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Salespeople Aren't Marketers!

When sales leaders and senior managers push their sales teams to “market” on behalf of the organization, something is wrong. Salespeople aren't marketers, and successful marketing doesn't require salespeople to step into a marketing role.

Professor Peter Drucker, widely regarded as an extraordinary thinker on business and management, regarded marketing and sales as antithetical. In fact, contrary to popular thought, he did not consider them synonymous or even complimentary.

According to Drucker, the aim of marketing is to know and understand the company's customers so deeply that when they see the company's product or service offering, it so clearly fits what they want that they are ready to buy. There is no need for traditional selling in this scenario – there is only a customer ready to buy and a company that either stands in the way or facilitates the purchase. In an ideal world, where marketing functions optimally, selling becomes superfluous.

In the business-to-business environment, the job of the marketing group is to fill the top of a company's sales funnel with high quality, bona fide prospects that are ready to become customers.

Assuming your products and services meet the actual needs of your customers, failure to fill the top of the sales funnel points directly at a problem in the marketing department. The marketing folks may not truly understand what their customers want and need or the marketing messages may not directly impact what customers want to accomplish, fix or avoid.

When the marketing department does its job successfully, selling, in the traditional sense, becomes superfluous, as Professor Drucker states. Does highly effective marketing, then, portend the end of professional selling? Hardly.

The good news for the sales professional is that successful marketing changes the role of the salesperson in an organization. Unburdened with marketing tasks, the professional salesperson can concentrate on developing skills that uncover hidden sales opportunities and that help facilitate and grow customer loyalty.

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