

LinkedIn Q&A with James Potter aka The LinkedIn Man

Summary:



On 14th June 2023, Camelot Experts and Corporate Partners came together both in-person and virtually for a Q&A workshop on how to get the most from LinkedIn. David Clamp interviewed 'The LinkedIn Man', [James Potter](#), who used LinkedIn personally to generate more than £10 million in sales in his corporate career, and has since gained over thirteen years of experience helping big organisations, small businesses and individuals across the globe to solve their LinkedIn dilemmas with astounding results.

Key Takeaways:

- *LinkedIn is a powerful tool that isn't likely to go anywhere any time soon. When used correctly, the relationships that you make and nurture online can lead to business offline.*
- *LinkedIn is a digital version of you. Create your content with a human & personal feel. Remember, it's not social media it is a social network.*
- *It's important to prioritise the quality of connections, not quantity. In fact, connecting with lots of people that you don't know can be detrimental.*
- *You want to build a network of nice people who you know and view these people as doors to the nice people that they know, not as an 'audience'. Also, listen to them and consider how you can help them first - it's just like networking in real life.*
- *LinkedIn's algorithms are entirely based on how much engagement your content is receiving - if it does well, LinkedIn will help it do even better. There is no rule that a particular type of content or time of day etc is favoured, as every audience is different. So the key is figuring out what works for your network and do more of that - you may need to experiment.*
- *When tagging people in your posts, only tag members in your network who are most likely to actually respond, otherwise it will work against you.*
- *When used correctly, LinkedIn messages within the platform can be more effective than email. Focus on using it to network, not using it to sell.*

For independent consultants, advisors, or partners of tech companies in the insurance industry, how we should be using LinkedIn compared to how it is typically being used?

The best all-round advice I can give for using LinkedIn is to be more 'human'.

We are very good at creating perceptions of ourselves based on how we think we should behave. But LinkedIn isn't social media, so shouldn't be treated in the same way. Instead, treat it like you are in a room full of people, being yourself, and make it more human. Don't confuse a social network (people that you know) with social media.

If you post a 3-page article, senior business execs are too busy to read through all of that and when they then see you in person, what are you going to talk about? Post shorter, regular, more human updates so that when networking in person, there are several conversation starters. There is a time and a place for long leadership articles but there needs to be a balance, you need to think about the audience you are targeting. In short, make your posts more chatty, human and relatable then more people will actually read and remember them.

This extends to the images you choose for your profile and posts too - it is generally preferable to avoid fancy Canva designs and keep it natural to who you are, so that you are then more easily identifiable at in-person networking events. The most important thing is that you actually look like yourself.

In a nutshell, be a bit more 'you', instead of the person you think you should be on LinkedIn.

Is there a limit on connection invites that can be sent via LinkedIn and should we be trying to maximise this?

There is a limit of 3,500 over the lifetime of the account and then it is LinkedIn's discretion to allow more. However, the common misconception is that by building as many connections as possible, they are going to be targeting the correct audience and it will provide a good return on investment.

This is counterproductive in the sense that by allowing people who you don't know to connect with you, essentially you are inviting them in to access your knowledge, list of people you know, insights into your business and once they have the information they need, you won't hear from them.

Instead of trying to build a massive audience like you would on social media, focus on building yourself a network of nice people that you know, who in turn know lots of other nice people on LinkedIn, and then use LinkedIn for what it's really good for... **who** do I want/need to know? And how can my nice network of people that I already know help me get to know the ones I don't? It's just like networking in real life - listen, chat, help each other out and provide introductions, don't just try and sell your latest whitepaper.

Think of your connections as doors to the lovely people that they know, rather than as an audience and you will start to see a return on investment.

It's also worth noting that LinkedIn has countermeasures and if you are sending multiple connection requests and just 5 of those requests click "I don't know this person", LinkedIn will apply countermeasures on your account that will then ask you to confirm email addresses for future connection requests.

If I have built a network I have had for a very long time, should I disconnect with people that I don't know?

There is no harm in sorting your contacts from A-Z and disconnecting with competitors or profiles who are irrelevant to the network you are trying to build but I wouldn't recommend mass deleting if you have already built those connections that bring value to your current network.

How can I further develop the existing network relationships I have?

Talking in person to mutual friends of existing connections can help to ascertain whether someone is a good fit for your network and will enable you to find out more about them. Your first question should be, who do I know that might know this person? LinkedIn is great for giving you that answer, then it might be time to pick up the phone! It is always better to be introduced by a mutual contact than to simply send a connection request.

What is SSI and is it beneficial to people?

No. SSI is a tool that mainly benefits LinkedIn. It is LinkedIn giving you a score based on what LinkedIn wants to see you do, to make LinkedIn work – for them.

What type of content will get the most engagement? I.e. audio, video...

LinkedIn updated its algorithms around 18 months ago so there is no preference.

How much LinkedIn will promote your content is largely down to how much your network engages with it. If your network is not reading and engaging, the algorithms won't work in your favour and will stop showing your content. This applies whether it is a video, link, article or written post.

Do you reach a bigger audience by commenting rather than sharing someone else's post?

It all depends on the target audience. The busier the person you are trying to reach is, the less likely sharing the post will have the desired result.

If I tag someone in a post, do I get in front of their network?

Tagging can actually work against you. If the person or people you have tagged don't respond, the algorithms will penalise it. If they do respond, more people from your own network will see the post but not necessarily the tagged persons' network.

Is there a specific time you should be scheduling a post for maximum visibility and engagement?

Previously, I would have recommended either on the commute in or out of work. But statistics now show that people in higher seniority positions tend to use LinkedIn between 20.30 & 21.30 in the evening. Don't be afraid to experiment with different times and use the LinkedIn post view tool to compare what works best for your networks as all networks are different.

If you have a premium account on LinkedIn, does it make a difference when you post things?

In a nutshell, no. If what you are posting on LinkedIn is doing what you need it to do, you might not even need a premium package. LinkedIn will try to sell premium in a way that makes you think you need it, but for the most part you can access premium features in other ways without paying.

Is it better to email someone or go via LinkedIn?

Try and use the channel that the person uses the most, if you know what that is. If you don't, start with LinkedIn. LinkedIn often has a higher response rate than email since a LinkedIn message is sent individually to a personal contact. It can feel more like one human talking to another human, in contrast to an email that can appear more generic and may get lost in all of the impersonal email traffic they are likely to be receiving. That said, regardless of the platform used, seeking an introduction from a mutual contact is by far the most effective way to go, rather than reaching out to someone you don't know.

Are LinkedIn groups still valuable?

No. Content marketing took over groups that were originally designed for discussions about a relevant industry.

How do you find the balance between being personal and still remaining professional on LinkedIn?

A good way to decide this is to ask yourself whether you would tell a room full of people you've never met and if not, don't post it for all to see. Being more personal in the right context is key here.

Will there be a competitor of LinkedIn?

It is unlikely given the global scale of LinkedIn.