

Managing Partners and LinkedIn: Are We There Yet?

By John Remsen, Jr.

In the June 2009 edition of The Remsen Report, I wrote, “The jury is still out on the effective use of social networking technologies as a means to build business relationships.” Three years later, it is now my view that there is no longer a missing link between social media and law firm management. The trusted link for an ever increasing number of Managing Partners is LinkedIn.

The Network for Professionals

Allison Shields, President of Legal Ease Consulting, Inc., reports that of LinkedIn’s 100 million plus members, more than 40 percent have the title of manager, director, owner, chief officer or vice president. In short, of all the social media contenders in the marketplace, only LinkedIn can lay claim to being “the professional’s network.” Unlike Facebook and Twitter, one doesn’t find many personal or trivial notes on LinkedIn.

Lawyers Are on LinkedIn, Too

Lawyers, too, have found utility with LinkedIn. UK barrister Carolyn Murphy reported her research at www.marketing-for-lawyers.co.uk almost exactly one year ago. She found that 56 percent of US lawyers were using some form of social media and cited an American Lawyer Media Intelligence survey finding that of 50 million users on LinkedIn, 1.5 million were lawyers. A more recent study released this year by LexisNexis found that 62% of US attorneys use some form of social media for professional purposes.

But Are Managing Partners There?

Hard data, however, doesn’t tell us much about LinkedIn usage by managing partners. Anecdotal evidence suggested that law firm leaders – mostly in their 50s and 60s – are too busy, or too skeptical, or too worried about ethical traps to embrace social media. It was, we thought, a matter of age and more compelling responsibilities.

Recent demographic data released by LinkedIn challenges our thinking. Some 26 percent of LinkedIn users are aged 18 to 34. But 38 percent are 35 to 49 and another 32 percent are 50 or older. So age alone doesn’t explain it.

Our Research Suggests Not Quite Yet

Our own research is revealing. At The MPF 2012 Spring Leadership Conference, we asked the 60 managing partners in attendance if they were on LinkedIn and how often they used it. Seventy-two percent reported that they had a LinkedIn profile, and nine percent more said it was a work in progress.

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But when we dug deeper we discovered that MPs just don't use social media all that much – at least not yet, with slightly more than half describing their use of LinkedIn as "frequent" or "occasional." Twenty-three percent admitted that their profiles had been created by their marketing people and that they never use it. Another 28 percent described their usage as "infrequent" and agreed that they "hardly ever go there." Refer to the attached exhibit for a complete breakdown.

Introducing the MPF LinkedIn Group

The Managing Partner Forum has recently launched the [MPF LinkedIn Group](#), an unprecedented opportunity for free, peer-driven dialogue and interchange among law firm leaders. It's a place where they can ask questions, share information and resources, and find a high-level online community of peers. Unlike other LinkedIn groups, membership is by invitation only and restricted to managing partners, qualified firm leaders and MPF faculty.

Like Most Organizations, Active Participation is the Key

Access to our LinkedIn site, unlike that of other law firm leadership groups, is limited to qualified law firm managing partners, firm leaders and MPF faculty only. Larry Bodine, who runs the LawMarketing Portal, expresses well the rationale for such a group. Larry writes, "Just like a car in the garage, it's no good if it just sits there; you have to go somewhere with it. You have to join a LinkedIn group, participate in a discussion, ask and answer questions to really make something of it." We agree.

Complimentary LinkedIn Profiles for Qualified Firm Leaders

To help you get the car out of the garage, our friends at Jaffe PR have kindly offered to create a LinkedIn profile for any managing partner or firm leader who has participated in a previous MPF conference. In addition, they will get you connected with our group at no charge. Please contact MTrudeau@JaffePR.com if you're interested in the offer.

Join the MPF LinkedIn Group Today!

Our group, the MPF LinkedIn Group, awaits your pleasure. It can be a powerful management resource. Or not. It will be what we together make it and we hope to see you there. [Click here to check it out.](#)

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About the Author

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Exhibit One

