



Integrated Digital Strategies

INBOUND MARKETING

for Franchise Development

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The landscape for franchise marketing is changing. Franchise sales representatives no longer drive the information that potential franchisees need to make their decisions. Rather, franchise prospects are conducting extensive research online, finding their information through Google searches, franchise review sites, and the franchisor's website.

In light of these changes, franchisors need to adapt in order to remain viable. Enter inbound marketing, the relatively recent marketing strategy that helps your franchise prospects find you.

Let this eBook be a guide to the basics of inbound marketing, including how it helps franchise brands attract quality leads through remarkable content and targeted online advertising.

WHAT IS INBOUND MARKETING

Increasingly, people believe inbound marketing is the most effective method for marketing online. This marketing technique earns a customer's attention through **targeted**, **valuable**, and **relevant** information, allowing your target customer—or, in this case, franchisee—to find you.

This marketing philosophy focuses on a combination of high quality content and thoughtfully placed online advertisements to educate potential franchisees about your opportunity, encouraging them to choose your franchise over the countless other opportunities.

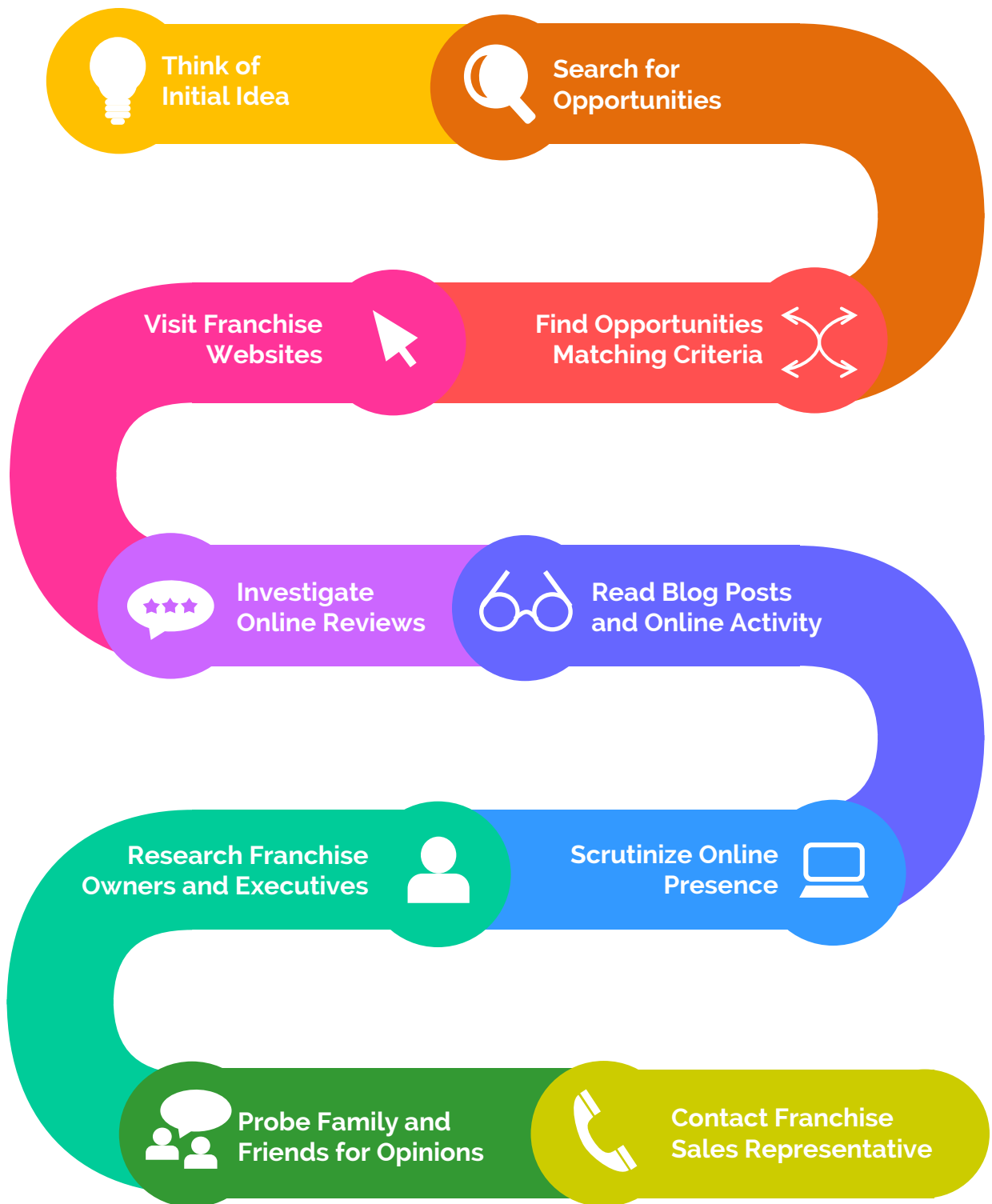
Prospective Franchise Owners Find You

The key to inbound marketing is that you find your franchise owners where they spend their time on the Internet. Rather than spending time and money tracking down leads, leads find you through Internet inquiries and research.

With inbound marketing, your goal is not to sell your franchise but to educate your prospects. An educated prospect is an informed lead, making the process of converting leads into franchisees faster and easier.

Indeed, 75% of business-to-business buyers say that they prefer gathering information online on their own versus interacting with a sales representative, proving how crucial inbound marketing is.

The Majority of Franchise Buyers Follow A Similar Path As They Decide Where To Invest



Inbound Vs. Outbound Marketing

Two opposite marketing methodologies—inbound marketing and outbound marketing—demonstrate the ways that the internet has changed the way franchisors must market.

INBOUND MARKETING

Earns attention through organic searches, targeted emails, and well placed ads

Is mapped to the buyer's journey

Uses relevant and informational language

Fits into regular internet use

Obtains information directly from the interested prospect

OUTBOUND MARKETING

Demands attention through pop-ups, spam, and generic calls or emails

Is generic and non-specific

Uses hard sales and advertising language

Interrupts regular internet use

Purchases or rents mass contact information

¹ <http://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing>
http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/discover-where-competitors-are-beating-you-online?utm_campaign=Competitive%20Analysis&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook#sm.0000ffm3ts11u1e1wzm73m6ynvq59

INBOUND MARKETING 101

Attract, Convert, Close, Amplify

The basics of inbound marketing can be summed up in four verbs:
attract, convert, close, amplify.

Attract strangers and turn them into visitors

using search engine optimization, content, social publishing, and an optimized website.

Convert visitors into leads

by gathering their information with forms, calls to action, and landing pages.

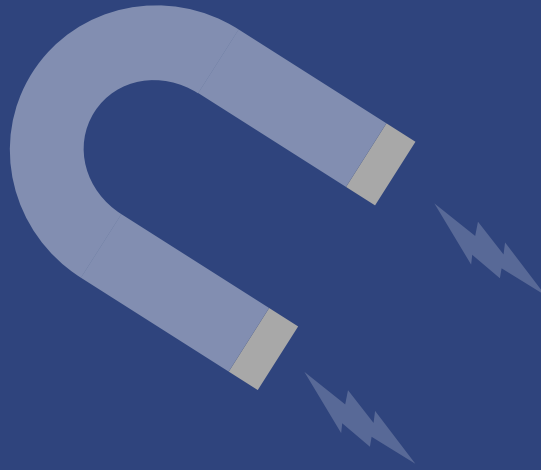
Close the deal and turn leads into franchisees

with marketing tools that help get in touch with the right leads at the right times.

Amplify your brand

by continuing to delight your franchisees. Get feedback from surveys, social monitoring, and smart text.

**INBOUND
MARKETING**



Attract Quality Leads

Inbound marketing creates informed leads who have done cursory research online before getting in touch with your franchise sales agents. Informed leads ask informed questions, so your sales representatives will spend less time answering basic questions and more time in discussion with serious prospects.

Effective inbound marketing uses two things to create content that attracts high quality leads: the **buyer's journey** and **persona development**. Using these to shape your content results in better leads and a higher conversion rate, all at a lower cost per acquisition.

The Buyer's Journey

As you attempt to draw franchisees to your brand, knowing the path they take to invest is crucial. This path is called the Buyer's Journey, and its **three stages** funnel people through to transform from strangers to franchisees.

STAGE ONE: AWARENESS

In stage one—the top of the funnel—the goal is to turn a stranger into a visitor. This is when your potential franchisee has begun thinking about the opportunity. Thoughts like, "I want to be my own boss," and "I wonder what it takes to own a business," begin to cross his or her mind.

STAGE TWO: CONSIDERATION

In stage two—the middle of the funnel—visitors become leads. At this stage, the visitor has decided that owning a business is the best choice for them, so they begin researching the different ways to make it happen. During their research, they will seek to understand the differences between starting a business and investing in a franchise.

STAGE THREE: DECISION

Stage three is the bottom of the funnel—where your franchise candidate elects to take the next step in the process of becoming a franchisee i.e. Business Profile Questionnaire, Interview, Discovery Day



INTERESTING NOTE:

According to Hubspot, the authority on inbound marketing, 70-90% of the buyer's journey is complete before the buyer contacts a sales representative.

⁴ http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/discover-where-competitors-are-beating-you-online?utm_campaign=Competitive%20Analysis&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook#sm.0000ffm3ts11u1e1wzm73m6ynvq59

Persona Development

Effective personas go hand in hand with the stages of the buyer's journey. A persona is an archetype of your typical franchisee; some brands have just one or two and others have six or seven.

These personas are composite sketches of the kind of people who invest in your franchise. The persona development process helps determine the duties and roles of the particular kinds of people your business is trying to engage through content.

Personas also help you address some of the basic questions and concerns that your potential franchisees may have. Since the advent of the internet, franchise prospects expect transparency from a franchisor, and personas help your website content achieve that.

Common questions are answered throughout the personas-development process that help inform your prospective franchisees. These include:

- ▶ **Goals and how the opportunity can help meet them**
- ▶ **Demographics such as age, gender, education level, current occupation**
- ▶ **Common objections and how to address them**
- ▶ **Issues or problems with franchising**

The three stages of the buyer's journey come together with your business's personas to create a map for your content.

Content Earns a Conversation

Once you have determined the stages of the buyer's journey and your franchisee personas, content is king. Content is the single most important part of inbound marketing, as **targeted**, **valuable**, and **relevant** content is how you push prospects through the buyer's journey. Only once you have created high quality content will your franchise prospects seek out your franchise sales representatives.

Content Must:

- 1 Speak to the persona of your potential buyer
- 2 Answer visitor's questions
- 3 Align with the buyer's journey—top, middle, and bottom of the content funnel
- 4 Drive them to take the next step in the buyer's journey

Creating content just for the sake of filling your website is ineffective. In order to drive leads, content must serve a purpose and fit specific personas at specific stages of the buyer's journey. Remember, **70-90% of the buyer's journey is completed through internet research**, which includes reading the content on your website.

Spend Time Developing Quality Content

In this information age, prospective franchise owners are more educated than ever before. Before a potential franchisee calls your recruiter, 84% of the time he or she will have consumed online information to learn about the opportunity.

A lead spends considerable time looking at a franchisor's website, especially compared to a visitor. A lead will take the time to read most of the content on a site,

sometimes as many as 150 pages, where a visitor typically only skims a few pages in total.

It is imperative that your website has enough content for the lead to obtain enough information to warrant a phone call, which is the essential step to convert a lead into a franchisee. Lack of content on your website sends potential franchisees to another opportunity—one that will inform them and educate them.

Gather Leads from a Variety of Sources

Inbound marketing strategically uses content in a variety of places to enhance franchise leads originating from a variety of sources. Some examples include:

- ▶ **Lead portals**
- ▶ **Franchise brokers**
- ▶ **Organic search**
- ▶ **Paid Search**
- ▶ **Referrals**
- ▶ **Current franchise customers**

Any of these sources can generate leads that turn into franchisees. Always remember, regardless of where a lead comes from, the first place he or she is going to turn for information is online. Managing content is the only way to filter a lead through to the next stages of the buyer's journey.

⁵ http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/discover-where-competitors-are-beating-you-online?utm_campaign=Competitive%20Analysis&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook#sm.0000ffm3ts11u1e1wzm73m6ynvq59

Online Advertising

Franchise sales agents used to reach most of their prospects over the phone; however, this is no longer the case. Even though nearly everyone has a smart phone in their pocket, franchise sales people have a difficult time reaching their target markets.

Online ads that are directed to relevant content on a franchise website are what attract leads. Optimized online advertising pushes prospects through the franchise funnel by focusing on specific keywords and **targeted**, **valuable**, and **relevant** ads.

Keywords

It is critical to research keywords in order to know what terms people are searching as they look for a franchise category. Some key words are searched so frequently that they are difficult to penetrate and scale. Others have too little traffic and are not worth pursuing. The goal is to find keywords that have high traffic and are relevant to the franchisor's business model.

Targeted and Relevant Ads

When a prospect clicks on an ad, it is critical that the ad delivers to relevant content that answers the prospect's questions and addresses their concerns. When the ad is relevant and answers a question, it is much more likely to push the prospect through the content funnel.

Let's Look at an Example.

A franchise prospect, Jeff, is a stranger to business ownership but he knows he wants out of his corporate job. He lives in Denver.

Google low cost franchise

Jeff Googles "How can I be my own boss?" and "Own a business in Denver." From these results he reads a few articles and blog posts about starting a business and a few more resources about investing in a franchise.

A few days later, Jeff searches, "low cost franchise." At the top of his results is an ad for Basic Franchising Co., which Jeff clicks on.

Basic Franchising Co.'s ad takes Jeff to a page dedicated to the low cost of their franchises, including the franchise fee and royalties. He spends several minutes thoroughly reading this content and several other pages on the site.

A few days later, Jeff is going through his Facebook feed, where he sees a suggested post from Basic Franchising Co. He clicks on the post to find additional information about Basic Franchising Co.'s franchise fees and financing options.

Over the course of several weeks, Jeff researches everything he can about Basic Franchising Co. Ultimately, he decides that investing in Basic Franchising Co. is the right career move for him.

Basic Franchising Co.'s ad takes him to a generic page on their website about the franchise opportunity. Jeff has to dig around to find information about the franchise fee; such information is limited. Instead of listing detailed information, Basic Franchising Co.'s website shows a phone number for Jeff to call.

A few days later, Jeff is going through his Facebook feed, where he sees a suggested post from Competitive Franchising Inc. He clicks on the post to find information about Competitive Franchising Inc.'s franchise fees and financing options.

Ultimately, Jeff decides to invest in a Competitive Franchising Inc. franchise instead of Basic Franchising Co.

In Jeff's example, the ads that targeted his specific searches and interests had a greater impact on his decision than the ads that were not targeted. These irrelevant ads kept him from investing in Basic Franchising Co. and eventually sent him to a competitor.

What kind of ads?

Ads come in all forms. Specific, targeted ads work the best regardless of what form they take.

Here are some examples of ad types:

- ▶ **Search**
- ▶ **Display**
- ▶ **Email**
- ▶ **Social media**
e.g. Facebook & LinkedIn

THE BOTTOM LINE: Inbound Marketing Helps the Bottom Line

Inbound marketing for franchise development has made driving new franchise sales simpler and more effective. Inbound marketing means that franchise salespeople can spend less time chasing leads from trade shows or answering questions from unqualified leads. Effective, detailed, and thorough web content helps serious franchise prospects qualify themselves before they even speak to a sales representative.

The combination of online advertising and great content produces quality leads, ultimately lowering the cost per lead. Ads that are rendered to the specific section of a well-designed website—complete with highly informative content—will make your franchise development team more efficient and effective.

Integrated Digital Strategies specializes in inbound marketing and the techniques that drive franchise sales, generate quality leads, and optimize web content. Our expertise is virtually unmatched. We work with our clients to create **targeted**, **valuable**, and **relevant** content to maximize their inbound marketing.



For more information visit us at

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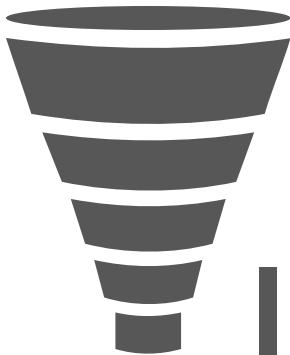
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