



# Give Marketing a Sales Quota

By Hugh Macfarlane.

Author of The Leaky Funnel and  
Founder & CEO of MathMarketing

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## ‘Air cover’ is not enough

There are two classic metaphors for the roles of Sales and Marketing:

- 1. Marketing lines the ducks up; and*
- 2. Marketing provides air cover.*

Depending on which of these metaphors is used, Marketing either has a huge task ahead of it, or a huge mask to hide behind. ‘Lining the ducks up’ means Marketing has a job and a half. But providing air cover is not measurable, not clear, and not enough.

In consumer marketing, brand is everything. But in business markets, it’s only 25 per cent. Many CEOs of B2B businesses confuse marketing with advertising and branding. Marketing itself often sees its primary focus as “building the brand”. Advertising - and other branding activities - may play a role in marketing. But in business to business (B2B), they’re only minor parts of the mix. These activities condition the market, but don’t cause anyone to act. Branding is a part of what we call ‘Environmental Marketing’ – to make clear that it is a preparatory activity, and not an end in itself.

Fun stuff that sports your logo doesn’t deliver revenue. Revenue needs *buyers*, who want to act now. We already know that our job is to affect opinion. Reis & Trout’s original book on Positioning<sup>1</sup> puts it pretty simply:

***“Positioning is not what you do to a product. It’s what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of the prospect.”***

David Meerman Scott recently put it even more simply<sup>2</sup>:

***“...what’s really at stake – in fact, what branding’s really all about – is a focus on the customer.”***

But opinion isn’t enough. We also need action. Instead of simply providing air cover with intensive

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<sup>1</sup> Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind by Al Ries, and Jack Trout in 1986

<sup>2</sup> Forget the Brand, Focus on the Customer’ by David Meerman Scott in 2007

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branding, Marketing's new front-line role is to line the ducks up *to take action*. But as you'll see in this ebook, Marketing has to line the 'right' ducks up; specifically, qualified ducks that are troubled and ready to buy.

## Enlightenment on alignment

The alignment between Sales and Marketing is one of the main issues faced by business-to-business companies worldwide.

### **Unfortunately, Sales and Marketing are often on different planets.**

Sales asks Marketing to do more advertising and run more events; while Marketing thinks that Sales is out to lunch and fails to capitalize on all their hard work. Looking for answers, we conducted a comprehensive study into Sales and Marketing alignment; in partnership with MarketProfs.com. The study showed that those businesses that had achieved Marketing-Sales alignment were significantly more successful than their less well-aligned competitors.

The businesses found to have the greatest degree of alignment are:

- **Growing 5.4 points faster** than their less-aligned counterparts when compared with businesses within the same industry.
- **Closing 38 per cent more proposals** than non-aligned businesses.
- **Losing 36 per cent fewer customers** to competitors. Customer churn is a problem for many businesses. The best-aligned businesses are better at keeping their customers than their laggard counterparts.

Source: MathMarketing alignment benchmark study 2004/2005 : 1400 professionals : 84 countries

As you would expect, we were keen to learn what these businesses were doing differently to generate such spectacular results.

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## Measurement helps alignment

Our benchmark study of 1,400 businesses provided some surprising “dos” and “don’ts,” some of which completely debunk the classic understanding of the roles of Sales and Marketing:

**1. Do measure the Sales department on how well it uses leads.** There’s nothing more frustrating for marketers than leads that leak before they even begin their journey through the funnel. Aligned businesses are measuring (and rewarding) salespeople on the proportion of leads that result in a first meeting. They are also measuring how many of those meetings result in a proposal being put to the prospect. It’s all about progression.

**2. Do measure the Marketing department on the quality of its leads.** In winning companies, marketers also get measured on the conversion of leads to meetings. If the leads that Marketing generates for Sales are of a poor quality, they both lose.

Marketing also gets measured by these aligned businesses on the conversion of proposals to sales. This was a surprise to us, and perhaps to you also. I can hear you asking, “But surely Marketing has limited influence on how many proposals get accepted?”

Not really. Marketing needs to be identifying leads from high-yield areas of the market. If as marketing experts we are generating leads from a low-yield market, or setting up meetings from prospects not ready or able to buy, then the salespeople are wasting their time.

**3. Don’t measure salespeople on proposals closed.** Now this one really surprised us. Surely propose-to-close is the most critical measure for Sales? As it turned out, the well-aligned businesses were far less interested in this measure than their poorly-aligned (and slow growing) counterparts.

Salespeople don’t need to be told (or measured on) how to close, and focusing overly on this bottom-of-funnel activity creates the horrible feast to famine behaviour that sees sales people empty their funnel out at the end of every quarter, and start from scratch at the beginning of the next. It is far better for

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long term revenues (5.4% better actually) to have your sales people busy working on Marketing's fresh leads as they come in, and closing only those that are genuinely ready to progress.

## 'Always be opening'

The classic 1992 independent film *Glengarry Glen Ross* – originally a play by David Mamet – got it wrong. But perhaps that was the whole point? In one memorable scene, Blake (Alec Baldwin) confronts the employees of a tough Chicago real-estate office: Shelley Levene (Jack Lemmon), Ed Moss (Ed Harris) and George Aaronow (Alan Arkin), whilst their unsympathetic supervisor John Williamson (Kevin Spacey) looks on. Blake starts by declaring (to Levene) "Let's talk about something important! Put that coffee down!! Coffee's for closers only..."

He continues by saying "Only one thing counts in this life! Get them to sign on the line which is dotted! You hear me...?" Blake then flips over a blackboard which features three large letters. "A-B-C" he says, "A-always, B-be, C-closing. Always be closing! Always be closing!!"

But this is an out-dated view, and as our alignment study showed, the key to long term revenue growth isn't 'always be closing,' but 'always be opening.' Leads stagnate quickly. If a sales person doesn't contact your leads quickly after they showed interest, then the value of those leads deteriorates rapidly. We need Sales to 'always be opening' new opportunities.

This means they need to translate leads into meetings (and then proposals and deals). If Marketing is going to produce the right number of qualified leads, Sales needs to act on the quickly.

And this is where measurement comes in. As a marketer, you need to get in the ear of Sales management so that individuals (and managers) in Sales are measured on how many of this week's leads they acted on. Quickly. Goaling creates behaviour, but only if it is visible.

Sales people respond to all sorts of pressures; their managers, their partners, and their customers. All of

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these pressures influence behaviour. But if these measures are hidden as KPIs that are only reviewed once per year – which is what most businesses do with behaviour-creating goals – then once a year is how often they will receive attention. Measurement, reporting and goals need to be ‘in the face’ of the sales force every week if they are to positively influence behaviour. You want your sales force opening, not just closing. So coffee, it seems, is for ‘openers’

## Marketing’s new role

Or is coffee for Marketing? Forget your image of soy mocha decaf latte, we’re talking pure espresso. In the results of our study, Marketing wasn’t spared the surprises. Just as Sales is traditionally measured on the wrong end of the funnel, so is Marketing. Marketing *should* be measured on its contribution to revenue.

Marketing *should not* be measured on its contribution to brand awareness; nor on the number of leads it provides. Leads are still important – but what we should be measured on is the amount of revenue that comes from these leads.

Ultimately, whether you are an individual contributor in Marketing or you run the whole show, your marketing is only valuable if it delivers revenue. In our study of 1400 businesses from 84 countries, we found that:

***Twenty-five per cent of your revenue should be delivered from leads generated by Marketing.***

Scary figure, right? The truth is that few B2B companies know about it – let alone plan for it, track it and adjust marketing activities to produce the result.

To achieve the twenty-five per cent, you need to start measuring Marketing on the things that matter.



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## Why Marketing is a long way from revenue

Unfortunately, many marketers spend their time, energy, and budgets on advertising, brochures, trade shows, and fancy flash intros for their Web sites. While these *may* be valid activities to condition the market, in B2B they are rarely enough to deliver revenue.

Give Marketing a sales quota? Not yet, Marketing is a long way from revenue because it's a long way from buyers. And many in our profession like it that way. Marketing does all the fun stuff, but we aren't held accountable to the things that matter. Specifically, Marketing is a long way from the revenue, because:

- We haven't been taught the right skills;
- We lack alignment with Sales;
- We lack a clear plan that Sales and Marketing agree to;
- We don't understand the problem with buyers; and
- We're not held accountable to revenue.

I've already covered measurement, but would like to explore each of these other causes a little further.

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## We lack alignment with Sales

Walk down any corridor in a sales-led B2B business, and you'll hear Sales and Marketing whinging about each other. Businesses try to fix this by rotating staff through the two departments, but that rarely delivers more than good relations. As our study showed, alignment is clearly a good idea; but to what should you align?

It's not about aligning Sales to Marketing or the other way around, so forget about 'field trips' and staff rotation. We need to align both to the same things.



**Sales and Marketing must align to shared objectives, strategy, tactics and measures. Ultimately, alignment calls for a singular plan built by Sales and Marketing together.**

Organising the execution of Sales and Marketing activities is a challenge. Notably, businesses:

*"...that lack a plan...produce fragmented and incremental activities."*<sup>3</sup>

Only a singular plan that aligns Sales and Marketing to shared objectives, strategy, tactics and measures will translate strategy into action – and produce real results.

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<sup>3</sup> Yukl, G. & Lepsinger, R. 2007, 'Getting It Done: Four Ways to Translate Strategy into Results', accessed at [http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/publications/lia/lia27\\_2Getting.pdf](http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/publications/lia/lia27_2Getting.pdf), (October 31st, 2007), p.4.

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## We lack a clear plan that Sales and Marketing agree to

Developing a singular plan that aligns Sales and Marketing to a shared set of objectives, strategy, tactics and measures is easier said than done.

Many businesses have:

- Unclear plans, that neither Sales nor Marketing buy into;
- Plans that lack clear actions and accountabilities;
- Plans with clear-enough actions, but no logical link between the strategy and these actions;
- Multiple disconnected plans; or
- No plan at all – it's everyone for themselves.

Sales builds plans for accounts and for opportunities, and Marketing builds plans for campaigns. But sales plans and marketing plans are often unconnected. By allowing plans to be built in isolation, businesses fail to harness the collective talent of their team, fail to gain buy-in from the key stakeholders, and fail to translate their strategy into action. And that's only a half of the problem. In fact, much of the problem is that we don't like problems.

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## We don't understand the problem with buyers

Most businesses don't know what problems their buyers face.

We live in a world where customer service and satisfaction is everything. Marketers build programs to reward regular customers, and to make them feel special, and invest in satisfaction surveys to measure their success. So why would a business focus on the problems that cause their buyers pain?

We all know that our salespeople are constantly looking for ways to delight their customers.

Both the Sales department and the marketing experts guard the happiness of the buyer jealously, promoting only positive and uplifting messages.

They say:

- “Good news travels fast”.
- “It takes 100 happy customers to overcome the effect of one disappointed one”.
- “If you're happy with our service, tell the world; if you're not, tell us”.

And so it goes. We want to satisfy our customers' needs, and to have them pleased about their choices. We want to tell prospects about the benefits of buying our product, or the great outcomes others have achieved by using our services.

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But here's the catch – few businesses will buy if there are no negative consequences of not buying. Therefore, businesses must identify (and emphasise) the problem faced by their buyers.

Here's a test. Ask your buyer “what will happen if you do nothing?” By nothing, we mean not buying from you, and not buying from anyone else. If the answer is “not much,” then that's exactly what your buyer will do – not much!

Good sales people know how to make their buyers cry. Good marketers do too.

The key is to get comfortable with uncovering the buyer's pain; if you want your prospects to buy you must make them cry. Sales and Marketing must therefore get good at making them do so.

But there are answers...

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## Three proven steps to get Marketing closer to revenue

Marketing can't get close to revenue, until it takes responsibility for planning all the way to revenue. The buyer's journey starts with stages often considered Marketing's domain, and ends with stages that Sales might be happy to own. But the reality is that Sales and Marketing need to agree to the whole plan. Agree the objectives and the strategy, then agree every tactic you will use to progress buyers through each stage of their journey. Don't make the mistake of each building your part of the plan, and then telling Sales about it.

You'll lack stakeholder buy-in and struggle to get your team to execute with passion and precision. And don't let Sales do the reverse to you. Instead, bring your team together and build your strategy in concert. If you do this efficiently, it can be done in just three days – and you'll reap the short-term and long-term benefits.

As a marketer, you need to know:

- How to set strategy for business markets
- How to plan campaigns that move buyers
- How to size your funnel and measure progress
- How to select tactics that progress buyers

If you measure Marketing on brand awareness, that's what we'll give you. If you measure Marketing on revenue, then we can do that too. Right?

And it starts with the plan...

*Lock yourself up  
with Sales until  
you agree on the plan*

*Learn the right  
B2B marketing skills*

*Measure Marketing  
on its contribution  
to revenue*

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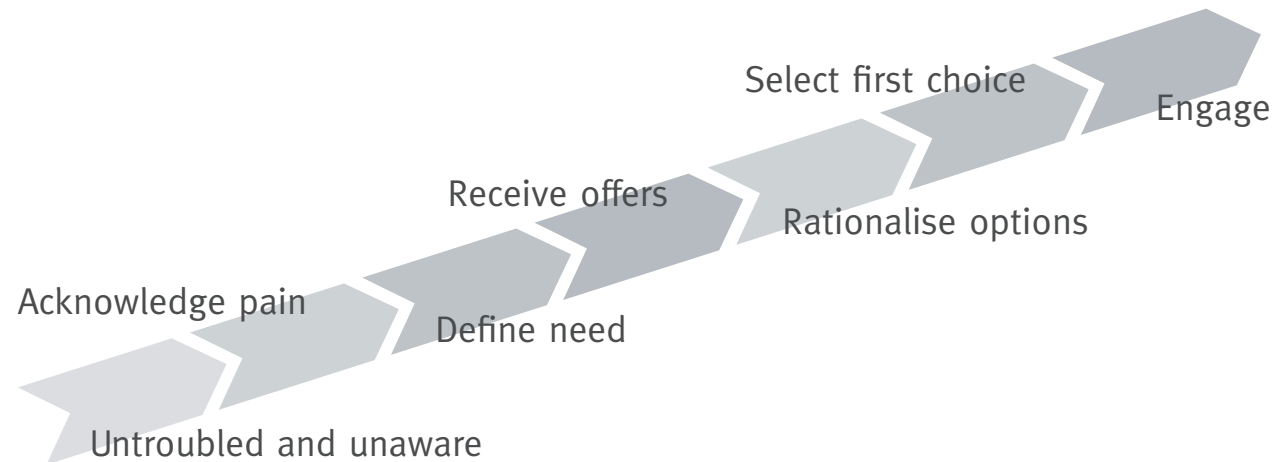
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## Step 1 – Lock yourself up with Sales until you agree on the plan

We've established that developing a singular plan that aligns Sales and Marketing to a shared set of objectives, strategy, tactics and measures is paramount. But objectives and strategy are just the beginning.

Together Sales and Marketing must find ways to move their buyers through their whole journey, end-to-end. This means choosing tactics for every stage. Forget about what you want to do to your buyers, and think instead about what decisions they face, and how you can help them make each small step. We call it the buyer's journey.



**The job of tactics is to progress buyers through each stage in their journey.**

Your tactics need to:

- Identify buyers who meet your ideal customer profile
- Position your brand on their list and get their attention

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- Get these buyers to agree that they have the problem you solve best
- Have them accept your solution as valid, then to prefer it and be willing to promote your proposal to other decision makers
- Be willing to contract, and then
- Be ready to discuss additional problems and needs.

We help companies around the world to build their plans, and have had one spectacular failure: our own plan. If you're too close to the content, it is hard to engage with others in your team and to develop your plan objectively. Consider getting outside help.

## And recycle the leakage

In sales and marketing, we celebrate winners – the salesperson who returns with the signed contract is a hero, as is the marketer who exceeds their quota of qualified leads. Even the customer gets a look in: we send them a letter of congratulations from the President of the company. Yet the celebrations usually cover the 5 per cent success and avoid confronting the fact that the other 95 per cent no longer in our sales funnel can actually be counted as failure. Why do we spend so much time on the 5 per cent of buyers and so little time on the 95 per cent who leaked from the funnel?

We need to push past the initial surge of euphoria that accompanies success and get down to the truth about the business of marketing to businesses. Some of the realities include:

- The funnel leaks. More particularly, buyers leak – 95 per cent of them in the example we've just quoted. They might have leaked early; not progressing past first base – or late; getting to contraction negotiation but falling over at the last minute.

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- Buyers stall in their journey. We know from measurement projects with leading businesses that it takes longer for buyers to say “no” than to say “yes”. When a buyer takes longer than is normal to progress through any of the stages in their journey, the chances of them progressing at all diminish rapidly.

## **Plugging the early leaks, cheaply**

Many buyers leak early and we need to recycle these buyers at low cost. Because the buyer that leaks early has only limited relationship with you, as demonstrated by their lack of response, your tactics need to have:

- Low involvement; and
- Low unit cost.

A buyer who has disengaged early in their journey has no real commitment to any ongoing communication from you – so anything that asks them to jump through hoops is not appropriate. This means you shouldn't send them emails that require them to click through to receive your white paper, or letters or surveys that require them to complete a form.

The buyers' responsiveness at this stage in the process is likely to be sluggish. It will take a while to bring them back on board. Conversely, you need to “allow” your buyer to progress if they are ready. Make your invitation subtle, but don't let it get lost. Whatever you do, keep the momentum going. If you lose momentum, you will have to start from scratch all over again. So start your recycling as soon as you can after they have leaked, and maintain the rhythm.

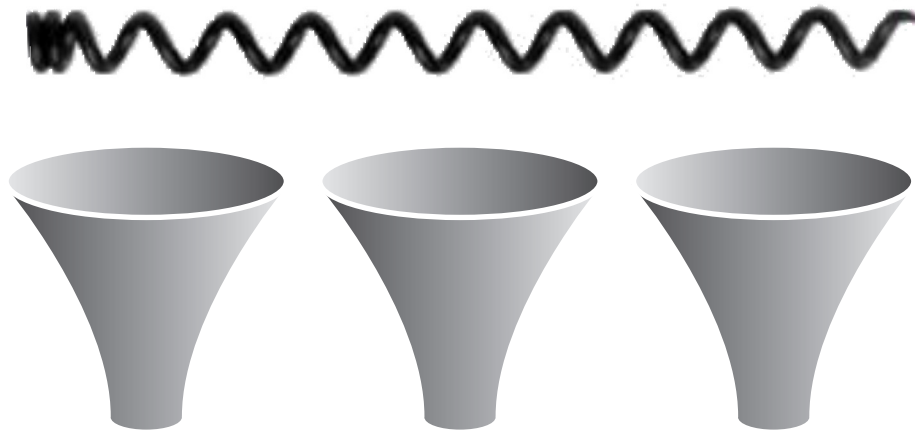
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## Build corkscrews through your funnel

We've emphasised the importance of momentum, but how do you keep the momentum going?



In B2B marketing, I like to use the term 'corkscrew' to refer to a tactic (or series of tactics) that you can execute over and over again, knowing that while the buyer will only drop into your funnel occasionally, every time you twist the corkscrew, you are moving them along – a little. You can only do this with tactics that you can execute over and over. To do this you need tactics with:

- Lots of strong content;
- Genuine value in every piece; and
- Variation in medium.

Consistent execution of these tactics allows continuous improvement and also enables you to gain traction with your target market; through repeat exposure. This process ensures that you can try and fail, try and fail, try and fail, and (eventually) try and succeed.

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## Step 2 – Learn the right B2B skills

You and your colleagues in Marketing need to know:

### How to Set Strategy for Business Markets



- How to earn a seat at the strategy table and the right to stay there;
- How to set (and guide) strategy for the overall business;
- How to set go-to-market strategy for your products and services;
- How to evolve your strategy as the market changes; and
- How to execute it with precision.

### How to Plan Campaigns that Move Buyers



- How to condition the market before making your approach;
- What it takes to position a strong brand and create constant demand;
- How businesses buy;
- How to execute with precision;
- How to recruit the best channel for you; and
- How to align all stakeholders.

### How to Size the Funnel and Measure Progress



- How big your market needs to be to meet your revenue objectives;
- What the critical levers are for your funnel;
- How to build a model funnel with reliable data; and
- How to measure actual progress as you execute and evolve your funnel plans.

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## How to Select Tactics that Progress Buyers



- How to align tactics to your strategy and execute them with rhythm;
- Which tactics best suit each stage of your buyer's journey;
- How to achieve momentum; and
- What it takes to get the rest of your team behind you.

## Step 3 – Measure Marketing on its contribution to revenue

It's sensible, proven and somewhat obvious to measure Sales on the propose-to-close ratio – the proportion of offers that are accepted - and Marketing on how many of their leads convert to meetings. Sensible, but not smart. In our alignment study, we found that the best-aligned businesses measure Marketing on how many of their leads convert to revenue.

The logic is simple:

- If you hold Marketing accountable to brand awareness, we'll give you a market that knows who you are (but doesn't necessarily buy).
- If you hold Marketing accountable for leads (only), we'll give you leads by the score.
- If you hold us accountable for meetings, we'll get you leads that convert to meetings.
- But if you hold us accountable for revenue, we'll get you leads that convert to sales.

And while propose-to-close is something that feels like it should be the job of Sales, there's lots of this that Marketing can influence.

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It's all about:

- Which pond we're fishing in;
- Whether we're getting leads with the right people within your target businesses; and
- Whether we're getting leads with buyers with a problem (the one you solve best) – not just with a need.

And to generate consistent revenue flows, you're going to need clever systems.

## The role of marketing automation

Does marketing automation fit into all this? Yes, as a key enabler that allows you to accomplish everything we've talked about.

Without marketing automation, the measurement, accountability, tactical execution and rapid adaptation required would overwhelm even the most dedicated workaholic.

For example, in "How to Set Strategy for Business Markets," we see that B2B marketers need to earn a seat at the strategy table and stay there. But Marketing can't earn that seat (let alone hold onto it) unless you can demonstrate that your work is having a measurable impact on revenue.

With the cold, hard metrics that marketing automation provides, Marketing can unequivocally demonstrate that "X programs drove X leads which lead to X meetings that closed \$X amount of revenue. Period." To do this manually would literally be impossible.

Another example... Aligning all stakeholders is vital to Marketing/Sales cohesion. With marketing automation, important capabilities like lead scoring become simple, repeatable and automated.

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“What does lead scoring have to do with alignment?” you ask.

Lead scoring allows Marketing and Sales to agree on what constitutes a good lead and what constitutes a lead that isn't yet ripe for sales consumption. Thus, there's no confusion over who's responsible for taking the lead to the next stage.

Sales doesn't get upset about having raw (read “useless”) leads dumped in their laps. And Marketing doesn't complain about all the great leads Sales is wasting.

This newfound affection that Marketing and Sales have for each other grows even warmer when Sales finds out that marketing automation gives sales reps direct insights into a prospect's hot buttons. The best marketing automation solutions actually let a sales rep see what content a prospect has viewed on the website, what white papers he's downloaded and what emails he's forwarded.

Armed with this knowledge, the sales person can immediately start a conversation focusing on what's nearest and dearest to the prospect's heart (instead of fumbling around searching for an opening).

Of course, there are many more ways marketing automation is essential to supporting B2B marketers:

- Automatically launch programs without human intervention. Thus, a lead nurturing program targeting leads that have “leaked” out of the funnel starts as soon as a lead drops off. No time is lost or effort is wasted;
- Institutionalize best practices so it doesn't matter who is at the controls, a first-year intern or seasoned marketer;
- Allow continuous refinement thanks to real-time measurement coupled with the ability to rapidly roll out new/revised deliverables;
- And much more.

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It's no wonder that companies that employ marketing automation enjoy significant competitive advantages over their less fortunate counterparts:

- Higher campaign response rates and conversion rates;
- Decrease in time to execute campaigns;
- Increase in number of campaigns;
- Decrease in cost per lead;
- Higher sales quota achievement; and
- Increase in average deal size.

## Summary

By getting Marketing and Sales to agree on a plan, strategies and tactics up front, by teaching your marketers the right skills, by making Marketing responsible for revenue and measuring Sales on the right metrics, by executing the right tactics at each step in the funnel, by measuring all aspects so that you can refine and improve continuously, and by supporting all your efforts with marketing automation, you'll set your organization on the path to greater success:

- Closing 38 per cent more proposals
- Losing 36 per cent fewer customers to competitors
- Growing 5.4 points faster

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## About MathMarketing

In Australia, Asia, North America and Europe, MathMarketing has served many leading and aspiring businesses who seek to align Sales and Marketing and pursue growth.

2300 subscribers | 9 years | 220 projects | 4 continents

These businesses have been wrestling with at least one of a number of common problems:

- They lack a clear plan for growth;
- Their team has gaps in their B2B marketing skills;
- Members of their team just don't 'get it'; or
- Sales and Marketing are not aligned.

In addressing these common problems, MathMarketing created Funnel Logic™. Developed as a unique approach to sales and marketing, Funnel Logic has been brought to life through:

- A facilitated planning program that aligns leaders from Sales, Marketing and other functions around a highly-actionable plan;
- Grounded marketing training for B2B professionals, helping marketers earn a seat at the table with advanced skills in setting strategy, sizing markets, building campaigns, and selecting tactics;
- Comprehensive business coaching which focuses the strategic direction of your business, and assists you in developing your own blisteringly clear, highly actionable plan for growth;
- An executive simulation game to help the broader team to understand the funnel, and how to progress buyers through it;

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- A series of thought-leadership articles delivered as sharp, punchy insights into managing your sales and marketing funnel published globally; and
- A popular business novel praised by business leaders for its true-to-life description of the challenges faced by growth businesses, and its powerful lessons for large and small businesses alike.

To learn more about these problems and how MathMarketing solves them,  
**visit [www.mathmarketing.com/eloqua](http://www.mathmarketing.com/eloqua) or phone +61 3 9948 0022.**



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## About Eloqua

About Eloqua Corporation

Eloqua provides the leading integrated demand generation applications and expertise for executing, automating and measuring highly effective B2B marketing programs. Eloqua drives the entire marketing process from contact to close, while making prospect interest and intent visible at every step. With leading technology backed by expert professional services, Eloqua automates best practices in demand generation for marketers who need to produce a continuous flow of qualified leads for a professional sales force. Eloqua's customers include Sybase, Seagate, Nokia, MySQL, Administaff, Nuance and many other leading B2B marketers. Eloqua Corporation is headquartered in Toronto with offices throughout North America and in London.

**For more information, please visit [www.eloqua.com](http://www.eloqua.com) or call 866-327-8764.**



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## About MarketOne

MarketOne International is a recognized leader in outsourced demand generation for the complex sale. Since 1998, MarketOne has executed lead development programs designed to profile sales prospects, cultivate, sales-ready' opportunities, and generate demand. Our core services include teleprospecting, lead qualification, lead nurturing, lead management, data management, and marketing automation.

More recently, MarketOne has integrated advanced eMarketing technology (Eloqua) with best-in-class telemarketing to provide clients a fully-managed Lead Lifecycle Management (LLM) solution. As a worldwide agency partner of Eloqua, we enhance new or existing Eloqua implementations with an array of professional services, including Eloqua consulting, implementation and managed services, as well as multilingual telemarketing and database services.

Eighteen of the world's twenty largest technology companies turn to MarketOne for expertise and execution in Lead Lifecycle Management. Our team of 225 professionals provides campaign execution in over a dozen native languages. Our offices are located in Boston, London, Tokyo and Barbados.

