EBOOK · CUSTOMER YIELD

Acquisition is *buyer-led*.

An ebook on customer acquisition — how to attract the right prospects, align marketing and sales, and win in a buyer-led world where most of the journey happens before you're even in the conversation.

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7 CHAPTERS · ~13 MIN READ · BY TERRY SULLIVAN

Terry Sullivan
Founder, Strategic Glue

6 TO FIX SERIES
CUSTOMER YIELD

THE FRAMEWORK

Six strategy areas. Six value drivers.

WHERE THIS FITS

Customer is one of *six* strategy areas marketing owns.

*The 6 To Fix framework maps the six strategy areas marketing owns to the six value drivers buyers pay for at exit. Customer maps directly to **Customer Yield** — the recurring economic value each customer relationship generates over time.*

STRATEGY AREA	VALUE DRIVER	VALUATION EFFECT
Brand	→ **Brand Worth**	→ *EBITDA numerator + Goodwill*
Customer	→ **Customer Yield**	→ *EBITDA numerator + Goodwill*
Offering	→ **Category Claim**	→ *EBITDA numerator + Goodwill*
Communications	→ **Demand Engine**	→ *Multiple expansion + Goodwill*
Sales	→ **Revenue Quality**	→ *Multiple expansion + Goodwill*
Management	→ **Transferable System**	→ *Multiple expansion + Goodwill*

Customer acquisition: getting the right customer in a *buyer-led world*.

Most businesses need new customers to grow. But *how* buyers actually decide has changed fundamentally — they self-educate long before they raise their hand, and most of the journey happens where sellers can't see it. This ebook covers how to acquire the right customer with modern marketing and sales, working with the buyer instead of against them.

> *"You need to reach the right prospect with the right message at the right time through the right medium.* ***That doesn't just happen.****"*
>
> TERRY SULLIVAN · FOUNDER, STRATEGIC GLUE

Most businesses require new customers to grow and build *value*.

Businesses need new customers to grow.

Considering the importance of new customers to most businesses, it makes sense that **customer acquisition** is a top priority comprising strategy and execution.

Recruiting new customers has never been more difficult.

Today's business environment is fraught with competition across town, across the country, and across the globe. What's more, there are so many messages, screens, and platforms that while there are more mediums with which to communicate, it has never been more difficult to reach prospects.

Strategy is needed to convert leads into prospects, and prospects into customers — which typically integrates *Sales and Marketing*. But a lot of stars must align before a prospect becomes a lead: you need to reach the right prospect with the right message at the right time through the right medium.

> BOTTOM LINE
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> *Customer acquisition means smart marketing.*

"Search drives a majority of website visits. But 68% of searches are 'zero click' — users find what they need on the Search Engine Results Page (SERP)."

Customer acquisition requires *strategic thinking*.

Goals and expectations.

Most business goals and expectations are predicated on hitting a sales number — yet so many goals and expectations are inconsistent with the strategy and execution needed to gain new customers.

Digital is different. Not magic.

Prospects are much further down the funnel than they have been in the past. Why? Because **self-education and research** has become the de-facto way of learning about a product or service. The sales rep is no longer the gatekeeper to pertinent information, and hasn't been for a long time. If prospects want to self-inform, aren't we impeding sales and brand value if we're not assisting them through valuable, educational content?

Given how people research online, it is important for management and team members to accept that the selling environment has changed dramatically. Alignment on goals and expectations is essential between all stakeholders, and developing a sound strategy that can be executed is critical in acquiring new customers effectively and efficiently.

> BOTTOM LINE
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> *Goals and expectations must be managed.*

Know your numbers.

Two sides of the same coin.

Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) and Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) are two sides of the same coin. Unfortunately, they are often overlooked — like that lost penny on the street.

Strategy, expectations, and results.

Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) sounds complicated, but it's simple. Knowing how much a customer spends with your company over their lifetime informs you about how much to spend to get a *new* customer.

Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) is how much you spend on a new customer. If CAC is higher than CLV, that may result in a non-profitable customer relationship or a long break-even period. Conversely, if CLV is a lot more than CAC, the company may consider investing more money in customer acquisition to accelerate growth or increase market share.

Most companies expect to break-even on customer acquisition costs within a year, but every business is different. Not every sale is *good*; CLV and CAC inform companies on how much should be spent on new customers versus how much value customers bring to the business.

> BOTTOM LINE
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> *Know your numbers about your customers.*

> *"It takes 8 attempts to reach a prospect — yet the average sales rep only makes **2 attempts**."*

TELENET · SIRIUS DECISIONS

Two fingers on the *same hand*.

Marketing and sales separation.

Marketing and sales should be two fingers on the same hand, but are often pointing fingers at each other. Marketing says sales doesn't follow up on leads, and sales says the leads aren't qualified.

Marketing and sales alignment.

Google serves **3.5 billion searches** every day. Corporate Executive Board says **57% of the buyer's journey** is completed *before* the buyer ever talks to sales — because prospects are doing their own research.

Customer acquisition entails building relationships with people who are immersed in digital technology. But their *human behaviors*, *actions*, *thoughts*, *and feelings* are informed from and transformed by the digital environment. People have changed. Shouldn't marketing and sales?

Companies with aligned sales and marketing generated **208% more revenue from marketing**. [Source: MarketingProfs]

BOTTOM LINE

Marketing and sales integration is smart.

Would you rather be *pushed or pulled*?

Buyers are in control now.

The old lines between "marketing" and "selling" don't map to how buyers actually decide. B2B and B2C buyers self-educate long before they raise their hand — through search, social feeds, review sites, podcasts, private Slacks, and increasingly **AI answer engines** like ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Google's AI Overviews. By the time a prospect fills out your form, they've already narrowed the field.

The businesses that grow now aren't the ones interrupting hardest. They're the ones showing up as the trusted answer *while* buyers are researching.

Create demand. Capture demand.

Modern acquisition splits into two jobs. **Demand creation** builds awareness and category authority through content that lives where buyers already are — LinkedIn posts, YouTube videos, podcast appearances, useful frameworks shared openly. It earns you trust *before* you're even a candidate.

Demand capture picks up the buyers who are actively looking — through search, retargeting, referrals, and a website that makes it easy to say yes. Skip demand creation and you're fighting for the same in-market buyers everyone else is bidding on. Skip demand capture and the awareness you built leaks to whichever competitor is easier to buy from.

Most of the journey happens where you can't see it.

The uncomfortable truth: most of the buyer's journey is *dark*. Recommendations traded in private DMs, podcasts consumed on commutes, AI queries you'll never see in your analytics. You can't attribute it — but you can *seed* it.

Your job isn't to build a perfect funnel. It's to build **authority** in the places your buyers already trust, so that when they're ready, or their peers, mentors, and search engines are asked about your category, your name is in the conversation.

> BOTTOM LINE
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> *Value is a two-way street.*

Deep focus versus *wide focus*.

Narrow your focus.

Account-based marketing isn't *new*, but when integrated with sales and buyer-led acquisition, ABM can produce results that are indeed new and improved.

Leads are generated. Accounts are earned.

Specific accounts are the focus in account-based marketing. Rather than targeting a segment or detailed persona, ABM targets *accounts* in ways that are more strategic, focused, and personalized — like a target market of *one*.

A primary challenge in many B2B sales is navigating decision influencers and the ultimate decision maker(s). Even in small companies, there are often multiple decision makers, and likely several influencers. The premise of ABM is to build relationships throughout an organization and provide personalized marketing to facilitate deeper engagement — resulting in opportunities to earn sales that might be **larger, more profitable, and more strategic** to your company's growth goals.

> BOTTOM LINE
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> *Less is always more.*

Manage what you *measure*.

Data and analytics = new sales and marketing.

Integrated marketing and sales is still part science and part art, but it is more data and technology than ever. And it requires significant strategy and planning — not to mention pre-planned and sometimes unplanned execution.

Sales and marketing have long been about metrics, but activity was often difficult if not impossible to measure based on data availability.

Marketing Automation, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and Analytics have enabled smarter as well as more effective and efficient customer acquisition and customer retention.

However, new challenges exist: determining which data to collect; review and analysis; and acting on insights. Tools like Salesforce and HubSpot offer myriad reports — but *human input* is essential to make informed decisions consistent with goals and expectations.

> BOTTOM LINE
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> *Using data requires time and resources.*

WHAT'S NEXT

See where you *score*.

Customer is one of six strategy areas in the 6 To Fix framework — and it maps directly to **Customer Yield**, one of the six value drivers marketing owns. The next step is to see how your business scores across all six.

5-MINUTE SELF-SCORECARD

Score your business across the *6 To Fix*.

Free score in five minutes. Get your headline band immediately, with the detailed per-area breakdown sent to your inbox. No call required.

Score Your Business →

strategicglue.com/scorecard

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This is one chapter from *6 To Fix* — Terry Sullivan's fourth marketing textbook, serialized chapter by chapter. Other chapters cover Brand, Offering, Communications, Sales, and Management.

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Marketing that Sticks to Business