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How to use Twitter to Excel at Social Selling



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Introduction

Have you incorporated Twitter into your social selling strategy yet? 69% of sales executives believe that the buying process is changing faster than organizations are adapting to it, and a large proportion of this failure can be attributed to a refusal to leverage social selling.

With over 300 million monthly active users, Twitter is a platform that any seller should seriously consider adopting as part of an evolved, all-encompassing selling approach.

50% of technology companies have acquired a customer through Twitter. 74% of people follow businesses on Twitter to get product updates.

The potential to maximize sales efficiently and effectively using Twitter is immense. It's no coincidence that social sellers (63.4%) report an increase in their company's sales revenue versus non-social sellers (41.2%). This ebook will share with you everything you need to know to expand your reach, prospect efficiently and engage in up-to-the-minute conversations that will convert customers and help you to drive more sales.



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#1 Optimize your Profile

The first step in any successful social selling activity is to ensure that you've optimized your social media profiles. On Twitter, you are equally visible to prospects as they are to you, so it's important to make an effort with your personal branding and present the best possible professional version of yourself. That small initial effort can yield significant long term benefits, as customers will be much more likely to trust you, engage with you and ultimately convert if you are considered a credible, authoritative social media source.

Choose an appropriate @username:

You will have to select a handle that is 15 characters or less and reflects both you and your business. Try to pick something clear, simple and easy to remember, as this will form your ongoing identity on Twitter, and is the name by which customers will be able to search for you. Because of this, it's essential that your Twitter handle holds a degree of relevance - why use your birthdate to create a unique username when you could include your company name? Sophie_DMI would be a lot more distinguishing (and informative) than SophieSmith1990.

Be on-brand:

Your Twitter profile is composed of a number of visual assets, most notably your profile picture and header image. Using a professional yet approachable and relaxed profile picture should be a consistent action taken across any social media account used for business purposes. When it comes to selecting a suitable header image, it's important to choose a photo that aligns with your personal brand and best represents your business.

You can even use your cover photo as an opportunity to advertise a price promotion, or a new product or service.

It's helpful to note that Twitter's recommended size for profile pictures is 400×400 pixels, and for header images it's 1500×500 pixels. Twitter will automatically resize any pictures that don't fit these dimensions.

Make your bio count:

You have a limited 160 character count with which to attract and engage potential customers, so use it wisely. Try to succinctly convey your business's unique selling point; how you can provide value to potential customers and why, rather than just listing your title or business name. You should try to position yourself as someone who can inform and advise potential customers, so including a pithy insight or statistic is also recommended. Use hashtags where appropriate, as these will increase your visibility in Twitter searches, and include a link to your LinkedIn profile to add another touchpoint for potential customers.

Use a Pinned Tweet:

Pinned Tweets are perfect for demonstrating your value that little bit further. You can provide maximum visibility at the top of your timeline to a Tweet that could either showcase your industry expertise or thought leadership, or promote your sales offering. All you have to do is post a Tweet, click "More" and then select "Pin to your profile page".



#2 Identify Leads

Because it can facilitate countless social conversations on countless topics, Twitter is the perfect medium for identifying and targeting potential customers. You can use Twitter to research their needs and interests, and then engage them in a personalized conversation that they will be much more inclined to participate in. If used effectively, Twitter is an all-powerful platform that can significantly assist your social sales process and improve customer conversion. We've outlined a couple of tactics you can adopt to make the most of your Twitter targeting below:

Acquire a relevant following:

Before you can start engaging with prospects on Twitter, you need to find them. You can use Twitter's search function and enter any keywords (be it a job title, company or industry) to find photos, video, news, tweets and accounts that reference them. You can also use the advanced search function to look for exact words and phrases, tweets from or to particular accounts (such as your competitors') or tweets that mention particular accounts. You can even use criteria such as location and date ranges, and include retweets in your search. Once you find the Twitter user you've been looking for, you should start following them, in the hope that they'll follow you back!

Another option is to use a social listening tool to help you find your ideal followers. You could use Followerwonk, for example, to search for users that include certain keywords in either their Twitter profile, bio or both. You can also use the app to identify your competitors' followers, and follow them yourself in an attempt to grow your own follower count. [Tweeepi](#) is another tool that can be leveraged to identify relevant followers based on a variety of search criteria, from interests, to name, to location.

Be organized:

Twitter lists can help to organize your prospecting process. Once you've started following a lot of users, your Twitter feed will start to get incredibly active; this, coupled with the fact that the average lifespan of a Tweet is approximately 18 minutes, means that you need to implement a streamlined system that allows you to closely monitor chosen users and their tweets as and when you need to. Creating lists is all about categorizing and curating Twitter users for your own convenience. You can create lists to monitor business prospects, either individual or company accounts, and segment those lists by industry, job title, how qualified they are, or a specific keyword. By following these lists, you will become familiar with conversation trends, industry news and customer pain points, all of which will set you up to engage prospects in a way that is more valuable to both you and them.

You can subscribe to other users' lists, if they haven't made them private (a feature worth taking advantage of when you're building prospect and competitor lists!), which is another way to gain a more detailed understanding of customer needs and the state of different industries without necessarily having to follow users. Finally, you can also view which lists you are a member of; a simple way to identify Twitter users/potential leads who are already interested in what you have to say!

Stay Alert:

Another effective way to make sure that you don't miss out on essential tweets or customer conversations, and to ensure you are in a position to respond as soon as possible, is to set up custom alerts. These alerts will notify you if someone tweets or mentions your company, selected competitors or keywords. You can use an app like Warble, which will automate the process, track your chosen Twitter activity and email you regular reports. You can also use IFTTT to receive emails when a Twitter user uses a specific hashtag, or a certain user posts a new tweet; there's even an option to receive a daily roundup of Tweets from preferred users! All you need to do is search "Twitter" and select the recipe that best suits you.

Themes.

Sea side
Towns

City
Country side



#3 Nurture leads

Once you have identified potential leads, the next essential element of any successful social selling strategy is to nurture those connections. Twitter is an ideal platform for maintaining valuable customer relationships because it facilitates instant, direct dialogue. The more emphasis you place on nurturing your prospects and existing customers, the more likely it is that you will be able to drive more sales and encourage repeat purchases. All you need to know is when to engage, and how:

BE COMPELLING:

In order to attract and engage potential customers, your Twitter account needs to be a balanced blend of educational industry articles, appealing infographics, and impressive statistics. This is how you establish yourself as an influential thought leader, win fans and influence prospects. If you don't have the time or resources to create this content yourself, you can curate captivating content from other authoritative sources. You can use an RSS like [Feedly](#), which will recommend and collate relevant industry blogs and articles from prominent publications, so you can read and share as efficiently as possible.

Tim Hughes, who worked on the roll out of social selling throughout Oracle, and is the co-founder of [socialsellinglounge.com](#) emphasizes the importance of having a "buyer-centric profile" on Twitter, and curating and posting articles that would be interesting to a target audience. It's about leveraging "content that the contact will be interested in to drive the conversation".

After you've found suitable content, use an app like Buffer to schedule your tweets, so they will be automatically posted throughout the day! Buffer will even recommend optimum times for posting to guarantee maximum engagement, and analyze your best and worst-performing tweets, so you know what content your followers are engaging with and can curate better content for them in the future.

BE RESPONSIVE:

After you've set up your alerts and curated a compelling timeline of tweets, you need to start interacting with your prospects directly. An easy way to test the water is to start retweeting them as a way to make yourself visible to a prospect without being too forward. It's a simple act that can serve as a catalyst for future engagement. If a user mentions you or your company, or a service or product you offer, this presents an appropriate opportunity for you to introduce yourself into the conversation. You'll be able to assess whether or not it's valuable to do so, but in the instances where you think it will benefit your social selling strategy, you can keep that conversation going by asking questions, and demonstrating an interest in their needs as a customer. In this way, you can slowly but surely advance your relationship and, when the time is right, either take the conversation to Direct Messages, email or phone for a more private, strategic discussion. By cultivating engagements that aren't punctuated with a sales pitch, you can demonstrate to prospects and existing customers alike that you have their interests, challenges and needs in mind.

TAG A COLLEAGUE:

Tim Hughes outlines a tactic called “Twitter Rooms” or “Tag Selling”, which could benefit sales generalists in convincing and converting customers. Once a seller has entered into a Direct Message with a prospect, he can bring in a colleague with specialist domain experience. “He does this using Twitter rooms. He always asks permission to bring in the colleague. At the point the specialist is engaged, he closes for next action”. Hughes references an acquaintance who claims to get “a far better response...and says he never asks for the sale directly; by then there should be trust built between the two parties”.

FIND YOUR ORIGINAL ANGLE:

A lot of sales professionals do Twitter well, so you need to think about utilizing the platform in a way that sets you apart from the competition. Crafting a distinctive online persona is equally, if not more important than curating quality content; it humanizes you, and makes you infinitely more relatable to your prospective customers. Pepper your tweets with appropriate humor, ask questions, be honest. It might take a while to find your voice, but as long as you avoid being too formal or stilted, your personality will begin to shine. Hughes agrees; “social media is about being social and engaging. Please don’t think social is about bombarding social channels with corporate content”.

#4 Gather insights

Sales is an indisputably competitive field. And whatever your product or service, the growing prominence of digital tools and technologies is creating an infinitely more bloodthirsty battle. 81% of consumers now conduct research online before making their final decision to purchase. They have been empowered by search engines, and social media, and this ability to self-educate means that buyers are less susceptible to a sales pitch. Similarly, buyers can easily uncover an overabundance of possible products and services – including those of your competitors.

The key to successfully setting yourself apart from the competition is simple – ongoing analysis. Gaining an insight into your competitors' social selling successes and struggles, as well as your own, is the most comprehensive way to understand both your position in the market, and your target customers.

ANALYZE YOUR COMPETITORS:

Gaining an insight into your competitors' strengths and weaknesses on Twitter is equally, if not more important than being able to understand your own. You can acquire information such as how many followers they have, who is talking about them and tagging them, and the kind of content they share in order to engage with their audience. This data is easily collected through social listening, and can help you to replicate your competitors' successes, avoid their mistakes, and ultimately refine your own social selling strategy.

Use a tool like [Twitonomy](#) to conduct an analysis of any competitor's Twitter account, which will include a variety of metrics. You can find out how many tweets your competitors send, and at what time of the day they choose to post them. You will be able to see which tweets performed best in terms of retweets and favorites, and who your competitors engage most with through replies and mentions, as well as their most frequently used hashtags.

You can also create private Twitter lists to monitor your competition, and create an IFTTT recipe to receive email notifications whenever they tweet about a topic of particular interest to you. Taking the time to pay attention to how they are engaging with their customers will enable you to improve your own Twitter tactics and maybe even intercept some new prospects!

MEASURE YOUR OWN PERFORMANCE:

Being able to benchmark yourself against your competitors and within the context of your industry will help you to optimize your social selling strategy. Twitter has a particularly detailed native analytics platform, which will enable you to establish an overview of top performing tweets (based on impressions), mentions and follower growth on a monthly basis. Based on this report, you can identify the common characteristics of your best performing tweets – if video content or image-based tweets are receiving more interactions, then you will know to focus on posting visual content to your Twitter account. If links to industry articles receive more interest, then you can make sure to add as many influencer blogs as possible to your RSS feed. This easily actionable insight is guaranteed to maximize engagement with your prospects and customers.

SproutSocial is a highly effective tool for generating custom performance reports on your social media channels, including Twitter. It's advisable to use this if you have a number of social media channels, as it streamlines the analysis process for you by identifying which of your social posts receive the most clicks, reach and engagement.

As with Twitter's native analytics platform, reaching this level of understanding about your Twitter performance will guarantee that you are interacting with your audience in a way that most resonates with and appeals to them.

Are you ready to become a social selling superstar?

By investing in a digital selling course that is tailored to your specific needs and interests, you can significantly enhance your marketing capabilities with a highly analytical, strategic digital skillset.

