



Why is Sales *and* Marketing Alignment  
Important in the Age of the Customer?

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## IT'S **SALES** *and* **MARKETING**, NOT **SALES** *vs.* **MARKETING**.

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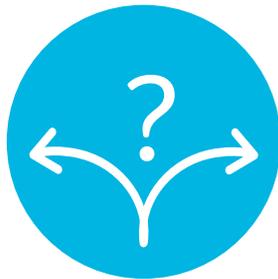
By Cate Gutowski, Vice President, GE Commercial Sales & digitalTHREAD

In my role at GE, I lead our Sales function and drive the digital transformation of our Sales force. As I work inside the company with a variety of business units, and I spend time with other firms outside of GE to learn about new best practices, one of the opportunities that I see is the untapped value that affects many organizations: creating alignment between Sales and Marketing.

There's an *and* between those two words for a reason. Too often, it feels like it can be Sales vs. Marketing, but the truth is....neither can succeed without the other.

For GE, this alignment is especially important, because we are undergoing the transformation from an Industrial company to a *Digital Industrial* one. We recognize that in order to *sell* digital, we have to *be* digital. To achieve this goal, we all have to work together and put the customer first in everything that we do.

While we've made great progress in this endeavor, there is always room for improvement. I'll share some of what I've learned on our journey thus far:



### **Let marketing be our guide.**

Our Marketing teams are the intelligence arm of our organization. They can see the *future*. Marketing can see what's around the corner: they know where the biggest opportunities are located and where the hidden profit pools reside. In many ways, I view Marketing as our Waze app—they have access to incredible data and insights that can help us determine the best route to take to drive growth and avoid traffic. Should we turn right and call on customer A, or turn left and call on customer B? Marketing is a treasure trove of useful information that can help uncover new leads—and more profitable sales. The more Sales taps into that information, the better for everyone.

Our healthcare business unit is currently proving the wisdom of this approach. Collaborating with their sales, marketing and IT groups, they recently developed the RevealApp—an app that utilizes the install base data that Marketing has collected over the years, and puts it into a digital format that's easy for reps to consume.

With the RevealApp, anyone selling healthcare equipment can easily prioritize their opportunities. In just a few swipes, a rep can gain new insights. She might learn that she doesn't need to go to the hospital down the road because they just installed GE equipment last year. Instead, she knows to call on another hospital down the block, because they have a competitor's equipment that is 20 years old. Pointing the Sales team in the right direction to solve our customers needs, drive growth and build out the pipeline is a great example of successful collaboration between Marketing and Sales.

### **We're on the same team, with the same goals.**

One of our biggest hurdles in getting Sales and Marketing to align is trust. As leaders, we need to work to create more of it. We need to understand that we are all on the same team, and we have the same goals. Marketing really can help grow sales.

The best way to build trust between Sales and Marketing? Deliver results.

That's what GE Power's Marketing organization is doing. They collect information about customers who are exploring our distributive power solutions online, creating a "digital fingerprint" of the customer when they interact with our website. Marketing shared this information with one seller whose customer was—according to the data—showing interest in a new product. The seller approached the customer about the solution, and won a \$7 million order. This is a good example of how we can deliver on what our customers want (when they want it), and win more deals faster when there is a foundation of trust between Sales and Marketing.

## **Smarketing. Rhymes with growth.**

*Smarketing* is Sales *plus* Marketing. And it's the future. If Sales wants to earn our role as the trusted advisor in the Age of the Customer, then we must be joined at the hip with Marketing. Sales needs the Marketing's intelligence and data when it comes to new digital trends and innovations. Sales must partner closely with Marketing to deliver fresh, new insights to customers on an ongoing basis. And, we can't forget that these must be insights that even our most educated customers cannot *find online*. Content must be curated, and personalized to meet the unique needs of each customer, and it should be appropriately tailored to their current location on the Buyers' Journey.

When we can combine Marketing's significant intelligence with the deep understanding that Sales carries of how our customers operate (and most importantly—how our customers make money), then we have positioned ourselves to truly be the *trusted source* for helping improve our customers' businesses.

Chances are, the tools you need to deliver customer outcomes, *enable faster growth and uncover even bigger opportunities already exist within your organization*. Our challenge as leaders, is to bring together Sales and Marketing to collaborate, so we can make the most of our collective resources to create more value for our customers.

Do that, and everybody wins...especially, and most importantly, the customer.



Cate Gutowski, vice president, GE Commercial & digitalTHREAD, is reshaping GE's commercial business by thinking and acting like an entrepreneur. Her experience as one of GE's most inventive sales veterans, combined with her customer-first focus and appetite for digital experimentation, is helping guide teams that are innovating new technologies in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and predictive analytics to drive productivity and enhance the customer experience. She also leads GE's global leadership through storytelling initiative, "If You Can See It, You Can Be It." Previously, Gutowski held corporate general manager and operational leadership roles for a variety of GE businesses in the United States and Europe.