INBOUND CONTENT CANVAS: HOW TO USE IT
By Columbia Road

The main purpose of mapping inbound content is to identify customer content needs per customer stage. This allows the company to serve their customers with the help of content in the most optimal way (i.e. educate customers) but also to obtain important information about the customer, such as their email (mandatory), phone number, title, and/or company name.

Optimally, each content should have their own landing page and lead form that are tightly focused on a single topic and customer goal aka call-to-action (CTA). A system, such as a specific inbound marketing software, may be used to set up the most optimal environment for this. In this type of environment, both the production and sharing of content as well as the tracking of visitor or customer activities is efficient.

Nurturing should occur from one stage to another, thus moving the visitor from the awareness stage to consideration, decision, relationship, and advocacy. Also, the customer may enter the website having already interacted with the company – or as an existing customer – and also those customers should be considered when producing content for the company website. Essentially, content should be built to cater to the needs of visitors, prospects/leads (MQL and SQL), and customers.

Before you get started with inbound content mapping you should have a clear understanding of your buyer personas and their customer journey. To get started with these, check out our [Buyer Persona Canvas template](#) and [Customer Journey Map template](#). If you have an understanding of both already, you can get started with the mapping of inbound content. Remember, if you have various customer personas, you should produce different canvases for each persona, if their needs differ.

OK, so here's how to use the canvas:
1. Have a dedicated team for inbound content (cf., required resources row in the canvas). Note: these can be either internal or external resources.
2. Decide on a buyer persona or customer segment to focus on. Tip: Do not focus on demography based segments. Focus on people or companies, who have similar needs or job-to-be-dones. Try to identify as many detailed micro-segments as possible.

3. Fill the Inbound Content Canvas for the buyer persona or customer segment under focus.
4. Ideate inbound content types. Use the canvas as an inspiration.
5. Evaluate the potential value and required effort of running those activities. Tip: Consider the cost of internal and external resources and paid marketing budget against the value of either marketing qualified lead (MQL) or sales qualified lead (SQL) value or purchase value, and numbers of those leads or purchases. Calculate the return on investment (ROI) by subtracting investment costs from the business impact.
6. Fill in the rest of the canvas sections that could lead to increased growth. The canvas helps you to go through all the key elements needed for the planning and execution of inbound content for a particular buyer persona or customer segment. In short, these are:
7. Start by printing out the canvas on A3 paper. Fill in the full content funnel canvas by starting from left and moving to the other end one column at a time. Fill in the individual content canvas from top to bottom. You can write your ideas and thoughts for each cell on post-its.
8. After you have filled in the canvas, you should have a much better understanding of where and how inbound content can be planned, delivered, and tracked in one particular customer group and each customer stage.

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INBOUND CONTENT CANVAS

Content funnel - Flowers as a Service example

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COMPANY: FLORALIFE | BUYER PERSONA: SMALL TRENDY COMPANIES

STAGE	AWARENESS	CONSIDERATION	DECISION	RELATIONSHIP	ADVOCACY
CONTENT TYPE	• Report on how flowers add to job satisfaction in workplaces • Whitepaper on the air cleaning effect of plants	• Guide to best plants for office surroundings • Checklist to Webcast / webinar video: flower crown online course, flower arranging webinar • Podcast with interesting florists, ikebana masters etc. • Brochure about Floralife	• Vendor comparison • Product comparison • Case studies • Trial • Live demo • Coupons	• Customer satisfaction survey • Discount for new customer subscription • Share pictures from office get something • Share pictures from your office, get x as a gift	• Customer testimonials
CTA / GOAL	• Download material	• Download material • Webcast / podcast subscription	• Sign up for demo • Purchase	• Up-selling • Cross-selling	• Reference rights • Referrals
CHANNEL OF SHARING & PROMOTION	• Website • Email • Social media • Offline channels	• Website • Email • Podcast apps • Offline channels	• Website • Email • Social media • Affiliate and partners	• Website • Email • Social media	• Website • Email • Social media
KPIS	• Engagement • Clicks • CTR • Email open rate • MQL	• Engagement • Clicks • CTR • Conversion rate • Email open rate • MQL/SQL	• Volume of demos • Volume and value of purchases	• Up-selling volume & value • Cross-selling volume & value	• Volume and value of referrals • Number of testimonials
ANALYTICS & PERFORMANCE TRACKING	• Google Analytics & Tag Manager • Social media analytics • CRM/Marketing software	• Google Analytics & Tag Manager • Social media analytics • CRM/Marketing software	• Google Analytics & Tag Manager • Social media analytics • CRM/Marketing software	• Google Analytics & Tag Manager • Social media analytics • CRM/Marketing software • Survey tool	• Google Analytics & Tag Manager • Social media analytics • CRM/Marketing software
NURTURING ACTIVITIES / HOW TO MOVE CUSTOMER FORWARD IN THE FUNNEL	• Awareness email series	• Consideration email series	• Decision email series • Sales rep email / call	• Relationship email series • Personal customer success email / call	• Advocacy email series • Personal customer success email / call

REQUIRED RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES: Copywriting & SEO | Visuals | Paid advertising | Analytics & tracking | Landing pages & forms | Marketing automation emails & series | Growth owner

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INBOUND CONTENT CANVAS
Content funnel

COMPANY: **BUYER PERSONA:**

STAGE	AWARENESS	CONSIDERATION	DECISION	RELATIONSHIP	ADVOCACY
CONTENT TYPE					
CTA / GOAL					
CHANNEL OF SHARING & PROMOTION					
KPIS					
ANALYTICS & PERFORMANCE TRACKING					
NURTURING ACTIVITIES / HOW TO MOVE CUSTOMER FORWARD IN THE FUNNEL					

REQUIRED RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES: Copywriting & SEO | Visuals | Paid advertising | Analytics & tracking | Landing pages & forms | Marketing automation emails & series | Growth owner