



# The Marketing Acceleration Framework

A Blueprint for Technology Marketing Success

White Paper  
by Stephen Gerrard

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# Executive Summary

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Buying behavior in B2B technology markets has fundamentally changed.

Gone are the days when companies engaged directly with vendors to get educated about the market. Today some 70% of buying information has been obtained *before* the point of first sales contact.

By the time prospects reach out to your company, they have already formed an opinion. Who helped shape that opinion? How do you become the frontrunner when the race has already begun?

Renowned Silicon Valley pioneer David Packard once said, “Marketing is the one thing in a company that is too important to delegate.”

He wasn’t referring to website layout, lead generation, or brochure colors. He was talking about the strategic side of marketing.

Strategic marketing can predispose buyers to buy from you, even before your sales team is engaged.

Unfortunately, marketing strategy often takes a back seat to marketing programs.

Most technology companies do marketing tactically. As a result they make one (or more) common mistakes in B2B technology marketing. Signs of a problem include:

- Marketing campaigns that return lackluster results.
- Lack of consistency in “what works” – both in marketing and in sales.
- Hand-to-hand sales combat, as prospects believe the company’s solution “is the same as others.”

The Marketing Acceleration Framework, which we introduce in this white paper, provides a roadmap for solving these problems. It is a strategic marketing blueprint that gets accelerated results.

You don’t need a large marketing budget to implement the Marketing Acceleration Framework, but you do need to do things in a certain way.

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- David Packard

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# Common Marketing Mistakes

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When technology companies start to grow, they often obtain outside funding. Press releases typically promise to “expand sales and marketing.”

Investing in sales usually translates into growing the sales organization. But how do you make smart investments in marketing? Too often, companies make these common mistakes:

## 1. *Jumping too quickly into marketing programs*

A bigger sales force will have a voracious appetite for leads. The marketing group is under pressure to produce, and it's easy to ramp up spending on tactical lead generation programs before you've done the strategic work that will maximize results.

## 2. *Just talking about your technology or solution*

A great solution won't win the day if buyers have to work too hard to see how it is relevant to them.

Many innovative technology companies with breakthrough solutions squander their advantage on “us-centric” messages.

You cannot accelerate marketing results if you force prospects to connect the dots as to how they can benefit from your solution.

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1. Programs looking for a strategy

2. Us-centric messages

3. The trap of being better

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## 3. *Falling into the “we're better” trap*

Many technology companies have an innovative solution, but are up against larger competitors who are better known.

A “we're better” message, even when provable, only reinforces the market leader's position. Deals devolve into hand-to-hand combat in a feature-function war, and often prospects will just go with the safest choice.

You can blow through a lot of marketing money in tactical programs that don't foster growth. How can you accelerate marketing to drive topline revenue?



# Marketing Acceleration Framework

The Marketing Acceleration Framework, depicted in Figure 1, provides a blueprint for technology marketing success.

## Marketing Acceleration Framework

Strategy	Plan	Enable	Execute
Business Strategies	Market Targeting	Thought Leadership	Website
Vision	Messaging Framework	Content Development	Content Marketing
Strategic Positioning	Buyer Personas	Sales Training Assets	Marketing Campaigns
Distribution Strategy	Buying Process	Lead Generation Assets	Analysts & PR
Solution Roadmap	Content Planning	Lead Nurture Assets	Events
	Demand Generation	Sales Enablement	Social Media
	Lead Management		Measurement

Figure 1: The Marketing Acceleration Framework

The Framework has four pillars: *Strategy* → *Plan* → *Enable* → *Execute*.

Many companies apply this formula in reverse. For them, marketing equates to clever programs while strategic positioning is assumed. Results are hit-or-miss, and increased program spend doesn't solve the problems.

Successful marketing must begin with strategy. The first need is to articulate the company's strategic position in light of its vision, business strategies, and unique differentiators.

Next, the company's approach to the market is carefully planned. The role of marketing in supporting distribution channels is brought into sharper focus. Program decisions are easier to make.

Third, the company must be enabled for success. This means creating vision-based thought leadership messages for training, promotion, attraction, and nurture.

Finally, the thought leadership message is packaged into campaigns, executed, and measured. Marketing acceleration happens because (a) the process occurs in the right order, and (b) programs are driven by vision-based messages.



# The Golden Thread

Strategic messaging is the golden thread that binds the Marketing Acceleration Framework. As Figure 2 indicates, the strategic message fans out to permeate key planning, enablement, and execution activities.

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Figure 2: The Multiplying Impact of Strategic Messaging

Many just pay lip service to strategic messaging. These are the companies that leapfrog into marketing programs, lead by talking about their solution, and portray themselves as better but not different.

Although every activity in the Marketing Acceleration Framework is vital, developing the right messaging framework is the lynchpin.

A compelling, differentiated vision – effectively translated into thought leadership content – delivers incredible leverage to every other sales and marketing activity.

Great strategic messages focus on solving a buyer's urgent business problems. They deftly triangulate buyer needs with the company's unique differentiators and competitors' gaps.

This kind of messaging is *reflected* in tactical marketing programs, not created by them.



# Marketing the Vision

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A logical – but fundamentally flawed – approach taken by B2B technology companies is marketing their product.

Unfortunately, that kind of marketing only perpetuates feature-function wars and hand-to-hand sales combat.

You are not marketing a product. You are marketing a *vision* that gives decision makers a powerful way to solve urgent business problems.

This is accelerated marketing, which in turn drives topline revenue. Here's how.

Vision-based messaging, executed well, attracts prospects that bond with your thought leadership ideas *before* they ever contact your company.

They are researching you anyway ... why not give them something different and thought-provoking to consider? If you market the vision well, new prospects will become *predisposed* to buy from you.

Prospects will even forgive you if some competitive features are on the roadmap instead of in the product, because you have achieved “vision-lock” with them at the higher business solution level.

Your sales people more readily control the buying agenda and wall off the competition when prospects accept your compelling vision. They spend more time in substantive business discussions and less in refuting competitor claims.

Any technology company can apply the Marketing Acceleration Framework.

You don't have to be the biggest vendor in your space, or possess the largest marketing budget. You just need to do things a certain way.

At Technology Marketing Associates, we've seen smaller companies successfully use the Framework to out-market much larger competitors and increase market share.

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Market the vision,  
Sell the product.

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