10 Must-Have Marketing Pieces to Connect With Your Prospects
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About the Author

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Elisa Ciarametaro is the Principal of Exceed Sales, a sales and inside sales consultancy. Elisa helps sales and marketing executives increase productivity and effectiveness. Her strategic insight and hands on implementation approach has helped companies avoid pitfalls, incorporate best practices and quickly realize sales results.

Elisa has been recognized by the SLMA as one of the 50 Most Influential People in Sales Lead Management, was a Board Observer with the MIT Enterprise Forum and resides in NYC with her husband and son. Learn more at www.ExceedSales.com or at Elisa's blog, www.ExceedSales.com/blog.

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You absolutely need some form of marketing to promote your products and services. But for some companies, it exists formally, informally, or not at all!

Believe it or not, marketing departments differ widely across organizations. I’ve seen billion-dollar organizations with no marketing department, startups with full-fledged marketing departments, and everything in between.

Whether you have a marketing department or not, your prospects need to understand how you can help them.

With that in mind, I offer to you my list of must-have marketing pieces.

These are the key pieces that can help provide your prospects with critical data that informs and educates. While this list is not exhaustive by any means, the documents I cover in this article can do much to help your prospects understand how you can help them.
1. Company Overview

The company overview should be a brief one-pager that describes who your company is and what it does.

What is appropriate to include on this one-pager?

Provide a brief history, mission statement, why choose your company, and your differentiator and/or value proposition. And while it may seem obvious, be sure to display contact information in this document. It should include the company name, mailing address, email address, phone number, and social media links (LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook, if applicable).

2. Product and Service Solution Overview

Helping customers see value in your solution is tricky to get right.

Many marketers feel compelled to explain their offering and how it works in great detail. However this is the ultimate turnoff for the prospect.

What they want to know – and briefly – is what your product or service does... and only in the context of how it helps or benefits them.

Don’t be boring. As you write it, think like your prospects and customers. Again, this document, along with any other media you prepare, should prominently display contact information.
3. Customer Successes, Testimonials, Client Stories

We all know how powerful our successful clients can be in telling our story to prospects and customers.

However, testimonials with real impact are often hard to come by and difficult to prepare. In order to be successful, the “story” must be properly organized. Key points include the challenge, the solution, and the results. It is within this structure that you need to clearly and concisely have your clients state their case.

Testimonials are powerful because they allow peers to speak to your prospects. Influencers convey their business pains and how you – as the solution provider – resolved the issue, delivering transformative results. Again, this document, along with any other media you prepare, should prominently display contact information.

4. Benefit Statement

To me, this is a critical component of the “marketing material mix.” Your prospects and customers want to know why they should continue to investigate your offering. Your benefit statement should answer the question that’s always in their heads: “What’s in it for me?” Your best answer will be brief, concise, clear, relevant, and simple.

Think about it. These buyers are gathering and reading a plethora of marketing data from a large number of sources. You need to be catchy and get your message across quickly and succinctly. This benefit statement can complement the advantages your clients highlight in customer success stories and testimonials. These people were once your prospects. Again – I really can’t stress this enough – this document, along with any other media you prepare, should prominently display contact information.
5. Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) help your prospects get the answers they are looking for with very little effort on their part – or yours.

You want to attract contacts and companies that are your ideal target market and audience for your solution, and rightly so. Your prospects don’t want to waste their time, either. The FAQs help each party to see if a good fit exists.

6. Pricing Outline

A key piece of information decision makers need involves pricing.

Some products and services are very complex and pricing cannot be outlined on a one- or two-pager. In these cases, it’s important to help prospects locate an individual who can provide pricing information.

You may refer the buyer to a representative who can outline the pricing details, but there must be a way for the buyer to access and understand that information before committing to purchase.

Other products have a set purchase price. Pricing tables are very helpful to visitors on your websites when shopping online, as are pricing pages for subscription-based products. Whatever your specific pricing model may be, available pricing information is always important to decision-makers.
7. White Papers, eBooks, and Best Practice Guides

These longer pieces of content are critical if you want to educate and inform, as well as place yourself as a thought leader among your peers. You may need some or all of these types of marketing pieces to familiarize readers with your company and capabilities.

I am a great proponent of having at least one of these documents prominently displayed on your website to engage visitors, prospects, and customers. It is also a great way to stimulate inbound marketing efforts.

8. Competitive Analysis

What are your competitors doing? This knowledge should be of utmost importance to many in the organization, including sales.

Explore your competition’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as your own. Document your analysis, and share it internally with company personnel as well.

If you don’t know your competitors’ weaknesses – and more importantly, their strengths – it’s hard to win against them. It’s important to assign the task of competitive analysis to a capable person or team, and allow sufficient budget, tools, and time to gather and report this critical information.
9. Blogs

In my opinion, blogs are must-haves, not just nice-to-haves. It’s another medium to engage with your prospects and customers, and it needs to reflect you and your company. In addition to your own thoughts and ideas, it’s important to share the thoughts and ideas of others, introduce guest speakers, and provide interesting quotes, references, and statistics.

Creating blog content is time-consuming, and preparing the information is no easy task. You must have a dedicated resource (i.e., marketing personnel) who write and keep up with the blog.

Distributing and sharing your blog is no easy task, either. If your audience doesn’t read and share what you have written, you must have an effective plan in place to get the word out.
10. Webinars

Webinars are a great way to educate and inform. However, when you think of what it takes to prepare, conduct, and follow up on these sessions, the amount of detail involved is mind-boggling. Yet webinars have a far reach in getting the message out to your prospects and customers.

When planning a webinar, you need to consider your topic and message:

• What will be your topic?
• How will you prepare your message?
• What will be the agenda for your presentation?
• Who will moderate and participate in the presentation?
• What audio, visual, and technical aspects will help your presentation?
10. Webinars (continued)

Consider also your potential audience:

- Who do you want to reach?
- How do you find those people?
- How do you get the contact information for the prospects and customers you wish to meet?
- How will you handle questions?
- What will be your “leave behind” for signups and attendees?

These are the 10 critical marketing components your organization should have, to be shared with prospects and customers alike. I hope this gives you a better sense of the thought and effort that must be considered when communicating with prospects.
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Discover

- Why most teams are leaving qualified opportunities on the table
- Which key metrics to measure and monitor to uncover best lead quality
- How to get started or improve your sales development efforts

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