Ending the War between Sales and Marketing
Can’t We All Just Get Along?

Over 40 percent of B2B sales professionals missed their quota in 2013 according to research from CSO Insights. The culprit, if you ask Sales, is often the quality and volume of leads from Marketing. Marketing, on the other hand, blames Sales for ignoring their leads and not working hard enough or acting fast enough to close them.

It’s a problem as old as business itself. Sales and Marketing just can’t seem to get on the same page. Group counseling with Human Resources, team building events, and joint meetings have failed to get the two groups to perform seamlessly.

Getting Sales & Marketing on the Same Page

The question then often becomes, “How can we align Marketing to Sales (or Sales to Marketing)?” However, this question is inherently flawed. You can’t align the groups to each other; you can only align them to a common Go-to-Market Strategy and Sales Process. This is the best way to create synergy and value for both departments, as well as your targeted customers.

Essentially, a Go-to-Market Strategy bridges the gap between the business plan and your chosen markets. It helps define the type of marketing and sales messaging you want to use and answers strategic questions such as:

- **What is the basis of our innovation?** Are we going to focus on product, process, or client business impact?

- **How will clients perceive our value?** Do we want to be the low cost provider, the total solution value, or guarantee business results?

- **What do we want our brand to stand for?** Are we the dependable purchase, the company that fixes operational problems, or advisors on important business issues?

- **How do we want our sales professionals to perform?** Should they be premiere transaction providers, trusted specialists, or political insiders?

This is an intentional approach to crafting how you will execute in the marketplace. Unfortunately, many organizations don’t know the right approach for their business or fail to communicate their chosen approach to the different functional groups. As a result, Sales and Marketing perform their duties in separate silos. This lack of alignment is expensive
and hurts company performance. The resulting organizational drag creates less than optimal results, wasted resources and budget, and lowered morale. If we can reverse this, companies see substantial improvement on important performance metrics: sales cycles are shorter, market-entry costs go down, and the cost of sales is lower.

Once a common Go-to-Market Strategy has been determined, each group needs to understand what success should look like. At this point, marketing activities MUST be aligned with the steps in the Sales Process. The Sales Process is the methodology that Sales uses to work from an initial prospect meeting through a closed/fulfilled revenue opportunity. Each step in the Sales Process helps to improve the probability of winning new business, if thoughtfully executed. Marketing should review these steps in order to create key activities that will drive or support each step in the sale. This begins with initial targeting of accounts or key client contacts and continues to fulfillment and measurement of a new opportunity.

Again, first the groups must be aligned to a common Go-to-Market Strategy and THEN to the steps in the Sales Process. The next step is to review the current marketing activities to determine if they are truly in lockstep with the Sales Process. Marketing efforts can shorten sales cycles if they are designed to bring value to the potential client throughout the buying path.

Aligning Sales and Marketing to a common Go-to-Market Strategy and ensuring that marketing activities are supportive of each step in the chosen Sales Process is almost guaranteed to positively increase revenue, win-rate, and margin.

This isn’t an easy set of tasks, but it can be done. Decide to end the conflict. Working together is fun; working against each other is misery. The good news is that there is a proven means to end the war. Now it becomes a question of leadership and a willingness to take the gloves off.

About Revenue Storm
Revenue Storm is a sales consulting firm that helps clients implement processes and disciplines to drive sustained revenue acceleration. We provide comprehensive consulting, training, coaching, and rigorous analytics to help Fortune 1000 firms create demand and increase profitable, sustainable revenues. Headquartered just outside Chicago, the firm accelerates revenues for its clients in 44 countries and nine languages. For more information and to experience the power of their approach, visit http://www.revenuestorm.com.