Your Exam Study Guide

The following guide walks through key lessons from each of the twelve certification classes. Use this as a guide as you prepare for your Inbound Certification test.

INBOUND CERTIFICATION

INBOUND FUNDAMENTALS
Essentials of an Effective Inbound Strategy

I.   Why inbound?

- What's the difference between traditional marketing and inbound marketing?
- What is inbound?
- What is the Inbound Methodology?
- What are the different phases that make up the Inbound Methodology?
- How does analyze fit into the Inbound Methodology?

II.   What are the fundamentals of inbound success?

- What are the inbound best practices?
- What is a buyer persona?
- How do you create a buyer persona?
- How do you go about researching buyer personas?
- What are the components of a persona profile story?
- What is the buyer's journey?
- What are the stages that make up the buyer's journey? How are they defined?
- What part does content play in inbound marketing and sales?
- In terms of inbound, what is context?
- What are the different ways to leverage content?

III.   What does inbound look like?

- What is considered a shift from traditional to inbound marketing?
- What makes up a good persona profile story?
- What makes content the right fit for buyer personas?

ATTRACT

Optimizing Your Website for Search Engines

I.   What is search engine optimization?

- What is search engine optimization (SEO)?
- In what ways does SEO help your inbound marketing?
- How do search engines find, understand and rank pages to show in search results?
- What is the difference between paid results and organic results?

II.   SEO strategy and best practices

- In terms of SEO, how are keywords defined?
- How should you go about picking the right keywords for your business?
- What are the different steps for doing keyword research?
- How do your buyer personas and the buyer's journey factor into your keyword research?
- In what ways can you expand your list of keywords?
- How can you determine which keywords people are using to find your site?
- What is the difference between short and long-tail keywords?
- In what ways and where should you optimize your pages for search engines?
- How should you properly optimize a website page?
- What types of links should you include in your content and why?
- Why is promoting a good user experience important for SEO?
- Why should you optimize for mobile?
- Why is promoting your content important for SEO?
- What's the relationship between links and SEO?
- What are inbound links?
- What strategies can you implement to earn links?
- What are online directories and why are they important for SEO?
- How can you optimize for getting found in local searches?

III.   What does a successfully optimized website page look like?

- How can you tell if a business has picked the right primary keyword for a page?
- How can you tell if they've optimized the page around the keyword?
- How can you tell if they're linking to other sources?
- How can you tell if they're offering a good user experience?
- How can you tell if they're promoting their content?
- How can you tell if they're earning links?

Creating Content with a Purpose

I.   Why is content important to inbound?

- What is content?
- Where does content fit into the Inbound Methodology?

II.   How can you create remarkable content?

- What are the different steps to the Content Process?
- What are the three things that content can defined by?
- How do you determine the purpose of a piece of content?
- What are different formats of content? What's the difference between these formats?
- How do you pick the best format for a piece of content?
- What two things should you always keep in mind when determining the topic for a piece of content?
- What are different ways to identify content topics that matter to your buyer personas?
- What's the buyer's journey? What are the three stages and how are they defined?
- What are the best practices for content creation?
- How does distribution fit into the Content Process?
- What are the different ways to leverage content with distribution?
- Why is it important to analyze content?
- What are the different metrics that can be used to measure content efficacy?
- What's the value in repeating the Content Process?

III.   What does remarkable content look like?

- How do you determine where a content offer fits into the buyer's journey?
- How do you effectively take someone through the buyer's journey with content?

The Fundamentals of Blogging

I.   **Why does blogging help your inbound marketing?**

-       How does blogging help to attract new visitors?
-       How does blogging help to convert new leads?
-       How can your blog help you to build trust with your prospects? Why is this important?

II.   **How do you create a successful blog?**

-       What are the blogging best practices?
-       How do you pick an appropriate blog post topic?
-       Why should you write about educational content rather than your business?
-       What are ways to brainstorm different topics to blog about?
-       Why is it important to do keyword research around your blog topics?
-       How many topics should you focus on per post, and why?
-       What is a working title and how is it different from your topic?
-       Why should you include a long-tail keyword in the blog post title?
-       How long should your blog title be, on average?
-       Why is it important to format your blog post properly?
-       What is whitespace and how does it affect your blog post?
-       Why are images important to include in blog posts, and where should they be placed?
-       Why is it important to optimize a blog post for search engines?
-       Where should you place your long-tail keyword within your blog post?
-       Where should you include links within the content of your blog post?
-       How can you use your blog and blog posts to promote your other offers?
-       What are the different ways you could promote your blog posts?
-       Which metrics should you analyze to track the performance of your blog? What does each metric tell you, and how can you use that knowledge to improve performance?

III.   **What does a successful blog post look like?**

-       How can you tell if a business picked a good topic to blog about?
-       How can you tell if they picked a compelling blog post title?
-       How can you tell if the blog post has been formatted properly?
-       How can you tell if the blog post has been optimized for search engines?
-       How can you tell if the blog or blog post is promoting other offers, and if the calls-to-actions are appropriate?
-       How can you tell if a business is promoting their blog posts?

Amplifying Your Content with Social Media

I.   Why is social media essential to inbound?

- How does social media fit into inbound?
- In which stages of the inbound methodology can social media be used?

II.   How to amplify your content on social media

- What are SMART goals?
- How do you set a SMART goal for social?
- What is a social media content plan?
- What should a social media content plan include? What are the components?
- What social media channels should brands be using?
- How do buyer personas fit into a social media strategy?
- How can you find the right social media platform for your business?
- What are the key ways to use optimization?
- How are visuals used in social media?
- How can you tie social media efforts back to ROI?
- How can you measure reach?
- How can you measure engagement?
- What is audience growth and how can it be measured?

III.   What does content amplification look like?

- What type of inbound challenges can social media help solve?
- How does consistently publishing to social media help with content strategies?
- How can you tell if a business has properly optimized their social posts for relevant content across platforms?
- What does it mean to 'meet your audience where they are'?

CONVERT
Enticing Clicks with Calls-to-Action

I.   How do you use a call-to-action (CTA)?

- What is the conversion process?
- What is a CTA?
- How does a CTA help to convert visitors into leads?
- What role does a CTA play in a conversion process?

II.   How do you create successful CTAs?

- What are the CTA best practices?
- What kind of words can you use on a CTA to get visitors to take action?
- How do the keywords of your offer and landing page impact the CTA?
- How can the visual aspects of a CTA, such as the size or color, help to grab your visitors' attention?
- Where should you place a CTA in an email? In a blog? On a website page?
- What is a good click-through rate goal to aim for with a CTA?
- What is a good clicks-to-submissions goal to aim for with a CTA?

III.   What does an effective CTA look like?

- How do you measure the effectiveness of a CTA?
- What different ways can you test and analyze a CTA?

The Anatomy of a Landing Page

I.   How do you use a landing page?

- What is a landing page?
- How does a landing page generate information about your website visitors?
- Where does a landing page fit into a conversion process?

II.   How do you create successful landing pages?

- What is a good conversion rate goal for a landing page?
- What are the landing page best practices?
- What kinds of words need to be included in a landing page headline?
- What are some ways to place emphasis on the offer you're promoting with your landing page?
- How long should the form on the landing page be?
- What kinds of questions should you ask on a form?
- What can you place on a landing page to visually communicate an offer?
- What is the benefit in including social sharing icons on a landing page?

III.   What does an effective landing page look like?

- What is a blink test?
- What is the purpose behind performing a blink test?
- How do you measure the effectiveness of a landing page?

Guiding the Next Step with Thank You Pages

I. How do you use a thank you page?

- What is a thank you page?
- Where does a thank you page fit into a conversion process?
- How does a thank you page differ from an inline thank you message?

II. How do you create successful thank you pages?

- What are the thank you page best practices?
- How do you set proper expectations of what happens next on a thank you page?
- Why does displaying the site's navigation menu on a thank you page help your thank you page?
- Are you required to use a CTA on a thank you page?
- How can you move leads further into the buyer's journey using a thank you page?
- How can a thank you page extend your social media reach?

III. What does an effective thank you page look like?

- When examining a thank you page, are you able to understand how to get the offer or what happens next?
- Can you identify what types of additional content to offer on a thank you page?
- How can you examine a thank you page to make sure it directs a lead further into the buyer's journey?

CLOSE
Sending the Right Email to the Right Person

I.   Why is email marketing still important?

-   What are some reasons why email works?
-   How can email help you close leads into customers?
-   How can marketers use email to delight customers?

II.   How do you send the right email to the right person?

-   What does content and context mean to your inbound marketing strategy and how does this help email marketing?
-   Why are buyer personas and the buyer's journey important to sending great emails?
-   What different types of data can you use to segment your email sending recipients?
-   The average email list decays at 25% a year. What are some reasons that this happens?
-   How can you avoid having your emails marked as spam? What is the impact of your emails being marked as spam?
-   What type of content is appropriate to email leads during the awareness stage of the buyer's journey? The consideration stage? The decision stage?
-   How is the success of your email marketing tied to the rest of your inbound strategy?
-   What is lead nurturing?
-   What different ways can you optimize your email for mobile?
-   How does email personalization impact the success of your email sends?
-   What are the different ways to add personalization to your emails?
-   What is actionable language, and where can it be used in your emails?
-   What components of your email can you make a CTA?
-   What does delivery rate measure? Open rate? Click rate?
-   Why is it important to A/B test your emails?
-   What is the difference between a hard bounce and a soft bounce?
-   How can you optimize your emails to look good on mobile devices?

III.   What does a great email look like?

-   Where are some appropriate places to put a CTA in an email?
-   Is it ever appropriate to have more than one CTA in an email?
-   What are some different ways you can you expand the reach of your emails?
-   What are the components of a good email signature?

The Power of Smarketing

I.   Why is smarketing critical to the success of an inbound company?

- What is smarketing?
- Where does smarketing fit into the Inbound Methodology?
- How does smarketing increase bottom line revenue results for organizations?

II.   How does smarketing result in alignment?

- What are the smarketing best practices?
- Why is it important for both teams to have the same or interdependent goals?
- What are the benefits of tying the marketing pipeline to sales quotas?
- How does visibility into each other's goals create better alignment and bottom line revenue results?
- How is compensation around goals related to smarketing alignment?
- Why are personas important for successful smarketing alignment?
- At what size company does smarketing work best?

III.   How do you integrate smarketing into your organization?

- What are the five steps to integrate smarketing?
- What are the six stages in the marketing and sales funnel and how are they defined?
- What is the most generic term for anyone in a marketing and sales funnel?
- What does it mean when someone says "the marketing and sales funnel is not always linear?"
- What constitutes a marketing qualified lead (MQL)?
- What is a service level agreement (SLA) and why is it critical to integrating smarketing into your organization?
- What is closed-loop reporting?
- What are some questions to ask yourself to identify if your organizations needs closed-loop reporting?
- What are some benefits of closed-loop reporting for marketing and for sales?
- Why are dashboards a great way to display data? What are the different types of dashboards?
- Why is it important to rely on data not emotions when integrating and running smarketing?
- What are the different ways to maintain open communication within your company?
- What should take place in a monthly management meeting regarding smarketing that is different from the weekly smarketing meeting?

Taking Your Sales Process Inbound

I.   What is inbound sales?

- Why have buying habits changed?
- What's the difference between the traditional and inbound way of selling?
- What is inbound sales?

II.   How can you transform the way you sell?

- What are the best practices for effectively transforming the way you sell?
- How can you transform the way you target accounts?
- How can you transform the way you prospect accounts?
- What things about your lead should you thoroughly research?
- How is the goal of a call determined?
- How can you transform the way you connect with accounts?
- What are the guidelines for transforming the way you connect?
- How can you transform the way your prospects perceive you as a salesperson?

III.   What does a day in the life of an inbound sales rep look like?

- If you needed to research a lead, where would you start?
- If you needed to research a lead, what information would you gather?
- What is a positioning statement?
- What are the three parts to a positioning statement?

DELIGHT
The Pillars of Delight

I.   Why customer delight is so important

- In which stages of the Inbound Methodology can delight be used?
- When should you be focused on delighting people?
- Why do people stop doing business with a business?

II.   How to delight your customers

- What are the three pillars of delight?
- Which interactions will build or destroy trust?
- What are the components to the customer delight checklist?
- What tool can help you solve customer issues quickly and exceed customer expectations?

III.   The seven customer delight guidelines

- What are the seven customer delight guidelines?
- Who is responsible for delighting customers?
- Why do you need to build a repeatable, consistent hiring process so you hire for character, train for skill?
- Why do you need to make sure you properly train your team so they understand why developing trust is key to delighting people?
- Why should you be measuring and tracking as many of your customer's interactions as you can?
- How can you educate your team members?
- How can you exceed people's expectations during more interactions?
- Why is following-up so important to delight?
- What steps should you take when trying to solve a person's problem as fast as possible?
- What's an effective way to empower your team while not micro-managing them?