

Fact Sheet: LinkedIn

What Is LinkedIn, and How Does It Work?

The dominant social media sites are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. All began as interpersonal communication channels, but have quickly become essential tools for businesses and organizations. They allow easy, direct communication between your team and current or potential clients and members. Their logos can be displayed on the home page of your Web site so that site visitors know they can click through to connect.

LinkedIn, the web's biggest professional network, allows individuals and companies to connect and collaborate with others in their industry by mining employees' work and education history. LinkedIn is often used to develop career opportunities, sales prospects, consulting offers, job inquiries, and reference requests as well as to reestablish contact.

Why Is LinkedIn Important?

According to LinkedIn, as of May 2013:

- LinkedIn has more than 225 million users in 200 countries.
- Two new members join LinkedIn approximately every second.
- 35% of LinkedIn users access the site daily.
- Users have created 2.7 million business pages and 1.5 million LinkedIn groups.
- 81% of users belong to at least one group.
- More than 1 billion endorsements have been posted on LinkedIn.

How Can Your Company Implement LinkedIn?

- Use outwardly facing profiles that highlight your willingness and abilities to help others and encourage connections.
- Maximize all profile fields, including Summary, Websites, Twitter account, former email addresses, past employment descriptions, Activities & Societies, etc. Be thorough – the more information you provide, the more connections you'll make and the more opportunities people will have to find you.
- Commit to a weekly social media strategy, including LinkedIn, and coordinate your efforts with other team members.
- Import contacts from other platforms to connect with people across all your networking circles.
- Get involved in industry-relevant discussions, and post or re-post interesting or useful content.

- Ensure all team members perform at least basic tasks, such as including links in their email signatures and responding to Inbox messages at least weekly.
- Use keywords in individual profiles that people at other companies or in your field are likely to use in their searches.
- Be open. Change the settings on your Company Profile to “Full View” so it can be fully indexed by the search engines.
- Put a face on your company. Choose someone to act as a focal point, and post your logo with the corporate profile. Complete all the Company fields.
- Use the Products & Services Tool to enhance your corporate profile.
- Recommend and be recommended.
- Endorse and be endorsed.
- Link to the company profile from your corporate site, and make it easy for people to connect.
- Ensure each employee selects the company profile from the drop-down when completing the Experience Section.
- Join Groups.
- Ask Questions and submit Answers.
- Connect to Colleagues based on your Experience entries and Classmates based on your Education entries.
- Post status updates in the Collaboration Box at least weekly to deepen relationships, increase mindshare and “drip” on prospects.
- Conduct Advanced Searches for your prospects. Warm up the relationships, getting Introductions as needed.

What Principles Should You Keep in Mind?

- Follow the LinkedIn rules, and remember that the more helpful you are, the more help you’ll get.
- Develop message points for your entire team that are easy to disseminate over LinkedIn.
- Frequent short sessions on LinkedIn can be very effective and ultimately save you time on phone calls and emails.
- Observe etiquette guidelines: contribute to the discussion in a respectful way; listen to what others say instead of rushing to “correct” them; and be accountable for and responsible about what you say.
- When posting company news, make sure that it is truly valuable to the group. Avoid self-promotion and blatant advertising.

Have questions?

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