

The Sales Manager's Guide to

DRIVING SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION AND REVENUE

A NOTE TO THE SALES MANAGER



Using social media is a vital component of the success of many sales organizations; the evidence is overwhelming. Salespeople who use social media to drive sales - also known as 'social selling' - have more opportunities, close more deals, and are more likely to make quota than others. Making the switch to social media is a big change for most organizations, and change requires leadership, time, and effort. It takes someone like you, a sales manager who knows social selling isn't just a flash in the pan - it's got staying power.

After all, you've seen firsthand how it has enabled you to establish your professional brand and expertise, expand your network with quality connections, and reach new prospects and engage customers. Naturally you want your sales team to experience the same success. And they can. It's just a matter of embracing and consistently applying the right approach and practices.

This guide was written with you - the sales manager - in mind. In it, we share five sure-fire ways to successfully navigate this journey within your own company.

We call this the guide for sales managers because we feel it's time to take social selling to the next level, moving beyond theory to enlightened practice. It's time to get real results with your sales, and this is the guide that will help you achieve those goals. Read on for tips on using LinkedIn's Social Selling Index as your benchmark for setting goals, creating a plan, tracking your team's success, keeping your reps motivated and continually improving their results.

Alex Hisaka
Content Marketing Manager
LinkedIn Sales Solutions



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1

SET GOALS

Start by establishing meaningful -
yet attainable - goals in order
to measure the results of
your initiative



STEP 1:

UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS NEED

Without a doubt, a social media program can drive dramatically better sales results. But before you launch your program, you should clearly document why you want to do so. After all, you need to convince your sales reps of the value to drive the program forward.

It's easy to say the goal of this initiative is to win more sales and increase revenue. But that kind of vague goal setting won't help you succeed. It's important that every stakeholder knows exactly what your social selling adoption is trying to accomplish, and the steps it will take to reach the goal.

Ask yourself, what problem are you trying to solve:

- More quickly drive qualified leads?
- Build a bigger sales pipeline?
- Gather better sales intelligence?

Then draft a goal-defining plan that includes the following:

- A statement of purpose
- Steps each responsible party is expected to take
- How progress will be measured
- A clear definition of success



STEP 2:

DETERMINE HOW YOU WILL DEFINE SUCCESS

As with any online business strategy, you need to measure the success of your social media initiatives to know you're on the right track. LinkedIn's Social Selling Index (SSI) is a good place to start when you're setting goals and measuring progress. SSI has become an important tool for sales professionals who want to measure how their individual sales activities add up on the LinkedIn platform, including the ability to:



Create a professional brand

Develop a complete LinkedIn profile that defines who you are and adds credibility, while also sharing content that shapes your brand.



Find the right people

Identify the right prospects through LinkedIn Search and second-degree connections, which can transform cold outreach into a warm introduction.



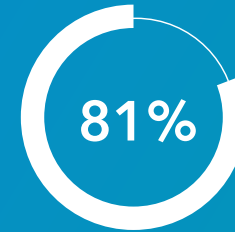
Engage with insights

Discover and share conversation-worthy updates to create and grow your relationships.



Build strong relationships

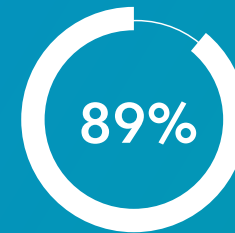
Strengthen your network by connecting and establishing trust with decision makers.



81% of buyers are more likely to engage with a strong, professional brand¹



50% of buyers are less likely to engage if they aren't the right person to contact about a new product/service²



89% of buyers are less likely to engage if the product/service is not relevant to their company³



90% of decision makers never answer a cold call⁴

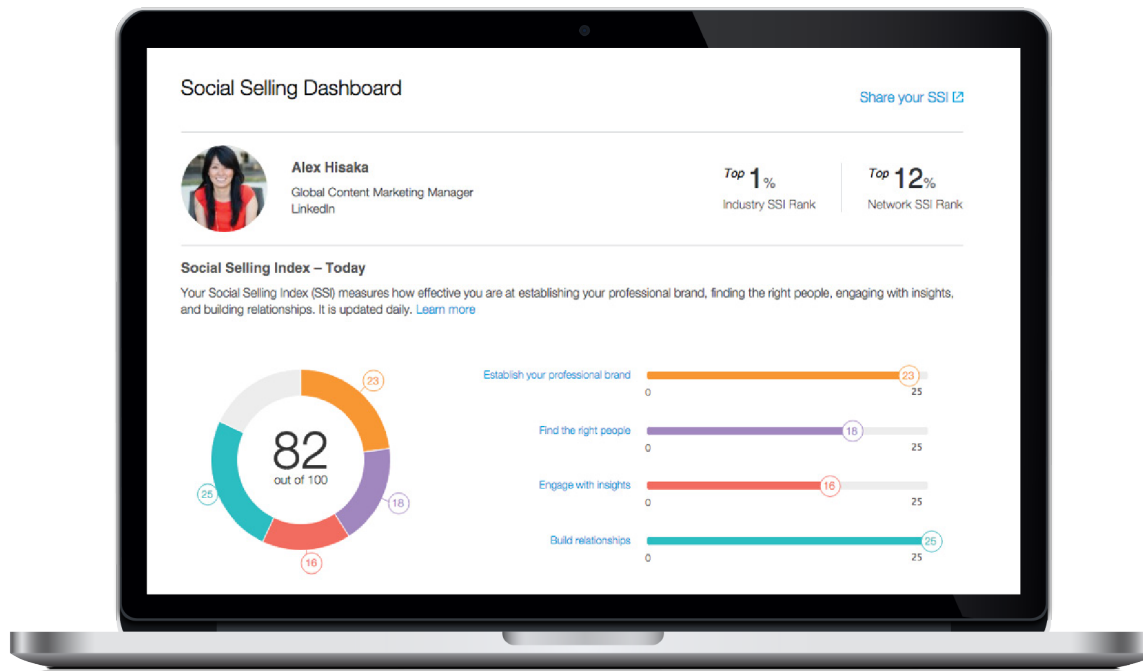
¹LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014. ²Harvard Business Review, 2012 - Tweet Me, Friend Me, Make Me Buy. ³Harvard Business Review, 2012 - Tweet Me, Friend Me, Make Me Buy. ⁴Harvard Business Review, 2012 - Tweet Me, Friend Me, Make Me Buy.

1 SET GOALS

Empowering salespeople with the knowledge of where they stand with social media can help them set clear goals and inspire them to become better social sellers.

The Social Selling Index was developed by identifying a group of top-performing sales professionals, analyzing their usage habits on LinkedIn, and determining how they use LinkedIn to drive successful outcomes. Each color on the dashboard represents a different element of social selling, so you can see where you are strong and where you might need improvement. The formula behind SSI is based on the sales activities these professionals rely on, effectively connecting the dots between those efforts and their individual successes.

SSI is available to everyone interested in understanding and improving their sales efforts. Visit the [Social Selling Dashboard](#) to get your SSI score and share with your network.



We've found that when a sales team's SSI increases, the following **three things** also happen:

1. The Sales Team Becomes More Inspired

We surveyed 100,000 professionals on LinkedIn and asked them how often they felt inspired at work. We found that those with higher SSI scores rated higher on the LinkedIn Inspiration Index.⁵

2. The Sales Team is More Likely to Exceed Quota

Sales professionals who use social media are 51% more likely to exceed quota.⁶ So when social media adoption scales to the entire team, the output also scales.

3. The Sales Team is More Likely to Go to Club

We analyzed our own LinkedIn quota-carrying sales reps across all global regions and found that those with an SSI above 90 were 3x more likely to go to club than any other sales rep.⁷

STEP 3:

USE LINKEDIN EFFECTIVELY

As a sales manager dedicated to your team's success, you know that quantifiable goals can motivate sales reps. Consider evaluating your team on the following metrics proven to improve results:

1. Number of connections

The average social media user has 930 connections, a number that can be used as a measuring stick during reviews.⁸

Remind your sales team to take a few minutes each day to establish one or two quality relationships with high-potential prospects rather than just add a slew of random connections.

2. Number of personalized connection requests

Sales reps focused on new business who exceed their quota send 148% more connection requests each month than those who do not hit their quota.⁹

Establish a baseline of the number of connection requests your sales reps currently send, and then ask them to gradually increase this number by extending one or two new invites a week.

3. Connections at key accounts

The average B2B sale today typically involves 5.4 decision makers.¹⁰

Measure how many connections your sales reps have within their target accounts. The more relationships your sales team builds, the more opportunities for referrals or introductions to decision makers.

4. Extended Network Leverage

Prospects are 5x more likely to engage with a salesperson referred by a mutual acquaintance.¹¹

Ask your sales team to report how many "get introduced" requests they are making on LinkedIn. Make sure everyone in your organization is connected with each other as these connections will reveal who is linked to key decision makers.

5. LinkedIn Group participation

Sales reps are 70% more likely to secure an appointment when reaching out to a prospect via a LinkedIn Group.¹²

Require your sales reps to pick and actively participate in a few Groups that are the most relevant to your industry (or their role). A divide-and-conquer approach can help your team create a solid online presence.

6. Engagement rate

81% of buyers report they're likely to engage with sellers who have a strong professional brand.¹³

Evaluate the amount of content each rep shares during a specific time period. Measure the engagement of their network by tracking how many people like, comment on, and share each piece of content.

⁸Jeffbullas.com, "25 LinkedIn Facts and Statistics you Need to Share." 2014. ⁹LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014 ¹⁰LinkedIn Buyer Research Survey, 2014 ¹¹IDC Study, "Social Buying Meets Social Selling: How Trusted Networks Improve the Purchase Experience." 2014 ¹²Salesforce Blog, "62 Sales Tips and Sales Quotes From Top Sales Experts." 2013 ¹³LinkedIn Buyers Research Survey, 2014

2

CREATE A PLAN

The success of any initiative hinges on a well-considered, well-executed plan.



STEP 1:

GENERATE SOCIAL MEDIA AWARENESS

The reality is that by embracing social selling, you're challenging traditional sales methods. And that always surfaces some resistance, particularly from those who don't understand social media—let alone the concept of using social media for sales through LinkedIn. So step back and develop a clear internal plan to get everyone on board.

First, recruit an Executive Sponsor to drive your program forward. Ideally this will be a Senior Executive at the VP level. After all, the initial communication about implementing the program will carry more weight if it comes from the top.

Second, make sure that everyone impacted by your social media program understands why social selling is being adopted.

Next, supply ample motivation by having your executive convey benefits such as the facts in the bar to the right.

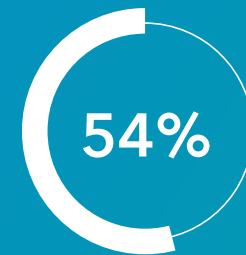
To spark team-wide motivation, speak about the powerful performance outcomes of sales reps who have adopted social media:

- **SSI leaders enjoy 45% more opportunities per quarter than SSI laggards¹⁷**
- **SSI leaders are 51% more likely to hit quotas than SSI laggards¹⁸**

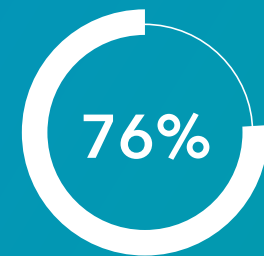
Finally, include a senior stakeholder at the social media kickoff meeting and in quarterly business reviews, and keep this person apprised of progress being made in your program.



92% of B2B buyers start their search for a solution to their problem online¹⁴



54% of salespeople who use social media can track their usage to at least one closed deal¹⁵



76% of B2B buyers prefer vendors referred by people they know¹⁶

¹⁴Inbound Sales blog, "How the B2B Buying Process Has Changed." 2014 ¹⁵Forbes Study, "The Impact of Social Media on Sales Quota and Corporate Revenue." 2014 ¹⁶IDC Report, "Social Buying Meets Social Selling." 2014 ¹⁷LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014 ¹⁸LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014



ASK THE EXPERT:

JULIAN LEE
Sales Enablement Director at PTC

LI: What role does social media play within PTC?

JL: Social media was a change that we needed to make, and when it comes to making change happen across a big organization, it's all about momentum. In just over a year, we've gone from salespeople using LinkedIn on an ad-hoc personal basis to a global organization that's adopted a common social selling platform and standards.

LI: How can an organization scale social media?

JL: We made a conscious decision to roll out LinkedIn globally from the start and establish quickly that this was the foundation to PTC's social media strategy. Crucially, we combined this with a regional support model featuring a sales enablement lead for each region working closely

with the Divisional Vice Presidents. Because of this regional focus, we were able to adjust to cultural differences, supply our salespeople with regionally relevant content and come up with localized development plans.

LI: What is the role of senior leadership when it comes to succeeding with social media?

JL: Executive sponsorship has been the secret sauce behind our social media implementation. Our regional roll-out plan makes it easier for a sales enablement leader like me to sit down with a regional SVP or VP and talk through what we'd like them to do: this might mean upgrading their profile or posting more content. This hasn't been difficult, as we've found a huge amount of enthusiasm and support from our senior executives for using their authority and leading by example to make the initiative happen.

LI: How do you determine and improve the impact of your social media initiative?

JL: SSI has been fundamental to embedding social media on a day-to-day basis. It provides a framework and measurement of the behaviors you want to drive and encourage, and helps you identify early on where people fall on the bell curve. We congratulate the former and find new ways for them to develop even further. For the latter, we show them where they are on the spectrum and how they can best improve.

Having a rank of usage and social selling is invaluable and plays right into our competitive nature as salespeople. The competitive instinct is never far from the surface, and nobody wants to be at the bottom! That's a major advantage when it comes to encouraging the adoption of new behaviors and quickly building momentum.

STEP 2:

EDUCATE AND TRAIN SALES REPS

As many as **75%** of salespeople say they've received no formal social media training at work.¹⁹ Many sales leaders simply tell their reps to "get on LinkedIn" without explaining what the reps should do once on LinkedIn, proper etiquette, and their goals. If your social media initiative does not include comprehensive training, it's as if your reps are starting with one hand tied behind their backs. It should come as no surprise that the remedy for insufficient training is, well, training. Here's what to offer at a minimum:

- Deliver basic training to everyone in the program and host in-person sessions with both large groups and individuals. During these, highlight socially engaged sales reps who catch on quickly and outperform others - who demonstrate best practices. This helps drive the program forward and delivers peer-to-peer training and support.
- If a top senior manager has secured sponsorship at an executive level, bring that person in to share actionable tips, insights and best practices.
- Develop tiered training to encourage reps at various levels to become more socially engaged.
- Create tailored training sessions for managers to help them improve their teams' overall SSI.

The insights you'll gain will allow you to implement specific actions tailored to build momentum.



Phil Horn
VP of Ticket Sales and Services, Sacramento Kings

Customer Story: Sacramento Kings

The Sacramento Kings got its social media efforts off on the right foot by providing LinkedIn training to a core group of tech-savvy reps. From there, the rest of the sales team received initial training on LinkedIn fundamentals, such as building a solid profile. With the sales team's proactive leadership at the helm and several highly enthusiastic reps, the Kings' sales force hit the ground running.

Since implementing social selling, the King's engagement efforts with fans and local businesses has led to **more than a 20% increase in attendance. In addition, the sales team has seen roughly 6% of its overall new business come from deals sourced through LinkedIn.**



ASK THE EXPERT:

MARK GHADERI

Sales Enablement Lead, SAP

LI: How did you train and get buy-in from your sales leaders to ensure social media success?

MG: It's essential to make sure your sales leaders aren't just willing to give their support to a social selling culture; they need to have the training and skills to be able to do so as well. As the program manager for APAC, I helped plan the training of our reps and explore ideas for building a social selling culture. We looked at onboarding and training delivery for both new hires and existing reps, and also created the framework for social media workshops that could get the whole region on board.

We then backed this up with training support for our leaders. We introduced social selling manager training to help our key people lead by example and give them the skills to review

our reps' performance. Our sessions covered professional branding, thought leadership via targeted content sharing, blog posts and use of rich media content, and expanding networks through LinkedIn Groups.

LI: What are best practices for helping sales reps succeed with social selling?

MG: Socially engaged reps can demonstrate best practices and jump-start momentum for your rollout. Ensuring that our use of LinkedIn embodied best practice was a priority. One key focus was the quality of profile pages. We made it a condition that reps had to update their pages to reflect our business values, our interest in the subject areas (such as cloud) where we are focusing on establishing expertise, and the value we could add for clients. We didn't want our reps

boasting about being great salespeople. That means nothing to the customer. We established best practice around explaining ourselves in terms that mean something to customers: helping them overcome challenges, achieve their goals and find new opportunities.

STEP 3:

CONNECT THE DOTS BETWEEN SALES AND MARKETING

While your sales and marketing teams might be doing a great job leveraging social networks, your organization won't gain much if those efforts are not well aligned. Left to their own devices, salespeople will create and broadcast whatever messages they find interesting, which translates into dilution – and worse – mutation of brand and market messages. So, it's extremely important to break down departmental silos and get both teams working in tandem.

Content should be an important part of your social strategy, but there is often a disparity between the content produced by marketing and the content needed by sales. In many cases, the marketing team prepares content that the sales team finds useless.

The key to creating effective content is getting input from salespeople at the very beginning. Salespeople are often the first

to talk to prospects and understand their needs. As a result, they can offer helpful insights that enable marketing to craft better, more impactful content. The sales team can, and should, add marketing content to their LinkedIn profile because it will give prospects a clearer picture of who they are and what they can offer.



“I use alerts to keep up with important information. Anything I find relevant, I share with my customers and partners. My goal is to make sure I’m active every week and my network sees [the content I post].”

Fernando Alves
Commercial Account Manager, Symantec



ASK THE EXPERT:

MATT HEINZ

President of Heinz Marketing

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

MH: I wouldn't define myself as a social selling guy. Frankly, I think social selling will have reached its maturity when we start just calling it selling. I describe us as sales pipeline people, and orient everything we do – our content, our focus, our services for clients – around building, developing and accelerating qualified sales pipeline. It's that sales pipeline focus that I'm proud to call my (and our) niche in the marketplace.

LI: How can social media help solve the sales-marketing misalignment problem?

MH: I'm not sure a tool set – even one as powerful and mandatory as social – is going to solve that problem. Marketers need to step up and own revenue responsibility, and both groups need to develop a common set of definitions and objectives. Without that foundation, it will be difficult to execute and optimize tactics and results moving forward.

LI: What are three tips for engaging with insights on LinkedIn?

MH:

1. Follow and watch the full ecosystem surrounding your prospect – their boss(es), their direct reports, their counterparts in other departments, their company. Leverage the full ecosystem to glean trigger events and buying signals that help you engage.
2. Use [Vorsight's 3X3 method](#) of scanning your prospect's LinkedIn profile to find unique things worth using in conversations – to break the ice and/or build rapport/differentiation at the start of the discussion.
3. Look for fresh starts. People who just started in new roles or new companies are looking for quick wins. What quick wins can you help deliver for them? Set up Saved Searches for these job-starters and get daily or weekly updates. Free leads!

LI: How can social media improve your sales pipeline?

MH: Social selling requires great content (yours and others), and I can honestly say that content plus social leverage has accounted for a significant, direct portion of our sales pipeline and client base.

A man in a blue shirt is sitting at a desk, working on a laptop. He is looking out a window at a cityscape. The image is split into two halves: the left half shows the man's hands on the laptop keyboard, and the right half shows his profile looking out the window. The background is a blurred city view with buildings and a street lamp.

3

TRACK PROGRESS

You'll never know how well you're working toward your goal unless you measure progress.

STEP 1:

MEASURE SUCCESS ON LINKEDIN

Here's a breakdown of SSI across the four elements of social selling on LinkedIn. Use this checklist to help your sales reps improve their scores. Then track your progress over time with the Social Selling Dashboard to see how you're improving.

Create a Professional Brand

Establish a professional presence on LinkedIn with a complete profile

- Is your profile complete?
- Do you include rich media in your profile?
- Are you receiving endorsements?
- Are you publishing long-form posts?
- Are you gaining followers from posts?

Engage with Insights

Discover and share valuable information to initiate or maintain a relationship

- Are you engaging with people's posts?
(via likes, comments and shares)
- Are people engaging with your posts?
- Are you joining LinkedIn Groups?
- Is your InMail response rate at least 10%?

Find the Right People

Prospect efficiently with powerful search and research capabilities

- Are you logging into LinkedIn daily?
- Are you using LinkedIn Search?
- Are you viewing other LinkedIn profiles?
- Are you viewing third-degree connection profiles?
- Are people viewing your profile?

Build Strong Relationships

Expand your network to reach prospects and those who can introduce you to prospect

- Are you connecting with second- and third-degree connections in your network?
- Are you connecting with VP+?
- Are you connecting with co-workers?
- Is your acceptance rate when sending connection requests at least 20%?



ASK THE EXPERT:

LAUREN MULLENHOLZ

Insights Team Manager at LinkedIn

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

LM: My team uses LinkedIn data to uncover interesting Insights on social media behavior. One of our priorities is understanding how sales professionals use the LinkedIn platform to become more successful social sellers. This understanding will allow us to guide our customers and users towards the right actions so they can become more successful in their professions.

LI: Why do salespeople need to pay attention to their Social Selling Index?

LM: The Social Selling Index measures how you perform against the four elements of social selling on LinkedIn: establishing your professional brand, finding the right people, engaging with insights, and building relationships. The formula behind SSI is based on what these successful reps do on the platform. That means others who

perform well in those four key areas on LinkedIn will likely see better sales results.

LI: How can sales managers drive social media adoption, engagement and accountability?

LM: Sales managers play a critical role in helping team members recognize the importance of performing the key activities that generate results in the new B2B buying environment. 76% of B2B purchasers prefer vendors referred by people they know. With that in mind, managers should convey the benefits of leveraging social networks such as LinkedIn in the selling process.

SSI is the key KPI to measure social media adoption and engagement. Managers should track and measure their sales reps' SSIs and coach each one on how to improve around the four pillars of SSI. For example, reps with a low professional brand score should enhance their LinkedIn profile.

At LinkedIn, we track the SSI of reps and share leaderboards for top SSI performers on individual teams. We also guide reps on how to increase scores for each of the pillars. For example, reps with a low relationship score are coached to increase their connections with decision makers at target accounts.

LI: How can social media improve your pipeline?

LM: Studies show that SSI leaders are 51% more likely to exceed quota and 3x more likely to go to club. The four elements of the LinkedIn Social Selling Index represent important behaviors that we see displayed by successful reps on the LinkedIn platform.

For example, engaging with insights can include commenting on posts shared by your prospects and speaking intelligently about a top-of-mind issue when you reach out to schedule a meeting.

STEP 2:

UNCOVER SUCCESS STORIES

Offer real-world proof whenever possible by showcasing the tactics and, more importantly, the results of your advanced social sellers. Showing sales pros what they can personally gain is critically important toward achieving buy-in.

During sales huddles, ask your sales reps to share social media success stories with one another along with tips for how best to leverage LinkedIn. For example, someone could say, "I found this person through LinkedIn—here's how and the insight I used to start the conversation."

The following success stories show what can happen when a company truly embraces the transformative power of social media.

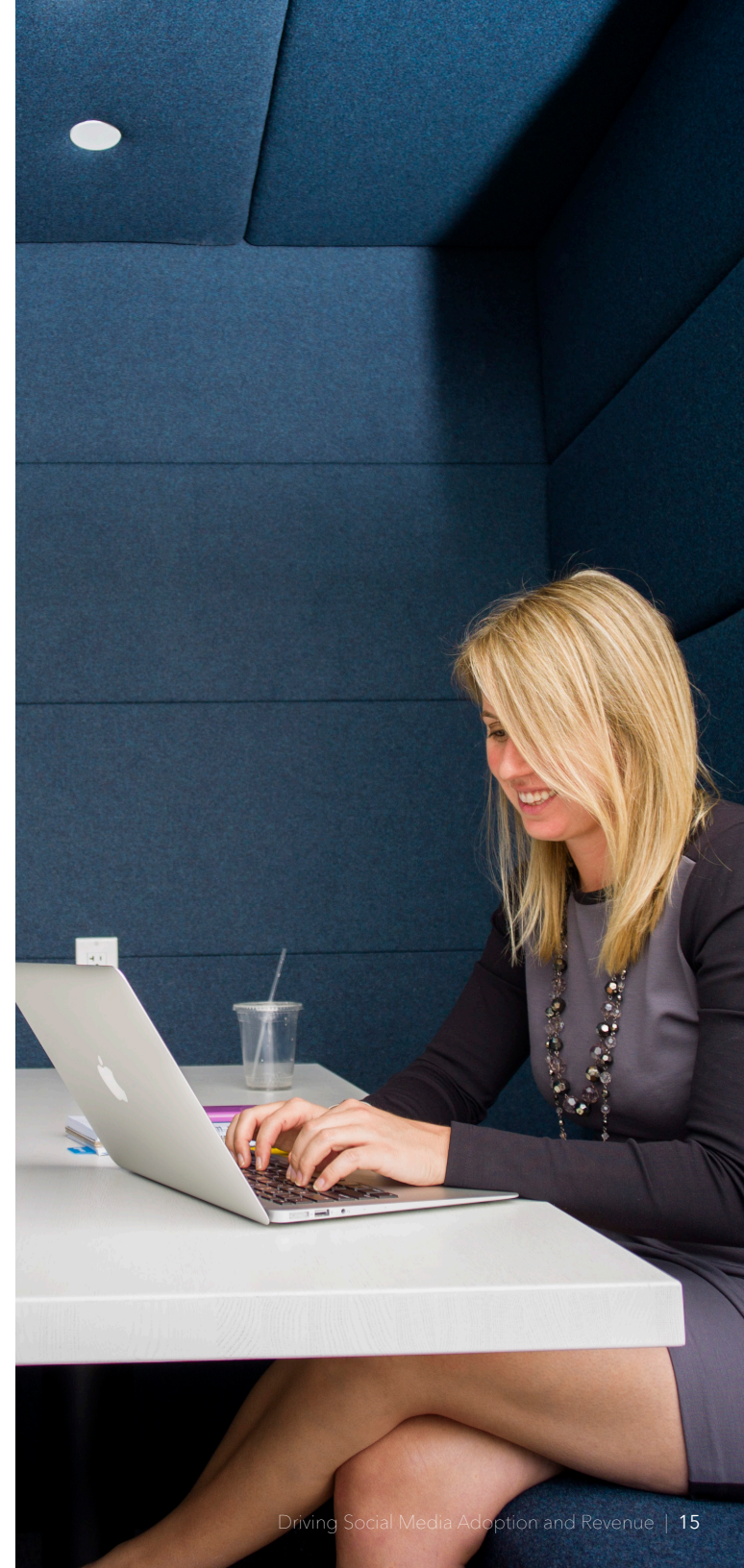
Customer story: Symantec

Symantec first used SSI as the KPI metric for program adoption, usage, and engagement. By using this data to create frequent performance reports for senior leadership and management, the company's sales group has been able to provide targeted training and recommendations to drive greater adoption and success.

Symantec's results are incontrovertible: **the sales team's overall SSI has increased over 20%**²⁰. It now represents the key metric in their social media training program.

Customer story: Guardian Life

Guardian put a spotlight on early adopter financial professionals with the foresight and willingness to incorporate social media into their prospecting and client nurturing plans. These metrics allowed Guardian to debunk the myth among some financial professionals that social engagement was not a true driver of actual client engagement and sales. LinkedIn was a key contributor to the success of their sales pipeline. **Guardian uncovered more than 30 qualified prospects in just a six-month period**²¹.





ASK THE EXPERT:

JILL KONRATH

Sales Acceleration Strategist and Bestselling Author

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

JK: As LinkedIn member #66032 (I joined in 2003), I immediately saw the value in leveraging social media to drive sales. Initially, I saw its value as a research tool, but over time I've used it to strengthen my professional presence, expand my reach and connect with prospective clients. These days, I regularly publish articles/updates on LinkedIn, and host a Fresh Sales Strategies group with over 15,000 members. And, I speak regularly to sales organizations about why/how to leverage social media to create more opportunities.

LI: What are three ways to uncover a collection of success stories?

JK:

1. Read the results in [Cracking the LinkedIn Sales Code](#), a survey that highlights how top social sellers leverage LinkedIn differently than everyone else. 3000+ salespeople took it and the results were fascinating.

2. Search out other social sales experts. They often share eye-opening examples on their blogs that will truly expand your idea of what's possible.
3. Visit a LinkedIn Sales Group and ask others how they are leveraging LinkedIn to drive business. Read what others are sharing, thank them for their ideas and ask follow-up questions on anything that doesn't make sense.

LI: Why is it important to share success stories among teams and their leadership?

JK: Until people really understand the value of social selling, they think it's a frivolous waste of time. The only way they "get it" is by hearing how other sellers have leveraged social media to drive more revenue. Then it starts sinking in. That's especially true when it's your colleague getting those results. Then it really hits home that it might be worth investing time learning this "new stuff." After all, if your teammate can create a new opportunity or close a big deal, then you can too.

LI: How can social media improve your pipeline?

JK: It expands the concept of what's possible for sales. Let's say you've only used LinkedIn for research. Then you hear a story about how participating in a Group was key to your colleague closing a deal. It piques your curiosity and when you find out how she did it, you have another tool to drive revenue. The more success stories you hear, the stronger your motivation grows to learn something new.

3 TRACK PROGRESS

STEP 3:

TRACK AND EVALUATE THE IMPACT ON THE BUSINESS

The best way to encourage your sales reps is to take social media seriously and evaluate the program regularly. Figure out what's working and not working and teach your struggling sales reps how to mimic successes.

Showing how social media drives revenue is critical to truly demonstrating its value and to win over skeptical executives. The challenge for sales managers is accurately measuring and attributing social's impact to your bottom line. To prove that your social media initiative is truly warranted, you need to track how it's influencing every interaction you have with your prospects and customers.

Use the [Social Selling Dashboard](#) to track how your team is effectively using social media for sales. The dashboard provides you with your weekly SSI in real-time, meaning you can adapt and improve results in a real-time manner. Stay on top of the data as it happens so you can ensure that your goals are being met.

Have your team members send you their weekly SSI so you can easily track progress over time. These reports will also present the data in an easily digestible way, allowing you to effectively share your ROI with higher ups in the organization.





ASK THE EXPERT:

TRISH SPARKS

Director of Sales Product Consulting at LinkedIn

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

TS: It started with a foundation based on my professional brand and relationships. LinkedIn brought those together so I could start being an effective social seller. I continue to build on that foundation through a variety of activities. That includes sharing or publishing content on LinkedIn.com, introducing colleagues to my network, and reaching out to members via LinkedIn Sales Navigator to establish a business relationship. These social sales activities allow me to continue building my professional brand and relationships.

LI: What are ways to track and evaluate the impact of your social media program?

TS: It's important to determine what success looks like for your business, what you're going to

measure and how you're going to measure it. In an effort to obtain a holistic view of social selling within my organization, I look at different data points. This includes the number of opportunities and closed deals sourced through LinkedIn in our CRM system and success stories gathered from our sales teams. I also consult LinkedIn's Social Selling Index, which evaluates each seller's utilization of LinkedIn as a social selling tool.

LI: How do you reinforce social media adoption, engagement and accountability from the top down?

TS: Executive sponsorship is the single greatest driver of social selling success across an organization. When I want to grow the scope of our social media program, I know that our sales team is going to see if leadership is on board. By aligning senior leadership with our social selling objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), we give our sellers a vested interest in

making social media a success. We also establish clear goals within the three pillars of adoption, engagement and accountability and work towards completing them by specific times of the year.

LI: How can social media improve your sales pipeline?

TS: Establishing executive sponsorship, success criteria and measurement allows our team to view the impact of social media across the global organization. As we build on the momentum of early success, our sales teams begin to leverage one another's best practices and strategies. This type of competition and collaboration directly impacts adoption, engagement and accountability. All of these factors ultimately lead to achieving the objectives, goals and KPIs that we establish at the start of the quarter or year.

A man with short blonde hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a light blue dress shirt, and a dark red tie, is smiling and looking off to the right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and a tree.

4

STAY MOTIVATED

Using social media for sales is not just another methodology - it's a new mindset and your sales reps will need continual encouragement to stay the course.

STEP 1:

REINFORCE ADOPTION, ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Once everyone is on board, it's easy to get excited about the prospect of change. After a month or two, though, that "mountaintop" feeling might fade as people settle back into their day-to-day routines. As a sales leader, it's your job to stop your team from slipping back into old habits.

Continue to monitor your team's progress towards its goals, and train anyone lagging behind. Identify early adopters who are already enjoying success with the new program, and recruit them as mentors for the rest of the team. A true social media paradigm shift doesn't happen overnight, so it's critical to keep everyone's eyes on the prize.

Some members of your sales team will resist the social media shift out of fear: fear of learning a new system, fear of letting go of previously effective tactics, fear of the exposure brought about by being active on social networks. These fears can keep them from putting their best effort into utilizing social media for sales.

Promote confidence through ongoing training, again using your top social sellers to motivate and encourage those who are still making the adjustment. Just remember - your reps still need to hit quotas, so allow them to gradually supplement their traditional selling tactics over time until social media becomes their norm.





ASK THE EXPERT:

PETER KIM

Director of Sales, Relationship Management at LinkedIn

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

PK: There is a very high bar for sales excellence within LinkedIn. I do my best to embody the principles we've established around using social media to drive sales. For instance, professional identity is a central element of selling on LinkedIn. With that in mind, my LinkedIn profile doesn't read like a résumé. Instead, I keep it updated to reflect my professional brand and ideals related to sales, sales leadership, and LinkedIn's value proposition.

LI: What are ways to measure the success of a social media program?

PK: Fortunately LinkedIn is able to measure social media behavior through the Social Selling Index (SSI). I measure my personal SSI every month and compare it to my peers while also monitoring my leadership team and reps. Transparency and competition has been key to inspiring and motivating social media adoption for sales.

LI: How can sales managers hold reps accountable for delivering social media results?

PK: One of LinkedIn's values is to "live what we sell" and I expect my organization to uphold this at all times. Each quarter I review everyone's SSI to make sure my organization is adhering to the principles we share in the market.

LI: How can social media improve your sales pipeline?

PK: Time after time, high SSI scores have proven to correlate very closely to top performers. My team understands there is a spotlight on this metric.

Their awareness naturally reinforces the proper rep behavior, including:

- Constantly maintaining and refreshing their professional profile on LinkedIn

- Proactively searching for and finding those contacts that can advance relationships and opportunities within their accounts
- Sharing insights that reflect and support their expertise in social media
- Consistently building relationships with key relationship stakeholders

STEP 2:

DRIVE ADOPTION THROUGH GAMIFICATION

Gamification isn't just a passing fad - it's proven to increase productivity among disengaged workers, which unfortunately is a growing segment. According to a report from Gallup, **70 percent of the current US workforce labels themselves as "disengaged" or "actively disengaged" at work.**²²

And if disengagement is the problem, gamification appears to be the answer. Gartner predicted that **40% of Global 1000 organizations would use gamification as the primary mechanism to transform business operations by 2015**²³.

But does gamification have the same motivating effect on sales as it does on other departments? Is commission not motivation enough? What about a spot on the sales leaderboard?

Sales gamification works because it addresses the three things salespeople are motivated by most: competition, recognition and compensation. Implemented correctly, gamification taps into these motivations,

incentivizing reps to complete goals such as closing deals faster, making more calls and following up on more leads.

Gamification is not a one-size-fits-all technique. In order to successfully leverage this method with your sales team, you need to strategically target different employee personalities. Think about your sales team. What interests each rep? When do they seem most excited? What motivational styles appeal to their individual personalities and to the team overall? Setting them up for success early in the year is pivotal, and keeping spirits and motivation high throughout is sure to yield measurable results.

5 Ways to Make Gamification Work for Your Team:

- **Keep it short** - Run contests no longer than 30 days in order to maintain interest and a sense of urgency.
- **Keep it simple** - The easier the contest, the more likely it is to catch on. Making LinkedIn connections is an easy goal anyone can understand.
- **Give a reward for performing the action** - Rewards are a core, motivating factor for continued participation in the program.
- **Provide well-timed reinforcements** - Proper timing reduces the chance of employee boredom.
- **Make it trackable** - Make it easy for your team - and yourself - by using metrics that are tallied automatically by LinkedIn, in real time. Release frequent leaderboard updates to keep everyone engaged and competitive.

²²Gallup Report, "The State of the American Workplace Report", 2012

²³Gartner, "The Gamification of Business", 2013



ASK THE EXPERT:

NEAL SCHAFFER

CEO of Maximize Your Social

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

NS: It was my second book "Maximizing LinkedIn for Sales and Social Media Marketing," that really shaped my professional experience. The book provided tactical advice on how to use LinkedIn for sales and also hinted at employee advocacy and the need for sales and marketing to work better together on LinkedIn.

LI: Why is gamification important in driving social media adoption?

NS: For salespeople, time is money. If they haven't bought into social media yet, the first two actions will be ineffective. Most salespeople are competitive by nature, and sales training often leverages this to bring out the best in them. For this reason, gamification – and rewarding those who win the game – is an easy and natural way to bring salespeople into the social media fold.

- Create role models that others will hopefully want to emulate

- Provide a lot of hand-holding training to those that are ambitious and see social media as a professional skill they need for their future career
- Gamify/incentivize everyone to participate

For salespeople, time is money. If they haven't bought into social media yet, the first two actions above are probably not going to be effective. Most salespeople are competitive by nature, and sales training often leverages this to bring out the best in them. For this reason, gamification – and rewarding those who win the game – might be the easiest and most natural way to bring salespeople into the social media fold.

LI: What are three tactics that effectively drive usage?

NS:

- **Gamification with Rewards:** This undoubtedly When I mention "rewards" to sales reps, they don't even have to be monetary: Simply winning a dinner with the VP of Sales or

gaining recognition from the executive team is all the incentive many salespeople need.

- **Leadership Involvement:** Social media usage should start from the top. If the executive team feels social media is important and becomes a role model for others to emulate, it becomes harder for most salespeople to ignore its importance over time.
- **Make it Easy:** Salespeople want to maximize their use of time and don't want to have to learn new tools. Make it easy by setting up 15 minutes a week every Friday afternoon for starters. Or host a weekly lunch during which you train and get all salespeople up and running on social media.

STEP 3:

CELEBRATE TOP SOCIAL SALES REPS

As a sales manager, you know what it takes to motivate your reps. If your team is like most, that translates into recognition and rewards for top performers. It goes without saying that sales commendations and awards should closely align with the team and company's overall objectives. Make social media part of the formula for determining who gets celebrated.

To reinforce the importance of and hold your team accountable for incorporating social media into their daily workflow, continually communicate the potential impact of using social media to drive sales.

Eventually, you can use internal metrics like SSI for validation, but at the outset, here are ways to build and drive adoption.

- **Host a Sales Social Hour** - Dedicate one hour per day or week when your sales team is focused on social media activities.
- **Initiate "Profile Month"** - Assign a certain month when everyone is expected to update their profile; create and share profile training materials with your team so they understand best practices.

- **Celebrate "Network November"** - Urge your sales reps to build out their connections and join LinkedIn Groups, and encourage them to share stories by awarding prizes.

Once those slower to adopt social selling see their top-performing colleagues being singled out, they're more likely than not to start embracing this new methodology.





ASK THE EXPERT:

JILL ROWLEY
Social Selling Evangelist

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

JR: I started as an individual, quota-carrying rep and was doing social selling before it was called social selling. As a top performer, I gained the attention of the Corporate Executive Board attention and they featured my social sales success in their 35-page guide to “Shaping Demand through Pre-Funnel Engagement.”

LI: Why is it important to celebrate your reps’ social media successes?

JR: Using social media can be quite transformational but it’s significantly different than traditional sales methodologies. It’s much harder and more complex than dialing the phone so it’s important to celebrate when people do it well. Reps need constant reminders of why to embrace social media and how to go about it. These reminders can be in the form of stories of colleagues’ success and how they can secure meetings, get competitive information they

couldn’t get before, and unearth old connections that matter.

LI: What are tactics that effectively drive social media adoption, engagement and motivation?

JR:

- If you’re using a collaboration tool like Yammer or Chatter, create a “social media superstar” or “social media success” group. Make the group collaborative and visible. Allow reps to post and to nominate their colleagues.
- Tie social media success into your quarterly sales awards, such as by giving an award for the “Best Example of Selling using Social Media in Q1”.
- Embed social media into everything related to your sales organization: your existing sales process, award program, metrics, dashboards and systems. If you keep the program standalone, you won’t see adoption.

LI: Why do companies need a strategic plan to operationalize and scale their social media program?

JR: We already know the modern buyer is digitally driven and socially connected and wants access to both information and people. But sales hasn’t evolved to keep pace. Making this seismic change requires senior-level buy-in and sponsorship. Remember – a fool with a tool is still a fool. If you apply the old mindset of quantity vs. quality (e.g., number of dials) to social media, you will fail. You need to establish the right mindset and a modern learning environment and approach to get the needed behavioral shift. This includes experiential learning revolving around snackable bites of training, and a blend of live instruction, recorded tutorials and coaching.

5

IMPROVE RESULTS

Take steps to increase the likelihood of success and continually tweak the program to yield better results over time.



STEP 1:

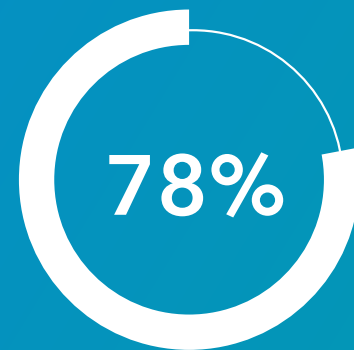
RECRUIT SOCIALLY ENGAGED REPS

Getting your social media program up and running is a huge accomplishment. But like any major initiative, you need to drive widespread engagement and adoption to ensure success. The smart strategy is to build on the momentum of your top-performing sales reps.

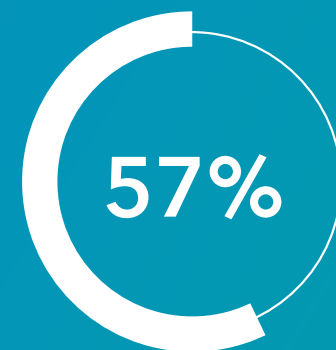
Here are a few tips for recruiting top sales reps:

- **Ask for volunteers** - they are most likely to be your internal champions.
- **Look for reps with high SSI scores** - this is an indication of current engagement on LinkedIn.
- **Choose reps with a range of experience** - pinpoint reps who are responsible for generating new business and for growing existing accounts.
- **Consider new college graduates** - these reps tend to have the most to gain and the least to lose. Plus you'll avoid "change management" issues because they are digital natives.

If you are looking to hire the top sales professionals, then you'll need to offer more than just compensation to attract the best. Today's high-performing, high-SSI sales professionals look for companies that breed a culture of high impact and push boundaries to adopt optimal selling practices.



High-SSI sales reps are 78% more likely to value "ability to make an impact" than a low-SSI rep²⁴



High-SSI sales reps are 57% more likely to value "culture that fits my personality" than a low-SSI rep²⁵

²⁴LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014 ²⁵LinkedIn Insights Survey, 2014



ASK THE EXPERT:

DARREN MARBLE

Regional Vice President of Sales at OSI Consulting

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

DM: I had the good fortune of starting my career in a true “inside sales” role ten years ago, averaging 300 cold calls and 4 hours of phone time per day. When LinkedIn came along, it was a platform I could immediately appreciate. I strived to learn everything I could to streamline my appointment-setting process. Ultimately, I used the same approach to become a social sales contributor for LinkedIn that I use to break into Fortune 500 companies.

LI: Why is it important to choose the right reps to drive and scale social media across the organization?

DM: You need passionate sales reps to lead a successful social media transformation. Social media often represents a major psychological shift in how a sales team approaches business

development, and passionate individuals are able to communicate the need for change with enthusiasm and positivity.

Secondly, sales reps that are already successful in using social media serve as an inspiration to others and can lead by example. What you don’t want to do is put a junior salesperson in charge of this type of initiative. It’s too important to the long-term success of your organization to take that kind of risk. Assign it to your top performers and create an incentive for them to own the rollout.

LI: What are some best practices for choosing the right sales reps?

DM: To start, I look for sales reps that have strong LinkedIn profiles and sizable personal networks. I like sales reps that are competitive, hungry, and follow up with determination after an interview. I ask myself, “Would my customers be impressed if I put this person in front of them for an hour?”

Lastly, I look for sales reps that are coachable. This is absolutely critical in my book. If I sense that the candidate will respond positively to feedback, is open and self-aware, and is committed to changing their behavior when needed, I will hire them and invest in their personal development

LI: How can social media improve your sales pipeline?

DM: With the right leadership in place and an emphasis on hiring socially engaged sales professionals, your organization is destined to generate tangible results and revenue. As I like to say, social media will make your sales processes faster, easier, and more efficient than ever before.

STEP 2:

MAKE SOCIAL MEDIA PART OF THE REP'S ROUTINE

We said it before but its worth repeating: **sellers who make a habit of using LinkedIn are 51% more likely to hit their quotas than those who don't.** By consistently focusing on creating a professional brand, connecting with the right people, engaging with insights, and building strong relationships, sales professionals can increase their sales opportunities by up to 45%.

Here are three habits that your sales reps should adopt, essentially programming themselves to perform the actions that lead to successful outcomes:

- **Add LinkedIn to Their Calendar**

Make the use of LinkedIn automatic by ensuring your reps block off time in their calendars. If they are constantly moving tasks around during the workday, ask them to open up LinkedIn before they boot up their email every morning.

- **Start Small**

Make it easy to fit social media into a busy schedule by easing sales reps into their new habit.

Ask that reps spend a few minutes per day on LinkedIn for a month. They should

use this time to reach out to a new prospect, renew a relationship with an existing connection, answer a question in a LinkedIn Group, or share a thought-provoking article.

- **Set a Series of Engagement Goals**

1. Complete your profile
2. Connect with seven new prospects
3. Share ten articles that will be useful to your prospects
4. Reach out to a connection every day for five days
5. Increase your SSI by five points





ASK THE EXPERT:

KOKA SEXTON

Content Marketing and Social Media Team -
Corporate Communications at LinkedIn

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

KS: I had the good fortune of being around at the inception of the term 'social selling' but I learned from many people who were calling it by other names at the time. Because I came from a sales background and was very familiar with how to use social media for sales I started writing about tactics and strategies.

LI: How do you reinforce social media adoption, engagement and accountability from the top down?

KS: In order for social media to be fully beneficial to a company there needs to be executive sponsorship. Without it, you are hoping that salespeople are all doing the right things and being consistent in their methodologies. The best way to

keep executive sponsorship is to tie sales activity back to pipeline and revenue as much as possible.

LI: What are three ways to make social media part of a sales rep's routine?

KS:

1. Schedule it every day.
2. Offer continuous training on best practices and new tactics.
3. Support sales' efforts by highlighting the salespeople achieving success.

LI: How can social media improve your sales pipeline?

KS: If a salesperson schedules social media activities and follows through, momentum will build over time. Training is key. Salespeople

need to understand why this activity is important and how to connect with prospects to build relationships the right way so they will eventually build their pipeline. Using CRM to track revenue metrics and something like the Social Selling Index is a great way for sales leaders to highlight their teams' wins.

STEP 3:

LEVERAGE THE RIGHT TOOLS

Today's sales managers are supercharging their social media strategies with LinkedIn Sales Navigator. Sales Navigator streamlines the sales process to help sales pros go social more quickly and efficiently. Even more crucially, it unlocks access to LinkedIn's entire 380+ million-member network. In fact, we believe in Sales Navigator so strongly that our own reps use it.

"As a sales organization that sells a social selling product to sales organizations, it is not lost on us that we must fully embrace our solution. And we do," says Mike Derezin, VP of Sales at LinkedIn. "Sales Navigator is where we start and end our workday."

Moreover, we've proven the value of Sales Navigator by analyzing our own sales reps' SSI performance across all global regions. We found that sales reps with high SSIs were three times more likely to go to club than any other rep.

Many of our customers are using the SSI to measure their adoption of recommended social media behavior on LinkedIn.

At Softchoice, all high-ranking executives are encouraged to be a part of LinkedIn Sales Navigator. As a result, they can offer the company's sales professionals access to their vast and powerful networks. Even Softchoice's CEO participates and encourages everyone in the company with a valid business reason to come to him for an introduction to someone in his network.

Social media shouldn't loom darkly as an unknown territory. With LinkedIn's expansive global network and purpose-built tools, the door is always open for improved performance. LinkedIn's SSI and Sales Navigator provide the foundational resources any sales team needs to master social media for sales.





ASK THE EXPERT:

MIKE DEREZIN

Global Head, Solutions & Research at LinkedIn

LI: How did you start using social media for sales?

MD: Prior to LinkedIn, I was an entrepreneur. Life and death was about raising capital. If you're going to raise money from angel investors and VCs you can't start cold calling them. It doesn't work that way. You have to figure out how you can get in and speak to these people in a way that will get you through the door. That's where I used LinkedIn. I figured out which VCs and investors I wanted to talk to and very methodically through LinkedIn was able to reach out to them in a warm way.

LI: Why should salespeople be using social media for sales?

MD: It all boils down to three main reasons:

1. Your buyers are on social and you need to be where your buyers are.
2. Social media is not a fad – this massive trend has become part of the fabric of how we do business. The most successful sales professionals have evolved their sales strategy

by leveraging the myriad opportunities available to them on social networks.

3. The data is now irrefutable: salespeople who excel at social selling are creating more opportunities and are 51% more likely to hit quota.

It's inevitable that social media is going to be a key part of our future. Social selling adoption is not a cakewalk and requires some work, but it's not as scary as it seems. Sales reps just need the right tools to do it well and at scale. That's where Sales Navigator can help.

LI: Why should salespeople be using Sales Navigator?

MD: Sales Navigator streamlines the sales process to help sales professionals become more socially engaged. When we created Sales Navigator, we took a great deal of time to understand the sales professional's daily experience and tailored it specifically to their day-to-day needs. Among other features, Sales

Navigator recommends and enables you to save leads based on your history and interests. It tracks and delivers insights and news involving your most important accounts. It points out colleagues and other common connections who can provide a warm introduction to prospects.

LI: How can social media improve your sales pipeline?

MD: Not only can social media help generate more opportunities and increase the likelihood of making quota, but it also can help salespeople stand out and exceed expectations. Since we introduced SSI, we have seen a positive correlation between high SSI and individual sales performance. Those with a high SSI are promoted 17 months faster than those with a low SSI. LinkedIn's own sales reps with the highest SSI scores are three times more likely to go to Club than any other sales rep. As our world moves online, and social becomes an increasingly important channel for sales productivity, measures like the Social Selling Index will become even more important to track.

CONCLUSION

It stands to reason that those who are improving their professional brand and building relationships with the right people are also building a rock-solid foundation for selling in the information age.

As sales professionals evolve, their professional reputation evolves as well. As networks grow, the likelihood of finding a warm path to each new sales prospect grows with it. And as relationships strengthen, sales pipelines become filled with referrals, which can significantly improve close rates.

To date it feels as though social media success has largely been the domain of those superstar reps who seem to excel no matter what. But the reality is that any sales team can make great strides – and accelerate pipeline development and drive more revenue – through social media. The key is to get strategic with social selling, and by following the step-by-step instructions in this guide, you and your team can do just that.

