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The Contract Between Marketing and Sales

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The story seldom changes. Marketing and Sales just don't talk to each other. Even though both teams have the same goals – to create solid brand recognition, a healthy, expanding customer base, and a powerfully communicated value proposition -- they insist on operating within their own silos.

How can we get Marketing and Sales to come out of their silos and talk to each other? How can we close this gap once and for all?

In fact, why should we even bother?

With over 50 years of combined experience in marketing, our observation is that the most vital relationship in any business is the one between these two teams. When Marketing is aligned on Sales' expectations and Sales understands the value of Marketing, the value proposition message has more focus – therefore more power – and profits increase dramatically. What's more, a collaborative spirit is fostered, co-workers feel respected, and the integrity of the company is strengthened – all of which work to further the success of the company.

But first, there must be a fundamental understanding within an organization – that the marketing department actually works for the sales department.

The essential work of any company with an intention to grow is to actively embrace this fundamental understanding and make a strategic investment into the design and implementation of a powerful relationship between these two teams. Given that both teams are accountable for the growth of the business anyway, working together with shared intentions and clarity of purpose will only foster greater success. Their results would therefore be greater than the sum of their parts.

Then, in order to cement the relationship and empower each other's accountability, Marketing will need to 'sign a contract' with Sales and agree to deliver on Sales' expectations. This contract is based on the mutually agreed upon strategies that both teams design as part of their relationship.

Contract of not, it's hard for Sales to win without Marketing's active support. With a contract in place, the tactics from Marketing will be designed from a solid strategy based on the goals and objectives of the Sales team.

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Sales will in essence be handed custom-made tools to take to the street, which will reflect Marketing's messaging in trade ads, lead generation programs and other awareness building initiatives.

Both teams will be delivering exactly the same message to the customer.

Without this vital relationship in place, even the sexiest, most compelling strategies could very well be a waste of time. How many years will Sales keep trying to make their numbers using sales tools that contain interesting but ultimately ineffective messaging, and pretty but too often irrelevant pictures? How many selling seasons will produce disappointing numbers because the market gets one story from Marketing and another from Sales? The economy is soft enough. Companies cannot afford to continue with such a crucial disconnect in teamwork.

Once we solve that problem, we get to solve the next one: getting Corporate revenue goals (often based on the expectations of their investor community – the Board Room) to reflect those of Sales (often reflected by the marketplace – the Street).

That's a whole other chapter.

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