

WHAT IS SOCIAL SELLING?

WITH OVER 4,000 BOOKS ON AMAZON FOR SOCIAL SELLING, AND 9 MILLION VIDEOS ON THE WEB, THERE'S MORE THAN ENOUGH CONTENT ON SOCIAL SELLING. SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THIS OVERUSED AND MISUNDERSTOOD TERM, AND SHARE PRAGMATIC TIPS TO HELP YOU ALONG THE WAY.

Let's start by stating social selling is **not** selling on social networks like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. No one wants to be on the receiving end of a "sales pitch" on social media. Social selling is an effective method to define your personal brand and value proposition, develop a network, build and nurture business relationships, gather, curate and share relevant information and research. Developing your social selling on-line presence is a skill that needs to be developed.

A study done by the Aberdeen Group found sales reps that leverage social selling in their sales processes were 79% more likely to achieve quota versus reps who didn't. In this hyperactive environment, with heightened customer expectations, technology and digitization have impacted the traditional sales process. But we are still humans who value honesty and mutually beneficial business relationships.

Social Selling is not a silver bullet, but it can help generate more revenue. You might ask "How?" Most will agree that sales processes vary among

organizations, but a well-defined process can be replicated, measured and adjusted. Given that sales is a "game of inches," a few well executed social selling tactics can give you a measured advantage in closing more deals.

It is critical to have a solid social selling strategy. This does not replace marketing and sales fundamentals. But there are specific social selling strategies you can implement so that you:

- Show up on the radar screen of a buying team looking into solutions months before they start reaching out to companies for RFPs.
- Apply tactics to ensure you connect and resonate with members of the prospects buying team.

Because price and product are easily replicated, the right social selling strategies may be a tie breaker for getting the business.

3 SOCIAL SELLING STRATEGIES

THREE STRATEGIES YOU MIGHT USE TO HELP YOUR SOCIAL SELLING EFFORTS

1. CONNECT THE SOLUTIONS YOU PROVIDE CLIENTS TO SOLVING PROBLEMS. SHOWCASE YOUR SOLUTIONS IN POSTS YOU CAN EASILY PUBLISH ON YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE. A SALES REP COULD:

- Gain permission from your client to showcase your solution/success story on LinkedIn.
- Write a brief 100 to 200 word article.
 - Take a photo of your client and members of their team/or employees using the solution.
 - Include a couple of quotes from their client, buyer or end user(s).
- Post this success story on their LinkedIn profile, and hashtag the clients' web site and a few key personnel from the reps team.
- Share the success story/solution with prospects in an industry that doesn't compete with their clients' success as a form of social proof.

2. UPLOAD BRIEF VIDEOS OF YOUR SOLUTION ON YOUTUBE

- Consider how your prospect/buyer would conduct their internet searches. Look up some key words competitors are using on the click on pay sites.
- Use your company's videos showcasing these solutions, and/or produce your own. Title the video with the exact words buying teams are using in their internet searches. These social selling tactics help SEO rankings. Note that SEO apparently favors fresh, relevant content in rankings. This may impact both your rankings, and help your solution appear in the internet searches of buying teams earlier in the process. This could lead to helping you shape the buying team's RFP.

3. CONNECT TO THE BUYING TEAM

Use the search feature on LinkedIn as a database to uncover buyers, their connections within the company and skillfully reach out to them.

- Select the right contacts using filters by job title.
- Send a customized invitation with a personal note that references a recommendation (or connections) from one of their peers, or counterpart from a non-competing organization.

Because price and product are easily replicated, a buying team will be looking for differentiators. These include having more contacts within a company and a tailored message/ approach to their specific role (buyer, influencer, end user, CFO, CIO, CMO, etc). Applying social selling strategies could have you increasing the probability of success against your competitors. ▲

GOOD SELLING!



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