



NEWS

Making LinkedIn work for your Brokerage or CTA

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Commonly referred to as the social media tool for businesses, LinkedIn provides a number of ways to promote your brokerage or CTA in the community and is a fantastic sales tool when used effectively. Here are tips for getting the most out of LinkedIn (while keeping compliance in mind of course)—both the do's and don'ts.

Ways to Use LinkedIn to Promote Your Brokerage or CTA

1. CREATE AND COMPLETE YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

LinkedIn profiles are very search-engine friendly—so searches on your name, your company, and key words in your profile may direct people to your profile page. When someone comes across your page and sees a completed profile, they are more likely to view you as a resource for their needs. Testimonials, when done correctly, help boost your profile, add to your credibility and provide exposure for your business.

2. LINKING FROM YOUR PROFILE

Your LinkedIn profile allows you to insert links to your website and other resources creating avenues for viewers of your profile to get to your website. If you have a Twitter page(s) you can post links in your status bar on LinkedIn or Twitter and have them automatically show up in both.

3. RESEARCH AND CONNECT WITH PROSPECTS

Use LinkedIn to discover, research and connect with your prospects in a non-intrusive way. Most people are passive in their usage of LinkedIn—creating a profile then waiting for people to come to them. But searches by title, industry, company name, keywords, and more allow you to find and qualify leads and contact them through your LinkedIn network. A profile search is also a great way to learn more about who you are meeting and seeing at a conference so you can connect with your contact in a more personal or relevant way.

4. ASKING FOR A CONNECTION

In the Pro version of LinkedIn you can request a limited amount of direct contacts using their InMail system, but the more common way is to find how you are linked to the contact via your other contacts—and then request introductions through the chain of connections. It's amazing how many people are often just two "connections" away.

5. PARTICIPATE IN THE CONVERSATION

Answer questions—LinkedIn Answers and LinkedIn Groups offer ways to showcase your expertise in the field by answering questions posed by others about futures, investing, etc. Of course you need to be careful of compliance issues here—but that being said general observations in many cases are appropriate and permissible. Answers also appear in LinkedIn searches.

6. KEEP YOUR PROFILE UPDATED REGULARLY

Keep your profile and information current—whether it's once a week, or once a quarter—profiles that are neglected show. Also regular users check in to see what their network is up to. It's the easiest way to keep up with the people in your network. (Hint: use #in to post an update to your LinkedIn profile when connected to your Twitter account)

Ways Not to Use LinkedIn to Promote Your Brokerage or CTA

1. DON'T OPENLY SOLICIT

You've identified a prospect that you are dying to meet. Don't act rashly and shoot out a contact request off the cuff. State clearly why you wish to connect with them, how they will benefit from it—and not simply as an open solicitation. When trying to make a connection through your network, each contact will see your request and will decide if they should pass it through. After all, you are asking someone in your network (and in their network...) to make an introduction, so they will be rightfully selective in the requests they pass on. The quality of your request will help them determine if they should pass the request on.

2. DON'T SPAM

"LIKE NEW, BARELY USED, RUNS LIKE A CHAMP!" you wouldn't send an email like this to everyone you meet, so don't send or post open solicitations in: link requests, your status field, groups, answers, etc. By doing so you'll potentially be removed from their network or they will certainly be less likely to endorse you. Follow your profile updates affecting your ability to use the power of your network and exposure for your business.

3. DON'T BE A MISER

People will also ask you for requests, endorsements, and connections. Extend them the same courtesy you would expect yourself. Your connections are like a currency, and if the contact is legitimate, don't be a miser—pass it on. Before you rush out and encourage your staff to get LinkedIn, be sure to consider all potential compliance issues for your company's participation in social media sites. You will be held to the NFA guidelines outlined in [Rule 2-29](#) and potentially any additional guidance from your clearing firm.

Participating in LinkedIn and other social media sites are a valuable and cost-effective way to provide exposure to your business, search for leads, connect with a network of like-minded individuals, highlight your expertise, and potentially gain clients as a result.

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