



Bringing Sales and Marketing in Alignment

3 Key Considerations for Navigating the Way, Together



Introduction

Sales and marketing alignment has always been a bit of an elusive goal post. That was true before the events of 2020. Since then, we've seen new stresses on how sales and marketing teams' coordinate—like operating in a remote, unpredictable environment while still needing to meet ambitious numbers.

Aligning teams now is even more critical. Plus, being out of alignment can hurt. According to [HubSpot](#), sales and marketing misalignment can lead to decreased productivity and wasted effort, costing companies as much as \$1 trillion per year.

Conversely, when sales and marketing teams are in rhythm, it's gold. [HBR](#) finds that “when sales and marketing work well together, companies see substantial improvement on performance metrics: Sales cycles are shorter, market-entry costs go down and the cost of sales is lower.”

In this ebook, we'll explore three key considerations for bringing sales and marketing in alignment.



Key Consideration #1:

The sales funnel is not linear.

When we talk about the marketing and sales funnel, it's easy to get stuck in the idea of prospects moving through in a straightforward manner. There's the initial engagement through marketing. Then, an SDR helps nurture the lead. Finally, there's the handoff to the rep to move it to close.


In this scenario, we often ask or say things like:

- **Who owns these leads at this stage of the funnel?**
- **Well, this is marketing's responsibility (or sales, depending on context) right now.**
- **This campaign didn't hit its numbers because x, y, and z.**

The reality is that the sales funnel is nonlinear. There is no hard start and end point. Much of the time we see the buyer journey start and stop, move forward then take a step back, or even recycle as they aren't quite qualified yet.

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To build alignment, we must get comfortable with the idea that everyone across revenue-generating teams contributes to activities that drive revenue growth. As Mark Kosoglow, VP of Sales at Outreach, said in a recent webinar, “We have to optimize our part. We have to be responsible for our contribution... But when you go in knowing that it’s a big ball of mess, as long as everybody’s contributing to the ball, the ball is big enough, and it meets the needs of the company—we should be okay with and encourage that.”

While sales and marketing must be flexible in the process, we also need to adhere to consistent messaging and coordinated, complementary strategy. Here, the conversation between teams focuses on working toward common goals, establishing feedback loops, and optimizing throughout the process from both a sales and marketing perspective. Ultimately, sales and marketing are working in lock step to craft a buyer experience that will lead to more closed won deals.

We need progressive sales and marketing leadership to build this unified journey. At the same time, revenue generating teams must be at the forefront of a buyer-aligned sales process and sales execution. Enter—dynamic guided selling.

Take It a Step Further:

Expand the scope with Dynamic Guided Selling.

Many sales processes tend to impose a rigid, linear view of buyer engagement. Likely, it’s because they are acting on limited information. **Dynamic guided selling** expands the scope of insight available to selling teams, allowing them to pivot in near-real-time with personalized guidance to reps and tailored responses to buyers through the entire selling process.

Of course, this requires a coordinated effort across revenue generating teams, backed by AI-powered technology.



Key Consideration #2:

Operationalize the right data to benefit both sales and marketing.

No one would argue that we lack a holistic view of sales and marketing data. The volume of activity across both functions generates an abundance of it. Though, the more data you have, the harder it is to manage—even if it's good data. For sales and marketing alignment, it's about zeroing in on the right data points and making sure it's powering both sides.

What does it mean to power both sides? Marketing, for example, has insight into prospects visiting the website, clicking on pages, and engaging with content. On the flip side, the digital conversations sales reps have with prospects provide insight into areas like which email subject lines generate the most positive replies or successful sequences. Marketing teams can leverage that wealth of data for campaigns by better understanding what language is best resonating with the target audience.

At the same time, the insights marketing has can power greater conversations when sales pick up the phone or send an email to a target prospect. To build the greatest alignment, it's about making it easy for both sales and marketing teams to understand that data on both sides of the aisle and use it effectively.

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What does that look like? Regular communication and shared perspectives across revenue-generating teams is key, of course. But also leveraging technology with machine learning to make data capture, reporting, and insights easier can help teams work effectively and more efficiently.



Take It a Step Further:

Leveraging machine learning to identify and act on buyer sentiment.

Sales and marketing simply can't rely on old data sets. Metrics like click, open, and reply rate are fine, but don't tell the whole story around whether our selling efforts are working. New data points are necessary to help revenue generating teams understand the new world and align on actions. One such data point is **buyer sentiment**, a better reflection of where a prospect currently stands in the buyer journey. It relays a **buyer's emotional response to sales engagement**—whether it is positive, an objection, a referral or an unsubscribe. Sales and marketing teams can dial into the emotion behind the response to make informed decisions on the best path forward.

Take **Outreach's Intent Reporting**, which uses machine learning models to identify and classify the intent of a prospect's email reply. Let's say your sales rep receives an objection that says the prospect already has a solution or that they don't have a budget for it. That insight can help sales reps take better action and provides sales managers with specific insights to coach their reps more appropriately. And with Guided Engagement, sales reps are automatically served the next best action, helping them navigate to the right content and manager-recommended templates they can use to overturn objections.

Key Consideration #3:

Building the (technology) bridge between sales and marketing.

Technology is critical to any sales and marketing motion. That is not in question. But many times, excitement builds around adopting new tools to reach an audience without establishing a clear ROI. It doesn't help that the number of products on the market is ever expanding.

What inevitably happens is that sales and marketing teams are overburdened by technology. The silos expand between teams with data coming out of a number of systems, but since none of it is connected, we lose the valuable, holistic understanding of our collaborative program. Plus, when teams are overburdened by technology, that takes a toll on adoption and active usage of it.



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To build alignment between teams, it's more important than ever to proactively assemble the right technology stakeholders who are empowered to create a unified adoption model. Sales and marketing leaders should remember these three key points:

1. **Invest in the fundamental technology**—CRM, Marketing Automation, and a Sales Engagement Platform (SEP)—to bridge operational gaps, build alignment, and spark synergies between your revenue-focused operational teams.
2. **Evaluate for scalability.** You want to choose the right technology partner(s) for the long haul. As your business grows and scales, you need to be confident that your technology applications can flex with you.
3. **Choose your partners wisely.** Partnership isn't only about the relationship between you and your vendor. It's also their willingness to integrate with other crucial components of your tech stack. You need applications that will connect in a programmatic, automated way to empower your team to act on the best data.

Take It a Step Further: Explore a platform approach.

Integrations shorten the distance between sales and marketing. But not every app is made the same. That's why it's important to explore partnerships with vendors that take a platform approach—those who understand that the entire ecosystem is crucial to help everyone reach their goals.

SEPs serve as the bridge between marketing and sales, integrating seamlessly between these crucial business tools. It brings automation, efficiency, and insights to sellers. At the same time, data is synchronized across platforms, so all revenue-generating teams are operating with the most relevant data across the entire customer lifecycle.

For example, **Outreach Galaxy** works with integration partners to equip revenue-generating teams with access to all the tools and channels they already use to drive sales success—all in one single view.

Summary

When sales and marketing are in alignment, organizations win. But it's not simply a nice to have, alignment is a must have, especially in this modern sales environment. To do so, sales and marketing leaders must make some key considerations and be bold enough to manage change from the front lines.

First and foremost, it's up to leaders to push their respective teams to create and maintain a buyer-aligned sales process and sales execution.

Leveraging data is paramount to power both sales and marketing. Keep in mind that new data sets are needed to measure and act on the right insights. Using an SEP such as Outreach can help you dive into insights around intent to make the best decisions on the path forward.

Finally, you can't align your sales and marketing teams unless you have a unified tech stack. Strongly consider platforms that heavily invest in integrations, to help you strategically scale over time.

Learn more about how Outreach can help you bring alignment to sales and marketing at [Outreach.io](https://www.outreach.io) and [schedule a demo today](#).

Outreach is the largest and fastest-growing sales engagement platform that helps companies dramatically increase productivity and drive smarter, more insightful engagement with their customers. The only sales engagement platform to make the Forbes Cloud 100, Outreach was also the fastest-growing Sales Engagement Platform on the Deloitte Technology Fast 500. More than 4,600 companies such as Adobe, Tableau, Okta, Splunk, DocuSign, and SAP depend on Outreach's enterprise-scale, unparalleled customer adoption, and robust AI-powered innovation. Outreach is a privately held company based in Seattle, Washington. To learn more, please visit www.outreach.io.

