



REMOVING THE SILOS  
BETWEEN SALES  
AND MARKETING



JACK WELCH, FORMER CEO OF GE<sup>1</sup>, WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PROPONENTS OF

THE “**BOUNDARY-LESS ORGANIZATION**” CONCEPT, WHERE TEAMS ACROSS

FUNCTIONS, GEOGRAPHIES, AND SENIORITY WORKED QUICKLY AND

EFFICIENTLY TO FIND SOLUTIONS AND MAKE DECISIONS IN REAL-TIME. IT IS

PARTICULARLY BENEFICIAL FOR MARKETING AND SALES TO WORK TOGETHER;

WHEN THEIR EFFORTS ARE WELL ALIGNED IT TRANSLATES TO MORE LEADS,

MORE DEALS CLOSED, AND HIGHER CUSTOMER RETENTION RATES.

While it's an admirable ambition, not every organization has successfully achieved cross-functional departments. Far too often, functions end up in silos, with departments, units, and processes working independently of each other.

By identifying silos and working proactively to remove them, an organization can break down communication barriers that prohibit innovation and growth, ultimately leading to better results for the business.



## WHAT CHALLENGES CREATE SILOS?

The end goal for both sales and marketing functions is to increase profit for their organization. However, their methods of achieving that goal may vary. In sales, it's simple: did a department reach its sales targets or not? Marketing is more opaque, and it can be difficult to quantify the correlation between the department's promotion, brand, and advertising efforts, as well as client acquisition.

Because of those differing processes and mentalities, a roadblock often forms between the two functions. A report by the Content Marketing Group shows that sales teams do not use 60-70 percent of B2B content created by marketing departments because they feel it's not important to their audiences. In fact, only 25 percent of marketing-originated leads are legitimate and ready for sales according to Gleanster Research.

There are a number of digital tools that are helpful in increasing efficiencies across functions and in working with customers. For example, with Connecteam<sup>1</sup>, employees can view and create project checklists, upload files, view colleagues' schedules, create libraries of information, and even train for new areas of focus. A platform like Pocket<sup>1</sup> reduces distractions while neatly compiling data in one convenient place. And there's no shortage of ways to communicate with customers, whether it's via social media or through any one of the e-mail newsletter platforms. Sparkcentral<sup>1</sup> is an example of both, allowing for communication with customers while also supporting in-app messaging for team members.



While these tools are helpful, they can oftentimes limit human interaction. Gartner predicts that by 2020, customers will manage 85 percent of their enterprise relationships without interacting with a human.

Many companies have tightened their spending on different functions, which results in even more pressure to achieve key results. On the marketing side, for instance, tighter budgets require justifying each initiative; for sales, it can mean fewer follow-ups. Each function wants to demonstrate its individual value to the company, but whether consciously or subconsciously, it can cause roadblocks in efficiency.



85%

of customers will manage their enterprise relationships without interacting with a human.

Source: Gartner



# HOW BUSINESSES CAN REMOVE SILOS FROM THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

Alignment is essential. According to MarketingProfs, companies with well-aligned sales and marketing functions experience 36 percent higher customer retention rates, 38 percent higher sales win rates, and are 67 percent better at closing deals.

Automation is another important tool for increasing efficiency. Organizations can automate tasks such as email blasts and newsletters, to focus on more in-depth campaigns that target the right people. According to the Aberdeen Group, marketing automation can increase conversion rates by more than 50 percent. Before starting with automation, it's important to define campaign objectives and consider audience personas. The groups are not identical, so messaging for each must be tailored accordingly. It's also best to start small before working up to more complex, multi-layered campaigns.

Even though organizations are using automation more frequently, salespeople still maintain the strongest relationships with customers. Salespeople must communicate with marketing in order for a business to thrive. Sales representatives can help answer these key questions:

- What do customers like about the company's product or service?
- What are they concerned about?
- What were the best and worst parts of the sales process?



By understanding the personas of their audiences and sharing that information across functions, an organization can better focus its efforts on the right people. It can also use a few other methods to bring more cohesion across the business:

- Create specialized integration teams where marketing and sales can meet to share common business goals and report progress to leadership regularly. This frequent face-to-face action helps remove the isolation caused by silos.
- Put the two teams together. More organizations are creating “smarketing” departments that combine the functions of sales and marketing. Aligning marketing with sales also helps to keep both sides accountable. For example, an organization may provide incentives for marketing to contribute a certain amount of qualified leads into the sales pipeline.
- Develop lead scoring to determine a lead’s “sale-readiness.” This is effective in strengthening the revenue cycle, but only if sales and marketing work in tandem to develop the scorecard.
- Utilize account-based marketing, whereby individual prospects or customer accounts are treated as one. This helps to get the best value out of marketing while engaging with prospects earlier in the process.
- Align marketing content with sales-identified segments to improve the quality of targets and leads.

Marketing and sales functions should start working together before a product or service is launched. Their combined knowledge can help influence the ultimate design. They should also collaborate on creating their buyer personas, developing case studies, product digest emails, and product demos or videos. Finally, functions across an organization should participate in offline or social media events together. These may not be traditional team pairings, but when an organization becomes integrated, the possibilities are endless.



## SOURCES

HBR.org, Slideshare.net, IterativeMarketing.net, IterativeMarketing.net, Hubspot.com, Gartner.com, Salesforce.com, Marketo.com, Docurated.com, GlobalPartnersInc.com, iMeetCentral.com, Hubspot.com, Marketo.com



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