

# 10½ ways to make LinkedIn work harder for you

## Tenandahalf top tips: June 2017

LinkedIn is still the acceptable face of social media for lawyers, patent attorneys, accountants, barristers and clerks.

It has almost cemented its position as the post-event 'nice to meet you' default and it also provides a non-threatening work-based environment in which to promote or exchange work-related material with a professional rather than social network of contacts.

However, the flipside is when we are working with law firms, barristers chambers, IP firms and accountancy practices we still have clients telling us they "have a profile but that's about it really" or "I am all set up but I'm not really sure what to do next" or "I've been meaning to look at it but it'll take a while and I haven't had that time to spare."

In a bid to address all 3 of these statements (and every derivation of) we have used this month's top 10½ tips to share 10½ tips that will not only make LinkedIn work harder for you, but also reduce the time you need to spend on the site to make it work for you once everything is up and running.

### 1. Market yourself properly

The reason this comes first is simple - LinkedIn is a marketing tool designed to market you so don't be embarrassed to use it for that purpose.

From your headline to your summary you need to subtly sell yourself and set out why you are different to every other solicitor, accountant, patent or trade mark attorney, barrister or clerk trying to use LinkedIn to bolster their business development.

Don't use job titles like 'Barrister' or 'Partner', tell people what you actually do:

'Specialising in providing commercial employment services for the businesses of Cumbria'

'Helping businesses drive greater revenues and greater profitability by becoming more efficient'

'A patent strategist driven by the desire to increase the value of my clients' IP'

Similarly use your summary to tell a story. Where did you start? How did you become the commercial employment solicitor, the revenue/profitability driving accountant or the strategic patent specialist?

This is the perfect place to set out the personality behind the profile and show people you want to start a conversation with your visitors, not just list out your CV.

## 2. Use the available apps

There are a load of free apps you can use to improve your profile. It is really easy to attach Box.net files so you can showcase:

- Events you've been involved with
- Presentations you've given
- White papers/special reports you've produced
- Articles you've written
- PR you've appeared in

All of this content underlines your position as a specialist and as a 'going concern' commercially; someone your visitors can recognise as involved rather than just spectating.

## 3. Link up your LinkedIn

The great thing about the internet and social media is it's so easy to link everything up so you maximise the punch of everything you're doing.

The last part of the profile completion process is to add any links to:

- Any publications you've written for (internally or externally)
- Any other websites you are connected with
- Any relevant landing pages your firm or the associations you belong to have set up
- Any stand-alone blogs you write for (e.g. WordPress)
- Any conferences you may have spoken/be speaking at

The people in your network have agreed to LinkIn with you so this is not an imposition or even just personal trumpet-blowing; if they are interested in what you do, they will also be interested in what else you've said about it.

## 4. Actually link in

I'm not sure if to LinkIn is a realised verb yet but it should be. The connections you LinkIn with are the backbone of a successful LinkedIn account so connect with clients, with colleagues, with contacts you've worked with in the past or have met at events.

And use the 'Colleagues' feature within LinkedIn. It will find who else you've worked with during your career at the click of a button and all too often within the professional services those forgotten contacts could well have ended up in-house at some new attractive target companies.

The more adventurous amongst you could also tap into your address books on your preferred email account/s. This can cause nervousness but I am repeatedly assured LinkedIn will never send spam; it just highlights who within your address books are using LinkedIn so you can make a personal approach.

## 5. Continually update your profile

You can have an All Star profile and all the connections in the world but if you don't keep it up to date, it will soon drop out of view rendering it all but useless BD-wise.

Try and aim to post 3 updates per week.

These can be content you or a colleague have published on your website, a link to an article you or a colleague have had published on a third party website, it can be a news article you've come across or an article in the trade press that's relevant to your practice. It can even be a photo of you completing the Robin Hood Marathon or West Surrey Triathlon (though personally I'd advise against using a professional LinkedIn profile that way).

Just keep the updates going. It's not an onerous task either; from a smartphone a cut and paste should give you change from 4 seconds!

## 6. Follow, follow, follow ....

LinkedIn allows you to follow both individuals and companies.

This is an easy way to follow what your key clients and targets are doing at a respectful distance (i.e. rather than being seen to 'stalk' their profiles). It is also an active service so will deliver updates rather than relying on you to remember to have a look.

This provides a very easy way to immediately recognise when an opportunity to make contact may be about to arise and will provide the perfect opportunity to drop them a line saying:

*"I noticed you were about to launch/open/announce something new which reminded me we haven't met up for a while ...."*

Or words to that effect.

## 7. Be prepared to recommend

Recommendations are another great way to bring your profile to life. In the same way as a testimonial adds weight to your brochures, the words of a peer or at least someone the visitor can empathise with, will immediately make your profile more credible than even the most beautifully written headline, summary and experience boxes.

And the good thing is you often don't need to ask. Just write a recommendation for a client, contact or colleague the general rules of reciprocity suggest they'll write one for you in return.

And if you do need to ask, I can't remember a single case (for me or for a client) where a request has been refused ... as long as the underlying relationship is genuine.

## 8. Include achievements for each job

While 'partner at Smith, Jones and Smith LLP' may be totally self-explanatory to you, it doesn't really tell a visitor much about what you could do for them and how well you would do it given the opportunity.

Wherever possible try to use real life examples (anonymised of course) to bring your experience into context and showcase the success you have achieved for clients in the past.

- You could say you helped raised the sale price of a client's business by 15% over their initial expectation
- You could say that you were instrumental in helping a succession of start-ups successfully navigate their first funding round
- You could say you worked on a project that halved the number of employment tribunals and doubles staff retention numbers for a client

You just need to make it relevant and make it quantifiable.

## 9. The Evening (or Morning) Post

By far my favourite function on LinkedIn is the long post (which I've had to double check just now as they keep renaming it and, at time of writing at least it's called 'Write and Article').

It's the perfect place to write blog-length articles (250-350) words on topics that are pertinent to your practice area. It's also a great way of building up a bit of confidence in your person writing style if you are just starting to help produce content for your firm or Chambers.

All you need to do is write your article (and I'd always suggest you do that in Word first and cut and paste it into the template provided), choose an accompanying image and click publish and you will:

- Send an automated alert to all your clients telling them you've published an article which ticks the 'remember I'm here' BD box
- Give your colleagues and contacts a link they can share via their various networks and social media accounts to tick the 'tell people you don't yet know you're here' BD box

### 10. Demonstrate you are always up-to-date

There are many lawyers and accountants serving the same geographic area or industry sector as you do and, to the layman, their skills and experience will probably look very much like yours.

If you can show you are on top of the wider issues affecting your local area or the sectors you work in most, you will immediately mark yourself out as someone

who understands and shares the concerns of your visitors.

It could be the difference between being instructed and being forgotten.

Sign up for Google alerts and for the e-newsletters produced by the local and trade press vehicles that support your primary specialisms.

Then cut and paste a few headlines and links each week to show you are always right up-to-date.

### 10½. Proof it ... then proof it again

Your profile will often be the first (or, after a long lay-off, latest) contacts a potential client or contact will have with you so don't greet them with a typo or poor grammar.

As a solicitor, barrister, patent or trade mark attorney or accountant your visitors will expect you to be able to demonstrate attention to detail; that bubble will immediately burst (and your credibility challenged) if you can't spell your job title correctly.

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