# Inbound vs. Outbound Sales: What’s the Difference?

Are you stuck in a dilemma about whether to choose an inbound or outbound sales method? Interestingly, you can adopt the best of both worlds by applying a hybrid system. Nonetheless, the dilemma is a great starting point to improve the effectiveness of your marketing function.

Inbound sales is a more organic approach that builds on a prospect’s interest by offering solutions, value, nurturing them, and finally closing the sales. Outbound sales, on the other hand, push solutions and products to a specific audience.

Outbound can quickly close deals and assert dominance, while inbound is cost-effective, scalable, and easy to apply. Both methods have separate unique points that businesses can apply to enhance their marketing function.

So, what’s the difference between the two methods?

## The Difference Between Inbound and Outbound Sales

### Implementation Period and Results

Inbound marketing takes a long-term approach where the implementation and expected results can take 6-12 months. It’s a complex process that requires content development, continuous improvement, monitoring, and consultation.

Outbound marketing is a more direct approach that can yield results within 2 weeks or a month. For example, a company can utilize paid social media ads to attract traffic to a landing page, delivering results fast.

### The Number of Channels Involved

A campaign in outbound marketing can involve the Facebook channel exclusively to attract new leads. Although there are other methods like cold calling or email marketing campaigns, a business can utilize a single approach to achieve its goal.

Inbound marketing uses a broader perspective involving multiple customer touchpoints. It takes the form of social selling that involves websites, social media, video, print, and email lists. The inbound sales approach looks to foster relationships, build trust and authority for a long-term business relationship.

### Return On Investment(ROI)

Outbound marketing has a quicker and higher return on investment, especially in the short term. According to [Word Lead,](https://www.smallbizgenius.net/by-the-numbers/ppc-stats/#gref) Google ads have a healthy ROI of 200%. It implies that for every $1 ad expense, there is an average return of $2. In addition, the sales representative has higher control over the sales process, leading to better results.

Inbound marketing involves churning content to tap on the buyer’s journey. Even so, top-quality content may not immediately generate leads or sales. It’s instead a wait-and-see method that requires consistency and patience.

### When to Use Inbound or Outbound Marketing

Both inbound and outbound marketing serves the same purpose— to generate leads and sales growth. However, if you’re looking to take advantage of an upcoming festive season, or national holiday, outbound marketing can work magic.

On the other hand, inbound marketing is ideal for a business that intends to build trust and a sales relationship gradually. Inbound is also cost-effective for a small budget, as you can organically attract quality leads over a long period.

### Inbound Sales

Inbound sales is a marketing methodology that focuses on buyers’ needs, pain points, and interests. Instead of prioritizing closing sales as quickly as possible, inbound looks to walk the customer through their buying journey.

The sales representative establishes the buyer's intent to determine which digital assets to apply during the nurturing process. For example, a prospect looking for information to cure a back problem is in the awareness stage — a blog article is a suitable and ideal marketing method to apply. After establishing contact, the sales rep can collect emails for retargeting or use call outreach or product pages to close the lead.

### Outbound Sales

Outbound sales is a more direct method that utilizes cold calls or emails to push sales. The target is usually a large audience not necessarily interested in your products. Typically, an outbound sales rep reaches out to a prospect to offer a service or a product using cold emails, cold calls, or texts. Leads in the [outbound approach](https://www.leadium.io/blog/6-ways-outbound-sales-helps-inbound-leads-grow) are less engaged or aware.

## Inbound Sales Strategy

Inbound sales involve collecting and pursuing ‘interested leads’ to see if they qualify for your products.

### **Inbound Sales Process**

The inbound sales process has four stages.

* **Identify Stage:** The first step involves identifying your ideal customers and the related problems they’re experiencing. The objective of the ‘identity’ stage is to create a customized sales process and experience using prospects’ persona. The stage creates [ideal buyer profiles](https://www.leadium.io/blog/how-to-create-a-valuable-ideal-customer-profile) that can best identify with your product and inspire valuable content for the sales process.
* **Connect Stage:** After identifying the ideal clients, it’s time to connect with the leads by creating a solution. You can create a blog post or a YouTube video containing educational material that addresses the lead’s problem. If your ideal prospect is searching for methods to assess their online reputation, create a blog that explains several methods to arrive at the answer.
* **Explore Stage**: Explore stage is the ideal time to nurture an interaction that builds trust by matching the prospects’ challenges with a relevant product. At this point, you can introduce a service that meets the prospect’s needs.
* **Advice Stage**: At this stage, you’ve obtained prospects’ trust and are sure your product meets their needs. It’s the right time to recommend your solutions using a call to action, like schedule a call or request a demo.

**A point to note:** The four stages can happen within a visit session, a week, or sometimes months. The speed depends on a prospect’s urgency and related content that guides them.

### When to Use Inbound Sales

Here are a few suggestions on when to use inbound sales

* **A Commonly Searched Solution**: If your solution draws a lot of search volume on the internet, inbound is an excellent method. You can complement inbound sales with keyword research to direct sufficient traffic to your site and products.
* **Start-ups With Little Capital:** Inbound marketing enables business owners to reach many people using a single blog post. Although the results can take time, it’s a cost-effective way to expose your brand to the world.
* **The Type of Audience**: Unique audiences don’t respond well to pushy outbound marketing like cold calls. Inbound marketing comes in handy because it is a gradual method that nurtures a sales relationship.

## Outbound Sales Strategy

Some marketers believe the outbound sales approach is ineffective because of invasive methods like cold calls or emails. Even so, it has some advantages like immediate feedback, highly targeted marketing, and control of your marketing campaigns.

### Outbound Sales Process

* **Prospecting:** The first step involves building a list of prospects that you intend to reach. It’s unlike the inbound method that highlights a broad target market. You can buy a list or build using lead-generating features on Google, LinkedIn, or Facebook.
* **Outreach**: After developing the list, the sales rep will reach out to these prospects using email, calls, paid ads, or physical visits. The goal of the outreach stage is to generate leads based on the initial response that’ll set forth the sales process.
* **Qualifying:** Qualifying is a vital stage where you separate the wheat from the chaff. The sales rep must establish whether the lead can benefit from your offers before proceeding with the sales process. It’s a critical stage that determines whether you’ll waste resources or grow your sales.
* **Pitching**: The sales rep moves ahead to hold meetings or schedule demos in an attempt to showcase the benefits of your solution.
* **Objection Handling**: Booking a sale is not a smooth process, which is why the sales rep must be ready to handle any objections or reservations. Businesses that prepare complaints professionally display empathy and are more likely to win over leads.
* **Closing the Deal**: After undergoing all the stages, it’s time to complete the sale. It’s essential to request the client to close at the right moment. Closing the deal may involve offering post-sale advice to convince the prospect conclusively.

### When to Use Outbound Sales

You can create a highly targeted paid ad when you have a specific prospect in mind— e.g., site visitors who dropped a shopping basket. It’ll help convince these leads instead of making an additional blog that might turn ineffective.

* **Expensive Products or High Tickets**: Only a few buyers can afford expensive products, making outbound sales a great match. Outbound sales can yield quick results for these types of scenarios.
* **Enterprises With Sufficient Budgets:** Outbound sales require several sales reps and capital to invest in ads. Even so, it compensates with high ROI and quick results.

So, which method is suitable for your business?

Outbound and inbound sales offer varying benefits that can match your business or current situation. After publishing a blog article, you can apply paid advertising to reach a specific audience quickly.

Equally, you can insert a link to a YouTube video during a cold email campaign to improve the conversion rate. That said, you can apply either method or integrate both worlds to enhance the results of your campaigns.

## Conclusion

Inbound and outbound sales are great marketing strategies that business owners can apply to boost their sales. It’s worth noting that each method is suitable for unique circumstances. Even so, a successful campaign relies on quality leads or an ideal target audience.