3 Steps to Sales and Marketing Alignment

salesfusion™

Aligning for Company-Wide Success

Here's an undeniable fact: 50% of your company's success relies on the relationship between your sales and marketing departments. Unfortunately, there's an age-old rivalry between the two departments due to a hindering disconnect. The marketing team claims that the sales team doesn't follow up on qualified leads, while the sales team claims that Marketing drives leads that are unqualified for outreach.

To add fuel to the fire, according to Forbes, 50% of sales representatives in B2B markets consistently fall short of their quotas. Can you guess why? A lack of communal understanding and agreement on terminology, important metrics, goals and tactics. Simply stated, a lack of alignment is the issue. Without alignment between Sales and Marketing, an information gap causes qualified leads to leak out of the sales funnel.

> Aberdeen Research found that companies with fully aligned sales and marketing departments experienced a 20% jump in annual revenue growth while those who did not prioritize Sales and Marketing alignment suffered a 4% decline.

Now that you have the case for driving alignment, how do you actually get started?

We have outlined 3 fundamental steps to getting the two departments on the same page.
It's important to keep in mind that the sales team gathers information on leads by actually speaking with them, while the marketing team gathers information from digital data. Both teams have insightful perspectives that can be used in conjunction to develop the perfect prospect plan, ultimately driving conversions and increasing revenue. Which, keep in mind, is the ultimate goal across all departments.

1 Share Definitions and Goals

A good start to developing alignment is making sure everyone is speaking the same language. Separately ask each department to draft a definition of your target customer: You will likely discover varying answers, even among teams. Here's your first alignment goal; ensure Sales and Marketing share a common understanding of critical terminology and goals.

1. Get the two teams together and review every touchpoint a lead has with your company, across departments and channels, in chronological order.

2. Paying close attention to the flow chart you've just created, brainstorm your target audience, or buyer persona. Maybe this fictional buyer works at a mid-sized company and engaged with your website content through organic search. What comes next? Decide together.

3. Once your buyer persona is in place, it's time to create a company-wide set of definitions. This ensures consistency for everyone. Once the list of definitions is laid out, create a document to distribute to everyone. The terms that need defining are up to you, but common mix-ups occur with:

- Lead
- Target Customer
- Sales Qualified Lead (SQL)
- Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL)
- Bad Contact
- Cold Lead

From here, begin measuring Sales and Marketing by the same metrics. If Sales is measured by opportunities, then Marketing must be as well.

> **Tip:** Try measuring success ratios based on the number of MQLs generated and then by the number of MQLs that were nurtured and closed as customers. This way you're not only tracking the number of leads Marketing passed to Sales, but also the quality of those leads.

2 Create Supportive Nurtures

Marketing is busy, Sales is busy, we're all busy. Your marketing automation platform can help you and Sales support each other through more than just a CRM integration. As you become comfortable with your platform, take the time to set up a series of email campaigns to aid sales representatives with their follow-up cadences. These series of emails, or nurture campaigns, support your mutual goals of quality lead generation and save everyone time down the line (especially the last week of the month when panic sets in). Not sure of where to start?

Nurture campaigns you might deploy are:

Cold-Lead Campaigns

Remember, "cold" leads are not necessarily "unqualified." These campaigns explore your prospect base for leads that can sometimes be more qualified than outbound leads since they've likely engaged with you before. Try dropping them into nurture campaigns that provide a strategic mix of product announcements and educational content.

Competitor Campaigns

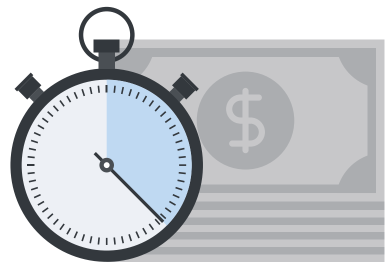
Early in the sales cycle, representatives may discover that a prospect is actually with a competitor. While their first thought is often to drop the pursuit, encourage Sales to treat these prospects as cold leads. While Sales schedules periodic check-ins, Marketing can nurture prospects with emails about product updates or industry news – anything relevant that will keep your brand top-of-mind and establish credibility. The goal of these campaigns is to stay visible incase that prospect has a negative competitor experience or craves change for another reason.

Thought Leadership Campaigns

Some leads start out emphatic about your company, but may become bored and drop off the face of the earth. When prospects aren't advocates for your company, they can be poached by a competitor. That hasn't happened yet, though! You've clearly earned their trust, but you'll need to work to keep it by delivering informative content and timely messages in a nurture. Sales closes the deals; they can keep their cadence updated with upcoming contract renewals so they can continue to grow relationships.

3 Refine Follow-Ups

Murky follow-ups stem from Sales and Marketing approaching pipeline separately rather than through a coordinated team effort. Leads are qualified through Marketing nurtures and then Sales reaches out with their own cadences, but does the Sales cadence align with the Marketing message that qualified a lead to begin with? If your teams are aligned, your messaging will be too. To avoid disconnect in messaging, Marketing should know what Sales' cadence consists of and Sales should know what a Marketing nurture entails.



With marketing automation, both teams have greater visibility into what the other is doing. Sales can see the emails their leads are receiving, while Marketing can access CRM notes to understand lead quality.

Keep in mind that alignment is a long-term commitment. Once you've started a dialogue with Sales, keep conversing about new campaigns, tactics and lead updates. You're a team for the long haul and the benefits will be worth it!

Usage Tip

Review the success of your efforts with a side-by-side comparison of pre and post alignment metrics, such as average lead follow up times and the number of qualified leads passed from marketing to sales.

The New Standard in Marketing Automation

Salesfusion is the all-you-need marketing automation solution built to work for you. With a curated toolset that includes highly intuitive campaign builders, advanced automations and superior reporting, we focus on what matters most to marketers – streamlining campaign creation, understanding engagement, improving conversion, and driving more revenue. Whether you're a do-er, dreamer, thinker, or techie, Salesfusion is the new standard in marketing automation.

Salesfusion serves the demands that mid-sized marketing teams have by focusing on areas that make teams more efficient to get campaigns out the door. Easy-to-use email, landing page and form builders make adoption quick for new or first-time marketing automation users. Built on CRM architecture, Salesfusion supports unlimited custom fields empowering advanced segmentations, lead scoring and personalization to make sure the right message is delivered to the right person at the right time. Real-time syncing with seven leading CRM platforms and native integrations make Sales and Marketing alignment a reality. Know what's working and what's not with Advanced Analytics, a powerful BI reporting module included with every package, so all users can leverage actionable data to streamline their marketing process and drive revenue.

Once you're a customer, Salesfusion supports you every step of the way to ensure success. We pioneered different deployment models to reduce complexity and the expense of working with multiple vendors. Our in-house experts, located in Atlanta, Georgia, accelerate successful onboarding and adoption of marketing automation, both the technology and the business practice. You can be confident every day that our friendly and knowledgeable support team is standing by and available by phone, email or chat, all at no additional cost to you.

Experience what a truly new standard of marketing automation means with Salesfusion.

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