



# The Beginner's Guide to Inbound Lead Generation

**STOICA**

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# Overview

Buyers nowadays have far more power than they used to. They do their own research well before reaching out to a vendor, they have plenty of options to choose from and rely less and less on sales people.

This is both a challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge is to open a conversation early on, stand out from the crowd and earn their trust.

But the opportunity is even bigger: your website is not a presentation brochure anymore. It can turn into your 24/7 salesperson, in charge of “speaking” to your prospects, answering questions, helping and educating them until they are ready to get in touch with a human being.

**In this guide we will explore how inbound lead generation works and what best practices to follow, so you can truly maximize your website’s lead generation potential.**

# What is inbound lead generation?

A lead is a person who expresses an interest in your company's products or services. They might signal their interest by requesting to download content, interacting with your company via website chat or signing up for your online events.

Summing up, lead generation is the process of attracting and opening conversations with such people.

Traditionally, the main (and only) way for B2B companies to generate leads was outbound: reaching out to people in targeted industry verticals, hoping to get them interested.

But today outbound lead generation is considered disruptive, it takes more time to win decision makers' attention, hence it is less effective and more expensive.

It's pretty much as searching for the needle in the haystack.

# How is inbound lead generation different?

By contrast, inbound lead generation enables you to get in front of the relevant audience, right when they search for information related to your industry and expertise.

Inbound allows you to start a conversation by being helpful and considerate to your audience, begin a relationship and build trust.

Inbound lead generation is built on the idea that it's better to speak to those people actively searching for solutions & experiencing pains you could cater to, rather than trying to win everyone's attention.

It shifts the focus from what message you want to convey to the information buyers actually need.

# Why you cannot ignore inbound lead generation anymore?

A big part of buyers' purchase decision is made before reaching out to potential vendors. As much as 70% of buyers fully define their needs on their own before engaging with sales, and 44% identify specific solutions before reaching out to a seller.

Furthermore, buyers prefer to educate themselves online before reaching out to you. According to Forrester Research, 68% of B2B customers research independently online.

What this tells us is that the battleground for reaching B2B customers is nowadays online.

With buyers not keen on speaking to vendors until very late in the process, inbound seems to be a win-win approach.

It allows vendors on one hand to open a conversation early on and showcase expertise, and buyers have the chance to investigate on their own terms.

## **SOURCES:**

[CSO Insights, The Growing Buyer-Seller Gap](#)

[Forrester, The Ways And Means Of B2B Buyer Journey Maps](#)

# The mechanics of inbound lead generation

First things first, let's lay down the foundation: how inbound lead generation works.

Essentially there are four elements of any inbound lead generation campaign: Call to action, landing page, form and content offer.



1. **Call to action** is an actionable button inviting people to click out to a landing page to access the content offer.



2. **Landing page** is a dedicated website page that provides information about the content offer and contains a form to fill in order to access the content.

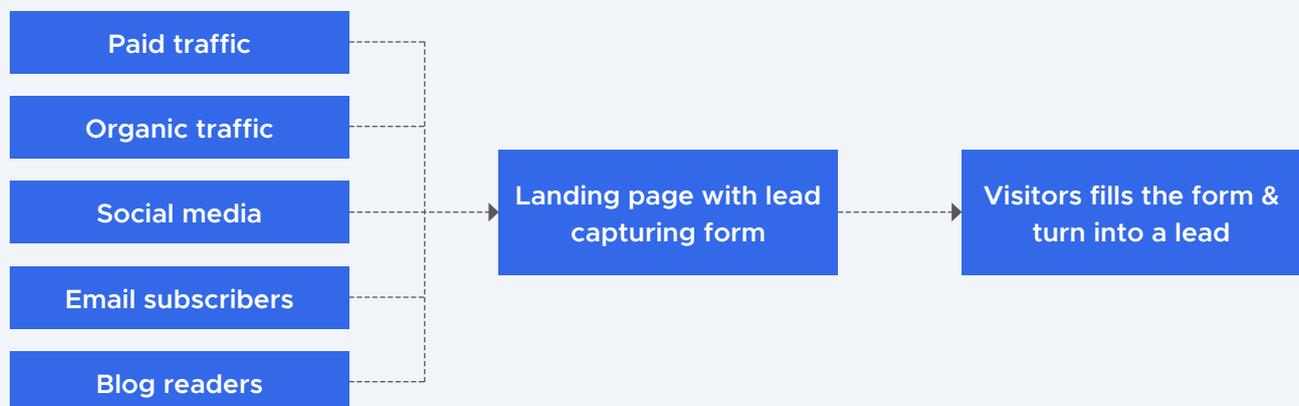


3. **Forms** are created to capture visitor information in exchange for the content offer.



4. **Content offer** refers to a high quality pieces of content such as eBooks, whitepapers, industry research, webinars.

The simplest lead generation flow can be:



→ The following chapters will cover best practices on how to attract relevant audiences, how to optimize landing pages and how to create unique content offers.

## CHAPTER 1

# Content offers that make a mark

The internet is a very competitive space, and with 70% of marketers saying they are actively investing in content marketing in 2020, according to HubSpot, it is difficult to stand out.

However, producing unique and valuable content is what will:

- get your visitor's attention
- convince them to convert on landing page
- come back for more content
- and finally turn them into a customer.

**So, how can you create content assets that makes a mark?**

Let's find out together in the next three chapters.

# #1 Content that stands out

Getting people to download your content offering in exchange for their information is one thing. But impressing them and keeping them engaged with your content is a totally different game.

**What gets people's attention is content that brings something entirely new or different:**

- An unique point of view on a topic
- Explains a certain subject better
- Gathers opinions from leaders in a certain field
- Reveals interesting data that your company produces
- Shows insights you posses thanks to your industry experience

Instead of leaning on your instinct when launching your next content offer, reflect on what insights, angles or data you have access to, so you can create content that is both educational and novel.

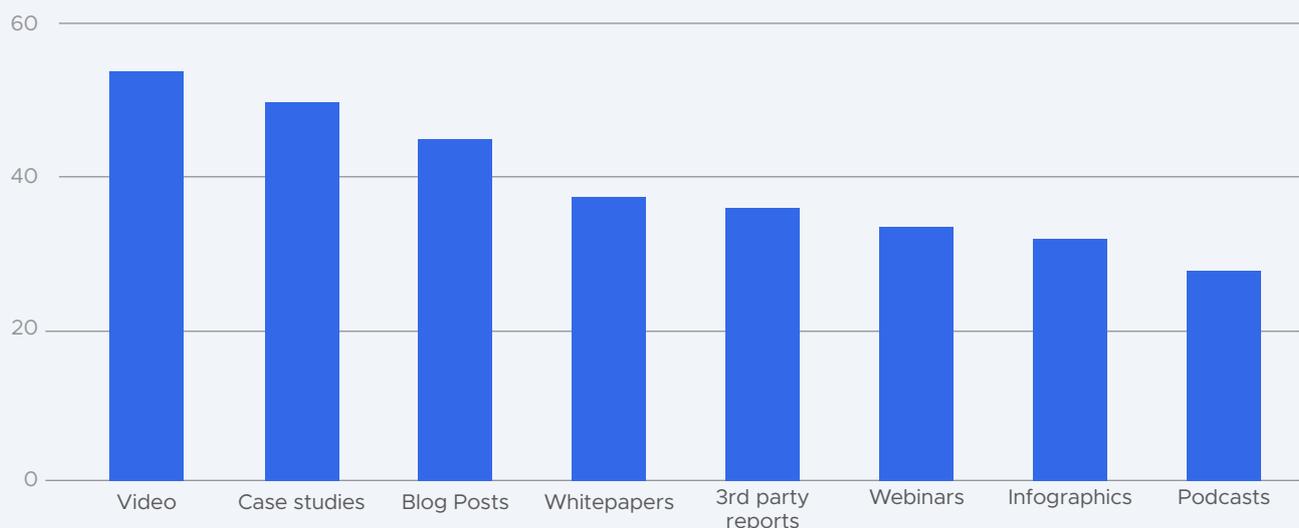
# #2 Rely on most popular formats

One study revealed that the most popular formats among B2B tech buyers are video, case studies and whitepapers, followed by 3rd party reports and webinars. Video in particular has been growing and in 2020 is expected to account for 80% of all web traffic, becoming the leading content format.

## PRO TIP

Take your current client case studies and transform them into **video case studies**. Case studies are one of the most influential content types in the purchase process. Combined with a popular and easy to digest format as video, you will supercharge your lead generation efforts.

### What types of content do you find most useful?



## SOURCE:

<https://www.isolinecomms.com/tech-b2b-buyer-survey>

# #3 Content for every stage of the buyer's journey

Visitors land on your website at every stage of their journey. In order to stay relevant and appeal to all of them, you should aim at creating content tailored for every stage:

- **Awareness** (top of the funnel or TOFU)
- **Consideration** (middle of the funnel or MOFU)
- **Decision** (bottom of the funnel or BOFU)

Here are a few formats fit for each of the three stages:

TOFU	MOFU	BOFU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blog post</li><li>• FAQ list</li><li>• Check list</li><li>• Educational webinar</li><li>• How-to video</li><li>• Downloadable kit / template</li><li>• Landing page</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blog post</li><li>• Case study</li><li>• Product presentation video</li><li>• Comparison chart</li><li>• Whitepaper</li><li>• Clients testimonials</li><li>• Landing page</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Product trial</li><li>• Consultation</li><li>• Video demo</li></ul>

# #4 Give webinars a go

91% of B2B professionals say webinars are their preferred content format, according to a study from BrightTALK

## Webinars pose several benefits:

- They are fit for every stage of the buying journey
- You can invite experts from your vertical, adding extra credibility
- Recorded webinars can be repurposed into several pieces of content

### PRO TIP

84% of the BrightTALK survey respondents listed staying up to date with their industry as the main reason for attending webinars.

So if you have limited bandwidth for creating webinars, focus your effort into the most sought after topics such as industry trends.

## CHAPTER 2

# Attracting relevant traffic to your landing pages

Creating engaging content is just half of the effort. The other half is presenting that content in front of the right audience.

To make your content as visible as possible, you have an array of channels at your disposal. Using a combination of these channels will ensure maximizing your success.

# #5 Paid traffic

Paid advertising can help you get a boost of traffic, even if only for a determined period of time. There are a number of different platforms you can advertise on, and it's important that you know which of these platforms works best for your business and where your target clients spend their time.

For B2B **LinkedIn** is typically the go to platform. **Facebook** with close to 2,45 billion active users (five times larger than LinkedIn) can also prove efficient, if you can adapt your messaging and make it a bit more laid back.

**Google Ads** is also a good channel to consider, especially as you target keywords that signal an increased buying intent.

## PRO TIP

To make the most of your ad spend, always A/B test your ads. You can create two ad groups, each targeting a different type of audience. Within each group, create at least two ad variations, and try different titles and copy. Run these ads in parallel and as you start seeing results, stop the ads that perform the least and keep the best performing one.

# #6 Organic traffic

With over 600 million blogs on the internet covering every industries and verticals, it is a real challenge to rank high on search results pages. If you have a relatively new website, it is even more difficult.

Instead of going with the pack and covering the same topics for high volume keywords, what you can do instead is **identify niche keywords** and build content assets around them.

Niche keywords are great to target because they are easy to rank for; the competition for these keywords is low, and the pages that rank for these keywords can easily be outranked. Make sure to pick the keywords with low competition and a decent amount of search volume, to make your effort worthwhile.

## PRO TIP

Check out our [step-by-step process on finding the best keywords suited for your business](#).

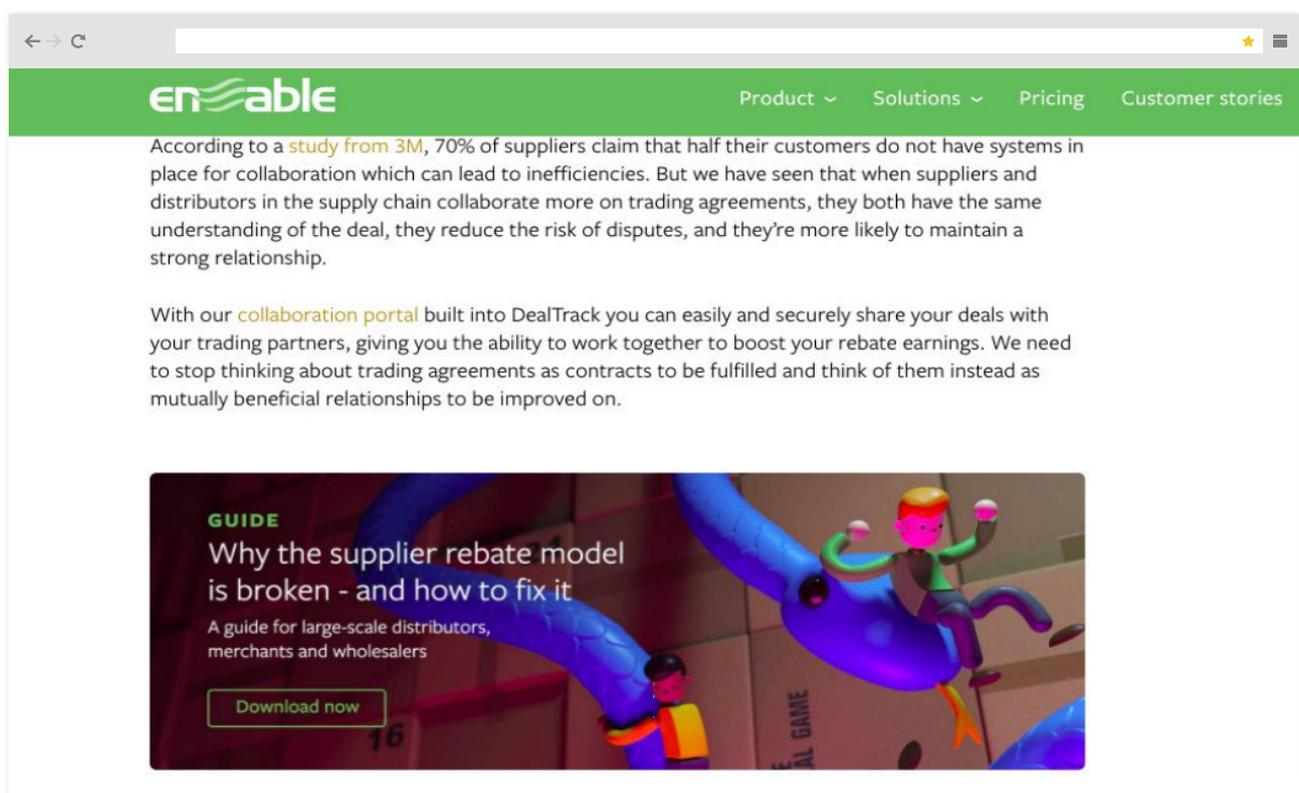
# #7 Don't underestimate your blog

Do you already run a business blog that attracts some visits? We have good news then: you have a new channel for promoting your content offers!

You can introduce call to actions within the copy of your blog articles or add an eye grabbing CTA button at the end of each post.

## PRO TIP

Link your content offers to the relevant blog posts. If you offer an eBook on tactics to optimize a website for search engines, than link it to a blog post related to SEO, instead of a post tackling social media.



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Enable website. The navigation bar is green with the 'enable' logo and links for 'Product', 'Solutions', 'Pricing', and 'Customer stories'. The main content area features a blog post with the following text:

According to a [study from 3M](#), 70% of suppliers claim that half their customers do not have systems in place for collaboration which can lead to inefficiencies. But we have seen that when suppliers and distributors in the supply chain collaborate more on trading agreements, they both have the same understanding of the deal, they reduce the risk of disputes, and they're more likely to maintain a strong relationship.

With our [collaboration portal](#) built into DealTrack you can easily and securely share your deals with your trading partners, giving you the ability to work together to boost your rebate earnings. We need to stop thinking about trading agreements as contracts to be fulfilled and think of them instead as mutually beneficial relationships to be improved on.

Below the text is a promotional banner for a guide. The banner has a dark background with a colorful illustration of a person climbing a blue structure. The text on the banner reads:

**GUIDE**  
Why the supplier rebate model is broken - and how to fix it  
A guide for large-scale distributors, merchants and wholesalers  
[Download now](#)

# #8 Email marketing is not dead

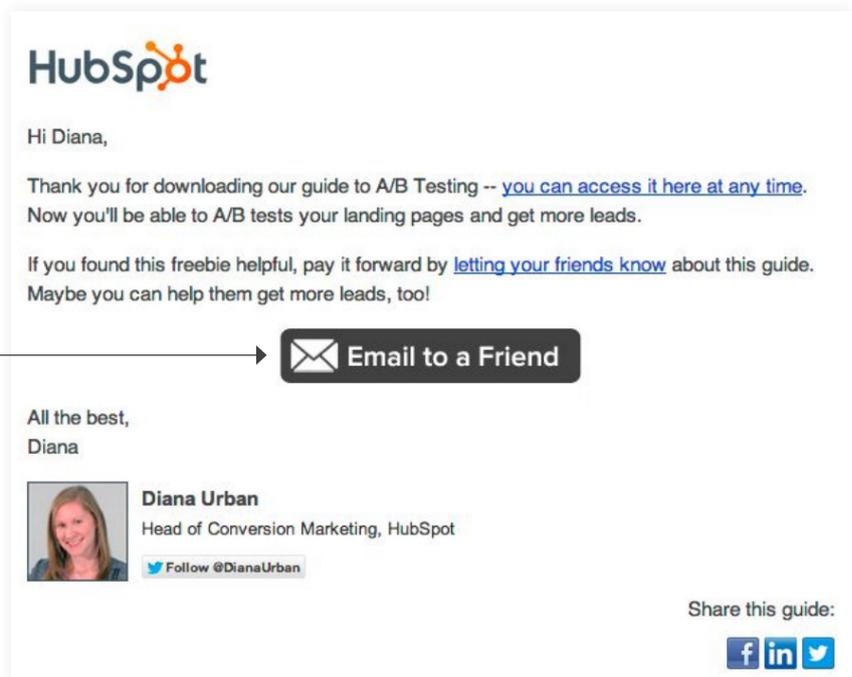
With 102.6 trillion emails sent every year and the average email subscriber receiving 13 commercial emails a day, it's safe to assume email is here to stay.

If you have a list of loyal subscribers, then think of it as a lead generation channel.

Sending truly useful and unique pieces of content increases the chances of your subscribers sharing it with friends and colleagues.

## PRO TIP

Make it easy for recipients to share by including a "Forward to a friend" link and/or social media sharing buttons.



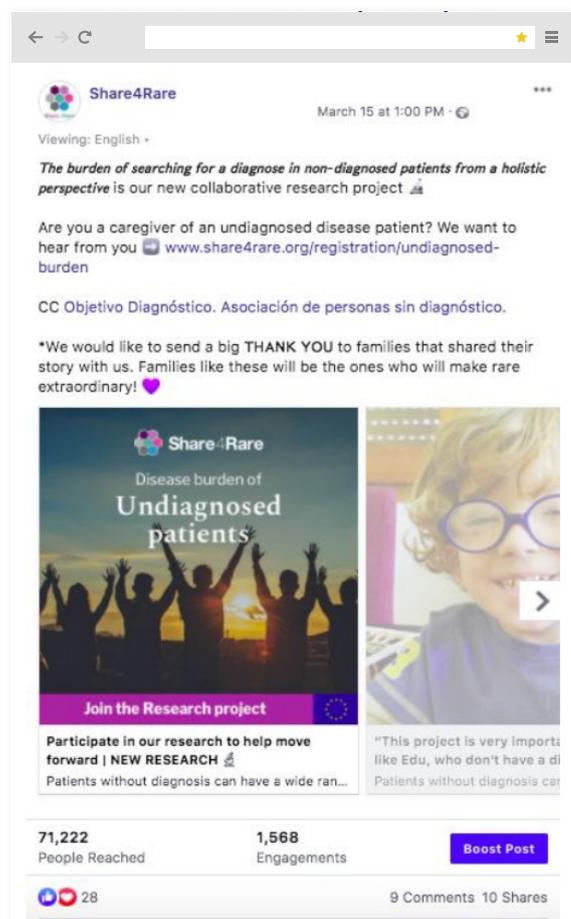
# #9 Leverage social media

If you already have an engaged community on social media, with whom you are constantly in touch, sharing your content offers will only add more meaning to the conversation.

As long as you focus on sharing interesting resources, owned or from others, and keep an ongoing dialogue with your followers, posting content offers won't be seen as pushy or shameless promotion.

## PRO TIP

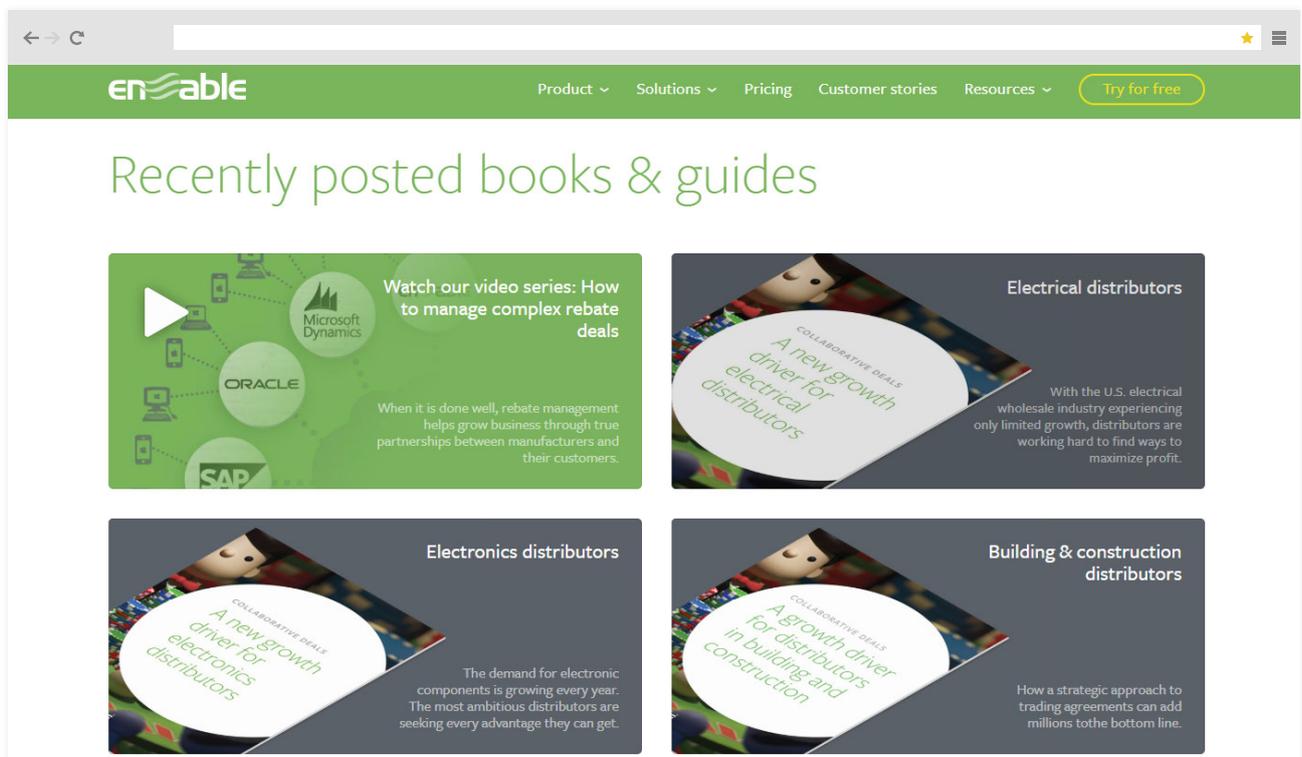
Make sure you mention the link in the text and highlight important ideas through [special formatting](#).



# #10 Create a resources page

While each of your content offer pieces should be “hosted” on separate landing pages, why not have a centralised page on your website, so your current visitors can navigate to?

You can create a resources page, where you can present all your content offers, with CTAs buttons for each piece, linking to their respective landing pages.



# #11 Promote content offers on product pages

Your product pages are one of the best places to advertise your content offers.

Remember, most of the visitors might not be just ready to sign up for your service or purchase your product, they are there to gather information.

By linking relevant content offers from product pages, you add value to their experience with your brand

← → C

**messageware** Products Trial Pricing Resources Support Company **Free Trial**

Trusted by more than 2500 companies with over 5 million users

**Messageware**  
**Exchange Protocol Guard**

Messageware Exchange Protocol Guard (EPG) provides on-premises Microsoft Exchange with enhanced security through real-time collection of logon information, analysis, threat detection, and security controls for six of the most widely used messaging protocols.

**Free Trial** **Download brochure**

Analytics  
Monitoring  
Detection  
Alerting  
Reporting  
Threat Intelligence

## CHAPTER 3

# Building conversion optimized landing pages

Landing pages are standalone pages that are designed for a specific marketing campaign, such as a campaign to promote an industry research conducted by your company.

The landing page is where you make your plea to visitors to download your gated content.

There are a number of moving pieces that make up a great landing page, from a title, copy, form and CTA to overall user experience on the page.

We will show you what are the best practices to follow to put together a smooth landing page user experience.

# #12 Landing page architecture

Headline & supporting subhead

Form

CTA button

Benefits

Social proof

The image shows a screenshot of the Infusionsoft landing page with several annotations. The page features a purple header with the Infusionsoft logo and a navigation menu. The main content area is white and contains a headline, a form, a CTA button, a benefits section, and social proof. The annotations are as follows:

- Headline & supporting subhead:** Points to the headline "Grow Sales. Save Time." and the subhead "125,000 users trust Infusionsoft's award-winning automation software, backed by 16 years of helping small businesses succeed and a worldwide community of experts dedicated to your success."
- Form:** Points to the form fields for First Name, Email, Phone, and Company.
- CTA button:** Points to the "See product demo" button.
- Benefits:** Points to the "Discover Infusionsoft's Automated All-in-One Sales & Marketing Built Exclusively for Small Business" section, which includes a list of benefits and a computer monitor image.
- Social proof:** Points to the two testimonials: "We increased revenue by 300% since implementing Infusionsoft." and "Infusionsoft is now the backbone of our operations."

# #13 Landing pages best practices

The first thing to keep in mind is: **create dedicated landing pages for each of your downloadable content assets**. Landing pages' sole purpose is to persuade visitors to open the gated content.

Therefore, in order to maximize conversions it's best to create a landing page, instead of sending traffic to pages with other call to actions such as the homepage.

Which leads us to the second principle: **remove navigation**. In order to keep visitors focused on the content offer, remove the navigation menu. Any interaction option you provide, outside of accessing the content offer, is a distraction from the conversion.

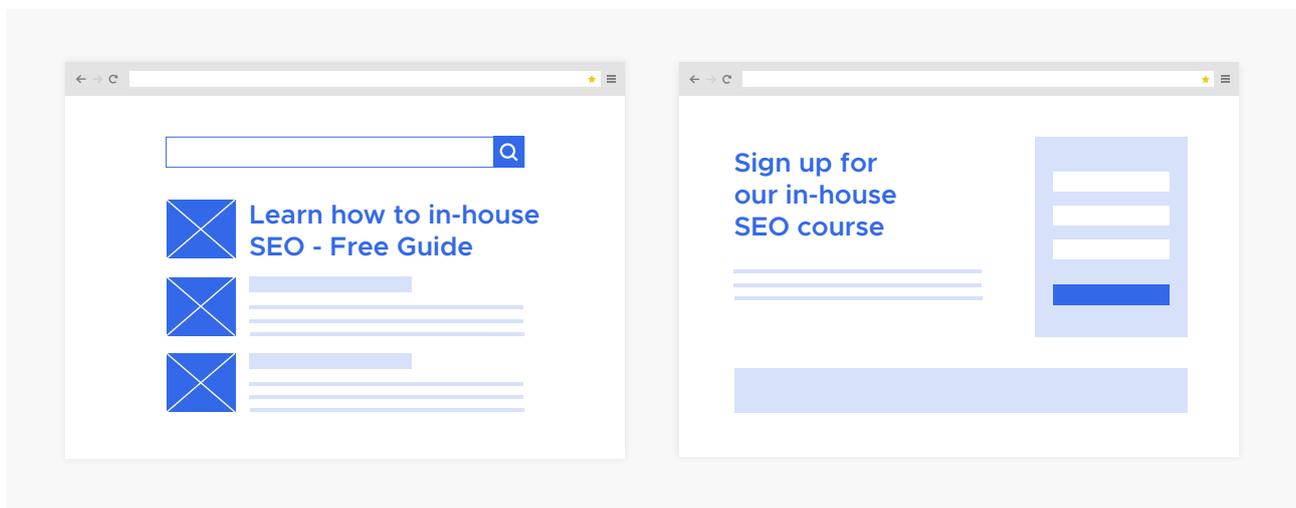
Then, bear in mind that the landing page **look and message should strongly fit the call to action** that visitors clicked on. If the match is poor and visitors find something else on the page than what they were expecting, they will leave the page as their initial expectation was not fulfilled.

And lastly, we encourage you to **A/B test your landing pages** design, call to action buttons and forms. When it comes to landing pages, it's all trial and error, so test, learn what works better and make changes as you go.

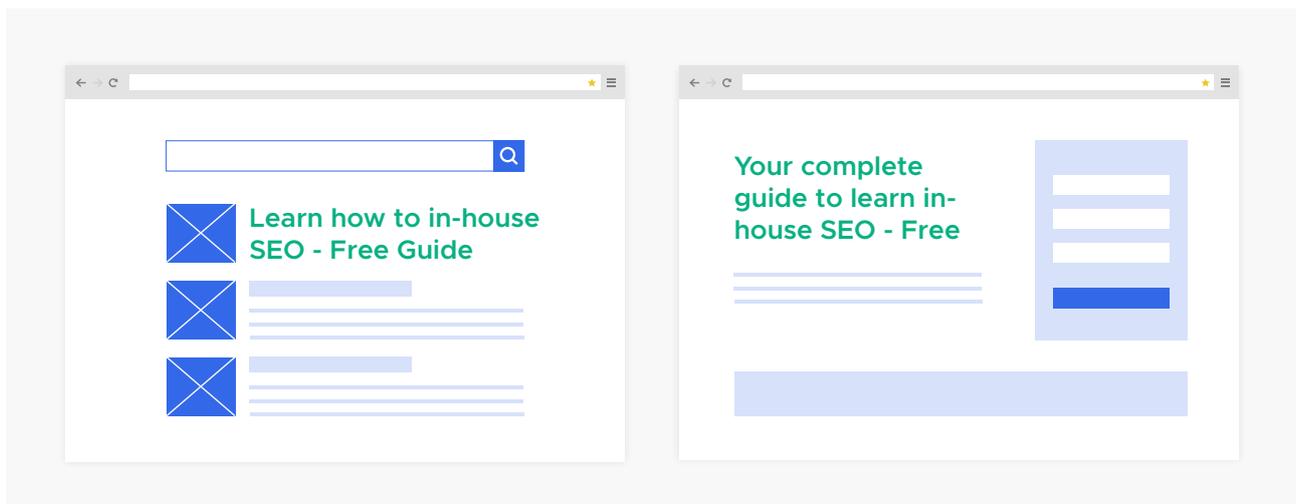
# #13 Landing pages best practices

Here is what a week message fit and a strong message fit looks like.

## ✗ Week message fit



## ✓ Strong message fit



# #14 Clear and attractive headlines

Your landing page headline (or title) is what visitors will read when they first arrive. If the title doesn't match to a high degree the call to action that brought them there and / or doesn't explain clearly what the page is about, they will most likely bounce off.

## The best practices to consider when writing titles:

- use your title to clearly state your unique value proposition
- keep title brief and follow up with a supporting subhead, to extend and support the benefit
- if your landing page is long, add a reinforcement statement halfway down the page to enhance and reinforce the value proposition
- additionally, long pages can benefit from a closing statement that back up the value proposition

### PRO TIP

Write at least 5 title variations before publishing your page, so you can come up with the best version.

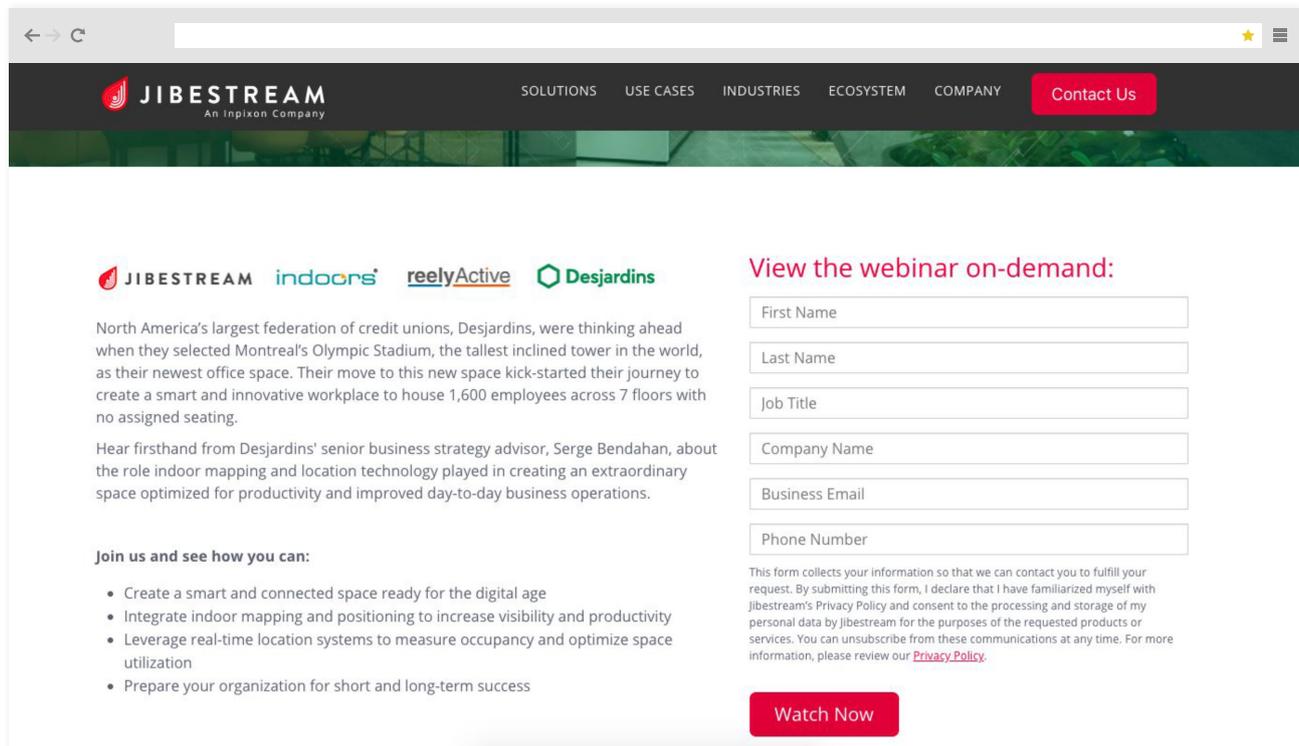
# #15 Show them the benefits

Make the benefits of your offering easy to spot, don't let visitors search them too much.

Your benefit statement should emphasize in what way your content offering solves a problem or answers questions your audience has, rather than enumerate what the offer is about.

## PRO TIP

Using bullet points will make it easy for visitors to scan the page.



The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the Jibestream website. The header includes the Jibestream logo (An Inpixon Company) and navigation links for SOLUTIONS, USE CASES, INDUSTRIES, ECOSYSTEM, and COMPANY, along with a red 'Contact Us' button. The main content area features logos for Jibestream, indoors, reelyActive, and Desjardins. The text describes a case study for Desjardins, highlighting their move to a new office space and the role of indoor mapping technology. A section titled 'Join us and see how you can:' lists four bullet points. To the right, a form titled 'View the webinar on-demand:' includes input fields for First Name, Last Name, Job Title, Company Name, Business Email, and Phone Number, followed by a 'Watch Now' button. A privacy notice is located below the form.

**JIBESTREAM** indoors reelyActive Desjardins

North America's largest federation of credit unions, Desjardins, were thinking ahead when they selected Montreal's Olympic Stadium, the tallest inclined tower in the world, as their newest office space. Their move to this new space kick-started their journey to create a smart and innovative workplace to house 1,600 employees across 7 floors with no assigned seating.

Hear firsthand from Desjardins' senior business strategy advisor, Serge Bendahan, about the role indoor mapping and location technology played in creating an extraordinary space optimized for productivity and improved day-to-day business operations.

**Join us and see how you can:**

- Create a smart and connected space ready for the digital age
- Integrate indoor mapping and positioning to increase visibility and productivity
- Leverage real-time location systems to measure occupancy and optimize space utilization
- Prepare your organization for short and long-term success

**View the webinar on-demand:**

First Name

Last Name

Job Title

Company Name

Business Email

Phone Number

This form collects your information so that we can contact you to fulfill your request. By submitting this form, I declare that I have familiarized myself with Jibestream's Privacy Policy and consent to the processing and storage of my personal data by Jibestream for the purposes of the requested products or services. You can unsubscribe from these communications at any time. For more information, please review our [Privacy Policy](#).

**Watch Now**

# #16 Display social proof

We rely on peers reviews and recommendation a lot.

In fact, a report from Nielsen revealed that as much as 92% of people will trust a recommendation from a peer, and 70% of people will trust a review from someone they've never even met. So there is no denying that social proof is powerful.

Social proof can be in the form of customers testimonials, showcasing clients, or displaying how many visitors downloaded same content offer.

The screenshot shows the Databox website homepage. The main headline reads "Do you know how your sales performed today?". Below this, it states "Databox pulls all your data into one place, so you can track performance and discover insights in real-time." There is a form for "Your company email" and a "GET DATABOX FREE" button. A note below the button says "FREE FOREVER - NO CREDIT CARD REQUIRED". To the right, there is an illustration comparing "Life before Databox" (a person looking at a desk with multiple monitors and papers) to "Life with Databox" (a person sitting at a desk with a single monitor displaying a dashboard). Below the illustration, there is a row of logos for AccuRanker, Tettra, toast, SmartBug, PR 20/20, CRAYON, and NEXITY. At the bottom, it says "15,000+ BUSINESSES AND MARKETING AGENCIES TRACK & IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE WITH DATABOX".

## SOURCE:

<https://optimmonster.com/11-ways-to-use-social-proof-to-increase-your-conversions/>

# #17 Nicely designed CTAs

CTAs are the gateway to conversion. Hitting the call to action button on your content offer landing page is the single action you want visitors to make.

## The 3 things to consider when creating CTAs:

### COPY

your call to action should be, well, actionable. Tell users what they should do: “Sign me up for the webinar”, “Download my free guide” etc. Generic messaging such as “Submit” are not effective.

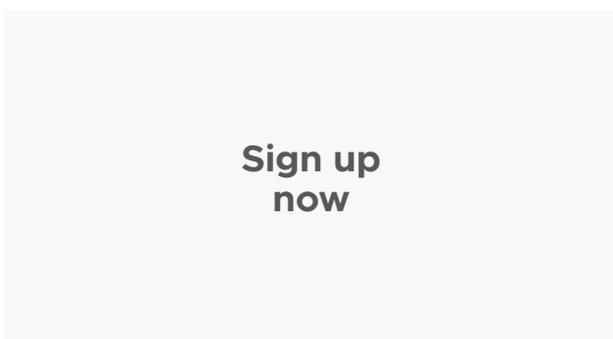
### DESIGN

you want to make sure you CTA button is easy to spot, so you should choose a color that stands out from the rest of the page. To add dimension to your CTA buttons, try adding effects such as hover or shadow. Directional cues such as arrows also help make the button stand out. And determine the right proportions, a tiny button will be difficult to reach.

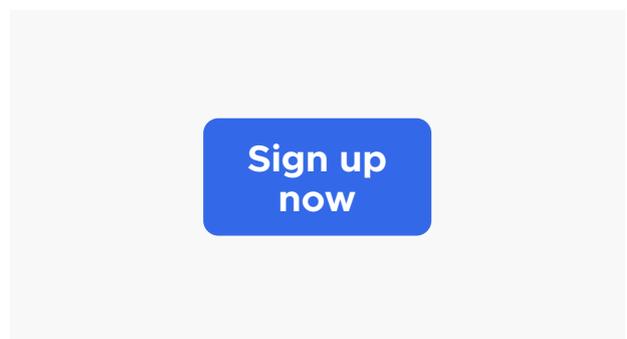
### PLACEMENT

should you place your CTA above or below the fold? If your offering requires detailed explanation, test placing your CTA below the fold, to give visitors the chance to understand the offer first. If your offering is pretty straightforward (such as with content offers), go for above the fold placement.

#### ✗ Poor design



#### ✓ Good design



# #18 Forms without friction

Forms are designed to capture email addresses and other contact details, in exchange for the content offer.

People are handing you sensitive data such as personal information, so you need to be considerate of how many details you ask. The incentive you offer will ideally match the length of the form.

Typically, shorter forms tend to convert better, but to truly find out what works best for you, we recommend to A/B test your forms.

**In order to decrease form friction, pay attention to:**

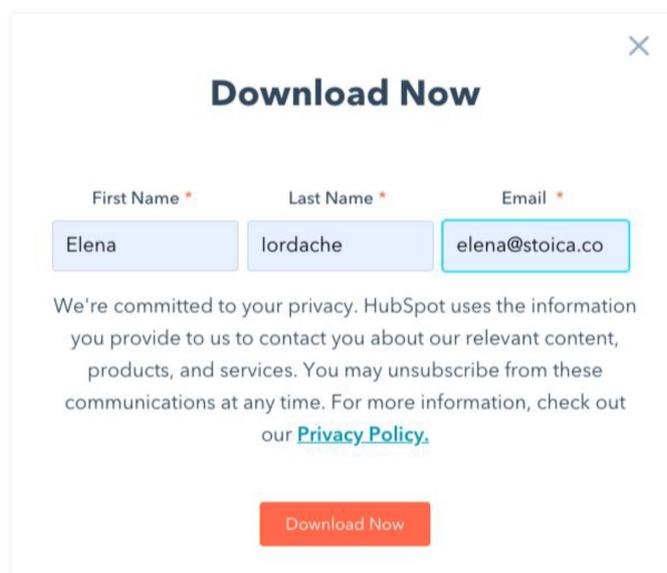
- too many open-ended questions that take time to answer
- dropdown menus that don't include a viable option for the visitor
- captcha security input fields

## PRO TIP 1

Reassure your leads that their personal information is handled with care by including a few words on how your company treats data & and a link to your Privacy Policy.

## PRO TIP 2

Progressive profiling enables you to keep your forms short and collect new data points on your leads when they download additional content, based on the data you already have. Platforms such as Eloqua, HubSpot, Act-On provide dynamic web form features.



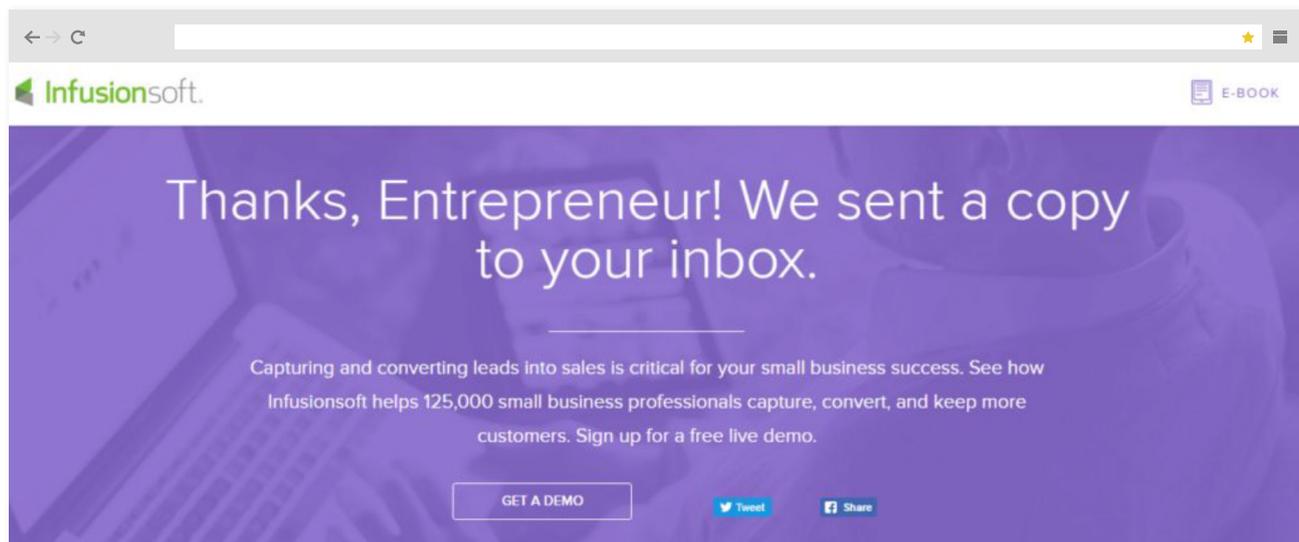
The image shows a 'Download Now' form with three input fields: 'First Name' (containing 'Elena'), 'Last Name' (containing 'lordache'), and 'Email' (containing 'elena@stoica.co'). Below the fields is a privacy notice: 'We're committed to your privacy. HubSpot uses the information you provide to us to contact you about our relevant content, products, and services. You may unsubscribe from these communications at any time. For more information, check out our [Privacy Policy](#).' At the bottom is a red 'Download Now' button.

# #19 Thank you page

The journey doesn't end when visitors fill in your form and receive the downloadable asset, it is in fact just getting started.

The thank you page is designed to reassure visitors they made a good choice and eliminate buyer's remorse.

It can be further used to point them in the direction of related content they could benefit accessing.



# #20 Effective follow up

What happens with all the contact details you collect after running a content offer campaign?

Do they go into a CRM or a spreadsheet?

Do you follow up with them manually or do you have an automation set in place?

The best thing you can do is segment the leads you collected and set up an automated flow of emails, keeping an open communication.

Automation can save a lot of time and effort, if you want to learn more about this, make sure you also read:

[From website visitors to paying customers](#)

# Conclusion

Building a mechanism that generates leads online has the power to transform your entire business.

Using unique content assets, calls-to-action, landing pages and forms - while promoting them across several channels - can reduce your lead acquisition cost, while delivering higher quality prospects to your sales team.

We hope you take the best practices included in this guide and apply them to your own marketing efforts, to help bolster your conversion rates and revenue.

# About Stoica

Hi there, we're Stoica, a B2B growth agency with operations in Bucharest & Brussels.

We help B2B companies grow better online by designing and building lead generation websites, sales funnels and marketing automation flows.

If you would like to know more and have a chat, you can book a 30 minutes **discovery call**.

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