



BEST PRACTICES

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Everyone drives revenue. If you don't agree, it's time to change the way you think about marketing—not in the functional context of creating demand for your services, but in the sense of how you view your organization.

Let's look at Apple. Apple is a manufacturer. But most of us who buy or use Apple products think of the company as a marketing powerhouse. That's because everyone who is affiliated with the organization seems engaged in selling it. From its developers and engineers to its retail staff, everyone is committed to providing a world-class customer experience.

Becoming a market-driven organization requires every employee, regardless of function, to focus on creating value for the customer and growing revenue. Directly or indirectly, everyone needs to move the brand forward.

Here's the problem: Marketing as a strategic function is often the first budget to get cut, especially when times are tough. And because marketing and sales are interrelated, cutting marketing and its processes often can result in leaving salespeople on their own, caving in to the low-price bidding war. Looking at it another way, keeping sales and eliminating marketing is like keeping the tactic and eliminating the strategy.

Companies ask me, how do I grow sales? The answer is, not without strategy. And for that you need the strategic value marketing brings and you need all employees to engage in the spirit, if not the act, of promoting your company, understanding and knowing what their roles are in driving revenue and meeting profitability goals.

To be successful in a world where technology has given customers greater control and access to more data than ever before, coordinating interdepartmental resources to create customer value will help your company become an organization where everyone is connected to the customer and involved in profitable growth.

It used to be that you went out and found customers. Now customers are finding you.

Are you reorienting your company so they can?

Here are 10 ways to get started:

1. Link your marketing, sales and operations efforts to grow profitably. Align goals interdepartmentally.
2. Recognize that every employee drives revenue and reputation and participates in creating a first-class service experience. Tell your employees how they affect growth.
3. Hire employees with sales in mind. How will these people represent you to the public? How will they contribute to achieving positive results? Remember, the team on the loading dock is the face of your company to the vendor; the courtesy of the receptionist is the sound of your company to the caller.
4. Have employees participate on sales support teams or send representatives from different departments to sales meetings. Understanding sales and growth goals empowers everyone to pitch in.
5. Make sure employees understand the mission, vision and objectives of the company, its services and its target audience.
6. Communicate across disciplines. Make sure your employees understand how other departments work and encourage them to find ways they can work together.
7. Define jobs in the context of how the roles and responsibilities help the company grow. Measure the bottom-line consequences.
8. Train for growth. Encourage employees to grow their specific skills in a way that will enhance company growth.
9. Use your entire team as a bucket brigade. Don't delegate the responsibility for selling and branding to a bucket of one.
10. Information is the first step to engagement. Have town hall meetings to discuss how the company is doing. Don't leave anyone out. Inspiration comes from unexpected sources.