

# LinkedIn for Lawyers

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*By Frank Ramos*



*To Ana*

*As with all my other books, this one is for you*

*To David and Michael*

*Keep playing*

DRI

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## About the Author

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Francisco ("Frank") Ramos, Jr. is the Managing Partner of the Miami litigation boutique firm of Clarke Silverglate, P.A., where he practices in the areas of personal injury defense, product liability, employment and commercial litigation. He served on the board of the Defense Research Institute (DRI) and is a member of the Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel (FDCC), where he served as co-chair of the Deposition Boot Camp and serves as co-chair of the Art of Marketing Seminar and the ACT Initiative.

He is a Past President of the Florida Defense Lawyers Association and Past Chair of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Historical Society. He has served on the boards of the Miami-Dade County Defense Bar Association, FIU Honors' Alumni Association, FIU Alumni Association, Parent to Parent of Miami, Miami Legal Services and Florida Christian School.

This is Frank's 11th book. His other ten books include—*Go Motivate Yourself, From Law School to Litigator, The Associates' Handbook, Attorney Marketing 101, Training Your Law Firm Associates, SLDO Strategic Planning Manual, Future of Law, Social Media Musings—My Reflections on the Practice and Life, The Practice and Process of Law—Checklists for Every Occasion* and *Be Your Own Life Coach*. He has written over 400 articles and has edited four books—*The Defense Speaks, The Trial Tactics Defense Manual, The Deposition Manual* and *Leadership for Lawyers*. Please follow him on LinkedIn, where he posts daily and has over 49,000 followers, or feel free to email him at [framos@cspalaw.com](mailto:framos@cspalaw.com).



# Foreword

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I get asked a lot about LinkedIn. I've been on the platform for about a dozen years (a baker's dozen) and have spent a lot of time studying the platform and trying to optimize my use of it. This book shares everything I've learned with you. LinkedIn isn't hard. It's not complicated. It's easy to understand, use and master. I hope you find this book helpful on your journey to making LinkedIn an integral part of your career and business development.



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## What Is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is the largest business social media platform with professional users from around the world. You will not find a business social media site with more lawyers, business leaders, insurance professionals and potential clients. You don't post family vacation photos, or discuss politics or share memes on LinkedIn. It is for professionals to discuss topics professionals discuss. It is a forum to meet and get to know prospective clients and share your expertise and market your practice. It is an easy platform to learn and use. There is an app you can download for your tablet or phone. The folks behind the platform are regularly tinkering and improving the platform to make it more user friendly and make it easier to reach out and connect with other professionals. In fact, by the time this book is published and circulated, there will likely be a half dozen new features that didn't exist when I wrote it. So, if you're considering putting your toe in the social media pond to generate leads and develop business, LinkedIn is the platform to consider and use.

## Why LinkedIn?

Still not convinced? Why use LinkedIn? Most every professional I know has a profile on LinkedIn. Most every professional I know scrolls through their feed on LinkedIn. If you Google someone, one of the first hits will be their LinkedIn profile. More and more of us interact with others daily through social media and no one does business social media better than LinkedIn. Each day, hundreds of new professionals join LinkedIn to meet and get to know lawyers like you. LinkedIn allows you to interact with others from around the world whenever and wherever you want and like. You can build relationships with others you would never have met in person. You can get referrals from prospective clients who learned about you through the platform. Why LinkedIn? Because it works for building your brand, expanding your name recognition and creating relationships with prospective clients.

## Why You Should Consider LinkedIn

If you're deciding how to market your firm and your practice, and you're looking to do so on a limited marketing budget with a schedule that doesn't permit you much free time for long lunches or cocktail parties, LinkedIn may be your solution. LinkedIn allows you to reach out to other professionals in a professional setting, connect with and message them and lay the foundation for a mutually beneficial business relationship that you can take offline. All business is based upon and premised on relationships. Most folks on LinkedIn are there to create new relationships and foster existing ones and

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are open to meeting and getting to know and referring work to lawyers like you. Online relationships aren't all that different from in-person ones and an online community provides you access to folks you may not have ever met otherwise.

## How LinkedIn Compares to Other Platforms

The major social media platforms include LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Lawyers use all these platforms to generate leads and develop relationships. Each has its own approach, tone, expectations and content. Facebook is primarily for friends and family where you share laughs and loss, opinions and humor. Photos are posted from vacations, meals, weddings, birthdays, graduations, funerals, losses, fundraisers and personal events. Some use it to promote their firms and their brand but they do it as part of a larger, more personal strategy, revealing items about themselves, their hobbies, interests and feelings. Instagram is a photo sharing site where you promote yourself and your business largely through visuals and short messages and videos. Like Facebook, it's more of a fun site, where you can promote your business, but in an eye catching manner. Twitter is a quick take website, where folks share their opinions and hot takes on a whole host of topics. It's a good site to share articles, blog posts and other items with potential clients. Twitter, though, is full of trolls and those looking for an online fight. So often, I've seen even the best meaning and innocuous tweets





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result in needless Twitter wars. Folks with thin skin should not apply. That leaves LinkedIn as the best platform for business relations. If you're going to pick one online platform to conduct business, choose LinkedIn.

## **How Marketing Has Changed**

There was a time all attorney marketing was done in person—over meals or drinks or at a conference. These efforts were supplemented with calls, letters and hard copy promotional materials. Though the personal touch will never be replaced and is integral in every attorney's business development plan, more and more marketing is going online through social media. Beyond the firm websites and attorney blogs, beyond the e-newsletters and e-mail blasts, more and more firms are turning to social media to promote themselves, their practice areas and their attorneys. Many firms have found their ways onto social media and have created their space and have spread their influence across various social media platforms. If done right, done well and done consistently, legal social media marketing pays off—it pays off in influence, in relationships and in new business.

## **How the Way We Receive Information Has Changed**

We receive more and more information on our phones. We receive news, calls, texts, messages, alerts, movies, shows, podcasts, blogs—you name it—on our phones. And we want the information to be concise, visual and easily digestible. We've lost our patience and our attention spans and we simply process information differently. Our brains work differently. Our brains are wired now for social media. Social media knows this because they've played a role in reprogramming us. The way we scroll down on our phones and tablets, the visual cues, the headlines and content—social media has trained us and transformed how we process and consume digital data. So if you want to reach others, LinkedIn allows you to tap into this Pavlovian response we've all become conditioned to. If social media has become the proverbial ringing bell, when it comes to professionals, LinkedIn rings the loudest.

## **My LinkedIn Story**

As I write this book, I have about 49,000 followers on LinkedIn. I post daily, including weekends and holidays, and regularly exchange messages with LinkedIn members. I have a worldwide network of lawyers, industry and insurance professionals, law professors and law students with whom I

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interact with daily. I've had others refer me cases or ask for help in finding them attorneys in their neck of the woods, and I have developed relationships with a wide array of potential clients who have come to know me through my daily posts. And all of this started with a decision in August 2016 to start posting daily.

I joined LinkedIn in 2007, tinkered with it, and didn't understand how it could help me and my practice. I revisited the platform every year with similar results and feelings. And then in 2016 I released my second book, *The Associate's Handbook*, and I was deciding how to promote it. It was a free e-book by DRI, and I wanted to get it into as many hands as possible. At the time, I had about 2,500 connections on LinkedIn and figured why not, I'll share daily excerpts from the book and a link at the end of each excerpt. And sure enough, a lot of folks started downloading my book. I picked up many new connections and followers and discovered the power of The Daily—if I committed each day to post on LinkedIn, I would grow my network, promote my book and my practice and my firm, and develop an oversized footprint in the legal community. So three plus years later, I still post daily. My daily advice for young lawyers has evolved and morphed from being excerpts from my book to advice on the practice, law firm management, leadership, motivation, mentoring, attorney wellness and of course pretrial and trial practice. And no, posting daily is less work than you think. Once you develop a habit to think and reduce to writing a daily thought, tip or share, you'll find yourself holding back from posting frequently throughout the day, every day.

## Others' LinkedIn Stories

By engaging regularly on LinkedIn, I've learned others' LinkedIn stories. The LinkedIn success stories, the influencers, are ones committed to posting regularly, engaging with those who share and comment on their posts, and taking those relationships offline by meeting with folks for coffee, meals or drinks. There are a lot of LinkedIn success stories, and most follow that pattern—regularly post, engage, and take fledgling business relationships offline.

## LinkedIn Is Like Vegetables

LinkedIn is like vegetables, you should try it, it's good for you and you may be surprised and like it. Take the time to sign onto the platform, download the app, create a profile and explore. See what other lawyers and law firms are doing on the platform. See who is on the platform and what they're posting and sharing. Talk to others using LinkedIn and ask about their experiences

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and results. Commit to using the platform for a month, consistently and regularly, and if at the end of the month you determine LinkedIn isn't for you, move on. LinkedIn isn't for everyone, and it's ok not to be active on it. But don't reject the platform before you've tried it. I never thought I would like spinach until I tried it.

## **Why Are You Considering LinkedIn?**

No doubt you've heard of LinkedIn. You're familiar with it. You likely already have a profile and have used it. But you haven't committed to it. It's a curiosity. It's a bit of an oddity. It seems foreign. It seems difficult to navigate. You don't quite understand it. Yet, it's intriguing. You read and hear about it all the time. Are you afraid of missing out? Being left behind? Ignoring a trend that can lead to more clients and increased revenue? Considering adding another element and aspect to your marketing plan? Before jumping into LinkedIn or any social media platform, ask yourself—Why do I want to do this? What is motivating me? What do I want? What do I expect? What outcome am I seeking? You should ask these questions whenever pursuing any new approach for your law firm marketing plan. Do you see LinkedIn as being part of the solution to your attorney marketing problem, or do you see it just as a fad? Your attitude, beliefs and values will drive whether you embrace LinkedIn, question it or even sneer at it.

## **LinkedIn Is Easy**

Let me assure you—LinkedIn is easy. I am not a techie. I am not embedded in the tech world. If I can do it, you can too. If I can develop a worldwide following, you can too. If you spend fifteen minutes a day for a week exploring LinkedIn, tinkering with your profile, posting, sharing, commenting and messaging, and clicking on all the tabs and sub tabs to see what the platform offers, you will learn how to use it, and in fact will be more familiar with the platform than 80 percent of those already on it. If you've never done any form of social media before, and all of this is not only strange but a bit scary, spending time on LinkedIn will show you that you can do this too. You got this.

## **LinkedIn on Your Phone**

Finding time for LinkedIn is easy if you use your down time—time waiting in line at the dry cleaner, market or retail store, time waiting for a hearing or deposition, time watching television. To use LinkedIn in these settings,

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you will need to use LinkedIn on your phone and to do that, you will need to download the LinkedIn app. It's free, it's easy to use and it's intuitive. Most of my time spent on LinkedIn is via my phone. Most of my posts, communications and interactions are on my phone when I'm waiting on someone or something. I wait, a lot. It bears noting that though the app has the same features as the website version, the layout is different and you'll need to learn to be proficient on both.

## **Making Time for LinkedIn**

LinkedIn only takes 15 minutes a day. You can spend more time on the platform, but you can do what you need to do in just fifteen minutes. If you train yourself to capture your ideas and thoughts when they come and reduce them to posts and be strategic about whom you reach out to and communicate with, 15 minutes is more than enough time. Of course, you can choose to spend more time on the platform, and the more time you spend, the more connections you'll make and the larger your network will become. But if you're worried about not having enough time, commit to just 15 minutes a day, and if you find your investment paying dividends, you can spend more time, whether that's more time daily or more time once or twice a week.

## **It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint**

LinkedIn is a long term investment. You do a little each day, and you keep doing a little each day indefinitely. You must be honest with yourself. If you don't see yourself remaining active on the platform a year from now, you probably shouldn't start. The time you spend starting and stopping is better spent pursuing other marketing efforts. LinkedIn is slow and steady. It is a marathon, not a sprint. It will take time to see a return on your investment of time and energy. Growth in your following, in your connections, in your online reputation and your influence will be slow and steady for a long time until one day, almost by surprise, it will start growing faster and faster. For months, possibly years, the growth will be arithmetic, and then, once you've reached a critical mass of posts and shares and connections and followers, the growth will become exponential. First linear growth, and with time, much time, exponential growth. That's how LinkedIn and all social media platforms work.

## **Have a Purpose**

As with any marketing effort, have a purpose when using LinkedIn. Do you want to be perceived as an expert in a field of law? Do you want to become

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an influencer? Do you want to grow your network? Do you want to build relationships with specific individuals who are active on the platform? There is a plethora of reasons for engaging on LinkedIn. You likely have several. Before engaging on LinkedIn, think through your purpose for being on the platform. What do you hope to gain, learn and experience from the platform? Reflect upon your overall marketing strategy and what role or purpose you want LinkedIn to play in that strategy. As with everything we do in our life, in our cases, in our careers—we need to start with the purpose and work backwards from there.

## Have a Goal

After reflecting and deciding upon your purpose for using LinkedIn, decide upon your goals. Do you want to have 1,000 connections? 5,000? 10,000? Do you want to connect with 10 in house counsel? 100? Do you want to become one of the leading influencers in a given practice area? Do you want to develop and grow your brand as a thought leader in a given field? Do you want to take your LinkedIn relationships offline so you're having coffee with a different LinkedIn contact every month? Every week? Think through the types and scope of goals that you can achieve through LinkedIn.

## Exploring the Platform

Learn LinkedIn much like a toddler learns about his environment—by exploring. Click everything you can click on the site, read everything you can read on the site, and try everything there is to try on the platform. A great resource is the LinkedIn Help page which shows you how to get started, manage your account, build your profile, grow your network, share your content, discover groups and manage your LinkedIn page. The resource is a de facto tutorial on getting the most from your LinkedIn experience. Read through the help pages to learn as much as you can about the platform. The better acquainted you are with LinkedIn, the greater the value you will derive from it.

## Crafting Your Profile

Whether you decide to become active on LinkedIn or not, take the time to prepare a robust profile. Prospective clients searching for attorneys like you often view attorneys' LinkedIn profiles when deciding to hire them. Your LinkedIn profile is one of the first items that pops up on a Google search when others are looking for you online. The difference between a strong

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and weak LinkedIn profile can make the difference between being retained and being passed over.

When creating your profile, use a professional headshot, preferably the one from your law firm website. Provide detailed information about you, your practice and your firm. But do so in a conversational and friendly tone. Express who you are much the same way you would do so if asked about your practice at a cocktail party.

LinkedIn provides several categories regarding your background information. Complete all of them. List your current and former employers, the schools you attended, your volunteer experience, your skills, the organizations you belong to, your language proficiencies, your publications, and your awards and accolades.

You can include links to your website, provide your email address, other contact information and links to your publications. Everything and anything you want others to know about you and your career can be included on your LinkedIn profile.

As with the platform as a whole, explore the various aspects of the LinkedIn profile and include as much relevant information about you and your practice as you can. When writing about yourself, strike a balance between a conversational and professional tone, and a balance between self-confidence and egoism. Remember, your profile is an extension of you, your firm and your brand.

## Sharing Publications

LinkedIn allows you to share links to your publications—your blog, your articles and your e-books. Prospective clients search the Internet for free stuff. They comb the Internet, including LinkedIn, for free legal information they can use in their businesses. By including links to your legal publications, you're providing a free service to prospective clients who'll consider that when retaining new counsel. By giving, you can get. And by sharing, you can attract new business. Adding value is the catchphrase for business development. The more value-add, the more attention you will receive from prospective clients.

## Creating a Firm Profile

In addition to creating a personal profile, consider creating a firm profile or a company page. This profile will be dedicated to your firm and the content will be firm driven. Whereas I recommend most lawyers create their own

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personal page, I am less sanguine on recommending a firm page. There are many law firms with successful LinkedIn profile pages and there are just as many with unsuccessful ones. Populating and maintaining a firm profile page is a lot of work and not for the faint of heart. Before going down the road of a firm profile page, spend some time reviewing, inspecting and studying other firms' profile pages and see how often they post, what they post and how they interact with their followers. After doing so, ensure you have the commitment of your firm to provide content, participate and contribute to the firm page.

Unlike your personal page, a firm page needs regular and frequent content and must draw upon not just your own expertise and contributions but the expertise and contributions of a large number of your attorneys. It is a significant commitment in time and energy and requires the buy in of numerous attorneys from your firm who will be contributing and adding value to the firm's page. If successful, however, it will expand and brandish your law firm name online.

## Promoting Your LinkedIn Profile

Once you have your LinkedIn profile, share it with others. Include a link of your profile on your firm website, your blog and any other site you use to promote yourself and your practice. Include the address to your LinkedIn profile on your business card and any other written or printed materials promoting your firm. In addition, include a link to your profile in the signature block of your emails. Share your LinkedIn profile with as many as possible so they can learn more about you, your practice and your firm. Understand that many others will come to know you and what you do not from your firm website but through social media platforms such as LinkedIn and others. Therefore, promoting such platforms is the best way to get your name, your practice, and your firm out to as many prospective clients as possible.

## Settings

LinkedIn allows you to decide with whom you share your posts and articles. You should change your settings to public so everyone on LinkedIn can see what you post and share. Setting it to private will limit those who can see your posts to those who are in your circle of connections and followers. Since the point of LinkedIn is to promote yourself and your brand, there's no sense in limiting who can see and interact with your posts.

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## Building Your Network

The purpose of LinkedIn is to connect and build relationships with other professionals. To do so, take time to build and grow your network on the platform. Connect with colleagues you know, friends from law school and other professionals with whom you have a personal relationship. After you've exhausted these contacts, explore connecting with others with whom you have something in common or have a common connection. For example, there may be an attorney at another firm who is connected with several of your friends, belongs to an organization with which you're involved, or practices in the same area of the law. You may want to send him an invitation, explaining why you want to connect and asking to add him to your network. Personalize your request to connect. And take your time and be strategic about expanding your network.

In addition to your own research, LinkedIn offers suggestions of members with whom you may want to connect. These are other professionals who have similar backgrounds or have common interests. Review these recommendations, and reach out to those you would want to include in your ever-growing network.

Concurrently, you will start receiving invitations by other members to connect. Err on the side of accepting connections to grow your network. Keep in mind, however, that there are those on LinkedIn who are overly aggressive in pursuing business and the moment they connect with you they will solicit you. Be aware and circumspect of third-party vendors who use LinkedIn to cold call unsuspecting LinkedIn members and start flooding their e-mail in box and voicemail with emails and voice messages.

## Expanding Your Network

Expanding your network is essential to growing your online footprint and online influence. As you grow your network, more will view your posts, share them, comment on them, and get to know you, your firm and your practice. As more members connect with and follow you, when they interact with your posts, their networks see your posts and are introduced to you. LinkedIn is designed to get your name out there to as many other members as possible. For example, if I like your post, that like becomes part of my feed and anyone who sees my feed sees your post. That's not how it works on Facebook and most other social networks. If you look at a LinkedIn member's feed, you will see not only what they posted, and not only what they shared, but what they commented upon and what they liked, or loved or whatever else they did to another member's post. That's how your posts can get thousands upon thousands of view even though you don't have thousands upon thousands



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of connections. Expanding your network will expand your ability to attract new work.

## **Making Connections**

Making connections on LinkedIn is not hard. LinkedIn does everything possible to facilitate connections because that's how it promotes and sells itself. And folks on the platform are there to connect with other professionals to develop relationships that will lead to new business. So if you have something in common with another member—same college or law school, same former employer, same practice area—use that as a segue to reach out and make a connection. Don't be pushy. Don't be overbearing. Don't try to connect with everyone and drive up the numbers of connections for the sake of having a lot of connections. You'll find a lot of members you reach out to are happy to connect. In turn, you'll start receiving your share of connection requests. If you spend just a few minutes each day sending out targeted requests, your following will grow, slowly at first, and then, with time, much faster. You're growing a network of members that will see you in their feed when you post, share or like. You will become part of their day, part of their thought process and part of their consciousness. Build a following and they will come and listen to what you say.

## **Personalizing Invitations**

When sending an invitation, go beyond the default invitation and explain to the recipient why you are seeking to connect. It may be that you two have met in person. You may belong to the same organization. Or you may simply enjoy her content. Provide a reason why you are connecting. A reason is different from a rationale. A reason explains the interest in connecting. A rationale explains what you want out of the relationship. Don't put the cart before the horse. You're just saying hello and seeking to connect. Seek the connection first, and then seek the relationship. And don't do a hard sell, either on the invitation or afterwards. Whatever you do on the platform view it from the recipient's point of view—how would you react if you received a similar invitation to connect?

## **Connecting with Prospective Clients**

As a lawyer, your prospective clients include in house counsel, insurance professionals, business leaders and other outside counsel. That's a broad list. In other words, most of your connections will be potential clients. Anyone

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who has referred a case or may refer a case in the future is a potential client, and that solo practitioner you connected with across the country may refer you a case one day when his client's cousin who lives in your neck of the woods is looking for a lawyer. So understand, most everyone you connect with in LinkedIn may one day refer you a matter.

On a related note, a caveat for connecting with in house counsel. The last thing they want is to connect with an attorney and start being solicited for work. The relationship precedes the ask, and it takes time to build a relationship, and you're not going to build a relationship with all your connections. Start slow, build slow and only after you have a relationship with another member do you make an ask, and when you do, you just make your pitch and move on. They now know what you do and how you can serve them and their company. And they will see your posts in their feed. And if they're interested in hiring you the next time they have a case that suits your geography and practice area, and if it suits their needs to reach out to you, they will.

## Accepting Invitations

Err on the side of accepting invitations. I typically avoid invitations from aggressive vendors who are pushing their services in the invitation. My experience has been that the moment I accept their invitation, they start soliciting me. I also avoid invitations from folks with bare bones profiles or unusual ones. Like any platform, there are scammers on LinkedIn. I also don't accept invitations from judges or magistrates, to avoid the appearance of any impropriety. Other than these three categories—aggressive vendors, apparent scammers and the judiciary—I typically accept most invitations. I should say I used to accept most invitations. I reached my connection limit (yes there is a limit on connections—30,000) a while back and now if folks are interested in learning more about me, they can follow me. That's something to keep in mind—there is a limit on connections, so be purposeful when you pursue connections.

## Recommended for You

So, you've sent connection invitations to everyone you can think of, and have run out of folks with whom to connect? Don't worry. LinkedIn has got your back. LinkedIn will recommend possible connections based on your profile and your current connections. These are folks with similar backgrounds or with a similar assortment of connections. Using whatever algorithms they use, they regularly update a list of members you may want to invite to connect. Keep in mind, that if you send out too many connection requests and too



many of them are rejected, you'll be put in temporary time out, preventing you from sending out further connections for a few days. LinkedIn is doing its part to combat spammers, and numerous invitations sent out day after day raises red flags with them and causes them to put a temporary halt on your connection privileges. I don't know what's considered too many invitations and LinkedIn doesn't say, but just an F.Y.I.

## Who's Viewed Your Profile

LinkedIn has a feature that shows you some of the members that are viewing your profile. For example, in the last week, 10 members may have clicked on your profile and LinkedIn will reveal to you the identity of three of those members. If you pay a monthly fee, you will be shown the identity of every member viewing your profile. It's an intriguing feature, because the "free" version gives you a glimpse into who is studying you and the "paid" version tells you everyone who is doing so. Personally, I find this feature intriguing but I rarely use it, and despite my heavy involvement on the platform, I don't pay to participate on LinkedIn. If you're a lawyer, and you're using the platform to build your brand and expand your network, you can do that with the basic, free version of LinkedIn. I do see more and more members paying for a premium account, and they must think it's valuable to pay for it, but I've learned to live without it. At this stage, like a dog chasing a car, I probably wouldn't know what to do with a premium account, just like a dog wouldn't know what to do if it caught up to the car.

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## Who to Avoid

Like every platform, there are folks who misuse LinkedIn. They see a pool of hundreds of millions professionals, and they salivate, thinking how they can bombard anyone and everyone with sales pitches and marketing materials to sell their products or services. They're the sales folks who are looking for a quick buck and will harass you until you say yes. Generally, anyone who comes on strong on LinkedIn, who is selling before they say anything else, are folks to avoid. And just as importantly, don't become a pariah on LinkedIn. Don't be that person at the cocktail party that sticks his business card in everyone's hands before even saying hello. You're better than that.

## Joining Groups

LinkedIn has a feature which allows you to create your own group of like-minded professionals or join an existing group. For example, there are hundreds of groups geared toward lawyers. Most voluntary bar associations have a group page. Most practice areas have a group page. Do word searches to find what groups best serve your interests and likes, ask to join them and observe what happens in the group. Once you're familiar with a group and its interactions, participate and post and share in the group on topics and issues of interest to the group. This provides another avenue on the platform to get out your message and solidify your brand.

## Participating in Groups

Participating in groups entails simply posting or commenting or responding to posts or comments. Again, you're not there to sell. You're there to become part of the conversation. You want to contribute your expertise and your thoughts and ideas and establish yourself as a thought leader on one or more practice areas or topics. If you build a rapport with one or more members of the group, take the relationship offline and speak with them on the phone, or if they're local, grab coffee. Business comes from relationships and LinkedIn can be the spark that ignites a relationship that down the road leads to new business.

## Creating Groups

If you can't find a group that suits your interests, or simply want your own group to control who participates and what's discussed, you can create your own group. LinkedIn makes this easy to do and notifies you when

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others are interested in joining or when members of the group are posting, commenting or sharing. Having a platform within a platform by having your own group builds your influence and brand. And it bears mentioning I keep using the word brand. Everything you do online either builds or undermines your brand. Be conscious of that when posting, commenting, sharing and communicating online.

## Your Feed

Whether you refer to it as your timeline, your feed or something else, you will notice there is a place to go to see the posts, shares and likes of your connections. LinkedIn's feed shares some similarities with Facebook. If you use Facebook, you'll see your friends' posts on your timeline. You won't see their comments or likes on others' posts, just what they post. This limits the traffic on your timeline.

LinkedIn is different. If I like, comment upon or share someone else's posts, that will appear on my connections' timeline. For example, a connection of mine writes an article. I comment favorably on it when it appears on my feed. My comment (and by extension her post, which includes her article) becomes part of my feed seen by my connections. You can see how easily a post can go viral on LinkedIn if enough connections like, share or comment on it (followers can do the same by sharing, liking or commenting). You can also see how your comments, shares and likes can inundate your connections' feeds. That's why I rarely comment, share or like others' posts unless I'm really moved to do so, otherwise I would be bombarding my connections' feeds all day. Now there are folks who grow their networks by commenting, liking and sharing and by doing so a lot. And certainly I am grateful when others like, comment upon or share my posts. But I try to be conscious of my connections' and followers' time and limit what I do outside of posting my own thoughts, advice and ideas.

## Posting

Since August 2016, I have been posting daily, including weekends and holidays. The more you invest in LinkedIn, the greater the return, and your goal, if possible, is to post daily. If you can't post daily, try to post at least three times a week. Regular posts will grow your network, your influence and name recognition. If you pick a large enough topic, and let that topic evolve over time into related topics, you will have enough to say to post daily. But before you commit to posting regularly, preferably daily, be honest with yourself. A year from now, do you see yourself still posting? A year from now,

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do you see yourself still active on LinkedIn? LinkedIn isn't for everyone, so don't do it simply because you believe everyone else is. Do it because you enjoy it. If you don't enjoy it, you'll start and stop and eventually give up on it altogether. As with any form of attorney marketing, you need to enjoy doing it or you won't do it for long and if you do, it'll come across as forced and be ineffective.

## What to Post

Once you've committed to posting regularly (preferably daily), you have to decide what to post. Start with the reason you want to post. Is it to be recognized as an expert in a legal field? If so, you'll be posting about that area of the law. You want to be recognized as a legal expert in cyber security? Each day, you'll discuss a new law, regulation or case about cyber security, provide your take on legal trends in the area of cyber security, share articles about cyber hacks, discuss what governments and agencies and companies are doing to combat cyber hacks and discuss the latest technology addressing cyber security. You get the idea. To do this, you'll need to immerse yourself in the area, read everything you can addressing every facet of cyber security and be prepared to discuss it. You can see how engaging on LinkedIn has a secondary benefit of making you a practice area specialist because to post every day on a topic you have to learn that topic inside and out and stay on top of it and ahead of it. By putting yourself out there as a practice area expert, you end up putting in the work to live up to that designation.

This brings me to my story. In August 2016, I decided each day I would post a tip for young lawyers. I had previously had two stints blogging for young lawyers and many of my writings were directed to them. So it was natural for me to choose that topic. It's a broad topic—it encompasses pretrial and trial skills, leadership, marketing, mentoring, writing, speaking, time management, motivation, inspiration and so many other areas. It's impossible to run out of stuff to say. I'm not being facetious. I could post daily for a millennia and still have something to say. In creating this platform for young lawyers, I've developed relationships with lawyers and business professionals from around the world. Many of them see me as a source of daily advice and inspiration, and this platform has kept me at the forefront of their minds. That's my story. It's worked for me because I'm passionate about mentoring. I learn as much or more from the young lawyers I interact with as they learn from me, and often thinking through my posts makes me a better lawyer, advocate, speaker and writer. Likewise, find a broad topic that excites you and post about it.

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## Picking a Niche

Pick a topic you will enjoy, that will not run dry, that is engaging and that you expect will develop a following. Take time to think this through. Take a day. Take a week. Heck, take a month. Really think about your niche before you start posting, because there's nothing more discouraging than switching horses mid race. Think about what you enjoy, what excites you, what aspects of the practice you embrace and love, and then think about it some more and settle on a topic. This is going to be your topic. Even if others on LinkedIn are writing about the same topic, they're not writing it from your perspective based upon your education, training and experience. Own the topic. Make it yours. Embrace it. Fall in love with it. This is going to be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

## Building a Brand

Use LinkedIn as a tool to build your brand. Everything you post builds or undermines your brand. Before you can build your brand, you must know your brand. What is your firm's brand? What is your personal brand? What are your practice areas? What are you an expert in? What would you like to be an expert in? Define your personal brand and evaluate the scope and boundaries of your brand before trying to build it out on LinkedIn. You want to know who you are, who you really are, before projecting who you are to the LinkedIn world.

## Creating Content

Once you know your topic and your brand, you need to create content—a lot of it—because remember, ideally, you're posting every day. Here are some ideas for creating content:

- Repurposing prior content. Take a look at articles, blog posts and other items you have written and repurpose them into a series of posts. Remember, posts are short—1300 characters or less. That's just a few sentences. It's easy to write a few sentences.
- Repurposing your research and motions. Look at research you've done and motions you've prepared and extract posts from that body of work.
- Read, a lot. Read everything you can find on your topic or niche. This generate information, data and ideas.
- Talk a lot. Talk to others in your practice area. Join organizations that like-minded lawyers are involved in and are active in. These conversations will spur ideas for posts.

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- Always be writing. Get used to either writing or dictating posts on your phone. We spend a lot of time in lines, waiting or standing around, and those wasted minutes can be used to generate engaging content.
  - Understand that what you do and what you post is circular. As you practice, you will have ideas about posts. As you post, you'll think through what you do as a lawyer which will sharpen your practice. And in a circle it goes, round and round. Posting, therefore, makes you a better lawyer.

## Generosity

Folks come to LinkedIn to get information, learn from experts, expand their knowledge, grow their networks and build relationships. What these wants reflect is a desire for free stuff. They want free advice, free guidance, free information and free help. You can't blame them—social media has taught us we can get something for nothing. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram—free access to so much for nothing. So if you want to build a following, be generous with your expertise and share it with others.

I share my books for free on LinkedIn, and I post daily advice for young lawyers. I also speak to and message with young lawyers, answering their questions about the practice and life. I do this, because I love to help, but I appreciate that doing this creates and fosters relationships with lawyers who one day may have a case to refer to me (and some have). Being generous on LinkedIn develops a following and relationships that will lead to work.

## Give to Get

When I was kid growing up in Chicago, well before 9-11 and hyped airport security, folks could wait for passengers as they deplaned right at the gate. And back then, there were solicitors galore asking for contributions for just about anything and everything. What I remember the most were the Hare Krishna's. There were dozens of them and their approach was always the same—they would hand you a booklet or flower and then hold out their hand for a contribution. What they had learned is if you give someone something you make them feel indebted to you, and they feel an obligation to give something back. Now, of course, many folks did not give them money despite the nominal "gift," but many others gave them money out a sense of obligation. See, what happened was the Hare Krishna's created an unspoken social contract. They gave something and created an expectation in the recipient that they should return the favor.



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So what can the Hare Krishna's teach us about LinkedIn? The more you give—the more e-books you share, the more articles you write, the more posts you post—the more you give, the more you will create in some of the recipients a sense of obligation to return the favor, which will occur in various ways—a case referral, connecting you with someone who can refer you cases, free publicity or something else entirely that will help you grow your practice. Now, I'm not suggesting you should give to get, but understand that a positive side effect of giving is sometimes getting. Giving away what you have can result in getting much more in return.

## Self-Promotion

Limit the amount of self-promotion you do on your posts. If you receive an award or win a trial or are featured in an article, sure, share that with your connections. But self-promoting posts should be a small fraction of your overall posts. In my own case, I would say my bragging posts make up less than 1 percent of all my posts. You should shoot for less than 10 percent. If more than a third of your posts are bragging on yourself, it's too much and you're going to turn others off. Everyone understands that members use LinkedIn to promote themselves, but we all get tired when someone does it too much. So if you're going to let folks know you're a Super Lawyer or AV rated or that you got a defense verdict, feel free, but make sure you're posting quality content before and after those posts.

## Promoting Others

It's easier to promote others than yourself, and promoting your firm or other lawyers in your firm comes across as less egotistical and others are more receptive to such posts. But again, keep these to a minimum. A firm page can regularly share a firm's accomplishments (and by doing so, I think it attracts less followers, but more on that later), but as an individual member, your goal is to share quality content, not blatantly market by shaking pom poms and doing cartwheels for yourself, your firm or for others at your firm. Remember, members are on LinkedIn for free stuff, not for commercials. Do you go on Facebook for the content or the ads? Do you use Instagram for the photos or the ads? Don't become viewed as an "ad" by other members, to be skipped over on their feed, or worse, deleted altogether.

And from time to time, promote other members. I've promoted other members' books or nonprofits because I believed in them and their work. I've had many members over the years share information about my books, articles and podcast, and I do the same for other members when appropriate.

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Paying it forward is the right thing to do, and others' will appreciate it and remember you for it.

## Avoiding Controversy

I can't make this point loudly and stridently enough—avoid controversy in your posts. Avoid comments about politics, religion and other controversial topics. Avoid inappropriate comments. Avoid being the shock jock of LinkedIn. I do know some members, including a handful of lawyers, who love to court controversy on LinkedIn. They love the attention and they love the fight, and I assume what they're doing is working for them otherwise they would stop. But I ask you—no, I beg you—don't be that person. First, if you work at a large firm, you're likely to suffer a backlash. Even if you're at a small firm or a solo practitioner, avoid controversy. It promotes online arguments, brings the trolls out from the woodwork and diminishes you. Let me repeat that—it diminishes you. You're not a carnival barker and you're not a Kardashian. You are a lawyer, you are a professional and getting back to what I said earlier, everything you post online builds or tears down your brand. Don't tear down your brand for more eyes on your posts. Don't turn yourself into click bate.

## Posting Regimen

Get into a regimen of posting the same time each day. Consider it your LinkedIn time. When I started posting regularly, I used my drive to work to conceive and think through the idea for the day. When I got to work, I parked, and before I turned off the car, I spent the minute or so I needed to type my post on my phone and share it. That was my routine. Because of the sort of posts I share, I don't need to be reading cases or statutes to write a post. My writing is more extemporaneous, and I can conceive it in the car or waiting in line. But that was my routine. You need to create your own.

You may want to get into the office a little earlier to work on your posts. Or simply wake up earlier and before you jump in the shower, crank out a post. Or maybe you're a night person and prefer to do it in the evening. And yes, I'm sure you've read there is an ideal time to post—some say between 11 am and 2 pm—and that's when you should post. I've never given much credence to that, but if you're a believer in that, and you're the type to live and die by analytics, you can still write your post at night and wait until 11:30 a.m. the next day to share it. The key is to make writing posts a habit, and you make it a habit by deliberately making time for it and inserting it into your schedule. It will take about three weeks of forcing yourself to

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post daily to turn it into a habit, much like brushing your teeth. But once you turn posting into a habit, you'll never look back. You'll be on your way to conquering LinkedIn.

## Staying at the Forefront of Others' Minds

The benefit of LinkedIn is that by posting regularly you remain at the forefront of the minds of LinkedIn members who regularly scroll through their feed. There are in house counsel, managing partners, claims professionals and business leaders who read my feed every day or most every day. I know that because they like, comment and share my posts and have messaged me to tell me so. Understand that not only does a referral source need to know you to refer you work, she needs to be thinking of you when a new case lands on her desk. If she thinks of someone else the moment that case hits, that other person will likely get the referral. That's life. But if she read your post that morning, and has been reading them every morning for the last three months, and she knows you and is thinking of you because of your daily posts, and you fit the criteria of the type of lawyer she is looking for (you're in the right geographic region for the case and you or your firm handles that type of matter), odds are she will reach out to you. Again, that's life. That's how life works. That's how referrals work.

LinkedIn is akin to a firm newsletter, or firm mailing or anything else a firm does to stay on others' radar. The difference, though, is that regular posting is free and welcomed and expected by the recipient. Post, and post regularly, to stay relevant, remain part of the conversation and to stay at the forefront of others' minds.

## Scheduling Posts

Nothing says you have to write posts each day. You simply need to post each day. The difference is that you can spend Saturday or Sunday morning writing your posts and wait each day until you post them. There are even apps you can use that automatically posts your posts on the dates and times you pre-determine. You can download the Hootsuite app, which you can use to manage your posts, and not only for LinkedIn, but for other platforms too, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. There's a free 30 day trial you can use to see if the program works for you. I won't get into the details of how the app works here. I recommend you go to Hootsuite's website and learn more about it. And no, I don't use it, but I know many who swear by it. I write every day, so I post every day. But if you're not the type to write every day and prefer to write once or twice a week and want a program to

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push out your posts daily, then Hootsuite is probably for you. Give it a whirl. If it works for you, great. If not, that's fine too.

The thing with LinkedIn is that using it and mastering it is largely trial and error. Yes, I have spelled out a lot of the do's and don'ts. But for LinkedIn to work for you, you'll need to experiment with it. You'll need to click on everything there is to click, and explore the site and see what others are doing on it. Because what works for me for LinkedIn works for me because I'm me. Again, I can give you general parameters on how to use the platform but how you use it, how you really use it, that's up to you and your schedule, and your skill set, and your interests and your proclivities and a hundred other personal factors. Happy hunting.

## What to Post

Playing the long game, and thinking what you'll be posting a year from now, even five years from now, is sobering. How does one create that much content—good, quality content—day in and day out? It starts with a shift in your personal paradigm. You have to start thinking like a writer, and that means you need to become hyper aware of your surroundings, of what you read, of your conversations and interactions and see every moment as an opportunity to capture and cultivate a thought you can transform into



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a post. The more you post, the easier it will become. The more you view the world around you as fodder for posts, the more topics will jump out at you. And the more posts you write, the more comfortable you will become writing and sharing your views, opinions and thoughts, and the more confident and self-assured you will become. You'll find that you're writing in your head all the time. Often my wife will look at me deep in thought at a reception or at a dinner and ask me, "What are you writing?" Expect that to happen to you.

When I started posting, I wrote a list of topics that I would review to give me ideas for new posts. The following is a list of items you can go back to over and over for new post ideas:

- Summarize the holding of a new relevant case
- Summarize the effects of a new law or regulation
- Your take on an article addressing a jury verdict, a legal event or a legislative bill
- Share your thoughts on how a new case, law or regulation will affect business
- Explain different aspects of lawsuits and litigation in terms clients can understand
- Share thoughts clients should consider when involved in a lawsuit
- Discuss legal trends
- Share news articles of interest to your clients with your hot takes
- Do a top 10 list or top 10 issues and spread out the issues over several posts

Write your own list and go back when you think the creativity well has run dry.

## High vs. Low Value Content

High value content is sharing an idea, process, thought or analysis. Low value content is simply sharing articles with no analysis or engaging in self-promotion. The ratio between high level and low level content should be at least 4 to 1, and preferably higher. Others are following you for your high value content, not for your self-promotion or simply parroting or sharing another's views or ideas. High value content takes thought. It takes time. It takes analysis. It takes research. That's why its valued. Remember, something for nothing—that's why so many are on LinkedIn, including potential clients. Give to get. So, yes, you can share low value content, but most of your posts should be so much more.

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## Using Visuals

If you have the wherewithal to include stock photos with your posts, consider doing so, because visuals attract more eyes. Having said that, I never have and likely never will include photos or other visuals in my posts. It's time consuming, and unless you plan on using the same handful of stock photos (which I don't recommend), buying access to a large library of stock photos can be expensive. LinkedIn, unlike Facebook and Instagram, doesn't have to rely on visuals. You can still get a lot of views without visuals. Many regular contributors who have built large tribes on LinkedIn don't use visuals. So don't worry about visuals. They help, but they're not necessary and don't have to be part of your posting plan.

## The Problem with Links

LinkedIn wants to keep eyes on its platform. It does not want its members to redirect other members to other sites or other locations on the internet. Therefore, whenever you include a link to a book, or a website or a blog on a post, LinkedIn's algorithm limits who sees that post. So if you want to share a link to let's say an e-book you wrote, include the link in your Publications section of your LinkedIn profile and ask folks to go there and download it. Have you made it harder for members to download your book? A little. Is it worth it? Yes. Because alternatively, many fewer members are going to see a post with a link to your book because LinkedIn is going to greatly limit who sees that post with that link. Try an experiment. Post about your book with an imbedded link and a week later post about your book asking members to find it on your profile page. You will see how many more views the latter post receives. If you have a website you want to share, include it on your profile page, and ask folks to find it there. If you have a blog you want to share, include it on your profile page, and ask folks to find it there. That's how you overcome the LinkedIn algorithm.

## LinkedIn's Algorithm

Understand that LinkedIn determines how far and how wide your posts go. LinkedIn is interested in original, non-spamming content, that its members will enjoy and will learn from. Your post about your big court win—probably not going to get much traction. Your post about the implications of the new Supreme Court ruling—probably going to get the algorithm's attention and it be will pushed out to members. LinkedIn can figure out whether your post has real value or is simply self-promotional or click bait or spam and will promote the former and ignore the latter.

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So what posts have legs, spread and even go viral? Posts that have something to say, that share first truths and principles, that provide real advice or help or tips, and do so generously and openly—those posts gain traction quickly and spread far and wide.

If you follow me you'll find my posts fall, largely, in two buckets. The first bucket is filled with posts that provide very practical advice about pretrial and trial skills, leadership, marketing, etc. These posts are well received, and are viewed and shared and commented upon. But they generally have a short shelf life, their stats are admirable but hardly viral and they generate only mild buzz. They're an important part of my brand, but just part of it.

The second bucket is filled with motivational and inspirational posts geared toward lawyers. Those, typically take off and some have gone viral (numerous posts have over 250,000 views and a few have almost 1,000,000 views). Why so many views? Why so many comments, and shares, and likes and so forth? Because not every lawyer is looking to improve his deposition skills, but each of us lawyers could benefit from a bit of motivation and inspiration.

So post original, compelling content, and understand that content with an emotional component, as opposed to simply an intellectual or logical one, is more likely to spread and become popular among your followers.

## **Analytics**

LinkedIn provides useful analytics. It shows you how many members have viewed your profile, where they work, where they live, their careers, among other data. This information is useful because you can see which of your posts are resonating and with whom, and which ones are not, and adjust what you post accordingly. Of course, not everything you post should be driven by the numbers. If I did that, then I would post solely motivational and inspirational posts and get away from providing practical advice about the practice, which I enjoy and which is an indelible part of who I am and my brand. But the analytics does help you refine your message and your posts to increase the size of your audience and following. We all assume we know what will reverberate and what won't, what will resonate and what won't. Sometimes we're right. Sometimes we're not. The data reveals the truth of what works and what doesn't and separates the wheat from the chaff. Don't over rely on the data, but do review it, study it and use it.

## **Authenticity**

Let's shift gears from analytics to authenticity. Don't let the numbers turn you into something you are not. You need to know your voice and speak

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it. Don't foster controversy just to gain followers. Don't adopt a persona to garner clicks. Don't use someone else's voice to get others to listen to you. Identify your voice, develop your voice, project your voice. You're you. Be you. Share you. We all know when someone is being authentic. We all know when someone is being some else. Assuming a persona to sell something, to get something, to influence someone—that's empty, that's cheap and any short term gains are overshadowed by losing yourself. Find your voice, express your voice.

## Going Viral

If you post regularly, and you develop your voice, and you project it and you're authentic to your voice, occasionally you're going to post something that goes viral. Something you say is going to resonate so much, going to reverberate so much, that one member after another will view it, and comment on it and share it, and the views will go from the tens of thousands to the hundreds of thousands. When a post goes viral, you pick up a lot of new followers and you expand your network. The thing about going viral, though, is that you can't force it. There's no secret formula for going viral. There are some common traits about viral posts—they trigger one's emotions as well as one's intellect, they often say something universal and typically they are encouraging and uplifting. When one or more of your posts go viral, study what you said and others' reactions to it and you'll find that the post likely shares these characteristics I have laid out. A caveat, though. Don't post with the intention of going viral and don't force trying to go viral. Imitating viral posts or other members whose posts go viral will cause you to lose sight of your purpose and brand. Stay true to yourself and your message. Yes, study which of your posts are resonating and do more of those, but don't do those exclusively and don't chase the viral post as if it's the Holy Grail.

## Making Posting a Habit

There is no shortcut to developing a following on LinkedIn and becoming a thought leader on the platform. You want a following, you need to post regularly, preferably daily. To do that, you need to make posting a habit. Here are some tips to do that:

- Use time in the car, train or bus to think about posts.
- Keep a journal and jot down ideas whenever they come to you.
- Set aside 5 minutes a day to type a post.



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- Keep your LinkedIn screen open on your desktop to make it easier to type a post if a thought comes to mind.
  - Become accustomed to the LinkedIn app and get in the habit on posting on your phone when you have downtime (waiting in line, waiting for a hearing or deposition, waiting for someone to join you for coffee or lunch).
  - Find another attorney interested in posting daily and hold one another accountable.
  - Use the note app feature on your smart phone to jot down ideas and content and keep a running list when you find yourself short of ideas or are struggling to come up with something to post.

## Becoming an Influencer

Developing a following in a discrete area—a practice area like cyber security, a skills area like trial skills or a coaching area like leadership or marketing—leads to one becoming an influencer and a thought leader. The benefits of this is that others come to see you as an expert and a voice in that area. Journalists start messaging you, asking you for your hot takes and thoughts in that area. You get asked to write and speak in that area. Others in that area follow you, quote you and reference you in their posts and writings and presentations. You become a known quantity in that area. And those looking for lawyers in that area will hear your name and come across you more than others in that area, and they'll consider hiring you when they have a need in that area. That's how being an influencer works. That's how being a thought leader works. You create buzz. You create a following. You create a forum. You build it and others come. And eventually your name becomes synonymous with the topic or area you post about and if anybody has a question or an issue or a case or a referral on that topic or area, they come to you.

## Writing Articles

LinkedIn has a feature that allows you to write and share articles on the platform. There are pros and cons to writing LinkedIn articles. The pros include allowing you to say more and dive deeper into topics. A post is limited to 1300 characters. An article has no such limitation and allows you to provide a detailed explanation on the topic. It allows you to share your expertise, thoughts and ideas in a deeper, more nuanced fashion. The con is that followers have to specifically click on the article to read it and most LinkedIn members don't want to make the effort. Furthermore, in our

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attention deprived society, most folks would rather read a 1300 character post than a 1000 word article. So you're putting in much more effort for much fewer eyes. But those articles can be repurposed and published elsewhere and do provide a basis to showcase your expertise. Find the time to write a few LinkedIn articles, study the response, repurpose the articles in other forums and publications and determine if writing articles is something you want to make as part of your LinkedIn brand and outreach. I don't. I wrote a few articles and determined it wasn't for me. Others make writing articles part of their outreach. It's a personal preference. My suggestion is you try it and then decide whether you want to keep doing it. And this is a good time to note that different members approach LinkedIn differently, and different members do different things on the platform to grow their following and influence. Experiment, see what you enjoy and that works for you, and pursue that path, your path.

## Posting Videos

Videos are becoming more popular on LinkedIn. We are visual and LinkedIn is following suit of other platforms, and encouraging and facilitating the use of videos by its members. If you're going to post videos, a few thoughts:

- Consider investing in proper equipment to give your videos a professional look. Yes, you can record videos on your smart phone, and the newer phones do a good job of creating quality videos. A lot of members use their phone to record and post videos of themselves. But if you want to take your videos to the next level, consider buying a camera, lens, tripod, microphone, lighting and video editing software. Research what the leading vloggers (video bloggers) use to record their videos and find quality equipment in your price range.
- Keep your videos short. 60 to 120 seconds. Remember, short attention spans.
- Upload the video directly to LinkedIn as opposed to sharing a link to YouTube. I've read from numerous sources that LinkedIn wants to keep folks on its site and its algorithm limits the exposure of posts that take it off its website.
- Use the proper setting. Find a location that's consistent with your brand. It could be your office. It could be your home. It could be outside. It could change. But whatever you settle on, make sure it's consistent with your overall message and theme.
- The camera needs to be focused on you, in a close up. Not too close, but your face and upper body should fill the frame.

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- Remember, the camera is on you. Dress and groom appropriately.
  - Avoid foul language, crass jokes, and odd references. Remember that these videos are part of your overall strategy to attract clients and referrals. Speak and present yourself in these videos as you would to a prospective client.
  - Procure and familiarize yourself with video editing software to make the most of your videos.
  - Create a YouTube channel and post your videos there too.
  - Consider sharing some of your videos on your firm's website and on other platforms.
  - As with your posts, your videos should focus on your key topics and areas and build, not undermine, your brand.
  - Thinking long term. Consider how you can turn your short videos into a series that you can share with others, possibly even securing CLE credit for them and providing more value to your followers.

## Liking

When members like your posts, your posts become part of their feed and when you like others' posts, they become part of your feed. Keep that in mind. Don't like too many posts and be aware when you like a post, you, in effect, are adopting that post as your own. And this feature—how liking a post makes it part of one's feed—is unique to LinkedIn and explains why one's post can so quickly and easily spread and become viral. Of course one of the benefits of liking the post, particularly if you have a large following, is that you're promoting other posts to a large audience and the authors of those posts will likely take notice, repay the favor, and keep you in mind when they need counsel with your expertise. There is value in not only sharing your voice but sharing others' voices as well.

## Sharing

You can share others' posts and they can share yours. When you do, I recommend you comment on them. It adds your voice to their posts, it's more engaging for your audience and the person whose post you shared will appreciate it. Shared posts have more of an impact on your following than liked posts and generate more traffic for the person whose post you shared than simply liking their posts.

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## Commenting

You can comment on others' posts and others can comment on your posts. These comments are a good way of gauging others' reactions to what you're saying. Are your posts resonating? Are you getting across your ideas and thoughts? Are you hitting the right tone? Read the comments carefully and study what they say about your posts and how you're connecting. And take the time to comment on others' posts. Comments are a great way to interact with other members and develop relationships with them. Remember, as with everything else, avoid argumentative and controversial comments, and stay on point, stay positive and make your posts thoughtful and uplifting.

## Responding

LinkedIn facilitates relationships. You meet folks on LinkedIn. You get to know folks on LinkedIn. You communicate with folks on LinkedIn. Part of this communication is responding to others' comments on your posts. Interact with those who comment on your posts. Thank them for their comments, answer their questions and consider taking that conversation offline, either by phone or in person. Responding to and communicating with those who like, share and comment upon your posts lays the foundation for relationships which can develop into future referrals and a mutually beneficial business relationship. And it's simply polite to respond to those who have taken the time to initiate a conversation about your posts.

## Blocking

Unfortunately, LinkedIn, like all social media platforms, has its share of jerks, trolls, hucksters, and the like who can disrupt your day and test your patience. LinkedIn allows you to block anyone who is commenting on your posts or messaging you. If someone makes a rude comment on my post, tries to sell their services through my posts or bombards me with solicitations, I block them. I don't engage, I don't respond and I don't try to get the last word. Fortunately, there are fewer of these types on LinkedIn than on other social media platforms. If you avoid controversial topics and over the top statements, you'll provoke fewer bad seeds who can't help but share their unwanted and unwarranted opinions. Some folks forget that LinkedIn is a professional networking site where they need to act professionally.

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## Avoiding Sales

Don't sell on LinkedIn. Build relationships on LinkedIn. The relationship precedes the ask. Before you let others know what you do and ask them to refer cases to you, give away a lot—posts, articles, links—that provide information prospective clients want and are seeking. A lot of folks assume falsely that being on LinkedIn gives them a license to hit up everyone they come across the platform for work. You wouldn't do that if you met someone for the first time at a reception or cocktail party. You get to know others first. They get to know you. Eventually, when the time is right, you let them know how you can help them with their legal needs and then you move onto other topics of conversation. LinkedIn is no different. The relationship precedes the pitch, it precedes the sale. That's why most of your posts should be informational, not promotional. That's why when you engage someone through a LinkedIn message, most of the discussion should be conversational, not hard selling. If members regularly like your posts, comment on them and share them, inform them of your practice and let them know you're available to serve their legal needs. Just a quick reference and then you move onto other topics. Folks who regularly engage with your content are open to listening to you briefly share with them what you do and how you can help them. And often, they'll remember you when they have a legal need you can handle.

## Avoiding Sales People

Some LinkedIn members push their services and products on the platform. They will seek to connect with you and if you accept their invitation, they will immediately pitch you and insist on a call or meeting to discuss their business. I avoid these folks, ignore their pleas and if need be, block them. Yes, they may have services I need—recruiting, court reporting, experts, etc.—but if they are making a hard sell, and they are being rude or obnoxious in attempting to sell me their services, the likelihood is that they'll be rude and obnoxious when I'm receiving their services. Also, in my experience, most folks who are pushy about their services are that way because they can't get clients based on the quality of their work product and have to sell hard to make up for it.

## Engaging Others

In addition to your regular posts, you will want to engage other members online. There are several ways of doing this. Choose the ways and methods you enjoy and feel comfortable with:

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- Like, share and comment on others' posts.
  - Post and comment in LinkedIn Groups.
  - Promote other members' webinars, books, articles and presentations.
  - Private message other members, thanking them for their posts, congratulating them on their successes or inviting them for coffee.
  - Respond to comments on your posts.
  - Message thanks to those who regularly like, share or comment on your posts.
  - Join other members' groups and promote them.

Develop online relationships and take them offline. This will deepen and strengthen these relationships.

## Messaging Others

LinkedIn allows you to message other connections. After you've connected to a member, and you've made contact through liking, sharing or commenting on each other's posts, decide whether you want to message that member and when appropriate, ask to meet for coffee or lunch. When messaging others, remember:

- Be polite.
- Don't sell.
- Don't be pushy.
- Keep it short.
- If you don't hear back, don't be persistent.
- Where appropriate, comment on or compliment them about one or more of their posts.
- Remember it is a business site, so keep it professional.

## Tagging Others

LinkedIn allows you to tag other members when you post or make a comment. It's a good way to thank other members or bring attention to what they're doing on the platform or elsewhere. For example, a member writes an article. You enjoy it. Let her know by sharing it and tagging her in your share so it draws attention to her and she realizes you're promoting it. She'll appreciate your efforts and that will lay the foundation for a flourishing relationship.

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## Making Introductions

You'll quickly notice if a member is a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> level connection. A 1<sup>st</sup> level connection is someone with whom you're directly connected. That member accepted your invitation to connect or you accepted theirs. A 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level connection is removed by one or two levels through mutual connections. You may notice there is a member who is connected with one of your connections, and you may ask that they make an introduction to get you connected. Conversely, someone may ask you to introduce them to one of your connections. When asking for an introduction or being asked for one, make sure the connection makes sense, is appropriate and the member who is being sought as a new connection would likely be open to such a request.

## Taking It Offline

For relationships to grow, blossom and develop, they need more than just instant messages and comments posted to a timeline. Reach out to connections for coffee or lunch. When you travel for work, make a point to meet connections in that town or stop. When you attend a reception, make a point to meet connections. When you attend a conference, make a point to meet connections. Social media and online platforms are just one piece of attorney marketing and business development. They do not replace personal



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connections. Seek out opportunities to take your LinkedIn relationships offline and deepen them.

## **LinkedIn Ethics**

Take the time to read and study your state bar's ethics rules and opinions about social media. Typically, whatever rules apply to attorney advertising applies to social media. View LinkedIn through the same prism you view your firm's website. If you have updated your website in the last few years, or are in the process of doing so, you should have compared its content to your state's bar rules. In fact, your state's bar association likely has a thorough and comprehensive set of rules and recommendations for law firm websites. Assume those rules apply to your posts and use of LinkedIn.

## **Beware Endorsements**

LinkedIn allows you to endorse and recommend other members and receive endorsements and recommendations from other members. For other professions, recommendations and testimonials may be crucial to marketing. Personally, I avoid seeking, accepting or offering endorsements or recommendations. Again, your state's bar likely addresses what representations you can make about your practice, your expertise, testimonials, etc. In Florida, for example, the state bar is very wary of lawyers calling themselves experts. It's easy for those endorsing you to call you an expert in all sorts of ways and you sharing their endorsements may run afoul of Florida's rules. To avoid any issues, I don't pursue or provide endorsements. In fact, I find that among lawyers, the love fest and interest in endorsements and recommendations waned several years ago. When I see lawyers with endorsements or recommendations on their profiles, they're typically years old. They realized that these features weren't for them and they forgot about them and just left them there. In short, avoid making endorsements and recommendations as part of your LinkedIn strategy. Other lawyers may disagree, but I've extracted a lot of value from the platform without these.

## **Beware Recommendations**

As I noted, avoid recommendations. I have some old recommendations that I've left on my profile. I turned off my endorsement feature years ago and stopped seeking out recommendations around the same time. Looking at my profile, my last recommendation is from 2009 and I keep the half dozen or



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so that I have for nostalgia's sake. Again, some other lawyers may disagree, but I avoid these. You're going to get traction on LinkedIn through your posts, not through recommendations.

## LinkedIn Etiquette

LinkedIn has its rules. They're not written down per se (although LinkedIn does have a help section that discusses how to use the platform), but they're based on common sense. The rules can be reduced to one sentence—it's the Golden Rule—treat others on LinkedIn the way you want others members to treat you on the platform. If you're wondering whether you should post about topic X or send private message Y or reach out to member Z, ask yourself how you would feel if you received that post, read that message or got that invitation? The issue about social media is that some folks forget their manners. They post things and say things and share things and send messages they would never do in person, but because they're on social media, they think it's somehow OK. I don't get it. I'm sure you don't get it. But that's how a small percentage of LinkedIn users act on the platform. Don't be that guy or gal. Be professional. Be ethical. And pretend the person you're dealing with is sitting or standing across from you and behave accordingly.

## LinkedIn Don'ts

Anyone who has been on LinkedIn for a while has a list of Don'ts when using the platform. Here are mine:

- I don't post about:
  - Politics
  - Religion
  - Controversial Issues
- I don't post
  - Humorous Posts
  - "Facebook Posts" (family photos, pictures of my meals, vacation photos, memes, etc.)
  - Non Business Posts
- I don't advertise. I'll share info about my books, my speaking gigs, my podcast and occasionally, my wins, but I don't do traditional advertising. You can promote your practice without direct advertising. If you choose to advertise, have your substantive posts far outweigh in number your advertising posts.

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- I don't engage with trolls. I block them.
  - I don't troll.
  - I don't pester other members. If I reach out to you and you don't respond, I don't keep reaching out.
  - I stay in my lane. I write for lawyers. I don't write for other professionals and don't pretend to know what they need or want.
  - I don't take others' posts, comments or links personally.

## How About a Premium Account?

LinkedIn offers several levels of a premium account for which you pay a monthly fee. I don't have a premium account and don't plan on getting one. The most touted features for premium accounts are that they allow you to see everyone who views your profile and allows you to reach out to non-connections. The premium accounts are geared toward reaching out to folks outside your circle of connections and seem to be geared toward recruiters who are searching out candidates for placement. Most lawyers I know don't have a premium account. Several who tried it, dropped it. You can try a premium account for free for a month. If you're really that curious, try it out and see if it's for you. For me, the current features aren't sufficient for me to purchase a premium account. If one day, the features expand, I may consider it. But for now, the premium features really don't play to the needs of lawyers.

## Getting Your Data

You can download all your LinkedIn data. If you go to your Profile page, scroll to the bottom, click on Manage Your Account and Privacy, scroll down to How LinkedIn Uses Your Data, click on Getting a Copy of Your Data, and then click on Download Larger Data Archive, within 24 hours you'll receive a download of all your data, including every post you've ever posted. If you're a frequent poster, you can turn those posts into articles or books. I turned mine into an e-book and am now working on a second one. Sometimes writing a book is nothing more than pulling old posts together and turning them into a book.

## Using Your Data

If you post every day, day in, day out, month in, month out, year in, year out, you will have so much content. So much amazing content. Download it, review it and use it. You have enough content for e-books, for articles, for

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blog posts, for your firm website and for presentations. One of your posts may be the seed for a presentation. Another post may trigger the idea for a seminar or webinar. Each post was born of an idea and can spur many more. Content can be reused. Repurposed. Applied in other contexts. Shared on other platforms. Think through all the ways you can use your data.

## **Repurposing Your Data**

Whenever you post, whenever you review your data, whenever you contribute to the LinkedIn conversation, consider how you can repurpose and reuse your data. It's your data, and the possibilities for it are endless.

## **Promoting Your LinkedIn Page**

Promote your LinkedIn page on your website, your blog, your e-mail signature block and business card. Ask others to connect or follow you on LinkedIn. If you're creating content and becoming a thought leader, let others know and share your content with potential referral sources.

## **Recruiting on LinkedIn**

If you're looking for lawyers to join your firm, LinkedIn is a great resource to find lawyers by geography, practice areas and specialties. Just as professional recruiters use LinkedIn to seek out candidates, you can do so on behalf of your firm. Instead of hiring a recruiter, be your own recruiter and search for candidates and let them know your firm is hiring. Don't be pushy. Don't be nosy. Just let candidates know of your interest and if the interest is mutual, they'll let you know.

## **Looking for a Job on LinkedIn**

If you're looking for a job, appreciate that one of the main purposes of LinkedIn was always and still is to connect job seekers with employers. So if you're looking for a job on LinkedIn, you've come to the right place. Search out and connect with recruiters. There is a feature that lets you let recruiters know you're open for new opportunities. And LinkedIn has other features that facilitate searching for job opportunities. Most every firm has a presence on the platform, making it easy to look for job opportunities.

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## Future of LinkedIn

LinkedIn, like any platform, changes, evolves, adds features, and transforms into something more. The LinkedIn of today is different from the LinkedIn of a year ago and much different from the LinkedIn of five years ago, and it will be different a year from now and much different five years from now. The platform continues to change. It continues to grow. More professionals join. More post. More share content. As the platform evolves, evolve with it, grow with it and learn from it. It's a great forum to meet professionals, develop relationships, build your book of business and grow your career.

## Appendix

### *Questionnaire for Topics*

The hardest part of staying engaged on LinkedIn is creating fresh, new content on a regular, preferably daily, basis. After you do it a while, it'll become second nature. But if you're just getting started, here are some questions that will spur ideas for posts:

- What legal issues are in the news?
- What cases are receiving media attention?
- What trials are receiving media attention?
- What cases are before the Supreme Court?
- What issues are being written about in legal publications?
- What legal issues are trending on social media?
- What issues concern your clients?
- What issues are your clients addressing on their websites?
- What cases are you working on?
- What presentations have you given?
- What presentations are you working on?
- What articles have you written?
- What articles are you working on?
- What cases are other attorneys in your office working on?
- What successes have you had? How about others at your firm?
- What issues have you resolved favorably for your clients?
- What surprises have you come across in your cases?

What questions do you most often get from your clients?

What are common misconceptions client have about the legal system?

What issues do you regularly discuss with clients?

Are there any topics or materials from your website, brochures or newsletters you can turn into posts?

What legal issues do you discuss with other attorneys during the day?  
At lunch? After hours?

What issues are voluntary bar associations tackling?

What issues are other LinkedIn members addressing?

What's happening in your practice area?

What's happening to clients in your practice area?

What are the trade associations relevant to your practice area addressing in their publications, websites and conferences?

What comments are other members making in response to your posts?

What questions are you receiving in response to your posts?

What are your most popular posts? Can you readdress those issues in new posts?

What are others who practice in your area posting about?

What have others suggested you post about?

What do you enjoy writing about the most?

What have you written on other platforms or in other contexts that you can repurpose on LinkedIn?



