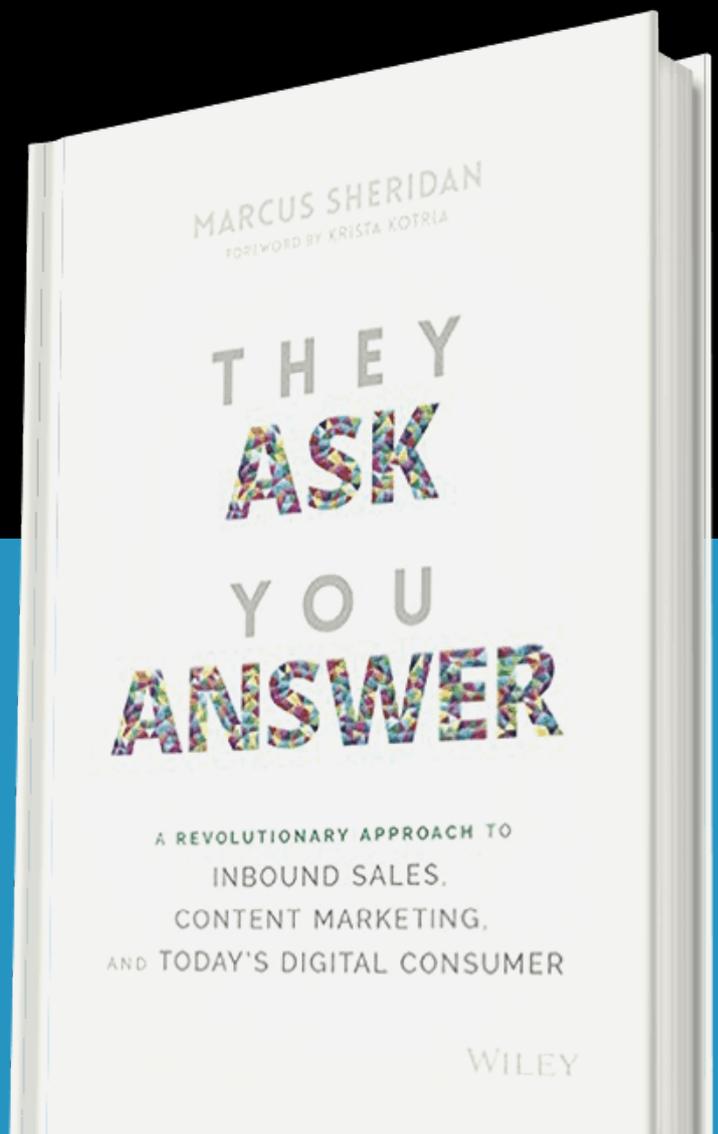


## Book Review

# They Ask, You Answer

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# Introduction



Marcus Sheridan has inspired marketers and salespeople across the world with his bestselling book, [They Ask, You Answer: A Revolutionary Approach to Inbound Sales, Content Marketing, and Today's Digital Consumer](#) (2017).

He explains how he saved his struggling company, River Pool and Spas, and made it into the most visited pool website.

With case studies, interviews, and his own story of success, Sheridan stresses

the importance of creating quality content.

They Ask, You Answer is popular here at Wellmeadow and among many of our clients, who find it a valuable and engaging guide to inbound marketing.

As a result, we have created a six-part summary of the book, which we hope you will find useful.

# Part 1



## ***A Very Different Way of Looking at Business, Marketing, and Trust***

Sheridan defines inbound marketing as the process of answering questions to attract customers. He argues that in doing so, you will gain their trust, leading to greater volumes of traffic, leads, and sales. He goes on to identify the content topics that are the most effective in generating sales, which he calls **“The Big Five.”**

# The Big Five

## 1. Pricing

Hiding the prices of products or services causes suspicion, so transparency is key.

## 2. Costs

Explain the factors that affect your prices within your content.

## 3. Problems

With trust at an all-time low, consumers 'worry more about what might go wrong than about what will go right.' Customers will be reassured if any possible limitations are acknowledged.

## 4. Comparisons

Consumers are keen to weigh out various options before making a purchasing decision. Answer their industry-based questions to gain their trust.

## 5. Reviews

Customers 'love knowing who everyone else loves, hates, and how they all stack up against each other.' Review your most successful competitors to establish yourself as a specialist in your industry.

"The Big Five" will help to eliminate customer doubt by addressing any concerns they may have, whether that be on pricing or reviews. Gain their trust by showing customers what they want to see.

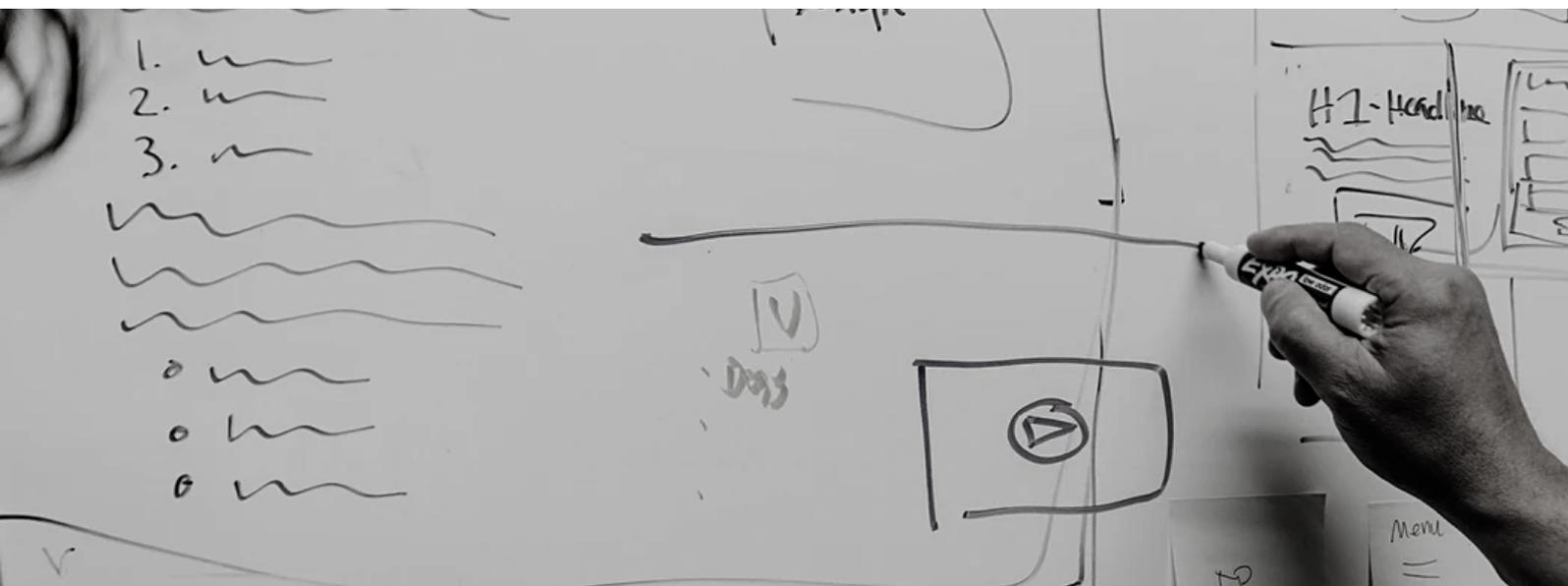
# Part 2

## ***The Impact of They Ask, You Answer on Sales Teams***

Sheridan argues that content marketing is the greatest sales tool. He uses the term, “assignment selling,” which he defines as content that is used in the sales process to address any questions or concerns. For example, a prospect can be encouraged to read a buying guide before a sales appointment so that they are better prepared.

To do this, the salesperson must embrace the role of a teacher and recognise their ‘**earned right to ask more of a prospect**’ when they are producing content for them.

We grossly underestimate the amount of content a customer will consume before making a buying decision. Sheridan proves this point with a customer, who read 374 pages of content from the River Pool and Spas website before making a purchase!



# Part 3

## **Implementation and Making It a Culture**

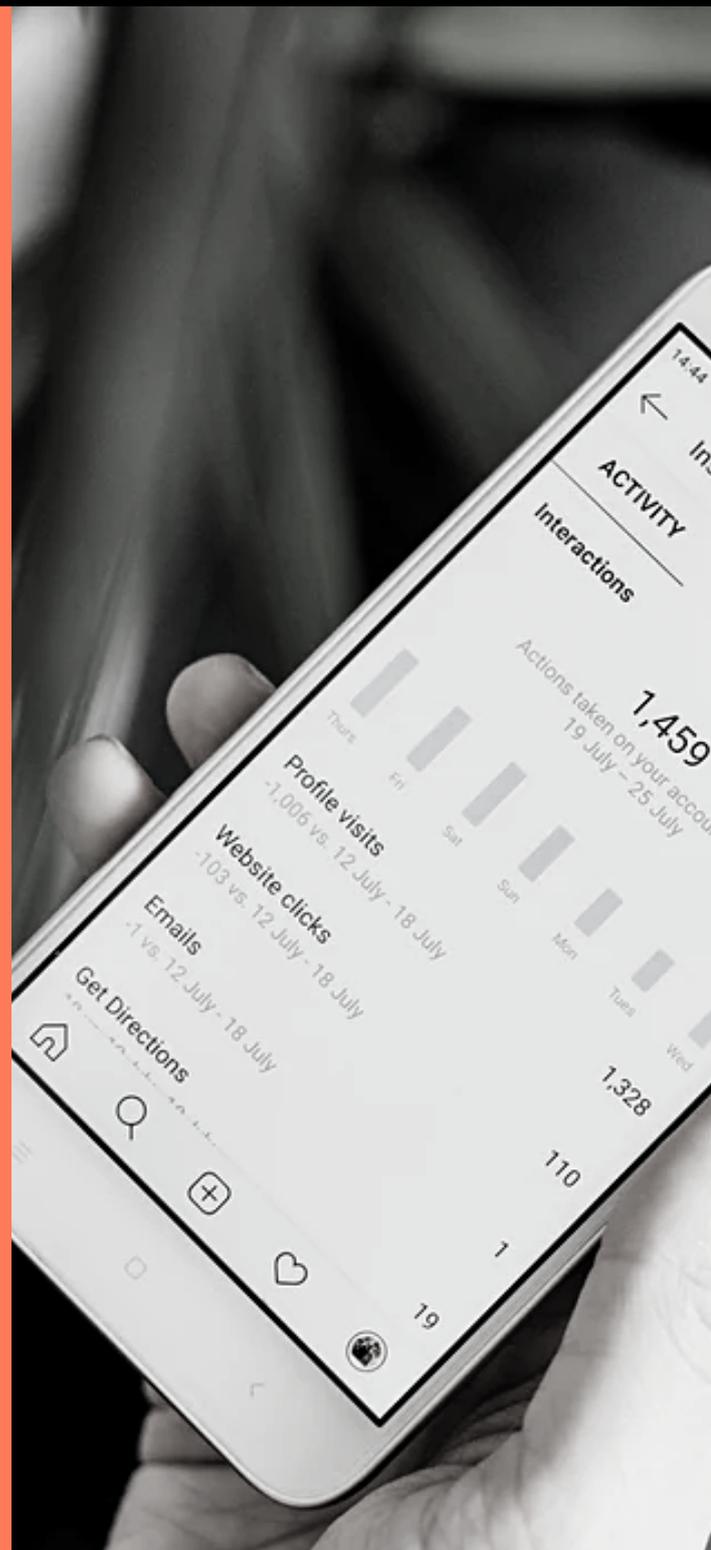
For effective assignment selling, the whole workforce must act as teachers and dedicate themselves to content creation.

Workshops are effective at getting everybody on board and making content-making a culture, as it is an opportunity to discuss goals as a team.

However if content is to be created properly, Sheridan stresses a content manager is needed: 'producing great content is a full-time job, and someone needs to do it.'

He goes on to describe the qualities that a content manager needs, such as strong copywriting skills and an appreciation for analytics.

The latter is particularly important where advanced analytics tools are concerned. Sheridan recommends using HubSpot for ROI (Return on Marketing Investment), advanced lead intelligence, and for testing CTA (Call-To-Action) button design to help optimize your website's performance.



# Part 4

## ***Creating a Culture of Video... In-House***

Sheridan explains the relevance of using video content in a time when the popularity of film is rising.

He argues that all businesses are media companies and should take ownership of all their content.

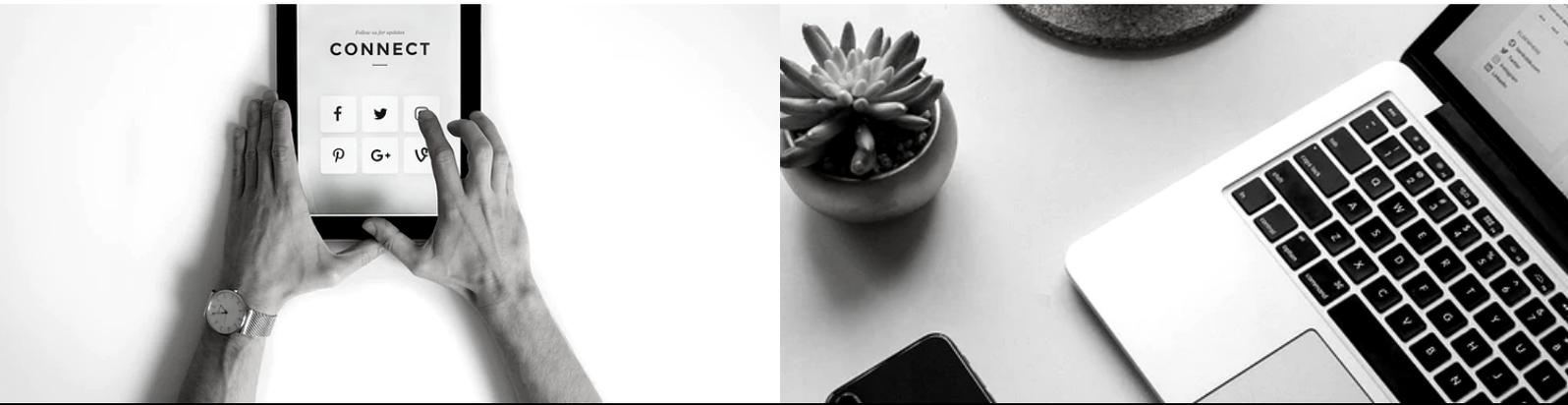
“The 80% Video” is a good place to begin:

1. Brainstorm a list of the most important products and services your company offers and any questions related to them.
2. Narrow the top seven questions, answering each one in an individual video.
3. Upload the individual videos online, whether that be on your company website or on a platform such as YouTube.
4. Take the seven clips and combine them together. The final video can be shown to prospects before their sales appointment.

Videos can also be used to create a more personalised and human approach to direct digital communication. The number of people who open their written emails is appalling, with studies showing that **‘fewer than 20% of sales emails are ever opened.’**

However, studies have shown that videos can greatly increase email conversion and click-through rates.





# Part 5

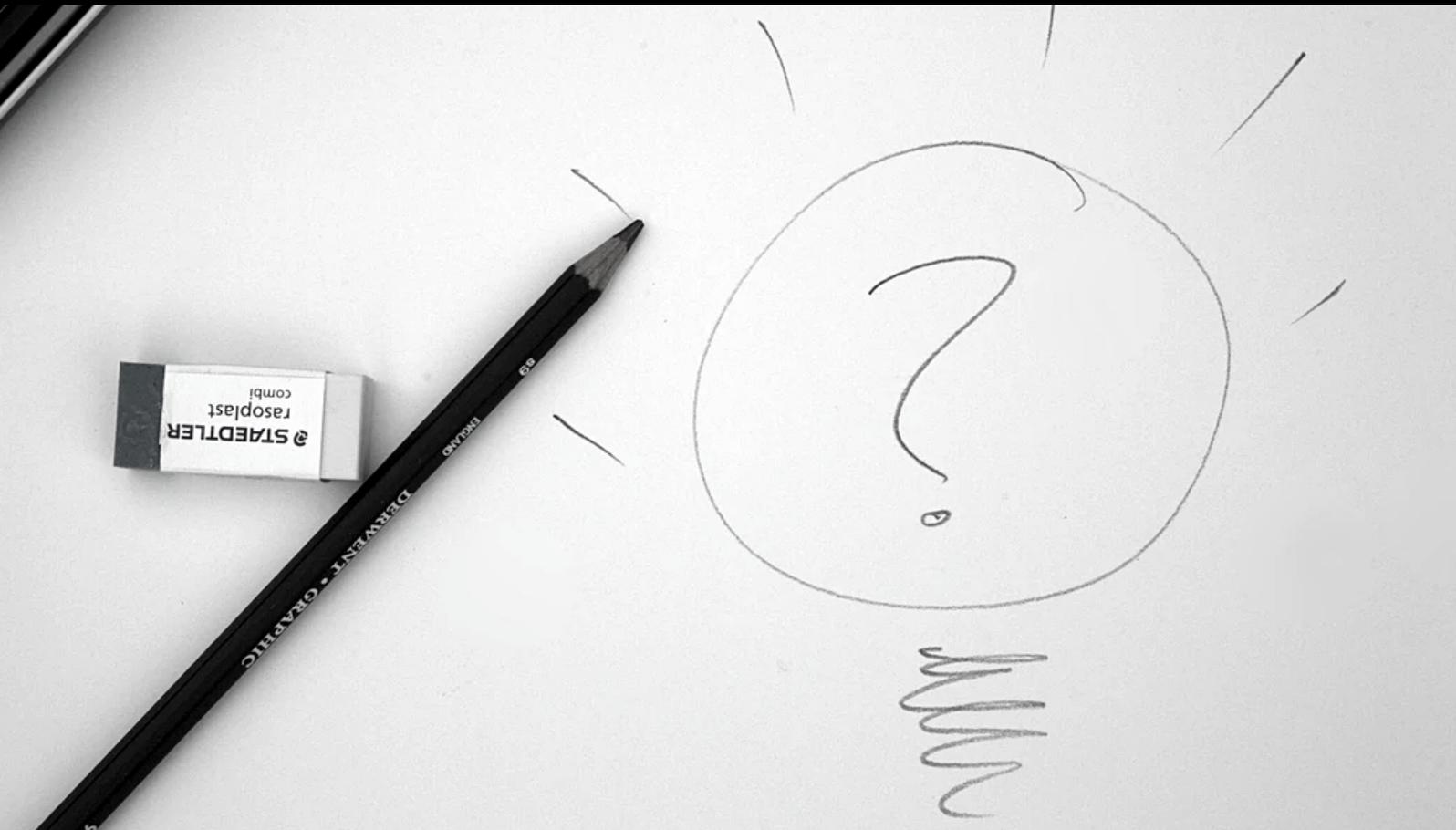
## ***How to Build the Perfect They Ask, You Answer Website***

Direct communication is at the very heart of conversational marketing, which Sheridan describes as ‘the one-to-one conversations buyers have with brands across different channels, whether that’s through live chats, chatbots, Facebook Messenger, Slack, text, and so on.’

Direct conversations offers customers the answers they need quickly and friction-free. Successful companies such as Amazon and Netflix thrive because they make actions easy for its users.

Sheridan also notes that self-selection tools, such as cost and pricing calculators, help to create a more tailored experience that will increase customer satisfaction and sales revenue.

# Part 6



## ***Your Questions Answered***

The final part is dedicated to questions that Sheridan frequently receives about inbound sales and content marketing.

He addresses the relevance of educating customers and the importance of keeping sales and marketing teams engaged in the content making process.

# Conclusion



Sheridan makes a persuasive case for inbound marketing and for a more humane approach to selling.

The main message behind **They Ask, You Answer** is simple: gain the trust of customers to gain more sales. Eliminate their doubts by providing honest and informative answers to their questions when they need them, using assignment selling, personalised videos and direct communication to improve their buying journey.

# Interested in Inbound Marketing?

According to Search Engine Journal, **inbound leads cost 60% less** than outbound leads.

If you're interested in finding out more about inbound marketing, why not download our free "Intro to Inbound" e-book [here](#) or using the QR code below.



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