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The Executive's Guide to Winning Sales With Today's New Buyer

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Table of Contents

I remember when I started in sales. Back then, I thought it was complex and tough; but as I think back on it today, I realize how simple things were by comparison.

In the "good old days," (and remember the good old days are never as good as they are old) the key ingredient in sales success was this thing called "salesmanship." If you could make a good connection, build a strong case and present your recommendations influentially, you could win the sale.

Today, two trends dictate a more refined, comprehensive approach to growing sales:

1. Today there is a middle-management gap that exists in most buying organizations. There is increasing separation between the people who manage business functions (those who live with the problems you solve); and those responsible for allocating the resources and driving the direction of the organization (those who have the authority to make a change).

   You can no longer simply go in "high" and convince the decision-maker. Research done by the Corporate Executive Board highlights the increasing importance of building consensus in the buying process. This means that salespeople must be able to "go low" before going to traditional decision-makers, and marketers must be able to deliver a compelling value proposition to the entire prospective organization.

2. The very nature of how organizations assess problems, vet solutions and buy has radically changed. Think about how you and your organization go about analyzing opportunities and buying, compared to what you did a decade ago.
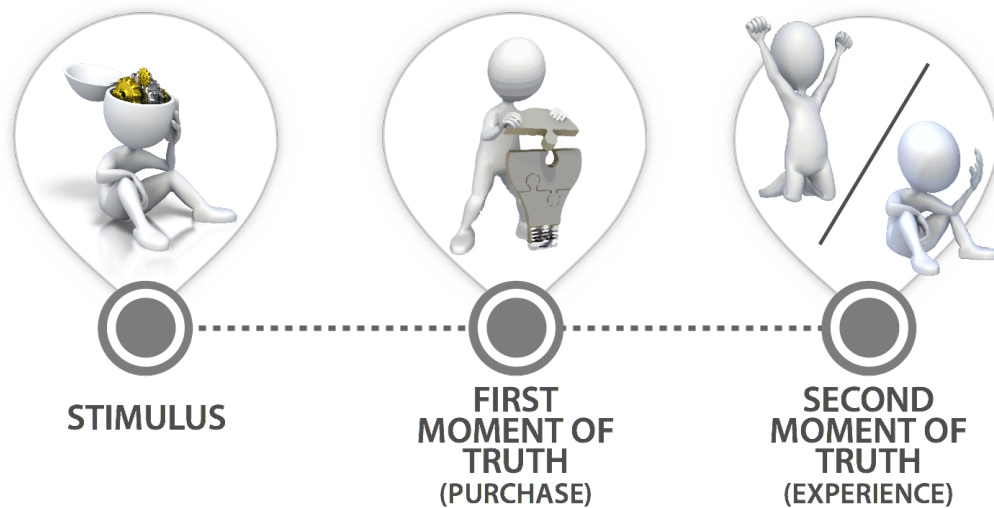
   Today, your process may begin with thoughts or ideas that were stimulated by some research or discussion. Your next step is to go online (if you aren't already there) to learn more about the issues, alternatives and opportunities. You will look to see what others are saying and doing about the issue elsewhere and download some resources in the process.

   Research from the likes of Forrester Research, Gleastner, Corporate Executive Board, DemandGen and more all demonstrate how much more important content is to support the selling and buying process.

Welcome To The Zero-Moment-of-Truth (ZMOT)

This term comes from exhaustive research conducted by Google & Shopper Sciences. They found that as the Internet matured in the late 2000s, customer behavior began to radically change.

Historically, the entire sales process was built behind a concept dubbed *The First Moment of Truth*.

STIMULUS   FIRST
            MOMENT OF
            TRUTH
            (PURCHASE)

            SECOND
            MOMENT OF
            TRUTH
            (EXPERIENCE)

Until relatively recently, the way people bought was that they were first exposed to some form of stimulus that created the realization of what we call a "pain gap." Simply put, the customer realized there was a gap between what they wanted and what they perceived they had.

The next step was to engage in some fashion with a selling organization that promised the ability to fill the gap. This was how customer's learned more about the problem, the alternatives that existed in the market and the resources that were required.

If you think about it, in the days before Google, salespeople were the ones that served that function. If someone had a question about what was available or what was happening in the market, a salesperson was a great resource to connect with because they were deeply involved with a broad set of customers and situations. Of course, today we go to a search engine for that.

The realization of the importance of the first contact between buyer and seller led to the creation of sophisticated sales processes like solution selling, consultative selling and more. Selling organizations realized the importance of

the salesperson in defining the problem and the growth of the "superstar" sales rep gained popularity.Without realizing it, many B2B organization began to diminish the importance of marketing and even lead generation in the process. This worked because the economic environment of the 1990s and early 2000s created more than enough demand to meet objectives.

The Changing Nature of How Buyers Buy

While all of this was going on, subtle changes began to build. Where selling organizations used to be able to control the flow of information, the Internet began to level the playing field. We were slowly moving from the days of Caveat Emptor (buyer beware) to where we find ourselves today Caveat Vendit (seller beware).
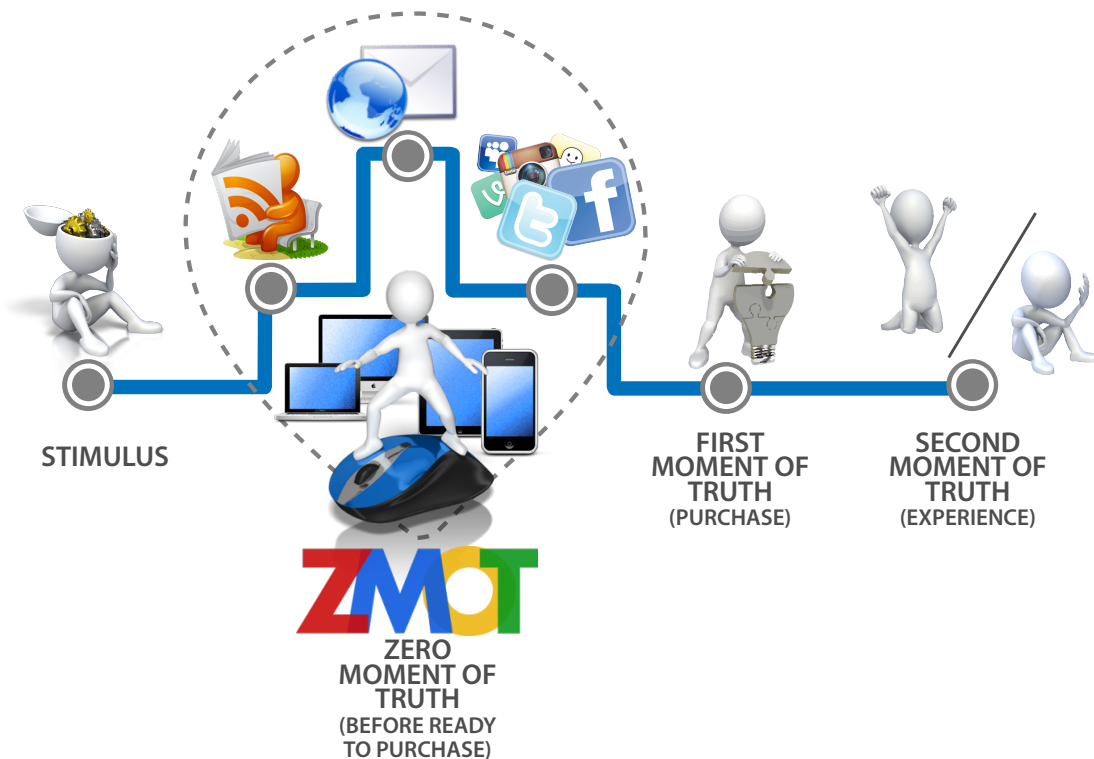
Buyers began to change their behavior. Increasingly when a stimulus led to a pain gap, before reaching out to selling organizations they'd begin the journey on their own. They'd visit the web. They'd check out social media. They'd submit questions through LinkedIn or Quora (and others).

Content grew in importance because buyers wanted to know and understand more *before* engaging in conversations with salespeople. Suddenly the buyer's and seller's journey desynchronized.

For those that aren't convinced, consider these facts:

- According to a study done by Google and Shopper Science, the amount of content sources reviewed by a potential buyer before being ready to engage in a buying process doubled from 5.2 in 2010 to 10.4 in 2011. (Just imagine what it is in 2015.)

- In a B2B sale the customer has moved from conducting 56% of the process on their own to 65% before they're open or ready to talk to a vendor (or salesperson).

- According to research firm MarketingSherpa, even small companies have an average of seven people involved in a buying decision; that number goes as high as 21 individuals at larger companies.

- According to Google's study, an online search has now equaled or eclipsed advice from friends, family or colleagues in the purchase process.

- According to Forrester Research, the first thing 80% of people do when they confront a problem or have a question is to go online and search for an answer. (This, by the way, applies to all age demographics.)

Unlike some have claimed, this change did not reduce the importance of (professional) salespeople, nor did it eliminate the opportunity for salespeople to engage with prospects early in the process.

What it has done is radically changed the game for selling organizations. Successful selling in the B2B world has gotten increasingly complex and challenging. Companies must address sales growth with a more comprehensive game plan than they have in the past.

The chapters that follow are based upon two years of research we conducted at Lift Enablement into the what and the how of scalable sales growth. We provide the best practices, data and structures that have proven to support predictable and sustainable sales growth. We trust you'll enjoy what follows.

Rethinking The B2B Sales Force

From the time I graduated college (in 1989), I've consistently heard claims that the traditional sales force is going the way of the dinosaur.

Percentage change in employment
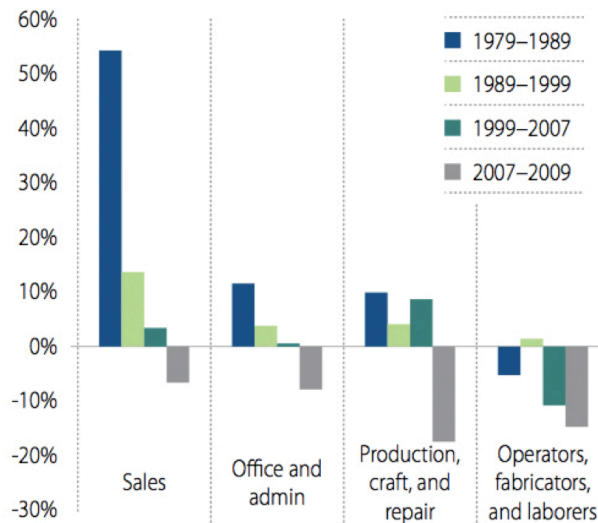
While the calls for the end of professional selling have certainly been premature, I was reminded of this issue when I came across an article, *How The Internet Is Making Us Poor*.

The article sites a study by the St. Louis Fed, pointing out that because of the Internet, "People who process information are losing their jobs at rates comparable to the rate of loss in manufacturing," with sales jobs being among the chief victims.

As the Internet, advanced marketing, analytics and the increasing power of procurement offices are taking hold, I stopped and asked myself, "Has the time come? Is the sales force, as we know it, done?"

Certainly, companies like Dell and even Apple have demonstrated that you don't need highly paid, highly incentivized sales reps to move expensive complex products. I know many a CEO that would be happy to hear the news that the sales force is a dying concept. As a member of and frequent speaker to CEO groups like Vistage and EO, I've seen first hand how challenging it is to hire effective sales people across the board. There certainly would be some happy executives if we could simply design a marketing strategy, apply some voodoo SEO, and then sit back and wait for the cash register to ring.

Then I remembered my favorite quote about statistics…they're like a lamppost for a drunk – used more for support than illumination. The Fed study concluded that *those who process information are losing jobs*.

Therein lies the rub. In the 70s, 80s and even into the 90s a salesperson's fundamental job was to process information. They were the kings of intermediaries. They could succeed without actually *creating any value, as they were already a necessity as a means to communicate it*.

Even as we entered the 21st century, salespeople could hit quota and survive if they just worked hard enough. As I've shared often, those days are long gone. But, as the saying goes, we shouldn't throw the baby out with the bath water.

While killing the sales force is a bad idea, **it is mission critical that B2B SMEs rethink their approach to building, managing and maintaining a highly profitable sales force.**

There are three old ideas that must be thrown out immediately. Throw out the idea that:

1. The first thing you should do to grow sales is hire more salespeople.

2. Sales generalists are the best way for SME's (or any size company) to build a sales team.

3. There's no "right way" to sell. Everyone does it differently.

The Heuristic of Sales

In *The New Design of Business,* author Roger Martin talks about three phases of design. He says that everything starts out as a mystery. The mystery phase is highly complex and confusing, as there are no clear rules about cause and effect.

As the mysteries are studied, themes (or heuristics) can emerge. These themes help tell the story of cause and effect. The challenge is that while these rules are often correct, and bring some degree of order to bear, they are not always true, leaving some complexity that must be managed.

As the design deepens, algorithms, or pure patterns, can emerge. These patterns are like mathematical formulas (hence the term algorithm) about cause and effect, and are always true. By the way, when algorithms dominate a job function, employment opportunities will drop.

A profession that deals in mystery is akin to art, and a profession anchored in algorithms is akin to science. Sales is in the middle – neither art nor science. Success requires a system designed to take advantage of the themes that work and that has the flexibility to adjust to the uniqueness of each interaction.

The Need for Focus & Specialization

If I could end only one horrible practice in sales, it would be the idea that hiring a salesperson to manage the entire sales process was a viable idea. The idea is bad for several reasons:

• B2B Sales is far too complex today.

- Far too much of "the sale" takes place when the salesperson isn't even present.

- Buyers are too harried and fragmented for one salesperson to be able to manage the process effectively.

- The sales process depends on multiple talents that don't exist within one person.

Success in B2B sales today requires focus and specialization. This is important so that you can match the talent of the individual to the task at hand, and to gain both the efficiency and effectiveness that focus brings.

There are three critical functions to the sales process:
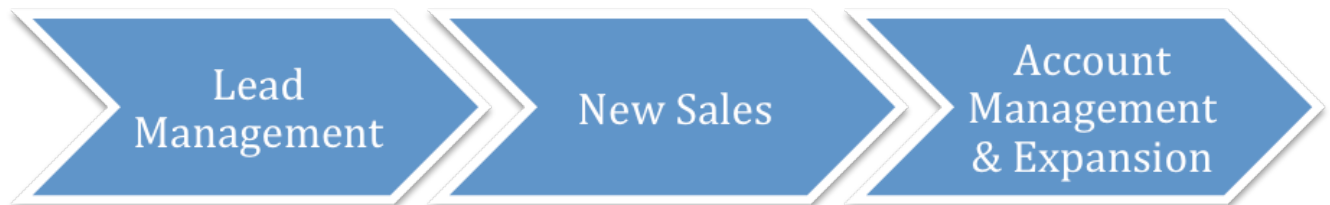
Lead Management:

Inherently a marketing function, lead management is responsible for the generation, cultivation and conversion of an increasing number of qualified leads that are positioned to be sales ready. Forward thinking SMEs will integrate proven inbound and content marketing strategies, with an effective outbound effort led by an inside sales team.

New Sales:

As the lead management team moves the lead to a "sales ready" status, it is turned over to a new sales team, responsible for managing the sales process. This new team will serve as the lead to determine the actions that will be taken, by whom and when. This position, which I typically call the engagement role, is the one that is most similar to the traditional sales role.

Several advantages are gained by focusing exclusively on the new sale process, such as greater capacity and improved performance.

Account Management & Expansion:

Once a sale has been made, it should be managed by a client services or account management team who is responsible for managing and expanding the relationship. Turning over a client/customer/account to an account

management team does introduce a degree of complexity, but that is overwhelmed by the increased efficiency, capacity and economic benefits associated with this model.

There is only one reason that this model should not be adopted by an organization in today's B2B world. The single-word reason is laziness. It's easier to just have one person handle the whole process. There's less risk of communication mistakes, management of the function *feels* easier and you don't need to develop and manage the systems needed for such an approach.

In the very short-run, this approach could (and I emphasize *could*) increase sales costs marginally. In the medium and long-term, **this model reduces sales costs and frees up capacity to allow for consistent growth**.

The truth is that such poor sales design is doomed to mediocrity at best. Today's technology tools allow businesses of any size to optimize the management of the sales process, and the increasing complexity and competition of the market demands it. The upside is that once the investment of time and effort is made building the system, the revenue growth process becomes far less disruptive and the opportunity to scale presents itself.

It's your choice. Continue to play a traditional game that clearly isn't working, throw the whole thing away for an e-commerce model, or jump ahead of your competition and build that system that makes sales growth predictable.

Understanding The B2B Lead Generation Model

I write a lot about lead generation on the Imagine blog. The reason for this is that you can't have predictable growth without predictable, quality lead generation. As I share in the post *Rethinking The B2B Sales Force*, an effective sales structure should look like this:
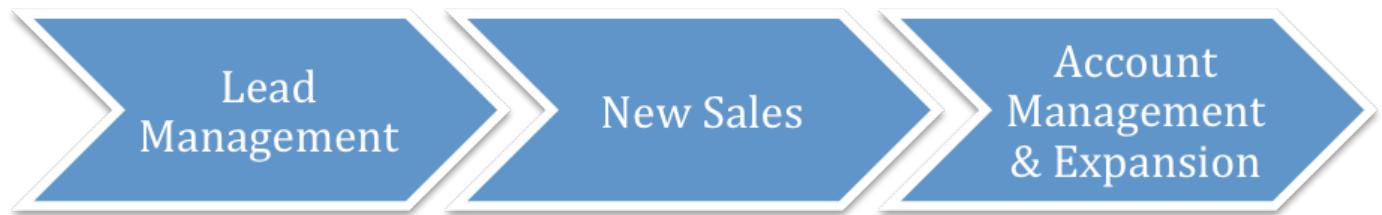
The most distressing observation I've made over the last 20 years working with small and mid-market businesses is the dysfunction, or even the abdication of the lead management function. This weakness is the central cause of the disruptive, unpredictable growth patterns for most B2B SME's.

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE B2B LEAD MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

The lead management function is responsible for four important objectives:

1. Creating awareness with your targeted profiles.

2. Generating leads with prospects who have the pain you solve.

3. Cultivating or nurturing those leads so they understand the value of your offerings.

4. Converting those opportunities to sale ready leads, where your new sales function takes over.

While the primary responsibility of this function lies within your marketing function, it is critical that your marketing and sales functions be fully aligned and integrated for successful implementation.

Prospect Segmentation

Not all prospects are created equally, and not all prospects should be managed in the same way. At its simplest you want to separate strategic prospects from standard prospects. Strategic prospects represent your best growth opportunities, and they should be handled with greater focus and separately from normal opportunities.

Lead Management Teams

Ideally you've got three teams in place to support your lead generation effort:

- **Inbound marketing team:** that is developing and sharing valuable content that challenges, influences and engages.

- **Inside sales team:** responsible for connecting with leads as they're generated, moving them through the early parts of the sales process and converting them to a sales-ready status. Additionally, this would be the team that is responsible for implementing outbound methods. In larger, more advanced organizations, this could be two distinct teams.

- **New sales team:** responsible for taking sales ready leads and moving them through your sales process, as well as performing targeted lead generation.

I realize that some companies are not big enough to support three full teams. In those cases there are two approaches you can take. You can maintain this three-team approach, realizing that one or more people will comprise multiple teams.

Or, you could eliminate the inside sales team, splitting responsibilities between your inbound team and your new sales team. **Word of caution:** This is often the default choice. The theory being that it's the best way to save money. The reality is often opposite. In reviewing hundreds of sales structures for SME's, I've found that maintaining an inside sales team is the lower cost option at least ¾ of the time.

Lead Management Responsibility

With your teams clearly in place, it's time to assess responsibilities to each team for lead generation. This is the beginning of your ability to create an effective service level agreement (SLA) between sales and marketing. As I've shared before (and you can review in our eBook *Aligning The Sales & Marketing Function*) creating an effective SLA is a critical piece of the foundation for an effective, scalable sales growth process.

While the details of an SLA are different for every organization, the basics are the same. In creating the SLA, it's important that you ensure a connection between the objectives associated with leads and the desired end result (sales). To do this, there is some math involved (or you can use our *Lead Generation Calculator* to do the work for you).

First, you need to create a structure that highlights how many sales you're going to make, at various levels. For example, we have a client with a $6 million new business goal, broken down as follows:

- 5 - $500,000 average sales.

- 30 - $116,667 average sales.

Next, you need to assign responsibility of those sales to the appropriate team. In this case:

Team	# of Sales	Average Sale
New Sales Team	5	$500,000
Inside Team Team	10	$116,667
Inbound Marketing Team	20	$116,667

Note that these are guides to planning, not written in stone. All three teams support the successful implementation of the program.

With accountabilities clear, it's time for the math. For each team, you need to determine:

- Win (Closing) Rate – the percentage of proposals (for lack of a better term) that result in closed sales.

- Fit rate – the percentage of sales qualified leads that turn into a proposal opportunity.

- Conversion Rate – the percentage of leads that turn into sales qualified leads.

For this client it looked like this (if you don't have history to determine these numbers, simply make some assumptions and adjust based upon reality):

Team	Win Rate	Fit Rate	Conversion Rate
New Sales Team	65%	33%	40%
Inside Sales Team	50%	33%	33%
Inbound Team	60%	33%	10%

We now know that:

- The New Sales Team needs to focus on 58 prospects that can average $500,000 sales.

- The Inside Sales Team needs to create 184 leads.

- The Inbound Marketing Team needs to create 1,010 leads.

With the numbers clear, it's now time to create the execution plan and the tracking mechanisms to make it a reality.

The B2B Lead Management Process

Inbound marketing is a powerful strategy. When we implement it for a company here at Lift Enablement, we will typically see a 2 to 7 times increase in lead generation in the first year and a 5 to 10 times increase in future years.

A 2013 study identified generating high quality leads as the number one challenge for B2B marketers. It's no surprise that inbound marketing, with it's proven track record, is exploding in use. While inbound marketing will certainly increase the generation of quality leads, it will also generate more low-quality leads.

In our experience, of the leads created by an effective inbound marketing approach, between 50% and 90% will never become qualified in any fashion. This rate is highly dependent upon the industry you're in, how clearly you've segmented your market and how effective your process and strategy is.

It's important to note that generating low quality leads is not, in and of itself, a bad thing. For companies whose message (and offers) appeals to a broad marketplace, and yet whose actual products and services appeal to a small percentage of that market, will experience a fairly high low-quality lead percentage.

At Lift Enablement, for example, we typically run between a 12% and 16% quality lead rate (meaning as many as 88% of the leads we generate are low quality and never enter any type of nurturing or pipeline process).

While at first blush this seems bad (it certainly did to me), our lead velocity growth rate of qualified leads (which at the end of the day is what we care about) is actually quite healthy.

What's interesting is that when generating leads is among your biggest barriers to growth, you tend not to consider what you have to do when your lead velocity increases. We see this everyday, as oftentimes our clients are initially stuck once the leads start to develop. As I shared in an earlier post, inbound leads don't behave like traditional outbound leads, and must be handled differently.

As you embark upon or enhance your inbound marketing efforts, the development of an effective lead management process is crucial to maximize the ROI of your lead generation efforts.

From our experience, here are the 5 attributes of an effective lead

management process:

1) Clear Definitions for Each Stage of the Funnel

It is important that you clearly define each stage of your funnel. For purposes of illustration, I will highlight the minimal areas of classification and share with you a baseline definition:

- **Visits** – We define a visit simply as a unique visitor to our website. We have clients that weave in offline measurements (like trade show visits, ad impressions, etc.) to this metric. The point here is that there's no right or wrong definition, so long as there is a clear one.

- **Lead** – We consider a lead simply a lead. There's no qualification. The measurement we use for this is names that are added to our database. This could either be the result of someone downloading something online, leaving a business card at a trade show, a referral, etc. An important point here is we measure leads as individuals, not companies.

- **Marketing Qualified Lead (MQL) –** These are companies that have identified themselves as being more engaged, have the pain that you solve, and meet initial criteria that indicate they *could* be a fit.

- **Sales Qualified Lead (SQL) –** These are companies who have the pain we solve and meet a deeper fit analysis that indicates a potential match. Additionally, these are companies where we've connected with the proper authority level, they demonstrate a defined need/pain and are open to conversation.

In our programs we define categories within each level of the funnel and provide a more detailed explanation that ensures a single definition that is understood and followed by all.

2) Clearly Articulated High Probability Indicators (HPI)

Spend the time *before prospecting* to identify the HPI that connect to the 3-5 causes that lead a prospect to buy from you. From there, you can build your story, challenge their thinking and create a stronger impression that will lead to action.

Clear HPIs provide focus for your marketing and sales efforts, which allow for greater alignment and more effective action.

3) Lead Triage or Lead Scoring Process

I've written much about lead triage vs. lead scoring (and for those that don't want to read that post, only a small percentage of companies should actually

be doing lead scoring, most should be doing triage). For purposes of space, I won't repeat all that I've written here.

Suffice it to say that a clear process for assessing both the company and the contact needs to be in place.

4) Service Level Agreement (SLA) Between Marketing, Sales (and if Necessary, Sales Development)

An effective service level agreement, at a minimum, meets three criteria.

1. Provides clear definitions for each stage of the funnel (as mentioned in the first point).
2. Clearly lays out the protocols of who (marketing, sales development, sales) does what (connect, email, call, voice mail) when and how often.
3. Lays out clear targets and measurements that will be used to assess progress and create accountability.

SLAs can certainly be deeper than these three criteria, and for those more advanced or looking to scale bigger and faster it certainly should be. However, if you don't have an SLA (and the majority of companies with marketing budgets under $1 million don't), start with these three criteria and evolve from there.

5) A Defined Nurturing Process

The power of building out a full funnel is that it builds predictability and scalability into your growth efforts. The frustrating part is that just because someone is a "qualified lead" doesn't mean that they're ready to buy or talk to a salesperson. According to Gleanster Research, that applies to 50% of your qualified leads, and I've seen stats that indicate it could be as high as 80%.

Additionally:

•   Leads who are nurtured with targeted content produce a 20% increase in sales opportunities (source: DemandGen)

•   Companies that excel at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales ready leads at a 33% lower cost (source: Forrester Research)

The bottom line is that effective nurturing is a requirement if you want to see the returns from your marketing and lead generation investments.

Want to learn more about lead management? Download our guide on how to effectively manage inbound leads.

The 4 P's for Winning The B2B ZMOT (Zero Moment of Truth)

Regular readers of the Imagine blog may have noticed that I've been [talking more and more about the ZMOT](). As research continues to demonstrate that your customers and prospects are taking on more and more of the buying process *without your presence,* the need to find new ways to connect and influence has become imperative.

For example, a recent report from Eloqua, a marketing automation provider, shared, "The old protocol of sending a detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) to prospective vendors has in many cases been replaced by downloading and evaluating white papers, case studies, product specs, and pricing sheets. In many cases, vendors and their sales organizations are unaware that they are being evaluated by a buyer, and therefore don't have the same opportunities to cultivate a meaningful role in the decision-making process. In other words, they are losing out where it counts."

What Is The ZMOT?

The Zero Moment of Truth refers to the point in the buying cycle when the customer/prospect researches a product/service, which often occurs before the seller even knows that the opportunity exists. The number of prospects researching a product online prior to purchase has been on the rise in recent years as the Internet and mobile continue to advance.

The 4 P's for Winning The B2B ZMOT

When I share my insights into winning this new territory, I find myself fighting to not use the term "new," when describing the approach. The truth is that the approaches for winning the moment aren't new, *they're just ignored by the vast majority of small and mid-size B2B organizations*.

Frankly [while these techniques have always been valuable]() in driving predictable, sustainable and scalable growth, SMBs were able to survive, and even thrive, without paying attention to them. There was enough business out there that they could wait for opportunities to find them.

They could focus on sales training and consultative selling to win the business when it presented itself. In the age of ZMOT, consultative selling is losing a lot of its effectiveness because the seller is entering the conversation too late.

Here's the good news: winning the moment is there for the taking for any SMB willing to play by, and excel with the new rules. To win, you must simply adopt these 4 P's.

Personas

As in, define your buyer personas.

74% of people online get frustrated with a website when content appears that has nothing to do with their interests (source: Janrain). The days of a single message being broadcast to your entire market are over. Driven largely by the on-demand nature of online content, customers have become accustomed to personalized engagements, on their terms and preferred channels.

I'll spare the details here, as I've written much about buyer personas in the past but you cannot win the moment if you're not completely clear about who you want to connect with, and where they are in their journey.

Personalize

Consider this:

- Calls-to-action (CTAs) that are targeted have a 42% higher viewer-to-submission rate than standard CTAs (source: HubSpot).

- Marketers who are personalizing their web experiences see on average a 19% increase in sales (source: Monetale/eConsultancy).

- Emails that are personalized using a lead's information get 14% higher click-through rates and 10% more conversions (source: Aberdeen Group).

We've been personalizing emails for years, the time has come to personalize your website as well.

Publish

Content for the sake of content is never a good idea. That said, there is no longer any reason that your company can't produce (lots of) quality content that resonates with your buyer personas.

The question is not can you afford to produce content consistently, it's can you afford not to? Consider:

- The average number of pieces of content reviewed by a customer before making any kind of a decision doubled from 5.2 to 10.4 from 2010 to 2011 (source: Google & Shopper Science).

- Online search has now equaled or eclipsed advice from a friend (source: Google)

- 70% of customers **prefer** getting to know a company via articles (not ads) (source: Content Plus)

- Companies with 30+ landing pages generate 7 times more leads than those with 5 or fewer; and those with 40+ produce 12 times more leads (source: HubSpot).

Participate

There are two aspects to participation. The first involves sharing and promoting your content, and the second involves nurturing.

Winning the moment is not a *Field of Dreams* event. You can't simply build it and wait for them to come. You must participate in the larger ecosystem. This means that you must structure and design your website to support this approach, utilize your email tools to point people in the direction of your content, and, yes, you must participate (actively) in social media.

For those who feel that social media is a waste of time, consider this, social media lead conversion rates are 13% higher than average conversion rates (source: HubSpot).

Finally, you must nurture your prospects. Here are the numbers:

- Only 25% of the leads you generate are ready to buy, 75% need nurturing (source: Gleastner Research).

- Lead nurturing emails have click-through rates that are 2.5x general emails (source: HubSpot).

- Leads who are nurtured with targeted content produce a 20% increase in sales opportunities (source: DemandGen).

- Companies that excel at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales-ready leads at a 33% lower cost.

Winning The B2B Sale In The Zero Moment of Truth

If you don't have a ton of quality, timely content, aligned with your message and geared to your buyer personas, you are at a major disadvantage when it comes to making consistent, predictable, profitable B2B sales.

Gone are the days when a beautiful brochure, powerful sales presentation and a strong salesperson could adequately sway a prospect/customer's opinions about the value of your products or services. Today, you don't have the opportunity to "learn about the customer" before you tailor "your pitch."

If you're not actively involved in your prospect's ZMOT one of two things will happen (neither of which are good):

- You'll be completely missed. You'll lose the opportunity without even knowing it was there.

- You'll be perceived as a pure commodity. Price and other unreasonable terms will drive the decision process. Your business will become less predictable and margins will deteriorate at an accelerating pace.

Winning In The Zero Moment of Truth

The first rule to winning the ZMOT game is to make sure you're playing. That said, merely showing up isn't going to do much for you. Here are some keys to winning the ZMOT:

1. Be (manically) clear on your buyer personas.

2. Make sure your website is positioned for the ZMOT.

3. Map your buyer's journey and build the content to match your key personas at each phase of their journey.

4. Make sure all of your marketing tactics (telemarketing, direct mail, advertising, etc.) are fully aligned to support the ZMOT.

5. Build a conversion path that turns strangers into visitors, and visitors into leads.

6. Make sure you're ready to effectively and appropriately follow up with your leads.

7. Revamp your sales process to connect with your personas at each phase of their journey.

8. Challenge your prospect by putting forth a compelling "commercial teaching point-of-view."

9. Ensure that your sales and marketing efforts are aligned throughout the sales process by developing clear service level agreements between the two functions (even if there's only one person managing both functions).

10. Prepare your sales process for the complexities involved in selling in a ZMOT driven process, where you often will not be able to begin your conversations with (or even get direct access to) key decision makers.

11. Close the loop, study your analytics and measure and adjust.

As I've shared before, it's a seller beware world and to succeed you better bring your A game.

Let's Talk About Your Marketing & Lead Generation

Studies show that when sales and marketing efforts are highly aligned, organization achieve an average of 32% revenue growth; and a decrease of 7% when they're not (source: Aberdeen Group). But what does that mean? How can you tell if your efforts are aligned, and, more importantly, how do you develop the roadmap to ensure they are aligned today…and in the future?

If your sales and marketing efforts aren't producing predictable, sustainable and scalable sales growth then we need to talk. Our free sales and marketing assessment will provide you:

- An analysis of your current marketing, lead management and sales situation to identify areas in need of improvement
- An in-depth look to figure out which lead generation tactics will work best for you
- An analysis of your sales structure to identify the best way to maximize growth opportunities
- An analysis of your website
- A written report providing the roadmap to make your growth predictable, sustainable and scalable

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