

Sales and Marketing: 4 Point Plan to Partnership

By Rob Eaton, Director of Sales, International, at [Avention](#)

Sales and marketing should go together like fish and chips, tea and biscuits and — as the song has it — “love and marriage”. But, the fact of the matter is that, whilst we all want the perfect partnership, we so often see these two functions totally divorced from one another.

The ideal is a virtuous circle, where sales continually updates marketing on buyers’ needs, which informs highly targeted and relevant marketing campaigns and messaging, which in turn supports ever more effective sales.

We can see how effective sales and marketing alignment is, with [Forbes](#) reporting that three fourths of top performing companies get this right. On the other side of the coin, 87% of companies who miss their targets report dysfunctional sales and marketing relationships.

Unfortunately, the reality for so many businesses is marketing campaigns that fail to address on-the-ground realities and sales pitches that ignore the marketing that’s meant to support them.

Turning this around demands a 4 point plan to partnership.

1. SHARE — experience and objectives

Creating the virtuous circle demands action, understanding and engagement from both sides.

The key to better alignment is the creation of shared objectives — where sales and marketing pull together, not apart. The first step is to embed mutual objectives. The best way to do this is: to involve sales people at the very beginning of marketing campaign development; and to involve marketing in sales conversations so they understand what motivates customers and prospects to make a purchase.

This ensures that marketing campaigns and collateral are informed by the people who use them on the frontline, and that those creating collateral truly understand what it needs to do. It also brings valuable ‘external’ perspectives — with sales bringing new insight to marketing, and vice versa.

2. TRAIN — design and deployment

Further, there’s not a lot of point coming up with a smart new marketing approach if it’s simply dumped onto sales teams that don’t know how to use it. We can see evidence of this disconnect in [Forrester Research](#) that showed that executive buyers felt that just 12% of sales calls actually added value.

So, as well as being involved in its design, sales teams need to be confident in effective deployment — with training ensuring that they know how to extract every last ounce of value from marketing materials when they engage with customers.

3. FEEDBACK — active and relevant

The next step is to create feedback loops, where sales teams report back to Marketing on the effective (and not so effective) aspects of campaigns. By feeding back insights from customer conversations, sales can empower marketing to deliver more meaningful and responsive campaigns.

4 Points to Partnership

1. **SHARE** sales and marketing understanding — involve marketing in customer engagement and sales in campaign development.
2. **TRAIN** sales teams to use campaigns and collateral effectively in customer conversations.
3. **FEEDBACK** is embedded to continually inform and optimise both marketing campaigns and sales conversations.
4. **DELIVER** with data that’s intelligent and effective — from one single, easily accessible and mutually meaningful source — to keep the virtuous circle spinning.

If sales gets pushback from customers on proving ROI on a purchase and cost savings to their business whilst marketing messages are centred on time and efficiency savings, for example, then Marketing needs to know and update materials accordingly. Marketing campaigns can rapidly shift focus – weaving in data points and industry specific insights – to address the issues that are weighing on customer’s minds right now.

4. DELIVER – data and insight

Using an intelligent data solution, sales and marketing teams can use actionable business insights to transform ‘lead generation’ to ‘lead conversion’. If sales and marketing can easily identify where their best opportunities are, they can focus their investment which will ultimately pay off. Now sales are focusing on the most lucrative targets – they will increase both the likelihood of conversion and the returns from each customer.

As well as being meaningful, data needs to be useable – by both sales and marketing. By deploying a solution such as OneSource DataVision, both teams can access highly customisable insight from a single, easily accessible and business-focused source. And of course, using DataVision keeps the virtuous circle – of sharing, training, feedback and delivery – spinning.

Putting it simply, everybody from your organisation sings from the same hymn sheet.

HAPPY – ever after

Sales and marketing need to be a partnership and not a competition – which is good advice in any successful relationship. If you’d like to find out more about creating harmony, get in touch today – and [click here](#) to listen to our CMO roundtable webinar on the subject.