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8 Ways to Use LinkedIn Groups to Boost Your Business

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LinkedIn Groups "provide a place for professionals in the same industry or with similar interests to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business contacts, and establish themselves as industry experts," according to LinkedIn.

[[The How-To Guide for LinkedIn](#)]



So how can your business or brand take advantage of LinkedIn Groups? Industry executives, recruiters and LinkedIn experts offer eight tips regarding how companies can get the most out of LinkedIn Groups.

1. Join groups where your customers and prospects are. "Identify groups with members who are prospective clients or influencers in your industry and then create content such as articles, how-to's, guides and blog posts that feature subjects relevant to that group," says Sara Flick, manager of content strategy and PR for [ZOGDigital](#), a search and social marketing company. "This method can be used to provide best practices, establish your brand as an industry leader, or promote products or services in a natural and organic way."

2. Create your own LinkedIn Group. "To truly build community, companies are often best served [by starting a LinkedIn Group] for a very specific group of people with whom the company hopes to engage and -- crucially -- who would find value in engaging with one another, and having your company facilitate that connection," says Sam Ford, director of Audience Engagement at [Peppercomm](#), an integrated marketing and communications firm.

"We created several groups on LinkedIn that would aggregate our target audience," says Peter Fosso, head of U.S. Operations, [Music2Deal](#). "Since our company has its core business as a social network for

the music industry, we created [the groups] Music Industry: Worldwide, Music Industry: United States and others. This allows us to build an audience, gain new members and propagate our brand."

[To learn more about creating a LinkedIn Group and the difference between Open groups vs. Members Only, click [here](#).]

3. Don't overdo it. "The biggest lesson that I learned, that I share with clients, is to focus and minimize," says Julia Angelen Zurich, president, [Z Group PR](#). "Being a member of 39 groups does not necessarily mean more contacts, referrals or projects," she notes. "I reduced my groups to one or two in each key category and then focused on being an active, contributing member to those groups. I made excellent connections and raised my professional profile."

4. Establish yourself as a thought leader or expert. If you want to establish yourself as a trusted resource or thought leader on LinkedIn, "contribute to group discussions," says Jeff Zelaya, a sales executive at [Vocus](#), which provides cloud-based marketing and PR software and consulting. "According to LinkedIn, participants who comment on group discussions get four times the number of profile views," he notes. And "more profile views can lead to an increase in your network and possible inbound leads."

"Answer questions others post in the group, direct them to resources which may help [and] use your experiences to help others," adds Clare McDowall, the founder of consulting company [Socially Good](#). "Post great content [that] might benefit others in the group. LinkedIn promotes the top contributors in each group, and gives your content recognition [which can] earn new connection requests and enquiries."

Above all, "don't be self-serving," says Misha Sobolev, director, [CTOsOnTheMove.com](#). "Maintain a 7/1 ratio -- seven useful pieces of content to one promotional."

5. Recruit new hires. "Recruiters should post jobs to the Discussion section of [their or the relevant LinkedIn] Group [as] their post will be sent out as a daily email to every person in the group," says Katie Sansone, social media manager at executive recruiting firm [Windsor Resources](#).

"Even if [a member of the group isn't] right for the job, perhaps they have a friend, sister, cousin, etc. who is." Also, "if you post in a group late at night, say 11:30 p.m., your post will be at the top of the Daily Digest Email and will be one of the first things people see when opening the email," Sansone says.

But remember: "Today's candidates don't have the patience to weed through a lot of text to find out about your company or wade through a lot of clicks to find the right job," notes Will Staney, director of Recruiting and Strategic Programs at [SAP](#). "So, it's critical that your company's LinkedIn Group [as well as your job postings] be compelling, targeted and timely."

6. Conduct market research (including polling group members/customers). "Want a fast and cheap way to find out what your market thinks? Ask them on LinkedIn," says Kurt Shaver, founder, [The Sales Foundry](#). "Join a LinkedIn Group whose members represent your market and simply pose your question. [Just] don't be overly sales-y. For example, as a LinkedIn sales trainer, I asked a group of VPs of Sales what training methodologies they prefer (classroom, webinars, online self-study...)."

"LinkedIn Groups allow you to create free polls with up to five answers," adds Katie Hollar, marketing manager, [Capterra](#), a free service that helps businesses find the right software. "Post a poll within your own customer or user LinkedIn Group to collect feedback on your product or service. For example, a software company could say, which feature would you most like to see added to our software functionality in 2014?" she suggests. "If you don't have your own LinkedIn Group, post the same poll across a variety of industry groups and aggregate the responses to use as research in a blog post or report."

7. Ask for testimonials/reviews. "[LinkedIn Company pages allow businesses to list their products and services](#) so that other LinkedIn users can recommend them to their networks," explains Hollar. And you can use LinkedIn Groups to "send a group announcement linking to your company page that encourages customers to recommend your product or service," she notes.

8. Involve your employees. "Businesses can amplify their impact by encouraging multiple employees to actively engage in timely dialogue with other LinkedIn users," says Lauren Hug, founder, [HugSpeak](#)

[Coaching & Consulting.](#)

Just make sure to "provide training on how to use LinkedIn, how to represent the company and network on behalf of the company," suggests Kim Garst, CEO, [Boom! Social](#). "When everyone is involved on the platform, it creates a phenomenal extended network that creates a larger company presence and builds industry awareness."

For specific information on how to create, join or manage a LinkedIn Group, go to the [LinkedIn Groups -- Getting Started](#) page.

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