

SRC ASSOCIATES
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MARKETING DEPARTMENT, ANYONE?

Our view on the crucial role of marketing is not one to be confused with the assumption that a marketing department or even marketing personnel are the dominant forces in decision making and that all other functions become subservient to the marketing function.

Marketing is a business process that involves all those in the organization and hence is everyone's responsibility. And therein lies the problem, there are many successful organizations who have embraced the marketing concept and do not have what could be called traditional marketing departments, yet someone needs to be responsible for marketing and its associated processes. You cannot blindly say that it is everybody's responsibility and then magically expect things to be done. At the end of the day, marketing effort needs to be evaluated and responsibility assigned to someone, or a group of people.

But does all this mean that you need a formal marketing department? Yes and no. The benefits to having a marketing department include clear responsibility and a statement that marketing is a serious and important function. The dangers are, very often, marketing people can be as myopic as anybody else when it comes to the customer and that functional silos can create stifled communication and inhibited co-ordination.

The question then is not whether you need a marketing department *per se*, but how you structure the process of marketing inside your organization and how you assign certain functions and responsibilities. Designating certain people as marketing personnel is very valuable whether you have a marketing department or not. These people should be information coordinators, acquirers, and disseminators. They should be customer and organization advocates, they should have access to the ears and hearts of those at the very highest levels of the organization whilst being available to all those in the organization. Marketing requires you to prioritize, every organization has, to a certain degree, finite resources and those resources must be effectively and efficiently deployed, you cannot expect the job of marketing to do itself, but you also don't want the job of marketing to be the domain of one person or department. All your people must be made aware of, and understand their role in the marketing process and how that interacts with those people who are officially designated as 'marketers'.