

5-Minute Guide To Leveraging LinkedIn For Business

- SPECIAL REPORT -

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When it comes to generating sales for a business, more sales-people are only as good as their leads. Since, its inception, LinkedIn has been known as a great place to search for a job and network with like-minded people. However, in recent years it has emerged as an excellent resource for generating more leads. For many, taking the time to manage a LinkedIn account for their business is a waste. However, according to recent studies, LinkedIn has been shown to drive 80 percent of all B2B social media leads, beating out Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. This means that looking at LinkedIn as the platform to utilize to generate more leads may prove to be worthwhile.

When you are approaching LinkedIn from the perspective of lead generation and sales, it is best if you view the professional networking platform as an investment for the future, because implementing any one individual action isn't going to increase the leads that your business receives. Instead, you have to put in a sustained effort toward building your business credibility, engaging with other members of the platform, and maintaining a high level of activity if you want potential leads to noticing your company's involvement.

Actively participating on LinkedIn will inevitably help your company stand out from the crowd. Spending just a few hours every day on LinkedIn can result in huge dividends for your business, not only with an increase in the volume of leads that you obtain but as well as the quality of the leads. Here are seven useful guidelines that your business should follow to leverage LinkedIn to generate more leads and increase sales for your business.

Maximize Your Mileage

When it comes to being able to increase highly targeted leads for your business, you won't be successful unless you are deliberate about it. The best way to do this is to redesign your LinkedIn company page to become an extension of your company's website. When you redesign your company page on LinkedIn to act as an extension of your company's website, it lays the groundwork for effectively utilizing LinkedIn for your marketing efforts.

Start by selecting an attractive header image and creating concise and convincing content in the description area of your company page. Making your company pitch clear and concise is an effective way to make your page stand out among the crowd and entices other members of the site to explore your page further.

You need to think of your LinkedIn company page as a stopping point on the road to your company site. Don't be afraid to look at other member's sites to see what they are doing and discover who is maintaining excellent company pages.

Give the People What They Want

When it comes to marketing your company's products or services, LinkedIn is unique. Unlike the other social networking platforms, LinkedIn allows you to create customer Showcase Pages to highlight individual products and services. By creating separate pages that feature a single product or service, you can better differentiate your business from your competitors.

Creating unique, individual pages for each of the products and services you provide you are able to segment your target audience and filter through your inbound traffic to determine where,

exactly, your business comes from. To create a showcase page, log into your LinkedIn account.

Click on the down-pointing arrow that is located next to the Edit option and select the Create Showcase Page option from the drop-down menu. It is essential that you optimize each page that you create to make them each more easily searchable. You can better optimize your pages by including relevant keywords throughout the content, as well as with the showcase page name. It is also imperative that you include the links to the corresponding service or product page on your company site.

Get Savvy

If you want to utilize LinkedIn to generate more leads for your business successfully, you need to know which features to use and how to use them, starting with keeping tabs on who has viewed your profile. LinkedIn provides you with an email anytime someone has viewed your profile. The most effective way to find potential leads is to keep track of those who have visited your profile.

If you want to see a complete list of people who have viewed your profile, then you will need to upgrade your LinkedIn account to one of their premium profile options. However, this is a value that could easily outweigh the cost of the service.

Every time that you receive an alert that someone has checked out your company page take the time to contact these members by sending them a quick direct message. Let them know that you noticed they viewed your company profile and let them know that you are available to talk with them about how you can help them.

Another feature that you will need to get familiar with is LinkedIn's advanced search feature. The advanced people search on LinkedIn is a comprehensive tool that lets you specify industry, location, years of experience, job title, seniority level, and keywords. This creates a highly specific search with results that you can use to define your target audience.

Finally, don't forget to utilize LinkedIn's sponsored content and ads. The value of paid advertisements in LinkedIn can far exceed the typical web ads, so it's best if you didn't shy away from them. LinkedIn's sponsored content is compatible with both mobile and desktop devices and it allows you to use more characters for text as well as larger images as compared to traditional web ads.

You can also enable the 'Lead Collection' feature that allows you to collect the information of the users who have clicked through to your ad and requested that you contact them. This can provide you with a complete picture of who your ads are attracting and how they fit in with your target audience parameters.

Utilizing paid ads and "Who's Viewed My Profile" feature are both valid ways that contribute to the top of the sales funnel and cultivate a list of highly targeted leads who might be interested in the products or services your company is offering.

Offer Your Knowledge

LinkedIn is full of many niche groups and by joining these groups and sharing your thoughts and opinions about the topics being discussed will help you establish relationships with the other members in the group, as well as those who are interested in your industry. In fact, many of the people who join these niche groups are explicitly looking for business advice. To get your business to

the front of these individuals minds, you need to be open with your knowledge. Sharing your experience with those in the groups that you join will help you to gain credibility as an expert in your specific industry and will quickly become the go-to source for questions about the niche. As more people come to you with questions and you increase your participation in these groups, you will start to generate more leads for your business.

An excellent place to start is to search for different groups in your industry. Start by joining just a few that stand out to you and spend some time reading through the discussions and paying attention to what the members of the group are talking about. As you become more comfortable with the topics that are being discussed in the various groups, you can start to put your two cents in and contribute to the discussions, hopefully sparking a conversation with the other members about something that you are knowledgeable about. You might know something that nobody else in the group does.

Once you become more experienced and active with the LinkedIn Groups that you are a part of, then you might want to consider starting your own group to generate even more leads. When you start your own LinkedIn group for your industry, not only do you have the opportunity to connect with a large audience of members who are interested in your industry, but you get to be seen as an expert and thought leader in your niche.

Keep Your Account Active

The only way you can keep your target audience interested in your business is if you continue to be active on LinkedIn and keep the products or services that you provide in the forefront of your audiences minds. Take time every week to search for other

LinkedIn members and continue to participate in the discussions happening in your groups. You also need to continue to keep your company page active. You can do this by sharing posts several times a week to stay relevant within your network.

While this kind of activity might seem indirect when it comes to generating new leads for your business, the post that you share tend to say a lot about you and your company and could end up making the difference in successfully finding and reaching out to new potential leads.

An even better and more effective way to maintain a healthy activity level on LinkedIn is to write your own posts. LinkedIn recently added a publishing platform to its site. Pulse, allows anyone to create long-form posts that can be quickly published and shared with your entire LinkedIn network. Optimizing the post with relevant keywords will make your articles easier to find by people that aren't in your network. This could lead to more people viewing your company profile, which in turn provides you with even more qualified leads.

Publishing posts and sharing them with your network will also help you to stand out in the minds of your target audience as a thought leader in your industry and help to add credibility to any of the cold contacts that you might choose to send to potential leads.

Sharing is Caring

After you've created an attractive company page that will draw in more viewers, participated in the discussions of the groups you joined, and established a strategy for sharing your content, it's time for you to show off your hard work. To help increase your leads, even more, you should consider sharing your LinkedIn

business page with your current mailing list. Along with sending them a link to your company page, be sure to include a short message explaining why your company is worth following and why they should connect with you on LinkedIn.

As more and more people visit your company page on LinkedIn, be sure that you respond to any comments that may be left on your site. When someone shares a thoughtful comment on your profile, it means that they share an interest with you. Establishing a connection with that person with a thoughtful response is one way that you can validate your credibility. Every small business owner knows that being responsive to your audience can make or break a relationship. When you are social with the people you interact with, they could end up being valuable future customers.

Conclusion

Whether you know it or not, LinkedIn is so much more than merely a site where people can search for a new job or connect with others who have the same interests. For businesses, it is a powerful tool for generating new leads and increasing sales. With the right approach to creating and maintaining your LinkedIn company page, you can reach more members who meet your target audience criteria and generate more leads for your business.

These seven simple tips for creating the best company page and for reaching more members can help you establish yourself as a thought leader in your industry and make more connections with those in your niche. The more connections you can make, the more leads you can generate, increasing sales for your business.