

BOOK REVIEW

Chase, L. & Knebl, K. (2011). *The Social Media Sales Revolution* (1st edition). New York: McGraw-Hill. 256 pp. ISBN: 978-0071768504.

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The *Social Media Sales Revolution: The New Rules for Finding Customers, Building Relationships, and Closing More Sales through Online Networking*, offers experienced sales professionals critical information and tools to effectively utilize the new landscape of social media sales technologies. Written with a positive framework, and upbeat tone, this book intends to bring the professional salesperson to the cutting edge of the social media sales revolution. In reality, this book should only be purchased by the neophyte social networker, as its usefulness to a seasoned Internet veteran is simply minimal.

Chapter 1 documents the author's early work experience in sales with the breakthrough technologies of the '80s and '90s – recorded message retrieval, voicemail, and the “greatest communication tool of all time” (p. 5), the Internet. The authors introduce the six rules for successful adaptation in the new media marketplace, and aim to “convince you to embrace the new fundamental rules for salespeople that together make up the Social Media Sales Revolution” (p.4): (1) abandoning traditional prospecting, (2) becoming a marketer first and a seller second, (3) building your sphere of influence, (4) becoming a value generator, (5) building your personal brand, and (6) working the window (p.5-19).

In the next few chapters, the authors introduce key elements of LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook. Chase and Knebl detail the immense potential of Twitter, as it can be seen by millions around the world simultaneously by those who actually want to see it. They suggest joining Hootsuite, a social media integration platform that can provide data clusters at your command for the analysis of pertinent

information (p. 70-74). This is perhaps the best contribution that the book makes. Profile building around the dynamics of Facebook is covered, and careful attention to etiquette is emphasized, as a bad reputation on Facebook travels faster than light. Special attention is paid to creating a Facebook advertisement, as it is seen as a cheap and effective way of generating sales.

“Blogging is easier than you think” invites the unlearned networker to explore the world of blogging. The genesis and evolution of blogging is discussed, and the current statistics regarding use are presented. The authors discuss the controversy surrounding blogs, as many sales professionals believe it to be pointless and a potential waste of valuable networking time. After convincing the reader of the value of blogging, Chase and Knebl offer overviews of some available blogging services, and cover initial concerns of the first-time user.

“Attracting attention to your online presence” focuses on the salesperson as a value generator (p. 128). The authors detail three major concerns one might have: lack of expertise, lack of time, and lack of writing skills. The authors address these concerns with a “don’t worry about it too much” attitude. The chapter implores the use of feed readers, expert bloggers, distribution of content through the major networks, and newsletters.

In a chapter dedicated to proper online etiquette, or “netiquette,” Chase and Knebl encourage the reader to heed some advice: (1) be yourself, (2) be accurate, and (3) be aware of the presence you are portraying online. “Effective Time Management,” describes how to incorporate the necessary social media habits into your daily routine. It explains the four advantages of marketing in the realm of social media: (1) reduced research time, (2) the lack of time constraints, (3) ease of information distribution, and (4) the minimal time required (p. 173-174). The book then informs us of “the four revolutionary requirements,” necessities for streamlining your production on the aforementioned social media platforms: participate actively, use patience and discipline, and have fun (p. 182-184). Emphasis is placed on planning your schedule around selling activities, social media activities, and administrative activities.

The authors provide a layout for day-to-day social media activities. The blueprint is as follows: start out on LinkedIn for possible leads, while showing your appreciation for information by “liking” significant data. The next recommendation is to update your status,

so that you can “keep your name in people’s faces in a noninvasive manner” (p. 198). You should then check out all LinkedIn sections: LinkedIn Events, LinkedIn Answers, and LinkedIn Groups. You are then advised to log into Twitter via Hootsuite. They recommend that you make comments on valued tweets, and remind the reader that “every interaction is the opportunity to start or enhance a relationship” (p. 207). The next step should be to check Facebook, to post, like, and share statuses.

The final chapter, titled “The future of selling,” is a bit misleading. It makes very few forward-looking statements as to what direction the social media sales is headed, and only maintains that the current landscape is actually the future. It begins by confirming the necessity of adapting to change, and embracing of the new world methods of communication (p. 224). The authors present us with “Kevin’s story,” a short-story designed to reveal an important fact: you can’t sign up for social networking in order to spam everyone and their brother, and expect the money to roll in. You must spend time studying “interpersonal, relational, and networking skills” if you want to use social media effectively (p. 224).

As a professor with 22 years of experience in higher education, I and my coauthor would not recommend this book for either undergraduate or graduate courses in communication. It is far too simple in its approach to be of any meaningful, significant, or informative value to students who are already literate in the vast means of social media tools that are already available online. Students would find this book to be tediously boring, and lacking the necessary critical value of supportive communication theory to make a case for an applied approach to leveraging social media.

However, if you are also a professor who consults on the side, this book would be of significant value to you in terms of educating your clients to the necessity of switching from old ways of doing business to the modern means of social media. The narrative style used to write this book is very approachable to people who are practitioners in the communication craft, and who need to understand that a new way of business communication has developed over the past 4 to 5 years — that simply requires a threshold of literacy in order to effectively and efficiently conduct business in the new millennium.

This book would be good for the beginning student who has no clue about new media and social media, as a reference vehicle only.

However, we believe that additional readings should be required for any person who is trying to effectively leverage social media in a corporate communication environment — or from a public relations perspective — to create additional sales for the company or organization they represent.

This book covers a simple, yet effective, way of navigating the massive new media landscape, while instilling the importance of efficient use; although, it only seems useful to the novice communicator, or the older salesperson behind the technology curve. The book doesn't offer too much valuable insight, but at least provides information on some useful and lesser-known applications.
