

HOW INBOUND MARKETING INCREASED INITIAL HYGIENE'S ONLINE SALES BY 76.29% IN 8 MONTHS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Challenge: Initial Hygiene Services South Africa sought an innovative, cost effective way to improve online leads and sales. They sought to do so by engaging and targeting their persona's with content which speaks to their specific needs and wants; all while integrating and communicating the company's core values and ultimately improving their brand positioning in the market as thought leaders in the industry.

Solution: In order to appeal to the changing market needs, Spitfire Inbound armed Initial with the right strategy and platform to engage effectively online and nurture customers from strangers. Done with a comprehensive understanding of their persona's buying journey and pain points, together with analytics and distribution capabilities; Initial was able to leapfrog their expectations of success.

Results: In July 2017, Initial began their innovative inbound strategy which includes focused content marketing strategies. They released 2 campaign specific blog articles a week and in turn skyrocketed their online engagement and lead conversion rate. Between July 2017 and the end of February 2018, **online sessions increased exponentially within eight months by 57.09%** compared to the previous period, **leads increased by 76.71%** and **online sales increased by 76.29% (year on year)**. They also achieved **a high lead conversion rate of 5.74%** and saw a 310% ROI on their inbound marketing efforts. Ultimately, the inbound strategy has influenced over a R1.5 million in sales.

The continuous growth was achieved through a data driven strategic approach whereby we incorporated an innovative solution understanding and gathering ROI within Hubspot. This provided insight and holistic view on the customers buyers journey.



"Hubspot is a fantastic inbound tool that provides granular information that guides well informed strategy. Combined with the expertise of an experienced inbound partner like Spitfire Inbound, we have seen rapid growth within our key metrics. I am delighted with the progress of the project." Lémay Rogers, Marketing Manager, Initial

THE STORY OF INITIAL

Many businesses choose Initial because they need a dependable and experienced provider for hygiene services, including bathroom servicing, sanitary waste disposal management, advanced kitchen and office hygiene solutions and floor care services.

Founded in London in 1903, and establish in South Africa in the 1960's, their steady growth has been based on quality service, innovation, understanding and meeting the needs of their clients and an extensive international footprint, making Initial one of the world leaders in the area of bathroom and occupational hygiene service provision.

Initial aims to deepen their relationships with their customers and build long term loyalty.

ALIGNING STRATEGY WITH CURRENT TRENDS AND BUILDING TRUST

We have seen technology accelerate change in society as well as business practices. It continues to impact markets significantly, reshaping consumers and how we market to them. Omnichannel sales, artificial intelligence, social sharing and big data are only some of the ways that technology remains the core of ever adapting marketing strategies.

Along with technologies, current economic pressures have reshaped consumer behaviour as well as businesses, calling for more innovative, cost-effective and adaptable solutions. There was slow economic growth and low consumer confidence in 2017 and 2018 will remain constrained as low business confidence, political uncertainty and high unemployment weigh on investment and private consumption. [FocusEconomics](#) panelists expect the economy to grow only by 1.3% in 2018.

Despite this, inbound marketing effectively captures the changing behaviour and buyer's journey, and is ever adaptable and focused on consumer needs and pain points.

Some of the behaviour changes include:

- Growing internet penetration (mobile)
- Longer buyer's journey
- Enhanced scrutiny and research
- Greater need for personalised content
- Importance of transparency

- Need for convenience and timeous service

The influence of technology along with the change in market has shifted traditional marketing mindsets and strategies. At Spitfire Inbound, it is no secret that building trust, communicating integrity and putting the customer at the forefront of any strategy decision is the ultimate tactic for success.

According to Accenture, marketers that don't focus on building trust and personalization stand to lose out. In 2016, businesses collectively lost [\\$756 billion](#), leading to a 43% increase in switching behaviour among consumers.

Initial was able to significantly impact consumers, sales and marketing efforts, through the convergence of technology and consumer behaviour with an inbound approach.

With a need to creatively align technology and internal budgets for the highest return, Initial not only aimed to benefit from technological trends but also aimed to improve customer experience and empower by ensuring customisable and efficient content throughout all stages of the customer journey and associated needs.

DEFINING SUCCESS AND THE RESULTS

In order to highlight the outcomes, we will begin by defining how success is defined with an inbound marketing approach.

- Demonstrates customer centricity and engagement
- Creating captivating quality content (with content which answers their personal and business pain points)
- Build trust and loyalty among consumers
- Effective consumer empowered nurturing through the sales funnel

Initial was able to achieve this through our partnership. The main results among others were as follows:

- **ROI & sales outcome:** The inbound approach achieved the results within eight months and continues to rise as a relevant brand. The increase in sales was achieved with limited budget while attracting and retaining customers. Initial was able to achieve both

trust and personalisation. Initial **broke even on costs within the first four months.**

The inbound strategy has influenced more than R 1.2 million in sales.

- **Consumer engagement:** Our content strategy and engagement approach used technologies and market research to provide fertile ground for Initial's online influence. We effectively identified and targeted the personas by providing relevant and empowering content as well as navigational ease online. Blog content now comprises **32% of all web traffic**, with **traffic increasing overall by 57%** and **conversion of lead to customer from content is 40%**.

HOW IT WAS ACHIEVED: CAPTURING THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE

With a need to creatively align technology and internal budgets for the highest return, Initial not only aimed to benefit from technological trends but also aimed to improve customer experience and empower by ensuring customisable and efficient content throughout all stages of the customer journey and associated needs.

INTEGRATING EFFORTS WITH INITIAL

We aimed to fully immerse into the user journey and integrate the findings with Initial to build a new strategy and customer portal. This led to increased connectivity which provided a gateway to evermore social interactions, along with online and offline connections.

We partnered with internal teams with the aim of shifting mindset and redefining success, emphasising on quality and reaching the target persona effectively. This resulted in sales success through a defined strategic journey model.

It was a combination of on-going research, content, automation and persona building that led to an increase in rankings; improving brand awareness, consideration as well as trust.

Our approach aims to increasingly and continuously learn consumer behaviour; understanding needs and purchases and actions. Driving decision making and connectivity through utilising insights and software which will continue to evolve Initial as a business.

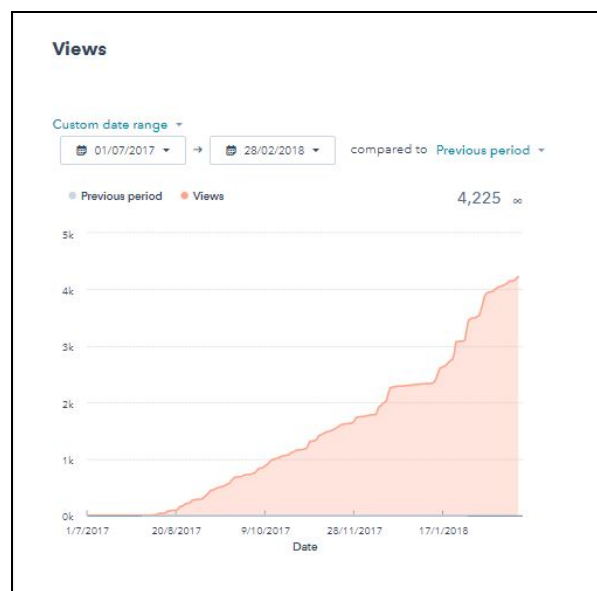
GETTING INTO THE RESULTS: INSPIRING ENGAGEMENT

Content is the fuel that fires the inbound approach, and a change in their content strategy reaped massive rewards.

The changes they made were simple, but effective, and relied heavily on an inbound strategy that helped them understand their personas and their pain points:

- Shifting from a more general approach of marketing to a more **defined, targeted approach** towards priority personas.
- Utilising a **deeper understanding of the personas** in order to best engage with consumers on a deeper more relevant level.
- Build a **clear and focused objective for content**, strategically based on topic pillars and associated communications.
- Publishing an average of **eight blogs a month**.

Within the blog, we see exponential growth in views and subscribers with the blog now contributing **32% of all web traffic**:



The content strategy resulted in high engagement and increased time spent online through website visits which achieved the following:

- Steady increase in organic search with a **4.05% conversion rate** of visitor to lead - **435% above the goal**.
- 432 contacts (60% of all contacts created) were created from organic alone!



- **50% increase in direct traffic**
- 155 contacts have been created from this direct traffic - this is a **2.37% conversion rate** which is above the HubSpot benchmark of 0.93% - **254% above the goal**
- **Email** open rate of 26.3% and an incredible **click rate of 10.14%** - above the [South African benchmarks from Everlytic](#) of 25.83% open rate and 3.46% click rate.

One of their most successful campaigns integrated with an annual PR strategy for [Global Handwashing Day](#). All inbound links, outbound links and content related to the campaign produced the following results:

SESSIONS	NEW CONTACTS (FIRST TOUCH)	INFLUENCED CONTACTS	CLOSED DEALS	INFLUENCED REVENUE
213	4	296	50	R151,277.77

The content was built and customised around persona needs driving awareness around the day but also exploring various pain points in order to highlight the importance of the cause.

We continuously aim to inspire end consumers as well as build leadership within the industry among professionals. This was achieved through providing a unique experience through relevant and thought provoking content. The content strategy has driven traffic, reputation and awareness as well as built **loyalty among customers**.

From the blog post entitled "[What can you buy for R2.40 per day?](#)" Esme said; "Dear Lemay. You are worth your weight in gold! What informative and brilliant newsletters you write. Well done! I wish we could convert the world!"

ALL LEADING TO IMPROVED SALES FUNNEL STRENGTH AND CONVERSION



“As a business, we are encouraged by the ongoing progress we have seen during Initial’s digital growth project. The process has enabled us to further reinforce our position as experts in our field, while creating a platform to drive education, enhance our customers’ buying journey and embed our mission of Protecting People, Enhancing Lives,” says Lemay

High conversion through relevant marketing and content has provided the ability to see the customer journey and understand fully the engagement process throughout.



71% of online contacts are made up of Sales Qualified Leads; indicating efficient distribution and content targeting of the optimal persona.

The main source of leads was derived from **organic search which made up 59% of the total online traffic**. Whereby **paid search (Adwords, PPC) equated to around 15%** of Initials’ customer leads. The traffic will increase as Initial continues to attract visitors using SEO, content and emailing nurturing (leads from direct amounted to 20%) along with focusing strategically on paid search.

This has proven to be a cost effective way to improve ranking and digital performance and we continue to see this trend among our customers.



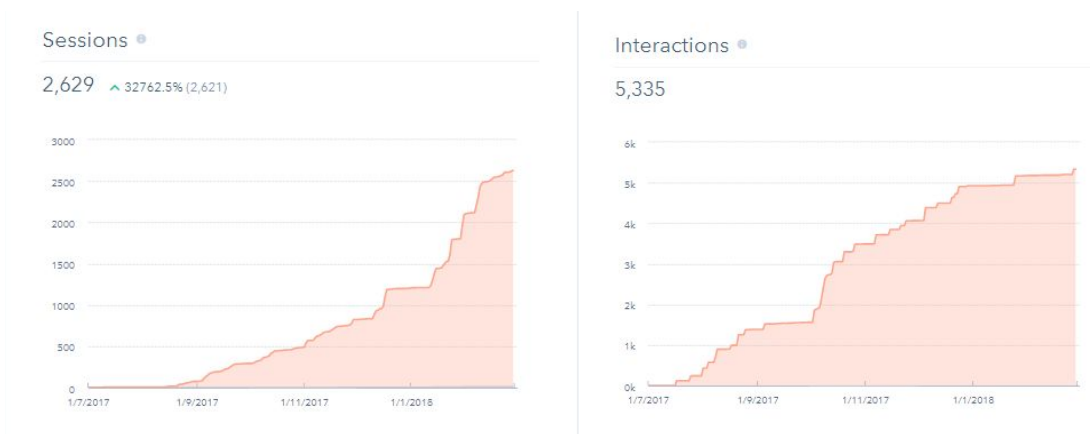
“A key validation for me remains the amount of customers we influenced to make a purchasing decision even if they didn’t complete an enquiry call to action.” says Nicole Horne, Online Marketing Executive, Rentokil Initial.

ENGAGING THROUGH SOCIAL

Within the 2017 [Qwerty South African digital report](#), 28,6 million (52%) of the urban population utilise the Internet which increased by 7% since Jan 2016. There is a 27% penetration of social media which has increased by as an additional 2 million (15%) new active social media users, and 3 million (30%) new active social users on mobile since Jan 2016.

Social media thus provides a lot of opportunity to generate and engage new leads as well as build awareness and brand equity.

Initial has successfully captured the social media channels of engagement, optimally targeting their personas. There was, and continues to be, a steady increase in social engagement and interactions with a greater following. Which has lead to enhanced sessions into the blog and content.



Social media has proven an effective tool in the content success and has resulted in eight leads and a 0.44% conversion rate.

We will continue to evolve with social as the blog and engagement grows.

DATA DRIVEN DESIGN

At Spitfire we encourage coordination between divisions and management within Initial, while also empowering local teams to innovate, explore, and take risks. We collect data, present it in an easy to understand way through databox, while developing relevance and context within the insights. This is followed by building strategic insights and aligning it to the current knowledge and operational actions of initial. In this way, data becomes the foundation to our growth driven strategy for Initial.

In the Initial B2B environment, there is various individuals within the buyer's journey. The individuals consist of the researchers, finance personal, decision makers and point of contact within one company. Understanding and gathering data on each individuals experience, journey and needs provided enhanced more personalised strategic focus within each stage of the journey. With Hubspot, an innovative approach to mapping the individuals was utilised and linked to company data. This provided accurate ROI data which takes into account all offline (such as word of mouth, individual awareness etc.) and online influence on decision making.

"I was impressed by how much data Initial gathers on a monthly basis. Through Hubspot, Initial have been able to pull all this data together to gain a deeper understanding of their customers and engage with their customers more meaningfully." Nicole Sengers

Our partnership is driven by communication and a drive to consistently improve and innovate.



"As a business, we are encouraged by the ongoing progress we have seen during Initial's digital growth project. The process has enabled us to further reinforce our position as experts in our field, while creating a platform to drive education, enhance our customers' buying journey and embed our mission of *Protecting People, Enhancing Lives.*" Nicole Horne