

Expanding Your LinkedIn Network

Tips on using the business-networking site

Tuesday, June 19, 2007 | by [Simon Meth](#)

Let's look at ways to expand your LinkedIn network, the online network of more than 11 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries.

Before we go on, I want to credit Shally Steckerl for many of the ideas that I used to build my LinkedIn network. Check out Shally's blog on [Becoming a Promiscuous Linker on LinkedIn](#). Shally has done a huge amount of research and has documented what works.

Should You Only Connect with People You Know?

This is a great question and one that seems to get people riled up. There's no right answer, but look closely at what you're trying to achieve. Building a small, tight network of people you know and who know you well is a great (but limiting) idea.

Let's say you commit to building a network of only people whose contact information you have and vice versa. You probably see them regularly or at least on occasion, and if you call them, they'll happily refer people to you. Most of the value in those relationships you'll have whether or not you add them to your LinkedIn network.

Or you could choose to expand your network with a wider range of people: in your industry, who worked where you worked, attended your school, live in your city, or those who find you. It may be possible to create a LinkedIn network that includes both a small, tight network and a large, loose network.

Really Work on Your LinkedIn Profile

If you want to be someone who others will want to network with, create a LinkedIn profile that's engaging to the reader. It doesn't work to spend five minutes creating a basic profile with nothing more than your current employer and a few stray bits of information. Think of this as creating your resume. Would you spend five minutes creating a new resume? You want people who are related to you in some way to be able to find you. If it isn't in your profile, then they won't find it. Put more information on your LinkedIn profile than you have on your resume. Everything you list increases your chances of being found.

LinkedIn displays a Profile Completeness indicator when you display your profile. Pay attention and do what you need to do to get that up to 100%.

Invite Some People

LinkedIn gives you 3,000 invitations for you to extend to others to build your network. That will be more than enough for most people, but it is possible to request more invitations in blocks of up to 500 if you run out.

