

Using Social Media to Boost Sales

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The days of the door-to-door computer salesman are gone. Instead, computers are now the ultimate sales tools for companies if they are using their technology resources properly. More than 15 million businesses and organizations are now part of Facebook. Many corporations also have company Twitter pages. In the corporate world, these pages are typically followed or liked by customers and employees. Companies with large customer bases and thousands of employees might have impressive numbers of likes or follows, but all too often, posts or tweets are stagnant, void of real interaction and results.

One of the main goals many companies share in regards to social media is solving how to monetize the various mediums. Currently, most corporate social media accounts function more as a customer service tool than a sales tool. The explanation for this is simple. Social media at its core is about relationships on an interpersonal level. By definition, a person cannot have a relationship with a corporate social media account. At the corporate level, posts and tweets are too broad and out of touch with individuals' needs, interests to function as effective sales methods.

Additionally, many social media platforms have evolved over the years and posts are no longer viewed by the same scope of audience. While a company may have thousands of social media likes, followers, etc., only a small percentage of those people will actually see a daily post. Because of this changing dynamic and shift toward paid posts, interpersonal interaction on social media has become more important for companies than ever before. Especially companies with few advertising dollars to invest in social media.

Corporate social media accounts should not be done away with, but it is time for executives at companies to change expectations and develop a new, more effective approach to social media. The role of the corporate account should remain what it always has been, a necessity of the times. An institution's Facebook or Twitter can be a public face of the company, but not one that is used any longer to drive sales of new

products or services. A corporate account used for a sales function will have to be fueled by advertising dollars to reach enough customers to make a post an effective sales tool.

Instead, this function of social media should be pushed down to the employee level. People customers can have one-on-one relationship with and feel like they can get to know. These faces of the company will become people who customers trust, and the people who to customers are the essence of the business. This trust provides employees with an open door to make connections with their customers on social media and deliver tailored, educational messaging that also sells.

In an employee-centric social media strategy, companies are able to reach customers through channels that are more effective while simultaneously exposing more potential customers to their products and services at the same time. Employees should be empowered with brand and legal compliant messaging they can post to their individual Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts by their employer. The messaging should be relevant, not pushy, relatable, and solve a problem for current and potential customers. If this method is utilized, businesses will be able to touch more people through social media and experience greater success at creating opportunities for sales.

Overall, companies need to adjust their selling and marketing techniques to align with the modern consumer. By making a few adjustments to current campaigns and capitalizing on the capabilities of social media companies will be able to significantly increase their bottom lines.

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