

## The Softness in Social Selling.

By Becky Frost



You may have heard of the term “Social Selling” (SS), but have you fallen victim to some of the common misconceptions of what selling online is really like?

You may be thinking “isn’t that just Social Media Marketing?” – Think again.

SS is a lead-generation technique utilised by business’ as a means of developing relationships with prospecting and existing customers using Social Media platforms. Although the end goal is

a sale, building the network creates the bulk of the sales process.

Often people will place SS into the same category as Cold Calling, but this is far from reality. No one likes the idea of being “sold” something, feeling as though they are being forced into making a purchase or signing up to a platform. That’s why SS is not delivered as spam, it is a process in which businesses and organisations target the correct contacts and maintain meaningful interactions, thus building trust and loyalty with their network.

Did you know?...

-78% of salespeople engaged in social selling are outselling their peers who aren’t.

-31% of B2B professionals say that social selling has allowed them to build deeper relationships with clients.

-More than 10% of social sales representatives have closed 5 or more deals due to being active on social media.

(Source – Optinmonster 2022)

If your business has a Facebook page, Instagram account or LinkedIn profile, you are already in the best position to get started, and with the Covid-19 pandemic shifting most relationship-building online, it is the perfect time to prioritise Social Selling.



The success of your Social Selling lies somewhat in the platforms you choose. Instagram has great networking capabilities through its direct messaging and hashtags, as well as built in tools such as story

ads with added links, making it an efficient platform for B2C communications. Similarly, Twitter is a great way to help online audiences get answers to their questions. Many companies set up specific Twitter customer service profiles, monitor those communications and respond instantly, which saves customers from having to call and sit on hold.

When it comes to B2B, LinkedIn is the best platform to communicate with decision makers and build a professional relationship.

But how do I social sell, well?...

- *Create Relationships, not sales.*

When selling online, don't make the customer feel as though they are being pressured into it. At the end of the day, you'd like to make a sale, but its best to first create relationships and trust with the prospects. Many online platforms are constantly bombarded with pop up ads and offers but being genuine and real with your approach will set you aside from the competition as most customers will feel more comfortable making a purchase after speaking to a real person.

- *Do your background research.*

If reaching out to a customer or a business via Social Media, don't create a general pitch for every contact, as this can appear somewhat 'automated'. By doing just a little bit of research into the target, you can personalise your sales pitch to suit their needs, which will put you ahead of the game and on the right track to generating a sale.

- *Interact Regularly.*

For social selling to be effective, you must interact on your company page, and with followers and connections on a regular basis. Post regularly and build genuine, unforced conversations but never push for a sale. Gradually become a trusted resource in your industry by offering solutions and providing relevant information. You can even spark up conversations on mutual interests, by doing this you are forming a relationship which could further lead to a sale.

- *Maintain the conversations.*

Try not to lose touch with your existing customer. If a customer has made a purchase once they are likely to come back for more. When it comes to your existing network, nurture the relationships, and keep them engaged by researching what interests them and staying relevant in your approach.

- *Stay up to date.*

Your profile or company page must be a place where customers, both potential and current can visit and retrieve all relevant information to create or maintain a relationship with your brand. By presenting a clean and professional profile that shares current offers and news, you will

continue to attract interest and increase sales revenue. It is also essential that you are easy to get in touch with, may they require an answer to a question.