



“The web has become our primary point of contact with prospective customers. So how do we make it the center of a dynamic marketing and sales strategy?”

Web-centricity is the key to B2B sales growth

The Internet has become a powerful and efficient platform for integrating and automating marketing and sales processes.

Introduction. For innovative companies that have transitioned from a primarily traditional marketing approach to a web-centric strategy, the impact on marketing productivity has been similar to the impact that the assembly line had on manufacturing productivity a century ago.

For companies that haven't yet ventured beyond the basic website stage or haven't developed a clear web-centric strategy for integrating and automating their marketing and sales processes, competition has never seemed greater and new customers have never been more difficult or expensive to find.

Just how pervasive is this transition to web-centricity among today's marketers?

- ◆ In a 2006 WebTrends® survey of more than 250 marketing executives, 56% said that the web was already the hub of their marketing strategy, or that it would become the hub within the next year.



With breathtaking speed, the Internet is becoming the environment in which virtually all business development activity is taking place. This white paper will help explain what a web-centric strategy is, and provide insights for a smooth and timely transition to it.

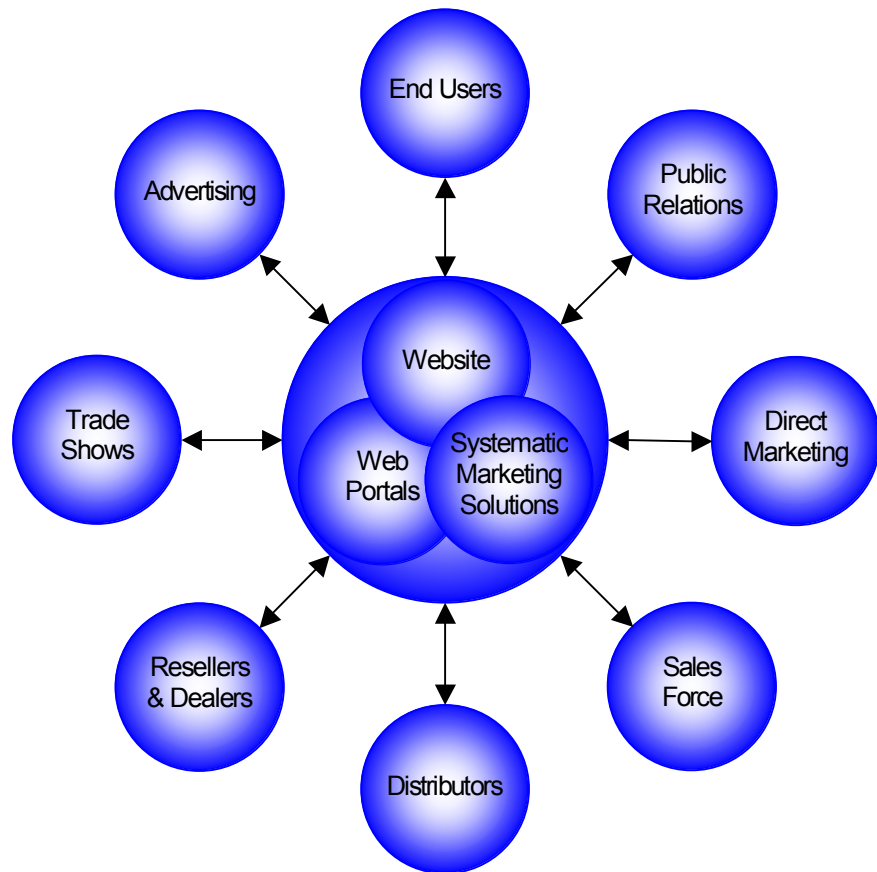
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What does a web-centric strategy do? A web-centric strategy streamlines marketing and sales processes, and leverages the Internet's extensive technological capabilities to acquire customers faster and retain them longer. A web-centric strategy does not replace traditional marketing communications tactics and sales channels – it makes them dramatically more productive.

Web-centric Strategy Overview

Elevated from spoke to hub. A company's website has become the primary point of contact with prospective customers. And the Internet has proven to be an efficient platform for integrating and automating virtually every marketing and sales process. As a result, the role of the web has been elevated from simply a spoke in the marketing mix wheel to being the hub of the marketing strategy.



The hub of a web-centric strategy typically includes the following components:

- ◆ **Website.** Segments users, tracks their online activity and captures lead data. Delivers high customer value information, tools and services.
- ◆ **Web Portals.** Login accessible portals with the information, tools and services required to support key customer and channel partner relationships.
- ◆ **SystematicMarketing™ Solutions.** A secure marketing and sales portal for the management of contact data, campaigns, web content and analytics.

Website for a Web-centric Strategy

What's makes a website designed for a web-centric strategy different?

Segment, track and capture leads. A core objective of a website designed for the web-centric marketing strategy is to segment, track and capture leads. The segmentation process begins by funneling prospective customers to areas of *relevant information*. Relevant information refers, for example, to presenting only those products and services that align with the prospect's application and are available in their region. The segmentation process has three important purposes: It streamlines the gathering of purchase decision information for the prospect, it demonstrates a value-added specialization in the prospect's application, and it enables your website to automatically recognize and present the prospect with segment-specific information when they return.

Once segmented, the prospect's online activity can be tracked to reveal areas of interest, product requirements, their stage in the buying process and other qualifying characteristics and marketing information. This segmentation and qualification data is, at this point, associated with an anonymous prospect.

Capturing contact information related to a website lead is one of the most important objectives of a web-centric strategy, and results in identifying a previously anonymous prospect that is already associated with segmentation and qualification data. The prospect's motivation for providing their contact data is to obtain high value information, tools and services from your website.

Deliver high customer value content. This objective requires a deep understanding of what information and tools will be valued most by a prospect, and delivering them in alignment with the prospect's buying process.

In terms of information, more is not necessarily better. Better is better, so strive to provide the best information, organized logically. Time-saving online tools that will help a prospect make an educated buying decision and advance them to the next stage of the marketing-sales pipeline will be considered well worth the price of their contact information.

Web Portals for a Web-centric Strategy

What is a web portal and what role do web portals play in the web-centric marketing strategy?

Web portal defined. A web portal is a self-service center that provides access to information, applications and services intended for a specific market segment. Customer and partner portals are usually login secured and provide resources not available to the general public.

Support key customer and channel partner relationships. The objective of web portals that support customer and partner relationships in a web-centric marketing strategy is two-fold: They reduce the cost of delivering the services required to maintain relationships while improving processes that drive revenue performance.

Customers and partners are ever more demanding. Web portals allow you to deliver the resources and capabilities necessary to satisfy this demand in a convenient and personalized way. Different types of customers and partners require different processes, and portals can easily provide resources and capabilities within the context of the type of customer or partner being served.

Web portals allow authorized customers and partners – wherever they are around the world – to perform work processes themselves simply by opening their web browser and logging in. Portals can provide access to a broad range of information, applications and services including product configuration and price modeling, opportunity management, order fulfillment and tracking, technical support and other vital business services.

Extending these online self-service capabilities to key customers and channel partners will improve relationships while increasing productivity.

SystematicMarketing™ Solutions enable VRM process

What is the primary strategic process that SystematicMarketing enables?

Virtual Relationship Marketing (VRM). VRM is a proven, strategic process for producing the steady stream of high-probability opportunities your sales force and channel partners need to achieve growth.



Stages of the Marketing-Sales Pipeline strengthened by Virtual Relationship Marketing

Popular studies have shown that only 11% of leads generated made a purchase within 3 months of their inquiry, and another 42% made a purchase in 4 to 12 months. This means there are nearly four times as many qualified but longer-term prospects than there are immediate selling opportunities at any time.

These less-immediate opportunities often fall through the cracks because seldom are efforts made to build a relationship with longer-term prospects. The reason? Few marketing and sales people have time today for the constant personal contact required... *unless it's done virtually.*

The goal of Virtual Relationship Marketing is to get prospects to qualify themselves and tell you when they are ready to buy. Done correctly, VRM will create the perception of personal contact in a way that is welcomed by the prospect and establishes “trusted advisor” status for the sales person.

By leveraging Ascend2's SystematicMarketing Solutions to do most of the time-consuming work for you, VRM will become an easily managed routine for helping you build and nurture long-term, profitable relationships with prospects and customers.

SystematicMarketing™ Solutions for a Web-centric Strategy

The SystematicMarketing Solutions. Ascend2's SystematicMarketing Solutions were designed specifically for the management of contact data, campaigns, web content and analytics, and the execution of Virtual Relationship Marketing processes in a web-centric environment. These integrated applications are made available to marketing and sales users through a secure web portal:

- ◆ **Manage contacts.** Store and manage critical information on leads, prospects and customers. Capture online and offline leads, and track through pipeline. Generate sales contact lists. Identify and alert sales force and channel partners of high-probability selling opportunities.
- ◆ **Manage campaigns.** Search and segment lists for targeted email, direct mail and telemarketing. Compose and mass-personalize messages, and track responses to VRM campaigns.
- ◆ **Manage content.** Easily produce custom landing pages for email, direct mail and search engine marketing campaigns. Update online product catalogs, news and other dynamic content.
- ◆ **Consult analytics.** View dashboard graphics and summary tables of marketing and sales pipeline status and other performance metrics linked to detailed marketing reports. Website analytics provide a live view of online visitors and their activities.

Contact Ascend2 if you would like to learn how a Web-centric Marketing Strategy and SystematicMarketing Solutions can help your company acquire customers faster and retain them longer for more profitable growth.

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