5 STEPS TO ATTRACTING YOUR MOST IMPORTANT, HIGH-VALUE PROSPECTS IN LinkedIn

Connequity™

If you're like most business professionals, you get your daily fill of blog posts, online ads and webinars promising the latest tactics on how to get more business from social media. It's true, there are a lot of tactics that will help you get more leads and referrals from LinkedIn - if you take the time to learn and implement them. But the problem is, without having a well-defined marketing strategy as an overarching guide to direct your marketing efforts, implementing a laundry list of tactics will not be effective.

The eighty / twenty rule states that 80% of the value of any activity is likely to come from 20% of the inputs. In practical terms, 80% of the most valuable information about how to get more business from LinkedIn can be found in just 20% of what is written about. This report will give you the crucial 20% of LinkedIn marketing strategies and tactics that will generate 80% of your results in your LinkedIn marketing activities.

This report will lay out a step-by-step strategy and implementation plan that will help you attract more high-value prospects for your service or practice in LinkedIn, and show you how to turn those connections into new business opportunities.

Why LinkedIn? At at time when there are hugely popular social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr and Google+, you might be asking "why LinkedIn?" The reason is because people that use LinkedIn are there for a different reason than any other social network. Professionals use LinkedIn to network with other professionals, B2B professionals use LinkedIn to find and network with business prospects, real estate professionals use LinkedIn to promote their services to prospects and prospective networking partners. In short, LinkedIn was originally created and is used, first and foremost for business.

So if you offer services to entrepreneurs, consultants, financial services professionals, legal professionals, CEOs… or virtually anyone in business, then LinkedIn is where you want to be.

According to LinkedIn, there are more than 400 million members worldwide, with over 107 million in the U.S. alone. That means there is a mind-boggling number of business prospects for just about every business or profession imaginable.

Let's jump in.

Before I get into the 5 steps, it's important to understand how LinkedIn is structured. LinkedIn is a network with 3 degrees of separation, meaning, every LinkedIn member has three levels of connections.

On the next page is breakdown of each level of connection in LinkedIn.

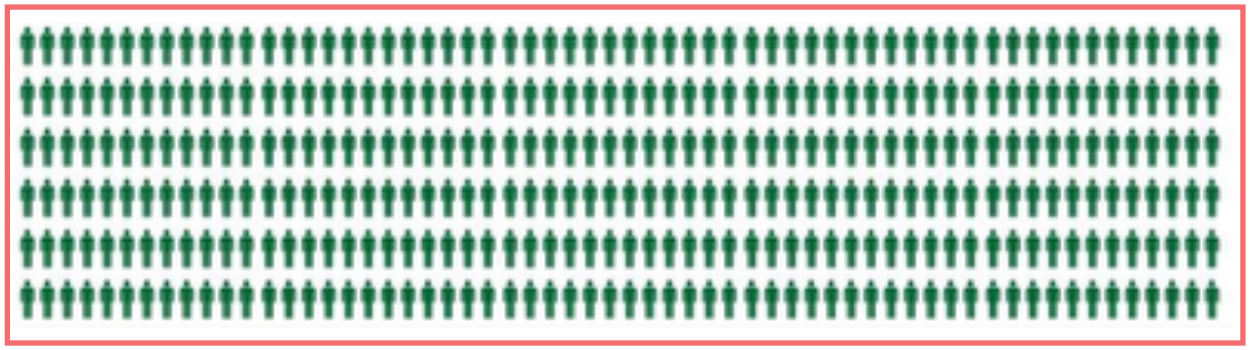
1st Connections - These are the people that you are directly connected to - your direct connections. They have either accepted a connection request from you or you from them. Your 1st connections have given you permission to communicate with them directly through LinkedIn, and often make their email and phone number available. The average LinkedIn user has between 500 and 1000 of 1st connections.

2nd Connections - These are people connected to your 1st connections. LinkedIn allows you to connect with them by clicking on a Connect button or using InMail, which is offered in their premium accounts.

3rd Connections - These are people connected to your 2nd connections, and LinkedIn allows you to connect with them using InMail or if you have some previous relationship with them, have their email address, or share a group together.

It's important to have a visual of these different levels of connections.

Your 2nd level connections are an untapped potential for new leads and clients



For example, if you have 600 1st connections, and each one of your 2nd connections have 600, your total potential network size is 360,000! The overall strategy of your LinkedIn marketing efforts, is to get as many 'targeted' 2nd level connections to become your 1st level connections.

Think about it for a moment. Your 1st degree connections in LinkedIn gives you many benefits, including:

1. **Access to their connections**. Remember, the average LinkedIn user has between 500 - 1,000 1st degree connections. So, for every new 1st connection you add, you have access to that many new potential connections. If you were to add just one new 1st degree connection a day, by the end of the year, your total network size would grow by 219,000 people (on average)!

2. **Increased ranking on searches**. First degree connections always appear first in search results, so naturally, the more 1st degree connections you have, the more opportunity you have to appear in search results.

3. **Ability to directly message.** Once again, 1st connections have given you the green light to contact them within LinkedIn, and often outside of LinkedIn.

4. **Ability to ask for an introduction.** Every professional knows that it's better to be referred by someone, than to approach a prospect or potential networking partner cold. LinkedIn makes it easy for users to approach a mutual connection and ask for an introduction.

Most importantly, doing business or networking with someone you're already 'connected to' is far easier than someone you're not. Your 1st degree connections are people you are connected to, whether you've met them in-person or not.

There is one important caveat I want to point out. I want to emphasize that the goal is not to spend time and effort indiscriminately trying to convert as many 2nd degree connections to 1st connections as possible. Instead, the goal is to be selective and strategic, targeting only the kind of professionals or businesses that you want to be in your circle of 1st degree connections.

Think about it this way. If your pool of LinkedIn connections is made up of anybody and everybody, then your LinkedIn marketing efforts will be watered down and far less effective. On the other hand, if you take the time to target precisely who you want to connect with - your ideal target prospective clients and networking partners, all of your future LinkedIn marketing efforts will be infinitely more valuable. Now I realize it's impossible to have 100% of your LinkedIn connections precisely targeted, but your objective should be to build targeted connections in your LinkedIn marketing from this day forward.

Using what you're about to learn in this report, you can get qualified leads from LinkedIn - certainly on a weekly basis and quite possibly on a daily basis. It depends entirely on how aggressively you're willing to implement these steps.

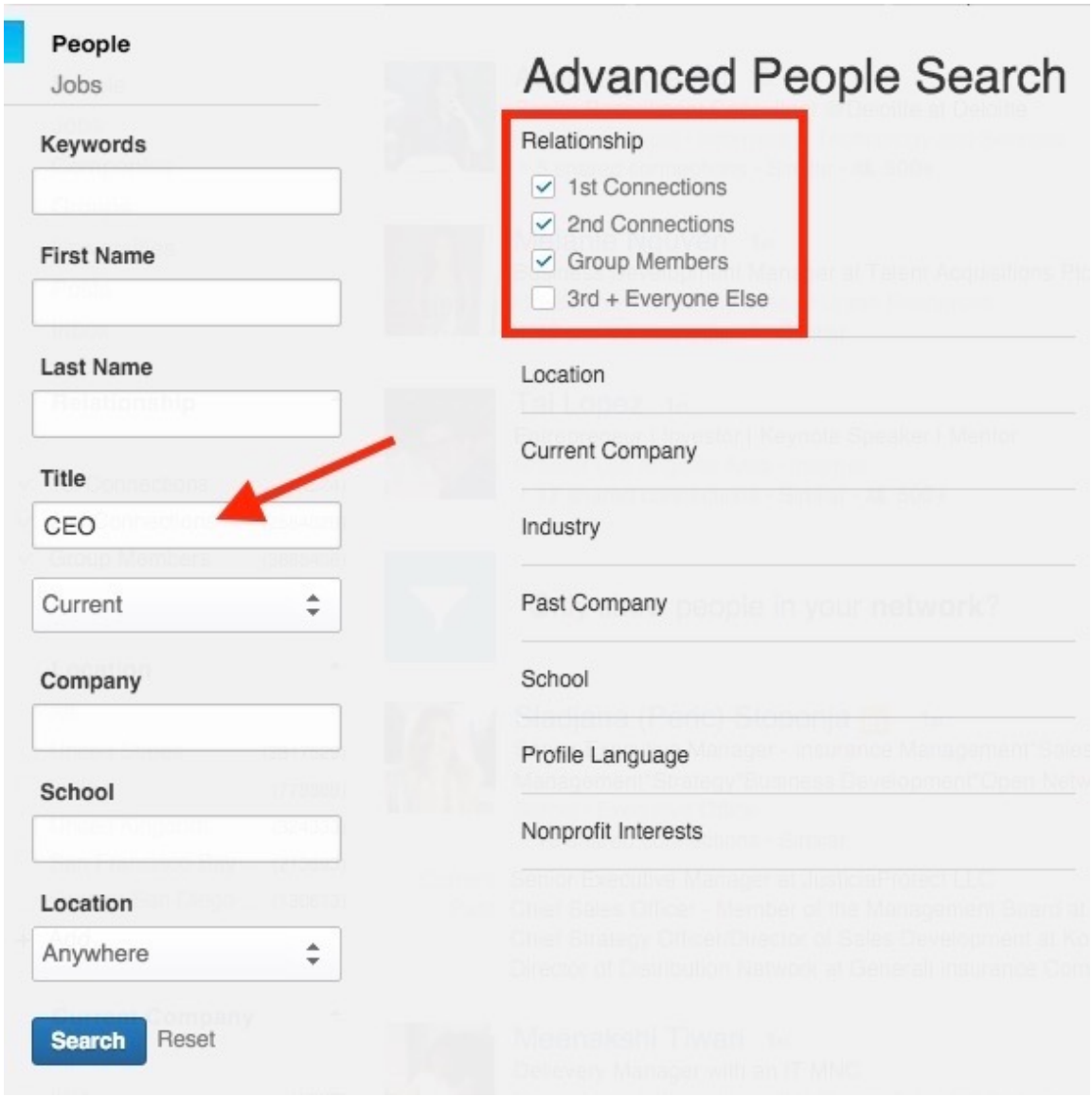
Now, before I go on, if you have a free LinkedIn account, I highly recommend upgrading to one of the premium plans. Their Business Plus account is priced at $59.99/month, and there is also a premium plan for sales people at $79.99/month. The added features available for either of these premium plans can be worth thousands of dollars a month to your business, so I personally recommend the upgrade.

The 5 Steps To Attracting High Value Prospects In LinkedIn

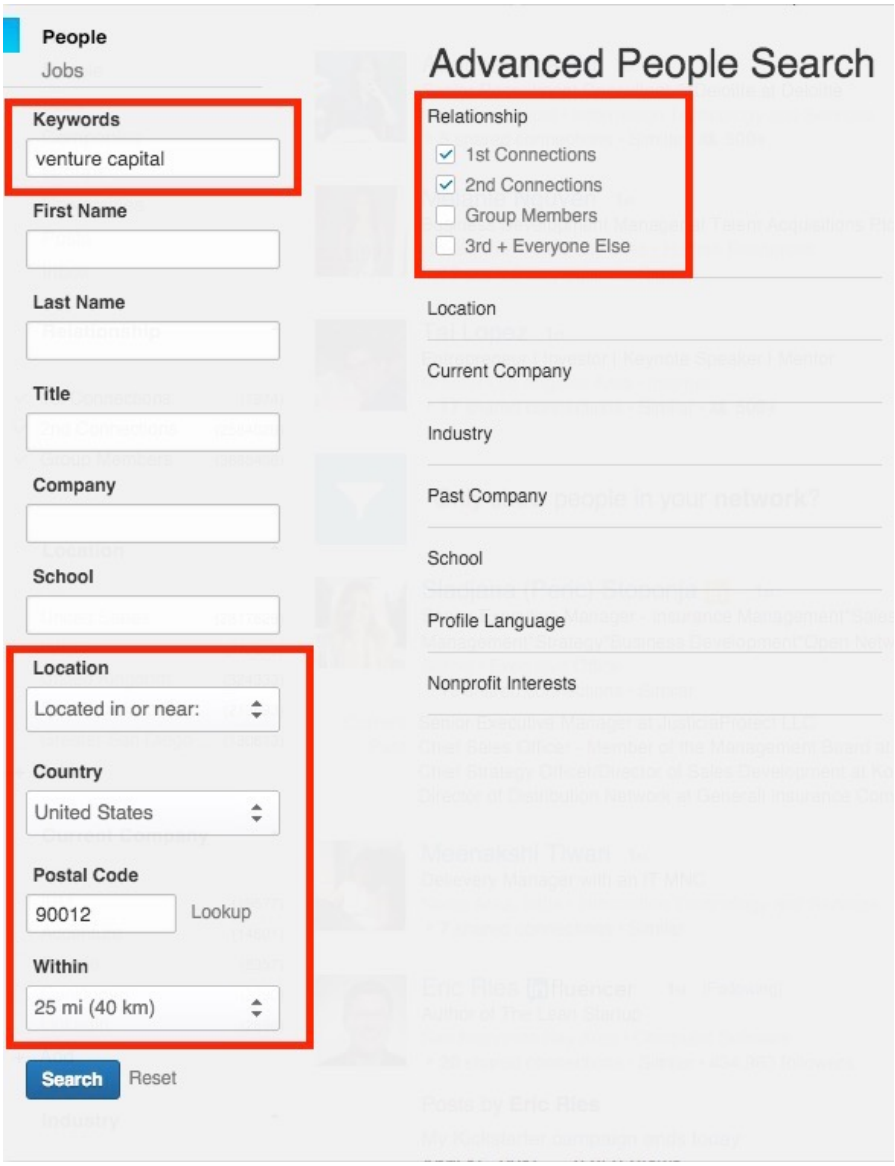
Step 1 - Target: The saying “you can’t hit a target you can’t see” is more relevant than ever in LinkedIn marketing. Before you do anything else, get crystal clear on who you want to target in LinkedIn - both clients and potential networking partners. This is the very most important step. Having a clearly defined picture of precisely who you are targeting will be your guidepost to executing a LinkedIn marketing strategy, designed to deliberately attract the right audience to your profile and ultimately connect with.

Think of who your ideal clients are: Are they employees at companies in certain industries? What’s their title? What size of company? Where are they located? Do they work at a specific company? Ask yourself, who your ideal target client is, as well as who would be in the best position to refer those clients to you.

To build a targeted list manually, use the advanced search feature in LinkedIn to search for and target 1st and 2nd level connections, as well as groups.



Enter in keywords for prospective clients first, then for potential referral partners. In the advanced search, you can find people by title, company, location or keyword.

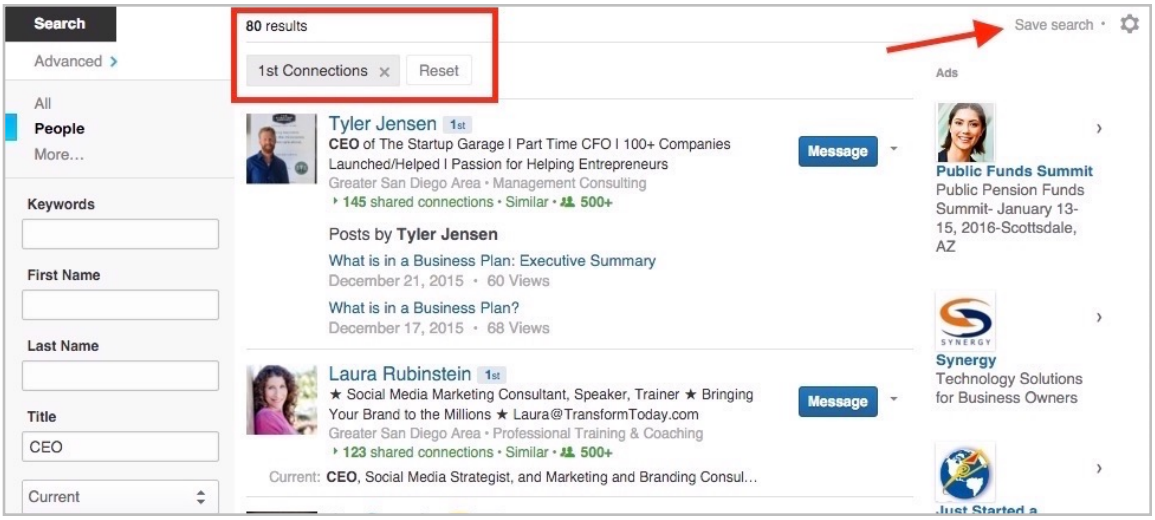


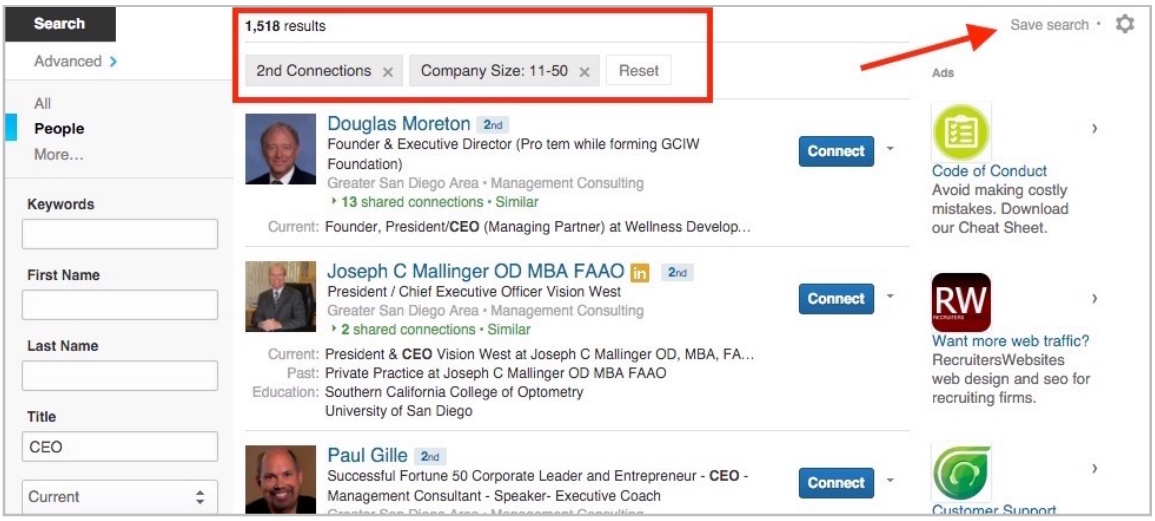
Premium LinkedIn accounts give you access to searching by company size and seniority level. The goal is to intelligently use the LinkedIn filters to identify your ideal target prospects.

Once you've used the advanced features and are happy with your search results, use the Save feature to save the following four lists:

1) 1st Connections, potential clients.
2) 1st Connections, potential networking partners.
3) 2nd Connections, potential clients connected to your 1st connections.
4) 2nd Connections, potential networking partners.

In Step 3, you will be engaging with each of these lists differently, so you want to make sure to save them into separate lists.





To automate the process of identifying high-value networking partners in your LinkedIn network, sign up for a free account at Connequity. It has a built-in algorithm that will automatically uncover which of your LinkedIn connections are most likely to send you referrals. Click here to sign-up for Connequity.

Step 2 - Optimize: Create and optimize your LinkedIn profile to attract targeted traffic from your potential leads and customers. As a business professional, use LinkedIn first as a marketing tool, so create your profile to appeal to your ideal target client.

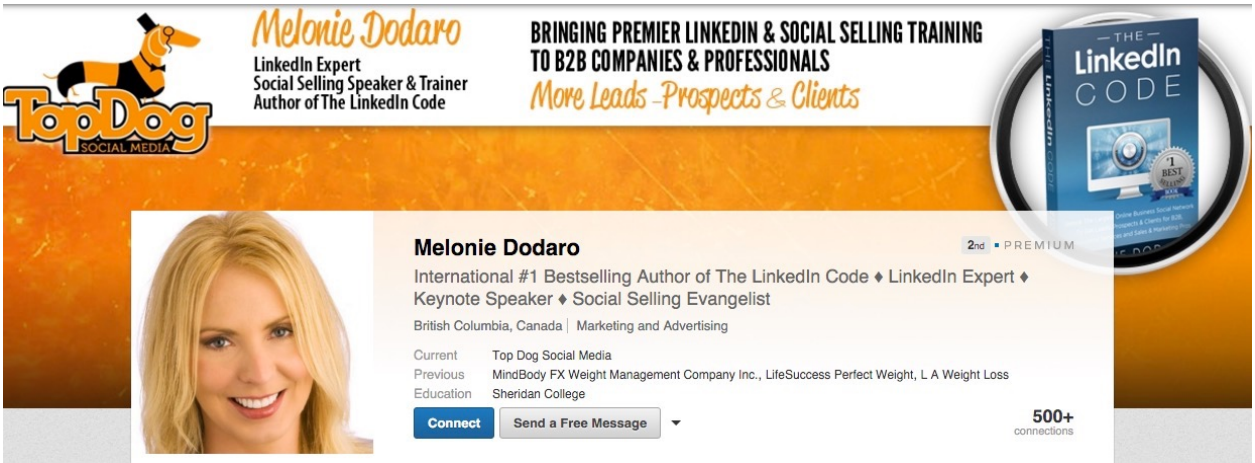
Think of your profile as opportunity to highlight the unique value you offer your target audience. It should promote your expertise and attract visitors so they will want to connect with you. When you optimize your profile properly, not only will you attract more visitors who want to connect with you, your profile will begin to appear in LinkedIn searches for keywords you use in your profile. Think SEO for LinkedIn. The end result of effectively optimizing your LinkedIn profile is - you will get more views, more followers and more connections.

The key elements of your profile are:

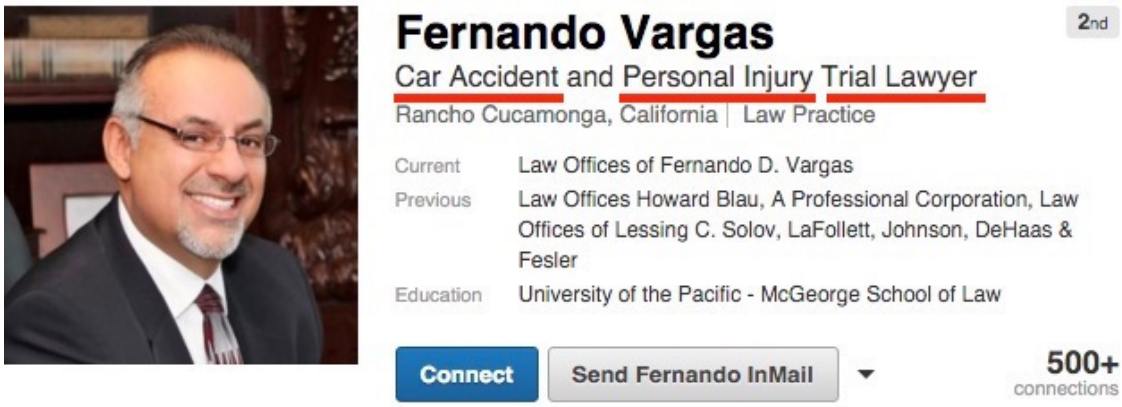
1. **Your name and picture** - Research shows that adding a professional photo to your profile, makes you 14 times more likely to be found on LinkedIn.

   If your picture is outdated, make sure to get a current professional picture that looks like you today, because you want to make sure your LinkedIn contacts recognize you when you meet them at workshops, conferences or meetings.

   You can also add a custom background photo to your profile with your company's branding. This will give your profile more personality and make you stand out from your competitors.

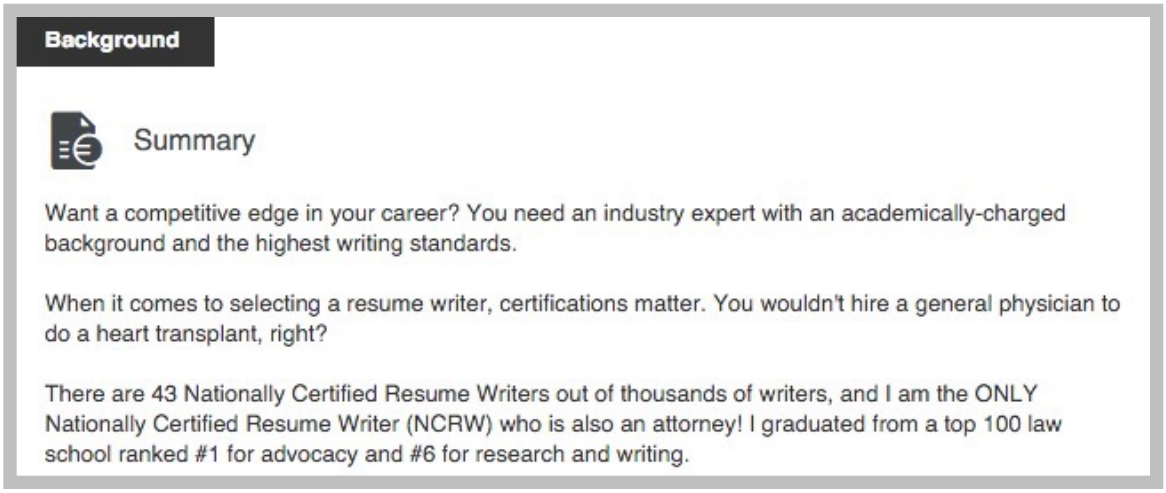


1. **Your title / tagline** - LinkedIn uses your title / tagline as one of the primary fields to rank members in searches. Choose your title / tagline based on what your ideal target customer would search for in LinkedIn, if they are looking for your services in your marketplace. Avoid choosing your title simply because that's what your title is at your company. Think of what keywords or phrases your ideal prospect would search for in LinkedIn and use that as a title. For example, if you are a Personal Injury Attorney, a prospect might search for 'car accident lawyer.' Think of creative ways to combine more than one keyword phrase as your title.



2. **Your summary** - According to LinkedIn consultant Andy Foote, "Your LinkedIn Summary is the most important white space on your entire LinkedIn Profile. What you choose to write here can make the difference between professional success or stagnation."

   Your summary should be professional, but most importantly, it should clearly articulate your unique competitive advantage. Think of it as your elevator pitch that will set you apart from competitors. Your summary should also highlight your specialties and have a call to action - letting people know how they can reach you outside of LinkedIn.



How To Get Potential Clients and Networking Partners to Discover You In LinkedIn

Now that you have identified and created targeted lists of potential clients and networking partners, and optimized your LinkedIn profile, now it's time to get these targeted prospects to discover you.

Step 3 - Engage: The most efficient way to leverage LinkedIn is to begin connecting (or re-connecting) with 1st connections. Again, these are your direct connections that have given you permission to contact them in LinkedIn. In most cases, these are the friends, family and colleagues that you have worked with previously or currently. But remember, you want to be ultra-targeted in this step and invest your time and energy engaging with the contacts in your saved list from Step 1.

The goal here is to engage with your 1st connections and make them aware of your services. If you have a free report, or guide, or kit that you use as a lead generation tool, offer it to your 1st connections, if appropriate. I will cover this in Step 5 in more detail.

LinkedIn allows you to send a single message to 50 connection at once, but DON'T DO IT! That's a rookie move and likely to get you angry responses from your connections.

Instead, you want your messages to be personalized and engaging. Ask for advice, invite people to meet for coffee, ask about their company. The key is to be personal and engaging.

Here is a stellar example of a message I received from a 1st level connection. It's personal and engaging, he reminds me about what he does and offers his service to anyone I might know, and then offers to return the favor, if I ask. This is what networking in LinkedIn is all about!

Hey Gary –

From CEO to CEO, I know we know CEO's.

As I celebrate 25 years of [redacted] I'm having fun looking at the past, but I still have to look to our future.

We do three things really well. We help clients develop strategic communications plans to reach targets, we build the creative resources required, and we help them manage it all because its not their strong suit.

A growing service has been me as a part-time CMO. Sales organizations that need marketing leadership, SMB's that want to add an experience to their C-Suite, startups that need a veteran in the pitch deck: I can help.

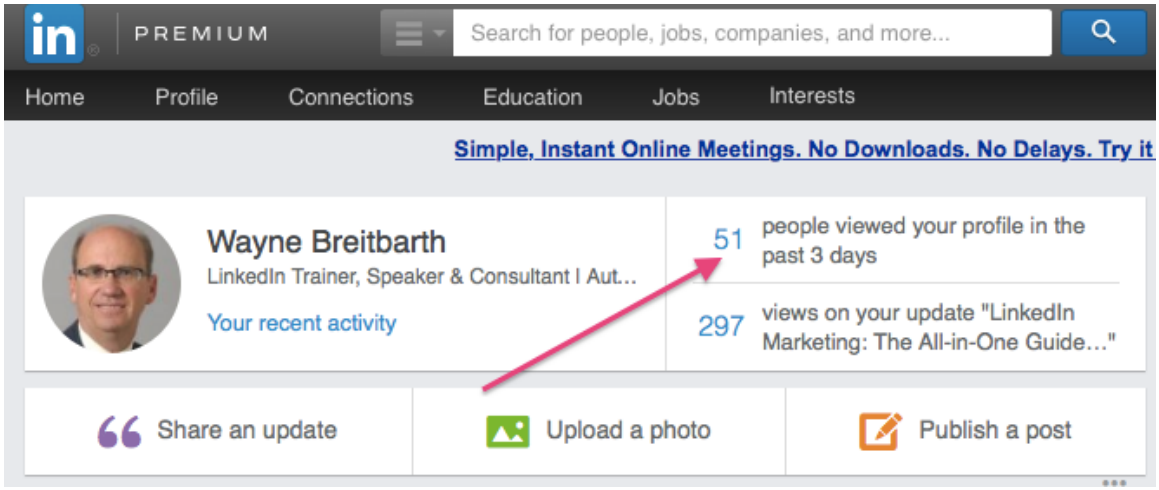
To my point, you know CEO's I don't know. I'd appreciate you introducing me to any CEO you think would be a good fit for me, or my agency.

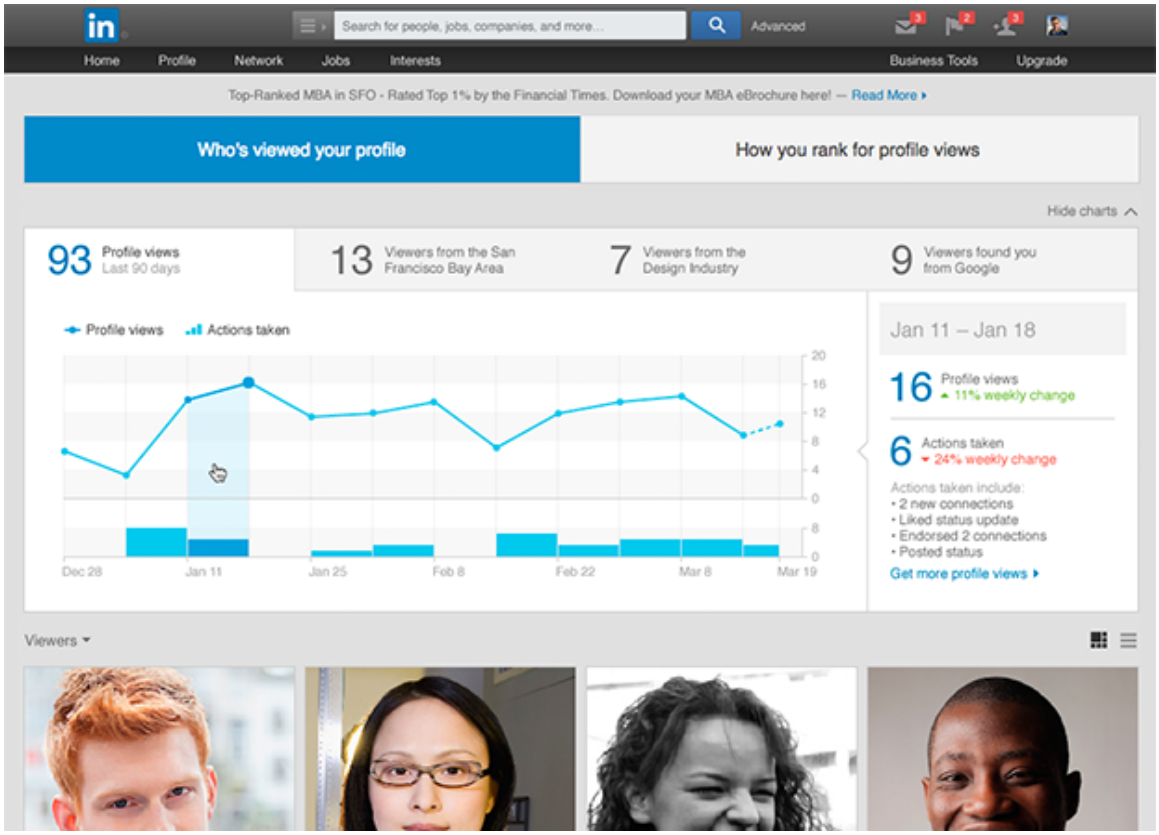
In return, I owe you one. Just ask.

kp

Now let's talk about engaging with 2nd level connections. The the best way to get 2nd degree connections to become new connections is to first get them to notice you. The easiest way to accomplish this is by leveraging the power of LinkedIn's "Who's viewed my profile" feature. This feature enables you to see who's looked at your profile.

At the top of your feed, LinkedIn will show how many people have viewed your profile in the past 7 days. If you click on the number, LinkedIn will show you who has viewed your profile, excluding people who have their profiles set to anonymous. Free account limit the number you can see, while paid accounts give you the whole list.





According to Wayne Breitbarth, a LinkedIn consultant and author, 70.6% of LinkedIn users say that the “Who’s viewed your profile” is the most helpful feature in LinkedIn.

When you view a 2nd level connection, that person will be notified on their cell phone or computer, that you viewed their profile. Most of the time, they will click through to see who is viewing their profile. When they do, since you have taken the time to optimize your profile (Step 2), they will see your highly optimized profile, that clearly articulates your unique competitive advantage, and why they should choose you over every other competitor in your field. Or if they are a potential networking partner, they will see that you are a professional, and somebody they would like to network with.

So the first step to engage with 2nd degree connections is to begin viewing their profiles on a daily basis.

Here is an example: Let’s say you are targeting CEOs of companies in your city. You go back to your saved search of 2nd degree connections from Step 1 and begin clicking through each prospect on that list. It only takes a few minutes to cover several profile views.

If you have an assistant, have him or her go through your 2nd degree lists each day and click on a certain number of your target list. Make sure your assistant is logged into your LinkedIn account though, otherwise it will look like your assistant is viewing their profiles.

As you do this consistently, you will begin to see your daily number of visitors climb higher and higher and connection requests climb. More importantly, you are priming your 2nd degree connections to want to connect with you. You will now become a familiar face to them as they begin to see your profile.

Connection Requests To 2nd Degree Contacts

Now it’s time to start making outbound connection requests to your lists of 2nd degree prospects.

As you are visiting your targeted 2nd degree connections profiles, you will start to see the two different buttons: Free Message and InMail.

An InMail is a feature LinkedIn offers premium account holders, that allows you to send messages directly to LinkedIn members that you are not connected to. Depending on the premium account you have, you can send between 15 - 30 InMails per month.

A Free Message is a way to message directly to LinkedIn members that you share a group with, regardless of whether you are connected to them or not. LinkedIn allows you to send up to 15 Free Messages per month.

So, when you see the button that says “Send a Free Message”, it means you share a group with that person.

As you begin to consistently visit the profile pages of your targeted 2nd degree connections, you want to send out the maximum number of connection requests per month. To maximize this, you want to join as many of the same groups that your targeted prospects belong to. I’ll cover this in more detail in Step 4, but for now, you want to maximize these features that LinkedIn gives you.

Here are some basic tips to messaging 2nd degree connections in LinkedIn:

1) Always personalize your message and make sure to spell the recipient’s name correctly.

2) Keep your messages short and sweet. Don’t waste people’s time with long-winded messages. Be professional and to the point.

3) Introduce yourself, and find common ground in the opening line *(ie. you belong to the same Group, industry, attended the same trade show, etc.)*

4) Get to the point as to why you’re writing. Always lead with them - not you. If you are asking to meet for coffee, make the request last.

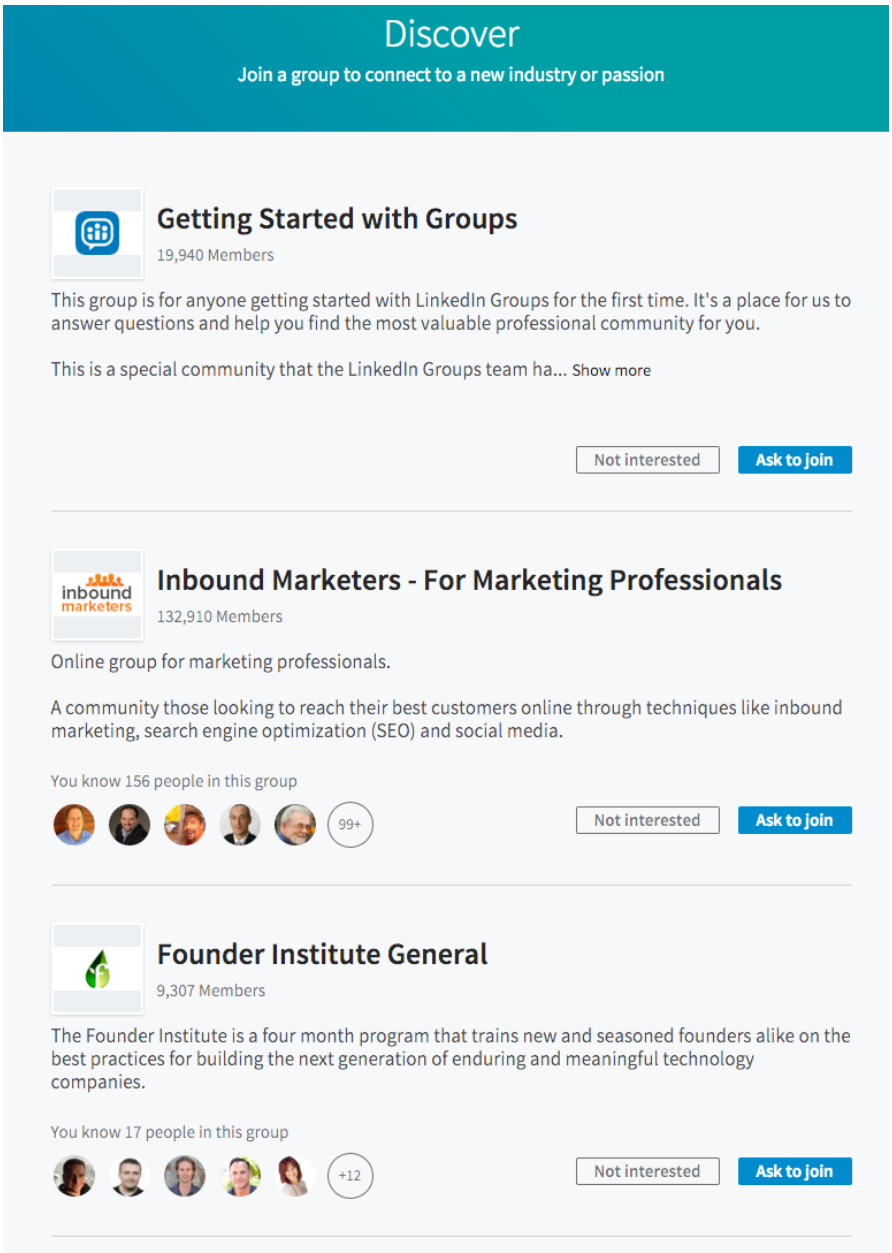
5) Always end with a clear call to action - request a connection!

Of course, these are just basic guidelines and your message will vary depending on your objective.

Here’s a simple template for reaching out to someone that you share a group with:

> *Hi (name), I'm also in the eMarkting Association Network and read your some of your posts. I thought we might both benefit from connecting with each other, so I'd love to connect. Thanks, (your name).*

Step 4 - Groups: LinkedIn Groups are a goldmine of networking opportunities, so be selective and join as many targeted LinkedIn Groups as you can. According to a recent LinkedIn user survey, 35% of all LinkedIn users belong to 1-9 groups. However, LinkedIn allows you to join up to 50 groups, so use the search feature and target the groups that your prospects belong to. Some LinkedIn experts ardently believe joining the right groups is the easiest way to to grow your network.



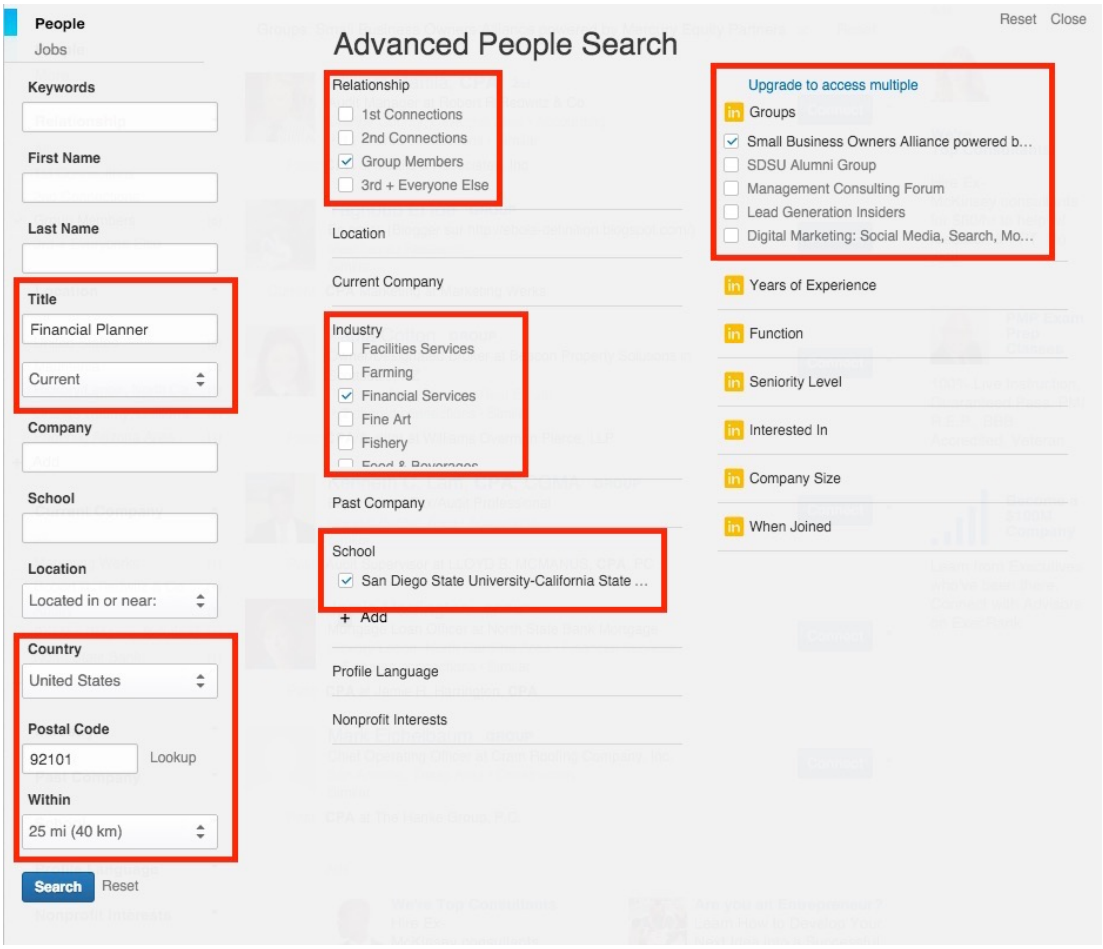
Joining targeted groups is important to your LinkedIn success for many reasons, here are just some of them:

1) When you join a group, all of the members of that group are essentially added to your network.

2) When you participate in group discussions, you automatically get noticed. The more actively you get involved in group discussions, the more profile views you will get. But be strategic about your participation. If you belong to a group where people can use your expertise, and you share your knowledge and expertise freely, you will get noticed and gain more connections.

3) Connecting with people you share a group with is easy and LinkedIn gives you a direct connection to them for messaging through their Free Message link.

HOT TIP: Using the advanced search feature, you can target members of groups you belong to with amazing precision. For example, let's say one of your best sources of referrals are CPAs, so you join the group "CPA & Business Professional Group." In the advanced search, you can search for the exact kind of CPAs you network with, in your city, and even down to the specific firm they work for. There are dozens of possibilities to use the filters creatively to come up with a solid target list of Group members that you want to connect with.



Step 5 - Offer: The final step in this system is to create a valuable free offer, something that will educate and provide value to your target audience. This is sometimes referred to as a “lead magnet” that you can extend to anyone that visits your profile page, your website, or anywhere you post content. It can be a link to a video, it can be a free report, or it can be a free webinar that offers valuable content for your targeted audience.

So, how will having a free report help you get more leads and clients in LinkedIn?

If your free offer is something that is important to your ideal target customers and contains information they want, it will accomplish three very important things:

1) It attracts - and gets prospects to **raise their hand** and **identify** themselves as a prospect. People who request a copy of your free report, for example, have identified themselves as prospects. In other words, it’s a self-qualifying tool.

2) It gives you an opportunity to build **goodwill**, **trust** and **credibility** with prospects, **before** asking them to use your services.

3) It gives you an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and expertise in your field of expertise and positions you as an authority in your field.

Once you have created an informational report or guide, promote it on your LinkedIn profile and on your website. Have a link prominently displayed to give visitors a way to find and download the report. This is a lead-generation tool that you should promote everywhere.

For new connections, you can send out a message like the following:

> Hi Gary, Thanks so much for connecting with me here on LinkedIn. I thought you’d find this article “12 Ways To Improve Your Client’s Local SEO Rankings” interesting.
> You can read it here: http://www.youradsquad.com/12-ways-to-improve-your-clients-local-seo-rankings/. There are some tactics in the article you may find useful, such as why I recommend incorporating Schema Markup on to your client's sites.
>
> It certainly has helped us on our own campaigns and I'm sure it can help you with yours too. Have a great day!
>
> Matt

Summary

By implementing the strategies in this report, you will be on your way to getting more leads, connections and clients in LinkedIn.

But remember, your success depends on your willingness to take immediate and consistent action. This entire system doesn't depend on perfection. You just need to be willing to take "imperfect" action.

One final point. Every client you have engaged in a relationship with you. They are not transactions, but mutually beneficial relationships. If you have a relationship-focused mindset in LinkedIn, you will begin to view your connections as the seeds of new business relationships that are there for you - to develop and grow into long-term professional relationships.