

# Smarketing | The Ultimate Power Couple

Written by:  
Amy Murch & Kelsey McKeon

With contributions from:



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# 1

## What is smarketing?

Sales + Marketing = Smarketing.

Smarketing simply refers to sales and marketing alignment. It is the process of aligning sales and marketing teams around shared business goals and objectives in order to ultimately aid customer acquisition and revenue generation.

It seems like a no-brainer, right? When sales and marketing work closely together toward a common vision, they are better positioned to efficiently achieve business and revenue growth. In fact, **companies with aligned sales and marketing functions have 36% better customer retention rates and drive 208% more revenue.**

But implementing and executing an effective smarketing strategy is no easy feat, and it's even more challenging to align remote or distributed marketing and sales teams, a common COVID-19 era reality.

We spoke with sales and marketing leaders from [GetAccept](#), [Hubspot](#), [Aircall](#) and [Pleo](#) to gather insights on how you might approach your smarketing strategy.

### Do you think your sales and marketing teams communicate effectively?



Poll Data from [Smarketing Webinar](#) (Sept 2021)

# 2

## Smmarketing in Practice

### How often should your sales and marketing teams meet and collaborate?

If you have to ask how often your sales and marketing teams should be meeting, they might not be meeting often enough.

Regular collaboration between sales and marketing teams prevents information silos and helps both teams keep larger organizational goals top-of-mind during day-to-day activities.

Sales and marketing teams at HubSpot and Aircall collaborate daily.

**“This is a daily collaboration. We are fully aligned towards the success of our customer so there is not a day that goes by without interactions.”**

Susanne Rönqvist Ahmadi,  
VP of International Marketing @ HubSpot

**“Weekly, formally. Daily, informally.”**

Jeff Reekers, CMO @ Aircall



Leaders hesitant to add another meeting to already overburdened schedules shouldn't worry. Opportunities for daily smarketing collaboration can come in many forms, such as:

- Sales reps sitting in on marketing meetings (and vice versa)
- Marketing teams listening to recorded sales calls
- Informal opportunities for sales and marketing teams to connect digitally via apps like Discord and Slack
- Huddles
- Marketing Activity summaries emailed to Sales reps on a regular basis
- Celebrating mutual win stories between sales & marketing via deal reviews - where sales reps give a play-by-play account of how they won the opportunity







### **What is an important metric that aligns sales and marketing?**

Sales accepted leads (SAL) are an important metric Sara Brooks uses to align sales and marketing teams in her role as VP of Sales at Pleo. A focus on SALs reduces friction between sales and marketing functions by establishing a common goal that requires effort from both teams within a previously agreed-upon framework.

She describes SAL as the “handshake” that happens when a sales team agrees a marketing-sourced lead is qualified.

“A lot of times marketing is measured on the number of leads you generate but...the quality is not taken into account as much,” Brooks says. “[With SALs], the quality has been approved by the team who receives it.”

SALs are a unique metric to keep your sales and marketing teams in sync. To get started tracking SALS, first bring both teams together to discuss what should define an SAL for both teams. Once you’ve defined a common goal, you can figure out a way to build SAL identification into your process.





## **What is a KPI to measure marketing and sales success that you don't typically hear about?**

MQLs and SQLs are some of the most common KPIs that come to mind when discussing sales and marketing alignment, but those metrics only cover one component of the customer journey.

Sales leaders from HubSpot, Aircall, and Pleo all use Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a KPI to measure marketing and sales success.

**"Nothing else really matters as much as happy customers. Customers share great experiences and bad experiences. They are the best salespeople... and probably your most important channel."**

Susanne Rönqvist Ahmadi,  
VP of International Marketing @ HubSpot

**"One unique thing we are focused on across the entire customer journey is the overall customer experience. All teams [at Aircall] look at NPS."**

Jeff Reekers, CMO @ Aircall

**"Sales velocity. Customer experience (NPS)."**

Sara Brooks, VP Sales @ Pleo

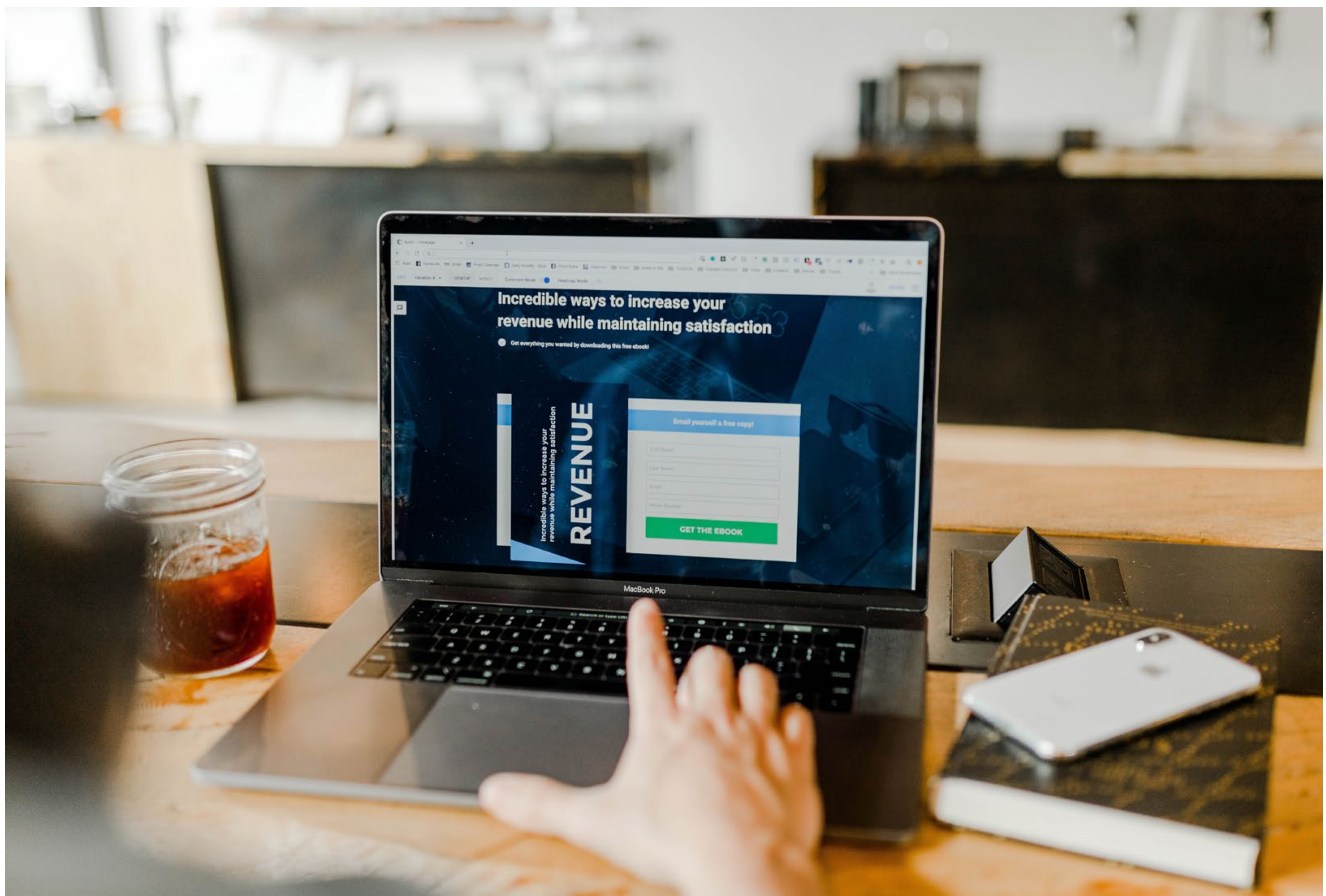


Customer experience involves the whole customer journey from the first piece of marketing collateral they see to their customer onboarding. Sales and marketing functions play an active role in boosting NPS by creating high-quality experiences before the prospect becomes a customer.

NPS will become even more important as more and more of the customer experience happens in digital environments. Companies must be able to provide a high-quality experience for remote buyers.

Dailius Wilson, VP of Growth at GetAccept - also recommends looking at Time to First Activity (T2FA) as another important metric to consider when building an aligned sales & marketing organization:

“Often marketing is frustrated that leads generated by their activities aren’t being followed up by sales. Time to first activity can be a useful metric whereby leadership can measure how long it takes sales to respond to a MQL. On the other hand, if sales immediately disqualifies a prospect, the quality & approach can be further investigated.”





**If someone attends a webinar or downloads content from your website, should they receive a sales call?**

No, not necessarily. Sales and marketing leaders at Pleo, Aircall, GetAccept and HubSpot all agree on the importance of warming up leads before they are called on by sales.

If a prospect downloads an e-book on sales tips and it's the first time they are interacting with your brand, for example, they may not be "sales-ready" just yet. In other words, the lead may not have expressed enough interest in your product or service to merit an unprompted sales call and would benefit from being further nurtured with relevant content instead.

Lead nurturing queues and campaigns are a great way to gradually educate your leads and encourage them further down the buyer journey funnel until they are ready to talk to sales. Many marketing automation platforms offer lead scoring to help rank prospects and attach a value to leads based on how they interact with your brand. The marketing team at GetAccept uses HubSpot to assign all webinar registrants an initial score for signing up. From there, the lead will receive more points if they actually attend the webinar, download additional sales and marketing content, browse specific landing pages, and/or interact with nurturing email campaigns.





Aircall CMO Jeff Reekers says that while his team wouldn't reach out to just any lead who attended a high-funnel webinar, there may be exceptions to the rule.

"It depends on the relationship and context," he says. "Some people we have historical relationships with. They have talked to our team before and have had a lot of engagement with our brand."

Reekers suggests that if a lead has potential buying intent, or there is a relationship history, it may make sense to give them a call with the aim of guiding the person to help them obtain the information they need or to ask for genuine feedback.

If your webinar topic is more general, consider adding a call-to-action to identify hand-raisers. Many webinar platforms allow you to add specific offers or CTAs allowing prospects to book a demo or request to be contacted by sales on their own terms directly from the webinar.

**"Not immediately, I prefer to have them added to a nurturing queue and then depending on their future engagement and score, direct them to sales or SDRs."**

Sara Brooks, VP Sales @ Pleo





**Describe a time where marketing and sales leadership were on completely different pages.**

It happens to the best of us. 90% of sales and marketing professionals agree that when their initiatives and messaging are aligned, the customer experience becomes more positive. That said, 9 in 10 sales and marketing leaders report they are misaligned across strategy, process, content and culture (LinkedIn, 2020).

So what are some ways in which sales and marketing leaders can achieve better alignment?

**Establish shared goals and objectives**

Sales and marketing misalignment occurs when sales and marketing teams are measured in different ways by different people. When the two departments share the same KPIs and metrics, they are more likely to succeed

**Roll out connected integrated processes and tools**

Sales and marketing departments may use different platforms and tools, but when the same data is shared and the tools are well-integrated, process alignment becomes smoother





### **Collaborate on Content Creation**

Roughly 55% of marketers don't know which assets their sales team uses most.

It's crucial for marketing to create content with the input of sales. Marketing content sometimes focuses too heavily on the product or solution features instead of the problem or pain the customer is aiming to solve. Marketing should include sales when determining core messaging, buyer personas, campaigns and content strategies.

### **Build a strong culture**

It's crucial to build a foundation of trust between sales and marketing.

Encourage each department to understand each other's roles, and to communicate and meet regularly. Attend each other's meetings and have marketing listen to sales calls to gain a deeper understanding for each team's challenges and processes. Lastly, celebrate wins and successes together

### **Be measured on the same metrics**

"If both sales and marketing have the same revenue targets in each market segment - there is a greater incentive for them to partner & work together"

- Dailius Wilson, VP of Growth  
@ GetAccept

**"It always goes wrong when the expectation is about enabling sales instead of enabling the customer. Align on the overall vision, align towards the customer and agree on the need to serve the customer instead of serving each other."**

Susanne Rönqvist Ahmadi,  
VP of International Marketing @ HubSpot



### **When does sales and marketing misalignment occur?**

A perfect smarketing strategy doesn't happen overnight. It requires a shift in mindset that starts at the top and ends with increased alignment between the two teams.

Start your journey towards increased sales and marketing collaboration by

winning/losing). Then as you scale and more formal processes need to be built, you'll have a strong DNA to keep that close feedback cycle."

- Jeff Reekers, CMO @ Aircall

Real smarketing alignment boils down to tight collaboration with an overarching emphasis on customer value and experience.

**"Align all vectors towards the customer. Share the same goals. Alignment eats strategy for breakfast."**

Susanne Rönqvist Ahmadi,  
VP of International Marketing @ HubSpot

making small changes to your weekly or even monthly routines and shifting the way you think about the function of each team.

"Think of the [sales and marketing] team more as a pod vs. individual teams. A pod shares a common objective with divided responsibilities to meet the goal (i.e., source pipeline, close pipeline). It also gives a common mission, alignment, and forces each team to know the details of the others -- sales should know the details of and give feedback on the marketing channels, marketing should know the details of the existing pipeline, the conversations happening, the challenges in deals, and why deals are



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for reading!**