

Creating a LinkedIn Group for Effective Event Management

Summary

LinkedIn can be an effective platform for event managers to promote their company and events. One of the best tools within LinkedIn is their groups function. Event managers can create focused groups, building up a network of engaged members through which events can be discussed and promoted. This article discusses how event managers can effectively use LinkedIn groups and explains how groups can be created, promoted and managed.

Article Body

Many organisations are looking for alternative, cost effective ways to market their events. This is why so many have been quick to latch onto social media. Sites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are all free to use and have great scope in terms of reaching a wide network of people.

LinkedIn is becoming especially popular for businesses. Founded in 2003, it is a business orientated social networking site. Mainly used for professional networking, it has more than 60 million registered users across more than 200 countries worldwide.

With over 4 million users in the UK, events companies are beginning to understand the benefits it can bring to their event marketing. As well as networking with colleagues and peers, LinkedIn also allows members the opportunity to create and manage groups focused on a wide range of subjects. Many of these groups have hundreds of thousands of members and alone can rival many niche social networks outside of LinkedIn in terms of their size and activity. These groups can offer fantastic networking opportunities for members – who gain access to resources and information that can help their careers.

This article discusses how to create, manage and promote a LinkedIn group with the aim of building up a strong network – in which you can discuss key industry topics, learn from peers and promote your events.

Creating a LinkedIn Group

It's easy to create a LinkedIn Group. Simply go to 'Groups' then 'Create a Group'. You need to think carefully about what to name your group. Consider the keywords your target members will search for. It's most likely that people will join a group when it's based around an industry, so it's best to not name it after your company.

You'll also need to design a logo – this is quite a small logo (100x50 pixels) so don't try and add too much text to it. Keep it clean and simple, yet eye catching. Then add a short description that effectively tells LinkedIn members what your group focuses on and who it is for. Ensure that the box is ticked that says "Allow group members to display the logo on their profiles. Also, send my connections a Network Update that I have created this group." This will give your group increased visibility within LinkedIn and will help to generate new members.

Promoting a LinkedIn Group

When you first create your group, you'll need to add some members – after all, who wants to join a group with no members! So invite colleagues (past and present) and existing customers to join, and encourage them to start discussions.

Once you've started to build up a small membership base, promote the group on your website, email





newsletter, blog and other social media networks. Make sure you're promoting your blog wherever possible and that people know how they can join. If you're already on Twitter and Facebook, consider creating new accounts to match your LinkedIn group. This enables members to network across all major social media platforms, yet all providing the same messaging, content and industry focus.

If you've got industry leaders attending or speaking at an event, ask them to join and engage with the community. They can start up threads based around agenda topics that can be discussed in the lead up to an event. They can also promote an event by explaining in more detail what their involvement is.

Remember to promote your LinkedIn group at your events – print details of the group on literature, ask speakers to mention it in their presentations and mention it when you're networking with delegates.

Managing a LinkedIn Group

You'll need to manage your group quite closely in order to maximise the benefits to both you and your Group members. Content must be provided on an ongoing basis in the form of discussions, news, events and jobs. The more opportunities for interaction you add to your group, the more value your members will gain from it.

It can often be the case that important information can get lost in a large discussion thread. As a way to overcome this, as a group manager you can use the 'featured discussions' feature. This highlights particular content, offers or events and will ensure that this thread is pinned at the top of the discussion board for as long as you want. This is a great way to promote your events – by opening a new thread giving information about the event and then making it a featured discussion, all your members will see it each time they log into the group.

An additional way to promote particular information (such as key events) is to send announcements. Announcements are emails sent by you through LinkedIn to your group members. Because the emails are coming via LinkedIn they come with an increased deliverability rate as recipients and their ISPs are more likely to recognise and trust the LinkedIn name. Announcements will also get added as a discussion thread in your group, and again, as a group manager you have the option to pin this as a featured discussion to gain extra visibility.

As a way of integrating your other social channels, you can import your blog RSS feed and have your blog posts automatically feed into your group News section. If your blog is relevant to your group this can be a great way of providing additional content to the group as well as promoting your own site and your own events.

LinkedIn groups can be extremely effective at generating a focused, engaged network of members. Once your group is established you can use it to promote events and offers; however this must be done without looking spammy. Members will not appreciate being marketed at constantly – the goal is to create a vibrant community, with a wide range of discussions based on the industry/topic in question. Promoting events and offers of your own events, as well as from other members is something that can have great dividends – but it must be handled tactfully.

The internet and technology is opening up all kinds of opportunities for event managers to market their events in a cost effective way. Tools like LinkedIn and other social media platforms, websites and email marketing are all part of a modern event manager's marketing plan. These marketing methods, when used in conjunction with a comprehensive event management solution can make event managers even more efficient. Sophisticated event management solutions include email





marketing tools as well as website and social media integration and the ability to take online bookings and payment. They can help to increase delegate attendance and satisfaction as well as reducing costs and increasing event ROI (return on investment).

Resource Box

For more information on [event management software solutions](#), talk to [evocos](#). In the past year alone evocos event & delegate management software solution has created over 7000 events, managed approximately 75,000 delegates and has taken over 50,000 online.

Incorporating integrated reporting and analysis tools as well as social media, email marketing, website integration, registration, online payment, badge production, resource management and event surveys, evocos is one of the most comprehensive event management software solutions on the market today.

The [evocos event software](#) team ensures you are able to seamlessly manage your events; gaining huge cost and efficiency benefits.

