BrandMaker

HOW MARKETING AND SALES CAN BOTH WIN BIG

The Essential Next Step In Local Area Marketing

This guide shows how to bridge the gap between central Marketing and local Sales

How to create empathy at scale?

Selling goods and services via a network of distributors, wholesalers, franchise partners and sales agents is a preferred strategy in multiple industries, and for good reasons. When executed well, the collaboration with local partners to promote, sell and deliver products can significantly boost business results. Especially when the delivery and aftercare need to be services that are flexible, high quality and personal.

But there is a downside. High levels of local flexibility can have a negative impact on branding and the general quality of marketing expressions. Channel partners might not be as keen or skilled to adhere to centrally crafted brand guidelines.

Global brands face a constant struggle to localize their branded marketing material to fit local market needs. Specialist Marketing Technology lends a helping hand by offering tools to easily customize content. High adoption of these tools can only be realized when all stakeholders, both headquarters and local partners, are equally facilitated in reaching their separate business goals. Central branding requirements and local sales targets need to go hand in hand for Local Area Marketing tools to be successful.

This guide shows you how. In addition it pinpoints which essential step is often missing in Local Area Marketing initiatives. It's a local tweak that makes a world of difference.

"Centrally created marketing material, plus customization to address local customer pain, equals empathy at scale

What is Local Area Marketing?

Local Area Marketing (LAM) is a strategy that uses a mix of digital, Point of Sale (POS) and local initiatives as a vehicle to integrate the brand or franchise into the local community, to drive sales, solid leads and referrals.

The concept is also known as Through Channel Marketing Automation (TCMA: Forrester) or Partner Relationship Management (PRM: Gartner). But whatever terminology you prefer, the basics are the same. They are all characterized by a multi-tier marketing supply chain.

The archetypical LAM process shows a multi-tiered string of stakeholders, from HQ to tier 1 local distributors, tier 2 wholesalers, tier 3 POS etc., that all fulfill an important role to create value for the customer. Below is an example of a globally operating brand, but a national operating brand could show a similar picture.

Headquarters

The Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) or franchisor does the product development and owns the brand. This can be a global brand that is listed on the stock market.

National Sales Center

The distributor has sales exclusivity for a geographical region and knows the national market. This can be an independent company selecting and supporting the Local Sales Teams to operate with.

Local Sales team

The dealer or intermediate runs a local operation and has a personal customer network. This is can be a family owned business that has been working in the industry for decades.

Sales Reps

The individual sales people eventually close the deals with individual customers. This can be… anyone, really.

Why do certain industries love LAM?

Local Area Marketing

↓

"Buying well-known brands from people you know well"

Local Area Marketing principles are applied everywhere around you. You routinely buy well-known brands from people you know well: when you order a combo-meal at the local fast-food restaurant, when you wind down the window of the premium car that you bought from the guy you went to school with, and when you insured that car via the friendly lady down the block.

LAM is all about trust. It's the reassurance that you get the quality of a well-tested and field-proven product, combined with the service of a person that understands your needs, sometimes better than you do yourself. In industries where economies of scale are required to be able to guarantee a constant quality of goods, and where personal local service is important, an LAM approach is often a natural fit.

Examples:

- ✓ Automotive: a reliable car in combination with the services from the local garage.
- ✓ Insurance: a stable insurance company in combination with a local representative that knows your family situation.
- ✓ Franchise: that special bagel you like, served with a smile by the restaurant owner, wherever you are.

Selling products via a channel partner network can be an extremely powerful business model. But only if the overall brand principles and local sales realities are aligned and respected.

When selling products via partners, marketing plays a pivotal role. It can make or break success.

What are the roles in LAM?

Within the LAM strategy, the stakeholders all have their own marketing roles and responsibilities. Here is an example.

Headquarters
Launch products and build the brand

At the headquarters, there is a long-term vision on how to create shareholder value and how to build the brand. Besides product development and the associated product info that is required for marketing activities, headquarters sets up the large branding campaigns and decides on product launches.

National Sales Center
Gain market share and localize content

The OEM notifies the distributor about new products and brand campaigns. The distributor selects the products and campaigns that will resonate in their respective market, and localizes content so it has the right language, metrics and tone of voice. Sometimes even the entire brand campaigns get a complete makeover to bring that finesse, to hit the spot.

Local Sales team
Generate store traffic and customize promotions

The dealer, intermediate or franchisee receives the localized content from the National Sales Center and checks how this can be applied to their network. From the pool of localized content, a subset gets selected and enriched with content that applies to the individual store's sales team. Promotions get customized with the correct address, tagline and visuals of the dealer, store or office. This is also where the final step is taken and personal invites or promotions are sent to contacts.

Sales Rep
Close deals, reach quota and earn that bonus

Finally, the Sales rep, store employee or host should turn all previous marketing investments into revenue. They have a strong focus on "the here and now" and reaching sales quota.

What are the signs the situation has grown out of control?

In theory the different LAM roles should work together seamlessly, but in practice Local Area Marketing comes with a couple of challenges.

As soon as centrally provided marketing material gets tweaked to meet specific regional needs or to address the requirements of partners, publications enter a content twilight zone.

Hidden content localization and customization quickly results in out-of-date product information and dubious creative, and also racks up significant local costs and efforts. Eventually, the uncontrolled growth of versions and variations strangle the brand, and confuse even the marketing teams that created the originals.

To make sure this doesn't happen to your LAM strategy, it is important to recognize shortcomings early. Here are the five most common signs that your LAM strategy needs immediate attention.

1

Publications are not aligned to brand guidelines

A brand is so much more than a logo. It's the combination of colors, words, images, values and interactions that deliver the overall brand experience. It is well recognized that a strong, consistent brand, built up over time, is the best guarantee of future earnings. The central marketing team at your headquarters is well aware of this mantra. But the local marketers who are closer to the sales teams are under pressure to help score deals today, so they are more willing to deviate from this statement for the sake of speed. As a result, localized content often deviates from central brand guidelines, and this causes problems. Brand consistency is about building trust. A consistent brand offers the customer the comfortable feeling that what they expect will be delivered. Inconsistent brands break this trust and threaten future earnings.

2

Product information is out-of-date

The more versions and variations of a publication you create, the more difficult it becomes to keep product information current. And it becomes more difficult to apply last-minute changes across all the available versions. Especially when dealing with multi-tier distribution channels, updating product information in a consistent way can be a daunting exercise. As local marketers work to meet local deadlines, they need to find product information fast. If they cannot find the correct content they will use whatever info they have… or they will create their own. Product information created on the fly is often misleading or plain wrong, which frustrates consumers and reduces trust in the brand.

3

Publications do not adhere to regulations

As the number of publications grows uncontrollably, so does the likelihood that publications aren't aligned with country and industry regulations. Where headquarters probably has the support of a legal specialist to check any publication before it is issued, local marketers normally find out if something is unlawful simply by trial and error, inviting bad press. Dubious product promotions and clunky disclaimers only serve to further reduce trust in the brand.

4

Local marketers do not have the resources to process all centrally provided materials

Most local marketers aren't full-time marketers. Often it is the managing director's assistant or a sales rep who has responsibility for marketing activities on the side. In addition to the previously mentioned concerns about brand consistency, product information accuracy and legal compliance, working with part-time marketers is also accompanied by a very practical problem; time constraints. A large list of centrally provided marketing publications requires an abundance of time to check, localize and tweak. If time is not available, only a small subset of (heavily adjusted) material will be used.

5

Central marketers have no clue which content has been used locally

Once publications start to grow out of control, and multi-tier content distribution starts to become disconnected, there is no way central marketers can oversee which localized materials are used. This is how local markets become marketing black holes. Valuable insights relating to which content has been used and which content was practically useless is lost along the way. And this way of working creates a vicious circle where HQ continues to deliver ever increasingly quantities of content "just to make sure", while local marketers become too discouraged to sift through this growing pile to find content that meets their needs.
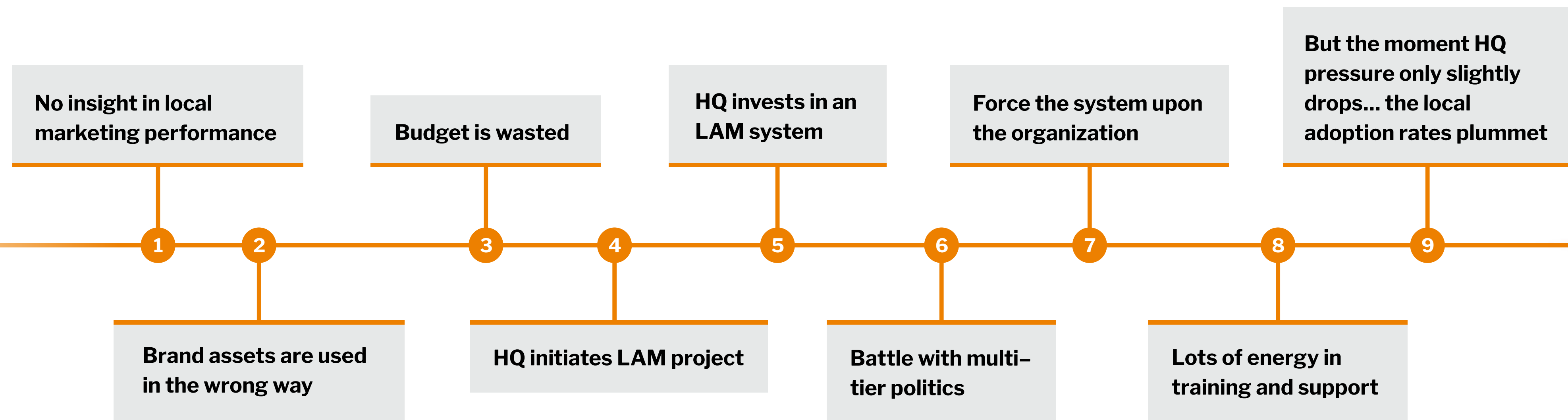
Uncontrolled activities from local partners results in marketing material that is:

- ✔ Outside of brand guidelines, damaging customers' trust.
- ✔ Contains inaccurate product information, misleading or frustrating the consumer.
- ✔ Not compliant with local regulations, causing disputes and fines.
- ✔ Impossible to localize across the range of materials, resulting in a smaller set of products promoted.
- ✔ Impossible to track, resulting in limited insights into which content was used locally.

A Local Area Marketing software solution can effectively fix the described problems. But as usual, the devil is in the details. There is a lot to be learned from previous LAM technology implementations.

What are the learnings from previous LAM implementations?

A typical LAM project timeline.

No insight in local marketing performance — 1

2 — Brand assets are used in the wrong way

Budget is wasted — 3

4 — HQ initiates LAM project

HQ invests in an LAM system — 5

6 — Battle with multi–tier politics

Force the system upon the organization — 7

8 — Lots of energy in training and support

But the moment HQ pressure only slightly drops… the local adoption rates plummet — 9
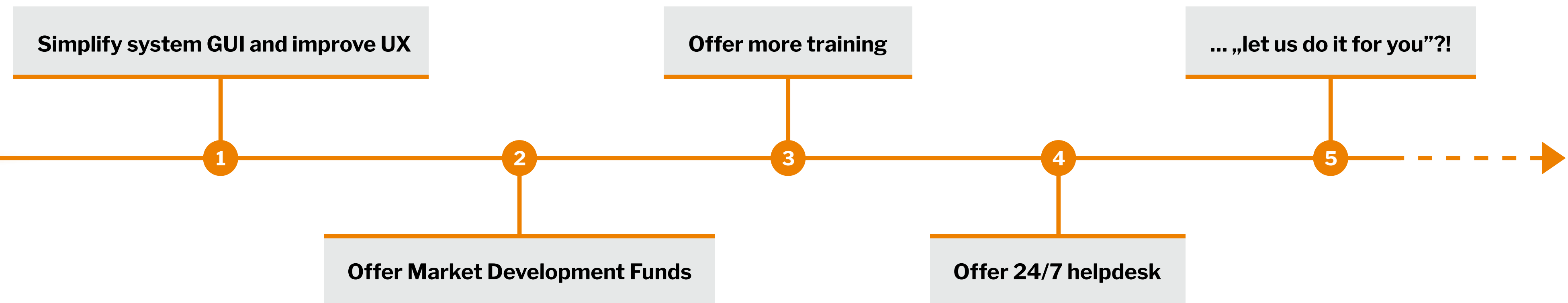
Mmm, how can we increase adoption?

To keep adoption rates of marketing material to an acceptable level, HQ needs to incentivize local partners and sales reps year-round. Usage plummets whenever HQ stops pumping money into the system. It's a never-ending expense.

How is the adoption gap historically dealt with?

In an attempt to revamp the LAM project, HQ can undertake various rescue activities. All methods require a considerable additional investment, but in practice none of them stands the test of time.

Historical wasy to battle low LAM adoption.

| Simplify system GUI and improve UX | | Offer more training | | ... „let us do it for you"?! |

1   **2**   **3**   **4**   **5**

| Offer Market Development Funds | | Offer 24/7 helpdesk |

## But the problem is more fundamental...

How the LAM Adoption Gap should be dealt with

Traditional LAM approaches and technology are skewed towards the interest of HQ, often the buying center of the technology. This has resulted in almost consistently disappointing adoption of new tech from local partners and their sales reps. The adoption gap occurs between the distributor and local teams, and exposes a fundamentally different business need.

Headquarters delivers marketing support

Sales reps require Sales enablement

Simply put, traditional LAM tools do not offer a "Product/Market fit" for all players in a Multi-Tier Supply Chain.

If marketing material cannot be practically used to close deals, sales focused teams are only mildly motivated to spend time on marketing and branding. To reach overall success, Local Area Marketing tools need to seamlessly extend functionality with Local Sales Enablement.
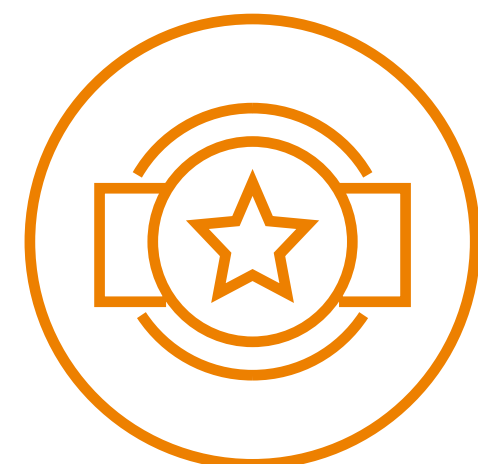
A good LAM system has to work from the beginning of the marketing material chain, all the way to the end. Call it the marketing material journey, if you will. If the sales rep, the last stakeholder in the chain, finds a reason not to use existing marketing materials, the entire marketing initiative is futile. If the interests and the objectives of all shareholders are aligned with exception of the last shareholder in the chain, the entire marketing initiative won't work. No content will reach the customer.

Your internal content journey needs to be effective, before you'll even get a chance to initiate your external customer's journey.

> **Before the 'customer journey' can start, your 'marketing material journey' needs to reach the Sales rep**

How marketing and sales can both win big

A simple portable Digital Asset Management app is the key to aligning the interests of marketing and sales. The quickest and most scalable way for sales reps to engage with prospects is to share existing content, from wherever they are and at any moment.

Sales reps want to sell… and they'd rather do so yesterday than next month. Their quarterly sales bonuses depend on it. Unless they can be sure content helps them to close deals, they will not spend an extra minute trying to locate that content piece. Non-usage rates for content are 60% to as high as 90%, depending on who you ask. That's a pretty clear signal sales reps can't find the content they're looking for, or that it isn't relevant enough for them to use.

The key to maximizing marketing effectiveness is aligning the needs of marketers and sales reps. The easiest way for field teams to make a (quick) sale should be to localize and share existing marketing content to the right prospects.

Using a mobile DAM, local teams will have all the content they need on a mobile device, clustered into easy-to-access folders. Corporate marketing material may be accompanied by sales items that are locally created, or they can be individual sales reps' personal favorites.

With the right technology, sales reps will be able to motivate a particular prospect to enter an automated customer journey, without ever losing sight of the prospect. Whichever path your contact takes, it will always remain linked to the sales rep that started the conversation. Sales reps will be able to follow up along the way with a personal call, and prove that it was their initial effort that eventually made the deal.

How BrandMaker helps close deals

With BrandMaker Media Pool Mobile, sales reps will be able to fully utilize their unique position, close to the customer. The easiest way for sales reps to impress prospects will be to distribute existing marketing material, from wherever, at any time.

Here's an example how marketers and sales reps work together, enabled by **BrandMaker Media Pool Mobile**:

A visitor walks into a store and asks about the functionality of product ABC.

The sales rep shows the visitor a video on a mobile device about how to use the product.

The sales rep asks the visitor if he/she should forward the asset.

Accompanying the video are related content pieces that can be consumed after the video is viewed.

The visitor views the video at home.

The sales rep turns an unknown store visitor into a known contact within minutes of the first encounter.

By mapping which content the contact has viewed, a customer/content profile is built over time.

From now on, content recommendations and automated, highly targeted promotions can be offered in the name of the sales rep.

The Sales rep can now decide to do a follow-up call or sent the invite for an upcoming event.

Every content interaction is adding to central insights on content performance. The increased transparency will enable content creators to build on popular recipes, so what gets made actually gets consumed. And all content will be adhere to brand guidelines.

The interests of marketing and sales will finally be aligned, to maximize marketing performance.

BrandMaker offers a range of LAM solutions.

1 **All-in-One Portal**

Smoothly guide sales teams & channel partners to the campaign assets they need using a configurable pin board and smart routing.

2 **Media Pool**

Streamline digital assets management, and organize and share marketing content in the right format for every channel.

3 **Media Pool Mobile**

Empower field teams, channel partners and sales reps to have the most relevant digital assets within reach, within seconds.

4 **Web-to-Print**

Adapt marketing material for local markets by putting self-service online templates in the hands of business users.

5 **Marketing Shop**

Supply marketing material for staff, affiliates and partners quickly, easily and transparently, using on-demand marketing fulfillment.

6 **Marketing Planner**

Use a single marketing calendar to schedule campaigns, plan budgets and monitor results for all partners in the marketing supply chain, rights and roles protected.

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