

How do we increase top line growth in a shaky global economy?

The recent economic downturn has forced many companies, large and small, to struggle through a myriad of business changes to improve or maintain their bottom line. Most of these efforts have been in the form of organization restructuring, job elimination, cost reduction, and improved operational efficiencies. While the disciplines, practices and metrics driven by Lean Manufacturing, Six Sigma, and other enterprise process improvement initiatives have proven quite successful in achieving operational excellence and major cost efficiencies, they do not address the paramount concern in most CEO's minds--how to increase top line growth in a shaky global economy.

While corporations have shifted their models through downsizing and cost cutting, customers have dramatically changed their perception of value. Purchasing roles and buyer expectations continue to fluctuate as demands for leaner inventories, lower pricing, shorter life cycles, and increased commoditization of products result in less competitive differentiation.

Augmenting these concerns, companies continue to blend their marketing and sales functions and thereby ignore the unique boundaries of the two processes. By and large, sales forces remain organized along geographical territories with some exceptions for managing large and national accounts.

It is necessary to realign the marketing and sales models to focus on **VALUE CREATION**. Each customer will interpret value differently depending on particular unique business needs (price, availability, performance, customization, warranty, etc.). Marketing departments must stay "ahead of the pack" in determining changing needs and expectations in the marketplace and responding to them quickly through ongoing research and innovation. Sales organizations must be aligned to *fit* specific customer needs and be able to provide the appropriate strategy to create the value proposition.

Our practice views the Business Process as parts of a triangle where each major function *supports and drives* the others continuously. We look at the **Marketing Effectiveness** through the various tools applied to determine market segmentation, distribution channels, product mix, brand performance, customer portfolio, pricing, and promotional strategies. We assist in performing a company audit of strengths and weaknesses (SWOT) as well as competitive analyses. Then we look at the **Sales Effectiveness** of the organization by reviewing structure, sales approach, customer margin, cost to serve, management layers, T&E expenses, productivity, service, training needs, and compensation programs. We then assist the client company in developing an action plan to align the organization structure with the identified opportunities to maximize resource utilization and generate short-term and long-term top line growth.

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