SALES & MARKETING: WORKING HAND IN HAND TO DELIVER MORE BUSINESS

Who does what in the collaborative Sales & Marketing funnel

NOW|COMMS.

NOW|COMMS.

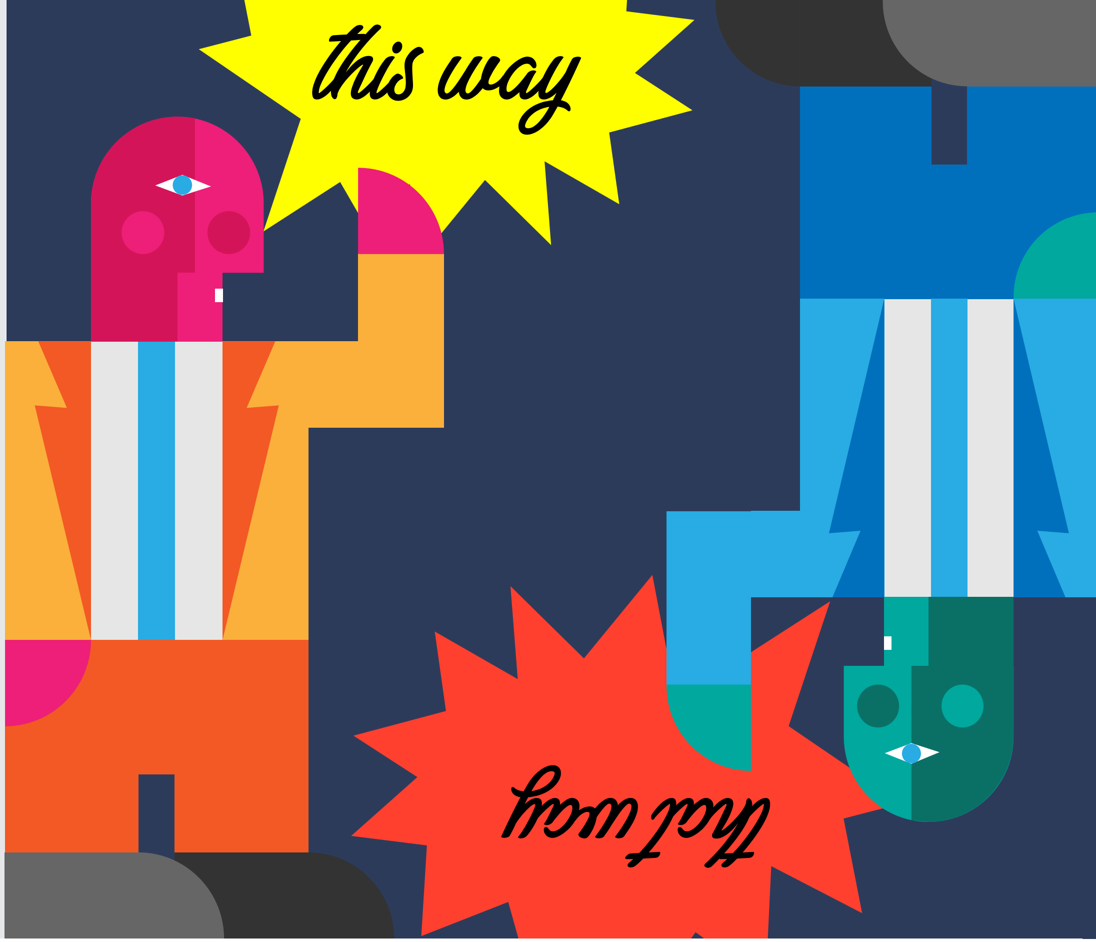
"The role of B2B marketing is to deliver new leads into sales. The sales team's role is to close the leads"

This is how a lot of enterprises see their sales and marketing functions. Their thinking usually goes like this:

Marketing produces some great educational content that tempts new leads into the pipeline.
With the help of some well-executed follow-up campaigns, marketing nudges this early interest down the sales funnel.

Next, marketing fires up some nifty tracking and analytics to spotlight new leads as soon as they start exploring the business' products and services.

Then suddenly, Hey Presto! Marketing's magic formula has cooked up another Marketing Qualified Lead ready for sales to close.



Sounds pretty simple right, so why doesn't it work?

In the real business world we live in, this framework finds itself under stress quickly. It's an uncollaborative structure that almost always fails because it assumes that marketing and sales work towards different goals: Marketing's job is to deliver Marketing Qualified Leads. Sales' ultimate goal is to close these leads.

Here's the problem with that: Leads are actually just people, and everyone is different

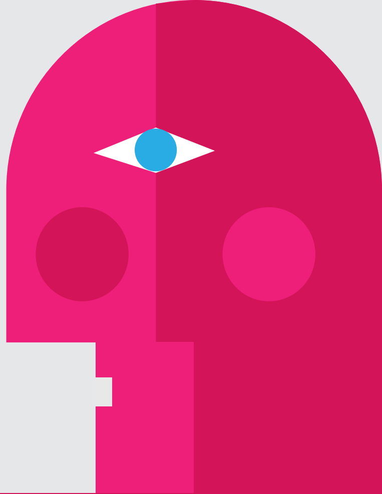
People who are not ready to buy never like being sold to, but when marketing passes Marketing Qualified Leads over to sales, getting sold to is usually the only option there is.

Marketing Qualified Leads usually get "qualified" when they cross some kind of predetermined threshold, like when a prospect downloads a white paper or asks for a demo or trial. These actions obviously demonstrate some kind of interest, but they don't necessarily deliver the quality leads that salespeople want to run with.

This is where the relationship between sales and marketing can get a bit thorny. Pretty soon sales is blaming marketing for passing on flaky leads (often in large numbers) and marketing gets all defensive, claiming sales isn't equipped to build strong relationships and close. The truth is both departments are failing simply because they're not collaborating enough.

Sales happen better when marketing and sales are totally aligned. That means building trust between the two departments. Trust is built on mutual understanding and usually takes some time to establish.

When sales and marketing work together great things happen. With both departments totally committed to the same goal (winning new customers), the blame game ceases to become an option for either. To succeed, both functions need to believe they're on the same team, working to the same gameplan to spotlight new leads as soon as they start exploring the business' products and services.



What's in this playbook?

This playbook walks you through some of the top ways sales and marketing can work together. We'll speak quite generally at times - since for each point there are many different ways you can carry it out - but to illustrate what we're talking about we'll also use ourselves as a case study. We've developed a funnel sales and marketing process at NowComms over several years and we're very proud of it.

Our process works because it's different. It's not built around the linear idea that Marketing Qualified Leads (MQLs) are passed to sales to become Sales Qualified Leads (SQLs) and then customers, it's just built around building better relationships with customers.

Adopting the ideas in this playbook will change the way you view the sales and marketing functions in your business. We'll explain how sales and marketing work better when they work together, and we'll walk you through the key processes that power success in a more collaborative sales and marketing funnel.

NOW|COMMS.

Get your teams aligned

Sales and marketing need to be working on the same team to get the best results. The first thing, then, that any CSM (collaborative sales and marketing) hopefuls should do is get their sales and marketing teams aligned.

To make this collaboration work (and continue to work long after!), you need to make sure everyone knows what the goal is. You can achieve this however you want. Meet weekly for coffee and a catch up, combine into a 'smarketing' department, agree KPIs together, ask for input from everyone (not just your own team members): the possibilities are endless.

The point is that your sales and marketing teams begin on the right note - they have a shared goal, and collectively reaffirm or readjust that goal each time they get together.

What would we recommend?

As a B2B marketing agency, our tried-and-true method of making sure that we're on the same page as the sales teams we work with is to hold regular marketing #Hackdays -Read More-.

We kick off all our projects with a confab between our cross-functional team and the stakeholders: our aim is to set the objectives that we'll all be working towards over the following few months. Each Hackday output is unique, but they're all extremely helpful in ensuring that marketing and sales have agreed what it is that they're both working towards.

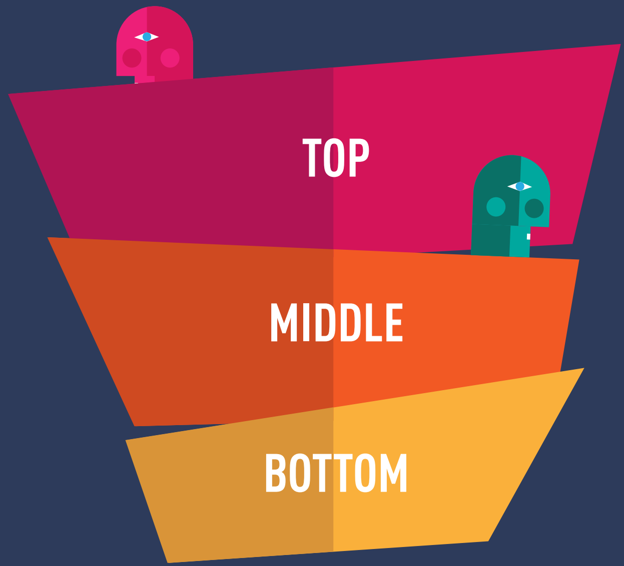
NOW|COMMS.

Make the sales process more inclusive - who does what in the CSM funnel

It's pretty likely that your sales team has some process or other that they swear generates guaranteed sales, usually in the form of some snappy initialism (think BANT, CHAMP, MEDDIC, CRUX, to name a few -Read More-). But to what extent is your marketing team included in this process?

The sales and marketing funnel isn't what it used to be: as more and more of the buying process is digitised, the line between the marketer's and the salesperson's job becomes less distinct. An effective CSM funnel needs to reflect this: let the marketing department take over parts of the process, so that when they pass MQLs to sales, those leads are properly nurtured and that sought-after sale is more likely to happen.

When a sales process is put at the centre of the CSM funnel the joint sales and marketing goal becomes clear and simple. As a team, everyone needs to produce leads that are qualified by that process and sales can then seal the deal from there.



What would we recommend?

Any sales process can be collaborative. We use BANT, a sales qualification framework used by IBM, Cisco and others, to determine a prospect's Budget, Authority, Need and Timescale. When a prospect is thought to have all four of these attributes, BANT thinking is that the prospect is almost certainly going to buy.

Obtaining answers to all four BANT questions can be time-consuming and difficult, but if everyone across the sales & marketing team knows which BANT attributes they need to acquire, the framework adds real focus to all sales & marketing efforts.

In our experience, a good marketing programme is usually one equipped to answer BANT's A (Authority) and N (Need) criteria. Good sales processes work towards uncovering information on B (Budget) and T (Timescale).

Stage 1: Education

This is where a company attracts a new prospect by being an expert on the problem the prospect has. Blogs, newsletters or downloads with names like “10 things you should know about South Africa before you go” or “Cash ISA or investment ISA: which is best for you?” are typical examples of good top of the funnel marketing content. The aim is to gain authority by helping a new prospect solve a problem they have.

At this stage of the process, marketing is good at assessing BANT’s authority requirement.

Stage 2: Explore

If you’ve made all the right moves during the education stage and managed to convince your new prospect that you’re a genuine expert, trust starts to develop. With trust comes a new willingness to explore the solutions you have that address their problem. Typical “explore” stage marketing products are things like product overviews, fact sheets or case studies.

Stage 3: Convert / close

With BANT’s authority and need questions answered, it’s now a good time for sales to engage.

Armed with the authority and need insights uncovered by marketing, the salesperson is well equipped to have a sensible conversation.

Sales’ job within the BANT framework is to work out if the new prospect has budget (if they do, how much) and a timescale (when is this prospect likely to buy).

Full Circle Marketing

A problem in many businesses is that they view a prospect's journey as rigidly one-way: first the marketing team gets them interested, and then the sales team seals the deal.

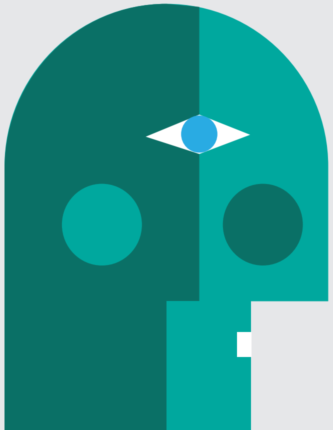
In these cases, when a client is not interested in buying at that moment, companies risk losing that all-important sale forever. This is why **full circle marketing** is so important.

If the sales team, instead of letting low priority leads go cold, passes them backwards up the sales funnel to the marketing team, you can continue to nurture them for however long you need to! In other words, customer journeys can be informed by more than just marketing insights: sales insights can be crucial in nurturing prospects properly.

Passing a lead back to marketing can help secure a sale further down the line

Imagine you're on the sales team for a company and your marketing team passes you a lead. You give them a ring, have a chat, and realise that they're not interested in buying just yet: "Er sorry, but our next budget meeting is in six months - can you call back then?"

Instead of just leaving yourself a reminder, pass the lead back to marketing, who can place them back into a custom nurture programme. This ensures that, when you call back half a year later, the lead is still informed and excited about the product and will most likely purchase now the budget and timeframe are better.



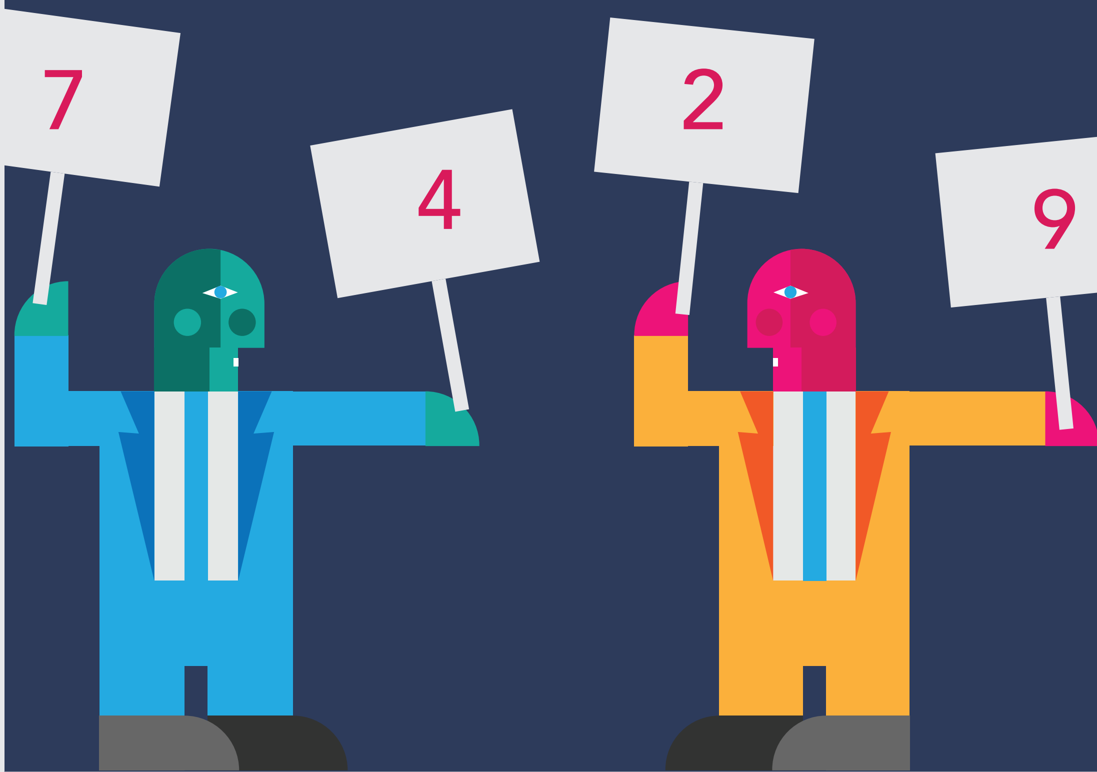
Lead Scoring

Another powerful way for sales and marketing to work together is to **lead score** prospects.

Lead scoring is a methodology that assesses how ready to buy a prospect is. The thinking behind it is simple: the higher the score, the higher priority the lead is to sales.

Marketing will usually be in charge of tracking the scores. These scores increase based on a number of things: it can be when they visit your website (or certain pages), fill out a form or request a demo, among other events. The marketing team can continue to nurture prospects until a predetermined score threshold is hit: then they are passed on to sales, and you can be fairly certain they will be ready to purchase.

Sales and marketing decide how points are scored together, meaning that when sales receive MQLs, they can tell how interested prospects are by the product, and also what specifically they are interested in.



NOW|COMMS.

Does your business have what it takes to create a more collaborative sales & marketing funnel?

Our BANT powered funnel sales & marketing process is helping more businesses win new customers every day, but it's not right for everyone.

You'll need to be:

- An agile business that values teamwork and problem solving over hierarchy and process
- Familiar with concepts like marketing automation and demand generation
- Good at Relationship Management (although you probably feel you under exploit them)
- Convinced by the potential of social selling