

SOCXO



**What do
Sales Folk Want?**

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What are the shiny new toys that Marketing and Sales teams are tinkering with? One that caught our attention (and of course, we took a particular shine to it given its perfect alignment with our own business) is social selling – or digital selling.

We thought of putting it to an honest-to-God organic test. Over the past month or so, we ran a few fun polls via our Twitter account – and while this may not be a scientifically proven method to do research, it did throw up some interesting observations.

Each poll question, which ran for a day (or two at best), had four options, of which only one could be selected. Our biggest worry? That people wouldn't engage with the poll. Turns out people had a lot to say, especially in our circles – which consists of marketing, social media, and martech folks in the US.

One major point that stood out was that social selling is a massive business opportunity both ways – for the guys creating the market for social selling, as well as for businesses looking to leverage social selling. We're part of the former category.

On to our findings.



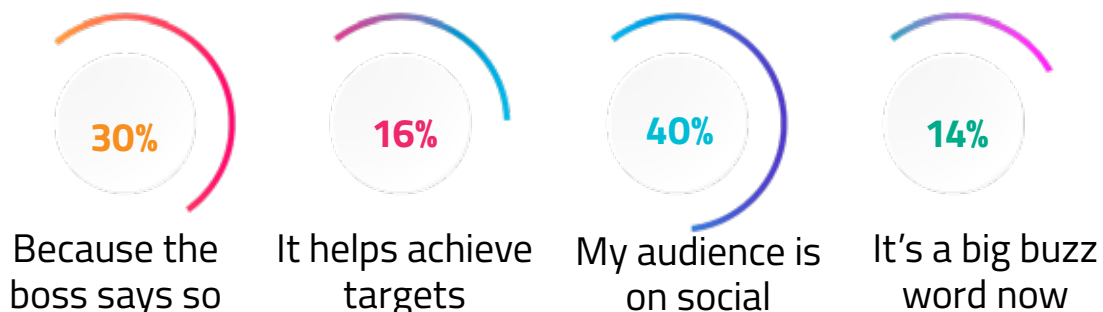
Belief and conviction in **social selling** is low.



There's a need for sustained investment in the form of education, hand holding, and demonstrated results – with both theory and industry use cases.

Our question: "Why would you as a sales (or marketing) person care about social selling? Aren't you good at what you do (building relationships) anyway?"

Why bother about #SocialSelling at all?



Interestingly, two of the most common responses were (first the obvious) because their audiences were already on social media, and so being present where the prospects were was a no brainer, and (two) that their bosses asked them to (they themselves didn't believe in this new-age strategy). The latter is perhaps the insight that's most valid. When was the last time you had to be pushed to do something at work? Obviously when the real proof wasn't in front of you...or you didn't see it yet. There are claims, but it's not believable enough – there's no market traction yet.



Leaders are still social media shy. And that, singularly, impacts how the rest of an organization deals with it.

Since the system is still in discovery mode, the fight is a rendition of "Us and Them," the immortal Pink Floyd song.

The roadblocks to social selling as perceived by respondents are... guess what?

1. Content.
2. Content.
3. Content!

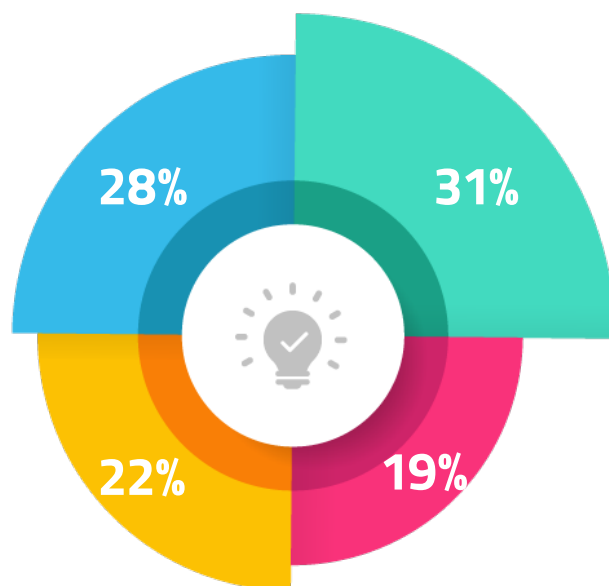
This, coming from people who are already in the domain, says a lot. Huge perception, possibly a huge gap between marketing and sales.

When marketing is in overdrive to develop all kinds of content, is sales disconnected from it? In today's hyper content market, the marketing folks might not accept it. Sounds familiar? Maybe it's a mix of two things – marketing not really keeping sales up to speed on brand, product, and content rationale, and sales dismissing content without giving it its due respect.

Yes, the bridge between marketing and sales is still around.

But that's not it. While people believe that they have to be pushed into social selling, they think that their business leaders themselves are immune to it. So why bother? They think that it's a method to delegate rather than internalize – and therefore regard it as an "administrative chore" rather than something their organization stands for.

If leadership walked the talk, perhaps the first roadblock would get solved by itself. The opportunity is to get the leadership team to do it first. The rest will follow.



31% Guidance on how to go about it

22% The mindset of sales folk

28% Leadership attitude

19% Content availability



The search for **real social selling** experts and educationists is what drives content, usage, and belief within the sales community.

Expert recommendations and third-party sources are more believable than official brand channels, at least when it comes to marketing. So when it comes to marketing suggesting custom content for sales, it's a no-no.

Here's the clear signal that sales believes in the power of content experts, and that they would even go to them to understand what kind of content could work for them. Not just that, they'd then probably get it created ... themselves!

David Ogilvy's famous quote "We sell, or else" comes to mind.

We think that's missed the mark in the marketing communication space these days. While B2B companies do try to build logical communication, they miss the emotional mark – and the opposite may be true for B2C companies.

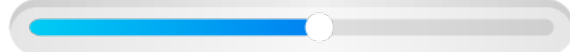
24% Our brand channels



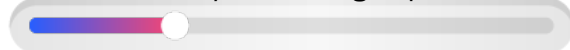
29% Select 3rd party content



34% Expert recommendation



13% Done by marketing dept

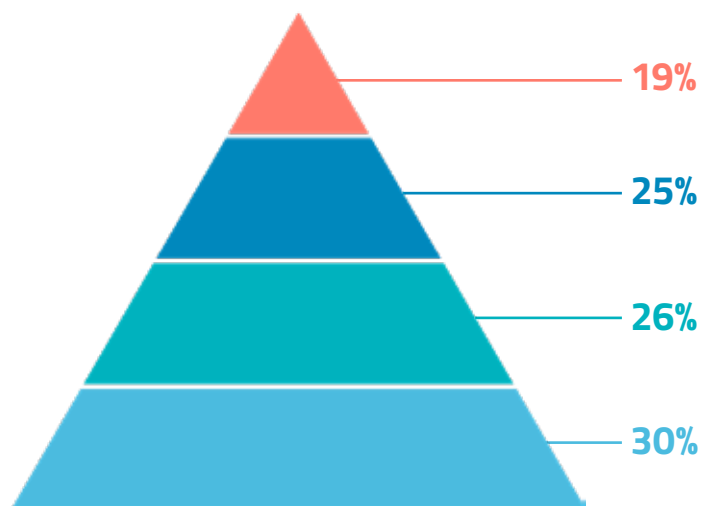


How sales folk would like to absorb and learn about social selling?

Here's the big revelation of how sales folk like to consume content themselves. Do they believe in reading? Do they believe in social media publications? Or do they talk to peers?

Drumroll They prefer to attend live workshops. Workshops allow them to interact and sense the energy of their peers as well as the facilitators. Workshops on the web (webinars) are popular too. So interactive experiences are the first preference for sales learning. Social media posts are not really absorbed – so you can go slow on those and instead focus on building first-person training.

No wonder we're seeing loads of social selling related content coming in as first-person videos. However, that's just engagement. The real action is at the workshops.



19% Blogs/E-books

25% Authored books

26% Webinars

30% Live workshops

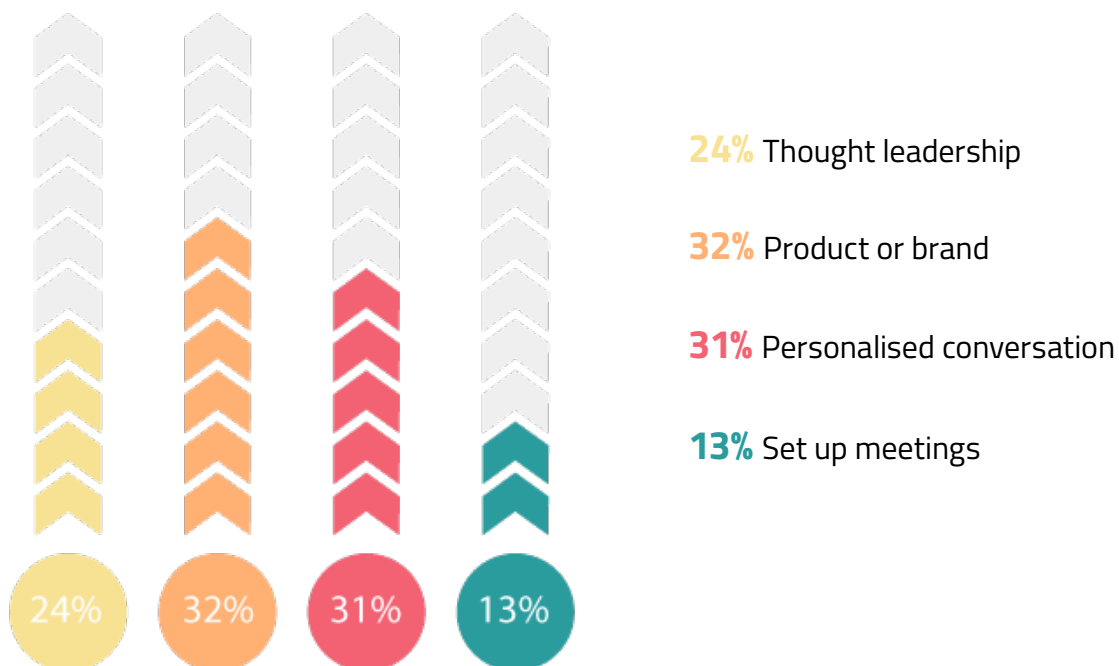




Marketing collateral does not cut ice with sales.

Here's where the product or brand kicks in. And the norm that sales is about personalization and conversations. So the thinking and the potential application of it seems to be right. Another point to note is that setting up meetings appeared to be the last thing on the agenda.

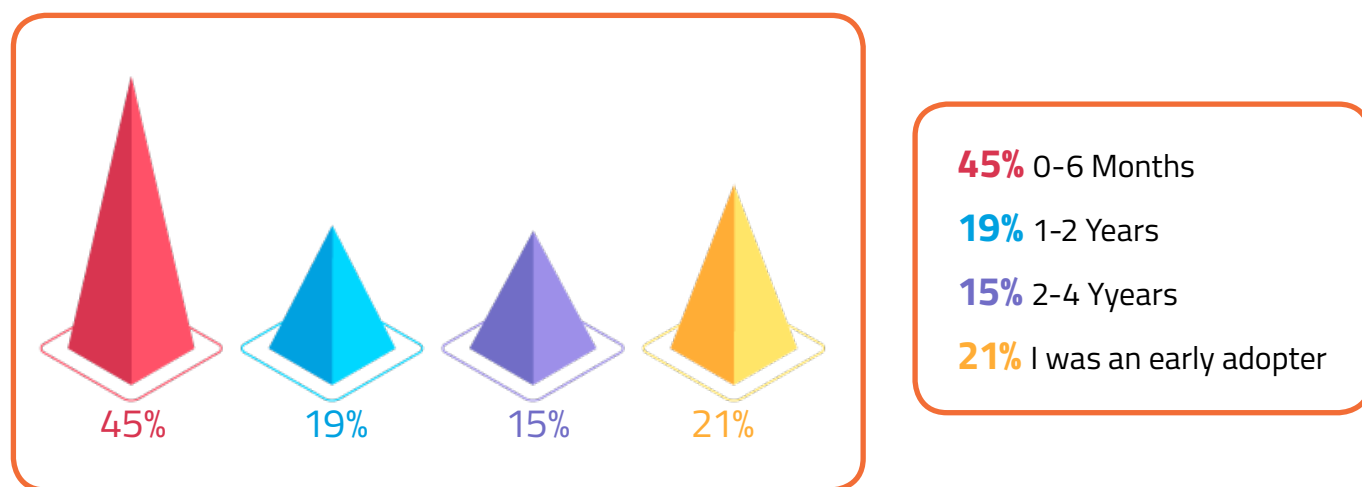
A popular assumption among marketing folk and social media nerds is that sales folk are forever jumping the gun and trying to set up meetings. Not so, and not by far. Conversations make social. And we know that's the essence of social media as well. So conceptually, maybe it's a marriage made in heaven.





While the buzz around the topic has been around for a few years now, adoption is new.

And this could mean only two things. First, the new-age, social media savvy folks are getting into sales - or the other way around. Or, from the looks of it, it's taking a lot of handholding to get people to adopt this method. Seems like this is a part of the 2019 adoption agenda, with some of the older folks already into it and getting into social selling education.





To wrap up, our readings from the polls and from conversations with social sellers:

- There's a massive opportunity for experts to teach, conduct workshops on, mentor on, and sell social selling.
- There's a big need to help marketing teams understand sales content and campaigns.
- There's a need to train both marketing and sales teams to not get into the old "Us and Them" debates as their worlds are now merging for real, virtually.
- Social selling is still an evolving market, and there's a need to prove that it works. Not just via research, but by actually showing people how it's done.
- There's a need for tools that takes away the administrative pain from the process.

Yes, there are data and CRM tools out there. But there's a need for a tool that helps curate contextual content, besides managing social networks and teams.



We'd be happy to help you understand how Socxo can maximize the results of your Social Selling program.

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