

17 TIPS TO START THE SOCIAL SELLING TRANSFORMATION



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STARTING THE SOCIAL SELLING TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

In our earlier piece [7 Ways Sales Professionals Drive Revenue With Social Selling](#), we provided a high-level overview of the concept and principles of Social Selling. Since the publication of that E-book, social media has become even more central to the way businesses of all kinds drive new prospects and clients.

One of the reasons for this development is that social media platforms have added features and functions that make them more flexible and easier to use. Even more important, however, is that both customers and salespeople have by-and-large become social media natives. In other words, instead of simply using social media as a high-tech way to connect and prospect, people are now more likely to view it as the most visible representation of a person or company's professional brand. As such, Social Selling is the **most effective way to leverage that brand to fill your pipeline with the right people, insights and relationships.**

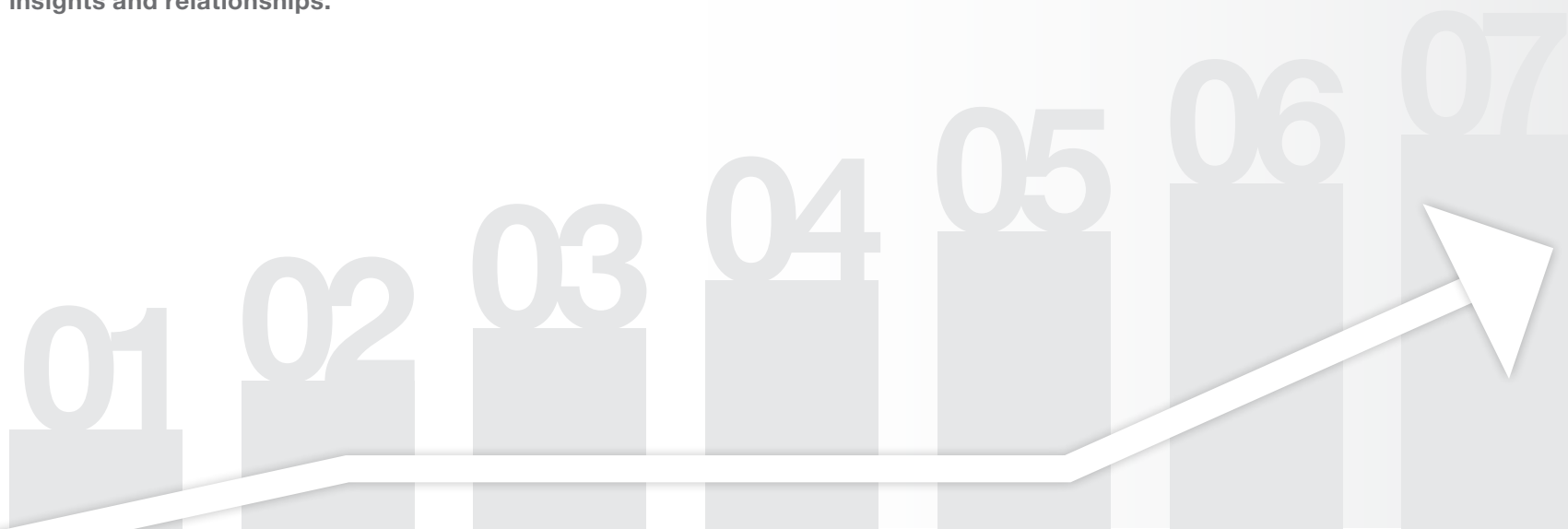
Social Selling Defined:

Social Selling leverages your professional brand to fill your pipeline with the right people, insights and relationships.

With that in mind, let's dig into the details.

This E-book will give you concrete tips drawn from the experience of some of the world's foremost experts on Social Selling about the actions you can take to gain more opportunities, close more deals and drive more revenue.

Follow these seven steps to begin building a profitable Social Selling campaign today.



STEP 1: CREATE A PROFESSIONAL BRAND

Many salespeople treat their social media profiles as an afterthought, including no more than the bare minimum of identifying information. This is the 21st century equivalent of showing up to a meeting with a rumpled suit and muddy shoes.

Your profile — especially your LinkedIn profile — is your professional online brand. Instead of viewing your profile as your resume, look at it as the place to demonstrate your value to clients, partners and prospects.

In addition to contact information, include robust calls-to-action that guide prospects on how to move further down the relationship funnel with you. Use the Headline, Summary and Interests sections to convey various elements of your experience, personality and skill set that highlight your ability to solve problems and make things happen.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #1


"The work you do on your profile is going to set the stage with the biggest impact. You want to go from an aesthetic profile to creating something that is more interactive by adding Rich Media, links, and valuable content."

– Koka Sexton,

Sr. Social Marketing Manager, LinkedIn




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500
connections

★ Relationship  Contact Info Connected 1 year ago

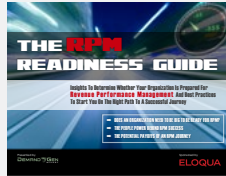
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7 Ways Sales Professionals Drive Revenue with Social Selling
May 20, 2014




The RPM Readiness Guide
April 2, 2014



Benchmarking Marketing Automation
March 26, 2014

Background

**Summary**

Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm. - Winston Churchill

Thanks for visiting my profile. I have included many items you may find informative.

Sales Professionals: Learn how to use LinkedIn <http://linkd.in/1odaWW6>

I'm an open networker. My connection philosophy is easy "Can I add value to you or can you add value to me" if any of those are met, we can connect. If you would like to connect, please customize your message. I rarely accept generic connection requests.

I am honored to be one of the most recognized social experts in the technology industry. With 10+ years of sales experience and a passion for social media, I have become an evangelist for social selling, a topic that I promote through global speaking engagements and customer trainings. My expertise extends beyond my knowledge of social networks like LinkedIn, Twitter and social applications into my skill at employing them to drive lead generation, create new opportunities, and engage customers.

Leaders in the sales engagement space are now stressing that it is critical for today's sales professionals to connect with their customers and prospects on a personal level.

It is also important that you optimize your profile for the LinkedIn search engines by including keywords that prospects are most likely to use when searching for services your company provides. Take advantage of video and other interactive features to highlight the best features of your brand — both organizational and personal.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #2

“Unless you are looking for a job, your profile isn't about you, it's about them. What value do you bring? Start with your headline — just having your company name and title is not engaging. What does your prospect or client care about? The whole point is to get them to continue looking through your profile, eventually to reach out.”



Click to share!

– **Brynne Tillman**,
President & CEO, Social Sales Link

Background



Summary

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Specialties:

- » Social Media Strategy
- » Social Media Channels
- » Content Marketing
- » Marketing
- » Sales 2.0
- » Social Selling Training
- » Social Selling Best Practices
- » Community Manager
- » Social Media Tools
- » LinkedIn for Marketing
- » LinkedIn for Sales
- » Social Media Marketing
- » Customer Engagement



Skills & Endorsements

Top Skills

- 24 Social Media +
- 23 Social Media Marketing +
- 22 Content Strategy +
- 16 Lead Generation +
- 14 Newsletters +
- 12 Blogging +
- 11 Public Relations +
- 6 Content Marketing +

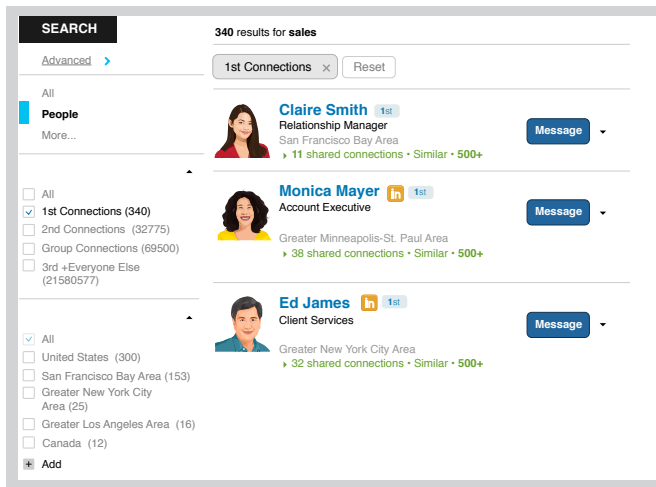


STEP 2: FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE

LinkedIn has one of the most powerful search engines in existence, and it's specifically designed for professional networking and business development. If you aren't proactively searching for new people to interact with, you are missing out on a big part of social media's potential to be a growth driver for your business.

With Social Selling, you have access to a web of connections that includes not only the people you know directly, but all the people they know, and so on. LinkedIn gives you the ability to tap into a vast ecosystem of these potential prospects, all of whom can be traced directly back to your core professional circle.

Salespeople who do a high quantity of LinkedIn searches substantially outperform those who neglect this feature. And those who use the full suite of tools designed to maximize social search perform best of all.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #3

“Most influential people use at least one social monitoring tool to be notified when something is written about them on the web. I know of sales teams that engage with prospects by commenting on their blog posts (or comments they make on other people’s blog posts), re-tweeting something they say, or mentioning something about them in a LinkedIn status update. This allows the sales person to be known by the prospect so when that sales person calls they are not a complete unknown and they have a reference point to engage the prospect in a conversation.”



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– Craig Elias,

Chief Catalyst, Shift Selling Inc.

(and author of “Shift!: Turn Prospects Into Customers”)

According to the recent study [Cracking the LinkedIn Sales Code](#) based on interviews with 3,000+ salespeople:



76.7% of top sellers always use LinkedIn to identify potential contacts;



80% of top sellers use LinkedIn to create highly targeted prospect lists; and



86.7% of top sellers always use LinkedIn to conduct in-depth research on prospects before making contact.

For example, the [TeamLink](#) feature of the LinkedIn Sales Solutions lets you find out specifically how you are connected to a valuable contact and then easily secure an introduction that would be most likely to result in a profitable outcome. Additionally, whenever you make a connection through its search engine, the LinkedIn algorithm will suggest five new people you should meet for lead recommendations.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #4

“If you go into someone’s profile, you can click on their number of connections. There’s a little magnifying glass where you can put some search terms in. So if you’re looking for authors let’s say, or CEOs, or whomever it is that you’re looking to have a conversation with, you can actually use that search box. Then you can take that into advance search and drill down by location or industry. Ultimately we can take someone who has 500+ or thousands of connections and drill that down to the eight or ten people that would make the best introductions.”



– **Brynne Tillman,**

President & CEO, Social Sales Link



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STEP 3: BUILD YOUR PIPELINE

The declining effectiveness of cold calling has already been well documented. Less well known is the declining impact of “cold networking.”

“Cold networking” is the practice of connecting with someone based on a weak link and then almost immediately asking them to give you business. But just because someone gave you a business card or permitted you to add them as a social media “friend,” “connection,” or “contact,” doesn’t mean you should consider them part of your pipeline.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #5

“With a LinkedIn network in place that has been nurtured with targeted insights for potential buyers, the rep has the foundation to sell much earlier in the buyer’s journey than those that don’t invest in their network. The investment pays off for the rep with an improved personal brand necessary to get callbacks and set the buyer’s vision.”

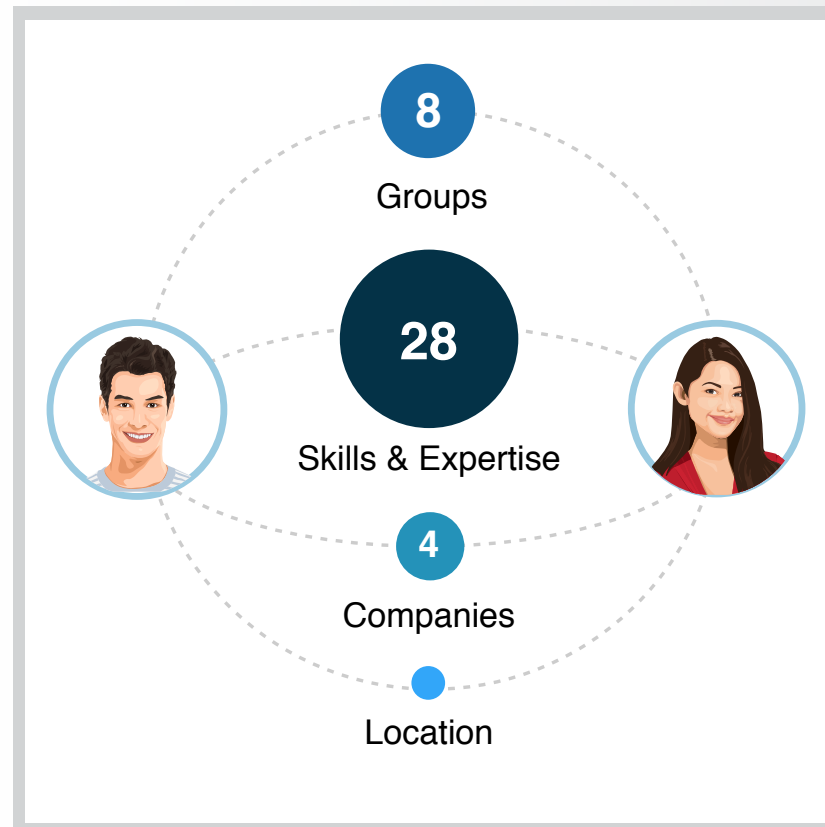


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– **Craig Nelson,**

President, Sales Enablement Group

Cold networking is the practice of connecting with someone based on a weak link and then almost immediately asking them to give you business.



Focus first on relationship-building activities. Use LinkedIn early on to find out what's especially relevant to a new connection or potential prospect. Then feed that prospect targeted content based on what you've uncovered.

In doing so, you'll quickly establish yourself as the resource best able to solve their problems if and when they come up. And at the root, that's what good sales is all about.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #6

"Your job as a sales professional is to build your pipeline, so how are you going to get to that end goal? By leading with insights. What kind of groups are they interested in and who else are they following? What kind of news are they interested in? It could be completely unrelated to what you need to talk about business-wise but you can find little insights that you can build the relationship from."

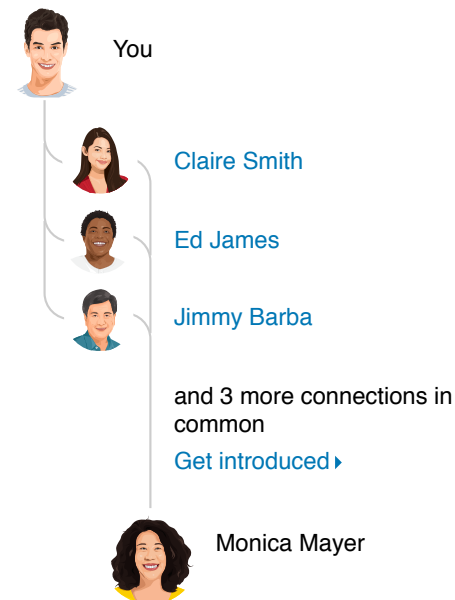
– **Koka Sexton**,
Sr. Social Marketing Manager, LinkedIn

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How You're Connected



In Common with Sue



STEP 4: STRATEGICALLY EXPAND YOUR NETWORK

Once you've cemented your social image, pinpointed the kind of people you want to meet, developed your search strategy and carved out your area of expertise, you need to think about your connection philosophy and how to substantially expand your network.

People vary widely in regards to how aggressively they choose to grow their base of social media connections, especially on LinkedIn. Some feel they should only add people to their networks that they know extremely well and turn down all new requests outside of their closest professional circles, and others are more open as to who they accept. As a social salesperson, you can certainly use some discretion as to who you choose to add and invite. That said, in general, the more opportunities you expose yourself to, the more opportunities you'll have.

You have little to lose when it comes to seeking out and embracing newcomers to your network, and when it comes to sales you have a whole lot to potentially gain.



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Social Selling Transformation Tip #7

"Monitor your social ecosystem to look for signals. Maybe someone in your extended network has just taken a job or maybe they've just been promoted. Maybe you or one of your connections has a relationship with an individual who leaves an organization. You can use those insights you gleaned from social media."

– **Dario Priolo,**
Chief Strategy Officer,
Richardson Sales Training



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Social Selling Transformation Tip #8

"My philosophy has been, for a long time now, really straightforward. If I can add value to you or if you can add value to me, let's get connected. It doesn't matter to me if you are in your first year of sales working at a small company or if you are an executive working for a Fortune 500."

– **Koka Sexton,**
Sr. Social Marketing Manager, LinkedIn

STEP 5: ENGAGE WITH INSIGHTS

The best social salespeople don't stop sharing insights once they've secured a connection or uncovered an ideal prospect. Depending on the product or service, a prospect may not be in the position to buy what you're selling for months — or years — after you've connected. That's one of the reasons it's so important to continue to engage the members of your social network on an ongoing basis.

Traditionally, salespeople would call prospects every few months to "just check in." But in a world where anyone can find whatever they want with a few mouse clicks, this method has become ineffective and even off-putting. Salespeople who don't educate, enlighten and inform, now blend into the crowd.

LinkedIn is currently in the midst of releasing a new publishing platform that will supplement and enhance the posting and messaging capabilities currently available.



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Social Selling Transformation Tip #9

"Change management research has shown us that people must SEE and FEEL the need to change because the part of the brain that makes the decision to change does not contain the capacity for language or rational thought. Thus, engaging with insights requires new messages, tools and skills to execute these visual, emotional conversations. You can't do it with the same old PowerPoint presentations."

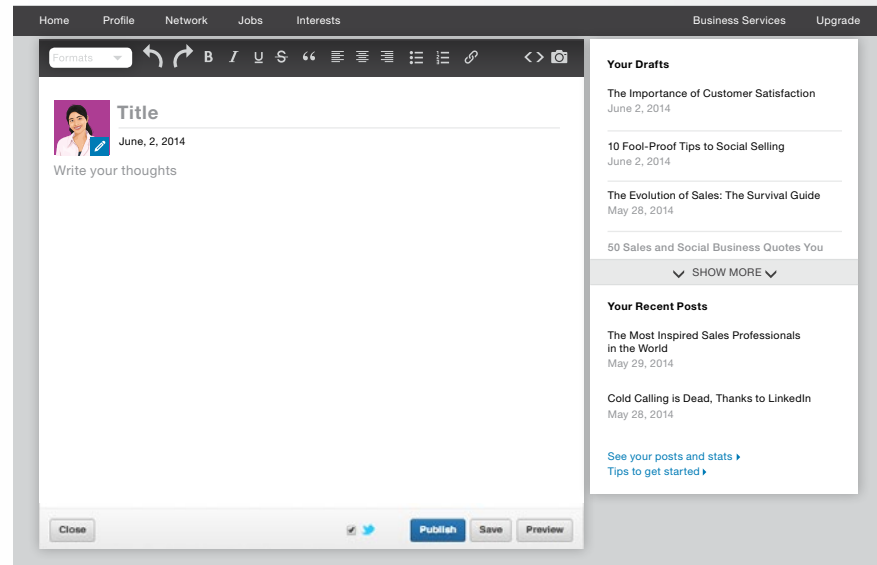
– **Tim Riesterer,**

Chief Strategy and Marketing Officer,
Corporate Visions

Social salespeople should take advantage of this, as well as the publishing capabilities of other social media platforms to consistently deliver knowledge that will enhance the lives and careers of the various people in their network.

The sorting functionality of LinkedIn makes it simple to both deliver universal information to your entire contact base, as well as ultra-relevant articles, blog posts, videos and so on to different members of your pipeline.

By being the person that prospects think of first when it comes to gaining the latest and greatest information about the field, the danger that they will perceive you as a “pushy salesperson” will virtually disappear. Instead, they will come to view you as a trusted problem solver. And, people buy from trusted problem solvers.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #10

“A significant buyer behavior trend is buyers today have become very active learners and knowledge seekers. Attempting to understand challenges and problems from many angles. It is important for social sellers to be in tune with helping connections learn. Taking care to not turn off connections with sales pitches disguised as insights and truly offering insights enabling earning and knowledge building.”



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– **Tony Zambito,**

Author of Buyer Persona blog

The sorting functionality of LinkedIn makes it simple to both deliver universal information to your entire contact base, as well as ultra-relevant articles, blog posts, videos and so on to different members of your pipeline.

STEP 6: BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

While growing your social network is vital, it's important to keep in mind that customers are first and foremost individual human beings. The best social salespeople treat them this way while working to uncover the unique needs that their products may be able to fulfill.

Relationships are not built between "Connections;" they are built between people. In the long run, people are much more likely to buy from someone they have a relationship with than from a semi-anonymous name and profile.

The information and insights you choose to share should not only stake your claim as the expert in your niche, but should also establish you as someone your prospects feel they actually know.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #11

"Check out the 'Viewers of this Profile Also Viewed' section. That's where you'll find the names of other potential decision makers within the account – including their boss, co-workers and direct reports. Having these additional names gives you more ways to get your foot in the door."



– **Jill Konrath**,
Bestselling Author "SNAP Selling"

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People Also Viewed



Claire Smith
Relationship Manager



Ed James
Client Services



Jimmy Barba
Sales Development




Monica Mayer
Account Executive



John Smith
Representative Manager

Sprinkle in a smattering of posts that are amusing, entertaining, or informative for their own sake. Share elements of your true personality — observations, tidbits, even fun updates about your friends and family. If someone lives in your geographic area, set up some time to have coffee simply to get to know them. The time you spend to create bonds with members of your social network will certainly pay you back in kind.



Koka Sexton
Sr. Social Marketing Manager LinkedIn | Social Selling | Transforming the way sales organizations do business
San Francisco Bay Area | Computer Software

CurrentLinkedIn

PreviousInsideView, Inc. Paragon Software, Acronis

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500+ connections

★ Relationship


Contact Info

Connected 1 year ago


Posts

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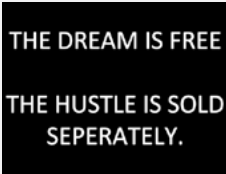
6,073 followers



If I were 22: Lessons from Basic Training
May 21, 2014



How Not to Sell like Gill from the Simpsons
May 20, 2014



It's all about the Hustle
April 17, 2014



Social Selling Transformation Tip #12

“Take advantage of LinkedIn’s saved search feature to learn of decision makers who are new in their jobs. Once you set up the saved search, LinkedIn will send you an email every week telling you who recently updated their LinkedIn profile and now meets the criteria used when you created the saved search. Decision makers who are new in their jobs are up to 10x more likely to switch vendors. Don’t wait too long after they get the job because research shows that about 50% of them will make a decision on who to switch to within the first 90 days of getting the job.”



– **Craig Elias,**

Chief Catalyst, Shift Selling Inc.

(and author of “Shift!: Turn Prospects Into Customers”)



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STEP 7: MEASURE HOW WELL YOU'VE ADOPTED SOCIAL SELLING

The best Social Selling tools and techniques are useless if the successes they facilitate cannot be replicated or improved. That's what effective measurement makes happen.

LinkedIn has built-in functionality to help salespeople, sales teams and sales managers determine how successfully they are engaging in Social Selling. One of the most powerful of these is an index score called the [Social Selling Index](#) or SSI.

The SSI takes into account many of the elements of successful Social Selling discussed above, including how effectively a salesperson has created their personal brand, found the right people, engaged with insights and built strong relationships. The SSI has been shown to be an accurate indicator of how likely salespeople who use these methods will be to hit their sales goals and how often they will fall short.

Overall, SSI measures your social selling performance based on these four activities on LinkedIn: create a professional brand, find the right people, engage with insights and build strong relationships. Each activity is measured on a 0-25 scale, then summed into an SSI score.



Click view the full infographic!



Social Selling Transformation Tip #13

“All too often, sales leadership relies on their gut to diagnose problem areas in the sales funnel and across the team. Unfortunately, that gut instinct is often inaccurate. In a world of Big Data and Sales 2.0, mounds of data is available to the leadership team. Top performing organizations are translating this data into specific diagnoses and customizing strategic initiatives to address these problem areas.”

– **Mark Roberge,**
Chief Revenue Officer, Hubspot



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According to a survey of 5,000 salespeople ...

- SSI high-scorers get **45%** more sales opportunities than others; and
- SSI high-scorers are **51%** more likely to hit quota than others.

Another way to track the impact of Social Selling is to use the reporting functions within third-party sales enablement tools. Because LinkedIn has become such an important vehicle for generating leads and sales, CRM tools like Salesforce.com have built-in capabilities for tracking which leads came from LinkedIn during the prospecting phase. Social salespeople should take full advantage of this functionality.

By establishing a measurement strategy from the earliest phases of a sales campaign, social salespeople can continually build on the successes made possible by following the advice given in the previous six steps.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #14

"The most important question to ask about measuring social media ROI is what will you get for this effort. The insights generated should shape your marketing strategies and boost performance. It is not necessary to seek perfection in ROI measures, but continually move forward in expanding capabilities. Even basic measures or ROI projections have an incredible effect on credibility with senior executives."

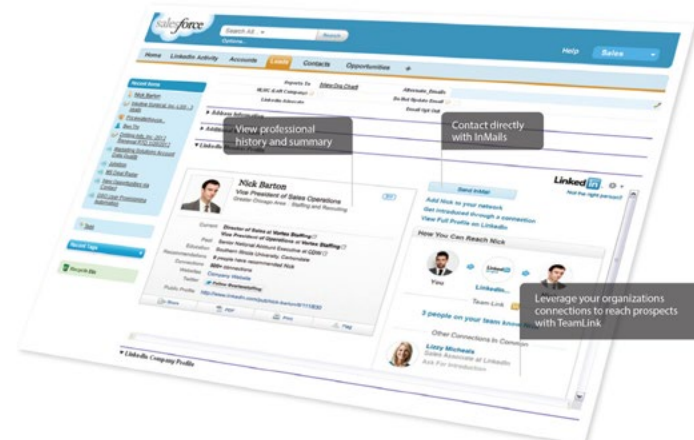


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– **Jim Lenskold,**

President, Lenskold Group (author of "Marketing ROI: The Path to Campaign, Customer, and Corporate Profitability")

LinkedIn with Salesforce



PUTTING THE SOCIAL WHEELS IN MOTION

It's not too often that the entire mechanism that powers a world economy flips upside down. Yet that is exactly what has happened with the rise of social media. For decades, if not centuries, the best salespeople were those who were comfortable engaging people on all levels and finding a mutual connection or shared need.

However, when everyone has a virtual universe of connections they can tap into at any moment, the old way of doing things no longer works.

The good news is that those who have a handle on the ancient human art of building relationships have a big advantage. Social Selling is nothing more than a way to make those relationships profitable for you on an immense scale.

When everyone has a virtual universe of connections they can tap into at any moment, the old way of doing things no longer works.



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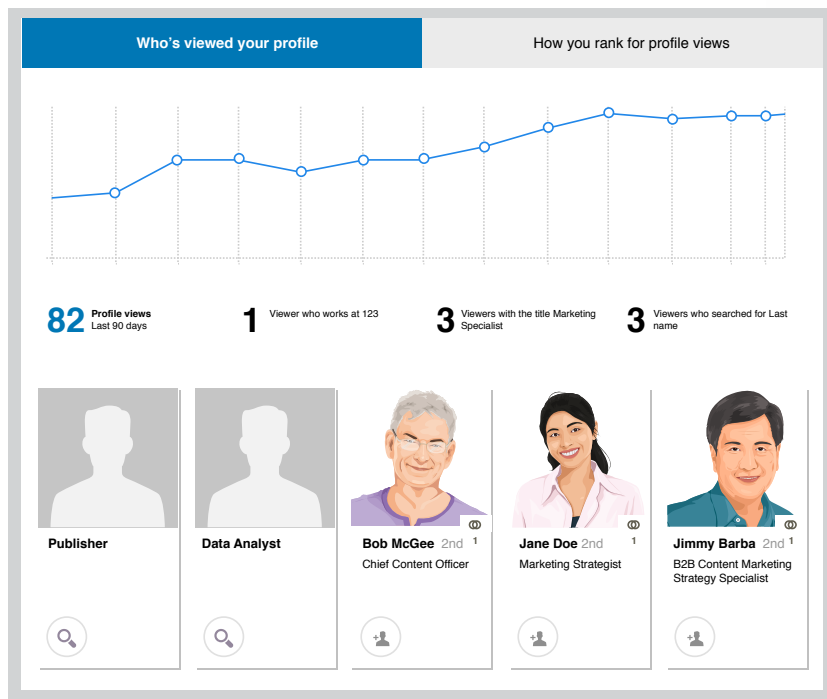
Social Selling Transformation Tip #15

“Recognize that not every insight is going to be relevant to every individual. Do your research and really take the time to personalize the insight to resonate most strongly with each person. Don't just go out and start blanketing the world with content. Really be thoughtful about what the content means for the prospect you're pursuing.”

– **Dario Priolo,**

Chief Strategy Officer,
Richardson Sales Training

By applying these seven steps to your own sales strategy or across your team, you will reduce inefficient cold calling, identify more qualified opportunities, and ultimately improve your sales and revenue goals.



Social Selling Transformation Tip #16

"You need to look at 'Who's Viewed Your Profile' on LinkedIn every single solitary day. This is who's looking at you. So when you look at who's reviewed your profile, you need to engage with them. My analogy with 'Who's Viewed Your Profile' is that it's as if someone

called your cell phone and they come up on caller ID but they didn't leave a message. If this is someone that you'd return the phone call to, reach out and connect with them. I've gotten so much business through engaging the people that have checked me out that were my second degree connections."



– **Brynne Tillman,**

President & CEO, Social Sales Link



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Social Selling Transformation Tip #17

"Check out recommendations. Who did your prospect recommend? Who recommended her? The people you uncover here might be good contacts for you as well."

– **Jill Konrath,**

Bestselling Author "SNAP Selling"



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ABOUT **DEMAND GEN** REPORT

Demand Gen Report is a targeted e-media publication spotlighting the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and, ultimately, drive growth. A key component of our coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts. For more information, visit www.demandgenreport.com.

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