

What is Social Selling? Selling on Social Media

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What is social selling?

You may have heard some buzz around this concept already, as social media becomes a more valuable platform for brands worldwide. The social media landscape has given companies a new environment where they can engage with, and nurture their customers.

However, the evolution of various social platforms also means they're excellent for capturing and converting leads too. Studies show that [78% of businesses](#) selling on social media outperform businesses that don't.

Plus, [61% of companies](#) with social selling tactics say they regularly achieve revenue growth.

So, how do you use social selling to your advantage?

What is Social Selling?

Social selling is a lead generation strategy which helps salespeople interact with potential buyers and prospects through social networks. Salespeople using this strategy use social listening tools, and analytics to learn more about their target audience and their needs.

Using these insights, salespeople reach out to their ideal customers through social media platforms, searching for opportunities to add to the sales pipeline.

Social selling is effective because it challenges the traditional transactional relationship between companies and customers. In fact, companies that prioritize [social selling are 51%](#) more likely to reach their sales quotas. The strategy leads to more natural relationships with leads, and allows salespeople to build trust and authority with their target audience.

LinkedIn: The Social Selling Index

As the concept of selling on social media has become more popular, certain platforms have even begun to introduce tools for sales professionals. For instance, LinkedIn, one of the best social selling tools for B2B companies, introduced the SSI (Social Selling Index) in 2014.

The LinkedIn SSI, found within LinkedIn Sales navigator, scores each LinkedIn profile on its selling potential. It looks at whether you're establishing a professional personal brand, sharing content that connects with your audience, reaching the right people and building relationships.

You can find your LinkedIn SSI score by signing into your LinkedIn accounts and visiting your Social Selling Index dashboard.

The Benefits of Selling on Social Media

So, why are sales reps using social media so much for modern sales?

The simple answer is that social selling works for all kinds of brands. [1 in 3 B2B](#) salespeople even say social selling has increased the number of leads they capture. Though it requires the use of the right strategy, social selling helps companies to:

- **Generate leads and revenue:** Social media makes it easy to target your ideal customers, using in-depth data and analytics. Social channels are also one of the top environments customers visit when they want to discuss their needs for products and services. The information you gather from social channels can help you to drive additional revenue without increasing your ad budget or sales team, with personalized sales strategies.
- **Build relationships:** Social media is primarily a tool for networking. This makes it an ideal resource to help sales reps form genuine relationships with customers. Professionals can get an idea of a prospect's interests, pain points, and personality by following them on social channels, examining the content they interact with and more. Plus, social messaging tools make it easy to consistently communicate with prospects over time.
- **Personalize pitches:** As you learn more about your prospects through social media tools, you can create more customized, relevant sales pitches. Taking the time to tailor a pitch to a prospect's interests and needs could be the key to closing more deals. Companies can use in-depth data about customer behavior captured from social media to connect more effectively with and.
- **Increase brand awareness:** Social selling requires reps and business employees to be active and present on social channels, sharing content and insights. The more a professional posts on social media, the more awareness of the brand they serve will continue to grow. This could even lead to network growth opportunities, which help salespeople to find new prospects.
- **Maintain a competitive edge:** Many brands on social media are already using these tactics. In 2020 alone, [25% of ecommerce companies](#) were selling on social media. Investing in the right strategy can help you to maintain a competitive edge, and avoid losing your potential customers to other organizations.??

What are the Best Networks?

Effective social selling relies on a company's ability to choose the right networks and strategies for sales success. We've already noted that LinkedIn is a particularly lucrative option for B2B brands. It offers direct access to B2B customers, as well as proprietary tools like the LinkedIn Sales Navigator for targeting business clients.??

However, there's no one-size-fits-all platform for social selling. Alongside LinkedIn, business owners can also consider a range of other platforms based on their target audience, such as:

- **Instagram:** Ideal for reaching a wide variety of customers in a visual industry, Instagram offers a host of selling features and opportunities. It has a massive base of engaged users, and even offers the Instagram Shop for direct sales within the app.
- **TikTok:** For companies targeting a younger audience, TikTok offers a great opportunity to go viral and gain rapid online attention. TikTok also offers partnerships with ecommerce tools like Shopify, and a creator network for influencer marketing.
- **Facebook:** As the largest social media platform in the world, Facebook offers access to a broad audience for companies selling products and services. Like Instagram, it has its own native ecommerce platform, Facebook Shops.
- **Twitter:** Ideal for nurturing leads and relationships, Twitter is essentially a discussion forum. Many social sellers use Twitter to monitor mentions and customer interactions, respond to service queries, and mitigate negative feedback.

Steps for Building a Social Selling Strategy

Demand for social selling will only continue to grow as the consumer landscape evolves. Already, [97% of Gen Z customers](#) use social media as their main source of shopping inspiration. However, like any sales strategy, social selling requires some careful planning.

Here are some steps you'll need to take to invest in social selling.

Step 1: Create a professional brand

A strong personal brand is an important part of effective social selling. One of the things that makes social selling effective is it gives sellers an opportunity to build deeper relationships with their customers. The best way to do this is to create a reputable, authoritative image on the right platform.

Ensure your social profiles are complete and informative on all the channels you want to use. This means filling out a bio with crucial information about your experience and knowledge, as well as uploading a trustworthy headshot or picture. Highlight your abilities and expertise by getting people to endorse you on LinkedIn, and make sure your profile stays up-to-date.

Step 2: Build your credibility

While a complete social profile will make you appear more trustworthy to consumers, you'll need to work to earn their trust. Building credibility means constantly sharing content that's relevant and useful to your target audience. Effective social selling isn't just about sliding into someone's DMs. It's about showcasing your authority and drawing leads to you.

Write articles you can share on LinkedIn [like Neil Patel does](#) to show his marketing skills. Post news updates, insights, and stories relevant to your industry. Another way to build credibility and social proof on channels like LinkedIn is to ask for recommendations and reviews. You can even showcase user generated content, video case studies, and similar assets on social media.

Step 3: Find the right prospects

Just like with cold calling, prospecting is an important aspect of social selling. You'll need to take the time to assess your target audience and determine what kind of channels they'll use. Think about whether your customers seek answers to their questions on Twitter spaces or Facebook groups. Search industry-relevant hashtags to see what your target customers are talking about.

You can also use your first and second-degree connections on LinkedIn to reach out to new potential customers. Another great way to track down prospects is to utilize social listening tools. Monitoring relevant conversations connected to your brand and industry can provide insights into possible customers, pain points, and opportunities for sales.

Step 4: Participate in Online Communities

To thrive in social selling, you need to be digitally active. This means getting involved with as many relevant communities as possible. There are plenty of options to choose from, including Reddit, Facebook Groups and Twitter Spaces.

The key to success is finding the right group for your target audience, and then interacting with it as often as possible. Start conversations relevant to the topics you know your customers are talking about. Answer the questions of other people in your groups with useful insights. Don't focus exclusively on selling when you're participating in a community, be helpful instead.

Step 5: provide Value

One of the biggest reasons sellers struggle with social selling, is they don't realize how much time and effort they need to put into managing and improving their social presence. Once you've started following and interacting with the right people, you need to constantly provide valuable content.

Nurture your prospects by sharing information they might find useful, from case studies, to reports, and blog posts. Use relevant hashtags to target your content, and follow industry influencers to stay up to date with emerging trends. It's also important to ensure you're being valuable in DMs with potential customers. Follow up with your prospects, ask questions, and concentrate on developing rapport. Don't make the mistake of trying to sell too quickly.

Step 6: Monitor and Optimize Your Results

The best way to improve your skills with any kind of selling, is to learn from your successes and mistakes. Before you start working on your social selling techniques, create a list of KPIs and metrics you can monitor to understand your success. You might look at engagement metrics like followers, likes, shares, and comments. Or you could examine conversion rates.

Collect insights from every strategy you implement to determine what strategies and channels are actually working for you. Based on this data, ask yourself what you should be doing differently to ensure more effective social selling.

Discover the Power of Social Selling

Social selling isn't just a trend, it's a strategy that's gaining increasing attention in virtually every industry and landscape. By 2025, experts believe social media will help to [generate more than \\$1.2 trillion](#) in transactions for brands. If you're not investing in selling on social media yet, you could be missing out on some incredible opportunities.

Of course, while social selling can deliver some excellent results, the benefits you'll get out of the strategy will depend on the work you put in.

Learn how to develop the perfect social media strategy, and improve your sales results, with insights from the [Hard Skill Exchange](#) today!??

HSE Team