

LINKEDIN GROUPS

CA\$H IN ON THIS POWERFUL TOOL

Joining and participating in groups on LinkedIn is consistently ranked in the top features that people say really help them build and brand their business as well as find the perfect job.

Groups are a great way to:

- Speak, share, and interact with a group of like-minded individuals who have common interests and are located around the world or right in your own neighborhood.
- Increase the size of the population you can search into when doing any type of search. Once you find members of the group who meet your search criteria, you can communicate with those people even though they may not be connected to you at the first, second or third level.
- Find people you may want to connect with.

You can join up to 50 groups on LinkedIn, and I suggest you take advantage of all this potential.

You may be cringing about all the e-mails you are going to get by joining more groups, but let me remind you that you control whether a group communicates with you and how often you receive those communications. You can do this either by going to “Settings” on any LinkedIn screen (which you will find by scrolling over your name on the top right), selecting the “Groups, Companies & Applications” tab, and then clicking “Set the frequency of group digest emails,” or by selecting “Your Settings” under the “More” tab once you are in a specific group. You can even shut off all communication, and you may just want to do that.

To help you find the LinkedIn groups that will assist you in accomplishing your goals, I have developed the following worksheet.

7 STEPS TO FINDING THE BEST LINKEDIN GROUPS

STEP 1

Fill in the blanks on the next page with the words that describe you and/or your situation. To help you get your thought process started, included in parentheses are some of the words I personally used when I owned an office furniture dealership.

Geographic region or area you serve and/or where your suppliers are located (Midwest, Wisconsin, Milwaukee)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Industries you sell to or receive supplies from (education, real estate, flooring)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Professional interest or areas of expertise (accounting, interior design, sustainability)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Products/services you sell (office furniture, carpeting, interior design)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Professional titles of your customers or suppliers (president, flooring distributor, CFO)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Your customers and vendors (architect, facilities manager, moving company)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Clubs or associations you belong to (AICPA, ACG, Waukesha Chamber, Marquette Alumni)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

Your hobbies and interests (hiking, scuba, fishing, social media, classic rock music)

_____ , _____ , _____ , _____

STEP 2

Go to “Groups” on the top toolbar and select “Groups Directory.” Then go to the box on the top left titled “Search Keywords” and search using specific keywords.

STEP 3

Finding Large Groups With No Specific Criteria

Joining large groups enables you to search a large database of people, find people who fit your search criteria, and then communicate with those people, even though they are not part of your first, second or third-level network.

Click the magnifying glass next to the “Search Keywords” box (no need to include keywords). You are now looking at a list of all the existing LinkedIn groups, which at the time of this writing is almost 1.6 million. These groups are listed in size order, with the largest group listed first. The number of members is listed in the group summary.

You should now look through this list of group profiles to find groups that have any of the keywords you listed above. For example, the largest LinkedIn group at this time is Job Openings, Job Leads and Job Connections!, which has over one million members. If you are either selling to HR professionals or need to hire an HR professional, this would be a great group to join—as long as you meet the membership criteria. The next group is Linked:HR, with more than 750,000 members. If you are selling to people in the e-marketing world, getting supplies from them, or if you want to hire someone in the e-marketing world, this would be a good group to join.

STEP 4

Finding Large Groups in Certain Geographic Regions (e.g., Wisconsin, Milwaukee)

The goal here is to find the largest groups in your defined geographic business area. In the “Search Keywords” box, put a description of a geographic area. Good examples of this would be the state, city or region you are living in, selling into, looking for employees from, etc. Be sure to try lots of words and combinations of words.

I suggest you join the largest groups in your region that you feel can help you reach your goals. You will then have the ability to search for members who meet a particular set of criteria. You may also find it advantageous to use the Discussions function to take part in the group’s conversations. This is an especially important step if your customers are also included in this geographic area, because it gives you the ability to display your expertise.

STEP 5

Finding Groups in Certain Geographic Regions With Some Other Criteria (e.g., accountants in Wisconsin)

If you want to find the groups that include members who are accountants in Wisconsin, you would first use the “Search Keywords” box to search **accounting Wisconsin** and then search **accountants Wisconsin**. The search logic here is all the words you type in this box must be included in the group profile. You do not have to follow the Boolean search rules, such as putting quotes around words, using AND, NOT, etc. It is based on just the words themselves.

STEP 6

Finding Groups With Multiple Criteria (e.g., accountants who like social media)

If you type in **accounting accountant social media**, you get one result, but if you just put in **accounting social media**, you get 29 groups. Remember—the logic is it will look for all words you have listed. Do the same for **accountant social media**, and you will get different results. It is sort of like a group treasure hunt. You have to keep playing around with words and combinations of words, always remembering that the way you describe something may be different than how others might describe it. Another example would be attorney, legal, lawyers, etc. Try them all.

Here is a great idea for those of you who want to take your LinkedIn group experience to the advanced level. If there is no existing group relating to a particular interest or expertise you possess, consider starting a group, and you will be a knowledge broker in that space.

STEP 7






Repeat Steps 3, 4, 5 and 6 over and over, with different combinations of regions, industries, interests, etc. Be sure to revisit these steps from time to time, because new groups are being formed all the time.

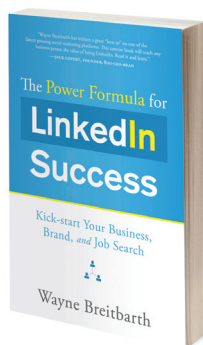
Wayne C. Breitbarth

Author of *The Power Formula for LinkedIn Success: Kick-start Your Business, Brand, and Job Search*

wayne@powerformula.net

Connect with me online!

 powerformula.net  /WayneBreitbarth  @WayneBreitbarth  /powerformula  /WayneBreitbarth



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