



social networking best practices

## Face It and Link In: Online Social Networking Best Practices

Social networking is here to stay. Your competitors are posting profiles on social networking sites like Facebook and LinkedIn. They are using them as resources for networking and as a strategic tool in marketing and business development. If used correctly, you too can use social networks to market yourself and your firm's services.

### *For Social Network Users*

- There are several social networks to choose from. The two main ones to start with are LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)). You can create a profile for free on both sites. It can take less than one hour to create your profiles.
- When creating your profile be sure to include:
  1. Photos – professional and personal. **DO NOT** post photos you wouldn't want your boss to see. Some sites, like LinkedIn, are very professional focused, while others, like Facebook, are more personally focused. Browse a few samples to get the picture.
  2. Contact information – title, firm, email, phone, website, blog, etc. Be sure to paste in the URLs to create “hard” links.
  3. Your firm brand and key messages – what is your niche? A few messages about your firm will really help in business development, branding and recruiting.
  4. History – what have you studied, where have you worked, what is your experience
  5. What you are up to – where are you now, how long have you been at your firm, what you do, what are you looking for, how can you be helped, what groups do you belong to, etc.
- Keep your information current.
- There are several features (a.k.a. applications) you can add to your Facebook profile. Be careful what you add and how many. Clean and simple is better.
- Set aside time. While social networking may seem overwhelming at first, you will only have to spend a few minutes on it every day or two to start benefiting. Of course, the more time you dedicate the more results you may see. For those just starting, spend your time making sure your profile is accurate and up-to-date and search for people you'd like to connect to. Once you have



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those things under control, play around a bit. On Facebook, add posts to your Notes section (it's like a mini personal blog). On LinkedIn, ask or answer questions. Any time you interact with your social network, an update of your activities will be posted on your connection's site so they'll know what you're up to.

- Recommend others and ask them to recommend you (LinkedIn-specific).
- Be careful who you connect to. It's not necessary to connect to everyone. On LinkedIn, we recommend only connecting to people who you would refer. This network is very business driven so you want to be sure you're connecting to people who you know and respect. If you get a request to connect to someone you do not know, review their profile before accepting. If that person has connections who you'd really like to leverage connecting to that person may result in productive business connections. If you accidentally "connect" to someone you do not want to be connected with don't worry, there is a way to disconnect with people.