12 Mind Blowing Strategies to EXPAND Your LinkedIn Network

By Donna Serdula

Author of: LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile
Tell Your Friends!

Share on Twitter
Share on Facebook
Share on LinkedIn
Share on G+

Spread the WORD!
# Table of Contents

What is the LinkedIn Network? ......................................................................................................................... 6

What does your LinkedIn Network do for you? ..................................................................................................... 7

How to Measure Your Success ............................................................................................................................ 10

Setting Time Aside ............................................................................................................................................. 12

Expanding Your LinkedIn Network .................................................................................................................. 12

The Good Guy Approach .................................................................................................................................... 12

Connect Your Web Address Book ...................................................................................................................... 13

Import your Email Contact List .......................................................................................................................... 15

Let LinkedIn Help You Connect ...................................................................................................................... 17

Expanding Your Network through Groups ......................................................................................................... 18

What LinkedIn Groups Have the Most Members? ............................................................................................... 18

Turning off the LinkedIn Group Emails ............................................................................................................ 19

Connecting to People in Groups ........................................................................................................................ 20

Join My Group! ................................................................................................................................................... 20

Manual Connecting: Turning it into a Process .................................................................................................... 21

Importance of Adding a Personal Note .............................................................................................................. 22

LinkedIn “Touch” Process ................................................................................................................................ 22

Invitation Limits ................................................................................................................................................. 23

Link to Your Public Profile ................................................................................................................................ 24

Customizing Your LinkedIn Public URL ........................................................................................................... 24

My Name Is Not Available! .................................................................................................................................. 24

Create a Profile Badge ....................................................................................................................................... 25

One Click LinkedIn Invitation Link .................................................................................................................. 26

Creating a One Click LinkedIn Invitation Link ................................................................................................ 26

QR Codes ............................................................................................................................................................. 27

Start a LinkedIn Group ....................................................................................................................................... 29

How to Create a LinkedIn Group ....................................................................................................................... 29

Ask Questions and Answer Questions to Expand your Network ..................................................................... 32

The Cowboy Approach ......................................................................................................................................... 32

LinkedIn Open Networker ................................................................................................................................... 32

Pros and Cons of being a LinkedIn Open Networker ....................................................................................... 33
12 Mind Blowing Strategies to EXPAND Your LinkedIn Network

I hear it all the time:

“I only connect with people I know and trust on LinkedIn”

And it’s these same people who wonder why their time on LinkedIn isn’t fruitful.

Most people are on LinkedIn for two reasons: to network and to find business opportunities. By keeping your LinkedIn Network to only those you know and trust you are severely limiting yourself.

Imagine this: You are at a business card exchange or a networking event. Do you bide your time with people you know and trust or do you suck in your gut and introduce yourself to the people you don’t know? Naturally you seek out those you don’t know! This way you can introduce them to your products and services and hopefully get a new customer.

The same holds true for LinkedIn. You can certainly keep your network full of people you know and trust... but they aren’t going to provide anything different than what you would typically expect from them. In order to expand your horizon, you need to expand your LinkedIn network!

If your LinkedIn network is the most valuable part of LinkedIn and the key to truly leveraging the social network, why do people insist upon keeping it closed?

LinkedIn advocates filling your LinkedIn network with only people you know and trust. According to LinkedIn, by building a network of people you know and trust, your LinkedIn network reflects your “real-world” network.

Few people realize the real reason LinkedIn advocates connecting with people you know and trust. You see, LinkedIn makes money through membership fees. By keeping networks small, users must upgrade to the paid version to communicate with people outside their network.

InMails, extra introductions, and enhanced search results are only available to paying members. People who have large networks are able to bypass InMails and introductions because their networks are so large they are directly or indirectly connected to more people and thus can communicate directly without need for these paid services.

There is another reason to expand your network outside of just people you know and trust. Not only is LinkedIn a Social Network, it’s also a database of professionals, for professionals. Recruiters, HR Professionals, and others use LinkedIn to find people. When you perform a search within
LinkedIn, the results are people within your network. If a recruiter is searching for someone just like you but you don’t share a common network connection or a LinkedIn group... YOU ARE INVISIBLE. If you want to be found within LinkedIn, YOU NEED A LARGE LINKEDIN NETWORK.

But wait! There’s more! LinkedIn rewards users with large networks with better search engine ranking.

If you do a simple keyword search within LinkedIn’s search engine, you will see that certain profiles rank higher than other profiles. These higher ranking profiles don’t always match the search criteria all that well. In fact, higher ranking profiles most often aren’t even as closely connected to the searcher as other, lower ranking profiles. Why do these higher ranking profiles get SPECIAL treatment and placement?

The differentiator is that the higher ranking profiles almost always have an exceedingly large amount of connections. When I say exceedingly large, I don’t mean 500. I don’t even mean 1,000. I am talking thousands plural! If you want to rank highly, YOU NEED A LARGE LINKEDIN NETWORK.

In order to leverage LinkedIn effectively and completely, you need a large network comprised of people you know and trust AND people you don’t know and trust.

What is the LinkedIn Network?

LinkedIn is unlike any other Social Network. Twitter and Facebook connect you to friends and followers. It’s all about who you are connected to directly. LinkedIn is different. It’s not so much who you know directly but who your connections know. You see, LinkedIn is based upon a network of varying degrees of connection. Your LinkedIn Network is comprised of people, called connections, who are directly and indirectly connected to you.

LinkedIn uses the terms 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degree connections to define relationships within your network of connections. It’s not that different from the old Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon game.

- A 1st degree connection is someone you have added to your network or they have added you to their network. 1st degree connections are directly connected to you.

- A 2nd degree connection is a person connected to your 1st degree connection but not directly connected to you.

- A 3rd degree connection is someone who is connected to a 2nd degree connection.
If a person is considered outside your network, you do not share any connections within 3 degrees of that person.

Also within your LinkedIn network are members of LinkedIn Groups. People in the same LinkedIn Groups are added to your network regardless of whether they are connected directly to you or not.

**What does your LinkedIn Network do for you?**

People within your LinkedIn network can “see” and “message” you via LinkedIn. When you perform a search, the people who show up in the search results list are the people in your network. When you post a status update, it’s the people in your LinkedIn network that see it and may comment on it. People in your LinkedIn network can recommend you and suggest profile updates. In order to communicate via LinkedIn without having to pay for an inMail, the intended recipient must be in your LinkedIn Network.

“But LinkedIn only allows us to connect with people we know and trust!”

Right, that’s why there is a special term for a LinkedIn user who is open to connecting with people regardless of whether they know them or not. The term is “LinkedIn Open Networker.” It is often abbreviated as LION.

An open networker is a LinkedIn user who understands the power of having a large LinkedIn Network. LIONS will connect with almost anyone on LinkedIn regardless of whether they know, trust, or even respect the person. An easy way to spot a LION (although it is not foolproof) is to see how many connections they have. If at the top of their LinkedIn profile it says 500+ Connections, odds are the person is a LION.

“Is it beneficial to be an open networker?”

Once I became an Open Networker and my LinkedIn network grew, the views of my profile and the amount of times my profile appeared in searches SKYROCKETED. Since there were so many people
in my LinkedIn network, more people saw my status updates and received my messages. Opportunities rushed at me and my business GREW!

So why is there even a name for being a LinkedIn Open Networker?

Remember how I told you that LinkedIn wants us to only connect with people we know and trust? Well, they MEAN IT.

Check out Section 11 of LinkedIn's User Agreement:

---

**LinkedIn User DOs & DON'Ts**

“As a condition to access LinkedIn, you agree to this User Agreement and to strictly observe the following DOs and DON'Ts:

*Don’t – Invite people with whom you have no prior relationship to join your network.*

---

How does LinkedIn police this policy? It’s all in how a person accepts your LinkedIn invitation. When you send out a LinkedIn invitation, the recipient has a few options:

1. They can **accept** your request
2. They can **ignore** your request
3. They can **report** your request as SPAM

By accepting your request they are accepting you into their LinkedIn Network. When this happens everything is hunky dory.

By choosing IGNORE, the recipient archives your request. If the recipient does nothing more at this point, everything remains hunky dory. However, two more options will appear:
THIS IS WHERE PEOPLE GET IN TROUBLE!

By choosing I Don't Know or Report as Spam, the recipient of your invite is citing you as an ABUSIVE LinkedIn user! If you get 5 invites marked as IDK (IDK stands for I don't know), your LinkedIn account is set to “restricted.” Once restricted, you must enter an email address each time you try adding new people to your network. This is a major inconvenience to say the least.

If you continue to get cited as an abusive LinkedIn user, LinkedIn will terminate your account. Say goodbye to your profile, connections, inbox and groups.

So instead of aiming low and wide and inviting the world, YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE ONLY INVITING PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT CLICK IDK OR REPORT AS SPAM. By connecting with people who are LinkedIn Open Networkers, you can rest assured they will NOT report you as SPAM or click IDK. Usually. There are jerks in this world but more often than not, by connecting with LIONS, you are safe from the dreaded IDK/SPAM label.

If you take anything away from this section, I hope it is that you must be careful on your quest to expand your LinkedIn network.

“But I need a semblance of control in my life! What if someone connects with me that I really don’t want in my network! Am I forced to accept them?”

Here’s the thing, the only prerequisite for being a LinkedIn Open Networker is that you don’t cite anyone for being abusive. That means refraining from clicking the IDK or Report as Spam links.

You can click the Ignore button all day long.

Accepting someone into your LinkedIn network is not the same thing as ENDORSING them as an upstanding human being. Your LinkedIn network is simply a network of connections. You may not particularly like someone as a person but if they have a large network, it would behoove you to connect with them anyway. Remember, it’s not who you know directly, it’s who your connections know!

“My competitor wants to connect with me! I think he wants to steal my connections!”

Remember what Michael Corleone said in The Godfather Part II, “My father taught me many things here — he taught me — keep your friends close but your enemies closer.”

Connecting with competitors isn’t such a bad thing! It’s not just your network that is opening up. You are getting access to THEIR NETWORK. And by being a LION and having such a LARGE network, there is no way that your competitor can go in and cherry pick your clients. Besides, by connecting, you can keep your eyes on your competitor by watching their status updates and recommendations.
How to Measure Your Success
Before you grow your network, it’s important to know how many people are currently in your network. It’s also good to know how many times you are showing up in search results and how many people are viewing your profile.

1. Login to LinkedIn
2. Scroll down the page, keeping your eyes on the far right hand column.
3. Look for the sections, “Who’s Viewed Your Profile” and “Your LinkedIn Network”
In this example, Kathy’s profile has been viewed by 9 people in the past 30 days. Her profile has shown up in search results 15 times in the past 7 days.

If your profile is showing up in search results but few people are viewing it, you may need to work on optimizing your headshot and headline since it’s clearly not conveying your value or compelling people to read more about you. If you aren’t showing up in searches very often, you most likely need to optimize your LinkedIn profile for the keywords people are using to find someone like you.

In either of these situations, I recommend reading my book, *LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a Powerful LinkedIn Profile*. My book will walk you through the steps you need to take to create a LinkedIn profile that conveys your value and sells you as a polished professional.

We can also see that Kathy’s network is comprised of 110 first degree connections. Her entire LinkedIn network (consisting of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Group members) contains 2,189,271+ people.
There were 12,989 people added to her network since November 1. This number is an aggregate of all the new people that her individual connections have added since November 1.

Set a goal for yourself. If you have 110 connections, perhaps you want to grow your network by 100 connections within the next month. Write down your current number along with your desired goal. Post it near your computer so you can see it. It’s important to constantly remind yourself that you have a network to grow! Don’t get cocky, kid! As soon as you reach your goal, expand it! Keep growing your network.

**Setting Time Aside**
One of the major hurdles to expanding your LinkedIn network is time. No one has enough time and it’s easy to procrastinate. My solution is to schedule time on your calendar. Schedule one hour to expand your network once a week... more if you can handle it. Make it a real appointment and treat it as a real appointment.

Think of it this way, by expanding your LinkedIn network, you are setting the stage for some serious prospecting and networking. It’s absolutely worth taking time out of your day to set this foundation.

**Expanding Your LinkedIn Network**
It’s now time to start EXPANDING your LinkedIn Network! There are two ways to expand your LinkedIn Network: The Good Guy Approach and the Cowboy Approach. The Good Guy Approach is totally on the up and up. The Cowboy Approach isn’t exactly Judas Priest’s *Breakin’ the Law* bad; it’s just not exactly how LinkedIn intended the site to be used. In full honesty, there are some strategies that go completely against LinkedIn’s User Agreement. You must determine for yourself how far you want to go to expand your network. I am simply providing the different techniques I’ve identified, you must determine what you feel comfortable using.

**The Good Guy Approach**
We are going to start connecting with people we know and trust, just as LinkedIn advocates. Each strategy in this session is 100% legal by LinkedIn’s terms of service. Things will change drastically when we get to the Cowboy Approach.
12 Mind Blowing Strategies to EXPAND Your LinkedIn Network

Connect Your Web Address Book
The easiest way to start growing your LinkedIn Network is by connecting with people you already know and trust. The best way to do this is by uploading your email’s address book.

If you access your email from the Web (as opposed to downloading it into Outlook) you can import and invite contacts to LinkedIn from the Add Connections page.

LinkedIn provides support for:

- Gmail
- Yahoo!
- AOL
- Hotmail

LinkedIn also provides upload support for additional web email providers via TrueSwitch, a secure address book import tool. Not sure if your Web email service is supported? The best thing is to give it a go and if it doesn’t work, skip to the Import Contacts section.

Import Contacts
1. Login to LinkedIn
2. Click Add Connections at the top right section of your screen.
3. Enter Your Web email address
4. Enter Your Web email password.
5. Click the Continue button.

LinkedIn will then search your Web email address book determining which of your contacts are on LinkedIn and which are not on LinkedIn. The next screen will show a list of your contacts that are on LinkedIn.

Visit http://www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com for more LinkedIn Resources
My suggestion is to deselect the **Select All** check box at the top right of the screen. Yes, I know it’s much easier to just send an invitation to everyone on the list but I’d prefer you to be a bit more strategic at this point. Scroll through the list and determine who you want to connect with on LinkedIn. The people you select are people that *know* you. Once your desired connections are selected, click the Add Connections button.

The next screen that appears is the list of remaining contacts that ARE NOT on LinkedIn.

![LinkedIn screen](image)

This step allows you to INVITE people to LinkedIn. I suggest deselecting all the names and going through the list one by one and determining who you want to invite. Unless you are a missionary type of person, you may choose to click, **Skip this step**. Selecting people here and clicking the Invite to Connect button means they will receive an email from you asking them to *sign up for LinkedIn*.

Certainly, if there are people that you want to connect with on LinkedIn but aren’t current members, this is a terrific option. But sending invitations to join LinkedIn to your entire address book is a bit obnoxious, especially if your address book is full of nonprofessionals.

Let’s face it; you don’t want to confuse Aunt Bertha with a LinkedIn connection request.

“*LinkedIn? Why he was my favorite president!*”

Over the next few days, you will receive auto-emails from LinkedIn letting you know the people you invited to connect, accepted. These people are now 1st degree connections within your LinkedIn network! Hooray!
Import your Email Contact List

Some people don’t use Web email but instead choose to download their messages into Outlook or another desktop email application. Even if you do use Web email, you may also have a list of contact email addresses in spreadsheet format. By uploading this list to LinkedIn, you can connect with even more people you know.

The first thing you need to do is EXPORT your contact list from your email program as a CSV (comma separated value) or VCARD formatted file. If you don’t know how to do this, check the application’s help guide. Typically, the steps are very simple. File > Export > Address Book.

Once you have your contacts in a spreadsheet, I suggest going through the list and making sure these are people you want to connect with on LinkedIn. If there are people listed you would prefer to not connect to on LinkedIn, delete their row of information.

Let’s start importing!
1. Login to LinkedIn
2. Click Add Connections at the upper top right section of your screen. The text is green in color.
3. Click the Import your desktop email contacts link at the bottom of the screen.
4. Click Choose File and then locate the file you exported and saved.
5. Double-click the file name and then click Upload File.
6. Check the boxes in front of contacts you’d like to invite to connect.
7. Click the **Invite Selected contacts** button.

Over the next few days, you will receive auto-emails from LinkedIn letting you know the people you invited to connect, accepted your LinkedIn invitation to connect. These people are now 1st degree connections within your LinkedIn network!
Let LinkedIn Help You Connect

LinkedIn will help you connect manually with people you may know through the People You May Know feature. LinkedIn identifies existing members on LinkedIn that you might know based upon commonalities such as having worked at the same company or if you share similar connections.

This feature works best when your LinkedIn profile is up to date and completely filled out. When your profile is completely filled out, LinkedIn can determine connections and provide you with connection suggestions.

Connecting to People You May Know

1. Login to LinkedIn
2. Click Add Connections at the top right section of your screen.
3. Click the People You May Know tab.

Peruse the list of people. If you know the person, click the Connect link. LinkedIn will send an automatic email inviting the person to connect. As you connect with more people, LinkedIn will offer even more suggestions for future connection.

You may notice that there are other options on this screen: Colleagues and Classmates.

As long as you listed your alma mater and your past companies, LinkedIn will show you a list of people who attended the same establishments at the same time. Go through these lists and connect with people you know. Remember, it’s important at this point to connect only with people you know and who know you.
Expanding Your Network through Groups

LinkedIn Groups is the EASIEST way to expand your LinkedIn network. LinkedIn allows you to join up to 50 LinkedIn Groups. **JOIN ALL 50 GROUPS!** But I don’t want you to join just any LinkedIn Groups. I want you to join LinkedIn Groups with large numbers of members! When I say large numbers, I am not talking a hundred or a thousand. I want you joining LinkedIn Groups with hundreds of thousands of members!

Why do I want you to join Groups with TONS of members? I think it’s best to quote LinkedIn:

---

**Fellow members of your LinkedIn Groups** – **These people are considered part of your network because you’re members of the same group. You’ll see a Group icon next to their name in search results and on their profile.**

---

*Get it?* By joining a group, you are adding all those group members to your LinkedIn network. Since you are now in their network, you will come up in their search results within LinkedIn and you can communicate and interact with them. Clearly, it behooves you to join groups with lots and lots of members.

**What LinkedIn Groups Have the Most Members?**

Now that you get the strategy, how do you find a list of LinkedIn Groups sorted by the members?

You could go through one by one, comparing member lists... or you could click here: [http://www.linkedin.com/groupsDirectory?results=&sik=1304055844060](http://www.linkedin.com/groupsDirectory?results=&sik=1304055844060)

Clicking on the link above takes you to a list of LinkedIn Groups sorted by order of members. Start from the top and work your way down the list!

**But What About Finding Relevant Groups for My Particular Category/Niche/Subject?**

Look, if you are dealing with a particular industry, I take it all back! *Okay, not totally.* Focus not on the largest LinkedIn Groups total but the largest LinkedIn Groups **within your subject area**! You want to make sure that you are connecting to people who are beneficial to your LinkedIn network. Join LinkedIn Groups that contain your PROSPECTS, CUSTOMERS, BUSINESS PARTNERS, etc!

If you are looking for job opportunities, join Groups that attract recruiters. If you are looking to sell into small businesses, join Groups where small business owners flock.

Often people join groups that have to do with their industry. This typically means they are connecting with colleagues or competitors. Think beyond what interests you. Think in terms of your target audience. Where are they likely to congregate?
Lucky for you, LinkedIn sorts the Group list search results by Groups with the most members at the top to the Groups with the least amount at the end. This means you really don’t have to do a lot of looking to find Groups with large numbers... they are typically at the top of the list.

**How Will I Ever Keep Up With All These GROUPS!?!!**

Please note that I didn't say I want you to *interact* in all these LinkedIn Groups... I simply said I want you to JOIN them. Pick a couple LinkedIn Groups that strike your fancy and get involved *if it’s beneficial to you*. Don’t feel any pressure to spend hours perusing all these LinkedIn Groups. Heck, feel free to ignore them if you want to... *it’s okay*. We joined these LinkedIn Groups mainly to expand your network. Sure there’s ways to work the LinkedIn Groups for marketing purposes but that’s another eBook entirely! Right now, I just want you to get the benefit of an expanded LinkedIn Network.

**Turning off the LinkedIn Group Emails**

There is a nasty side effect of joining all 50 Groups. Joining 50 Groups means you are now subscribed to potentially 50 LinkedIn Group digest emails. You will find yourself suffocating under an avalanche of Group digest emails. Makes you understand why Postal Workers go postal, right?

Well, no worries! There’s a fix! Here’s how you can turn off those annoying and never ending Group Digest Emails.

**Eliminating the Group Digest Deluge**

1. Click your name at the upper right hand corner of your LinkedIn screen.
2. Click *Settings*
3. Click the “Groups, Companies and Applications” section.
4. Click “*Set the frequency of group digest emails*”
5. Scroll through the list and choose either Weekly or No Email depending on your preferences.
6. Click Save Changes when finished.
Connecting to People in Groups
You've joined up to 50 Groups. Spend some time taking inventory of the membership. Are there any members who are adding real value to the Group? Who are the leaders? These are people you may want to consider adding to your network.

When you invite a person to connect with you, you must cite how you know them. One of the options listed is Groups. Simply belonging to the same Group is enough of a reason to connect with a person on LinkedIn. Yes, there is a bit of a risk they may reject your LinkedIn invitation but that’s why I suggest adding a personal message to your invitation. Who can resist adding a polite person who showers them with compliments?

Another way to ensure your LinkedIn invitation is accepted is to connect with people who are active contributors to the Group. Most likely if a person is interacting on a LinkedIn Group, they understand the importance of growing one’s LinkedIn network and are more open to connecting with a stranger. It’s also safe to connect to the manager of the Group. Managers undoubtedly understand the value of connecting and will happily accept your invitation. Again, I can’t stress enough the importance of adding a personal note to your request to connect.

Join My Group!
I have an active and fun LinkedIn Group called Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets. My Group is dedicated to helping individuals leverage LinkedIn more effectively. Members are welcome to submit their LinkedIn Profiles for constructive critiques for improvement or ask questions regarding LinkedIn. If you are interested in learning how to truly crank up your presence on LinkedIn, I highly recommend joining my Group → http://linkd.in/joinGroup
Manual Connecting: Turning it into a Process

You have taken the steps to expand your network to include everyone you know and trust. I hate to tell you this, but you still aren’t done. Every day you meet people. You want to get into the habit of connecting with people on LinkedIn EVERY DAY! Think of LinkedIn as your own personal CRM. CRM stands for Customer Relationship Management. By continually connecting with people, you are forging your network into stronger, deeper connections.

Networking is in itself difficult for most people. You meet people, exchange business cards and then what? Most of the time the business cards go into a shoebox to collect dust or they get dumped in the trashcan.

Business Networking Consultants tell us that we should get on the phone and call these people but that’s just plain uncomfortable. Calling a stranger isn’t my idea of a good time!

I have an easier solution that produces great results. Take those business cards and plug the names into LinkedIn. Send them an invitation to connect and include a personal note.

“It was so nice meeting you at last night’s business card exchange. If you know of anyone looking for an accountant, please feel free to refer them to me! Next time you are in the Philadelphia area, let me know and perhaps we can grab a cup of coffee!”

When you connect with someone manually, you need to specify how you are connected to the person.
Choosing Friend allows you to connect with a person you have not worked with in the past. Typically, you do not have to do anything more; however, if your account is restricted, a new field appears where you must input their email address. This shows that you know the person enough to have this secret key.

If you select, “I don’t know Jason” LinkedIn will prevent you from inviting that person to connect.

![LinkedIn invitation was not sent]

**Importance of Adding a Personal Note**
I know it is super tempting to keep the default LinkedIn message when sending a LinkedIn invitation _but you must fight this temptation_! You want to go against the tide. Be memorable, be engaging, and above all else, be personable.

“It was great meeting you at the networking event yesterday evening. I like to keep track of my network on LinkedIn. May I add you?”

How many “touches” does it take to make a sale? Most experts agree it’s 6 - 8 touches just to get a response. LinkedIn can help, if you are disciplined. Check out this process:

**LinkedIn “Touch” Process**

1. Meet Person
2. Send LinkedIn Invitation Request
3. Send Thank you for connecting

Once connected, your new contact is subscribed to your LinkedIn Stream of Updates...
That’s 6 touches without even trying! By adding people to your network, they are subscribed to YOU and they receive your LinkedIn updates. If your updates are engaging, helpful, and memorable, why wouldn’t a connection call you when they need your services or products? This is drip feeding on steroids!

**Attention Sales People**

The most valuable resource a salesperson has in their arsenal is their book of business. So often, this book of business is stored on their company’s server. What happens if they are one day unceremoniously dumped as an employee? What happens to this list of customers and prospects? IT DISAPPEARS. Salespeople typically stay in the same industry and find another job selling to their old prospects and customers. When they get sucked back into their familiar industry, they’ll have to rely on their memory as to who they know and where they worked.

What this means is you should keep a copy of your database of prospects and customers on LinkedIn. If the worst does happen, you still have a list you can use in the future for other companies.

**Invitation Limits**

Everyone has limits... including LinkedIn. LinkedIn users can send up to 3000 invitations. Once that limit is reached, you have to kindly ask LinkedIn to provide you with more!

As long as you play nicely in their sandbox, LinkedIn will provide you with another 500 invitations. Here it is in **their own words:**

---

*LinkedIn initially allows all users to send up to 3000 invitations. This limit is an automatic method to prevent accidental abuse and protect both senders and recipients. The limit is in place only to prevent abuse, not to block invitations sent by careful inviters. LinkedIn encourages all users to connect to their trusted professional contacts and to others who welcome connections with new contacts. Users who limit their invitations to these two groups have high invitation acceptance rates and LinkedIn will usually raise the limit for such inviters.*

---

The smart strategy is to get people to invite YOU that way you don’t use up your invitations.
In order to make it easy for people to connect to you, you need to be able to easily link to your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn automatically assigns your profile a default Web address. The default address is a jumble of letters and numbers that is not easy to remember or market. But that’s okay! LinkedIn gives you the ability to change this URL to something easy to remember and easy to promote!

First off, check your public profile address by visiting your Edit Profile screen. Your public Profile URL is listed at the bottom of the gray box just above your Summary. Does it look like this?

http://www.linkedin.com/pub/your-name/31/54a/b91

If so, you need to customize that baby. If not, feel free to skip this session.

Customizing Your LinkedIn Public URL
1. From the Edit Profile page, click the “Edit” link to the left of Your Public Profile URL.
2. Your Public Profile appears.
3. In the column to the right of your Public Profile is a box entitled, “Your Public Profile URL”
4. Click the link, “Customize your Public Profile URL.”
5. In the field provided, enter your NAME. Do not use your company’s name as your Public URL. Your Public URL is a permanent link to your LinkedIn profile. Companies, on the other hand, do not always have permanence in your life.
6. Click the “Set Custom URL” button.

My Name Is Not Available!
Is your name already taken? It happens. Let’s find an alternative way of stating your name.

Pretend your name is John Smith. Here are some ideas of re-phrasing your name that might not yet be taken:

- First initial and last name: JSmith
- First name, middle initial and last name: JohnASmith
- First and middle initial and last name: JASmith
- Add “To” in front of first and last name: ToJohnSmith (get it? Linked in to John Smith. Cute, right?)

A customized, Public Profile URL looks like this:

http://www.LinkedIn.com/in/FirstNameLastName
Include your LinkedIn public profile URL on:

- Business Cards
- Resume
- Email Signature
- Website
- Brochures
- Sales Literature
- Letterhead

**Create a Profile Badge**

LinkedIn provides a number of badges that you can embed on your blog, online resume, or website to promote your profile.

The link to the official LinkedIn badges can be found on the screen where you customized your Public Profile URL.

All you do is copy the code and paste it into your HTML document. If you are don’t typically deal with code, you can instead save the image to your desktop and insert it into your WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor. Don’t forget to link the image to your Public Profile.

Once your badge is on your site, people will feel compelled to view your profile and hopefully they will choose to add you to their LinkedIn network!
One Click LinkedIn Invitation Link

When asking people to connect on LinkedIn, most people send a link to their LinkedIn profile. This works fine but it’s not the most efficient route. By directing a person to your Public Profile, the person must click on the View Full Profile button to view your complete profile. If they aren’t already logged in to LinkedIn, they are directed to the LinkedIn login screen. Once logged in, your full profile will appear. At this point, the person must click the Add to Network link or Connect button... if they get that far without giving up or getting distracted by your awesome profile. What’s the alternate path? Create a One Click Invitation link so people can immediately add you to their network!

The One Click LinkedIn Invitation link is a hack and not something officially sanctioned by LinkedIn but it works great! The One Click Invitation link circumvents the whole process and immediately provides access to the invitation screen for immediate connection.

Creating a One Click LinkedIn Invitation Link

1. Login to LinkedIn
2. Click Profile > View Profile
3. Find your LinkedIn user number. It's the number buried in the address bar. It's right after id=

4. Once you know your LinkedIn user number, plug it into this link, along with your first and last name:

   http://www.linkedin.com/inviteFromProfile?from=profile&key=_______&firstName=______&lastName=______

Here's what mine looks like:

   http://www.linkedin.com/inviteFromProfile?from=profile&key=4270384&firstName=Donna&lastName=Serdula

When a person clicks this link, they are immediately whisked to the LinkedIn Invitation screen.
12 Mind Blowing Strategies to EXPAND Your LinkedIn Network

We now have another issue. This URL is a bit unruly. No worries, though. You can easily make it friendly by visiting a URL shortening site like Bit.ly. URL shortening sites do exactly what it sounds like they do: **they make long URLs short so they are easy to type, share, tweet and email.**

There are other URL shortening sites out there besides bit.ly:

- cli.gs
- budurl.com
- tinyurl.com
- zima
- is.gd
- adjix.com
- tr.im
- tweetburner
- snipurl.com
- poprl.com

I like bit.ly because you can customize the shortened URL and track the number of clicks it’s received as long as you signed up for a free account with them. Try out a couple URL shortening services and see which one works best for you.

Here’s my shortened link: [http://linkd.in/invitedonna](http://linkd.in/invitedonna) (Go ahead; invite me to join your network!)

Include your One Click LinkedIn Invitation link wherever you can:

- Email Signature
- Social Media Profiles (Facebook, Twitter, G+)
- Blog sidebar
- Online Bio
- Business card
- Letterhead
- Cover Letter
- Resume
- QR Codes

I wish I could say I came up with the idea for the One Click Invitation link but the truth is it’s the baby of Stacy Zapor. Stacy is the most connected woman on LinkedIn with over 30,000 1st degree connections! You can read her original article on the One Click LinkedIn Invitation [here](#).

**QR Codes**

Another way to make connecting easier is by linking your profile to a QRCode and placing it on your business card.
What’s a QR Code?
A QR Code (stands for "Quick Response") is a square barcode readable by most mobile phones. A QR Code can be embedded with URLs / Website addresses, location coordinates, text or contact information.

You can create a QR Code with either a link to your LinkedIn Public Profile URL or your LinkedIn One Click Invitation link.

There are a number of Websites that allow you to generate a QR Code for FREE!

- [http://qrcode.kaywa.com/](http://qrcode.kaywa.com/)
- [http://goqr.me/](http://goqr.me/)

Generate your QR Code and add it to your business card. Add it to your business card either by providing the QR Code image file to your printer OR by uploading it to your business card design next time you get your business cards printed.

Here are some awesome online Business Card printers that allow you to easily add a QR Code.

- MooCards
- [BuyPrintingCheap.com](http://www.buypipingcheap.com)
Start a LinkedIn Group

Starting a LinkedIn Group is an excellent way to expand your LinkedIn Network. It's also a great way to market you and your services or products... but how to market yourself on LinkedIn is a whole different eBook. Let's talk about how you can start a Group and expand your network using it.

Groups allow you to forge new business relationships with like-minded professionals. You can post news, participate in discussions, and network. It is a great way to promote yourself! It also allows you access to potential connections. People love to connect with the Groups leaders and since you are the center of communication, it's easy to ask people to connect with you.

First things first, what is the topic of your Group? You could form a Group for your company, product or service you sell. You could start a Group for your industry or for an association or external group. Just make sure that the people you are targeting as connections in your LinkedIn network would want to join your Group. Check out other LinkedIn Groups and try to figure out how you can differentiate your Group. Narrow your topic as much as possible.

**Hint:** It's imperative you don't duplicate an already established Group. Make sure you create something different and interesting. If there is an already established Group out there, join it as an active member. Why bother creating something that already exists?

How to Create a LinkedIn Group

There are two types of LinkedIn Groups: Open Groups and Members-Only Groups. The main difference is the visibility of the discussions. Members-only group discussions are restricted to only group members. Open group discussions can be viewed by anyone on the web and can be shared outside of LinkedIn.

**To create a group:**
1. From LinkedIn's main navigation bar, click Groups > Create a Group
2. Fill out the Create a Group page. Fields with an asterisk are required.
3. Click Create an Open Group or Create a Members-Only Group.

Here's where the fun part begins! Once the Group is created, it’s time to create custom Auto-Responder email templates.

**Auto-Responder Template**
1. Click Manage within your Group.
2. Click Templates, under Manage Group.
3. Edit the template for both Request-to-Join and the Welcome Message.

Each time a person joins your Group, LinkedIn will send an automatic message that is delivered to their email account. This is your chance to provide information on the group but also mention that you are open to connecting with them on LinkedIn.

Visit [http://www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com](http://www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com) for more LinkedIn Resources
Here’s my customized Request-to-Join message that I use for my LinkedIn Group, **Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets**:

Your membership to Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets for your LinkedIn Profile will be approved shortly.

In the meantime, why not connect with me?  
http://www.linkedin.com/in/todonna

For free resources and research on how to best optimize your LinkedIn profile, please visit: http://bit.ly/LIMBlog

Thanks so much and I hope you find the Profile Makeover group helpful!

--Donna Serdula

To learn more, visit my Website: http://www.linkedin-makeover.com
My book is available on Amazon: http://amzn.to/LinkedInMakeover

Once a person joins your Group, a welcome message email is sent to them. Here’s a copy of my LinkedIn Group’s, **Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets**, welcome message:

**Congratulations on joining Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets!**

You can now connect, share ideas & discuss LinkedIn profile tips and tricks with other professionals. In order to take full advantage of this group, please get involved in the conversation by posting and adding to our discussions.

As a LinkedIn Profile Writer and LinkedIn Profile Optimization Specialist, I created this LinkedIn Group because I wanted to offer an online resource for news, views, strategy and advice on how to best optimize your LinkedIn profile.

For free resources and research on how to best optimize your LinkedIn profile, please visit: http://bit.ly/LIMBlog

For suggested changes or recommendations to the group – or just to connect since I’m an open networker, please contact me via:

http://www.LinkedIn.com/in/ToDonna

Kind Regards, Donna Serdula, Profile Makeover, Group Owner
Notice how I specifically mention that I am an open networker and would welcome an invitation to connect? I also provide links to my Website and blog. It's all self-promotion, baby!

Once the LinkedIn Group is set up, market it by sending it out to your network and ask people to join it.

Here are some ideas on getting people to join your LinkedIn Group:

1. Share the Group with your LinkedIn Connections
2. Tweet it
3. Post it on Facebook
4. Post it on your LinkedIn Status Updates
5. Blog about it
6. Email it to your address book / email list
7. Post the link on other LinkedIn Groups
8. Create a business card or postcard and distribute it to people

Once you have a decent amount of members (over 500), people will take notice and want to join.
Ask Questions and Answer Questions to Expand your Network

The Answers section is found under "More" on LinkedIn's navigation bar. Answers give you the ability to ask questions and answer questions from LinkedIn users. Sharing your knowledge and showing off your expertise while picking the brains of other experts has never been so easy!

Each time you ask or answer a question, you are making yourself visible to people outside your LinkedIn Network.

Once you have proven yourself to be a formidable expert by answering a tough question, why not message the person who asked the question to connect on LinkedIn? Heck, message the other people who answered the question along with you!

If you ask a question, reach out to the people who provided you with answers and ask them to connect on LinkedIn.

You have already established a connection with them... now it’s time to formalize it by connecting officially.

Customize your connection request and let the people know why they should connect with you.

---

Thanks so much for answering the question I posed in LinkedIn Answers today. I found your answer to be highly innovative and would welcome the chance to connect with you on LinkedIn. I have quite a number of connections within your industry that may prove helpful to you. Just say the word and I’d be happy to make an introduction!

---

The Cowboy Approach

Everything we have done to this point has been on the up and up. LinkedIn can’t possibly get angry with us since we have only connected to people we know and trust. But as I said earlier, who goes to a networking event and hangs out with people they know? It’s time to expand your network outside of your comfort zone. It’s time to connect with the world! It’s time to become a LinkedIn Open Networker!

LinkedIn Open Networker

Why should you connect with the world?

- If you plan on using LinkedIn to grow your business, whether locally or globally, I highly recommend becoming a LinkedIn Open Networker.
12 Mind Blowing Strategies to EXPAND Your LinkedIn Network

- If you plan on using LinkedIn status updates to promote yourself, I highly recommend becoming a LinkedIn Open Networker.

- If you plan on using LinkedIn to FIND people/prospects/candidates, I highly recommend becoming a LinkedIn Open Networker.

- If you want to get FOUND on LinkedIn for either job or business opportunities, I highly recommend becoming a LinkedIn Open Networker.

Pros and Cons of being a LinkedIn Open Networker

There are some amazing benefits when you are a LinkedIn Open Networker. Not only are you available to more opportunity but you also have better search engine ranking and enhanced amplification of your status updates and messages. In terms of enhanced amplification, by using the Status Update functionality of LinkedIn to send out messages to your network, the only people who will see it are those who are connected to you. By having a large network, more people will see your message.

Many people are hesitant to connect with competitors or even colleagues on LinkedIn in the fear that they will steal their connections. This becomes a non-issue when you are an Open Networker. Your Network will be so vast that it would be impossible even for the wiliest competitor to weed through your thousands of connections to “steal” your clients. And yet, on the other hand, this dilution of your network can also be a disadvantage since it will be harder for you to comb through the list looking for people you know.

There is a work around for this issue. You can tag your connections to make filtering easier.

Tagging Contacts

1. Click Contacts at the top of your home page.
2. Click the box next to a connection’s name in the middle panel.
3. Click the Edit tags link in the right panel.
4. Take one of the following steps:
   - Select or unselect tags by clicking the boxes next to the tag names.
   - Type a new tag name into the empty text box and click +.
5. Click Save.

Another disadvantage is that by connecting with so many people, you open yourself up to the potential for SPAM. You may also find that your inbox is overrun with invitations to connect and messages from people thanking you for connecting that the important LinkedIn emails get lost. It’s important to stay on top of your LinkedIn email and invitations when you are a LION since it’s easy to get avalanched.

Clearly people worry about connecting with someone of dubious respectability. Connecting with someone on LinkedIn isn’t an endorsement of their character. Connecting is simply connecting. If you find that a nefarious person has entered your network and you are uncomfortable with their presence... REMOVE THEM!
Removing a LinkedIn Contact

1. Click Contacts at the top of your home page.
2. Click the Remove Connections link in the upper right of the Connections page.
3. Check the boxes next to the people you want to remove.
4. Click Remove Connections.

Connections will not be notified when they are removed from your connections list. They may eventually find out that they were deleted from your network when they attempt to contact you and find you are no longer a first degree connection. Only the member that disengages can reinitiate that connection.

As you go about growing your LinkedIn network, remember you aren't necessarily connecting with the person as much as you are connecting with their network. If their network is beneficial to you, you may want to keep the person in your network... *just learn to hold your nose.*

Reflect on the reasons why you want to be a LION and then determine if the pros outweigh the cons. If you are ready to expand your LinkedIn Network and connect with the world, proceed! Keep in mind, when you are a LION, you can determine how far you want to go. The main thing is that you never click IDK. If someone sends you an invitation and you don't want them in your network, ignore them and feel fine about it. You should never feel bullied into accepting anyone's invitation. The key is that you archive the invite and you don't mark them as SPAM or IDK.

Okay, enough chit chat, let's get to work!
12 Mind Blowing Strategies to EXPAND Your LinkedIn Network

10

Brand Yourself a LION!

You need to let other LinkedIn users know you are open and willing to connect. The way to do this is to place the words LinkedIn Open Networker and LION throughout your profile. Here are the steps to do it:

1. At the bottom of your profile in the Contact Preferences Section, let people know you are a LION.

Here’s some wording you can use:

---

I am a LinkedIn Open Networker / LION. Please connect with me using my email address: Donna@LinkedIn-Makeover.com

---

2. State it again in your LinkedIn Summary!

Here’s some wording you can use:

---

I believe in the power of networking, that’s why I am a LinkedIn Open Networker (LION). Please feel free to connect with me using my email address: Donna@LinkedIn-Makeover.com

---

3. State your LION status in your Headline! Here is mine:

Social Media ★ Web Design ★ Public Speaker ★ Author ★ LION ★ Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles ► Read My Profile!

4. And if you are really GUNG HO, put it in your Name field. Add the word LION or simply your EMAIL ADDRESS to your last name.

---

John Smith LION jsmith@aol.com

---

Note: It’s imperative that I tell you that some of this advice goes contrary to LinkedIn’s User License Agreement. Specifically:

---

Don’t undertake the following:

---

Visit http://www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com for more LinkedIn Resources
Publish inaccurate information in the designated fields on the profile form (e.g., do not include a link or an email address in the name field). Please also protect sensitive personal information such as your email address, phone number, street address, or other information that is confidential in nature.

Upload, post, email, InMail, transmit or otherwise make available or initiate any content that:

c. Adds to a content field content that is not intended for such field (i.e. submitting a telephone number in the “title” or any other field, or including telephone numbers, email addresses, street addresses or any personally identifiable information for which there is not a field provided by LinkedIn);
Join LinkedIn Open Networker Groups within LinkedIn

There are Groups on LinkedIn dedicated to Open Networkers. By simply joining these LinkedIn Groups you are letting other Group members know you are willing to network and connect openly.

**Join the top LION Groups.** They are:

1. TopLinked.com (Open Networkers)
2. OpenNetworker.com
3. LION500.com (Open Networkers)
4. InvitesWelcome.com (Open Networking)
5. LION™ Worn with Pride! [Choose wisely ... ]

You can simply join these groups and sit back and bask in the knowledge that you have expanded your network by the number of members in the Groups AND that you are allowing people to see you are open to connecting... but you can do more!
Use a LinkedIn Open Networker Directory Service

Believe it or not, there are directories out there for Open Networkers. Two of the most popular are TopLinked and Invites Welcome. Both of these sites allow you to download the directory for FREE! You can then use LinkedIn’s bulk upload tool to import the lists.

Clearly, rather than just downloading the lists, you should get your name on the list so you can sit back and have invitations roll in. So how do you get YOUR name on these amazing lists? You have to PAY to get on it. Yes, you pay money to get LinkedIn invitations. Sweet, huh? And the really awesome part of this is that you do not need to accept everyone. Just accept those LinkedIn invitations that you like and ARCHIVE any that look hinky. Remember, it’s okay to archive invitations... it’s NOT okay to IDK or Report as SPAM.

Costs to Join Open Networker Directories
- TopLinked costs $9.95/month or $49.95/year
- Invites Welcome costs $2.95/month or $19.95/year

In order to upload the LION lists to LinkedIn, follow the steps that I outlined in Import your Email Contact List.

How Many Connections Should I Aim for?

Often I am asked, “What number of connections should I aim for? 500? 1000? More?” I say, the sky’s the limit! Don’t have a single end number in mind. You want to always keep expanding your LinkedIn network. There is no end.
What Now?

Now that you know how to expand your LinkedIn network, it’s imperative you optimize your profile. Since you are connecting with the world, people will undoubtedly check out your LinkedIn profile to learn more about you. This is an opportunity to sell yourself, your business, products and/or services. Your profile should portray you as an expert in your industry and someone your reader can trust, confidently.

Lucky for you, I have a book that guides you, step by step, through optimizing your LinkedIn profile! LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile teaches you how to stand out from the crowd, impress your network, and get found more easily! Download it today as a .pdf, Kindle, Nook or buy it in paperback at Amazon.

If you would prefer to sit back and relax, you can hire me to write your LinkedIn profile! Visit my Website, LinkedIn-Makeover.com to learn more!
Stay in the LinkedIn Loop!

Buy My Book!
LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile
Learn the secrets to creating a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile! This easy to read and fun book walks you through building an amazing LinkedIn profile. Chock full of LinkedIn Summary and Headline examples, LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile is your one stop resource to learn how to optimize your LinkedIn profile so you can get FOUND on LinkedIn. BUY THE BOOK!

Hire Me to Write Your LinkedIn Profile!
One on One, Plus, and Basic sessions available
Get a professionally written LinkedIn profile from the author of LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile! Working directly with Donna Serdula, your profile will be optimized for the best results! Stand out from the crowd with a LinkedIn profile that sells you as an expert in your industry and markets you as someone who deserves to be noticed! ORDER TODAY!

Read My Blog!
Free resources to learn how to leverage LinkedIn more effectively!
The LinkedIn-Makeover.com blog keeps you up to date on the latest information on LinkedIn, including tons of tips and video tutorials! READ MY BLOG!
Limits of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty

The author and publisher of this book and the accompanying materials have used their best efforts in preparing this document. The author and publisher make no representation or warranties with respect to the accuracy, applicability, fitness, or completeness of the contents of this book. They disclaim any warranties (expressed or implied), merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose. The author and publisher shall in no event be held liable for any loss or other damages. As always, the advice of a competent legal, tax, accounting or other professional should be sought.

This book contains material protected under Federal and International Copyright Laws. Any unauthorized reprint or use of this material is prohibited.

And just to make sure you totally understand...

I am not affiliated with LinkedIn. Not in any way. Some of the strategies in this book go contrary to LinkedIn’s Terms of Service. I take no responsibility and you can’t hold me responsible for anything that happens if you follow any of the strategies in this book. Really. Bad things might happen to you.

XOXO,

Donna

Copyright © 2012 Donna Serdula