

Marketing In-House **VS/** Hiring an Agency

Which is Really Better for Your Business?



T ABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	3
What an inbound marketing strategy involves	4
What an inbound marketing agency brings to the table	5
Challenges for in-house marketers	8
Examining the concrete benefits of partnering with an agency	11
Conclusion	12
About us	13



Overview

Inbound marketing is undeniably a powerful way to get your brand message to the right people, in the right way, and at the right time. Inc.'s "10 Reasons Inbound Marketing is Necessary in 2016" states:

"Traditional outbound marketing campaigns like cold emails, cold calls, snail mail, and trade shows are not as effective as they once were. Consumers are now bombarded by constant information from marketers, so it will require a strategic, well-planned inbound campaign to stand out from the competition and gain significant recognition."

The source of inbound marketing's strength lies in the way it flows with the buyer journey, creating a seamless, non-disruptive conduit for getting your brand message out front and center in the minds of your target audience.

Inbound marketing is subtle and effective. As far as marketing strategies go, inbound marketing represents the best possible environment for wooing your leads to actually become your customers.

One of the things that makes inbound great is that it can be as challenging as it is rewarding for your organization. The sheer scope of the requisite omnichannel approach to inbound

marketing can make it difficult and a bit unwieldy to manage as a DIY endeavor.

Whether you are just beginning to embrace the inbound marketing philosophy or you have been working with inbound strategies for a time, you may be wondering which approach is best - to handle your inbound marketing in-house or hire a digital marketing agency to handle it for you.

This guide is designed to help you identify and weigh the considerations that will factor into your decision to handle inbound marketing as a DIY job or partner with a digital marketing agency.

What an inbound marketing strategy involves

Before determining whether your team can handle a full-fledged inbound marketing campaign or whether you need an outside marketing agency to manage these efforts, make sure you consider the essential components of a good inbound marketing campaign. HubSpot, a leader in inbound strategy development, lists the following as fundamental elements of a basic inbound campaign:

- Call-to-action buttons
- Landing pages
- Forms
- High-level content like ebooks, white papers, case studies, and infographics
- Video
- Email nurturing
- Social media
- Digital PR
- Paid online advertising

In the interest of being thorough, to that basic list you will often need to add additional elements such as:

- Market research
- SEO research
- Data analysis
- Marketing software mastery
- Website development or re-engineering

As you can see, inbound marketing has a lot of moving parts. While some of these parts require less effort to manage than others, there is still quite a bit going on in a comprehensive marketing campaign. If you also factor in integration of digital strategies with traditional marketing methods that may be unique to your organization or industry, the picture becomes even more complex.



What an inbound marketing agency brings to the table

Now that you have a basic list of the fundamental elements of an inbound marketing strategy, it is time to compare what an inbound marketing agency can bring to the table with what your in-house marketing team can provide. Consider what an agency can provide in the following areas:

- Expertise
- Processes
- Tools
- Consistency
- Quality
- Time



Expertise

If you choose to use an inbound marketing agency, it is likely that one of the most important things you will look for is expertise with inbound methodologies. An agency worth its salt will have a deep bench of talented individuals, each with his or her own set of inbound marketing skills. For instance, an agency will have people who specialize in marketing research and social media marketing, people who are pay-per-click (PPC) advertising experts, and specialists in web design.



Processes

Because digital marketing agencies work with inbound methodologies each and every day, they have the process down to a science. They understand the customer journey and how to tailor a campaign to optimize its effectiveness at every stage. Agencies are typically masters at designing and implementing workflows and processes that facilitate a smooth-running campaign from start to finish.



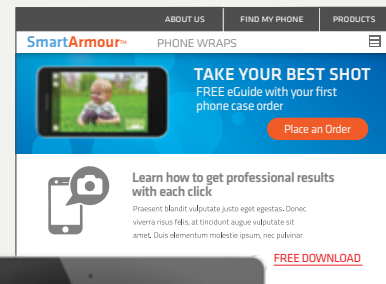
Tools

Just as a skilled carpenter will bring all the necessary tools to a job – hammer, level, squares, circular saw, etc. – an inbound agency will have a fully-stocked toolbox it can use on your campaign. Professional inbound marketers know all the intricacies of marketing software and they understand how different digital platforms work. Digital marketers are also immersed in new technological developments as well as emerging marketing trends. After all, it is their business to do so.



Consistency

Because inbound marketing agencies have the right processes in place and the right tools for the job, they are able to deliver consistent, well-designed, and targeted marketing messages across all digital platforms. The more consistent your brand message is, the more likely it is that your audience will follow through on your website's conversion opportunities.



Quality

Along with consistency, inbound marketing agencies put a high value on providing quality to their clients. This means that digital marketing specialists constantly test, monitor, and measure the success of campaigns, making adjustments mid-stride if needed to drive results.



Time

A good agency has a firm grasp on how to streamline the creation and deployment of inbound marketing campaigns. By pulling together expertise, technical know-how, professional instinct and creative energy, your agency partner can quickly and consistently deliver quality finished products, saving you time and money in the process.



Challenges for in-house marketers

While all of those potential advantages of hiring an agency sound good, many organizations balk at the idea of hiring an agency because of the perceived expense of doing so. You may feel that you can save time and money by keeping your marketing in-house.

It is reasonable to question whether that is the case. After all, the more time and money you can save, the better. However, the question is, can you really save time and money by treating inbound marketing like a DIY project?

Consider the resources you must allocate to handle inbound marketing in-house. For instance, you will need to have someone who is skilled at market research. You may already have such a person in place. How much are you paying him or her to do the job? Be sure to factor in such costs as payroll taxes, employee benefits, and the expense of the software used for market analysis.



Do you have a skilled graphic designer? If not, what would it cost to hire one? Do not forget to factor in recruiting and onboarding costs.

What about a programmer, a copywriter, a marketing automation specialist, a social media specialist, or a marketing director? Do you have a deep bench of talented inbound marketing specialists? If not, how much would it take to hire enough staff to handle an intricate inbound campaign?

Some organizations may be able to make do with a small marketing staff that possesses some level of expertise in inbound marketing. That is great.



But consider this: Even the most skilled marketers you can find still need access to top tools of the trade to be effective and efficient.

For instance, your team will need marketing software that includes automation, analytics, and so on. Remember that technologies are constantly advancing. Therefore, investing in marketing technology is not a one-and-done proposition. If you partner with an agency, however, you get to leverage the agency's technology on behalf of your company. This represents another potential area of savings for you.



Suppose, however, that you are willing to jump all these hurdles to keep your marketing in-house. There is another factor you may not have considered. How much of a learning curve will your in-house team have to deal with while learning the inbound ropes?

As you know, missteps in marketing can be very costly for your organization, from a financial standpoint, a timing standpoint, and even a reputational standpoint. The question then becomes, how much time and money are you willing to bet on an in-house marketing team?

The answer, of course, is dependent on the team and your organization's overall tolerance of risk. In some cases, an in-house marketing team on its own may make good sense. In others, however, that decision may cause you to leave significant money on the table.



Examining the concrete benefits of partnering with an agency

No one needs to remind you of the importance of adjusting your marketing strategies to keep up with the constant shifts in customer behaviors and trends. Rather than trying to build an in-house team that will need to learn to master an omnichannel approach to digital marketing over time, doesn't it make sense to hire an agency that is already up to speed?

- *An inbound marketing agency already knows what works and what does not. And inbound marketing specialists can quickly tailor their processes to fit your industry and your particular niche. An experts at reading the patterns in marketing data, an inbound agency can quickly put its finger on the pulse of your business, your customers, and your industry.*
- *An inbound marketing agency will give careful attention to your insights, knowing that the integrity of your brand must be maintained and enhanced at every turn and via every piece of content and every campaign strategy deployed.*
- *An agency will also work with you to find the most economical way to handle your inbound marketing needs on a pay-as-you-go basis. A reputable agency will be able to detail for you every step of your marketing campaigns.*



- *The agency will monitor the progress of your campaigns, providing you with detailed reporting so that you can see how your campaigns are performing and where improvements may be needed. This detailed reporting gives you the added benefit of helping to prove the ROI of working with an inbound marketing agency.*
- *Plus, if you work with an agency that is HubSpot-certified, your agency will help you get the most out of the powerful HubSpot sales and marketing platform. Access to HubSpot's comprehensive inbound marketing resources will elevate your marketing campaigns to a new level.*



Conclusion



When all is said and done, only you can decide which course is right for your organization. You know what your ultimate goals are, and you know what you can and cannot sustain in the way of an inbound marketing strategy.

Whether you choose a DIY option or hire an inbound marketing agency, the most important thing is that you put forth your best effort to reach your target audience with relevant, valuable content that drives conversions. If you can do that, you will achieve your inbound marketing goals and see a good ROI for your efforts.



About Inbound 281

WHO WE ARE

We are a digital marketing agency dedicated to helping our clients navigate the digital landscape, connect more meaningfully to their customers, and inspire their audience with purposeful content. We do this by leveraging inbound marketing and web design strategies for business, corporate, and enterprise marketers.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to use our inbound approach to develop leading-edge digital marketing plans, perceptive strategies, and valuable solutions to help you engage your customers with more two-way conversations and personal interactions to support revenue generation.

READY FOR A CONVERSATION?

If you are interested in a comprehensive plan that combines website design, email marketing, social media marketing, content development, and automation – or if you'd just like to learn more about how an inbound marketing plan can complement your established branding and communications strategies to meet your organization's unique needs, reach out and have a conversation with us.

[TALK TO US](#)



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