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Tips for Creating an Intercultural LinkedIn Profile.

Have you ever looked at your LinkedIn profile from an intercultural perspective?

Culture is an important factor to take into account when using LinkedIn. Are you communicating the way your audience expects? Are your messages being understood the way you intended? Are *you* interpreting *others'* communications the way *they* intended?

Cate Brubaker from SmallPlanetStudio.com and Sabrina Ziegler from Authentizen.com believe that LinkedIn can benefit your career or business. We've joined forces to help you use LinkedIn in the most effective way. Continue reading to get our *5 Tips for Creating an Intercultural LinkedIn Profile*.

“ Communication—the human connection—is the key to personal and career success. —Paul J Meyer ”

People around the world use LinkedIn for different reasons, in different ways, and have different goals and concerns. In today's interconnected world, it's vital to take these differences into account.

In this brief document, we'd like to share with you the results of an informal international survey that we conducted in early 2013 focusing on participants from Europe and North America (thanks again to all who participated). We noticed that Europeans and North Americans have different approaches to LinkedIn. This is tremendously important to be aware of if you're planning to use LinkedIn for networking, identifying potential clients for an international job search.

What are the key differences between European and North American LinkedIn users?

Let's start with the reasons for creating an account and the goals associated with using LinkedIn.

Europeans indicated that the reasons for joining LinkedIn are to network with colleagues and stay up-to-date on their profession, whereas North Americans indicated using LinkedIn primarily to build a network of people they met at conferences or other group contexts.

How else does LinkedIn use differ?

According to our survey, North Americans use their LinkedIn profile to search for a job, whereas Europeans don't use the platform as frequently for this purpose. North Americans also like to use LinkedIn to follow thought leaders and keep up with trends.

Europeans, on the other hand, use LinkedIn because of its integrity and due to the ability to separate personal and professional lives.

Another difference that we found relates to how Europeans and North Americans view barriers and concerns related to using LinkedIn. See the sidebar for the top five for each group.

Disclaimer: When speaking about the survey results we are batching all Europeans and all North Americans into one box. We realize that each culture has different cultural values, norms, and great diversity. We decided to generalize as a way to highlight the overarching common barriers and concerns that each group has based on survey results.

Top 5 LinkedIn Barriers & Concerns

Europeans

1. Having to "sell myself"
2. Privacy
3. Fear that endorsements may not be legitimate
4. Complexity of the platform
5. Language barrier

North Americans

1. Payment required for full membership
2. Amount of time and effort needed
3. Do I even want or need a professional life online?
4. Privacy
5. Endorsement and introduction features may not be legitimate

How can you apply this information when using LinkedIn?

As an example, let's say you'd like to connect with a European audience. For many Europeans English is not their mother language and thus it's important to remember this when communicating. This does not mean you need to simplify your language so much that they feel as if you were talking to a child, but it is important to be mindful of not using abbreviations, colloquialisms, slang or idioms.

Since "having to 'sell myself'" is the #1 barrier, avoid trying to overtly sell *yourself*, you may be viewed as being too pushy and not sincerely interested in the person you want to communicate with. Instead, invest in the relationship; provide value

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"Seek first to understand,
then to be understood."

– Stephen R. Covey

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to the person or group that you want to target. Make getting to know them take priority over selling yourself. Understand that a large concern that Europeans have is that they will lose some of their privacy by being on LinkedIn (concern # 2). When you first make contact, introduce yourself and remind the other person how you know them. Don't send a generic connection request or message. Also keep in mind that Europeans fear that the endorsements given may not be legitimate (concern # 3). Therefore, don't rely simply on your LinkedIn profile to tell your story. Showcase your work aside from the LinkedIn endorsement tools, once you are that far in your relationship. (Of course, these tips apply to connecting with anyone, not just Europeans!)



5 Tips for Creating an Intercultural LinkedIn Profile

1. **Be clear.** Avoid abbreviations, acronyms, and the like that might not make sense to others.
2. **Ask yourself** how your profile could come across to non-native speakers and those from other parts of the world. Better yet, ask people from several countries to give you their perspective on your profile. Is there anything that could be misunderstood or misinterpreted?
3. **Use keywords** that your target audience is likely to search for. Don't assume that people in other countries will search using the same keywords. Find out which keywords your audience is likely to use and then incorporate them into your profile - especially your headline - so they can more easily find you.
4. **Find out** what your target audience values in recommendations, and then ask recommenders to address those topics.
5. **Be aware that differences exist** but remember to also look for commonalities.

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LinkedIn is a powerful platform that can help you further your career or build your business.

But it's up to you to utilize LinkedIn's possibilities and maximize its potential.
Make the commitment to yourself to take ACTION.

Commit to reviewing and improving your profile, even if you just do one small thing each week.

This is the first key first step to LinkedIn success.

Want more LinkedIn tips & strategies?

We can help.

We're offering two webinars and an e-course for expats, international education and intercultural professionals, and small business owners or entrepreneurs wanting to work internationally. We will:

- Address your LinkedIn questions and concerns
- Help you create a LinkedIn profile that gets results
- Give you peace of mind that you're putting your best self forward

Click here to learn more: <http://www.smallplanetstudio.com/products/linkedin/>

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(expires in March - register today so you don't miss out!)

About Us



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“ You will get
all you want
in life, if you
help enough
other people
get what
they want. ”

-Zig Ziglar