SOCIAL SELLING PLAYBOOK

BY RAMI EL HAJJAR

hovi DIGITAL LAB

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS SOCIAL SELLING

Social selling is being defined in a multitude of ways: a new lead-gen tactic; a way for sales people to build relationships with prospects; content sharing by sales reps on social media.

A straightforward sentence for it: Selling over social media. Yes, it does involve several different activities, a lot of which boil down to: Build a relationship with your prospects based on offering value - on a social platform.

It of course involves more than sales people just hopping on social and liking posts left and right - maybe up and down is more appropriate. It involves real engagement and relationship-building with prospects. Sales people need to focus on building their networks, creating value for their connections, and pushing thought leadership. You'll find yourself meeting the same silence you get from an unanswered call if you're just pushing the sale all day, every day.

Social selling is about talking to people, sharing content, liking posts, commenting on those posts, sliding into DM's, and getting that communication channel open.

Company heads and executives no longer answer cold calls and barely look at cold emails. That's why there's such a massive shift towards using social platforms to connect and build relationships with prospects. The focus has shifted completely from booking a meeting and making a sale to building a relationship and offering unconditional value.

Nowadays, a massive amount of B2B sales is happening over LinkedIn, with sales reps prospecting, researching, and reaching out to their clients over LinkedIn. Sales reps are sending out connection requests, liking and commenting on prospect posts, and sharing worthwhile content to push thought leadership and drive a conversation. Here are some stats to consider when thinking about social selling:

1. 45.6% of French DMUs made a purchase decision after discovering content on LinkedIn (Statista.com)
2. According to a Harris Poll, 73% of American businesses executives sell on social media, with the number reaching 79% for those who anticipate making sales over social over the next three years.
3. The average buyer uses 6.9 information sources when making a purchase decision (trustradius.com)
4. 27% of global tech buyers consult online communities and forums when making their purchasing decisions (trustradius.com)

CHAPTER 2: THE PROFILE

Here are some quick and tangible profile adjustments you can make to really get the most out of your LinkedIn profile:

Pick a nice, professional picture. You want to look good, happy, and approachable. You don't need to suit-up (sorry Barney) you just need to look smart. Your picture plays a role in defining your prospects' first impression, so use it to build a good one. Don't use your graduation photo, you're a professional with a job now, not a fresh grad looking to get hired. I know your grad picture looks great, but save that for a photo frame at home, or your reels on Instagram.

Link up with your marketing team and add the company cover photo. Keep up that professional veneer and make yourself and the company you represent look good.

After your profile photo, start sprucing up the rest of your profile. Update your experience, add your certifications, get recommendations from your peers, colleagues, clients, and management.

Also, when writing what you do in your current sales position, I always suggest writing how you help your prospects. I know, you might look at that and go weird. But that's what you're moving towards. You want to talk to people who have issues and pain points your solution solves. If you're approaching prospects you can't help, you're wasting their time and making yourself look bad. Worse, you're wasting your own time. Time you can spend talking to people who need you to reach out.

And here's a fun tip most people overlook. You can record a little voiceline to add at the top of your profile for people to play. Most people don't use it because they don't know it exists. And that's something you can use to stand out and get your prospects' attention. Get them to hear your voice before your call. The brain's great at remembering voices, and you'll trigger that familiarity switch and make those few moments that much easier and stress-free. Or maybe only stress-adjacent.

Work on your headline and let people know what you help them achieve.

Focus on what they'll be getting from engaging with you. Your headline pops up where your name does. At the top of your profile? Yes. Next to your name when you make comments? Yes. In the search bar when people type in your name? Also yes. Keep it simple.

Don't stuff 20 different keywords and just list the things you cover. Just like you skip long numbers after digit 4, your prospects are going to skip your list past word 3.

Here's an example: "Digital Marketing | B2B | SaaS | Growth Expert | Sales Specialist | RevenueOps | Lead Generation | Cake Maker | Executive Coaching | Leadership | Marketing Executive | Other Real Titles and Words.

So how many of those did you read? (I'm willing to give you to Lead Generation.) Be straightforward and concise. A better example would be something more along the lines of "I help companies evolve their Sales and Marketing" or "I'm a BDR @ Hovi helping companies enhance their growth strategies." Short, clear, and not 10 hot-topic words we've had to suffer through for the past year that give no indication or implication about what you really do.

CHAPTER 3: SHARE CONTENT

Alright, you understand what social selling is. You know what it involves and what it's about. First step was beautifying your profile, now comes step two. Sharing content and being valuable.

One of the biggest pitfalls social sellers fall in is simply updating their profile, and thinking they're done. But anyone you contact to connect, whether you're looking to reach out to a prospect or just connect with a new colleague, will check out your profile. They're checking it not for what you know, but what you offer them. And what you're going to offer them is value through your posts and the content you share.

Spend time reading blogs, watching videos, and generally consuming content pieces, whether they're made by your company's content team or you found a different source. Ofcourse, I'm not telling you not to be biased and push your branded content, but you can push that sense of benefit and usefulness by mixing up your sources. Moreover, you'll be subverting your prospects' expectations - a BDR sharing content that's not their company's.

It shows you're willing to go the extra mile to look for information and find an answer. You're researching and consuming content, not acting as another channel for your marketing team.

Remember to always add a little summary of the piece or one of your own thoughts on it to push people to engage with and read what you're sharing. Set expectations and live up to them.
Furthermore, expand your activity to posting your own experiences, lessons learned, and your own thoughts. It's not always just sharing a cool video or tool you find. With social selling, one of the most important pieces of value is YOU. Share your thoughts on LinkedIn about what you're reading and ask your network for their own. Put out some polls to see what your prospects are dealing with and how they're trying to solve their challenges and issues. Social seling has relationship building as a core facet, and prospects don't build relationships with your content pieces, they build a relationship with you. So, start talking to your network. Engage with their comments, respond, like, and support.

Voice your thoughts. Connect on common ground. Build your relationship. Prove you're trustworthy.

Buyer's view 'vender representatives' as the least trustworthy source of information. It's incredibly difficult to change a prospect's belief in vendors, but you can focus on changing their perception of you. Transform the way you're seen from a sketchy salesman to a trusted source of information.

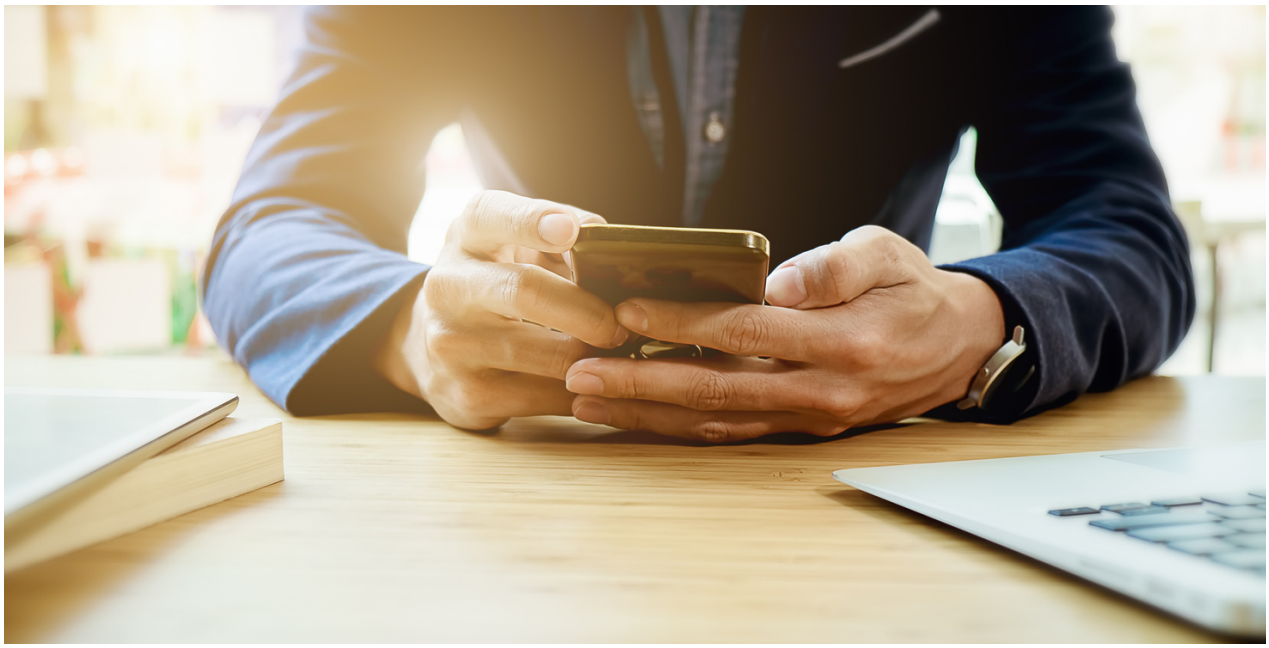
CHAPTER 4: YOUR LINKEDIN ROUTINE

Now I know, you've got calls to make, emails to send, an inbox to check, and a huddle to attend. Days can be hectic and packed right to the brim with things to do. But you can't let that stop you from using one of the most important of your channels to hit your quota.

Just as with any of your tasks, you've built a routine; an easy step-by-step process to streamline your day and organize your time.
I'd suggest giving yourself 15 - 30 minutes in the morning - it helped me connect with my prospects, and gave them the time they needed to see, read, and reply.
Here's the morning routine I used for my LinkedIn activity:

Morning Routine:

1. Find content to share - *Check out Feedly to help purse through content that you're looking for and make it easy to share directly to your profile*
2. Share it on LinkedIn - *You can also share it on other platforms you're active on*
3. Check who's viewed your LinkedIn profile



1. Send a connection request to any target buyers who looked at your profile
2. Look at who liked or commented on your posts
3. Send connection requests to people who engaged with your content
4. Review your LinkedIn alerts
5. Organize "hot" buyers in a LinkedIn folder
6. Share content with hot buyers - This is a good way to work on your hot leads as well
7. Review any additional trigger event alerts
8. Respond to messages - Remember to set time in the afternoon to follow-up as well
9. Create new conversations

This is a good morning routine to supplement or complement your regular sequencing activities. I know you might have your own tool set, so feel free to tweak this to suit yourself. If you're following a set cadence within your process, I'd suggest adjusting this routine to suit that cadence.

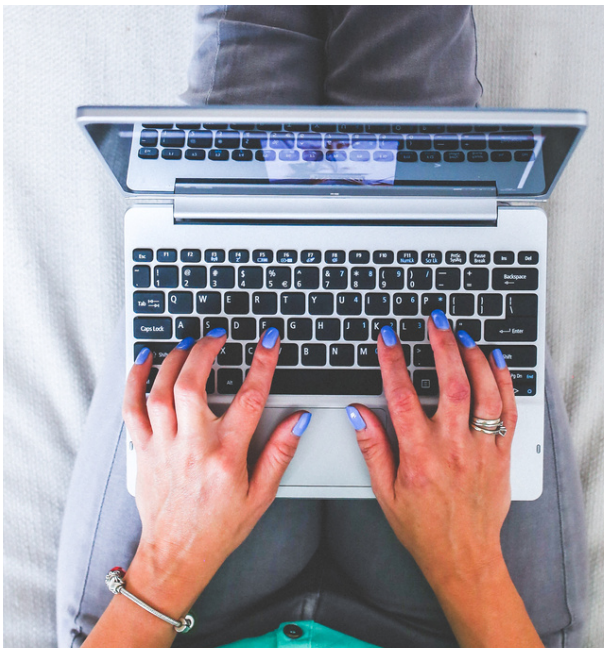
I started with this, then changed to sharing content in the morning and checking my profile views and alerts, and followed my LinkedIn messaging activities according to my sequences.

CHAPTER 5: LINKEDIN MESSAGES

It can be difficult starting a conversation with a stranger. You walk up to them, and you try to notice something they're wearing, maybe they're reading, and commenting on it as a way to break the ice and strike up a conversation. That same idea is what you should use on LinkedIn.

Whenever you're reaching out to a prospect, check out their profile, what certifications have they worked to earn, what have they accomplished during their tenures, what did they mention in their bios, and dive into their posts and activity.

When sending your connection request, there are two main paths you can take.



The first is the most common: You go for the meeting or hard sell.
Most often, you're going to be met with silence on that front. If you've got a great profile and well crafted note, you might get an accept on the connection request you send, but find little to no engagement. Not promising.
The second path, you reach out to build value for your prospect and the foundation for a working relationship. You mention your posts, that you share worthwhile content, and ask them to check it out. Getting the accept here shows that at the very least, the prospect you reached out to finds the content you're sharing valuable, and is willing to engage with someone who's going to add to their LinkedIn experience.

Where do you find your great opener?

Along both paths, you still need a great way to break the ice and connect with your prospect. So here are the places you can look to find one:
Read your prospect's bio. It's a great place to find good tidbits of resonating information. Whether your prospect has a dog, kids, loves biking, or long walks on the beach. They'll usually mention it there and it's a good way to open up your conversation.
Look through your prospect's experience and education. Check out where they've worked and what they've done. Get an idea of their professional journey, and see what they've focused on and had to manage.

Check their recommendations. You'll be able to give your reaction to how people see your prospect and how they feel about them.
Outside of LinkedIn you've got a few other options you can take if you're looking at a hot lead you want to commit to bringing in:
Use your favorite search engine. You might catch your prospect being a guest on a webinar or invited speaker at an event.
Look at your prospect's instagram and twitter. You'll get a look at some more of their out-of-work activities and what they like to do. Ready yourself with your prospect's preferences. You're trying to connect with them, and the best way to do that is with their favorite hobbies and activities

Remember, always ready up a great opener to get your prospect to read through your message and decide on clicking 'accept.' Whether you're going with a more direct sales approach, and want to push your solution first with a focus on prospect pain points, or you're setting yourself up for more engagement and using a more ABM-like approach, always craft a great opener to stand out.

Here are some examples you can build your message on and take inspiration from:

Hey John,

Love seeing a focus on talent and people! Must be a great culture that you're a part of at ABC Company.

I know you might check my profile, see BDR and flinch - but I'm not trying to hit you with some cold sales pitch. Just looking to connect with other pros and share some value. Connect?

Hey Smith,

Not looking to hit you with a cold sales pitch, but I am looking to connect and meet new pros. Hope that's not too surprising.

Definitely invite you to look at my profile - hope you find some value from my posts

Connect and share thoughts?

Hey Jane,

Heard you on JJ's Podcast last week and found what you said about marketing automation pretty interesting
Would love to connect with you on it
P.S. Check my posts! Connect?

Use these examples as starting points to write your own connection requests for your own prospects. Remember to tweak it for your prospect! But now you're probably wondering, "When should I write a note with my request?" A lot of requests that are sent are usually met with silence.
So consider this when you're deciding on writing a note for your connection request:
Do they have a profile picture?
Do they have a large network of connections?
When was the last activity time of the prospect?
Do they engage with other posts on LinkedIn? How?
Do they post on LinkedIn?
Are they a hot lead or important account?
Answering these questions will help you decide whether to write a note with your request, or to simply send the request out empty. Identify if they're an active member on LinkedIn. Check if they sign-in on often to engage with your messages and posts, Decide whether they are an important account for you to bring in and move forward.
It's small, but it'll allow you to dedicate more time to crafting your note, messages, and conversations with key prospects and target accounts.

CHAPTER 6: EXAMPLE OF A LINKEDIN BDR SEQUENCE

Here's a sequence you can adopt and adjust when trying to reach out to your prospects on LinkedIn:
Day 1: View prospect's profile
Day 2: Engage with a post or comment made by your prospect and send out a connection request

Personalize the connection request depending on what:
Content your prospect shares and consumes
The prospect writes about themselves in the about section
Is said about them in their recommendations
You found during your research
If your prospect accepts the connection request:
Send them a thank you
"Thanks for connecting!"
Great to connect with you!"
"Happy to be connected"

If your prospect responds to you, be prepared to have something to build a conversation on, and start with the initial point you used in your connection request

Your goal here is to start a casual conversation

DO NOT ASK ABOUT THEIR JOB yet

If your prospect responds, it's casual conversation time. Now, you can slowly start to move the conversation to their job.

If there is a natural lull/break in the conversation, that could be a good opportunity to change the conversation towards their job.

Your goal now is to get the prospect to open up to you about their job

You're looking for them to share something that your solution helps with.

Day 4: Your prospect didn't respond on Day 2 - Follow-up with them about something new. A new note about content they shared, their profile - keep it light and easy to reply to. You don't want to hit a prospect with something they need to think about - They can get lazy like any of us, and will ignore your message.

Day 6: Follow-up with a cold pitch, intro video, or be different and use LinkedIn's voice message.

After Day 6, if the prospect does not respond, stop DMing - Start focusing on interacting with their posts, liking and commenting for the next few weeks.

Try again to get the prospect to open-up - If there's still no response, it's time to move on.

Day 3: Profile View

Day 4: Engage with their profile

Like/Comment on a post

Day 5: Repeat Days 3 and 4 until they accept your connection request - or try for a little while and then focus your efforts somewhere else.

CHAPTER 7: SOME TOOLS TO HELP WITH YOUR PROSPECTING

Here are some free tools you can use to stand out and better connect with your prospects:

Dubb: Allows you to send videos, CTAs, and meeting links through LinkedIn
Drift Video: Send videos to your prospects on LinkedIn
Krisp: Take better videos by canceling out background noise
Hugo or Docket: Take better meeting notes and take care of those notes
Crystal Knows: Make researching your prospects easier