

Using LinkedIn to Develop Business: A PRIMER FOR LAWYERS

By Terrie S. Wheeler, MBC

As a lawyer, you have likely dabbled on LinkedIn but now you are wondering if it's worth taking the plunge and actually devoting more time to using it. Can it really help you bring in more business? The short answer is yes – if you follow the recommendations below.





Complete Your Profile

The very first thing you need to do is complete your LinkedIn profile. The simple fact is that we live in a Google society and even if your primary source for new business is from referrals, prospective clients will still Google your name before they contact you. LinkedIn is generally one of the top pages that people will find, so let's make it a great profile! Let's start from the top.

USE A PROFESSIONAL PHOTO – Make sure you have a professional photo of yourself and add it to your LinkedIn profile.

CREATE A PROFESSIONAL HEADLINE – Directly under your name is your professional headline. Change it to reflect the specific work you perform for clients and the areas in which you want to become known. For example, Employment Lawyer | Advocate for Employees Wrongfully Terminated.

CUSTOMIZE YOUR LINKEDIN URL – Under your picture you will find your personal LinkedIn address. Click edit and customize your link with your name: www.linkedin.com/in/terriewheeler

CREATE A COMPELLING SUMMARY – Make sure your summary is written in first person – you want people to connect personally with you. When you write your summary focus on the types of clients you serve, what your greatest accomplishments have been, what you enjoy most about your practice, and your client service philosophy.

ADD YOUR EXPERIENCE – Make sure your experience section is complete. Click “Add a Position” and list every professional position you have held; provide a sentence or two on what you did in each position.

FEATURE PUBLISHED ARTICLES – If you have published articles that have accompanying links, list

the article title and copy the hyperlink into the space provided. Make sure to provide a summary of the article.

LANGUAGES – If you are bilingual, see the option on the right side of the page to add language proficiencies.

HONORS AND AWARDS – List any noteworthy awards you have received. Don't be shy! If you are on the Rising Stars or Super Lawyers lists, let people know.

CERTIFICATIONS – If you have advanced certification as a lawyer, make sure you list it under this section.

VOLUNTEERING AND CAUSES – Anyone visiting your LinkedIn profile (or your website biography for that matter) will want to see what is important to you and how you engage with and volunteer in your community.

CHOOSE THE ORDER – In most sections you can choose to move the placement of an item up or down within that section by clicking on the arrow icon in the section.

Add Connections

Once your professional profile is magnificent, make a point of adding connections. We tell our clients of setting a goal of having 501 connections so that your profile states that you have 500+ contacts. Having connections on LinkedIn provides the foundation to allow you to use the site for research and to increase your visibility within your network.

Click “Add Connections.” Select the email program you use and enter your email password. Don’t worry. No one will receive a LinkedIn request from you until you purposefully select them. This algorithm allows you to see who in your base of contacts is already on LinkedIn. You can then pick and choose who you would like to invite to connect with you.

Update and Engage

On the “Home” page, post something interesting and relevant that will appear on the news feeds of all your contacts. Take a look at what your contacts are posting and let yourself be inspired by fresh, current posts you can make. By consistently sharing valuable information with your network using LinkedIn status updates, you are providing thought leadership to your network – and in doing so, creating credibility for yourself.

Join Groups That Attract Clients and Referral Sources

You have the ability to join up to 50 groups on LinkedIn. You don’t need to get too carried away, just make sure the groups you join are relevant to you. In addition to state and local bar associations you are a member of, your law school and undergraduate alma maters. Search for groups that would attract clients and referral sources and engage with those groups by participating in discussions.

My Offer to You

After you have updated your LinkedIn profile, send it to me and I will review it and recommend any additional enhancements I think would benefit you. Just send me an email, Terrie@psm-marketing.com and I will get back to you!

By following the recommendations identified above, you will have the opportunity to develop and maintain relationships with people in your network – and to provide thought leadership and credibility at the same time. Having a complete LinkedIn profile *will* pay off by opening doors with targeted clients and referral sources – but only if you engage!



Terrie Wheeler is the founder and president of Professional Services Marketing, LLC (PSM). Terrie has spent the last 25 years as an in-house marketing director, marketing consultant and marketing coach to lawyers and law firms. She currently teaches marketing at three law schools and serves on the Lawyers Board of Professional Responsibility. You can attend PSM’s free Marketing Motivation Webinars by registering at www.PSM-Marketing.com. If you have a marketing question, contact Terrie at twheeler@psm-marketing.com, or via telephone at (320) 358-1000.

