

Social Selling: Increase Sales On Social Media

There are around 1.5 billion social media users across the globe, according to McKinsey and Company. Brands and online sales professionals who utilize social selling in their sales strategy can increase brand awareness with potential prospects before they ever enter the online sales funnel. Social selling is a modern approach to traditional sales, connecting brands with targeted prospects and providing value-adding resources to establish awareness and trust.

To take advantage of an active online presence, it's time for digital sellers and marketers to get social-savvy and level-up their online selling abilities to increase sales using social media.

What is social selling and how does it work?

Social selling uses varying social media platforms and networks to build better relationships with potential customers. The point of social selling is to cultivate brand awareness in your target audience by using social media monitoring as a tool, developing an understanding of their unique needs, and establishing a connection with them online.

When social selling is done right, your brand will be at the forefront of your ideal customer's mind. When paired with a well-rounded social media strategy, social selling can make it easy for a prospect to move through your online sales funnel and make a purchase.

By utilizing the right social selling tools and strategies to engage with your target audience, you can take your digital selling and marketing abilities to the next level. Read on to uncover the top ways that professional digital sellers and marketers are using social selling to increase sales on social media.

Build a relationship with your prospects

Social selling requires a dedication to developing meaningful relationships with leads and prospects before they move into your online sales funnel. Ideally, the content you create and share on your social media networks should be valuable, relevant, and actionable for your target audience.

By sharing useful content – like newsletters, webinars, infographics, and 'how-to' blog posts - that can be used immediately by an audience, you cultivate a connection of value between yourself and your target consumer. By establishing this connection before they enter your sales funnel, you can help solidify your position as their first point of contact when they need a service or product that you provide.

Establish yourself as an industry expert

Few people will read content on how to open a retail storefront from an author whose online presence doesn't demonstrate that they have any previous experience in doing so. To be taken seriously as an industry expert, you must build a rapport with your target audience.

Social selling involves taking the time to showcase your insider knowledge and skills in your specific industry. Provide valuable, relevant information that can be utilized by your audience. Share content from your own blog and third-party sources to showcase all there is to know about the unique facets of your industry.

Share your story

With access to multiple social media platforms and professional web design templates, the online world allows brands to tell their story in a way that is meaningful to both them and their potential customers. Emotions are a powerful tool for digital sellers and marketers, and top-notch social selling should include igniting the curiosity of your followers.

Whether it's a series of Instagram posts sharing photos of your humble beginnings or a Facebook live video where you share your story with an audience of prospects, social selling should involve developing an interesting narrative of your brand's journey.

Choose the right social channels for your audience

Chances are that your target audience has a preferred social media network that they spend the majority of their online social time on. For example, if you're using social selling to generate interest in your line of sustainably made clothing, chances are you won't be getting much traction on LinkedIn.

Facebook's founder Mark Zuckerberg reported that Facebook reached 2.01 billion users, and it's estimated that by the end of 2018, they will reach 2.3 billion active monthly users. The sheer number of active users on Facebook makes it a must for those developing a social selling strategy for their brand. In addition, Facebook makes it easy to cross-share content to other social media platforms like Instagram, which again increases the reach of each post.

By maintaining an active presence on the social media channels that your target audience prefers, you can develop brand awareness, leading to more prospects who are able to move into your optimized online sales funnel. Digital sellers can start by maintaining a well-curated and regular presence on 2-3 platforms that align most with their target audience.

Vary your content to keep it fresh

Your social media feeds won't get much traction if you're sharing the same type of content over and over again, no matter how valuable or relevant the information is. To optimize your feeds for social media selling, share a range of content to keep a well-rounded online presence. Some of the most popular types of social media content that drive engagement include:

- Podcasts
- Infographics
- Webinars
- Videos
- Client testimonials
- Ebooks
- Guides
- Photos
- Videos
- User-generated content

Maintain a professional online brand

For optimal social selling, your brand should maintain a professional online presence. This comes down to the quality of content you share, the regularity of branding throughout social media profiles, and how you engage with your followers (who, keep in mind, are potential prospects).

To keep a streamlined professional presence across your social media platforms, take time each day to view follower comments, engage with your audience, and answer each question or comment that requires an answer (even if it's less than positive). Sections of your profiles that require you to fill out information about your brand and your contact information should be seamless and up to date. If a prospect decides that they want to get in touch with you but get the wrong number when they call, chances are that they'll find another similar offering and drop out of your sales funnel.

Create a social media community

The best social selling strategies are those that feel organic and natural to a prospect. Ideally, this means that a user will identify your offering as a solution to their problem without being prompted. People want to interact with positive entities, so try to keep your social media content light, truthful, and meaningful. Again, answering follower comments and questions to maintain high levels of engagement will be of great help in assuring your spot as an expert in your given industry.

Optimize your social media channels

To transform leads into high-potential prospects, your social media channels should make it easy for users to access more information about your company or brand. By reviewing user analytics, you can see what posts are receiving the most engagement and calculate the conversion rate for your channel.

Some social media platforms are making it easy for users to access your product or service offerings. "Buy" buttons on social media business pages like Facebook allow a viewer to purchase directly from the social network.

Research your target audience

Social media analytics and social monitoring tools are immensely helpful in understanding your target audience better. Develop buyer personas based on the age, country, and gender of those who most frequently visit your profiles and posts.

In addition, you can also monitor industry-wide trends to help you uncover what types of content and topics are most engaged with by your ideal buyer persona. Some social media monitoring tools can also help you monitor your competitors and understand your industry. This is market research made easy, allowing you to optimize your social selling and increase sales on social media.

Conclusion

Social selling is an imperative part of your brand's social media strategy. But to increase sales and your bottom line, your social selling initiative should include much more than purchasing a couple of paid ads or sharing endless blog posts. Social media is just that – social – and for brands to find success on these platforms, they must focus on building brand awareness and a community-based social media identity. Jump start your social media strategy by connecting with leads before they ever enter your online sales funnel.

Source: Digital Marketing Institute