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# Transform Your Marketing Inbound and Outbound Strategies



**WHITE PAPER**



## Transform Your Marketing

How we've been marketing for the past century is no longer effective. We need to adapt and update our marketing strategies to meet the needs of the modern consumer. We need to evolve. Does this mean that all traditional marketing practices are null and void? No. Absolutely not. It means that we need to find the best balance between "old" and "new" for maximum return on marketing investment (ROMI).

### Outbound Marketing

New marketing strategies attract marketers like moths to a flame. For some reason, marketers assume "out with the old and in with the new" is the only way to improve results. Some even believe that inbound marketing should replace outbound marketing altogether.

Even Hubspot, who initially coined the term "inbound marketing" and is credited with initiating the concept, uses outbound marketing to enhance engagement with inbound leads. The difference is how "outbound marketing" is defined and executed.

**The [Outdated] Outbound Marketing definition:** Pushing messages out to the masses via multiple channels with the idea that a percentage will stick and generate a sale (or at the very least serve to enhance brand awareness for future business potential)."

**The [Updated] Outbound Marketing definition:** "Reaching out to clients and prospects with relevant messages by sending the right message to the right person at the right time (target marketing)."

Which marketing strategies are considered "outbound"?

- Trade shows
- Conferences
- Telemarketing
- Print advertising (newspaper, magazine, publications, etc)
- Billboards
- Direct mail campaigns
- TV advertising
- Radio advertising
- Email and e-newsletters

Let's review email and e-newsletters for a moment. You might feel like outbound marketing is a negative concept that might no longer effective. Or maybe it has just left a bad taste in your mouth. But, the truth is that outbound marketing, if done well, is a vital piece of the much larger marketing pie. And that certainly includes email and e-newsletters.

Email and e-newsletters have gotten a bad rep because email is an inexpensive, easy and instantaneous method of communication. The medium has been abused by too many companies, resulting in SPAM. In the modern definition for outbound marketing, which includes relevance and targeting, email and e-newsletters (when done properly) are actually a combination of outbound and inbound marketing. They enable both "push" and "pull", "outgoing" and "incoming"... technology has advanced the traditional email newsletter to include such inbound features as "Share This" buttons and social media integration.

Getting back to outbound marketing as a whole... outbound marketing has traditionally been considered a poorly targeted technique because it couldn't be personalized to specific markets, groups or individuals. This may have been true in the past, but certainly isn't the case today. With the tools available to marketers in this day and age, outbound marketing can (and should) be tailored to segmented and identifiable demographics. Purchased lists for telemarketing and direct mail can include such minute details as age, parental status, income, or even whether or not the prospect prefers Crest or Colgate, winter fresh or cinnamon.



TV spots can be selected based on the very specific demographic that watches that particular show at that particular time on that particular channel (of course, TiVo and DVR users typically skip the commercials, so consider your budget accordingly). The same thing may be said for radio spots – choose your station carefully, while keeping in mind that many consumers have switched to satellite radio to avoid ads altogether. Traditional ads are now seen as “interruption marketing.” We really just want to watch the program or listen to the music, and the ads interrupt that activity. Finally, trade shows and conferences are obviously only going to attract those interested who are in the topic, automatically ensuring a relevant audience. No one has cash to burn on activities they are not interested in.

With so many marketers referring to outbound marketing as “interruption marketing,” are these strategies still impactful and successful? In a word, yes. Outbound marketing, while typically more expensive, often produces faster results than inbound marketing does. It is also easier to scientifically measure the ROI on outbound methods and adjust your strategy accordingly. Most businesses still depend upon outbound marketing to bring in consistent profits. The advent of inbound marketing has not affected that very much.

Most consumers are accustomed to outbound marketing (except perhaps our newest generation, who appear to be born with iPhones in hand).

Outbound marketing is familiar. It’s expected. It can even be surprising when done in a modern, creative way (think Superbowl commercials). Email marketing is one of the few outbound strategies that has continued to evolve with technology. There’s no better (and more cost-effective) way to send targeted, personalized messages based on the recipient’s interests and demographics. Email lists have the MOST relevance potential, plus the added component of offering educational and informative content that would simply be too lengthy to include in an ad or commercial or postcard, or even a brochure.

Email databases can be segmented and broken down not only by demographics and interests, but also by behavior.

If a subscriber interacts with your message, purchases a product or service, forwards or replies to your email, or exhibits any other kind of engagement with the communication, that activity can be tracked and classified. Does that sound like an antiquated, out of date marketing methodology to you? Think about it this way: What email newsletters do you subscribe to? I bet there are a couple of newsletters that you actually look forward to receiving in your inbox and that you would truly miss if they suddenly stopped showing up. This type of engagement with your favorite email newsletters happens because of targeted marketing, effective list segmentation, messaging with relevance, and then demonstrating responsiveness to the reader.

The return on investment for outbound marketing depends on your goals and objectives, percentage of budget allocated to the outbound strategies, and how integrated ALL of your marketing techniques are in your overall marketing plan.

Imagine what would happen if you combined the effectiveness of outbound marketing strategies like email marketing with the reach and visibility of inbound marketing... would it, could it, possibly transform your marketing?

There is nothing wrong with spending money on tried and true marketing strategies when they provide verifiably positive results. But if there is a chance that making a change, reconstructing or remodeling your efforts would produce even better results, you would be foolish not to try it. Consider the impact a more balanced mix of contemporary outbound and fresh inbound marketing strategies could have on your bottom line.



## Inbound Marketing

What exactly is “inbound marketing”? In traditional (outbound) marketing, companies focus on finding customers. Inbound marketers flip outbound marketing on its head. Inbound marketing is the concept of integrating content, search and social media to help prospects find your company (instead of you finding them) through the sharing of information they consider valuable and choose to engage with.

Essentially, you want to consistently generate enough interest and engagement so that prospects choose to continuously access your content because they’ve come to know that whatever you publish has a high likelihood of being valuable to them.

Inbound marketing alone may be sufficient for a company to target, convert and retain clients if the company is well known and well established within the industry. Victoria’s Secret has one of the largest Facebook followings, with over 17 million fans. Their brand is known worldwide because they have done a fair amount of outbound marketing over the years with their catalogs and commercials. Could they get away with eliminating their outbound marketing? Probably. But even Victoria’s Secret knows that to maximize their marketing investment, they should not stop utilizing traditional marketing methods.

Companies that do not yet have a universally recognizable brand do not have the luxury of even considering using inbound marketing as their sole strategy. It takes exposure to the masses to develop a brand and corporate identity, educate potential prospects about the company, and begin building credibility and trust.

Outbound marketing teams serve to introduce your company and your brand to the masses, and, over time, whittle down the campaigns to specifically target your markets by reviewing analytics, behavior and response. Initially, though, outbound marketers build up your brand and recognition stone by stone, step by step.

While outbound marketers have been stereotyped as having to “buy, beg or bug” to get consumers’ attention, they serve a vital purpose in establishing the initial dialogue between company and prospect. Outbound marketing teams focus on activities and deliverables that help establish a company in the marketplace. The skill sets for traditional marketing teams revolve around copywriting, design, creative messaging, collateral production and short-term campaigns.

Inbound marketing teams are not so different. Certainly, the focus on copywriting (content) is absolutely essential. In fact, all of the same skills that an outbound marketing team possesses are required of an inbound marketing team.

In addition, inbound teams also need gregarious social networkers – those who can not only mesmerize prospects at trade shows and conferences, but also online from “behind the curtain” via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social sites. And, just as you would have on your outbound marketing team, you need someone who can analyze and understand the success of the metrics related to metrics of your inbound strategies and have the vision to see where tweaks might be necessary to maximize results.

**The most successful inbound marketing campaigns are comprised of three primary components:**

- Content – articles, whitepapers, ebooks, podcasts, blogs, vlogs, infographics
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Social Media

+ “Success is dependent on effort.”  
— Sophocles

## Content Creation

Content is the heart and soul of any marketing campaign, but inbound marketing cannot survive without it. It is the foundation and cornerstone of online strategies. Information attracts prospects to your company. How helpful, informative and relevant that information is will determine how effective it is.

## SEO

SEO makes it easier for the right prospects to find you. By utilizing the right tools, keyword analysis and link-building, you maximize your visibility on organic searches for terms that match what you are communicating. Once traffic begins to flow to your site(s), your page ranking increases, and, in turn, so does your SEO. It's kind of an inverted tornado – once the winds begin picking up, they increase and whirl until you're at the pinnacle (in SEO terms, that means being on page one of Google).

## Social Media

Social media amplifies the impact of your content marketing efforts. Qualified leads turn to social media networks for honest, authentic reviews by existing clients and customers before making decisions. When your content is discussed in an open, public forum like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, and other outlets, it not only helps increase your search engine reputation, but, perhaps even more importantly, your company's overall reputation. "Transparency is the new black."

## Get Them To Come To You

Now we know that inbound marketing consists of content, SEO and social media. We know the goal is to get qualified prospects to knock on your door, instead of you canvassing the neighborhood with a flashlight searching for leads.

As with all other types of marketing, past and present, inbound marketing requires that you:

- Understand and penetrate your target markets
- Add value
- Build trust
- Consistently deliver relevant, valuable content
- Build relationships
- Provide clear calls to action
- Solicit and promote feedback and discussion
- Track your success

Inbound marketing is an ongoing process and strategy with none of the expiration dates or campaign deadlines that exist in many outbound marketing strategies. Building trust, adding value and establishing relationships take time and consistency.

Remember when we said that email and e-newsletters overlap the outbound / inbound paths? That's because they are also centered on content, building trust, adding value and establishing relationships – and they can be interactive and establish a two-way dialogue that no other outbound strategy can compete with. Additionally – e-newsletter subscriptions are often the result of permission marketing – where readers are actively seeking out and subscribing to the information.

**+** "You can buy attention (advertising). You can beg for attention from the media (PR). You can bug people one at a time to get attention (sales). Or you can earn attention by creating something interesting and valuable and then publishing it online for free."  
— David Meerman Scott



## Combine Outbound & Inbound Strategies To Transform Your Marketing

Which leads us to the third part of this whitepaper: combining outbound and inbound marketing strategies to transform your marketing and maximize your return on marketing investment. The importance and effectiveness of integrated marketing strategies has been proven time and again over the past few decades.

Many companies are combining inbound and outbound marketing and taking advantage of multiple channels to reach a larger audience and gain additional advantages. Inbound is definitely critical in today's marketing sphere, but inbound doesn't actually work without outbound in tandem.

Your success is determined by how the two disciplines are incorporated and executed.

Your marketing and public relations strategy cannot rely solely on inbound marketing because your content will never be seen. You can upload a video to YouTube, but without pushing it out through your social feeds and/or outbound methods (email newsletters, print collateral), you're crossing your fingers and hoping that enough people will stumble across it and then share it with others in order for it to gain momentum and popularity.

That's what we commonly refer to as the "on a wing and a prayer" method. It's not recommended. As your audience begins to catch on that your content is relevant and valuable, they will begin to follow you organically, but it takes time.

Outbound marketing can speed up the process by driving people to your online marketing channels and stimulate inbound responses.

Consumers expect (and appreciate) multiple points of contact. There is no singular method that will be able to meet all of their needs, or even match their mood, throughout the sales cycle. Think about it – could Facebook alone enable you to attract, engage, motivate and develop a prospect through the lead nurturing process until they become a client or customer? Could an advertising campaign? Could an email newsletter? Could your website? Each of these touch points have a distinct role to play within the sales funnel.

Inbound marketing is quickly becoming the preferred approach in the world of marketing because of its ease and budget-friendliness, but outbound marketing can significantly strengthen and enhance your inbound efforts. Structured outbound marketing not only complements your inbound marketing campaign, but it also solidifies the marketing and sales process as well.

Outbound marketing supports inbound marketing by:

### Completing The Sales Funnel

- Inbound marketing identifies visitors, targets potential leads and provides pertinent, relevant information. SEO and social media create the top of the funnel. But without outbound marketing, the funnel would end after the top portion, leaving only a black hole where the middle (lead nurturing) and the bottom (the final sale) should be.

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"Content marketing  
is a commitment, not  
a campaign."  
— Jon Buscall



## Providing Relevant, Helpful Information To Prospects, Warming Up Your Leads

- Using inbound marketing, you can identify and track prospect behavior, using that data to further analyze the prospect's needs and interests, allowing you to increase the relevancy of your outbound messaging to nurture them exactly how they need to be nurtured – with the content they'll value – further developing the relationship, earning trust and loyalty.

And, finally, outbound marketing supports inbound marketing by:

### Developing trust and credibility

- You know that credibility is built and gained by consistent messaging, relevance and follow through. Inbound marketing helps attract and draw qualified prospects through the use of relevant search terms and your content; outbound marketing nurtures those leads through other platforms that also enable them to view "real" reviews, feedback and interaction with your brand. You could cold call a purchased list until your telemarketers are blue in the face, but without implementing other methods to insulate and nurture those potential leads, your time and efforts will be lost. Social media allows you to "listen" more actively to what your prospects want, and gives you the opportunity to deliver it, closing the sales funnel while continuing to nurture through the marketing process.

What we all really want is to reach and attract more qualified leads that result in more business at the lowest cost possible.

We want our prospects to spend more time with our content and less time with our competitors' content. Let's review a few things that rely on a combination of both strategies (inbound and outbound) that you might not have thought about as being a combination of strategies:



"A year from now,  
you may wish you  
had started today."

— Karen Lamb

### Lead Nurturing

- Continuous engagement with prospects who have demonstrated interest in specific topics by opting in to a newsletter, downloading a whitepaper, subscribing to an RSS feed, or attending a webinar requires both inbound and outbound techniques and communication to continue to develop the relationship by sharing relevant content that addresses their preferences.

### Blogs and RSS Feeds

- Once prospects have subscribed to your blog, technically, each and every post that is relayed to them via the feed is outbound. Comments posted by readers, on the other hand, are inbound. Readers who share your blog posts are participating in outbound marketing on your behalf, which in turn generates a potential for inbound opportunities (more readers and more comments).

### Twitter and Facebook

- When we post tweets and status updates that lead back to our website, blog, video or other content, we're engaging in outbound marketing. Done well, each tweet or update is an invitation to share information designed to be valuable to our target markets. It's also an invitation to comment, share or otherwise interact with us. It's an opportunity for influence. Other tweeps who retweet or fans who "like" or share our content are truly a source of inbound marketing and help influence other prospects.

### Conferences and Trade Shows

- Participating as a speaker or exhibitor at a conference is an outbound activity. But, the inbound potential depends on what you deliver during your interactions. Anyone who chooses to engage with you based on your conference activities is now arguably an inbound source.



## The Basics of Getting Personal

When crafting personalized email messages, ensure that your messages are visually appealing, relatable and engaging. The simple fact is that outbound and inbound strategies (such as email and social media) are not adversaries; they're complementary tools that can be used to support and enhance each other. You need to fit it all together. By weaving email marketing and social media together as part of your traditional mix, you can dramatically enhance the effectiveness of your marketing efforts.

Why? It could be as simple as the quantity of touches. Blogs and other social media outlets have the opportunity to obtain much more traffic than your email list can grow. The content you post on your blog may be dense with the keywords that search users are using, which may not even be the same as the keywords that SEO experts identify or recommend for your firm. Your email can drive readers to your blog or website or Facebook page, but the content on those sites remains searchable in between newsletter launches.

A common thread between email and social media is relevant content. Each become more effective the more relevant they are. Just as readers won't open or click on an email that isn't of interest to them, they'll pass right over a post on a social media site that misses the mark as well.

The more you successfully integrate your approaches, the larger your distribution reach will be. Companies that have combined email, telemarketing, blogs and social networking efforts report that they've seen benefits in SEO. Some even claim that their SEO results have increased by three to four times compared with what they achieved through their websites alone.

As with any marketing strategy, the proof is in the pudding. No matter how you market, you have to:

### Identify your goals and create a plan

- Get your whole team on board – both outbound and inbound (or print and online)
- Map out your overall strategy and identify roles, expectations, and goals
- Encourage innovation, creativity and collaboration

### Track, measure and analyze the data

- When measuring your marketing mix's success, don't stop at just taking its temperature with a thermometer
- Adjust it, like a thermostat, based on your findings
- Mix things up until you find the perfect recipe

### Adjust Your Strategies, Emphasis And Messaging Based On The Data

If you start off the year emphasizing inbound methods with a particular focus on social media, but discover in May that your marketing soufflé is a little flat, puff it back up with some (targeted) email newsletters, a postcard campaign, or a few "lumpy letters".

(Lumpy letters are packages that are mailed to your warmest leads in unconventional sizes that contain a small give-away or trinket – the unusual size or presentation of the package, sent via regular mail, will entice the recipient to open it, and if the message is relevant and provides value to the prospect, will jump-start the two-way dialogue you need to get to the next stage of the relationship.)

If your website is the wedding cake of your marketing plan, think about other methods as the essential ingredients that allow you to create the most impressive tiered pastry anyone has ever seen or tasted. Remember to think creatively – consumers today are bombarded with constant messaging everywhere they look. To stand out, you have to be different. Unique. Innovative. Surprising. Relevant. Valuable. Consistent. Generous. Recognizable. Interesting. Helpful. Found.



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“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”  
— Charles Darwin

## The Bottom Line

Outbound and inbound marketing should be integrated for maximum return on investment. Because content is the key to both outbound and inbound marketing, use that to your advantage. Use your email newsletter and your blog as “content laboratories” to determine what your prospects are interested in, what drives the most traffic, inspires the most comments, etc. Set up “preference centers” for your email newsletter and blog – let your prospects tell you what they want to see, read and receive.

Identify the channels you want to focus on, but remain flexible enough to adapt the strategy based upon the metrics you reap and analyze. Mix and match your methodologies until you find the best recipe for growth and long term success. “Push” your prospects to your social sites and “pull” your prospects into your outbound strategies (using sign-up forms).

Cultivate relationships for the long term, using both outbound and inbound strategies. Nurture with relevant content. Remember that consumers are savvy and long to “connect” in our increasingly impersonal, electronic world. Be somewhat ironic and use electronic media to reach out and touch your prospects. Make those connections.

Build upon the data that you pull from these interactions and data points by delivering even more content in creative ways that fits the needs of your target market – articles, ebooks, whitepapers, webinars, videos, cartoons – and share the content using all of the channels and methods at your disposal.



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