

Professional Profile Pro: Koka Sexton

Head of Social Media, Member Marketing & Communications, LinkedIn



LinkedIn: When did you realize that your LinkedIn profile factored into your web presence?

Koka Sexton: Back when I was in sales, I had a love-hate relationship with marketing. I loved the people, but they would throw leads to me and I'd never follow up. Then, in 2005, I signed up for LinkedIn. I found that being active on social media, especially LinkedIn, was generating better leads than what marketing was able to find me. The more I was active on LinkedIn, the more people were hitting my profile and I realized these were the people I actually wanted to do business with. It was around that time that I was able to do lead generation so successfully that LinkedIn became my channel for sales. Every URL, every blog comment went back to my profile because I could see who looked at my profile, to see who I was touching.

LI: How did you use your LinkedIn profile to build your personal brand?

KS: When I started driving traffic to my profile to see who viewed it, my profile wasn't built out very well. I began to realize that this traffic created awareness, so I started building my brand on my profile. I knew I needed a platform to stand on, and LinkedIn was that primary platform because it had the network I wanted. My primary focus was adding value, driving awareness around the industry itself and sharing information I found, rather than driving a product.

LI: What was the advantage of your LinkedIn profile when you worked in sales?

KS: I really allied with the "Who's Viewed Your Profile" feature, so I could see who was hitting my page. Then, when LinkedIn added functionality to publications, my profile became a resource for people and a destination to point people to look at rich media, articles and E-books. As I moved through sales and met new people, LinkedIn became my database of people that I had come in contact with in some way. It was much easier to search and find information about people, rather than just saving them as a contact in outlook.

LI: What are three tips for sales professionals to move from resume to reputation?

KS: 1. Turn your profile into a resource as opposed to just listing your work history. A resume is all about you, but your LinkedIn profile should be all about the person you're trying to engage with. Everything you write about yourself should be in relation to customers.

2. Start using your network as a way to amplify your influence in your industry by sharing industry information and articles that add value. The more you share things that matter to your ecosystem, the more people will view you as a subject matter expert.

3. Thoughtfully build your network and have a connection philosophy that you use when you're building it. Are you connecting with everyone or just everyone you meet face to face? As a sales professional, you need to be somewhere in the middle. Always connect with someone whose industry or job title relates to you. Regardless of title, I would still connect with people in my industry so that I can be informed on their business.



Koka Sexton has become a "professional profile pro" over time, through his social selling and sales experience. Sexton is currently managing social media for LinkedIn's global Member Marketing and Communications team. In this interview, he discusses ways to use your LinkedIn profile to build relationships, add value and create your personal brand.



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