

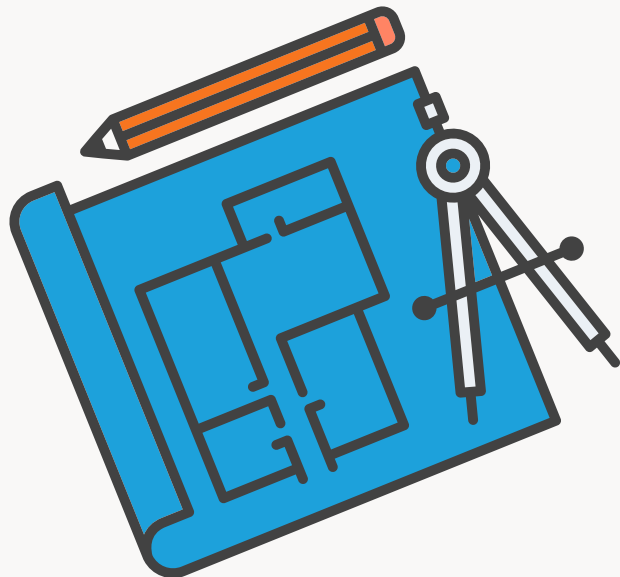


HubSpot

**CONSTRUCTING A  
WINNING BLUEPRINT**  
*for 2017*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*(click any section  
to jump to it!)*



F	FORWARD	3
I	INTRODUCTION	4
1	INBOUND MARKETING	5
2	LEAD GENERATION	13
O	BUYER PERSONAS	14
O	COMPELLING CONTENT	23
O	WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION	30
3	REPORTING & ROI	35
C	CONCLUSION	40



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## WRITTEN BY HUBSPOT PARTNERS

This entire “Constructing a Winning Blueprint in 2017” ebook is a collaboration between **23 unique HubSpot Agency Partners**. Each agency has experience in the manufacturing space and contributed a section on how they believe manufacturers can overcome the biggest marketing and sales challenges facing the industry in 2017. To learn more about the participating agencies, check out the rest of this ebook.

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**PRODUCED BY ASHLEIGH ERTURK** 

Ashleigh Erturk is a Channel Marketing Manager at HubSpot. She's been working at the company since February 2016, focused exclusively on the [Agency Partner Program](#).

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW: WHY MANUFACTURERS SHOULD EMBRACE INBOUND MARKETING

Jack Welch once said, “The moment the rate of change outside an organization exceeds the rate of change within, the end is near.”

In his 20 years as CEO of General Electric, Welch tenured an increase in the company’s value of more than 4,000 percent. He did this not by shunning change, but by welcoming it and using it to educate a wider audience.

Think of the alternative and a company like Kodak. Instead of zooming in on why they existed, they chose to frame themselves by what they did. In short, a company known for preserving memories was left behind because they were so hell bent on how those memories were preserved. Instead of listening to what people wanted, they tried to dictate it. Instead of embracing technology and the new opportunities it provides, they rebuked it.

This can be true for manufacturing, as well, particularly as it relates to sales and marketing. Will there be manufacturers so entrenched in the current process of how they generate leads and new sales that they fail to actually sell and generate as many leads as they could? Not if inbound marketers have anything to say about it.

Today, people go to the web to find answers to their problems, to read reviews of products, to get advice on what, when, and where to make a purchase. They’re consuming digital information that affects their buying patterns, information that someone is creating. Shouldn’t it be you?

By attracting new visitors to your website with valuable information, converting that traffic into new leads with innovative software, nurturing and closing those leads into new customers, and then delighting the heck out of the customers you have, only then will you use technology to its fullest potential.

Change is going to happen, whether we like it or not. And as Charles Darwin observed, it isn’t the strongest or most intelligent that survive. It’s the ones who are most adaptable to change.



**CHAD STAMM | [TMC DIGITAL MEDIA](#)**

TMC Digital Media is a full service inbound marketing agency specializing in foodservice equipment manufacturing. We’re here to change the way marketing provides support to sales by creating remarkable content and a brand awareness that generates and nurtures new leads.

# SECTION ①

## INBOUND MARKETING

---



F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## REALITY CHECK: PROSPECTS CAN'T FIND YOU IF YOU DON'T MARKET TO THEM

Today, 95% of purchases begin via a search online, marketing seems to have more “moving parts,” and the buyer’s journey has changed dramatically. B2C buying and selling practices have fully permeated the B2B world—the entire selling model must change along with it. Yet, business owners and managers still insist on using old sales and nurturing tactics. There is a slight turn in attitudes, with management now realizing that the buyer’s journey is no longer linear. Well-informed buyers typically reach out to sales people only when they are ready. Buyers are self-educated, which changes the salesperson’s role significantly. How does today’s manufacturing company and sales staff prepare for the educated buyer, and how do they remain involved in the 70% of the research that buyers are doing prior to contacting sales people? Surely, they can prepare, and not just react to emails coming in. What’s to be done? How about a reality check?

### REALITY CHECK

- Nobody is going to answer your sales person’s phone call
- Nobody is going to beat a path to your doorstep if they don’t know you
- Nobody cares that you make the best products in the world if they’ve never heard of you

### BIGGEST MYTH: THERE IS NO ONE SOLUTION

- An SEO program is only as good as the content you create
- One blog every couple of months will get nobody’s attention
- An email campaign that does not target personas and is not creative will not be successful.
- A new website that is not well thought out from the perspective of your audience will not generate the leads you hope for
- You can’t win without a plan

It’s time. Get beyond the myths, stay ahead of your competition, and start a marketing plan now.

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### BOB GRANT | [GRANT MARKETING](#)

Grant Marketing helps clients grow business, providing brand development and marketing for manufacturing and industrial companies. As a skilled HubSpot Gold partner, we help B2B companies create, implement, and integrate inbound marketing strategies into their marketing mix. Grant is a small firm with big shoulders, solid expertise, and deep vision.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## FINDING A UNIQUE BRAND VOICE AND PROMISE

No matter what your business produces, distributes, or sells, there is one thing that clients will pay attention to above all else – the voice of your brand. People need to feel that they are buying into something bigger than just products or services. They want to know your company's story, and how it relates to the specific challenges they are facing. They want to find a reason to trust you.

Even if your prices are lower or your products are superior to those of your competitors, you cannot build lasting loyalty without first developing a solid brand. Establishing a consistent and trustworthy brand image that represents your company's purpose, personality, and values is one of the most important steps you can take towards achieving marketing success.

It's important to understand that developing a brand voice and promise involves much more than simply choosing the right colors or a creative logo for your website. Your brand should be a true reflection of everything your company stands for and what you hope to achieve in the future. It should be reflected in every form of communication that occurs between you and your target audience. It must be continually maintained and improved, and perhaps most importantly, it must adapt to the world and the people around it.

How do you find your unique brand voice? You can start by taking a look at where your business is now, and where you started. What accomplishments are you most proud of? Who are your target clients, and what problems can you help them solve? What unique qualities does your business possess? Why are your solutions better than your competitors'?

The answers to these questions should slowly unravel the blueprint for your unique brand voice and promise.



### LISA EDWARDS | [SAVOIR FAIRE MARKETING](#)

Savoir Faire Marketing/Communications is an agency that works with a broad range of clients to solve a wide variety of business challenges. We are a collection of talented, curious, and dynamic individuals with a passion for bringing a brand story to life and getting it the results it deserves.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## MANUFACTURERS GET THE JUMP ON COMPETITORS WITH THE SAVVY USE OF LINKEDIN

Manufacturing sales rely on the art of relationship building, but with everyone chasing the same high-ticket buyer, how can you outmaneuver competitors? Since it's human nature to buy from someone who has provided you with valuable assistance at the moment you needed it, inbound marketing is a great way to reach prospective buyers first and nurture successful, enduring relationships by providing useful information. Social media is an inbound strategy that helps buyers find you quickly. In Manufacturing, LinkedIn is like attending a mega trade show, allowing you to sort through the attendees and exhibitors, find who you want to meet, and quickly earn access. Here are some LinkedIn tips to get the Inbound leads flowing your way:

- Have your entire team create an editorial calendar of helpful content like Slideshares, photos, and updates to consistently post on both your company and personal profiles for prospects to find in search, then like and share each other's content.
- Create a persona for each target, then use the search feature, narrowing results by industry, company, region, etc. Save your criteria so it's ready when you want to refresh with new leads. For more targeted results, use Boolean search in Google. For example, try site:linkedin.com/in "purchasing manager".
- Join relevant LinkedIn Groups and engage in discussions, offering helpful responses. You can also message a limited number of group members you're not connected to.
- Personalize invitations to connect by sending the request from their profile page.
- Save the email alerting you they've accepted. It includes a message link that allows you to make contact.
- View profiles of your best customers, and see people with similar profiles that appear in the "People Also Viewed" section.
- Keep an eye on who has viewed your profile or content you've posted by reviewing article stats.



### JANALEE SILVEY | [FRONT BURNER MARKETING, LLC](#)

Front Burner Marketing, LLC is a HubSpot Certified Agency Partner focused on helping you get the most out of your HubSpot subscription to generate qualified leads. Our experienced team of professionals can develop your entire marketing strategy, then make it come alive with content creation, social media, email, video, graphics, website development, SEO and PPC engagement.



F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## FINDING THE RIGHT BALANCE BETWEEN TRADITION AND INBOUND MARKETING TACTICS

For many manufacturing and industrial companies, it is not about balance when it comes to online tactics. They simply are not marketing online in a significant way. Most have a catalog style website, create little or no content designed from the buyer's perspective, and may attempt a tactic or two from the digital playbook. In most cases, manufacturing and industrial companies don't have the in-house resources to build and sustain an inbound marketing effort.

If you are a manufacturing company that does not understand inbound marketing, deploy marketing automation tools, adopt sales enablement best practices and create content your prospects love, then you are missing out. Why? Because inbound marketing is how you can generate leads in the quickest and most cost-effective way.

Trade shows and traditional marketing can still be effective if combined with inbound marketing. Just showing up for the event or running an ad in the trade journal are not enough. Content, even in ads and at shows, must be about the trade show attendees. Lead nurturing with proven effective email and call scripts that provide personalized value to prospects make traditional marketing work.

The right balance is what sets your team up for success with your prospects and customers, not some canned formula on a budget spreadsheet.

### ENSURE YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:

- What is the buying process of your ideal customer?
- Where is your target persona going for information and help?
- What information do your customers need to make the buying decision?
- What marketing choices impact the buying process the most, or in other words, at which points in the buying journey can you most influence the customer?
- Where does your sales team have the most expertise, and when does your prospect want it?

If you can answer these questions, then you are on your way to finding the right balance.

### TODD HOCKENBERRY | TOP LINE RESULTS



We dramatically improve your sales and marketing performance by showing you how to align your marketing and sales teams with the way people buy using online and offline strategies. We know how to grow B2B, manufacturing, and industrial companies.

## PRIORITIZING INVESTMENTS - TECHNOLOGY VS SALES VS MARKETING

Marketing technology is rapidly changing the way companies reach their customers. When it comes to investing your 2017 budget, understanding how to best use new technologies will greatly increase your ability to build strategies and engineer demand to strengthen marketing and sales efforts.

### UNDERSTAND VISITORS

Marketing platforms give you the ability to track the journey of your visitors from initial visit to conversion to close. Knowing how to use tracking data is one of the best ways optimize your strategy.

**Leveraging technologies like HubSpot or Google Analytics will show:**



Which pages are **engaging visitors**



What content is **driving conversions**



The **devices and platforms** visitors are using

Not only can this data help improve the digital experience, but you can interpret this information and send the results to the sales team.

*(continued on the following page)*

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## PRIORITIZING INVESTMENTS - TECHNOLOGY VS SALES VS MARKETING (CONTINUED)

### KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS

By collecting and interpreting the marketing data, companies can begin to paint a picture of the specific customer engaging with your site. **Sales teams can then use the results to:**



Utilize **lead scoring** to understand which leads are the most qualified



Use **form submissions** to understand the interests or problems leads are facing



Leverage **marketing workflows** to communicate automatically with prospects

Marketing automation technology prepares sales teams to speak with potential customers and increases the chance of closing deals. Investing in and understanding how these technologies work is key to the success of both marketing and sales efforts of manufacturing companies

No matter what marketing technology you invest in, make sure that the marketing and sales teams are on board. When different teams invest in different technologies, it can interfere with the other's process and strategy. Having marketing and sales alignment is key to the success of any new marketing technology that gets implemented.



### DAN ROMANSKI | POINT TO POINT

With deep industry expertise in Building Products, Industrial Manufacturing and Food Products Manufacturing and an approach that delivers outcomes consistently better than competitors, Point To Point has become recognized as an industry leader in Engineering Demand for leading B2B brands.

## HOW TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY SMALLER WORLD

The manufacturing world is shrinking. As information is shared through collaborative discovery, reverse engineering occurs in factories across the globe, and technology narrows the gap between manufacturers and their potential customers, there are three essential steps to staying competitive:



**Innovation** – Your team must continue investing in new technology that will get products to market faster and create a competitive advantage for your end customers, be it through cost savings or improved performance. This investment must also match up precisely with your customers' needs, which requires sustained effort to understand those needs.



**Specialization** – You cannot be everything to everyone. Remaining competitive means understanding your sweet spot, the space where your capabilities overlap with your customers' needs and your competitors' gaps in knowledge. This is the space in which you can win and the space in which you should invest.



**Communication** – If you do not continually emphasize both your innovation and specialization, you leave room for a competitor to win the communication game even if they are not truly winning the technology game. SEO is very real, and as product managers and project engineers retire, their younger counterparts are relying on Google as their primary research tool. Keyword-rich content published frequently on your website and shared across various social media platforms can ensure that your company is at the top of search results when someone looks for the latest technology in your niche.

A platform like HubSpot allows you to publish the necessary content as well as understand how you stack up against your competition in the keywords you are pursuing. Data-driven marketing can keep you focused on ROI both in where you choose to spend your marketing dollars and how you invest in R&D.



**SARAH CAMPAGNA | [LAUNCH TEAM, INC.](#)**

Launch Team, Inc. specializes in marketing for high tech manufacturing, optics, medical device, and engineering services companies who are expanding their technologies or entering new markets. Our team can get your product to market on time and on budget with a proven, research and metrics driven strategy to fuel sales.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

# SECTION ②

## LEAD GENERATION

---



F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

●

BUYER PERSONAS

○

COMPELLING CONTENT

○

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## MULTI-CHANNEL LEAD GENERATION & NURTURING FOR THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

In comparison to many other industries, the manufacturing sector has been slower to adopt digital and inbound marketing strategies. Engineers, fabricators, machinists and others working in manufacturing often turn to traditional channels such as tradeshow, industry publications and print material to market their products or services over digital channels such as search engine optimization, email marketing or content marketing.

By combining familiar traditional channels with today's digital channels for lead generation and nurturing, manufacturers stand to generate more leads and business. This multi-channel approach provides manufacturers the ability to attract and nurture leads via familiar channels while reinforcing their message and improving their conversion through digital channels.

Investing and implementing a multi-channel approach is a simple synchronization of marketing efforts. Manufacturers relying on traditional channels such as tradeshow can capture leads at the show and nurture them post show via digital channels through targeted 1:1 email communications with relevant content that is aligned with that particular buyer's journey. Alternatively, they can also use digital assets such as ebooks or whitepapers to generate leads online and reinforce that demand with targeted retargeting ads and personalized direct mail campaigns to move those leads further along the sales process and accelerate sales velocity.

Whichever approach they take, manufacturers can ensure that their prospects are fully engaged in the channel that is most comfortable for them while maximizing their lead generation and nurture potential.



**SAMUEL THIMOTHY | [ONEIMS](#)**

OneIMS is results-driven online marketing firm that successfully manages all aspect of inbound marketing campaigns for clients in various industries. We help our clients create demand for their products and services, generate sales-qualified leads, and nurture those leads through the buying process until they become paying customers and brand ambassadors.

## SOLVING THE SLUGGISH SALES CONUNDRUM WITH INBOUND MARKETING

Whether you are manufacturing advanced instrumentation, industrial goods, or high-end hardware, you are bound to encounter established competition, complex sales processes, and rigorous buyer expectations. With 57% of B2B buyers' purchase decision process occurring before your sales team is contacted, it is critical that your marketing content has the power to attract, nurture, and close new business. By adopting inbound marketing, you can ensure your sales team consistently receives high quality leads to close.

If you are struggling with sluggish sales, I encourage you to put a pause on your marketing activities and carry out an honest assessment of your website's content. Through the lens of your buyer's journey, ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1 Do we have a firm understanding of who our buyer personas are?
- 2 Do we have content tailored to each of our buyer personas?
- 3 Do we have content for a buyer in each stage of the sales funnel (e.g. attract, convert, close, and delight)?

Performing this exercise will help you identify gaps and opportunities for improvement in your marketing strategy. In the manufacturing industry, effective content marketing will differentiate you from your competitors and position you as a thought leader even if you sell similar products. Although it's no small effort, investing in content marketing will result in more relevant website traffic, higher quality leads, and increased revenue. Inbound marketing is the best way to break the gridlock of sluggish sales in manufacturing.



**CHUCK MILLER | THE MARKET ELEMENT**

The Market Element is a full-service digital marketing agency that specializes in helping companies achieve growth through inbound marketing services, creative asset development, and pricing optimization services.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

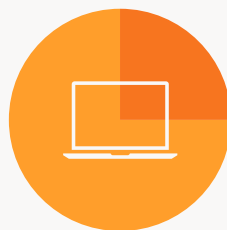
## USING INBOUND MARKETING TO BOOST YOUR MANUFACTURER'S REPRESENTATIVE SALES PERFORMANCE

Many small to mid-size manufacturing companies rely on B2B manufacturers' representatives as their outsourced independent sales team. Manufacturers depend heavily on the sales rep's existing customer relationships and also ask them to generate the lion's share of new sales prospects.

These sales reps are valuable to many companies because they provide access to their existing relationships and can achieve an immediate boost to sales. However, they are finding it more difficult to reach new prospects using cold outreach.

### DO THE MATH!

As reported in the Harvard Business Review, manufacturer's reps spend 25% of their time researching prospects while at the same time 90% of C-level prospects won't respond to cold outreach. 25% of time spent on prospecting with a 90% failure rate!



Manufacturer's reps spend **25% of their time** researching prospects



But 90% of prospects **won't respond to cold outreach.**



F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

●

BUYER PERSONAS

○

COMPELLING CONTENT

○

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## USING INBOUND MARKETING TO BOOST YOUR MANUFACTURER'S REPRESENTATIVE SALES PERFORMANCE (CONTINUED)

### 3 REASONS WHY THE HISTORICALLY EFFECTIVE B2B SALES REP APPROACH IS LOSING EFFICIENCY:



In the past, prospects viewed sales reps as their primary source of information. **Now prospects search online** for the information they need and instead of speaking to a sales rep.



**Prospects have less available time** to meet with new sales reps and create excuses to avoid meetings or calls.



In many industries where success depends on engineer-to-engineer joint specification development and collaborative design, **prospects quickly circumvent the sales reps**.

B2B companies can take control by utilizing inbound marketing campaigns, focused on attracting strangers with appropriate content and keywords, converting strangers to leads via industry appropriate calls to action and then nurturing leads into educated warm leads that are ready to talk when your sales rep calls. The revenue side of your P&L will thank you.



**CHRIS THORNTON** | [OPEN PATH DIGITAL](#)

Open Path Digital is a HubSpot Certified Partner B2B inbound marketing agency with deep roots in Industry, Manufacturing and Distribution. We empower B2B sales teams through inbound warm lead generation and sales rep performance tracking.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

●

BUYER PERSONAS

○

COMPELLING CONTENT

○

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## HOW TO CONNECT WITH LEADS WHO AREN'T YET READY TO BUY

Each day when you connect with buyers, (also known as potential new customers) it is most likely that they are not ready to buy at that moment – especially if you manufacture more complex products than simple nuts and bolts. Find ways to meet your buyer at the point in their buyer's journey – figure out where they are, so that you can add ideas, value, and perhaps even a new point of view.

When you determine that they are not ready yet to buy, nurture the relationship through multiple, personalized contacts and learn more about your buyers needs and ways your company can best help them. Create a non-aggressive cadence (multiple touches) of communication that matches their behavior. If their company has a strong Twitter presence, reference something that was said by them on Twitter in your next email to them. If they are more easily reached through the phone, call them.

If you are struggling to reach someone at the company that originally came to you through Inbound, look for one, two, or three others at the same company in addition to the original person to connect with. Individuals don't make buying decisions anymore, buying teams do. Don't put all your faith in hearing back from one contact when there are others who can give you information, refer you to part of the decision-making team, or even recommend you based on the relationship you've built with them.

Final tip: In your initial conversation, ask them for their mobile phone so that you can confirm meeting times via text. If they give it to you, they will be OK receiving a text here or there, and that can be a great way to connect.



**LORI RICHARDSON | [SCORE MORE SALES](#)**

Increase opportunities, expand pipeline, close more deals and develop sales leaders. At Score More Sales, we combine a scientific approach of data, process and tools with the right sales skills and people skills for consultative sellers.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

●

BUYER PERSONAS

○

COMPELLING CONTENT

○

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## HOW TO CREATE AND UTILIZE BUYER PERSONAS

A buyer persona is a representation of your ideal customer, based on your personal experience, your company's insight, and industry research.

You'll get a better understanding of how you can solve your target customer's problems by pulling together information on their demographics, job function, goals, and pain points. Armed with this knowledge, you'll implement effective marketing campaigns and work toward your goal of driving more leads — ultimately turning them into customers.

These personas can be created at an industry-wide level or drilled down to a handful of specific companies. For this example, let's say you have a few recurring customers, but you want to get on more lists of approved suppliers at Fortune 500 companies.

To begin, you'll need to gather as much information as you can — start by answering these questions with your buyer at a big-name business in mind:



What's the ongoing job focus?



Where does stress come from?



What's the day-to-day job like?



What's their buying behavior?



What content do they consume?

## HOW TO CREATE AND UTILIZE BUYER PERSONAS (CONTINUED)



What are their more common confusion points and questions?



How does their background play into their role?



Are there any other personality traits that factor in?



What standard or certification requirements are necessary to complete their job?

You might have to ask your colleagues, do some searching online, or get in touch with some other industry folks, but through this exercise, you discover that there's a small window of opportunity when your dream customer is searching for more vendors to add to their short list.

From there, you create a marketing strategy to stay top of mind for this particular persona through all manner of digital marketing tactics. After few months, when your dream customer is in that sweet spot of sourcing for new vendors, they receive one of your well-timed email blasts and fill out an RFQ.



### SHAWN FITZGERALD | RESULTS-POWERED MARKETING

Results-Powered Marketing, a HubSpot Diamond Partner and Google Partner, is the full-service agency solution for manufacturers and industrial companies. The company's team of engineers and online marketing experts use proven inbound marketing strategies to drive highly measurable, bottom-line results.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

## USING BUYER PERSONAS AND THEIR BUYER JOURNEY TO CREATE WINNING EDITORIAL PLANS

The best content plans for industrial businesses are built on a deep and well-developed understanding of what often is a very complicated buyer's journey. That's why buyer personas and their corresponding journeys serve as outstanding platforms for editorial and content plan ideation and creation.

Playbook development usually includes interviews with customer-facing client team-members, and interviews with the client's best customers, both to understand why they choose our client, and to learn about the journey they took to become a customer.

The takeaways from the interviews serve as the foundation for persona development, and the creation of buyer journey roadmaps. These roadmaps provide a great opportunity to tap into and frame the collective customer and prospect experience of the client team to create relevant and compelling editorial and content plans.

Here's what we do:

- 1 Schedule a workshop, inviting all customer-facing people from client's staff.
- 2 Using Columbus approach of audience self-discovery, help remind them why inbound is important, appropriate, and valuable to their business.
- 3 Set expectations that everyone in the room will be participating in some role of content creation, distribution, and promotion.
- 4 Review buyer personas, focusing on key questions and pain points.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

## USING BUYER PERSONAS AND THEIR BUYER JOURNEY TO CREATE WINNING EDITORIAL PLANS (CONTINUED)

- 5 Segment persona questions by buyer journey phase (awareness/consideration/decision), working on them in chronological sequence.
- 6 In awareness phase, provide preliminary topic categories to help the team focus their thinking.
- 7 Divide the team into small groups, giving each group specific assignments around topic categories.
- 8 Ask teams to present and explain their work, encouraging them to illustrate with examples from actual prospect or customer experiences.
- 9 Close the workshop by reinforcing the importance and value of their commitment, and reminding them of all the benefits their organization will realize from their commitment.

Follow this approach and you'll be creating great content plans, too!



**GREG LINNEMANSTONS | WEIDERT GROUP**

Weidert Group is a Wisconsin-based B2B inbound marketing agency and Platinum HubSpot partner, helping companies attract and close opportunities online.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## ENGAGING AN INDUSTRIAL AUDIENCE WITH COMPELLING CONTENT MARKETING

Content marketing's impact on the greater manufacturing community is—without question—on the rise. And for good reason.

Engineers and other manufacturing industry target buyers and decision makers are online—and they do engage with content. Sure, these professionals may not be as likely to comment on social posts or subscribe to your blog, but they are certainly consuming high-quality, educational content that helps them solve problems, answer questions, and compare application stories and use cases.

What does not appeal to this audience, however, is “fluff”. Instead, focus on facts and figures, and when partnering with a dedicated agency, pair your subject matter experts with content marketers who have the writing chops to translate your SMEs’ insights and expertise into compelling and digestible blog articles, Q&A interviews and thought leadership pieces, each addressing a topic your intended audience cares about.

The inbound marketing process also offers opportunities to test your content – to see what’s working and what isn’t. Content marketing today is highly data-driven. Superfluous copy and a pretty website aren’t going to cut it. Implementing a content marketing program is about helping prospects solve problems, becoming your audience’s go-to industry resource and nurturing leads down your sales funnel with tested content that addresses each stage of the buyer’s journey.



**SUSAN LAPLANTE-DUBE | [PRECISION MARKETING GROUP](#)**

Precision Marketing Group is a full-service outsourced marketing firm and HubSpot Platinum Agency Partner. A valued member of the Partner Program since 2008, PMG offers the best in strategy, design, execution and HubSpot expertise to privately held B2B organizations.

## PRODUCING CONTENT FOR THE MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNELS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

There are two phases to help you identify your most effective channels and produce the best content for each.

### PHASE 1:

The first phase includes identifying and documenting your ideal customer profile or buyer personas.

Research where they look for information and where they communicate. It may be mainstream websites, niche industry forums, publications or local associations.

Find this information by simply asking customers and your internal team members that interact with your customers on a daily basis.

Conduct interviews with:



customers and prospects



sales team



executive team



service and support team

Identify questions, concerns and pain points of your buyer personas. The goal is to identify the top 15 questions and create a content plan to answer their questions.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION



## PRODUCING CONTENT FOR THE MOST EFFECTIVE CHANNELS FOR YOUR BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

### PHASE 2:

The second phase includes working with team members to analyze what is currently working and what has or has not worked in the past. Decide next steps by letting your goals, objectives and strategy dictate tactics and tactics will dictate your channels.

In the final element of phase 2, implement tactics by testing content channels, analyzing engagement and making modifications accordingly. Here are a few scenarios:

Are you trying to develop a deeper relationship with existing customers and prospects? If so, channels that support video can be highly effective. Create consistent video messages that build trust and showcase innovative ways to support customers' growth.

If your business is focused on region or industry growth, using blog content amplified by targeted audiences on LinkedIn and Facebook can raise awareness and build trust with cold audiences. This tactic helps fill the sales pipeline that can then be analyzed for qualified leads.

Regardless of which tactics you implement, manufacturers who see success with producing content for effective channels do the necessary testing, analyzing and adapting to fit their unique business needs.



### STEVE JAMES | [STREAM CREATIVE](#)

Founded in 2006, Stream Creative is a Milwaukee-based, data-driven inbound marketing and design agency, as well as a Platinum Level HubSpot Partner. The team takes pride in creating multi-channeled campaigns that grow brands and create loyalty among business-to-business and business-to-consumer organizations in industries such as manufacturing, insurance, healthcare and more.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## HOW TO INCREASE LEAD QUALITY AND MAXIMIZE YOUR CONTENT EFFORTS

If your leads aren't a good fit, start here:



### ENSURE YOU HAVE CLEAR, DIFFERENTIATED POSITIONING STATEMENT.

Be overt about who you are and what you do. Your positioning should be descriptive enough for your ideal prospect to understand what your services are, and focused enough to not appeal to everyone. Ways to differentiate:

- Geography
- Industries served (no more than three)
- Unique perspective or service offerings



### PRODUCE EXTREMELY TARGETED CONTENT.

If you've developed buyer personas, it should be relatively simple to identify their challenges and goals, then craft content for each stage of the buyer's journey.

Don't make the mistake of letting company goals drive the topics — everything should be centered around your personas.



### COMMIT TO LEAD NURTURING.

Lead nurturing is sharing helpful content to leads who just aren't ready to purchase just yet (hint: almost all of them). It builds trust while moving leads closer to the sale. How they interact with your emails and other content (if at all) can help determine lead quality and interest level.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## HOW TO INCREASE LEAD QUALITY AND MAXIMIZE YOUR CONTENT EFFORTS



### USE LEAD QUALIFYING TECHNIQUES.

Get sales and marketing on the same page. They need to agree on several factors, including:

- Definition of a “sales qualified lead” (SQL)
- What makes a quality lead - budget, authority, need, timing
- Lead scoring values - see below



★★★★☆

### IMPLEMENT LEAD SCORING.

Assign positive and negative scores to traits and actions (offer downloads, job title, unsubscribing, etc.) in your marketing automation software. Once a lead's score reaches the one needed to become an SQL, it's passed to sales to close the deal.



### USE PROGRESSIVE PROFILING ON FORMS.

Instead of asking leads to re-enter name and email when they download another offer, ask questions that will help you score / qualify them (job title, budget, challenges).



### MICHELLE KING | [REPUTATION INK](#)

Reputation Ink is a content marketing, lead generation and PR agency with proven results helping manufacturing clients exceed sales goals. We've helped Stellar, an architecture, engineering and construction firm, generate millions in revenue through an award-winning blog, Food for Thought, and other high-value content targeted to the food manufacturing industry.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## POSITIONING IS THE PROPOSITION UPON WHICH YOUR ROI STANDS.

Selling used to be about superlatives. Words like first and best once closed deals. Now, buyers distrust anything that smells like promotion.

Today, manufacturers build power when they eschew hyperbole in favor of a compelling niche which deeply understands customers' needs and competitive landscapes. Well-positioned manufacturers typically tired of "scraping by" selling interchangeable products in a world of acceptable substitutes and they changed.

We see three symptoms of positioning problems:

- 1 Excess plant capacity. Low revenue per-employee. Margins can't justify CapEx.
- 2 Overdue AR indicates clients have the power.
- 3 "Sales" grinds away hours responding to RFPs.

### POSITIONING = PROFIT

Narrow positioning gains marketplace power. Positioning is not about advertising but reserving space for your un-substitutable product in the buyer's mind. Interestingly, a well-positioned company becomes operationally efficient—employees work with clarity and consistency. Six-sigma and process excellence initiatives become about solving fascinating challenges not winning a race to the lowest cost.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## POSITIONING IS THE PROPOSITION UPON WHICH YOUR ROI STANDS. (CONTINUED)

### YOUR POSITIONING

Start by investigating positioning ideas through three lenses and see how they fare.



Use keyword search tools to prove a market. If no one is searching for what you might make...rethink!



Can you interrupt RFPs because your positioning is so effective the buyer listens when you talk? If they smile, nod, and say, "Fill out the RFP," then you do not have a compelling position.



Is your idea strategic and operational, or language-based? Your business is not losing power in sales because it did not frame the right sentence on a brochure.

Then trial balloon vetted ideas with trusted customers to uncover unintended consequences. The final test comes when you run ideas into the marketplace. In six months, you will have insights on what to keep, change or drop.

Be courageous!



**SEAN M DOYLE | [FITZMARTIN](#)**

FitzMartin is a consultancy that works with B2B executives who are focused on improving the ROI of their sales and marketing operations. They hire us to help them sell to high-value hard-to-reach prospects; to craft relevant brands with defensible positioning; to use digital tools in powerful ways, to sell more.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

○

BUYER PERSONAS

○

COMPELLING CONTENT

●

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## WHY YOUR MANUFACTURING COMPANY WEBSITE IS NOT GENERATING ANY LEADS: AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

The websites of many manufacturing companies fall short of their marketing expectations leaving industrial marketers frustrated by a lack of leads. After all, the promise of the website was to be an online sales rep where customers would request a quote at any time of the day or night, and new business would roll in 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Some manufacturing companies invest more time and money into digital marketing activities like blogging and search engine optimization, social media marketing, and paid digital ads, but still do not see the pay off in terms of increased leads and sales.

Online marketing, such as SEO and social media, can help drive website traffic, but those tactics are not designed to produce sales leads or identify and nurture the most qualified prospects. While the website may attract visitors, it often lacks a way to convert those strangers into leads.

Most websites do not have a traffic problem. They have a conversion problem. The fact is most visitors do not click on a search result because they want to buy – yet. While a “Request a Quote” form is a mainstay for most manufacturing company websites, most website visitors are far from ready to make a purchase. Usually, they are simply doing research, comparing specifications or suppliers, and finding product information that answers their questions.

But whether they found your site via a search engine or clicked a digital ad, they came to your company’s website because they were at least somewhat interested in the information you provide. The goal is to give them more of that helpful information and convert those anonymous visitors into leads. After all, you’ll need their name and email address, as well as other demographic information, to use in your sales follow-up.



### CHRIS KELLEY | [V2 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS](#)

Chris Kelley is a Marketing Strategist at V2 Marketing Communications in Rockford, IL. He manages client accounts, and directs creative services and internet marketing strategy, including; inbound marketing, search engine optimization, blogging, social media and website development. On the weekends, Chris loves attending his son's college football games and playing guitar in his church band.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

O

BUYER PERSONAS

O

COMPELLING CONTENT

O

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## 4 TIPS TO GENERATE LEADS AND SALES USING YOUR WEBSITE

Is your website working for your company? Is it engaging prospects? Generating and capturing leads? Guiding them to your sales team?

If not, you're missing out on valuable sales tools.

Face the facts: 94% of B2B buyers conduct some form of online research before purchasing a business product. What will they find on your site?

If your company is like most manufacturers, for years you have relied on conventional marketing tactics such as traditional print and trade shows. The truth is, your buyers can -- and will -- research online before they ever contact a company representative. Your website should be an online extension of your sales team.

### 4 Tips to creating a website that sells for you:



#### STRATEGICALLY GUIDE USERS THROUGH YOUR SITE

Your website should have a strategic marketing approach that uses design, content and calls-to-action (a contact form, newsletter signup, quote request, etc.) to engage customers. Funnel users through the site by providing what they are seeking and creating opportunities for interaction.



#### TAKE A MOBILE-FIRST WEBSITE APPROACH

First, consider how users will interact with your site while on smaller devices (iPhones, tablets, etc.), and, second, how they will interact with your site from their desktop. From a smartphone, can customers easily find what they are searching for on your site?

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## 4 TIPS TO GENERATE LEADS AND SALES USING YOUR WEBSITE (CONTINUED)



### CAPTURE ATTENTION WITH VIDEOS AND AUTHENTIC IMAGES

A 30-second or less video of your latest machine in action can make an impact. Also, say goodbye to stock photography. Give online prospects an authentic experience with photography that captures the culture and personality of your company.



### TELL YOUR STORY

The content and design of your website should tell a compelling story. Give users insight into your brand, your culture and what you can offer them. Make a good first impression.



### KELLY BRAUN | MARKETING ESSENTIALS

Marketing Essentials offers inbound marketing services including Website Design, Content Development, Social Media Engagement, Email Marketing, SEO and PPC Advertising. We utilize cutting-edge industry tools and proven methods of tracking website traffic, lead generation and social media engagement with one intent in mind: helping you reach your business goals.



F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

○

BUYER PERSONAS

○

COMPELLING CONTENT

●

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## CREATING A VISUALLY APPEALING WEBSITE

A successful website design looks great without distracting from the content or intended goal of a page. It engages users, helps them connect with your brand, and inspires them to take actions that align with your website's larger strategic objectives.

### 4 KEY PRINCIPLES THAT HELP WEB DESIGNERS ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:



#### HIERARCHY

Establishing the relative significance of items on a page through the strategic placement and differentiation of fonts, colors and other page elements.



#### CONTRAST

While the elements of a page must be unified both visually and conceptually, it is the contrast between them that allows each to have its greatest impact. Contrast is achieved through the intelligent differentiation of type, color and other page elements. The ability to strike the right balance between unity and contrast is the hallmark of a strong and seasoned visual designer.



#### WHITE SPACE

The effective use of white space declutters a design, makes written content more readable, and allows each page element to stand out on its own and resonate more effectively.

## CREATING A VISUALLY APPEALING WEBSITE (CONTINUED)



### CALLS-TO-ACTION

Structuring your design so that its aesthetic and structural elements all encourage the user to take a specific action (i.e. purchase an item, request more information, etc.). The presence of a call-to-action will likely be spec'd in at the UI level of a site's design, but the site's visual or UX designer can influence the likelihood of its success by how well they apply other design principles to its execution. Does the call-to-action stand out in "contrast" to other elements on the page? Is it legible and uncluttered due to proper use of "white space"? Does it fit within a well ordered page "hierarchy" that presents meaningful content to the user before leading them to take action?

Successful visual design involves applying core design principles such as those above with a view towards achieving a website's larger strategic objectives. Visual design "mastery" requires talent, training and a wealth of experience, but its importance in developing successful websites can not be underestimated.



### BRYAN LESSERAUX | [BRAINSTORM STUDIO](#)

Brainstorm Studio is a NY-based digital agency with over 15 years' experience. We provide targeted design, development and marketing services to a wide range of clients. Focus areas include: web design & development, branding & design, web marketing and social media marketing.

F FORWARD

I INTRODUCTION

1 INBOUND MARKETING

2 LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3 REPORTING & ROI

C CONCLUSION

# SECTION ③

## REPORTING & ROI

---



F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## ANALYZING AND TRACKING MARKETING EFFORTS

On the long list of challenges that manufacturers face, analyzing your marketing efforts and measuring your ROI may be the most difficult. You're ahead of the game if you already have "marketing efforts" in place. But are they working? How can you tell?

First of all, a good marketing automation platform should do some of the hard work. These systems provide analytics on reach (e.g., web visits), engagement (e.g., email clicks) and other behaviors (social media follows, blog reads, CTA clicks, etc.) over time. Use these numbers to analyze your own performance. For example, did your social interactions decrease this month? There may be an organic reason (e.g., your big conference bumped up fans and followers last month). If not - investigate further. Are the decreases within certain personas? Did your use of visuals decrease? Did Facebook change the algorithm they use to display posts? Find out what went wrong – and fix it.

You can also compare your numbers with marketing benchmarks. A word of caution here. It's important for manufacturers to keep in mind that your benchmarks are very different than, say, B2C companies or even other types of B2B companies. [Recent research](#) shows that manufacturers see, on average, a 2.35% email click through rate. "Home and Garden" related companies see a 3.5% click through rate. That's nearly a 50% difference! Don't assume you're failing by using the wrong benchmarks (and vice versa).

Finally, the ultimate measurement of your marketing efforts – are you getting new business? What's happening to your leads? Is Sales turning them into gold? It's common for manufacturers to use distributors, which makes tracking sales trickier. Do your very best to maintain a closed-loop marketing machine, and you'll have an idea of where those leads are ending up. And hopefully – it's the sales funnel.



JESSICA MCCANN | [ACADIA](#)

Acadia works with manufacturing and technical B2B companies to engage new clients and increase revenue. We know what works - whether it's inbound marketing, inside sales activities or a combination of both.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

○

BUYER PERSONAS

○

COMPELLING CONTENT

○

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## FULL PATH ROI: ALIGNING ATTRIBUTION MODELS WITH THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

As marketing technology becomes more complex, marketers are faced with an increasing amount of data generated by the campaigns they're running. This is compounded by the nature of the sales cycle and buyer's journey in the manufacturing industry, which includes many touch points and decision makers over a longer period of time. An engineer may read your blog post via organic search, sign up for your newsletter and get nurtured via email, while a CFO from the same company may click your display ad on a trade web site and call a sales rep. A campaign must reach all the right contacts at the right point in the buyer's journey through the right channels. A marketing attribution model allows you to understand what efforts are not only converting but influencing opportunities across the buyer's journey.

First touch and last touch attribution models may work well for campaigns with short sales cycles but few manufacturers have this luxury. Using simplified attribution models may cause you to pause or overfund certain programs. With a full path attribution model you can assign values to both converting and assisting actions across channels. Integrating both web analytics and CRM account data will connect the dots and close the loop in longer sales cycles. There is no one attribution model that is right for everyone, but developing your own full path attribution model will allow you to more intelligently optimize efforts and budgets across channels for each stage in the buying journey.



**ROBERT CAVILLA | [BUSINESSONLINE](#)**

BusinessOnline is an award winning, performance-driven B2B digital marketing agency that elevates and measures the value of marketing.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

BUYER PERSONAS

COMPELLING CONTENT

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## HOW TO FIND THE RESOURCES YOU NEED TO CREATE & MANAGE A MARKETING STRATEGY

The first step in the process of finding your resources is getting crystal clear about whom you can reasonably access within your organization to assist with a marketing strategy. The answer to this question will vary depending on the size of your company, the number of in-house marketing dedicated employees you have and the executive teams' philosophy regarding marketing.

Manufacturing companies that have been around for decades don't necessarily have dedicated marketing departments or individuals. This is when you look outward for a marketing partner that can guide you through the marketing strategy process and work alongside you as part of your implementation team.

**Here are four points to consider when searching for your inbound marketing partner:**



Before you can search on Google for a resource for marketing strategy, you have to know what or who you are looking for. A marketing strategist will understand the principals of your business, your business goals and know how to incorporate those goals into a marketing strategy. An inbound marketing agency will feature marketing strategists as well as implementation and analytics capabilities to the table.



Much of the work will be done offsite and meetings can be in person or via Skype. If your company is in an area that doesn't have many marketing firms that have inbound marketing experience, it's critical that you widen your geographic search.

F

FORWARD

I

INTRODUCTION

1

INBOUND MARKETING

2

LEAD GENERATION

O

BUYER PERSONAS

O

COMPELLING CONTENT

O

WEBSITE OPTIMIZATION

3

REPORTING &amp; ROI

C

CONCLUSION

## HOW TO FIND THE RESOURCES YOU NEED TO CREATE & MANAGE A MARKETING STRATEGY (CONTINUED)



There is a difference between an inbound marketing agency and graphic design firm. You need a team that knows the inbound methodology, buyer persona development, optimization and analytics. Don't be fooled by a 'we can do it all' agency mantra.



Marketing agencies provide an outside perspective on your manufacturing business and will reinvigorate your team with new learning, fresh ideas, reducing your workload and getting results.

### VERA FISCHER | [TX, 97° WEST](#)



Proudly based in Austin, TX, 97° West is a fiercely independent agency, not only in ownership structure but, more importantly, from the conventional wisdoms and practices of the marketing industry. They have depth and expertise in all the traditional areas (interactive, account service, strategic planning and creative execution), but don't confine themselves to these boxes. The agency's strengths lie in its ability to identify a company's core values and develop clear, precise branding and positioning that have a creative voice, which speaks to the 'truth' of your company. 97° West is a HUB and WBENC certified agency.

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