

PRACTICAL SUCCESS



ERIC FLETCHER has more than 25 years of experience, spanning broadcasting, advertising, marketing, and professional services business development. He is a seasoned connector of ideas, people, and strategic growth-oriented solutions. For the past dozen-plus years he has managed and directed teams focused on targeted business development and client service in the legal industry.

A MARKETER AND A SALESPERSON WALK INTO A BAR....

Even if you aren't familiar with the setup, you know this is a joke. Marketing and sales can barely stand to be in the same conference room on some days. No way they're going to drop into a happy hour together. Even if it's via Zoom.

Here's the punchline: While marketing and sales squabble over resources, debate who should be held responsible and who should get credit, the leverage and growth to be gained in alignment is lost.

And that's no joke.

Memories of a garage start-up

If you haven't an aspirational bone in your body, you've been inspired by at least one story of an entrepreneur who, sequestered (voluntarily) in a garage with little more than duct tape and tenacity, gave birth to a thriving business.

You might have been in one of those garages. Or it might have been in a corner of the attic. Or at the kitchen table.

Wherever the work was done, the start-up success stories I know of have one thing in common: lines between departments rarely exist. One day the spare bedroom was the CFO's office. The next it belonged to the IT guru. (Same person...just a different hat.)

And everyone was in marketing *and* sales.

In those up-from-nothing ventures, the short-term objective was singular—to survive. Whatever it took.

Because there was a vision for the long term.

A distinction between telling the brand story and closing a sales pitch didn't rear its ugly head until someone actually put together enough presentations, stirred up enough leads, and closed enough pitches to make the company grow.

Enter silos—disguised as progress, and in the name of leverage.

That's when we stopped walking into that bar together.

Don Quixote rides again

I recognize that in most quarters this is an exercise in tilting at windmills. But what might happen if we did away with the departments?

[Pause for audible gasp.]

What if we were back in the garage, or at the kitchen table, driven not by how many clicks we generate or how many calls we squeeze into a day; but aligned around a singular vision—prepared to do whatever it takes.

And since I'm already on this limb, I'll inch a bit further out.

If our blink response to this fanciful idea is that the complexities of a full-blown business render the entrepreneurial model obsolete, we've landed on

the real reason we often seem to be pulling in different directions.

The vision is unclear. Or missing. Success is measured in snippets.

We can debate metrics if you are inclined, but here's what happens: When our focus is disproportionately on short-term measures, realizing these measures becomes the mission.

But, for example, when the measure of accomplishment is an intentional click by a viable prospect because engaging the right prospect puts us one step closer to an ultimate goal: Marketing and sales are no longer separate departments.

We are aligned as co-conspirators engaged in a singular pursuit.

And come on, after a day of scheming around how to get out of the garage and take over the market, co-conspirators will happily walk into a bar... together. And politely disagree over who buys the next round. 

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