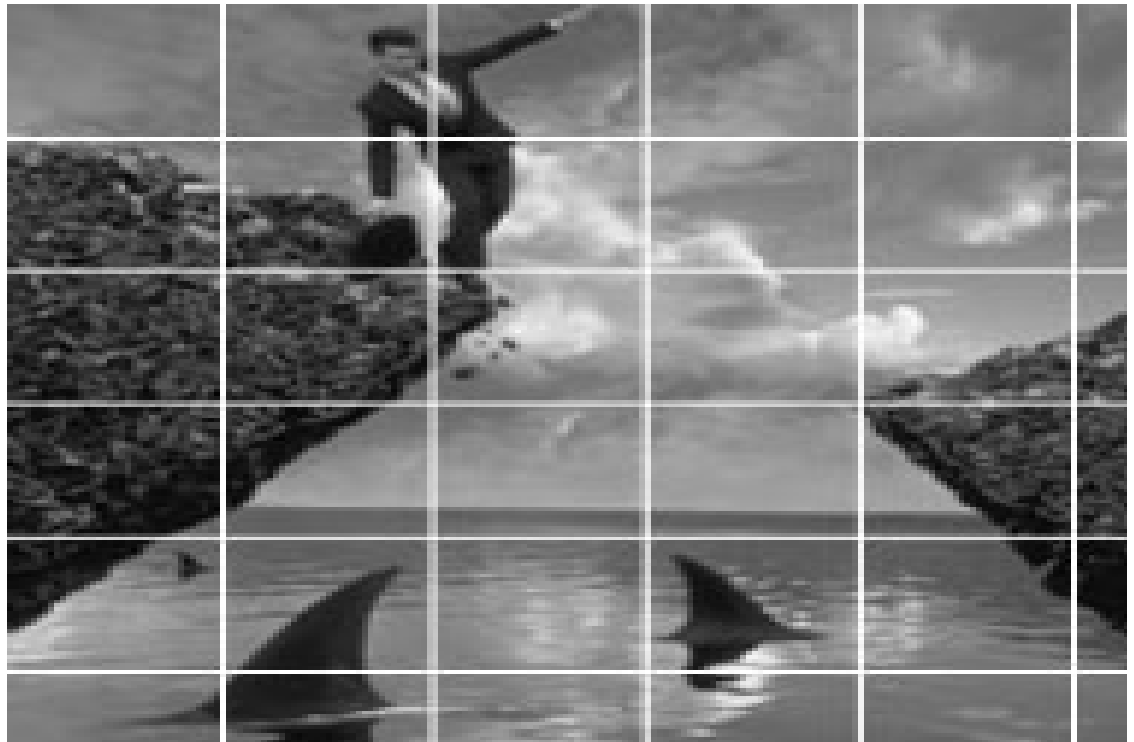


executive briefing report

ON POINT



10 Actions Every CEO Should Do – Today *(or How To Fix Your Sales and Marketing Engine)*

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How To Fix Your Sales and Marketing Engine

This is an open letter to the CEO;

Most companies I work with have a performance problem of some kind. Typically it involves the sales organization, the selling process, revenues and/or cost of the sale.

The following questions and actions are not meant to be antagonistic nor are they meant to be challenging. These questions and actions are meant to provide you some insight as to what may be wrong and what can be done to drive more sales and improve your business.

In about 80 percent of the cases, these questions uncover the biggest problems and issues affecting sales and revenue growth. To be sure, there are other issues affecting sales, marketing and revenue growth. However, these questions and actions uncover the issues that have to be addressed immediately. Of greater benefit is that the questions and actions will provide you with a roadmap to begin repairing the sales and marketing engine.

I hope you take the opportunity to not only review the questions and actions, but actually perform the actions necessary to address the questions.

Thanks! And Best of Luck!

How To Fix Your Sales and Marketing Engine

Let's get started. Here are the diagnostic tools that will allow you to see things from a different perspective and get under the hood of the sales and marketing engine – quickly and without getting into too much trouble. Also, and I guarantee you this, you will have little fun as a by-product.

1. Call into your main office number, you know the switchboard – if you have one. See what happens. Do you actually get someone? Or do you get a voice message prompting you?
 - a. If you have a switchboard or not – it does matter. If you do get through to someone, ask him or her to transfer you to someone in sales. If you get an automated message, follow the directions in order to get to sales.
 - b. Can you get to sales from the main number? If you can't, here's something to fix right away.
 - c. Okay, let's assume you get to someone in sales. If you get a voice mailbox, leave a message asking them to call you back. Obviously, whatever you do, don't leave *your real name*. As CEO you will be called back right away.
 - d. Call again. Go through the process above. Except this time you explain that you want to complain to someone.
 - e. Call again. Ask to speak to the CEO, yourself. Watch how you are sent around to others. See how you are screened? Now think about this; if you are screened this much, think about how much information is filtered before it actually lands on your desk. You have some many people protecting you

from the outside world – that whatever information is getting to you – it is filtered four or five time – before you hear about it – *if* – you get it at all.

2. How does your website work? Does it work for you? Here are three tests you can try out. Go to your website.
 - a. Test number 1. Look at the first webpage. Does it actually explain in clear terms what your company does? Does it explain – right there on the first page what problems your company solves?
 - b. Test number 2. Is it easy to navigate to get the necessary information?
 - c. Test number 3. See if you can get someone to send you something or call you by requesting additional information from your website. And if your website will allow it, ask that a representative contact you. Now wait to see if you get a response. If you don't get one in 8 hours – go strangle someone. If your website won't allow someone to contact you, you have something else to fix.
3. Here's my personal favorite. This action will tell you everything about how the market views your company. Are you ready? We are going to make an Ice Cold – *Blue* Ice Cold – Cold Call.
 - a. Pick up your phone and make five ice blue cold calls right now.
 - b. Don't think about it. "Just do it" as the Nike people say. Don't look for additional information about your product, your service or solution. Just pick up the phone and call into a company you know is not doing business with you.
 - c. Pick 5 companies, any 5 companies will do.

- d. Call. Please don't miss this opportunity. *Don't* not do this. This is a taste of life that you can only enjoy by doing it first hand.
 - e. Did you do it? You did - really? Great. Now, did you actually get through to a buyer or decision maker? I won't even ask if you got an appointment.
4. Now don't do this activity until you do number 3 above.
- a. This won't have the same effect if you didn't do number 3. Please go back and do number 3 if you haven't done so. Thank you.
 - b. Okay. Now ask your Marketing Vice President for the "elevator pitch" or "script" for whatever the heck it is that your company makes and sells, or for whatever you were cold calling for above.
 - c. Did you get the elevator pitch or sales script? Did you get it right away? Or did it take an hour to get? If you didn't get it right away, be a little suspect that the document may have just been created. My bet is you didn't get one, or if you did, it was out of date or was not well designed.

Okay. One more activity before we take a break. This one is the fun one!

5. Get up and go down the hall or to the floor where the sales people sit.
- a. Pull up a chair to the first sales person you see.
 - b. After you let them catch their breath, because you scared the crud out of them, ask them this; *"Who are the top ten companies you are targeting to make customers?"* If they rattle off ten, ask him or her to provide you a copy of the list. If they can – great. If they cannot produce a hardcopy list of some kind then they really aren't calling on them. Ask this question anyway – in either case, "What actions and activities are you using to get in the door and

identify needs and get business?” Then listen. If they cannot tell you what they have tried and what they are doing – bite your tongue.

- c. Now get up and go to the next sales person – (if they all haven’t scattered when they saw you sit down). Ask him or her same question or this question; *“What are your 3 biggest challenges in making a sale?”*
 - d. Listen to these answers very intently. You are listening for sales and marketing fixes and internal speed bumps. If you don’t get any internal speed bump issues or complaints – ask them for some internal speed bumps.
6. Take a break by going to the bar; Or to your cardiovascular surgeon; or lace up your running shoes. Your choice. Either way – take a break.
 7. The next day, start up the morning by going down to the marketing department. Gather the group together and ask them to perform number 3 above.
 - a. Because you’re the boss, you can get these people to do it. Just make sure you pop into their offices to listen to them to make sure that they are actually completing the cold calling.
 - b. Upon everyone’s completion, get them to gather around. Ask them how they did. Ask them how it felt. Listen. *(Warning: some of their answers may surprise you. Some may depress you.)* Ask if anyone had an “enlightening experience.” Ask if any of them got an appointment.
 - c. When they all say, “No” – and they will – ask them what they are going to do to fix this.
 - d. DO NOT ACCEPT, “It’s not my job to make cold calls.” Or “It’s the sales person’s job.” This is exactly their job. This is where sales and marketing fall apart. The problem is that marketing usually has no concept of what

sales has to do to get into see a prospective customer or they have forgotten, because they have been away from it for so long.

- e. IF THEY DO NOT ACCEPT this as their job, fire them all and start over. This type of attitude breeds a culture that will kill your organization.

8. Go back to your office. You may have to return some phone calls from your Human Resources Department. But after that, have you received any emails from your website inquiry? How about those phone calls – anyone call you back regarding sales or the complaint you left yesterday?

9. Go down to the customer support center or to the people that support your customers.

- a. Pull up a chair to the first customer support rep you see and ask them, *“What are the three biggest complaints you get?”* In addition, ask, *“What are the three biggest issues you have internally to resolving these complaints?”*

- b. Grab a headset, if that is the type of business you are in, and listen in on the calls. Do not try to field any calls or complaints, because you will definitely screw these up.

- c. Find out whether a customer complaint actually finds its way to the sales person managing the account.

10. Go visit 10 customers. Take your top 5 revenue producing accounts and the top 5 highest potential revenue producing accounts.

- a. Ask the account rep to set up the appointment.
- b. *You must* ask the account rep to go with you. No one else. You don’t need an entourage which everyone will try to supplant you with. If your sales rep

does not go with you, the account will wonder what is going on with the account rep.

- c. By going with the account rep alone, you will also breed a certain trust within the sales ranks. And that will build loyalty to the company that you cannot buy.

Perform these actions today. Tomorrow at the very latest. You will find these actions very valuable in that they will provide you insight as to how cohesive your sales, marketing and customer services organizations are.

In addition, you will gain insight as to how well your organization is defining the market and differentiating itself among the competitors.

Most of all, you have had a little fun and you just may have shaken the organization out of its lethargy.

AUTHOR BACKGROUND and EXPERIENCE

Joe Murphy has a background of 20 plus years in helping clients get results. Joe has held various leadership positions that included Chief Sales Officer and Senior Vice President & General Manager with responsibilities of P&L management, sales, consulting and delivery. He has managed national consulting organizations of over 400 consultants, has worked with the Fortune 500 public and private firms, government and not-for-profits. He has helped organizations increase revenue, improve customer satisfaction and reduce the costs. His work has taken him to Europe, India, and China and across North America. Last, Joe Murphy consults and advises business executives and IT leaders and speaks and presents regularly at conferences and panels.

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10 Things Every CEO Should Do To Improve Sales