



LinkedIn for Business Development

Business Development Best Practices Series

Published September 2015

LinkedIn has been called Facebook for professionals, the virtual rolodex, and the headhunter's haven to name a few. Regardless of what you call this online network, LinkedIn can be important for business development. Before delving into LinkedIn business development advice, let's look at why LinkedIn is beneficial for the construction industry.

Why LinkedIn – Everyone's On It

With more than 300 million members, LinkedIn is the largest business network in the world. In 2013, the Master Builders' Association (MBA) released the results of a social media survey of western Pennsylvania commercial construction professionals. This survey indicated that 89% of the professionals in the region's construction industry use social media and the majority use social media for both professional and personal use. According to the MBA survey, LinkedIn was by far the one used most for professional networking.

Despite the Pittsburgh survey being over two years old, the usage of LinkedIn by the construction industry remains strong. If you're not convinced or don't think it can be helpful, take a step back and think about the last ten people you have communicated with in your day-to-day work activities (phone, email, meeting, etc.). I would be shocked if most, if not all, are not on LinkedIn. Your coworkers, peers and competitors are on LinkedIn and without a LinkedIn presence you may be missing valuable opportunities. If it turns out that your work contacts are not on LinkedIn, then stop reading this article now. Are you still with us? Good, let's proceed.

The LinkedIn Profile

A good first step for using LinkedIn for business development is your profile. Your profile is crucial as it is the site where potential clients can learn more about you and your role in the industry. An unfinished profile is a bad first impression to make, especially for prospective clients. A profile picture is a great way to bring your page to life and let people know you are real. According to LinkedIn, users with a profile picture are more likely to be accepted for connection than others without a photo and users with a profile picture receive more profile views as the result of a LinkedIn search opposed to users without a picture.

After the appropriate profile picture is selected, you should take some time to make sure your profile tells your story. Make sure your headline is current and customize your experiences so inquirers can learn about key positions you

have held, work achievements, education and certifications, and volunteer involvements. Plus the summary section of your profile allows you to share your expertise and vision, so do not forget about this item.

Join & Be a Thought Leader

Now that you have an effective profile, you are ready to expand your network and spread your brand. Company pages and LinkedIn groups are excellent locations to get noticed and make new connections. What companies do you enjoy working with? Check to see if they have a company page and join. Take a second and think of business groups and associations that you belong to and then see if these organizations have a LinkedIn group and join. Once you join spend a little time to actively participate with the groups to share your knowledge. Be mindful of the number of groups you join. It is better to join a few and be active, then join many, become overwhelmed with content overload and then do nothing. Posting insightful comments or thought-provoking questions will be welcome by your connections (and future connections) and most importantly you'll demonstrate that you are interested in your community and making your mark in the industry. By demonstrating your thought leadership, it will result in more connections and all the LinkedIn activity opens the door for new business opportunities.

LinkedIn can be a powerful tool. It does not guarantee you will succeed in obtaining all sorts of work, but it can help find prospective clients and demonstrate firsthand your connection to them.

Key Takeaways:

- LinkedIn is the largest business network in the world - find, and be found, by potential clients
- The LinkedIn profile has become the business card
- LinkedIn provides numerous opportunities to demonstrate expertise and knowledge

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MBA is the voice for the construction industry in Western PA, and provides valuable member services, promotes best practices, & helps to grow the workforce.



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