

Is Your Sales Team Using LinkedIn To Its Full Potential? Most Likely Not...

8 min read



How much time do you spend on LinkedIn? How much time do your sales team and human resources department spend on LinkedIn?

Key Takeaways

- **Building a Personal Brand Is Essential:** In addition to your professional posts, personal content can help you...
- **Focus on Proactive Recruiting:** She sees many businesses missing out on a major opportunity for recruiting and building pools of potential candidates through...
- **Take Advantage of All Four Paths to Social Selling:** Social selling is the process of developing relationships along the customer's journey into and through the sales funnel...

If you're like a lot of businesses, your answer might be, "Not much time."


While that's okay, the sun has been setting on the days of handing out business cards at packed networking events and taking a different potential client out to lunch every day. With the restrictions of the pandemic, these types of sales and recruiting traditions have gone even further by the wayside.

LinkedIn has stepped in to take their place, and the platform has expanded every business's potential pool of leads and candidates as far as the internet can reach. In fact, at the beginning of 2022, LinkedIn reported 822 million registered users [1].

So, what's the catch?

According to the founder and CEO of [Intero Advisory](#), [Colleen McKenna](#) the catch is that you need to know what you're doing and have a strategy in place in order to use the platform effectively. Essentially, if you're spending time on LinkedIn without really understanding how to use LinkedIn, then you could be wasting your time.

Whether you have a profile and already encourage your employees to build their own profiles or are completely new to the professional social media network, the following tips can help you get started and/or improve your existing presence and strategy.

 **Prefer listening over reading? Listen to the full episode (& more) [here!](#)**

10 LinkedIn Secrets Your Sales Team Should Know About

1. Building a Personal Brand Is Essential

Many people are afraid of making LinkedIn too much like Facebook – and it shouldn't be like Facebook. It is a professional platform, after all. Despite this, some people go too far at avoiding all personal content and anything that makes you seem like a human and not just a business person. Your LinkedIn profile and presence should allow people to get to know you beyond what you're selling and who you work for.

Sharing a few personal posts here and there humanizes you, allows potential connections to get to know you, makes them want to talk to you, and makes you more trustworthy because it shows you're a human, too. In addition to your professional posts, personal content can help you build a brand and foster new connections.

2. LinkedIn Sales Navigator Requires Strategy

LinkedIn Sales Navigator offers tools that are built for business development and sales professionals, and these tools aren't available with basic, free accounts. However, they're only truly useful and effective if you sign up with a strategy. You need a plan to know how you'll identify a target account, how many people at a single business you should be connected to, which individuals you should connect to, and an understanding of the kinds of content they value the most.

3. Don't Aim to Sell

Remember that, on LinkedIn, your goal should not be to sell. It should be to share, educate, connect, and develop trust in relationships with potential clients. When you have that, you can find out which communication channels the individual prefers (email, phone, or talking in person) and set up a time to talk business.

Read More: [When Your Sales & Profitability Are Struggling, Do THIS...](#)

4. Focus on Proactive Recruiting

McKenna reminds her clients that LinkedIn isn't just about finding sales leads; it's an equally effective recruiting tool. She said that she sees many businesses missing out on a major opportunity for recruiting and building pools of potential candidates through LinkedIn. She describes the difference between proactive recruiting (connecting with talent and building a pool of potential candidates before you need them) and reactive recruiting (posting a job listing after you have an opening and waiting for the right candidates to apply).

"Eighty percent of people on LinkedIn say they are open to a new opportunity," said McKenna. "So, not even needing LinkedIn Recruiter, which is the corporate version for corporate recruiting through LinkedIn, using even basic at its most elemental level gives you the ability to reach out. So, to me, building a talent pipeline is as critical as building a sales pipeline."

5. Network Size Matters, But Relevancy Is More Important

Don't spend time on LinkedIn building enormous networks of people that are not relevant to your business. You can have a huge network of non-relevant contacts that isn't fruitful or a smaller, more intentionally curated network of connections that is much more fruitful.



The graphic is a green rectangular banner with a blue arrow pointing right at the top right. In the top left, it says "Path to PROFIT PODCAST". In the center, a quote reads: "8 seconds. I want women to think about in those **8 seconds** that somebody looks at their profile, how can they stand out and shine." At the bottom left, there is a circular profile picture of Colleen McKenna, with the text "Guest: Colleen McKenna CEO & Founder, Intero Advisory" next to it. At the bottom right, the "GrowthForce" logo is displayed.

6. Target the Right Number of Relevant Connections

In order to build a solid, relevant network of connections on LinkedIn, you'll want to aim at a consistent number of requests/messages each week. Your volume will depend on the amount of time you and your employees have free. McKenna recommends aiming for 50 to 60 requests/messages per week with a highly successful acceptance/reply rate of about 30%.

McKenna also warns against attempting to grow too quickly. LinkedIn strives to create meaningful, relevant connections on its platform. If an account adds too many too quickly it could be flagged as spam and shut down.

7. Take Advantage of All Four Paths to Social Selling

Social selling is the process of developing relationships along the customer's journey into and through the sales funnel. The strategy works because people like to do business with people they trust, and trust grows out of relationships. There are four basic pathways to social selling which include:

- Outbound - Researching potential clients and reaching out.
- Inbound - Helping potential clients come to you via advertising or other digital tools like content and social media.
- Referrals - Word-of-mouth referrals are the top social selling channel for most businesses.

- Speaking Engagements - You can gain clients and develop relationships by positioning yourself as an industry leader by speaking at events.

With LinkedIn, you can actively drive each of these social selling channels by searching out contacts, having a presence that can be found, receiving referrals from your contacts, and by positioning yourself as a thought leader by publishing educational or helpful content.

8. Personalize Your Contact Requests and Messages

There are a lot of tools available for automating LinkedIn messages and connection requests. While automation can save a lot of time, it's not a very effective communicator. People are individuals, and they like to be treated as such. Automated messages don't feel trustworthy to most recipients. Using software to automate LinkedIn connection requests and messages costs money, but the automated messages feel cheap to the recipients.

Potential connections value your time, and they are more likely to respond to a personalized message that shows you've done a bit of work to get to know them, as a recipient. For example, you might lead by saying that you liked something they posted, listened to their podcast, or read an article they wrote. Instead of leading with an immediate sales pitch, focus on making a meaningful connection first.

9. Be Patient

You could send a message or a connection request to an individual in January and not hear from them until July. Do not delete old connection requests because you never know when a potential contact will respond and be ready to talk to you.

10. Women, Don't Be Afraid to Position Yourself as Business Leaders

Throughout her consulting experience, McKenna's company has tracked a lot of data, and she shared an important observation: "Women don't tend to invest in their online brand and building themselves up as much as men do – especially on LinkedIn."

Further expanding on this data-based observation, she recalled an experience from a recent conference she attended with a couple of her colleagues. For two days, for 14 hours each day, they were providing attendees with 10-minute LinkedIn evaluations. Of the experience, she said that the men at the conference would mostly approach them with confidence saying that they thought their profiles were pretty awesome but asking them to double-check. Women, on the other hand, would approach them without much confidence in their profiles. They mostly hadn't paid much attention to their profiles and reported having outdated photos.

Read More: [The Most Common Mistakes of Business Leaders \(And What To Do Instead\)](#)

"I really am pretty passionate about women owning who they are professionally," McKenna said, "and putting that on LinkedIn and being really proud of who they are [and] what they've accomplished."

McKenna encourages women to use their profiles to showcase their accomplishments, build their presence, and fight against the ageism that women often come up against – both those who are young and those who are not as young.

Is Time Spent on LinkedIn Time Wasted?

As with most professional pursuits, time spent on anything if not spent smartly, astutely, and efficiently can be wasted. For example, old-fashioned cold calling and networking events can be a waste of time, if you do not implement, test, and improve a strategic process for making meaningful connections through those pursuits.

Time spent on LinkedIn works the same. Be sure to go at it with a strategy and a plan. Be sure to measure your results (i.e. number of contacts and connection or reply rate) and make adjustments to your strategy as necessary.

Continuously Improve Your Business Management Skills and Team Through Relationships and Networking

Humans are social animals, and that means we learn best from each other. In addition to helping you grow your business through relevant sales leads and bolster your team with proactive recruiting efforts, LinkedIn can also help you make connections with business leaders who are looking to share their insights and expertise with others who can do the same for them. On LinkedIn, you can trade knowledge, connect contacts with individuals who can help them improve their businesses, and learn from leaders in your industry. To make the most of your time, be sure to remember Colleen McKenna's list of LinkedIn secrets.

1. <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/linkedin-statistics/>