**A Note on Using Linkedin and its potential**

**Summary**

With its main function as a networking and recruitment platform, and the recent collaboration with Do-It, LinkedIn offers an ideal tool for researching likely candidates for highly-skilled volunteer or trustee roles. With its publishing and groups functions, it provides another great platform on which to build a network of interested followers.

LinkedIn is also *the* business to business social network. If we’re looking to engage more with companies with CSR programmes, it’s where we need to be. It offers a great way to build awareness and a professional identity for NB, showcasing our services, products and campaigns.

We need to develop a content strategy that allows us to:

* Publish a great variety of valuable, actionable information in articles and updates.
* Trial a variety of post types and formats (e.g. text, slides, videos, lists, etc.).
* Engage with followers and key influencers by responding to posts and comments and re-sharing content.

We recommend we create **a public NB LinkedIn profile** and can consider creating a LinkedIn group in the future.

Time commitment for the page will focus around writing a **minimum of 4 update posts a month and 1 long-form content piece (article or slide presentation) a month**. Content creation will be split between different topics, but initially will have a greater percentage of articles on volunteering, due to the key 2015 objective of volunteer recruitment. [Some content pieces will be able to be promoted to both the Facebook and the LinkedIn audiences where their interest overlaps. See Facebook Plan further above].

**Issues to Consider**

* To get the most out of LinkedIn, we do need to **commit long-term and ensure buy-in from all** staff/core volunteers to ensure sustainability of content generation.
* National Charities tend to have very professional LinkedIn Profiles while **local groups are as yet often still missing altogether** (e.g. none of the respondents to our NB members survey have a LinkedIn account for their group). This is something we could build over time through encouragement, information and training sheets.
* Establish **guidelines** as to what posting/publishing/commenting behaviour on behalf of NB is appropriate for staff/volunteers.
* A lot can be done free of charge (especially as our volunteer roles are already being posted on LinkedIn via Do-It.org if promoted via the BVA Volunteer Centre), but some more professional staff recruitment solutions will **incur a charge**.

**Ownership & Authorship Processes**

* We recommend starting with one account for the whole of NB, to ensure a coherent professional identity and to give ourselves time to learn the best ways of using this new network before deciding whether there is a need to branch out for each member group. One account also ensures sufficient content in the form of articles and updates by pooling news and writing from the different groups initially.
* The account would be owned and managed by NB core team. Due to volunteer recruitment being the core objective for 2015, the content for publication on LinkedIn would initially focus more around information and content for potential volunteers and trustees, with other topics (e.g. aimed at local groups) increasing over time.

**Schedule**

Pre-Launch:

* Research further into who other conservation groups’ followers are and what they respond best to.
* Research national and local charities’ activity for ideas and networks to tap into on LinkedIn.
* Research conservation / biodiversity and third sector LinkedIn groups to engage with.
* Write 10 articles at least, plus 10 weeks’ worth of update posts upfront (if not more), to get ahead of the game and make for a coherent posting history.

Launch Week:

* Launch the profile with 5 articles and 5-10 update posts staggered over time to populate the page.
* Join groups, monitor activity and post a relevant content article or discussion topic to start as an active member.
* Promote to current contacts (corporate volunteer contacts, past private volunteers, member groups, etc.) and invite to follow us.
* Follow with daily update posts in the first week.

Post-Launch

* Post an update or share good content (with comment) from other influencers at least once a week thereafter, AND
* Publish an article at least once a month thereafter.
* As we become more familiar with the platform and content that works, we can increase the frequency.

As with Facebook, the ongoing planning for LinkedIn content should become part of the regular committee meetings and member meetings and recorded in a Content Calendar.

**Success Metrics**

* Number of Followers/connections
* Post views
* Post likes
* Post comments
* Post shares
* Article views
* Article likes
* Article comments
* Article shares
* Visits to the NB and member group websites
* Applications for volunteer roles
* Applications for trustee roles
* Applications for NB membership
* Registrations for Events

**Content Plan**

We recommend following the social media best practice rule of 80/20:

* 80% engagement through original and re-shared valuable content and comments
* 20% self-promotion of pure push marketing for NB services/roles/events/campaigns, etc.

By consistently providing valuable and actionable content, we earn the right to occasionally market ourselves and invite donations (of time, skills, contacts, money, equipment, etc.).

Valuable articles on practical tips and best practice should be as much as possible on evergreen content, applicable UK-wide (though illustrative examples can be Basingstoke/NB-based within the articles) to ensure share-ability and longevity of content.

Articles should be at least a few paragraphs long but can include bulleted lists which are popular social media content formats. (1600 words was the recommended word length for blog posts in 2014 according to Buffer research, and LinkedIn articles are similar to a professional blog.) Slideshares of presentations are also popular.

**Content Type Ideas**

* Event and campaign invitations
* Follow-up stories from events and campaigns (celebrate success)
* Reports on conservation and the third sector with comments by NB
* Information of use to potential volunteers and member groups about conservation, volunteering, trusteeship, group management, etc. (See overlap with Facebook articles plan.)

**Content Format Ideas**

* Articles
* Slideshares
* Videos
* Podcasts
* Etc.

**Content Topic Ideas and Possible Networks**

Research likely individuals, companies and groups to network with for each key customer persona, and topics to engage with them, such as for example:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Possible Segments** | **Content Ideas** | **Possible networks to connect with on LinkedIn** |
| Potential Highly-Skilled Volunteers | *For example:*   * *How to Build Transferable Skills Through Volunteering* * *How to Get into the Conservation Sector* * *How to Get into the Non-Profit Sector* * *How to Get into Fundraising* * *10 Sought-After Volunteer Skills (e.g. Web Design, Design, Marketing, Communications, Fundraising)* * *10 Easy Conservation Ideas for the Work Place* * *10 Great Conservation Ideas for Schools* * *10 Unusual Conservation Ideas in the Community* * *10 Easy Fundraising Ideas for the Work Place* * *10 Great Fundraising Ideas for Schools* * *10 Unusual Fundraising Ideas in the Community* * *10 Great Ideas for Conservation Fundraising Events* * *5 New Skills I Learned from Volunteering at xyz* * *5 Life Lessons I Learned from Volunteering with abc* |  |
| Potential Trustees | * Trustee Skills * Trustee Roles and Responsibilities explained   + Chair   + Secretary   + Treasurer   + Finance Officer   + Fundraiser   + Marketer / Comms   + Volunteer Manager   *For example:*   * *How to Find a Great Conservation Trustee Position* * *10 Sought-After Trustee Skills (e.g. Finance, Funding, Volunteer Management, Communications)* * *7 Forms of Funding Conservation Trustees Should Know About (e.g. Grants, Funding, Fundraising, Online Fundraising, Corporate Sponsorship, etc.)* * *10 Habits of Successful Conservation Trustees* |  |
| Companies with Corporate Volunteering Schemes | * Conservation Volunteering Projects in the Community * Skills-Based Staff Volunteering for Conservation (e.g. use of x hours of web designer’s time for a charity)   *For example:*   * *12 Interesting Conservation Projects for Corporate Volunteering Schemes* * *10 Ways to find a Great Conservation Volunteering Project for your Company* * *5 Signs you have found the Right Conservation Charity of the Year for your Company* * *10 Effective Ways to Promote your Company’s Conservation Charity of the Year* * *Corporate Volunteering Case Studies from volunteer company and charity or service user’s side:*   + Conservation   + Animals   + Children   + Adults   + Elderly   + Disabled   + Etc. |  |
| Member Groups | * Volunteer Recruitment * Volunteer Management & Retention * Committee Succession Planning * Trustees and Governance * Marketing, Media and PR * Fundraising * Great Campaigns * Leadership and Strategy * Public Policy * Campaigning and Influencing * Funding and Finance   *For example:*   * *10 Tips for Recruiting Great Conservation Volunteers* * *10 Tips for Retaining Star Conservation Volunteers* * *5 Easy Ways to Celebrate Star Conservation Volunteers* * *5 Steps for Recruiting Great Conservation Trustees*   + (For inspiration, see for example: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20141201121946-135064766-7-steps-for-recruiting-great-trustees?trk=prof-post>) * *10 Tips to Ensure a Great Start for New Conservation Trustees* * *10 Key Training Areas Conservation Charities Should Consider for their Members* * *How to use LinkedIn for your Conservation Charity* |  |
| Third Sector | * Voluntary Sector News * Voluntary Sector Reports (e.g. “Decision Time: Will the voluntary sector embrace the age of opportunity?” - <http://voluntarysectorageing.org/>) * Relevant Third Sector Events (e.g. BVA Voluntary Sector Forums?) | Charities and Voluntary Sector   * [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=3056168) (NCVO) LinkedIn Group (2702 members) * [Charity UK](https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=887297&sort=RECENT) (26,184 members) * [Association of Volunteer Managers](https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=2197429) (2223 members)   Marketing for Charity Sector   * [UKMN Charity / Not-for-Profit Marketing](https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=2070621&sort=RECENT) (1088 members) * [Institute of Fundraising](https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=3064668&sort=RECENT) (17,472 members) * [I AM Networking - Charity & NFP Professionals](https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=4243014) (3512 members) |
| Awareness Promoters | Write or comment on and share conservation news | * [Gazette](http://uk.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=2876940) |
| Volunteer Promoters | * Re-share Conservation Volunteer Role of the month from Do-It or our website (ensure roles have clear and attractive role descriptions) * Re-share local Conservation Paid Charity Job Roles (as and when) from LinkedIn advertising to groups that allow job postings (OR pay to advertise?) * Skills-based volunteering * Micro-volunteering * Volunteer skills   + Web Design   + Design   + Marketing   + Fundraising   + Campaigning and Influencing   + Conservation * Volunteer Development * Private Volunteering Case Studies from volunteer and charity or service user’s side:   + Conservation   + Animals   + Children   + Adults   + Elderly   + Disabled   + Etc. | * Volunteer Centres * Voluntary Action Groups |
| Ecologists and Conservationists | * Conservation News (e.g. February 2015 [article about green spaces in Basingstoke](http://www.observergroup.co.uk/green-space-fight-continues)) * Conservation Sector Reports * Key Conservation Sector Campaigns (e.g. [Vote for a National Bird](http://www.votenationalbird.com/)) * Local Conservation Sector Campaigns * Key Conservation Sector Events (e.g. BioBlitz) | * [NBN National Biodiversity Network](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=148939&trk=vsrp_groups_res_name&trkInfo=VSRPsearchId%3A3435902651432803453615%2CVSRPtargetId%3A148939%2CVSRPcmpt%3Aprimary) (3893 members) * [BioBlitz](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=7444158&trk=vsrp_groups_res_name&trkInfo=VSRPsearchId%3A3435902651432803332975%2CVSRPtargetId%3A7444158%2CVSRPcmpt%3Aprimary) (141 members) * [Green Connect](https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=5122596&trk=vsrp_groups_res_name&trkInfo=VSRPsearchId%3A3435902651432803138688%2CVSRPtargetId%3A5122596%2CVSRPcmpt%3Aprimary) (15 members) * [The Conservation Volunteers](https://www.linkedin.com/company/58032?trk=vsrp_companies_res_name&trkInfo=VSRPsearchId%3A3435902651432804149891%2CVSRPtargetId%3A58032%2CVSRPcmpt%3Aprimary) (1552 followers) * [Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust](https://www.linkedin.com/company/2041245?trk=vsrp_companies_res_name&trkInfo=VSRPsearchId%3A3435902651432804448141%2CVSRPtargetId%3A2041245%2CVSRPcmpt%3Aprimary) (438 followers) * [Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust](https://www.linkedin.com/company/5085677?trk=vsrp_companies_res_name&trkInfo=VSRPsearchId%3A3435902651432804355011%2CVSRPtargetId%3A5085677%2CVSRPcmpt%3Aprimary) (BBOWT) (143 followers) * [Basingstoke Transition Network](https://www.linkedin.com/company/2591990?trk=tyah&trkInfo=clickedVertical%3Acompany%2Cidx%3A1-1-1%2CtarId%3A1432804655356%2Ctas%3Abasingstoke%20transition%20n) (20 followers) |