



GIBBS & SOELL

Insight

FOR MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS

Volume 15, Issue 2

Sales vs. Marketing: Why Can't We Be Friends?

While it's a difficult dynamic to understand, the relationship between sales and marketing teams can frequently be strained. Often, these teams work under the same roof, yet are separated by distinct departmental walls and follow different plans to achieve the same bottom line results. It is no wonder disagreement and finger pointing can occur when market share and awareness fall below expectations.

What is worse, when these two critical disciplines do work together, the results are not always improved. Sales wants better tools, faster and a better recognition from marketing of the real-life obstacles that impact their success. Marketing wants sales to step back, look at the big picture and follow the marketing plan. After all, there's a lot of expensive research to back it up.

Why has this phenomenon occurred in so many organizations? Why has it been allowed to exist for so long? Probably because poor company performance rarely is linked – at least not publicly – to an unhealthy alignment of sales and marketing disciplines.

In 2006, the *Harvard Business Review* published "Ending the War Between Sales and Marketing." The authors looked in-depth at the relationships between sales and marketing within a range of companies across multiple industry sectors from equipment, materials, medical systems, financial services and high technology, among others.

The results included four key findings:

- *The marketing function can take many different forms in different companies, even during various product life-cycle stages.* These transformations can cause confusion and affect the sales and marketing relationship.
- *When the relationship is strained, the economic and cultural reasons usually rise to the top.* Economically, how the sales and marketing budget is allocated is a constant debate. Culturally, salespeople and marketers often have different business "DNA" (e.g., relationship builders vs. analytical project-oriented skill sets).
- *As difficult as it may sound, companies can actually assess the quality of the relationship between sales and marketing.*
- *Once they know where the problems lie, companies can take practical steps to improve these relationships.* (See table, page 2)

Closing the Gap

At G&S, we're helping clients take practical steps to close the sales and marketing gap by increasing communications across both disciplines. One critical first step that we find very effective involves our own **I Power™** process for creating influential, insightful messages at the start of virtually any campaign.

Whether launching a new brand or product, laying the foundation for a new communications or sales program, or managing a crisis, we take a cross-organizational view and build hands-on consensus among sales and marketing senior management. This can be a powerful process to build

G&S Unveils New Logo

Beginning with this issue of INSIGHT, we are pleased to introduce a fresh, new logo for Gibbs & Soell Public Relations, as well as an enhanced newsletter layout. The strong, contemporary look reflects our emphasis on business-focused results and our client-centric culture.

teamwork and find common ground from which to move forward. **I Power** was developed to assist individuals, teams and the entire organization in shaping and sharpening customer-facing messages to achieve impact and consistency.

Recently, one of our clients, a top manufacturer in the building products and home improvement sector, assembled a cross-organizational team of sales and marketing executives to launch a new PR program designed

exclusively for one of its Big Box retail customers.

Coming into the **I Power** process, participants on both sides were skeptical. Following the process – and even six months later – that buy-in, mutual understanding and respect still exist, and the PR program continues to show results.

We’ve seen first-hand that successful initial steps like these are contagious, leading to other mission-critical collaborations.

Organizations that assess the situation will see it is possible to improve these vital relationships, but only if communications gaps are exposed and mutual agreement is reached to close them.

Rather than accept that sales and marketing typically under communicate, point fingers and, therefore, fail to win points for teamwork with senior management, the time has come to bring these diverse teams and their unique marketplace experiences together, turning cultural differences into a strategic advantage. [G&S](#)

Sales & Marketing Integration Checklist

The table below from the *Harvard Business Review* is a helpful checklist to ensure better integration between sales and marketing. Read each item carefully to determine if your organization is on the right path to a harmonious relationship.

Integrate Activities	Integrate Processes and Systems	Enable the Culture	Integrate Organizational Structures
Jointly involve Sales and Marketing in product planning and in setting sales targets	Implement systems to track and manage Sales and Marketing joint activities	Emphasize shared responsibility for the results between the different divisions of the organization	Split Marketing into upstream and downstream teams
Jointly involve Sales and Marketing in generating value propositions for different market segments	Utilize and regularly update shared databases	Emphasize metrics	Hire a chief revenue officer
Jointly involve Sales and Marketing in assessing customer needs	Establish common metrics for evaluating the overall success of Sales and Marketing efforts	Tie rewards to results	
Jointly involve Sales and Marketing in signing off on advertising materials	Create reward systems to laud successful efforts by Sales and Marketing	Enforce divisions’ conformity to systems and processes	
Jointly involve Sales and Marketing in analyzing the top opportunities by segment	Mandate that teams from Sales and Marketing meet periodically to review and improve relations		
	Require Sales and Marketing heads to attend each others’ budget reviews with the CEO		

Harvard Business Review, July-August 2006

I Power™ is a trademark of Gibbs & Soell, Inc.

G&S Contact Information

Cos Mallozzi

President and CEO

+1 212 697 2600

cmallozzi@gibbs-soell.com

New York

Luke Lambert +1 212 697 2600

llambert@gibbs-soell.com

Chicago

Jeff Altheide +1 847 519 9150

jaltheide@gibbs-soell.com

Raleigh

Bob Bowman +1 919 870 5718

bbowman@gibbs-soell.com

San Francisco

Roger Ryerson +1 415 362 9930

rryerson@gibbs-soell.com

Zurich

Kellie Nolan +41 (0) 44 205 5565

knolan@gibbs-soell.com

China

James Huang +8610 6530 7781

james_huang@inhere.com.cn

Tokyo

Lyle Fujikawa +813 5561 2911

fujikawal@cosmopr.co.jp

Latin America

Mayra Hernandez +1 954 730 7730

mayra@bitnergoodman.com



Your business
is our **passion.**