



Social Media: De-Mystifying its Business Value

By Ron Snyder

Social Media is a vehicle by which people talk with each other. The business value of Social Media is to leverage the genuine comments of real people to build the credibility of your offering. Social Media interactions accelerate the process by which prospective buyers become happy customers based on the remarks of those who already are. It is a set of technologies that bring a personal touch into the buying/selling process, which is becoming increasingly impersonal. Further, it enables you to tap into the “voice of the customer” to gather valuable feedback and improve your offering.

I am looking at Social Media with a broad perspective- beyond the common Social Media platforms to include customer references, testimonials, case studies, user forums and other ways interested parties communicate.

How can effective use of Social Media accelerate your sales efforts?

- Social media cannot provide a key feature missing from your offering. Yet, it can help people see the importance of capabilities you do deliver.
- Social Media does not change your pricing. However, customer testimonials and case studies can significantly increase the perceived worth of your solution.

How does it help across the sales process?

- Presence on the right sites dramatically improves awareness and generates leads.
- Comments from customers, industry influencers and peers help buyers believe your claims that you will solve specific problems, deliver the best solution and offer superior value.
- Customer testimonials and references jump-start stalled purchase processes by responding to the concerns or missing information causing the delay.
- Forums and user communities enable users to resolve implementation and usage issues; decreasing customer churn.
- Learning how other users get the most out your offering creates happier customers and provides impetus for renewals, upgrades and buying other products from you.

You can collect critical input about what’s working and not working regarding your offering, your reputation and the way you interact with your customers and prospects so you can make important adjustments.

Beware of blanket statements, for example, that you must have a (Facebook fan page or a Twitter account. In order to determine the most effective Social Media strategy and platform (Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, forums, groups, etc.), you must understand the usage habits of your target audience.



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It is difficult to assess the return on investment (ROI) of Social Media efforts at this time. There are sales force automation products that track marketing activities and their conversion to the next stage in the sales process- and ultimately if a sale was made. Admittedly, there are many activities that contribute to making a sale, yet knowing which Social Media activities impact buying provides guidance and confidence in the allocation of resources.

Given the dramatic increase in the use of Social Media in the buying process and how helpful each boost along the sales process can be, it is something that needs to be considered in everyone's sales and marketing strategy.

About Breakthrough, Inc.

We provide Sales & Marketing guidance to companies delivering high value products and services- Business to Business.

- ✓ Direct Experience- in Sales, Marketing and management
- ✓ Best Methods- an aggregate of best practices and tools
- ✓ Performance Management- to support successful adoption of new methods and tools; track progress and fine-tune approach



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