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How Marketing Can Meaningfully Increase Pipeline Velocity and Conversion

Executive Summary

According to Gartner[1], today's marketing teams face constant pressure to generate more and higher quality pipeline than ever. To succeed, it's a must for them to tightly partner with their sales counterparts. However, this is challenging in light of:

1. Limited visibility into marketing qualified leads (MQLs) after handoff to sales
2. Limited visibility into marketing attribution because it's lost when a lead becomes a contact

Lacking visibility into what sales or marketing are doing independently makes it challenging to work together effectively. Being hampered in this way prevents marketing from achieving the ultimate goal of delivering the right message at the right time to the right person. Without a full view of the sales-engaged contacts, marketing has no choice but to keep casting a wide net to catch the leads that sales needs—often by purchasing lists, which leaves them at risk of non-compliance fines and spamming existing contacts.

On the other hand, when these go-to-market teams work from the same dataset, marketing can stop playing the volume numbers game. Instead, they can allocate investments to the right accounts and personas, and align with sales to engage influencers, decision makers or even detractors within key accounts.

In this eBook, we explore two common ways that marketing and sales are misaligned:

1. Marketing lacks visibility into key accounts and sales engagement
2. Marketing and sales aren't pursuing the same potential buyers

We also outline what it takes to evolve from the current state where sales and marketing operate in silos to a future state where marketing works alongside sales to drive pipeline velocity and conversion.

Who Will Benefit From This eBook?

Marketing leaders who want tighter alignment with sales to focus investments and maximize impact by targeting the most promising accounts and personas to win more revenue.

Misalignment #1: Marketing and sales aren't pursuing the same potential buyers

Companies invest significantly in—and rely heavily on—CRM systems as a single source of truth about prospects and customers. Yet few realize the full return on their investments because reps hate wasting time populating their CRM manually—so they don't. In fact, 50% of the contacts that sales engages are missing from CRM.

When they can't trust sales to keep data up to date and reliable, even the most skilled marketers are unable to leverage their company's CRM to run impactful campaigns. Lacking access to critical lead, contact, opportunity and account details, marketing focuses its efforts in the wrong areas.

Here are two signs marketing is out of alignment with sales in this way—and a proven approach to get them in sync and position marketing for a better future.

Pain point #1: Marketing is limited by a small pool of marketable contacts because it only markets to those who have signed up for an event or downloaded content.

While sales doesn't hesitate to actively interact with prospective buyers, many marketers assume they can only reach out to contacts that have given consent. Relying on form fills alone to identify and engage potential customers is a slippery slope.

Complicating matters are strict data privacy rules across the globe, such as the GDPR in the European Union, CCPA in California, LGPD in Brazil, NDB in Australia, and CASL in Canada. With more regulations likely on the horizon, it's more challenging to be a responsible corporate citizen while still reaching and engaging essential buying committee members.

For instance, when it comes to which contacts can be stored and processed per the GDPR, Article 6-1A says you must establish "Consent." On the other hand, when it comes to which contacts can receive commercial electronic messages per CASL only those who have given "Express Consent"—can be contacted. This leaves marketing without access to the biggest, best pool of prospects.
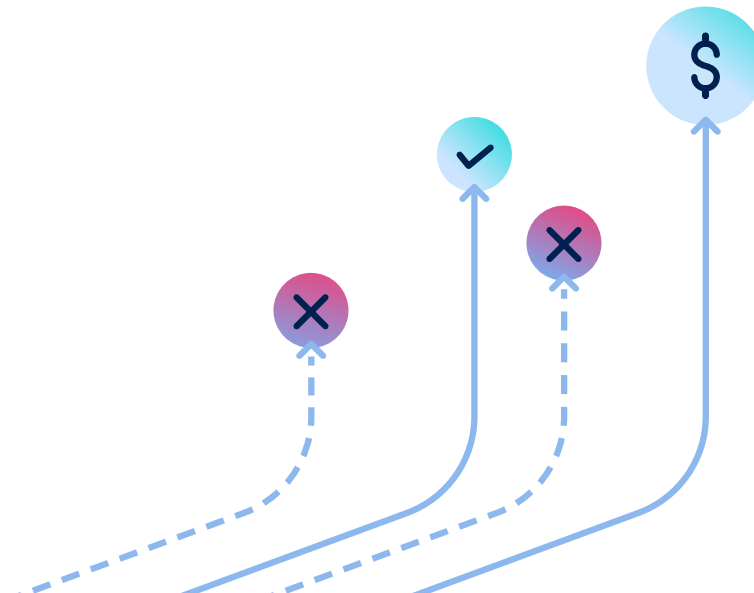
Pain Point #2: Since aggregating, centralizing, and making contact data accessible to all GTM team members is tedious and time-consuming, marketing buys lists.

Yet, reliance on lists often results in money wasted. Rather than nurturing the warm leads that sales has already engaged or those expressing high purchase intent, marketing spins its wheels generating a heap of irrelevant cold leads. At the same time, they risk sender reputation damage, non-compliance with regulations like GDPR, and low engagement and conversion rates from contacts lacking context or not in the market to buy. Considering the importance of delivering the right message to the right person at the right time, marketing can't waste time and budget on contacts that lack real purchasing influence.

Enabling the future state: Expand your compliant, marketable database.

The key to alignment is providing marketing with bullet-proof contacts. Best-in-class organizations aggregate contact details from the extended GTM team's inboxes, track attributes required to satisfy regulations, and retain the information for compliance auditing purposes. Rather than making sure contacts on their list match those sales is already engaging, marketing can focus on influencing deals to close. The results of these efforts pay off big when marketing embarks on account-based efforts and broader-scale demand gen campaigns.

Current Contact List (Outdated, incorrect / missing info)

		Contact... ↑ ∨	Title	∨	Title Seniority	∨	Title Department	∨
1	☐	Aaron Kizer	-?		-?		-?	
2	☐	Aaron Mantsch	-?		-?		-?	
3	☐	Aaron Saferin	-?		-?		-?	
4	☐	Aaron Belkin	-?		-?		-?	
5	☐	Aaron Karchmer	-?		-?		-?	
6	☐	Aaron Marquit	-?		-?		-?	

Misalignment #2: Marketing lacks visibility into key accounts and engagement

According to Gartner[2], the typical buying group for a complex B2B solution involves 6-10 decision-makers. As buying groups expand and get more complex, marketing is seeking ways to influence the trajectory of the sales team's deals and forecast. Yet, marketing is only as effective as the data they can access—and in the case of CRM, they are often accessing incomplete or inaccurate data about sales' contacts and interactions with prospective buyers.

Simply put, poor-quality CRM data (or no data at all) along with lack of insights into engagement with key personas in key accounts prevents marketing from effectively executing downstream activities in support of sales. With only 40% of marketers having systems in place to track customer engagement in a way that informs their marketing roadmaps, marketing is left in the dark when it comes to supporting sales efforts.

Here are three signs marketing is out of alignment with sales in this way—and a proven approach to get them in sync and position marketing for a better future.

Pain Point #1: Marketing doesn't understand who sales is engaging.

Marketing can't understand sales' past or planned engagements with accounts if reps aren't logging this data in their CRM. Never mind identifying and nurturing top-priority accounts—marketing can't engage the personas within those accounts that will ultimately drive higher win rates. No wonder 75% of companies state inadequate outreach driven by poor data lost them customers.

Pain Point #2: Marketing's campaigns target different accounts and personas than sales has prioritized.

B2B organizations with tightly aligned sales and marketing operations achieve 24% faster three-year revenue growth and 27% faster three-year profit growth, according to SiriusDecisions. Yet, marketing struggles to align well with their sales counterparts and help generate more pipeline without access to trusted account and contact data in their CRM. As a result, they are diminished in their efforts to influence buying committees.

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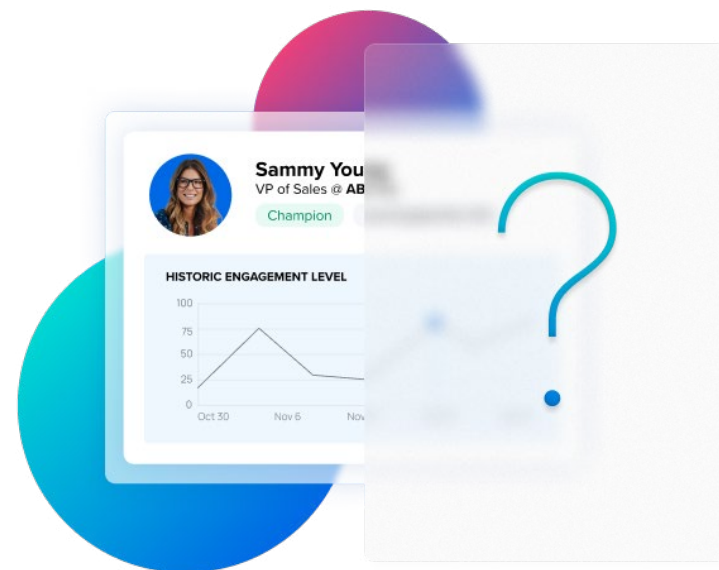
2   Gartner, "5 Strategic Priorities for CMOs" 2021

Pain Point #3: Marketing can't measure or prove the value of its contributions.

According to Forrester[3], an aligned revenue engine will enable organizations to achieve the following marketing outcomes by 2025: higher campaign ROI, improved conversion rates, dissolved attribution arguments, better marketing impact and influence, and fewer budget pressures. That's no surprise since a top-performing revenue engine is driven by a shared understanding of personas, accounts, opportunities, pipeline, and engagement—enabling marketing to track and prove their contributions.

In organizations struggling with CRM hygiene or inconsistent CRM practices from AE to AE, marketing efforts suffer. Limited insight into overall engagement levels, and wasted time and effort with irrelevant contacts put pipeline and revenue targets at risk. Attribution gets lost in the process and marketing struggles to justify its spend and value. Yet the majority of B2B marketers (78%) are measured according to the portion of sales pipeline they influence.

Enabling the future state: Provide full insight into accounts, contacts, and engagement.

To ensure marketing and sales work hand in hand, supply marketing with a larger, compliant pool of contacts—and the same account- and persona-level insights as your extended sales teams via easy-to-use dashboards. Total pipeline visibility eliminates the massive division between marketing working top of funnel and sales working middle funnel. Such intelligence helps prioritize marketing tactics while ensuring marketing is targeting key accounts expressing the highest purchase intent and the personas who historically drive the highest win rates.

Priming the marketing-and-sales engine in this way is a win-win-win: Marketing investments will be optimized, campaign attributions will improve (i.e., better ROI), and sellers get added air cover so they can stay laser-focused on late-stage opportunities with the highest intent.

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3   Forrester, "B2B Revenue Engine Alignment: A Cultural Transformation That Begins With Customer Obsession", Nov 21, 2022

Conclusion: Unlock Revenue Growth Through Data-Driven Alignment

To effectively engage, nurture, and convert today's extended decision-making units, marketing and sales must work in concert. When the goal is to optimize every interaction between potential buyers and the company, it's a must to break down silos so cross-functional teams can truly act as one.

The best GTM teams collaborate by leveraging contact, account, and engagement data to ensure marketing supports sales with timely, targeted campaigns designed to increase pipeline velocity and conversion. In this eBook, we've outlined proven, practical ways that any marketing organization can position themselves for the same success.

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PLAYBOOK

Proven Ways to Align Marketing with Sales for Faster, Stronger Pipeline
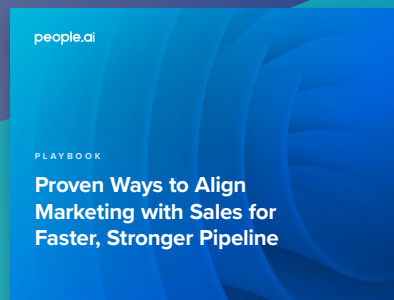
Download the companion playbook for even more prescriptive guidance on how to achieve alignment between your GTM teams.

And to experience how People.ai converts data into actionable insights, pipeline growth, predictable revenue, and an unprecedented look at the big picture, request a demo.

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