

Tweet This

Social media tips from a regular sales guy

Editor's Note: In this column space of *Vet-Advantage*, we will give you insight into both basic and advanced tactical selling techniques that will help you serve customers better than ever before. But let us preface this with a warning. The material in these articles is not for salespeople who are not ready to push themselves harder than ever before. It is for the professional who seeks constant improvement, fresh ways to serve customers, and constant learners who are never satisfied with being average. If this is you, it's great to have you on board. Now let's get to work!

Are you sick of hearing about it yet? Social media, social networking, Web 3.0? Can't we just leave that stuff up to the marketing guys and let us just do our job? Like many, my early thoughts about this new "connected" world ranged from skepticism to trash talk, but I realized that if I were to effectively "diss" it, I would at least have to better understand what the buzz was all about. I am now only several weeks into my social experiment and I must report ... I'm beginning to break. Trust me, I'm not happy about it. I mean, what am I going to say now to all my fellow regular sales guys at the next sales meeting cocktail party while they all sit around mocking all those nerdy "Tweeters." What am I becoming? For now, my intent is to lay low. But this doesn't mean I can't share my "schooling" with you.

Reactions to results

First thought: Tweeting and Facebooking (I think that's a verb now) is a time waste. Do people really care what I just ate for lunch? Do they really need to know that it's a gloomy day in Kansas City? That the color yellow makes me sad?

Now thinkin': They may not care about meals, weather and colors, but they DO care about something you just learned that can make them more effective at work or at home. Perhaps by posting the latest industry trends, changes in the marketplace or a quicker way to do



By Brian Sullivan

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something, they may actually look forward to hearing from you. They may even get used to it. Perhaps miss you when you're not there!

First thought: It's a company's job to spread the corporate image and deliver product information to the marketplace.

Now thinkin': With so many products and services looking, performing and priced the same, perhaps one of the only differentiators in the sale is the salesperson. So maybe you need to begin marketing yourself with these tools. After all, isn't Facebook just a personal webpage that tells people (including prospects and customers) what you are all about? So why don't you turn it into a living brochure that tells others just how smart you are and how you are NOT like the other sales guys.

First thought: Do people really care what you think? Whatever happened to humility in sales? You are not a self-promoter. Your performance will do the talking.

Now thinkin': Get over it! Self-promotion is a good thing. But only if you want to, well, get promoted in your career. If your competition is getting more attention because they are more visible, then your humility is doing nothing to advance your career.

First thought: I don't want my competition to know what I am up to. I am "stealthy" like that.

Now thinkin': Yea, you're so "stealthy" that your customers and marketplace don't even know you exist. So let the world know how hard you are working at making your customers better. Hide nothing. Share your thoughts, an idea that saved a customer time, an example of how your company made somebody's life easier, etc

First thought: If I get into this stuff I might lose focus and be Tweeting every five minutes.

Now thinkin': Maybe I am not as weak as I thought. By setting aside specific



First thought: There are enough research tools for me to understand my customers and industry. This stuff is overkill.

Now thinkin': By doing a Twitter keyword search on any topic, including the name of a hospital, you will get up-to-date information that comes not only from the PR department, but from some fellow Tweeters in the building. That's what you call "inside scoop."

First thought: Don't people have to sign up to follow you? It's going to take three years before I have enough followers to make my tips and knowledge worth spreading.

Good news is, when you follow people, they often follow you back. You now have a captive and targeted audience to share your "goods" with.

times each day to post something valuable, I am actually touching more customers than I would with a cold call. And it is NOT making me less productive.

First thought': I communicate enough with my customers and fully understand how they feel about me and my company.

Now thinkin': WRONG. In fact, while working with a recent corporate client, we did a search of their company name on Twitter. The CEO was shocked when he saw an unhappy customer had posted to his list of over 1,000 followers just how bad their service was. We also learned about a website called Groubal.com that let's unhappy customers share their service horrors. Does that CEO still think Twitter is worthless? He immediately signed up for an account and offered to make things right with the customer. By Tweeting, he not only made things right, but the customer was amazed the CEO cared so much. BINGO!

Now thinkin': You can now use software that allows you to TARGET specific prospects. For instance, I just typed in "Veterinarian" and the software found hundreds of veterinarians who you can "follow." Good news is, when you follow people, they often follow you back. You now have a captive and targeted audience to share your "goods" with. (If you want to know more about the software, drop me an e-mail at bsullivan@preciseselling.com and I will give you the secret. It's pretty cool.)

While typing away with this article, FIVE new followers joined my team. It would be rude of me not to share with them some tip that will make them the best salesperson in their company. Oh, and if they like what I have to say, they just might like me enough to issue a purchase order or flash a credit card for the products and services that I DON'T give away. And if that's what social marketing means to a Regular Sales Guy, count me in. I can hardly wait to tell the fellas. ■

For commission-building tips on sales, negotiations AND social marketing, follow the Regular Sales Guy, Brian Sullivan on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn by going to @preciseselling.com. See you there!