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Introduction

For savvy professionals and organizations, LinkedIn provides a way to access a global network of over 200 million business-minded users. Whether you're a small business owner or a marketer for a mid-sized or large company, if you're not using LinkedIn for business, you're missing out on ways to boost your company's reach — and bottom line.

With a little planning and effort, companies large and small can soon benefit from LinkedIn's global network — and this eBook is designed to help you get started quickly. It begins with an overview and step-by-step instructions for setting up LinkedIn company pages, which combine the professionalism of a company website with the interaction of a social media profile, and are used by more than three million businesses.

Next, you can explore best practices for using LinkedIn to drive marketing and sales, identifying the tactics that best suit your business profile and goals. As marketing tools, your LinkedIn profile and company page are great ways to communicate what your business has to offer, and to tailor valuable content for the industries and groups you want to engage. Using LinkedIn groups in your marketing strategy can help you develop your reputation and subject-matter authority, generating new connections, referrals and business.

Using LinkedIn as a sales tool requires not only research skills to quickly identify and connect with prospects, but also a keen understanding of the network's culture, to ensure your sales messaging meets users' expectations. To make the most of these interactions, LinkedIn's Contacts and Mobile apps can help sales staff organize contacts to ensure appropriate follow up on the most promising leads.

This eBook concludes with six case studies of LinkedIn campaigns — real-world examples from small, medium and large companies. These case studies make it easy to see these best practices in action, as well as the variety of possibilities LinkedIn has to offer.

What is LinkedIn and Why Does It Matter?

Facebook, Instagram, Vine, Pinterest — the list is endless. And with each new social media platform, businesses must try to balance the necessity of keeping up with the times against their own limited time and resources. While you may enjoy using certain platforms (like Vine, for example) in your personal life, they are not necessarily appropriate or relevant for your industry. With LinkedIn, however, business is the focus — not photos of cats and food (unless, of course, that is your business).

Building a strong presence in LinkedIn's professional environment is a bit like combining some of the functions and presentation of a company website with the interactive nature of a social media profile. [Today, more than 3 million businesses maintain their presence through LinkedIn company pages, providing a key point of access to a network of over 200 million registered users around the world.](#)

If you're not using LinkedIn for business, you're missing out on the opportunity to boost your company's reach — and bottom line.

"LinkedIn's party line has always been that you need to know the people you connect with. However, with the new Company Page, you have the ability to increase your following, without increasing your connections. And this is good news for people who are more interested in building their company's visibility and business than their own." — Viveka von Rosen, social media expert and author of [LinkedIn Marketing: An Hour a Day \(Sybex, 2012\)](#)

SUMMARY:

LinkedIn combines the professionalism of a company website with the interaction of a social media profile. Today, more than 3 million businesses use company pages to access a global network of over 200 million users. If you're not using LinkedIn for business, you're missing out on ways to boost your company's reach — and bottom line.

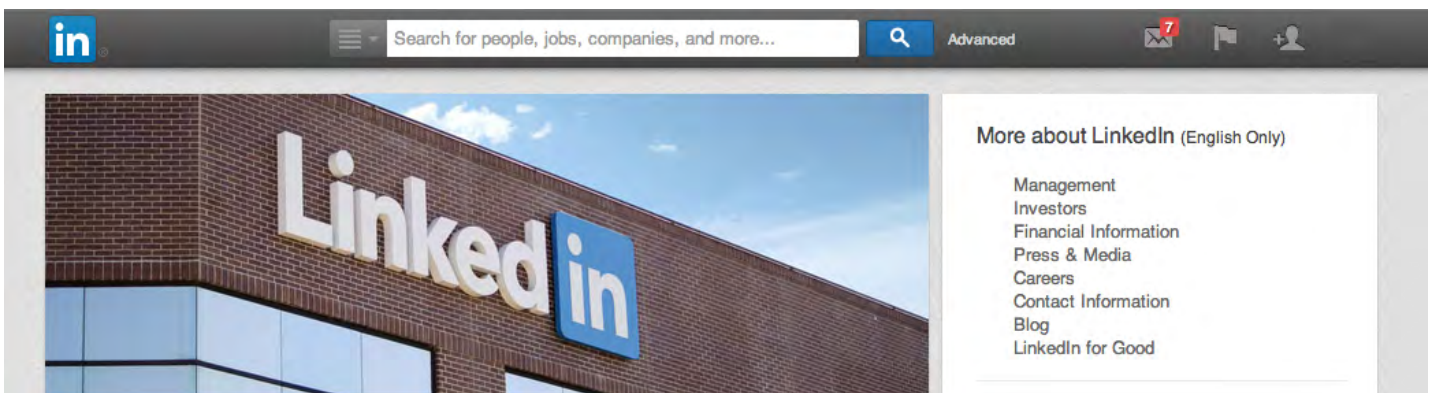


Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

Here are five ways using LinkedIn can help your business grow:

- 1) **Reinforcing your reputation:** As a marketing tool, LinkedIn provides a great way to share your company's story, and develop trust and subject-matter authority through regular updates and customer recommendations.
- 2) **Generating leads and referrals:** Your LinkedIn activity shows other professionals that you value and participate in business communities, and sends a message about your company's competence with technology and emerging media. Especially for business-to-business firms, these connections can drive referrals that result in new clients, customers and contracts.
- 3) **Showcasing products and services:** With LinkedIn's company pages, it's easy to communicate what you have to offer, and to tailor this message for different industries, groups and demographics. Listing your products also allows you to collect recommendations, as one Hubspot report notes, and "[to drive traffic back to your website's products or services page, which can ultimately drive sales.](#)"
- 4) **Building your brand:** As current and previous employees actively use LinkedIn, they create a growing network that links (quite literally) back to your company page, expanding your brand presence.
- 5) **Attracting new talent:** While LinkedIn is useful for job hunters, it's much more than a place to surreptitiously post resumes. The network offers companies a great way to advertise job openings to a diverse talent pool. Plus, the candidate profiles say much more about a potential employee than the typical resume and work samples.

These five items alone should give you an idea of why it's important (and valuable) for companies to create a strong presence on LinkedIn. And when you think about it, if you're not using the world's largest professional network to grow your business, aren't you missing out? Fortunately, companies large and small can soon benefit from LinkedIn's global network, with a little planning and researching of best practices.

11 Steps to Setting Up a LinkedIn Business Page

Time to set up your new LinkedIn business page! At first, you confidently fill in basic information about your company. If there's a detail you don't have at your fingertips, you might hazard a guess, or make a note to come back to it. But after a few of these missing pieces, you start to realize that the task is more involved than you thought — and there's no way to finish before that 4 p.m. meeting.

When setting up a LinkedIn company page, it's easy to stall out. Perhaps you lack the necessary images and information, or you're unsure about how to get started. And maybe you've made a common social media mistake: Thinking that creating the page is the end of the project, when it's only beginning of a strategic campaign. This article helps businesses avoid these obstacles, providing step-by-step instructions from preparation to setup to implementing follow-through.

Preparation

To make setting up your business page as smooth as possible, make sure to prepare the materials and information you need before getting started. This initial legwork can save time, minimize roadblocks and prevent miscommunication between business departments or team members.

1) **Review existing profiles:** Chances are good that company employees already have profiles on LinkedIn, and there may already be a default business page present. By making note of who's already active on LinkedIn, you can find internal experts that can assist you with setup, updates or admin duties. If the people who will administer the business page do not have member profiles already, they will need to create them.

2) **Research your competitors:** Before you set up your business page, take the time to see what the competition is doing. Depending on your needs and industry, this could be an informal review, noting strengths and weaknesses, or a detailed competitive analysis. Any market research can help you to avoid rookie mistakes and can suggest ways to help you differentiate yourself in the LinkedIn community.

SUMMARY:

Creating a LinkedIn company page is straightforward, but many people encounter obstacles. Perhaps you need to gather images and details, don't know where to start or realize you lack a clear plan for what comes next. This article helps businesses avoid stalling out, with step-by-step instructions from preparation to setup to follow-through.

3) Set initial communication goals (and be ready to change them):

Early in the setup process, you'll be asked to [fill in searchable keywords](#) under "Company Specialties." These keywords should be strategic choices to drive traffic and leads, not something generic that's just filling up space. Look at any keyword analysis your marketing team has done and think about what terms you want your company to come up for in search engine listings. As with any advertising, social media or marketing content campaign, you'll save time and effort by having a plan and goals ahead of time. Just be prepared to tweak them as your LinkedIn expertise grows.

4) Collect marketing copy and images: The Home space on your business page needs to create a strong impression. Don't leave these first impressions to chance! Gather materials from previous and current marketing campaigns, review them for appropriateness, and make adjustments as necessary.

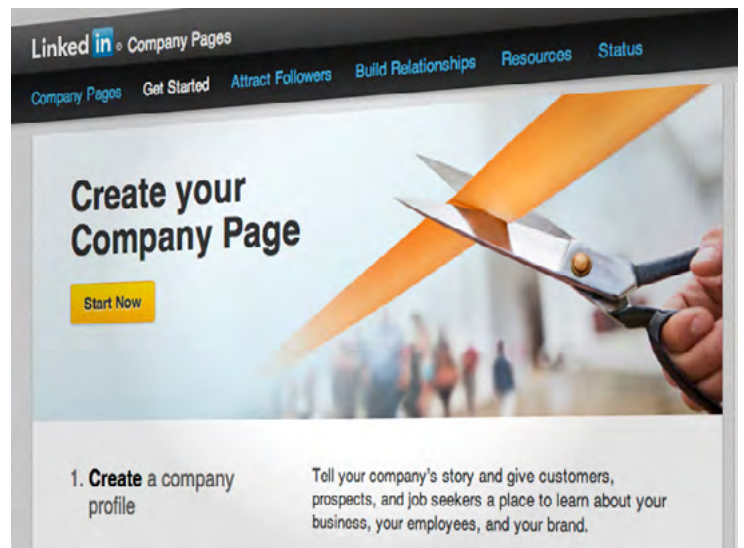


Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

To get started, you will need professional, error-free "About Us" text, a compelling image, and square and standard formats of your logo. LinkedIn suggests thinking of this page as an opportunity to ["tell your company's story"](#) and give customers, prospects, and job seekers a place to learn about your business, your employees, and your brand."

If you plan to highlight products and services (and you should) you will also want to gather the relevant details: names, descriptions, images, features, contacts, videos or other media assets.

Setup

Once you've done the initial legwork, [setting up the actual company page](#) should be quick and straightforward.

5) Create your company profile: First, select "Edit" on the right-hand side of the page, and then fill in the basic information as completely and accurately as possible.

6) Add page admins: This allows access for the people who will manage and edit the company page, which you've already identified in step one.

7) Add marketing copy and images: Upload your cover image and logos, then copy-and-paste your “About Us” text and “Company Specialty” keywords.

8) Add products and services: After switching to the “Products” tab, click on “Edit” to begin adding items — again, using the marketing materials and product details you organized in the preparation phase. If you’re not ready to add products just yet, you can still move on to the next step to complete the initial setup. (An upcoming blog post will cover best practices and tips for highlighting products and services.)

9) Review your profile: You’ve completed the initial setup, but it’s a good time to review what you’ve posted for any errors, typos or missing information. Again, a professional image is vital on LinkedIn, so it may be wise to enlist help to proofread the profile early on.

Follow-Through

You might have set up the perfect business page in a flurry of activity. But if that page is never updated or maintained, that neglect will end up sending a very different message to prospective clients than you intended.

10) Plan your updates: LinkedIn makes it easy to stay in front of customers and potential leads by posting relevant updates and links that generate conversation. Hubspot suggests [posting about once a day](#), focusing on content valuable to your audience. Consistency is the key to developing topic authority, so it makes sense to plan your updates in advance. Consider selecting a different topic to focus on each month and writing posts that relate to that main theme each day.

11) Set aside time for daily maintenance: Once you get the hang of using LinkedIn, it should only take about 10 minutes per day to [post updates](#), [check page statistics](#) and [respond to any comments and messages](#).

Conclusion

Setting up a business page on LinkedIn is an important step in building brand awareness, expanding your network and generating leads. By following these steps — preparation, setup and follow-through — you can minimize the obstacles and quickly create a professional platform for your company.

LinkedIn for Marketing: Updating Your Profile, Connecting With Professionals

When LinkedIn launched in 2003, it provided social media functionality for businesspeople who wanted to network online. Since then, the site has become a key way to share your company's story, and develop trust and subject-matter authority. As LinkedIn continues to develop new business-oriented features and functionalities, the site becomes more powerful and efficient as a marketing platform.

But what does it mean to look at LinkedIn from a marketing perspective? The next three articles present six ideas for how LinkedIn can support (or even transform) your marketing strategy. This post starts with the basics: Keeping your profile updated and turning professional connections into meaningful opportunities to tell your company's story.

1) Keep your profile updated: Many people create a LinkedIn profile when they are applying for jobs, and abandon it once their search is over. That's fine for some purposes, but not when you're using LinkedIn to market your company. A current, complete profile does more than show who you are and your role in the company — it should also show prospective clients how you can help and what specific customers and clients you work for.

When you fill out the "Experience" field, for example, don't just summarize your resume; be strategic. "Use the 1,000 characters in the description section to tell people why they should hire you or your company or buy your product," says Viveka von Rosen, social media expert and author of *LinkedIn Marketing: An Hour a Day*. She suggests using the space for a testimonial, to list different companies you have helped, or "tell a 'save the day' story."

For marketing purposes, be sure to include information about your company's current projects and promotions, using images for visual enhancement. Even though LinkedIn profiles do not allow for external hyperlinks, you can write a great call-to-action and provide your website address, encouraging people who browse your page to visit your website or landing page. Any recommendations you can get look good on a profile; endorsements are also nice to have, but not essential.

SUMMARY:

As LinkedIn continues to develop new features and functions, businesses should think of the site as a powerful marketing tool. LinkedIn can support (or even transform) your marketing strategy. This article covers the basics: Keeping your profile updated and turning professional connections into opportunities to tell your company's story.

Extra tip: Set a reminder for yourself in your calendar to review your profile on a regular basis — at least once a month. No matter where you work, your skills and accomplishments will change over time.

2) Use your profile to build and strengthen connections: Make sure you're sharing your profile account as you interact with professionals outside LinkedIn. If you're meeting someone on Skype or in GoToWebinar, for example, you can always offer to connect on LinkedIn. You can search for people on LinkedIn and connect, even if you don't know their email address. New tools like [LinkedIn Contacts](#) have CRM features that allow you to add notes about the people you've met and help you keep track of hundreds of connections. For another example, you can use [Outlook Social Connector](#) to manage your LinkedIn contacts within Microsoft Outlook.

Extra tip: You can create a direct link to your LinkedIn profile just about anywhere — from your company website and blog to eBooks, even your email signature. Take time to brainstorm a list of ideas for other areas where professionals might see your profile link.

People tend to use LinkedIn in one of two different ways. Some connect with everybody to grow the largest network they can. Others connect only with people they know very well. When reaching out to connect with people, timing and context are important. A good policy is to send people a message soon after you meet, if you plan to connect, and to personalize the request message.

In the end, LinkedIn provides a great marketing platform for professionals and organizations that want to spread awareness of their brand, showcase their work, and develop expertise and authority. The first steps are updating your profile and building connections.

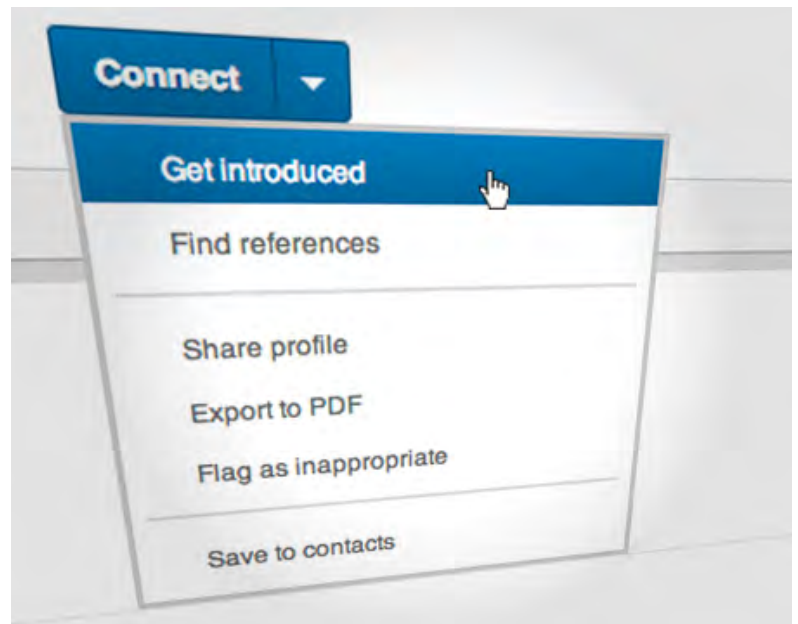


Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

LinkedIn for Marketing: Sharing Valuable Content and Showcasing Your Business

Now that you're thinking about LinkedIn from a marketing perspective, it's time to focus on a messaging strategy and other ways to showcase your business. LinkedIn's company pages feature is making it easier for businesses to communicate what they have to offer, and to tailor valuable content for different industries and groups.

1) Use your company page to showcase your business: A LinkedIn company page is different from your professional profile — think of it as blending the elements of a company website with the interactive functions of a social media profile. It's a great place to present a focused company summary and highlight products and services for a highly targeted audience.

Like a personal profile, think of company pages as strategic messaging opportunities: Tell potential clients why you're in business, what you're good at doing and why people come back to you. You can't include everything your company offers, so you may want to focus on your top three to five services or products and a link to your company's website. You may also want to include updates on your latest projects and landing pages for current promotions. It's also good to encourage employees to follow the page and have the company name in their profiles.

Extra tip: Haven't set up LinkedIn company page yet? For a guide to the process, "[11 Steps to Setting Up a LinkedIn Business Page](#)" provides user-friendly instructions, from preparation to implementation to follow-through.

2) Participate in the news feed, providing valuable content: By responding to content other people share and providing your own regular updates, the news feed lets your company connect with people without constantly interrupting them. The key is to focus on a professional tone — LinkedIn is not nearly as casual as Facebook, for example — and to provide value to potential clients or influencers in your industry.

As a good rule of thumb, you should plan to post your own updates twice a day. Those updates should include sharing your company's blog posts,

SUMMARY:

LinkedIn's company pages feature is making it easier for businesses to communicate what they have to offer, and to tailor valuable content for different industries and groups — a powerful marketing tool. The traffic company pages generate is highly targeted: If someone visits, they want to know more about what you do and what your service or solution offers.

as long as they're targeted to professional users, as well as other news and articles that would be interesting to professionals in your industry. You can also share brief updates about your company or your workday. For example, if you made a new sale, you could mention that (without disclosing too much detail), or you could note progress on new project, such as using a new tool for your business.

When planning your updates, think about using filters to target status updates for specific client groups. You could have one update that goes out to everyone, and then create a second one addressed to others in your industry, and another to potential clients. Once you have the filters set up, it's easy to send an update to each one of the filtered groups every day.

Extra tip: When sharing a link, either to your own blog posts or outside content, it's always best to annotate it, providing context with your message. You might want to briefly note why you find the article relevant for a certain industry, or ask a question about a point raised in it.

Your LinkedIn marketing strategy should include sharing valuable content as a way to direct potential clients to a well-designed company page. While company pages may not get as much traffic as other parts of LinkedIn, the visits they do receive are highly targeted. If someone visits your company page, they want to know more about what you do and what your service or solution offers.



LinkedIn For Marketing: Joining Groups And Cultivating Leads

For many companies, LinkedIn has become a key way to develop a trusted reputation and subject-matter authority. Taking an active role in LinkedIn's industry groups demonstrates that you value participating in a business community, and underscores your company's commitment to new technology and social media. Including LinkedIn groups in your marketing strategy can help generate new connections, referrals and business opportunities.

A second reason to join LinkedIn groups is that you can engage other group members directly, notes Viveka von Rosen, social media expert and author of *LinkedIn Marketing: An Hour a Day*. "Once you join a group you can send a message to strategic members," she says, "or invite strategic members to connect with you."

There are the two main elements to consider when using LinkedIn groups for marketing: joining appropriate groups and creating your own.

- 1) Join relevant industry groups: Start by joining key groups in your own industry — for example, professional associations, alumni groups and other networks you belong to. Next, you'll want to join industry groups where your prospective clients are likely to be members. If your company designs custom software solutions for the film industry, for example, you might want to seek out software development groups as well as groups for film production and supply houses.
- 2) Create your own group for current clients and prospects: By starting your own group on LinkedIn, you gain additional abilities to target prospects, share information, and circulate your company's blog articles and updates. As you participate in other groups, you can steer prospects and existing clients into this group for additional lead cultivation. Having your own group means you facilitate the communication, and it allows you to segment your market and target information that suggests why they would come to your company.

SUMMARY:

Active participation in LinkedIn's industry groups shows others that you value the business community, and underscores your company's commitment to new technology and social media. Using LinkedIn groups in your marketing strategy can help you develop your reputation and subject-matter authority, generating new connections, referrals and business.

Extra tip: "Make sure you or someone in your company is tasked to moderate it to keep it interesting and relevant," von Rosen says. "Make your group a destination and active forum."

Whether you take an active role in existing industry groups or create your own client group to share valuable content, participating in the online business community creates a positive image for your company. It also improves your access to fellow group members, which can facilitate connections, referrals and other business opportunities.



LinkedIn for Sales: Identifying Prospects and Building Relationships

With over 200 million LinkedIn users, finding ideal sales prospects might seem like looking for a needle in a haystack. For a good return on investment, salespeople need the research skills to quickly connect with worthwhile prospects on LinkedIn.

Salespeople need to focus on two areas: Growing connections and then building relationships with those individuals. Learning to use the People Search functions — and how to build relationships within this context — is vital to generating leads and sales.

- 1) Using LinkedIn's People Search to find and research prospects: People Search is a great tool for finding people to connect with as well as identifying the ideal prospects for your business at target companies. Start by entering the name of the target company in the LinkedIn search box. After generating the results, you can then narrow your search by selecting options on the left, such as filtering by direct connections or second connections. This gives you a list of people at the company and shows any shared connections you may have.

Don't have specific companies you are targeting? Another good option is to use a similar search strategy in industry-specific LinkedIn groups. As you go through the group members, you can see what type of position they hold and where they work. From there, you may want to explore the Company Page to learn more about a prospective client and see what other employees are using the site. A great advantage of using this method is that if you and the prospect are members of the same industry group, you can connect directly.

Extra tip: To expand your reach, remember to join groups where you expect to find prospects, not just those for your immediate circle or industry. For example, if you're an accountant, look beyond accounting and join groups for entrepreneurs, small business owners and so on.

SUMMARY:

With over 200 million LinkedIn users, finding ideal sales prospects might seem like looking for a needle in a haystack. For a good return on investment, salespeople need the research skills to quickly connect with prospects on LinkedIn. Knowing how to use the People Search functions and build relationships are key to generating leads and sales.

2) Building relationships by connecting directly or requesting introductions: Once you've identified prospects using People Search, it's time to make the connection. LinkedIn gives you a couple of options, but the key to a solid strategy is determining which methods are going to generate the best sales.

Many people will suggest making initial contact through an introduction or referral from a shared connection. The idea is to ask one of those shared connections to recommend you to the prospect or set up a phone call to discuss sales. True, recommendations are a really powerful tool, but only if the connections involved have strong relationships. And those are harder to find: Many people are open networkers on LinkedIn, so the fact that you share a connection doesn't mean they actually know the people in their networks. You can easily waste a lot of time if you have to go through several people trying to get a meaningful introduction.

Some find that just starting the dialogue is a more time-efficient strategy for building a relationship. First, review the prospect's profile to learn more about them and their role at the company, then visit the Company Page to get a sense of the content, or look at the person's Twitter profile to get a quick sense of what their interests are. With a little research, instead of spending time looking for an introduction, you can initiate the conversation yourself through groups or Twitter, and start building some rapport.

Extra tip: No matter what approach you use, focus on the relationship, not the sales pitch. When you reach out to someone new on LinkedIn, some will want to immediately connect, but others will want to know what your intentions are. As much as possible, avoid just jumping in and saying, "this is about sales."

In the end, LinkedIn is a great way to connect with sales prospects, but you need some skills if you want to avoid wasting time and earn a good return on the time you invest. Through practicing your skills with People Search, you can learn to quickly uncover the best prospects, and begin building the business relationships that will drive sales for your organization.



LinkedIn for Sales: Managing Prospects with CRM and Mobile Apps

You're off to a great start: You've connected with a few hundred fellow LinkedIn users who seem like good sales prospects. But any salesperson soon faces two related challenges: organizing these contacts to ensure appropriate follow up, and helping your contacts remember who you are and why you're connected. Without the right tools to meet these challenges, once-promising leads quickly grow cold.

Two tools from LinkedIn can help you manage prospects and connect in person: the Contacts and Mobile apps.

1) Managing and nurturing connections with LinkedIn Contacts: Most sales organizations use some form of customer relationship management (CRM) software. With Contacts, launched in early 2013, users now have access to similar CRM functionalities from a browser or mobile app, making it easier to stay in touch and know who you're talking to.

In a nutshell, Contacts integrates your connections from LinkedIn with your various address books, email accounts and calendars, and automatically keeps them up to date. The tool can also compile the details of your conversations and meetings and connect them with each contact profile. This way, salespeople can keep their prospects organized and stay in touch without having to copy and paste email addresses from one program to another.

Perhaps more importantly, Contacts allows you to create alerts, notes and reminders as you cultivate business relationships. For example, let's say you have a conversation with a prospect, and he or she asks you to follow up in six weeks. If you have over 500 connections, it can be difficult to keep them all straight in your head, especially if your address book, calendar and email aren't seamlessly connected. With LinkedIn Contacts, you can quickly save your notes from the conversation and set a follow-up reminder. Six weeks later, you'll be reminded to follow up, and have the relevant details at your fingertips instead of buried in your email.

SUMMARY:

Once you've connected with a few hundred fellow LinkedIn users, salespeople will soon face two related challenges: organizing contacts to ensure appropriate follow up and helping your contacts remember you and the reason you're connected. Two tools from LinkedIn can help you master these challenges: the Contacts and Mobile apps.

Extra tip: When you consider using LinkedIn extensions for Outlook and third-party applications, it's important to secure your data. Make sure you review the reputation of the developer and the app, and ask technical support staff at your company before giving access to your LinkedIn account.

2) Using LinkedIn Mobile apps to share information and connect in person: An effective LinkedIn network needs to reflect your real environment if you want real-world sales. A detached island of "Internet friends" isn't the goal. Using LinkedIn on your mobile device can help integrate your online and real-life networking. If you're at a networking event, such as a trade show or meet-up, it's a good idea to use the LinkedIn Mobile app to exchange contact information right there, while you have that person's full attention. While you will still want to follow up with prospects soon, you're taking care of the LinkedIn connection right away, instead of having to remind them.

LinkedIn Mobile is available for iPhone and iPad, as well as Blackberry, Android and Microsoft devices. One useful feature: If two people both have the app running, they can bump phones to instantly exchange contact information.

Extra tip: While you're making the LinkedIn connection, you can also ask the other person if they would like to subscribe to your blog or email newsletter. By asking people if you can add them to your newsletter when you meet them, they've opted in and you won't run the risk of spamming them.

LinkedIn is a great way for salespeople to connect with prospects, but these connections can be useless without a good way to organize contacts for follow-up and other relationship building. Learning to use LinkedIn's Contacts and Mobile tools can help you manage these customer relationships and make connections at networking events.

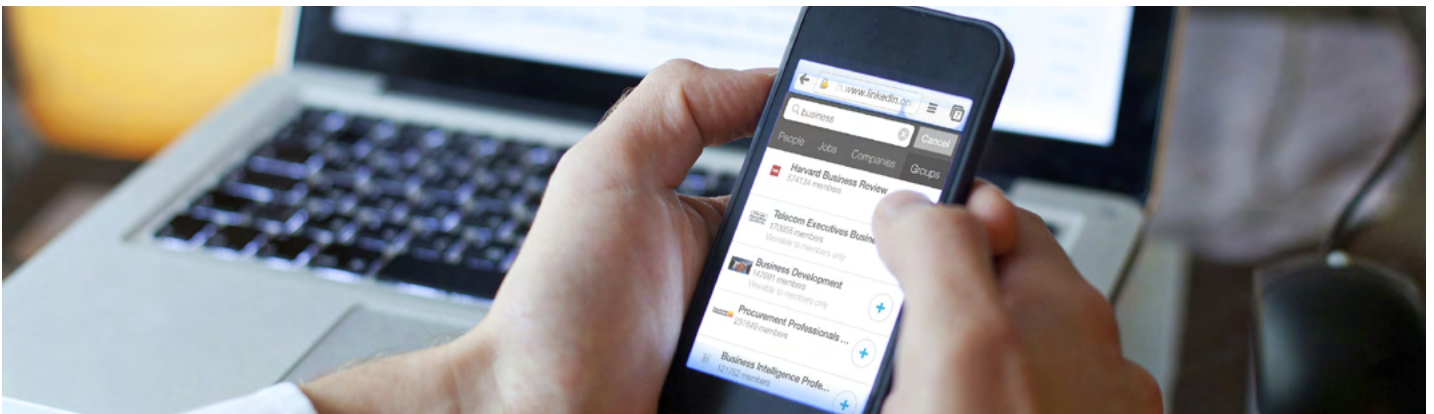


Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

LinkedIn for Sales: Building Engagement and Closing the Deal

With over 200 million LinkedIn users, odds are good that your ideal customers are already using the networking site. As a business networking site, LinkedIn provides a useful forum for salespeople to generate leads by researching prospects, making connections and building relationships. But it's not an e-commerce platform.

Generally speaking, LinkedIn is more of a prospecting tool than a direct sales tool — and it's a good one. A study by HubSpot found that LinkedIn traffic has a high visitor-to-lead conversion rate (2.74 percent), almost 3 times as high as traffic generated from Twitter and Facebook. When you use status updates to share landing pages or post product descriptions and other sales copy on LinkedIn, focus on bringing prospects into nurture campaigns, not the hard sell. You stand a better chance of gaining a person's attention or contact information than getting them to pull out their wallet.

1) Building engagement with “calls-to-action” (CTAs) and offers: Once you connect with someone on LinkedIn, they may see blog posts and other content you post on your network, but that's probably not enough to keep that contact from going cold. One solution is to focus on getting prospects to subscribe to your newsletter or blog, creating additional ways to keep up those touches through LinkedIn.

Depending on your business type, you could also create a CTA encouraging people to sign up for a free demo or an assessment, or a free download. Once you have the CTA text, you can start adding it to the end of your profile and blog posts, with links to a landing page with details of the offer, designed to create interest.

Extra tip: As a member of a group, you can send out group messages when you're having a free giveaway or running a promotion and include your sales links as well as your CTAs for the newsletter and other offers.

2) Using targeted LinkedIn ads to drive current promotions: Like many social media sites, LinkedIn will allow you to advertise to its users. As with any ads you purchase, these need to be carefully targeted to ensure a good return and conversions instead of wasting clicks. You can

SUMMARY:

With over 200 million users, odds are good that your ideal customers are already using LinkedIn. But LinkedIn is generally better for prospecting than direct sales. To drive sales with LinkedIn, it's essential to understand the expectations of the site's users, and make sure your CTAs, ads and other sales messaging mesh well with the culture.

filter ads by a person's age, level in their company and other factors, and create different ads for each group you're targeting.

The ads can be expensive, and again, LinkedIn isn't an e-commerce site. Instead of sending people who click on the ad straight to a sales page, try to collect as much information as you can. A good strategy might be to send visitors to an opt-in page with a good offer, where you can get their information. True, you can use sales links instead of opt-in links, but unless you already have built the relationship and dialogue that LinkedIn facilitates, they're not going to be as effective.

Extra tip: To get the most from LinkedIn ads, test your campaign before you spend real money on the ads. Through your email or other marketing tools, send the offer to a couple hundred people to see how well it's converting. This also gives you a chance to work out any kinks before you start sending people there from LinkedIn.

To successfully drive sales with LinkedIn, it's essential to understand the expectations of the users, and make sure all of your sales and advertising messaging meshes well with the LinkedIn culture. Many users are not used to sales pitches or don't appreciate them. Others will suspect that a new person contacting them just wants to sell something. It's important for salespeople to be aware of that fear when asking to connect or posting sales links, and using CTAs and LinkedIn ads to direct people to useful offers can help overcome these obstacles.



How Can Small Businesses Get the Most from LinkedIn?

Spend a little time on LinkedIn, and no doubt you'll see plenty of large, global brands using the social network to drive aspects of their business. You'll find recommendation ads from car companies like Volkswagen and user communities built around technology giants like IBM, Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard. But small business owners need to know and understand that LinkedIn is not exclusively for big brands.

Many small businesses are already using LinkedIn to generate leads, make business connections, and build follower communities around their products and services, according to Lana Khavinson, Group Product Marketing Manager at LinkedIn. These small businesses are discovering that the platform can help them create experiences that go way beyond the profile page and connect with the right audience in thoughtful ways. With so many options for engaging potential clients and customers, small business owners need to focus on the core strategies and tools to get the most from LinkedIn.

On the strategic side, small businesses need to set clear goals, target the right audiences, and develop and share content that expands their reach and builds relationships. As you develop these goals and strategies, make sure you take a moment to think about what kinds of people are using LinkedIn, and what brings them to the network.

What sets LinkedIn apart from many other online social networks is its professional focus: People go to the site looking for ways to educate themselves and opportunities to further their careers and advance their professional lives. While other social media platforms tend to focus on a person's personal life and activities, LinkedIn's users are generally more open to making useful connections and learning about business opportunities. As a small business owner, you can use LinkedIn as a place to promote yourself, your company and what you have to offer.

In terms of practices, Khavinson recommends that small business owners start by focusing on learning (and eventually mastering) these two tools.

- 1) Company pages: For any business, creating a company page is a great starting point for building a presence on LinkedIn. This page is free to create, and it acts as an information hub where LinkedIn users can visit and learn more about your company. A well-planned and executed

SUMMARY:

While large, global brands certainly use LinkedIn to drive business, many small businesses are also using the platform to generate leads, make business connections and build follower communities around their products and services. To get the most from LinkedIn, small businesses should get started by focusing on a few core strategies and tools.

company page is also a great way to build a community of followers around your brand, making it easy to engage with that community regularly so that these users are always keeping your business in mind.

2) Sponsored updates: Once you create a company page for your business, it's easy to use LinkedIn's sponsored updates to extend your reach, build brand awareness and generate leads for prospective clients and customers. For example, if the key demographic your business needs to reach is financial services executives, you can sponsor a company update targeted to this exact demographic. This tool ensures that your company is providing relevant content to the right audience, when they are in the right mindset for doing business.

While large companies and global brands often use LinkedIn to drive business, small business owners also have much to gain from using the platform, which makes it easy to engage with more than 200 million users, making connections and identifying business opportunities. By focusing on core strategies and tools, such as setting up company pages and using sponsored updates, small businesses can get the most from LinkedIn.



Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

Curate, Create, Consume: How Quality Content Helps Small Businesses Stand Out on LinkedIn

Perhaps you've seen other small business owners using LinkedIn to find leads, make business connections and build follower communities. But how can they hope to stand out and compete when the playing field includes global brands and multinational corporations? For small businesses, the key is to focus on quality content that's relevant to your business and your prospective clients, engaging with LinkedIn users as a content curator, creator and consumer.

For small businesses, LinkedIn offers endless possibilities to connect with the right audience in very thoughtful ways — especially through content, says Lana Khavinson, Group Product Marketing Manager at LinkedIn. LinkedIn members are looking for information that will make them more productive and successful, she notes. That creates an opportunity for small businesses to help provide these users with the information they need.

The goal for small businesses should be to create a lasting impression by providing relevant content that educates and inspires, according to Khavinson. While some may think they can rely on automated, impersonal reposting or willy-nilly spontaneity, these approaches tend to quickly fizzle. Standing out with quality content requires planning and forethought.

Small businesses should break down how they engage with LinkedIn content into the following three steps.

1) Consuming content: To run a successful business, you need to stay up-to-date on the latest industry news, trends and best practices. The same is true for your prospective clients and customers. By following companies of interest, channels and influencers, you receive double the benefits. First, you'll be more competitive by being in the know. Second, by helping others do the same, you can develop a trusted reputation on LinkedIn that facilitates your marketing and sales efforts.

2) Curating content: Once you're comfortable using LinkedIn to identify and consume relevant content, the platform offers easy ways to curate

SUMMARY:

Quality content can help small businesses compete against large, global brands for the attention of LinkedIn users, using it to generate leads and connections and to build communities around their products and services. To stand out, a small business needs to engage with LinkedIn users as a thoughtful content curator, creator and consumer.

that information and share the most interesting material with your target audience. You can use your company page or personal profile to pass along the articles, news and videos that you believe will best resonate with your target audience. Your network will appreciate getting this information and, with consistent curating, they will look to your business for expertise and insights.

Bonus tip: Instead of simply sharing a link, take the time to write a short introduction, noting highlights and points you found especially relevant.

3) Creating content: As you consume and curate content on LinkedIn, take note of ways you can expand the conversation and reframe it for your target audience. By creating compelling company updates and sharing them with your followers, your business becomes a valuable content resource to your brand advocates and potential customers.

Bonus tip: To get the best return on your LinkedIn time, consider using analytics to track the performance of links, images, videos and other content you share. Once you can see what drives the greatest levels of engagement, you can adjust your content strategy to maximize your efforts.

Again, always think about what draws users to LinkedIn: Often, these people are looking for ways to further their careers and professional lives, to stay on top of industry trends, to improve productivity and enjoy greater success. In each case, they need (and appreciate) information that helps them reach these goals, and that creates an opportunity for small businesses to make a big impression.

While large companies and global brands may seem to dominate LinkedIn, small business owners can stand out and compete, using high-quality content as a way to engage potential clients and customers. By starting with thoughtful content consumption, small businesses can then curate and create content for their chosen audiences.



How Mid-Sized Businesses Can Drive Awareness with LinkedIn: Reconverse Case Study

While medium-sized businesses may not have the same name recognition that large companies do, they can use LinkedIn for successful outreach campaigns. LinkedIn offers unique opportunities for mid-sized companies that want to grow their followers and connect with key audiences, says Lana Khavinson, Group Product Marketing Manager for LinkedIn. Many of these companies, including the innovative U.K.-based human resources firm Reconverse, achieve real success on the platform.

Reconverse stages an events series for the in-house recruitment industry. Its twice-monthly events include closed-door roundtable discussions led by in-house recruitment experts. Such discussions provide an intimate, engaging and informal atmosphere for connecting suppliers with potential buyers. Launched in 2011 by a husband-and-wife team, Reconverse has a staff of five.

With limited staff and name recognition, the new company needed ways to reach professionals in human resources and recruitment industries in order to raise awareness of Reconverse and its speed-meeting events concept. Reconverse's LinkedIn campaign offers a great example of how a new company can use the network to build buzz, awareness and contacts in their field.

Reconverse focused on two basic tools to create their outreach program. Here's what they did:

- 1) Setting up a LinkedIn company page: Creating a business page is free, and a great way to further strategic goals with a professional presentation, an important step in building brand awareness, expanding your network and generating leads. For optimal impact, invest the necessary time for preparation, setup and follow-through. As with any advertising, social media or content marketing campaign, clarifying goals and plans ahead of time will save time and effort.

SUMMARY:

Medium-sized businesses may lack name recognition, but they can use LinkedIn to achieve real success in growing their followers and connecting with key audiences. Innovative U.K.-based human resources firm Reconverse offers a great example of how a new company can use a LinkedIn campaign to build buzz, awareness and contacts in their field.

2) Using status updates to encourage engagement and drive leads:

With the company page as a platform, LinkedIn makes it easy to stay in front of customers and potential leads by posting relevant updates and links that generate conversation. By staging a status update “contest,” Reconverse’s first status update resulted in 1,403 likes, 120 comments and 87 followers; it also attracted 15 event attendees and four supplier clients.

Now, Reconverse derives 90 percent of its revenue from its LinkedIn community-building efforts and more than 300 followers. “All of the people who follow us are in the exact industries we are targeting,” says Reconverse director Jamie Leonard, “so we consider them qualified business leads.”

Tip: With status updates, some experts suggest posting once a day, focusing on content that’s valuable to your audience. Consistency is the key to developing topic authority, so make sure to plan your updates well in advance. Consider selecting a different topic to focus on each month and writing posts that relate to that main theme each day.

Another relevant example is CalCPA, a mid-sized organization that provides advocacy and a variety of resources for California’s certified public accountants and accounting students. In order to reach prospective members, CalCPA chose LinkedIn for its ability to precisely target by professional interests, region and industry, and because the network’s users are receptive to information about career growth, and often self-identify their interests and future career plans. Through its LinkedIn campaign, CalCPA attracted a 47 percent increase in its student membership in only three months.

As the Reconverse and CalCPA examples show, mid-sized organizations can use LinkedIn successfully to spread awareness and drive engagement — especially when the organization focuses on areas of interest to the site’s users, such as recruitment, professional development and career growth.

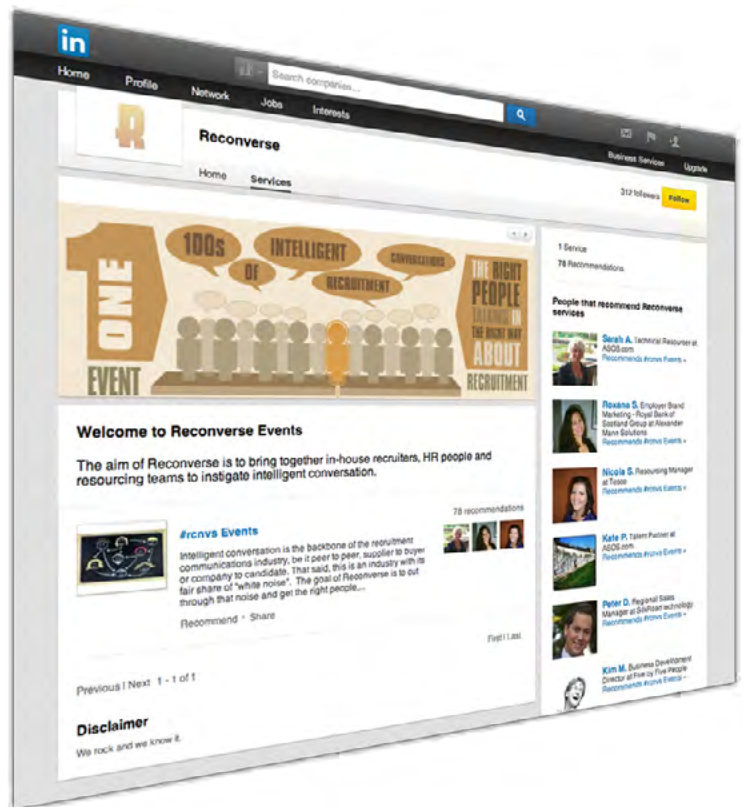


Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

How to Build a B2B Community on LinkedIn: HubSpot Case Study

LinkedIn provides medium-sized businesses with excellent ways to speak directly to target audiences. Within the business-oriented context of the network, these tools are particularly useful in helping companies in business-to-business (B2B) sectors achieve real success. One such example is marketing software company HubSpot, a mid-sized company that has used LinkedIn to help establish it as a go-to resource for many in the industry.

HubSpot, a U.S.-based company founded in 2006, provides all-in-one inbound marketing solutions to more than 10,000 companies in 56 different countries. Its software platform integrates email, website, blog and social media marketing, and includes a full suite of tools for marketing automation, analytics, lead management and search engine optimization. With LinkedIn, HubSpot wanted to increase engagement with its target audience of B2B marketers, raise awareness of HubSpot's expertise with inbound marketing and differentiate its business from competitors.

HubSpot's LinkedIn campaign focused on three elements, and provides a useful template for many mid-sized businesses.

- 1) Launching a LinkedIn company page: This page offers a framework for HubSpot to engage followers by posting status updates and news on trends in the marketing industry, and is integrated with HubSpot's industry group and content delivery efforts.
- 2) Sharing fresh, relevant content: HubSpot focuses very heavily on content, offering free webinars and high-quality eBooks on its LinkedIn company page. This content marketing strategy also happens to align with LinkedIn's own priorities.
- 3) Creating a new LinkedIn industry group to build community and conversations: HubSpot also founded a LinkedIn Group — Inbound Marketers — as a means to share expertise on marketing issues and extend its thought leadership efforts. Now, according to Lana Khavinson, Group Product Marketing Manager at LinkedIn, B2B marketers know they can rely on HubSpot for interesting and trusted content, and it keeps them coming back for more.

SUMMARY:

LinkedIn helps medium-sized businesses speak directly to their target user audiences, which can be especially powerful in business-to-business (B2B) sectors. One example is marketing software company HubSpot, a mid-sized company that has used LinkedIn to help establish itself as a go-to resource for many in the industry.

The LinkedIn campaign has been extremely successful for HubSpot, attracting 16,500 followers and 82,000 group members, and developing a thought leadership position that helps to improve lead generation efforts. More than that, it provided hard evidence that, at least for HubSpot, LinkedIn was the best social network for promoting their business. HubSpot found that traffic from LinkedIn generated a visitor-to-lead conversion rate of 2.74 percent — the highest from any social network, and almost three times higher than similar efforts on both Twitter (.69 percent) and Facebook (.77 percent).

As HubSpot's head of global marketing Dan Slagen says, "LinkedIn brings us in contact every day with B2B professionals that understand the value of our products." Other companies in B2B sectors would be wise to take note.

As the HubSpot case study shows, LinkedIn can be a great place to grow a mid-sized company in the B2B space. Through LinkedIn, such companies can reach an audience of professionals open to business discussions, encouraging engagement through social tools and building a reputation by sharing thought leadership and expertise. The business-oriented context makes LinkedIn a particularly rich vein for companies focused on B2B sales and service.

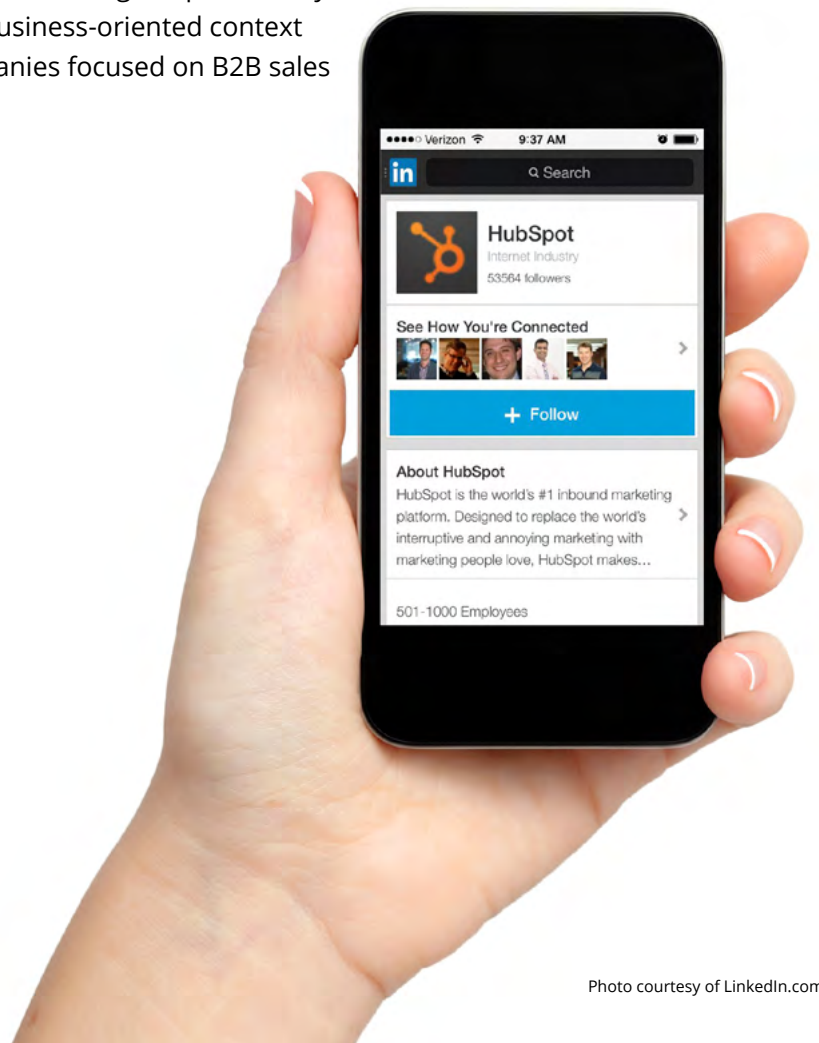


Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

Driving Awareness with LinkedIn: General Electric Case Study

Large companies that enjoy global name recognition still need ways to drive greater awareness for specific initiatives. Through LinkedIn, large companies have an opportunity to go deeper, using the platform's multimedia tools to target business-focused audiences and reach influencers and decision-makers in specific industries.

General Electric (GE) provides a useful case study on how to build key relationships with highly targeted ads. When GE wanted to enhance the reputation and leadership roles of its energy and healthcare divisions in specific regions around the world, it needed to engage with a very specific audience segment, according to Lana Khavinson, LinkedIn's Group Product Marketing Manager.

GE Healthcare provides medical equipment and services that include imaging and information technologies, diagnostics and patient monitoring systems. The division, which has revenues of approximately \$17 billion, also pursues disease research, drug discovery and biopharmaceutical manufacturing technologies. GE's energy technologies, meanwhile, help to deliver one quarter of the world's electricity at present; its oil and gas divisions operate in more than 120 countries.

GE's LinkedIn campaign targeted industry professionals and government policymakers, and focused on three LinkedIn tools.

1) Content ads: GE used LinkedIn content ads to share a variety of multimedia offerings, including video case studies that featured GE customers. This content marketing tool makes it easy for a large company's marketing team to distribute media assets in multiple formats, with measurable results.

Result: The visual appeal and creative approach of GE's video case studies contributed to an average interaction rate of 5.75 percent.

2) Sponsored InMails: To achieve deeper engagement with specific individuals, GE sent personalized messages to policymakers and industry professionals. LinkedIn's Sponsored InMails offer a way to

SUMMARY:

Companies with global name recognition still need to drive awareness for key initiatives. When GE wanted to boost the profile of its energy and healthcare divisions, it needed ways to engage specific audience segments in specific geographic regions. GE's LinkedIn campaign combined video case studies, personalized InMails and targeted display ads.

deliver exclusive content directly to users' inboxes, cutting through the clutter. To make sure these messages have maximum impact, users receive only one Sponsored InMail message every 60 days.

Result: For GE, these personalized, one-to-one communications achieved open rates of 13 percent.

3) Targeted display ads: The campaign also used display ads that offered downloadable content on GE-powered initiatives. LinkedIn shows only two visual ads per page at a time, so they attract users' attention instead of getting lost in cluttered ad layouts. The platform makes it easy for brands to deliver existing creative content to highly targeted segments of its more than 200 million users.

Result: GE's focused display ads generated over 1,300 unique content downloads.

GE set out to enhance the reputation and leadership roles of its energy and healthcare divisions in specific regions around the world. In the end, "LinkedIn provided a highly effective channel for building connections and developing a community of industry professionals," says Paul Marcum, GE's director of global digital marketing and programming.

As the GE case study shows, LinkedIn's highly targeted ads can be combined to build key relationships. When large companies need to drive awareness for key initiatives, the platform offers several ways to engage very specific audience segments in specific geographic regions. Depending on the project, marketers can tailor and test these solutions, combining content ads, sponsored individual messages and display ads in different arrangements to achieve the desired results.



GE Healthcare

Logo courtesy of gehealthcare.com

Driving Advocacy and Recommendations with LinkedIn: Volkswagen Case Study

As one of the most iconic, beloved brands in the automobile industry, Volkswagen needs no introduction — in much of the world. But Volkswagen needs precise messaging and targeting to reach potential customers in certain countries or demographics where it is less well-known. For example, when it wants to create brand awareness and loyalty, and influence decision-making among working professionals — in India.

LinkedIn allows marketers at large companies to target very specific groups for individual initiatives, and to combine the most effective tools for driving advocacy and recommendations among the network's users. For Volkswagen's campaign, LinkedIn was able to provide access to career-minded professionals, and precisely target users by seniority and geography, to match prospects with affordability criteria and Volkswagen's dealership locations.

The campaign consisted of three steps, and combined a new company page and recommendation ads to reach the targeted user segment.

- 1) Creating a Volkswagen India company page on LinkedIn: This new company page received 2,300 new followers during the 30-day campaign, and helped to target recommendations and ads.
- 2) Enabling LinkedIn members to recommend their favorite models to others: Volkswagen invited LinkedIn members to recommend their favorite Volkswagen model to other LinkedIn connections, according to Lana Khavinson, LinkedIn's Group Product Marketing Manager.
- 3) Using LinkedIn Recommendation Ads to extend the campaign's reach: Using LinkedIn's targeting capabilities, Volkswagen was able to target these ads to consumers who matched the buyer profile for a specific car model.

SUMMARY:

With LinkedIn, marketers at large companies can target very specific groups for initiatives, and combine the most effective tools for driving advocacy and recommendations among users. When Volkswagen wanted to build brand awareness among professionals in India, it used LinkedIn's recommendation ads to target users by seniority and geography.

The campaign was a success: In just 30 days the campaign saw more than 2,700 Volkswagen fans recommending models to their connections and 960,000 viral updates about Volkswagen car models.

The Volkswagen case study offers a great example of how larger companies can drill down on a specific target demographic and capitalize on the social nature of LinkedIn to reach new advocates, creating brand awareness and customer loyalty, and influencing consumer decision-making.

Professional status, which LinkedIn tracks, turns out to be a significant factor in auto sales. “For many people, their car reflects their professional life, and their professional identity affects their car choices,” notes Lutz Kothe, head of marketing and public relations for Volkswagen Passenger Cars.

No wonder then that luxury car maker Jaguar also launched its own LinkedIn campaign when it wanted to extend its appeal to South Africa’s new business audience. According to Jaguar’s marketing director for South Africa, Roland Reid, “LinkedIn helped show that potential customers can live the dream of driving a Jaguar.”

But LinkedIn isn’t only good for selling cars in new markets. Telstra, a leading telecom company in Australia, partnered with LinkedIn to reach and engage the four million LinkedIn members in the country. Telstra’s goal was to build relationships and enhance brand perception among Australian professionals, and used LinkedIn’s Sponsored Updates tool, another new content-marketing tool that large companies can use to target their own segmented audiences. Using sponsored updates, Telestra’s insightful content accelerated the rate at which they attracted new followers by 12 percent.

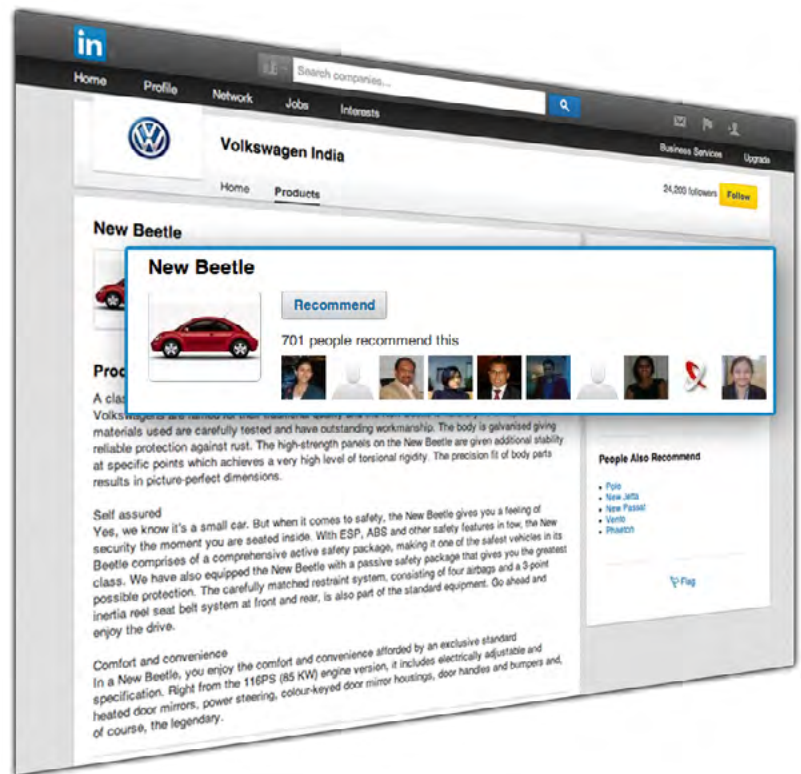


Photo courtesy of LinkedIn.com

Conclusion

Before you go, here's a quick summary of five ways that using LinkedIn can help your business grow.

- 1) Reinforce your reputation: LinkedIn is a great way to share your company's story, developing trust and relationships through regular updates and customer recommendations.
- 2) Generate leads and referrals: Participating in the LinkedIn business community is a good way to develop and foster connections that drive referrals, resulting in new clients, customers and contracts.
- 3) Showcase products and services: LinkedIn's company pages make it easy to communicate what your business has to offer, tailoring your message for different industries, groups and demographics.
- 4) Build your brand: As employees, clients and followers interact via LinkedIn, they create a growing network that helps expand your brand presence.
- 5) Attract new talent: The network offers companies a great way to advertise job openings to a diverse talent pool and evaluate candidates.

These five factors underscore the importance of creating a strong presence on LinkedIn. By using the tips, resources and expert advice in this eBook, you're well on your way to using the world's largest professional network to grow your business. And hopefully, this eBook is only a starting point, sparking fresh ideas that will help bring your business new audiences and projects.

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