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## **Social media, the key to social selling**

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There is no silver bullet when it comes to selling. The same holds true of the new social buzzword of the month "social selling." Like your personality, your social business strategy is unique to you. There are some best practices and techniques that will share the same characteristics across your target market.

The easiest way to describe social selling is comparing it to a knife instead of a sword; which means it is death by a thousand cuts instead of one large blow; a soft sell. Following are a few tips that will help infuse social media into your sales cycle and help your 2014-marketing plan.

Understand your core principles as a salesperson of prospecting and preparation. The first contact and getting a prospect to attend a professional event or a webinar is a must before entering social media to your mix. The key to becoming a successful social seller is knowing how to incorporate social media at each step of your current sales process. This information determines how social media can make each part of that strategy more effective. Putting a creative and special touch on the sales cycle often reaps more rewards over traditional formulaic strategies.

Making social connections with decision makers before you call increases the probability of your call being successful because you'll have more information about your prospect. Following a sales prospect's Twitter account or checking your prospect's LinkedIn status arms you with the knowledge and confidence to make a great first impression. Understanding your prospect is the most important sales tip you can get. Like G.I. Joe said, "Knowing is half the battle."

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