Read me

If you want to effectively engage **key decision makers on LinkedIn**

#5 in a series of 6

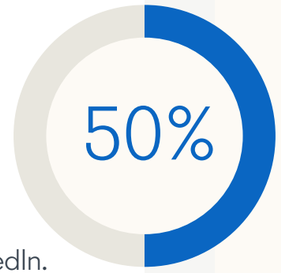
LinkedIn

Why it matters

If you or your sales reps need to connect with business decision makers, LinkedIn should be a prime destination.

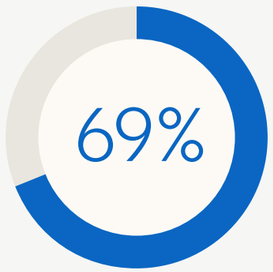
Half of all B2B buyers

use LinkedIn as a resource when making purchase decisions.



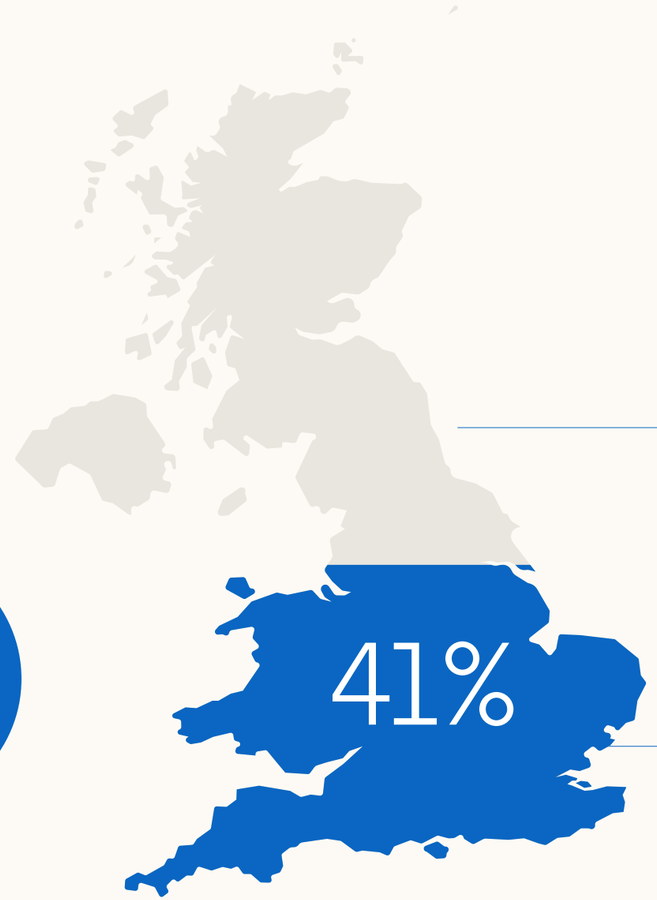
And they are open to interactions with sales professionals, given the professional context of LinkedIn.

You can bet every modern B2B seller seeks out and builds relationships by engaging with prospects who are active on LinkedIn. In fact, research proves this out.



of top salespeople

— those who exceeded their projected target revenue by more than 25% — use LinkedIn.com as a social media platform, **10% more likely than their contemporaries.**



In the UK, top sellers are **41% more likely to describe themselves as very active on LinkedIn.**[1]

Sales intelligence is also an increasingly important factor in sales technology investment, understanding the broader applications of how data can inform your sales strategy has grown in priority in recent years.

In Europe, LinkedIn tops the list of sales intelligence tool preference, **with nearly half of all sellers using it for this purpose.**[2]

Read on for

6 proven steps

to improve your sales strategy on LinkedIn

[1] LinkedIn, Ultimate Guide to Sales Prospecting: Tips, Techniques and Tools | [2] LinkedIn State of Sales report, 2020.

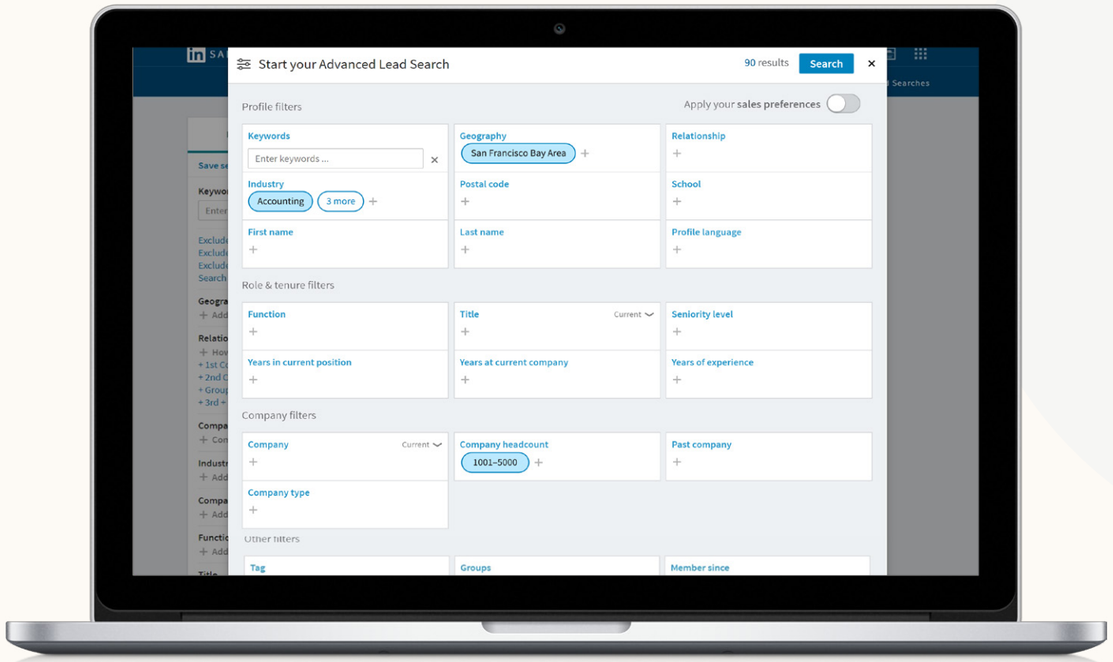
Step 1

Target the right buyers and companies with the Advanced Search feature

Every closed deal starts with a solid relationship between a sales pro and the decision makers within an account. To zero in on the best prospects, start by creating an ideal customer profile, do this by comparing the characteristics of your top performing sales recently, and who you understand your key audience to be.

Your ideal customer profile can help you narrow in on top customers in relation to the metrics that indicate high sales value, such as revenue amount, contract renewals, or profitability. When reviewing your last top 20 deals, answer the following questions:

1. **What were the decision makers' job titles?**
2. **What size company did they work for?**
3. **In what industry?**
4. **How long had they worked in their role?**
5. **What else do they share in common?**



Understanding these details helps you prospect with purpose using LinkedIn Sales Navigator to search LinkedIn by title, position, and even seniority. For example, you might decide it makes sense to plug in terms like Account Manager, VP, and Product Manager.

Viewing decision makers by company of interest can help determine which ones are most active on LinkedIn. Those that post content and comment on or like others' posts clearly understand the value of social networks like LinkedIn. That means they are more likely to welcome interactions and invitations to connect via social media. That's your low-hanging fruit — start there.

Pro Tip

Events or Work Travel: Sales Navigator could help you better prepare for events or work travel. With a very targeted search within a geographic region, in a specific industry and/or within a list of named accounts, you could create a list of prospects to connect with before the event.

Step 2

Map the buying committee

The average B2B buying committee included

6.8 people[3]

The more headway you make engaging this buying committee and the more you invest in understanding each of their top priorities, the more likely you are to close a deal.

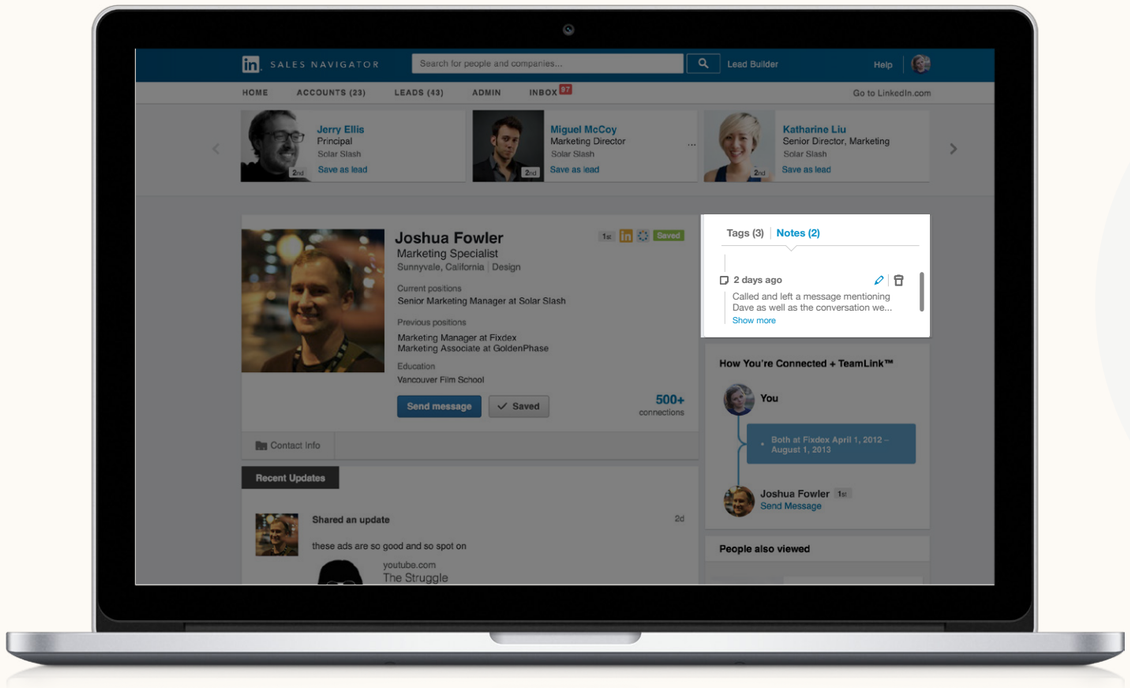
Sales team interconnectedness matters for productivity, our research shows that sales teams with high interconnectivity (multi-threaded) found and added three times as many decision-maker profiles to their network.

have 6+ connections with potential customers.[4]

Today, a rock-solid relationship with one top decision maker just isn't enough. Even if they're on board with your solution, they might be overruled or outflanked. To avoid this fate, you want to influence their associates so you can sway the buying committees from all sides.

Mapping the buying committee is far easier with LinkedIn Sales Navigator at your fingertips. With just a few quick searches, you get a high-level picture of an account's organisational structure. Calling upon advanced search on LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can then identify the crucial decision makers at the account. As a bonus, these searches provide insight into top priorities and pertinent topics as you see what content the company and its employees share.

Expanding your visibility within a company on LinkedIn is smart practice, buyers are five times more likely to engage someone with mutual connections on the platform. As your presence grows throughout the ranks of a target account, your outreach should lead to more interactions. Plus, you gain sway through your extended network, as buyers lean on their colleagues for recommendations.



Pro Tip

Having 6+ connections to the buyer can **increase win rate by 34% and shorten sales cycles by 10%.**

[3,4] LinkedIn Sales Technology Summit, 2019

LinkedIn

Step 3

Understand what buyers value

By spending an average of just 37% of their time selling, it's no wonder modern salespeople are increasingly overwhelmed and often more paralysed than empowered by sales technology.

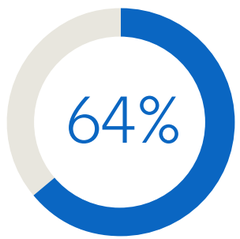
To gain the attention of empowered yet overwhelmed buyers, modern sales pros are doing more research than ever before. The goal is to present insights that get potential customers to take notice and move smoothly through the buyer journey.

With over

950 different technology solutions

out in the market currently, buyers are getting harder and harder to truly reach through all the noise.[5]

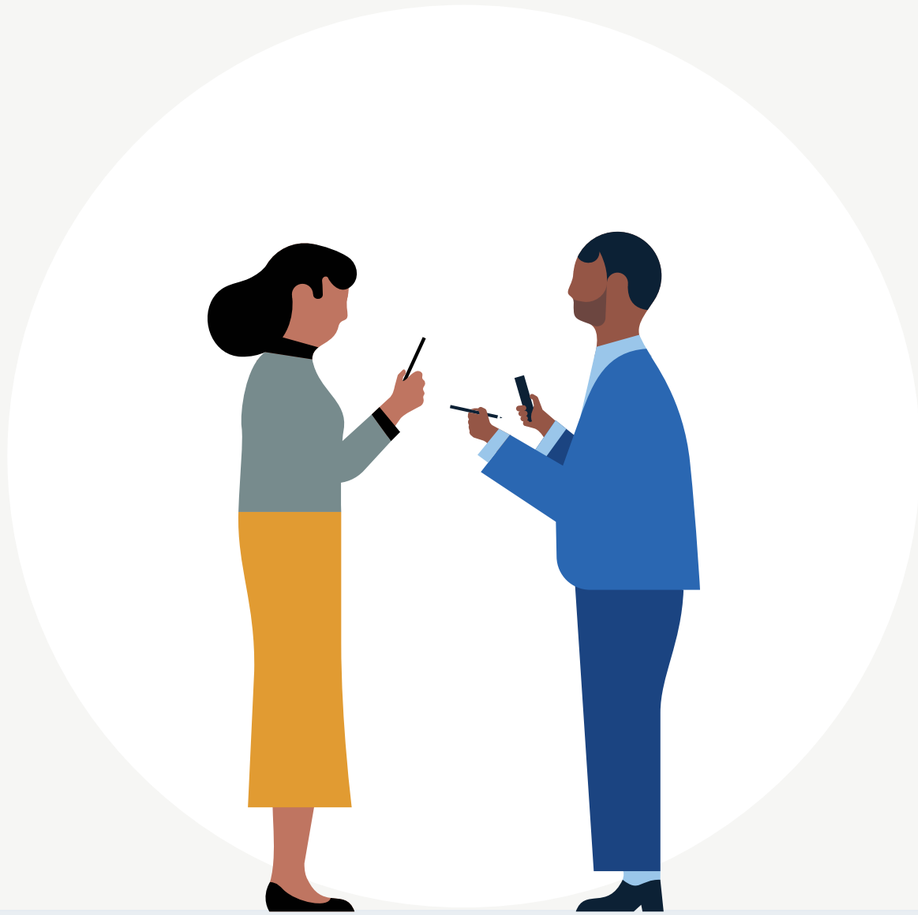
Sellers must have a solution that allows them to add value through their relationship, and approach the buyers' challenges as though they share them in order to gain their all-important trust.



of LinkedIn Sales Navigator users
believe that the service has adopted a buyer-first mindset.[6]

Each buyer's situation is unique, and there are nuances to the challenges they're faced with.

Get curious. Ask questions to understand their industry, business & role, what they're solving for, what success looks like for them, their timing, their dependencies, and their process. Then, leverage your expertise to help define the right buying process for them, and co-create the approach to achieving success, together.



[5] LinkedIn Sales technology Summit, 2019 | [6] LinkedIn Insights, Global Seller Quant Survey 2019

Step 4

Become a go-to resource online

62%

of business decision makers

look for an informative LinkedIn profile when deciding whether to work with a sales professional.

69%

of millenial buyers

are more likely to speak with a sales professional who has a professional social media presence.

That's why

49%

of all B2B buyers

make a point of researching sales reps on LinkedIn.

and

50%

of all B2B buyers

avoid reps with incomplete profiles.[7]

Moreover, **Millennials are expected to amount to 46% of the global workforce this year**[8], and are known to be more likely to research sellers on social networks. There is an obvious need to ensure your sales are boasting solid profiles.

Make yourself that source and a trustworthy ally by steadily posting thoughtful and thought-provoking content about your industry, a relevant niche, or a top-of-mind issue. Show potential clients that you're focused and committed by regularly posting interesting, engaging updates to LinkedIn.

Leverage industry data and news on LinkedIn by:

- ☑ Sharing links to interesting industry reports in your status updates
- ☑ Including data and statistics when commenting on prospects' status updates or in LinkedIn Group discussions
- ☑ Promoting your posts in multiple ways to drive plenty of views, such as by including a link in your professional email, and on other social sites
- ☑ Use relevant hashtags when posting in order to your content. **5 hashtags are recommended as a maximum** so that you still come across as sincere.

Think of yourself as a teacher, and develop or curate content that can help buyers confidently make the best purchase decision for themselves and their companies.

Pro Tip

Consider using solutions like LinkedIn Elevate to easily distribute your content. Salespeople who regularly share content are 45% more likely to exceed quota.[9]

[7] LinkedIn 2019, 14 tips to get your LinkedIn profile selling harder for you this year | [8] LinkedIn Sales Technology Summit, 2020 | [9] LinkedIn Elevate, 2020

Step 5

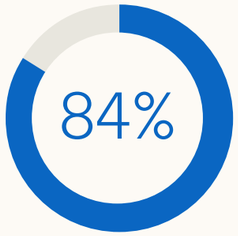
Score a warm Introduction

Time-starved decision makers are too busy to respond to cold outreach. **90% of decision makers say they never respond to cold outreach. And, of those, only 28% engage in conversations.**[10] With sales content and messages bombarding them at every turn, buyers are increasingly selective about where to spend their time. To that end, they rely on relationships and personal connections during their research process.

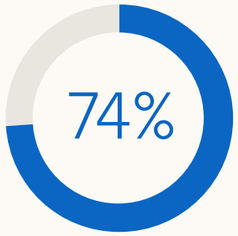
An effective way to beat the odds is to warm up your outreach by asking a mutual LinkedIn connection for an introduction.

LinkedIn Sales Navigator can illuminate connections between your teammates and colleagues and these decision makers. You'll see connections with everyone else on your sales team – even if you're directly not connected to those colleagues on LinkedIn.

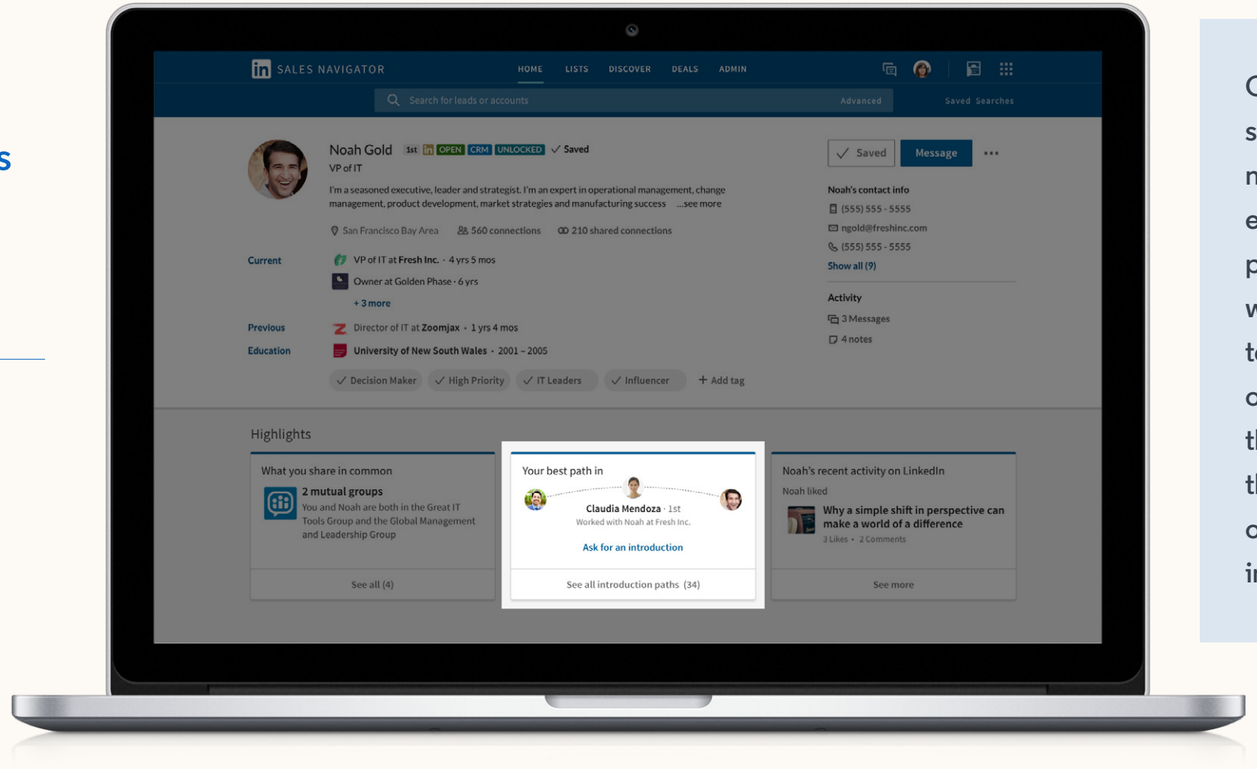
The TeamLink feature also shows how you are connected to a contact. Through your LinkedIn network, you might find that an acquaintance, or former classmate or colleague is also connected to a decision maker. Tapping into these resources paves the way for warm introductions into an account.



of B2B decision makers
begin their buying process with a referral



of buyers
choose the sales rep who was first to add value and insight.[11]



Once you come across a match, send a friendly LinkedIn InMail message to your connection explaining how the prospect will potentially benefit by engaging with you. Include a message template they can use in their outreach to make it easy for them to follow through. Taking these steps boosts the likelihood of your connection making the introduction.

[10] LinkedIn 2019, 14 tips to get your LinkedIn profile selling harder for you this year | [11] LinkedIn, 2020. Bringing Modern Selling to Life with Sales Navigator to Acquire New Business

Step 6

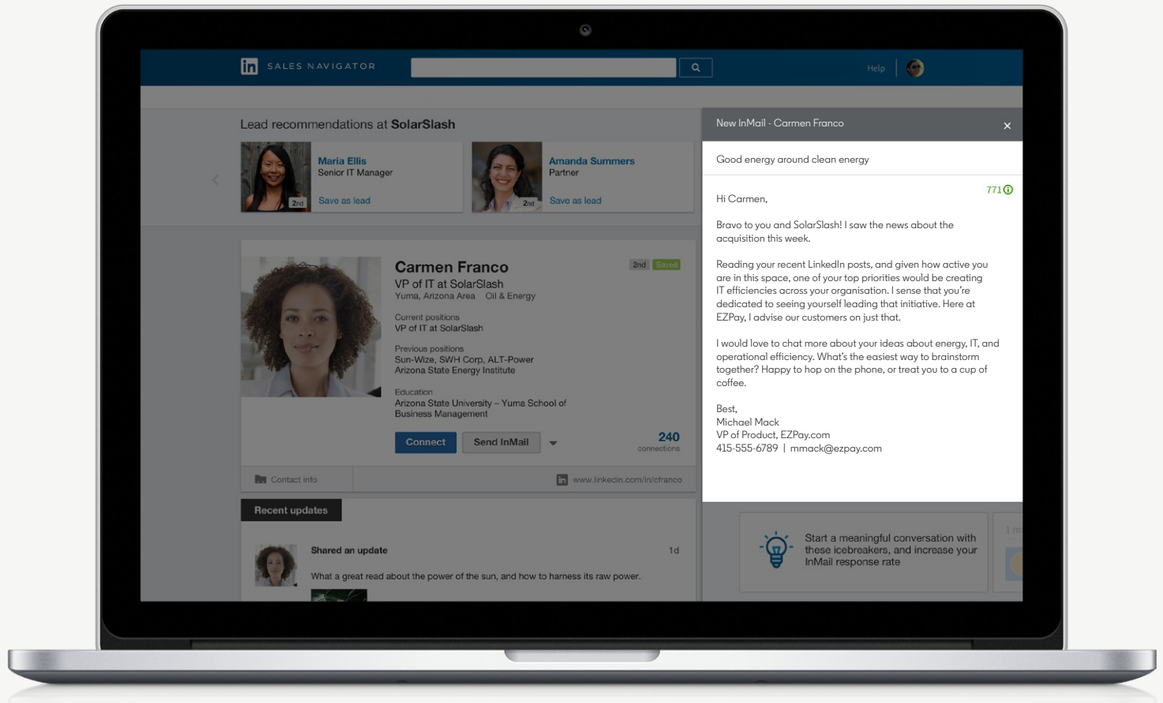
Engage with personalised outreach

To get prospects to respond to your outreach, you need to communicate from the beginning that you understand their situation, needs and challenges. Delivering unique, relevant insights is among the most effective ways to personalise your outreach. It starts by studying the world from their perspective.

Pay attention to what LinkedIn members regularly post to their profiles. Look for digital clues such as the following to start conversations:

- **Company news:** Major organisation-level changes like acquisitions, cutting costs, and a new strategic direction.
- **Job change:** When potential buyers change jobs, it might mean you need to find a new champion or sponsor for a purchase. Or it could open doors to new opportunities as you follow them into their new roles.
- **Status updates:** Updates reveal prospects' top concerns and priorities, providing invaluable insight into what can spark engaging discussions.
- **Blog posts:** Add insightful comments or link to a prospect's LinkedIn long-form post, or reference or comment on a prospect's ideas in your own posts.

Your target audience is interested in the latest and greatest industry developments, but they also want to see your unique take on what's happening. When you look for content to share with your prospects, focus on providing insights that will help them make more informed decisions about the challenges they face in their industry.



Conclusion

Breaking it down

Here's how to apply these best practices step by step:

- ☑ **Find decision makers** and the colleagues and peers who influence them.
- ☑ **Save these people** as "Leads" in LinkedIn Sales Navigator.
- ☑ **Find and follow them** on LinkedIn to learn about their pains, challenges, motivations, and goals.
- ☑ **Work your network** to find a referral path.
- ☑ **Begin engaging** with potential buyers via LinkedIn.
- ☑ **Identify and share content,** information, and ideas that will provide value to these decision makers.
- ☑ **Build a relationship of trust** across the target account.

About us

LinkedIn Sales Navigator makes it simple to establish and grow relationships with prospects and customers by helping you tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of 675 million members. Designed for sales professionals, LinkedIn Sales Navigator combines LinkedIn's network data, relevant news sources, and your accounts, leads, and preferences to produce customised recommendations and insights.

With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can focus on the right people and companies, stay up-to-date on what's happening with your accounts, and build trust with your prospects and customers.

Looking to get LinkedIn Sales Navigator for your team? Request a free demo.

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