

Business Branding

LinkedIn Branding

When most people think about LinkedIn, they think job searching and recruiting. Not long ago, essentially that's what it was. It was a portal to store your online resume for recruiters to view and a place for job seekers to find jobs.

If that's how you're picturing LinkedIn - you're missing the boat. Not just the boat, but the entire ocean! LinkedIn has changed dramatically over the last 3-4 years. Here are some key elements that are different:

1. Anyone can post an article
2. Anyone can post video content
3. Voicemail messaging

"Oh, that's it? That doesn't seem that exciting" - you right now. Here is why those seemingly small features are actually huge, and how they can help you craft and show your professional brand.

Posting articles is a way for businesses and individuals to get their message out to a large audience. It used to be a reserved privilege for those tagged as "influencers". Articles aren't like posts that get lost in feeds. They differ because they appear on people's timelines, but they also remain on your profile indefinitely and are highlighted on your profile for viewers to see. Use this opportunity to elevate your professional brand by establishing credibility and positioning yourself as a thought leader.

Add depth to your brand with video content and voicemail messages. Let your customers and prospects get to know you better. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video or voice message is worth a million! Don't be a part of the inbox noise - leave a custom voicemail in your prospects' inboxes. They get plenty of messages, but do they get voicemail messages? How many have you received? I'm guessing not very many. Be different!

If LinkedIn isn't part of your content marketing strategy, you're doing it wrong. Take advantage of these new tools to add depth to your message and connect with your audience in interesting

ways. As Gary V says - make sure your content is like the TV show and not the commercials. Don't just talk about your product. Offer tips for your audience to help them see you as a thought leader and expert. Always remember to **help first!**

LinkedIn is becoming a community of people who are interested in helping each other and forming real business relationships. Make sure you're taking every opportunity to portray your professional brand and to stand out on LinkedIn. Want some quick tips and tricks for how to do so? [Download 10 Things to Start Doing on LinkedIn Today.](#)

4 Tips to Improving Your Business Brand by Helping First

In a perfect world, what are adjectives you hope people might choose to describe your professional brand? Perhaps kind, dedicated, empowering, or helpful come to mind. Let's focus on how to be known for one of those right now: **helpful**. I'm sure you've heard countless sayings that bear some resemblance to these:

"No one has ever become poor by giving."

"Success has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It's what you do for others."

As cliché as those sayings may sound, how different would our personal and professional lives be if we embraced and lived out the mindset of **help first**?

When's the last time you opened a marketing email that made you feel like just another prospective buyer on a mailing list? Odds are it happens pretty often. If you're a marketer and in the position to do differently, then do differently. Aim to help first! People are constantly bombarded with content - a steady influx of emails, new posts on Facebook, advertisements in store windows. Readers appreciate content that leaves them feeling better off having read it. Provide insights, resources, and solutions. I bet you'll see an improvement in response rates for having done so.

Examples of helping first in a professional setting:

- Give your time and knowledge, even if there's no immediate compensation.

It's likely that at one point you had a mentor, colleague, or friend who did just that for you - and by doing so, helped you get where you are today.

- Share your network.

Offer to make introductions. Ask your connections what their ideal customer looks like and keep that in mind to make referrals in the future. Generosity has a way of coming back to you.

- Add value first instead of rushing to sell.

Build a relationship first, sell second.

- Endorse and recommend others.

Help others in spreading their message. Easiest place to do this professionally? LinkedIn!
Check out our [blog post](#) on the topic.

Leave people feeling better off than before you interacted with them. I promise you'll benefit from doing so. People may not remember everything you do for them, but they will remember how you made them feel. Remember you are a reflection of your business - so give your professional brand the attention it deserves. If you aim to help first, you'll be taking both your personal and professional brand in the right direction.

Website Branding

We live in a digital age - it's undeniable. Craving Mexican for dinner? Type in a quick google search of "Mexican near me". Looking for fun things to do this weekend in the city? Type exactly that in the search bar. You get the gist.

It's no different when people are searching for companies. Whether they want to hire you or work with you - your website is likely where they'll get their first impression. Ask yourself: is your website portraying the best possible first impression? I hope so, it's a reflection of your business brand! Start by ensuring you have these components.

What We Do

This seems like a given, but sometimes it's overlooked. What you do should be the first thing a visitors sees when they arrive on your website. A headline like "Sales Enablement and Marketing Agency" leaves little room for confusion. But don't stop there! Include a section or even additional page where you go more in depth. Highlight your core services and areas of expertise. For example: lead generation, content marketing, or social management.

About the Company

This is your chance to really sell yourself and stand out from the competition. What makes you different? What's the history of the company? What processes do you follow? Establish credibility and let prospects know why they should choose *you*.

About the Team / Who We Are

People usually connect with other people easier than they connect with a product or service. You can talk about what you do until you're blue in the face but chances are they've probably heard it all before. Sell *yourself* first. People are buying the relationship with the service provider just as much as they're buying the service. Highlight core values and share personal tidbits!

Testimonials

Put your great work on display! Reach out to a client you have a good relationship with and ask them to say a few words on your behalf. This goes a long way in establishing credibility in the eyes of website visitors.

Blog

This is a great way to show yourself as a subject matter expert and thought leader. Blogs are also great places to include call to actions and link back to other places on your [website](#) (see what I did there). They can be shared on various platforms which increase the likelihood that a reader will follow it back to your (now optimized) website.

Miscellaneous

- **Images / Videos**

A picture is worth a thousand words. A video is worth even more!

- **Calls to Action and Content Offers**

Inspire your visitors to take action. For example, include a call to action at the end of a blog such as “download the case study”. Offer the case study as a downloadable PDF and require them to submit an email address to receive it. This way you’re both getting something!

- **Social Media Links**

Direct your visitors to all of your social media platforms. LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

- **Contact Information**

Don’t leave visitors wondering what they should do next. List your phone number, an email address, and even physical address to allow them to reach out. Take advantage of tools like chat bots that pop up and ask visitors how they can help or offer to schedule a call. Make it as easy as possible for prospects and customers to reach you and buy from you.

Here's to leaving powerful first impressions!

Tips to Jumpstart Your Social Selling Strategy

So... I don't love the term social selling, but I'm willing to swim with the current. Social selling is *really* just selling, isn't it? The only difference is that instead of a rolodex or business cards, we have the technology on our computer or phones. The most important skill in sales is our ability to build relationships.

Tempted to stop reading because your job title doesn't reflect a sales position? Wrong - everyone's in sales. Why? It's simple, you're constantly selling your business's brand and yourself.

When interacting with someone you've just met, are you going to pitch them your product or service right away? Imagine this - you're waiting for your table at a restaurant and there's another group in the lobby. You introduce yourself to someone from the group and she seems friendly. Do you think the first thing she wants to hear about is how great your product is?

Don't think about selling to your network, think about selling *through* it. Develop relationships, a brand, and content that draws people into your network and sales funnel.

Build your relationship funnel first. How? Build your brand in a way that keeps you top of mind and provides value. To paraphrase Gary V., "be the show, not the commercial". Don't just post videos and content about how great your product/service is, but strive to be authentic and discuss trends and topics going on in your industry. Always keep your target market in mind!

Social selling is a lot less important than your **branding**. The best way to have a relationship become a sales prospect? Have them make that decision on their own. If your brand is interesting and you're consistent with your content, the people in your relationship funnel are more likely to convert (without you "selling").

People don't like to be sold to, but they *do* like to buy. You've heard it before...most people do research on their own before deciding to engage a sales person. How do you start building relationships so they can later resurface inside your sales funnel? **Network.**

Business Networking On LinkedIn

- Get your stuff together on LinkedIn - [read this](#) to get started
- Join LinkedIn groups - initiate conversations and contribute to existing ones

- Follow hashtags that relate to your industry and target market
- Explain *why* you are sending someone a connection request -- DO NOT sell or attempt to sell right off the bat
- Stop being a wallflower and jump in on LinkedIn and social media. Comment, participate, demonstrate your value, and show your brand! Nobody else will do it for you.

Business Networking in Person:

Start by asking yourself, “what’s the desired outcome?”. Then consider these:

- What’s the first question you'll ask people you meet?
- How will you answer the question that 95% of the group will ask? “Yeah, so...what do you do?” (don’t be that person)
- How will you answer the question that 4% of the group will ask? “What’s your WHY?” because, you know, Simon Sinek
- Set a timer and engage with a new person every 5 -10 minutes
- Connect on LinkedIn (use the handy dandy QR code to do so in seconds)
- Send an email ASAP to log the contact in HubSpot with a follow-up task (all from your phone)
- Consciously step outside of your comfort zone
- Don't go for the food but for the relationships
- Turn on the LinkedIn feature to find users near you
- Don't get hammered - you aren't as interesting as you think you are when you drink too much

Use these tips to shape your networking and social selling strategy. Have an effective strategy and watch those new relationships pop up in your sales funnel. [Download 10 Things to Start Doing on LinkedIn Today](#) to begin improving your LinkedIn networking!