B2B Marketing™



BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Beginner's Guide to LinkedIn

B2BMARKETING.NET

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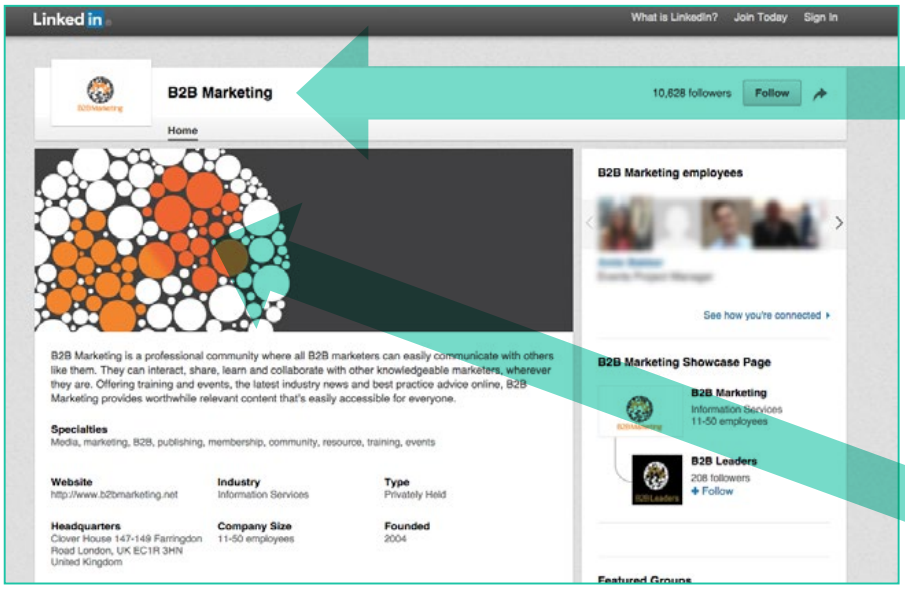
Introduction

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network, with 364 million members from 200 countries across the globe. It can be a fantastic platform for both individuals and businesses to grow their reach, however it can be hard for marketers to get right; success on LinkedIn requires both a marketing team that knows how to make the most of its features, and engaged employees who are willing to represent their company in a positive light.

This guide will help you overcome both of these challenges, so that you can make sure LinkedIn is truly integrated into the rest of your social media strategy. This is the third in a series of *Beginner's Guides* focused on the top social networks that have been put together with B2B marketers in mind. In addition to LinkedIn, we have published a *Beginner's Guide to Twitter* and a *Beginner's Guide to Facebook*.

In this guide you'll find the basics of LinkedIn outlined, a guide to getting LinkedIn working for your business, 10 everyday LinkedIn tips, a template for a LinkedIn content schedule and a list of further reading.

LinkedIn: The basics



Standard logo

Min size 300x300/max size 400 x 400
PNG/JPEG/GIF 4MD
Resized to 60x60

Banner image

646x220 pixels (PNG/JPEG/GIF)
Maximum file size 2MD

Profile

LinkedIn allows you to see who has viewed your profile and posts, as well as how your profile views compare to your connections, company and peers. You can browse anonymously by changing your privacy settings; however this means you won't be able to see who has viewed your page.

Connections

This is the number of people in your network with whom you share updates. LinkedIn offers a number of ways to grow your following by pulling contacts from your work email to premium member options that let you message people outside your network.

Company Page

Businesses can set up Company Pages on the social network which users can follow. Brands can personalise the page with a profile image, header and description, link to Groups and post updates.

Groups

Users can join up to 50 Groups on LinkedIn. These are forums where you can post questions and have discussions and debates. It's a great way to make new connections and ask your peers for advice.

Pulse

Pulse is LinkedIn's publishing platform. It allows users to post long-form updates such as articles or blogs straight to the site. Once the content is published the user's connections are notified.

Recommendations

Connections can post recommendations that appear on your profile. These are short references your followers can view.

Endorsements

Users can endorse their followers for certain skills that appear on their profile. You can add top skills to your own page that you would like your followers to endorse, for example 'social media' or 'content marketing'.

How to get LinkedIn working for your business

ROBYN PIERCE
HEAD OF
SOCIAL MEDIA
THE CROCODILE



LinkedIn has made a great niche for itself. While other social networks have fallen by the wayside due to lack of focus, clumsy interfaces or inability to scale (remember Eons, Orkut, Ping, Xanga? Didn't think so), LinkedIn has very much cornered the B2B market.

According to LinkedIn, it has more than 364 million members across more than 200 countries. Many people see it as a tool for getting a new job, and while it's true that LinkedIn has changed the face of recruitment, there's more to it than self-promotion.

LinkedIn offers a host of features that allow businesses to build brand awareness, reputation and trust, and generate leads. However, understanding where LinkedIn sits within your social media strategy and how to make best use of it for the good of your business can be a challenge.

On Facebook and Twitter the line between professional and personal usage is clear and businesses are by and large limited to communicating via branded company accounts. On LinkedIn the opposite is true. Personal profiles are work-focused and the good news is there's plenty you can do to make sure these personal profiles are showcasing your brand in the best possible light.

1. Getting started

Success on LinkedIn begins with individual profiles. While LinkedIn company pages are useful for building a following around your products or services, they are passive and lack the functionality of personal pages. You can't connect with people or message them from a Company Page and, ultimately, people want to deal with people rather than logos.

Many employees within your business will already be using LinkedIn to network with colleagues, customers and prospects. Supporting those employees with guidelines for optimising their LinkedIn presence will help you harness those individual profiles and get them working for your business.

Profiles with photos receive 50-70 per cent more enquiries than profiles without, so encourage staff to use a professional-looking photo. Other advice you should include in your LinkedIn guidelines are steps for claiming vanity URLs, guidance on writing headlines that will perform well in search, and specific company information that everyone should include on their profiles like company web address, blog, Twitter handle etc.

2. Being proactive

Adopt a proactive approach and encourage people to build their LinkedIn networks by reaching out and inviting people to connect. It's the social media equivalent of exchanging business cards, and sending a LinkedIn invitation is a great way of following up with new contacts and getting in front of prospects.

People appreciate the personal touch so it's best not to use LinkedIn's default text in invitations. Taking a little extra time to write a personal message will make a big difference in terms of how invitations are received.

Another worthwhile thing to do is endorse contacts for their skills and experience – often they will endorse back. Over time, these endorsements will build out a detailed picture of professional capabilities.

3. Awareness and reach

Once you've engaged employees with guidelines for optimisation and advice on best practice, you can use them to spread the word about the latest news and developments within your business.

Rather than relying on people to share your company's content of their own volition, write the LinkedIn updates for them. Then it becomes

a simple cut and paste job. By providing a regular round up of shareable links and posts, you can extend the reach of blogs, press releases and case studies to the many people in your employees' LinkedIn networks.

You'll find the most active LinkedIn users within your business are more than happy to share work-related content. As a result, the most engaged and informed advocates of your brand – your employees – will be helping to grow brand awareness and reach.

4. Showcase talent

Another idea is to extend your company blogging strategy to include LinkedIn. Since opening up its Pulse publishing platform to all English-speaking users, LinkedIn is attracting more readers interested in long-form posts.

The people within your business who are already writing great content, either for your company blog or in their own right as subject matter experts, should be encouraged to upload their posts to LinkedIn Pulse so that more of the right people are exposed to their ideas and so your business can showcase its talent.

5. Support social selling

If you remain unconvinced of the value of LinkedIn to your business, consider the needs of the sales team. LinkedIn can be a powerful tool for sales professionals, providing direct access to key decision-makers.

With a basic free LinkedIn account you can access the Advanced People Search tool and identify prospects based on job title and location. Upgrade to a Premium account for additional filters such as company size and seniority.

Encourage the sales team to explore LinkedIn to its full potential, and they will soon make meaningful connections and open the door with prospects. Make sure they have optimised their personal profiles to support sales objectives and showcase the business in the best possible light.

It may be worthwhile providing some training to help sales people leverage the opportunities of social selling and business development on LinkedIn. Think of it as working the room for the 21st century – just a lot more efficient and cost effective.

6. Sponsor updates

Despite the accessibility of social media, making sure the right people see your content is challenging. Increasingly, B2B marketers must look to paid social media to ensure cut-through.

LinkedIn sponsored updates offer precise targeting, making sure content reaches the right audience. Sponsored updates appear in users' news feeds like ordinary posts, making them less intrusive than traditional advertising.

According to LinkedIn, after HubSpot started using sponsored posts it generated 400 per cent more leads within its target audience on LinkedIn than on other platforms.

So there you have it: six positive actions you can take with LinkedIn that will benefit your business. The key is finding the confidence to support and encourage employees in their personal use of LinkedIn. Think of it as good, old-fashioned teamwork.

Ten everyday LinkedIn tips

JESSICA MCGREAL
DIGITAL CONTENT MANAGER
B2B MARKETING



Everyday LinkedIn tips for B2B brands

How to make your organisation successful on the largest professional social network.

1. Utilise your Company Page

It's easy to set up a Company Page, but it's vital brands use the space to their advantage.

LinkedIn doesn't offer brands much room for personality, so marketers have to harness the little space available to showcase their company and its products or services. So, ensure your header image stands out by using a photo of your latest event, or update it to coincide with your latest campaign. Meanwhile, when posting an update remember to attach an image using the paperclip symbol to make your message stand out.

2. Share expertise

Consistent status updates will make sure you are seen on users' feeds. This doesn't have to be everyday but perhaps thrice-weekly (depending on your following). You can also send more personalised updates by selecting a target audience to share a piece of content with. To do this click the arrow on the 'share with' box (underneath the status update textbox) and select 'targeted audience'.

These updates shouldn't be too product centric or sales-y, instead focus on sharing industry news and best practice that your followers will find useful.

3. Create a Group

While employees can join LinkedIn Groups and contribute, as a company you may wish to set up your own group on a subject aligned with your brand values.

For example, if you are a professional service organisation with a new corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategy, why not set up a group dedicated to discussing the significance of CSR? This will give your brand the opportunity to position itself as an expert in this field, while becoming great space for peer-to-peer conversations.

In addition, Groups offer brands the option to email members once a week. This is a bonus email marketing tool, allowing you to reach people beyond the company database.

4. Make the most out of analytics

LinkedIn offers some great analytics tools that allow marketers to really get to grips with what resonates with their followers – and what doesn't.

Company Page analytics includes stats on your page's overall reach and engagement as well as a breakdown of each status update in terms of impressions, clicks, interactions and engagement. In addition follower demographics are displayed, as well as visitor counts.

5. Recruit

LinkedIn's a great place to advertise new job opportunities in your organisation. The social network has made posting job advertisements pretty simple: just select the 'Jobs' tab, then hiring in the right hand column and fill in the required fields. An advantage of advertising on LinkedIn is that all your connections and Company Page followers can see the ad on their home feed.

Everyday LinkedIn tips for employees

It's individuals, not companies that hold the power on LinkedIn. Consequently, encouraging your employees to become active advocates on the network is an essential ingredient of any LinkedIn marketing strategy. Here are some top tips for your staff:

1. Training is essential

First things first – training is essential if employees are to see the benefits of this social network. If you're on the social media team, here are a few ideas: LinkedIn workshops are a great start. If you're working in a large organisation consider filming short top tips videos, or writing a snappy how to guide to share over email. These should cover the basics of using the network, the opportunities it presents and brand voice.

This training will give confidence to those starting out, while ensuring they are representing the brand in a professional way.

2. Network, but don't spam

LinkedIn is a professional networking site, so it's important to add people you've met through work whether at events, meetings or just email. However, don't be one of those people that adds absolutely everyone (LinkedIn caps free member's monthly adds anyway). There's no value in adding people you don't know, and this can be seen as spammy. Endorsing people that you don't know is even worse. Instead, use the site to keep up with the contacts you know through work and share useful industry information and advice.

3. Contribute to LinkedIn Groups

Joining relevant industry LinkedIn Groups and starting or adding to discussions is a good way to make new connections on the site. There are groups on every subject around, from 'B2B Marketing' to 'The Gardening Seeds Guide'. LinkedIn makes it easy to find new Groups and there's clearly something for everyone.

4. Publish blogs

LinkedIn Pulse allows members to publish blogs and articles directly to the social network. This is a great tool for various reasons. Firstly, when you publish content all your followers are notified. This maximises exposure and encourages interaction, as well as debate. In addition, you can see analytics, including who has viewed, shared and liked, in a weekly stat update sent via email.

5. Support your industry

This network is not just about staying up-to-date with industry news, but rather supporting your peers and driving your sector forwards. So don't just share company news, but rather industry-wide achievements. See what people are discussing and sharing on your home feed and get involved by liking, commenting or sharing.

Further reading

- *B2B social selling on LinkedIn*, B2B Marketing and Really B2B
- *How to: Set up a successful LinkedIn group*, Marketing Options International
- How to: G*et the most out of LinkedIn advertising*, Peter Wilkinson, social media director, Panther Interactive Marketing
- *Case study: Capgemini grows employees' social authority*, B2B Marketing
- *Connect: The Secret LinkedIn Playbook To Generate Leads, Build Relationships, And Dramatically Increase Your Sales*, Josh Turner (June 2015)
- *The LinkedIn Code: Unlock the largest online business social network to get leads, prospects & clients for B2B, professional services and sales & marketing pros*, Melonie Dodaro (May 2014)

b2bmarketing.net Template

Template: Social media calendar

								Results	
	Platform	Content type	Target audience	Objective	Copy	Link	Impressions	Engagement	Clicks
Monday	LinkedIn								
	Twitter								
	Facebook								
Tuesday	LinkedIn								
	Twitter								
	Facebook								
Wednesday	LinkedIn								
	Twitter								
	Facebook								
Thursday	LinkedIn								
	Twitter								
	Facebook								
Friday	LinkedIn								
	Twitter								
	Facebook								
Saturday	LinkedIn								
	Twitter								
	Facebook								
Sunday	LinkedIn								
	Twitter								
	Facebook								

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About The Crocodile

The Crocodile is an award-winning B2B agency with a talent for creating conversations. We provide a powerful blend of strategic, creative and technology-enabled marketing services to create enduring and profitable relationships with the audiences that matter to our clients.

We're excited by the game-changing role of marketing, and we're intently focused on helping ambitious marketers put customers at the heart of a winning strategy.

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About B2B Marketing

B2B Marketing is the comprehensive information resource for B2B marketers. Its mission is to provide practitioners with the information they need to perform better and achieve more, whatever sector of the B2B space they are operating in.

Launched in 2004 as B2B Marketing magazine, it has since evolved into a multi-faceted resource, delivering a broad range of content in a variety of different forms and formats.

Its key products are:

- Online community
- Magazine
- Awards
- Research and reports
- Training
- Events
- Membership

For more information on any of these products or services go to b2bmarketing.net or call +44(0)20 7014 4920

STAY ON TOP OF THE MARKETING EVOLUTION

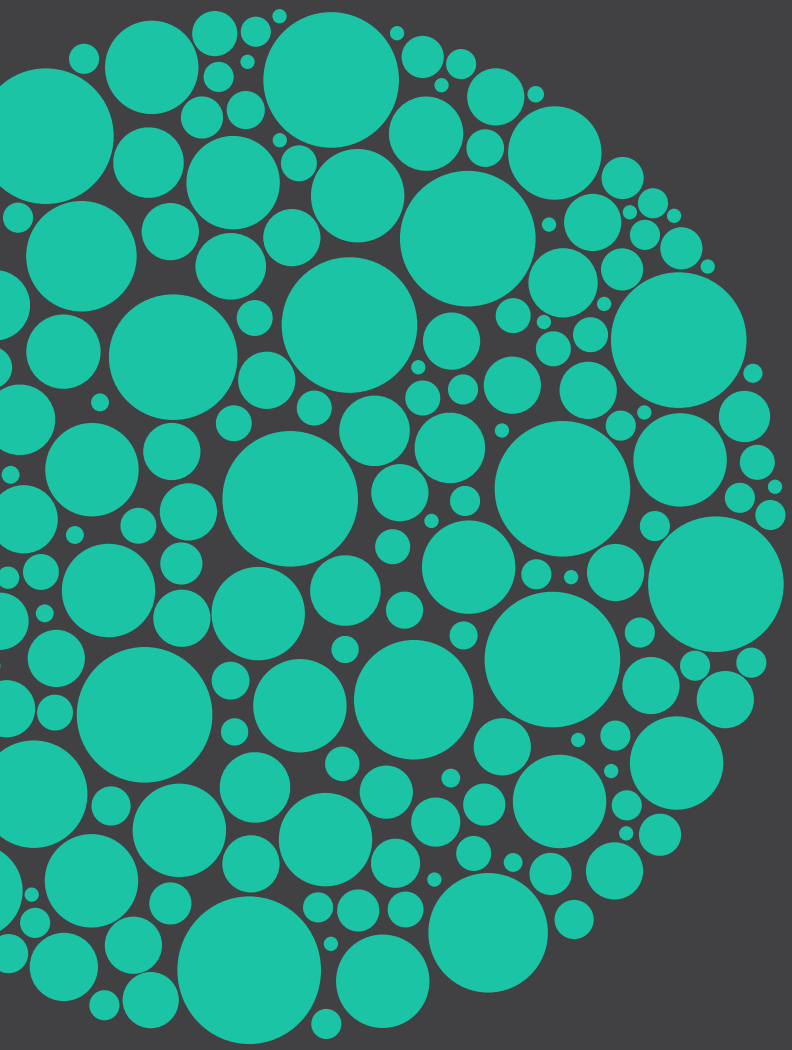
Corporate membership

B2B marketers have never had to be so multi-skilled, multi-tasked, and accountable to business objectives. Marketers need up-to-the-minute research, knowledge and insight to ensure they are not left behind.



Join us today

To find out more, contact our membership team:
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B2B Marketing

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