

Marketing Rep vs. Sales Rep

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I've heard both the term Marketing Rep, and Sales Rep. Is there a difference? If there is a difference, how do I decide which I need in my company? Is there any difference in how I supervise one position vs. the other? My company is a growing service company. We sell a service that is not that well known, to both individual clients and businesses. We don't have as many leads as we'd like. I'm the primary sales person, closing most of the new business for the company. This will be my second hire in sales – the first one didn't work out, and I want to do this better.

Yes, there is a difference between a Marketing Rep position and a Sales Rep position. Let's start with a definition of each. Then we'll look at how to manage each position, and how to decide which is right for your company. We'll end up with a specific recommendation about what our reader may want to do, based on what is known about that specific company.

Marketing and Sales Rep positions are very different. Marketing Reps promote the business, introduce concepts, and introduce people to what the business does. They identify prospective accounts by talking with people, networking, making phone calls, and generally introducing themselves around. They are like a walking billboard, continually telling people about the product or service they

represent, and how that might likely benefit a prospect. They talk about the gains made by clients who have worked with their company.

Generally, marketing reps are charged with filling the sales pipeline with possibilities. They are working on covering a lot of ground, focusing on big numbers of contacts and introductions. Their job is to make as many people aware of their company's products and services as possible. Their focus is the front end of the sales pipeline.

Sales Reps work with interested prospects. They qualify, propose specific solutions, confirm that prospects are interested, prepare proposals confirming what has been agreed to with prospects, and close sales. Sales Reps are generally focused on the middle and end of the sales pipeline. They bring the prospect home, and get the deal done.

Skills needed for each job are also quite different. Marketing Reps are required to meet a lot of people, get on the phone with people they don't know to make contact, and send out information to lots of potentially interested targets. They are charged with building the first level of relationship with accounts they suspect may be good clients. Sales Reps on the other hand, are charged with weeding through prospects. They are supposed to figure out who would

be a good client, and who wouldn't. They must be good at negotiations and have excellent closing skills.

When trying to determine whether your company needs a Marketing Rep or a Sales Rep, start by evaluating your pipeline of prospects for each product or service that you sell. Consider the length of the pipeline, from the first time you talk to a suspect, until you finally close a deal.

Scenario 1: Do you need lots more prospects (I know, we could always have more)? Do you need to do more than internet marketing, direct mail and advertising, to inform and attract prospects to your company? Is a typical sale for your company complex and relationship driven? By that question, I mean, is it important that your potential buyer understands what your company does, and trusts that your company will do a good job, before getting into serious negotiation?

Scenario 2: Are enough interested companies or individuals contacting your company for information? Are your major challenges more around working to close deals with interested prospects? Do you have more prospects than you can reasonably get to? Are you losing opportunities by letting things drag on too long, or by not following up enough with people who are already interested?



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If you answer “yes” to Scenario 1, you need a Marketing Rep. If you answer “yes” to Scenario 2, you probably could benefit from a Sales Rep. If you answer yes to both, you probably need both. Start with the Marketing Rep position first, and fill your pipeline with opportunity. Then focus on closing skills. As the owner, you may find that your closing skills are good enough, if you simply have more people to talk to about what you do.

In the case at the start of this article, I would recommend starting with a Marketing Rep. Their product needs to be better known. They need more prospects to work on. The business owner is already closing business, and accepts that responsibility, and has additional time to work on closing business. Be sure to set goals with the Marketing Rep, focusing on #s of introductions, #s of letters mailed out, #s of prospects that are pre-qualified.

Looking for a good book? Try Guerrilla Marketing Excellence, the 50 Golden Rules For Small-Business Success by Jay Conrad Levinson.

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