

5 Tips for Using LinkedIn to Find Star Employees

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Successful business people are always looking for their next rock star employee. The question is where do you find them? The good news is that the latest LinkedIn stats – 60 million professional profiles spanning 200 countries - would indicate this is a good place to look.

Many of us already have a LinkedIn account, and if you don't, LinkedIn is free and easy to manoeuvre. The trick is incorporating some strategies (habits, if you will) into *using LinkedIn*.

Below are five easy things you can add to your LinkedIn strategy to give you greater exposure to top talent.

1. Build Connections

In the course of your daily business, you never know where your next sale is going to come from. The same can be true for recruiting. It's important to connect and build relationships with a variety of different people. For example, *my LinkedIn profile* has connections from prior jobs, clients, and local entrepreneurs I do business with. It's great when I can make introductions between people with varied needs.

2. Join Groups

In addition to being a part of groups for your personal and/or professional benefit, join a couple of groups that might help surface candidates. Let's say you're always looking for sales professionals. There's a LinkedIn group - *The Sales Association* - that you might want to join as a way to connect with possible candidates. They have almost 20,000 members, are affiliated with a *national association*, and have a job posting system when you're ready to let people know about your next opening.

3. Engage with Questions and Answers

Once you start connecting with groups, look for opportunities to engage with people in discussions. Notice people who share your culture and enter into a conversation with them. I belong to a group called *Social Media in Organizations*. This group offers multiple channels to talk about workplace social media – discussions, webinars, articles, a book club, etc.

4. Get (and Read) LinkedIn Updates

This is a quick and easy way to recognize people for promotions, awards, and accomplishments. People will remember you. Since much of your LinkedIn profile is static, this is a way to regularly let people know what you're up to. I've seen some of my connections post in their status "Looking for a Senior Accountant. Got a lead? Let me know."

5. Embrace Mobile

Keeping up with all of the information available can be a daunting task. That's why I like the mobile version of LinkedIn for my phone. I can check updates while I'm waiting at appointments, so staying on top of the activity doesn't have to be a time-consuming chore. LinkedIn offers versions for the *iPhone* and *BlackBerry*.

Over the years, LinkedIn has taken some hits for being nothing more than an online repository of names. But these days, more and more people are becoming reacquainted with it. Since most people have a presence on LinkedIn, it's an obvious place to keep tabs on what's happening in the marketplace. And as small business owners, you can easily leverage LinkedIn to find talent.