

**IS YOUR  
TIMING  
KILLING  
YOUR  
*potential?***



# Stop trying to force *attraction*

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Instead, first work on *being more attractive*. Marketing materials are too often designed with the salesperson – rather than the buyer – in mind. They tout features and benefits and then go for the close. *Wrong*. Great marketing aligns with the buyer, not the seller. What are their felt needs? Whom do they trust? What interests them? What do they find helpful?

Here's how you can find out whether your marketing is aligned properly. Ask this question: *Who wants the next interaction more, the buyer or the seller?* If you answered *seller*, you've got some work to do. Focus instead on being more attractive by being more helpful.

Anticipate people's needs and offer meaningful ideas or tools that meet them rather than going for the close too quickly. Find ways to be top-of-mind without "selling": maintain a regular blog and/or social media presence, publish white papers or participate on industry panel discussions. Invest in marketing activities and deliverables that communicate who you are, not just what you sell.

## 57%

OF BUSINESSES HAVE WON A NEW CUSTOMER BASED ON A COMPANY BLOG.<sup>1</sup>

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## 60%

OF PROSPECTS SAY A WHITE PAPER INFLUENCED THEIR BUYING DECISION.<sup>2</sup>

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# WHAT CAN YOU DO *right now?*

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You may not be ready to start that blog, but you might be ready to start writing. Offer some really helpful insight while capturing some valuable mindshare in your prospect.

- 1 Make a list of five mission-critical challenges your customers face.
- 2 Look at the benefit that solving this challenge would offer, the factors that are causing the issue and some insight into how they could be solved.
- 3 Write about that. Don't jump to the close; present a conversation. The hardest work is, surprisingly, the headline.

Don't overestimate your audience. When faced with real business challenges, the market consumes information at a voracious rate. Write what you know, and don't worry about it being "already out there."



# Don't shoot without the target *in sight*

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Your sales force's time and energy is one of your most precious assets. You can't afford to deploy your people at unknown targets and hope it works. Your mass-marketing efforts, like advertising, should appeal to the many – the “suspects.”

Only after these suspects have been converted to “prospects” – meaning you have reason to believe they would be interested in your products or services – should you deploy your valuable human assets.

Once that happens, you can tailor your marketing and communications specifically to address this phase in the buying cycle, with things like case studies, webinars, direct mail and e-newsletters.

## 89%

EFFECTIVENESS RATING FOR  
CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS,  
AND CLIMBING.<sup>3</sup>

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## 61%

OF B2B MARKETERS  
DESCRIBE WEBINARS AS  
THE THIRD MOST EFFECTIVE  
SALES TACTIC, ONLY BEHIND  
IN-PERSON EVENTS AND  
CASE STUDIES.<sup>4</sup>

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# WHAT CAN YOU DO *right now?*

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Immediately stop making general, introductory brochures and focus your efforts at investing in closing tactics. Your sales force should be feeding your marketing team ideas and insights about customers to help generate thoughtful publications. On the flip side, marketing should be feeding sales great stories and examples as prepackaged meals.

- 1 Establish a standard boilerplate for a case study.
- 2 Collaborate with three customers to craft a complimentary story of your relationship, and commit that to paper.
- 3 Frame it as a benefit instead of just-the-facts.
- 4 Keep it light with pictures and graphics.

Ideally, find stories that align with your core brand promise. You can use those stories not just with clients, but also as activation tactics with your internal audiences.



## *Go deep!*

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Once a prospect becomes a customer, the dance has only just begun. Now it's about deepening customer relationships by meeting more needs over time, and that doesn't just mean selling more stuff.

When customers start calling you to look for your next offering (rather than you calling them), or they start telling others about you, it's working. Meeting more needs means you keep trying to find out what those needs are and when they change. Your marketing and communications efforts are just as important as ever, but they're different from the ones you use to appeal to mass-market "suspects."

To deepen customer relationships, consider email reminders, market insights and perspective, or special print collateral and mailings.

# 75%

OF ALL CROSS-SELL  
OPPORTUNITIES OCCUR  
WITHIN THE FIRST 90  
DAYS OF THE CUSTOMER  
RELATIONSHIP.<sup>5</sup>

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# WHAT CAN YOU DO *right now?*

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Consider making an onboarding kit for your new customers, if you don't have one. This can be simple or complex. Start with simple.

1

Poll your customer service contacts for typical gaps in service. What are the common challenges customers face?

2

Organize this information into how-to procedures that make sense for a customer. Remember, think outside your own skin. New customers are not familiar with your terms and departments.

3

Walk a new customer through the kit, in person. Help them help themselves and form a stronger relationship in the meantime.

Most new experiences start with a degree of change and frustration. Understanding that and working hard to make it as pain free from the outset will help retain those relationships in the long run.



# THE BOTTOM *line.*

Know why you're doing what you're doing, and do it on purpose. Align the right marketing at the right time with the right customer segment, and you'll rest easy knowing that your marketing dollars are working as hard as they can for you.

<sup>1</sup> <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/11414/12-Mind-Blowing-Statistics-Every-Marketer-Should-Know.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.slideshare.net/slidade/how-towriteagoodwhitepaper>

<sup>3</sup> <http://csbj.com/2014/01/02/take-advantage-of-2014-trends-that-impact-customers/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2012/10/2013-b2b-content-marketing-research/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.infosys.com/industries/financial-services/white-papers/Documents/mobility-hockey-stick-effect.pdf>