



Revenue Acceleration through Focused Tactical Campaigns **By Rick Nichols**

When working with clients and conducting workshops, we often use sports analogies to illustrate business applications of strategy and execution. While this time of year can mean a lot of things to a lot of people - like the changing of seasons or the beginning of school - at InfoMentis, it's all about the beginning of football season. Hopes are high for a winning season and everyone is excited about the possibilities for "their team".

As I sat through the first game of my alma mater, I thought about all of the planning and strategy that go into the 3-hour competition of a football game. There are the lessons learned from last season, the assembly of the team, the reviews and analyses of plays and weeks of practice, practice, and practice. What a tremendous balance of strategy and execution! That's what I want to talk about relative to strategic marketing and tactical selling.

Executives and football coaches alike continually battle challenges such as staying ahead of the competition, building a solid team, and delivering on promises made. Whether fans or shareholders, all eyes are on these leaders.

We work with organizations that have all kinds of plans for growing revenue, improving profit margins, and expanding market share. Often times, coming up with the plan for achieving those goals is fairly simple, but putting them into practice and achieving success can be much more challenging.

Value of Tactical Marketing

From a business perspective, strong execution is critical to revenue, competitive performance and market share and tactical marketing is one of the keys to driving strong execution. Tactical Marketing is the area of the organization that provides tactical support for corporate marketing, sales, services and support. While Tactical Marketing can play a leading role, they can't do it alone. They must work as a team with your sales professionals - especially since sales is in front of the customer on a frequent basis.

Speed, Flexibility and Timing

In working with the field sales organization, Tactical Marketing can gain tremendous insight into what is needed to help buyers commit to buying in the least amount of time. In order to accelerate revenue, Tactical Marketing needs to be able to formulate and execute short-term campaigns and provide the tools necessary to create new or increased demand in a short period of time.

Think like the Customer

The key to planning and executing any successful campaign is in understanding key behaviors in both the buying and selling process. It is important to be realistic about:

- ***How the customer expects to evaluate and buy.*** Despite today's world of tele-relationship marketing and selling, sometimes the buyer expects face-to-face interaction. It is critical that you understand the type of interactions required to satisfy the way your customers will buy.
- ***How the customer makes decisions.*** Items which pass a certain economic threshold or require committee evaluation are more complex to sell and may require additional levels of attention. You need to understand what resources will be required from your team at which points in the buying cycle.
- ***Other alternatives that your buyers will consider.*** When working to develop a compelling value proposition and clear differentiation, you need to be thorough and honest about what other choices your buyer could make.

While one of the objectives of a tactical marketing campaign is typically to generate demand in the 30-, 60- or 90-day timeframe, you need to manage the balance between short-term revenue and long-term impact on revenue. You don't want to cannibalize longer-term revenue possibilities and you want to avoid any channel conflict.

Readiness Is Critical

Whether in football or business, once a campaign is launched, there is no opportunity to rewind. So, while agility is important, you want to make sure that you are ready before you execute. The key to success in tactical campaigns is to drive desired behavior in customer acquisition and retention. The field sales or services organization's readiness to engage and execute is critical to success. Specific tools should be well thought-out and provided to better enable sales and services to engage the customer in a compelling conversation.

Supporting media, presentations, scripts, and other sales support materials need to be considered before launching any campaign. You need to consider how they will be used, when they will be most effective and who will be using these materials in order to streamline and accelerate the buying process. It is also essential that the sales force be coached well before launch.

If you wait too long or are not launch-ready, any revenue derived from the campaign probably won't affect the time targeted. Launching with impact on day one of the campaign maximizes everyone's benefit.

Benefits

Coming out a winner takes teamwork. Executing effective tactical campaigns will

- give your customers added incentive to move forward
- re-energize the sales or services organization with something new and valuable to offer customers and prospects
- Provide fallback revenue that may otherwise not be expected.

Shortfalls can unsettle even the strongest organization and leaders. Defining a solid strategy and aligning the right tactical activities to support that strategy will help you create the balance that you need for developing a strong team and maximizing your revenue opportunities.

Are you a football fan, too? [Click here for a chance to win a copy of "Madden NFL 2006".](#)