

LUAN
Wise

Mastering Social Selling on LinkedIn



1. Introduction	3	10. Managing the Invitations You Receive on LinkedIn	17
2. What is Social Selling?	4	11. Posting Content on LinkedIn	18
3. How Does 'Social Selling' Differ from 'Traditional Selling'?	6	12. Commenting on LinkedIn	20
4. The Challenges of Social Selling	7	13. Sending Direct Messages via LinkedIn	22
5. Social Selling and LinkedIn	9	14. LinkedIn Groups	24
6. LinkedIn's Social Selling Index (SSI)	11	15. A Social Selling Routine	25
7. Establishing a Personal Brand	12	16. Measures of Success	27
8. Finding Your Target Audience on LinkedIn	14	17. Conclusion	28
9. Building Your Network on LinkedIn	15	18. About Luan Wise	29

1. Introduction

LinkedIn is a valuable platform for professionals seeking to connect, engage, and build networks that lead to new opportunities. Social selling emphasises business development through relationship-building rather than direct selling, making it an effective approach for fostering connections with both potential clients and referral partners.

This ebook walks you through the essentials of social selling, from understanding its core principles and how it differs from traditional sales to mastering the features LinkedIn offers to grow your personal brand and online presence.

The advice shared within this guide can be followed using either a free or premium LinkedIn account and also with LinkedIn Sales Navigator for those seeking advanced prospecting and outreach capabilities.

Whether you're new to social selling or looking to refine your approach, this ebook provides actionable advice and a structured path to unlocking LinkedIn's full potential to support you and your business.

2. What is Social Selling?

Social selling is the art of using social networks to find, connect with, understand, and nurture sales prospects.

Social selling is a lead generation technique that involves establishing a personal brand, providing relevant content, building relationships, engaging with people, being helpful, and educating people about you, your services and your industry.

It's the modern way of developing meaningful relationships with potential customers that keep you and your organisation front of mind so that you're the natural first point of contact when the prospect is ready to buy.

Social selling puts the customer first and focuses on long-term relationships with high life-time value.

Social selling isn't a one-size-fits-all, quick win, technique that you can simply implement and see instant results. It's about a consistent, coherent approach to finding your customers and communicating with them one-to-one, and finding bespoke solutions to their problems.





Social selling requires a proactive approach to spotting opportunities to help potential clients and knowing what to do when that opportunity arises. This removes the pitching component from sales conversations – the element that many of us feel uncomfortable with - because you're already engaged in a conversation about your products and services.

Social selling is effective and relevant now because the way that potential clients obtain information and make decisions about what they choose to buy has changed. They might be time-poor, but they do more research for themselves before they get in contact with organisations.

From searching via search engines and social media platforms, to asking friends and colleagues for recommendations, potential customers are leaving a trail of breadcrumbs on social media that provide an opportunity for you to start up a conversation with them.

3. How Does 'Social Selling' Differ From 'Traditional Selling'?

SOCIAL SELLING

Social selling is different. It focusses on building long-term relationships with potential clients so that you understand their needs and they grow to know who you are, what you stand for, and ultimately buy from you from when the time is right.

Social selling isn't purely transactional in the way that traditional selling can be; it's more individualised, bespoke, and about developing and continuing a relationship with prospective customers up to the point they buy and beyond.

TRADITIONAL SELLING

The traditional way of selling included cold calling, qualifying leads and creating presentations to talk about your products and what your organisation had to offer.

4. The Challenges of Social Selling

Social selling presents several challenges that can impact its effectiveness if not addressed properly. One significant challenge is the need for individuals to consistently produce and share high-quality, relevant content that engages potential clients.

In a crowded marketplace, standing out requires not only understanding the target audience's pain points and interests but also creating content that resonates with them. This requires an investment of time and resources, as well as ongoing collaboration with marketing teams to ensure alignment and consistency in messaging across the organisation.





Another challenge of social selling is the difficulty in building genuine relationships through digital interactions alone. While social media platforms provide a vast network of potential connections, cultivating trust and rapport without face-to-face interactions can be challenging. Individuals must be adept at using digital communication tools effectively, balancing professionalism with authenticity to foster meaningful connections. Additionally, the fast-paced nature of social media can make it hard to maintain engagement and follow-up with prospects, leading to potential missed opportunities if interactions are not carefully managed and tracked.

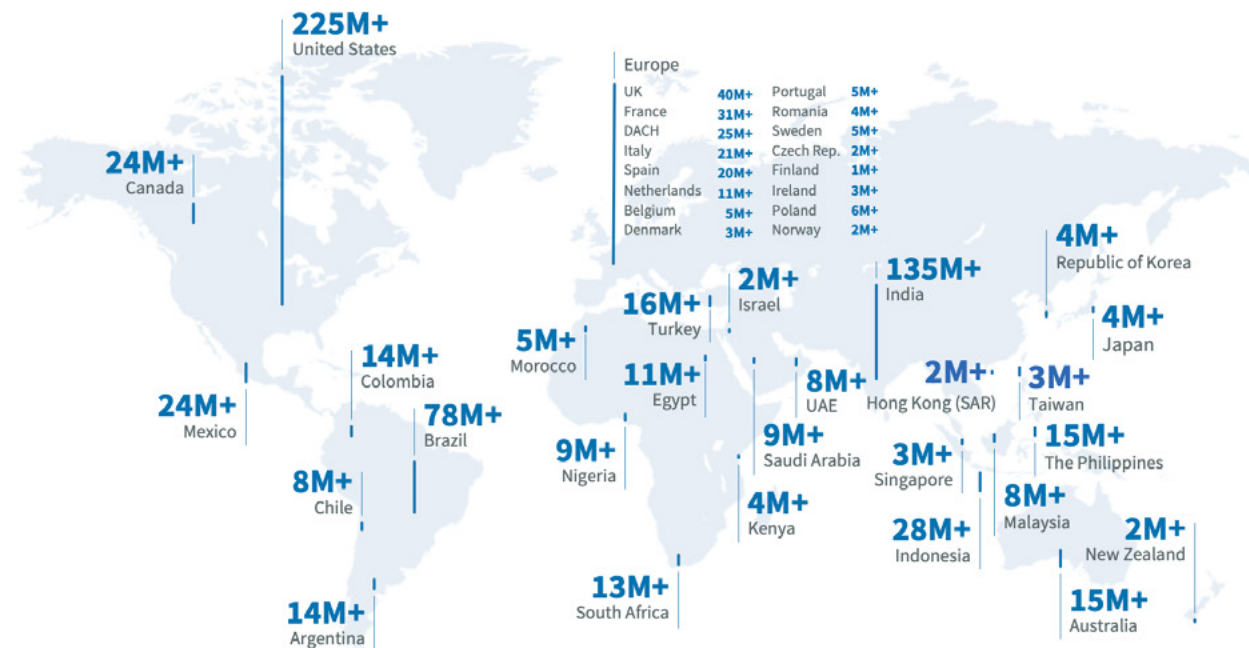
Measuring the effectiveness of social selling efforts can be complex. Unlike traditional sales activities, which have clear metrics and conversion points, social selling often involves long-term relationship building that may not immediately translate into sales.

Determining the ROI of social selling initiatives requires an understanding of how social interactions contribute to the broader sales process.

5. Social Selling and LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network, with a mission to connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful and a vision to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce.

More than 1 billion members in 200 countries and regions worldwide*



*FY24/Q4 Membership: numbers are updated quarterly after Microsoft Earnings

LinkedIn is a powerful tool for social selling because it offers a highly targeted platform to connect and network with influencers, decision-makers and potential customers. LinkedIn's features, such as **content sharing**, allow you to build and nurture relationships by showcasing your expertise and adding value. This helps you position yourself as a trusted advisor, foster meaningful interactions, and drive business growth.

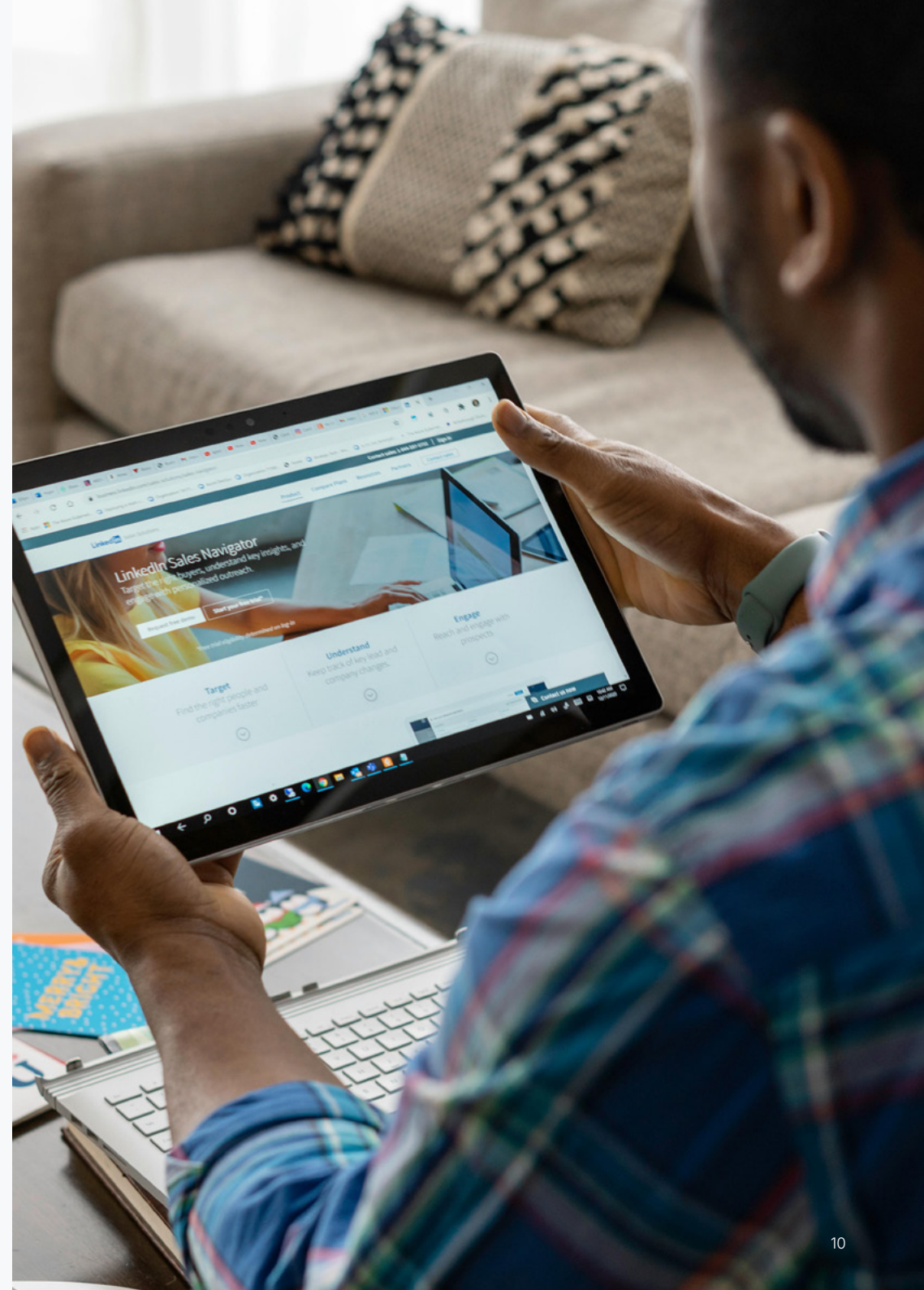
A **basic (free)** LinkedIn account provides limited access to features like personalised connection requests and messaging, which can make lead generation and social selling more time-consuming and less targeted.

However, upgrading to a **Premium Business** account provides access to valuable tools like **"Who's Viewed Your Profile"** allowing users to identify potential leads and engage with those who have shown interest in their profile. This visibility helps prioritise outreach to warmer prospects.

A **Sales Navigator** account takes social selling to the next level, offering advanced search filters, lead recommendations, and the ability to track and engage with specific leads. Sales Navigator also provides insights into company updates and key decision-makers, enabling more personalised and effective outreach.

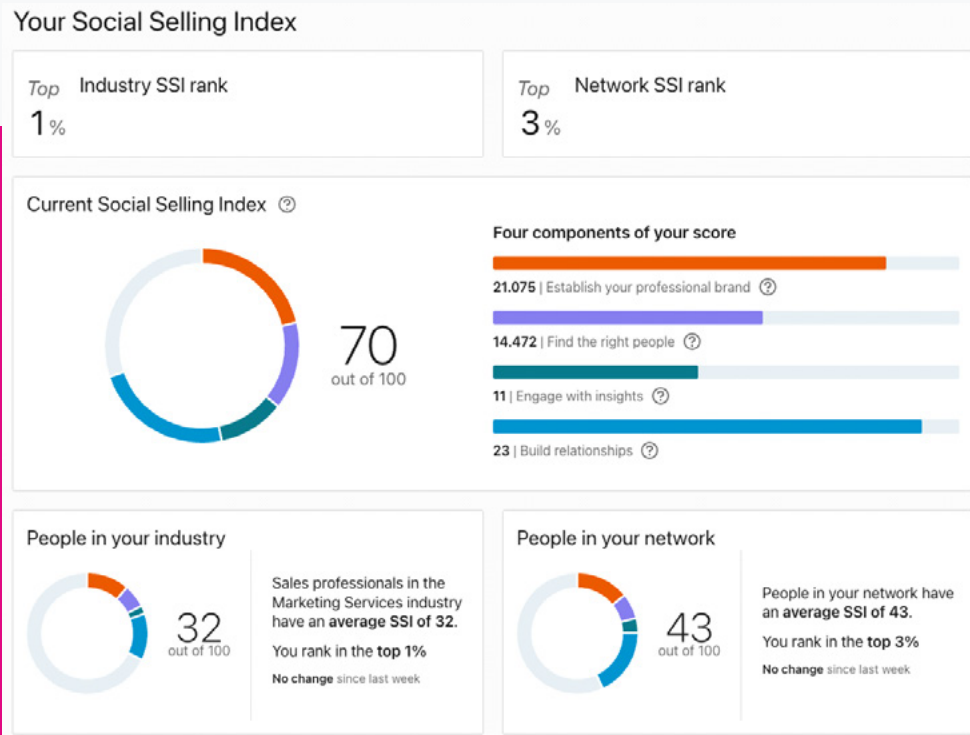
For a comparison of account features, visit:

<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a545596>



6. LinkedIn's Social Selling Index (SSI)

When you visit LinkedIn's **Social Selling Index (SSI)** page, you'll see a chart (like the one below) that visually represents your SSI score. This measures your effectiveness in using LinkedIn for social selling and is broken down into four key areas.



Establishing your professional brand – Reflects how well you are positioning yourself as an expert by sharing relevant content and engaging with your network.

Finding the right people – Measures how effectively you are identifying and connecting with the right prospects.

Engaging with insights – Evaluates how well you are building relationships by sharing valuable insights and participating in meaningful conversations.

Building relationships – Assesses your ability to cultivate strong connections with decision-makers and influencers.

Each of these components contributes to your overall SSI score, which ranges from 0 to 100, with a higher score indicating a stronger social selling presence on LinkedIn.

Data is updated weekly and provides a useful indicator for your social selling-based activity on LinkedIn.

Go to this website page to discover your SSI score:
<https://www.linkedin.com/sales/ssi>

Take note of the areas where you can improve your LinkedIn profile and activity.

7. Establishing a Personal Brand

Amazon Founder Jeff Bezos said, *'Your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room.'*

Using a personal LinkedIn profile for social selling is important because it allows individuals to build direct, personalised relationships with potential customers, showcasing their expertise and fostering trust through one-on-one interactions.

While a LinkedIn company page can raise brand awareness, it lacks the personal touch that a personal profile offers, making it less effective for building deeper connections.

Personal LinkedIn profiles also have higher engagement rates, as people tend to engage more with individuals rather than brands.

On average, employees have **ten times more** 1st-degree connections on LinkedIn than a company page has followers

Content shared by employees is **eight times more likely** to engage audiences and **24 times more likely** to be reshared compared to content shared by brands.

Content shared by employees is clicked through **twice as often**, indicating higher effectiveness in driving website traffic and engagement.

Source: LinkedIn, The Official Guide to Employee Advocacy



Everyone has a **personal brand**. The key to using it as a tool for social selling is to think consciously about how you want others to talk about you (*when you're not in the room*); to consider how you can use LinkedIn to **present yourself in the way you would like to be perceived**. This starts with your LinkedIn profile and is supported by the content you share and how you interact with others on the platform.

Building your personal brand online involves several key steps. It begins with **connecting** with industry peers, potential clients, and thought leaders to expand your network.

Next, **be visible** by consistently sharing valuable and relevant content that showcases your expertise and insights. This visibility helps establish your authority and engage with your audience.

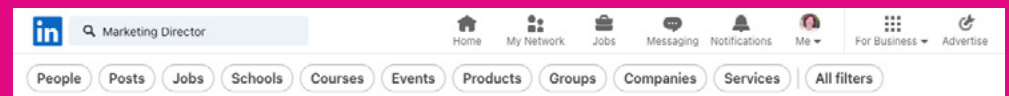
Finally, **nurture relationships** through personalised messaging and interactions to deepen connections and foster trust. By actively engaging and providing value, you can effectively build and strengthen your personal brand online.

8. Finding Your Target Audience on LinkedIn

Social selling starts with knowing WHO you want to engage with via social media. Only then can you build meaningful relationships, adding value and being helpful.

Understanding your target audience involves identifying the specific individuals who are most likely to benefit from your products, services, or expertise. This means focusing on factors such as their industry, job title, geographic location, and professional interests.

You can use various filters to refine your search on LinkedIn.



Keywords

Enter relevant keywords related to the person's job title, skills, or industry to find profiles that match your search.

Location

Refine your search by geographic location to find professionals or companies based in a particular area. This is useful for targeting regional opportunities or networking within specific locations.

Industry

Filter your search by industry to discover professionals and companies that operate within a certain sector.

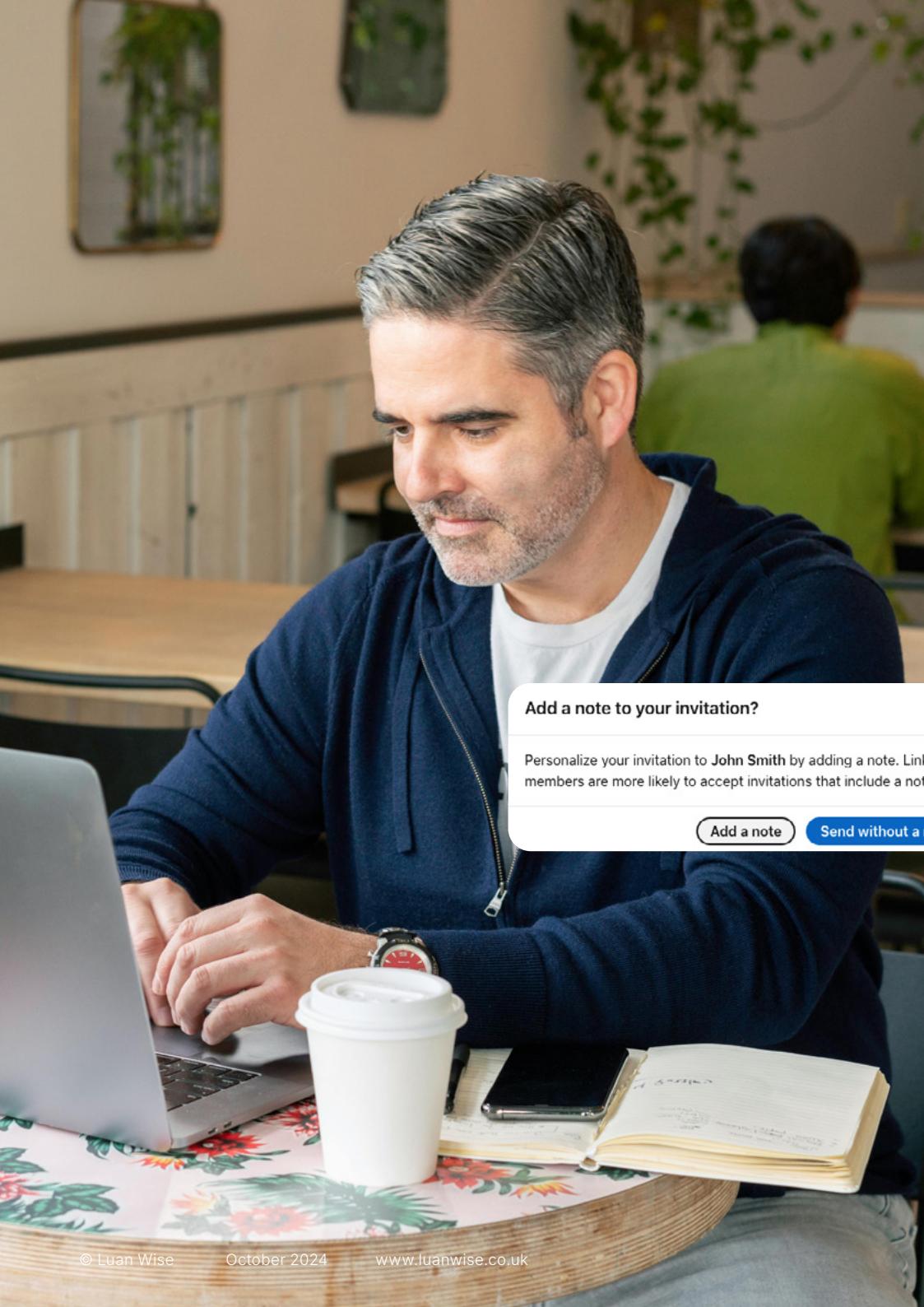
Company Details

Search for profiles associated with specific companies or explore the company pages themselves to find employees, news updates, and more. This can be useful for understanding company culture and connecting with key decision-makers.

9. Building Your Network on LinkedIn

Building your network on LinkedIn is essential for expanding your reach and uncovering new business grounds. By actively looking for opportunities to connect, such as when a prospect wins an award or reaches a professional milestone, you can send personalised connection requests that resonate.

Personalising a connection request on LinkedIn is valuable in making a strong first impression and increasing the likelihood of acceptance. By adding a personalised message, you show that you're genuinely interested in connecting and provide context for why you want to build a relationship. (To note: with a free LinkedIn account, there are limitations on the number of personalising connection requests you can send each month).



On desktop, after clicking “Connect,” select “Add a note” to craft a brief, tailored message. On mobile, tap the “three dots” then “Personalize invite” to write your personalised introduction.

Below are example scenarios and messages you could use when sending a connection request via LinkedIn. Your message cannot be longer than 300 characters.

Recent Post: “Hello [Name], I really enjoyed your recent post on [topic]. It was insightful and thought-provoking. Let’s connect—I’d love to stay updated with your content!”

Thanks for Commenting / Sharing a Recent Post:
“Hi [Name], thanks for commenting/sharing my post on [specific topic]! I appreciate your support. I’d love to connect and keep in touch.”

Winning an Award: “Hi [Name], congrats on winning the [specific award]! That’s a fantastic achievement. I’d love to connect and hear more about your work and experiences.”

Industry Peer: “Hi [Name], I’ve been following your work in [industry/field] and think we share a lot of similar interests. I’d love to connect and exchange ideas and insights with someone at a similar stage.

A LinkedIn Suggestion: “Hi [Name], LinkedIn suggested we connect. I’m impressed by your work in [specific area] and would love to add you to my network.”

Event or Conference: “Hi [Name], it was great meeting you at [Event Name]! I enjoyed our conversation about [specific topic or shared interest]. I’d love to connect and continue our discussion. Looking forward to staying in touch!”

Podcast: “Hi [Name], I just listened to your episode on [Podcast Name] and found your insights on [specific topic] really inspiring. I’d love to connect and keep up with your work. Thanks for sharing your expertise!”

Industry Article: “Hi [Name], I read your recent article and was particularly struck by your quote on [specific topic]. I’d love to connect and discuss your insights further. Thanks for sharing such valuable thoughts!”

10. Managing the Invitations You Receive on LinkedIn

Managing invitations on LinkedIn is an important step for maintaining a professional and relevant network.

When you receive a **connection request**, carefully review the sender's profile to assess whether their background, industry, and interests align with your networking goals. Consider the **context of the invitation**—whether it's a potential business opportunity, a mutual connection, or someone whose work you admire. If the invitation seems relevant and aligns with your professional objectives, accept it to expand your network and foster new relationships.

If the request doesn't align with your goals or appears to be from a spam account, you have the option to ignore or politely decline it.

Once you **accept a connection request**, it's a good practice to **follow up with a personalised message** to introduce yourself and outline potential areas of mutual interest. This initial communication helps to establish a **stronger connection** and sets the stage for future interactions.

Additionally, regularly review your list of connections to ensure that your network remains relevant and valuable. It's OK to unfollow or remove a connection if they are not adding value to you.

Note: When you're connected with someone on LinkedIn, you'll both see each other's posts and updates in your feeds. If you choose to unfollow them, their updates will no longer appear in your LinkedIn feed, but you'll stay connected.

11. Posting Content on LinkedIn

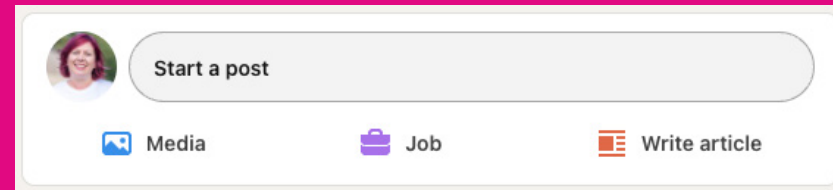
On your LinkedIn profile, you can create a variety of posts to engage with your network and share valuable content:

Text posts: Simple updates or insights that consist of just text. Up to 3,000 characters are available.

Image posts: Posts that feature one or more images. You can use a JPG, PNG or GIF file format, or for multiple images create a PDF document.

Video posts: These posts allow you to share videos directly on LinkedIn, up to 5GB and 10 minutes. For longer videos you might wish to include a link to a video hosted on YouTube or Vimeo.

Polls: Create polls to gather opinions or insights from your network on various topics. This interactive format can drive engagement and provide valuable feedback.



Longer-form content:

Articles: Publish in-depth articles on LinkedIn to share expert insights, industry analysis, or thought leadership.

Newsletters: If you have a series of related articles or updates, LinkedIn's newsletter feature allows you to create and distribute content directly to subscribers.

Events: You can create and promote events on LinkedIn, such as webinars, conferences, or meetups. This feature includes details like date, time, and location, and allows users to RSVP and engage with event updates.

Top Tips for Posting Content on LinkedIn

Post consistently: Develop a posting schedule that suits your workflow and stick to it. LinkedIn content generally has a longer shelf life compared to other platforms, so find a cadence that works for you, whether it's weekly or bi-weekly. This allows you to test different types of content and learn what resonates best with your audience over time.

Focus on accessibility: Ensure your content is accessible to all users. This includes using alt text for images and videos, ensuring good contrast for readability, and structuring your posts with clear headings and concise language. When using hashtags, consider CamelCase (e.g., #SocialSellingTips) to make them easier to read and understand.

Use hashtags and emojis: Include relevant hashtags and emojis in your posts to increase visibility and engagement. Use hashtags to categorize your content and reach a broader audience interested in specific topics. Emojis can add a personal touch and make your posts more engaging but use them sparingly and appropriately. If you're not sure about what emojis to use, visit www.emojipedia.org

Add value: Focus on sharing content that provides value to your audience. This could be industry insights, practical tips, or thought leadership. High-quality, relevant content will attract and engage your network, establishing you as a knowledgeable resource.

12. Commenting on LinkedIn

Interacting with your LinkedIn newsfeed and commenting on posts are essential practices for adding value to both the content author and your network.

When you engage with posts by **liking, sharing, or commenting**, you contribute to the visibility and reach of the content. This not only supports the author by amplifying their message but also demonstrates your active participation in relevant discussions. **Thoughtful comments** can provide additional insights, ask questions, or share related experiences, which enriches the conversation and fosters a deeper connection with the author and other readers.

Commenting on posts also enhances your presence within your network by showcasing your expertise and interest in industry topics. It helps build relationships by initiating meaningful interactions and establishing you as an engaged and knowledgeable professional. Remember, LinkedIn's SSI (*Social Selling Index*) score includes effective engagement with insights and building relationships as a key component of successful social selling.

By regularly **interacting with your newsfeed**, you not only stay informed about industry trends but also position yourself as a valuable contributor to your professional community.

Here's some example scenarios:

Promotion Announcement

"Congrats, [Name], on your promotion! Well deserved—can't wait to see what you achieve next!"

Book Launch

"Congrats on your book launch, [Name]! I'm excited to read it and see your insights in print. Well done!"

Fundraising Involvement

"Great job, [Name], on the fundraising effort! Your work for [cause] is truly inspiring. Keep it up!"



13. Sending Direct Messages via LinkedIn

Not all interactions on LinkedIn need to be public; private messages can also be a valuable tool for meaningful engagement.

Before connecting with someone, you might use InMail or a connection request message to introduce yourself and explain why you're reaching out. An InMail is a direct messaging feature on LinkedIn that allows you to contact individuals outside of your immediate network, making it useful for reaching out to potential clients or connections you can't message directly through standard connection requests. InMail credits are available as part of LinkedIn's premium (paid) accounts.

After connecting, direct messages provide an opportunity to build on the newly established relationship. This is the ideal time to engage in more detailed discussions, share insights, or explore potential collaborations. Your message can be more open-ended and conversational, reflecting on your initial connection and suggesting ways to continue the dialogue. Whether you're proposing a virtual coffee chat, sharing relevant resources, or simply expressing enthusiasm about connecting, maintaining a professional and friendly tone will help solidify your new connection and foster a productive networking relationship.

Use the 'aeroplane' icon under a post in your newsfeed to share it privately or go to the messaging tab on the desktop or mobile app to find a contact to message.

When someone views your LinkedIn profile, it's a prime opportunity to engage with them. This information is available via your LinkedIn homepage. With a free account, you have limited visibility into who is viewing your profile, whereas a premium account offers unlimited access to profile viewers, allowing you to more effectively target and connect with those who show interest in your work.

Here are some example messages you might send to someone who has viewed your profile: the first is for someone you are not yet connected with, and the second is for someone who is already a connection.

Hi <first name>

I hope you're having a good week.

I noticed that you have recently viewed my LinkedIn profile and since we haven't spoken before I wanted to check to see if you found what you were looking for, or if I can help at all?

Regards,
<name>

Hi <first name>

How are you?

I noticed you have taken a look at my LinkedIn profile this week, which prompted me to get back in touch! <Refer to previous conversation...>

Regards,
<name>



14. LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn Groups are online communities within LinkedIn where professionals with similar interests, industries, or goals come together to discuss topics, share insights, and build valuable connections.

Groups offer a space for members to engage in conversations, ask questions, and access resources related to their field or areas of expertise. Participating in LinkedIn Groups can help individuals broaden their network, stay informed about industry trends, and enhance their visibility by contributing meaningful content and commentary.

To get involved, start by identifying groups that align with your interests or target audience. You can search for groups using LinkedIn's search bar, exploring keywords relevant to your industry or profession. Once you join a group, be proactive by introducing yourself, participating in discussions, and sharing valuable insights to demonstrate your expertise. Engaging regularly in group conversations will help you build relationships with other professionals and potentially attract new business opportunities.

15. A Social Selling Routine

To effectively leverage LinkedIn for social selling, a structured routine is useful for maximising your outreach and engagement. This routine includes preparatory steps to optimise your profile daily tasks for maintaining active interactions, and weekly activities to refine your approach and expand your network.

Getting Ready

Optimise Your Profile

Profile picture: Ensure your profile picture is professional and up-to-date.

Headline and Summary: Craft a compelling headline and summary that clearly convey your value proposition and expertise. Use relevant keywords to improve visibility.

Experience and Skills: Update your experience section to highlight recent achievements and skills. Add recommendations to build credibility.

Contact Information: Make sure your contact details are current and easy to find.

Check Privacy Settings

Profile Visibility: Adjust settings to ensure your profile is visible to your target audience. Decide who can see your connections and activity.

Notifications: Configure your notifications to stay informed about important interactions without being overwhelmed.

Data Sharing: Review your data-sharing settings to control who can see your profile updates and interactions.

Daily Tasks

Monitor notifications

Review connection requests, messages, and engagement on your posts. Respond promptly to maintain active engagement.

Engage with content in your newsfeed

Like, comment on, and share relevant posts from your network and industry leaders. This helps increase your visibility and fosters relationships.

Connect with new contacts

Send personalised connection requests to new prospects, industry peers, or individuals you meet at events or through mutual connections. Respond to connection requests you receive.

Engage with existing contacts

Check the 'Catch up' tab within 'My Network' where you will see updates about existing connections such as birthdays, work milestones and job changes.

Weekly Tasks

Post valuable content

Share insights, articles, or updates that provide value to your network. Aim for consistency in posting to keep your audience engaged.

Analyse engagement metrics

Review analytics on your posts, profile views, and connection requests to gauge the effectiveness of your social selling efforts. Identify what's working and what needs adjustment.

Expand your network

Identify and connect with new potential leads or influencers in your industry. Use LinkedIn's advanced search features to find individuals who match your target criteria.

Engage in Groups

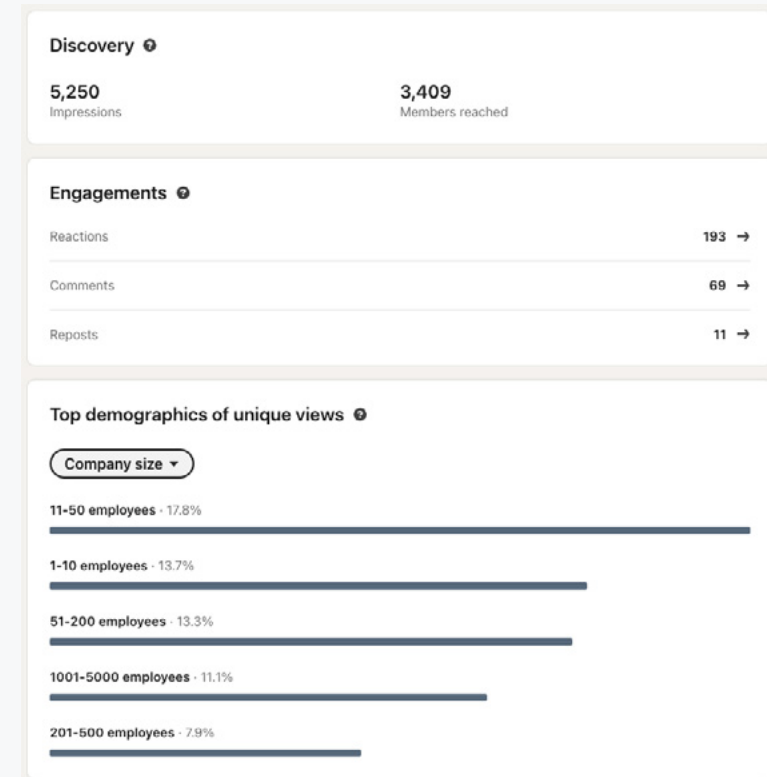
Participate in LinkedIn groups. Share your expertise and contribute to discussions to establish yourself as a thought leader.

16. Measures of Success

Measuring your success on LinkedIn involves analysing various metrics to understand how well your profile and content are performing.

On a personal profile, LinkedIn provides data such as profile views and search appearances. Profile views indicate how many people have visited your profile, giving insight into your visibility and the effectiveness of your networking efforts. Search appearances show how often your profile appears in search results, helping you gauge the reach of your profile in search queries relevant to your industry or expertise.

When you post original content, LinkedIn offers metrics to assess engagement and impact. Key data points include post views, likes, comments, and shares, which reflect how well your content resonates with your audience.



*Analytics for a LinkedIn post (personal profile).
You can view discovery, engagement and demographic profiles.*

To fully assess your success on LinkedIn, it's crucial to tie these metrics to broader sales and marketing activities. For instance, evaluate how LinkedIn engagement correlates with tangible outcomes such as scheduled meetings, pipeline progression, and overall sales performance. By linking your LinkedIn activity to these business metrics, you can better understand the effectiveness of your social selling efforts and refine your approach to achieve your professional goals.



17. Conclusion

Social selling is the modern way of selling by understanding your customers, building relationships, and offering help and bespoke solutions to customers' problems. It's not a quick fix, but a steady process by which you build your brand, garner trust, and are alert to opportunities to start conversations with customers; conversations that might lead organically to a sale.

To be effective at social selling, you first need to know:

Who you are: what your business does, your values and what makes you unique. *Who are your customers:* their demographic, the problems they face, and the questions they are asking.

To build momentum for social selling, you need to:

Ensure that all your social media profiles are complete and up-to-date. Be consistent and authentic in your content and messages. Listen regularly for opportunities to help customers or demonstrate your expertise.

Most importantly, once you've established a connection with someone, try to take the conversation offline and into the real world. Meet face-to-face and enjoy a coffee together.

18. About Luan Wise

Luan Wise is a chartered marketer and fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (FCIM) with over 20 years' experience in agency, client-side and consultancy roles working across sectors including b2b and b2c professional services, higher education, manufacturing, learning & development and more.

A specialist in social media, Luan has trained thousands of business professionals across the world via open social media training courses and in-house programmes. She is a course instructor for LinkedIn Learning and an accredited lead trainer for Facebook and Instagram.

Luan is author of the 'Relax! It's Only Social Media' and 'Planning for Success: A practical guide to setting and achieving your social media marketing goals', 'Using Social Media for Work: How to maintain professional etiquette online' and 'Smart Social Media: How to grow your business with social media marketing'

If you're looking for support in using LinkedIn for social selling, get in touch via email: sayhello@luanwise.co.uk

For further information about Luan, visit www.luanwise.co.uk or search @luanwise on:

