16.18: LinkedIn

Figure 16.18.1: The LinkedIn logo *Adapted From LinkedIn, 2017*

Introduction and stats

LinkedIn is a professional social network. It has 433 million members in 200 countries around the world. More importantly, one in three professionals in the world has a LinkedIn account, and almost 50% of key decision makers use LinkedIn for business purposes. LinkedIn is also 277% more effective for lead generation than Facebook or Twitter (PerfectBoom, 2016). To access all the benefits of LinkedIn, you need to have a company presence. LinkedIn is used for building networks, improving credibility, and driving recruitment. LinkedIn can:

- Help your business to engage and connect with influential industry figures
- Boost search engine page rank
- Provide a host of data for market research
- Allow businesses to monitor prospects and customers
- Enable businesses to clarify what they stand for
- Track and learn more about the media covering your industry
- Assist in positioning your business as an industry thought leader
- Engage customers with LinkedIn hosted content.

(Karr, D. 2015)

Features

Company page

A company page helps LinkedIn members learn about your business, your brand, and any job opportunities in your company. A company page is a great starting point for developing a reputation as a leader or player in your industry.

Initially, company pages were viewed as HR landing pages, but they have evolved. They can help drive business results, increase awareness about your business and its products and services, and promote career opportunities. Your LinkedIn company page should be viewed as a supplement to your company website and should help to drive traffic to your website. These pages provide free marketing opportunities and can enhance the credibility of your company. Good copy on your page should incorporate your key phrases and key words to ensure your site is optimised for search engines.

Some key tips for a great company page include:

1. Highlight your business entities with a showcase page
2. Share engaging content regularly
3. Optimise for search engines using keywords
4. Target prospective candidates with a Careers tab
5. Use an eye-catching cover image to grab user attention (Edgecomb, 2016).

Figure 16.18.2: The Four Season Hotel's company page on LinkedIn uses a great image, and focuses on their achievements and their people rather than pushing the hotel. *Adapted From Impact, 2016*

Note

For more information on creating a quality company page see the following link: https:// www.forbes.com/sites/ williamarruda/2016/07/21/ how-to-create-acompelling-companypage-on-linkedin

Showcase pages

LinkedIn also has Showcase pages, which provide a way for companies to highlight their individual brands, specific products, or new initiatives. Showcase pages are an extension of Company pages. A dedicated page helps drive engagement, and allows businesses to share specific content with a targeted audience. LinkedIn users can now follow only the aspects of your business they are interested in. Showcase pages are designed to build relationships with relevant LinkedIn members, and LinkedIn suggests using Sponsored Content and Sponsored InMail for more campaign-based marketing efforts.

LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn Groups allows for your company to join with other professionals and businesses outside of your immediate circle of contacts. It broadens exposure and connects your business with others in your industry. It provides a platform for you to share industry expertise and establish your business as a thought leader. Participating in Group discussions also potentially attracts visitors to your company page.

Groups help extend the reach of your content and provide constructive feedback from relevant professionals. Groups share information about target audiences and provide market researchers with insights. It is important to join Groups that are relevant to your business and interests. Sharing company content on a Group increases traffic to your page and your website. To avoid being seen as overly promotional in Groups and only pushing your own agenda, engage in a courteous manner and share, comment and use the opportunity to create meaningful relationships.

Job postings

LinkedIn is often the first place top talent look for work, so it's important that your job vacancies are displayed and kept updated. It is also useful for HR to recruit new talent by looking at potential candidates using LinkedIn and asking them to apply for specific positions.

Advanced People search

The Advanced People search enables your business to network by seeing who your contacts know, and in turn connect with them directly. The power of LinkedIn lies in its ability to make new connections and relationships through existing ones, and using such opportunities to expand the business. Current stats say that 50% of B2B buyers use LinkedIn as a resource to inform purchasing decisions, while 76% of B2B buyers use recommendations from their professional networks for whom they wish to work with (Newberry, 2016).

LinkedIn Pulse

LinkedIn Pulse is a blog platform. Brands are not able to use it themselves, but by working with influencers, the platform can be leveraged for marketing.

Marketing and advertising on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great marketing tool in terms of generating awareness, understanding your target audience, making connections and building relationships. It also offers a range of advertising solutions. These include:

Note

For more information on advertising on LinkedIn see https:// business.linkedin.com/ marketing-solutions/ how-to-advertise-onlinkedin and the Social media advertising chapter.

- Sponsored content – boosting your content
- Sponsored InMail – deliver relevant content directly to your potential customer's LinkedIn mail boxes
- Text Ads – self-service advertising platform offering high quality leads within tight budgets. (LinkedIn, 2016)

LinkedIn Analytics

LinkedIn has its own native analytics service which provides a good amount of information on audience and engagement. It provides useful data on updates, reach and engagement.

'Updates' is a table showing the most recent updates, including:

- Previews of posts
- The date posted
- The audience the post was sent to
- Whether the content was sponsored or not
- The number of impressions to LinkedIn members
- The number of clicks your content received
- The number of interactions (likes, comments or shares)
- Any additional followers who were acquired due to the post
- Total engagement.

Additional graphs showing the reach of the post include the trend on the number of times updates were seen organically and through paid channels. Engagement is also illustrated on a graph to demonstrate engagement across organic and sponsored campaigns for various time lines (White, 2016b).

Other companies, like Quintly (www.quintly.com/linkedin-analytics) and simply measured (simplymeasured.com/linkedin-analytics) also offer detailed analysis of LinkedIn pages and their performance for your business.

LinkedIn Summary

For B2B marketing, LinkedIn is definitely the platform of choice. The unique targeting and search functionalities of the platform make it well suited to such marketing efforts. It also provides a lot of unique options for B2C marketers, and can be leveraged nicely for professional contacts and to gain acclaim within your industry.

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