Marketo Engage

QUICK INSIGHTS

Create Your Dream Team with Marketing and Sales

Discover three powerful ways to better align marketing and sales while driving growth.

The relationship between marketing and sales can be fragile. Sales depends on marketing for messaging and leads, but when that messaging doesn't get results or those leads don't convert, sales teams take the hit. Not only do sales reps risk missing their quotas, but because each team has its own terminology and language, they may not even be able to communicate what's wrong to marketing. This can cause frustration, leading to mistrust and resentment.

In addition, marketing teams often find themselves discouraged by the frustrated sales reps' vague or unhelpful feedback, like "these leads are bad" or "this messaging doesn't work." This often leads marketing to question the sales team's effort to engage the leads they provided—or how their messaging is being used. This is a recipe for constant conflict.

But marketing and sales are not doomed to eternal discord. By establishing a common language and fostering a collaborative process, you can build a bridge between marketing and sales. This short brief explains three important ways you can build up that marketing-sales alignment.

Tip #1: Provide context for lead handoffs

At many organizations, getting a lead handoff can feel like being handed an unsolved mystery. Sales reps and business development representatives (BDRs) receive the bare minimum of contact data—such as name, title, organization, email, and phone number—with no information about how the lead was qualified or engaged by marketing. Without that context, sales reps and BDRs are left to guess what their leads are most interested in.

A more effective approach is for marketing and sales to develop a content framework and shared lead history. A content framework matches different types of content—like recorded demos, reports, webinars, etc.—to each stage of the customer journey. The framework allows sales to understand the significance of leads' interactions with marketing. For example, if a prospect downloads a report mapped to the "evaluate" stage of the customer journey, sales knows that the lead is beginning to compare different solutions.

In addition to a content framework, marketing and sales should also maintain a shared lead history, with marketing providing information on how leads have interacted with marketing content. Sales should document their conversations with leads as well, so marketing will understand prospects' specific needs if they are recycled to marketing for nurturing.

With a complete shared lead history in use, all marketing and sales outreach to leads and prospects will be both relevant and well informed.

Tip #2: Customize messages for each prospect's journey

BDRs and sales reps often find themselves using the same generic pitch for all their leads, due simply to how little information they've received from marketing. These generic pitches are typically much less effective than a more personalized approach. They can also make prospects' journeys feel disjointed.

BDRs and sales reps may not have the time or the expertise needed to craft new custom messages for each lead. The solution is for marketing and sales to work together on a lead follow-up library. A good library should include a number of situational pitches based on common scenarios and prospect pain points that BDRs and sales have encountered in their conversations with customers. It should also come with a variety of "fill-in-the-blank" email templates and a collection of pre-made copy blocks that BDRs and sales reps can use to personalize them. The objective is personalization at scale.

For best results, the lead follow-up library should be a living resource that evolves based on new input from BDRs and sales reps as they "road test" new content.

Tip #3: Create a collaborative messaging framework

Marketing teams typically "own" messaging. They often work with analysts and other third parties to conduct market research and test various messages with different market segments. Once their research is completed, they deliver the messaging to sales. And at many organizations, that's where the process ends.

But this one-way flow of messaging from marketing to sales misses some critical input: the conversations that BDRs and sales reps have with prospects every day. This is why messaging built by marketing alone often misses the mark and may be discarded by sales teams, who end up building their own DIY messaging.

A better approach is a collaborative messaging framework that unites insights from both marketing and sales. This framework can integrate a careful analysis of closed-won and lost deals, feedback from BDRs and sales reps, and research conducted by analysts and other third parties. And these messages should be continually tested and refined over time.

Next steps

Improving marketing-sales alignment can't be accomplished in a day or even a month. It requires an ongoing commitment to collaboration and two-way communication. The work you put in, though, will be returned many times over in the form of pipeline and closed-won deals. We encourage you to commit to marketing-sales alignment throughout 2021 and beyond.

Learn more:

5 Steps to Becoming One Revenue Team with Sales for ABM

Marketo Sales Insight 5 Minute Overview

Marketo Sales Connect 5 Minute Overview

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