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## Introduction

According to PushingSocial.com, "Stubborn 'community managers' will spend 2012 searching for the link between engagement (in social media) and profit. The good news is that in 2013 they will find it."

This year has been all about the power of social networking -- specifically the "Big Four": Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest... and LinkedIn. Today we're going to focus on LinkedIn, because although as much as some people avoiding using it, LinkedIn has made a lot of improvements and has added some excellent new features, such as company pages (more on that later).

So let's dispel some common myths and take a look at some of the unique ways it can help you build your business.



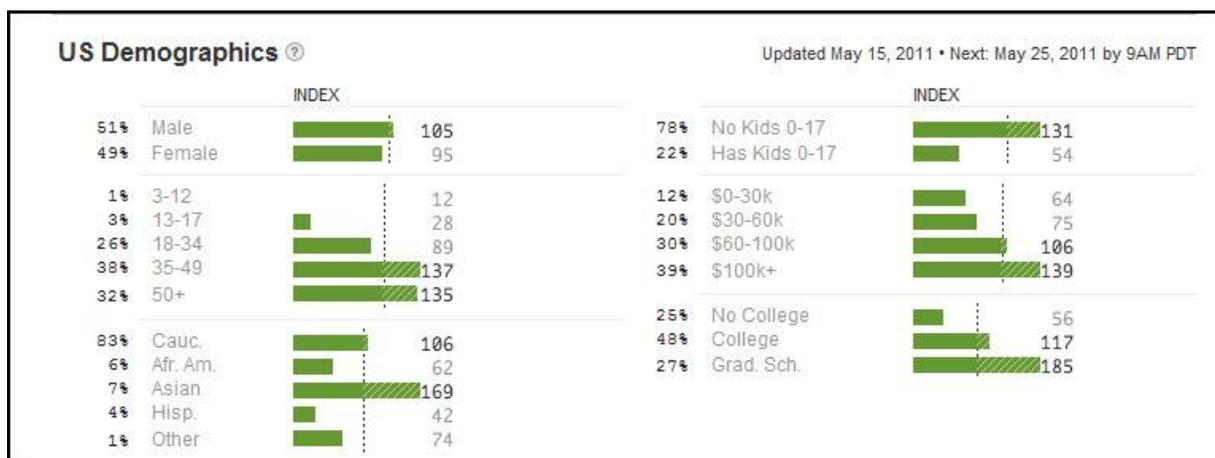
## What Is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a social network, just like Facebook or Twitter. However, the emphasis with LinkedIn is (or was for the most part) on the "network" rather than the "social".

It used to be thought of as a place where professional, post-graduate males between 28-40 posted résumés or CV's on the net, but with social networks realizing they're at the crest of power, with the phenomenon of social search posing a serious threat to Google and its algorithms, that has changed.

For instance, LinkedIn's referrals to Facebook pages are now up by 1000%, while Twitter's have tumbled. LinkedIn has been rolling out TONS of new features making it more stream-lined with better functionality.

Here's a look at the new, broad demographic for LinkedIn, courtesy of Quantcast.com:





The areas to concentrate on here are those parts of the green bars extending beyond the dotted, vertical lines: This represents the segment of population visiting the site that is "over indexed", meaning that as a percentage per hundred visitors, it's higher than the norm.

So today's strongest LinkedIn demographic looks as follows:

- Male
- 35-50 years old
- Asian and Caucasian
- Childless
- Earning between \$60-100k
- Earning over 100k
- College or Grad School

On the surface, scanning the list above seems to say that not much has changed: But when you see how closely the female segment is gaining on the male (49% female-51% male), there seems to be a definite shift (which is only going to increase). College graduates (a minority before) are also now well-represented and over indexed.

If you are a 28 year old Hispanic female with two children, does this mean you should ignore this broad demographic? Definitely not! It means that you'll keep the focus professional and, well, focused. LinkedIn is still your business card, résumé or CV on the net... only now it is so much more, with the most vocal and visible group not fitting



Quantcast's broad demographic but often forming the strongest presence you'll connect with, depending on your contact list.

Here's the beauty of LinkedIn: **You set your own demographic** by importing contacts from or linking:

- Your email address book
- Twitter
- Your blog

In addition, LinkedIn now has some exceptionally powerful features it never had before -- one of them unique. This particular feature allows you to:

- Post "recommendations" (i.e. testimonials) for your network contacts
- Allow them to post recommendations about you
- They have also now added "**endorsements**" which is a more lightweight way to recommend people and specifically, their skills. When you click on a person's profile, you'll be given a list from which to choose.

Other's viewing your profile will be able to see for which skills you have been endorsed. It's a cross between a Facebook "like" and a +1 on Klout.

LinkedIn Groups also provides a decided advantage in building and refining your own personal demographic. You can join or even start a group very easily, connecting with



like-minded industry professionals who are not yet in your address book. By doing this, you are connecting with your target niche.

This is especially advantageous if you have a B2B (business-to-business) service business: You can pick up permanent jobs or land projects with astonishing ease. But remember, if you join a group, you should maintain a presence in it and show some activity or you'll never be noticed. You'll want to post new relevant content on a daily basis so be careful of the number of groups that you join. (Some people disagree with me about the amount of groups you join. They say: "the more the better" because of the added exposure. I say that it does nothing to join a group and not participate in it.



## How to Use It

LinkedIn is best used for networking. Not only can you find clients if you're a B2B service, you can also make yourself known to potential JV partners -- as well as help yourself to a host of high-end insider tips and leads.

LinkedIn operates by allowing you to post the following:

- Your Profile
- Your Profile Photo
- Your Résumé or CV
- A Summary (the equivalent of a "Resource Box" in article marketing)
- A link to your blog (or blogs) that will include snippets of your last few postings (found in the applications tab).

You can also:

- Join groups
- Ask for recommendations
- SEO-optimize your LinkedIn URL
- SEO-optimize your keywords in your Summary section
- Add your own, custom anchor text to your links
- Answer member questions as an instant "expert"



- Searching by Companies you may have worked for or currently do business with
- Use their application feature to post polls, BoxNet files, SlideShare your Amazon Reading list or to choose one or more several others featured .

**Take time to set up your profile.** It is the best source of free professional advertising and promotion you could ever hope to get.

- Be sure that your name is simply who you are, not your nickname, not your company title, just your formal name.
- Make your HEADLINE one that is attention grabbing. You may want to include some of your keywords in your headline, as well.
- Include your keywords in your summary, your skills, your specialties and your experience.
- When listing your experiences, don't make the section as dull and boring as a resume' (there's a separate place for a resume or CV). Concentrate on your current position and those experiences that back that up. If something doesn't relate, leave it out. For instance, I spent 30 years working as a registered nurse. It doesn't have MUCH to do with social media (You can find out on my "About me" section of my website to see why it has a little to do with it), so it's best for me not to list all the hospitals where I worked. It will only confuse people. Is she a nurse or a social media specialist?
- Honors and Awards is an important section to fill out if you want media attention, writing or speaking opportunities.
- Your group affiliations will automatically be listed for you.



## Four LinkedIn Do's and Don'ts

As with other social networking sites, there is an accepted etiquette to LinkedIn. And **Rule # 1** is... never indiscriminately invite people to join your network or group because you think it will be advantageous. This group is far less tolerant of "hit and miss" random requests than is, say, Facebook or Twitter. Here's a typical reaction, quoted on BNET: *"I get **LinkedIn** requests from people I've never met, but they've seen my name along with my company, so they send a request. I'm tired of it. Tell people to stop. I feel guilty not helping these people, but I also refuse to recommend someone if I don't know what kind of worker they are."*

**Rule # 2:** Update your status regularly...which means at least once every day.

As I mentioned, you want fresh and relevant content to be seen alongside your name every day. Not only will you miss amazing freelance or job opportunities if you don't, but LinkedIn only works if you remember to use it! (All too many people make the mistake of saying: "There. I've got my profile posted on LinkedIn -- that's all I need.")

It's not a static "business card" -- it's more of a living gallery of who you are and what you can offer.

**Rule # 3:** Use recommendations wisely -- both giving and requesting.

Be choosy about who you ask. Always ask those who know you well. Asking people who are peripheral is more likely to result in a "no" (or in having your request ignored). After all, you wouldn't walk up to the Vice President of a large corporation and ask him



to write you a letter of recommendation if the closest you'd ever come to getting to know him consisted of watching him onstage at the annual meeting.

Be sparing also in giving recommendations: Resist the temptation to please your friends and curry favor, if that's something you've gotten into the habit of doing on other networks such as Facebook or Twitter. Make sure that your word carries weight; and that a recommendation from you is "pure gold".

Endorsements will be a less formal way to reciprocate.

**Rule # 4:** It's a very simple one: Never send people network requests ("friend" requests) without changing the default message to something more personal. This is the default message, below...

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn interface for sending a connection invitation. At the top, there are tabs for 'Add Connections', 'Colleagues', 'Classmates', and 'People You May Know'. The main heading is 'Invite STACI to connect on LinkedIn'. Below this is a section titled 'How do you know STACI?' with radio button options: 'Colleague', 'Classmate', 'We've done business together', 'Friend', 'Other', and 'I don't know STACI'. Underneath is a text area for a personal note, which contains the text 'I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.' followed by '- Mary Jones'. At the bottom, there is an 'Important' note: 'Only invite people you know well and who know you. Find out why.' and two buttons: 'Send Invitation' and 'Cancel'.

Testing has proven to many internet entrepreneurs that a better response rate is garnered when that message is personalized and a reason added.



Someone once told me "if a person can't take the time to write a small personal note, it says to me that I'm not worth the 10 seconds it would take to do that. Why would I want to be linked to someone who apparently could care less about me?"

**Rule # 5:** Do not spam everyone's inbox with your event invite. True, you can get away with it on Facebook, because events are largely ignored, but you won't be looked upon kindly if you do it on LinkedIn. There is a way to announce an event on LinkedIn and then share it without spamming your connections. See [THIS ARTICLE](#) for info on how to do that.

LinkedIn encourages you to round up as many contacts as you can -- but that's more to their advantage than yours. Choosing your contacts is very much like defining and targeting your ideal customer: It's better to have a smaller "list" that is highly responsive and appreciative -- one that connects and engages naturally, with enthusiasm, tied by common interests -- than a huge, generic one.

Take some time to browse through all the tutorials and sections. Join two or three groups, seek out contacts from three or four companies and add business friends and contacts you know well from your address book.

See Who You Already Know on LinkedIn

Searching your email contacts (hotmail.com, gmail.com, yahoo.com, aol.com) is the easiest way to find people you already know on LinkedIn. [Learn More](#)

Your email:

Email password:

We will not store your password or email anyone without your permission.



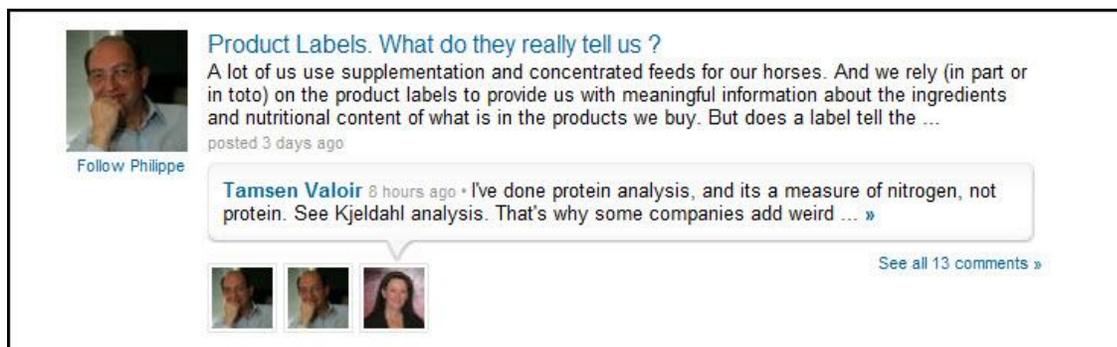
Then study your new contacts' profiles and summaries. See how they network and model yourself after the style that feels most comfortable and fits in with your business image, branding and "voice."



## Expand Your Reach

### Using LinkedIn Groups

Joining a group is a great way to make your voice heard (and your face seen) in the LinkedIn community. You'll be notified of new threads and posts, and you can simply click and comment.



Just make sure your comments add value to the discussion. You should never make do with comments such as: "Great point, Cliff!"

Addressing a specific point from an expert or involved stance goes a long way towards adding value.

And if you can conclude your comment with a call to action (or at least make it an "open" statement, inviting further opinion or questioning, as opposed to a "closed" one) you'll be welcomed as someone who livens up the group and keeps the ball rolling and in play.



## Company Pages

Company pages are a new feature at LinkedIn and are a place where people can connect with your company or the company you represent (given permission, of course). They allow for a large image at the top, tabs that can provide further information about your company and a "follow" button.

There is also a function on the company page called Featured Updates that allows the owner "to highlight important content by promoting it to the top of their Company Updates stream", according to the LinkedIn blog.

## Using LinkedIn Answers

Another effective way to set yourself up quickly as an authority voice: Provide valuable responses to questions asked in LinkedIn's ["Answers"](#) section.





## Conclusion

The most important point to remember about LinkedIn is that it is primarily professional in focus. Various discussions can often be informal or friendly, but even so, "fluff" is cut out and people are there to make points, as well as provide or receive quick, focused expertise.

It is also multi-layered, with many other flexible options for boosting your credibility there -- or losing it.

I believe that LinkedIn will continue to add many new features and functionality thus making it a great choice for you, as a professional or for your business.

### About On The Webb Social Media Services



According to PushingSocial.com "Stubborn 'community managers' will spend 2012 searching for the link between engagement (in social media) and profit. The good news is that in 2013 they will find it." Why not be ahead of the game and launch your social media campaign NOW?

At On The Webb Social Media, we bring your business into the online conversation thereby helping you build strong online connections with literally tens of thousands of current and potential customers.

We believe that a combination of fan acquisition accompanied by fan engagement is important to the growth of your business and your return on investment.

In order to simplify your marketing strategy, On the Webb Social Media partners with experts in the field of web development, graphic design, SEO, branding and copywriting.

During the time it took you to read this, anywhere between one and a thousand people could have mentioned you, your product or company on a social media site, either in a positive or negative way. And



while you may have missed it, their friends and the people they influence did not. That is the power of social media and precisely why you need to get involved immediately.

#### **About Shelley**



Shelley Webb is the founder and owner of On The Webb Social Media. She brings her years of hands-on social media experience to help passionate small business owners navigate the oft-times confusing world of social media.

She has mentored with some of the top names in internet marketing, small business ownership and social media and because the world of social media changes almost daily, she continues to do so.

\In 2011, Shelley was a finalist in the Shorty Awards which honors the best of Twitter and social media.

She works very hard to keep up with and be educated about the latest social media trends.

Shelley has also been a registered nurse for over 30 years and brings that sense of dedication and commitment to her social media clients, as well.

Having founded The Intentional Caregiver, an online support group for caregivers of aging parents and loved ones in 2008, she dedicates 10% of all her profits to go back to support this important free resource.

She currently resides in the country in beautiful Coeur d'Alene, Idaho with her 2 dogs, 2 tortoises, 1 cat and almost 30 chickens!