



# **LinkedIn – How to use it to grow your business**

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**As at July 2014 – currently 7,500+ LinkedIn connections**

## **LinkedIn's Mission:**

Is to connect the world's professionals to enable them to be more productive and successful.

What % of your clients and prospects are using LinkedIn? If you are not sure, ask them.

How much time can you allocate for Social Media contact each month?

\_\_\_\_\_ hours per month \_\_\_\_\_ per day

**With all your social media activity, always be clear on:**

**Why** are you doing it?

**What** do you want to achieve?

**How** are you going to do that?

According to Forbes magazine (April 18, 2013) LinkedIn's popularity has skyrocketed over the last decade. Launched in May 2003, in January 2013 LinkedIn hit a staggering 200 million users – massive growth when we consider it held just 22 million five years ago and one million just a year after launch.

If your clients and prospects are connected to LinkedIn, you need to have a LinkedIn presence as well. LinkedIn is fast becoming the most effective business networking tool available.

The beauty of LinkedIn is that it is a great way to:

- Reconnect with lapsed connections
- Stay connected to prospects, clients and your connections
- Research prospective clients and people already in your networks
- Prospect for new clients.
- Research company information before a briefing/meeting

## What should your profile say?

How do you describe yourself on LinkedIn with a view to attracting new business clients?

Writing your profile is the *most important tool* you can use on LinkedIn. Spend at least 20-30 minutes completing your profile page. Feel free to edit the profile page every couple of months if you feel it is not working for you. The first 5-8 words after your name are *very important*. Your description will drive people to click on your profile if it is well worded.

Include any awards, special recommendations, training, qualifications etc. that you may have completed in the ten years. Consider also including special interests, volunteering – all the things that makes you YOU! Avoid including your date of birth for security reasons.

Have an open profile. I first learned about LinkedIn through a social media expert called Iggy Pintado [www.iggypintado.com](http://www.iggypintado.com) Iggy recommended having an open profile – this means as people connect with you and you with them, you can look through their connections list and see the people that you have in common. From there the next step is to send them an invitation to connect. If you have a closed profile no one will be able to access your connections list – though that basically defeats the purpose of LinkedIn. It is all about connecting and expanding your network and finding mutual connections through the people that you do know.

**LinkedIn is free** – although Iggy suggested from the start that I upgrade to a premium account, which costs approximately \$A25 per month. There is a list of upgrade benefits on the LinkedIn website.

There is also an edit button so if you type things that don't sit well or fit the space well, just press edit on your profile page and fix them. It is also a good idea to update your LinkedIn profile every 5-6 months, it's amazing how quickly some items become outdated or you get involved in new projects. Use a professional photo and remember – 'the more you tell, the more you sell.'

## **QR code on your business card**

Something a little bit different is to include your QR code on the back of your business card. You may choose to include a phrase *check out my LinkedIn profile* below the QR code. To obtain a QR code, firstly go to your LinkedIn profile page, and save the web address. You can Google a variety of free QR code providers, and download the QR code, send to the printer and voila – a business card with a QR code on the back. Of course you will include your web address on the business card as well, though a QR code stands out and is an instant link to LinkedIn.

## **Sending invitations to connect:**

You may find that 90% of the people you invite to connect you will say yes. And as for the 10% that reject or ignore your invitation, I suggest that you don't take it personally. You may have rejected many invitations before you joined LinkedIn and that 10% may be in exactly the same boat. When you do receive an invitation and the name of the person is not familiar to you, if you click on the name, you will find the number of people whom you have in common. Obviously if you have no connections in common and the name means nothing to you, then you may press the ignore button or the spam button if you wish. However, if you do have many connections in common, you may like to accept their invitation.

When you send an invitation – make sure that you don't just click connect – particularly if you go through the people you may know list. The reason why is that the click triggers an automated boring message.

It is far better to personalise your message:

### Examples of LinkedIn invitations–

1. Hi Mary, great to meet you at Women's Network Australia on Wednesday. All the best with your uni exams. I would like to connect with you on LinkedIn.
2. Hi Joe, a blast from the past. I knew you when we both worked at XXX. Great to see you on LinkedIn, would like to connect with you.
3. Hi Mary, we have more than 260+ mutual connections, though I don't think our paths have crossed yet. I would like to connect with you.
4. Hi John, I have just finished reading your book and loved it! Congratulations – would it be possible to connect with you?
5. Hi Jason, we are both members of the XXX group and appear to have 150+ mutual connections. May I connect with you on LI?
6. Hi Maree, we met at John and Jane's engagement party last year. I just saw you on LinkedIn and thought I would invite you to connect with me.

**Always send a 'thanks for the invitation to connect message'.** Many people miss the opportunity to follow up after they receive an invitation. I strongly recommend that after you accept the invitation, click on the send a message or start a conversation with...button and write a quick note. "Hi Jane, thanks for your invitation to connect on LinkedIn – isn't it a great networking tool? Feel free to contact me if I can ever assist with any xxxxx plans (whatever your business is). Enjoy the week/weekend/month (include your name, website and mobile number). Why bother? The minute it takes you to write the thank you message is another opportunity to market yourself.

**Time allocation.** One of the great things about spending time on LinkedIn is that you can see results for that time commitment quite quickly. If you can when you are starting out on LinkedIn, aim to spend 10-20 minutes per day on LinkedIn time. One of the great things about LinkedIn is that it is available 24/7, so if you are travelling in a different time zone, you can still access it. Many multi-taskers can access LinkedIn while they are watching DVDs or television.

**Looking through other people's connections.** From your LinkedIn home page you can click on the network button at the top of the page. You will then be able to access an alphabetical list of your connections. By clicking of each connection you will be able to click on their connections list (unless they have a closed profile) and go through their connections page by page. Anyone who is a first/direct connection for you and your connection will show up clearly that you have people in common. You may also recognise someone that you know in another person's list. Feel free to send them an invitation to connect. (See invitation examples). The more effort you put into writing your invitation to connect, the more you increase your chance of the invitation being accepted.

### **Ideas for regular updates.**

At the top of your home page beside your photo is a long white space with the words Share and Update. This is the LinkedIn location where you can insert a comment, a quotation; add a reference to an article you have read or something that you want to share with your connections. You may want to mention a special offer you are making, your opinion on something, a motivational quote or a link to something you find interesting.

If you are having trouble coming up with something, you might download some inspirational/motivational quotations and keep them in a handy spot for the occasions when you need them. Another great spot to find interesting article is by clicking on the Interests button and then on the Pulse button. Here you will find a stack of articles from a variety of leaders. Select an article that appeals to you, read it and then at the top of the article you will see a variety of icons including the 'share' icon.

When you press on 'share' you will find the article is shared with your connections list or groups and you can add a message to the update. You may express an opinion about the article or quote a line or two and encourage people to read it.

This is one of the ways that items end up on the home page. Alternately you can scan through your connections list and share one of their comments or links. This is a great way to increase your visibility with your connections database as well as the general LinkedIn community. Be seen, get known and move ahead.

Finding things worth sharing with your network is really very easy – basically you just have to discipline yourself to make the effort each day to access your LinkedIn account and invest a small amount of time every day building your profile.

### **Consider joining a group**

Under that same Interests button on your home page, you will find a groups tab. When you click on groups you will be taken to a LinkedIn area where there are lots of interesting national and international groups of people communicating regularly. There are mainstream business focussed networks as well as special interest groups such as 'Movie Addicts'. Two groups you might like to start with are - TED – ideas worth spreading and the Harvard Business Review – both have lots of interesting discussions. You can also indicate on your settings page whether you receive a weekly, daily or monthly summary of your group activities. Most groups will allow you also to access their list of members and that is another series of potential people with similar interests that you can invite to expand your network. Once you join a group, the group's logo will be included on the bottom of your profile page.

## **Research companies/individuals**

If you have a client list or list of organisations that you would like to work with or work for, you can 'follow' their company and be advised when they update their company pages with their latest news. Again this is a great way of researching the company and finding the names of people who work for the company or people you may know.

## **Keep your eye on your connections list**

LinkedIn has a system when one of your network changes their job, receives a promotion or their job status changes at all, this is listed in your updates list. In addition you also regularly receive a summary of people in your network who have changed jobs. This is a great way of tracking past or current client's career movements. Plus it is a great reason for you to reconnect with them, send a congratulations note and re-establish the connections.

## **Write one recommendation for someone every week**

Recommendations in the LinkedIn world are a form of testimonial or referral and are so easy to write. As you grow your connections list it should be very easy to find at least one person per week to send a recommendation to. To write a recommendation, go to the person's profile, scan about half way down the profile page and just underneath the education section you will find a recommendations button. Here you can write a short recommendation and when you submit it is sent to the receiver who can then click to share that recommendation for display on their profile page. Never ask anyone for a recommendation, just give them to others. With the law of reciprocity you will receive recommendations yourself anyway.



## **People you may know**

Again on your home page you will find a section on the top right where it lists 'people you may know'. Similar to Facebook, based on the information on your profile and the other people you link with LinkedIn suggests people that you may know. It is worth scanning through these names at least once a week to see if you do know anyone on the list. If you click the connect button a standard LinkedIn message will be sent to that person. However if you do know the person, I recommend that you click on the persons profile and then connect from that page. You will be able to send a detailed invitation to that person reminding them how you know each other. You will find you get a much better response with a personalised invitation rather than the standard LinkedIn connection.

## **Endorsements**

If you click on someone's profile page or when you access your home page, often you will see an endorsement section. Do you endorse this person for certain skills? You can skip this section or endorse the person for the skills you know they have. If the endorsement section appears on your home page, you will find there are four people at a time that you can endorse. I recommend you only endorse people whom you know well with the relevant skills.

## **Who's viewed your profile?**

This section appears on the right of your home page and you can click on the number to see who has viewed your profile. When you access this link you receive an image of all the people who have recently viewed your profile. Plus a visual summary of the dates and numbers of people who accessed your profile. It is interesting to track the dates when you attended a networking event and used LinkedIn as a follow up or pushed a marketing initiative and drove people to your LinkedIn site.

## **How do you rank in your profile views?**

In this same section you can click on how you rank in your profile views. LinkedIn crunches the numbers on number of views for your profiles compared to the same information for your connections list. As at July 2014, I currently rank in the top 2% for profile views in my connections list – I am #117 out of my 7,452 connections list. Obviously if you are spending little time on LinkedIn then you can't expect to rank very high on the list. As previously stated, you can see reward for effort quite quickly with LinkedIn as their system tracks and rewards effort.

## **Who's viewed your updates?**

On the right of your profile you will also see a multi coloured circle showing the people who have viewed your updates and whether they were from first connection (you know and are connection to them) , second connection (someone you know, knows this person) or third connection (this person is not known by you or someone in your network) level. Plus how many views there were and how many comments. There is also a link on news that is trending and you are able to click on that and resend some of those articles through your own updates. As you can see LinkedIn does make it as easy as possible for you to build your profile. All you need to do is commit to spend time building your connections and LinkedIn profile.

## **People also viewed**

On the right of your profile page you will also see the 'people also viewed' section. This is interesting to see who people compare you with or who may be your competitor nationally or globally.

## **Number of connections**

On the right of your home page, you will see how many connections you currently have and how many people that has the potential to connect you with.

In July 2014, I currently have 7,500+ connections which give me access to a potential 17,450,000+ professionals. When you click on that expanded professionals link you will have access to all these connections divided into first, second and third connection level, plus demographics, plus interests and groups. Finding like minded people has never been easier via LinkedIn.

## **Using LinkedIn as a follow up tool after networking events**

Often you meet people at networking events and may not necessarily want to do business with them in the future. However, you have spent time talking to them, found that you have things in common and enjoyed their company. You may ask them the question, how are you finding LinkedIn? Then suggest that you will send them a LinkedIn invitation. Aim to do that within 48 hours of meeting the person and your invitation message will of course refer to the meeting.

### **How do I personally generate business via LinkedIn?**

In my LinkedIn profile I describe myself as a Networking Strategist, Writing Mentor and Ghost Writer. In the last few years, I have been able to track that 25%-30% of my new business comes from LinkedIn. In the early days I would waste a lot of time responding to people with lengthy answers that wasted my time and resulted in little or no business let alone a response. Then I started to track that most of my queries were about ghost writing or writing mentoring and 80%-90% of these queries came outside of business hours and predominantly over the weekend. Obviously if writing wasn't a person's day job, then it might be something that they aspired to do.

**So in an effort to convert more of these writing queries, I set up a simple system –**

1. When I received a ghost writing or writing query over the weekend or out of hours and I happened to be online, I would respond to the person – “Thanks for your query re ghost writing. I have found that no two authors are the same and I don’t have a set profile or quote that I can send you without knowing a little more about your book. I am in my home office today and will be available until 4pm (or whatever time) – feel free to phone me on 0407906501 to chat about your book. I am more than happy to give you a complimentary 15-20 minutes to answer your questions about printing/editing/cover design (whatever their initial question was about). After that my phone consulting rate is \$195.00 per hour including GST. We can continue the conversation today or we can arrange a future time to discuss your writing.

This system stopped the type kickers very quickly. If they could not pick up the phone for a free 20 minute discussion, they would never pay for my services to write their book.

2. What I also found was that I needed a next step to progress their book if they had written more than 10,000 words to date. So I would let them know that I was happy to read their book for a set hourly rate and I could read 5,000-6,000 words per hour. Plus I charge for an additional hour to complete a report on what I would suggest you could do with the book and what the next steps are for the writer. Again I had been burned many times reading dozens of books, giving reports and then never hearing from the author again. This was a low cost way of progressing the book. I also found that most authors appreciated the constructive feedback and then progressed to having me project manage the self publishing side of their book or in some cases actually write it for them.

3. **When it came to networking, there could also be tyre kickers –** people who wanted your ideas but didn't want to pay for your time. Had lots of questions and just wanted my ideas. Alternately they had a remote networking group that they wanted me to speak at. So I was able to explain the costs involved with travelling to a 'free presentation' and how there were ways around that. But all these options started with a phone call.
4. **Did I convert everyone from query to paid word?** No, however, I did increase my conversion rate by offering a low cost option to start and then move forward to a higher daily rate for writing or project management. Depending what your product or service is, you might find that people stay in the 'prospects' area for weeks or months, before they actually make a decision or have the budget to progress the project.
5. **Every day I spent at least 10 minutes on LinkedIn.** Sometimes I have more free time or if I am travelling, scanning LinkedIn is a great way to spend waiting time in an airport. I also multi task from time to time when I am watching a DVD or television and scan profiles or send invitations at the same time. However, that daily presence helps keep your name out there. I write at least two updates each day – that may be a motivational quote, forwarding an article from the Pulse section or on-forwarding something that one of my network have shared.
6. My aim is to make it easy for people to do business with me. So many things are instant today, and speed of response pays dividends.
7. Continually updating and improving my LinkedIn profile – it's amazing how quickly a profile can become out of date.
8. When I meet new people, I follow up with a LinkedIn invitation – and make sure that I refer to something we discussed when we met.

**Like every social media tool today, who knows where one message or click can lead to? LinkedIn is continually improving and refining its systems. LinkedIn's mantra is 'to do less more efficiently.'**

**Whether you upgrade to LinkedIn Premium @ \$25.00 per month (approximately) or stay with the free service, LinkedIn is definitely one of the fastest growing, easiest business development tools available today. Let's connect!**

I look forward to receiving a LinkedIn invitation to connect with you. If you have found this ebook useful – please feel free to share it with your network.

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Global Networking Specialist, **Robyn Henderson**, has written and contributed to more than 30 non-fiction books in the **Worth Knowing Series** over the last 20 years.

She believes the key to growing your business is to network smart, be visible and strategic with face to face and social media options. Plus always follow up and aim for win/win outcomes – even with strangers. With more than 6500+ connections on LinkedIn – Robyn is able to track that 25% of her work comes from LinkedIn. Yet 2 years ago she was totally ignorant of social media. Offering her 13 books and eBooks in an electronic version means Robyn can pass the savings onto you. Instead of \$350+ for hard cover books, you pay only \$99.00 for the electronic version.



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