



Marketing.com, Sept-Oct 2016

Initiating and mastering the art of social selling

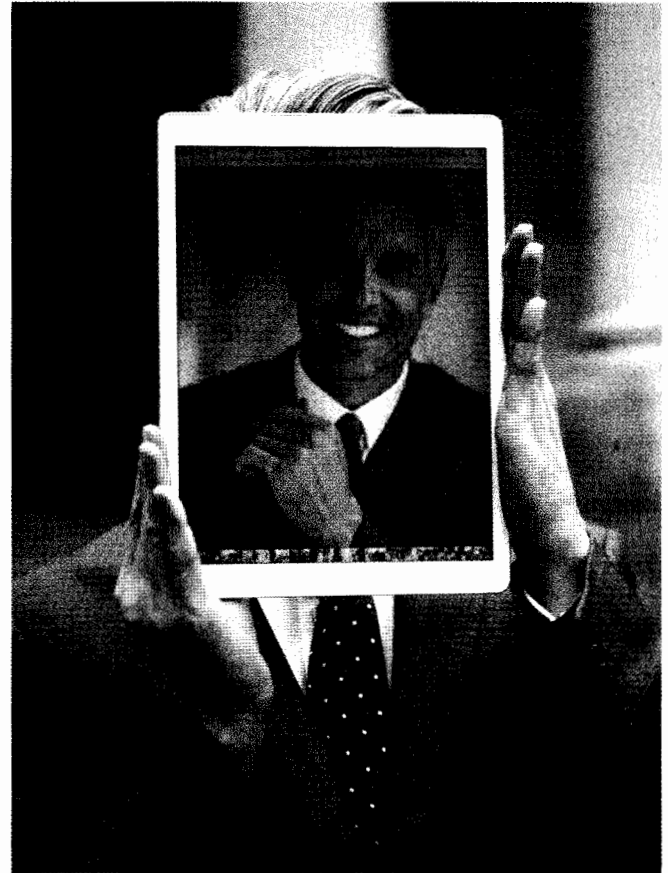
Social selling is using social networks to learn more about customers' buying preferences and behavior, connecting with them and starting a conversation. It may feel awkward at first because social media has become such a personal space for a lot of people, says Patrick Hogan, chief technology officer at sales software and services provider Tenfold.

"Keep in mind that buying is personal," Hogan says. "Whether they are making a personal B2C purchase or a B2B decision, people's decisions are personal matters. In this connected world, if you snooze, you lose. Failure to keep with the times will cost you."

Hogan offers these five steps to initiate a social selling strategy:

- 1. Optimize your social media profiles.** While you should polish your company's profile, individual sales professionals' profiles are equally important. Write up your summary like web page copy. What do you bring to customers? What can your products do for the customers? Apply the same principles when talking about your past work. You need to emphasize that you are a trustworthy and competent person. This adds to your authority.
- 2. Research your targets.** If you have built a rock-solid buyer persona, identifying the particular people you're selling to on social networks shouldn't be hard. Identify the ~~companies~~ you're prospecting and get to know the patterns of people you want to connect to. Here's some of the information you need:

Communities



3. Listen. The reality is people want to talk more than listen. You need to take advantage of this by offering an audience to your targets. Find out what ~~products~~ they use. Get to know what they think of those ~~products~~. Once you find out what matters to them when it comes to ~~products~~, you'll communicate better and be guided better.

names

4. Make connections and initiate conversations. Be honest and direct. They will know you are a sales professional. But if you've done your homework and ticked off your checklist, you shouldn't be seen as intrusive at this point.

5. Be a source of excellent content. You build authority by only sharing posts that are worthwhile to read for your audience. ~~Coordinating with your~~

"In