intention.ly

IS YOUR FIRM MAKING THESE MARKETING MISTAKES?

Your Guide to Correcting the Most Common Growth Missteps in Financial Services

From fintech startups to massive RIAs, financial services firms often struggle to harness marketing as a true growth lever. In an industry rooted in trust and expertise, marketing missteps can silently choke your pipeline and stunt your firm's potential.

From our vantage point driving growth for over 50 fintech and finserv firms, **we've identified the most common 10 marketing mistakes** we see, why they happen, the downstream damage they cause, and most importantly, how to correct course.

1 TREATING MARKETING AS SALES SUPPORT, NOT A GROWTH DRIVER

- **The Mistake:** Many financial firms still view marketing as a department whose sole job is to feed leads to the sales team. Marketing gets relegated to booking webinars, blasting emails, and tossing any "interested" contacts over the fence to advisors or sales reps.
- **Why It Happens:** Leadership hasn't updated their understanding of marketing's role. In traditional financial services, sales drove revenue through personal relationships and referrals, so marketing was an afterthought.
- **The Fix:** Reframe marketing's role at the firm level. Instead of measuring marketing by number of leads, treat it as a strategic function responsible for driving buying processes at scale. Empower marketing to educate and prime your target buyers so that by the time a prospect speaks to your sales team, they're already convinced of your value.

2 MISALIGNING SALES AND MARKETING

- **The Mistake:** Marketing and sales operating in silos with separate goals and minimal collaboration. Marketing might be running campaigns it thinks are great, but sales finds the leads "garbage." Sales might be reaching out with messaging that doesn't match marketing's content.
- **Why It Happens:** The two teams are measured differently – marketing on MQLs, sales on revenue – so they naturally diverge. Leadership gaps and cultural issues where marketing is seen as lower status exacerbate the problem.
- **The Fix:** Forge a tight revenue partnership between marketing and sales. Create shared goals and definitions around what constitutes a qualified lead. Establish regular communication and planning sessions. Create integrated workflows with smooth handoff processes and unified messaging.

3 CHASING VANITY LEAD METRICS

- **The Mistake:** Treating lead volume as the primary measure of marketing success. Firms stuck in this mode define a "Marketing Qualified Lead" by arbitrary scoring (downloaded an eBook, attended a webinar) and celebrate hitting lead quotas regardless of quality.
- **Why It Happens:** Legacy KPIs and dashboards drive this behavior. When leadership gives marketing a lead goal, the team will inevitably chase that number, even if it means piling up low-value contacts.
- **The Fix:** Evolve your metrics from quantity to quality. Stop celebrating raw lead counts and instead measure pipeline generated per marketing dollar. Ungate most of your content and focus on business-level outcomes like pipeline, win rates, and revenue influenced.

4 CLINGING TO OLD-SCHOOL OUTBOUND TACTICS

- **The Mistake:** Running marketing like it's 2005, prioritizing heavy outbound prospecting and cold outreach as if information was scarce. This includes blasting cold emails to purchased lists, relentless cold-calling, or sponsoring generic trade shows without any modern twist.
- **Why It Happens:** Legacy habit and initial success in a different era. If a firm was built by rainmaker salespeople, there's a belief that more calls equals more sales, always.
- **The Fix:** Modernize outbound and use it judiciously. Align outbound with buyer readiness, focusing on target accounts where you have reason to believe there's a fit. Personalize and add value. If you reach out, do it with insight that references the prospect's specific situation.

5 USING AN OUTDATED INBOUND PLAYBOOK

- **The Mistake:** Pride in being "inbound" but using a playbook stuck in the early 2010s. This means cranking out SEO-driven blog posts, gating every piece of content, and measuring success by website traffic and downloads.
- **Why It Happens:** Because it used to work a decade ago. Many marketers cut their teeth on those strategies and haven't evolved even though buyer behavior has changed dramatically.
- **The Fix:** Update your inbound strategy to align with how buyers actually research today. Shift from search to social and community, focusing on sharing insights on LinkedIn, participating in industry forums, and appearing on podcasts. Ungate most content and refresh your content strategy based on buyer input, not just keyword volume.

6 IGNORING SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER CHANNELS WHERE BUYERS GATHER

- **The Mistake:** Treating social media, online communities, and other "non-traditional" channels as afterthoughts or irrelevant to B2B by not engaging at all, or using social as a one-way billboard for press releases.
- **Why It Happens:** Traditional financial firms often believe social media is only for B2C or younger audiences. Compliance concerns in finance also scare firms into avoiding social channels altogether.
- **The Fix:** Establish a credible, active presence where your buyers frequent. Double down on LinkedIn at a minimum by posting thought leadership regularly and engaging in industry discussions. Leverage niche communities where your target audience seeks advice. Navigate compliance smartly with guidelines rather than bans.

7 OVER-RELIANCE ON ATTRIBUTION TOOLS AND IGNORING HOW CUSTOMERS MAKE DECISIONS

- **The Mistake:** Running marketing only by what your software can track, and ignoring anything it can't. If an activity doesn't show up cleanly in Google Analytics or your CRM, you cut it from the plan. Meanwhile, you double down on easily trackable channels even if their impact on real pipeline is questionable.
- **Why It Happens:** Finance-oriented firms crave quantifiable ROI, so marketers stick to what's easily measured. Marketing automation tools have given a false sense of full visibility into the customer journey.
- **The Fix:** Evolve your measurement approach and accept that not everything worthwhile will have a neat number next to it. Use blended metrics and proxies instead of demanding direct attribution for every activity. Budget for brand and education as R&D, and educate stakeholders about attribution limits.

8 EXPECTING INSTANT MARKETING RESULTS

- **The Mistake:** Pulling the plug on marketing initiatives if they don't yield immediate ROI. Treating marketing like a tap: "We spent $X this quarter, how many leads or deals did we get this quarter?" If something doesn't show quick returns, it gets cut.
- **Why It Happens:** Financial services professionals are often metrics-driven and may come from sales or finance backgrounds where monthly or quarterly results are paramount. Budget constraints in smaller firms feed this too.
- **The Fix:** Develop a longer horizon and discipline in your marketing strategy. Set realistic expectations with clear milestones and understand that not every marketing effort yields a sale in 30 days. Commit to consistency by choosing strategic marketing plays and sticking with them long enough to bear fruit.

9 PRODUCING CONTENT THAT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

The Mistake: Creating content that talks about yourself rather than solving the customer's problems. This includes overly technical product brochures, boastful press releases, or generic market commentary that provides zero value to prospects.

Why It Happens: It's easier to write about what you know (your product, your firm) than to deeply address a customer's world. Internal stakeholders often request this kind of content, and compliance can water down messaging to bland statements.

The Fix: Make a deliberate shift to customer-centric content that educates and adds value. Speak to specific pain points and questions your target clients have. Provide insights, not just information. Use the customer's language and show, don't just tell, through case studies and stories.

10 FAILING TO DEFINE A NICHE OR DIFFERENTIATOR

The Mistake: Not clearly defining who your ideal customer is and the unique value you offer them. Many financial firms fear niching down, so their marketing remains broad and bland. Without a clear ideal client profile, messaging can't be sharp or compelling.

Why It Happens: Fear of excluding potential business. Firms think a broader net catches more fish and worry that focusing on a niche means turning away other clients.

The Fix: Define who you serve best and build your marketing around that. Look at your top customers and identify what they have in common. Craft messaging directly for that audience, addressing their unique pain points. Tailor content and channels to your niche, then gradually expand only when you've dominated your core segment.

6 STEPS TO TRANSFORM YOUR FIRM'S GROWTH TRAJECTORY

1. Audit your current approach against these ten areas
2. Start with alignment – get marketing and sales working toward shared revenue goals
3. Focus your targeting on your most profitable client segments
4. Balance metrics between leading indicators and revenue outcomes
5. Modernize your channels to meet buyers where they actually are
6. Commit to consistency in your marketing efforts over time

TURN MODERN MARKETING INTO YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

The firms that continue making these ten mistakes will struggle with feast-or-famine growth while their competitors build sustainable marketing engines. Fix these fundamentals, and marketing becomes a growth driver rather than a cost burden, driving predictable pipeline generation, shorter sales cycles, and stronger client relationships.

We work with over 50 of the industry's top fintech and finserv companies to modernize their marketing efforts and transform the impact it has on growth. If any of these mistakes resonate with you, we're here to help. Click below to set up a no-obligations consultation with our team.

SCHEDULE A STRATEGY CALL →