

A LINKEDIN MARKETING GUIDE



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FOR ONLINE
BUSINESS OWNERS

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Introduction

LinkedIn is often called the Facebook for business professionals. You get a much more professional, business-oriented experience on LI than on FB. This means LinkedIn is the perfect place to expand your circle of influence, grow your business, and improve sales and profits ... as long as you don't adopt a selling mentality.

LI is a social media network. All social media sites are social in nature. People go to these sites to socialize and meet others with similar interests, and not to have you try and sell them on your products and services. Having said that, the business professionals you will meet on LinkedIn are definitely more likely to join you in a business venture or become a customer than those you engage with on Facebook or Twitter.

The way you move someone on LinkedIn from a prospect to customer or business partner is through specific marketing methods proven to work on that social media site. There are certain things you should and should not do, and little-known LI tools and tactics that can reward your time spent marketing on this business-boosting social media network. But is LI the right place for your marketing efforts?



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Should I Use LinkedIn for Marketing My Business?

LinkedIn has over 600 million users. As mentioned above, these are individuals who take their businesses and careers seriously. These users understand that you have taken the time to reach out to them because you want to develop a professional connection. This is vastly different than the experience on social media sites that focus on sharing pictures of happy babies and funny cats. People are on LinkedIn to do business.

LinkedIn offers personal and company pages. Everyone on LinkedIn has to have a personal page. This is where you talk about yourself, and there are several places where you can introduce your business. Smart business owners will also build a company page, which you can consider as a "Meet and Greet" or "About Us" landing page for your brand or business.

If you do nothing more than create a basic personal account and company page, you improve the awareness of your business on local, national and international levels.

Another reason you should think about marketing your business on LinkedIn has to do with perception. You are viewed as a professional in your field when you publish content on LinkedIn. Additionally, consider the following statistics and LinkedIn truths.

- One study shows that 89% of business-to-business (B2B) marketers use LinkedIn to post content and to target their audiences.
- A full 66% of business to consumer (B2C) marketers use LinkedIn.
- The LinkedIn publishing platform acts as your own business blog, it delivers your information and content to business-minded professionals, and it is free to use.
- There are a staggering 9 billion content impressions on LI feeds every single week. You need to be there, because it's very likely your competitors already are.
- 79% of B2B marketers have stated that LinkedIn is effective for generating qualified leads.

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Whether you're marketing direct to consumers or to other business professionals, LinkedIn can help your business. To get the most out of your time on this potentially game changing social media site, you need to know how to market "the right way".

In this eBook about using LinkedIn to build your online business, you'll learn simple but highly effective strategies to help you grab the attention of your target audience. For instance, it may be as simple as maxing out the character counts on your LinkedIn profile for you to automatically start connecting with your perfect prospect. Other more time-intensive, in-depth marketing tips will also be discussed, such as why you need a company page as an online business owner.

Let's start by taking a look at the character limits you need to follow when adding content to any section of your LinkedIn profile. This will help keep you in LI's good graces and also maximize your chances at attracting the attention of the LinkedIn search engine, and search engines outside of the site like Google as well.



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Character Limits to Remember... and Take Advantage Of

The following character limits apply to different parts of your LI profile and company pages. A character is considered any punctuation (a letter, symbol or number) or spaces. As an example, the title of this chapter (Character Limits to Remember ... and Take Advantage Of) has 54 characters.

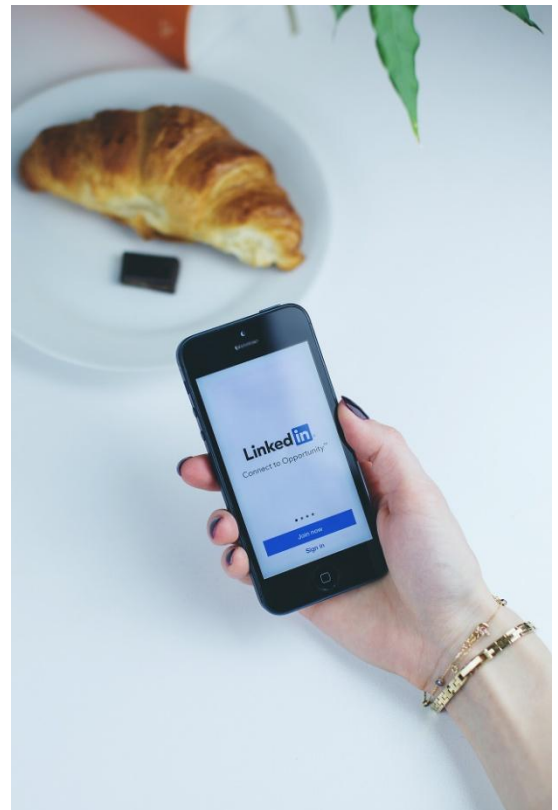
Why is it important to understand these limits?

If you go over the allowed number of characters on any section of your profile, like your status update or summary, your profile will not be updated.

It's just as important to max out your character limits when you can.

This gives web search engines as much possible information to find your profile. For instance, if you use just 300 of the allowable 1,300 characters in a status update, you're missing out on all the extra words and phrases you could have added in those 1,000 characters you decided not to use.

If your average word contains 6 characters, that means ignoring a full 166 extra words that can raise your search engine ranking for the keywords and phrases you are targeting, and missing out on opportunities to connect with your audience. In most cases, maxing out your character limits is a smart marketing move.



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Here are a few important character limits to remember when creating or updating your profile, and when you are marketing on LI.

- Headline - 120 characters
- Summary - 2,000
- Interests - 1,000
- Skills - 80
- Company About Us - 200 minimum and 2,000 maximum
- Company Status Update - 1,300
- Personal Status Update - 1,300
- LI Publisher Post Headline - 100
- LI Publisher Post Body - 40,000
- Comments - 1,750
- Headline for Text Ad - 25
- Message Body for Text Ad - 75

Take a look at the LinkedIn Publisher Post character limits. LI describes their Publisher platform as a way *"... to further establish your professional identity by expressing your opinions and sharing your experiences."*

You do this by publishing articles on your personal LI account. This is not allowed on Business Pages. Look at that juicy 40,000 character limit! This gives you somewhere around 6,500 to 7,000 words to connect with your audience and search engines.

This is the highest character count on any LI section of your account. Take advantage of it. The articles you publish can be found in the LI search engine and in Google and other search engines outside of LinkedIn. This is a powerful and free marketing tactic that can deliver so many benefits for you and your business.

Incidentally, LI may change these limits at any time. Don't worry about memorizing these counts, when you attempt to post anything on LinkedIn you will receive an alert if you go over a character limit count.

CharacterCountTool.com and CharacterCountOnline.com are two free character counters.

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Making the Right First Impression

Think connections, not sales.

Think of your market's needs, not your own.

If you keep these two simple rules in mind all your marketing efforts on LinkedIn will be as successful as they possibly can be.

This means looking professional to your audience, while also delivering upfront value. You do this by first creating a smart personal page and profile.

Here are a few simple ways to do exactly that.

- Add a professional looking photo. That picture you love of you and your friends hanging out at the beach has no place on LinkedIn for the business-minded professional.
- Create a Summary Statement and Headline that explain how your business can benefit the reader.
- Adopt a casual, conversational tone. This is, after all, a social network.
- Fill out all fields of your profile, including the Interests and Education sections. Don't miss out on any free opportunities to introduce yourself and your business.
- Develop a "voice" that is both professional and unique to your personality.
- Keep keywords out of your name field. LI frowns on this practice, and could "sandbox" your profile if you do this. Your headline is used for keyword placement.
- Don't forget your contact info. Include all relevant information, including website and social media data, email and phone number if applicable.

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- Choose all Skills and Accomplishments that relate to your business, and to the prospects you are trying to reach.
- Add at least one value-rich article to your profile, so people can view you as someone that provides value and answers big questions in your field.
- Update regularly.

You just learned how to make your personal profile attractive to LI. Now let's use another tool that introduces your business to LinkedIn members.

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How to Build a LinkedIn Company Page

Company pages allow you to directly introduce your business to the world.

You can mention your company on your personal profile. There are spots there to add contact information and talk about the products and services you offer.

However, a company page allows you to develop the perception that you are an industry leader in your field. You can build your brand, offer employment opportunities for other LinkedIn users, and build powerful and respected back links to your website that will help you with search engine placement.

Because there are specific requirements for developing a company page, this is not a marketing tool used by all LinkedIn professionals. This is actually a good thing for you. As an online business owner, this narrows your field of competition and provides you with one more piece of Internet real estate where you can market your business.

There is one important qualification for building a company page on LinkedIn:

You must have access to an email address that is listed with your business domain name.

For instance, if your business website is BloggingTipsForTeachers.com, you would have to have access to an email address such as YourName@BloggingTipsForTeachers.com.

To begin setting up your company page, head over to <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/company-pages>.

After you verify your business email address, there are several things you should do to market your business properly:

- First off, add a cover image and company logo if you have one. Unlike your personal profile, this doesn't need to be a picture of you. Keep in mind that you want this image associated with your products, services and company name.

It will appear whenever someone either searches for your company, or finds your company page by searching for related keywords and phrases.

- Add a company description. Keep in mind that you want to not only introduce what you do, but also how your company can benefit anyone who is reading this content.

Think about this experience from the web reader's point of view, which is always, *"What's in it for me?"* You have a full 2,000 characters to describe your company, and the potential benefits for prospective customers.

- Begin linking to your company page in your emails, blogs and forums, newsletters and press releases, and on social media. If you follow the link provided above for creating a company page, you will be given the opportunity to create a social media follow button for your profile on LinkedIn.
- Add daily updates. You can't publish articles on your company page, like you can from your personal profile. However, you can create status updates of up to 1,300 characters each. Do this on a daily or at least weekly basis to drive engagement and attract attention.

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Building Showcase Pages

Do you have different products and services you want to introduce to the LinkedIn community and the online world? If so, building Showcase Pages that branch off of your Company Page is perfect for this.

Not all business owners know of this incredible free tool for introducing and promoting specific aspects of your business on LinkedIn.

Here's how it works.

Imagine that you run an online business that sells eBooks for pet owners. If you publish a company page status update linking to a blog post on what to feed a pet chimpanzee, you will miss out on connecting with all the dog owners on LinkedIn.

With showcase pages you can dedicate an individual page to each segment of your market you are trying to reach.



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This means in the above example, you could develop different pages for promoting your eBooks to dog owners, cat owners, chimpanzee owners and other pet owners individually.

This is a powerful way to streamline your LinkedIn marketing approach. Set up a different showcase page for each prospect persona you are trying to reach.

One neat aspect of these pages is that they link back to your company website. They have a larger hero image than other pages and areas of your LinkedIn profile, and you can buy advertising to promote these pages. This is not a tool which is available on group pages, and it is very easy to access.

After adding an update to your showcase page, you will see an option to "Sponsor Update". A pop-up will appear, working you through setting up an advertising campaign regarding where you would like your sponsored update to appear.

You have plenty of targeting and bidding options, and even the smallest of budgets can benefit from this customizable paid marketing experience on LinkedIn.

Getting the Most Out of LI Groups

We just mentioned how Showcase Pages allow you to focus on a specific product, service or prospect persona. As an online business owner, you probably already understand the benefits of niching down to target a smaller, more well-defined audience rather than a large group of people.

You may sell a few copies of a book titled "Saltwater Fishing Tips", but when you change that eBook title and focus to "Top 21 Tips for Catching More Flounder", the improved sales you will receive come from the fact that you are laser targeting your focus.

When you join or create a LinkedIn group, you benefit from the same focused approach. You can interact with individuals with very specific interests and desires, rather than trying to fight for attention in a much bigger, crowded market or field.

One veteran move here is to combine your geography with your industry. Even if you offer online services to a national or global audience, joining a LinkedIn group titled Los Angeles Mortgage Professionals makes a lot of sense if you are in Los Angeles. This is a sneaky way to also appeal to the location-based search algorithm employed by LinkedIn, Google and other search engines.

Consider joining just a few groups rather than several. Take your time searching for groups related to your business and your industry, and join 3 to 5 that apply to your business. The reason why you don't want to join 10 or 20 or more groups is because you want to interact with these groups and their members on a regular basis. If you join a group and never add value or engage users in that group, why did you join?

Once you have joined groups that relate to your business focus, start engaging in conversations. Make comments to posts and discussion threads. Don't waste your time here, and add real value. This is a great way to pass on knowledge and build the image of you and your business as industry leaders. You can also develop valuable business contacts and gain a lot of knowledge yourself.

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Why not create your own group?

If you can't find the perfect group for you to join, create one. This isn't always a good idea. If you are in a field which is well represented in LinkedIn groups, you could struggle to attract attention if you create another group which brings no new value or unique approach to your marketplace.

Finally, contact and connect with fellow group members to help build your email list, develop business contracts and build your brand.

What You Need to Know About LinkedIn Ads

There are plenty of options with LinkedIn Ads.

If you're thinking about spending money on advertising your online business on LinkedIn, make sure you exhaust all free tools and tactics first.

You may find you are getting the results you're looking for without spending a penny. If you do decide to pay for advertising featured on LinkedIn, here's what you need to know.

- If you're used to advertising on Facebook, be prepared to spend more money here. That's because the professional nature of LinkedIn members means there are more people willing to spend money on ads, so the bidding process will usually cost you more money than other social media sites.
- LinkedIn offers incredible targeting tools. Because there is so much more information offered by LinkedIn users on their profiles than on social media sites like Pinterest or Facebook, LinkedIn advertising can help you hone in on various specific prospects.
- Lead generation, website retargeting, contact targeting, list building and direct sales are all aspects of the different LinkedIn advertising offers. You begin by choosing an advertising objective, and depending on what you select, you will be offered different types of ads, such as text or video ads.
- LinkedIn also allows you to choose to advertise in the LinkedIn inbox. This means you target specific audiences, and they view your ads in their inboxes. This can deliver more of a personal touch than a sponsored update or some other type of LinkedIn ad. Advertisements are sold by an auction process.

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- You bid against other LinkedIn members, using CPC or CPM pricing. This means cost per click or cost per thousand exposures. You can continually change your bids, your budget and schedule, monitoring your results and spending money on those efforts which pay off the best.

To get started with LinkedIn advertising, head over to the following link.
<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions>



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The Value Delivery and 80/20 Rules for Connecting & Building Relationships on LinkedIn

To be successful on LinkedIn, you can't just create a profile and then start asking people to connect with you. Whether you're interacting with other LinkedIn users on your personal page, company page or in a LinkedIn group, you need to remember you are dealing with real people and not cardboard profiles.

This means getting to know someone. Before you ask someone to connect with you, read that person's profile from top to bottom. They may mention they attended a particular college or they are a fan of a certain professional sports team. This is information you can use to personalize your invitation.

Additionally, remember the 80/20 rule for placing any content on LinkedIn.

About 80% of your status updates, articles, comments and other content publishing efforts on LinkedIn should be all about providing information, answering questions and solving problems. You should only try to move someone off of LinkedIn and to your website for list building, lead generation or selling purposes about 20% of the time when publishing content.



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I have mentioned several times in this eBook the idea that LinkedIn is a social network, and not a sales network.

That means as long as you interact with your audience on a regular basis, you provide real value, and you are only in selling mode about 20% of the time, you're more likely to create the marketing results you are looking for.

Should I Go Pro or Free?

LinkedIn offers both free and premium accounts. The standard free account can help you reach all your business goals. If you want marketing tracking tools and other benefits of the professional versions of LinkedIn, you have the following options.

- LinkedIn Premium Career – \$29.99 per month – Gives you premium jobhunting features.
- LinkedIn Premium Business – \$47.99 per month – Allows you to see the complete profiles of your connections, as well as send direct messages to anyone on LinkedIn, even if you're not connected to them. You get access to premium search filters and other benefits with this paid option.
- LinkedIn Premium Hiring – \$99.95 per month – Perfect if you are going to be doing a lot of hiring on LinkedIn.
- LinkedIn Premium Sales – \$64.99 per month – Ideal for running your sales team, or if you as a business owner handle sales yourself.

It's recommended that you access all the many free marketing tools and features LinkedIn offers before going to premium.

There are many business owners that market their products and services effectively on LinkedIn without paying for premium features.

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Summary

LinkedIn can deliver just about any benefit you are trying to achieve in your business. You can build your email list, develop important backlinks that help you with search engine rankings, grow your circle of influence and increase sales and profits. The key is marketing the smart way, and this doesn't necessarily mean spending a lot of money.

The first thing you need to do is beef up your personal LinkedIn profile. Look at it with an objective eye. What does it look like? How does it *"feel"*? What is the overall message you get when you look at your profile as if you were another LinkedIn user?

Use the character limits mentioned in this eBook to max out your content creation whenever possible. If LinkedIn allows you 'X' characters in some field on your personal or company page, and you use 1/2 'X' characters, you're throwing away a free marketing opportunity.

Speaking of company pages, make sure you build at least one company page to represent your business.



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Add showcase pages to that company profile. Join LinkedIn groups and engage with their members regularly. Post updates to your company page and personal profile regularly.

Publish articles through the LinkedIn publisher platform, benefiting from the massive 40,000 characters you are allowed for each article.

Work through this list of proven LinkedIn marketing strategies and tools and develop a game plan for daily, weekly and monthly tasks. Like so many other online business owners, you can reap a lot of rewards when you follow a proven path to marketing success, and that is what you have in your hands right now.