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## **How to Use LinkedIn for Social Selling: Five Tips from a Pro**

*Is your sales team using LinkedIn to its fullest potential? Survey says: probably not. Here are five ways to harness the power of LinkedIn for local business development.*

If your sales team is like most, they are using LinkedIn to connect with people and to research target buyers prior to making contact. However, most folks don't go much beyond that—and that is a lost opportunity, because there are some lesser-known ways to use this platform to really amp up your team's business development efforts. With more than 350 million users, and 2 new users added each second, LinkedIn is arguably the best way to reach business decision-makers online today.





Before you start diving deeper into LinkedIn, make sure you have a solid strategy and clear guidelines for how your team should use this tool. What training do they need? What metrics will you track? What is the core message for each target buyer, which will likely differ by audience (for example, a restaurant owner versus a car dealer)? What types of content can you share to add value to your network? And lastly, make sure your entire team is connected to *each other*. Yes, this sounds completely obvious, but you'd be amazed how many times I train corporate groups that have not fully connected online.

## OK, LET'S EXPLORE **FIVE** ways to get more from LinkedIn:

- 1.** Get new sales leads delivered to your inbox every week. Using LinkedIn's *Advanced People Search* feature, you can create up to three saved searches based on your target buyer's characteristics. This feature allows you to precisely define your search criteria and get a weekly email identifying people who match these criteria. This new lead list can expose not only direct buyers, but also referral sources within a particular industry.

Keep in mind that search results are based on both your personal network and the groups you have joined. While you are able to select 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree connections, I recommend you select only 1st connections, 2nd connections and group members. For your lead lists to be most effective, you should find ways of connecting within your target buying community to turn 3rd degree connections into closer connections.

### How to set up an *Advanced People Search*:

1. On the LinkedIn navigation bar, click *Advanced*, located to the right of the search bar. A window will appear (Figure 1) that allows you to create a search list. I recommend basing your search on keywords or the business title that your prospect typically holds. You can find local leads by using your zip code and a proximity radius, and further refine the list by choosing a target industry.
2. In the *Relationship* area, select 1st connections, 2nd connections and group members. Groups can dramatically improve your search results, provided that you are a member of groups that your prospects are most likely to join.
3. Once you have created your search criteria, click on the "Save search" button located in the upper right corner, and give the search a name. Set your email frequency to "weekly."

Each week, LinkedIn will notify you about new people matching your criteria who have joined your network. This list provides real-time prospecting opportunities for you to leverage each week. Remember that these are people who may not be directly connected to you yet. For example, they may be connections of people who are connected directly to you.



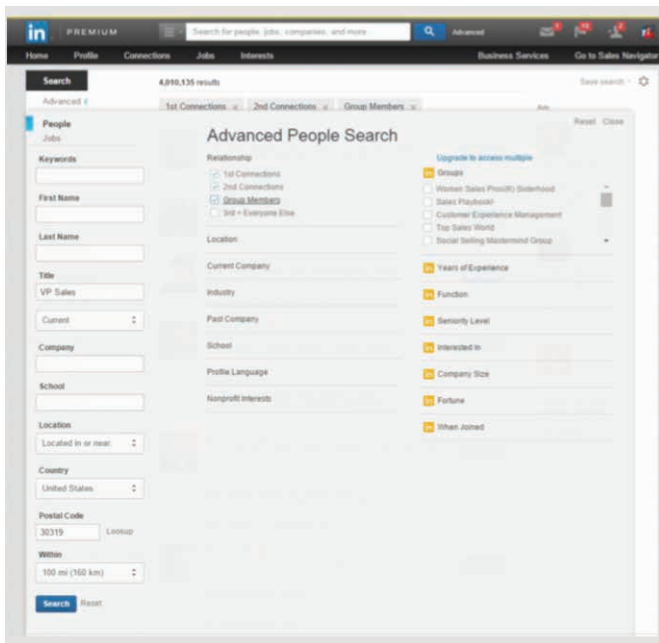


Figure 1. Screenshot of the *Advanced People Search* function in LinkedIn.

2. **Strategically join groups to increase your search results.** Joining groups can dramatically increase your *Advanced People Search* results, since you don't have to be directly connected to the members for them to show up in your searches (Figure 2).

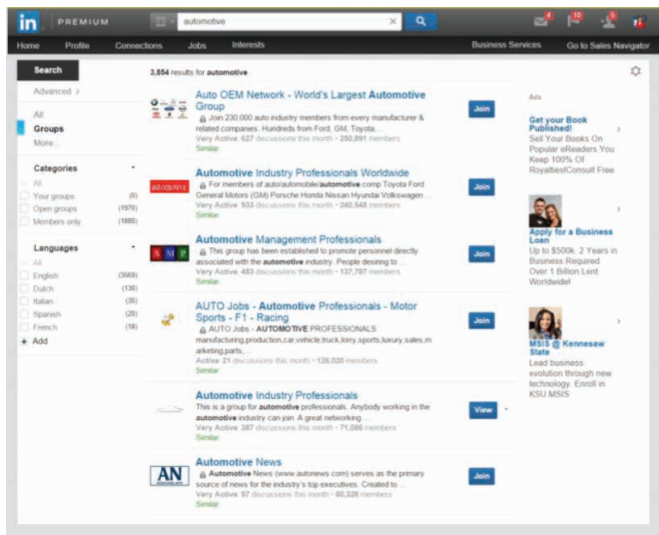


Figure 2. The keyword “automotive” returned 3,850 group results, including an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) network with more than 250,000 members.

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One question I frequently get asked is whether it's worth it to upgrade from the free version to LinkedIn Premium or Sales Navigator. Both offer some advantages, like the ability to save more searches, access more results and use more InMails (LinkedIn's internal messaging system). That said, most people are not maxing out the potential of the free version before they upgrade, so I suggest trying the free version to its fullest potential first, then upgrade if you need more options.

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### A few things to keep in mind about LinkedIn groups:

- Some groups are public and some are private. Private groups will review your request to ensure that you are either in the industry or partner with those who are.

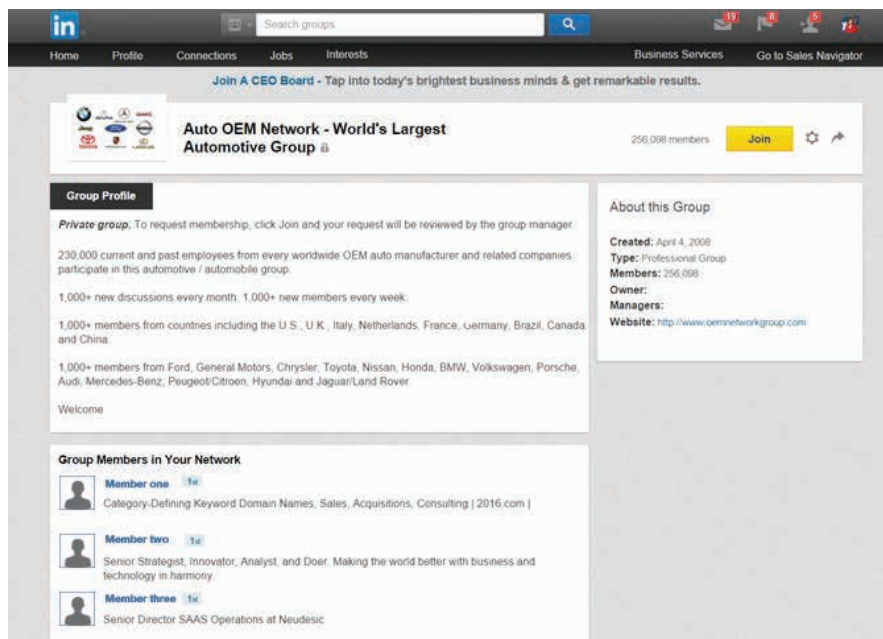


Figure 3. A look inside the OEM group.

- If you are trying to join a private group, the information you can see about the group is limited to the number of members, type of group and group rules (if any). This information is located under *Group Profile*.
- With Public groups, you can see the same information as Private groups, as well as a list of members in the group. The member list is located in the *About* section of the profile.
- You can join up to 50 groups. This may sound like a lot, but if you're selling local and regional advertising, you probably have at least that many types of buyers you contact!
- Once you're a group member, click on *Settings* and then the *Members* tab. You can then search within the member list. You can't save this search, but it's handy to help narrow your targets within a group.







- Add media to your profile. This is far less common than it should be, and it's a great way to stand out from the crowd. Add a presentation, video, whitepaper or interesting piece of content to your permanent profile. This can make the difference in establishing credibility with prospective buyers.

The ROI is clear...

Our worldwide sales survey quantifiably proved that using social media for selling generated revenue results. 73.6% of sellers using social significantly out performed peers who did not. Of the 54% of sellers who tracked social media usage back to closed deals, 40% have closed more than one deal (2-5). Another 10.8% closed more than 5 deals!

I'm the co-author of *The New Handshake: Sales Meets Social Media* the first book written about how social media and social networking applied to selling.

To learn more about social selling and our programs, call me at 404-647-4925 or email me at [barbara.giamanco@scs-connect.com](mailto:barbara.giamanco@scs-connect.com)

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Figure 5. Media assets included within a LinkedIn *Summary* section.

- **Don't skimp on your *Experience* section.** Don't just put job titles and dates. The more complete the *Experience* section, the more likely people are to review and engage with a profile. According to LinkedIn, "profile completeness not only helps you show up in more searches, but also improves how you are matched in our system." \*
- **Pay attention to who has viewed your profile.** One way to expand your connections is to see who has viewed your profile, and then view theirs. This often results in an invitation to connect.

**4. Use content to gain visibility.** A key way to demonstrate credibility with your target buyers on LinkedIn is to provide engaging content. This can be achieved in a couple of ways: by sharing original content and thought leadership produced by your organization, or by highlighting insightful, relevant content from other industry leaders and luminaries.

\*Source: [https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/50991/~/-/ranking-in-search-results-%E2%80%93-people-search](https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/50991/~/-/ranking-in-search-results-%E2%80%93-people-search)





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### Here are a few great ways to share content on LinkedIn:

- **Status updates.** First, a status update should never be a sales pitch. Instead, share something that your network cares about, like industry trends or points of view. For example, if you are targeting restaurant owners for local ad sales, share an article about recent updates to Yelp's review algorithm. When sharing other people's content, make sure to add your own spin (at least a sentence) on why you think this piece of content is relevant or interesting and be sure to cite the source for the content.
- **Update the media on your profile.** The content in your *Profile* section is static until you change it, whereas status updates are dynamic and continue to circulate the same way they do on Facebook or Twitter. To keep your profile content fresh, update your media (see Figure 5) at least once a month to feature new content of interest to your network.
- **Share content from your company page.** If your company is sharing content, simply click the "share" button.
- **Connect to Twitter.** By linking your Twitter account and LinkedIn accounts, you can automatically share the same status update from LinkedIn to Twitter. The status box will let you know if you exceed 140 characters (Figure 6).

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn status update interface. At the top, there are three buttons: "Share an update" (with a quote icon), "Upload content" (with a camera icon), and "Publish a post" (with a pencil icon). Below these is a text input field containing the text "This is how you share content on both LinkedIn and Twitter...". Underneath the text field is a character count indicator: "Count: 61 (Only 140 characters will be shown on Twitter)". At the bottom, there is a dropdown menu for sharing settings, currently set to "Share with: Public + Twitter", and a blue "Share" button.

Figure 6. By linking your Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, you can automatically share the same status update on both channels.

- **Share your buyers' content.** This is a nice way to elevate your buyers and prospects: by sharing or liking interesting content they have posted.





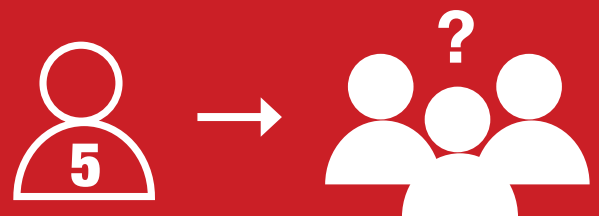
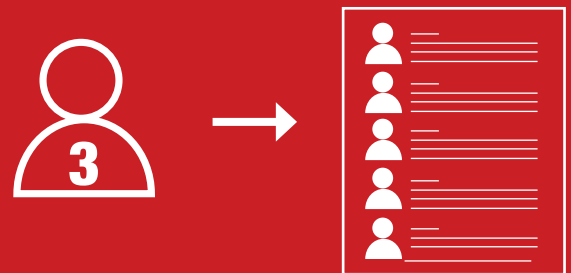
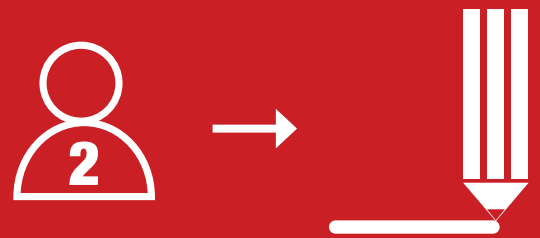
**5. Five things in 15 minutes:** Last, commit to the process. It takes a few minutes of daily focus to truly get the most from LinkedIn. Also, in my experience, the best time to send InMail via LinkedIn is between 8am and 11am.

**Each day:**

- Invite three people to connect, and make sure to customize your invitation messages.
- Post a status update.
- Contact five people on your *Advanced People Search* lead list.
- Comment or like a piece of content.
- Answer a question in a group.

We've just scratched the surface here, but the key takeaway is that the basic LinkedIn version can do much to boost your team's business development efforts. If you would like a more customized or in-depth discussion about social selling, visit [barbaragiamanco.com](http://barbaragiamanco.com) for more information.

# 5 THINGS EACH DAY







### **About Barbara Giamanco**

Barb Giamanco heads up Social Centered Selling, which offers sales and social selling programs to sales and marketing teams interested in driving revenue results. Programs are customized to meet client needs and focus on the strategic application of a combination of platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Hootsuite, InsideView, Yesware and more. Programs are delivered virtually, at sales retreats, sales meetings or conferences.

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