



State of Revenue Alignment

SalesLoft partnered with MSP to survey revenue teams about their perception of their marketing peers.

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Summary of Findings

- Revenue team alignment (Sales, Marketing, and Customer Success) is still a pain for many organizations, particularly smaller to mid-sized companies that maintain smaller Marketing teams.
- Mis-alignment has a direct, negative impact on productivity and, ultimately, revenue growth.
- Teams struggle with data and organizational silos, content is underutilized, and opportunities are missed.
- Revenue leaders see the most value in marketing-sponsored webinars and events and less value in traditional collateral such as one-pagers and pitch decks.
- Sales leaders continue to tie marketing's success strictly to top-of-funnel activities and engagement.
- Revenue leaders want marketing success to be tied to the company number.
- Sales leaders want more transparency from their Marketing counterparts, particularly in research and collaboration.
- Companies should consider making structural changes that better align the organization around a single source of truth and shared goals.

The Survey

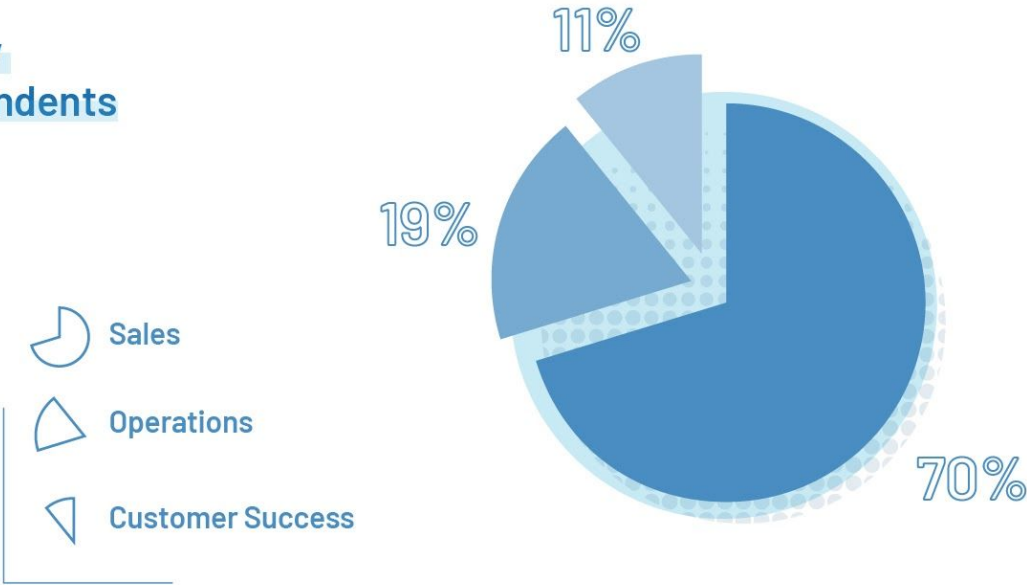
When your Sales and Marketing teams are on the same page, everybody wins. Alignment optimizes your marketing and sales cycles as a whole, reducing costs and driving organizational growth.

- Alignment can lead to a **32% increase in year-over-year** (YoY) revenue growth. ([Aberdeen Group](#)¹)
- Alignment can lead to **208% growth in marketing-influenced revenue**. ([Wheelhouse Advisors](#)²)
- Alignment can lead to **38% higher sales win rates**. ([MarketingProfs](#)³).

With those kinds of results you would assume everyone was working towards alignment, so we asked.

SalesLoft partnered with Modern Sales Pros (MSP) and their Customer Success counterpart to gauge the current perception from Sales and Customer Success teams on the state of their Marketing and Sales alignment.

Survey Respondents



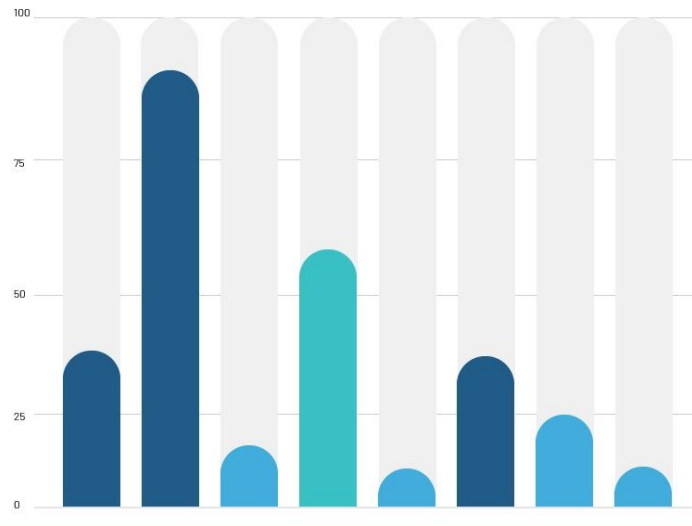
Of those surveyed, 70% identified as Sales leaders while roughly 19% identified as operations. The remaining 11% identified as Customer Success. Over 50% of those respondents **reported an average deal size of over 10K.**

Measuring Marketing Success

Historically, Marketing's impact on revenue has often been considered a black box.

How is Marketing Success Measured

- Web Traffic
- Inbound Leads / Marketing Qualified Leads
- I don't know
- Opportunity/ Revenue Influence
- Share of Voice
- Engagement (i.g. email opens/clicks)
- Customer Satisfaction Scores
- Marketshare



When asked how their Marketing counterparts measured their success, a majority (63%) of respondents selected **inbound leads or traditional marketing engagement metrics**, while only 22% of respondents selected **opportunity/revenue influence** as the key success metric for Marketing teams.

This is interesting when you consider that, in recent years, the majority of Marketing teams have been focused on revenue influence.

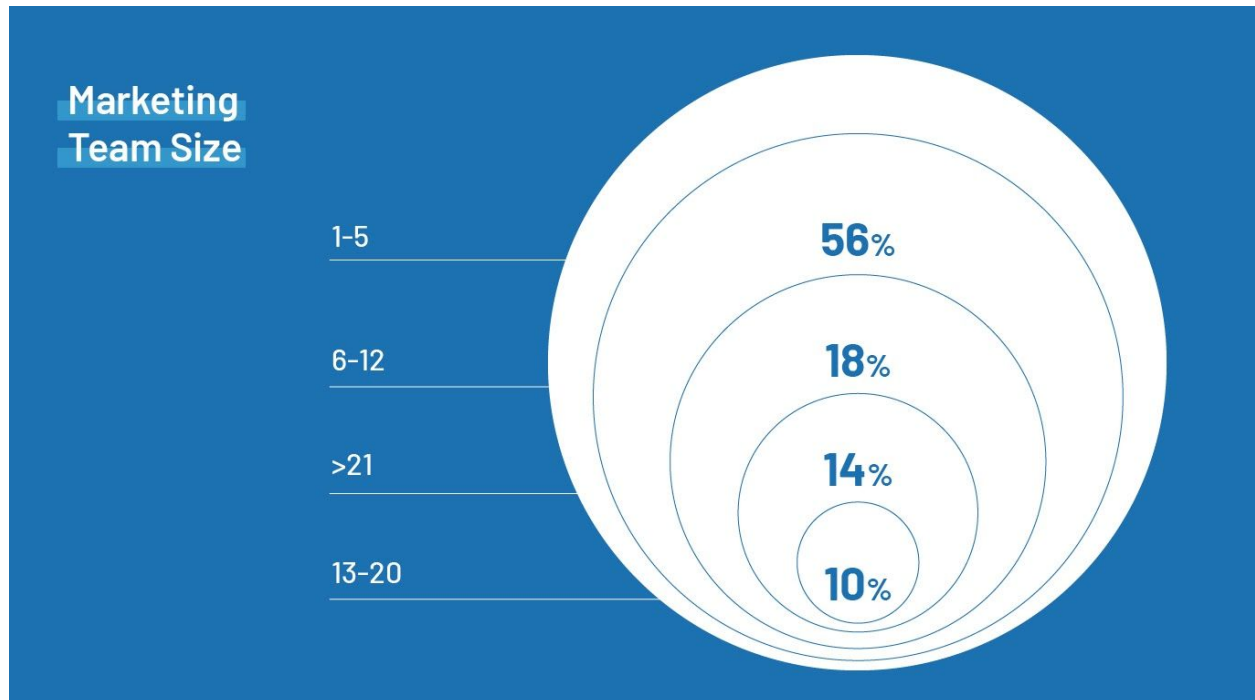
A [recent study](#)⁴ from the consulting group, 99Firm, found that the top marketing objective for B2B marketers in 2020 was converting **leads into customers**, not prospects to leads or engagement metrics.

This shift in marketing focus is more common in larger, more mature revenue organizations. Smaller to mid-size organizations with less investment in marketing may not be prepared to present metrics on revenue influence.

In our survey, **the average marketing team was comprised of 1 -- 5 people**.

This indicates that respondents, on average, are likely to have smaller marketing budgets and less mature marketing strategies.

Taking this a step further, it is also safe to assume that this survey trended more heavily with smaller to mid-sized organizations where smaller marketing teams are the norm.



Often we assume that these smaller teams would have a general sense of their impact, or at least be able to quickly determine if their efforts are “moving the needle”, but this is not the case.

The smaller the marketing team, the harder it can be to understand and surface impact on revenue. Why? They are often focused on content delivery and sales support, often missing the opportunity to track influence.

According to the [2020 ABM Benchmark](#),⁵ only 43% of marketers who produce content measure ROI, and only **59% of marketers are confident in their ability to demonstrate ROI.**

This lack of confidence may be the culprit. Empower your Marketing leaders to bring what they have to the table to join the conversation. It’s ok if the data isn’t complete or even if it’s anecdotal – at least it is something that helps communicate the impact of their marketing efforts.

If they are still on the fence, remind them that no matter how good the content is, it’s the impact that really matters.

Content Needs

Now things get interesting. We asked our survey respondents what Marketing-produced assets delivered the most value. We were astonished at the results!

According to our survey results the single-most important content, asset type, or activity that Marketing produces is...**webinars**? Yes, webinars!

Well, webinars and events. (We thought, for sure, it was going to be one-pagers!)



It may seem like a strange answer, but after digging into this question further, we concluded that, with the recent changes to how sellers sell in the age of COVID, it makes sense.

The runner-up for most impactful marketing asset? Website.

With sales going digital, online channels have increased in importance. When we consider our earlier question, it becomes clear that Sales thinks of Marketing as strictly top-of-funnel.

Where do the best leads come from? Webinars. What is the primary way for buyers to learn about your business? A well-built website that is easy to find and navigate.

If we apply this lens to other asset types, the perception of Marketing's value at the top of the funnel becomes even clearer.

Ebooks, videos, white-papers/guides, one-sheets/infographics, and even presentation decks were all rated as less impactful than webinars/events, corporate websites, and landing pages.

See the trend?

What Marketing *Isn't* Doing

We also asked respondents to tell us what, in their opinion, Marketing *wasn't* doing, and they didn't hold back!

Feedback ranged wildly, but the word cloud to the right shows some particular trends that we can group into the following categories.

- **Demand generation and inbound**
- **Content and events**
- **Attribution and reporting**
- **Research and analysis**
- **ABM and other marketing strategies**
- **Systems and collaboration**



These responses clearly indicate that there is a mismatch between what Marketing is doing (or at least how they are perceived) and what Revenue Teams actually want.

Among the responses related to content and research, there was another common thread: the desire to get closer to the customer. Buyer personas, case studies, customer quotes, and content built for the customer all appeared multiple times in the responses.

To illustrate, let's look at some of the responses.

"More and better prospect segmentation. I am never satisfied that we understand enough about prospects."

"Just about anything modern, they are hyper-traditional. Measuring video engagement, having up-to-date customer stories/use cases, and measuring engagement overall is helpful but not done currently."

"Persona and buyer-centric specific messaging as well as in-the-funnel nurture programs specific to a prospect's journey."

"I wish they'd be less generic in what they furnish to the market regarding the problems to be solved. They can research a gaggle of prospects, aka targets, too."

What does this tell us? Even if Marketing thinks they are doing a bang-up job building relevant content, their sellers and customer reps aren't convinced.

Other responses show ways marketers might tackle the concerns around content.

"Draw clearer distinctions between the business and our competitors."

"Improve case studies with more data and statistics."

"More focus on product marketing and competitive analysis."

What strategies did respondents request? One, in particular, stood out as something Marketing should invest in if they aren't all ready. Account-Based Marketing, or ABM.

To level set, ABM is a business marketing strategy that concentrates marketing resources on a set of target accounts within a market. It drives focus and prioritization throughout the revenue lifecycle, providing additional coverage for accounts in deal cycles and improving lead quality.

We will speak more about why your organization should consider investing in ABM in the ["Take Action" section](#), later in this paper. Stay tuned.

In addition, many responses offer candid feedback that reinforces that the smaller the Marketing team, the larger the divide. The desire for Marketing to contribute or be responsible for revenue success is clear.

"Owning a portion of revenue. 100% accountable for closed deals."

"I wish marketing presented a forecast of leads they will deliver to the business on an ongoing basis."

"Communicating their strategy with the sales team."

What does this feedback tell us? Sales and Customer Success teams *want* to collaborate with Marketing. They want Marketing's influence to be clear. They want a closer relationship and more insight into what Marketing is already doing and planning.

Ultimately, they want to know and trust that their Marketing team is "thinking more strategically about how to get deals into the funnel, less about activities, and more about revenue conversion/production."

Take Action

Build Trust

"One way to build trust between Marketing and Sales is to make them accountable for the same company goal: revenue."

— Mike Lieberman, Co-founder and CEO, Square 2 Marketing

It's true. The easiest way to build trust between Sales and Marketing is to ensure Marketing is accountable to the company number, but many organizations struggle with the "how."

For some, they accomplish this by migrating part or all of the sales development team to Marketing. In SalesLoft's case, for example, the inbound development team is a Marketing team, which gives Marketing the added benefit of direct feedback on the sales experience and the quality of inbound leads.

Not every revenue org is built the same. Nor would it be fair to say that there is a single reporting structure that would work for every revenue team. But there is a larger benefit to removing organizational silos.

Whether your Marketing team owns a specific sales function or not, include Marketing impact metrics in any of your pipeline or quota attainment dashboards and meetings.

Sales and Customer Success teams should work with Marketing to surface new content, discuss strategies, and present any available reporting metrics to demonstrate Marketing's influence. This will help teams feel more connected and confident.

But, be careful not to stop at leadership. The entire team should be aware of what all arms of the Revenue Org are striving for and accomplishing, *especially* if your sellers and customer reps view Marketing as a black box, which we already confirmed most do.

Lean into a Revenue Operations Model

Revenue leadership is made up of Marketing, Sales, and Customer Success, each with their own distinct hierarchies, goals, and priorities that often come into conflict.

A "Revenue Operations" approach to leadership teams restructures the way teams relate to one another fostering collaboration through shared goals. Different models could look like:

- Having all revenue teams report into a single, existing, leader,
- Aligning your leadership as a *committee* of department's chiefs, or
- Establishing a new hierarchy within a leadership committee with a chief revenue officer sitting at the top

The important element is ensuring that all leaders share the same ultimate goal, revenue, and collaborate on a unified strategy. A revenue operation reporting structure has been shown to combat the negative outcomes that result from the traditionally siloed team structure. It provides a north star to guide and unite revenue teams resulting in:

- Less wasted time, lone wolf mentalities, and finger-pointing
- More accurate forecasting, data-driven collaboration, full-funnel accountability, predictable business growth, faster sales cycles, and higher win rates

Clari recently published findings on [The Rise of Revenue Operations](#),⁷ which stated that switching to a unified Revenue Operations reporting model resulted in an **average company growth of 19% and 15% rise in profits**.

One of the clear takeaways from our survey was the desire to have better data and collaboration between Marketing and the rest of the revenue team. A Revenue Operations reporting structure does just that by removing organizational silos - Great!

But, in addition to organizational silos revenue teams also struggle with data silos. With incompatible tech stacks and purchase decisions being made in a vacuum, it can be impossible to get a single source of truth for anything.

Revenue leaders should take a good hard look at their tech stack and how they segment data. How many disparate systems are Marketing, Sales, and Customer Success teams using? Are technology decisions being made in a vacuum? Share this information among your revenue leaders.

It is safe to assume that most sellers want more from Marketing, but at its core they want to be informed and collaborated with. That can't happen if teams aren't working from the same data. By working together to ensure that all teams are working from the same data set, you will likely uncover new insights and opportunities.

Only once you have successfully removed and reduced the organizational and data-based silos can your revenue team claim alignment.

Invest in Account-Based Strategies

Account-based Marketing has been a hot strategy in recent years.

As a refresher, ABM is a business marketing strategy that concentrates resources on a set of target accounts within a market. It drives focus and prioritization throughout the revenue lifecycle, providing additional coverage for accounts in deal cycles and improving lead quality.

A [2019 ABM Benchmark study](#)⁶ found that at least 50% of B2B organizations had ABM initiatives in place for more than a year. The [2020 study](#)⁵ saw 73% of respondents reporting that their ABM strategy had **"greatly exceeded their organization's expectations,"** specifically sharing that their ABM strategy drove:

- Efficient use of marketing resources
- Better Sales and Marketing alignment
- A clearer path to ROI
- Stronger, more trustworthy relationships
- Better reporting potential
- Faster sales cycles
- Streamlined customer acquisition process

The message is clear: an ABM strategy drives organizational alignment and revenue growth.

Of all the actions we have described, this may be the easier change to navigate quickly since it doesn't require a leadership or organizational restructuring. In addition, both MSP and SalesLoft offer a wealth of thought leadership on the subject.

Long story short, regardless of company size, **if you aren't thinking ABM, YOU SHOULD!**

Conclusion: That's a Wrap

Revenue team alignment is still a pain for many organizations, particularly smaller to mid-sized companies that maintain smaller Marketing teams.

Misalignment has a direct, negative impact on productivity and, ultimately, revenue growth. Teams struggle with data and organizational silos, content is underutilized, and opportunities are missed.

What are some actions you can take?

1. Ensure marketing metrics align with the company's revenue goal.
2. Consider reorganizing your team and reporting structures, giving Marketing ownership of inbound sales development reps.
3. Consider restructuring your leadership team reporting structure in line with Revenue Operations best practices.
4. Review the revenue tech stack to reduce redundancies and data silos.
5. Share Marketing's goals and metrics with the team.
6. Implement ABM.

Companies should make changes to align the organization around a single source of truth and shared goals. Breaking down walls that have formed between the different arms of the revenue organization can unite the team across data, strategy, and leadership.

Sources

- 1) [The Divide Between Customer Service and Marketing is Costing Your Business](#) - Aberdeen Group
- 2) [How to Align Sales & Marketing to Boost Revenue by 208%](#) - Wheelhouse Advisors
- 3) [Do B2B Marketing and Sales Teams Cooperate Effectively?](#) - MarketingProfs, published February 2021
- 4) [B2B Marketing Statistics from 99 Firms](#) - 99Firms, published late 2020
- 5) [2020 ABM Benchmark Survey](#) - DemandGen, published based on September 2020 survey
- 6) [2019 ABM Benchmark Survey](#) - DemandGen, published based on September 2020 survey
- 7) [The Rise of Revenue Operations](#) - Clari, published March 2019