How Collaboration Makes All Departments Revenue Generators

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As a business matures, limited resources and strained schedules can result in a lack of communication between teams, forcing each into its own niche. It is easy for teams to grow in bubbles, developing a limited understanding of other teams' roles and objectives.

Growing companies that are still working to create foundational branding, marketing and lead generation resources may find it difficult to imagine a unified vision that ties all teams together. However, ensuring teams grow together and recognizing their roles in revenue generation can prevent costly misunderstandings down the road. Let's define these roles and recognize each team's contributions:

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Sales

Sales teams are easily recognized as revenue generators, but it can be a long journey from the first touch with a potential client to a sale, and each team bears responsibility for different parts of that success. All contributions should be recognized.

Marketing and communications

Both marketing and communications personnel must understand their industry, company brand, goals and messaging. Communications teams interact primarily with clients and investors, although they are also critical to a business's internal correspondence.

Communications departments promulgate a company's brand story and protect its reputation while promoting employee wellbeing and helping retain talent. While often seen only as a cost, these services provide measurable value in time not spent hiring and onboarding, combatting negative perceptions about the brand or winning back lost customers.

Marketing teams are also responsible for brand awareness but are focused on research, data collection, campaign creation, lead generation, managing budgets and calculating the success of marketing initiatives. Marketing departments have measurable goals and benchmarks that are traditionally tied to revenue.

Design and SEO

Design and marketing are distinct specialties not usually treated as interchangeably as marketing and communications. Graphic designers use visuals to create an emotional connection with an audience and help convey brand values. Marketers use the assets created by designers to run campaigns and generate leads.

SEO specialists make sure potential clients find the company and are exposed to its marketing campaigns. They do critical research and have valuable insights into how customers are connecting with the brand.

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Breaking down barriers and bringing teams together

While all departments have distinct responsibilities, from an external perspective, there is no sharp line between promotions and sales, marketing and SEO, or design and customer experience. All parties must be in-sync to create consistent encounters, as consumers can no longer be expected to follow a straight line through a sales funnel, but instead zig-zag between different online, media, print and in-person experiences with a business.

It is easy for each department to get stuck in the rut of its day-to-day activities, ultimately leading to divisions within a business. However, failure to recognize each department's role in revenue generation can lead to unintended inefficiencies within the business that include:

- Disjointed, ineffective visuals
- Inconsistent or confusing messaging
- Low-quality leads
- Repetitive, costly revisions on design projects
- Poor user experience with online assets
- Low employee morale

Several years ago, when our agency was onboarding a team member for a new sales position, design was introduced for the first time to the language sales used on calls and in emails. The design team had known in broad terms what benefits we were offering clients, but not specifically how those benefits were being presented.

My partner and I agreed it was absurd it had taken us so long

to share this basic information between sales, marketing and design. When we later embarked on brand refresh and expansion of our offerings, we involved all team leaders in the discussions of our vision and strategy. Getting feedback from all sources about questions and concerns they receive from clients in their daily communications allowed us to generate well-rounded buyer personas and create materials that more effectively speak to our clients' needs.

You can cultivate collaborative and profitable relationships by fostering good habits from the outset. Here are a few tips:

1. Align team goals

Everyone may appear to be working toward the same goals when the reality is subtly different. For example, assume your marketing department is charged with delivering leads and is measuring its successes by lead volume.

The objective of both marketing and sales is new customers. However, simply measuring lead volume without focusing on lead quality can hamstring sales. Measuring marketing success by quantity and quality of leads is more effective. In a collaborative relationship, teams can:

2. Develop sales-enabled resources

Sales-enabled resources are those that help close deals. Aside from the obvious advantage of customer acquisition, creating sales-enabled resources also forces communication between departments and helps everyone understand why clients buy. Examples of sales-enabled resources include:

- Email drip campaigns
- Case studies
- Sales decks

- Guest posts
- Competitor comparisons

Everyone, from marketing leaders to SEO specialists, can have some role in developing these items.

3. Foster an environment that shares resources and enables feedback

Inefficiencies and misunderstandings create frustrations that can ultimately affect your bottom line. Designers who are not brought into a campaign until late in the process can feel like their hands are tied and may not produce optimal work. SEO specialists who do not know brand guidelines cannot sustain a consistent user experience when performing on-site SEO updates. Do not make people work for the resources or information they need. All teams should:

- Have access to all brand assets and design guidelines
- Understand brand messaging
- Understand the emotional connection customers have with the brand
- Have access to a central pool of customer data

You should also develop systems for regular feedback, and make sure everyone knows feedback is welcome.

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Teams must be aware of each other's challenges to support each other. They must also understand what role they play in revenue generation and why their skills are valuable.

Fostering such understanding from the beginning helps create cohesive, profitable endeavors.

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