

The Ultimate Guide to Hiring an Inbound Agency

11 Attributes & Core Values
Your Next Agency Partner
Must Have



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Introduction

INBOUND'S ROI CANNOT BE DENIED

The return on investment businesses experience when shifting from outbound to inbound marketing has been well documented. Companies that align their strategy with how their customers *actually* find information are blowing key growth metrics out of the water. The combination of insightful content and website engagement creates the bedrock for long-term sales and marketing success.

As marketing dollars shift toward digital, many internal teams are finding it tough to keep up. Mastering modern strategies (like AEO) takes time and resources that can overwhelm nimble teams.

PARTNERS CAN ACCELERATE RESULTS

That's why more businesses are looking outside their organization for help. The right agency brings deep online experience to boost visibility and generate qualified leads.

However, choosing a partner is not one-size-fits-all. Here are the 11 most important values to look for when hiring an inbound marketing agency.

Offers the Right Services

HIRE A MARKETING AGENCY THAT DELIVERS THE INBOUND SERVICES THAT MATTER THE MOST

Specialties (like social media) are common, but any firm calling itself an inbound agency should offer a cohesive strategy. That means traffic generation through SEO/AEO and social, premium content for lead generation, targeted lead-nurturing campaigns, and built-in analysis and measurement to maximize every investment.

Digging into the results of your online efforts is non-negotiable. Doing so regularly allows an agency to repeat what's working and fine-tune what isn't.



KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Do you offer Traffic Generation, Lead Generation, and Analytical-Focused service packages?
2. What tactic or tactics does your firm use to deliver each one?
3. Which past or current client examples best illustrate your success in each?

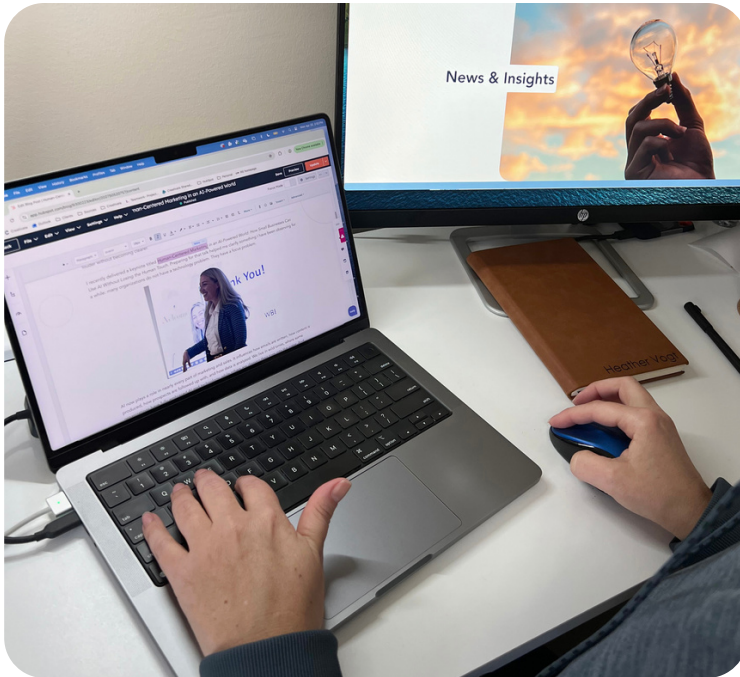
Presents a Clearly-Defined Delivery Process

HIRE AN AGENCY WITH A SOLID, PROVEN PLAN OF ATTACK

They know you. They know your business. They know what inbound success requires. Any agency worth considering should be able to map out the specifics of the strategy they're proposing.

Expect a timeline for each phase and a clear description of the resources needed along the way. Every component of the strategy should make sense for your brand.





Does your business have no web presence?

Traffic generation services like SEO, AEO, blogging, and social media should come first.

Is your website underperforming on leads?

Your partner should ensure traffic is consistent before crafting premium offers and landing pages.

Are too few sales tied back to your site? They'll need to review traffic and lead quality, then build out targeted lead-nurturing and email sequences.

The ability to measure and interpret data is a baseline skill. Each agency you consider should be able to set benchmarks, identify trends, and take action.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Given your situation, goals, and challenges, what do you recommend we do first?
2. How does our situation match that of another customer you've worked with?
3. What do you see as the most critical piece of inbound marketing for our business?



Conducts a Goal-Oriented Sales Process

A MARKETING AGENCY'S PITCH SHOULD BE TAILORED TO YOUR BUSINESS' SPECIFIC CHALLENGES AND GOALS

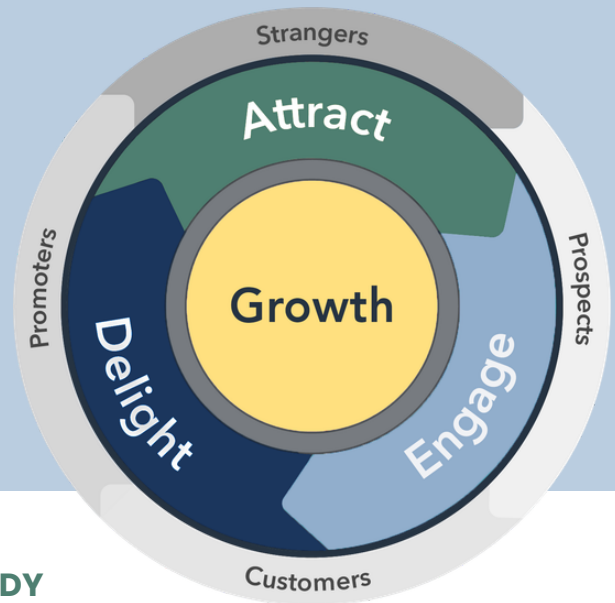
A good inbound agency starts with your goals and challenges, then connects them to how they can help. You'll see slides on who they are and what they do, but their services are most compelling when they're framed as answers to the problems you're facing.

Expect them to ask about your goals, timing, urgency, key metrics, and team makeup. Their answers to these questions allow them to prescribe a plan that's truly yours.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Have you worked with clients who have faced challenges similar to mine?
2. How does each piece of your proposal address my challenges and goals?
3. What's the timeframe for hitting these goals, based on your proposed strategy?

Maintains a Website Optimized for Inbound



HIRE A FIRM THAT CAN CITE ITSELF AS A CASE STUDY

They'll talk the talk, but does the agency you are considering walk the walk? Do they do inbound for themselves? A clear YES or NO will tell you a lot about how good they *really* are.

In hiring mode, it's easy to focus on services and testimonial pages. Step back and ask: are they doing the things they'd be proposing to you? Are they consistently showing up online? Do their CTAs and premium offers show *strong* thought leadership?

An effective inbound marketing agency should be its own best case study. Think twice about hiring a firm that doesn't prioritize their own business.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. What have been the results of your own firm's inbound efforts?
2. Does what you're outlining for us match what your own firm does online?
3. What key lessons have you learned from using inbound marketing for your own business?

Presents Compelling Case Studies

HIRE AN AGENCY WITH COMPELLING EXAMPLES OF THEIR MARKETING PROWESS

Any inbound agency truly hell-bent on delivering ROI will be eager to show you how they've done it for others. Ask for client success stories early. Strong testimonials should include glowing remarks, real numbers, and the strategies behind them.

Look beyond testimonials. Do these case studies show an increase in website traffic? Lead growth? Customer conversion? Make sure their wins line up with the outcomes you're after.

Ask for references, too. As long as there isn't a conflict, they should hand names over freely. Bonus points if those clients are still active – retainer work is a sign the agency has earned the relationship.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Can you share case study materials and references from other clients?
2. What lessons from past success do you plan to apply to our business?
3. What are the critical success factors for inbound marketing?

Showcases Their Specific Areas of Focus



YOUR AGENCY SHOULD SPECIALIZE, NOT GENERALIZE

Does the agency you're considering have a sweet spot? If they've worked with businesses like yours, they'll already speak your industry's language.

Use the sales process to figure out where their strengths lie. If their specialty is social media, they should know the fastest ways to leverage it. If they've worked in your industry, they'll know your terminology and thought leaders, which makes content creation faster from day one.

Specialties can shine brightest when they're part of a comprehensive inbound strategy. Just make sure their biggest strengths *actually* make you stronger.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Have you worked in my industry before?
2. Which piece of inbound marketing is your strongest capability, and how will your strategy capitalize on it?
3. If you have worked in our industry, how familiar are you with our thought leaders? If not, how will you ramp up?

Teaches and Trains Your Team

HIRE AN AGENCY THAT KNOWS HOW AND WANTS TO LEVERAGE YOUR TEAM'S INDUSTRY EXPERTISE

Consider all the sides of your business. Sales and marketing are obvious, but what about operations, manufacturing, research & development, or packaging? The content these teams can contribute to your inbound efforts is often the most valuable.

A post shared by 15 or 20 employees will outperform one shared by the company account *every time*. An agency worth its weight will be eager to talk with your team, train them on best practices, and harness their brain-power.



KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. How do you plan to use members of our team for content creation?
2. How will you set them up for success and make their time well spent?
3. How has involving client team members worked in past engagements?

Key Capabilities Reside Either In-House or With a Trusted Partner

HIRE AN AGENCY THAT CAN EXPLAIN HOW IT DOES WHAT IT DOES

A complete inbound marketing strategy is made of many tactics. It's like a puzzle – but not because it's confusing, but because it has a lot of pieces that only work when fit together. Succeeding online means executing a strategy that includes all the right ones.

The agency's most important job is assembling those pieces into a cohesive strategy. Know each potential partner's capabilities upfront, and understand who owns each piece – whether it lives in-house or with a long-term collaborator.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Do you do all your inbound work in-house?
2. If yes, who specializes in what?
3. If not, who do you outsource to, and how long have you worked with them?



Possesses Strong Project Management Skills

INBOUND MARKETING IS A SERIOUS PRODUCTION – YOUR AGENCY SHOULD WANT TO RUN THE WHOLE SHOW

Inbound marketing is organic. It takes time, effort, and coordination.

Any agency you partner with will need your time – at the start to ramp up, and ongoing, to keep methods sharp and aligned with your business.

They'll need to understand your customer, identify the content that resonates, and add forms and other inbound elements to your site. To pull this off, they need to get inside your head, the team's heads, and on your website admin's calendar!

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- 1.What requests, technical or otherwise, should I expect as our engagement kicks off?
- 2.What ongoing requests will you make of my team?
- 3.What project management tools or orientation materials should we expect, and when?

Places an Emphasis on Measurement Optimized for Inbound

AGENCIES THAT MEASURE EVERYTHING SUCCEED FASTER

Every piece of inbound is trackable and interpretable. Any agency you work with should lean into that heavily.

You have goals. You're hiring them to hit those goals. They should be just as focused on charting success in a data-driven way as you are. Expect measurement at every step, with regular reports on what's working and what needs work.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. How will you measure the success of the campaigns you're proposing?
2. How often will you report on progress and key metrics?
3. What adjustments will you make if certain metrics are over or under performing?



Values Transparency



YOUR MARKETING AGENCY PARTNER SHOULD WANT YOU TO SEE EVERYTHING THAT THEY SEE

Transparency should be a core value – regular meeting schedules, willingness to train your team, and direct access to the software and data behind your campaigns. Transparent agencies treat their clients as part of the team and move faster because of it. They invite feedback often, and pair their know-how with your industry experience to craft sharper strategies.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. What software do you use to execute and manage marketing?
2. Will we be trained on it?
3. How often will you share wins and progress with us?



Conclusion

FIND THE BEST EQUIPPED AGENCY

If you're short on the time needed to execute modern marketing tactics, a strategic marketing partner can help. Agencies whose people, leadership, skills, and core values align with the 11 attributes above are positioned to deliver real results.

MARKETING AGENCY RESOURCES

Creativate is a certified Platinum HubSpot Partner – an extension of your marketing team that brings best-in-class practices from multi-million dollar companies to your business.

Our core values of **flexibility**, **consistency**, and **long-term partnerships** mean our proactive strategies stay aligned with your evolving goals. Our voice is honest, transparent, and business-friendly, so every conversation feels inviting and sincere.



Let's Get Started!

Your business has goals. We have the strategies to get you there. Whether you're just exploring inbound or ready to push your campaigns further, we're in your corner. At Creativate, we build partnerships designed to grow with you.

[**SCHEDULE A CALL**](#)[**LEARN MORE**](#)

When you work with us, you get a team genuinely invested in your success – not just your deliverables. Reach out today, and let's grow something great together.

Michelle



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