

The Business and Writing Coach

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Coaching and Speaking

Inbound vs. Outbound Marketing

Perhaps the single most important step you can take as an entrepreneur is to effectively market your goods and services. You can have the best products in the world, but if no one knows about them, your business will fail! When it comes to successfully promoting your business, you can choose from a variety of **inbound** and **outbound** marketing techniques.

Outbound marketing is the proactive process of *finding* potential customers and motivating them to buy your products and services. It is a traditional form of marketing that involves the promotion of your goods to people who are not actively seeking them. Common outbound marketing techniques include tele-

vision and radio advertising, newspaper and magazine advertising, telemarketing, trade shows, direct mail (both electronic and paper), e-mail blasts and public relations activities.

Outbound marketing has a long history of success and it typically provides quicker results than inbound marketing. Unfortunately, it has its weaknesses as well. Advertising, trade shows, telemarketing and the like can be prohibitively expensive. In addition, outbound marketing is intrusive. In many cases, you are trying to sell your goods and services to people who have no interest in them. This has led to many attempts to block outbound marketing efforts such as caller ID, call blocking, spam fil-

ters and pop-up blockers.

Conversely, inbound marketing consists of promotional efforts that focus on *getting found* by customers. The idea is to take proactive steps to bring potential customers to you and motivate them to buy your goods and services because of the quality content you provide in various formats. Inbound marketing techniques include blogging, articles, white papers, search engine optimization, video, and social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Inbound marketing has the advantage of being far less expensive to implement than outbound marketing. In fact, you can facilitate a successful inbound mar-

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About the Author:

Dr. Tyrone A. Holmes, Ed.D,
CPT
USA Cycling Level 2 Certified
Coach
ACE Certified Personal
Trainer
President and Owner
T.A.H. Performance Consult-
ants, LLC



Pyramid Coaching

Pyramid Coaching is a specialized form of business coaching that recognizes the power of writing to significantly elevate your business performance. Named after my Publishing Pyramid, it will help you write your way to more business, greater income and increased recognition. As a part of the coaching process, you will complete the Publishing Pyramid Inventory, which describes the 7 levels of the Pyramid, and assesses the extent to which you are effectively utilizing publications such as newsletters, blog posts, booklets, e-zines, book chapters, manuals, books and e-books. As a result of the Pyramid Coaching process, you will be able to develop a diverse array of publications that you can use to demonstrate your expertise, promote your business and create multiple revenue streams. For more information and to sign-up for a FREE coaching session, please visit my website at www.holmesfitness.com.

Dr. Tyrone A. Holmes, Ed.D, CPT

The Business and Writing Coach

17212 N. Scottsdale Road - Suite 2317
Scottsdale, AZ 85255

Phone: 480-584-6202

Fax: 480-584-6206

doctorholmes@sbcglobal.net

www.doctorholmes.net

The Business and Writing Toolkit

www.drtyroneholmes.wordpress.com

Inbound vs. Outbound Marketing (continued)

keting campaign without spending a dime. You are also able to provide valuable content for potential customers and to distribute information about your business in a non-intrusive fashion. This is one of the great benefits of inbound marketing. It tends to be a more welcome form of promotion because you are providing valuable content as opposed to offering a sales pitch.

Of course, inbound marketing has its weaknesses as well. While there is little monetary cost, there is a tremendous cost when it comes to time.

Developing and maintaining a blog, writing articles, creating video and maintaining a consistent presence through social media requires a significant amount of your time, especially when compared to the time required for most outbound marketing campaigns. Another weakness of inbound marketing is that it can take a long time to achieve success.

So, what's the bottom-line when it comes to inbound vs. outbound marketing? My recommendation is to incorporate elements of each. Both marketing approaches can be suc-

cessful when used properly and each offers unique benefits. Think about how you can incorporate both approaches in a marketing strategy that will provide you with the greatest possible return. For example, a business coach might decide to use email marketing (outbound) because she has a long client list she can use for the distribution of product information. She could also use blogging (inbound) as a way of disseminating business information and demonstrating her expertise to potential clients.