

3 Steps to Being Taken Seriously on LinkedIn

LinkedIn came a little late to the party with their news feed. The Facebook-style, personalized news feed didn't show up on LinkedIn until about 8 months ago (years after Twitter and Facebook were letting users push updates ad infinitum). This may have been for good reason, as LinkedIn is a different type of social network more geared toward professional networking and communication.

For one reason or another, the LinkedIn timeline seems to have become a little chaotic. Not so much because people are actively posting lots of different things on there, but because of automation, especially with respect to Twitter.

If you want to keep a high quality of content on your LinkedIn stream, there aren't any content filters or content grouping algorithms (e.g., Facebook's "Chris Boivin and 5 other people shared a link..." content grouping feature that keeps you from seeing the same video of the sneezing baby panda 6 times on the page). All you can do is leave people on, or hide them. Here are three quick and easy steps to avoid being hidden or ignored:

(1) Take control of Twitter

In an attempt to spread the Twitter brand and hallmarks (hashtags (#), short links (t.co), @replies) throughout the ether, Twitter lets users automatically copy their tweets to LinkedIn. How great, right? What a time saver! Well, if you look at LinkedIn timelines, you'll see that people (not you, right?) might have forgotten that their tweets are going there. Or that EVERY ONE of their tweets are going there. And that's ALL that they're sending there.

When on LinkedIn, you are usually in a business/networking frame of mind, so endless streams of retweeted clever quips, movie theatre check-ins, aged-looking photos of lunches, etc. seem to interrupt the LinkedIn news feed. And if that's all that you're sending there, you're probably going to be hidden. (Furthermore when you port your tweets to LinkedIn, only those that have Twitter accounts can respond. Generally [there are fewer social networkers on Twitter than LinkedIn](#), so you're setting yourself up for a dead feedback loop.)

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The #in and #li hashtags to the rescue! If your tweets are not private, you can link your Twitter and LinkedIn accounts but ONLY send things to LinkedIn by adding the #in or #li hashtag to the tweet. [Click here to link your accounts](#) and make sure you keep the "Send only those tweets with the hashtag #li or #in to LinkedIn" checked. Now that's cool! And responsible. And will keep you on the news feed.

(2) Reconsider "Bullhorn Reach" and other recruiter automation services

There are many different automation feed services out there today. People are busy and trying to get the most out of their social media presence. There are two problems with these services.

First, they're not perfect. They often post and repost the same content at different times of the day in order to keep them in front of readers at "opportune" times. That can be noisy and frustrating - I see a post about a job, I get excited, but I see that it's the same job that I've already seen 5 times (the job that I'm not qualified for or interested in). Grr.

Second, they eliminate the humanity of social media. There are dozens of job search sites out there. If I want to see listings, I'll go to indeed.com or look on LinkedIn's job listings. If someone has a job that they're looking to fill, I'd much rather they put out the call in a genuine status update on LinkedIn, thereby inviting me to start a conversation. Posting one after another update from the same posting service is distracting and it seems to send a message like "Hey, you're not important enough for me to take a few seconds and write my own updates for, but I still want you to trust your career success with me!" That doesn't fly.

Take the time to talk with people on LinkedIn. Write a quick update to let people know you're looking for someone with a certain skill or that you're looking to help people find their next career opportunity. The Internet should not be an excuse to replace humanity with robotic interactions. It's "social" media for a reason.

(3) Participate - don't precipitate - in LinkedIn groups

LinkedIn Groups are wonderful vehicles for meeting others with the same professional or social interests, discussing issues, solving problems, doing research and learning about events. Posting and responding in these forums is one of the best ways to truly enjoy LinkedIn and it also helps keep you high in LinkedIn's search and display algorithms (you'll show up more in people's searches and more often be recommended as a connection for others who might know you). For those that receive email updates about group activity, your name will be in front of them more often as well.

That's all well and good, but be careful about dominating groups, reposting events and announcements, and posting off-topic content. You may not think people are paying attention, but when your name comes up over and over again posting innocuous open questions in groups

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(especially in more than one group), or your posting for an event shows up every other post, and especially when you post self-serving articles (like this one ;-)) in groups that are specifically for other topics, you stick out like a sore thumb. And then, people start to skip right past your posts, and you even might be filtered out by group administrators (and in my opinion, the best groups are the ones that have someone managing posts - not necessarily approving every post, but paying attention to group member activity and putting controls in place where possible).

Use good judgement when posting and respect group parameters (stick to the group topic/area of interest, try to match the rate or volume of postings in the particular group, and give more than you take (i.e., respond to other participants more than you post your own things)).

Hopefully, these observations ring true and some of the guidelines I'm suggesting make you a more productive and valuable LinkedIn member, leading to more quality interactions, strong relationships and more useful information as you navigate the network.

Thanks for listening! Look forward to hearing your feedback!