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# Untangling the Confusion Between Marketing and Sales Functions

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A problem I find is that too many business owners and professional practice partners are confused about the differences between marketing and sales functions and tasks. You need clarity about these differences if you want to most easily market and sell your services or products.

I find this particularly true of fast-paced entrepreneurial-type of business owners. Conceptually, they tend to blend the separate functions and tasks of marketing and sales into one big pot that boils over with ineffectiveness, wasted financial resources and poor results in terms of consistently gaining and retaining loyal customers.

Too often I ask leaders a few critical questions to understand where their heads and hearts are before I enter into a coaching or consulting relationship with them. I rarely get clear answers to the questions that follow.

- Can you share with me the written vision you have for your business?
- Can you give me a list of your key goals and accompanying objectives that you want to achieve to make your vision a reality?
- What are the things that your prospects, clients and customers need and want from you that you offer them?
- What is the value to your customers and clients from their perspectives of what you offer them?
- Presently, what are the key functions and tasks you and your team carry out to market your products or services?
- Presently, what are the key functions and tasks you and your team carry out to sell your products or services?
- What are the things you do to measure the impact of each of your marketing and sales strategies and tactics?
- How do you and your team demonstrate a commitment to continuously enhancing your marketing and sales functions?
- How do you and your team show commitment to building relationships with your prospective and existing clients and customers in order to gain and maintain loyal, long-term clients and customers?

Marketing functions and tasks are those which position your products or services in the minds and hearts of prospective and current customers or clients. Sales functions and tasks are those which lead your prospective and current customers or clients toward buying a product or service.

Some examples of marketing functions are newspaper and magazine ads, speaking

engagements, news releases, newspaper stories, television ads, and direct mail discount coupons.

Some examples of sales functions are building a marketing to sales bridge, qualifying the decision maker, qualifying the buyer, establishing personal credibility, relationship selling, building interpersonal rapport, understanding benefits, advantages and features of your products and services, identifying the customer's buying gaps, developing relevant benefit statements, overcoming obstacles, and closing a buying agreement.

To accomplish these functions, your marketing and sales people must possess and diligently apply the skill sets associated with each function.

A fundamental focus that needs to be developed company wide is on proactive selling that strategically moves your prospects toward buying your services or products rather than your people selling to them.

If you need help in strengthening marketing and sales within your company, I urge you to gain the assistance and guidance of an independent business coach or other outside adviser. Get one that you can trust to provide solid, independent and valuable guidance to get the right marketing and sales functions and tasks clearly defined, and then achieved, for your particular business.

Yours for gaining and retaining more loyal customers and clients! If you need help in mastering and implementing any of the skills and tactics mentioned, I'm here for you! Please visit the Call-A-Coach section of my web site for more information.

## About the author:

Dr. Mac shares with business owners the practical knowledge and insights he gained as a small company CEO. He founded Sycamore Ranch, Inc. when 27 and as CEO led his partners and a staff of 100 for 16 years in developing and operating the 50 acre recreational facility. Years later, he integrated what he learned from his Doctoral program at USC with his practical business experiences and began consulting. For four decades Mac's coached business owners in mastering and applying "how to" leadership and managerial skills for: Hiring and retaining only the top ten percent producers; Optimally deploying and supervising staff to maximize their personal motivation; Developing high integrity leadership teams; Facilitating mutual performance accountability and peer coaching processes; and, Integrating his Intentional Business Integrity Process into their company operations. Mac has served leaders in manufacturing and high tech companies; accounting, banking and insurance enterprises; medical and health care organizations; service and retail oriented businesses; as well as

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