

The state of RevOps: Three learnings from our GTM Summit



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The explosion of data, processes and technology across enterprises, the increasing challenge of silos across customer facing functions and the need to operate more efficiently and profitably fuels the rise of RevOps. Despite growing engagement, not everyone is fully leveraging the power of RevOps, primarily due to a misunderstanding of RevOps as an org structure, when in actuality, it is an operating model.

Siloed handoffs and disjointed customer experiences are a thing of the past. In this current buying environment, delivering an aligned end-to-end customer experience will define the winners. RevOps drives the collaboration that makes that possible.

The recent RevOps Council meeting at the Scale Venture Partners GTM summit produced an energetic discussion on the state of RevOps. Three key themes emerged:

1. RevOps is not SalesOps—and you're missing out if you're treating them as the same.

Historically, organizations have leveraged Sales Ops groups to drive the processes, systems and data around revenue. Some companies birthed RevOps as a cost-cutting measure to consolidate ops groups, while others slapped a new name on SalesOps with little change to the group mission or purpose.

Treating RevOps like a glorified rebranding of SalesOps keeps legacy silos in place rather than facilitating a central view of the data, processes/workflows, and systems to support that journey. What this misses is the actual goal of RevOps: bringing together individuals with varying strategic and operational expertises to drive, support, and enable an ideal customer journey across all customer facing teams.

For example, if sales, marketing and customer success all have their own operational workflows, data, and systems, how likely is it that your customer is having the best experience vs. feeling like they are working with a number of teams that don't communicate?

The solution is bringing together a group of operationally-minded individuals from the customer facing groups that are dedicated to enabling the end-to-end customer journey. The group works in a business partner model (an ops person reporting to marketing, sales ops person reporting to sales, CS ops reporting to customer success) and tightly operates with other operational functions such as finance and BusOps.

This model produces more alignment among customer-facing functions and provides better focus on the customer and KPIs, which leads to more predictable business performance and growth.

2. Alignment at the company level is more important than alignment at the team or individual level.

Over time the mission of corporate teams and organizations becomes self-preservation as opposed to fulfillment of the original mission ("the iron law of bureaucracy"). Marketing ops become dedicated to serving solely the marketing function, customer service ops become dedicated to preserving CS resources, etc. The end result suffers, leading to choppy customer experiences, incomplete pictures of the customer (including the Ideal Customer Profile), and rising churn.

Here the group diverged on the solution and a fascinating discussion ensued. One line of thought: begin not with the organization model or org chart, but rather with the workflows. What are the strategic, tactical, and operational workflows that must be supported? Then,

work backwards from the workflows to determine the org model rather than starting with the org model.

Applying this structure, early stage startup founders have a unique opportunity to prevent the siloing of data, processes, and systems that have to be painfully unwound by the time they reach \$30-\$100M by working backwards from the ideal workflows.

The other line of thought? Create one strategic and operational RevOps group responsible for all operations related to revenue. Still have a MOps person working directly with marketing (or they will be underserved) and also have them be part of and aligned to a larger group focused on the end-to-end customer journey. This tended to be the approach of RevOps leaders that already have a clear organizational model in place and need better collaboration.

Both approaches focus on forcing greater alignment towards the mission of driving a better, more efficient end-to-end customer experience.

3. Understand what the numbers mean rather than just managing to the number.

The greatest challenge for RevOps today is getting their arms around and aligning all the data. Think of all the time your group or organization spends in trying to ensure the timeliness, accuracy and reporting of data. The time and effort spent on getting the data right misses the point of all the data work to begin with: getting actual insights from the numbers to understand your business and take appropriate action.

The group expressed optimism about the ability of artificial intelligence (AI) to reduce manual efforts, produce better models, and get to insights and action more quickly. As my former colleague Neil Harrington mentioned afterwards, RevOps teams (or whatever group in your company is charged with optimizing the end-to-end customer journey) have a great opportunity to come to the table with an informed hypothesis on what the annual number should be vs. waiting for it to be handed down.

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