

How Lead Nurturing can Successfully Link Marketing and Sales

Creating a Win-Win scenario for both Marketing and Sales



The Relationship between Marketing and Sales

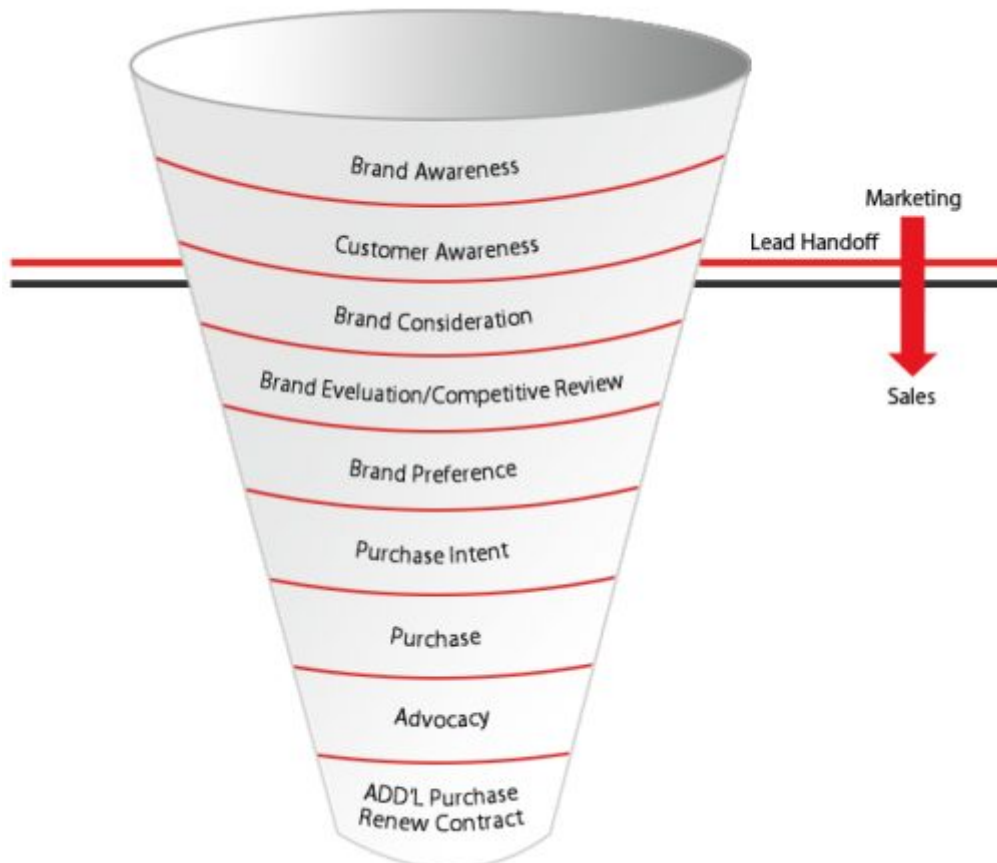
In today's economic crisis, business-to-business (B2B) company survival depends more than ever on the ability to generate qualified sales leads and effectively turn those leads into purchase orders.

Marketing and Sales organizations are under pressure to get results even as teams are trimming down and operating budgets are shrinking.

This is an opportune time to evaluate the relationships and processes that tie these organizations together, and identify ways to improve individual and cross-functional productivity.

Sales' contributions are highly visible throughout the company. They are the most exposed professionals in a traditional sales-driven organization. However, Sales is very dependent on Marketing. Without a steady stream of qualified leads, it becomes extremely difficult for these individuals to succeed.

Marketing and Sales share responsibility for the corporate sales funnel. It is broadly understood that Marketing's role is to fill the sales funnel with leads generated from their brand building and demand generation initiatives. The Sales team then takes over to process the leads through the various stages of the funnel.



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As dependent as the teams are on each other, they can evolve into disparate functions that make it challenging to hand off sales leads from Marketing to Sales.

The challenge is to ensure that the leads generated by Marketing are qualified to the satisfaction of both the teams, and that they handoff to Sales at the point in time that maximizes the chances of an actual order from the customer.

Success eventually depends on building consensus between the two teams. This includes understanding the buyer and agreeing on the criteria for a qualified lead. Next, Marketing and Sales must clearly define the responsibilities and ownership for the lead at every stage of the Marketing and Sales process.

By aligning Sales and Marketing with mutually agreed upon goals and processes, companies can introduce a collaborative approach to customer management, and effectively measure and optimize the performance of both teams. By building consensus, these two functional areas can become a single virtual revenue-generating team.

The Vital Lead Nurturing Link

Marketing & Sales can be smoothly integrated by lead nurturing. Lead nurturing is the process of building a relationship by conducting an informative dialog that helps qualified prospects who are not yet sales-ready, regardless of budget, authority, or timing - and of ensuring a clean hand-off to sales at the right time.



In particular, companies that excel at lead nurturing:

- Decrease the percent of marketing-generated leads that are ignored by sales (from as high as 80% to as low as 25%)
- Raise win rates on marketing-generated leads (7% points higher) and reduce "no decisions" (6% lower)
- Have more sales representatives that make quota (9% higher) and a shorter ramp up time for new reps (10% decrease)

Make your sales & Marketing Teams Work in Tandem

- ➔ Use a series of ongoing communications - by mail, email or phone - designed to keep pace with the prospects' information needs to make decisions about the kinds of products or services. (Marketing)
- ➔ Be sure to include multiple offers that appeal to prospects at all stages of the buying process. (Sales)
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For example, if prospective customers are early in their buying processes, they will be more receptive to offers for free information in the form of how-to guides, white papers or email newsletters.

As prospects move further along in their buying processes, appropriate offers may include those that require a higher level of interest or commitment on the part of the prospect. These include webinar invitations, demonstrations, checklists and other decision-making tools.

As prospects approach being ready to buy, they will be more receptive to offers such as longer, in-depth seminars; needs assessments; or meeting with and getting a proposal or quotation from a salesperson.

→ Next, keep in touch with your prospects via a series of ongoing communications and offers throughout your prospective customers' consideration processes, until they are ready to engage with your salespeople. (Sales & Marketing)

Sales revenue per customer is usually significantly higher for those who are included in the prospect relationship marketing program compared to those who are not. Relationship marketing is not just feel-good jargon.

If you use well-crafted communications designed to keep in touch with and inform prospects as they move through their consideration and buying processes - not just focusing your company's efforts on the easy or short-term sales opportunities - it is not difficult to close three out of four sales that others are leaving on the table. And that makes your lead nurturing program a winner.

Conclusion

Sales and Marketing may not ever fully understand or appreciate each other, but technology can at least begin to break down some of the barriers that exist in businesses all over the globe.

About Leadsberry:

Leadsberry offers high-quality lead management solutions customized for large and small businesses. Leadsberry's world-class lead management tool has helped businesses generate sky-high ROI by completely automating their lead nurturing process. Their marketing automation tool is one-of-a-kind wherein clients are able to generate, follow-up, score, nurture, analyze and convert leads into deals. Since inception Leadsberry's innovative lead nurturing tool has helped its clients automate their lead generation and follow-up completely and bolster their sales double.