

LinkedIn: Who is checking you out?

A Guest Article by Mark Williams
December 2009

LinkedIn: Who is checking you out?

A Guest Article by Mark Williams for TCii Strategic and Management Consultants

How to win business via LinkedIn

A sales trainer in London recently told me about a lunch he had attended with his biggest client, the “head honcho” from a large international merchant bank.

While they were enjoying their starter in a swanky Mayfair restaurant, the banker turned to the sales trainer and asked: “How do you get most of your clients?” The sales trainer replied: “The vast majority of our clients come to us through word of mouth. I have a strong network of contacts in the banking sector and I believe we have a very strong reputation.”

The banker responded: “That is very impressive, but when we first contacted you we hadn’t ever heard of you before.” Intrigued by this statement, the trainer asked how the bank had come to contact his organisation in the first place.

“I searched LinkedIn for sales trainers with a financial services specialism in London and you were one of about 30 I found,” said the banker. “Excellent. So why did you call us?” the sales trainer asked.

The answer was not what he expected: “You had more recommendations than anyone else and some of them were from people whose opinion I respect. I considered that if so many people had taken the time to recommend you then you must be pretty good.”

Your profile and network are key

This is not just an example of the power of recommendations but also the importance of a good, effective profile: without the right keywords of “sales training” and “financial services”, he would not have appeared in the search results in the first place.

It is also an example of how critical it is to build a strong network of relevant connections. If the sales trainer had not connected with a sufficient number of users, he would not have been in the client’s network (first, second and third tier connections) and would have only appeared as a “private” profile in the search result.

The reality of LinkedIn is that your customers and potential customers, or possibly even potential employers and employees, are likely to be checking you out and making judgements on you from your profile. When you conduct a simple name search on Google these days you will find that the top results are almost always LinkedIn profiles – try googling yourself now to see what I mean.

LinkedIn: Who is checking you out?

A Guest Article by Mark Williams for TCii Strategic and Management Consultants

Are you happy with your profile? Does it portray the right image, and would it make someone want to do business with you? Have you got powerful, compelling recommendations from customers, or are your testimonials from colleagues? (Let's be honest – who else cares what your co-workers think of you!)

Many people confuse online networking with traditional offline networking and become very "precious" about whom they connect with. The result is a limited network, which in turn leads to low visibility – i.e. they won't appear in search results. I am not advocating massive networks of irrelevant contacts, but you do need to be aware of the dangers of small "exclusive" networks.

Maximising your LinkedIn presence

Whether you like it or not, LinkedIn is growing rapidly. In the UK alone, over 100,000 new users are signing up every month and, because the functionality is improving, people are really starting to use this tool to research new markets, suppliers and employees. In order to maximise your effectiveness you need to ensure the following:

- You are visible to a wide range of users. (How many people are in your network?)
- Your profile is rich with relevant keywords.
- Your profile is professional, impressive and compelling.
- You have as many credible recommendations as possible from current and past customers.

Mark Williams
Managing Director – ETN Training

If you would like more information on any of the points covered in this Guest Article, please contact **TCii** on **020 7099 2621**.