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Don't start your inbound marketing program without considering this advice
The three essential steps to get your inbound marketing up and running
The stepwise way to avoid costly strategic mistakes in your inbound marketing

KEYWORD(s)

Inbound marketing, content marketing

HEADLINE:

So you want to create an inbound marketing campaign...

SUBHEADLINE:

How to execute with the right strategy and resources

COPY:

By Paige Moore

Inbound marketing is on a roll, and it doesn't appear it is going to stop anytime soon.

In fact, according to Hubspot's State of Inbound Marketing 2014, 80 percent of all marketers employ some type of inbound marketing campaign, from blogs, to newsletters, to social media/digital marketing. It's not hard to understand why. The same report showed that companies using inbound marketing techniques are 13 times more likely to enjoy positive ROI, have warmer and more informed sales leads, and land more sales. Ready to sign up yet?

Great! Now what about your content? This is where we see the most failures. Clients get excited about the possibilities of inbound marketing, but fail to plan for what it will take to get their content operation going. And make no mistake about it – content-driven inbound marketing takes a substantial operation to produce amount of insightful blogs, webinars, special reports, email blasts and social media content you need to be heard.

Fortunately, quality inbound marketing programs are achievable If you make the right decisions at the beginning. Here are some of my tips on how to get started out right with inbound marketing:

Set a budget

This can get a bit complicated depending on the nature of your business, whether you are marketing to other businesses (BtoB) or consumers directly (BtoC). The general rule of thumb is this – you should be spending no more than 10 percent of the lifetime value of each customer on your marketing to that customer. So, start out by factoring how many new leads and new customers do you need each month to meet your sales goals. Then work backward from that number. To get that many leads, how many messages do I need to send out? Factor in the average click through rates for your industry, available by going to Google’s publicly available stats. By now, you should have a pretty good idea of the number of messages, frequency and size of lists you need to have. Take this number, look at the amount of money you’ll need to spend, then look again at the 10 percent of the lifetime value of a customer stat. Do your lead generation needs match up with your new potential budget? Then proceed.

Set your communications goals

What is your prospective customer truly interested in? Are there subsets within your customer base that need attention, such as different personas and buying profiles? Do these different personas need different kinds of content? (links to your blog on buying personas) What are the end results you wish to see? Use these answers to help you create some common themes for your content. For a more thorough guide, download our report [The Essential Guide to Internet Marketing](#).

Find your internal content experts

In every company, there are pockets of expertise. If you are running an online ecommerce fashion business, for instance, you have buyers who go to this year’s fashion shows to see the latest trends. You have designers, who have their own voice and fashion sensibilities, interpreting those trends into new product. You have customer service people who can tell customers how to care for their garments. You might even have an online community manager, who knows all about what customers are saying about the clothes on the site and how they are putting them together in fun combinations. Each one of the employees I described have a unique point of view and information they can contribute that will give your customers an “inside view” of your company, your philosophy, and your product.

Find your resources

Be honest about what you can realistically manage, and plan accordingly. Taking on content marketing is a big job, especially if you are trying to tack it on top of the one you already have. And don’t count on your internal content experts gladly supplying you with beautifully written blog posts right on schedule, either. You will either need to find an agency or make an internal hire that will gather the information, do the ghost writing, get the approvals, manage the posts and blasts and continuously monitor metrics. Of course, it goes without saying that here at Outside Source Design, we specialize in this kind of work and would love to help you!



SUSAN GOSSELIN
CORPORATE WRITER

Find your resources (continued)

Nobody ever said inbound, content-driven marketing was easy. But, with the right planning and resources, you'll see the results are truly worth it.

Paige Moore is the content director for OSD. In addition to being our chief word nerd, she handles site architecture for websites, search engine optimization, and strategy for content marketing programs.