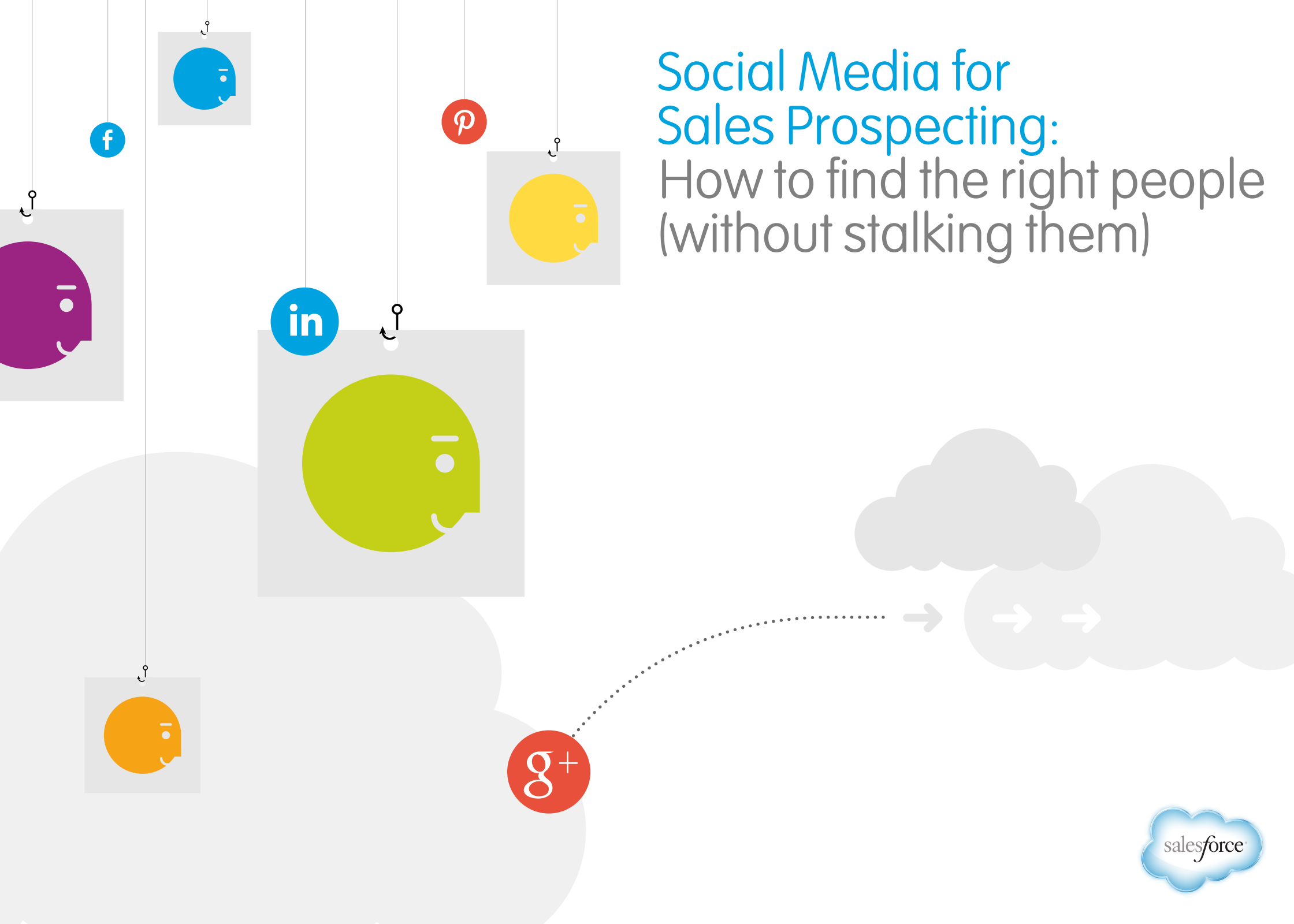


Social Media for Sales Prospecting:

How to find the right people
(without stalking them)



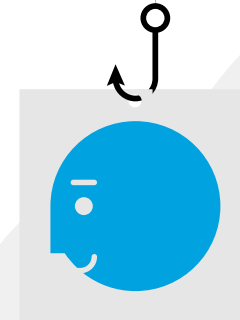


It's no longer what you know,
or who you know...



knowing

knowing



Share this



...Now, it's what you know about who you know.

We've heard selling described as a numbers game – the more mud you throw at the wall, the more is likely to stick.

Some people still work that way. They're the ones who phone just when you're at your busiest. They don't know anything about you, but what they have to say is REALLY IMPORTANT.

That's not just hard work. It's also time-consuming, ineffective and damaging to their brand.

You'd never behave like that, would you? Not when you have the most powerful research tools in the world literally at your fingertips.

(And this handy guide to get you started.)

Social selling is about using social media to gather priceless insights that will set your approach apart from the rest.

What you learn will improve the relevance of your offer, and help you speak in your customer's language. With social selling you will:

- Discover new opportunities
- Learn about prospects, their companies and teams
- Find buying signals and trigger events
- Discover hot buttons

One other thing. Social selling isn't stalking – it's not about rummaging through your prospects' dustbins.

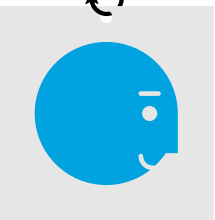
Instead, it's taking advantage of all the information an individual has already shared online, so that you can demonstrate an understanding of their experience, circumstances and needs.

And then whack them right between the eyes with your uncannily irresistible pitch.

NEXT

Making what you want to say, what they want to hear.

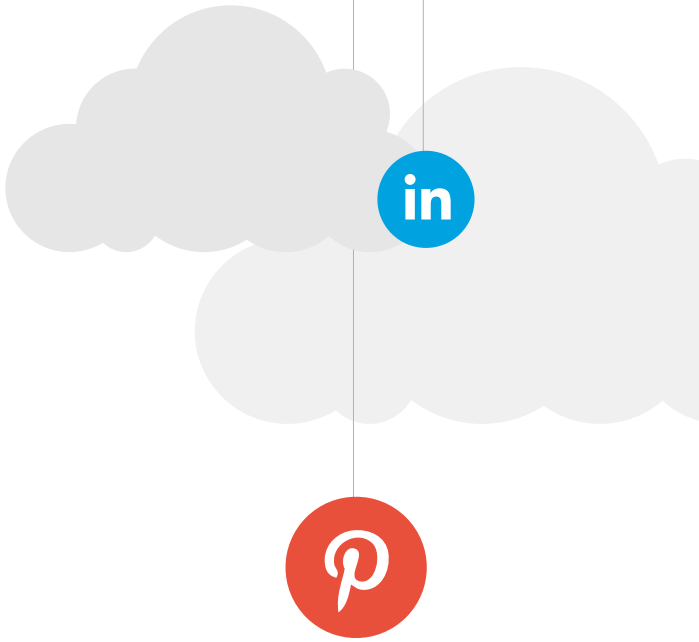
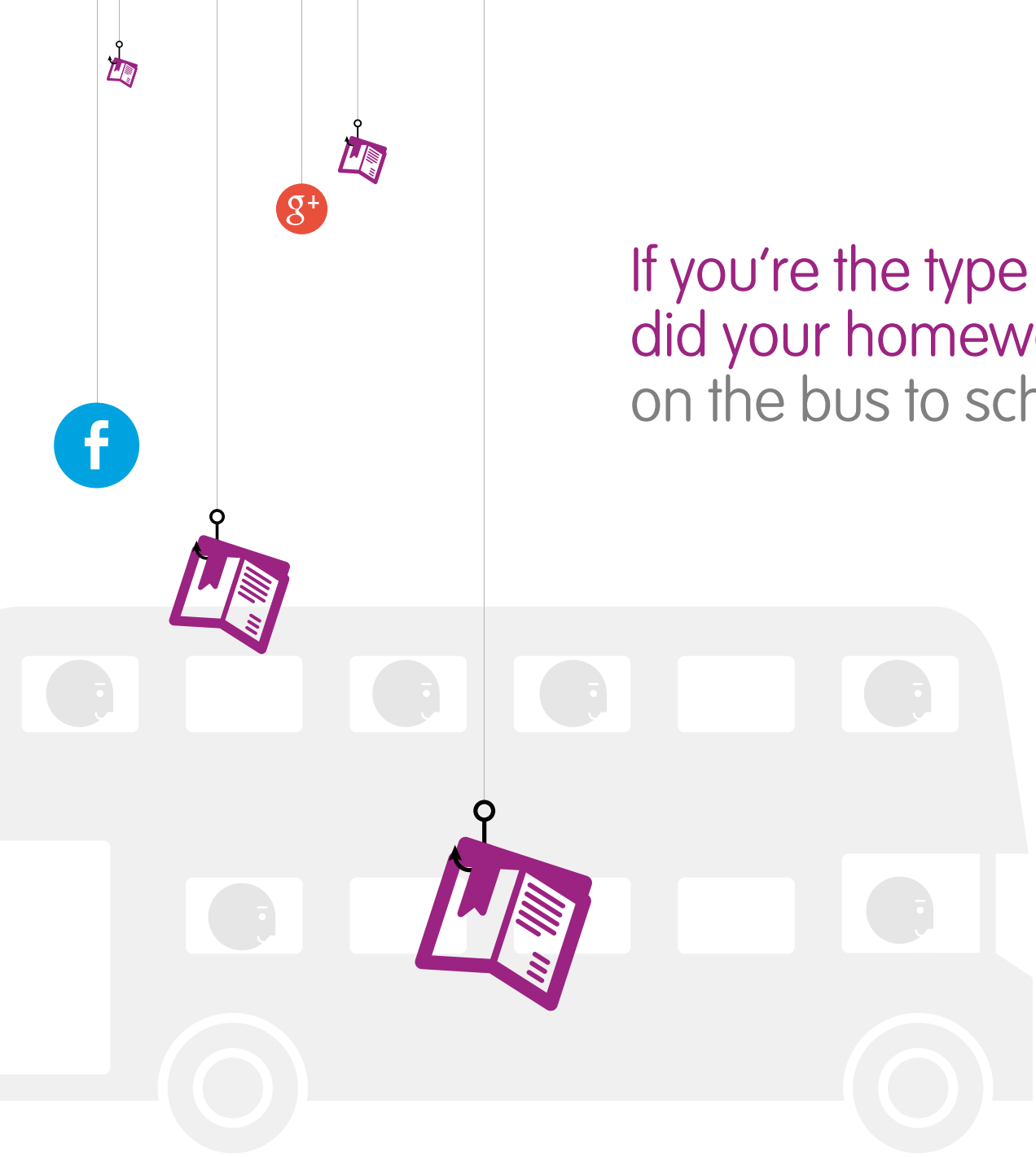
knowing



Share this



If you're the type who
did your homework
on the bus to school...



...it's time to sharpen up your act.

The more you know about a person, the better able you are to map what you want to say to what they want to hear.

You're nodding. This is...well, obvious.

Except that increasingly, your prospects will expect you to be better informed before you approach them.

And it will be painfully obvious if you haven't put in the effort.

In fact, if your company's products or services are on their radar at all, chances are they already know more about you than you do about them.

So getting background on your prospects – as full as you can make it – is essential. And doing your homework is just plain professionalism.

Can you remember what happened if you didn't do your homework? That's right – detention. But these days it isn't you being shut in. It's you being shut out.

In this book, we'll be looking at a number of tools and methods involved in social selling, including:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter and #hash tags
- Message board tracking
- Google and Google Alerts
- Building social profiles within your CRM tool
- Blogs
- Looking for mutual connections
- Internal social collaboration tools

You're probably familiar with many of the names, if not the details. Some will work for you, some won't.

But how will you know until you try?

Seth Godin nails that point here. And if you're not familiar with Seth Godin, look him up.

"Remember, ignorance isn't bliss – it's just ignorance, and these days it's inexcusable."

[Tweet this quote](#)

NEXT

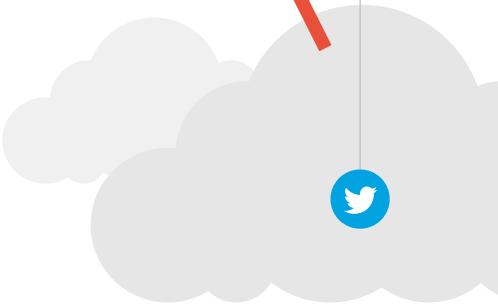
Ready, able and willing. That's them, not you.



Share this



It's not about being good at selling.
It's about being good at finding...



Share this





“Social Selling tools and tactics can expose a larger number of opportunities than would have been available previously. It still requires focus, discipline, structure and understanding of your customers’ needs to succeed.”

Miles Austin, fillthefunnel.com



...people who are ready, able and willing to buy.

Social selling can be summarised as due diligence on what you hope will be a long-term relationship.

Effectively, you’re narrowing your search down to those who will be most receptive.

That doesn’t mean just the CEO. Even if you get a meeting, you won’t close a sale; her team will be in the dark about you and what you represent.

Quite understandably, they may feel aggrieved about being side-stepped. And you’ll be worse off than when you started.

The secret is to use social selling to look at the whole company, to identify the movers, shakers and influencers, and to join the dots between stakeholders in a project.

This has a number of benefits:

- You know where to focus your sales and marketing efforts
- You can follow conversations to see what people are saying (about themselves, about your competitors, even about your company)
- You can find out what interests your prospects and tailor your message accordingly

Selling is important, but first you have to find your prospect – and get on their wavelength.

NEXT

The social niceties of social selling.



LinkedIn

Register with LinkedIn and start to build a list of Connections – contact details of people you know. In the UK alone there are 11 million members, so it’s a fertile hunting ground.

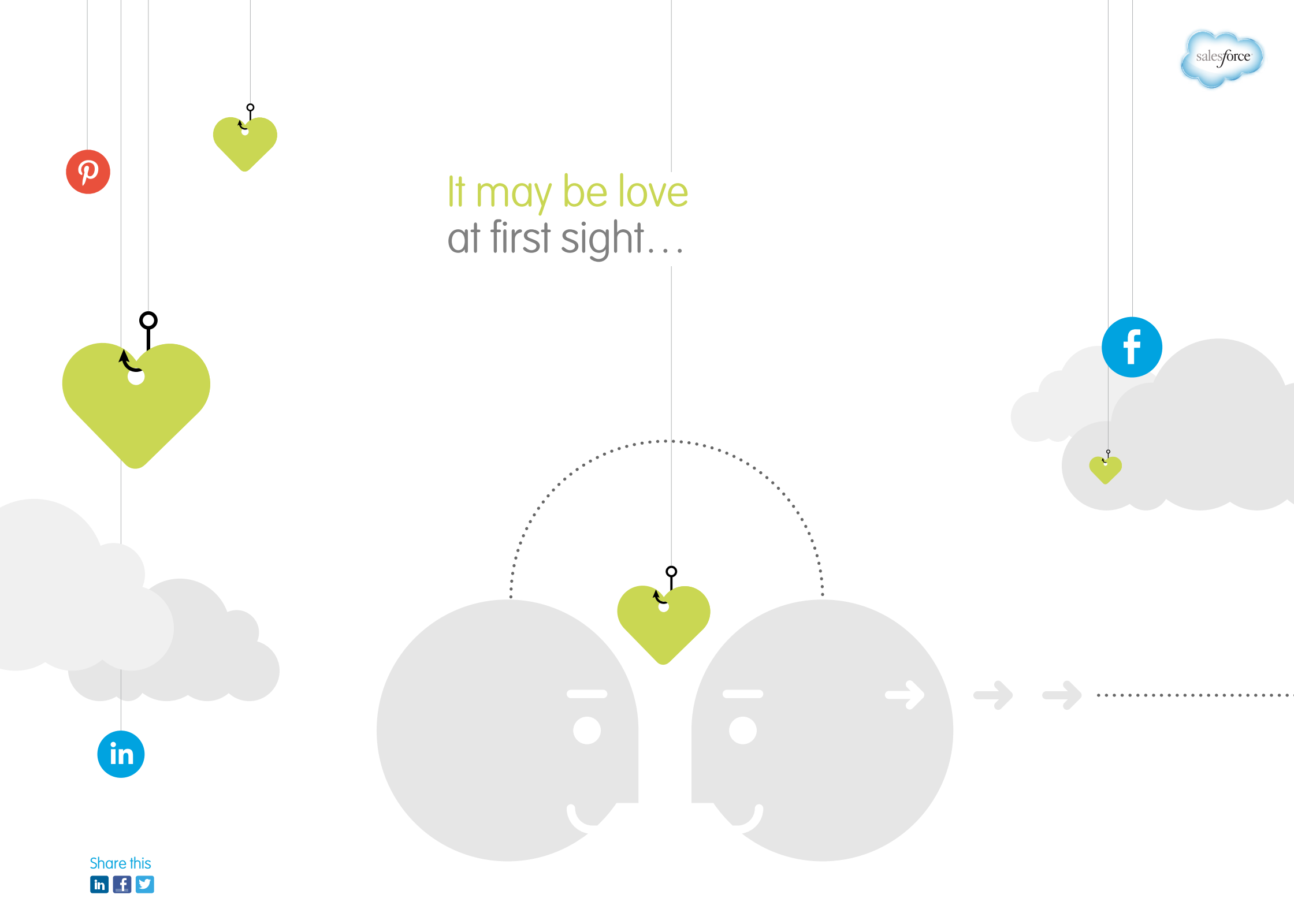
- Your network consists of your direct connections, the connections of each of your connections (second-degree connections) and the connections of second-degree connections (third-degree connections).
- This way, you can gain an introduction to a person you’d like to know through a mutual contact.
- You can also follow individuals and companies. One of your prospects just changed jobs? Could be a great time to offer your help.
- LinkedIn also offers interest groups, covering a wide range of topics mainly around professional and career issues.
- These support a discussion area, moderated by the group owners and managers. Members are kept informed with email updates. Another great opportunity to stay abreast of what’s happening in an organisation or industry.

LinkedIn is the largest professional network in the world – if you’re not there already, join now. Learn more at linkedin.com

Share this



It may be love
at first sight...



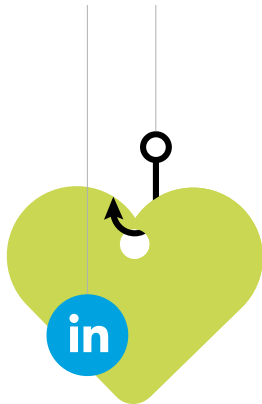
Share this



...but you don't get married on the first date.

“Social selling is a sales technique, leveraging social media, to get and maintain a 360 degree picture of the clients and their influences on an ongoing basis. It allows sales people to manage and maintain 5 times as many active customers compared to traditional techniques.”

Axel Schultze, CEO of XeeMe and Chairman Social Media Academy



In social selling – as in every other aspect of life – there’s a right way and a wrong way of going about things. Specifically, of making contact.

For example, a key prospect may make life easy for you by cultivating a high profile – but she’s putting in that effort for her benefit, not yours.

Mary Smith is active on LinkedIn Groups, industry forums and Twitter. She’s not doing that so that you can make a sales pitch.

Getting it right:

I saw this on your LinkedIn profile and realised that it’s just one of the areas where our work overlaps. What you’re doing with Technoco Consumables is really interesting. I’d like to share some data with you – I think it may help.

That’s respectful – of the person, her position and her time. Then there’s the not-so-subtle approach:

Getting it wrong:

Hello, I don’t know you, but you have a job in a company and I sell things. Wow, what a coincidence! Would you like to buy something now?

OK, nobody’s that crass. But if you’ve ever invited a complete stranger to connect with you on LinkedIn, without giving them a genuine reason to do so, I hope you’re blushing.

Spread your search among a prospects’ colleagues. Recommendation from someone inside an organization will secure a meeting 84% of the time, a credible referral from outside the company will secure a meeting 42% of the time.

Good manners count for a lot. Online etiquette isn’t just a nice-to-have – it’s essential.



Twitter

According to Twitter, it’s an information network that brings people closer to what’s important to them, reading, writing and sharing messages of up to 140 characters.

According to us, it’s a goldmine for social sellers:

- Every day, millions of business people turn to Twitter to connect to their interests, to share information, and find out what’s happening in the world.
- These conversations provide a powerful context in which to connect messages and brands to what people are talking about right now.
- ‘Follow’ your prospects, and while they’re telling engaging stories, broadcasting content, connecting directly with consumers and driving transactions, you can be there too.
- You can influence and participate in real-time conversations, listen and gather market intelligence and insights.
- It is likely that people are already having conversations about your prospects’ business, competitors or industry on Twitter.
- You can group posts together by topic or type by use of hashtags – words or phrases prefixed with a “#” sign. And you can retweet posts to build your network.

Learn more at twitter.com

Share this



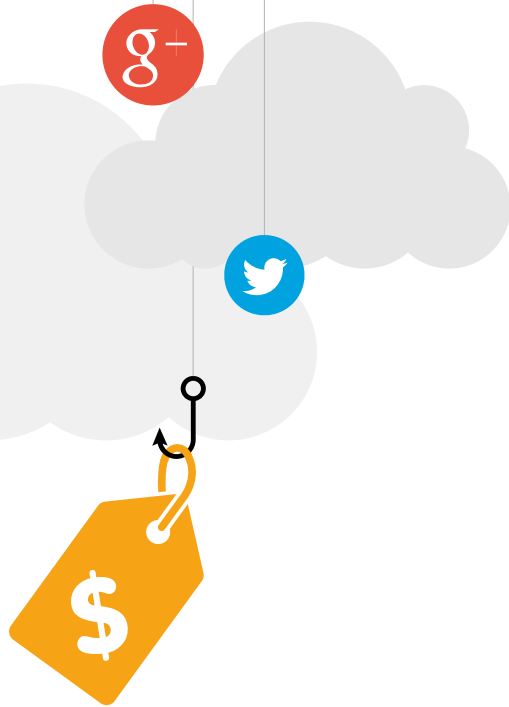
You know why
you're selling it.



Share this



But do you know why people might want to buy it?



Let's take a step back for a moment, and look at the broader landscape of where your prospects operate.

It's about understanding their companies and competitors, their industry and what makes it tick.

Where are the opportunities? How do you recognise the dead-ends – before you waste a lot of valuable time?

Industry knowledge will also help you get a better handle on who you're up against in a particular sector.

There are several useful tools that will give you a 360-degree perspective, without leaving your desk.

Start with the obvious – Google (or one of the other big search engines).

But open up your horizons to include groups, industry forums and consultant or analyst sites and blogs.

Podcasts and webinars can be a rich source of information.

And aggregator sites or RSS services such as News Fire can help you keep abreast of sector developments.

The lesson here is, to learn the most about your prospects, you have to be where they are.



Google Alerts

Google Alerts are an easy way to get the latest content of your search queries.

You'll get email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) so you can:

- monitor a developing news story
- keep current on a competitor or industry
- get the latest on an event



Social media tracking tools

There are millions of message boards spread out across the Internet – far too many for one person to identify, let alone monitor.

That's when Radian6 comes into its own.

It's the social media monitoring platform for marketing, communications and customer support professionals. And its flexible dashboard enables real time monitoring of all forms of social media.



Quora

Quora's stated mission is to share and grow the world's knowledge.

You can ask any question, get real answers from people with first-hand experience, and blog about what you know.

Or, in true social selling style, you can pose questions of interest to your prospects – and to see what others are saying about the topics that interest potential customers.

NEXT

Getting more out of your CRM – socially.

Share this



Listen first... ..then talk.

60%
of B2B decision makers
use social media

75%
of B2B buyers will likely
use social media in the
purchase process

55%
of B2B survey respondents
conduct searches for
information on social
media sites

Wikipedia defines Customer Relationship Management (CRM) as 'a model for managing a company's interactions with current and future customers. It involves using technology to organize, automate, and synchronize sales, marketing, customer service, and technical support.'

Doesn't sound very social, does it?

You can change all that for the better by augmenting your CRM system – whether it's a series of spreadsheets, or an all-singing, all-dancing powerhouse – with the growing influence of social media.

Fortunately, buyers these days are increasingly open about their activities. They post comments on forums, ask their followers on Twitter and update their status on LinkedIn.

So that's where you'll be, listening in – and joining in.

Using tools such as Tweetdeck, Google Alerts and Sales Cloud, you can integrate social networking as a channel. It will give you a conduit to monitor your prospects' online activity – including their raves and rants about favoured and disliked companies and products.

By melding transactional data from traditional CRM with insights by prospects from their participation on social sites, you gain a more complete understanding of them and their needs.

And you'll be poised with useful, timely information to help.

One way to join in is to set up searches to look for trigger phrases. That might mean following your key target companies on LinkedIn, looking for new job postings or breaking news.

Or for the bigger picture of what's happening in a sector. Check out the blogs by your prospect's company or industry influencers – and see what's happening in the 'Comments' section.

Don't be afraid to participate; get yourself known in the right circles as someone who has insight to offer, and you're already one step ahead when you make contact with your prospect.



Make your social profiles work harder

Contacts. Ensure you're using all methods of contact – including LinkedIn profiles, Facebook pages, Twitter and email addresses, and mobile phone numbers – to flesh out your prospect profiles.

Engagement tools. Collecting information is great, but the profile must show how engagement took place. Remember, it's all about building up the amount of information you have over time – not just as a one-off exercise.

Customer analytics. Now you have your profiles, you can track and review their behaviour. This is the heart of a social profile – being able to see your prospects' preferences, and how they interact with others online. This is where you learn what people think about a brand, their current needs and future spending plans.

Social selling is a two way street – the more you listen to what your prospects are talking about, the more likely you'll say the right things when you make contact.

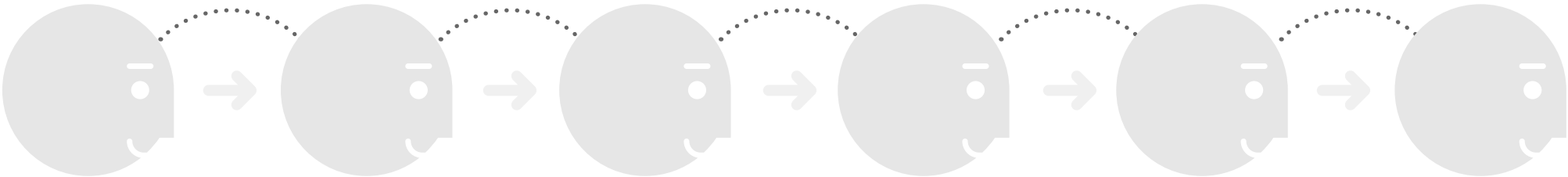
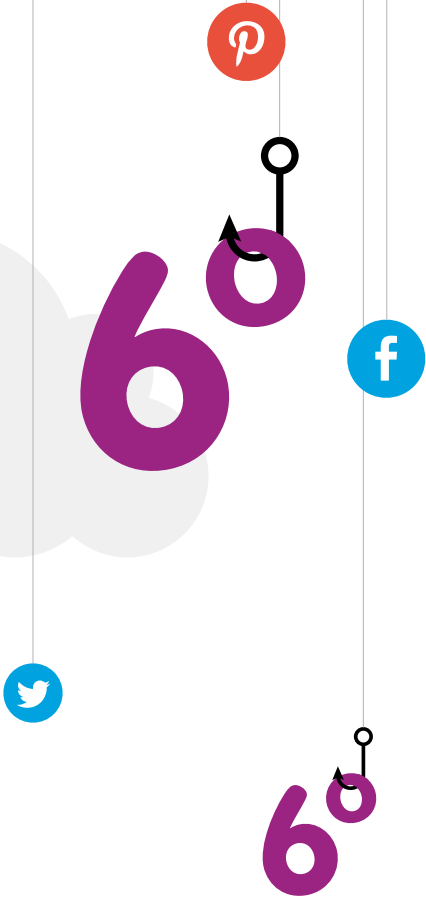
NEXT
It's a small world
(with big possibilities)



Share this



Six degrees of separation...



...brings you closer to your prospects.

A chain of 'a friend of a friend' statements can be made, on average, to connect any two people in six steps.



Strange but true – everyone is approximately six or fewer steps away, by way of introduction, from any other person in the world.

A good little factoid for a pub quiz, even better for building relationships with your prospects.

Suddenly, social networking tools such as LinkedIn and Facebook assume greater importance.

But you'd be missing a trick if all you did was rely on the giants of the global village.

Your activity can begin much closer to home, with your own personal network of friends, colleagues and associates.



Work your contacts

- Look for mutual connections (not just on social networking sites, but also in your own network) and start to build bridges.
- Leverage your own education – are there university contacts that can bring you closer to your potential customers? Getting introduced by a mutual friend or associate opens doors faster.
- Remember we talked about social CRM profiles on the previous spread? Use internal social tools, such as Chatter, to collaborate and share insights, information and resources with colleagues.
- Add to your social profiles all the time, and have everything you need at your fingertips when you make contact with your prospect.

The tools are there – you just have to use them.

NEXT
Meeting (and exceeding) expectations.



Share this



How would you like it if someone treated you that way?

“The new social customer is demanding relevance from sales people, expecting them to know about them, their companies, and their needs before engaging.”

Back when press advertising was a big part of any CMO's spend, publisher McGraw Hill ran an ad featuring a grumpy-looking businessman addressing a sales person:

- “I don't know who you are.
- I don't know your company.
- I don't know your company's product or service.
- I don't know what your company stands for.
- I don't know your company's customers.
- I don't know your company's record.
- I don't know your company's reputation.
- I don't know your company's accomplishments.
- Now, What was it you wanted to sell me?”

The message was that sales start before your salesman calls. How times have changed! Or have they? Simply swap 'you' and 'I' ...

“You don't know who I am.
You don't know my company...”

...and you can see why prospects hate cold calls.

But when you can approach someone with a clear understanding of their situation and needs – and you've obviously taken time and trouble to learn what they are – the opportunities are endless.

We've covered a lot of ground, and we hope you'll go away enthused and wanting to learn more about the tools and methods touched on here:

- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Message board tracking
- Google Alerts
- Adding social profiles to your CRM
- Blogs
- Looking for mutual connections
- Use internal social tools
- Learning more about Salesforce solutions



Where do you go from here?

Hopefully, you'll leave this little book a few minutes older and considerably wiser.

We've demonstrated that social selling isn't just a peripheral activity – it's a growing and valuable part of your job, preparing you for your role in the conversation with potential customers.

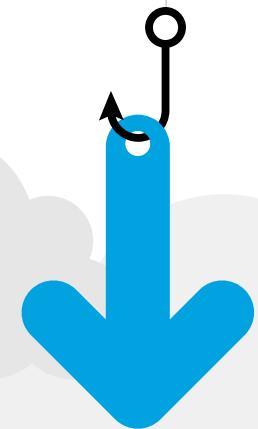
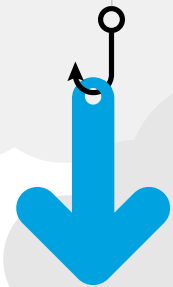
And let's get something straight about the so-called 'shifting balance of power'.

In truth, the customer has always been in charge of the conversation.

What's changed is that your customers and prospects are having conversations of their own – conversations that don't automatically include you.

Social selling – knowing all you can about your prospect before you meet – will help you earn their attention.

And make your sale.



Share this



Resources

[More reading on Sales Prospecting](#)

[7 Ways to Use Twitter for Sales Prospecting](#)

Tips from Salesforce's Anna Bratton

[Ten Tips for using LinkedIn for Sales Prospecting](#)

A tour of the 'not-so-secret weapon for sales prospecting

[More on Social Selling](#)

[The Mini-Guide to Social Selling](#)

A meaty blog post or PDF download for salespeople

[LinkedIn for Sales: An Action Plan for Salespeople](#)

A checklist of ways to harness the power of LinkedIn

[The Tech-Enabled Salesperson](#)

The apps and tools our own salespeople use every day

[The Sales Forecasting Mini-Guide](#)

How to transform your sales operation with real-time forecasting

[More on the Social-Powered Enterprise](#)

[48 Ways to Social-Power Your Business](#)

A fun eBook packed with good ideas for the whole business

[The Social-Powered Enterprise](#)

How social media is transforming every aspect of your business and what you can do about it

[The Social Success content site](#)

Packed with best-practice advice, interviews and ideas for the whole business

[Sales Cloud Free Trial and Pricing](#)

Go on, check it out!



About Salesforce.com

Founded in 1999, [salesforce.com](#) is the enterprise [cloud computing](#) leader. Using [salesforce.com's](#) social and mobile cloud technologies, companies can connect with customers, partners and employees in entirely new ways. Based

on [salesforce.com's](#) real-time, multitenant architecture, the company's platform and apps give customers the tools to create a social front office and revolutionize the way they sell, service, market, collaborate, work, and innovate.

-
- Grow your business with the world's #1 sales app, [Salesforce Sales Cloud](#).
 - Deliver amazing customer service with the award-winning [Salesforce Service Cloud](#).
 - Listen, engage, advertise, and measure social media marketing with the [Salesforce Marketing Cloud](#).
 - Achieve breakthrough collaboration and productivity with [Salesforce Chatter](#).
 - Align, motivate and drive performance with [Salesforce Work.com](#).
 - Build social and mobile cloud apps on the [Salesforce Platform](#) and extend success with the world's leading enterprise app marketplace, [the AppExchange](#).

Share this





Let's socialise!

No matter what system you're using for CRM today, switching to Salesforce is easy. And if you have any questions at all, we're here to help. Contact us on 0800 0921223 or connect with us via social media and we'll be only too happy to guide you.



[Twitter](#)



[Salesforce Live](#)



[Facebook](#)



[YouTube](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[SlideShare](#)

Share this

