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Blog Story

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How To Use LinkedIn To Promote The Cause You Care About

Courtney Selstad, Senior Program Associate, Jaffe Management @ 11:10 am
Uncategorized

Associations have an uphill climb when it comes to getting their message out and heard by the audience they wish to reach. With advertising and marketing budgets that are generally a fraction of what is being spent in the for-profit world, organizations need to think creatively in order reach their targets.

There is no solution to this problem that is more association-friendly than social media, and specifically LinkedIn. Although maintaining a LinkedIn page will require time and effort no financial investment is necessary.

Once thought of as a resume site where job hunters and employers could find each other, LinkedIn has grown to become is a premier business site with people from all industries and countries flocking to set up profiles and use it as an effective business-building tool.

Create a LinkedIn Open Group for Your Association

Most associations a website, but creating a LinkedIn Group can expand the reach of an organization exponentially. How many people use LinkedIn? In the U.S. alone, 84,851,462 Americans use LinkedIn. This massive user base is fertile ground for membership-building and fund-raising, seeking new staff members, and even finding new and exciting talent for your board.

LinkedIn Groups allow individuals and organizations with similar objectives to

- Promote a cause they care about
- Share information
- Pose and answer questions
- Post and view employment opportunities
- Make business contacts
- Establish themselves as industry experts

LinkedIn makes it wonderfully easy to make your group part of its site. You'll find a comprehensive FAQ on starting a group here.

Managing Your Association's LinkedIn Group

Warning: a LinkedIn Group page does not run itself. It must be monitored and maintained so that it is of value to people who visit whether those visitors are association members, prospects, or prospective donors. To ensure the health and well-being of a LinkedIn Group, someone within the organization – board member, volunteer, or staffer – will need to be chosen to

- Pre-approve posted discussion topics
 - Post questions that spark a dialogue with group members
 - Ensure that the level of discourse is relevant to the organization
 - Ride rough-shod over posts that are offensive or inappropriate
 - Delete posts that are patently self-serving
- LinkedIn "Secret Weapon" for Associations

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Once you have established a LinkedIn group for your organization, you can launch opinion polls. This is an unparalleled way to foster interaction with your members, donors, or any other target group whose opinion matters to your association.

The primary purpose of a poll is direct market research, but polls also generate buzz and can bring attention to a topic of interest to your association. In other words, opinion polls do more than simply put your finger on the pulse of your audience. Results can:

- Serve as the basis for blog posts, articles, and other marketing materials
 - Be posted to Facebook or tweeted to increase your social media presence and attract new visitors to your page
 - Illuminate which offers and promotions are most attractive to your members and prospects
- Learn from the Masters About LinkedIn Association Pages

If your association has been thinking about becoming active in the LinkedIn community, a review of some robust association pages that are thriving can help you avoid mistakes and pitfalls while developing your own. Some of LinkedIn's greatest success stories include:

American Red Cross

National Wildlife Federation

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

United Nations Development Programme

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