

# **LinkedIn - Your Social, Business & 'Job Magnet'**



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## Great Tips To LinkedIn Success:

LinkedIn.com is a social networking website where job-seekers, business owners and professionals gather to develop relationships as well as market their own brands. Marketing on LinkedIn is not like marketing on Twitter or Facebook. However, if done correctly, LinkedIn can be a great place to network with potential employers and fellow business people to help your employment prospects or your business to grow.

### **One of the first tips to mention; is to try and get noticed.**

So, you have to sign up to LinkedIn to do this. Yes, that's obvious, but, if you haven't done this simple step yet, please do so right now. Your profile is your introduction to other LinkedIn members so be sure to use a little creativity, share 'who' you are and 'what' you do (or what you do best). Also, another added bonus is - if people search for your name in Google - your LinkedIn profile can appear.

**Another tip is to ask for recommendations.** This is a form of "word-of-mouth marketing" and is a great way to get in touch with the right people. Also, be willing to help others by offering recommendations to help 'them' connect with people of interest. Also, join groups related to your business, skill set, interests, etc. Be active and offer help, participate, make your voice known etc. so that people remember you in a positive light.

It's a good idea to link some of your other web properties such as blog feeds or Twitter updates into your LinkedIn account. This way, your account appears active, prospects can get a better idea of who you are and what you do, and you're more prone to expand your network quickly.

Remember – you should keep your account updated regularly even if you're only sharing some positive experiences you've had during your working day. This all helps to show your personality to your contacts within the LinkedIn community.

## How To Use LinkedIn Effectively:

LinkedIn, like many (if not all) social networks has the potential to drive mega-tons of targeted leads to your website or other social media pages. LinkedIn is about networking with like-minded business professionals and provides a wonderful platform to connect with people you otherwise wouldn't connect with. Due to the networking aspect of it's set up and members, it's the perfect platform to market your business, skills, talents, products, services, and so on.

LinkedIn is designed to bring potential employees, professional individuals and businesses together. When you join, you should add as much information as possible about yourself and your business or skills to attract others you'd like to network with.

Because LinkedIn is mainly designed for the business arena, you must approach the marketing aspect a little differently than say Facebook or Twitter. However, one of the main unique aspects of LinkedIn is that it's a network of authority figures.

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Whether they be business owners, professional entrepreneurs, investors, developers, the majority of members have some sort of power over the business they are in. Why is this important? Because you have the potential to connect with and network amongst people with real power and who can make executive decisions. If you are seeking employment these connections can be invaluable.

So, to effectively partake in LinkedIn marketing, start by joining the website, fill in your personal info, and again, consider the types of business people who will be reading your profile. Make sure your profile or company page is easily searchable (including on the search engines) and make what you have to offer attractive to your prospective associates.

Become active on LinkedIn and exchange views, ideas and social chit-chat with others to show that you're interested in what they have to say, and offer recommendations where appropriate, show enthusiasm by participating in groups, and reach out to prospects.

Get to know the network. Read their FAQ and 'join groups' that relate to your business and interests. Be active, participate, help, and share what you or your business has to offer. The leads are there, get prospecting!

## Improving Your Social & Business Networking:

Social networking is not a new phenomenon - people have been meeting together for centuries as a way of expanding their friendships, increasing their sense of community, and establishing new business relationships. And even in the last half century, neighbourhood or city-based networking organizations have arisen such as the Lions, Kiwanis, and Elks clubs along with those dedicated to pure networking like Business Networking International and LeTip.

But it wasn't until a website called **sixdegrees** was created several years ago that online networking started to take off - sure chat rooms and list servs had existed in the pre-1995 days but there were never resources online dedicated exclusively to networking. And while **sixdegrees** sold off their company's assets to other online upstarts, the networking craze had begun. Depending on where you look, there are potentially hundreds of websites where one can network, separated out by interest, industry, and geography and whether the networking interest is for business or personal reasons.

For more business networking, there are 4 primary sites individuals use to expand their network and ultimately their income. The granddaddy of them all is **craigslist** - a San Francisco-based warehouse of local community news, classifieds, dating options, and job listings started by Craig Newmark that has content specific to the top metropolitan regions in the US. It's a popular site and useful for many things - as **ebay** found out when they purchased a 25% share.

**ecademy** is a UK-based site created by the uber-networker Thomas Power. **ecademy** requires membership and is set up for pure networking, particularly on a worldwide basis. The site also enables blogging, industry-specific content and chats, and is enabled for heavy-duty networking with known and unknown associates.

**Ryze** is a site focused on business-to-consumer networking and provides a venue to create a community around your business and personal interests - unfortunately, **Ryze** use is not regulated too well, so the connections and content is often related to business opportunities, MLM deals, and value-less connections.

**LinkedIn** is the current undisputed leader in the US and worldwide due to its ease of use, practical benefit, and value added features; including providing a testimonial for someone you know, passing along requests for connections, job listings, and easy networking with those with similar interests.

Regardless of which site you decide to use, pick one initially and commit to a week or a month of consistent participation in the community and decide how you might benefit the work or personal lives of others.

As with everything else in life, you get out of it what you put into it - so think about 'how you can benefit' - yourself and others - as you participate.

## **LinkedIn Basic Marketing Blunders:**

Like me, have you received email invitations like these?

[ I'm using LinkedIn to keep up with my professional contacts and help them with introductions. Since you are one of the people I recommend, I wanted to invite you to access my network on LinkedIn. Basic membership is free, and it takes less than a minute to sign up and join my network. ]

I've received well over 35 invitations like this, worded almost precisely the same way. The senders have acted surprised and offended that I didn't leap immediately to take advantage of this invitation.

Let's look at the problems from a marketing point of view.

\* Almost all of the invitations I received were from people whose names I didn't recognize. Why would I want to be part of their network? The invitation doesn't say who they are, who they have access to, and how I would benefit from their network.

\* What is Linked In, how does it work and what are the benefits of using it?

No one has yet explained this clearly in their invitation. You cannot expect that someone receiving this invitation understands what you're asking them to join or how it would be advantageous to them. It would be helpful to have a paragraph or two describing how it works and citing a specific result the person behind the invitation enjoyed from membership. It may be that people assume that since "basic membership is free," the typical recipient of this invitation will go ahead and join. But even if it doesn't cost money, joining would take time. You still need to "sell" people on taking a free action, especially with respect to an activity or organization that may be unfamiliar to them.

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\* No one took the time to head off possible misunderstandings or objections to this membership. As a non-member of Linked In, I am concerned that joining would open me up to a lot of email and phone calls in which I would have no interest and that would waste my time. Again, you can't assume that something free is thereby enticing; you need to imagine why someone might have doubts or dismiss the idea and address those objections.

\* Using a canned invitation that is almost exactly the same as everyone else's doesn't make a good impression. Even if the text provided by Linked In were effective, which it's not, you'd want to give it your personal stamp.

Other than being irritated that they are apparently encouraging people to send invitations that make little sense, I have nothing against Linked In.

Perhaps it's a useful organization. My point is that its members need to use common sense and fundamental marketing principles to encourage busy, skeptical people to give it a chance.

## **LinkedIn Marketing Made Easy:**

After you sign up with LinkedIn, it's good to know that your profile is very important because it's a place where others who would like to connect with you will visit first. Create an interesting profile to attract potential partners or business associates and entice them as well to click links to your web properties to learn more about you.

Below we'll provide some tips on how to take advantage of your time at LinkedIn. One thing people like to read is interesting stories about yourself. Why not consider adding a video or some unique way to showcase yourself and/or your skills? Think about making that good first impression and also consider who might be watching and if they are the types of people you'd like to connect with.

LinkedIn can be a powerful platform to connect with people, so take your time and be as creative as possible...also, remember to have fun!

LinkedIn isn't just about you and what it (or others) can offer you. Rather, consider it as a mutual ground where you are there to help folks, for example by way of recommendations, and it won't be long before others are helping you. Networking isn't just about asking, but also questioning whether you can be of any service too.

Consider joining groups that are related to your line of work, skills, or talents. You can search for such groups or even create your own. Get in with the right groups and make valuable contributions could easily take your business to the next level.

While the above information is just a brief synopsis of the power of networking at LinkedIn, it should give you some idea of why it's important to become part of such a powerful networking community.

# Monetizing The Social Network:

## A review of ways marketers can align with these consumer hot spots.

Online social networks are hot. Those who participate in them belong to two, three, four, maybe even more than 10 or 20 different ones. They enjoy their features, upload photos, request business contacts and talk with friends.

**For now, consumers get to do this for free. For now.**

Although social networking in the offline world may be well-established -- monetized through conferences, venues, referral fees and headhunters -- the online world seems to just be examining the methods of monetization. The general principle still stands: if you have a large database of active users, you can make money -- right?

## Here is how it is being done today:

**Advertising** -- A quick review of ad dollar expenditures in the U.S. reveals that only a small portion of the total is spent online -- but that is going to change fast. Online advertising is once again booming -- and just as public television and print media often can be sustained from pure advertising models, online is no different. The leading social networking sites (MySpace, Friendster and LinkedIN, along with many others) are primarily supported by advertising. Although their aggressive growth strategies mean that some may still be losing money, advertising represents a substantial amount of revenue.

**Revenue Share/Per Transaction Fees** -- Someone clicks on her friend's profile on Friendster and sees that he loves HBO's hit series "Deadwood." Clicking on the term "Deadwood" brings up all the other members who have the same interest -- and an easy-to-purchase link for the "Deadwood" Season One DVD through Amazon. It's essentially a focused advertising arrangement -- marketers now have precision targeting through social networking profiles, tapping into user interests -- and offering purchase options within very specific filters.

**Events** -- Although revenue numbers generated from MySpace/Facebook-style events are difficult to come by, these events are known to be well attended and a driving force behind their impressive growth. In general, while it's unlikely that offline events account for more than 10 percent of any social network's revenue, events do make for great content and word-of-mouth advertising.

Moving forward, compelling new ways to monetize social networks will continue to emerge. The downside, however, is that some of these methods may not be in the user's best interest -- and they might end up taking the "cool" edge off these communities.

**The Buying Club/Affiliate Revenue Models** -- With Buy.com's purchase of Metails, a major offline and online retailer has recognized the power of social networking and made a

commitment to the space. Yub.com enables users to develop their own social network focused around products, product ratings and, more importantly, a point-based rewards system that lets members benefit from a friend's purchases. While Yub.com feels like heavy retail -- with a full online mall that has grown rapidly in the last few months -- the site is building a large user base and enticing members to recommend products to friends.

Although the buying club mentality might work only within certain types of social networks, the notion of a point system that rewards users for certain activities should be embraced more broadly. By developing a currency system, a social networking site can create very real incentives (promotions, giveaways, contests, fundraisers) for specific actions, from which everyone can benefit.

**Corporate Sponsorship** -- Does being a fan of a brand mean that you want the owner of that brand to have all of your personal profile information? Practically speaking, the answer has to do with the type of brand and the reward the user receives for sharing that information. Corporations will take notice of these social networks and begin offering competitive services with products and (if they are smart) experience-based rewards. Just as Icelounge (described as a "MySpace for skaters") was launched, larger brands will begin to do the same. Increased brand loyalty and sales opportunities will lead directly to monetization.

**Country Clubs/Membership Fees** -- The SNS world can be a field of dreams -- albeit for a price.

As social networking site ASmallWorld.com has recently demonstrated, if you build a great social network -- making it "invite-only," with restrictions on activities -- well, everyone wants to join. Naseeb likewise has proven that a focused social network, aimed at a specific niche, can justify an admission charge. From where I sit, I'd much rather be part of a social network with fewer members, no advertising, and no corporate sponsorship but that charges for entry.

Overall, social networking sites are experiencing hockey stick growth and, in the process, influencing new types of two-way brand experiences and community building on the web. Although the approaches to monetization outlined here just scratch the surface, revenue models abound. Any repository of personal data and contact information on a large group of users (perhaps better to call them "consumers") inevitably translates to profit opportunities.

Let's just hope that all our email accounts and personal profiles don't end up in a spam database through a dot-com SNS auction.

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## **Social Networking As A Great Marketing Medium:**

There has been a virtual explosion of social networking sites in the past couple of years. Even the big players like Google, Yahoo and MSN are getting into it.

With so much interest in how social networks work, one begins to wonder if there is marketing potential within these social networks?

Well, you could already be a member of various social networking sites including [myspace.com](http://myspace.com) / [facebook.com](http://facebook.com) / [instagram.com](http://instagram.com) / [pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com) and [linkedin.com](http://linkedin.com) (just to name a few).

I joined some myself, partly because I wanted to see what they were, but more importantly to see what impact social networking would have on SEM in the coming years.

I've been a member of various services for some time and the reach these sites have is incredible.

For example, from my LinkedIn network of seven people I have an expanded network of over 12,600 people.

Imagine that - I'm only a click or two away from close to 13,000 other people who share my similar interests ranging from what I like to watch on TV, to what type of work I could provide to them.

Through my connections and their connections, I'm connected to people ranging from the American Cancer Society, to Sun Microsystems, to the University of Texas, to Google.

### **But what marketing opportunities are there for Social Networking?**

Well, let's look at Facebook.

Facebook is one of the top sites on the Web today. It racked up over a trillion page-views per month (more than Google) and new users are signing up at a mind-boggling rate of 3.5 million a month.

Facebook is typical of where today's 18-30 year old goes to manage their digital life. It allows users to post photos of themselves and their friends, create a blog, list their favourite bands, view and share videos, suggest things to do and lists a set of people they consider friends. It is on this "Friends List" where most of the opportunities lie.

All 680,000,000 users of Facebook have a friend's page that lists people that person considers their friend. This is a list of people that they are interested in talking to and about, as well as hearing from on a regular basis. Once you add someone as your friend they can send you emails, comment on your photos, read your blogs, as well as leave

messages that you can then share with others. This is an opportunity for instant feedback about you.

The ability to add friends to your page is key for marketing to Facebook users. According to Courtney Holt, head of media and strategic marketing at Interscope Records, "This generation is growing up without having ever watched programmed media." "They don't think in terms of the album, and they don't think in terms of a TV schedule. They think in terms of TiVo, P2P, AOL, and of course MySpace and Facebook."

### **You can see how this could grow.**

Let's say you create a Facebook account to talk about your product or service. You blog about it and search for others that may share your interests.

You then invite them to be your friend. When they become a friend you start your "soft sell" pitching your product to them.

As they grow to appreciate it, they start blogging and sharing it. Soon hundreds or even thousand of people are talking about you and your product or service.

### **Don't think this will work?**

Let me give you some examples. There are many bands who have gotten their start on MySpace and now Facebook. Simply by hosting some of their music online and blogging about themselves they developed a following. Soon they had record deals and contracts lined up.

But that doesn't mean other social networking opportunities should be overlooked. As I mentioned above, LinkedIn is more of a professional introduction service. If your product or service fits here then by all means explore it further.

And there are others as well. Services such as Yahoo!s MyWeb, Flickr, <http://del.icio.us> and more.

So if you've ever wondered what other online opportunities could be out there, consider social networking. It could be the next great online marketing channel.

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## **Spread The Word About You Or Your Business:**

With so many powerful social media websites these days, it's never been easier to connect with so many people even if you're the only person in your business. If you set up your feeds correctly people can, for example, read on Facebook information about your business based on a Tweet which can lead to a connection on LinkedIn. It's amazing how powerful this "viral marketing" can be and it makes sense why so many businesses are using such strategies.

LinkedIn is a networking website aimed at professional business people and owners. It is said that the average member earns \$100,000 or more per year so we're talking about successful people with the power to make executive decisions. However, for the viral aspect of social media to really work efficiently, it does take time to set up. But, the effort (if done correctly) should pay dividends.

LinkedIn is free - so if you haven't joined yet - do so now.

Fill in as much detail as you can without being too long-winded and do not be boring. Use a little creativity to describe yourself and your business. Even consider creating a quick video if possible.

One of the aspects LinkedIn is known for is recruiting - so marketers often turn to LinkedIn to find part time, full time, or outsourcing staff. If you're looking to source staff, check LinkedIn for sure.

You can also join relevant groups on LinkedIn. The more you contribute, the more favourable your name will become and people will want to connect with you personally. You can also start your own groups which could lead to future business relationships.

If you own a business, whether you're a lone entrepreneur or a company with staff, LinkedIn is a great place to make relevant connections to help expand your business to the next level.

## **Tips For Marketing On LinkedIn:**

Before LinkedIn the usual way to network meant attending meetings, seminars, conferences, etc. While this still happens today, you are very limited in the number of people you can network with or contact. However, now with LinkedIn, you can network to technically millions of people, have access to a wider audience, and can do all of this from the comfort of your own home and at your own pace.

Not only can you attract new business through networking on LinkedIn but you can join groups of like-minded professionals and businesses and really take your company and income to the next level. Additionally, you can learn about new trends, stay abreast of hot topics, and discover what colleagues are doing to improve their business in today's economic climate.

When creating a profile on LinkedIn, consider creating a personal profile and one for your company. Add some creativity when creating your profiles so that your audience is at least engaged and interested in what you have to say or offer. Don't bore them! Also, keep it short and sweet, the vast majority of people reading your profile are busy business folks.

Be sure to emphasize your expertise by adding your resume and a detailed history of your work and personal experience that pertains to your business. Fill out all available sections to show you're serious.

While LinkedIn is a fantastic online resource, don't forget that networking offline is still very valuable and can provide you with a steady flow of contacts between the two. Add testimonials if you can, to build trust, and be sure you network with the right people as connections with "bad apples" can reflect negatively on you or your business.

Enjoy the power of LinkedIn and use it as a tool to further network, connect with business people, and highlight your brand.

### **Use LinkedIn To Expand Your 'Social Sphere Of Influence':**

While LinkedIn is known as a place where business people connect and network, by that very nature it is a social media marketing platform as well. A personal or business entity can use LinkedIn to promote itself as well as make connections with other business people in an attempt to broaden one's network.

Aside from signing up and creating a profile on LinkedIn (which is of course the starting point) one of the most popular strategies is getting recommendations. A LinkedIn recommendation can be seen as social proof toward a brand's value and popularity. If you or your company is recommended, that shines a huge positive light on your business. It's also recommended that you have a number of recommendations on your profile, because the more you have, that can have a positive impact as far as how other business folk see you as a valued member.

In a similar respect to giving recommendations, you should strive to get recommendations too. Again, by receiving recommendations, you are in effect getting a positive vote about you and others will take notice. If you are viewed positively, you have a better chance of connecting with more people, developing stronger business ties, and if all goes well gaining more business too!

So, sign up, add as much info about 'you' or your business, provide - and hopefully receive - recommendations, as well as join groups and become active, if you follow these basic principles on LinkedIn then you will have the best chance of marketing yourself or your business and reaping the rewards of your efforts.

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