

MARKETING LABS



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When time is short and the stakes are high

A marketing lab conducted by VisionEdge Marketing provides a proven process and working environment for leading your team to solve tough issues surrounding product positioning, market segmentation, and lead generation.

Companies use the labs to re-set brand positioning and messaging, to construct lead pipeline strategies that put sales and marketing on the same page, or to systematically define and identify lucrative market segments.

Better than a business seminar, VEM labs are fast-paced, roll-up-your-sleeves, collaborative work sessions typically lasting about five hours. We use our proprietary Accomplish™ methodology in the labs to achieve the necessary outcomes. The labs are available as stand-alone consulting projects, but can be combined with other consulting services offered by VEM. Six labs are currently available:

1. Market Segmentation Lab
2. Pipeline Engineering Lab
3. Positioning and Messaging Lab
4. Strategic Positioning Lab
5. Marketing Metrics Lab
6. Touch Point Effectiveness Lab

Market Segmentation Lab

Description

The Market Segmentation Lab (MSL) is an interactive work session designed to help organizations determine criteria and identify segments that would best meet this criteria. The following ground is covered: product category, pain points, segmentation, criteria, ranking and weighting, segment selection.

Companies seek market segmentation assistance to prioritize multiple market opportunities or focus sparse resources on those market segments with highest business potential. The lab uses a proprietary model that avoids the common mistake of chasing markets based on size alone.

Deliverables

A Word document is generated containing notes from the lab that include the segmentation criteria, the weighting and ranking for the criteria, and initial segments to research and plot.

Outcomes

As a result of the MSL, you will have a segmentation model suitable for use with each of your products. For the specific product on which the lab focused you will have:

- Identified the segmentation criteria
- Determined ranking and weighting for the criteria
- Selected segments to evaluate
- A rough draft for an action plan to support a segmentation strategy

Pipeline Engineering Lab

Description

Long sales cycles, lack of qualified leads, and stagnate pipelines are common issues facing today's companies. In many organizations marketing is charged with "generating leads" and sales is charged with "closing leads". What should be a highly collaborative effort often becomes a lightning rod for inter-department friction. The cause of this friction is most often traced to several factors:

- The lack of a systematic approach for managing the lead flow
- Inconsistent or vague definitions for the various stages of the sales cycle
- Lack of understanding of what stages exist between an initial contact and a closed sales order
- Inability to accurately forecast the necessary quantity of leads to be generated
- Inability to accurately forecast the number of closed sales for any given month

The Pipeline Engineering Lab (PEL) is an interactive work session designed to help companies engineer a systematic buying pipeline model that can function as the single most important performance dashboard for marketing and sales departments. Participants find the lab serves as a terrific vehicle for aligning company strategies and tactics as well as aligning sales and marketing teams.

The lab covers the following ground: market strategy, target market, current pipeline process, behavioral commitment development, conversion ratios, and pipeline tactics.

Deliverables

A Word document is generated containing notes from the lab that include the behavioral commitments that define each of the phases in the pipeline, estimated conversion rates at each phase, number of contacts required for each sales order, and preliminary tactics and responsibilities assigned to each phase of the pipeline.

Outcomes

As a result of the PEL, you will have a pipeline model suitable for use with each of your products. For the specific product on which the lab focused you will have:

- Identified the market strategy for product
- Determined the target market for each pipeline
- Defined the behavior commitments for each pipeline stage
- Established reasonable conversion ratios and elapsed time between the stages
- Established how many contacts, leads, etc. are required for every closed order, and the amount of time required to move a target through the buying pipeline to close
- Linked tactics to each stage
- A rough draft for an action plan to support a buying pipeline based on behavioral commitments of your target market.

Positioning and Messaging Lab

Description

Smart managers realize that they have little chance of achieving revenue goals and building shareholder value if their company/product is not strategically positioned in the marketplace and if key messages aren't believable. Poor positioning contributes to long sales cycles, low close rates, customer confusion, channel indifference, and sales organization discord. The Positioning and Messaging Lab (PML) is an interactive work session designed for the purpose of creating the foundation for a company or product's strategic positioning and messaging.

Over 80% of the companies who participated in a recent survey said that their teams needed to adjust or re-think their company's positioning strategy. Unfortunately many of these companies will attempt to develop their strategic positioning platform and key messages internally without assistance from outside the organization. This approach often results in vague, pompous, myopic, and unbelievable positioning. The reason for this failure is that office politics and deeply in-bred biases heavily influence internal teams.

Deliverables

A Word document is generated containing notes from the lab that include the value pyramid and positioning statement constructed during the session.

Outcomes

As a result of the PML you will have a clear idea of how your company or product should be positioned to be successful in the current marketplace. You will have a rough draft of a positioning pyramid that defines the following:

- Value: what does the customer most value that you provide?
- Brand promise: what can the customer count on you for?
- Value proposition: why should the customer buy from you?
- Meaningful point of difference: how are you different from your competitors?
- Concept of singularity: what is the single thing you want to be known for?
- Positioning strategy statement: a shorthand description of the product or company that integrates the five components into a concise, compelling and meaningful description under 100 words in length.
- A rough draft for a messaging map from which you can build the key messages that support the value proposition.

Together, the Positioning Pyramid and Messaging Map provide the blueprint for all communications about your company or product. In fact the Brand Promise should be viewed as the essence of your entire organization, its DNA.

Planning for Profitability Lab

Description

In the mid-1990's, Arthur Andersen conducted a survey which found that companies with a written strategic plan had 63% higher revenues growth and 100% more profit than those companies without a plan. A strategic plan provides focus and helps organizations anticipate change. This two-day interactive session guides participants through the process of developing a strategic plan: mission, market, competition, opportunities and threats, objectives, strategies, tactics, resources and financials. The purpose of the lab is to help the organization formulate the framework for their strategic plan.

Deliverables

A Word document is generated containing notes from the lab that includes all the key elements of the plan. This document serves as the basis for the company to create a final credible strategic plan.

Outcomes

As a result of the PPL, you will have a process by which to develop a strategic plan and the framework for your strategic plan. You will have a rough draft of a strategic plan that includes addresses the following:

- Mission: What is the purpose of the strategic business unit?
- Market: What market is served and how the market will change?
- Competition: Who are the major competitors and what are their strengths and weaknesses?
- Self-evaluation: What are your strengths and weakness?
- Opportunities and Threats: What opportunities exist on which you can capitalize and what threats must be countered?
- Objectives: What measurable outcomes does the SBU plan to initiate to accomplish the mission?
- Strategies: How will the SBU intend to achieve its objectives?
- Tactics: What activities are required to implement the strategies?
- Resources: What people, facilities, equipment and funds are required to carry out the plan?
- Financials: What revenue and profits can be expected as a result of the plan?

Pre-meetings with key participants and two-day session with notes is \$9,000.

Marketing Performance Lab

Description

The Marketing Performance Management and Measurement Lab (MPML) is an interactive work session that uses a proprietary mapping methodology to help organizations

1. Establish a baseline for marketing accountability and marketing metrics
2. Align marketing with the business outcomes
3. Develop initial set of metrics that link marketing to business outcomes
4. Create a “back of the envelope” representation of the marketing dashboard

Deliverables

A Word document is generated containing notes from the lab along with the initial map and dashboard blueprint.

Outcomes

As a result of the MPM Lab, you will have

- A map that identifies definitive links between marketing objectives and business outcomes
- Quantifiable, measurable marketing objectives that directly relate to how marketing is moving the needle
- An initial set of marketing metrics and KPIs (key performance indicators)
- A blueprint for a marketing dashboard

Touch Point Effectiveness Lab

Description

Each of us can recall good and bad customer experiences - whether an online buying experience, the responsiveness from a supplier or the encounter with someone on the front line. As business professionals we understand the importance of every single interaction a customer or prospect has with an organization, especially in today's environment of intense competition, low switching costs, and increased commoditization. Yet, many organizations continue to flounder when it comes to managing customer experience and engagement.

Customer experience and engagement have evolved from table stakes to points of differentiation, as indicated by the flurry of customer experience/relationship scores and indexes now being published. More and more evidence strongly suggests that there is a link between customer experience/engagement and the financial success of the company.

So what are some things your company can do to begin to understand how to improve customer experience and engagement? We have found that companies truly focused on improving customer engagement do at least two things: they identify all the key touch points a customer has with their company, measure their effectiveness and use them to create a map of the customer experience. This is the purpose of the interactive Touch Point Effectiveness Lab (TPEL).

Deliverables

A Word document is generated containing notes from the lab that includes the initial inventory of your organization's touch points, a map of the touch points as they relate to the customer life cycle, and a 2X2 grid that depicts how each touch point relates to the operational and customer experience effectiveness.

Outcomes

As a result of the TPE Lab, you will have

- The initial inventory of touch points customers encounter throughout their life cycle along with its operation role and purpose within the customer experience,
- The initial scoring of the value of each touch point in terms of its impact on the experience
- An initial assessment of each touch points effectiveness.

The Lab Process

We have found that the labs serve as terrific vehicles for aligning company strategies and tactics as well as aligning sales and marketing teams. The most productive labs are those that include senior management responsible for strategy and revenue goals and members of the sales and marketing organizations responsible for achieving the product/service revenue targets.

The lab process involves discovery, prioritization, analysis, decision-making, and creativity. Through fast-paced discussions, exercises and role-playing the critical elements for a model and action plan are assembled.

We suggest 4-10 participants in a lab. Labs typically last five hours.

All labs are based on the proprietary Accomplish™ methodology perfected by VisionEdge Marketing over many years in scores of consulting engagements.

Prior to any lab, a pre-meeting will be held with the your company's internal champion to discuss the lab's outcomes and any key issues related to your company to ensure the lab meets your company's specific needs. At this time we will want to clarify the objectives of the lab.

Costs

The labs are affordable for companies of all sizes. Compensation for labs range between \$7,500 - \$15,000. Facilities and materials are additional.

VEM recommends that labs be conducted in a neutral location away from your office. The facility arrangements are your responsibility, however VEM can recommend a number of suitable meeting locations.

About VisionEdge Marketing

Focus

VisionEdge Marketing, a data-driven strategic and product marketing company with a core competency in marketing metrics and accountability. Our passion is to help companies of all sizes solve four critical business problems: How to acquire and keep profitable customers, how to successfully define and launch market-leading products and services, how to create performance-driven marketing organizations, and how to accurately measure and improve marketing's contribution to the business.

Our methodologies, models, tools, and best practices are delivered through two primary lines of business: consulting services and learning services. Our consulting services consist of three practices: business intelligence, strategy, and revenue creation. Educational programs, publications, and our online community comprise our learning services. Customers most often seek our help when it comes to:

- Business intelligence such as market, competitive and customer primary qualitative or secondary research.
- Product positioning and messaging
- Brand strategy
- Pricing strategies
- Market and customer segmentation
- Pipeline engineering and demand/lead generation
- Customer retention and acquisition action plans
- Marketing plan development
- Marketing metrics, ROI and dashboards

Background

One of the things our customers greatly appreciate is that we take an analytical and fact-based approach to marketing that is grounded in well-defined, repeatable methodologies that produce measurable results. Our unique competitive advantage is in our staff. We bring more than 100 years of combined marketing experience to the table. In fact, each and every member of the VisionEdge team has successfully lead global marketing organizations through multiple phases of corporate growth – from Series A start-up to IPO to leading positions in mature markets. Founded in 1999 and headquartered in Austin, we have had the privilege to work in a variety of industries and our satisfied clients range from early stage start-ups to Fortune 500 companies across a wide array of industries. Companies you might be familiar with include 3M, Adobe, Abbot Spine, Agility Logistics, BAX Global, BMC Software, Cirrus Logic, Emerson Process Management, Freescale, Kronos, LA Metro, Motion Computing, Southwest Airlines, Vignette, and Zebra to name a few.

Services

- The SmartStart Services Suite™ is a revolutionary consulting services bundle for marketers that serve as the basis for strategic marketing, product/service marketing, tactical marketing, and marketing communications. The SmartStart Services Suite bundle features VentureStart™, QuickStart™, MarketSmart™, JumpStart™,

PowerStart™, EdgeStart™ and MetStrat™ which focused on marketing performance measurement and management.

- Marketing labs assist teams rapidly develop product positioning, market segmentation, or lead generation strategies.
- Strategic Marketing Academy™ includes over a dozen courses, workshops and seminars delivering vast curriculum tailored to the needs of your organization.
- TIPS Online Advisory Service is a subscription-based service providing marketing advice and resources at your fingertips.

Improving Your Probability for Success™

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