LINKEDIN

FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM BUSINESSES

A GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE LINKEDIN BUSINESS LANDSCAPE



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WHAT IS LINKEDIN?

LinkedIn is a social network for professionals with **over 277 million users**, it is the premier social networking site devoted solely to professionals. There is no other social networking site in which you have a greater chance of being able to interact with an influential decision maker due to the business focused nature of the community.

LinkedIn is important: not only because consumers are members of LinkedIn, but also because the network offers a great platform for finding distributors, agents, and strategic alliances. It is probably the most obvious way to identify influential individuals at specific organizations. A search for your target business or title on LinkedIn will identify people you may already be connected with, either directly or through your daily business connections. LinkedIn is arguably the best tool to leverage your existing contacts to connect with people and find potential customers online, as well as being a great place to network professionally, post and find jobs, answer questions and build **thought leadership**.







WHY SHOULD I BE ON LINKEDIN?

81% of business decision makers use LinkedIn on a regular basis. Whether you are looking to build a strong profile or you wish to target your business marketing, LinkedIn has become the network of choice for the business community. LinkedIn offers several ways to build your professional network, brands and business reputation throughout your network as well as gain valuable traffic back to your website.

- Creating brand awareness With more than 3 million company pages on LinkedIn including all Fortune 500 companies, LinkedIn has an ever expanding global presence.
- Highlight Recommendations More than 45% new B2B users on your website come from a LinkedIn Company page. Having third party recommendations attract new business prospects and are great in making an impression even before they reach your website.
- Recruit Talent In 2013, 93% of recruiters use LinkedIn for recruitment, up from 78% in 2011. Today, LinkedIn has become a living database for most recruiters.
- **Generating Leads** As per Hubspot, lead generation at LinkedIn has the highest visitor-to-lead conversion rate at 2.74%. LinkedIn is a treasure trove of B2B content that can be used to support your organization's lead generation and qualification activities.







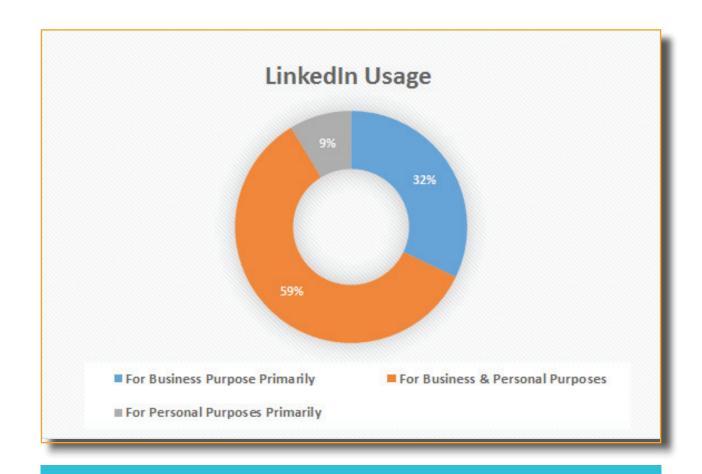


Image courtesy of: http://www.business2community.com



LEAD GENERATION AT LINKEDIN IS 277% MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN FACEBOOK AND TWITTER WITH THE HIGHEST VISITOR-TO-LEAD CONVERSION RATE AT 2.74%.

- HUBSPOT







LinkedIn is the largest professional social network online today with an astounding **277 million users** and a targeted audience of business professionals. Although LinkedIn lags behind Facebook with around **1 billion users**, it's no small fry. You will still find people on LinkedIn who you will never connect with on Facebook – which for many users is still a personal network. LinkedIn, when used correctly, can be a powerful social media marketing tool.

Here are some of the best ways to utilise LinkedIn to expand your own business:

- Making Connections Of course, one of the most straightforward and obvious ways to utilize LinkedIn is to expand your professional network. Instead of going for sheer number of connections, put time and effort into establishing connections with individuals that you can actually help, and vice versa.
- Company Pages LinkedIn company pages let you create a full profile for your business, post updates, and get followers. For a business on LinkedIn, this is an essential first step.
- Status updates Aim to provide one update per day that contains compelling or noteworthy information about your company or industry to ensure you stay active and your target audiences achieve value from the information shared.
- Blog Posts LinkedIn allows you to easily syndicate your blog
 posts to your company profile. As you post a blog on your
 website, copy the URL into the status block in your company
 LinkedIn page. This automatically updates with your post's title
 and link to the full post on your website, as well as showing
 analytics on engagement and clicks for that blog post.
- Groups Groups let you connect with other like-minded professionals outside of your network. To get LinkedIn group's mindshare, you can join a few groups and then start your own conversations as well as participate in those discussions started by others. These are also featured on your Company Page.





- Answers By constantly participating on the answer boards and responding to any or all questions that pertain to your area of expertise, leads to engagement. This can be a good way to establish your expertise in your field and get new connections at the same time.
- Presentations LinkedIn allows you to share power point presentations. If you have a SlideShare account, you can easily share your presentations on your LinkedIn profile as well.
- Recommendations allow other LinkedIn users to provide a testimonial of your work. When you have recommendations from key figures in a network, it can benefit your reputation and create new connections and business.
- LinkedIn Ads LinkedIn also provides paid advertising options to promote your business actively on LinkedIn. You can set a budget, and pay only when your links are clicked on.
- LinkedIn Premium Premium LinkedIn accounts add some useful features to your LinkedIn account. While not free, they allow you a greater number of InMails so that you can seek out new connections and communicate directly with other people's inbox more aggressively.
- Recommending Others Instead of just waiting for recommendations or requesting them from everyone on your network, offer recommendations to those you have worked with.
- Connect With Other Social Media Connect your LinkedIn account & profile with your other social media accounts to make the most of your connections across all networks.
- Photos & Videos. Great images always capture attention. Posting great media, images and videos to your LinkedIn page can attract more eyes and increase the possibility of getting your content shared.

Like all social media, LinkedIn takes time and effort to be effective for your business. By investing a little time each week, you'll eventually see your hard work pay off in new connections and followers.





WHY CREATE A LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE?

The benefits of a well presented LinkedIn company page include engaging followers with company news, updates, events and relevant content. There is improved search engine rankings as LinkedIn pages often perform well in company searches, as well as lead generation opportunities from your content marketing. In fact, research shows that **50% of LinkedIn members are more likely to purchase** from companies when they engage with them on LinkedIn.

- Showcase what your business has to offer Smart marketers who build out their products and services page attract twice as many company followers than those who don't. Use this page to tell members what you do best and give them compelling reasons to follow you. You can link to just about anything from your products and services page, including your latest and greatest white papers, case studies or how-to content.
- Engage Your Audience With LinkedIn company pages, you can like and share content as a company. You'll develop trust with customers while developing a more professional corporate brand identity. Hands down, content that's customised to your followers' and customers' professional interests resonates the most. You can post and share items like company news, promotions, relevant industry articles and YouTube videos.
- Attract More Followers Social media is about engaging followers. Engage your colleagues and employees. Cultivate a larger following with a multi-channel approach. Add a Follow button to your website.







Introduce people to what your company has to offer and drive business. Members can recommend your listed products or services, providing compelling social proof of their value that amplifies across the network. You'll best attract customers when you turn your products, services or anything else relevant to your business into focal points. Here are just a few examples of what to feature prominently:

- **Products** The software you sell or the apps you've built
- Services A list of your résumé writing services or your tax consulting brochure
- Other Webinars you host or your company's white papers or ebooks



Showcase your business, reach new customers, and attract great talent



Millions of professionals are following more than 2 million companies on LinkedIn. Who are these followers? They're current customers, potential clients, job seekers, and business partners. They're eager to hear the latest news, see the best products and services, and keep an eye out for job openings. And they're the key to unlocking major business opportunities for your company.

Image courtesy of: http://marketing.linkedin.com





Company pages are also very SEO-friendly. **Google previews up to 156 characters of your page's text.** Be sure to edit your description so that it leads with powerful, keyword-rich sentences. Include words and phrases that describe your business, expertise and industry focus as members can search for companies by keyword on LinkedIn.

Finally, remember to include your company contact information, descriptions of offerings and your areas of expertise. Your primary attributes can also function as keyword tags. Once you've done that, ask your customers to recommend the products and services they favor. Authentic advocacy equals credible endorsement!



CULTIVATE A MULTI-CHANNEL APPROACH, ADD A LINK TO YOUR LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE IN YOUR EMAIL SIGNATURES AND CREATE A FOLLOW BUTTON ON YOUR WEBSITE!

- HUBSPOT

LinkedIn's market research shows that 50% of LinkedIn members are more likely to purchase from a company they engage with on LinkedIn. When people visit LinkedIn, they're in a professional mindset. They actively seek insights and content that can help them be better professionals. Content from companies is not only wanted but expected. LinkedIn members are eager to hear from companies about new products and services, industry news, and career opportunities.







HOW TO CREATE A LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE

The foremost purpose is to establish your presence. Your company page is your home on LinkedIn and more importantly where you use it to tell your brand story.

Inbound marketing on LinkedIn begins with ensuring that your company can be found in the LinkedIn Companies directory and your company can be "followed" by users who want to stay up-to-date with your organisation. With the status update feature, LinkedIn Company Pages are quickly becoming an alternative free source of company information where your company should be present.

- Edit the description of your Company Page Overview Make sure it is in sync with your company website. Add details about the value your company offers. Remember It's a great place to start spreading your message and opening up the conversation.
- Add keywords within the Specialty Section There is also an opportunity to enter 256 characters under the "Specialties" section. Make sure that any keywords for which you want your company to be found are here.
- Pick your industry You can choose a main company industry.
 Make sure you choose the most appropriate, as this is a field that may be used in a search to find your company.





- List your location There is also a search field for location.
 LinkedIn gives you the opportunity to enter up to five locations.
 Use this if your company is represented in multiple regions.
- Choose a banner image that reflects your Company or brand personality.
- **Post status updates** Make an effort to post regular status updates on your page, including links back to your website and blog. This is your chance to make your page dynamic and interactive, as well as send traffic back to your website.

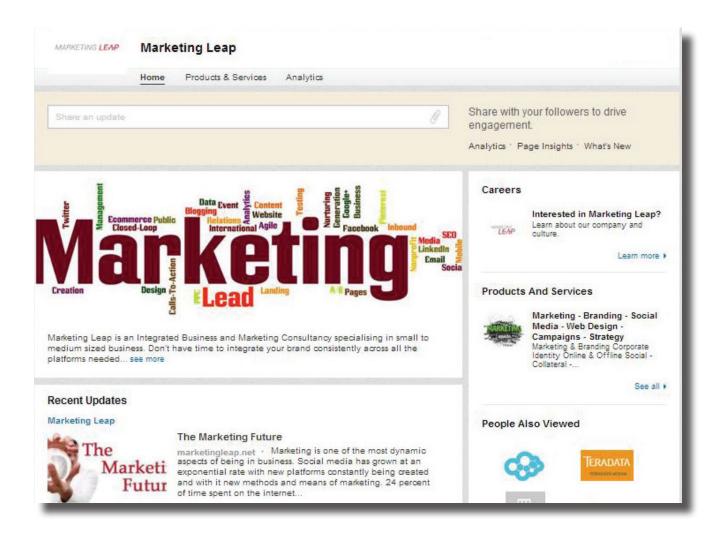


Image courtesy of: http://marketingleap.net





Adding a **Products & Services** tab will ensure you catch the eye of prospective customers by featuring products, services, or anything else that would be relevant to your target audience.

To get started, simply click on the Products & Services tab. If this is your first time on the page, click 'Get started.' If you have used the Products & Services tab before, click on 'Add product or service' from the 'Edit' dropdown.

- Choose product or service
- Select a category
- Add the name of the product or service
- Attach an image (100 x 80 pixels .PNG .JPG .GIF)
- Add a description (up to 2,000 characters)
- Click 'Publish' on the top right of the page and your product, service will appear on the page.
- List up to 8 key features. They will appear in bullet form after the product or service description.
- Add your website URL. This allows a visitor to learn more, plus it helps with search engine optimization.
- If possible, add someone who can be contacted for additional information.
- Add a YouTube video

Note: You will need to repeat these steps for each product or service that you want to display.



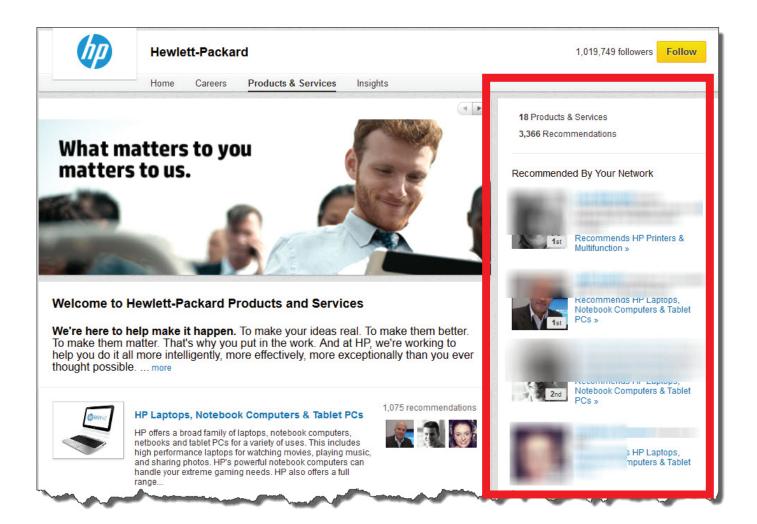




Customer recommendations are a great way to invite customers to recommend your products or services. Recommendations provide an authentic endorsement, making it easy for prospective customers to feel confident about doing business with you. The more people who recommend your products and services, the more likely it is that buzz about your company will spread.

You can invite people to recommend your products and services directly from the Products & Services Tab on your Company Page, using the 'Request Recommendations' button.

When your product or service receives a recommendation, it'll appear on both the product page and the recommender's homepage!







Take your page to the **next level**:

- Add a Career Page Create a home on LinkedIn to showcase your employment brand to talented professionals with a LinkedIn Career Page
- Sponsored Updates Publish your content with Sponsored Updates to create value and establish trust that sparks ongoing conversations and deeper customer relationships.
- Showcase Pages Showcase Pages are aimed at building relationships with LinkedIn members. Extensions of your Company Page, they are designed for spotlighting a brand, business unit, or initiative. Create a page for aspects of your business with their own messages and audience segments to share with. Showcase Pages allow you to extend your Company Page presence by creating a dedicated child page for those aspects of your business. Interested members can then follow your Showcase Page as they follow any Company Page. It is important to remember that a Showcase Page is to establish a dedicated page representing a specific brand, business unit, or company initiative.



CULTIVATE A MULTI-CHANNEL
APPROACH, ADD A LINK TO YOUR
LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE IN YOUR
EMAIL SIGNATURES AND CREATE A
FOLLOW BUTTON ON YOUR WEBSITE!

- HUBSPOT







LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE CHECKLIST

1	 Company Overview - Make it easy for the right people to find your Company Page by adding SEO terms (keywords) in the description and 'Specialities' sections. 	
2	 Logo & Banner Image - Keep your Company Page fresh with rich cover images that reflect your company's accomplishments, events and offerings. 	
3	 Career Pages - Studies show that a strong employer brand can cut cost per hire by 50%. Use rich media i.e. video on your Careers Page to showcase yours. 	
4	 Showcase Pages - For business lines or initiatives with unique messaging and audience segments, consider creating a dedicated Showcase Page. 	
5	• Featured Groups - ie all of your LinkedIn communities together by using featured Groups to show Groups you manage or participate in on your Company Page.	
6	 Company Updates - Every like, comment and share increase your reach. Prompt your followers to take action on your updates by asking thoughtful questions. 	
7	 Page Analytics - Get insight into what's working and what's not by using Company Page Analytics to test frequency, topics and formats. 	





HOW TO BUILD LINKEDIN ENGAGAMENT

Marketing your company is less about one off interactions and more about building trusting relationships through relevant content. Status Updates are the most effective way to start a conversation, drive word of mouth, and engage directly with your target audience.

- **Post status updates** Share company news, industry articles, thought leadership pieces or ask followers to weigh in on hot topics. Posts will appear on your Company Page and in the news feed on the homepage of each of your followers (desktop, tablet and smartphones). When followers like, comment, share your message spreads to their networks and builds viral distribution.
- Share rich, relevant content Share images, infographics, or any compelling content that you've developed which can help to build a relationship with your target audience. Want to share news with specific LinkedIn members? Target your update based on our unique criteria. It's a powerful way to deliver highly relevant content to the right audience.
- Encourage virality Ask followers to like, share, and comment on your updates. This helps spread your message to their entire network.
- Keep it brief but regular Make your posts succinct and meaningful. Build industry credibility by adapting your language to match that of your targeted industries. If you're posting to developers, use their language. You will reach more of your audience and extend your reach as you post more often.





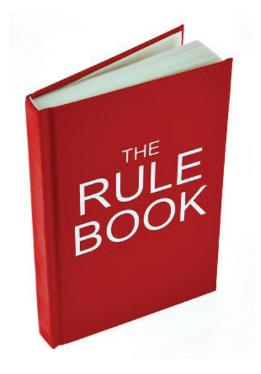




- 60% OF MEMBERS ARE INTERESTED IN INDUSTRY INSIGHTS
- 53% ARE INTERESTED IN COMPANY NEWS
- 43% ARE INTERESTED IN NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES
- LINKEDIN

Companies that have organized their content strategy and administrative access have seen tremendous results with engagement.

- Assign multiple admins for the Company Page so that different stakeholders can split the work and control content for specific lines of business.
- **Create an editorial calendar** so that each admin can organise their content and the timing of status updates.
- Post to Groups regularly and comment on discussions started by other members.



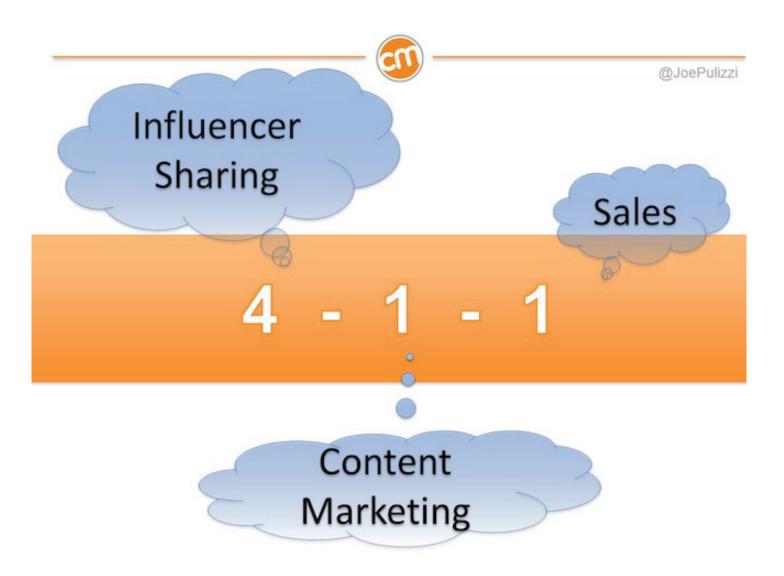
Before you start to post there are some basic content marketing rules:

- Headlines are everything Use your words carefully
- Keywords are essential -LinkedIn enables customers to search using keywords
- Use the 4-1-1 rule for posts -Tippingpoint Labs' rule (below)
- Use a 3 to 1 ratio for blogs give value x 3 then promote your company







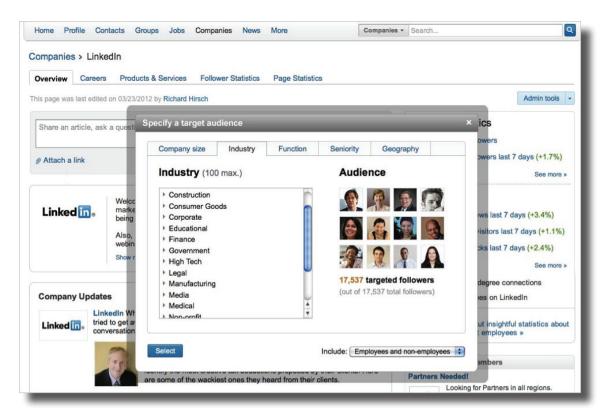


Tippingpoint Labs' 4-1-1 rule was originally developed for Twitter but can help you control and balance your LinkedIn content so that your posts benefit both your brand and your followers. The easiest way to remember with LinkedIn posts is: Give value - Give value - Give value - Promote - Educate

The rule is simple: Post four times about interesting, educational or entertaining **original** content. This will usually come from different sources so you are promoting other peoples resources as well. Follow this with one self-serving post promoting your organisation or services, then share one educational post your audience would find valuable. The 4-1-1 rule keeps your followers coming back for more of the information they value instead of driving them away with self-promotion.







Personalise your messages to your audience - Drive increased engagement by targeting your posts to specific groups of your followers using LinkedIn's rich, up-to-date profile data.

Remember what LinkedIn members are interested in - Focus on sharing relevant and actionable insights about your company and industry. Informative, useful blog posts receive the highest engagement rates because that's the information members expect from companies they follow on LinkedIn. After all, your followers are active on LinkedIn because they want to be more productive and successful professionals.

Encourage your audience to participate - Extend your reach by encouraging your followers to like, comment, and share your posts.

- Participate in the conversation with follow-up questions or answers.
- Cross-promote your status updates by posting them through both your Company Page and Groups
- Write updates that include clear calls to action (e.g., like, share, or "Tell us something")
- Ask questions to spark participation in the discussion thread

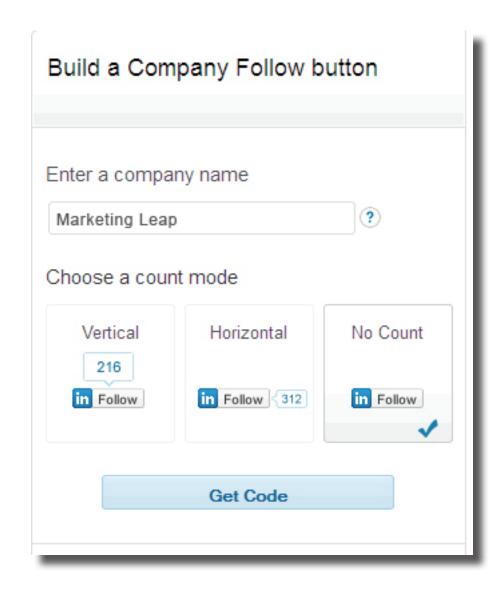






Once you've established your company presence on LinkedIn, you can begin fostering relationships by attracting followers to your Company Page. Here are some simple, effective strategies for attracting followers.

- Engage your colleagues: Employees are 70 percent more likely to engage with your Company Updates. Encourage them to add a link to your Company Page to their email signatures.
- Announce your Company Page to customers and partners. Once
 your page is all set, drive traffic its way with a compelling blog
 post or email newsletter announcement.
- Add a "Follow" button to your website. Your web team can pull code for a "Follow" button from developer.linkedin.com to add to your blog or website. This lets LinkedIn members follow your company with a single click.



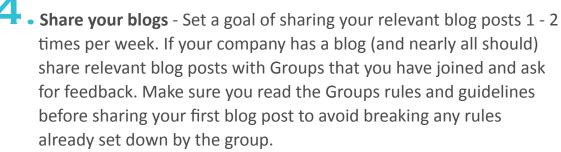




LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGE ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

LinkedIn, while a professional networking site, is still in essence a Social Media network. CONSISTENCY is key. Use this checklist weekly both for your company page as well as your personal profile.

• Follow new companies - Set a regularly attainable goal of 3 new companies per week.	
 Ask for recommendations - Ask for 1 -2 recommendations per week from Associates, Customers and other connections you do business with. 	
Connect with new people - Set an attainable goal of connecting with between 3 - 5 people per week.	







CREATING AN EFFECTIVE LINKEDIN WORKFLOW



USE THE 3 TO 1 RATIO FOR BLOGS I.E. GIVE VALUE - GIVE VALUE - GIVE VALUE - PROMOTE YOUR COMPANY OR PRODUCTS.

- BRETT MCFALL









- Follow the 3 to 1 Ratio when creating and posting content via Blog on your company website
- Create value content i.e. give information or solve a problem (e.g.7 steps to / 10 point checklist / How To)
- Create value content i.e. give information or solve a problem
- Create value content i.e. give information or solve a problem
- The fourth Blog will then promote your company or product

- 2. Share Blog link on LinkedIn Company Page
- Copy the Blog website link
- Open your Company LinkedIn page and paste link
- Allow a few seconds for a summary to display automatically
- Click Shar
- \bullet An update will be broadcast to your Company Page followers $\,$ homepage feed
- Enter a comment or call to action inviting them to share or comment

- 3. Share Blog link on LinkedIn Personal Profile
- Copy Blog website link. Allow a few seconds for a summary to display automatically.
- Open your PERSONAL LinkedIn page and paste link
- Click inside the text box and type in your remark. Text is limited to 600 characters maximum.
- Select Public to show the update to everyone in your extended network including your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degree connections.
- Select Public + Twitter to have your update visible on both your LinkedIn and Twitter accounts.
- Click Share.
- An update will be broadcast to your network's homepage feed. Paste link
- Enter a comment or call to action inviting them to share or comment.

- 4. Select Relevant LinkedIn Group & Share Blog Link
- Move your cursor over Interests at the top of your homepage and select Groups.
- Click the group's name.
- Enter your topic or question in the "Start a discussion or share something with the group" box (remember you are trying to get people to have a conversation with you).
- Enter details in the "Add more details" box
- Add the blog website link and click Attach
- Click Share
- \bullet Ensure you are actively involved in the Group discussion / Conversation



5. Rinse & Repeat

- Start from step one and repeat.
- Ensure you stick to your content publishing schedule
- Host a company "Lunch & Learn" to evangelize the power of company updates, and share tips and tricks with your team. This can
 have a significant impact on your company page's overall reach.
- Consider third-party apps like GaggleAMP and Addvocate to show employees which updates are most important for your company and are pre-approved for sharing.







THE BEST LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGES OF 2013

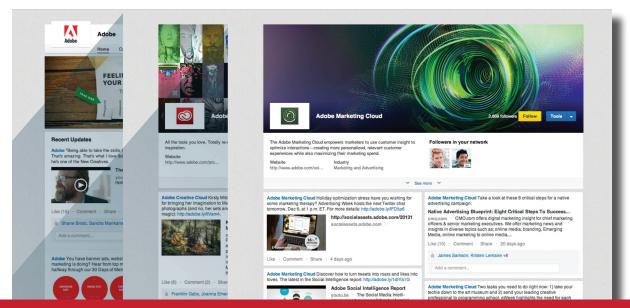
The following pages are companies who LinkedIn believe were best using their platform to promote their products and services in 2013. These are the Oscars as it were for LinkedIn Company Pages.

Also like every Social Media Network, there will be a lot of exciting changes made in LinkedIn during 2014, however the tips and ideas following will help set your company in the best light. Learn from them and make your mark in 2014!



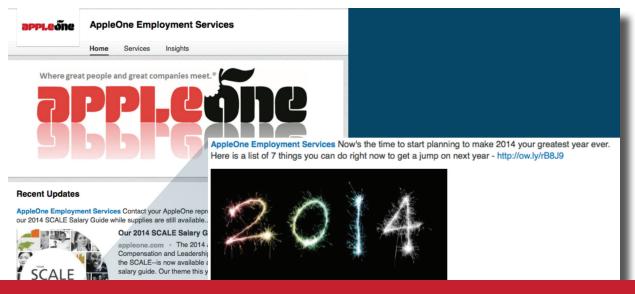








Highlight your brands with **Showcase Pages** Adobe created Showcase Pages for Adobe Creative Cloud and Adobe Marketing Cloud to allow for customized messaging and engagement with their unique audience segments.



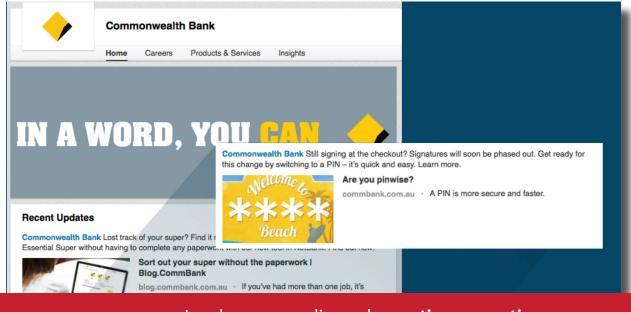


Stand out by using **images and rich media**AppleOne helps their content pop by including eyecatching imagery. Including images with your updates is a great way to boost comments.



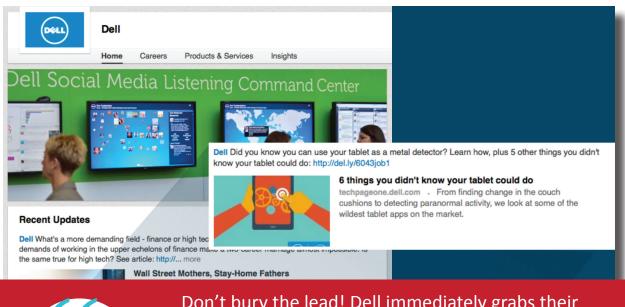






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Involve your audience by **posting a question**Commonwealth Bank engages their followers by asking thoughtful questions. Be sure to keep it a two-way conversation by responding back to those who comment..





Don't bury the lead! Dell immediately grabs their followers' attention by starting posts with interesting facts. Company updates with **snappy introductions** catch the eye and get better engagement.











Show and Tell - Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts lets its brand shine with fun videos. Engage members directly in the feed by sharing a YouTube video.





Sponsor your best content - HubSpot uses **Sponsored Updates** to drive qualified, targeted leads. Try promoting your best offers and content alongside organic content.



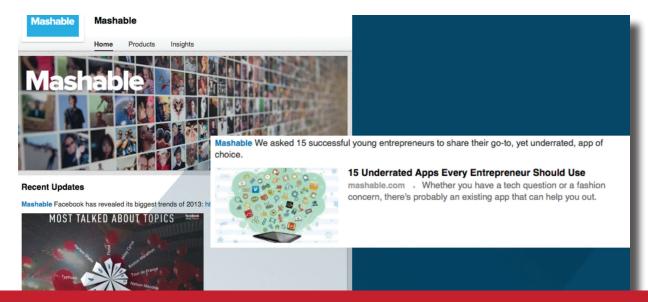








Show off your **company culture** - Kellogg Company shows off its company's culture by sharing awards. Use updates to share honors your company has received.



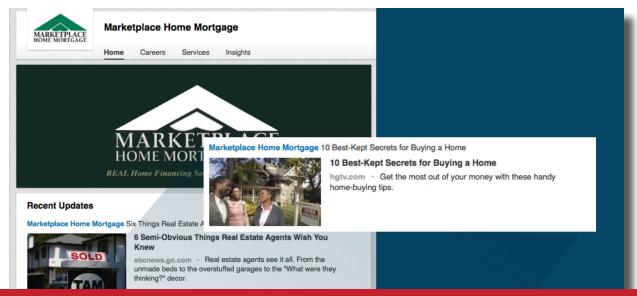


Share snackable, valuable content - Mashable hits the sweet spot by sharing content that is both high quality, yet quick to consume. Keep your posts bite-sized to drive high engagement.











Provide **expert tips & insights** - Marketplace Home Mortgage shares quick tips and insights that are relevant for their home buyer audience. Post updates that spotlight your industry expertise.





Try a **Top 10**, **or Dos and Don'ts List** - NPR quickly catches its audience's attention by posting intriguing and valuable lists. Lists are a great way to organize content into quick and easily digestible pieces.







CONCLUSION

Business and Marketing in todays social world is all about how well you cultivate thriving relationships with your followers.

As in any good relationship, your followers require care and attention. Following the steps laid out in this e-book will deliver high-quality content that addresses your members' professional needs and you'll not only grow your follower community, but also forge bonds and foster honest conversations with potential customers.

The rest now is up to you to take LinkedIn by the horns and make it one of your most fruitful channels.

If you don't have time to integrate your brand consistently across all the platforms needed by businesses today, but aren't big enough for a full time marketing person, we can help. Focussed on small to medium sized business our services are totally flexible to give you the freedom to pick and choose when you need the marketing support. The end result is to create a consistent and seamless experience for your customers as they move between each of your marketing channels. Want an Integrated marketing strategy ... Take the Marketing Leap and contact us today!







BUSINESS AND MARKETING IN TODAYS SOCIAL WORLD IS ALL ABOUT HOW YOU CULTIVATE THRIVING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS.







MARKETING LEAP

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