ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 3 - number 67 Wednesday 08 may 2019

Is it convenient to use inbound marketing in eLearning?

Promoting an online course through the creation of free content is the essence of inbound marketing applied to e-learning. Does it really work?

Inbound marketing is another way of saying content marketing, which is a content-based promotion strategy. For a site that offers online training, it means creating free content to make yourself known to your customers. We all do research on the internet because we look for a specific product or service or very simply because we are looking for the answer to a question. The purpose of inbound marketing is precisely this: to provide content that is used to inform, educate and help potential customers in the purchase decision. Since the task of inbound marketing is not to sell a product, but to provide all the information needed by the potential buyer, is it worth using it to promote courses in eLearning mode?

What is not convincing about inbound marketing?

Let's start with the reasons why many are skeptical about applying inbound marketing to eLearning or other realities:

- It is expensive, because you have to pay professionals who write content for your site.
- It is a long process, because the contents must be published consistently over time.
- It is difficult to measure direct results, i.e. how many people actually buy an online course thanks to free content.

What are the benefits of inbound marketing for eLearning?

The strengths of inbound marketing go hand in hand with perceived weaknesses:

- **Costs**: paying professionals who make articles of interest to potential buyers of online courses is not actually a cost, but an investment that lasts over time. The material produced, in fact, always remains available to the company and, if updated and reused, can continuously increase its value. It is worthwhile to spend to have durable content compared to using your resources in a temporary advertising campaign, precisely because you buy resources that potentially last forever.
- **Duration**: producing content consistently helps to build a relationship of trust with potential customers, strengthening the image of the online training company and therefore increasing the chances of selling.
- **Measurement of results**: the direct results of inbound marketing can be measured with the use of simple analytical tools able to understand how many readers turn into buyers and how many of these then become promoters themselves.

How to plan an inbound marketing strategy for eLearning?

To best capture the benefits of inbound marketing it is necessary to have a clear strategy where the visitor moves from reader to potential customer and where the customer becomes a promoter. Having an inbound marketing strategy means:

- Connect with your customers, then understand who they are and how to help them make their purchase decisions;
- Plan relevant content that exactly answers potential customer questions. It makes no sense to use keywords only to attract visitors to the site without giving valuable information.
- Communicate content with a voice suitable for potential customers, paying attention to the way things are said so that everyone can use the content without difficulty.
- Create textual content and use images and videos that can be reused. The editorial plan includes both new contents that are valid at all times and content already produced to be transformed into infographics, video tutorials, etc.

The purpose of inbound marketing is to promote the eLearning company by offering free quality content that lasts over time and convoys the visitor on his journey of transformation from reader to client to promoter. To be effective, inbound marketing must

be based on a communication strategy that starts from the contact with the customer to which useful and updated content is offered.