



# 10 *Outside-of-the-Box*

## INBOUND MARKETING IDEAS

*to Get You More Leads*

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# INTRODUCTION

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So you've covered [all of the basics of your inbound marketing program](#):

- **You know your audience:** You [created buyer personas](#) and your website and content has been developed to be persona-centric.
- **You're creating great content:** You have blog posts going live twice a week and several members of your organization have bought-in to creating educational content with you.
- **You're doing everything you're told you need to do to attract prospects:** You know your keywords, you've got all of the basic SEO covered, you're active on social, all of your content is very shareable, and you've submitted some guest posts on sites where your personas hang out.
- **You've set up all of your conversion paths:** Every page has CTAs, especially at the end of your blog articles, and you have dozens of landing pages offering great premium content. You've also made subscribing to your blog easy, attractive, and valuable.
- **You're setup to work your inbound leads:** You know how to define, segment, and nurture MQLs and SQLs, you've got your workflows ready to go, and you send out strong marketing emails.
- **You know your KPIs and how to use your analytics:** You have HubSpot setup and you know how to use the data to make smart marketing decisions.

But here you are, 6–12 months into your program and you're just not where you want to be. Maybe your business needs results now. Maybe your boss is breathing down your neck. Or maybe you're your own boss and you've invested everything you have into inbound marketing rather than other alternatives you were originally evaluating. You're starting to think that maybe inbound just isn't right for your company.

**Never fear:** You're not alone. With inbound marketing now widely accepted, businesses need more than just the basic blog or eBook to differentiate themselves from their competition and attract the attention of their prospects. They need something unexpected, something with the wow factor that inspires leads to convert and, in turn, share the news with their peers.

**In this guide, you'll find some of our secret sauce:** I've included a number of the trade secrets we share with our clients and use every day to help their businesses succeed.

Check out these 10 unique inbound marketing ideas you can use to supplement your inbound efforts and achieve quick results.



# 1. DEVELOP A LOYAL PROGRAM

Loyalty programs are a strategic way to develop trust with prospects in your target audience. B2B referral software programs, such as [Influitive's AdvocateHub](#), allow you to build out a loyalty program on their platform to help your organization capture customer enthusiasm and use it to boost your marketing qualified lead generation and sales efforts.

They do so by incentivizing customers, partners, and employees to be the brand advocates of your target community by completing challenges, where they are rewarded for content they create, online reviews they post, forums they participate in and blogs they comment on, and testimonials and case studies they submit. This creates additional traction and new opportunities for business and brand engagement as you share this

testimonial content with others and gain new lead conversions. Meanwhile, the advocates earn points and badges and advance to different levels, where they can cash in on a variety of perks and privileges.

These programs often interface directly with CRMs like Salesforce.com, providing additional visibility and engagement opportunities for your sales team, all of which can lead to quick new business and revenue opportunities.



## 2. BEYOND ADWORDS, UTILIZE SOCIAL PAID ADS

Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn all offer paid advertising opportunities to gain new marketing-qualified sales leads with targeted Pay-Per-Click ads. PPC/social paid ads can be effective— again when you have the extra budget.

Everything you do with social paid ads will align with inbound strategy, since you're still creating content people love to attract, convert, close and delight—only now you'll have to pay-to-play on most social platforms. Strategic approach to social paid ads is vitally important now that marketers can no longer rely on organic reach alone. The importance of creating attention-grabbing ads with the engaging headlines is crucial, as is the targeting of specific audiences:

You'll also want to fine-tune and target your ads to achieve increased relevancy based on the demographic, geographic and contextual parameters you worked up designing your buyer personas.

You'll want to work up clear measures for social ad success, you'll want to optimize your ads to achieve continuous lead- and customer generation, and you'll need to test what's working with your PPC campaigns to make sure you're not paying for useless impressions and clicks based on unrelated keywords.

## Twitter

Your choices for social paid advertising on Twitter include: Promoted Tweets, Followers (Promoted Account), Apps and Videos (app installs or engagements, video views on Twitter).

Promoted Tweets are the way to go if you want people to view a blog post or visit a webpage. If you're looking to increase brand awareness by getting people to follow your account, then Followers (Promoted Accounts) may be your best option. Promoted Tweets usually wins out, since the goal of most marketers on Twitter involves directing people to visit a certain webpage.

## LinkedIn

On LinkedIn you'll choose between an Ad, which resembles a standard banner ad with a picture and brief text placed on the side of the screen, and a Sponsored Update. There are two different Sponsored Updates: The Direct Sponsored Content post shows up in users' feeds

but doesn't appear on your own LinkedIn page, and the standard Sponsored Post, which appears on your own page that's boosted with money while also showing up in users' feeds.

Specific tracking tokens can be used with Direct Sponsored Content to determine which leads are coming from paid channels, to delve more deeply into targeting audiences and to test different ads to evaluate performance. (1)

# 3. UTILIZE RETARGETING CAMPAIGNS

You might know about retargeting already. But in case you're not familiar, retargeting ads are a form of paid display advertising, like Google Adwords Display ads, that are served to people who have already visited your website or are a contact in your database (like a lead or customer). Retargeting uses cookies to anonymously follow your online audience around the Web after they leave your site. (2) If a visitor leaves your site but does not convert after reading a particular blog post, retargeting ads can be placed on Facebook, Twitter and/or Google to drive these same people to view another blog post on your site about the same topic. (3)

Typically, less than 2% of your website visitors will convert the first time they're on your site before leaving. Retargeting helps you focus on the other 98%, encouraging

these people who've already been on your site to return and convert.

Typically, retargeting ads have been used to push products. But driving visitors to your blog content, where conversion opportunities reside, can be equally effective. Siobhán McGinty of Hubspot references a 50% increase in repeat visitors, a 300% increase in time on-site, and a 51% increase in conversion rates by promoting content through retargeting. Sharing brand new pieces of content in your retargeting ads, such as eBooks, can also be effective, after you've studied your analytics to figure out which pieces of content are most popular in terms of social shares and conversion rates. (4)



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You'll want to get the right ads in front of the right people to improve the relevancy of your retargeting campaign and maximize your budget. When setting up your retargeting campaigns, you'll want to target your ads to maximize relevancy based on demographic, geographic and contextual variables. Obviously you'll want to reference your buyer personas. Test what's working and make sure you're not paying for useless impressions.



## 4. USE PAID CONTENT DISTRIBUTION

The use of paid content discovery and delivery platforms, such as [Outbrain](#) and [Taboola](#), are a great way to increase traffic to your site. These content marketing platforms provide display links to your content as recommendations on the web's largest content publishers including sites like CNN.com, Slate and ESPN. Just like Google Adwords, you set a budget and pay per click for these platforms.

Delivery platforms like the ones listed above make use of behavioral targeting to increase engagement and encourage visitors to stay on your site longer. They recommend interesting articles, slideshows, blog posts, photos or videos to your readers in a way that does a more effective job than the more basic related item widget.

Using content discovery platforms enables you to target

content to specific websites where you know your personas are hanging out, so you can get your best top-of-the-sales-funnel conversion opportunities in front of them.



## 5. RUN A CONTEST

Running a creative contest is another surefire way to build your lead base and increase conversions and revenue. Online service platforms like Shortstack allow you to quickly build contests and sweepstakes that will maximize your online presence and potential. Last fall the IMPACT team devised a two-week [Shortstack](#) contest for a client, Stag Arms, to increase traffic to their website and collect leads through strategic conversion opportunities.

The contest yielded 53,945 submissions, allowing Stag Arms to collect and add 21,456 new contacts to their lead database. Their total contact database rose to 192,880 contacts (an increase of 13.9% in just one month) and the increase caused website traffic to rise by 43.25% during the month the campaign was run. [Read our case study.](#)



## 6. INCREASE CONVERSIONS WITH EXIT INTENT POPOVERS

Exit-intent popups provide you with a second chance to communicate call-to-action messages just before visitors leave your site. Exit-intent popover technologies, also known as overlay popups, detect when visitors are about to hit the back button, close a browser, or navigate away and presents popup dialog as a last-ditch effort to gain a business conversion.

[Brian Massey](#) cites data to support the claim that 10 to 15% of lost visitors can be saved through the use of exit-intent popups; that is, they will respond to a well-crafted message rather than leave your site altogether. Exit-intent popups are non-interruptive, and therefore superior to normal pop-ups that may block content visibility while visitors are browsing and scanning your site –

they only appear when your visitors start to leave your site altogether or switch to another window. (5)



# 7. CAPTURE MORE LEADS WITH GATED VIDEOS

Gating opportunities for video product launches are another plausible tactic to increase leads and conversion opportunities, but placement is crucial.

Placing an email gate at the beginning or middle of a product pre-launch video will significantly reduce the number of views your video receives. This is worth noting, since maximizing views of a video normally adds value to the brand and increases social sharing opportunities.

Reducing the number of video views, however, may be a trade-off that's well worth it, if it's exceeded by the value of new emails—new top-of-the-sales-funnel *leads* - for your organization.

What's more, a post-roll gating call-to-action, such as an email collector, is less interruptive and can usually increase the number of emails captured without reducing the number of views.

[Wistia](#) is the industry standard in professional quality video marketing. Explore pairing its services with [Turnstile](#) to capture leads with your videos in a way that is unintrusive and effective.



## 8. CREATE A QUIZ

Most people love a good quiz. It can be a fun way to capture leads and return something of real value to the user, but it is an often-overlooked strategy.

The lowly quiz may be content marketing's best-kept secret—the perfect type of interactive content: According to [Buzzsumo](#), 82% of the people seeing a quiz in their social feed will try it.

What's more, pairing this high attraction rate with a quiz related to product knowledge or professional services competence allows our clients to push leads into different directions based on their own knowledge and expertise.

[Ozzi](#) found that close to 75% of people who start a quiz finish it, taking an average of two minutes and 27

seconds to do so. That's a lot of time spent interacting with your brand!

We designed an effective quiz for a client recently with about 20 questions. Each question tested the visitor's product knowledge and professional services expertise. A score of 85% or higher conferred an expert status; a score between 65% and 84% denoted a novice status, and a score of 64% or lower consigned the visitor to newbie status, where they received recommendations for additional training and resources to improve their product and service knowledge.

For additional value, the visitors often shared their high quiz score results on social media like LinkedIn: “I received a 98, what did you get?” — truly a great way to attract your target persona.

# 9. RUN A SURVEY, CREATE YOUR OWN RESEARCH REPORT

Creating your own research report on trends affecting your industry is yet another great way to generate leads for your organization—time-consuming, but very rewarding.

Put together your own research report based on a feedback survey from your target personas. In addition to posing questions the right way—e.g., never being coercive or asking leading questions where the answer is implied—conduct the survey by putting demographic questions first and making sure they're mandatory to answer, proceeding from high-level and general strategic questions to more tactical and specific ones, and randomizing your question choices, especially with multiple choice surveys.(6)

Then use this data as the basis for your own research report, looking for patterns, similarities and outliers in the data. Creating your own data has another tangible benefit: Statistics usually create the highest level of engagement and social sharing on Twitter. You can link to the PDF report from the Tweet, where you'll generate new leads and create new credibility for your brand.

[Hubspot's state of inbound marketing report](#) is a great example of a free self-generated research report that generates leads.

# 10. SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE YOUR LONG-TAIL FOCUSED, OFF-SITE CONTENT

Your website and blog aren't the only places to showcase your call to action content assets.

Content you already produce, such as blog posts, whitepapers and eBooks, can be repurposed, repackaged, and coordinated with additional content types designed to educate and inform, including articles to share with industry bloggers and news publications, slide decks to share on SlideShare and Twitter, videos to share on YouTube, Facebook and Vimeo, and infographics to share on visual social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and Facebook and Twitter, which permit picture posts.

SEO-optimizing and tagging these content assets with long-tail keywords can build brand awareness and improve your brand's organic reach and online visibility,

while driving additional traffic to your website or blog, where they may respond to other calls to action. In many cases, this content may rank even faster than content found on your site, while providing additional means for your company to be found through search engines. Much of this may already be familiar, but you may want to outsource some of the time-consuming content creation tasks to freelancers—this will free up your time so you can make sure to exploit every available off-site opportunity.



The background of the entire page is a dark, grayscale photograph of a workspace. It features a laptop with its keyboard visible in the upper right, a spiral-bound notebook with a pen resting on it in the lower left, and a document with a bar chart in the bottom left corner. The text and button are overlaid on this background.

# LET'S GET STARTED

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We'd love to talk about the bigger picture with you. Let's strategize about some ways to take your marketing efforts to the next level.

**TALK TO US**

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