

“Selling Marketing to Sales”

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Selling Marketing to Sales? That’s right. As a marketing professional this should be your *top* priority. Not only because it is in your best interest to build visibility for Marketing’s contribution, but because Sales is your customer and without their buy-in all of your efforts will be for naught.

In fact, there is constant buzz about the lack of Sales and Marketing Alignment and the devastating impact this issue can have on an organization. Let’s look at the most fertile ground for debate between Sales and Marketing— leads.

A recent study¹ of technology sales and marketing executives resulted in some startling statistics that put this issue in perspective:

- 94% of B2B leads are ignored; you can conclude that only 6% of leads are utilized
- 79% prospects never received a follow-up call
- 70% leads disqualified by sales reported that they purchased the products or services from another vendor

Marketing often reports lots of activities and campaigns that show production of volumes of leads, yet Sales never has enough opportunities in their pipeline to meet their revenue targets. Can these numbers possibly be right? Is this just more fuel for the Sales vs. Marketing fire?

It is really easy to look at these numbers and immediately start pointing fingers at Sales. But consider this perspective—Marketing may be at fault.

That’s right. It’s Marketing’s responsibility to produce highly qualified leads in a target market and arm the sales organization with competitive tools so that they can win deals. And today’s economy has created a heightened hunger in sales people for leads. Look at the results again from that perspective and what you’ll see is that there is a possibility that Marketing has created the problem by; producing the wrong leads, putting lead management processes in place that are broken or, worse yet, Marketing has a real credibility problem with Sales.

With credibility comes alignment. This is not just a matter of increasing the visibility for what Marketing is doing, but to increase Marketing’s *Sales Visibility*.

It's the ability to look at how to deliver real "lift" to revenue. It's not really all that difficult, but it does require that Marketing view Sales' perspective.

Here is our **Top 10 List** to Achieve Sales & Marketing Alignment

- 1. Not All Leads Are Equal.** The most common mistake, perhaps the most deadly of all, is for Marketing to provide any visibility at all to "raw" leads. These are the leads that have yet to be fully qualified; reams of card swipes from the tradeshow booth, volumes of Web hits and partner/channel leads. Expecting Sales to weed through these opportunities in a timely fashion is unreasonable, but it also creates doubt in the mind of Sales as to whether Marketing knows what a real lead is. They begin to believe that all "leads" that come from Marketing are equal—in other words, they are not worth their time and go ignored. Defining very specific lead qualification and management processes that are owned by Marketing ensures that Sales will only see leads that have been thoroughly qualified.
- 2. What is a Pipeline?** End the madness! How many hours have been spent debating the pipeline value? Sales only cares about what they can forecast. Everything else should be considered part of the funnel and Marketing should take the responsibility for care and feeding of the funnel. Period.
- 3. Know Your Customer—Sales.** Sales is Marketing's customer. For Marketing to have credibility with Sales, it requires an understanding of what they really need to win. What are the sales tools that will deliver a competitive advantage in the field? In a nutshell, Marketing must identify tactical ways to make the sales process more effective to help drive revenue. Sales will definitely value tools that help them compete and win.
- 4. Sing from the Same Song Sheet.** Branding and advertising messages don't typically work in the field. The result will be message *du jour*—inconsistent, ineffective positioning. Deliver hard hitting sales positioning that ties back to the brand message, develop proof points and tools that help sales "own" the message and Sales will become the strongest weapon in building brand equity.
- 5. Shoot for the Same Target.** Sometimes wasted leads stem from an issue as simple as the fact that Marketing uses one set of criteria for assessing the quality of a lead, and Sales uses a completely different set of criteria. This sounds simple; the trick is to realize that this is a

moving target. As quickly as the market landscape changes for Field Sales, so does the criteria they use to assess a sales opportunity. It is critical that Marketing maintain visibility into the reality of how Sales qualify leads.

- 6. Get to the Point.** Sales people are paid to sell. They do not have the time or the patience to read lots of emails, reports and statistics. Keep all Marketing communications short and sweet. Sales will typically review materials to see what directly impacts their ability to make their sales numbers—in other words—make money. Remember, if Marketing reports are seen as “fluff” or “noise” it will drown out the good stuff that Sales would really care about.
- 7. Know your Competition.** Competition is everywhere; new competition pops up out of nowhere. This is the reality of the Sales world. Marketing will score high points from Sales when arming them with strategies and tactics to attack the competition. The key is to really know the latest competition and to build tools and tactics to attack the competition where it hurts—their strengths.
- 8. Get it from the Horse’s Mouth.** Marketing often gets frustrated that it is so difficult to get input and feedback from sales. The rule of thumb is to remember that Sales is still one of the greatest sources of data for Marketing, and they will give you great information—but it won’t be easy. Sales doesn’t respond to general surveys or meet arbitrary, internal deadlines. Marketing must make allies out of the most valuable sources in the Sales organization and always, always reach out for input on a one-on-one basis.
- 9. See the World Through the Eyes of Sales.** Just keep in mind that to Sales the view of the world is simple— all Sales people put everyone and everything in one of two columns; 1) those that can do something for me, and 2) everyone else. Marketing needs to earn its place in column one.
- 10. a. Tell ‘em What You are Going to Do for Them.**
 - b. Do It.**
 - c. And, Tell ‘em What You Did.**

Remember to continue to build visibility for how Marketing is helping to drive sales (remember the Top 10 List). This is what *Selling Marketing to Sales* is all about.

About Critical3 Marketing

Critical3 Marketing delivers marketing services for high tech companies to achieve a different – the *critical* – level of marketing that results in measurable topline revenue growth, powerful sales and marketing alignment, sustainable competitive advantage and a strong sales pipeline. Critical3 Marketing leverages its principals' double-digit years of high tech marketing experience to deliver on every facet of the marketing mix, from branding and marketing strategy, to lead generation and pipeline management, to interactive marketing, and PR with a focus on those execution areas that will drive the most topline revenue impact for customers such as Covente, Down South Software, Georgia Commerce Group, Seagull Software, Technology Association of Georgia and XcelleNet. With the unique combination of sales and marketing expertise, a virtual team approach, and a focused execution model, Critical3 understands and applies the level of marketing – ***marketing that drives sales*** – that will drive top-line results for customers. For more information on Critical3 Marketing and its services visit www.critical3.com , info@critical3.com or contact us at +1 404-873-6212.

¹ SiriusDecisions, ***Perspectives: What a Waste***, April 22, 2004