

*Social Media Quick Guide*

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# LinkedIn



## About ChurchTechToday

ChurchTechToday was born out of the need to find a place to discuss how technology can truly impact the Church in positive ways, whether it be reducing administration with a church office, allowing para church organizations to connect with their members online, or simply to share the Gospel message through non-traditional channels.

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LinkedIn is considered by many to be the professional's social network, both from a company standpoint and individually. For some users, it is a place to find a job or do their research on a company they are applying towards. For some organizations, this is how they find out more about the professional life of an applicant and advertises jobs in a social network geared towards the professional life.

Yet, the power of LinkedIn goes beyond filling a job with a person and for users that are comfortable with their current career, businesses that are not looking to employee anyone, and people who are neither current employed nor looking, LinkedIn can still be a great resource for you. We offer up several tips not only for the individual pastor, but also for the church as a whole.

### **The Network's Persona**

As previously stated, LinkedIn has become known as the professional social network. In our social media town, you could equate LinkedIn to the Department of Commerce, professional agencies, career counseling companies, job boards, and the downtown business district. People are networking over coffee, so busy that they have to buy hot dogs at a street vendor, and everyone is dressed to impress.

In many ways, LinkedIn is the same thing. Unlike most other social networks, this is not the place to be casual, but professional. Think of how you would go into a job interview and then digitize that process of thinking, attitude, and approach to relationships to the LinkedIn platform.

Churches have an interesting navigation into this realm where they not only try to be relational, but professional. For the youth worker, this may mean that we leave the goofiness behind for a time and share the impressiveness of your ministry. For churches that are all in with relational ministry, being able to brag about your ministry with the right stories that still talk about the numbers and facts.

*2 people join LinkedIn every second  
and 84% of accounts are free*

*Nearly 95% of all users are in a  
LinkedIn group*

*76% of users use LinkedIn to  
research people and companies*

## The Network's Lingo

- **Status** – a professional update of blogs, media, or text content
- **Groups** – close circles of people by specific topics
- **Personal Account** – free and paid accounts for individual people to connect other contacts and businesses
- **Business Account** – a paid account that can connect and interact with contacts
- **Contacts** – accepted invitations to connect and to view each others profiles and network
- **Endorsement** – a formal, public and professional comment written to recommend a colleague or business partner
- **Degree of Connections** – users you have connected with (1st degree), friends of a friend (2nd degree), and friend of a friend of a friend (3rd degree)
- **Recommendations** – based off of location and degrees of connection
- **Find Jobs** – a way for contacts to interact with businesses for possible employment opportunities posted by companies

## The Network's Downside

One of the most common perceptions of LinkedIn accounts is to go in, create your digital resume, and then leave it alone until you need it again. The problem is that most of the work that needs to be done frequently and consistently to maximize on your LinkedIn account, whether you are looking for a job, an employee, or network connections. The dumbest thing you could do is expect something amazing to happen within employment and networking from LinkedIn without putting in the necessary time, energy, and effort. Instead, let's take a look at how we can set our profile up for success and then go the extra mile with engagement and find LinkedIn gold.

## Setting Up Your LinkedIn Profile For Success

Your LinkedIn account can become your entire professional life consolidated into one profile that tells your professional story effectively. To do this as a personal account, you need to make sure that you have everything present and be networking regularly. For those that want to setup a business account, you can use these tips as guidelines but know that there are subtle differences.

As with any resume that you might put together, ensure all information that you are putting into it is accurate, engaging, and compelling. Unlike a paper resume that you might submit, this profile is open for all you have networked with to see and so you must be careful to be truthful, even when you are being grandiose. You have one of two options here, tell the whole story of what you have done but potentially get lost in the clutter if there is too much or narrow it down to a niche that you want people to focus but risk your viewers missing out on something amazing, even if not directly related. You choose the path but understand the consequences that come with it.

Along with ensuring a compelling profile full of experiences, details are important. Make sure that you use action verbs in the description when adding descriptions to your different jobs in the past and present. Words like “communicated,” “organized,” “led,” and “taught” show what you did while directing it to a specific use-case. These words to readers will help them understand your passions, dedications, and ability to act where needed.

## How To Use The Network Effectively

Effectively using LinkedIn may seem extremely similar compared to how you might network outside of social media. If you are a pastor in your community, you probably have done a lot to meet up with other local pastors, school systems, and community event planners to make yourself available whenever you are needed. You take the time to get to know them, offer your services

whenever feasible, and support their causes if appropriate. You should have that same attitude for your LinkedIn community.

When you take the time to setup your profile, find as many people on the social network that you work with on a regular basis as well as the numerous people that you want to connect with from your past. As you make those connections to contacts, you will be offered recommendations to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree connections that might be appropriate. This is step one of beginning to engaging effectively.

The second step takes a different turn. You have the ability to like and comment on other people's status updates as with most other networks and we assume you can figure that part out. What we want to emphasize that is unique to LinkedIn is the ability to ask for and give out written recommendations and endorsements. We will offer some great next step ideas beyond the typical LinkedIn recommendations and endorsements in our ideas section, but here are some basic pro-tips.

- **Do Unto Others.** Just as the Golden Rule pushes children to be nice, we need to make sure we are giving recommendations and endorsements to others as we would like to receive them. Why not take a 30-minute time slot once a month to go on there and simply recommend and endorse your colleagues and friends.
- **Don't Hesitate To Ask.** Asking for a recommendation may be the best way to put your best foot forward. In our own experience, 90% of those we ask on LinkedIn offered a 1-3 paragraph positive recommendation highlighting your best features and some that you did not even know about. Be fickle about who you ask, but be bold.
- **Limit Your Skills And Experiences.** It is great to cover the breadth of what you can do in your skills and experiences, but only putting those that you excel at and getting numerous endorsements may have more positive benefits than listing everything and receiving minimal endorsements.

*33% of business users find LinkedIn extremely important for growing their network.*

*62% of LinkedIn business users review company followers.*

*There are over 10 million endorsements given daily.*

## Five LinkedIn Ideas for Churches

We want to set you up for success on LinkedIn, so we have come up with some great LinkedIn ideas for your church to use it well. Note that some of these ideas are perfect for large churches and others setup for small ones.

### 1. **Have The Whole Staff Engaged**

As a senior pastor, why not write a recommendation and endorse all of the skills you see as a positive with your administration assistant, youth pastor, and everyone else on staff with you. At the same time, encourage other staff to use 10-30 minutes of their work time once a month to engage with their peers as well as other churches in the local area. This will create a positive and professional environment of friendship that may go far outside the digital walls of LinkedIn.

### 2. **Endorse Your Congregational Volunteers**

Your volunteers most likely signed up because of a specific calling, a positive environment, or giving back to a ministry that invested in them. Endorsing and recommending your volunteers may be one small but professionally significant way to say thank you for what they have done. To the volunteer who has shown great commitment, excellent skills, or a love for the ministry, bless them with an astounding recommendation.

### 3. **Become Church Profession Authorities**

Youth and senior pastors all over the nation have their own niche networks, though many times are limited because of geography. LinkedIn groups, along with most other social networks, have a mentality of becoming a “look at me” environment. What if you went against the norm, entered a LinkedIn group specific to your current profession, and simply gave what you had to the community? Answer questions that are asked, comment on posts shared that you have something to offer, and become an authority within the group. Sure,

you can share, but try not to feed the “self-promotion monster,” but instead be seen as a professional authority through giving to others.

#### **4. Network With Other Church Leaders**

Connecting on LinkedIn with the mentality of “what is mine is mine” may seriously limit your options for future potential staff and volunteers. Connecting with other church leaders in your community not only raises your visibility to a wide range of people that may be looking for a new job or volunteering position, but also can foster a healthy comradery. Push for networking with other churches, create your own local church leaders group, and start the dialogue on this network that you may have been longing to have for years.

#### **5. Find Volunteers and Church Staff As A Company**

We have talked little about engaging on LinkedIn as a church, but having a church profile during times of looking to hire a new staff person as well expanding that to finding new volunteers may be a great recruitment tool that no one else has done in your area. Finding great volunteers and staff is hard as it is, so adding another tool like LinkedIn, posting positions on the network, and pushing it out to possible candidates could be the perfect thing for your ministry. Think outside of the box, put some resources behind it, and push your recruitment efforts to the next level.