Hewlett-Packard Case Study
Creating 2,000+ brand advocates in two weeks with LinkedIn Recommendation Ads

“LinkedIn is innovating in ways that create rich new opportunities for brands.”
Larry Nelson
Director of Digital Strategy, Hewlett Packard

Hewlett Packard’s social media team is responsible for accelerating the expansion of HP’s social capabilities globally to:
• Create advocacy for the HP brand, products, and services
• Generate strong engagement, sentiment, and conversation around HP products and services
• Support HP customers quickly and easily
• Drive leads, revenue, conversion, and cost savings

Larry Nelson, director of digital strategy at HP, says, “We were looking for new ways to use social media to engage our commercial clients when LinkedIn approached us with an opportunity called ‘Company Pages,’ which provides an HP-branded environment within the LinkedIn community. It’s essential for our content to be available anywhere, any time, in communities where our customers and prospects congregate.”

‘Company Page’ targets business professionals
HP launched its Company Page in November, 2010, along with LinkedIn’s new recommendation capability, which enables members to post recommendations of HP products and services. Each recommendation is automatically communicated to the recommender’s LinkedIn network, and also appears on the HP Company Page as a resource for those interested in community feedback on HP products and services.

Challenge
• Engage commercial clients on LinkedIn
• Encourage business professionals to recommend HP products and services to their peers
• Quickly build a critical mass of recommendations

Solution
• Establish LinkedIn Company Page to engage professionals in a business context
• Activate LinkedIn recommendation capability, inviting visitors to endorse HP products and services
• Use LinkedIn Recommendation Ads to accelerate results

Why LinkedIn?
• #1 resource for career-minded professionals
• Precise targeting by seniority, industry, job function, and geography

Results
• 2,000 product recommendations in two weeks
• 20,000 new followers on HP Company Page
• 500,000 viral updates about HP products and services
Recommendation Ads augment HP fanbase

Kari continues, “We had a lot of discussion on whether a demand generation campaign could be used to accelerate ratings and reviews. The key issue was whether we could advertise the initial recommendations we’d received – and request more of them – when there were not yet a lot of endorsements for certain products due to the recommendation function being so new.”

Rapid results

Kari explains, “We launched the campaign in December and in just two weeks, over 2,000 LinkedIn professionals had taken the time to recommend HP products and services. These recommendations in turn generated over 500,000 viral updates. Traffic to our products and services pages more than doubled. By the end of the month, we had 2,900 new recommendations from business professionals and 20,000 new followers on the HP Company Page.”

Kari says, “We were fairly confident that recommendation-based ads would drive high click-through rates, but the number of LinkedIn members that then went on to identify themselves as HP customers and personally recommend our products and services exceeded our expectations.”

Larry states, “This entire process changed our perception of LinkedIn. We knew they provided a valuable platform and growing membership base, and many of us use LinkedIn on a personal level. But now they’re innovating in ways that create rich new opportunities for brands. There are not a lot of other vehicles to reach a business audience on the scale that we can with LinkedIn.”

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Kari Homan, Worldwide Social Media Manager, Digital Strategy Group, Hewlett Packard