



EXPLOITING LINKED-IN TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS

Linked-in is essentially Face Book for business and with a little work you can soon be using it to driving traffic to your web site. Owner of www.BusinessSmiths.co.uk and small business expert Simon Ellingworth explains how it can work for you.

Our objective is to showcase our expertise, build brand awareness and drive traffic to our web site and it's FREE business resources without physical spend. We successfully use Linked-in to achieve this and our record result was over 500 hits in a single day having spent only an hour. So, lets start with the basics:

- 1) You need to create a well written profile for you and your business, ideally include a photograph which is professional, but friendly.
- 2) People do judge you by the number of connections so exploit your existing contacts and get connected. Don't get carried away as a dozen is enough to make you look selective.
- 3) Consider starting your own group which can include your customers and suppliers, but only do this if you are disciplined to invest regular time growing it and posting to it. If you plan to drive people to your web site, I prefer to capture them their on our newsletter subscription.
- 4) You need to find a number of appropriate groups which have a reasonable number of subscribers who are actively posting. You can soon see this by simply visiting the groups.

The group search facility on Linked-in is shockingly bad, the good news is that we have a link to separate search facility on our website, checkout no. 14 of our FREE business resources at http://www.businesssmiths.co.uk/resources-brand_building

The golden rule is to avoid blatant advertising or self promotion, it will soon alienate fellow users and group moderators.

There are opportunities to start dialogue and even offer your services by spending time responding to discussions in each group, but this can be time consuming. If you can offer advice, tips or generally share your expertise and most importantly make it relevant to the group you'll soon catch people's interest.

Don't forget the objective. If you want to drive people to your web site, don't post a discussion for some FREE software you think would be useful to your audience with a link directly to it. You need to drive traffic to your site and when they get their, they need to find something of both relevance and value.

I highly recommend that you use Google Analytics (click here for a link to a FREE article about doing so) you'll be able to easily see the traffic generated from your Linked-In activities and other sources.

One additional benefit is you can see the geographical origin of your traffic. We've started drawing traffic from the US and Canada, so we now have an opportunity to make our offering relevant to a new market.

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