



# Modelo de *inbound marketing* como estrategia de comunicación política y de gobierno: atraer e involucrar a la ciudadanía<sup>1</sup>

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**ES Resumen.** El estudio trata de dar respuesta a la ausencia de experiencias del *inbound marketing* en la comunicación política e institucional en España, donde su uso se limita al ámbito comercial. Mediante un estudio exploratorio se analiza el comportamiento y el impacto de la metodología en un caso de comunicación institucional de una administración local y se estudia la reacción de los usuarios. Se concluye que el *inbound marketing* aplicado a un caso de comunicación política supera las expectativas y proporciona mejores datos que los del marketing empresarial. El resultado obtenido se considera satisfactorio en cuanto a que se llega al público objetivo y se producen un elevado número de conversiones a leads y cierres.

**Palabras clave:** Información digital; comunicación institucional; e-gobernanza; *inbound marketing*; inbound de gobierno.

EN

## Inbound marketing model as a political and government communication strategy: attracting and involving citizens

**EN Abstract.** This study tries to respond to the absence of *inbound marketing* experiences in political and institutional communication in Spain, where its use is limited to the commercial sphere. Through an exploratory study, the behavior and impact of the methodology is analyzed in a case of institutional communication of a local administration and the reaction of the users is studied. It is concluded that *inbound marketing* applied to a case of political communication exceeds expectations and provides better data than business marketing. The result is satisfactory in terms of reaching the target audience and producing a high number of conversions to leads and closures.

**Keywords:** Digital information; institutional communication; e-governance; *inbound marketing*; inbound government.

**Summary:** 1. Introduction. Political Marketing and Inbound Marketing. 2.1. History of the concept of Inbound Marketing 2.2. Political and Government Inbound Marketing. Methodological framework. 3.1. Spatial and temporal framework. 3.2. Application procedure. 4. Results. 5. Analysis and discussion. 6. Conclusions. Bibliographical references

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## 1. Introduction

In a world in which the use of technologies has brought about changes in people's needs and behaviors, political and institutional communication is also influenced. Communication, thanks to web 2.0 and 3.0, allows citizens to create and publish digital content in an open, horizontal and bidirectional way, without interruptions and transforming the web into a space that can invite citizens to participate and express themselves.

Politics is making use of technological advances for its own benefit, in the same way that in the mid-twentieth century market research and advertising techniques were incorporated into political communication to project the image of candidates and persuade citizens. Thus, political marketing emerged in the 1950s in the United States, where it underwent a particular development due to its electoral system, its democratic tradition and the massive power of the media (Martínez Pandiani, 2007).

New technologies are changing economic structures, social and consumer habits, behavior and, ultimately, citizens (Alonso and Adell, 2011). Policy proposals cannot ignore contemporary social and behavioral changes.

In this new environment, the practice of politics has become much more complex. New forms of communication are being explored, more in line with the needs and interests expressed by today's individualized citizen, and which necessarily involve the use of new technologies and websites as a new place for relationships.

The present work aims to study the reaction of a specific community of users when confronted with a communication action of a local government by applying the inbound marketing methodology, a non-intrusive marketing technique that is not only aimed to get final customers, but also to keep them satisfied and take care of prescribers (Aguado, 2015).

Inbound marketing has been widely implemented in the commercial sphere but there are hardly any practical experiences in Spain in political and government communication. Therefore, through an exploratory study, the research measures the innovative application of this technique in the field of politics with a view, on the one hand, to its possible application in the public sphere and, on the other hand, to establish the basis for other more rigorous research.

The HubSpot platform was used to conduct the study, a benchmark in inbound marketing that relaunched the concept of this methodology, defining it as a coordinated system of online marketing techniques that result in a strong effect of attracting visits to a website, new business opportunities and, finally, new and valuable customers (Valdés, 2012).

## 2. Political Marketing and Inbound Marketing

Political analyst Stanley Kelley (1983) first used the term "political marketing" to highlight the importance of marketing professionals when conveying ideas that would have an impact on the voter. In contrast, Alonso and Adell (2011) highlight that, under sign manipulation theories, political marketing was more closely identified with propaganda or mass persuasion than with the implementation of business marketing techniques in politics.

In 1952, television advertising was aired for political purposes, and in 1960 the first televised debate between JFK and Nixon took place, an event that changed politics forever and marked the history of electoral campaigns. The aftermath of that debate led Nixon to have the first professionalized political marketing campaign in history in 1968. A decade later, Great Britain followed in the footsteps of the United States and Margaret Thatcher became a political product of market research. In 1980, Ronald Reagan also used this technique to shape the image of a president.

Barack Obama is the reference of political marketing and his electoral campaigns are considered milestones. Castro Lampón (2009) considers that branding and marketing techniques were undoubtedly the key to Obama's electoral victory. In 1985, the American Marketing Association (AMA) redefined the concept of marketing, and political marketing became an official discipline, somewhere between marketing and political science.

Martín Salgado (2007) states that political marketing has grown in parallel with the development of the media and communication technologies. The media could not be limited to entertainment. Radio and television played, from the start, a crucial role in the revolutionary transformation of political communications that reached their maturity in the 1970s (Crespi, 2000).

Political advertising and debates were the main tools of political marketing until the Internet was incorporated into election campaigns in the 90s, causing a real revolution. In the 21st century, most candidates use almost all political marketing techniques and any political group running for election must know everything that political marketing can offer if it does not wish to set out in a position of unmistakable inferiority with respect to its competitors (Alonso and Adell, 2011).

### 2.1. History of the concept of Inbound marketing

The Internet has changed the world in which companies operate, forced to adapt to a new scenario in which traditional marketing, perceived as an intrusion, has lost competitiveness. This major shortcoming is corrected by

online marketing (Opreana and Vinerean, 2015). The combination of various digital marketing actions, such as organic search engine optimization, content marketing, social media presence or web analytics, can be encompassed under the concept of inbound marketing, which aims to reach consumers in a non-intrusive way through the Internet (Caragher 2013), discarding annoying actions.

Inbound marketing is a sequential methodology focused on attracting people who first recognize that they have a problem, then commit to researching it, and lastly make a decision about the strategy, method or approach to solving it. This is what is called the "buyer's journey" in the inbound methodology, according to HubSpot Academy. The agency InboundCycle points out that the buying process or "buyer's journey" refers to the stages a person goes through from

the moment they realize they have a need until they purchase a product or service to solve it, and the inbound methodology strategy consists of accompanying the user throughout that process.

The concept of this marketing discipline in charge of attracting new customers in a natural way (Toledano and San Emeterio, 2015) was created in 2005 by Brian Halligan, co-founder of the marketing software company HubSpot, and became popular with the publication of the book "Inbound Marketing: Get Found Using Google, Social Media and Blogs", by Halligan and Shah (2005).

Inbound marketing is based on attraction, and its methodology consists of four stages: attract, convert, close and delight. Consumers find the product or service on their own initiative, attracted by quality content, so that attention is not bought, but earned (Del Santo and Álvarez, 2012). Inbound cannot exist without content, as it attracts potential customers by generating trust and credibility, which is the true differential value of this marketing discipline. Content has to be valuable, relevant, of quality and adapted to the place in the buyer's journey where the user is. HubSpot Academy qualifies content as the fuel of the inbound methodology, because it has the function of moving people from one stage to another. It provides information that can help the user in the purchase and consumption decision-making process (Castelló, 2013).

Content is a critical part of the inbound strategy, because it is not enough to have excellent content, but it is also necessary to make it available to users through different online marketing tools: website, company blog, social networks, landing pages, calls to action or emails, among others. In short, it's about bringing content to where buyers spend their time (HubSpot Academy). This is where inbound marketing comes into play and its importance in the world of digital marketing to reach consumers in a non-intrusive way, in such a way that it brings value to the company and consumers (Miguel-Romero, 2014).

In the inbound methodology, the protagonist is the user, who is provided with a pleasant experience based on the resolution of their problems through relevant content. Interactivity and participation are the most prominent elements because they provide valuable relationships that transcend the limitations of traditional media (Opreana and Vinerean, 2015).

Pleasing is the key to the inbound world, and it is the reason it is different from other marketing disciplines. According to this philosophy, pleasing is achieved by generating trust in each interaction with the user, which in turn helps to retain customers, encourages loyalty and creates long-lasting and stable relationships. The goal should be customer loyalty (Castañeda and Luque, 2008).

This method of online strategy has among its main advantages that it works personally with the person, its low cost, high profitability and that all actions can be measured and monitored. This vital information provided by web analytics allows us to remain flexible and vary the course (Del Santo and Alvarez 2012). Measurement is what makes marketing a science rather than just a tool (Opreana and Vinerean, 2015), and for a successful inbound marketing campaign it is necessary to study which strategies work and which ones need adjustments to create relevant content. In this discipline, measuring marketing effectiveness and efficiency is necessary and manageable.

## **2.2. Political and Government Inbound Marketing**

Nowadays, users do not perceive great differences between political parties, and they are forced to stand out through creative communication. Politics is sold more than practiced: candidates become merchandise where the packaging is more important than the content, campaigns are presented as mere commercial promotions, and the electorate is studied as just another market (Contreras, 1990).

Political marketing, increasingly competitive, has gone from being an alternative to a necessity (Valdés, 2012), and inbound marketing applied to politics and government is posed as an interesting option due to it being a methodology focused on the user (or potential voter) who is offered valuable content with their needs and the channels where they spend their time in mind.

In an election campaign, political inbound marketing consists of designing a strategy to guide the person through the voter's journey following the four steps set by the methodology until they become a convinced voter: attracting traffic to the candidate's website through SEO, getting leads or prospects by offering a range of electoral content that encourages them to willingly subscribe to information lists, turning them into voters through a lead nurturing process (automated email chains containing information tailored to the user's interests) and, finally, transforming voters into campaign promoters by encouraging them to convey a favorable opinion in their area of influence (Del Pozo, 2015).

The difference with traditional political marketing is that it lacks personalization, requires mass mailings and is focused on positioning the candidate and his program. Political inbound marketing targets the voter with whom it is trying to connect through content relevant to their lives. The success of the strategy consists of identifying the degree of sensitivity of the contact and stimulating their conversion process through personalized email marketing and email automation.

Political marketing is also used by the government. Quality public information improves the administration's service and citizens' perception of the institutions. In fact, institutional communication is a decisive element to achieve a better general management of the institution and a social projection of the institution that promotes the knowledge and participation of citizens (Aranes, 1996). By applying the inbound methodology to institutional communication, the user is, once again, placed at the center of the action.

The so-called citizen's journey begins when a person becomes interested in a government program or service and ends when they receive the assistance they desire to meet their need. Valuable content guides them through all stages. According to the HubSpot platform, the government's goal is to better engage citizens and achieve greater participation by leveraging attraction techniques.

### 3. Methodological framework

Political and government Inbound Marketing is a technique that has barely been implemented in Spain yet and there is no in-depth research on this topic. The methodological design follows a hypothesis-generating case study design (Lijphart, 2008). According to this author, hypothesis-generating case studies start with the formulation of possible hypotheses in relation to a phenomenon that has been little or not studied at all through the analysis of a case, followed by its verification based on the generalized study of cases. Their purpose would be to establish theoretical approaches in fields, areas and phenomena for which no theories yet exist. The case study can provide an outstanding explanatory value, contributing to the exploratory theoretical development of the phenomenon to be studied.

This type of methodological design is especially useful when the chosen topic has hardly been explored and recognized, as in the present case, and when it is difficult to formulate precise hypotheses or hypotheses of a certain generality. Similarly, it is an appropriate design when a new study phenomenon appears which, due to its novelty, does not admit a systematic description, or when the research resources or scope of the research are inadequate to undertake a more in-depth study.

This research explores and analyzes the behavior of users from the dissemination of an institutional communication campaign through the inbound marketing methodology applied in the context of a local administration. The aim is to detect a behavior that has not yet been explicitly formulated due to the absence of studies and research of this type.

#### 3.1. Spatial and temporal framework

Through the launch of an institutional communication campaign consisting of childbirth preparation courses in public swimming pools, the online relationship of the Huelva City Council with the citizens (G2C) is studied. Through the HubSpot tool, the Software as a Service (SaaS) platform that manages inbound campaigns, the behavior of users is analyzed during three of the four stages of the inbound marketing technique (attraction, conversion and closing). HubSpot is an all-in-one inbound marketing platform that incorporates all the functionalities for execution and monitoring in a single dashboard (i.e. the main results are displayed graphically on a single screen). This facilitates the process because all stages are measurable: number of visits, how many have been converted into sales opportunities or leads and how many contacts have been closed. In addition to providing this data, HubSpot also reports the source by which the contacts were attracted to the website. Two other measurement tools are added, the Facebook Pixel and Google Analytics, which provide other interesting data to draw conclusions.

The research was carried out throughout 25 days, from December 18, 2017 to January 11, 2018. It is aimed at pregnant women from the city of Huelva as well as other users and professionals interested in the AIPAP method (Integral and Pelvic Conditioning in Water for Childbirth). Due to time constraints, the research concludes at the closing stage, which in this case consists of pre-registration for the courses by means of a form, instead of reaching the stage of delight, with which user satisfaction is achieved. The selection of this sample of the population is established by the temporal opportunity that means the validity, at the time of the study, of this childbirth assistance program advertised by the Huelva City Council and aimed at pregnant women residing in the city of Huelva and health professionals interested in these programs.

### 3.2. Application procedure

The research starts with the publication of the web page [www.matronataciónhuelva.com](http://www.matronataciónhuelva.com), previously indexed in Google so that it appears in search engines and linked to HubSpot so that measurements can be taken. In order to attract visitors to the website during the attraction stage, classic institutional communication tools are used: advertising spots, press releases, the City Council's website and social networks. All these communication resources contain the link to attract visitors to the website.

The spot is broadcast on municipal television as well as on the [matronataciónhuelva.com](http://matronataciónhuelva.com) website. The press release is sent to the media on the first day of the investigation, and is published by the local media and the City Council's website. Publications on the *Facebook* and *Twitter* accounts @AytoHuelva are made on December 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 31. On December 28 and January 2, advertising was published on *Facebook* and on January 9, the digital newspaper *Huelva Buenas Noticias* published a report.

The website that users reach through the different sources of attraction consists of three pages. The home page, with the domain [matronataciónhuelva.com](http://matronataciónhuelva.com), contains a short description, a spot, an illustrative picture and a call action button that leads to a landing page with a pre-registration form for the courses. The form asks for name and surname, expected delivery date, address, telephone number and zip code. Once the user has pre-registered for the course, the user reaches the closing stage.

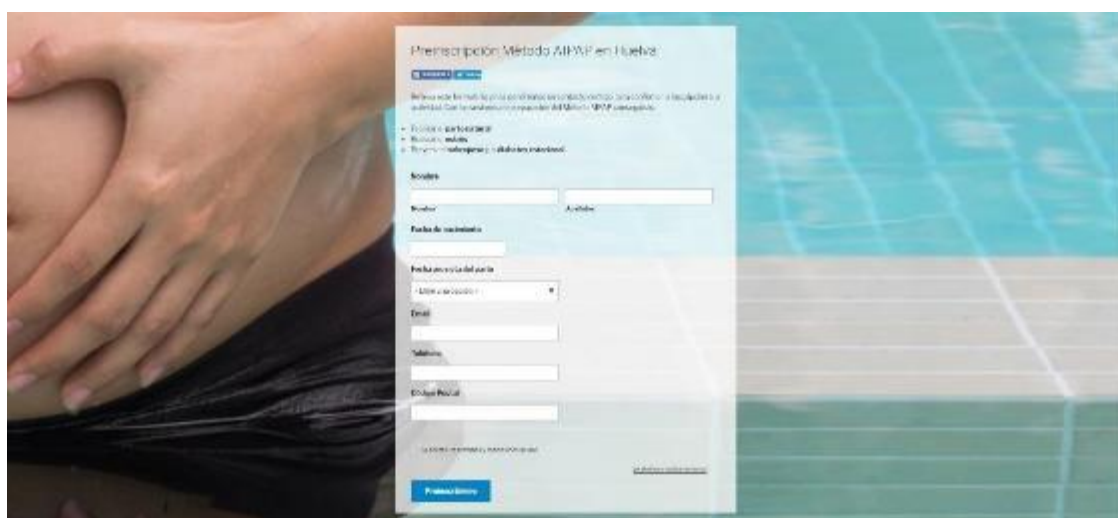
The home page also contains two buttons, "more information" and "download ebook", which lead to a third page containing a white paper with information about the courses and the benefits of the AIPAP method as well as a simple form for downloading an ebook with the same content. The form requires first name, last name, email and current situation ("pregnant woman" and "other"). The download of the ebook transforms the visits into sales opportunities or leads, reaching the conversion stage.

Image 1



Source: Web page [matronataciónhuelva.com](http://matronataciónhuelva.com) (page 1)

Image 2



Source: Web page [matronataciónhuelva.com](http://matronataciónhuelva.com) (page 2)

Image 3

¿Qué es el método AIPAP?

Contenido [\[ocultar\]](#)

¿Qué es el método AIPAP?  
 ¿Por qué incluir esta actividad a tu preparación al parto?  
 ¿A quién va dirigido el método AIPAP?  
 ¿Que vas a conseguir con el método AIPAP?  
[Metodología](#)  
[Coste](#)

[Compartir 0](#) [Twitter](#)

Rellena este formulario para descargar la información sobre el método AIPAP

**Nombre**

**Nombre** **Apellidos**

**Email**

☐ Si acepto los términos y condiciones de uso

[Ver términos y condiciones de uso](#)

**Descargar**



Source: Matronatacionhuelva.com website (page 3).

The publication of the website coincides in terms of timing with the launch of the content through the official channels of the Huelva City Council to place the campaign at the beginning of the funnel of the inbound methodology, specifically in the attraction of visits to the website. Once the user has arrived at the website, they can either abandon it or move forward, downloading the *ebook* and becoming a sales opportunity or *lead*, and/or pre-registering for the course, reaching the closing stage.

Image 4



stages of the inbound methodology

1. Attraction stage: There are different options to successfully achieve the attraction part of the inbound methodology. The most basic ones are search engine optimization or SEO, content strategy through blogs and social networks. Due to time constraints, and taking advantage of the fact that the Huelva City Council has a positioning already and is considered an "expert" in the eyes of society, the research enters the attraction stage directly with the institution's own instruments, dispensing with SEO and blogging strategies (content

writing in blogs). The content with which the study is launched to attract visitors to the website is the information

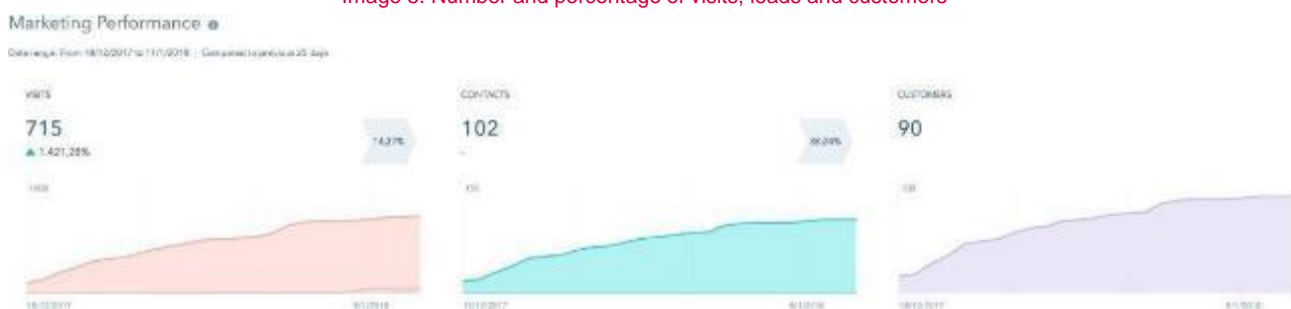
through a press release published by the media, a spot on municipal television, the website and the City Council's social networks (*Facebook* and *Twitter*).

2. Conversion stage: Conversion is when a visit is transformed into a sales opportunity or lead by means of a downloadable document (ebook) through a form which aims to obtain a list of subscribers. In this study, leads are not only pregnant women, but anyone who, for professional or other reasons, has downloaded the information. A health professional, for example, could be a contact in this case
3. Closing stage. Closing takes place elsewhere on the home page, on a landing page that contains a form for course registration, which can be accessed through social networks or the website's call action.
4. Delight stage. The process does not end at closure, but at delight, when the customer becomes a prescriber. Due to the peculiarities of the research, the closing is the last stage of the study. At the end of this stage, a list of contacts will have been obtained, with whom the City Council can establish a personalized and satisfactory relationship, becoming prescribers in the future.

#### 4. Results

According to HubSpot, at the end of the study, the *matronatacionhuelva.com* website received a total of 715 visits during the 25 days. Out of these, 102 became leads (14.27%), 90 of which reached the closing stage, or in other words, users who pre-registered for the course (88.24%).

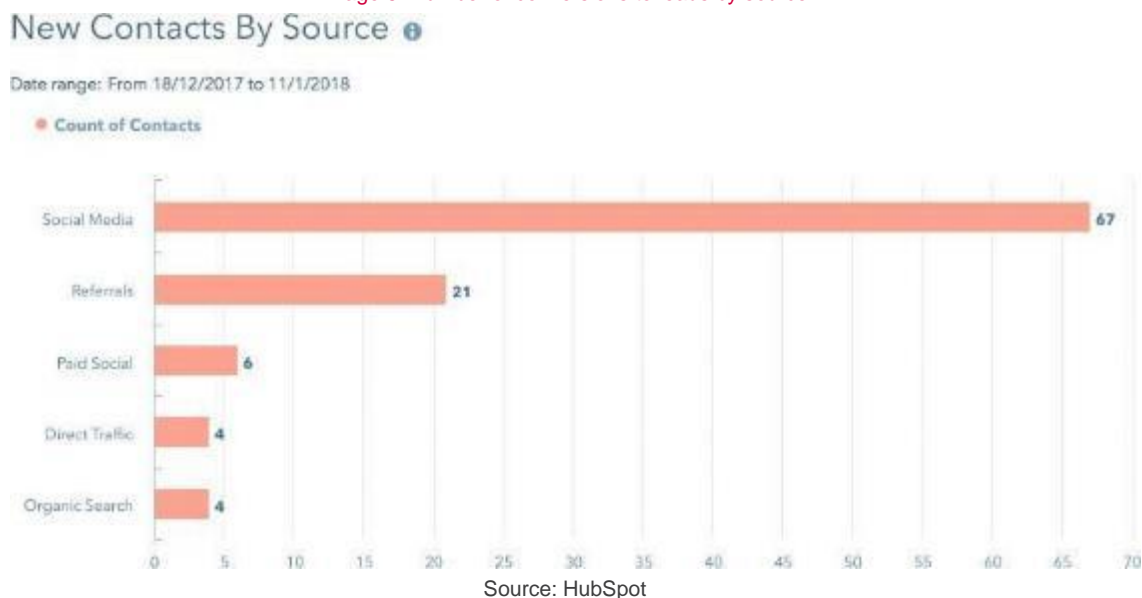
Image 5. Number and percentage of visits, leads and customers



Source: HubSpot

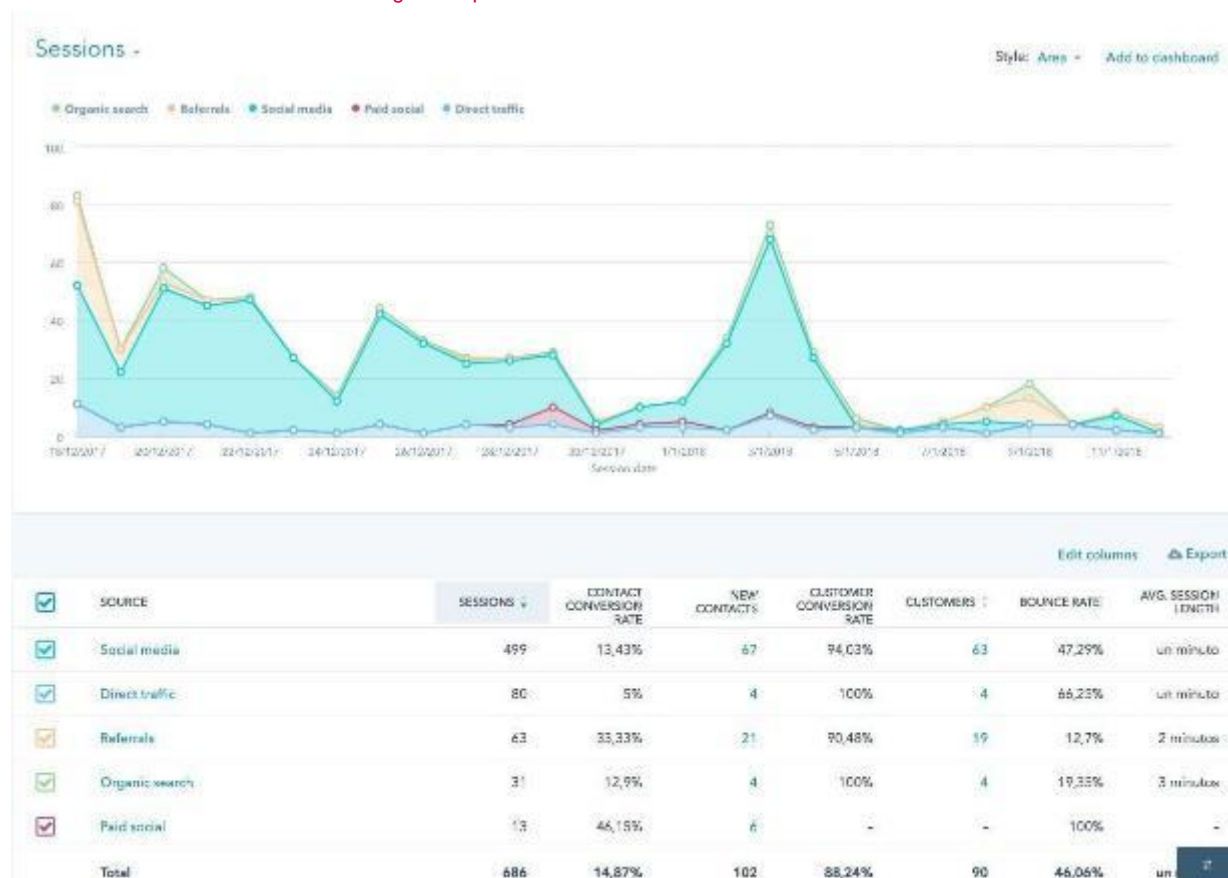
The conversions per day to leads indicate that there is continuity throughout the research period, although there is more activity around the time of posting on social networks. On January 10 and 11, there were no conversions at all. Image 6 shows in green the days of publication on social networks.

Image 6. Number of conversions to leads by source.



The report of sources analyzes the channels that generated the web traffic that afterwards moved down the funnel from the attraction stage. It allows us to study how the efforts that have been made to bring visitors to the website and that trigger the methodology respond.

Image 7. Report of sources of attraction to the website.



Fuente: HubSpot

The 686 sessions or unique users generated 715 visits to the website in the attraction stage. The channel that has provided the most contacts is social media, with 499 sessions (72.7%) and 67 conversions, of which 63 have reached the closing stage (94.03%).

Referrals (a concept that refers to the situation of contacts that arrive at our website through a link on another website) is in second place in terms of conversions, with 63 unique users, 19 leads (33.93%) and 18 customers (94.74% of leads). The *Huelva Buenas Noticias* portal leads the percentage of conversions to customers and is a key element at the beginning and end of the campaign, coinciding with the publication of the press release and a report on the AIPAP technique two days before the end of the research. This portal has a very low bounce or abandonment rate (12.5%) in comparison to the very high rate of conversions to leads or customers.

Conversions from paid social media (i.e. when a person clicks and enters the advertising space that appears while browsing their social networks) are in third position; they are produced by the effect of the type of ad called "lead generation" on *Facebook*, which consists of a publication with a form that the user can directly fill out without having to enter the website, becoming a lead or a customer, as the case may be. It has been shown to a very small universe, the 303 people who have visited the website but have not advanced to the conversion or closing stage. This data is provided by Facebook's Pixel. This modality has generated 13 sessions, of which 6 turned into leads (46.15%) and none into customers. The amount spent on this advertising is 6.94 euros; the cost per lead is 0.53 euros.

The social paid graph does not show the conversions generated through the promoted publication from December 28, as these were made directly on the *matronatacionhuelva.com* website, not on Facebook's form. That advertising has reached 10,207 people, generated 152 clicks on the link and 42 euros were invested. The cost per click is 0.28 euros.

Direct traffic is in fourth place, with 80 sessions to the website, which generate 4 conversions to leads (5%) that finally reach the closing stage (100%).

Organic traffic is in last position, with 31 unique users that result in 4 conversions to leads (12.9%) which in turn are converted to customers (100%).

The traffic analysis indicates that social networks are the source through which most visitors, leads and customers enter, while referrals are in second position with respect to customer generation and have the highest conversion rate in relation to users entering the website (30.1%).

In general, sales opportunities or leads are also very relevant in this study because, although they do not reach the closing stage, they do provide, through the ebook download form, very significant data that allows us to continue working with it so that it progresses through the funnel. In addition, it provides the institution with a very interesting database of contacts for future communication actions.

Social media (67) and referrals (21) are the sources with the greatest capacity to generate leads in absolute terms,

although paid social is the source with the highest percentage of conversion to leads (46.1%) through the form inserted directly in the *Facebook* publication. Despite this, paid social is the only source that has achieved no conversions to customers. Referrals also show a good indicator (33.3%) in this section.

Table 1. Conversion rate of sessions to clients.

Source	Sessions	Clients	Percentage
Social Media	499	63	12.6
Direct Traffic	80	4	5
Referrals	63	19	30.1
Organic Traffic	31	4	12.9
Paid Social	13	0	0

Source: own elaboration.

Table 2. Conversion rate of sessions to leads.

Source	Sessions	Leads	% Conversion
Social Media	499	67	13.4
Direct Traffic	80	4	5
Referrals	63	21	33.3
Organic Traffic	31	4	12.9
Paid Social	13	6	46.1

Source: own elaboration.

The average bounce rate on the website (46.06%) is within normal parameters, being very low in referrals (12.7%) and organic search (19.35%).

In relation to the path that the user follows when he enters the website, it can be seen that they first pre-register and then download the ebook. In other words, from the attraction stage, they go directly to the closing stage, becoming a customer.

Image 8. Diagram of contact behavior on the web. Source: Google Analytics



Source: Google Analytics.

Regarding the demographic data provided by *Google Analytics*, by age, all visitors are between 25 and 54 years old, with the 35 to 44 age group being the most common. By sex, 90.2% are women and 9.8% are men.

According to interests, i.e., the content of other pages also visited by *matronatacionhuelva.com* users, 19.91% of the public has viewed job search portals, 9.49% for hotels and travel and 8.33% for women's clothing and accessories.

5. Analysis and discussion

Public affairs have traditionally been a unidirectional kind of communication. The application of the inbound marketing methodology, has sought to offer, from a local institution, a closer relationship with citizens, demonstrating that it knows their needs and understands their interests.

At the time of the research, there are around 820 pregnant women in the city of Huelva, of whom only those who are in the second trimester of pregnancy (12-15 weeks) without risk or medical contraindication can take the childbirth preparation activity with the AIPAP methodology. 25 days after the application of the inbound methodology, 90 women were pre-registered after reaching the closing stage, showcasing an excellent response from the target audience.

The application of online marketing with the inbound methodology to an institutional communication proposal has been positive; and it corresponds to the approach of Alonso and Adell (2011) when they state that the incursion of technology creates new citizens who use it to express themselves, communicate, relate, seek their leisure, find work, develop it, etc. In agreement with these authors, the fact that technology causes immediacy and that citizen interaction takes place without delay may be an important factor in the high number of people who participated in the offered activity.

In general, the conversion rates of the contacts presented by this methodology applied to a case of institutional communication are very high in relation to other inbound marketing processes, as evidenced by the conversion of 14.27% of visits to leads. A closing rate of 88.24% is practically unknown in the business field, where the standard is a percentage of less than half of the leads.

The high conversion rates explain the high number of clients obtained despite the fact that visits to the website (715) are not significant. This may be due to two factors: either users have come with a very clear idea of pre-registering for the activity, or they have been convinced by what they have seen on the website. Therefore, this is a highly qualified audience that shows great interest and interacts until the closing.

This approach is in line with the line expressed by Castelló (2013) when he states that the content strategy becomes the fundamental piece, as it seeks to attract potential customers by generating trust and credibility, positioning the company as an expert in its sector of activity.

In this study, social networks are the best positioned source for attracting visits and acquiring customers. In fact, social media have an enormous weight in political marketing because they have acquired great relevance for people, as evidenced by different analyses (IAB Spain, 2017). In addition to the number of followers, the importance of social networks in political marketing lies in the possibility of the political party or institution to have a highly segmented target audience that reacts more positively than the general public. These possibilities are greater in the age group between 16 and 45 years, where there is greater consumption of social networks.

Given that Facebook is the social network with the most followers in Spain, in this study it is also the social medium that provides the most contacts, offering, as well, an unusually high conversion rate. Twitter, on the other hand, has not managed to generate engagement, which confirms that it is a social network that does not create social engagement beyond itself.

Institutional and political communication through social networks generates a closeness and sense of proximity that is very well received among citizens, since it allows a direct and bidirectional relationship without intermediaries. It has been demonstrated in this case that social networks are communication channels that can be used to solve problems and challenges in marketing (Miguel-Romero, 2014), and given that people are spending increasingly more time on the Internet, companies and institutions should incorporate social networks into their marketing strategies.

The referral data show the greater influence of the digital newspaper *Huelva Buenas Noticias* compared to other media, as well as the website of the Huelva City Council. This is a circumstance that must be taken into account in the design of the general communication policy of the institution.

It has been proved that the City Council's website has not worked as a source of attracting visitors. This means that this site may be fulfilling its function as a mandatory instrument of the regulations of citizen participation and transparency, as well as for other types of enquiries, but it is not a preferential means by which citizens are informed.

The high conversion rate through referrals means that the contact has reached the page and has become a customer thanks to content that they have found valuable. Therefore, the content strategy has been part of the

general strategy of the communication action and has been in line with the rest of the actions. Good content generates engagement, i.e. it is capable of generating and establishing a bond with the public (Toledano and San Emeterio, 2015).

Advertising on social networks using this methodology is cheap. The cost per click on the promoted ad is 0.28 euros, while the cost per lead through Facebook's form is 0.53 euros, well below the average cost of advertising in commercial marketing. These data confirm the higher profitability of inbound marketing compared to other forms of online marketing.

Beyond cost savings, the efficiency of selling a product on the Internet is almost twice as high as through outbound techniques (Miguel-Palacios, 2016). However, although cheaper than traditional advertising, the content on which the practice of inbound is based also consumes resources such as time, people, production of materials, etc. (Toledano and San Emeterio, 2015).

The good organic search results are striking considering that this is a website with just three pages, with hardly any copy (i.e. hardly any written content on the web) and with just one month of existence. The data indicate that Google has indexed the page in search engines without making revisions or penalties during the process, which indicates that the good practices and recommendations suggested in the inbound methodology for the development of web pages are effective. Organic positioning is essential for the success of any website, hence the need to follow an appropriate inbound marketing strategy to avoid "disappearing" from the online market (Miguel Romero, 2014).

The average bounce rate (46.06%) is within the normal parameters of any website. However, it is very low in referrals (12.7%) and organic search (19.35%). This could explain that many users come to the website, read the White Paper and subsequently become leads or customers thanks to the positive effect this content has had on them.

The influence of the white paper can also be seen in the path that the visitor follows when they enter the website: reading the information, pre-registering for the activity and downloading the ebook to preserve the content. In other words, they reach the closing stage before the conversion stage.

Again, the valuable content is appreciated by the user and allows the institution to obtain, through the form, more information about the person downloading the ebook (in this case if it is a pregnant woman or another type of person interested in this topic, such as parents, health professionals, etc.).

For political communication, it is important to know both the demographic data and the interests of voters in order to make proposals and develop content tailored to their needs, and that, additionally, can be appealing to them. In the study carried out, and with the support of Google Analytics, it was found that many women who have visited the *matronatacionhuelva.com* website are also interested in employment matters. This information could be valuable to guide municipal policy and communication actions of the City Council.

This aspect in regards to interests is particularly relevant for a public institution. Knowing the community makes the creation of profiles easier, analogous to the buyer personas of commercial marketing (i.e., the fictitious representation of the target audience of a given product to be advertised), with specific information on demographic and psychographic data in order to subsequently create personalized content for them. Institutions can provide relevant information to citizens and better serve them by segmenting and distributing content based on their specific interests.

All the data analyzed in the study has been extracted thanks to the measurement of results, an essential aspect in any promotional or communication action. New technologies allow instant monitoring of the strategy's development, which makes decision making easier at all times.

In short, a new form of digital political marketing has been explored with the understanding that if voters and citizens in general have changed, institutions and parties have to respond, creating new forms and spaces of relationship that enable interactions and reactions from the public to whom this political communication is addressed. In addition, politicians already in power need tools that promote a positive image of their government work (Del Pozo, 2015).

It has been proven that, compared to traditional political marketing, which lacks personalization and requires mass mailings to position and sell the product, political and government inbound marketing places the user at the center of the action, for whom valuable content is generated based on the needs and tastes of the target audience.

In this strategy, the channel through which the sender communicates is determined by the place where users are located and are more inclined to interact. In this sense, the digital ecosystem in general and social networks in particular become very relevant and make transit through the different stages of the methodology easier.

It is, however, a methodology that is not easy to apply and, without adequate expertise, it is easy to make mistakes in planning, creation, distribution and analysis. Furthermore, although it is cheaper than other marketing techniques, it requires investment in technical, economic and human resources.

For the method to work properly, specific inbound marketing tools are needed to avoid the risk of focusing efforts on technology instead of on the strategy needed for the objectives set. Without the right tools, instead of inbound marketing, a collection of online marketing techniques would be being applied.

In cases such as the one studied, a local administration lacks sufficiently qualified and specialized personnel in this type of techniques, making it almost essential to resort to external services for its implementation in the institutional communication strategy. Technical and economic reasons may hinder the use of this methodology in public institutions.

## 6. Conclusions

It is proven that inbound marketing applied to a case of political communication exceeds expectations and provides better data than corporate marketing. The result is satisfactory in that the target audience has been reached and there has been a high number of conversions to leads and closures.

Valuable content works and provides a highly qualified audience that confirms one of the theories of inbound marketing: good content leads to the website a quality audience, which is the one that converts and reduces bounce rates. It is the user who, attracted by the content, comes to the website on their own from social networks, links on other websites or through search engines (Toledano and San Emeterio, 2015).

The method has proven to be effective and when SEO cannot be applied, as in this case, other actions can be implemented to attract an audience without having to spend anything or very little on advertising.

The methodology, correctly planned from the beginning of the process, has yielded positive results. The creation of the website and the landing pages following the recommendations and good practices of inbound have favored search engine indexing and conversions. As Miguel-Romero (2014) states, the way the website is designed and how the content is structured will achieve a better ranking in search engines, as well as attract and retain consumers.

Automation helped the method to run smoothly and digital management to develop easily. Having observed all the processes has given the possibility to intervene and make decisions when necessary. In agreement with Miguel-Romero (2014), the substantial advantage offered by inbound marketing is the ease and speed of obtaining results on campaigns in almost real time.

It has been proven that, in a local administration, social networks are more powerful than the institution's website to inform and communicate with citizens. For Miguel-Romero (2014), the social media strategy has become a part of great significance of the SEO positioning strategy and therefore of inbound marketing.

It has also been proven that web communication, understood as a form of direct person-to-person communication, works. It is effective in defining a target audience and aiming to reach them with content that appeals to their interests. This same objective using traditional advertising (interruption marketing) is much more expensive and reaches an audience that is outside the target audience. Government marketing goes beyond promotional activities (Barrientos, 2010).

Political and government inbound marketing offers new communication possibilities that institutions and political parties are not currently taking advantage of. Through the contact pool created from the forms, this method of communication offers a direct and close relationship with the citizen and allows the creation of stable bonds so that they become a prescriber.

Through this marketing technique, demographic and interest data are obtained that can determine the future communication actions of a political party or institution. Therefore, it is in line with the definition of political marketing, understood as a technique that allows one to know and understand the needs, desires and aspirations of a society to then gain power and solve those needs (Rivera and Suárez, 2017).

The results obtained could be considered a success story in commercial marketing. However, unlike in the USA, in Spain there are no political and government inbound marketing experiences that can be used in order to establish comparisons.

The real power of inbound within public institutions lies in knowing, engaging, serving and pleasing citizens. To know the real effectiveness of the political and government inbound methodology, i.e. the satisfaction of the user so that they become a promoter, it is necessary to get to the delight stage. In fact, to please is the key in the inbound world, and in the case of political and government inbound, it is understood that satisfied citizens will become promoters and advocates of the administration's services, and will most likely share their positive experiences and help in the promotion. It is proposed that further research be conducted to reach this stage and analyze the behavior of the voter or user of the public administration in relation to the promoting entity.

In order to study the methodology in its entirety, it is proposed to carry out studies that use the tools specific to each of the stages of inbound marketing: blogs, website optimization and social networks in the attraction stage; ebooks, technical articles and informative pages in the conversion stage; e-mail and CRM (Customer Relationship Management, an IT tool used for the organization and management of contacts with customers in advertising and marketing) in the closing stage; and actions that contain innovation, communication and education to generate trust in the user when they reach the delight stage.

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