

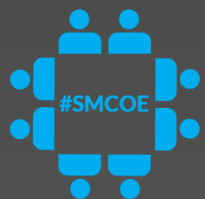
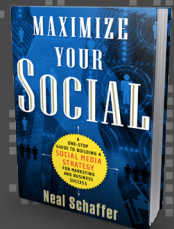


# Maximizing LinkedIn

## For Business



**Neal Schaffer**



Social Media  
Center of Excellence

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: [Maximizing LinkedIn for Business](#)

Chapter 1: [How LinkedIn Is Being Used by Corporations and Professionals Today](#)

Chapter 2: [Optimizing Your LinkedIn Profile](#)

Chapter 3: [Build Your Empire](#)

Chapter 4: [Using LinkedIn to Maintain Your Professional Relationships](#)

Chapter 5: [Establishing Credibility Through Recommendations](#)

Chapter 6: [Understanding Skills and Endorsements](#)

Chapter 7: [Making Pulse Your Source for Professional News](#)

Chapter 8: [Letting Your Professional Voice Be Heard](#)

Chapter 9: [Joining Groups](#)

Chapter 10: [Staying Up to Date on LinkedIn \(and Social Media\)](#)

[About Neal Schaffer](#)

# INTRODUCTION: MAXIMIZING LINKEDIN FOR BUSINESS

The professional world has finally realized the importance of LinkedIn as a business platform that serves multiple objectives. Besides being a central hub for professional branding, networking and career management, LinkedIn is now becoming a growing source of news, knowledge and opportunity for professionals worldwide. Businesses are now calling on employees to participate on LinkedIn not only for social recruiting but also for social selling, social media marketing and employee advocacy.

As the leading author, speaker and trainer on LinkedIn for business, my goal with this handbook is to provide useful information that is just as relevant for employees getting trained on LinkedIn as it is for professionals, executives and business owners trying to derive more value from their LinkedIn profiles. While you won't get as much help here as you would from [reading my two LinkedIn books](#) or joining my [Social Media Center of Excellence](#), this quick summary will help ensure that you don't miss out on what LinkedIn has to offer, so you can get started on truly maximizing your LinkedIn presence.

# 1. HOW LINKEDIN IS BEING USED BY BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONALS TODAY

Back in 2011, I wrote my second book about LinkedIn, “Maximizing LinkedIn for Sales and Social Media Marketing”. At that time, I wrote,

*In order to maximize your company's exposure on LinkedIn ... every sales and marketing employee that represents your business needs to have a LinkedIn profile.*

While the book was geared toward sales and marketing professionals, the reason for having a presence on LinkedIn was clear:

*...every employee representing your company that is on LinkedIn increases the chances that your company will indirectly be found, and the more connected your employees are to others (including each other), the easier it will be for those wanting to contact any of your company employees to do so through the LinkedIn profile.*

Fast-forward to today, where:

- Social media extends well beyond the sales and marketing departments thanks to the evolution of social business.
- Companies are finally realizing that their **employees are a huge untapped source of brand advocates**.
- Social media usage by professionals has become mainstream, judging by Facebook alone.

From a social business perspective, LinkedIn is also one of the first social networks to require cross-department collaboration, simply because many times, LinkedIn company pages are managed by the human resources department, not the marketing department. HR departments increasingly utilize LinkedIn as part of their **social recruiting** efforts, meaning that more and more employees already have a LinkedIn presence.

Now, LinkedIn is being used by companies in more ways than you can imagine, including:

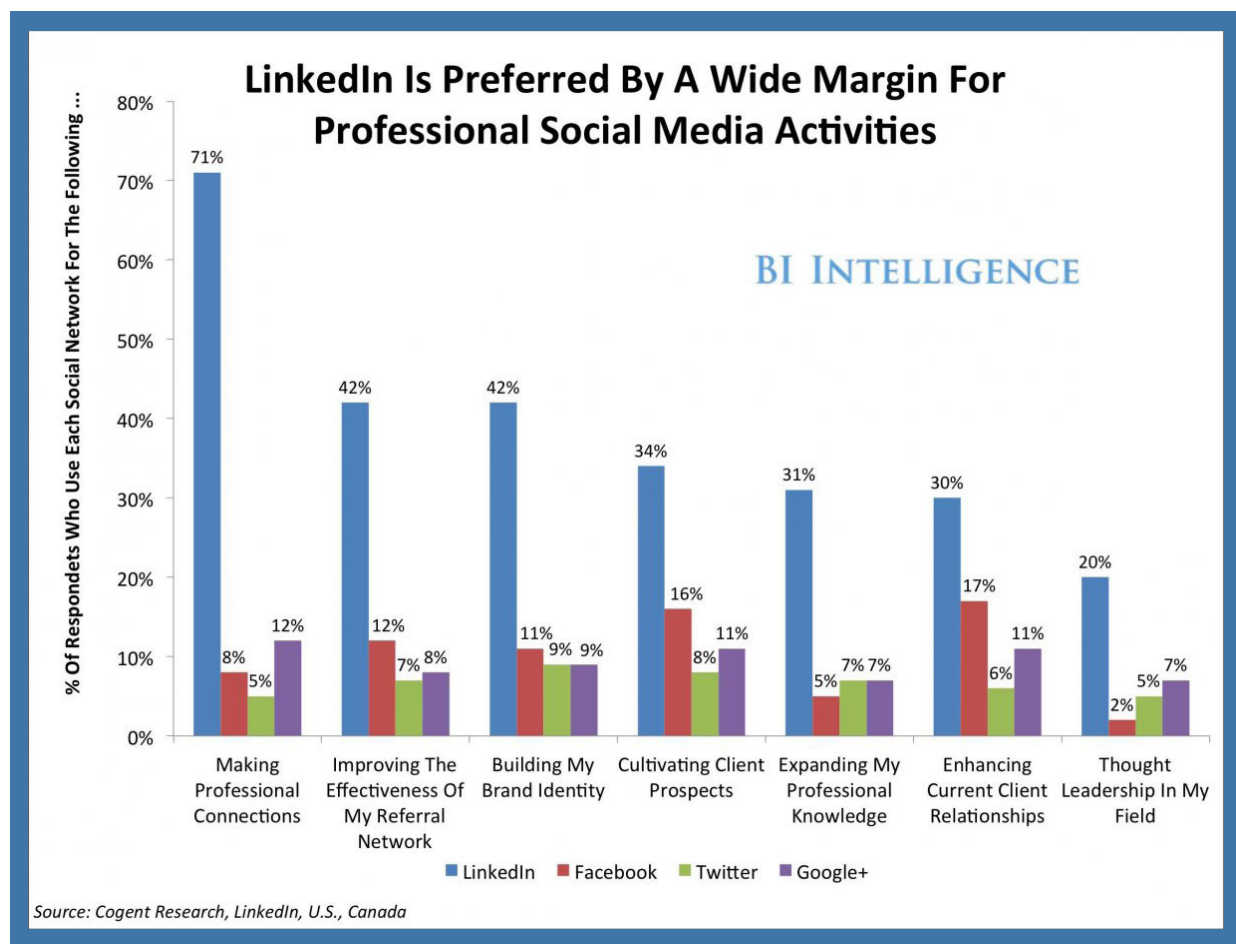
- *Social recruiting*
- *Public relations*
- *Community-building*
- *Social selling*
- *Social media marketing (including social advertising)*
- *Employee advocacy*

Regardless of what department you're in, it's becoming more likely that you can use LinkedIn as part of your job. Understanding the holistic value that LinkedIn offers businesses is really the first LinkedIn skill that every professional should possess.

As companies have become more involved with LinkedIn, so have individual users. Not only are more professionals now on social media, they are also **consuming more information** fed to them by their networks and **sharing more information** to their networks. Companies can take advantage of this trend by having employees share their brand message. After all, [Edelman's Trust Barometer](#) reminds us that **"Employees rank higher in public trust than a firm's PR department, CEO, or Founder."**

Whether you're leading an employee advocacy program at your own company, receiving internal training on LinkedIn, or merely want to better utilize LinkedIn to meet your professional objectives, you'll be glad to know that LinkedIn can help in several ways. And if you're involved in employee advocacy, you can download a free, definitive guide that I co-authored on [how to create an employee advocacy program](#).

Consider this graphic:

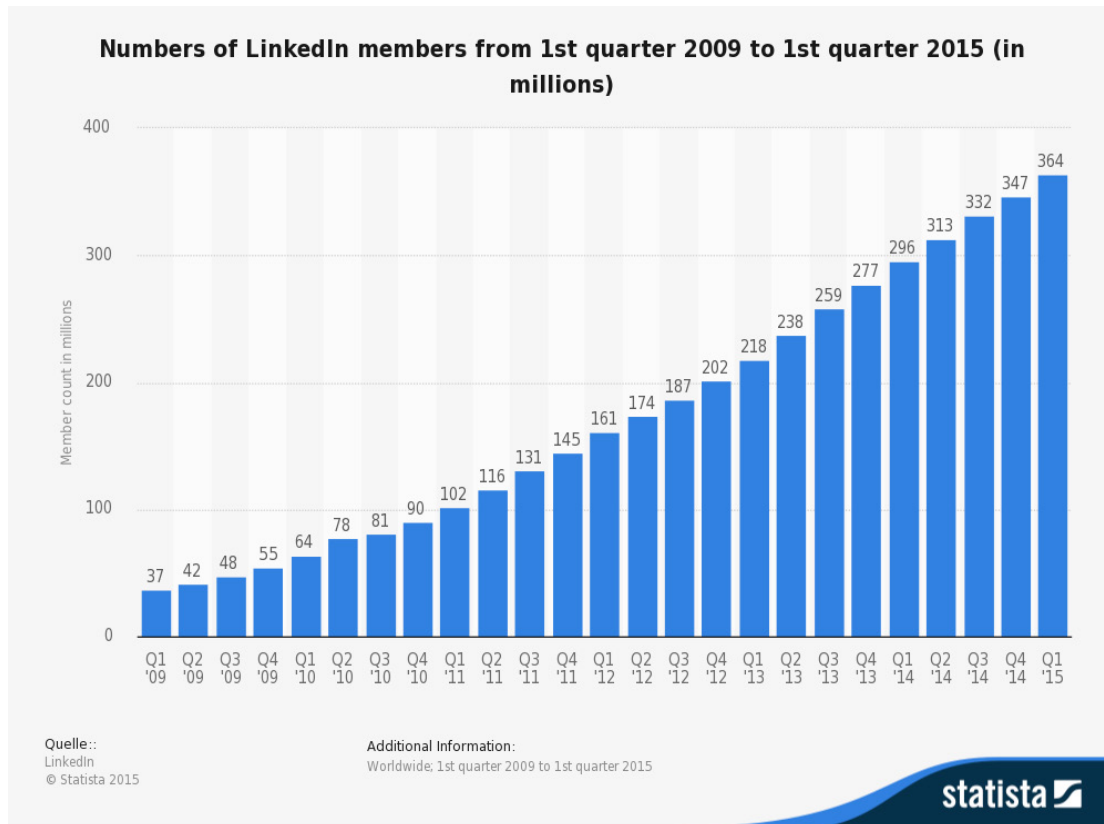


Source: *Business Insider*

The conclusion is clear: LinkedIn is preferred by professionals for every single professional social media activity measured.

Even more convincing is that LinkedIn continues to grow as professionals worldwide join the network. Two out of three LinkedIn users today weren't even on the platform just a few years ago.





Source: Statista

It's time to rethink your view of LinkedIn, so you can take full advantage of it. The following chapters explore the features that LinkedIn provides to every free account member, to enable you to achieve all your objectives for using the site.

### **Additional Information Links:** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [What Is LinkedIn and Why Should You Join?](#)
- [7 Reasons Why Every Professional Should Be on LinkedIn](#)
- [10 LinkedIn Skills Every Professional Should Have](#)
- [4 Convincing Reasons Why Employee Advocacy Should Begin on LinkedIn](#)



**DID YOU KNOW?**

CEOs prefer to be active on LinkedIn compared to any other social network by a wide margin.

## 2. OPTIMIZING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

As with any other social network, once you have signed up and established an account, LinkedIn will ask you to enter personal information to better develop your profile. While this might take you aback, the more information you provide, the easier it will be for you to get back in touch with those from your past and vice versa. This process will also add your keywords to the LinkedIn database, allowing opportunities to come your way.

This is where you need the following mindset to take advantage of what LinkedIn has to offer: Your LinkedIn profile is not your resume. It is an inbound marketing tool that you can use to create your own future — and tell your story.

### YOUR LINKED PROFILE IS A RESUME TO REPUTATION



#### KOKA SEXTON, GROUP MANAGER, CONTENT AND SOCIAL MARKETING, LINKEDIN

We call your profile a **resume to reputation**. It's the transformation we're trying to get members to make, where **you quit looking at your LinkedIn profile as your online resume**, which is still the connotation it has for a large number of people, who say, "It's my resume; it's how hiring managers find me." But the reality is that not just hiring managers are looking at your LinkedIn profile. In fact, **nine times out of 10, it's not a hiring manager who's searching your profile**. It's your colleagues. It's people you're trying to do business with. It's people you met at an event who are getting to know you. So when those people outside of hiring managers are looking at your LinkedIn profile, what are you trying to show them? Are you trying to say that you are a quota crusher — that you did all of these things? Because nine times out of 10, your prospects are going to get scared of that. So what you need to do — and that's why we have rich media — is to add these other elements. **Use your LinkedIn profile as a resource so that people want to keep coming back**. I've got people who hit my profile all the time, and they've never actually sent me a connection request. But when they do and I say, "Hey, you've been looking at my profile for the past month," they often answer,



“Because I see the same picture [in my news feed or in group discussions].” When I ask, “Why now?” they reply, “I get news from you, and now I just figured I would reach out to you because I keep coming back to your profile often enough so that I might as well be connected to you.” It’s your professional brand that you should be exuding through your profile, and it’s not just your resume. If a hiring manager is looking for somebody with your skill set, if that person looks at your profile and sees a bullet list of all the things you’ve accomplished, that looks nice, but when a hiring manager looks at your profile and says, “Oh my gosh, this is a professional in this space,” you’re much more likely to become a candidate.

Remember: **Your LinkedIn profile will become your default homepage on the Internet for your professional brand**, and every action you take on LinkedIn will leave a footprint, with a link taking others back to your profile. Take a few minutes now to confirm that it represents you well, and make a habit of revisiting your profile monthly or quarterly to ensure that your information and branding are still relevant.

## Neal’s Tips

### Building a Stellar LinkedIn Profile

- **Be Real.** Use a professional photo and your full, real name.
- **Be Complete.** Use all of the real estate that LinkedIn offers.
- **Be Branded.** Use the Headline and Summary areas to tout your strengths, differentiate yourself from others, and make relevant viewers of your profile *want* to contact you.
- **Be Searchable.** Make sure that relevant keywords associated with your brand, experience, profession and industry are included in your profile.
- **Be Visual.** Insert links to YouTube videos, SlideShare presentations or anything else on the Internet where you are featured in a way that will help you reach your objectives. At the very least, upload your own company resources to make it easy for profile viewers to find out more about your organization.
- **Be Trusted.** No matter how much you may want to promote your company, your LinkedIn profile should be all about you and how you can help other LinkedIn users, not an advertisement for your products and services.

## ADVICE ON YOUR PROFILE PHOTO



**KOKA SEXTON, LINKEDIN**

We respect our members, and we'll let them post whatever picture they want, as long as it's not inflammatory or offensive. But I think there's a standard. I think that when people look at your LinkedIn profile, they want to see something professional — not you playing with the dogs in the yard or something. Your profile photo should be a professional head shot, and typically what we tell people is that if you haven't done it yet, go out, get a camera, hire somebody, and have a professional head shot taken.

**People buy from people, and people want to associate faces with names, and what better place to have that head shot than on your LinkedIn profile, which is where most people are looking for you anyway?**

***Additional Information Links:*** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [LinkedIn Profile Tips: The 10 Mistakes You Want to Avoid and Why](#)
- [10 Incredibly Simple Ways to Maximize Your LinkedIn Profile for Inbound Marketing](#)
- [8 Creative LinkedIn Profile Tips to Help You Maximize Your LinkedIn Presence](#)
- [Professional LinkedIn Profile Tips: A Checklist of 17 Must-Have Items](#)
- [The Ultimate LinkedIn Profile Tips Summary + 8 Stats Infographic](#)



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

The simple act of adding a [LinkedIn profile picture](#) makes [your profile 11 times more likely to be viewed by others!](#)

## 3. BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Once you've gotten your profile set up, it's time to build your LinkedIn empire by establishing a robust network of connections.

One of the most basic yet unique functionalities that LinkedIn provides is the ability to visualize your degree of separation from other LinkedIn users. Those with whom you connect become your first-degree connections. First-degree connections of your first-degree connections appear as your second-degree connections, and first-degree connections of your second-degree connections appear as your third-degree connections.

Since LinkedIn is a database, the more connections you have, the more people you will be able to **contact easily through second-degree connections and vice versa**. Simply select Add Connections, which appears at the top right-hand corner of every page on LinkedIn, and upload your email database. You can also search for colleagues or fellow alumni based on where you have worked or gone to school. Make sure you only send invitations to those you truly know; LinkedIn may restrict your account if recipients of your invitations say that they don't know you.

This brings up a critical point: **LinkedIn is based on the concept of only connecting with people you know and trust**. But compared to the past, we are getting to "know" a lot more people through social media. And with more and more fake profiles on LinkedIn for various reasons, we are all receiving more LinkedIn invitations than ever before.

It should be no surprise, then, that one question I often get asked is, "Which LinkedIn connection requests should I accept?" **Every professional must decide on his or her own LinkedIn connection policy**. Whether it's only accepting invitations from people you have personally known for many years or accepting invitations from those who want to connect with you and who you think might add value to your network, decide on how open or closed you want your LinkedIn network to be. If you're in doubt about a particular invitation you've received, send a message back to the person and ask why the person wants to connect with you. If the person doesn't answer or doesn't do so convincingly, then ignore the invitation.

A guideline that I give professionals for how many LinkedIn connections they should have is to multiply their age by 10. After all, you meet at least 10 new professionals each year, right?

I don't expect college students to have 200+ connections upon graduation, but I do believe that professionals in their 40s and 50s can and should have connections in the hundreds.

Think about it: Over time, you get to know more people, even if you have been working at the same organization. Each year, the number of your real-world contacts grows as you meet more people in your professional and everyday life. These contacts should translate into LinkedIn connections. It's just a matter of taking those email addresses and checking them against LinkedIn's database. Your new real-world contacts who are also on LinkedIn then become your new connections.

Some of the most important assets of your professional life are the people you work with. So what is the upper limit for connections? How many is too many? I'd say you can't have too many connections. After all, as the name of the popular book implies, "[Your Network is Your Net Worth.](#)"

## Neal's Tips

### People to Invite

- Colleagues, past & present
- Partners & clients
- Professional association members
- Networking acquaintances
- Classmates
- Friends
- Family

***Additional Information Links:*** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [15 Ways to Grow Your LinkedIn Network](#)
- [How Many LinkedIn Connections Should You Have? \[VIDEO\]](#)



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

Forty-one percent of professionals surveyed had more than 500 LinkedIn connections.

## 4. USING LINKEDIN TO MAINTAIN YOUR PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Now that you've created your network on LinkedIn, it's time to learn how to use LinkedIn to keep in touch with your professional contacts on a daily basis. After all, as LinkedIn says,

*"A healthy professional life starts with healthy relationships."*

There are many benefits to a LinkedIn membership, but the Connections functionality and its ability to act as a virtual personal assistant will help you stay organized and in touch with your network in unprecedented fashion.

You can begin the process by selecting Connections from the top navigation menu. Assuming that you have already uploaded your email database to find your professional acquaintances on LinkedIn, you have begun the process of syncing your other professional data with LinkedIn in a powerful way. To review or change your current sync options, select the Settings icon (the gear) in the top right corner of the Connections screen. You should then see a similar screen to what is displayed on the right.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Connections' settings page. At the top, there's a header with the LinkedIn logo and the text 'Connections: A healthy professional life starts with healthy relationships'. Below this is a section titled 'EMAIL, CONTACTS, & CALENDARS'. It lists several sync options: 'LinkedIn' (28,521 contacts, Refresh), 'Gmail, Google Contacts, & Calendar' (6,467 contacts, Change, Remove), 'Yahoo! Mail & Contacts' (Sync), 'Yahoo! Calendar' (Sync), 'Outlook Mail, Contacts, & Calendar' (Sync), and 'iPhone Address Book' (4,832 contacts, Remove). Below this is an 'APPLICATIONS' section with 'Evernote' (Sync) and 'Triplr' (Sync). The final section is 'CONTACTS FILE IMPORTS', which includes 'Imported Contacts' (3,001 contacts, Remove), 'Outlook Contacts CSV' (Import), 'Outlook Contacts Mac' (Import), 'Mac Address Book vCard' (Import), and 'Yahoo! Contacts CSV' (Import).

If you're worried about potential privacy issues, you might not want to sync any of your personal data with LinkedIn. On the other hand, if you're looking to truly "Maximize Your Social," sync the data that seems rational. (Feel free to refer to my own synchronization details, shown in the screen capture.) Remember, social media is about comparing risks with rewards, and I do believe there are more rewards to reap than risks incurred when you upload your email database to LinkedIn.

## Maximizing the Value of LinkedIn's Connections Feature

Here are the best ways to use LinkedIn Connections:

### Sync your contacts and email.

As noted earlier, you can sync your email contacts to LinkedIn Connections. After you do this, your Connections database will automatically be updated on a daily basis — Once you sync your email account, you have the ability to see the last time that you had an email communication with anyone in your network — invaluable data that can help you stay in better touch with people.

### Send congratulatory updates.

The top of the Connections page showcases those in your network who have birthdays, new jobs or work anniversaries. This information offers the perfect opportunity to keep in touch with your connections on important dates by making it easy to send them a quick message or post a status update comment.

### Easily search (and tag) your network.

Hovering over any connection gives you the ability to tag that contact with one or more categories. This is extremely helpful in segmenting your network by criteria such as how you know people and what type of contacts they are.

Once you tag someone, you can filter your connections to display only people with a particular tag using the "Filter by" options at the top of your list of connections. Filtering by tags is the most targeted way to search through your connections. The Filter function also gives you the ability to search through your contacts by company, location, title and source.

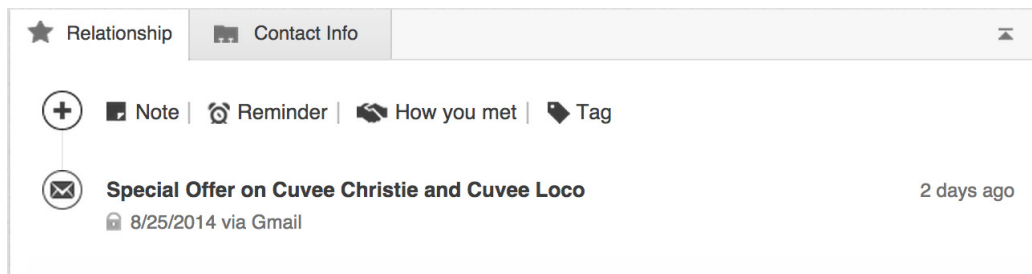
### Keep your LinkedIn network up to date.

Once you sync your email with LinkedIn Connections, the default display for your connections is in order of your most recent email communication. At the far right side of each connection, the LinkedIn icon will appear in blue if the person is a first-degree connection or in gray if you have not yet connected with that person on LinkedIn.

Browsing through this list on a daily basis and connecting with those who have gray icons will ensure that your LinkedIn connections database is always up to date.

## Augmenting Your Contact Database with Additional Information

Using LinkedIn Connections, you can easily stay up to date and effectively search through all your connections. LinkedIn also lets you manage your relationships by providing fields where you can enter personal notes directly on the pages of those with whom you are connected; these notes are visible only to you. These fields are accessible next to the circled plus that appears in the Relationship section on your 1st degree connection's LinkedIn profile page.



On the Relationship tab, you can store notes as well as details of how you met. Two additional areas of value here are reminders and email history.

### Set reminders to keep yourself connected.

When you create a reminder to get back in touch with a contact, it appears at the top of your Connections screen on the specified date along with any other notifications. You can set reminders for a day, week or month in advance or create recurring reminders to be in touch weekly, monthly, quarterly, biannually or annually.

### Review past email correspondence.

All email communications that you have ever had with this contact automatically appear here, assuming the contact was in the email client you synched. This makes it easy to review your previous correspondence. **Making Connections your first stop in the morning and spending five minutes communicating with and staying up to date on your network will ensure that you maintain healthy relationships with your connections.** But don't forget the other important way of keeping up with what's new in your network: monitoring your network updates from your Home page on a daily basis.



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

LinkedIn offers Outlook users a free tool to help stay connected with their LinkedIn networks. Find out about this and other officially supported LinkedIn tools [here](#) [must be logged in to LinkedIn to view page].



## 5. ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY THROUGH RECOMMENDATIONS

**Everything you do on LinkedIn will lead others to your profile.** Show potential hiring managers, marketing partners, clients and other professionals that you have social proof by displaying endorsements and recommendations from your peers that back up what you say in your profile.

**LinkedIn recommendations are the ultimate social proof in your profile.** When people look at your profile, you want them to see you as a real, verified professional, and there is no better way to achieve this than by being recommended by peers who can help verify that you have the skills and experience you claim to have.

Many wonder about the true value of LinkedIn recommendations. With so many quid pro quo recommendations on the site, doesn't that limit their credibility? Still, people need a way to confirm the claims made by others in their LinkedIn profiles, ideally by objective third parties. That's what recommendations are for, and they serve this purpose well, so long as you receive professional recommendations that offer honest feedback from people who have worked with you and know you well.

Furthermore, although it might not happen frequently, there is always a chance that someone looking at your profile for a specific objective might actually be a first- or second-degree connection with someone who has recommended you. This is especially true if you work in a niche industry where many professionals know each other. In such cases, having a recommendation can help push your profile to the forefront and provide you with significant benefits.

Understanding the value of LinkedIn recommendations, you'll want to be proactive in sourcing them for your profile. Before you ask those in your network for recommendations, though, I recommend that you start by paying it forward and recommending others with whom you have worked in the past for their skills and experience. Human nature predicts that some of these connections might also ask you if you'd like to receive recommendations from them. But never write a recommendation for the sole purpose of receiving one in return.

You don't need a lot of recommendations for social proof. LinkedIn used to recommend having at least three to achieve a "complete" profile. If you feel like you need a few more, now is the time to reach out to your old managers, colleagues, subordinates, customers and partners and ask for a recommendation, reminding them of your accomplishments in your request.

Don't be shy; many busy professionals that I know actually prefer that you send them a draft recommendation together with your request, so long as the content is accurate and would authentically represent them. Whether you write a draft or ask for a recommendation, always remember to bring up specific actions that you took to achieve specific results. Vague recommendations offer little to no value.

***Additional Information Links:*** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [LinkedIn Recommendations: Will You Write Me One?](#)
- [Are LinkedIn Recommendations for Real?](#)
- [How Should I Deal With a LinkedIn Recommendation Request I Don't Want to Give?](#)

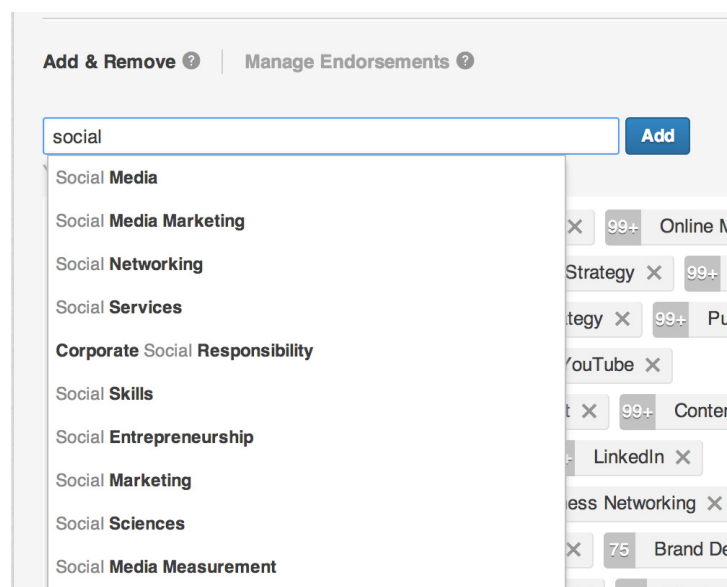


You must be 1st degree connections on LinkedIn to recommend or receive recommendations from another user.

## 6. UNDERSTANDING SKILLS AND ENDORSEMENTS

LinkedIn enables you to list skills on your profile and then be endorsed for those skills. Every professional has skills, and listing those skills helps categorize what you bring to the table as a professional. It also gives your connections the ability to endorse you. By adding a skill set to your LinkedIn profile, you also make your profile more credible. The credibility added by skills isn't on par with that added by recommendations, but the skills feature is still an important one that you should embrace. Keep updating your listed skills regularly, and make sure your profile displays the top 50 that LinkedIn allows.

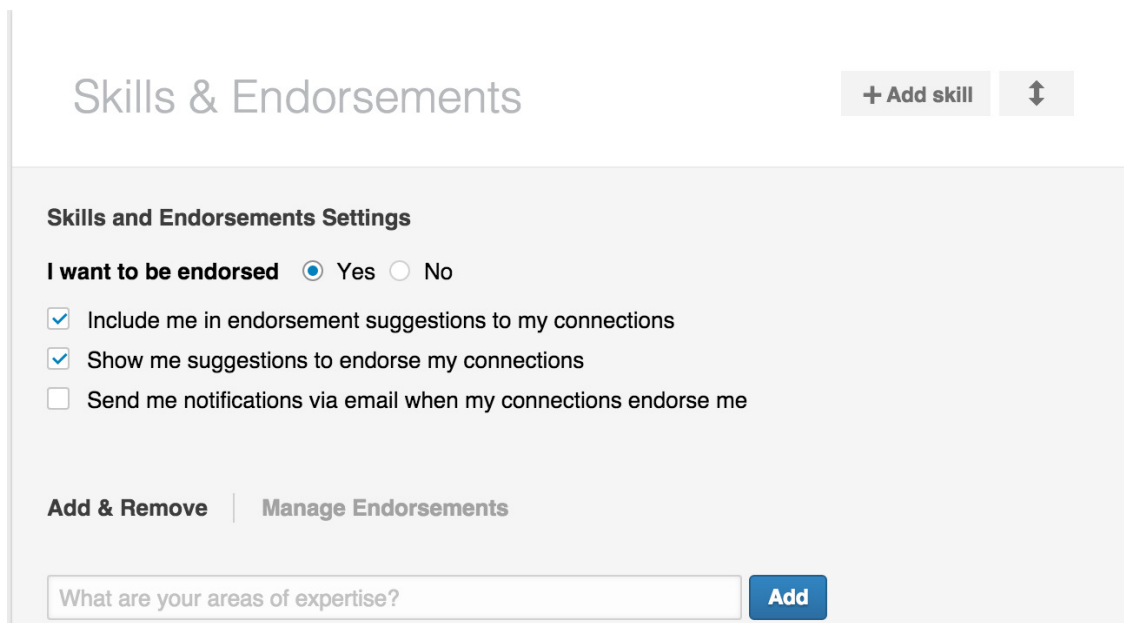
If you're trying to figure out what skills might be the most appropriate to add to your profile, just open your profile and scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section. Then, select Add Skill. In the box that appears, enter a keyword that a hiring manager, customer or marketing partner would use to look for someone like you. For example, in the following screenshot, I entered the word "social."



Based on this input, LinkedIn recommends several skills that might be appropriate to include. Going through this exercise for a few keywords is bound to help you populate your database of skills.

Once you have the right skills in place, you might be surprised when people in your network start to give you endorsements for your skills. How can you leverage endorsements for engagement with your network as well as promoting your professional brand?

When LinkedIn first introduced endorsements, there was a bit of an outcry from the community for a variety of reasons. If for some reason you don't want to be endorsed, you can opt out. LinkedIn provides you with options for managing all your endorsement-related activity whenever you select Add Skill in the Skills & Endorsements section of your profile.



The screenshot shows the 'Skills & Endorsements' section of a LinkedIn profile. At the top, there's a header 'Skills & Endorsements' with a '+ Add skill' button and a sort icon. Below this is a 'Skills and Endorsements Settings' box. Inside, there's a toggle for 'I want to be endorsed' set to 'Yes'. Below that are three checkboxes: 'Include me in endorsement suggestions to my connections' (checked), 'Show me suggestions to endorse my connections' (checked), and 'Send me notifications via email when my connections endorse me' (unchecked). At the bottom of the settings box are two tabs: 'Add & Remove' (selected) and 'Manage Endorsements'. Below the tabs is a text input field with the placeholder 'What are your areas of expertise?' and an 'Add' button.

Don't let the controversy prevent you from taking advantage of LinkedIn's endorsements feature. Although you can choose whether or not you want to be endorsed, I have found that choosing to be endorsed always works in favor of professionals.

Endorsements help you engage with your network and promote your professional brand. And since endorsements are typically easier to get than recommendations, they offer a great way of lightly engaging with your network.

There is another important reason why you should accept endorsements: According to LinkedIn, [your profile is four times more likely to be viewed if you have endorsements](#). There are many potential explanations for this, but clearly endorsements from other trusted LinkedIn users show that you and your skills are real. Perhaps this influences how often and where you appear in LinkedIn searches.

## THE VALUE OF ENDORSEMENTS

“When I’m looking at a profile, endorsements actually provide value to me. Not because of the 20 things someone is endorsed for, but what are the top two? Because those top two are usually legitimate. If there’s enough people to say you are well known in these two or three things, chances are you’re pretty influential in that space.

Koka Sexton, LinkedIn



## Neal’s Endorsement Tips

- Endorse your connections as a way of keeping in touch
- Help your connections with their personal branding by endorsing them for their appropriate skills.
- Pay it forward – you never know how an endorsement might aid your connection in the future
- Take Endorsement choices as valuable feedback from your network
- Deepen your relationships by thanking those who endorse you.
- Avoid quid pro quo endorsements as much as possible. I suggest writing a recommendation instead, if you really want to thank someone for meaningful endorsements.

**Additional Information Links:** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [8 Ways to Make LinkedIn Endorsements Work for You and Your Network](#)



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

More than 2 billion  
endorsements have already  
been made on LinkedIn!

## 7. MAKING PULSE YOUR SOURCE FOR PROFESSIONAL NEWS

LinkedIn allows you to keep up with the news that is relevant to your objectives through its Pulse application, which you can find under the Interests tab. Consider Pulse your daily newspaper for keeping tabs on timely, high-quality content that has already been filtered by LinkedIn, saving you time by cutting through the noise of the Internet.

Pulse also gives you the ability to engage with content creators by commenting on their posts, and you can also engage with other readers who comment. Furthermore, you can “like” any post by giving it a thumbs up, which is another way of getting on the content creator’s radar as well as introducing the content to your network through an indirect notification. You can also directly share the content as a status update, a topic we’ll cover in the next chapter.

### Setting Up Your Pulse

Pulse is an easy-to-understand news application that has just three tabs: Your News, Top Posts and Discover. The default view shows you news articles that have been published by all your connections that you are following. (We’ll cover publishing on LinkedIn in the next chapter.)

In order for Pulse to present relevant posts in Your News, you’ll want to make sure you’re set up for success. You can do this by navigating to the Discover tab and adding content providers to your Pulse preferences by clicking on the blue plus sign in the top right corner of any image you see.

- Items under the **Recommended for you** heading are news sources that LinkedIn has suggested for you. These may be influencers, channels or publishers.
- **Influencers** come from LinkedIn’s original influencer program or they may be users who have started to publish on the LinkedIn platform. Currently, the most popular influencers are Richard Branson, Deepak Chopra, Jack Welch, Arianna Huffington and Bill Gates.

- **Channels** are categories of content covering more than 50 subject areas. The most popular channels are Leadership & Management, Big Ideas & Innovation, Technology, Entrepreneurship & Small Business, and Professional Women.
- **Publishers** are both traditional sources of news as well as companies that publish content via their LinkedIn company pages. Currently, some of the most popular publishers are Harvard Business Review, TED Talks, Reuters, Forbes, and The Wall Street Journal.

As you can see, there are a plethora of options for adding new content into your Pulse feed. You may wish to explore this content just for yourself, but you might also want to curate it and share the most interesting and relevant content with your network, with a LinkedIn group, or on other social networks.

You can always view the Top Posts to ensure that you are up to date on the news being read by most LinkedIn users as well as to find new sources of content that you might have missed in your customized news feed.

## Neal's Tips

### LinkedIn Pulse as an Engagement Vehicle

- LinkedIn Pulse gives you the ability to easily share content that you like with your network as a status update. If you don't have anything to post, why not update others on something that you recommend they read?
- Liking a post is a social signal to the post's creator as well as to your network about content that you value. Even if you don't want to create a formal status update, liking a post still has some engagement value.
- Outside with a few minutes of time? All your LinkedIn preferences are synched with the LinkedIn smartphone app, giving you the opportunity to engage on LinkedIn anytime and anywhere.

**Additional Information Links:** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [LinkedIn Revolutionizes Social News With LinkedIn Today](#)



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

You can use LinkedIn's advanced search function to look for articles published by LinkedIn users and influencers on specific topics. First, select Advanced next to the search box. Then, select Posts in the left dropdown menu and enter a keyword. This allows you to use LinkedIn as a trusted search engine when looking for professional content.

## 8. LETTING YOUR PROFESSIONAL VOICE BE HEARD

Although your LinkedIn profile is static, it's easy to dynamically update it while engaging with your network. By posting a professional status update, you can share information with your connections that they may value while promoting your own personal brand.

The top of your LinkedIn Home page beckons you to share an update. If you read something online that might be of interest to your network or you see compelling content in LinkedIn Pulse, why not share it as a status update?

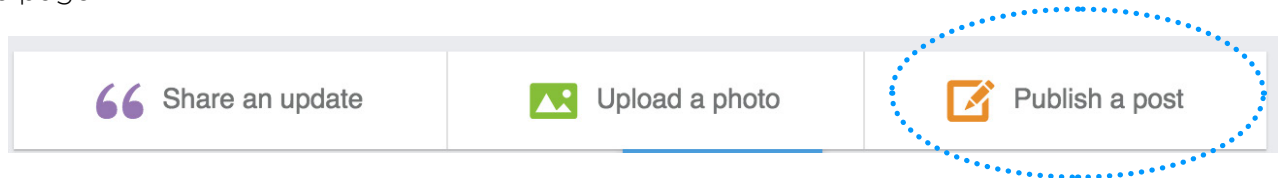
If you share relevant status updates every day, you are engaging with your network daily, maintaining mindshare among your connections, and developing and promoting your professional brand.

“Within LinkedIn, we find that the most engaging content is really education. It's the things that you're going through to build yourself up professionally, to either help you out in the position you have now or to help you out with the position you want to have tomorrow.”

Koka Sexton



LinkedIn gives you an even more powerful way of letting your professional voice be heard: the ability to actually publish a long-form blog post. LinkedIn is currently rolling out this service to all its members, and you'll know you have access when the "Publish a post" link appears on your LinkedIn Home page.



Why should you consider blogging on LinkedIn? It's simple: LinkedIn owns a large publishing empire, and publishing content on LinkedIn ensures that a sizable audience will read your content. Your posts also become part of your profile, allowing your profile visitors to understand you and your thoughts at a deeper level.

If you have advice to share, want to discuss your experiences with others, or enjoy mentoring other professionals, the LinkedIn publishing platform is the most powerful way to let your professional voice be heard and display your thought leadership for all to see. Here is my advice regarding publishing on LinkedIn, based on the type of entity you are.

### Professionals Who Have Never Blogged:

You now have the ability to share your knowledge and experience with the world. You don't have to blog every day; on the contrary, consider adding a few paragraphs of your thoughts monthly or even quarterly to help pay it forward and indirectly showcase who you are as a professional.

Remember that the content you publish will become part of your LinkedIn brand and affect the way that others perceive you, so make it count! An hour of your time each month can make a profound impact on the professional lives of others, and it will undoubtedly serve your professional branding well in the long term.

### Businesses:

From a content marketing perspective, you can understand how the LinkedIn publishing platform offers content the chance to be seen by a large audience. Unfortunately, this platform is for individual profiles, not company pages. Simply having employees publish links to your company page will do no good. But this is the age of employee advocacy, where employees who are proficient at social platforms become brand ambassadors for your company.

Encouraging the sharing of your company's social messages is only the beginning of an employee advocacy program; encouraging and helping your employees find their own voices to help them publish their thoughts and ideas on LinkedIn's publishing platform will be a win-win for your company and its employees.

## Content Creators:

While it may be tempting to copy content from other sources or simply paste a summary of your content on LinkedIn with a link leading elsewhere, consider going back to your organic roots in blogging. When we blog, we blog for our own community, right? We do it to share our knowledge and attract those we can help with our knowledge, products or services.

In the case of LinkedIn publishing, it's not about building our own community but **serving the LinkedIn community**, and in doing so, indirectly building a new community within LinkedIn. For that reason, whenever possible, you should publish unique content on LinkedIn and gear the topics that you blog about to LinkedIn's unique professional demographic.

## Neal's Tips

- **Close posts properly.** Remember to include a short bio and even a call to action at the end of each post to better educate your readers and increase your chances for relevant engagement.
- **Engage.** Be a listener, and monitor your LinkedIn notifications for comments on your posts. The comments section of your post will turn out to be a great platform for engaging with your network and making more connections.
- **Spread the word.** Don't limit your long form posts to the publishing platform alone. Share them everywhere — on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and wherever else you have a presence.

**Additional Information Links:** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [How Will YOU Use the LinkedIn Publishing Platform?](#)
- [How to Write Your First Blog Post on the LinkedIn Publishing Platform](#)
- [9 Tips to Writing Posts That Get Read on the LinkedIn Publishing Platform](#)

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

The long-form posts that you publish on LinkedIn can be pulled into Pulse and included in the Pulse section of LinkedIn's Home page, allowing your content to potentially display to tens of thousands of LinkedIn users!

## 9. JOINING GROUPS

LinkedIn groups are the biggest public Internet forums for professionals in the world. As of March 2013, there were already more than [2 million LinkedIn groups](#), the largest of which now has well over [1.7 million members](#). I consider these groups to be virtual industry conferences or tradeshows – wouldn't you want to be seen, meet others and promote your expertise at the largest networking event for professionals on earth?

With more than [200 conversations per minute occurring in LinkedIn groups](#), you get a sense for the sheer volume of engagement and your potential to leverage it.

If this is not enough to convince you of the value of LinkedIn groups, consider some additional points. LinkedIn groups help you:

### **Connect with other professionals with similar interests.**

Joining groups allows you to bond and connect with people who have the same professional interests as you.

### **Learn from the experts.**

There are many subject matter experts who participate in LinkedIn groups; you can easily engage with and learn from them.

### **Show your expertise in your field.**

LinkedIn Groups can help you showcase your talents and skills on a wider stage. People beyond your first-degree connections who are members of your LinkedIn groups will be able to recognize you for who you are.

### **Increase your visibility.**

LinkedIn groups allow you to increase your visibility to the online world in a dramatic fashion, especially since discussions from public LinkedIn groups have the potential to be found in Google searches! LinkedIn allows you to join up to 50 groups, but start by joining a few targeted groups that are aligned with your professional objectives.

I also recommend that you join one or two of the largest groups on LinkedIn, which can help expose you to hundreds of thousands of LinkedIn users. Finding LinkedIn groups to join is easy. From the dropdown menu next to the search box, select Groups. Then, search for relevant keywords, and you are bound to find many groups that may interest you. Can't find an appropriate group? Start your own!

I've started my own groups on LinkedIn, and today they are used by thousands of LinkedIn members for sharing information, teaching and learning. One other benefit of joining a LinkedIn group is that the default setting for group membership allows group members to message each other. This means you can contact and be contacted by other group members regardless of whether you are connected to them. This is an easy way to improve your "contactability" on LinkedIn.

While social media etiquette and best practices are hardly carved in stone, it's helpful to follow a few guidelines when participating in groups. Following these suggestions will add to your personal brand on LinkedIn and help you get the most out of groups.

- When posting a discussion on a group, make sure that your post aligns with the mission and policies of the group and adds value to the group.
- Watch your frequency. Starting no more one discussion a week is good etiquette, unless otherwise specified.
- Remember to follow group etiquette on group discussion boards, too. As the centerpiece of each group, these boards are where all the real conversations happen.
- Kuuki wo yomu. This Japanese phrase means reading the atmosphere, which is always a good idea. For groups that have no guidelines or policies listed, the best practice is to observe first and then contribute in the same tone.

## Neal's Tips

### Join 50 Groups

- LinkedIn allows you to join up to 50 groups. To maximize your potential to reach others — and for them to reach you — join the maximum number of groups.



- Try a combination of big groups, local groups, alumni groups (for both schools and companies), industry groups, professional association groups and target market groups.
- Make sure that you don't get daily or weekly updates from every group you join, unless you want to receive lots of email from LinkedIn! There is a link at the bottom of every newsletter that allows you to turn off the daily or weekly update.
- Make it a daily or weekly habit to jump into a group conversation or start one of your own.

### ***Additional Information Links:*** ( Please click each title below to access the content )

- [LinkedIn Groups Tips: What Are They and Why Join Them?](#)
- [Which LinkedIn Groups Should I Join?](#)
- [LinkedIn Group Etiquette: What Are the Rules?](#)
- [Recommended LinkedIn Groups:](#)  
[The Social Media Strategies for Business Group](#)  
[Maximize Social Business](#)



**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

#### Business Is Everywhere in LinkedIn Groups

[Here's how I developed business through a LinkedIn group discussion.](#)  
In "[Maximizing LinkedIn for Sales and Social Media Marketing](#)," there is a case study of a businessman who generated 75 percent of his \$5 million in annual revenues from LinkedIn groups.

## 10. STAYING UP TO DATE ON LINKEDIN (AND SOCIAL MEDIA)

I decided to take all my experience in consulting, coaching, speaking and training corporate clients and make it available to everyone through the creation of a [Social Media Center of Excellence](#). This e-book is one of the free resources that you can download once you register on the site. For a small monthly subscription fee, you'll get access to the following features to ensure you stay up to date with the constantly changing landscape of LinkedIn and social media:

- Live 60-minute premium webinars based on the corporate training I do, plus some webinars with guest experts
- Live 60-minute conference calls where you'll have a chance to ask me any social media question you have — and get the answers you need for your business
- Access to the community forum with valuable resources and tips from other Center of Excellence members, where you can also ask your social media questions in real time
- Access to the complete library of prerecorded webinars and audio calls, giving you invaluable information on a variety of social media topics

I created the Social Media Center of Excellence because businesses of all sizes and professionals from a variety of industries and disciplines need help with social media. Case in point: The 2014 [Social Media Marketing Industry Report](#). The report noted that 89 percent of social media marketers said they wanted to know about the most effective engagement methods and social media tactics for their social marketing.

The report also stated that marketers are specifically looking for more help with measurement of their return on investment in social efforts (88 percent), finding the best social media management tools (85 percent), and targeting the right audience (83 percent). My advice? Join the [Social Media Center of Excellence](#) to learn, network and get answers to your social media questions.



## ABOUT NEAL SCHAFER

Neal Schaffer is a leading social media strategy consultant, international speaker and author of three books, including “Maximize Your Social” and “Maximizing LinkedIn for Sales and Social Media Marketing.” CMO.com recently named Neal one of Marketing’s 10 Biggest Thought Leaders, and Forbes has listed him as a Top 50 Social Media Power Influencer two years in a row and as one of the top 5 leading authorities on social selling.

Schaffer has helped dozens of companies, large and small, with their social media, including Fortune 500 enterprises and a Grammy-award winning musician. As a popular speaker on the topic of social media, Schaffer has lectured at more than 200 events across three continents since 2009. He also teaches social media marketing as part of the Rutgers University Mini-Social Media MBA program and is the founder of the leading social media for business blog, Maximize Social Business.

In 2015, he launched two new ventures: the Social Media Center of Excellence, to build and educate a community on best practices in using social media for business, and the Social Tools Summit, a biannual live conference to educate businesses on the potential and variety of social media tools available to help increase efficiency and ROI from social media programs.



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