



5 Ways Your Business Should Be Maximizing Your LinkedIn

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If you're overlooking LinkedIn, your business is ignoring the second-largest social network. That's right, some data suggests that LinkedIn actually has more dedicated users than Twitter. Whether you are seeking introductions to decision makers or more clients for your business, LinkedIn can help you get there, but only if you use it right. Overhaul your LinkedIn presence with these 6 proven strategies to maximize your reach on LinkedIn.

1. Makeover your profile

Everything you do on LinkedIn will reflect back on your LinkedIn profile. Before you do anything else, review your LinkedIn presence and make sure it shows you off in your best light. Refresh your LinkedIn photo. Update fields to showcase new skills and new accomplishments. Solicit Recommendations from past colleagues and clients who can praise the work you've done. In other words, set up your infrastructure properly for your future LinkedIn success.

2. Groom your network

Professionals at every level should have a broad network on LinkedIn. After all, people trust people they know, and assuming you've been working for awhile, you should have at least hundreds of LinkedIn connections. When you can turn to your network and ask for referrals for business deals or recommendations of vendors, you can move ahead with decision-making with an added element of trust. Your friends, colleagues, past coworkers, classmates, professional association members, and others make good network connections.

In parallel to growing your network of connections on LinkedIn, I also recommend you groom that network. As LinkedIn becomes more popular, there are more fake profiles. Simply accepting every connection that asks could expose you to risk. Evaluate any new connection for legitimacy. Create notes on how you know connections in your Relationships tab. Create a

LinkedIn connection policy that makes sense for your business objectives and stick to it.

3. Add Skills and Endorsements

If you're using LinkedIn to grow your business, you'll want to add Skills and Endorsements that reflect your skill set. Filling these out is as easy as entering in a keyword to get suggestions of relevant Skills to add. As you add Skills, LinkedIn will recommend similar skills to consider based on what others with your Skills add.

Once you add Skills, you'll find that LinkedIn Connections start to Endorse you for those skills. Having these additional votes of confidence will reflect positively on your business, so don't opt out of Endorsements (although you can) – in fact use LinkedIn Endorsements to your advantage.

As you do this, consider Endorsing connections whose work you can vouch for. You never know when "paying it forward" will net you new business referrals. All it takes is a small social signal that can create a ripple effect of goodwill.

4. Take Your Pulse

Pulse (found in the Interests tab) lets you follow relevant industry news from within LinkedIn. Connect with content creators in your niche, track trends, be the first to know about the latest news, and stay on the cutting edge when you track Pulse.

A simple three-tab design makes Pulse easy to browse. See Top Posts, Discover new content, or go straight to what you care about most with Your News. If you see something that interests you, share it with your connections. Pulse also offers the option to see content by Publisher (which includes mainstream media), Channels or subject area categories, and Influencers or top minds in our society.

Dive into Pulse to stay engaged and in the know in your industry.

5. Share

Lastly, cultivate a habit of sharing content with your Connections to stay engaged, maintain ties, and cultivate and promote a personal brand. Sharing can be as simple as posting the latest business statistics, sharing a story that you found on Pulse, or letting your network know about your latest professional achievements. By taking a few minutes to share to a tidbit of news, and making it a consistent habit, you will truly maximize your reach on LinkedIn. If you're in sales, this concept becomes even more important in order to maintain mindshare.