

# Customer

Focusing on Customer Satisfaction and Retention

## RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT



THE  
LITTLE  
THINGS  
ARE THE  
**BIGGEST**  
THING

- Creating Loyalty for External and Internal Customers
- Managing Your Product Crisis
- Showing Value to Senior Management
- Leveraging Social Media Tools

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## the secret to linkedin success lies between your keyboard and your chair

By Andy Begnoche

**T**he more I discuss LinkedIn as a social media tool, the more I'm asked, "How can I use LinkedIn more effectively?" My first response is usually a question: Do you want to *find* someone, or do you want to be *found*? The context and goal of your search will dramatically change how you use this tool. Are you looking to *hire* someone, or are you looking for a *job*? Do you have a product or service to offer, or are you looking to purchase a product or service for your business? Once you know what you are looking for, then you can decide how to present yourself to the world. That's where LinkedIn comes in.

Unlike other popular social media websites such as MySpace, Facebook and Friendster, LinkedIn offers more than just a way to communicate with your friends, share photos and play games. The connections you make in LinkedIn provide greater value because each connection requires users to confirm the connection by answering the question "how do you know this person?"—creating a more credible and authentic network.

### Your LinkedIn Profile: Your Business Card on Steroids

Showcasing yourself on LinkedIn starts with your profile. Having a complete and thorough profile page will go a long way toward telling your story and generating the right connections. Your profile page is how you present your professional background and identity to other LinkedIn members, and it is what you look at first when you con-

sider contacting or connecting with someone on LinkedIn.

Is your profile still working for what you are doing now? You may have originally set out to network with certain people, but now you are looking for a new job. Update your profile to meet your current goals. Just as you would update your resume to highlight your experiences for a specific position you are seeking, so you would update and change your profile page as your needs evolve.

USERS WITH COMPLETE PROFILES  
(100% COMPLETE) ARE 40 TIMES MORE  
LIKELY TO RECEIVE OPPORTUNITIES  
THROUGH LINKEDIN.

*Profile Tips:* Fill out your profile like it's an executive bio. Most new users only put *current* company in their profile, which limits their ability to connect with more people. Be sure to include past companies, education, affiliations and activities. Users with complete profiles (100% complete) are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn. Also, include a link to your profile as part of an email signature. That way contacts can quickly see all your credentials, raising your level of credibility.

### Quality versus Quantity

There's a notion that the more connections you have, the better your network. This may or may

not be a true statement depending upon where you are in your professional life. Having cocktails with close friends is much different than offering a toast at a family wedding or having a few beers with 50,000 fans at a playoff game. All are very important and memorable events, but the quality of the conversation and the ability to make real connections varies greatly for each.

If you are looking to market yourself (or your products and services), you *may* want to reach the largest audience possible. However, engaging with a handful of specific, highly qualified individuals will allow you to focus in on those you really need to connect with. This will help you clear the clutter and accelerate the process. It will serve you well in the

long run to have a balanced network of top quality contacts you know well and trust, combined with business associates and acquaintances you can reach out to when needed.

*Networking Tips:* Grow your network before you really need it. Having an urgent need and trying to grow your network quickly will result in making unqualified and less useful connections. Join groups within your industry/specialty and invest time commenting on discussions and helping contacts connect with other people within your network. Engage in discussions that will move the conversation forward. Don't comment on something just to get your brand or product noticed. Keep it authentic, and you'll

make lasting connections. When starting a discussion, be brief. Use notes, not long sentences that run across several ideas, and follow the discussion, looking for contacts that you can connect with directly.

### To Ask or Answer, That Is The Question

One of the more underutilized features of LinkedIn is the Answers feature. By broadcasting your business-related questions to both your network and the greater LinkedIn network, you will get more high-value responses. As with most social media tools, there's much to be gained by listening and providing answers, not just by talking. Lending your expertise will build your credibility and help you to make new connections and grow your network.

The Advanced Answers Search can be used to find answers to many questions. You can also leverage this tool to engage customers. Using key words like brand names or product names will help you hone in on very specific topics, issues and situations. You can see what people are saying about your company, brand and industry. Similar to searching Twitter (on which anyone can post and potentially generate thousands of comments), LinkedIn Answers may return only a handful of discussions from qualified individuals. But you can then follow up and engage with these people directly.

Top companies like Macy's are finding the search features in social media tools such as LinkedIn and Twitter particularly useful for engaging with customers. "The value that social media has for customer care professionals is exponential," says Iasha Rivers, Manager of Consumer Affairs at Macy's. "It offers access to another platform in which we, as a business, can harness information and communicate and improve our services through immediate customer feedback."

YOUR LINKEDIN EXPERIENCE WILL BE WHAT YOU MAKE IT. USE LINKEDIN ON A DAILY BASIS AND SET ASIDE TIME TO NETWORK AND CONNECT WITH YOUR CONTACTS.

### Job Search: Hunting or Hiring

Perhaps one of the most prevalent features of LinkedIn is employment capability. There is a bit of a misconception that LinkedIn is just an employment tool. Because LinkedIn is a professional social networking site, it lends itself to headhunters and employers looking for qualified individuals, as well as those looking for career advancement.

The LinkedIn job-posting tool is very robust and allows for maximum detail when posting or searching for a position. As an employer, you'll enjoy the built-in tools for managing and reviewing applicants and positions. As an applicant, you can search on the company name to find people who work there now, or who used to work there. Review what types of backgrounds and education they have and determine which of these target companies seems most suitable for you given your own experiences and interests.

### Job Hunting Tips

Expand your network. Use LinkedIn to get back in touch with people you already know and bring them up to date on your professional status. Connect with friends, parents' friends, your friends' parents and older siblings, previous associates from other jobs, college alums and so on. You can also use LinkedIn to research the people that you're interviewing or meeting. Knowing you went to the same school, both play golf or share

acquaintances is a lot better than an awkward silence after, "I'm doing fine, thank you."

### Imagination Is The Limitation

As you develop an active and valuable network, be sure to get creative with how you use it.

- *Interested in the health of a company?* Perform an advanced search for company name and uncheck the "Current Companies Only" box. This will enable you to scrutinize the rate of turnover and whether key people are leaving.
- *Want to improve your Google Page Rank?* In addition to your name, you can also promote your blog or website to search engines like Google and Yahoo! Your LinkedIn profile allows you to publicize websites.
- *Planning a business trip, but have time to fill?* Meet select people one-on-one purely for networking purposes. Create a short list of people that you want to see and send them a personal email with available times. Find a great restaurant, book a celebrity guest... you get the idea.

Your LinkedIn experience will be what you make it. Use LinkedIn on a daily basis and set aside time to network and connect with your contacts. If you invest the time to grow and keep your network healthy, then you will have a positive, fulfilling and successful experience using LinkedIn. Visit [www.socap.org](http://www.socap.org) to join SOCAP's LinkedIn group. **CRM**