



At LinkedIn, we love to hear about customers experiencing incredible success. We recently sat down with Mike Tognotti, Founder and CEO of Raindance Partners, to hear about how he's expanding his firm's scope and delighting clients in the process.

LinkedIn: Tell us a little bit about your firm.

Mike Tognotti: Raindance Partners is a 10-person recruiting firm. We're headquartered in Santa Barbara, California, though we do national searches.

We specialize in biotechnology - specifically in the life sciences and diagnostics verticals, and some medical devices as well. Since we brought on LinkedIn Recruiter, though, we've actually been able to expand into the technology market. It's given us far more reach than what we had before.

LinkedIn: As we look back to when we began this partnership - you were a bit skeptical, weren't you? Could you share a little bit about that?

Mike: I did actually have a lot of skepticism. There are a lot of different products out there. I always knew LinkedIn was a very powerful tool - but specifically, with LinkedIn Recruiter, I was trying to figure out how it would map to our current and future needs.

Once I had a chance to really test-drive it, I was hooked. I immediately bought four seats - and that's actually a lot of seats for a firm like us - and then we bought three more seats right after that.

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Mike Tognotti
Founder and CEO
Raindance Partners, Inc

Recruiter is easy to use, and it really expanded our capabilities. It's allowed us to collaborate with each other at a different level than we could before. About twenty percent of the time, our recruiters are teaming up on projects. LinkedIn Recruiter has a very good global view so that there's an organized approach when people work together. It gives them real-time information so they don't overlap when working with candidates.

LinkedIn: What do those expanded capabilities mean to you, in terms of real ROI for your business?

Mike: Our recruiters are closing more searches in a shorter period of time, so they have more capacity. They're getting to more candidates, and to higher-quality candidates, with a more organized approach.

Bottom line, we're seeing more touch points with our candidates, more touch points with our clients and a really global sense of what's going on in each and every project.

We've been able to close more searches successfully than we ever have before with other tools. Within the first forty days, the product has completely paid for itself.

LinkedIn: What would you say is your biggest win in using LinkedIn Recruiter?

Mike: Here's a great example. There's a multi-billion dollar, publicly traded biotech company that has been our client for years. We had mostly worked on sales and marketing searches for them.

Recently their Director of Human Resources came to me and said, "We're looking for a human resources business partner. I know you don't typically work on those searches, but if you'd be willing to give it a try..." And I said, "Absolutely."

He is one of my prized clients, and I had total confidence in telling him, "We'll give it a try. I want to let you know we haven't done work in this area, but we have the tools and capabilities now where I know I can do a good job for you."

Using LinkedIn Recruiter, I quickly built a prospect list, engaged the candidates on that list with information about a job that was relevant to them, and got a very high response rate. In addition to that, we posted the job in one of our Job Slots. We had close to eighty people apply, including the prevailing candidate - who wasn't even on my original prospect list because he lived elsewhere, but was looking to move back to the Bay Area. Very quickly we were able to make that placement.

It was a good performance, and it showed that we were able to do something out of our area of expertise. That's helped us to open up more business with this client. They've now given us searches in finance, legal and operations. And they're confident in us knowing that we can do it.

LinkedIn: Final question. If you weren't a recruiting leader, what would you do professionally?

Mike: You know, it's crazy. I think I've always wanted to be a recruiter.

When I graduated from college, I just put a suit on, printed out a bunch of copies of my resumé, and I walked around all the biotech buildings in South San Francisco. I went into the lobby and said, "Hi, I'm Mike, I just graduated and here's my resumé. Are there any openings here?" I did it every day for two weeks and finally, there was someone who graciously invited me in and started talking to me.

I had a good career. I became the VP of Sales and Marketing for a publicly traded company with two hundred people. But I most enjoyed building teams and recruiting people. That was the fun of it all for me - so then, I started thinking, "Wow! You know, maybe this is something I should do."

So I quit my job and went cold turkey into recruiting. I've never looked back.