



# LIFECYCLE MARKETING ESSENTIALS

## NETWORKING WITH NETWORKERS

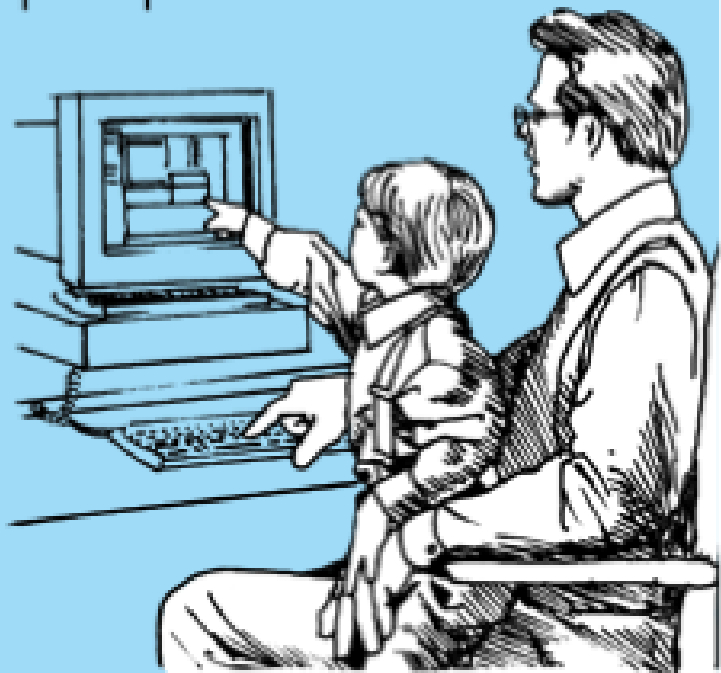
*HOW TO GET STARTED WITH LINKEDIN*

*By June Brockmeyer*



Creating an effective **relationship marketing strategy** means taking advantage all marketing media at your disposal. Entrepreneurs and small business owners know that doing this requires time and effort. It's important to nurture and develop relationships in different ways, in person and online, by blogging, sending emails and using social media. The best way to connect in a professional capacity is by using LinkedIn. And I'd like to give you some great tips from start to finish on how to leverage LinkedIn to your advantage.

What's this 'LinkedIn' ? Is that like FaceBook for old people?



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# Improving Your Relationship Marketing Strategy

The social media concept shouldn't be anything new for those of us who are browsing the web on a regular basis. For example, I've had a [Facebook](#) account for years, I've been on [Twitter](#) a shorter period of time and as far as [YouTube](#) goes, I'm a fan of watching and posting educational videos. Even though these aren't the only social media sites the world has to offer, they are considered the most popular based on the number of users they attract.

Let's not forget about [LinkedIn](#). For a lot of young professionals and entrepreneurs, LinkedIn is on the top of the social media platform list. I had heard about the site a while ago but thought "I'll get to it later" and never signed up.

Well, as I cruised the web a few days ago, I came across an interesting read. According to the LinkedIn press center and [SysComm International](#), "LinkedIn is the oldest of the four sites [Facebook, Twitter, YouTube] having been created on May 5, 2003." And yet I wasn't a part of it. The professional networking site has millions of users worldwide and a new member joins every second, so, the only logical step for me to take was to become the next new member and jump on the LinkedIn train.



# All Aboard!

Many of you may have already joined the site, but for those of us who thought “I’ll get to it later” or maybe created a profile but didn’t do anything else after that, let me tell you: We’ve been missing out on valuable professional opportunities and the ability to grow our social and professional networks to get new [marketing contacts](#).

And so my LinkedIn Newbie journey began.

## >>> Step 1: Signing Up



Just like every morning, I headed to my computer, grabbed some coffee and then I finally did it: cruised on over to the LinkedIn website.

There were what looked like Polaroid pictures (I know, old school) of members with quotes lauding their positive experiences with the site. I could toggle through different people and see what each of them had to say. What a great way to use testimonials huh?

Then I looked over and noticed the form, which was waiting to be filled in with my new user information. It even read "Get started – it's free. Registration takes less than 2 minutes" I followed these explicit directions and signed up.

Once I was done with the basic logistics of opening an account, I uploaded a pretty profile picture and asked myself "Now what?" This was a defining moment in my LinkedIn journey. I wasn't worried about how hard it would be to learn to use LinkedIn it, but I wanted to make sure I learned to use it effectively. Time for research!





## >>> What's the point?

On the LinkedIn site, there is a quick and dirty explanation of what the network is and its purpose:

“LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional network with over 175 million members and growing rapidly. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals.”

Sounds promising right? Sites like this can help improve the relationship marketing strategy we have as entrepreneurs and small business owners.

As we know, social media sites make it very easy for us to get to a place where we're comfortable with the basics, but as a LinkedIn newbie I still needed to get those basics down.

## Let's Connect!

As I logged into my LinkedIn profile, I noticed I needed to complete a few more steps in my profile. First came making connections. The way I understood the concept of connections was to “add” people I knew to my network, sort of like one would add “friends” to Facebook and similar social sites. Although the concept was similar, LinkedIn seemed to be a bit more extensive when it came to [relationship marketing](#).





## >>> Step 2: Finding My People

I noticed a button that encouraged me to add people I may have as email contacts. Seemed like a logical first step, so I decided to start there. LinkedIn allowed me to [send an email](#) saying "I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn." You can edit this message if you choose to make it more personal or keep it short and simple.

After doing this, I noticed that almost all of the people I requested through email were on LinkedIn. If you're like me, you have more than one email account so I thought, "Why not repeat this step and connect with more people?"

You can also look for connections at any time using the search engine on the top right of the screen. It offers a "People you may know" area, which remains there so you can always do this at a later time.

## >>> Step 3: "I Know I am, But What Are You"

It's time for us to talk a bit more about our skills and talents. After all, Fortune 500 companies as well as entrepreneurs are on LinkedIn, which means we need to take some time to promote our skills and brag a little.





Make sure to include your education. That is another avenue you can travel down to network with people who may have attended the same university and share similar networks.

## An Endorsement Says More Than 1,000 Words

According to The Free Dictionary, an endorsement can be:

1. The act of endorsing: The athlete was highly paid to do endorsements of products.
2. The signature on a check, contract, instrument or other document endorsing it.
3. Approbation/sanction/support: The candidates competed for the union's endorsement.
4. An amendment or addition to an insurance policy, as to cover special circumstances.

For our purposes, let's focus on the third definition.

The skills we say we have are true, but how do we get more people to believe we actually can do what our online resume says? Enter: endorsements.

When I first saw this capability on LinkedIn I thought it was genius. I can have my connections virtually confirm that the skills I have listed are true and the best part is that I can do the same for them.

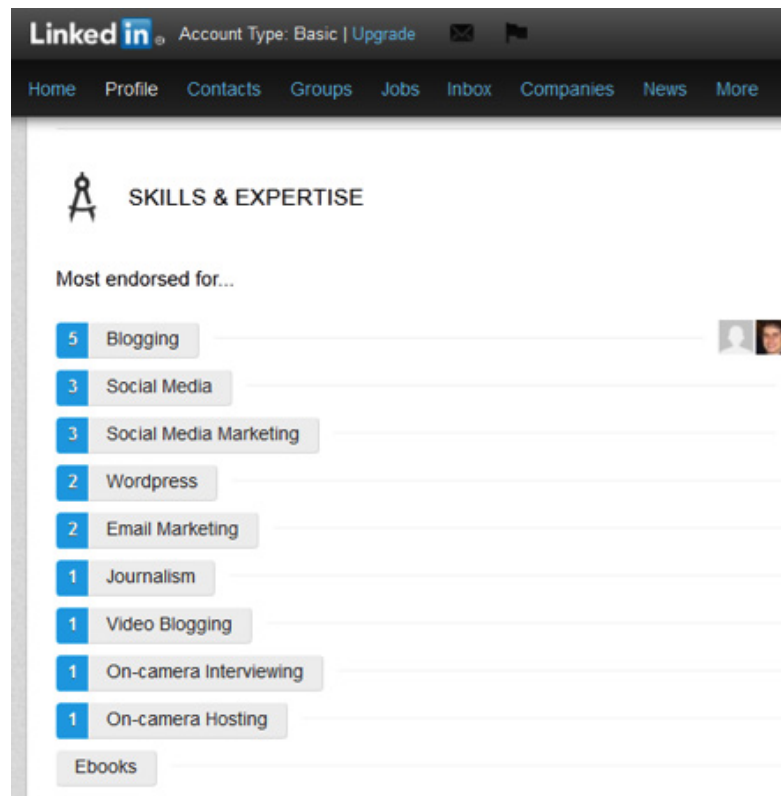




## >>> Boosting Endorsing Karma

Endorsing can help your marketing strategy by supporting your expertise and others within your network.

I had a few connections endorse me for blogging and a few other skills, so when my turn came along, endorsed them on skills I know are legitimate. What a powerful way to show the world we can really do the things we say we can!



## Recommendations: Endorsements' Big Brother

As I continued to explore the site to find ways to better my [marketing strategy](#) I realized there was something new on my profile.

The notification buttons on the top of the page tell us when a person has messaged us, if someone has looked at our profile and if anything else happens—like receiving a new recommendation.



A recommendation? What's that? Well, one of my connections had taken the time to write me a recommendation and said something nice about my work.

This is great because it shows up right under the job the person knows you from. For example, if someone worked with you at a company you've added to your profile, that recommendation shows up right under that listed job and everyone can see it. This kind of support can really impress connections, especially as our LinkedIn "online resume" takes shape.

You know how the best publicity is word of mouth? The same goes for LinkedIn. When someone endorses you or recommends you for a certain skill, the whole LinkedIn world gets to see just how talented you are!

## Conclusion: Be Adventurous and Stay Engaged

There are also a tremendous number of groups you can join. From universities and colleges to profession-based companies and groups, you'll have no trouble finding several that match your business interests and intents. I found a few that fit my areas of expertise and decided to join or follow them. I also sent a message introducing myself to one



of the groups because, as we know, staying engaged is critical when it comes to growing your network.

I've always liked the hands-on approach to learning so, now that my LinkedIn profile is pretty much complete, I can make some new connections and browse through the different features on the site. Feel free to do the same.

Just like any other form of social media, it can be hard to stay engaged and keep up, but making it a part of your daily or weekly routine can help you become a known [LinkedIn](#) member and others will begin to add you as a connection.



*LinkedIn newbie no more.*

Be adventurous. Not only can you meet new people and network, you could also find your dream job (if you haven't found it already). This LinkedIn novice has graduated to "expert"—or at least not such a newbie anymore!

# About the Author

**June Brockmeyer** joined the Infusionsoft family in 2012 as a Brand Journalist and loves helping small businesses succeed. She has experience as a bilingual multimedia journalist, working in TV news reporting, radio and online media.



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