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Solve The Deep-Rooted Strategy Problem Affecting Marketing and Sales

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Summary

When companies struggle to realize growth ambitions or revenues plateau, the natural ambition is to revisit Marketing and Sales practices to find out what's wrong. The reality is that when a company decides to dig a little deeper, they often find there's a deep-rooted strategy problem. There are good reasons for this — markets change shape, competitive products evolve, and founders realize that the original reason for existing isn't as relevant anymore. In this research we dive into what's likely to be happening and why, then provide some solutions on how to move forward.

Key Take: Companies must regularly reassess their purpose, align their value proposition with market shifts, and ensure resources are strategically positioned to drive sustained, scalable growth. Without this discipline, businesses risk losing their competitive edge and no longer being relevant.

Organizational Structures and Weak Strategic Vision Undermine Market Relevance and Growth

Markets are shifting faster than ever, driven by advancing technology and rising customer expectations. Despite these external forces, many organizations remain anchored in reasonably static internal structures, processes, and strategies. Without doing anything differently, businesses can suddenly find they're not as relevant as they used to be and struggle to keep pace with competitors resulting in plateauing revenue growth or worse, notable decline. The world's most successful companies maintain a clear, simple vision that informs their strategic direction, ensuring adaptability and sustained execution. When strategy lacks focus or fails to drive necessary change, execution falters, leading to misplaced blame on departments rather than addressing the root cause: an underlying strategic misalignment.

- **Organizational execution becomes less effective over time despite accelerated external forces for change.** Despite technology advances, growing customer expectations, and increasing competitive innovation many companies continue to operate as they always have. Executive team structures, workplace technologies and processes remain reasonably static. Ways of working become solidified to such a degree that teams find it hard to adapt to shifting market demands. Without doing anything differently, companies can suddenly find they’re not as relevant or struggle to keep pace resulting in a plateau or decline in revenues.

- **A lack of company vision means companies fall short in telling the world why they’re so relevant.** A clear corporate vision with an associated mission statement detailing the “how” guides execution and defines market positioning. Without a strong vision, companies struggle to differentiate themselves, leading to unclear branding, ineffective marketing, and lower customer trust. A well-defined vision also ensures that internal teams understand how their work contributes to long-term aspirational goals and what the company aims to become.

- **A lack of focus on maintaining a clear corporate and related strategy further constrains execution abilities.** Corporate strategies are often undefined or not maintained, leading departments to operate in a disconnected way. Execution relies on a layered and department-connecting strategy. Without a clearly articulated and aligned corporate strategy, departmental functions remain fragmented. Without a logical strategic hierarchy, the product team often becomes too powerful. It takes the lead sometimes in an unstructured way. The marketing and revenue strategies are overruled limiting a company’s ability to execute and drive sustainable growth.

- **Product value degrades if not kept in check with strategic market demand.** Businesses that fail to evolve their product offerings, or worse evolve in the wrong ways by not being aligned to market demand through a strategic approach, risk losing relevance. Relevance is an incredibly important word. Consumer expectations shift rapidly, and without continuous innovation on the right things, even advanced products become outdated. Companies need clear product roadmaps aligned with customer needs and business goals that become living objectives. Nothing stands still and so successful execution means continuously checking product relevance.

- **Revenue goals are not tied precisely to a long-range plan to ensure appropriate business planning.** Many companies set short-term revenue targets without linking them to a comprehensive long-term strategy. This short-termism leads to reactive decision-making, inefficiencies in resource allocation, and an inability to invest in sustainable business growth.

Mistaking Tools for Solutions, Short-Term Pressures, and Leadership Misalignment Create Execution Roadblocks

Even when companies recognize the need for change, execution often falls short because organizations mistake tools for solutions and justify focus based on short-term financial or tactical pressures. Technology and digital transformation efforts are frequently layered onto weak organizational structures, masking deeper execution issues rather than addressing them. Without strong strategic alignment, leadership struggles to work effectively together, leading to fragmented priorities, miscommunication, and stalled initiatives. Product evolution also suffers when it is not rooted in a clear strategy, causing businesses to lose relevance in rapidly shifting markets. Revenue planning, in turn, becomes reactive rather than forward-looking, further limiting long-term business growth and sustainability.

- **Too much reliance on tools masks the organizational execution problem.** Many organizations implement new technologies to improve execution without addressing underlying strategic gaps. Digital transformation efforts fail when they are merely layered onto inefficient processes or practices. Tools are only effective when aligned with a clear business strategy, but many companies mistake technology adoption for actual transformation.

- **Short-term pressures undermine long-term strategic success.** Companies often prioritize quarterly targets and immediate performance metrics over long-term goals. While short-term gains are important, an overemphasis on immediate results and getting lost in the daily grind prevents organizations from realizing the benefits of strategic sustainable and considerable growth and the company's full potential. Succumbing to short-term pressures to fuel "quick win" R&D that appeases one or two big clients and brings in a few extra dollars — but ultimately butchers the overall product direction — further compounds the issue. Companies executing in a tactical, constantly changing, way will likely continue to see "enough" growth but not the kind of growth its capable of.

- **Leadership disconnect weakens strategic alignment and subsequent execution.** Senior leadership teams often meet on a Monday each week and talk about how well each of their departments are doing. Then do the same the following week. Rarely do leaders meet as a team in-between to actually work together on execution ambitions — they're paid to do their role as CRO, CPO or CSO, why would they want to keep talking outside of that CEO organized weekly get-together? When executives operate in silos, corporate strategy becomes inconsistent or nonexistent, and middle management struggles to translate high-level goals into actionable plans. This disconnect results in poor communication, duplicated efforts, and reduced organizational agility. Execution becomes an even bigger problem.

- **Failure to evolve product strategy weakens competitive positioning.** Companies that do not continuously refine their product roadmaps or use roadmaps incorrectly, such as to demonstrate month-by-month feature goals or rely entirely on "what our customers are asking for", will lose their market edge. Henry Ford, the successful car manufacturer, is famous for saying, "If I asked people what they wanted they'd have said faster horses". The product strategy is not going to evolve in the right ways if not relentlessly grounded in why competitors' customers choose them and the research that is informing their decision making. A lack of structured evaluation and adaptation or using the wrong justification and source of insights leads to product strategies becoming outdated quickly or roadmap messaging getting lost in a sea of sameness. Businesses settle on saying at least the same things as their competitors.

- **Revenue targets lack strategic foundation, leading to misaligned incentives.** Organizations that set revenue goals without aligning them to the product and marketing strategies, at the very least, often experience inconsistent or constrained growth. Departments may pursue conflicting objectives, focusing on short-term sales rather than sustainable customer value. This lack of alignment results in suboptimal resource allocation and missed growth opportunities. It also makes it hard for the CFO to plot the revenue goals and excite the board.

Organizational Design, Strategic Vision, and Layered Execution Drive Sustainable Growth

To drive long-term success, organizations must refine their strategic frameworks, enhance leadership alignment, and integrate execution methodologies that prioritize customer and business value. A well-defined corporate vision must serve as the foundation for decision-making, ensuring that product strategies align with long-term market relevance rather than short-term gains. Strong organizational design is essential, with a layered and connected set of departmental strategies that directly support the overarching corporate strategy. This structured approach enables businesses to develop precise product and revenue roadmaps using proven methodologies and strategic tools that drive alignment and execution. With vision, strategy, and execution fully synchronized, companies transform into unstoppable execution engines—driving sustained innovation, market leadership, and long-term business growth.

- **Fix the org design using interviews to understand existing organizational design and become an execution machine.** Conduct structured interviews with leadership and key teams to identify gaps between strategy and execution. This assessment will reveal decision-making bottlenecks, communication barriers, and areas for operational optimization. Once diagnosed, companies can implement targeted changes that optimize roles, clarify responsibilities, improve efficiency, cross-functional collaboration, and adaptability. Ultimately, the company becomes execution optimized.

- **Make sure you have a compelling corporate vision and product strategy mapped to revenue goals.** A strong corporate vision should drive all strategic decisions and be a part of a daily check on progress. Product and revenue goals must align with this vision to ensure consistency in execution and to maintain perceived company value. Financial analysts can’t measure how well the company is performing if not given something to measure against. Else, the product strategy forms the basis of the mission statement that makes the vision attainable. Organizations should establish clear success metrics and regularly evaluate progress against the vision and the mission to ensure long-term business objectives are overachieved and the company is valued the way it should be. At the very least the “Three Amigos” — CRO, CPO and CMO — should be meeting like old friends and talking reality on a regular basis to keep their teams aware of other team objectives and to be better aligned. When these three leaders align on fundamental, measurable outcomes, it can dramatically transform a company’s execution capabilities.

- **Integrate corporate, product, and sales strategies into a cohesive execution model.** Companies should ensure there is a strong corporate strategy that each department can align to. Then each department must have a strategy that’s understood to be part of an ecosystem of connected strategies for execution. Marketing’s strategy creates the “at-bats” and ensures Sales has a seat at the table. The Sales strategy drives the revenue that funds the product strategy. The product strategy fuels the corporate strategy. Leaders should be incentivized to be involved in and aware of each departmental head’s strategy or strategic goals. Establishing cross-functional teams can also ensure strategic alignment, enabling more seamless execution and greater business impact. For example, an Evangelist role who’s on the ground with the sales teams but part of Marketing, helps to ensure better alignment and more valuable strategic approach.

- **Ensure the proper product value maps to business problems using proven methodologies.** Frameworks like the Customer Value Proposition Canvas can help organizations define exciting and inspiring product strategies based on real customer needs. By staying customer problem or ambition -centric, businesses can maintain relevance and drive sustainable value creation. Customer insights, competitive analysis, and emerging industry trends as well as existing customer ambitions should be used to identify the pain points a company should be marketing to. This should inform a shareable product roadmap that’s inspiring, visually exciting and represented as a journey with various important stops along the way. Relevance should be reassessed regularly to ensure tight alignment with market demands.

- **Ensure revenue planning aligns with sustainable growth strategies.** Organizations should tie revenue goals to long-term strategic objectives, ensuring that financial targets support sustainable business expansion rather than just short-term gains. This involves balancing investments in customer acquisition, retention, innovation, and operational improvements to drive consistent, scalable growth. Most importantly, the product strategy should be easily mapped to quarter-by-quarter growth making revenue goals real and reportable to the board, with confidence.

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