

QUARTERLY SALES AND MARKETING MESSAGING REPORT

THIRD QUARTER 2011 – LEAD MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING AND SALES SLAs

AT A GLANCE

- 74% of marketing and sales professionals indicate that their organization does not have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Marketing and Sales, or if they do, they've never heard of it.
- 70% saw some or significant increases in the quality and qualification of leads after their organization implemented an SLA.
- 59% say that Marketing support misses the mark when it comes to messages and tools that help follow-up with leads in the early stages.

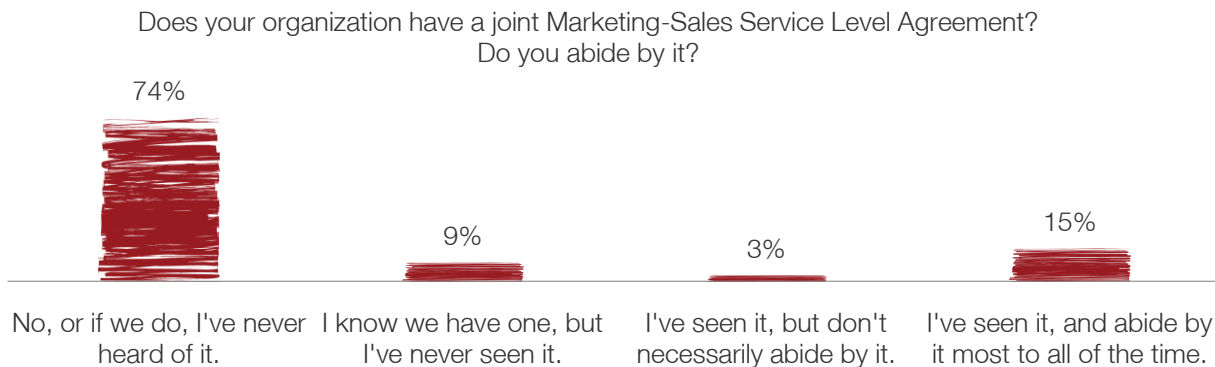
Each quarter, Corporate Visions, Inc., the experts in sales and marketing messaging, tools and training, surveys marketing and sales professionals who work in complex, business-to-business selling environments. The findings highlight trends and challenges facing industry-leading companies across the globe that are working to achieve alignment between their marketing and sales efforts and differentiate their solution in an increasingly commoditized marketplace.

Service Level Agreements or “SLAs” are common in many industries where someone is looking for a performance guarantee or management tool. A Marketing and Sales SLA is a newer concept focused on getting both departments on the same page when it comes to lead management. Is it effective? Or is it just another overhyped idea that ultimately generates disappointingly little change in behavior and alignment?

The SLA is supposed to establish consensus between Marketing and Sales regarding lead qualification and how a lead will be handled between the departments. What is the expectation for Sales follow-up? What are the consequences if no follow-up occurs? How many and what types of leads can Sales expect from Marketing? What happens when a lead is disqualified or goes cold? How and why does Marketing attain credit for deals generated?

FINDING #1: MOST ORGANIZATIONS DON'T HAVE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

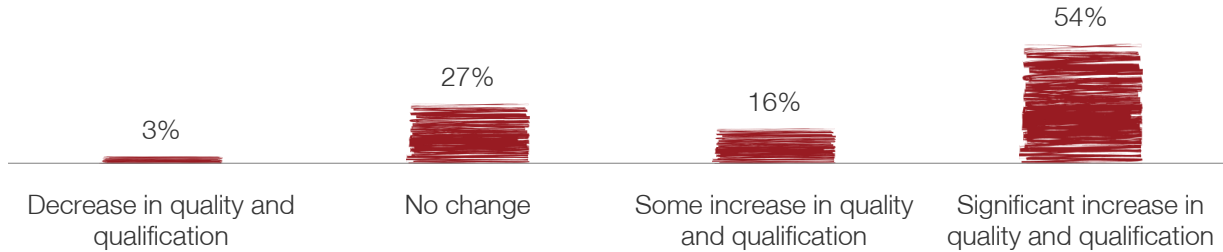
74% of marketing and sales professionals indicate that their organizations have not yet implemented a SLA, or if they have, they've never heard of it.



Developing a SLA is an intimidating process, starting with the difficult task of getting your heads of Sales and Marketing in a room together to agree on achievable expectations for both departments. Then, you need to train your marketers and salespeople in the new process, and hold them accountable for following it.

FINDING #2: LEAD QUALITY AND QUALIFICATION INCREASES WITH SLA

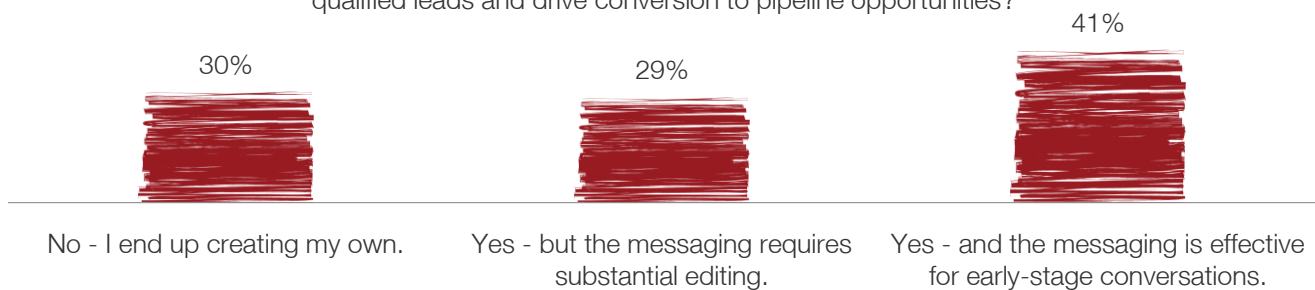
If your organization has implemented a Service Level Agreement, how has it impacted the quality and qualification of leads sent to Sales for follow-up?



The good news is that SLAs are worth the effort. 70% of respondents reported an increase in quality and qualification after a service level agreement was implemented. A well-designed SLA puts an end to the blame game between Marketing and Sales (“None of my leads are qualified!” “You’re not following up on any of them!”). An SLA gives Sales an opportunity to tell Marketing when and how they want their leads served up. In exchange, it gives Marketing the chance to get Sales leadership on board with holding their salespeople accountable for follow-up. Marketing may hand off fewer leads, but they’ll get the attention they deserve.

FINDING #3: MESSAGES AND TOOLS FOR LEAD FOLLOW-UP LACKING

Is Marketing providing tools and messaging to help Sales effectively follow-up with qualified leads and drive conversion to pipeline opportunities?



Now that Sales has signed on to pursue qualified leads, what does that follow-up sound like? If Marketing wants to maximize conversion rates, then they must take responsibility for arming salespeople with the messaging and tools they need to move those qualified leads into the pipeline. Yet, nearly 60% of professionals report that Marketing is leaving salespeople to their own creative devices, either building their own or substantially re-working what’s provided. The hardest message to craft can sometimes be the simplest: what comes out of your sales person’s mouth during the first 60 seconds when their prospect answers their call? What’s your company doing to make sure your leads are converted when they are turned over to the field for follow-up?