

# SALES SUPPORT

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## A vast majority of marketing materials created to support the sales function are tossed in the trash. **Here's how to create materials that won't be.**

**A**n organization's marketing and sales departments are supposed to play for the same team. But more often than not, they're playing entirely different games.

"Part of the problem is they are two separate departments, so with that go separate goals," says Lisa Dennis, president of Knowledge Associates, a sales and marketing consulting firm based in Cambridge, Mass. "They're just not on the same page. The jobs themselves, the way those organizations operate, are not designed in concert." That disconnect is holding business back.

According to a January report issued by Cambridge, Mass.-based Forrester Research Inc., only 8% of marketing and sales leaders surveyed rated their interdepartmental collaboration a five out of five, with 68% giving their collaboration a score of three or below. And according to a 2008 survey issued by the Palo Alto, Calif.-based CMO Council, salespeople consider up to 90% of marketing-generated collateral useless.

"Marketing typically has a better handle on the overall battle plan," says Jeff Pedowitz, president and CEO of The Pedowitz Group, a marketing and sales automation specialist in Atlanta. "[Marketers] know all the pieces and are more plugged into the long-term strategy. The salesperson is in the field of battle trying to kill something. They'll use whatever tool they can to get [the] job done effectively," even if that tool wasn't created or vetted by marketing, he says. The problem is that such sales tactics can dilute marketing's efforts.

Marketing is valuable to any organization, but "ultimately, we are all in sales. Nothing happens unless and until we sell something," says Daniel Joyce, global director of sales and marketing effectiveness, automation and control solutions at manufacturing powerhouse Honeywell International Inc., based in Morris Township, N.J. That means marketing departments at B-to-B organizations need to start playing the sales game in order to win new business.

That said, marketers need some good training. They need to first understand the sales mentality and function by shadowing sales people and learning what works in the field. Only then can marketers tailor their materials to better suit the sales force and attract new customers.

### **Think Like a Sales Rep**

Alignment between marketing and sales needs to start at the top. "Strong leadership sets the growth culture and customer mindset and it extends to the DNA of each employee, to make sure they understand how to best support greater organizational alignment," Joyce says.

With the right leadership comes greater opportunity for marketers to understand sales, even to practice sales. Joyce says Honeywell moves marketers into sales and vice versa when

What's particularly valuable is when marketers learn from their companies' sales force by sitting in on sales meetings and hearing firsthand what its objectives and strategies are. David Karel, vice president of marketing at Bizo Inc., a B-to-B ad network in San Francisco, touches base with the sales team weekly. "It's the single best opportunity for marketing to hear what the [sales] challenges are and what's happening," Karel says. Bizo celebrated a 300% sales growth in 2010 from 2009.

At Honeywell, all of the company's sales and marketing leaders from around the world, about 30 to 40 people, get together for a one-day meeting at least three or four times a year, with marketing and sales leaders assigned to specific business divisions getting together monthly. Joyce says of about 10,000 people working within

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appropriate so the two sides better understand one another. Dennis and Pedowitz suggest that upper management even consider compensating marketers the same way as salespeople, and even linking the departments' sales quota. That way, "they're joined at the hip," Pedowitz says.

Companies also should send their marketers through sales training, suggests James Obermayer, executive director of the Sales Lead Management Association in Villa Park, Calif. Obermayer says marketers can send themselves through their own crash course by attending a trade show and paying attention to sales pitches and benefit statements.

his division, 15% are marketers, while 85% are in sales. Honeywell also finds opportunities for marketers to learn from top sales performers. "We want to understand what it is they are doing ... what are the top pieces of literature and what are the messages they're using," Joyce says. "We want to know about that great success." The company celebrated its own success in 2010, increasing its sales by 8% to \$33.4 billion.

Besides learning from sales at meetings, marketers can learn from shadowing top sales representatives as they talk to customers and potential customers in person and over the phone. "If you're responsible for creating

demand in the field, you need to know exactly what is going on in the field,” Dennis says. Over time, marketers will discover a pattern the sales reps use in their pitches that can be used in their own marketing materials, as well as secure a front row seat to see how a customer or sales lead responds. “You can’t understand what the market requirements and customer requirements are ... unless you know their pain points,” Joyce says, which is a main reason why Honeywell marketers shadow sales representatives at least once every month or quarter, depending on their role.

But to ensure you have a full comprehension, don’t just be a fly on the wall, says Dan McDade, president and CEO at PointClear LLC, a marketing and sales automation consultancy in Norcross, Ga., and author of the book *The Truth About Leads*. “There’s a keen sense of the audience that salespeople tend to have that sometimes is just too subtle for a marketer to see,” McDade says. Pedowitz says marketers should ask salespeople why they asked certain questions of the prospects, why they represented certain elements of a product and other questions that flesh out observations they may have made. It’s also a good time to ask sales what marketers can do to better get the right message across.

### Making The Right Materials

Whether it’s during those debriefing sessions with sales or in separate meetings, it’s a good idea for marketers to meet with sales reps to go over some ground rules. The sides need to know what market they are going after and the top selling points for the company’s primary products and services, McDade says. He also advises marketing have sales reps analyze their last 10 sales presentations and determine what were the most effective tools that they had and the things they thought they needed that could have been helpful. Pedowitz says the two sides should establish what a qualified lead is, as well as a protocol for what happens to certain types of leads and the time frame for follow-ups. Marketing also should share the campaign calendar early on with sales leaders so they can provide input that may help shape campaign objectives for the better.

Then it’s down to creating materials. Generally speaking, experts agree one of the key considerations is less is more. Just as good sales people cut to the chase with their pitches and aim to keep the message simple, sales-supportive marketing materials should do so as well. “At the end of the day, a prospect can only take away a couple of key points,” says Russell Glass, CEO of Bizo, so a marketer needs to know what

will make prospects bite. The primary value proposition and points of differentiation have to be succinct and transparent. McDade says they will be most effective if tailored to one of the three conditions for selling: fear of loss of a current situation, perceived risk of deterioration and an opportunity to improve a current situation. Knowing which condition applies to a prospect, and having messaging and materials in place addressing that condition, can better ensure buy in. Previous conversations with sales may help marketers position these points in a conversational, complementary fashion, but marketers can always check back in for more guidance.

Beyond complementing sales pitches and addressing prospects’ needs, the most effective materials are tailored to a prospect’s step in the purchase cycle, be it awareness, discovery, comparison or point of purchase, Pedowitz says. For awareness, white papers and peer referrals can indicate to prospects a company’s expertise and offering, McDade says. For prospects deeper in the consideration set, materials such as webinars, analysis reports, podcasts and charts listing product and service offerings can further support the company’s value proposition and competitive distinction, Pedowitz says. Then near the end of the cycle, materials must indicate



clear deliverables, how success will be measured, and how the customer will be taken care of after the sale. Pedowitz and McDade agree marketing materials should emphasize peer recommendations at this stage.

Pedowitz strongly suggests primarily using interactive features; not only does he think they'll better guarantee deeper engagement and consumption from prospects, but the download of such materials can be measured to indicate appeal among prospects, which in turn can be used to inform sales which types of materials are working best. And while tailoring materials to specific consideration sets and steps in the buying cycle may be a smart strategy, Dennis advises marketers make sure that each piece of content is connected. "There is a lot of stuff out there that is stand-alone and that is problematic," she says. "You have to look at all your marketing content as pieces of a puzzle." So at the end of a white paper, for instance, marketers should provide recommendations for other content prospects to read, or links to upcoming company events about that topic, she says.

Sales may be more prone to use marketing materials that were inspired by their input, but to better guarantee use, Dennis suggests creating instructions along with the materials

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**For More on Marketing and Sales Alignment: Article**  
*Made for Each Other*  
 This *Marketing News* story explores how marketing and sales can create a more harmonious union.

**Webcast**  
*Communicating with Sales: How to Avoid Getting Lost in the Noise*  
 Wendy Grahn, manager of sales enablement at Zebra Technologies, discusses how her department creates relevant content for a 4,000 member-strong sales force.

**Podcast**  
*Marketing News Presents: How Owens Corning Strives for Marketing and Sales Alignment*  
 David Longmuir, customer discovery leader for building materials provider Owens Corning, discusses the sales marketing divide and how his company tries to bridge the gap. Available beginning April 11.

so sales knows how to use them and when. It's also wise to create a single, digital portal on a server where sales can access all marketing materials easily, she says. But perhaps the best way to make sales care about the marketing materials is to have representatives review the work before it's released, or even assess work in

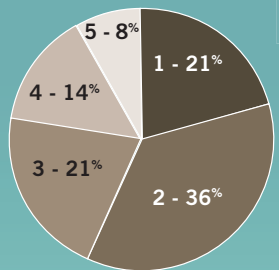
progress before too much money and time are invested.

"As a rule of thumb I never tackle a major piece of marketing without a handful of sales people to spend time on it," says Bizo's Karel. "I won't do it, it doesn't make sense. There's too big a chance to be off base." **m**

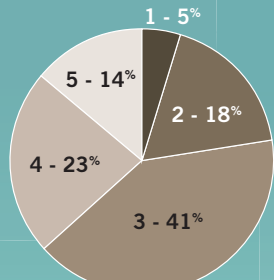
## WHAT DOES SALES THINK?

In October, Forrester Research surveyed sales leaders to see what they thought of marketers in their company, asking them to rank them on a one-to-five scale. Here were the results:

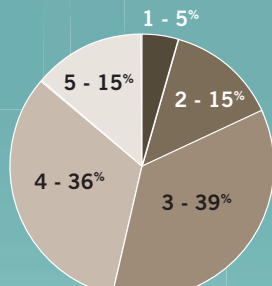
Marketers understand what it's like to be a salesperson:



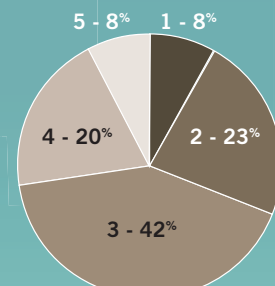
Marketers are a valuable asset to sales:



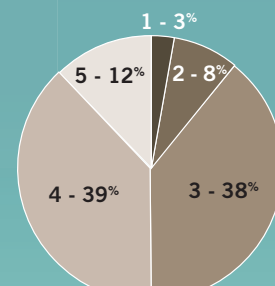
Marketers are experts in our products and services:



Marketers are experts in the needs of our customers:



Marketers are talented at what they do:



The biggest obstacle to alignment, according to the Forrester survey, was that marketing's long-term thinking clashed with sales' short-term thinking. On a scale of one to five, 58% rated this obstacle a four or a five. The second biggest obstacle was that the departments had different goals and measurements; 46% gave that a ranking of four or five. Sales indicated that there was little collaboration when it came to setting revenue goals and targets (earning a score of one from 12% of survey takers) and following up on leads (ranked a one by 11% of survey takers).

Source: Forrester Research Inc.

ANSWERS RATED ON 1-5 SCALE

