

How to Develop an Engaging Personal Brand in LinkedIn®



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LinkedIn® is the ultimate B2B online personal branding tool for business owners, executive management, business professionals and sales professionals. LinkedIn® has 70+ million decision makers in its network. With this volume of salespeople fighting for target attention, it is nearly impossible to make a personal brand impression. Instead of a whole lot of trial and error, I have outlined proven tips below which will make your LinkedIn® profile and presence effective for generating a strong and memorable personal brand.

Why You Must be Different and Brand Yourself

Without a consistent, memorable and strong personal brand, users of LinkedIn® searching for someone with your skills and experience will be unable to find you. Further, because of the high volume of competition in LinkedIn®, a boring or incomplete profile will almost assure that your target will quickly skip by you and onto the next qualified candidate. Finally, unless you work daily to strengthen your personal brand voice within the LinkedIn® system, you will slowly disappear from the rankings and importance of LinkedIn®, similar to how web sites with stale content are never seen.

Making an impressive Personal Brand statement

Before you even think about using LinkedIn® to drive content and develop leads and interest, you need to do some introspection and talk to your closest colleagues to develop your own unique and compelling personal brand. To see LinkedIn® as a personal branding tool in such a way that you as a business professional can create a market position around your strengths or talents will immediately help to set you above the crowd of 70+ million others.

This solution involves first defining your market position as a business title. Examples can include:

“Online Marketing Professional NYC”

“Business Management Consultant LA”

“Social Media Strategist Chicago”

To help you determine those strengths, it is wise for you to ask the assistance of your clients and colleagues or those who know you best. Simply ask how they perceive your value. You will get a lot of feedback. From there, make a conclusion which you can sum up for your LinkedIn® headline.

In addition to developing your personal brand market position, you also need to commit to a way of communicating that position. It can be through writing, presentations and video. You will need to assess what your style is of communication and decide how you will best be represented. This can take the form of blogging, answering questions on LinkedIn® related to your skill set, writing for online publications where you have an expertise as some examples.

The style you choose to communicate in should also be reflected through a professional photograph as your profile picture. For instance, in my profile my photo is one taken in front of a table and microphone where I was a panelist at the NYXPO this year.

Creating a Searchable, Branded Profile

Exploring your market position, as you now have just done will assist you in developing your own personal keywords. Having this list handy is instrumental to writing and maintaining a visible profile. You want to define at least 3-5 strong keyword phrases to support your personal brand and then utilize those when writing: your headline, summary, skills, job titles and descriptions and all embedded content (your blog, presentations, videos, etc.).

In my LinkedIn® profile <http://www.linkedin.com/in/onlinebranding> you will notice that I emphasize:

- Web Marketing Consultant
- Online Marketing Consultant
- Online Marketing Trainer
- Digital Strategist
- Online Branding Consultant

I am looking for companies and decision makers to find me when they are searching for consultants and trainers in these areas. And so, you will notice in my profile that my headline “Online Marketing Consultant for any Web Business Initiative” supports this position. You will see in my job titles, I utilize my keywords as:

- Online Marketing Consultant at Ciplex
- Online Marketing Trainer and Branding Consultant at Agent-cy Online Marketing, Inc.
- Online Marketing Consultant and Speaker at Agent-cy Online Marketing
- Web Consultant for Web Business Initiatives at Jasmine Sandler Web Consultant

Continue then to use your keywords in your summary and when choosing skills choose ones that are related to your keywords. For me, my skills include:

- Marketing
- Internet Marketing
- Marketing Communications

And so forth (you can choose up to 50 related skills), as they support the work I have done, my expertise and my interests.

Another useful tool to support your expertise and related keywords in LinkedIn® is the project tool. You can create a whole list of projects by skill area. Within my LinkedIn® profile, for example, I list and direct viewers to Web Copy Projects and Online Strategy/Plans of which I have led and completed. In this way, people can easily access work you have completed.

Adding apps and specific content within your LinkedIn® profile is a must so that users are engaged to contact you. The TypePad Blog App integration will be important if you commit to writing to a blog to support your personal brand, as I do via www.jasminesandler.com. Other useful app plug-ins include SlideShare, for pulling in recent presentations, such as my latest LinkedIn® for Personal Branding presentation which you can download on my LinkedIn® profile for reference following this

whitepaper. With the events app, you can show people where they can meet up with you and it also shows your commitment to networking, both on and offline. It can be a great way for you to invite LinkedIn® users to meet the real you.

LinkedIn® Activities to Ensure People will Connect with You

Once you have a clear understanding of your strengths, skills and keywords, the way to show the LinkedIn® world that you are in fact an expert is to spend daily time answering questions in the Q&A section. Choose 2-3 categories of which you are 100% comfortable answering questions to and showing examples based on work you have done. For me, online marketing and search marketing are areas in which I spend time answering questions and citing examples. If you commit to doing this at least once every few days, users and the LinkedIn® rating system will start to revere you as an expert in those categories, thus supporting your personal brand.

Updating your status and commenting on other's status and opinions on linked articles is key to showing your activity in LinkedIn®. Of course all of this needs to provide value to your LinkedIn® network and show your expertise. You should also think of doing this in related LinkedIn® Groups, once you join them. Joining groups related to your industry, client base and university are the best places to start.

By joining and participating or even starting your own Group and managing it successfully, you really start to engage in effective LinkedIn® practices. Groups where you have industry or client in common will allow you to connect individual members into your network much more easily and hence, provide business opportunities to you. You should make it your practice to engage in your Group discussions and polls once a day.

As I always tell my online marketing training clients, LinkedIn® is analogous to a networking event offline. It just so happens to be an online community. And so, because all marketing and sales activities must be leveraged, any time you attend a local networking group or event and collect business cards, you should immediately go online and ask those people to join you on LinkedIn®. This is how I have been able to grow my LinkedIn® audience to over 2,000 business professionals (1st connects) in a short time.

Leveraging Your LinkedIn® Personal Brand

Once you have established your LinkedIn® personal brand and committed to its daily activity, it is equally important for you to leverage it across all of your online marketing channels. This means your Blog, Facebook page, Twitter page, website and any other web pages you utilize to drive business. In addition, when meeting others offline whom you want to do business with, you should stress your LinkedIn® profile for them to visit. In that sense you want to create a LinkedIn® page name people will remember. As one of my keywords that supports both my personal brand and company (www.agent-cy.com) brand, “Online Branding”, my LinkedIn® profile is as such <http://www.linkedin.com/in/onlinebranding>. This profile has been helpful for multiple reasons. It has helped me to drive brand recognition of who I am “Online Branding Consultant” and has also helped me to gain visibility in Google for Online Branding agency. LinkedIn®, as you can see is used by millions of business people around the world every second. What that means is that its rank as a B2B social media tool to Google is #1 and so if your title, profile and content activity supports targeted keywords, you can bet that Google will find you there and reward you for doing so.

LinkedIn® and Your Personal Brand

It is understandable that you are a busy business professional. Perhaps you own or manage a business or an entire marketing team. Therefore you may not have all the time in the world to spend on LinkedIn®. What you can do is to start with defining your personal brand statement and giving yourself a deadline to have a 100% complete profile. From there, try to give yourself at least once a week to be active in the tool. And remember LinkedIn® can be useful in multiple ways, for qualified lead generation, for indirect referrals of business and for search engine optimization.

If you want to learn more about how to use LinkedIn® to develop and support your Personal Brand, please visit my [On demand webinar](#).



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