



## **Is your marketing manager redundant?**

You know, I'd hate to be a marketing manager in a today's business environment. The problem is there's precious little for a marketing manager to manage! Here's a person with no authority, no direct reports, a tiny budget, and no process to oversee. A person who's only mandate (to 'get the firm's name out there') has no metric with which success can be measured.

Now, I'd like to make it clear that I have no problem with the title of *Marketing Manager*, or with the person who holds that title. My problem is with the role that's generally assigned to that title. The fact is, if your firm sells in a business-to-business, complex selling environment, the traditional role of a marketing manager is probably redundant.

If so, you should move fast to redefine your marketing manager's role - to provide him or her with something of substance to manage, and to provide your firm with an opportunity to recoup its investment in the position.

## **The word *marketing* means too much**

Unless you're in a direct business to consumer sales environment, your marketing manager probably shouldn't manage marketing! The problem is, the definition of *marketing* is so far-reaching that the word loses all relevance. Michael Porter (the patron saint of strategy) defines marketing as *the entire organization, as viewed from the customer's perspective*.

So, is it practical to give your marketing manager responsibility for *your whole organization as viewed from your customer's perspective*? I suspect not. Even if we view marketing in terms of its core functions, its reach is still very broad. First-year marketing students are taught about the four Ps of marketing: *product, price, place* and *promotion* (*place* refers to *distribution*).

My guess is that, in your firm, it's really the last of the four Ps (*promotion*) that concerns you the most. (I suspect that your product design, pricing and distribution strategies are not in a constant state of flux!) Accordingly, it would seem beneficial to restrict your marketing manager's role to the management of *promotion*.

## **But the word *promotion* means too little!**

However, in the context of a B2B sales environment, promotion should consist of so much more than simply *getting your name out there*. Let's face it, you can't sell solutions, services, information technology, mining equipment or construction services with the kind of promotional campaign that a business-to-consumer goods firm would use to sell cornflakes.

You need a process - often a complex, protracted process - that starts with the identification of a potential customer, and ends with the acquisition of an enduring and profitable relationship. This means that, if you want your marketing manager to manage *promotion*, he or she should manage your entire *sales process* (and not just your advertising and public relations activities).

## **The role of a *sales process manager***

Okay, the title's not so sexy! But, remember, what we're concerned with here is the role behind the title. (You're welcome to continue to refer to your *sales process manager* by the arbitrary title of *marketing manager*.) The reality is that, while technically you're restricting the scope of your marketing manager's role, in practice, you're likely to provide him or her with considerably more responsibility.



Your *sales process manager* should be responsible for the two components of a (relationship-centric) sales process:

1. Relationship acquisition. (The acquisition of relationships with a constant stream of potential clients and centres of influence.)
2. Relationship management. (The ongoing management of these relationships and the generation of sales opportunities.)

In practical terms, this means that your *sales process manager* should be responsible for managing:

1. the repeatable, synchronous marketing process campaigns that acquire relationships;
2. the automated communications (nurture, newsletter, seminars, white papers, etc) that maintain and develop those relationships;
3. and the various steps to fill your sales pipeline (maintenance of a communications log and scheduling of appointments with sales consultants).

While many firms do not give their marketing managers responsibility for any part of the sales process, this is dead wrong. What is the purpose of advertising and public relations activities if it is not ultimately to generate sales?

We frequently come across organizations where marketing managers are busy running 'branding' campaigns, and salespeople are out in the field 'turning over rocks' looking for sales opportunities. Go figure! If your organization does not have salespeople, your *sales process manager* should be responsible for and assist with the sales-related tasks performed by partners or managers.

### **'Managing' doesn't mean 'doing'**

While we're in the process of reengineering your marketing manager's role, it's worth reminding ourselves that 'managing' doesn't mean 'doing'. I often take a walk through our clients' manufacturing facilities. In the process, I seldom see production managers operating machines.

Why then, do these same organizations have their marketing managers doing data entry, creating advertisements, writing brochure copy, designing PowerPoint presentations, and so on? The issue is not whether or not your marketing manager is skilled in these areas, but whether or not they can manage part of your sales process if they have their sleeves rolled-up, doing process work. Tell me, have you ever seen an orchestra where the conductor plays first violin?

### **A rewarding career**

If you compare the role of typical marketing manager with the role of a *sales process manager* the differences are profound.

- The former has little authority and no process to oversee. The latter has authority and input over the sales process - and is in a position to manage this relationship acquisition process and see its impact through to the conversion of opportunities into sales.
- The former has no way of quantifying his or her effectiveness. The latter can demonstrate a clear return on marketing investment - by relating marketing activities to the sales they produced.
- The former makes decisions based on intuition and data of questionable relevance (can anyone really demonstrate a linear relationship between brand equity and sales?). The latter (to quote Alfred Sloane) 'manages with the force of facts'.