



If you've bought this book then hopefully you've mastered the basics of LinkedIn and you're ready to take the next step to making it a productive tool. For the record I don't call myself a LinkedIn expert. Others have done that, but I simply view myself as a small business person trying to use these incredible new social networking tools to grow my business. If LinkedIn can help me do that then I want to know everything possible about it.

I didn't start using LinkedIn because it was a great social networking tool. I started using it because I thought that maybe there was a way to drive business. Over the last 15 months I have progressed from stumbling over some prospects to actively receiving several calls a week to help others with their health insurance needs.

Each of these calls is the result of communicating to my different networks on LinkedIn in an indirect manner. I'm not out there shouting that I can save you \$100 on your health insurance policy. It wouldn't work if I were.

In this book I'll explain how you can use LinkedIn to conduct marketing activities, generate sales leads, and eventually sales through effectively communicating your message (s).

Most people view LinkedIn as a social networking site and in a limited vision that might be all that it is. If you expand your vision and truly begin to think about how the members, tools, and connections can be used then your perspective will change. I see linkedin not as a networking site, even though that is how it began, but as a social marketing resource.

My goal on LinkedIn isn't to simply network with other business professionals, but to also communicate with or to them. Networking and connecting is part of the picture that facilitates communication, but not the goal itself. If all that you do is connect then you're not likely to maximize your opportunities. You have to constantly be in front of your networks so that when they encounter an issue that you can provide service to, you are on the top of their mind.

The goal is to help you learn how to monetize your LinkedIn presence. In some cases the actions you take will directly lead to developing new prospects or sales. In other cases you'll simply be building credibility by providing service and value to others. The combination of your efforts will allow you to benefit indirectly through helping others.

Many of the opportunities that I have encountered developed because I helped others first. Over time many people will become familiar and comfortable with you because you have been providing service to others without asking for anything in return.

There is a hierarchy of familiarity that people go through before they will decide to engage your product or service. They have to:

1. **First Know You** - Through being part of their network or a fellow group member along with repeated exposure.
2. **Like You** – Have you done everything you can to create a positive perception? The most effective way is to provide value to others asking nothing in return.
3. **Trust You** – Believe you are credible (recommendations, answers, well written profile, etc.).

Connecting to another or belonging to the same group is the first step in others getting to know you. Next they have to be exposed to you over a period of time through your various communication activities. As people get to know you through your activities they will form a positive or negative opinion. How you conduct yourself will go a long way in generating positive perspectives. Finally you have to have established that you are credible and trustworthy through how you interact, what others say about you, and the value of the information you share.

Success will not happen overnight. You have to be patient knowing that at some point your activities will begin to generate momentum. The time it takes will be in some part based on the time you invest to accomplish the credibility building process. It took me almost a year before I started seeing a significant return on my activities. LinkedIn has changed and there are tools now that were not available last year, so hopefully you' see results in a shorter time frame.

LinkedIn provides the platform and tools to accomplish all three phases of the familiarity hierarchy. As you engage your networks through the various communication tools you will begin building your online brand. It may take time to see the fruits of your labor but if you are consistently active it will eventually happen.

Business, like life, evolves over time from putting one foot in front of the other. To move forward you have to take the next step. Shall we get started?

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Atlanta, GA

PS...Since this book is the LinkedIn Marketing Secret Formula it wouldn't be complete without an actual formula.

(Network Reach + Value Provided to Others + Credibility) Messaging Opportunities = X Success

In other words a larger network reach, providing more value, developing greater credibility, multiplied by the number of direct and indirect messaging opportunities will lead to success you can achieve using LinkedIn.