

Linked

Tenandahalf's LinkedIn Tool Kit



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Why is LinkedIn important?

LinkedIn is an easy and time-efficient way to showcase your skills and specialisms and build your profile within your target markets.

It also allows you to promote any content you or your colleagues have written, any event you'll be attending or presenting at, any press you've been mentioned in and any other professional or marketing activities you've been involved in.

And, as long as you are active, your LinkedIn will act as a passive advertising campaign, ensuring you stay visible to your clients, contacts and targets.

And if that isn't enough you can also use your LinkedIn profile:

- To demonstrate your knowledge, credibility and expertise to your connections
- As a research tool to stay on top of what's going on in your profession, your local area, your sector and with your clients
- To follow any target clients you are interested in (and identify who you need to connect with to turn those targets into clients)
- To join groups that will provide you with another way of meeting potential clients and referrers

In this tool kit we will share what you need to do to get the maximum value from your LinkedIn profile.

We will cover:

- How to create a strong LinkedIn profile
- How (and why) to 'like' and 'share'
- different types of updates you could be posting on LinkedIn
- How to make LinkedIn work harder for you once you're up and running

But first just in case there you still have a little cynicism or nervousness about using LinkedIn, we'll start with 7 myths about LinkedIn that we can shatter right now ...



Why is LinkedIn important?

1. It's a waste of time because only recruitment consultants invite me to connect

Just ignore unsolicited LinkedIn invitations (unless they are from people that can really help you). Instead connect with people that you know, have known and want to know better.

If you get your LinkedIn network right, it'll help you stay visible to your connections and play a major role in helping you deliver a fully integrated personal business development plan.

2. If I look at someone's profile, they will think I am weird

No! They will actually:

- a) Be flattered
- b) Think you are professional in the way you prepare for meetings and approach BD more generally
- c) Be reminded to take action/ follow up on a previous contact

3. LinkedIn doesn't help you win business

Don't confuse strategy with execution!

Just because something hasn't worked for you in the past doesn't mean necessarily that the approach is flawed. Instead look at how you can get LinkedIn working more effectively for you ...

... Update your profile, switch to a professional photograph, ask for more client recommendations and take the time to showcase how your expertise/services has benefitted clients

4. LinkedIn is the same as the other social media channels

No, it isn't.

LinkedIn is the most effective way to build visibility and position yourself as an expert in the areas you want to market by posting relevant content, sharing headlines and links and commenting on the issues affecting your clients and your practice.



Why is LinkedIn important?

5. I don't have time for LinkedIn

You can use LinkedIn effectively in as little as 2 or 3 minutes a day. All you need to do is like, share and comment on other people's posts.

6. LinkedIn isn't relevant to my network

Research shows that over 90% of people in business use LinkedIn.

Even if you are sceptical or don't like the tool, the people that you are trying to influence do it's the perfect way to get yourself the potential clients and contacts you'll need to build a successful future.

7. I don't have anything to post on LinkedIn

You can start by sharing the blogs, articles and event news your firm is producing.

You can also get new ideas for your own content (and remember the 'post an article' function is even more proactive than a standard update) by answering the questions your clients, referrers and other professional contacts are asking you.

And you can get more ideas by posting headlines from and links to interesting articles in the publications your clients are most likely to read.



How do you
create a
strong
LinkedIn
profile?

Here is a checklist to help you complete your profile:

1. Add a professional profile photo

A good photo increases the credibility of your profile and profiles with a photo get up to 21 times more profile views than profiles that don't. But please use a professional photo – not half of the holiday snap you took at that restaurant you really liked. That really *isn't* credible!

2. Make your headline stand out

Your headline will be created when you add your current and previous positions to your profile. However, you should always edit this so it says what you do and how you help clients rather than just 'associate' or 'partner' which are terms that will mean little to your visitors.

3. Take the time to work on your summary

The 'About' section of your profile should clearly explain what you do, how you do it and who you do it for. Try and keep this to two paragraphs filled with the things you want to be known and found for. One trick is to list those search terms in a Word file then work backwards to turn them into coherent paragraphs.

4. Include all your work and education experiences

This gives people more insight into who you are and where you've come from. And please keep this up to date; there is nothing worse than gaps or outdated information. It'll sow a seed of doubt in your visitors' minds.

5. Add all your relevant skills

Listing all your skills on your profile will help you showcase your abilities to your visitors and as some may not be obvious from your current position or role, it can help you position yourself as a more rounded individual or even highlight something that is particularly important to the reader. It also gives your connections an opportunity to endorse you for those skills which again will only add to your credibility.

6. Ask for recommendations

Recommendations are arguably more powerful than even the best written profiles. As they are independent and credited to someone the reader will recognise as being similar to themselves, they are totally believable. And, if any come from someone you don't think is quite suitable, these can be hidden.



How (and why) do you 'like' and 'share'?

Liking and sharing your connections' updates are the easiest ways to keep your profile active.

To do this all you need to do is either click the 'like' icon (the thumbs up under the post) or the share icon (the semi-circular arrow under the post).

Aside from keeping your profile active (and it needs to be active in order to persuade LinkedIn to include you in the searches users are making to find people with your particular experience) there are 4 key benefits of liking your connections' posts:

1. The person who published the post gets a notification to let them know you liked the post. This is a quick, easy and effective way to remind them you're still there.
2. It's flattering. It's a very small act that can have a big impact in terms of telling your connections you like what they're doing and who doesn't like that (especially as it'll help boost the reach of their post)?
3. Your name and profile picture will appear when someone else clicks to see who liked the post. This could introduce you to a new audience, some of whom will be looking to connect with someone in your position/with your skills and experience.
4. When someone visits your profile they'll see you are active which will have a knock on effect on how seriously LinkedIn's algorithms treat your profile.

Who should you like?

While it is helpful to support your colleagues' posts, you should only do this if they are relevant to your practice. Too many irrelevant posts could dent the credibility of your activity and, by extension, your profile.

Similarly, 'blanket' liking of all your firm/colleagues' posts can also send a red flag to the algorithms which could be detrimental if it's deemed a long-term pattern.

Try to mix it up and make sure you are liking your professional contacts' posts (this will open up a new audience), posts from relevant media (this will open up a much bigger audience) and - if you're comfortable - your clients (again, it's flattering).



How (and why) do you 'like' and 'share'?

How do you share?

Sharing is a little more involved, but it will be more prominent than and taken more seriously by your connections than a like.

And you will need to add a comment to contextualise your share. If you are unsure as to what you should be adding to a share, some of the following may help:

My colleague (@name) has just posted this article and I thought it may also be of interest to some of my connections.

Our (area) team has just published this article on (subject) and it is well worth a read if you are involved in (area).

As a firm we are heavily involved in (subject) so this article was very interesting. I hope you'll find it interesting too.

I came across this on my timeline and thought it would definitely be interesting to some of my connections.

I've just finished reading this article and had to share it as there is so much good stuff in there.

I really enjoyed this article on (subject) and thought some of my connections would too.

(@name) just posted this and it's a great read so I thought it would be worth sharing.

As I'm directly involved in (practice area) I thought this was an excellent read so I wanted to share it with my network.



What are the
different
types of
updates you
can post on
LinkedIn?

1. Your or your firm's content

This is the most obvious option.

If you write something for your website (or for anyone else's website) or one of your colleagues posts a new blog, share the link. To make your content work, you need to drive traffic to it and getting as many people as you can to share the links has to be the first step.

Also, when more people actively engage with a piece of content, it will immediately become more visible to the search engines and to the search function on LinkedIn. This will help the piece reach a whole new audience.

2. News from your practice area

At the moment there are new updates and new directives coming out hourly never mind daily. People need to be alerted to the ones that will affect them.

If you can keep up with the latest developments as they're reported by the BBC, the trade press or your professional institute or association, those headlines and links will make practical posts your clientbase and your market will appreciate.

3. News from the sectors you work in

If you focus on specific industry sectors, keep up to date with the latest from the relevant trade publications. Again, many of the headlines and links they publish will make good posts.

To make it easier for you to manage, sign up to their free e-newsletters and then you can share the link to your social media accounts in seconds via the share function on your phone.

You can also set up Google alerts (www.google.com/alerts) using the key search terms relating to your sectors so that even more relevant headlines and links are sent straight to your inbox each day.

4. Good news from the news

If you see a 'feel good' story that relates to your practice, your clients or your local area, why not post that? We're all fed up with bad news at the moment so share something that'll make people smile.



What are the
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LinkedIn?

5. Something from your day

If anything interesting happened to you during the working day, why not post it? Sometimes it's these more unexpected offhand posts that elicit the best response.

6. Something from your inbox

Has a contact, a client or any other source sent you something you found useful/interesting/valuable? Use it as a post! If you appreciated it, many of your connections will too.

7. Something you had to look up

If you were asked a tricky question that forced you to open a book or go online or to a colleague to find the answer, why not share it?

If you prefix it with something like 'here's something I didn't know ...' or 'they say you learn something every day ...', people will recognise that reading your post will teach them something a little different ...

... but almost certainly valuable.

8. Re-share your contacts' updates with a comment

If one of your clients or professional contacts shares something you like, why not re-share that with your audience? You can add something like 'this caught my eye and I thought it may of interest to my connections ...' to justify why you're doing it.

The good thing about sharing a contact's post is that, thanks to the laws of reciprocity, they'll either reply to thank you or feel indebted to share one of your upcoming pieces. Both options will boost your profile.

9. Disagree with an update you've seen

OK, this does take a little bit more confidence than the other options we've shared here but it is effective!

Obviously, you can't be rude or dismissive, but you can politely disagree and offer your own point of view. People expect social media to tell them things rather than debate things so if readers see a different point of view, it can often encourage greater engagement.



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10. An online poll

If you want to get people involved in your posts, how about running a poll? Both LinkedIn and Twitter have easy-to-use polling functions and once you have the results, reporting them will make another post!

10½. Something a bit lighter

Your posts don't always have to be strictly business-related. We're definitely not advocating a quick video of you doing shots or arm-wrestling the dog but if you want to share a song that popped up on Spotify, your new personal best for 10k or a photo of you topping a ton on the dartboard, do it.

Not only do people need a bit of light relief, they also need a reminder that irrespective of what ype of solicitor you are, you are still very definitely you.



How can you
make your
LinkedIn
profile work
harder for
you?

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 'Associate' 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.



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3. Link up your LinkedIn

The great thing about the social media is it's so easy to link everything up so you maximise the effect 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.



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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 someone else's 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).

Whatever you choose to post, just keep the updates going. It's not an onerous task; 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.



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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.



How can you
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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 an 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 relevant local/trade publications 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.

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.

Linked

Do you need any more help?

If you need some more help either getting started or with being a little more adventurous with LinkedIn please email bernard@tenandahalf.co.uk or douglas@tenandahalf.co.uk



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