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Marketing and Sales – different departments – combined efforts

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When the word prospecting is mentioned in general conversation many immediately think of the act of panning for gold. We see a person hunched over at the river's edge washing away the debris to find glittering pieces. When the word prospecting is mentioned while discussing marketing or sales, some marketers think of making countless telephone calls, knocking on doors, and sending large quantities of mailers. Here too we are searching for the glittering pieces of gold.

Prospecting – the marketing attachment to sales

We say attachment because attracting prospects is what marketing is supposed to do. Marketing plans are designed to strategize the best way to get the attention of potential clients or customers (often in a form of advertising) and create a reason for the prospect to take some kind of action. If the marketing is done right and some kind of call to action causes persons or businesses to make contact with your company, then a marketing strategy has achieved its initial purpose. Once attracted and a lead is obtained, the sales process starts to take shape.

Taking interested prospects and turning them into buying customers

It is said that most small to medium sized businesses do not have a marketing plan, so attracting and creating the “calls to action” have been left to sales staff that begin prospecting. Very often, sales people do not take the time to learn and master prospecting. The results are often disappointing. Finding prospects becomes challenging, and many new-to-sales people will leave the profession in disappointment.

One thing is certain. Prospecting can lead to the highest amount of negativity in the marketing/selling process. If an owner wants to obtain the highest level of productivity from their sales department, there should be a significant company involvement in the marketing of their offerings. If there is no real involvement by the company, and everything is left to the sales person; “Learning How to Prospect” becomes their survival kit.

Clarification

Many types of businesses take care of the total effort in bringing the client to the point of contact with the sales person. While employed by these types of businesses, the sales person will have little need for being able to prospect. Retail sales is such an example. Many direct sales companies perform this task as well.

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When sales is the responsible for prospecting

There are many businesses that play a varying role in attracting and providing leads for their sale people. It is a mistake for businesses to not get involved in marketing or prospecting and leave these solely to the sales department. Businesses have a vested interest in the success of their sales people and should participate wherever possible.

Two department – combined efforts

Marketing and sales should always be a combined effort with feedback from the sales department to indicate what is working and what is not. Left on its own, marketing does not always provide the sales department with qualified leads. If the sales department fails to inform the marketing department what is going wrong, problems are not solved. Time is wasted by visiting prospective buyers who have no need or any real interest in your company's product or service.

Examples

- 1) Leads are often generated by a totally separate marketing arm that is not attracting the right kind of prospects. Often lead-generation involves a telemarketing department and the telemarketer is looking to make as many appointments that they can to fill the daily quota set by the company.
- 2) A bad marketing campaign may be characterized by the wrong message being sent or the wrong market being approached. Consequently, there is failure to provide quality leads for the sales department.

Conclusion

Sales people should have a significant involvement in the marketing process to obtain more control over the effectiveness of their efforts in the search for clients and the selling of the company's offerings. One should never underestimate the challenges of prospecting. It takes a lot of effort and perseverance. When a company plays a role in prospecting, everyone benefits.