

INTERMEDIATE

HOW SALES CAN USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO CLOSE MORE DEALS



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INTRODUCTORY

Introductory content is for marketers who are new to the subject. This content typically includes step-by-step instructions on how to get started with this aspect of inbound marketing and learn its fundamentals. Click here to read our introductory-level ebook on this topic, [How Twitter Can Solve Challenges for Marketing, Support, and Sales](#).

INTERMEDIATE

THIS RESOURCE

Intermediate content is for marketers who are familiar with the subject but have only basic experience in executing strategies and tactics on the topic. This content typically covers the fundamentals and moves on to reveal more complex functions and examples. After reading it, you will feel comfortable leading projects with this aspect of inbound marketing.

ADVANCED

Advanced content is for marketers who are, or want to be, experts on the subject. In it, we walk you through advanced features of this aspect of inbound marketing and help you develop complete mastery of the subject. After reading it, you will feel ready not only to execute strategies and tactics, but also to teach others how to be successful.

HOW SALES CAN USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO CLOSE MORE DEALS

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Foreword

I have spent most of my career largely in a world filled with sales and marketing professionals, and I am often baffled that one group will often embrace a new technique or method, while the other will completely ignore it. No place is this more apparent than in the world of social media.

Although salespeople have grown comfortable with the use of LinkedIn as a sales tool, they seem to avoid blogging like the plague. And Twitter? Even poorer adoption. And when I ask them why, I commonly hear, “I’m not a writer,” and, “Who cares what I think? I’m just a sales rep,” and “Why should I? I’m busy. Besides, how is Twitter going to help me make my number this month?”

Tough objections indeed.

But after working with thousands of salespeople and their managers over the past 25 years, I’ve learned that social media truly can benefit your sales team. A recent survey even revealed how 78.3% of sales reps have used social media to sell. The tips and tricks shared in this HubSpot ebook will ensure you’re not left out with the 22% of sales reps ignoring social media as a tool to close more deals.



Jeff Hoffman

Your SalesMBA

A renowned sales executive and entrepreneur, Jeff has consulted industry leaders throughout the world on the topics of sales, sales management, and sales operations. The author of Your SalesMBA, Jeff has delivered sold-out presentations to thousands.

Introduction: Use Social to Have Conversations with People who Matter Most.

Social media's strength for businesses has always been in its ability to scale personal interactions.

And yet, it hasn't been adopted by sales teams and largely lives within the marketing department. However, social gives sales reps that are hungry for touch-points with their prospects and leads a way to connect and further the relationship without much added financial cost. It allows you to cultivate conversations with the character identifiers social media profiles provide.

This guide will walk through ways your sales teams can get the most out of social channels and work with marketing to find and elevate the people that matter most to your business.

CHAPTER 1

HOW SOCIAL CAN
PROVIDE NEEDED
CREDIBILITY

Building Credibility

First, a simple scenario: Imagine you are in the market for a new house. Your first step is to choose a real estate agent to represent you.

Of the two agencies you look at, one has an active blog on real estate tips and tricks. You read their useful, non-fluff articles on how to prepare financially before getting a mortgage. You later notice that the same agency is present in the first-time home buyers' forums you've been following, answering questions and providing a wide array of resources to people in their research stage.

The other agency is well reputed but has been largely inactive on social channels. Now, when it comes to choosing someone to represent you, who would you go with?

Credibility has a (digital) paper trail. Sales representatives who recognize that they're more than just a vessel for transactions elevate themselves as authorities in their fields and tend to garner more interest and more trust from their prospects.

So how does a busy sales rep build credibility?

Particularly in jobs that require a near constant stream of phone calls or sales visits, it can seem difficult to find the time to build your authority through content and online contributions. Abstaining from contributing, however, can be more damaging and costly in the long run.

By building credibility and demand in the marketplace, a sales rep can minimize the time he or she spends prospecting and reinvest that time in other areas. Here are a few credibility-building activities your sales team can consider, sorted by the time investment each requires.

Low Time Commitment

- Take 30 minutes at the beginning of the week to schedule tweets, LinkedIn posts or Facebook posts about your area of expertise. These can be original ideas or links to useful content from other sites.

Medium Time Commitment

- Contribute to forums or comment on blogs about your focus area. Answer questions and resist the urge to sell or promote your own product if it's not relevant. Be genuine, and the readers will find their way to you.
- Develop relationships with other content creators in your field. This can be as simple as commenting on their posts or connecting with them at events and following up. They will expand your reach and be able to send recommendations your way in the longrun.

Large Time Commitment

- Start and maintain a blog on your area of expertise or offer yourself as a regular contributor on third-party blogs. While this does require a larger than average investment in time, HubSpot research shows that companies that blog regularly have 55% more website visitors. They are also found more easily through search engines and tend to have a higher rank than their competitors. Blogging can help you build the top of your funnel to pull in more prospects and hopefully more quality leads.

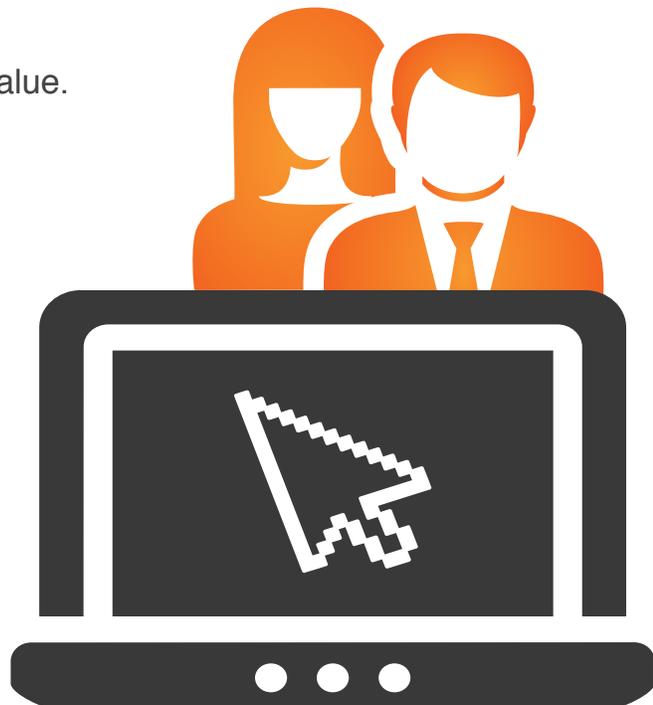
Frank Belzer, author of [SalesShift](#), speaks often about how sales representatives can use social media to establish credibility and build authority. The control of the research and sales process has shifted to the hands of the buyer. These buyers navigate their purchasing paths based on where they can find the best information. He explains:

“

Sales people need to add more value to the conversation than the website does.

”

Social media can help add that value.



CHAPTER 2

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO PROSPECT

There is nothing worse than a cold call. Sales reps hate them. Recipients hate them. And yet, in many companies, both sides are faced with holding their phones and suffering through them again and again. The funny thing is, it doesn't take much to warm up a call – just a little bit of information; a simple, relevant interaction.

Social media was built for this kind of interaction.

Find People in the Moment They're Looking

There are a handful of tools to help you get more targeted in your prospecting on social media. Here's a few we recommend:

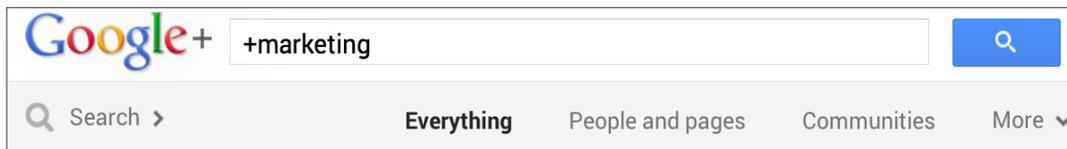
1) *Twitter Advanced Search*

One of the most useful and under-tapped tools within Twitter is the [advanced search option](#). This feature, which you can see a screenshot of below, enables you to create highly targeted searches and get notifications emailed to you when you when someone new matches it. Twitter lets you specify things like topic, location, and even the tone of the tweet. And while this free tool isn't 100% accurate (tone is determined by usage of emoticons), it's not a bad way to start if you're looking for cost-free ways to find social prospects.

2) Find People on Google+

When you first sign up, Google+ automatically scans your existing connections to see if any of them are using Google+ and invites you to connect with them by placing them in one of your Google+ Circles. While this isn't a bad way to make sure you're staying engaged with your current audience, it doesn't really expand your reach or introduce you to new people. To do that, you'll need to submit your keywords for a more detailed Google+ search.

To achieve a broader reach, use Google+ search with the keywords you established to find other individuals who are interested in the things that matter to your company.



i HINT: When using Google+ search, you can get even more specific by enclosing terms in quotes -- like "market research" -- or excluding terms with a minus sign -- like "market research" -stocks. When you find people discussing your keywords, selectively add them to your Circles. Think about naming Circles based on the shared interest area so your overlapping focus area is clear. To keep new connections engaged, just add a "+" or "@" in front of their name to tag them in a future post.

3) Quora and Other Q&A Forums

Quora is more effective for some industries than others, but it is chock-full of individuals asking questions and looking for guidance. In addition to Quora, look to see if there are forums or discussion boards for your particular industry. Many fields like real estate, home maintenance and small business entrepreneurs have vibrant online communities. Here's an example question posted about Dropbox:

★ **Why is Dropbox more popular than other programs with similar functionality?** [Edit](#)

E.g., SugarSync, Windows Live Sync, Google Drive, SkyDrive, Omnidrive, iCloud, etc., which are or were free. [Edit](#)

[9+](#) [Comments](#) · [Share](#) (25) · [Report](#) · [Options](#)

157 Answers [Ask to Answer](#)

Anum Hussain [Add Bio](#) · [Make Anonymous](#) 

Add your answer, or [answer later](#).

Finally, a word of advice: Just because an interaction happens on LinkedIn or another social network, doesn't mean a conversation without context is any less cold. Cold-emailing someone on LinkedIn or sending direct messages the moment someone follows you on Twitter delivers the exact same negative experience as the dreaded cold call.

Social media is meant to be social, not spammy.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL'S ROLE IN INFORMING YOUR SALES CALLS

Social media can be leveraged to keep your existing leads engaged while adding context to the conversations you have with them on your sales calls. Here are a few key ways to inform your sales calls with social media intelligence.

1) *Add Social Media to Your Pre-Call Research*

Typically sales reps get a collection of information before making a call to a company: the company size, their annual revenue, or their biggest needs. This dossier of information helps a rep shape the conversation in a more consultative manner.

But what if a quick social media search were added to this routine? What could you learn by connecting with someone on social media and listening to what they share before calling? What if you knew what pieces of your shared content the lead clicked on before contacting your company?

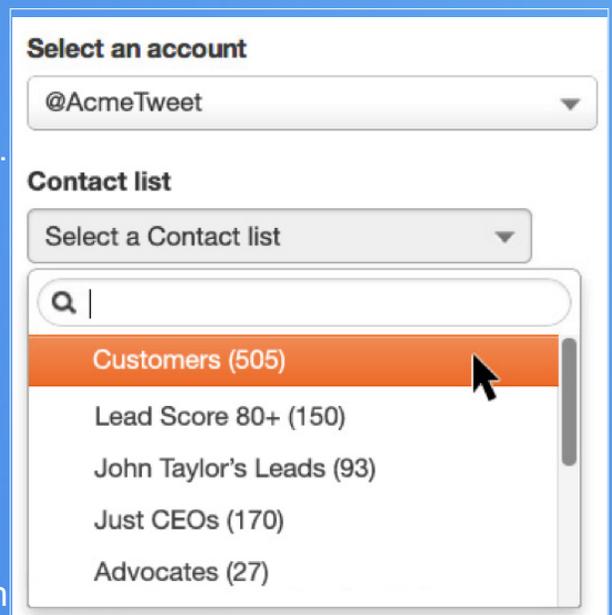
Using social media, your call could reference shared articles or updates from the company or lead that you might have otherwise missed. You can see if your lead has been actively talking with other companies or researching other needs. Social can add to the full context of the individual so that your conversations are deeper and more productive.

2) Create Twitter Lists of Your Leads

As you get new leads, do a quick search to see if they are active on Twitter. If they are, follow and add them to a list of leads for the quarter. Twitter is the best channel for this sort of targeted view because following someone doesn't require approval and can be asymmetrical in nature (though hopefully you'll get a follow-back.) By creating Twitter lists for each of your sales quarters, you can get to know the interests and breaking news of your leads before getting on calls with them. Taking this extra step can help your calls become more productive, personal and memorable.

Tip for HubSpot Customers: Build Lists with HubSpot's Social Inbox

If you don't have time to create the Twitter lists manually, you can use a software like HubSpot to do social segmentation for you. When you're monitoring social, it can be hard to separate your leads from the large masses of people around them. Channels like Twitter and Facebook can start to seem like a firehouse if you don't have a way to focus in on just the people that matter to your business. By integrating with a company's database of leads, HubSpot's Social Inbox allows sales reps to set up an individual stream of tweets from just their leads.



3) *Keep Your Customers Happy Even After They Convert*

Sales Coach Rick Roberge makes a nice point [on his blog](#) about the ripple effect that can happen through continued customer engagement on social media. He writes:

“

Get everyone in your organization active on social media and intertwined with their customers social media presence. When one of your customers' does something good, get your salesperson to start the ripple on social media. The more customers he has, the bigger the wave will get which will get him more hands raised and more customers.

”

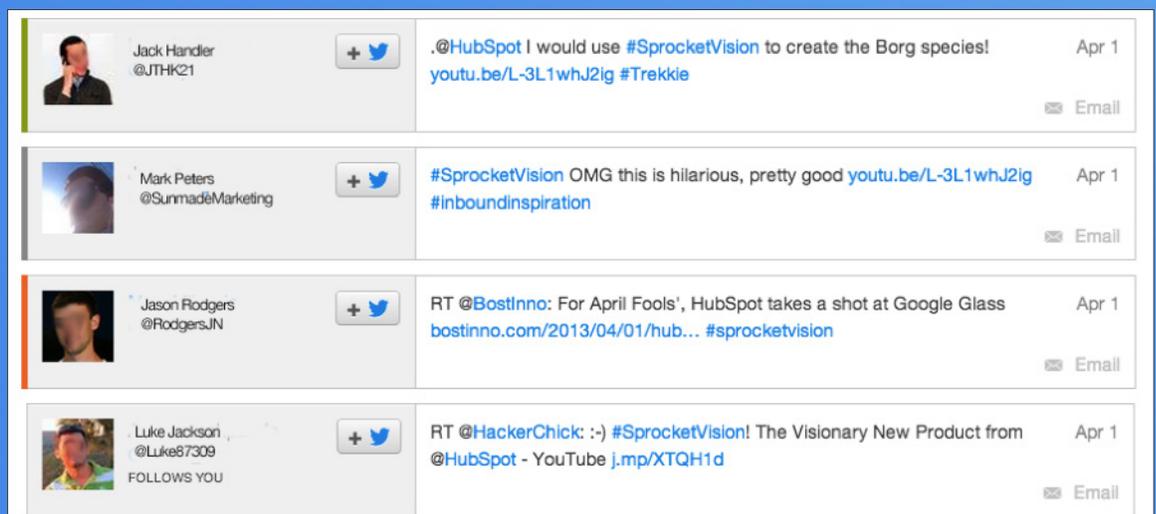
Keeping customers engaged not only helps you increase customer happiness, it also helps you expand your reach and grow your audience.

4) Create Twitter Lists of Your Customers

Think about adding a step into your sales closing process that enables sales reps to add a new customer into a list on Twitter. Once the list is created, work with marketing and customer support if you have it to keep it monitored. Watch for comments or questions about your company, but also make sure that you are sharing their posts when relevant and expanding their reach. Look for opportunities to surprise and delight your customers.

Tip for HubSpot Customers: Identify Customers Easily with the Right Software

In HubSpot, tweets from customers are color-coded in green, as in the image below. You can also create a separate stream of customers and set up alerts for when they are in need of answers.



CHAPTER 4

MARKETING AND SALES ALIGNMENT AROUND SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is typically seen as a top-of-the-funnel activity – one that lives squarely within marketing. But this thinking limits the true potential of social media for your business. Carole Mahoney from [Mahoney Internet Marketing](#) puts it nicely. She writes:

“

Marketing is the matchmaker, but sales needs to do the dating.

”

Sales and Marketing should meet to create a coordinated social media strategy that answers the following questions:

Monitoring:

- Who’s primarily responsible for setting up lists and alerts for social media?
- How should a sales rep be notified when their lead mentions the company or relevant keywords on social media?
- What should sales reps look for in social media before calling on a lead?
- How can marketing best flag sales teams to important posts or comments?

Responding:

- Who is primarily responsible for responding to social media posts?
- Does that change if the social contact is a prospect, lead, or customer?
- What does a good response or post on social media look like?
- What does a bad response or post on social media look like?

Reporting:

- How will both teams know their collective social media strategy is working?
- What metrics will marketing and sales track for each channel?
- How will you record and aggregate social conversations?
- How much time should each team spend on social media as a channel?
- How many visits, leads and customers do you need social media to generate to validate the time investment in each channel?

By aligning your Sales and Marketing teams around a common social media strategy and practice, you contribute to a more frictionless experience for prospects and leads. Each conversation on social media develops from a disconnected interaction to a true business opportunity that translates into better sales intelligence for your calls, and a better overall experience for your customers.

CONCLUSION & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Conclusion: Get Your Sales Team Using Social.

For some time now, social media has been the voicemail box we just haven't been checking. With the growing adoption of social media, there are more and more messages being sent over social that your sales team should be trying their darndest to catch. And if they're not checking these messages, someone else will. In fact, 72.6% of salespeople using social media actually outperformed their colleagues not on social media.* Don't let the salesperson outperforming your sales reps work for your competitor.

When convincing your sales team to use social, remind them that the value of social media in the sales process extends beyond just being present where leads are communicating. It has to do with the soft skills many sales professionals have already honed in-person and on the phone. Any sales professional knows it's extremely important to develop a sense of comfort and trust early on in a relationship. Social media can be the perfect medium for engaging in those conversations that will help you better understand your lead's pain points, interests, and personality.

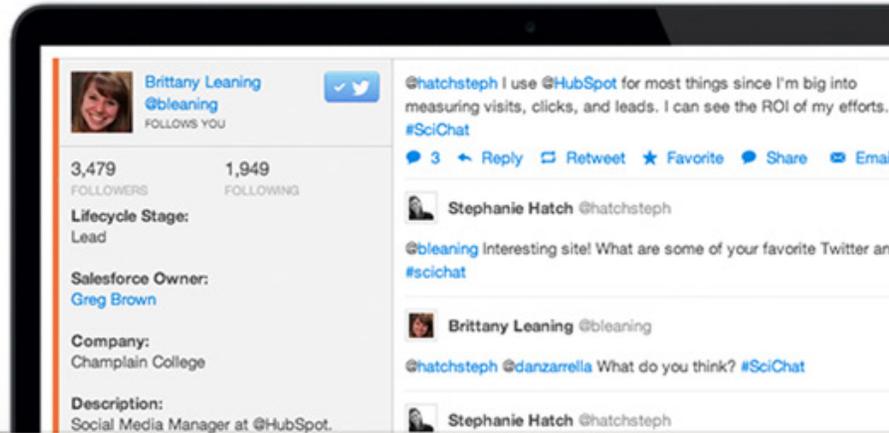
In a world where we text before we call, the domain of sales conversations is expanding from the headset into the Twitter stream.

*According to Social Media and Sales Quota, Jim Keenan of A Sales Guy Consulting
Barbara Giamanco Social Centered Selling

INTRODUCING

HubSpot Social Inbox

Make social personal again.



FIGHT THE NOISE, PERSONALIZE YOUR RESPONSES, AND DELIVER REAL SOCIAL MEDIA ROI WITH SOCIAL INBOX.

HubSpot's latest social media tools, titled Social Inbox, gives you the context you need to elevate the conversations that matter most to your business. With social inbox, every social media interaction hits your Contacts Database, allowing you to personalize interactions like never before. [Click here to request a demo.](#)

**HUBSPOT CUSTOMERS:
START USING YOUR SOCIAL
INBOX TODAY.**

Click here to access Social Inbox within your own customer account. As long as you're logged in, we'll take you straight to your new monitoring tool.

**NOT A CUSTOMER? SEE
SOCIAL INBOX IN ACTION
WITH A FREE DEMO.**

Click here to request a demo of social inbox, and learn how to develop a scalable social strategy for every department in your organization.

