MARKETING RESOURCE

MARKETING & CUSTOMER SUCCESS ALIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION
MARKETING AND CUSTOMER SALES ALIGNMENT

Customer success isn't a new idea, but its popularity has exploded in recent years for a couple of notable reasons. First is the rise of the software-as-a-service (SaaS) industry, along with other subscription-based models. When a sale isn't a one-time thing but a recurring event, companies have to focus not just on closing one customer but on keeping them on board for the next renewal.

The other factor is the massive proliferation of marketing and consumer choice in general. Thanks to smartphones, virtually everyone has access to all the consumer research information they could ever want, right at their fingertips. No longer are they making choices based on what's nearby or who has the highest marketing budget — targeted ads and social media marketing allow even small and relatively obscure companies to make themselves known.

The combination of these two factors means that customers have more choices than ever. They can order any product from any company, anywhere in the world, at the push of a button. If your competition is putting out a better product at a lower price than you, your customers will know about it, and many of them won't hesitate to jump ship.

That's why now, more than ever, companies need to be focusing on the satisfaction and success of their existing customers — even more than they need to focus on acquiring new ones. In an increasingly competitive digital world, maintaining a loyal customer base is one of the most important things you can do.

CHAPTER 1
WHY CUSTOMER MARKETING MATTERS

You probably already have a customer success department, hard at work helping your customers with their onboarding and education needs. What we're proposing is that you take that a step further, redirecting your existing departments to focus on the same thing. Why? Because the benefits can elevate your company's relationship with your customers to an entirely different level.

Customer Happiness Above All

Your top priority is better customer happiness — especially given that it's [five to 25 times more expensive to acquire a new customer than to keep an existing one](#), depending on your company and your industry. Any product more complicated than a toothbrush has a learning curve to go with it, and the faster your customers can learn how to use your product and integrate it into their daily lives, the better.

Every department in your company should be working in service of customer happiness. Your accounting department should make invoicing intuitive and straightforward. Your service department should focus on quick, helpful responses to questions. Your product department should be focusing on ease of use and comprehensive features. But the essential integration with customer success comes from your marketing team.

Marketing and Customer Success

If you already have a marketing team focused on acquiring customers and you already have a customer success team focused on keeping them happy, why would you need a third team that combines the two? The answer comes down to communication.

Your marketing team is reaching out, attracting new customers with the promise of the experience they'll have with your product. Your product is cheaper, has more features, or is easier to use than the one they currently have. It solves a problem they didn't know they could solve.

Your customer success team's main priority is to ensure that your customers' experience is as positive as possible — but is it the experience the marketing team promised them? Not necessarily.
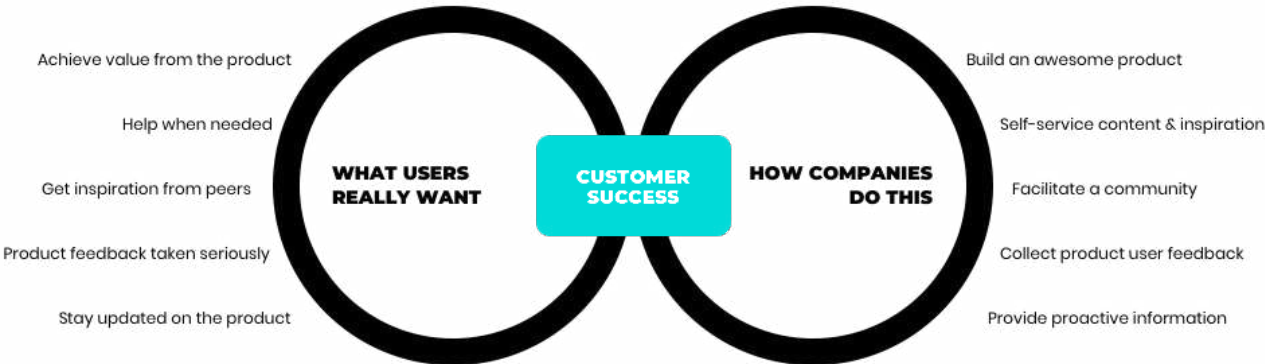
Too often, marketing and customer success teams are disconnected. They both have the same goal — the success of the company — but they're not communicating. The marketing team brings in new leads but doesn't pay any attention to what happens after those leads convert. The CS team is doing all the work after conversion but doesn't know who these new customers are or where they originated.

When the CS team has to branch out into the marketing world, they're uninformed and unprepared. They don't know what previous campaigns have looked like, what your prospects have already heard from your marketing team, and what might resonate best with them.

In short, your customer success people aren't marketers. They're intelligent, thoughtful, and they specialize in one-on-one communication and hands-on instruction. But on the occasions that they have to do some marketing, like creating educational materials to send out to thousands of new customers, their skills fall short.

Customer marketing combines your marketing teams' large-scale messaging skills with your CS teams' insight and educational abilities in one department. Together, they'll make powerful campaigns, bringing in exactly the right customers, enhancing their experience with your product, and convincing them to stick around and renew. Here's how to shift your company's priorities to make that happen.

WHAT IS CUSTOMER SUCCESS

Achieve value from the product		Build an awesome product
Help when needed		Self-service content & inspiration
Get inspiration from peers	**WHAT USERS REALLY WANT** — **CUSTOMER SUCCESS** — **HOW COMPANIES DO THIS**	Facilitate a community
Product feedback taken seriously		Collect product user feedback
Stay updated on the product		Provide proactive information

Customer Success is about aligning interests to drive value

MEASURING YOUR MARKETING ON CUSTOMER SUCCESS OUTCOMES

Marketing is all about setting goals, analyzing campaigns, and measuring success based on whether you met those goals. Simple enough, right? The complicated part is that you can use thousands of different metrics to evaluate your marketing, depending on what your company is trying to accomplish in the near-, medium-, and long-term future.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Goals

Most marketing goals are quantitative (based in hard numbers) because they're easier to measure that way. If you set a goal to double website visits, you can tell immediately whether you've met it or not. The same goes for lead collection — marketers tend to focus on quantity over quality. Quantity is a simple matter of counting, while quality requires a much more in-depth analysis.

The downside of quantitative KPIs is that they're often giving you pretty shallow insights. You can tell how many people came to your website, but not why. You can tell how many leads you're bringing in, but not what each person needs. You need a mix of both types of metrics to gauge your marketing success.

Pure demand is essential, and [there will always be some part of your company that's focused on bringing in more leads, but it's not the only thing](). Instead, what we're suggesting is that you should be judging yourself based on the connection between your goals and your customers' success. So how does that look?

Churn and Renewal Analysis

As we mentioned above, successful customers stick around, renewing their subscriptions and making repeat purchases rather than churning at the end of their first year or free trial. By diving into the numbers, you

can figure out what's leading to their success or failure.

What you're looking for are the things that **your best, most successful customers have in common**.

That will start with the customers themselves — their income levels, job titles, locations, and similar characteristics.

Then, you'll start to look at usage. Let's say you make a project management software, and you're wondering what your best users have in common. You notice that when people only use your software through the web interface, their retention rate over the course of six months is only 20 percent — not optimal. But the customers that use the web interface and the browser extension show a 40 percent retention rate and the ones that download the mobile app show an 80 percent retention rate, which is much more encouraging.

The lesson is to find the customers who are only using the web interface and promote the browser extension and mobile app — if you can get them to download those, they'll be more likely to adopt the software and renew their subscriptions.

The same goes for churning customers. There may be certain areas of onboarding that they didn't get through or certain features of your product that they never used. If you can identify those speed bumps, anticipate them going forward, and help future customers get past them, you'll significantly cut your churn.

Sentiment-Based Segmentation

You're almost certainly already segmenting your customers by the size of their account, the number of people working there, how long they've been customers, and other quantitative data points like that. [Quantitative segmentation is incredibly useful and shouldn't be neglected](#).

But you should also be segmenting your customers by how they feel about you. Customers who have been the most receptive to your customer success efforts are more likely to be open to cross-selling and upselling, for example, so they're the perfect target for marketing emails about new and expanded product lines. Customers that are more lukewarm about you, on the other hand, might benefit the most from an email offering them a free, live walkthrough of your product's features and capabilities.

Ask Your Customers What They Think

You can start with NPS surveys. NPS (Net Promoter Score) surveys aren't a new system, but they're time-tested and straightforward to administer. You simply ask your customers to answer questions on a scale of one to ten, usually starting with some variation of "how likely are you to recommend our product to a friend or colleague?" Then simply break down your customer list by their responses:

- Anyone who answers a 9 or 10 is a "promoter" who loves your product and will tell other people about it. You want to keep them happy, but they don't need much extra attention.

- Anyone who answers with a 7 or 8 is a "passive." They're satisfied with the product, but they'd switch if they found a better option. They're not likely to talk down about you, but they're not selling your product either. With a little extra attention, you can turn these people into promoters.

- Anyone who answers a 6 or below is a "detractor." As of right now, they're not happy with your product and probably won't purchase it again. They might even be actively complaining about you online, which is hurting your reputation. Every company has detractors, but if their numbers start to become worrying, you need to reach out to them and find out what's wrong.

You can generate NPS-based segments with just the single question we mentioned above, but you can also get much more granular with the questions you ask them, focusing on specific features instead of the product or company as a whole. For example:

- How easy was it for you to begin using our product?
- How integral is our product to your daily life or workflow?
- How likely are you to renew your subscription at the end of this term?
- Do you think the pricing for this product is fair?
- How satisfied have you been with the service you've received from this product?

And so on. **Each of these questions will divide your customers into segments that you can triage accordingly**, either rewarding their loyalty, giving them a helpful nudge, or diving into why they're so unsatisfied.

NPS surveys aren't the only tool you can use for this kind of segmentation. If you've got a big social media following, use it! There are plenty of online tools to create surveys like SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, Google Forms, and more that will give you a robust analysis of your results. Create a survey on one of those platforms and send it out to all your social followers. It won't be as easy to connect social accounts to individual people in your CRM, but you'll still get a sense of what people like and don't like about your product and your company.

More Segmentation

Some other segmentation methods to try include:

- **Demographics:** look for correlations between demographics and the metrics we've talked about above. Do young people have an easier time getting to know your product? Do people in specific industries use it more often?

- **Usage:** segmenting your customers by how often or how much they use your product can be extremely useful. Some might use it every day, while others only check on it once a month. Their needs — and your messaging — will be different.

- **Onboarding outcomes:** you want to know that your customers came out the other end of your onboarding process with a thorough understanding of how to use the product. If they jump right into all the features, you know it's been a success. If they don't, they might need more help.

There's no limit to the amount of segmentation you can do, as long as it's useful. If you create segments based on your customers' hair color and it doesn't get you any actionable information, you can just scrap those segments and try something else.

CHAPTER 3
CREATE A CUSTOMER MARKETING TEAM

No, not a marketing team. And not a pure customer success team, either. Customer marketing is a hybrid of the two, combining the skillsets and priorities of marketing and customer success.

What Marketers Bring to the Table

The main reason to create a dedicated customer marketing team is that marketers are excellent communicators. After all, that's their job — they start with an idea or a message, research the audience to whom that message needs to be delivered, and put together the best visual and written communication resources to get the message across. In this case, their materials are in the service of customer success rather than customer acquisition, but the idea is the same.

[The other skillset that marketers bring to the table is in the area of data and analytics](). Just like not every marketing campaign is a winner, your outreach attempts won't always work. You'll do your best to help a customer, only to find that they still churn. You might reach out to ask people if they need help and they won't respond. You'll send them a detailed PDF of how to get your product set up, and they won't even open it.

You need to analyze your customer success efforts just like you analyze

your marketing efforts to see what's working and what's not, and marketers are the perfect resource to do that.

What Customer Success Brings to the Table

Marketers are great communicators, but with a catch: they're seldom communicating one-on-one. They're used to sending out broad messages to the world, appealing to categories of people rather than individuals. That's where customer success teams can help fill the gap.

When the two combine, you get all the thoughtfulness and helpfulness of a customer success professional combined with the top-tier communications materials you expect from your marketing department. It's the perfect recipe for your customers' long-term success.

The Customer Success Pipeline

Once you have a customer marketing team in place, their primary purpose will be to roll together all the lessons we've been talking about to create a pipeline for customer success. They'll examine every shred of marketing data, usage data, demographics, sentiment scores, and the rest.

The result of that analysis will be a list of triggers and markers to look for in each of your customers — specific things to look for that indicate that a given customer is likely to renew, expand, or churn.

Once your team knows what to look for, they can create a plan for reacting to each of those people. Customers who seem likely to renew can receive emails prompting them to switch from a monthly payment plan to a yearly one. When you find customers who seem open to expansion, send them promotional offers for new or related product lines. If you find customers who are on the path to churning, reach out to them and find out how you can help.

These are essential steps when a new customer comes on board and starts using your product, but don't forget about your existing

customers. At any point, an existing customer (especially a "passive" on the NPS scale) might decide that they're fed up with the small annoyances they have with your product. You need to watch for red flags like decreased usage or unsubscribing from email lists to make sure you're not losing the customers you already have.

Turning Customers into Promoters

Finally, a customer marketing team will be responsible for turning your customers into a form of marketing themselves. We can't emphasize enough how valuable it is to have active promoters out there in the world, evangelizing for your company. New customers trust them, existing customers feel valued, and you save on your lead generation
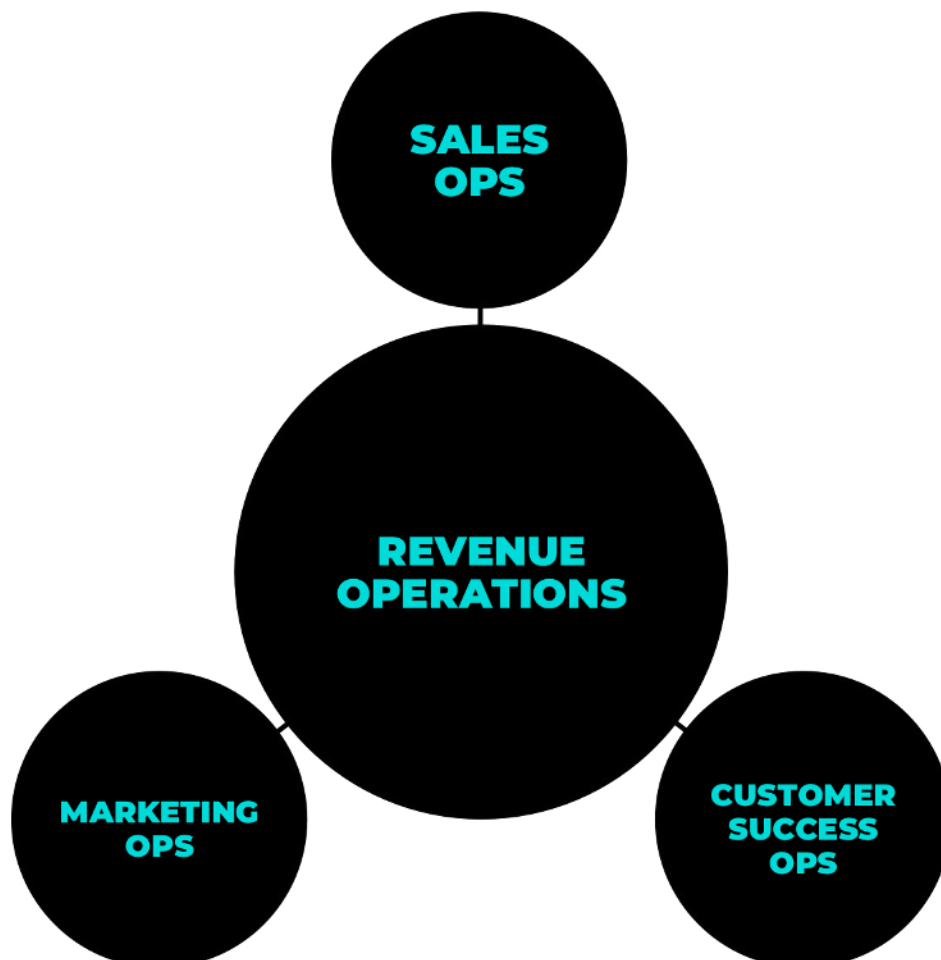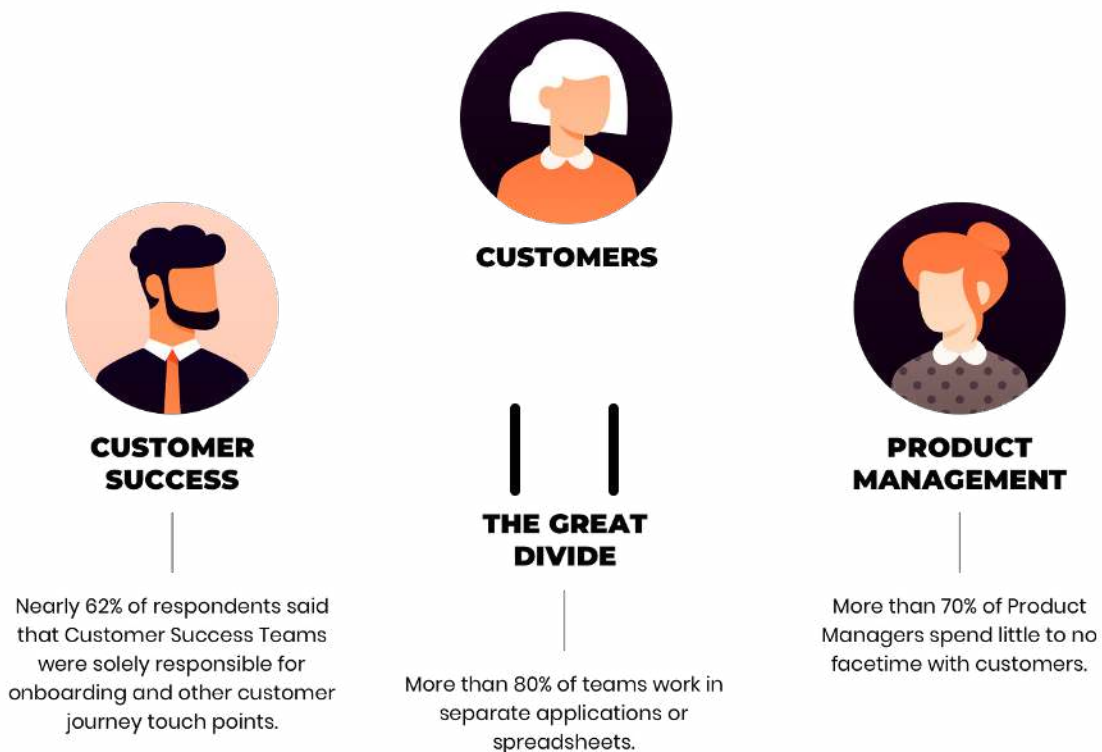
budget.

Start by seeking out feedback from your happiest customers (again, your CM team should know who those are) and adding testimonials to your website. Ask them what they like most about working with you and take notes for interacting with other customers. If you're not getting good reviews on Google or Facebook, seek them out by sending emails to your most successful people and asking them to write you a glowing recommendation.

For the best customers, consider writing up case studies that explain in great detail what the customers' problem was, how you fixed it, and what the result has been for that customer. Focus on both the issues that future customers are most likely to face and those that have been hardest to solve to prove your versatility. Sprinkle in quotes from the customer concerned that explain how helpful you were to add an extra layer of authenticity and relatability to anyone reading it.

THE GREAT DIVIDE

CUSTOMERS

CUSTOMER SUCCESS

THE GREAT DIVIDE

PRODUCT MANAGEMENT

Nearly 62% of respondents said that Customer Success Teams were solely responsible for onboarding and other customer journey touch points.

More than 80% of teams work in separate applications or spreadsheets.

More than 70% of Product Managers spend little to no facetime with customers.

INVEST IN CUSTOMER ENABLEMENT

You might be noticing a slight downside to all these suggestions: they're very time intensive. You're not wrong. One-on-one communication is inherently expensive and difficult, and you can't afford to hire hundreds of CM professionals to make sure your customer base has someone to talk to.

You can get in front of the problem by creating the resources your customers need to help themselves. Many of your customers will prefer this option — why wait until business hours to talk to someone on the phone or wait two days for an email reply when you could just Google the problem?

Creating Educational Resources

When they do, you need to have created the resources to let them solve the problem without your help. That all starts with onboarding. When a customer first makes a purchase, they need to be able to start using it right away. If it's a physical product, that means including a "quick start" guide and comprehensive manual that will get them up and running. If it's a digital product, send them an email with the first steps. You can even add a splash page that offers a quick tour of the website or software when they first log in.

You should also create an online resource like an FAQ page or some other type of knowledge base, where customers can search for their questions and get the answers directly from you, rather than asking third parties on the internet. Talk to your customer service staff about the questions they get the most and make sure those are prominently addressed.

Should You Let Your Customers Help Each Other?

Some companies have set up forums where customers can ask each

other questions about the product and how to use it. Running a forum is a risk. Moderation is difficult — you don't want your customers to call each other obscenities in the Q&A, but you also don't want to read every comment to filter out the bad ones. You can keep this at bay by allowing your users to self-moderate, upvote and downvote comments, and report the unhelpful ones, but a forum is a risk most companies don't need to take.

THE FUTURE OF CUSTOMER SUCCESS

The purchasing landscape has changed — there's almost no company in the world that doesn't have competition in one form or another. And customers are more informed than ever. Most of them have a machine at their fingertips that can easily find hundreds of pages of information telling them why they should buy from you, whether they should cancel their subscription, what your competitors are offering, and so on.

As a result, customer loyalty is harder to find, harder to earn, and harder to keep than ever. Your existing customers are more important than ever to keep around. To do that, you need to make sure that they're as satisfied with your product as possible.

That means making sure that you're not just making a sale, but solving real problems in a helpful, sustainable way. You need to know what problems your customers are likely to face, why they stay, and why they leave. If you can do that, your satisfied customers will be your best resource for years to come.

MADISON TAYLOR Marketing

303.500.3265
info@madisontaylormarketing.com

We are **innovative thinkers**
and **boundary-pushers**.

5613 DTC Parkway, Suite 120
Greenwood Village, CO 80111