

domesticating IT

Inbound Marketing Evaluation

Sample Company

25-September 2010



Increase qualified visits and
convert more leads into customers.

Domesticating IT

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Sample Company

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Contents

Introduction..... 1

 Your Scores..... 1

 Inbound Marketing..... 1

Detailed Evaluation 3

 Content..... 3

 Search Engine Optimization..... 4

 Promotion..... 4

 Conversion..... 5

 Analytics..... 5

Next Steps 6

 Resources 6

 Blog Posts..... 6

 Contact Me 7

About Domesticating IT 8

Introduction

Domesticating IT is happy to provide this Inbound Marketing Evaluation. Your total web presence has been graded on a four point scale against 26 different criteria to arrive at a composite score. The score itself isn't as important as the recommendations. Hopefully this report will help you formulate a strategy for improving your visibility and conversion rates online.

Your Scores

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Content | 2.2 |
| Search Engine Optimization | 1.7 |
| Promotion | 1.6 |
| Conversion | 1.5 |
| Analytics | 0 |
| Total | 1.2 |

What the scores mean:

- 4: Great job! You have implemented most, if not all, best practices for inbound marketing.
- 3: While you're doing some facets of inbound marketing, you could see better results with a little improvement.
- 2: The bad news is that you're not implementing any inbound marketing best practices. The good news is that you could see huge improvements quickly!
- 1: Warning! This score indicates that your current practices are actually harming one or more aspects of your inbound marketing

Inbound Marketing

Inbound Marketing is an approach that uses the Internet to attract quality attention to your web site, generate leads, and converts them to customers. Traditional marketing approaches like advertising, trade shows, direct mail, and cold calling are becoming increasingly less effective. Peoples' attention spans are spread thinly across a wide array of media, making them harder to target and they are getting better at avoiding interruptive messages like commercials and sales calls. Outbound marketing is getting harder and more expensive. Conversely, inbound marketing has a 60% lower cost per lead than outbound marketing¹.

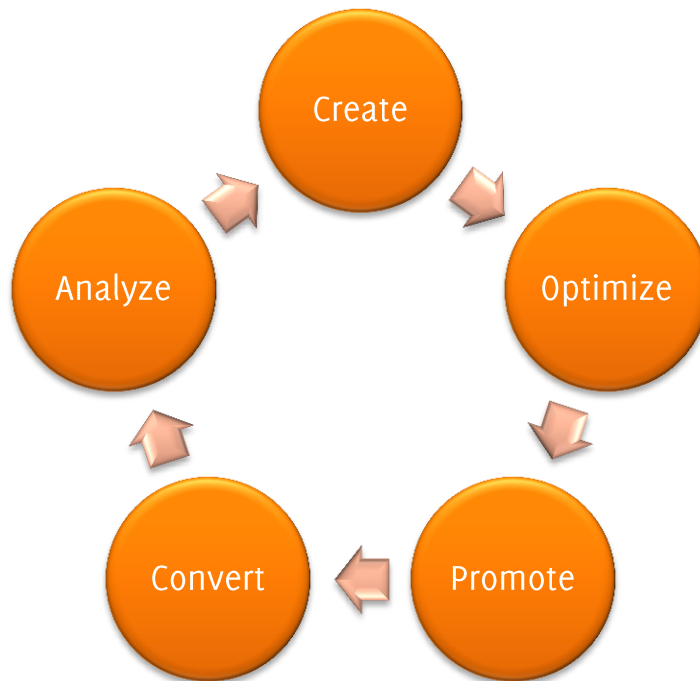
¹ "Introduction to Inbound Marketing" by Hubspot



2 | Inbound Marketing Evaluation for sample customer

This process involves five steps:

1. **Create** remarkable content that your customers will find interesting and want to share with their peers. This content must be engaging and provide value to the consumer. It is not another vehicle for delivering your brochures. The more pages your website has, the more attention it will receive from the search engines.
2. **Optimize** the content for search engines so that it is easily indexed and ranks for relevant keywords.
3. **Promote** your content over a wide range of channels including social media.
4. **Convert** leads into customers through landing pages with strong calls to action.
5. **Analyze** the performance of each and every step in order to continuously adjust and improve.



Detailed Evaluation

Each of the following sections provides a breakdown of the 26 individual scoring criteria for the five principal activities of inbound marketing.

Content

Inbound marketing starts with creating compelling content that your target audience will want to share with others.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Blog structure | 0 |
| Readability | 2 |
| Quantity | 2 |
| Applicability | 3 |
| Consistency | 2 |
| Aesthetics | 3 |
| Total | 2 |

Blog Structure

The most effective means for delivering remarkable content is via a blog. There are several reasons why this is the case. First, each blog post appears as a new page on your web site. The more pages search engines find, the more they love your site. Second, most blog engines these days are at least moderately optimized for search “out of the box,” which means they do much of the heavy lifting for you; URL rewriting, page titles and headings, meta tags, etc... Third, they incorporate features that make easy for visitors to subscribe, share, and engage with your site.

Your site does not contain a blog. It's highly recommended that you convert your “News” page into a blog for several reasons. First, each blog post constitutes a distinct page on your site. The more pages you have, the more search engines take you seriously. Currently, your site only contains 9 indexed pages, which is extremely small. Second, blog posts allow readers to comment which encourages engagement and could increase leads and online profile.

Readability

Everybody believes they are a victim of information overload these days. Author and thought leader Clay Shirky believes it is more accurate to categorize the situation as “filter failure,” but either way the solution to this is simplicity. In most cases, visitors to your web site are going to decide whether or not to stay in just a few seconds. The language you're using had better be concise, simple, and direct. Readability is a relative measure of the complexity and length of your sentences. The longer and more complicated they are, the less your chances that a visitor will stick around.

Quantity

A wealth of information on your website demonstrates several things. For one, it's a sign that your company is active and dynamic (as opposed to dormant or stagnant). Also, it is a tacit gesture of good faith to your audience that implies commitment and generosity. In a word, it shows you care.

Your site does not contain any downloadable white papers, presentations or even brochures. There is no blog and very little subject matter information.



Applicability

Does your content talk about stuff you care about, or stuff your audience cares about? Ideally you can do both at the same time. However, as marketing guru David Meerman Scott says at every chance he gets, “Nobody cares about your product. All they care about is their problem(s).” Focus on delivering content that alleviates pain.

There is lots of information about Serenity Place, but not very much that can give assistance and/or inspiration to an addict.

Consistency

Let’s assume you have a healthy amount of remarkable content that’s easy to read and highly applicable to your target audience. Hopefully it was posted at regular intervals over a long period of time. I can’t tell you how many web site blogs I visit (many of them marketing companies!) who blasted out of the starting gates six months ago with a dozen blog article in six days... and then never post again. This is perhaps worse than having no content at all, as it insinuates that you jumped into something without a plan or proper forethought. They may wonder, “Is this the way you run other aspects of your business too?”

The consistency of updates on Facebook appears to be very good. However, the weak score is a reflection of the absence of blog updates, which are much more important.

Aesthetics

This one is very tough. For one thing, it’s obviously quite subjective. But more importantly, it’s often overrated. Many companies spend tens of thousands of dollars to have designers build incredibly beautiful websites that are invisible to search engines. That’s like building a Starbucks in the middle of the Australian Outback. What’s the point? However, neither is it true that aesthetics don’t matter. Again, simplicity is the order of the day here.

The overall appearance of the web site is good. The colors are attractive and soothing. However, the design is extremely poor. The text is contained in a very small proportion of the page layout and forces the user to scroll through it, but the page itself does not scroll.

Search Engine Optimization

The single most important factor (approximately 60%) in how well your site ranks in search engines is the number of inbound links (i.e. links on other sites pointing to a page on yours). The best way to accomplish that is to create remarkable content that people want to talk about. There are also link-building strategies you can employ by actively reaching out and promoting your site, but great content spreads itself. But having said that, it’s also important that you are mindful of the other 40%, which is referred to as “on-page” optimization.

To see the seven criteria used to evaluate search engine optimization, request a [free evaluation](#).

Promotion

Creating remarkable content and optimizing it for search is a great start, but it’s relatively passive. To start proactively inbound marketing, you need to promote your content.

To see the five criteria used to evaluate online promotion, request a [free evaluation](#).



Conversion

Conversion is the process of transforming visitors into leads and leads into customers. To do so, you need to have systems and strategies in place to move people through that process. And it all begins by asking them to do something.

To see the four criteria used to evaluate conversion, request a [free evaluation](#).

Analytics

One axiom of business management is, “If it can’t be measured, it can’t be managed.” It’s important to have solid analytics and review them regularly in order to understand how effective your inbound marketing is (or is not) and whether you’re trending up or down.

To see the four criteria used to evaluate analytics, request a [free evaluation](#).



Next Steps

Resources

If you're a "do-it-yourself" type of person and not intimidated by technology, there are many aspects of inbound marketing you can implement on your own. There is an almost endless supply of information and free tools online to help you. Here is a list of free tools and resources you can start using today:

- **Domesticating IT blog** (www.domesticatingit.com/blog)
Hey, if I took the time to write this evaluation I'm going to give myself top billing.
- **Hubspot blog** (blog.hubspot.com)
This Cambridge, MA company eats its own dog food. They are the original inbound marketing company and their web site is a treasure trove of marketing resources and information.
- **Website Grader** (websitegrader.com)
This is another tool from Hubspot that provides a quick and dirty way to see how your site stacks up against about a million others.
- **Outspoken Media blog** (outspokenmedia.com)
This group of sassy ladies lives up to its name. They offer a wide array of advice on internet marketing and are not afraid to mix it up. It's informative and entertaining.
- **Copyblogger** (copyblogger.com)
"Copywriting tips for marketing success" is their game.
- **Search Engine Land** (searchengineland.com)
Lots and lots and lots of information about search engine optimization.

Blog Posts

The Domesticating IT blog covers a wide range of inbound marketing and social media topics. Here is a list of some of the more popular articles:

Top Five TED Talks for Inbound Marketers

The first rule of inbound marketing is Creating Great Content (PDF). Since you won't get far without it, and because so few people provide advice on exactly how to create remarkable content, I thought I would share my five favorite talks to help and inspire inbound marketers.

<http://www.domesticatingit.com/top-five-ted-talks-inbound-marketers/>

Sneak Peak at Google's Facebook Killer

Paul Adams is the Senior User Experience Researcher at Google. He posted a presentation on Slideshare that is providing a glimpse at the philosophy behind the rumored "Facebook killer" that Google is working on. This presentation indicates some fundamental differences between its view of social networks and the way in which Facebook is currently implemented.

<http://www.domesticatingit.com/sneak-peak-googles-facebook-killer/>

Search Optimization: First Do No Harm

Search engine optimization is the process of maximizing your web site's visibility to search engines in order to obtain the highest possible organic search ranking. While there are lots of things you can do to have a positive impact on SEO, there are also plenty of actions that can hurt.

<http://www.domesticatingit.com/search-optimization-first-do-no-harm/>



Social Media Marketing: Hope Is Not a Strategy

“Change is not a destination, just like hope is not a strategy.” In a business setting, change for the sake of change is unthinkable. Why are you making the change and what is its benefit to the business? And assuming change is warranted, hoping for it to happen isn’t exactly a recipe for success.

<http://www.domesticatingit.com/social-media-marketing-hope-is-not-a-strategy/>

Social Media Strategies Laid BARE

“No battle plan survives contact with the enemy.” This quote from Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, chief of staff for the Prussian army in the late 1800’s and one of the great strategists, has had a profound effect on modern warfare tactics and forms the basis for a concept called “Commander’s Intent.” The idea is that each commander, company, and soldier has a clear understanding not only of the plan, but the intent of the plan. To that end, I have come up with a memorable and (hopefully) “sticky” acronym for what I think is a useful guide for the social media commander’s intent; BARE. This stands for “**Be Authentic, Relentless, and Everywhere.**”

<http://www.domesticatingit.com/social-media-strategies-laid-bare/>

Contact Me

Of course, if you’re not the do-it-yourself type or simply don’t have the time you can contact me to schedule a consultation. There are lots of ways to get in touch with me:

Propose a meeting time using Tungle: www.tungle.me/JonDiPietro

Email: jon.dipietro@domesticatingit.com

Phone: 603-606-5937

Mobile: 603-759-7551

Twitter: [@JonDiPietro](https://twitter.com/JonDiPietro)



About Domesticating IT

Domesticating IT is an inbound marketing consultancy offering a range of services that will increase qualified visits to your website and convert more leads into customers. These services include CMS-based website design, blog integration, search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing strategy, lead capturing and nurturing systems and web analytics. Inbound marketing leverages free and low cost tools and services in a way that empowers smaller businesses to outmaneuver companies with much larger advertising budgets in order to gain more customers, not more traffic.

Jon DiPietro is the founder and principal of Domesticating IT. He also founded Bridge-Soft, LLC, an environmental data management software company and is the author of the upcoming book, “Social Media for Engineers & Scientists” from Momentum Press, a frequent speaker on Internet marketing and social media, and a certified Inbound Marketing Professional.

Jon currently serves on the Executive Board of the Boston Section of the ISA (past President), Director-elect and webmaster for the Water and Wastewater Industries Division, and contributes to the Management Division and Publications, Image & Membership, and Publications Departments. He also chairs the Social Networking Committee for the New England Water Works Association and serves on the Customer Service / Information Management Technology Committee for the American Water Works Association.

