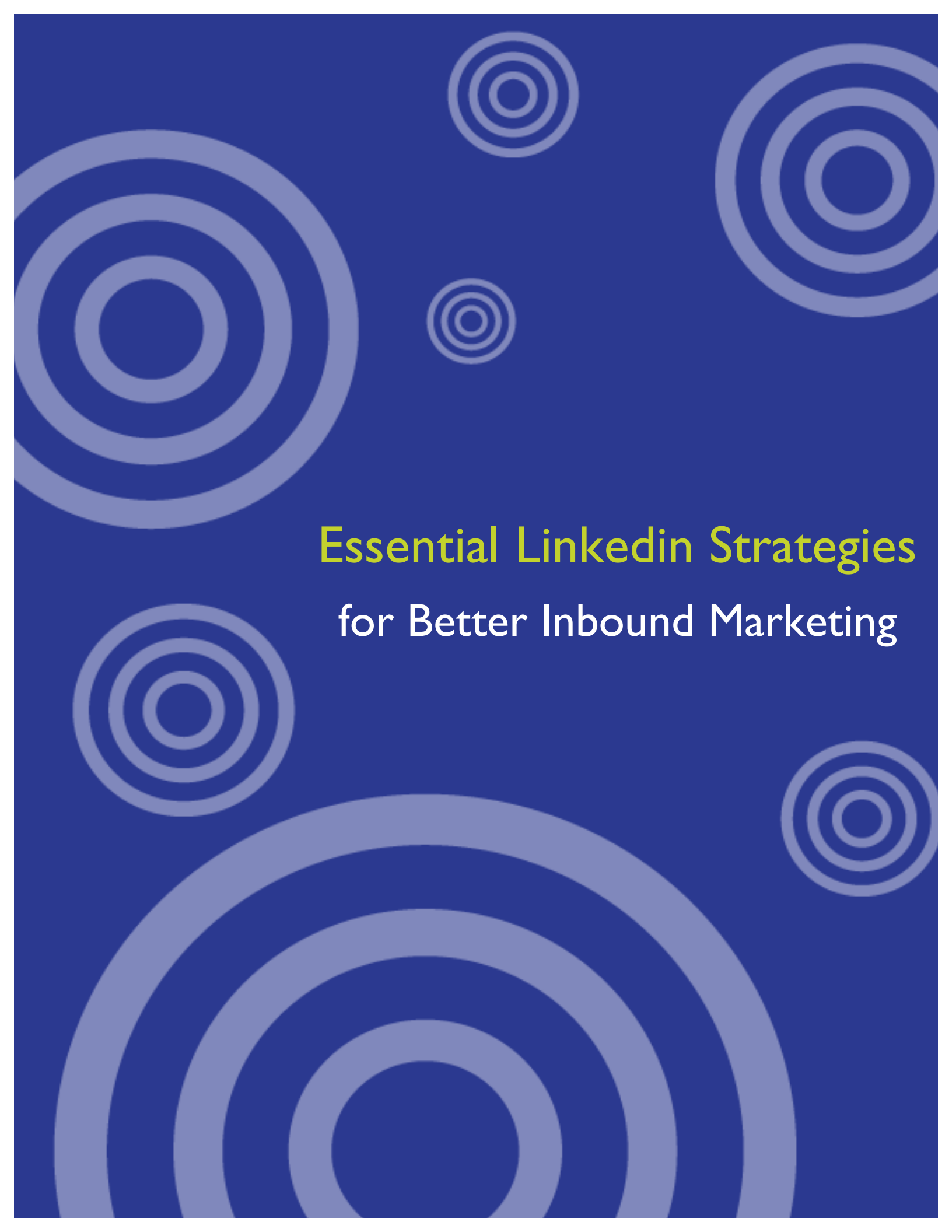




Essential LinkedIn Strategies for Better Inbound Marketing

About Concentric Marketing

Concentric Marketing is a UK based inbound Internet marketing agency and Hubspot Partner.

We help our clients be found online through search engine optimisation, marketing content development and social media communications. We then take a proven approach to convert these website visitors into leads and new customers.

We are delighted to bring you this eBook by renowned LinkedIn specialist, author and speaker, Victoria Ipri.

About the Author



Victoria Ipri is a high-calibre copywriter and LinkedIn specialist who has helped hundreds of small business owners across the globe achieve outstanding success with Internet marketing. She focuses on demystifying social media and LinkedIn marketing, using simple language and easy-to-apply guidance.

Victoria left the corporate marketing environment in 2006 to pursue her own Internet marketing business. Her passion lies in developing meaningful content and strategies to help small business owners make the most of today's hottest digital marketing opportunities.

Victoria holds a Masters certificate in Advanced Internet Marketing Strategies from the University of San Francisco and resides in suburban Philadelphia, PA.

She welcomes your questions and concerns about Internet Marketing in general and LinkedIn specifically. Learn more or follow Victoria at:

www.ModelloMedia.com

www.Linkedin.com/Victorialpri

www.Linkedin-Sanity.com

www.Twitter.com/Victorialpri

email: Victoria@ModelloMedia.com

Skype ID: victoriaipri

Contents

Introduction - The Whys of LinkedIn Marketing	6
A. Why Use LinkedIn?	7
Chapter 1: What is LinkedIn, Really?	8
A. Which Network is Right for You?	10
Chapter 2: 5 Steps to LinkedIn Success	11
A. Planning: Strategy & Online Media Action Plan	11
B. Niche Branding vs. Broad Industry Branding	13
C. Implementation: Profile Building & Planning	15
D. Implementation Without Fear	17
E. Conversation Starters	18
F. Who's Steering the Ship?	20
Chapter 3: Will You Manage Your Own LinkedIn Marketing?	21
A. "Can't I Just Build a Profile and Hope for the Best?"	22
Chapter 4: Engagement: Communication & Trust Building.....	24
A. The Right Way... And Wrong Way... to Connect.....	25
B. Listening - The Power Behind LinkedIn Marketing	27
C. 21 Tips for LinkedIn Engagement.....	28
Chapter 5: Tracking - Analytics & Free/Paid Tools	31
A. Customer Engagement: The Most Important Metric.....	32
B. 19 Cool Tools to Help You Listen	34
Chapter 6: Reputation Management.....	36
Chapter 7: LinkedIn, in Less Than An Hour a Day	39
A. Is One Hour a Day Enough?.....	39
B. 10 Suggestions for a Better LinkedIn Experience	41

Chapter 8: LinkedIn Profile Segments	43
A. The “Secret” to Optimizing Your LinkedIn Headline.....	44
B. Specialties	46
C. Recommendations	47
D. Status Updates.....	47
E. What to Post	48
F. Contact Information	48
G. Applications	49
H. Groups	51
I. Top Influencer	54
J. “ Answers”	55
K. Vanity URL (Public profile link)	57
L. Specific Steps for LinkedIn Invitations	58
Chapter 9: Company Pages	60
A. Finding Company Profiles	62
B. Creating Your Company Profile	63
C. More Profile Options	64
D. Improve Your Profile.....	64
E. Finding the Content You Need.....	65
Chapter 10: Daily Maintenance Steps	66
Conclusion - Are You Making Progress?	69

Introduction - The Whys of LinkedIn Marketing

“I don’t have enough time for LinkedIn!”

“Technology moves too fast for me!”

“I’m afraid to make a mistake.”

“How do I *do* it?”

Here is the essence of LinkedIn marketing: a relatively small investment of time and money can yield incredibly positive lead generation results...as well as building trust with your target audience, and a reputation for authenticity and excellence.

LinkedIn marketing is no magic wand. It’s up to you to make it work to your benefit. This means you can’t go charging into LinkedIn without knowing why you’re using the tool, and what you hope to accomplish, both in the short term and long term. To do it takes virtually nothing. To do it *right* requires education, time, commitment and perhaps a little cash to achieve the best results.

LinkedIn is overflowing with half-baked profiles, and the sad remnants of half-hearted attempts at engagement, which leave many members proclaiming, “LinkedIn just doesn’t work for me!”

In fact, it’s not the tool that’s broken. It’s the approach.

Setting up your profile is easy. Planning an engagement strategy is not.

A. WHY USE LINKEDIN?

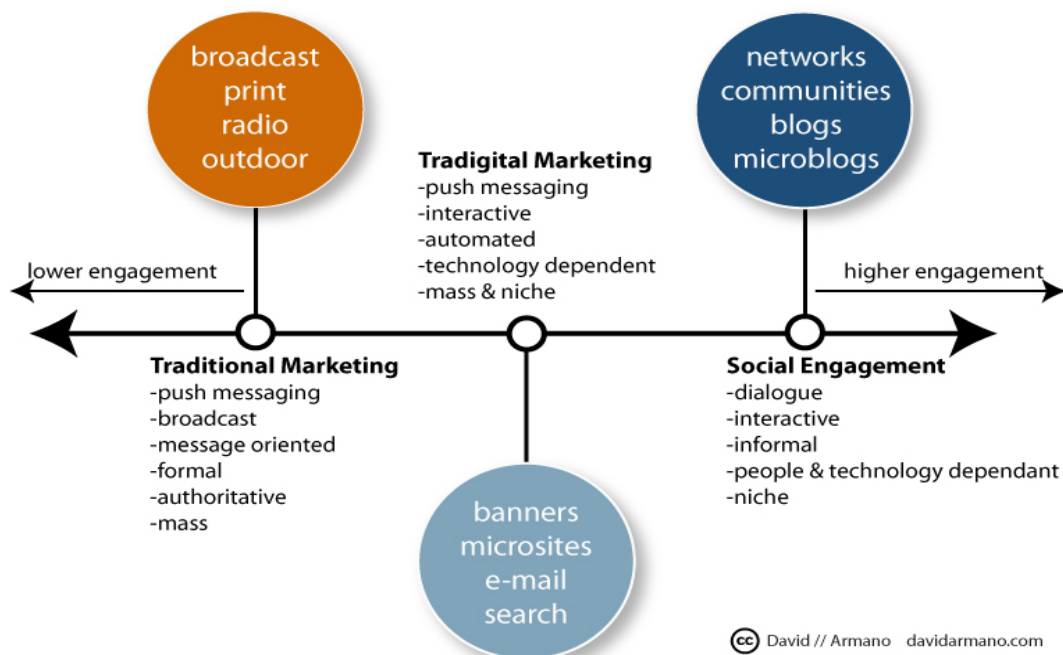
Do you want to:

- ...be more customer-responsive?
- ...enhance product or service awareness?
- ...incorporate customer feedback for product development?
- ...do a better job of branding?
- ...expand your online presence?
- ...become an industry expert?

These are all good reasons to engage on LinkedIn.

Emily Soares Proctor, writing about “5 Easy Steps to a Winning Social Media Plan”, states, “According to the recent 2010 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, most business owners can maintain a very respectable social media presence in six hours a week, including research and production time.”

Terrific! Now let’s learn how to do it even faster, get better results, and overcome common barriers to social media marketing success.



Chapter I: What is LinkedIn, Really?

LinkedIn is a platform where registered users can maintain a contact list of known and trusted business professionals. A member can invite other members to 'connect', or can invite non-members to join the site and connect.

The list of connections can be useful in:

- Building a trusted network three degrees deep. (Direct, 2nd and 3rd degree connections)
- Meeting, via member introduction, those with whom you may have difficulty connecting otherwise
- Job seeking or candidate seeking
- Identifying business opportunities
- Receiving recommendations from others
- Following connections
- Following the companies where your connections are employed
- Increasing awareness of your offer to targeted prospects

LinkedIn's "gated-access approach" demands professionals have a pre-existing relationship, or are mutual acquainted through a third party. This is very different from the Facebook approach.

LinkedIn was created in May 2003 by Reid Hoffman and key individuals from Paypal and socialnet.com. The company headquarters are in Mountain View, California, with offices in Omaha, Chicago, New York and London.

The current CEO of LinkedIn is Jeff Weiner, a former executive at Yahoo! Inc. Reid Hoffman is now Chairman of the Board.

LinkedIn currently boasts about 100 million members, and claims a new member joins every second. About 50% of members are from the United States. Approximately 11 million are from Europe. India is the fastest growing country. Even China is getting in on the act.

According to Bloomberg, LinkedIn was valued at more than 2 billion dollars at the time of this writing. <http://bit.ly/bxOEeT>

Point to Remember:

**Your LinkedIn success
relies on properly
defining and targeting
your audience; then,
being where they are,
sharing and providing the
right information at the**

A. WHICH NETWORK IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

You can't build a house with an egg beater, no matter how much time or money you spend. Make sure you've chosen the right network for your business model to ensure your hard work is not in vain. For some companies, the B2C (business to consumer) approach of Facebook works best. LinkedIn is best for professional services providers in the B2B (business-to-business) sector.

This reality is slowly changing as new technologies emerge. Recently, Ray Brown, founder of Clienteerhub, used the phrase B2Me...indicating a cross functional, two way space where customer influence reigns supreme. Ray recently said to me, "...it's not about short term revenue. It's...a whole of business concept rather than purely marketing."

In their ebook, *How to Generate Leads Using LinkedIn*, HubSpot suggests, "The starting point for using LinkedIn (or, for that matter, any social media tool) is to ask yourself, "Is this tool right for my business?" After all, just because everyone else has jumped on the bandwagon doesn't always mean that it's right for you."

Chapter 2: Five Steps to LinkedIn Success

Marketing is storytelling, and nowhere can you enjoy the opportunity to tell your story more effectively than with social media marketing. Companies who have built great communities online -- Starbucks on Facebook, Zappos on Twitter, Graco on Flickr, The Personal Branding Network on LinkedIn, and Dell everywhere -- have figured out:

- *Who* they are (in terms of public perception)
- How to capture market attention
- *Why* consumers should invest in the company story

What's *your* company story? What do you believe in? With what traits do you want your audience to associate you? When I introduced The Confident Copywriter brand, I did so because I was frustrated by the “make-six-figures-by- next-Tuesday” hype so typical of the copywriting industry at that time (2006). I felt I had uncovered a weak spot, and that the ‘average’ copywriter would respond to my ‘real’ viewpoint.

Turns out, I was right. The Confident Copywriter was a big hit, and a jumping off point for me to expand on other topics today.

No doubt, you've got a story to tell. Let's talk about how to tell it.

A. PLANNING: STRATEGY & ONLINE MEDIA ACTION PLAN

What is the best way to begin planning your LinkedIn marketing program? By understanding *why* you've chosen LinkedIn in the first place. (“Because everyone else is doing it” is not a reason.)

LinkedIn is nothing if not a superior lead generation tool. And no business can survive without quality leads. A recent MarketingSherpa report highlights results of a survey: “B2B marketers are more worried about generating quality leads than creating new demand for their products and services.

Perhaps marketers in 2010 are just more cognizant of the demand gen issue within their organizations and understand that without quality leads, sales cannot be successful.

Trends show the majority of B2B organizations are increasing their marketing budgets for inbound marketing tactics in order to generate more - and better quality - leads for their sales teams.”

Generally speaking, your LinkedIn program should center on these goals:

1. Building buzz around a brand, product or service
2. Better overall public brand awareness
3. Increased traffic to enhance SEO efforts
4. Increased blog subscribers to build a stronger community
5. More leads, and better quality leads
6. Simple monitoring of public brand opinions/feedback
7. More sales, and higher revenues

Let’s say Joe the Businessman wakes up one morning with a thought: “My company is way behind. Our competition is killing us! We need new customers...and fast. I better start using that there social media thing everyone is jabbering about.”

So he logs onto LinkedIn, builds a basic profile, joins a couple of groups, and...waits. And waits.

Soon, he contacts me, complaining he “did what he was supposed to, but social media just doesn’t work for me.” (True story, by the way. Name changed to protect the clueless.)

Joe has effectively failed. He *didn’t* do what he was supposed to do. He did the bare minimum, had no plan, no objective, no engagement, no understanding of LinkedIn etiquette...heck, if Joe *did* succeed, it would be a miracle! Moral of the story: you’ve *got to* have a plan. Granted, it’s not the fun part; but it *is* a necessary part

B. NICHE BRANDING VS. BROAD INDUSTRY BRANDING

The Internet has made it possible for every business owner -- even those with very specific interests -- to find a like-minded audience, build a core following, and enjoy a profitable business. Forums, blogs and websites abound, catapulted to success within a small community of people interested in the author's unique micro-view. This is great, because it demonstrates how anyone can begin an online business with nothing more than subject interest.

When people say the Internet has leveled the playing field, they aren't kidding! No longer must you compete with the likes of WalMart or Target to be deemed "successful" in your niche.

On a broader scale...let's say you are a certified CPA, or a personal injury attorney. How might you successfully niche yourself in such a large industry? Focusing on a specific, narrower market is the way to begin. Developing resources within that smaller target market adds value to your services.

Ebooks, reports, public speaking, free or paid seminars, and community involvement targeted to the interests of small groups helps to build expert status. From this vantage point, it is easy to see how the planning phase of your LinkedIn marketing efforts can be slimmed down, helping you to actually become *more* effective in your market, streamlining the job of planning, implementation and promotion...a faster route to success.

This is not to say that you've got to stay in that spot forever. Change, growth and innovation are vital to the future of your business.

To successfully market yourself on LinkedIn, concentrate on areas where you can be *your* most powerful and influential. For example, I'm trained and educated in search engine optimization (SEO,) conversion rate optimization (CRO), and copywriting.

While I still do a good deal of copywriting for my clients, I find SEO far too technical for my right-brained self. I prefer to market myself more broadly - as an Internet marketing specialist with talents in several key areas, including SEO and CRO. Surely you know of janitorial companies who clean only commercial buildings, realtors who sell only high-end properties, markets

selling only gourmet treats, copywriters who focus only on whitepapers...these companies find their unique power - and attract their audiences - by focusing on what they do best, and concentrating in those areas where their real interests and talents lie.

If you are working hard to market yourself on LinkedIn and getting nowhere fast, you may be trying to “fit a square peg into a round hole”...i.e., missing your key areas of interest, neglecting to hang out in appropriate communities, or failing to connect with likeminded people. It shouldn't be that hard! If it is, something is off kilter.

These tips will get you started:

- Get help optimizing your profile. I can help you for as little as \$50.
- Rewrite your summary. Don't simply regurgitate your resume. Let your personality shine!
- Complete your profile 100%.
- Take a new picture if necessary. Full face, smiling, looking at your audience...You *do* want to do more business, don't you?
- Most importantly -- step away from your profile and get active! Join LinkedIn groups, share insights, offer to help others succeed...this is where true engagement and lead generation begins.

C. IMPLEMENTATION: PROFILE BUILDING & PLANNING

I have heard business owners remark, “We really don’t have a specific market.” Huh? Let’s think about this for a moment.

We’ll use the example of dirt.

You could say everyone needs dirt; therefore, the ‘dirt seller’ has no specific market. But I beg to differ. People who enjoy gardening need dirt more than people who enjoy cycling. Landscape companies need dirt more than opera singers. Construction companies need dirt more than a retail store owner. Every product has a target market. Your job is to find it!

Today, the focus is on the customer. When you determine what your audience wants, as compared with what you *think* they want, you are closer to success.

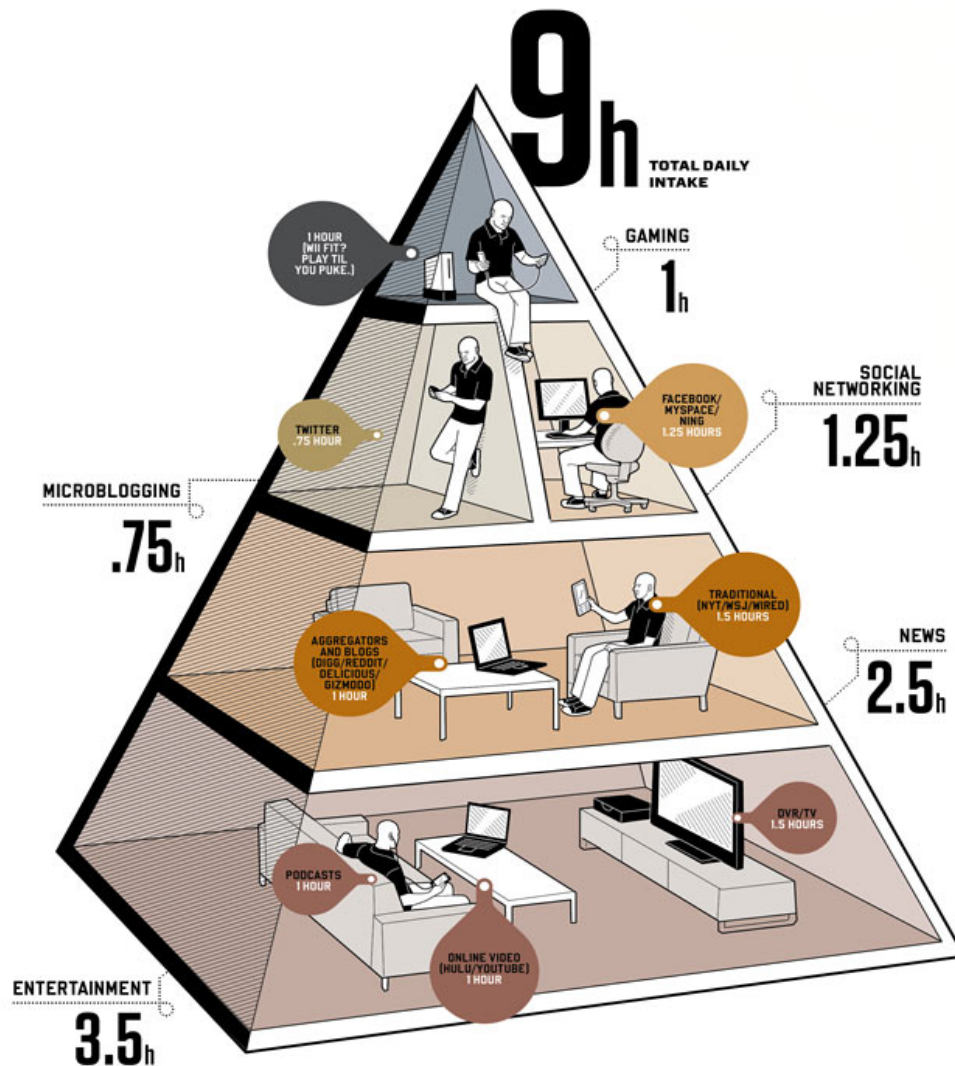
McDonald’s is another good example. Everyone needs to eat, right? But McDonald’s customers want specific value: speed, affordability, and convenience....things you might not find in a typical sit-down restaurant. As more people have become concerned with avoiding McDonald’s high fat, high calorie, high sodium, low fiber menu choices, the company has created ‘healthier’ choices. But let’s be real -- the company isn’t known for its salads, and never will be. However, I challenge you to buy a cheeseburger at any McDonald’s anywhere in the nation, and find one that tastes ‘different’. It won’t happen.

How do they do it? The organization knows what a McDonald’s cheeseburger *is*, and what every customer *expects*, no matter where they are geographically located. McDonald’s doesn’t confuse its customers. Instead, the organization respects the customer by maintaining a consistent formula from week to week, despite the occasional foray into SaladLand.

How can you give *your* buying audience what they want?

- Interact, and do it appropriately
- Exceed expectations
- Keep your promises

- Respect the customer...but 1st, you've got to *know* your customer
- Ready to move on to the fun part: engagement? We're almost there.



[Source: <http://bit.ly/ij2Bn7>]

D. IMPLEMENTATION WITHOUT FEAR

The word *implementation* is defined as “the realisation of an application, or execution of a plan, idea, model, design, specification, standard, algorithm, or policy.” Implementation, therefore, requires forethought:

- Choose the correct social media channel for your brand image. Building and maintaining your presence “everywhere” will also dilute your presence everywhere, costing money and time and building frustration.
- Carefully decide who will execute your LinkedIn marketing plan.
- Since the success of your campaign hinges on quality, get help as needed. Don’t be afraid to hire a professional. You go to a doctor when you are sick, take your noisy car to the mechanic, and hire a reputable roofer when your roof leaks, don’t you? When it comes to your success on LinkedIn, remember: your goal is not to save money. Your goal is to get results.
- Content rules! LinkedIn is a great tool, but humans make purchasing decisions, and humans read words. Engage others with relevant, interesting content.
- Address the needs of your target audience. This requires knowing your audience - where to find them, how to engage with them and what they want.
- Remember, you *are* being watched. It can be exciting to find your name mentioned in connection with a hot topic; however, with great power comes great responsibility.
- The larger you following, the more carefully you must promote yourself.
- Not every consumer is looking for freebies. Again, knowing your audience can go a long way toward creating the programs and benefits

that will build a strong community of followers and make you the expert among them.

E. CONVERSATION STARTERS

Consider the needs of your LinkedIn community of followers, as well as your company's short- and long-term goals. Here are a few conversation starters:

- Company or brand information establishes value and demonstrates 'personality'
- Fun information doesn't ask the reader to do anything except enjoy!
- Press releases
- Event creation: online, offline or hybrid
- Asking for or responding to feedback
- Coverage of industry news or related world events
- Individual recognition (birthdays, promotions, achievements, etc.)
- Customer service matters
- Surveys, quizzes, polls
- Sharing a meaningful quote...another 'just for fun' item
- New software developments that make our lives easier

Remember:

- Stay focused on meaningful, relevant, useful messaging
- Be present, i.e., don't be robotic. Let your personality shine through!
- Be genuine

Followers are born when people react in the moment to something meaningful you've done or said. Gone are the days of the self-serving, self-promoting brand message. Today, *consumers* tell *companies* what they want, and companies *listen*...because they recognize that consumers have many, many choices, and can switch brands in a heartbeat.

Ensure that your LinkedIn efforts offer participants a fun, engaging experience. When I first began my LinkedIn Group, *Social Media for the Clueless*, I was instantly messaged, privately and publicly, about the use of the word “clueless”...it was “unwise”, I was “alienating potential members”, I was “demeaning people”, and so on.

Of course, the group name was a tongue-in-cheek reference, swiped from the title of my first ebook, but not everyone got it. (Such criticism can sting, but it can also create a very effective forum for discussion.) All I knew was that the name resonated with me, and I believed it would resonate with others. Within a few days, we had surpassed 500 members and had 63 discussions going! And we’re still going strong.

I offer this example to demonstrate how turning conventional thinking on its ear, having a little fun, and offering a different (not abusive, or offensive) viewpoint can stir things up just enough to get a positive reaction.

And yes, it’s ok to have fun on LinkedIn...just not the kind of fun that requires putting a lampshade on your head (visit Facebook for that!)

F. WHO'S STEERING THE SHIP?

Every LinkedIn marketing program needs a captain. If you work alone, you're it. If you work within a team environment, team members can provide input, but only one person can steer the ship.

LinkedIn marketing is time consuming. There's no way around it. In the meantime, your company is pursuing many other objectives...like making money.

Digital branding expert Brian Solis states in *The 10 Stages of Social Media Business Integration*, "The shift from simple response to purposeful, strategic communication will be mutually beneficial. It is in this stage that we can truly produce captivating content and messages. In order to hold it, we have to give the audience something to believe in — something that moves them. The conversations that bind us form a human algorithm that serves as the pulse of awareness, trustworthiness, and emotion."

Implementation speaks directly to establishing a brand-worthy persona. Your LinkedIn activity must not only have a purpose (the plan), but must drive consumers and shape the brand message (implementation).

Perhaps you've heard of the "brand makeover"... as a company creates a more vibrant community, the landing page or website becomes hopelessly out of date.

The brand makeover redefines the brand's *raison d'être*: customer engagement...thereby ensuring a far more satisfying customer experience.

Chapter 3: Who Manages LinkedIn Marketing?

If your company consists of two or more people, decide who is responsible for content updates. Coming up with regular, relevant content, updating that content across many groups, remaining socially significant, responding to questions and comments...it's a busy job, even when the right tools are used. In larger organizations, the marketing department or communications department may handle these tasks. When you work alone, it all falls on you, unless you choose to outsource all or part of your LinkedIn marketing to a specialist.

Regardless, communication is a critical component of the implementation process. Bottom line: if you can't handle it, get help. Barter, pay...whatever you need to get it done.

If you think your employees might handle this task, don't pass the job off to the first warm body that enters the room.

Whoever manages your LinkedIn marketing becomes the 'face', and voice, of your organization. It is a very important job.

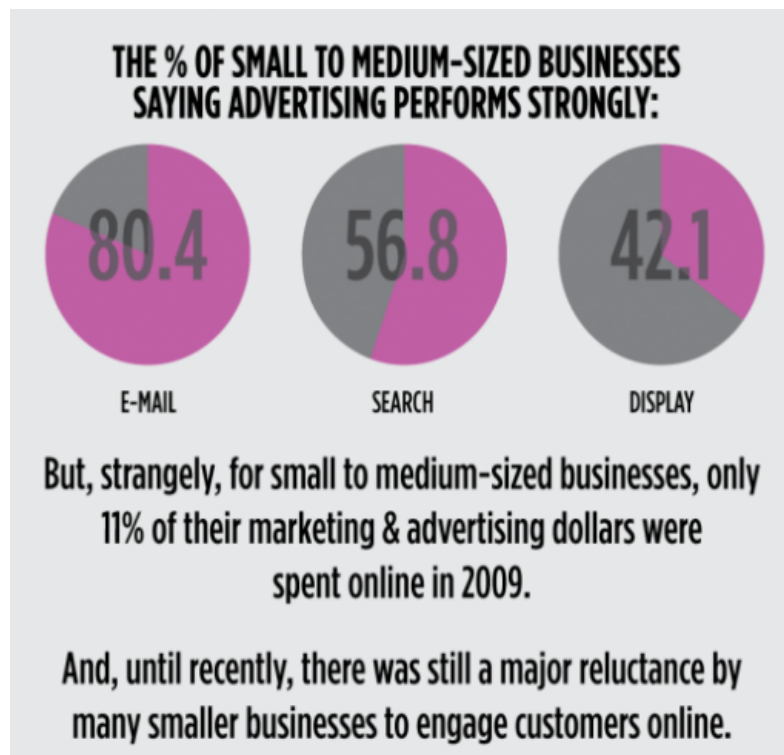
A. “CAN’T I JUST BUILD A PROFILE AND HOPE FOR THE BEST?”

In short, no.

The most effective LinkedIn marketing revolves around shared experiences, valuable connections and meaningful information, building a company’s presence over time, via community building, listening, and honest engagement.

“The thing about social media is that it’s always new, and as such, these stages represent a moment in time. They will continue to evolve and expand with new technologies and experiences.

In the end, social media is a privilege and a tool — one more opportunity to run a more meaningful and relevant business.” (*Brian Solis*)



There is far more to LinkedIn marketing than building a profile and simply hoping for the best. One is proactive; the other, reactive.

Luis Ramos, CEO of The Network, says creating an effective LinkedIn marketing strategy is complex because “it includes not only looking inside the organization to establish appropriate practices, usage policies and content parameters, but it also includes looking outside the organization to determine the proper degree of engagement.”

Chapter 4: Engagement

First and foremost, LinkedIn requires that people connect, and via invitation only. One must invite; the other must accept. If you invite a non-member, he or she must become a member to accept the invitation.

The person accepting your direct invitation becomes a “first degree” connection. LinkedIn strongly suggests you thoughtfully select whom you will invite, choosing only those you know and trust, i.e., family, friends, current or former classmates or colleagues. Elsewhere in this book we discuss the value of stepping outside this tight community to expand your presence. What you choose to do is your decision.

LI assumes that, at some point, you will request a recommendation from a first degree connection, or vice-versa. This is why quality is far more important than quantity. Sure, it’s fun to brag about having thousands of connections. However, unlike Facebook, LinkedIn network members are not *collected*; they’re *selected*.

Additionally, recommendations can improve page rank within the LI network. A higher rank might mean enhanced connections and better lead generation. Higher rank refers to where you fall on a list which is produced when a member runs a keyword search. Just as in Google, most members don’t look beyond the 1st page of results to find what they want. This means...you’ve got to be there.

A. THE RIGHT WAY...AND WRONG WAY...TO CONNECT

In 2008, LinkedIn advised that connecting with anyone and everyone can be “counterproductive.”

Today, this myth lingers on. The profiles of many members languish, because they really aren’t sure how to connect, or even if they should.

While it is true that your LI network should primarily be based on those you know and trust, it would be foolish to purposely avoid connecting with anyone else.

Lewis Howes, author of *LinkedWorking*, explains, “It pains me to see when people only have fewer than 100 connections, and they think that having a “small trusted network” is the way to go. That’s a joke, and those with that mindset are going to be asking themselves why their message isn’t spreading to the world and why they haven’t achieved their marketing goals.”

You never know from where an opportunity or big breakthrough might originate. If you share ideas only with those you know and don’t branch out to connect with new people, then you will be exposed to a limited number of opportunities, within a limited network.

Regarding how to connect, undisputed marketing genius Chris Brogan says, “This is where LinkedIn wishes I’d shut up. I have a different view than they do on connecting. I’ll connect with anyone. I don’t see much in the way of negativity to connecting via the service. I think that by my connecting with people, I’m opening up potential networks so that people can see and reach out to more like-minded people.

I do sometimes turn down connection forwarding requests, because I have some very high profile connections who might not feel the way I do, but for the most part, I can’t see anything wrong with making the offer.”

I agree. Certainly, quality trumps quantity. I don’t advocate connecting for the sake of bragging rights. “My network is bigger than yours” is just silly.

If we follow the logic of six degrees of separation (upon which LinkedIn was conceived) it makes sense:

“Six degrees of separation (also referred to as the "Human Web") refers to the idea that everyone is on average approximately six steps away from any other person on Earth, so that a chain of, "a friend of a friend" statements can be made, on average, to connect any two people in six steps or fewer.”

For companies embarking on LinkedIn marketing for the first time, The Wall Street Journal suggests addressing:

- How LinkedIn will integrate with the company’s core strategy
- Who will be the ‘voice’ of the company
- How much time will be devoted to engaging in LinkedIn tasks
- How quickly the company will evaluate its success
- Who else will be on the team when it’s time to put out fires?

B. LISTENING: THE POWER BEHIND LINKEDIN MARKETING

The most important social media action is listening. Unlike traditional marketing, LinkedIn marketing demands that you provide your audience with the resources, products and services *they* want most. To find out what that is, you've got to listen.

Case in Point: I recently worked with a client who, after thoroughly questioning me about the rules of engagement, still seemed perplexed.

Sure enough, a few days later, she was very proud to present to me her first "discussion": not a discussion at all, but a call to arms, a sales pitch: "Learn more about this amazing home-based business opportunity!"

Needless to say, the group administrator quickly moved the post to Promotions, where it belonged. My client simply didn't get it. It was back to the drawing board, along with a lesson on opening her ears.

Lisa Barone, co-founder and Chief Branding Officer for Outspoken Media, said, "Your job...is to listen, to help and to get your message out only when appropriate. For every 10-15 messages where you help someone else, you get to include one that promotes yourself. That's it. [LinkedIn] isn't about you. It's about your customers and connecting with them so that when they have a need for X, they remember they have a friend...who specializes in that."

Certainly, engagement demands good (read: meaningful, relevant) conversation. However, online conversations are devoid of the usual conversational markers like body language or facial expression. What else might you do to ensure your message is correctly perceived?

C. 21 TIPS FOR LINKEDIN ENGAGEMENT

The following list was created by Brian Solis:

- 1.** Discover all relevant communities of interest and observe the choices, challenges, impressions, and wants of the people within each network.
- 2.** Don't just participate solely in your own domains. Participate where your presence is advantageous and mandatory.
- 3.** Determine the identity, character, and personality of the brand and match it to the persona of the individuals representing it online.
- 4.** Establish a point of contact who is ultimately responsible for identifying, trafficking, or responding to all things that can affect brand perception.
- 5.** As in customer service, representatives require training to learn how to proactively and reactively respond across multiple scenarios. Don't just put the person familiar with social networking in front of the brand.
- 6.** Embody the attributes you wish to portray and instill. Operate by a code of conduct.
- 7.** Observe the behavioral cultures within each network and adjust your outreach accordingly.
- 8.** Assess pain points, frustrations, and also those of contentment in order to establish meaningful connections.
- 9.** Become a true participant in each community you wish to activate. Move beyond marketing and sales.

- 10.** Don't speak at audiences through canned messages. Introduce value, insight and direction with each engagement.
- 11.** Empower your representatives to offer rewards and resolutions.
- 12.** Don't just listen and placate — act. *Do something.*
- 13.** Ensure external activities are supported by a comprehensive infrastructure to address situations and adapt to market conditions and demands.
- 14.** Learn from each engagement and provide a path within the company to adapt and improve products and services.
- 15.** Consistently create, contribute, and reinforce service and value.
- 16.** Earn connections through collaboration and empower advocacy.
- 17.** Don't get lost in translation. Ensure your communication and intent is clear and that your involvement maps to objectives created for the social web.
- 18.** Establish and nurture beneficial relationships online and in the real world as long as doing so is important to your business.
- 19.** “Un-campaign” and create ongoing programs that keep you connected to day-to-day engagement.
- 20.** “Un-market” by becoming a resource to your communities.
- 21.** Give back, reciprocate, and recognize notable contributions from participants in your communities.

Point to Remember:

The most important indicator, especially in the early stages, is participation. An engaged connection is a valuable connection.

Follow Brian's advice to answer every question you have about what to do, how to do it, or how to say it. When you're not sure how to proceed, come back to the rules. The answers you seek lie among these 21 points.

Chapter 5: Tracking - Analytics & Tools

Tracking is the process of measuring LinkedIn marketing progress and success. LinkedIn offers tools to help you do this. Much has been written about tracking social media efforts, determining ROI, and other topics which often scare corporations concerned about privacy, reputation and so forth. Good thing LinkedIn makes it fairly easy, via a variety of tools and stats.

No worries. When first starting out, tracking is simple: an increase in followers and a healthier rate of engagement means you're doing it right.

- If people are drawn to your comments and content...
- If people choose to follow you...
- If most comments are positive...
- If private requests for help, advice, opinions, joint venturing rise...

You're doing it right! Eventually, you'll want to track:

- Traffic
- Interaction
- Leads
- Engagement
- Public opinion about your company or brand

Side Note: Give your efforts two to three months to take hold. Others must trust you before they'll engage with you. Don't try to push the process. Let it happen naturally.

In a moment, we'll discuss some great tracking tools, even if you're an army of one with a zero budget.

A. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: THE MOST IMPORTANT METRIC

Whether engagement takes place online or off, your business will improve, grow and succeed when you listen to your customers. Engaged customers are more receptive to your brand message, convert more rapidly, buy more regularly and spread your message via word of mouth - your own sales army!

Today, customer engagement happens, in part, when you provide relevant content. Note I did not simply say 'content'...*relevancy* is key to engaging with your audience. What is the most important kind of relevant content you can provide?

Content others in your community want. A few years ago, keywords were the most important thing on the planet. Keywords, however, are not very "community relevant."

Here's why:

Typically, the business owner builds a website, displays his products/services, and optimizes the site with appropriate keywords. The customer goes to Google (or another search engine), types in descriptive words and phrases and, voila!

A list of relevant websites pops up. The search engine has already done the heavy lifting, determining relevancy and displaying those sites for the customer.

Social media, however, has enormously impacted keyword-based search. Business owners must do more than build a website and hope for the best. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, et. al, have shifted search (and its more vital cousin, engagement) away from keywords and onto content relevancy. The only sure way to reach your customers today is via authentic engagement...providing the right content at the right time.

Crowd Conversion founder Robert Grant explains, "It's not a question of whether we're going to adopt this. It's going to adopt us. You cannot avoid being affected by these changes. [Will you] harness this...or sit back and wait

for everybody else, those who get it, to jump in and dominate the space....We need to start engaging customers in the here and now.”

Meaningful engagement with your customer base means you can:

1. Spend less money seeking new customers
2. Increase profits
3. Reduce costs
4. Enhance efficiency

Isn't this what it's all about?

Point to Remember:

Engagement stimulates word of mouth, in turn impacting page rank. Woe to the marketer who hasn't taken time to build relationships with his audience.

B. 19 TOOLS TO HELP YOU LISTEN

Tool	Free or Paid?	How It Helps You
Google Alerts & Social Mention	Free	Monitor social media conversations across videos, images, comments, & social bookmarking
Google BlogSearch	Free	Cool tool for searching relevant blogs by topic/keyword
Google Insights	Free	Compare search volume patterns across specific regions, categories, time frames & properties.
How Sociable?	Free, with a paid upgrade	Measure your brand's visibility on the <i>social</i> web
Monitter	Free	Web-based tool to monitor Twitter in real-time for mentions of any words or phrases
Omgili	Free, & cool buzz graph	Measure and compare the buzz of any term
SamePoint (in beta)	Free	Conversation search engine -- see what people are buzzing about
Trenderr	Paid, 14 day free trial	Real time social and digital media tracking
TweetGrid	Free	Twitter search dashboard that updates in real time
Trendpedia	Free	Search for the most relevant blogs on any given topic
BlogPulse	Free (Founded by	Automated trend discovery system analyzes & reports on daily activity in the

	Neilsen)	blogosphere
Alltop.com	Free	Finds and reach communities and influencers related to your audiences' interests
Radian6 and/or SM2	Paid	Radian6 and Alterian's SM2 offer great analytics, intuitive interfaces, and many valuable features
PR Newswire's Social Media Metrics	Paid	Monitor, analyze & measure impact of conversations re: your organization, brand, spokesperson or competitor
CrazyEgg.com	Paid	Website visitor behavior insights & conversion optimization using heat maps
Addict-O-Matic	Free	Visual of brand, personality, or meme buzz real-time placements. Instantly creates a custom page with the latest buzz by topic
Compete.com	Paid	Web traffic analysis service publishes approx. number of global visitors to the top 1,000,000 web sites in the world.
Yahoo Pipes	Free	A powerful composition tool to aggregate, manipulate, & mashup web content
Dandy ID Social Rank	Free basic or Pro account	Find out how you stack up in social media

Chapter 6: Reputation Management

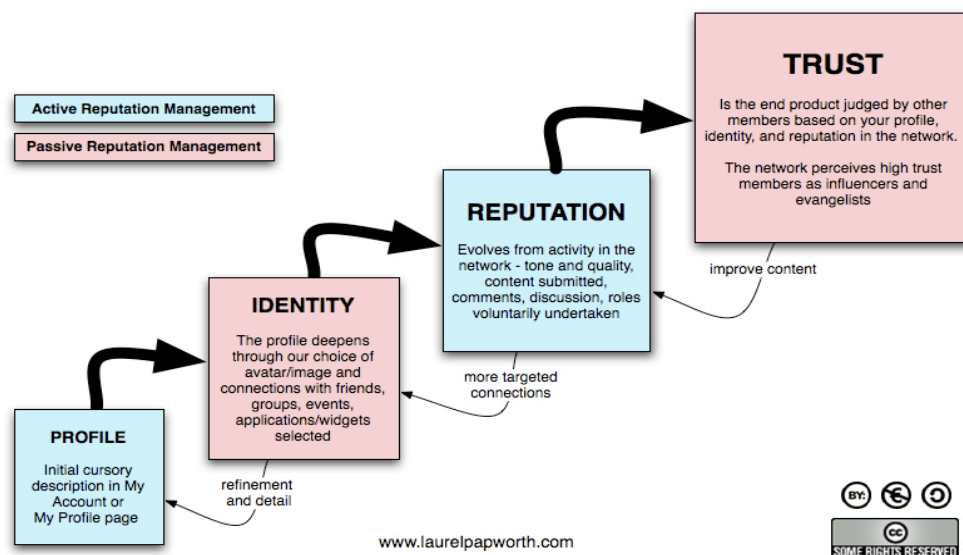
Once you become familiar with and adept at managing your online presence (and as your universe of followers expands) reputation management may become crucial.

Online reputation management is a means of controlling public information about you or your company. With so many tools designed to search, aggregate and disseminate all types of information, reputation management is quickly gaining traction.

The goal of reputation monitoring is excellent public relations. Nathan Baker, founder of the U.K.'s Reputation 24/7, says, "...reputation is the most valuable asset a person or business has. Reputation is not built overnight; it takes great effort, hard work and years to build it. But it only takes one unhappy customer, employee or malicious competitor to ruin it."

SOCIAL WEB - REPUTATION MANAGEMENT CYCLES

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Consider eBay, a pioneer of consumer feedback. Ebay allows buyer and seller ratings based on customer feedback. This helps others make important buying decisions. Today, we take this system for granted but it was once a revolutionary concept.

Of course, there is more to reputation than mitigating or removing negative comments or feedback. Reputation monitoring and management also:

- Improves customer satisfaction
- Increases brand perception
- Gains insights about competitors
- Maintains shareholder value
- Increases understanding of the relationship between user generated content and traditional media
- Provides early warning systems for reactive and defensive PR
- Reduces marketing spend
- Helps identify gaps for products and services
- Enhances insight into online networks and keywords and key phrases found in user-generated content

[Source: Wikipedia]

Point to Remember:

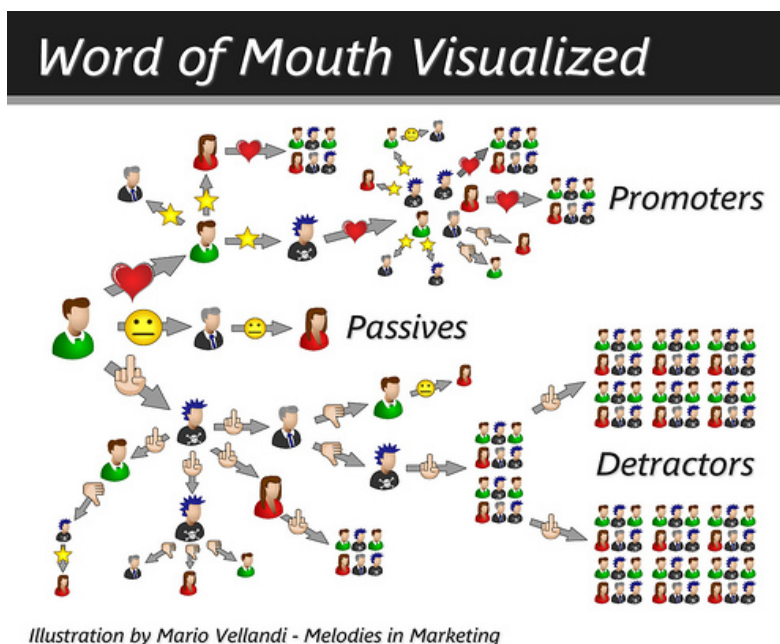
If you have a website (especially e-commerce), blog, landing pages, multiple social media profiles...you can bet someone, somewhere is talking about you. Be aware, and ready to quickly correct negative issues.

Elixir Systems offers an excellent [.pdf](#) on this topic. If it interests you to dig deeper, I highly recommend it. In part, this document advises developing a manual 'early warning system' using Internet monitoring tools to gather intelligence and assess potential trends. The tools suggested include:

- Setting up Google/Yahoo Alerts to find your brand in the news
- Using sites like Feedster and Technorati to watch your brand in blogs
- Customizing RSS readers for brand tracking
- Tracking brand, company and product names, key employee names
- Monitoring industry-related sites

Elixir Systems suggests tracking additional information “such as competing brands and organizations, industry terms, as well as general industry news.”

Not quite ready for reputation management? Simply get involved in the conversation. Your active involvement is a key influencer.



Your participation can affect what others think. Lead brand conversations and help others see your company does care about public perception.

CHAPTER 7: LINKEDIN IN AN HOUR A DAY

I am often asked, “Where do you find the time to be so active on LinkedIn? I can’t seem to even get started.”

This is usually followed by some variation on the question, “Does LinkedIn really help you? I mean, have you gotten any *real* business from it?”

I hear the question as, “Is all of this effort worth it?”

And my answer is, “Would I be chatting with you now if it weren’t?”

A. IS ONE HOUR A DAY ENOUGH?

Are you competent in your current job? Were you as skilled on the first day or first week as you are now? No doubt, you improved with practice.

All the common excuses for not participating in LinkedIn marketing boil down to two issues: information overload and time.

So much information is available (and often, the advice is conflicting), and our days are so jam-packed, it is easier to let it go. It is easier to convince yourself your business can survive without LinkedIn. Information overload also creates fear...“Which method is right for me?” “What if I goof up?” “What if I make a fool of myself?”

Good news. You don’t *have to* do it all! By performing specific actions in specific ways, and ignoring the noise, you’ll have plenty of time to market your products and services on LinkedIn.

In fact, you can cut that hour down to 20-30 minutes a day and still get great results. I know, because I do it.

Of course, you *can* do it all if you really want to: build hundreds of profiles, carry on meaningless online conversations, knock yourself out doing research, ignore tools that can make your job easier...basically, run around like a virtual headless chicken.

There are several hundred social media sites in existence. I hear about new ones each day; don't you? The community building concept has taken off in a huge way. It seems we are just beginning to grasp its real depth and power.

But you don't have to be active everywhere to enjoy the benefits. Anyone who says you do is simply dispensing bad advice. A serious focus on lead generation requires a type of narrow thinking, and this is what LinkedIn helps you achieve best.

So, first, take a deep breath. Once you become skilled, feel free to go nuts! But don't set yourself up for failure right out of the gate by trying to be all things to all people.

Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn, suggests that the best use of LinkedIn is the opportunity to do "small goods" for others. Congratulate contacts when they've got good news, craft a quick answer to an industry question or "like" an article shared by a connection. The best networking is mutually beneficial. Help others and they're likely to help you back. Everything else is just icing on the cake.

Follow Reid's advice, and your LinkedIn marketing results - and your presence - will improve organically. Above all, remember your manners. There are people on the other side of that monitor! Stay positive, be polite, and behave authentically. Personalize invitations and requests for recommendations. Respond graciously in discussion groups. LinkedIn is a powerful professional tool: if you wouldn't say it or do it in public, don't do it anywhere.

B. 10 SUGGESTIONS FOR A BETTER LINKEDIN EXPERIENCE

Guy Kawasaki, co-founder of Alltop.com, offers these 10 suggestions:

Acquire new customers through online recommendations and word of mouth.	Ask...your happy clients to write you a recommendation, which will be published on your LinkedIn profile and will be broadcast to their entire LinkedIn network.
Keep in touch with people who care most about your business.	...keep your business alive in the minds of the people who care most... LinkedIn is effective for two reasons: the business intent of LinkedIn users and fewer status updates, which mean you stay on top of mind. <i>[Don't forget to]</i> sync your LinkedIn and Twitter accounts.
Find the right vendors to outsource services you're not an expert on.	...find and vet vendors through the network of your peers...trade services with your vendor connections on LinkedIn; sort of a mutual referral system.
Build your industry network—online and in person.	Search LinkedIn's Groups directory to find industry associations and networks.
Get answers to tough business questions with a little help from your real friends.	Small business owners deal with challenging questions on a slew of topics each day...find answers to those vexing questions quickly by tapping into the wisdom of your network
Win new business by answering questions in your area of expertise.	Use the many forums...to share...knowledge you've gained...win new business...find prospective clients. Prospective customers will find your answers when they use LinkedIn's

	advanced Answers search....a great way to soft pitch your skills and expertise.
Raise funding.	...find mentors or potential investors...Once you're connected, your participation on LinkedIn...may even cause them to consider investing in your small business.
Network with peers in your industry for repeat business referrals.	...these partners are your best source of referrals [and] repeat business....you're sure to find a relevant group to network.
Convince potential customers of your expertise by sharing unique blog content.	Small businesses smart enough to create unique content on their expertise should link to it from their LinkedIn profiles.
Keep your friends close and your competition closer.	Over 150,000 companies have a company profile on LinkedIn, the "public profile" for companies. These pages surface key stats on companies; recent hires as well movers and shakers. Not only do company profiles give you unique insight into your competition, they also give you an opportunity to stumble upon potential hires by browsing through company pages.

Chapter 8: LinkedIn Profile segments

In the world of advertising, everyone knows that the right advertisement makes a tremendous difference. It's not enough to display your logo during the Super Bowl – successful ads attract attention, highlight product benefits, and communicate brand attributes.

The same is true for your LinkedIn profile. Strictly speaking, your profile is not an advertisement, but it should be a powerful marketing message that catches the attention of your chosen audience, communicates what makes you special, and allows others to understand how your solution can solve your reader's problem.

If you gave your LinkedIn profile a half-hearted attempt at 'greatness', and it's been lying dormant ever since, I'm guessing you gave up in frustration. Or, perhaps you didn't see the real benefits of LinkedIn and lost your motivation.

LinkedIn success begins with a strong profile. All over the Internet, you'll read that your profile is like a resume. Wrong. It's way more than that. Your LinkedIn profile is a keyword-searchable gem that can put you in front of key decision makers, without so much as a phone call. Try that with a paper resume!

So, let's agree to give your LinkedIn profile the respect it deserves.

The Profile is comprised of several segments, and serves as the hub for all of your LinkedIn activity. Within the profile, you'll find:

- Headline
- Status Updates
- Summary
- Recommendations
- Experience
- Specialties
- Contact Information

- Links to your blog, presentations, etc.

Some members don't realize that LinkedIn page rank works like Google, based, in part, on keywords. Keywords make it easier for people to find you and connect with you (hopefully leading to greater opportunities).

But how can you possibly compete among millions of other members?

A. THE "SECRET" TO OPTIMIZING YOUR LINKEDIN HEADLINE

When it comes to optimizing your LinkedIn profile, no part of the page is more important than the Title, or Headline, that tiny area directly underneath your name. Most people use this spot to list a job title. But listing your job title *only* might hold you back.

Some time ago, my headline was something like "Results-Oriented Copywriter."

Not terribly exciting, and it did nothing to promote my skills in social media marketing and customer relationship management.

I thought it was working. I was wrong. Here's why:

More people will find you through the 'people search' feature on LinkedIn... and *connect* with you...when your title uses the right keywords, since they are more apt to search for people by job title than your unique name (unless he or she already knows you personally).

No doubt you know the importance of keywords for general Internet search. But most people don't realize those same principles apply to getting found...and getting business...on LinkedIn.

There are several 'recommended formulas' for creating an effective headline tag. The one I like the most is this one:

Value or Solution | Value or Solution |Trust/Credibility | Who I Am

This format allows you to describe what you do, and how you solve problems for others, rather than simply who you are based on job description.

This is my most recent headline:

LinkedIn Specialist ~ LinkedIn Lead Generation Coach ~ LinkedIn Author & Speaker ~ Top 5 for Keyword "LinkedIn"

First, I thought about what I do. Not just the words typically associated with my work, but the value I offer. Then I considered how I help others, and with what qualities I wanted people to associate me.

Next, I did a keyword check within the LI network. If you call yourself “Marketing Director” (because that is your job description), and 367,589 other members also use “Marketing Director” to describe themselves, how will you ever stand out? Your chances of landing on page 1 within LinkedIn based on this phrase are nil.

And why do we care about landing on page 1? Because the person seeking a Marketing Director will probably not look at profiles beyond page 2. Maybe page 3 if he or she is ambitious.

Therefore, perform a quick keyword search on the phrases you want to use:

- 1) Go to the search box on the top right of your LI screen
- 2) Make sure the search box is set to “People”
- 3) Type your term into the box

A list of everyone in your network using this term will appear. At the top left of this list (not your page, but the list itself), click on the little drop down boxes so the list is set to Keywords and Expanded View.

At the top right of this list is a number, along with the word “results” (for example, “7,019 results”) These are your LinkedIn competitors. Now you know how many members in your network are using the same phrase(s). If you have a paid account, LinkedIn nicely highlights where and how the phrase is used in each profile, so you can immediately see how others have used the phrase and how they have ranked by using it.

The next task becomes figuring out how to describe yourself, based on the formula, but using creative phrases that are at once searchable, accurately descriptive, and not overly competitive.

And by the way, you only have 120 characters to work with.

Can you see how creating a headline like this provides a snapshot of who you are, how you help others, and the value you provide...instead of simply what you do for a living?

If you did nothing else to improve your profile but craft a more compelling headline, I guarantee you'd connect with greater impact.

B. SPECIALTIES

List your most important skills and abilities here, using industry-savvy language. When others search the LinkedIn database for someone with your talents, your Specialties will help to drive them to *you*.

For example, a computer programmer experienced in using a demanding software platform would want to list this skill here.

Think about how others search. Use words and phrases that best match the words others might type in to find someone like you.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations section is professionally validating, but here's something many LinkedIn members don't know:

If you had a clone, (for argument's sake), and your profile showed 5 recommendations while your clone's showed 4, your profile would rank higher.

This little example demonstrates the importance of remembering that you *are* competing with others on LinkedIn, particularly when recruiters engage in passive recruitment (finding and contacting members whose profiles match job requirements, even though the member is not actively job seeking). You also compete when, for example, a member seeks an expert, needs specific talents for a project's completion or wants specialist advice.

D. STATUS UPDATES

LinkedIn recommends posting a status update 3 times a week for members with more than 500 connections. The average LinkedIn member doesn't have 500 connections. So how often should you update, and how much is too much?

Quick rule of thumb:

You are posting too frequently if people complain, ask to be 'removed from your list', or interaction has decreased or ceased altogether.

Use your head, make sure posts are valuable to your audience, ask questions to draw people out, and don't forget to respond to anyone who comments to keep the conversation moving.

When you begin to get 'likes' and comments, you'll know you're on the right track.

E. WHAT TO POST

“What should I say?” is a common question. Status updates should be informative. News about your industry, company, or brand may be appropriate. News about your travel schedule is not of much interest to anyone, unless you’re asking to connect with other attendees of the same event. Links to press releases, world news, articles and other generally interesting items work well. Remember to remain relevant.

If people follow you for your great financial tips, don’t suddenly switch to chicken recipes.

F. CONTACT INFORMATION

LinkedIn is about connecting. Many people seem afraid to share their contact information online. Yet, most professionals have a business address, email and phone. This information is no secret, and is likely available elsewhere on the Internet. If you’re not comfortable listing your phone number because you work from home, then simply list your business email address.

Your security and privacy concerns are valid. For example, I would not reveal my birth date or marital status. Who cares? But easy access to a phone number can make or break a deal...and it has.

Think about it. Then do what works for you.

G. APPLICATIONS

LinkedIn Applications added to your profile help to present a fuller picture of who you are. The following apps are currently available. How many are right for you?

Application	What It Does
Events	Find professional events to attend. Where are connections going?
SAP Community	Display your certified SAP expertise.
Lawyer Ratings	Showcase Martindale-Hubbell® Peer Review Ratings™ / Client Review Ratings™
Rofo Real Estate Pro	Stay informed about your local real estate and office space marketplace. Follow and connect with active brokers and professionals, track new property listings and see the latest deals in your market. Real estate professionals can use Real Estate Pro, with additional useful features.
Blog Link	Connect your blog to your LinkedIn profile
SlideShare	Upload, display, or view presentations of others
Legal Updates	Find or post legal news that matters to you and your business
WordPress	Sync your WordPress blog posts with your LinkedIn profile
Projects / Teamspaces	Share / track unlimited tasks, projects, documents, Google Apps
My Travel	Share upcoming trips, current location, & travel stats
Tweets	A Twitter client you can use right on LinkedIn.

Huddle Workspaces	Private, secure online workspaces
FT Press Delivers	Essential insights from today's leading business minds
Polls	Collect actionable data from connections
Portfolio Display	Showcase your creative work
Google Presentation	Embed a presentation via .PPT or Google's online application
Amazon Reading List	Extend your professional profile -share the books you're reading
Company Buzz	Ever wonder what people are saying about your company?
Box.net Files	Manage all your important files online.

To download an app:

- Log in to your homepage
- Go to the “More” tab
- Click on “Applications” in the dropdown box
- Download your chosen apps

LinkedIn allows a maximum addition of 15 modules and/or applications. If you need to remove an app before downloading another, a notification message will appear at the top of the page.

H. GROUPS

You can join groups led by other LinkedIn members, or start your own group(s). Unless you are an experienced LinkedIn user, it may be wiser to join established groups first and learn how it's done.

To view groups:

- Log into your homepage
- Click on the “groups” tab
- Choose “Groups Directory” from the dropdown box

Once there, you can search for specific groups by keyword.

As of this writing, LinkedIn boasts a whopping 1,025,115 groups. No wonder people are confused about what to do, and reticent about getting started!

You may join as many as 50 groups. (Some groups offer subgroups. These do not count toward your group total.)

Some groups accept all members. Some require that your membership be manually approved by the group administrator or moderator.

As mentioned, you may wish to cull through your groups once a month or so to see which ones remain valuable, and which ones can be dropped or exchanged for a more relevant group.

Participation is key with groups. It's your job to get in there, join in on posted discussions, and start discussions of your own. This is a fantastic way to showcase your expertise, add value to the group, and reach out to others.

One of the best benefits of group membership is the ability to connect with other members without knowing the individual's email address. Simply by belonging to the same group, you may request a connection.

Executive development expert Andy Robinson offers excellent advice about group building on his site, CAREERREALISM:

Valuable things you can do as a Group member –

- **Share great content and information as “News Items” in Group forums** – blog articles you find online that would be of interest to Group members and other useful content online – news, events, book referrals, etc.
- **Cross-post YOUR own blog articles** – ones YOU write – to as many relevant Groups as possible. I will very often cross-post my blog articles to five to ten relevant Groups – significantly increasing exposure of the article and maximizing the number of people who could benefit in some way from the advice and information contained in the article.
- **Participate** - in a meaningful way – in Group forum discussions. Make insightful positive-minded comments; add value to conversations; give advice when asked; answer questions.
- **Utilize the “Jobs” feature** of Groups. Search for jobs or post job openings. Groups are an excellent source of “niche” jobs and should be used by anyone actively engaged in a job search.
- **Connect directly with other Group members.** Search for people to connect with – someone who shares a common interest, a common employer experience, a common educational experience. Groups are an excellent source for expanding your network of direct connections in LinkedIn.
- **Start your own group!** Create your own “community” and serve as the moderator of Group activity. Moderating and Group “ownership” gives you great exposure and strengthens your “brand” or area(s) of expertise.

Give consideration to the following ideas when searching for Groups to join:

- **Industry-specific Groups** – Examples include Retail Industry Group, Health Care-oriented Groups, Travel Industry Groups, etc.
- **Trade and Professional Organization Groups** – There are Groups for scores of trade and professional organizations. Join those relevant to you.
- **Employer Alumni Groups.** Many of the Fortune 100+ companies have alumni Groups for their former employers. This is a great way to reconnect with former colleagues.

- **College/University Groups.** Most major colleges and universities of Alumni Organization Groups on LinkedIn. Another excellent means for reconnecting with “long lost” contacts and friends.
- **Job/Career-Related Groups.** There are hundreds of Groups in the job, career development, career management areas. If you’re in a job search, you’ll definitely want to check these out.
- **Social Media Groups.** There are Groups for Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn where you’ll find forums for discussion of tips, techniques and very useful advice relevant to most major social media tools.
- **Peer-level Executive Groups.** Check the various CEO, COO, CIO, CFO, etc. specific groups. A great way to connect with peer-level professionals and sharing useful information.
- **Functional/Technical Specialty Groups.** There are scores and scores of these. Find a Group or Groups relevant to your areas of functional or technical specialty (sales, marketing, accounting, IT, supply chain, etc., etc.)
- **Personal Interest Groups.** An avid cyclist? Well, there are Groups. A devoted football team fan? There are Groups. A great way to share with people of like-minded interests.
- **New Business.** Find Groups to join where there are members who are highly likely to be a source of business for you – potential customers, clients, buyers and “influencers.” Look for ways to add value to these Groups through discussion and sharing of information.

Most importantly, do not join only those groups consisting of coworkers or friends. Step outside the proverbial box and join groups where you are sure to meet new people and develop new business. For example, I belong to a real estate group, even though I’m not a Realtor™. I’ve uncovered new business in this group, since I am the only group member talking about social media and LinkedIn. Talk about differentiating yourself!

On the other hand, I recently joined –then quickly unjoined- a sales group whose members did not appreciate online marketing. Most discussions centered on ‘old school’ sales techniques. As soon as I discovered this wasn’t the group for me, I was out.

I. TOP INFLUENCER

Another benefit is Top Influencer, a designation given to a group member whose discussion topic receives a high number of responses (group member participation). The Top Influencer “counter” sets back to zero at the beginning of each week, giving all group members equal opportunity.

LinkedIn instituted Top Influencer to support those who are active in group discussions, as compared to people who constantly post but don’t participate.

It feels great to see your name on the list. Others are impressed by it. It proves you are asking the right kinds of questions, which means you’re thinking and engaging.

And seeing the names of others listed as Top Influencer offers yet another opportunity for you to connect simply to say “Congratulations!” These are all valid benefits to participating regularly.

J. “ ANSWERS”

The general questions section (“LinkedIn Answers”) is “one of the best places to share business knowledge:

- Ask your question - get fast, accurate answers from your network and other experts worldwide
- Answer questions to showcase your knowledge, expertise
- Stay up on the latest in your industry and functional area

Asking a Question

- Log in to your home page
- Click on the “More” tab
- Choose “answers” from the dropdown box
- Enter your question in the box
- Select the appropriate category
- Decide whether to send the question directly to specific connections

Question Tips:

- Your question will appear immediately under the Answers tab, on your profile, on your connections’ homepages, and in email if you’ve selected specific connections to receive it.
- If you prefer to ask a private question, you may do so -- your question will appear, not on the website, but in the inboxes of those to whom you’ve chosen to respond.
- Don’t use Answers to post jobs, recruit jobseekers, etc. These types of questions will be flagged and removed.
- To find out if your question or a similar question has been previously asked and answered, use the Advanced Answers search tool.

Answering a Question

Answering questions is a great way to showcase your knowledge.

Remember when I suggested earlier that you should keep an eye on your network updates? This is one of the reasons why. Questions asked by others in your network will appear on your homepage, where you can easily share your expertise. You'll also find questions under the Answers tab, or by using Advanced Answers search.

Simply click on the question, which will take you to a page showing all answers received. When you respond, your answer will appear on this page, on the homepages of your connections, on your profile, and via email to the person asking the question. You may choose to answer the question privately as well.

K. VANITY URL (PUBLIC PROFILE LINK)

Which of these URLs would you rather use to drive business?

www.linkedin.com/in/yourname

or

<http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=24719905&authType=name&authToken=6M2t&goback=%2Econ>

Change your profile settings to obtain the so-called vanity URL or public profile link to further indicate your professionalism.

To create your custom URL:

- Log in to your profile
- Choose edit profile
- Choose Public Profile Settings on the right side of the page
- Click on 'edit' next to "Your Public Profile URL" at the top of the blue box
- Type your first and last names in the box and click 'set address'

You may also want to take a moment while you're here to review your settings, and how others view your profile. Make any changes you deem necessary.

Also available on this page are the html codes which will allow you to create custom buttons to promote your profile on your blog, web pages, resume, etc. Take a look. The possibilities are endless.

L. SPECIFIC STEPS FOR LINKEDIN INVITATIONS

Who should you invite to join you on LinkedIn?

- People you know
- People you want to know
- LinkedIn members
- Non-LinkedIn members

Unless you share a group with the person you wish to invite, you'll need his or her email address to complete the invitation.

Try these tips:

1. Invite one contact at a time:

Enter the person's name and email address using the "Add Connections" link found under Contacts on the profile page.

2. Invite one contact at a time and add a personal message:

Click the bright yellow link: "Add ____ to your Network" link

3. Invite "people you may know":

- a) Click Contacts.
- b) Click Add Connections.
- c) Click People You May Know.

Alternatively:

- a) Click Contacts
- b) Click Add Connections
- c) Click Continue in the right-side blue box right under your email address to import your email addresses.

Or:

Enter into the left side blue box the individual email addresses of those you wish to invite.

4. Invite Colleagues or Classmates:

Colleagues have worked or do work for one of the companies you have listed on your Profile, during the same time periods you have listed. Classmates have attended the same educational institutions you have listed on your Profile, during the same time periods you have listed. To connect to colleagues, follow the same steps as above, except to click Colleagues or Classmates instead of People You May Know, and complete the boxes which appear on the page.

NOTE: LinkedIn does not permit the insertion of web site URLs or links within an Invitation. This information can be shared only after a connection is accepted.

Chapter 9: Company Pages

Company pages are a useful research tool through which you can explore and find companies with whom you want to do business. On the company page, you can view a Company profile, LinkedIn members employed there, and other types of unique data.

To show us how it's done, the LinkedIn blog highlighted a post written by Paul-Henri Ferrand, CMO of Dell Consumer, Small And Medium Business, regarding what was then the new Dell company page:

As a company that does more than 50% of its business online, Dell understands we are in a new era of e-commerce and shoppers have fundamentally changed their buying behaviors.

At Dell, we also see this [shift towards social commerce](#) as an incredible opportunity to continue building more powerful relationships with our customers. As a pioneer in the online space, we've been active in social commerce and support for some time with our Ratings & Reviews site housed on Dell.com, our activity on Twitter and Business Solutions Exchange group on LinkedIn – all places where customers can easily share experiences and learn from the knowledge of their peers.

Last summer, in partnership with Intel, we launched the Business Solutions Exchange community on LinkedIn, allowing our customers to harness their collective wisdom to support purchase decisions. Our new Company Page on LinkedIn reiterates our commitment of participation in leading social platforms.

Dell's new and improved LinkedIn Company Page

Now, we're excited to announce that we've taken the next step in integrating online shopping with the social sphere – with a new [Product & Services tab](#) on our LinkedIn Company Page. Dell is one of the many companies leveraging this new LinkedIn feature, which allows LinkedIn members to publish recommendations that are then linked to their professional profile.

LinkedIn Account type: Pro Add Connections

Home Profile Contacts Groups Jobs Inbox Companies More Companies

Companies > Dell > Products & Services > Dell Streak

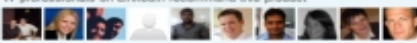
Overview Careers **Products & Services**

Dell Streak



Recommend Share

17 professionals on LinkedIn recommend this product



Product Overview

Small enough to slip into a pocket - Big enough for real business

One device does it all — online networking, secure email, video conferencing, IM and SMS/text, a phone call — however you like to stay connected, the Dell Streak keeps the lines of communication open.

Innovative Design: With a brilliant 5" screen and 6" wide x 3.1" high x .4" thin dimensions, there's plenty of space to take full advantage of the multi-touch display and the high-quality scratch-resistant Gorilla® glass means your view stays crystal clear. Featuring and a front and rear-facing camera for video conferencing and photo capture, there's no need to carry, charge, sync and update multiple devices.

Connectivity: Create and review documents, run presentations, update reports, approve expenses and even access a PC — right from the palm of your hand. With 3G mobile broadband, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth® you've always got an easy way to connect. Plus, swappable microSD memory cards mean virtually limitless storage for documents, presentations, videos, pictures

Productivity: A powerful yet efficient 1GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon™ processor speeds things along using Google's Android based OS, you get real work done wherever you go. Plus ultra-intelligent facial proximity and ambient light sensors automatically adjust screen brightness, optimizing your battery life.

17 Professionals recommend Dell Streak

All professionals that recommend Dell Streak

Sort by: Your network



Gregorius M Djojopranoto, Country Manager Indonesia (RFM) at ROXAR AS Indonesia

Small in size but huge functionality recommended table to accompany any smartphone. Best thing is good for reading emails and browsing.

November 1, 2010 · Like · Flag



Maria Pergolino, Director of Marketing/Demand Generation at Marketo San Francisco Bay Area

I like that it's small. Thanks Dell.

November 9, 2010 · Like · Flag



Rahul Singh, Business Development Manager at RAKBANK United Arab Emirates

awesome company great people

November 4, 2010 · Like · Flag

Dell has 61,295 followers

Follow Company

For more information
Visit our website >

What is your story?
You've taken your own path to success. Now show the world how you made it happen.



Tell Your Story >

Professionals that recommend this product also recommend...

- Salesforce CRM
- Employee Discount Program from AT&T
- HP Laptops, Notebook Computers & Tablet PCs
- Dell Latitude E4310 Laptop
- Dell Workstation Solutions

Flag

While our other social commerce ventures tend to cater more to consumers and small-business customers, this new platform provides an avenue to directly reach and engage with all our customers from individuals to large enterprises.

Our new Company Page represents an opportunity not only for customers to learn from one another, but also for us to learn from them. At Dell, providing stellar customer experience is key.

Our customers trust us to deliver technology solutions that help them do and achieve more at home, work, school or anywhere in their world. To effectively do this, Dell connects with more than 5.4 million customers every day — on the phone, in person, on Dell.com and, increasingly, through social networking sites like LinkedIn.

With a Company Page of over 60,000 followers within the LinkedIn professional network, I'm anxious to see which products and services spark the most online conversations.

A. FINDING COMPANY PROFILES

To access the Company Search page, click on the “Companies” tab along the top navigation bar. Here you can also discover which companies are most viewed, fastest growing and most connected.

Alternatively, individual member profiles connected to a company display a special icon next to that individual's company name. The icon looks like a piece of paper with the right edge folded down. Simply mouse over the icon for a quick Company page popup, or click on the company name to view the Company profile. Here are some tips from LinkedIn:

Components of a Company Profile

Company profiles begin with a brief overview and are followed by two primary components: information about relevant people at the company on the left, and aggregated statistics about employees on the right.

Related Companies

Ever wondered where a company's employees worked before they joined or where they went after they left? Or which other companies they are most connected to? Related Companies finds trends in the work history of users and identifying connections between companies.

Key Statistics

Ever wondered what the top locations or most common schools that a company hires from are? Key Statistics is produced from the aggregated non-personally identifiable data of LinkedIn users who are currently employed by this company. This data only reflects estimates about the company's employees and is not endorsed or provided by the company.

Company Description

A short overview of the company provided by our partner, Capital IQ.

Company Employees

A list of LinkedIn users in your network (up to 3 degrees' separation from you) who currently work at this company.

New Hires

LinkedIn users whose profiles indicate they've recently joined this company.

Recent Promotions and Changes

LinkedIn users whose profiles indicate they've recently changed positions at this company.

Popular Profiles

These are LinkedIn users who are highlighted because they may be active in the news, referenced in blogs, participating in industry groups, and/or frequently the result of searches and other activities within the LinkedIn network. Users who appear on this list have among the most profile views at their company.

How Information is Gathered

The information you see in the company pages comes from two sources— Capital IQ and LinkedIn user data. Our partner, Capital IQ, provided the basic company data such as company overview, revenue, etc. All of the relevant people and aggregated company statistics are based on LinkedIn network data. (End of LinkedIn quoted material)

B. CREATING YOUR COMPANY PROFILE

- Log in to your home page
- Click on the More tab
- Choose Companies from the dropdown box
- Click on Add a Company (tab is on the right)
- Follow the directions

Remember- your profile must list this company as a former or current employee before you can create a new Company page.

C. MORE PROFILE OPTIONS

LinkedIn recently introduced the latest [profile customization options](#).

Section	How It Helps You
Publications	Your body of publications helps define you as a professional. Add your published work to your profile.
Languages	Do you speak multiple languages? Indicate your expertise with the Languages section.
Skills	List skills, expertise, and proficiencies on your profile with via the Skills section.
Certifications	List certifications, licensure, and clearances attained.
Patents	Show off your inventions, granted and pending patents

Click on “[Add Sections](#)” in the Edit Profile view to see a list of all profile sections.

D. IMPROVE YOUR PROFILE

A new LinkedIn profile feature is the “Improve Your Profile” button, on the right side of your profile page. Click on this button and you’ll receive brief suggestions as to how you might add information to improve your profile.

E. FINDING THE CONTENT YOU NEED

Social media marketing demands lots of fresh, relevant content. Where can you find it? Try searching for content based on these popular items:

- Top news stories, especially specific industry news
- Social Media How-Tos
- Web traffic related, such as trends, strategies and page rank
- Opinions of noted people (such as industry experts)
- All types of facts and statistics
- Google News – seems like everyone loves these tidbits
- Lists (such as “Top 10 Ways to...”, or “7 Most Wanted...”)
- Upcoming events of interest to your network

Chapter 10: Daily Maintenance Steps

The following are maintenance tasks I complete daily. These steps are very doable...*after* you've built a strong, 100% complete profile, joined groups, and begun engaging:

Task	Frequency	Time Required
Status Updates	3 x week	Less than one minute
Read/respond to emails	Daily	20 minutes
Post new discussions	Daily	About 20 seconds per discussion
Respond to discussions	Daily	10-15 minutes
Accept /Respond Invites	Daily	Less than one minute
Connect/ Join Invites	Every few days, about ten invites	15 minutes
Post in Linked Answers	Weekly	5 minutes
Create and send polls	Monthly	30 minutes
Join/Unjoin groups	Monthly	30 minutes
Check stats	Every few weeks	Less than two minutes
Tweak my profile	Monthly	5 minutes

Does this seem like a lot to manage? When you become accustomed to doing it, it won't. Just like keeping up with your email inbox, maintaining your LinkedIn presence will become second nature.

Here is a modified task list if you are just getting started:

Task	Frequency
Read/ respond to emails	Daily
Respond to private questions, requests...	Daily
Post status updates	1 x week
Post new group discussions	2 x week
Respond to group discussions	3x week
Invites: Send Out, Accept Incoming	As required
Groups: Send/Accept Join Requests	2x week (5-10 at a time)
Post questions in LI Answers	1 x week
Join / Unjoin Groups	Monthly
Check Stats	Monthly

Many find this tip useful:

Create a Word file and title it LinkedIn Ideas

1. Go to Google Alerts and/or Social Mention
2. Type in a search term that interests you- i.e. "LinkedIn news"
3. Fill in the rest of the information requested

These two tools will work *for you*, sending tons of research material to your inbox.

Simply open your email, read what's new, determine if those topics fit your audience, and voila! You've got instant, fresh content for your status updates, discussion posts...and, often, if you act quickly, you'll find you are sharing news most people have not yet heard, which advances your credibility.

Anything you don't use that day goes into the LinkedIn Ideas file for later use. (Unless it's irrelevant...then simply delete it.) I mean, c'mon...could it be any easier?

Conclusion - Are You Making Progress?

Progress Marker	Logical Measurement	Analytical Measurement
Reach	How is your community growing over time?	Check the right column of the home page: "Who's Viewed My Profile?" Track these numbers over time Keep an eye on 'Network Connections'
Group Interaction	Started a LinkedIn Group? Is it growing & active? How about other groups?	Log in to the group Click on Members; track growth Click on Discussions; track numbers
Thought Leadership	Are you giving /receiving multiple recommendations? How many questions have you posted/answered? How many were voted "Best Answer"?	Send/request recommendations Track rec'd recommendations Track responses to your status updates and LI Answers Track # of Best Answers
Pre/Post-Campaign Snapshots	Announcing an event? Compare numbers post-announcement	Reread "19 Cool Tools to Help You Listen"
Website Traffic	What do the numbers say?	Install Google Analytics to track and correspond to LI activity
Leads	With how many leads have you interacted? How many interactions led to closed deals?	A manual task...but well worth it
Sales	How much LI business have you earned?	See Leads

When you engage authentically with others and are genuinely interested in their success, people naturally want to be connected to you. Your influence (and, therefore, social status) builds when others feel you are truly interested in helping them. By serving as a valuable connection, you are implementing “the rule of reciprocity”...you’ve helped others who, in turn, feel obligated to reciprocate. Today, there is no better way to grow your business.

To take advantage of this symbiotic relationship, you must know your network well. Here is where quality vs. quantity comes into beautiful play. Using the Advanced Search feature on LinkedIn, and spending some time filtering your 1st degree connections by geography, industry, or special interests, you can uncover your most valuable relationships and uncover opportunities to introduce like-minded members of your network.

Here is one real-life example:

A short time ago, I wanted to invite social media marketers to an in-person meeting.

First, I used the Advanced Search to create a list of all my 1st degree connections. The Advanced Search button is located to the right of your search bar.

Next, I filtered this list by geography. I chose to search for those within 50 miles of my postal code.

Next, I filtered these results using the term “social media”.

The result was a list of 40 social media marketers with whom I could connect nearly instantly...as well as setting up the perfect environment for future initiatives with this group.

Now, I ask you...where else could you obtain such a well targeted, ready-made list of invitees in under 2 minutes...for free?

Your organization deserves to enjoy all the benefits of LinkedIn marketing done right. But it won’t happen without the right tools for the job.

If you are in business, own a business, dreaming up a new business, or spending your days counseling others about business...LinkedIn is for you.

When to Call A Professional

The most compelling reasons to outsource management of your LinkedIn activity are time and expertise.

It *can* be a fulltime job analyzing your firm's needs, creating appropriate inbound/outreach plans, and managing and growing your online presence, depending on many factors, such as organization size and individual skill. Many companies simply don't have the staff or the knowledge to create, implement, manage, and maintain their own successful LinkedIn marketing programs.

Hiring a LinkedIn marketing manager or firm is not 'evil', and it is not an indication you have somehow failed. Businesses routinely hire programmers, web designers, copywriters, PR specialists...yet recoil in horror at the thought of hiring a LinkedIn marketing specialist.

What could be more important – or more exciting - than marketing your products and services to ready-made audiences eager to hear from you?

Modello Media helps small businesses successfully manage the challenges of LinkedIn marketing to achieve enhanced lead generation and new business development. I hope you'll take a moment to [visit Modello Media online](#), stop by my blog, [Linked-In-Sanity](#). We are happy to provide our no-obligation opinion.

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