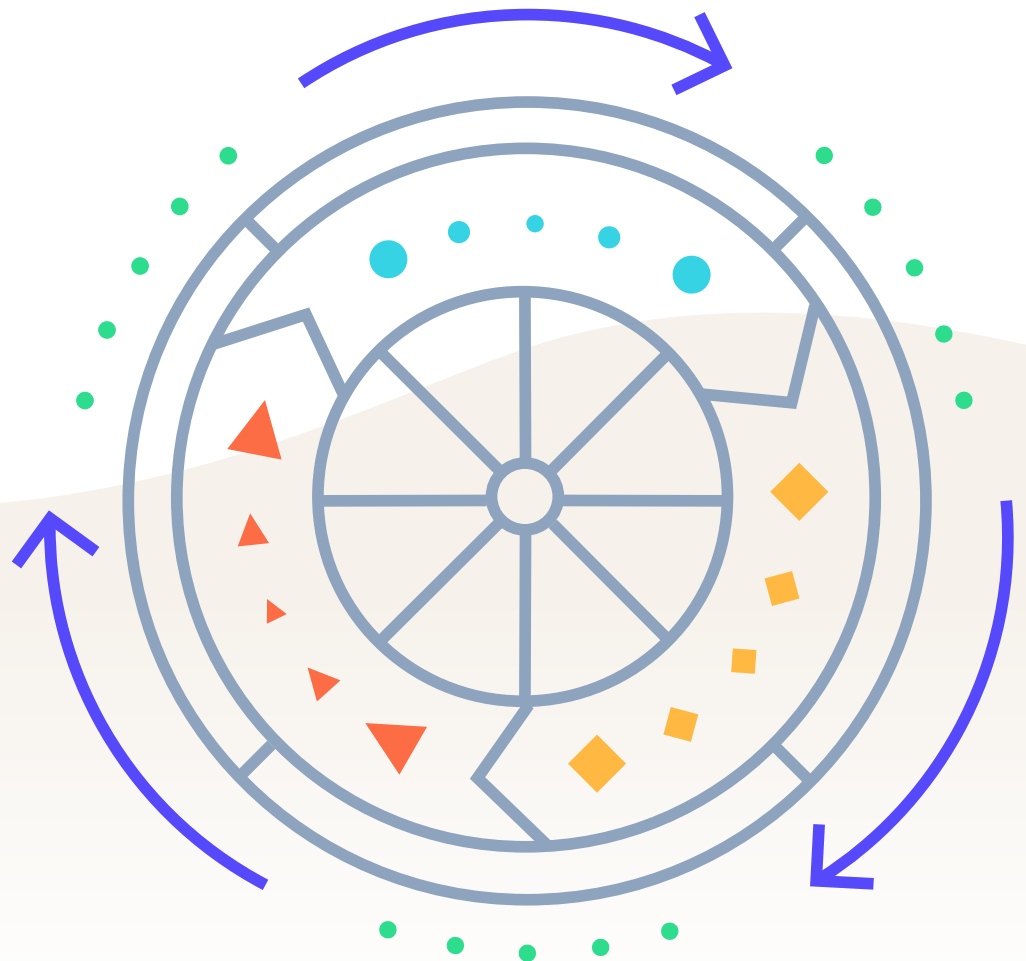


Introduction to

# B2B Inbound Marketing

This introduction to inbound marketing is for B2B technology companies who already invest in marketing and want to know what inbound is, what it means to their business, and the opportunities it offers.





# Contents

<b>Why inbound?</b>	<b>1</b>
Inbound marketing vs content marketing	2
<b>What is inbound marketing?</b>	<b>3</b>
The B2B buying process	3
The inbound methodology	4
<b>Inbound marketing tactics</b>	<b>5</b>
Attract	5
Engage	5
Delight	5
The role of marketing automation	6
Business benefits of going inbound	6
<b>Getting started with inbound</b>	<b>7</b>
Content marketing	7
Lead generation	8
Marketing automation	8



# Why inbound?

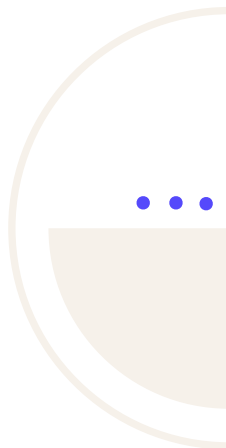
For several years, the traditional toolkit of B2B marketers has been losing its edge. Subjected to masses of advertising and brand messages every day, your buyers have evolved.

They've become extremely effective at ignoring anything they haven't asked to receive. Their eyes don't see banner adverts and they can spot the direct mail lurking in their post. Unsolicited email is instinctively, if not automatically, removed from the inbox. And cold calls from pushy sales reps are the least welcome things of all.

Unsurprisingly, the ROI from all these activities, when used as lead generators, has seen rapid decline. **It's time to find a new toolkit.**

This may all sound like a marketing nightmare, but actually, it's a dream. This is your opportunity to replace expensive marketing tactics that no longer work. It's your opportunity to adopt a new marketing philosophy, inbound, that will propel you and your company to new heights.

Inbound marketing replaces [ineffective, interruptive, outbound marketing tactics](#) with content driven strategies that help you to attract, convert, close and delight modern B2B buyers.



### Inbound marketing vs. content marketing

You've probably heard of content marketing and might be wondering how it differs from inbound. Definitions vary, but the way we think about it is that [content marketing](#) is a tactic (a great one at that), while [inbound marketing](#) is the strategy.

Inbound marketing is the answer to the question “how do I use content to win more customers?”

Inbound marketing integrates content marketing with a range of other digital marketing tactics, like SEO and email, to generate traffic, leads, and revenue.





# What is inbound marketing?

Inbound marketing is the act of aligning your digital marketing efforts with the buyer's decision-making process. The aim is to expose your company's expertise to them, when and where they're looking for it. To earn their trust, rather than pushing them away and to help the right leads become your customers.

## The B2B buying process

All B2B buying decisions go through the same set of stages. Your buyer travels from a position of having an as yet undefined problem, through researching potential solutions, to identifying and eventually choosing the one that's right for them.



Buyers progress through these stages at different speeds, depending on what they're purchasing. They may even move back and forth between them. But overall, this is how B2B purchasing decisions unfold.

What has changed, is what buyers do and how they act at each stage.

**Buyers have taken back control of the buying process.** They dictate the flow of information between you and them, and decide when and how they want to communicate.

Inbound recognises this change and that, to earn your buyer's trust and the right to engage them in a conversation, you must play by their rules.

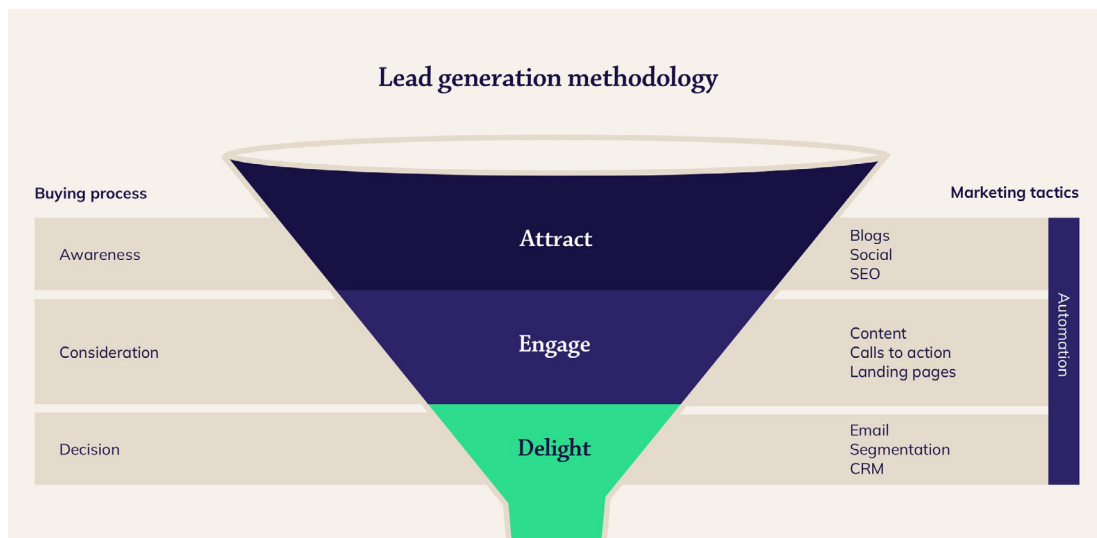
That means letting them do their own research online, not interrupting them with adverts or calls. And it means helping them make good purchasing decisions by adding value to their research, not selling to them at every opportunity. This is what inbound marketing enables you to do.

### The inbound methodology

While your buyer navigates the buying process, they need information to help them along their way. The type of information they seek changes as they progress towards making a purchase, as does their willingness to share contact details and engage with potential suppliers.

The inbound methodology, developed by HubSpot, maps your digital marketing with the stages of the buying process. Built around the self-sustaining Flywheel model, inbound helps you:

- **Attract** more visitors to your website, while they research their problems
- **Engage** anonymous visitors and convert them into known leads as they dig deeper into their problems and seek richer information about potential solutions
- **Delight** customers by helping them decide which solutions to buy and treating them with care. This helps to build trust and turn them into promoters of your brand





# Inbound marketing tactics

When you understand your buyer's preferred way of making decisions and how these align with the inbound methodology, it's easy to see which digital marketing tactics play a role at each stage.

## Attract

Attracting new visitors to your website requires you to answer their questions and appear where they're looking.

Blogging is the single best method for driving new prospects to your site. Backing this up with [search engine optimisation](#) (SEO), social media, and paid social promotion will maximise your blog and website's traffic generation potential.

## Engage

At this stage, you want to build trust with prospects and earn the right to engage with them directly. Usually, this means offering them something of value in return.

Content that aligns with the different stages of the buying process – such as whitepapers, ebooks, and webinars – encourage engagement. The next step is to nurture their interest in you and your company. Content and offers that align to the later stages of the decision-making process, delivered via timely, personalised emails, are effective here.

You'll also need calls to action throughout your blog and website to help you convert leads.

## Delight

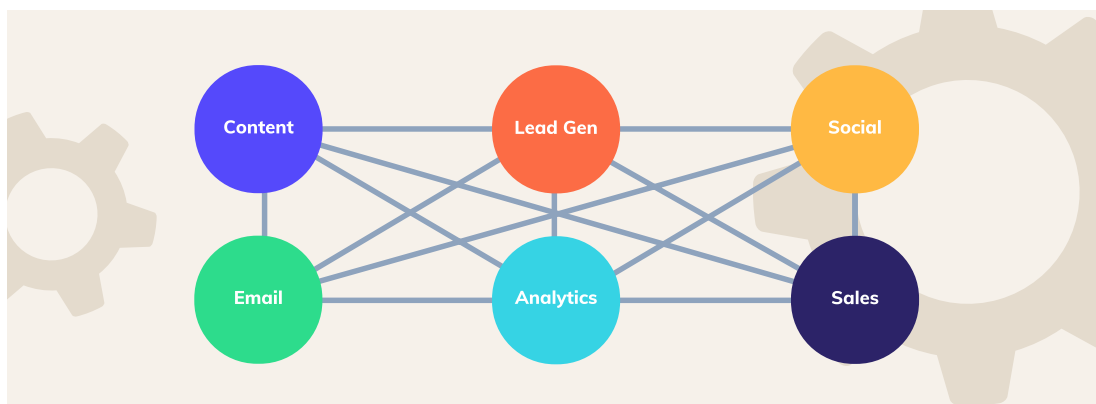
The effects of inbound marketing don't stop when your prospect becomes a customer.

Ensuring your existing customers have access to your latest and most relevant content, through blog digests, personalised emails, and social media can help you keep them engaged with your brand and create opportunities to upsell.

### The role of marketing automation

[Marketing automation](#) is the software that ties together all of your inbound marketing tactics - integrating execution, measurement, and analysis under one roof.

Although it isn't absolutely necessary for achieving the results of inbound marketing, marketing automation software makes it much easier. Automation makes it easy to create data-driven lead generation campaigns, personalised emails, and contextual web content.



### Business benefits of going inbound

Inbound marketing is an excellent way to generate more leads. But, when you market your business in a way that naturally aligns with what your buyers really want, **great things happen**.

Going inbound unlocks additional benefits that further enhance your lead and revenue generation potential:

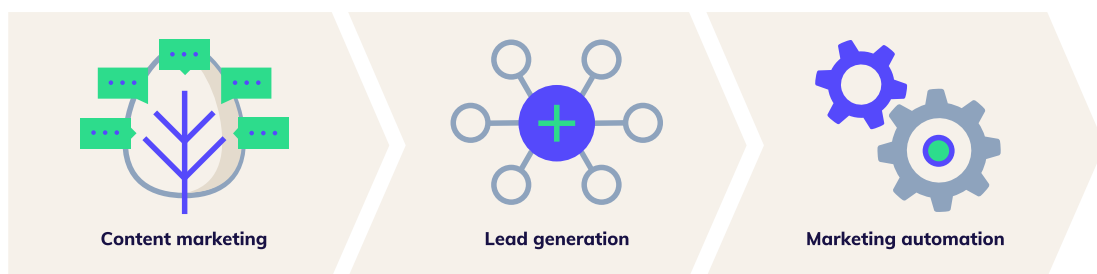
- Improved ranking for competitive search terms
- A reputation for thought leadership
- Higher lead-to-customer conversion rates
- Larger, more engaged social audiences Greater ROI from events
- More collateral and resources for use by sales
- More value from CRM investments and improved usage





# Getting started with inbound

Putting inbound marketing to work for your business, and generating maximum results, requires the implementation of three core pillars: [content marketing](#), [lead generation](#), and [marketing automation](#).



## Content marketing

Creating quality content that aligns with your buyer's questions and needs is at the heart of effective inbound marketing.

In fact, content plays a key role at every step of the inbound methodology. It helps you increase search traffic, convert leads, and nurture and close customers.

Your content can take many forms. Blogs and ebooks are some of the easiest and most reliable formats to get started with. Later you might graduate to infographics, slideshares, webinars, video, and other types of rich content.



### Lead generation

With more visitors coming to your website to consume your content, lead generation is your next concern.

Leads don't convert themselves. So you need to create conversion opportunities (lots of them) to help them along the way.

Ideally, every page and post on your website will feature a relevant call to action or conversion opportunity. You must align all your calls to action, landing pages, forms, and content offers to earn a prospect's trust and obtain their valuable contact data.

You also need to optimise your website for conversion to ensure that your main marketing site isn't letting the side down when it comes to converting leads.

### Marketing automation

Marketing automation isn't just software, it's an inbound discipline in its own right.

Learning how to use marketing automation to segment your audience, monitor and engage leads across channels, and build effective email sequences is an essential component of any successful inbound programme.



