

LinkedIn

Thanks to Jo(e) Ideas for Business who came and taught the IA Women's Network group all about LinkedIn, we are able to share with you some of the notes taken during the workshop. Nothing can substitute for the real thing, and I highly recommend these incredible teachers for any social media learning! They are multi-talented and offer many services. Without further ado, here are some insights gleaned from their course:

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a Low Energy - High Reward Resource...and it is Free!

It is becoming more and more powerful as people realize its potential value for their businesses. It is anticipated that someday it will be a paid service...so take advantage of it now while it is free!

Actually there is one level that requires money (gold "In") and then there is the free (blue "In"). Free is recommended since LinkedIn is not yet fully understood and not used to its maximum capacity by most people.

Your Profile

Before getting into the use of the system it is important to have a great profile...because as soon as you start expanding with LinkedIn people will become interested in you, and what will they see? You may want to toggle "off" for the "Notify Your Network" otherwise each and every change you make will send off a notification to all the people in your network...A bit embarrassing for you as you realize afterwards that twenty notifications just went out to each person on your entire network to look at your updated profile!

First and foremost you want people to see your name and what you do, so make it noticeable at **first glance**. People judge in just a few seconds whether they want to read more about you. You want to be a real person, because people connect with real people. LinkedIn is not just about businesses, professionals and selling, it is about

connecting with other people who just happen to be professionals like you, and might just want to use your services once they get to know you. Just like what Sam said during the September luncheon, you sell yourself first!

You want to make sure that what you say cannot be misunderstood...so be very clear. I am a Mental Health Counselor, so I wouldn't say "Diane Kinnear - Counselor" because there are many different kinds of counselors.

You want to say your location, so for me, Red Deer, Alberta. This advice is again, to help people connect with you and if they are from your area they will pay more attention...if they are not you may not benefit from being connected to them anyway, and it would help them to discriminate whether you would be a good connection for them. You would not say the name of your organization, especially if it is repetitive of what your title depicts (for me to say I am a Mental Health Counselor working at Life Review Counseling is redundant).

You definitely want a good picture of yourself, as pictures grab people's attention far quicker than words. Your picture should show you in your professional setting...unless you do something where a softer look would draw people to you in that profession (so not a picture of you at the beach if you're a lawyer, but if you rescue animals, it would be good to show a casual picture of you with a rescue animal). The picture should be of you smiling, and making eye contact with the camera...engaging your audience.

Current experience should include anything that is important to you, and may include more than one item.

IM = Instant Messenger and is an old system - ignore it.

You are given the opportunity to connect the LinkedIn with your business website...just make sure you add it to your contact info (right beside the hyper-link under your Profile editing tab).

Also, under contact info please be careful...this is a business media, so do you want people to be able to contact you at home? Some businesses maybe, but others definitely not. For me, this would include my business phone number, my website, and my e-mail address because these are all directly connected to my business. Some may

want to add Twitter, but ignore the We Chat, as it is again, an old system that never quite got off the ground.

So sometimes it may feel like the questions LinkedIn is asking don't seem relevant...remember that they are like any other organization and they may be phishing in order to better their own system. They may want to know everything about you, but be discriminating and only add in information that can benefit you and connect you to more people with whom you want to be connected.

Mainly you want to focus on adding information that tells people what you do, why you do what you do, and experiences that led you there. It is okay to be a real person and tell people your personal story as long as it is relevant to your business or can draw people to you as a person so that you can do business with them. People may not care that I spent 15 years as an administrator in the military because it has no relevance to my being a therapist, and they may not care that I love gardening and cooking and animals...unless I want to draw people to me who have had similar experiences.

The Experience Section is meant to be your resume, so whatever you would put on a resume you would add...if it would not look right on a resume then leave it off. Awards go here.

What to Share on LinkedIn

It is a judgement call what to share, but do not mistake LinkedIn for Facebook...they are similar but worlds apart. Don't put irrelevant personal stuff on there! Quotes relevant to what you do are good, though...as long as they are in good taste.

And pictures, pictures, and more pictures!!! Pictures get noticed. Scroll down the LinkedIn home page and notice where your eyes are drawn...to the pictures!

Very important, and a huge aha moment for me, was when Jo(e) explained that you should always write something with your pictures that uses words relating to your business, and name the jpeg in this manner also...Why? Because (of all the darn things) Google automatically searches everywhere on the internet, including LinkedIn, for words with pictures so they can direct people who are searching for something toward that topic (so your SEO ratings go up!) For me, now that I know about this fascinating

little tidbit, I would post a picture and say something about depression, anxiety, anger management, or other counseling-related topics, knowing that Google will find my words and direct people to me quicker when they Google any of these topics! Pay for Google Ads? Why bother?! Here we have a free method of increasing our standing with Google! (This one tip made the whole evening worthwhile for me!)

And this golden nugget goes for Facebook and other social medias, too, so make sure you are putting the right words with your pics, and labeling them to bring people to you! Way better than going out there and searching for customers/clients!

There are two options for writing on your timeline: Share an Update and Publish a Post. The difference is that published posts show up on other people's LinkedIn accounts as a red number in the top right corner...so they get noticed. They are also permanent on their LinkedIn account until they decide to delete them, so they can go back to them easily if they want to. The shared update goes on their timeline and they need to scroll down their posts in order to find it. You want to keep your shared updates short and sweet, and if at all possible you want to add a picture...when scrolling down the screen pictures grab you, while words just get passed by. The shared updates are really intended to be informational or educational for the recipients.

A good rule of thumb is to attend to your LinkedIn account at least twice a week and put out posts. It is advisable to use layman's terms, and try not to be all business or ultra-professional. The objective is to sell yourself ...without appearing to be trying to sell yourself.

You can help people to connect with you from other medias by copying and pasting your hyper-link, found underneath your picture under the Profile tab. When you tell people to connect with you, just paste your hyper-link onto the other media with a note asking the other person to connect with you...by clicking on it they are taken directly to your LinkedIn home page. Any way you can make connecting easier is beneficial! Super easy!

The easiest "cold call" you will ever make: Simply "like" other people's posts. Be genuine, and really only click on the ones you do like, but it is a real compliment and will warm them up toward you.

Another fabulous tip from Jo(e) was to offer expert advice in your area of expertise. By giving away just a tidbit of information you are giving people something valuable and they not only appreciate it, but value you more highly as being an expert in that field...they will be more likely to come to you should they have a need in the future with which you may be able to help them.

Mention mentors and people who have helped you to get where you are. Not only are you complimenting and giving due recognition to whom it is deserved, but you are aligning yourself with that person and their level of competency. In short it helps to establish you as an expert in your field.

Another great tip from Jo(e) was to directly bring the person about whom you are speaking into your post by adding an @ sign in front of their name while writing the post. Their name highlights and the post automatically goes to them. You can then remove their last name if you wish to make it more personal and it still recognizes them and goes on their timeline.

If you are going to try to get people to go to a link it is best to put a personal comment before you add in the link. Personal comments get noticed more, and bring the person closer to you so they will be more likely to click on your link. Always remember that professionals are people just like you!

Do not openly try to sell your product or service. Soliciting is not what LinkedIn is intended for, and may even make people angry enough to sue you. Subtlety is the aim of the LinkedIn game!

Social media is more about your target audience than it is about you.

There were MANY MORE tips and great teaching aids that Jo(e) told us, but it would not be fair to them for me to give it all away. This article was just the tip of the iceberg! They were fabulous and there is no substitute for actually being there and learning this stuff hands-on. I appreciate all that Jo(e) Ideas for Business taught me, and would highly recommend them to you.

Notes taken by Diane Kinnear, Chairperson of IA Women's Network