

The background features a solid orange color with faint, semi-transparent graphics. On the right side, there is a stylized hand with fingers spread, appearing to hold a slice of watermelon. On the left side, there is a stylized flame or fire graphic. The main title is centered in the upper half of the image.

UNITING SALES AND MARKETING

An eBook by
212MEDIASTUDIOS

Although sales and marketing typically have complementary or supporting relationships in organizations, these two teams are often siloed. The reason may be contrasting communication styles, lack of goal-setting, lack of buy-in, or lack of data—or some combination of the four.

Great organizations become mediocre when departments feel pitted against each other, even if this isn't the case. When there is discord, internal struggles often are manifested externally, and it's not long before the public catches wind. When a customer engages with your content and becomes a lead, the last thing you want is a sales rep to follow up and present a contradictory brand image or approach.

In a perfect world, the two teams work together to develop and maintain a consistent brand voice and message that converts prospects to customers. You *can* streamline the process and keep everyone happy at the same time.

We have identified four key elements to help you find interdepartmental zen.



KEY ELEMENT 1: COMMUNICATION

Forging a better working relationship could be easier than you think. The first step is addressing and challenging preconceived notions about the function of each department. This is a tall order at times, when sales and marketing feel more like “frenemies” than allies. Team members need to understand their own and others’ responsibilities and how each person’s role fits within the bigger picture.

Sales and marketing should be thought of as one unit, not two separate, standalone divisions. While each team will have its own targets, ultimately you are working toward the same goal—to attract qualified leads, nurture them, and finally convert them.

The delivery is just as critical as the content of the message.

A simple in-person conversation can change the trajectory of your departments and organization for the better. Face-to-face interaction can cut down on misunderstandings or perceived roadblocks, while electronic communication can mask or mute emotions.

Invite the teams to discuss and agree on the key elements of the sales process. Naturally, each group will have its own insights and ideas about the essentials. By surveying your team, and being fully aligned in thinking and motivation, you’ll be stronger than ever.



KEY ELEMENT 2: GOAL SETTING

Marketing should treat sales like an internal client and nothing less. What are their goals and desires? How can marketing help sales achieve those goals? Which tactics, strategies, etc. are necessary to further company goals? What are their pain points and areas of weakness?

A little bit of humility and a willingness to learn can go a long way on the part of the marketing team. One exercise that has been proven beneficial is to have someone from marketing sit in on a sales call every now and then. This is a great behind-the-scenes learning experience that can spark ideas for content creation and future promotions. It also shows a willingness to be a team player, which builds rapport. Similarly, a sales professional might benefit from seeing a brainstorming or strategy session in the works. Analytical types often butt heads with creatives, but seeing their colleagues in their elements might foster mutual respect and understanding.

But don't stop here. Data from everyday tools like customer relationship management (CRM), marketing automation, and sales analytics programs can be shared across teams for maximum impact and minimal or no extra cost. Specifically, the marketing team can benefit from having direct access to intel on prospective clients to better market to them.



KEY ELEMENT 3: COLLABORATION

No team exists in a vacuum. This truth especially applies to the sales and marketing spheres. While they may not understand each other or even speak the same language at times, that doesn't mean they can't gain common ground with a concerted effort.

Consider the role of an interdepartmental liaison. He or she is someone both groups trust. He or she helps to resolve conflicts and shares with each group the feedback necessary to move through conflict. It's important that the liaison be treated as a neutral party and not be punished for simply delivering the message, no matter how unpleasant or inconvenient.

What might this role look like? Let's refer to this liaison as Leslie for the purpose of this exercise. Leslie goes to the staff meetings, client meetings, and client strategy meetings. She doesn't develop products; instead, she points out what might be missing or makes note of trends she notices, then works with both departments to incorporate the necessary changes. She is the go-between person who can cut through the clutter to take a product or service to the next level. Because of Leslie, the two teams feel a greater connection and have more buy-in when it comes to the other's goals.



KEY ELEMENT 4: DATA

While communication is critical to team effectiveness, it's not enough to carry departments through friction.

Talk is cheap, so you'll want to make the most of your time together by relying on the power of data. While words are nuanced and can sometimes incite conflict in a tense environment, objectivity in the form of data can be the saving grace for cross-functional teams.

Start by exchanging facts and figures to build common ground. No matter the industry, data pertaining to best practices and ROI of tactics will usually sell the marketing strategy to sales. Then, measure for success—and remain consistent. Don't change the metrics mid-stream or at whim. For example, if you're measuring for a total number of leads, use that as your baseline regardless of the results. Agree up-front on the goals, deliverables, and time frame.

This might call for some education. While sales tends to be a numbers game, marketing is concerned with acquiring the insight necessary to increase the quantity and quality of good leads. The marketing department will need to be privy to what a "good" lead looks like. This may include age, gender, location, and other demographic information. Define core criteria for vetting the viability of a lead.

The marketing team will take that information a step further with the development of buyer personas. Both teams will need to work together to get these dialed in. The more defined the personas, the easier it will be for the marketing team to curate the subject, pitch, tone, and channels to reach the target audience.

The sales team can add value by sharing insight gleaned in the field from prospects. What are the most common questions or concerns they hear? Sales representatives can pass on feedback that marketing folks might not otherwise be aware of, helping them develop more effective campaigns and increase ROI. In short, numbers can form a proverbial bridge between marketing and sales.

WIN-WIN-WIN SCENARIO

The relationship between sales and marketing need not be adversarial. It's possible for the two teams to **align communication, rally around shared objectives, collaborate, and lean on data to accomplish organizational goals.**

We hope the steps in this guide will encourage your sales and marketing teams to be more mindful of their interactions. These improvements will also help you serve customers better now and build better products for the future. And isn't that what it's all about?

