

Integrating Sales and Marketing: Case in Point Fortune 50 Computer Manufacturer (public)



For over four (4) years HotLink has had a variety of online programs with this customer and continues to service several programs for different divisions within the company. The case study below highlights a dynamic initiative that involved a very talented customer team of sales and marketing professionals who worked hand-in-hand with Hotlink to develop this solution for integrating sales and marketing activities.

CHALLENGE:

Our customer's initiative called for a solution to strengthen the communication between sales and marketing teams. The goal of the project was to ensure that marketing activities and lead generation results were more visible to and actionable by the sales team. The sales team should be able to better access marketing resources and utilize real-time information to increase sales for the company. Finally, the sales team should then have a process and associated web-based tools to become more supportive of and integrated with the marketing team's initiatives.

By addressing these challenges, the goal was to accomplish the following:

- Increase sales productivity through integrated tools for managing relationships;
- Improve on marketing strategies for acquisition, development and retention of clients; and
- Improve customer interaction, loyalty and service with clients.

Supplemental benefits expected:

- Address inefficiencies in the sales process and integrate solutions with marketing;
- Automate and track marketing processes and activities;
- Define a methodology for better allocating sales and marketing expenditures;
- Provide budgetary controls to manage marketing and sales expenses; and
- Provide metrics for measuring marketing expenditures related to sales revenue.

SOLUTION:

HotLink was chosen to partner with a program design team from Sales and Marketing to develop a solution to address the above challenges.

HotLink began with assessing and identifying core dynamics between sales and marketing. This process included interviews with members of the marketing, sales, and financial teams within this customer. The result -- HotLink and the customer mapped out the "best practices" for having sales integrate with marketing (and vice versa) and a web-based tool-kit for coordinated activities.

HotLink collaborated with the program design team to identify processes appropriate for automation and strategies for communicating the new program to sales. The intent was to provide a seamless website for sales where they would be able to focus on their core business strengths and rely on the HotLink solution to accomplish the specific goals outlined above. Our proprietary technology, MarketPlace™, was utilized as the core engine to drive this process.

Key functions of **MarketPlace™** for this customer include:

- A. Database integration of existing employees (users) with customers (recipients) for streamlined “select recipient, select product and send” capabilities;
- B. Centralization of procurement and distribution for all marketing “touches” to the contact database (i.e. branded merchandise, direct mail, collateral and spec sheets, electronic html newsletters and surveys, invitations, etc.);
- C. Implementation of fulfillment solutions (pick, pack, ship) for marketing execution and product distribution;
- D. Reporting on marketing expenditures by campaign, product and/or timeframe, with the ability to analyze costs associated with sales down to the individual client contact;
- E. Reporting on marketing activities performed by sales executives;
- F. Coordination with this customer’s advertising agencies; and
- G. ROI evaluation of marketing impact on sales results.

RESULTS (execution):

This company chose HotLink as a partner to support the sales and marketing efforts for Global and Large Corporate Accounts. **MarketPlace™** was well received by the sales teams and went a long way to creating a new level of balance between sales and marketing in these divisions.

- The **MarketPlace™** technology became more than “a marketing storehouse”. Sales began to use it as an account-planning tool every bit as much as they used it to follow up on leads or to send product literature, invitations and gifts to clients and prospects.
- Sales teams were empowered to manage marketing “TouchPoints” for each business site in each sales maker’s account set. TouchPoints included: marketing collateral, branded merchandise, email marketing, online surveys, invitation to events and direct-mail door opener campaigns.
- Marketing also gained from being able to measure usage on the back end, thus tracking which marketing communications pieces were the most useful in acquiring and retaining accounts.

RESULTS (by the numbers):

Some key metrics include:

- At the start of the program sales close rates began at 50% *but hovered around 75% by the third year.*
- *Marketing costs per closed sale began at \$170 per order, but as the close rates improved, the total **marketing costs per sale dropped to around \$125.*** Marketing costs also became more favorable as the mailing and contact lists became more precise and “scrubbed”.
- Sales teams enjoyed increased productivity, faster execution using integrated fulfillment processes and shortened sales cycles through more intelligent marketing communication tools and collateral materials.

Most importantly, sales and marketing were working together within a tangible process and web-based environment to synergize competencies related to the acquisition, development and retention of customers.