4 Do and Don’ts of Social Selling on LinkedIn
The social media explosion seen in recent years has transformed the way we do business.

Gone are the traditional days of ‘one-way selling’, where sales was a straightforward process and involved the sales rep convincing the buyer of the need to buy their product or service.

Customers today are more empowered and connected than ever before, and interestingly, decision makers reportedly consume at least 5 pieces of content before engaging with a sales rep. Many companies are using social media not only to reach out and communicate with their customers, but also to close deals online.

78.6% of salespeople who use social media out-perform those who don’t (Forbes)

According to Hubspot, 77% of B2B purchasers said that they would not even speak to a salesperson until they had done their own research.

The world of social selling can seem vague and overwhelming to those who are just getting started with it. Social media platforms offer a treasure trove of data which can give you valuable insight into who your prospects and leads are. At the same time, it may be challenging to navigate the murky waters of virtual relationships, especially since trust and community are at the heart of selling on social media.

To help you get started, here are some dos and don’ts to keep in mind when approaching social selling on LinkedIn.
**Do**

**Build your profile and establish a professional brand.**

Make an effort to create a profile that stands out. In addition to listing your professional goals and accomplishments, use rich media like videos and presentations to add depth and visibility to your brand. Use a professional photo to get your profile noticed (up to 11 times more likely), and add a job title, tagline, and summary that accurately outlines your role and how you help customers. You can be sure that a prospect will check out your profile before meeting you, so make sure your page speaks to their challenges and pain points.

**Learn more about people.**

Review your prospect’s LinkedIn profile before that sales call to learn more about their background, interests etc. and use this information to build rapport when you speak. LinkedIn’s Advanced Search feature allows you to find prospects by name, company and position enabling you to reach out to and build relationships with key decision makers and stakeholders at target companies. Use a mutual connection to request an introduction as people are much more likely to respond this way - this will enable you to even access top tier leads.

**Share content and engage.**

Consistently capture the attention of your LinkedIn connections by sharing blogs, articles, white papers and industry news so that you are seen as a valuable and relevant contact. Use the platform like a networking event - communicate one-on-one to engage leads but from time to time impress them with a thought leader article, which is your equivalent of a captivating speech. LinkedIn Pulse is an innovative feature which curates content based on your areas of interest, particular influencers or companies. Sharing and engaging with these pieces are a great way to show your interest and insight.

**Listen.**

This is a great place to learn all about your industry, buyer personas, their challenges and pain points. Keep yourself abreast of the latest in your niche, competitor news and other information by participating in relevant LinkedIn Groups, and following thought leaders and innovative companies in your industry. Being aware of the content and news your contacts share in your newsfeed also helps you educate yourself about their interests and needs.

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**Don’t**

**Begin without a plan.**

Using social media to build relationships and sell your product or service can spell disaster if you don’t have a strategy in place. Setting specific goals and metrics for success will help you monitor progress and stay aligned to the broader sales strategy. For instance, how many people will you connect with every day? How many leads do you want to find? Being sure about what you want to achieve will give you a target to work towards.

According to LinkedIn’s State of Sales Report for 2016, 90% of top performing salespeople use social media as part of their sales strategy.

**Assume every contact is a prospect.**

Sending connection requests to anyone who seems like they’d be a good fit may not yield the best results as they may not be open or willing to connecting with you. It doesn’t make sense to spend time on a 10-minute pitch when you don’t have qualified leads for your product or service. Instead, identify your target audience on LinkedIn and build relationships with them.

**Broadcast excessively.**

You won’t be providing value or building relationships if you are using your feed to push your product or service to others. Marketers often use social media to churn out content to make sure their brand or product is visible - but this can come off as aggressive and put people off interacting with you.

**Just do the hard sell.**

LinkedIn may not be the right place to close deals as pressuring your leads to convert may be counter-productive, and runs the risk of damaging the relationship you invested the time and effort to develop. Focus instead on building trust and sharing expertise via great content so that you can take your prospects further on to the next stage of the sales funnel.

Social selling is one of the core inbound sales channels. Schedule a Free Inbound Sales Consultation Today.