How to Create a Step-by-Step LinkedIn Marketing Strategy for Your Business

By Josh Turner
Executive Summary

LinkedIn provides a virtually limitless pool of prospects for you to tap into. But without a guide to walk you through the process, it can be challenging to effectively tap into this database. This step-by-step guide walks you through exactly what you need to know to maximize the marketing and sales efforts for your business on LinkedIn.

There are a lot of moving parts within LinkedIn, but it doesn't have to be intimidating. This step-by-step manual will walk you through each component one at a time. By the end, you’ll have a true framework for putting a powerful LinkedIn marketing plan into action.

The overall framework involves the following:

- Having a clear picture of who it is you are targeting (we call this your Prospect Profile).
- Understanding the LinkedIn tactics at your disposal.
- Understanding which of these tactics are most likely to effectively reach your prospects, and are at the same time within your means.
- Determining which to focus on first.
- Building a process around the execution of these tactics.
- Knowing what success looks like, and where it’s coming from, so you can refine your process.

This primer is for business owners, sales professionals, marketing managers, entrepreneurs and anybody who is looking to leverage LinkedIn for marketing and sales objectives. In it, you'll get best practices for each of the most impactful tactics, with examples you can put to use right away.

This isn't your typical hyperbole. It's based on hard work and experience. Further, Josh Turner's company actually works these systems and strategies every day on behalf of their clients.

They walk the walk, and this guide will show you how to do the same within LinkedIn.

Here's a sampling of what people have had to say about this tutorial:

"I have listened to so many entrepreneurial leaders talk about their marketing strategies, but none had hit home like you have."

"I have utilized many of your points already with my sales team."

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By Josh Turner

Founder, LinkedSelling.com and LinkedUniversity.com

Introduction

On a recent hiking trip to the Smoky Mountains a couple weeks back, I had a simple choice to make.

Which way to go?

Luckily this was an easy decision. We didn't want our 5 mile hike to turn into 10. The trail was well marked, and we stuck to the plan.

Henwallow Falls was just around the corner.

But what happens when the trail's not so well marked? In business, marketing and sales, rarely is the path clear. We have many choices competing for our attention, energy, and resources.

And that brings me to a question that a friend recently asked me....

"How do I create a LinkedIn step-by-step strategy that I can enact a bit at a time?"

That's a trail that's certainly NOT well marked. And it's a question that cannot be answered quickly.

There are a lot of moving parts here, and I'm going to walk you through each of them one at a time. By the end, you'll have a true framework for putting a powerful LinkedIn marketing plan into action.

The overall framework involves the following:

• Having a clear picture of who it is you are targeting (we call this your Prospect Profile).
• Understanding the LinkedIn tactics at your disposal.
Understanding which of these tactics are most likely to effectively reach your prospects, and are at the same time within your means. Determining which to focus on first.

Building a process around the execution of these tactics.

Knowing what success looks like, and where it’s coming from, so you can refine your process.

I’m going to share with you best practices for each of these areas, with examples you can put to use right away.

Ready?

Let’s jump right in.

*Forming a clear picture of your ideal prospect.*

This is one of the most important components of putting your plan in place.

*Having a clear picture of who it is that you are targeting. We call this your Prospect Profile.*

In [Linked University](#), we have an entire training lesson on this topic. I’m going to give you the nuts and bolts of it here.

*Working Within The Parameters*

LinkedIn gives you many criteria by which you can identify prospects, but these criteria are not endless. The most valuable search tool LinkedIn gives you is the Advanced People Search.

Within the Advanced People search, you can discover prospects via the following criteria:

- Keywords that you come up with.
- Location including country and zip code. (Hint: Once you advance to the results page, you can filter for specific cities.)
- Titles.
- Company names.
- Schools attended.
- Industry.
• LinkedIn Groups They Belong To (as long as you are in the same group)
• Relationship (i.e. Degrees of Connection)
• Language
• Company Size
• Seniority Levels
• Interested In (Things that people indicate they are interested in, on their profile)
• Fortune level companies (If you are aiming at the big dogs)
• Open Link

If you don’t have an understanding of how you can use the system to search for people, then you won’t have a very good time at mining the system for great prospects. Spend some time playing with the Advanced People Search and figuring out what each criteria means.

From there, develop a one page cheat sheet that you can refer to on an ongoing basis. This cheat sheet will include the key search criteria that will help you uncover the most relevant prospects.

I’m going to use my business LinkedSelling.com as an example. Click here to take a look at a Prospect Profile cheat sheet I’ve developed for my business.

You can see that we’re working within the parameters that LinkedIn offers, but only those that are relevant.

**About Focus**

Of course, we work with clients who have less than 10 people. And we’ve done work with companies with more than 1,000. But they’re the exception.

By focusing more precisely on the kinds of companies that are most likely to be a good fit, our efforts will yield better results.

Think about this for your business too. In your case, maybe it’s not an “employee size” focus. Maybe it’s drilling down into a handful of industries that you do your absolute best work in.

Or maybe it’s a laser focus on CXO level decision makers. Often times, it’s a more precise geographic focus that will yield great results...

**About Geographical Targeting**
Too many people try to go too broad with their prospecting efforts. I’m not entirely comfortable being as broad as I am (US, UK, Australia, Canada), but it’s working for us.

If you want to target the entire globe, set Location to “anywhere.”

If you are focused more regionally or locally, obviously you want this to be a major part of your criteria via zip code filters.

**Finding the Right Groups to Target**

Being in the RIGHT groups is possibly the single most important thing you can do. Too many people join groups that have to do with their subject matter expertise.

For example, an SEO consultant might be a part of all sorts of SEO and online marketing groups.

But if that’s not where their prospects and potential clients hang out, they’re missing out. While there are certainly great reasons to make yourself known within subject matter groups, I’d much rather stay away from the competition…and focus on being where my prospects are.

Knowing that you can only be a member of 50 groups, you have to pick those that will give you the most bang for your buck. Certainly you can leave groups that don’t get you results, but you have to start somewhere.

There are generally two ways to identify the groups you should take part in:

1. Search the groups directory.
2. Review profiles of prospects you know you want to do business with, to see what groups they are a part of.

I generally try to find the groups that will have the most relevant prospects. They are usually fairly large groups. Once you find a group that seems like a good fit, take a look at the group statistics. Even for closed groups, you can get to this in the right sidebar.
Now, take a look at the demographics area within the group’s statistics.

For one group I’m assessing, with a total of about 39,000 members...here are the important things:

![Graph showing seniority levels](image)

*At least 76% of the people in this group fit the seniority level that I’m looking for.*

![Graph showing function distribution](image)

*At least 43% of the group members are in Marketing, Sales or Business Development.*
I can infer that this group contains somewhere in the ballpark of 12,000+ prospects that fit my prospect profile. I can get a lot of mileage out of that, seems like a great group for me to join.

And that’s the process. Find a bunch of groups like that, and you’ll suddenly have a virtually limitless pool of prospects within your reach.

Does This Seem Really Basic?

Hopefully it does, because it is. This is an important part of the foundation.

Understanding who your prospects are, and then coming up with your Prospect Profile. Don’t overlook it.

If you haven’t done it yet, take a couple hours and put it together. You will see through the rest of this guide how many times we refer back to it.

**Understanding the LinkedIn tactics at your disposal.**

Now it’s time to review the different LinkedIn tactics at your disposal.

This isn’t an exhaustive list.

Better, it’s a list including the major tactics that can be expected to get the best bang for your buck. In no particular order.

**Direct Outreach to Prospects**

We’re defining prospects here as anybody you are not connected to. What this entails is messaging these people, with some sort of a pitch or request for a phone call.

For every business, the approach will differ. But, no matter what business you are in, if you do it right the results will be the same. Consistent, predictable call volume.

The actual process of getting it done involves a) finding your prospects b) utilizing LinkedIn to send them messages.
It takes quantity to make this work. It’s a numbers game.

**Personal Messaging Campaign to 1st Degree Contacts**

“I have all these connections. Now what?” This is a common question. One way to leverage your most important connections is to stay in front of them through a personal messaging campaign.

This involves a) designing a campaign to drip content to your connections b) sending personal messages in mass.

Again, this is an approach that takes a real commitment and time investment. But assuming your message is on point, it is a proven method for converting connections to lead.

**Status Updates**

Let’s be honest. Not that many people are sitting in front of their computers all day reviewing their LinkedIn feed. People pop in and out, sometimes daily, sometimes less.

If you want your name to stay front and center, for those rare times when they are looking at their feed...you need to be consistent.

The best way to do that is via automation. Using various social media tools, you can set up and schedule status updates weeks in advance.

It’s not the sort of thing that generates a flood of leads, but it will keep you top-of-mind with your connections...and that’s worth a lot.

**Optimizing Your Profile**

More and more, I’m finding this whole “profile optimization” thing to be less and less meaningful and effective. *At least in the sense that most think of it.*

It’s something you should do, but it’s the kind of thing that will yield a lead every once in a while...not regularly (contrary to what some of the gurus out there are saying).

Optimizing your profile generally refers to getting the right keywords in the right places, within your profile, so that you rank highly for these terms in a LinkedIn people search. It doesn’t take much effort to rank well for keywords you target.

What matters even more, however, is that your profile be optimized for conversion. This isn’t about keywords. It’s about converting profile views into a next step.
That could be a call, an email signup, a download of a report...you name it. Important? You bet. ([For a free 10-part video series on “profile optimization” click here.](#))

**Content Distribution into LinkedIn Groups**

If you or your company has a blog or produces any sort of content (videos, white papers, reports, webinars, articles, podcasts, etc.) then you need to be pushing this content into relevant LinkedIn groups.

The key word is *relevant*. If your content is all about Flux Capacitors, then it probably doesn’t make sense to distribute it into groups about B2B Marketing. Instead, you should be focused on getting this content into groups about time machines, the time machine industry, people who care about time machines, etc.

If you’re sharing into relevant groups, it will drive thousands of new visits to your site.

And if your site is well structured to capture leads from these interested parties, it will move the needle.

**Direct Engagement in Groups**

This is about more than one-way content distribution. This is about getting involved in a handful of groups that really matter to your business, and building relationships.

It requires commenting on posts, following those who you wish to keep tabs on, reaching out to people personally, and positioning yourself as an expert resource.

Often, people say to me: “I just don’t have time to do LinkedIn right. It takes too much time to be reading things and commenting on things.” What they are talking about is this one strategy, engaging with prospects in groups.

And they’re right, it takes a lot of time but is a true way to build lasting business relationships.

**Building Your Own Group**

This is right up there with the best of them, in terms of ROI.

Develop a community that is a valuable resource for your prospects, grow it, and moderate effectively so people keep coming back. Do that, and people will see you as a real leader and the go-to guy for whatever you do.
Yet this is one of the most time intensive tactics that LinkedIn offers. On top of that, most people mess it up and create groups that are overly promotional and turn people off.

It takes a bit of a commitment to learning how to do it the right way, in addition to purely having the time to do it (unless you have the budget to outsource), but if you can clear the hurdles there’s a big payoff.

**Endorsements / Recommendation Solicitations**

Having a lot of recommendations and endorsements is certainly a good thing. When a prospect looks at your profile, you want them to see all of the great things others have to say about you.

Further, it seems clear that LinkedIn’s search algorithm will eventually take more into account than simple keyword stuffing. Endorsements will probably weigh heavily into the next generation search, so it’s good to get them.

All that said, I still put these tactics in with profile optimization. You’re not going to set the world on fire by focusing on these sorts of “low hanging fruit” tactics. Some smart people are really devoting a lot of time to gathering tons of endorsements….and I don’t want to discount these efforts, so take my opinion for what it is worth.

**Build Expert Status in LinkedIn Answers**

Here’s how this works.

1. You answer a ton of questions every day within LinkedIn Answers.
2. Sometimes your answers are voted as the “Best Answer.”
3. You end up getting enough “Best Answers” that you become a Top Expert, either overall or in a specific category.

Becoming a Top Expert has some potentially big benefits. It’s a serious credential, and exposes you to millions.

What’s it take to get there? Top Experts are typically answering between 200-500 questions per week.

**Build / Manage a Company Page**

Company pages are very similar to facebook pages. They’re linear. You post updates, and you hope people see them. You can target the updates to specific followers, but that doesn’t mean they will see them.
Having a company page is definitely something you should do. Any credible business should have one. Prospects may look to it as a sign of legitimacy. They’re a good part of your foundation.

Build it and take time once a month to set up your updates using hootsuite or another social media automation program. But if you’re wondering where to invest ongoing time to position and grow your brand within LinkedIn, groups are where it’s at...hands down.

**How to Approach These Tactics?**

I’ve outlined the 10 most common tactics and marketing approaches that you can take advantage of within LinkedIn. Try to do them all, and you’ll do none of them well.

The key is to focus on those that can make the biggest impact, within your time and resource constraints, and then move on to the next.

Once you master one approach, you’ll be in a position to determine what other steps you can take to automate or downsource to a virtual assistant or admin staff.

But, where to start?

*Which tactics are effective AND within your means?*

Now it’s time to build on everything we’ve discussed so far, and to do this I’m sharing with you a guideline of sorts.

It ranks the following, for each of the 10 major tactics we talked about last week:

- **Ease of Implementation** – This refers to the level of ease with which you can get things off the ground.
- **Learning Curve** – This refers to the complexity of the tactic. Generally speaking, the more moving parts the higher the learning curve.
- **Ease in Training an Assistant** – This ranks how easy/difficult it is to downsource a given tactic to a virtual assistant or admin staff.
- **Time Required** – This ranks the time required to effectively execute a given tactic.
- **ROI** – Based on our experience, the return you can expect on a given tactic.
- **Setup Time** – The amount of time required to get things set up.
- **Ongoing Monthly Commitment** – The estimated amount of time you can expect to commit to a given tactic.
Some of this is subjective. For example, how am I to really say whether the ROI of Direct Outreach to Prospects should be scored higher than Building Your Own Group? That’s a tough one. But, what’s not tough is Group Building versus Profile Optimization. That’s clear...building your own group wins hands down.

While there are some close calls...overall you will find this to be a valuable tool in mapping out your game plan.

What can be gathered from this information?

For starters, it’s clear that the highest ROI tactics are also those that are the most difficult to implement.

But are you really surprised? You know what they say about the things that are worth having.

Whether you are part of a mammoth company, or you’re on your own, here’s one thing we all have in common:

You can’t take on everything at once and expect for it all to work really well.

I always tell new Linked University members that they should focus on a couple new tactics a month. FOCUS on those that are both feasible and have a good prospect for providing ROI, master them, systematize them and automate/downsource them, and then move on to the next tactic(s).

After a few months, you’ll have 5 or 6 solid tactics in play and things will really be taking off.

**Determining which tactics to focus on first.**

Let’s talk now about determining which tactic(s) to focus on first and how to prioritize. There is a rhyme and reason, and there are certainly some things that everybody should put in place first.

But after this “foundation” the path isn’t the same for everybody.

Be sure to refer to the Tactics Worksheet.

No matter who you are...there are a few things you should do first, regardless.
The Foundation

There are 4 things we recommend everybody put in place right away.

1. Optimize Your Profile
2. Build a Company Page
3. Automate Status Updates
4. Install the LinkedIn Share Button on Your Blog

Why are these so essential? They’re really the backbone of your presence. Without a nice looking profile, optimized to convert views into leads...people will think you’re a goof ball.

Without a company page, some might wonder if your business is here to stay.

Without posting regular status updates, you’ll still survive. But it’s so easy to automate, I don’t know why you wouldn’t. Using hootsuite, I set up 3-4 daily updates all weeks in advance. Click here for more on hootsuite.

And without the LinkedIn share button on your site/blog, you are REALLY doing yourself a disservice. Take the time to get it installed, and you’ll be able to share your best content into the most relevant groups with just a few clicks.

Everybody should do these 4 things. Put some time on your calendar, and knock one out per week...within 4 weeks you will be down to a much shorter list. Only 6 tactics to choose from.

Tackling the Advanced Tactics

Now return to the Tactics Worksheet, and think realistically about how much time you can put toward your LinkedIn marketing efforts.

Then, pick the tactics that have the highest ROI within your time constraints. But don’t stop there.

Also be sure to take into consideration your aptitude for these things. Don’t try and tackle the most complex tactic right away, if you generally like to really take your time with new technologies.

If you’re being honest with yourself, now you should have a few tactics to focus on.

Work on 1 or 2 at a time, and within a few months you’ll have a real system on your hands for generating consistent results.
Building a process around the execution of these tactics.

Without a process, you’ll spend twice as much time and be constantly reinventing the wheel.

This is how you can keep it manageable.

Instead of talking in vague jargon, I’m going to discuss each of the 10 tactics from the Tactics Worksheet and what you can do to establish processes around each of them.

**Building Your Own Group**

- Create content calendar weeks ahead of time.
- Work on group promotion in scheduled blocks of time.
- Have a set time each day that you moderate the group.
- Find leaders in your space to attract as managers/moderators.

**Direct Outreach to Prospects**

- Utilize saved searches.
- Develop scripts ahead of time and A/B test.
- Track your prospects in a spreadsheet.

**Direct Engagement in Groups**

- Focus on a small number (3-5 groups)
- Find key players and prospects, and follow them.
- Focus your engagement on the people that matter.

**Personal Message Campaign**

- Develop scripts for your campaign well ahead of time.
- Track who they are being sent to.
- Track responses

**Distribute Your Content Into Groups**

- Use the LinkedIn Share Button
- Don’t waste time sharing into groups your content is not a fit for.
- Share religiously, and follow up on all comments.

**Build Expert Status in LinkedIn Answers**
• Utilize the RSS feeds to more easily find questions that apply to you.
• Set time aside each day to answer at least 10 questions.

Build a Company Page

• Automate updates through hootsuite.
• Leverage other social properties and LinkedIn tactics to grow followers.

Status Updates

• Automate updates through hootsuite.
• Build schedule of updates once a month.

Optimizing Your Profile

• Be sure to update periodically to reflect your latest offerings.

Endorsements/Recommendations

• Set time aside periodically to give lots of them, and you will in turn receive.

The last couple don’t have a whole lot of process tricks involved…it’s just a matter of doing it. And while that’s largely the case with most of these things (Just get the work done!), there are clearly a number of things that can be done to speed things up.

These are just some of the strategies we employ to make LinkedIn marketing as efficient as possible. There are a lot more inside our advanced training at Linked University.

Process is important.

What my company does for clients is “Systematically building relationships to move cold prospects to warm leads.” Notice I didn’t say “Randomly spewing content all over the place.”

I said “Systematically.”

That’s because it’s all part of a process to do it in mass. You can’t have a genuine personal relationship with 3,000 or 20,000 people…it’s literally impossible.

But, you can leverage systems like LinkedIn to position yourself in a way that people come to know, like and trust you. And then you’ve won.
Knowing what success looks like.

This entire guide started with a question/request from a friend.

“I don’t know how to create a LinkedIn step-by-step strategy that I can enact a bit at a time. Maybe this is what I’m to learn in LinkedIn University. An article or blog about what you offer to the person who is ready to use this media but doesn’t know how to not get overwhelmed by the possible ways to start would be great!”

I believe this guide has greatly answered that question.

Now that you have a real framework for building a step-by-step strategy, you can’t overlook the end goal.

So what does success look like?

It’s important to understand the answer to this question.

Success can come in many forms, and too often people look to “sales” as the only metric. You need to think more holistically than that.

Here’s what success looks like with a well-rounded strategy.

- Consistent increase in traffic to your site.
- Increasing profile views.
- More email signups for your special reports, webinars, etc.
- Increasing 1st degree connections.
- More people signing up for and attending your events.
- Growth of your LinkedIn group.
- Growth of your email list.
- More press and speaking opportunities.
- Leads.
- Sales.

There are probably a few more. You need to prioritize them and be sure that what you are doing is working.

If traffic isn’t increasing, then something needs to be adjusted. Maybe you are in the wrong groups, or maybe there is something about the way you are posting/sharing content that isn’t encouraging clicks.
If your email list isn’t growing, why? Are you making your offers a focal point of your efforts? Are you getting them in front of the right people? Or, possibly, are you being overly promotional and turning people off?

If you’re not generating leads, it could be any number of reasons. Your LinkedIn marketing mix may need to be adjusted, but you also need a holistic, well balanced position across multiple platforms to get the most out of your LinkedIn efforts. (For more on that: The Truth About LinkedIn Marketing)

If you do not measure, then you cannot manage.

If you’re just pushing messages and content around, but you don’t know your numbers, then how can you know whether things are working or not?

Develop goals for a handful of metrics that you can manage. Review them every couple weeks, and track your progress.

There are more sophisticated ways to do this, such as integrating Google Analytics and CRM along with link tracking and landing pages, but start with a simple spreadsheet and take a few minutes to update it twice a month.

If there is anything most successful businesses have in common, it’s that they know their numbers.

That said, I have yet to meet a person who followed through on everything I’ve outlined in this series and not seen tremendous results...whether they are diligently monitoring the numbers or not.

It’s true, you have to know how to focus.

Now you have a much better game plan for systematically focusing on the LinkedIn tactics that will get you big results.

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