



STRATEGY MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Sustain Your Sales, Don't Confuse Selling With Marketing.

Selling is not marketing. A sales plan is not a marketing plan: it is contained within the marketing plan. Confusing the two at the start can have dire consequences. We have seen superior products sent to market only to fail for want of adequate support because the entrepreneur misunderstood or ignored their marketing needs. Think of it the way military leadership does, with eighty or ninety per cent of resources deployed behind the line in support of each ten or twenty troops who directly face an enemy.

What's the difference?

Both have quantified goals. A sales plan is short term. It deals with the trade or an intermediary between you and your customer or product end user. It is tactical, not strategic, and its results are immediately measurable. A marketing plan is longer term. It is strategic. It frequently encompasses the founder's vision for the company and its mission. It has a much broader focus than a sales plan. It deals with targets – industries, sectors, categories, geography and customers. It also deals with image - who you are and what you or your company, service, product or technology should look like to the different constituencies affecting your success – product end users, channel or trade decision makers, sometimes media, regulators or investors. It encompasses specific image components: website, logo, graphics, stationery, collateral materials, advertising, channel or trade publicity and public and investor relations. It includes your messages and specifies the mediums to deliver them. The marketing plan provides a platform or framework for the sales plan and is typically executed by different people than those who execute the sales plan. In many companies marketing and sales come together under the executive leadership of a single individual reporting to the CEO.

Does it really matter?

Because the marketing plan is that part of the business plan which articulates where you are going and how you expect to get there, understanding its significance has implications for hiring, structure, reporting, budgeting and timing. A common situation we encounter is the adequately funded sales plan with little or no marketing support. This results in a weak marketing environment within which the sale is to occur. Critical pieces get shortchanged: the website doesn't reflect the true quality of the product or the prospects of the company; the company's image is not clear or adequately presented; advertising or support materials are non-existent, late or substandard; there is no product (or corporate) or public relations plan. The salesman's job is made more difficult than necessary. Usually by the time all or some of these defects become obvious it's too late to change a plan or get them funded. While this confusion is sometimes more visible and serious with consumer oriented products, scientific and technology targeted products can suffer too. Buyers of medical or technology oriented products are

as responsive to a positive company image and effective marketing communication as anyone else, even though they may have different media consumption habits.