

Are you ?

Author: Dean Stanberry
December 14, 2009

The term “Social Media” has come to dominate the airwaves and the Internet. Unless you are a member of the Net Generation (i.e., 27 or younger), you may be perplexed by number of different services out there; with the familiar ones being [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Plaxo](#), [YouTube](#), and [MySpace](#). While you may be complacent with your trusty old e-mail account; rest assured these services represent the evolution of electronic communication and its here to stay.

More than just another mechanism to consume your precious time, social media is the foundation for fundamental change in the way institutions interact with their constituents. If you want to better understand the impact social media is having on Madison Avenue and our way of life, take a look at the cover story in the December 2009 edition of Fast Company entitled “[Follow Me](#)” featuring Ashton Kutcher’s company *Katalyst*.

For the purposes of this article, let’s just say that services like Facebook and Twitter tend to be focused on casual or social interactions, whereas LinkedIn is more oriented towards the business professional. As members of IFMA, it should come as no surprise that the most cited reason for being a member is for the networking opportunities. Think of LinkedIn as a networking tool on steroids. With over 50,000,000 users worldwide, and growing every day, it has gained prominence as one of the foremost tools to develop and maintain your network of professional contacts. Suffice to say; if you’re not already active on LinkedIn – ***you need to be.***

How to Join

Joining LinkedIn is simple. Just go to www.Linkedin.com and register yourself as a member. The basic service is free. While there are paid upgrades, these are mostly of benefit to HR Recruiters and marketing professionals. One item of note; some people prefer to register their account with the personal vs. their work e-mail address. Either way should be fine as you can include additional e-mail addresses once registered, and it is something you can update at any time. Just remember to keep track of your Login ID and Password.

Your Profile

You’ll want to provide a profile of yourself so that others can see what you do and where you are. The profile includes items such as a personal summary, your specialties, current employer, past work experiences, education, and other (optional) personal information. You can fill out as much or as little as you like. If you are a job seeker like me, you’ll want to have a complete profile; but more on this point later. If you’re not sure what to include,

try looking at other members profiles. Just search for names of people you know, your job title, relevant companies, etc... You’ll find more than enough to give you some great ideas. There is quite a bit of on-line help available, both from within LinkedIn and by searching Google for “[LinkedIn Tips and Tricks](#)”. I also recommend a good book published by Sams entitled “[Teach Yourself LinkedIn in 10 Minutes](#)” by Patrice-Anne Rutledge. Think of your profile as the public representation of your personal brand. You want it to reflect your career objectives, skills, experiences, and interests. I recommend including a good, professional looking photo; but it’s optional based on your personal preference.

Building your Network

Before you get started; you should consider what your network strategy is for LinkedIn. In other words; are you using it to maintain business contacts, build a marketing network, or subject matter resources? I don’t recommend treating it as a numbers game; “connecting” with as many people as possible. You should have a plan regarding who you invite, as well as who you accept invitations from. Once in LinkedIn you can search for individuals by name, by company, by job title, etc... However, if you already have an address book in Microsoft Outlook, Google Gmail, Yahoo mail or any others; you can [import the address book](#) and LinkedIn will look for member names that match your existing contacts. This way you can choose to send out a batch of “invitations” (LinkedIn terminology) at one time as a way to start building your network quickly. LinkedIn does provide protections so that members are not “spammed” by individuals they do not know. When sending an invitation to connect to someone, you have to identify how you know them (i.e., are they a colleague, classmate, business partner, friend or other). For “other”, you must be able to supply their e-mail address or LinkedIn will not send the invite. While this may sound a bit complicated, you’ll get the hang of it quick enough. Once you start making connections, [LinkedIn tracks the number of connections you have at the 1st, 2nd and 3rd degrees of your network.](#)

The people you are connected to directly are your 1st degree. The people they are connected to make up the 2nd degree, and finally the people connected to them represent the 3rd degree of your network. For example; as I’m drafting this article – I have 217 1st degree connections, 21,500 2nd degree connections, and 1,798,100 3rd degree connections for a total of 1,819,800 people within reach of my network.

Wow! Now, you might ask why does this matter? Good question. Say you are looking to reach out to someone in a specific company, but you don’t know anyone there. By

Are you ?

Author: Dean Stanberry
December 14, 2009

searching your connections, you may find that someone in your 2nd degree network happens to work there. Using your 1st degree contact, you can “request an introduction” to the individual and in all likelihood it will be accepted. I’ve used this on several occasions with great success. This is but one example of how you can utilize your extended network – there are many more...

[Get Recommended](#)

Another nice feature in LinkedIn is the ability to write a recommendation for someone that will show up as part of their profile. This is particularly useful for job seekers as recruiters are increasingly using LinkedIn as a candidate search and pre-screening tool. This is another area to put some thought into. I don’t recommend simply “trading” recommendations with friends & peers. It is much better to have recommendations from leaders or business partners who can expound on your specific accomplishments, strengths or skills. Also; for your profile to be considered “complete” by LinkedIn, you’ll need at least three recommendations. More recently, I have seen job postings on LinkedIn that state “recommendations preferred”.

[Groups](#)

LinkedIn has a wealth of Groups organized around about any topic you can imagine. IFMA headquarters has a LinkedIn group. In fact, there are 59 groups around IFMA including councils, chapters, and specific FM topics. There are company groups, company alumni groups, university alumni groups, professions, and the list goes on – 474,306 groups as of this writing. Go to the Groups page and just start searching for anything of interest. You may find that your local IFMA Chapter already has a group on LinkedIn. Bear in mind that LinkedIn limits individuals’ to participation in a maximum of 50 groups. Most groups have a discussion board, news items, and many post jobs. On the upper-right of a Group screen you will find a link to the Group Profile. The profile will show you the complete group description, when it was created, how many members are in it, the Owner, and if there is an external web site associated with the group. I recommend interacting with the groups you join. Posting and/or responding to discussions on the group boards is a good way get noticed, presuming you are offering worthy content. As a final note; be mindful of the tone and tenor of your discussion participation as they are not anonymous.

[Jobs](#)

As a job seeker, I’ve found LinkedIn to be a great resource in my job search. Many jobs are posted to LinkedIn at the same time they are posted to job boards such as Monster or CareerBuilder. The nice thing about looking for jobs on LinkedIn is that it will tell you if you have any [connections in](#)

[your network that might be a resource](#) for you in pursuing the opportunity. Another interesting item found on your LinkedIn home page is an item entitled “[Who’s Viewed My Profile](#)”, which shows the number of times your profile has been viewed or appeared in a search. Again; a good, complete profile will increase your chances of being found in a search.

But Wait, There’s More...

LinkedIn also has a few [applications](#) you can add to your profile to make it more useful. For example; there’s the Amazon reading list where you can share the books you’ve read along with your rating and comments. There’s [SlideShare Presentations](#) where you can upload PowerPoint files, PDF’s and others to view and make available for download (should you choose). There’s [Events](#); where anyone can publish information about upcoming events and individuals can indicate if they are attending (it shows up on your profile). There’s [Company Buzz](#) that will show you twitter activity about your company. All these are found under the “More” menu item at the top of the page; simply select “Application Directory”.

At the bottom of each page are additional links, including one for [Tools](#). This includes items such as Microsoft Outlook and Internet Explorer Toolbars, enabling you to jump to common LinkedIn features from either of these applications. If you’re a job seeker, the Internet Explorer toolbar contains a feature called “JobsInsider” that will assist in your job search. When viewing a job posting, it will let you know about LinkedIn members in your network who work at that company and could be an inside connection for you. There is also an E-mail signature tool that will generate a customized e-mail signature for Outlook or other e-mail clients. I use the Internet Explorer Toolbar frequently and use the E-mail signature in Microsoft Outlook

Want to control what people see or don’t see on your profile, go to the item at the top right of the screen entitled “[Settings](#)”. Be sure to review each of the items under Settings and make a conscious choice as to what you will display or not display to the world. If you’re unsure of a particular item, consult the on-line help files. You have control over most aspects of your account, including deleting it if you so choose.

There’s An App for That

If you have an iPhone, like I do, there’s a LinkedIn app for that. Go to the [iTunes App Store](#) and download the free LinkedIn application. You can check updates, check status messages, and send messages to contacts.

Are you **Linked in**®?

Author: Dean Stanberry
December 14, 2009

Want to have a connection to your LinkedIn profile on your Facebook page? There's an application for that too. While in your Facebook account, search on "[My LinkedIn Profile](#)" and complete the requested information. It will put a button on your Facebook profile page connecting to your LinkedIn profile.

As a final point; I recommend including the web address to your LinkedIn profile on your business card, your resume, and your e-mail signature. This makes it easier for people you communicate with to connect with. The web address is found on your Profile page and entitled "Public Profile". By default, LinkedIn assigns a random identifier to your public profile; however, you can change it to something more meaningful from the Settings page.

I welcome you to check out my LinkedIn public profile at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/deanstanberry>. If you like, send me an invitation to connect and indicate that you read this article in your invitation message. If you are reading a printed version of this article, you will find an electronic copy posted on my LinkedIn profile containing all of the embedded hyperlinks to LinkedIn help pages and other resources. Happy Networking!

Dean Stanberry



Workplace Strategy
& Facilities Management
(720) 877-1521 Mobile

mdstanberry@comcast.net
www.linkedin.com/in/deanstanberry