

#GUIDE

HOW TO START A SOCIAL SELLING PROGRAM

 sharebee



What do you need to start Social Selling in your company?

Companies are aware of the benefits of sales activities on social media. They know the research results and see the competition's activities. However, they often do not know where to start, how to encourage salespeople to be active online, or how to motivate them. Therefore, I will try to show in this publication **which elements are necessary** and how to implement a Social Selling program so that it achieves the intended goals and becomes a permanent element of corporate culture, not a one-time project or campaign.

As for Social Selling, I hear the question "is it worth doing?" less and less often. Companies are asking today **"how to do it right?"**



Marcin Sokołowski,
CEO Sharebee

When deciding to implement Social Selling in a company, it is worth taking care of "sponsorship", i.e., **support from the highest possible level** (ideally the management board). The topic should be owned by the heads of both sales and marketing. Usually, we start discussions by showing the managers of the company the possibilities and goals - so that together we can clarify in which direction we want to go.



It is important that at the beginning **everyone has a common denominator** and knows whether we focus on generating leads and the image of our salespeople as experts, or on building an image and recognition of the company on social media, or if the priority is Employer Branding and the image of the company as a place where it is good to work.

In the projects we carry out, we usually start with a pilot, which **lasts at least a quarter** and has a defined "roadmap", i.e., an action plan, containing key elements from communication and selection of people for the program, through workshops, to tools and KPIs that we will measure.

If we reduce Social Selling to one-time workshops with LinkedIn, it will almost certainly not bring results, at best it will open your eyes to the potential and opportunities that Social Selling offers, but it will not allow for effective implementation of the program.

For Social Selling in a company to bring the expected results, we need to plan at least the following 4 elements:

1 Adequate content

Content should be delivered continuously, regularly, ideally according to the sales funnel stage, in accordance with the TOFu, MOFu, and BOFu (Top, Middle, and Bottom of the Funnel) scheme. Most marketers panic at this point, wondering where to get and how to generate **20-30 pieces** of content per month, because that's how many the employee-ambassadors using our platform typically consume (publish on their profiles). The point is that the content should not be about you, your brand, awards, and products, certainly not in the majority. They should relate to the category you operate in, talk about best practices, market trends, and innovations.

In practice, it works best when the proportion of company-related content to independent, expert, industry content is **3 to 7** (out of 10 pieces of content – 7 expert vs 3 company).



2

Ambassadors

People are the most important factor in the Social Selling program, so it's important how they are chosen and included in the program. The natural choice is the sales team, which will derive direct benefits in the form of an additional source of leads. It is also worth inviting domain experts and appointing people who will be the faces of individual areas or topics.

Ideally, the company's management team, including the CEO, should be **involved in the program**.

The communication inviting to the program should clearly show the goal and benefits for both sides – the employee and the company. In practice, in the programs we have implemented, after the invitation to the program, there was almost always a "bumper crop", i.e., more people applied than places were anticipated.

3

Tools

At a larger scale and number of people participating in the program, it is difficult to control content, publications, and results without a dedicated tool. Up to about 10 people, you can try to manage the project manually using Excel, email, and SharePoint. However, above this number, it is simply worth using dedicated tools such as Sharebee, which **manage the entire process** from content, through ambassadors, publications, statistics, and engagement, to clear reporting of results.

4

Engagement

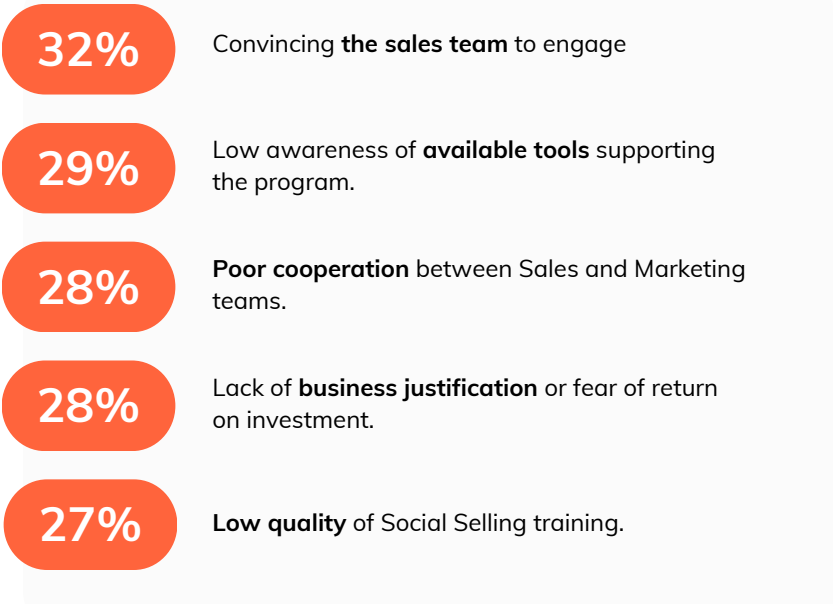
For Social Selling to be effective, it is worth preparing it in the form of a program, regularly communicating milestones, and engaging participants, for example, through **gamification**. In practice, we observe how in the initial phase, when all indicators are growing, the first leads appear, and reach increases, there is excitement and even a race.



However, the best results are achieved when Social Selling is **a constant element of the corporate culture**, and the company's presence in social media is as natural as using mail, cell phones, or company cars.

Therefore, it is worth having ready-made elements that build engagement, such as animation in the program, rewards for the best, or gamification between individual structures. Tools that have built-in gamification mechanisms that build rankings, award points, and animate participants based on their behavior can help us in this.

Main obstacles in implementing Social Selling programs in companies



Source: study commissioned by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Hootsuite, May 2017.



An important element of the "roadmap" is **communication in the program**. It's crucial for participants to have a sense of purpose and understand why such a program is being implemented and what is expected of them. It is also important to continuously communicate the results, what has been achieved, what needs improvement, and how to do it during the implementation of such a program. Usually, our clients conduct this communication on a monthly basis, summarizing key parameters, rewarding leaders and best practices, and announcing what awaits participants in the coming weeks.

Well-executed Social Selling **brings tangible results** in the form of leads, relationships, meetings, and signed agreements.

When inbound interest appears - that is, interest from the outside, the quality of such inquiries surpasses leads generated by outbound activities - such as advertising and "push" actions. However, there are of course much fewer of them, which is why Social Selling does not replace other activities, it complements them. Remember, **Social Selling is a process**, not a one-time campaign.

From our experience, when this program is implemented only by the marketing department or only by the sales department, it has little chance of success. Sales need fuel in the form of content and understanding of the mechanics of effectively reaching customers. **Marketing needs sales**, which is on the front line of daily "conversation" with customers, to reach the target group on a large scale. Cooperation and engagement of both teams are necessary to achieve the goal.

Contact us!

Let's talk about how the Sharebee platform and our team can support you in running the Social Selling program in your company.

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