed for this phase. You'll just have to develop a system to deliver the content to them in the right way at the right time and remind them how much you value their partnership.

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# ARE YOU READY?

It is possible to generate the right leads for your business. Inbound marketing provides a system that's perfectly tailored for any company selling a high-value product or service, especially if the sales cycle is long and the process is complex.





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We outlined the four reasons this was true at the beginning of this ebook. We'll emphasize them again at the close.

### **HIGH VALUE = LONG SALES CYCLE**

Any company that has a long sales cycle needs to find ways to build a universe of prospects before they're ready to buy. Inbound marketing does just that.

### **COMPLEX SALES = MORE DECISION MAKERS**

For the most part, no one is going to make a large B2B purchase without involving all of the stakeholders. When executed correctly, you could use a lead gen program to build relationships with all decision makers before your sales team gets involved.

### **COMPLEX SALES = RESEARCH**

If you're selling something complex, then your target audience is going to do a lot of research into the right solution before they buy. A content-driven lead gen program should make that research easier for the prospect.

### **MORE TRUST = HIGHER CLOSE RATE**

A lead gen program that focuses on being ridiculously helpful to prospects will create trust in your company as prospects move through the buyer's journey. This will result in a greater close rate once the sales team gets involved.

If you make an investment in generating the right leads, you'll turn your digital channels and your website into the engine for your business.

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# WORK WITH A BRAVE NEW TO GENERATE THE RIGHT LEADS AND ACQUIRE MORE CUSTOMERS

High-value, hard-to-reach prospects can be effectively converted through digital marketing. Just combine smart decisions, discipline, the right systems, and an experienced team to make it happen.

We empower brave, entrepreneurial companies with big dreams to grow past their current limits by using the best traits of digital marketing and the discipline of traditional media direct response to craft strong inbound lead gen systems — without forgetting the need to ask boldly and often for the sale.

Reach out today to stand out from your competition, generate the right leads, and drive breakthrough growth.

**CONTACT US** 



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