

The Intelligent Inbound Podcast: Lessons Learned from a Revenue Leader Turned SaaS Co-Founder

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In This Episode ...



Has your inbound marketing agency embraced the idea of Intelligent Inbound® marketing being about a “culture of experimentation”? Can you turn abstract ideas into tangible deliverables? Are you transparent, and do you surround yourself with other transparent people you trust?

All this is part of the unique alchemy for inbound marketing strategy success for one former CMO turned SaaS co-founder.

Christine Bottagaro is co-founder and chief revenue officer at Resurface Labs, a software company that gives you insight into your application programming interfaces (APIs). Although she is a SaaS company co-founder and a chief revenue officer, she has profound marketing experience. She can cover everything from product marketing and customer programs to sales enablement and demand generation.

In this episode of the The Intelligent Inbound Podcast, Christine speaks about lessons learned via a transition from being a CMO at two previous posts to both a CRO and a co-founder of Resurface Labs.

Entrepreneurship, Value-Adding, and Crucial Conversations

When asked what made her want to build Resurface Labs—the startup Christine co-founded in June 2020, smack dab in the middle of the first and scariest part of the global COVID-19 pandemic—she talked about three questions that came to her mind:

- Will I be challenged?
- Can I add value?
- Do I get to work with cool people?

Switching gears from sales to marketing was not effortless from Christine’s perspective. She described a “brain shift” that had to happen, so she didn’t forget that she always had to keep playing on the inbound marketing side of things, even as a leader.

As a business leader, she has been surprised to find that her biggest key performance indicator (KPI) is now her meeting calendar. She discovered her immediate need has shifted from focusing on data to focusing on the diverse group of individuals she wants to have crucial conversations with. That means meaningful, relevant conversations with the people knocking on her door and vice versa.

Inbound Marketing Techniques That Produce Tangible Results

Inbound marketers are sometimes faced with the challenge of having to justify their goals. They are often tasked with explaining to layperson executives why building buyer confidence is worth pouring your teams' social capital, hardline assets like software, and collateral resources into an investment.

Building buyer confidence is a good investment from an ROI standpoint. Still, it has to be about exactly what's happening with their website or with their pain points. It can't be abstractions.

Providing value to the user before they are your customers is critical. HubSpot offers a [website grader tool](#) that lets you plug in the URL and watch it return detailed data about the exact things you need to improve—a potential goldmine for inbound marketers.

Intelligent Inbound Marketing as a Culture of Experimentation

In the marketing world, data and metrics are easy to find—they're everywhere. But sometimes, what you want to know is what happens when you tinker with processes. Whether it's just a new website or microsite designed for people who want to learn first, that can be a really low lift, and experiments can be smaller than you might think they need to be.

Christine firmly believes that an essential step in the process is being realistic and knowing when to walk away. If you have an A/B test you started running over a year ago on a call to action (CTA) in your navigation on your homepage, what is it doing still sitting there?

We see so many abandoned experiments in marketing. That's why it is a shortcoming to utilize a persona or buying stage when frameworking inbound marketing content. You have to help prepare for it because it's expected. It's narrow to believe we have to hit just this one persona. There's a whole group of people.

SaaS Creation: A Focus on People, Transparency, and Storytelling

The reality is that to be successful, you have to build a company culture where failure is simply failure—there is the opportunity to fail fast and see where that leads you, explains Christine. She thinks that will ideally lead to full transparency.

Transparency is closely connected to the idea of trust, a reputation for integrity, and people-first collaboration skills. Using stories to highlight the problem, the steps to correct it, and how it has worked for groups of respected people in the industry will turn heads. This happens because you highlight the problem not in terms of you, but in terms of how people are solving it.

Making Conversions + Offering Your Clients an Off-Ramp to Success

Christine recalled being the prospect in a marketing cadence and receiving a fabulous newsletter—on the surface. She finished reading, was sold, and was expecting the next step to come, whether it be an offer to sign up for a demo or something else. But it never did.

The newsletter failed to provide the critical CTA step. Inbound marketing aimed at increasing the buyer's knowledge base and understanding during the awareness stage is great, but at some point as a marketer, you have to give people a path to end their buyer's journey and make a purchase.

Tied into this notion is the expectation that buyers will align with your buyer persona, but in reality they may not. It should be about building confidence around a solution and how that solution uniquely solves whatever it is the buyer is looking for—the unique value proposition.

When everyone is working as a unified team, it's nice to have that outside viewpoint. It's nice to have experience of looking at and consuming other people's marketing and automation tactics and strategy. This viewpoint shines a light on what you could be doing, too, in providing your clients a secure off-ramp to success.

Coming Soon ...

Please join us next week for another episode of The Intelligent Inbound Podcast. You'll meet other industry experts who challenge the status quo for inbound marketing. If you learned something today from Christine, please pay it forward by rating and reviewing us on your podcast listening platform of choice.

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Christine Bottogaro can be reached at christine@resurface.io. She is happy to talk to all kinds of people in person or via LinkedIn. She's tough to miss these days.