

Four Must-Do's for Bigger, Better Deals

There's a fundamental shift happening in businesses around the globe today, as the formerly adversarial relationship between Sales and Marketing is being replaced by a new level of collaboration driven by the need to achieve shared goals. Marketing can accelerate this transition—and fuel overall customer acquisition and loyalty—by equipping Sales with tools that help them identify and qualify prospects, understand needs, propose solutions, and overcome obstacles. Every Sales Enablement program should include the following four essential components:

Consider the following four strategic contexts in defining your campaigns:

- **Prospect diagnostics and dialogue mapping.** In a fast-moving and complex selling environment, all but the most sophisticated sales reps are challenged to stay on top of changing customer-buying dynamics. Sales playbooks provide a powerful framework for teaching the field how to recognize potential prospects, engage in dialogue around current trends, and propose value propositions that speak to the unique situation of each customer.
- **Credibility-building content.** Closing the deal often comes down to a question of confidence, as customers must feel safe that they're making the right decision. Case studies, analyst perspectives, and other evidence of your company's track record help the field address customer concerns and close deals.
- **Contextual solution-selling tools.** Sales reps must make your solutions relevant in the context of each customer's characteristics and care-about's. Customizable solution templates—including modular PowerPoint presentations and proposal templates as well as account-specific collateral—can help them position your offerings from the perspective of the customer's industry, role, and pain points for a more compelling business case.
- **Qualification standards and scoring.** Clear criteria and scoring models help align Sales and Marketing around a common definition for qualified leads and ensure smoother hand-offs. But BANT isn't enough to determine if a prospect is truly sales-ready—add demographic profile (company type, role in the organization) and behavioral history (frequency and type of interactions) to your scorecard.

"The missing link is the ability to provide predictive marketing, dynamic content generation, transparency, and custom sales communications."

—Sirius Decisions
"Field Marketing 2.0", January 2007

3 THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

- 1. Get the scoop from Sales.**
Interview your top sales reps to understand catalysts and trends fueling customer purchases, selling strategies, common roadblocks, and competitive activities. Build a strawman from this insight and adjust processes accordingly.
- 2. Map winning plays.**
Create maps for typical buying scenarios to visualize the flow of sales steps, from initial customer approach to close, and embellish with discovery questions, talking points, and recommended resources to support reps through each step.
- 3. Define the metrics that matter.**
Track the impact of sales enablement on: efficiency (time spent finding, approaching & engaging prospects), effectiveness (quality and relevance of communications), and impact (win rate, cycle time, deal size).

Bottom-line benefits

Companies that have achieved marketing and sales alignment are:

- Growing 5.4% faster
- Closing 38% more proposals
- Churning 36% fewer customers

—Marketing Sherpa, *December 2006*

Capturing customer insights

Roundtable discussions can bring customer-buying dynamics into sharper focus. Host a private dinner with a select group of customers to drill down on issues that are at top of their minds today:

- Trends affecting their businesses
- Current approaches and unmet needs
- Opportunities for new solutions
- Pricing sensitivity





Setting Sales Up For Success

Just as a “play” in the sports world refers to a set of actions designed to achieve a certain goal, a playbook for your Sales team provides a selling framework that sets the stage for successful engagements with prospects and customers. Typical content includes market landscape and trends, target customer profiles and needs, competitive sell-against strategies, and a discussion of common selling scenarios or “plays,” such as net new acquisition, competitive attack, installed base renewal/upgrade or cross-sell/up-sell.

Built from the best practices of top reps, each play should outline the sales steps for each scenario, including:

- Profile of the ideal prospect
- Probing questions to uncover customer needs and objections
- Talking points to position your solution in the context of specific customer situations and competitive alternatives
- Pointers to other tools and resources for more information
- Language from your agreed-upon sales methodology for better alignment

“Carefully planned enhancements in the relationship between Sales and Marketing will bring salespeople’s intimate knowledge of your customers into the company’s core, help you serve customers better now, and help you build better products for the future.”

Harvard Business Review
“Ending the War Between Sales and Marketing”
July 2006

Prospect Diagnostics and Dialogue Mapping

- Playbooks
- Prospect value propositions

Credibility Building Content

- Case studies
- Analyst perspectives

Contextual Selling Tools

- Solution templates
- Proposal tools
- Account-specific collateral

Qualification Standards and Scoring

- Demographic profile
- Behavioral history

Meeting demand for meaningful dialogue

Web 2.0 is dramatically shifting how customers research and buy products. Customers are much more informed because they are using the Internet to do their own research, which can make it tougher for salespeople to engage in a relevant discussion that delivers value.

Marketing can help sales reps be better prepared for in-depth conversations by:

- Creating news feeds that highlight current industry trends
- Sharing brief summaries of customer research on buying patterns and needs
- Providing concise, convincing bullet points to sell-against key competitors

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