

# Sales, social media and you



By [Monika D'Agostino](#)

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More and more sales people are using social media to help them prospect and develop new business. Why? Because using social media channels can boost sales people's performance.

It's certainly an avenue that I use for my client development. Used wisely and effectively it's a great tool to enhance your business development efforts. Below is an article that was featured in Forbes on how sales people outsell their peers by using social media channels.

[Study: 78% of salespeople using social media outsell their peers](#)

This is a quote from the article: "But as he's (Jim Keenan) shown, those who have been using it (social media) are quickly gaining a competitive advantage." The issue that I see in the long run is that once everybody adopts that technique (and everybody can and should), we are back to square one where sales people need to find ways to stand out from their peers.

## Standing out from the crowd?

Last week we had a meeting with a logistics firm in Seattle and our prospect confirmed that sentiment. He mentioned that everybody now knows who your clients are, because it's readily available information and while social media is a wonderful and easy way to find decision makers, it's not something that is exclusive to any one person.

So, what's a sales person to do? Think about these ideas. Once you have the decision maker identified you can try to connect with them on LinkedIn, add them as a friend on Facebook, follow that person on Twitter, use Google Alerts to follow their company, or perhaps advertise on any of the social media channels to reach the right audience. However, once you do connect and start building a relationship you will need to understand consultative selling to understand your client's needs effectively.

Social media should be used to create awareness, build thought leadership and inform your prospect but it shouldn't be applied when actually selling to your prospects. I would actually argue that sales people don't outsell their peers using social media, but, on a level playing field, they out-prospect them, they out-perform them on their pre-call intelligence.

## Selling thru social media our main focus?

We provide a good portion of our consulting and training in the logistics field, and for marketing and research agencies. And though you might say we have come to know these industries well, there are still vast differences in the way each

company is structured, and in the way in which we serve them. The inner workings of an organisation cannot be discovered through social media. Once interest is established, you need to ask the right questions to gain a deep understanding of your prospect's needs and then develop a solution that brings real value to your prospect.

In another quote from the article it states that there is a direct correlation between social media and sales success. "Social media users have also exceeded quota (exceeded quota by 10% or more) at higher rate than non-social media users every year since 2010. That means more social media users are at Presidents Club than non-social media users." Allow me to propose this: Are sales people who use social media more successful than others, OR is it that consistently successful sales people almost always use the smartest techniques and are ahead of the curve?

In essence, social media is the phone book, yellow pages, conference centre and water cooler combined. The question is not whether to use it or not, but how. People who hang at the water cooler for hours and bore by-passers with their stories were as ineffective as sales people who invade your space on social media. I love LinkedIn and use it all the time, but am starting to get too many senseless business requests, which will result in me being even more careful who I allow into my network.

## Where to go from here?

Facebook has been effective for B2C, but I have yet to see the value in a B2B environment. Blogging, Twitter and all the other micro-blogs are great for information sharing and thought leadership, but should we really put aside the basics of consultative business development in favour of social media centric selling?

I propose we be wise in the way we use social media as an indispensable aid in developing and maintaining business. Never forget that it's human interaction, relationship building and truly understanding your prospect's needs that are the foundation blocks of a healthy business relationship.

## ABOUT MONIKA D'AGOSTINO

Chief Consultative Sales Officer at Consultative Sales Academy - I work with highly motivated individuals and organisations to create success by utilizing a consultative sales approach. Contact details: website: [www.consultativesalesacademy.net](http://www.consultativesalesacademy.net) | Twitter @monikadago | LinkedIn

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