

Tactics For Effective Inbound selling

How to create and implement
an effective inbound selling
strategy to increase client
acquisition and grow your
business



Contents:

Chapter 1:

What is Inbound Sales? ... Pg 3

Chapter 2:

Traditional Sales vs Inbound Sales... Pg 4

Chapter 3:

The Inbound Sales Methodology ... Pg 5

Chapter 4:

Understanding The Buyer's Journey ... Pg 7

Chapter 5:

The Importance of Identifying Good Fit Customers ... Pg 9

Chapter 6:

The 4 Phases of Effective Inbound Selling... Pg 10

Chapter 7:

6 Essential Inbound Sales Tools ... Pg 13

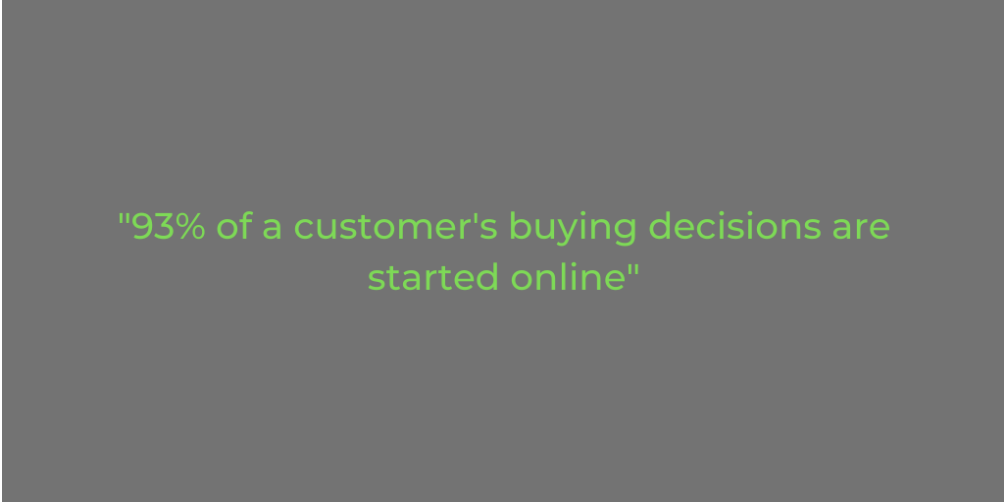
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Chapter 1:

What is Inbound Sales?

The way we all make buying decisions has changed forever, the impact this has had on the traditional sales process has been profound, with buyer's no longer dependant on the sales person to provide the information they need to make their buying decision.



"93% of a customer's buying decisions are started online"

Some of the key questions they could be asking include:

- What is included in your product, service or solution ?
- What does it cost ?
- How does it compare to your competitors offerings?
- Who else is using your product, service or solution ?
- Do they like it ?

Now buyers are doing their own research online and finding out their own answers to these and many more questions.

Buyers also expect a far more personalised sales experience, one that is human, holistic and helpful placing their needs and goals at the heart of the process in a buyer centric and not sales centric manner.

This is where Inbound Sales excels and the modern sales team recognise that they must transform their entire sales process, so they are focused on helping the buyer and aligning how they sell with how the modern buyer researches and buys.

Remember with Inbound Sales you are not trying to sell but helping buyer's to buy.

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Chapter 2:

Traditional Sales Vs Inbound Sales

Traditional sales teams have relied on a broadcast mentality and pressure sales techniques which simply do not work in the modern digital age.

Some of the characteristics of traditional sales approaches are:











- Failure to identify active buyers and where they are in their buying journey.
- Cold calling outreach with generic qualification processes.
- Sales centric approach which kicks into presentation mode as soon as a prospect shows any interest.
- Delivers the same presentation over and over.
- Always price led – offering discounts to try to secure a sale rather than building value.

The modern Inbound Sales team adopt a very different approach with:

- A focus on active buyers and understanding exactly where they are in the buying journey.
- Provide personalised insights and content to help the buyer make the right buying decision for them.
- Build trust and authority through “thought-leadership” and sharing helpful advice.
- Move into exploratory and discovery mode when a buyer shows any interest.
- Personalise the presentation to each individual buyer and adjust the sales process to fit the buyer’s timeline not their own.
- Define the value in their solution to ensure that price is not a driving factor in the buying decision.

The inbound mentality to sales is all about attracting the right people, then connecting, engaging and helping them to make a decision.

Be a magnet not a megaphone. Attract and help buyers to make the right decision for them.

 Inbound	VS	 Outbound
 The marketer educates their audience		The marketer only hard-sells to their audience 
The marketer engages and interacts with their audience 		The marketer rarely engages with their audience 
 The most effective content pulls people in		The biggest budget wins 
The audience gives permission to the marketer 		The marketer interrupts the customer 

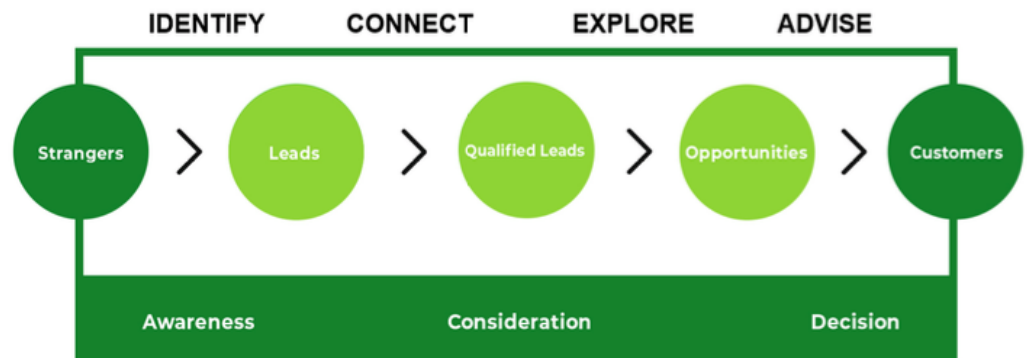
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Chapter 3:

The Inbound Sales Methodology

The Inbound Sales Methodology is built around the goal of turning a Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL) who has expressed interest and intent into a Sales Qualified Lead (SQL) and opportunity to naturally close into a customer.



The Inbound sales process is focused on the four key stages of Identify, Connect, Explore and Advise.

Identify:

The biggest mistake most sales organisations make is that they fail to execute a process for identifying “good fit” prospects.

A criteria for who may be a good fit for your business could include:

- Size Of Business
- Industry
- Buyer Personas
- Geographic Location

Connect:

Once you know your good fit audience, then you need to connect and engage this audience. Your sales team then need to make an initial “connect” call to identify goals, challenges, gaps and timescales. As Dan Tyre discusses in this blog post from Hubspot – [Always Be Closing Is Dead: How To Always Be Helping](#) – the approach here is to help your buyer understand where they are, where they want to be and that it is possible to get there.

Explore:

You now need to have a longer “exploratory” meeting to demonstrate what help is required and how you could be one of the options they consider. We need to dig into specifics at this stage and ensure we fully understand their needs and that our product, service or solution can help.

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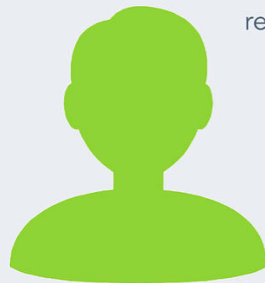
Advise:

Finally, once you have all the specific information and have helped the buyer to move along to the decision / selection stage – we can present a well-informed solution presentation to advise the buyer on their various options, costs and timescales.

The entire process is aligned with the stages of the buyer's journey, to ensure that it remains contextual with where the buyer is on that journey and always being helpful and valuable to the buyer.

Understanding your **personas** will make it even easier to delight your customers.

Personas can help ensure that your solutions and recommendations are relevant and useful to your customers.



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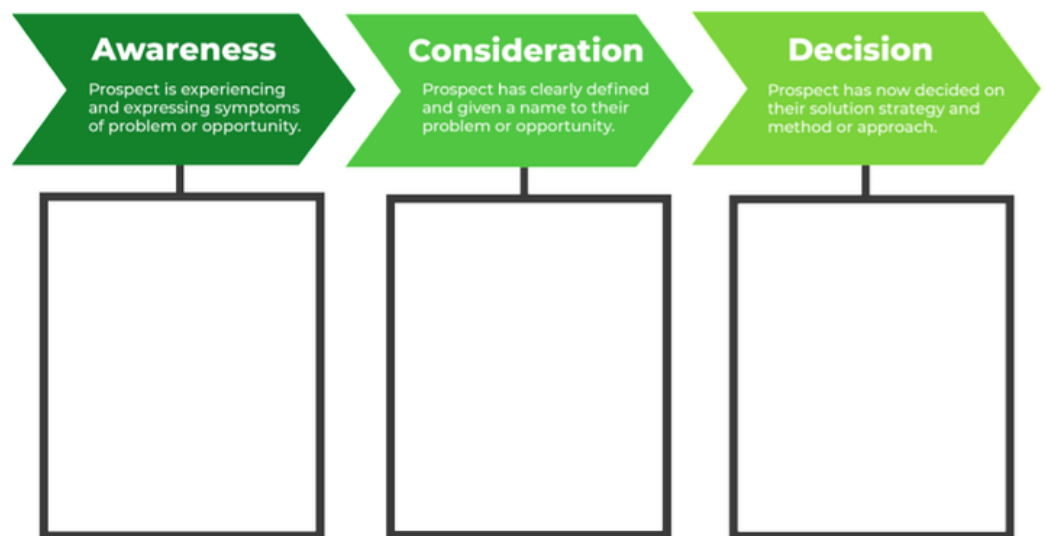


Chapter 4:

Understanding The Buyer's Journey

The first step in moving to an Inbound Sales approach is to understand the way your customers buy your product or service. This is known as the Buyer's Journey which is simply the active research process that someone goes through leading up to a purchase.

Buyer's want to be educated, supported and guided through their buying process.



As you can see from the graphic above, a simplified buyers journey consists of 3 main stages:

Stage 1 – Awareness

The stage where a buyer first becomes aware of a problem or opportunity, they ask general questions to give it a name and frame it. Remember the thing the buyer is becoming aware of at this stage is their problem and not your solution.

Focus on understanding and answering these questions:

- How do buyers describe their goals or challenges?
- How do buyers educate themselves on these goals and challenges?
- What are the consequences of inaction by the buyer?
- Are there misconceptions that buyers have about addressing the goal or challenge?
- How do buyers decide whether the goal or challenge should be prioritised ?

DME TIP: Remember to focus on the buyer and not your solution in the awareness stage – they are trying to define and understand at this point – so help them do that.

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Stage 2 - Consideration

Once the buyer has framed the pain, challenge or opportunity, they now move onto considering the available solutions.

At this stage the buyer has clearly defined their goal or challenge, they have given a name to it and they have committed to addressing it, they have evaluated the different approaches or methods to solve their challenge or capitalise on their opportunity.

Focus on answering these questions:

- What categories of solutions do buyers investigate?
- How do buyers educate themselves on the various categories?
- How do buyers perceive the pros and cons of each category?
- How do buyers decide which category is right for them?

Stage 3 - Decision

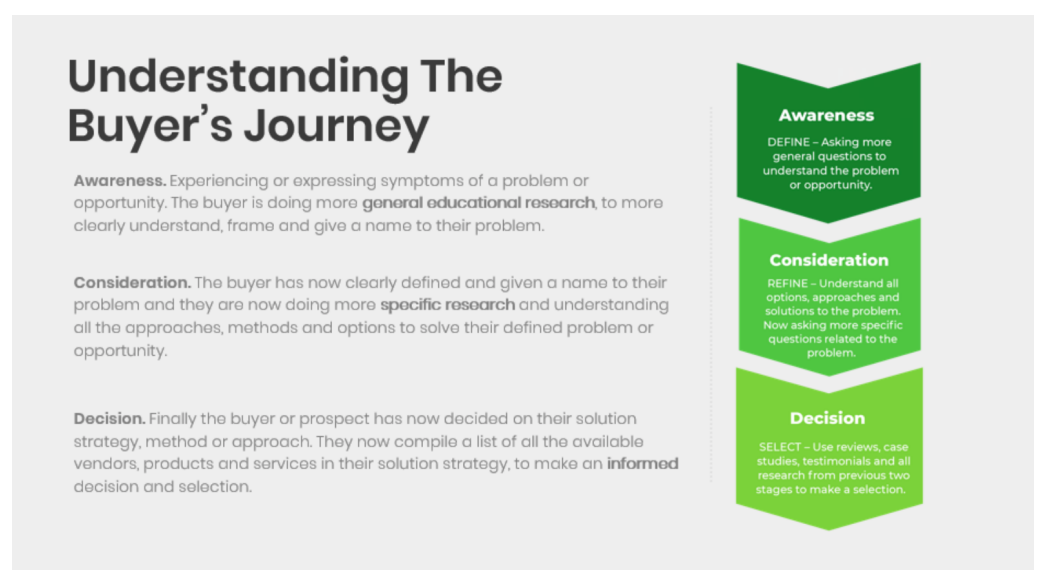
At this stage the buyer has already decided on the solution category, they will have created a list of specific offerings in their specific category and decide on the one that best meets their needs or they may go with the solution they find first.

A key component of an inbound sales strategy is connecting with the buyers before they enter the decision stage. The buyer's journey is important for two reasons in inbound sales.

Firstly, it allows sales to prioritise "active" buyers who are aware they have a problem and need help, rather than "passive" buyers, who may or may not require help. We will discuss the importance of this in the Identify stage later on in this guide.

Secondly, it allows the sales process to always remain relevant to the buyer and by delivering the right content, to the right person at the right time, sales can naturally help the buyer move along their journey. Focus on sharing advice, help and insights that ignite interest and allow you to explore this further with the prospect, starting a natural sales conversation and establishing trust and authority at the same time.

The key is to identify the buyer's interests and priorities and offer guidance. Show a genuine interest in helping your prospect accomplish their goals and overcome their challenges. This approach will build trust and increase the likelihood that the buyer will want to move forward with the solutions that you suggest.



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Chapter 5:

The Importance of Identifying Good Fit Customers

We discussed above, the identify stage and the importance of finding good fit prospects and customers. A good fit customer is someone who fits your criteria of buyers who are likely to benefit the most from your product, service or solution.

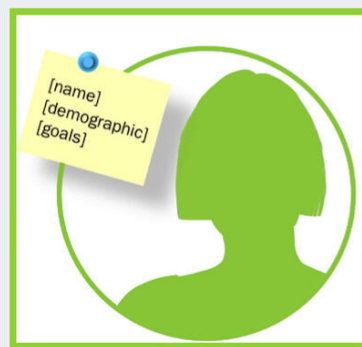
Active Buyers vs Passive Buyers

The importance here is to separate Active buyers, who are already engaged in a buyers journey and have an intent to buy from Passive buyers, who are people who are not yet ready to buy but may be in the future.

You can find active buyers by using social media, finding groups where your buyers are asking questions and answer them, read blogs that your buyers are reading and create and write your own blog posts and engage with thought leaders in your industry, this will help you identify active buyers and also position yourself as an expert and trusted thought leader.

The experience we want to provide here is that feeling of giving a name to a problem they didn't know they had. Share an insight or content with the PASSIVE BUYER to help them and this will leave them with a great impression.

Buyer Persona



Buyer persona: **HR Manager Tina**

Concern: **hiring top talent**

Challenge: **senior management is not on board**

Beneficial content: **targeted at her boss and demonstrates the value of the top talent Tina wants to hire**

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Chapter 6:

The 4 Phases of Effective Inbound Selling

Let's look at each of the four phases of an effective Inbound Sales process and explore how they work together to create a sales approach which aligns with how the modern buyer wants to buy.

Phase 1 – Identify – Finding Your MQL's

Spending time on identifying which are good fit leads including segmenting active buyers from passive buyers to ensure that your sales team are always creating a predictable funnel of opportunities.

A buyer is normally already 50% or more of their way through their buying journey by the time they reach out to a business or salesperson. Active buyers are those who have visited the website, downloaded content, read blog posts, filled in forms or engaged with an email, it is vital you develop a process or system of identifying these buyers. Using a system such as Hubspot is perfect for notifications of this type of activity from buyers.



Good inbound sales teams will also develop target account lists based on buyer personas and ideal buyer profiles, through research on social media platforms such as LinkedIn plus ask for referrals through existing customers, to their good fit leads.

Phase 2 – Connect – Turning Your MQL's into SQL's

Once you have identified these good fit leads, now is time to reach out with a personalised connect call that offers value and focuses on the prospect's goals, challenges and pain points.

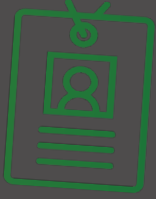
Remember the goal here is to turn an MQL into an SQL, which is when the buyer decides to prioritise the goal or challenge they are facing.

In the connect stage you introduce yourself to the prospective buyer for the first time. The experience you provide here should make it clear that you understand their context. This could be understanding their industry, role, interests, common connection or more – in this opening out reach make an offer in-line with the awareness stage of the buyers journey or whichever stage the buyer is in at that moment.

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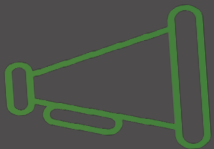


The key is to identify the buyer's interests and priorities and offer guidance. Show a genuine interest in helping your prospect accomplish their goals and overcome their challenges. This approach will build trust and increase the likelihood that the buyer will want to move forward with the solutions that you suggest.



DME Tip:

Do not be tempted to dive straight in to demo your product or service without understanding the problem you are trying to solve. Offer content or consultations to help the buyer diagnose their situation. Then you will be perfectly placed to help guide them through the rest of the buyer's journey.



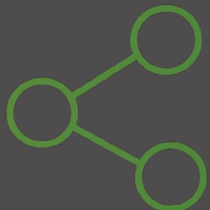
Phase 3 – Explore – Converting SQL's into Opportunities

The purpose of the connect phase is to confirm that the prospect has a problem that you can help with and to set up a time when you can explore that problem in depth.

The explore phase is the most important phase of inbound sales. It is where you can find out if your prospects need your help and whether they want it.

You will explore the unique challenges that your qualified leads are experiencing to decide whether your services are the best fit for their context. If it is a "good fit" you will convert these leads into opportunities.

It is important that at this stage you establish yourself as an expert and assume a consultative role. Leverage the buyers initial interest and this expert position as an authority to probe deeper into the buyer's specific goals and challenges. Remember that you are the expert and you can assess whether you can help the buyer more efficiently and thoroughly than they can help themselves on their own.



DME Tip:

Don't waste time on those who are not a good fit. Identify unqualified leads quickly so you do not waste time working with people who are not a good fit and will never buy from you. This gives you more time to focus on those who want your help.



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Stage 4 – Advise – Close Opportunities into Customer

In the final Advise stage, your goal is to advise the prospect on the ways your product, service or solution is uniquely positioned to address their goals and challenges. If they decide this is right for them, they will become a customer.

This is the grand finale of the experience we have provided. At this phase we will prepare a personalised solution presentation, showing why you are uniquely positioned to help.

This presentation should include:

- A slide deck presentation - emphasising the value propositions aligned with the buyer's needs and using the buyer's terminology.
- A product or service demonstration - illustrating only the features important to the buyer, in order of importance to the buyer. Also include case studies and testimonials.
- An ROI Analysis - customised to the buyer's metrics and business.
- A proposal - contract or agreement that spells out the client's goals, agreed upon scope of work, and metrics that indicate success.

By uncovering the buyer's context and tailoring the presentation accordingly you will add tremendous value to the buyers journey, beyond the information available online.

DME Tip:

Focus on connecting the dots - Your buyer's do not need you to provide them with general information at this point. Your buyers are drowning in a flood of information overload. Provide an experience of connecting the dots and providing a clear path from where they are to where they want to be and why our offering is uniquely positioned to get them there.

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Chapter 7:

6 Essential Inbound Sales Tools

One of the secrets to effective inbound selling is the alignment between marketing, sales enablement, sales and service. The key to this alignment is in developing a tech stack of tools which enables a focused single view of each contact, be it a lead, prospect or customer.

Here are six tools which will make this alignment easier and ensure that your business maintains a buyer centric view:

1) Customer Relationship Management (CRM):

A central database of contacts and companies that the business engages with, recording each touch point and conversation with a lead, prospect or customer to provide a central system for all departments to use and update. Our weapon of choice for world domination is the Hubspot CRM: <https://www.hubspot.com/software-demo>

2) Marketing Automation & Lead Nurture:

Lead nurturing is all about providing the right information, to the right person at the right time and by using automated work flows, sequences, Calls To Action (CTA's), landing pages and email marketing plus effective social media management to publish to the right channels you can achieve this and provide a very personal experience to the user.

Leveraging Marketing Automation tools such as Hubspot's Marketing Hub (<https://www.hubspot.com/software-demo>) can make lead nurturing human, holistic and helpful rather than feeling un-personal and robotic through their suite of automation tools.

DME Tip:

Using tracking within Hubspot allows you to see when a contact visits your website, how many times, what content they have downloaded, what blog posts they have been reading and how they have engaged with you on social media. By using lead scoring and awarding points per action, you can segment your leads into the most engaged and hottest leads, then automate a task to follow them up.

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3) Sales Automation & Sales Enablement:

Once leads and prospects are engaging with you regularly, you need to be able to see where they are in your sales pipeline and their own buyer's journey, to provide valuable, relevant content and insights to help move them towards making an informed buying decision. Planning meetings and using email sequences can maintain a level of engagement with every prospect as they move along their journey, allowing the sales team to effectively explore, advise and present their solution to the right people at the right time.

Again we use the Hubspot Sales Hub, <https://www.hubspot.com/sales/demo>, to measure every phase of the sales process and progress prospects along.

DME Tip:

Upload important documents and PDF's to your documents are in Hubspot Sales and you will be notified each time someone opens your document or reads it, again allowing a very contextual conversation.

4) Personalised Video Prospecting & Follow Up:

Let's face it emails still work but reading a long text email from someone is not very personal or engaging. However using tools such as Vidyard, www.vidyard.com, or Wistia Soapbox, <https://wistia.com/soapbox>, you can create short engaging videos talking direct to a prospect or customer, which cut through the noise and instantly connect.

We have been using this approach for the past year and seen open rates and engagement increase by 56% since we started using this in our own sales process.

DME Tip:

Also these tools send you a notification when someone is watching a video and also adds this information to their activity feed in the Hubspot CRM, so you can see that your message is getting through and who is engaging with you the most.

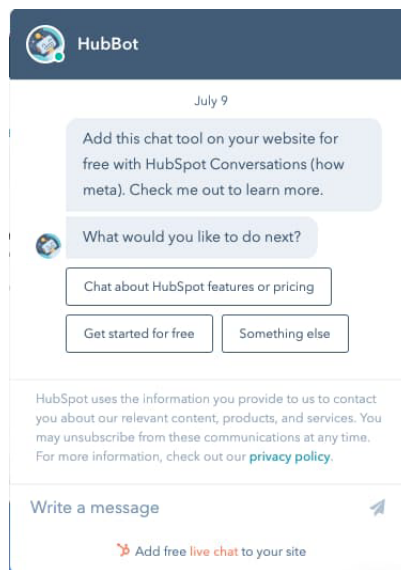
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5) Live Chat & Chat Bots:

Forms are dead, buyer's simply will not complete a form and wait 24 hours for you to get back to them, they want answers now and using live chat, messenger and chat bots for communication and conversations is by far the most effective tool to achieve this. Hubspot CRM provides a free chat bot tool or other apps such as Drift, <https://www.drift.com/>, can be used as conversion tools and to shorten the sales cycle.

DME TIP: Set up URL specific Chat Bots, so that you can deliver relevant information about the page that a visitor is visiting i.e On you Pricing Page – set up a chat bot to say “We see you are looking at pricing – can we help ?”.



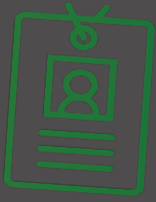
6) Service & Support Tools - Customer Nurturing:

Your customers are your greatest asset and also your greatest source of feedback and new business. Using tools such as Hubspot Service Hub, Survey Monkey and Trustpilot to support and nurture customer relationships, cross-sell, upsell, ask for referrals, survey opinions, gather reviews, testimonials and case studies will allow the service department to constantly develop content, insights and leads for your inbound sales efforts.



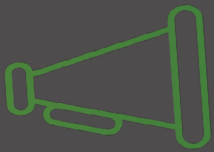
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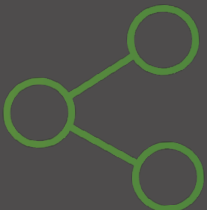


DME Tip:

Set up a native integration between Hubspot and Survey Monkey, then use an automated workflow to ensure that every customer receives an (Net Promoter Score) NPS survey of 5 questions following their purchase, order or renewal. Allow this information to drive constant strategic innovation of your business and service.



There are hundreds of apps, tools and pieces of software to make managing your Inbound Sales strategy more effective, but ensure that you focus on these six area first and build your tech stack around this.



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Need Help With Your Business Growth?

We are Lincolnshire's Business Growth Agency - our team of inbound marketing and sales experts drive increased traffic, leads and revenue growth for medium sized businesses in Lincolnshire.

Book an exploratory call to discuss your growth goals, gaps and challenges to find out how we can help you.

[Book a Call](#)

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