Content Marketing
Definition & Strategy

Learning objectives

Pre-requisite for student: Introduction to Digital Marketing is recommended.

The student is able to / understands

- what content marketing is
- the 'WHY' of content marketing.
- the benefits of content marketing
- the connection of content marketing strategy to company's business strategy
- the essentials of effective content marketing strategy
- set up an effective content marketing strategy

Contents

In-Class Activity: recap and discussion on pre-course assignment

- What is content marketing? Rely on sources.
- Students need to think an example of their own prior to the course; come up with an example for content marketing which you found interesting/successful and argue for your choice

Discussion in pairs / groups of 3-4 for 10 minutes

1. Is content marketing inbound or outbound marketing
2. In which channels can one do content marketing
3. Share your findings about the brands / companies (re: pre-course assignment)

1.Content Marketing Definition

What Is Content Marketing?

"Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on **creating and distributing** valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action."

https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/what-is-content-marketing/

- Appreciated by target group
- Useful - target group typically searches for content
- Continuous
- Planned and measurable

What Is Not Content Marketing?

- Advertising
- Pushing through own message
- Non-measurable
- Easy
- Relevant only to big brands
- Free
- It raises awareness, not sales
- Results come quickly

Read further: https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/2989/inbound-marketing-vs-outbound-marketing.aspx
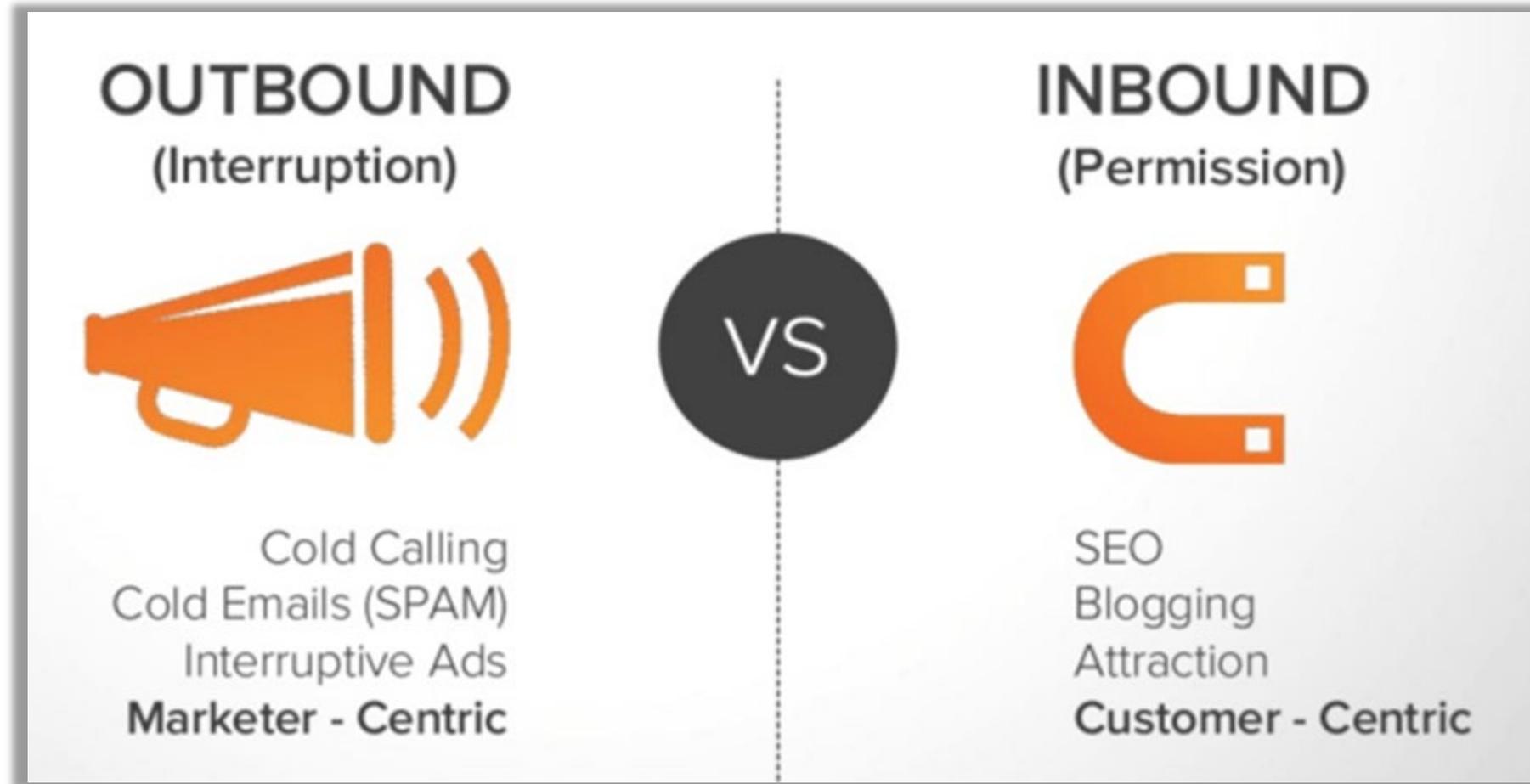
What content does

Content increases brand visibility

Instead of reading a sales pitch, customers or potential customers may be reading an article that provides advice or guidance, promoting the brand in different areas outside its corporate website or traditional locations.

Content helps create backlinks for search engine optimisation (SEO)

Good articles are often recycled by other people online. Have you ever quoted an article or added a link back to a page about a certain subject? By adding someone else's article to your web page, you are creating a backlink that Google sees and it acknowledges that the original content must have value to be added to another website.

Content encourages conversion rate optimisation (CRO)

Clever content such as buying guides can convert browsers into buyers. If you are visiting online retailers such as Sears in the United States or John Lewis in the UK, you will notice with more expensive goods, such as those in their large appliance category, they offer 'buying guides'. This free online advice offers useful information before a purchase takes place. A well-written guide can convert browsers into buyers and offer greater reassurance about the company's expertise.

Content inspires social shares

Have you ever shared an article on Twitter? Retweeted, liked or commented on content created by someone else? Content can inspire social shares, especially where the contentis vivid and interactive Digital tools make it easy to share content across social channels.

2. Content Marketing Types And Channels

- Blogs
- Reports, articles, guides
- Whitepapers
- Videos
- Social media posts
- Print media (eg. customer magazines)
- Webinars, e-books
- Podcasts
- Infographs
- Newsletters
- Influencer marketing
- Native advertising
- Events

"A father" of content marketing.
The Furrow magazine by John Deere, est. in 1895.
Still going strong - now online, too, of course.
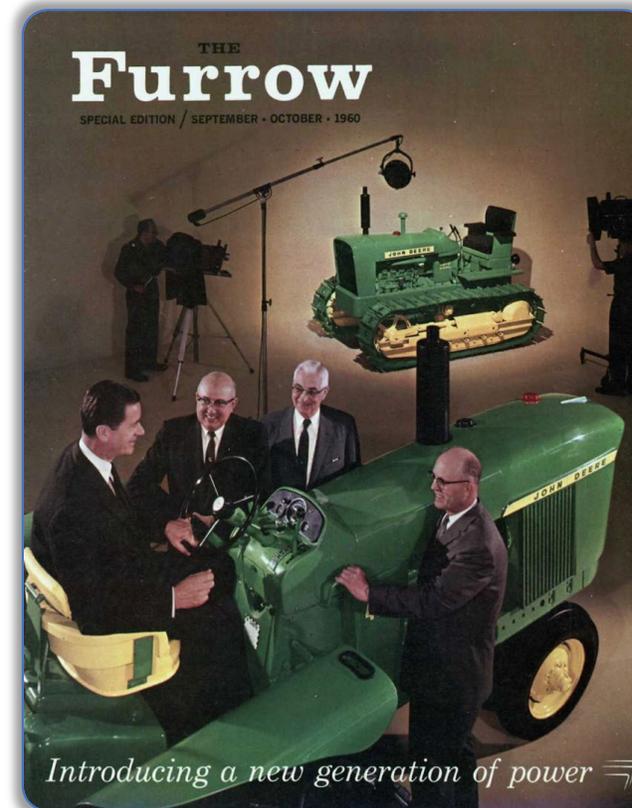
A tip: Content Curation
You don't need to create content from the scratch.

Curated content or the process of content curation has been described by researchers Aristea Fotopoulou and Nick Couldry from Goldsmiths College, University of London, as 'finding, categorizing and organizing relevant online content on specific issues'

Content curation can be a useful way of creating content on specific themes such as product reviews, *where you are telling the story about the story*. As an example, you may curate content by gathering up a series of articles written about Snapchat Specs, assessing the different perspectives and range of advice provided and turning this into a post for your blog.

Fotopoulou, A. and Couldry, N. (2015) 'Telling the story of the stories: Online content curation and digital engagement', Information Communication and Society, 18 (2), pp. 235–49.

Co-funded by the European Union

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3. Benefits of Content Marketing

Image source:

Changes in Consumer Attention

The customer is in control.
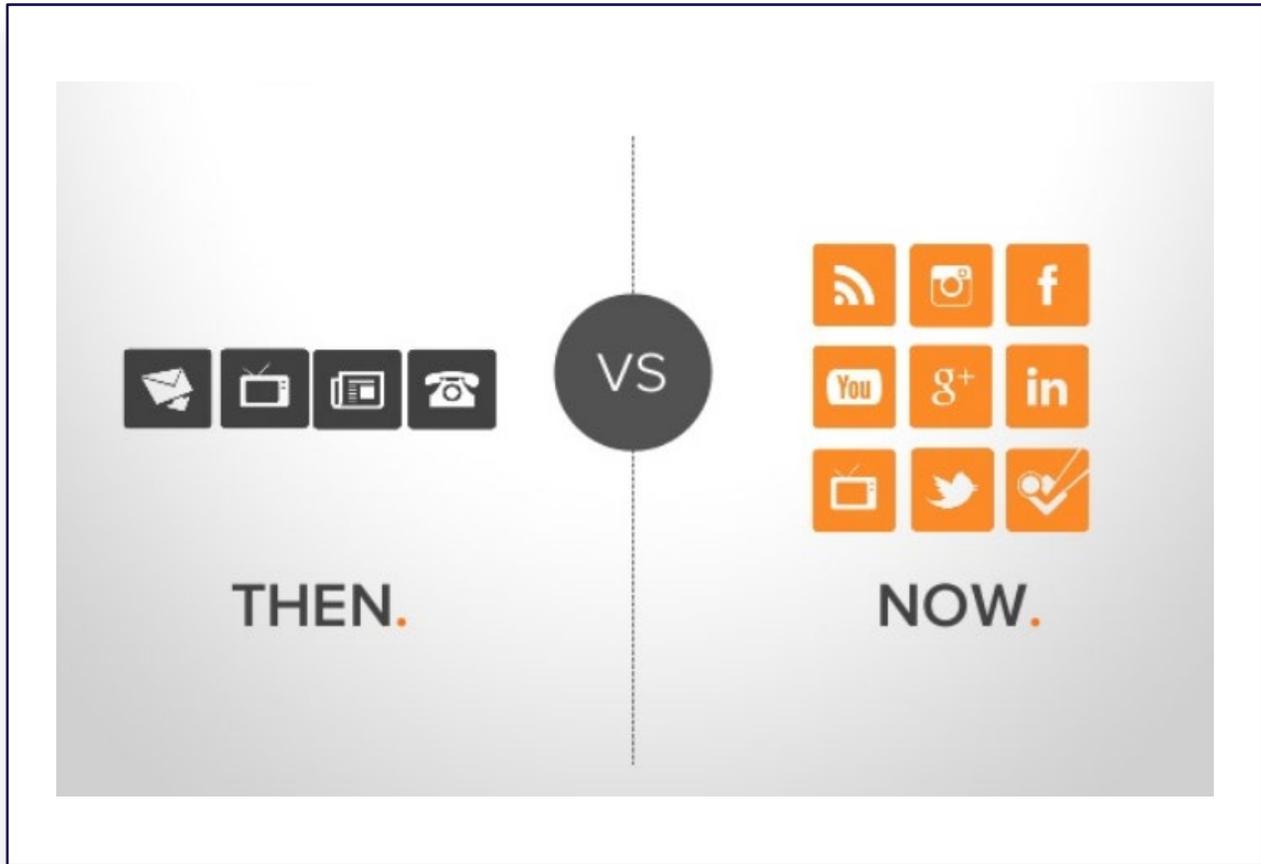
INBOUND VS OUTBOUND

Inbound	Outbound
the marketer educates	the marketer simply sells
the marketer interacts with the audience	the marketer rarely interacts with the audience
the most valuable content wins	the biggest budget wins
the marketer gets permission from the customer	the marketer interrupts the customer

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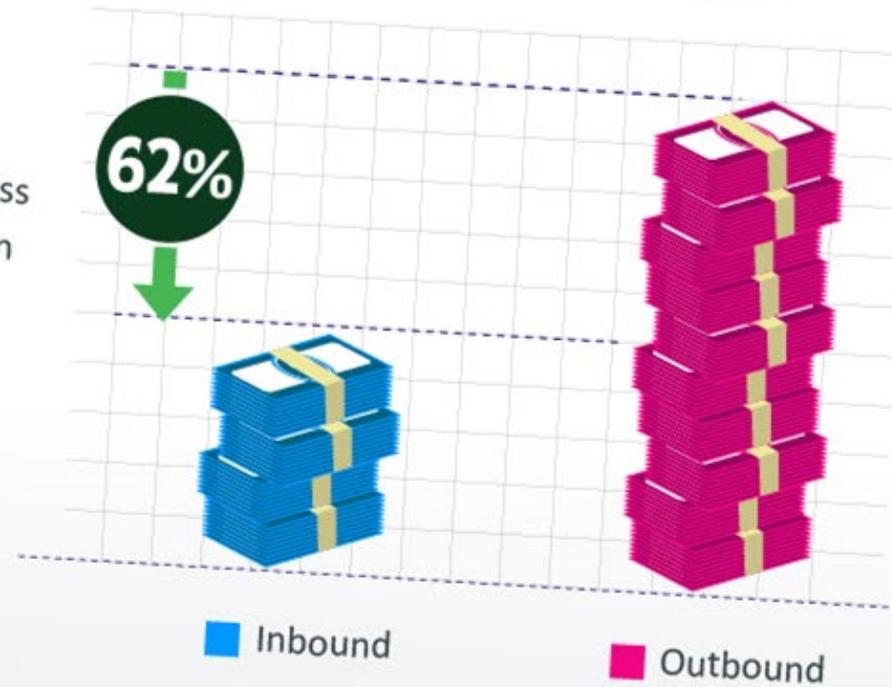
Content Marketing – WHY?

- According to Demand Metric, content marketing **costs 62% less** than traditional marketing and **generates 3 times as many leads**.

- It's no surprise that **90% of organizations** use content marketing as part of their marketing efforts and that it continues to grow in popularity.

Source: Lyfemarketing

78% of consumers prefer getting to know a company via articles rather than ads.

70% believe that organizations providing custom content are interested in building good relationships with them.

Content marketing is quickly becoming the best way to attract and convert these customers.

Futher reading: https://www.thehoth.com/blog/boring-niche-content/

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Benefits of content marketing

- Increase website traffic.

- Establish authority and trust.

- Create brand awareness.

- Develop brand personality.

- Connect with your audience.

- Fuel social media and PR.

- Support the conversion funnel.

- Improve conversion rates.

4. Content Marketing Strategy

Business Strategy

Marketing Strategy

Content Marketing Strategy

Social Media Strategy

Video Strategy

etc.

Quiz! (this is in-class activation)

True or false?

- content marketing = advertising
- content marketing can be applied in small companies, too
- content marketing brings results quickly
- content marketing doesn't cost anything

Content Marketing Strategy – what is it?

- Set goals, a) objectives and b) relevant metrics and c) KPI's
  - Ie. a) Increase awareness, sales, customer service, employer brand. Remember SMART
  - Ie. b) # of returning visitors, best converting content, # of returning customers
- Target = know your (potential) customers
  - Buyer personas
  - Their buying behavior - customer journey
- Create a Content Mission
  - How – by creating content - to help your buyer personas to reach their goals. And to become your customers.
- Resource realistically
  - People, budget

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Content Marketing Strategy:
Closer Look at the Following Strategy Parts
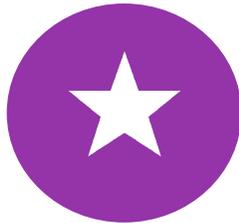
GOALS, OBJECTIVES & METRICS

WHY AND HOW TO BUILD A BUYER PERSONA

CUSTOMER JOURNEY
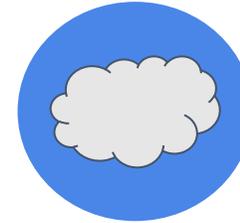
CONTENT MISSION

ASSIGNMENTS
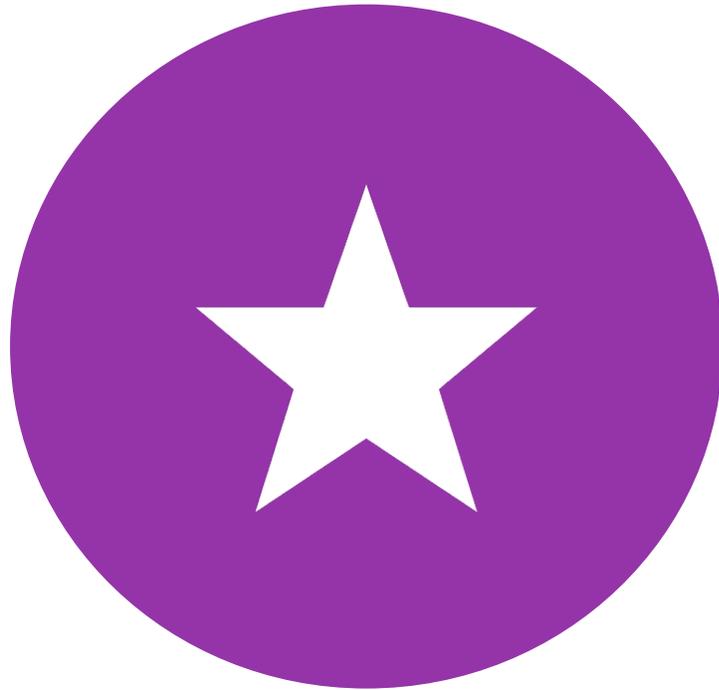
GOALS, OBJECTIVES & METRICS

What is the difference between a business, marketing or content strategy
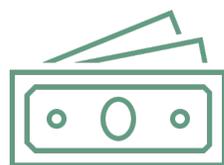
What do you want to achieve with your target audience?

Business goals

Sales forecast

Profit

Market share

Content Marketing goals

Brand awareness

Brand knowledge

Brand attitude

Brand action (buying) intention

Brand loyalty

Content goals

Increase conversation rates

Engaging with customers

Educating current and potential customers

Fostering brand loyalty

Content Metrics

Goals

Content goals

Increase conversation rates

Engaging with customers

Educating current and potential customers

Fostering brand loyalty

Metrics

- set relevant conversion goals for different stages of customer journey: newsletter and blog subscription, video views, content downloads, purchase
- engagement: number of shares and comments in social media, analytics metrics: nr of pages per session, time on page, sessions per user, etc
- educating customers: content downloads, users on site
- fostering brand loyalty: nr of returning users

SMART Objectives

Specific: They must clearly describe what it is you want to achieve.

Measurable: They should have clear metrics that can be measured before and after and objective is met.

Achievable: They should be realistic for your business to achieve by a certain time.

Relevant: They should relate to the overall business or individual objectives. Remember: you get what you measure / what your objectives are. Relevance is important!

Timed: They should have a target date for completion to encourage action to be taken to complete the objective.

Further reading (tip: useful in the group assignment):
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.html

Why SMART?

- They direct your marketing to the right direction. Ie. align with business goals.
- They are measurable. If objectives are not measurable, they're not worth much.
- Good and useful for all objectives in digital marketing

Specific
Measurable
Achievable:
Relevant
Timed

EXAMPLE:
A local garden company (sells plants, garden equipment, etc.) from Turku is expanding their services. *Next year's focus is on a new service, garden planning.*

Which of the following is/are SMART objectives?
- Our objective is to grow by 20%.
- Our objective is to sell garden planning service worth 10 000 € in 2023.
- Our objective is to be the biggest garden planning company in Finland during 2023.

WHY AND HOW TO BUILD A BUYER PERSONA

Buyer persona

- Fictional character that is created to represent a type of customer.

- *Personas* are used in conjunction with segmentation, where the personas represent the different segments.

- Personas are represented through their demographics, history, personality, ambitions and goals, frustrations, preferred brands and other characteristics that are important to the company.

- When the buyer is not the same as user/consumer important to create *buyer persona* and *user persona*

WHY?

- You can draw the attention of potential customers by offering them interesting content or **helping** them.
- Excellent way to create targeted, interesting and meaningful content
- Customers expect personalized content
- Buyer persona is a model – a fictional persona – who describes your typical customer.
- **NOTE! Buyer persona is NOT "a 30-50 year old man".**

HOW TO USE?

- Talk to your persona in his/her own tone of voice.
- When making content, always keep in mind, what is important for your customer (and not to your company)
- Better results in SEO and SEA, when you plan your keywords for your persona (f. ex. painpoints)
- When sharing content in social media, you can target more precisely, when you target to your persona (f. ex. according to his/her interests)

Buyer Personas

How to build?

1. Do audience research
   - Who is already buying from you? Interview some of them.
   - Study your website and social analytics. For example Facebook Audience Insights.
   - See what the competition is up to
2. Identify customer **pain points**
- Social listening
3. Identify customer goals
4. Understand how your brand can help
5. **How can you reach him/her?** What news and social media channel s/he uses?
6. Turn your research into buyer personas

Templates:
- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LjXUD2T80m9abqmqQRgJva5Xds3OxLqtm EOXkTX_wpI/edit
- https://www.impactplus.com/blog/great-buyer-persona-examples-free-template (see Student Sarah, Rachel Stay at Home Mom
- Further reading: https://blog.hootsuite.com/buyer-persona/
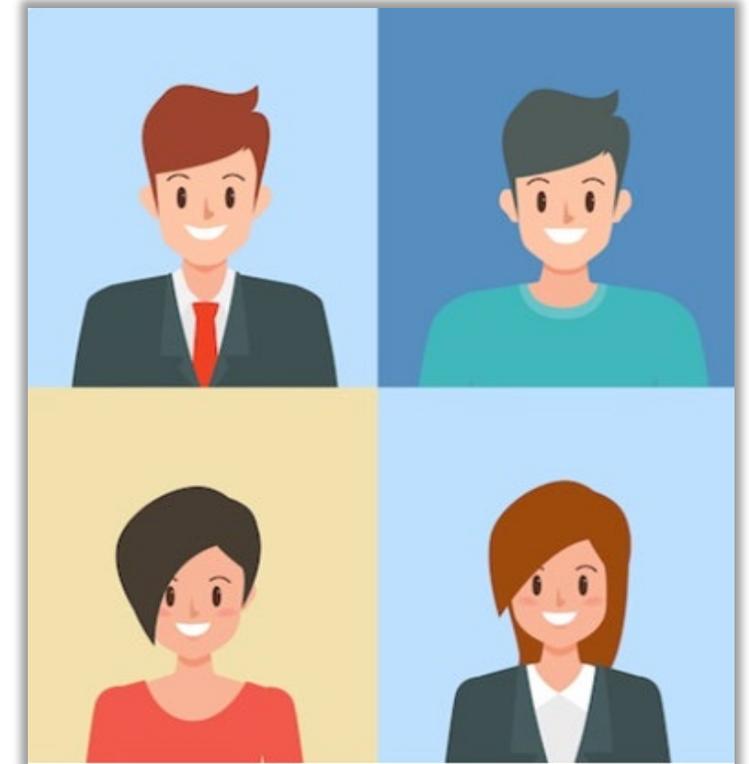
Good, editable template
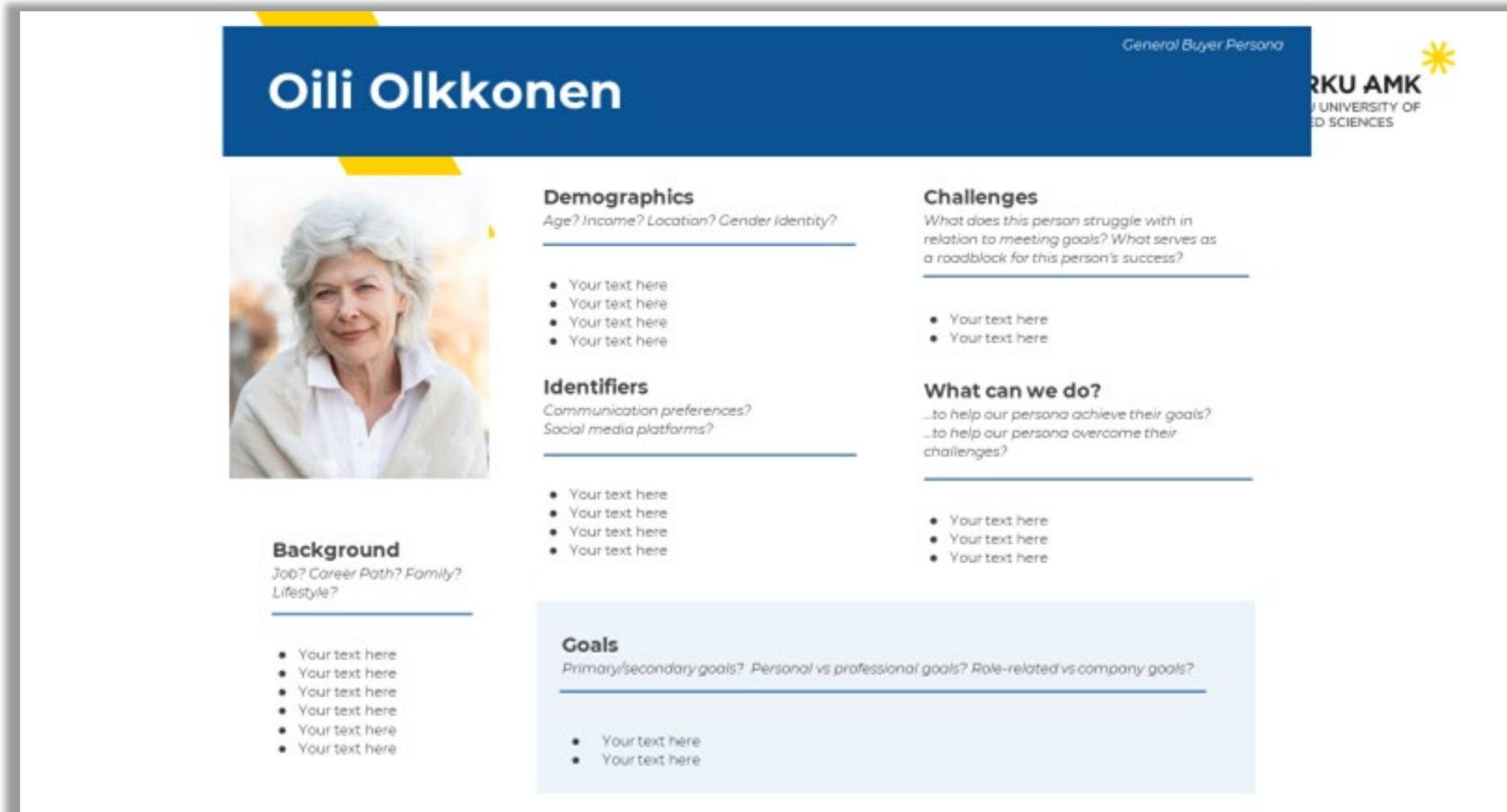
General Buyer Persona

Oili Olkkonen

RKU AMK
U UNIVERSITY OF
ED SCIENCES

Demographics
Age? Income? Location? Gender Identity?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Identifiers
Communication preferences?
Social media platforms?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Background
Job? Career Path? Family?
Lifestyle?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Challenges
What does this person struggle with in relation to meeting goals? What serves as a roadblock for this person's success?

- Your text here
- Your text here

What can we do?
...to help our persona achieve their goals?
...to help our persona overcome their challenges?

- Your text here
- Your text here
- Your text here

Goals
Primary/secondary goals? Personal vs professional goals? Role-related vs company goals?

- Your text here
- Your text here

Empathy map

An *empathy map* is a collaborative tool that we can be used to gain a deeper insight into our customers. Much like a buyer persona, an empathy map can represent a group of users, such as a customer segment.

Empathy map

A tool to gain deeper insight into the needs / experience of the target group you work for.

Use this to identify your persona's goals and painpoints.

WHAT DOES HE THINK AND FEEL?
What is really important to him? What does he think about in the shower? What touches him? What does he get emotional about? What keeps him awake at night? What gives him pain in his belly? What makes him feel sick/nausea? What does he dream about?

WHAT DOES HE HEAR?
What do his friends, colleagues, boss, family and acquaintances say to him? Which people, media and channels have the strongest influence on him?

WHAT DOES HE SEE?
What sort of location does he live and work in? Who are his friends, colleagues, family and acquaintances? Which messages and propositions does he see daily?

WHAT DOES HE DO AND SAY?
What is his attitude? How does he behave? What does he say to other people? What activities is he engaged in? To what extent is there a conflict between what he thinks, feels, does and what he says?

WHAT PAIN IS HE FEELING?
What does he fear? What are his problems and frustrations? What obstacles does he face in trying to reach his goals? What risks does he not dare to run?

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO HIM?
What does he really want to achieve? What are his needs? What requirements and standards does he apply? What are his criteria for succes? How can he achieve his objectives?

Bron: Basisboek customer journey © 2018 Noordhoff uitgevers b.v.

WHAT SHE THINKS AND FEEL

What are doing this weekend?

What's the next Festival?

Is there an app to help find downtown parking?

Where is a Cat's only Vet?

Looking for a rare book can't find

Where can I go to learn pottery

Is there a better way to get to work

Want to go somewhere to eat decadent chocolate crepes

Has this book been translated to English?

What book are you currently Reading

Who colors your hair. It looks great.

Why are you so obsessed with junk food?

Is there Mexican Junk food?

Where are the Indian vegan restaurants on Hillcrost?

Lee Anne

Lots of online ads that don't interest me

Unexplored businesses I see from the car

Is there a culture you haven't explored?

Have you ever had a kolaches

How do you find these cool places

Tons of businesses every inch of the city

Piles of work on my desk. Very little time

Have you ever been to a Texas Rodeo?

WHAT I HEAR

WHAT I SEE

Many buildings many people

Too many results on Google Search

Negative Yelp ratings for everything

Another freeway is closed

WHAT I SAY & DO

Use Google for everything

Watch my friends's feed online for scoops

Invite to explore Angie's list

What biz in Chinese district?

Want to learn more about Texas

Want to find a no kill shelter and volunteer

What's in Martha Texas?

I spend too much time searhing online

I like to explore little towns on the weekendst

Join tons of online groups to interact with Houstonians

Can I eat Vegan Italian?

PAIN

GAIN

Energy wasted on travel time

Too brand loyol to try new search tools

Archaic systems and processes

Houston is so big, that I feel lost

Wish I didn't have to drive so far for salon visits

Met a group of innovative programers

Houston Hurricane recovery helped with map app

How internet bought us together during storm

Found cool Bistro near home

Heading Mayor's task force for highschool entrepreneurs

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Empathy Map – The Creation Process

In-Class Group Activity: create a broad empathy map

Managerial problem to solve: "Why would somebody buy a new iPhone?"
Before you start the exercise, you will need at least basic understanding of your user segments (e.g. Sally the College Student, Sean the Young Professional).
You can use this template: https://www.ijlan.nl/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/empathy-map-poster.pdf
Encourage everyone to write down their thoughts regarding each of the empathy map's quadrants. Review the completed empathy map and discuss any patterns and outliers.

Choose a moderator, who will posing questions like these to help team members better visualize their users:
What environment are the users in when using your product?
Are they having fun, or do they want to get it over with?
What's their life like outside of using the product?
What kind of day are they having?
If all else fails, try a bit of role-playing, where one person "plays" the user, and ask them questions or play the role of the product, eliciting responses.

At the end of the session, wrap up what was learned. Did anyone's opinions change? Is there a better direction to go with the product design? Were any of the responses based on data, or pure assumption? These answers are partly why you made an empathy map in the first place.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Customer Journey

- There are many different illustrations – and even terms – in customer journey description
- Common to them all is that their purpose is to describe the path which potential customer takes when searching solution to his/her needs.
- In content marketing the marketer's task is to provide content which takes the potential customer through different stages of the customer journey towards purchase and brand loyalty
- In the following slides you see four different illustrations, each emphasizing a different point of view.
- Do you see the same logic in all of them?

Buyer's Journey (= Customer Journey)

= Process buyers go through to become aware of, consider, and decide to purchase a new product or service.

Awereness
Potential customer becomes aware of the problem s/he needs to solve.

Consideration
Potential customer is aware of what the problem is – now s/he's looking for solution.

Decision
Potential customer is looking for the best product/service, with the best deal.

Advocacy

Graphics source: https://insights.newscred.com/
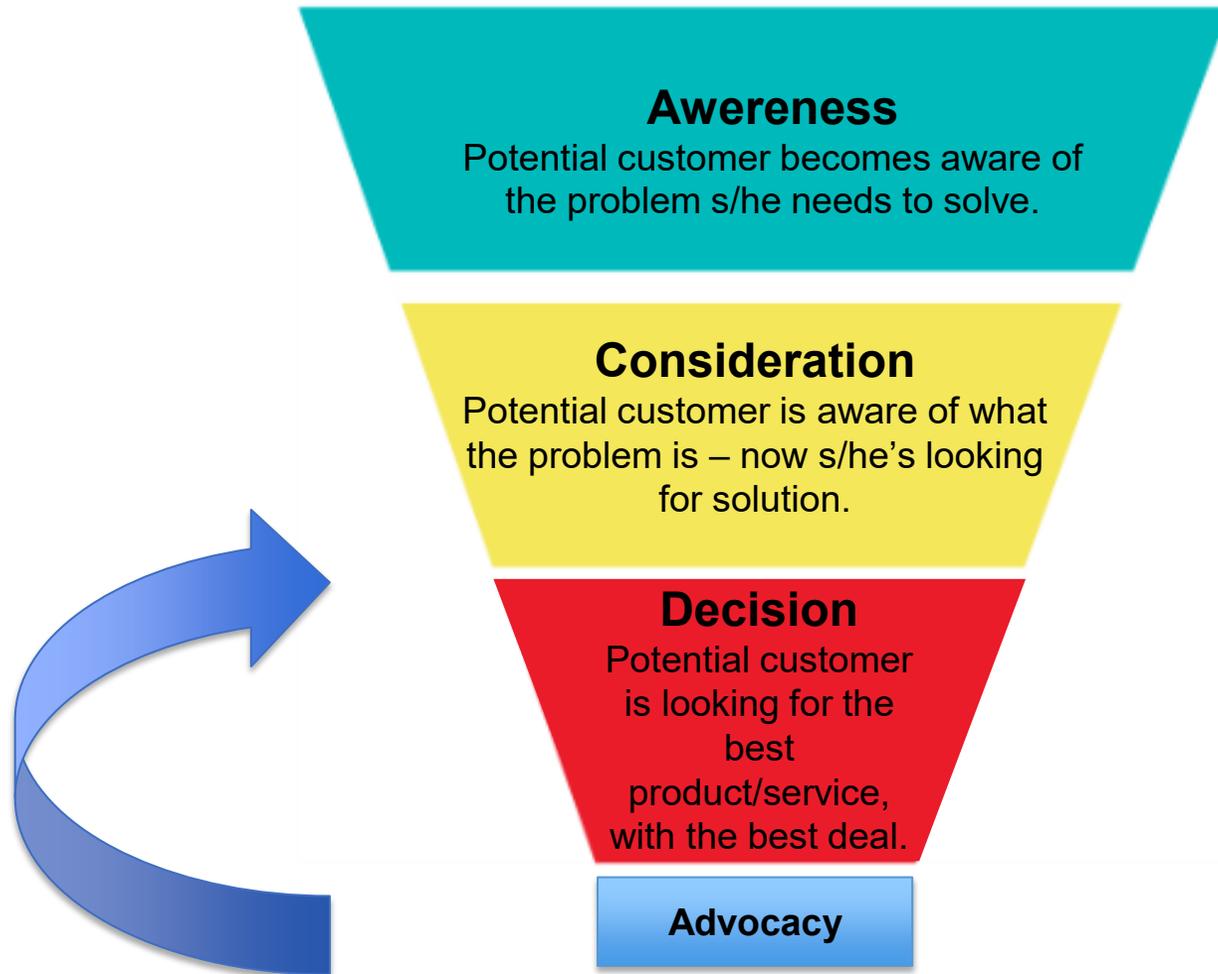
- Videos
- Blog posts
- Social media posts
- Infographics
- Quizzes
- Outbound advertising – traditional media, too!

- Newsletters
- Events
- Whitepapers
- Webinars
- SEO, SEM
- Native advertising, influencer marketing

- Case studies
- Pricing
- Demos

- Website
- Customer service

- Social networks ~word of mouth
- Blogs

Further reading:
https://www.crazyegg.com/blog/guides/buyers-journey/

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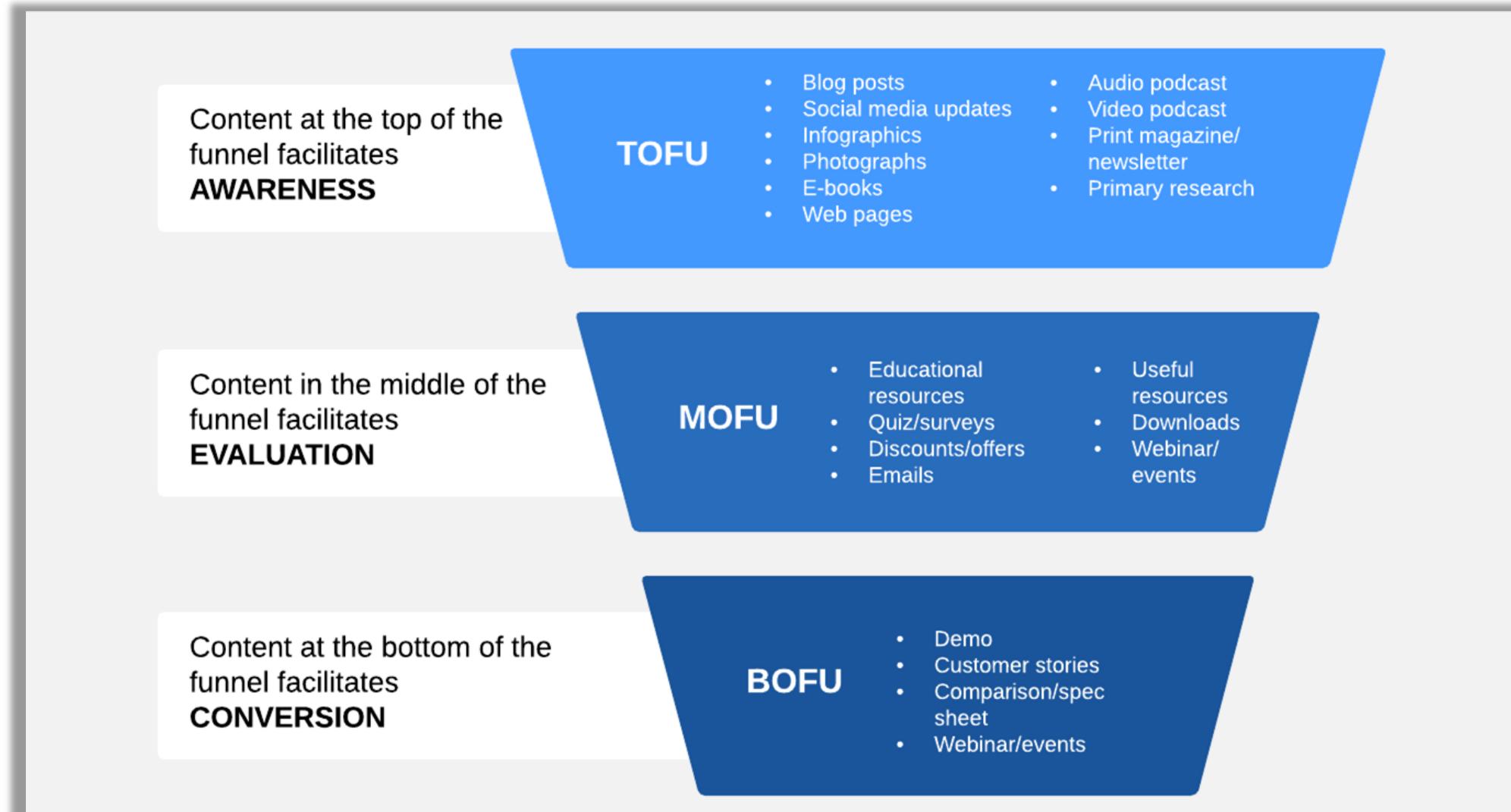
INBOUND MARKETING METHODOLOGY
From a stranger to a loyal promoter

Inbound Marketing Methodology

Attract	Convert	Close	Delight
Strangers →	Visitors →	Leads →	Customers →	Promoters
Blog & Keywords Social Media Pages	Forms Calls-to-Action Landing Pages	Events Email CRM Integrations	Email Social Media Workflows

Graphic by: **DevriX**   Source: **HubSpot**
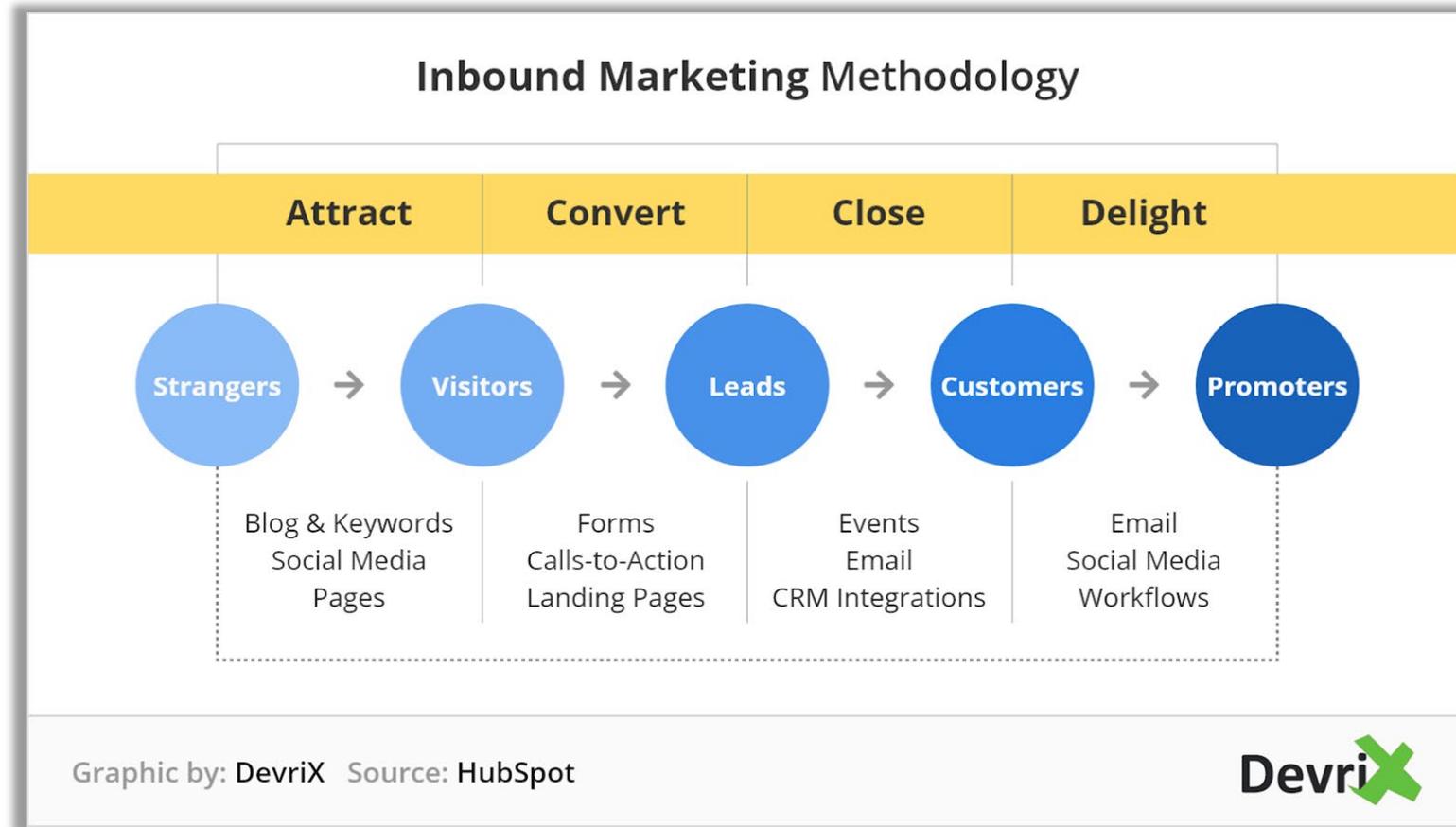
Successful inbound marketing strategy that engages in conversation with potential customers

Engagement builds connections with a client.

Image source: Campaign Creators on Unsplash
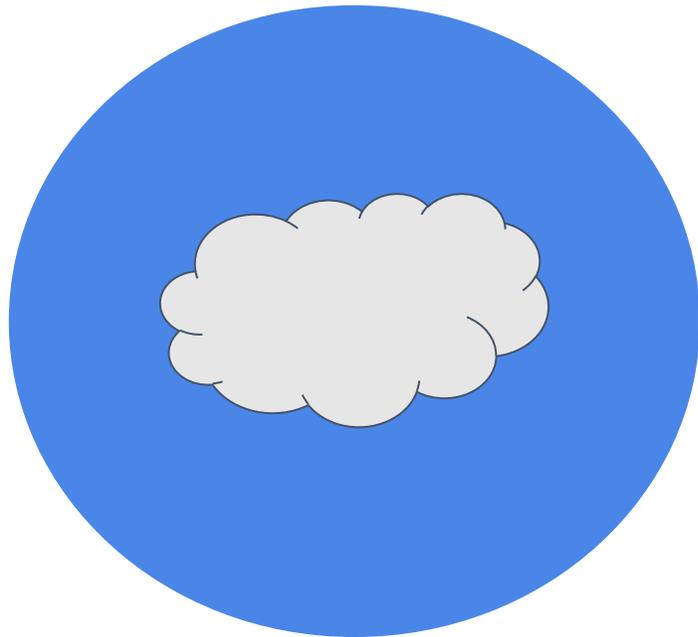
CONTENT MISSION

Content Mission

- when creating content mission, you need to think how you can help your buyer persona with your content
- what are his/her problems / painpoints?
- what are his/her goals, and how your content can help him/her to achieve those?
- make first a keyword analysis, and and include those keywords in your content mission

For example:

Our content mission is to ease our buyer personas in their recruiting challenges. We provide useful tips, information and content in how to succeed in finding and hiring the best people to open positions.

keywords: recruiting, how to find best workers

But remember!

Inbound marketing does not exclude outbound marketing activities. Only a combination of these two strategies will be a key advantage in building competitiveness of companies.
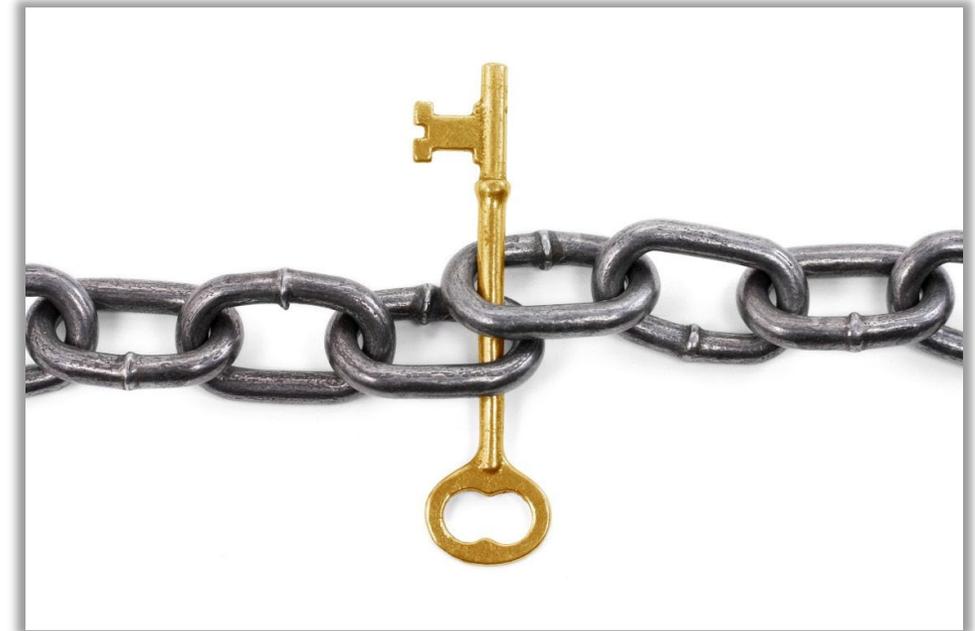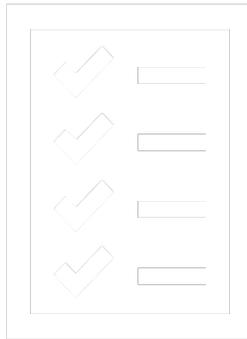
5. Assignments

This section includes also the in-class activities, which are presented earlier

Inidividual assignment
difference between in- and outbound marketing

STEP 1

Look for two organizations or brands.

STEP 2

And use social content marketing examples to show how a brand uses inbound or outbound marketing, respectively.

STEP 3

Show these examples (screenshots) in a Powerpoint presentation (maximum 6 slides) Substantiate your choices in the notes below and don't forget to mention the sources.

STEP 4

On the final slide mention your learning outcome, what insight(s) do you take along after this assignment?

Pre-Course Assignment

- What is content marketing? Rely on sources.
- Students need to think an example of their own prior to the course; come up with an example for content marketing which you found interesting/successful and argue for your choice
- use .pptx or .word in reporting
- be prepared to discuss in class

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Group Assignment: Build Content Marketing Strategy for your company

1. Decide a company which you build a strategy for. It can be BtoC or BtoB company. The key elements (1-4) of the strategy are mentioned on slide 25.
2. Build a content marketing strategy for your company. . When building buyer personas, think through and answer to these questions:

Get into the minds of your buyer persona
- what is his/her pain point or objective for which s/he seeks help?
- what are steps in his/her journey, and what kind of content could you offer?
- how do you (channels) reach him/her in different stages
- how would you help conversion in different stages

Make a customer journey for your persona

1. Utilize these slides and trustworthy sources.

1. Format: .doc or .pptx. Quality over quantity.

Assessment

Build Content Marketing Strategy for your company

Fail:

Strategy is inferior; missing most elements and not content marketing related.

Pass:

Strategy contains some elements, but is not quite logical nor realistic. Use of sources is limited.

Outstanding:

Strategy demonstrates expertise and profound understanding of content marketing strategy

Important Notice

The DEMS material aims to enhance digital marketing skills in higher education, comprehending the essential needs in organizations. You have access to extensive slide sets with in-class activities and assignments, as well as detailed user instructions for teacher.

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