

Stretch Your Professional Profile with LinkedIn

by Giselle Carson

Are you connected on [LinkedIn](#)? Do you tweet or have a blog? Do you use online videos to reach a larger audience? You probably answered yes to at least one of these questions, which means your competition probably has as well.

Social media is nothing new. [Facebook](#) has been around for nearly 10 years, [Twitter](#), seven and LinkedIn, eleven years. Everyone is in on the social media scene, whether their prerogative is purely for socializing or professional networking. It is more crucial than ever to stand out to your target audience.

The most widely utilized professional social media tool is no doubt LinkedIn. Many companies and individuals dip their toes in the social media pool for the first time by using LinkedIn. It can be very easy to set up your profile and hope that the right people stumble across it. So how do you stand out amidst the digital clutter to connect with your current and potential clients and grow your practice?

- **CREATE A PROFILE THAT IS 100% COMPLETE AND KEEP IT UPDATED.** You

should upload a current, professional picture to your profile, highlight your practice and list your affiliations, publications, education, and interests. In the summary section of your profile, use keywords that will enhance your visibility. Be creative with your profile headline and include more than attorney or lawyer. Make it interesting and memorable. Take advantage of the many options offered to personalize your profile to best meet your goals.

- **FIND CONTACTS AND REQUEST CONNECTIONS.** Start building your network by locating and connecting with colleagues, organization leaders, clients, prospective clients, and others. There are many ways to find connections based on your profile and contacts including importing your existing contacts' list and/or using the search box to find a person. Send a personal message with your connection request. Be cautious about who you invite and accept in your network. Unfortunately, some people take advantage of these networks and use them for aggressive self-promotion. The quality of your connections is more important than the quantity.

- **POST UNIQUE, VALUABLE AND INTERESTING UPDATES FREQUENTLY.** Your connections are going to look at your content and create an impression of your knowledge and value offerings based on your postings. Take advantage of the option to post articles, presentations to show your knowledge and services. Use relevant keywords that that will help search engines link to your page.
- **LINK YOUR PROFILE AND BROADEN YOUR EXPOSURE.** You can add links to your website, blog, and twitter. This provides another venue for potential clients to obtain more information about you and your practice.
- **STAY POSTED ON THE LATEST INFORMATION FROM YOUR BAR ASSOCIATION ABOUT ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING POSTS.** Rules regulating this content are changing based on the number of people using online social media as another way to market themselves.
- **SET A LIMIT TO THE TIME YOU DEVOTE TO THIS MEDIUM.** Social media should not replace your in-person relationship building efforts. It should only enhance those efforts. Schedule 15 to 30 minutes daily to post, comment

and monitor your social networks.

- **GET INVOLVED IN RELEVANT GROUP DISCUSSIONS.** LinkedIn provides forums to ask questions to the groups you belong. By engaging in the conversation, you have an opportunity to demonstrate and share your knowledge.
- **DON'T EXPECT IMMEDIATE RESULTS.** Social networking is a marathon not a sprint. It should be a long term commitment. You must be persistent and consistent at creating and providing meaningful content.
- **DON'T POST ANYTHING YOU WOULDN'T WANT THE WORLD TO KNOW.** Once the information goes public, it's out there and cataloged for an eternity.

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