

# Utilizing online social networking sites

[Sociology](#), [Social Networking](#)



Social Networking Business and Human Services organizations all over the world try to look for different ways to improve and be successful. One of the ways organizations have been able to maintain success is by networking and linking themselves with similar organizations. A website that provides organizations with this type of networking is LinkedIn. In week two I was given the task to research and understand why such sites as LinkedIn help human service organizations stay connected with their professional community and other human service professionals.

In addition to researching how these sites enhance more quality services and support and how additional training keeps you up to date and competitive against other organizations. History of LinkedIn LinkedIn is a site used by business professionals all over the world. This site provides business professionals and other types of organizations the ability to exchange information and other networking types of opportunities. Created by five founders, LinkedIn's website officially took off in 2003 (LinkedIn. com, 2012).

The five founders asked 350 of their closest contacts to join their site and within the first month had over 4500 members in the network (LinkedIn, 2012). By the end of 2003 they had over 81000 members and now present day has over 41 million members (LinkedIn, 2012). LinkedIn had a vision to redefine the social networking community and set a new standard. Considered by many to be the businessman's Facebook, it continues to grow and help businesses to gain new opportunities through social networking.

#### Using LinkedIn to Stay Connected

LinkedIn has provided human service organizations the ability to reconnect to past and present colleagues, which allows them to stay in constant touch.

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In addition, help them gain inside connections with similar types of organizations that enhance their growth and success. The network also provides similar organizations within their network to share advice and answer questions. Human Service organizations grow and remain successful by linking themselves, working together and gaining referrals from similar types of organizations.

Being tied into an online community helps an organization stay connected to other human service agencies and the ability to offer more types of support services. For example, one human service agency may provide speech and occupational therapy, where as their community link specializes in integration behavioral therapy, which their client needs. What then happens is a quality referral to that agency. These two organizations were able to work together, provide more services, all for the greater good of the client's needs.

How it works is that an online user can search for an organization under the search tool. Once an organization is found the user could research statistics regarding the organization, location, and who runs it. The user can then ask to follow the organization and become a networking connection. Training and continuing education is an important aspect to any human service agency. Organizations need to be able to provide training opportunities to their employees to keep them up to date and remain competitive in their field.

New types of therapies and research are developed all the time and directors and employees need to be aware of them. Through LinkedIn and staying in touch within their online community, organizations can now attend approved

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training sponsored by different organizations. Some organizations can even upload the training online so that employees can do their continuing education hours without leaving the office. Sites such as NHS on LinkedIn have provided numerous human service organizations with online training, consulting, professional development, and human services training (NHS-LinkedIn. om, 2012). In addition to finding online training and development, employees can also look for employment for human service organizations through the LinkedIn community. Instead of putting an ad in the newspaper more organizations are looking to LinkedIn and other online sources to find knowledgeable and qualified employees. TechnologyUsed to Stay Connected Some other ways that human services or other business organization use technology to stay connected to their business contacts and employees is by the internet and other social online networking websites.

Sites like Facebook and Twitter can be an essential tool in keeping contact and the ability to provide constant updates. My friend's son attends a specialized Autism School in the Salinas area. The director has 2 offices in the San Luis Obispo area and one in the Stanford area. Although her job as director keeps her on the road visiting the different sites, there are times when she is unable to visit the area. She keeps in constant contact with the assistant director and employees by using Skype.

Skype is an online tool where you can have instant face- to- face chats and hold meetings without all being at the same place at the same time. This way she is always able to attend weekly meetings, get updates, and hold training sessions with her employees. This site has enabled her to grow her organization in different areas while not having to visit the site daily. Staying

Connected to the Community If I was trying to find a way to stay connected to other human service professionals in my area I would turn to the internet in order to build and find online networks.

Sites such as LinkedIn would be perfect for my individual needs and allow me to build contacts while enabling me to advertise my organization. I would look to LinkedIn to help me build my online website. The purpose of this site is to allow registered users to follow your organization and become notified when other contacts or updates have been added like training, fundraisers, or networking opportunities. This can help me grow a professional contact list that I trust and find other business opportunities recommended by someone from another contact network.

Conclusion Social and online networking is an online platform that can be used to build contacts and other business opportunities. Sites such as LinkedIn, has given human services and other business organizations the ability to grow, keep in contact, and build relationships. Since 2003, LinkedIn has continued to be the number one site that businesses turn to in order to build their online community. Since that time LinkedIn has continued to improve their site by designing better applications to make building an online community easier.

Human Service organizations will do what they can in order to achieve their mission. Working together with other organizations is the key to building relationships, offer more support services, and provide quality referrals to their clients. References LinkedIn. com, (2012). Company history. Retrieved on October 25th, 2012 from <http://press.linkedin.com/history/> NHS (2012).

NHS management services. Retrieved on October 25th, 2012 from <http://www.linkedin.com/company/nhs-management-services>