



What are Your Firm's *Structural* 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 **Structural Integration Barriers Assessment** to see which cultural barriers exist at your firm. Then you can take our [Cultural 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. Our firm markets and sells through a matrixed business organization (e.g., geographies, industries, service lines).
2. Our marketing and selling "hand-offs" (e.g., turning inquiries into proposals) aren't as seamless as they could be.
3. Our marketing and selling processes are hampered by problems with our technology systems, performance incentives and measures, and/or internal communications.
4. We have trouble prioritizing our emphasis on acquiring clients, retaining them, or building our book of business with them.
5. We sometimes are unclear on who's supposed to make marketing or business development decisions.
6. We are uneven in assigning aspects of marketing and selling functions (e.g., sometimes we assign marketing and selling to a practice leader; sometimes to a separate marketing or sales head.)
7. Our firm expects people to collaborate informally on marketing and business development initiatives.
8. Our marketing programs emphasize marketing communications (i.e., holiday cards, brochures, press releases, advertising).



ExpertiseMarketingSM

9. Our managers have increased calls for return-on-investment proof of our marketing programs.

10. People in our marketing and selling functions are not offered a pathway to equity ownership or top management positions.

11. Our firm has begun outsourcing some of our marketing services to external vendors.

12. Our firm doesn't invest enough in marketing and selling training for our revenue generating practitioners.

13. Our firm doesn't invest enough in broadening the skills of our nonrevenue generating marketers and sellers.



ExpertiseMarketingSM

Answers to the Structural Barriers Self-Assessment*

If you answered Q 1-4, your firm may be experiencing *a lack of coordination in its go-to-market processes*.

Process coordination challenges can occur when PSFs do business through a matrix of geographies, industries, functional focuses and/or service lines. With each layer of organizational complexity, the challenges increase for seamlessly managing an inquiry into a lead, a prospect into a proposal, or a proposal into a client. Process coordination becomes even murkier because most firms allow a lot of variability in the way their marketing and selling activities are implemented or managed.

Process coordination challenges are exacerbated by under-performing technology systems, uneven performance incentives and effectiveness measures, or problems with internal communications. Some PSFs also have trouble prioritizing whether to emphasize activities to acquire clients, retain them, or build the firm's book of business with them.

The bottom line: a lack of process coordination exists because the function of marketing is not seamlessly integrated with the function of sales.

If you answered Q 5-7, your firm may be experiencing *a state of confusion and uneven accountabilities in marketing and sales*. What exactly is marketing? How is it different than sales? Who's in charge of what, and how should we structure it?

In a PSF or B2B, sales is a one-to-one activity. But marketing is a one-to-many activity. The potential for boundary confusion creeps in when one-to-one practitioners (accountants, engineers, lawyers, etc.) want to get involved in the one-to-many aspects of marketing. (Examples include revenue-generators developing their own sub-brands, or hoarding prospect names in their own personalized databases.) What's more, many professional firms split assignments for aspects of marketing and sales functions. When they do, they create gaps or duplications in accountability.

Also, many firms expect people to collaborate informally on marketing and sales initiatives. Friendly collaboration sounds good in theory, but it's important to officially outline shared accountabilities for each function's success (including structural components like updated job descriptions and clearer reporting relationships). Otherwise, this "friendship" model leaves an organization with under-harnessed people and ineffective professional service marketing and sales.

If you answered Q 8-11, your firm may have *structurally lopsided marketing and sales programs*. We've identified at least four indicators of lopsidedness.

First, a budgetary over-emphasis on marketing communications (i.e., holiday cards, brochures, press releases, advertising), and not enough on strategic activities like segmentation, differentiation, client research or new service development.

Second, an increase in calls for ROI proof of a marketing communications program. ROI pressures exist precisely because PSFs over rely on less-than-optimally researched and undifferentiated marcom tactics for less-than-well-targeted prospects.



ExpertiseMarketingSM

Third, position descriptions that overemphasize communications, and relegate marketing and business development roles to “support” (literally set up to be silo’ed), instead of being crafted with clear pathways to strategic leadership. Many PSFs neither recruit nor try to retain marketers and business developers who have strategic or analytical capabilities.

Fourth, evidence that some of the tactical aspects of communications are beginning to be handled externally by outsourced vendors. It’s tempting to outsource commoditized marketing services, especially in tight financial times. And it’s smart to manage marketing and selling budgets for maximum productivity. But if PSFs delegate their tactical initiatives away, without a parallel initiative to ensure better integration of marketing and selling functions, they risk exacerbating the organizational silos that have already crept in.

If you answered Q 13-14, your firm may have *underemphasized marketing and sales skills growth*.

A professional service firm (PSF) is essentially a collection of entrepreneurs who thrive on friendly internal competition. But practitioners can become more interested in what their colleagues think than what clients think! When PSFs under-invest in the marketing and selling skills-growth of their revenue generators (and eventually holding them accountable for gaining these skills), it’s a slippery slope. It can hurt the entire firm if a practitioner’s advancement is not tied to the marketplace.

And what about growing the skills of marketers and business developers? There’s talk about how PSF and B2B marketers should provide “insights on complex, strategic issues” or “work hand-in-glove with innovators” or “speak the language of the CEO.” Exactly how should they learn these important skills?

Shouldn’t PSF managers more consciously support the integrated skills growth and career advancement of their marketing and business development professionals? Currently most don’t. No wonder there’s an overemphasis on marcom!

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



ExpertiseMarketingSM