

HOW TO LEVERAGE LINKEDIN

> With so many platforms across social media, many business owners forget that LinkedIn is home to more than 500 million users. If you think of LinkedIn primarily as a place for professional connections, you're not alone: A recent survey found that 94 percent of recruiters search for job candidates on the platform. For florists, the question becomes: "How can I use LinkedIn to raise awareness for my shop in a way that leads to increased revenue?"

The first thing to keep in mind is that while you should build a personal and company LinkedIn page similar to the one you have on Facebook, the way you interact, engage, and use each platform in general is very different.

Remember that Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are best for sharing the personal side of your life with friends and family. LinkedIn, on the other hand, should be approached as if you're interacting with colleagues or other coworkers. This doesn't mean you can't share milestones in your life, but keep it "business personal."

Getting Started

Company pages on LinkedIn are an ideal way to inform other users about your shop, how your brand interacts with the community or events, and even when you have job opportunities. LinkedIn is also a great way to showcase your ex-

pertise and leadership in the floral industry to other businesses.

When setting up your LinkedIn company page, you're going to be provided with an area to describe what your shop does. Keep in mind that the first 156 characters are the most important because that's what people will see when searching on Google.

Also, remember that descriptions such as "family-owned business established in 1942 and serving the Minneapolis area" are — well — boring. Plus, that verbiage really doesn't show how your shop is any different from every other flower shop. A better approach? In the description area, focus on what makes your shop different (think: modern aesthetic or European style).

Below your company description, you can add specialties, which, like keywords, will help other users and businesses find your shop. These are important! When choosing keywords, think like a customer to identify the products or services to highlight (e.g., garden-style weddings).

LinkedIn for Marketing

LinkedIn posts can include videos, photos and long-form text, but that's not necessarily where the platform shines. For example, save the shots of your designs for Facebook and Instagram. On LinkedIn, show off different events and

work you've done for other local businesses and tag them in the post.

You can focus on local charities you're involved with or even share video tutorials that can help users, including other florists, complete tasks or challenges more effectively. If you find something that would benefit your audience, such as a news story, share that as a post.

Your employees can help your LinkedIn efforts, too. Ask them to connect with your company page. As soon as they do, you can expand your reach tremendously through their personal network of followers. Your company page also gets linked prominently on their profiles and vice versa.

You can also use LinkedIn Groups to connect with other florists. Not only does this help you network with other leaders in the floral industry, but it also attracts more views for your company page.

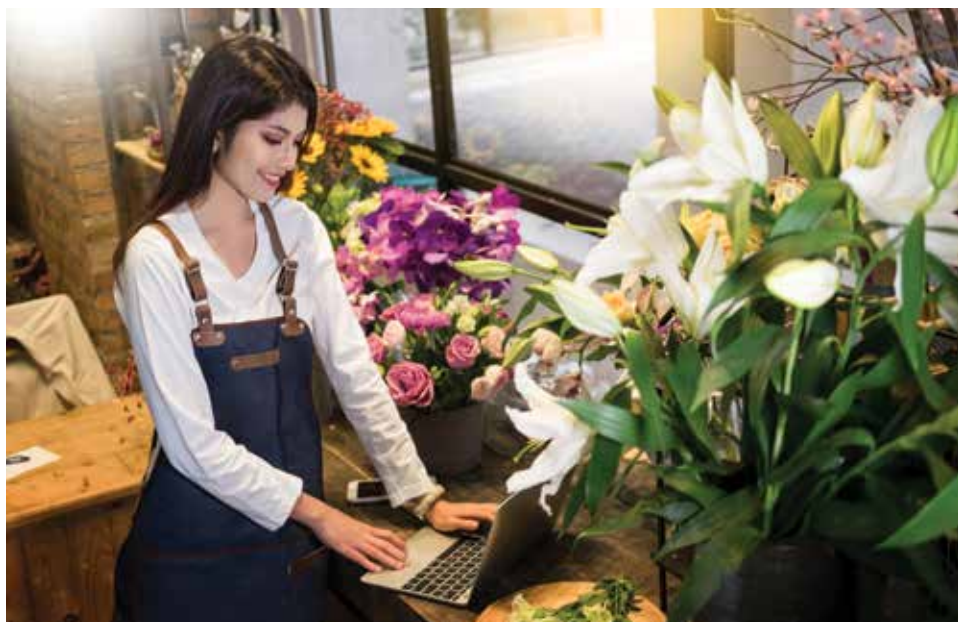
Understand the Algorithm

Just like Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, there's an algorithm in place at LinkedIn to determine the quality of your content and measure engagement. The key once again is to make sure you provide value and content that gets users talking or sharing.

Remember, there is such a thing as "overposting," and this occurs on all platforms. You don't have to send five updates a day so people notice you; doing so will actually decrease the likelihood of reaching the exact people you're trying to target.

LinkedIn has exactly what your flower shop needs to reach more users and to grow your business or corporate accounts. Being able to use it effectively to promote your specialties and leadership in the industry takes time but is definitely worth the rewards. 🌿

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