

Welcome to Bridge the Gap Contributor Wednesday, I'm Chris Watson. And today we're going to talk about how to get marketing and sales teams to communicate more strategically so we can close more deals. Now, what we know is that marketing and sales have a unique relationship. And if you were to ask salespeople their feelings about marketing and ask marketing their feelings about sales, you would get a large array of answers. You might get answers like yes, sales just doesn't use our stuff appropriately. We send them so much collateral, so much good information, and they just don't understand the information we send them so they don't know how to use it. Or sales might say marketing doesn't even talk to customers. They don't even talk to prospects. They are giving us information and they don't really understand what we're doing because all they're doing is looking at the data and they're hoping that some inbound leads are gonna come in, they send it to us.

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And this is in turn, why we have issues is because most of the time we have a marketing manager and a sales manager communicating, but we don't actually have people that are in marketing on the team and people that are on the sales team communicating often and effectively. And before you get upset, I hear many times that people say, "oh yeah, our marketing and sales teams are communicating." Well, they might be, but are they doing it in a way that's helping you close more deals? Are they doing it in a way that's driving more revenue or are they doing it because their managers, their directors, their leaders are telling them that they have to. So I'm going to talk about three specific points underneath how we can get our sales and marketing teams to communicate more. The first one is we need to agree upon when someone is conversation ready.

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I attribute this to my buddy Torlando Hakes, who is a CMO over at Folia. Congratulations by the way, Torlando, if you listen to this man, but he brought up to me one time that marketing and sales, they kind of have different interpretations of when someone is conversation ready, specifically because marketing may not do a lot of actual conversations with a prospect and sales feels like they need to be in control of the conversation earlier than what really is necessary based upon someone seeing great marketing.

We need marketing to understand that they have to give context to sales. They have to allow them to understand what the buyer's journey has been up to that point. They have to let them know, "hey, this is what we were thinking when, when we put this here on this website for them to download and look at and click and view, and because they went through this path, then they most likely are trying to solve X problem.

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And so that's where we need to start the conversation. We need to grab the context. We need to make them feel like we are aligned with what the behaviors and what they've already done. Marketing has to give context to sales.

Now sales can't feel like they need to restart the journey because when they do, when someone on the, on the phone with them or sets a demo with them and we start from scratch all over again, well, we've all experienced how that feels. I want to give you a metaphor. Imagine if you had been going to the same doctor for five years, and then one time you show up to the doctor and when you show up, they say,

“now remind me who you are and remind me what you've had done before. And remind me why you came in the last time.”

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And is this a checkup or this is something about cholesterol. Is it high?” Imagine if that happened, well, you would feel very disconnected. In fact, you'd probably leave the office and say, “wow, that person doesn't care about me.” They don't even remember the last conversation we had and I know they take notes. And for some reason it didn't get in the computer and you would feel disoriented for a moment. You would feel like, “yeah, I don't know if I want to return here,” and you'd probably go and look up another doctor. Well, the same thing is happening to a buyer. I want you to imagine this buyer has gone to the website has clicked through, has read some things, maybe downloaded some brochures maybe even have gone to a free webinar. And now they show up as they schedule a demo, and they start to communicate to the salesperson.

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The salesperson says, “so, what made you schedule the demo?” “Well, I've spent approximately an hour on your website and I've downloaded two documents and I've flipped through all these pictures and said that, yes, I wanted to solve that problem. I attended a webinar.” Well, if they don't have that context, then sales starts the conversation from the start. Now sales should be asking for the context, the sales should want to know what the journey is. So you can see now that if marketing doesn't give the context and sales isn't intentional about wanting to know the context, then the content really doesn't matter. The communication that we're going to have isn't going to be effective. And eventually the prospect feels extremely frustrated. So the first thing we have to do is we have to agree upon when someone is ready to have a conversation. They have enough information that they're to a place where now they need to have a conversation.

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And we need to give context to sales when that conversation occurs and sales needs to be intentional about understanding what the buyer's journey has been up to that point. If that communication takes place, then these conversations, the sales cycles will shrink, and the conversations with your buyers will be at the perfect time where maybe just, maybe the buyer is the one asking all the questions and not the salesperson, because the buyer has already had many objections already overcome through the marketing materials. So that now when they're just asking questions of sales, can the product do this? Will it do this? I know I read this. Can you explain this? And that's just so much easier for a salesperson to be an expert and to be a consultant at that point, instead of feeling like they have to over-sell.

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The second thing is account based marketing. So if we were to think about if you are a company that can serve large organizations, then the truth is is that you may be looking for who really is the decision maker, or maybe there's multiple decision makers. And so your marketing maybe going out to multiple people, whether that be through web, whether that be through ads, whether that be through email, whether that be through a video or a loom video prospecting or LinkedIn direct messaging, whatever your marketing plan is your strategy. There might be multiple people that are now interacting with the website, interacting with the content.

And so we have to begin to look at those larger organizations as almost an account you've probably heard of ABM. And if you haven't I would suggest going take a look at it, but we start looking at it as an account.

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And when we do that, and we think of all these leads as not individual leads, but we now see them that all of these people within the organization that have different roles as one single account, it allows us to qualify that account more effectively. It also allows us between marketing and sales to communicate on which role has been there the most, who is probably the decision maker or who might be able to play the role in champion to then take it to the decision maker. And when we do that, we can more quickly define an account that is ready for us to begin reaching out in a different way than what maybe marketing has already or what the sequence has already at that point, that potentially was automated. Now it needs to be shifted into a personalized sequence.

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Obviously one of the ways we've just get more strategic in general is not always jumping to a conversation or to a demo, just because one individual in one role within the organization has interacted with a website. But instead setting some metrics to say, "well, how many times do we want them to interact in?" how many roles do we want to interact in? Is there a certain role it's a higher value than another role.? And then explaining all that and having that you know, beyond just the CRM, but letting sales, the salesperson know the account executive or the SDR, whoever might be reaching out, letting them know who interacted and where do they interact? I think there is a massive divide between sales wanting to know more about marketing and marketing wanting to know more about sales.

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And in fact, that would go as far as saying that there are a lot of organizations that are now hiring CROs to run sales and marketing underneath one umbrella together because they recognize that those two teams need to work together because they are the core of revenue in the organization. And so imagine that for a moment. If you know distribution and manufacturing, they decided they didn't want to play nice together. And we weren't distributing these widgets as quickly as we were manufacturing them and we had too much inventory, business would fell apart. And for some reason we have made marketing and sales work together, but they're working in a silo and they shouldn't be working in silos. And so we can more effectively improve their communication. We can increase revenue quicker because both teams will be engaged and they'll not only be engaged in their own material.

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They'll also be engaged in what they need to know and want to know in marketing that will help them in their job and what they need to know. And maybe even want to know in sales will help them in their job. And if we can't facilitate that, then number three, we can end this silent civil war or we can help them earn trust back between each department, each people. Because that's what we have to figure out. Is there a silent civil war going on where sales gets together and says, "those are really crappy leads they're sending us. I don't even know how they're qualifying this." And marketing gets together and says, "we're sending a home of leads. We're doing our job. We have our metrics down, right? We're meeting all of our goals."

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Marketing has pipeline goals, and sales has their goals, lead targets and sales targets. And when we begin to set those metrics, you can realize we may start operating in a silo instead operating together. And then you can just be assured there isn't going to be zero effective communication. If the only communication is typed down in a CRM, if the only communication is, "Hey, you've gotta go and find what I put down for you to be able to go and grab." And there's not actual communication between them, and we're not facilitating that. Then you can be assured that marketing and sales are not working aligned. They're not working together. No matter what you think it's not happening. They're not doing it to their best of ability. So we have to give them a place, an opportunity to come together and work more effectively.

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Marketing, honestly, they may just not care what has to offer them for insights. They don't care that sales may know why a prospect is saying no. Or what the common objections are that a prospect is giving them. Sales doesn't use the marketing materials or believe in the data the marketing's giving them. They just don't believe it. So if we could, just one suggestion, if we could make marketing have to listen to some sales calls, they may learn a lot from that and be able to empathize with sales. If we could make sales people create marketing assets that would be used in say, sales outreach, or marketing materials, or a sequence, depending on how your organization is created and how they deploy that, then I think sales would have a greater appreciation for when they created it thinking it's great.

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And marketing people begin to ask questions. Well, what were are the, how is this going to fit into our attribution model? And where do we want them to click? And where is the call to action? And this is a lot of words. And I think marketing and sales would have a greater appreciation for each other if we could offer them a place to experience each other's worlds. And I think there's a lot of value in that because how do you expect two people, two groups to strategically communicate effectively if they don't understand each other's worlds? At Craft and Compel we always talk about, you have to understand their story, their world before they're going to care or want to understand your world, your story. And how can you build a better future story, a better world, a better future world together.

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If you don't understand each other's stories, each other's worlds. And so we have to give an opportunity for that. One thing that we have began to offer at Craft and Compel is we begin to offer these workshops. And me and Torlando Hakes were actually the ones that put it on. And what we do is we go in and we teach organizations how to facilitate strategic communication between sales and marketing teams. And here's the best part. We go in, we teach the organization how to do this, how to facilitate this through an experience. And then they're able to then do it from that point on. And we recommend do this quarterly. Every time you're getting ready to roll on a new campaign, or you're getting to roll into a new quarter, let's have a conversation about what, what are marketing's goals?

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What type of assets are they gonna put out? What is the sequence they want to put out? What's the call to action? And then sales can say, "well, hey, these are our goals. And now that we know your journey, this is how we're going to start our conversations. And this is how we can agree upon when an account is conversation ready when they're qualified."

If they're gonna just be more agreement, more understanding, more discourse then I promise that there will be a shortened sales cycle. There will be a much more engaged buyer, as well as a much more engaged marketing sales team, because they're now working together, and they're not working separately and they're not in a silo. And so what I would challenge you to think about, if you're in sales, go reach out to a marketing person within your organization and just ask a few questions, go on on your own company website, look at the marketing, see how it makes you feel, what makes you think, and go ask a marketing person about it.

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Hey, I noticed you guys have an opportunity for them to click here and download this. Why do we do it that way? And if you're in marketing, go ask a salesperson, "what are the common objections that you're getting?"

Or go ask somebody in customer management, customer service and "hey, how are, why are we losing customers?" Or do we ever ask our customers, like, "how did this change your life when you bought our product or service?" Because we could begin to use that messaging in our marketing. We need our teams, our departments to quit working in silos, and we need them to begin to strategically communicate with each other, because if we can create eight narrative that goes all the way through and they're aligned, and if we can get them to more freely communicate without being told to do it, but more importantly, they want to do it because they see the advantages.

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That's when your organization's gonna scale quicker. That's when your prospect becoming a customer then equals a referral and heavy, heavy, heavy retention for your customers. What I hope is you're walking away from here and saying, "man, I need to create and facilitate an opportunity for my marketing and my sales teams and for all of my teams really in my organization to communicate more often. And I need to not tell, but I need to offer them, Hey, this is how it's gonna change. This is, this is the change in your world. Here's the better place." Be the guy don't be the hero, allow them to communicate. And you will see, you will reap the benefits in your revenue and in your engagement of your employees, just by offering them that place to communicate more freely.

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