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# THE SBRA COMMUNITY WHO IS ON YOUR TEAM?

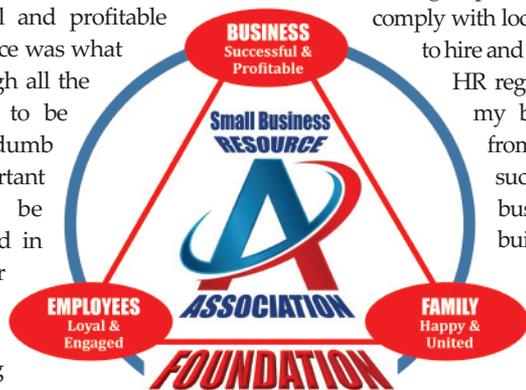


**By Gary Seibert, CEO,  
Small Business Resource Association**

Forty-eight years ago, when I started my first big company, I had just left teaching high school physical education and had no background in owning and running a “real” business. I was driven

by instinct and gut feeling rather than sound business practices. I felt that my vision and beliefs were sufficient to build a successful and profitable business. Hard work and sacrifice was what would help me navigate through all the difficult times and guide me to be successful. I was young and dumb and about to learn a very important lesson. Most people cannot be knowledgeable and experienced in every aspect of running their business. Surrounding yourself with people equal to or better than yourself, is the key to being successful while reducing the stress of the day to day challenges of owning and operating a business. Here is what I learned that “I needed to know” to help me be a successful business owner.

1. Someone needs to be the VISIONARY. Fortunately, that is where my strength was. I saw the finished product even before I started to build it. I saw a need and a void. I saw a pain that nobody was addressing. I saw a market with multiple opportunities for growth and expansion. I knew who the competition was and what they were not doing that the market needed. I saw into the future and believed that I could provide the products and services



needed to be successful. I had a vision, I had a dream. Almost everyone has visions and dreams but only a few ever make those visions and dreams come true.

2. The VISIONARY needs to be HUMBLE. As much as I wanted to be the leader and in charge of everything, I quickly learned that I had limited experience and knowledge of some very fundamental business needs such as how to set up a legal business entity, how to set up an accounting department to keep proper records and comply with local, state and federal tax laws, how to hire and train staff and comply with related HR regulations, how to properly protect my business, employees and myself from lawsuits and accidents, how to successfully market and advertise my business to get customers and how to build a BRAND. You see, I had the vision, (IDEA), But I had NO idea how to make it a reality. I needed help.

3. I needed a MANAGER to help me put all the pieces together and oversee the day-to-day operation of the business. This person was skilled in hiring and managing people. They knew how to run an efficient, cost-effective operation. They had experience in purchasing and keeping the cost of the operation within budget. They managed the business.

4. I needed a person that had TECHNICAL skills to be on top of our daily finances, legal and insurance protection, compliances and human resources. This person needed to be up-to-date with all the ever-changing rules, laws and regulations that could make or break a business.

Being a visionary is only part of a successful business. The vision must be driven by a sound and experienced team of people that know how to make the vision a reality. This team works together for the common good of the business and communicates effectively to reach the goals established by the team. TEAM=Together Everyone Achieves More

My successes over my 50-plus years of being an Entrepreneur are due solely to the people (teams) I surrounded myself with and allowed to exercise their knowledge and experience to help me build my vision into Successful Businesses. Without them, my dreams may have become nightmares.

WHO'S ON YOUR TEAM?

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# SIX WAYS TO PERSONALIZE YOUR PITCH WITH SOCIAL SELLING



By John Whitehall,  
Sandler Training

You've probably been social selling for years without realizing it. Every time you add more people, opportunities, or information to your pipeline from digital sources, you're employing this modern selling strategy. Social media and online marketing have quickly become the gold standard for prospecting.

Ninety percent of top performing salespeople utilize social media as part of their approach.

However, it doesn't stop there. To execute social selling correctly, you need to make sure you find the right person, at the right time, deliver the right message, over the right channel, and with the right "ask." Top sellers use social media to perfect and personalize every part of the sales cycle. When they take this extra step, 64% of sales representatives that invest time in social media hit their team quota, while only 49% of salespeople who don't use social media achieve this mark.

Whether you're struggling to use these new selling tactics or just looking for better ways to connect with potential buyers, here are six ways top performers are using social selling to add a little punch to their sales pitch.

## 1. Personalize Your Prospecting

These days, it's unusual and almost unexpected to call a prospect without looking them up online first. The wealth of information you can find on your prospects is invaluable before you make that first contact. You can personalize your prospecting pitch so much better if you jump online first.

Beyond ensuring that you're talking to the right person, you might find that you have a common connection to help get the conversation started. You might find that they're especially qualified or disqualified by the information they have on their online profiles. Or, you might discover that they're connected with your competitors or your brother-in-law!

The point is, if you're making prospecting or sales calls without doing some online research, you're missing out on valuable information to help you sell more and sell more easily.

## 2. Personalize Your Referral Requests

Everyone has been in a referral conversation where the response is, "Sorry, I can't think of anyone." However, you can eliminate that result forever by personalizing your ask using social media.

Before any meeting on your calendar, in-person, or on the phone, research the person with whom you're meeting. Look at their friends, connections, and followers, and identify 10 people who might be good prospects for you. At the end of the meeting, ask the person to qualify this list for you. Have them scratch out any names that wouldn't be a good fit, and put a star by any of them they think might have a need.

By personalizing your referral request with names of people they know, you will eliminate the mental blocks between you and the introduction. Then, all you have to do is ask how well they know the referral, and whether they would be comfortable introducing you. If you get good at this tactic, you will never HAVE TO make another cold call. Each meeting on your calendar will lead to another warm referral.

## 3. Personalize Your Presentation

With the help of social selling, you should be able to identify the decision makers and influencers attending any sales pitch. Then, you will need to determine their interest in the project, their personality style, and their pain points. The key to success in any sales pitch is proving you can solve the prospect's problem, within their budget, and according to their decision-making criteria.

Think about how social selling can help you with all three. Can you identify, target, and connect with white knights on your side? What about dark knights pulling for the competition? What could you find out about the higher-ups or end-users?

Taking a few minutes or even a few hours to personalize and perfect a big pitch is time well spent. Presentations are boring and annoying when the information or content is irrelevant. Every prospect is asking, "What's in it for me?" Make sure you have the answer to that question!

## 4. Personalize Your Client Outreach

Many salespeople are so focused on prospecting that they forget to keep in touch and connect with existing clients on social media. Stay top of mind for up-sells, cross-sells, renewals, referrals, and more by sending some personal touches over social.

You will probably want to like, share, and comment on your client's posts. You can also send personalized thank you messages, give recommendations and endorsements, and introduce them to your network. Often, closing the sale is just the start of the relationship. Don't forget to keep a "warm fuzzy file" on your clients. Reach out to them with good news on their project, new information on their industry, or new products and services they might need. Set up quarterly review meetings and client appreciation events to keep building the relationship.

How often should you tell your clients that you appreciate them? Do it before someone else does!

## 5. Personalize Your Communication

This strategy is rare, which makes it all the more special. Most people communicate with others in their own preferred method. However, top performers have learned to adapt their style to fit their prospect's preferred method.

When you first meet a prospect or bring on a new client, ask them about their preferred communication method. Do they prefer a phone call, face-to-face, text message, email, or direct message on social media? You won't know if you don't ask. Then adapt your outreach based on the answer. You'll find it much easier to get a response and then get a sale if you use a channel that the client prefers.

Think about it this way. If someone in the sales process has to be uncomfortable, it should be you, not the prospect. Also, the method of communication is just the tip of the iceberg. You can match their tone, words, body language, pace, and dozens of other attributes to enhance and personalize your communication.

## 6. Personalize Your Posts

If you're wondering what to post on social media, one of the best strategies is to make your posts personal. It might be sharing photos or videos of your workday, or you might share something specifically with or about your clients. Personalizing your marketing and social media posting makes them more relevant and engaging.

Think about the posts you typically see on your social media feed. What stands out? What gets the most likes and shares? People rarely like or share advertisements, but they love to share and comment on good news, personal events, original posts, or completed projects. Even if you don't work in a very interesting industry, your client's stories are interesting. Your story is interesting.

In sales, don't make the mistake of sending the same message to everyone. That's called advertising. The sales function is typically most effective when it's a one-to-one conversation, which includes questions, listening, and thoughtfully crafted responses, not a one-way broadcast.

Remember, you're trying to start a sales conversation with the right person, at the right time, with the right message, on the right channel, and the right ask. You can't do that without personalization.

If you haven't already, we encourage you to make social selling a large part of your daily sales behavior. The selling landscape has changed. Marketing and sales automation have become commonplace. There are now billions of people begging for attention and personal touch on social media. Now, more than ever, it's important to be the one listening, personalizing, and making human connections. It just might be the slight edge you need to sell more, and sell more easily.

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Members Helping Each Other Grow



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## MEMBER MINGLES – NETWORKING

Wednesday, October 26th, 5:30-7:00  
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## Learn How the SBRA Can Help Your Business Grow

– Membership Benefits Update  
Wednesday, October 28th,  
9:00-9:30 a.m.

Register: <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>