

Split them up

Marketing and sales roles should not be combined

Having worked in sales for one of the most powerful marketing companies in the world, the distinction between marketing and sales has always been clear to me.

However, for many business owners, especially in the manufacturing sector, the differences are not so well-defined. How many people do you know carry the title, “VP Marketing and Sales” or “Director Marketing and Sales?” While the two functions are certainly intertwined, the rationale for separating the two is compelling. Let’s begin by defining the two responsibilities.

The difference between marketing and sales

Marketing

1. Marketing is one of the most strategic responsibilities in a company. It controls about 75 percent of what the company does and includes a wide scope of activities that touches virtually every department. Decisions about product design, testing, prototypes, manufacturing, production, cost, packaging, selling, advertising, promotions, and much more involve departments from finance to production.
2. Marketing takes a macro view of the market, the company, the competitors and the trends that impact a customer’s willingness and ability to buy. Fact-based decisions are made with profit generation and increased market share as the desired results.
3. Marketing is one to many.
4. Marketing protects the reputation of the company, brand and indi-

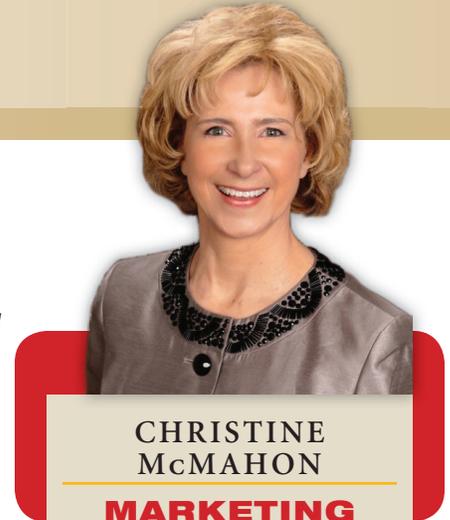
vidual products.

5. Marketing collects and analyzes big data about what customers want and why they want it. Marketing also uncovers the price that customers will pay for a product or service before it is launched in the marketplace.
6. Marketing tells the stories (company, brand, product, etc.) and keeps a constant watch on customer experiences so quick modifications can be made to increase appeal.

7. Marketing looks at the future and brings it to the present.

Sales

1. Sales is an execution function within the larger marketing plan. While it is strategic relative to territory plans and customer relationships, the end result is more tactical – revenue generation.
2. Sales maintains a micro view focusing on the product and the customer.
3. Sales is one to one. In other words, it is relationship driven. Sales uses the stories, quantifiable facts and case studies developed by marketing to influence the buying decision.
4. Sales leverages the company’s reputation and brand promise to advance



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MARKETING

the sales process. Personal integrity and commitment can reassure a wary buyer. Once an order is placed, sales monitors, and when necessary manages, company processes to ensure the deliverables reach the customer when promised.

5. Sales research is targeted to the pros-

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pect’s company, the individuals who comprise the buying committee, the decision maker and general industry trends. Sales calls focus on learning how each stakeholder defines and will measure success.

6. Sales planning is typically for the fiscal or calendar year with the focus on increased revenue contribution and on an individual basis, earned commissions.

Combining marketing and sales functions

Should a single person be responsible for these two functions? My vote is absolutely not for these reasons:

- » They require different skill sets. Rarely does the combined talent exist in

one person. Marketing is by far more encompassing and from a research standpoint, more time intensive. Sales is about execution. The time requirement for both is significant, which means in a combined role one area will likely suffer and both are needed for long-term growth.

- » Both positions are time intensive but for different reasons. Marketing includes research, development, creative strategy, execution and analysis of results. When you add on content generation for multi-channel media, the hours become significant, often requiring several full-time people or a combination of employee and agency support.

For sales, building relationships, qualifying opportunities and developing the right solution, especially when air travel is required also takes a significant amount of time.

For the person who wears both the marketing and sales hats, one discipline

will likely suffer because there simply isn't enough time to simultaneously get it all done!

The solution

While the argument can be made that combining marketing and sales generates efficiency and cost savings, what really happens is that the quality and quantity of deliverables is significantly compromised. One person just can't do it all.

My recommendation is to outsource marketing. There are many marketing companies who possess the expertise, infrastructure and analytic capabilities who can assess the market, identify new opportunities and determine the best go-to-market strategy.

Marketing communications can also be outsourced so you capture your company stories and produce the multiple streams of communications needed to educate and nurture your existing and prospective customers.

Studies show that 80 percent of sales today are made on the fifth contact, yet

salespeople lose momentum by the third or fourth. Sometimes the pause button is pushed for only a couple of weeks, sometimes it's for a couple of months. This is the point when sales turns to marketing communications for a series of a turn-key communications that can be easily populated into a software program like Mobile Marketer (www.salesautomationsupport.com), which automatically distributes the content to prospective customers on a prescribed timeline.

The need for marketing intelligence and effective communications increases as the company grows. That's why keeping these functions separate is one of the most critical decisions a business leader can make to secure and advance their future success. ■

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