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# How Sales and Marketing Partner for Social Media Success

Social selling is most effective when individual salespeople, along with sales executives and marketing leaders, become advocates for the process.

While social selling requires a change in mindset from the traditional way of engaging with prospects, the return on investment in social selling is undeniable. According to Aberdeen's *Social Selling Impact Report*, 73% of salespeople using social selling as part of their sales process outperformed their sales peers and exceeded quota 23% more often. In 2015, the 20% of enterprises employing social media beyond marketing will lead their industries in growth, according to Gartner's report, *Social Is Here, Where Is The ROI?* 

"By connecting buyers and sellers through social selling, these social buyers are spending more budget, more often. Lead with insights and you are five times more likely to get engaged and build your pipeline faster," said Koka Sexton, Senior Social Manager for LinkedIn. While the benefits of social selling are clear, many are still trying to sort out the most effective ways to engage with prospects and customers through this new approach to selling. Two-thirds of companies have no social media strategy for their sales organization, according to the study *Social Media and the Sales Organization* from the Sales Management Association.



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—Koka Sexton, Senior Social Manager, LinkedIn

"To succeed at social selling really requires a cross-functional collaboration between sales, sales leadership, marketing, sales enablement and sales training," said Jill Rowley, a social selling evangelist and consultant. "It is all about putting them together to really drive the social selling agenda."

While sales and marketing alignment is integral to the selling process no matter how or where the interactions take place, social selling provides a unique set of challenges and responsibilities:

- Individual sales professionals want to connect with their buyers on LinkedIn and other social networks, but they need some guidance in terms of what content to share and how to reach out to prospects;
- Sales leaders want to encourage a social selling mindset, but they lack the training material and resources to encourage a social selling environment; and
- Marketing needs to communicate with the sales team and sales leadership about the content and best practices for engaging with buyers in a new way.

This E-Book will take an in-depth look at each of these roles and how they play a part in the move toward a social selling environment. "To succeed at social selling really requires a cross-functional collaboration between sales, sales leadership, marketing, sales enablement and sales training."



—Jill Rowley, social selling evangelist and consultant



Social Selling for the Salesperson: Identify and Connect With Prospects Sales professionals typically think of social media as a way of connecting with clients. They meet a prospect at an event and immediately send them a LinkedIn request to add them to their network. But savvy social sellers are using LinkedIn and other social media to research, prospect, engage and close.

It's not just about amassing connections, though. Truly connecting with a prospect is about beginning an exchange that adds value for the buyer beyond a list of product features.

"Social selling works best when the sales reps are directly engaged — making themselves trusted sources of information, insights and advice," said Matt Heinz, President of Heinz Marketing Group. "This requires a disciplined approach and regular execution, but it's clear that reps who invest in this today are driving higher, more consistent pipelines and success."

At minimum, sales reps should look to their marketing counterparts to highlight content worth sharing, Heinz explained. "They should also work closely with their peers to identify new, operational best practices to more efficiently identify buying signals, engage with prospects, and manage a wider network of prospective buyers." Salespeople should be using social media to listen for opportunities, said Jim Keenan, CEO/ President of A Sales Guy Consulting, a sales consulting firm. "They need to be listening to what customers and prospects are saying on social media. There is no excuse why they don't know what is going on."

"Social selling works best when the sales reps are directly engaged — making themselves trusted sources of information, insights and advice."



–Matt Heinz, President, Heinz Marketing Group Some of the typical tasks of a salesperson that can be enhanced with social selling:

- Identifying and filling the funnel with relevant companies and prospects;
- Qualifying new leads, and researching companies and individuals prior to contacting; and
- Discovering compelling sales events to drive relevant conversation and qualify deal timelines.

### Developing a Profile That Resonates With Prospects

As buyers are also researching you and your company, it is critical to optimize your LinkedIn and other social media profiles to resonate with prospects.

"The salesperson's social media profile is one of their most basic sales tools, and it should be presented in a way that's customer-centric," said Alex Hisaka, Content Marketing Manager at LinkedIn. "So everything from your summary to your headline should be structured in a way that makes sense for the prospects and companies that [you, the salesperson] want to go after."

Uploading projects and rich media presentations can also bolster the online presence of a salesperson. "By providing samples of your work and relevant presentations, the prospect can immediately get a sense of who you are and how your offering can be relevant to their business," Hisaka said. "It's really the online reputation of the salesperson."

#### Tools for the Individual Salesperson

Sales Navigator helps salespeople stay focused on the right people and companies as they incorporate social selling into their daily routine, according to Alex Hisaka, Content Marketing Manager at LinkedIn. "You're not doing cold outreach; you're not making connections with people that might not be the best fit for your company."

#### With Sales Navigator, salespeople can:

- Increase pipeline size and quality;
- Boost selling time;
- Decrease research time;
- Shorten sales cycle;
- · Develop more accurate forecasts;
- · Increase call response rate; and
- Decrease data entry.

Prospecting is at the heart of the salesperson's job — they are looking for the types of accounts that they want to acquire and following those prospects.

LinkedIn's Lead Recommendations tool examines a salesperson's historical and saved leads, and presents them with similar decision makers and influencers.

LinkedIn's Lead Builder also helps the salesperson build their lead lists and track prospects' activity — what they're posting, who they're following and what kind of company information or news that they're sharing, among other updates.

Sales Navigator's Account Pages feature provides company updates and information on new and existing relationships.

"Sales Navigator is vital to my day-to-day sales efforts," said Christine Sather, CRM National Business Development Manager for RBA, a digital technology consultancy. "It enables me to broaden my access, target more precisely and sell more efficiently."

### What Is SSI?

For a successful selling effort, it is important to track how well the new approach is being adopted by the individual salesperson, as well as the team.

The Social Selling Index (SSI) is a consolidated metric to determine how well the salesperson has adopted social selling.

There are four components to an SSI score: creating a professional brand, finding the right people, engaging them with insights and building strong relationships.

Each area is worth 25 points, with a total maximum score of 100.

#### Salespeople With A Higher SSI Get Results

The Social Selling Index (SSI) is predictive of sales success. SSI leaders — those with a score over 70 — consistently outperform their counterparts who have an average of 22.8. Those with high SSI scores:



Create 45% more opportunities per quarter than SSI laggards;



Surpass sales goals, as they are 51% more likely to exceed quota; and



laggards.

"[Salespeople] need to be listening to what customers and prospects are saying on social media. There is no excuse why they don't know what is going on."



–Jim Keenan, CEO/ President of A Sales Guy Consulting

### Steps for Building Your SSI

From the perspective of the individual salesperson, as well as the overall sales team, metrics matter. As companies adopt a social selling approach, it is important to keep a pulse on how well the strategy is being embraced on the individual and team level. That's where the Social Selling Index (SSI) comes in.

Dan Lurie, Senior Insights Analyst at LinkedIn, provided some insights on building the four pillars of the SSI score:

**Create a professional brand.** "Buyers have to feel confident that you are the right person to help them," Lurie said. "Your profile should not be about touting your achievements, but relating your strengths to the buyer's needs."

**Find the right people.** "It is not just about finding individuals, but how the salesperson is performing when it comes to finding the influencers," Lurie explained. "It is not just about going high to find senior level people; it is about finding the *right* people."

**Engage with insights.** "As buyers are 60% of the way through the process before they speak to a salesperson, it is important to change your mindset on how you engage with the prospect before you speak to them and once you get the opportunity to speak with them," Lurie said. "They don't want to know just about what's going on in your industry. They want industry insights so they feel confident in you as a salesperson and your company overall."

**Build strong relationships.** "Relationships matter in the world of selling more than ever," Lurie noted. "It is important to understand and measure how reps are making those connections."



### Social Selling For Sales Leadership: Inspire and Coach

The job of the sales leader is to inspire, coach and manage their team. Successful sales leaders optimize execution among their sales team by coaching and enabling reps with the tools and strategies to perform at peak efficiency. More than two-thirds (64%) of teams that use social selling hit quota compared to 49% that don't, according to Aberdeen's *Social Selling Impact Report*.

"The goal of social is to connect personally, and for the sales leader this requires the recognition that their sales team needs to be skilled appropriately based on role, redirecting training resources and adapting competency models to include this skill," said Joe Galvin, Chief Research Officer and EVP at Miller Heiman.

Sales leadership should encourage their team not only to build their own profile and knowledge, but to promote the company's thought leadership. "Encourage your sales team to develop and nurture their own networks by sharing the company's thought leadership and promotional campaigns with their network," said Jim Brodo, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Richardson, a sales training and management solutions provider. "They should be sharing relevant headlines about your firm or news taking place in the sector." "The goal of social is to connect personally, and for the sales leader this requires the recognition that their sales team needs to be skilled appropriately based on role, redirecting training resources and adapting competency models to include this skill."



–Joe Galvin, Chief Research Officer and EVP, Miller Heiman



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### Getting the Team On Board

The best leaders lead by example, and social selling won't work unless the sales leader is on board and practicing the basics of social selling. Tom Eggemeier, Chief Customer Officer and EVP of Global Sales for Genesys, a provider of multi-channel customer experiences and contact center solutions, said he engages regularly on social media to set an example for his sales team.

Sales teams perform best when they have a leader they want to emulate, Eggemeier noted. "In my view, salespeople are uncertain as to how to use LinkedIn and other social media tools to be successful. However, if a salesperson can replicate an approach that has been successful — and ideally they are following the behavior of sales leadership — for an easy win, they will do it."

It is the role of the sales leader not only to practice what they preach, but also to highlight the successes of the sales team, Eggemeier explained. "We have a vice president of the West Coast who is our top salesperson and, through no coincidence, the most active social seller. My job is to have her engaging with marketing so that they can know what content she has been sharing and what has been successful and to promote internally."

### The Benefits of Sales Navigator for the Sales Leader

Sales leaders are leading an army of sales reps, so it is essential to have an overall view of the team's performance to help maximize resources and ensure that your sales team is operating at peak efficiency. Sales Navigator enables sales leadership to:

- Access a single source of sales intelligence for sales reps to accelerate research;
- Simplify and promote best practices and productivity across the sales team;
- Retain top talent by empowering sales reps with tools to help them achieve quota;
- Forecast more accurately with real-time insight that is easy to digest; and
- Gain additional visibility into the value of sales intelligence.





If a tool is going to help a salesperson meet his or her quota, they are eager to get on board. However, it is the role of the sales leader to ensure that those tools are quick and easy to use so that they will be adopted.

"It's not just a matter of marketing creating the messaging, but it's a matter of being able to enable the salesperson to quickly and easily share that," LinkedIn's Hisaka said. "Then that helps the sales leadership make the case for social selling. They can then say, 'Listen, guys, two seconds you hit the button, you're sharing all this information and valuable stuff with your followers, building leads, how tough is that?'"

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—Tom Eggemeier, Chief Customer Officer and EVP of Global Sales, Genesys

#### New Horizons Sales Team Boosts SSI By 54%

New Horizons Computer Learning Centers, a provider of online and classroom-style IT training courses, was evolving from an inside sales model several years ago. As part of that transition, COO Tynan Fischer wanted to adopt a social selling approach and, as a result, began using LinkedIn Sales Navigator and SSI scores to track how effective his team was at adopting this new approach to selling.

The results:

- The team's SSI score went from 39 to 60;
- \$1.7M in opportunities were identified in 6 months, with a 57% close rate; and
- The contact database grew 73%.

As part of the process, Fischer worked with marketing to develop a standard LinkedIn profile that his team could adopt. "We needed every profile to have a professional photo. We needed to get away from the sales team talking about how many quarters they had reached quota or made the president's club to messaging that would communicate what they could do for buyers."

Fischer also instituted a daily social media selling schedule. "From 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., they were to be distributing approved content, whether it was third-party content or Horizons content. From 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., they were to identify 10 leads on LinkedIn, and spend three minutes on each profile to learn about the person and reach out." Social Selling For Marketers: Creating Content, Establishing Processes Marketers and demand generation professionals take the lead when it comes to developing and distributing content, which takes center stage in social selling. A B2B decision maker views five pieces of content before they are ready to speak with a sales rep, according to *Better Lead Yield in the Content Marketing Field* from the CMO Council.

Social selling is a new sales skill that the sales professional must develop and master, but they can't go it alone. "Left to their own devices, salespeople will create and broadcast whatever messages they find interesting, which translates into dilution — and worse — mutation of the brand message and market messages," explained Miller Heiman's Galvin.

Content and top-of-funnel lead generation has long been the domain of the marketing department. However, the roles of marketing and demand generation teams have significantly expanded over the past several years. In addition to researching markets, finding, enriching and qualifying leads, marketing and demand gen teams are now responsible for moving leads further down the pipeline. Helping the sales team and the sales leaders define a social selling strategy is part of that job.

When implemented properly, social selling enables sales professionals to become an extension of marketing. "It is really our job as marketers to empower the sales team, and marketing takes responsibility for creating platforms to make social selling a success."



-Meagen Eisenberg, VP of Customer Marketing and Acquisition, DocuSign

#### Benefits of Sales Navigator For Marketing

Marketing is an integral part of a social selling strategy, developing the messaging and processes to help move the sales process to the social realm. Sales Navigator helps marketing:

- Reduce cost per lead or opportunity;
- Increase open rate, click-through rates and conversions;
- Increase pipeline;
- Target messaging; and
- Expand target market.

"The role of marketing is to provide a complete toolbox for success to your sales team," Heinz said. "Marketing cannot only create processes and content to be used on the front lines, but they can centrally identify social leads, buying signals and trigger events on prospects that are worth pursuing. Create specific processes to enable all social leads to integrate into your marketing automation system, lead scoring and sales CRM as appropriate."

Marketing is tasked with making sure that there are enough prospects in the pipeline, and that leads are segmented by industry and type of business, among other responsibilities. Social selling is more successful when there is a demand generation structure in place.

"It is really our job to empower the sales team, and marketing takes responsibility for creating platforms to make social selling a success," said Meagen Eisenberg, VP of Customer Marketing and Acquisition at DocuSign, a provider of digital transaction management technology. "Marketing is looking at the leads that are coming in, how they are being managed and how they are activating into deals."

To make the most of social selling efforts, Eisenberg recommended taking a content inventory. "You're not going to be effective in social selling unless you know what content is available and which content aligns with the buyer's journey."

#### The Payoff of Sales And Marketing Alignment

Social selling is most effective when sales and marketing collaborate on everything from defining lead targets to content, such as LinkedIn profiles and other content shared on social media.

"We really find that social selling, and selling in general, is most effective when sales lets us know what they want," said Meagen Eisenberg, VP of Customer Marketing and Acquisition at DocuSign. "And it all starts with identifying the target so that we can build messaging and strategies around the ideal prospect."

One area where marketing can add value is helping the sales team and sales leaders understand how to use content more effectively during the social selling process. "One thing we were finding was that marketing was putting out a lot of great content," said Tynan Fischer, COO of New Horizons Computer Learning Centers. Social selling training and collaboration marketing helped New Horizons get over the hump. "It has made a profound difference in getting our sales team to think differently about how they work with content," said Fischer "With marketing's input, there is a natural progression of how the team should be sharing content. This collaboration has gotten our sales [team] to stop focusing on their own sales cycle and how they want a deal to progress, to focusing on the buyer's journey."

"The role of marketing is to provide a complete toolbox for success to your sales team."



–Matt Heinz, President, Heinz Marketing Group

#### Conclusion

Social selling requires a total commitment from everyone in the organization — from marketing and demand generation specialists to the individual salesperson to sales leadership.

Social selling is being adopted by progressive organizations that recognize the need to maximize their interactions with potential buyers and meet them where and when they're looking for information. In today's always-on environment, that means being active on social media channels. More than three-quarters (78%) of salespeople using social media outsell their peers, according to the *Social Media and Sales Quota* survey, conducted by A Sales Guy Consulting and Social Centered Selling.

To maximize social selling success, the various parts of the organization need a cohesive plan, along with the tools, strategies and metrics to see that the vision is being executed.

- Marketing can provide guidance as to the content, tone and cadence of social interactions;
- Salespeople can build their professional brand, find the right prospects, engage with insights and build strong relationships to bolster their SSI score; and
- Sales leadership can model behavior for the sales team to emulate, track the adoption of social selling techniques and highlight successes.

With a cohesive effort, social selling provides a tremendous payoff in identifying the right leads, communicating with them effectively and continuously interacting with prospects on social media channels to close more deals.

