



Smartphones Could Be a Game Changer for Sales



John McGee, CEO of OptifiNow

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.

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.

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.

In addition to an employee-based social media selling strategy, companies need to reach their current and potential customers through another medium that is relevant to modern lifestyles, text messaging. There are more than 320 million wireless subscribers in the United States and it is likely that most of them are tethered to their phones every waking hour of the day. Unlike email or direct mail that might only be read a few times a week, text messages are nearly always read instantaneously upon receipt. And the customer is already on their phone so making a call to act on the message received is a simple follow through in that moment.

Text messaging campaigns have been proven to be more effective than other sales mediums in today's hyper-connected world. It is vital that companies seek out a CRM solution that allows them to incorporate SMS campaigns effectively into the sales and marketing outreach they are already doing. Businesses should look for a solution that allows management to create a library of company approved messages that can be customized by the individual sales person to match their particular clients' interests and buying environment. Text message sales tools should also have an automatic trigger to send preset messages to customers based on certain parameters such as time in the CRM system, purchasing anniversaries, etc.

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 and text messaging, companies will be able to significantly increase their bottom lines.

About the Author

*As the President of OptifiNow, **John McGee** leads the company's vision, strategy and growth. John founded OptifiNow to solve a common problem of enterprise customers – the shared struggle of managing national and global sales teams with brand and legal compliant messaging. Prior to founding OptifiNow, John was and still is the President of 121Communication, a web-based digital print and marketing automation company. John led 121Communication to be one of the first companies in the United States to partner with Hewlett Packard's digital-printing and communications division. Since then, he has consistently innovated with HP and other technology partners to meet the needs of enterprise customers.*