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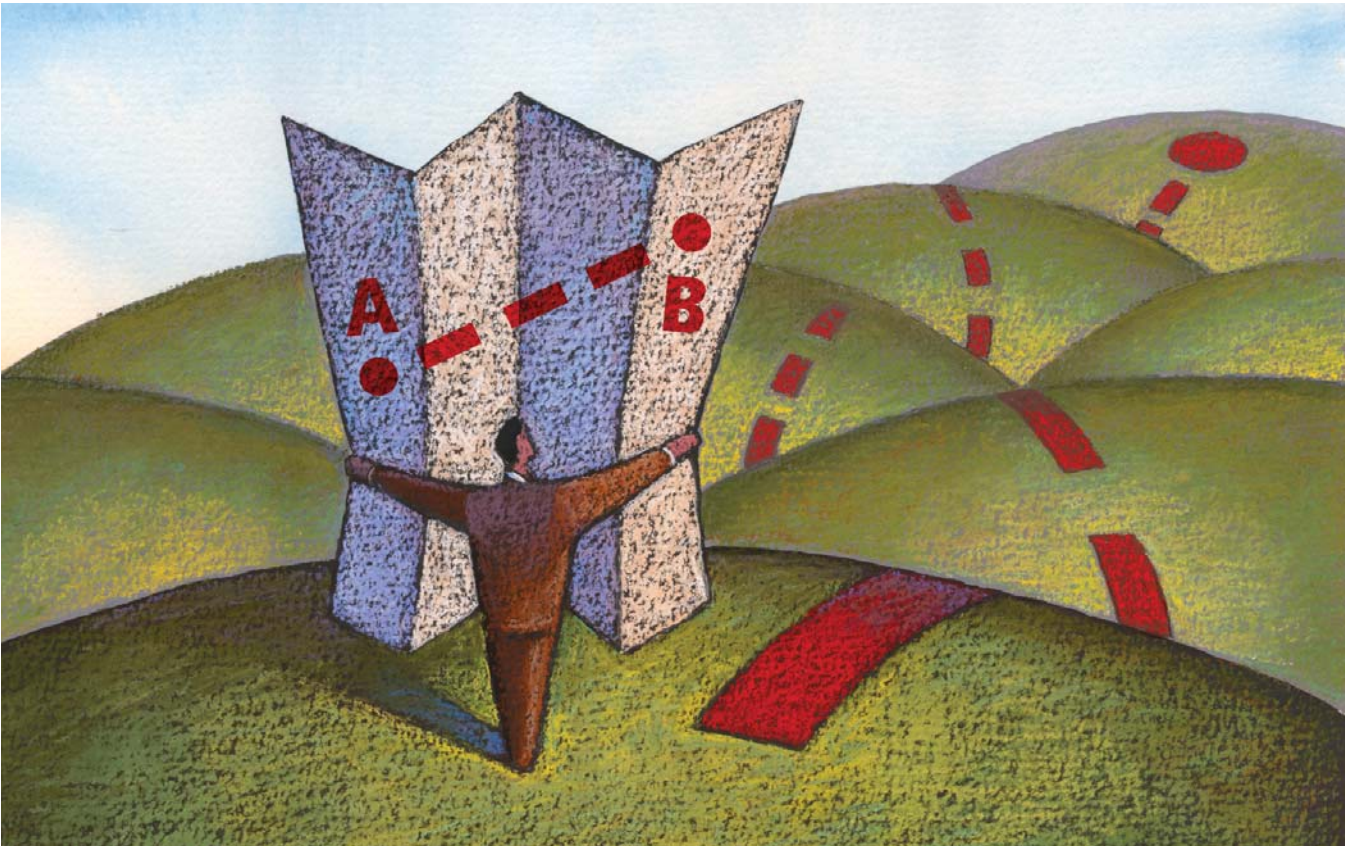
MARKET PARTNERS  
CHANGING THE WAY YOU SELL  
FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

# Hired Up or Burnt Out?

How to sizzle without fizzle

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## A Road Map to Success

*How to increase your revenue by using a repeatable sales process*

This article is based on a conversation with Martyn Lewis, president and CEO of the consulting firm Market-Partners, which is focused on business-to-business sales effectiveness and serves clients ranging from startups to industry giants. Since 1995, Market-Partners has transformed thousands of sales professionals in more than 100 companies in 20+ countries. Lewis can be reached directly at 707/575-4722 or at [mlewis@market-partners.com](mailto:mlewis@market-partners.com).

Ascent Healthcare Solutions is an independent reprocessor of medical devices for hospitals and healthcare providers throughout North America. Working within FDA guidelines, Ascent takes devices that the original medical manufacturers have labeled “single use” and cleans, function-tests, then sterilizes them, and sells them back to the hospitals at about half of what they would pay for a brand-new device.

According to its Website, Ascent is a privately-held company with a customer base consisting of approximately 1,700 hospitals and surgery centers in the United States, including most of the medical facilities recognized annually by *U.S. News & World Report* as the top hospitals in America. In the company’s last fiscal year, Ascent saved these facilities and their patients in excess of \$100 million in supply expenses. Since the

company’s inception, Ascent customers have safely reprocessed more than 50 million medical devices, eliminating at least 10,000 tons of waste material from local landfills and saving more than \$500 million in costs.

Ascent was ultimately created through the merger of Phoenix, Arizona-based Alliance Medical Corporation and Lakeland, Florida-based Vanguard Medical Concepts. The firm employs approximately 800 individuals in Arizona, Florida, and other locations throughout the United States.

Market-Partners became involved with Ascent in 2003. Around that time, the FDA expanded the types of medical equipment permitted for reprocessing. While this regulatory change created new opportunity for market growth, Ascent’s sales numbers weren’t growing apace.

This lack of growth didn’t make sense. Manage-



## SALES ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Ascent's field sales force consists of approximately 168 sales professionals organized into eight geographical districts with approximately 21 field personnel located in each district. Sales activity in each district falls under the aegis of a district manager, each of whom is responsible for his or her unit's sales strategy, allocation of resources, and recruitment of team members.

The district managers are key players in Ascent's sales strategy. They enjoy significant autonomy and responsibility but are also accountable for the results in that district. In effect, each district operates like a separate small company, with the district manager acting as the virtual CEO. The district managers, in turn, report directly to Ascent's COO, who reports to Ascent's CEO.

Ascent does not have a chief sales officer or a senior vice president of sales; however, the company does have a vice president of corporate accounts who assumes overall responsibility for ensuring complete service and satisfaction for Ascent's customer base.



To make the changes permanent, Market-Partners worked with Ascent to create a detailed, customized process for selling and managing accounts that would be scalable, predictable, and repeatable across the entire organization. This process was expressed in two key documents: a one-page "road map" that presented the steps that every sales effort must go through, from finalizing contracts to introducing new programs; and a 46-page "playbook" that presented detailed instructions, goals, tools, skills, tips, traps, checklists, and more, for each step of the road map.

– GEOFFREY JAMES

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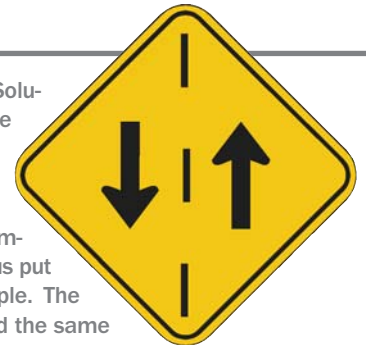
## THE SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

After implementing the sales road map developed with Market-Partners, Ascent Healthcare Solutions achieved several consecutive quarters of growth. In March of 2008, for example, the company was \$2 million ahead in sales numbers, with steadily increasing sales revenues in the previous four quarters. Before Market-Partners' involvement, Ascent was a \$20 million company, but it is now expected to surpass \$100 million in sales revenue.

Ascent COO Rick Ferreira identifies the repeatable sales process as a key element of his company's success. "Market-Partners helped us develop a scientific way to sell," he says. "It helped us put a process in place that was scalable, so I could add more accounts and add more people. The account management model was fully scalable, so it would produce predictable results if I did the same key activities in hospital A or hospital B."

Ferreira can monitor progress within a standardized process that was formerly disorganized and inefficient. "Even when people today call us about an account they're working on, one of the first questions we ask them is, 'What stage are you in on the road map?'" he explains. The repeatable process also helps Ascent's sales teams prequalify prospects. For example, "a hospital that will not give us access to the C-suite or to the physicians doesn't line up for us as a good customer," explains Ferreira, who also notes that such difficult customers inevitably cause problems or impede future sales.

The sales process also enables Ferreira to eliminate salespeople who take what he calls "the cowboy approach" to selling, rather than following the proven methodology. "The sales process has really lowered the level of the water, so you see the rocks right away – you know who's doing the right thing consistently and who's not." Ferreira adds that the process helps keep individual sales efforts on track. "When I see an account that's not performing well, I can go to the road map with the account team and walk through the stage it's in and what the team has done," he says. That knowledge then makes it easier to take corrective action and get the opportunity back on course.



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