

GUIDE

Rolling Out a Social Strategy to Local Sales Teams

3 Strategies to Help Increase Adoption



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In a survey done by LinkedIn of over 100,000 professionals, those who had adopted social media as a tool to help them connect with and sell to customers also reported feeling more inspired at work. As noted by Daniel Lurie, a business analyst at Pinterest, this makes sense because those engaged in social selling “are working within the new buyer journey rather than against it. Thus, they are more likely to realize success, which naturally leads to greater inspiration levels.”¹

Although social media can prove to be a powerful tool for inspiring teams and engaging with customers, implementing a social media strategy that is widely embraced and adopted can seem like a monumental challenge to overcome—especially for organizations operating in different regions with local sales teams.

This guide will give you a list of three steps that will help spur the adoption of social media across the organization, from head office to sales professionals on the ground.

You’ll learn how to enable your workforce to use social media to serve and engage customers at a local level, while also providing social content with consistent branding and messaging from head office.

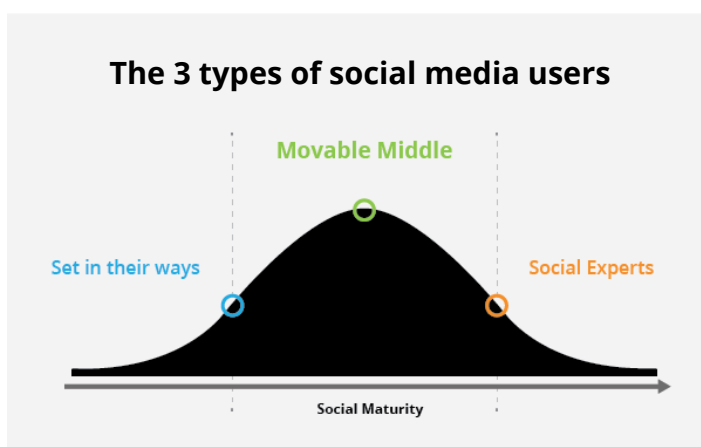
These tactics are based on interviews with experts as well as our experience working with over 1,700 enterprise customers including CENTURY 21® Real Estate, OCBC Bank, Local World, Delaware North, the Canadian Football League, and LIDS Sports Group.

1. Build confidence through education

The more knowledge people have about a new tool or technology, the more likely they are to use it.

Inspiring confidence through education is fundamental to success especially when rolling out social technologies. According to Gartner, a “provide and pray” approach to social tools has about a 90% failure rate.²

There’s most likely a wide variety of digital skill sets among employees and teams within your organization, which is why it’s crucial to provide access to different types of education for different levels of social maturity. These varying levels of social maturity usually fall into one of three areas.



Social Experts are already using social media to build their personal brand as well as their professional networks, and are looking to help drive change within the company. They will be looking for strategy frameworks and guidelines to help them align their efforts with the organization’s official social media strategy.

On the other end of the spectrum you may find people who are more set in their ways, and may be resistant to adopting social media all together. You’ll need to assure this group that social media isn’t here to replace traditional communication channels such as phone calls, face-to-face meetings, or email—in fact, it can actually make their time on those channels more productive. Provide basic training that will help them understand how social media can be a time-saving tool once integrated into their existing daily routines.

Then there is the Movable Middle. This group wants

change, but in order to build their confidence and have them successfully adopt social media they’ll need structure, daily practice, content, and tools. Give them simple tasks and metrics such as “identify 20 leads from social every week” or “have 15 social interactions with current clients every month.” Then show them how to do this.

By targeting these three groups, you’ll be able to move them along the social media bell curve. Soon, you’ll have thousands of Social Experts out there selling and connecting.

One of the best examples of providing customized training for a distributed workforce comes from Hootsuite’s partnership with CENTURY 21® Real Estate. Their global social media team came up with the idea of “21 Minutes of Social,” a program that brought together product training, education, and enablement.³

The program offers specific steps: spend this many minutes listening to your local market, use these tools to find interesting content, connect with three prospects on LinkedIn. It’s clever and fits perfectly with their brand.

✓ How Hootsuite Helps

Hootsuite’s social media education programs and certifications were created to help individuals and organizations reach business success.

- **Hootsuite University** is designed to train teams on social media fundamentals and the Hootsuite platform.
- **Custom Education** helps accelerate social transformation through tailored social media training and education to address specific organization needs.
- **The Advanced Social Media Strategy Certification (ASMS)** provides coursework and applied credentials for experienced social media professionals and social leaders in your organization to expand their social media skill set.

2. Connect through content

In a study done by LinkedIn and Cogent Research of individuals with investable assets over \$100,000, it was noted that the younger investors who were focused on accumulating wealth placed the highest value on relevant content when researching and deciding about financial products.⁴

Providing relevant, well-targeted content is one of the best things a sales representative can do when reaching out to a prospect on social media.

Supplying your teams with this content in advance will make it easy for them to become more active on social media. This also gives you the ability to ensure the content being sent out by those representing your organization is consistent with your brand.

Keep your brand consistent while allowing local creativity

One way to better coordinate across large organizations is to develop a list of social media content that should be standardized, as well as content that needs to be customized.

To standardize:	To customize for local markets:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">customer service FAQs in each languagebrand awareness campaignsresearch and benchmarking best practices (for B2B)how-to and other educational content (for B2C)positioning and company messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">individual content (such as Tweets sent by sales agents)global campaigns tweaked for cultural preferencesposting time & frequency (to respect holidays and culture)

Create content for each stage of the sales cycle

Look at your sales funnel and identify the different customer pain points along the way. Then support your agents by providing them with social content relevant to each stage.

For example, a potential homebuyer doesn't begin by immediately searching for a mortgage broker, but for answers to questions such as "most affordable neighborhoods in Austin?" or "which has a better resale value: a condo or a townhome?" A financial institution could create a video that shows buyers how to calculate potential equity, or put together a local guide of average neighbourhood prices in Austin, and then use it reach out to influencers and individual consumers.

Encourage your agents or sales teams to leave a trail of content that will bring prospects to them—useful articles, blog posts, and infographics, for example—so that potential customers can discover them at the early stages of their buying cycle, while they're still building awareness and researching solutions. Social selling is about working within this buyer's journey, rather than only being there at the end when they're ready to make a purchase.

How Hootsuite Helps

Content Library

Your global office can save messages and images in a selected Content Library in Hootsuite, which your sales team can then edit, translate, and publish within a few minutes. This can help employees move fast on real-time opportunities or easily localize content as needed. There will be no need for back-and-forth emails or policing images, since your local teams will have the assets they need in one central location.

For example, CENTURY 21® Real Estate uses Hootsuite's Content Library to provide access to professionally designed and approved assets from their agencies. That way, more than 100,000 of their affiliated brokers and agents around the world can easily share approved social content in their local markets.⁵

3. Listen and engage locally

Social media networks are full of potential customers sharing their thoughts and opinions about your product or service, and sending out buying signals that your sales teams can capitalize on.

Demonstrating how to use social media to effectively find new leads and reach these customers in their local markets will help spur adoption across the organization.

Discover more leads through social listening

Modern buyers complete most of their buying process before they reach out to a vendor. The good news is that those critical early stages of the cycle aren't happening behind closed doors, but on social media where your sales team and agents can see them.

As Jim Keenan and Mark Fidelman wrote in *Forbes*, “a lead today can be someone complaining on Twitter that their current vendor is driving them crazy. It can be a question in a LinkedIn group. It can be a unassuming comment on a Facebook page. Today, leads are far more than a call from a friend, a business card from an event or a chance encounter on a flight.”⁶

Help your sales teams understand how to find these potential buying signals using a social media management and analytics platform, and establish clear guidelines for how they should then use the content you have supplied them with to begin developing a relationship with these potential customers.

✓ How Hootsuite Helps

Setting up search streams in Hootsuite can help your sales teams identify potential customers and monitor the most relevant conversations by filtering out the noise and organizing incoming posts. Set them up for success by creating streams for:

- **Geo-location or language:** Filter your searches to see results only from those within a certain geographic area. For example, a car dealership could set up search streams for phrases such as “hate my car” or “need a new ride” and then set a filter so that the only results displayed are the ones coming from people near a specific dealership. Results can also be filtered by language, allowing your regional teams to find conversations happening from their target demographic.
- **Mentions of a competitor's username, brand, or products:** Set up streams to view the social activity of your competitors to keep tabs on who they are engaging with. Analyze the negative sentiment around social mentions of your competitor's and then use those customer perspectives when developing or marketing your own products or services. For example, if customers complain about their bank's slow and complicated mobile app, emphasize the speed and ease of your mobile banking in new customer acquisition campaigns, as this could attract customers from competitors.

What we've covered in this guide:

To get everyone on the same page when rolling out an organization-wide social strategy to dispersed teams, we suggest laying the groundwork by implementing these three strategies:

- **Educate your teams:** Understand that there are different levels of social maturity within your organization, and inspire confidence in all of them by providing the necessary education.
- **Arm them with content:** Provide social content for your team to help position them as thought leaders and valuable resources for potential customers, while ensuring your brand positioning and messaging is consistent.
- **Give them the tools to reach local markets:** Set your sales professionals up on a platform that can help them filter messages and posts by keyword, location, or language so they can find, and join, the conversations that matter.

Endnotes

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About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation



Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era. As the world's most widely used social relationship platform, Hootsuite Enterprise enables global businesses to scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and business units. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of technology integrations, allowing businesses to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

We help organizations create deeper relationships with customers and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help businesses pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through education and professional services.

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