

Leveraging LinkedIn

By
Robb Pardee

www.linkedin.com/in/robbpardee

Personal Branding & Business Development Checklist

Create your profile, completely and in detail. Go to www.Linkedin.com and fill in the blanks under “Join LinkedIn Today.”

- This includes a color photo.
- Add keywords that will help potential clients to find you. Present your profile to match the clientele you want to target. List results, accomplishments, and skills.
- Customize Your “Public Profile” LinkedIn address to match your name, e.g., <http://www.linkedin.com/in/YourName>
- In “Additional Information” add customized links to your blogs or websites.
- Under “Privacy Settings,” make your profile as *public* as possible.
- Under “Network Updates,” list presentations you’re going to give or events you’ll attend.

Build your network

- Invite referral sources, clients, colleagues, college classmates and any source of new business to join your network.
- Add people who give you their business card, if they can be a referral source.
- If a news reporter calls you, get their email address and invite them to connect.
- Use LinkedIn to sift through your Outlook contacts and send them an invitation.
- Accept invitations from people you know, have met, or interacted with on LinkedIn.
- Add your LinkedIn Profile web address to your email signature.

Get active and build a reputation

- Contact happy clients and well-known colleagues and request that they write a recommendation for you. Within “Your Profile” there’s a handy “Request Recommendations” link. Write Recommendations for others in your network.
- Search “Groups” for industries and associations of clients, local city groups, and business networking groups that focus on your niche – and join multiple.
- Start a discussion within the group (and be viewed as a leader). Pick any topic in current events, issues your clients face, and topics you want to become known for.
- Comment on a discussion that is already underway. Contribute to the discussion from your professional perspective.
- If you can’t find the exact group you want, start a group and be its leader.
- Under “Network Updates,” in your Profile, add something new every week. It could be something you are doing, attending, or have read.
- Use the free add-on applications that add richness to your profile. You can use these “apps” to poll your network or group; to pull posts from your blog to your profile; to post documents, presentations, photos, videos and PowerPoint presentations; to add a Twitter feed; and to share your travel plans with those in your network.

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Ask and answer questions to highlight your expertise.

- Go to the “Answers” page and “Ask a Question.” Ask questions about topics or industries you are researching. Genuine requests for expertise generate the most responses.
- Search the active “Questions” by topic area and answer from your professional expertise. Good Answers often lead to new contacts.

Monitor and Meet your contacts

- Read the weekly email digest you get from LinkedIn, highlighting changes in the lives of your contacts. Be on the alert for people who have started or left jobs, because they can be a source of business. Even if someone has merely changed their photo, investigate and find out what really changed.
- Once a week, contact someone in your network you’d like to know better and meet them for coffee or lunch. Always try to bridge the gap from virtual to real world.
- Be outgoing and host a LinkedIn meet up in your city or at a conference.