

# The MSP Owner's Guide to Using LinkedIn to Generate Leads

Why LinkedIn is the best social media platform to generate leads»»



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# Why LinkedIn?

When you think about the most important social networks for your MSP, you probably think about some of the bigger names like Facebook, Twitter, and even Instagram. Yes, it's absolutely true that those services give you intimate access to hundreds of millions of people around the world. But in terms of generating business to business leads, there's only one social network platform that has the ability to consistently outperform the rest. **That social network is LinkedIn.**

According to a recent study, two professionals join LinkedIn every second. 90 million senior-level influencers and 63 million decision makers use LinkedIn. Not only do about 97 percent of B2B marketers currently use LinkedIn as a content distribution channel, but about 46 percent of ALL social media traffic headed towards those B2B companies' websites also originates from the service.

In terms of generating business to business leads, there's only one social network platform that has the ability to consistently outperform the rest. That social network is **LinkedIn.**

So at that point, it's safe to say that the potential to generate higher quality and more engaged leads from LinkedIn for your MSP isn't just significant. It's practically enormous.

But at the same time, there are still people out there who are making some fairly large mistakes when it comes to properly leveraging LinkedIn to their advantage. Many MSPs choose to focus their efforts on a dedicated company profile, for example, when **LinkedIn is all about your personal profile**. Sometimes MSPs see LinkedIn as a way for potential customers to find a business when **it's really about the different ways that a business can effectively find customers**.

These mistakes have made it difficult for MSPs to achieve the results they were after in the past and, as a result, has led to many of them writing the site off altogether. But as someone who has helped over 100 different MSPs since the start of 2018 alone, I can tell you that from first-hand experience this is the type of opportunity that your business literally cannot afford to overlook.

- **Six** phone calls in one week
- **Four** deals signed over two weeks
- **\$18,000** added in recurring revenue in 30 days

These are just a few examples of the real, tangible results that we've been able to generate for our own clients when LinkedIn is used the right way at exactly the right time.

Now, I'd like to take the opportunity to describe in detail exactly how you can start using these tactics, to see results.

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# Setting up your profile

Maybe the most important thing for you to understand, is that simply having an account on LinkedIn won't be enough to generate a steady stream of new leads coming right to your (virtual) door. As the owner of an MSP, **you need to build a strong profile** for yourself because that is where all of your activities will be centered (as opposed to your general company page.)

That means your profile must be built for success from the start. If it isn't, you won't get nearly as far as you'd hoped. Now is the time to educate your future prospects about what YOU do in a specific, intimate, and relatable way.

## Creating your headline

According to one [recent study](#), you have about seven seconds (if you're lucky) to make a first impression on your target audience. In the context of LinkedIn, that means that your headline isn't just an important element of your overall profile optimization efforts.

**It's a critical one.**

Whenever you post something in your news feed, your headline is the first thing a prospect sees. They'll see it when you send them a message, when they look at who has viewed their profile recently, or whenever you get recommended for a connection.

In a best-case scenario, your headline is a chance to quickly hook someone — to grab their attention in a way they just can't look away from. In a worst-case scenario, it's an opportunity for them to write you off immediately — they'll elect to ignore your profile and at that point, and you're probably not going to get them back again regardless of how hard you try.

**Just because a headline is short doesn't mean it can't be meaningful.** Far from it. You just have to make appropriate use of the real estate that you've been given.

For example, your first instinct may be to write a headline like this:

- “CEO of [INSERT MSP BUSINESS NAME HERE]”

There’s nothing inherently “wrong” with this approach — it’s just that those headlines don’t tell someone nearly as much as you think they do.

The issue is that they’re all focused inward, towards yourself. It’s okay to be proud of the fact that you’re the CEO of a business you founded, but your leads are going to need a little bit more than that. **They don’t want to know about YOU as much as they want to find out about what YOU can do for THEM.**

Again, consider the problem with the following examples:

- “Helping your business align its technology with its long-term goals.”
- “Providing an innovative approach to technology.”
- “Leveraging the power of modern technology to your advantage.”

They’re all technically “true” — those are things that you do. But they’re also things that ALL managed services providers do.

Now, consider something like the following:

- “X% Faster Response Times to Your IT Problems”
- “Guaranteeing Y% Uptime via a Proactive Approach to IT”
- “Increase Your IT Return on Investment by Z% with Managed Services.”

Think about the types of things people say to you whenever you’re onboarding a new customer. Nobody ever says “I’m thinking of doing business with you because I want to align my technology with my long-term goals.” Instead, they come at you with the problems they’re facing — “my current provider takes too long to respond to tickets,” or “my network is always going down and I can’t take it anymore,” or “I’m spending too much money without getting anything from it that I couldn’t do myself.”

The headline examples in the former category are all about you — which is the problem. Instead, you need to take the big issues that all of your customers tell you about and reverse it on them.

**Use the headline as the opportunity to A) call out the common problem that people face, and B) position yourself as the ONE company that can solve it.** That's how you make excellent use of your headline and get people to start paying attention.

## Choosing a professional photo

In general, the delicate tightrope act you're trying to walk with your LinkedIn profile is "personal but professional at the same time."

A lot of people tend to lean far too heavily on the former and their photo is maybe the best example of this.

A big part of profile optimization comes down to choosing the right photo, because again, **you have fractions of a second to make a good first impression.** You may like that family photo of you smiling during a backyard barbecue, but never forget that this is a professional network — and every element, including your image, needs to match that same style.

Remember that you're going to be specifically targeting people who have questions about working with an MSP. They have very serious problems that need to be solved. The future of their business is at stake. They don't care that you took a good photo at a family picnic.

At a bare minimum, your photo should have a professional background and you should be smiling. This is a great way to both immediately build some credibility, and also confirm in someone's mind that they're actually in the right place.

## Writing a winning "About" section

The "About" section on LinkedIn is exactly what it sounds like — an opportunity to go into more detail about who you are, what you do, and why people should actually care. Use this section to write about your business in a way that doesn't focus on technical specifications or the actual "nuts and bolts" of your technology. Use it to write about how you specifically **help like-minded business owners accomplish their goals, or solve certain problems that they're facing.**

You have **fractions of a second** to make a good first impression with your **LinkedIn profile.**

Call out a problem that your target audience is having and tell them outright how you'll solve it. If you know that response tickets that go unanswered is a major problem they're having, write about the fact that you answer those tickets in an average time of an hour or less. If you know that they're concerned about technology going down, write about how your uptime is X% higher than everyone else's. **Take something good about yourself and reframe it in a way that emphasizes your customer first, and then you second.**

Be specific. Talk to your audience about their unique pains. Do it in not only the headline and "About" section, but ALL throughout your profile.

## Additional elements for your LinkedIn profile

There are a number of other sections in your LinkedIn profile that you'll need to complete, too, including ones like:

- **Your work history.** Here is your chance to not only show that you've worked with X number of MSPs over the years, but that you've also worked with organizations in a specific niche or geographic area. In other words, frame this in a way that calls out what your ideal customer looks like. Let prospects see themselves in your description.

- **Education.** This is where you can specify all of the certifications you have, the training that you've gone through, or similar things of that nature. All of this will contextualize what you can do in the minds of your prospects.
- **Volunteer Experience.** This is a great way to show that your brand is about more than just managed services, you also prioritize helping the community, too. It's again a great way to paint a very well-rounded picture of yourself.

But don't forget — people don't care so much about what you've done, and are instead focused on what you can do FOR THEM. So while these sections should all be complete, they're not as important as the rest.

## Recommendations: The importance of social proof

The importance of social proof is something that cannot be overstated — particularly on LinkedIn. It's effective due to the bandwagon effect — if your leads see that you're already successfully engaging with other like-minded business owners, they're more likely to do so as well because other people have already taken that step.

Don't be afraid to **ask your best customers to recommend you on LinkedIn**. If they're happy with your service, they should have no problem doing this. The more recommendations you get, the more reach your profile will have, and the more convincing it will be for the prospects who land on it.

Put those recommendations in a more strategic location — like your “About” section — beyond the dedicated section at the bottom of the page; almost doubling it like a testimonial.

This, coupled with the design of your profile to address their questions and concerns, is what will set you (and your LinkedIn page) apart. If you get them interested as soon as they see your profile, they're more likely to stay around to listen to what you have to say. That, in a nutshell, is what profile optimization is all about.

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# Growing your network

By now, you have a profile that is optimized that will allow you to **capitalize on those precious few seconds you have to stand out in a crowd**. People will immediately get a sense of what you're all about and, more importantly, why they should care. But you can't sit back and wait for people to stumble upon your profile. Instead, you need to take the proactive approach — meaning you need to start asking for new connections yourself. This, too, is something you'll need to do in a very particular way.

## Using LinkedIn Sales Navigator

The best way to strategically send connection requests is with the [LinkedIn Sales Navigator](#). This is LinkedIn's advanced search tool that gives you more options and results beyond what you'd get with the regular LinkedIn search. (Access to the tool requires a premium LinkedIn subscription.) This is the part of the process where you actively go out and find prospects to engage with — forget about waiting for them to come to you. Whether you're

interested in talking with small to medium-sized business owners in your area, IT directors or some other group entirely, you need to actively send connection requests to people in your very precise target audience. Once you've upgraded your account and you're actually inside the LinkedIn Sales Navigator tool, you can begin conducting those searches using the following steps:

- Click on the button labeled “Lead Builder” in the search bar at the top of the screen.
- Use the bar on the left side of the screen to enter as much detail as possible about the people you're trying to find.
- If you know the specific company someone works for, you can put that information in the “Company” box.
- Use the “Location” filter to narrow your search to your core service area. Use the “Title” and “Industry” filters to precisely target those within that area. If you were specifically looking for IT directors, you would include that information in “Title.”

When you're done, the main portion of the window will be populated with results that precisely match your query.

Once you have your list pulled up in Sales Navigator, you can quickly browse through and select the profiles that look like good prospects for you. To request a connection with them, just click the "Connect" button and send them a connection request. That's the literal part of sending a connection request. The next thing to focus on involves not only what you're going to say, but how you're going to say it.

## Sending connection requests

Sending connection requests on LinkedIn is how you grow your network. These outbound connection requests are an important part of how you expand your reach.

Now that you're ready to send connection requests, be careful because if you're an active LinkedIn user, you've probably noticed the high amount of "connection request spam" that's currently out there. There are a lot of people out there sending vague, irrelevant connection requests using pre-made templates, thus creating a lot of noise for people like you who are actually trying to use LinkedIn in the right way.

Because of that, you'll need to cut through all that noise and show your prospect that you're a real person who wants to communicate in a genuine, authentic way. So when you go visit the profile and click that "Send Connection Request" button, make sure that you include a personal note.

Even something as simple as saying "Hey there! I noticed you're a fellow small business owner in my area. I just wanted to reach out and introduce myself and see if there was anything I could do to help" will go a long way towards injecting as much personality into the encounter as possible.

In a larger sense, **you need to have a personal, logical outreach message** (read: non-salesy) locked, loaded and ready to go. You also need to connect with as many people as you have time to on a daily basis. For some, that may be 10 connections a day. For others, that may be 75. It doesn't matter — if you **remain consistent and vigilant** in your efforts, they will soon begin to **generate their own momentum.**

## Following up with your connections

Even if you do attempt to make 75 connections per day, understand that not all of them are going to be successful. Some people just don't check LinkedIn very often. Others don't accept outside connection requests of any kind.

When people DO accept your request, it is of PARAMOUNT importance that you follow through on your promise with continued, direct, straightforward, and raw conversation that goes beyond "straight selling." The idea here is that you reach out and say something like "Hey there. Thanks for connecting with me."

When people accept your request, it's important that you deliver on your promise with **continued, direct, conversation** that goes beyond **"straight selling"**.

Here are some examples of follow-up messages that you can use for immediately after that initial connection is made:

1. "Hey there! Thanks for connecting with me. [INSERT SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF HERE] You know a little about me at this point, I'm interested in learning more about you. Do you guys use your own IT provider, or do you have everything in-house?"
2. Hi! Thanks so much for connecting with me, it really means a lot. I'm very active on LinkedIn and I also do a lot of work on our company blog. Here's a link to an article I thought you in particular might get a lot out of.."
3. "Hello! In case you didn't already know, we're an IT support company in [CITY] and we do things a bit differently. Would you be open to a short call or even a cup of coffee, just so we can get to know each other?"

All of this really means a lot to the very active people on LinkedIn. Let your connections play out in an earnest, organic way. Then, segue into the "... oh by the way, my business provides IT support and here's what makes us a little different..." aspect of the relationship when it's natural to do so.

# Nurturing your connections

By now, you'll have started to build your audience and you're going to have people that you'll have established a meaningful connection with who are in just the right place at just the right time. They'll want to talk to you about what type of services you offer, and that's terrific.

But the truth is, **to get the most out of using LinkedIn, you'll need to nurture those leads once you connect.** That's what we'll be describing in the next section.

## Posting content to LinkedIn

Remember that connecting on LinkedIn means that these people are going to be seeing your posts from now on. They're going to be able to make comments on those posts. You're going to be able to respond to those comments. In other words, this is where you develop your relationship with your connections and you do it in a natural and organic way.

Think very carefully about what types of content you're posting. Consider an article about why it's important to upgrade from Windows 7, for example, as Microsoft's older operating system is about to hit "End of Life" status. This type of article is genuinely helpful for your connections, as failing to upgrade exposes them to some fairly significant risks they need to be aware of.

But the truth is, you know exactly why you'd post that type of article — you want to sell Windows 7 upgrade packages. That's perfectly acceptable, provided that the original article was of a high enough quality in the first place. In that example, a good piece of content would be one that informs, educates and helps your audience AND ALSO can be used as a sales opportunity for your business. If the content were ONLY a sales opportunity, it wouldn't have the same impact and it wouldn't be useful in terms of nurturing your connections over the long-term.

### Post helpful articles that answer questions or address concerns

**that your users have.** If you see something that you think people might like to see, share it on your page. If you've written something specifically for your ideal audience members, share that, too.

Maybe you've found that a lot of your clients are having a hard time understanding some new type of malware, or some major industry-specific compliance change. Either find an article that helps clear up the matter and share it, or write one of your own that does the same thing.

Don't look at LinkedIn as an opportunity to post ads for your business and don't rely heavily on scare tactics. To continue with the above example, don't write a piece about upgrading from Windows 7 because "if you don't, it could bring your business to its knees as you're exposed to cyber-attack after cyber-attack." Let people know what Windows 7 "End of Life" means, why upgrading is important, and what might happen if they don't, using calm, clear language that educates them instead of terrifies.

**Always be posting helpful, high quality content** so that when you pop up at the top of someone's feed, it's for a **positive reason that ISN'T trying to sell something.**

## Exporting your connections

The last and final thing you can do with LinkedIn is export your connections so that you can use them elsewhere.

LinkedIn natively includes a way to export all of your first degree connections, right from your main account page. Now, this doesn't mean that you can export all those people and put them directly into an email marketing program like MailChimp. Those leads didn't opt into your email list and above that, it wouldn't be the right thing to do.

However, you CAN export those that you've determined are the right fit for your business and send them an email from your personal inbox. Even something as simple as "Hi there - we connected on LinkedIn and I wanted to ask you a quick question..." would be more than enough to get the job done. The essential thing is to use these people as the basis for ongoing prospecting, as at this point you've already warmed them up.

At that point, all that's left to do is to carry that relationship over the finish line.

# Taking your networking to the next level

LinkedIn is one of the most powerful opportunities you have available. More than any other social network, it takes what you can do with “real world” networking and translates it onto the Internet. Only you don’t have to attend a community dinner or industry brunch. You can do everything right from your computer, day or night

The process may seem straightforward, and in a lot of ways it is. But believe me — it works. It’s the one we use at Tech Pro Marketing for our own clients and we are consistently generating leads on their behalf. But it’s a process that takes time. I’d be lying to you if I said this wasn’t a big commitment. But, as the old saying goes, “anything worth doing is worth doing right.”

If you truly want to use LinkedIn to generate more leads using this process, it’s something you’re going to have to work at.

Oftentimes, that means putting in at least two hours to make these connections with people — even when you “don’t feel like it.”

Some of our clients have the resources to put forth that effort on their own, and they’re seeing tremendous results with it. But others don’t and that’s okay.

If you’re one of those people who believes in the process but doesn’t necessarily have the time to devote to it, Tech Pro Marketing is offering a free consultation for readers who want to see what it’s like to work with a firm that is dedicated to generating leads using LinkedIn (and other innovative marketing tactics).

We’ll even review your current LinkedIn profile to see what is working and, more importantly, what can work even better.

So if this is something you’d be interested in, please contact **Tech Pro Marketing** to get your free consultation scheduled.

## About the author



You don't want marketing help from just anyone — you want it from someone that doesn't just know MSPs, but someone that is focused exclusively on helping MSPs generate leads. Nate Freedman has more than two decades of marketing and IT experience and manages a team that has dedicated more than 25,000 hours to working with managed services providers on new and innovative ways to guarantee the marketing results they need when they need them the most. [Connect with Nate on LinkedIn.](#)

## About Tech Pro Marketing



Tech Pro Marketing partners with MSPs throughout North America, helping them generate predictable, quality leads with our proven MSP Lead Generation Engine™. Visit the [Tech Pro Marketing website](#) for more information.



### About Barracuda MSP

As the MSP-dedicated business unit of Barracuda Networks, Barracuda MSP enables IT managed service providers to offer multi-layered security and data protection services to their customers through our award-winning products and purpose-built MSP management platforms. Barracuda MSP's partners-first approach focuses on providing enablement resources, channel expertise, and robust, scalable MSP solutions designed around the way managed service providers create solutions and do business. Visit [barracudamsp.com](http://barracudamsp.com) for additional information. [@BarracudaMSP](#) | [LinkedIn: BarracudaMSP](#) | [blog.barracudamsp.com](http://blog.barracudamsp.com)

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