Marketing and Sales: Divide or Conquer

What is "marketing" and what is "sales"? Some people use the word "marketing" as a euphemism for "sales." "I'm in marketing," they say.

So what is the difference? Marketing is what you do to position the company and its products to gain the attention of prospects and regain the attention of customers. Sales is what you do once you have their attention. Marketing includes things like advertising, collateral design, promotions and public relations. Selling continues the process by exploring potential fit between prospects' (and customers') wants and your products and services.

Picture a funnel with its wide end upward. Marketing is at the top, followed by: connecting with prospects (where selling begins), qualifying to explore fit, presenting, and opening new business. If you're responsible for only part of the picture, you may be better able to support the other players. If you're responsible for the whole process, focusing on each step increases your overall success.

Marketing as Sales Support

Sales operates most effectively when well prepared by marketing. Separately and together, marketing and sales develop customer acquisition and retention plans. While sales professionals research buying patterns and needs of prospects and customers, marketing facilitates their work.

A strong marketing program is at work as the sales force pounds the pavement. By the time an initial sales call is made, the prospect knows about the company and its products. Marketing has established recognition of the brand and product benefits.

The product may be complex or new. Marketing and sales may both help educate prospects about its benefits and features. Both need to demonstrate their value to the customer.

For sales calls, marketing provides collateral materials. This could be presentations and demos, product samples and gifts or in-store promotions. Well-equipped sales reps look part of a professional, credible operation.

Sales as Eyes and Ears

It is important for Sales to give Marketing feedback about prospects' reaction to marketing messages and materials. Sales also contributes to ongoing marketing strategy and materials development and improvement. Sales provides feedback about the competitors' positionings, marketing and product strategies. The more information and knowledge that is shared, the more effective the customer acquisition and retention program.

PR and Sales

Separate, yet mutually dependent. Public relations is often seen as a corporate marketing strategy. It is also a valuable resource for the sales process.

The more positive publicity the public relations team generates, the easier the sales professional's job. Strong public awareness and recognition of a company and its product benefits contributes to prospect and customer receptivity to purchase.

Here's where sales comes in.

Sales can help PR create meaningful news by keeping PR informed about:

- Key clients
- New large accounts
- Growth trends
- New industries or market sectors joining as customers
- Customer testimonials that demonstrate product benefits to potential customers
- Competitive differences and advantages
- Strategies and tools used that stand-out among competitors
- How company performance stacks up to the market

PR Helps Sales...

- Keep informed about expected company news
- Provides news clips as sales collateral
- Promotes good customers with collaborative press announcements and interviews
- Posts customer testimonial on the Internet press room and in press kit
- Leverages information about Sales' findings whenever possible to generate news!!!