



FORGING NEW LINKS

HOW TO USE LINKEDIN AS A MARKETING TOOL

After you learn the secret to social media marketing success, it's time to get to work. For business-to-business social networking, LinkedIn is where the action is! LinkedIn is the most "professional" of the major social networking websites, used by 450 million business professionals worldwide. Since it is largely focused on B2B connections, LinkedIn should be a big part of your social media marketing strategy.

Most people only use LinkedIn as an online resume. To take LinkedIn to the next level and use it as a marketing tool, put the following recommendations into action.

BEEF UP YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive resume — on steroids. In addition, to information about your work experience and education, LinkedIn allows you to enhance your profile with the following Web 2.0 capabilities to showcase your expertise:

■ **Status Updates:** One of the best ways to keep your connections informed about your happenings is by posting 'status updates.' Status updates are brief statements that you feel your connections will find useful. In addition, they can include links to related content on your Website or third-party Websites. To

appear active in the LinkedIn community, post useful and actionable status updates on a regular basis.

■ **Posts:** LinkedIn allows you to easily publish articles (or posts) to your profile. This is a great way to establish yourself as a thought leader getting exposure to your LinkedIn community.

■ **Videos and Presentations:** If you post PowerPoint presentations to SlideShare or videos to YouTube, you can display these valuable content items in your LinkedIn profile.

■ **Recommendations and Endorsements:** LinkedIn makes it easy for you to request recommendations and endorsements from your connections. A collection of glowing recommendations that underscore your expertise and experience will significantly enhance your profile.

■ **Publications:** If you wrote and published traditional books or e-books, you can highlight these publications with active links so connections can view and purchase them.

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IF THERE IS A PROSPECT YOU WANT TO REACH, YOU CAN EASILY FIND THEM ON LINKEDIN AND SEE HOW YOU ARE CONNECTED TO THEM.

Projects: If you have successful projects you want to highlight, post your projects including a description, link and the team members you worked with.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LINKEDIN COMMUNITY FEATURES

In addition to your profile, LinkedIn provides a number of community features that allow you to communicate and collaborate with other LinkedIn users, including:

Groups: LinkedIn Groups help you stay informed and keep in touch with people that share your interests. You can create your own LinkedIn groups or join any number of groups that focus on your area of interest or expertise. Participating in LinkedIn Groups by adding value to the discussion is a great way to expand your circle of influence.

Company Pages: Company Pages are a powerful research tool that you can use to find companies to do business with or research

competitors. In addition, you can create a page for your company to showcase your expertise. You can publish your company's description, headquarter's address and website address. To further your company page's value, you can post targeted jobs, recruitment videos, information about products and services and company images.

LEVERAGE LINKEDIN AS A BUSINESS-BUILDING TOOL

LinkedIn can be a valuable business tool to help you grow your business and catapult your career. The following strategies will help you use this resource to produce results:

Brand Your LinkedIn Address: When you create a LinkedIn profile, it will create a LinkedIn Web address that will appear like a

collection of odd letters and addresses. LinkedIn will let you customize this address to create a branded LinkedIn address with your name. My LinkedIn address is <http://linkedin.com/in/bobdestefano>.

Become a Recognized Expert: By actively participating in LinkedIn group discussions and publishing thoughtful posts on a regular basis, you have an opportunity to establish yourself as an expert and thought leader.

'Warm Call' Sales Prospects: If you are in sales, you can use LinkedIn as a 'warm calling' tool. If there is a prospect you want to reach, you can easily find them on LinkedIn and see how you are connected to them. If you have an active list of LinkedIn connections, you are most likely only two or three connections away from the prospect. Use LinkedIn's introduction features to ask one of your connections for an introduction.

Find Rock Star Employees: Successful business people are always looking to find valuable employees that will ensure their future success. LinkedIn provides you with an easy place to find them. You'll have access to a pool of talented individuals within your LinkedIn groups. You can also post a job directly on LinkedIn to attract a talented set of candidates.

Keep Your Connections Current: Whenever you meet someone, connect with them on LinkedIn. It's a great way to expand your influence and keep connections up to speed on your accomplishments.

I use LinkedIn on a daily basis to grow my business. To get a first-hand look at my LinkedIn strategy, connect with me at <http://linkedin.com/in/bobdestefano>. **CS**

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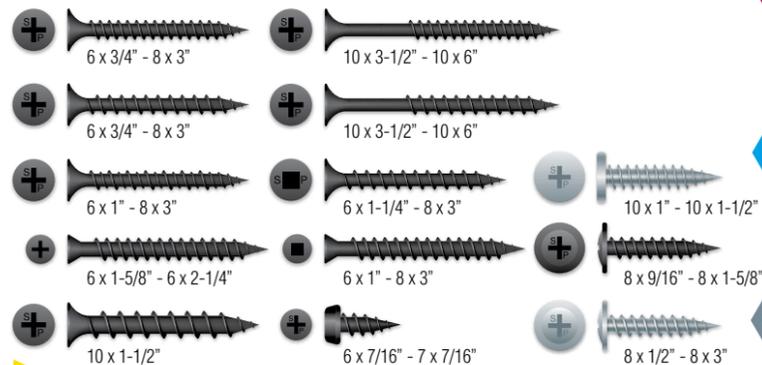
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