

Marketing Collateral as a Sales Messaging Tool



Improve Performance.
Drive Revenue.

About The Naro Group

The Naro Group specializes in helping technology companies capitalize on their investment in sales process and sales training. Contact Jim Naro, President, by email at: jnaro@TheNaroGroup.com.

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By Jim Naro, President of The Naro Group (Originally published in Mass High Tech)

Every marketing department produces a wide array of materials that can very effectively help sales people achieve revenue objectives.

These materials – whether it is copy on a website, collateral, or industry-generated pieces – provide significant value for sales people as they begin to develop the foundation for engaging prospects in meaningful conversations. These conversations are the cornerstones of a productive sales cycle, and the more engaging they are, the more quickly the sales process will flow.

The one-to-many communication in marketing materials can be converted into viable one-to-one dialogues with prospects with just a little effort and research. Sales people will be able to develop intelligent, probing questions that help them identify a buyer's strategic objectives, understand barriers to achieving those objectives, and align solutions to requirements.

Here are a few examples on how, with a little digging, sales people can generate probing questions that help establish an intelligent exchange between themselves and their prospects.

Web Content:

Companies vary widely as to what type of content they put up on their websites, but oftentimes there are high-level summaries of the benefits its products or services provide. This information can be used as the basis for the very first dialogue sales people have with prospects as a simple qualifying process. Benefits such as “improved accuracy in cost estimating” and “faster turnaround times” for project management software can lead to queries about whether or not inaccuracies and slow response times are affecting ability of the prospect's company to achieve margins.

Case Studies:

Sales people want to anchor their conversations around a business objective to continue to qualify opportunities during the sales cycle. One way to achieve

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this is to look for measurable results in case studies. Sales people can then frame questions around how the solution they are selling has helped other customers achieve a particular objective. For instance, a sales person can make statements such as, “Typically, our customers’ objectives when deploying a project management system include increasing revenue, achieving a greater share of the market, or reducing costs.” He or she then can ask the question, “What are your company’s objectives in relation to those objectives?”

White Papers:

Typically white papers discuss challenges facing a particular vertical or functional area. This can help sales people uncover barriers to achieving strategic objectives that their offerings would address. This allows them to demonstrate that they have an understanding of the business challenges their prospects face. For example, a white paper on project management might have an issue defined as “unable to generate consistent cost estimates from multiple sources.” From that, a sales person can formulate a question such as, “How do you generate cost estimates for projects today?” Natural follow-on questions could be, “What sources are used as inputs?” and “How does this impact consistency?”

Product Data Sheets:

Good product literature will usually have not only a description of a company’s products or services, but also specific data on how they are used to solve customer issues. This information can help sales people prepare questions that may make their prospects think of an outcome that they hadn’t considered. Hence, a question such as “Could you increase the consistency of you estimates if you had consolidated project cost information supporting earned value techniques, right at your fingertips?” might generate a whole new realm of interest from a prospect.

ROI Calculators:

ROI calculators can help sales people understand the value of their products and services and the types of measurement prospects use. From data on ROI calculators, a sales person can develop measurement questions such as, “What number of full-time equivalents are needed to generate costs estimates?” and “What are the consequences on profits when costs are off?”

With just a little time, sales people can explore the materials from their marketing department provides and find that it can turn into a very productive treasure hunt – with increased revenue and shorter sales cycles as the treasure!



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