

Is Social A Source For B2B Leads?

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Most referrals from social sites uninterested in products and services

While many business-to-business (B2B) companies have gotten turned on to the value of social media marketing and find it helpful for tasks like prospecting and lead generation, inbound social marketing for B2Bs may leave much to be desired.

A study by lead generation solutions provider LeadForce1 examined the behavior of visitors to B2B Websites who had been directed to the sites from social media, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Wikipedia.

Visitors from the top social sites were generally uninterested in product or contact pages, suggesting they were not in the market for the company's products or services.

Visitors from Facebook were most likely to check out a company's "about" page or blog posts.

Twitter-directed visitors had similar behavior, with blogs coming out on top.

In addition, most site visitors referred from Facebook or Twitter visited only one page before leaving.

This suggests that social network users are willing to follow company links to check out content but unlikely to make the jump to doing product research or other sales-related activity.

LinkedIn and Wikipedia users were more likely to browse around company Websites before leaving. LinkedIn users, however, tended to be interested in "careers" pages, suggesting the business-oriented social network refers many job seekers.

It was visitors from Wikipedia who were most likely to be carrying out product research.

Studies from HubSpot have found B2Bs can find leads for less through inbound social marketing, and that social participation can help increase B2B leads.

This data suggests, though, that outbound marketing may be most effective for B2B lead generation in social media. Programs like IBM's Listening for Leads uncover potential customers through social discussion monitoring.

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