

LinkedIn

MARKETING EXCELLENCE



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What is Linked Marketing and Why Should You Care?



If you run *any* sort of blog, website or business online and you want to find opportunities to grow and to increase your turnover and profits, then you *need* to make sure you're on LinkedIn and that you're making the most of it.

Of course you probably know how important social media marketing is in general and chances are you're *already* investing time, money and effort into managing your presence on Facebook and Twitter. Or at least you certainly *should* be if you aren't already...

But LinkedIn? That's a much smaller social network and most likely you're thinking that it belongs much lower down on your list of priorities. You might even be asking yourself why LinkedIn marketing specifically deserves an entire book dedicated to it...

So what's going on then? Well, the point that many people miss is that LinkedIn is not *about* sheer numbers. Rather, LinkedIn is about *who* it gives you access to and how you can use that to expand your business. LinkedIn actually offers huge opportunities and advantages that other social networks just can't match due to the way it allows you to interact with highly influential individuals within your industry or niche.

LinkedIn is different from other social networks for one big reason: it's designed *for* businesses and it actively *encourages* self-promotion. This is entirely different from Facebook for instance which encourages you to only add people you actually *know* to your list of contacts. On Facebook, the pages for businesses is an afterthought at best and any serious attempt to promote yourself might be seen as spam and result in punitive measures.

LinkedIn on the other hand is a tool *for* self-promotion. It gives you access to a gigantic network of contacts operating within your field and it gives you the means to reach them, to work with them and to be seen by them. They say that business is all about 'who you know' and LinkedIn is all about making sure that *you* 'know' the right people.

Or as LinkedIn put it in their own mission statement, the business is all about:

Connecting the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.

And it goes much further than that. Did you know for instance that LinkedIn has its own publishing platform that is *perfectly* designed for content marketing?

Some Facts About LinkedIn

- 1 out of every 3 professionals is on LinkedIn
- LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network and gives you access to the largest group of influential and successful individuals anywhere
- As of 2015, LinkedIn has 364 million members
- LinkedIn continues to grow rapidly – the same time last year the site had 296 million members
- LinkedIn has members in over 200 different countries
- LinkedIn is one of the oldest social networks having been formed in December 2002

While LinkedIn might not be as big as say Facebook then, it is certainly rather large and when you consider the caliber of those who are on the site, it becomes clear that you and your business *need* to be here.

What's more, you need an effective strategy to make the most of LinkedIn so that you aren't just spinning your wheels and wasting your time. And that's where this book comes in... Keep reading and we'll look at how you can build an amazing LinkedIn profile, how you can leverage the many amazing tools that the site provide you with to promote yourself and your business and how you can network with other users to make the kinds of powerful connections that can propel you to the top of your game.

LinkedIn Objectives

Before we look any deeper into how you can create your LinkedIn pages and profiles strategically, or how you can market yourself though, it's first important that we look at what your end game is. What is the *objective* on LinkedIn and what can you hope to gain from putting in the time and effort here?



The main benefits of LinkedIn can be broken down as follows:

- Networking
 - To find job opportunities
 - To find business partners and opportunities to promote yourself
 - To find clients and customers
 - To find potential employees
 - To create new opportunities
- Marketing
 - To increase awareness
 - To build brand loyalty
 - To create a more professional impression for your brand and your services/products
 - To promote a website and gain SEO/social media marketing benefits
 - To find potential clients and customers
 - To build leads and keep in contact with them
- Staying up-to-date with industry news and opportunities
- To find potential services and suppliers
- To keep track of your own employees and your own achievements and businesses
- Organizing your contacts

Throughout this book, we will assume that your goals include *all* of these key points and as such we will address strategies that will help with all of them.

Building Your Profile Strategically

So, when it comes to creating your LinkedIn strategy, where do you start?

Well, it would seem that a smart place would be... at the beginning. And what is the first thing you need to do when signing up to LinkedIn? Create a profile!

There are two types of profile you can create on LinkedIn though in fact. The first is your own professional profile which will be a profile for you specifically. The second is the profile you will create for your business which is where you will promote your brand instead of yourself.

To begin with, let's start with your personal LinkedIn profile which is probably the first thing you will create when signing up and which will act as a springboard for most of your other activities. Here, the idea is to sell yourself and to make yourself look professional and accomplished while doing so. LinkedIn gives you a number of tools and areas through which to accomplish these objectives. We'll look at each of them in order.

Your Headline

The first field you'll likely enter in the creation of your LinkedIn profile is the description about yourself called your 'headline'. This is a short line that will list your job role and possibly your interests or your experience.

Say you worked as an internet marketer then, your headline could read as any of the following:

Internet Marketer, Digital Entrepreneur and Business Consultant

Helping businesses to connect with customers and clients through digital marketing

Digital marketing expert and head of DMSolutions

Whatever you put here, try to make sure that it is short and succinct while at the same time professional, impressive and descriptive. The idea is to make yourself sound like someone that people would want to work with if they are in your field. At the same time though, you should also aim to put across a bit of personality to help make yourself feel *somewhat* approachable.



This doesn't mean that you should try to be 'funny' or 'quirky' in your headline – this can come across as desperate and may actually undermine your ability to appear professional.

Think about it this way: you're trying to sum up your professional persona in a single line. That means you want to encompass what you do for a living, your mission statement, your goals and your history as much as possible but in a bite-sized form.

Note: Specifically you have 120 words to play with here.

Your Summary

Don't spend too much time trying to cram everything into your summary though, as that's what your profile 'Summary' is for. This is the next field that you can use to enter your details into and that you can use to attract potential business partners and clients.

This is where you will go into a little more detail explaining what it is you do for a living and what the key elements of your business are and your major achievements.

The best way to think about this section of your profile, is to imagine that you're at a professional party or event and someone then comes up to you and asks you 'what do you do'? Your job is to answer that question in about a paragraph, while at the same time selling yourself. Unlike a party though, you don't need to worry too much about boring the other person when you're writing your LinkedIn profile!

Let's take the example of the digital marketing expert again then. Here, you might say something like the following:

I am the founder and owner of DMSolutions, a small business providing digital marketing solutions. I help companies and individuals to increase their visibility on the web through search engine optimization, branding, content marketing, influencer marketing and social media marketing. I have worked with a number of large clients in the past included ILoveMincedPies and LanyardsRUs, both of which saw a significant increase in traffic, turnover and profits thanks to the efforts of myself and my team.



I also have several other professional interests including web design, programming and more. I am the developer of a very successful app and have an extensive background and qualifications in business management, marketing and graphic design. I am currently open to working with any and all new clients, so please get in touch if you require my services in any capacity.

Notice that this summary performs three main roles: it outlines the specifics of what DMSolutions does, it shows how this helps businesses (and demonstrates the clear potential ROI) and it gives a little background. What's more, it also invites readers to get in touch which right away opens the lines of communication. Don't be afraid to outright *ask* for the kinds of connections you want to make. Are you looking for sponsors on your YouTube channel? Great – then *ask for them*. Are you looking to get into fitness modelling? Again, mention this and invite agencies to get in touch.

While writing any aspect of your LinkedIn profile, try to keep in mind the following objectives:

- Content should be grammatically correct with no errors in spelling or punctuation
- The tone should be professional but *human* as you might see on a CV (but with a little more personality)
- You should try to keep it brief and aim to give the most information with the fewest words

Tip #1: Your summary and your headline do *not* need to be static fields. You can update and freshen up the information you provide about yourself regularly – for instance, what was your biggest accomplishment this year? As we age, so we gather experiences, accomplishments and knowledge; so you need to keep updating your profile to ensure that it conveys everything you have to offer.

Tip #2: Ditch the buzzwords! Remember how you're always told to say things like 'teamwork' and 'synergy' and 'initiative' in your CV? That's old advice and it's become something of a cliché. Try to avoid making the age-old mistake of using big and impressive-sounding words to say... nothing much at all. Instead, focus on being honest, genuine and likeable. Likeability is a big factor actually – no one wants to work with someone who comes across as unpleasant.

Tip #3: Not confident in your writing skills? Write it yourself and then have a proofreader look over it. Many online writing agencies offer this service cheaply, or you can alternatively ask a friend or relative with good writing skills to do it for you.

Experience

The next section for you to fill out is your 'experience'. Here, you can add each of your different job roles and briefly highlight the skills that you learned working in those capacities.

If you currently own your own business – as many people reading this will do – then remember to make sure that you include that here.

At the same time, put down any job roles that sound good and that helped you to develop the experience you have today. Remember, the rate you charge will be directly related to the experience you have in your industry – so *show* your clients why you deserve the rates you're going to ask for by demonstrating your decorated career so far.

One tip though is to make sure that you include only relevant job roles. The ideal scenario is that each of your former positions was in the same industry and that they together demonstrate your ascent through the ranks to become the best in your business. It's okay to include job roles from previous career paths however (such as the time you thought you wanted to be a lawyer), just make sure that in the description you mention how it benefited you and you try to link it to your *current* position.

So, if you're currently offering web design services and you want to include your work experience as a waiter, make sure you focus on how you learned to deal with clients and listen to their requirements – skills that transferred nicely to your current role. Always try to keep in mind the outcome that you want from your LinkedIn profile and then paint everything on the page in that light.

Tip #1: Avoid trying to list part time jobs and other non-relevant information. If you spent your summer working for a local paper round... leave it out. Including this kind of experience only makes it look as though you're clutching at straws. If you're fresh out of college and you just want to find a job, then it *may* be useful. For serious professionals looking for networking opportunities and clients though... leave it out.



Tip #2: You have the option here to list documents, photos, links and videos to back up what you say. You don't *have* to do this but if you can provide some evidence then this will help you to inspire more confidence and trust.

Projects

The projects section is your real opportunity to show off and to demonstrate what you can do. You can use this to showcase your personal projects – such as an app, book or website you might have created on the side – but you can also use it to showcase your best work within your current position.



For instance then, if your last organization left you in charge of relations with a big client and it turned out well, that is something you can list as a project. Likewise, if you recently provided work for a big client to help them promote themselves/cut their overheads/design a website, then this is something else you can list.

This section is actually particularly useful for self-employed entrepreneurs and start-ups. If you list your own business as your only experience this won't inspire much confidence in your clients on its own – it might be that you actually spend all the time sitting at home in your pajamas claiming benefits. By listing high profile clients you've worked with though and by listing the results you've helped them to achieve, you can show that your business is one that should be taken seriously and that you really know what you're doing. Note though that you need to check with your clients before listing them by name.

Skills and Endorsements

Here you can list all the skills that you have and all your areas of expertise. You do this by searching for keywords and this is one of the main ways in which potential clients and partners will find you. Try to be comprehensive here but again avoid 'overreaching'. If you start adding skills like 'makes a mean carbonara' it will come across as



though you don't have any actual marketable skills. This is the equivalent as listing your work experience as a school cleaner when you're trying to promote yourself as a lawyer.

Laser focus has the benefit here of making you look like a master of your trade. At the same time, by having a smaller selection of skills, you'll find you get more endorsements for each individual one. This means that people have ticked 'YES' when LinkedIn has asked them whether you really know about what you claim to know.

Tip #1: Make sure you make an effort to endorse other users for their skills. When you do that, you'll find that they tend to feel obligated to reciprocate in kind and you'll quickly build up a long list of endorsements.

Education

Education is where you'll list your qualifications. Here you can add any college/university/high school and extra curricula education as well as any courses you've completed. Again, you also have the option to add documents, photos and videos as evidence that you really have the qualifications you say you have. As with your projects, there is no requirement to do this but it certainly doesn't hurt. And likewise, as with your work experience, avoid adding qualifications that don't relate to your current business in anyway. That cycling proficiency certificate you got when you were 6? You can leave it out.



Additional Info & Honors & Awards

You can also add additional information to your page such as your hobbies and interests, your personal details and 'advice for contacting'. This is where you can make yourself sound human and give people the chance to connect on a more human level. At the same time, you can invite people who have seen what you have to say to get in touch and give them the best means to do so.



The Honors and Awards section meanwhile gives you the option to showcase any crowning achievements. This can be a great way to sell yourself a little more – if you haven't headed up many projects in your line of work but you have repeatedly been employee of the month, this is where that might belong. Again, think about whether what you're bragging about will *actually* impress anyone though!

General Tip: As you fill in all the details on your profile, you'll be able to see a 'Profile Strength' meter filling up. Keep going until it reaches the top and you'll know that you've covered most bases.

Your LinkedIn Photo

The old adage that 'a picture tells a thousand words' is certainly true when it comes to picking a picture for your profile. And no matter how hard you've worked to write yourself a bio that will stand out and make people want to do business with you, a poorly chosen picture can completely undermine all that hard work if you aren't careful.



So how then do you go about picking a picture that will show you in the best light and that will work with you to help you build connections and business opportunities?

The first thing you need to consider that is your photo should be of yourself, with your face prominently visible. The next thing to ensure is that the photo looks friendly and approachable but at the same time professional. This definitely isn't a scenario where you want to use a picture from your latest night out on the tiles and nor do you want a picture of yourself hugging your pet pooch. Instead, the best LinkedIn profile pictures will simply be you in a shirt or a suit smiling for the camera. Ideally though, you want to avoid anything that looks too staged or forced. Don't make the common mistake of dressing up in a suit at home and taking a picture in your home office – you'll look like an idiot. If you don't normally work in a suit, then look for a picture of yourself in smart clothes. If you've attended a wedding recently for example, then take a look through those pictures to try and find something appropriate.

Smiling is still important though because again – you want to create a profile that makes people *want* to work with you. Then again, this shouldn't be a smile that says 'I'm having a great day out!' so much as one that looks dependable, approachable and reliable.

And likewise, try to pick something that makes you look attractive. You might not expect this to matter but actually, studies show that better looking people tend to get better jobs and do better in interviews! It can be difficult for us to tell which photos of ourselves are the most attractive, so if you're unsure, try asking a friend or relative which of your pictures works best.

Tip #1: You can also add a cover image, just like on Facebook. This is a good way to make your profile more eye catching and it's a great way to enhance brand awareness – if you have a logo then adding this onto a black background and making it your cover image will help tie all your products and services together and aid with your attempts to build authority.

Keywords Are King

When writing your LinkedIn profile, something to keep in mind is that you can benefit from including keywords and phrases. What these are phrases and terms that people are likely to enter into search engines – including both Google *and* LinkedIn's own search function.

The idea here is simple: by using the right words throughout your content, you will increase the likelihood that those words will bring up your profile when someone searches for them. At the same time though, it's important not to 'overdo' the insertion of keywords as this will make your text seem awkward to read, damaging the impression that you'll make on your visitors. Meanwhile, when you overuse your keywords this can actually send a signal to Google that you're attempting to manipulate their search algorithms at the expense of delivering great quality to your visitors – and the result is that they can end up penalizing your page by preventing it from ranking highly in the searches at all.

A good 'density' for inserting your keywords is around 1-2%. Moreover, Google is now capable of looking at 'related' keywords and using those to help you rank as well. This is called 'LSI optimization' or 'Latent Semantic Indexing'. So as well as trying to subtly lace in your keywords, you should also be aiming to write 'around' the topic and include lots of synonyms and related terms. This should occur pretty much naturally as you're writing.



Choosing Keywords

The biggest question is how you pick your keywords to begin with. Here, the answer is to think about what people might be looking for that other LinkedIn users might not have thought to target. So in other words, if you try and 'rank' for the term 'writer' you may well find that this is very difficult or even nigh impossible. Why? Because everyone and their wife will be trying to do the same and the chances of 'beating' all of them is slim.



You might then instead try to rank for something such as '15th century art law writer'. The problem in this case? No one is likely to be searching for that term. You'll be the first name to come up if anyone *does* probably... but no one will.

On the other hand though, if you were to try and go a little more specific – by ranking for a term such as 'fitness writer' you can stand a much better chance of competing within this more limited field but at the same time you'll still be able to attract traffic through a decent number of search queries.

Your Company Page

Once you've made your LinkedIn profile, you'll next want to add your company page. This is basically *like* a profile, except that you'll be writing about your business rather than about yourself personally. This means you should write in a manner that sounds a little more detached and professional and you should focus on *value proposition* (how do people stand to gain from using your products or services) as well as on mission statement and goals. A little SEO (search engine optimization through keywords) again can go a long way.



The Company Page has a 'summary' field just like your profile, which is where you are going to fill in most of this information. Previously there was a 'Products and Services' page, though this is no longer supported by LinkedIn. Instead, you can now create 'Showcase Pages' which is where you will be able to create specific pages for your products and services. This might

include your digital marketing services, or it might include your website. This has the distinct advantage of allowing you to market a specific aspect of your business. For instance, if you have multiple websites, you won't need to have multiple company pages to promote them.

Note that you can actually get direct sales from your LinkedIn page if it's good, so make sure you give your visitors the direct links to where they can buy what you're selling. At the same time, you want to demonstrate the success that your products and services have enjoyed to show how capable your business is. Talk about numbers of sales, customer reviews and the like.

Branding

On your company page, you will find that your branding is particularly important. You will want to include a logo as your main 'profile image' for instance instead of a picture of yourself and you'll probably want the same for your cover picture.

As mentioned earlier, this is an excellent way to tie all your various products together and to create a coherent visual style that will increase your apparent professionalism. This is a very important tool for creating authority in your niche and for creating a cohesive experience for your visitors and customers.

So how do you go about creating your brand? The first thing to do is to come up with a logo if you don't have one already. We won't go into that in great detail here but essentially this needs to be an image created with vector software to create a 'vector' file (instead of a raster file). The best example of this is to use Adobe Illustrator which will produce an AI file. The reason that these are so important is that they allow you to subsequently edit the image by selecting individual lines and moving them around the image. At the same time, they can be zoomed in and out of without sacrificing any image quality. Essentially, the difference is that vector files contain 'code' that tell the computer how to draw particular shapes. On the other hand, raster files are simply large selections of pixels in particular positions.



When coming up with the design for your logo, try to ensure that it is simple and that it is versatile. You should be able to change the color of the logo, shrink it, enlarge it and place it on various different backgrounds without sacrificing the quality or the visibility. This is important because apart from anything else, it will likely need to be used in a square format for your Company Page profile image *and* as a cover image in a horizontal oblong. Do spend some time and effort on this aspect of your business before you invest too much time on LinkedIn as it will act as a force multiplier and help you to benefit *more* from all of your subsequent work. In fact, if you aren't particularly confident in your own abilities when it comes to branding and design, think about hiring someone who you do trust to do a good job. And in fact, why not try using LinkedIn to find a professional designer?

You should also consider making *yourself* a prominent part of your own branding. This is a great strategy for bloggers in particular and there are many prominent examples of this working well: Tim Ferriss (*The 4 Hour Workweek*), Pat Flynn (*Smart Passive Income*) and Dave Asprey (*The Bulletproof Exec*) are all prominent and

Expanding and Utilizing Your Personal Network

Once your LinkedIn profile is set up and you have created your Company Page, the next thing you need to do is to start growing your personal network. As mentioned before, this will create countless new opportunities to promote your business, to find business partners and to gain clients – among many other things. We're looking at this *first* rather than marketing because marketing on LinkedIn will be that much easier once you have built up a large network.

Degrees of Separation

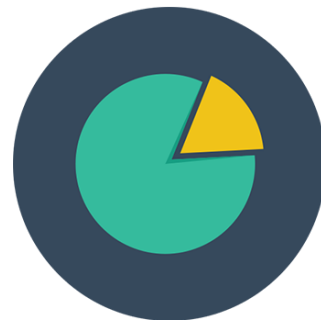
When you first sign up to LinkedIn, you will be given the opportunity to add a bunch of people that you already know through Facebook, through your mobile phone contacts and through your e-mail among other things.

This might at first seem like an irritation and you'll probably be tempted to quickly swipe through all your old school friends and work colleagues.... But *don't*.

Why? Because those contacts are incredibly valuable, even if you're not particularly interested in their actual careers. To understand this is to appreciate the full power of LinkedIn, which often comes down to essentially being a case of a game of 'degrees of separation'.

To see this in action, take a look at your current LinkedIn profile and then search for someone influential that you want to connect with. Don't be afraid to reach for the stars and to aim big – Richard Branson might be slightly too high up the pecking order but if you have a few hundred contacts, then you could very well find that you're connected to someone like Tony Robbins. That's a *hugely* powerful connection and we'll see how you can use this later.

So in other words, that kid who always used to pick their nose at the back of history class is well worth adding on LinkedIn because their Aunt *might* just be best friends with Tony Robbins' hair dresser... it's always possible! The wider the audience you connect with, the more easily you'll be able to start reaching out to *more* people.



So, don't just accept *all* those people you knew from school – make sure that you also actively seek out anyone you can think of and use them to build your professional network. And you never know, it might just turn out that someone you used to know is *themselves* now a very powerful connection for you!

Rapporteur

Rapportive is an incredibly important tool that you can use to increase your connections. Essentially, Rapportive is a plugin that you use with Gmail and which can then show you the LinkedIn profile of *anyone* who messages you.



This makes Rapportive a fantastic tool in many ways. Not only does Rapportive ensure that you can find out who someone is when they propose doing business but it also gives you the significant advantage of being able to add them as a contact right then and there rather than having to remember to do it later.

If someone contacts you to suggest working with you, or even if you contact them, this puts you at the forefront of their mind and thus gives you the opportunity to reach out to them. Even if they turn down your suggestion to work together, the fact that they've actually *communicated* with you makes them *far* more likely to add you to their LinkedIn network out of politeness and a sense of obligation alone. But when you do this, timing is everything: you need to act quickly to take advantage of that window of opportunity while they are susceptible to your approach. If you leave it a year and *then* try adding them on LinkedIn, you'll find that they are all the more likely to simply ignore their request. At this point, you might as well be messaging them cold again.

Rapportive turns every interaction into an opportunity to connect on LinkedIn and that makes it an *invaluable* tool. You can get it from: <http://www.razorsocial.com/linkedin-tools/>

Inviting Others to Connect

This doesn't all have to one way though. In fact, you *might* find that you have better luck creating meaningful connections (more on that later) by inviting *other people* to connect with you.

How can you do this? One simple way is to use a plugin on your website that lets people easily connect. Some themes will even have this feature built in, letting you grow your network quickly.



WP LinkedIn is a basic plugin that lets you embed your profile throughout your site:

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/wp-linkedin/screenshots/>.

Another way to do this via a website is by using the 'Follow Company Plugin Generator' which is for getting people to follow your business as opposed to your personal profile. Note that when you use the Follow Company Plugin Generator, you can do so for your business *or* for a Showcase Page. This is again particularly useful for promoting a website or blog that belongs to your business – this way you can treat your company and your website as separate entities.

The Follow Company Plugin Generator can be found here:

<https://developer.linkedin.com/plugins/follow-company>.

Another option is to invite your followers and friends to connect via e-mail marketing, Twitter or Facebook. This is a good strategy because these people are *already* fans and have already decided to follow you: thus they will likely be more receptive to an offer to join on LinkedIn – they may even be excited to.

Finally, don't be afraid to suggest connecting in real life. If you meet someone at a networking event or even at a social gathering and you think there's a chance you could do business together (or that they know someone you want to do business with) then ask them to add you on LinkedIn. You can even consider adding your LinkedIn profile to your business card. If you'd like to be fancy, you can do this with a QR code so that your connections can just scan your card with their phone and then add you on LinkedIn. This is like having Rapportive in the real world!

Managing Your Network and Connections

Right now you might find yourself starting to get a little excited about the prospect of **LinkedIn** marketing. Perhaps you looked up David Beckham and found you had a connection in common. 'I can talk to David Beckham??' you're no doubt exclaiming...



But while this is a nice thought, the reality is unfortunately somewhat different. You can't just leap in and start talking to David Beckham because despite that contact you have in common... you're still not best mates! (Unless you are).

Even the contacts that are *direct* connections are not necessarily going to regard you as anything other than a complete stranger. Being friends on LinkedIn does not make you friends in real life – especially for a major player who is likely to get contacted by about a billion smaller-fry on a daily basis.

Likewise, that kid who used to pick their nose in history? They probably don't want to introduce you to Obama either. Especially if you used to tease them...

The point is, to be meaningful on LinkedIn, a contact has to be meaningful in real-life – it has to be someone who owes you a favor, who genuinely likes you or who engages with your content. Likewise, you also need to think about your contacts in terms of who they are and what they mean to you. The way you approach your best mate is probably different from the way you approach Stephen Hawking. Likewise, the way you approach someone in the fitness industry is likely different from the way you approach someone in the programming industry.

So, you need to manage and organize your contacts and that means thinking carefully about who they are and how they are important to you. At the same time, you need to maintain your relationships and keep them 'meaningful'.

Fortunately, LinkedIn has some useful tools for doing both. One example of this is the suggested contacts, where LinkedIn will alert you to birthdays, to promotions and to other meaningful events in your contact's lives. This is a very handy way to stay in touch with someone and to stay 'on their radar' if you genuinely know them.

If you want to take this further, then try using the excellent FiveHundredPlus utility (<https://www.linkedin.com/today/>). This is a tool that allows you to easily take stay in touch with contacts by alerting you to contacts that you haven't contacted for a while so that they

don't forget you. At the same time, FiveHundredPlus also helps you to organize those contacts in meaningful and useful ways.

Another tool built into LinkedIn itself meanwhile is the option to add tags. Click 'connections' along the top of LinkedIn and you'll be presented with a list of people you know. These are already in order of how recently you communicated and you can sort them in alternative orders and filter them in various ways too. At the same time, you can also add 'tags' which essentially allow you to categorize each person in terms of the way you know them, the industry they're in or anything else that might be useful.

However you do it, the trick is to make sure that you spend time actually tending to your connections rather than just viewing them as 'in the bag' as soon as you're connected.

Note: There has been a lot of talk over the years of LinkedIn improving its *own* contact management utilities. In fact, it has been implied that it could eventually become a fully-fledged CMS, which would make a lot of sense for the direction of the business. Stay tuned for that then!

Marketing Yourself and Your Business

Influencer Marketing

Once you've put all this time and effort into growing your list of LinkedIn connections, you might then start to think about how you can use them to market your business, your website or your blog.

This is where 'influencer marketing' comes in – a relatively new term in the world of internet marketing but also one of the most powerful and important strategies that you have available to you. Essentially, influencer marketing straddles the line between conventional marketing and networking and combines them in a truly powerful way. What's more, it can save you countless hours when it comes to promoting yourself and getting ahead on the web. As it happens, LinkedIn is actually *perfect* for influencer marketing and is perhaps the optimal tool for doing it effectively.



What is Influencer Marketing?

So how does this idea work? Basically, influencer marketing means that you're going to stop trying to reach as wide an audience as possible with your marketing and instead you're going to focus on the *quality* of the audience you market to. This might mean focusing on *one* individual and getting them to retweet or promote something you have to say.

So if you were to take conventional marketing on Twitter, you might spend countless hours trying to build your number of followers and then trying to create new content that would help increase your engagement. Over countless hundreds of hours spread over months or years, you would build enough of a following to become an influencer in your niche and to start getting more business each time you post.

With influencer marketing though, you would skip this step. Instead, you would focus on creating a relationship with someone who *already had* a huge amount of influence. Let's take Richard Branson for instance. If you could somehow *reach* Richard Branson and get him to Tweet about your product (and to include your username) you would likely get thousands of new follower's overnight and *gigantic* sales for your book or your services. In other words, you could leapfrog all of the competition by going directly to a key influencer who has the ears and hearts of your audience. This way, *one single* retweet, guest post or shootout could be an order of magnitude more effective than hundreds or even thousands would regularly be.

How to Reach the Big Influencers

Problem is, Richard Branson probably doesn't want to shout out to you on social media and in fact you probably have no means of contacting him...

This is where that 'degrees of separation' thing comes in again. You see, if you could find someone who knew someone, who knew someone, who knew Richard Branson, then you would be connected by 3 degrees of separation. And anyone who is connected to you by that many people, will then show you your connection to them. In other words, you would be able to go onto LinkedIn and you would be able to see the two people who you need to go through to get to Richard Branson.

What's more, if you're connected to someone by three degrees, then you will be able to send them 'InMail'. This is a message that they'll receive in their LinkedIn inbox and which statistically has a higher chance of being opened.

Suddenly, it becomes all the more possible that you could reach a big influencer in your niche – especially if you're working hard to grow the prominence of your website. Get big enough and you might be considered an E-lister. That might be enough to encourage a few 'C-listers' to contact you to potentially do business together. That *in turn* means that you now have the opportunity to *directly contact* some of the biggest thought leaders on the planet. This is powerful stuff.

Climbing the Ladder

Remember what we said earlier though: outright messaging Bill Gates out of the blue is *not* going to go down well – even if you have a vague connection by people neither of you really know all that well (imagine that!).



So how do you instead go about getting the attention of the big players? One trick is not to aim quite *so* big. Instead of looking to get free promotion from the biggest names in your industry, instead try to make meaningful connections with the rising stars. Look at the people who are *just ahead* of you and try to work with them instead of trying to jump ahead. These people will have a much better chance of wanting to connect with you because they won't be inundated with requests and because they have something to gain from the relationship as well as you do.

Even then though, you need to be careful about how you get in touch. Once you've made the connection, try to manage that connection by congratulating them on birthdays etc. and by sharing content they might find interesting (more on that in a bit). Then, when you do get in touch, make sure it's with something that they will *genuinely* find interesting and avoid any thinly veiled motivations that are too self-serving. Think about the kind of message *you* would respond to and try to come across as genuine.

This is even *more* important if you're emailing a big name in your industry. Instead of straight away telling them you want to do business with them, try just saying that you're a huge fan and that you'd love if they checked out your website. Leave it at that for a while. Likewise, sharing something you think might be useful with them is another way to gradually build rapport.

Tip #1: Note that you *may* already have some very powerful contacts in your connections! It could well be that someone you know is now a big name in a particular blogging sphere and if they've already connected with you then this is almost like a 'freebie'. LinkedIn makes life easy for you as well by actually highlighting the true thought leaders with an 'Influencer' badge right on their profile.

Be Persistent... But Not too Much!

Don't be disheartened if you don't get a positive response right away, you will likely find that these people have a lot on their plate and they as such won't always have time to respond to your messages. The best strategy then is to wait a few months – even a year – and to try again. Don't be bitter and instead just be friendly and outgoing, the result is that you'll eventually become 'known to them', even if they don't respond still. You can also try contacting them through other means – through Facebook for instance. Comment on their blog posts a couple of times too.

While you want to be persistent though, you also don't want to be annoying or you'll end up blocked and ruining any chance of a meaningful relationship in the future. Never e-mail more than once every few months (unless you get a response), don't write overly long messages (these people are busy) and never come across as rude, entitled or bitter. Oh and remember that you're trying to make a good impression here – spelling counts for a lot. The objective is *not* to come across as a rabid fan...

Ask for an Introduction

Better yet though, is to ask for an introduction *in person*. Here you will only be using LinkedIn to identify the people who are powerful connections in your network and you're then going to do the rest in person. Once you see that someone you know is twice removed from a powerful business partner, you can then ask them to introduce you at a party or similar and this way you'll have a much better chance of being able to make a good impression. People who we meet in 'real life' are far more memorable than the people who contact us on the web for obvious reasons and we're far more likely to want to do them favors or to work with them if they can come across well.

Content Marketing

Influencer marketing was one fancy marketing buzz word, now it's time for another: content marketing. Like influencer marketing though, content marketing is not just a 'buzz word' but rather an incredibly powerful marketing tool. In fact, content marketing is somewhat considered as the natural evolution of search engine optimization and is now an integral part of almost every business' marketing strategy.



Essentially, the objective with content marketing is several fold but it all revolves around developing high quality content (not surprisingly). Traditionally, this content will then either be uploaded to your own blog or to the website of someone else in your industry (where it is known as a guest post). We're going to focus here on uploading content to your own blog – and yes, even if you run a B2B or commercial business, you should still have a blog which you can use to add content to your site and to build a relationship with your visitors. This is also very important for your SEO and the more content you add to your site, the more there will be for Google to search through and index.

When it comes to LinkedIn marketing, content marketing is all about offering value to your visitors through your blog. Essentially, you're going to add lots of new content to your blog or website and you're going to make sure that it provides real value to your LinkedIn network. This means it needs to be interesting, useful, entertaining, engaging... or all four. Preferably the latter.

Again, think about the kind of content that *you* would want to read. Avoid anything that is derivative or done-to-death and instead ask yourself: if you saw that crop up on your home feed, would you click on it? If the answer is no, then you need to rethink the angle of the piece or you need to make the title more interesting.

Essentially, what you are now doing is converting your LinkedIn connections into potential fans and regular visitors for your website. This might also lead to some people signing up to your mailing list or even becoming direct customers/clients if your site is good at converting.

At the same time, if you keep posting great quality content to your LinkedIn network, you'll find that they generally start to regard you as someone who knows what they're talking about with regards to that subject or niche. This is the other huge benefit of content marketing – it allows

you to demonstrate your knowledge and give your visitors a 'free taste'. Eventually, they should come to consider you as a leading authority in that field and as such they might seek out your opinion when looking for products, services and other ways to spend money. It's at this point you become an influencer yourself and give yourself a 'platform' through which to launch your various business ventures.

Shareaholic

But why do all the work yourself? You can also let people share your content from your blog directly to *their* LinkedIn networks. To do this, you just need to install Shareaholic (<http://www.shareaholic.com>) on your WordPress site and they'll that way then be able to quickly and easily share your content on a number of different social media sites – LinkedIn included.



Note that you can also get your content to automatically be shared with LinkedIn through WordPress *as* you post it. This can save you some time as well when it comes to sharing it manually.



LinkedIn Pulse

LinkedIn Pulse is a great tool that essentially allows you to make 'guest posts' on LinkedIn. Normally, the idea of a guest post is that it will allow you to build a link back to your own website, while at the same time gaining some of the authority of the post that your post appears on. Guest posting also has the advantage of allowing you to target a very specific market – that being the demographic that you are trying to sell to.

LinkedIn Pulse is essentially a 'news service' published right on LinkedIn itself that users can use to find interesting stories published by their connections, or that are within their areas of interest.

To see LinkedIn Pulse, you can go to <http://www.linkedin.com/today/> or alternatively click on 'Interests' and then select 'Pulse'. This will then show you three pages of curated content – content published by your connections ('Your News'), content that is popular in your niches/areas of interest ('Top Posts') and people you should follow ('Discover').

As a reader, this is an excellent place to learn industry news and to get inspiration for your own content generation. In terms of networking, it's an excellent way to find influencers in your niche. From a marketing perspective though, this is a great place to publish your content for SEO benefit *and* to improve your authority, influence and brand exposure.

To publish here, just click on one of the top stories to open 'Pulse' in the reader format and then click 'Publish a Post'. This will make it easy for you to post your content and to get free links and exposure as a result. If you get lots of thumbs up, this could potentially appear in the 'Discover tab' to get seen by thousands and thousands of users, drastically increasing your connections and more. You can even use a LinkedIn Pulse post to directly sell a product if you do so in a subtle-yet-persuasive manner. This is a great asset and certainly something worth experimenting with.

Posting and Updates

Of course, on top of all this content marketing and influencer marketing, you can also use LinkedIn to just... *post*. This works the exact same way it would in Facebook or Twitter and whatever you post will appear in the newsfeeds of your connections and followers.

And as with Twitter or Facebook, each time you post, you increase your brand awareness and remind your connections that you exist. At the same time, you can use this method to let people know about new product and service launches, about special offers and about all manner of other things going on with your business.

The rules of posting successfully on LinkedIn are the same as they are for any social media channel: make sure that you post regularly (but not too often), don't say anything controversial or offensive, don't promote yourself too much and always offer something that has value (people don't want to know about your lunch). More so than other networks as well, make sure you stay professional and 'on message'. If you are a car salesman, then you probably have



people following you who like cars and who are in the industry. So make sure your *posts* are on topic and that way you'll be providing value and something that's actually interesting to your audience.

Company Updates

Companies can also post by using 'Company Updates'. These are similarly posts that you write 'from' your business and that will appear on your connections' newsfeeds. This is once again a good way to make sure that people see your logo regularly and are reminded that your brand exists.



Better yet, if you create a Company Update and post it to your feed, there's a chance that someone will like it, share it or comment on it. And when they do that, it then becomes visible to everyone in *their* network.

LinkedIn doesn't have the same potential to go viral as, say, Facebook. However, what it *does* give you the opportunity to do is to potentially get your content seen by Donald Trump. Again, if you have someone in *your* connections, who knows someone in *theirs*, it then only takes a couple of likes for them to be able to see what you've posted. And if it's something that makes you look very good, that might then a) illicit a like or share from that influencer, or b) leave them more open to potentially business offers in future.

So don't let the relatively small number of shares and likes put you off. LinkedIn is all about quality and you absolutely *must* be posting here as well as the other big social networks.

Targeted Company Updates

Note as well that you also have access to another very powerful tool – targeted company updates. These are basically updates that allow you to target precisely *who* sees your post on their newsfeed. Filters include company size, industry, function, geography, language, seniority and more. All of this means that you can target precisely who sees your message and thus avoid spamming all your connections with information and news that they aren't likely to be interested in.

Company updates also give you a useful way to update your employees about changes within your organization. This demonstrates the power of LinkedIn as a business management tool for *internal* business dealings as well as for networking and marketing.

LinkedIn Investment – LinkedIn Premium and Ads

LinkedIn marketing is potentially highly powerful as a tool for networking and marketing and if you follow the advice in this book, you'll find that the possibilities are endless.

The question you might be wondering then, is whether it's worth upgrading to LinkedIn Premium? And whether or not you should use LinkedIn ads? As the platform is already so powerful, might it not make sense to invest some money into it and potentially amplify that potential?

What You Get With LinkedIn Premium

Everything that is listed in this book, you can already do with a 'regular LinkedIn account'. In other words, you can use all the techniques suggested in these pages so far without spending a dime. You certainly do not 'need' a LinkedIn Premium account in that case. And probably, you shouldn't think about spending any money until you have at least implemented some of these strategies.



But if you're having success with LinkedIn already and you'd like to get a little bit more out of it, LinkedIn Premium *does* offer some interesting incentives. These include:

Advanced Search

Advanced search allows you to search specific LinkedIn members using a number of advanced filters and fields. Specifically you get an additional 8 fields to search by which are: company size, seniority level, interests and Fortune 1000. This means that you can quickly find a contact you want to work with, rather than sifting through everyone you know.

Who's Viewed Your Profile

Another great way to make connections on LinkedIn is to see who is viewing your profile and then to add those people back. This is a useful tool because it allows you to see how well your

account is working as well. Normally you can see a few of the people who have recently viewed your profile, but with Premium you can see everyone.

Search Keywords

You'll also be able to see who found your profile using which keywords. This is *very* useful because it allows you to monitor the effectiveness of your LinkedIn SEO.

InMail

Everyone has InMail for connections and for 2nd and 3rd degree connections. But with Premium, you'll be able to send an InMail to anyone on LinkedIn which you can use as a way to 'prime' people to accept your offer to connect rather than just contacting them out of the blue.

LinkedIn Ads

Finally, you have LinkedIn Ads. And what these are is essentially a PPC network (Pay Per Click) that works similarly to Facebook or Google AdWords. That is to say that you only have to pay when someone actually clicks on your ads (though you can also pay per impression). You'll generally only pay a few cents for each click but the more you pay, the more often your ad will appear. You also set a minimum daily budget, with the minimum being set at \$10.



This is very effective because it means you don't have to pay *anything* if your ad is ineffectual and doesn't generate any traffic whatsoever. Likewise, again like Facebook Ads and Google AdWords, LinkedIn allows you to carefully target *who* sees your ads and this is fantastic for B2B organizations as it lets you specifically market to decision makers within your industry. What's more, LinkedIn Ads also work incredibly well for recruiting.

The exposure you'll get from LinkedIn Ads is of course not as great as what you'd get from Facebook but for the right business model this is definitely worth experimenting with. And in some ways, the slightly less popular nature of this platform can work in your favor as there will be less competition.

Conclusion

So there you have it, everything you could possibly need to know about LinkedIn Marketing and how to really make the most of it! Hopefully you're now well aware of the potential power of LinkedIn and of how to leverage it for maximum effect. The real take home message is that it's a highly powerful tool for networking and that in turn makes it incredibly valuable for various forms of marketing – *especially* influencer marketing. This is the one and only platform that you can use to arrange a meeting with the very biggest names in your industry... and that's *hugely* valuable to any business and to any entrepreneur.

But we have covered an awful lot through the duration of this book and if you're feeling a little lost about where to start at this point... that's understandable. Just to recap then and to prep you for leaping in, let's end on a few 'LinkedIn Top Tips'. Enjoy, and I hope to see you on LinkedIn soon!

LinkedIn Top Tips

- Write in a professional manner with perfect spelling and grammar
- Think carefully about your headline
- Choose a profile picture that shows your face – these are more memorable
- Choose profile picture that is attractive and makes you look reliable and trustworthy
- Spend some time on creating a logo and a brand before putting too much effort into LinkedIn
- Create a cohesive and consistent visual style across all your channels
- Feature your projects and experience as they relate to your current business
- Use basic SEO on your profile page
- Create a company page
- Add 'Showcase pages' for your products and websites
- Endorse people to try and get endorsements back
- Accept all invitations to connect on LinkedIn – they may just be valuable
- See who you know through your connections and don't be afraid to 'test out' whether you're connected to some big names
- Seek out people to connect with
- Use 'Rapportive' to add e-mail contacts to your LinkedIn

- Connect to people you interact with in the real world – consider adding your details to your business card
- Ask people to give you real-world introductions to people in your LinkedIn network
- Make it easy for people to connect from your website
- Ask people to connect through other channels
- Post content regularly and make it high quality
- Share content from your blog
- Don't contact people you're distantly connected to out of the blue
- Manage your network and bear in mind the difference between a contact and a 'meaningful contact'
- Post company page updates and target them where appropriate
- Consider upgrading to Premium and/or using LinkedIn ads