THE VENTURE MARKETING MANIFESTO

FOR B2B SMALL BUSINESSES

5 MANAGEMENT MISTAKES BLOCKING SALES REPS FROM SELLING

John M. Fox

www.VentureMarketing.com
www.Marketing-Playbook.com

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING FOR B2B SMALL BUSINESSES
EXCLUSIVELY SERVING BUSINESS LEADERS AND ACTIVE BOARDS

Key terms in this document: Marketing Game Plan, Marketing Plan, Marketing Strategy, Marketing Playbook, Pipeline Report, Qualification Matrix

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The Top 5 Management Mistakes Blocking Sales Reps from Selling

There are certainly *more* than 5 ways executive management unintentionally (or intentionally) blocks its very own Sales Reps from selling, but here are the Top 5 we've witnessed over the past 30 years—and God forbid, committed ourselves:

1. Letting Sales Reps decide which marketing activities get done.

2. Making Sales Reps responsible for their own marketing work.

3. Allowing Sales Reps to be responsible for the customer qualification matrix.

4. Expecting Sales Reps to take on an educating, nurturing role for prospects and customers.

5. Turning Sales Reps into overpaid secretaries and clerks.

In the next pages, we will discuss these "**5 Management Mistakes**" in what has become our personal manifesto. What started out as a White Paper has now become our position paper. It's not just something we believe—it's the very principle of growth.

Why should you care? Because we've been in your shoes. We have been on the very front lines making deals happen at the street level for young upstart firms with breakthrough technology which literally created new markets. My perspective of how marketing and sales and business development must work together is not something learned in a book—it's from actually getting out there and taking action.

Bottom line: Here's all we want you to do. Ask yourself this one question: Have I applied the same discipline in my marketing as I have in the creation of my product? If you cannot emphatically say, "yes," then read on.

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Mistake #1: Letting Sales Reps decide which marketing activities get done

Putting Sales Reps in charge of the marketing mix will only yield a hodgepodge activity list—not a marketing system.

If there is a hierarchy of management sins, this one is on the top of the list. It's born out of the lack of management discipline. Over time, it will lead to the company's ultimate death.

But how does it start? The genesis for putting Sales Reps in control of what goes into the marketing mix comes from a heavily sales-driven or entrepreneurial management team who sees the business landscape as a primitive world run by Hunter-Gatherers. Every Sales Rep is responsible for their own "food." The prevailing wisdom can be summarized by this statement: "Our Sales Reps eat what they kill. If they don't figure out how to kill it, they starve."

In this culture, Sales Reps become their own one-person wrecking crew and spend their time each day selfishly manipulating every aspect of the business to maximize orders. In particular, you see this mode of selling in real estate brokerages (commercial real estate and residential real estate), insurance agencies and most start-ups.

Management promotes this behavior. By the very nature of their commission plan, Sales Reps aren't incentivized to be strategic. Don't believe me? Just take a look at your own Sales Rep commission plan. If yours is like 99.8% of the incentive plans we've seen, the plan is all about closing deals. As it should be. No matter how many seminars or pep talks you give to your team (you know the ones that start off with a title slide like, "There's no 'I' in TEAM"), it won't make much difference.

It's not that thinking like a Hunter-Gatherer is a bad thing. It's not. It IS a problem, though, when this mode of thinking gets baked into the culture and prevents the organization from creating **systems** to sustain itself. If you're not careful, placing so much emphasis on the accomplishments of individual Sales Reps puts the entire company in jeopardy when one of the top-producing Sales Reps leaves the firm and takes their book-of-business with them.

And one of those "systems" that must be put into place is **a marketing system that predictably creates more and better opportunities for ALL Sales Reps to meet qualified decision-makers**. A system that moves prospects through the selling process faster because each element in the marketing system is linked to a specific buyer hurdle.

Putting Sales Reps in charge of the marketing mix will only yield a hodgepodge activity list—not a marketing system. You'll see tactics that may work for individual territories, but are mostly useless for the rest of the sales team.

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Let me give you a "for instance."

The table below is a Q1 Pipeline Report for Dennis Rheem, an outside Sales Rep. He has a number of deals in the pipeline at various pipeline stages.

Prospect	**Customer Contact**	**Pipeline Stage**	**Forecast Close**	**Potential Opportunity**
A. Datum Corp	Kim Abercrombie	Lead qualification	Q1	$ 300,000
Adventure Works	Angela Barbariol	Schedule demo	Q1	$ 200,000
Alpine Ski House	Gabriele Cannata	Needs assessment	Q1	$ 100,000
Baldwin Museum	Barbara S. Decker	Schedule demo	Q2	$ 500,000
Blue Yonder Air	Susan W. Eaton	Proposal	Q2	$ 400,000
City Power & Lt	Kathie Flood	Schedule demo	Q2	$ 300,000

You need to align your marketing activities to those stages in the sales process where deals are getting stuck.

As you can see, Dennis has three deals in the pipeline waiting for a demonstration to be scheduled. From his selfish perspective, the marketing mix should be limited to the set of actions that will help him get more demos scheduled.

If we roll all of the other Sales Reps' pipeline reports into a single pipeline, the combined report will most likely identify other needs. While Dennis may need help at the "Schedule demo" stage, the other Sales Reps may need help at the Proposal or Contract Negotiation stages.

So how do you determine where to put your marketing dollars to work? Should it just be left to the Sales Rep who complains the most? Or maybe it should be determined on an ad hoc or on-demand basis.[1]

There's an answer to this. In fact, we've spent the last eleven years solving this problem for our customers. The short answer is that you need to align your marketing activities to those stages in the sales process where deals are getting stuck. Stuck deals are opportunities that are taking a long time to move forward. Often, after a few months, stuck deals disappear altogether from the pipeline report.

Now, let me show it to you visually.

[1] We refer ad hoc or on-demand marketing as "Lumpy Marketing". It's the kind of marketing that gets done right before a trade show or when the loudest sales person demands it. It's not strategic.

Here's a sales funnel snapshot with deals moving through it. On any given month, there may be more deals in the top stages than in the final stages. That's natural.

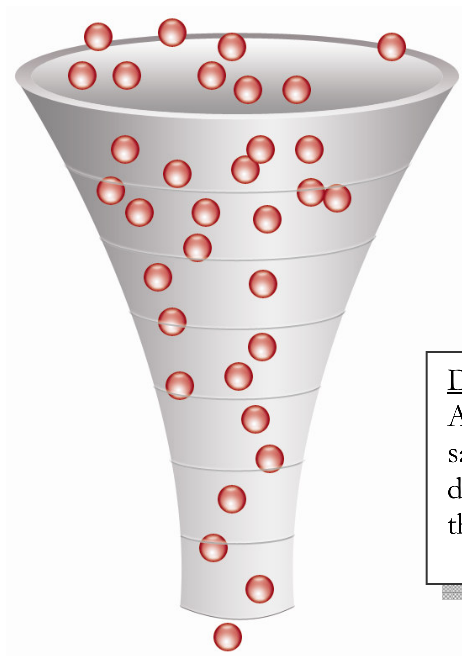

Diagram 1:
A snapshot of a typical sales funnel depicting deals at various stages in the pipeline.

Here's another look at the sales funnel, but now we've applied **a filter to show only those deals that haven't moved forward in the last six pipeline reporting periods**. Clearly, a lot of deals are stuck at one specific stage. Deals are aging (literarily dying on the vine) and not moving through the pipeline.

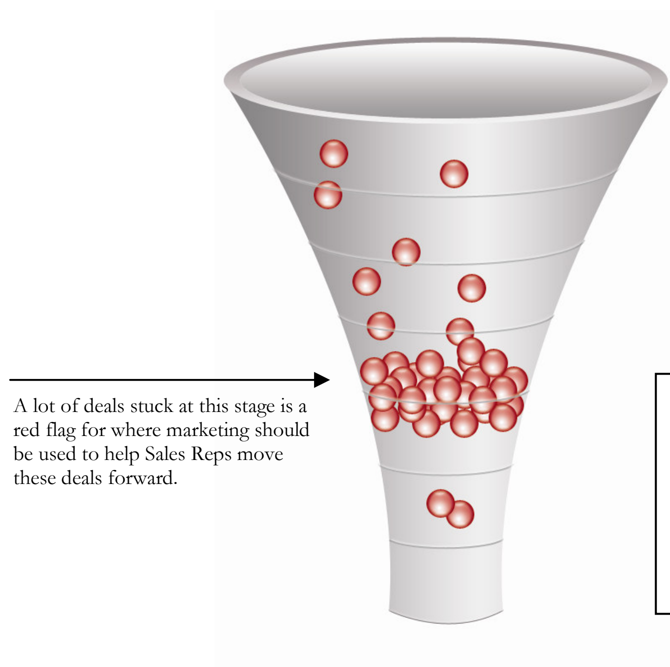

Diagram 2:
This sales funnel shows only those deals that haven't moved forward in the last 6 pipeline report periods.

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Unless your Sales Reps can take off their "I'm-in-it-for-me" sales hats and put on their strategic thinking caps, they'll never be able to see the spots on the sales cycle where marketing is needed to help move deals forward. That's why you cannot let Sales Reps decide which marketing activities get done. They don't have the required strategic vantage point that a marketer does (or should have!).

Mistake #2: Making Sales Reps responsible for their own marketing work

The second mistake blocking Sales Reps from selling stems from a lack of leadership and marketing resources compounded by the Hunter-Gatherer mentality we mentioned earlier (see page 1). It's bad enough allowing Sales Reps to determine the marketing mix, but the mistake is compounded by making them responsible for *doing* their own marketing work.

The majority of B2B small businesses have abdicated basic marketing activities to their Sales Reps.

The net effect: Busier, but less effective Sales Reps due to duplication of effort.

In the early 1990's, companies started to place greater responsibilities on their Sales Reps. Reps got laptops and with it, the full Microsoft Suite of software like Word and PowerPoint. The kind of tasks that used to be done by office staff and the marketing department are now pushed down to the Sales Rep.

In contrast, when I began my career at Intel in 1979, I was given an office, a secretary and a telephone. When I started selling in 1981, after a two-year training program, I got an expense account and a company car. When I needed a proposal, I handwrote it and my secretary, Marie Giotto, took care of all the details. I got to proof it, but Marie made sure it followed company standards.

When I had to make a presentation, I had a choice. I could use the overhead slides provided by the marketing departments in California, Arizona or Oregon and have one of our local field engineers make the presentation. Or, I could fly in one of the headquarters' marketing experts and let them put on their own dog-and-pony show. In either case, professionals assembled the presentations and the output was first class.

The idea of a Sales Rep creating their own presentation wasn't foreign, but it wasn't anything like it is now.

Today, this trend continues. A vast majority of B2B businesses of all sizes have abdicated much of what we'd consider to be basic marketing activities, formerly the responsibility of an inside marketing team, to their Sales Reps. The net effect: Busier, but less efficient Sales Reps.

How is this being communicated to the Sales Reps?

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Sales Reps are asking…	**Management is communicating…**
I need lead sources…	That's a Sales Rep's responsibility.
I need a proposal…	Do it yourself.
I need a customer presentation…	Whip something up on your own.
Shouldn't all our presentations and proposals look like they're from the same company?	That's not important.
Who at corporate is going to generate leads, qualify leads and distribute the leads?	That's what we hired you to do.

What started out as a great idea to empower Sales Reps has gone too far. Consistency has suffered at the hand of empowerment. Here's an example of what we mean.

Recently, we provided marketing consulting to a small business of about 60 employees. Terrific little business doing more right than wrong. We had the opportunity to review their proposals and PowerPoint presentations. We couldn't tell if any of it came from the same company. No consistent company boilerplate, document format or fonts.

We asked the Sales Reps how much of their time is spent doing (what we called) traditional marketing tasks.[2] Do you know their answer? It was somewhere between 30 and 40% of their time. This is not unique to this company. Several industry sources report that Sales Reps commonly spend in excess of 40% of their time doing marketing tasks.

40% is about 16 hours or 2 full days a week doing tasks that ought to be done by internal marketing staff who are experts at it. Plus, internal staff have the advantage of immediate access to all data across all sales territories and business operations.

Here's another example.

Today, it's easier than ever to get lost on the wide variety of places one can go for leads. Beyond traditional sources like direct mail and print advertising, there are tradeshows and industry conferences as well as PR and e-mail marketing. Google AdWords and search engine optimization (SEO) fall into this category, too. There are experts in each of these areas and in order to be successful with any of these lead sources you have to be able to (1) know which ones to use for your situation and (2) be able to properly implement the selected lead source.

[2] Traditional marketing activities include creation and maintenance of proposal and presentation templates, graphic design, trade show planning and execution, direct mail, web site design and maintenance, list acquisition, database management and newsletter production.

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Unless all your Sales Reps are marketing geniuses, putting this responsibility on your Sales Reps is plain stupid. You will be forcing Sales Reps to do things that are not immediately helpful to closing more business.

Don't get us wrong. We're not advocating the complete elimination of Sales Rep enablement. We think it's great that Reps can be more autonomous. What we find to be disturbing is the expectation that Sales Reps can "do it all." From a management perspective, not only is this a poor use of assets and not something you'd allow in any other part of your business, it prevents Sales Reps from devoting more effort to getting meetings with qualified decision-makers—something Marketing can never replace.

It boils down to a loss of economies of scale. Rather than concentrating your marketing expertise within your marketing department, you're spreading it out among several untrained individuals.

Mistake #3: Allowing Sales Reps to be responsible for the customer qualification matrix

Okay, we know we said Mistake #1 was the worst management sin. But this one is just as bad.

Just so we're on the same page, the Customer Qualification Matrix is your set of criteria for a successful customer relationship. For our own consulting business, we use a qualification matrix to predict whether a prospect is likely to become a good customer. Have you developed the customer profile for your business?

The common mistake is allowing Sales Reps to decide which companies to do business with. No science. No standards of comparison. Nothing. Most of the time, we don't even see agreement on the prospect's position or title the Sales Rep is supposed to be reaching out to. Ugh! This is completely irresponsible management.

By way of example (and to demonstrate that what we're describing is not some pie-in-the-sky, lofty platitude) let me share 5 of our own customer qualifications:

1. My principle contact is the president, CEO, or founder.

2. The Prospect company is a second-stage startup technology business, typically with fewer than 100 employees and revenues between $5M-$100M.

3. The Prospect sells through indirect channels of distribution such as OEM, reseller, partner, distributor, independent rep, private label and affiliates.

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4. The Prospect sells to other businesses (B2B) through a sales force of at least four Sales Reps.

5. The contact can personally authorize and fund the use of outside management consulting firms like Venture Marketing.

You need this same kind of qualification matrix for your Sales Reps to use. If you sell through indirect channels, it's even more important.

Your optimal customer profile should be developed over time, using measurable, historic business statistics mixed in with other industry data.

Operating without a crisp, clear qualification matrix is like going to the airport to pick up a passenger for your boss. You go to the baggage claim area and start looking. But you have no idea who you're looking for. Male, female, tall, short, old, young?

Then you spy a good looking passenger across the room. You reason, "Since I'm the one doing the driving, I may as well enjoy the ride back to the office." Now all you have to do is convince this person to get into your car.

Suddenly, it dawns on you, "Am I at the right airport?"

Don't laugh too hard. This story is closer to the truth than most would like to admit.

Your best customer (or optimal customer) profile should be developed over time, using **measurable**, **historic business statistics** (e.g., revenue and gross profit) mixed in with other industry data. Here are just a few criteria you may decide to use in your own profile to <u>filter **out**</u> those companies that <u>would **not** be a good fit</u> for your organization. The better the fit, the higher the profit per customer.

☐ Revenue	☐ Number of employees	☐ Industry (S.I.C.)
☐ Region or geography	☐ Years in business	☐ B2B or B2C
☐ Public or private	☐ Civic responsibility	☐ Association membership
	☐ Key application	☐ Contact title/responsibility

<u>Mistake #4</u>: Expecting Sales Reps to take on an educating, nurturing role for prospects and customers

It's rare that a company (or individual, for that matter) is ready to buy something when a Sales Rep first meets them. Even if they have an obvious need, they probably want to get to know you and your company before they entrust you with their future.

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Winning organizations have put the Marketing Team in charge of the majority of customer nurturing and education.

One of the most effective ways to build a relationship with prospects is by providing education about your company, its products and especially, how you've solved problems for similar companies. The educating and nurturing process can be a long one, though, often taking months or even years to develop.

When Sales Reps play the sole role of educator, it may help them build a solid relationship, but it is very time consuming. The training tends to be on-demand. There is no curriculum to follow or set topics to cover. It's ad hoc and often a complete waste of time because much of the effort is invested into prospects who never convert into customers. It's even more tragic when a Sales Rep's educational efforts yield a sale months later for the competitor who, like a barracuda, swoops in and steals their catch.

That's why winning organizations have put the Marketing Team in charge of the majority of customer nurturing and education. And the tactics to accomplish this are baked into their Marketing Game Plan. Nurturing and education becomes a repeatable system that allows for periodic communication with prospects (often referred to as a series of topical conversations). Then, when the prospect is ready and worthy of a Sales Rep's time, a Sales Rep is introduced to the prospect to address specific needs and questions that can only be handled by a human.

Mistake #5: Turning Sales Reps into overpaid secretaries and clerks

Before you start sending me hate mail about "Overpaid Secretaries and Clerks," please don't assume I'm disrespecting these two professions. I'm not. My own grandfather was a secretary, as was my mother. They both could type like fiends and in fact, my grandfather won a speed-typing contest in the early 1920's, clocking in above 100 words a minute on a *manual typewriter!*.

But stand back just a minute and ask yourself how much of a Sales Rep's time is spent doing clerical work? If you've sipped the Salesforce.com/CRM/contact-management Kool-Aid® you've probably put out at least a few edicts about keeping your contact notes up to date and complete. Today, many companies expect full and detailed call records to be entered into the contact database. The mantra is: Record everything.

Ask yourself this, though. Does anyone actually sit down and read all these notes? Is this the highest and best use of your Sales Reps' time? If recording all call details is so important, wouldn't it make more sense to utilize a speech-to-text conversion service and have the notes automatically entered into the CRM database?

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What's this have to do with marketing? A great deal. If you subscribe to our definition of B2B marketing, you'll understand why.

B2B Marketing is—

Everything that's done to get a Sales Rep in front of a qualified decision-maker.

It's marketing's job to connect buyer with seller. To create the opportunity for an exchange of ideas between two individuals at the highest corporate levels. It's marketing's function in life to keep Sales Reps out in front of customers where they can match buyer needs and requirements with the best solution offered by the seller's firm.

This means that your Sales Reps must concentrate on the later stages of the sales process where only a human can build a relationship and close deals. B2B marketing is not well-suited for closing deals. Human Sales Reps are.

According to a 2007-2008 global research study conducted by Development Dimensions International,[3] buyers expect three things from Sales Reps. They are:

To solve a customer's problem, a consultant must first know the needs that underlie it.

1. **To truly understand the client's business**. This means Sales Reps have done their homework, folks. Are you allowing time for this? If they're busy doing the marketing work or being an office stenographer, they won't have time to do this.

2. **To listen and provide sound advice**. Rather than focusing so much training time on cold-call techniques, wouldn't it make more sense to concentrate your sales training on how to be better listeners?

3. **To know how to create a "win-win" situation**. In order to do this, Sales Reps need a deep understanding for the products and services they sell as well as a working knowledge of how clients use their products to solve specific problems. Without solid application knowledge, Sales Reps may as well be completely naked when they make their sales calls.

[3] Development Dimensions International (DDI) is a global HR consulting firm. Do yourself a favor and read the report, "**Sales: Strategic Partnership or Necessary Evil?**" It's brilliant! You may download it (Free) at: www.ddiworld.com/pdf/globalsalesperceptionsreport_br_ddi.pdf.

You may recognize much of what we're discussing here as the principles of *Consultative Selling***,** first taught by Mack Hanan in his book, **Consultative Selling: The Hanan Formula for High-Margin Sales at High Levels**, first published in 1970 and now in its 7th printing. Here's an excerpt from chapter 1 [**emphasis** is mine]:

> In just three sentences you reveal whether you are a consultative sales representative.
>
> In the first sentence, a consultant identifies a customer problem in financial terms—what the problem is costing the customer or what the customer could be earning without the problem. If you mention your product or service, you are vending and not consulting.
>
> In the second sentence, a consultant quantifies a profit improvement solution to the problem. If you mention your product or service, you are vending and not consulting.
>
> In the third sentence, a consultant takes a position as manager of a problem-solving project and accepts single-source responsibility for its performance. In the course of defining the project in terms of contribution to customer profit, you are able to mention products and services for the first time.
>
> If you are selling as a consultant, it is easy to predict what the fourth sentence must be. It will be a proposal of partnership with your customer's managers in applying your system to solve the customer's problem.
>
> A consultant's problem-solving approach to selling requires helping customers improve their profits, not persuading them to purchase products and services. **To solve a customer's problem, a consultant must first know the needs that underlie it. Only when a customer's needs are known, can the expertise, hardware, and services that compose a system become useful components of their solutions**. This is the difference between servicing a product and servicing a customer. It allows your relationships with customers to be consultative rather than the simple sell-and-bill relationship that characterizes traditional customer-supplier transactions at the vendor level.

If your Sales Reps are leashed to their laptops doing data entry and missing opportunities to get in front of customers to learn about their businesses and solve problems, something's wrong. Either you've hired the wrong Sales Reps or you've encumbered them from being successful.

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What is a Marketing "Game Plan?"

As a team who have worked for and with second-stage startups for a very long time, we have to admit a common sense of angst over the topic of Marketing Plans. Marketing Planning is unquestionably essential, but the notion of writing a Marketing Plan is not something that keeps me up at night. The truth be told, writing a Marketing Plan is something that puts me to sleep. It has the feeling of a college term paper and the grade isn't something you get at the end of the term. The grade is earned over a very long period of time. And the grading curve is tough.

The main problem with writing a Marketing Plan for a growing business is that by the time you write it, it's out of date. Another problem is the disposition of the Marketing Plan once it's written. Most often, it's put into a drawer or on a shelf, never to be reviewed until next year's creative writing assignment.

The Marketing Game Plan is different than a Marketing Plan.

So you're not confused, the term "Marketing Game Plan" is our own creation. And while you won't find it in any other literature, the concept is simple. Your Marketing Game Plan is your selection of marketing activities for each quarter linked to specific target audiences (e.g., inactive customers, current customers, prospects) and known deficiencies in the sales cycle where your Sales Reps struggle to move deals forward. A quick glance at your quarterly Game Plan shows you where you're allocating marketing resources.

Goal:
The objective of your marketing is one thing—Get more meetings with qualified decision-makers

Your Marketing Game Plan is your selection of marketing strategies—tailored to the unique needs and strengths of your Sales Team, market conditions, competition, product development/engineering and your financial resources. Your core set of marketing actions must help you achieve the objective of your marketing—that is, those actions that will do the best job of getting your Sales Reps over all the hurdles in the sales process—to get more meetings with **qualified decision-makers.**

If you recall back on page 3, we talked about "stuck deals." Focusing on those parts of the sales process where deals are getting stuck and then selecting marketing activities that will address these issues should make up the bulk of your Marketing Game Plan.

For your business, your Game Plan may only include a handful of marketing strategies. Even if you can only execute 3-5 Marketing strategies each quarter, it's a start. The important thing is that you execute those 3-5 strategies without fail.

And the good news is this: Just by going through the process of building your Marketing Game Plan you will have taken the first (and most important) step to applying engineering discipline into your marketing.

How Your Marketing Game Plan Keeps Sales Reps Moving Forward

Let me summarize how your Marketing Game Plan addresses the **5 Management Mistakes Blocking Sales Reps from Selling**.

Mistake #1: Letting Sales Reps decide what marketing activities get done.

Recap: Sales Reps don't have the proper perspective for determining what marketing activities are needed.

Game Plan: For starters, use your pipeline reports to identify at which stages in your sales process deals are getting stuck. Rank them in order of importance and then meet with your marketing team or consulting firm to select appropriate marketing activities to that will move deals past these stages. If you run out of ideas, please refer to our Marketing-Playbook web site at www.Marketing-Playbook.com.

Mistake #2: Making Sales Reps responsible their own marketing work.

Recap: In the name of cost-cutting and efficiency, you've pushed all the labor down to your Sales Reps.

Game Plan: Take as much of the load as possible off of your Sales Reps so they can maximize their time in front of prospects and customers who are ready to buy. Subscribe to our definition of B2B Marketing (that marketing's objective is to give you more opportunities to meet with qualified decision-makers, see page 9). Consolidate your outreach efforts into a select number of activities and put your marketing team or inside sales team in charge of the effort. Consider hiring an agency or a marketing director if you don't have one already.

Mistake #3: Allowing Sales Reps to be responsible for the customer qualification matrix.

Recap: Putting Sales Reps in charge of deciding which companies to do business with.

Game Plan: Use business statistics and other metrics to derive your own optimal customer profile. Your profile should be defined in such specific terms that you could go to a list broker and buy names against your criteria.

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Mistake #4: Expecting Sales Reps to take on an educating, nurturing role for prospects and customers.

Recap: Using expensive resources, like Sales Reps, to nurture the relationship with prospects.

Game Plan: Make the nurturing and education function part the marketing mix by offering self-directed educational materials, FAQs, white papers (like this one), tutorials and flash demos. Lay out a trail of breadcrumbs for your prospects to follow at their own pace. You don't have to force-feed people. If you have a compelling offer and can communicate it clearly, people will find you and follow your lead. By the very fact that you have downloaded this white paper from our web site, you've just proven our point.

Mistake #5: Turning Sales Reps into overpaid secretaries and clerks

Recap: Keep Sales Reps in front of their computers recording everything into the database.

Game Plan: Take your sales and marketing team through a training class on Consultative Selling. If you can't afford the training, get the books. Analyze why Sales Reps aren't talking with prospects and customers more. Are they doing marketing work? Are they doing data entry? Have you not clearly stated your expectation for them being in front of qualified prospects and customers? Do some Sales Reps need to find their next place of employment?

No Traction For Sales Reps

More than a decade of consulting for executive leadership teams has proven to me there are two types of companies: Those that "operationalize" their sales and marketing and those who make it up as they go. And it should come as no surprise that the first group outperforms the second.

What's not so commonsense is that the vast majority of small and mid-size businesses have no marketing system whatsoever. Marketing for these businesses is broadly a series of one-offs. Nothing links one marketing activity to another. Of all the firms we've worked for and with, it is indeed a rare treat to find one that has built repeatability into their marketing operations for the principle purpose of creating traction for Sales Reps.

Need data? *BusinessWeek* Research Services sheds further light on the problem facing executive management, noting that while 53% of respondents believe their sales and marketing functions have a close and collaborative relationship, **only 7%** feel the two groups work together effectively to harvest business prospects. Further, 56% of the respondents don't have a formal process for generating, qualifying, certifying and

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validating new business opportunities. 56% of respondents convert less than 10% of their business prospects into deals; approximately 30% convert less than 5%. 72% of respondents believe they could increase revenue at least 10% with better business development practices. Nearly half of the respondents say it takes at least **six months** to close a deal. [emphasis mine]

But it starts with you, the CEO, President or Founder. You are the one and only person who can instill the desire for the Marketing team to take a leadership role in not just being responsive to the needs of Sales Reps (that's a given), but in creating your Marketing Game Plan and building a marketing system to support it.

What to do next

Start with a 60-minute Revenue Diagnostic Consultation.

Un-jam stuck deals. Get prospects to take action. Maximize selling time.

Venture Marketing has developed a **60-minute Revenue Diagnostic Consultation**, which we conduct over the telephone with you (and your top sales execs, if you wish). Here's what we accomplish together in this fast-paced, zero-nonsense session:

- **Un-jam stuck deals:** Keeping deals flowing all the way through to decision has a direct impact on the bottom-line. We'll help you uncover where opportunities are *really* getting stuck in the sales pipeline and recommend practical marketing strategies you can immediately put into action to move them forward.

- **Getting prospects to take action:** 9 out of 10 companies make a habit of confusing prospects. Their web site is unclear. Visitors can't figure out what to do. Google can't find them. We'll walk through your home page and give you a checklist of things to fix.

- **Stop wasting time:** Is your sales team wasting time? We'll show you how to balance their time for maximum output by using our units-of-action sales management tools.

The 60-minute Revenue Diagnostic Consultation is conducted by the founder and president of Venture Marketing, John Fox, who has worked with more than 250 business-to-business (B2B) companies and launched 44 start-ups and company re-launches, including second-stage start-ups like Unitrends, Scala, NSI and Informance International as well as enterprise firms like Tellabs, U.S. Robotics and Hostopia.

Please be assured that this consultation will not be a thinly disguised sales pitch—it's not. It's real work and real insight on your business.

Click **here** to get started (www.venturemarketing.com/diagnostic).

Venture Marketing | +1 (630) 355-6951 | e-mail: info@venturemarketing.com
www.venturemarketing.com

About the Author

John Fox is president of Venture Marketing. He's recognized as an authority on B2B marketing and its transforming impact on the entire sales process. Leveraging his passion for technology and his business development expertise, he makes important connections between people, products and marketing ideas that create new markets, mashups and business opportunities.

John is also the author of *Marketing Playbook—The Definitive Guide to B2B Marketing for Small Business,* endorsed by recognized thought-leaders such as Seth Godin, Guy Kawasaki, Al Ries, Ben McConnell, Doug Hall and Rieva Lesonsky. *The Marketing Playbook* provides instructions for strategic messaging, advertising, direct mail, tradeshows, PR, SEO, reseller communications, pipeline management, incentive programs, web design and many other forms of sales support. *The Marketing Playbook* also describes key B2B communications tools such as the *Strategic Messaging Workplan*, the *Springboard Discussion Document* and the marketing *Game Plan*.

Unlike other marketing experts who are mere observers, John has spent the last 28 years on the front lines getting new marketing strategies and tactics implemented. He knows the gotchas, the pitfalls, the timing and the costs and he communicates all of these in an easy-to-understand style. Bottom line: John's advice and all the Strategies in *The Marketing Playbook* are not written by an academic or pundit who has spent their career on the sidelines. He really knows how to make marketing work for sales people because he's spent his career doing it.

John has been featured in numerous publications and radio programs, including *BusinessWeek*, *Chicago Tribune*, Crain's *Chicago Business*, Crain's *B2B*, *PCWeek/eWeek*, and the *Advertising Show*. He actively serves on an advisory board at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's College of Engineering.

He holds a BS Engineering-Computer Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and an MBA from Keller Graduate School of Management. He and his wife, Ruth, of 26 years live in Naperville, Illinois with their five entrepreneurially-minded children.

About Venture Marketing

At its core, Venture Marketing gives second-stage technology startups what they lack—a winning Marketing Game Plan with the right marketing actions that create real customer traction. Based on objective research, on-point messaging and a clear understanding of sales process hurdles, a well-constructed Marketing Game Plan not only gives B2B marketing teams a seat at the table, but more importantly, the respect of the entire field sales team.

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