

Are you In or Out?

Connecting to Professional Audiences on LinkedIn

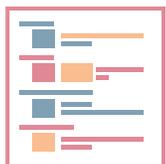
With a membership of over 460 million, LinkedIn is rapidly becoming a necessary tool for nonprofits.

Strategize

When considering any new social network, think about whether it is worth your staff time investment to take on the new platform and if the platform will serve your strategic goals. If you are trying to reach professional or academic audiences, LinkedIn might be just what you're looking for. Start by asking: who are your target audiences; where can they be found and what do you want them to do? The [Spitfire Smart Chart®](#) can help you think through these questions and incorporate LinkedIn into your overarching communication strategy.

Think Outside the Box

LinkedIn has been categorized by many as a job hunting tool. This reputation naturally developed because of the structure of the tool – members are encouraged to list their bio, past job experiences and build their connections with colleagues or companies they know offline. However, this reputation is misleading as many nonprofits do not see the value in LinkedIn and overlook the vast opportunities that exist to gain volunteers, find board members and even secure funds.



Create

The first step to using LinkedIn is to create a “[company page](#).” A company page is very similar to a Facebook company page in that you can post status updates and share links and photos. The difference is that LinkedIn members can interact on a deeper level with your organization than they can on Facebook.



Encourage

Each time your organization is listed on a LinkedIn members' profile, it helps to position you in front of vast networks of like-minded people. Encourage your current and past staffers and volunteers to include your organization on their profile.

Build

When setting up your company page, list details about your mission, activities and history. Be sure to include your address, skills or specialties, banner image and link to your website and other social media profiles. Check out [these nonprofits](#) for ideas on how to successfully use LinkedIn.

Connect

There are several ways for your organization to use LinkedIn and they don't require rocket science. Think about how you use your personal networks for your own objectives and apply that logic to your organization's needs.



1. Post a volunteer opportunity. More than 4 million LinkedIn members want to volunteer their time for good. To reach these members, LinkedIn created the “**volunteer marketplace**” where members can search opportunities to volunteer in their communities. Additionally, LinkedIn charges companies a fee to post job opportunities, which can cost up to \$400 for 30 days. However 501(c)(3) nonprofits located in the U.S. receive a 90 percent discount.



2. Map out your connections. Applying for a grant and want to know if you have any useful connections that could put in a good word? Trying to confirm a dynamic speaker for your annual meeting?

- Go to LinkedIn and search for the relevant organization, click on the organization link. On the organization's page there is a box on the right saying how you're connected, click “See All.” Look for your shared connections. Determine if you are close enough to any of the connections to ask them to put in a good word or connect you directly.
- Another option is if you know the name of the particular person (potential speaker or decision maker on the funding opportunity) you want to reach. If you do, type their name in the search box and click their profile. Scroll to the bottom to see if you have any shared contacts. If you do, determine if you feel comfortable reaching out to your shared connections with the ask.



3. Share content. Reuse the photos, news articles and stories you share on your organization's other social media channels. Don't worry about posting every day, but try to post a few times a week.



4. Advertise. Try advertising your page and posts to specific people based on their current job level, company, position or location.

- Create an ad for your page if you want to raise awareness about your organization. Use your logo for the picture, include a headline and description of your organization.
- While your status will appear in your followers' newsfeed without an advertising budget – unlike Facebook – sponsoring updates will help you reach the exact people you want to reach. For your posts that you'd like people to take action on or interact with, click “Sponsor Update” and experiment with a small budget to determine what audience targeting works best.



5. Find board members. By **posting open board roles**, you can leverage the power of the LinkedIn network to target and identify qualified professionals for your board.

6. Join groups. A LinkedIn group is a subset of members with common interests and a place for professionals in the same industry to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business connections and establish themselves as experts. You can find groups to join by using the search feature at the top of your homepage or **viewing suggestions of groups you may like**.



Analyze and Listen

As with all digital platforms, evaluate how your audience is engaging with your content and if there are changes that should be made to better meet your objectives. As a page administrator, use your page's Analytics tab to view data about your organization's page. The tab is broken into **three sections**: Updates, Followers, and Visitors. Track each of these metrics on a monthly basis:

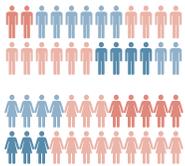


Updates

Impressions: The number of times each update was shown to LinkedIn members.

Clicks: The number of clicks on your content, company name or logo. This doesn't include shares, likes and comments.

Interactions: The number of times people have liked, commented on and shared each update.



Followers

Count: Keep track of the number of people who chose to follow your organization.

Follower Demographics: A breakdown of who's following your organization using five types of demographic data. Use the dropdown menu on the right to filter with the following demographics: Seniority, Industry, Function, Region, Company Size.

How You Compare: How do your follower numbers compare to other companies? How do you rank?

Visitors section

Unique Visitors: A graph showing how many LinkedIn members visited your page. This removes duplicate visits to a single page such as when a member refreshes your page or leaves for a few minutes but returns later.

Visitor Demographics: This is a graph showing a breakdown of who's visiting your page with the following demographics: Seniority, Industry, Function, Region, Company Size.