

Content Marketing 101: Your Comprehensive Guide to the Inbound Methodology

Help your customers find you online!

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CONTENTS.

1. WHAT IS INBOUND MARKETING?
2. THE PHILOSOPHY: WHY INBOUND WORKS.
3. THE METHODOLOGY: HOW INBOUND WORKS.
4. THE TOOLS: A PLAYBOOK THAT WORKS.

1 What is Inbound Marketing?

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WHAT IS INBOUND MARKETING?

Instead of trying to increase online leads by buying ads, buying email lists, or cold calling, inbound marketing focuses on creating educational content that pulls people toward your website where they can learn more about what you sell on their own accord.



INBOUND IS AN APPROACH TO MARKETING THAT REACHES TODAY'S CONSUMER.

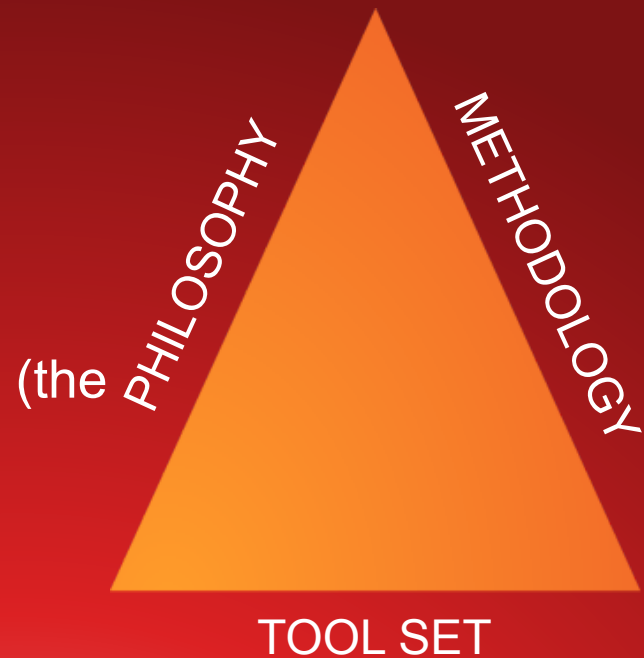
Get found by qualified leads online with content (website pages, blog articles, social messages) optimized for search and social media.



Understand what content pulls your buyers through the sales funnel, and use that context to personalize your marketing at scale.

INBOUND MARKETING CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IN THREE WAYS:

1. Inbound as a ***philosophy***
(the “WHY?”);
2. Inbound as a ***methodology***
(the “HOW?”); and
3. Inbound as a ***tool set***
“PLAYBOOK”).



2 The Philosophy: Why Inbound Works

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INBOUND AS A PHILOSOPHY.

Inbound marketing is a philosophy based on the truth that consumers buy differently today than they did 10 years ago.



THINK ABOUT IT.

PRE-INTERNET.

- **Buyer:** Relatively uninformed.
- **Buyer Journey:** Linear.
- **Marketing Playbook:** Interrupt (cold calls and advertising).



TODAY.

- **Buyer:** Well-informed.
- **Buyer Journey:** Fluid and random. Starts with Google.
- **Marketing Playbook:** Thought leadership through content creation.

HOW DID THIS TRANSFORMATION TAKE PLACE?

There are three major reasons why consumers are skeptical about brands, and why interruptive advertising and cold calling aren't nearly as effective as they once were ...



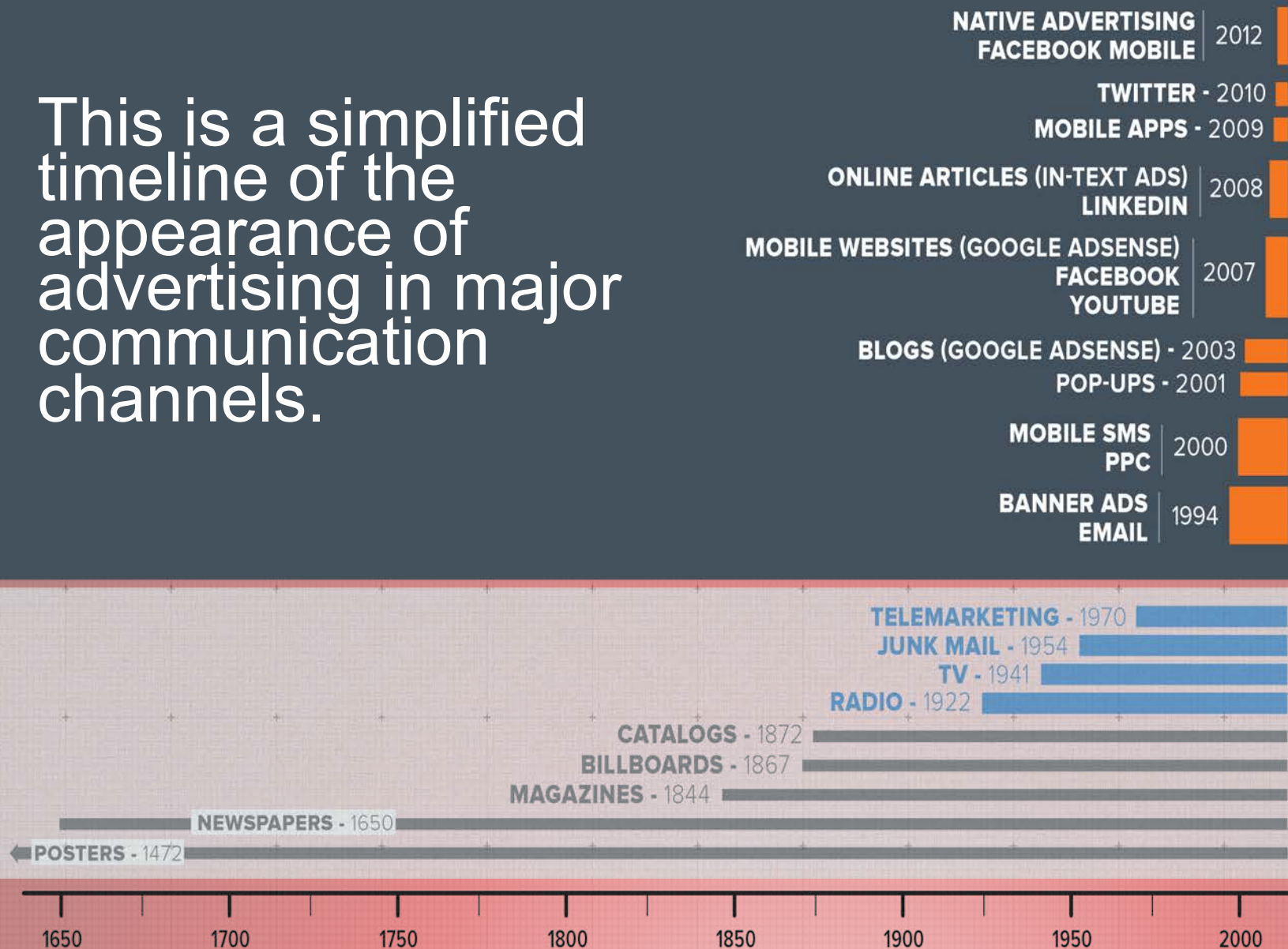
WHY INTERRUPTION DOESN'T WORK: REASON NUMBER ONE.

1. **The Proliferation of Media:** The media landscape has become insanely cluttered. There's a magazine, TV channel, radio station, and a gajillion websites for every conceivable interest.



Let's try to comprehend
just how cluttered the
media landscape is to
illustrate how much
advertising there is ...

This is a simplified timeline of the appearance of advertising in major communication channels.



THE PROLIFERATION OF MEDIA.

- In 1920, there was 1 radio station. In 2011, there were 14,700.
- In 1946, America had 12 broadcasting TV stations. In 2011, there were over 1,700.
- In 1998 (over 15 years ago!), the average consumer saw or heard 1 million marketing messages – almost 3,000 per day.
- In 2014, there are 1,500 stories competing to show up in your personal Facebook News Feed at any given moment.

Advertising was
proliferating faster than
laws were implemented
to regulate it, which
leads us to ...

WHY INTERRUPTION DOESN'T WORK: REASON NUMBER TWO.

2. A History of Deceptive

Advertising: Consumers are accustomed to false claims and deceit in advertising, so even when clever ads are seen by consumers, they're thought to be dishonest.



According to the 2012 Edelman Trust Barometer, 63% of consumers need to hear company claims **3-5x** before they'll actually believe them!

Interruption.
False claims.
Over-promising.
Under-delivering.
Increased regulation.
Brand egocentrism.
Exploitation.
Lawsuits.



This
changed
everything.

WHY INTERRUPTION DOESN'T WORK: REASON NUMBER THREE.

3. **Technology Empowered the Consumer.** Consumers gained access to tools and information that enabled them to dodge interruptive brand messages and instead seek out information when they're ready.



VCRs.
Caller ID.
DVRs.
The Do Not Call list.
Spam software.
Broadband internet.
Smartphones.
Social media.



This
changed
everything.

THAT'S WHY PERMISSION BECAME MORE EFFECTIVE THAN INTERRUPTION.

By aligning the content you publish with your customer's interests, you can earn permission to market to prospects that you can convert into leads, close into customers, and delight to the point they come promoters of your brand.



There are several major themes of inbound, permission-based marketing. Let's talk about them.

CONTENT CREATION.

You create targeted content that answers your customer's basic questions and needs, and you share that content far and wide.



LIFECYCLE MARKETING.

You recognize that people go through stages as they interact with your company, and that each stage requires different marketing actions.



PERSONALIZATION & CONTEXT.

As you learn more about your leads over time, you can better personalize your messages to their specific needs.



A MULTI-CHANNEL PRESENCE.

Inbound marketing is multi-channel by nature because it approaches people where they are, in the channel where they want to interact with you.



INTEGRATION.

Your publishing and analytics tools all work together like a well-oiled machine, allowing you to focus on publishing the right content in the right place at the right time.



IN SUMMARY, INBOUND MARKETING IS ABOUT

...

- Building trust, not skepticism among your prospects.
- Being loved, not ignored by your customers.
- Outsmarting, not outspending your competitors.



3 The Methodology: How Inbound Works

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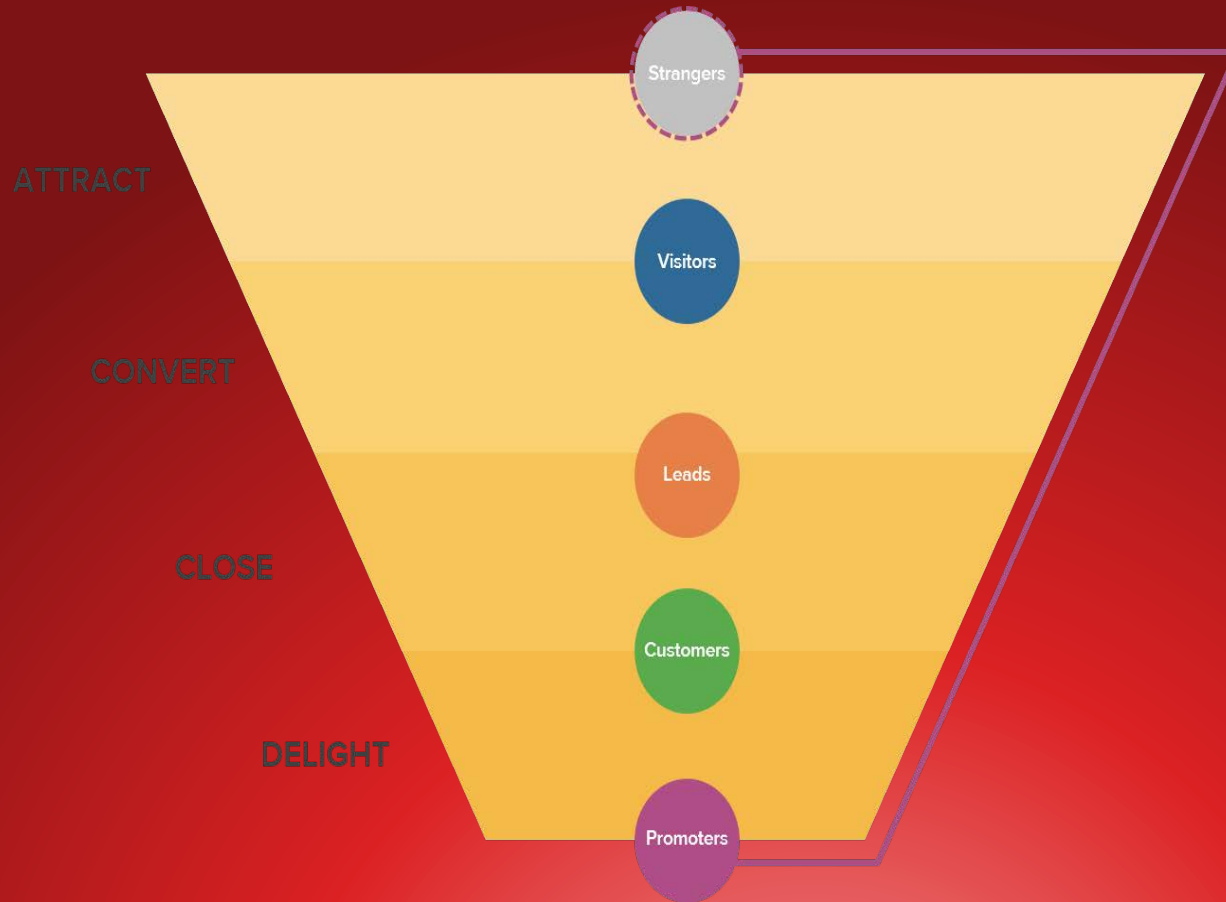
THE METHODOLOGY.

The inbound philosophy is backed by a methodology that helps brands attract, convert, close, and delight visitors, leads and customers through a variety of channels such as social media, blogging, SEO, landing pages, forms, and email.

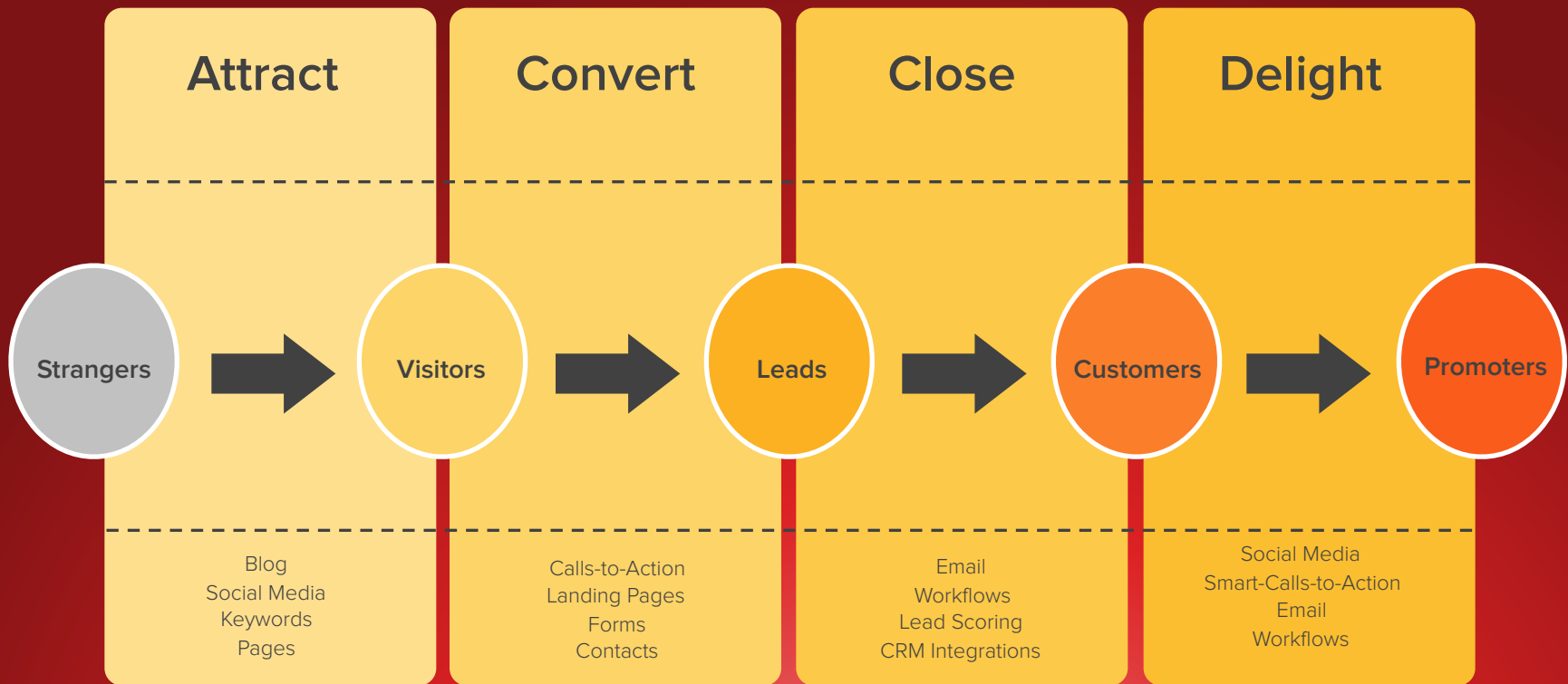


The methodology facilitates the buyer journey through the sales funnel – from strangers to promoters of your brand.

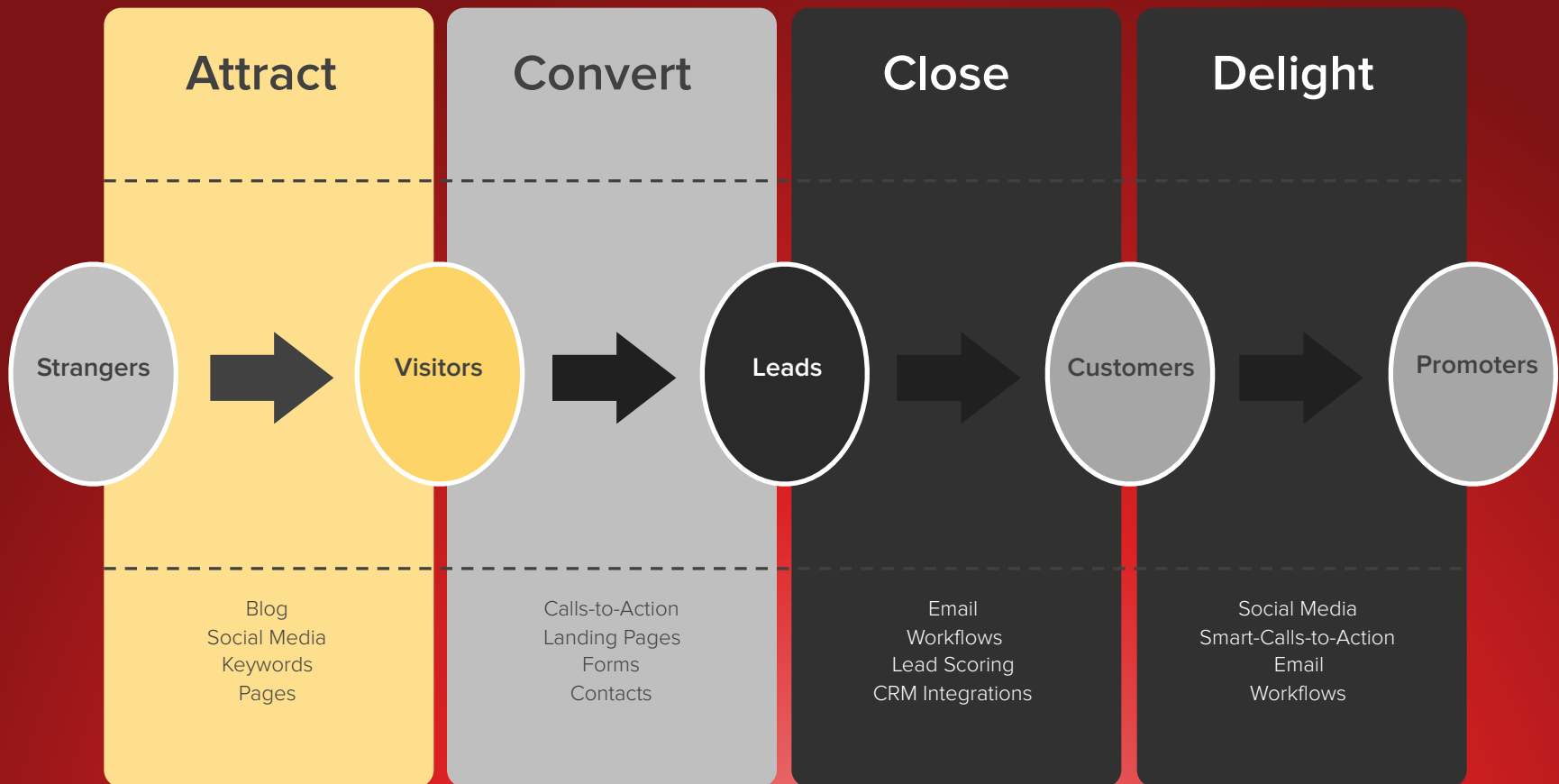
THE METHODOLOGY VISUALIZED AS A SALES FUNNEL.



LET'S GO THROUGH THE METHODOLOGY STEP-BY-STEP.



STEP 1: ATTRACT STRANGERS AND TURN THEM INTO WEBSITE VISITORS.

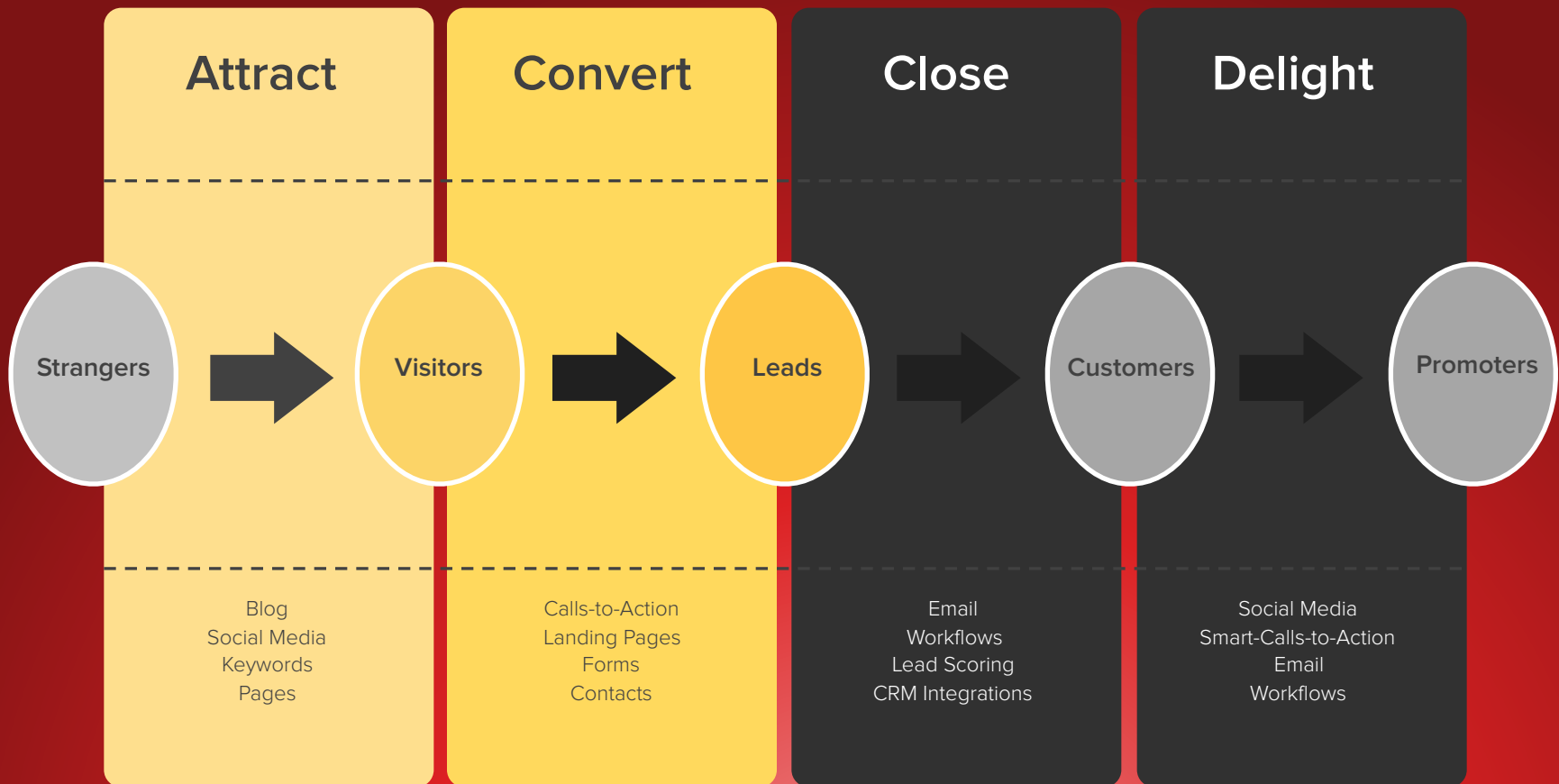


STEP 1: ATTRACT STRANGERS AND TURN THEM INTO WEBSITE VISITORS.

You want to attract people that will potentially become leads. Attract your ideal customer or buyer persona by creating content that's valuable and easy for them to find.



STEP 2: CONVERT WEBSITE VISITORS INTO LEADS.

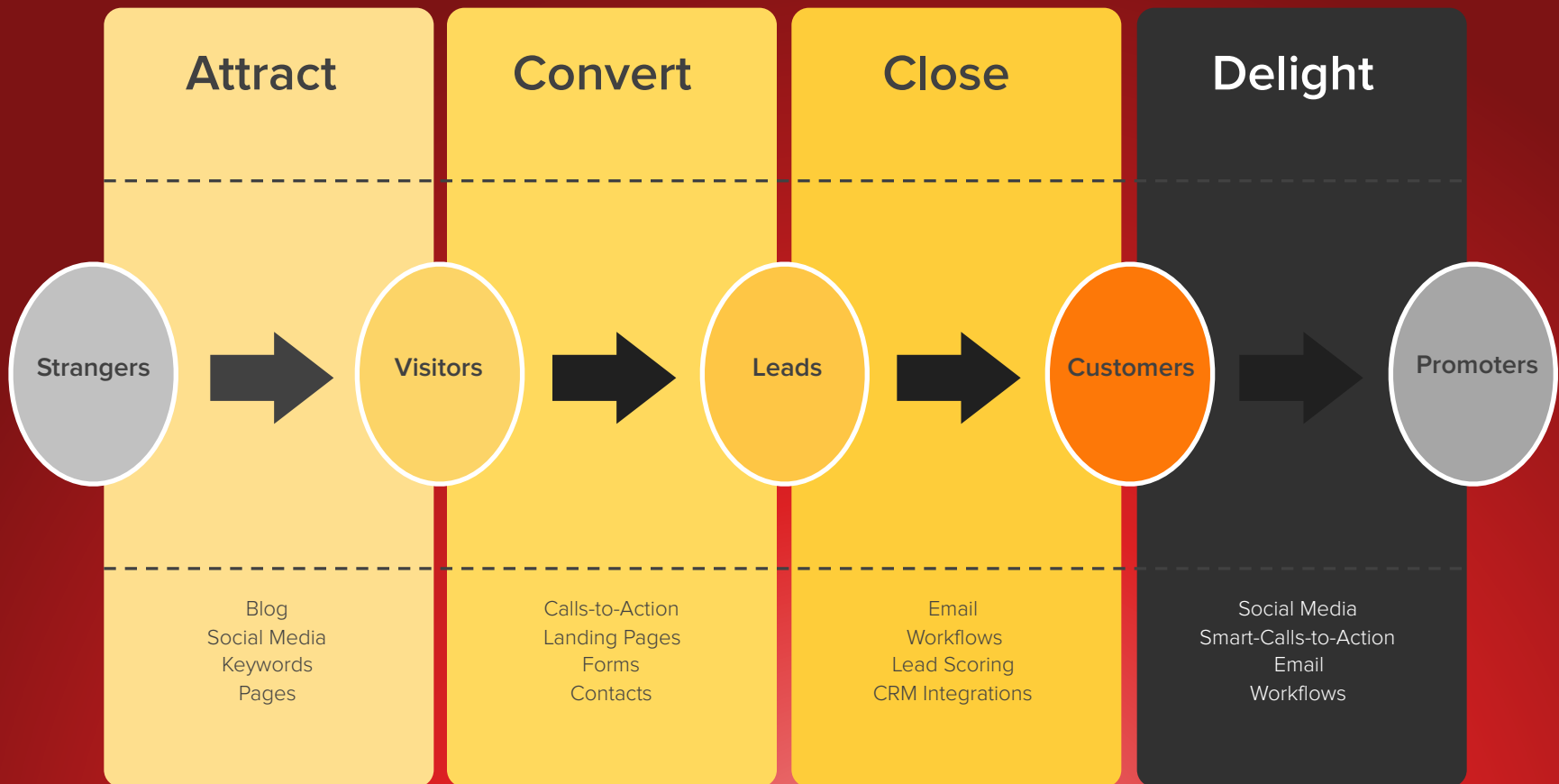


STEP 2: CONVERT WEBSITE VISITORS INTO LEADS.

Once you've got visitors to your site, the next step is to convert those visitors into leads by gathering their contact information. In order to get this valuable information, you need to offer something up in return (ex: ebook).



STEP 3: CLOSE LEADS INTO CUSTOMERS THROUGH LEAD NURTURING.

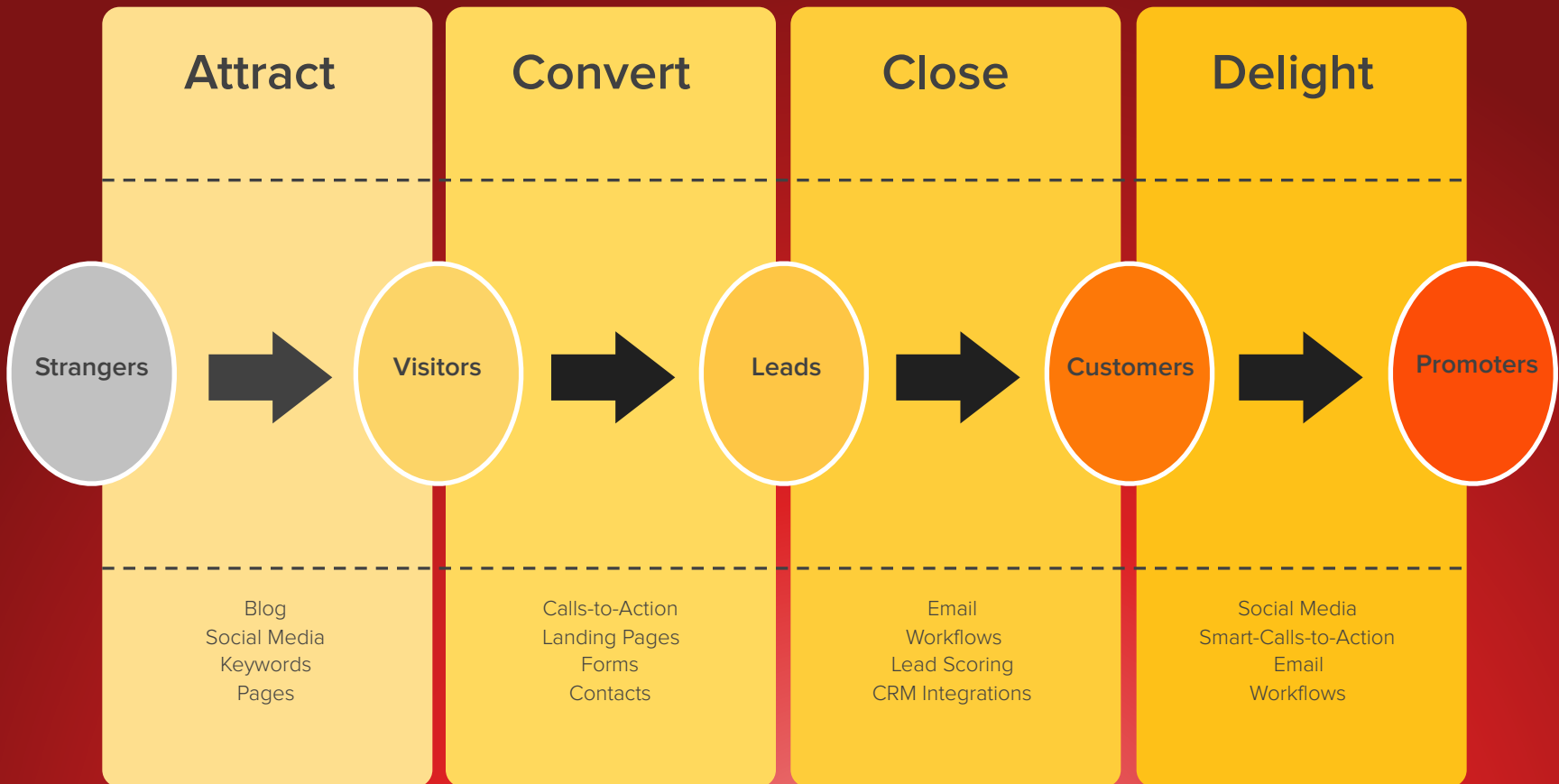


STEP 3: CLOSE LEADS INTO CUSTOMERS THROUGH LEAD NURTURING.

Once you've attracted the right visitors and converted the right leads, you need to transform those leads into customers with targeted, automated email nurturing and social media interaction.



STEP 4: DELIGHT CUSTOMERS TO TURN THEM INTO PROMOTERS OF YOUR BRAND.



STEP 4: DELIGHT CUSTOMERS TO TURN THEM INTO PROMOTERS OF YOUR BRAND.

Using context and personalization to deliver tailored messages, continue to engage with, delight, and (hopefully) upsell your current customer base into happy promoters of your company.



Now that we've covered the methodology, we're ready to dig deeper into the tools you need to get visitors (traffic), leads, and customers.

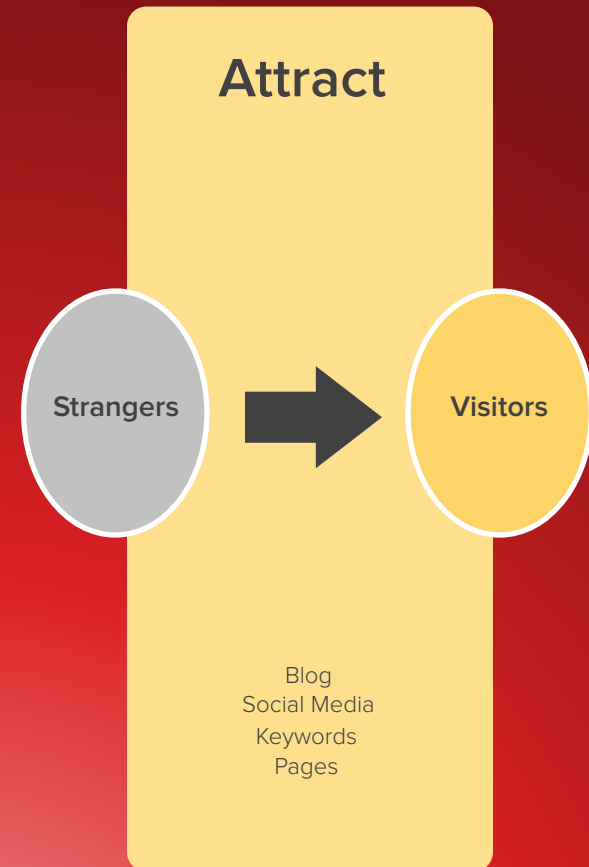
4 The Tools: A Playbook That Works

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STEP 1: ATTRACT STRANGERS AND TURN THEM INTO WEBSITE VISITORS.

Tools to attract strangers to your site include:

- Blogging
- Social Media
- Keyword Optimization
- Site Pages



We're going to take a moment to emphasize the importance of blogging because it's *that* important ...

Companies blog
because it's one of the
most effective ways to
attract potential
customers to your site.

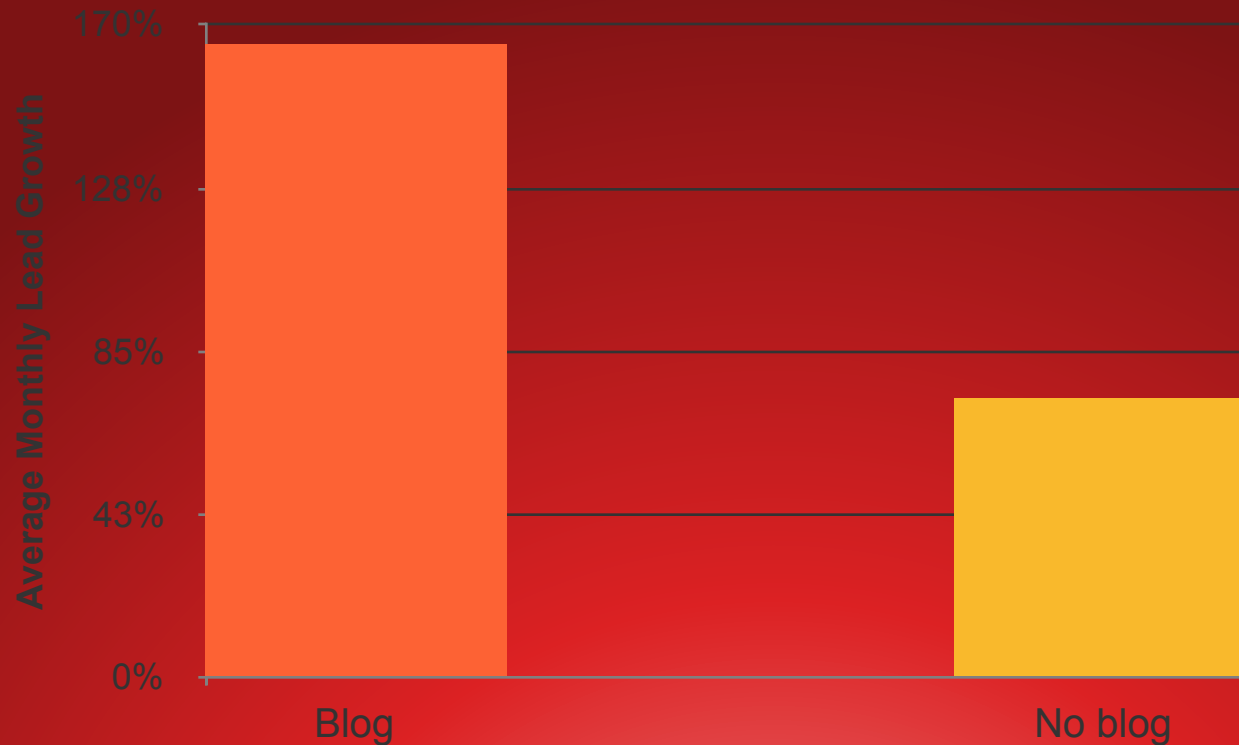
SERIOUSLY. BLOGGING WORKS.

The average company that blogs generates:

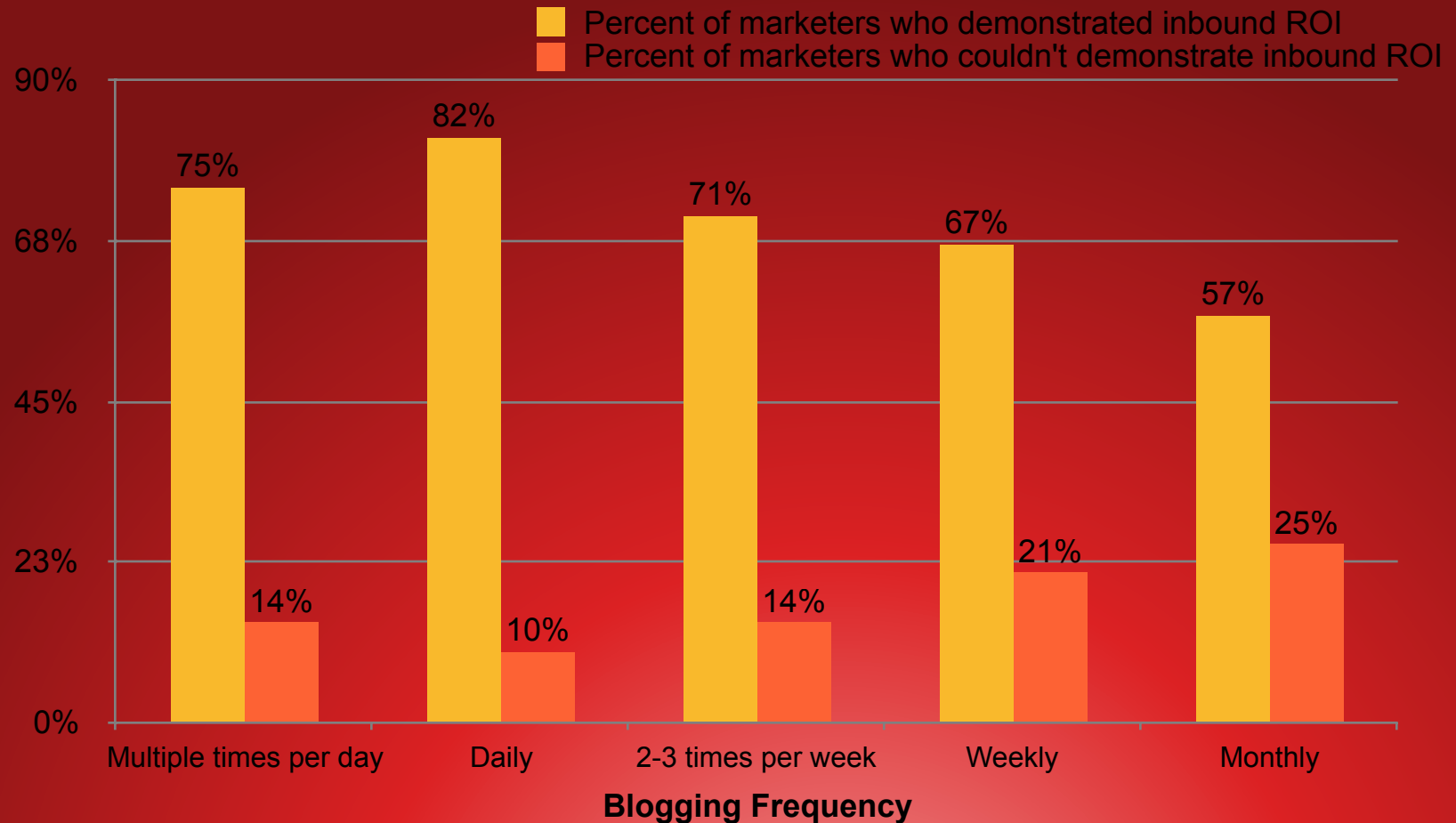
- **55%** more website visitors.
- **97%** more inbound links.
- **434%** more indexed pages.



COMPANIES THAT BLOG GENERATE 126% MORE LEADS THAN THOSE THAT DON'T.



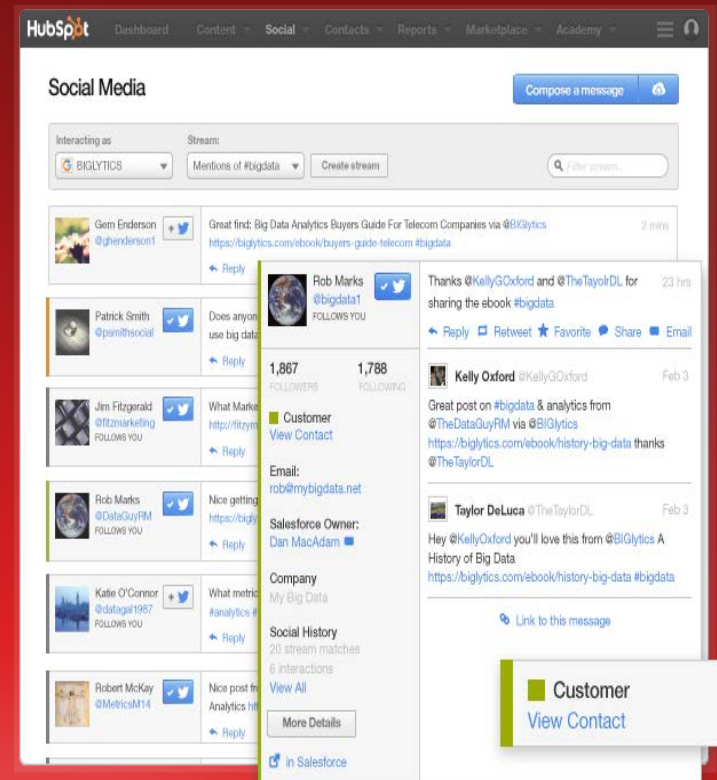
BLOGGING IS REGULARLY LINKED TO HIGHER ROI.



Blogging isn't the only tool that effectively attracts customers to you, though.

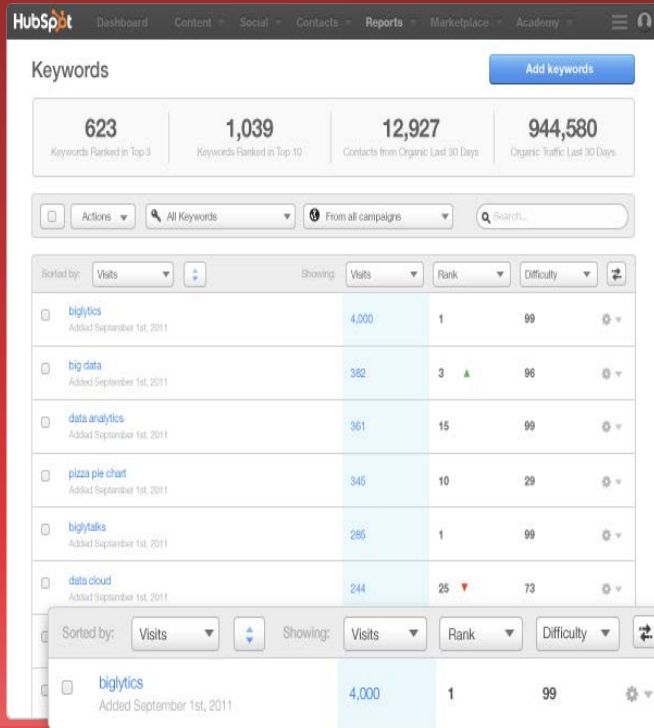
YOU NEED TO BE ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA SITES, TOO.

You must share remarkable content and valuable information on the social web, engage with your prospects, and put a human face on your brand.



YOU SHOULD CREATE CONTENT AROUND TARGETED KEYWORDS AS WELL.

You need to carefully, analytically pick keywords, optimize your pages, create content, and build links around the terms your ideal buyers are searching for. (Psst! HubSpot's software gives you SEO advice as you type).



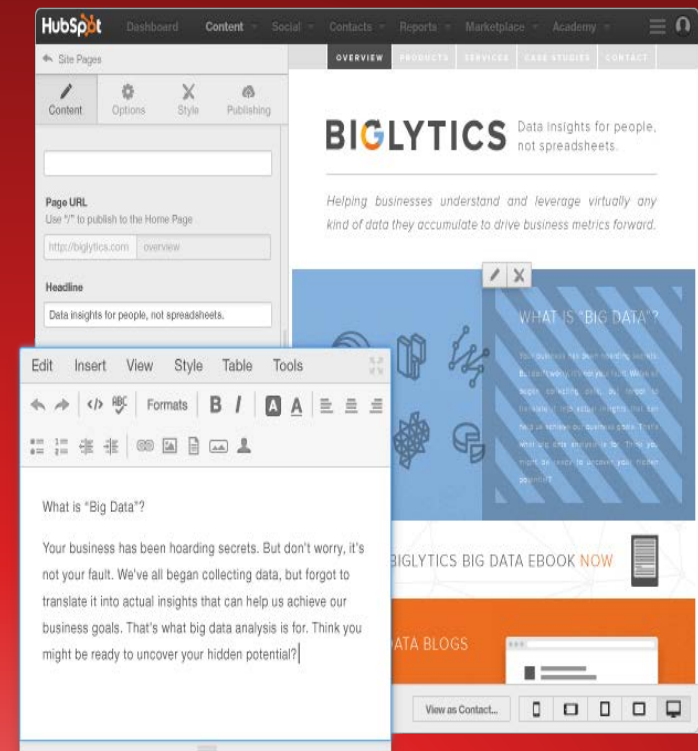
The screenshot shows the HubSpot Keywords dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links to Dashboard, Content, Social, Contacts, Reports, Marketplace, and Academy. Below this, the 'Keywords' section has a summary of keyword performance: 623 keywords ranked in the top 3, 1,039 in the top 10, 12,927 contacts from organic search in the last 30 days, and 944,580 organic traffic in the last 30 days. A table below lists keywords with columns for keyword name, visits, rank, and difficulty. The keywords listed are 'biglytics', 'big data', 'data analytics', 'pizza pie chart', 'biglytics', and 'data cloud'. A modal window is open at the bottom, showing a detailed view of the 'biglytics' keyword.

Keyword	Visits	Rank	Difficulty
biglytics	4,000	1	99
big data	382	3	96
data analytics	361	15	99
pizza pie chart	345	10	29
biglytics	285	1	99
data cloud	244	25	73

Keyword	Visits	Rank	Difficulty
biglytics	4,000	1	99

KEEP YOUR WEBSITE FRESH WITH EASY-TO-DEPLOY SITE PAGES.

Search engines and users like frequently updated websites, so you need to transform your site into a beacon of helpful, fresh, and optimized pages to appeal to your ideal buyers without having to rely on IT.



What tools do you use
to turn traffic into leads?

STEP 2: CONVERT WEBSITE VISITORS INTO LEADS.

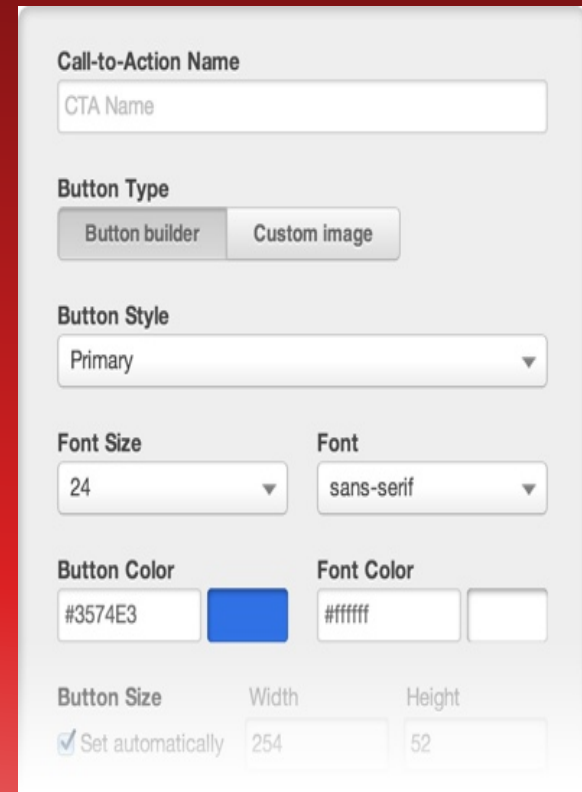
Tools to convert visitors into leads include:

- Calls-to-Action
- Landing Pages
- Forms
- Contacts Database





ENTICE YOUR VISITORS TO CLAIM AN OFFER WITH CALLS-TO-ACTION.

Calls-to-action (CTAs) are buttons or links that encourage your visitors to take action, like “Download a Whitepaper” or “Attend a Webinar.” If you don’t have CTAs or if they aren’t enticing enough, you won’t generate leads.

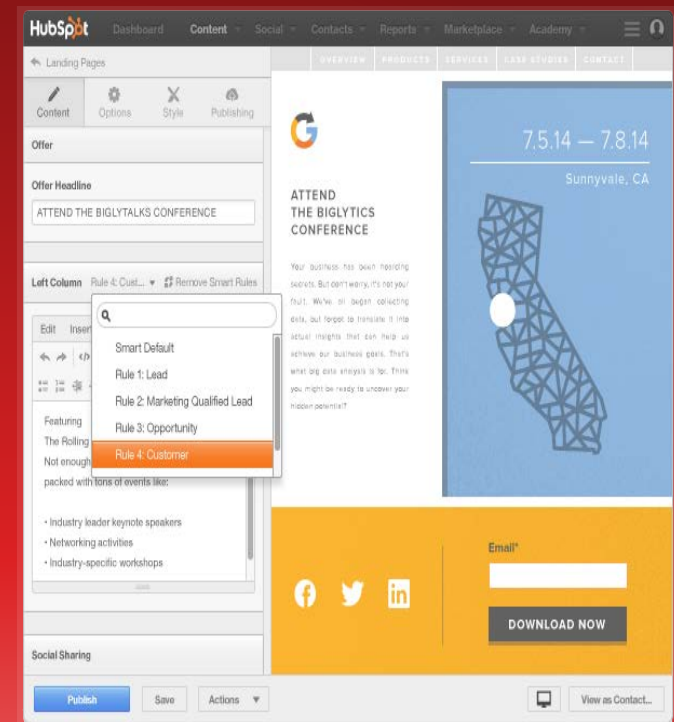


The image shows a configuration interface for a Call-to-Action (CTA). It includes fields for the CTA Name, Button Type (with 'Button builder' selected), Button Style (set to 'Primary'), Font Size (24), Font (sans-serif), Button Color (hex #3574E3 with a blue color swatch), and Font Color (hex #ffffff with a white color swatch). At the bottom, there are settings for Button Size, including a checked 'Set automatically' option, a Width of 254, and a Height of 52.

Call-to-Action Name		
<input type="text" value="CTA Name"/>		
Button Type		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Button builder <input type="radio"/> Custom image		
Button Style		
<input type="text" value="Primary"/>		
Font Size	Font	
<input type="text" value="24"/>	<input type="text" value="sans-serif"/>	
Button Color	Font Color	
<input type="text" value="#3574E3"/> 	<input type="text" value="#ffffff"/> 	
Button Size	Width	Height
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Set automatically	<input type="text" value="254"/>	<input type="text" value="52"/>

DRIVE VISITORS TO LANDING PAGES WHERE THEY CAN BECOME LEADS.

When a website visitor clicks on a CTA, they should then be sent to a landing page where the offer in the call-to-action is fulfilled, and where the prospect submits information that your sales team can use to begin a conversation with them.



USE FORMS TO GET THE INFORMATION YOU NEED ABOUT YOUR PROSPECTS.

In order for visitors to become leads, they must fill out a form and submit their contact information. Optimize your form to make this step of the conversion process as easy as possible.

The screenshot displays the HubSpot form builder interface. On the left, a sidebar lists various field categories with their respective counts: Contact (400), Company Information (26), Annual Revenue, Annual Revenues - strathcom, Company, CRM, Employee Size - specific, Industry, Industry type, Website, Other Properties (37), Salesforce (26), Calls (1), Analytics (2), Conversion Information (6), and Social Media (1). The main area is divided into two sections: 'Default questions' and 'Queued questions'. The 'Default questions' section includes fields for First Name, Last Name, Email, and Product, each with a 'Smart' icon. A 'Company Name' field is being dragged from the 'Company Information' category into the 'Default questions' section. The 'Queued questions' section is currently empty. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Save form', 'Edit', 'Preview', and 'Actions'.

HOUSE ALL OF YOUR CONTACTS IN ONE PLACE.

Keep track of the leads you're converting in a centralized marketing database so you can make sense out of every interaction you've had with your contacts – be it through email, a landing page, or social media.

The screenshot displays the HubSpot CRM interface for a contact named Mary Dawson. The top navigation bar includes links for Dashboard, Content, Social, Contacts, Reports, Marketplace, and Academy. The contact's profile shows a photo, name, and key metrics: First Touch (1 Year Ago, Opened Email), Last Touch (5 Hours Ago, Form Submission), and Lifecycle Stage (Lead, Since Feb 7, 2014). Below this, a timeline of interactions is shown, categorized by month. A summary box on the right lists: 5 Emails, 4 Events, 3 Twitter Events, 4 Website Visits, and 1 Webinar Event.

HubSpot Dashboard Content Social **Contacts** Reports Marketplace Academy

Mary Dawson

First Touch: 1 Year Ago (Opened Email)
Last Touch: 5 Hours Ago (Form Submission)
Lifecycle Stage: Lead (Since Feb 7, 2014)

Showing All 124 Interactions

March 2014

- 5 Emails
- 4 Events
- 3 Twitter Events
- 4 Website Visits
- 1 Webinar Event

Download BK Glytics Big Data eBook (Wed Mar 5, 2014 at 3:24pm) - Opened

BK Glytics | Data Analytics Tools (Tue Mar 4, 2014 at 1:35pm)

Attended March 2014 Product Announcement Webinar for 58 minutes (Tue Mar 4, 2014 at 9:00am)

Show all 17 interactions

February 2014

- 1 Property Change
- 2 Form Submissions
- 1 Website View
- 1 List Membership
- 2 Syncs
- 3 Emails

Submitted a Comment (Hide Submission Details - Fri Feb 7, 2014 at 4:50pm)

Watched BK Glytics Full Demo on BK Glytics | Software (Fri Feb 7, 2014 at 4:35pm)

Became a Marketing Qualified Lead (Fri Feb 7, 2014 at 4:20pm)

Summary:

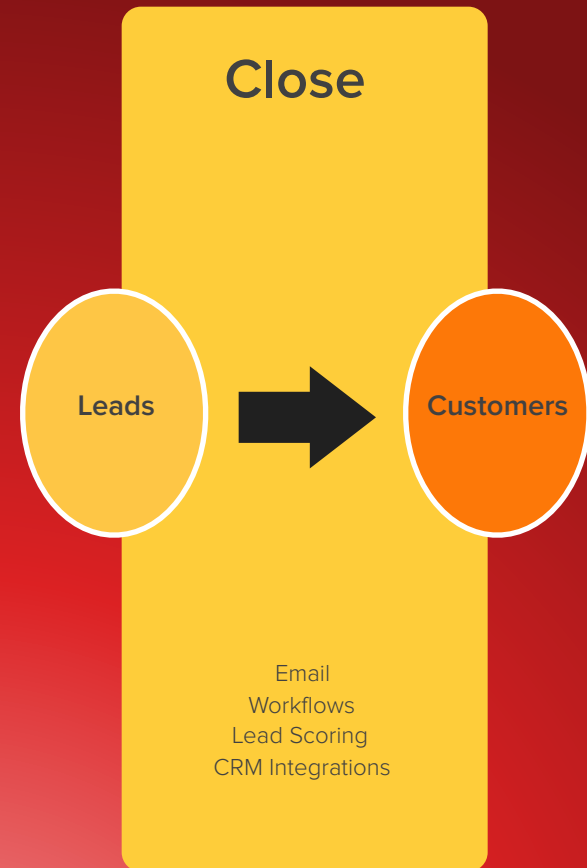
- 5 Emails
- 4 Events
- 3 Twitter Events
- 4 Website Visits
- 1 Webinar Event

What tools do you use
to turn leads into
customers?

STEP 3: CLOSE LEADS INTO CUSTOMERS THROUGH LEAD NURTURING.

Tools to close leads into customers include:

- Lead Scoring
- Email
- Marketing Automation
- Closed-Loop Reporting



USE LEAD SCORING TO DETERMINE WHICH LEADS ARE READY FOR A SALESPERSON.

You've got contacts in your system, but how do you know which ones are ready to speak to your sales team? Using a numerical representation of the sales-readiness of a lead takes the guesswork out of the process.

The screenshot displays the HubSpot CRM interface for creating a lead list. The top navigation bar includes links for Dashboard, Content, Social, Contacts, Reports, Marketplace, and Academy. The main section is titled 'Lists' and shows 'All CIO Charlie Leads'. Below this, there are two sections for defining list criteria:

Which contacts should be in this list?

Include contacts who meet all of these requirements:

- Contact Property: Industry is equal to Technology Companies
- Contact Property: Title is equal to Data Analyst

Also, include contacts who meet all of these requirements:

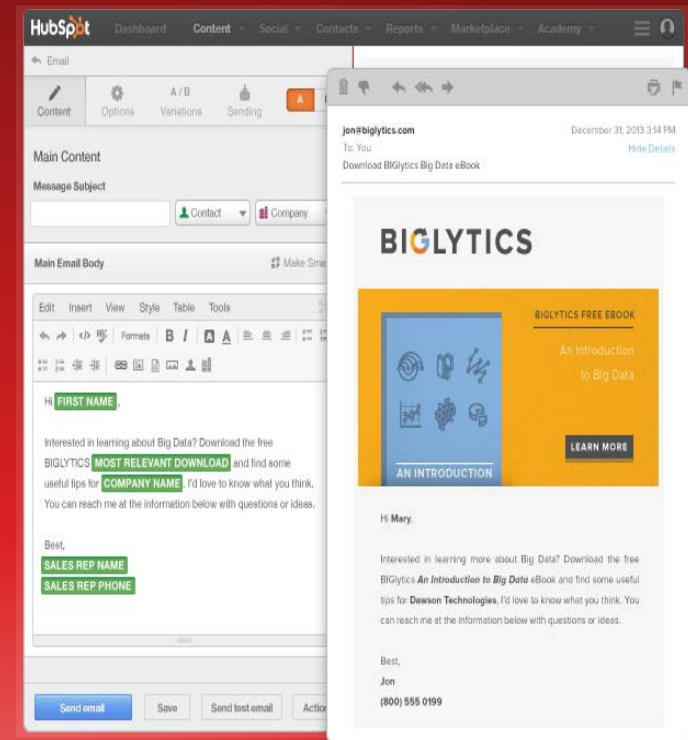
- Page View: Contact has visited (exact URL) www.biglytics.com/pricing
- Less than 30 days ago

Below these criteria, there is a table of leads:

Name	Type	Folder	Size	Created
Telecom Customers			14,992	Mar 13, 2014
Target Campaign			1,190	Mar 13, 2014
Download eBook			6,775	Mar 13, 2014
Prospect Nurturing			969	Mar 13, 2014
Filled out Demo Request			2,036	Mar 13, 2014

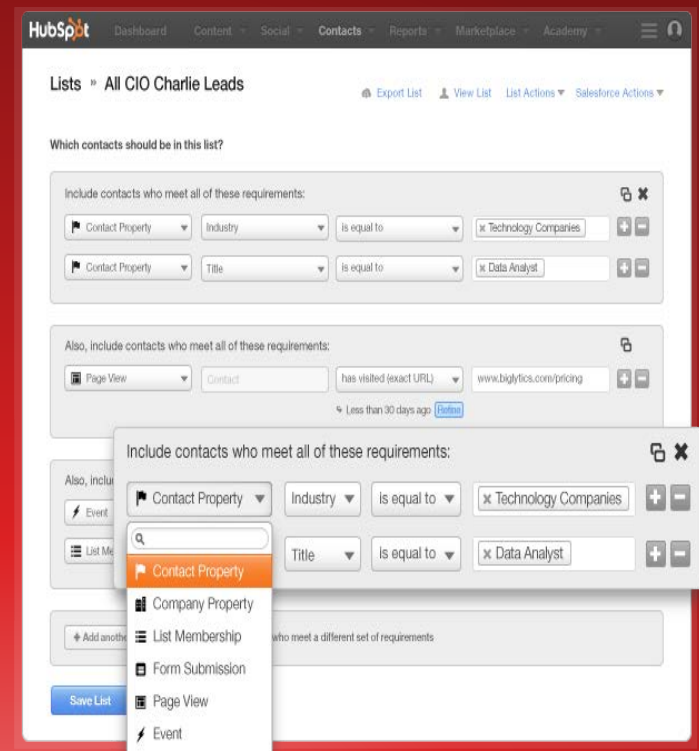
SEND TARGETED EMAILS TO LEADS TO PULL THEM THROUGH THE SALES FUNNEL.

What if a visitor clicks on your CTA and fills out a form on a landing page to download a whitepaper, but still isn't ready to become a customer? Nurture them with a series of emails focused on useful, relevant content until they're ready.



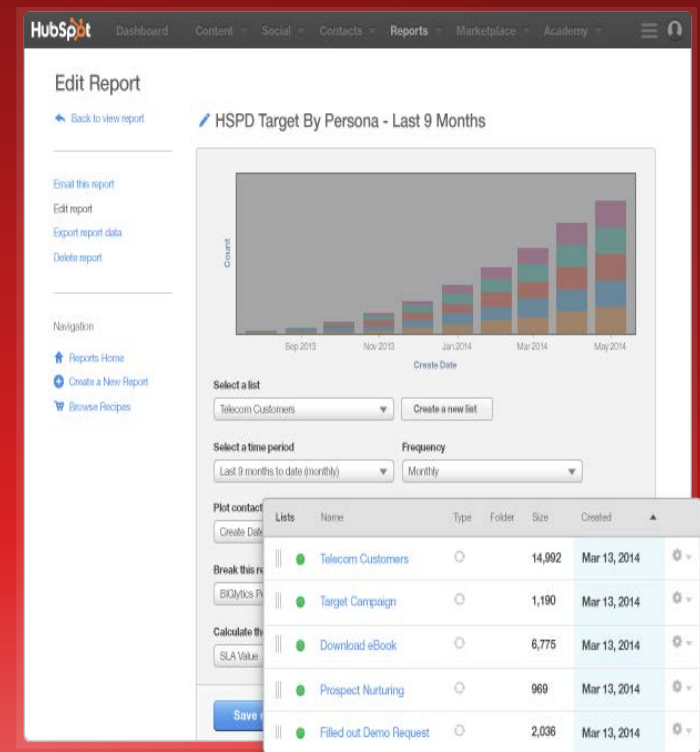
GO BEYOND EMAIL BY USING AUTOMATION INFORMED BY CONTEXT AND LIFECYCLE.

If a visitor downloaded a whitepaper from you in the past, you might want to send that lead a series of related emails. But if they follow you on Twitter and visited certain pages on your website, you might want to tailor the messaging.



CLOSE THE LOOP BY INTEGRATING YOUR MARKETING TOOLS WITH YOUR CRM.

Know which marketing efforts are bringing in the best leads and whether your sales team is focused on the most qualified leads by integrating with your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

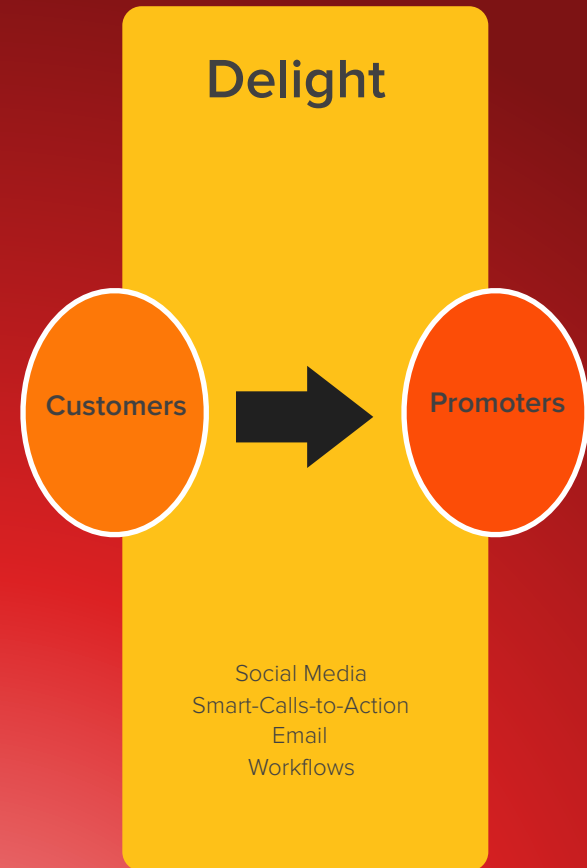


What tools do you use
to turn customers into
repeat, happy
customers?

STEP 4: DELIGHT CUSTOMERS TO TURN THEM INTO PROMOTERS OF YOUR BRAND.

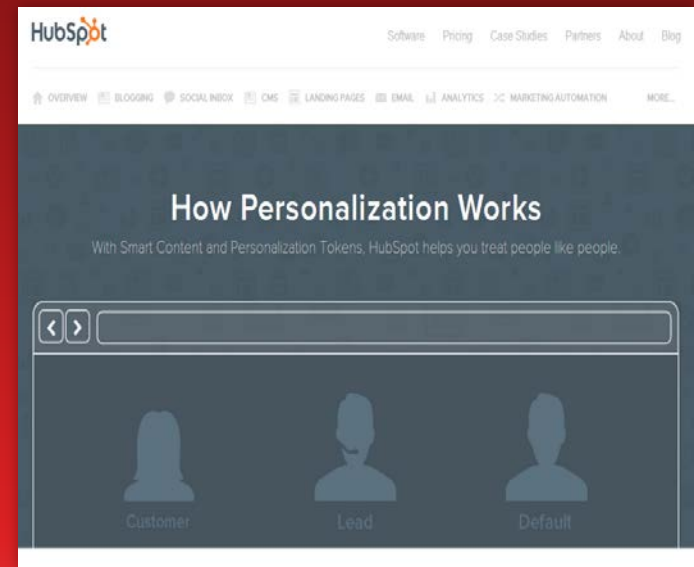
Tools to delight your customers include:

- Smart Calls-to-Action
- Social Media
- Email and Marketing Automation



KEEP THE CYCLE GOING BY CONTINUALLY NURTURING WITH PERSONALIZED CONTENT.

Treat people like people and earn trust by using Smart Content and Personalization Tokens to create a tailored experience based on prospects' needs across all of your marketing channels – from CTAs to email to landing pages.



Click to learn more about how Smart Content and Personalization works.

Alas, we're done with
the tools!

Here's how the inbound
methodology and tools
all come together.

1) ATTRACT: GET TRAFFIC

Create **blog** content, search engine optimize (**SEO**) that content, and promote it on **social media** sites

2) CONVERT: GET LEADS

Place **calls-to-action** throughout your website, blog, social accounts, and email to drive visitors to **landing pages with forms**.

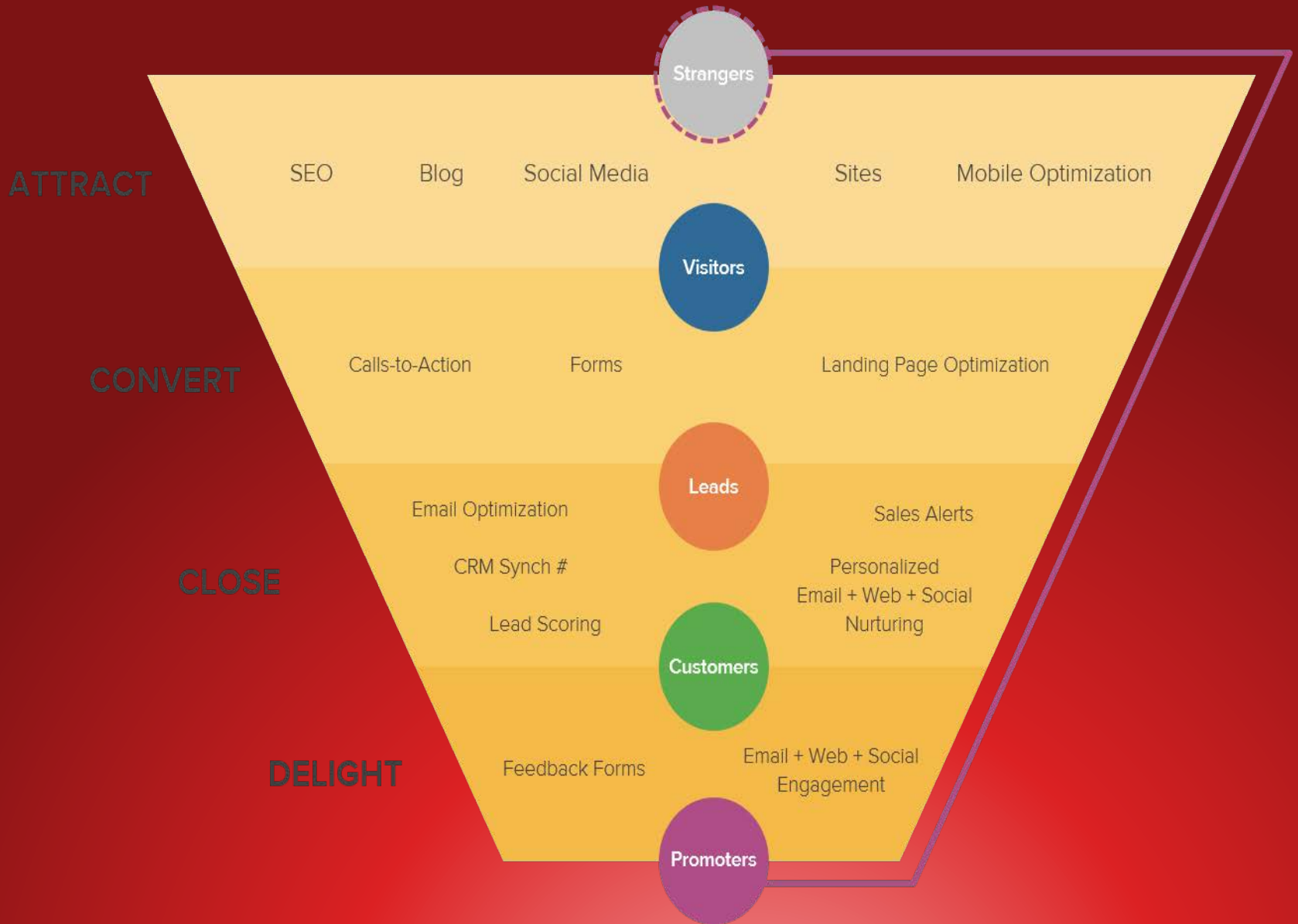
3) CLOSE: GET CUSTOMERS

Send leads **targeted, automated emails** to drive them through your buying cycle. Provide your sales team with **lead intelligence** for more effective sales calls.

4) DELIGHT: ANALYZE & OPTIMIZE

Analyze the success of your marketing campaigns, and determine which areas need further **optimization** or **personalization** for future success.





Now that you understand the methodology and have the tools, its time to get inbound!

For more resources, [visit our blog](#) and [join our newsletter](#)!

