

IS YOUR BUSINESS GOOGLE-IZED?



Sandi Sturm, Inbound Train

Table of Contents

- 3) What is Inbound Marketing
- 6) On-Site SEO
- 9) Blogging for Customers
- 13) Promote with Social Networks
- 15) Lead Generation
- 17) Be Mobile Friendly
- 19) Keep Happy Customers

What is Inbound Marketing?

How do we get the attention of our ideal customer in the age where we can push a button on our remote to skip commercials, listen to ad-free radio, and read our news on a tablet?

And how does your small business compete with those competitors with deep pockets?

The great news is that you can—even if you have a very small budget!

But what is Inbound Marketing?

It is marketing activities that bring visitors in rather than us having to go out to get prospects attention. It works for you while you work on your business.

It means that your target customers, those you really love working with, are finding out about your business because they need you and your service or product.

You no longer need to go out and get their attention. Inbound Marketing allows you to be found and draws your perfect customer to you.



Maybe this scenario will help.

Samantha needed to remove a stain that appeared on her carpet after a holiday party. She pulled out her computer and searched for “stain removal.” Since she was at home, an article appeared that was written by a local company, “Main Street Carpet Cleaning”.



The article explained how different stains needed different treatments. In the article there was a link to the company blog where another helpful article appeared.

In the sidebar of the blog, the company had a Call to Action item titled, “10 Types of Stains and How to Remove Them from Carpet.”

Samantha clicked on the picture and went to the Landing Page that mentioned the 10 types of stains. One of them described the type of stain she had on her carpet. She filled out her email and name to collect the free eBook.

The tips worked. Three days later Samantha received another ebook in her email titled, “Keeping Carpets Stain Free.”

Samantha was very thankful since she has another party coming up.

Both eBooks prompted Samantha to follow Main Street Carpet Cleaning on Facebook to receive specials on Carpet Cleaning, House Cleaning, and Holiday prep. She took the advice.



Two weeks before the next big holiday, Samantha received a special email newsletter from the company announcing a holiday special for carpet cleaning and house cleaning. Since she entertains a lot, she wanted to get the carpets cleaned and ready.

Samantha gave them a call because she felt like they really cared about her and were local experts.

Inbound Marketing Attracts your ideal customers through blogging, search engine optimization, website pages, and social media interaction.

Inbound Marketing converts those visitors to your website into leads using Calls to Action, Landing Pages, and Email Management Strategies.

Inbound Marketing tools allow you to create and deliver content that will appeal to the right people, in the right places at just the right times. Just like Samantha.

If you have a small budget, the good news is you can do the majority of these things yourself.

ON-Site SEO

We now explore the importance of on-site SEO which stands for “search engine optimization.” We can optimize all of our online content for search engines, and in this case, for Google.

Before we begin, you should understand that Google is in business just like you and me. Their business is to provide the best search results for people looking for information online.



Now imagine how many websites there are out there to choose from. This counter shows the number of websites currently on the web at this moment. Amazing competition!

How does Google decide who to bring up on a search result? No one person knows that answer outside of a few Google developers but there are very intelligent people that dedicate their lives to try and figure it out. That is who we listen to.

To simplify how it works, let's consider how you and I use Google search. We type in a search term or phrase into the search bar. Or we speak into our phones and ask a question.

Let's ask “where is waldo?” In a matter of half a second (in this example) a list of possibilities show up. The question we always get is “How do I get on the search result page?”

That question cannot be answered exactly because remember, no one on the outside of Google truly knows. For organic search, there are not a **FEW** criteria in the algorithm, there are hundreds, if not thousands!



But remember those gurus I mentioned that study how it works? They test and test and have come up with some main things we definitely need to do. Because if we don't - then we can almost guarantee you **won't** show up in the results! And the kicker is that the criteria changes as the internet changes.

Remember this – your website should appeal to search engines **and** people!

There are four main areas to consider on your website SEO. The Title Tag, keyword phrases in content and headers, a good description to grab the human reader's attention, and alt tags on images. We will go into each one in a little more detail.

The big overall concept is that each page has its own topic with specific content, a unique title tag on each page, and unique descriptions. Each and every page is different and focuses on content people are looking for.

Remember this...

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The most important component in on-site SEO is the Title Tag. It looks like this in the code of your website. Google sees this as code, people see it in the browser tab as this.

<title>Second Story Window Cleaning | My Town, TN</title>

Let's say your business is a cleaning service. One of your specialties is second story window cleaning. Potential customer Sam, needs his upstairs windows cleaned because he is afraid of ladders. He types "second story window cleaning" in the Google search field and the city he lives in.

Google is now searching that phrase and location. First stop, the Title Tag. Lucky for you that you have a page on your website with this title tag – "Second Story Window Cleaning | My Town, TN." That is a mark in your favor.

Next, Google searches for the header tags, which are the text headers of your page, and the content on the page. In the code it looks like this.

<h1>Second Story Window Cleaning Serving the My Town area since 1989.</h1>

If you are creating your own website the H1 tag is usually found in the font options. Might also show up as Heading 1.

Your h1 tag on the same page is "Second Story Window Cleaning Serving the Smithtown area since 1989." Google is thinking you might be a good candidate to show up as a result! But there is more.

Google now takes a look at the content on the page. You have the same terms in your first paragraph, with the communities you serve. You also have an image with alternative text, “second story window cleaner.”

Google does not see the image, only the alt text. **People** see the image, so it should relate to the topic on the page.

Great! Congratulations! You are now in the search results page for Sam to see. But so are others. The next important step is to have a description that grabs attention and validates that your page is indeed supplying the answer the searcher needs.

The description tag is for people to see and read. Google does not consider this for ranking but will highlight them in the results. But you still want the keywords in there because that is what your potential customer was looking for! In this scenario it might say something like “Need second story windows cleaned in Smithville? Call for summer specials!”

Here is what the code looks like...

```
<meta name="description" content="Need second story windows cleaned in My Town? Call for summer specials"/>
```

Here is what the search result looks like...

[My Town Window Cleaning](#)
www.mytownclean.com
 Need second story windows cleaned in the My Town, TN area?
 Call for summer specials. 555-123-4567.

Sam sees this and it hits home. He gives you a call and now it’s up to you to provide excellent customer service.

To recap, if you work on your own website, check each page and make sure each one has a unique keyword phrase, Title Tag, H1 tag, related content, and descriptions. These can all be done in the SEO section of your website builder (ie: Wordpress, GoDaddy).

Pull up your website. If the tab just says “HOME” for your homepage title tag, do you think that is good? Who is searching for your services by typing the word HOME in the search field? If you have a webmaster, create your keywords and descriptions and share with them what you would like to use on each page.

Remember, each page needs to be unique with its own keyword phrase. And the phrase must match the content on the page.

Blogging for Customers

In the first section we discussed the importance of on-site SEO, how each page should be unique and that your website design is for both Google and people. The next step is to create great content that will be found by your potential customers. Remember Sam? He was looking for someone to clean his upstairs windows. People are searching for all kinds of information. In fact, about 20% of all searches per day have never been searched before.

“Does your website answer questions for people?”

Let's continue with the cleaner scenario as your business. You have all your on-site SEO worked out perfectly. But that is not all Google considers when putting you into the search results.

Remember how many websites are out there? Some of them are your competitors, and some are directories that are collecting leads for your competitors.

But you have the advantage because you understand Inbound Marketing. You have learned that a website alone does not prove you are a viable business in Google's eyes.

Providing great content that answers people's questions gives you multiple opportunities to attract potential customers. You were able to attract a new customer to your service because they were searching for a second story window cleaner. But how many people are looking for that each month? Not many.

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Soooo... you have done your homework and researched keyword phrases related to your business. This tells you what people are actually searching for, how often, and how many other websites are using similar terms. Now you can create a strategy to write at least one article per week on your blog using those keyword phrases.

Your competitors just have a website. They have done nothing to it, nor have they interacted with their customers online for over a year. Their web person just knows how to build a website and knows nothing about Inbound Marketing. Good news for you! Google prefers companies that create great content and interact with their audience.

Of course this is greatly simplified and other factors come into play, but the concept is that the more content you have out there the better your chances of getting found.

I hear you asking, how do I find time to do this? I ask you, what is a customer worth to you?

Right now I'd like you to consider how much is a customer worth to you over a 5 year period? Consider their referrals as well. Take a moment to write this number down. You will refer to it often.

I also hear you saying, what do I write about? A simple way to begin is to write down 10 questions you are asked on a regular basis. If you have employees that answer the phone or talk to customers, ask them to do the same. Take 5 minutes right now and begin your list. I bet it will be closer to 50 questions.

This does not include general question of location and hours of operation. Those should already be answered on your web site. Your questions will each be answered in a blog article.

Put the questions as the title, then write your answer in the content just as you would talk to a person - Informal and showing your personality.

I bet you could easily come up with 25 – 30 questions. There are half your year's postings if you only post once per week! And the list can grow each month! Just keep track as you are asked. You will soon form the habit of writing it out in your blog.



There is also a lot of other content you can share on your blog. After all we want great content that people will share!

You might come up with helpful checklists, to-do videos, video interviews at trade shows, opinion pieces, and stories about your team. The important thing is to create a monthly strategy which can be done in 30 minutes per month. Determine who will create the content and then monitor its progress and review! It is important to remember that your content is never sales oriented!

Do not use your blog articles to sell anything! That is like asking someone to marry you on the first date. Content is to provide answers to those questions people are searching for. It provides information for current customers, and allows potential customers to find your company.

How do you get a blog on your website?

First of all you want it attached to your domain and not on a separate domain. Why? Because your purpose here is to get people to your website so they can learn more about you. And remember that section on SEO? Why would you send potential customers to a separate place?

In fact, you may consider using blogging software, or another content management system, to take control of your website. As you may be starting to understand, you want to have the ability to add content on a regular basis. This is sometimes difficult when you need a webmaster to do it for you. As well as costly! Being a webmaster myself, I can say that sometimes the work gets backed up! See if yours will build this system for you and teach you how to use it.

Let's explore how blogging and content creation fits into the Inbound Marketing system with another scenario.

Teresa is online searching for the best method for cleaning a stain on her couch. Luckily this was a question you are often asked so you wrote an article about it. Google's GPS system knows that Teresa lives in your area and shows your article in the search results. Remember it is a bit more complicated than that, but you have created all your on-site SEO correctly and shown Google you are worthy of consideration by providing content. I can guarantee that if you did not have content related to that question you would not be found!

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Teresa reads your description and clicks the link to your blog article. After reading it she is happy. You solved her problem. She now sees your call to action, something we will discuss more about later, which invites her to download an eBook for “5 Ways to Keep Your Furniture Spot Free.” She clicks on the link provides her email, and receives her eBook.

Teresa is now in your email list. She has raised her hand to show her interest in your services. You now have a lead to nurture. We will discuss this in more detail during the lead generation section. Your blog is very important in attracting potential customers. And it also gives you a very inexpensive way to acquire leads.

To recap before heading into social networking and promotion, remember that most results in a Google search are blog posts that companies have written to supply answers to questions. Blogging positions you as an expert.

In our scenario, Teresa thinks you’re great! You solved her problem. The eBook is printed out and on her counter. And your logo is front and center. Since she was on your website, she knows you can clean her special rugs and clean her second story windows for a reasonable price.

So how much is a customer worth to you?

First, you need to determine your target audience. Who are you trying to reach? This is actually done before you write content. Your target audience determines topics for some of your blogs, the content on your web pages, and the social networks you use.

Why pay hundreds on an outbound marketing strategy when you can spend a few dollars on social networking and reach a very specific audience?

Another audience might be older couples over 55 who own their own home. With them, your message is focused on your second story window cleaning service, but expect that some of your other services will interest them, too. Sam fits into this group.

Can you see how the content changes for each? So does the social networking channel they are on. Teresa will most likely be searching on Google Search, Pinterest, and YouTube for a solution. Sam is on Facebook and uses Google search, but also likes the tutorials on YouTube. You know this because that is who you were targeting!

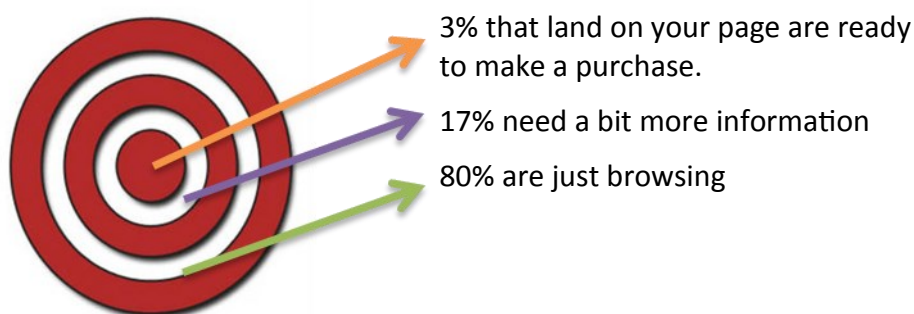
Each sees your content ads in their social networks and end up on the appropriate content on your website or blog. Now they each know of your other services, have downloaded specific content relevant to them, and are now on your email list.



They are the ones that have clicked your call to action to receive related content. (More on calls to action in next section). 17% just need a little bit more information, which you are supplying in your blog and through your email nurturing system. They may take a little longer, but they will buy.

The other 80% are looky- loos. They are just surfing. But you can still keep them in your list and slowly nurture them with more related information.

To recap, to be the most effective, create 2 or 3 target audiences. More than that will be too time consuming. Remember you are creating content for each audience, nurturing them with specific email campaigns, and reaching them in the social networks they use on a regular basis.



Lead Generation

By now you should be seeing the power behind Inbound Marketing! Your onsite SEO is set so that those searching for content can find you. You have lots of content out there to be found in your blog and website. You are actively promoting your content to the right people in the right channels and communicating with potential and current customers. And you now have great leads you are nurturing.

What do I mean by nurturing?

I mean that those who downloaded your content have raised their hand to say they are interested in your product or service. They do this by downloading your special content, which can be an eBook, a top 10 list, a video series, a webinar, or a mixture of several things.

You know what topic or service they are interested in. So you create an email campaign or additional social network campaign to give them more great content.

In an email campaign, you may do something like this...

Sam clicked your call to action on your blog sidebar after landing on your blog after a search. Remember, Sam is in your target audience of 55+ homeowners. The call to action is for an eBook on “Caring for the Exterior of Your House After Retirement.” Or maybe “Easy tips for caring for the exterior of your home.”

This is relevant to Sam because he is slowing down and is not sure he wants to do all the work any longer. This is good because you offer many services to help him out.

He is now on your landing page that describes the eBook and asks for an email and name so you can send the eBook to him. He says yes I am interested and fills out the form.



The content you are offering must be top notch and worthy of exchanging an email for. Offering bad content could give you opposite results than you are trying to achieve.

In two days, Sam receives an email from you asking if he had any questions on the eBook, and offering a link to a YouTube video on “Cleaning Gutters the Easy Way.” When he clicks that one, fills out the email form again, he is put into a different list and off the first.

A week later, you email again and ask what he thought of the video (which can be season specific for better results) and invite him to an event you are hosting. You have these events every other month. The link in the email sends him to a page on your website describing the event and to RSVP.

A few days later, before the event, you send a formal invitation or ticket with a coupon or free gift. Gifts are always better! Again, figure this into what a new customer is worth to you!

Sam attends the event where you wow him with your customer service and show him how you can help. This event only has Sam and other targeted people like Sam. Teresa would be at a different event targeted for her needs!



You have now taken them through your sales funnel from prospect to lead to customer. As a prospect they were just looking at your online content. They became a lead when they filled out the first form.

When someone tells me they got 1,000 visitors to their website I say “so What?” Do you see why? If you don’t get them into your funnel, they are more likely to be the 80%. You might not do business with them.

I know you are still thinking, “How can I do all this?”

Well, maybe you can’t. But what is one new customer worth to you? What would 100 be worth to you over the next few months? Get that number in your head.

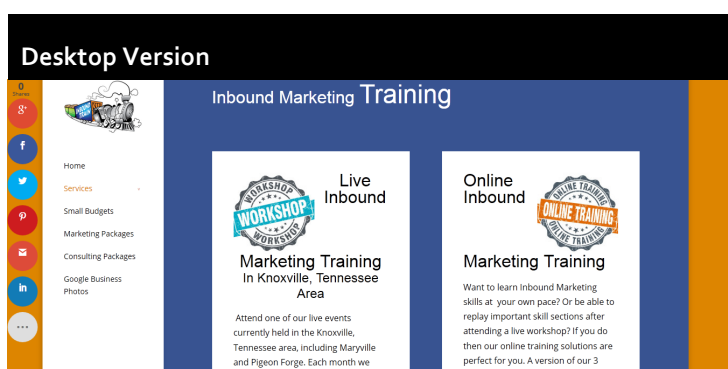
If you don’t start now, how much can you lose? Once things are set up, you can maintain the

Be Mobile Friendly

As we stated early on, Google has 100's of things it considers before it lists your company on a search result for a particular keyword. One very important factor is to have a mobile responsive website. This means that your website transforms to fit into mobile devices like smart phones and tablets. Not just shrinks up, but actually becomes easy to read and navigate on smaller screens.

Not too long ago, this meant having two websites. One was built for the desktop computer, and one for the mobile phones. But current standards in programming code converts your desktop version automatically after it calculates the size of the screen.

If someone clicks a link in Facebook from their phone to your website, a mobile friendly version should appear. Pause right now and pull up your website on your smart phone if you have one handy.



Do you see an exact copy of your website but in a smaller, hard to read and use version? Or did the appearance change, like the image above, with easy navigation buttons, click to call action and map link? If it is just a tiny version of your website as seen on a desktop computer, then it is not mobile responsive.

People have no patience to scroll, and grow, to see your website pages and information. What does that mean? It means they close the window and move on to your competitor!

More people access the internet on their phones than on a desktop or laptop computer as of 2014. If you have not noticed, all new technology has focused on mobile devices, not on desktop computers.

If someone cannot find information fast, then they go to the next on the list.

That is why Google considers if your website is mobile friendly in the algorithm. Remember, they are in business too and want to provide the best possible search result for those looking for information.

Talk to your webmaster about getting your site into a responsive format. Wordpress has some great responsive theme options. No need to spend thousands of dollars on recoding an existing website. You could probably use an update anyway if your website is over 2 years old.

On that note, it is important to build a new website every 3 years or so because as technology changes, your audience expects to see you change with it. Website development should always be a line item in your budget.

How much is that new customer worth to you?

Now let's take a look at how to keep customers happy in the next section.

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list.



Keep Happy Customers

We have discussed several components of Inbound Marketing to help grow your business. They are very efficient in attracting your target audience and very affordable to most small businesses. Throughout the ebook I have been asking how much a new customer is worth to you. How much are 100 new customers worth to you?

How about the reverse? What if you begin to lose customers? If you do not pay attention to the Inbound Marketing strategies of today, your results could go the other way.

We cannot ignore the power of Google. True, they sort of dictate what we do. But they control nearly 70% of the search market. Then add in YouTube and Google+, and they control a lot more! So it makes sense to learn what works with them and what does not.

If you do get started with your Inbound Marketing strategies and build up your customers, you are now ready to keep them happy!

It costs 7 times more to acquire a new customer than to keep current customers happy. So why would you not have a strategy to keep them coming back?

We all may be guilty of not keeping up with our customers on a consistent basis because the reality is that we are busy working in our business! But with a simple system in place, and some planning, you may be able to build your profits with those customers you already have by keeping them happy.

If you have a B2B type business or sell large retail products, you are able to send a thank you card to new customers. This could be the first thoughtful action to take so they know you appreciate their business. If you run a small item retail store that might be a bit difficult to do. But you can get them into a customer loyalty program of some kind.

Send Out Card System—

<http://bit.ly/KeepHappyCustomers>



On holidays and birthdays, your customers receive another personalized card. Real cards, in the mail! **Please do not send eCards.** They are impersonal. For retail, you might give a special gift on birthday months.

For big ticket items consider giving back 2 – 5% of the contract to them as a gift. The gift should be personalized. For example, if you know the customer enjoys skiing, maybe a ski pass , or a certificate to dine on the mountain.

This is much more beneficial and memorable than a discount up front. Usually, when you give a special discount, the buyer thinks it was just for them and won't share their enthusiasm.

Send a gift basket with tickets to their favorite sporting event or concert. You can almost see and hear them smile while they share the story!

Just keep in touch on a regular basis. Let them know what you have going on and what's going on in your area that relates to your type of business. For example, if you are a Garden Center, you might let them know of the Home and Garden show and to invite them to stop by your booth for a special gift for customers.

Keep your customers happy and you will be happy, too!



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