

B2B MARKETING eBook

LinkedIn: Basic Best Practices for B2B Marketers

5 Steps to Leveraging Success



Introduction

B2B marketers use LinkedIn more than any other form of social media, and for good reason. With more than 70 million users and one million company profiles, LinkedIn is focused purely on business discussion and professional networking. And according to Forrester Research, the demographics of the average LinkedIn user fit the background of the key decision-makers in B2B environments.

Despite LinkedIn's established relevance in business, only 1% of company profiles are optimized. For those who aspire to leverage LinkedIn to its fullest extent, this fact represents a tremendous opportunity.

What You'll Learn in This eBook

On LinkedIn, you are only as visible as the depth of your optimization and the size of your network. This eBook will help you drive B2B success through LinkedIn with 5 KEY STEPS:

Step 1: Establish Your Brand

Step 2: Optimize Your Account

Step 3: Build Your Network

Step 4: Target Your Ideal Client

Step 5: Stay Top of Mind

First, let's examine the facts behind LinkedIn's tremendous growth and influence, and the benefits you'll experience by engaging effectively.

Just the Facts:

LinkedIn as of Mid-Year 2010:

FACT: LinkedIn has more than 70 million members.

FACT: LinkedIn has more than 1 million company profiles – but only 1% are optimized.

FACT: A new member joins LinkedIn approximately every second, and about half of its members are outside the U.S.

FACT: Executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members.

FACT: Currently, LinkedIn has members in 200 countries on all seven continents.

FACT: Average years of experience of a LinkedIn member – 15 years.

FACT: Average age of a LinkedIn user – 41 years.

FACT: 47% are decision-makers.

Benefits of Being on LinkedIn

- **Ability to be known** – The ways you participate will help define your personal and corporate brand. Contribute, give and share in a positive way, and you can develop a good reputation in these communities.
- **Ability to find others** – With a moderately sized network, you can develop a sufficient reach when you perform searches.
- **Opportunity to learn and share** – LinkedIn Answers is an excellent tool to showcase expert advice.
- **Ability to connect with group members** – There are many exclusive groups that give you access to other members, people who share commonalities.
- **Opportunity to show you are plugged in to current technology** – Active participation in LinkedIn tells others you are serious and competent about networking and new technology.

5 Steps to Leveraging LinkedIn Success



Best Practices to Get Found and Generate Client Interest

Step 1: Establish Your Brand

WHY? *The clearer you are on your brand, the better you represent yourself and the more business you will attract.*

- **YOU are Your Brand.** Inbound marketing has changed the way we do business. Even as a B2B, your clients want to work with individuals – but within some corporate entity. There needs to be a balance between the company and the individual representing the company. Employees are becoming representatives of company brands. For that matter, your clients and customers are becoming the unpaid sales evangelists for your brand. So it must be clear to you and to them. The less clarity, the greater the chance you will be misrepresented. Be clear on your brand.
- **Why You?** Be clear on the benefit the client receives in hiring you. What specific area of expertise, industry or niche makes you distinct from your competitor? What specific benefits will your client receive by working with you? Why you individually? Why you as a company?

Step 1: **Establish Your Brand** [continued]

- **What are Your Keywords?** As a B2B, there is a specific list of keywords you'll want to use to get found. As an individual working for a B2B, these key words will describe you, as well. These keywords do not need to be sophisticated, but they do need to be clear. If someone was doing a keyword search for you on Google, what would they be typing? Keep these keywords by your computer at all times, and use them often in your social media efforts.
- **Create Your Profile in a Word Document First.** Your personal and company profile on LinkedIn is a website. Make no mistake. This is a professional representation of YOU. If you create your profile first in a Word document, you:
 - ▶ are less likely to have spelling errors.
 - ▶ are less likely to have grammatical errors.
 - ▶ can format certain areas with bullets and spacing.
 - ▶ can re-purpose content in other social media sites.
 - ▶ can create a template for other employees, generating a unified message and image.
 - ▶ have a back-up in case anything happens to your LinkedIn account.

Step 2: Optimize Your Account

WHY? Attracting more eyes with customized and optimized content will increase traffic to your online presence.

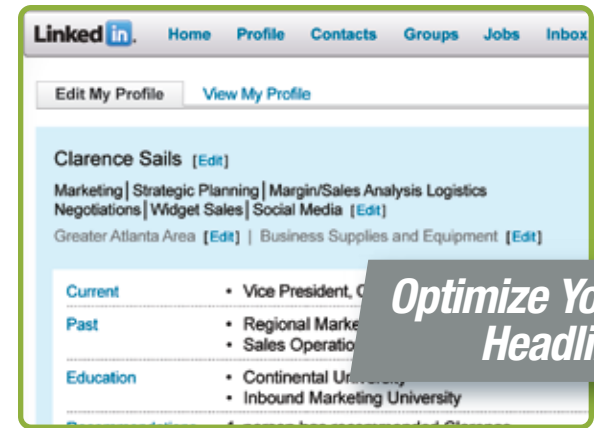
- **Your LinkedIn Profile is your professional identity, your autobiography, and your brochure or ad.** Think of it as a website showcasing your career, your company, your product and your service. Like any brochure or website, make sure your content is grammatically correct and free of spelling errors.



**Get Found to
Get Business**

Step 2: **Optimize Your Account** [continued]

- Use the “Professional Headline” on your profile to share your areas of expertise and interest. You have 120 text characters to work with. This field is weighted heavily in both the LinkedIn Search and Google Search, so use your keywords. Almost every action you take on LinkedIn is accompanied by your headline section and picture – so make sure they are engaging.
- Your photograph should attract others by being engaging and approachable, preferably using a close-up of your face. (If you are smiling or laughing, even better.) This is a business site, but it’s a social networking site first. Do not include anything or anyone other than yourself in the photo, and do not use a logo (which goes against the End User Agreement).



Step 2: Optimize Your Account [continued]

- Use the “Summary” section to expand upon information in your profile. This section is searchable, so include keywords that are appropriate for your industry. You can write your summary in a Word document first and then cut/paste it into LinkedIn. This will allow you to check spelling and grammar, as well as create attractive formatting with bullets and spacing. The most common symbols and bullets will transfer over. You have 2,000 characters to use.
- Change the link/URL in your profile by editing “Public Profile” so that it includes your name, your company name or expertise in your industry (www.linkedin.com/in/linkedinexpert). Also include it in your email signatures, business cards, other marketing collateral, and as a website link in your “About Us” section.



Step 2: Optimize Your Account [continued]

- Put ALL of your job titles in the “Title” field of the “Experience” section. This field is also heavily ranked in a LinkedIn Search.
- Invest in the “Share an Update” section several times a week by informing your network of recent work you have done, successes your clients have experienced and good information from others – just to be helpful. Make sure you start your update with keywords, and add a link to a website when possible. The new “Share an Update” section works much like Facebook and will pull the icon from your website into the stream.



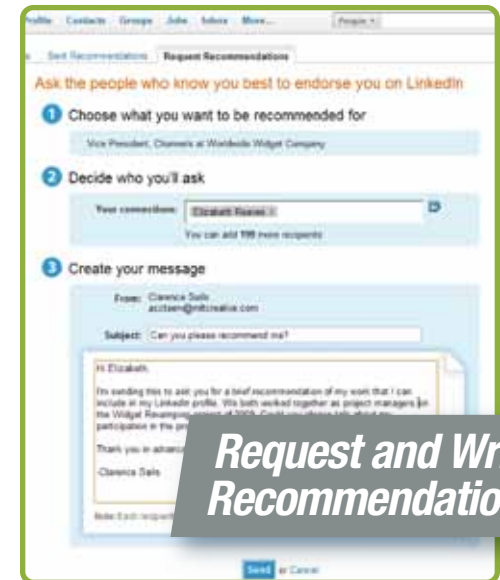
Optimize Your Experience



Post Status Updates Often

Step 2: **Optimize Your Account** [continued]

- **Link your “Share an Update” section to Twitter, but use the Twitter hashtag “#in” on those select tweets you wish to appear on LinkedIn.** Remember, LinkedIn works differently from Twitter, and your LinkedIn connections may not appreciate your Twitter prolificity. Be sure to use your keywords in your LinkedIn and Twitter updates.
- **Ask for recommendations. When asking for recommendations, remind people who you are and tell them what to say using bullet points with keywords.** You can then use these testimonials on your website. You can only get recommendations from your first tier (connections), so make sure you are connected to some top people in your field, famous folks, executives, etc. Write recommendations for others; they will be prompted to write one back to you.



Step 3: Build Your Network

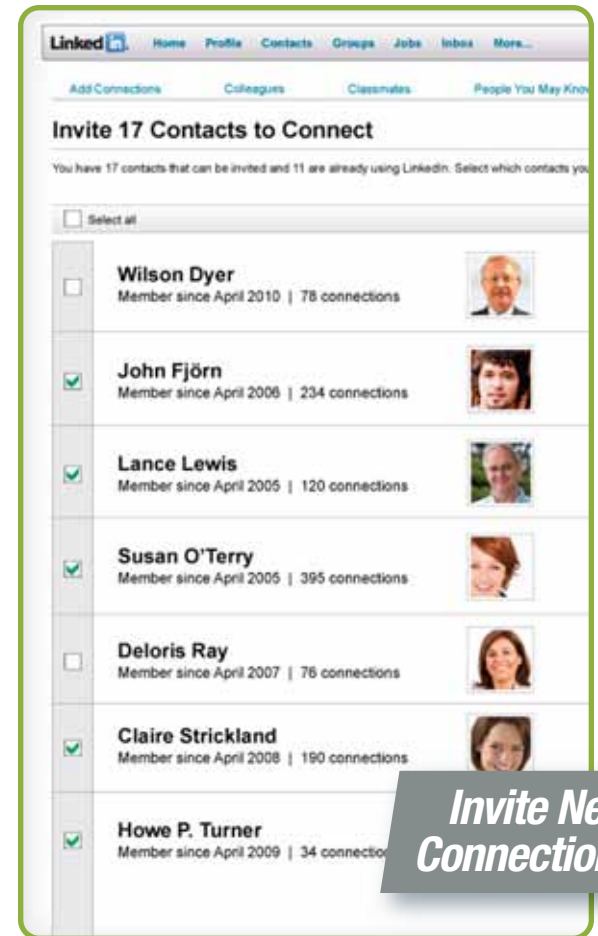
WHY? You're only as visible as the size of your network.

- **Make sure you spend a few minutes every day looking through your connections you are following, and their connections, and comment or “like” their updates to build camaraderie.** This also gives you an excellent opportunity to reconnect with old associates and build new relationships. A best practice is “three old, three new” every day. This may become your largest artery for warm leads and new business.



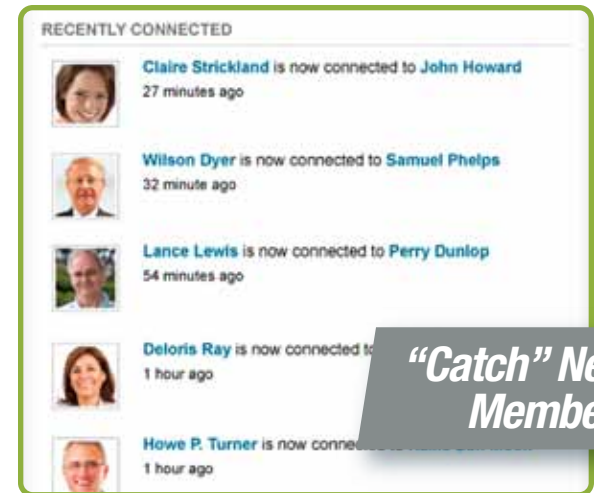
Step 3: **Build Your Network** [continued]

- **When using LinkedIn's "Connections" button, only invite people who already use LinkedIn.** LinkedIn will ask for your email address and email password. That is fine. It's a trustworthy source. Do not click the "Select All" and "Send Invitation" button. Make sure you go through your uploaded list and only choose the people who are already using LinkedIn. (The blue button to the right of their name indicates they are on LinkedIn.) LinkedIn has a 3,000 invitation limit, so you do not want to expend your invitations by mistake.



Step 3: **Build Your Network** [continued]

- Use the new “Recently Connected” tool at the bottom of the home page to “catch” new members and initiate their experience on LinkedIn. You will always stand out in their minds and you get them before they are jaded by the “sales ads.”
- Use “Company Search” to further engage. Find new hires and congratulate them (building camaraderie), discover executives (and the groups they belong to), connect to someone who has left the company (to find out more about it), locate a mentor or insider (to give you the inside scoop).



Step 3: **Build Your Network** [continued]

- **Join groups that have a lot of members (toplinked, LinkedHR, open networkers) as well as industry groups and alumni groups.** You can join up to 50 groups, which will grow your network, but will not cost you any invites.
- **Accept every invitation (but do check out their profile first).** Remember, it is not just those individuals you are connecting to, it is their network.
- **To become more visible, you will need to become a “strategic open networker” (or pay LinkedIn a low monthly fee).** Strategic open networkers – as opposed to a LIONs (LinkedIn Open Networkers) – don’t have to grow their first tier exponentially, but will need to grow their whole network by inviting and accepting connections from people with large networks.



Step 3: **Build Your Network** [continued]

If you choose to become an open networker, these are your options:

- Go to www.toplinked.com/top50.html and invite the toplinked people (who have less than 28K connections – new limit imposed by LinkedIn).
- Join www.opennetworker.com (an affiliate site) and for a nominal annual fee you will receive invitations – from complete strangers – but they might know someone you need to know.

If you have a small (5 million or less) network (1st, 2nd, 3rd tier + group members) you may be missing out on both your own ability to be seen by others, as well as the ability to find and target strategic clients.



Step 4: Target Your Ideal Client

*WHY? The more you follow and contribute valuable information, the higher quality your tribe:
“Know me. Like me. Trust me. Buy from me.”*

Once you have grown a decent network, you will have access to more people, including target clients:

- **Use “Advanced Search” to specifically target the type of person who would make an ideal client (sort by “relevance” and “expanded” view).** Use a Boolean Search (AND, OR, NOT “”). Invite the strategic people you find to connect using groups, if possible, or get “introduced” through a mutual connection. (Hint: Find experts in your field and invite them as a guest blogger on your blog, or speaker at your event.)
- **Find and “follow” ideal clients in groups.** This is not the same as connecting – but gives you many of the same benefits. Use search within the member section of a group (Boolean).
- **Search “Companies” to find key people you might want to connect with.** A wealth of valuable information is often overlooked here.

Step 4: **Target Your Ideal Client** [continued]

- **Search by location when traveling, and meet your connections IRL (in real life).** This is one of the best practices proven to create new business relationships. And all it costs is a cup of coffee or lunch.
- **Ask for the “introduction.”** You only get five at a time, so it’s best to ask for an introduction from someone who: 1.) obviously uses LinkedIn, and 2.) knows and likes you. If an introduction has not been passed within a week, withdraw it and go another route.
- **Use the new “tagging” option in your LinkedIn Contacts list once you are connected.** This is only good for 1st level. You can now attach “tags,” or labels, to your connections. Tagging makes it much easier to manage and communicate with connections on LinkedIn.
- **Download vCards of your 1st level connection.** And organize them using Outlook, Act, Apple Mail, BatchBook, etc.
- **Do market research and gain knowledge with “Polls.”** Then share survey and poll results with your contacts.
- **Share useful articles and resources that will be of interest to customers and prospects in groups.** Link to articles and content posted elsewhere, with a summary of why it’s valuable, to add to your credibility. List your newsletter subscription information and archives.

Step 5: Stay Top of Mind

WHY? Now that you have expanded your network and visibility, you're well-positioned to further leverage your hand!

- **Create and utilize “LinkedIn Groups” for TOMA (top-of-mind awareness) and to showcase you and your company’s expertise.** You may want to divide your group into sub-groups for segmented audiences. Share your group within and outside of LinkedIn with a URL shortening tool such as bit.ly. Share it in Twitter, Facebook, email, newsletters, website, email signature, etc.
- **Use “Answers” to be a thought leader and expert in your industry.**
This is time consuming, but has proved a very successful marketing strategy for some business owners and industry specialists.
For example, use “Answers” to mine for blog ideas and cross-pollinate, then share on Twitter and Facebook.
- **Use a “Company Profile” to give your business credibility and elevate your success.** Make sure you optimize your profile so it can be found in a search for keywords, not just your company name.



Step 5: Stay Top of Mind [continued]

■ Use “Applications” to upload existing marketing assets:

- ▶ Box.net – Allows you to share the content of whitepapers, brochures, mp3’s, etc.
- ▶ Huddle Workspaces – Share a workspace, invite collaboration
- ▶ Slideshare/Google Presentation – Embed PowerPoint presentations
- ▶ Industry Presentation – Show expertise
- ▶ Photos of Product or Service
- ▶ Embed a Video – Very powerful!
- ▶ Wordpress/Blog Link – Embed your blog into your profile for effortless repurposing of content.
- ▶ Post Events – Optimize the title for Google ranking



Maintain and Build on Your LinkedIn Success

Weekly Action Plan

Why? Because who has an hour a day?

- Update status at least three times per week (with links and keywords).
- Get back in touch with three old contacts through LinkedIn, and reach out to three new contacts.
- Invite or ask to be introduced to one strategic person a week, and follow up with them in some way.
- Manage your inbox daily:
 - ▶ Respond to requests
 - ▶ Forward intros
 - ▶ Answer invitations
 - ▶ Respond to recommendations
- Attempt to engage in at least one discussion in a relevant group per week.
- Answer one question per week (repurpose with blog)
 - ▶ Repurpose old content
 - ▶ Mine for new content
 - ▶ Help someone out
 - ▶ Increased inbound leads

Maintain and Build on Your LinkedIn Success [continued]

Finally, Remember Old-Fashioned Etiquette

Why? Because it is still a SOCIAL Network

- Be courteous
- Be relevant
- Be responsive
- Email
- Pick up the phone
- Help someone out



LinkedIn **Profile Worksheet**

Ready to update your LinkedIn Profile? Take some notes on this worksheet, then type your updates into a Word document before bringing them online.

LinkedIn sign-in email: _____

Password: _____

Other email addresses (personal and professional, past and present):

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Website (your most valuable landing pages: company website, personal website, blog, etc.):

- _____
- _____
- _____

LinkedIn **Profile Worksheet** [continued]

Keywords / Keyword Phrases:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Headline (120 characters that best describe you, your talents and your industry, using your keywords often):

This B2B Social Media eBook has been provided to you by MLT Creative and prepared with the help of Viveka von Rosen.



About MLT Creative:

MLT Creative, based on the east side of Atlanta with a Northeast office in Rhode Island, was founded in 1984 by partners Billy Mitchell, Craig Lindberg and Glenn Taylor. Known as the Idea Launch Pad for B-to-B Marketers, MLT Creative's services include

strategic planning, positioning, brand development, advertising, direct marketing, inbound marketing and sales promotions.

Our tight-knit team may have taken different paths to get here, but the resulting blend is nothing short of seamless. At MLT Creative, you'll find a seasoned staff of experts with decades in the business working alongside recent college grads with an eye for the future. This balance of perspectives converges in a collaborative environment that enables us to approach any project from multiple angles more effectively.

With our focus on business-to-business marketing, we bring an entrepreneurial edge, creative energy and strategic perspective to every project.

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About Viveka von Rosen:

Viveka von Rosen is a successful entrepreneur, nationally renowned IA Certified LinkedIn trainer and expert, and a respected social media speaker. Her extensive sales and

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