



**THE NEW ERA
OF THE COLD CALL:**
COMBINING INSIDE SALES TOOLS
WITH SOCIAL SELLING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Using social networks such as LinkedIn have proven to be impactful over the years for sales professionals. Cold calling, though revered by some, is quickly losing its ability to get a decision-maker's attention. Decision-makers rarely pick up their phones from unknown numbers, and voice mails are quickly treated like unwanted distractions and deleted.

There is a blend of the two worlds that is rarely discussed, but that needs to be addressed. On one side is the phone, a tool that's been used for decades. Probably the single most effective tool for sales professionals, the phone allowed them to scale in unprecedented ways until email came along. The issue that has come to fruition is that the phone – and even email – are interruptive tactics. While they do have a success rate (though it's declining), these are the tools that traditional sales professionals and leaders have come to trust.

On the other hand is social media. Traditionally adopted by marketing, social networks have been used as a broadcast tool and more recently as a place to build communities. When used by sales

professionals in the right way, social networks become one of the most effective applications to connect, communicate and generate pipeline. Social selling is fairly new, but the impact it is having around the world has become more evident as companies are able to attribute revenue to these activities.

Neither of these are mutually exclusive. A sales professional can continue only using the phone and dialing for dollars, or they can go all-in with social networks such as LinkedIn, and find some success there. However, there is also a way these tactics can be combined to maximize results.

The reality is that even though social selling is highly effective, getting your decision-makers on the phone is still necessary in most sales cycles. Moving from online to offline with efficiency is the key. With this being true, sales professionals need to become experts in both, and sales leaders need to adopt new applications to ensure the success of their teams.

In social selling, you need to leverage your professional brand to identify the right people and fill your pipeline by using insights

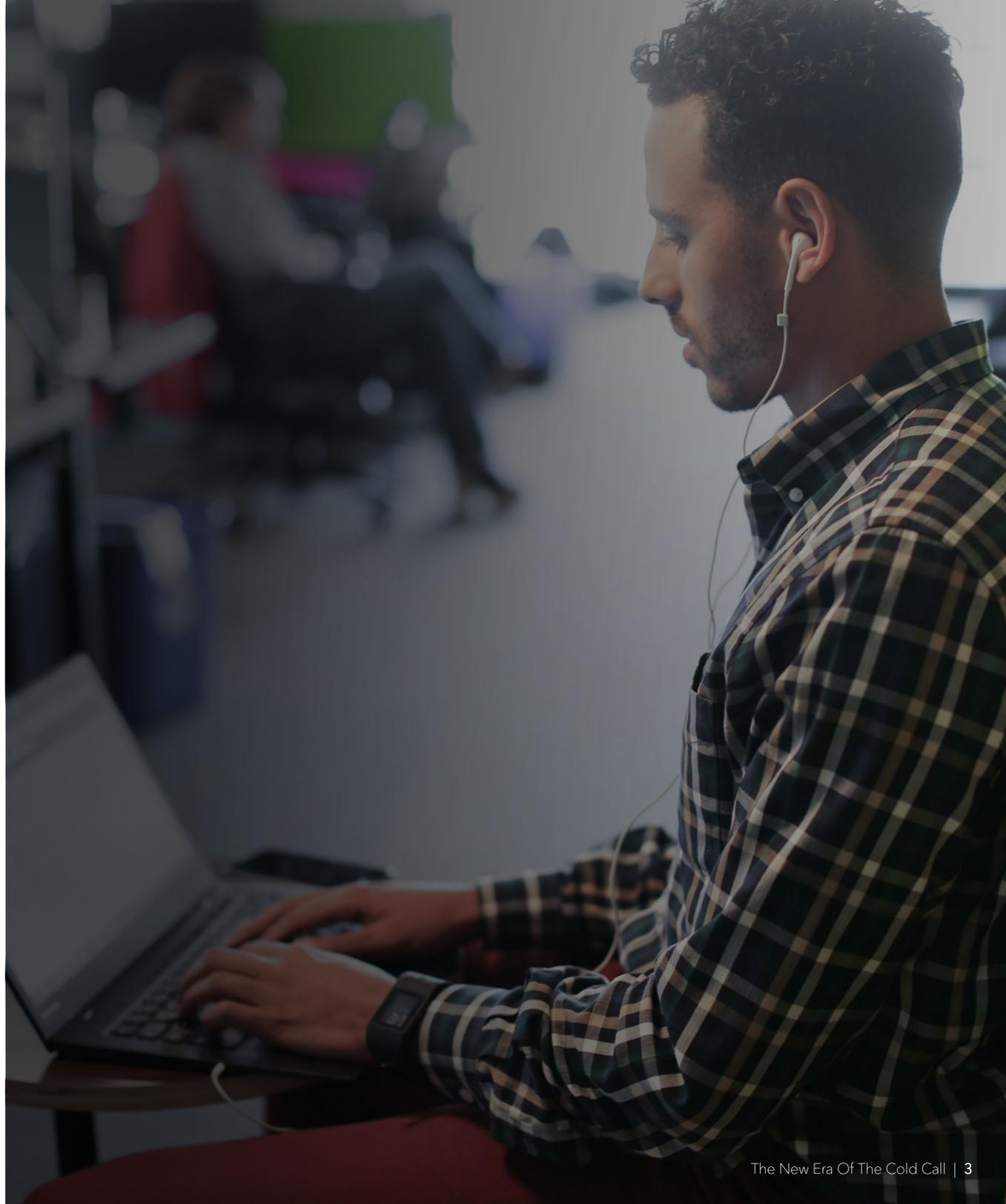
The science of social selling is knowing the methodology of leveraging both disciplines in a process that identifies:

1. Decision-makers at scale and gets you engaging with as many as possible through social media; and
2. Funneling these decision-makers into a bucket of highly qualified buyers in order to maximize your effectiveness.

and building strong relationships. It all starts with your professional brand, and there is no other network designed to showcase your brand more than LinkedIn. This is why having a social selling methodology is so important for sales executives to empower their teams to be successful.

The idea is to use social signals as trigger events to engage with decision-makers. By socially surrounding these buyers, your chances of seeing these triggers increases exponentially, as does your proximity to them if you build social capital. The goal is to take the online conversations you are having into the offline sphere in order to schedule a meeting or a call that can further build the relationship and move the sale along.

Building a bridge between social media and your phone should be a strategy all sales leaders focus on this year. Having a team of sales professionals building relationships by the hundreds online without having the process in place to take those relationships through the buying process offline is a waste of energy. Relationships are important, but they don't bring in revenue if your only actions are 'likes' and 'shares'. The winning strategy is one that combines both and trains the sales professionals to be buyer experts.





ZOE SANDS

Social Media And Enablement Manager, EMEA - Connected Experience, Veritas Technologies LLC

LI: Why is combining inside sales tools with social selling an important tactic today?

ZS: Combining social selling with inside sales tools helps sellers to be more informed and build up their trusted advisor status online. It is important to use social selling in the sales process, because it helps place sellers closer to the buyer in the earlier stages of the buying process. Interjecting sales reps into the buying process earlier helps organizations identify more opportunities and establish and build awareness. It also helps retain existing customers by using technology to help stay in touch more easily.

LI: What is your advice for sales to get buy-in for this strategy?

ZS: I would advise organizations to have an integrated social-selling program that connects sales, sales enablement, marketing and operations. Establishing an integrated approach will enable better employee adoption, aid

reporting for return on investment, and gain commitment from other departments within the business to help develop a successful program and instigate social change within the organization.

LI: What are some challenges companies face in implementation?

ZS: Sometimes social-selling programs are standalone and are not integrated within the overall sales and marketing program, which hinders adoption and implementation. Other times, some companies will focus on a tool and training rather than social change management. A social-selling program should never be led by a technology; you should put people first in developing a successful social-selling program and then establish policies, processes and platforms (i.e., tools and technologies). Don't start social selling with a technology; start with people, and you will be on the road to a successful program.

LI: What would you recommend companies do to overcome those challenges?

ZS: To overcome these challenges, I would recommend the following:

- Gather a cross-functional team to work on your social-selling program with team members from sales, marketing, sales enablement, and marketing and sales operations.
- Focus your social-selling program on people. Business is all about people, so put people first in your program.

Start your social-selling program with a small pilot. Make sure to identify social employees, develop policies and processes, identify how you will measure success and decide on one or two tools you need to start your social-selling program. That may mean starting with LinkedIn Sales Navigator, for example. After that, set the pilot time frame and measure everything you do.



LINDSEY BOGGS

CEO and Social Selling Expert, Lindsey Boggs Consulting, LLC

LI: Why is it important to combine inside sales tools and social selling?

LB: It's important to view social selling as a *layer* to your prospecting efforts, not the *only* way to prospect. Defining a cadence within your current prospecting efforts to include social-selling strategies – when done correctly – is the most effective approach. I would rather see a sales organization spend two to three minutes researching a prospect socially and *then* reach out, versus batching and blasting 100 automated generic emails.

LI: How did you get buy-in and implement it at your company?

LB: That famous adage about “asking for forgiveness later” applies to my experience. I saw what everyone else was doing around me – cold calling and sending marketing automated emails – and it wasn't working. I didn't want to be at 58% of my quarterly number; I wanted to *destroy* my number, make President's Club, and be No. 1, so I tried something new.

I remember the first time I used LinkedIn for prospecting efforts. I immediately started getting appointments set, and the rest is history. Our head of sales cared more about pipeline growth and business closed. We eventually rolled it out and the entire sales team adopted it. This all started because I tried something new that was a little out of my comfort zone. What I tell people all the time is “if it feels weird at first, you're probably doing it right.”

LI: What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?

LB: In the beginning I didn't know how to develop a cadence to combine all four prospecting channels: social, email, phone calls and marketing. I was still held to a daily activity expectation, and at times it was challenging to hit all of the metrics that were expected of me. Eventually I developed a ‘work-back plan’ that helped me identify exactly how many touches I needed to have to create one meeting, and I ultimately hit my monthly and quarterly numbers.

LI: What were the results?

LB: The results were phenomenal. Using LinkedIn messaging and emailing, my response rate was 60%. **The key to this phenomenal number is persistent follow-up.** Below is an almost *daily* conversation I have with sales organizations:

Sales: “Social selling isn't working.”

Me: “How many times are you following up?”

Sales: “Two or three times.”

That's the problem. Persistence is key. You have to be as persistent in your prospecting efforts as you are when you're closing a deal. Again, **social selling is a layer to current prospecting efforts.** LinkedIn makes it incredibly easy to nurture prospects and stay on top of news, media and coverage within these organizations. Use it wisely and your results will follow.



ALEX SOBOL

Co-Founder and Managing Partner, The Millennium Alliance

LI: Why is it important to combine inside sales tools and social selling?

AS: It's another tool. It can be an effective tool, but I don't think social selling should replace traditional sales techniques. Combining them is key. LinkedIn Navigator gives you insights on people before you talk to them. It's another avenue for you to get in touch with people. If you have good relationships with people in your network, they'll be happy to introduce you to their contacts, and [those contacts] in turn will feel compelled to talk with you, because there's a relationship there. You need to create a good reputation for yourself. It puts emphasis on making sure you're doing a good job, and your network will want to help you out.

LI: How did you get buy-in and implement it at your company?

AS: I picked a select group of colleagues whom I thought would like it. The idea was to have them champion it. We used case studies from those selected few [to present to our team]. We monitored their progress for six weeks and had them explain why it was valuable for them. Then we rolled it out in phases.

LI: What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?

AS: Change can be difficult, and using new tools requires a learning curve. But I think anyone who wants to be successful in sales has to be active on LinkedIn. People were really into Navigator because it's the most in-depth. We rolled out Navigator first, and then we incorporated social selling into that after people got used to using the tool.

LI: What were the results?

AS: We're able to track through our CRM whether it was an inbound lead or a referral, or social selling and Navigator. In the second quarter this year, I would say about 15% of total biz was generated from social selling.

CONCLUSION

Social networks have evolved over time, from their use as a broadcast tool and as a place to build communities, to one of the most effective applications to connect, communicate and generate pipeline. The impact of social selling on the customer lifecycle, as we've seen with our experts, is clear. Companies are now beginning to tie revenue to these activities.

In addition, combining traditional selling tactics with social selling is now considered a sales best-practice to maximize results. Sales professionals need expertise in both areas. As they identify key contacts and gain insights through social selling, those relationships can then be cemented in the offline world. The social signals are triggers for sales to engage with these decision-makers and move them to the sale.

For more information on LinkedIn Sales Navigator, [click here.](#)

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– Lindsey Boggs,
Lindsey Boggs Consulting, LLC