

what did your marketing budget buy you?

Part 5: Better equipped Distribution
to create demand

Traditionally, Distribution played a key role in the supply chain, primarily handling the warehousing, transportation, and installation of products.

With the rapid advancement of technology and the rise of Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions, the role of Distribution has significantly evolved.

To survive in the modern digital economy, Distributors cannot remain the intermediaries of the past; they need to add greater value to their vendor and partner customers.

Moving On

In a recent conversation with a country General Manager of a leading Global Distributor, he told us the greatest value they can deliver is sales leads because it's number 1 on the list of what vendors and partners demand.

Zoom out to how Distribution generally operates and how this presents significant challenges.

Fundamentally they need to find a way to have a direct relationship with buyers - an area where they traditionally have no experience because they rely on their sales channel to do this.

This sales channel often isn't any more equipped to manage modern buyer behaviours and can't give the vendors the assurances they need to invest in digital marketing programmes.

Distribution is somewhat out on a limb given they're the ones seen to be investing on behalf of their vendors.



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Notwithstanding this, they're in a prime position to take ownership of demand creation end-to-end and be accountable for the results expected of them.

Welcome to Part VI of our series which explores how the more forward-thinking Distributors are looking to address the issue.

1. Understanding buyer behaviour

There are many reasons why this is important, not least the impact it has on sales needing to follow up on leads.

Understanding how buyers seek out and shortlist technologies make it easier to structure outreach to establish trust. Timing is everything.

- 70% of buyers shortlist suppliers before wanting to speak to sales (source: Forrester);
- Buyers make decisions in groups. Influencing a wide range of roles is key, not just one or two individuals;
- If you want to reduce the chances of things falling out of bed the closer you get to the end of the process this needs to be a continually managed data task;

- Without MarTech supporting continual outreach, establishing the level of buyer intent from what they are engaging with over time is impossible; Getting this right leads to more informed and
- productive sales conversations;
- MarTech also streamlines visibility and
- processes between marketing and sales teams.

2. Passive to proactive involvement

Typical Distribution lead generation programmes leave all the heavy lifting to partners and rely on a traditional historical formula.

Simply put, most invest in portals that contain all their vendor campaign content and support materials for use by partners.

Some have built-in campaign tracking and reporting metrics. They then rely on "spiff days" to do intensive follow-up and hope partners make a good job of it outside those times.



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This is all good stuff, but looking at it from a partner perspective they sell multiple vendor solutions as well as their services and simply don't have the resources to do it all consistently for all their vendors.

This leads to:

- Significant challenges with traditional distribution-led demand creation;
- Limitations of current partner engagement – typically only 20% are active in the market;
- The invisibility of progression or results until deal registration leads to forecasting challenges.

3. Fixing the disjointed process

Part of the problem goes back to the point of buyer behaviour. To this end vendors, distribution and partner channels create their problems. Buyers don't operate in the way they like to apply and measure funding – quarterly.

Problems arise when:

- Lead attribution is skewed and incorrect as it may assign inaccurate ROI to an activity;

- Hasty follow-up creates sales apathy and irrelevance for buyers;
 - Inefficiencies in the process impact investment from vendors and uptake from partners;
 - Lack of visibility in the process until deal grab (sorry, Reg)
- Typically happening after a flurry of outreach which is reported as a deal too early to be meaningful which disrupts forecasting capabilities;

4. Creating change

Making the change requires radical thinking and for most, a shift in strategy.

Yet through the creation of a centralised programme offering value up and down the chain, they're supercharged with everything needed to create guaranteed leads.

With the ability to create transparency and results through ownership of the entire process, they have a winning formula for adoption by vendors and partners.



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Doing this in-house isn't for the faint-hearted and could take years to establish properly and require considerable skills in many areas.

Distributors can create transparency throughout the entire process that includes call management for partners.

Key components needed would be:

- Strategy and process;
- Investment in staff and marketing resources that fully understand end-user demand creation;
- Advanced MarTech for intent marketing, automation and lead management;
- Integration with existing systems;
- Comprehensive visibility and management for all stakeholders;
- The ability to guarantee results for vendors investing in the process;

Or, it can be taken right now as a fully managed service we call **Market Activation™**.

5. Economies of scale and revenue opportunities

We wouldn't know our market if we can't answer the "what's in it for me" questions, Distribution would logically have.

We've got first-hand experience working in various distribution businesses in our careers.

The good news is there are huge economies of scale and increased revenue opportunities available to Distribution choosing to adopt Market Activation™:

- Efficiencies through core process set-ups and scalable service packages;
- Up to 70% margins achievable on sales and marketing services packages;
- Light touch involvement from Distribution stakeholders beyond usual account management;
- Efficiency of channel sales management processes.

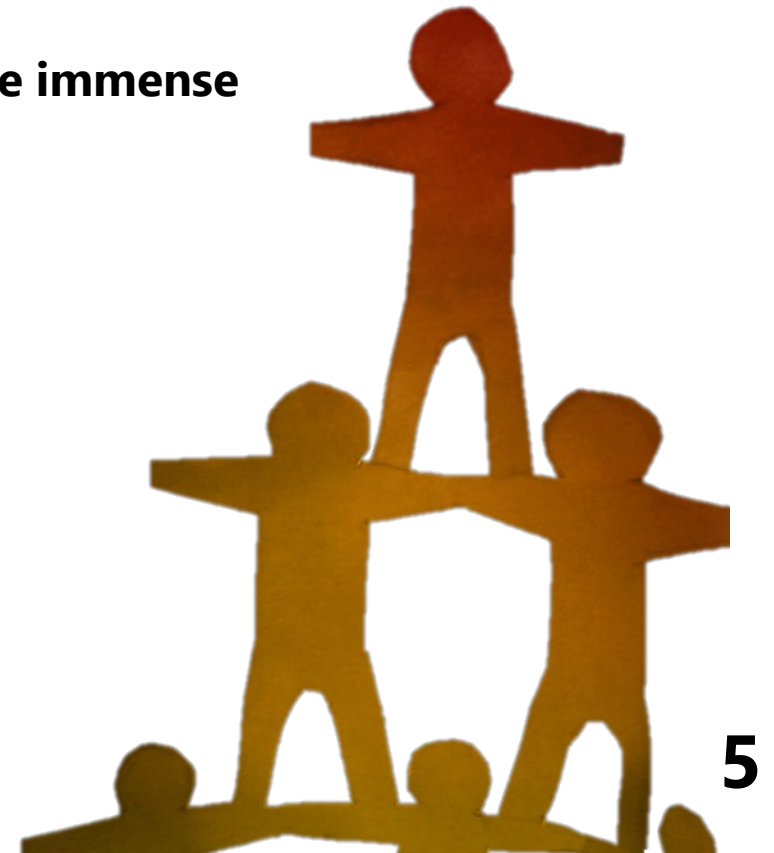


Conclusion:

The need for distribution to fully embrace their part in demand creation is no longer about transacting sales and, arguably, is long overdue.

By providing value through the creation and nurturing of buyer relationships for the common good of their vendors and partners, they can facilitate a seamless journey from awareness to conversion.

By taking this lead they will differentiate and provide immense value and ensure mutual growth for all.



A win for buyers - a win for you.

Our three founders have had long careers specialising in Strategies for Growth, Communications, and Martech coming from diverse backgrounds in Technology and Retail Advertising markets.

We've witnessed the way technology buying has evolved, recognising the nuanced paths of today's decision-makers.

Today's buyers think differently; their decision-making paths aren't straightforward anymore.

Our deep understanding of the complexities, challenges and risks of not achieving adequate ROI on sales and marketing investment led to us creating this market-beating programme.

Market Activation™, is a programme designed to build buyers' trust and engagement with brands whilst supporting our clients by providing actionable data to create better-informed sales conversations.

By making ourselves accountable for the end-to-end process, we're able to guarantee the results from the start.

Through Market Activation™, we bring clarity, responsibility, and a sure-fire path to growth.

We hope you like it enough to ask us to show you how we can transform the value you get from your marketing investment in the form of better sales outcomes.

www.theamigosnetwork.com

Book a meeting with us and learn how to become better equipped to create demand:



Book a Meeting