



Are You LinkedIn Or Missing Out?

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 100 million members from 200 countries and territories.

LinkedIn is available in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish

More than half of LinkedIn members are currently located outside of the United States

There were nearly two billion people searches on LinkedIn in 2010

More than one million companies have LinkedIn Company Pages

Roughly one million new members join LinkedIn every week, at a rate equivalent to a professional joining the site faster than one member per second.

Source: <http://press.linkedin.com/about>

You have the power to exponentially expand your horizons with LinkedIn, the social network for professionals. I'm not here to convince you to join LinkedIn, much less provide training on how to use it. The site (www.linkedin.com) is user-friendly and there are many books, blogs and YouTube videos about LinkedIn. No, this article is for those of you who have a LinkedIn profile but aren't taking full advantage of its offerings. I'll have to assume that you have valid reasons for being on LinkedIn, such as:

- your company requires employees to have a LinkedIn profile
- you're an independent consultant and want to promote yourself in a professional venue
- you want to establish or maintain your reputation as an expert in your field
- you want to network with other professionals
- you want to find a job, employees, or suppliers
- you're interested in getting feedback from customers and prospects
- you have a clear expectation of a return on investment for the time you spend on LinkedIn

I will share the LinkedIn philosophy that differentiates it from other social networking sites, its tools that can benefit the shot peening (and blast cleaning) professionals, and how two people in our industry are using LinkedIn. All of this is in hopes that you'll take advantage of its full potential.

Pay It Forward

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that LinkedIn is about more than finding jobs or new business leads. LinkedIn has a heart. When you join LinkedIn, you're expected to give more than you receive. Some of the ways you can help others include:

- If you can be truthful, always give a positive recommendation when asked and put some thought into it to make it as powerful as possible
- Give a recommendation without being asked and make someone's day
- Contribute to a group's discussion by asking questions, providing answers, or sharing tips, documents and videos that will be helpful to group members
- Watch for opportunities to mentor
- Help job hunters make connections

Whatever your reasons for helping others, you'll get out of LinkedIn what you put into it. As we explore Groups and the Questions/ Answers forum, you'll read about more ways to contribute.



The Power of Groups

LinkedIn has over 220,000 groups. If you don't belong to relevant groups, you're missing out on one of the most powerful tools on LinkedIn. For starters, when you're accepted into a group, every group member becomes a connection. You won't need an introduction or InMail to contact them. If you want to learn more about a group member, you can view their full profile. Here are a few more reasons to join groups.

- Group discussions will often address the problems and opportunities that you face.
- Discover hot buttons and problems you can solve for customers or your employer.
- Your Group's icons will be listed on your profile page. Visitors to your profile will see that you're engaged and active in LinkedIn and they'll learn more about your interests and areas of expertise.
- You can become an expert in your field for that group by sharing information and answering questions. Shot peening is still a relatively unknown application in the metal treatment toolbox, and the opportunity to share information and become the shot peening expert in a group is noteworthy.
- Learn an industry's jargon.
- The ideal employee, employer, client or supplier could be a group member.

LinkedIn will also provide you with a list of additional groups that might interest you based on your current group memberships. And when you review the list of group members and see people from your field, you know it's a good group.

The following are group listings with potential for the shot peening and blast cleaning industry. This list is from a 15-minute search—imagine what else is available.

Aerospace MRO A group for professionals that are involved in Aerospace Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul. The goal is to share ideas, experiences and comments.

Aviation & Aerospace Maintenance (MRO, Jobs, News) A subgroup of Mexico's Aerospace Industry & Jobs. Links professionals in the Aviation/Aerospace Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO) area to share experiences, job opportunities, news.

Materials for Medical Implants This group is intended to identify and discuss developments in the field of materials for medical implants; including, but not limited to, advances in resistance to infection, and improvements in tissue integration and stability.

Mining and Construction Equipment To exchange ideas, techniques and knowledge that can benefit people in the mining and construction industry.

Bodycote Thermal Processing Forum For admission to the Bodycote Thermal Processing Forum, please ensure your LinkedIn profile contains some reference to thermal processing, heat treatment, or a related method of metal surface treatment. This forum also welcomes metallurgists from the automotive and aerospace industries. Keywords: heat treating, heat treat, steel, stainless steel, metallurgy, hot isostatic pressing (HIP), nitriding, Nadcap, carburizing, induction heating, electron beam welding (EBW). (Has this group heard of shot peening?)

Gear Manufacturing This group is for sharing the process of gear manufacturing and difficulties that are countered while maintaining the profile accuracy and finishing of gear tooth of bigger module gears.

Gear Manufacturing Industries For everyone in the Gear Manufacturing Industry who would like to network and discuss the latest trends and technologies in Gear Manufacturing. All sales/marketing people who are presently working in any gear manufacturing industry are welcome to join.

Wind Power Operation and Maintenance For professionals involved in the Operation and Maintenance part of wind energy in the Nordic and Baltic region. Developers, educators, manufacturers and owners are all welcome to join the discussions on turbines, gearboxes, blades and more.

The Question and Answer Forum

Do you have a business-related question and would like relevant, quality answers from experts? Forget about Google, tap into LinkedIn. Asking a question in the Question/Answer section is similar to posting a question to a group but you can designate the audience (i.e., everyone, your network, or specific connections in your network). Before you post a question, search "Answers" and you might find the answer in this huge database of information.

Why should you answer a question? Again, members are expected to give more than they take so please be willing to share your expertise. Second, you'll receive exposure and free publicity. When you answer a question, your name and contact information are part of the answer. The answer will have a link to your profile and it will become part of your profile. The person that posted the question also has the opportunity to rate the answers. A good rating or the rating of "best" will designate you as an expert in your field.

Granted, there aren't going to be many questions on shot peening, but are you a business owner, sales representative, world traveler, trainer, manufacturer or global supplier? You have knowledge and experience to share.

Find a Job, Employee, or Clients

LinkedIn is THE network for job seekers and employers. There are employment resources in LinkedIn with a wealth of information on how to use them. LinkedIn is a great networking site for consultants, too. Instead of launching a website in the immense ocean of the internet and hoping someone finds you, a keyword-rich profile and your network can bring prospects to you. You can "fish" for ideal

clients and learn more about them before you cold call, send an InMail, or connect through a group or your network.

Two LinkedIn Participants

Kumar Balan, International Sales Manager Wheeler Group

When I asked Kumar why he joined LinkedIn, he said that he is building "personal brand equity." A salesperson's equity is his experience, expertise, reputation, and the relationships he has built and maintained. Ultimately, these elements will contribute to his company's and customers' revenue and growth. Here is how Kumar's profile expresses his brand equity:

- A professional photo. People want to see who they're doing business with and a photo increases your "likability."
- The right amount of connections. When I wrote this article, Kumar had 116 connections. Too few connections would indicate that he isn't putting in the effort. Most people aren't willing to connect with members that have only a couple connections. Too many connections can send the wrong message, depending on your field.
- A complete work and education list.
- Kumar has given recommendations so he understands the Pay It Forward concept. Recommendations are also a good indicator of a person's values and ability to build relationships.
- He has received very strong recommendations that cover several attributes.
- He belongs to relevant groups. Kumar's groups signify his desire to stay on top of industry trends and explore new markets.

Marcel Von Wonderen, Master Engineer KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

Marcel has a profile that reflects his wide range of responsibilities as Master Engineer/Process Equipment and Materials Development for KLM. He has taken advantage of additional LinkedIn tools that showcase his skills as an educator, including PowerPoint presentations and links to his website. He also has an impressive list of honors and awards.

"I use LinkedIn to network and get connected with professionals in my field," said Marcel. "The best part of LinkedIn has been getting in touch with people that I had lost contact with." He belongs to several groups and follows group discussions, including Air France-KLM. Following your own company is a great news source, especially if your company is a large international organization. "Air France-KLM continuously informs followers about the newest developments and innovations. The posts aren't only about KLM but also about colleagues and competitive airlines," added Marcel.

Make the Connection

Ultimately, LinkedIn is about finding and keeping connections that can deliver business, information, a new job or employees. LinkedIn is a great resource for people like me—consultants in creative fields. But what really intrigues me is its potential for a relatively unknown industry like shot peening. I hope you'll use LinkedIn to introduce yourself and shot peening to a global community. ●



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