

Elevate your LinkedIn prospecting

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP

Use this checklist to take your networking to the next level.

The pandemic has upended much in our lives, not the least of which networking and prospecting. No longer are in-person lunches or coffees the automatic go-to for getting to know someone and connecting with potential prospects at events is not happening.

LinkedIn has grown exponentially in importance for business owners at every stage of the game during the pandemic, but especially for small business owners. And it's likely to stay that way. Whether you are a newbie to LinkedIn or have been on the platform for years, there are still plenty of ways to power up your networking mojo.

A picture is still worth a thousand words

When is the last time you looked at your LinkedIn photos? Now it's not just your profile pic that speaks for you. Your background photo has a chance to make a first impression as well.

Hit all the marks with your bio photo – a recent professional picture (one taken with the iPhone portrait setting will do!) that shows you wearing business-appropriate attire and smiling.

Background photos can add a bit more depth. Stay in the professional zone but consider a picture that represents an activity you love outside of your work. Tip: Google LinkedIn background photos to find plenty of free apps that will design one for you.

Make the connection

Level up your connection game by going back to basics. Take just 10 minutes a day and add vendors, clients and customers you already have, family, friends and everyone in your phone contact list. Though it seems obvious, many of us forget to add contacts along the way.

Tip: The most effective connection requests on LinkedIn come with a personal note – even just a few words make an impact.

Narrow your focus

Take 20 minutes to get savvy about all the filters on LinkedIn – from job function to seniority. Get into the advanced filters and narrow down where someone went to school, what industry they work in or where they are located. Use this info when you send a personal note to connect – a reference to a local sports team win or a mention of a news headline that might be valuable for their industry are great ways to start.

Bonus round: LinkedIn Premium

If you haven't yet dipped a toe into LinkedIn Premium, sign up for the free 30 days and have a look around – it's worth it. With the ability to message with people you don't know, advanced search capabilities and access to LinkedIn Learning, LinkedIn Premium can be a great way to supersize your network – fast.

Resources

Check these sites out for a deep dive:

- [SocialTalent](#)
- [Top Dog Social Media](#)
- [Entrepreneur magazine](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

Sources: [blog.realnex.com](#); [makeyourmarkdigital.com](#); [spotio.com/blog](#); [neilpatel.com](#); [forbes.com](#); [socialtalent.com](#); [topdogsocialmedia.com](#); [entrepreneur.com](#)

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