

# Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS NETWORK

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### LinkedIn - Making the Most out of Groups

I've spent the last two days talking about how to make improvements to [your LinkedIn profile](#), and getting the most out of [your LinkedIn home page](#).

Today, I want to cover LinkedIn Groups.

On LinkedIn, there are groups for everything, from business networking to animal lovers. Groups are an excellent way to connect with people outside of your immediate network in areas where you share an interest.



I'm going to focus on the ILN's group, because I'm the moderator and have the most familiarity with it, but most of this advice can be applicable to any business networking group for lawyers. During my presentation, I started with the "why" - why should the lawyers in the room have any interest in joining the ILN Group on LinkedIn?

- The group offers the ability to network with those attorneys that they see regularly at conferences, and those attorneys who don't attend, thus broadening their pool of relationships.
- As a group participant, you can share news and information, such as client alerts.
- You can also ask questions to crowd source or seek referral assistance.

- Because our group is private and limited to current ILN members, they can use the group to collaborate with each other - LinkedIn offers a lot of the same functionality that a proprietary intranet would involve, so why not take advantage of it?
- At the very minimum, you can comment on, and "like," other people's posts - it's also a good place to keep up to date with news from other firms and the ILN itself.

Okay, so you're convinced that you should join a group - how do you leverage your membership? Along with the points I mentioned above, you can also use LinkedIn groups to connect with people outside of your network - one of the options when inviting someone to connect with you is to connect on the basis of being in the same group. I will often connect with someone I may not know well because we're both members of the same group.

Although the goal with LinkedIn is not to get as many connections as possible, groups can be an excellent way to connect you with the right people.

Another major benefit of groups involves conferences - some conferences will create groups just for that event, like the [Legal Marketing Association's Annual Meeting](#). Or, if you're a member of an association group like ours, pre- and post-events are a good time to get more involved. Participating in the group by asking questions and seeing who on the attendee list you can connect with can help you to "pre-build" your relationships. It's also a good time to ask questions of the organizers about what sessions you should attend and if they have any recommendations for making the most out of their conference experience.

Post-conference presents another excellent opportunity to connect in the groups. Share some of your memories of the conference, link to any blog posts about the sessions that you may have written, share an article that you think might be of interest to the group - this can keep you connected in between conferences and lead to a deepening of the relationships that are so essential to effective networking.

I'll leave you with a best practice for using LinkedIn groups - when you are part of a group, sign up to receive an email digest. This way, you don't have to remember to check the group page every time you want to see what the latest information is. The digests can be daily or weekly (I recommend weekly to cut down on emails). To do this, go to the group page, and click "More..." in the group menu bar. Then click "My settings," and check the box for "Send me a digest." This will allow you to choose the frequency.

This gives you the freedom to quickly review any new discussions coming in, and comment on the ones of interest to you without having to search them out on the page.

Since this about covers the discussion we had in Lisbon about LinkedIn, I'll leave you with two additional points, unrelated to groups:

- One of our delegates recommended that in addition to signing up for the group email digest, users sign up for the LinkedIn digest, which gives you an abridged version of the updates on your home page. If you're not going to have LinkedIn open automatically on

your browser every morning, this is a good second choice , as it allows you to scan the updates and see if you should log in and comment on any of them.

To set this up, mouse over your name in the upper right hand corner and click on "settings." In the box at the bottom, you'll see a menu - click on "Email preferences" and then "Set the frequency on emails." Select "network activity" and choose the frequency, and this will send you a digest of the updates from your network. Then hit save.

- Another of our delegates said that when responding to questions in the Answers section of LinkedIn, he and other attorneys from his firm will include a disclaimer that they're not providing legal advice - he said this is particularly important for the US. This isn't possible with all forms of social media, like Twitter, but he advised including it where you can.

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