

# Suggested Student and Class Activities

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Suggested Student and Class Activities to Practice Inbound Marketing by [Rebecca Corliss & Jia Li Lily Zhu of HubSpot](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).

## **Suggested Student and Class Activities**

*Below are suggested student and class activities to allow students to practice inbound marketing skills. They can be altered to accommodate large groups or changed to suit individual class assignments.*

### **Inbound Marketing**

#### **1. Class Debate: Inbound vs. Outbound Traditional Marketing**

Divide students into two groups. One will advocate inbound marketing as an effective marketing strategy and the other traditional marketing. For the debate, students should use specific business examples to demonstrate that the strategy they are advocating was more effective in generating leads and customers. At the end of the debate, the professor can provide a brief review of each side's argument. Then he/she can ask everyone to reconvene to discuss ways to leverage the strengths of both inbound and traditional marketing for a hypothetical business.

#### **2. Student Project: Launching a Business Using Inbound Marketing Strategies**

Ask students to create a hypothetical business and devise its launch campaign. Students should brainstorm product and business strategy and set marketing goals. Within the campaign, students should consider website design, blog strategy, search engine optimization, landing page creation, call-to-action placement, social media interaction and email marketing.

Throughout the semester, students should execute their campaigns and track their progress. How successful was their campaigns in getting found online and generating leads and customers?

Note: This project can be completed through using the HubSpot Semester Trial.

### **Blogging**

#### **1. Group Activity: Understanding Effective Blog Article Titles**

Collect a group of recently published blog posts from various blogs and industries and make a list of their titles. Ask students to discuss whether they think the article title would successfully attract visitors through search engines and social media.

Give the full articles to the students to read. Have them create new headlines for each blog post optimizing for: keywords, social media sharing, and comprehensive summary.

#### **2. Class Discussion: Examination of the Components of an Effective Blog Article**

Pick a few recently published blog articles and distribute them to the students. Ask students to identify what could be improved in the article to better generate traffic and better generate traffic into leads.

### **3. Small Group Discussion: Blog Article Topic Brainstorm**

Put students into groups and assign them a particular industry. Ask them to brainstorm 3-5 article topics that would best attract potential customers without explicitly promoting a product or service. Ask them to present to other classmates and have their classmates vote on the most appealing topic (followed by brief discussion).

### **4. Student Activity: Write a Post to Earn Site Traffic**

Ask students to write a blog post with the goal of getting as many page views as possible in 24 hours. After the 24 hours are up, students should prepare data to show their success or progress and why they were the most successful.

In a class discussion, students should examine the five top-performing posts, and discuss how the headline, topic, content and promotion strategies may have driven that success.

**Note:** This activity can be done through setting up a free blogging tool like WordPress or through the HubSpot Blogging and Sources tools in the HubSpot Semester Trial.

## **Social Media**

### **1. Student Activity: Facebook Pages vs. Groups**

Ask students to either create a Facebook Fan Page or a Group on Facebook for a hypothetical company. Reconvene to compare how the capabilities of each Facebook tool differ and discuss which might be better depending on the campaign.

### **2. Class Discussion: Channel Building: Twitter vs. Facebook vs. LinkedIn**

Give students examples of four different businesses of various industries. Have students discuss which social media channel might work best for building its reach. Why? How could the business use channels in conjunction with each other?

### **3. Student Presentation: Social Media Marketing Plan**

Ask students to create a marketing plan driven by social media tools for a company of their choice. Within the plan, the student should decide what social media platform should be used, what content will be shared, and how much time should be allocated to each activity. Have students present their marketing plans to the class, including specific metrics they hope to achieve.

## Search Engine Optimization

### 1. Student Activity: Website Improvement Proposals using Analysis from Website Grader

Each student should select a business website of an industry of their choice. Students in each group will review their website and identify elements that are missing or can be improved to increase the website's marketing effectiveness. After compiling a list, students should run their website on Website Grader and compare elements they have identified with those identified by Website Grader. Using the feedback from Website Grader, students should make a proposal for the company on how it can improve its on-page SEO, off-page SEO and overall website quality.

### 2. Group Discussion: Website Ranking by Keyword in Google and Bing

- Ask students to get into groups. In each group, students will chose a general keyword and a related long-tail keyword and search them in Google.
- Why do you think the top 5 websites that resulted from the general keyword search were able to rank high?
- Why do you think the top 5 websites that resulted from the long-tail keyword search were able to rank high?
- Why would a smaller business want to optimize for long-tail keywords instead of general keywords?
- Do results change when you use a different search engine like Bing? And Yahoo?

## Lead Conversion

### 1. Group Discussion: Landing Page Evaluation

Divide students into groups. Students in each group should receive 3 landing pages from various websites. Students should discuss the merits and weaknesses of each, decide what aspects can be changed to maximize lead conversion rate, and pick the one they think would yield the highest lead conversion.

### 2. Student Presentation: Designing Landing Pages

Each student should create a hypothetical business and design a landing page for the business's website. The landing page should have forms, graphics, and content that target a specific business objective. In a presentation, students should discuss how an individual would find this landing page, and why his or her landing page is optimized for conversion. At the end of the presentation, fellow students should suggest recommendations to make each other's landing pages even more effective.

Note: This activity can be done through using PowerPoint to design hypothetical landing pages, or it can be completed by created actual landing pages online through the HubSpot Semester Trial.

### **3. Group Activity: Call-to-Action Buttons**

Assign a business to each group, and have them choose a specific business objective achievable online. (Download something? Ask for a trial? Consultation? Based on the objective the groups choose, the group will need to design a call-to-action button considering text, image, layout, color, etc. The students will then present the elements of their designs and how they will optimize conversions. Students can also vote on whether they will click on a button and see a live demonstration of a certain button's click-through rate.

### **4. Group Activity: Design an Offer**

Divide students into small groups and have each group brainstorm and design an appealing offer that would generate leads for a company of their choice. Ask students to present their offers and get feedback from classmates on whether their offers are effective. How could they be improved? What kind of landing pages should students couple with their offers?

## **Lead Nurturing & Email Marketing**

### **1. Student Activity: Design Email Campaigns That Target Different Stages of the Sales Cycle**

Students will choose a hypothetical company and consider that company's following audiences: cold prospects, new visitors, repeat visitors, and loyal subscribers. For each audience, students should compose an email that best targets each audience group. Students should consider headline, layout, message, bullet points, call-to-action, image, etc. With each email, students should include an explanation on why each email would be most effective for each audience.