



9 things you need to know about selling on social

Make the most of the lucrative social selling market with these 9 tips.

3RD APRIL 2018

With 1.8 billion people active on Facebook, Instagram hitting 800 million active users each month, and over 150 million people using Snapchat daily – to name just a few examples – the reach of social platforms is huge. They are also the best places to sell.

This Nielsen study is one of many that proves what retailers have always suspected: people are more likely to trust their friends' recommendations than anyone else's. Which is why, in the last ten years, money has flowed into social selling.

Increasingly, the e-commerce buying process is driven by customers purchasing within an experience they've already created for themselves, surrounded by people, brands and services selected by them.

For start-ups in particular, who have small marketing budgets to work with, utilizing social media is a relatively cheap way to effectively reach huge numbers of primed, eager target customers and maximize ROI.

So, here are some ways brands need to be positioned on social platforms, to win sales and loyalty.

Setting up shop on social media: Nine Top Tips to get you started:

1. Start with the right platform for your target audience

There are a lot of social channels out there. Each one is different and attracts a different audience – Snapchat and Instagram tend to attract a younger crowd. LinkedIn is for business networking, Twitter is for opinion-formers. Figure out where your target buyers are, and position your business there.

There are many free analytics tools online, which provide a breakdown of social media audience demographics to help you choose the right social channel and build your marketing strategy.

For example, Facebook Audience Insights is an analytics tool that will segment your followers by age, gender, lifestyle, relationship status and job title.

It will also give detailed insights into their target behaviors – what time they are most active on the site and how long they are spending there. Once you have all this information, you can schedule your content accordingly and target them when they are most engaged.

Another advantage for social is that most of the platforms are now global. You may be a one-man band selling from your bedroom but a presence on social allows you to access customers in every corner of the world, as swimwear brand Kulani Kinis found when their strong Instagram presence catapulted them, with the help of DHL, to huge worldwide sales. Different social platforms can help you sell to local people or the entire world. It's up to you.

2. Understand the social sales funnel

As trust is a pillar of social selling, it's clear that brands need to take time to establish a rapport with prospective customers. 'Soft' selling is often the most effective strategy – taking the time to build up followers, winning their trust and creating brand loyalty all lead to repeat custom in the long term.

3. Keep them interested

Create interesting and original content to engage your audience and keep them engaged with you for longer. Longer engagement means a higher chance of buying.

If you're a small cake company that creates bespoke designs for clients, Instagram is great as your primary platform for advertising.

It gives you ample opportunity to flood your feed with colorful and mesmerizing photos of your masterful creations. This keeps people scrolling, and if they like what they see enough they'll click through to your website and maybe buy something. Great content, on the right platform, also encourages sharing with friends on social media, which will further your reach even more.

4. #GetNoticed

Hashtags are a crucial way to link your content to the people looking for it. Carefully consider which hashtags you use – think beyond just the product you're selling and consider related themes that drive your customers to you. Perhaps you're a jewelry brand; rather than just hashtagging #jewelry and #fashion, think about occasions people may want your product for. Think #gifts, #birthdaypresents, #weddingideas Know your customers and their behaviors and choose your hashtags accordingly.

5. Speak to people

Listen to their conversations and engage with them. Answer questions. Respond to their needs. Build a relationship with new and existing customers. It will build trust and keep you in their minds when they decide to make a purchase. There are plenty of tools out there to help you manage your online customer service.

Nimble, for example, is one of the most intuitive CRM tools on the market. It allows you to communicate with your customers across any social media channel, in real-time. By nurturing customer relationships this way, you'll win sales.

6. Work with advocates

One of the most effective and organic ways to spread your brand's message on social media is to work with social media influencers. These are individuals who blog and post about a specific subject and have a loyal follower-base. Due to their popularity, their endorsement of a brand or product can often be far more effective for sales than paid-for advertising, as it is seen as more authentic. We'll be looking into the role of influencers in more detail soon, so please register with us to be one of the first to read our article.

7. Get your call to action right

Once you have hooked a visitor with your content, next comes the crucial step of converting interest into a sale. Make your call to action clear, and ensure the buying process is simple. Something as straightforward as adding a 'click to buy' tab underneath that Instagram product photo they have liked will help you leverage positive leads. Don't waste this opportunity.

Alternatively, if you're telling a more complex story, use the episodic nature of social to draw customers in. No-one gets married on a first date, especially when they are being persuaded to buy a more expensive item. So use a call to action like 'next steps' or 'find out more', to pull your customers naturally through the sales funnel.

8. Encourage customer feedback

A huge majority (92% in one global survey) of people look at customer reviews when considering a product or brand for the first time. Peer reviews are considered more authentic and trustworthy than advertising messages from the brand itself. Use this, and create a space where happy customers can share positive experiences of your product. Be aware though, this works both ways and customers may post about an unhappy experience. Stay switched on and respond to complaints quickly.

9. Use provocative language

Ask questions. Encourage debate. Find out what people need. If people want to know the answer, they will often follow the question. After all, you followed a question to end up right here, didn't you?



NEXT STEPS.

Register for Discover.DHL to see our e-commerce Dos and Don'ts. They could help you get to the next level.

Sign up for a DHL account now

Contact your local **DHL Express office** to discuss this topic