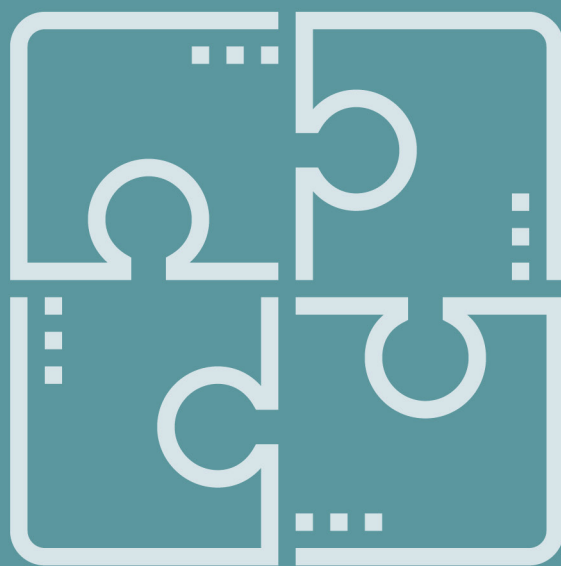




HOW TO ALIGN SALES & THE REST OF THE ORGANIZATION



A WHITEPAPER BY THE BROOKS GROUP

“Our recent research study reveals that 47% of salespeople do not have confidence that the sales department is respected by other departments inside of the company.”

It's an internal company dynamic that's as old as the hills: the sales department and the rest of the company don't get along. There are a number of reasons for this, the main one being that they simply don't understand one another.

Your sales reps are the face of your company, representing it to prospects and customers and developing relationships that will drive sales and increase revenue... hopefully for years to come. Most of the rest of your company isn't in a business development capacity – or so it may seem to customers. They're concerned with the day-to-day operations of the company, keeping things running smoothly so that the customers can receive the best products and the best service.

HERE'S THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM: Sales believes that without their efforts, the rest of the company wouldn't have jobs. Conversely, the rest of the company believes that without their efforts, sales would have nothing to sell. Couple that with what's typically a fundamentally different world-view between the typical salesperson and the typical support staff member and you're dealing with a scenario that's high-maintenance and full of drama.

You simply can't run a company when you have what are essentially 2 camps that are fundamentally resentful of the other. If you want to get the most revenue out of the team, everyone has to work together. Sales and the rest of your organization needs to be on the same page. They need to be able to understand one another and cooperate with one another to achieve the same ultimate goals.

To that end, here are some strategies for bridging the gap between sales and your other departments, eliminating the animosity before it develops and, instead, forging strong, helpful relationships across sections.



Encouragement and Education

The first roadblock to a successful relationship between your sales team and the rest of your company is a lack of understanding about what sales does.

Your operations and fulfillment sections tend not to know a lot about what the sales department faces on a day-to-day basis, or how they're contributing to the company as a whole aside from the vague concept of "bringing in customers."

They need to be made aware of what the sales process actually consists of and how it fits in with what the rest of the company is doing. The sales team, likewise, needs to be made to feel that their efforts are appreciated by the rest of the company, like they're part of the family that is your organization.

Additionally, sales needs to show respect and support for the support staff.



Using a Company-Wide Publication to Build a Culture of Collaboration

A GREAT WAY TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR ALIGNMENT GOALS IS TO HIGHLIGHT THE GOOD WORK THAT YOUR SALES TEAM IS DOING IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE THEM AND EDUCATE THE REST OF THE COMPANY.

If your company has a newsletter or other regular publication to keep your employees up to date on the latest news and developments, take a section each month and use it to spotlight some of your client success stories. The real “gold” here is to highlight success stories where sales and support collaborate to win a deal.

Interview some of your satisfied clients. Have them tell about their experience with the competition and why they couldn't meet their needs. Then have them explain why they decided that your company would be a better fit for what they needed – and how your sales team showed them these benefits. You can also include shorter testimonials about how someone on your sales team helped your customer solve an important problem. Sharing these stories across the organization will help demonstrate the value of your sales team, as well as show ways in which they benefit the company and generate revenue.

Another way of educating your company about the roles people play in your success is to interview those people directly.

Each month, interview a different sales rep and show who they are and what they do for your organization. This can include people on the sales team, as well as members of other departments. That way, your organization can learn more about the sales team and their role, the sales team can learn more about the rest of your organization and what they do, and everyone can gain a better understanding and appreciation of everyone else. This will lead to better relationships across departments, more meaningful cooperation, increased productivity, and, ultimately, more revenue.



Confidence

What's the main role of a salesperson in your company? To sell your product? To generate revenue? To build your customer/client base? These things are all important, but they can ultimately be boiled down to one simple thing: to instill confidence in the value of a relationship with your firm.

Your sales reps are the face that represents your company to the world, and, more importantly, to your prospects and clients. The ultimate goal is, of course, to get them to buy your product or services, but the only way to do that is by giving them confidence in who you are and what you do. Sales needs to build the customer's trust and show them that your company is the best at what you do, and the best choice for what they need.

We recently conducted some research and discovered that 47% of salespeople DO NOT have confidence that other departments in the company value the sales department.

What does that tell us? Almost half of salespeople today don't have confidence in their own company. They tell potential clients that their products are the best, their prices are substantiated by the value they'll receive, but they don't really believe that the company is supportive of their efforts, which translates into a lack of confidence that the rest of the enterprise will support and deliver on commitments made to the customer.

THIS RAISES TWO QUESTIONS: First, why don't sales reps have more confidence in the companies they work for? Second, if they don't have confidence in their company and products themselves, how can they successfully convince customers to have confidence in them?

IT ALL COMES BACK TO THE FUNDAMENTAL LACK OF TRUST THAT EXISTS BETWEEN SALES AND THE REST OF THE ORGANIZATION.

It's difficult to have confidence in client services, support, ops, etc. that displays thinly veiled contempt for the sales organization.





Who Takes the Heat When Something Goes Wrong?

Here's the truth. When something goes wrong for the client, the sales rep is going to take the heat, even if the mishap is beyond their control or lays at the feet of the client fulfillment function. Additionally, any kind of bad press gets projected by the clients directly onto the sales reps whom they deal with. This can be anything from a mistake they heard about in the news to a less-than-stellar experience they had the last time they called. Again, the circumstances may be completely beyond the sales rep's control, but as the "face of the company," the rep still ends up shouldering the blame for it, which can be very demoralizing and lead to a lack of trust and confidence in the company.

So what can you do to boost your salespeople's confidence in your organization and what you do? Bridging the gap between the different departments is a good start. Making your sales team feel like a valued part of your organization is the first step towards building their confidence in it.

Make sure other departments are just as available to customers who are experiencing problems, not just the salesperson. Make sure there is also absolutely clarity around what the customer expectations are so that problems don't arise due to miscommunication.

Create a culture of collaboration, where sales and the rest of the organization feel as though they're "in this together" through both good and bad times.



Creating a Culture of Collaboration

One of the best ways to build strong relationships between sales and the rest of your company is to have them collaborate to drive your desired outcome – excellent customer experiences that drive more revenue. If they can work together towards a single end and rely on each other for support, then they can bond together.

But as we already discussed, sales tends to be fairly removed from the rest of the company. It starts with creating a culture in which everyone feels as though they're in sales.

You see, your sales team is essentially the tip of your spear. They find and win new customers, then – in most business models – hand those new customers over to fulfillment so that their order can be processed and delivered to them.

What we're getting ready to tell you is powerful and can transform your business:

YOU MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT FULFILLMENT HAS THE ABILITY TO FIND FURTHER SALES OPPORTUNITIES WITH THAT CUSTOMER. THE KEY IS THAT THEY RECOGNIZE THEM FOR WHAT THEY ARE AND PASS THEM TO SALES.

Why is that?

- 1 The experience they have as their order is being fulfilled is a huge factor in whether or not you're going to realize repeat and referral business. When the customer is treated well, they will buy more, come back to seek your services again and again and tell their friends about their positive experience.
- 2 If client services does a solid job with the client, then there will be a high level of trust developed with your fulfillment people and the customer. Consequently, the customer will share with them additional needs as they come up. It's up to your fulfillment people to notify sales and have them follow up, so it makes sense to train fulfillment to be part of the sales process.



How to Put Everyone in Sales

Providing your other department personnel with basic sales process/questioning training can help them keep those customers and uncover new sales opportunities, boosting revenue and leading to regular business. It can also help them to understand the sales process – and thus the sales team – more fully.

Having sales and fulfillment working together towards the same goal can aid in their alignment and forge solid relationships between them. Suddenly, they're not just cogs in a machine, working separately and hardly aware of one another. They're part of a larger whole, each understanding a bit more about what the other does and what they experience. With time and close collaboration, they can become like a family.



Compensation

There's still one other important factor that separates your sales team from the rest of the company: compensation.

Sales compensation is largely, if not entirely, based on performance. They receive a commission based on how many sales they make, or how much revenue they bring in. The rest of your employees, though, have a fixed salary. Whether it's hourly or annually, their paycheck remains steady, regardless of how much or little success they have in what they do.

This difference can become a huge point of contention within your company. Your non-sales staff works hard and contributes significantly to the success of your company, but they typically operate within a comp structure that doesn't include ongoing performance-based incentives.

Meanwhile, sales may likely disdain the risk aversion the rest of your employees whose paychecks aren't directly tied to their success or failure. Everyone goes through periods where productivity is difficult, and those periods may not be entirely the fault of sales. The rest of the company can just ride through these periods without it directly affecting them, but if problems arise in sales, they have to take a cut to their paycheck. It can cause frustration and animosity between departments. The solution is to have an incentive based compensation plan that extends to your other departments.

WORK WITH OTHER DEPARTMENT HEADS TO BUILD A "SALESESQUE" REWARDS SYSTEM FOR YOUR OTHER DEPARTMENTS THAT MEASURES THEIR SUCCESS IN A WAY THAT MAKES SENSE FOR THAT DEPARTMENT, AND THEN COMPENSATES THEM ACCORDINGLY.

This will provide everyone in the company with the motivation not only to work hard, but also to generate results and cooperate to drive a strong customer experience and revenue. And in the process, it puts your other departments on equal footing with sales in terms of compensation and recognition for the work that they do. This reduces the animosity against sales and helps to align them with your other employees.



Conclusion

Your company is made up of teams. You have your sales team, your fulfillment team, your IT team, and plenty of others. Each department is a separate team. But this mentality suggests that you're all working against one another, competing for supremacy. This is how division occurs within your ranks and gulfs develop between departments.

Instead, it's important to think of your entire company as being a single team. You each play different positions, but you're all united in working towards a common goal. The success of one is the success of everybody. Treating your entire team this way and encouraging both understanding and collaboration between departments will help you to align not just sales, but all of your departments and employees with one another.

When your employees are in tune with one another, understanding each other's positions and helping each other to succeed, it leads to higher productivity across the board, and, ultimately, increased revenue. Isn't it time you worked to bridge the gap between departments and bring your employees together?



Key Takeaways:

- Allow price to be your competitive advantage—a higher price can make a statement about credibility.
- Provide a high quality solution by first determining a prospect's requirements and needs.
- Quality customer service can be the one single thing that makes or breaks a sale.
- Delivery is absolutely the one thing you must be competitive on if you want to sell at a higher price than your competitor.
- Successful salespeople must be intellectually curious and always looking for new ways to bring more value to the customer.

About The Brooks Group

With nearly 40 years of industry experience, The Brooks Group achieves sustainable sales culture transformation for clients by delivering targeted training that becomes operationalized by threading into an organization's existing systems.

The Brooks Group takes a holistic approach to practical culture shifts and focuses on customized “street smart” sales and sales management programs, with a high level of relevance and practicality for the individual learner. Training gets reinforced with an industry-leading cloud-based sales and sales management coaching platform.

For more information

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