



## Top 5 LinkedIn Tips

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Whether you are trying to expand your business network or searching for a new job, LinkedIn can be your "go-to" social media platform.



When performing a social media audit for a new client one of the first things I look at is the presence they have on LinkedIn. Whether you are B2B or B2C (business-to-business or business to consumer) you should have a profile on LinkedIn for you AND your company. Your personal profile is your on-line resume and connection file. Your profile is a living representation of your career. It should reflect you. There is a specific area to represent your company.

My question to you is - Do you *use* LinkedIn or just collect connections?

To help you move past the "collecting connections" phase, I offer my **Top 5 LinkedIn Tips**.

1. **Photo** - There are two schools of thought on this option. The detractors feel that having a photo of yourself can lead to discrimination. My philosophy is - put on a smile and snap a headshot that is professional in appearance (doesn't have to be professionally done) that is tight and well-lit with limited background distractions. A bonus to having a good photo on your profile is that you have some recognition when you are meeting a new client or prospect for the first time.
2. **Complete** - In the early days of LinkedIn, the process to obtaining a 100% complete profile required you to have a photo, headline, current position, two past positions, education, 3 recommendations, summary and specialties. Now LinkedIn makes suggestions for your profile to help you make it as complete as possible.

The three key areas to include keywords that will bolster your appearance in search results are – headline, summary and skills & endorsements.

When it comes to recommendations, they have to come from people to whom you are a 1<sup>st</sup> degree connection. Avoid the "recommendation love" trap of writing one for someone who has just written one for you. A good way to put a smile on someone's face is to write an unsolicited recommendation.

Note that the average user sees only the first 100 results in any keyword search performed. Only profiles that are 100% complete appear at the top of the list. So with a potential pool of 330 million names, if your profile isn't complete, your profile may never be seen unless someone searches for you by name.

3. **Connections** - to be effective in LinkedIn you need a minimum of 500 connections. In the classes I teach, my mantra is "It's not about who you know, but about who they know." Developing relationships is important, and in some cases, getting to know someone on-line is just as valuable as a face-to-face relationship.

Less than 10% of my connections are considered an "on-line only" connection. I know that because I have "tagged" all of my connections through a function in LinkedIn that allows me to categorize my connections for later reference. This feature makes things easier to communicate down the road.

4. **Invitations** - What do you do with all the business cards you collect at a networking event? If you attend as many as I do, it is sometimes difficult to remember where you might have met someone. One of the things that I strongly advocate is personalizing invitations that you send. When I return to my desk, I take the business cards I gathered from a particular event and compose a personalized invitation incorporating the event and day I met them. I offer some assistance and finally, ask the person to connect. This helps the person remember where we met, which is especially useful if that person is not a regular visitor to their LinkedIn account.

Personalizing an invitation also works when trying to connect with someone that you would like to know. In your invitation, explain why the connection would be useful or beneficial. By adding that detail, someone is more likely to accept your invitation and less likely to report your invitation as spam.

5. **Participate** - There are so many ways to participate in LinkedIn. The most obvious are to share status updates regularly and engage in discussions within Groups. Every time you participate or connect with someone new, a notification goes up in the update streams of the people to whom you are connected. Marketing theory says that it takes 5-7 touches before someone remembers your name and 21 touches for someone to take action. The more frequently your connections see your name (touches), especially with useful information, the more likely they are to either a.) do business with you, or b.) tell one of their connections about you.

Once you get in the habit of using LinkedIn regularly, you will see the benefits that this social media tool can offer. Remember that these tips were for your personal profile. Your personal profile is your on-line resume and a link to your connections. It should be a dynamic representation of your career path with all the curves and turns. As an entrepreneur, you may be your company, but don't make the mistake of creating a

personal profile to represent your company. Use the function specifically designed to represent your company. It allows you even more flexibility.