

Branding to Win Clients and Candidates

The Complete Guide for Staffing Firms



No Brand? No Business.

Competition is fierce in the staffing world. You're feeling the heat. Job candidates and clients have more choice than ever when choosing a firm. They have more information than ever to help make their decisions. Meanwhile you're so strapped for resources that you can fit your entire budget into a thimble.

But here's the thing - there's a way to crush the competition and cut through the noise. It's called branding. A powerful brand is your staffing firm's ticket to winning more business and placing more candidates.

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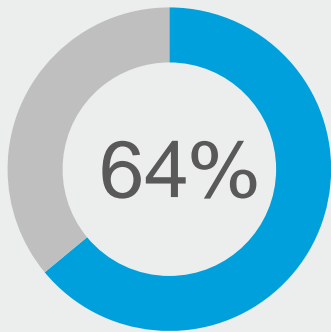
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What is a brand?

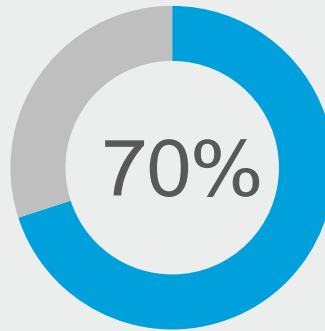
Your brand is the sum of all the experiences your clients and candidates have with you. It's built from many things: it's your track record, your relationships, and your recruiting approach. It's your industry, company, and role knowledge.

Simply put, it's why people choose to do business with you – or don't.

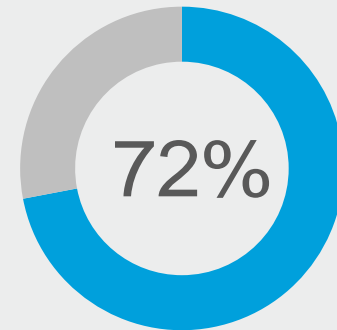
More and more staffing firms are seeing the light:



of your fellow staffing firms
have a brand strategy¹



measure their brand relative
to competitors¹



agree their brand significantly impacts
the growth of their business¹

What side are you on? Now is the time to focus on your staffing firm brand – defining it, promoting it, and measuring it. Because the stronger your brand is, the easier it is for clients and candidates to say yes to you.

So here it is, your crash course on branding. Many of the tips don't cost a dime.

¹ [Global Staffing Trends 2016](#), LinkedIn Corporation.

Don't be daunted. We're here to help.

“My business is too small to care about branding.” Even if you're a one-person show, you have a brand. There are some very simple and very free ways to develop it, so read on.

“I don't have the resources or time to devote to branding.” We're not going to lie. This can be hard and tedious work. But it doesn't have to cost a lot. You can compete with the big guns and see big results by doing small things.

“My firm isn't any different from other firms.” Wrong again. You may offer identical services, but every staffing firm has something that distinguishes itself. The key is to unlock that difference and then milk the heck out of it. We'll help you get there in this guide.

“I thought branding was Marketing's job.” Not entirely. Branding is everyone's job. It doesn't matter whether you're a large firm with a devoted marketing team, or a small firm who's scraping it together: every employee is an owner of your staffing firm brand.

Plus...

Today's workers are more socially savvy and selective about their careers than ever before. They are also hard to reach through just one channel. You need to market your firm to candidates, not just to clients.

Don't be daunted.

We're here to help. (continued)

“My brand only matters to my clients.” If you are promoting your brand only to clients, you're missing the boat. Just 18% of candidates think of a staffing firm when looking for a new job.² How's that for a wake-up call? You're not on candidates' radars, and that's a big deal.

“My brand only matters to my candidates.” If you're only thinking about job-seekers, you're missing the chance to bring in the big bucks. When there are too many choices and not enough time, it's the strongest brands that win clients' attention, and dollars.

“Nobody will notice if we don't brand.” Not so fast. Your potential clients and candidates are going online to get the skinny on you anyway. Meet them where they are, join their conversations, and shape their perceptions. You and your firm will have a reputation regardless, so you might as well influence it in your favor.

“Where do I start?”

Glad you asked. Let's go.

² [The Reason Why More Candidates Don't Use Staffing Firms](#), LinkedIn Talent Blog, 20 May 2015.

Let your branding journey begin

Step 1: Define your brand

- [Get buy-in](#)
- [Listen and learn](#)
- [Craft your approach](#)
- [Set your goals](#)
- [Test drive your messaging](#)

Step 2: Promote and engage

Kick your personal brand up a notch

- [Add more muscle to your profile](#)
- [Go wider and deeper with your connections](#)
- [Write smart InMails and emails](#)
- [Network offline too](#)

Strengthen your company brand

- [Let your employees be thought leaders](#)
- [Take your Company Page to new heights](#)
- [Grow your followers](#)

Listen and engage more deeply

- [Break away from the pack with killer status updates](#)
- [Decide where to play on other social media](#)
- [Make a bigger splash with paid tools](#)

Step 3: Measure and adjust

- [Explore Net Promoter Score and key LinkedIn metrics](#)
- [Choose your key indicators](#)



Define Your Brand

Define Your Brand

This first step requires some corporate soul-searching. Now don't roll your eyes. This isn't marketing fluff. This is thinking critically about who you are as a company. Knowing who you are – and knowing it really well - informs every step that follows. Why? Knowing yourself means you're authentic. Authenticity builds trust. And trust builds business. It's that simple.

Whole books have been written about how to define your brand, but we're going to keep it simple here and just cover the basics. The bottom line is you can't use your brand until you understand it. The goal is to obtain the most accurate picture of who you are and who you want to be as a company.



Note: we're not going to cover employer branding here since everything you need to know about that is in our [Employer Brand Playbook](#)

1. Get buy-in.

You first have to get your leaders to commit to investing in your brand. They must be on board in order to set the right tone with other employees, but also because you'll want them to participate in the research in step 2.

Make sure you're armed with facts such as the ones on page 3 to help you make the case for building your brand.

We know you don't take no for an answer, so if you get push back, suggest starting small. Do a pilot program to show some results. Works like a charm every time.

2. Listen and learn.

You can't define your brand in a silo. Gather facts, opinions and stories - the building blocks of your brand - from your clients, candidates and employees.

Before you talk to them, walk in their shoes to experience your brand as they do.

Go through your candidate and client touch points step by step. Review all materials each group accesses across print, online, social media, and events. Check out the checklist on the right for a number of items you should audit.

Audit your online reputation

Official

- ✓ Corporate website
- ✓ Company Page on LinkedIn
- ✓ Official presence on other social platforms
- ✓ Direct communication with clients and candidates (e.g. InMail, email, events)

Unofficial

- ✓ Employee LinkedIn profiles
- ✓ Blogs, Yelp, etc.

3. Plan your research.

With a grasp of what's out there, you're ready to conduct research with your core audiences. Research comes in all shapes and sizes, but regardless of budget you need to answer these four questions:

- ✓ **Whom will you talk to?** Start with your current clients and candidates, and a few key employees. Then consider those who may be aware of you but haven't worked with you. If you're really brave, survey former clients and candidates too.
- ✓ **What information will you collect?** What are you known for? What are you best at? Objective research will help you hone your strengths and understand your weaknesses. We dare you to ask for honest answers and face the realities – it will serve you well.
- ✓ **How often?** Listening should be continuous, but you should do a more formal audit every 2-3 years to make sure it's fresh.
- ✓ **Where and how will you engage your targets?** Focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and surveys are the most common research techniques. They can be as formal or informal as you like or can afford. Ideally you can hire a third party to ensure objectivity.

Internal - sample questions for you, your colleagues, and your leadership team

- What's your company's purpose?
- What are you good at? Best at?
- What do your clients say you are good at? Your candidates?
- What's special about your recruiting process?
- What makes you different from other similar staffing firms?
- What's the one attribute that most distinguishes you?

External - sample questions for candidates and clients

- What's your overall impression of XYZCo? What's its most memorable trait?
- What's your favorite aspect of how XYZCo operates?
- What makes XYZCo different from other firms?
- How likely would you be to work with XYZCo again? Why?
- What would you change about XYZCo or wish it did differently?
- Describe XYZCo using adjectives as if it were a person.

4. Put it all together.

You've audited your materials, thought through the candidate and client experiences, and conducted research with key audiences. Now it's time to reflect on what you've learned.

Mind the gaps. Are there any inconsistencies? Do your materials match what your research says?

Look for patterns. What are your most common attributes? What phrases are the most encompassing? Try to tie it all together with a few key words and phrases.

5. Craft your approach.

Consider what you want people to think about your organization. Is it feasible based on reality? It's time to refine your messaging.

Be real. What you say about your company must be true for your clients and candidates. If not, they'll see through you and you'll lose their trust.

Be personal. Go back to the individual stories gathered during the research phase. Stories are motivational and more easily remembered than just about anything else.

Be consistent. Think about how to align your client and candidate messaging. There should be strong consistency between the two.

6. Set your goals.

How will you define success at the outset? See the "[Measure Your Brand](#)" section for inspiration.

7. Test drive your messaging.

Don't make a big splash without first testing your findings. Tailor your messaging to different types of clients and candidates. Run ideas and visuals by key people to check that they ring true. Remember to engage your senior executives along the way.



Promote and Engage

Promote and Engage

We're biased of course, but LinkedIn is the natural place to start building your brand. Our 400+ million members use LinkedIn to engage in professional conversations, research companies and opportunities, and stay abreast of industry news.

There's a wealth of free and paid tools you can use to showcase who you are, and to engage clients and candidates. In this section we'll cover LinkedIn tips in detail, along with other social platforms you should consider.

10 tips for promoting and engaging on LinkedIn and beyond.

Boost your personal brand:

1. [Add more muscle to your profile.](#)
2. [Go wider and deeper with your connections.](#)
3. [Write smarter InMails and emails.](#)
4. [Network offline too.](#)
5. [Help your employees be thought leaders.](#)

Boost your company brand:

6. [Take your Company Page to new heights.](#)
7. [Grow your followers.](#)
8. [Break away from the pack with killer status updates.](#)
9. [Make a bigger splash with paid tools.](#)
10. [Decide where to play on other social media.](#)

Kick your personal brand up a notch



1. Add more muscle to your profile

Remember that the #1 activity on LinkedIn is checking out profiles. It's the first place clients and candidates go to research you and your firm.

The more robust your profile, the easier it is for viewers to assess whether you can help them achieve their goals. Make it easy for someone to scan your profile in 60 seconds and feel like it's a no brainer: you're the ideal partner.

Here's how to give your profile star quality:

- **Re-write your summary.** Aside from your picture, your summary is the most important part of your profile. It sums you up professionally, and it shows your true colors.

Not sure what to write in your summary?
Answer these questions in your own words:

- What do you do professionally?
- Why do you do what you do?
- What makes you different from other similar professionals?
- What do you want viewers to do after reading your profile? **Hint:** inviting them to connect and start a dialogue is a perfect call-to-action.

Whatever you do, lose the jargon and write simply.

- Use short words.
- Use short sentences.
- Use short paragraphs.



1. Add more muscle to your profile (continued)

- **Boost interest by adding rich media.** Don't just describe the presentation you gave, upload the darn thing. Link to pictures, blogs, videos, SlideShares and websites. Why? They are eye candy, but more importantly, these assets show your expertise.
- **Make it easy for viewers to learn more by linking** to your firm's website, LinkedIn Company Page, IM handle and Twitter feed. Doing so also gives them more options for contacting you.
- **Display your proven track record by getting recommended** by both clients and candidates. These serve as testimonials for your firm as well.

Bonus tip: Strike while it's hot! When you successfully place a candidate, immediately ask both the candidate and the client for a quick recommendation. Asking while your work is fresh makes it easier for them to say yes.

So the next time someone thanks you for a job well done, reply: "Thanks. I'm actually trying to build out my presence on social media. It would mean a lot to me if you wrote a short recommendation on my LinkedIn profile." Bam. Easy as pie.

Another good way to get a recommendation? Give one.



Fred Ewing a recruitment specialist at UK-based Meridian Business Support, has 75 recommendations (see below). You can't argue with those numbers. How many people do you have vouching for your excellence?



Experience

Managing Consultant - Transport and Infrastructure

Meridian Business Support - Recruitment Specialists

October 2004 – Present (11 years 5 months)

Tasked with growing a profitable business within consulting engineering and white collar technical recruitment. Personal specialism within Transport Planning, Modelling and Rail / Aviation Consultancy. Built an extensive client list and continue to provide expertise in these sectors. Provide advice to candidates and clients alike on market conditions and projects.

June 2011 - Account Manager for Transport for London

- ▶ 1 organization
- ▶ 3 honors and awards
- ▼ 75 recommendations, including:



Terry Wa
Technical Director/Senior

I have no hesitation in recommending Fred in recruiting staff because his exceedingly seamless professional service.... View ↓



Ozle Sah
Quantitative Researcher

Fred is a fantastic recruitment consultant who has a gift for detecting the right skill set for an available position.... View ↓

[73 more recommendations ↓](#)



1. Add more muscle to your profile (continued)

- **Show your human side by highlighting your volunteer experience.** Your volunteer experience could be another way you show your professional passion and thought leadership.

Maybe you want to go in-house one day. Or maybe you want to start your own staffing firm down the line. Whatever your goals, investing in your profile will pay dividends now *and* in the future, wherever you end up.

Still not convinced?

One study of over a million professionals revealed that 76% want specific information about a recruiter's success before determining if they will respond to his or her calls or emails. The take away here? If you don't know how to brand yourself, you won't attract the top talent your staffing company needs for its clients.³

³ O'Donnell, J.T. [Why Recruiters Need 'Celebrity Status' Today](#), Inc. 15 July 2015.



Volunteer Experience & Causes

Member of Women in Leadership Taskforce

American Staffing Association
Economic Empowerment



This task force addresses the issues surrounding gender imbalance in the staffing industry's executive tiers. It aims to provide resources for women to excel as leaders in staffing and propel a movement in the industry toward empowering workplace solutions.

Chairperson of "Staffing as a Career" Task Force

American Staffing Association
January 2015



The task force mission is to establish and promote the staffing industry as a career opportunity and choice for students in our nation's colleges and universities. To develop tools and resources for member companies who are recruiting internal staff and college students interested in our industry to connect through ASA for possible internships or long term employment.
<https://americanstaffing....> **more**

Member of Education and Certification Committee

American Staffing Association
January 2009 – Present (7 years 1 month)



ASA's Education and Certification Committee creates and insures high quality education and training for the nations Staffing Industry Professionals.

Council Member and former Chairperson of Search and Placement Policy Council

American Staffing Association
January 2010 – Present (6 years 1 month)



ASA's Search and Placement Section represents the interests of those members that provide Direct Hire services.

Board Member

Capital Area Staffing Association (CASA)
January 2000 – Present (16 years 1 month)



1. Add more muscle to your profile (continued)

- **Show your expertise by publishing long-form posts.** Consider sharing your point of view on an industry trend or relevant current event. For tips on how to get started, check out [Everything You Need to Know About Publishing on LinkedIn](#), and [The 7 Secrets to Writing Killer Content on LinkedIn](#). If you've already written articles or thought leadership pieces published elsewhere online, link to them in the Publications section of your profile.
- **Build credibility by adding certifications and sharing your skills.** Here's an opportunity to emphasize what you're best at and to optimize your profile with keywords. Once you add your top skills, candidates and clients can endorse you for them, adding to your credibility.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile's 'Skills' section. At the top, there's a 'Skills' header with a gear icon. Below it, the 'Top Skills' are listed in a vertical column on the left, each with a blue box indicating the number of endorsements. To the right of each skill is a horizontal row of small profile pictures of people who have endorsed that skill. The skills and their endorsement counts are: Technical Recruiting (99+), Executive Search (99+), Recruiting (99+), Transportation Planning (69), Management (61), Human Resources (60), Contract Recruitment (58), Recruitment Advertising (41), Rail (39), and Permanent Placement (39). Below this list, a section titled 'Fred also knows about...' displays a grid of skill tags with their endorsement counts: Transport Modelling (34), Transportation... (26), Engineering (26), Temporary Staffing (22), Sourcing (21), Graduate Recruitment (18), Negotiation (16), Contract Management (14), Project Management (13), Talent Acquisition (13), Transport Economics (11), International... (11), Business Development (10), Stakeholder Management (9), and Team Leadership (9). A 'See 25+ >' button is located at the bottom right of the grid.

Skills

Top Skills

- 99+ Technical Recruiting
- 99+ Executive Search
- 99+ Recruiting
- 69 Transportation Planning
- 61 Management
- 60 Human Resources
- 58 Contract Recruitment
- 41 Recruitment Advertising
- 39 Rail
- 39 Permanent Placement

Fred also knows about...

- 34 Transport Modelling
- 26 Transportation...
- 26 Engineering
- 22 Temporary Staffing
- 21 Sourcing
- 18 Graduate Recruitment
- 16 Negotiation
- 14 Contract Management
- 13 Project Management
- 13 Talent Acquisition
- 11 Transport Economics
- 11 International...
- 10 Business Development
- 9 Stakeholder Management
- 9 Team Leadership

See 25+ >



2. Go wider and deeper with your connections

Be your bold friendly self and connect with existing clients, prospects, and big names in your industry. Stretch it – you can always benefit from more. The more quality connections you have, the more mutual connections you'll be able to cite when reaching out to clients and candidates. Don't forget to:

- **Use the “People You May Know” feature** and let LinkedIn do the work for you. At the risk of tooting our own horn, we do a pretty darn good job of giving you people whom you do in fact know.
- **Use “Who’s Viewed Your Profile”** as a reason to reach out to new connections.
- **Make sure you tailor your connection requests** so that they have your personal touch.



“Sometimes when I have a down moment, I’ll take a look at who has been looking at my profile. When I know someone, I’ll reach out and connect. When I don’t know them but would like to, I’ll thank them for checking out my profile and will start a quick dialogue.”

Carolyn Betts
Founder & CEO
Betts Recruiting



3. Write smart InMails and emails when you reach out

Writing a winning message isn't always easy. In fact, so many recruiters do it poorly. That's good news though. It means it's that much easier to stand out.

Think about it: if your competitors are blasting your candidate with generic messages, won't she do a double-take when you reference two people you know in common and the company she most admires?

InMails aren't just for recruiting candidates though. They are for engaging prospective clients too. It is often the first and only touch point a prospective client has with your firm. Make sure you aren't just touting your "amazing list of candidates" over and over again. Never works, by the way. Lead with your clients' needs, not with what you have.



"Because I have over 3,600 connections and my market is so specialized, I'm bound to have a second-degree connection with any candidate I reach out to. He or she will be more inclined to respond because we know people in common."

Fred Ewing

Recruitment Specialist

Meridian Business Support



3. Write smart InMails and emails when you reach out (continued)

How do you know what your clients and candidates need?

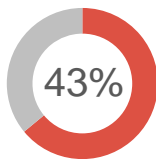
Here's a little secret: just ask good questions and let them talk.

For clients, that means learning about their business units, products, strategies, and culture. That means knowing the strategic importance and financial impact of the roles you're recruiting for. All of these factors inform the type of talent they will need now and in the future.

For candidates, that means understanding what they're good at, what their goals are, what motivates them, and the cultures in which they'll thrive.



[LinkedIn Talent Pool reports](#) shed light on what candidates in certain industries and functions want in a job. Use this data to paint the picture you need to both land the business and advise your clients and candidates.



Consider this: only 43% of search and staffing leaders feel confident using data to understand recruiting effectiveness⁴, so you could really set yourself apart with this approach.



“LinkedIn Talent Pool reports help us provide extra transparency to our clients. Not only do the data show our expertise and visibility into the talent market, but they also help manage clients’ expectations. That way when we discuss why a particular search is difficult, we are able to back it up with LinkedIn statistics. The end result is building trust.”

Samm Pearey
Director, Knowit

⁴ [Global Staffing Trends 2016](#), LinkedIn Corporation.



4. Network offline too

Don't just network with clients and candidates online. Remember to host in-person networking events and meet-ups as a forum to develop relationships as well.

- **A one-of-a-kind recruiting event.** Betts Recruiting recently hosted its first TechCrawl in San Francisco. Thirteen companies and scores of qualified candidates participated in a traveling open house. Similar to bar hoppers in a pub crawl, Betts' candidates moved from office to office, getting to know the companies that interested them. The final destination for all was a party at Betts' office.

Betts Recruiting Do you want to see what the hottest companies in San Francisco are up to? Are you interested to see the coolest company offices? Do you want to network with some of the movers and shakers of Silicon Valley? You don't want to miss the SFTechCrawl!... [more](#)



SFTechCrawl - The Crawl Is Coming...

sftechcrawl.com • The hottest companies in San Francisco are opening their doors for one day, and you're invited. Drink, network, and geek out.

Like (10) • Comment • Share • 6 days ago



5. Help your employees be thought leaders

Encourage them to share content, join groups, and help spread your messages. Tee up an article of the week they can share and recommend LinkedIn Pulse channels and Influencers to follow. You can even build a library of pre-approved content and messages for them to easily share.

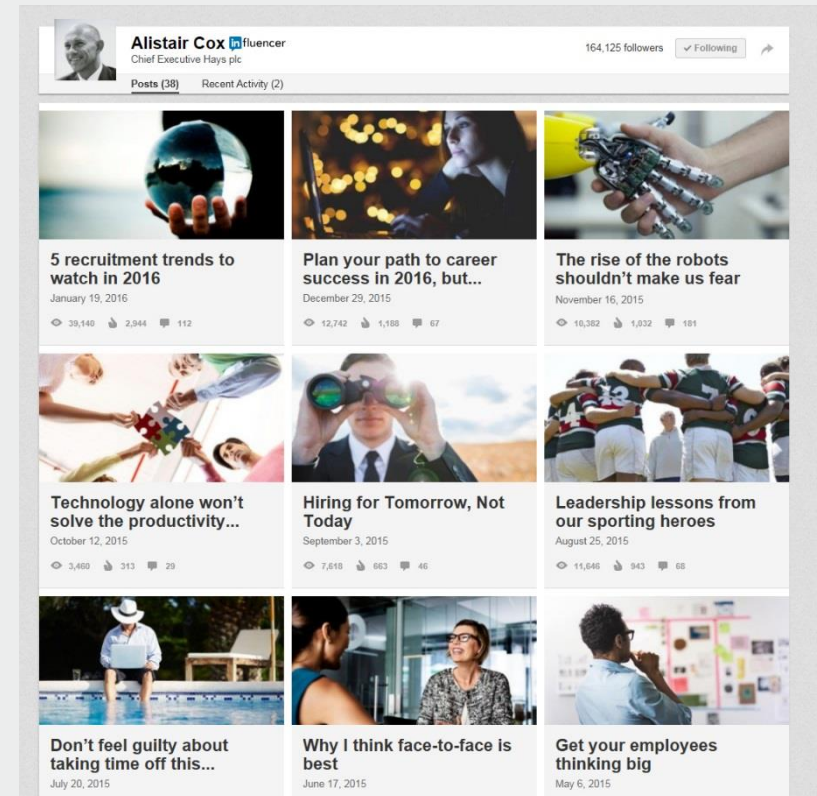
Recruitment professionals receive 10x the amount of profile visits on LinkedIn;⁵ that's a lot of eyes looking at your employees. Make the most of this traffic by encouraging them to share content that's relevant to their target candidates and clients. Also have them use their profiles as platforms for sharing information about your firm and their role.

Your fellow employees' personal brands will benefit from building out their profiles and growing their networks. It's a win-win: what's good for the firm is good for their own reputations.



Tip: Start with employees who are already savvy LinkedIn users. Piggyback on their efforts and use them as examples for others.

Get inspired. [See how Hays CEO Alistair Cox publishes on the LinkedIn platform:](#)



⁵ [World's 25 Most Socially Engaged Recruitment Agencies Revealed. LinkedIn Talent Blog.](#) 7 October 2015.

Strengthen your company brand



6. Take your Company Page to new heights

There are over 48,000 staffing and recruiting companies on LinkedIn⁶. Does your Company Page help you stand out? As your information hub on LinkedIn, members expect you to have a great one. Make sure that it communicates:

- Your focus areas
- The type of clients with whom you work
- The opportunities you can deliver to candidates
- What candidates and clients should expect by working with you



Caution: don't say the same things every other firm does. Bor-ing. Be what the competition isn't. Turn heads by focusing on what's in it for candidates and clients. Try not to talk about yourself the whole time.



"Having more followers than companies 100x our size gives us significant credibility within the industry."

Chad Saffro

Recruiter and Consulting
CS Recruiting

⁶ [LinkedIn research per Field Guide.](#)



6. Take your Company Page to new heights (continued)

An all-star Company Page can make your small staffing firm seem bigger. It levels the playing field and makes you look just as savvy and capable as your 5000-employee competitor.

Here's a best-in-class staffing firm Company Page. Is yours up to par?



Why we like it:

- Sums up unique positioning to both clients and candidates in one headline
- Grabs attention with explanation of why it's different from other recruiting firms
- Builds credibility with specific examples of results achieved
- Further brands itself with infographics and testimonials on its accompanying Careers Page. (See page 27 for more details on Career Pages.)

The screenshot shows the Andiamo Partners website. The header includes the Andiamo logo (two blue squares) and the text "ANDIAMO". To the right, it says "Andiamo Partners", "Staffing and Recruiting", and "51-200 employees". Below the header is a navigation bar with "Home" and "Careers" links. The main content area has a blue background with a large white code symbol (</>) in a circle. Below this, the headline reads: "Leveraging big data to connect technology's greatest minds with the world's top companies." The Andiamo logo is repeated below the headline. The text continues: "We're a different kind of recruiting firm. We employ Research & Data Analysts alongside Technology Recruiters to bring our clients the top 2% of passive technology talent. With unique data partnerships and a revolutionary technology platform, we're mining and curating massive amounts of data to bridge the talent gap." It then lists client testimonials: "Our data-driven approach has helped us become the top recruiting partners of Amazon.com, HBO, Bloomberg, Goldman Sachs, TripAdvisor, Audible, MasterCard, and others." Under "Delivering Results:", it lists: "Amazon.com: Andiamo has recruited over 100 of the top Software Engineers, Data Scientists, UX/UI Designers, SDMs, SDEs and Architects for Amazon via our game-changing, data driven recruiting process." "Bloomberg: Andiamo has helped Bloomberg recruit over 200 of the world's top Software Engineers, Developers and Architects." "HBO: Andiamo is helping build HBO's cutting edge technology teams for HBO Media and Code Labs/ HBO Go." "Goldman Sachs: Goldman has relied on Andiamo to deliver 150 of the world's top Software Engineers, Architects, Data Scientists and DevOps Engineers." "MasterCard: MasterCard has relied on Andiamo's data driven approach to build their new Silicon Alley office in Manhattan and recruiter over 100 cutting-edge technologists for new development projects." It also mentions "Andiamo Awarded - 2012, 2013 and 2014 Inc. 500/5000 - Fastest Growing Companies in America". At the bottom, under "Specialties", it lists "Information Technology Recruiting, Financial Services Recruiting, Information Technology Consulting, Technology Staffing".



7. Grow your followers

Company followers are key assets. Why? They are:

- Almost 95% more likely than non-followers to respond to an InMail message
- More than twice as likely to recommend your company to others

They also help amplify your message. On average more than 60% of your followers will share the content you publish on social media.⁷

Look around. How many followers do your closest competitors have? Here's how to out-hustle the competition:

3 Steps to follower growth

Once you've set up your Company Page, follow these three steps to grow your follower base.

Step 1: Add a free "Follow" button to your site

Make it easy for people who visit your website to follow your Company Page by embedding a free "Follow" button.

Step 2: Go social

Cross-promote your Company Page in LinkedIn Groups and on other social platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

Step 3: Have employees spread the word

Ask your team to include your Company Page on their LinkedIn profiles and in all client and candidate communications. They can even embed a Follow button in their email signatures.

For more information on the Follow button, visit developer.linkedin.com/plugins.



"We have grown our follower base to 4000 people and counting, surpassing many of our more mature rival agencies. Followers equal brand awareness. The more brand awareness we have the better chance of success we have."

Samm Pearey
Director, Knowit

⁷ [First Staffing Company to Hit 1M Followers on LinkedIn: What They Are Doing Right](#), LinkedIn Talent Blog, 15 June 2015.

7. Grow your followers (continued)

Listen and engage more deeply

You've enhanced your profile and connected with more prospects. You've improved your Company Page and attracted more followers. You're now holding a megaphone, my friends. Time to use it.

Followers are a viable pool of clients and candidates, and they want to hear from you:

- 87% want to hear from you when there's a job that's a good fit.
- 75% want to hear from you when you have interesting insights to share.
- 78% expect career advice such as interview tips.
- 66% expect to hear company news and updates.⁸



8. Break away from the pack with killer status updates

They have 3 key benefits:

- **Show you're a strategic partner.** By giving clients valuable information that impacts their firms, they'll start sharing their problems and goals, and will ask for your help in finding talent to achieve those goals. By hooking candidates with valuable content that shows you're an industry expert, they'll be more likely to rely on you for guidance.
- **Make you visible and accessible.** Instead of pinging people you're trying to win over, status updates are a non-invasive way to stay top of mind. Be patient: it may take months or even years to get a potential candidate or client on board. Win their attention and loyalty now; make money later.
- **Extend your reach.** The more likes, comments and shares your content receives, the more broadly it reaches throughout the LinkedIn network. Don't forget to wow them and excite them every once in awhile.

Check out [11 Ways Staffing Companies Should Use Status Updates](#) for tips to ensure your updates are uber-engaging.

⁸LinkedIn survey of staffing agency followers.



"We have always positioned our organization as a thought leader in the staffing industry, using email blasts to communicate with our clients and candidates. Creating followers on LinkedIn moves that marketing to a social platform, which over time will grow larger than our Mee Derby database. One of the biggest signs that our presence is growing is that we often receive messages, out of the blue, from people whom we haven't met before."

Robin Mee

President & Founder

Mee Derby



9. Make a bigger splash with paid tools

LinkedIn business solutions can take your branding to the next level. Here's a summary of options:

[Sponsored Updates](#) allow you to reach beyond your follower base to the network's 400+ million members and publish relevant content straight to the LinkedIn feed of any member on the site. They provide the perfect opportunity to increase awareness and elevate your brand with a high-quality audience.

[Targeted Ads](#) get your business in front of clients and candidates who matter most – and drive them to your website or landing pages. You can use Ads to amplify your brand impact, expand your follower base, and spread the word about your firm's capabilities and open positions.

[Career Pages](#) are a great place to feature quotes from your employees, candidates and clients. Here you can also include videos and links to other resources such as your website.



Andiamo Partners does a stellar job of branding its Careers Page with a dual-purpose infographic that's featured in its "Revolutionizing the Recruiting Industry" section for clients and its "Why Work With an Andiamo Recruiter?" section for candidates.



9. Make a bigger splash with paid tools (continued)

[Sponsored InMail](#) allows you to reach clients and candidates through tailored messages with 100% deliverability, making sure they get seen. A Sponsored InMail only gets delivered when members are active on LinkedIn.

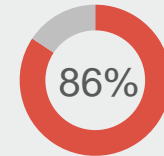
[Job slots](#) get your clients' opportunities in front of the right candidates automatically. LinkedIn's matching algorithms target candidates with the most relevant jobs based on their LinkedIn profiles. You can use job slots to proactively build your pipeline and attract both passive and active candidates.



10. Decide where to play on other social media

LinkedIn is the social network for professionals, but we know it isn't the only game in town. Ideally you can give your audiences options in terms of both channel and content. That way they can choose how they want to engage with you. If you can't do that, focus on nailing one channel before moving to the next.

If your specific target group spends a great deal of time on Facebook, then you should be on Facebook. Some industries are more represented than others. Check out resources such as Social Media Today and Mashable to get the stats on where your target audiences spend their time on social media.



Fun fact: 86% of job seekers have an account on at least one of these six social networks: Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest.⁹











Sharing, liking, tweeting, posting, pinning or any other social action are all ways to promote your brand. Isolate the social platforms most widely used by your target audience and start establishing yourself as a reliable contributor.

⁹ 2014 Jobvite Jobseeker Nation Study.

10. Decide where to play on other social media (continued)










Where, when and how to publish

Generating quality content is only half the battle; getting it in front of the right audience is equally important. Here's a summary of the key social media channels you can use to distribute your content and brand your staffing firm. If you have a great piece of content, promote it everywhere that makes sense. But remember, don't post on a platform if you can't spend the time to respond to comments or post consistently.

Platform	What works	Considerations	Peak activity	Suggested frequency
	Content that showcases your talent brand, as well as anything that educates readers on your company, industry, and professional development topics like leadership. Videos, images/quotes, and thought leadership-oriented blog posts tend to do well.	Professional-oriented social network, so photos from your family vacation are better utilized elsewhere.	 7-9am  5-6pm	Start with 2-3 times/week. Work up to once per day.
	Chatty content that shows your company's informal side e.g. wacky photos from the holiday party. Highly visual content and things such as infographics tend to do well.	You can't target your posts by industry, so you'll have to find other relevant parameters.	 6-8am  1-4pm	Start with 2-3 times/week. Work up to once per day.
	Industry news. Encourage your employees to share job postings on Twitter for their portfolio companies. Get inspired by searching for your relevant terms and seeing which top results surface.	Less professional focus and more news, entertainment oriented; 140-character limit and short life-span due to high post volume.	 1-3pm	2-5 times per day.
	How-to and thought leadership presentations that help professionals be better at their jobs, particularly the 30-45 year-old set.	Growing a following takes time. Best used in conjunction with LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter or embed in a blog.	 Tue and Wed, 24hrs/day	2-3 a month.

10. Decide where to play on other social media (continued)

Where, when and how to publish

Platform	What works	Considerations	Peak activity	Suggested frequency
	Short videos are a great way to show the behind-the-scenes of a company.	Only be on YouTube if you can create high-quality videos quickly and consistently. If don't have the resources to do so, don't do it.	 12-1pm	2 a month or more if you have the resources.
	Images, graphics and charts. Be highly visual and focus on lifestyle content.	A worthwhile investment if you are mostly targeting women, and have a consistent supply of truly great photos or infographics.	 2-4pm  8pm-1am	A few times a week.
	Motivational quotes work best here.	Mostly an awareness play, but limited in that you can't click in posts. So if you're trying to raise brand awareness by driving traffic to your new website, you don't want to do that on Instagram since followers can't click on the posts.	 Daytime	2-3 times a week.
	Technology or science-related articles, blog posts, infographics, videos and papers.	The audience here is likely very techy, so keep that in mind when developing your content strategy.	 9-11am	A few times a week to once a day.



“You don’t go to a construction site and say “Okay, I’m going to bring one tool.” You have to have a power drill, you have to have a hammer, you have to have a flat head screwdriver and a Phillips head screwdriver. We train every single recruiter on how to use these tools effectively. For example we use HootSuite to make sure that content is posted regularly on social media and to build our brand presence. We use LinkedIn to build 1:1 personal connections with candidates.”

Nancy Soni, Founder & CEO, FILD

10. Decide where to play on other social media (continued)

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, don’t forget to:

- **Target.** If your audience is everybody, then it’s nobody. It’s better to be too narrow than too broad.
- **Experiment.** One of LinkedIn’s social media experts, Liana Pistell, advises a 3-month minimum time period for testing out a new platform, posting at least a few times a week. “Just start doing it. See if and where you get value. You’ll know in three months if you’re getting enough engagement. Don’t try to tackle eight platforms at once though. Start with two or three, see what works, and go from there.”
- **Be visual.** Strong visuals are the name of the game, regardless of channel. If your content doesn’t have a compelling image or video, think twice before posting. There are some great resources for finding free and ready-to-use visuals such as unsplash.com and bestofstockphoto.com.



“My goal is repetition, and to have every touch point be impressive and impactful. It’s the accumulation of all those things that strengthens our brand.”

Carolyn Betts, Founder & CEO, Betts Recruiting



Measure and Adjust Your Brand

Measure and Adjust Your Brand

How do you know if your branding efforts are working? There's always third-party research, but that can be expensive. In this section we'll cover some alternate metrics you can monitor to better understand your brand impact. First we'll discuss Net Promoter Score, then several LinkedIn-specific metrics.

Net Promoter Score (NPS™) The best measure of brand success is earning loyal clients and candidates - the people who keep coming back to you and who recommend you to others. That's why NPS is a good core metric: it was developed as a measure of loyalty between company and consumer.¹⁰

¹⁰ Reichheld, Frederick F. (December 2003). ["One Number You Need to Grow"](#). Harvard Business Review.

¹¹ www.netpromotersystem.com



Here's how it works:

The Net Promoter Score is based on responses to a single question: *How likely is it that you would recommend XYZ staffing firm to a friend or colleague?*

It's scored on a 0 to 10 scale. Responders with a 9 or 10 are Promoters, 0 to 6 are Detractors, and 7 or 8 are Passives. The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of customers who are Detractors from the percentage who are Promoters.¹¹

Calculating Net Promoter Score

0 = Not at all likely

10 = Extremely Likely

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
NPS (Net Promoter Score)							=	Promoters (%) (9s and 10s)	-	Detractors (%) (0 through 6s)

NPS can be as low as -100 (everybody is a detractor) or as high as +100 (everybody is a promoter). It's a simple number you can compile and track regularly. For more information on implementing NPS, visit www.netpromotersystem.com.

For LinkedIn metrics specifically, here's what matters and how to use them:

1. Company Page analytics

The Analytics tab of your Company Page offers rich data on how your brand is performing, including:

Follower demographics: understand your audience better with more detailed demographic data. You can drill down by seniority, industry, company size and function. Make sure the audiences you're looking to engage are well-represented.

How you compare: benchmark your followership against similar organizations and competitors. Set a goal for follower growth and use the "follower trends" module to track your progress. Followers are correlated with interest in your brand, so they're a good proxy for brand strength.

Visitors: track your page views and unique visitors over time to understand how your efforts to drive traffic are performing. Review visitor demographics to see who's visiting your Company Page.

Status update engagement: use the data on what's performing well – and what's not – to tailor your content and increase your impact.



"One thing we're actively monitoring is the growth in our follower base. A lot of people are interested in what we do because we specialize in placing executives in the staffing industry. This follower base helps us stay connected and continuously engaged with hard-to-reach passive candidates."

Robin Mee

President & Founder
Mee Derby

2. Sponsored updates

Sponsored Updates are data-rich. Each one comes with its own dashboard that shows impressions, clicks, interactions, the number of followers (read as new leads) acquired from the update, and the engagement percentage.

Gained from Sponsoring

+1,489	+3,596	+922	+34	+11.43%
impressions	clicks	interactions	followers acquired	engagement

These analytics help you control cost and show the overall effectiveness of a post. They also let you easily perform A/B testing to give you an understanding of what resonates with your audience and what doesn't. Below are a few key definitions:

Impressions: the number of times your update is seen by a member of the social media platform. Each time an update displays in the newsfeed, it is counted as one impression.

Engagement: the number of clicks to your update link, as well as likes/shares/comments/followers acquired, divided by impressions.

Engagement = $\frac{\text{clicks} + \text{likes} + \text{shares} + \text{comments} + \text{followers acquired}}{\text{impressions}}$



"I measure impressions on our LinkedIn Company Page to see whether our content is inspiring interest among our target communities. For example, we have one minute animated videos there, created by our agency, to help engage potential consultants. What's important to us is that the level of engagement has grown significantly within the last year. I also look at impressions generated per unit of time – for instance, one recent company status update generated 3,000 impressions, 36 clicks, and 14 interactions in under 20 hours."

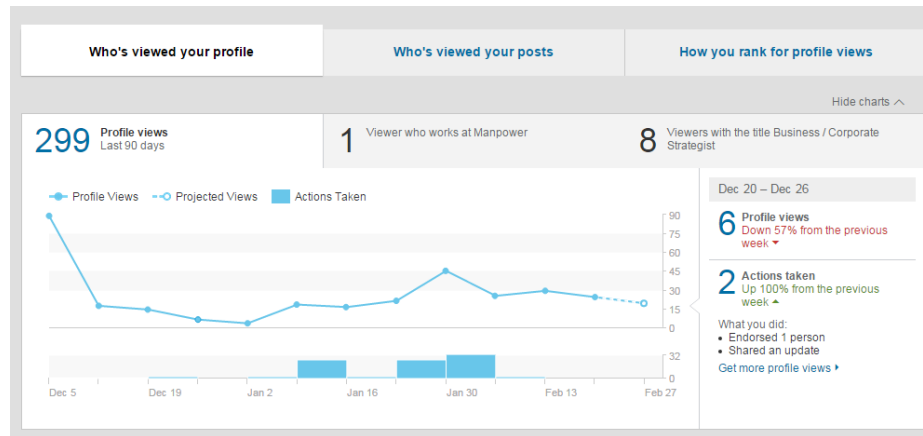
Michael Primorac

President

Mediant Health Resources

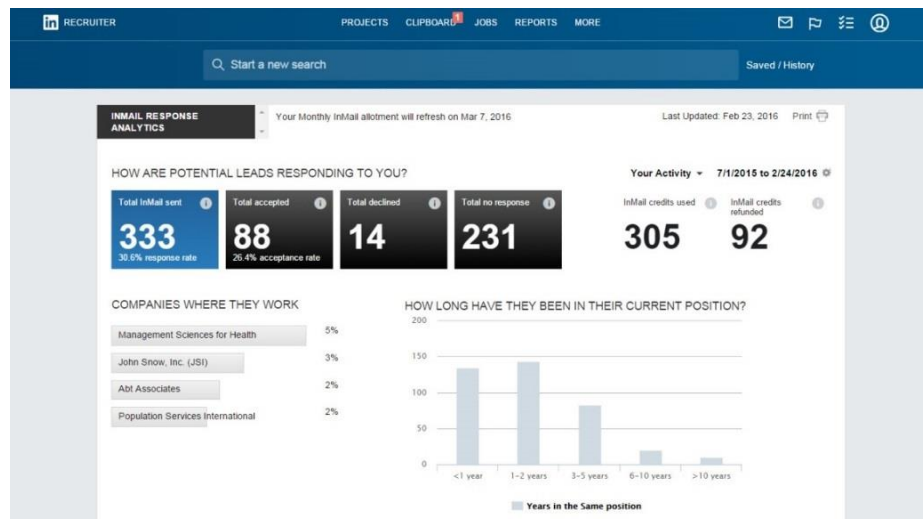
3. Profile analytics

[Track profile views](#) and connection requests. People viewing your profile could be potential leads. You can also track the views, comments and shares of your published posts to gauge which ones resonated most with your audience.



4. InMail response rate

Keep an eye on your InMail response rate, which can be found in the InMail analytics dashboard of [LinkedIn Recruiter](#). You should aim for a response rate of 22% or above (22% is average). This dashboard also includes additional insights to help you optimize your messages based on your target audience.



“I look at how many people are visiting my profile to gauge my influence levels among prospective candidates. For instance, within a 90-day period my LinkedIn profile will typically generate more than 5,000 views.”

Michael Primorac

President

Mediant Health Resources

“We are extremely diligent about tracking our InMail response rates. If recruiters slip, we work with them to understand and improve their performance. For recruiters who are knocking it out of the park, we’ll similarly analyze what they are doing and share their best practices with the team.”

Carolyn Betts

Founder & CEO

Betts Recruiting



Conclusion

With so many free tools, even small firms can compete. You can run circles around a competitor of any size if you have the guts and the stamina to take your brand by the horns and invest in it.

Remember though, branding isn't a one-time thing. It's an ongoing process that impacts all parts of your business, all of the time. Make sure you are on the continuous mission to define, promote and measure it.

Staffing Firm Branding Hall of Fame

Thank you to these staffing firm leaders who shared their expert advice and best practices.



Carolyn Betts
Founder & CEO, Betts Recruiting



Michael Primorac
President, Mediant Health Resources



Fred Ewing
Recruitment Specialist, Meridian Business Support



Chad Saffro
Director of Operations, CS Recruiting



Robin Mee
President & Founder, Mee Derby



Nancy Soni
Founder & CEO, FILD



Samm Pearey
Director, Knowit

Not quoted but featured:

Andiamo Partners
Hays

We'd also like to thank Liana Pistell, Social Media + Content at LinkedIn for her insights.

Questions?

[Contact us](#)

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With over 400 million members worldwide, including executives from every Fortune 500 company, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.

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