

## Inbound Marketing Agency Uses a Data Driven Approach to Attracting Visitors to Websites and Converting them into Qualified Leads



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**CEOCFO: Ms. Cisco, what is Marketing Essentials?**

**Ms. Cisco:** Marketing Essentials is an inbound marketing and sales agency, which means we focus on attracting visitors to a website, converting them into leads and delivering sales qualified leads to our customers to meet their revenue goals.

**CEOCFO: What do you understand about the process that perhaps others do not?**

**Ms. Cisco:** Jumping into tactical applications will lead to disappointing results. Buyers today make decisions differently due to the wealth of knowledge they gain from the internet. Therefore, an inbound approach must begin with researching, crafting and understanding personas and using data from behavioral insights to develop an optimal inbound strategy that matches those personas. Instead of simply choosing digital tools and channels, businesses must understand the buyer, create customer-driven content for specific stages of the sales funnel, distribute that content in the right channels, at the right stage of the funnel. This enables you to attract your target audience, nurture them into sales qualified leads and convert them into sales.

**CEOCFO: With so much change in what people are using, where they look and what is available, how do you know what is right for any given client?**

**Ms. Cisco:** We use data. A struggle with traditional marketing has always been the lack of data. You would start with brainstorming, come up with a lot of great ideas and then run campaigns, but it was extremely difficult to measure the effectiveness. Whereas with inbound, tactics can be measured. With our clients, we do extensive data analysis of their online brand, of their competitors, and we develop customer-centric personas. Using all of that information, we can develop a custom strategy with measurable ROI. Inbound marketing and sales is both an art and a science.

**CEOCFO: What might you discover that probably would not be picked up by other people?**

**Ms. Cisco:** It often has to do with misaligned tactics and strategy. For example, if a customer says that their goal is to get more leads, one of things we may find in our research is that they are not getting enough visitors to their site to even convert into leads. Or, it could be that their user experience on the site is creating barriers they are unaware of. Through research and analysis, we can identify issues to help align the correct strategy, tactics and goals.

**CEOCFO: Are you surprised as I am how when I go to a site that so many do not have easy contact information and how they make it difficult to communicate?**

**Ms. Cisco:** I agree 100%. I think it goes back to how traditional marketing agency's build websites based upon "what do you want it to look like?" They focused on what I would call the "prettiness" of the site. Today, the website is the new sales person – the first encounter a visitor has with a company's brand. This means that in less than 10 seconds, the visitor will

decide if they want to engage with your brand in some form. That's why as an inbound agency, we focus on using data to build websites with a growth-driven design methodology. We use user experience and usability data to drive how the website should function and look based on user interaction. This becomes an ongoing process — not a one-time painful website build that ends with a stagnant site. It is super important to make it easy to do business with you, make sure they have a good user experience and provide a strong message they can immediately see to pull them in to your sales funnel.

**CEOCFO: Are you able to help your customers with the backend, such as voice mail options, or how to handle an inquiry?**

**Ms. Cisco:** Yes, we also conduct inbound sales audits. Based upon the client's goals and the audit findings, we are able to develop an inbound sales strategy that is focused on processes, people and systems. For example, if they are questioning the effectiveness of their lead management process, we will conduct a sales mapping process to evaluate exactly what happens whether that lead comes through the internet, the phone or the front door. What is that experience like and how is that lead handled, managed and nurtured? It all originates back to the goal the client is trying to achieve, which in turn drives the sales audit process.

**CEOCFO: Who is your typical client?**

**Ms. Cisco:** Our ideal client is what we like to say is a perfect fit. We work well with clients who are growth-oriented, meaning they are driven by data and goals and have realistic expectations. For example, if a CEO says they want to increase their revenue by 2% and they want it done in 30 days, we are not a good fit because that is an unrealistic expectation based around how inbound marketing and sales works. They also have to be intricately involved. A company who just hired you to perform the task, but are not involved in it are likely not going to get optimal result. We must work as strategic partners.

**CEOCFO: Are there particular industries that you prefer?**

**Ms. Cisco:** With our experience in conversion rate optimization, we know that as long as all of the elements and research has guided us down the right strategic path, we are likely to get results for them, regardless of the industry. We predominately focus our energies around the senior living industry, the industrial/manufacturing industry, professional services like large group insurances or accounting firms, and then the healthcare providers like physician groups. It is interesting because, for example, some people say they only want to work with an agency that does manufacturing and knows their business so they do not have to take time teaching. What we have found by working in these different verticals is that we are able to test, try new things, continually advance and use this knowledge across the verticals. If you are only siloed in one, you do not get that experience to be able to translate into higher conversion rate opportunities.

**CEOCFO: What has changed in your approach over time?**

**Ms. Cisco:** One of the things we have learned is that you can't get results with a set it and forget or "cookie cutter" strategy. The drivers to results must understand how to be flexible or agile in the strategy based upon the buyers and the supporting data. That means the approach that we take at the onset of an inbound program will and should change based upon what the data tells us in order to achieve the highest conversion rates at each stage of the sales funnel. Applying agile marketing principles means we are continually seeking improvement opportunities and can make real time changes within the context of the program while working for the client to get them better results.

**CEOCFO: What is your geographic range?**

**Ms. Cisco:** Interestingly enough, I would say 75% of our clientele is virtual within the U.S. but outside the state of Ohio. The other 25% are within the state of Ohio.

**CEOCFO: How are you reaching out and how do you jump off the page if someone searches?**

**Ms. Cisco:** Many agencies that I would call both traditional and digital agencies say they do inbound marketing, and that is what I would say is the red flag. Just saying that they do it and actually using the methodology and practicing on their own agency are two different things. We practice what we preach. We generate our business using inbound marketing and sales methodologies. Anything that we would recommend to our clients, we have tested on ourselves and have data to show. The other avenue of business development for us is education. I am a firm believer in not selling but in giving and educating. We do a lot of workshops, educational events and speaking engagements at state and national conferences.

**CEOCFO: Your site features a lending hand section. Why is giving back important for the company and the business but for you personally as well?**

**Ms. Cisco:** Intrinsicly, I do what I do every day because I love it and it gives me an opportunity to help other people. All of our employees are very passionate about helping other people - that's why they are awesome at what they do. Paying

it forward is a part of our culture. We really enjoy helping other people and it is our way of making a difference in some small way in the greater community.

**CEO CFO: *How is business these days?***

**Ms. Cisco:** Awesome. We are very blessed to have amazing, talented, wonderful team members who work for us. We are blessed to have clients who appreciate and value our strategic partnership and we are blessed that people are searching and engaging with us. When it is a good fit and makes sense, we are engaging with them.

**CEO CFO: *Final thoughts?***

**Ms. Cisco:** As I look ahead and look at not only my own business but at other businesses that want to grow, the internet is not going away. However, how people search and use the internet and on what technology, that is going to continually change. Our biggest goal and challenge is to continually stay ahead of those changes so we can deliver results for our clients consistently.

