

SOUNDINGS Trade Only



HOME > COLUMNS/BLOGS > MARKETING INSIGHT

The Golden Rule: Share and Share Alike

How to drive business growth by better aligning the sales and marketing departments.

WANDA KENTON SMITH • FEB 25, 2024

I recently attended a major industry conference where a marketing team's event drove traffic and created buzz. I congratulated a member of the sales team and was surprised that he and his crew knew virtually nothing about it.

In my 40-plus years in the industry, I've experienced similar disconnects between sales and marketing. These departments often operate as independent silos on the organizational chart, without the same direct-report structure. It's no wonder there can be a lack of internal communication and focus, along with muddled accountability for results.

According to a HubSpot 2023 State of Marketing Report, only a third of sales and marketing teams are aligned. Half the marketers surveyed said they plan to create stronger synergy. As a veteran marketer, I believe a fundamental remastering in how sales and marketing operate is necessary to enhance revenue generation, improve team satisfaction and advance customer delivery.

Marketing powerhouse Marcus Sheridan agrees. As president of Marcus Sheridan International/Impact, he has long preached the importance of sales and marketing integration. "Silos kill organizational success," he says. "A great sales and marketing culture starts with an agreement that both departments matter. Sales has to see themselves as a part of marketing. Marketing has to see themselves as a part of sales. Unlike the past, sales needs to participate as subject matter experts to help marketing. Marketing,

at the same time, needs to be responsible for revenue generation and have [key performance indicators] built around this metric.”

Such a well-oiled dynamic is evident at Galati Yacht Sales. Its sales and marketing team works as a unified force, including in lead management and reporting; campaign results; boat show planning and statistics; social media reach; qualitative reporting; digital tool development; customer interface and engagement; and shared responsibility for overall sales through joint marketing initiatives.

“Marketing and sales alignment is not an issue that we think about because it’s simply standard operating procedure at Galati Yacht Sales,” says director of marketing Mary Strauss, adding that the alignment is due to a variety of factors including technology, marketing automation, customer relationship management, personalities and respect.

According to Strauss, the marketing team at Galati is an integral part of the sales process. It participates in ongoing sales meetings along with ad hoc brainstorming sessions. The marketing team is responsible for customer relationship management, which, she says, “provides a single source of truth that all managers can access.”

This is how marketing sources drive sales revenue. A custom-designed marketing dashboard allows 24/7 management access to review real-time results.

Additionally, Strauss says, the sales team actively contributes to marketing initiatives, including creating content (blogs and video) while working with the marketing content creator to validate and develop ideas. Strauss says the marketing team seeks sales team input because sales talks to customers every day.

“Marketing wants the salesperson to be the rock star,” she says, adding that the marketing team coaches on social media presence, trains for customer relationship management, builds customizable templates and executes events. “Marketing’s role is to run air cover for our sales team so they can focus on selling.”

Darren Plymale, Galati’s executive vice president, chief financial officer and chief operating officer, says the sales team’s ability to identify market trends

and consumer feedback, and provide both to the marketing team, is key.

“Our business cycles from new yacht interest and brokerage yacht demand are always evolving,” he says. “As we move through these cycles, sales and marketing must be on the same page and continue pursuing ways to reach the consumers’ demands. The continued feedback we receive from marketing provides confirmation as to where our industry is moving. We must always be in front of the curve.”

Correct Craft president and CEO Bill Yeargin also points to the benefits of a solid working partnership between sales and marketing. “We have several hundred dealers, and having our sales and marketing teams working well together makes a big difference in our dealer satisfaction,” he says. “Both teams need each other. We talk in terms of marketing teeing it up for sales, while the sales folks are normally frontline and need to communicate back to marketing what they need.”

Another organization with a unified sales, marketing and customer service focus is Sportsman Boats, with departments headed by chief marketing officer Victor Gonzalez. “There are three major benefits in my eyes to a collaborative effort,” he says. “First, for the sales teams, it relieves them of those awkward first interactions where a customer perhaps hasn’t quite decided what they should be looking at. Marketing should deliver that

customer at a point in their shopping process where they are two-thirds of the way there.

“Second, for the marketing team, it eliminates the guesswork on what they should be working on,” he continues. “The sales team is the best resource for what is needed for the business at that moment. Whether they should be focusing on leftover inventory or new boats or something else, sales has the answer.

“Lastly, for both teams, it’s an especially great time to understand each other’s strengths and struggles, and how those can be virtually eliminated,” he says. “I believe the customer service team is equally responsible in this, and it’s a trio. Happy customers buy more boats down the road. Keeping that connective nurturing tissue with every customer will keep them in the

family far longer. Those happy customers talk to their friends, and those friends also buy boats.”

Shifting to this type of approach may be challenging for traditional sales and marketing organizations. Companies need to create the internal vision and structure; overcome turf wars and job insecurities; and have full leadership support.

“Resistance from leadership is the biggest challenge,” Sheridan says. “If you have resisters, they will be a cancer to the entire organization. Remove the resisters, seek a culture of champions, and things will take off from there.”

He also suggests creating a revenue team that includes at least one member each from sales and marketing who meet each week to discuss priorities, trends and observations. “Have each marketing team member shadow someone in sales at least twice a year,” he adds. “Have each sales team member attend marketing events and conferences to learn how today’s buyer is changing.”

Yeargin says he encourages this kind of synergy by asking his team not to make others earn their trust. “Give it until it is broken,” he says. “This can save years in what it would sometimes take to develop trust.”

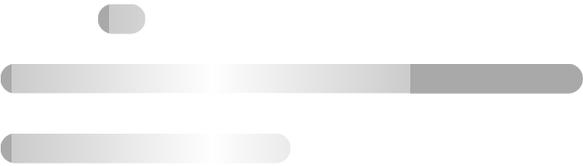
Plymale says the need for leadership to share information and feedback is also key. “We are constantly measuring shows, events, consumer feedback, tournaments, and taking that information back to marketing,” he says. “Our marketing budgets are growing more and more today with the digital competition, websites, paid search.”

Gonzalez says the old standby of money can also help nudge teams to collaborate. “Attaching dollars to achievable goals could be as simple as some monetary compensation if a customer mentions a marketing piece in a survey at the close of a sale,” he says. “Having upper management also participating shows a deeper entanglement and care for customer-facing work that the marketing team creates. And it won’t get done if it’s not on the calendar; schedule time to work together on content and for brainstorming sessions.”

If one of your goals is to grow business, consider how your organization’s sales and marketing departments can become a cohesive, cross-functional team. There are countless benefits to this approach, all while reinforcing a positive corporate culture.

This article was originally published in the March 2024 issue.

RELATED





© 2024 ACTIVE INTEREST MEDIA ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

[SUBSCRIBE](#) [NEWSLETTER](#) [CUSTOMER SERVICE](#) [DIGITAL MAGAZINE](#) [LICENSING & REPRINTS](#) [RESOURCES](#) [ADVERTISE](#) [CONTACT US](#)
[PLATFORM PRIVACY](#) [SISTER SITES: PASSAGEMAKER](#) [YACHTS INTERNATIONAL](#) [ANGLER'S JOURNAL](#) [SOUNDINGS](#) [POWER & MOTORYACHT](#)
[SAIL](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#) [TERMS OF SERVICE](#)

A channel by  **THE
ARENA**
Group