

Seven Tips for Legal Professionals on LinkedIn

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From HBC's Sound Bites Blog (www.hellermanbaretz.com/soundbites)

To celebrate HBC's recently launched partnership with the country's leading LinkedIn trainer and social media expert [Viveka von Rosen](#), we sat down with our newest team member to get some insider tips from the "LinkedIn Expert."

1. Treat Your LinkedIn Profile Like a Website:

LinkedIn is a Professional online representation of YOU! Make sure your LinkedIn profile is formatted, clean, and free of spelling and grammatical errors. I strongly suggest creating your LinkedIn profile first in a Word document; not only so you can "catch" errors, but also so you can get a better idea of what your profile will look like on the LinkedIn website. In some sections of LinkedIn you can also pull in bullets and special characters. There is still no **bolding** or *italics* other than what LinkedIn itself formats in your personal profile. Another bonus: if you've already created your profile in a Word document, sections of it can easily be copied into other social media platforms to keep your branding unified.

Time Saver: You can always have your assistant create your profile in a Word document that you can edit and then have him or her cut and paste into the LinkedIn website. If you already have a LinkedIn profile, have your assistant select all and paste into a Word document using this tip sheet to optimize it for you.

2. Know Your Keywords:

Like any website, LinkedIn's internal search engines weigh your keywords heavily in its searches. Make sure you place your most important search or keywords strategically throughout your profile. Some places you might want to consider are your:

- Professional Headline;
- Title Fields;
- Specialties;
- Interests;
- Recommendations; and
- Education (Activities and Societies).

Caution: Many states insist you be licensed in a specific industry, so make sure you know your state's guidelines and rules before making a list of specialties.

Time Saver: Have your assistant go into Skills and make a list or "related skills" that might be good keywords for you. Dig deep.

3. Keep your Photo Professional:

I recommend a close-up and a smile. A full-body shot of you and your family, you and your car, you and that fish you caught last week is unclear and unprofessional. *LinkedIn doesn't like logos.*

Time Saver: Use the profile you have listed on your firm website. This is also good for branding and consistency across social mediums.

4. Personalize Your Public Profile URL:

Make sure your public profile reflects your name, your business, or your area of expertise. Nothing says, “I’m a LinkedIn neophyte” like a public profile that reads: <http://linkedin.com/pub/firstname-lastname9890734-akjshfih>

5. Personalize Your Websites:

When you edit your website, the drop-down menu gives you the option of “other.” When you click on that, a new field opens up that allows you to type in your business name, website name, call to action, or description of your website. So, instead of “Company Website” or “Personal Website,” this section can read “My IP Law Blog” or “My Firm Bio”

6. Join Strategic Groups:

Join legal industry and association groups, your ideal client’s industry groups (maybe you work with authors or inventors), groups that you are interested in (fishing, skiing, etc), groups that your target prospects are members of, alumni groups, open groups, and some big groups (consider LinkedHR with 500,000+ members). Once you join a group, you can send a message to strategic members /prospects or invite strategic members to connect with you.

For more posts on groups check out:

- <http://linkedintobusiness.com/2010/12/linkedin-tips-how-to-deal-with-your-groups-and-group-email/>
- <http://linkedintobusiness.com/2010/12/i-want-to-open-my-group-on-linkedin-now-what/>
- <http://linkedintobusiness.com/2010/12/open-groups-on-linkedin/>

Caution: Never give legal advice on LinkedIn and use your disclaimer for any advice you give.

7. When Inviting Others, Tell Them How You Know Them:

LinkedIn used to have an “I don’t know” button that could get you in a lot of trouble. Now a person’s response to an invitation is “Accept” or “Ignore”. Nevertheless, when inviting someone to connect with you, I highly recommend telling him or her how you know them or why you want to connect. I would also add the disclaimer: *“If you feel you have received this message in error, or simply don’t want to connect, please ignore this invitation”*