



# LESSONS IN SOCIAL MEDIA: LinkedIn

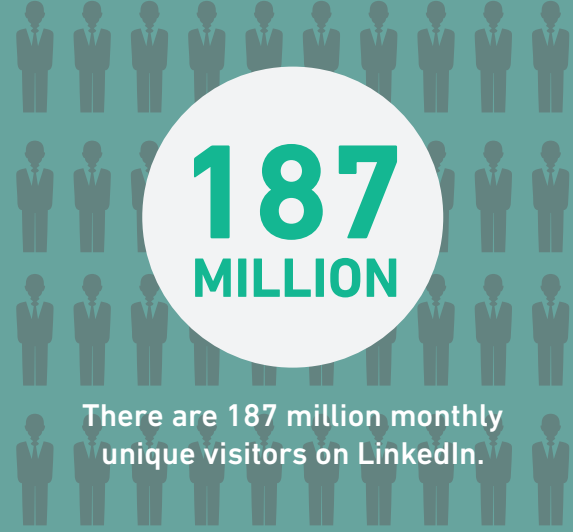
If you're a small business owner or entrepreneur, you've probably experimented with social media but have you fully embraced LinkedIn and used it to help build your business? Here's some help to get you started.



## WHAT?



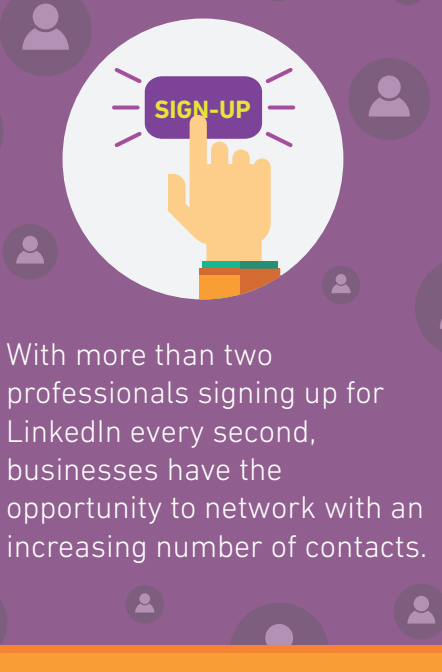
**LinkedIn** is the unmatched social networking site for professionals, business owners, and business-to-business organizations looking to build the relationships that are so critical to survival. Unlike other social networks, LinkedIn focuses on business and professional profiles.



There are 187 million monthly unique visitors on LinkedIn.

## WHY?

### THE TOP 5 REASONS TO USE LINKEDIN:



With more than two professionals signing up for LinkedIn every second, businesses have the opportunity to network with an increasing number of contacts.

- 1** Increase your personal and company visibility
- 2** Influence your target market through value and leadership
- 3** Nurture prospects and generate leads
- 4** Gain insights and conduct market research
- 5** Share relevant content about you or your company

## HOW?

### CREATE YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE:

- 1** **Start with a professional photo.** If you don't have one, use the best snapshot you can find. This is not the place to be funny or silly, but do smile to make the best first impression.
- 2** **Make your headline stand out.** Customize the default headline and keep it to about ten words. You might want to list your specialty or what makes you unique. You can also use keywords that are important for your business. Just be sure to avoid industry jargon.
- 3** **Complete the "summary" field with significant achievements.** Limit to four or five that illustrate your core values and what people should know about you.
- 4** **Keep your "experience" or work history relevant.** Rather than every job you've ever had, list only the jobs that contribute to your current goals.
- 5** **Add visual media.** Include anything that helps tell your story (e.g., links to relevant videos, articles you've written, past presentations, and important photos).
- 6** **Complete your profile as much as possible.** This means skills, honors, awards, interests, education, languages, volunteering, etc. — all the additional details that don't fit in the summary but provide more insight about you.
- 7** **Secure recommendations.** Reach out to current and past colleagues, managers and clients to ask for recommendations that support your professional goals.

# 14 TIMES

Research shows that just having a picture makes your profile **14 times** more likely to be viewed by others (Talent Blog, LinkedIn, 12/14).



## WHEN?

# 25 MILLION

**Did you know:** 25 million LinkedIn profiles are viewed every day.

Once your profile is complete, there are a few core activities you will want to get in the habit of doing. This should take only about 15 minutes per day.



**Tip:** customize your greeting when connecting with people on LinkedIn to be more engaging.

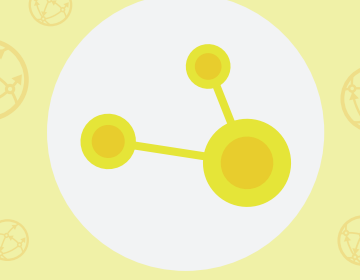
**Starting out:** You are using LinkedIn to build a network, so import a list of your contacts from the "Add Connections" page on LinkedIn. This will run a one-time upload of your address book contacts, as well as their detailed contact information so that LinkedIn can suggest connections and help you manage them.

**Daily: get connections.** Once you make a few connections, LinkedIn will continue to make suggestions of more people to contact. Become familiar with the "Connections" menu so that you can "Keep in Touch" and "Add Connections."

**Daily: status updates:** Status updates on your home page are limited to 140 characters. All of your 1<sup>st</sup> degree connections will receive your updates. However, it is likely that only a small percentage will see them because they may have hundreds or even thousands of updates in their homepage feeds. Updating two or three times a day increases the chances your updates will be seen.

**2 to 3 times per month:** group discussions: LinkedIn allows you to join 50 Groups. The goal is to join the ones where your target audience and prospects are to increase your visibility within an industry. Quality trumps quantity here. Posting in Groups and liking other people's contributions will also show up in the news feeds of your 1<sup>st</sup> degree connections and anyone else who liked the same posts.

**1 to 2 times per month:** company page updates: This is another opportunity to engage followers and influence audiences. Many will question the legitimacy of your business if you don't have a company page. It should be a window into your business and what your company stands for.



**Example:** NBM has three Groups connected to our industry that correspond to their publications and trade shows: *Printwear* magazine, *Sign & Digital Graphics* magazine and *A&E* magazine.

## IMPORTANT ADVICE:

LinkedIn is very much a professional and business based networking platform but the underlying principles of social media remain. Two very important principles to remember: 1) offer value and 2) be authentic.

- 1 OFFER VALUE**
- 2 BE AUTHENTIC**

Try to be informative with "did you know" type updates versus aggressive selling. Hammering your connections with messages about your products and services will not win any customers. With a small investment in time, updates should help you build credibility, visibility and awareness.

