



How to Cross the Chasm:

HOW TO CAPITALIZE ON THE SOCIAL SELLING TREND

A MESSAGE TO THE PROGRESSIVE SALES PROFESSIONAL



It seems every few years, new sales methodologies are developed to help sales teams keep pace with changes in how buyers make purchases. And more are bound to come. No matter what methodology your organization has adopted, it's clear that your process is incomplete without the addition of social selling tactics.

In a relatively short time, selling via social media has dramatically changed – and improved – how sales reps find, connect with, and engage prospective buyers along their path to purchase. Simply put, sales reps that excel at social selling are helping their organizations drive significantly higher revenues. Those organizations that bet big on this winning approach sooner than later will outpace their competitors and significantly impact the top line.

Rather than start from scratch, you and your team can learn from the sales organizations succeeding with social selling. While every organization adopts the approach that best suits its needs, the leading ones all embed the following practices:

- **Executive alignment:** Build support for social selling by leading from the top
- **Education:** Maximize adoption of social selling with best practices
- **Measurement:** Motivate the sales team and drive the ROI of social selling

Read on to understand how effective social selling translates into a competitive advantage, best practices employed by leading companies, and ways that your organization can transform its sales approach now to drive better results.

Alex Hisaka
Content Marketing Manager
LinkedIn Sales Solutions



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|--|----|
| 1 | Social Selling: Unlock Competitive Advantage..... | 1 | 4 | Blueprint for Success: Transforming Your Sales Organization..... | 17 |
| 2 | The LinkedIn Social Selling Journey..... | 9 | 5 | The Future of Sales on LinkedIn..... | 22 |
| 3 | The Science of Social Selling: Measuring Adoption and Results.... | 13 | 6 | It's Time to Leave the Era of Cold Calling Behind..... | 25 |

1

SOCIAL SELLING: UNLOCK COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

"We are in the early majority stage of crossing the chasm. How are you going to take advantage of this moment in time?"

Mike Derezin, VP of Sales
LinkedIn Sales Solutions



SOCIAL SELLING: UNLOCK COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

To understand the shift in focus that companies need to make today, how do we think about the advantages that come to those who move first?

Not long ago, the concept of sustainable competitive advantage reigned supreme. The idea was fairly simple: companies built a fortress, so to speak, around what they felt was a defensible offering or capability. They dedicated most or all of their resources to maintaining and capitalizing on their set position for as long as possible. Unfortunately, this led to complacency: as these companies enjoyed the spoils of their conquests, they felt little urgency to pursue new opportunities and innovations.

Skip forward to today and we see that this approach has fallen by the wayside. With so many innovations being launched quickly and frequently, companies that stay static find themselves left behind.

Enter the wisdom of Columbia Business School Professor Rita McGrath. In her seminal book, *The End of Competitive Advantage: How to Keep Your Strategy Moving as Fast as Your Business*, she upends the fundamental notion of sustainable competitive advantage. Instead she suggests a strategy based on the idea of transient competitive advantage. As she explains, “to win in volatile and uncertain environments, executives need to learn how to exploit short-lived opportunities with speed and decisiveness.”

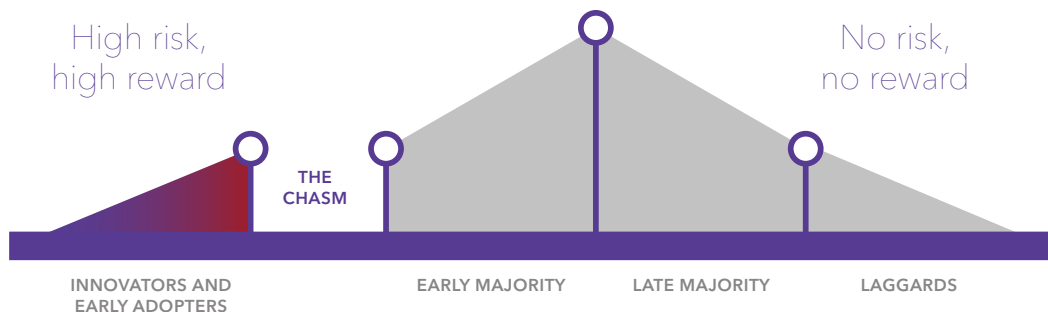


In a nutshell, the idea is to seize opportunities, exploit them, and then move on quickly once the opportunity has been exhausted. But keep in mind that transient opportunities aren't fads that come and go; the transient opportunity refers to the window when a company is gaining advantage and its competitors are not. The question for organizations becomes: How do you take advantage of these transient moments when they come? And how can we apply this to the social selling opportunity? To answer this question, let's take inspiration from another seminal work: *Crossing the Chasm*, by Geoffrey A. Moore.

In his book, Moore argues there is a gap between the early adopters and innovators of any technology and the

mass market. Those willing to try new technologies are risk takers, while the rest of the population is much more conservative. And though early adopters and innovators take on high risk, if their investment pays off and their chosen path proves popular enough, they are rewarded with high returns. Put another way, those who jump on an opportunity early stand to win big, while those who wait to see whether or not it will pay off enjoy fewer rewards.

With that in mind, what is your organization's strategy when it comes to jumping on the opportunity presented by the social selling journey? How can you take advantage of this early phase of the social selling trend – and reap the high rewards being enjoyed by early adopters?



Those who jump on the social selling opportunity early stand to win big, while those who wait to see whether or not it will pay off enjoy fewer rewards.



Before you devise your social selling strategy, it's important to learn from other early adopters and innovators. Namely, you need to understand what to do with this trend and when to jump on it.

First you must realize that each trend moves at its own pace. Consider the rise of the internet. When this global network of networks and the first web browsers entered the commercial world in the 1990s, many businesses stood back and watched because they couldn't grasp the full impact of this emerging trend. In 1991, a mere one million people worldwide used the internet. Five years later, the internet was no longer a trend but the norm, and over 77 million people were online.¹

When a trend emerges and starts to build momentum, you can capitalize on the opportunity by being proactive. But if you miss the wave, you can get caught in an endless catch-up cycle, which can prove fatal for some companies.

Take Kodak. Kodak's competitive advantage was around its analog cameras and film. In the 1970s, Kodak controlled almost 70% of the US film market. This market leader believed digital photography would become a mass consumer

market at some point in the future. In fact, it invented the first digital camera in 1975. But it fundamentally misjudged this trend's pace. Kodak didn't sell digital cameras to the masses until 2001. Unfortunately, by sitting too long on what was once its sustainable competitive advantage – analog film cameras – Kodak was unable to capitalize on this industry-changing trend. The story of Kodak's demise ended in 2012 when it filed for bankruptcy.²

Spotting a trend isn't enough; you have to know the pace of a trend to act in the window of opportunity. Let's see what a winner looks like when it comes to the digital trend.

Walgreens – the largest drug retailing chain in the United States – disrupted its own business model because it recognized how the healthcare industry was changing. In 2008, Walgreens differentiated itself by adopting a digital-intensive strategy and growing its digital division from a small team to one consisting of hundreds of employees across four offices worldwide. To cross the chasm, Walgreens had to balance two things: 1) becoming a leader in emerging arenas, like mobile and 2) modernizing its existing properties.³

Today, the company is recognized as an industry innovator and is rewarded in the form of over 14 million weekly visits to its digital properties across web, mobile and tablet platforms. Walgreens' mobile app drives about 40 percent of the retailer's digital traffic, while features like Refill by Scan and QuickPrints demonstrated how digital can transform an underlying business. Walgreens crossed the chasm because it spotted the trends early, had the courage to act on them, and continues to innovate.

¹Wikipedia, "Global Internet Usage." 2015. ²The Wall Street Journal, "The Demise of Kodak: Five Reasons." 2012. ³EY, "Walgreens' Strategic Transformation." 2012.

We're seeing a similar transformation in sales. Sales is undergoing a universal and fundamental shift in order to meet the demands of a more informed and increasingly digital world of buyers. The sales rep is no longer in charge; in fact, it's quite the opposite – the buyer now holds the power. Buyers prefer to access information at their own pace and convenience. This change in the buyer-seller power structure demands a large scale shift in mindset and an openness to embrace new methods in order to succeed. Many are finding success by adopting social selling – in other words, driving sales using social media. This trend and approach is changing the face of sales for the better by improving the entire process for both the buyer and the seller.

Even with all the significant and measurable results countless reps have achieved through social selling, many sales leaders are resistant to change. Perhaps you're one of them. We get it: you've established processes, tools and methodologies to ensure your approach

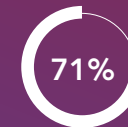
is repeatable and scalable. And you've achieved success with this approach for some time. But as the previous examples demonstrate, resistance to change can prove the downfall of even market leaders. And resistance to change is what stops many companies from fully adopting social selling. But considering that **today's buyers complete 70% of their purchase before contacting a salesperson**,⁴ this resistance seems counterproductive.

There's no denying that it takes some work to restructure an entire business around social selling. And it's certainly easier to keep doing what you've always done. But take note: digital disruption means that it's no longer an option to maintain the status quo and companies will see a significant drop-off in sales if they don't embrace and incorporate social selling into their sales processes.

Buyers are **more likely** to engage with a salesperson if:



Their company is well-known and has a strong professional brand



Mentions specific information relevant to their current job



Mentions a common colleague

Buyers **don't engage** with a salesperson because:



The product/service is not relevant to their company



It's not the right time in the buy cycle



They aren't the right person to connect with about new product/services

⁴LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014.

Assuming you're convinced that social selling is a trend you can't afford to sit back and watch, the next question is how do you move forward with it? With any business initiative, you need to measure the results of your efforts to determine whether or not your investment is paying off. And with the Social Selling Index (SSI) from LinkedIn, you can gauge the success of your social media efforts and make sure you're on the right track. SSI helps you measure how individual sales reps and entire teams are performing when it comes to social selling.

SSI measures how well sales reps perform across four key areas to generate a score:



CREATE A PROFESSIONAL BRAND

In today's world, **77% of B2B buyers are going on social networks for information about the products and services they are considering.**⁵ It's imperative that your company and its army of salespeople are presenting themselves in the best light.



FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE

According to CEB, over 5 people are involved in the purchase decision-making process.⁶ While the concept of "purchase by committee" isn't new to sales, today more people are on that committee and we see more consensus buying than ever before. Unfortunately, most sales reps use a single-threaded sales approach, nurturing and depending heavily on one relationship within a company as they try to make a sale. Instead, they should map out each target account and the key influencers in the decision so they can build consensus for a purchase.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Many companies still rely on outdated methods such as cold calls to build relationships. But this tactic is less and less effective and can even damage your brand. In fact, **90% of decisions makers don't respond to cold outreach.**⁷ The good news is that social selling enables an alternative approach: warm introductions – that is, when an established connection facilitates an introduction.



ENGAGE WITH INSIGHTS

Today's buyers aren't just looking for information – they want to gain knowledge that will inform their purchase decision. Your sales reps can answer this call by publishing and sharing content. Let's be clear: we don't mean your reps have to produce content; but it's important that they like and share content. This allows them to demonstrate that they are aware of the issues that matter to their prospects and are focused on helping and not just selling. It also makes it possible for them to scale their reach in a way that simply isn't possible with face-to-face interactions.

⁵LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014. ⁶CEB, "Sales: Why You Should Teach Customers How to Buy," 2014. ⁷ LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014.

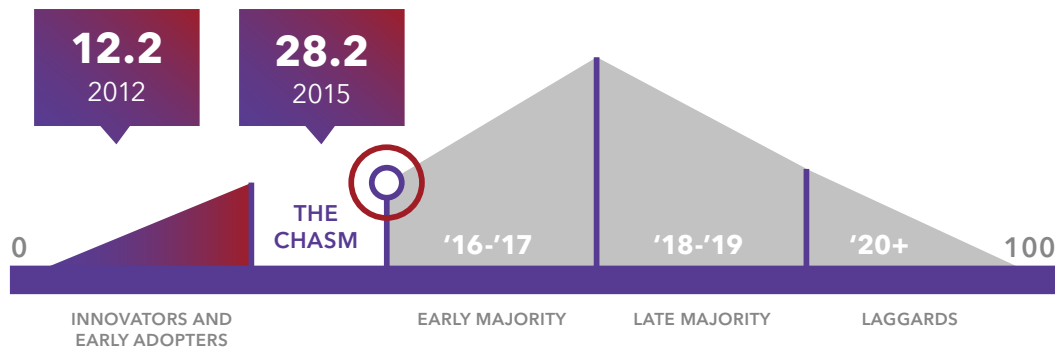
1

SOCIAL SELLING: UNLOCK COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

We can measure a sales rep's and sales team's social selling performance on a scale from 0-100, with each of the four elements on the last page, equaling 25 of the total 100 points. Using this Index, we can see that social selling has crossed the "chasm" from innovators/early adopters to the early majority. And that means sales leaders like you can still jump on this trend and realize big rewards.

We developed the Social Selling Index by studying the behaviors that successful reps were performing on the LinkedIn platform. The score is one metric that tells you how well you are performing social selling activities on a scale from 0 to 100.

Social Selling Index (SSI)



We can see that social selling has crossed the "chasm" from innovators/early adopters to the early majority.

A common misconception among those new to leveraging social media for sales is: Be active on LinkedIn and the leads will come. While it's true that most of today's top sellers are highly active on LinkedIn, it is the rationale behind the activity that ultimately determines success, not the activity alone. Similarly, sales organizations don't stumble into social selling success: successful adoption requires a purposeful approach.

As anyone working in a sales leadership role can tell you, making the switch to social selling won't happen overnight. However, if we believe social selling is going to be a core part of the fabric of business moving forward, we can tackle the following three steps to seize this opportunity and speed up the journey:

- 1. Gain executive alignment**
- 2. Educate about social selling**
- 3. Measure the impact of social selling activities**

PTC on gaining executive alignment

As a major player in the global market for years, PTC saw that its business was being reshaped by another trend: the Internet of Things. Knowing that its market would be moving even faster than before, PTC decided it needed to embrace social selling as quickly as possible.

To that end, it deployed a regional sales enablement structure to support reps in getting the most out of social selling. This regional focus meant that PTC was able to adjust to cultural differences, supply salespeople with regionally relevant content and come up with localized development plans. It also helped secure the buy-in of senior executives while demonstrating to sales reps that PTC was committed to making social selling happen.

SAP on educating the sales team

SAP – one of the world's largest software companies – is betting big on social selling. Its adoption of social selling is the biggest single change to the company's sales strategy in the last 10 years.

With thousands of sales reps around the world, SAP felt its collective network could prove to be a significant advantage. To ensure the adoption of social selling, SAP customized its training for each type of sales rep (e.g., inside versus field), trained its instructors so social selling became part of the overall sales process curriculum, and trained its sales managers to ensure they could lead by example and make social selling part of the review process. All sales reps and leaders were trained on professional branding, thought

leadership via targeted content sharing, and use of LinkedIn groups to expand networks. Quarterly social selling blitz days and town hall meetings helped to turn early adopters into regional role models.

Symantec on measuring the impact

At Symantec as at just about every company, measuring the impact of social selling is critical to justifying ROI. To that end, SSI is at the core of all the company's social selling efforts. Symantec uses SSI as a benchmark for reps to track their own progress, for sales teams to see how they rank against each other, and for Symantec's sales reps as whole to understand how they stack up against the company's competitors. And it has found that its reps score an SSI almost 50% higher than competitors when using Sales Navigator. Symantec established an educational program to help sales teams understand what their score means and how they can use it to improve their social selling skills.

Now that you understand the importance of social selling, how are you going to take advantage of this moment in time?

A man with short dark hair, wearing a grey blazer over a light blue button-down shirt, is speaking on a stage. He is wearing a small lapel microphone. The background is a solid blue color. The image is split vertically, with the left side showing a darker, more muted version of the same scene.

2

THE LINKEDIN SOCIAL SELLING JOURNEY

**"As early adopters - or the early majority
- commit and make career bets if you
believe in social selling."**

Mike Gamson, Senior Vice President
of Global Solutions
LinkedIn



Social selling doesn't happen overnight. From executives and sales leadership to the individual salesperson, the story of LinkedIn's transformation into a social selling organization will help you navigate this journey within your own company. **VP of Sales Solutions, Mike Derezin** sat down with **Senior Vice President of Global Solutions, Mike Gamson** for a fireside chat to explore how LinkedIn's own sales teams have embraced social selling through goal-setting, executive sponsorship, and rep-level adoption.

Q: The notion of competitive advantage is about taking big chances that can really change your company's history. When our largest billion dollar business, LinkedIn Talent Solutions business, had just started in 2009, you stuck your neck out to make it successful. What did you do and why?

A: I was leading an organization and we saw the opportunity with clarity because we were closer to it. That gave us the conviction to make a case for something that we believed in. We felt that there was an inflection point in the world where this large, secular trend was upon us and it gave us this ability to find and engage with passive candidates who were already working somewhere else but might be able to find a company that would be a better fit and let them live out their full passion.

Q: One of our values at LinkedIn is taking intelligent risks. Why is intelligent risk important?

A: We believe that risk taking is an enormous part of what makes technology companies in particular successful and companies in general successful. But how do you figure out what is an intelligent risk to take? What is the framework? And how do you implement it in a practical sense?

To answer this, we developed a framework with three aspects:

1. **The evaluation of upside to downside** – How much do I stand to gain if this goes well vs how much do I stand to lose if it doesn't go well? There no right ratio. At LinkedIn, we want a minimum of at least 3 to 1 upside to downside or it's probably not a risk worth taking.

2. **The likelihood of expected value of outcome** – We look at upside and then ask how likely it is to happen. Think about a \$1 lottery ticket. If you win \$1 million off a \$1 investment that's a very strong upside to downside. However, the actual likelihood of you winning is quite low.
3. **Seeking balance in your portfolio.** If you are already pursuing lots of other projects – or even just one other huge project – your portfolio might be out balance if you take on another big risk.

Q: What are some big intelligent risks you've taken?

A: I'll share a failure and a work in progress. The failure was in the Talent Solutions business, our first business and the largest, and we thought

we had a big idea. Most companies' number one source of business is referrals. For a referral to go really well you need to have awareness of your external network, what jobs are available at the company, and be able to match those things. We thought, "We might have the assets to build this into a product." But we didn't take into account our customers' workflows and the technologies they were using. As a result of this oversight among others, we failed to bring this big idea to market.

An intelligent risk in progress was that we made the largest acquisition in our history this year by buying Lynda.com, a leader in the elearning space. This will play a part in what we're trying to accomplish over the next 10 years: the idea of an economic graph. LinkedIn created a platform to help people tap the value of their professional networks, and developed an infrastructure that could map those relationships for what would eventually become the world's largest professional graph.

Then our CEO Jeff Weiner said, "What if we could extend this professional graph into an economic graph by digitally manifesting every economic opportunity in the world: the skills required to obtain those opportunities; the profiles for every company in the world offering those opportunities; and the professional profiles for every one of the roughly 3.3 billion people in the global workforce?

And what if we could overlay the professional knowledge of those individuals and companies onto the graph?

Today LinkedIn has an enormous skills database and education database, we work with institutions around world, and we have a knowledge database because of all the content and updates shared on our platform. What we lacked was the ability to help a member acquire the skills they need to get ready for a job promotion. Lynda.com is a move in that direction. I hope we can someday look back and say that acquiring Lynda.com was a successful intelligent risk.

Q: You talk about the importance of the work culture. How has LinkedIn made work culture a competitive advantage across the company and in our sales organization?

A: As a young company, we had the opportunity to determine what kind of culture we wanted to create. We canonized what became five cultural values and six tenets. We feel so strongly about our culture that it's the first thing we talk about when interviewing a candidate. We use it as the litmus test to see if someone will thrive in our environment. How it becomes a competitive advantage is that we have this incredible group



of people bringing in other incredible people, so it helps us find more great talent. But it goes way beyond that. We use our culture and values to enable our globally distributed employees to be more autonomously empowered. As long as our people are making good decisions through our values and our culture, this is a very liberating force when managing a distributed team at scale.

Q: Many of us are probably proud of our culture, but how do you actually make it real?

A: The most pithy way I've heard it described was through Fred Kofman – a Vice President at LinkedIn – in his book “Conscious Business.” According to Kofman, a leader's responsibility relative to culture is to 1) set the standard, 2) demonstrate the standard and 3) hold others accountable to the standard. As a leader, it's my job to clearly set and communicate the standard of what is expected of our people. The moment a leader fails to demonstrate the standard it undermines his ability to lead. Demonstrate it every day, bringing it into your everyday conversations and decision making. And lastly,

we hold others accountable to that standard because again if a leader allows something to go on outside of the standard it's like they are giving tacit permission for a trespass against that standard and it undermines her ability to lead.

Q: Why you were excited to launch our Sales Solutions business and why did you want to get involved?

A: We have access to all of the prospects salespeople want to talk to. But we needed to create value for sales professionals without diminishing the experience of prospective customers, our members. So we started from a place of members first and attacked one of the worst parts of buying and selling: cold calling. We thought, “What if we could reduce and then potentially eliminate the need for the cold call by creating a more efficient system that is more economically compelling and creates a better experience for both parties?” It was the germ of this idea that allowed us to change the conversation and gave birth to the Sales Solutions business.

Q: How are you helping your sales team with social selling and what advice would you give about setting a standard?

A: Salespeople like to win and a leaderboard is a great way to be transparent in showing who within the sales organization is helping others on the team. As a sales leader, one of the biggest barriers that you likely face is that most reps on your team are probably uncertain about your openness to helping. Many likely feel their deal is not big enough to warrant your time. So tell your sales team how and when they can engage you. I'm open to any deal I can help with, as long as the sales rep can give a valid reason why my connection will value their outreach.

Q: What advice can you share for those facing their transformative moment with social selling?

A: As early adopters – or the early majority – commit and make career bets if you believe in social selling. Then figure out how you can manifest that belief and turn it into something valuable for your company before the late majority catches on. That way you can realize the full benefits of being early.

3

THE SCIENCE OF SOCIAL SELLING: MEASURING ADOPTION AND RESULTS

"If you believe that social selling is inevitable, then I want to help take you on a journey from belief, to adoption, and then to ROI."

Lauren Mullenholz,
Insights Manager
LinkedIn Sales Solutions



THE SCIENCE OF SOCIAL SELLING: MEASURING ADOPTION AND RESULTS

Earlier we walked through three critical steps you must take to capitalize on big shifts in business: executive alignment, education, and measurement. Let's dive deeper into measurement.

If you believe that social selling is inevitable, we can help you on your journey from belief to adoption and then to ROI. How do you drive adoption when behavior change is hard? And how do you measure results and the bottom-line impact of your efforts? You can measure adoption using the Social Selling Index. And you can measure results by gauging impact on pipeline and revenue.

Why is measurement so important? You can't change what you don't measure. Think about report cards in school, whether your child's or yours when you were a kid. Report cards tell us a student's GPA, which has been shown to be a leading indicator of success in life. While a high GPA isn't the only factor, it can help someone get

into a good college which can lead to landing a good job. It is an important indicator that a student is developing the right behaviors. There will always be outliers and other factors, but you care about your kid's GPA because it helps you understand whether or not they are on the right track and making progress.

The Social Selling Index is the equivalent of the GPA for social selling, with a scale of 0 to 100. At the lower end of the range are laggards who are slower to adopt social selling behaviors. And at the higher end are leaders who are excelling at adopting and embracing social selling behaviors on the LinkedIn platform.



We already covered the four components, each of which represents 25 points out of the 100. SSI assigns a score for each component and one overall score. As a reminder, the components are: Creating a professional brand, Finding the right people, Engaging with insights, Building strong relationships.

Here's why these four components matter to a sales professional:



CREATING A PROFESSIONAL BRAND

There is a lot of competition for a decision makers' attention and time, and a lack of a professional presence introduces unnecessary questions. Sales reps are often the first impression a target buyer has of a company, so it's important that they build and maintain a professional brand.



FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Whether you are engaged in an RFP process or trying to make inroads with a promising account, it's important to quickly find the right decision makers and influencers. After all, your competitors are trying their best to connect with these people.



ENGAGING WITH INSIGHTS

Being a subject matter expert is incredibly powerful in today's world. One of LinkedIn clients shared an example of the power of this. A couple of the company's top social sellers were constantly engaging with content. When a national news story broke, the media reached out to them for comment. This has had a positive impact on the company because they are now recognized thought leaders in the space.



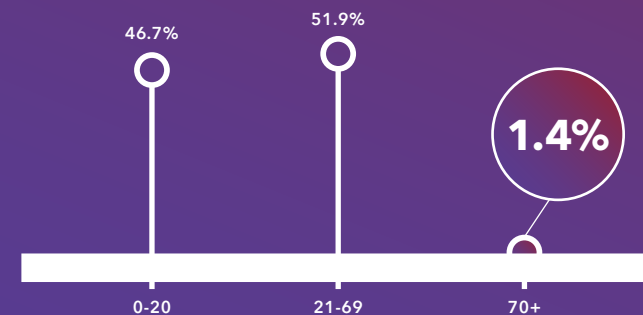
BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Sales is all about influence without authority. Building strong relationships with higher level people takes effort, but is incredibly important to the sales process. By establishing and building a strong relationship with a champion within target accounts, sales reps greatly boost their chances of ultimately winning over the right people - and closing the deal.

a high SSI actually matter? We have conducted research comparing social selling leaders with an SSI of 70+ to social selling laggards with a score of 30 and below. The leaders see twice the number of new clients, meetings secured, and opportunities generated via the LinkedIn platform compared to laggards.

Only 1.4% of all sales professionals score an SSI of 70+. The top social sellers are creating an edge for themselves and by extension for their companies. The good thing is, we're trending up. In the past year, we've seen sales reps as a whole move from 21 to 28 on the scale. In other words, on the adoption curve, social selling has just crossed the chasm and is moving into the early mainstream.

SSI distribution for all sales professionals



Only 1.4% of all sales professionals have a high SSI of 70+. The top social sellers are creating an edge for themselves and their companies.

**ASK THE EXPERT:****PHILIP AMATO**

Marketing Communications Manager, Microsoft

Our social selling journey at Microsoft started two years ago when one of our colleagues had launched a social command center. After seeing this we realized the following about the B2B space:

1. The IT buying journey had dramatically changed
2. Buyers were using social media to learn about their favorite brand's products and services and probably wanted to hear from us on social

We decided to launch our own social selling program, as well as a CRM system to manage all the reps in the program. When a seller joined the program, we created a CRM ticket and entered all the education we delivered to that rep – for example, if she attended a coaching or onboarding session – so we could track those key activities. We merged the Social Selling Index with our CRM database so we had a comprehensive view of all of our reps, how socially engaged they are, and their correlating SSI.

After we integrated the CRM system with our program, we had an opportunity to share some

of our insights with key executives at Microsoft during our mid-year review. This was crucial for executive alignment. That executive alignment started to cascade down to everyone from sales leaders and directors to their sales teams.

We also use a social selling enablement calendar. On a daily basis, any seller at Microsoft can take advantage of live and recorded webinars, working sessions, and in-person training sessions. This education combined with executive alignment has been crucial to our success.

The other component of this enablement is our coaching. As part of our social selling program, we maintain a bench of LinkedIn certified coaches. These people are experts at social selling, with a solid grasp of how to engage with customers over social. Because everyone sells and uses social differently, our coaches work with our reps to create personalized social selling strategies. Because of the centralized view within our CRM system, our coaches can hold our

sellers accountable and talk to them about where they are strong and where they need to improve.

Today, our reps have increased their SSI from a median of 48 to 56 and we're continuing to grow that number. Success like this requires behavioral change. We're evolving from people who are accustomed to leveraging pre-existing connections and cold emailing to people who are using insights to socially engage with customers.

What we found was that our social sellers on the lower end of engagement were generating 30.3 opportunities and while those on the higher end were generating 41.8 opportunities. That's a 38% difference, which means for every 10 points a seller's SSI increases, that seller will generate 4.3 more opportunities. Our goal is to continue to increase our Social Selling Index because a higher SSI represents behavioral changes that equate to more effective sales. Those behavioral changes have translated into ROI, more sales, and more opportunities.

4

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS: TRANSFORMING YOUR SALES ORGANIZATION

“What is your vision for your sales organization? What does the ideal sales organization of the future look like?”

Trish Sparks, Director of Sales
Product Consulting
LinkedIn Sales Solutions



BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS: TRANSFORMING YOUR SALES ORGANIZATION

If we believe social is going to be part of the core fabric of business, how do we seize this opportunity?

Our customer success organization at LinkedIn works with sales teams from companies in a range of industries around the world that have chosen to enhance their more traditional sales methods with social selling best practices.

To help these sales teams kick-start their social selling journey, we assist them in creating a plan called a “Blueprint for Success.” While the plan details differ based on each sales team’s goals, three themes remain constant:

- **Awareness**
- **Education**
- **Reinforcement**

Let’s think about these concepts in terms of creating a blueprint for a house. Creating awareness – and with that, securing executive

sponsorship – is the foundation of building a healthy and sustainable social selling program.

Next is education, which is like the walls and roof of the house. With the right structure through effective education and learning, your sales professionals will embed social selling into their daily sales workflow. Finally, reinforcement – and with it, accountability – can be considered the insulation. Insulation is the reinforcement that makes a house livable in the long run. Transforming a sales team into a social selling organization requires a thorough yet flexible adoption plan. To that end, reinforcement is critical for driving accountability.

When architects get the blueprint right, the end result is that they achieve their vision of a beautiful, custom-built home. The same is true of a blueprint for your social selling program.



Your blueprint can bring your vision to life. When the blueprint is executed effectively, you end up with the desired result. What is the vision for your sales organization? What does the ideal sales organization of the future look like?

Here's what we see when organizations fully embrace social selling. The best and brightest talent wants to work for you because they no longer have to make cold calls. Instead of counting how many outbound calls their reps made, your sales managers are focusing on how many valuable relationships their reps have established. Rather than dread conversations with your sales reps, your prospects and customers look forward to chatting with them because they offer valuable insights.

Becoming a social selling organization is a gradual transformation. Most teams begin by integrating social selling best practices into their current practices.

How long will it take to build your house? If you have 10 salespeople, you might be able to implement social selling fundamentals in a few weeks. Of course, it will take longer if you

have 15,000 reps. Regardless of the size of your team, the same guiding principles apply: you need to develop a plan incorporating awareness, education and reinforcement.

The main objective of your plan is to empower people to adopt social selling. Awareness, education and reinforcement are the fundamentals, but none are a one-time exercise. Get executive sponsors involved early and often. Think about how to educate your teams in a scalable and effective way. And tap into your sales reps' competitive nature and create a culture of recognition to hold your sales teams accountable for adopting and practicing social selling behaviors.

Think about where your organization is along the social selling journey. If you haven't visualized what you want your sales team to look like, take some time to do it. Then start developing the first version of your blueprint or tweak your existing plan to optimize your chance of success in transforming your sales reps into world-class social sellers.





ASK THE EXPERT:

JOAN FITZPATRICK

AVP, Sales Productivity, NetSuite

My first piece of advice when transforming your sales organization is to **find your evangelizers**. To that end, we piloted LinkedIn Sales Navigator with reps selling into the software vertical, spanning offices and geographies.

While we didn't have a full-blown social selling initiative, we purchased Sales Navigator to help reps identify influencers in their deals and find NetSuite champions who had moved to new companies. And because they were happy with Sales Navigator, we then had evangelizers planted across all of our offices. Based on the success with our software vertical, we quickly rolled out to our other verticals and to other teams.

My second piece of advice is to **dedicate resources**. Traditional sales tools that allow you to look up firmographic data or to build a list of companies are tough to keep front of mind with sales reps. They are fairly intuitive and are used for a narrow set of cases. We saw Sales Navigator as a tool that would influence and change the way we do business because it allows reps to be more productive and

opens up new selling avenues. But to use Sales Navigator effectively, reps need to understand how it works, how to optimize their LinkedIn profiles, how to ask for introductions, how to search, and how to find multiple people in an organization. To succeed, you need to designate at least one person who has bandwidth to roll out Sales Navigator and spread awareness of the product.

My third piece of advice is to **continually communicate and provide visibility into what is happening with Sales Navigator**. We invited LinkedIn to participate each year in our sales kickoff, which has helped us tremendously in driving awareness. We also regularly work LinkedIn tips and tricks or contests into our monthly global sales call. And we keep LinkedIn and our other tools front of mind during our sales planning or when we change sales policy. When it comes to providing visibility, we generate customized monthly reports for our vertical leads and front line sales managers, showing their individual reps' usage of LinkedIn. With this information, our front line sales managers can

have productive conversations with their reps around pipeline and prospecting.

Finally, my last piece of advice is to **secure executive sponsorship**. One way we built executive sponsorship was through a contest we ran. We had done a fair amount of education on how to use LinkedIn Sales Navigator. But adoption was spotty when it came to how many companies and contacts the sales team had saved. I proposed a contest where reps would have a short window of time to save their accounts to LinkedIn. The winners would be drawn from those who successfully added all of their accounts and would get a personalized recommendation on their LinkedIn profile from our president. The president helped me recruit the top worldwide sales VPs to participate, giving us 18 sales leaders focused on this initiative. In the end, over 85% of our reps fully participated and the other 15% participated on some level. That gave us thousands more companies and contacts to track than we had just two weeks before, and has driven 2015 pipeline and revenues.



ASK THE EXPERT:

PHIL HORN

Vice President, Ticket Sales & Service, Sacramento Kings

2012-2013 was a precarious time for the Sacramento Kings. With the threat of the team moving to Seattle, many fans disengaged and many of our sales reps took positions with other teams.

Our entry to social selling really was the result of new ownership taking over in the spring of 2013. The new owners were Silicon Valley folks who believed sales 3.0 tools would solve several issues:

- Better target our fans and reconnect with the market
- Get more done with fewer people
- Rebuild our staff, offer new tools to existing staff, and help our reps scale faster

So we embarked on Sales 3.0, which revolved around three pillars:

- Social selling
- Accelerated technology
- Collaboration

And LinkedIn Sales Navigator was perfect for getting us there.

Across our social selling program, **we focused on creating a culture of recognition and celebration around talent.** First, we emphasized how we were investing in talent—both current and future employees. We promised our reps they would no longer make cold calls if they used Sales Navigator. It was a big boost to retention and recruiting.

We also shared wins and built a team selling environment. In our daily huddles, we highlighted social selling wins. When reps made deals through LinkedIn, we'd ask them to describe their process: how they found the right people, what search filter they used, and what email they sent. The idea is to help your teammates win because you never know when they might be talking to someone who can help you with a sale.

We used gamification as a reinforcement mechanism. We tracked Sales Navigator stats in Salesforce and monitored Inmail activity. And we created leaderboards and correlated SSI to top

performers – and integrated it with Salesforce. Managers can access dashboards and reports in Salesforce to see ROI and sales reps can use these to demonstrate their wins.

When you celebrate, recognize and gamify the right behaviors, you see a dramatic culture shift. And for us, that has translated into a top-performing sales organization. Over the last few years, we've seen a 17% jump in attendance, the highest in the league. And we are now number one in new season tickets sold.

Social selling and Sales Navigator have changed the way we sell. Along the way, it's important that executive leadership and owners recognize and celebrate those engaged in the right behaviors – and do so daily. Remember, it takes 30-60 days for something to become a habit. You can't just drop in a new tool and expect people to use it. It's about telling stories, huddles, creating public leaderboards, and integrating with existing tools that will speed adoption and get your organization on a new track.

5

THE FUTURE OF SALES ON LINKEDIN

"We're passionate about pushing the boundaries of what Sales Navigator can be to help you create that change in your organization."

Jeff Birkeland, Head of Product
LinkedIn Sales Solutions



THE FUTURE OF SALES ON LINKEDIN

So where is sales headed now that we have entered the social selling era? It often helps to take an outside-in view so let's take a look at the future of sales from the perspective of a buyer.

Imagine working at a startup company. The company is growing, but is still small enough that everyone knows each other. Everyone has too much to do and not enough time to do it - in other words, they are busy and overwhelmed. And B2B sales companies are reaching out, trying to sell their software and services to your company.

Most days you get to the office early, open your laptop and quickly feel buried under a mountain of email including work email, junk email, personal email, and a variety of sales pitches.

One morning, one pitch catches your eye:

Jeff,



We have some software that will help your company be more productive. I would love to get you on the phone and explain this to you. Thanks.

-Sam

You think to yourself, "There is no context here for me to hang my hat on. There is no relevance of the software to my company's business. Sam isn't demonstrating that he even understands my business." You have work to do and no time for Sam so you go on with your day.

But Sam is persistent and follows up two days later with a classic follow-up email.

Jeff,



I'm not sure if you had chance to review my first email, but I would still like to get you on the phone and tell you about our software. Maybe you can tell us about your company so we can customize our pitch?

-Sam

Sam gets two points for persistence but he still hasn't given you a reason to connect so you go on with your day. Sam follows up a third time, fourth time, and until he has reached out 10 times. Then he sends one more email:



Jeff,

We realize you haven't read any of our previous emails. I'm beginning to think that either you are not interested, or maybe you've been attacked by a rhino. Are you okay, Jeff?

-Sam

Sam actually attaches a picture of a rhino to the email. This story probably rings true for all of us. We've either been on the receiving end of this or know someone who is still using this old sales tactic. But there's a new – and better – way of selling.

Modern-day sales reps use Sales Navigator to dig into and engage with insights so they always have context, information, relevance and timing to strengthen their pitches. As a result, their prospects and clients view them as trusted advisors rather than follow-up machines.

As sales leaders, it's our goal to create organizational change and get those rhinos to embrace the better way of selling. The problem is that it's not easy work. Change is hard. Social selling is not easy, and as much as we critique Sam's method, he was bringing passion and persistence to his job. What he wasn't bringing was the context, insights, intelligence, and relevance that would have allowed him to craft a much stronger sales pitch.

And that's where LinkedIn Sales Navigator comes in. And that's why our product team is so passionate about pushing the boundaries of what Sales Navigator can do to help you create that change in your organization.

The latest enhancements in Sales Navigator can help you better measure, coach and act on insights – and accelerate success with social selling.

CONCLUSION: IT'S TIME TO LEAVE THE ERA OF COLD CALLING BEHIND

Hyper connectivity has already changed the perception of social networks from a “nice-to-have” to a “must-have” sales channel. Prospective customers already expect companies to establish credibility, make a personal connection and engage them only when they have a relevant context for their outreach. Social selling is no longer optional for organizations. It enables sales reps to establish authentic, long-lasting two-way relationships with buyers, and has already proven to be more aligned with the customers of today and substantially more effective than traditional selling methods.

In a knowledge economy where the competition is just a click away, it's critical for sales reps to know their buyers well. That's why social selling has crossed the chasm from early adopters and is entering the early majority stage. It's also why platforms like LinkedIn and tools like Sales Navigator have become essential.

The near future is about pushing yourself and your team to grow. It's about spotting and jumping on trends while there's still a chance to reap big rewards. It's about adopting social selling before your competitors.

How can your company get out in front? What investment is required? And in what time frame? Now's the time to create a Blueprint for Success.

