OUTBOUNDVIEW®

Boudinet Media
GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT

THE ORGANIC INBOUND MARKETING PLAYBOOK *for* B2B

Launching an inbound B2B marketing strategy does not need to be expensive. It does not require tons of money for Google AdWords and PPC. It does not require that you spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on expensive events and sponsorships.

It does require the implementation of thoughtful content that truly engages your buyer. Use the nine techniques below to build recurring organic traffic.

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THE ORGANIC INBOUND MARKETING PLAYBOOK FOR B2B COMPANIES

Quality inbound lead generation can accelerate your sales cycle, create happier sales reps, and bolster revenue growth. The playbook can be reused by any company looking to bolster inbound lead generation, accelerate sales cycle velocity, and retain and expand its existing client base.

Technique #1. Dial Into Your Target Audience

Every great inbound marketing strategy starts with a perfect understanding of your target audience - your ideal client profile.

If your understanding of your target audience or ideal client profile needs work, then use these two powerful, simple tactics to master and understand your ICP:

1. Make a list of your existing client base, enrich their data, and map their buyer journey.
2. Interview your best clients about their experience with your product or service intimately.

PHASE I. ACCOUNT-LEVEL RESEARCH

This research starts at the account level, where you need to identify insights about the companies that buy you and start building a list of target accounts.

THE BASICS

Businesses often overlook tremendous value in determining their ideal customer profile by neglecting to dig deeper. Within this space, you're only discovering topical information such as employee count, revenue, location, or industry. This is just a starting point, not where your research should end.

ACCOUNT-BASED RESEARCH

What are key strategic priorities for the accounts you're targeting? How does your solution help them achieve their goals? What can the technology stack of your target customer tell you? Account-based research gives you an extra level of targeting above and beyond company size, revenue, and industry.

BUYING TRIGGERS

Which activities inside an organization indicate your solution could be a fit for them? For example; at OutboundView, when organizations are hiring inside salespeople, it typically means our services could be a fit. When a new VP of Sales is hired, that is a good time for our team to reach out and discuss their lead generation strategies, because they're typically reviewing new sales processes. If we can tell a company isn't getting any inbound traffic, that tells us that the target needs outbound marketing. Identifying the triggers that drive organizations to buy is absolutely critical for top of funnel targeting. Finding target accounts that are showing "buying triggers" for your business should be the highest priority for your top of funnel outreach efforts.

PHASE II. BUYER RESEARCH

Who's your buyer? Not ideal company target - we're talking the customer writing the checks or using your products. We think about buyer personas by focusing on two categories: **Decision Makers and Doers**.

DECISION MAKERS are the individuals focused on high-level, strategic outcomes, and are usually writing the check for your product or service.

DOERS are your users focused on the day to day tactics supporting your product or service.

Why is this an important distinction? Each requires different strategies to spark interest in your product or service; but most importantly, each requires a different messaging to initiate a discussion.

Buyer personas are the first step in the sales and marketing process. They help businesses clearly define who the key decision makers and influencers are at a prospective company. These personas clearly establish who the targets are for your team. Most importantly, buyer personas outline the specific value proposition, thought-provoking questions, and resources needed to lead efforts toward an opportunity for each type of Doer or Decision Maker.

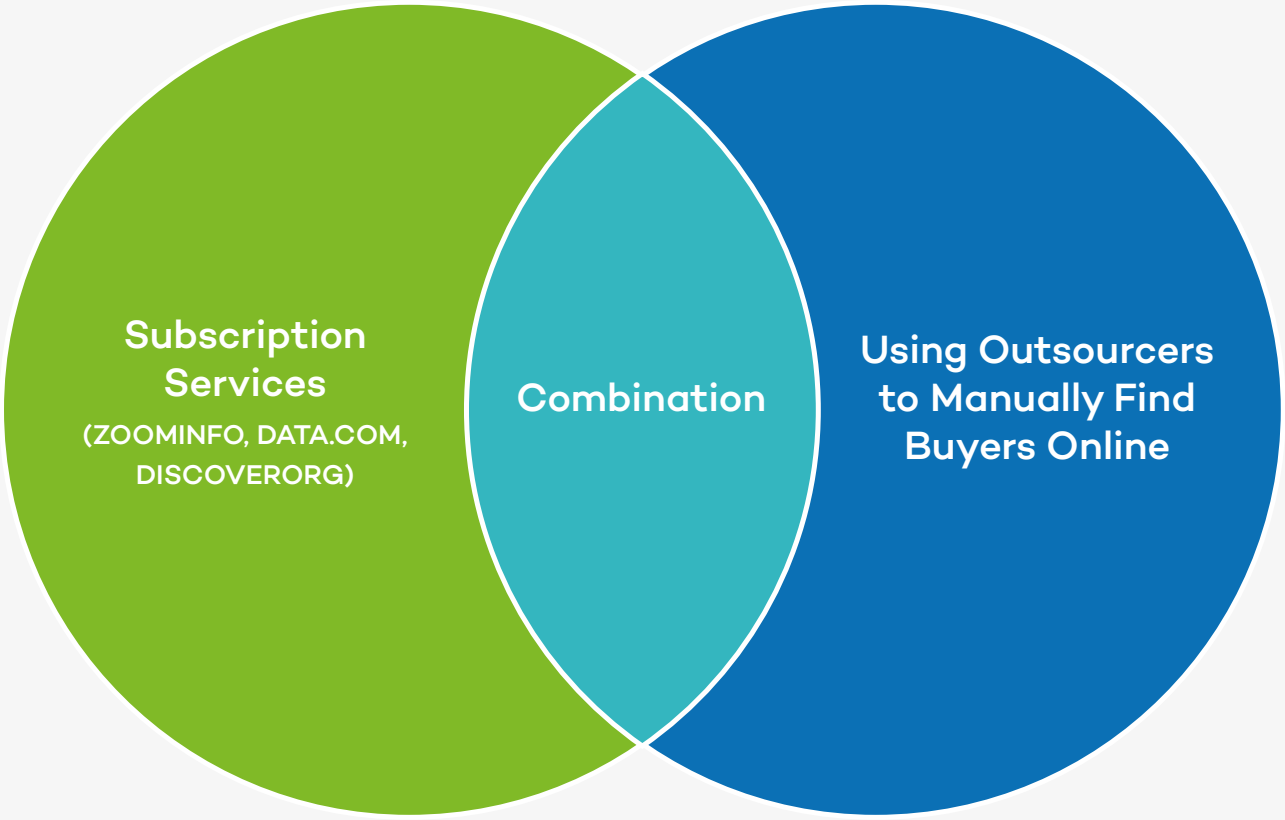
OutboundView has created a simple list of steps to follow when building your buyer personas:

1. Start small with a goal of 2-3 buyer personas.
2. Think pain points – What makes your customer's job difficult? Keep in mind these pain points need to be related to their overall job, not just pain points your solution solves for.

3. Perform customer interviews and ask your buyer the tough questions, don't just make assumptions.
4. Make them tangible! Create bio pages for "Bill the Buyer", "Sally Seller" and have fun with it!
5. Think "Personally" and "Professionally" – How does your solution help your buyer reach their goals, both personally and professionally?
6. Create a unique value proposition for each type of persona.
7. End with messaging – As the last step in the process, build messaging that aligns with the customer's pain points and helps differentiate your solution.

To see who is engaging with and responding to your content, create an updated database of people who are following you on social media and subscribed to your email list.

Add calls-to-action for your blog, events, and gated content on your website to passively capture emails over time. Then, use tools like Clearbit or DiscoverOrg to enrich the data you collect with detailed firmographic information about who your audience is and how well they fit your ideal client persona. Or, have someone curate the list for you by hand.



Doing so will enable you to build an audience over time and get maximum return-on-investment for your publishing efforts. This may take a little bit of work, but it will pay huge dividends in the short-term and long-term. You'll learn which topics and personas to lock in on and focus your future efforts appropriately.

Technique #2. Create Epic Content in Two Forms

Content creation is cheaper and easier to produce than ever. But your time and resources are precious - so we recommend fixating content on one of two areas: thought leadership on your philosophy and flywheel storytelling about client success (referring back to your philosophy).

What is thought leadership? You ask. Two things:

- An annoyingly-named and often-abused piece of business terminology.
- Content that explains the philosophy behind the product or service you offer.

Once you find your target audience, you should use BuzzSumo or Ahrefs to find topics relevant to your buyer that have high Google search volume and a high volume of social media mentions.

Why use thought leadership? You ask. Because like Simon (Sinek) says, "The best way to inspire action is to 'start with 'why.'"

Start with why - How great leaders inspire action

Think back to Mitch and Murray's favorite acronym: AIDA.

Glengarry Glen Ross Speech

Lastly, recall that people buy products and services (especially expensive B2B solutions) from brands they know, like, and trust. Thought leadership builds trust and awareness and table-sets future action from your buyers.

The second type of content you should create is flywheel storytelling - where you tell client stories in evocative fashion by placing them on the Hero's Journey.

In these stories, your client (note: not your product) is the hero. They are facing a challenge or obstacle to overcome - and that challenge or obstacle reflects a greater injustice in the world.

Here, it's important to build up your client as a subject matter expert in their field. Perhaps they are an integral leader in a Fortune 1000 or high-growth startup. Perhaps they are a visionary consultant or well-known face in their industry. Whatever the case, you should establish their credentials, backstory, philosophy, challenges, and how they discovered your product or service.

How to Persuade More Prospects and Close More Deals with Storytelling

From there, you can chart their path to success and use their words to describe your product or service's role in getting them from A to B.

Prezi | **Prospect's Journey**

To flesh out best practices for doing so, we strongly advise watching this great webinar Prezi just did with Marylou Tyler, Nigel Green, and Stefanie Grossman on using storytelling to persuade prospects throughout the buyer's journey.

Technique #3. Package Content for Maximum Distribution

To maximize efficiency, we recommend repurposing and repackaging content as much as possible.

For example, you can turn a webinar with a client into a video interview on YouTube, a podcast episode, and an article that can be shared in various formats across social media.

The idea here is expediency. Rather than churning out a bunch of unique, disjointed pieces of content, you can turn one epic piece of content into a multi-purpose series of articles, videos, and podcasts.

Remember - not everyone consumes content in the same format. The beauty of this method is that you can create content in the format of best-fit for your entire audience.

To gain maximum exposure for your content, focus on the best distribution channels. For B2B, a solid email newsletter featuring valuable thought leadership, industry research, and client-led insights is a great way to connect with buyers and build trust.

We also advise supplementing email with social media posts on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, et cetera, depending on how much time your ICP spends on those networks.

Finally, we recommend uploading video, audio, and presentation content to social media networks like YouTube, SoundCloud, and SlideShare. Optimize the content for SEO so that it can be found via search and gain the maximum visibility over time.

Technique #4. Create Trust and Credibility with Consistent Output

James Carbary has built a seven-figure business around the concept of "Content-Based Networking."

We found similar value in the concept of leveraging content to create and enhance authentic relationships with clients and audience.

An important best practice for this method is customer storytelling.

You should foreground your clients in your content as much as possible. Make them the heroes of articles and case studies capturing their success story with your product or service in grand detail. Explain their background, philosophy, challenges, success path, and subsequent gains from choosing you as a vendor.

From there, you should map the distribution of these stories to the audience of best-fit. If the hero in your client success story is a VP of Sales for a SaaS company, then route that story to similarly-situated prospects and clients in your sales, marketing, and client success funnel.

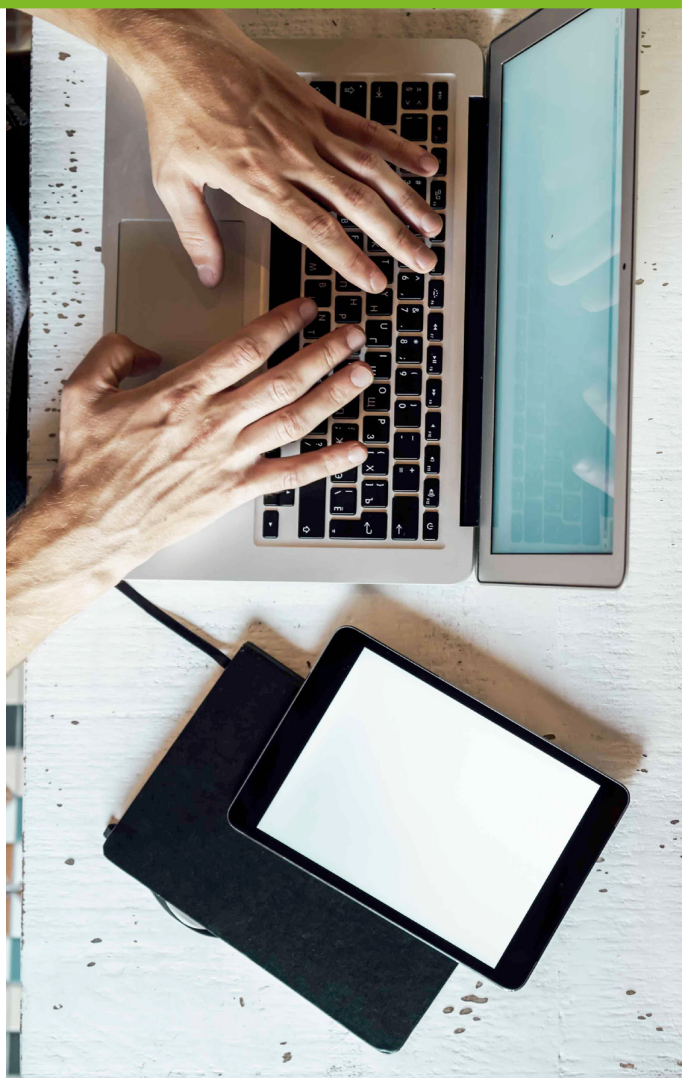
This technique goes to the importance of using data about your buyer and prospect personas to build authentic relationships.

Sending a case study about a 10,000-person staffing firm using you to solve Problem A to a 50-person SaaS company looking to solve Problem B will have minimal impact and may even adversely your credibility with the prospect.

The reason: your outreach seems inauthentic as it's not relevant to the buyer or his or her problems.

The bottom line is - you should always seek to route content to your audience of best-fit. Use data and well-developed personas to make this happen.

Technique #5. Leverage Content to Build Authentic Relationships



Once you commit to a content-driven inbound marketing gameplan, it's important to know that you're playing the long game. Content publishing pays back exponentially over time. It may take months or years - but you'll see it. Provided you commit to publishing steadily and consistently.

Let's say you publish 3 articles per week - and two out of three posts feature a client or a key ally in your industry. You're setting yourself up for success.

Think of it this way - publishing 2 articles each week that cross-promote a client or peer leads to 104 goodwill relationships over the course of a year, possibly more if you publish content that features multiple clients or peers.

Think about content creation as a long-term investment with escalating payoffs in the form of heightened SEO, a strong database, referral-minded channel partners, and powerful press relationships.

These, in turn, lead to increased qualified lead velocity from content you've already created.

Technique #6. Build Your Brand - What Others Say About You

Jeremy's very first marketing investment at Ambition was Pardot. His second was G2Crowd.

Why? Because every brand needs to cultivate reviews and testimonials that describe your value. As Daniel Pink and HubSpot CEO Brian Halligan discuss in this must-listen podcast interview, for the first time in history your buyers have as much access to information about your company as your sellers do.

In other words, your brand is just like your reputation. It's not what you say it is. It's what others say about you.

Creating a committed campaign that incentivizes happy customers to review your company is an incredibly powerful, worthwhile investment in this day and age. Whether it's Google Reviews, Yelp!, G2Crowd, or another vendor, it's important to have your clients affirming your value publicly on the internet.

The second component to building your brand is creating clear statements of philosophy, or why you exist. This can be accomplished through published mission statements and consistent thought leadership output that dials into your purpose as a company, which we covered in Technique One.

Technique #7. Serve the Entire Customer Lifecycle

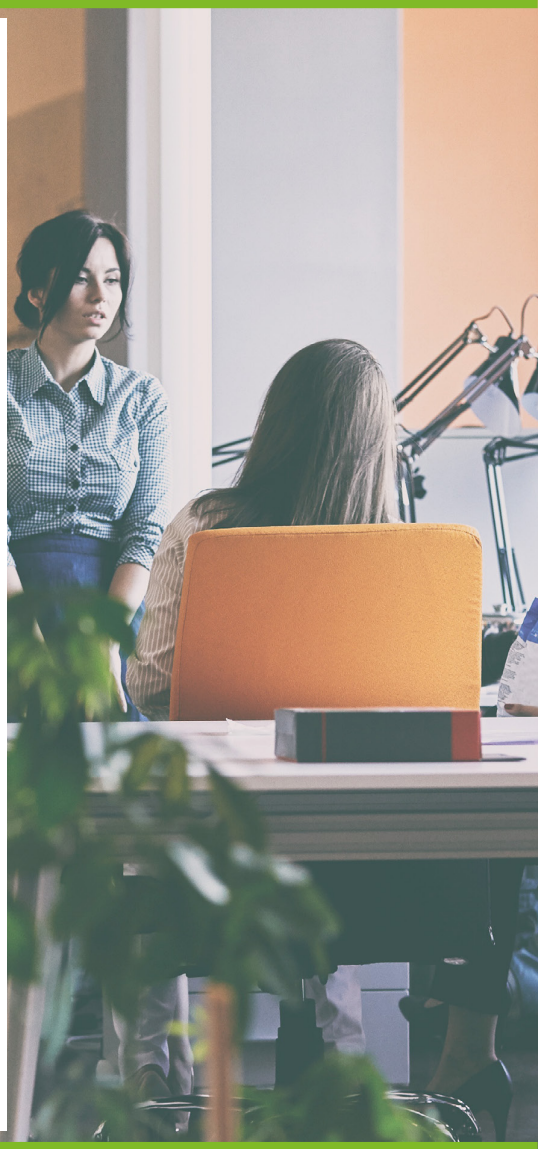
Content should serve the entire customer lifecycle - from first touch to renewal. This ensures maximum value from your publishing efforts and total artillery coverage for sales development, account executives, and customer support.

Again, we look back to Technique One. The goal is to expeditiously create content with the breadth and depth to add value across as much of your audience as possible. This includes:

- Cold prospects
- Warm prospects
- Lost prospects
- New clients
- Long-term clients
- Lost clients

The broader the scope of impact a piece of content has, the better it serves your bottom-line. If you are only creating content designed to impact the top-of-funnel, you are vastly under-serving your audience, your company, and yourself.

Redouble the benefits of your hard work and seek to create content that resonates with the six audience categories referenced above and distribute it accordingly.



Technique #8. Track and Analyze the Entire Funnel

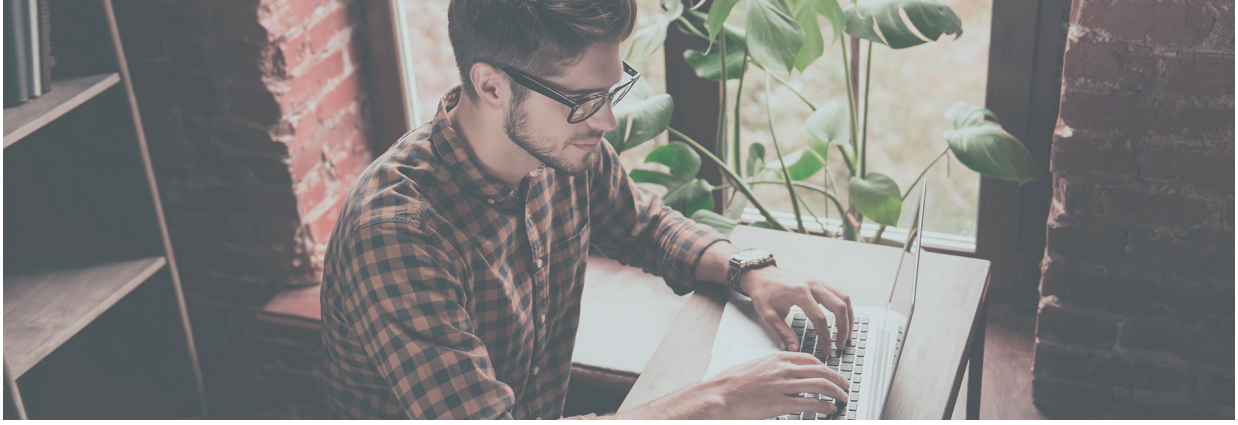
This technique is a critical component that should be applied to everything you do. To get the most benefit from your content-driven inbound marketing efforts, you should use technology to analyze what content and channels drive results.

Invest in a marketing automation system - HubSpot, Marketo, and Pardot (especially if you use Salesforce) are all great options.

Devote a few dollars to a content tracking tool like Guru to build your internal knowledge base.

Use Outreach, Cirrus Insight, or SalesLoft to send trackable content at scale and give your sales reps the ability to see what messaging, links, and attachments get prospects to respond.

Keep track of the data-driven insights these tools give you. Then triple down on what is working and fix areas that need improvement.



Technique #9. Emphasize Process, Details, and Fundamentals

The final technique is also a 'must apply' for all aspects of the content-driven inbound marketing playbook.

The key mantras here are to:

- Create transparent, consistent workflows.
- Strike balance between speed and quality control.

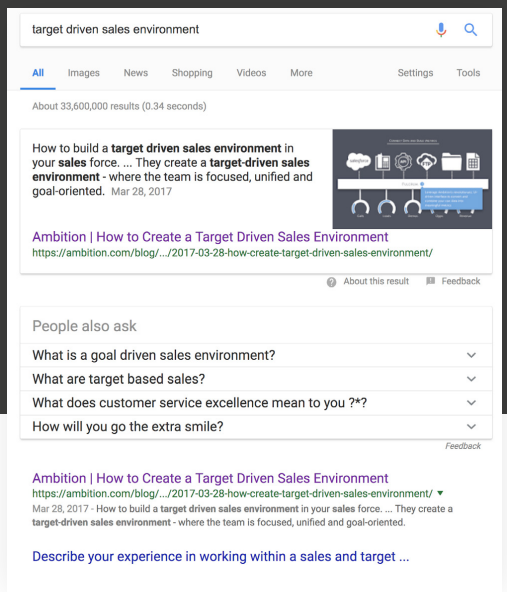
To accomplish the former, use a project management tool like Asana or Trello to keep your team on the same page. These tools will also help you strike the balance between speed and quality control.

Two points-of-emphasis here are attention to detail and going the extra mile.

Paying attention to detail, for example, could mean optimizing every blog post you publish for SEO as a matter of best-practice.

That means adding alt titles to your images, using the proper text formatting with headers, et cetera, and using an SEO tool (we love Ahrefs) to discover the best keyword opportunities for high Google rank.

Here's a high-performing blog post Jeremy wrote at Ambition whose title was chosen specifically for its high search volume (400 per month) and low keyword difficulty (less than 5 backlinks were needed for a top search ranking).



Going the extra mile is as simple as emailing a partner or client you feature prominently in a piece of content to:

- Give them a heads up they are being recognized.
- Gently ask if they can share it across their channels.

The biggest driver of content is the willingness to do these two things. By developing a consistent process, practicing good fundamentals, and going the extra miles, you can guarantee a sound return-on-investment in your content marketing efforts to drive inbound leads and give sales and client success the heavy artillery they need to most effectively do their jobs.

Don't Sweat the Techniques:
CONTACT BLAKE AND JEREMY

Ready to drive more leads across your sales funnel cheaply and at-scale?

Contact Blake or Jeremy to get full-scale inbound and outbound content marketing set up for your sales organization.