

Link Up with New Clients through LinkedIn

By Margaret Grisdela

More law firms are discovering the benefits of social media business development campaigns in 2011, and LinkedIn is an easy way to get started. There is no pressure to post news on any predetermined schedule, so you can avoid the Twitter jitters.

Here are some new features that you can easily add to your LinkedIn profile:

- **Publications.** Publicize articles or books you've written by activating the "Add a Section" feature under "Personalize your Profile." You will be able to list the title, publisher, publication date, and a link to the article or book.
- **Services.** The Company Profile feature in LinkedIn now provides a "Products & Services" tab to highlight your different service offerings. You will be able to describe each practice area in some detail, and provide the visitor with contact information to learn more.
- **Attorney Ratings.** Martindale Hubbell partners with LinkedIn to display your peer review rating.
- **Events.** While LinkedIn has offered an events feature for some time, you can now display events as part of your profile. This is ideal for attorneys who speak frequently. It is also an effective way to promote upcoming webinars, since virtual events can be publicized as well.

Take the time to review your current LinkedIn profile. Here are three common opportunities for improvement:

- **Expand your practice description;** don't just list your title and firm. As an example: Jane Smith is an experienced Fort Lauderdale family law attorney who concentrates in matters involving divorce, separation, child custody, child support, alimony, guardianship, and visitation rights.
- **Personalize the URL** for your LinkedIn profile to feature your name. This will be one more way to enhance your personal search engine visibility. See the "Edit Profile" tab for instructions.
- **Activate your Law Firm profile.** Click on the "Companies" tab in the main menu, you will then see a link in the upper right to "Add a Company." Activation requires use of a firm email address.

Eliminate multiple LinkedIn profiles. Many people inadvertently end up with 2 or more profiles. Pick the one with the fewest connections and delete it (see the LinkedIn Help section for details).

Remember to prominently feature the keywords that are important to your practice (i.e., Fort Lauderdale divorce lawyer, or Florida intellectual property attorney) in all key aspects of your LinkedIn profile.

Best of all, LinkedIn is free! It fits into any law firm marketing budget.

As with any legal marketing campaign, check with your state bar association for applicable attorney advertising rules in the state(s) where you practice. In Florida, for example, unsolicited invitations to connect through LinkedIn and other forms of social media may be in violation of Bar rules.

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About the Author: Margaret Grisdela is the author of *Courting Your Clients* (www.courtingyourclients.com, now in its 2nd edition) and president of Legal Expert Connections, a national legal marketing agency. She is available to help you set up your LinkedIn profile or other social media campaigns. Contact her at 561-266-1030 or mg@legalexpertconnections.com. Details at <http://www.legalexpertconnections.com>.