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# MDRT Minute

## Get Linked In, Not Left Out

For years, social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter have offered life insurance agents mind-boggling opportunities to improve their branding, gain greater control of the referral and sales process, and discover hidden connections to prospects and life-event driven money in motion. But too many agents remain unaware of those potential benefits, even today. Concerns about compliance, confusion about social media's relevance to their business, a dizzying array of site and feature choices, and a certain degree of technophobia have conspired to keep those agents on the sidelines. But, used properly, and using nothing more than a computer and phone, social media can and *will* give you results.

### **Want more referrals? Work smarter at cultivating them.**

Of all the avenues for generating business, the best one for connecting with qualified, high-probability prospects is referrals. Instead of asking your top clients a version of "Who do you know?" to get those referrals, consider LinkedIn — arguably one of the world's largest professional networking communities. Connecting with your top clients on LinkedIn not only gives you access to their profiles and professional history, it also puts you in touch with their own personal web of contacts, allowing you to see instantly who those referrals might be, and, just from the information available to you, discern who can most likely become your future clients. The demographics are very attractive: older, college-educated, six-figure earners, many of whom own their business or have a senior role with a company — exactly the kind of prospects you're probably looking for. Once you get set up and comfortable using LinkedIn, help your clients and others do the same. Show them how they can use LinkedIn to capitalize on business development opportunities, and they'll never forget you.

### **Make it easy for people to find you online, and brand yourself.**

Once you have those referrals — if they are the least bit interested and the least bit tech-savvy — the first thing they will probably do is Google you. And what are they going to find? Sites such as LinkedIn and Facebook are pushed to the top in search results, since they are considered authoritative sources. So the next question you should ask is, "What are people seeing when they view my LinkedIn profile?" Is it a well-crafted message about the solutions you offer the clients you serve, the problems you help them solve? Or is it a patchwork of factoids — the company you work for, where you live and where you went to school? Being visible online is important; the branding and messaging that visibility conveys is even more important.

### **Start uncovering money in motion and your connection to it.**

In the old days, when you read a story profiling an attractive prospect, you probably just cold-called them because unless it was obvious that you shared an acquaintance who'd make an introduction, how would you ever figure out you knew somebody who knew them? Today you can read that same article, but you can also instantly check LinkedIn (or the other social networking sites) to see if that potential prospect has a profile there, and to determine whether and how the two of you are connected. (It will indicate if you are right there on the person's profile page.) Assuming you are connected, a quick call to one or more of those mutual acquaintances may help you better qualify that person as a prospect, shed light on what makes them tick or perhaps even result in a personal introduction.

### **Time to take action.**

Before you call it a day today, invite someone you know to join your network on LinkedIn, create a Google Alert on your clients — whatever moves you forward. The trick is to do it now. Tomorrow you'll be on to something else, and these strategies will be a memory unless you put one of them to work and see how it benefits you and your business.

***Kip Gregory** is one of the life insurance industry's leading authorities on sales productivity and creating business value. His book, "Winning Clients in a Wired World," outlines fast, easy-to-implement strategies for increasing selling efficiency and enhancing effectiveness. Gregory's entire 2012 Annual Meeting presentation, which features this and other social networking prospecting strategies, is available for purchase at [www.mdr.org](http://www.mdr.org).*