LISTEN TO YOUR ADVERTISERS

How Publishers Can Differentiate Their Advertising With Inbound Marketing Campaigns

HubSpot
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INTRODUCTION
In case you missed it, the way people buy has dramatically changed over the last ten years, whether they’re shopping for a new pair of shoes, trying to decide which restaurant to go to for dinner, or whether a particular microchip is the right part for a new device they’re designing. Yet, for most publishers, your sales reps are probably selling advertising the same way they always have.

And that’s a problem.

People’s information consumption habits match their buying habits. Today, they’re consuming, sharing, and publishing information in new and different ways at a volume and velocity that is astonishing. Consider the following:

**Blogs** – 2 million posts are written and published daily (that’s enough content for 770 years of Time Magazine).

**Email** – 294+ billion emails are sent daily.

**YouTube** – 6,000 hours of videos are uploaded daily. And according to Nielsen, YouTube reaches more US adults ages 18-34 than any cable network.

**Netflix** – 22 million hours of shows and movies are watched each day (equal to 3 days of movie theater attendance).

**Pandora** – 18.7 million hours of music streamed each day.

**Facebook** – has 1.5 billion users, 23% log in 5 times a day, 47% of Americans claim it’s the top influencer for their buying decisions, 70% of marketers acquire new customers through Facebook.

**Twitter** – 215 million active users, 40 million tweets go out daily.

**Pinterest** – 20 million active users pinning 17+ million times.

**Yelp** – 138 million visitors/month, 61 million reviews written/month.

[Sources: YouTube, Social Media Today, Digital Buzz, Orbit Media, DMR]

Most of your advertisers are keenly aware of this. (If they’re not, you might want to check their pulses and see if they’re alive!) It’s why they’ve diversified how they invest their marketing dollars. It’s why you’ve seen such a huge decline in print advertising revenues and a major shift to digital marketing.

Advertiers want their brands to be found by their buyer personas wherever they happen to be. And advertisers go where their personas go. But brands need more than eyeballs and ears. They also need more than clickthroughs.

Your advertisers need to show, concretely, how their marketing efforts create sales. The pressure on them to show marketing return on investment (ROI) is enormous.

What are you doing about it?

- What are you doing to provide your advertisers with the solutions that will generate sales for them?
- How are you helping them achieve and prove ROI?
- How do your solutions match the way your advertisers’ target personas find, consume, share, and publish information?
- How do your solutions make it easy for
target personas to decide to buy your advertisers’ products and services?

- How have you adjusted your selling to match the way your advertisers buy media today?

- What are you doing to make it easier for your sales reps to sell more advanced inbound marketing services and make more money, without resorting to heavy discounts?

By the time you finish reading this book, we hope you'll be better prepared to create your own unique solutions. You'll be able to dig for more information and seek help where you need it. Most importantly, you'll be better able to solve your advertisers’ problems so they shine like stars, and you become a hero in their eyes.
CHAPTER 1

You’ve Got a Selling Problem
Bill, ad sales rep for Widget Enthusiast, is meeting Advertiser Amy for the first time. He starts his pitch with information about his publication’s parent company. Then he presents his publication, its mission, editorial (programming) content, special features, top journalists, production schedules, reader stats, and their demographics and some psychographics, along with intent-to-buy data.

Smiling, Bill proceeds to talk about the different types of advertising available. He opens with ad formats and special placements. He offers to “throw in” web banner ads and a monthly newsletter placement at a discounted rate. He talks about guaranteed impressions and average clickthroughs. And if Amy’s really interested in the most extensive reach and frequency, he can also do three exclusive weekly email blasts at a great rate.

Confident he’s got the sale, Bill then declares, “As you can see, Amy, we can reach the buyers who want your widget. Our next placement opening closes in three weeks. What ad format do you want and where and when do you want it?”

Amy, unsure of what results and ROI she’s going to get from Widget Enthusiast, sighs and says, “Leave your materials with me and I’ll get back to you.”

What’s wrong with this picture?

No Direct Attribution

Even if Amy bought from Bill, the results his publication delivers aren’t directly attributable. There’s no way for Amy to tell which leads came from those print ads, banner ads, newsletter ads, or email blasts. Because all Widget Enthusiast is tracking are impressions and clicks.

That means Amy can’t directly track sales to this publication or the specific tactics. Which also means she can’t prove ROI. So what are the chances she’ll be back for more? Slim. Especially if she doesn’t meet her lead and revenue goals.

But what’s even worse is that Bill’s publisher could be undercharging Amy. Amy could blow her numbers out the door, but because Bill can’t prove it was due to Widget Enthusiast, he’s stuck. He has to keep discounting his advertising, hoping to get more advertisers to make up for the lost revenue. That’s a slippery slope — a dangerous strategy for any media company, not just a publisher.

No ROI Conversation

Out of all the things Bill could have discussed that would have perked up Amy’s ears, ROI was it. Had Bill started out there, he would have had Amy sitting on the edge of her seat.

Most Bills avoid talking about ROI. Heck! He’s not even sure what ROI means or how his publication can prove it. Worst of all, he’s afraid his Amys will invest in other media outlets if he can’t meet their ROI expectations.

Sell Campaigns, not Ads

Stop selling ads in a vacuum. Use a consultative approach to focus on your advertiser’s goals and challenges. Co-create integrated campaigns that address her concerns. Together you can agree on how to create and set up direct attribution for results. Results are what she needs to help determine what is and isn’t working and to justify how she’s choosing to market her brand.
The more value you provide Amy, the more you can charge. When you sell campaigns, you’re delivering a higher value beyond connecting the dots between campaigns and revenue. If your publication is on target for Amy, it’s likely that you’ll increase the volume of quality leads she gets (i.e. leads more ready to buy).

With the right software platforms in place, you could use progressive profiling to learn about her prospects. That profiling will help you deliver more relevant offers that pull Amy’s prospects steadily through the buying process. Your lead nurturing services turn those prospects into leads she can confidently hand-off to her sales team. In fact, your campaign could even accelerate the buying decision in Amy’s favor.

When you sell campaigns, you let Amy see how you think, how you work, and what processes you use. This increases her confidence in you and deepens the trust between you. When you come to Amy with a campaign renewal, or an idea for a new campaign for her latest widget, she’ll be willing to try it.

Her trust in you grows. That trust reduces the effects of any negative experiences she might have (offers that don’t quite work, lower lead delivery than expected, etc.). And it enhances and deepens your credibility. She’ll have more patience, because you’ll have built up a track record.

You’ve become Amy’s trusted advisor. You’re no longer that pushy ad sales rep just thinking about your commission. You’re building a firmer, longer-lasting relationship you both come to rely on. So long as you never abuse Amy’s trust, you’ve got a loyal advertiser — which does wonders for your publication’s bottom line and the value of your brand.
CHAPTER 2

How to Create an Integrated Marketing Campaign Using Traditional and Inbound Marketing
1. Set and Define the Campaign’s Goal

By setting and defining the campaign’s goal, you’ll know how success is defined and can plan accordingly. For example, a campaign’s goal could be: deliver 450 qualified leads every month.

An essential part of this is defining what “qualified” means. For example, a qualified lead will answer all three of the following questions “yes”:

- Do your product specs require a smart widget?
- Have you had trouble finding the right smart widget?
- Do you need sample widgets to produce a prototype in the next 30 days?

This requires the sales manager to reach an agreement with the advertiser.

2. Agree on Value

$24,000 (sales based on advertiser’s sales team’s close rate) / 450 qualified leads = a value of $53.33 / qualified lead

3. Write Buyer Persona Narrative

A buyer persona narrative brings the buyer to life using demographics, psychographics, and behavior. This makes it easier to craft compelling offers for each stage of the buyer’s journey. It also helps you understand what information channels and formats will work with him/her at each stage.

4. Define Buyer Persona Decision Journey / Funnel

Diagram the buyer’s decision journey (aka decision funnel). This helps you determine which channels, depth of information, and formats you need at each stage.

For instance, the inbound marketing methodology defines the buyer’s journey in four stages. It also shows which tactics can work at those different stages.

Inbound Methodology

![Inbound Methodology Diagram](image)
5. Set Marketing Strategy
Think of a marketing strategy as a filter that helps you determine how to use your resources. This keeps you from chasing tactics that won’t be effective.

* e.g. To clearly differentiate our superior smart widgets from copycat widgets. Our widgets work flawlessly under the harshest conditions.

In this case, the strategy is about product differentiation. Other options include segmentation, launch, and dominance, among others.

6. Define Metrics to Track
You need to know what data is important to track and how frequently you’ll check on them. Together, you and your advertiser need to agree on which metrics to use to show progress and results.

Leading indicators help you tweak and adjust campaigns as they’re happening (usually checked daily, sometimes hourly). Lagging indicators give you the final results (too late to course-correct). Use vanity metrics with caution — they consume resources and mostly just make you feel good. Some examples:

**Leading Indicators**
- Landing page views
- Landing page form submissions
- Email opens
- Email clickthroughs
- Webinar registrations
- Webinar attendees
- Social media shares
- Prospects (first-time converters)

**Lagging Indicators**
- Subscribers/Followers/Friends/Connections
- Sales / Revenue / Profit
- Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)

**Vanity Metrics**
- Social media likes/favorites
- Downloads
- Website hits

7. Create Your Offers / Calls-to-Action (CTAs)
Based on the buyer’s journey and information needs, you’ll create however many offers you need for the campaign. If it’s an on-going monthly campaign, you may have multiple content offers necessary for nurturing prospects into qualified leads. If it’s a one-off campaign, you may only have one content (e.g. special report) or event (e.g. webinar) offer. Your CTAs are the heart of your campaign and set the framework for your tactics.

8. Define Tactics / Set Timeline
These two go hand-in-hand. As you define the optimal mix of tactics to achieve the goal, you’ll slot tactics on a timeline. What will be used, what results are you predicting from the tactic, when will it start, how long will it be used. Your mix
might consist of any or all of these:

**Advertising, traditional and new formats** — banner and skyscraper ads, and programmatic ads.

**Content marketing** — e.g. brand journalism and sponsored content. Can be in the form of ebooks, white papers, podcasts, videos (product reviews, demos, educational webinars, etc.), checklists, research reports, etc.

**Broadcast emails** — e.g. your monthly newsletter to subscribers, one-off emails sent to your subscribers (all or segmented).

**Social media** — e.g. posts promoting premium content offers, starting discussions / asking questions on topic related to advertiser’s goal, e.g. in a relevant LinkedIn Group discussion: “What smart widgets have you used that keep working in the harshest conditions?”

**Lead nurturing emails** — e.g. emails sent to prospects needing additional information and on-going support before they meet the “qualified” lead criteria. Always used in long-term campaigns, but can also be used in a one-off campaign to increase results.

**Landing pages, smart forms, progressive profiling** — if you’re using an all-in-one-marketing software platform, you can boost effectiveness using landing pages with smart forms that serve two purposes: make it more convenient (don’t have to re-enter same data to get the content) and gather additional new information about the prospect to help qualify them and segment your database.

**A/B Testing** — again, assuming you’ve got a robust marketing platform in place, you can offer advanced testing of offers, messages, creative elements (design, images, etc.), even audience segments, to increase results.

**Events** — Both in person (e.g. trade shows, seminars, workshops) and virtual (via webcasts/webinars) events have a role to play in the marketing mix.

**Merchandising/Contests** — Their use will depend on the goal, strategy, and resources. Designed properly, they can be extremely effective with consumers. e.g. a giveaway contest for a pool by a pool company in the summer.

**Apps** — Creating campaign specific apps can be useful audience engagement tools, in addition to being a potential source of revenue for your advertiser.

### 9. Roles & Responsibilities

Last, but not least, once you’ve got the plan together, you’ll need to figure out who is responsible for what pieces of the plan. What tasks belong to you and which ones to your advertiser?

Once you agree on the tasks, it’s now your job to manage your team internally and keep them focused on executing the plan. You’ll be reporting and reviewing the metrics you agreed to, sounding the alarm when things go awry. That way you can tweak, course correct, or renegotiate the rest of the plan, the goal, etc.

You’ll stay in close contact and communication with your advertiser throughout the campaign’s development and implementation.
Until both you and your advertiser have been through this process a few times, there are bound to be course corrections as you get it working smoothly.

10. List of Additional Resources

Pulling off this campaign may mean using resources your advertiser has no knowledge or experience with, and that you don’t offer.

Which is why having a list of experts will put you in a whole new league than other media sales reps.

On that list should be companies you’ve found to be reliable and high quality. The last thing you want is to refer a someone less than stellar, because of how that will reflect on you! But on the flip side, reliable, high quality work will reflect well on you. LinkedIn is a great resource for you to discover those experts. Set criteria that you feel they need to match so that you’re confident of your referrals.

Some resources to consider:
• Inbound marketing agencies
• Web application developers
• Public relations firms
• Merchandise companies
• Video production studios
• Web application developers
• Printers
• Mailing houses
CHAPTER 3
Shifting Gears for Success
The good news is your sales team is knowledgeable about your audience. Their experience working with your advertisers means they have a good idea about the match between your advertisers’ target and your audience. Your reps know your publication, its content/programming, and what makes it better from similar publications. They understand advertising and its benefits in raising awareness for your advertisers’ brands.

What they’re lacking is how to apply inbound marketing to create more than just a lift in overall brand awareness. This is why they devalue web ads and email blasts with deep discounts or give them away for free, just to get the print advertising purchase order.

**Instill A New Mind Set**

Your sales reps need help to shift to the campaign/consultative sales model. They have to wrap their brains around this brave, new world of inbound marketing. But they can’t do it on their own. They need your help to:

**Stop relying on cold calling and start using inbound selling**

Cold calling has become the least effective way for any brand to generate sales. According to Chet Holmes International, only 3% of any market is ready to buy now and 6-7% are open to buying.

Inbound selling aligns your sales team’s efforts with your marketing team’s efforts to generate, nurture, and close leads. Inbound marketing works on the 67% of the market that isn’t yet ready to buy — warming them up for your sales team. It also means your sales team is using inbound marketing methods to further the sales process once they engage with a sales-qualified lead. And to keep the customer happy once they sign the deal.

![Diagram](source: Ultimate Sales Machine by Chet Holmes)

**Become experts at developing integrated digital marketing campaigns**

Your reps will need training and practice to learn which inbound marketing tactics solve specific problems for advertisers. They must know which levers, when combined, will generate the results an advertiser values.

For instance, a brand’s goal is to increase their target’s engagement with the brand by a certain percent as well as to generate so much revenue within 6 months. What will that take?

In the end, your media company may only offer a piece of the entire campaign. By knowing what elements work well together, Bill can help Amy put together a completely integrated campaign. He could even introduce her to other resources (e.g. a live broadcast company, a merchandise company, a video production company, etc.) that could help her pull off this campaign and achieve her goals.

**Speak “value” fluently**

Most companies, regardless of what they sell, do so based on costs plus a percentage for operating and profit margins. In fairness,
accounting and tax regulations have driven this for centuries. Unfortunately, that approach leaves a lot of money on the table. It also sets up your relationship for conflict and tension. Buyers push to get the best deal and sellers try to get as much profit as possible.

That type of relationship focuses on the wrong end of the equation — with neither side feeling good with the end result. Buyers always wonder if they got gouged and sellers feel like they’ve been taken advantage of.

According to Ron Baker, author of Implementing Value Based Pricing and founder of the Verasage Institute, there’s a much better way. A way that’s win-win for both sides — valued-based pricing.

Bill’s happy because he’ll get his full commission and he’s motivated to keep Amy happy, so he stays on top of the team to deliver her results. Bill’s team is motivated to be more effective instead of him hounding them to be more efficient.

**Align Compensation to Reward New Behaviors**

Sales people respond to compensation models that reinforce behavior. When you change your emphasis to campaign-based digital marketing, you must adjust your compensation model to reward digital sales. You may even need to tweak your pricing. And in some cases, you may need to do both.

If you’re like most publications, you reserve premium pricing for print ads. When you put premium pricing on your digital products, you have created a built-in incentive for your reps to sell them. You can speed the transition by pricing digital higher than print ad prices.

Think even bigger and add an inbound marketing software platform that lets you offer a full range of marketing services.

At minimum, you should change digital products’ pricing to be on a par with print and stop discounting them.

**Provide a Safety Net During the Transition**

Without some sort of safety net, your reps will lack the confidence to step out and try this new approach. They need to know you’ve got their back. Provide training and coaching to help them develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities they lack. Create the best compensation plan you can, knowing you’ll adjust it as you learn from the
results it drives.

None of what you do will be perfect at the start. Nor will your sales reps instantly respond and be successful. You both need permission to crawl, stumble, and fall before you work out all the bugs.

And work them out you will, if you keep your eye on the goal, act consistently, and keep tweaking until the kinks are all gone.
CHAPTER 4

The Three Key Elements You Need to Shift to a Campaign Model
**Know Your Advertisers**

Although each advertiser has a different business, they will have similar needs and goals. Their resources, business strategies, processes, and external challenges on the other hand, are often radically different.

You must understand the context of their needs and goals. That takes doing research. You should have a deep understanding of the company, the individuals involved in developing, implementing and approving any marketing you do, along with the target customers, and their competitors.

The context will help you discover where the pressures and problems are, as well as the opportunities. For example, the value of a lead for Chipotle will be lower than the value of a lead for Ferrari, Lamborghini, or Tesla!

To be profitable in the media world today, you must build the capacity to provide products and services that generate high value leads in custom campaigns for your advertisers.

**What Results Does Your Advertiser Want?**

The top publications today start the conversation with a discussion of the client’s business goals and objectives. They help their clients express what results they need to be successful.

Let’s say Amy’s company is not making its sales goals. Amy’s been tasked with making up the $21,000 shortfall in providing qualified leads to the sales reps to close that book of business.

Bill asks Amy what the average sales transaction is. “$1,500,” says Amy. How many qualified leads do the reps go through before they close a sale? “50,” Amy replies.

Bill does some calculations and says, “OK. That means you need seven new customers. And that means you need 350 qualified leads.”

What criteria does Amy’s firm use to determine a lead is “qualified”? She doesn’t know, so together Bill and Amy figure out what the three pieces of information are that tells them this lead is a qualified lead. Amy gets the sales manager to agree that these three criteria mean the lead is qualified. But the sales manager wants 450 leads, not 350. Amy pushes back and says she’s only got budget to deliver 350. Sales manager says if she delivers 450 qualified leads, sales will close two additional accounts and so that means she’s got extra leeway in her budget — but only if she succeeds.

Amy goes back to Bill and tells him the lead goal 450 and the sales goal is $24,000.

**Develop the Campaign Plan**

Amy has decided she wants to develop a campaign plan that’s going to deliver 450 qualified leads every month for a year. Using the three criteria, they develop three questions that have to be answered.

They develop an integrated campaign around Amy’s smart widget products for solar storage systems. Amy agrees that Bill’s publication will write a monthly blog article on the topic of solar storage systems and the different types of widgets that make them more efficient. In the content, they’ll include a link for a whitepaper she has about “How to Scale Up Production for
Smart Widgets in Solar Storage Systems.” When a prospect clicks on the link to get that free whitepaper, he’s taken to a landing page with a smart form asking for his name, email, and an answer to the three criteria-based questions.

All prospects that answered yes to the three questions get sent to Amy as qualified leads. The other prospects are put into a lead nurturing campaign until the time comes when they’ve answered all three of those questions with a yes.

**One-Off Inbound Marketing Campaigns**

The above framework can also be used successfully for campaigns with brands that only have the resources to run one campaign.

The major difference between a long-term versus a one-off ad campaign used to be the trade-off among **impact, reach, and frequency**. However, with inbound marketing, once information (e.g. a blog post) is published online, it’s there forever. Rendering old frequency norms obsolete. And **making your published content all the more valuable**.

In fact, your published content, especially if it’s been optimized for search engines, is like an annuity — it pays dividends in search engine results year after year. This is why search engine optimization and indexing is crucial to your media company’s long-term health. Search engine optimization, site indexing, and on-going publishing are crucial factors in growing your website’s reach (traffic).

But it leaves the question of impact — how do you know which messages, which offers, which content is most valued? Especially when you only have a short period of time.

**A/B split testing** (assuming your website has sufficient traffic) is a high-value marketing service you can provide. A/B split testing helps narrow down different offers into the one that delivers the greatest results ASAP. The greater your website’s reach, the faster this information can be gleaned, the more confidence you’ll have in the results, and the faster you can deliver the results your advertiser needs. A/B split testing is by far the most effective way to test for and show impact.

**Dental Products Report – A Media Publisher Case Study in Brief**

*Dental Products Report* (DPR) is an online B2B magazine that caters to dentists and dental hygienists. Before using HubSpot, its sales team primarily sold CPLs, sending thousands of leads to advertisers. But the leads weren’t qualified and DPR’s advertisers wanted better results.

An advertiser agreed to do a one-time campaign on its oral cancer-screening product. The product sold for $100,000. If even just one purchase resulted in a sale, the campaign ROI would be extremely high.
The Campaign

- A sponsored article, which linked to the first landing page.
- A digital display ad with an offer for a free ebook on “What you need to know about oral cancer detection.” It also linked to the first landing page.
- The campaign’s first landing page had a form that asked two qualifying questions.
- Those who answered “yes” to both questions were automatically enrolled in a lead nurturing campaign.
- The lead nurturing campaign offered them a webinar where they could learn more. If interested, they clicked on a link that went to the second landing page to register.
- Those who attended the webinar were offered a demonstration of the product. If interested, they clicked on a link to the third landing page. These leads were then forwarded to the advertiser.

The Results

- 1,600 people visited the ebook landing page
- 826 people downloaded the ebook (51% conversion rate)
- 93 people watched the webinar (11.2% conversion rate)
- 13 people requested a demonstration (13.9% conversion rate)

Fewer leads, but of higher quality, were worth much more to this advertiser than thousands of leads that weren’t qualified and nurtured through the buying decision process.
CONCLUSION
Shifting into campaign mode is something that needs to be planned and executed thoughtfully. It doesn’t happen overnight, unless your team is already equipped to do so.

The writing is on the wall. CPIs and CPLs aren’t enough anymore for advertisers. They’re seeking ROI. And the combined powerhouses of advertising, inbound marketing, and inbound selling can deliver that.

With inbound selling practices, your sales reps will be able to target advertisers that are a better fit for your publication. And close more profitable business.

With inbound marketing services, you’ll add depth to your product offerings. Your advertisers will get fully integrated marketing campaigns that deliver what they need most — qualified leads.

As you become better at consultative sales, and developing integrated campaigns that deliver what you advertisers need — you’ll stop leaving money on the table. Instead, you’ll be reaping the rewards that come from delivering the value your advertisers have been looking for.

Most importantly of all, you’ll grow your publication’s credibility, enhance its reputation, and build trusted relationships that last a long time.

All of which add up to increased revenues, increased profits, and a much happier and more productive sales team.
**TYLER RHODES**

Tyler Rhodes is a senior inbound marketing specialist on HubSpot’s Media team. He specializes in helping media companies engage with their audiences, generate advertiser ROI and create new revenue streams using inbound marketing.

INTERACT WITH ME ON TWITTER:

@INBOUNDTYLER

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**SUSANNAH MORRIS**

As Emerging Verticals Marketing Manager at HubSpot, Susannah oversees the media marketing program to help media companies use inbound marketing to grow their businesses.

INTERACT WITH ME ON TWITTER:

@SWMORRIS2
TRANSFORM YOUR MEDIA COMPANY INTO AN INBOUND MEDIA COMPANY.

Bring your audience and advertisers together to drive more revenue for your media company.

Use our integrated system to unify your marketing efforts and track ROI for you and your advertisers.

Track contacts with a complete timeline-view of their interactions in a responsive database.

TALK TO US TODAY