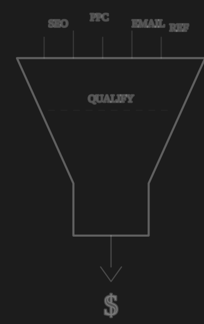
# Feed the Machine: Marketing for Sales

THE 50 FACTOR — GROWTH FACTOR #48

## Marketing That Feeds Sales — and How to Stop Wasting Money on Brand Theater




The Complete Implementation Guide

BY SCOTT SCULLY

## Growth Factor #48: Marketing That Feeds Sales — and How to Stop Wasting Money on Brand Theater

### The Complete Implementation Guide

*This white paper is a companion to Chapter 48 of The 50 Factor by Scott Scully. The book tells the story. This guide gives you the accountability framework that transforms marketing from a cost center into a revenue engine — and helps you tell the difference between marketing that produces pipeline and marketing that produces nothing but pretty content.*

## Why This Growth Factor Matters

Marketing's primary job is to generate qualified leads that sales can close. Everything else — brand, content, events, social media, sponsorships — is either in service of that job or it's brand theater.

Brand theater looks like marketing. It costs like marketing. It produces beautiful decks, polished social media posts, impressive conference booths, and well-designed email newsletters. It does not produce pipeline. It does not produce revenue. It does not feed sales.

Most founders between $15M and $50M are spending 30-50% of their marketing budget on brand theater — and they don't know it, because nobody is measuring marketing by the only metric that matters: qualified leads generated per month.

The shift from brand theater to demand generation is the single highest-ROI change a growing company can make in its marketing function. It doesn't require more budget. It requires different accountability.

## The Marketing Accountability Stack

### Layer 1: Lead Generation

The foundation. Everything else is built on top of this. The primary KPI for the marketing function is qualified leads per month — leads that meet a defined criteria (right industry, right size, right authority, expressed interest) and can be passed to sales for follow-up.

Secondary metrics: cost per lead by channel, lead-to-opportunity conversion rate, and lead-to-closed-deal conversion rate. These metrics tell you not just whether marketing is producing leads, but whether those leads are any good. A marketing team that produces 200 leads per month at $500 per lead with a 5% conversion to opportunity is generating worse ROI than a team producing 50 leads at $100 per lead with a 20% conversion.

Set a monthly target. Track it weekly. Report it in the leadership meeting alongside sales pipeline and revenue. Marketing accountability starts the day you put lead count next to revenue on the same scorecard.

### Layer 2: Content That Converts

Every piece of content has one of three purposes: generate a lead (awareness content with a conversion mechanism — a form, a download, a meeting request), nurture a prospect (email sequences, case studies, educational content that moves someone from "aware" to "interested"), or enable a sale (pitch decks, one-pagers, competitive battlecards, ROI calculators that help the rep close).

If a piece of content doesn't serve one of these three purposes — if it doesn't have a conversion mechanism, a nurture sequence, or a sales use case — it's entertainment. Entertainment might build brand awareness over time. But it doesn't feed sales this quarter, and this quarter is what pays the bills.

### Layer 3: Sales Enablement

Case studies, pitch decks, one-pagers, competitive battlecards, email templates, ROI calculators, proposal templates, client testimonials. This is the highest-ROI marketing output you can produce — because it directly improves close rate across every rep on the team.

Most marketing teams under-invest in sales enablement because it's not glamorous. It doesn't win industry awards. It doesn't get likes on LinkedIn. But a well-constructed battlecard that helps your rep win against a specific competitor produces more revenue than any social media campaign ever will.

Ask your sales team: "What do you wish you had in your sales conversations that you don't have today?" The answers are your sales enablement roadmap.

### Layer 4: Brand and Reputation

Important. Not unimportant. But it's the roof, not the foundation. You build the brand on top of a functioning lead-gen machine — not instead of one.

Brand activities — conference sponsorships, thought leadership platforms, PR, awards (Principle #10), employer brand content (Principle #24) — compound over time and produce benefits that are real but hard to measure. The mistake is prioritizing brand over demand gen. The correct order: build the lead engine first, prove it works, then layer brand on top as an amplifier.

### Layer 5: Analytics and Attribution

Where did each lead come from? What did it cost? What happened to it? Did it become an opportunity? Did it close? What was the revenue?

If you can't trace a lead from source to close, you're spending blind. Attribution doesn't need to be perfect — first-touch attribution (which channel generated the initial lead) combined with common sense is sufficient for most companies at this stage. The goal is to know which channels produce leads that convert, so you can invest more in those channels and cut the ones that don't.

## Hiring for Demand Generation

The title matters. You want a VP of Demand Generation, not a Head of Marketing. The title signals the expectation: this person's job is to generate demand (leads, pipeline, revenue) — not to build a brand or produce content for its own sake.

**The interview question that separates real marketers from brand marketers:** "How many qualified leads did your last campaign produce, and what was the cost per lead?" If they can't answer with specific numbers — if they talk about impressions, reach, engagement, or "brand lift" — they're not a demand gen hire. They may be a talented marketer, but they're not the person who will feed your sales team.

**Day 1 KPI:** Qualified leads per month. Not website traffic. Not social followers. Not brand awareness. Leads that your sales team can call, qualify, and close.

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## Content Marketing Done Right

Identify the 5-10 questions your ideal clients are Googling. Not "marketing for B2B companies" — specific, long-tail questions like "how to reduce employee turnover in manufacturing" or "what does a managed IT services agreement include."

Write the definitive answers to those questions. Better than anything else on the internet. 1,500-2,500 words. Well-structured. Authoritative. Rank on page one of Google for those searches.

Gate the highest-value content — the detailed playbooks, the ROI calculators, the industry reports — behind an email form. The form captures the lead. The lead enters the nurture sequence. The nurture sequence produces the sales conversation.

Content marketing takes 6-12 months to compound. The investment is front-loaded — you're writing content for months before it ranks and produces leads. But once it ranks, it produces leads while you sleep. Every piece of ranking content is a permanent, cost-free lead generation asset. Over time, content marketing produces the lowest-CAC leads you'll ever have.

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## Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

**Mistake #1: No lead target.** If marketing doesn't have a qualified-leads-per-month target, they'll optimize for whatever they feel like — which is usually brand activities, because they're more fun and less measurable.

**Mistake #2: Measuring impressions instead of leads.** Impressions are a vanity metric. A post that gets 50,000 impressions and 0 leads is worth less than a post that gets 500 impressions and 10 leads.

**Mistake #3: Under-investing in sales enablement.** Your reps need battlecards, case studies, and ROI calculators more than they need a new logo or a redesigned website.

**Mistake #4: Building brand before building demand gen.** Brand is the roof. Demand gen is the foundation. Build in order.

**Mistake #5: No attribution.** If you don't know which channels produce leads that close, every dollar spent on marketing is a guess.

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## Quick-Start Checklist

- ✓ ☐ Set qualified leads per month as marketing's primary KPI
- ✓ ☐ Audit current marketing spend by channel — what produces leads and what doesn't?
- ✓ ☐ Cut channels with no attribution or no lead production

- ✓ ☐ Ask sales: "What do you wish you had?" — build the sales enablement toolkit
- ✓ ☐ Identify 5-10 questions your ideal clients are Googling
- ✓ ☐ Write the definitive answers — rank on page one
- ✓ ☐ Gate high-value content behind email forms
- ✓ ☐ Build the lead-to-close attribution model (even first-touch is sufficient)
- ✓ ☐ Hire or retitle for demand generation, not "marketing"
- ✓ ☐ Report lead count in the weekly leadership meeting alongside pipeline and revenue

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### Implementation Tools

Ready-to-use templates for this Growth Factor

XLSX **Marketing Accountability Dashboard**
Columns: Channel, Leads, Cost, Cost/Lead, Opportunities, Opp Rate, +3 more

XLSX **Content Calendar with Conversion Mapping**
Columns: Week, Monday Post, Wednesday Post, Friday Post, Owner, Platform, +1 more

PDF **Sales Enablement Audit**
What does sales need that marketing hasn't built?

XLSX **Lead Attribution Tracker**
Columns: Name, 6-Mo A-Player Avg, Leaderboard Rank, Leadership Signals (1-5), Coachability (1-5), Overall Ready?, +2 more

PDF **Demand Gen Hiring Scorecard**
Interview questions and evaluation criteria

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*This is Growth Factor #48 of 50. Marketing that feeds sales connects directly to the Growth Formula (#4), CAC management (#31), and the employer brand (#24). When marketing is accountable for leads and sales is accountable for closing them, the revenue engine runs on data instead of hope. Brand theater ends. Pipeline begins.*

*Get the book: The 50 Factor by Scott Scully*

## The Marketing-Sales Alignment Problem

In most companies, marketing and sales operate as separate functions with separate goals. Marketing measures impressions and engagement. Sales measures pipeline and revenue. Neither team understands what the other does. Both teams think the other is underperforming.

The alignment fix is simple: shared metrics. Both teams are measured on the same funnel: leads generated (marketing's primary), leads qualified (shared), opportunities created (shared), and deals closed (sales' primary). When marketing's success is measured by the quality of leads that convert — not just the quantity of leads generated — the content changes, the targeting changes, and the ROI improves.

The weekly leadership meeting includes both the marketing and sales scorecard. The marketing leader reports lead volume and quality. The sales leader reports pipeline and close rate. Both discuss what's working, what's not, and where the handoff needs improvement. This shared visibility eliminates the "marketing gives us bad leads" / "sales doesn't follow up" blame cycle that kills revenue in most growing companies.

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## The $0 Marketing Budget Test

Here's a thought experiment that clarifies priorities. If your marketing budget went to zero tomorrow — every dollar eliminated — where would your leads come from?

Referrals (Principle #7). Your employer brand and reputation (Principle #24). Your content that already ranks on Google. Your personal network. Your advisory board's connections. Your existing clients' expansions.

These are the channels that don't require ongoing spend. They produce leads because you've built a company worth talking about. Everything else — paid ads, sponsored events, outbound campaigns — produces leads only as long as you're spending.

The best marketing strategies invest heavily in both: the paid channels that produce leads now, and the organic channels that produce leads forever. But if you had to choose — and most founders at $15-30M do have to choose where to concentrate — build the organic engine first. It compounds. Paid doesn't.

The sales enablement gap is the most underinvested area in most growing companies. Your reps are having hundreds of conversations per month without standardized case studies, competitive battlecards, or ROI calculators. Every conversation where the rep has to improvise — inventing proof points, guessing at competitive differentiators, estimating ROI without data — is a conversation that performs below its potential. Building the sales enablement toolkit is a one-time investment that improves every conversation every rep has for years. The ROI is incalculable because it compounds across every deal, every rep, every quarter.

## The Brand Theater Audit

Run this test on your current marketing spend: for every dollar spent last quarter, can you trace it to a specific number of leads? If yes, that dollar was demand gen. If no, that dollar was brand theater.

Most founders who run this audit discover that 30-50% of their marketing budget can't be traced to lead production. Conference sponsorships with no lead capture mechanism. Social media posts with no conversion path. Brand videos with no measurable outcome. Beautiful work — but work that doesn't feed sales.

The audit doesn't mean you cut all brand spending. It means you know which dollars produce pipeline and which produce awareness — and you make conscious decisions about the balance instead of spending blind.