



Is Your Revenue Team Rowing In The Same Direction?

Description

Last year I read [The Boys in the Boat](#), an excellent book about the University of Washington Gold Medal winning crew team of 1936. It is an epic tale of hard work, perseverance, and most of all incredible team-work. In crew, all 9 rowers must be completely in synch: focused on the same goals with the same strategy, same timing and same execution. Get out of synch on a crew boat, and you might “Catch a Crab” and literally get flipped out of the boat!

I was recently reflecting on the team work and synchronization required in high performing revenue organizations with Doug Jensen. Doug has a great perspective on sales & marketing organizational behavior, having grown through the ranks at great SaaS companies like Omniture, Adobe and ObservePoint. He saw so many opportunities to improve inter-departmental coordination throughout his sales career that he founded a company – [Universe](#) – to help revenue organizations align their efforts for maximum success. I asked Doug for a few examples of sales & marketing organizations catching crabs.

“There are so many, and it happens all the time. And it is not because companies do not have great people with all of the best intentions. It is just that organizations grow and departments grow, and they all tend to over-optimize to their own view or lens on the problem, and many times that creates problems with other departments. For example: product teams do a great job listening to the customer, and as a result may over-prioritize product features from loud customers that don’t correlate with revenue growth metrics. Another classic example is the marketing team that blows their lead generation numbers out of the water, but does it with leads that are poor-fit accounts that don’t close and end up laying on the floor of the sales room. Or you could have the sales team selling features and promises that are ahead of the product maturity, which leads to head-aches for the customer success team and ultimately higher churn.”

Doug went on to explain that the classic “finger pointing” and inter-departmental friction that arises from mis-alignment, does not necessarily have to be a bad thing. Sure, they are symptoms of a problem, maybe even disfunction, but they are also valuable signals giving you the clues on how to start solving the problem, and when you do that, you can get people to start rowing in the same direction. “Your sales people and marketing people don’t want to be at odds with each other! If you can get everyone

on the same page with clear metrics of what success means, they will love you for it...and you will love the results!"

Here are some steps to make sure that all members of your revenue organization are rowing together in the same direction:

- **Target Market and Customer Segmentation:** Determine your strategy of where and how you will compete. ([The 1st Gear](#)) This means being specific regarding who you will focus on serving, and who you will not – this is the best way to focus your scarce resources.
 - Develop an Ideal Customer Profile
 - Cleanse/Organize your CRM – be sure that it has all of the required fields that are used to determine your Ideal Customer Profile
 - Develop a Customer Scorecard – and use it to score prospects against your ideal profile
- **Design Your Integrated Sales & Marketing Efforts Around Your Customer Segmentation:** ([The 2nd Gear](#)) If everyone knows what the target is, you can align efforts and eliminate waste and re-work.
 - Make sure that marketing efforts are focused on where your **target** customers are.
 - Be sure your sales pitch is aligned with your product value delivery (**today**, not in the future).
 - Design success metrics that explicitly align with the **next revenue department** (i.e.- the rower in the boat behind you)
- **Be Transparent and Collaborative:** The whole point here is having everyone focused on the same strategy and tactics.
 - Be sure to include the leaders of marketing, demand generation, inside sales, sales and customer success in these discussions
 - Allow healthy discussion in the planning sessions in order to get agreement, it will reduce arguments later in the process
 - Iterate and refine until you have plans and metrics that are consistent with the strategies of each department
- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate:** Once you have an integrated plan, identify the key elements and communicate them constantly!
 - Without fresh reminders, people fall into old habits
 - Turn-over and growth create new team members who were not there for the strategy sessions, they need to learn the right way on day 1
 - Incorporate the messages in company-wide communications, you will be surprised how many areas can contribute to or detract from an aligned strategy. Make it the former by ensuring everyone knows the game plan!

I am an Executive in Residence with Bessemer Venture Partners. I spend my time scouting exciting technology companies for our Cloud Software Team and coaching companies on how to best scale the Growth Mountain.

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jcastelli

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