



2020 EDITION

Optimize Sales and Marketing with LinkedIn
Social Network for B2B Marketing

Marketing Essentials for Honeywell Channel Partners

Introduction

Social media has risen quickly as a phenomenon, and this rapid growth has pressured B2B companies to adopt social networking as a viable marketing method. Unfortunately, most companies don't take the time to plan or develop the necessary foundation and resources required to successfully launch and manage this tool.

In the past few years, there was much drama and noise around the growth and success of Facebook, Twitter and other social platforms, and business to business companies were focused on these anomalies. In the world of social media:

- Facebook is for connecting with your friends and family.
- Twitter is for news and public display.
- Instagram and Pinterest are trendy, visual personal promotion tools.
- LinkedIn targets the niche for connecting business people.

In recent years, LinkedIn has grown to become the de facto social network platform for B2B companies. Since its inception in 2002, the site has over 500 million users in more than 200 countries and territories, with the US leading the number of users.

LinkedIn often finds itself under fire for being too difficult to work with, or not being as innovative as some of its social platform competitors. The technical developments released by LinkedIn have been steady, but by no means do they equal the technological wonders materializing on other social media sites.

One possible explanation is that LinkedIn possesses a monopoly on business to business connections. No other social network site comes remotely close to offering the depth and magnitude of professional contacts that LinkedIn manages. That is the focus of this guide.

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Why LinkedIn

Personal profiles are LinkedIn's critical draw. They tempt people in initially, and then keep them coming back for more updates and information. Perhaps the greatest value is the fact that users continually login to update their profile.

The personal profile database is the advantage LinkedIn offers that allows companies to target business professionals in ways previously impossible to accomplish. According to late 2019 data from LinkedIn, there are:

- 62 million senior-level influencers
- 40 million decision makers
- 10.9 million opinion leaders
- 6.9 million C-level execs
- 3 million MBA graduates

LinkedIn's success and value is its extensive user base and continual organic updates to the user profile.

40% of LinkedIn users login every day

The average time a user spends on LinkedIn a month is 17 minutes. This does not seem as high as other networks, such as Facebook; however, LinkedIn is used for all-together different purposes. There are numerous types of LinkedIn members. Some update their profile when moving jobs. Others login daily or hourly, during the work day, to keep tabs on updates and industry news.

27% of LinkedIn's monthly users visit via mobile apps

The main reason for the popularity of the mobile app is the regular stats on who viewed your profile. LinkedIn's mobile apps have been extremely popular, and weekly mobile page views are increasing nearly 250% year-on-year.

3.5+ million companies hold a LinkedIn company page

An average of 1.2 million products and services are showcased on LinkedIn company pages. Businesses have increased the usage and maintenance of their company pages, and this is only going to increase in the next few years.

2.1 million groups are active on LinkedIn

A LinkedIn group offers a seamless way to create a dedicated community throughout the wider population of LinkedIn. The average LinkedIn member joins seven groups, while the power users join many more. Prior to the monopoly hold of LinkedIn on business communities, there were many publications, user groups and social networking sites for niche business segments. Today, it is much easier, and much more successful, to launch your own LinkedIn group instead.

Build a Plan

Marketing is a synergistic process. One element feeds on another. To understand the benefit LinkedIn marketing can offer your business, you need to consider how it will integrate as part of your overall marketing strategy.

Before making a decision to utilize LinkedIn as a tool to meet your business objectives, you need to have a firm grasp of the mechanics, requirements and how you are going to incorporate the tool into your overall sales and marketing goals. Develop your plan, including measurable objectives and the analytics tools required to measure success.

Start by asking simple questions:

- Why do you want to market your business on LinkedIn?
- How is it going to integrate with other marketing tactics?
- Who will manage the tool?
- What is the time and budget required to manage it properly?

If it's planned and executed properly, LinkedIn will have a positive impact on all your sales and marketing efforts, including:

Sales

- Website traffic generation
- Lead generation
- Direct sales

Brand

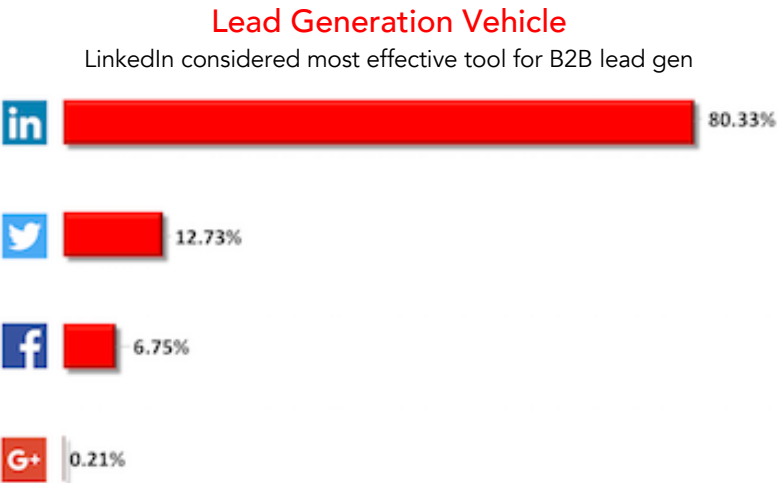
- Brand awareness
- Company positioning
- Reputation management

Content

- Content dissemination
- Reach
- Engagement

CRM

- Customer retention
- Customer satisfaction
- Connecting with prospects, customers, vendors and peers



Some of the business benefits are an end goal, while others are more tactical, working in conjunction with other marketing channels toward an end goal.

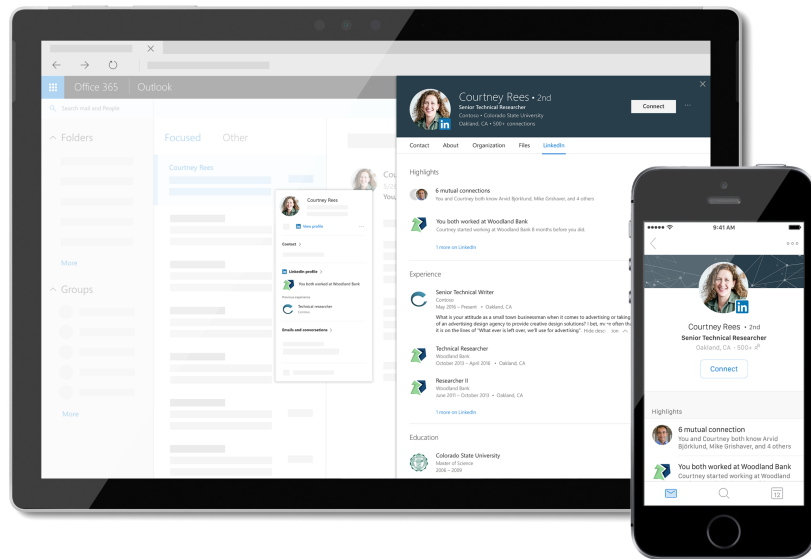
Make a clear decision as to the role you want LinkedIn to play in your marketing strategy.

Track, Measure and Improve

The final, crucial element of incorporating a successful LinkedIn marketing strategy is a working model for on-going measurement and improvement. This is a continuous cycle to qualify performance, analyze key learnings and make decisions to stay fluid and continually improve.

Preparing the right analytics framework to measure the performance of your LinkedIn marketing takes you full circle back to the business objectives you set for your activity in the first place.

LinkedIn offers numerous tracking metrics when using the platform, as well as other tools, such as Google Analytics.



Build the Foundation

At this point you have either decided you are not ready for LinkedIn, or you are ready to jump in. After you complete your plan, start with the LinkedIn foundations required to start the process.

Build and Optimize Your Profile

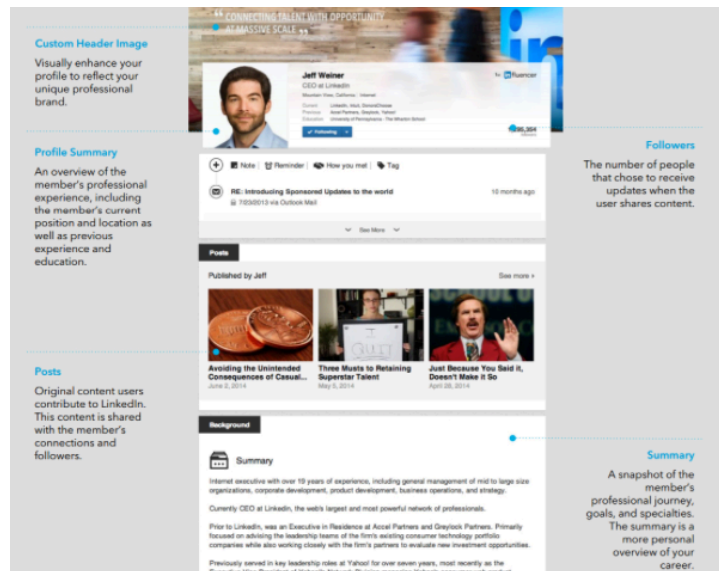
If you were to Google yourself right now, your LinkedIn profile is likely to be one of the first results. LinkedIn profiles generally rank on the first or second page of search results for your name, so you will want your profile to be complete if you want to make a good impression on those searching for you. LinkedIn makes all users' public profiles searchable.

Build and Optimize Your Company Profile

An optimized company profile can boost the visibility of your company and its content in the search results — both on and off the LinkedIn network.

Search engines, like Google, scour pages and URLs for keywords, and LinkedIn profiles offer many opportunities to embed keywords within the LinkedIn URL, other URLs you list within your profile, job titles and descriptions and content links you include. If your company and employees have optimized profiles, you could very well gain an advantage when prospective customers are searching for companies, products and services you offer.

Take advantage of your existing online properties by linking to your company page from your company website, blog and other social platforms. Use the "LinkedIn Company Follow" button to make it easy for people on your website or blog to follow your page with a single click in your email signature.



Encourage Employee Involvement

Your employees are the most powerful brand advocates. Make sure to invest time encouraging them to add their position at your company to their profile. This automatically makes them followers of your page, featuring your company page in their news feed and sending traffic your way. One key strategy that works exceptionally well is to involve your employees on an ongoing basis to promote company updates.

Collectively, your employee base is likely to have a large network of contacts. Encourage your employees to share and like company posts. This will extend the reach of your updates outside your

current follower base, in a highly targeted way. Your employees work within the same industry and hold the personal business relationships essential to your company's success.

Your employees' likes and shares will propel your company updates into their very own LinkedIn feed, appearing in each of their first-level contacts' news feeds on their homepage. Needless to say, this level of publicity will drive your company, message and products to your vendors, customers and potential customers you are trying to reach.

A concerted effort by your team to share, like and comment on your company updates also sends a very positive underlying message about your organization. You communicate as a cohesive team unit, with enthusiasm and a mutual desire to succeed.

A necessary and often overlooked step is the need to train your employees and provide the necessary tools and guidelines to assist your employees in this endeavor. Before you cut them loose, provide regular updates, advice and guidance on what to post, when to post and how frequently they should post.

Build a Targeted Network

Much like in everyday business, the larger your network of relevant contacts, the more opportunities you have to reach and convert them to customers. To maximize the number of people with whom you can actually contact and engage, you must first build a well targeted network of your own contacts.

Join Targeted Groups

Groups offer a number of methods and means to connect and build relationships with other group members. Promote your relevant content and establish an intelligent leadership position. LinkedIn makes it very easy to find groups relevant to your business and target audience.

Focus on 3 to 5 groups that most accurately represent your target demographic.

Building active involvement in a group takes time. Instead of spreading your efforts in too many groups with limited impact, focus on your core groups and become an active participant and thoughtful leader.

Upon joining a group, be sure to take time to familiarize yourself with the content people are sharing on a regular basis and the types of questions that are being asked.

Analyze the most popular discussion topics. What spurs the greatest conversation and debate? Spend time reviewing the responses and pay close attention to the direction of the discussion.

Engage regularly.
Avoid promotions.
Become a contributor.
Connect with group members.

Learn from the contributions of the most active group members, in order to understand their concerns, needs and the type content that motivates them.

The most popular discussions are the most visible real estate in a group. Take the time to get involved in the discussion. Watch and learn.

Posting your own discussion topic in a group is an important method to gain visibility. But before you do, make sure you have first done some research. Participate in top discussions beforehand. Get a feel for the culture and tone of the group by actively participating in dialogues with group members and commenting on their posts.

Seek to be helpful. Pose a question to engage the group. Or post a relevant or helpful article to share with the other members. It's vital that you add value when starting discussions. Try to be helpful and solve problems.

When sharing links, make sure they are from a trusted and reputable source. Add context and reasons for your post. Add your own thoughts, in addition to the link to a relevant article. Make your contributions count.

Build a Content Plan

Take time to develop the content you want to share on an ongoing basis. Formulate a strategic approach and consider what will benefit your audience. How can you make their lives easier, while positioning your expertise in a relevant and engaging way?

Brainstorm different topics. Research LinkedIn groups, as well as other forums, and identify online issues that generate the most debate amongst your audience. LinkedIn groups are a great source for content. Visit a group where your community is active to understand the dynamics and type of information and/or topics that are both applicable and appealing.

When developing your content strategy, clearly define the message you want to deliver to each audience that is cohesive with your business needs. Some criteria to consider:

- Solve a problem — get to core of your audience’s pain points
- Be believable — support with evidence
- Be understood — reflect stakeholders’ understanding
- Be distinctive — create competitive standout
- Be credible — know your stuff
- Be interesting — find a novel angle
- Drive your agenda — build a sales pipeline
- Avoid negativity and politics — stay on topic and don’t get distracted

**Content is the key
to a successful
social network strategy.**

After you clarify your content plan, build a quarterly content calendar with specific dates, topics, content owner and who or what solution you will feature.

Call to Action

Clear call to action or direction is extremely important in your posts. Make it apparent what you want your audience to do. If you want them to check something out on your website, say it and post the link for easy access.

This call to action should be even more straightforward in your company update posts, because the posts appear in LinkedIn’s unified search. The unified search corresponds very well with Google search; therefore, you should include targeted keywords when posting your company updates. Take time to develop the right content, with a clear, decisive call to action and an educational benefit to your audience.

Content Distribution Channels

B2B Marketers who use social media sites to distribute content



Post Frequency

For best results, plan a regular posting schedule so followers can rely on you to keep them informed and up-to-date. Although there are no firm guidelines, you should plan on two posts per week, with a sensible cap of two posts daily.

People can be easily put off if they feel their feed is being taken over by your updates. If you find you are posting above this threshold, relook at your content calendar and consider how to consolidate your content into fewer posts. Become more focused. Zero in on the themes and topics that garner most response from your community of followers.

Reach Your Prospects

Just like any marketing effort, LinkedIn requires both time and resources to maintain, nurture and grow. Choose your marketing channels carefully. There are a number of ways to reach people on LinkedIn, including:

- Personal direct contact
- Free or organic
- Paid advertising

The first and foremost is with direct messaging to your contacts. However, this is not always the best way if you do not already have a relationship with a person. It also does not work if you are looking to engage with a large audience.

Free or organic is an excellent option for most companies to reach a larger group. The basic account offers enough to have a well-rounded experience. After you understand the tool better and develop a discipline to manage it well, you should upgrade your account to unlock additional features available to premium accounts. You can use these free or organic tools to build your brand and deliver content.

Company page

Market your business to the LinkedIn community by telling your company's story and giving customers and prospects a place to learn about your business, employees and brand.

Showcase pages

Use the showcase pages to create dedicated content for more solutions, services, brands, businesses and initiatives.

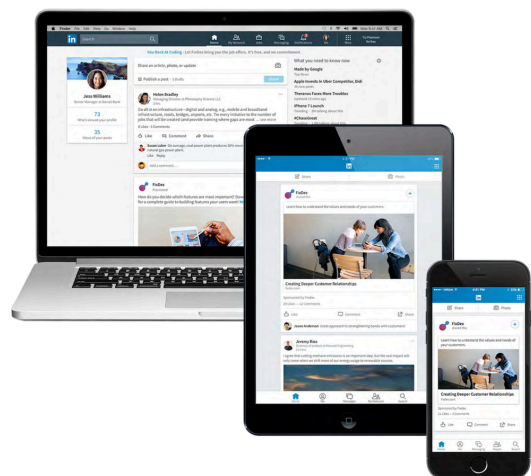
Long-form posts

Using an intuitive blogging tool that seamlessly integrates with your LinkedIn profile, you can publish new and previously published content on LinkedIn to quickly grow your audience and network.

SlideShare

SlideShare is not only a repository for your slides, but also a social channel where you can establish your brand as a thought leader and authority around topics and keywords. LinkedIn also offers a range of advertising options that rely on its powerful targeting tools to deliver ads to people based on their job title, employer, role, skills and interests. There are two types of "sponsorships" available on the LinkedIn ads platform – sponsored ads and sponsored posts.

After you build your organic presence, you should consider investing in a range of paid options to reach the right audience on a larger scale.



Sponsored content

Delivering your content directly into the LinkedIn feed, this allows you to capture people's attention where they're most engaged, while consuming information shared with them by their professional network. Sponsored Content is foundational and arguably LinkedIn's most versatile product. You can design your program to serve branding and awareness objectives, along with direct response and lead-generation goals.

Sponsored InMail

The most direct way to engage your prospects on LinkedIn, this is a game-changer in terms of taking email marketing effectiveness to the next level and driving tangible metrics, including leads, cost-per-lead and pipeline. This is done by delivering targeted, personalized messages and content right into prospective customers' LinkedIn inboxes.

Text ads

Text ads are a powerful way to make sure you get on the radar early and build your brand with the right audiences at a reasonable price.

Dynamic Ads

Dynamic Ads (e.g., Follow Company, Spotlight) allows you to accurately target your audience with highly relevant and custom designed ads. This is a very effective tool for driving traffic to your website or your company page on LinkedIn.

LinkedIn also offers many services to premium subscription packages and additional advertising options, including:

- Matched audiences
- Website retargeting
- Email contact targeting
- Account targeting

Pricing

Similar to Google, Facebook and other social networks platforms, the amount you pay to advertise on LinkedIn is up to you. When you run ads, you compete with other advertisers who want to reach a similar target audience. You can get started with any budget and stop your ads at any time. LinkedIn ads are sold through an auction.

Conclusion

For B2B companies, LinkedIn is most compelling choice when evaluating the business case for social networks. There are many other platforms that offer additional, complimentary or altogether different benefits, but LinkedIn is the logical first step.

No other social network site can match the breadth of professional contacts that LinkedIn can offer. It is quite simply the place to go to locate business professionals online. And if you want to reach them with your marketing communications, utilizing the marketing platforms provided by LinkedIn is the most logical solution.

As a valued partner, Honeywell offers marketing support, resources, tools, collateral and campaigns through Partner Marketing Concierge. PMC is your marketing resource that constructs the foundation for successful marketing campaigns and provides the essential tools to execute your marketing programs quickly and cost efficiently.

For more information, contact your Honeywell CBM, CMM or visit Partner Marketing Concierge.



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Resources

LinkedIn Advertising Resources

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions>

Create LinkedIn Company Page

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/company-pages>

LinkedIn Sponsored Content Advertising

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/native-advertising>

LinkedIn Sponsored InMail Advertising

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/sponsored-inmail?trk=mlc-t-eur>

LinkedIn Text Advertising

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/ppc-advertising?trk=mlc-t-eur>

LinkedIn Sales Navigator

<https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions>

LinkedIn Online Learning Tools

<https://learning.linkedin.com/for-entire-companies>

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Sources: "B2B Marketing 2019 Benchmarks, Budgets, and Trends — North America," Content Marketing Institute/ Marketing Profs. Webbiquity, 2019. "LinkedIn for B2B Lead generation" infographic,