

MIND THE GAP

WORK TOGETHER TO BRIDGE THE GREAT SALES-MARKETING DIVIDE

By Beth Négus Viveiros

Both sales and marketing have the same ultimate goal—to boost their company's bottom line. So why do they often have such a hard time working together? Chief Marketer asked some of the featured speakers at this summer's B2B LeadsCon Summit for their thoughts on ways companies can create a better sales and marketing relationship.

ESTABLISH A "LEGISLATIVE BRANCH" IN YOUR COMPANY AND STOP WASTING LEADS.

DAN MCDADE,
PRESIDENT,
POINTCLEAR

A low percentage of leads are effectively followed up on by sales.

The reasons vary. In many companies sales has been conditioned to expect poor quality leads from sales. We audited leads generated via content aggregators for one very large software company and just 1.28% of those leads were actually qualified. Marketing's response was that it was still an important source of leads and that rather than prequalifying them they would simply be sent directly to sales. In other companies, lead follow up can be as light as one telephone call and/or an email. We have proven that even the very best, most highly qualified leads need significantly more attention than that one call.



Our recommendation is that companies agree on lead-qualification criteria and the target market and then have a "legislative branch" evaluate each and every lead that does not become sales accepted and qualified. The buck has to stop somewhere. If the lead is legitimately "not qualified," we can fix whatever is broken in the qualification process. If the lead was simply not handled appropriately by sales (not followed up on for non-intuitive reasons such as "I called twice but they didn't call back"), then we fix that.

This process would enlighten just about every company out there. Sure, it will be time consuming and tedious for a month or two, but the payoff will be a two to five time increase in return on marketing investments.

MEASURE AND MANAGE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

JIM LENSKOLD,
PRESIDENT,
LENSKOLD GROUP

Start with aligning marketing objectives to incremental sales, revenue and profits. That is the common purpose of both organizations with each taking a different role in managing the buyers' purchase journey. Organizations that are successful in this area are those that have put reliable measurements in place.

Marketing measurement can range from simple tracking metrics to market testing or advanced modeling. When reliable measure-



ments show that marketing generates quality leads with higher sales conversion rates, higher value and/or faster close times, the dialogue with the sales teams often—but not always—shifts to how marketing can further contribute. The one big barrier that stands in the way is the cultural perspective that sales and marketing are competing for sales credit instead of collaborating for shared credit. One step I encourage to help get past this barrier is to have marketing run its ROI analysis with both marketing and sales team expenses evaluated against the sales generated by the collaborative effort.

With tracking and measurements in place, some marketing organizations then move to ROI scenario planning to design campaigns that have the targeting, tactics and objectives with better potential to drive revenue and profit. They work with the sales team to look closely at the purchase funnel leakage points and close those gaps or shift targeting to eliminate low potential leads.

GET OUT OF YOUR IVORY TOWER AND MEET WITH SALES ON A REGULAR BASIS.

CHRIS CHARITON,
SENIOR DIRECTOR,
DIGITAL MEDIA
SOLUTIONS, IHS

Working closely with the sales organization is the only way to ensure that marketing efforts are optimized. One tip to ensure that



the relationship is a strong one is to put a regular meeting on the calendar with sales leadership and have an agenda in advance. Use this time to share what your marketing team is working on and find out what the latest challenges and issues are facing the sales organization. Know the sales numbers and how sales is compensated. This will assure that you are aligning initiatives where they are needed most and show that you aren't in an ivory tower.

Don't just rely on your sales team to provide the voice of the customer. Do sit in on sales calls and experience the process for yourself. Get the input not just of sales leadership but feet-on-the-street top performing sales people on what they need from marketing and what objections they have to overcome. Their input and buy-in will also go a long way to getting the whole sales team on board with a campaign or strategy. Periodically review sales enablement tools with a

few representatives of the sales organization. Retire what is no longer relevant. Organize what you do have in a way that makes sense to sales and make sure it is easily accessed from multiple devices while traveling.

Sometimes what sales articulates as a solution can be better addressed in a different way. You don't want to have sales micro-managing the marketing function but inclusion in what you are developing will make certain you execute effective tactics that are met with a positive reception from sales.

Share results and data. Give sales metrics on those marketing qualified leads you are generating and the close ratio. Package competitive market research into useful content sales can leverage. Share the successes. Remember, sales' job is to maximize its time engaging customers. It is not to make less work for the marketing team so be patient when sales asks for the same information you just shared yesterday. Marketing's role is to

make sales' job easier and more productive. We all win when we do that.

WORK TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP AT EVERY TOUCH POINT.

**SCOTT BRINKER,
PRESIDENT/CTO, ION
INTERACTIVE**



The relationship between marketing and sales is in tremendous flux as buyers shift more of the touch points for their purchase decisions from live discussions with salespeople to largely self-service digital channels that are controlled by marketing.

This doesn't diminish the importance of great sales relationships, but it does significantly increase the responsibility for marketing to enable and support those relationships.

Marketing and sales alignment must be rooted in the recognition that customer

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CREATING VALUE JAY BAER ON MAKING MARKETING DATA MATTER



Today's marketers need more information than ever before to get the job done, because today's customers have more data than ever before at their fingertips.

This means marketers need to act more like sales—giving prospects more (and more specific) information earlier in the process, and sales needs to act more like marketing, giving contact

more actual value, according to Jay Baer, president, Convince & Convert, and author of *Youtility: Why Smart Marketing is About Help, Not Hype*. "Last year, mobile usage doubled in 2013," said Baer. "The overwhelming majority of your customers have access to all the world's information—on their phones."

Today, if you make a bad decision, you're just lazy, he told attendees of the BMA14 conference in Chicago. "All the information a consumer needs to make a better decision is in their hand, and people have figured that out."

Baer—who will also keynote LeadsCon New York and the B2B LeadsCon Summit in New York in August—told the BMA audience that the difference between helping and selling is just two letters, and those two letters can make all the difference.

"You can sell to someone, or you can help someone and create a customer for life," he said. "The marketing playbook of the last 50 years is largely invalid today. Customers are in charge of their decision making journey, and we can't force them to interact with our messages."

Customer interaction is no longer a "master and servant" situation, said Baer. Today, marketers have to operate on a peer-to-peer basis, because they're not just competing with each other for attention, they're competing with everything. This is especially true online, where everyone's personal and professional lives have converged in an unprecedented way.

To illustrate this, he pointed to his own Facebook feed. A picture of a friend's child making a windmill at Lego camp was

followed by a corporate post from a brewing company. That was followed by a post from Baer's wife, and then a pitch for a webinar from Eloqua.

"My Facebook feed goes something like this—friend, company, family, company—and guess what, your feed looks exactly the same. And so does your friends' and your customers'," he said—and the same goes for their Twitter stream, their email inbox and so on. "You're competing for attention against people I actually love? Are you more interesting to me than my own wife?"

"Friend of mine" awareness is replacing top of mind awareness, which means marketers must be useful if they want to connect. This is the idea behind Baer's theme of "Youtility." The definition, he said, is quite simple: create marketing so useful that people would pay for it, marketing so good it could be a product unto itself.

"If you start to think about how to make marketing more useful, you will see examples all around you," he said. "Once you are attuned to it, you will start to see it."

As an example, he cited Columbia. An obvious choice for the brand would be to create an app about something like how to find the best type of jacket for a particular outdoor situation. What wasn't so obvious—but was obviously more useful for outdoorsy customers—was to create an app offering tutorials on how to tie 70 different types of knots. It isn't the kind of thing you'd necessarily use every day, but you would keep it on your phone for when such a need arises—and it keeps the brand top of mind.

"We're surrounded by data but often starved for insights," said Baer. "Customer interaction is the raw material of marketing greatness."

He suggested marketers regularly do ridealongs with the sales team and listen in on customer service calls to hear what customers are really thinking. "You need to get past the data to insights." —*Beth Negus Viveiros*

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acquisition is no longer a classic funnel, where prospects are cleanly handed off from one department to another. Even after a prospect has become a sales accepted lead, that prospect is going to continue to be engaged in digital marketing touch points. The two teams need to synchronize on this process so that what the customer hears from the salesperson and sees in his or her digital interactions—on the website, in email and in social channels—are coordinated.

From my perspective, a well-managed marketing technology layer in an organization provides tremendous opportunities to manage such cross-team synchronization. It requires cooperation on defining the points of synchronization and a marketing technologist who can configure the software tools accordingly—but there are often many ways that marketing automation platforms and CRMs can be tailored to suit this purpose.

A big part of sales support from marketing should be keeping sales connected with the logic of marketing's technology systems. Loop sales in on the full lifecycle nurturing programs in marketing automation. Loop sales in on the algorithms for determining marketing qualified leads. Loop sales in on attribution analytics. Good marketing technology management today is not just about making the tools work—it's about democratizing their access throughout marketing and sales to better empower everyone in the organization to engage digitally savvy prospects and customers.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MARKETING AUTOMATION.

JANET DRISCOLL MILLER, PRESIDENT/CEO, MARKETING MOJO

One of the most beneficial tools to improve marketing and sales alignment in the past 10 years is clearly marketing automation. Now marketers have greater visibility into how their efforts actually affect sales, not just anecdotes. From the sales side, marketing automation, when used well, helps marketing give sales more information about prospects and essentially prequalify leads, allowing the sales team to focus on the best prospects.

I think some sales departments, though, are reticent to accept marketing automation tools because they absolutely represent a paradigm shift in the old sales equation that X Marketing Qualified Leads generate Y Sales Qualified Leads generate Z Opportunities and Sales. Sales is no longer about a sheer



quantity of leads—marketing automation refocuses sales to focus on the best leads. It's incumbent on marketers to effectively communicate that message and the message that marketing exists to help sales succeed.

RESPECT EACH OTHER, AND LOOK AT YOUR ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE.

RUTH STEVENS, CONSULTANT, EMARKETING STRATEGY

It's true that sales and marketing are set up to be in opposing camps, so tensions naturally run high, and finger pointing is inevitable. One of the best ways I've seen to overcome this divide is organizationally, as when both sales and marketing report to a single chief. Another way is if the head of sales and the head of marketing actually respect, like and trust each other, and that mutual feeling trickles its way among the teams.

The reason why these two approaches tend to work is that the problem is less about process and more about attitude. The hard truth is that, in B2B, marketing is in service to sales. And that can be a hard pill for some marketing people to swallow.

In B2B, P&L responsibility usually lies with sales. It's the role of marketing to help them be more productive; to target the right prospects, to cold calling, to deliver an effective message, to close more deals, and to penetrate existing accounts more deeply. Sometimes this is called sales "enablement." Whatever it's called, it's a service role.

And that means marketing needs to be helpful. Not obsequious, and not a push-over. But in service. So, when sales complains about lead quality, marketing must take another look at its own processes. Is it following best practices? And at the same time, marketing needs to collect the data to prove that the leads are being qualified to the level that sales agreed to in the first place. Mind over matter.

TALK TO YOUR COUNTERPART IN SALES AND LEARN THEIR NEEDS.

BOB TRINKA, FORMER DIRECTOR - SALES & MARKETING, SEKISUI DIAGNOSTICS, LLC

Marketing executives should takes the time to meet with their counterparts in sales and learn what



are their objectives for the year. Then, strategies, programs, messages and tactics can be developed. Where possible, marketers should also interact with customers and prospects to understand first hand customer needs and issues, and learn how the company's product offerings meet those needs.

If there is a divide, and if executive leadership must intervene, it's too late. It's best to fix problems as quickly as they start to occur. Signs of a productive relationship between sales and marketing include frequent, friendly and cooperative communications between leaders and members of the departments; clear action plans to carry out initiatives on both sides; mutual understanding of monthly, quarterly and annual goals and milestones.

Marketing should think of itself as a service organization to the sales department. It should not tell sales how to do its business, unless sales reports to marketing. Remember, don't take a condescending attitude toward the sales team. View each other as peers who are working together to deliver the best outcome for the company.

CREATE A CONSISTENT RELATIONSHIP ACROSS THE COMPANY.

MARIA GRAZUL, CONSULTANT, MARKETING PRO CONTRACTORS INC.

Bridging the marketing/sales divide is no easy feat. If you are new to a marketing leadership role, for example, if you have recently moved to a different company, use the timing to your advantage. Of course, you first want to meet with the sales leaders to understand their needs and pain points. Meet the individual sales execs, join them on calls, learn about them and see what they're seeing, first hand.

Engage your team in this process. Meet regularly with sales leadership to plan lead-generation campaigns and train sales team members on the materials. Following those campaigns, track results using your sales automation program and follow up with sales team members and leadership regularly.

They need to know just how many new leads your team is delivering to them. If you start your relationship out on the right foot, this will be easier, but either way, you will need to prod them, so you can see whether you need to modify your approach to improve the quality of leads headed their way. !



