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SALES & MARKETING INSIGHTS

Redefining the Relationship between Marketing and Sales

The Frontier of B2B Marketing and Sales
Effectiveness

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The days when marketing and sales departments could drive revenue growth simply by cultivating social relationships, and promoting product features and price, are rapidly going the way of carbon paper sales receipts.

Companies today need a different set of skills and capabilities to execute competitive, growth-oriented b2b marketing and sales strategies. Demanding, well-informed customers and an increasingly complex marketplace are forcing sales and marketing leaders to find new ways to collaborate more effectively.

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The Challenges of Value-Based Selling

The force driving reinvention of the marketing and sales interface is the ever-increasing importance of value-based selling to profitable growth.

Value-based selling focuses on the true worth and benefits that a customer realizes from the products, services and programs proposed by the seller—a value that goes beyond list price. Leading marketing and sales organizations effectively design, tailor, communicate, quantify, prove and reinforce compelling and differentiated value to an increasingly sophisticated and demanding set of buyers. Failure to do so will eventually lead to commoditization, declining customer loyalty or both.

While the concept of value-based selling in b2b markets has been around for more than two decades, it is especially relevant today. Yet few organizations are actually doing it well. One of the big impediments to success? The chasm that often exists between the marketing and sales functions.

Value-based selling requires a highly coordinated, cross-functional and end-to-end approach to strategy development and execution. In traditional business models, strategies are designed by an internal marketing or sales strategy group, and then passed on to the field to execute. These strategies often fail because they do not meet customer or market needs, are not understood or adopted by the sales force, or are not supported sufficiently to enable effective execution. This failure, in turn, can result in missed growth opportunities, profit margin erosion and a low ROI on marketing and sales investments.

Marketing and sales leaders must find new ways to bridge this chasm, overcome these challenges and build the capabilities required to excel in value-based sales execution. While the gap between marketing and sales has a long history, the imperative to excel in value-based selling can serve as a driving force for change. The most successful marketing and sales organizations will be those that reinvent how they operate, and improve the integration and joint effectiveness of these two functions.

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The Game Changers

Value-based organizations move well beyond selling based on features and price. They develop sales processes and design market offerings based on customer needs, buying processes and value to the seller. They communicate, quantify and prove the benefits and worth of the proposed market offering relative to alternatives. They understand the cost of providing that value and ensure that the transaction benefits their company. By focusing on the creation of mutual value, they guard against the risk of simply “giving away” value.

Once the organization delivers on the promise of value made to the customer, it reinforces that value and identifies future opportunities for mutual value gain. This maximizes a customer’s perception of the value gained and increases their brand loyalty (*Figure 1*).

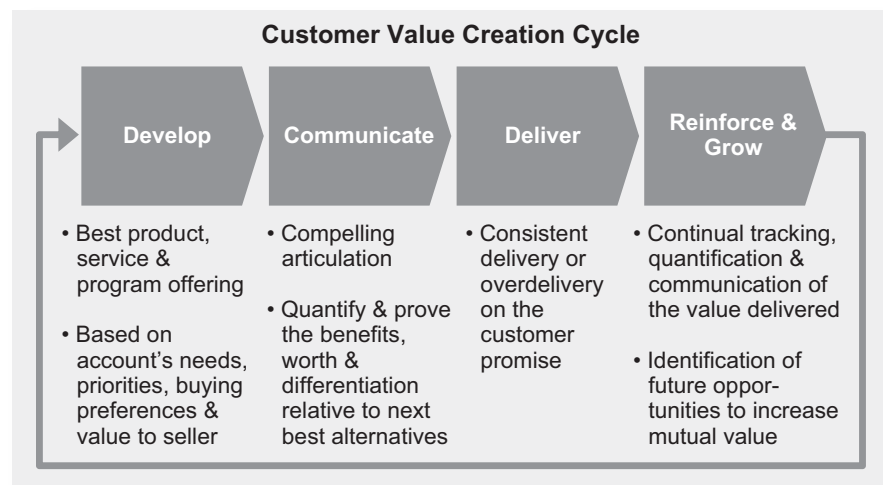


Figure 1. Maximizing Customer Value Perception and Loyalty

A majority of marketing and sales organizations have already taken at least a few steps to build their value-based selling capabilities. This often includes communications materials developed by marketing, or consultative selling training for the sales force. Yet few organizations are executing value-based selling like they could. That age-old gap between marketing and sales undermines their ability to do so. The sales department believes that marketing fails to develop quality value propositions and support tools, and has unrealistic expectations about price. Marketing departments believe that their sales teams do not know how to sell based on value, and that they are too quick to use marketing as a scapegoat. And while ultimately the top 10% of sales reps “figure it

out for themselves,” most reps just stick to what they know: features, basic benefits, price and social relationships.

A number of forces are increasing the critical importance of value-based marketing and sales:

1. Buyer sophistication continues to increase rapidly. The advent of economics-oriented buying committees has diminished the impact of “social relationship” selling and placed significant emphasis on “demonstrable” forms of financial value.
2. Core products are increasingly viewed as commodities. Few b2b industries now enjoy significant or sustained differentiation in their basic product. They achieve competitive differentiation through a broader combination of products, services and programs tailored to address customer needs beyond just core product needs.
3. Many large companies now look for a small number of suppliers who can provide the greatest business value to them. These candidate suppliers demonstrate a deep knowledge of these companies’ business, and offer solutions that address their broader business issues.
4. Organizations are continuing to strive for “customer focus.” Most b2b companies sell to customers who have different needs, buying processes and potentials. This means that they also must create a unique set of segment- and even customer-specific value propositions that cater to those specifications. Managing different value propositions for different segments and customers increases the complexity of the marketing and sales interface.
5. There is an increasing adoption of hybrid sales channels. As value proposition and sales process strategies have evolved, so has sales force design. Marketing and sales organizations today leverage a diverse range of global account management, strategic account management, key account management, field sales, channel account managers, specialists, telesales, e-channels and business partner combinations. These combinations allow marketing and sales leaders to deliver tailored value proposition strategies to different customer groups, cost-effectively. This, however, also increases the complexity of the marketing and sales interface.
6. Marketing and sales leaders have an increasingly strong need to demonstrate meaningful ROI within their own organizations. Internal cost scrutiny has increased pressure to demonstrate ROI

on investments. Provable metrics and ROI impact are critical to securing and retaining internal investment.

The consequence of these forces has been a steady shift in the competitive frontier from product and price to solution and value. Correspondingly, the imperative to address the gap between marketing and sales has escalated. Strong collaboration between these two functions is critical to achieving effective value-based selling capability. *Figure 2* highlights the conditions necessary for value-based selling excellence, and the associated levels of marketing and sales collaboration.

Condition	Sales And Marketing Dependencies
Deep customer and competitor insight	Marketing and sales each have unique information and customer perspective critical to effective strategy design and execution.
Actionable segmentation strategy	Marketing and sales must both understand, agree with and act upon the segmentation against which segment-specific market offerings, value propositions, sales processes and sales channels will be implemented
Effective value proposition strategy	Marketing and sales each have insights and skills critical to developing an effective strategy. Additionally, sales must understand, buy into and be able to execute the value proposition strategy.
Effective sales process	The sales process must be aligned with the value proposition strategy. Marketing must fully understand the sales process, which phases need their support, and the nature of that support (e.g., leads identification, pricing, tools, etc.).
Effective value-based selling tools	Developing tools that help sales people profile accounts, determine the right offerings, communicate and prove the value proposition, and reinforce the value delivered requires strong participation from both marketing and sales to ensure that the tools not only meet sales force needs but also reflect the strategy.
Right channels and sales force design	Both marketing and sales have a strong vested interest in sales channel selection and resourcing. Both of these must align with the company's value proposition strategy and growth strategies.
Necessary sales force skills	Marketing supports segmentation, product and value proposition training. Other sales training, coaching and hiring is typically provided by sales.
Motivation systems	Motivation systems need to be aligned between marketing and sales to ensure effective collaboration and constructive (vs. destructive) tension around pricing decisions.

Figure 2. Marketing and Sales Interdependencies Critical to Value-Based Selling Effectiveness

The Marketing and Sales Gap

Marketing and sales leaders can take some solace in the fact that they are not alone in their struggle to deal with this cross-functional divide. Only a minority of leading companies has taken significant action to address this gap. The following case example typifies the marketing and sales situation at many companies today.

CASE STUDY A

Mutual Perceptions at a Fortune 500 Software Provider

Marketing believes that the sales force:

- Over-relies on price and friendship
- Does not effectively communicate and reinforce value
- Does not spend enough time on “their product” (e.g., each product team wants more sales force attention)
- Does not consistently target the most important opportunities
- Does not spend enough time on new business development
- Does not provide enough insight back to the marketing team
- Does not respect the marketing team’s opinions

Sales believes that marketing:

- Sets price expectations too high
- Does not differentiate offerings sufficiently
- Develops segmentation strategies that are too difficult to apply
- Generates low quality leads
- Provides tools and collateral that do not fit the sales force’s real needs
- Is too far removed from the customer and the actual selling environment to understand customer needs and priorities
- Is too bureaucratic

“Marketing” could easily be replaced by “sales strategy” in the above case example. The variance is essentially between an internal group

that creates strategy and provides sales support, and the field sales force that executes the outlined strategy. The consequences of this gap are significant and can result in the following scenarios:

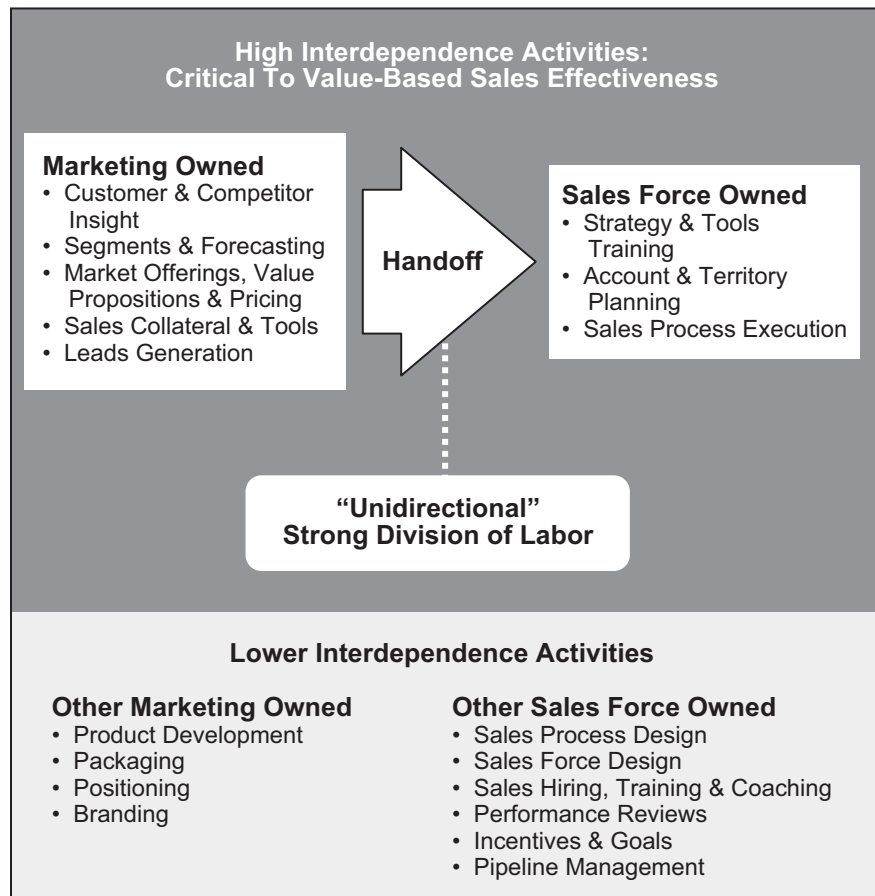
- Marketing investments in customer insight, market offering, value proposition strategy and sales tools go largely unused by the field sales force.
- The majority of the sales force is not able to tailor, convey, prove and reinforce customer value consistently to maximize win rates and customer loyalty.
- Marketing ROI is difficult to assess and the sales force's performance falls short of company expectation.
- Missed goals and finger pointing reinforce the gap and it grows wider over time.

The questions then are, "What is causing this common disconnect?" And, "How does one address it?" Certainly, the problem is not "ineffective" people. If it were, the disjoint would occur only in a few organizations, which is not the case. In our experience, the root cause of this disjoint lies in the fundamental marketing and sales business processes, and in the relative roles assigned to the internal strategy group(s) and the sales force.

Prevailing business processes view the marketing and sales process as a "relay." The marketing or sales strategy team conducts customer research, devises a segmentation strategy and develops market offering and value proposition strategies. Then, they dutifully develop the requisite sales collateral or tools and turn them over to the sales force. The implicit assumption is that "if we build it, they will come." The reality is usually quite different.

Often the sales force does not fully agree with or understand the strategy and tools provided. In multi-line-of-business organizations that sell through a common sales force, the misalignment can be even worse. Each brand team or line-of-business may present the sales force with its own strategies, with little or no consideration for the others. This unidirectional business process, as depicted by *Figure 3*, fails to maximize marketing and sales effectiveness.

Figure 3. Today's Unidirectional Marketing and Sales Paradigm



This unidirectional business process may seem like an efficient division of labor on the surface. Unfortunately, it generally fails. The process neither captures effectively the powerful information that the sales force has about customers, competitors and success strategies, nor does it foster sufficient understanding of the support and tools required for successful execution by sales persons.

Instead, the unidirectional business process places the sales force in the position of inheriting a strategy. At the same time, the sales force incentive plan imposes financial risk on the members of the sales force for “hitting the numbers.” Low ownership of the sales strategy and a high personal stake in the success of that strategy is a formula for conflict.

Outdated business processes and roles are not the only issue. Other root causes of frequent marketing and sales ineffectiveness can include:

- A failure to accomplish all the marketing and sales-related activities that are critical for success. For example, if detailed baseline value propositions that sales people can leverage for each customer segment have not been developed, or integrated into usable tools, sales persons are left to their own devices to create those value propositions, leading to inefficient “recreating of the wheel,” and inconsistent communications to customers.
- A lack of adoption of leading edge methods and tools required to enable value-based selling. For example, the sales processes at many companies are either ill-defined or do not effectively drive value-based selling. Many companies lack efficient web-based tools their sales force can use to profile customers, develop solutions and easily create compelling presentations and financial ROI statements. And when such tools are developed, the sales force often does not have a strong enough voice to ensure the tools meet their needs.

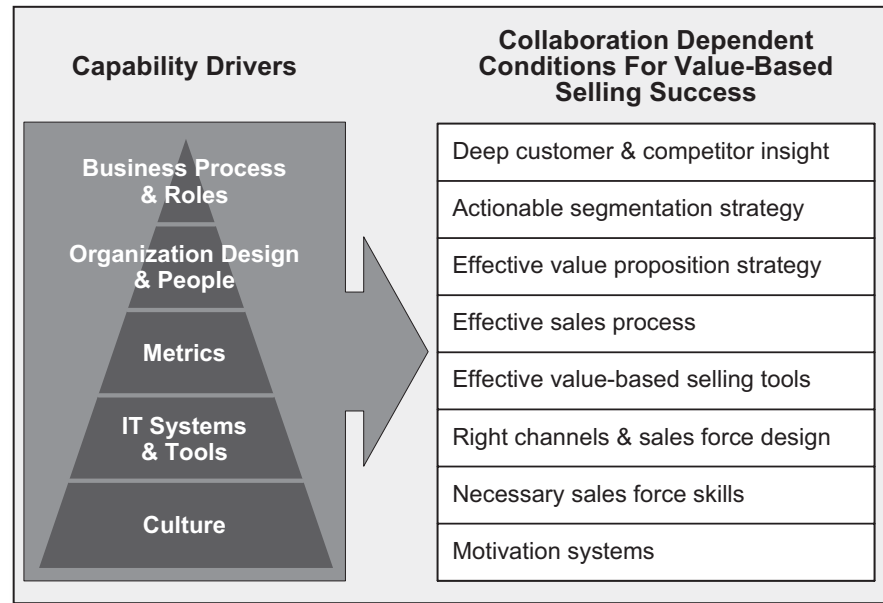
A New Paradigm: Three-legged Race

Companies need a major shift in the way marketing and sales work together to maximize and sustain profitable growth in today’s b2b markets. The challenge for marketing and sales leaders is to build end-to-end business processes that bring together information and insights, build mutual commitment to strategy and ensure that the sales support provided by marketing meets the sales force’s needs. To achieve this, the paradigm required is a “three-legged race,” not a “relay.” Marketing and sales must find ways to increase their collaboration dramatically at all stages of strategy development and execution. This is the only way for them to overcome the fatal flaws of the unidirectional models that dominate today.

Marketing and sales capabilities, like any organizational capabilities, are the net result of business processes and roles, organization design, IT systems and tools, metrics and culture (*Figure 4*). Leaders in marketing and sales are devising business processes and roles with a significantly higher level of shared involvement and ownership of critical activities. They also are enhancing their IT capabilities, aggressively adopting leading methodologies and tools, realigning internal

metrics and evolving their culture for excellence in value-based selling. Essentially, they are taking a systematic approach to capability building—fueled by the imperative to improve marketing and sales collaboration as required for highly effective value-based sales capability.

Figure 4. Key Capability Elements for Closing the Marketing and Sales Gap



Significantly improving the ways in which marketing and sales work together must begin with effective underlying business processes and roles. The basic questions are:

- Are all the critical marketing and sales activities accounted for and performed in the most effective sequence?
- Will the relative roles of marketing and sales ensure effective pooling of information and insights, build mutual commitment to strategy and ensure that the support provided to the sales force meets their needs?

Once business processes and roles are established, the optimal organization design and people skills can be determined to execute the process in the most cost-effective manner. One can then devise metrics that ensure individual accountability while promoting teamwork, develop tools and systems that enable the business process and the sales force, and allow for performance tracking and management.

The following case exemplifies how one Fortune 200 transportation and logistics company re-engineered its business processes, roles and capabilities. The result was a dramatic increase in integrated marketing and sales effectiveness, and with it, a greatly improved value-based selling capability.

CASE STUDY B

Marketing and Sales Business Process and Roles Transformation at a Fortune 200 Transportation and Logistics Company

In 2004, this global transportation and logistics company was suffering from significant underperformance in its b2b segment. Competitors had made inroads while corporate buyers had become more and more demanding. These forces were driving down margins and had led to revenue decline. Executive management believed significant improvement in sales capability was necessary to regain competitive advantage and help return the company to growth.

An evaluation of the marketing and sales organizations unveiled a number of factors fueling the situation:

- The sales force lacked the ability to set and track meaningful performance goals at the rep level.
- Many sales people had drifted away from selling, and were spending the majority of their time making service calls on their customers.
- The selling activity that was taking place was highly transactional in nature and was exacerbating commoditization.
- The majority of the sales force lacked a disciplined process for identifying customer needs and priorities, developing compelling solutions, negotiating mutually valuable terms or reinforcing the value actually delivered.
- Most sales reps were over-relying on price and social relationship and did not fully communicate or prove all of the ways the company was creating value for the customer. As a consequence, customers and the sales force both significantly underestimated

the value customers were realizing through their partnership with the company.

Significant disjoints existed between marketing and sales:

- Sales found the marketing collateral difficult to access and of limited value.
- Marketing felt sales did not share enough customer insights, and over-focused on price.

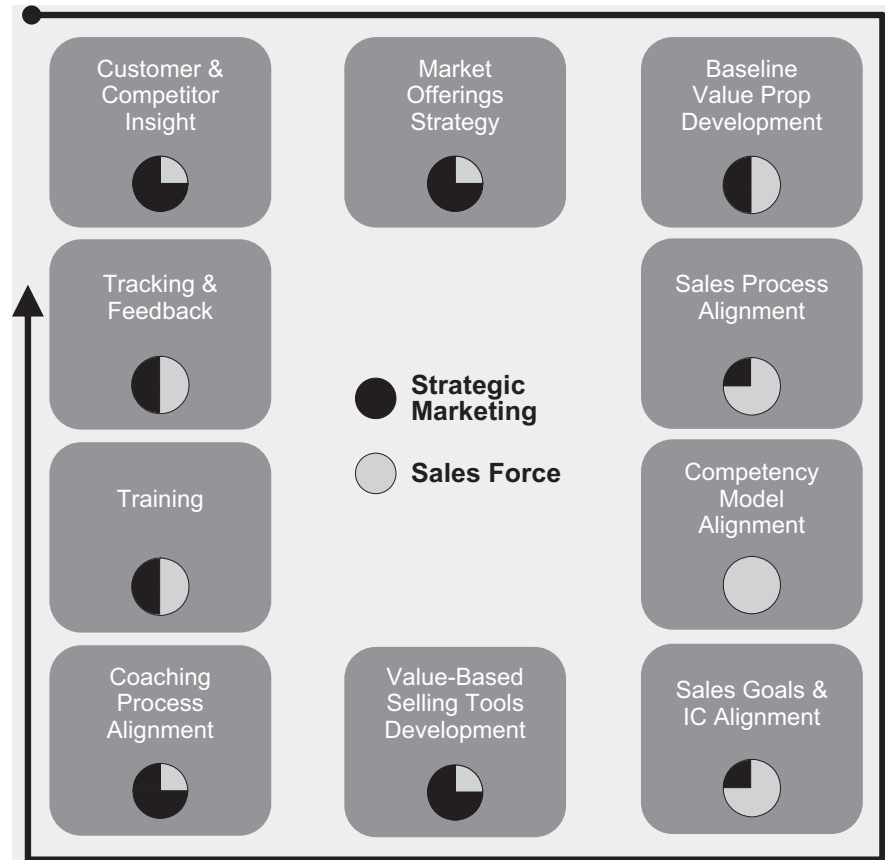
An assessment of the organization surfaced a number of underlying dynamics contributing to the situation:

- Both marketing and sales lacked a well-defined business process for developing sales strategy and ensuring the support required for execution.
- Neither marketing nor sales had a strong sense for their respective roles in crafting the customer value proposition or the tools and other support required to enable value-based selling execution.
- Neither organization fully understood what the other did, or how they should be working together to maximize performance. As a result, each tended to “do their own thing” and point fingers at the other when performance failed to meet expectations.

In response to these insights, marketing and sales leadership devised a 24 month plan to dramatically increase the organization’s overall value-based selling capability. This plan laid out a systematic, repeatable business process for addressing each key component required for effective value-based selling. It also defined and created strong collaboration between marketing and sales at each stage in the process, as depicted in *Figure 5*.

CASE STUDY B

Figure 5. Key Business Process Phases and Roles



As a consequence of the transformation, marketing and sales collaboration dramatically increased, and sales people’s customer facing activities and behaviors changed. Customers quickly noticed and commented on the far more compelling sales process and the increased value of interactions with the company. Business performance significantly improved. The company achieved a 23% improvement in b2b account performance, including a net increase in revenue of more than \$200M in its local home market alone.

The company in the above case successfully pursued a large-scale, end-to-end transformation of its marketing and sales organizations to address significant underperformance in its b2b business segment. Many organizations require a more incremental approach. While their current business performances may be strong, there is plenty of room for improvement. Leadership must identify ways to increase customer focus, and push their company to the front of the competitive pack without “blowing up” all that already is in place. What they need is a

more targeted approach to building integrated marketing and sales capability.

For these companies the actions that will lead to the greatest improvement are issue- and situation-specific. The best opportunities for creating a meaningful impact will depend on an organization’s relative strengths and weaknesses in the key drivers outlined in *Figure 4*.

An effective way for leaders to diagnose their marketing and sales integration, and to target gaps, is through a two-tiered self-assessment. The first question is “Do we have a marketing and sales alignment problem?” To answer this question, leadership needs to consider the associated outcomes the company is achieving in the marketplace. We have found assessments such as those depicted in *Figure 6* to be quite valuable for this purpose.

Value-Based Selling (Outputs)	Macro Litmus Tests	Relative Score (A,B,C,D)
Develop and Tailor	We consistently develop and tailor competitively differentiated market offerings comprised of product, service and program elements that best reflect customer needs, buying preferences and profitability.	
Communicate	Our sales force is able to consistently and effectively communicate, quantify and prove the organization’s value proposition relative to next best alternatives.	
	Our pricing process ensures that we are highly competitive relative to our value proposition and that we achieve our profit objectives.	
Reinforce and Grow	We continually track, quantify and communicate the value we have delivered to our customers. We leverage our proven value delivery as a platform to identify and pursue additional value creation opportunities.	
Customer Loyalty	Customers clearly perceive the incremental value we provide relative to next best alternatives. As a result we lead the industry in customer loyalty.	
Financial Performance	We consistently achieve our revenue and profit goals by profitably providing greater customer value.	

Figure 6. Marketing and Sales Outcomes Scorecard

Low scores in any of the above categories signal an existing or impending problem. The challenge then is determining the root cause for these low scores. It is important to note that the cause may not always be poor coordination between marketing and sales. The reasons could be the uncompetitive nature of a company's products or the inadequate training provided to its sales force. Regardless, low scores on any of these metrics should trigger a careful examination of the ways in which marketing and sales are working together.

The next level of assessment, as outlined in *Figure 7*, is to identify and address areas underlying any performance gaps where marketing and sales efforts may be misaligned. Again, the capability and drivers framework presented in *Figure 4* can be a particularly valuable aid in this assessment.

Capability Drivers (Inputs)	Micro Litmus Tests	Relative Score (A,B,C,D)
Business Process	All critical marketing and sales activities are accounted for and properly sequenced.	
	The current marketing and sales business process and roles ensure effective pooling of information and insights, build mutual commitment to strategy, and make sure that the support provided to the sales force meets their needs.	
Organization Design and People	The internal marketing and sales organization structure cost-effectively delivers critical sales and marketing activities.	
	People in each position have the right skills, understand their role and have mutual empathy to be successful.	
Metrics	Marketing and sales metrics are devised to reflect individual roles while simultaneously motivating teamwork.	
	Performance against metrics is rigorously tracked and plays a strong role in individual and team performance reviews, rewards and consequences.	
IT Systems and Tools	A comprehensive customer and prospect account database is developed to support the needs of both marketing and sales.	
	The sales force is provided with effective value-based selling tools that directly address their needs and requirements at each stage of the sales process.	
	The appropriate back-office systems exist to support metrics tracking and to feed the sales force value-based selling tools.	
Culture	Marketing and sales leadership exemplify teamwork in their day-to-day interactions, and expect the same of their respective organizations.	
	The organization views and respects the sales force as “the team that is going out on the field to represent the company in competition.” This places the sales force front and center—with other groups focused on enabling the sales force’s success.	
	The organization recognizes and respects the important of effective strategy and support. Marketing and sales strategy are viewed as an essential part of the revenue driving machine—not as cost centers.	

Figure 7. Marketing and Sales Integration Assessment

When applying the above evaluation, it often is useful for marketing and sales leadership to consider also the specific conditions highlighted in *Figure 4*:

1. Are marketing and sales working together to ensure that the company has a central repository of customer data and insight that can drive winning strategy?
2. Have marketing and sales developed a segmentation strategy and associated segment profiles that can drive winning segment-specific value propositions, sales processes and sales channel selection?
3. Does the company have a compelling, detailed baseline value proposition for each customer segment that the sales force can tailor as appropriate?
4. Has the company defined a sales process that drives the appropriate type of value-based selling for each customer segment? Does this sales process clearly define advances sought in each stage, relative roles of different key stakeholders, stage level metrics and critical enablers for each stage?
5. Does the sales force have tools to profile accounts, develop tailored marketing offerings and value propositions, estimate value creation and delivery, and communicate to customers and prospects? Has the sales force adopted these tools?
6. Does the go-to-market strategy ensure that the sales channel aligned to each customer segment cost-effectively fits the value proposition and sales process strategy?
7. Is the sales force expert in the company's segmentation, marketing offering, value proposition and sales process strategies?
8. Are the motivation systems in marketing and sales driving constructive collaboration (vs. destructive tension)?

Assuming that a gap exists in any of these areas, the resolution ultimately ties back to one or more of the capability dimensions highlighted in *Figure 7*.

Leaders should guard against the “we are doing that” mindset when applying the above diagnostics and strive to make an objective, critical and honest assessment. To be effective, these assessments need

leaders who have the courage to challenge the status quo and identify ways to make their company processes stronger. Enlightened leaders will realize that such assessments are not about declaring past practices a failure, but about identifying ways the company must evolve to succeed in the future.

Another important aspect of incremental change is triage—identifying those customers and sales teams where improvements in value-based selling capability will have the greatest impact. For instance, if gaps between the marketing and sales functions effectively deny a strategic account team the tools it needs to succeed, then addressing that is a higher priority than addressing gaps within the general field force. Strategic account teams need a higher level of value-based selling capability since they deal with more complex buying situations and solutions. And improvements in strategic account team effectiveness can lead to significant, often disproportionate upside gain.

ZS has worked with more than 1,000 marketing and sales organizations over the last 25 years. During this time, we have observed several areas that prove to be causes of a large disconnect between marketing and sales:

1. Marketing and sales personnel lack an understanding of, and empathy for, each other's jobs.
2. The sales force has not participated in the segmentation strategy, and neither agrees with the strategy nor believes it to be actionable.
3. The sales force lacks the value-based selling tools and detailed baseline value propositions it needs to successfully execute all phases of the sales process.
4. The pricing process is leading to destructive, rather than constructive, tension between internal pricing teams and the field.

Companies can often address these types of issues through an incremental approach and may not need a large-scale transformation as described in Case Study B. The next case, from a Fortune 100 high-tech company, describes an incremental, grass roots approach that resulted in radical improvements against the first three issues outlined above.

Marketing and Sales Alignment at a Fortune 100 Computer Hardware and Networking Company

In early 2000, this computer hardware and networking company, like most companies in the industry, experienced the end of one of the highest growth decades on record. The company had met or exceeded the expectations of Wall Street for 43 consecutive quarters. Yearly stock splits were the expectation, not the exception. However, as became apparent in 2000, the good times had masked serious issues.

Large amounts of inventory began to build up to meet rising demand, and the company's p/e ratio soared to over 140. As the high-tech bubble began to burst, new markets where this company excelled, like the Service Provider space, began to collapse. Many of the company's clients in this market ceased to exist, and those with staying power reduced their IT spend across the board. The subsequent events of 9/11, combined with the tech fall-out, corporate financial scandals and a recession, made for a challenging sales environment. Marketing and sales had historically been cordial to one another, but were not aligned in a way that supported each other's needs—the riches of the past had never required them to work together. Now, however, growth was difficult and customers were demanding proof of value relative to competitors. The game had changed.

The company's services sales force felt tremendous pressure to achieve their performance metrics, and had to defend the value of its offerings to customers more vigorously than ever before. A major breakthrough was realized when a small marketing team and one regional sales team agreed to collaborate one deal at a time. The regional sales team shared its best sales practices and field realities with the marketing team, so marketing could better understand the requirements of the sales force in this challenging environment. The marketing team was then able to construct content and tools directed at the key stages of the sales cycle. The impact was immediate. The region's sales team quickly led the country in performance.

From this experience, the marketing team was better able to generalize their support for the rest of the sales force. They separated out the customized (dynamic) collateral aimed at specific customers based on their issues and needs, from the unchanging (static) content—white papers on technology, for example—and stored such content for sales teams

CASE STUDY C

to use at the times when most appropriate. Marketing also developed generalized tools to support the sales process and to enable a financial quantification of value. This aligned approach to developing marketing content and sales support tools led to a healthy relationship between the sales and marketing teams and to a dramatic impact on their ability to position and sell value to customers.

One of the essential ingredients for marketing and sales alignment exemplified in this case is mutual understanding and empathy. Building mutual understanding and empathy between marketing and sales personnel is crucial for sustained collaboration between these two functions. Companies can achieve good results with a combination of side-by-side teamwork and training focused on helping both groups understand each other’s roles. *Figure 8* summarizes some of the more effective approaches that we have observed; they are most impactful when used in combinations.

Increase Empathy And Collaboration Between Marketing And Sales	
1	Co-location of the sales and marketing groups in the same location and next to each other
2	Job rotations at the executive and staff levels through both functions
3	Placement of HQ team member on sales force teams (e.g., HQ staff members assigned to district teams, SAM teams or GAM teams)
4	Formation of a sales force advisory board that interacts with sales and marketing strategists
5	Account reviews conducted by sales teams conducted with a sales and marketing executive committee
6	Quarterly plan of action meetings conducted jointly by sales and marketing
7	Increased marketing roles in annual sales meetings
8	Requirement that marketers and sales strategists go through all sales training (e.g., sales process)

Figure 8. Tactics for Increasing Empathy and Collaboration between Marketing and Sales

Looking Forward

Achieving end-to-end marketing and sales collaboration and effectiveness is challenging, and is confounded by many barriers. The increasing importance of value-based selling capabilities, however, means

that today's leaders must find a way to make their marketing and sales departments work together more effectively.

While some companies will need large-scale, end-to-end transformation, others will find it more appropriate to adopt an incremental approach to change. Whatever their path, companies today will have to elevate their capabilities by focusing on their business processes and roles, organization design, performance metrics, systems and tools, people and culture.

The rewards for organizations that are able to integrate marketing and sales are substantial. They will be able to better develop, tailor, communicate, prove and reinforce value relative to their competitors. Customer win rates, penetration and loyalty will increase. They will ensure mutual value in their customer relationships and stop "giving away value." Finally, they will maximize ROI on their very substantial marketing and sales investments.

About ZS Associates

ZS Associates is a global management consulting firm specializing in sales and marketing consulting, capability building, and outsourcing.

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