


WILEY

Overcoming Internal Resistance to Inbound Marketing





In your attempt to implement inbound marketing in your organization, you will inevitably meet resistance from the nay-sayers. For you, the courageous marketer advocating change, the first step is the hardest. This is because inbound marketing is not a silver bullet that immediately solves your marketing and business problems. It takes time to introduce inbound marketing, to build your inbound Conversion Machine, and to initiate inbound campaigns. Like anything worth doing, inbound marketing requires an investment of resources: time, money, and hard work. For this reason, it's best to view Phase I of inbound marketing as the building-the-infrastructure phase, much as a brick-and-mortar structure is built before opening up shop for business.

The good news is that once you begin implementing inbound marketing and the inbound philosophy, the results usually speak for themselves. When your marketers discover better ways to engage and track prospects ... when your salespeople begin to close more business ... when management begins to see real change occurring and business goals being met ... that's when business becomes fun. When business initiatives work — and, when implemented properly, inbound marketing works — funding for new marketing initiatives will follow, at least for as long as there continues to be a return-on-investment for the company.

But, first things first. You may believe inbound marketing is right for your marketing department and your company, but for inbound to maximize its impact, you certainly must gain the trust and approval from others inside your company.

Making your case for inbound marketing

Implementing inbound marketing in your company means change, and we all know change isn't always embraced with open arms. If you work at a progressive company that operates

with transparency and clearly defined accountability, you may find that inbound marketing is warmly welcomed. Likewise, if you're part of an customer-centric organization that values its people as much as profits, your road to introducing inbound marketing most likely will be easier. So that you're prepared, here are some common objections you may encounter when introducing inbound into your company:

- **“That’s not the way we’ve always done it.”** Exactly. That’s why inbound marketing is a positive change.
- **“Our current marketing is working just fine.”** What is “just fine”? Companies are either growing or dying. Inbound marketing compels growth.
- **“We don’t have the budget for a new system.”** Can you afford not to invest in a measurable system with proven ROI?
- **“I don’t understand what inbound marketing is, so we’re not really interested in pursuing it.”** You may not understand inbound marketing, but don’t you want to understand your customers better so we can create better marketing?
- **“Our website’s not broken; it was just re-built by great designers.”** That may be true, but is the website built on conversion architecture? If the website is a streamlined Conversion Machine, that’s great — because inbound marketing is about more than your website. It’s about attracting and converting prospects into customers.
- **“We don’t have the personnel to create enough content for inbound marketing”** Maybe we should re-think our initiatives if we want to have a meaningful presence with our digital marketing. We know content is king, so perhaps we should re-allocate resources to create value for our target customers.

Benefits of introducing inbound into your organization

Inbound marketing offers any organization a number of great benefits. When transitioning to inbound marketing, it's important to communicate these benefits to everyone affected by this change. Even if there is company-wide acceptance that introducing inbound marketing into your organization is the right thing to do, clear communication of the benefits helps people come to terms with the change. By clearly communicating inbound marketing's benefits to your internal colleagues up front, you can refer back to these conversations and presentations when it comes time for marketing to delegate ownership and accountability of the various inbound tasks within marketing and other departments.

By introducing inbound marketing, your organization stands to benefit in a number of ways. The following list breaks down some of these benefits by department:

- **Marketing:** Your marketing department benefits in the following ways:
 - As the correlation between marketing and revenue increases, so does the value for marketers and marketing.
 - Instead of being evaluated on fuzzy metrics, marketing can now operate transparently, sharing key marketing performance indicators.
 - Better connectivity and communications between the marketing and sales departments result in higher success in achieving business goals.
 - Marketing delivers higher quality leads to salespeople.

- **Sales:** Your sales staff benefits in the following ways:
 - Inbound marketing gives them the ability to integrate marketing leads with sales CRM.
 - Contact with prospects earlier in the decision-making process helps you take the lead position, positively influencing sales outcomes.
 - Salespeople are granted the ability for real-time follow-up with prospects via marketing automation software, which increases close ratios dramatically.
 - Implementing a lead scoring system provides higher quality leads so your salespeople are talking to better qualified prospects.
- **Operations:** Your business operations staff benefits in the following ways:
 - Integration of marketing with customer service results in higher customer satisfaction.
 - Better predictive metrics for sales means more reliable budget planning for your accounting department.
- **Leadership:** Upper management benefits in the following ways:
 - Company leadership has better marketing and sales data to allocate resources more efficiently.
 - Management has better metrics to measure meaningful performance.
 - Your company is better able to make data-driven business decisions instead of emotional decisions.



Gathering support for the change

Different people will come to support inbound marketing for different reasons, and that's okay. As you work to gather support for your organization's change to inbound marketing, you should know your audience inside your company, presenting your case for inbound marketing as you would a creative brief of a client campaign or an internal marketing campaign. The difference here is that your "customers" are your associates, colleagues, managers, and fellow employees. Understand their needs and speak to those needs when building support for instituting inbound marketing.

Different groups within your organization will require different motivations to make the change. Depending on the group, try using these approaches:

- **Upper management:** Your company executives will most likely offer their support for the change based on whether your inbound marketing proposal provides a meaningful return-on-investment. Connect with your "C-Suite" by showing inbound case studies and applying likely business results for your company before and after inbound implementation.
- **Sales:** The sales department will most likely support the change based on the answers to two questions:
 - Does it make the salesperson's job easier?
 - Will it increase sales, allowing salespeople to earn more money?

The answer to both of these questions is yes. It's your job as a marketer to connect those dots for sales personnel in a meaningful way.

- **Finance:** Since this department is usually characterized by managing expenses rather than creating opportunities, focus on the efficiencies created through inbound marketing. (For example, show your accounting team how inbound marketing allows your company to reach twice the number of prospects with the same staff and same investment level.) For those financial types that value opportunity as much as expense-control, inbound is a rational, planned, trackable expense that is also scalable.

Treat the introduction of inbound marketing into your organization in much the same way you would treat an online stranger you wish to attract and convert into a lifelong brand advocate. Introduce inbound incrementally. Share the big picture pay-off, but get incremental support. Even a hike to the summit of Mt. Everest is made of small steps.

Understanding the negative consequences of not changing at all

It's no accident that online marketing investment has exploded. Dollars follow customers, and customers are on the Internet. So the question of whether to invest in digital marketing is moot. The only questions that remain are: How much of your budget should be invested? In what manner? Getting answers to these questions is why you perform an assessment before you make any recommendations.

One thing is clear: For viable businesses, the cost of doing nothing will eventually be more devastating than any perceived risk of investing in new digital media and inbound marketing.

Presenting your case for inbound marketing

If you're charged with introducing inbound marketing into your company, there are plenty of resources at your disposal. Here are a few:

- **Education:** Begin educating yourself about inbound marketing. Here are just a few resources:
 - Content Marketing Institute (<http://contentmarketinginstitute.com>)
 - HubSpot (www.hubspot.com)
 - Inbound.org (<http://inbound.org>)
 - KISSmetrics (www.kissmetrics.com)
 - Marketo (www.marketo.com)
 - Moz Academy (<https://moz.com/academy>)
 - Moz Community (<https://moz.com/community>)
 - Pardot (www.pardot.com)
 - Search Engine Land (<http://searchengineland.com>)
- **Engagement:** Seek out any internal advocates who will immediately see the value in what you're trying to do. Enlist their engagement to make your case for inbound. If it makes sense, get help from an inbound professional.
- **Embrace:** After doing your research, create a vision of what your company's marketing will look like after you've implemented inbound marketing. Don't be overly optimistic. Paint a realistic picture, and use numbers that connect your marketing efforts with business results. Begin sharing your findings with key management to gauge interest, seek input, and eventually gain acceptance.
- **Encouragement:** After you've instituted inbound marketing, make sure you touch base with key decision-makers on a regular basis, reporting your successes and creating continued value. When you're performing well and attaining goals and objectives, the results will speak for themselves; however, it's always a good idea to remind key internal people why you've instituted inbound marketing and to update them with the results you're tracking.

Learn more with *Inbound Marketing For Dummies*

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