



## Executive Track

# What are Your Firm's *Cultural* Barriers to Marketing and Business Development Integration?

## A Professional Services Marketing Barriers Assessment

For many professional service firms (PSFs), integrating marketing and business development (selling) functions can be an uphill battle if they haven't yet identified their structural and cultural impediments to integration.

Take our short **Cultural Integration Barriers Assessment** to see which cultural barriers exist at your firm. Then you can take our [Structural Integration Barriers Assessment](#). From there, you will be invited to consider how elements of *The Integration Imperative* might be applied to erase these organizational silos.

Note: If you complete these assessments [on our internet site](#), the assessment results are **instant and 100 percent private**, visible only to you. We do not collect any information about you.

Check all that apply

1. Many of our revenue-generating practitioners are allowed to avoid marketing and selling.
2. Our revenue-generating practitioners sometimes exclude marketers and business developers from important strategy decisions, meetings or initiatives.
3. We offer no possibility for equity ownership to nonrevenue-generating marketing and selling professionals.
4. We under-resource marketing and sales support; this leaves marketers and sellers little or no time to increase the value of their functions.
5. Our marketing and selling functions are poorly defined.
6. Our revenue-generating practitioners have unrealistic expectations about what nonrevenue-generating marketers and sellers can achieve.
7. Our managers have not succeeded in leading cultural shifts that could help the firm compete effectively in the future.



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- 8. We do a poor job of preparing for the economy's down cycles.
- 9. Our firm tightens its marketing or selling budgets in a knee-jerk fashion, regardless of those functions' effectiveness.
- 10. We are not aggressively working to erase our marketing and selling silos.
- 11. We have only recently hired nonrevenue-generating marketing or selling professionals.
- 12. Our marketing and selling functions look like a patchwork quilt of definitions, organization structures, and reporting relationships.
- 13. People in marketing and selling positions come and go too frequently.
- 14. We don't offer our marketing and selling professionals enough assistance in growing their academic credentials in service management, marketing or selling.
- 15. Our management function used to be more collegial. Now managers are expected to deliver tangible business results.
- 16. Increasingly, our managers are required to make decisions that have competitive consequences for the whole firm.



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## Answers to the Cultural Barriers Self-Assessment\*

**If you answered Q 1-2,** your firm may be challenged by a *culture of distrust related to marketing and business development.*

When it comes to marketing and selling, the issue of accountability looms large. If not handled well, unevenly assigned accountability can create a debilitating environment of distrust. And worse, some firms allow their people to avoid marketing and selling responsibilities, or allow performance measurement programs to be so individually applied that they are organizationally ineffective.

Toxic levels of distrust also occur when shared accountability for marketing and business development is denied to those who seek it, such as when revenue-generating practitioners expressly exclude marketers and business developers from marketing or selling meetings or collaborating on related projects.

**If you answered Q 3-6,** your firm may be experiencing the cultural challenge of people who *feel marginalized related to marketing and sales.*

A culture of distrust leads to marginalization. But marginalization also stems from a structural arrangement, when private PSFs don't offer equity ownership to non revenue-generating marketing and sales professionals.

The sentiment is, "Marketers don't generate revenues, so why should we offer them a piece of equity ownership?" For business developers, the sentiment is, "People who just sell aren't the real professionals here; we, the revenue-generating practitioners, are!" These outmoded notions, exacerbated by recessions, only exacerbate the marginalization felt by those denied entry into "the club."

Feelings of marginalization are also fueled by old fashioned cultural norms, including under-resourcing marketing and sales support, poorly-defining or holding unrealistic expectations for marketers and sellers to achieve, and maintaining the love-hate relationship that has traditionally existed regarding selling in most professional firms.

**If you answered Q 7-10,** your firm may be experiencing the cultural challenge of *short-term thinking related to marketing and sales.*

Recessions, globalization, rapid technology changes and other marketplace shifts pose a riveting challenge for PSFs and B2Bs. Yet most firms' managers have not yet envisioned the critical cultural shifts that will be required in order to compete more effectively in the long term.

It's not all bad. But when the economy is up and revenues are flowing, how well equipped have managers been to insist on preparation for the next downturn? And when the economy stumbles, how aggressively are they working to erase marketing and sales silos and pursuing integration for better go-to-market effectiveness? Their firms' survival depends on it.



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**If you answered Q 11-12**, your firm may be experiencing cultural challenges related to the "immaturity" of marketing and sales functions.

PSFs haven't always invested in marketing and sales, so these functions are still somewhat immature. It's not uncommon to hear about a firm hiring its first-ever marketing coordinator or business development professional. This "immaturity" feeds into the patchwork quilt of definitions, organization structures, and reporting relationships of marketing and sales. There's no industry standard yet.

It's no one's fault, then, that functional disconnects exist, or that their effects seep into professional firms' cultures. But this explanation won't serve as a good excuse to not pursue more effectiveness through integration. It will be up to PSF and B2B managers -- within and across sectors -- to erase the silos that are created by an immature field.

**If you answered Q 13-14**, your firm may be experiencing cultural challenges related to *unrealistic expectations, demand for talent and high turnover of marketing and sales functions*.

The "immaturity" of marketing and business development feeds a cycle of unrealistic expectations, demand for talent, and high turnover. The elements of this complex cycle create enormous cultural obstacles to marketing and sales effectiveness in professional firms.

Considering the fragmented landscape for access to knowledge, credentials and best practices, highly skilled professional service marketers and business developers are few and far between. Simultaneously, PSFs' and B2Bs' demand for experienced marketers and business developers is rising. What do you get when demand is high and experienced supply is low? Unrealistic expectations, among a firm's practitioners and executives, and among marketers and business developers too. Inevitably, the result is a revolving door. And the cultural ramifications can be toxic.

**If you answered Q 15-16**, your firm may be experiencing cultural challenges stemming from the organization's *shifting leadership demands* related to marketing and business development functions.

This cultural challenge centers around the very definition of leadership in a professional environment, and how one manages a business built on the intellectual capital of high-achieving equals.

In the professional firm of yesteryear, "leadership" definitely did not connote "management." Decisions were made by collegial consensus. Today, the concept of "leadership" in a professional firm faces enormous shifts. Professional firm leaders are increasingly required to make enterprise-oriented decisions that have unavoidable competitive consequences. They are being asked to set the strategic direction that will represent a compelling-enough call to action to motivate individualistic professionals.

These leaders will need to drive their organizations' evolving expectations of the management function. With more shifts surely ahead in the hyper-competitive PSF and B2B marketplace, managers will be expected to introduce and reinforce new norms about what management is supposed to do for a professional enterprise. They'll be expected to deliver results they've never had to deliver before.

**\*for more detail, go to our overview of [The Integration Imperative's online self-assessment tool](#)**



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