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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE FOR LINKEDIN:

## Why It's Time



Prepared by



Our business is developing yours.

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# Why It's Time

Are You  
**Linked Out?**



From an article in Forbes; "When someone Googles you, your LinkedIn profile is likely to show up at the top of the search results because you are a part of that 500,000 person search engine known as LinkedIn. It is the number one social media for business. It is a key tool for influencing those who want to get to know you. LinkedIn is the place where people go first to learn about you."

Yet many professional service providers continue to avoid this reality. Social media and content marketing are this new reality but excuses and resistance to change abound. With so many different social media platforms let's narrow the focus of this conversation to the #1 platform for business – LinkedIn.

Forbes states LinkedIn drives 64% of all social media visits to company websites. Do you really want to offer an incomplete profile when others come to check you out? Yet Forbes tells us over 50% of LinkedIn profiles are not completed or optimized.

Time seems to be the biggest obstacle to using LinkedIn. But in fact, once your profile is optimized you can spend 10-minutes on most days to be a part of the conversation and let your connections know you are providing content and also noticing their posts and articles.

## It's About Your Clients

Your clients are on LinkedIn and are increasingly looking for new information. You want to be the individual or the firm that provides it. Reading the posts of your connections also helps you to stay up to date on industry trends and client news.

LinkedIn is a strong platform to increase the level of content you and/or your firm pushes out to connections and your industry. It's like having a "blog-like" opportunity without the commitment of a blog.

A first step to successfully jumping into LinkedIn is to connect with your contacts. The number of connections you have is posted on your profile page at the top. Strive to reach 500 connections as quickly as you can as once you get to 500 connections it just reads 500+. Some LinkedIn members look questionably at users who have less than 500. Clients, prospective clients, referral sources and colleagues should all be connections.

As with any of social media, it's not a "one and done" scenario. Look at the content your connections are posting. Read their articles and consider commenting and/or "liking" their most recent ones. Check in to see what your most important connections are liking and sharing, and what might trigger a conversation or opportunity for follow up. Being helpful to someone is one of the quickest ways to become memorable.



## Learning the Ease of LinkedIn

Posting original content on your Home page is part of the process. This can be just a few sentences in which you write about your area of expertise, or information about a meeting or event you attended. Consider composing several sentences about a new business trend, or an important industry or marketplace update. You can comment on an interesting article providing a link to it. If the article has an image it will automatically appear in your post. Interesting images increase the open rate significantly.

If you post blogs on your website or separately, be certain to repurpose each one using the link in your post offering a couple of sentences about the blog. Share posts from your associates or company news. Mix up your posts to include updates or trends, industry information, summaries or advice from strong conference sessions you've attended, repost articles you or your partners have published and announce speaking engagements ahead of time. Consider having a photo taken of you speaking and post that with a summary of your presentation.

You can write an article to place on your Profile page and it will also appear on your status update on your Home page. This is a free way to continuously demonstrate and enhance your expertise on a given topic. Develop a strategy or position you wish to take on for your updates and articles. Identify your audience's hot buttons, pain, and fears and address them. Build trust and align your position with the goals and values of your audience. Finding intelligent articles takes less time than crafting original content, but still shows your knowledge and expertise.

Sharing content allows you to stay in touch while you sleep. Many times your contacts will "share" an article you posted which now goes to all of their connections. And yes, business actually happens on LinkedIn.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce it can take between 8 to 20 touch points before someone knows you well enough, understands the depth of your knowledge in a particular area, and feels comfortable enough to want to do business with you. So after your next meeting, speaking opportunity, or networking event, this great tool we call LinkedIn can assist you in making numerous touch points demonstrating your knowledge, expertise, and ability to connect and care. Be certain to add new connections after every meeting you attend. Stay top of mind with LinkedIn.

Content Should:

- Be snack-sized
- Consider the use of bullet points



- Offer key takeaways, and be obvious
- Have a unique voice that resonates with your readers
- Serve your visitors' intent by answering their questions and educating them
- Get the right information and experience to your audience quickly

## What is all of This Talk about Optimizing Your Profile?\*

It is worth highlighting again that most folks will go to LinkedIn before going to your firm or company website to review your Profile page.

Optimizing your LinkedIn Profile helps others find and learn about you. To optimize your Profile start by looking at the following two areas.

**A Clear Profile Headline** (120 character limit) appears under your name. Do not be generic, rather be specific. Try, "Resolving complex audit and tax problems," rather than "Tax Accountant."

- Consider incorporating key search words in your headline and also in your profile. LinkedIn automatically provides the name of your company and your education on the next line under your Profile Headline.

**The Profile Summary** comes next (2,000 character limit). A well-branded Profile summary helps distinguish you from the competition and allows viewers to get a deeper understanding of what you do, how you do it, and why you do it. Generic descriptions don't work well on LinkedIn. Emphasize your professional skills.

1. Avoid the use of "I." After a few times of seeing that word it begins to sound like "me, me, me and then there is me!" Instead of saying, "I am an investment

**\*See Addendum**

professional. I help companies..." Consider, "As an investment manager that focuses on your financial goals, we assist companies..." You might also consider writing in the third person such as, "As an attorney who successfully closes M & A transactions, Stacy spends time honing in on each client's business goals before any transaction begins."

- a. Include key words that clearly describe what you do so that LinkedIn and search engines can connect those searching for your area of practice, experience and expertise. LinkedIn has over 500 million users and therefore is one of the largest search engines in and of itself. And you, as a LinkedIn user, get the enhancement of LinkedIn when folks are searching the web. For most of us, the first thing that comes up under our names on a Google search are several LinkedIn results such as status updates and articles. This is powerful stuff.
- b. Modify your Summary from any other online bios or profiles just a bit. Search engines will discount your Summary if it is taken literally from your website bio since that information is already online.

### Engage in the LinkedIn Community

Once you have completed the steps above you may want to polish and complete the other aspects of your Profile. You can find these as you scroll down the Profile page. The following aspects should be easier to complete once your Headline and Summary are completed.

1. Be sure to upload a professional high resolution color photo.
2. Establish credibility with recommendations.
3. Manage your endorsements.
4. Use the Media section to link to content on your website and blogs. Post presentations, articles and other content on your profile page. It provides the reader with a sense of the depth of your expertise and your distinctions.
5. List education, projects, certifications, volunteering/ causes, honors and awards. Use logos, colorful images and photos.
6. Join a few targeted LinkedIn groups.

### Conclusion or Can I still Ignore LinkedIn?

We began this article with a quote from Forbes. It reminds us that we are way past the tipping point for the adoption of social media, especially LinkedIn. It is far from being considered a disruptive technology these days. LinkedIn was launched in 2003 and was adopted by the Innovators

who were visionary and saw the possibilities of this technology. Next came the Early Adopters and by 2004 there were over a million users. By 2011 the Early Majority were on board. By 2013 this technology was adopted by the Late Majority. According to the laws of disruptive technologies only the Laggards, defined as critical thinkers who are more comfortable with tradition and the status quo, remain passive about using LinkedIn.

These suggestions are a great place to start to connect and get noticed on LinkedIn. Ignoring social media at this stage would be akin to Late Adopters who avoided disruptive technologies such as email, company websites and branding. The future is now. Get connected through the use of the number one business social media in the world, LinkedIn.



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Our business is developing yours.

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# Maximum Character Count for 2017

When you type text into a LinkedIn box, every character counts. Technically, everything you type is a 'character', including letters, number, spaces, and punctuation

1. Name: First Name: 20 characters, Last Name: 40 characters
2. Professional Headline: 120 character limit
3. Professional Summary: 2,000 character limit
4. Recommendations: 3,000 characters limit
5. Website Anchor Text: 30 maximum characters
6. Website URL: 256 maximum characters
7. Vanity URL: 5-30 characters after 'www.linkedin.com/in/' \*
8. Position Title: 100 maximum characters
9. Position Description: 200 character minimum (2000 maximum characters)
10. Interests: 1,000 characters
11. Additional Info/Advice for Contacting: 2,000 character limit
12. Phone Number: 25 character limit
13. Skills: 80 characters per skill
14. Profile Publication Title: 255 character limit
15. Profile Publication Content: 2,000 character limit
16. Invitation to connect message body: 299 character limit

*\*Your custom URL can have 5-30 letters or numbers. Can't use spaces, symbols, or special characters.*



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# Additional Thoughts and Tips

## Forbes Magazine and Other Online Research

- LinkedIn drives 64% of all social media visits to corporate websites
- 50% of profiles are completed
- 42% provide regular status updates
- 41% report 500+ connections – up from 20% in 2013
- 58% spend more than two hours weekly
- 74% use LinkedIn to research people and companies
- Posting status updates rose from 10% to 39%
- Who's Viewed Your Profile remains #1 feature followed by People You May Know
- 70% of users gave LinkedIn a 4 or 5 rating (out of 5)

## Building your Profile

- Include high resolution professional photo
- Brand profile headline
- Customize profile URL
- Add location and industry
- Include targeted keywords in profile

## Engage in the LinkedIn Community

- Establish credibility with recommendations
- Manage endorsements
- List education, projects, certifications, volunteering/causes, honors & awards
- Include visuals of work, videos, presentations, published works
- Add "Advice for Contacting Section"
- Join and participate in groups
- Post regular and informative status update



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