



Marketing Portals that Deliver

Providing great sales support in B2B marketing.

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Provide great sales support, or else.

Marketing professionals know that great support for their salespeople is a key deliverable in any economy. But when economic conditions worsen and fear grips businesses – certainly the case today – marketers experience even more pressure to deliver targeted, compelling support for their salespeople and sales channels. Salespeople demand more leads, more selling tools, more competitive analyses, more tradeshow, more email campaigns, more seminars – the list goes on.

Unfortunately the marketing budget is a prime target for cost-cutting as the economic outlook dims – leaving marketing executives in a tough spot. Most B2B marketing departments face 2012 with more “must-accomplish” goals and fewer resources. It doesn’t matter what heroics were pulled off in 2011 – the executive team expects more rabbits from marketing’s smaller number of hats in 2012.

In 1990 I faced a similar situation as a marketing manager when the CEO of the company informed me and my marketing colleagues of his “tough love” approach to generating revenue in a recession: “It’s simple,” he said. “You’ll either deliver great sales support to each and every channel, or your successors will.”

SAAS: Right Approach for a New Reality

Marketing applications that use a software-as-a-service (SAAS) model can help marketers “deliver the goods” in the face of budget constraints. SAAS applications such as RevBase provide robust functionality backed by comprehensive support and a service level guarantee – all for a modest setup fee and a pay-as-you go monthly service fee. This means a marketing department can configure a sales support solution for their specific needs in days, deploy it within a few weeks, and produce business results that exceed the investment within two months. With an SAAS application such as RevBase[®], marketers pay only for the functionality they need to produce results. What’s more, they benefit from the expertise of the SAAS provider’s customer care team, who are partners in their success.

Your Marketing Portal: Sales Nirvana or Wasteland?

Marketing portals have emerged as the principal means of sales support in the B2B world. Today's marketing portals evolved from first-generation marketing intranets and sales extranets, and typically provide self-service resources for all of the company's sales channels including direct teams, distributors, dealers, agents and reps, retailers, etc. A marketing portal also serves targeted content to audiences such as marketing partners, public relations teams, creative agencies, and industry influencers.

Given the importance of sales support in B2B environments, marketing portals are a hot topic. Marketers want to update their previously-created intranets and/or extranets to deliver more information and tools that help their salespeople win business. For some, the situation is dire: their salespeople are complaining that the current marketing/sales intranet site is a wasteland of poor navigation, outdated materials and inconsistent presentation.

Marketers also see portals as an avenue to streamline communication between marketing and sales, so both departments operate more efficiently. Ideally, the marketing portal is a "sales nirvana" where every salesperson finds the right information at the right time for each selling situation, and where every salesperson benefits from best practices and company-wide expertise.

A Marketing Portal that Delivers

SAAS applications such as RevBase are powerful, ready-to-use solutions which eliminate the delays, frustration and cost of internally-developed portals. Marketers have implemented RevBase to transform outdated sales support web sites into marketing portals that deliver.

What are the components of a marketing portal that delivers? Six capabilities are essential:

- 1. Combines electronic and physical assets into a "one-stop-shop."**

A marketing portal that delivers is comprehensive, up-to-date and is "the place to go" for marketing/sales materials in any and all formats.

2. Delivers qualified leads plus the marketing/sales tools to use with the leads.

Salespeople pick-up new leads and update lead status within the portal. In addition, leads are presented with the appropriate sales tools and sales approach.

3. Presents marketing materials based on each salesperson's territory, role and focus.

A marketing portal that delivers is partitioned into virtual sub-portals that present relevant information – and nothing more. Access control and security are enforced behind the scenes, supporting diverse sales channels and complex channel structures.

4. Integrates self-service search with active delivery of updates and alerts.

The marketing portal is dynamic, and provides filters for both urgent communications and alerts (e.g., price changes) and for targeted materials that address customer-specific issues.

5. Promotes collaboration and dialogue.

A marketing portal that delivers includes tools for idea exchange, discussions, and user-contributed content.

6. Provides customized marketing materials and sales tools.

The marketing portal has templates that can be customized or personalized for specific sales situations. This includes support for co-branding materials, customer-specific offers, personalized contact information, and more.

In 2012, can you afford NOT to have a marketing portal that delivers?

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