

14.1: Inbound and Outbound Marketing

Learning Objectives

Understand key terms associated with online strategy, the objectives of the four stages of the RACE framework, how it links to personas and journeys, and how to use it to support competitive analysis.

In this chapter, we discuss some key vocabulary associated with digital marketing, covering concepts such as inbound and outbound marketing, as well as paid, owned, and earned media activities. We then turn our attention to the framework we will cover for the rest of the semester, the RACE framework. We briefly cover the framework's four stages before focusing on how to link persona, journey, and strategy. We conclude the chapter by understanding how the RACE framework can support competitive analysis.

Inbound and Outbound Marketing

Inbound and outbound marketing represent two grand approaches to connecting with consumers. **Inbound marketing** aims at bringing visitors 'in,' drawing them to your company via, typically, content marketing, social media, and well-optimized websites. In this first approach, consumers find you because you represent them.

Outbound marketing is what we typically think about when we think of advertising: the promotion of products or services through advertising and promotions. In this case, a message goes 'out' from your company and stops consumers in whatever they were doing (e.g., a consumer is 'stopped' by an ad when scrolling on Instagram or reading their Facebook feed; they are 'stopped' by an ad at the start of a YouTube video; they are 'stopped' by an ad which cuts a newspaper article or a blog post in two).

Inbound marketing is associated with a few other concepts, such as

- **Permission marketing**, where advertising is welcomed because permission to be advertised to has already been given and advertising is anticipated (e.g., email marketing) (Wikipedia, 2024a)
- **Two-way communication**, meaning that there can be an interaction between consumers and the brand (e.g., consumers can comment on social media posts and blog articles)
- It is sought, meaning that consumers find you
- It has been one of the fastest-growing strategies to do marketing online for the last decade (McCoy, 2021)
- It is seen as cheaper to perform since companies do not need to invest in ads (although there are costs associated with content creation)
- Aimed at customer acquisition

Outbound marketing is associated with concepts such as,

- **Interruption marketing**, where marketing efforts such as ads interrupt what a consumer is doing
- **One-way communication**, because consumers cannot talk to ads
- Imposed, because consumers do not agree to be advertised to
- Decreasing, although this is debated (Leslie, 2015)
- Expensive, because fees are associated with putting ads online
- And aimed at awareness creation, as it has typically been the case with traditional advertising

Examples of inbound marketing include blog posts, infographics, ebooks, white papers, social media posts, tutorials, and the like.

Examples of outbound marketing include advertising of any sort.

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