

LinkedIn[®]

to Your Future

 Michelle Glennie

When reading the LinkedIn updates for the groups you subscribe to, you might have the impression that it's just a place for job seekers. While it can be used to look for jobs and potential employees, it can be so much more than only that for you and your business. LinkedIn is also a business search tool where people can look up information not only on individuals, but also on organizations. How often have you searched LinkedIn for a person's profile before calling him/her? (I have – many, many times.)

Another added LinkedIn benefit that is often forgotten is the reference link to your company's website. What does this mean? If you look at your website analytics, you will see the sources that are referring traffic to your website. This is where LinkedIn can help. The more often you update and put information out on LinkedIn, the more you will see that LinkedIn will be one of the largest reference points of traffic to your website. (What prospects see when they get to your website will have to be the topic of a future article.)

As of August 2011, LinkedIn has more than 120 million members from more than 200 countries and territories; more than two million companies have LinkedIn company pages. These numbers are staggering – and constantly growing. With that growth in mind, we want to ensure that you're making the most of LinkedIn.

10 LinkedIn tips to help you and your business:

1 To make your profile fully searchable on LinkedIn, be sure that it is 100 percent complete. (When editing your profile, LinkedIn provides

a percentage of how complete it is.) Complete any unfinished tasks and/or ask for recommendations to complete your profile.

2 Create a company page profile. If you haven't already done this, it's a must! Prospects are looking at your page – and your company page – before they talk to you.

3 Once you create a company page profile, make sure that your employees are connected to the company. Employees may have the company name listed in their profile, but that doesn't automatically mean that they are connected to the company page. Have them go in and establish this connection in each of their profiles.

4 Add each of your products or services under your company profile to increase your company's visibility.

5 Once you have your products and services created, ask for recommendations from clients. You can easily do this by initiating an email from LinkedIn or by emailing your customers directly.

6 Add downloads to your profile with the Box.net feature. You will find this application under the "More" tab at the top of the LinkedIn toolbar (from "More," click "Get More Applications..."). With Box.net, you can add brochures, whitepapers, case studies, and more to your personal profile. Remember that prospects are doing their research about you and your company before they talk to you.


7 Create a group within LinkedIn for your customers. This is a great way to give your customers added value with tips and tricks, updates on new

products or features, news about events, and so on. Your group can be structured to ensure that only customers are signing up and accessing the group.

8 Use the "Events" tool (under the "More" tab) to promote an event you are attending or hosting. While this is not necessarily a good tool for keeping track of who is attending your events, it is a great tool for promoting awareness. Plus, people know where to find you through the events you're attending.

9 Update your profile occasionally. Remember, like your website, the content on your profile can get old quickly. Be sure to add any new skills or experiences to your profile to keep it fresh.

10 Know who is viewing your profile. When you first log into LinkedIn, you will see a small area on the right-hand side of the screen that says "Who's Viewed Your Profile?" It will then display the number of people who have viewed your profile within a certain number of days and how many times you have shown up in a search. It is a good habit to check this weekly to see who has visited your profile. Hopefully it will be the prospects you've been speaking with!

In today's business world, LinkedIn has become a social media staple. Keep in mind that in 2010, there were almost two billion people searches performed on LinkedIn. Think about that for a minute – two billion! If you haven't paid much attention to LinkedIn, your profile, your company's profile, or how LinkedIn can help your company, now is the time to reconsider this tool. Make sure that you aren't missing the opportunity to be found, the opportunity to use this as a marketing tool, and the opportunity to connect with the channel around you. Opportunity is definitely knocking; answer the door! Your boss – and your business – will thank you for it. 

Michelle Glennie and the team at The Partner Marketing Group are LinkedIn aficionados. Check out the products and services designed for technology Partners at www.ThePartnerMarketingGroup.com. Connect to Michelle on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/michelleglennie> and follow The Partner Marketing Group at <http://www.linkedin.com/company/the-partner-marketing-group>.

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