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## Letters

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**M**arketing is everything that a company does to reach and persuade prospects. The sales process is everything that a company does to close the sale and get a signed agreement or contract. Despite having objectives that would appear to be in sync, it's not uncommon for a company to be unbalanced when it comes to these two ingredients of business success.

PharmaVOICE conducted an informal survey of its readers who are actively involved in either sales or marketing to determine what factors typically divide the two sales and marketing functions. Different metrics in terms of compensation and achievement of goals were two of the most common responses. More often than not, sales is focused on top-line results, while marketing is responsible for the bottom line.

According to David Davidovic, senior director of commercial strategy at Genentech Inc., whether the company has a structure-based or collaboration-based integration model for sales and marketing, both models have factors that can lead to divisiveness. These can include misalignment of metrics and incentives; a lack of understanding or appreciation for each other's real-world opportunities and challenges; a lack of trust between the two functions; and insufficient or inappropriate frequency, type, and depth of communications.

There also is division over who has the final authority on key decisions, such as pricing or market-share targets. While the marketing team may set the strategy, the sales team must be fully committed to the plan; and the marketing team must be flexible if the plan is not effective. According to respondents to our survey, often the two departments become territorial and lose focus on the primary objective.

According to Werner Guminski, managing director of TNS Healthcare, the real barrier to having sales and marketing aligned is that, despite having the joint target of making a brand or portfolio successful, both sides are stuck in their view of what is most important: for one team the brand and for the other team the sales.



Taren Grom

Most experts agree that to forge a more integrated sales and marketing strategy, a comprehensive approach must be championed at the top level. Only then will tactics effectively permeate through both organizations.

Survey respondents pointed out that too often marketing rolls out programs to sales without gathering input from the field force as to what their real-world needs are. Additionally, there are several layers of sales (field sales and managed markets sales people), and marketing does not always recognize that each group has its own set of needs and opportunities.

When we asked our readers to comment on the barriers to effective and efficient communications between sales and marketing, their responses ranged from egos to cross-purpose goals, to lack of upper management support, to polarization of the two functional silos. But overwhelmingly, the responses focused on the fact that there were too few communications between the two groups. The left hand often doesn't know what the right hand is doing.

"The preconceived notion that sales doesn't get what marketing says and marketing doesn't get what sales says is clearly a challenge," says Joe DeBelle, senior director of marketing at Lathian Systems Inc. "These conflicting perspectives prevent effective, two-way communication and collaboration, which are critical to effectively bridging the gap between the two. Indeed, communications between sales and marketing are essential — the more the better. Marketing and sales should fit like a hand in a glove; and quite frankly, the opposite is happening. Sales goes down one path, marketing goes down another, and each function wonders why it isn't successful with a particular campaign or brand message."

Taren Grom  
Editor

Working hand-in-hand