

# The 7-Step Guide to Smart Internet Marketing

The Business Owner's Bible  
to Successful Marketing  
On the Web



INBOUND MARKETING SQUAD.com

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# Introduction

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If you're reading this eBook, chances are you're either a **business owner** or a **marketing professional** who understands the **importance of inbound Internet marketing** today. You've seen firsthand how traditional outbound marketing methods are becoming less effective and more expensive. And you know that by neglecting to **market your business on the web**, you're missing out on the **powerful business results** that an **effective inbound marketing strategy** can produce.

Whether your business is just getting started with Internet marketing or you just want to brush up on the basics, this eBook can serve as your bible to setting up and implementing a successful Internet marketing strategy, step by step.



This comprehensive Internet marketing eBook will:

- Clarify the **jargon** of Internet marketing
- Lay out the **framework** for successful Internet marketing
- Give you **the steps to take**, in the most efficient order, so you're **reaping the benefits of Internet marketing** quickly.

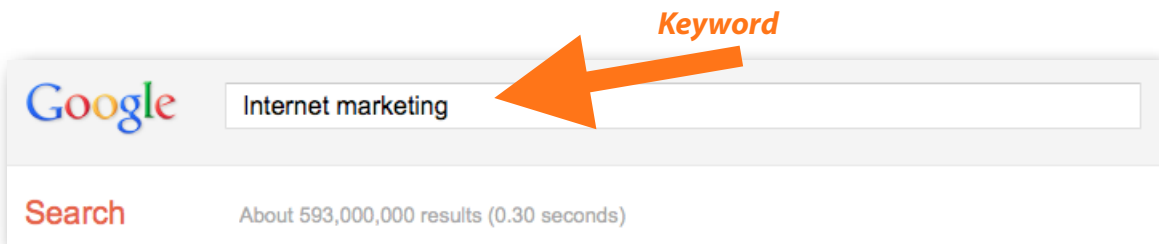
Our goal is to help you get the **greatest return on your marketing investment**. Based on analyzing years of behavioral data from thousands of companies' websites and marketing and lead nurturing campaigns, we've found **these techniques to be the most effective regardless of what kind of business you have**—whether that's a software company, a landscape contractor, a health care professional or a manufacturer (to name just a few).

# Step 1: Create Your Keyword Strategy

If you wanted to boil Internet marketing down to a single word, it's: **keywords**.

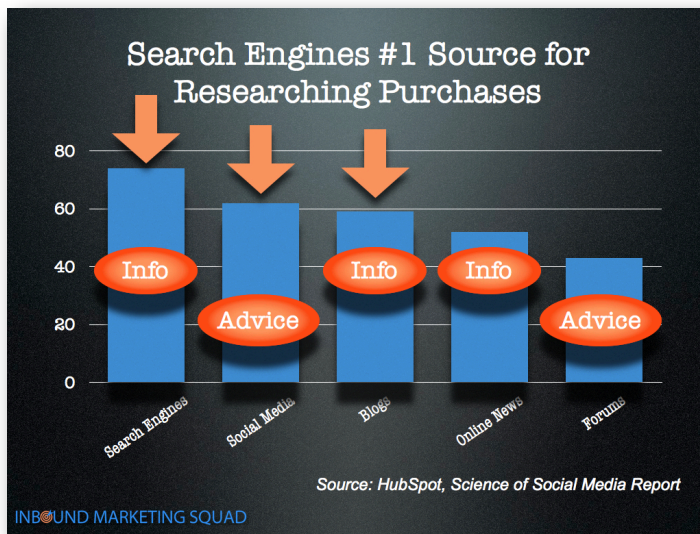
## What Is A Keyword?

A keyword is a word or phrase that a person enters into a search engine like Google or Bing. Or a social media site such as Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.



## Why Build A Keyword Strategy?

Increasingly consumers are finding businesses online through search engines. Did you know that **70% of U.S. adults use search engines to research products and services**



**online before they buy?**<sup>1</sup> And how do they find them? By using keywords! Fortunately, you can take advantage of this buyer behavior by **optimizing** your website around the **keywords** that are both **relevant** to your business and that **buyers use** to find businesses like yours on the web. Doing so **increases your chances of getting found by buyers searching online** with

those keywords, which will **drive more and better quality traffic** to your business website.

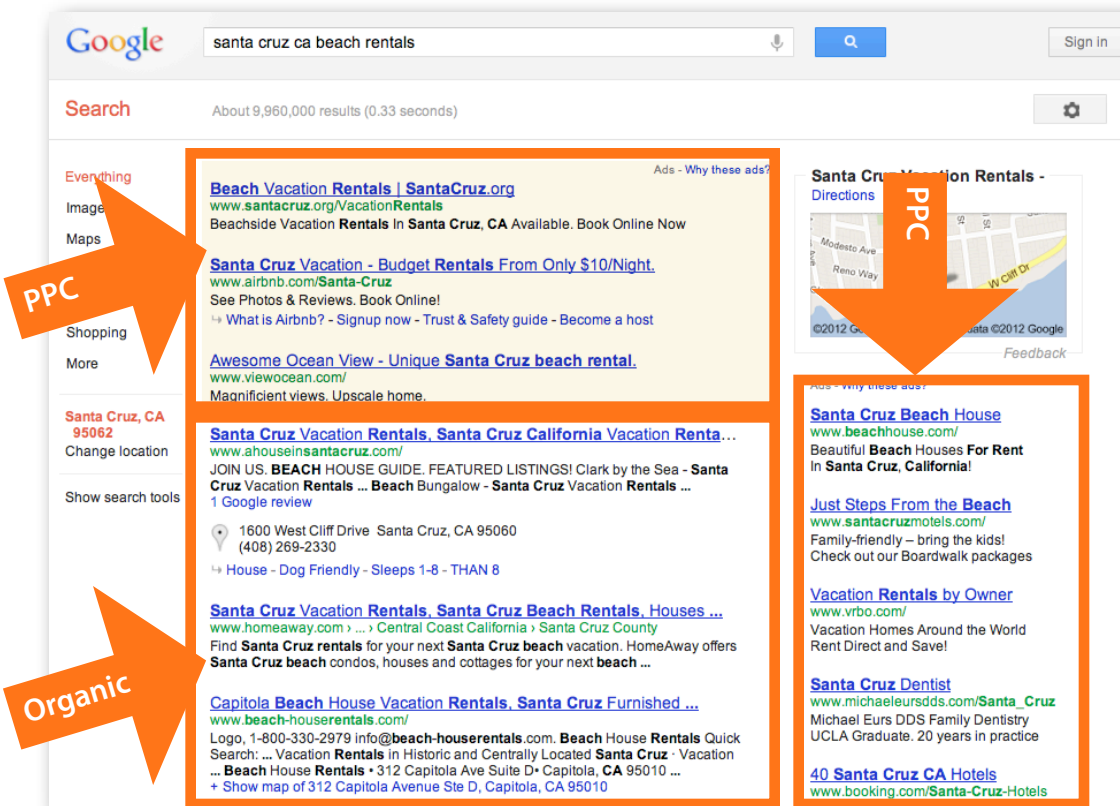
<sup>1</sup> HubSpot, Science of Social Media Report

While it's difficult to know exactly which keywords are being used by decision makers to find businesses like yours, there are **ways to determine the popularity and competitiveness** of certain keywords. You can also **test and analyze how effective** different keywords are at **drawing visitors to your site**.

As a business professional, you already know you need to make it as easy possible for your business to be found on the web by the right people. To help you do that, in this section you'll learn **how to define which keywords will maximize your potential** to draw in **relevant traffic** from search engines.

**Keyword research is a process that must be done regularly for it to deliver the results you seek.** It also gives you valuable insight into your industry's trends as well as which products and services are in demand at different points in time.

**Comprehensive keyword research can help grow your business** using cost-effective **organic search engine** traffic instead of spending money on activities such as pay-per-click (PPC) or cost-per-click (CPC) ad campaigns like Google AdWords. **Organic searches** are the results you see on a search engine's page that are not paid for.



The reason you hear so much about the importance of being on page 1 of search engine results is because:

- **70% of the links search users click on are organic<sup>2</sup> (organic results are trusted)**
- **75% of web users never scroll past the first page of search results<sup>3</sup>**
- **60% of all organic clicks go to the top 3 organic search results<sup>4</sup>**

## How To Create A Keyword Strategy

### 1. Create a list of 3 - 5 keywords relevant to your business

Think with the mind of someone searching for your product with a search engine. For most small- and medium-sized businesses, your keywords are not usually your brand name(s). Instead, think of words and short phrases that a prospect would use to describe the:

- Problems your products and services solve
- Pain or challenges the prospect faces because of the problems she's experiencing
- Core essence of the benefits of your products and services

### 2. Choose keywords based on difficulty and relevance

Some very general words such as "marketing" or "business" are very competitive, making it virtually impossible to rank well for them in search engine results. If you are a small- or medium-sized business, you probably want to choose less competitive keywords and instead choose those that are more specific and related to your business. The jargon-y name for these type of keywords are *long-tail keywords*.



The greater the volume of searches on a keyword, the more competitive it is. There are a number of different tools you can use to figure out how competitive a specific

<sup>2</sup> MarketingSherpa, February 2007

<sup>3</sup> Marketshare.Hitslink.com, October 2010

<sup>4</sup> MarketingSherpa, February 2007

keyword is as well as help you brainstorm new and alternative keyword ideas. These tools include [Google's Keyword Tool](#) or HubSpot's Suggest Keywords feature in its software's [Keyword Grader Tool](#).

Another important factor for picking keywords is their relevance to your business. While some obscure terms might be easy to rank for, they might not be relevant to your business and thus will attract visitors to your site who aren't truly interested in what you have to offer them.

You need to find a balance between relevance and difficulty. **Set some criteria or rules and apply them consistently.** You may find this challenging at first, but as you begin to **test these keywords and track results** over time, you'll discover which keywords and rules work best for your business. Don't worry about putting the "perfect" list of keywords together at the start. We'll discuss more about trying out different keywords in the "[Analyze and Refine Strategies](#)" section.

### 3. Design and optimize your website around your keywords

Now that you've chosen your keywords, it's time for the next section on [website optimization](#).

#### Additional Keyword Tips:

For more helpful information about choosing keywords, check out [HubSpot's Keywords Tips](#).

## Step 2: Optimize Your Website

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Now that you've chosen your keywords, you can increase your website's chances of ranking for those keywords. Search engine optimization, aka SEO, is about doing just that!

To get found, you should aim to be on the first page or in the first 2-3 search engine results pages for your keywords.

Google suggests you design your website for visitors, and not for search engines. While you should keep this principle in mind, it is worthwhile to learn a bit more about SEO to better optimize your site.



### What You Should Know About SEO

SEO is divided into two separate categories: *on-page* SEO and *off-page* SEO.

**On-page SEO** refers to how well your website's content is *presented to search engines*. This can often be improved immediately.

**Off-page SEO** refers to your *site's overall "authority"* on the web, which is determined by what other websites say about your site. This can take time to improve.

Even though on-page SEO accounts for only about 25% of how search engines score and rank your website, it's worth **tackling first since it can be improved quickly**.

### Test Your SEO with MarketingGrader.com

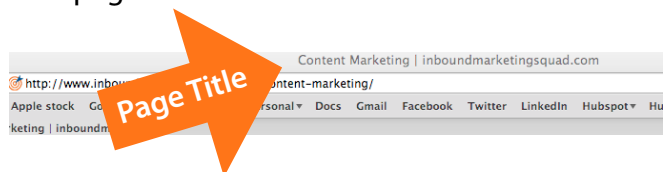
To find out how well optimized your website currently is, run it through HubSpot's free tool, [MarketingGrader](#). This tool will analyze your website and provide you with an overall score between 0 and 100. The higher the score, the more SEO-effective it is. These scores are based on a percentile scale, meaning that if you scored a 54, your website has scored better than 54% of the more than 3.5 million websites that Marketing Grader has analyzed. For on-page optimization, the most relevant part of this report is Part II: Optimize.

Do not be discouraged if your SEO score is a little low. If this is the case, you can probably get your website back in the game with only a little bit of work on your on-page SEO.

## 9 Elements of On-Page Website Optimization

### 1. Page Title

Page titles are one of the most important on-page SEO factors. Page titles are the text you see at the top of your browser window when viewing a web page. They are also the title of a page that is presented in search engines.



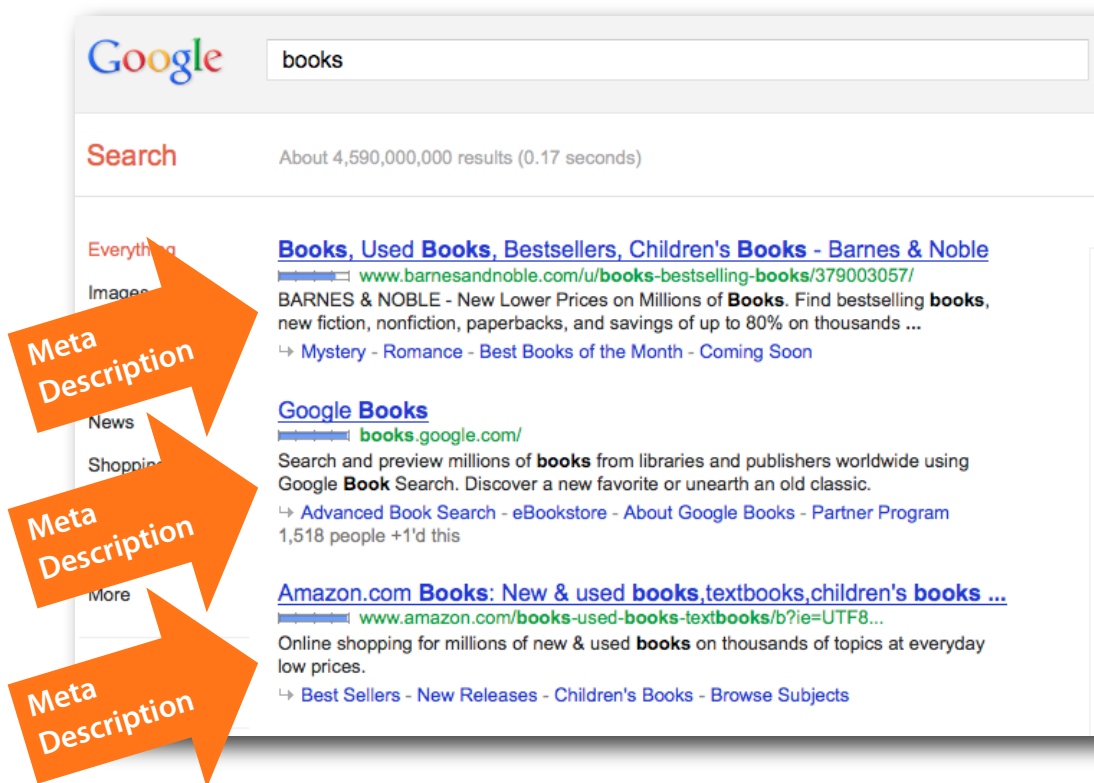
Page titles can be found and edited in your site's HTML code. The text that is surrounded with the <title> tag is your page's title.

The following are a few guidelines for coming up with effective page titles:

- Include keywords
- Make it fewer than 70 characters (including spaces) long. Longer page titles will not be seen in your web browser or in Google search results. If you make the page title too long, it will also dilute the importance of the keywords in the title.
- Put keywords as close to the beginning of the title as possible.
- Make it readable for site visitors.
- Include your company name at the end of the page title, unless you are a big brand and people search for you through your brand name.
- Use different page titles for each page. Each page is an opportunity to target different keywords.

### 2. Meta Description

Meta data is an often overlooked opportunity to attract visitors from search results. Interestingly, it does not directly influence search engine rankings. Nevertheless, it is a good practice to include keywords in your meta description.



Meta data is the text seen as the description of a site in Google search. These words attract a searcher's attention and help the searcher to quickly grasp whether the site is relevant to them, or not. For this reason, including keywords in your meta description can draw in visitors, even though it does not affect search engine rankings.

The meta description is not visible on your web page. The short summary of the web page, which is usually included at the top of the page's source code in a <meta description> tag, is not used by the search engines for any SEO purposes. The meta description is used to provide the searcher with a short description of the page (<150 characters including spaces) beneath each result. If a meta description is not included in the HTML source code, then the search engine will usually extract and display part of the content from the page in its place. Since the meta description is not as well understood as other page elements, there are some very common mistakes people make when creating their websites.

### 3. Headings

If a piece of text appears larger or more prominent than the other text on a page, it's probably part of a heading. You can verify this by checking the HTML code of your web page, and seeing if that text has an <h1>, <h2>, or <h3> tag surrounding it. Ask your

webmaster or a developer to help you check this. Text within the heading tags is more likely to be read by search engines as keywords than the text in the rest of the page.

For this reason, it is good to include keywords in your headings whenever possible. <h1> tags give the text more weight as keywords than <h2> tags, and <h2> tags have more weight than <h3>. While <h4> and <h5> tags do exist, their influence on keywords is virtually the same as that of regular text. Including too many header tags dilutes the importance of keywords in other headings, so **we recommend using the <h1> tag only once**. If the page is text-heavy like a blog post, then feel free to throw in a few <h2> or <h3> tags as paragraph subheads.

#### 4. Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

HTML is the back-end code (language) of your website that search engines read and interpret. Search engines extract relevant information from your HTML, including keywords.

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) on the other hand, is the “dialect” that specifies the template for the visual representation of your page (e.g. layout, fonts, colors, etc.). In the CSS, you define how headings, links and other visual elements of the text should look. CSS enables your site to maintain a consistent look and feel so when visitors navigate from page to page, they recognize they’re within the same website, instead of someone else’s. CSS also enables you to make global visual and layout changes quickly across your entire web site without having to redo each page individually.

**The takeaway here is simple: use CSS.** Putting layout-related information in your HTML dilutes the relevance of your HTML content, which is what search engines read and use to do their rankings. Most content management systems (CMS) today use CSS that lets you interact with CSS much as you do with a word processor such as Microsoft Word.

#### 5. Images

Images on a web page can certainly enhance a user’s experience. However, when inserting images into your website, keep in mind the following:

- **Associate text with pictures / graphics.** Search engines cannot ‘read’ images. They read only text. “ALT-text” is an HTML attribute you can add to your picture so search engines replace the image with some associated text. Content management

systems (CMS) such as [WordPress](#) or [HubSpot](#) make it easy for you to upload images and add text to the image's ALT-text attribute.

- **Include keywords in your image file name.** This will help you draw in relevant traffic from image searches. Separate different keywords in the file name with a dash (-).
- **Do NOT use images excessively.** More pictures means your page will take longer to load. This has a negative affect both on the user's experience AND SEO.

## 6. Domain Info

Search engine rankings favor sites that are registered for a longer period of time. Longer domain registrations indicate a commitment to the site and mean the site has a lower chance of being considered to be spam. Extend your website registration for \$10 - \$20 per year for an SEO boost. We recommend no less than 2 years and more is better.

## 7. MOZRank

[MOZRank](#) is a general measure of how much authority your site has. It has become the industry standard for determining how popular a specific web page is, which is why it's so important. The higher your MOZ rank, the better. Note that MOZRank factors in both on-page and off-page SEO. Improving your on-page SEO may help improve your rank, but there is much more you can do to improve it (don't worry, we'll [cover more of this later](#)).

## 8. Google Crawl Date

When Google crawls your site, it updates the information related to it such as your keywords and other SEO factors. (Crawling your site means Google activates an automated program that methodically goes through pages on the Internet and creates an index of the data it "crawls.") Therefore, you want Google to crawl your site as often as possible. Google's crawler is very smart. If your site is new, it may crawl your site frequently at first to see how often you create new content. Once it sees you only update it once each month, then it will only check back on a monthly basis.

The best thing you can do to make Google crawl your site more frequently is to regularly produce fresh content and publish it on your website. We'll cover this in more detail later on in [Step 3](#).

## 9. URL Structure

The URL of a web page is its web address. For example, our blog's address is <http://inboundmarketingsquad.com/blog>. The URL structure of a website is about how the different URLs connect with each other.

Unfortunately, improving your website's URL structure (sometimes called "site architecture"), is one of the more difficult aspects of on-page website optimization. The methods for fixing these issues depend entirely on the back-end parts of your website, such as your content management system or programming framework. Nevertheless, if you have a competent webmaster or web developer by your side, having him tackle these issues can significantly improve your SEO. Your best approach might be hand to him the following:

### Principles of Good URL Structure

- **Apply a 301 redirect where necessary.** A 301 redirect forwards an old URL to a new one. Make sure you do this if you change the URL of a page on your site. A common mistake is not applying a 301 redirect between `yoursite.com` and `www.yoursite.com`. This can be quite a problem from an SEO standpoint, because search engines will give separate credit to both versions of your site!
- **Avoid pages with deeply nested URLs.** Here is an example of a deeply nested URL:

*<http://yoursite.com/about/management/contact/phone>*

Deeply nested pages will get less SEO credit. You can fix this problem by improving your overall site design.

- **Include keywords in your URLs.** If you've already bought your main URL, then don't worry about buying a new one just for this purpose. You can clean the URLs of your interior pages to include keywords and not look like gibberish.
- **For your internal page URLs, separate individual keywords with dashes (-).** For example: <http://www.inboundmarketingsquad.com/content-marketing/> is a good URL that captures "content" and "marketing" as keywords.
- **Create static URLs, not dynamic ones.** A static URL is one that doesn't change and doesn't have variable strings. [This article from WebConfs explains in greater detail](#)

[the differences between static and dynamic URLs, how to recognize them and how to fix them.](#)

Check to see if different URLs appear for the same page in your website. If there are, you can look into how to create static URLs with your web server software. Do a Google search on “create static URL + [name of your server’s software]”.

If you’re not technically inclined, get help from your webmaster, hosting provider or a web developer.

## Avoid “Keyword Stuffing”

After reading this you might think, “Keywords are really important. If having keywords all over my page helps me rank for them, I should just fill my page with these keywords.”

Unfortunately, it’s not that simple. Apart from leading to a bad experience for site visitors, search engines are smart enough to detect this strategy and take measures to discount such web pages. Trying to trick search engines is not a good SEO strategy, and sacrificing readability for SEO isn’t a good idea either.

## Improving Off-Page SEO With Inbound Links

**So if on-page SEO accounts for 25% of your overall search engine ranking, what makes up the remaining 75%?** As we mentioned before, **off-page SEO** is based on the **authority of your website**, or what other websites ‘say’ about yours. Simply put, websites with better or higher authority will rank better than websites with lower authority.

**One of the main influences on a website’s authority is inbound links.** If another website links to your website or a page on your website (like a blog article), that is called an inbound link. More inbound links is better, and more inbound links from websites with high authority themselves is the best! For example, an inbound link from *The New York Times’* website is much more valuable than an inbound link from a low-trafficked blog with a small readership.

**So what’s the best way to attract more inbound links** (or ‘link love’ as we like to call it)? Through **content creation!** Creating valuable, remarkable content that other websites will naturally want to link to in their own content is a great way to increase

your website's inbound links. In addition, you can improve your chances of attracting inbound links by **sharing your content in social media** and **optimizing it for search results** so it can be easily found. We'll discuss content creation more in [Step 3](#) of this eBook and social media promotion in [Step 4](#).

## Step 3: Create Blog & Marketing Offers

Blogging platforms (a smarty-pants way of saying “tools”) like [HubSpot](#), [WordPress](#) and [Blogger](#) have made publishing content on the web easier than ever.

Now that you have developed a clearer understanding of your business’ keywords and

optimized your existing web pages for search engines, your next step should be to attract more visitors. Blogging and creating other content like eBooks, special reports, white papers, videos, audio podcasts and webinars are powerful ways to help more ideal future customers discover your business online.



### How to Think About Business Blogging

When thinking about blogging, take off your hat as a business owner or marketing manager and instead, try to think like a magazine editor. The goal of a business blog should be to publish articles that share industry expertise and knowledge, much in the way a column or an article in an industry magazine would. Your goal should NOT be to publish articles that push or promote your products and services. If you do that, you’ll find that few people, if any, will read your blog or share it.

Think about what you’re writing and the words you’re using. Don’t use industry jargon that only you, your employees and industry insiders would understand. [Just as you did when brainstorming keywords](#), think of the words your prospects would use that would lead them to your business’ website. Use those keywords in your blog posts.

### Getting Set Up With Blogging

While writing content that’s interesting to your prospective customers is important, you first need a way to publish that content online. There are many paid and free tools

available that give you various ways to publish content online. When choosing a blogging tool, consider a few things.

**The most important thing you can do is to make your blog be a part of your business website.**<sup>5</sup> Without a blog, a website is sort of like a printed brochure that doesn't change until you run out of copies. A blog makes your website more dynamic by automatically injecting new content every time a blog article is published. **Search engines reward higher rankings** to websites that **consistently add fresh content**, and these **higher rankings translate into new visitors and leads** for your business.

## Blogging Tools to Consider

While it's important that your blogging software be easy to use, it's more **important that your content be useful and interesting**. If you're looking for a blogging tool for your business, some options include [HubSpot](#), [WordPress](#), [TypePad](#), [Blogger](#), [Posterous](#), [LiveType](#), [Drupal](#), etc.

These platforms all offer a content management system (CMS) that allows you to easily add content to your blog, without needing to know any HTML code. This lets you quickly update your site with industry news or other timely information, without having to wait for a webmaster or technically inclined person to post your content.

## Key Components of A Great Blog Post

A well-constructed blog post includes several components essential for attracting traffic and [converting your traffic into leads](#):

- **A compelling article title.** Your blog article's title is the first thing people (and search engines) will see. The clearer and more specific it is, the more likely it will be read and shared by readers with their networks. It also needs to include an industry keyword because that's what will appeal to search engines.
- **Well-written and formatted text.** The body of your article should be well-written and formatted in a way that makes it easy to read. Consider using subheads (header tags) and bulleted lists to break up the content into sections. Have a

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<sup>5</sup> Your blog's URL (its address on the web) should be in your domain, e.g. <http://www.inboundmarketingsquad.com/blog> or <http://blog.inboundmarketingsquad.com>

colleague or friend proofread it for any glaring errors such as typos, misspellings, context, grammar and factual errors before you publish it.

- **Images/Videos.** Relevant multimedia content can make a blog article more memorable and fun to read. It also helps to break up text to make it more pleasing to the eye. Your goal should be to include one relevant image per post. Slideshows, videos and infographics are other examples of rich media you can feature.
- **Links.** Include in-text links to relevant content. These can also point to [landing pages](#) (which we'll discuss more in [Step 5](#)) to help you generate more leads for your content.
- **Call-to-Action.** Every blog article you publish should include a relevant call-to-action (aka CTA) at the bottom of the article to help boost lead generation (we'll cover this in depth in [Step 5](#)). You can learn more about CTAs by reading our eBook, *How to Create Effective Calls-to-Action*.

## Deciding What to Blog About

Most **business blogs start with a purpose**. What are you trying to educate your industry and potential customers about? This education is not about your product(s) or service(s). It's about common industry issues and the problems your potential customers face, which your product or service helps solve.

A great way to start blogging is to **think about the 10 most common questions you get asked by prospective customers**. Take each one of those questions and write a short article giving an answer. Do this once a week for 10 weeks and you'll have the strong foundation for a successful blog.

Remember to **let your expertise and passion shine through** while keeping these business blog best practices in the back of your mind.

## You Blog to Generate & Convert Leads

The primary goal of your business blog is to drive lead conversions. [In Step 5](#), you'll learn how to create landing pages and calls-to-action (CTAs) to help drive more potential customers to your business. Business blogging is a great way to attract organic search engine traffic and to engage with your audience. Never forget that all

that traffic and engagement does your business no good unless it's converting into a qualified lead.

To convert more leads, include graphic CTAs in the sidebar of your blog as a yet another way to convert more visitors into leads. Add text CTAs in the **beginning**, middle and end of each blog post. They should be written in simple, clear language and encourage your reader to take some type of action, e.g.:

**Download** [White Paper Title] || **Follow** [Author] **on** [category topic]

|| **Get** [blog title] **daily in your inBox** || **Subscribe to** [newsletter title]

**Tip: CTAs convert more often when the offers closely relate to the content of the blog post.**

For example: let's say you sell underwater cameras and related gear. Your post is about the pros and cons of using a specific type of underwater housing for digital video cameras. Your blog's CTA in this case would perform really well if you offered a free

report on how to maintain your underwater housing in perfect waterproof condition.

To your left is an example of a blog call-to-action.

These calls-to-action should link directly to a **landing page that provides downloadable access to a more in-depth learning experience** such as an eBook, white paper or webinar after they've filled out a lead generation form.



## Other Content You Can Use for Lead Generation

While it's a great place to start, blog content isn't the only type of content you can use. There are other formats that are in great demand, which makes them ideal for "re"-converting a lead and gathering even more valuable lead information than an email address. We call this "premium" content.

Consider producing longer-form text-based content items such as eBooks, white papers, or research reports that can be used as lead generation offers for your calls-to-action. Especially consider rich media / non-text based content offers such as how-to videos, webinars and podcasts.

Such offers will feed conversions. An information-rich resource that took significant time and effort to create provides the type of value web visitors seek. That content might advance someone's knowledge or simply entertain them. Because it's more valuable content, your visitor is willing to fill out a lead generation form giving more information that's valuable to you (e.g. work title, phone #, company name, etc.) to access that resource. This is a critical point in your sales cycle.

To be most effective, these offers should not be random. If you've got a closed-loop marketing system that's tracking which pages your visitors are reading, and in what progression, what offers they're downloading, the actions they take on your site after downloading each offer, the system's analytics will provide data for your insights.

Those insights should shine a spotlight on what types of content are most attractive to your target audience at specific points in their decision process. That's what should drive your decisions about what premium content to offer on what types of blog posts and on which specific web pages.

## Step 4: Promote Content Through Social Media

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Social media continues to generate a lot of buzz among marketers and business owners. Why is that?

Because studies show that **when companies leverage social networks** to distribute business content and increase the community of advocates for their businesses, **they experience significant revenue growth**. Social media allows direct communication between your prospects, customers and your employees. It is a key publication channel and enhances your brand's visibility online.

While new social media tools such as Google + and Pinterest can significantly affect the social media landscape, **most businesses really only need to focus** on the major players: **Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn**. Just remember that before you dive in, put **marketing analytics** in place to measure the true success of your social media efforts.

### Monitoring Social Media

An important part of leveraging social media is to understand what industry-related conversations are happening online and recognizing when you should respond. Here are some tools you can use to easily monitor your business and industry mentions in social media:

- **Google Alerts:** Set up multiple Google Alerts for your company, brand, products, leaders, industry terms, etc. The alerts will be delivered directly to your email inbox at the frequency you choose (e.g. daily or as they happen) and is a great way to help you track mentions of your brand and relevant keywords on the web on news sites, in blogs, etc.
- **HubSpot:** HubSpot's social media monitoring tool enables you to set up filters in the key social media networks and track conversations relevant to your brand and industry.

- **HootSuite:** Using a tool like HootSuite allows you to save keyword searches as a live stream so you won't miss out on what's being said about your brand, industry and products.
- **Twitter:** Monitor mentions of your brand on Twitter with tools like Twitter Search or HootSuite. CoTweet is also a great tool to help manage multiple users on a corporate Twitter account and allows you to assign particular tweets to the appropriate team member for follow-up.
- **Google Reader and RSS Feeds:** Set up RSS feeds in Google Reader of searches of your brand or industry keywords in other popular social media sites such as Flickr, Digg, Delicious, etc. Scan the results in your reader daily for mentions.
- **Facebook Insights:** Stay on top of and participate in discussions occurring on your company's Facebook Fan Page. Use your Fan Page's Facebook Insights Dashboard (found in the left sidebar when you're on your page as an admin) to show you stats such as fan growth and page views to gauge your page's interaction and engagement.

## Getting Started With **Twitter for Business**

Twitter is a social network on which users share 140-character messages with each other. Users *follow* (aka subscribe to) each other's updates and can receive messages via multiple technology devices including desktop computers, smart phones, and text messages. Understanding how and if people are talking about your business and industry on Twitter should dictate whether you should invest the time to start and manage a Twitter account for your business.

If you decide that Twitter is right for your business, you can visit [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com) to sign up for a free account. Here are a few tips for setting up a business Twitter account:

- Use the name of your business as your Twitter username.



- Use your business logo or a picture of the person managing the account as the profile image for the account.
- Create a custom Twitter background that provides additional information about your business.
- Use tools like HootSuite or TweetDeck to determine industry influencers and potential customers that your business should follow.

For more tips on how to use Twitter for business, [download HubSpot's free webinar, How to Use Twitter for Marketing & PR.](#)

## Using Facebook for Business



With more than 800 million monthly active users (December 2011), Facebook has become the major player in the social media industry. Facebook serves as a powerful platform for building a community of advocates for your business to help increase word-of-mouth marketing.

The first step in leveraging Facebook for business is to set up a business page. [Watch this video](#) by HubSpot for a step-by-step guide to creating a Facebook business page. For even more information [download HubSpot's eBook, "How to Use Facebook for Business."](#)

## Using LinkedIn for Business

The social network business people may be most familiar with is LinkedIn. This network of over 150 million business users is a major player in the lead generation game, especially for B2B companies.

To get started using LinkedIn for your business set up and complete a personal profile for yourself and a company profile for your business.

When setting up these profiles, remember to optimize your information by adding links to your website and blog. Take the time to make the descriptions of yourself and your business interesting to read and an accurate reflection of your experience, knowledge, and passion.

Once you have created profiles, LinkedIn has two major features that are of particular use to businesses and their employees.

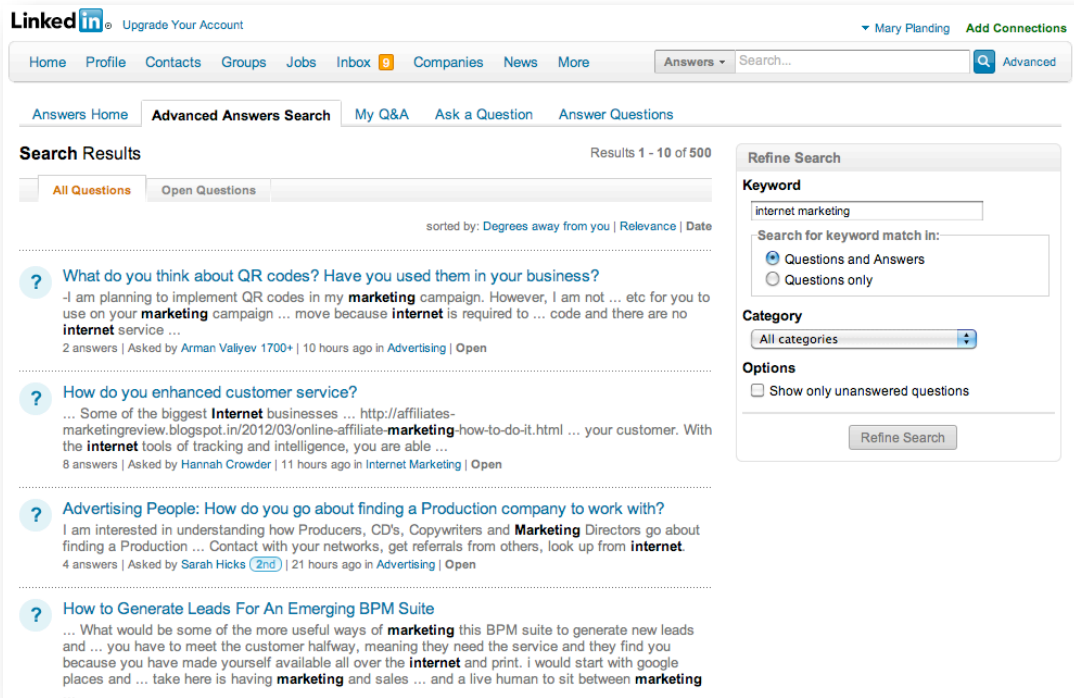
- **LinkedIn Groups**

The Groups feature lets LinkedIn users to create and participate in discussions around a topic within LinkedIn. Groups can be a great way to make potential business connections, but can also be a great place to share relevant blog content.

- **LinkedIn Answers**

This lets you find people who are publicly stating they have a specific problem or need. Identifying those questions and responding with a resource or a blog article of yours that answers that person's question can offer a great marketing opportunity for your business. Ultimately, you can generate high-quality traffic and leads to your blog from LinkedIn Answers.





For more information about how to use LinkedIn for business, grab a copy of [HubSpot's free eBook, Learning LinkedIn From the Experts.](#)

## Step 5: Convert Site Traffic Into Leads

*“People are visiting your site, but those visits aren’t leading to new customers.*

*What do you do?”*

By now, you should have already:

- Launched your **blog**
- Optimized your site for **search engines**
- Starting participating and promoting your content via **social media**



If it’s been several weeks, by now you should start to see a spike in traffic to your website.

*There’s most likely only one problem.* All that traffic to your site isn’t leading to any new business! People are visiting your site, but those visits aren’t leading to new customers — or even new sales leads.

So what do you do?

Simple. **Focus on conversion.** Focus on converting more of your website visitors into sales leads. To do this: decide on a **compelling offer** for your customers, create a **call-to-action** to promote your offer, launch a **landing page** with a form for visitors to submit their information to obtain the offer, and **test, measure** and iterate the whole process.

Here’s a **detailed guide to each step** in the conversion process:

## 1. Select Your Offer

The offer is the **most important part of any campaign**. It's the initial attraction that catches the attention of your website visitors and **gives them a reason to fill out the form** used to collect their information. Your offer should target the type of sales lead you're trying to attract. For example, if you're a tennis instructor, you want to create offers that will appeal to players trying to improve their game. If you're an engineering consultant, you'll want to create offers that appeal to executives trying to improve their manufacturing process.

**“Typical content offers include research reports, how-to eBooks (like this one!), slide downloads, or archived webinars.”**

Product-based offers might include a free trial or demo of your product or a personal consultation. Of course, there's no reason to be constrained by what's typical. Use anything you think will work for your target customers. (Also keep in mind that the offer form is a conversation starter for the sales team, so it should be designed to start a conversation that will lead to a sale.)

## 2. Create Calls-to-Action

Once you decide on your offer, create a few compelling CTAs. As we suggested earlier, a call-to-action is a button or a link on a website that attracts a visitor's attention and directs him to a landing page. Calls to action are located everywhere—on web pages, in emails and blog posts, within offers, etc. They are the key trigger behind lead generation.

On the landing page, the visitor is prompted to complete a form by entering their contact information and other details in order to receive what's being offered. It is this information exchange that results in a prospect being converted into a lead with whom your sales team can follow up. Naturally, not all conversion events are of equal importance and, as you become more experienced with Internet marketing and start generating lots of leads, you will have to start thinking about scoring your leads so you are prioritizing each opportunity.

Your call-to-action can be text or an image, but it should always include a link to its corresponding landing page. If you have an effective call-to-action, you'll convert a high percentage of your website visitors into leads.

To the left is an example of the landing page [tied to the call-to-action at the bottom of a blog post](#) we showed you earlier.

### 3. Create Landing Pages

The landing page is the web page where your visitor arrives after he clicks on your call-to-action, and where he fills out the form to receive your offer.

You'd be surprised by how many times we've seen calls-to-action that aren't links. Whether intentional or a matter of forgetfulness, the lack of a link will make it much harder for visitors to find out how to receive the offer, and few, if any, will persist. So double, triple and quadruple check to make sure all of your CTAs link to their corresponding landing pages.

As we said, **landing pages house the form** where users submit information that allows them to access your offer. The information you collect will be used by you or your sales team to follow up with the leads. Once visitors submit their information on the landing page, they should be **redirected to a thank-you page** where they can access the offer. (Note that if you're doing a promotion on a third party site — Google AdWords for example — a landing page might be the first page on your site where your visitors arrive.)

Besides the form, a landing page should feature a clear description of the offer (preferably with an image) and bullet points that are easy to browse through.

On your right is a typical landing page.

**INBOUND MARKETING SQUAD**  
Turn your website into a lead generation machine 408.844.4133

Stop wasting your marketing investment!

**The 7-Step Guide to Smart Internet Marketing**

You're a savvy business professional who knows that traditional marketing isn't working the way it used to. You also know that to stay competitive today means mastering the in's and out's of internet marketing. And with everything else on your plate, how can you do that efficiently?

In our free 44-page eBook, **The 7 Steps to Smart Internet Marketing** you'll get a guide that:

- Takes you step-by-step (in priority order), using proven strategies to get your business found by qualified traffic on the Internet.
- Teaches you how to do the activities that yield the biggest results.
- Shows you the smart way to capture leads and how to keep them moving through your sales funnel 'til they're ready to buy from you.
- Makes using social media understandable and simple.
- Explains which metrics are the most meaningful and why so you can get rid of what isn't working and do more of what is.

**To receive your free copy, fill out the form below:**

First Name

Last Name

Email (we will keep your email completely private) \*

Your Website \*

Download my 7-Step Guide to Smart Internet Marketing NOW

Be clear about what the offer is in your CTA. And be very specific. If you're giving away a free guide, say "Download our FREE guide to X." If you're hosting a free webinar, say "Register for our FREE webinar on X." X should clearly **convey a compelling benefit of receiving the offer**. This is much more effective than "Download Now" or "Get A Free Article." These simply aren't specific enough.

#### 4. Test, Measure and Iterate

Offers, calls-to-action and landing pages are the core elements of the conversion process, but you can't stop there. If you just have a single conversion pathway, you have very little insight into the process and the way it performs. To improve your conversion process, you need to experiment.

The marketing metrics you should be watching closely include the click-through rate (CTR) of your call-to-action, the conversion rate of your landing page and the number of new leads and sales and offer resulted in.



To figure out which elements best achieve your goals, you have to test different CTAs, landing pages, and offers. If a CTA has been on your homepage for a month, vary the messaging or swap out an entirely new CTA. Then after another month, measure which one performed best.

If landing page conversions are low, make a change to the page layout and measure the results. Don't be afraid to test variations, you can always switch back if the old version worked better. It will be worth it when you've found the best combination that increases your site's conversions.

After a CTA has been on your homepage for a month, vary the messaging or swap out an entirely new CTA, and after another month, measure which has performed best. If landing page conversions are low, move the form above the fold and measure the

results. Don't be afraid to test different variations; you can always switch back if the old version worked better. It will be worth it when you've found the best combination that increases your site's conversions.



## Step 6: Nurture Leads with Targeted Messages

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**“Companies that excel at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales-ready leads.”**

According to [Gleanster](#) 50% of your prospects aren't ready to buy just yet. Eventually only 15-20% of them will buy something. Whether that's from you, or one of your competitors.

Bottom line: Companies that build relationships with their leads over time have the greatest success in turning leads into customers by staying top-of-mind until the lead is ready to buy.

Which is why following up with contacts through targeted messages is essential.

### The Idea of Lead Nurturing

Lead nurturing is the process of developing that relationship with your potential customers by sending targeted, relevant and valuable messages to them promptly. The end goal is to get your leads to “raise their hand” and self-select into further engaging with your business. A 2009 Forrester Research study found that companies that excel at **lead nurturing are able to generate 50% more sales-ready leads at 33% lower cost-per-lead.**

Simply put, lead nurturing is a system that lets you send an automated series of email messages to an early stage lead to pre-qualify them before handing over to your sales team.

As a marketer or business owner, you know that capturing leads is the lifeblood of any business. But not all leads you initially capture are at the point where they can be considered sales-ready. Depending on whose research you read, only 5% to 25% of the traffic on your site is ready to do business with you right then; everyone else is in research mode.

Take a look at your existing sales funnel. How long does it typically take a lead to become a customer after her first inquiry? Does the sales cycle vary for different types of purchases? At what price point will more people be involved in the decision, and how many and who are they and what part of the decision do they “own”?

Equipped with the answers to these questions, you can create very effective lead nurturing campaigns. The more you leverage this channel to qualify leads, the happier and more productive your sales team will be. And you could get used to being called “My hero!” A lot.

## Email Marketing Best Practices

Besides nurturing leads with targeted email messages, take a look at the larger email marketing picture, which includes growing your database, closely following key metrics and conversion best practices.

### List-Building

Every Internet marketer, experienced or newbie, grapples with creating opt-in opportunities. Various industry reports peg the “expiration rate” of any email list at around 25% per year. That’s deadly for conversions and new business.

Give people lots and lots of reasons to opt-in. What’s so valuable about your eBook? What interesting and unique information will they receive in your email newsletter? Be explicit and phrase the benefit(s) for your recipient.

Only send messages to people who have explicitly opted in. Follow Seth Godin’s Permission Marketing: Would your recipient be upset if they didn’t receive your message? If yes, you should go ahead and send your email.

## Sending

- **Stay relevant.** What offer originally brought them to you? How else can you engage them? Send them an email with more resources targeted to their interests.
- **Be personal.** Use a real email send name and address and add a personal signature. Personalize the message so the recipient remembers how and why they came to your website. For example, start with “You recently checked out our eBook...” or “Thanks for subscribing to our blog!”
- **Add value.** Get into the mind of your recipient and ask, “What’s In It For Me?” (WIIFM) Are you emailing them just to tell them how great your product is? Or are you offering to help solve a problem they’re facing? Make the value clear in both the email body and the subject line.
- **Don’t rely on images.** Many email clients don’t load images automatically, so if your email is one large image, your recipient won’t have any idea of what it’s about? Use images as supplementary (clickable) content in your email and make sure you have enough text to communicate value.
- **Be consistent.** You want your recipients to expect and look forward to your messages. Whether you send your messages daily, weekly, or monthly, pick a schedule and stick to it.

## (Re)Converting

- **What do I do here?** When someone opens your email, make it clear what they’re supposed to do. Is it to click to read a blog article? Download a new eBook? Share something on their social media networks?

If your goal is lead generation, be sure to include a call-to-action that links to a landing page where the recipient can convert (again) and self-select to further engage with you. If they’re already existing leads, tell them about product-centric offers and let them self-qualify as more sales-ready. If they’re not yet ready to commit, keep nurturing them with broader offers and stay top-of-mind.

- Remember that the landing page is part of your email campaign. Email marketing doesn't stop with a click. Your **landing page is an extension of your email**, and it is where your conversion takes place. Make sure your email offer and landing pages are aligned, using similar language and images.

## Measuring

Many metrics can define the performance of your marketing emails. Here, we will focus on just a few key metrics.

- **Click-through rate** (CTR) measures responses. Of the people you emailed, how many of them clicked through to your landing page? The CTR can give you a sense of how compelling your offer and email messages are. Experiment with different subject lines, calls-to-action, and timing to improve the CTR of your emails.
- What about **open rate**? Open rate is an increasingly unreliable metric, as more email clients do not load the images necessary for tracking who opened an email. Focus instead on how many clicks your email received.
- **Unsubscribe rate** measures annoyance and spam. There will always be some people who do not want to receive your email anymore, but you want to make sure your unsubscribe rate does not exceed 5%. If your unsubscribe rate gets this high, check on your opt-in policies and procedures to make sure you're only emailing subscribers who want to receive your messages.
- **Conversion rate** measures actions. The final step is conversion, so measure how many of those clicks turned into reconversions on your landing page. It's the ultimate measure of an email campaign's effectiveness. The higher your conversion rate, the more relevant and compelling the offer was for your audience.

However, conversion rates are dependent on factors beyond the original email message, such as the quality of your landing page. Test different landing pages to improve the conversion on your website. Measuring conversion rate requires integration between your email platform and your marketing analytics.

We've talked about how to use lead nurturing and email marketing to develop relationships with your leads and keep them moving through the sales funnel.

## **“Nurturing your contacts, however, doesn’t have to be limited to email communications.”**

After all, you can communicate with your leads via social media or another platform they use. That is why you should also start thinking about behavior-driven communications, those that get triggered based on your leads’ full history of interactions on and off your site.

## Step 7: Optimize Your Marketing for Mobile Viewing

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Clearly mobile platforms are becoming an increasing consideration when it comes to internet marketing. The growth of Apple's iOS devices will continue, with analysts projecting new sales of 116 million iPhones and 55 million iPads in 2012 and 143 million iPhones and 68 million iPads in 2013. If you're trying to market on the mobile web, you need to consider the importance of creating entertaining and quality content that can be easily consumed on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablet computers.

### How to Optimize for Mobile

Mobile marketing is being tossed around frequently in marketing circles, often with many different intended meanings. While mobile marketing can mean many things, there is one primary message being conveyed to marketers looking to take advantage of mobile: optimize website for mobile viewing.

There are two options to make your website mobile-friendly for viewing.

#### 1. Set Up Mobile Redirect

You can create an entirely different version of your website targeted for mobile viewers and set up a mobile redirect. (Most likely your web hosting provider can build a browser redirect feature into your website.) Through this feature, a line of code is placed on your website's home page to determine the size of a visitor's browser screen. Based on that information, the visitor can be directed to the mobile site or not.

#### 2. Use Mobile CSS

This is when you use mobile CSS to make your website mobile-friendly. The CSS lets you change the way your website is organized and displayed on mobile-devices.

Before you pick either of these, do some deep thinking about what a visitor would be looking for on your site while using a mobile device. Most mobile visitors are looking

for key information, so reduce what's included on your web pages and give them the information that will be most useful. For example, make it easy for them to find your contact information and streamline navigation.

## Critical Elements to Optimize for Mobile

While your entire website should be mobile friendly, there are some critical pieces that you need to pay close attention to. If you decide to outsource the work for these, make sure to ask about:

### 1. Emails and Calls-to-Action

It's important that you optimize your website and emails to be viewed correctly on mobile devices, such as the iPhone and Android-powered devices. Additionally, it will be important to think about how your calls-to-action and offers work on mobile devices.

### 2. Downloads

Is it easy for a prospect to fill out a form on your website from their smartphone? If you are offering a download, will it open on mobile devices?

### 3. Video

Bytemobile has found that in 2011, 60% of all traffic on mobile web devices will be for video. The study also shows that 10% of mobile web users account for 90% of mobile web traffic. This staggering statistic means that a relatively small group of mobile internet users are doing the vast majority of mobile bandwidth consumption.

Mobile bandwidth cost is more likely (than not) to rise soon. So it's important to develop ways to engage mobile users that won't require heavy bandwidth. For example: don't ask a user to stream a 10-minute video. Instead, provide an easy to read text summary of the video if they're using a cellular data connection. Give them an opportunity to watch the video if they're on WiFi, to help them conserve mobile bandwidth.

Now that you've got all the right Internet marketing strategies in place, it's time to make them all as efficient as they can be. Your main goal in this next step is to find the best way to use all the strategies we've discussed to get found online and generate new customers.

## Step 8: Analyze & Refine Strategies

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**“At the bottom of the funnel, review the performance of your various marketing activities.”**

Now that you’re pulling prospects through the funnel, it’s time to review the performance of all the marketing activities, identify the winning ones and eliminate or drastically modify the ineffective campaigns. In this section we’ll review some metrics to monitor and make suggestions for refining your Internet marketing strategy.



### Analyze & Refine Your Strategies

#### 1. Implement an Analytics Program

To track your marketing activities’ performance, you need to have an analytics program in place. HubSpot’s marketing analytics tied to your CRM solution can reveal astonishing data not only on traffic and leads, but also on new customers acquired from various channels and campaigns. Google Analytics is another great tool designed to help you analyze website traffic and campaigns.

#### 2. Identify Opportunities

Figure out what you want to improve. Do you want more people coming to your blog? Do you want to convert more visitors on your home page into leads? Get into the mindset of constantly looking for new opportunities.

#### 3. Set a Metric for Success

In almost all cases, your metric should be quantifiable and involve a set time. For example: “Increase X website leads over the next Y days.”

#### 4. Refine

Analyze how your programs performed and make changes with the aim of achieving your marketing goals by doing less of what doesn't work and more of what does (and by modifying what doesn't work so that it works better).

#### 5. Evaluate

Determine if you've met your success metric. If so, stick with your change. See what you could have done differently. Continue to monitor it to make sure the improvement has a long-term effect.

## Metrics to Track and Report

In order for your refinements to have a big affect, you need to monitor several key factors. Before diving into how to improve them, let's first discuss what the relevant metrics are. This is list of what to monitor when you are first starting out.

Before diving into how to improve them, let's first discuss what the relevant metrics are. This is just a minimal list of what you should be monitoring. After getting comfortable with these metrics, take a look at a more comprehensive set of metrics to measure in our Web Analytics Marketing Hub.

**Marketing Grade:** Instantly find out the strengths and weaknesses across your marketing funnel. Your Marketing Grader report will reveal information that will guide you through any optimization process.

**Traffic:** Overall, how many people are coming to your website? What channels drove the most and the least visits? Take that knowledge, make iterations and launch campaigns to increase visits.

**Leads:** How much of this traffic are you converting into leads (i.e. potential customers)? This number should be constantly growing to ensure a steady revenue flow.

**Customers:** You should always be mapping your campaigns and channels to customer acquisition. How many sales did you close this month? How does that compare to last month? The ability to make this comparison is invaluable to any business owner or

marketing organization. Not to mention how happy these ROI numbers are going to make your boss.

**Traffic, Leads and Sales by Keywords:** Remember Step 1? It was all about creating a keyword strategy. To do that successfully, you need to know which keywords are drawing in the most visitors to your site. This is data that Google Analytics can provide you with easily. However, you need to go deeper than that. Which keywords brought in the most sales? HubSpot's integrated software can provide you with these insights, enabling you to take your keyword strategy to the next level (see screen shot below).

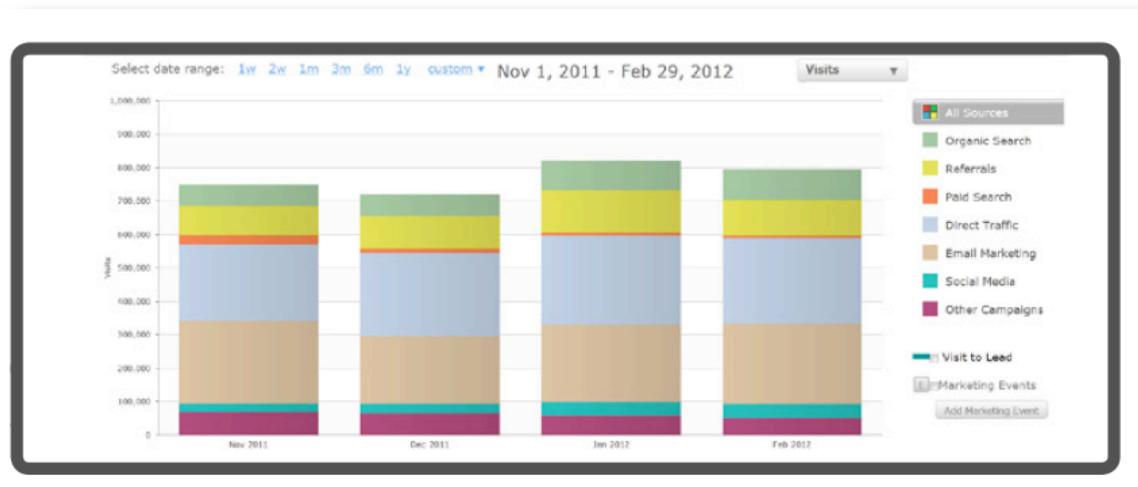
			VISITS		LEADS		SALES		
🔍	Google Images	facebook	2,444	0%	0	0%	0	0%	↓
🔍	Google	hubspot.com	2,158	2.8%	61	1.6%	1	.045%	↓
🔍	Google	how to use facebook for business	1,450	20%	293	0%	0	0%	↓
🔍	Google	lead generation	1,396	3.1%	43	0%	0	0%	↓
🔍	Yahoo	hubspot	1,333	2.9%	38	0%	0	0%	↓
🔍	Google	linkedin	940	.74%	7	0%	0	0%	↓
🔍	Google	hubspot pricing	887	1%	9	0%	0	0%	↓
🔍	Google Images	facebook logo	866	0%	0	0%	0	0%	↓
🔍	Google	google+ for business	694	16%	109	0%	0	0%	↓

**Customer Acquisition Cost:** How much are you investing to draw in each new customer? If you rely primarily on outbound marketing methods (e.g. trade shows, advertising, direct mail) your cost per customer will probably be high. If you're following the steps we've outlined and focus on inbound marketing, you'll be saving your company a great deal of money.

**New vs. Repeat Visitors:** Of your overall traffic, how many visitors are returning to your site, and how many new people are finding you? Both types of visitors are good. Attracting new visitors means people are finding you through search. Attracting repeat visitors means you've given people good reason to come back to your site. The key is finding a balance. Industry standards suggest having between 12 - 15% repeat visitors.

**Effectiveness by Channel:** What promotional channels or referring sources are sending you the most traffic? Focus on long-term results, not short-term traffic spurts that you might get from news coverage or press releases. Here is a screen shot from

HubSpot's Sources Report showing how many leads originated through each inbound channel.



## Steps for Improvement

While you should try to reach long-term goals, there are some short-term steps you should take to get there. The following are some elements of your website you can refine so you can reach your broader goals:

**Keywords:** Try new keywords or variations of keywords to see if they help you get found better. Since each page on your site can incorporate different keywords, there are tons of ways to do this.

**On-Page SEO:** See if changing a simple on-page factor can help boost visits. Examples of on-page factors are page title, meta description, and headings. As a simple test, try changing the page title of one of your web pages to see if you generate more traffic.

**Conversions:** Try new things with your conversion forms or landing pages. For example: try making the conversion form more prominently located on your web page.

**Content Strategy:** Determine which content is generating the most traffic. This could be an opportunity to either focus more on that kind of content, or refine your delivery of other content.

**Social Media Promotions:** Evaluate which social media channels are generating the most site visitors and leads. Again, you can either focus on your successful social media platforms, or try improving your performance in your less successful ones.

**Lead Nurturing & Email Marketing:** Maybe you're sending emails too frequently — or not frequently enough. Maybe the calls-to-action in your emails are not appropriate for your audience. Always keep experimenting and testing.

For more information about how to effectively measure your marketing programs, check out [HubSpot's on-demand webinar, "The Science of Analytics."](#)

## Conclusion

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“Don’t try to swallow the elephant whole.

Tackle each tactic one at a time so  
inbound marketing is digestible.

Remember: Inbound marketing is *not a sprint*.

*It’s a marathon.*

Being successful requires

**practice, patience and endurance.”**

For starters, the idea of inbound marketing might seem difficult and daunting. But by tackling each tactic step by step, businesses can make it more manageable and start generating results. We hope that by reading this eBook you’ve gained an understanding of how inbound marketing can improve your overall marketing plan and help you achieve greater business growth.

You now know how to build a keyword strategy, develop your SEO plan, convert traffic into leads, nurture leads through the sales funnel and analyze all these efforts to improve and get even better results.

Now go forth and conquer! Become more profitable! One step at a time!



**Get Your FREE Sales & Marketing Funnel Evaluation**

In 30 minutes you could learn the top 5 things wrong with your funnel and how to fix them to increase your business.

**[Register for your FREE](#)**

**[Sales & Marketing Funnel Evaluation](#)**