

## Attorney's Guide: 6 LinkedIn Must-Haves for Personal Branding

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Today, most lawyers have a LinkedIn profile, but many of those profiles are simply online resumé. LinkedIn is a tool that is so much more powerful to only be used as a resumé. Not only is it your digital business card and introduction to the world, it is your own personal marketing tool that will enhance your business development, reputation, and of course, network.

How do you get there and harvest all that gold that LinkedIn has ready for you? There are several must-haves and things that you can do with LinkedIn. But as that dear enchanted lady once said, "It's always best to start at the beginning."

### 1. What's your LinkedIn's purpose?

Decide on the purpose of your LinkedIn account. This may be to build a strong network, create business development opportunities or acquiring information. The list is almost endless. The point is you must have a specific purpose or goal for your LinkedIn account.

### 2. Who's your intended audience?

Once you've identified what you want your LinkedIn account to do, the next step is identifying your audience. Think about what they want in an attorney and strive to meet those wants. What are they interested in? Identify the search terms they use to find lawyers like you.

### 3. How about that profile?

This is perhaps the most important must-have. Don't just build a profile; [craft your profile](#). Sprinkle in those search terms and keywords as you craft your profile. People like visuals, so [add videos, presentations and PDFs](#) to showcase your expertise. Do your title and headliner describe just any old lawyer or does it showcase you and your purpose or goal?

Use your profile to portray yourself as a thought leader in your particular field as well as an expert. Turn yourself into the go-to resource that people count on. You want people and the media to come to your LinkedIn profile when they have questions or issues about your subject matter. Ultimately, you want people to come to you directly when they have these issues.

### 4. Got Connections?

Digital networking via LinkedIn is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century's version of getting to know your neighbors, colleagues and, most salient to this article, your potential clients. The mantra should be [connect, connect and connect](#) some more. Having written that, it's important to connect wisely.

Go back to your target audience and figure out where they are hanging out on LinkedIn. There is an army of



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LinkedIn groups that you should explore. In addition to potential connections, groups will help you gain more insight into what makes your target audience click.

[LinkedIn's powerful search engine](#) allows you to find almost any kind of group. Another way to find groups is to search the profiles of group members and check out what other groups they belong to.

When you do connect, do so with more than the general LinkedIn message. [Create your own message](#) that shows that you understand their issues and interests and that you can perhaps help them out.

Nurture your connections. For example, participate in group discussions, comment on other's posts and send meaningful messages to your connections. Don't bombard your connections, but touch base every other month or so.

## **5. Got Content?**

Again, set yourself up as a thought leader and expert in your subject and become that go-to resource by providing content that is pertinent to the issue, engaging and informative. You can do this in one of three ways.

First, you can share content produced by others. Make sure it comes from a reliable source or at least well-respected in your field. This also helps to develop relationships with the authors of the content you share.

Second, share your own content that you've published, presented or otherwise produced for other locations. If it's published online, write a synopsis and provide the URL link.

Third, and perhaps most fun, write content directly on LinkedIn. By taking a look at your groups and connections, you will be in a better position to target the content to your LinkedIn audience.

Don't forget to employ video and images in your content sharing. People do love a good video, photograph or infographic.

Using video has a particularly great advantage. It is new. As such, so far it is free. Once people start catching on to new features in social media, the platform usually starts to charge in some way. So go for the gusto while it's still free.

## **6. But, in real life.**

Now that you've won over your target audience and they know you are knowledgeable and respected and their go-to person, it's time to take it to make those connections in-person.

If a connection has made it clear that they are interested in what you have to offer, suggest a short meeting to discuss their issue. Make the suggestion professional yet friendly. As a lawyer, you must connect with your client in some form of real life, as lawyering usually involves the communication of very personal information. That's not something you want to do online.

## **Build Your Road**

LinkedIn is a valuable piece in your marketing toolkit. Take advantage of it to build your own yellow brick road. It is much more than a forum for your online resumé.

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