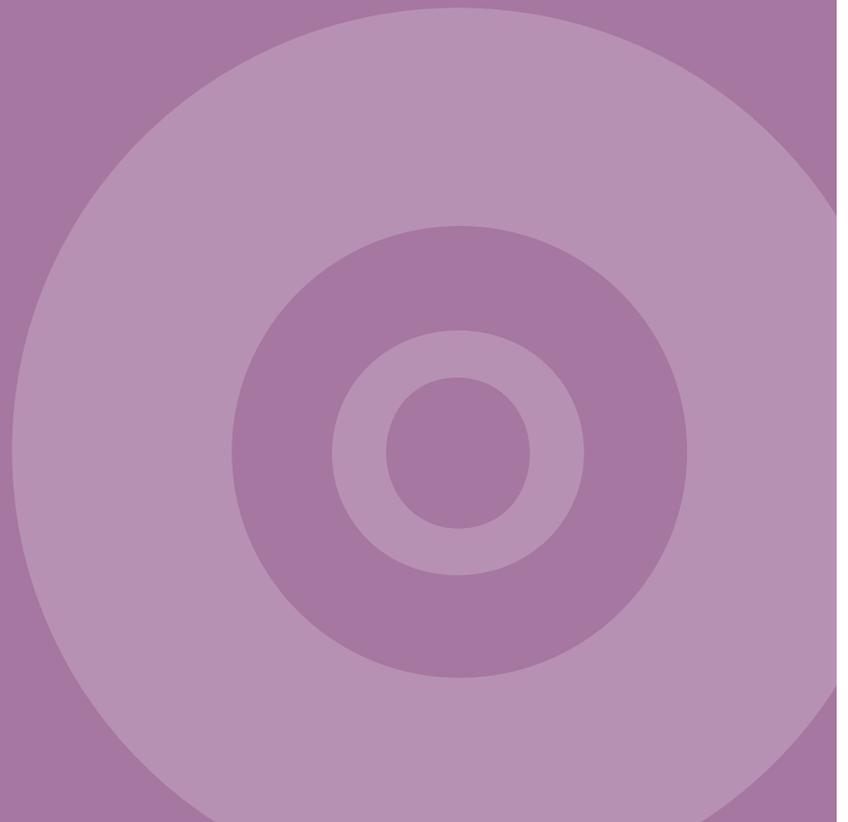




INSIGHT

# Sales and marketing **best of enemies or sworn friends**

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## Introduction

The relationship between sales and marketing departments in B2B organisations is often perceived as a fraught one. Although in theory all parties are working with a common purpose – i.e. to generate more customers and increased revenues for the organisation – the relationship between sales and marketing can sometimes feel as if it's marked more by suspicion, misunderstanding, and less-than-subtle attempts to shift blame, rather than a genuinely collaborative approach to winning business.

The research revealed that sales and marketing teams have quite similar views about the value of different marketing activities

To help understand in more detail the dynamics of the sales and marketing relationship, OneGTM commissioned research into the perceptions and attitudes of individuals working in sales or marketing roles within B2B organisations. We wanted to find out the relative views of sales and marketing professionals about the value of different types of marketing activity and the degree of alignment, or otherwise, between the different functions. We wanted to understand what causes potential disconnects within go-to-market programmes, and identify the factors that undermine the effectiveness of marketing activities.

The research provides some interesting findings, revealing amongst other things that sales and marketing teams have quite similar views about the value of different marketing activities, but that there are many issues which prevent organisations from creating and executing fully aligned and integrated go-to-market programmes.

## Key findings:

- Increasing brand awareness was rated as the most valuable marketing activity by both sales and marketing professionals. However, while sales people rate generating sales leads as the next most important, marketing people viewed providing market insight as their second most valuable activity.
- All marketing activities asked about were rated as valuable by at least two-thirds of sales people, which suggests that marketing team's complaints about not being valued may be overstated.
- Only 1 in 5 sales and marketing professionals believe that the activities of their respective teams are fully aligned. 1 in 10 feel that sales and marketing in their organisation are not aligned at all.
- Sales and marketing people agree that the top two sources of disconnect within their organisation are the fact that they are driven by different targets and objectives, and political conflict between senior managers.
- 57% of all participants felt that lack of a clear strategy that everybody is working to was a source of problems within their organisation's go-to-market approach.
- Respondents felt that on average less than two-thirds of their marketing activity was part of a long-term plan, with more than a third being unplanned and reactive.
- More than a third of all planned marketing activity never actually gets implemented.





57% of all participants felt that lack of a clear strategy was a source of problems within their organisation's go-to-market approach.

- A range of factors impact an organisation's ability to build integrated marketing plans, with lack of time, lack of budget, lack of a structured process, and lack of senior management direction all being identified as issues by more than 50% of marketing respondents.
- A large proportion of marketing professionals believe that their department makes a significant contribution to their company's bottom-line success.
- The majority of sales people believe that marketing don't spend enough time speaking with real customers and don't understand what sales people need to be successful.

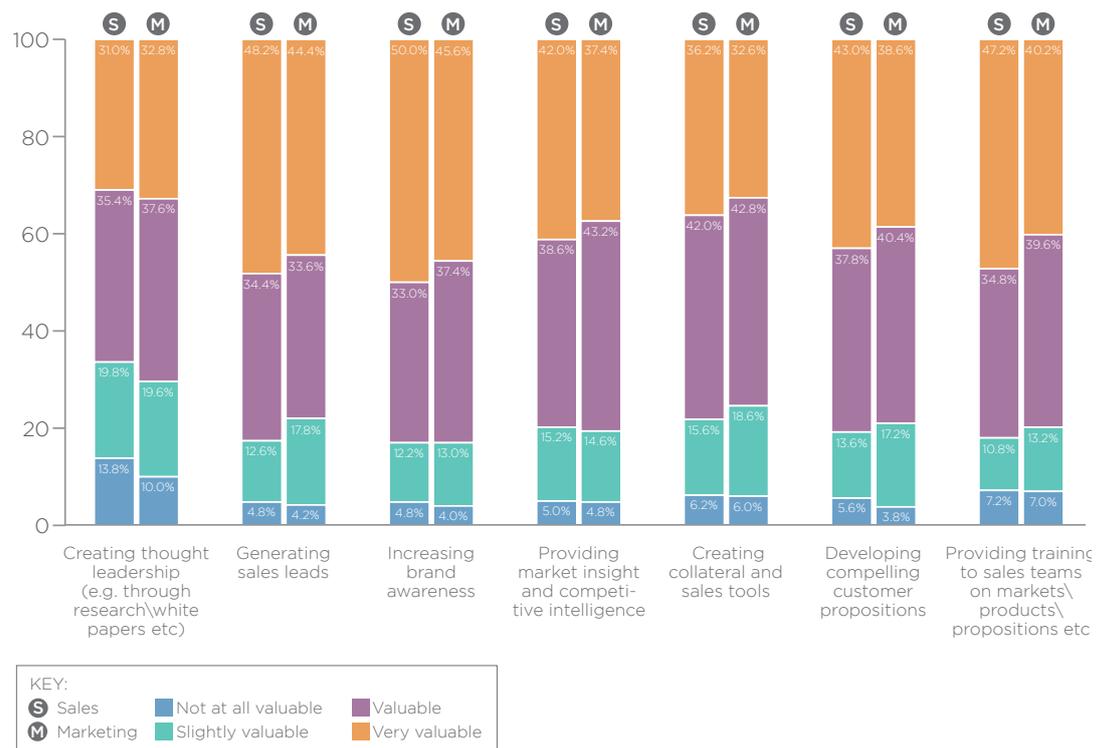
## About this research

The research method consisted of a quantitative survey, carried out by The Leadership Foundation, with a sample of 1000 participants; half of which worked in sales and the other half in marketing – all within B2B organisations.

## What are the most valuable marketing activities?

- There was a fair degree of consistency in the views of sales and marketing teams about the value of different marketing activities. Both groups identified increasing brand awareness as the most valuable marketing activity to their organisation.
- Sales teams, perhaps unsurprisingly, rated generating sales leads as the second most important activity, while marketing teams rated the provision of market intelligence as next most valuable.
- All marketing activities asked about were identified as valuable by more than two-thirds of both respondent groups, revealing that sales people do place value on marketing even if it doesn't always feel that way to the marketing department.

## How valuable do you believe the following marketing activities to be to your organisation?

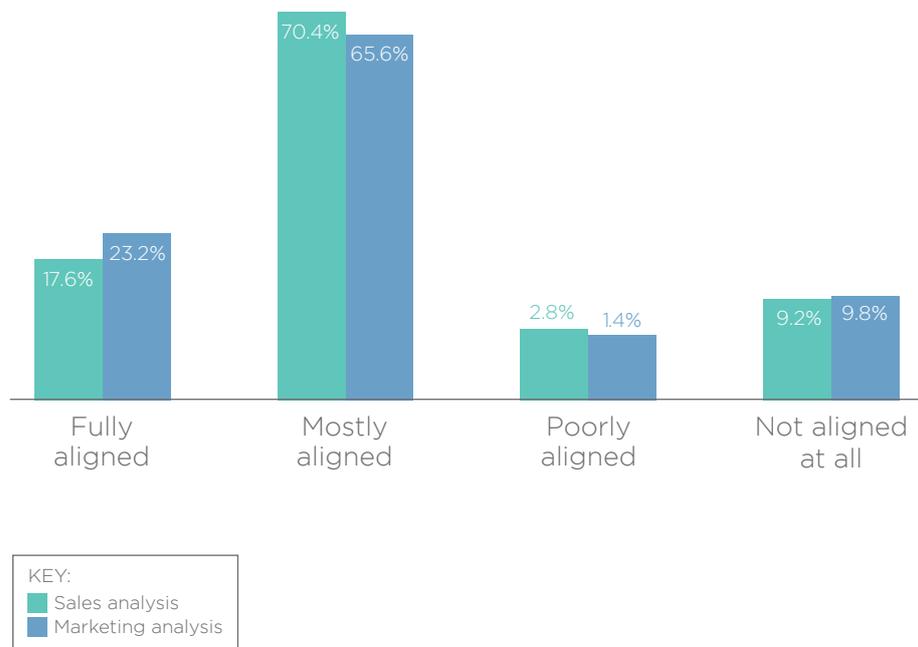


Only a minority of respondents in both groups felt that the activities of their sales and marketing teams are fully aligned.

## How aligned are your sales and marketing teams?

- Only a minority of respondents in both groups (23% of marketing participants and 17% of sales) felt that the activities of their sales and marketing teams are fully aligned
- 1 in 10 of both sales and marketing participants said that their sales and marketing activity is not at all aligned, suggesting major disconnects between sales and marketing in a significant minority of companies.
- Overall there was a fairly consistent view across sales and marketing participants about the level of alignment across the two departments – so they are at least aligned on one thing!

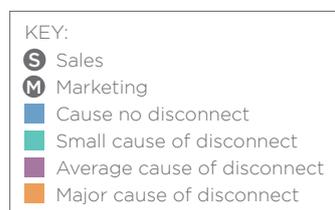
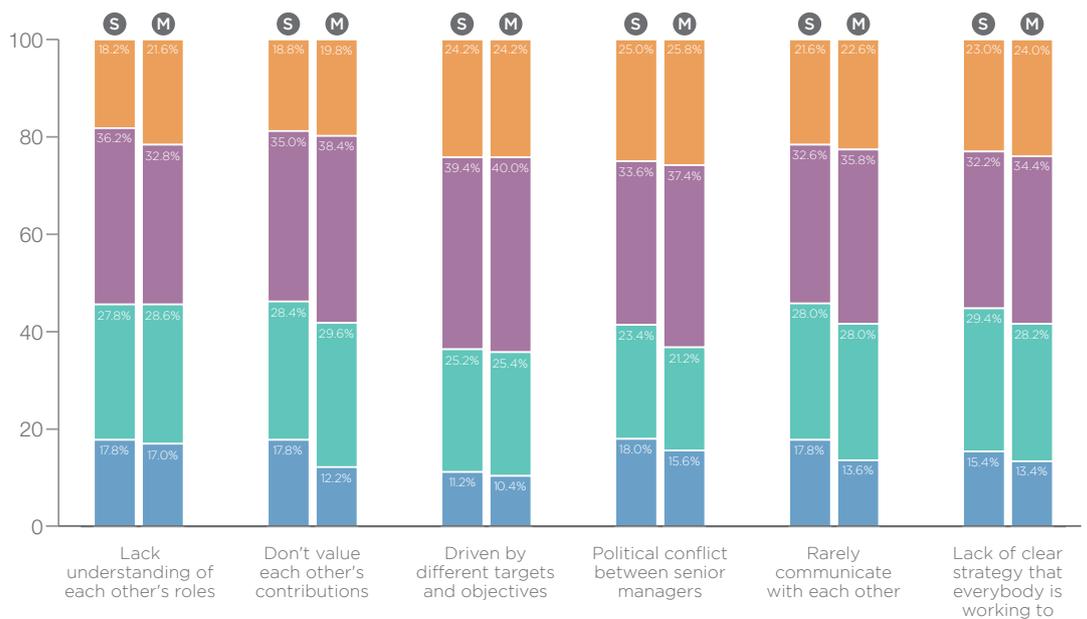
### How well aligned do you believe the activities of the sales and marketing teams are in your organisation?



## What causes disconnect within the organisation?

- The biggest cause of disconnect between sales and marketing within B2B organisations is being driven by different targets and objectives, suggesting a major failure in the planning processes within those organisations.
- Political conflict between senior managers was also highlighted as a major source of problems, suggesting that personal conflict at a senior level is being allowed to permeate down into the organisation.
- Lack of clear strategy, lack of understanding of each other's roles, and poor communications between departments were also identified as causes of disconnect by more than 50% of respondents across both groups.
- Both sales and marketing people feel undervalued by their counterparts, with 58% of marketers and 54% of sales people believing that they don't value each other's contribution.

## To what extent do the following factors create disconnect between sales and marketing in your organisation?



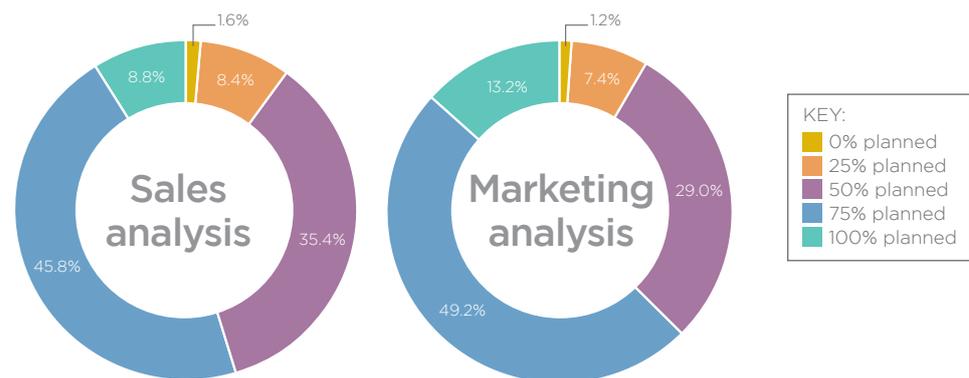
### How much marketing is planned?

- Respondents felt that on average less than two-thirds of their marketing activity was part of a long-term plan, with more than a third being unplanned and reactive.
- 62% of marketing respondents and 52% of sales respondents felt that more than half of their organisations' marketing activity was part of a long-term plan.
- Despite this, the majority of respondents from both groups felt that the balance between short-term and long-term objectives was about right.

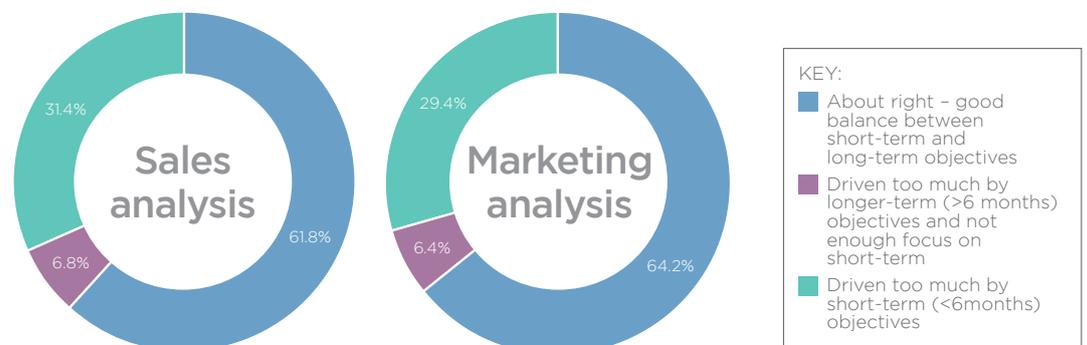
### How much planned marketing activity actually gets implemented?

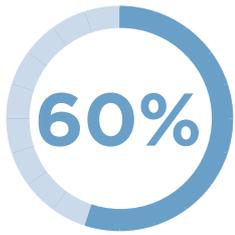
- Almost half of all respondents stated that less than 50% of planned marketing activity actually ever gets implemented, suggesting poor planning or frequent changes of direction in many organisations.
- On average across all respondents, less than two-thirds of planned marketing activity is implemented.

### Roughly how much of your marketing activity is part of a long term plan, compared to that which is unplanned and reactive (%)?



### In relation to your company, which of the following statements would you most agree with in terms of the focus of marketing activities?



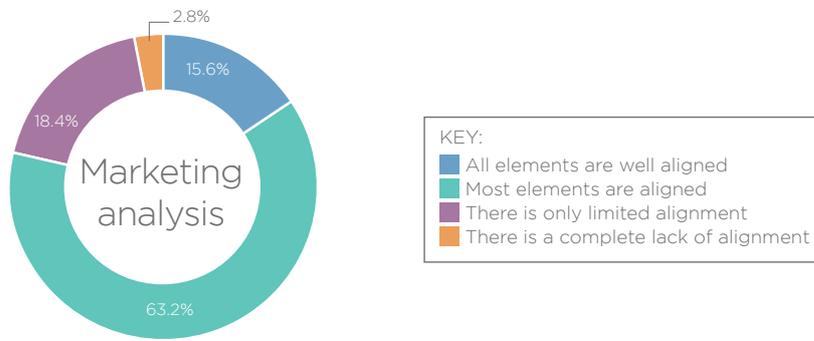


Nearly 60% of sales people think that marketing don't spend enough time speaking with real customers still prevails.

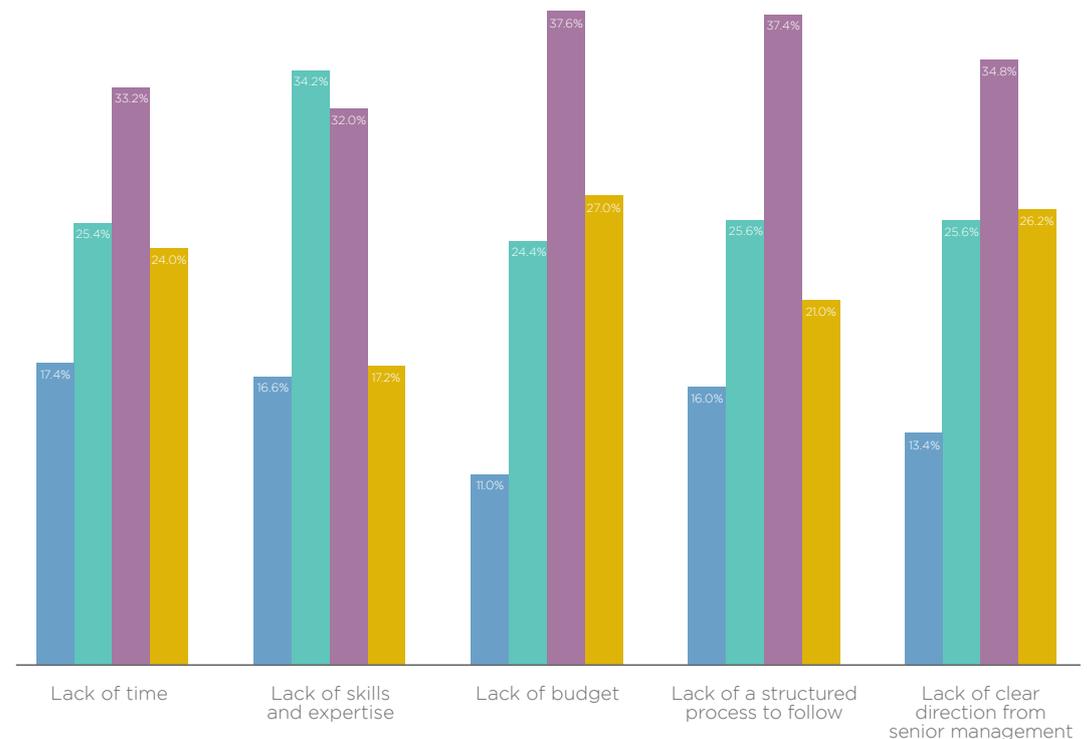
### How aligned is your marketing activity?

- More than 1 in 5 marketing participants stated that their marketing activity lacked alignment, with less than 1 in 6 stating that all of their marketing activity was aligned.
- A range of factors impact an organisations' ability to build integrated marketing plans, with lack of time, lack of budget, lack of a structured process, and lack of senior management direction all being identified as issues by more than 50% of marketing respondents.
- Half of all marketers said that lack of skills and expertise limited their organisation's ability to build fully integrated marketing plans.

### In your organisation, to what extent are the different marketing activities (e.g PR, thought leadership, demand generation, brand awareness and channel enablement) aligned as part of an integrated plan?\*



### To what extent are the following factors a problem that limit your ability to build fully integrated marketing plans?\*

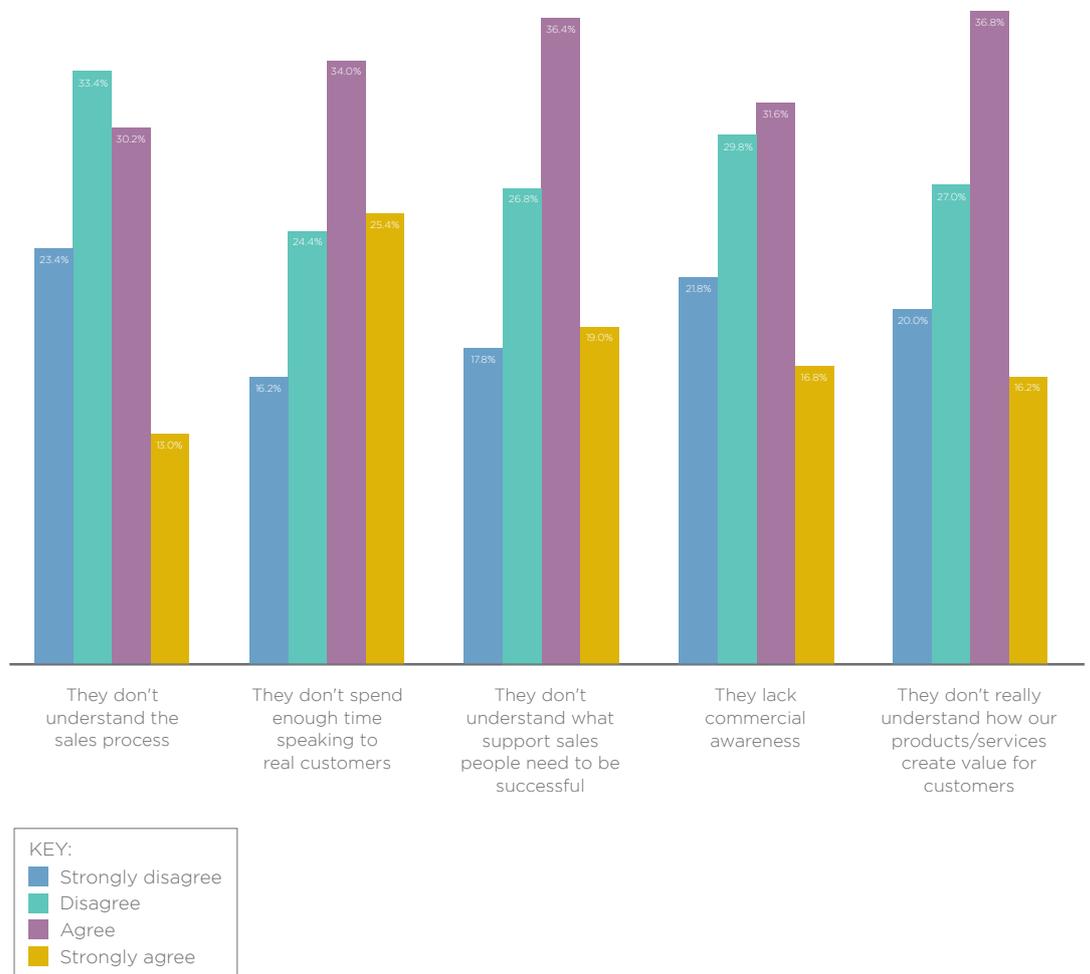


\*question asked to marketing participants

## How does the sales department perceive the marketing department?

- Salespeople generally have a positive perception of the marketing team's contribution to the success of their company, with 79% rating the contribution as quite, or very high.
- The long-standing complaint that marketing doesn't spend enough time speaking with real customers still prevails, with nearly 60% of sales people identifying it as a significant issue.
- Over half of sales professionals believe that marketing does not understand what support sales people need in order to be successful and do not understand how their products or services create value for customers.

### To what extent do you agree with the following statement in relation to your marketing departments?\*



\*question asked to sales participants

## Summary

The survey reveals some interesting things about the slightly confused relationship that seems to exist between sales and marketing. Although sales and marketing professionals have fairly similar views about the value of different types of marketing activity and the contribution of marketing as a whole, nonetheless a significant proportion believe there are significant disconnects between themselves and their counterparts.

Many of these issues – e.g. lack of common targets and objectives, lack of a clear strategy that everybody is working to – would seem to relate to failures in an organisation's planning process. If organisations were building fully integrated go-to-market plans, which sales and marketing teams collaborate on and jointly own, it would help to ensure that all parties are working to the same strategy and objectives, and that everybody understands each other's role and value. Failure to do this results in the sorts of issues uncovered by the research.

The survey offers some clues as to the reasons for this. Political infighting between senior executives is clearly being allowed to get in the way of collaborative working; while the ability to build fully integrated plans is being impacted by lack of senior management direction, lack of structured processes, lack of time and lack of budget.

However, this failure to build fully integrated plans could well be leading to wasted costs and effort within organisations, with the research finding that less than two-thirds of planned marketing activity ever actually gets implemented.

Based on the results of the survey there are a number of points that we would suggest organisations consider to help improve alignment across sales and marketing, and avoid wasted effort:

- Invest in building fully integrated marketing plans that have shared ownership across sales and marketing.
- Be aware of the damage that political infighting can do within an organisation and take steps to minimise its impact. This needs to be driven from the most senior levels within the organisation.
- Take steps to improve sales and marketing teams' understanding of each other's role. In particular, make sure that marketing people spend time with sales people in front of customers, surely a critical requirement if marketing are to effectively fulfil their role.
- Don't underestimate the importance of investing in developing brand awareness as a driver of sales.

The survey showed sales professionals value brand-building as highly as marketers do.



## About the author

### Phil Brown

Phil has more than 20 years sales, marketing and general management experience in the technology, telecoms and online sectors. His career includes launching a new, online business for a major telco, building a SaaS business from the ground up, closing multi-million pound sales, helping create a global partner programme for a leading software vendor and running a successful consulting company. As OneGTM's strategy and planning expert, Phil works with clients to ensure they have the right strategies in place to achieve their goals and effective plans to execute them.



## About OneGTM

OneGTM specialises in helping B2B technology companies to deliver integrated go-to-market programmes that drive profitable growth. We have delivered successful results for a range of clients in the ICT sectors, including Symantec, Cable & Wireless Worldwide, Telstra, Sanyo, Tools Group, Admiralty and AboveNet.

Our end-to-end capabilities, from strategic planning through to market positioning and demand generation, help our clients succeed, by ensuring that all go-to-market activities are fully aligned and highly effective.

We have a particular focus on channel enablement. Our experienced team understand how channels operate and what they require to be successful. We can help define the frameworks, methodologies and programmes to ensure sales channels are fully engaged - and we can create the toolkits they need to deliver.

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Unlock your channels



What Channels  
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