

CATALYST

the **MARXGROUP**

Business Strategy | Marketing Communications

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Sales vs. Marketing

By Tom Marx

Sales and Marketing Teams: Allies, or Oil and Water?

On several occasions we have witnessed first hand, or have heard of from an owner or manager, a serious lack of cohesion between the sales and marketing teams. Both factions send out dissimilar marketing messages – internally and externally. The pressures of having separate goals, urgent deadlines and limited budgets are used to justify the inconsistencies.

If your internal messaging is unfocused, you can bet that your customers are confused about your value proposition and your brand.

From the outside, the two teams look “disconnected” to whatever primary corporate marketing strategy there happens to be. Getting these teams to talk to each other – regularly – is essential to having clear product and corporate messaging. By having both teams engaged in the **cooperative** design of your marketing strategy, your value proposition will be communicated in a more powerful, consistent and effective manner. Everyone will be speaking the same language.

Take a look at your existing marketing communications and consider the current level of **collaboration** with your sales and marketing teams. Then ask yourself these questions:

- * Do we have regularly scheduled brainstorming sessions that include product marketing, field sales and corporate marketing team members?
- * Do our team members openly and readily disclose their opinions?
- * Are team meetings rousing and productive?
- * Do our team members put the teams’ agenda above their own?
- * Are our brand/product/service messages consistent and easy to understand by our customers?

Take a look at your answers. If you answered NO any of these questions, you’re likely losing more money than you need to. Marketing strategies and communications programs cannot be conceived in isolation.

If you are not engaged in regular, stimulating, thought provoking, collaborative meetings between field sales, product and corporate marketing, your sales goals will be much harder to reach. Worse yet, you’re wasting time and money.

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When you have a cohesive, functional team, magic happens:

TRUST - authentic communication generates effective listening

COURAGE – Cooperation AND opposing viewpoints builds possibilities (no more “same old thing”)

COMMITMENT – Team members pay more attention (less gossip, less assuming sales goals are being met effectively)

ACCOUNTABILITY - Team members take responsibility for their actions (rather than pointing fingers)

Bottom line?

Faster decision making based on coherent marketing, sales and communications strategies – which means improved field sales.

Now for the commercial:

It’s hard to change to a more **collaborative** system on your own. This kind of “culture change” requires the skilled intervention of a marketing expert who has an outside perspective – someone who listens to the concerns of the sales and marketing folks and designs solutions that work for both teams.

This is a particular talent of The Marx Group. We use a systematic approach where we will examine the interrelationships between/across different departmental functions, then recommend strategic solutions that fully utilize the **combined strengths** of the teams.

The results are always dynamic – and often unexpected. Some of our clients have said:

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