

4.4: What is the Difference Between Sales and Marketing

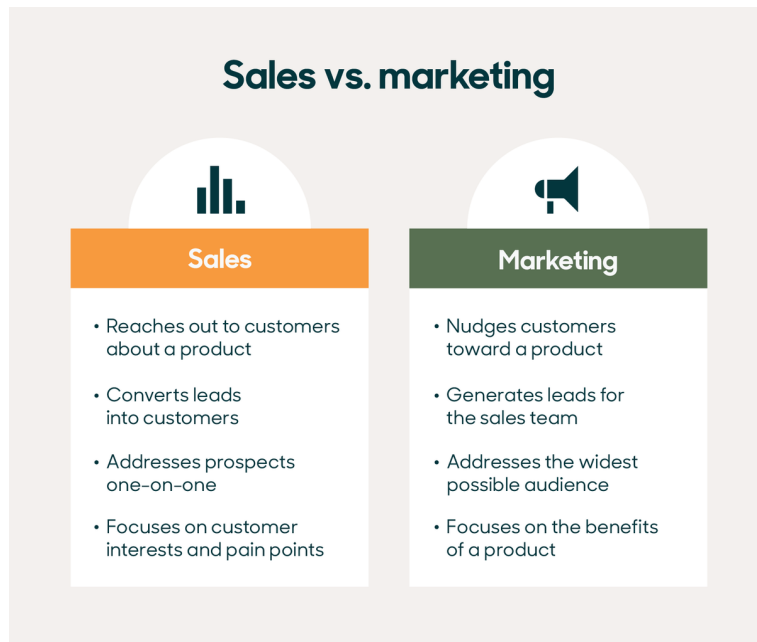


Fig. 4.4: Kumar, Kishan. "Sales vs. Marketing, [LinkedIn.com](#)

What's the Difference Between Sales and Marketing? (A Guide)

Many people use the terms marketing and sales interchangeably, since both business activities aim to sell products or services to consumers. While they share some similarities, these two concepts each have their own processes, strategies and goals. Knowing the differences between sales and marketing can help you determine what career path you wish to pursue. In this article, we define sales and marketing, compare both processes and describe you can integrate sales and marketing efforts successfully.

What is sales?

Sales is the process of selling and delivering products or services to consumers in exchange for compensation. Sales generation often involves expressing a product's benefits to potential customers through demonstrations. Companies can also offer discounts to make the product or service more attractive to consumers. A sale is the start of a contract between a vendor and a buyer. Salespeople are responsible for developing and cultivating relationships with potential and existing customers to help companies increase their sales and profitability.

What is marketing?

Marketing is the process of promoting goods or services to consumers to encourage sales. It usually involves analyzing consumers to better understand their needs or challenges, which can help marketers make purchases more appealing. Marketing also involves using measurable data, such as website visits, to determine customers' interests in a product or service. By using metrics, a marketing department can craft advertising that appeals to the people who are most likely to purchase a product or service.

Sales vs. Marketing

Here are some core elements of both sales and marketing, including the primary differences between the two, to help you understand each one more fully:

- **Process**

Both sales and marketing follow specific processes to achieve their goals. The marketing process focuses on informing consumers about a product or service. It involves creating strategies to market a product by explaining its benefits and describing the ways it can resolve challenges for consumers. The marketing process also includes determining the target audience for a product or service so marketers can create campaigns directly for those consumers. The sales process involves making an action plan to sell products or services using available tools and resources. While a marketing team works to make consumers aware of a product or service, a

sales team works to convert that awareness into actual sales. Typically, salespeople interact directly with customers to provide more details about products or services. Sales teams often have specific goals they work toward as part of the sales process.

- **Goals**

The primary focus of both sales and marketing is to generate income for a business, but the time frame for achieving those goals is different. Marketing focuses on long-term goals to promote the company or its products and services. For example, a marketing goal may be to increase the company's brand awareness, which refers to customers' recognition of a business. Marketing campaigns centered on promotional goals can often last for several months or more. In contrast, sales teams usually focus on achieving short-term quotas or sales volume goals. They aim to move products as efficiently as possible from the company to the consumer. Achieving this goal usually requires dividing tasks among the entire team, with each salesperson being responsible for meeting a sales target. These sales targets may be weekly, monthly or quarterly.

- **Strategies**

Since marketing and sales have different time frames for their goals, they also have different strategies for achieving them. Marketing departments develop campaigns based on market research about a target audience. Marketers use this information to highlight the benefits of a product or service and proactively answer questions consumers may have.

Some common marketing strategies include:

- Focus groups
- Blogs
- Social media
- Email newsletters
- Direct mail materials

Sales departments typically use more direct strategies to convert leads into sales. They connect with potential customers in various ways, such as phone calls, emails or in-person events. Once they contact a lead, they make a sales pitch to convince the potential customer to buy a product or service.

Some common sales strategies include:

- Solution selling
- Networking
- Conceptual selling
- Gap selling

Approach

While marketing and sales teams may have similar goals, they have different approaches to their work. Here are the primary differences between the two approaches:

- **Marketing Approach**

Here are some key aspects of the marketing approach:

- Marketing applies to a wide range of users by creating the concept of an ideal customer, who represents a specific target audience.
- Marketing is usually a collective process that aims to promote products or services for broad appeal.
- Typically, marketing considers customer needs and uses them to develop effective promotional strategies.
- Customers represent the beginning of the marketing process.

Sales Approach

Below are some essential details about the sales approach:

- Typically, sales teams focus on individual leads, rather than on a wide range of potential customers.
- Sales is often a person-to-person process involving a salesperson and a potential customer.
- A sales department focuses on meeting the needs of the company to achieve sales goals.
- In sales, the customer represents the end of the supply chain.

Integrating Sales and Marketing

Companies can successfully integrate their sales and marketing efforts to achieve success. Typically, this integration can occur by using various methods, which include:

- **Service level agreement**

A service level agreement (SLA) links sales and marketing through a formal agreement. Most SLAs have a shared set of deliverables that one department can provide to the other. It creates a shared goal for both departments and aligns them accordingly. The marketing department, for example, may have the responsibility of developing an ideal customer profile and identifying leads for the sales department to pursue. The sales department may then be responsible for receiving those leads and contacting them to close sales and generate revenue.

- **Lead generation**

Businesses can also develop stronger relationships between sales and marketing by leveraging market research to better inform the sales process. This process may involve a lead generation system, which typically includes:

- **Cold leads:**

These leads include people who have little or no awareness of a company's products or services. These leads usually come from marketing campaigns, such as social media ads, direct mailing and traditional advertisements.

- **Warm leads:**

A warm lead is someone who has expressed interest in a product or company. They may come from various marketing strategies, such as personalized email messages or paid advertising.

- **Qualified leads:**

These are consumers the marketing team has identified as ideal customers based on market research. The sales team can assess qualified leads to determine the best strategies to close deals and convert them into actual customers.

Source

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