

Medallion Fulfillment & Logistics

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Harness the Power of Inbound Marketing to Attract Customers to Your Website

There's a new kid on the marketing team and he's not only changing the rules, he's playing a whole new ball game. Inbound marketing is leveling the playing field, allowing small-scale entrepreneurs and start-ups to go toe-to-toe with the big leagues and score. Fast, fun and cheap, inbound marketing is an entrepreneur's marketing dream. Learn to harness the power of inbound marketing and you can quickly move your company from farm team to major league.

Still a rookie in the marketing world, inbound marketing currently accounts for just 10% of most marketing budgets with outbound marketing chewing up the 80% lion's share of available advertising dollars. Over the next year or two, however, marketing gurus expect that ratio to be turned upside down. The exponential expansion of Facebook (500 million active users and counting) as a primary communication venue and the growing proliferation of mobile communication via smartphones (90% of Americans have cell phone contracts and 60% use smartphones) is driving the shift from traditional outbound to internet-focused inbound marketing.

Inbound marketing – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, blogs, white papers, eBooks, forums, webinars, RSS feeds -- is internet based and search engine driven. Unlike outbound marketing – newspaper and magazine advertisements, television and radio ads, cold calls, direct mail campaigns, email spam, trade shows – that reaches *out* to consumers, casting a wide net in the hopes of snaring a few paying customers; inbound marketing uses search engine optimization techniques (SEO) to target and pre-qualify consumers who are actually interested in purchasing your product and pulls these potential customers *in*, directing them to your website.

A successful inbound marketing program is three pronged:

- Informative and useful content is created and published on your website in the form of website content, blogs, white papers, video clips, forums, webinars, etc.;
- Search engine optimization (SEO) is utilized to increase the ranking of your content with popular search engines, making it easier for consumers to find; and
- Social media is used to spread your content to potential customers.

Not only has inbound marketing proven to be more effective in connecting to interested customers and producing useful targeted leads, it's cost-effective. There is no charge to launch a Facebook page or use Twitter. According to a Hubspot survey of 231 marketing professionals,

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the cost of an outbound lead is \$332, whereas the cost of an inbound lead is only \$134, a 60% reduction. Inbound marketing also has a longer shelf life than outbound marketing efforts. Media ads are only effective during the week or month of publication or airing, pay-per-click ads are effective only as long as you continue to pour money into them; but blogs, white papers and videos live on the internet forever and can be recycled via social media again and again, maximizing your marketing investment. An added bonus is that inbound marketing removes the interruption onus that burdens outbound marketing. Where outbound marketing interrupts consumers by pushing its message, uninvited, into their lives; inbound marketing attracts interested consumers motivated to embrace its message -- and your product.

In effect, inbound marketing shifts control of brand message distribution from your business to consumers. While it can be difficult to relinquish that control, business owners who embrace inbound marketing will find the benefits to be considerable. Each time your brand is mentioned, recommended, shared or linked to on a social networking site such as Facebook, it carries the personal endorsement of the individual who is passing it along, increasing your marketing impact and, because of the personal connection, making your product even more enticing to the people on that individual's friend list. Inbound marketing expands the reach and impact of every marketing dollar you invest. Don't be left in the dust; join the inbound marketing team today.

About the Author

Jan Stewart writes exclusively for [Medallion Fulfillment & Logistics](#), a family owned fulfillment service business located in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. When you need simple or comprehensive assistance with warehousing, order processing, and shipping for your store or e-commerce business, consider Medallion first. Visit them at www.MedallionEnterprises.com.