

10 Signs You Have a Customer Understanding Deficit

Symptom	Cause
Leads fall into a black hole	Conceptual gap between “marketing qualified” and “sales accepted” leads; inbound demand signals from customers get lost in siloed processes that are company-centric, not customer-centric
Marketing, sales, and service have different goals and objectives	No corporate or even departmental alignment on goals and objectives (customer retention, account growth, new business, etc.); business units/departments don’t use the same definitions or data
Vanity metrics abound but meaningful impact isn’t measured	Company-centric metrics emphasize activity (“do something”), not correlated to customer-centric processes/experiences (“do the right thing for the customer”); no link to measurable business results
Marketers seek content to fill drip campaigns instead of developing campaigns based on identified customer needs	No full-scope feedback loop that illuminates critical moments in customer journeys; lack of clarity on customer motivations; prioritization of internal action over customer impact
Salespeople don’t log opportunities and customer input consistently	No direct benefit to individual salespeople from time-consuming admin work; unreliable analysis (of customer needs and buying cycles) and prediction due to poor data create friction with management
Marketing wants attribution, but sales won’t play along	Marketing communications often disjointed and out of step with sales engagement, sales attempts to insulate customers from communications they don’t control
Sales doesn’t trust marketing with customer relationships	Marketers lack direct exposure to customers so can’t create the awesome experiences they seek; the less direct exposure marketing has to customers, the less sales trusts in marketing’s abilities
Direct customer feedback stays in customer service or field service	Customer/field service and support systems isolated from marketing and CRM systems, so key insights not shared between departments as a matter of course—only by accident or exception
Customer-facing processes are defined within departments or silos	Individual customers are often in multiple relationship “stages” at the same time, but customer information systems and processes only support a linear progression from department to department
Retailers, resellers, and channel partners operate in isolation	No ownership or responsibility for sharing customer data and insights, building integrated feedback loops; no alignment with corporate goals and objectives

Root Cause: No comprehensive, shared understanding of who the customer is and what’s compelling to them—much less when or how they want to hear about it