



LinkedIn Sales Solutions

HOW-TO GUIDE

to

SOCIAL SELLING



INTRODUCTION

Why Read this eBook?

As much of the business-to-business (B2B) buying process continues to move online, social networks have become fundamental to the success of sales organizations. For example, According to [The Aberdeen Group](#), sales professionals who use social selling help best-in-class companies **achieve a 16 percent gain in year-over-year revenue**, four times better than at typical companies. The stories in this eBook illustrate similar results: increasing numbers of B2B salespeople are using social media to increase their revenue potential, exceed quota, prospect more effectively, and consistently create a more robust pipeline.

Social networks offer sales organizations new opportunities to connect with customers and close deals. This eBook provides a practical understanding of social selling and how companies are using social tools and tactics.

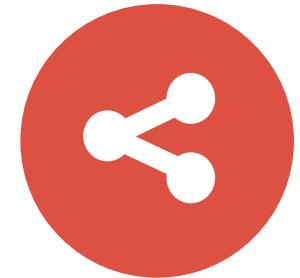
In this eBook you will learn:



How social changed the cold call



Social selling success stories from enterprise companies



How to create and leverage your personal/professional brand on social networks



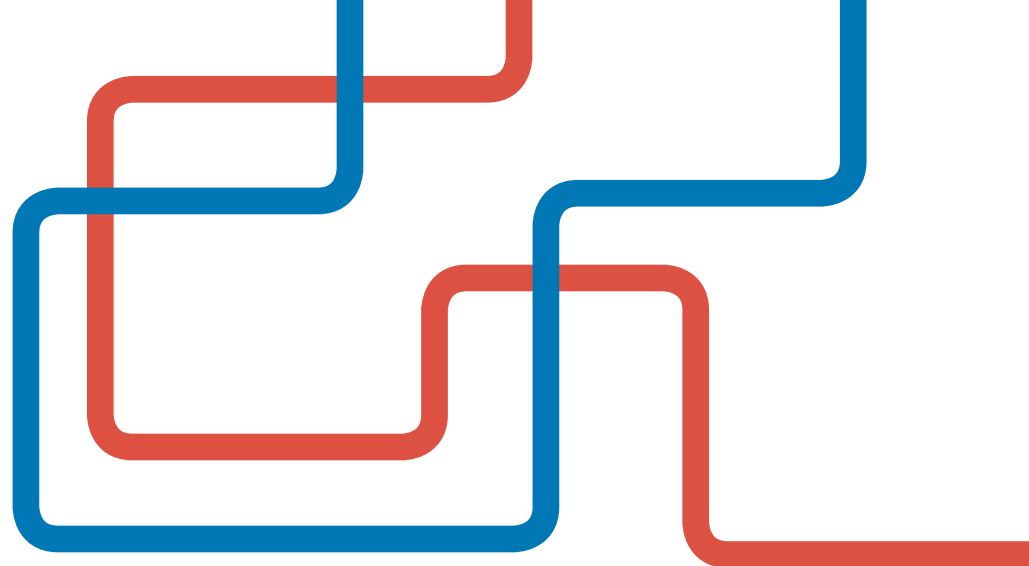
Tips to avoid a sales pitch on social media



What the future of social selling holds for B2B companies

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Inside are tips and insights from some of the sales industry's top thought leaders and award-winning social influencers. Read it today and find out how you can better leverage social selling to benefit your organization.



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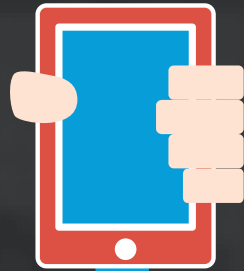
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THE
VALUE
of
SOCIAL
SELLING

THE VALUE OF SOCIAL SELLING

Businesses are constantly being introduced to new tools, technologies, and ways of connecting with customers. Because the sales organization is a company's revenue engine, successful sales executives keep their focus on tools and processes that will help move business forward.

Executives who found ways to leverage social networks to their advantage became early adopters; however, other sales organizations have yet to fully embrace social as a selling tool. In the podcast [*"Sales 2.0 Pioneer Anneke Seley Talks about Social Selling"*](#), Seley says executives' reaction to social selling is similar to reactions to earlier technological shifts that disrupted the way business was conducted.

When Seley founded Oracle's inside sales team, for example, many naysayers told her that connecting with prospects on the phone, particularly to sell a high-tech product, would not be as effective as face-to-face selling. "That's certainly true for a lot of opportunities, but there are many opportunities that can very effectively and efficiently be sold by phone," Seley says. "In the nineties, we had the emergence of the Internet in business, and we didn't really know what to do with email at the time. Many executives had their assistants printing out their email messages. But now we can't imagine doing business without email."

Seley says today is "the era of social business." "We're facing the same questions of 'How do I use it?' and 'How do I measure it?' that I have seen in other decades," she says. "For me, this is the evolution. What are the tools, what are the preferences, how has the world changed to have an impact on the way people buy and therefore the way we sell?"



THE VALUE OF SOCIAL SELLING

Not all B2B sales teams have incorporated social selling into their sales process, but many others have seen that social media can be transformative.

This is true for companies large and small, across all industries. Certain industry studies and experts are documenting these shifts; consider the following statistics:

LinkedIn data shows:

51%

Sales professionals who use LinkedIn for social selling are 51% more likely to exceed their sales quota than sales professionals who don't use LinkedIn for social selling.

3x

Sales professionals that use LinkedIn for social selling are 3X more likely to crush their sales quota for the year than any other sales rep.

1.6x

Directors that use LinkedIn for social selling get promoted 1.6X faster to VP.

THE VALUE OF SOCIAL SELLING

A Social Success Story: Hit 100% of monthly quota

NAME: Reis Inc.

ABOUT THE COMPANY: Reis, Inc. is the nation's most trusted provider of impartial commercial real estate performance information and analysis at the metro, submarket and property level.

PROBLEM: Reis wanted to maximize the effectiveness of their inside sales team by leveraging LinkedIn's vast network.

SOCIAL SELLING INITIATIVE: Sales Navigator empowered Rei's sales team by giving them the greatest access to LinkedIn's network.

RESULTS: Within the first three months of using Sales Navigator, one sales rep closed a deal that covered 100% of monthly quota; with the entire team reporting sales attributed to LinkedIn or enhanced by LinkedIn. Sales reps adopted Usage Reporting data to get key insights into their team's actions on LinkedIn and to keep their reps focused on the right activities. Investing in a premium sales tool showed reps showed reps that Reis is committed to their success and motivated them to perform at a higher level.





II



HOW

do we

**DEFINE
SOCIAL
SELLING**



HOW DO WE DEFINE SOCIAL SELLING?

The term “social selling” is still fairly new, and, even just five to 10 years ago, despite the explosive growth and popularity of social networks, many B2B executives believed that such social sites as Twitter and LinkedIn were distractions that would draw salespeople’s attention away from core selling activities.

They also believed that LinkedIn was largely a résumé repository, where salespeople would go to hunt for new jobs or be poached by the competition.

There is a growing awareness among sales leaders, however, that, at its core, social selling adheres to the same time-tested principles of sales success. Consider the definition of social selling put forth by LinkedIn’s global senior manager of social marketing, Koka Sexton, in his blog post “[The Rise of Social Selling](#).” He defines social selling as, “leveraging your professional brand to fill your pipeline with the right people, insights, and relationships.”

Sexton, who Forbes recently reported as ranking number one among the top 30 “[most influential social sales professionals online](#),” says that his own journey with social selling began when he was an inside sales rep and had no way of getting to know prospects the way field sales reps traditionally did—namely, through face-to-face interaction. “I didn’t get to go to their offices, so I never saw the pictures on their walls, their golf trophies, or whatever else might have helped me build rapport and a relationship,” Sexton says. “I just had a name, a phone number, and a title.”

Social media, he says, opened the door for him. “Suddenly I knew when they were on vacation and when they were coming back, who they were connected to in an organization, and what connections I might have in common with them.”

Leveraging your professional brand to fill your pipeline with the right people, insights, and relationships.



HOW DO WE DEFINE SOCIAL SELLING?

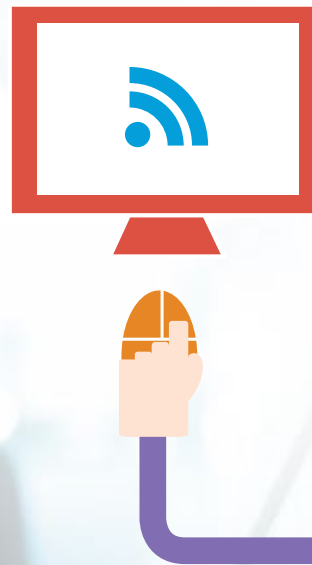
Selling Power Editors Answer Four Questions about Social Selling

1) Which network should I join?

Conflicting reports abound about which social networks will get the most traction for sales, but an obvious rule of thumb is to figure out where your customers are most likely to be and establish your presence there. Most surveys in the B2B marketing community list LinkedIn and Twitter as top choices; these sites have the largest number of users. (If you're after the biggest possible user base, [here's a list of the top 15 according to Alexa rankings.](#))

2) How can I maximize my time on social sites?

Staying on top of industry trends and news is key to building upon your expertise and expanding the respect and trust your connections have for you. LinkedIn Sales Navigator helps you stay informed and up-to-date with key insights to improve your sales workflow.



HOW DO WE DEFINE SOCIAL SELLING?

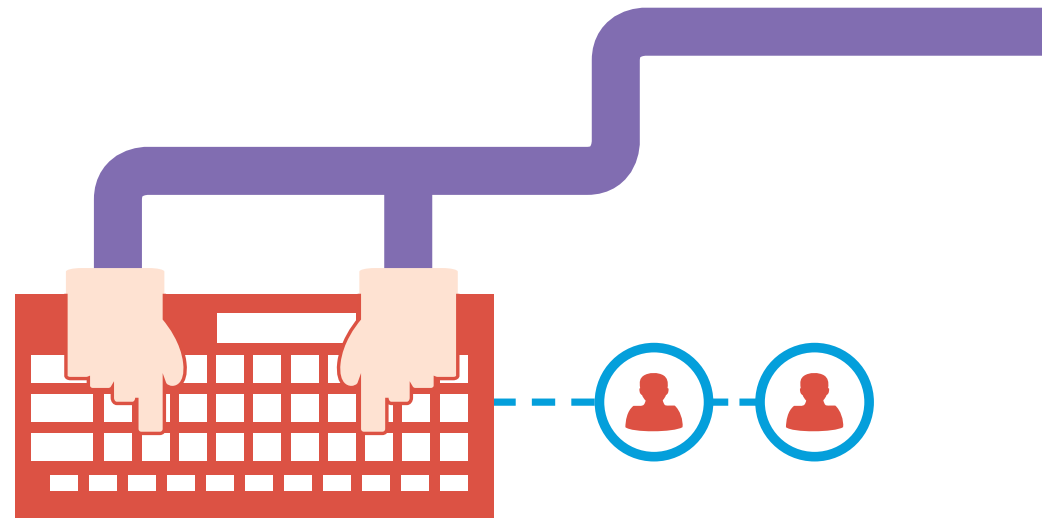
Selling Power Editors Answer Four Questions about Social Selling

3) How active should I be on social sites?

Ideally, you should be active daily, but it doesn't have to take up a lot of your time. You can use automated tools to schedule updates (even dozens of updates throughout the week, for example) so that your social accounts stay active, so that your social accounts stay active. Make sure to check the responses to your posts and shares and follow up when someone mentions your brand. Fifteen minutes every day should do it.

4) What's the best way to reach out to prospects on social media?

Before you reach out directly, find out all you can about them based on their social profiles. Visit their LinkedIn profile and check their Twitter timelines. Depending on how active they are, you might be able to find out far more than their full names, job titles, and work history. Be sure to use [TeamLink](#) to uncover the best way to get an introduction. Find common connections for warm introductions and minimize the need for cold calling.





III

PERSONAL BRANDING

and

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS



PERSONAL BRANDING AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Avoiding the Sales Pitch on Social Media

When you interact on social networks, don't be "sales-y." Your job as a social seller is to build relationships by offering advice and expertise, not information about your company's solutions and services. Building trust will pay off in the end. For example, if you notice a discussion on LinkedIn that's relevant to your brand and industry, share your advice without any pitch or product mentions. Your participation demonstrates your interest in being connected, staying current and making your mark where the newcomers to your industry will be."

To become a trusted advisor, salespeople should post about four times as much educational materials as product or company information. "Keep sending them educational materials, then drop in something on your company, and they will click on it," Sexton explains.

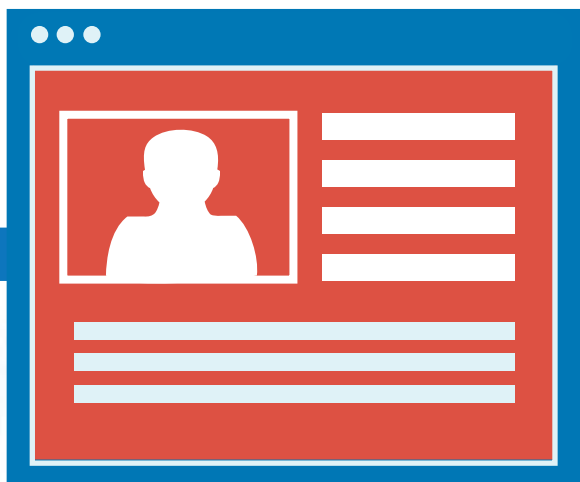
Reps can obtain educational materials from several sources. Plug keywords into Paper.li, and every morning it will put together the news on your favorite subjects. Key influencers in your industry publish on blogs or social streams. Use thought-leadership materials from your own company, as well. Don't go overboard, however. As Trish Bertuzzi, president and chief strategist of The Bridge Group, has said, "Excessive links to white papers, product briefs, your online demo, et cetera, isn't being helpful. It's spamming."

Social selling pioneers such as Sexton quickly realized how important it was to build a professional identity on social media. "Your prospects will be looking for people who have answers," says Sexton. "They'll be doing online searches to find solutions related to your product, and they'll want to know something about you before they get in touch. If they don't think you're reputable or knowledgeable, that hurts your chances of creating a relationship, and the worst thing of all is if they can't find you at all online. In that case, you're out of the game completely."



PERSONAL BRANDING AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

This is one of the most basic steps in getting started with social selling: to establish your professional brand on social networks. Here are some tips on how to optimize your online profile:



Use a professional headshot. Your profile picture doesn't mean stiff or formal; depending on your industry and preference, you might not even have to be wearing a suit. Avoid selfies or photos in which you're clearly at a social event.

Have a descriptive headline on your LinkedIn profile.

Your headline doesn't have to be your job title. According to an [award-winning Slideshare presentation](#) from Bertuzzi, your prospects might find "Customer-Centric B2B Software Sales Professional" more compelling than "Sales Executive."

Include a concise summary of your professional experience and work history. Your summary should explain what you've achieved for your company and customers—not what you've achieved for yourself.

Use applications such as HootSuite or Buffer to schedule and post your updates. This is a great way to stay consistently active on social media, even if you can't do so in real time. Consistent communication will increase your reputation as a reliable source of insight and information and put you in a great position to be seen as a trusted advisor.

PERSONAL BRANDING AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

How Social Changed the Cold Call

Many social selling experts say one of the biggest advantages of social media is that it has turned the cold call into “the warm call.” The ability to transform a cold call into a warm introduction/lead perfectly encapsulates the value of social for sales teams. Not only is cold calling an arduous and psychologically draining activity for many salespeople, it’s not nearly as effective as a socially informed approach.

According to a LinkedIn study, cold calls were ranked as the least effective way to gain the attention of B2B buyers. In fact, only 4% of B2B buyers said they would have a favorable impression of a salesperson who reached out cold. Meanwhile 87% of B2B buyers said they would have a favorable impression of a salesperson who was introduced to them through someone in their professional network.

Craig Rosenberg, cofounder of TOPO, remembers a caller who left a positive impression when, in a voicemail, she explained how much she admired the content on Rosenberg’s popular blog, the Funnelholic. “This was at a time when I was getting about 50 cold calls a week,” he says. “She just projected a lot of energy, and she said, ‘Whether we work together or not, I just think your content is amazing, and I’d love to talk with you for five minutes.’” Rosenberg ended up calling her back.

“Primarily, I called her back because I was so impressed that she had done her research, and I could tell her enthusiasm was genuine,” Rosenberg says. “For me, this situation was probably a bit unique because I blog so much, but I do believe that there is knowledge waiting out there on the Internet and social media that sales professionals can use to change the way they have a conversation with a prospect. It goes from, ‘Hey, do you want to buy my stuff?’ to ‘Hey, I have some great ideas for you because I see you’re doing X, and I’d love to talk about how I can help you in the same way I’ve helped others.’”



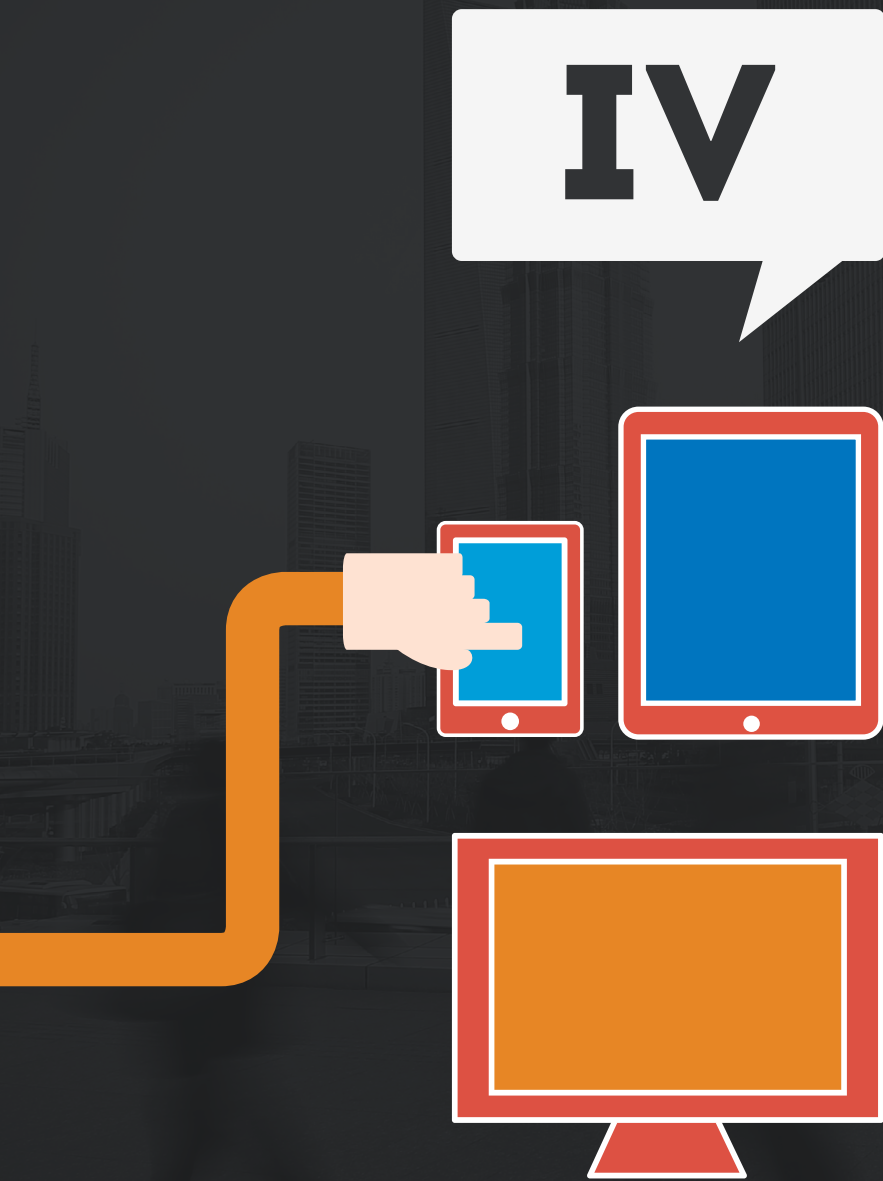
IV

USING

SOCIAL

to

**BUILD
PIPELINE**



USING SOCIAL TO BUILD PIPELINE

Sales professionals know that the key to closing more deals is not necessarily generating more leads, it's generating the right leads. These days, one of the best ways to build a robust sales pipeline is to generate those leads using LinkedIn.

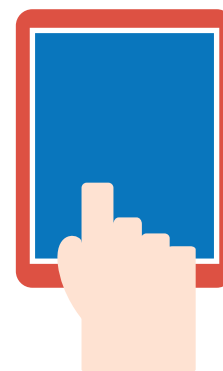
Although many people think LinkedIn is just a place to post your résumé or hunt for a job, it actually represents a way you can strategically build pipeline and nurture relationships. Sexton says there are two basic steps to leveraging the LinkedIn Sales Navigator for better pipeline results.

Step 1: Search LinkedIn's 318 million members and see what information is available about prospects on their profile pages. This alone can tell you a lot, and when your network is big enough, you can often request that one of your first-degree connections introduce you to a third-degree connection.

Step 2: Use LinkedIn as an engagement platform. Via status updates or comments in groups, start sharing content or responding to content posted by others. As Sexton says, these interactions add up to stronger relationships, which can help build pipeline and reduce churn.

"The more engaged you are with [buyers], the harder it is for them to break with you...If you engage through social media throughout the year, at year-end, they know you."

—Koka Sexton





USING SOCIAL TO BUILD PIPELINE

In fact, social selling solves one of sales professionals' biggest conundrums: the loss of contact with "influencers" (either at prospect companies or within existing, strategic accounts) whenever a contact changes jobs or moves to a new role.

Today, many businesses report that they must work with, on average, four individuals to close a sale (see the [CSO Insights 2012 Sales Performance Optimization Study](#)). If even one of those individuals drops out of the organization, pending deals can be jeopardized. Consider social selling your insurance against such situations. Social connections allow for a "multi-threading" approach, wherein reps establish a much wider network of influencers within a key account or prospect company.

The ability to connect with more people within the same organization makes salespeople less vulnerable to changes they can't control.

Matt Heinz, president of Heinz Marketing, Inc., has heard numerous stories from clients who have leveraged social as a channel for establishing trusted relationships with customers. "One of the most impressive stories was when a client did a split test between cold calling and social prospecting—same pitch, same general sales process, except that half of the time, the team was still cold calling, good names and companies but otherwise smiling and dialing, and the other half of the time they were mining the social Web for buying signals and trigger events. The social selling work generated a 50 percent increase in opportunities created."

Heinz says he is convinced these results were not because those particular leads "happened to be warmer." He continues, "The social context in which the lead was received and responded to accelerated the path to rapport and trust. The qualifying conversations demonstrated that more of those prospects were qualified, interested, and ready to engage."

USING SOCIAL TO BUILD PIPELINE

Use CRM to Tie Social Selling to Revenue

To identify measurable results from your social selling efforts, start leveraging your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Start with these simple tips from Sales For Life founder and social selling training expert Jamie Shanks.

- 1) Create CRM tabs, one in Accounts and one in Opportunities. Use these tabs to monitor and measure social selling success.
- 2) Think of LinkedIn as its own lead source. Have a tab in Accounts to track where your sales team is acquiring net new company information for the CRM (LinkedIn must be one of the choices).
- 3) Do the same in the Opportunities tab, but now view LinkedIn as a business-development action that results in Opportunities. LinkedIn must also be one of these actions that drive opportunities. Now, with a simple reporting dashboard, you can clearly understand the return on investing time in LinkedIn and/or any social selling platform or activity.



USING SOCIAL TO BUILD PIPELINE

Enterprise Success Stories

As B2B companies partner with vendors, more success stories are emerging that link social selling initiatives to increased pipeline velocity, lead conversions, and efficiency. Here are a few:



Weight Watchers (Corporate Programs)

In addition to its consumer brand, Weight Watchers has added a corporate sales initiative targeted at companies wanting to offer employees the option to take part in the Weight Watchers program.

Duncan Ellis, national corporate sales manager at Weight Watchers Australasia, explains that the main challenge was determining how to build a targeted database of decision makers. “We had previously relied to a large extent on organic growth to drive corporate sales, but we needed a more proactive approach,” Ellis explains.

By partnering with LinkedIn and adopting its Sales Navigator solution, **Weight Watchers tripled its database of corporate sales leads within the first six months of adoption** and saw an increase in both response rates (by 20 percent) and conversion rates. Says Ellis, “LinkedIn gave our corporate business managers the opportunity to have direct, high-level conversations with decision makers, which was a huge factor in building quality leads and an improved conversation rate.”

USING SOCIAL TO BUILD PIPELINE

PayPal

Currently, more than 5.5 million Australian consumers rely on PayPal when transacting online or on a mobile device. Paul Weingarth, head of field sales at PayPal Australia, was looking for a quicker way to provide his team with more accurate leads and to move away from purchasing rich data that required costly data scrubbing.

“We don’t need all that rich data, just a company name, and then we go to LinkedIn, search, and find the right person. It reduces sales cycles and provides more opportunities,” says Weingarth.

In addition to achieving a nearly 3,000 percent return on their investment in LinkedIn, **PayPal reduced sales cycles by 25 percent** and established multiple threading through its accounts. Weingarth explains that this multi-threaded approach has helped eliminate the risk of losing opportunities, as in the past there was only one reliable key contact within any given account. Thanks to LinkedIn, the PayPal team now has a secure foothold, and accounts are not nearly as vulnerable to churn.

National Bank of Canada (NBC)

In a highly regulated and security-minded industry, National Bank of Canada (NBC) needed more digitally savvy mentors and thought leaders to help it leverage social media to prospect, engage with customers, differentiate its brand, and showcase its experts’ knowledge.

Adopting LinkedIn Sales Navigator in conjunction with an educational curriculum had a direct impact on sales of financial products. Results from this initiative exceeded expectations by generating a more than **400 percent return on investment to NBC within the first 10 months**. Data also shows that **sales reps using LinkedIn Sales Navigator are 5.2 times more successful than their peers**. Moreover, NBC wholesalers are now seen as highly respected experts in the field: NBC advisors who studied the curriculum saw, on average, **a 33 percent increase in connections**.



THE
FUTURE
of
SOCIAL
SELLING

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SELLING

Many companies are either reluctant to embrace social media for sales or are still moving slowly in doing so. Industry experts and analysts believe that these companies will be left behind within the next five to 10 years.

Jill Rowley, who designed and deployed an online social selling training program for Oracle's global sales force, says the reluctance is understandable at companies that "have been around a long time and are used to having control." She says, however, that C-level executives must take action now to ensure future success.

"We live in a collaborative economy," Rowley told Mark Schaefer in a YouTube interview ("Social Selling with Jill Rowley and Mark Schaefer"). **"By 2025, 75 percent of the workforce will be Millennials.** [They] were born digital, born mobile, born social. They are used to having untethered access to information, to people...In 2020, **50 percent of the workforce will be Millennials...**Those are our employees, those are our customers, those are our partners. Businesses must evolve."

Heinz envisions a future when "social selling" is simply seen as "selling." "Do you really want to keep cold calling?" he asks, "or would you prefer to respond to buying signals and trigger events that immediately give you rapport, context, and engagement from more prospects?"

He adds that, in the short-term, sales professionals and sales organizations who embrace social selling will "run circles" around their peers and competition. "They will win the race to build credibility and preference with their prospects before competitors even show up or know what's going on," he says. "Medium-term, more organizations will be able to map their social selling activities directly to pipeline contribution and closed business. Today, that attribution tracking is spotty at best, but I believe once we see the direct tie between social selling practices and pipeline velocity, efficiency, and conversions, it will become impossible."



THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SELLING

Sexton predicts that social selling will be the norm in five years. “We are about a year away from the tipping point, when we get to critical mass.” When that happens, Sexton predicts that the following will occur:

Salespeople will be hired based on their social footprint.

For example, a company selling medical devices in Michigan will look for a rep with that or a closely related social identity. “They won’t hire a nonmedical rep from California, because he will not have the connections.”

The line between sales and marketing will blur even further as salespeople do their own micromarketing. Reps are already good at one-to-one and one-to-few communication. “What happens when, instead of calling ten people on the phone, they can do four social media updates a day, reaching 15,000 people?” Sexton asks.

Reps who are already responsible for about 70 percent of their leads and revenue may increase that share by becoming their own marketers. Save people who are important to you to see their updates on your homepage, Account Pages, or on their profiles, so you’ll always know what’s going on.

“If you want to know the most important paper on a subject, Google will tell you,” Sexton observes, “but if you want to know the hottest paper today, Twitter will tell you in real time before it bubbles up a week later on Google.”



ABOUT THE EXPERTS QUOTED IN THIS BOOK

Koka Sexton

Koka Sexton is one of the most recognized social experts in the technology industry. With more than 10 years of experience in sales roles, he frequently speaks about social at global speaking engagements and customer trainings. He is currently senior social marketing manager at LinkedIn.

linkedin.com

Anneke Seley

Anneke Seley is the founder of Reality Works Group. As the 12th employee at Oracle, she was the architect of Oracle's groundbreaking inside sales team. She is coauthor of Sales 2.0: Improve Business Results Using Innovative Sales Practices and Technology (www.sales20book.com) and a frequent speaker on innovative sales practices and technology.

realityworksgroup.com

Trish Bertuzzi

Trish Bertuzzi is president and chief strategist of The Bridge Group, a consulting firm that helps sales and marketing leaders make big decisions about implementation strategy, process to improve performance, supporting technology, and metrics and measurement. In the process, The Bridge Group has worked with more than 190 business-to-business technology clients to build, expand, and optimize their inside sales efforts.

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ABOUT THE EXPERTS QUOTED IN THIS BOOK

Matt Heinz

As president of Heinz Marketing, Heinz brings more than 15 years of marketing, business development, and sales experience from a variety of organizations, vertical industries, and company sizes. His career has focused on delivering measurable results for his employers and clients in the way of greater sales, revenue growth, product success, and customer loyalty.

heinzmarketing.com

Jamie Shanks

Jamie Shanks is managing partner of Sales for Life, where he leads the world's definitive social-selling training program.

salesforlife.com

Jill Rowley

Jill Rowley is founder and chief evangelist of Jill Rowley #SocialSelling. Formerly, she headed social selling and social business evangelism and enablement at Oracle and was EloQueen at Eloqua.

jillrowley.com

LinkedIn Sales Solutions

ABOUT US

LinkedIn Sales Navigator makes it simple to establish and grow relationships with prospects and customers by helping you tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of 300M+ members. Designed for sales professionals, LinkedIn Sales Navigator combines LinkedIn's network data, relevant news sources, and your accounts, leads, and preferences to produce customized recommendations and insights.

With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can focus on the right people and companies, stay up-to-date on what's happening with your accounts, and build trust with your prospects and customers.

For more information, please visit our [Sales Solutions](#) site.

