



Building Better LinkedIn Connections

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Building Better LinkedIn Connections

All too often business owners will resist using LinkedIn to build relationships with prospects, make connections with vendors or partner with others. LinkedIn might seem like a place that's good for uploading your resume and connecting with people you already know. But in reality it's a place where you can make great connections that can help you further your career or grow your business.

LinkedIn has over 135 million individuals and over seven million companies signed up to their site. With that many users, LinkedIn can likely benefit all businesses in some way. In fact, it can be an important social media outlet for most businesses.

Of course, making quality connections on LinkedIn isn't always easy. With recent changes, they've made it very straightforward for people and businesses to connect with one another. But you don't want to connect with everyone who's out there. Instead you want to find ways to build better LinkedIn connections that can help you build your business, connect with others who can help you in your career, or connect with clients you want to work with.

The wider you build your network the higher you show up in LinkedIn's search results, making it more likely you'll be found by those specifically looking for you or for someone with your experience or skills.

In the following pages, you're going to learn about the types of connections you can have on LinkedIn, as well as where you can find new connections. You'll also get tips on how to get better connections.



Types of Connections

LinkedIn uses a system that categorizes your connections and contacts into separate “degrees” or levels.

These include:

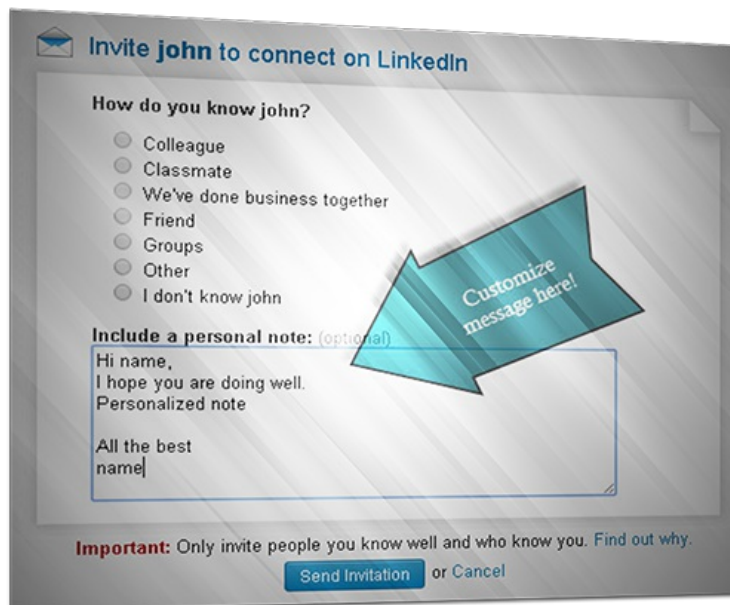
First Degree – are those people you already know. They include your friends, colleagues and anyone you have already met.

Second Degree – are the friends and contacts of your first degree connections. They are the friends of friends.

Third Degree – are the connections from your second degree connections or the friends of friends’ friends.

Group Connections – are the people who join a group and have the same interests. They will be the people who share at least one group with you.

You can use these levels to make connections among other LinkedIn users. For example you can connect with other members of any group you belong to that has the same goal or interests as you.



Where You Can Find Connections

Once you have your profile filled out and have begun using LinkedIn, you are ready to start adding connections. LinkedIn provides a variety of ways to find and add new connections to your network. Once you find someone you want to connect, begin the process by sending them an invitation.

NOTE: Don't use the standard connection request! You want to create valuable professional relationships. Instead, do some research on the person you want to connect with then send a customized connection request.

1. Your email contacts list is the easiest way to add new contacts. You're automatically linked to your email account when you sign up on LinkedIn. LinkedIn searches your email account to find people in your email contact list that have the same email address of people who already have LinkedIn accounts. These will be first level contacts of family and friends.

2. Your work colleagues will be next. Find them by typing in the names of the different companies you worked at. You can also click on your profile and view the Company profile to see a list of people you know.

Connecting with colleagues validates your profile by validating that you actually worked for a particular company. It also gives other the opportunity to recommend and endorse you.

3. Friends of friends come from people you have connected with. When you connect with a new person, look at their connections to see if you might know some of them, but haven't formally connected with them yet. Ask your existing connection if they might be willing to connect you to the ones you don't know.

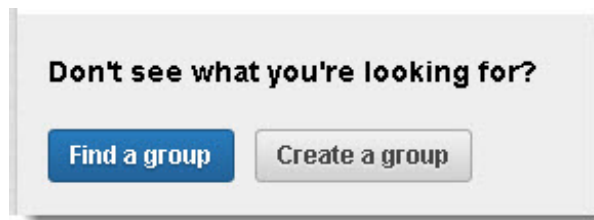
4. The Home tab tells you when someone you are connected to makes a new connection. If you already know this person, send them an invitation to connect with you. If you don't know them, then ask to be introduced.

5. Search function. The LinkedIn search lets you search by name for people you've previously met, but have lost touch with. Or use it to search for people you know from your other social media accounts.

6. LinkedIn Groups let you join in discussions and interact with people in the group. Often, they are willing to become connections with you. If you can't connect with them, you can always follow them. Be sure to connect with the group owner as well.

7. Advanced Search. Use LinkedIn's advanced search to find target people and companies that complement your goals. Use search terms that include a particular skill, industry or company name. Set filters by the location, company size or even seniority, for a more distinct search.

8. Make a list of target companies and go directly to the company websites. Locate those you'd like to connect with. See if they are on LinkedIn, what groups they belong to on LinkedIn and then send them an invitation to connect.



Here are 8 more ways you can find connections by sending invitations:

1. Classmates and Alumni
2. Email recipients who have LinkedIn in their signature
3. LinkedIn's suggested people you may know
4. Conference speakers and other attendees
5. New prospects
6. Professional or trade association colleagues
7. Bloggers you like and follow
8. Chamber of Commerce associates

Finding connections on LinkedIn begins with people you already know, like your family and friends. When building your network, try to make meaningful connections that can help you reach your goals, rather than just linking to anyone that has an account.

Tips for Make Great Connections

Have you spent time building your LinkedIn connections? Are you going deeper with those connections (and with any new ones you are making) and building relationships?

LinkedIn is a tool marketers should be using to connect to other professionals or to companies in a meaningful way. It's a place for building valuable relationships where both parties can help each other. So how do you find great connections through which you can build those kinds of relationships?

Follow these tips to begin improving your engagement and building better connections:

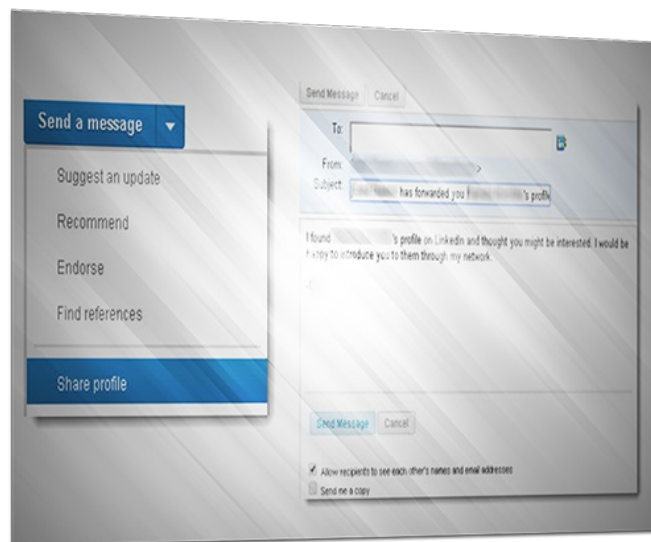
- Build real relationships by remembering the other person is human. Take the time to do some research on them before you initiate contact. Learn how they prefer to interact.

- Reach out to new customers by connecting with them individually.
- Have a complete profile, including a professional image and your complete work history. Join relevant groups and understand how they work.
- Initiate conversations after you've made a new connection or received an introduction.



- Give compliments or ask questions of others in groups.
- Ask for advice from those who have answered your questions in a group.
- Attend events that LinkedIn connections are attending, and make it a point to meet and have a conversation with them while there. You can find meetings by going to the event RSVP page to see who is attending. Reach out to a few by sending a message or InMail. Let them know you are looking forward to meeting them face-to-face.
- Create an editorial calendar from the questions and topics that are most popular in groups. Use these to create posts that you share with your LinkedIn connections.
- Ask intriguing questions and share useful information.
- Update your status frequently. Using status updates keeps you from being forgotten. People will be more likely to believe that your profile is fresh and up to date as well.
- Don't accept everyone who requests to become a connection; be appropriately selective.
- Be helpful by introducing two connections who can benefit from knowing each other, by using the share profile function on LinkedIn. This can be done as follows:
 - Search for one of the connection's profiles from the top of your home page.
 - Click their name.

- Expand the menu next to the Suggest Connections button. Select Share Profile or Send Message.
- Enter each recipient's name in the To: field.
- Modify the message to explain how they could benefit from knowing each other.
- Click Send Message.



Making connections and building your network doesn't mean connecting with everyone. You want to go deeper into building a relationship with your connections by sharing useful content, asking questions or answering questions that you can. It means filling out your full profile, including a professional image and all your previous jobs and volunteer work.

Building Relationships

Relationship building is what makes a company memorable. Think about Apple, Ritz Carlton, Hershey's (and various other companies) and how they share similar values with their customers. You want to do the same with your connections. Connect with those who share your values and then begin building a relationship with them.

- One way to do this is to share content that is relevant and helpful to them. Consider their needs and how you can help them. Do research on them and follow what they are doing.
- Build relationships with your connections through groups. Join LinkedIn groups related to your market niche. With these highly targeted people and business, you can share insightful advice and help those interested in what your company

has to offer. Don't be afraid to ask questions as well. Be a participant in the group.

- Be genuine in how you deal with your connections. Be honest. Don't be phony or pushy with your sales focus.
- Give recommendations to those you have worked with. They might even return the favor and give you a recommendation.
- Share and comment on updates from your connections on a daily basis.



- Endorse your connections. The Endorsements feature allows you to recognize a particular skill or area of expertise of your connections. When you make an endorsement, they receive a notification that lets them know you think they are great at “blogging” or “Social Media Strategy” or “Choosing Wine.”
- Give compliments to your connections on their products, services or posts.
- Act as a resource to others. Add value and advice to status updates when necessary.
- Send a “thank you” message when someone accepts your invitation.

You've taken the time to get connections on LinkedIn. Now take the time to build those connections into lasting business relationships. Professional networking has always been about giving something in order to get something back in return. Online networking is no different. Whatever your goals are, building relationships with your connections is a win-win for all involved.

What Happens Next

LinkedIn is about connections. Connections make up your network. Your network brings you opportunities. In short, new opportunities come from relationships you have built.

There are many ways to find and make connections on LinkedIn. You can use the advanced search to target people, groups and companies you are interested in. Simply

type in your search term, such as a particular skill, certification or industry, and then choosing the filters like the location or company size to get a more distinct search. The results will show up as a photo, title and the connection to you.

Or you can use the skills section to research skills and search terms. It includes related terms, people and groups that best match the skill you input.

Every connection you make on LinkedIn should align with your own values. Build your own profile so that it includes not only your current position but every job and instance of volunteer work you've done in the past. Keep your status updated. Send personalized invitations to connect.

Build relationships and new connections by joining groups and interacting on them. Meet connections at local events they are attending.

Contact connections that live in areas you are visiting when you travel. Ask them if they want to meet up for lunch or coffee. Or have a small group networking get together with several contacts that live in the same area.

Reach out to influential connections, explaining who you are and who referred you to them. Give them a compliment before you ask for their advice.

Don't just be a listener. Serve as a resource for your connections. Provide value and insight to others. Send private detailed messages to connections with additional tips or resources to help them accomplish their goals.

Don't just connect with others. Be involved and build relationships with your connections.

Social Marketing Resources

[Linkedinfluence](#) - The Ultimate LinkedIn Training Course

[Magic Submitter](#) - Power To Dominate Social Media And All Search Engines

[Social Business Accelerator](#) - Social Media Training & Software

[Social Marketing Tribe](#) - #1 Resource For Ongoing Social Media Training. 100+ Hours Of Training On Topics Like: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Youtube, Email / Digital Marketing

[Blogging With John Chow - Learn From a Pro](#)

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