

# Linked, faced, & booked

How to get social networking websites working for you.

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For most lawyers, social networking usually involves after-hours business attire, catered food and two or three cocktails. By most measures it does not include LinkedIn, Facebook or MySpace, each a cornerstone of the young and burgeoning world of social networking websites.

Since these sites first started emerging in 2002, countless millions have fallen under their spell (Facebook alone boasts some 34 million registered users), thanks largely to their user-friendly interfaces and compulsively addictive nature. With networking a long-established element of the legal trade, it was only a matter of time before savvy lawyers such as Cheryl Slusarchuk succumbed to their online charms.

"It's the same as an e-mail referral," says Slusarchuk, a partner in McCarthy Tétrault's Vancouver offices with 116 connections (and counting) on LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)), a social networking site targeted to business professionals. "Somebody will send you an e-mail that says, 'This person is coming up to British Columbia from the States and needs some help. Can you talk to them about the key legal issues in Canada?'"

A technology lawyer by trade, Slusarchuk uses the site

to keep in touch with a wide range of geographically dispersed contacts and credits it with generating billable hours. A self-described "early adopter" of new technologies, she was among the first to get her thumbs on the first beta version of the Blackberry, and was also one of the first users of LinkedIn. And there are plenty more where they came from.

While LinkedIn has several hundred Canadian lawyers as users, it's much harder to gauge the number of lawyers and/or professionals active on popular social networking sites such as Facebook or MySpace. This is partly because so few seem to be willing to fess up to it. In fact, the PR departments of two firms contacted for this article flatly (perhaps dubiously) denied that any of their lawyers were involved in social networking sites of any kind.

Rob Hyndman, a Toronto-based technology lawyer, also sees lawyers' reticence to use (or admit to using) social networking sites. "I suspect it's because it takes a lot of time, much of it idle, at least relative to the productivity of billing time," he says. "And for many middle-aged and older people, time spent on sites like Facebook probably still feels like playtime rather than work time. "I think many people also have a strong preference for face time, rather than Facebook time." ....

By **Brad Mackay**. Read the entire article online at [www.cba.org/practicelink/socnetworks](http://www.cba.org/practicelink/socnetworks).

# Thinking of linking?

*Seven ways to increase the value of your LinkedIn profile.*

## 1. Increase your visibility.

By adding connections, you increase the likelihood that people will see your profile first when they're searching for someone to hire or do business with. In addition to appearing at the top of search results, people would much rather work with people who their friends know and trust.

## 2. Improve your connectability.

Most new users put only their current company in their profile, severely limiting their ability to connect with people. You should fill out your profile like it's an executive bio, so include past companies, education, affiliations, and activities. You can also include a link to your profile as part of an e-mail signature.

## 3. Improve your Google PageRank.

Since LinkedIn profiles receive a fairly high PageRank in Google, this is a good way to influence what people see when they search for you. Create a public profile and select "Full View." Also, instead of using the default URL, customize your public profile's URL to be your actual name.

## 4. Perform blind, "reverse," and company reference checks.

LinkedIn's reference check tool lets you input a company name and the years the person worked at the company to search for references. Your search will find the people who worked at the company

during the same time period. Since references provided by a candidate will generally be glowing, this is a good way to get more balanced data.

## 5. Make your interview go smoother.

You can use LinkedIn to find the people that you're meeting. Knowing that you went to the same school, played hockey, or share acquaintances is a lot better than an awkward silence after, "I'm doing fine, thank you."

## 6. Gauge the health of an industry.

If you're thinking of investing or working in a sector, use LinkedIn to find people who worked for competitors — or even better, companies that failed. For example, suppose you wanted to build a next-generation online pet store; you'd probably learn a lot from speaking with former Pets.com or WebVan employees.

## 7. Ask for advice.

LinkedIn Answers allows you to broadcast your business-related questions to both your network and the greater LinkedIn network. The premise is that you will get more high-value responses from the people in your network than more open forums.

Adapted from "Ten Ways to Use LinkedIn," a blog post by **Guy Kawasaki** ([http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2007/01/ten\\_ways\\_to\\_use.html](http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2007/01/ten_ways_to_use.html)), from which the "More numbers" sidebar also was drawn.

## ■ A growing trend

"The key for innovative lawyers is not to look at things the way they are, but to look at what things could become. You ought to look at Facebook that way. Sure, it was built by what we lawyers may call 'kids,' but so were Microsoft, Google, YouTube, and more. The same technology that generates networking among the younger generation could drive a vibrant network among lawyers and other business people.

"Lawyers are already using LinkedIn in droves. Expect such lawyers to take advantage of Facebook as their community matures — in more ways than one."

From "Facebook a growing force for lawyers and business people," by **Kevin O'Keefe** at LexBlog (<http://kevin.lexblog.com>).

## ■ Student networking

"With the summer associates getting ready to finish up their program, I thought it would be useful to get their take on the use of social network sites. Summer associates will be starting as attorneys in the fall of 2008. Here is some preliminary survey information:

More than 80% have a Facebook account. Of those, 2/3 check Facebook at least once a day.

Only 25% have a LinkedIn account. Of those, only 10% check LinkedIn once a week, the rest rarely.

Only 20% have a MySpace account. Of those, 25% check it once a week, the rest rarely."

From "A survey on the use of social networks," by **Doug Cornelius** at KM Space (<http://kmspace.blogspot.com>).

## ■ More numbers

**47:** the average number of LinkedIn connections for people who work at Google.

**58:** the average number for Harvard Business School grads.

**20+:** people with more than 20 connections are 34 times more likely to be approached with a job opportunity than people with fewer than five.

**500:** every member of the Fortune 500 is represented in LinkedIn. In fact, 499 of them are represented by director-level and higher employees.

**8** OF THE LARGEST LAW FIRMS IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE A FACEBOOK NETWORK:

- Skadden, Arps: 335 Members
- Baker & McKenzie: 557 Members
- Jones Day: 220 Members
- Latham & Watkins: 291 Members
- Sidley Austin: 107 Members
- White & Case: 287 Members
- Shearman & Sterling: 137 members
- Kirkland & Ellis: 160 Members

From **Larry Bodine's** "Law Marketing Blog," <http://blog.larrybodine.com/2007/08/articles/tech/why-lawyers-cant-ignore-facebook-for-networking/>