



STOKE B2B SERIES

EPIISODE 3

The Inbound Channel

The Inbound Channel I (aka the I win Channel) is the channel where people you don't know find you online and make a decision to purchase your goods or services. This channel is everywhere and it's open 24/7. Inbound is the force multiplier in today's world. It leverages the network effect. It's worth spending the time to give it a deep think – and then implement.

The core of the inbound channel is found through answering the following question for your firm – **How do I make myself discoverable in all the places where companies are seeking solutions to their problems – problems that my business could be a part of solving?** Then you create content that provides value in each of these places, so that you can be found.

Many organizations still think that their website is their online channel when, in reality, it is the very last step that your future customers will take before making the decision to engage with your firm.

If you're not already leveraging Inbound, you need to have a starting point and then evolve – you cannot do it all at once. At Onemata we are starting with three distinct paths to drive Inbound (there are more): content generation, advertising, and outstanding customer experiences. The latter is critical because word of mouth drives the online universe. Find the websites that publish reviews for your industry because these sites are vital for getting reviews in front of interested parties.

Content

Ongoing content development at Onemata is a priority. Our mission is to help small and midsize businesses grow. We feel we have a responsibility to contribute to the communities we belong to first, before we ask for anything in return. Because your prospects are online every day trying to solve problems, you can provide meaningful content that explains – in text, image, and even video – a potential solution to a problem they are having. Often this content leaves bread crumbs that lead straight back to your site – the classic win-win.

Examples of places where we think about distributing content are blogs, social media, and industry specific websites, just to name a few. All of these are locations where content can be placed, discovered and consumed. Don't get overwhelmed by this and try to be everywhere at once. Pick a place to start and start. Whatever you choose, go to YouTube and search for how to place content there. YouTube is a wonderful place for beginners because it will train you quickly.

Advertising

For advertising at Onemata we focus on Google and Facebook as our primary tools, given their deep targeting and affordability. However, both networks are quite complicated and require an insider's knowledge to get the most out of your investments. At Onemata we use Inbound marketing agencies to place and manage advertising on our behalf.

Outstanding Customer Experience

Outstanding customer experience should be at the heart of all businesses and is particularly important for Inbound. "Word of Mouth" is a fundamental aspect of the web, and it can work for you or against you. Web users value and respect the opinions of friends and third parties. At Onemata, we plan to be picked up and reviewed by sites like Capterra and G2 Networks, which have built wonderful businesses around the idea of technology feedback. If and when your customers value your product and service, one significant reward can be favorable reviews at sites such as these. This can create groundswell interest in your company. Of course, the opposite is also true. The old adage still holds: Take care of your customers and they will take care of you.

Your Website

And now the Website, which is the **LAST** step in your inbound channel strategy. Your website is a tool to convert inbound interest into sales. You have to ensure that the path from site visit to transaction is streamlined and simple. The essence of good Inbound conversion is to obsess over making it easy and downright delightful for your customer to do business with you. If there is a step that can be eliminated, find a way to eliminate two. Don't make your site visitors have to think about what do to next.

Things to Think About / Implement

1. If you want the opportunity to really scale your business you **MUST** have an Inbound strategy of a few tactics that you do consistently over time. Put a dollar and time budget to inbound, commit, and see what happens.
2. Develop great original content, from writing to video and everything in between, that you create and sprinkle around the internet.
3. Due to the complexity of internet advertising we recommend getting an inbound ad agency. Agencies that are just getting started are often a reservoir of fabulous talent at a discount and they can help you with both advertising and your website (done right, this is a hidden gem and will pay off).
4. Make sure your customers really love working with you; if you make a mistake, fix it; and make it easy for people to review your firm so that you can get the word-of-mouth freight train rolling.
5. Last, we like spending time and funds on Inbound first – before ever thinking of hiring a sales professional – because the cost of a salesperson vs. spending that same amount on inbound is a no-brainer. When you do hire a sales professional, you can make yourselves fat on all the inbound demand.