



Photo: Jack Moreh

HOW TO ACHIEVE 1000+ LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS

And What To Do With Them

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WHERE TO START

You have probably heard that LinkedIn is the business professional's social media network. If that's the case, are you putting your best LinkedIn profile forward to create connections that makes sense, to help generate leads, and to increase search rankings for your profile?

Here are several ways to accomplish those goals; plus, tips on what to do with those connections once you make them.

Where To Start

Begin by reviewing your current profile. Does it have a professional photo?

According to Susan P. Joyce, Job-Hunt.org writer, "According to LinkedIn, complete LinkedIn profiles (which means the profile has a headshot) are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn than incomplete profiles."

This doesn't mean use the photo from your wedding, or a casual shot; but rather a profile photo that represents you in the professional way you want to be seen. For example, if you're a CPA who adheres to a less conservative approach, your head shot might show you in a button-down shirt rather than a suit and tie. Even a slight head tilt or the image background can completely change a person's perception. Be conscious of that before posting the image.

Second, consider the professional skills section of your profile. Use terms that help to increase search engine rankings within the platform, as well as on major search engines. For example, a tax professional might use skills such as tax, income tax, corporate tax, tax research, tax preparation, tax accounting, management, financial analysis, and CPA.

Here are some other profile sections to consider:

- Project promotion, linking them back to your website;
- Publications you've been cited in;
- Honors, awards, and certifications; and
- Professional memberships bit of body text.

Finally, interests and causes help to develop conversational elements with other professionals. For example, maybe you're active with Habitat for Humanity.

Sharing that on your profile could help generate a topic of conversation or influence a person's desire to connect.

Why LinkedIn?

- Search engine ranking
- Branding
- Personal branding
- Thought leadership (topics of interest)
- Business research
- Employee (candidate) search
- 3rd most used platform among biz owners
- Lead generation
- Relationship building
- Content distribution
- 17% of U.S businesses use LinkedIn
- 94% of B2B American marketers use to distribute content

POSTING TIPS

- Best day to post – Tuesday 10-11 a.m. ET
- Best time to post 1 p.m. & 2 p.m.
- Best time for shares 10 a.m. & 2 p.m. ET
- 20 posts per month to reach 60% of your audience
- Average # of weekly updates by top companies 12.6

<http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/linkedin-business-page-and-group-statistics>

NEXT – YOUR HEADLINE

By default, LinkedIn populates your headline with your current title and company, and a lot of people let that stand. To make it stand out, consider succinctly stating your specialty, speaking directly to your audience, including important keywords, and being specific and creative. Make it memorable with a hint of interest that makes people want to read more.

Here are some interesting LinkedIn headline examples from within the profession.

- L. Gary Boomer, “Visionary and Dot Connector – Boomer Consulting, Inc. – CPA Profession”
- Jim Bourke, “CPA Industry Thought Leader With Everything Technology Related!”
- Maureen Renzi, VP of Communications at PICPA, “Promoting the CPA profession’s core values of honesty, integrity, & service ► How Can I Help You?”





Make it Sticky

A sticky LinkedIn profile offers information about how you make a target market reader's life better through solutions you and your company provide.

Leveraging keywords in that profile help to make it sticky, not only in LinkedIn, but also in major search engines.

Here's an example from an attorney in the accounting profession:

Attorney with 20 years of experience in **estate planning, wills, trusts, and other legal services**. Focused on providing my clients with the best legal strategy to help them achieve their **financial goals** and objectives. In short, I consider myself to be in the **TIME** and **SLEEP** business. I buy clients time, to get their lives back together, and help them to sleep at night by helping them to relieve the anxiety that accompanies any **financial crisis**.

Now that you've spruced up your profile, it's time to connect with the right people and to leverage those connections.

Here's How

- Be engaged – comment, share, and like influencers' posts.
- Two to three times per year, send your connections a personalized message (not in bulk, do it on a one-on-one basis). It takes time, but it's worth it!
- Look at prominent connection's groups to see which ones they are in; then join the ones you find relevant.
- Ask connections a question; then create a blog post with the answers and link to their profile to help promote them.
- Comment on influencers' long posts.
- See whom your connections share with you and consider connecting to those you have in common. Tell the new person why you're connecting and how you discovered him/her.





You can also conduct an advanced search to find more people in your target market. Do this by setting up specific criteria that you want to include and exclude. Then save the search so each time a new member joins that meets your criteria, you can connect with him/her.

Here are the steps:

- Open up LinkedIn Advanced Search.
- Enter your keywords, separated by qualifiers, such as “AND” and “OR.”
- Choose from your connections at various levels – or from groups.
- Scroll down and expand other fields that might be relevant in your search.
- Add a location, if that is relevant.
- Press “Search” when you have set up all your parameters.
- Save the search to have emails sent to you when someone new meets your criteria.

GAINING AND LEVERAGING CONNECTIONS



If you have a free account, some fields won't be available to you.

However, you can find out a lot of information using just the basic version of LinkedIn for research.

If you want to upgrade, scroll down the left-hand, vertical menu until you see "Search like a Pro" and click "learn more." A pop-up window will open showing you various upgrade filtering options.

SECRET WEAPON



Here is a secret weapon most people don't know about.

If you create a LinkedIn group, you, as the owner, can send one announcement per week to group members. It goes to their email box associated with their LinkedIn profile.

Before creating a group, however, do these six things:

- Know your target market.
- Search LinkedIn to determine the groups your target market is in and what those groups are called. Then choose a name for your own LinkedIn Group.
- Know what you want to do with the group before creating it.
- Write a clear mission statement for the group.
- Invite your connections (if they are the target market) to join the group. Include the mission statement in the invite. Do not use the generic invite.
- Create a welcome gift, such as a free eBook, checklist, or tip sheet download. Send a welcome message to group members with a link to the “free gift.”

KEEP POSTING

If you're not ready to create a group to reach a target market consistently, consider these options to keep your profile content fresh and searchable.

- Update your profile quarterly for keywords and add new projects
- Share current news about the topic you want to be found for at least 3-5 times per week. Do this in the profile status update bar.
- Create long posts in your status update about topics you want people to recognize you for, e.g., Best Practices, How To's, Q&As, Tip Lists, etc.
- Ask a question in your status update that is relevant to your target audience.
- Join and be active in relevant groups.

Now that you're armed with these LinkedIn tips, how will you increase your followers and then keep reaching out them throughout the year?

Penheel Marketing

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