

## Mediate or mandate: how should sales and marketing integrate?

*By Beth Rogers*

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A new and unique study conducted earlier this year by Beth Rogers, a Senior Lecturer at Portsmouth Business School and Research Director of the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management concludes that the sales function and marketing function in a company are more likely to be in conflict than harmony due to their interests clashing. "There are a variety of causes for this, but different objectives and measures are likely to be at the heart of any conflict, supported by "cultural" factors. Conflict seems to be generated by both functions, with some opinion leaders observing that senior management should take more responsibility for doing something to solve it. Previous studies of this topic and some sales and marketing opinion leaders perceive that this conflict is probably having a negative impact on company performance.

The limited research sources and the opinion leaders straw poll suggests that sales and marketing integration is desirable. Opinions on workable solutions are clustered around three subjects:

- that the Chief Executive Officer should expect and lead integration
- that there should be a chief officer reporting to the CEO with responsibility for sales and marketing and possibly other customer-focused functions
- that sales and marketing need to learn about and appreciate each other's responsibilities via joint training, meetings, and possible even job sharing or job swapping."

We find these conclusions to be in line with our own experiences and we concur with the view that companies should move towards a stronger alignment of marketing and sales, especially by eliminating the conflict of goals and measures.

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