# Social Lead Generation 101:

# What happens when the old ways of finding new revenue sources are no longer working?

# Easy, tap into the channel of social lead generation.

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Unless you’re living under a rock, you’ve probably noticed that there’s been a shift in how people (and buyers) want to communicate.

When it comes to business, gone are the days of frequent or impromptu in-person meetings. We've said good-bye to the times when you could make an unplanned call and expect someone to answer (we have smart phones to thank for that).

Very soon, we’ll start to see the decline of business emails. The email has been dying for a while, but it’s been on a very slow road down. Kind of like the floppy disk, it seems like it’s lived forever!

Email’s problem is that people are now starting to realize the fact that more than half of their daily inbox is from businesses trying to sell. The emails aren’t personalized (a first name doesn’t count!) and a lot of them are “cold” in that they’re from someone the recipient doesn’t even know. The modern-day buyer is savvier and more prepared to just ignore you if they don’t recognize you right away.

This shift has been compounded by Millennials.

**New generation = new channel opportunities**

A study by [Google and Millward Brown Digital](https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/the-changing-face-b2b-marketing/) found that 46% of decision makers are now aged between 18 and 34 years old (up from 27% in 2012). Millennials tend to set the trend for generations above (Gen X and Boomers) and below (Gen Z) them, and this is very much true for the trends in communication channels.

Think about the last time you communicated with someone. Let's guess, it was probably through a messaging app on your phone. Right? Which one? The point here is that there’s a lot of them.

Millennials have trained us to think of messaging apps as being the new norm of all communication. And why not! Even your Grandma is sending emojis in your family chat instead of dialing your number.

So, what does a sales professional do when all their old ways of prospecting and communicating with potential buyers are dying? Easy – tap into a new channel. Enter Social Lead Generation.

**Social lead generation 101**

Social Lead Generation is the act of finding new “leads” or “prospects” through a social network, such as LinkedIn or Facebook.

While social networks might not be good “closing-the-deal” tools per se, if utilized properly, they can be amazing opening, or lead gen tools. Why?

To start, social media networks hold a ton of data.

**Data is king**

Social networks have information such as your name, where you live, your role and company and (in some cases) your age. These networks are literally a database of potential for sales professionals to tap into.

Above and beyond the obvious data, there’s more value if you know where to look.

If you go onto a friend or connections page, you’d be surprised at how much you can find out about them. Their thoughts on a recent software acquisition, a post about how they can pick “the right” avocado – every time, and how they just came back from a successful business trip to Sweden.

If used properly, social media data can be powerful tool to help the modern sales professional do their job better. Today’s sales reps need to be extremely well-prepared for any prospect communication because of buyer expectations. The more you know about your prospect, the better.

Using a social profile to gather relevant data can be the key factor in allowing for a sales relationship to grow, quick.

**See your prospects**

Secondly, social networks are transparent to anyone who has an account. In a world where online attention spans are diminishing, visual credibility is an increasingly effective solution for sales professionals to stand out to potential buyers.

An email to your inbox with a name and signature is cold, but a message sent through a social network that allows you to simply click and see a face, description and connections (hey – you’re connected to my buddy John!) of the sender all in one place, is very warm.

A social profile is your first impression. It gives a simple understanding of your character as well as the value you have to offer.

Many times, it can be the validation a prospect needs to move forward with a conversation.

**Have real conversation with real people**

Finally, there is the fact that social networks are in fact – social!

The networks have been designed to allow for instant back and forth conversation which allows for a casual and friendly way to communicate. Anytime someone has a life event or posts a new article, there’s an opportunity to reach out and say, “Hey, how are you?”.

Social prospecting is all about creating a casual and mutually beneficial relationship that’s not built on a long-winded sales pitch, but a real moment in time and a real conversation – that hopefully leads to a sales relationship in the future.

**Value + data = success**

This new way of connecting to potential buyers can change the entire face of sales outreach.

It’s a natural way to create a two-way conversation with a potential buyer who (assuming you’ve done your research) will have an interest in what you have to say because you can base the outreach on things that relate to that prospect.

Creating value for a prospect is the most important aspect in this strategy, and the data points in which social networks contain are the key to finding this success.

The reasons for using social prospecting are simple to understand, the hard part is doing it. It’s not impossible on your own but implementing a robust social lead generation strategy takes time and effort.

If you want to learn more about social lead generation and how to implement a scalable prospecting machine, talk to us now about Engage.