

https://dspace.org/

The misalignment of sales and marketing in the digital age: the case of South African small and medium-sized enterprises

Armstrong, Richard

2020
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/30287

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

The misalignment of sales and marketing in the digital age: The case of South African small and medium-sized enterprises

Richard Armstrong

0204356V

richardtomarmstrong@gmail.com

072 0250 990

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business

Johannesburg, 2020

ABSTRACT

Conceptually the two functions, sales and marketing are closely aligned. In reality, however, there is a tendency for misalignment to develop. This study investigated the misalignment between sales and marketing in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) in South Africa within the context of the age of digital business.

A survey was used to interrogate the extent, nature and causes of such misalignment. This in turn allowed for the support for potential solutions to be measured. The study found that a high degree of misalignment exists between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs. The evidence suggests that such misalignment relates, either directly, or indirectly to 'lead management'. Potential solutions to the issue were suggested and were overwhelmingly supported by the sample.

KEY WORDS

sales leads, digital marketing, sales and marketing misalignment, digital business, marketing measurement

DECLARATION

I, _Richard Armstrong_, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Digital Business at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Richard Armstrong

Signature: 

Signed at **Johannesburg**

On the **28th** day of **February 2020**

DEDICATION

To those I love: especially my wife and twin daughters Erin and Ava.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my wife for her patience and encouragement.

Thank you to my supervisor, Mthandeni Langa, for his support.

Special thanks are extended to Professor Phillip Kotler of the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University for granting his permission for the use of the research instrument as published in his 2006 article, “Ending the War between Sales and Marketing” (Kotler, Rackham, & Krishnaswamy, 2006)

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: List of Data Sets and Corresponding Populations 32

Table 2: Overview of Data Analysis of “Sales” Sample 37

Table 3: Overview of Data Analysis of “Marketing” Sample 38

Table 4: Overview of Data Analysis of “Marketing & Sales Combined” Sample 39

Table 5: Summary Statistics for Sales/Marketing Alignment Scored According to the model of Kotler et al. (2006) 47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Sales Funnel Example, Showing Division of Tasks Between Sales and Marketing – (Kotler et al., 2006, p.11) 17

Figure 2: Scale of Alignment (1-10) and Assumed Correlation with the Relationship Categories Proposed by Kotler et al (2006) 45

Figure 3: Summary of Response Types in Relation to Total Sample (Pertaining to Likert Scale Only) 45

Figure 5: Comparison of Likert Scale Alignment Categorisation by Function 46

Figure 6: Representation of Results of Self-Rating Alignment Question: “On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate the level of alignment between sales and marketing at your company? (0-4 = Misaligned; 5-10 = Aligned)”. 48

Figure 7: Comparison of Results – Likert Scale Versus Alignment Self-Assessment Question (Question 6) 49

Figure 8: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 1: Sales’ Belief that Marketers Do Not Provide High-Quality Leads 50

Figure 9: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 2 – Marketing Believes Sales Does Not Follow Up Adequately on Leads Provided by Marketing 51

Figure 10: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 3 – Information Not Shared Effectively Between Sales and Marketing 52

Figure 11: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 4 – Generally the Personality Types of Salespeople are not Compatible with Those of Marketers 52

Figure 12: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 5 – Despite Advances in Digital Reporting Technology; Marketing’s Contribution to the Business' Bottom Line Cannot be Effectively Measured 54

Figure 13: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 6 – Lack of Agreement Between Sales/Marketing as to What Constitutes a Lead. 55

Figure 14: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 7 – Poor Use of Digital Technologies (e.g. Sales/Marketing Management Software) to Track Leads Through the Sales Funnel. 56

Figure 15: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 1 – Focus on the Customer Rather Than on Individual Sales 57

Figure 16: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 2 – Using Digital Technology to Share Information Between Sales and Marketing 58

Figure 17: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 3 – Focusing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity 59

Figure 18: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 4 – Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales and Marketing 60

Figure 19: Survey for Establishing Nature of Relationship Between Sales and Marketing (Kotler et al. 2006) 88

Figure 20: Categorisation of Relationships Between Sales and Marketing (Kotler et al., 2006, p.1) 89

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BANT: A lead qualification framework that assesses the strength of leads based on the following: budget, authority, needs, timeline (Keenan, 2016).

Contents

ABSTRACT II
KEY WORDS II
DECLARATION III
DEDICATION IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS V
LIST OF TABLES VI
LIST OF FIGURES VII
LIST OF ACRONYMS IX

1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY 1
1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY 1
1.2.1 THE DIGITAL BACKDROP 1
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEMS 3
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 3
1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 3
1.6 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 4
1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS 6
1.1 ASSUMPTIONS 8

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW 9

2.1 INTRODUCTION 9
2.2 BACKGROUND 10
2.3 SALES AND MARKETING FUNCTIONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SMME LANDSCAPE 10
2.3.1 MEASURING MISALIGNMENT BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING 10
2.3.2 HYPOTHESIS 1 11
2.4 POTENTIAL CAUSES OF MISALIGNMENT WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SMME CONTEXT 11
2.4.1 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT OF SALES AND MARKETING 11
2.4.2 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING 14
2.4.3 COMPETITION FOR BUDGET 14
2.4.4 EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES 15
2.4.5 MISCOMMUNICATION 15
2.4.6 LEAD SCORING 16
2.4.7 THE SALES FUNNEL 17
2.4.8 LACK OF FOLLOWING UP ON LEADS 18

2.4.9 Hypothesis 2 19
2.5 Suggested Solutions to Misalignment 19
2.5.1 A Customer-Focused Approach to Sales and Marketing 20
2.5.2 Conceptualising Sales and Marketing as a Pipeline Rather Than a Funnel 20
2.5.3 Mutually Agreed Upon Lead Classification 21
2.5.4 Cross Functional Access to Information 22
2.5.5 Sales to Focus on Lead Follow-Up Intensity 23
2.5.6 Hypothesis 3 24
2.6 Conclusion of Literature Review 24
2.6.1 Hypothesis 1 26
2.6.2 Hypothesis 2 26
2.6.3 Hypothesis 3 26

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 27

3.1 Research Approach 27
3.2 Research Design 29
3.3 Data Collection Methods 30
3.4 Population and Sample 31
3.4.1 Population 31
3.5 Sample and Sampling Method 32
3.6 Research Instrument 33
Section 1 34
Section 2 34
Section 3 34
3.7 Procedure for Data Collection 35
3.8 Finding Survey Respondents 35
3.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation 36
3.10 Limitations of the Study 40
3.11 Validity and Reliability 40
3.11.1 External Validity 40
3.11.2 Internal Validity 41
3.11.3 Reliability 42
3.12 Demographic Profile of Respondents 42
3.13 Ethical Considerations 42

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS 44

4.1 Introduction 44
4.2 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 1 44
4.2.1 Calculation of Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale 46
4.2.2 Levels of Alignment indicated by Likert Scale 46
4.2.3 Results of Alignment Self-Rating Question (Question 6 of Survey) 47

4.2.4 Comparison of Results Between the Likert Scale of Kotler et al. (2006) and Self-Rating Alignment Question (Question 6) 48
4.3 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 2 49
4.3.1 Potential Misalignment Cause 1: Sales Believes Marketers Do Not Provide High-Quality Leads 49
4.3.2 Potential Misalignment Cause 2 – Marketing believes Sales Does Not Follow Up Adequately on Leads Provided by Marketing 50
4.3.3 Potential Misalignment Cause 3 – Information is Not Shared Effectively Between Sales and Marketing 51
4.3.4 Potential Misalignment Cause 4 – Generally the Personality Types of Salespeople are not Compatible with Those of Marketers 52
4.3.5 Potential Misalignment Cause 5 – Despite Advances in Digital Reporting Technology; Marketing's Contribution to the Business' Bottom Line Cannot be Effectively Measured 53
4.3.6 Potential Misalignment Cause 6 – Lack of Agreement Between Sales/Marketing as to What Constitutes a Lead 54
4.3.7 Potential Misalignment Cause 7 – Poor Use of Digital Technologies (e.g. Sales/Marketing Management Software) to Track Leads Through the Sales Funnel 55
4.4 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 3 56
4.4.1 Potential Misalignment Solution 1 – Focus on Customer Rather Than on Individual Sales 57
4.4.2 Potential Misalignment Solution 2 – Using Digital Technology to Share Information Between Sales/Marketing 57
4.4.3 Potential Misalignment Solution 3 – Focusing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity 58
4.4.4 Potential Misalignment Solution 4 – Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales/Marketing 59
4.5 Summary of the Results 60

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 61

5.1 Demographic profile of respondents 61
5.2 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 1 62
5.2.1 Analysis of Alignment Results based on Likert Scale 62
5.2.2 Alignment Analysis Based On Results of Alignment Self-Scoring Question (Question 6) 63
5.2.3 Comparison of Alignment Findings (Likert Scale Versus Alignment Self-Rating Question) 65
5.2.4 Conclusion Hypothesis 1 65
5.3 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 2 66
5.3.1 Analysis – Potential Cause of Misalignment 1: Sales' Belief that Marketers Do Not Provide High-Quality Leads 67
5.3.2 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 2: Marketing Believes Sales Does Not Follow up Adequately on Leads Provided by Marketing 67
5.3.3 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 3: Information is not Shared Effectively Between Sales and Marketing 68
5.3.4 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 4: Generally the Personality Types of Salespeople are Not Compatible with Those of Marketers 69
5.3.5 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 5: Despite Advances in Digital Reporting Technology; Marketing's Contribution to the Business' Bottom Line Cannot Be Effectively Measured 69

5.3.6 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 6: Lack of Agreement Between Sales and Marketing as to What Constitutes a Lead 70
5.3.7 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 7: Poor Use of Digital Technologies (e.g. Sales/Marketing Management Software) To Track Leads Through the Sales Funnel 70
5.3.8 Conclusion Relating to Hypothesis 2 72
5.4 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 3 72
5.4.1 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 1: Focus on Customer Rather Than on Individual Sales 72
5.4.2 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 2: Using Digital Technology to Share Information Between Sales/Marketing 73
5.4.3 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 3: Focusing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity 73
5.4.4 Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 4: Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales and Marketing 73
5.5 Conclusion 74

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS 76

6.1 Introduction 76
6.2 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 1 76
6.3 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 2 77
6.4 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 3 79
6.5 Recommendations 81
6.6 Suggestions for Further Research 84
6.7 Final Comments 85

Appendix 87

Demographic Questions Appearing before Section 1 87
Likert Scale Questions Used in this Study (Kotler, 2006) 88
Calculation of Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale used in this study 109
Email from Professor Phillip Kotler granting permission for instrument Use 113
Message sent via LinkedIn InMail to potential respondents 114

References 115

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the perceived misalignment of the sales and marketing functions in small, micro and medium-sized business (SMMEs) in South Africa in the age of digital business.

1.2 Context of the Study

Ideally, sales and marketing work in unison to capitalise on business opportunities and grow revenue (Kotler, Krishnaswamy, & Rackham, 2006). Despite a common objective, there is a perception that sales and marketing are often misaligned – the result being missed opportunities and reduced operational effectiveness (Redding & Practice, 2015). This happens regardless of a plethora of digital technologies that, in theory at least, should have brought sales and marketing in the digital age closer together.

A common theme in the literature is the identification of a scarcity of communication between the two functions as a probable cause of misalignment (Sabnis, Chatterjee, Grewal, & Lilien, 2013). An example of this is the reported dearth of feedback provided by sales to marketing and the tendency of sales not to follow up on marketing-generated leads (Sabnis et al., 2013).

Sales has traditionally taken a transactional approach to gaining new customers, while marketing is becoming increasingly customer-centric (Patterson, 2007). This suggests that sales and marketing are operating based on different conceptual models.

1.2.1 *The Digital Backdrop*

The fourth industrial revolution (4IR) is characterised by exponential improvements in technology. Among these are the improvements being made in artificial intelligence (AI) and the exponential increases in both the volume of and accessibility to

information brought about by the proliferation of internet access. The result is increased connection between people, things (i.e. the 'Internet of things' or IoT) and people and things. Virtually nothing remains untouched by the 4IR. Sales and marketing are no exception. In recent years, both functions have benefited from improved measurement capabilities – made possible by new technologies. Marketing spend over the past decade has become increasingly weighted towards digital media (Statista, 2019). Thus, digital marketing (marketing by digital means) is different to traditional marketing in many ways; the most fundamental of which is measurability. Marketers using digital methods can now far more accurately determine what is working and what is not. This has given marketing the opportunity to consistently empirically prove its value (Chaffey & Patron, 2012) and has, perhaps, shifted the balance of power between sales and marketing.

For its part, the sales function has also benefited from technological advancement of the digital age – both directly and indirectly. Indirect benefit should have manifested through marketing in the form of higher quality leads – a result of marketing's improved digitally based targeting and measurement techniques. Direct benefit has arrived in the form of customer relationship management (CRM). CRM systems are aimed at making the day-to-day activities of sales staff and sales managers easier.

For both sales and marketing, the ability to accurately track movement through the sales funnel is revolutionary. This, in theory at least, should make it easy to determine any weak links within both the sales and marketing processes. Despite the improved digital technology with which both sales and marketing can now operate, it seems there is, on aggregate, still a costly misalignment between these two business functions. Such misalignment, where it exists, is a thorn in the side of modern (digital) businesses – a form of business in which transparency and near instant communication and the adaptation which this implies are paramount.

1.3 Research Problems

1. Despite advancements in both sales and marketing technology in the digital age, there is a perceived misalignment between these two functions (Kotler et al., 2006; Patterson, 2007; Peterson, Gordon, & Krishnan, 2015).
2. While there has been significant research into the causes of sales and marketing misalignment globally it is unclear how the causes identified pertain to the specific context of South African SMMEs. By understanding these causes within the South African context it is hoped that specific practical solutions can be found.
3. Various theorists have proffered solutions to sales and marketing misalignment. Yet, how such proposed solutions will be perceived within the South African SMME environment is largely unknown. Understanding the general attitudes towards such sollutions is a vital step in assessing their practicality within the South African SMME environment.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent is the misalignment of sales and marketing perceived to be present in South African SMMEs?

2. How are the causes of misalignment identified by other theorists perceived within the South African SMME context?

3. How are the various suggested technological and methodological solutions to sales/marketing misalignment viewed within the context of South African SMME's

1.5 Significance of the Study

There has already been significant research into the perceived misalignment between sales and marketing (Kotler et al., 2006; Levine, 1989; Patterson, 2007; Peterson et al., 2015). This, however, does not mean the problem and its consequences are sufficiently understood – nor is there consensus as to how this problem might be addressed. Given the fundamental importance of both sales and marketing to

individual businesses, and to the economy as a whole, any research that may shed further light on this topic is of value. It is hoped it may incrementally aid in helping a clearer image of the specified areas of investigation to emerge.

The geographical focus of this study will add to its unique value. By focusing on the South African business environment, geographically specific findings may emerge. These might be helpful in better understanding the potential misalignment of the sales and marketing functions in the South African SMME context in the age of digital business.

Further research into the relationship between sales and marketing is especially fitting as the 4IR continues. As the pace of change increases, it is necessary to review traditional assumptions and practices at increasingly shorter intervals. What worked in the past may no longer work in the future. By continually exploring the relationship between sales and marketing, businesses may be better prepared to either foresee or implement change. The innovation that this likely implies is at the heart of business in the digital age.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

This study is limited to South African SMMEs. The reason for its focus on SMMEs is that it is such businesses which can least afford the missed profit opportunity reportedly brought about by the misalignment between sales and marketing. Similarly, it is such businesses which may benefit the most from such a study – and could potentially act upon insights gained through the research with the most ease – as they are often less burdened by the bureaucracy of their larger corporate counterparts.

There is strong evidence supporting the view that where misalignment between sales and marketing exists, it has significant negative consequences for profit maximisation (Peterson et al., 2015). Keeping this in mind this study proceeds with the assumption

that where misalignment between sales and marketing does exist, it presents a significant threat to maximising profit potential.

This research, therefore, attempts to reveal the extent and degree of such misalignment between sales and marketing in small (including micro) to medium-sized companies operating within South Africa.

Furthermore, an attempt is made to reveal the causes of such misalignment where it does exist. In so doing, the focus is on revealing how the causes determined by other researchers (whose studies were conducted in a variety of different countries) apply to the South African SMME context.

Finally, the study intends to reveal how the numerous suggested solutions (those already suggested by other researchers) to the misalignment issue are viewed within the South African SMME environment. In this regard, a focus is placed on the following sales and marketing misalignment symptoms:

- The tendency for sales and marketing not to have a clearly defined method of categorising leads.
- The perceived extent to which sales grossly neglects to follow up on leads generated through marketing efforts.

The degree to which digital technology (specifically CRM systems) are currently used to bridge the information gap between sales and marketing will be reviewed.

Importantly, the study is confined to South African SMMEs as a whole. It does *not* attempt to compare findings between SMMEs in different industries.

1.7 Definition of Terms

BANT: A lead qualification framework that assesses the strength of leads based on the following factors pertaining to the lead: budget, authority, needs, timeline (Keenan, 2016).

Customer Relationship Management System (CRM): Software that helps to manage the relationship between an organisation and its customers; and facilitates the transparency of customer information to relevant parties within the organisation. It can also be used to schedule sales and marketing tasks such as automating emails or sending reminders for sales calls to be made. ("What is CRM," n.d).

Lead: A person who has indicated some level of interest in the product or service being sold ("What is a lead ", n.d.).

Lead Scoring: A method of prioritising leads according to the likelihood that they will result in sales. Essentially, this is a process of categorising leads according to a variety of predetermined characteristics (Byrnes, 2011).

Marketing: “The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organisational goals” (Bannock, 2002, p.214).

Medium Enterprise (ME): Businesses with between 51-250 full-time employees (Business Tech, 2019))

Sales: “The function of selling a good or service” (Bannock, 2002, p.328), generally used here to refer to the department facilitating this function (Bannock, 2002).

Sales Funnel: The conceptualisation of the process of sales (and marketing) as having a funnel shape, which indicates higher volumes of people at the start of the

funnel (the process) than at the end of it. This implies that the sales (and marketing) process is linear and that while there may be many leads, only a small proportion of these will ultimately result in sales (Patterson, 2007).

Small Enterprise (SE): Businesses with between 11-50 full-time employees (Business Tech, 2019).

Micro Enterprise (ME): A business with between 1-10 full-time employees (Business Tech, 2019)

Small to Medium Enterprise (SME): Businesses with between 11-250 full-time employees (Business Tech, 2019).

Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (SMME): All businesses with between 1-250 employees (Business Tech, 2019)

1.1 Assumptions

- Survey respondents will have a general understanding of the terms and terminology used in the questionnaire.
- Where misalignment between sales and marketing exists, these functions can be brought closer together.
- All else being equal, a positive relationship between the sales and marketing functions positively correlates with the optimisation of business opportunities and increased profit.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

By introducing the broad perspective of the study; the previous chapter illustrated the continued importance of sales and marketing in the digital age. It also hinted at the potential negative consequences when the relationship between the two functions goes awry. It was also implied that the issue of misalignment between sales and marketing predates the ongoing digitalisation of business processes. Yet, the evidence suggests misalignment between sales and marketing is a challenge with which business in the digital age still contends.

It was also suggested that the interface between the two functions is the epicentre from which misalignment originates. The scope of the literature reviewed does not extend to include theoretical perspectives on sales and marketing that are not closely linked to the interface of the two functions itself.

The literature reviewed therefore focuses on those studies concerned with the extent to which these functions support one another and the objectives of an organisation. Such 'almost' universal organisational objectives might include improving customer value and the speed of response to the market (Cespedes, 1992, 1993; Guenzi & Troilo, 2007; Smith, Gopalakrishna, & Chatterjee, 2006) as cited by (Biemans, Brenčič, & Malshe, 2010).

There are numerous studies to support the notion that a fundamental misalignment between sales and marketing is not anomalous – that it is, instead, a relatively common occurrence (Beverland, Steel, & Dapiran, 2006; Kotler et al., 2006; Redding & Practice, 2015).

The literature includes many recurring themes. By critically reviewing such themes, the topic of this study and its significance to digital business can be better understood.

2.2 Background

Without sales and marketing revenue would cease and businesses would perish (Pycraft, Singh, et al., 2010). Each function is charged with the responsibility of maximising profit. Despite the intrinsically implied, broad theoretical alignment between sales and marketing (both are dedicated to maximising profit), there is seemingly the potential for operational misalignment of the two functions (Biemans et al., 2010).

In recognition of this, multiple studies have investigated its existence, consequences and causes (Biemans et al., 2010). Others have proffered solutions. The following section assesses the proposed consequences of such misalignment.

2.3 Sales and Marketing Functions in the South African SMME Landscape

The overall proposed negative consequence of misalignment takes the form of missed opportunity and the resultant failure to maximise profits. When assessing the extent to which the misalignment of sales and marketing is present within South African SMMEs, it is necessary to be guided by the work of multiple researchers who have attempted such measurement, albeit in different contexts.

2.3.1 *Measuring Misalignment between Sales and Marketing*

Before proceeding, it is pertinent to define misalignment. A general working definition which is implied by multiple theorists, but not explicitly stated by any of them, can be understood as follows*:* Alignment between sales and marketing is the state in which each function cooperates with the other to realise the objectives of the firm*.* Non-alignment between sales and marketing is the complete absence of alignment (Biemans et al., 2010; Kotler et al., 2006).

Alignment and non-alignment of sales and marketing are seldom seen in their extreme forms; that is, complete alignment or complete non-alignment. As with many phenomena, the alignment or non-alignment of sales and marketing is usually a question of degree; consequently, misalignment of sales and marketing is the degree to which either or both of the two functions are working against one another to the detriment of the firm as a whole (Kotler et al., 2006; Peterson et al., 2015).

Relating to the question of the degree of misalignment, Kotler et al. (2006) created several categories which define the nature of the possible relationships existing between the sales and marketing functions. These are: undefined, defined, aligned and integrated (Kotler et al., 2006).

2.3.2 *Hypothesis 1*

There is misalignment between sales and marketing within South African SMMEs

Null:

There is alignment between sales and marketing within South African SMMEs

2.4 Potential Causes of Misalignment within the South African SMME Context

The body of literature identifies various causes of misalignment between sales and marketing. A selection of key theories which attempt to identify such causes are discussed.

2.4.1 *Performance Measurement of Sales and Marketing*

Sleep, Lam, and Hulland (2018) see the measures used to quantify the performance of the functions as a variable that contributes towards misalignment (Sleep, Lam, & Hulland, 2018). Sales is rewarded for meeting sales targets (Küster & Canales, 2008). Sales are easily empirically measurable – either targets are met, or they are not. The measures of marketing performance, however, are more nuanced. They are generally measured over longer periods of time (Peterson et al., 2015). Traditionally, marketing

performance measurement has included metrics that are less categorical than those associated with sales (Clark, 1999).

Thus, marketing performance measurement has gone through many iterations over the past few decades, from the 1970s to the present day (Clark, 1999; Peterson et. al, 2015). Several categories of marketing measurement protocols have been classified. These are: non-financial measures, single financial output measures, multiple measures and input measures (Clark, 1999).

The single financial output measures are profit, sales and cash flow. This method of measurement seeks to uncover a cause-and-effect relationship between marketing actions and financial results.

Various methods were proposed for linking marketing inputs to financial results (outputs) (Clark, 1999). The notable issue with such attempts was the existence of multiple variables which contribute concurrently with marketing to financial output. These could not be adequately 'controlled for' in such measurement methodologies (Clark, 1999; Piercy, 1997). The quest for a well-rounded understanding of marketing's potential impact on a business resulted in the consideration of non-financial measures.

Key subcategories of this broad group of measurements are: customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, market share and brand equity (Jooste, Strydom, Berndt, & du Plessis, 2012). The assumption with the measurement of customer satisfaction is that it is an indicator of subsequent brand loyalty. This, in turn, would serve as an indicator of the potential for future revenue streams. The basis for this was the rationale that satisfied customers progress to become loyal customers and would make multiple purchases from the business (Clark, 1999).

The early 1990s saw an increase in the use of input measures (Clark, 1999). This was based on the assumption that there is a positive correlation between marketing inputs (activities) and marketing success in the form of increased profit Jooste et al, (2012).

The next evolution of marketing measurement was the movement towards multiple measures. The multiple measures subcategory includes the marketing audit, effectiveness/efficiency measures and multivariate analysis (Clark, 1999).

Since the advent of digital marketing, it is – in theory at least – possible for financial output measures to be more accurately correlated with specific digital marketing inputs. This improved accuracy, however, would only pertain to digital marketing and not to marketing as a whole (Saura, Palos-Sánchez, & Cerdá Suárez, 2017). This brief analysis of marketing performance measurement shows the cumbersome nature thereof. It also provides some insight into why sales has seemingly doubted the credibility of marketing (Beverland et al., 2006).

The measurement of the performance of the sales function in contrast to that of marketing is far less convoluted. In the final analysis, the performance of the sales team is measured only by the number of sales made (Küster & Canales, 2008). This is clearly a measure of output rather than input.

The potential for reward systems to be a source of conflict between the two functions relates not to the reward systems themselves, but to the objectives they incentivise. The objectives of sales and marketing can seem to be at odds with each other.

Much of this is perhaps due directly to the timespans within which each of these functions orientate themselves – i.e. sales focuses on the short term, yet marketing gives priority to the long term (Biemans et al., 2010; Peterson et al., 2015). Generally, while the success or failure of specific marketing initiatives (especially those using digital technologies) can theoretically be determined quickly; the aggregated result of

all marketing efforts takes longer to measure (and is already open to a significant degree of interpretation when non-digital methods are used).

2.4.2 *Cultural Differences Between Sales and Marketing*

There is a theory that the misalignment between sales and marketing is merely a group manifestation of the personality differences between individuals drawn to the respective functions. The hypothesis is that, in general, marketers are more analytical while their counterparts in sales show greater competence in personal communication. Related to this is the level of granularity with which sales and marketing approach their roles.

Salespeople focus on individual accounts (potentially at the expense of seeing the bigger picture) while marketers look at things from afar, taking into consideration the broader context in which individual accounts exist. The two functions are effectively viewing the same commercial landscape, but from different angles (Levine, 1989).
Sleep et al. (2018) contend that the perceived misalignment between sales and marketing is at least in part attributable to the tendency for individuals within both departments to begin to self-identify as members of the group to which they belong, at the expense of their identities as individuals. Perhaps this self-identification as a member of sales or marketing results in a lack of identification with the meta-structure that is the firm. This strong identification of individuals within the department in which they work has the potential for departmental goals to inadvertently appear more important than organisational objectives (Sleep et al., 2018).

2.4.3 *Competition for Budget*

The competition for budget between sales and marketing is another potential cause of conflict and, therefore, misalignment. This is symptomatic of what Kotler et al. (2006) imply is the economic conflict between the two functions.

There is a view that in recent years (particularly in B2B businesses) marketing has gained advantage in the ‘battle for budget’. This is thought to be a result of the uptake of digital marketing tools and techniques which have made it easier for marketing to claim return on marketing investment. This has potentially begun levelling the playing field as far as the respective functions’ ability to demonstrate results is concerned. At the same time, there has been a tendency for businesses to reduce the size of their sales teams (i.e. the employees responsible for the sales function) (Redding & Practice, 2015).

2.4.4 *Educational Differences*

It could be argued that, on aggregate, an educational chasm divides the employees of sales and marketing. It is pointed out that marketing managers are far more likely to hold advanced degrees than their sales counterparts. This could also relate to marketing’s penchant for analysis and strategic decision-making. The educational divide could be a source of conflict between the two functions (Peterson et al., 2015).

2.4.5 *Miscommunication*

Peterson et al. (2015) point out that sales and marketing departments often lack a common language. The terminology of sales and marketing, respectively, might cause the one to misinterpret the meaning intended by the other (Peterson et al., 2015).

The term ‘lead’, used by both functions, is particularly troublesome. This is partly because there are multiple types of leads. The following more specific terms are often used to describe leads. These are: marketing qualified leads (MQL) and sales qualified leads (SQL). Yet, for either of these terms to have any value, their specific definition must be agreed upon collectively between sales and marketing (Redding & Practice, 2015). This is because they constitute a key metric, as potential customers flow through the sales funnel. The same applies to the term ‘prospect’.

Peterson et al. (2015), citing (Maddox, 2008), succinctly demonstrate the issue by saying, “To a salesperson, a lead is a prospect expressing interest in a particular product, while marketing may count a contact that has downloaded content from a website as a lead” (Peterson, 2015, p.31).

It appears that there is no commonly agreed upon industry-wide definition of the various terms relating to leads and the categorisation thereof. This could be the cause of miscommunication leading to antagonism between sales and marketing.

2.4.6 *Lead Scoring*

Directly related to the previously discussed problem concerning definitions is the notion of lead qualification or lead scoring which, broadly speaking, is the process of dividing leads according to their perceived level of quality (Byrnes, 2011). Quality is determined by the perceived probability that a lead will result in a sale. Which lead characteristics are indicators of increased probability of conversion is open to debate. If these indicators are not agreed upon collectively by sales and marketing, the potential for misunderstanding exists (Byrnes, 2011).

Jolson (1988) divides leads into three groups based upon their origins. These are company-initiated, prospect-initiated, and salesperson-initiated leads. These are defined as follows:

- Company-initiated: Those leads responding to company marketing.
- Prospect-initiated: Those leads contacting the organisation of their own volition, in the hopes of realising some want or need. [1]

[1] : It can be argued that there is no such thing as a true prospect-initiated lead as in order for a prospect to initiate contact with the business there always exists the prerequisite for them to be aware of it and awareness is generated by marketing (not the prospect).

- Salesperson-initiated: Leads that result directly or indirectly from the salesperson's canvassing efforts (Jolson, 1988).

2.4.7 *The Sales Funnel*

Linked to the 'lead definition' conundrum is the concept of the sales funnel itself. This common conceptual model traditionally delegates the work of sales and marketing to the top and bottom halves of the funnel, respectively (Kotler et al., 2006). This is demonstrated by the following diagram.

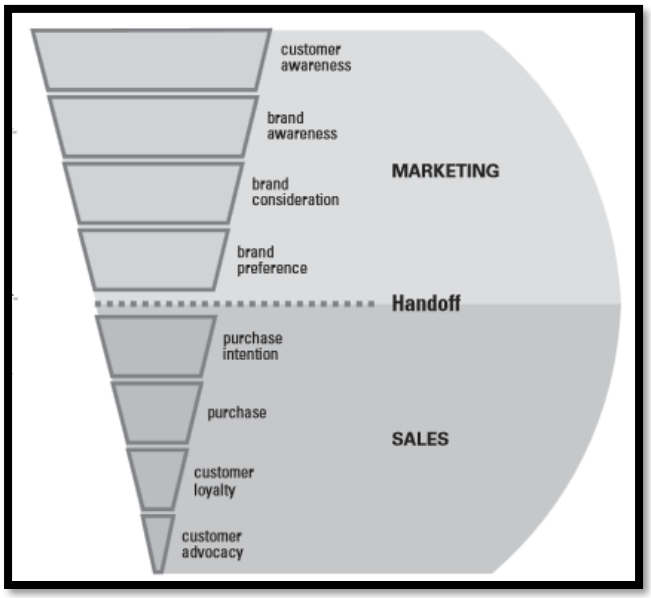


Figure 1: Sales Funnel Example, Showing Division of Tasks Between Sales and Marketing – (Kotler et al., 2006, p.11)

Marketing is traditionally held responsible for top-of-funnel activity, while sales plies its trade at the funnel's narrow end. Marketing is tasked with getting more leads, while sales is tasked with converting them (Peterson et al., 2015).

Thus, there is a somewhat arbitrary division of labour somewhere around the halfway mark of the funnel – the point at which marketing hands over leads to sales.

Noble (2010) proposes that there is a fundamental problem with conceptualising the sales and marketing processes as a funnel. He asserts that the conceptualisation of the twin processes of sales and marketing using a funnel has several shortcomings. Foremost among these is his assertion that “consumer behaviour is less funnel-like than previously thought” (Noble, 2010, p.2).

He is not alone in his aversion to the sales funnel. Patterson (2007) also suggests that the conceptualisation of a sales funnel is problematic. This is because:

- It is commonly referred to as a ‘sales funnel’ even though marketing plays a significant role in ‘filling’ the funnel.
- The funnel analogy suggests that there must be a lot more input at the top than there will be output at the bottom.

She proposes that conceptualisation of sales as a funnel should be reconsidered. She argues, “The ideal shape would actually look more like a pipe, where every opportunity that goes in at the front would ultimately turn into a customer” (Patterson, 2007, p.188).

While Patterson (2007) concedes that this ideal is unrealistic, she maintains that the conceptualisation of the combined sales and marketing process as a pipe, rather than a funnel, is integral in aligning sales and marketing. This is as it would encourage both functions to approach their task from a customer-centric perspective rather than a purely transactional one (Patterson, 2007).

2.4.8 *Lack of Following Up on Leads*

The overall consequence of misalignment proposed by multiple theorists is a loss of opportunity to maximise profits. Some researchers point only to this final consequence. Peterson et al. (2007) conclude that the misalignment costs time and resources and leads to a culture of blame. Other theorists, however, give their own nuanced interpretation of how the consequences of misalignment manifest.

A common theme in this regard is the reported failure of many sales teams to follow up on leads provided by marketing. This is pointed out in a number of studies. A 2013 study found that sales only followed up on 30% of leads provided by marketing (Sabnis et al., 2013). An earlier study suggested that, “As much as 80% of marketing expenditures on lead generation and sales collateral are wasted – ignored as unhelpful and irrelevant by sales” (Aberdeen Group, 2002, p.2) as cited by (Biemans et al., 2010).

Most recently in 2019, it was again concluded that lack of following up on leads was a behaviour that had severe negative implications as far as achieving profit potential was concerned (Ohiomah, Andreev, Benyoucef, & Hood, 2019).

2.4.9 *Hypothesis 2*

The causes of misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs are consistent with (those identified in) other parts of the world.

Null

The causes of misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs are unique to the South African SMME context.

2.5 Suggested Solutions to Misalignment

There is significant overlap of the solutions to misalignment proposed by various theorists. Each of them suggests ways of promoting synergy between sales and marketing. It seems, however, that most do not reveal sufficient detail concerning the precise means of achieving their desired end. Many of the suggestions are open to considerable degrees of interpretation.

2.5.1 *A Customer-Focused Approach to Sales and Marketing*

Patterson et al. (2007), for example, suggest abandoning a transactional approach to sales and marketing in favour of a customer-focused one. The transactional approach to which she refers is characterised by not only the transaction-like relationship between the business and the customer, but also – and more importantly perhaps – to the internal transaction between marketing and sales; an interaction in which marketing hands over leads to sales (Patterson, 2007). This implies a clear division of responsibility between sales and marketing.

The customer-centric approach favoured by Patterson (2007) is based on the premise that the customer's needs should be the core concern around which the sales and marketing functions align. The two functions should act as an integrated unit which values the 'customer lifecycle relationship' above all else (Patterson, 2007).

2.5.2 *Conceptualising Sales and Marketing as a Pipeline Rather Than a Funnel*

As already briefly discussed, there is a call from some researchers to get rid of the sales funnel as the conceptual model underlying the functioning of sales and marketing (Noble, 2010; Patterson, 2007). The conceptualisation of the flow of sales and marketing tasks (and various stages of the customer lifecycle to which such tasks apply) as a 'buying pipeline' rather than a sales and marketing funnel is central to Patterson's (2007) call for sales' and marketing's mutual focus on customer centricity. She asserts that creating 'a buying pipeline' is crucial to realising alignment between sales and marketing (Patterson, 2007).

As represented in the diagram below, Patterson (2007) proposes mapping the various stages a customer will pass through en route to purchase. She suggests that such stages should be categorised by 'behavioural commitments' demonstrated by the prospective customer. The behaviours to which she refers should imply incremental increases in commitment – with each new indicator of commitment moving the

prospective customer further across the buying pipeline (Patterson, 2007). The crux of her suggestion is that it is necessary to “have a clear understanding of the specific incremental behaviours your customers actually demonstrate that shows they are moving their commitment to the relationship forward” (Patterson, 2007, p.168).

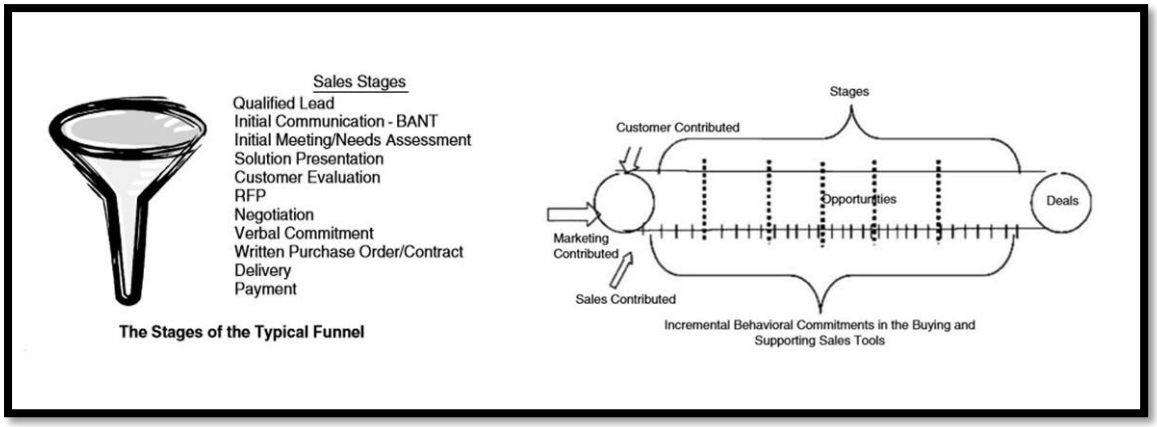


Figure 2: Sales Funnel versus Buying Pipeline (Patterson, 2007 p.187; p.189)

2.5.3 *Mutually Agreed Upon Lead Classification*

Patterson’s suggestion of recognising behavioural commitments relates closely to the idea of lead qualification or categorisation. Traditionally, the categorisation of leads has used temperature as a metaphor with ‘hot’ representing those most likely to convert and ‘cold’ representing the lowest quality leads. Aligned to this is the notion that sales and marketing should decide upon lead categorisation or qualification (also sometimes referred to as lead scoring) together (Redding & Practice, 2015).

In so doing, it is hoped that the risk of miscommunication (and the potential animosity arising from it) can be mitigated – increasing the potential for alignment. Yet, as suggested by Redding and Practice (2015), the idea of mutual classification of leads can be expanded upon to include the mutual agreement of processes and procedures (rules) to be followed relating to such leads. While it is not suggested that sales and marketing technology, which assists in the automation of both sales and marketing

processes, is a panacea; it is seen at least as a necessary part of the solution (Redding & Practice, 2015).

2.5.4 *Cross Functional Access to Information*

Relating to Patterson's encouragement of a customer-focused approach, Peterson (Biemans et al., 2010). Peterson et al. (2015) stress the importance of an appropriate flow of information between sales and marketing. What specifically constitutes an appropriate flow of information, however, is not particularly clear. Citing (Pellham, 2009), Peterson et al. say, "The ability of the salesperson to serve as an information conduit between the customer and the marketing function is critical to retaining customers and improving relationship quality" (Peterson et al., 2015, p.34). Yet, no prescription as to the minimum requirements for information sharing from sales to marketing (or vice versa) is given.

In the absence of such a prescription, perhaps the implication is that, in sharing information both from sales to marketing and vice versa, it is better to err on the side of oversharing rather than under sharing.

Maybe the concept of visibility as it is applied in the methodology of Just In Time (originally applied to manufacturing but also applicable to other service-oriented tasks) could ensure a constant and abundant flow of information between the two functions (Pycraft, Sigh, et al., 2010). In such a manner, the risk of under sharing would be largely reduced. This, however, would be pursuing the idea of Peterson et al (2015) to the extreme.

Such sharing of information suggested by Peterson et al (2015) can be more easily achieved and maintained through the integration of various CRM-type systems such that it creates "a transparent data funnel through which your marketing, sales, and customer service teams can have a 360° view of every customer. This means

transparency through the whole sales funnel, and it makes it easier for marketing, sales, and customer service to get on the same page" (Rombaut, n.d.).

2.5.5 *Sales to Focus on Lead Follow-Up Intensity*

Another solution to the perceived misalignment of sales and marketing is presented by Ohiomah et al. (2019).

The solution is inferred, perhaps rather than implied, as it intends to improve salesforce efficiency (rather than directly increase the alignment of sales and marketing), while the research was isolated to inside sales i.e. sales limited to soliciting business without personal contact, such as sales meetings with clients. As such, it relies solely on communicating with prospects and clients by telephone, email, etc.

While the research is not predominantly about the misalignment between sales and marketing, it addresses one of the major concerns that multiple theorists indicate is at least one of the causes of an often tumultuous relationship between the two functions – that is the reported lack of sales' follow up on leads, especially those delivered by marketing.

The simple suggestion is that sales should focus on lead follow-up intensity, which implies maximising both the speed and persistence with which sales pursues leads.

The study concludes that there is a strong positive correlation between follow-up intensity and sales performance. Referring to the earlier work of Sabnis et al. (2013) and Smith et al. (2006), Ohiomah et al. (2019) say, "Salespeople are more likely to convert leads to sales if they consistently contact leads with persistency and immediacy" (Ohiomah et al., 2019, p.174).

2.5.6 *Hypothesis 3*

The proposed solutions to address misalignment between sales and marketing will be accepted by the sales and marketing cohorts within the South African SMME's.

Null:
The proposed solutions to address misalignment between sales and marketing will be rejected by the sales and marketing cohorts within South African SMME's.

2.6 Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature accumulatively provided multiple theories as to the causes, consequences and possible solutions to the phenomenon of misalignment between sales and marketing.
The consequences have been shown to be severe and are likely to be more so in the context of small and medium-sized businesses where the margin for error is all the narrower. The consequence of such misalignment, broadly speaking, is missed revenue opportunity.

Various methods for identifying the level of alignment (or misalignment) between sales and marketing have been used.

Similarly, there have been many ‘symptoms’ shown to be present when misalignment between sales and marketing exists. Such symptoms contribute towards the ‘meta-symptom’ which is a generalised lack of information sharing and cooperation.

Where misalignment between sales and marketing exists, a common source of contention is the lead. Marketing blames sales for not following up on the leads provided, while members of sales typically question the quality of those leads. Related to this is the definition (or lack thereof) of the term lead itself.

The traditional conceptualisation of the sales and marketing process as a funnel has been blamed by some for creating an invisible and somewhat arbitrary divide between the two functions – with marketing being held accountable for top-of-funnel tasks and sales being responsible for all activities associated with the bottom half of the funnel. The means by which the performance of sales and marketing are traditionally measured is seen as another potential contributor to misalignment.

While the digital age has seen a dramatic rise in the ease of measuring marketing success or failure, there seems to be a residual scepticism of marketing-performance measurement which remains – a legacy of the pre-digital era, perhaps.

The various theorists propose several solutions to the misalignment issue, each attempting to address one or more of the causes of misalignment discussed.
One such solution includes being rid of the sales funnel and replacing it with a 'buying pipeline'. The purpose of this would be to bridge the conceptual gap between sales and marketing and to make the customer the focus of both functions. This would move sales and marketing away from a transactional approach and towards a customer-centric one. Some implied solutions focus more on one side of the sales and marketing divide than the other. Noting that sales team's performance improves when they increase 'intensity and persistence' of follow-up, Ohiomah et al. (2019) strongly encourage this.

It is also suggested that technology (such as CRM systems), while not the panacea to misalignment, can at least better facilitate the flow of information between sales and marketing.

Such technology can also be useful in assigning leads to the correct workflow based on system rules. Aligned to this is the assertion that for alignment to be fostered, there must be mutual agreement between sales and marketing regarding the scoring of leads.

2.6.1 *Hypothesis 1*

There is misalignment between sales and marketing within South African SMMEs

Null:

There is alignment between sales and marketing within South African SMMEs

2.6.2 *Hypothesis 2*

The causes of misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs are consistent with (those identified in) other parts of the world.

Null:

The causes of misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs are unique to the South African SMME context.

2.6.3 *Hypothesis 3*

The proposed solutions to address misalignment between sales and marketing will be accepted by the sales and marketing cohorts within the South African SMMEs.

Null:

The proposed solutions to address misalignment between sales and marketing will be rejected by the sales and marketing cohorts within South African SMMEs.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The literature review has provided the broad context necessary for an investigation into relationship between the sales and marketing functions. An explanation of the chosen research methodology follows; it outlines a process through which the relationship between sales and marketing was interrogated within the specific context of South African SMMEs in the current digital age.

3.1 Research Approach

The approach taken is deductive. The deductive approach begins with predefined theories; it then uses data to validate those theories within a specific context (Creswell, 2003). In this instance pre-existing theories regarding the relationship between sales and marketing, were validated within the context of South African SMMEs in the age of digital business.

In keeping with the premise on which a deductive approach is based, the research hypotheses were tested against the data collected.

To fulfil the requirements of deductive logic, a quantitative strategy was applied. In so doing, it was necessary to assign a numeric value to the opinions given regarding the subject of study.

The process of deduction implies a chain of logic in which a valid finding is confirmed by the internal truth of the premise and the logical agreement of all subsequent statements with the previous statement (Cryan, Shatil, & Mayblin, 2014).

The deductive process, as it has been applied, is illustrated as follows:
If it is shown that the instrument is valid and reliable; then for the hypothesis to be true, a measurement supporting the hypothesis must be recorded.

In such a case the chain of logic would be as follows: The instrument of measurement is valid; it records a measure supporting the hypothesis; therefore, the hypothesis is true.

The alternative to the aforementioned scenario is one which supports the null hypothesis: The instrument of measurement is valid; the instrument does not record a measurement supporting the hypothesis; therefore, the hypothesis is false.

Sales and marketing represent an abstract concept or construct. Deductive logic, therefore, proposes that any subcategories thereof (such as the perceived misalignment between sales and marketing functions) are also abstract concepts or constructs.

Therefore, to make the information gathered quantifiable (for the purpose of pursuing deductive ends) it was necessary to objectively measure *opinion* about the subject rather than the objective reality of the subject itself. Thus, a quantitative approach (using a survey) was used to measure the opinion of the sample representing the population (Creswell, 2003).

To further clarify: in so doing, the objective reality of the situation has not been measured, but rather the collective subjective perception pertaining thereto. In the absence of the ability to objectively measure abstract concepts, measuring the aggregated subjective perception thereof is a plausible alternative (Kent, 2001).

A cross-sectional study was favoured over a longitudinal or before-and-after study. A cross-sectional study has allowed analysis of the construct of misalignment between sales and marketing as it is manifested across and within the chosen population. As will be shown in the next section, the choice of research design focuses on a practical means of conducting research in the chosen field of inquiry.

3.2 Research Design

Since a survey may be designed to provide a quantitative measurement of opinions, it supports the quantitative approach chosen for this study (Creswell, 2014).

It was determined that a survey would be used to aggregate the sentiment expressed by relevant individuals towards the subject of the misalignment between sales and marketing.

Using a survey has enabled the study to be highly focused, as only the most pertinent questions were asked (Dane, 1990). This served to filter out any ‘noise’ irrelevant to the specific areas of inquiry. The use of a survey was also chosen by multiple researchers in this field (Kotler et al., 2006; Ohiomah et al., 2019; Peterson et al., 2015; Sabnis et al., 2013; Sleep et al., 2018).

A potential disadvantage of survey use is that it may, as a consequence of its highly focused nature, fail to reveal potentially important information. The reason being that a survey can only elicit information pertaining to the specific questions it poses.
Another potential disadvantage of survey use is that it introduces the potential for the misinterpretation of questions (Mis, 2011). This risk, however, has been mitigated through the careful construction of survey questions (Mis, 2011).

The use of a survey also has the practical advantage of being relatively easy to administrate (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). This is especially true when digital technology is harnessed for the purpose of survey dissemination and data collection. Using such technology possibly increases the percentage of respondents. A likely reason for this is that their participation is likely to take less time and effort than that associated with a traditional survey process. Related to this relative ease of administration is the comparatively fast turnaround of data collection using surveys (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). This allows a cross-sectional data set to be gathered faster than traditional survey methods would allow.

Furthermore, the use of a survey allows the data pertaining to each of the research questions to be easily segmented. This is extremely useful when the task of data analysis is undertaken (Granello & Wheaton, 2004).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected by inviting a sample of the population to participate in the survey. Individuals were encouraged to participate by the offer of receiving the research results. The social media platform LinkedIn was used to target people within the defined population and subpopulations to which the study relates. Advertisements, in the form of InMails (a type of LinkedIn advert) were used to elicit participation.

The advertising (the InMail) promoting the survey contained a link to the questionnaire. The cloud-based survey platform Qualtrics hosted the questionnaire and gathered the data submitted by respondents.

By making use of digital advertising technology, the number of unqualified individuals reaching the survey was minimised ("Sponsored InMail Overview," n.d). The LinkedIn technology allowed potential respondents to be targeted by their location, job title, and the size of the company for which they work.[2] All of the aforementioned information has been willingly provided by the targeted population to LinkedIn. LinkedIn allows messages to be sent to users through their system but does not reveal its user's identities to advertisers ("Privacy Policy," n.d.) . Thus, no privacy issues were to be encountered. Later, once the respondent reached the survey, they could choose to reveal their identity.

[2] There are multiple criteria that can be used to target individuals on LinkedIn. The ones mentioned, however, are those most applicable to this study.

3.4 Population and Sample

3.4.1 *Population*

As already discussed, the context of the study is the South African SMME environment. The study was, therefore, confined to businesses within South Africa which employ between one and 250 people.

The population of interest comprised those individuals within such SMME businesses who were the most likely to have intimate knowledge and practical experience of either sales or marketing. More specifically, the relevant people within such organisations regarding the alignment of sales and marketing have been identified as:

1. Sales staff (including but not limited to managers or directors)
2. Marketing Staff (including but not limited to managers or directors)

The identification of these roles was based on the logical assumption that people fulfilling such functions are the most likely to have an understanding of the issues being considered. They were also the chosen populations of multiple previous studies (Biemans et al., 2010; Kotler et al., 2006; Sleep et al., 2018).

The reason for selecting both sales and marketing representatives was to provide a perspective from both sides of the sales and marketing divide. By comparing the data gathered from sales representatives to that gathered from marketing representatives, the issues at hand could be assessed at an enhanced level of granularity. The results gained from each of the respective parties were analysed first as a whole and then in isolation.

The table which follows provides a summary of the population (data set number 1) and describes the subpopulations of which it is comprised.

Data Set Name	Data Set Number	Description
All	1	Comprises data set 1 and 2
Marketing	2	Individuals working in marketing at a South African SMME
Sales	3	Individuals working in sales at a South African SMME

Table 1: List of Data Sets and Corresponding Populations

3.5 Sample and Sampling Method

Since the research required two subpopulations to be studied, it was necessary to draw samples from each of these. The starting point for finding such samples was the SMME business.

To determine the degree of confidence with which the research results would be generalisable, it would first be necessary to determine the population size. To do this, it would have been necessary to know the number of businesses in South Africa that are defined as SMMEs. Unfortunately, there is seemingly no consensus as to what this number is. Multiple studies on this subject provide different figures ("The alarming truth about the number of small businesses in South Africa," 2018). The degree to which these numbers vary from one source to another clearly indicates that their integrity is extremely suspect.

It would seem, therefore, that the true population size is unknown. In the interests of having a frame of reference, however, the number suggested by a recent study has been chosen as an estimate. This study reports that the number of SMMEs in South Africa is 250 000 (*The number of formal micro, small & medium businesses*

in South Africa, 2018) .

It is noteworthy that even if the exact number of SMMEs in South Africa were known, it would not be possible to know, or even logically estimate, the number of: A. marketing staff and B. The number of sales staff – the reason being that the number of staff employed in sales and marketing roles would vary from one business to the next.

Since the population size, as already demonstrated, is unknown, it was not feasible to use 'true' probability sampling. Even if the population size were known, it would still not have been possible to use probability sampling. This would be because the identities of the individuals comprising the population would still be unknown. This would make it impossible for the probability sampling criterion of random selection to be met.

The aforementioned protocol implies an element of self-selection because respondents would need to choose whether or not to participate. This was permissible given that the population was homogenous regarding its primary attribute variables (Flick, 2011). These included three variables:

- The location of the businesses for which population members work (i.e. South Africa)
- The roles played by members of the population within the businesses (i.e. either a sales or marketing role)
- The size of the business for which population members work (i.e. businesses with between 1-250 employees)

3.6 Research Instrument

The survey consisted of three parts – one section pertaining to each of hypotheses identified. The survey took the form of a Likert scale, a single numeric linear scale question and a series of individual Likert Type Items.

Section 1

The first section of the survey made inquiry into the extent to which sales and marketing are aligned within the respondent's organisation. This part of the survey was comprised of questions used by Kotler et al. (2006)[3]. His measurement instrument (a survey using a Likert scale) was used. The scoring of the survey would categorise the relationship between sales and marketing (in each instance) using the four relationship categories existing between sales and marketing identified by Kotler et al. (2006). This part of the survey essentially replicated the methodology and terminology used by Kotler et al. (2006) and applied it to the specific area of study, i.e. SMME businesses in South Africa in the age of digital business.

This section also included a single, numeric linear scale question which prompted respondents to rate the level of alignment between sales and marketing at their business on a scale of 1-10.

Section 2

This part of the survey asked questions relating to the causes of misalignment between sales and marketing. A series of Likert items (not a scale) was used to gauge the respondent's strength of opinion pertaining to a series of suggested causes of the misalignment between sales and marketing. Most of these suggestions were based on causes already identified in various studies by several theorists.

Section 3

The purpose of this section of the survey was to gauge the degree to which various solutions proposed by the theorists were viewed as viable by the respondents. A series of Likert items was used to determine the strength of agreement or disagreement regarding the suitability of the proposed solutions.

---

[3] See appendix for survey and explanation of scoring suggested by Kotler et al. (2006)

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

The survey was administrated digitally and was hosted on Qualtrics. Respondents were invited to participate in the survey via social media advertising and were directed to it by a hyperlink.

3.8 Finding Survey Respondents

The primary medium for finding survey respondents was LinkedIn. This popular networking site allows users to target individuals by industry, job title, geographic location and company size. The mechanism used for sampling was predominantly LinkedIn since the system could deliver InMails inviting individuals who met the targeting criteria to participate in the survey. The criteria for taking part in the study as previously defined were:

- Being a staff member involved in either sales or marketing at a South African SMME.

The delivery of the LinkedIn InMails was based on whom the LinkedIn Algorithm found available to receive the invitation. The implication of this is that non-probability sampling was used (Flick, 2011). The sample was a non-probability sample because:

A. The system targeted advertising to people within the defined population that happened to be using the system at the time
B. There was an element of self-selection, whereby prospective respondents chose whether or not to participate.

Convincing potential respondents to complete surveys is often a difficult task, as it requires them to give of their time with little or no compensation. To mitigate this factor, the research results themselves were used as an incentive, enticing respondents to complete the survey. In exchange for their time, the respondents were promised that they would receive the research results in a summarised format such as an infographic or a brief article summarising the findings.

3.9 Data Analysis and Interpretation

It was determined that the data would be analysed using descriptive statistics. The data corresponding to each of the three sections of the survey would first be analysed in isolation to the other sections. Data from each section would then be compared to that gathered from other sections.

Similarly, data gathered from each of the respective samples would be analysed, first in isolation to the others and then as part of the data set which was to include the data gathered from both samples.

The first section would be scored using the method identified by Kotler et al. (2006) to categorise the relationship between sales and marketing in the respondent's business as 'undefined', 'defined', 'aligned' or integrated.

To gain greater insight into the data provided, the scores for each of the questions would be analysed as follows pertaining to each of the three data sets, i.e. sales, marketing and sales and marketing combined: mean, mode, etc.

Analysis Steps	Research Questions/ Survey Section	Population	Desired Sample Size	Analysis Method	Specific Measure	Notes
1	1	Sales	30	Total scores using scoring model of Kotler et al. (2006)	Determine as "undefined, defined, aligned or integrated	See scoring model of Kotler et al. (2006)
2	1	Sales	30	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to total scores not to scores for individual questions
3	2	Sales	30	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to all questions in section
4	3	Sales	30	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to all questions in section

Table 2: Overview of Data Analysis of "Sales" Sample

Analysis Steps	Research Questions/ Survey Section	Population	sample Size	Analysis Method	Specific Measure	Notes
1	1	Marketing	30	Total scores using scoring method of Kotler et al. (2006).	Determine as "undefined, defined, aligned or integrated	See Scoring Model of Kotler et al (2006).
2	1	Marketing	30	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to total scores not to scores for individual questions
3	2	Marketing	30	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to all questions in section
4	3	Marketing	30	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to all questions in section

Table 3: Overview of Data Analysis of "Marketing" Sample

Analysis Steps	Research Questions/ Survey Section	Population	sample Size	Analysis Method	Specific Measure	Notes
1	1	Sales & marketing combined	60	Total scores using scoring method of Kotler et al (2006)	Determine as "undefined, defined, aligned or integrated	See scoring model of Kotler et al. (2006)
2	1	Sales & marketing combined	60	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to total scores not to scores for individual questions
3	2	Sales & marketing combined	60	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to all questions in section
4	3	Sales & marketing combined	60	Descriptive statistics	Measures of central tendency	As applied to all questions in section

Table 4: Overview of Data Analysis of "Marketing & Sales Combined" Sample

Part 2 – Data Analysis and Interpretation

It was determined that the results from each of the samples would then be compared to those of the others.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

It was not realistically feasible to use probability sampling (based on the fact that the population size is unknown) and even if the population size were known, it would not have been practical (given time and cost constraints) to identify each SMME within the population. This would need to have been done to ensure random sampling, i.e. that all members of the population would have had the same chance of being included in the sample (Creswell, 2014). Since non-probability sampling was used, the sample is less representative of the entire population than it would have been had it been feasible to use probability sampling.

Since there was an element of self-selection in the sampling process, there was some potential for respondent bias. It is reasonable to assume that it is possible that a higher proportion of those persons who have relatively strong feelings relating to the subject would agree to complete the survey – this implies the potential for respondents' responses to tend towards the extremes.

3.11 Validity and Reliability

3.11.1 *External Validity*

External validity is the extent to which the results of the study can be generalised beyond the study itself (i.e. the likelihood that the aggregated opinions of the sample are representative of the aggregated opinions of the target population (Flick, 2011).

The sampling method as already mentioned targeted individuals deemed to be representative of the population (sales and marketing combined) and sub-populations (sales and marketing considered individually). The number of individuals who did not meet the demographic criteria that were made aware of the survey was minimised. In

such cases when the method of targeting potential respondents failed to filter out any individuals that did not satisfy the selection criteria, such persons were excluded during the data analysis process – thereby ensuring the sample was representative of the population.

a. *Statistical External Validity*

It would have been extremely challenging to use true probability sampling. This, by definition, would involve being able to identify each person in the population and then using random selection to source respondents (Creswell, 2014).

To address the challenge of true probability sampling in this specific case; a sample was drawn from LinkedIn where an invitation to participate in the survey could be made as 'random' as possible. Each of the individuals with a presence on Linked-In meeting the criteria would likely have had a similar (but not equal) chance of receiving an invitation to participate. Therefore, the requirements for statistical external validity have been met.

b. *Contextual External Validity*

There is no characteristic (variable) that could bring the contextual external validity of the study into question because there is no reason to believe that the sample gathered was not representative of the broader population chosen as the subject of the study.

3.11.2 *Internal Validity*

Internal validity is the extent to which research design measures what it is intended to measure (Garson, 2018).

To optimise internal validity every effort was made to ensure a high response rate to the survey. This is because the higher the rate of non-response the greater the chances for sample bias (Kent, 2001). Thus, the study used incentivisation in the form of a free report to be sent to respondents in an attempt to optimise the response rate.

3.11.3 *Reliability*

Reliability is the extent to which a measurement instrument used within a study consistently measures the construct it aims to measure (Garson, 2018).

The internal consistency method was used as a means of determining the level of reliability of the Likert Scale used in investigating hypothesis one. To measure the internal consistency thereof Cronbach's Alpha was applied (Garson, 2018).

The risk of participant error was mitigated by ensuring that the survey instructions and questions were made as easily understandable as possible.

3.12 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The relevant demographic criteria of the actual sample were closely aligned to those of the intended sample. The sample consisted of sales and marketing staff from SMMEs within South Africa.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

The identities of all respondents remained confidential. This limited the risk of any discrimination as a result of their participation (Creswell, 2003). Confidentiality was maintained by careful data management practices. All information regarding the identities of participants were password protected.

The survey itself served as a digital consent form that was used to record the consent of the participants. The terms of engagement were mentioned in the invitation; completing the survey was to constitute consent. Since the survey form was digital, the aforementioned action served as a substitute for a signature.

The principle of informed consent was adhered to while soliciting respondents (Creswell, 2003). This was achieved by clearly defining what potential respondents would be subjecting themselves to by participating in the survey.

The true purposes of the survey were made transparent to all those who chose to participate (Creswell, 2003). This transparency was achieved by a brief statement included on the InMail invitation which clearly stated the intention and purpose of the research.

The incentivisation for participating in the research was the assurance of receiving a summarised version of the data collected once the research was complete. If the respondents wished to take up this offer, they would have needed to enter their email address on the online survey. To protect this information, it was first held on the survey software (which is password protected). When it was necessary to transfer this information from the cloud-based software hosting the survey to a bulk email program, the information was temporarily stored on a password-protected Excel spreadsheet. Once all the necessary emails had been sent, all email addresses would be deleted from any online services. Any file containing such information, such as the Excel document, was also to be deleted.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a detailed description of the research methodology applied. In this chapter, the data gathered by following the modus operandi described in the previous chapter is presented. The aggregated responses to the questions relating to each of the respective hypotheses are presented together.

The presentation of the data will follow the order of the hypotheses – starting with Hypothesis 1 and ending with Hypothesis 3. The majority of the data is represented in either table or graph format. Each table or graph includes an appropriate description.

As stated in Chapter 3, the survey responses will be presented by group. Group 1 includes all respondents (sales and marketing); Group 2 includes only the sales group and Group 3 includes only marketers. Where applicable, each of the three groups are compared to each other.

4.2 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 1

The data collected regarding Hypothesis 1 consists of the summarised responses to a Likert scale. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Likert scale was one developed by Kotler et al. (2006). The scoring model developed by Kotler et al. has been used to categorise the nature of the relationship between sales and marketing. The four categories defined by Kotler et al. were: undefined, defined, aligned, and integrated.

For the purposes of this research, undefined is synonymous with unaligned; while ‘aligned and integrated’ are merely varying degrees of what has been previously described as alignment. The term ‘defined’ merely suggests that there is a defined relationship existing between sales and marketing, but that is one in which the level of alignment is comparatively low. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

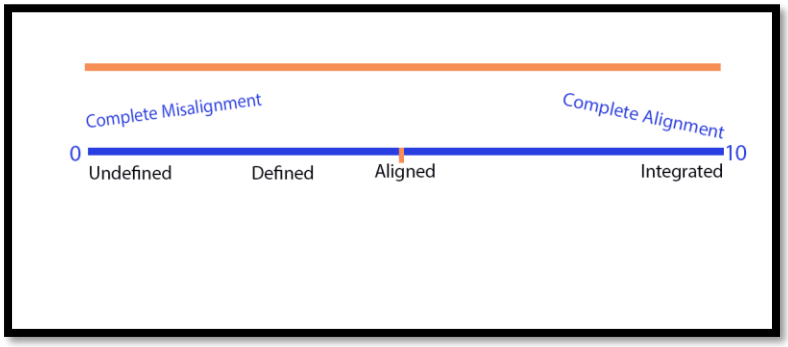


Figure 2: Scale of Alignment (1-10) and Assumed Correlation with the Relationship Categories Proposed by Kotler et al (2006)

The graph below indicates the number of responses to Kotler's (2006) instrument (employed in this study) provided from the sales and marketing cohorts, respectively.

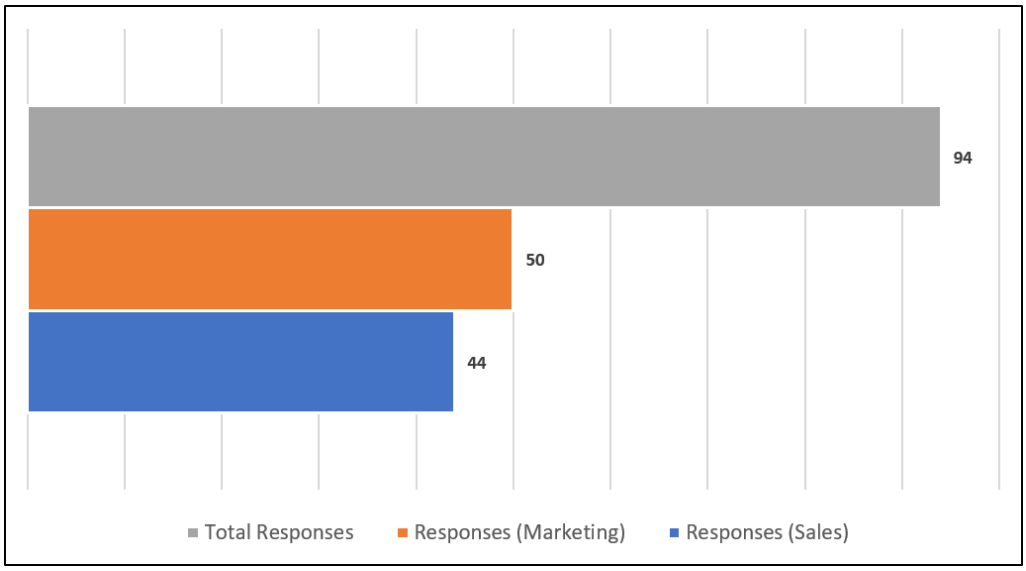


Figure 3: Summary of Response Types in Relation to Total Sample (Pertaining to Likert Scale Only)

4.2.1 *Calculation of Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale*

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the Likert Scale used. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to be 0.9003.

4.2.2 *Levels of Alignment indicated by Likert Scale*

The results of the Likert scale responses are presented in summarised form in the figure below. The Likert scale was scored using the scoring model described in Chapter 3. The percentages indicated are derived from the numbers presented in Figure 5. The graph illustrates the nature of the relationship between sales and marketing according to the terminology of Kotler et al. (2006).

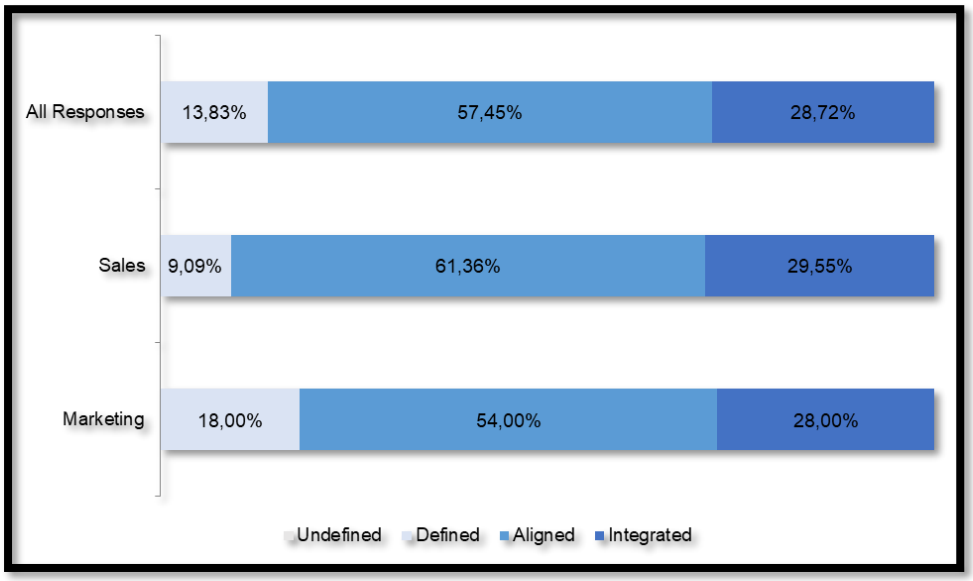


Figure 4: Comparison of Likert Scale Alignment Categorisation by Function

A summary of the descriptive statistics is presented below; this pertains to the responses to the previously described Likert scale. The table is reflective of all completed responses (i.e. those from both the sales and marketing groups, respectively).

Mean Score ($\bar{x}$)	74,29
Median Score (MED)	75,00
Standard Deviation (S)	11,87
Number of Observations (n)	94

Table 5: Summary Statistics for Sales/Marketing Alignment Scored According to the model of Kotler et al. (2006)

4.2.3 *Results of Alignment Self-Rating Question (Question 6 of Survey)*

The graph which follows presents the results regarding the question, “On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate the level of alignment between sales and marketing at your company? (0-4 = Misaligned; 5-10 = Aligned)”. The raw scores for this question were converted into categories, using the following scoring model:

1-2 = Undefined

3-4 = Defined

5-8 = Aligned

9-10 = Integrated

This was done in order to compare the results of this self-rating question to those obtained from the Likert scale of Kotler et al. (2006) as employed in this study. The figure below indicates both the raw results (scores from one to 10) and the corresponding categories which the raw results represents once the scoring model was applied. The sample size was 132 (with 70 responses from marketing and 62 from sales).

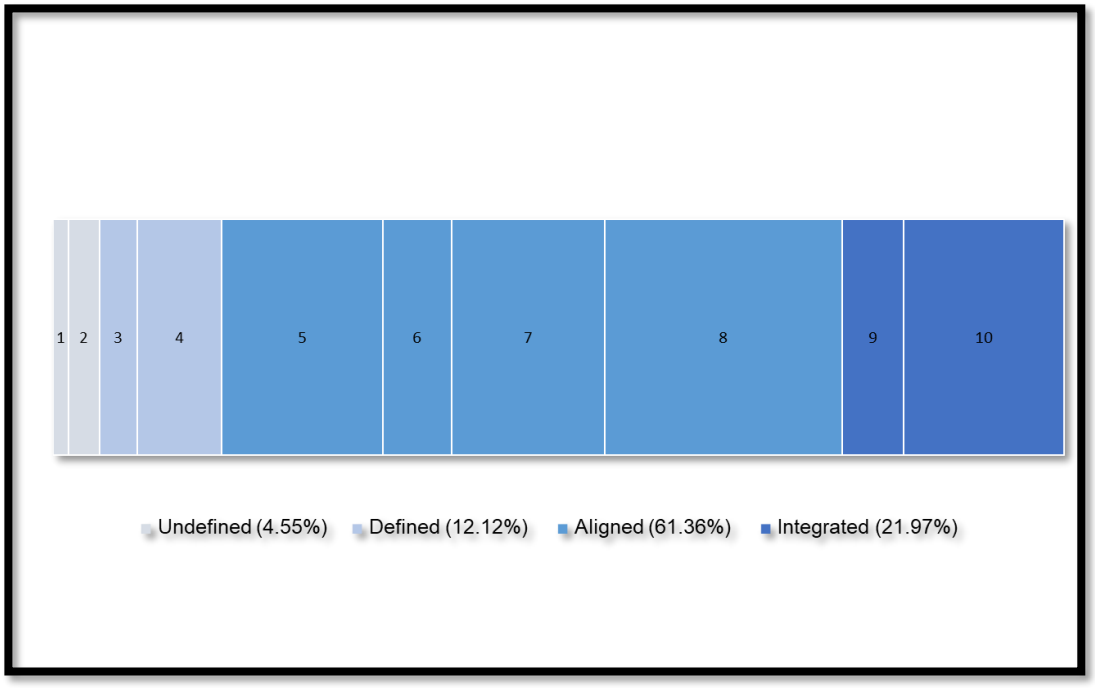


Figure 5: Representation of Results of Self-Rating Alignment Question: "On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate the level of alignment between sales and marketing at your company? (0-4 = Misaligned; 5-10 = Aligned)".

4.2.4 *Comparison of Results Between the Likert Scale of Kotler et al. (2006) and Self-Rating Alignment Question (Question 6)*

A comparison of the results of the Likert scale developed by Kotler et al. (2006) as used in this study and the self-scoring alignment question is represented in the graph below. The specific numbers to which the percentages relate for the Likert scale results and the self-assessment alignment question, respectively, have been indicated in the preceding sections of this chapter.

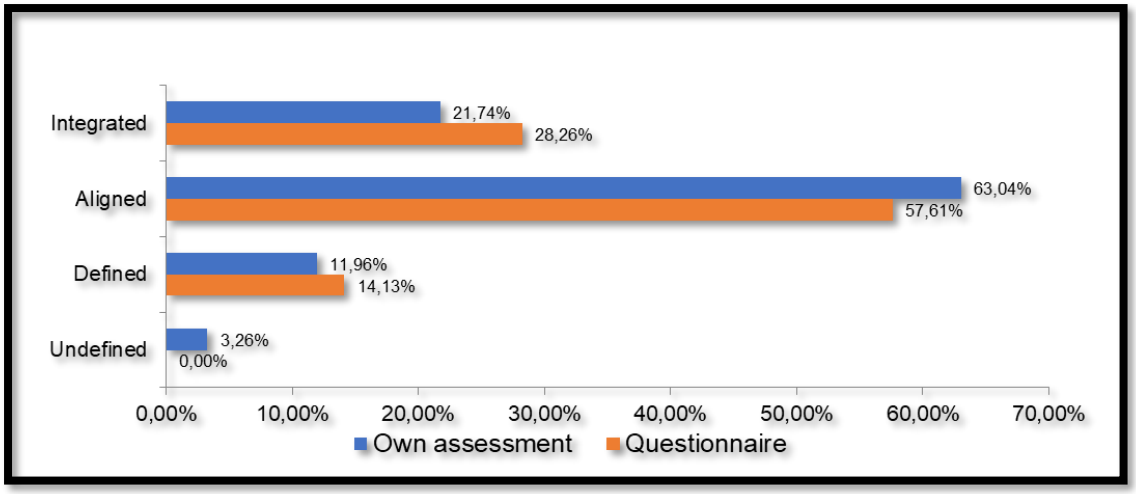


Figure 6: Comparison of Results – Likert Scale Versus Alignment Self-Assessment Question (Question 6)

4.3 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 2

The instruction relating to each of the following statements was: “To which extent do you agree that each of the following factors are causes of misalignment between sales and marketing?” The results of each of the questions relating to the potential causes of misalignment between sales and marketing are presented in this section. The samples size was 83 with 46 responses from marketing and 37 from sales.

4.3.1 *Potential Misalignment Cause 1: Sales Believes Marketers Do Not Provide High-Quality Leads*

The graph below presents the level of agreement expressed by respondents as to whether or not the belief that sales believes marketing does not provide high-quality leads is a cause of misalignment between sales and marketing.

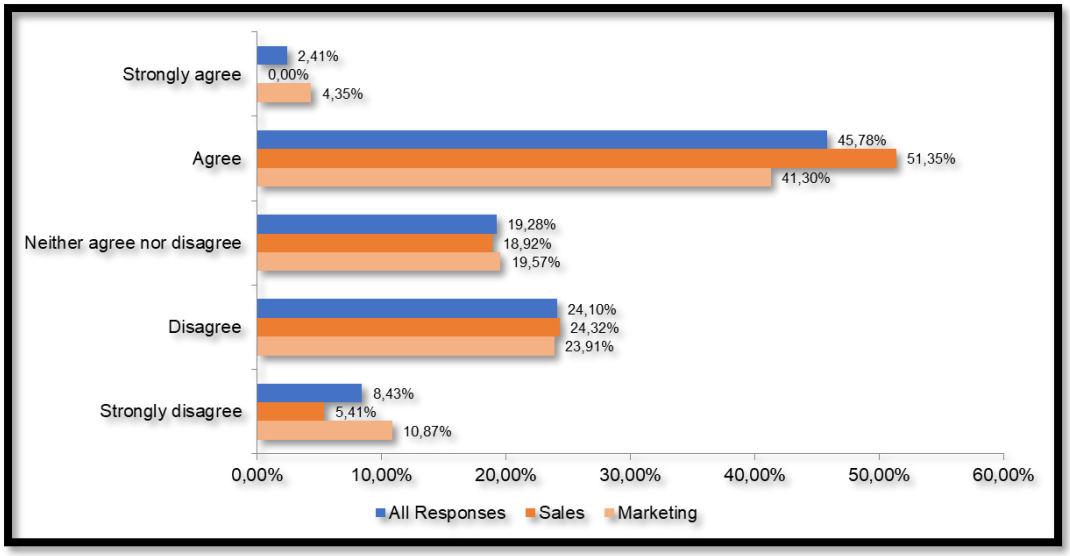


Figure 7: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 1: Sales' Belief that Marketers Do Not Provide High-Quality Leads

4.3.2 *Potential Misalignment Cause 2 – Marketing believes Sales Does Not Follow Up Adequately on Leads Provided by Marketing*

The graph which follows illustrates the degree to which respondents agree that the assertion that marketing believes that sales does not follow up adequately on leads provided by marketing is a cause of misalignment. The information is represented in aggregate (all responses) and at the more granular level, allowing for the comparison of responses from the sales and marketing groups.

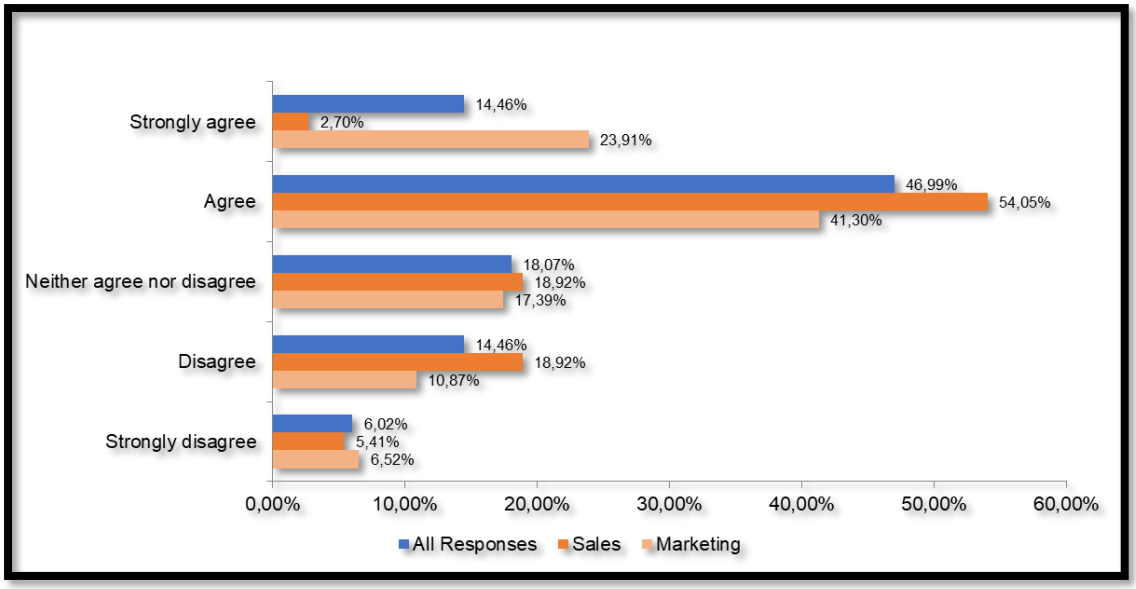


Figure 8: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 2 – Marketing Believes Sales Does Not Follow Up Adequately on Leads Provided by Marketing

4.3.3 *Potential Misalignment Cause 3 – Information is Not Shared Effectively Between Sales and Marketing*

The results indicating the extent to which respondents agree or disagree that poor information sharing between sales and marketing is a cause of misalignment is presented in the graph which follows. The information is represented accumulatively (all responses) and by each of the respective subsamples of sales and marketing.

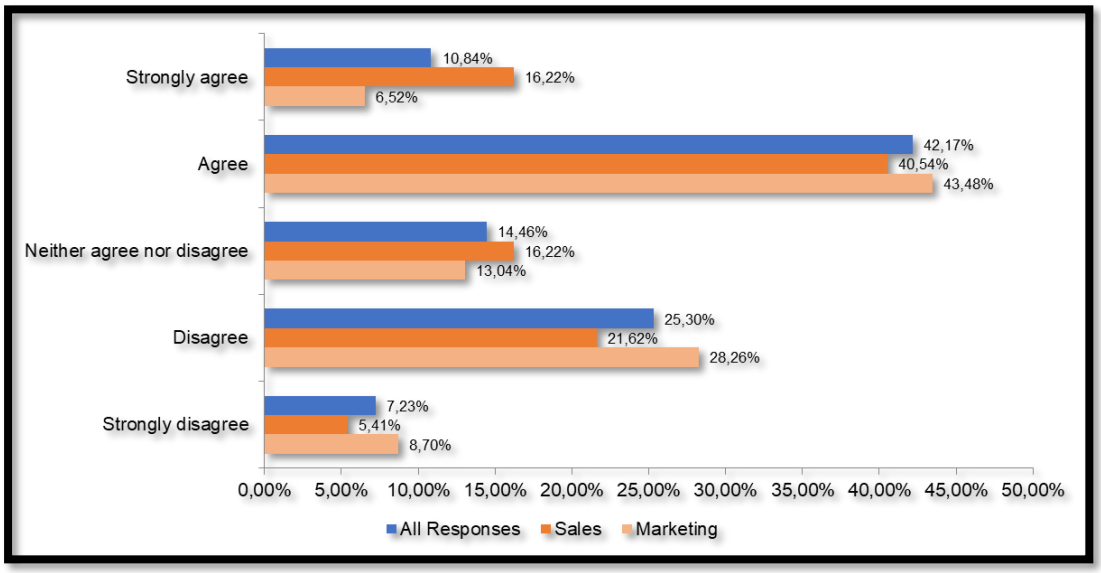


Figure 9: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 3 – Information Not Shared Effectively Between Sales and Marketing

4.3.4 *Potential Misalignment Cause 4 – Generally the Personality Types of Salespeople are not Compatible with Those of Marketers*

In the graph below, the results relating to potential misalignment cause 4 are presented. The proposed cause asserts that it is a mismatch of personality types between individuals in marketing and those in sales that is responsible for misalignment between the two functions. The results pertaining to all respondents (sales and marketing combined) are shown as well as the results as they pertain to each of the two groups (sales and marketing) individually.

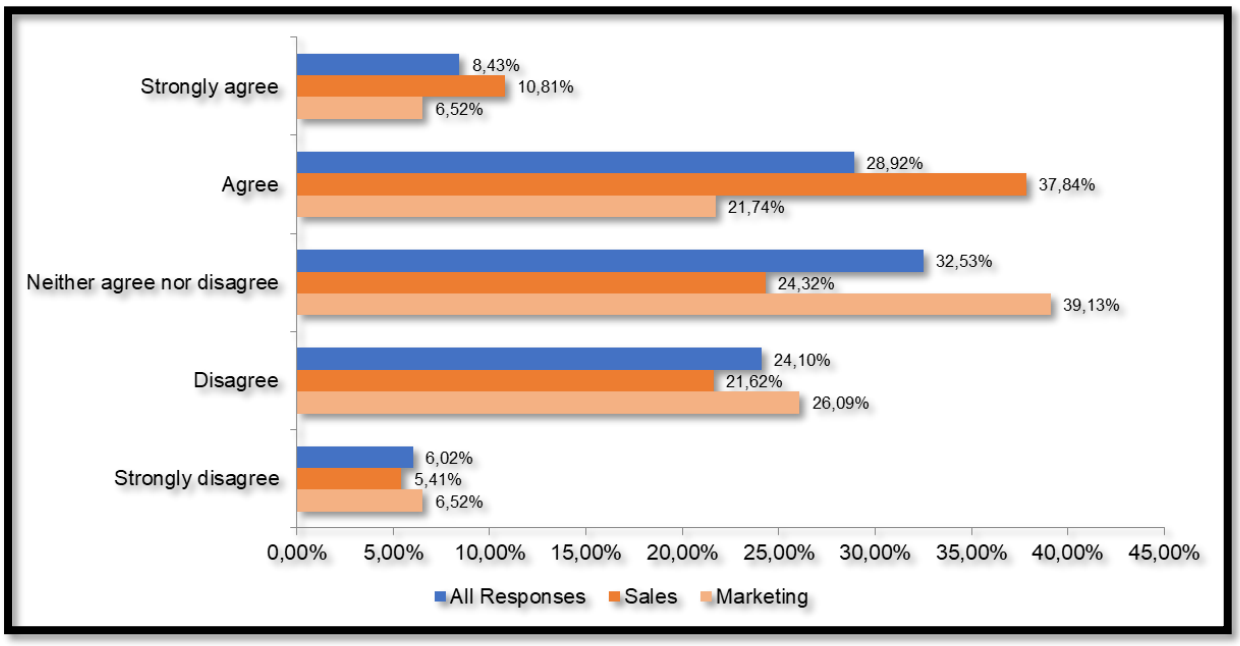


Figure 10: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 4 – Generally the Personality Types of Salespeople are not Compatible with Those of Marketers

4.3.5 *Potential Misalignment Cause 5 – Despite Advances in Digital Reporting Technology; Marketing's Contribution to the Business' Bottom Line Cannot be Effectively Measured*

The graph below indicates the level of agreement regarding the potential cause of misalignment which asserts that a cause of misalignment is the assumption that despite advances in digital technology; marketing's contribution to a business' bottom line cannot be measured. The responses to this statement are shown in total (sales and marketing responses combined) and are also represented according to each subsample group – i.e. sales and marketing, respectively.

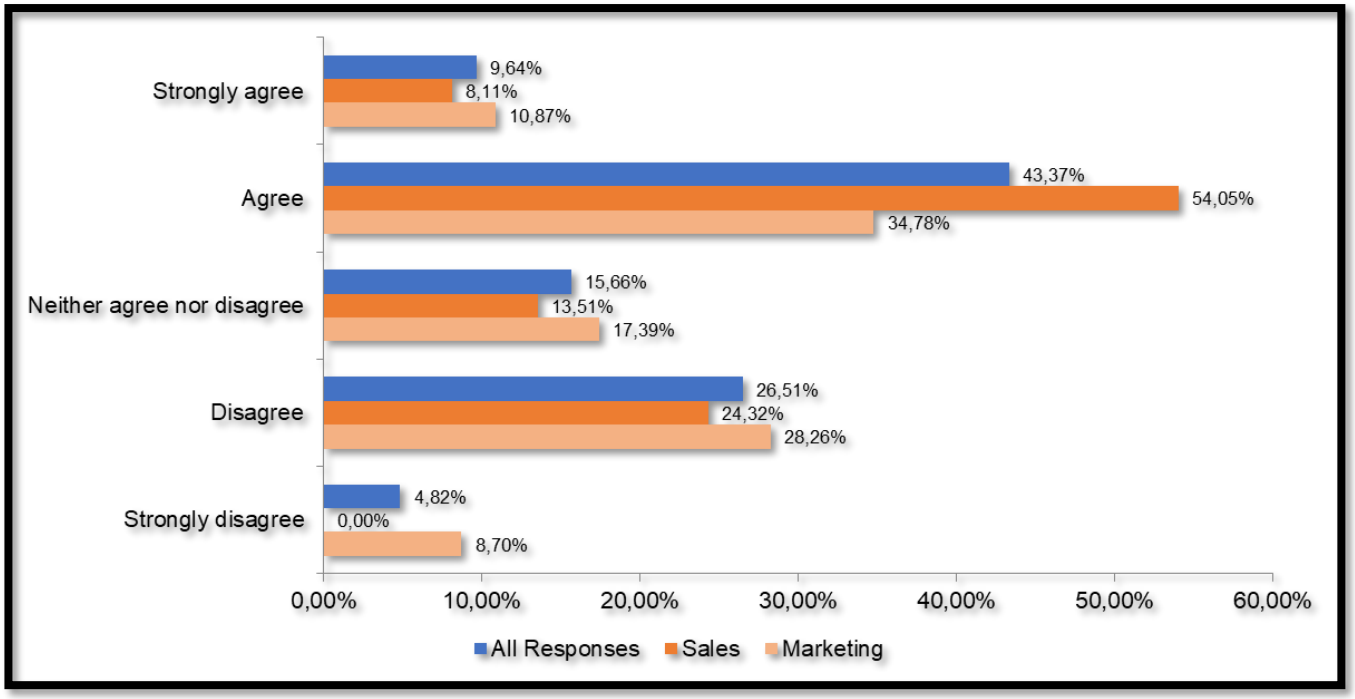


Figure 11: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 5 – Despite Advances in Digital Reporting Technology; Marketing's Contribution to the Business' Bottom Line Cannot be Effectively Measured

4.3.6 *Potential Misalignment Cause 6 – Lack of Agreement Between Sales/Marketing as to What Constitutes a Lead*

The extent to which respondents hold the conviction that a lack of agreement between sales and marketing as to what constitutes a lead is a cause of misalignment is represented in the graph below.

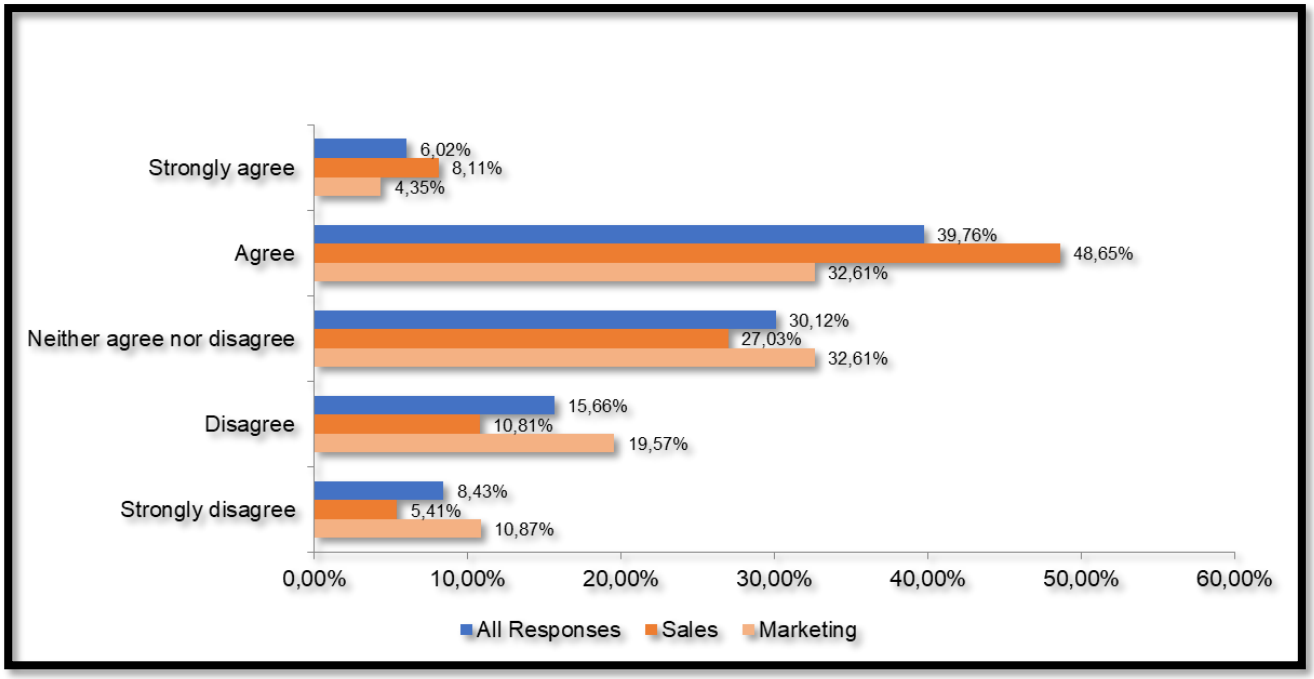


Figure 12: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 6 – Lack of Agreement Between Sales/Marketing as to What Constitutes a Lead.

4.3.7 *Potential Misalignment Cause 7 – Poor Use of Digital Technologies (e.g. Sales/Marketing Management Software) to Track Leads Through the Sales Funnel*

The graph which follows represents the level to which the respondents agree that "Poor use of digital technologies to track leads through the sales funnel is a cause of misalignment between sales and marketing". The responses are presented according to each of the subsamples (sales and marketing). The combined results (all

responses) present the responses as whole (combing the results from both sales and marketing).

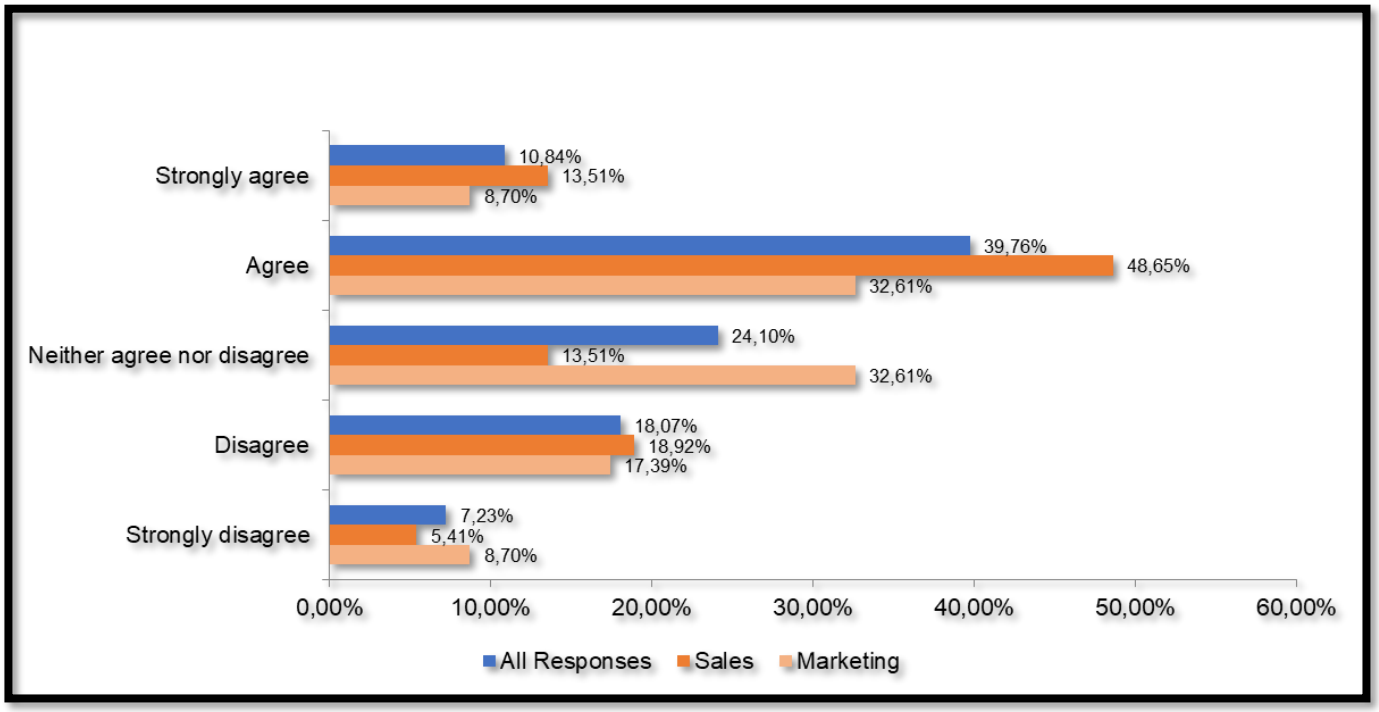


Figure 13: Results Regarding Potential Cause of Misalignment 7 – Poor Use of Digital Technologies (e.g. Sales/Marketing Management Software) to Track Leads Through the Sales Funnel.

4.4 Results Pertaining to Hypothesis 3

The results regarding the suitability of a number of proposed solutions to misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs are presented in this section.

The instruction given to respondents in the section of the survey which proposed various solutions was, “Do you agree that each of the following suggestions are viable solutions to improving the level of alignment between sales and marketing?”

The graphs which follow present the level of acceptance (regarding suitability) with which the various proposed solutions were met.

The sample size relating to all 5 questions in this section was 80. 46 responses were received from marketing and 34 from sales.

4.4.1 *Potential Misalignment Solution 1 – Focus on Customer Rather Than on Individual Sales*

The response to the proposed solution to misalignment which asserts that the issue of misalignment between sales and marketing could be remedied by focusing on the customer rather than on individual sales is shown in the graph below. The results are shown according to the group (sales or marketing) from which they have been drawn. The overall results (combining those from sales and marketing) are also shown.

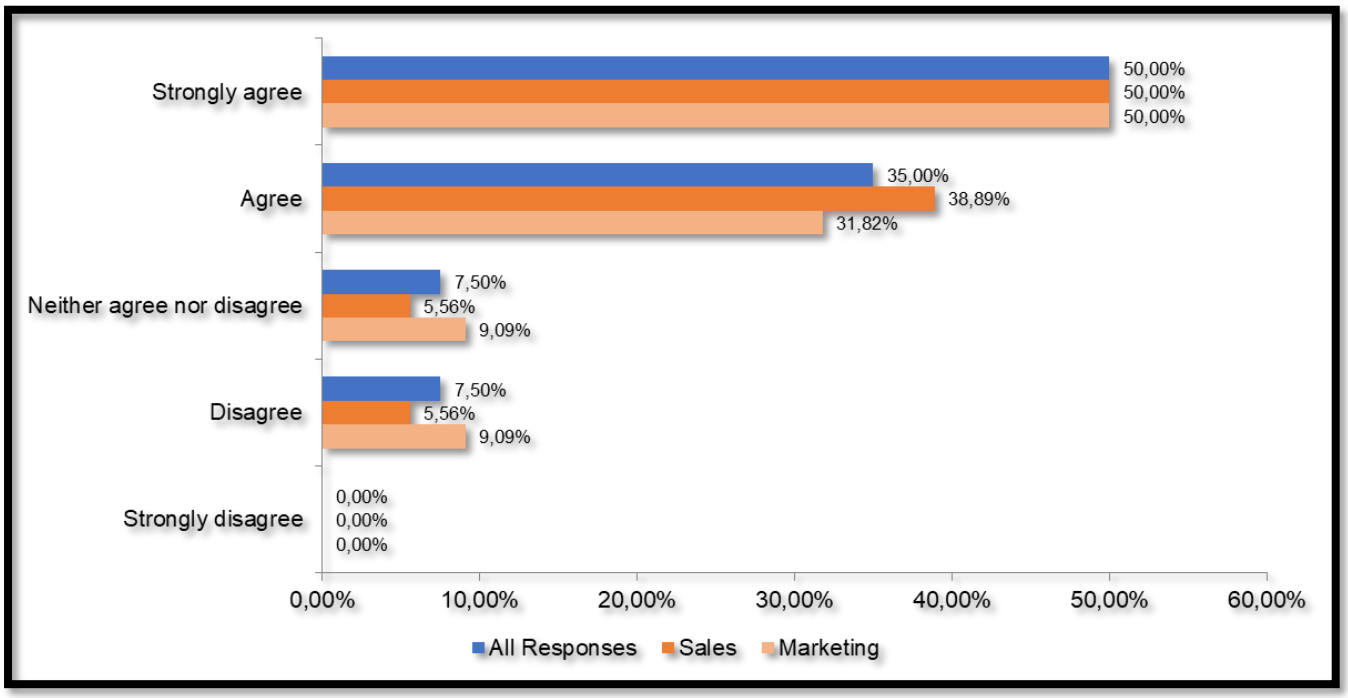


Figure 14: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 1 – Focus on the Customer Rather Than on Individual Sales

4.4.2 *Potential Misalignment Solution 2 – Using Digital Technology to Share Information Between Sales/Marketing*

The graph below shows the proportion of respondents who affirm the notion that the problem of misalignment between sales and marketing could be solved by "Using

digital technology to share information between sales and marketing". The results are simultaneously categorised according to the subsample group to which respondents belong, and the degree to which respondents support the proposition. For the purposes of comparison, the combined results (sales and marketing together) are also indicated.

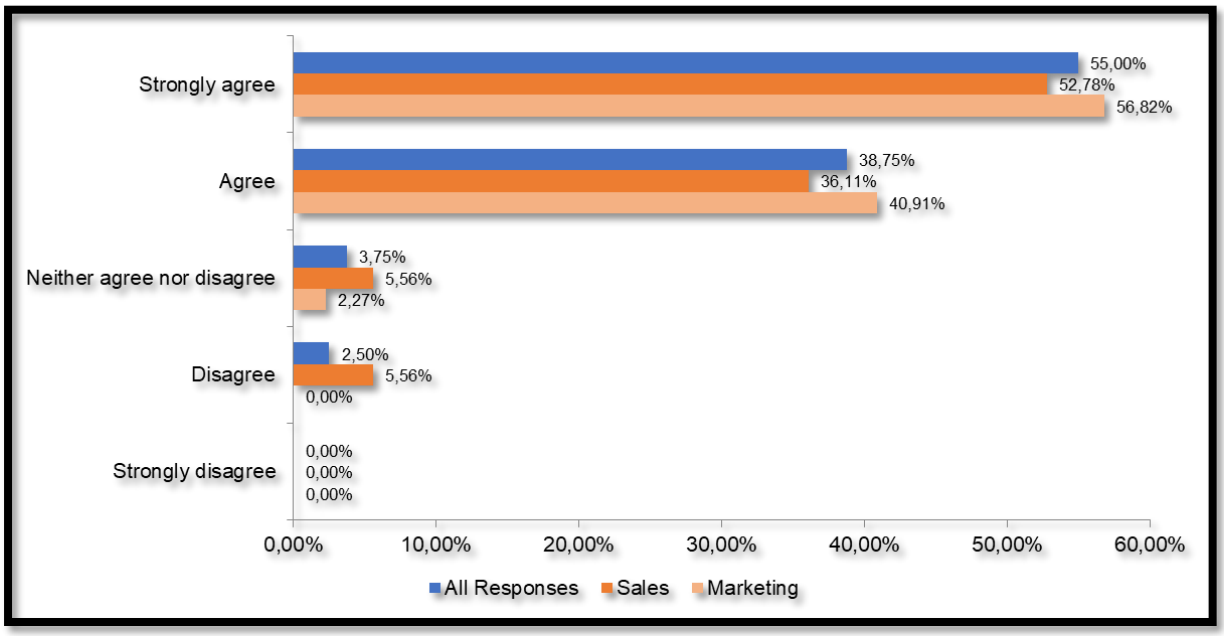


Figure 15: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 2 – Using Digital Technology to Share Information Between Sales and Marketing

4.4.3 *Potential Misalignment Solution 3 – Focusing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity*

The extent to which respondents from sales and marketing, respectively, agree that focusing on lead follow-up intensity is a suitable solution to the misalignment between sales and marketing is represented in the figure which follows. As in previous graphs, the information is categorised according to the level of affirmation and the subsample group from which respondents were drawn.

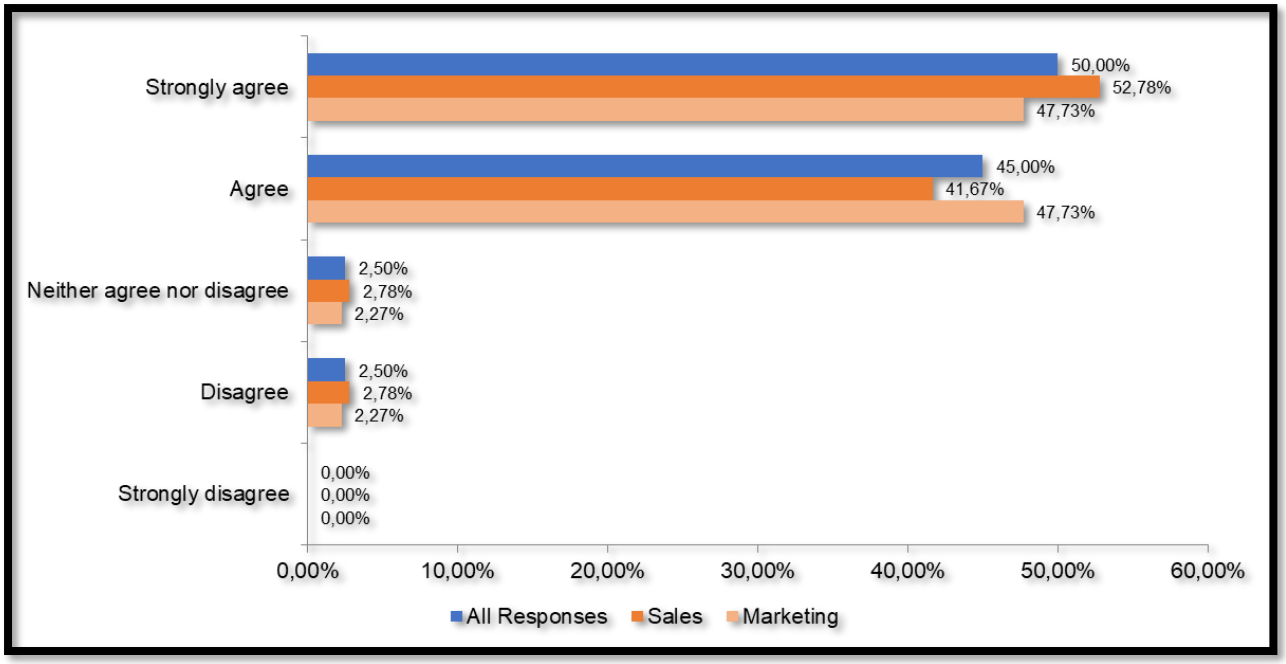


Figure 16: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 3 – Focusing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity

4.4.4 *Potential Misalignment Solution 4 – Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales/Marketing*

The graph below illustrates the level and extent of agreement with the sentiment expressed, i.e. that the active promotion of a culture of unity between sales and marketing is a suitable solution for misalignment between sales and marketing.

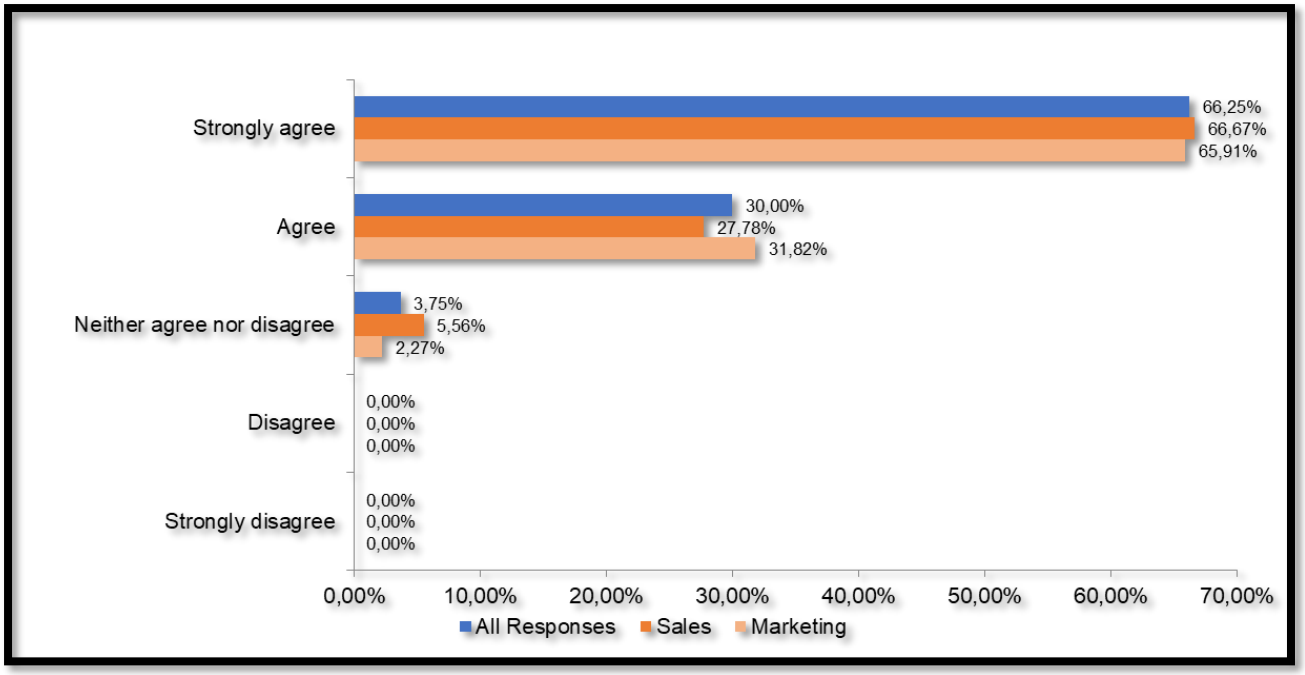


Figure 17: Results Regarding Potential Misalignment Solution 4 – Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales and Marketing

4.5 Summary of the Results

This chapter has presented the data gathered in summarised form. The aggregated results of the survey questions pertaining to each of the three hypotheses have been revealed in turn. The data presented has provided a foundation without which the analytical exploration to be pursued in the following chapter would not be possible. The data presented in this chapter will be interrogated and discussed in the next.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The previous chapter presented the data gathered. In this chapter, the aforementioned data is analysed and discussed. The analysis begins with data collected in relation to the first hypothesis, which proposes that, "there is misalignment between sales and marketing within South African SMMEs"

Generally, the data have been analysed on aggregate first (considering responses from sales and marketing combined). Where the results seemingly differ significantly between the sales and marketing samples, such differences are analysed and discussed. All results have been analysed within the context of the applicable literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

5.1 Demographic profile of respondents

The number of respondents varied between questions. It ranged between 80 and 132. The least answered question had 80 responses while the most answered question had 132 responses.

The sample comprised individuals who met the following criteria:

- Respondents work in either sales or marketing at a South African company with 1-250 employees.

Certain sections and individual questions within those sections saw higher response rates than others. This was expected, as some questions were closer to the start of the survey and therefore required less of the respondent's time to complete. The response rates pertaining to each of the survey's sections (and where applicable, individual questions) have been described in the previous chapter.

5.2 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 1

5.2.1 *Analysis of Alignment Results based on Likert Scale*

The responses to Section 1 of the survey seem to indicate that a relatively high degree of misalignment exists between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs. The results, taken on aggregate across sales and marketing, have grouped respondents' opinions of the relationship between sales and marketing within their businesses into the four categories prescribed by (Kotler et al., 2006), i.e. undefined, defined, aligned and integrated.

The level of the Likert Scales' internal reliability has been confirmed by the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha for the Likert scale was calculated to be 0,9003. This demonstrates a very high degree of internal reliability. This finding is important to the study as a whole as the Likert Scale questions represented 76,92 % of all survey questions included (Kotler et al., 2006).

As previously stated, alignment between sales and marketing has various levels. Translating Kotler's (2006) terminology into a slightly more intuitive understanding of alignment, "undefined" on the one extreme of the continuum can be understood as "total misalignment" while "integrated' can be understood as "total alignment".

a. *Analysis – Combined Alignment Results (Sales and Marketing Combined)*

The results show that 13.8% of the total sample falls into either the "undefined" or "defined" categories. This categorisation is indicative of businesses being on the lower end of the misalignment/alignment scale.

57.4% of the respondent's businesses fall into Kotler's "aligned" category. The remaining 28.72% have been classified as "integrated". Stated differently, the results suggest that as far as the relationship between sales and marketing is concerned, the majority of businesses have been diagnosed using the instrument developed by Kotler

et al. (2006) as being mediocre. A relatively high proportion, 28.72%, have found themselves assigned to the realm of superiority regarding the functional cohesion of the sales and marketing functions.

b. *Marketing and Sales Alignment Results Comparative Analysis*

When the results are analysed on a more granular level, i.e. that of sales and marketing, respectively, a difference in the results at the lower end of the aligned/misaligned continuum emerges. Eighteen percent of marketers have categorised their company's relationship between sales and marketing as being undefined or defined. In contrast to this, only 9,09% of the respondents representing the sales cohort assigned their companies relationship between sales and marketing to the undefined and defined categories – on the lower end of the alignment/misalignment scale.

Such results could suggest that members of the sales cohort are on average less critical of the relationship existing between sales and marketing.

It must, however, be noted that the sample size drawn from marketing differed from that drawn from sales. The total number of observations was 94, with 50 from marketing and 44 from sales.

5.2.2 *Alignment Analysis Based On Results of Alignment Self-Scoring Question (Question 6)*

Essentially, this question addressed the same issue – i.e. that of misalignment as the instrument prescribed by Kotler et al. (2006). It did, however, attempt do so in a more direct manner. The question simply asked respondents to rate the alignment between sales and marketing at their companies on a scale of one to 10, with one representing extreme misalignment and 10 representing total (complete) alignment. The

respondents were further informed that one to four represented misalignment, while five and above represented increasing levels of alignment.

One of the reasons for including this question was to encourage a high number of responses which could potentially be used as a substitute for the data intended to be gathered by this study's use of the Likert scale first used by Kotler et al. (2006).

The Likert scale was comprised of 20 questions and it was predicted that many potential respondents might fail to complete all of them. This prediction was based on a benchmark which asserts that when a survey has more than 12 questions, the drop-off rate increases by 15% ("Average Survey Response Rate," N.D). This axiomatically implies that questions appearing later in the survey will receive fewer responses than those appearing earlier.

In the event of a large number of respondents failing to answer all Likert items comprising the Likert scale, data gathered from the question (Question 6) which asked, "On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate the level of alignment between sales and marketing at your company? (0-4 = Misaligned; 5-10 = Aligned)" would at least give some indication of their perception of alignment/misalignment between sales and marketing at their companies.

The data pertaining to this question was included in the presentation chapter. The results were presented in their raw form and then in a more easily digestible format once a scoring model had been applied to them. As previously discussed, this scoring model was designed to assign the raw scores (1-10) to the categories defined by Kotler et al (2006), i.e. "undefined", "defined", "aligned" and "integrated".

a. Analysis of data after scoring model applied

Like the results obtained through this study's use of the Likert scale developed by Kotler et al. (2006), the results of the self-scoring question ("On a scale of one to 10,

how would you rate the level of alignment between sales and marketing at your company? (0-4 = Misaligned; 5-10 = Aligned)" also show that a significantly higher proportion of the marketing sample (as compared to the sales sample) have assigned the sales/marketing relationship in their business to a low position (nearer to misaligned) on the alignment/misalignment continuum. This finding – that the marketing respondents, on average, rated their businesses lower (less aligned) – could suggest that, on average, marketers are more critical than their sales counterparts when placing their businesses on the alignment/misalignment scale.

5.2.3 *Comparison of Alignment Findings (Likert Scale Versus Alignment Self-Rating Question)*

The number of responses to the alignment self-rating question (132 responses across sales and marketing) was 40.4% greater than the number of responses (94 responses) to the 20-item Likert scale. Thus, the single-item question presents a more viable source of information by virtue of the larger sample size.

5.2.4 *Conclusion Hypothesis 1*

The first hypothesis stated: "There is misalignment between sales and marketing within South African SMMEs". The research question associated with hypothesis 1 is "To what extent is the misalignment of sales and marketing perceived to be present in South African SMMEs?" The results of Question 6 found that 15.28% of respondents (across sales and marketing) categorised their business' relationship between sales and marketing as either defined or undefined (i.e. low on the scale of misalignment/alignment). Similarly, the results from this study's use of the Likert scale developed by Kotler et al (2006) shows that overall (sales and marketing sample combined) 12.12% of respondents assigned their business' relationship between sales and marketing to either undefined or defined (i.e. low on the scale of misalignment/alignment).

The question then to be answered relates to the total extent of the misalignment. To understand the extent of misalignment it is necessary to, set the percentages aside and calculate the raw number of businesses that such percentages are likely to represent.

Assuming that there are at least 250 000 SMMEs in South Africa ("The alarming truth about the number of small businesses in South Africa," 2018), this would then imply that depending on which result is used – that from Question 6 or that obtained from the Likert scale – between 38 200 (250 000 × 15.28%) and 30 300 (250 000 × 12.12%) SMMEs in South Africa are suffering the ill-effects of sub-optimal alignment between sales and marketing.

These numbers are large especially in a country where SMMES are touted by government and other organisations as being the saviour of the ailing economy (Njiraini k, 2019). It is for the aforementioned reasons that Hypothesis 1 is supported.

5.3 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that: “The causes of misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs are consistent with (those identified in) other parts of the world.”

This section reviews that data collected with the intention of discovering the reasons for the misalignment between sales and marketing within the context of South African SMMEs in the epoch of digital business. It is only by analysing the responses to each of the seven relevant survey questions that a clearer picture as to the causes of misalignment between sales and marketing in the digital age may emerge. Consequently, the research question , “How are the causes of misalignment identified by other theorists perceived within the South African SMME context?” will be answered. The number of respondents to each of the questions varied, as indicated in the previous chapter.

5.3.1 *Analysis – Potential Cause of Misalignment 1: Sales' Belief that Marketers Do Not Provide High-Quality Leads*

Some 49% of the 83 respondents who answered this question either agreed (45.78%) or strongly agreed (2.41%) that the notion that sales believes marketers do not provide high-quality leads is a cause of such misalignment. This finding relates to the work of (Byrnes, 2011), who suggests that a lack of agreement regarding what constitutes a lead, and subsequently the value thereof, is a cause for misunderstanding and by extension misalignment. In other words, to provide an empirical basis as to what a lead is, is the only way to objectively determine whether leads provided by marketing are of a high quality. Although the affirmative response to the cause proposed was relatively strong, there was a sizable number of respondents who gave a negative response to the question, with 24.1% disagreeing and 8.43% strongly disagreeing.

5.3.2 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 2: Marketing Believes Sales Does Not Follow up Adequately on Leads Provided by Marketing*

An analysis of the responses to the relevant survey question showed that the majority (61.45%) of the combined sample (representatives of both sales and marketing) either agree or strongly agree that the "follow-up" of leads is a contentious issue and a cause of misalignment.

When analysed at a more granular level, i.e. that of sales and marketing individually, the affirmative response given by marketing is predictably higher than that of sales. Some 65.21% of the marketing representatives expressed either agreement or strong agreement with the proposed assertion, whereas 56.7% of the sales representatives agreed or strongly agreed with the given statement. This finding lends credence to the notion that real or "imagined" inadequate follow-up on leads is a source of misalignment between sales and marketing. Unlike other studies, this question

focused on the belief held by marketing that sales does not follow up adequately on leads provided by marketing, rather than the objective reality of the extent to which sales neglects to follow up on leads. The latter was the focus of studies conducted by (Sabnis et al., 2013) and Aberdeen Group (2002). Nevertheless, despite the different angles of approach between this and previous studies (i.e. focusing on opinion versus focusing on fact), the two approaches and the results thereof seem to support one another and point to the conclusion that actual *or perceived* inadequacies of sales follow-up on leads is a cause of misalignment.

5.3.3 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 3: Information is not Shared Effectively Between Sales and Marketing*

The results indicate that just over 53% of all respondents believe that ineffective information sharing between the two functions is a cause of misalignment. When the data is filtered to isolate only the sales sample, this proportion increases to 56%.

The finding that poor information-sharing is believed to be a prevalent cause of misalignment is perhaps simultaneously encouraging and discouraging when viewed within the context of digital business and the plethora of digitally enabled information sharing tools.

It is encouraging in that at no time in human history has it been easier to communicate (i.e. share information). This suggests that the problem of ineffective information sharing is, in theory, at least solvable.

The finding is discouraging for the same reason. It suggests that the ineffective sharing of information between the two functions is a result of either ignorance or wilful blindness.

5.3.4 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 4: Generally the Personality Types of Salespeople are Not Compatible with Those of Marketers*

The proposition made by a number of theorists, most notably by (Levine, 1989), that a fundamental cause of misalignment between sales and marketing is the incompatible personality types that individuals within two groups (on aggregate) exhibit and that these different personality types lead to different and perhaps incompatible approaches to business. The finding that, of all respondents (sales and marketing combined), 37% support this proposition through either agreement or strong agreement indicates that this sentiment is echoed in the South African SMME sales and marketing environment.

It is noteworthy that a significantly higher proportion (59.5%) of the sales contingent supports the notion proposed by the survey question. In contrast, the support for the notion garnered from marketing was comparatively low, with only 28% of marketers affirming the proposal.

This discrepancy is perhaps an indication that on aggregate, marketers are unaware of the attitude of sales – one which could logically affect the communication and therefore alignment between the two functions.

5.3.5 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 5: Despite Advances in Digital Reporting Technology; Marketing's Contribution to the Business' Bottom Line Cannot Be Effectively Measured*

53% of all respondents are of the opinion (agree or strongly agree) that essentially, despite the advances in digital technology (including various forms of analytics), marketing's impact on the business' bottom line cannot be effectively measured. Predictably, perhaps, the percentage of the sales sample in agreement with the proposition is higher than that of marketing. The percentage of respondents affirming

the statement in the case of the sales sample was 63%, while it was markedly less than the 45.5% in the case of marketing.

This finding provides greater depth and potentially support for the idea that the different ways (measurement) by which sales and marketing are held accountable could be a potential cause of misalignment. If one function is held accountable according to easily measurable activities and outcomes (as in the case of sales) and the other function's impact (that of marketing) is largely perceived to be unmeasurable, it is easy to see how conflict and therefore misalignment may result.

5.3.6 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 6: Lack of Agreement Between Sales and Marketing as to What Constitutes a Lead*

Leads are the currency of sales and marketing. It is, therefore, not surprising that the data indicates that a large proportion of the sample (45.78%) sees the lack of agreement as to what a lead is as a viable cause of misalignment between sales and marketing. This question and the insights which the responses to it provide are closely related to Question 27, which proposes that "Sales believes marketers do not provide high-quality leads". The relationship between the two questions is self-evident. Yet this question points towards an answer as to *why* (as strongly indicated in the responses to Question 27) "sales believes marketing does not provide high-quality leads"; if there is no predefined agreement as to what exactly a lead (never mind a high-quality one) is, then it is easy for sales to question the quality of the leads with which they are provided. This is as there is no gold standard against which to measure the quality of a lead. The data supports the work of (Peterson et al., 2015) and Redding and Practice (2015).

5.3.7 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Cause 7: Poor Use of Digital Technologies (e.g. Sales/Marketing Management Software) To Track Leads Through the Sales Funnel*

50.6% of the overall sample support the notion that the poor use of digital technologies to track leads through the sales funnel is a cause of misalignment. This strongly suggests that in the age of digital business, the misuse (intentional or otherwise) of digital technologies can be easily perceived as a liability – one which acts to the detriment of the sales/marketing relationship and by extension the business as a whole. Although the survey questions mention “poor use”, this can logically be extended to include non-use as the extreme form of “poor use”. This is of importance to the era of digital business, as it speaks directly to the technology which has become its life blood.

When comparing the difference in results between the sales and marketing samples, it is noteworthy that a considerably higher proportion of the sales cohort (62.16%) supported the proposition (agreed or strongly agreed) as compared to the 41.3% of the marketing fraternity.

This question, and the data the responses to it have garnered, relates to the work of Peterson et al. (2015). The question, and therefore the responses to it, work on the assumption that the funnel is a conceptual model in which marketing is responsible for the top of funnel activities and sales is responsible for those at the bottom end (Peterson et al., 2015; Kotler et al., 2006).

The question posed (and the responses gathered) do not directly address the proposal made by Patterson (2007) and Noble (2010) that the conceptualisation of the sales/marketing process itself, as a funnel, contributes towards misalignment between sales and marketing. Rather, the results indicate that a funnel (or a pipeline) in which the right hand (sales) does not know what the left hand (marketing) is doing, is a likely cause of misalignment. That is, it is dysfunction within the manifestation of the conceptual model (be it pipeline or funnel) which is the cause of misalignment rather the choice of conceptual model itself.

5.3.8 *Conclusion Relating to Hypothesis 2*

An analysis and interpretation of the data pertaining to Hypothesis 2 strongly suggests that the causes of misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs are consistent with those identified in the broader business community – a community which extends beyond SMMEs and beyond the borders of South Africa. Hypothesis 2 is, therefore, supported.

5.4 Discussion Pertaining to Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states that: “The proposed solutions to address misalignment between sales and marketing will be accepted by the sales and marketing departments within the South African SMMEs.”

A number of possible solutions to the problem of misalignment between sales and marketing were suggested and respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement.

5.4.1 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 1: Focus on Customer Rather Than on Individual Sales*

The first of these questions proposed as a solution a “focus on customer rather on individual sales”, implying a focus on lifetime customer value rather than on making sales quotas for a particular period.

This is a recommendation to which 85% of the respondents lent their support (either agreeing or strongly agreeing). This approach aligns with the “customer-centric approach”, most notably proposed by Patterson (2007). The indication is that such an approach would be accepted as suitable within the South African SMME sales and marketing community.

5.4.2 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 2: Using Digital Technology to Share Information Between Sales/Marketing*

This solution was not explicitly proposed by any of the authors upon whose work this research paper draws. Nevertheless, such a solution is a logical inference. It is a notion which 94% of the overall sample supports, with only a small minority (2.5%) disagreeing with its viability as a proposed solution to misalignment between sales and marketing.

5.4.3 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 3: Focusing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity*

This proposed solution relates to the work of Ohioma et al. (2019). A “focus on lead follow-up intensity” is clearly viewed by the sample as a viable solution to the problem of alignment between sales and marketing. This is evident in that 95% of the sample either agree or strongly agree that improving lead follow-up intensity would serve to counteract the development or continuation of misalignment.

5.4.4 *Analysis – Potential Misalignment Solution 4: Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales and Marketing*

Ninety-six percent of respondents give their support to the notion of “actively promoting a culture of unity between sales and marketing”. This overwhelming support suggests that the will to unite (or at least improve the relationship between the two functions) is present. This is positive in that it shows that both parties are at the very least interested in improving their relationship. Roused by this sentiment, it is hopeful that a means of achieving the desired end of “actively promoting a culture of unity between sales and marketing” will be actively sought, found and then implemented.

Conclusion Relating to Hypothesis 3

The data shows that all of the proposed solutions to the issue of misalignment between sales and marketing are viewed as acceptable by the vast majority of respondents. The level of support for each does, however, differ slightly between proposed solutions:

- 85% supported solution 1 - Focus on Customer Rather than on Individual Sales
- 94% supported solution 2 - Using Digital Technology to Share Information between Sales/Marketing
- 95% supported solution 3 – Focussing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity
- 96% supported solution 4 - Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales/Marketing.

There was a marginal difference in the level of support (one percent) between solutions two, three and four respectively. Furthermore, there was a nine percent difference in the level of support between the solutions proposed with the highest and lowest levels of support.

Hypothesis 3 which states, ‘The proposed solutions to address misalignment between sales and marketing will be accepted by the sales and marketing cohorts within the South African SMMEs is therefore supported.

5.5 Conclusion

The data has been analysed in relation to each of the three hypotheses. Furthermore, parallels between this and preceding research have been drawn. Such comparison has been made directly where possible and indirectly where appropriate. The results show that there is indeed a noteworthy level of misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs.

It was also found that the causes of such misalignment are consistent with those identified in other parts of the world Such causes, it could be argued, all relate directly (or at very least indirectly) to leads; and in particular, to how leads are defined and managed.

Multiple solutions proposed to the challenge of misalignment between sales and marketing were accepted by the respondents. Hypothesis 3 was therefore supported.

The practical implications of these findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided an analysis of the research results. This chapter applies the aforementioned analysis in answering each of the research questions posed. Each of these is answered in turn. This is followed by a description of a series of recommendations based on the research results and the interpretation thereof. The chapter concludes by proffering suggestions for further research.

6.2 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 1

The first of the three research questions posed was: “To what extent is the misalignment of sales and marketing perceived to be present in South African SMMEs?”

The research results have shown that there is misalignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs. An analysis of the results presented in the previous chapter indicates that between 12% and 15% of South African SMMEs fall into the misaligned category. This misalignment exists despite the numerous tools of the digital age developed to facilitate the seamless integration of business processes and communication between the human representatives of the functions.

That misalignment should be so prevalent in the digital age is cause for concern. Such a high level of misalignment suggests inefficiency that individual businesses and the economy as a whole can ill afford. Conclusions regarding the causes of such misalignment will be drawn in the following section.

6.3 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 2

The second research question was: How are the causes of misalignment identified by other theorists perceived within the South African SMME context?

The causes of misalignment where perceived as being relevant explanations of misalignment. This is indicated by the proportion of respondents that supported each of the respective proposed causes. This ranged from 37% to 61,46%. Some of the causes identified in the literature were:

- Differences in the manner in which sales and marketing performance are measured
- Cultural differences between sales and marketing
- Competition for budget between sales and marketing
- Miscommunication between sales and marketing (especially relating to the definition of leads and the scoring thereof)
- Lack of lead follow-up
- The conceptualisation of the sales/marketing process as a funnel

These were only a handful of possible causes which seemed to have garnered the most attention within the literature. The aforementioned causes informed the creation of the specific survey questions. Where appropriate, variations of the potential causes were used to inform the questions asked. These were based on the original causes outlined – a case in point was the question, “Do you agree that poor use of use of digital technology is a cause of misalignment?” (Question 33). This question was based on the premise that misalignment is caused by ineffective information-sharing, i.e. miscommunication.

Relating to the idea that misalignment is caused by ineffective communication and the poor use of digital technology is the lead itself.

The data gathered shows that the following proposed causes (all relating to leads) are indeed perceived as legitimate.

- Sales believes marketers do not provide high-quality leads
- Marketing believes sales does not follow up adequately on leads provided by marketing
- Lack of agreement between sales/marketing as to what constitutes a lead

This suggests that by focusing on removing the existence of the third cause (lack of agreement between sales/marketing as to what constitutes a lead) mentioned above, the degree to which the other two causes are made manifest might be reduced. This possibility will be explored further in the following section.

The most pertinent observation perhaps is that there is strong support (53% across sales and marketing) for the idea that a cause of misalignment is the belief that "Despite advances in digital reporting technology; marketing's contribution to the business' bottom line cannot be effectively measured".

This notion relates directly to the manner in which the performance of sales and marketing is measured. When a large proportion of people hold the opinion that marketing's effect on the bottom line cannot be measured (which the data has shown), then it is surely difficult for marketing to command the same respect as sales – the outcome of which is clearly empirically measurable (either there is a sale or there is not).

The cause proposed by the statement, "Generally the personality types of salespeople are not compatible with those of marketers" received the lowest level of support. This suggests that while this sentiment is existent, it was not perceived by many of the respondents as an important a cause of misalignment as many of the others.

6.4 Conclusions Regarding Research Question 3

The third research question was: “How are the various suggested technological and methodological solutions to sales/marketing misalignment viewed within the context of South African SMMEs ?

An analysis of the data collected shows that all of the suggested solutions are seen as viable options to address sales/marketing misalignment within South African SMMEs. This is based on the fact that the vast majority of respondents supported each of the four proposed solutions – 85% supported Solution 1, 94% supported Solution 2, 95% supported Solution 3 and 96% supported Solution 4.

This finding, which shows high levels of support for all four of the suggested solutions, has practical implications regarding the nature of both preventative and curative measures to be taken.

Notably, most arguably all of the suggested solutions suggest the necessity of the correct use of digital technology in at least one of its many forms. For example, Solution 1, “Focus on customer rather on individual sales”, could be achieved through the use of customer analytics and CRM software.

It is demonstrated through the high level of support (85%) to Solution 1, “Focus on customer rather on individual sales”, that part of the solution to the problem of misalignment within SMMES is believed to be a change of focus regarding the sales/marketing process itself. At the heart of this change of focus is a move away from the transaction-based approach to sales and marketing towards a customer-centric one, as proposed by Patterson (2007).

The move away from a transactional approach to sales and marketing and towards a customer-centric one is, in essence, a conceptual rather than a procedural or technical change. There will, however, undoubtedly be procedural and technical implications. In

accommodating such implications, SMMEs will inevitably need to further embrace digital business practices and the technologies synonymous therewith.

Fortunately, the four solutions seen as viable solutions to misalignment within the context of South African SMME's (i.e. Solution 1 – Focus on Customer Rather than on Individual Sales; Solution 2 – Using Digital Technology to Share Information between Sales/Marketing; Solution 3 – Focusing on Lead Follow-Up Intensity; and Solution 4 – Actively Promoting a Culture of Unity Between Sales/Marketing) are not mutually exclusive. For example, the suggested solution of "using digital technology to share information between sales/marketing" can be easily adapted or extended to practically support the call for a more customer-centric approach to sales and marketing.

Similarly, the proposal to focus on lead follow-up intensity can be aided through sales and marketing software (like salesforce) – a manifestation of "using digital technology to share information between sales and marketing". The fourth of the proposed solutions, namely "actively promoting a culture of unity between sales/marketing" is conceptually simple but could prove difficult to implement in practice.

The golden conceptual thread common to all the proposed solutions is transparency. This implies real-time access to information. Transparency suggests that all internal stakeholders (specifically sales and marketing) should have access to the same information, at all times. This would facilitate a single source of truth; a factor which would likely mitigate the risk of miscommunication and enable an environment of trust – seemingly so vital to a productive relationship, both at personal and departmental levels.

6.5 Recommendations

As discussed in the literature review, numerous researchers have concluded that misalignment between sales and marketing is harmful to businesses. It is with this in mind that SMME owners and directors motivated by the profit incentive should seek to mitigate misalignment between sales and marketing. The first step, then, in the process of reducing misalignment between sales and marketing would be to determine the extent to which their business is affected by it. For this purpose, the instrument developed by Kotler et al. (2006) or the simpler single question instrument, which posed the question, “On a scale of one to 10, how would you rate the level of alignment between sales and marketing at your company? (0-4 = Misaligned; 5-10 = Aligned)” – (Question 6) used in conducting this research – could be administered.

Only through the analysis of such results can the solutions analysed in Chapter 5 be tailored to unique scenarios. While these solutions provide broad guidelines, they are not, nor are they intended to be, one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, they represent areas where creativity and very likely digital business technologies should be brought to bear.

On an individual and collective level, marketing and sales employees should take responsibility for proactively improving information-sharing (communication) between the two functions. This is based on the finding that 53% of the total sample believe that ineffective information-sharing between sales and marketing is a cause of misalignment. Furthermore, they should see their overriding responsibility as being to the company rather than a department, team or specific manager.

It is noted, however, that achieving such an ideal is difficult for individual employees when company culture and existing incentives may be at odds with it. As a more immediately actionable remedy, sales and marketing management and higher-level management should take steps to formulate an agreed-upon definition of a lead – that is, they should arrive at a working definition that alleviates the potential for

misunderstanding and miscommunication regarding this common but often ill-defined construct.

The basis for this recommendation is the finding that 45.78% of respondents agree that a “lack of agreement between sales and marketing as to what constitutes a lead is a cause of misalignment”. This action could extend to defining particular types and qualities of lead. The more clearly defined the terminology relating to leads is, the less room there is for misunderstanding, and therefore miscommunication, to take root.

Management should attempt to address any concerns around the performance measurement of marketing. To the extent that marketing’s impact on the bottom line can be measured, it should be. South African SMMEs that take an approach that focuses on individual transactions rather than the customer life-time value espoused by the customer-centricity suggested by Patterson (2007) should reconsider their focus, as this potentially has an impact on the business’ culture and the relationship between sales and marketing. Essentially, the former approach favours the short term over the long term. This proposed solution was supported by 85% of the respondents, which indicates that the vast majority of individuals working in sales and marketing in South African SMMEs would support such an initiative.

The recommendation for South African SMMES (especially their sales and marketing cohorts) to become more customer centric may seem obvious given the literature reviewed and the subsequent findings of this study. What is not obvious is how this can be practically achieved. Further, more specific recommendations are therefore required to plot a course towards the desired customer centricity.

The call to become increasingly customer-centric aligns with the issue of measurement – not only the manner in which the performance of sales and marketing is measured, but also in relation to a variety of metrics related to customers at an

individual and group level. The idea is to know as much as possible about the customer or potential customer. At the most advanced level, this could include the use of big data and predictive analytics. This in theory, would:

- (A) tell marketing who to market to and when (thereby increasing the quality of leads and increasing the return on marketing spend)
- (B) make the process of selling far easier

By applying data-driven decision-making to the issue of marketing and sales misalignment within South African SMMEs, the opinion and circumstantial evidence (arguably traditionally associated with both functions) could be avoided.

Noting that 53% of all respondents still believe that marketing's effect on the business bottom line is ultimately unmeasurable it is recommended that this opinion be addressed. A possible means of changing this opinion is the implementation of a marketing measurement plan. Such plans will no-doubt rely heavily upon digital technologies in the form of CRM software and marketing analytics programmes. Through such action not only will the business be able to demonstrate return on marketing investment with a far greater degree of accuracy but will also be in a position to make data driven decisions, further improving sales and marketing efficiency. By demonstrating the logical means by which marketing return on investment is 'successfully' measured it is hoped that the degree and magnitude of disbelief in marketing measurement will be significantly reduced. This in turn is likely to reduce any friction between marketing and sales resulting from the perception that marketing return on investment is ultimately unmeasurable.

6.6 Suggestions for Further Research

As this study has shown, there are multiple sub-issues (such as lead classification, lead management, marketing performance measurement, and the sharing of information between sales and marketing) relating to the issue of misalignment between sales and marketing which could benefit from further research.

Regarding the measurement of marketing performance, research could seek to understand why the perception that marketing's impact on the bottom line cannot be measured persists, despite growing evidence to the contrary.

Key to such an investigation would be determining if ineffective measurement of marketing outcomes on aggregate is caused by ignorance of the technology available, unwillingness to take the effort required to implement effective marketing measurement, or perhaps the seemingly unlikely possibility that marketing's effect on a business' bottom line is indeed objectively impossible to measure.

Another area in which research could be conducted relates, once again, to leads. Such research could test various lead classification models against one another. Also, existing research into what constitutes the ideal level of lead follow-up intensity could be further built on, perhaps with a focus on South African SMMEs.

This study did not attempt to investigate the potential role played by the type of industry in which the SMME's operate on the misalignment between sales and marketing. An investigation into the role industry type plays in the relationship between sales and marketing could be the focus of future research. This could give unique insights into the nature of the misalignment between sales and marketing within specific industries. The resulting insights could allow for the problem of misalignment to be addressed at a more granular level.

This study looked at how a series of potential solutions to sales and marketing misalignment were perceived. It was shown that some were perceived as being feasible solutions. Further research, could be designed to assess the real-world viability of such potential solutions.

Furthermore, the significance of the findings of this research could potentially be enhanced by repeating the study with a larger sample size.

It is conceivable that the level of digital readiness of South African SMMEs is likely to have an effect on the ease with which various interventions aimed at mitigating sales and marketing misalignment could be implemented. With this in mind, the level of digital readiness and the degree to which it might be positively correlated with higher levels of integration between sales and marketing functions could be studied further.

The data collected during this research shows that the proposed solution of “actively promoting unity between sales and marketing” was supported by 96% of respondents. Yet the specific means of attaining this end warrants further thought and then perhaps real-world experimental implementation.

6.7 Final Comments

This study has contributed to the broader body of knowledge by gathering information specific to the South African SMME context. In so doing it has built upon the credibility of many of the theories outlined in the literature review. The study lends further credence to the notion that sales and marketing misalignment is widespread. It suggests that sales and marketing misalignment is not confined to big business but that it is indeed prevalent in the South African SMME environment.

It is predicted that as the age of digital business continues to evolve, those SMMEs – and indeed those businesses of all sizes – that seek and achieve ever higher levels of alignment of sales and marketing will gain a considerable competitive advantage. This

as they grasp profit-making opportunities which may otherwise be casualties of sales/marketing misalignment. Part of this would include the use of digital technology to improve customer-centricity.

It would be foolish to underestimate the effects that technological advances are likely to have on both sales and marketing in the coming years. Yet until such advances occur, their specific nature will remain in the nebulous realm of speculation.

It is possible (and very likely) that many of the tasks involved in both sales and marketing will become increasingly automated. In a best-case scenario, this would mean that the humans in the system would be able to focus on tasks that cannot *yet* easily be replicated by machines.

In the worst-case scenario (from the perspective of those employed in either sales or marketing), adoption of technology would allow an extreme level of customer-centricity (characterised by extreme convenience for the customer) which may render traditional sales and marketing designations redundant.

This, however, is conjecture. What is not, is the importance of alignment between sales and marketing in South African SMMEs – especially as the age of digital business demands every competitive advantage.

Appendix

Demographic Questions Appearing before Section 1

1. What is your job title?
2. Have you been in your current role for more than four years?

Y/N

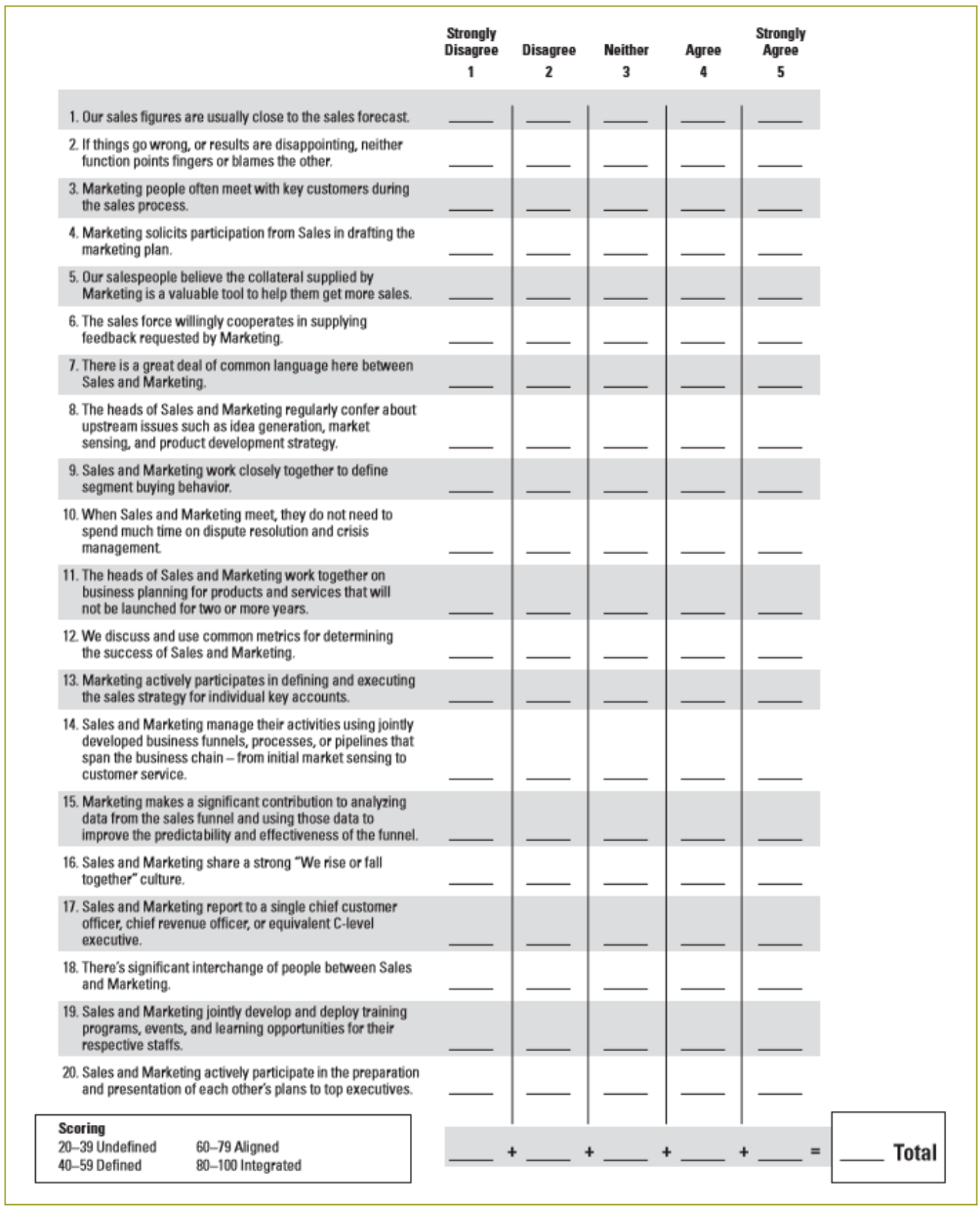
3. Does the business you work for have between 1 – 250 employees?

Y/N

4. With which function (sales or Marketing) is your role primarily associated with?

Sales/marketing

Likert Scale Questions Used in this Study (Kotler, 2006)



	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. Our sales figures are usually close to the sales forecast.	____	____	____	____	____
2. If things go wrong, or results are disappointing, neither function points fingers or blames the other.	____	____	____	____	____
3. Marketing people often meet with key customers during the sales process.	____	____	____	____	____
4. Marketing solicits participation from Sales in drafting the marketing plan.	____	____	____	____	____
5. Our salespeople believe the collateral supplied by Marketing is a valuable tool to help them get more sales.	____	____	____	____	____
6. The sales force willingly cooperates in supplying feedback requested by Marketing.	____	____	____	____	____
7. There is a great deal of common language here between Sales and Marketing.	____	____	____	____	____
8. The heads of Sales and Marketing regularly confer about upstream issues such as idea generation, market sensing, and product development strategy.	____	____	____	____	____
9. Sales and Marketing work closely together to define segment buying behavior.	____	____	____	____	____
10. When Sales and Marketing meet, they do not need to spend much time on dispute resolution and crisis management.	____	____	____	____	____
11. The heads of Sales and Marketing work together on business planning for products and services that will not be launched for two or more years.	____	____	____	____	____
12. We discuss and use common metrics for determining the success of Sales and Marketing.	____	____	____	____	____
13. Marketing actively participates in defining and executing the sales strategy for individual key accounts.	____	____	____	____	____
14. Sales and Marketing manage their activities using jointly developed business funnels, processes, or pipelines that span the business chain – from initial market sensing to customer service.	____	____	____	____	____
15. Marketing makes a significant contribution to analyzing data from the sales funnel and using those data to improve the predictability and effectiveness of the funnel.	____	____	____	____	____
16. Sales and Marketing share a strong "We rise or fall together" culture.	____	____	____	____	____
17. Sales and Marketing report to a single chief customer officer, chief revenue officer, or equivalent C-level executive.	____	____	____	____	____
18. There's significant interchange of people between Sales and Marketing.	____	____	____	____	____
19. Sales and Marketing jointly develop and deploy training programs, events, and learning opportunities for their respective staffs.	____	____	____	____	____
20. Sales and Marketing actively participate in the preparation and presentation of each other's plans to top executives.	____	____	____	____	____

Scoring
20–39 Undefined 60–79 Aligned
40–59 Defined 80–100 Integrated

____ + ____ + ____ + ____ + ____ = ____ Total

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW • JULY–AUGUST 2006 PAGE 6

Figure 18: Survey for Establishing Nature of Relationship Between Sales and Marketing (Kotler et al. 2006)

The Idea in Practice

How interconnected should *your* Sales and Marketing teams be? The authors recommend determining their existing relationship, then strengthening interconnection if conditions warrant.

WHAT'S THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP?

THE RELATIONSHIP IS…	IF SALES AND MARKETING…
Undefined	• Focus on their own tasks and agendas unless conflict arises between them. • Have developed independently. • Devote meetings between them to conflict resolution, not proactive collaboration.
Defined	• Have rules for preventing disputes. • Share a language for potentially contentious areas (e.g., defining a "lead"). • Use meetings to clarify mutual expectations.
Aligned	• Have clear but flexible boundaries: salespeople use marketing terminology; marketers participate in transactional sales. • Engage in joint planning and training.
Integrated	• Share systems, performance metrics, and rewards. • Behave as if they'll "rise or fall together."

Figure 19: Categorisation of Relationships Between Sales and Marketing (Kotler et al., 2006, p.1)

COMPLETE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT **(questions 1-43)**

Start of Block: demographic questions

Q1 Which of the following best describes your role at work?

- Marketing (1)
- Sales (2)
- Other (3)

Q2 Are you in a management position?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q3 How long have you been in your current position?

- 4 years or more (1)
- Less than 4 years (2)

Q4 Do you work for a South African company?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q5 How many staff does your company have?

- ○ 0-10 (1)
- ○ 11 - 250 (2)
- ○ 250+ (3)

End of Block: demographic questions

Start of Block: Alignment of Marketing and Sales

Q6 To what extent does the marketing function align with the sales function at your company? (i.e. how well do they work together?) alignment = 5-10; misalignment 0-4)

- [ ] 1 (1)
- [ ] 2 (2)
- [ ] 3 (3)
- [ ] 4 (4)
- [ ] 5 (5)
- [ ] 6 (6)
- [ ] 7 (7)
- [ ] 8 (8)
- [ ] 9 (9)
- [ ] 10 (10)

End of Block: Alignment of Marketing and Sales

Start of Block: Block 5

To what extent do the following statements describe sales and marketing at your company?

7 Our sales figures are usually close to the sales forecast

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

8 If things go wrong, or results are disappointing , neither function points fingers or blames the other

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

9 Marketing people often meet with key customers during the sales process.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

10 Marketing solicits participation from sales in drafting the marketing plan

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

11 Our salespeople believe the collateral supplied by marketing is a valuable tool to help them get more sales.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

12 The sales force willingly cooperates in supplying feedback requested by marketing.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

13 There is a great deal of common language here between sales and marketing.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

14 The heads of sales and marketing regularly confer about upstream issues such as idea generation, market sensing and product development strategy.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

15 Sales and Marketing work closely together to define segment buying behaviour.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

16 When Sales and Marketing meet, they do not need to spend much time on dispute resolution and crisis management.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

17 The heads of Sales and Marketing work together on business planning for products and services that will not be launched for two or more years.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

18 We discuss and use common metrics for determining the success of Sales and Marketing.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

19 Marketing actively participates in defining and executing the sales strategy for individual key accounts.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

20 Sales and Marketing manage their activities using jointly developed business funnels, processes or pipelines that span the business chain from initial market sensing to customer service.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

21 Marketing makes a significant contribution to analysing data from the sales funnel and using those data to improve the predictability and effectiveness of the funnel.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

22 Sales and Marketing share a strong "we rise or fall together" culture.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

23 Sales and Marketing report to a chief customer officer, chief revenue officer, or equivalent c-level executive.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

24 There's significant interchange of people between Sales and Marketing.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

---

25 Sales and Marketing jointly develop and deploy training programmes, events, and learning opportunities for their respective staff.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

26 Sales and Marketing actively participate in the preparation and presentation of each other's plans to top executives.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

End of Block: Block 5

Start of Block: Causes of Misalignment

Instructions To what extent do you agree that each of the following factors are causes of misalignment between sales and marketing?

27 Sales believes marketers do not provide high quality leads.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly Disagree (5)

28 Marketing believes Sales does not follow up adequately on leads provided by marketing

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

29

Information is not shared effectively between sales / marketing

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

30 Generally the personality types of salespeople are not compatible with those of marketers

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

31 Despite advances in digital reporting technology; Marketing’s contribution to the business' bottom line cannot be effectively measured

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

32 Lack of agreement between sales/marketing as to what constitutes a lead.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

---

33 Poor use of digital technologies (e.g. sales/ marketing management software) to track leads through the sales funnel.

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

End of Block: Causes of Misalignment

Start of Block: Potential Solutions

Instructions Do you agree that each of the following suggestions are viable solutions to improving the level of alignment between sales and marketing?

34 Focus on customer rather than on individual sales (implying a focus on lifetime customer value rather than making sales quotas for a particular period)

- [ ] Strongly agree (1)
- [ ] Agree (2)
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- [ ] Disagree (4)
- [ ] Strongly disagree (5)

35 Using digital technology to share information between sales/marketing

- ○ Strongly agree (1)
- ○ Agree (2)
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ○ Disagree (4)
- ○ Strongly disagree (5)

36 Focusing on lead follow up intensity.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

37 Actively promoting a culture of unity between sales/marketing.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Disagree (4)
- Strongly disagree (5)

End of Block: Potential Solutions

Start of Block: Personal Details

Instruction Only complete this section if you wish to receive the results of this research.

Name

_____

Email

_____

End of Block: Personal Details

Calculation of Cronbach's Alpha for Likert Scale used in this study

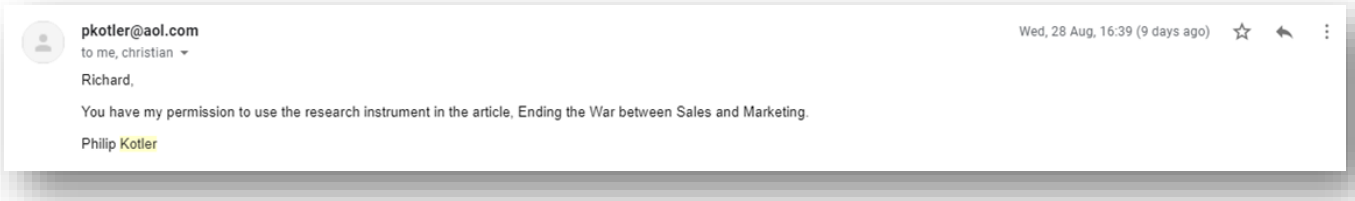
Item-total Statistics					
variable	**Summary for scale: Mean=74.2872 Std.Dv.=11.8717 Valid N:94 (Data for reliability analysis) Cronbach alpha: .900317 Standardized**				

	alpha: .903060 Average inter-item corr.: .324448				
	Mean if deleted	Var. if deleted	StDv. if deleted	Itm-Totl Correl.	Alpha if deleted
Our sales figures are usually close to the sales forecast	70,67	133,2210	11,54	0,27	0,90
If things go wrong, or results are disappointing , neither function points fingers or blames the other	70,91	127,9289	11,31	0,45	0,90
Marketing people often meet with key customers during the sales process.	70,91	123,9928	11,14	0,46	0,90
Marketing solicits participation from sales in drafting the marketing plan	70,35	128,3555	11,33	0,42	0,90
Our salespeople believe the collateral supplied by marketing is a valuable tool to help them get more sales.	70,05	131,3270	11,46	0,39	0,90
The sales force willingly cooperates in supplying feedback requested by marketing.	70,30	125,9964	11,22	0,62	0,89
There is a great deal of common language here between sales and marketing.	70,36	126,1883	11,23	0,65	0,89
The heads of sales and marketing regularly confer about upstream issues such as idea generation, market sensing and product development strategy.	70,41	123,6470	11,12	0,66	0,89
Sales and Marketing work closely together to define segment buying behaviour.	70,45	121,9706	11,04	0,76	0,89

When Sales and Marketing meet, they do not need to spend much time on dispute resolution and crisis management.	**70,83**	**129,6732**	**11,39**	**0,38**	**0,90**
The heads of Sales and Marketing work together on business planning for products and services that will not be launched for two or more years.	**70,93**	**126,4093**	**11,24**	**0,47**	**0,90**
We discuss and use common metrics for determining the success of Sales and Marketing.	**70,41**	**128,5406**	**11,34**	**0,56**	**0,90**
Marketing actively participates in defining and executing the sales strategy for individual key accounts.	**70,55**	**126,1195**	**11,23**	**0,58**	**0,89**
Sales and Marketing manage their activities using jointly developed business funnels, processes or pipelines that span the business chain from initial market sensing to customer service.	**70,63**	**126,0848**	**11,23**	**0,64**	**0,89**
Marketing makes a significant contribution to analysing data from the sales funnel and using those data to improve the predictability and effectiveness of the funnel.	**70,45**	**126,6301**	**11,25**	**0,56**	**0,89**
Sales and Marketing share a strong "we rise or fall together" culture.	**70,52**	**122,8027**	**11,08**	**0,68**	**0,89**
Sales and Marketing report to a chief customer officer, chief revenue officer, or equivalent c-level executive.	**70,56**	**128,7566**	**11,35**	**0,38**	**0,90**
There's significant interchange of people between Sales and Marketing.	**70,73**	**127,8973**	**11,31**	**0,46**	**0,90**
Sales and Marketing jointly develop and deploy training programmes, events, and learning opportunities for their respective staff.	**70,83**	**123,3115**	**11,10**	**0,62**	**0,89**

Sales and Marketing actively participate in the preparation and presentation of each other's plans to top executives.	**70,59**	**121,2215**	**11,01**	**0,70**	**0,89**

Email from Professor Phillip Kotler granting permission for instrument Use



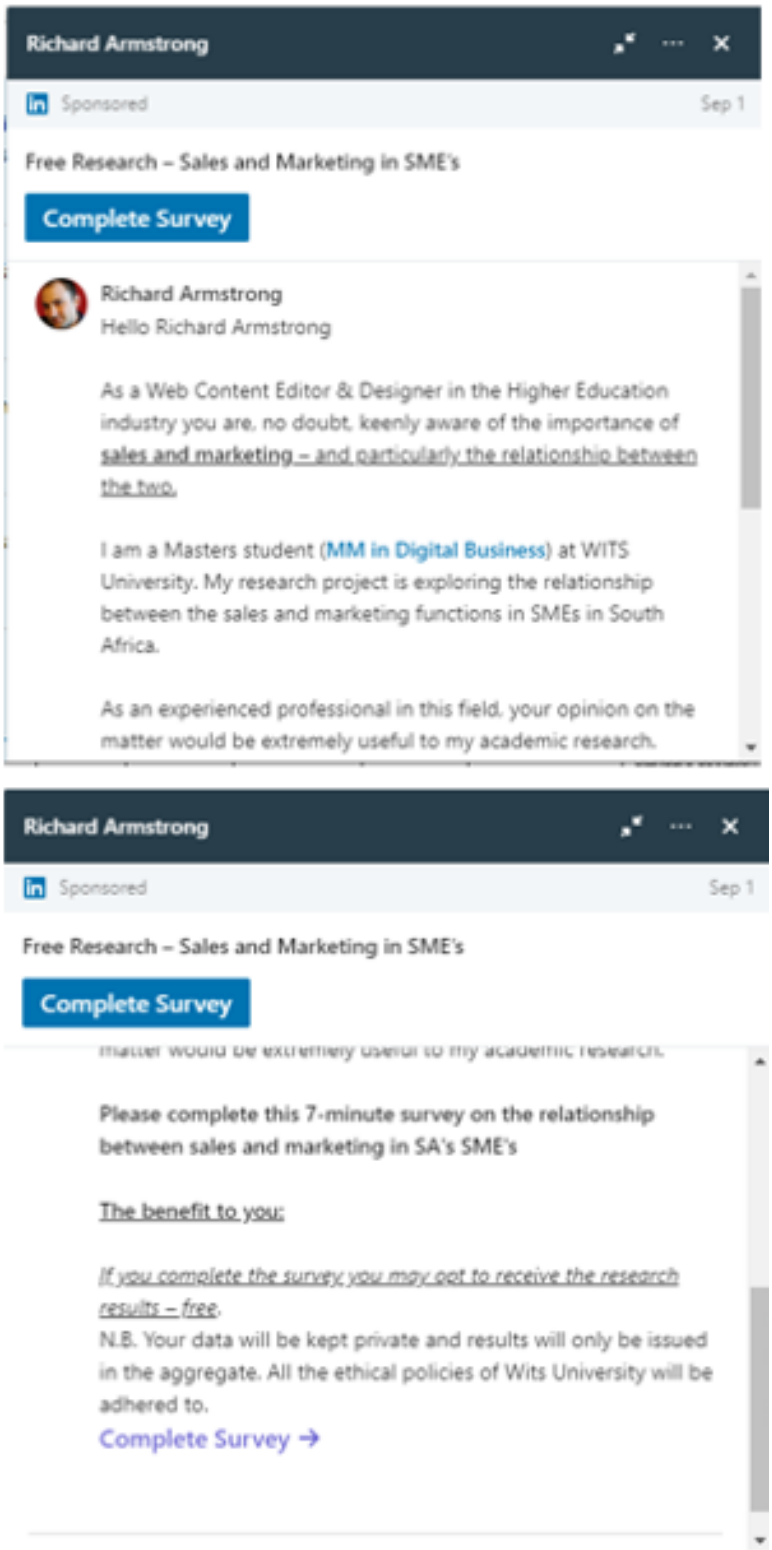
pkotler@aol.com
to me, christian
Wed, 28 Aug, 16:39 (9 days ago)

Richard,

You have my permission to use the research instrument in the article, Ending the War between Sales and Marketing.

Philip Kotler

Message sent via LinkedIn InMail to potential respondents



References

The alarming truth about the number of small businesses in South Africa. (2018). Retrieved from https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/260797/the-alarming-truth-about-the-number-of-small-businesses-in-south-africa/

Average Survey Response Rate. (N.D). Retrieved from https://surveyanyplace.com/average-survey-response-rate/

Bannock, G., Davis E, Trott P, Uncles M. (2002). *Dictionary of Business* (1 ed.). London: Penguin.

Beverland, M., Steel, M., & Dapiran, G. P. (2006). Cultural frames that drive sales and marketing apart: an exploratory study. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 21*(6), 386-394.

Biemans, W. G., Brenčič, M. M., & Malshe, A. (2010). Marketing–sales interface configurations in B2B firms. *Industrial Marketing Management, 39*(2), 183-194.

Byrnes, K. (2011). What is lead scoring? Retrieved from https://blog.marketo.com/2011/01/what-is-lead-scoring.html

Cespedes, F. V. (1992). Sales coordination: an exploratory study. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 12*(3), 13-29.

Cespedes, F. V. (1993). Co-ordinating sales and marketing in consumer goods firms. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 10*(2), 37-55.

Chaffey, D., & Patron, M. (2012). From web analytics to digital marketing optimization: Increasing the commercial value of digital analytics. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice, 14*(1), 30-45.

Clark, B. H. (1999). Marketing performance measures: history and interrelationships. *Journal of marketing management, 15*(8), 711-732.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design : qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches / John W. Creswell* (2nd ed.). London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design : qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4 ed.). London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Cryan, D., Shatil, S., & Mayblin, B. (2014). *Introducing Logic: a graphic guide*: Icon Books Ltd.

Dane, F. C. (1990). *Research Methods*. Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole.

Flick, U. (2011). *Introducing research methodology : a beginner's guide to doing a research project* London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Garson. (2018). *Research Design Statistical Associates Blue Book Series 32* (pp. 158). Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/Research-Design-2018-Statistical-Associates-ebook/dp/B00A2XAAT6

Granello, D. H., & Wheaton, J. E. (2004). Online data collection: Strategies for research. *Journal of Counselling & Development, 82*(4), 387-393.

Guenzi, P., & Troilo, G. (2007). The joint contribution of marketing and sales to the creation of superior customer value. *Journal of Business Research, 60*(2), 98-107.

Jolson, M. A. (1988). Qualifying sales leads: the tight and loose approaches. *Industrial Marketing Management, 17*(3), 189-196.

Jooste, C., Strydom, J., Berndt, A., & du Plessis, F. (2012). *Applied strategic marketing*: Pearson.

Keenan, J. (2016). Why It's Time For B.A.N.T. To Go Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/jimkeenan/2016/05/03/why-its-time-for-b-a-n-t-to-go/Kent, R. A. (2001). *Data construction and data analysis for survey research / Raymond Kent*. Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave.

Kotler, P., Rackham, N., & Krishnaswamy, S. (2006). Ending the war between sales and marketing. *Harvard Business Review*, *84*(7/8), 68..

Küster, I., & Canales, P. (2008). Some determinants of salesforce effectiveness. *Team Performance Management: An International Journal, 14*(7/8), 296-326.

Levine, R. (1989). Overcoming sibling rivalry between sales and marketing. *Management Review, 78*(6), 36.

Linked-In Privacy Policy. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/legal/privacy-policy

Maddox, K. (2008). Moving Past the Culture of Blame; Ongoing Disconnect Hampers Cooperation of Sales and Marketing *BtoB 93*(12), 1-2.

Mis, B. (2011). *Quantitative research: An introduction* [Kindle](3 ed., pp. 186). Retrieved from https://www.amazon.com/Quantitative-Research-Introduction-BenjaminMisebook/dp/B005HFQ4FS/ref=sr_1_5?crid=J0N1WMIBH6NX&keywords=quantitative+research&qid=1566565415&s=digital-text&sprefix=quantitative+res%2Cdigital-text%2C373&sr=1-5

Njiraini, K. B. (2019, March 6). *SA's job problem can be fixed by small business*. Retrieved from Business Live:https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2019-03-06-sas-job-problem-can-be-fixed-by-small-business/

Noble, S. (2010). It's time to bury the marketing funnel. Marketing

The number of formal micro, small & medium businesses in South Africa. (2018). Retrieved from South Africa: https://www.smallbusinessinstitute.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SBIbaselineAlert1final.pdf

Ohiomah, A., Andreev, P., Benyoucef, M., & Hood, D. (2019). The role of lead management systems in inside sales performance. *Journal of Business Research, 102*, 163-177.

Patterson, L. (2007). Marketing and sales alignment for improved effectiveness. *Journal of Digital Asset Management, 3*(4), 185-189. doi:10.1057/palgrave.dam.3650089

Pellham, A. T., L (2009). Does the Quality of Consulting Behaviours Mediate the Relationship Between Those Behaviors and Salesperson Effectiveness?". *Journal of Selling and Major Account Management, 9*.

Peterson, R. M., Gordon, G. L., & Krishnan, V. (2015). When Sales and Marketing Align: Impact on Performance. *Journal of selling, 15*(1), 29-43.

Piercy, N. (1997). *Market-Led Strategic Change*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Pycraft, M., Singh, H., Phihlela, K., Slack, N., Chambers, S., & Johnston, R. (2010). *Operations management: Global and southern African perspectives.* Cape Town: Pearson Education.

Redding, S. J. J. o. D., Data, & Practice, D. M. (2015). Can marketing automation be the glue that helps align sales and marketing?. *Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice, 16*(4), 260-265.

Rombaut, V. (n.d.). 7 Outstanding Ways to Use Salesforce to Boost Customer Retention. Retrieved from https://neilpatel.com/blog/salesforce-for-customer-retention/

Sabnis, G., Chatterjee, S. C., Grewal, R., & Lilien, G. L. J. J. o. m. (2013). The sales lead black hole: On sales reps' follow-up of marketing leads. *Journal of Marketing 77*(1), 52-67.

Saura, J. R., Palos-Sánchez, P., & Cerdá Suárez, L. M. (2017). Understanding the digital marketing environment with KPIs and web analytics. *Future Internet, 9*(4), 76.

Sleep, S., Lam, S. K., & Hulland, J. (2018). The sales–marketing integration gap: a social identity approach. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 38*(4), 371-390.

Smith, T. M., Gopalakrishna, S., & Chatterjee, R. (2006). A three-stage model of integrated marketing communications at the marketing-sales interface. *Journal of marketing research, 43*(4), 564-579.

Sponsored InMail Overview. (n.d). Retrieved from https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/sponsored-inmail?src=go-pa&trk=sem_lms_gaw&veh=Google_Search_EMEA_ZA_Brand-LMS_Beta_DR_English_268157137832__%2Blinkedin%20%2Binmail_c__kwd-300912600629_1392741811&gclid=CjwKCAjwnf7qBRAtEiwAseBO_ISaQOb1MExqwkUcurk3TSttutniB-kpL1UlE57qb1W5HqAQis8iqxoCuJkQAvD_BwE

Statista. (2019). Advertising spending in South Africa from 2017 to 2020, by medium (in million South African rand). Retrieved from

https://www.statista.com/statistics/386540/advertising-expenditures-by-medium-south-africa/

These are The New Definitions for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in South Africa (2019). Retrieved from https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/305592/these-are-the-new-definitions-for-micro-small-and-medium-enterprises-in-south-africa/

What is a lead (n.d.). Retrieved from https://help.salesforce.com/articleView?id=faq_leads_what_is_a_lead.htm&type=5

What is CRM. (n.d). Retrieved from https://www.hubspot.com/growth-stack/what-is-crm