

Aligning sales and marketing



Why sales and marketing drift apart

Put your Sales Director and Marketing Lead in the same room and ask a simple question:

“Where do our best opportunities really come from, and what happens to them?”

If the answers match, you are in a minority. More often, you hear two different versions of reality:

- Marketing talks about campaigns, website traffic, enquiries and engagement.
- Sales talks about relationships, timing, good names and deals they feel they found themselves.

Both feel they are doing their job. Both can produce reports that prove it. Both are slightly suspicious of the other.

On the surface, things might look fine. Targets are just about being hit, the pipeline feels busy, marketing can show activity. Underneath, there is usually friction, waste and missed opportunity.

Sales and marketing alignment is not about forcing people to agree in a workshop. It is about changing how both sides think about their role in growth and giving them a shared system that works when nobody is there to referee.

This is how we approach it.

1. Clarifying the role of brand and sales

When results are soft, it is easy to blame the channel or the people. You hear comments like “sales are not following up”, “marketing are sending poor leads” or “the brand is not strong enough”.

Often the real issue is simpler. Nobody has written down what the brand is meant to achieve and when sales should take over.

We help leadership answer four questions together:

- What is brand for, in commercial terms
- What is sales for, beyond simply closing deals
- Where do they overlap
- What is out of scope for both

What brand is responsible for

In most B2B businesses, a clear brand exists to:

- Make you easy to find, easy to shortlist and easy to understand.
- Reduce perceived risk so buyers feel safer moving forward.
- Create a clear story about why you are worth more than the cheapest option.

What sales is responsible for

A disciplined sales function exists to:

- Turn interest into qualified opportunities.
- Guide buying groups through risk, politics and trade offs.
- Shape and close deals that protect value and margin.

What changes when roles are clear

Once roles are written down and agreed, a quiet shift happens:

- Marketing stops measuring success on soft volume alone.
- Sales stops expecting campaigns to do the whole job.
- Leaders gain a simple test for new requests, “does this support the role we agreed, or is it a distraction”.

Even if you think you already have this in place, write it down. It is often surprising how differently people have been filling in the gaps.

2. Shared definitions for leads and opportunities

Ask three people in your business what a “good lead” is and listen carefully to the answers.

If those answers differ, you do not have alignment. You have a temporary agreement that will break under pressure.

In many companies, the pattern looks like this:

- Marketing is rewarded for volume, so the definition of “lead” gets looser over time.
- Sales quietly ignore anything that does not feel ready, then complain about quality.
- Leadership sees numbers but not causes, so they push for “more activity”.

We cut through this by agreeing simple, written definitions that live in your CRM system, not in a slide deck.

Simple shared definitions

For example, we might define:

- **Lead**, fits the basic target profile and has taken a visible action, for example downloaded a guide or requested access to a resource.
- **Marketing qualified lead**, shows both fit and intent, for example the right sector and role, plus a high intent action such as a consultation request or pricing enquiry.
- **Sales qualified opportunity**, a real project, confirmed through a conversation, with a clear problem, timescale and agreed next step.

Every business will adjust these. The important point is that sales and marketing own the definitions together.

What changes when definitions are shared

Once this is in place:

- Marketing knows what “good” looks like and can design campaigns and content to achieve it.
- Sales can no longer dismiss everything that arrives in their queue.
- People stop gaming the numbers and start improving the system.

Even strong teams often discover that their current definitions are vague or hidden. Tightening this alone can improve conversion without any extra spend.

3. Aligning sales conversations with the brand story

Think about the last time a strong opportunity slipped away. Was it really price, or did the story fall apart somewhere between first click, first call and final proposal

Most B2B buyers research quietly. By the time they speak to sales, they have already formed an impression of:

- What you stand for.
- How you compare with others.
- How risky you feel as a choice.

If the first conversation contradicts that impression, they feel exposed. If the proposal looks and sounds different again, they lose confidence.

We are not interested in putting your team on rails. We are interested in giving them a structure that reflects the brand you want to be.

Discovery call outline

We help clients build a discovery outline that respects how buyers think. A typical structure is:

1. **Context and intent** Why they are speaking to you now, what they have already seen and what problem they are trying to solve.
2. **Impact and stakes** What happens if they do nothing, or choose the wrong partner, in practical operational or financial terms.
3. **Your approach in their words** How your way of working addresses that impact, linked to your core promise and proof, not a long feature list.
4. **Fit and next steps** Where you are a strong fit, where you are not, and what a low risk next step looks like.

The psychology is simple:

- Buyers feel heard and understood.
- Sales are not guessing, they are working within a shared frame.
- The brand promise moves from the website into the live conversation.

Even teams who feel they are “great in a room” often discover that each person is selling a slightly different version of the business. The outline makes those differences visible and fixable.

Proposal and pitch structure

The same logic carries into proposals and pitches. We standardise a structure that follows how your buyers decide, for example:

1. Their situation and what is at stake.
2. The outcomes they care about most.
3. Your recommended approach and why it works.
4. Evidence that you can deliver.
5. Scope, investment and timeline.
6. How success will be measured.

Instead of starting from a blank slide deck every time, sales teams start from a structure that already fits the brand. They still tailor, but within a frame that builds trust rather than resetting it.

4. Sales enablement that people actually use

The usual pattern looks like this:

- Marketing builds a “master deck” of forty slides.
- Someone creates a folder of PDFs, case studies, data sheets and tools.
- Sales keep their own versions on desktops and use whatever they prefer.

On paper, you have a toolkit. In practice, you have confusion.

Start with what sales really need

We work the other way round. We start by asking sales three questions:

- What do you reach for most often
- Where do you feel under equipped in conversation
- What do prospects ask for when they need to convince others internally

Simple tools that support real conversations

We then design a small, sharp set of tools that support those moments, for example:

- A short core deck, built around problems and outcomes, that reflects the agreed positioning.
- One page summaries for key sectors or offers that a buyer can forward internally without rewriting.
- Simple value or risk calculators that help buyers build their own internal case.
- Follow up email outlines that keep the story consistent between meetings.

The test is not “do we have collateral”. The test is “does the sales team choose to use this when nobody is watching”.

If you already have plenty of material, this work is often about cutting and sharpening, not simply creating more.

5. Focusing on key accounts

In many B2B businesses, a small number of key accounts can make or break the year. Yet those accounts often experience a fragmented version of you:

- Brand campaigns at the top of the funnel.
- Generic nurture emails.
- Individual outreach from sales.
- Occasional executive contact when something goes wrong.

Everyone is busy. Nobody feels in control of the whole picture.

A joined up approach to key accounts

We help you apply the same alignment principles to your most important accounts:

- Agree which accounts really matter, based on potential, profitability and strategic fit.
- Map the buying group, who influences, who decides and who blocks.
- Plan coordinated activity, where marketing, sales and leadership use the same narrative, tailored to different roles, over time.
- Measure at account level, looking at engagement, meetings, pipeline and progress, not just channel metrics.

True key account focus is not putting a logo in an email header. It is treating an account as a market of one, with a consistent brand story and a joined up team behind it.

Even if you already “do account based marketing”, this discipline usually reveals gaps, overlaps and opportunities you have not been using fully.

How Webstudio helps you move from truce to alignment

You may read this and think, “We are not perfect, but we are not in chaos either.” That is exactly the point.

Real misalignment rarely looks like open conflict. It looks like:

- Mild frustration in corridor conversations.
- Quiet workarounds in your CRM system.
- One or two big deals that nobody can quite explain.

The cost is hidden, slower progress, lower conversion and more effort than necessary.

When we work with clients, we:

- Start with how you actually win business today, not an idealised funnel.
- Put marketing, sales and leadership in the same conversation and keep them there.
- Make roles, definitions and narratives explicit, so assumptions are exposed.
- Align your brand strategy, website and sales tools around the same commercial logic.
- Set up simple, shared metrics so everyone can see where things are improving.

We do not replace your sales or marketing teams and we do not run your pipeline. You keep ownership.

Our job is to remove friction in the system so the work your people already do produces more of the right deals, with less noise and fewer surprises.

The result is not a promise that “marketing and sales will never disagree again”. That would not be healthy. The result is that when they do disagree, they are looking at the same facts and working from the same story.

If you suspect there is more potential in your current activity than your current results suggest, that is usually a sign that your brand and sales engine can be tuned.

That is the work we do.