

# THE **INBOUND** LEAD REVOLUTION



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## **How Inbound Marketing is Changing the Way We Sell and Buy**

If you're reading this you already have some interest in the relationship between lead generation and profit. That's a good thing. As a business owner, or as someone who may be considering starting a business, profit should be your primary concern. The reason for this is obvious. Businesses that turn a profit stay in business, while businesses that fail to turn a profit do not. This is a primary law of the marketplace, and like all primary laws, you ignore it at your own peril.

Every business needs a steady stream of customers in order to maintain profitability. Once again the reason is obvious. When the customers dry up, so do the profits. When the profits dry up, so does the business. Satisfied customers equal a healthy bottom line. This is another primary law of the marketplace. So maintaining a robust customer base should be the number one concern of any business that wishes to turn a profit, which is another way of saying every business, including yours.

One of the best ways of build and maintaining a robust customer base is through lead generation. Leads are people who may be interested in what you have to sell. In other words, they are potential customers. If you generate enough leads, then you will, in turn, generate customers. However, since every lead does not convert into a customer, you need to generate many leads in order to satisfy your business' need for customers.

Traditionally, businesses have used several tried and true methods in order to generate the leads they needed to survive. However, because of the internet and the rise of social media, the way people communicate and respond to information has changed. This, in turn, has changed their buying patterns and, as a result, many of these traditional, tried and true methods are no longer an effective way to generate leads.

This report will discuss these changes and will show you, the business owner, the new and innovative trends and techniques that have been developed in reaction to the marketplace's changing response to information and offers. These new methods have revolutionized the process of lead generation and, like all

revolutions, the sooner you adapt your business to these changes, the better off you will be.

## **Outbound Marketing – Your Father’s Way of Generating Leads**

You already know what outbound marketing is, even if you don’t know it. If that sounds ridiculous, it’s not. The reason you’re already familiar with it, but can’t define it, is because it is so pervasive. It’s in the background of almost all traditional media, whispering to you, shouting at you, jostling for your attention. In fact, you’ve probably been exposed to outbound marketing, in one form or another, every day since the day you were born.

Outbound marketing is, in a nutshell, every form of traditional advertising you’re already familiar with, including television and radio commercials, print advertising and direct mailing (also known as “junk mail”). When you realize that all of this advertising is, in fact, outbound marketing, you are suddenly able to see what a widespread and common marketing technique it really is. In fact, even the billboards you see by the side of the road when driving are a form of outbound marketing.

Outbound marketing, as you may have already guessed, generates leads by sending out unsolicited offers and information to certain segments of the general population. These population segments are selected by businesses based on geographic criteria, in the case of some direct mail marketing, or by demographic criteria, in the case of some television, radio or print advertising. However, no matter the case, the common element among all outbound marketing is the unsolicited nature of the offer. In short, as the very name suggests, outbound marketing reaches “out” to the public in the hope of attracting interest in what is being offered.

This interest is, of course, the way outbound marketing generates leads. Someone in the target market segment sees or hears an offer. They happen to be interested in the product or service being offered. They seek out the business offering this product or service and, if all works according to plan, they become customers by purchasing that product or service. In short, the offer generates the lead and, hopefully, the sale.

For many years, this approach worked wonderfully. Media was specifically designed to be built around offers. Television networks, radio stations, magazines and newspapers all generated revenue by selling advertising. The U.S. Post Office made money delivering advertising. Property owners made money leasing space to outdoor advertisers. You, as a member of the general public, had no choice in the matter. If you wanted to watch television, listen to the radio, read a publication or even drive or walk down a street, then you were bombarded with hundreds of unsolicited offers every day. Some you looked at but, over time, more and more of them you learned to ignore.

In response, business owners, and the advertising agencies they employed, had to up the ante in order to break through your self-imposed blinders to grab your attention. They had to spend more money creating ever more clever or misleading ads that would entice you or fool you into looking or listening. Because of this, the return on investment, or ROI, to generate solid leads using outbound marketing continually shrunk as advertising costs grew.

As technology made it easier for you to ignore unsolicited offers, this trend only continued. New media outlets, such as subscription and streaming video and music services, satellite radio and electronic publishing also helped to accelerate the diminishing ROI of outbound marketing. Today, the writing is on the wall when it comes to outbound marketing as a valid form of generating leads. 44% of direct mail marketing is thrown directly in the trash without being opened. 86% of people skip through television commercials or avoid them entirely. 84% of 24 to 35 year olds, the most valuable advertising demographic to outbound marketing, have clicked out of a website because of unsolicited advertising. For you as a business owner, this means only one thing – outbound marketing is becoming increasingly moribund, antiquated and irrelevant; it just doesn't know it yet.

## **Inbound Marketing – The Best Way for You to Generate Leads**

In many ways, inbound marketing is a direct response to the decline and demise of traditional outbound marketing. Innovative business owners, like you, had to come up with more effective and efficient ways of generating leads. Because of this, inbound marketing is, in many ways, the exact opposite of outbound marketing. Let's take a look at how.

The very name "inbound marketing" gives you a hint that something is different. Inbound marketing seeks to draw potential customers "in" by developing an ongoing dialogue that establishes trust and confidence in a business well before any sales offer is made. This is accomplished by providing the potential customer with effective two way communication (hence the term "dialogue") between the customer and the business through solid value based online content that may help solve a problem the potential customer is experiencing without necessitating a purchase.

This quality content is placed on the website of the business in question and offered to any visitor for free. The business generates organic traffic to the website through blogging, search engine optimization and social media marketing. This traffic, in turn, comes "in" towards the website because of a natural curiosity or need for the information contained within the content on the site. When this curiosity or need is piqued or satisfied by the content, a positive feedback loop begins to form between the traffic and the business. Trust in the business begins to grow.

The business will often have further quality content available on the site in exchange for contact information. Because of the positive nature of their experience on the business's site, the traffic is much more likely to "opt-in" for the additional content by providing contact information. Every visitor to the site who does so becomes a warm lead. At some point, as the dialogue between the lead and the business continues and trust grows further, an opportunity will present itself to offer the lead a product or service. If this offer is well-timed, the likelihood increases that the lead will respond favorably to the offer and become a paying customer. In many cases, the offer will actually be solicited by the lead

themselves. The business' inbound marketing sales funnel engendered such trust and confidence that the lead will actually take the first step to becoming a paying customer without prompting.

For any business owner this is a dream come true. An endless stream of eager, warm leads is created by a simple process and for a very high return on investment. In addition, the general public, who make up this business' pool of leads, is becoming increasingly familiar with inbound marketing sales funnels. They expect the level of service, information and trust that inbound marketing provides.

As result, the choice for you, the business owner, between traditional outbound marketing and inbound marketing to generate effective sales leads seems clear. If you are in the business of making a profit, and you should be, then inbound marketing is the only choice that makes sense.