



Why Marketing is Now More Important than Sales.

Gone are the days when throngs of salesmen in penny loafers knocked on businesses' doors one by one in hopes of introducing, educating, and converting those "blind" prospects into long-term customers. Thirty years ago, there were only a handful of ways prospects could get information from anyone other than your sales force. Now, your marketing department has assumed the role of educating your customers, and your sales team's role has shrunk to simply converting interested and educated prospects into buyers. Plain and simple, marketing has trumped sales in the corporate hierarchy.

Marketing today is a complicated game. Back in the 1970's, your company might have spent almost its entire marketing budget on television commercials to run during I Love Lucy, or bought up a bunch of newspaper ads or radio spots. These choices alone would allow you to reach your target audience. Not anymore. Focusing your marketing efforts with laser accuracy has replaced broadcasting. Now your marketing department needs to know where and how they can reach your targeted demographic. Is it on a cable TV station geared toward women from 18-39, or should you sponsor a NASCAR driver so his fans (your prospects) can see your logo and hear him thank your company at the finish line? The choices are literally endless. The key is knowing which vehicle will work for your business—whether it's launching a direct mail campaign or sponsoring a major sporting event. And don't forget about your online presence—your website, your blog, your social media posts. Though your marketing pie is bigger than ever, it's sliced into smaller pieces.

Not only do you need to pick the right channel to reach your customers, but you need to have a rock-solid message too. Today, customers want to know why your product or service is their best choice, and while you're telling them, they expect to be entertained. What makes your company memorable? Do you have an amphibian as your spokesperson? Do you have a recurring element in your commercials, like a 5-word phrase that

sums up your customers' frustrations with your competitors? Developing winning marketing campaigns takes research and ROI-driven program development all being led by a talented, creative team. It also requires your marketing message stays consistent throughout your company—from your television advertisements to your email signature line. Marketing plays a bigger role in business than ever.

Effective marketing means your prospects will remember your name and know where to find you. They will not wait around for a salesperson to knock on their door. They'll go to your website, research what other people are saying about you, and maybe even subscribe to your social networking feed. Only then, if they like what they see, will they decide to contact your sales department. In today's world by the time your sales team begins interacting with your prospects, they should already have a strong understanding of who you are and what you do based on the work of marketing. You need to be generating more revenue with fewer salespeople than before. .

So the next time your sales numbers disappoint you, don't immediately fire the chief sales officer —take a hard look at your messaging and how it is delivered to your target audience instead. Do you have the best available, experienced talent working for you? Has your marketing team grown to keep up with the new media demands? If not, it's time to make some changes in your marketing staff—not your sales staff. With a top marketing staff and a progressive marketing plan, you'll watch your sales climb.

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