

# 5 Unexpected Benefits of LinkedIn Groups

*Cappy Popp*

10–12 minutes

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LinkedIn Groups are a great way to build credibility for yourself or your business. You can join up to 50 of them, but why bother? What benefits could you expect to see by joining even one? Aren't they all overrun with spam and self-promotion? Assuming you're already not [making obvious mistakes when using LinkedIn](#) what benefits do groups offer?

They can be a miserable experience if they are managed poorly. But great ones exist and there's always the potential for you to create and moderate your own.

This one shouldn't be a surprise. **LinkedIn is used by 94% of B2B marketers**, compared to 87% for

Facebook and 84% for Twitter, according to a [2016 MarketingProfs content marketing study](#). 2 out of 3 marketers highly rate LinkedIn's effectiveness in their organizations, compared to 55% for Twitter and a surprisingly low 30% for Facebook.

**If you have a brand that sells to businesses in any way you should be on LinkedIn in some capacity.**

But in what capacity, exactly?

If you have a smaller company it may be difficult to cost-effectively build the big audiences larger companies generate, limiting your reach. You could grow your audiences with LinkedIn advertising's excellent targeting options, but it's not cheap.

Enter LinkedIn Groups...

LinkedIn Groups allow you to create or participate in dedicated discussion forums on moderated business-focused topics. Post information that members find valuable or helpful and over time your audience can grow significantly.

But there are barriers you need to overcome to get

there. Ask yourself an important question if you're thinking of creating a new group and give it an honest answer: **why should this group exist and what purpose does it serve?** If the answer has any hint of “selling” or “marketing” to users **DO NOT CREATE THE GROUP.** There are many thousands of pointless sales-focused groups already littering LinkedIn and they offer little to no value to users.

**Competition is fierce!** There are over 2 million LinkedIn Groups out there and most are dormant or dying. If you don't have a novel twist on a topic or a true niche that's unserved by existing LinkedIn Groups you'll likely fail without a significant advertising spend (and then likely still.) Find a group that already has a sizeable audience, great engagement, and rigorous moderators and start participating in it, first. Corporate-sponsored groups are a great place to start since they generally have more resources to effectively manage their groups professionally. [We have a dedicated post answering the, “Should I create a group or join](#)

[one?" question – check it out for all the details.](#)

Here are **5 unexpected benefits you can experience by participating in LinkedIn Groups:**

## **1. Groups can give you free, direct communication with their members**

if you do decide that creating a new group makes sense, then the most powerful feature of LinkedIn Groups is that they **give moderators the ability to [directly email group members](#) once per week.**

Members have to opt-in to group communication to be contacted but in my experience most do. Since [people visit LinkedIn less than the other premier social networks](#) they tend to like getting notified weekly when interesting content becomes available, assuming it's of high quality.

This is an opportunity to get your content to a targeted audience without resorting to costly e-mail marketing. You can use it to notify members of new, valuable, or popular posts in the group, constantly re-engaging them. Note I didn't say using it to directly sell or market to them. Your goal

should be to be an influencer within the group first, thought leader in your niche second, and lead generator a distant third.

You also get the ability to send out an automatic email to welcome new members to the group. This sets you up immediately as a group authority and gives you the opportunity to share links to valuable resources (including your own sites.)

## **2. They allow you to gain influence quickly**

Content posted to groups must be focused on the topic or fall within the content guidelines provided by the group. Groups are not the place to spam your blog content; they are designed to be authentic environments for discussion, not "Content Marketing Craigslist."

LinkedIn used to support a Promotions tab within groups to allow a dedicated spot for promotional posts but these efforts were overwhelmed with spam. Many groups have been ruined by a combination of constant link-spam and lax

moderation. Now the platform uses a set of algorithms that detects promotional (read: off-site links), irrelevant, inappropriate, or heavily cross-group-posted content and places it in a special publishing queue moderators must manually curate to allow them to be published at all. This makes more work for the moderator but gives them more control of the discussion.

All this means the **bar is set relatively low for people to gain influence within groups**. Most people glance through the posts and rarely engage giving you ample opportunity for you to do so.

**Here's a surefire way to gain influence quickly:**

- **Selectively engage in groups you have the time, interest, and experience to do so well.** Don't "post and bounce" just to promote your services or products. You'll likely end up ignored, banned, or worse, professionally discredited. Industries are smaller than you think and peppering large numbers of groups with the same self-promotional garbage will get you noticed in the wrong way.
- **Ask valuable questions** and give others'

interesting, unique answers.

- **Turn off any auto-posting** to LinkedIn Groups. A good moderator will ban them anyway. Only share reputable, helpful content and only do so in the context of a discussion to further it. Posting links to your blog in this way is a great way to gain blog followers but be sure you're only posting that link if it helps the discussion at hand.
- **Contribute regularly and consistently to multiple discussions.** Think slow and steady, not carpet bombing for a short period of time. It takes time to build trust and influence. Give your peers time to recognize you and soon you'll find yourself being asked directly for your opinions.
- **DO NOT send LinkedIn invites to other members until you've had some (preferably positive) interactions with them** in the group. A great time to do so is after you've had a positive interaction with them in a lengthy discussion.

**3. You can get content in the hands of target audience and personas -- free**

A LinkedIn Group provides a dedicated channel to your customers or industry colleagues. “Give to get” should be your mantra. Yes, it’s a cliché. But it matters here.

**The average contact quality you’ll get on LinkedIn is much higher** in general than those from Twitter or Facebook and you need to treat them with the respect that deserves. A well-moderated group is usually comprised of very specific demographics which is a huge benefit, assuming you've done the work already to identify the demographics that matter to you.

**It’s hard work to post to LinkedIn Groups.**

Only share your content as post responses in threads where it would add to the discussion. Do it manually so that you can target your posts to the individual audiences you find in each group. By manually, I mean to craft each response separately and possibly vary the text, tone, and language to speak most effectively to each group audience. For example, if you're a member of a pest control group and a small business owners group the



audiences will likely be very different and communicate with different language and terminology. But, your content may be valuable to both. Build your responses such that they resonate optimally with each group.

You should see more targeted free marketing-qualified leads before you know it. A great example of this is [Amar Ghose, CEO of ZenMaid software used LinkedIn Groups very effectively to generate a majority of their company's sales.](#)

## **4. LinkedIn Groups are fantastic feedback channels**

Assuming a group is managed well, it is full of people whose opinions you'd likely value in your line of work.

So, use them!

**Using LinkedIn Groups to get feedback is one of the most powerful ways you can use them.**

Honest reviews are [difficult to come by these days.](#)

Make sure to helpfully participate for a while before

requesting anything. Ask group members to give feedback, reviews, and professional advice on your product, service, or offering.

Don't use this as a thinly-veiled way to promote content or market to members, for example," I just wrote this blog post, what do you think? Discuss below!!!" That's not asking for feedback, it's self-promotional and a good group moderator will never let it reach the page.

**Ask people direct, clearly-bounded questions then expect and thank them for honest answers.** Doing this can also be a great way to generate content ideas that you can further share with the group in the context of other discussions.

## **5. Powerful problem-solving at your fingertips**

Feedback isn't the only thing you can gain from groups. Have a difficult business problem to solve, need an external unbiased viewpoint (*not* subject to internal politics,) or have a question about handling a difficult situation?

Ask fellow group members.

**These types of questions get great engagement**

because they are asking for professional opinions, not leads, and you're giving group members a chance to shine. Chances are you'd personally value the counsel of a number of your fellow group members if you met them in person. Don't forget to thank those that give meaningful responses.

**Bottom Line**

Be strategic in what content you post, how you post it, the groups you post it to, and how you behave in LinkedIn Groups. You'll not only grow your influence but see some undeniable benefits along the way.

What tips do you have for getting the most out of LinkedIn Groups?