

# The Smart Guide to Successful Social Selling



SELL. SERVICE. MARKET. SUCCEED.







# 79% of salespeople who use social media as a selling tool outperform those who don't.

-Social Media and Sales Quota Survey

If you had been told 10 years ago that your customers would write down all their wants, needs, opinions, and thoughts and then publish them for the entire world to see, including you, it would have seemed too good to be true. That's the type of access that great salespeople dream about.

It's perplexing then, how many great salespeople are missing out on this opportunity by not pursuing social selling. Your prospects are handing you all the information you could need to make contact and close a deal, you just need to be listening for it.

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## Introduction

# Selling in the Digital Age

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The sales process has remained relatively unchanged for thousands of years. You find somebody that may need what you're selling, you educate them on the benefits, and you close the deal. While those essential ingredients have remained pretty consistent, how you go about accomplishing them has changed dramatically.

Whether you're selling to consumers or businesses, you know that the buying process has changed for your customers. They are more tech savvy, more educated, and more connected than they were just a few years ago. They aren't as easily swayed by a cold call and a sales pitch as they prefer to do their own research. With so much information at their fingertips, they are engaging with your company far later in the sales process and then only to discuss the last few details before making a decision.

To regain their footing in this rapidly-changing environment, the smartest sales reps are getting social. It's more important

than ever for the savvy salesperson to reach buyers early, armed with relevant information that's served up at the right time.

This e-book will walk you through everything you need to navigate social selling like a pro:

- Setting up compelling social media profiles to give you a platform from which you can engage.
- Monitoring social channels to identify new prospects and buying signals.
- Engaging prospects in the right way, with the right content, at the right time.

Let's get started.



## Chapter 1

# Create a Social Platform

All the social strategy and flawlessly-executed engagement tactics will get you nowhere if you haven't put thought and time into creating compelling social profiles. Have you visited a website recently that looked like it hadn't been updated since the 1999? How did that impact your view of the company and their credibility? Not great, right? How you put your social media presence together can have the same effect, so let's spend some time making it right.

### Your Facebook Profile

By nature, your Facebook profile is going to be the most personal of your social media channels. However, that doesn't mean your prospects won't come looking for you once you make contact with them. That's why it's important to start with a stellar and clean Facebook profile.

Review your privacy settings and make sure only your friends have access to your photos and posts to your wall. This will help prevent a friend from ruining your professional facade with a poorly-timed tagged photo or post. It's ok to provide access to some of

**Social opens a secret door that puts you right in front of decision makers. The secret door is much more effective than the front door.**

- Josiane Feigon, President at TeleSmart Communications



your photos, but ensure they showcase your personality in a way that does not hurt your credibility. Also, make sure that you update your employment status to your current position and company — this shows that you have pride in your employer. Lastly, if your company has a Facebook page (and they should!), you should already be a fan.

### **Your Twitter Profile**

Create a handle that's easy for your clients and prospects to find and remember. If your name is taken, try adding an initial or abbreviating your last name and stay away from numbers and underscores because they're hard to share verbally and tough for your audience to recall.

Include your role and company's Twitter handle in your bio, as well as personal tidbit or two, to showcase your personality and add a human element. A clean template example is: personal fact, role at company, what you tweet. This clarifies your affiliation, shows some personality, and sets expectations for what you will share.

### **Your LinkedIn Profile**

If you're on LinkedIn, make sure you've completed 100% of your profile. Pick a good headshot and headline that lets people know who you are, what you look like and your area of expertise. LinkedIn provides a helpful gauge that shows you how complete your profile is and what you have left to add.

More recently, on the "See who's viewed my profile" page, LinkedIn provides a robust recommendation engine of ways to perfect your profile. From adding skills to following pages, the recommendations can help you get in front of the people you want to connect with.



## Chapter 2

# Listening on Social

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Social media presents an incredible opportunity for salespeople to get first-hand thoughts, concerns, and opinions directly from their target audience. It's like having a full time focus group at your disposal that is always on, and always providing a stream of consciousness that you can tap into for insights, opinions, and research.

However, many great salespeople are missing out on this opportunity by not engaging in social selling. All the information a salesperson needs to close a deal is out there on social media already, it's just a matter of knowing where to look and having a strategy in place for putting that information to work for you once you find it.

**Make each sales rep responsible for monitoring a certain number of competitors using LinkedIn.**

- Jamie Shanks, Partner at Sales for Life

Just as dashboards allow you to sort through big data for the metrics that really matter, social listening tools allow you to sift through the firehose of social posts to identify the ones you truly care about. Creating a social dashboard with social listening tools like salesforce.com's Radian6 can be an easy way to identify, at a glance, the social media information you should focus on. This means cutting the time you need to invest in social from hours down to minutes.

Here are a few things you should consider listening for on social media:

### **Industry news**

In order for you to best serve your customers and establish yourself as an industry expert, you need to stay up to date on the latest industry news. This means filtering social results to return trending topics, and industry developments that could have an impact on your prospects' companies or campaigns.



## Buying signals

As we mentioned before, much of the sales process is taking place long before a prospect ever contacts a sales rep. This means that this research stage is often occurring on social media where you can easily identify potential purchase behavior. You should be looking for any social posts that include:

- Negative sentiment about your competitors
- Frustration over a business problem you can solve
- Questions about your product or industry
- Recommendations for provider of your product or service

Social posts around these topics give you the opportunity to help potential prospects and develop a trusting relationship that will allow you to pitch your product later on.

## Existing Leads

For leads that are already in your pipeline, you should be monitoring their social activity as well. Keeping an eye on what they are posting and the types of content they are sharing should give you a better sense of how to connect with them and how to position your product. According to CSO Insights, 42% of sales reps feel they do not have the right information before making a call. Social media can dramatically improve that percentage. Do you have a mutual connection or share a love for a certain hobby? Use this information to strengthen your connection and turn cold leads into much warmer connections.

## Your Competitors

In addition to being a good way to identify potential prospects, monitoring the social presence of your competitors can also give you an edge in competitive deals. Look for posts with negative sentiment from existing users. This will show you where the potential shortcomings in their offering are and where your product can gain an edge. Monitoring their corporate accounts will also let you know what features they're pushing and how you can plan to counter them in conversations with your leads.

## Quick Tips

When listening on social media, it is important to look out for any of the following:

- ▶ Negative comments about your competitors or complaints about a problem your company can solve.
- ▶ Important news related to your industry or information that could impact your leads.
- ▶ Any questions or inquiries about your brand, product, or services.

## Chapter 3

# Engaging on Social

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So you've established yourself on the key social media platforms and you've set up social listening to monitor your leads and your industry. The final step, and the step with the real payoff for salespeople, is to connect with your prospects on social media. With sales cycles getting longer and prospects engaging with salespeople later, it is important to put yourself in front of your prospects as early as possible, and social media is the perfect venue to accomplish this.

Engaging with social media is a fine balance. Come on too strong with a sales pitch and a hard sell and your prospects will go running. Engage too little by only following or visiting their profiles and they'll feel like you are just doing reconnaissance. The easiest way to find this balance is to focus on delivering value. Social media is not the appropriate medium to close a sale, but it is certainly the right place to start one. By providing

advice and helpful content, you can open a dialogue and establish yourself as a trusted resource.

### Finding the Right Content

The odds are usually pretty good that your marketing team is already busy making content. They spend time making sure that your company's content addresses common business problems and hits the common pain points for your customers. Great! That's exactly what you need to connect with prospects on social, but where do you find it?

Up to 70% of content created by B2B marketing teams is never used by sales, according to SiriusDecisions. Most sales and marketing teams just aren't set up to communicate every piece of content that gets produced, but you can stay up to date by making yourself a part of your marketing team's

**The modern sales professional doubles as an information concierge, providing the right information to the right person at the right time in the right channel.**

- Jill Rowley, Social Selling Evangelist

audience. Subscribe to your company's blog, follow your company's social accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. You'll be amazed at the content you find, and when you see something that might be great to share with a prospect, simply save it for later.

### Sharing the Right Content

Once you've tracked down the right content, sharing it with your leads or potential prospects is the easy part. Just make sure to consider the following elements of your message.

**Watch the tone:** Make sure your message is as far from a sales pitch as you can make it. Sounding overly friendly or "salesy" is an easy way to have your message ignored. Remember, you're just a knowledgeable follower who can lend a hand or offer advice in a confident, knowledgeable, and cordial way. They don't need to know how much effort you put into positioning yourself to make this sale.

**Get the message right:** Keep your message short and to the point. No sales pitch. Just value. Let them know why you are reaching out and what it is you are sharing with them. If you notice a prospect complaining about a common pain point for your audience, you might consider a simple message like "Hey [name], this blog post has some advice that might be helpful! [link]."


Social selling is not just a small-business play. It's not just a large-business play. It's a play for every business in every segment of the market.

- Liz Gelb-O'Connor, VP Inside Sales Strategy & Growth at ADP

### Quick Tips

When engaging on social media, it is important to make sure your message follows these guidelines:

- ▶ Your message should never have a sales tone. You should always come off as amicable and helpful.
- ▶ Any content you provide should be incredibly relevant to the conversation and provide real value.

The background of the slide features a light blue abstract network diagram. It consists of numerous small circles (nodes) connected by thin, light blue lines, creating a web-like structure that spans the entire background. The nodes are of varying sizes and are distributed across the slide, with a higher density in the upper left quadrant.

# Social sellers are already outperforming their peers. Will you excel or fall behind?

Whether you are ready for it or not, your audience has already gone social. If you want to keep up with your customers, you need to not only keep up with their changing behavior, but be out in front, listening to their concerns and needs, and responding before they even know there is a solution.

Selling with social in mind is a powerful new tactic for sales reps, and one that is still in its infancy. The sales teams that take advantage of this new trend early will find themselves creating more leads, connecting more meaningfully, and ultimately driving more revenue.



# SALES SOLUTIONS THAT WILL MAKE YOUR BUSINESS MORE PRODUCTIVE

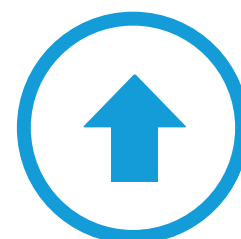
If you want to grow your sales and establish a transparent sales process, you need an easy-to-use Customer Relationship Management system. Salesforce allows you to store customer and prospect contact information, accounts, leads, and sales opportunities in one central location.

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**26%**  
improved  
win rate



**36%**  
increased sales  
productivity



**28%**  
increase  
in sales





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