

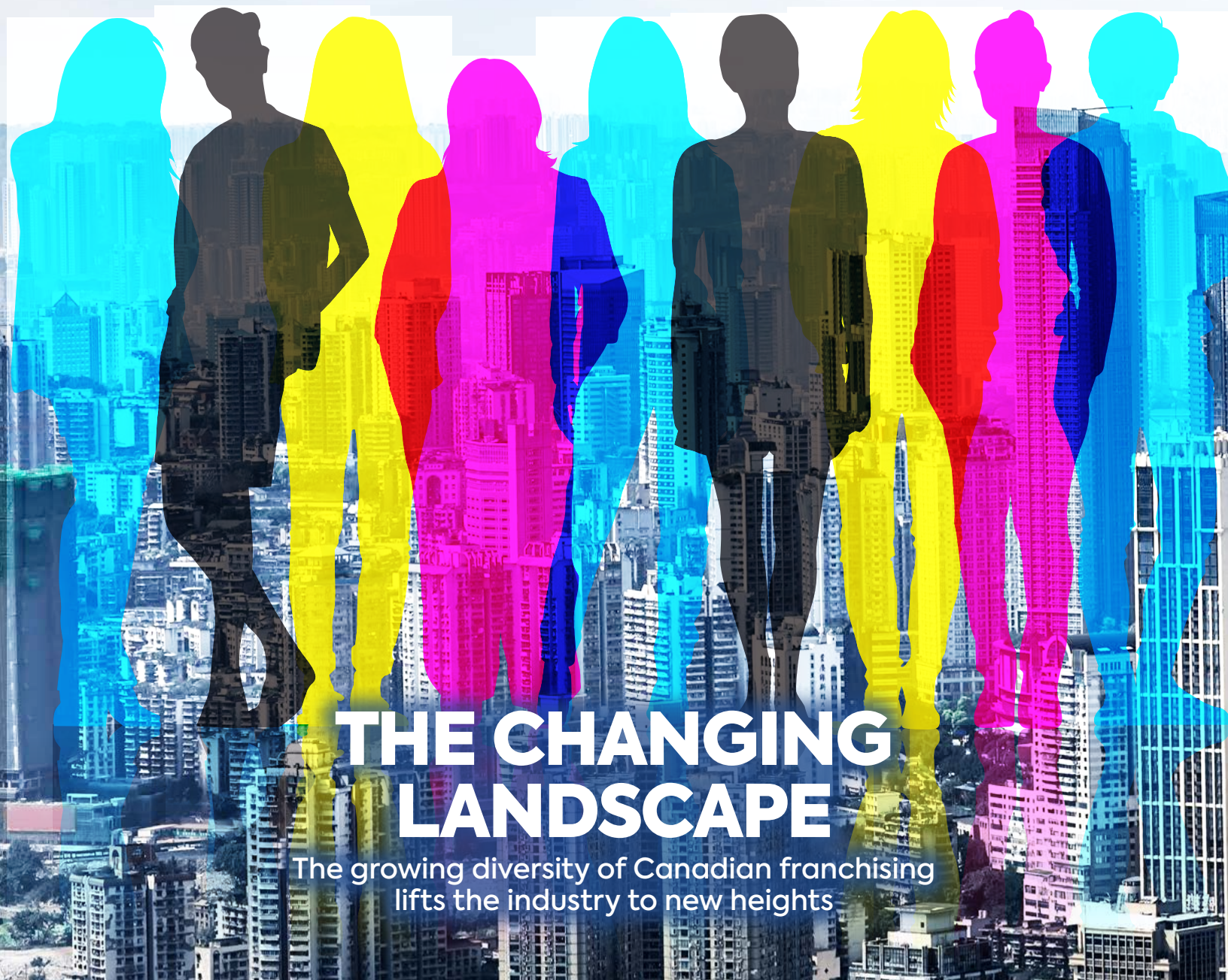
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Dismantling Departmental Barriers

3 ways your marketing and business development teams can work together to accelerate growth

BY MARTY MENARD



How do your marketing and business development departments work together? You likely wouldn't be alone in thinking that these two departments are unlikely collaborators. In traditional business models, these two departments typically function as separate entities with disparate focus and directives. But in an evolving marketplace where current, past, and future customers can make purchasing decisions with the ease of a few keyboard strokes, traditional approaches are an anchor to outdated processes; franchise and multi-unit organizations draw a hard line between marketing and business development at their own peril.

From my marketing students to my business clients, an all-too-common misconception about marketing is it's all logos and slogans, fancy branding and eye-catching design. There is no denying that these are very important elements for supporting any brand, but your franchise organization's marketing efforts must integrate and work together with your business development strategies to not only grow your customer base, but to also create deeper, more meaningful customer relationships.

Beautiful branding and flashy content alone will not stimulate growth or stave off attrition.

So, let us first define the differences between business development and marketing.

Business development is about working at the front line of new business acquisition, cultivating client relationships for both the short and long term, networking, and most often, working on behalf of your clients and customers to drive growth and profitability. This is clearly what the entrepreneurial franchisee signed on for

when purchasing their first franchise location! That being said, it's important to keep in mind that business development is just one of many hats franchise owners must wear, from bookkeeper to HR manager to team builder, and in many cases, service providers.

For this reason, franchisees often require tangible support from their marketing team when it comes to providing the tools they need to be successful in their new role as business developers for an established franchise brand.

I think it's important to mention that though the scope of each unique franchise organization's business development strategies can be wide-ranging and vary significantly from organization to organization, it should never vary from franchise to franchise within a single organization. This is where an interconnected marketing and business development strategy can ensure cohesion and consistency.

Marketing is about identifying, reaching, and staying connected with the target audiences best suited to your products and services. Marketing is most successful when it addresses how you position the brand, the company, and your offerings in the competitive marketplace. Success is then measured by how successful your efforts were in increasing awareness amongst your target audience and in theory, creating a stronger flow of qualified leads and opportunities for, you guessed it, your business developers! And this is clearly what the industrious franchisee is expecting from their head office when purchasing their franchise!

And though it should be clear to us all that marketing and business development are different in how they're executed, they can no longer remain siloed in any organization that wants to fully

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realize their long-term goals for growth and brand loyalty. Business development and marketing are two sides of the same coin.

Here are my top three ways for your organization to begin aligning your marketing and business development strategies to work together and support one another's efforts for increased growth and market share.

1. Your Marketing Strategy Should Have a 'Leads Quota'

A huge part of the success of any franchise location simply comes down to the total number of inbound calls, online inquiries, and in-person visits they receive. The more of these 'leads' that can be created via strategic marketing efforts, the more opportunities for new business development and ultimately, closed business are created.

Once both franchisees and head office agree on a definition of a qualified lead, the marketing team can be held responsible for a lead's quota with well-defined qualification metrics for all involved. Each business and organization will have unique characteristics; for one organization 20 leads a month might be necessary to stimulate consistent growth, while another might only need 10.

This is a great example of both the franchisor and franchisee committing to one another and sharing skin in the game, so to speak. Further, and this might be the business developer in me talking (of course it is), but experience has demonstrated that another wonderful by-product of setting a leads quota is that it really helps the marketing team hone in and better identify what

strategies are cutting through the noise and ensuring your message is reaching your audience! This leads me to my second point.

2. Marketing Campaigns Must Be Agile

For many franchise organizations, it's too often the norm to have long lead-time marketing campaigns where both head office and the individual franchisees will not receive the real results of their campaign's effectiveness until many months later.

I cannot stress enough that drawing up a year-long marketing plan in early November, only to have to wait until April to see whether any of the initial campaigns worked (or not), is a recipe for throwing away money and opportunities.

The marketing landscape is diverse, complex, ever-changing, and it gets more challenging to effectively make lasting impressions with savvy consumers. This is why marketing teams and their strategies must be flexible if they want to generate more meaningful data.

One of the best strategies to put this agility into action is ongoing test campaigns. By launching a brand-new marketing campaign and buying some pay-per-click (PPC) traffic to test your message, you can get volumes of actionable data within a few days ... even hours! If this data passes your benchmarks, you can more confidently and responsibly move forward with launching it at scale.

This will generate faster results, stronger leads, and consistently valuable feedback from both consumers and individual franchisees! Which leads me to my third point.



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3. Franchisor and Franchisee Must Regularly Stay in Touch

Gone should be the days where the franchisee and head office only meet annually to discuss 'the year in review,' providing lots of fancy slides, slightly-exaggerated stats, and maybe some decent catering.

The marketing team needs to be involved in the entire sales and business development process on a regular basis, producing informational material and helping their franchisees on the front lines address and respond to real consumer needs.

Three things are forever: death, taxes, and prospects having endless questions, objections, or concerns throughout the course of the sales process.

Traditionally, the individual franchisees and their teams handle direct objections and concerns. But in my experience, franchisees can increase closing rates tenfold by involving their marketing teams early on in the sales process.

When franchisee and head office have an open channel of communication, through a centralized advisory council or a MIS/CRM software platform, the marketing team can collaborate closely with the franchisees and create a list of common customer objections. They then can create targeted material for each meaningful query, so any time a franchisee encounters a similar objection, he or she has the informational material at their fingertips to move customers further along the sales cycle.

It should go without saying that a professionally produced marketing document will work much better than a quickly drafted

email from a franchisee in answering prospects' questions. Not to mention the added benefit of saving your franchisees valuable time, since a vast majority of them spend up to 30 hours a month producing their own, perhaps less experienced, sales material.

Yes, there are unique responsibilities and machinations of the marketer vs. the business developer, but in today's business landscape, true scalable success happens only when an organization's marketing and business development tactics are integrated in a way that support the other's efforts every step of the way. 🌟

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marty Menard is the Director of Business Development of Kre'Adiv House, a full-service marketing agency serving franchise and multi-unit-based organizations. Kre'Adiv House has earned numerous advertising and marketing awards for strategically unifying large-scope organizations, with an emphasis on growth and expansion. A proud educator, Marty is a part-time Marketing Professor at Fanshawe College's Lawrence Kinlin School of Business in London, ON, and serves as a mentor for the Ontario Centres of Excellence Young Entrepreneurs Initiative. A nationally published writer, speaker, and media consultant, Marty is a passionate advocate for creating stronger and mutually successful partnerships.

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