

# 2024

## Using LinkedIn™ to Grow Your Business



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# Introduction

Hello! I am Laura Barker. I am so thankful you decided to get this guide to grow your business using LinkedIn. I've been using LinkedIn to grow my own businesses for over 10 years. LinkedIn has changed dramatically since then. You probably know it started out as a job-finding/recruiting platform. Profiles were basically resumes. As more business owners joined the platform and began to use it to develop business relationships, LinkedIn began to evolve into what is now the only business-focused "social media" platform on the planet, literally. As a solo entrepreneur, I was elated! I quickly developed systems and strategies to maximize my LinkedIn presence. The result? All three of my business ventures saw significant growth. I am so excited about sharing my knowledge with you to help you see similar success.

So, let's dive in and start to transform your business with LinkedIn!

## Your Business Can't Afford To Ignore LinkedIn

It's official. In November 2023, LinkedIn passed the 1 Billion Users milestone. LinkedIn reigns supreme as the top business-focused social media platform in 2024. When searching for new ways to expand your customer base, build strategic partnerships, and boost brand visibility, leveraging LinkedIn should be a priority. Compared to other social sites catering more to personal connections, LinkedIn creates space to directly engage the decision-makers, influencers, and industry leaders most likely to help take your business to the next level.

Whether you want to demonstrate thought leadership via content and community-building, facilitate lucrative B2B sales, or keep your finger on the



pulse of emerging industry trends - LinkedIn supplies the engaged professional audience to make it happen.



As we dive deeper into maximizing your LinkedIn presence in 2024, keep top of mind the platform's unique ability to:

- Research and target decision-makers
- Initiate strategic partnerships and collaborations
- Establish yourself as an industry expert and thought leader
- Expand your professional network both wide and deep
- Create brand awareness

## A B2B Google

One of LinkedIn's most powerful features is its robust search functionality. In many ways, LinkedIn can serve as a "B2B Google" allowing you to quickly mine professional data to drive business leads and sales.



With LinkedIn's advanced search, you gain instant access to an extensive database complete with key details on business professionals across all industries and career levels. Simply input a title, company, location or other search parameters on the advanced search filters option to generate targeted prospect lists.

For example:

- Accountants working remotely
- Nutrition bloggers with over 100k Instagram followers

No other platform allows you to leverage social media data for laser-targeted sales prospecting quite like LinkedIn. The platform's unparalleled access to both professional and company intel provides an incredible competitive advantage over the other social media platforms.

Additionally, Google indexes and ranks LinkedIn content prominently within search results. This means optimizing your LinkedIn profile and content with strategic keywords can drive traffic and visibility within organic search - expanding your reach considerably.

## LinkedIn: Is it just Facebook for Entrepreneurs?

Some call LinkedIn the "Facebook for business folks". Both platforms connect you with others. However, LinkedIn focuses on enriching professional opportunities over personal connections.

On Facebook, you connect with friends and family to share life updates through photos, videos, and comments. LinkedIn is more about making connections that'll help grow your business, become a recognized thought leader, and advance your industry standing.

When entrepreneurs use LinkedIn, networking is presumed to be for business purposes. A few examples:

- Searching out partners for game-changing collaborations.
- Tracking down go-to service providers to solve pressing problems.
- Seeking intel to give your venture an industry edge.
- Generating qualified leads.
- Developing business client relationships.

Connecting on LinkedIn signals you want to talk serious business growth - not your latest beach trip! Of course, there's still room for personality. But the interactions focus on achieving career and company wins vs. planning social get-togethers.

**Here's the key takeaway:** The strategies that work wonders on Facebook will straight up flop on LinkedIn. Tagging friends for viral stunts won't improve your status with executives and industry influencers! To make LinkedIn work, you need a tailored approach based on cultivating mutually beneficial professional relationships.



## What About Other Platforms to Build Your Business?

While LinkedIn reigns supreme for B2B relationship building, other social platforms certainly hold value based on business models and offerings.

Instagram and TikTok tend to better serve creators of commodity products with transactional business models. Think online fashion boutiques or specialty food brands. Visually dynamic content inspires impulse “add to cart” purchases.

Pinterest allows makers of creative products to gain traction. Craft artists, DIY project bloggers and wedding photographers attract engaged audiences through idea-driven image and video content.

Word of caution - spreading efforts too thin risks stunted results. Before exploring additional platforms, first commit to fully mastering LinkedIn marketing fundamentals. Once you generate consistent returns through targeted networking, personal branding and lead generation on LinkedIn, it's time to consider expanding your social media footprint.

## What Are Your Goals for LinkedIn?

Before diving into LinkedIn, clearly define what you want to accomplish with your presence on the platform. LinkedIn success requires commitment and a strategy tailored to your specific objectives.



Common goals for businesses leveraging LinkedIn may include:

- Expand professional network for partnership opportunities
- Increase brand visibility and thought leadership
- Generate inbound sales leads in target demographics
- Recruit top-tier talent or industry experts
- Conduct competitive research and track industry trends
- Community-building via facilitating group conversations
- Promote online courses or gated content to ideal buyers

With clear goals in place, you can methodically create content, connect with the right users, join aligned groups, and better target messages and interactions.



**Key question to drive strategy:**

What does success look like on LinkedIn for you in concrete metrics like leads generated, strategic partnerships landed, or new clients?

## Profile Picture and Banner Image

Now that you have a clear understanding of your goals for LinkedIn, it's time to create a powerful Professional Profile starting with your profile picture and banner image.

Your profile picture and banner image are prime visibility real estate. You want to make sure that you are presenting folks with a fantastic first impression.

**For your profile picture**, use a high-quality headshot radiating approachability and confidence.

Stick to simple professional attire in solid colors without distracting backgrounds. People want to see YOU. Let them see you smile.

Keep in mind that the majority of LinkedIn users access the platform from mobile app which means your headshot is *tiny*. So, make sure they can actually see your face even on the mobile app.



Keep your profile photo updated at least yearly. You want the recognition factor while accurately representing your current professional stature and personal brand. Using outdated images undermines credibility. The profile picture should

be a *headshot* which means your shoulders and head. No wedding pictures. No crazy backgrounds that would be distracting. A solid color background also gives you the opportunity to stay on brand.

**Your banner image** presents another impactful visual branding opportunity.

There are 5 elements that can make your banner picture more effective.

1. Your logo/name
2. Who you serve
3. How you serve
4. Your UVP (Unique Value Proposition)
5. Call to action

The general principle is to create a banner picture that will resonate immediately with your ideal client.

You may want to include:

- Conference stage photo of you speaking
- Images of books you have written
- Graphic embodying ideal client and common pains
- Credibility icons such as popular podcasts, etc

One of my students, Ann Rockley, totally revamped her profile including her banner picture. She has branded it with her brand colors and states her UVP as a revitalization coach guiding you to better health and career success.



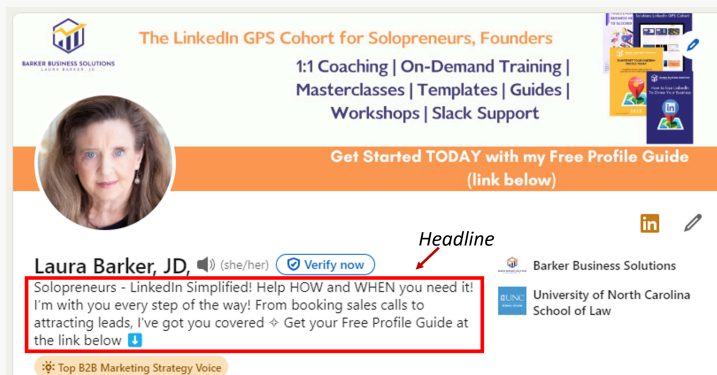


<https://www.linkedin.com/in/annrockley/>

A banner picture is not a “one and done”. Is there an event you want to draw attention to? A new product launch? To keep your profile interesting, refresh your banner image monthly while maintaining overall visual brand consistency across updates. Keep images crisp, text concise, and graphics straightforward. Fancy, confusing banners diminish credibility. Simple, engaging images demonstrating your capabilities make the biggest impression.

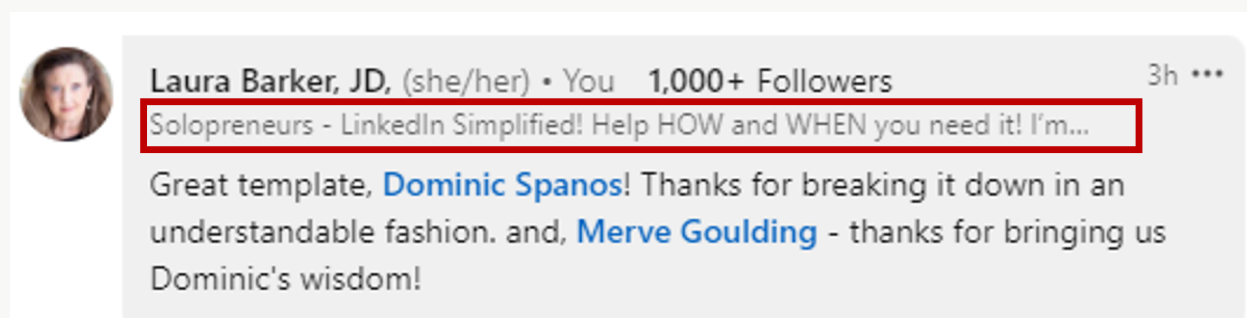
**Important Note:** If you haven’t identified your brand colors, fonts, etc. you will want to do that before designing your banner picture. You can get help for this using AI such as chatGPT or other AI software. Canva.com is a great place to start as it has hundreds of templates and suggestions to inspire you as well as being the easiest way to create your banner picture.

## Your Profile Headline



Your LinkedIn headline appears front-and-center beneath your profile image as indicated in the image above. It also follows your activity on LinkedIn meaning that it appears with any content you post or discussions you join. The first 10 or 12 words serve as your “window display” to immediately catch the eye of your ideal client. The first part of your headline appears on everything you do on LinkedIn. Just like your banner picture, your headline is not a “one and done”. Finding what resonates with your audience takes time and testing.

Does your headline speak to your ideal client?



Some headline optimization best practices:

- Lead with an intriguing emotional hook drawing people in
- Emphasize key positioning differentiators
- Speak directly to the outcomes you enable
- Use power words that instill confidence
- Align messaging with content and visual branding

Maximize the impact of your headline by leveraging *copywriting frameworks* like AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action). Not familiar with these frameworks? Check out my article on the topic [HERE](#). You can also ask CGPT or CoPilot to tell you all about copywriting frameworks and then use the ones you like. When framing your prompt, be sure to include the character limit.

You want to give AI information about your business so that it can generate headline ideas based on topics you talk about. Stay aligned with your content pillars. Input your content pillar and purpose, your core services and ideal clients/target audience for headlines more likely to resonate with your ideal clients.

Your headline is limited to 220 characters to concisely communicate your UVP (unique value proposition) so make every single one count! Headlines come in many varieties. Below is a simple formula to get you started.

**Follow this basic LinkedIn headline formula:**

*I help (your target audience) to (the benefit you provide them) by (your unique mechanism that sets you apart).*

Some examples:

I help startup founders to quickly validate new products by leveraging behavioral science and prototyping MVPs.

I help B2B companies expand market share by implementing targeted paid social campaigns informed by 1st party data.

I help beauty retailers optimize supply chain agility by building direct trade relationships and forecasting models.



This basic formula establishes immediate relevance to your ideal client while differentiating your approach. Continue testing variations and refining the positioning narrative.

There is no one way to create a headline guaranteed to get attention. Play around with different versions. Pay attention to those headlines that catch your attention. What was it that made you want to know more?

## Your About Section

Contrary to popular belief, your “About” section is not about you. Instead, your About section offers invaluable space to speak directly to your ideal client, to address and empathize with your ideal client's pain points. Think of this section as a conversation with your ideal client.

Before you can write an effective About section, you have to know your ideal client at a deep level. People often tell me that they know their ideal clients. While a customer-centric business owner does know certain things about our ideal clients, that is not the same as having a robust ideal client profile that illuminates demographics, psychographics, behavioral information, and more.

Leverage AI tools to inform your complete buyer persona profiles. Scientifically determine demographic details, common objectives, frequent pain points and defining objections to tackle within your About summary.

Try the prompt below to get started in learning about YOUR ideal client. All you need to do is fill in the 3 **[bold bracketed statements]** with your info. CGPT will do

the rest. Copy/paste the **entire prompt** with your info to CGPT4 for best results.

**IDEAL CLIENT PROMPT:**

"I am a *[insert your title, role, etc]*. I serve *[insert target audience]*. My services include *[describe what you sell and the price points]*. You are a marketing genius like Mark Cuban. I want you to help me create an incredibly detailed profile of my ideal client.

Consider the following factors:

Demographic Characteristics: Age, gender, location, income level, education level, marital status, occupation.

Psychographic Traits: Interests, hobbies, values, attitudes, lifestyle.

Online Behavior: Preferred social media platforms, online shopping habits, favorite websites, and communication preferences.

Needs and Challenges: What keeps them up at night? What solutions are they actively seeking?

Goals and Aspirations: What are they striving to achieve both professionally and personally?

Preferred Media Sources: Where do they get their news? What publications or influencers do they trust?

Brand Preferences: What brands resonate with them and why?

Decision-Making Process: How do they go from problem recognition to making a purchase?

Potential Objections or Concerns: What could make them hesitate or opt for a competitor?

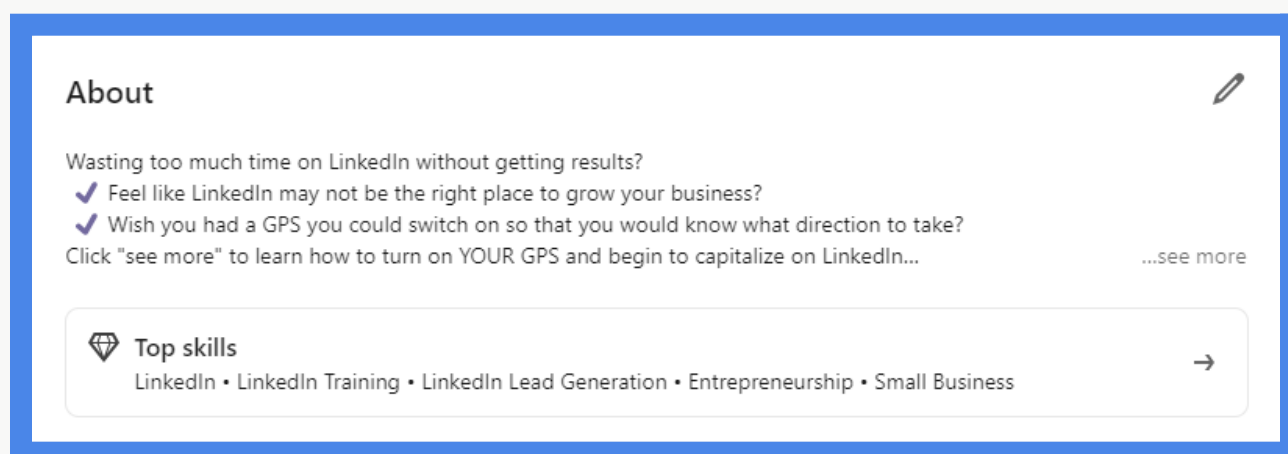
Role in the Buying Process: Are they the decision-maker, influencer, or end-user

Keywords or phrases that will be relevant to them?"

**END OF PROMPT**

Once you have a detailed ideal client profile (ICP) with SEO keywords and all, incorporate what you have learned into a powerful About section that resonates with your ideal client.

Keep in mind when you are writing your About section that the first 2-4 lines are the only ones viewers will see initially. Your opening lines need to be compelling enough that the reader will want to “see more”. Here’s one I’ve used that has worked well. Notice that I used visually appealing sentence lengths, stats, pain point in the form of question, and well placed professional checkmarks.



One way to open is by pointedly yet compassionately detailing the pressing obstacles and risks your buyers regularly navigate. You can demonstrate this with statistics, questions, etc. I recommend using copywriting frameworks again with the help of AI. Using some industry keywords will also help people find you in searches.

Be sure to write your About section in 2nd person. Read it aloud to catch any awkward sentences or poor transitions. Use short sentences. Write your content for a 5th-grade reading level. This will ensure you have written in a way that is a quick easy read.

Visually format the entire About section for ease of reading. If you aren't familiar with formatting content for visual appeal, check out my newsletter article:

[Visual Copywriting: Your Secret Weapon](#)

Strategically incorporate social proof elements like testimonials, impressive client logos and positive ratings. Write in an advisory, conversational tone throughout. Avoid industry jargon - write to one specific ideal client. Let them know that you understand their challenges and have solutions.

## Experience and Education

### **Your Experience Section**

Feature your present business prominently regardless of company size, team size, or longevity. Your entire experience section should be written for your current ideal client. Let past experiences highlight how they contributed to your current role.

Don't include every job you have ever had. If you worked at McDonald's in high school, you don't need to include that in your LinkedIn experience section. However, if you had a mentor there who inspired you to become the expert you are today, include it and explain why it is relevant.

A great feature of the Experience section is that you can create sub-roles based on core offerings:

- 1-on-1 Business Consulting
- Group Training Program Director
- The Ambitious Entrepreneur Podcast Host

This structure allows detailing different roles, services or courses, all under one company. In each part of your Experience Section, emphasize the business impact enabled through your work using details, preferably with numbers:

- Helped 12 entrepreneurs generate an average 27% YoY revenue increases
- Directed online training program to 400+ solopreneurs establishing LLCs

Incorporate rich media examples directly within experience entries:

- Client testimonial videos
- Free downloadable resource guides
- Webinar case study recordings
- Curated expert interview audio clips

### **Your Education section**

Here, you want to feature any and all credentials supporting your authority in your expertise.

Don't worry if you don't have any formal education or degrees. Get creative.

I've seen "School of Hard Knocks" and other ways of describing how you know what you know.

With so many paths to becoming an expert, use this section to describe your journey.





## Skills, Endorsements & Recommendations

The Skills section allows you to select up to 50 skills. I don't recommend that you try to find 50 you can claim experience in. Instead, choose skills in your area of expertise most relevant to conveying your current services and value to prospective clients.

Carefully curate which skills to feature based on the capabilities and knowledge domains most influential when buyers evaluate working with you. Ensure they accurately reflect current core competencies.

Prioritize your top 3 most important skills by arranging them in the first slots. Strengthen your credibility by showcasing the specialties that attract ideal new business partners.

For example, an entrepreneurship consultant may highlight skills including:

1. Business Strategy
2. Entrepreneur Coaching
3. Leadership Development
4. Executive Presentation Training
5. Venture Capital Consulting

As you interact with other LinkedIn members, they can endorse you for specific skills. Public endorsements serve as social proof reinforcing your capabilities that prospects will consider.

As connections endorse you, they serve as social proof of capabilities. Once a skill receives 99+ endorsements, LinkedIn elevates your visibility in related skill searches.

Regularly endorsing others strengthens relationships. Be generous with your endorsements. The folks you endorse will receive a message from LinkedIn to let them know you have endorsed them. Great way to start a conversation!

The recommendations section offers additional visibility into the experience of working with you. When giving a recommendation, proactively provide thoughtful recommendations for your connections highlighting working relationships and project results. It doesn't help much if you simply state that they are "great to work with". Include specifics so that readers can get a better understanding of that person's quality of work. Strive to give as many recommendations as you receive through descriptive stories of collaborating successfully.

In addition to giving recommendations, you want to receive them as well. You can ask former clients, employers, etc to give you a recommendation. When you send the message, it's not a bad idea to remind them of something specific you two collaborated on or accomplished together.

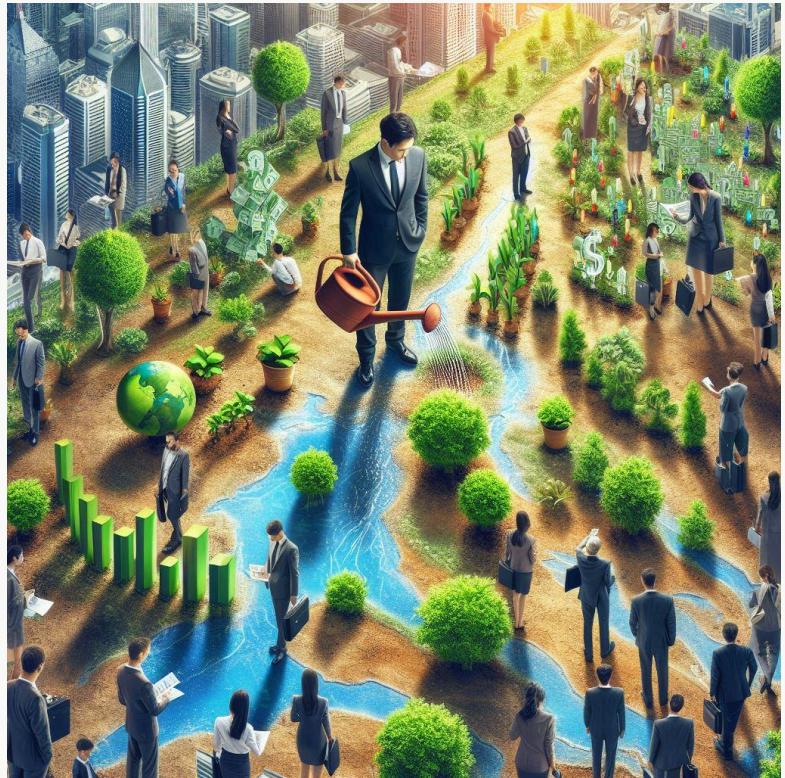
Receiving credible public testimonials from other respected industry professionals showcases strong working rapport and your ability to deliver the results clients seek.

# Growing Your Network and Getting Clients

## Content Creation

Now that your LinkedIn profile looks professional, it's time to build a solid network and connect with potential clients. Your network is a lot like a garden - it needs tending, nurturing, and planning.

The key is creating helpful content that educates your audience. Good content will make you stand out and build relationships.



Your content goal is to have your posts show up in the feeds of more and more users. You can share different types of content:

- Plain text
- Text with images
- Video posts
- Document shares (aka carousels)
- Live videos
- Newsletters

To see your “garden” grow, your content should first provide value to readers. Use the “*Why-What-Call-Now*” structure:

**Why:** Explain why your post matters. Hook readers with a dramatic fact or emotional story.

**What:** Share knowledge and tips without pitching services. Show how you can help, don't just market.

**CTA:** Ask readers to take action NOW with a specific CTA (call-to-action), like asking a question or offering a free resource. Then deliver!

The goal is to show readers that you offer useful information so that they will want more helpful information and support from you over time. Focus on building relationships, not just selling. LinkedIn is a long-term play for serious business people. It takes consistency over time to build a following. By *consistently creating good content* that people want to engage with, your following will grow. You will meet new people and even get new clients.

## Networking the Right Way

Networking does not mean spamming canned pitches to hundreds of connections. LinkedIn won't allow that, and it will likely upset people. Studies show members find unasked-for sales pitches frustrating.

Instead, take a mutually beneficial approach to networking. Start by finding influential people in your industry and connecting with or following them. Interact with their content - comment, react, and discuss with others commenting.

Find some influencers in your industry and follow them. Commenting on their content is a great way to connect with others in your field. Make a habit to comment regularly on posts of interest to your ideal client. When leaving a comment, be insightful and edify the author. You never want to “steal” an audience so, again, no pitching. Think back to your headline - if folks are interested, they will go to your profile.

Your comments are a great way to show that you have fresh perspectives because of your expertise. Treat the comments to a post as a conversation. Ask questions. Answer questions. Get truly engaged.

LinkedIn's direct messaging is also a part of good networking. But remember, LinkedIn messages are not the place to sell your services. Unless specifically asked, don't pitch what you offer. Continue adding value to the relationship. You can reach out to folks who visit your profile, subscribe to your newsletter, comment on your content, etc.

Eventually, conversations will lead to what you do. But start by referencing recent content or achievements of theirs. You simply want to *spark a real conversation* and build a relationship. No need to be salesy or pushy.

Often, people will check out your profile before they even connect with you. Assuming you have an optimized profile, it shares the services you provide among other things. This can naturally lead to discussing if you'd be a good fit to



work together. Set up a phone call or Zoom - this is where sales conversations happen.

The goal is genuine relationships first, not just spamming out pitches.

Networking on LinkedIn can be extraordinarily powerful if you do it correctly.

Having good conversations with good people is the secret to making it work.

## Adapt to the AI Landscape

As a solo entrepreneur, it's crucial to understand how AI is changing business. Platforms like ChatGPT and Claude can help you work smarter by automating tasks and providing personalized assistance. Failing to embrace this new technology will result in seeing your competition outperforming you at every turn. It would be like stubbornly refusing to get a smartphone because you love your old flip phone.

ChatGPT got it all started in 2023 and the growth we have seen since has been somewhat mind-boggling. Advances are being made in every industry from medicine to logistics to e-commerce. The old saying was "there's an app for that". Now, it's "there's a AI for that". If you feel overwhelmed by so many new things to learn, you aren't alone. I am thankful that I jumped on the AI bandwagon even before CGPT was launched. As a beta tester with it's parent company, open.ai, I was learning what was coming. I have embraced it from the beginning. The result is better service to my clients. Specifically, my business now includes AI training specifically for solopreneurs and small businesses. After all, business owners

don't want to have to be an expert in AI. They just want to use those services that will help them grow. I help them identify what they need and provide them with the right AI for the task.

Here are just some of the key ways AI can assist solo entrepreneurs:

- Brainstorming content ideas and outlines
- Putting together marketing plans
- Providing advice and feedback as a virtual advisor
- Drafting and editing social media posts
- Creating visual designs and graphics
- Researching trends and insights in your industry
- Automating administrative tasks
- Creating a solid business plan along with marketing strategies
- Create amazing images that capture your vision



I created this Thank You message in about 5 minutes using Bing Image Create. It's free and very easy to use. What will you create for your business, your brand, your content?

Transparency matters when you are using AI for your business. It is especially important to let clients know if you are using AI in your work for them. Be upfront about how you use AI ethically as part of your personal brand. Share with them that the time and energy AI saved allows you to focus on the meaningful work you are doing. Giving credit to the AI services you leverage will only build trust.

For example, if Claude helps craft a great social media post, mention it provided writing support. Be open about your process. This shows you are on the cutting edge and builds trust. One way to do this is to have a statement you can use on all of your communications that used AI support. (See my statement at the end of this guide).

Consider sharing the pros and cons you have experienced with AI over time. Solo entrepreneurs who smartly integrate and discuss AI as part of their personal brand will have a major advantage.

I predict there will come a time when we won't need to have an "AI" was used statement. People will expect that AI played a role. Until then, transparency is probably the best rule of thumb.

## The Key is Authenticity

As you build your LinkedIn presence, focus on being authentic and transparent. People can detect disingenuous networking and self-promotion from a mile away.

When connecting with others, take a genuine interest in them as individuals, not just potential leads. Ask questions about their background, interests, challenges, and goals. Offer to help make warm introductions to others in your network who could provide value.

When sharing updates and content, don't just post generic inspirational quotes or platitudes. Share your real experiences, useful advice, and thought-provoking perspectives. Admit what you still struggle with or have more to learn.

Consider sharing the story of why you started your company, including the difficult early days. Be open about mistakes you've made and lessons you've learned along the way. Not only will this help distinguish you from the crowd, but people may relate to and respect your journey.

Authenticity builds authority and trust - critical ingredients for successful business relationships. Stay true to who you are while networking on LinkedIn.

## Final Thoughts

Embracing LinkedIn as an entrepreneur in 2024 necessitates playing by somewhat different rules than other social media platforms in order to fully leverage its business-building potential.

Carefully optimize each profile element to establish credibility and clearly communicate your differentiating value proposition to the buyers that matter most.

Strategically create and engage content centered on your ideal client's pain points, goals and knowledge gaps. Educate transparently with authentic perspectives.

Grow your network through genuine relationship building - not transactional pitches masquerading as intro messages. The emphasis is quality over quantity connections.

Monitor algorithm changes and test features as LinkedIn continues evolving in capabilities. Commit to efficiently systematizing foundational elements like CRM integration, analytics reporting and automated nurture streams.\

Finally, recognize LinkedIn mastery now intersects with adopting artificial intelligence in your business processes at some level. Leverage responsibly applied AI tools to sharpen positioning, refine messaging, and streamline content creation.

By focusing on value-driven content over selling - while still directly addressing buyer needs and pain points - your LinkedIn presence will convert interested prospects into loyal clients that fuel sustainable entrepreneurial success in 2024 and beyond.

As a LinkedIn coach, I'm honored to offer ongoing guidance tailored to your entrepreneurial objectives across LinkedIn and beyond. Depending on your present business needs and budget, we can partner together through:

- ✓ Interactive online masterclasses providing step-by-step LinkedIn optimization blueprints
- ✓ In-person workshops facilitating creation of complete, high-converting profiles
- ✓ Private 1:1 consulting focused on personalized profile refinement, content strategy & creation, business development



## ✓ The LinkedIn GPS Cohort

I work with most of my clients through their membership in the LinkedIn GPS Cohort. They enjoy monthly webinars and workshops, office hours, on-demand training library, and daily feedback and support directly from me. You can learn more about it [HERE](#)

My passion is equipping entrepreneurs like yourself with the mindsets, skillsets and toolsets essential for leveraging LinkedIn to reach goals like landing new clients, forging strategic partnerships, and establishing thought leadership.

I'd love to hear more about your current business priorities to explore how we may potentially work together using LinkedIn to serve your vision this year!

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*Here's how I have used AI to assist me in creating this guide for you:*

- *CGPT4 - brainstorming*
- *Claude - proof and improve material I wrote*
- *Midjourney and Bing for Image Creation*
- *Bing image create*

*If you would like to know more about these tools and others, please reach out to me on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurabarkerjd/>*