

BY JIM FOGARTY

## Give Your Sales Team Access to the Collective Genius of Your Organization

**T**he goal of every marketing and sales organization is to consistently articulate unique, compelling and credible messages to their customers throughout the sales process. While companies use both “air cover” such as advertising and “ground cover” such as field-based salespeople to deliver their messages, studies have shown that up to 85% of a company’s brand image and the purchase decisions of their customers are determined by the direct interaction between salespeople and target buyers.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, none of the stakeholders are happy with the interactions:

- **TARGET CUSTOMERS** – of executives that take regular meetings with sales reps, more than 80% say the reps are unprepared, at least 70% simply “talk product” and know little about their business<sup>2</sup>
- **MARKETING AND SALES MANAGEMENT** – less than 25% of CMOs and senior sales executives are satisfied that their sales teams can accurately and consistently communicate targeted messages to their customers<sup>3</sup>
- **SALESPEOPLE** – salespeople spend up to 40% of their time creating presentations, customizing messaging and getting ready to interact with customers<sup>4</sup>; they use only 20%-50% of the materials created for them by marketing<sup>5</sup>; and only 10%-20% of salespeople are creating the “best” message for their prospects<sup>6</sup>

The job of frontline salespeople is not getting any easier. A recent study by IDC found that sales cycles have increased 24% and the number of decision makers involved has increased

to seven<sup>7</sup>. Combine this with increasingly competitive markets, evolving end-user needs, and a growing bag of products, services and solutions that salespeople are asked to position and sell, and it is clear that frontline salespeople and the marketing and sales organizations that support them face a daunting challenge.

Salespeople and marketing and sales management need a tool that:

- Connects salespeople with the best content, peer insight and subject matter experts (“sales assets”) for each specific selling situation
- Enables salespeople to intuitively access the best sales assets on-demand
- Promotes the most appropriate content to the salespeople and allows them to personalize it while reinforcing the brand
- Enables marketers to develop messaging and sales assets that salespeople actually use by ensuring they are aligned with the way salespeople really sell
- Allows subject matter experts to publish and promote their knowledge, content and insight without duplicating their efforts with every salesperson
- Allows marketing and sales management to see how the sales assets are actually used and get feedback on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of them from the sales team

In essence, marketing and sales teams need to harness the collective genius of their organizations and make it easily accessible to every frontline sales resource.

The field of “sales enablement” has emerged to fill this gap in marketing and sales, and a Chicago-

1 Source: Booz, Allen, Hamilton Study

2 Source: Sirius Decisions, “Mission Critical Report: Executive-Level Selling: Segment and Vendor review” 16 December 2005

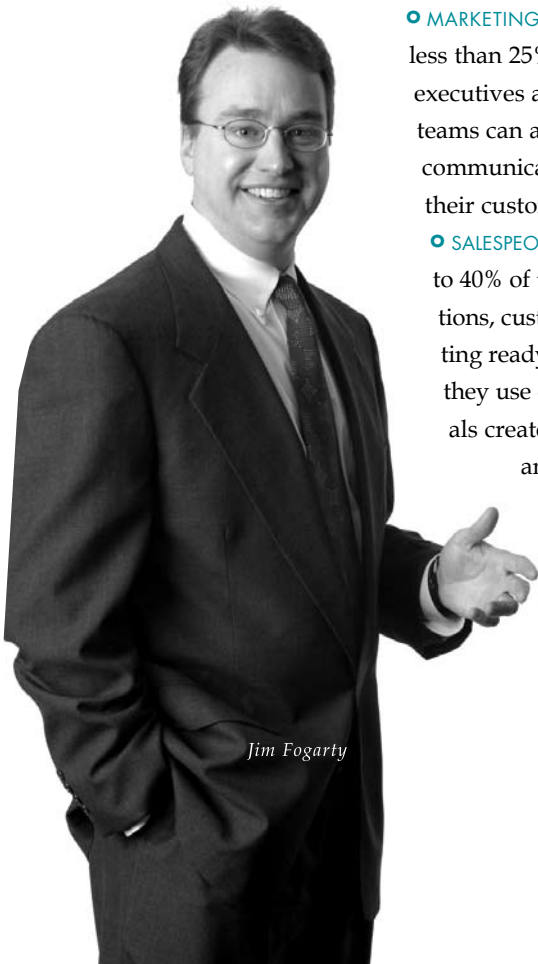
3 Source: CMO Council, “Message Maps and Gaps Report” 2004

4 Source: CMO Council, “Message Maps and Gaps Report” 2004

5 Source: AMA/CMM Group Roundtable Discussions, 2002

6 Source: AMA/CMM Group Roundtable Discussions, 2002

7 Source: IDC, “IDC’s Customer Experience Survey, June 2007, in partnership with IDG



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based firm, SAVO Group, has distinguished itself with its award-winning, on-demand application. Frank Lynn & Associates has partnered with SAVO Group to extend the application to organizations whose sales coverage models include indirect sales channels such as consultants, system integrators, VARs, manufacturer's representatives, dealers and distributors. In these sales models, the challenge for the corporate marketing and sales management team can be even more challenging than the one it faces with its own direct sales team because:

- The sales enablement challenge is often bigger—a typical company may employ 10s or 100s of direct salespeople while their indirect channel partners can collectively deploy 100s or even 1,000s
- The needs of the channel salespeople are different—the indirect sales channels' target decision makers, value propositions and sales processes are typically different from those of the direct sales organization and, therefore, their sales support needs are different
- Channel mindshare is more elusive—sales professionals in the indirect sales channels are one step removed from their suppliers, and most

of them sell products, services and/or solutions from numerous manufacturers and service providers. Therefore, suppliers must compete aggressively for the hearts and minds of the channel salespeople

It is not surprising that in the 2007 VAR Business Annual Report Card, value-added resellers gave suppliers 65 out of a possible 100 when asked how effective vendors were at providing sales support<sup>8</sup>. If done well, the benefits of extending sales enablement to channel partners are numerous and compelling because it:

- Arms channel salespeople with the best sales content and coaching tools in an easy-to-use, just-in-time fashion
- Gives channel salespeople access to a supplier's expertise and subject matter experts—resources that are often difficult for them to find
- Manages the way corporate brand messages are delivered by channel partners
- Accelerates the ramp-up of new channel partners
- Increases mindshare with existing channel partners

Organizations that leverage indirect sales channels in complex, consultative sales situations benefit greatly from the use of sales enablement tools. FL&A and SAVO work with clients whose sales coverage models include indirect sales channels to:

- Define and document the client's sales strategy (e.g., target markets, key sales situations, value propositions, sales processes)
- Map the indirect sales channels to the sales strategy
- Align sales assets with the key sales situations and selling processes
- Configure SAVO's application software to enable the channel's sales processes

#### SUMMARY

*We invite you to learn more about sales enablement and how FL&A and SAVO can help you use it to enhance the performance of your direct and indirect sales teams.*

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