

LinkedIn

Business Essentials



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Introduction

In today's marketing environment, it is crucial that businesses have a presence in social media. Social media marketing can be intimidating and time consuming if you do not plan and establish a foundation from the beginning. It's one thing to set up your LinkedIn page, but planning how and when you are going to post to you're your clients, fans and future customers is another story. Keeping your followers engaged is where most businesses fail in the social media atmosphere.

But why Social Media you might ask? Social media marketing has many benefits. Through the different channels available for social media, you can increase exposure for your business, increase traffic to your website, increase search rankings, generate leads, develop raving fans, improve your sales, grow business partnerships, and best of all reduce your marketing expenses.

No longer do you need to take out costly ads in the yellow pages or in newspapers. Those are still great options, but social media provides quicker results you are able to measure and track month to month.

In this report, I will walk you through LinkedIn and how you can create your vision and goals for your LinkedIn profile. While it isn't vital for you and your business to participate in LinkedIn, it is a good idea to at least have a presence here and point them to your website or a way to interact with your business. You do not want to lose a potential client just because you're not found on LinkedIn.

So, Let's get started.

#1: Critical Areas to Consider

In each of the social media sites, there is a basic funnel every business should follow. First, create the social media platform. A platform is “A raised floor or stage used by public speakers or performers so that they can be seen by their audience.” You want to be seen by your audience, or in this case, your clients and customers. In the next chapters, I’ll explain the LinkedIn platform and how to build it to fit your business.

Next, every business needs to build a community of followers.

Please understand, your goal should not be to sell within LinkedIn. Instead, you want to create a raving fan base that will be interested in what you have to say and what you’re giving away so you can build an email subscriber list, and THEN convert them to buyers.

Critical Areas

There are seven very critical areas each business or individual must consider in order to be successful in social media marketing and LinkedIn.

- 1. LinkedIn Vision**
- 2. LinkedIn Goals**
- 3. LinkedIn Voice**
- 4. Building the LinkedIn Platform**
- 5. The LinkedIn Publishing Plan**
- 6. LinkedIn Community Building**
- 7. Measuring and Tracking Results**

We’ll discuss these in detail in just a few moments.

#2: Reasons to Use LinkedIn

But first, let's discuss why someone should use LinkedIn. The #1 advantage of LinkedIn is it's all Business! LinkedIn is a business oriented social media networking service. It allows businesses to build a personal and business brand by providing both personal pages and a business page. LinkedIn can also increase visibility of products and services for your company. Through LinkedIn's groups, you can participate in targeted and relevant business groups to establish your authority and leadership in your area, build connections with prospective clients, and develop new strategic partnerships.

You might ask yourself, "What can LinkedIn do for me?"

Great question! LinkedIn is an easy and effective way to find like-minded people and business associates. LinkedIn allows users to read a person's business history on a single page. You can also see whom they associate with and other people they know, allowing you to reach out and make a connection with them as well.

Top 8 Reasons to Use LinkedIn

1. **Build your Social Reputation.** LinkedIn is a great tool for people to outline their experience, accomplishment, organizations and network.
2. **Find Qualified Employees.** Looking for an employee? Use your connections to search out qualified candidates. LinkedIn also has a job posting board, for a fee.
3. **Make New Connections.** Use LinkedIn and do a search for people in your niche or area of business. LinkedIn has an introductions tool that you can use to give you a written introduction for a person you want to connect with.
4. **Increase your Google Ranking.** Well-written LinkedIn profiles typically earn a high rank on the front page of Google. The more information you have such as LinkedIn (or Blog articles), the higher your Google ranking.

5. **Check out Competition, Customers, Partners.** LinkedIn is a great tool for research and to see what groups your customers and potential customers belong to.
6. **Groups.** Groups are a great way to network. Use groups to make connections with others within the group.
7. **Recommendations.** LinkedIn has a recommendation system where you and your contacts can recommend individuals and other companies, and in turn, they can recommend you.
8. **Use it on your smart phone/tablet.** Log in just about anywhere to post an entry, make a recommendation or find a new contact.

Now, let's discuss the seven steps to a successful LinkedIn plan in the consequent chapters.

#3: Creating a Vision

Creating a vision for your social media platform will vary slightly for each social media site. In general, you want to decide the following for your business.

What is the picture of your future for your Social Media Strategy?

- a. Where do you see your business in the next five years?
- b. What do you want your business/brand to be known for?

What's your legacy?

Remember, LinkedIn is all about business. Your vision for your LinkedIn platform should also be all about business. Some examples are below:

Vision Example #1:

To become the leading resource on LinkedIn for creative and cool basket weaving ideas!

Vision Example #2:

To help 1000s of men and women with chronic health conditions experience renewed health and happiness!

Vision Example #3:

To moderate the most popular and engaging "Internet Marketing" group in LinkedIn.

Vision Example #4:

To create an increase of new strategic JV partners to take my business to new levels.

Vision Example #5:

To become the predominant “your niche” consultant (and guru) in
LinkedIn.

ACTION STEP: Write a short one sentence LinkedIn vision statement that aligns with your business objectives and inspires and motivates you to keep building your Social Media Platform!

#4: Setting Strategic Goals

According to an eMarketer Report, 80% of businesses incorrectly begin with tactics instead of goals. Goals for your LinkedIn profiles need to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely (SMART goals).

Set strategic goals that are attainable for your company. You will measure these goals periodically to evaluate your efforts. Strategic goals for LinkedIn might look like these.

Strategic Goal #1:

Add 100 new active members to your “Internet Marketing” Group over the next 30 days.

Strategic Goal #2:

Identify and connect with 5 prospective JV partners in the next 30 days.

Strategic Goal #3:

Add 15 new recommendations in the next month.

Strategic Goal #4:

Generate 100 new email leads from our LinkedIn business profile over the next 60 days.

Strategic Goal #5:

Add 500 new blog subscribers from Pinterest in the next 90 days.

Strategic Goal #6:

Add 250 new subscribers to your YouTube channel over the next quarter.

ACTION STEP: Using the SMART goal formula, write out your specific, strategic goals for your LinkedIn profile. **Note:** Don’t worry about how you’re going to get there at this point! We’ll discuss that soon.

#5: Finding your LinkedIn Voice

Finding your LinkedIn Voice doesn't have to be difficult. Ask yourself these questions. Do you want your LinkedIn profile(s) to have a unique voice and personality? Does your business sound like someone people will want to talk to? Would YOU want to talk to you? Does your voice effectively resonate with your target audience?

For example, Facebook business, Easy Lunch Boxes, displays her voice on her website and Social Media sites. She's a mom who loves to cook. She's friendly, warm and responsive, fun and creative, and passionate about making food fun for kids.

Again, LinkedIn is all about business so you do not want any personal comments, posts or discussions involved in your LinkedIn profile. This isn't Facebook. This is all about your business and the image you want other businesses to see.

Your LinkedIn voice needs to be personable with a more "Professional Edge." You should focus on business objectives than personal objectives.

When you are sharing content, be sure that it upholds the thought leadership in your market. Content ideas to share could be:

- Infographics
- Business quotes
- Blog posts from your market
- Business-oriented polls
- Tips and how-to videos

Don't lose sight of YOU...just talk more business!

ACTION STEP: Write out a few bullet statements that define your persona and the voice you want to express in your LinkedIn profile.

#6: Building LinkedIn Platform

Basic principles to focus on for building your LinkedIn Profile will carry over all of the Social Media sites.

As a general rule:

- 20% of your posts should be **Promotional** (product launches, free offers, upcoming events)
- 40% should be **Informational** (Blog posts, industry news, interesting quotes and helpful tips), and
- 40% must be **Conversational** (answering questions, replies to followers)

You want to brand continuity across all Social Media channels so your entire Strategy is consistent, supports your community of followers and is in tune with the interests of your audience.

Your LinkedIn platform will consist of your Profile, Company Page, and Groups. First we'll start with your Profile.

#7: Setting Up LinkedIn Account

If you haven't set up a LinkedIn account, start by doing that first. It's very straightforward and there are guiding steps if you need help. Once you're set up, here are ten important steps to creating a successful LinkedIn Profile:

1. **Add a Professional Photo** – If you cannot afford to schedule time with a photographer, at least dress up in your business attire and have a friend or family member take a few headshots of you using a smart phone. The quality of images on smartphones is excellent. This should not be a photo of you with your dogs, unless your business is about dogs.
2. **Write a compelling headline** (120 characters) – This headline can be keyword rich for your business. Be descriptive as you can, but you only have 120 characters, not 120 words!
3. **Customize Your LinkedIn URL & Websites** – If LinkedIn is not on your “A” list, it is vital that you customize your URL and website links here.
4. **Add an interesting keyword-targeted profile summary**
– Make sure you showcase your top skills, speak to your target audience, and use concise paragraphs. Let this summary be your “30 second introductory speech.”
5. **Integrate Profile Enhancing Apps** - SlideShare Presentations is an app you can use to upload your presentations or and checkout ones from your colleagues. Projects and Teamspaces is another app you can integrate. It allows you to track and update tasks, projects and documents through Google Apps (it's free).
6. **Add relevant and targeted skills to your Profile** – choose from a list of skills to add to your Profile. Clients and other LinkedIn members will endorse your skills, so be sure to reciprocate and endorse others.
7. **Add Relevant work experience** – don't list every job you've had, but include those that support the experience and skills you want to display.
8. **Request and provide “recommendations”** – Once your profile is set, ask for recommendations from those you work

with and those you've completed work for. In return, provide recommendations to others creating a source for feedback and communication with others.

9. **Add relevant projects and publications that boost credibility** – Adding these shows others you do what you say you do. It creates trust and reliability.
10. **Add other miscellaneous categories** – You can include awards/certifications, courses, special interests, organizations, and LinkedIn groups.

#8: Creating Your Company Page

In addition to creating your LinkedIn Profile, you should also create your LinkedIn Company Page. This will help promote your business brand. It is also Google and LinkedIn search-friendly. Company pages also attract new customers / JV Partners. You have the ability to promote products and services, build up “Company Recommendations, and you’ll have the ability to share videos, blog posts, and social media content.

To create a company page, you must be signed into your personal LinkedIn account. You will also need an email associated with the URL of the company you are going to set up so you can retrieve the verification emails. From your menu, go to “Interests” □ Companies □ Create a Company Page. Enter your company name and email address then verify the address when you get the message.

Find your company name under the search, follow yourself, and then enter all the company details as required, especially the “Services” section. Then make sure your company page URL is listed on your personal profile as well so that people can find your services.

#9: About LinkedIn Groups

Why should you and your business invest time in LinkedIn Groups? For starters, it is a targeted channel for connecting with your audience. Groups help you build credibility and leadership and connect with other authorities in your market.

When it comes to joining groups or starting one, always join FIRST and start one later! You can search for groups or you can use the “Groups You May Like” feature to find groups based on your interests and skills.

After you join a group, the next thing you want to do is get noticed! Here are a few ideas on how to get noticed in groups:

1. Regularly join the conversations on the popular discussions in your field.
2. Start conversations on “Hot Topics.”
3. Follow and make connections with top experts.
4. Strategically use “Promotions” to share free stuff.

If you’re going to start a LinkedIn Group, follow these steps for creating an appealing group for others.

1. Pick a group name that includes a popular keyword.
2. Add a distinctive logo.
4. Make your Group “OPEN” so Search Engines can index you.
5. Create “Group Rules” to keep SPAM out!
6. Invite active members from other groups.
7. Use “Manager’s Choice” to promote your free content and build up your list
8. Research and post content and respond to comments on a regular basis.

ACTION STEPS:

- Review your current LinkedIn Profile and identify at least 3-5 things you can do to improve your profile.
- If you do not have a Company Page, create one and be sure to update your page accordingly.
- Review your current groups. Determine which groups you should focus on and which ones you should drop. Join groups if you are not currently in any.

#10: Creating Publishing Plan

Your publishing plan needs to have **consistent**, interesting, and genuine content to keep your connections engaged. An important step to doing this is to create a social media editorial calendar. This can be as simple or complicated as you need. You can store logins and schedule your content posts. It's very helpful if you have multiple channels other than LinkedIn. It is meant to keep you consistent and organized and to stay focused on your goals. You can also schedule publishing content using tools such as HootSuite.

When considering your publishing plan, you will want to post content that matches up with your LinkedIn voice and who you are as a business. The content should be personable but “business-focused” only. You are trying to build a list by gathering a group of people that are interested in what you have to say and share. Content helps create a relationship with them and supports your credibility as an authority in your field.

Since LinkedIn is all about business, and not your personal agenda, you need to make sure you identify the type of status updates to send to JUST LinkedIn. Be sure the right content is reaching the right audience!

Some ideas for content to publish on your LinkedIn account are below:

- Infographics
- “How-to” videos for businesses
- Blog posts and articles
- Quotes that inspire
- Current industry events
- Polls and surveys
- Business questions
- Free reports or business guides

Here are some ideas of content management to use for LinkedIn.

Everyday you should do the following. It should take approximately 15 minutes each day to complete these tasks.

- Update Status (via Hootsuite) 3-5 times
- Review/comment on Network Updates on Home Page
- Check your Inbox and respond to messages.
- Check target group discussions and like, follow and comment accordingly.
- Actively participate in discussions and make sure “Group Rules” are being followed.

Every week for approximately 30 minutes of your day, do the following:

- Post new discussion threads in target groups (1-2 per week)
- Invite 15 new connections
- Endorse specific skills of 3-5 profiles

To keep up with managing your LinkedIn community, every month spend about 45 minutes doing the following:

- Update profile content.
- Update Company Page (New products, promotions).
- Write and request 5-10 recommendations per month (Company and Profile).
- Review and add new apps.
- Search and join new target groups.
- Measure and record LinkedIn and business stats.

ACTION STEPS:

Research and select 10 “hot” content topics that will interest your audience and develop a publishing plan to post it on a consistent basis.

#11: Building a Community

Each business niche will have leaders in the field that have huge followings because they are constantly engaging their audience. You should research gurus in your area and determine what strategies they are using to engage their followers.

Remember, the point of using LinkedIn is to build your list so you can market and turn those followers into customers and clients. Here are some steps to use to build your LinkedIn community.

1. **Connect with your current business contacts.**
2. **Use the “People You May Know” feature on a regular basis to add connections.**
3. **Use the “LinkedIn People Search” to search for your industry. (i.e., authors, marketers, coaches)**
4. **Use your existing groups to add connections through invitations.**
5. **Be active and engaging.**
 - a. Regularly post, share and make comments.
 - b. Be active in groups (and other members will notice).
 - b. Thank professionals who invited you to connect on LinkedIn.
6. **Advertise on LinkedIn**

ACTION STEP: Using the 7 strategies, go and invite 10-15 quality “Connections.”

#12: Evaluating Results

In order to determine what efforts are making a difference in your business, you should measure and track those results. You need a base to start from and then measure weekly, monthly and quarterly to see those results. By this, we are looking at your numbers in your LinkedIn accounts.

As a result, you should also track the business side of these. Was there an increase in website traffic? How many new blog subscribers? Any new email leads? How many new buyers? What were your revenues?

To measure your success with LinkedIn, you'll need to track and record some stats for both LinkedIn and your website. For LinkedIn stats, record the following in your spreadsheet.

- # of connections
- # of profile views
- # of recommendations
- # of skill endorsements
- # of company follows and recommendations
- # of new group members
- # of new discussions and overall activity

Website stats to track are:

- # of new website visitors
- # of new leads
- # of new blog subscribers
- Growth in revenues

ACTION STEP: Document your current LinkedIn stats in preparation for future evaluation.

Conclusion

LinkedIn is a powerful tool to use for both your personal career and your business. Through LinkedIn, you get access to people, jobs, news, updates, and insights that help you be even better at what you do. If you haven't experienced the power of LinkedIn, I challenge you to investigate the possibilities today!