

SALES PERFORMANCE SPOTLIGHT

Marketing's Role in Demand Generation

Very few sales organizations have the luxury of relying on marketing to create all of their opportunities. Even the best marketing organizations will only create a portion of the opportunities needed to fill the funnel, leaving the rest to be generated by sales professionals through social and referral selling.

Playing Their Assigned Positions

When marketing and sales are well-aligned, and everyone understands their contribution to demand generation, that's not a problem. "It's like a well-trained and -coached basketball team where all players understand how to play their position," says Joe Galvin, Chief Research Officer for MHI Research Institute. "Sales professionals are in the best position to ask for referrals and engage customers on social platforms. Marketing has the most immediate access to the resources and expertise needed to create content and campaign materials."

What Success Looks Like

Like the winning basketball team, everyone in marketing and sales must understand what success looks like. World-Class Sales Performers assign a shared goal such as revenue generation to the teams. When everyone is working toward the same goal, they are using the same yardstick to measure the results of activities and behaviors.

Accountability is also important. Like players in the game, sales and marketing will have individual stats to which they must be accountable. "Prospecting is the most unproductive and unstructured thing the salesperson does," says Galvin. "Sales and marketing leadership need to work together to decide what portion of the funnel opportunities can realistically be contributed by sales and what needs to come from marketing."

For marketing, these individual goals also involve laying the groundwork for successful interactions in the field. For example, it needs to create the content salespeople will use in face-to-face interactions and curate on their social platforms. To be effective marketing must understand the customer's journey and create content that aligns to each stage of the process and the unique needs of each Buying Influence.

Assessing the Results

Without incorporating marketing's contribution, assessing sales results is like studying only half the team. Thanks to the Internet, Buyer 2.0 interacts with marketing or, marketing created content long before he or she interacts with a salesperson. Including marketing-derived demand-generation data in the sales funnel analysis provides a full life-cycle view of customer activity and behavior and allows for a more complete interpretation of outcomes. ■

About this data

Each month the Sales Performance Spotlight delves into one of the best practices of World-Class Sales Organizations as revealed in the annual *MHI Global Sales Best Practices Study*. This research, conducted and analyzed by the MHI Research Institute, represents the world's largest ongoing study of complex, business-to-business selling and sales management practices. Learn more [here](#).

Sales and marketing are aligned in what our customers want and need.

