Aligning Sales & Marketing

Must Haves for Creating a Highly Productive Mobile Workforce

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In many B2B companies, the coordination of marketing departments and field sales teams is rarely planned or managed.

The unfortunate result is that many corporate marketing departments waste millions of dollars creating content that rarely gets used by salespeople and is never seen by customers.

In fact, research survey results show that 60-70 percent of marketing content created by B2B companies is never used.[1] Today, it is both possible and prudent to produce, distribute, and measure highly targeted content that can actually help field sales teams grow sales volumes. This article explains how a new generation of highly mobile sales enablement tools can leverage big data analytics and machine learning technologies to help field salespeople win deals.

Introduction

The market for new generation sales enablement tools that leverage the emerging wave of Internet of Things (IoT) big data is approaching $600 million per year. This number is projected to grow to $5 billion over the next five to eight years. Driving this growth is the realization that, without collaborative tools in place, marketing departments and field sales teams will be rendered non-competitive.

The challenge for most organizations involved in direct sales is learning how to place their product, their company, and their sales team in the best possible position for winning deals. Marketing departments play an important role in producing the content that helps support field sales in their efforts to build credibility and customer trust. The way sales activity information and intelligence is gathered is also critical to success.

[1] Kopec, Maris, SiriusDecisions Summit presentation, 2014

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BUILT WITH MOBILITY, FLEXIBILITY, AND COMPLIANCE IN MIND, VABLET ENSURES THAT FIELD SALES REPS HAVE THE RIGHT CONTENT AT THEIR FINGERTIPS WHEN THEY NEED IT, EVEN WHEN THERE IS LIMITED OR NO WIFI.

In many corporate environments, management expects salespeople to gather data, input it into corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, and also spend their time in front of the customer. The problem is that salespeople spend up to 1/3 of their time either searching for appropriate content or completing an assortment of administrative tasks (e.g., processing emails, filling out reports). To break the vicious cycle of wasted content development time and the increasing volume of sales administrative work, appropriate tools are needed that can make on-site sales calls both more frequent and more effective.

Issue 1

Broken marketing-to-sales content hand-offs

In order to make progress and gain a competitive advantage, several key organizational issues need to be addressed before a proper sales enablement solution can be put into place. The first is coordination between sales and marketing teams. Field salespeople are often frustrated by how difficult it is to access the sales support content they need. They spend time searching their email, making phone calls, and chasing down people in an attempt to locate the right information.

On their end, marketing people are equally frustrated. They spend many hours researching market and customer data and creating content in different formats so their materials can get "consumed." However, sales people often don't utilize the materials they have produced or they complain that the materials are not up to date or not on target for their particular group of customers.

Issue 2

Sales and marketing are not leveraging big data analytics and machine learning

Most organizations today do not have the proper tools in place to take advantage of the data constantly being generated by field salespeople as they interact with their customers on a daily basis. Knowing the answers to questions like "What solutions were presented by the salesperson?" or "What media interested the customer?" would help marketing to be much more accurate in terms of the "personas" they develop and target.

Capturing such knowledge, however, requires a platform that enables marketing to interpret that data in a way that drives their new "on target" content creation. Such a platform has to extract the benefit of new big data and machine learning technologies.

Issue 3

Where tablets, machine learning, and content management software meet to drive sales

Success in executing a "win more deals faster" approach is a multi-step process. Management needs to develop a framework that can deliver relevant content on a flexible, easy-to-use platform that allows for not only delivery of effective content to field sales but also reporting of that content performance to marketing departments.

Below is a list of recommendations that can help companies optimize such an approach:

DEPLOY A "MOBILE FIRST" PHILOSOPHY

Tablet devices, such as the Apple iPad, offer the advantage of being easy to transport, simple to use, and powerful in their ability to store and stream both text and graphic content. A business climate now exists where these personal devices can include a corporate folder that presents itself as a simple icon. With the advent of file-sharing technologies (such as Box and Dropbox™), information can easily be shared back and forth between a central content repository (controlled and managed by marketing) and the tablet (used by field sales reps).

Add in a cloud environment and the proper content asset management platform, and the tablet amounts to the most powerful sales tool salespeople have ever literally held in their hands.

USE A TOOL THAT INTEGRATES WITH YOUR EXISTING CRM

The mobile tablet can act as a conduit between the salesperson and the data and artificial intelligence sourced from the corporate CRM system. While in the presence of a customer, the salesperson can both download the sales-related information he or she needs and capture transaction data that gets fed back to the CRM. Tablet use in the field is tracked and that data is forwarded to both the CRM system and the marketing department. As field data is collected, the CRM system learns more about what that prospect is thinking. This allows for the analysis of patterns that help to determine where that specific customer is in his or her "buy" cycle. The technology also allows marketing to determine which pieces of content are being used in the field and how effectively they are impacting the customer.

SELECT A TOOL THAT MINIMIZES SALES ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

When field sales reps open their tablets and enter their CRM credentials, they download their events, calendars, and contacts.

All the latest updated and "qualified" content is made available for their upcoming schedule of calls. Videos, statistics, forms, charts and graphs, brochures, and interactive HTML tools are all there. These tools should also support use of offline files, so the rep doesn't have to worry about unavailable or unstable WiFi disrupting any customer presentation. At the end of the day, the app should send all the data gathered during meetings in the field to the CRM system.

EMPOWER MARKETING WITH A TOOL THAT CONTROLS AND TRACKS CONTENT USAGE

These new sales enablement "feeder" tools allow marketing teams to capture analytics surrounding the use of files that each of the salespeople have on their tablets. They know whether or not all salespeople are accessing the latest versions of key content documents, such as price sheets. They also possess the data regarding which files the reps are sharing with their customers. They can cross-check which content is being used by the top salespeople vs. those assets being used by salespeople who are underperforming. In this way, sales managers can better focus their efforts on underperforming sales reps to help them gain confidence knowing that they are armed with the same quality content that has helped make the leading reps successful. Therefore, in addition to being utilized as a sales tool, the content provided by marketing also serves as a training tool.

IMPLEMENT A TOOL THAT IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO SERVICE HIGHLY REGULATED INDUSTRIES

In the Life Sciences arena (i.e., organizations that sell pharmaceuticals and medical devices), content is often highly regulated. The materials reps and marketing teams share with their customers and prospects need to be compliant. Therefore, it is important that the content management solution is both auditable and capable of precise version control. A system with the capability of restriction options (i.e., a particular file can't be emailed, printed, or annotated) can help sales and marketing organizations stay on top of compliance issues.

vablet, the missing piece of mobile device sales enablement

New sales enablement tools are just now emerging to address current inefficiencies in the marketing and sales cycles. Considered one of the industry's best-of-breed platforms, vablet has been solving customer global content management and sales presentation issues since 2010. vablet offers a complete mobile sales enablement solution that aligns marketing, sales,

and training. It is highly adept at supporting regulated environments where precise control, delivery, and tracking of content and sales activity in the field is critical.

With more than 20,000 users across 50 countries, vablet benefits any company where mobile workers or field sales people exist. vablet has delivered solutions across the life science, manufacturing, retail, distribution, and financial industries.

Built with mobility, flexibility, and compliance in mind, vablet ensures that field sales reps have the right content at their fingertips, when they need it, even when there is limited or no WiFi. Corporate content can be accessed securely from anywhere, and captured usage data can be easily integrated into existing CRM, ERP, BI, and marketing automation systems.

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