

# INBOUND ISN'T ENOUGH

Why Inbound Marketing Alone  
Won't Deliver Your Best Results



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# Introduction: Inbound vs. Outbound

At its core, inbound marketing is about attracting the likeliest customers and enticing them to come to you.

Inbound marketing is commonly referred to as a **pull marketing** model because you are using tactics and great content to pull the attention of your prospects to your brand. Your prospects, when they respond, are self-identifying as interested, and so they are possibly qualified to some degree. In inbound marketing, you set the stage with attractive content, SEO, and other tactics, and then work to help the right people find your website and your offerings.

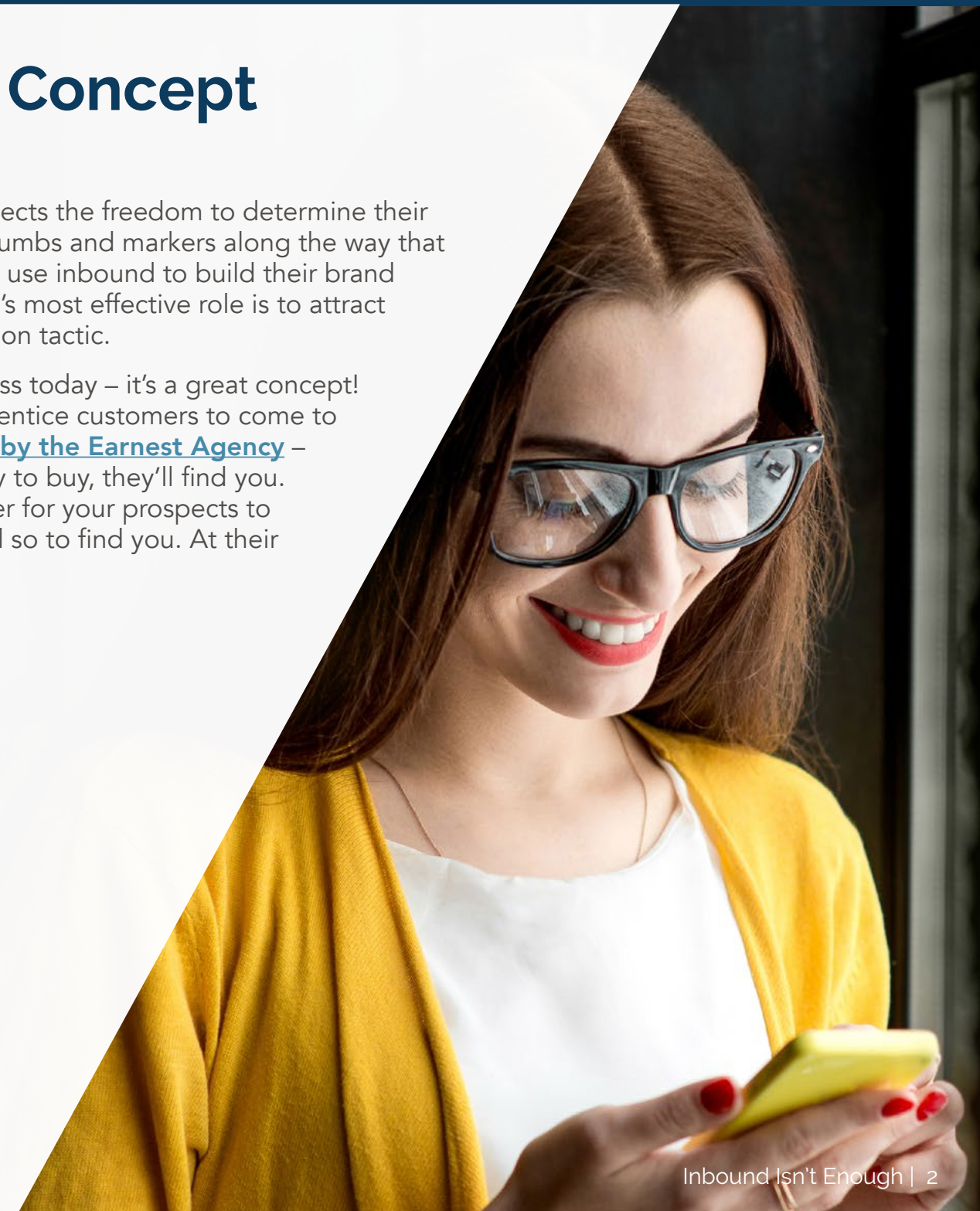
In contrast, outbound is **push marketing**; you proactively push information or content to people you hope will become buyers, or to people who are already existing customers. You can control the message and timing, and often target known prospects with personalized messaging.



# Inbound is a Great Concept

With inbound, you essentially give your prospects the freedom to determine their own path to purchase, but you leave bread crumbs and markers along the way that help guide their path to discovery. Businesses use inbound to build their brand and improve customer retention, but inbound's most effective role is to attract net new leads as a top of funnel lead generation tactic.

Inbound is one of the hottest trends in business today – it's a great concept! You can create value around your brand, and entice customers to come to you. What's not to like? According to [a study by the Earnest Agency](#) – 9 out of 10 buyers say that when they're ready to buy, they'll find you. Inbound marketing is all about making it easier for your prospects to find the information they're looking for ... and so to find you. At their own pace, and on their own terms.



# Outbound: From Interruption... to Permission Marketing

Outbound, in the past, was strictly about pushing your message to mass audiences. In the Mad Men era, agency media buyers could pick a channel (say a television program or a magazine that appealed to a gender or a broad demographic) and do broad-brush advertising. You spent enormous amounts of money on one campaign message and pushed it to as many people as you could, trying to get the most exposure possible. Some types of outbound are referred to as “interruption marketing” because they do, in fact, interrupt whatever you are doing. Broadcast media is still the worst offender.

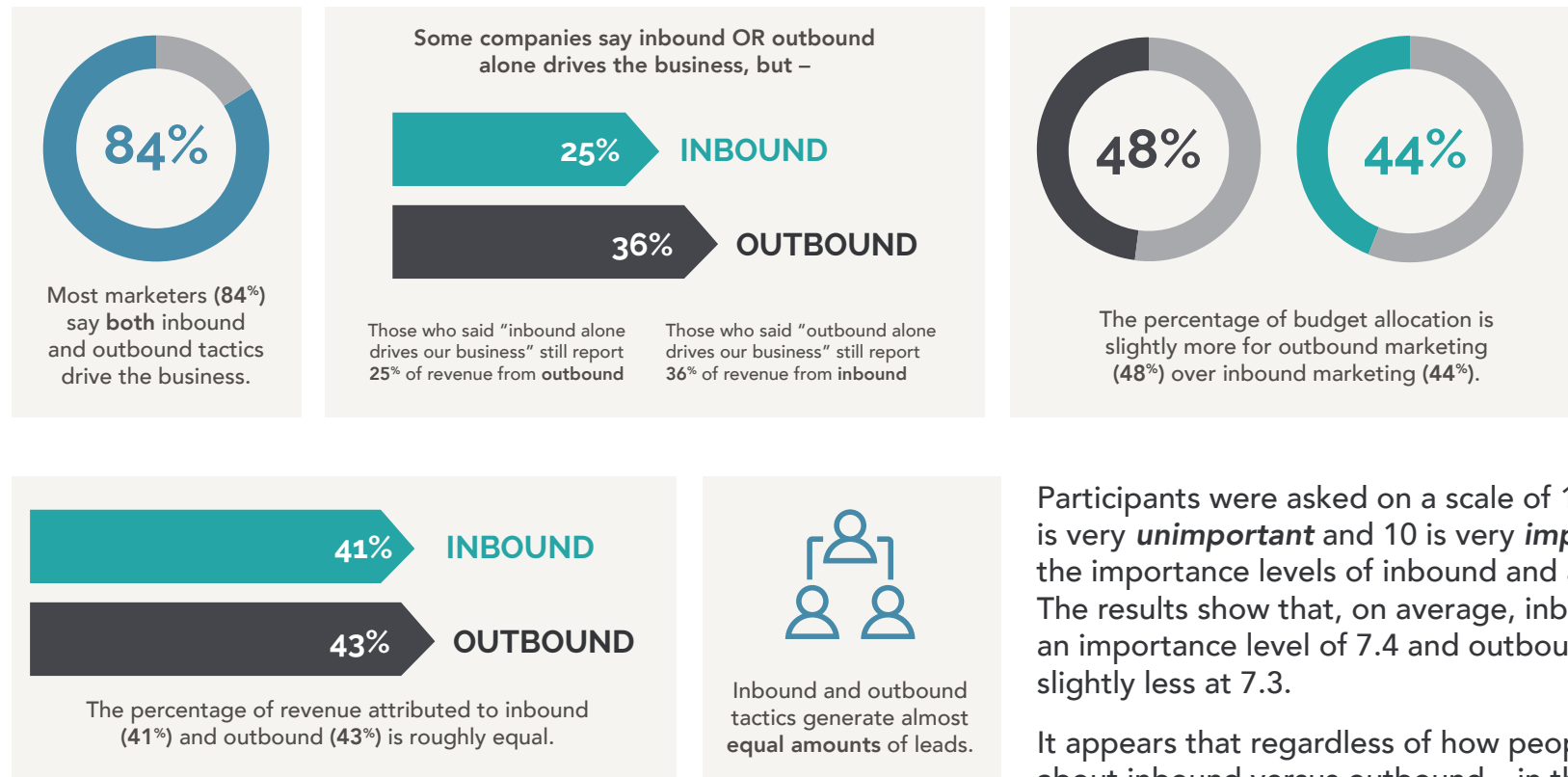
Thanks to new technologies, today we have more options for implementing an outbound marketing strategy. We can push relevant messaging to known personas. We can address their pain points and interests in a timely cadence, to build a relationship and keep our brand top-of-mind in the decision-making process.

See the difference? Using behavior profiling and activity history, marketers now more than ever have the ability to create personalized messages with relevant information, reaching their prospects on a more personal level, with information the prospect is looking for or wants to receive. It’s a proactive strategy, and allows the marketer to factor timing into the mix.

Seth Godin coined the phrase “interruptive” back in 2008, and he called the new order of outbound “[permission marketing](#).” The point is, we all do buy things, and we all do look for information. We provide our contact information so that someone can send us information we want to receive. (“Send me that eBook.” “Notify me when this goes on sale.” “Yes, I’d like to attend that webinar.”) If someone asks for information, it’s still outbound marketing when we send that information, but it’s no longer interruptive.

# How B2B Marketers are Actually Using Inbound and Outbound Marketing

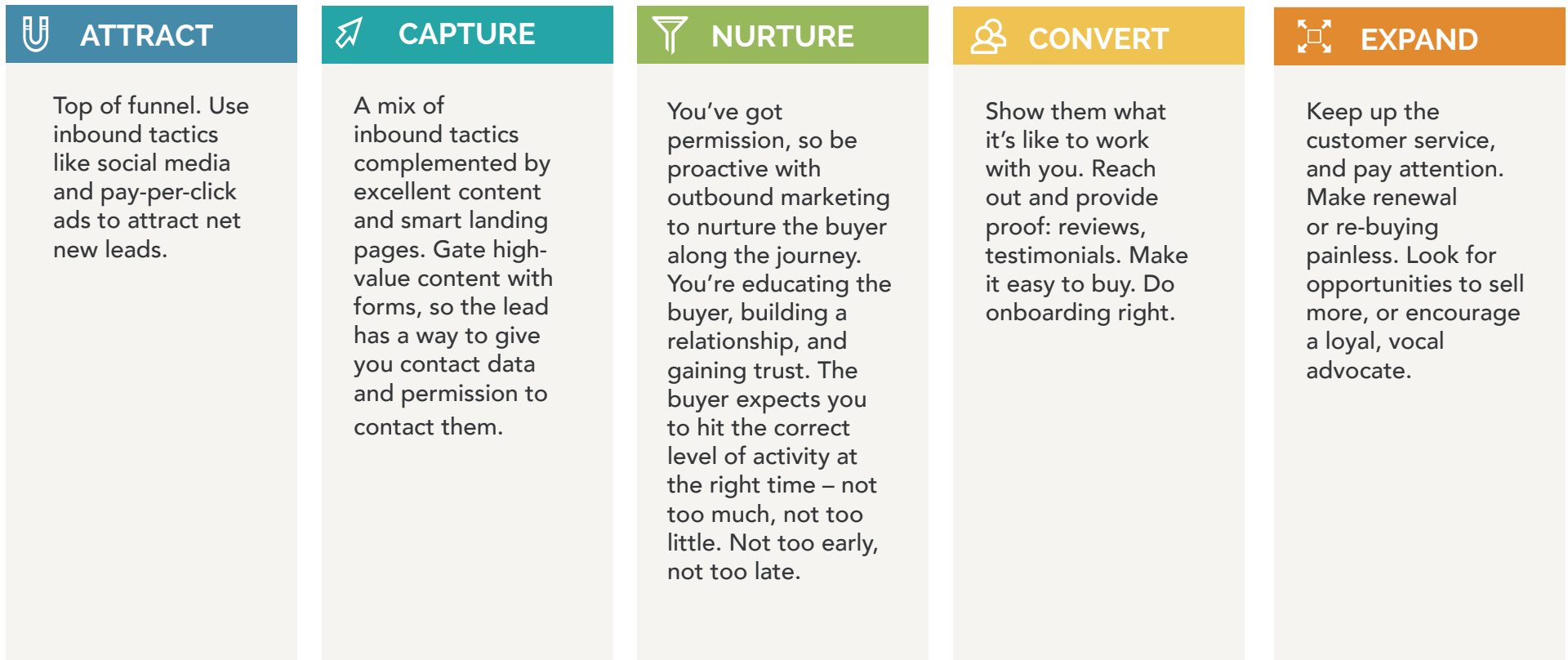
Act-On did a study of participants from emerging to mid-sized B2B growth organizations. Over half of the respondents had a marketing job title, and well over half were in organizations that experienced revenue growth in the last fiscal year. We found:



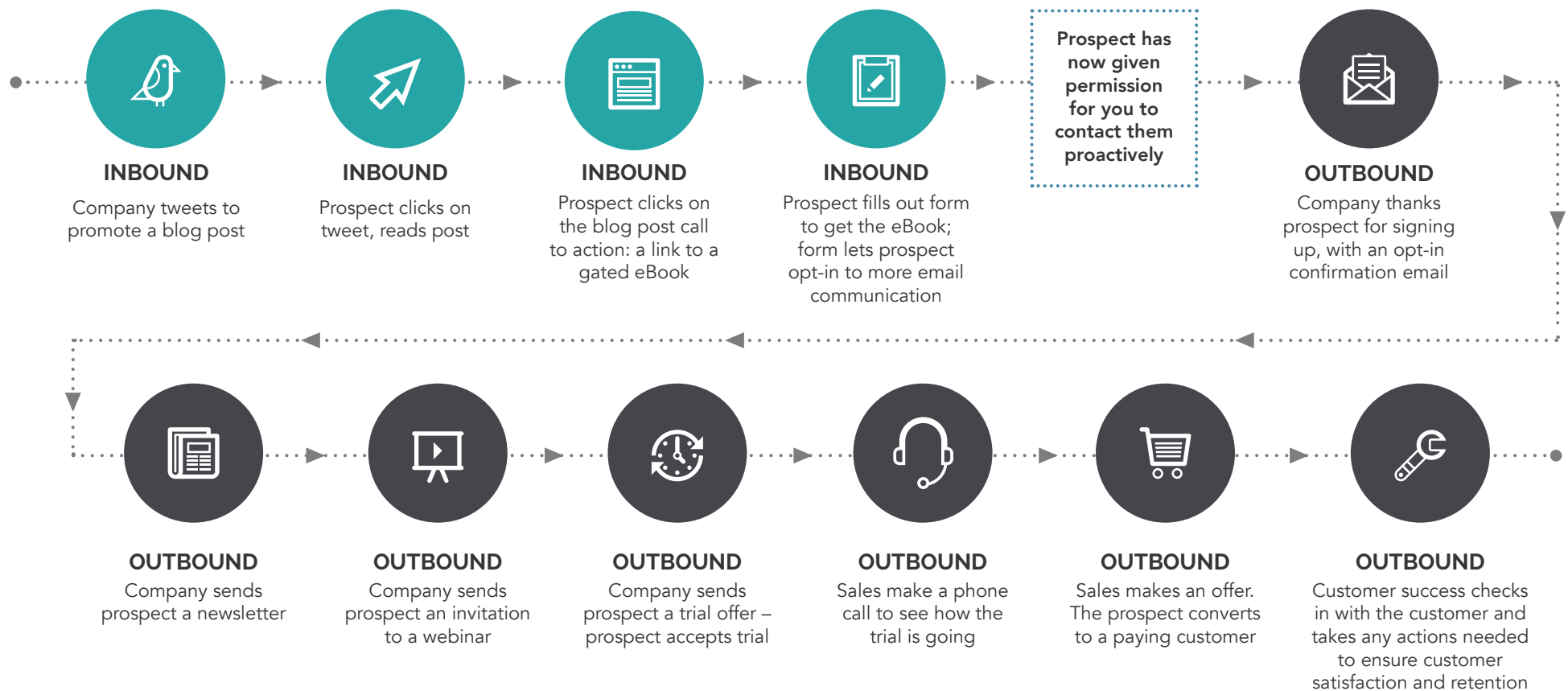
# Inbound & Outbound Together Create a Winning Marketing Strategy

Technology keeps evolving, empowering the buyer in new ways. It's up to us to pay attention and use data to understand what's going on – where buyers are now, and where they're going in the future. Getting that right – and meeting them where they are – takes a mixture of inbound and outbound strategies and tactics.

Here's how it looks, step by step through the buyer's journey:



# Infographic: A Use Case That Illustrates a Typical Scenario

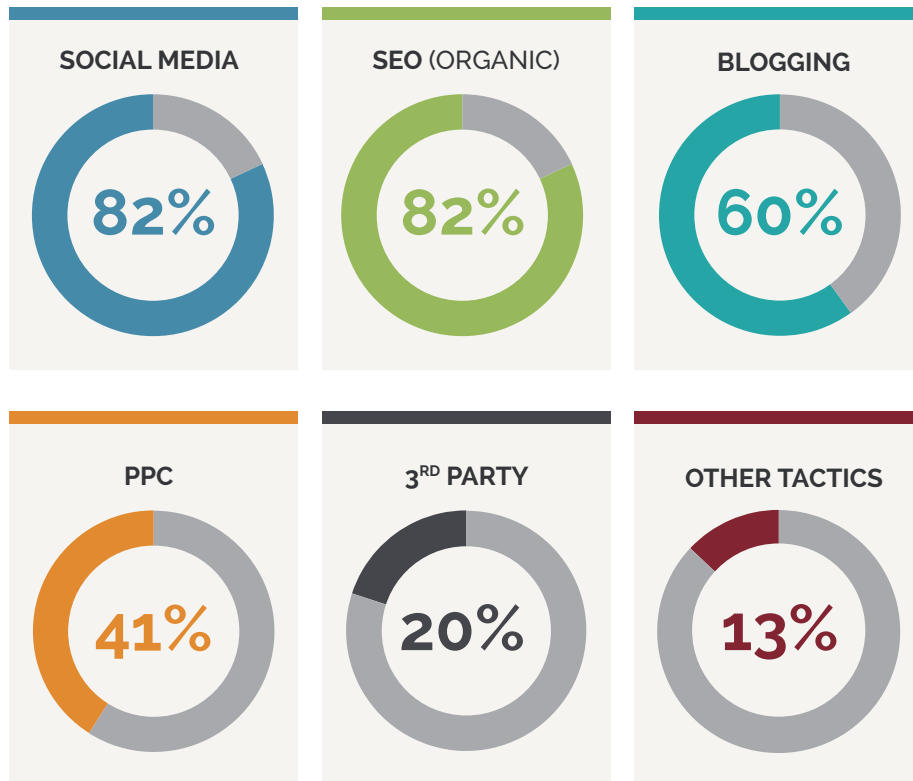


*As you can see, it does take a village to attract, close, and retain a customer. It takes your marketing, sales, and customer success teams. And it takes a healthy balance of inbound and outbound tactics.*



# The Top Inbound Marketing Tactics

Here's what marketers say are the most effective inbound tools and tactics, according to a [Demand Metric Research Report](#):



## A Few Notes on Our Favorites:

### Social Media

Two rules:

- It's not about you or your product, but helping your buyer feel comfortable with your brand as a trustworthy source. Listen, and respond without making it about you. And curate other people's content.
- Have something interesting to tell them: anything your audience will find useful, interesting, and share-worthy.

### Search Engine Optimization - SEO

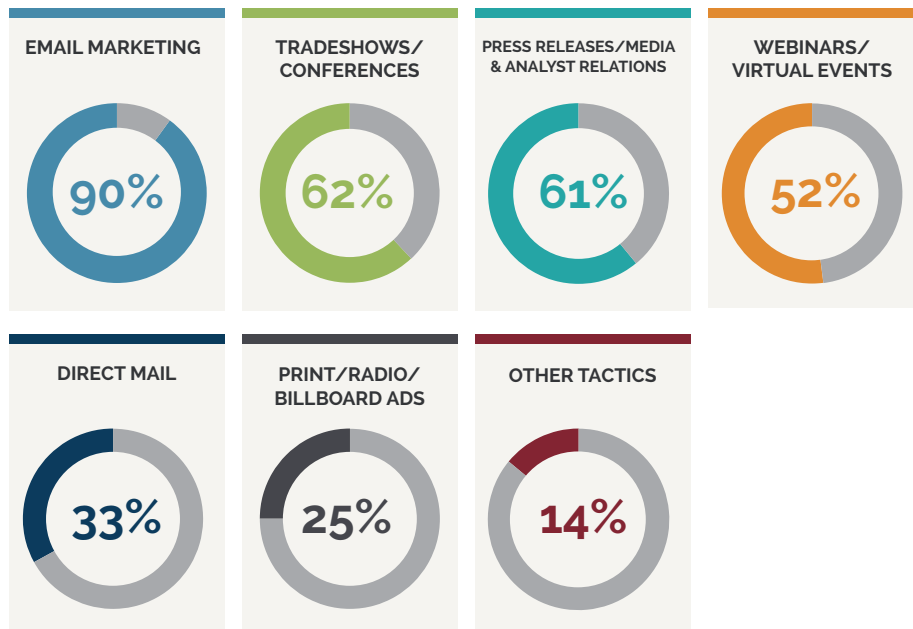
Google's chief goal in life is to deliver the most satisfactory experience possible for the searcher. The golden rule for SEO today is to [write for people](#) and not for search engines!

### Blogging

A well-written, informative blog can help you establish your brand as friendly, knowledgeable and helpful – someone a prospect would feel secure about engaging with in a business relationship. You can share blog posts on social. And frequent blogging is great for SEO.

# The Top Outbound Marketing Tactics

Email's still the killer app. Email's ROI - [an average of 38:1](#) - still outpaces just about everything else. And, email is ranked #1 as the [preferred method of communication](#) by consumers. Given today's [segmentation and personalization tools](#), the possibilities for connecting with your prospects on a personal and customized level are almost endless with email.



## A Few Notes on Our Favorites:

### Behavior-Triggerred Email

Trigger emails go out automatically, in response to actions your prospect might take, such as downloading a white paper. The beauty of trigger marketing is you're using the buyer's own digital body language as the impetus to action. Plus you look very alert and responsive... very attractive attributes.

### Nurture Email Programs

According to Gleanster Research – [50% of leads are qualified](#) but are not yet ready to buy. Your best strategy is to nurture them over the sales cycle, no matter how long it may be. Keep helping them learn more, [keep them engaged](#), keep your brand top of mind – by nurturing them. Learn all about lead nurturing with Act-On's eBook [10 Ways to Nurture the Buyer's Journey](#).

### Retargeting Ads

You can achieve a higher ROI with retargeted ads than with regular website ads. This is because you control who you want to see your ads, so you can target your known prospects and known accounts, or go as far as to serve ads to anyone who has visited a particular page on your site. It's a very good tactic to include in your account-based marketing strategy. [CMO.com released a statistic](#) that showed retargeting can boost ad response by 400%, which is huge! [Learn more.](#)

# The Top Outbound Marketing Tactics (continued)

## A Few Notes on Our Favorites (continued):

### Video Marketing

According to DigitalSherpa, [video helps increase people's understanding](#) of your product or service by 74% – which is why it can make a huge impact in increasing the conversion rates of your outbound tactics. Today's technology can let you know when one of your prospects has watched one of your tracked videos, and how far they got through it. Your sales team can get this information, so they have a better understanding of how to start their conversation.

### Account-Based Marketing

[Account-based marketing \(ABM\)](#) is a [strategic approach to engaging companies](#) who have critical characteristics in common with your top tier customers. It is similar to other types of lead generation and uses the same outbound tactics, but with the focus on an account rather than individuals. It's also highly regarded as a retention and upsell strategy.

## Want to Learn More?

For a quick overview of ABM, check out our SlideShare: ["10 Things You Need to Know About Account-Based Marketing"](#)



# 5 Tips for Integrating Inbound & Outbound Marketing

The secret to integration is [implementing a balanced strategy](#) of both inbound and outbound tactics across the customer experience. Build bridges across media functions and silos, and construct your marketing plan as a whole, always considering how to move the customer along his or her buying journey.

## Tip #1. Develop a cohesive messaging strategy

Make sure that your messaging retains your brand voice throughout the length of your prospect's buying journey, while ensuring the topics and pain points you are addressing are relevant to your prospect's personas and stage of their journey. Make messaging consistent across channels. If you make an offer on Facebook, for example, make sure it can be found on your website and in your emails.

## Tip #2. Plan your content

Do a gap analysis so you know that you have [content for every persona at every stage](#), in every channel. Make sure that your sales team has access to your content so they can provide relevant content for discussions they have with prospects.

## Tip #3. Make sure you consider the source and activity from inbound leads before you transition into outbound tactics

Meet with your sales team to see which actions from inbound indicate that a prospect is probably ready for a conversation. Score the attributes and actions they tell you identify the sales-ready lead, so that leads can be automatically qualified. Continue to nurture and serve retargeting ads to the rest of your prospects, to keep them warm and making progress.

## Tip #4. Track key metrics across the buyer's journey

Consider metrics like cost per leads and lead-to-sales, or lead-to-opportunity conversion rates. Connect your marketing performance to closed sales, retention rates, and customer lifetime value. (If attributing leads to social media has been a problem for you, check out Act-On's new [Advanced Social Media Module](#).)

## Tip #5. Develop an integrated mindset

There should be no walls between inbound and outbound strategies. They both contribute to your opportunity to attract, convert, and expand customer relationships.

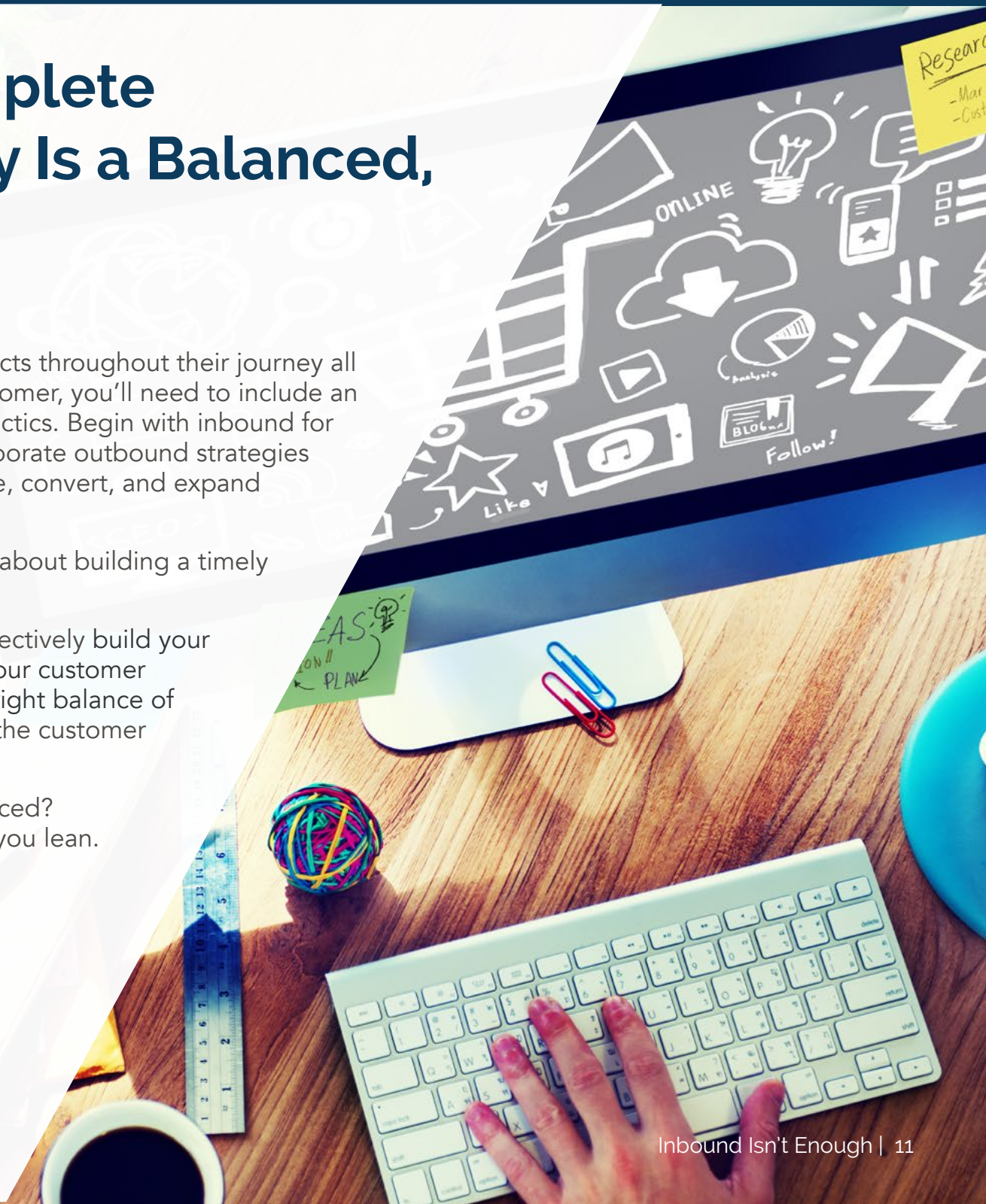
# Conclusion: A Complete Marketing Strategy Is a Balanced, Timely Strategy

In order to successfully market to your prospects throughout their journey all the way from the initial attraction to loyal customer, you'll need to include a healthy mix of both inbound and outbound tactics. Begin with inbound for prospects at the top of the funnel, then incorporate outbound strategies to help you move them through to the nurture, convert, and expand stages.

It's really not about inbound or outbound; it's about building a timely relationship with your customer.

A [balanced strategy](#) will help you not only effectively build your brand, but drive demand, and then expand your customer relationships. For most of us, that means the right balance of push and pull tactics, with emphasis on what the customer needs – when they need it.

Wondering if your marketing efforts are balanced? Take this [quick assessment](#) to see which way you lean.





# Acclaim for Act-On



## About Act-On Software

Act-On Software is a marketing automation company delivering innovation that empowers marketers to do the best work of their careers. Act-On is the only integrated workspace to address the needs of the customer experience, from brand awareness and demand generation, to retention and loyalty. With Act-On, marketers can drive better business outcomes and see higher customer lifetime value. The Act-On platform provides marketers with power they can actually use, without the need for a dedicated IT resource.

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