

Why Blogging Matters

Andrea J. Simon, PhD

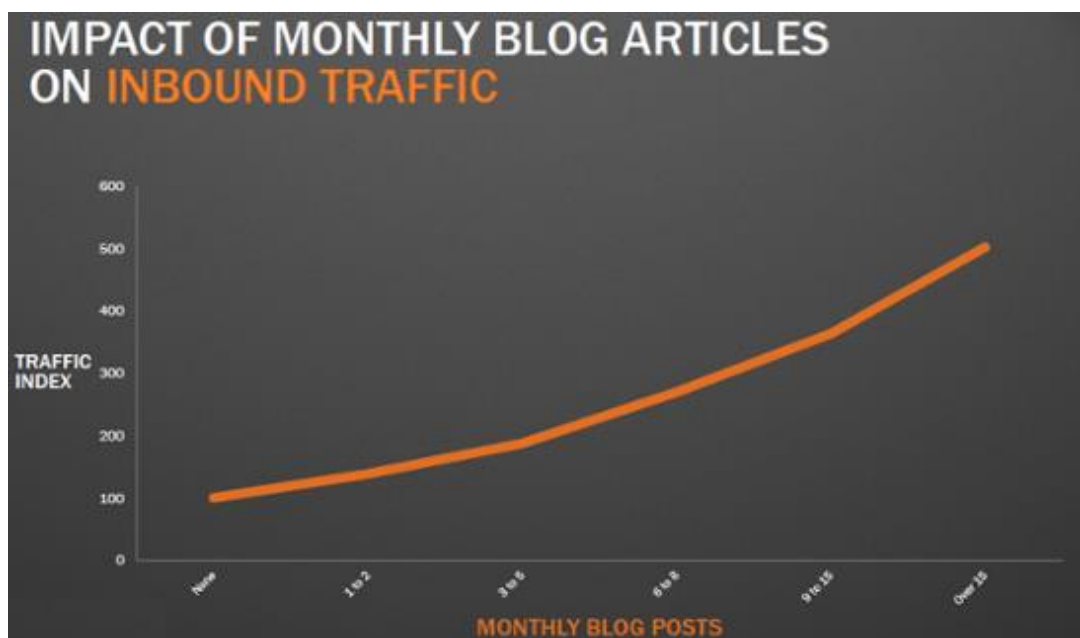
Way back in 2012, [HubSpot](#) published [research conducted among 7000+ customers](#), which set the stage for blogging and its role in building web visits, contacts and customers. I often like to take clients back to 2012 to see how the relationship between blogging then and now has evolved—and become even more powerful.

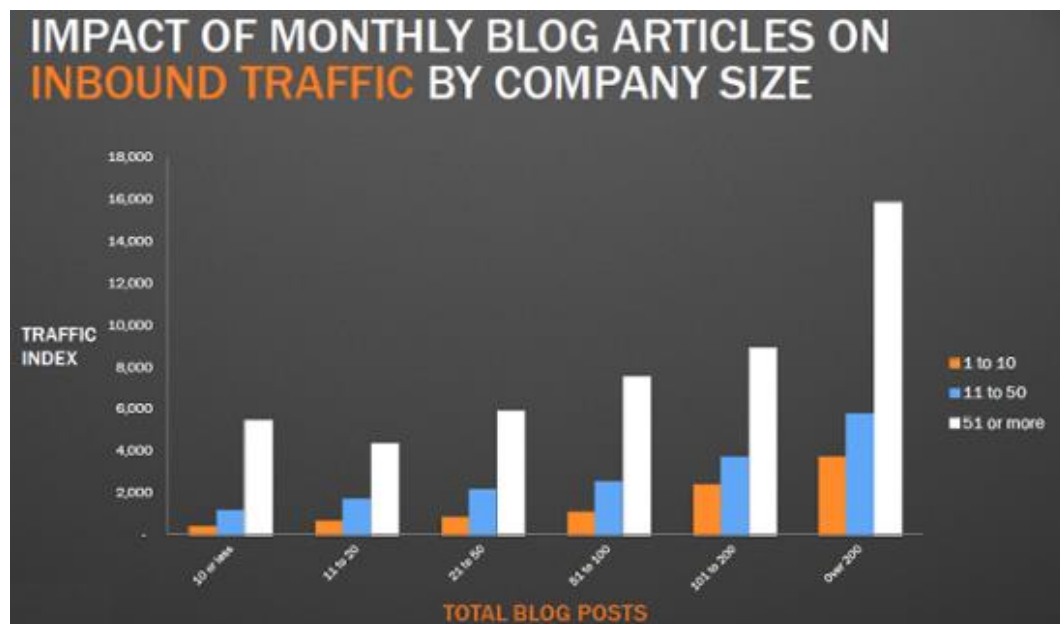
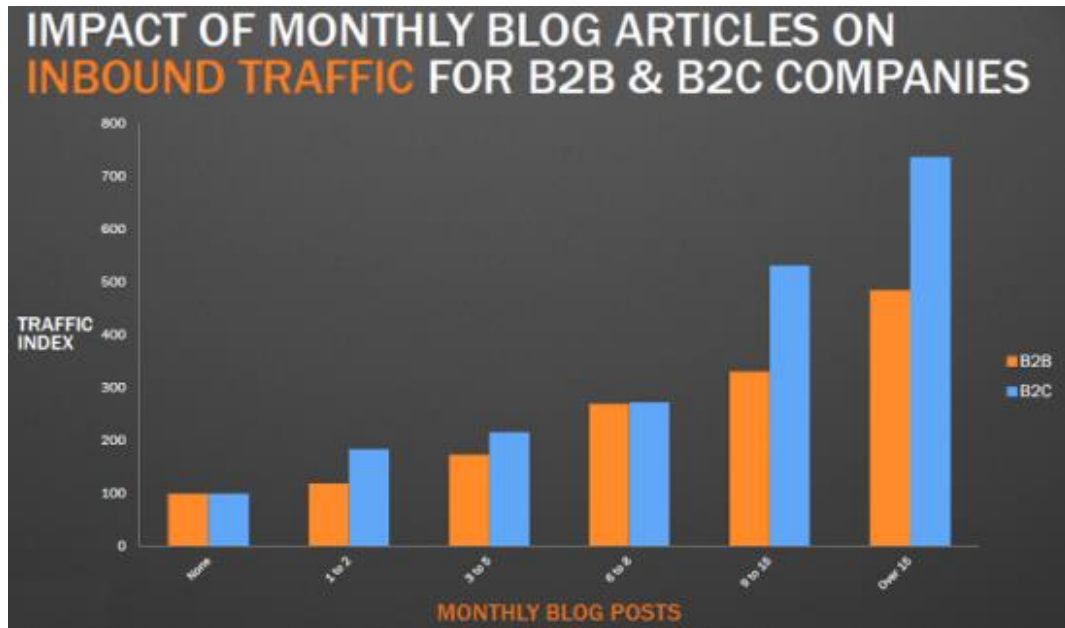
Every time you post a blog, you add a page of (hopefully) relevant content to your site, which directly impacts your ranking.

Blogging is how search engines will designate you as an authority in your business, industry, products or topics. If you do it well, you have built your blogging around your ideal buyer and that buyer's semi-fictional persona. You know what types of questions they have that you are there to answer, and you even have a good sense of what stage they're in along their buyer's journey.

In addition, your keyword analysis has helped you identify the top-ranking long-tail keywords that can enable *your* solutions to rise to the top of the search engines. With these keywords firmly in mind, you have written fresh, highly-valuable copy that your customers and potential customers can really use. You have even linked it to another blog, white paper, e-book or video to help your reader move along the buyer's journey and hopefully decide that you are the right answer for them.

To reaffirm the value of blogging, let's take a look at its impact. Back in 2012, we could already see the impact of blogging on web traffic, as shown in [these three HubSpot graphs](#):



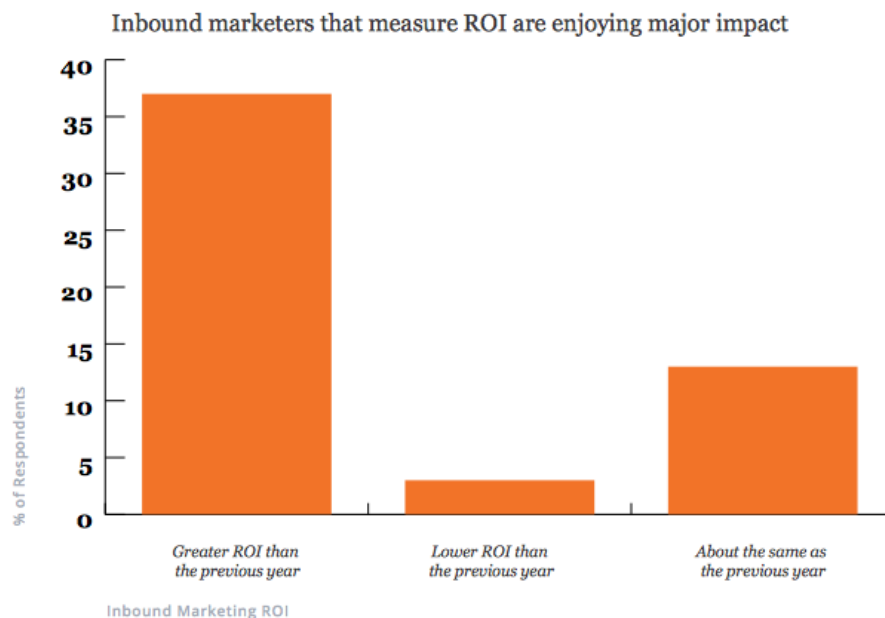


These charts came from research conducted four years ago. At that time, companies that blogged 15 or more times per month got **5X more traffic** than those that did not blog at all. This was particularly impactful for smaller companies with 1-10 employees.

So where is blogging today?

In “[State of Inbound 2014](#),” published by HubSpot, the highest performing companies using inbound marketing were focused primarily and appropriately on “getting found.” And these companies with the top ROI were all concerned about being #1, #2 or #3 on search results. Or conversely, those that got found had the highest ROI from their inbound marketing.

INBOUND ROI IMPACT YEAR OVER YEAR



If marketing today (maybe always) is all about getting found and chosen, the tactics must focus on providing relevant, meaningful content designed around the right buyer at the right stage in their journey. Sounds complex, but in fact, it simply means telling the company’s story using the tools of content marketing: blogs, organic search and content amplification.

Indeed, the chart that is most powerful is this one:

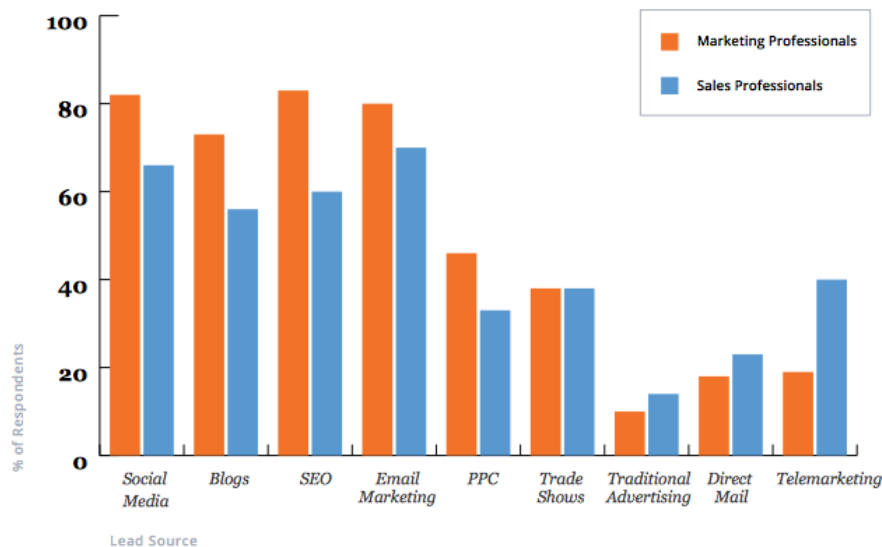


When we dig further, the areas that are most important for driving ranking and search are the four key forces behind inbound:

1. **Social Media**—where all the conversations and influencing is taking place.
2. **Blogs**—where the authority is being told and shared by storytelling and educating.
3. **Organic Search**—focusing on the right keywords and making sure the content is highly meaningful information told in the right way.
4. **Email Marketing**—sharing the content and engaging communities

WHICH LEAD SOURCES HAVE BECOME MORE IMPORTANT (OVER LAST 6 MONTHS)

Sales gravitates toward outbound channels whereas marketers lean inbound



The power of blogging goes way beyond search

One of the most important roles that blogging performs is **educating the buyer** before he or she decides to discuss a possible purchase with a salesperson. During the buyer's journey, the searcher is defining what their problem or pain point is. They then search for the right solution before they even get close to having a sales discussion.

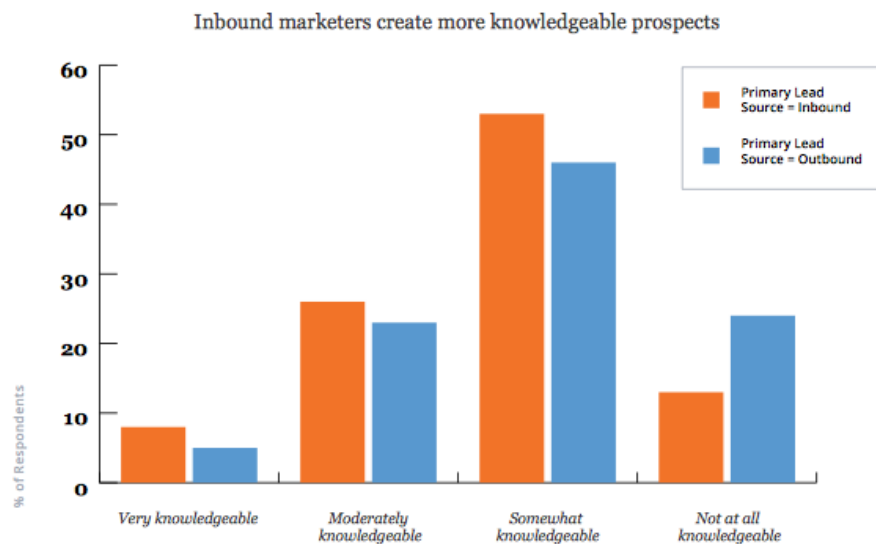
During that crucial process, your content is best offered in an educational fashion, not in a product- or service-focused sale. Your job is to help the searcher find the right answers to their questions. Ultimately, you want to be not only the educator but also the solution.

The real value of blogging lies in the educational process and the credentialing of your organization as the authority to the searcher.

It is both in what you offer (your stories) and how you offer it (format and design) that your blogs will draw searchers to your business like moths to a flame.

By pre-selling and pre-educating a purchaser, inbound clearly “warms” leads to make them more pre-sold.

HOW KNOWLEDGEABLE ARE PROSPECTS ABOUT YOUR COMPANY PRIOR TO SPEAKING WITH SALES?

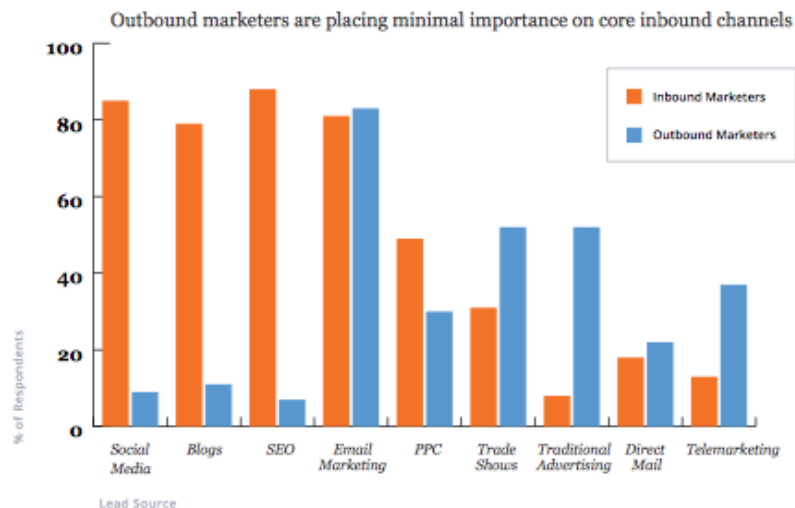


Undoubtedly, inbound leads are far more knowledgeable than those generated by outbound marketing. It is not surprising that they are fully prepared to buy because they were actively searching. Your job is to make it easier for them to make the right decision and overcome the “paradox of choice” (where they have so many choices that they are afraid of making any).

Where do those best leads lie?

Your best leads, or prospects, are searching for you and get hooked by your content. According to HubSpot research: “Inbound marketers are finding leads where outbound marketers aren’t. According to the below graph, 84% of inbound marketers – compared to only 9% of outbound marketers – cite organic, top of funnel sources (social media, blogs, SEO) as rising in importance.”

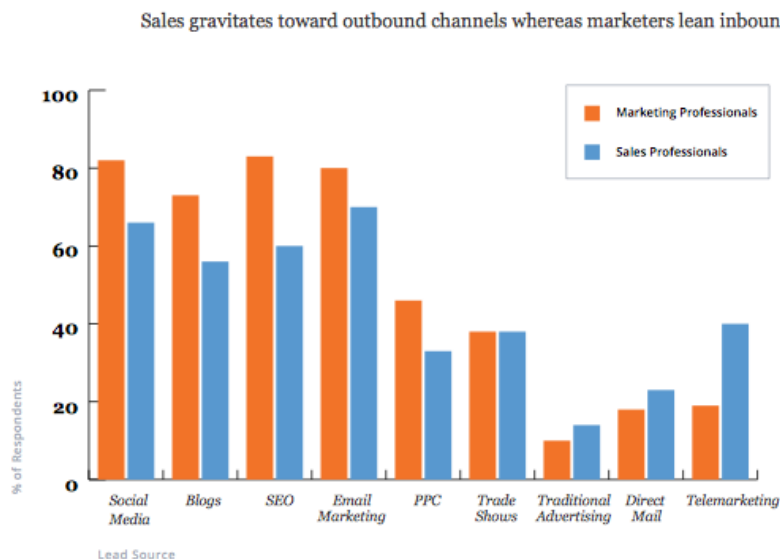
WHICH LEAD SOURCES HAVE BECOME MORE IMPORTANT (OVER LAST 6 MONTHS)



Not surprisingly, sales and marketing view these truisms rather differently. Sales is more excited by the leads that come through email marketing, and rightly so. These are typically more seasoned buyers who have already gone through their awareness and consideration stages and are more ready to talk “sales.” On the other hand, marketers know full well that social media, blogs and SEO are where they have to fill the funnel for the sales team to get their warmed-up leads.

This graph captures it so well:

WHICH LEAD SOURCES HAVE BECOME MORE IMPORTANT (OVER LAST 6 MONTHS)



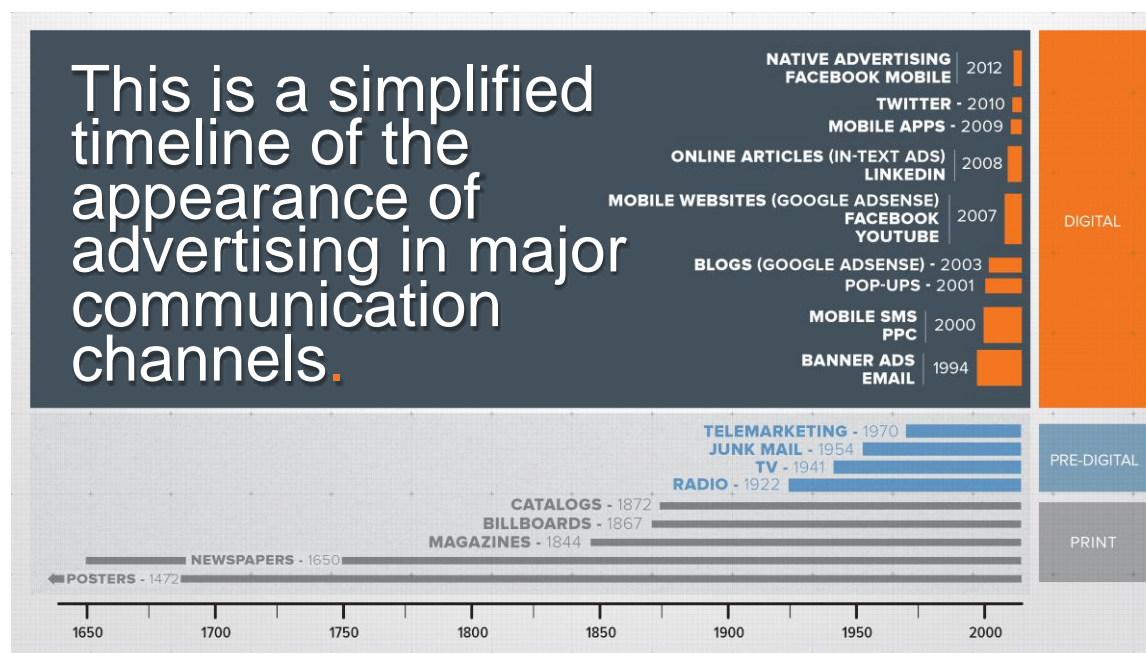
So now what do you do with the blog content you wrote?

Let's assume you have gotten really diligent about blogging and are posting 2-3x a week, even daily. Your search and keyword rankings keep rising. Nice, right?

Well, what if you could help that move along? This is where the distribution of your content—all those blogs—is so very important. The channels are out there: Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, your email lists, and other bloggers. Think of yourself as a media maven with all these stories to share through your blogs. Where and to whom would you send them? And don't forget, you can then repurpose them into longer stories such as white papers or videos to get even more traction.

Where Inbound Marketing is heading

We all are aware of the speed of change today. If you want to be reminded of how this plays out in media through 2012 (not that long ago), study the timeline below:



Now we are watching the great transformation again. Communication used to be from “one” to “many” through controlled media sources such as newspapers and mass media. Now it is the “many” to the “even more many.” If you are tweeting 3-5 times a day, blogging 1x a day and then sharing your information through other bloggers, emails and social media, you are now your own newspaper, advertiser and mass marketer. Who knew!

Now, what's your story?

Are you wedded to the world you knew in the past? Or are you ready to realize that the world is changing, fast, and you have to adapt to it? Like it or not, you must shape this new world or it will leave you behind.

If you would like to know more about what we do, how we do it and why it might be right for your business, give us a call (914-245-1641) or email us at info@simonassociates.net. We'd love to talk with you!