

# 7 STRATEGIC TECHNIQUES to Gain Clients from LinkedIn

By Debbie Harris, MA



**LinkedIn**

Performance Intermedia, LLC is focused on training professionals and organizations to use Social Media effectively and with best practices. The information I have provided is based on best practices, education and our experience; it should not be considered legal guidance. It is recommended that all clients seek legal counsel regarding social media policies and other issues involving employment law, etc.

### 7 Strategic Techniques to Gain Clients from LinkedIn

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# INTRODUCTION

LinkedIn is a great tool for generating new clients and strategic partners. It is the “go to” professional network that exposes you to a local, regional, national, and global audience. Like any tool, it must be set up and used effectively. LinkedIn should be part of your overall business development strategy. These techniques will lead to your increased success in gaining clients from LinkedIn.

## TECHNIQUE #1

### *Let Your Profile Help You*

A professional, completed, and optimized profile on LinkedIn is the first step to gaining business from LinkedIn. Not only will an optimized profile increase your ability to be found when potential clients search in LinkedIn, it will also help with someone does a Google search on you or your products and/or services. I often work with clients who have paid little attention to completing their LinkedIn profiles only to find that once I optimize them, they are getting business opportunities from LinkedIn.

What does your LinkedIn profile say about you? Is it truly the way you want to represent yourself? Here’s what you need to know

- Be sure to have a picture on your profile. Faces are important and people want to see your face on LinkedIn. A professional headshot is best but it doesn’t have to be taken by a professional photographer. However, make sure you are dressed appropriately and smiling. LinkedIn is not the place for a picture of you with your pet, child, grandchild, or anything else. Your photo should not be more than five years old.
- Fill in all the categories that are relevant to you and your business. Do you do volunteer work? Are you involved with organizations both for profit and not for profit? What about Chambers of Commerce or professional associations? Include them all and write a line or two to explain what they are.



- Do not just list acronyms. Acronyms assume too much. Always list the full name and then the acronym in parentheses.
- When listing organizations and associations, I am often asked if controversial or religious associations should be listed on LinkedIn. That is up to you. Understand that some people might not choose to do business with you because of your affiliations. If you are okay with that, then go ahead. Remember that you will be connected by LinkedIn to people with similar information in their profiles, so you may find clients simply because of an organization or association you belong to. In other words, you could lose or gain business because of your affiliations. Consider both possibilities before you decide whether to include something controversial on your LinkedIn profile.
- Complete all fifty in the Skills & Expertise section. Sometimes a client will have a skill or expertise that does not come up when filling those in. Go ahead and add it. Remember to capitalize the first letter of each word so that everything looks consistent and professional. These are important searchable key terms, so think about what someone might search under to find your service or product.
- Please complete the section Advice for Contacting You. So many people forget to complete this at the bottom. Don't you want people to reach out to you? Be sure to include an email and/or phone number in this section. You should have this in the Contact Info at the top as well. This is also a good place for a Disclaimer.
- Write your Summary using key terms for your industry and the service you provide. I suggest writing your summary in a Word document, so you can be sure to check spelling and grammar. This will also allow you to add bullets, etc. No one wants to work with someone who can't spell properly; there is no excuse for that now.
- Complete your Job History. Do not list every job if you there are many and they are not related to what you do now. Show all of your professional experience,

even if it is within several careers. This is very common and will continue to be so.

- Complete your Personal Information and Interests. Your month and day of your birthday is a nice touch. I do not believe the year is necessary.

## TECHNIQUE #2

### *Connect with Others on LinkedIn*

After I optimize a client's LinkedIn profile and we are ready to gather connections, the next question that comes up is, "Should I connect with people I do not know on LinkedIn?" Go ahead and add "People You May Know" but just a few at a time. If you're greedy LinkedIn will send you a warning. If someone sends you a request to connect and you do not know them, my approach is to connect with them, if they are a good fit for your community. We all want to expand our reach.

However, here are some reasons to accept connection requests:

- If there is a personal reason not to connect with someone. This one is pretty obvious. Former personal relationships or people who have "done you wrong" in some way. You probably shouldn't connect with them anywhere on social media because they could hurt your reputation.
- If it is a competitor that you simply do not feel comfortable connecting with. Competitors can be great strategic partners especially if your service is predominantly local. Competitors out of your area can often refer business to you. You can prevent your Connections from seeing your Connections. Go to your Profile Picture at the top right, go to Privacy & Settings and you will see "Who Can See Your Connections". You can choose Only You if you wish.
- If you are looking for a new job on LinkedIn. In this case, you might not want to be connected to your current employer. However, remember that you cannot

guarantee that your current employer is not connected through someone else, so you would need to block this person.

- If there is an issue with a prior employee. In this case, you might not want to connect or you might need to block them.
- You can block someone from seeing you on LinkedIn by going to their LinkedIn profile and clicking on the arrow on the blue box – Send a Message. You will see a drop down list. On the list you will see Block or Report. Here's the scoop on what LinkedIn blocking does and doesn't do: It does not apply to anything that you have made public like posts or comments in groups.

## TECHNIQUE #3

### *Become a "Go-To Person" on LinkedIn*

Here are a few ways to become the person other professionals seek for answers in your area of expertise:

- You should post on LinkedIn as often as you have something to say. LinkedIn is not the place to discuss what you had for dinner, your pet's cutest trick, or your favorite TV shows. Again, this is not Facebook. LinkedIn posts should be professional and informative. It is better to post less than to post content that does not support your professionalism
- Think of your strategic partners—professionals who would give you a referral and would feel comfortable giving you advice. Post articles that would help and educate them. Always post a comment when you post an article.
- Write your own articles on LinkedIn or copy and paste in your blogs/articles that you write on your own website. In the Status box you will see a pencil icon. Click that and write a blog or copy your blog there. Use pictures and be sure to size them appropriately for LinkedIn, which are 698 x 400 pixels.



- You can post an article that someone else has written, if there is a Share button with the article. Never take excerpts from an article. Link the entire article in your post.
- Engage with others by commenting on their posts, clicking LIKE, offering congratulations on a new job, anniversary, etc. Under Connections at the top, you will see a drop-down arrow. If you click on Keep in Touch you can see what is happening with your connections.

## TECHNIQUE #4

### *Take Advantage of LinkedIn Groups*

LinkedIn has over 1 million groups! There is something for everyone. Groups are a terrific way to network. When you are in a group with someone, you can connect with them and build relationships based on your common interests.

- Join only a few groups. I see so many clients who joined many groups and do not participate in any of them.
- Join a variety of groups that will help you. Join groups with professionals who do what you do. You can share ideas and learn from them. Also join groups different from your profession that contain members who can be strategic partners and a source of referrals.
- Join a group that is related to an activity that you enjoy besides your profession. Do you ride a Harley? Do you play tennis? Are you into fitness or cooking? There are groups for many activities.
- Introduce yourself to the members of the group and show that you have joined to learn and share.

- Ask questions and comment on discussions that are going on in the group.
- Never promote your services or sell your products in a LinkedIn Group. Group participation is about building rapport.

## TECHNIQUE #5

### *Give and Receive Recommendations*

Everyone likes to receive a testimonial recommending them. LinkedIn makes it simple for you to give and receive them. Go to the top right where your profile picture is and click on Privacy and Settings. Select Privacy Controls and then “manage your recommendations”. Ask for and give recommendations here. You can also go to a person’s profile and click on the drop down arrow next to “Send a message”.

Recommendations help complete your profile and can boost your image for recruitment or promotion. Sometimes recruiters will read recommendations to find additional candidates for a position.

- When you ask for a recommendation, be sure the person can actually speak to what you do or has worked with you in some other capacity, i.e. a work project or a service project.
- I advise my clients not to recommend someone they do not know or that they simply cannot speak about from any professional or business standpoint. Believe it or not, people ask for recommendations from people they do not know.
- Do not “endorse” people you do not know. Even if you cannot reciprocate, remember to thank those who recommend you.
- If you are receiving written testimonials from clients or online reviews, ask them if they would be willing to also give you a recommendation on LinkedIn.



- Give people you have worked with a recommendation. This is a great way to reconnect with them. Also give your strategic partners recommendations. You might not do business with them directly as a client or service provider, but if they are sending you good referrals then you can recommend them as excellent colleagues with valuable clients who are a pleasure to work with.

## TECHNIQUE #6

### *Create a Company Page on LinkedIn*

If you own your own company, a company page on LinkedIn will give you the opportunity to add more search terms and expand your company's presence. To create your page, move your cursor over Interests in the black bar at the top of the page and click on Companies. Scroll down the page and on the right hand side you will see, "Create a Company Page".

- Be sure to fill in all the pertinent information.
- Put up a banner for your Company Page.
- Keep your branding consistent.
- Post updates on your Company Page.
- Share your Company Page link on other social media.
- Have your employees connect with your Company Page. It is especially important that your management, sales, and marketing personnel have completed optimized profiles. This increases the ability for the company to be found and makes your online presence look professional and consistent. I see so many profiles that are doing a disservice to the company they are working for

- You can sponsor an ad or an update on LinkedIn, but be sure you know what you're doing here. My clients often have wasted money away on social media advertising because they did not fully understand how to make it work for them.
- You should also create a Showcase Page which extends the features of your Company Page. After you create your Company Page, click Edit at the top right and then Create a Showcase Page. Take advantage of all resources to spread the word.

## TECHNIQUE #7

### *Upgrade Your Profile*

One of the questions I am asked often is, "Should I upgrade my LinkedIn profile?" LinkedIn recently instituted a new Premium Plan that is only \$9.99 per month, billed monthly. It allows you to have a larger profile picture. It also gives you keyword suggestions and a larger search listing. Now there is a Business Plan for \$29.99 and a Business Plus Plan for \$59.99 billed monthly. You will save money if you pay any of these on an annual basis. There is no contract and you can cancel at any time.

- I recommend upgrading to the \$9.99 plan if you are using LinkedIn at all for business—and you certainly should be.
- If you are going to be committed to using LinkedIn as a significant business development tool then you may want to consider the other two upgrades.
- The upgraded plans may make sense for certain people in your organization who are charged with bringing in new business and marketing the company.
- Sales teams can certainly utilize the upgraded plans and generate potential business.

- These are options to consider. In any case, even without upgrading, I believe LinkedIn will definitely help your business grow.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Simply complete your profile as I have laid out here and continue to share and engage with others as a consistent, long-term strategy. Soon you will start to gain key contacts and new business. I decided years ago to become skilled in LinkedIn—when I began receiving invitations to speak and sit on boards, in addition to gaining new clients and strategic partners. May you have tremendous success in your journey with LinkedIn!

## DEBBIE HARRIS, MA,



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Debbie is the President of Performance Intermedia, LLC, which provides:

- Social Media Strategy and Best Practices
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- Reputation Management
- Social Media Advertising
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