



Simple Marketing Now's LinkedIn Guide



Simplified Instructions To Help You Get Started

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Getting Started
Advanced



Simplify

Simple Marketing Now

Simple Marketing Now LLC
973-283-2424 phone

<http://SimpleMarketingNow.com>
info@simplemarketingnow.com

Welcome to Simple Marketing Now's Guide to Getting Started With LinkedIn!

Perhaps you've already read our *Top 10 Tips for Getting Started with LinkedIn*? If not, they include the following, which we describe in greater detail in this LinkedIn Guide.

1. **Complete your profile 100%**, add photo, details.
2. Try to **write about yourself conversationally, yet professionally**. Think about telling a story.
3. Think about which **keywords are most relevant to you professionally**. Include those keywords in:
 - i. Your headline
 - ii. Your current experience
 - iii. Your past experience
 - iv. Your summary
 - v. Your specialties
4. **Claim your vanity URL**.
5. **Add Twitter to your profile** so people can follow you on Twitter. Include links to your digital properties [websites and blogs] so people can find you. **Add Apps to your profile** - Slideshare, Boxee or your blog feed.
6. **Search LinkedIn Groups for groups of interest**. Check out what kinds of conversation topics take place. Join the group if you like what you see and participate in the discussions.
7. **Explore LinkedIn Answers**.
8. **Follow companies of interest**.
9. If you have a business, **create a LinkedIn Company Profile**.
10. Use **LinkedIn Signal** - <http://www.linkedin.com/signal/> - to search. Explore **LinkedIn Today** - <http://www.linkedin.com/today/> - to find out which stories are being shared on LinkedIn.

Finally, be sure to **update your status on a regular basis** [once or twice per week] with links to articles you find interesting, links to your own blog content, etc. To remember, add a reminder in your calendar program.

What is LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional social network, launched in 2003, which now claims over 100 million members [as of March 2011] in over 200 countries in all 7 continents. LinkedIn members include:

- 72% college grads
- 66% over \$60K/year
- 68% 35+ years old

Every Fortune 500 company is represented and 81% of business-to-business marketers use LinkedIn.

LinkedIn has become a more robust networking platform in the past 1-2 years, adding better group functionality [for more information read: [Welcome to a whole new way of experiencing LinkedIn Groups](#)] and becoming more integrated with Twitter [e.g, LinkedIn Today].

LinkedIn used to be quite static – primarily a place for resumes. Although it is considerably more interactive, LinkedIn is a much calmer, corporate like environment compared to Twitter or Facebook. It's a wonderful environment for keeping track of people you know and connecting with people you meet professionally. It's valuable for networking, researching and connecting for business purposes.

What's important to remember is that **search engines such as Google like LinkedIn profiles**. If you have a LinkedIn profile and Google yourself, you'll notice that your profile appears prominently on page one of search results, making it an important element of your personal and professional brand reputation management. Manage your profile and control what people find about you and your company.

Within LinkedIn you can search people, companies and groups. You can see how you are connected to others; you can learn more about the person you'll be having a business meeting with and have a more productive session. You can also send personal messages.

What to do first on LinkedIn:

Focus on your personal profile. Set it up and complete it 100%. Develop a LinkedIn profile that encourages connections:

- Use conversational wording
- Use keywords
- Post a professional photo
- Describe yourself in an interesting way

Your positioning in LinkedIn is influenced by your connections and the keywords in your profile. If you want to come up higher in search results, it helps to **connect with others**. Import your contacts

and browse through your connections' connections to find others you know. LinkedIn will suggest people for you to connect with.

NOTE: when you invite others to connect with you, be sure to customize the invitation so it sounds like it came from you. This makes a difference!

Add keywords to your **professional headline** and your **current & past position titles**. In this example, Ruben Quinones' professional headline reads: "*NYC Online Marketing, SEO, PPC, Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Online Branding, Speaker, Blogger, NYU Adj.*" Notice that the headline is about selling solutions rather than listing a position title that only makes sense to you.

The summary has no bearing on the LinkedIn search algorithm. However, that's where you tell your story.

Specialties matter, as do Interests. That's where you should jam keywords in!

Add applications to make your profile pop. You can add a feed from your blog, embed your Slideshare presentations, add link to files like resumes and marketing kits [via Box.net], and connect your Twitter account.

To find these applications, on the LinkedIn Nav bar, look for MORE – you'll notice many options including the apps directory. [Others include: polls, private collaboration space, track travel via Triplt.]

Consider status updates an opportunity for conversation with your network. Make the information you post beneficial to your audience. Preferably do status updates from the LinkedIn application itself versus using #in from Twitter so you can include a picture or video and - more importantly - customize the message for your LinkedIn audience.

Try to get one recommendation per position. Recommendations factor into your overall positioning for search results.

Be sure to use LinkedIn as a research tool, to connect and converse with contacts within industries.

Groups and Answers represent ways for demonstrating knowledge. Google indexes answers; they help your Google-ability [a.k.a., Google Juice].

Additional LinkedIn Considerations:

Explore using LinkedIn search; see what kinds of professional headlines come up when you enter your search terms. Who ranks first? Where do those search terms appear in those results? Think like Google.

Mention your key words many times throughout your profile to improve your ranking. You can separate current positions into three separate positions to highlight specific keywords.

You can name your weblinks in such a way as to highlight keywords or calls to action. Ruben uses "*Need a Speaker?*" "*My take on Social Media...*"

Once you have your profile created and completed, **claim your vanity LinkedIn URL**. To do so,

go to settings/public profile; you'll see the prompt to customize your LinkedIn profile URL. Be sure to note the other options available.

How to increase your LinkedIn visibility:

Don't forget to issue status updates on a regular basis.

- Consider creating events in LinkedIn to raise awareness for what you are doing.
- Recommend others and request recommendations [Be sure to customize your request message].
- Explore the other valuable LinkedIn features.

Other valuable LinkedIn features:

LinkedIn offers several features for interacting with others: **LinkedIn Answers**: a Q& A Forum. Per a report in Business.com in Dec. 2009, 59.2% of companies and 79% of B2B organizations who participate in online business forums use LinkedIn Answers. **LinkedIn Groups** – over 500,000 based on companies, schools, affinities...

Do a search and see what comes up [Note: simply select groups in the LinkedIn search window; it defaults to people]. The most popular ones appear first. Check them out. Consider creating your own about a subject you are passionate about.

NOTE: It's critically important to moderate and be actively involved in your group to ensure quality of content and high level interaction [i.e., no spam]. I give the example of HIMSS' best practices : moderate, post guidelines, educate about policies, ask questions, followup, interact, keep it fresh and relevant.

How to use LinkedIn for business?

In addition to your personal profile, you should also be sure to claim your business profile. There, too, you should use keywords. You can now track companies of interest – new feature – find out when they move locations; upcoming big events; new employees...

Integrate LinkedIn into your other activities online and offline. For example, on your website, add link to your LinkedIn profile on your about us page. When you meet new people, connect with them on LinkedIn. Add a link to your LinkedIn profile in your email signature. Include a reference to it on your business card.

Demonstrate thought leadership by participating in LinkedIn Answers: ask questions/provide answers – Caution: don't shamelessly self-promote! Find relevant groups to contribute insights to. You can also use LinkedIn's DirectAds to push relevant ads to LinkedIn subscribers targeted by profile demographic info.

For more information, check out [LinkedIn's Learning Center](#) [click on More in your LinkedIn navigation menu], the [LinkedIn Blog](#), [MarketingProfs has put together a case study collection](#), and see the resources below.

LinkedIn Groups

Within your individual LinkedIn profile, you can join up to 50 groups. Groups are a great opportunity to reach and engage with potential customers online.

The first step is to search existing groups based on **keywords you consider relevant** to determine if one already exists. If yes, join it. Familiarize yourself with the group's guidelines; read through existing conversation threads; do some research on those who actively participate and start getting involved.

Definitely consider researching successful groups so you understand what makes them work, what kinds of questions does the moderator ask? How frequently do new discussions start? What are the group's dynamics? Just a few people or a wide range of perspectives? What is the tone of the discussion?

If a group doesn't exist, create one!

- + pick a name with keywords relevant to your audience
- + make it an industry group rather than a company group
- + add a logo
- + invite coworkers, friends, colleagues to join
- + be sure to promote it online and offline

For a group to be successful, it's important to actively manage it and encourage discussion. If you don't, it will become overrun with spammy self-promotion rather than valuable insights.

It's a good idea to develop and post guidelines for group interaction [be respectful, no self-promotion, what topics are acceptable, etc. See [LinkedIn Group Guidelines or Rules of Engagement](#) for more details]. **Post those as a featured discussion** so everyone can find them. When you welcome new members, send them a link to the guidelines. By the way, you can send announcements to the members of the group; you can import your blog feed into the News section. You can also directly message group members even if you aren't connected to them. LinkedIn has added a lot of rich functionality to groups.

Please note: as with all social media and social networking tools, this will take focused time and effort to generate success. You are building a community.

Spend time beforehand determining what your objective is and how you will add value. You can then prepare a content plan and develop a content calendar.

By the way, you can make your group private and use it as an ongoing focus group discussion. You can also 'follow' individuals within a group [as you can companies now].

LinkedIn Answers

These are particularly effective for lead generation, and demonstrating expertise. Access Answers from the "MORE" tab. When you respond to relevant questions, your answers will appear in your

network updates. You also gain expertise points. You can include links to relevant articles, blogposts, etc. [e.g., you can add value].

You can also ask your own questions for research; you can make your questions private.

LinkedIn Events

You can use LinkedIn Events to promote your activities and invite your connections. When they RSVP, it shows up in their home profile so all their connections see it. To access, go to MORE and follow the steps/answer questions to Add an Event.

LinkedIn Search

Search is powerful in LinkedIn. You can search people and companies [as well as groups, jobs, answers...].

Other LinkedIn Features:

LinkedIn now offers Direct Ads. Access them through MORE. Allows you to target specific parameters with ads.

LinkedIn is a social network.

The best uses for LinkedIn involve connecting with others – to **build your reputation, recruit or make contact with, to do market research with, to establish thought leadership and generate new business** with down the road. It's a network of people, more specifically business professionals.

LinkedIn is not the best source of mass consumer leads. It is, however, a valuable B2B source and will connect with you professionals from around the globe allowing you a rich source for networking. LinkedIn is a powerful social networking platform as we discussed in the last session. It's considered the #1 resource for marketing your business and allows you to connect with:

- Peers to consult with in a non-competitive environment.
- Suppliers.
- Valuable for B2B or commercial relationship building and to supplement/reinforce the networking you do at Chamber of Commerce meetings and other local groups.

1. Build Your Business Reputation via LinkedIn

Offer value based on your area of expertise. As important as it is to fully understand your own company and products, if you want to connect with others – find commonality, develop a relationship, engage in conversation with them – it's equally important to **think beyond products to solutions**. You may be in the flooring business, but you also deal with business processes or marketplace issues that are relevant to other business people. Perhaps, too, your product fits into a bigger solution: flooring is part of a building, for example.

The poster child for building reputation via LinkedIn is Jason Alba who has written the book [I'm on LinkedIn--Now What???: A Guide to Getting the Most Out of LinkedIn](#)

LinkedIn offers those who participate in LinkedIn Answers the opportunity to accumulate 'reputation points'. To build your reputation via LinkedIn, take a topic of interest and knowledge to you. Maybe it's environmental sustainability or time management.

Thank privately all those who comment and express interest. Be consistent about sharing, have a theme. Is it all related to sustainability? Or is it sustainability in your town? Or related to one product?

Consider gathering what you share into a newsletter. [Think how to repurpose the content you create.]

2. Recruit for Business Using LinkedIn

In terms of case studies for recruiting, just about every company has turned to LinkedIn for recruiting. Either for hiring leads or to supplement candidate research by searching on specific keywords and connecting with those who have an interesting and relevant background. So, be prepared!

Another valuable idea with long term benefit is to create a group that brings together people with common interests – perhaps around a cause – and interesting backgrounds that may relate to your field of interest or expertise.

- + By inviting them, you make them feel good.
- + At some point down the road, this might be a group that you hire from or pull from for additional activities.
- + By creating such a forum, you create goodwill and readiness to help you when you need the help.

LinkedIn Business Examples:

- + A marvelous example is #prstudchat group which supports a weekly PR student chat. The group is robust, active, further discussing ideas presented during the Twitter chat and representing talented young PR candidates.

- + Incept helps blood centers recruit and maintain blood donors to maintain a supply of blood. They created a customer-centric group around giving blood that connected people who work at blood centers around the country, discussed issues faced at blood centers and identified solutions [how to knowledge] and built relationships. Imagine how powerful this will be for the next blood crisis! [Read Nate Riggs' post: [How To Build a Customer-Centric LinkedIn Group.](#)]

NOTE: remember to moderate and manage your groups. Don't forget to set rules for behavior.

Develop the relationships first. Once you're active in LinkedIn groups and answers, you'll find that you can seamlessly turn to the relationships and goodwill that you've built for other purposes.

3. Market Research Using LinkedIn

Given the tools that LinkedIn makes available for asking/answering questions and engaging in discussions and conversations, don't overlook LinkedIn as a source of valuable market research and insight.

For example, in the groups you're active in, post a request/invitation to participate in your research.

Create an event [i.e., a research event] and invite others to the event.

Be sure to have a series of messages prepared explaining what you're researching, thanking for participation. Etc.

Be sure to mine existing data on LinkedIn including existing Answers.

Read through relevant group discussions.

Connect with those whom you find insightful.

Build relationships.

4. Building your Business with LinkedIn

The New York Times featured a Canadian entrepreneur who sells equestrian luggage. It's called Red Scarf Equestrian. She credits LinkedIn for building her business because it allowed her to expand beyond Canada.

How: by searching on relevant terms, finding groups related to her product category and building relationships. As with building your business offline, this happens gradually over time.

It supports all of your offline or in-person activities and it allows you to connect in a way that overcomes location, makes the most out of the relationships you've built throughout your career.

Make a habit of spending 20 minutes a week on LinkedIn. Add a reminder to your Outlook calendar to do so.

As with networking offline, start building relationships and establishing your reputation now so you earn enough social capital to make sales pitches down the road more acceptable.

Before heading off to a trade show or event, do a LinkedIn search on some of the people you will be meeting with. Bring that information up when you meet. Observe what happens.

NOTE: LinkedIn Group Guidelines or Rules of Engagement

Have you given thought to your **LinkedIn Group Guidelines or Rules of Engagement**? It's an important question, and yet one that many group owners, managers and moderators haven't addressed.

My model for LinkedIn Group moderation, interaction and guidelines is HIMSS, the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society, which has successfully grown a LinkedIn Group to over 40,000 members by nurturing interaction, carefully moderating and consistently communicating its guidelines. [For more perspective, read my post [HIMSS, Social Media & Healthcare IT Community](#).]

Many LinkedIn Groups aren't that vibrant and others, too self-promotional. The ones that shine are ones where the group owner actively moderates, invites conversation and encourages the sharing of true value with members. Regardless, I expected to trip over more examples of LinkedIn Group Rules and Guidelines to share with Tricia.

What has been your experience? Which LinkedIn Groups do you consider most vibrant and what are their guidelines? How are those guidelines and rules of engagement communicated? Here are two examples:

Lead Change LinkedIn Group:

The purpose of this group is to connect and discuss character-based leadership. You will notice that self-promotion is generally ignored. People in this community connect and share openly about leadership, but if all you do is talk about yourself, people will lose interest quickly. Promoting other groups or services that don't have to do with leadership development will cause us to move your discussions to the Promotions area, or ban you altogether.

HIMSS Group Rules of Engagement

Please read the following rules of engagement before posting. They are designed to ensure the HIMSS Group remains professional, vibrant, and useful for all group members. Since there are gray areas for such rules, HIMSS Group moderators reserve the right to interpret the rules of engagement so the group can successfully lead change in the health IT and management systems field through knowledge sharing and communications. Although, HIMSS staff moderates the group, members are encouraged to help the moderators in this process by reading and following the Rules of Engagement, flagging inappropriate content and inform a moderator of spam and inappropriate content.

RULE #1: All discussions and shared links must clearly relate to the health IT and management systems field.

RULE # 2: Discussions should advance the professional development of health IT and management systems professionals.

RULE #3: Discussions must clearly invite member response and participation. When posting discussions or sharing links, pose questions to garner quality conversations.

RULE #4: Discussion items must be self-contained. While articles, blogs or other reputable health IT and management systems sources may support a good discussion, these resources cannot substitute a discussion.

RULE #5: Be professional, kind, polite and respectful of other members.

RULE #6: Promotions of products and services (even when free) are not allowed.

RULE #7: Job posts are not allowed. This includes messages that advertise job opportunities; recruit candidates; feature resumes and applications, or that self-promote one's availability for positions. If you are in the process of seeking a new position or looking to hire a new candidate, visit HIMSS JobMine at <http://www.himss.org/jobmine>.

RULE #8: Spam messages and postings are prohibited. Spam includes:

- *Sending multiple unsolicited messages to group members. Substantiated complaints will result in the spammer being removed and blocked from the group.*
- *Posting the same discussion repeatedly in order to promote a product, service or company.*
- *Posting commercial comments in discussions when such comments have nothing to do with the discussion.*
- *Posting comments in one's own discussion for the sole purpose of making it go to the top of discussions.*

RULE #9: General invitations to connect are not allowed in the discussions forum.

RULE #10: BREAKING THESE RULES OR ANY OF LINKEDIN TERMS OF USE MAY LEAD TO MEMBER REMOVAL. Members who break the HIMSS Group Rules of Engagement or the LinkedIn Users Agreement, may receive a reminder or may be removed and/or blocked without additional notice.

LinkedIn References

[#TalkFloor Social Media Marketing Series: LinkedIn](#)
[LinkedIn Advanced on TalkFloor Social Media Marketing Interview Series](#)
[LinkedIn Business Successes on TalkFloor Social Media Marketing Interview Series](#)
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[LinkedIn Content Marketing Podcast - Bernie Borges](#)
[Ruben Quinones suggests his LinkedIn Tips.](#)
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[5 Ways to Weave LinkedIn Into Your Marketing Mix](#)
[How LinkedIn will fire up your career](#)
[Worksheet: Using LinkedIn to Market Your Business](#)
[Expert Tips For Using LinkedIn](#)
[How I was wrong about LinkedIn \(with 2 Mini Case Studies\)](#)
[How Do I Make The Most of LinkedIn?](#)
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[6-Step Corporate LinkedIn Strategy](#)
[Top 5 Ways to Market Your Business With LinkedIn](#)
[11 Tips for LinkedIn Business Development](#)

About Simple Marketing Now LLC:

Simple Marketing Now, an inbound marketing strategy consultancy, helps organizations get found online using social media and content marketing. Simple Marketing Now publishes the *Content Talks Business Blog*, issues the *Social Flooring Index* which monitors the social state of the Flooring Industry and writes *Flooring The Consumer* about marketing to women and the retail experience, now a BuyerZone Top 20 Business Marketing Blog. Simple Marketing Now is a certified HubSpot Partner.

For more information, visit <http://SimpleMarketingNow.com>.

About Christine B. Whittemore:



Christine B. Whittemore is Chief Simplifier of **Simple Marketing Now LLC** and has been immersed in social media marketing since June 2006 when she launched her first blog, *Flooring The Consumer* about the customer retail experience, marketing to women and social media marketing. It is ranked in the AdAge Marketing Power 150 Blogs, listed on AllTop and has been named a BuyerZone Top 20 Business Marketing Blog of 2012.

In March 2009, she launched the Simple Marketing Now Blog, a Junta42 Top 42 Content Marketing Blog, about marketing with social media and content.

Whittemore is a columnist for *Floor Covering Weekly*, a Hearst publication, where she writes about the customer retail experience. She contributes to MarketingProfs and the Content Marketing Institute and is a frequent speaker on the topic of customer experience and marketing with social media at industry events. Most recently, she presented on the topic of Social Media for Lead Generation at the MarketingProfs B2B Forum 2011.

Christine is a member of the Floor Covering Institute, serves on the Columbia Business School's Alumni Club of New York Board of Directors and the Kinnelon Public Library Board of Trustees, and is a member of the Surfaces Education Advisory Council.

She earned her undergraduate degree from Smith College and her MBA from Columbia University.

Simple Marketing Now LLC

8 Sleepy Hollow Road

Kinnelon, NJ 07405

<http://SimpleMarketingNow.com>

973-283-2424

Info@SimpleMarketingNow.com

