11 Amazing Apps and Hacks for Sales and Social Selling

by

Shane Gibson

11 Amazing Apps and Hacks for Sales and Social Selling

How I define social selling forms the basis for the strategies processes and principles I teach sales leaders and their teams.

Social is bi-directional or two-way communications, it is as much about listening and showing genuine interest as it is about sharing your ideas or content. Great social sales leaders know that we need to add value, invest in relationships and truly understand our market through social media monitoring (listening) and dialogue.

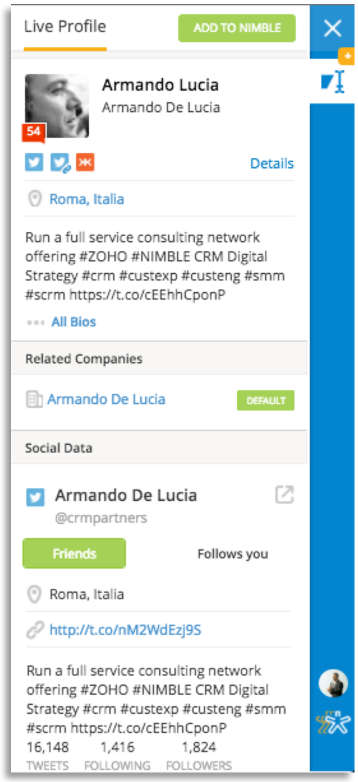
Selling is about creating an environment where an act of faith can take place. It doesn't just happen at the close of the deal, it happens all the time, online and offline. Social sales leaders have this core intent driving all of their conversations, content and sales funnel steps. They also step outside of the sales funnel and are human because who you are is truly what builds that trust and faith.

"Social selling is a two-way authentic communications process that creates an environment where an act of faith can take place."

With that said, social selling is also about growing your network and improving the quality of interactions in the most leveraged way possible. Sales has changed, it's not longer enough to just hammer the phones or our prospects email inboxes. We have to be relevant, well timed, strategic and tech savvy to win. This guide was not designed to show you every tool or even the whole picture. My goal when writing this was to introduce you to **11 tools and approaches that you could implement tomorrow that will help you accelerate your success in sales in business.**

Enjoy!

Sales Hack #1: Nimble



What is it? Nimble started off as a niche player in the CRM market. They have since grown into an internationally recognized and award winning CRM tool. Nimble is simple and easy to rapidly implement. Their Nimble Smart Contacts widget is my favorite feature and truly makes it a leading Social CRM and sales enablement tool.

How do you use it to hack your sales? Two key ways you can use Nimble to hack your sales process are:

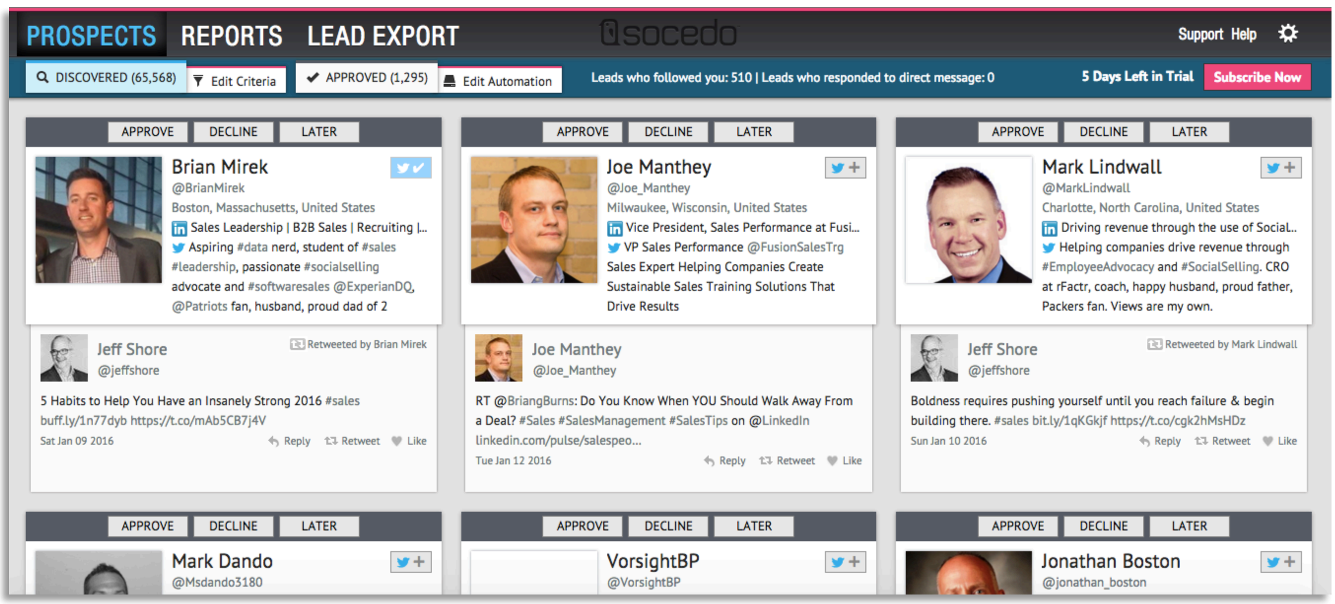
Using Nimble Smart Contacts Widget I can literally mouse over a name or email address on anything in my browser (web page, Facebook profile, Twitter profile or even inside SalesForce.com) and it will “automagically” display all the social data and profile information on that contact available in Nimble’s immense data wharehouse – with one click I can create a new contact and assign a deal or next step to the contact. This literally saves hours a week of manual data entry for most sales people.

The second feature that really helps is the option to quickly flag a contact as important, when you do this Nimble will remind you every three weeks to reach out to them. We all know that we should follow-up but many of us forget to do this, and with social integration you can comment or interact with one or two clicks on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook or via email.

The other great benefit of this tool is it pulls my email messages from multiple email accounts and social interactions through twitter into one message feed so I can see all of my recent interactions. It’s a great way to review client contact and interaction at a glance.

Sales Hack #2: Socedo

What is it? Socedo is a Twitter app built for prospecting and lead generation. By specifying keywords or industries you want to target Socedo's intelligent search algorithm finds several hundred prime contacts per day for you to outreach to. I have used similar tools but I really feel Socedo is far more effective at finding real legitimate contacts and manages to filter out the garbage and noise.

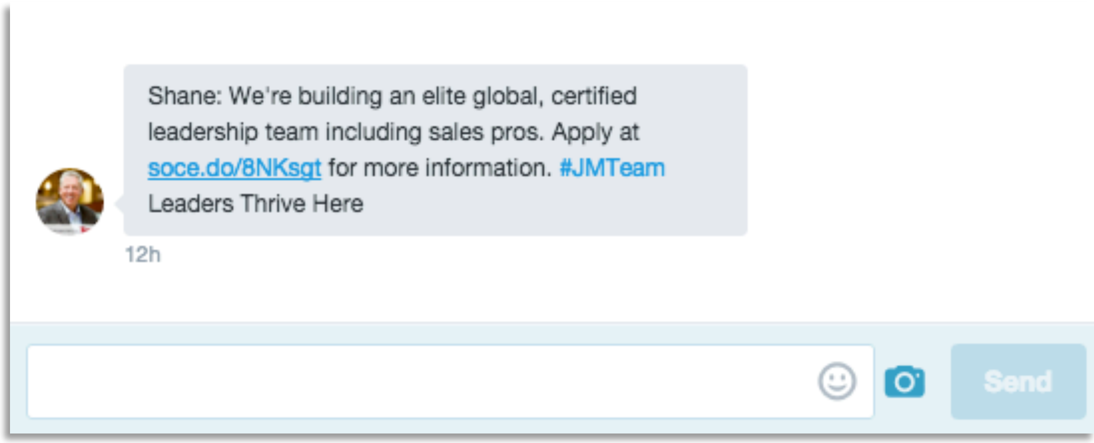


How do you use it to hack your sales?

Target key terms used by your prospects and watch Socedo load up a list of prime suspects. In most cases the list of "discovered" contacts will be more then enough to keep you busy for weeks if not months. The app tracks both the new follows and click-through's from your campaign and organizes that data into easy to read and export reports.

You will need to manually approve them (with one click) and Socedo will follow them and then 24 hours later and then "favorite" one of their tweets that uses the key terms you stipulated. This follow plus engagement resulted in a 20-30% follow-back in my tests.

The next step is Socedo sends a personalized message. Many people are negative about automatic DM's BUT because you followed them for using a specific keyword it's all in the customization. John Maxwell's Team followed me after I tweeted about a sales training topic recently. They then favorited my tweet (actually Socedo did this for them) and when I followed back I got the following message:



When I clicked through it took me to a very well designed landing page that speaks specifically to sales trainers and keynote speakers like me. Ideally for your purposes all of these types of lead gen activities should drive people to some sort of subscription or landing page (which I talk about later in this post).

None of this would work without focusing on the context of my tweets, because they took the time to customize the process and content it spoke specifically to my interests and didn't come across as spam or pitching.

Sales Hack #3: Twitter Video

What is it? Twitter video is a much under utilized tool that Twitter rolled out last year. It allows you to respond with a 30 second video embedded in your tweet. This video works well on mobile and desktop platforms and can be recorded and posted directly from your smartphone, tablet or computer.

How do you use it to hack your sales?

One of our major goals in social selling should be deepen relationships beyond the mild flirtation that is precipitated out of 140 character limits on Twitter.

Building 10 real relationships with real potential customers is way more important than gaining 1000 followers.

The battle isn't just for attention it's also for retention. Retention or memory of us. Imagine following someone on Twitter and instead of the auto-dm (automated direct private message) that most people sent they took the time to reply publicly to you and recorded a quick 15-30 second video thanking you and addressing you and your business specifically. Which one are you more likely to remember or have an emotional connection with? **(Jim Keenan @keenan does an awesome job of this)**

This also works for questions people ask you about your products and services on Twitter. A quick 15-30 second video can answer many questions and it takes less time than writing an email or a blog post. For added leverage you can embed and organize all of your Twitter videos on an FAQ page or for re-sending to people who ask the same question in the future.

Sales Hack #4: Google Hangouts / Zoom

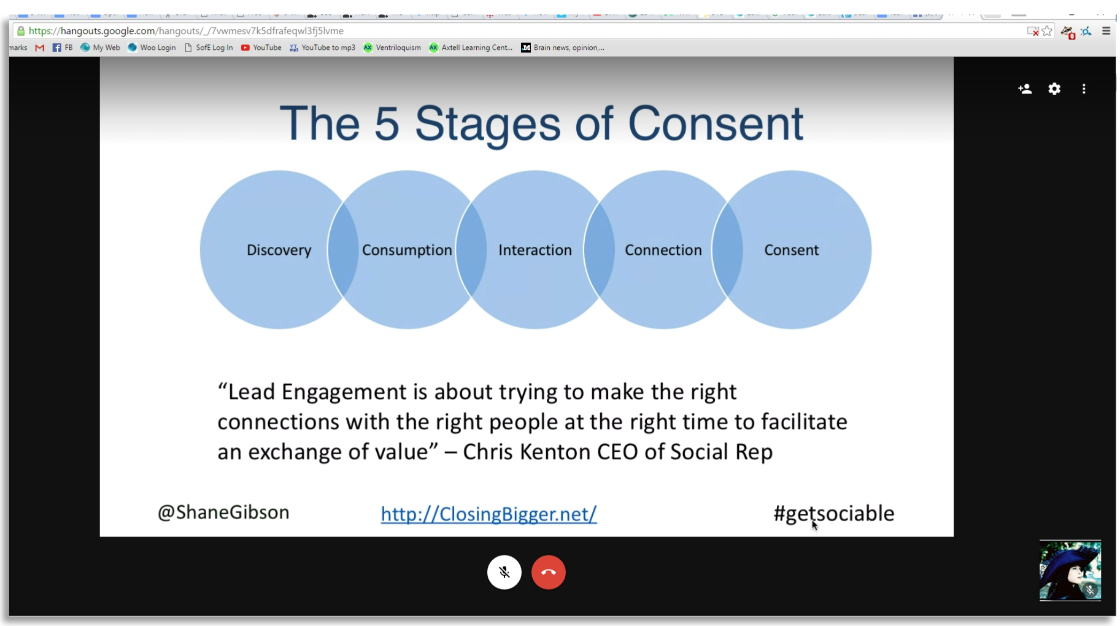
What is it? Google Hangouts and Zoom are essentially both video based conferencing tools you can use instead of the old-school telephone approach to customers phone calls or in-person meetings. Google Hangouts is free and Zoom is a paid service. While neither of these tools are really new or ground-breaking it still surprises me how few salespeople outside of the software/tech space use these tools to sell on a regular basis.

How do you use it to hack your sales?

Record for continuous improvement and saving time on debriefs: If you're using Zoom you can record your meetings. My good friend and mentor **Fred Shadian**, a world class martial artist once said to me that:

"Self-correction is the highest form of training."

This statement holds true for sales people as well: many sales people get stuck in a rut presenting the same content, and saying the same things in the sales presentations, demos and client calls (for years!). By recording your calls and then taking the time several times a week to review the recordings you see opportunities for improvement, and you will also pick up on customer comments, questions and reactions that you missed the first time through. It's also a great coaching tool. If you're not sure how you could improve or what to improve you can share it with a team member or a professional sales coach and ask for feedback.



The other big benefit is it can be used instead of a team debrief. Spending an hour with a client and then spending another hour telling your team what happened is a big waste of time. Multiply that by 5 meetings a week and you've lost a lot of sales time to team debriefs. Instead send them the recording with a brief outline of what transpired and what they next steps have to be, If they're unclear they can always review the call to see what transpired. This can cut down debrief time by many hours per week AND it's a permanent record that can be attached to the client file.

Another obvious hack here is a simple time saving hack. Even if someone is in the same city as you, if you're not 100% sure they're truly qualified as a prospect you should get them into an online meeting first. A 20 minute in-person meeting requires travel time and often costs money for transportation. In addition to this you almost always spend another 20 minutes chatting and it's always more difficult to end an in-person meeting than an online one. Your 20-minute meeting is often really 90 minutes out of your day.

For some people that may be all of their pro-active sales time. Take 20 minutes, do an initial online meeting and commit to an in-person meeting after you qualify them. For me it's also interesting to see how many times I have been able to close that deal with the first 20-minute Google Hangout and was able to skip the in-person sales call all together.

Sales Hack #5: Click Funnels / Unbounce

What is it? Click Funnels and Unbounce are two tools I am familiar with. There are many others but I can with confidence endorse these two. Click Funnels and Unbounce both can be used to build online landing pages designed for conversions. "Conversion" often refers to an event where a potential customer gives us their contact details, books an appointment, signs up for a webinar or product demo or of course makes an online purchase.

Unbounce or Click Funnels are in essence your online sales funnel building tools. Most marketing departments understand the need for online landing pages and sales funnels when running ad campaigns yet most sales people don't have personal landing pages to send customers or prospects to. The email signature of most sales people typically has a company url embedded directing all customers and prospects to the front page of the company website where the customer is asked to choose between 10-20 links and buttons, most get lost, lose concentration or abandon the site quickly.

How do you use it to hack your sales?

Build a unique landing page for each major product or service you sell, that landing page should be designed to capture the contact details of a prospect or get someone to take the next step in the sales process with you. Sending someone to a typical page on your website to look at a specific product or service usually means they will click a link and land somewhere that along with the one thing you want them to read they are also given 10 or more links to click unrelated to that step in the sales process.

You want your prospect to request a product demo, but instead they click the "About Us" section, read up on your CEO, look them up on LinkedIn and then decide to read some un related articles on LinkedIn and of course forget all about your email and the link they clicked 10 web pages ago.

Unbounce did an A/B test where they tested two landing pages for an e-book download; the first one had a submission form you need to fill out in order to get access to the e-book plus 9 more links on the page to various sections of their site and resources. The second landing page had the same submission form BUT had all other links and navigation options removed. **The page with only one option had a 31% increase in e-book downloads compared to the one with the additional links and navigation.**

"To hack your sale process, think like a funnel hacker and a marketer. Start sending your prospects to well designed landing pages that move them down the sales funnel and keep them focused."

Sales Hack #6: Hubspot Sales / Yesware

What is it? Both Sidekick and Hubspot take the guessing out of one-to-one email marketing & sales and also drastically improve your timing. Both tools can connect with Outlook and Gmail, both also have SalesForce and Hubspot CRM integration. Nimble also has this functionality built into their CRM.

I've used all three. I like them all, so I'm going to leave this one up to you which one you use. With that said Yesware seems to have more options in the way of templates and integration with Mailchimp and also has it's own mail-merge tool as well. Sidekick has some great features related to managing teams of people using the tool, the data on the whole group and the integration with Hubspot's free CRM is pretty cool as well.

How do you use them to hack your sales?

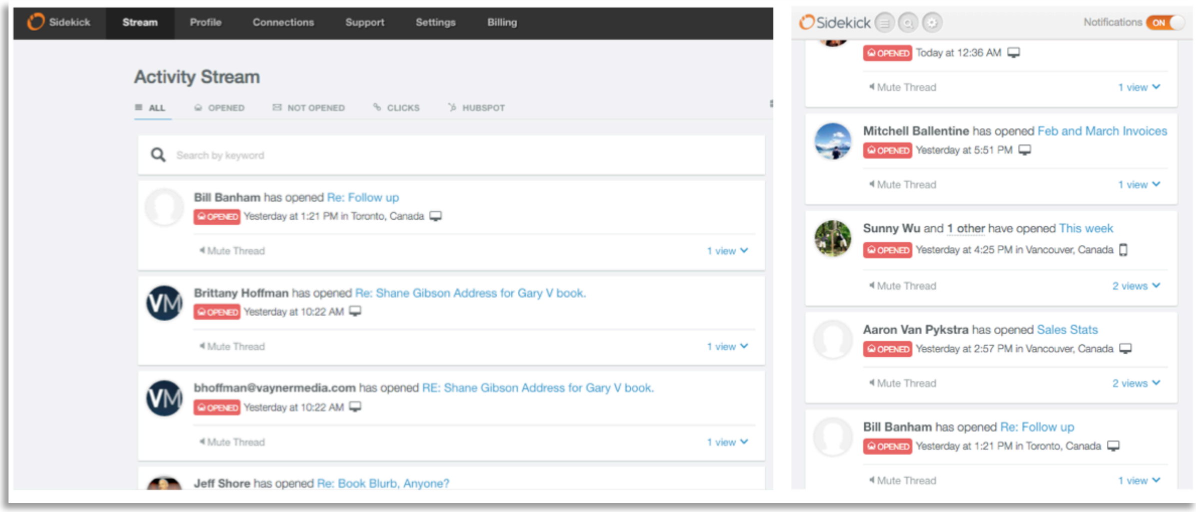
By using either tool you will know:

- When someone opens your email (and how many times)
- The geographic region they are in
- If they click a link, and which link they click
- When multiple people in an organization open an email you sent

This is vital information and can be used in many aspects to improve your sales process and interactions with your clients and prospects. **One great approach is for proposals you have sent.** Sidekick and Yesware both will tell you when your prospect has opened your email. When you know the exact moment someone has begun to read your proposal you are much likely to have them be receptive when you call. If you have sent 20 proposals or quotes to clients you can organize your calling or follow-ups to the top 5 most interested or engaged prospects that day.

There's another benefit to proposal tracking as well. We have all submitted proposals to well meaning executives who get busy with other things and don't get around to reading our proposal right away, or they initially delay a decision and say they'll get back to us.

With Hubspot Sales, Nimble or Yesware they will let you know when that email is opened again signaling a renewed interest in your proposal days, weeks or even months later. I have had Sidekick notify me a client open an old proposal, I called them within 5 minutes of opening the email, set a follow-up meeting to get an update on their needs and closed the business all within 5 days, this was after almost four months of radio silence.

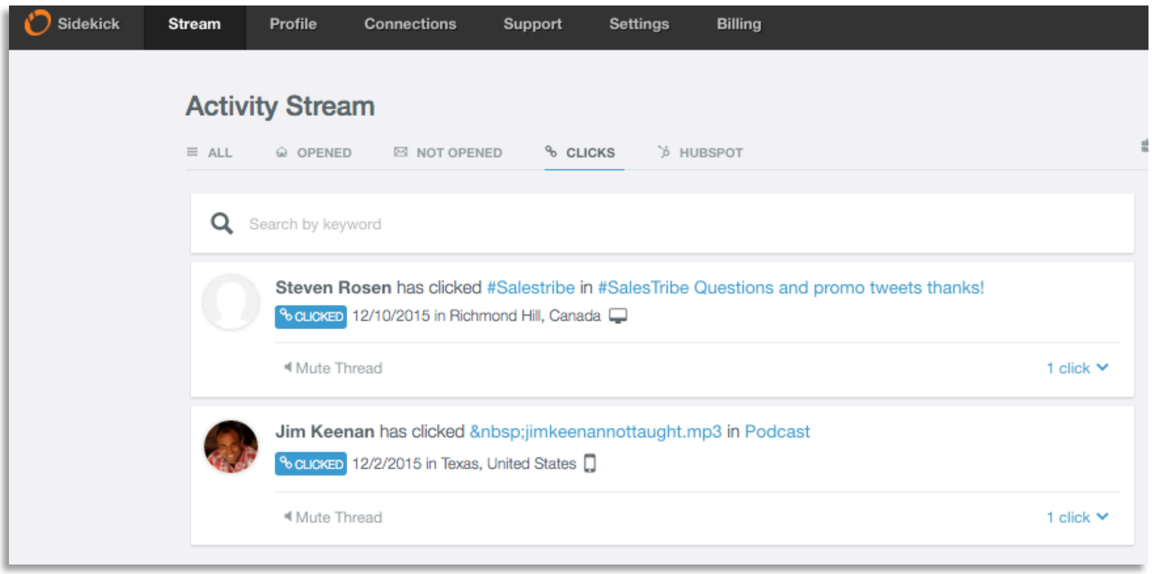


Another indication of interest is when you get notifications that multiple parties are opening your email or proposal. You may for instance submit a proposal to a local contact in your city but the head office is New York. You then notice after weeks of silence that someone in New York has opened your email, then an hour later several more people do the same. For me this indicates in many cases that the deal is moving forward of being talked about. I will often at this point send through additional value-added material or reach out to my initial contact and follow-up the day I see all of the activity start. This ensures I am talking to a prospect at a time that is very relevant to the products and services I am offering. Calling or emailing people that are already engaged greatly increases your change of doing business with them

If you are trying to reach a prospective decision maker in a company and are unable to get their email address you can send through an email tracked by sidekick to multiple variations of their address. I wouldn't suggest doing 10 all in one day, instead try one a day. For instance if you were trying to reach Bill Gibson at Knowledge Brokers International, and his email wasn't public you could try bill@kbitraining.com, then billgibson@kbitraining.com, bgibson@kbitraining.com, ceo@kbitraining.com, etc. and wait to see which account you get notified as reading and/or opening the email. Once you have seen your initial intro email has been opened you can follow-up with a more specific question or call to action that gets their attention. (**By the way if you want to reach Bill Gibson, Chairman of Knowledge Brokers International best to find him on Twitter as @billgibson1**)

A final method I have used is one where I am following up with a web-lead or a person who has asked for some general information. I will test which topics or solutions they are interested in by sending them an email with 3 to 5 links in them.

Each link is related to a different product or service. If I was running a catering business and notice that they opened my email three times and clicked on the link outlining wine options twice, I will likely lead the first conversation talking about wine or even send additional info on wine options to them before the follow-up to increase interest and engagement.



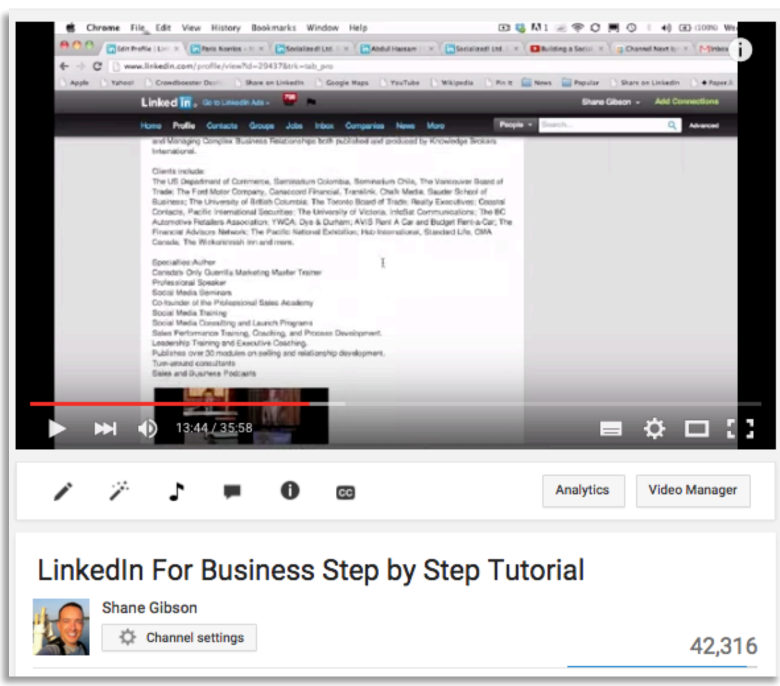
A final use is of course for A/B testing. You can test subject lines and see which one generates the most opens. You can also use it to test several sales people against each other. In Sidekick I can look at my entire team and see how long it takes any sales person's average prospect to open our standard "Follow-up email 1." If I notice that one person has a significantly lower open rate compared to the rest of the team it means they either are not having the same quality of initial conversation or are not qualifying their prospects well enough. I can also take those who are performing the best, see what is duplicable and train the rest of team in their approach.

Sales Hack #7: Camtasia / ScreenFlow

What is it? Camtasia (for PC's) and Screenflow (for Mac) are both screen recording and editing software. They will capture anything that happens on screen as well as record video and audio from your computer. These tools can be used to build software demos, record a Power Point presentation or webinar and mix multiple video files and images together to produce a dynamic high quality video presentation.

How do you use it to hack your sales?

I personally use Screenflow to record both client web meetings and webinars I deliver, these are archived and I use them both as a client record and resource that I can share with clients, staff and partners. Many times multiple people will have the same questions over time, I can present the answer once in the form of a video tutorial recorded through Screenflow and then post it to my site and/or YouTube and Facebook video channels.



Instead of sitting on the phone or even sending a response via text email to the same question I get all the time, I send the answer to many frequently asked questions via video. My clients love it because they can re-watch them as many times as they need to and share it with their team, and I love it because it saves me so much time on a weekly basis.

You can also use a screencast/recording to do a page-by-page walk-through of a presentation, proposal or project plan. This has proven to be very useful when I found myself unable to present to key decision makers. Using rich media and not depending on a 3rd party person to present your proposal to their team greatly improves your chances of success.

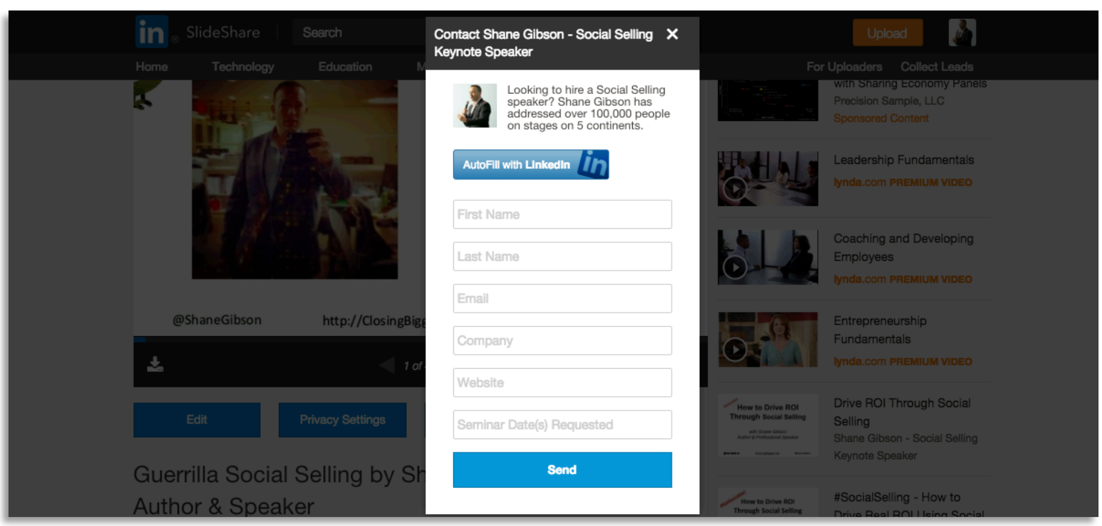
If you work for a software company or have a complex website where you are often playing tech support with clients on the phone Screenflow and Camtasia can help save you hours and hours of time per week that you could use for selling. For any client question related to using your software or your site offer to record a quick video on how to do it and send through a link via email. They can follow you step-by-step visually as you give them instructions. The other benefit is you never have to answer that question again – just send them the link.

Sales Hack #8: Slideshare

What is it? Slideshare is basically the YouTube of documents. It's a place where you load up presentations, infographics, e-books and any other major form of document. Slideshare was purchased by LinkedIn recently and for this reason integrates well with LinkedIn. Once you upload your presentation you can embed in any blog or webpage which allows the viewer to walk-through the entire presentation without the need to download it and view it in PowerPoint or Keynote. Slideshare also has a large and active member base who views, comments, shares and downloads content that is posted to the site.

How do you use it to hack your sales?

I upload my PowerPoint from most of my seminars to SlideShare and then turn-on the option to capture leads within their dashboard. At the end of reviewing the presentation a pop-up appears asking the viewer if they would like more information and to contact the author. After I present my seminar I supply the link to the audience and I often get inquiries via Slideshare for keynote speeches and training services. There are entire courses now available online that teach people how to use Slideshare presentations as lead generators. My average cost per very qualified lead runs $8-$12.



You can upload product brochures, e-books, sales presentations and a variety of other value-added pieces of content you use in your sale process. This will be a great resource for your existing clients and will also attract new prospects through Slideshare and is well indexed by Google.

Sales Hack #9: IFTTT

What is it? IFTTT otherwise known as **If This Then That** allows you automate key sales and social media software tools. It also has moved into automating the internet of things, allowing your smartphone to tell your lights to turn on once it detects you are within a certain distance of your home (Android or IOS device and a wemo connector for your home appliances are required). Anything with an API compatibly with IFTTT can have a recipe applied to it, this platform in essence can automate and integrate several apps and devices into a single process. For instance you can have an email sent to you if a certain type of ad shows up on Craigslist and then tell IFTTT to text you when the email hits your inbox.

How do you use it to hack your sales?

There are numerous hacks but I will share with you two that have really helped me recently on Twitter. **For client monitoring and engagement you could for instance program it to email you a link to any Tweet mentioning your client's name.** I have found this very relevant for me to keep abreast of any new press or potential crisis' that my clients are facing almost in real-time. A quick email congratulating them or offering them help (if the situation is bad) has created several opportunities for me in training and consulting work. The reason of course is timing, I contacted them literally as the positive or negative event was unfolding.

The second hack or "recipe" as IFTTT calls it, is to **automate list building in Twitter.** The reason why lists help sales growth is they increase followers and engagement from people specifically interested or focused on a certain topic. For my business I set up IFTTT to create individual lists from people who tweeted using #tag's that would make them a likely client, community member or alliance for me. It has been averaging me an addition 600 – 1600 new followers per month and has drastically increased my engagement on Twitter with my audience.

Here's an example. I programmed IFTTT as follows: If a person tweets about #SocialSelling put them on the list "Social Sales Leaders." Pretty simple formula, but in the past I was building this manually and it was effective but very time consuming.

Once you list someone, especially labelling them as a leader (positive feedback) they are likely to follow you, or in many cases tweet a thank-you to you. Here's where the less automatic but important step comes in: once they follow you or thank-you follow them back and tweet a thank-you that is customized. Instead of just saying thanks for the follow, say "thanks for connecting here on Twitter, how are things at Hootsuite (or Socedo or wherever they work)?" That little bit of customization has helped me start conversations that lead to LinkedIn connections, webinar attendees or invitations to do training or speaking. Here are some of the topics you may want to base your lists around:

- People who tweet about a specific conference
- People who's tweets contain links to specific sites
- People who tweet about a specific topic nearby
- People who tweet about your competitor
- People who participate in specific Twitter chats related to your industry

This is a very simple hack but don't be too general. I chose #SocialSelling instead of a more general topic like #sales because it narrowed my audience. I also find conferences directly related to my niches and build a "recipe" around those two, sometimes the list ends up only being 30 people BUT in many cases I gain 15 followers from it and engage with 5-10 new connections.

Remember that it's not just about the list, it's about following back and engaging those who respond to or follow us.

"That's the "social" in social media or social selling. It's about attracting them, engaging them and then moving them into the sales or relationship building funnel, and that takes real dialogue."

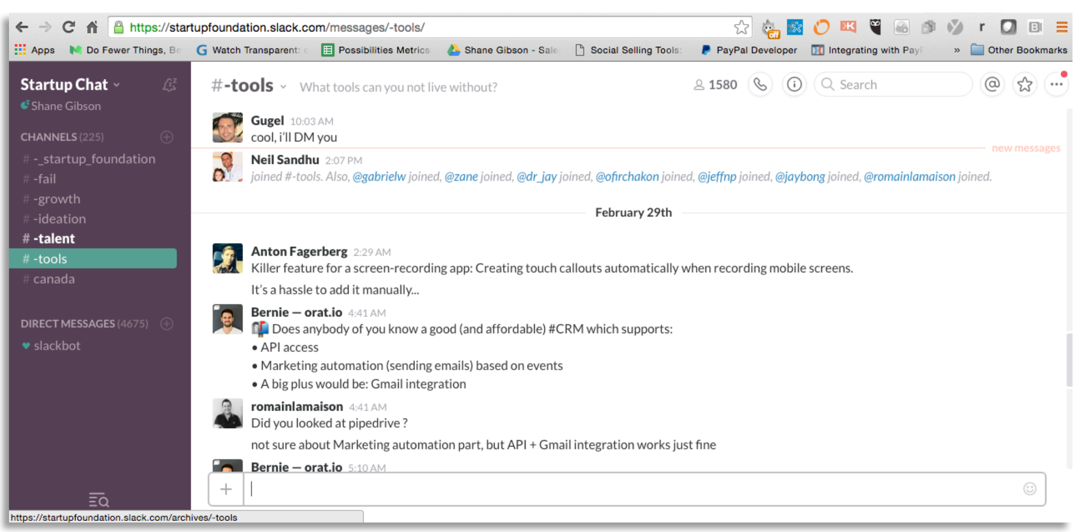
Sales Hack #10: Slack Groups

What is it? Slack is a tool that was developed and launched in 2013 and as a company has already grown to over $1 Billion valuation. It was developed as a cloud based team collaboration tool that has literally replaced internal emailing for several of my clients. It's like your own mobile friendly, highly intuitive social networking tool for your company.

Here's where it gets interesting. You can also **create public Slack channels that are interest based.** Hubspot (the creators of Sidekick) for instance created a public inbound marketing channel that thousands of marketers who use or could use their software collaborate, share best practices and build relationships. I am a member of another public slack channel for startup founders and participate in many of their discussions on business growth, recruitment and growth hacking. Through these conversations you can migrate these contacts into your sales funnel.

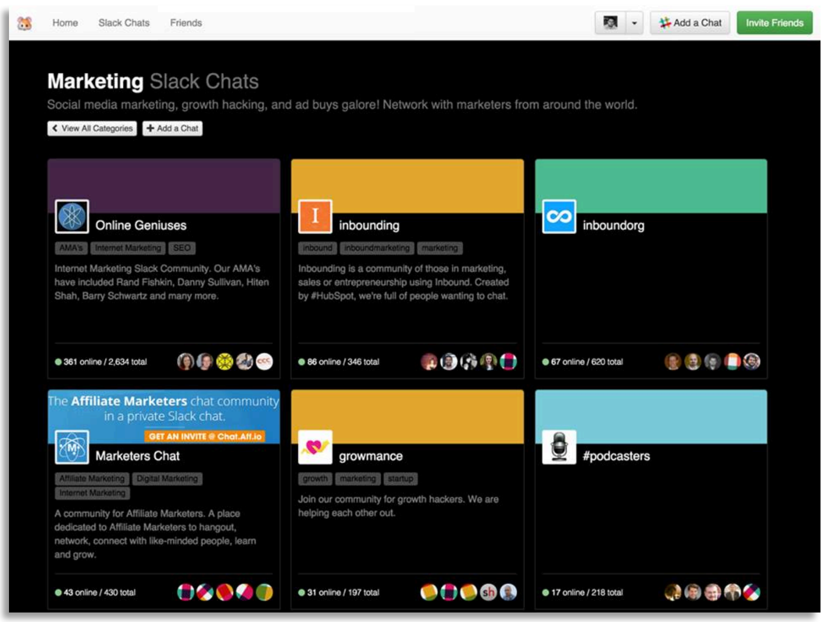
How do you use it to hack your sales?

One important thing to note is most slack channels are very anti-sales and pitch. Avoid selling in the channel, instead look for opportunities to give advice, share links to resources or good content you have created and build rapport and trust through conversations. Once you have built some rapport with key people you can individually private message them and suggest a LinkedIn connection, offer a demo or even just suggest a quick Google Hangout to chat with them about their business. All of these soft steps in communication on slack often more effectively lead to business than a hard pitch approach.



The culture and sheer volume of dialogue reminds me of the early days of Twitter. My suggestion is join a few slack channels, learn how they work and grow your network. The next step in my opinion is to find a niche topic that you and/or your team is a thought leader in and start your own public channel as a way to build your community and prospect base. This is a new tool and rapidly evolving and it's something that is new for me as well, BUT it has a ton of potential.

My Facebook friend and founder Matt Schlicht of ZapChain just launched a new project called Hamster Pad.



It's a directory of 400 slack chats in 25 categories including: Marketing, Startups, Health & Fitness, Mobile Developer, Product, Design, Finance, Sports, Video Games, Slack, Music, Blockchain, Travel, Social, Politics, Virtual Reality, Podcasts, Content Creators, Security, Photography, Investors, Schools, Events, Business. It's just in it's infancy but looks like a great directory.

Another good resource is SlackList.info, a handpicked list of top Slack communities.

Sales Hack #11: IRL

IRL is an exciting sales hack that most modern, tech savvy social sales people forget about. It's one of the quickest ways to generate ROI from social selling and close a deal. If you haven't guessed already **IRL stands for "In Real Life."** All of these tools, dashboards, new followers, extra traffic etc. don't matter as much as building relationships and trust. In the words of Scot Heiferman founder of Meetup.com:

"Use the internet to get off of the internet"

Some sales processes never require a face to face meeting, but even then try to deepen the relationship on a more engaging platform. If you're communicating on Twitter why not suggest a quick Google Hangout? If you're talking on LinkedIn with someone you feel is a qualified prospect that lives in your city, book an appointment to go see them or at least pick up the phone.

This personal touch of humanizing digital will accelerate your sales process. Even if it doesn't accelerate your sales process, meeting people face-to-face brings some humanity back into your day and improves quality of life. Real life interactions will improve customer retention, build relationships faster and give you a break from staring at a screen all day.

(Left to right: Shane Gibson and Peter Aceto CEO of Tangerine Bank [@PeterAceto] hiking the Grouse Grind together in Vancouver, BC. Peter and I first connected on Twitter many years ago and have been doing business in real life ever since.)

About Shane Gibson

Author - Speaker - Social Selling Thought Leader

Shane Gibson is an international speaker, and author on social media marketing, social selling and sales performance who has addressed over 100,000 people on stages in North America, Southern Africa, India, Dubai, Malaysia and South America. **Shane Gibson is #5 on the Forbes.com list of the Top 30 Social Sales People in the World.**

Shane's books include **Sociable! How Social Media is Turning Sales and Marketing Upside Down. Closing Bigger the Field Guide to Closing Bigger Deals and Guerrilla Social Media Marketing**, co-authored with Jay Conrad Levinson.

He is a certified Master Trainer and contributing author in the Complete Sales Action System™, and Managing Complex Business Relationships. Shane is Canada's only Guerrilla Marketing Master Trainer. He is also co-founder and facilitator of the Langara College Online Professional Sales Certificate Program; a 72-hour 4-month program based upon Shane's sales processes and programs.

Shane has been conducting sales seminars, in-depth training programs and working with sales organizations for over 20 years.

Blogging since 2002, and podcasting since 2004 Shane is a veteran in the social selling arena and cited as an expert in the use of social media platforms, and channels. Published in numerous publications including CMA Magazine, the Financial Post, the Globe and Mail, Entrepreneur.com.

Shane's speaking and training clients include: Sun Life, ACL, BMO Financial, CPA, HUB International, Canaccord Financial, Standard Life, Ford Motor Company, ADVOCIS, Manitoba Motor Dealers Association, CMA Canada, Reliance Industries (India), Corning Cable Systems, IUOE, The Vancouver Board of Trade, BuildDirect, Seminarium Colombia, Seminarium Chile, HeroX, the Sauder School of Business, the University of British Columbia, and hundreds of entrepreneurs, individual sales people and marketers over the past 20 years. When he's not working or tweeting you can find Shane hiking or skiing in British Columbia's Coast Mountain range with his family.

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