

# Can social selling be used to increase B2B sales?

 By [Graeme Wilson](#)

9 Jun 2014

I've heard the term 'social selling' being bandied about the B2B world a lot lately. It's no wonder that more and more B2B brands are warming to the idea; when done correctly, social selling can be a powerful tool for increasing B2B sales.

## **Social selling is the practice of using employees' personal social media accounts as marketing tools**

Employees' social media accounts can be used to boost B2B sales both by finding new customers and by selling more to existing customers. In order to do this, employees use their personal accounts to recommend company blog posts, articles or products to their social network.



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## **Social selling only works when it is carried out strategically**

Social selling isn't going to work if employees simply post links to the company's homepage for no apparent reason. For social selling to work, the company needs to regularly produce new, interesting content that its employees can recommend to their friends online.

In addition, employees' social media posts need to be strategically crafted. Each post should contain original copy that piques the reader's interest and prompts them to click on the link

provided.

The link should then take readers directly to the particular blog or piece of content recommended in the social media post. This content should be accompanied by a call to action prompting the visitor to take the next step in the buyer journey by doing something like downloading a piece of premium content or requesting an obligation-free quote.

## **Marketing automation technology can be used to monitor click-throughs**

Social selling can result in anonymous leads seeing your content, following a call to action and becoming known leads. Using marketing automation technology, you can then begin to nurture these leads and hopefully convert them into customers, thereby boosting your B2B sales.

Besides attracting brand new leads, social selling can also be used to increase B2B sales by influencing known leads and existing customers. Marketing automation software can be used to notify the relevant salesperson when a known lead or existing customer clicks through from an employee's social media profile, indicating interest in a particular service or product.

## **Social selling works because people are more likely to read something recommended by a human being**

According to InsideView, IBM saw a staggering 400% increase in B2B sales after piloting a social selling programme.

There is one primary reason why social selling is so effective. People will listen to another person - especially a person they know personally - before they listen to a brand or a company. Because we're so used to brands shoving advertising messages down our throats in an effort to get us to buy something, we've become suspicious of any message put out on social media by a brand. We're far more likely to click on a link posted to someone's personal account than one posted by a company.

## 55% of B2B buyers search for product information on social media

The infographic reports that over half of all B2B buyers turn to social media sites for information. Even when buyers aren't consciously trawling social media networks for specific product information, content relating to something they are thinking of buying will jump out at them when they're absent-mindedly scrolling through their newsfeed. If this content is strategically crafted, it will spur them to click through to your website.

## If you want to use social media to up your B2B sales, make sure that you're using the right social networks

Don't make the mistake of thinking that simply because a social network is popular or has a large membership that it's the right channel for social selling. The infographic states that LinkedIn generates more B2B leads than Facebook, Twitter or blogging. Yet only 47% of companies use LinkedIn, while 90% use Facebook.

Get your employees to join the right social networks - including LinkedIn - and train them to participate in your social selling programme. Some companies actually have control of their employees' personal LinkedIn and Google+ accounts. This means that employees' personal accounts can be added to the social media schedule and taken care of by the marketing team.

An upside of this approach is that when the B2B sales start flooding in, you won't have to worry about your employees being too busy closing deals to post company content to their social media accounts.

## ABOUT GRAEME WILSON

Graeme has been in the software and telecommunications industry for more than a decade, in various roles concentrating in sales and business development - notably at MTN Business, Verizon and SEACOM. His successful track record of delivering growth and innovation in close alignment with customers' business requirements has earned him a reputation as results-orientated professional. At MPULL, Graeme is in charge of client service, partner relations and sales.

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