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The Future of Sales is Social: A LinkedIn Social Selling Blueprint



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Introduction to Social Selling

01

Social selling is the modern approach to sales where businesses and sales professionals leverage social media platforms to identify prospects, build relationships, and ultimately drive sales. It moves away from traditional cold calling and conventional sales techniques, offering a more personalized and organic way of generating leads and nurturing them into customers.

Instead of a direct "hard sell," social selling focuses on creating and fostering positive relationships through regular engagement and insightful content. This helps position salespeople and brands as thought leaders in their industries and makes sales interactions more meaningful, warm, and effective.

Why Social Selling Matters?

Social selling is becoming essential for businesses as buying processes evolve, especially in B2B markets. A few key reasons why social selling matters include:

1 Increased Reach

With billions of users on social media, social selling expands your access to potential customers.

2 Building Trust and Credibility

By sharing valuable content and engaging with prospects in a personalized way, you build trust over time, making it easier to convert leads.

3 Better Sales Performance

According to LinkedIn, sales professionals who practice social selling outperform their peers, creating 45% more opportunities and 51% more likely to reach their sales quotas.

Who Should Use Social Selling?

Social selling can benefit a wide range of professionals and businesses, including:

1 B2B Sales Teams

Companies selling products or services to other businesses benefit immensely from social selling by nurturing relationships with decision-makers.

2 Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners

They can use social platforms to build their brand presence and attract potential customers directly.

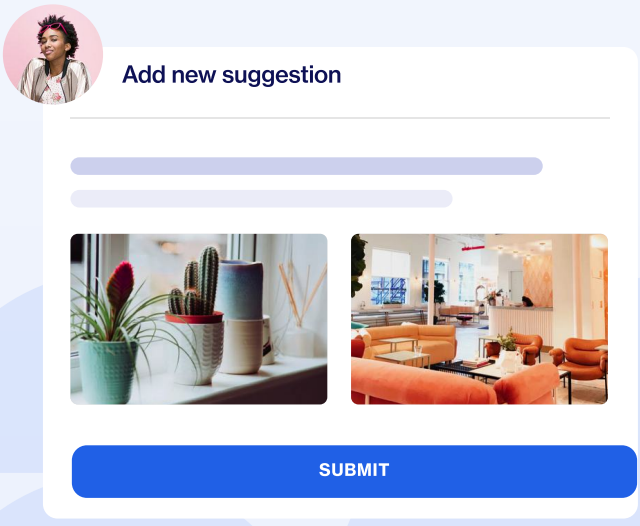
3 Marketing Teams

Marketers can support social selling efforts by providing sales teams with the right content and insights to share with prospects.

4 Thought Leaders and Influencers

Industry experts looking to increase their brand and engage in meaningful conversations with potential clients or partners.

While B2B professionals are often seen as the primary users, B2C companies can also use social selling to increase brand engagement and sales, particularly for high-involvement purchases.



Social Selling Across Different Platforms

02

LinkedIn

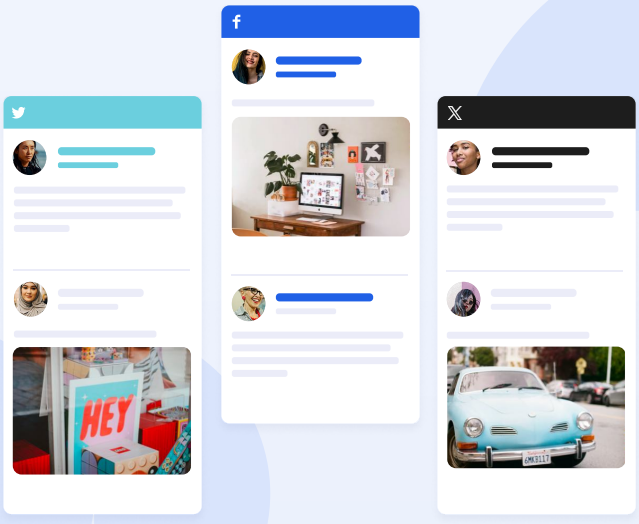
LinkedIn is the go-to platform for B2B social selling due to its focus on professional networking. It allows users to connect directly with decision-makers, share insights, and engage with relevant content. Additionally, LinkedIn offers specialized tools, like **LinkedIn Sales Navigator**, to enhance prospecting and relationship-building efforts.

Facebook

While often more associated with B2C, Facebook can be valid for social selling, particularly by leveraging groups and communities for engagement. It allows businesses to showcase their human side and build customer loyalty through active discussions and relationship nurturing.

X

While limited in character count, X offers quick and easy ways to engage with industry discussions, thought leaders, and prospects. It can be a powerful tool for sharing real-time updates, engaging in conversations, and following industry trends via hashtags.



What is Social Selling on LinkedIn?

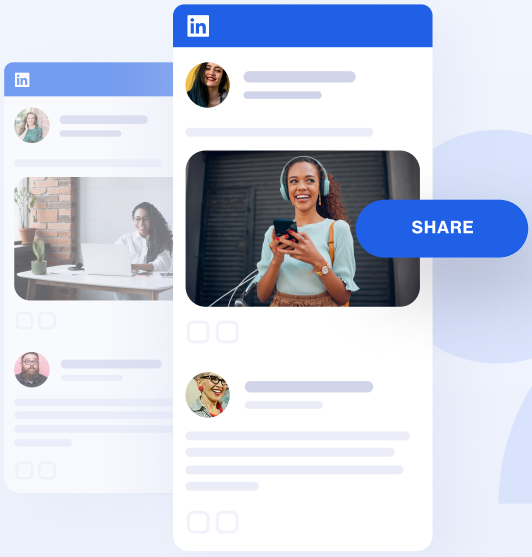
03

LinkedIn is one of the most powerful platforms for social selling in the B2B space. With 930 million users worldwide (as of 2023), it offers a broad reach for professionals looking to connect with the right people. The platform provides specific tools and metrics, like the Social Selling Index (SSI), to measure and enhance your social selling effectiveness.

The Power of LinkedIn for Visibility Beyond the Platform

One recent advantage of LinkedIn is that articles published on personal profiles are now discoverable through **Google search results**, amplifying your visibility beyond the platform. This means potential prospects can find content shared on LinkedIn—articles, insights, or thought leadership pieces—outside of LinkedIn's ecosystem, and they will reach the writer's profile directly.

Moreover, these articles are increasingly being used as sources in **AI-powered tools like Perplexity**, an AI-based search engine and knowledge tool, further broadening the reach of your content. This dual benefit can significantly expand your professional brand's presence and authority, making LinkedIn not just a social network but a vital content distribution channel with SEO and AI integration benefits.



The Social Selling Index (SSI)

The Social Selling Index (SSI) is a LinkedIn-developed metric that evaluates how effectively you're using the platform for social selling. Your SSI score is calculated across four key components:

1. **Establishing Your Professional Brand**

How well you've completed your profile and share insightful content.

2. **Finding the Right People**

Your ability to identify and connect with prospects using LinkedIn's search tools.

3. **Engaging with Insights**

How well you engage with relevant content, including posts, articles, and industry news.

4. **Building Relationships**

Your success in cultivating relationships with decision-makers and influencers in your industry.

SSI scores range from 0 to 100, with a higher score indicating a more substantial social selling presence.

Components of SSI

To break down the SSI further:

1. **Establish Your Professional Brand (25 points)**

Complete your LinkedIn profile, share content demonstrating your expertise, and regularly engage with valuable posts.

- **Tip:** By publishing well-researched articles on LinkedIn, you now increase your visibility on search engines like Google, as these articles can be indexed and appear in relevant search results.

2. **Find the Right People (25 points)**

Use LinkedIn's search tools to identify and connect with key decision-makers and influencers within your target market.

3. **Engage with Insights (25 points)**

Share, comment on, and discuss relevant content to stay top of mind with your audience. Remember that your thought leadership on LinkedIn could also be used as a source by AI tools like Perplexity, further expanding your reach.

3. **Build Relationships (25 points)**

Focus on nurturing connections by sending personalized messages and maintaining ongoing engagement.



Benefits of a High SSI Score

A higher SSI score can have significant impacts on sales performance:

1 Increased Credibility

A higher SSI score signifies a more active and reputable online presence, which can increase prospects' trust.

2 More Sales Opportunities

LinkedIn reports that top social sellers with high SSI scores create 45% more opportunities than those with lower scores.

3 Better Sales Performance

Sales professionals with high SSI scores are 51% more likely to hit their quotas.

4 Enhanced Visibility

A higher score increases your presence within your network and industry, boosting your visibility to potential leads.

Additionally, the content you share can increase visibility beyond LinkedIn by appearing in Google search results and being used as a source for AI tools, further expanding your reach and credibility.



How to Implement Social Selling on LinkedIn

04

Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile

Your profile is the foundation of your social selling efforts. Here's how to make it stand out:

1. **Complete Your Profile**

Use a professional photo, write a compelling headline, and ensure your summary reflects your expertise.

2. **Showcase Skills and Experience**

Highlight your achievements, get endorsements, and request recommendations to build credibility.

3. **Content Sharing**

Share articles, insights, and news demonstrating your thought leadership and engaging your audience.

Remember: Your articles are visible to your LinkedIn network and discoverable on Google search results, expanding your reach beyond LinkedIn.

Leverage LinkedIn Sales Navigator

LinkedIn Sales Navigator is a premium tool designed to improve prospecting by providing advanced search filters, lead recommendations, and CRM integrations. It helps you:

1. **Identify Decision-Makers**

Use advanced search filters to narrow down critical prospects in your target industries.

2. **Track Leads**

Save leads and receive updates when they change roles or engage with specific content.



Content Creation and Engagement

Content is key to building relationships on LinkedIn. Some content strategies include:

1. **Sharing Industry Insights**

Post articles or videos valuable to your audience.

2. **Engaging with Comments**

Respond to comments on your posts to encourage further interaction.

3. **Joining Groups**

Participate in relevant LinkedIn groups to connect with like-minded professionals and prospects.

Personalized Outreach and Relationship Building

Sending connection requests with personalized messages increases your chances of acceptance. Here's how to make your outreach more effective:

1. **Send Personalized Messages**

Avoid generic requests—mention how you can add value or share something in common.

2. **Follow-up**

Maintain relationships by checking in periodically, sharing relevant content, or offering assistance when needed.

Empowering Your Team with Employee Advocacy and Content Sharing

05

Social selling doesn't have to be an individual effort. Companies should empower their employees to become brand advocates by actively sharing content on their social networks to maximize their potential. This is where employee advocacy comes in.

Employee Advocacy is a strategy where companies create valuable content and share it with employees on their social media profiles. When done right, this can massively amplify the brand's reach and improve sales performance.

Here's how businesses can help their employees succeed at social selling through employee advocacy:

Create and Curate Shareable Content

One of the biggest challenges for employees in social selling is knowing what to share. Companies can solve this by:

1. **Creating Original Content**

Develop blog posts, infographics, videos, case studies, and other engaging content that employees can easily share with their networks.

2. **Providing Templates**

Offer pre-written posts or captions that employees can personalize to make sharing quicker and easier.

3. **Curating Industry News**

Compile relevant articles or insights from external sources to keep employees' networks informed about industry trends.

Make Sharing Simple

To encourage participation, make it easy for employees to share content:

1. **Use Advocacy Platforms**

Tools like Oktopost, Bambu, or Hootsuite Amplify allow companies to distribute content directly to employees, making it simple to share with one click.

Social Selling Activities

Use Cases by Customer-Facing Employees

Social selling isn't just about posting articles or sending connection requests—it's about integrating your company's values, solutions, and brand into employees' social interactions with prospects and customers. Below are critical use cases of social selling by customer-facing employees, highlighting how sales, marketing, and customer service professionals can all contribute to social selling success.

Account Executive Engaging Decision-Makers

An **Account Executive (AE)** at a SaaS company uses LinkedIn to research critical decision-makers at a target company. Instead of sending a cold connection request, the AE engages with their posts, leaving thoughtful comments that provide value. Over time, the AE builds rapport and, after several interactions, sends a personalized message that references their earlier conversations and insights. The prospect is more inclined to respond, given the existing rapport. This proactive engagement shows the AE is paying attention to the prospect's needs rather than focusing solely on the sale.

Key Activity

1. Engaging with content: Commenting and sharing insights, not just passively liking posts.
2. Personalized outreach: Mentioning shared content and common points of interest makes building trust easier.

Customer Success Manager Using Educational Content to Nurture

A Customer Success Manager (CSM) shares educational articles, case studies, and how-to guides relevant to customers' needs. These posts are not sales pitches but aim to educate the customer and help them maximize the value of the product they've already purchased. This consistent engagement ensures that the customer remains connected to the brand, increasing customer satisfaction and retention. Moreover, as satisfied customers interact with the content, they may share it within their own networks, bringing in new potential leads.

Key Activity

1. **Educating rather than selling:** Sharing knowledge-building resources that help customers see more value in the product.
2. **Nurturing long-term relationships:** Keeping customers engaged and driving retention through valuable content.

Sales Development Representative Using Twitter for Prospecting

A Sales Development Representative (SDR) at a tech company uses Twitter to monitor key industry hashtags and trends. They set up Twitter lists to track potential leads and engage with prospects through retweets and replies, sharing relevant content. This social listening strategy allows the SDR to stay up-to-date with prospects' needs and challenges, leading to a more informed outreach when they finally engage in a conversation.

Key Activity

1. **Social listening:** Using Twitter to monitor industry trends and conversations to identify leads.
2. **Engagement at scale:** Interacting through quick replies, retweets, and shares to stay visible to a larger audience.

Best Practices Customer Facing Employees for Social Selling

1. **Personal Branding and Optimization:** Each account executive completes their professional profiles on their respective platforms, ensuring they reflect their expertise and build trust.
2. **Content Creation and Sharing:** Their strategies center on sharing valuable content that resonates with their audience, whether original content, curated insights, or multimedia like videos and infographics.
3. **Consistent Engagement:** Social selling isn't just about broadcasting; it's about interaction. These professionals consistently engage with their audience by commenting, replying, and sparking conversations that help build relationships.
4. **Platform-Specific Tactics:** They adapt their strategies to their specific platform—long-form content on LinkedIn, real-time interactions on Twitter, or community engagement on Facebook—maximizing the tools available on each platform for social selling success.

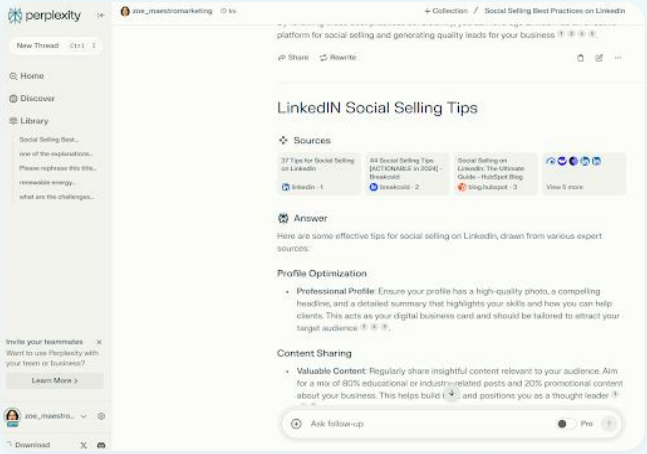
Social Media Marketing Manager Enabling Social Selling for Sales Teams

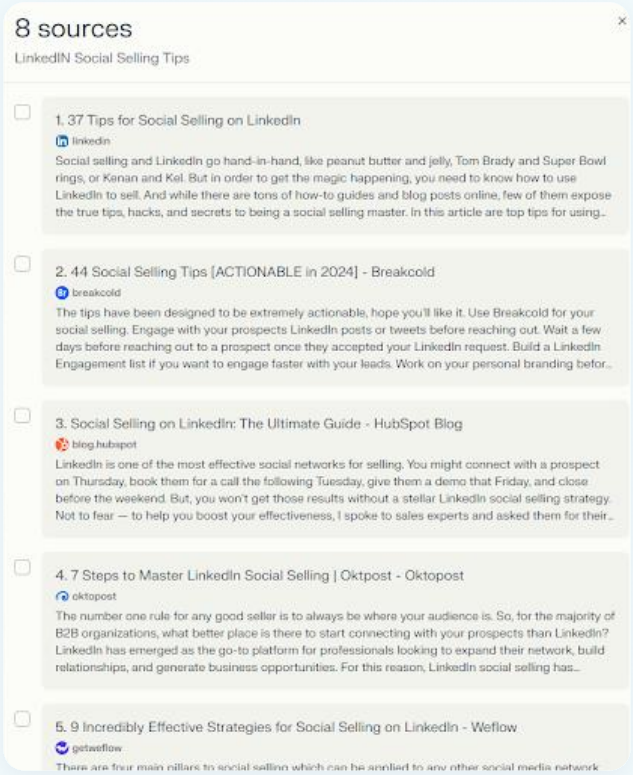
A Social Marketing Marketing Manager creates a content calendar with regular posts, whitepapers, and case studies for the sales team to share with their networks. They work with the sales team to create custom, easy-to-share content that speaks directly to the pain points of different personas. The Social Media Marketing Manager uses an employee advocacy tool like Oktopost to streamline this process and make it as simple as possible for employees to share high-quality content. As a result, the entire sales team contributes to a more significant online presence, helping the company generate inbound leads.

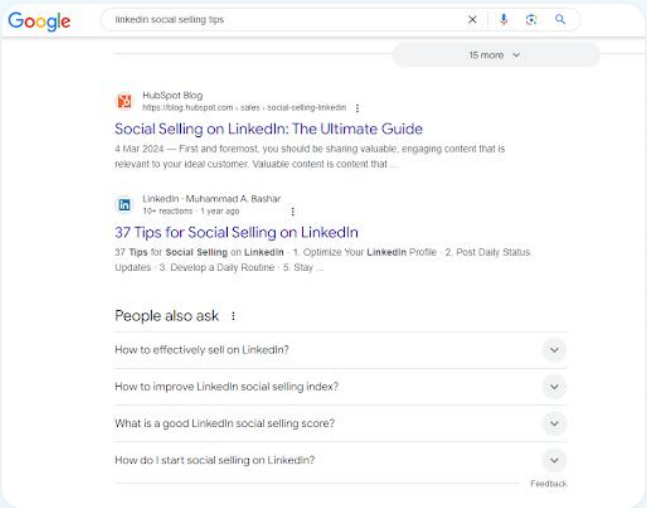
Key Activity

1. **Content curation:** Ensuring the sales team has a steady stream of relevant, shareable content.
2. **Advocacy platform usage:** Streamlining the process so it's easy for the sales team to share high-quality, on-brand content.

LinkedIn Articles are found on Google Search and are Sourced on AI Tools.







Conclusion

Social selling is a powerful tool for modern sales professionals and businesses, especially on LinkedIn. Leveraging the platform can build meaningful relationships, enhance your professional reputation, and drive better sales outcomes. The Social Selling Index (SSI) is a valuable metric that can help you track your success and guide your strategy on LinkedIn. To succeed, create a complete LinkedIn profile, share insightful content, engage with key industry players, and build relationships through personalized outreach.

Remember, your LinkedIn articles not only engage your network but also boost your visibility on Google search results and may even be cited by AI-powered tools like Perplexity. By integrating social selling into your overall sales strategy, you'll position yourself ahead of competitor sales members and tap into a wealth of new opportunities.

Oktopost

About us

Oktopost is a B2B social media management platform that helps marketing and revenue teams drive engagement, measure success, and link social media to revenue growth. Trusted by thousands of marketing professionals in some of the world's leading B2B technology and financial services companies, Oktopost provides a robust suite of solutions for social media publishing, business intelligence, social listening, and employee advocacy, all in one platform.

Learn how to measure social media impact and increase revenues with Oktopost's specialized B2B social media management platform.

Book a demo