



Creating a Sales and Marketing TEAM

Prior to the 2002 Super Bowl, the New England Patriots made the decision to break with tradition and be introduced not as separate offensive and defensive units, but as a TEAM. This was rightly viewed as a major statement about how they viewed the importance of the team vs. the individual in driving their success.

Individuals on teams have a role to play and the more successful they are in doing their job/role, the more success the team will have. If each person does their job, then as a team, their chance of winning is dramatically increased. Whether you love or hate the Patriots, this mindset of everyone focusing on just doing their job and relying on each other, has allowed them to put TEAM first.

If your sales and marketing organizations are not completely in line with their shared goals, then you are not maximizing their impact as a team. When you think about driving alignment between these groups around lead generation, it starts with agreeing to the right targets, the right expectations, and everyone doing what they committed to do. It is really viewing this process as a true TEAM approach. Each person and function have a role to play, and if they follow through with their commitments, the organization will have a higher lead to opportunity conversion process with increased bookings to follow.

The more aligned sales and marketing are on lead generation roles and targets, will allow a company to view the budget around lead generation to be more pliable based on moving budget dollars between sales and marketing to generate a more cost-effective approach to lead gen. In addition, enhancing focus on account expansion through Account-Based Marketing (ABM) is helping to drive better alignment between sales and marketing.

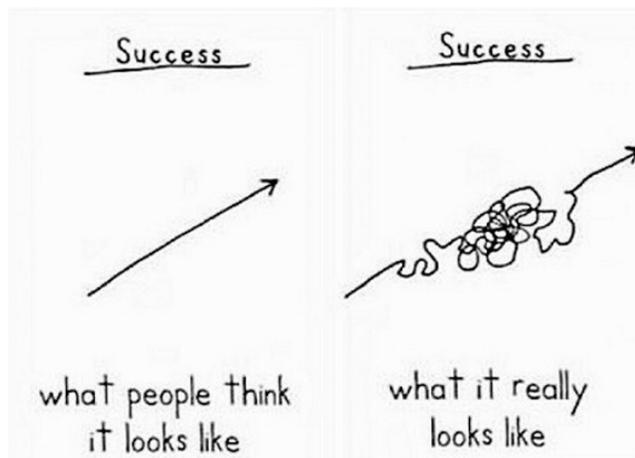
Depending on what type of product/service you are selling – high volume/ low dollar vs. low volume/high dollar – will dictate the type of lead generation strategies and tactics you deploy. But setting that aside for the moment, the sales and marketing leaders need to agree on some basic items that will determine where money should be spent for lead generation:

- What percent of the Next Twelve Months (NTM) revenue is expected from current customer expansion?
- What percent of the NTM revenue is expected from Net New Customers (NNC)?
- Marketing needs to establish, if there is no Historical data, how many base inquiries it takes to generate a Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL) and how many MQLs it takes to generate one Sales Qualified Lead (SQL)?

- Sales needs to establish a base line for how many SQLs are needed to generate a booking? However you define a SQL it needs to be viewed as an initial stage opportunity within your sales pipeline.
- Marketing and Sales leaders need to establish key definitions and policies to change behavior.
 - These will include at a minimum MQL, SQL, and timelines for sales to respond to an MQL
- Sales need to establish individual and shared goals pertaining to;
 - MQLs generated and converted to SQLs
 - Opportunities created from MQLs and SQLs
 - Booking targets

If your sales and marketing leaders/ teams seem to be working against each other, or playing the blame game around lead generation, taking these steps to gain teamwork will, at a minimum, start to highlight where your teams are not aligned and what is causing the friction.

This is a marathon and not a sprint. Well, at least a half marathon. Remember, success is not a straight line. Whenever I embarked on something new with my team, I always remind-



ed them of the picture in the other column. It will feel like two steps forward and one back. However, continued improvement will drive real teamwork and real results.

Henry Ford said it best: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

The sales and marketing teams need shared goals and targets and clear definitions on what their respective jobs are in achieving those team goals. Ultimately companies need to move beyond sales and marketing alignment and merge budgets and organize around the customer. Companies should have only one budget to spend on capturing NNC revenue, expansion revenue, and on customer retention. The sooner you start driving sales and marketing toward shared goals the sooner the results will appear.

-- by Jerry Rulli, Principal

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