

СЕКЦІЯ 5

ДІДЖИТАЛІЗАЦІЯ : ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНИХ ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ БІЗНЕСУ

DIGITIZATION: WAYS OF INTEGRATING SOCIAL NETWORKS INTO THE SALES STRATEGY

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Money! How many meanings can you put in this word? How much could you earn if you created an online shop on social media just a year ago? That is a big amount of money which is still with other people, and these people are on social networks. Nowadays, entrepreneurs who do not understand this remain on the sidelines of progress: without customers and without profits. In the last few years, the whole world will receive challenges: first, quarantine restrictions, and then, as a result of a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a large number of people were forced to change their place of residence and work. Moreover, this leads to an increasingly active use of all kinds of social networks. In addition, everything that was initially considered as entertainment content or just communication today becomes your store or office, where you need to work.

Here are eight ways [1] to integrate social media into your sales strategy to drive revenue.

1. Identify the most-used platforms for your ideal customer.

As sales pro, you should have a well thought out ideal customer profile. This profile should spell out key information about who your buyer personas are. For B2B companies, this can include the size of the company that would benefit from your product, how much revenue they bring in, and their organizational structure. For companies that sell to consumers, your ideal customer profile should include

information such as how old your buyers are, what their interests are, and what problem they are turning to your product to solve. Once you have your ideal customer profile laid out, use this information to determine what social media platforms they are most likely to be active on. For example, if you work for a B2C company and are targeting Generation X and Y consumers, you would be better served to focus your efforts on *Facebook* than *Tik Tok*. Conversely, if you sell B2B and are looking to gain direct access to seasoned professionals, *LinkedIn* may be a more productive platform to focus on than *Pinterest*. In addition to understanding what platforms are frequently used by your ideal customer, take time to understand how your customer is using these platforms. For example, if your customers prefer natural-looking user-generated content, then you will most likely find them on *Instagram* because that is where that type of content performs best. Or if your audience prefers searchable instructional content, they may spend more time on *YouTube*. This information will provide valuable insight on where you should focus your energy to best connect with and serve your audience as you implement social media into your sales strategy.

2. Share customer stories with marketing.

When it comes time to purchase a new product, buyers feel more confident in their decision knowing the product has a seal of approval from another buyer. In fact, 83% of buyers say word-of-mouth recommendations influence their buying decisions. The best way to incorporate the word-of-mouth approach into your sales strategy? Through sharing customer stories your prospects can relate to. As a sales rep, you play an integral role in sharing your customer's stories. Although your marketing team is often tasked with the job of creating content for your company's social media channels, your frequent communications with prospects and customers can provide valuable content as well. Make sure you are regularly sharing the stories of happy customers with your marketing team for amplification on your company's social media platforms to provide social proof that can help drive sales for your business.

3. Leverage social proof in your sales materials.

In addition to sharing customer stories with marketing, don't forget to include social proof in your sales materials. If you receive a stellar online review or have a happy customer create an appreciative social media post praising your product, reference them in your sales pitches to build trust and credibility with potential customers.

4. Optimize your personal social media accounts.

Your company's accounts aren't the only touchpoints your brand can have with a customer on social media – your personal accounts can serve as a personable extension of your company's brand. As a sales rep, you can optimize your own social media accounts to support your selling efforts. This way, buyers can quickly see you're a representative of your brand as soon as they see your profile. The two platforms that are best for this are *Twitter* (where consumers often go to communicate directly with brands and thought-leaders) and *LinkedIn*.

5. Use social media when prospecting.

Social media can be a powerful tool for prospecting and connecting with new contacts, especially for those working in B2B sales. If your company sells to other businesses, *LinkedIn* should be a key tool in your prospecting process. *LinkedIn* allows you to find and build relationships with potential customers that are a perfect fit for your business. The free version of the tool has a search feature that allows you to filter users by keywords, industry, location, work history, and mutual connections. You can simply tailor your search to include the attributes of your ideal customer to find new contacts to reach out to. For reps ready to take their *LinkedIn* prospecting to the next level, *LinkedIn Sales Navigator* provides advanced search insights, provides valuable lead recommendations, and can even connect with your CRM, making it easy to stay in touch with new contacts.

6. Track relevant metrics.

As a sales professional, you're no stranger to tracking metrics such as the average length of the sales cycle, pipeline velocity, and average lead response time to understand how your business is performing. And if you aren't already, it is time to include social media metrics in your regular reporting. How many of your leads come in from social media? Of your social media leads, how many of them convert? What percentage of your total sales come from social media leads? This information is helpful to track to understand how to continue integrating social in your sales strategy. In addition to these quantitative figures, you may want to consider tracking some qualitative information. For example, if a specific social media post led to an influx of leads that ended up converting, note what type of post this was and seek to understand what made this content so successful. This can inform your strategy moving forward.

7. Add social listening to your operating rhythm.

If you could be granted the superpower of reading your customer's minds, would you take it? Though I can't give you that superpower, I can attest to the power of social listening, which can help you understand how your customers really feel about your product and company. You can then use the information you

find to inform your sales strategy moving forward to better accommodate customer needs and concerns.

Here are a few ways you can incorporate social listening into your regular operating rhythm:

- Search for your company or product name on *Twitter* to see what users are saying even if they don't directly tag your company. You can also do this with competitors to see what consumers are saying about similar brands.

- Use a tool such as *HubSpot Social Inbox* to see all of your company's brand mentions across platforms in one place.

- Follow the *LinkedIn* updates of companies and individuals you are interested in working with. Anytime they are mentioned in the media or elsewhere on the platform, you'll receive a notification.

- Scan the comments section of posts from your company, your competitors, and any influencer marketing posts promoting your or your competitor's products.

8. Conduct competitive analysis.

Social media is a powerful tool for conducting competitive analysis. Not only can you see what content your competitors are sharing to engage with their audience, announce new product drops, and promote their current product line-up, but you can also access comments and reviews to see how their customers truly feel about their products. Whether their audience is living feedback for their product, reviewing this information on a regular basis can help you distinguish the differentiators of your company and offering in the words of customers looking for those attributes. Additionally, if you work in B2B sales, performing a competitive analysis of your ideal customer's competitors is also worthwhile. By knowing what your prospect is up against in their industry, you are better equipped to walk into a sales conversation knowing exactly how your product can suit their needs and support the growth of their business.

To sum up, though the job of social media management often falls under the responsibility of marketing, social media platforms are incredibly valuable for sales professionals to use and understand as well.

Reference:

1. 8 ways to integrate social media into your sales strategy. URL: https://blog.hubspot.com/sales/social-media-and-sales?utm_campaign=blog-welcome-emails&utm_medium=email&utm_content=196364097&utm_source=hs_automation&hubs_content=blog.hubspot.com%2Fsales%2Fsales-strategy&hubs_content-cta=increasing%20online%20sales%20through%20social%20media (дата звернення: 12.01.2023).