



Social Selling - Why Sales Needs Content



– By Susan McKenney

Over the last few years sales and marketing have become much closer in their relationship with the addition of technology and social media. The lines between sales and marketing continues to blur. One of the fine lines that sales and marketing will have to manage is the difference between them in an ever-changing environment of technology.

Technology controls our lives, and with each year that passes the way in which we communicate will continually change. Technology has made line between sales and marketing much closer, and this “grey, area” is called content. It is increasingly obvious that sales today have changed, and sales must now must get involved in producing their own relevant content. If sales doesn’t start producing content, sales it will be left behind in the numbers game.

What does content mean for sales? Today and well into the future content will be driven in society by social media. As more social media channels get added to the many we have now, the main aim of anyone in sales or marketing, must be to provide the right content to the right decisions makers at the





right time. While marketers have always known this, it used to be the exclusive space of the marketer. Sales must now find their way in the providing relevant content.

Why is content such a vital part of the social selling that has entered B2B businesses? Relevant content cultivates the lead and drives it down the path to a sale. Content also should be always attempting to build trust in you and your organization. If you deliver the wrong content it will become annoying, spammy and will work against you and your company trying to build a brand awareness, and a reputation. Sales should not minimize the importance of content in their sales strategy because you run the risk of not only creating or using the wrong content, but sending it to the wrong people and alienating them and you run the real risk of becoming irrelevant and out-of-touch with your sales target.

Today's sales is all about providing value. What content can you share with a prospect that will make their job easier? Whether or not the prospect ends up buying from you, if you provide valuable information, you can set yourself up as a thought leader and can earn a referral.

Social intelligence is vital to sales success. Social media channels aren't just for research and chasing down leads anymore. Sales people must educate themselves on the art of social selling. When done effectively it positions reps as thought leaders through their tweets and blog posts. Sales people must be actively involved on LinkedIn, Facebook and many more relevant social channels. Done right social selling can also produce inbound leads for a Sales Rep. Forward-thinking companies have begun social selling, but much of the sales industry still leverages content that reads more like a sales pitch. You must be a more well-rounded informative sales person and be out there talking about other areas than your company's products to get noticed. Throwing up sales pitches about your product will no longer work. Forward emails, LinkedIn message or tweets become spammy and are not noticed and can even damage your social profile.

Another reason you must change your content is that your buyers according to a [recent Corporate Executive Board study](#), 60 percent of a prospect's buying decision happens before they even talk to a salesperson. Sales Reps must understand their newly educated prospects motivations, and hesitations, about buying. *What* are customers reading? *Where* are they reading it? Sales Reps should be the ones answering the questions as to what buyers are reading about. They should also be looking to find out where their customers are going to get their information. They're the ones who talk to potential and current customers on a regular basis. If the decision to buy something is happening before they talk to you then how do you change your format to give them reasons to buy from you.... You get that information from current customers and prospects as you engage with them. You should be asking your customers and prospect both what information they need and where they are looking to get information. Once the information is collected, it essential that you are getting seen and heard in those places solving and answering the questions educated prospects still need to obtain from an educated salesperson...YOU. By continually reaching out to your customers and quizzing all prospects you can keep up to date on what where and how you improve your presence to get them to look at your solution. Your prospects and customers ultimately become your guide to effective and necessary content.

