

Top 5 Mistakes People Make When Prospecting on **LinkedIn**



Written by J.C. Granger, CEO

Mistake #1

The first mistake that most people make when trying to prospect on LinkedIn is that they start trying to sell and pitch in the invite to connect message, and it's ridiculous. Think of your invite message like a subject line for an email. If your subject line on the email said, *"Buy my stuff, buy my stuff, click here now,"* how many people do you think are going to open that email? The fact is, if nobody opened your email, it doesn't matter if you have the best email in the whole world or the best offer - no one is going to ever see it; the same thing applies to your invite message.



If your invite to connect message says things like, *"Hey, I just want to connect with you because we have this great offer for this new service that does X, Y, Z. Are you interested in connecting?"* Well, no, of course I'm not. I don't know you. I don't know your products yet. **I don't know your service.** There's almost nothing enticing about the offer that you're putting in an invite message for me.

The best way to create your invite message is to be very nonchalant about it. **Give prospects a reason as to why you're connecting.** It should have nothing to do with anything that you're selling. You also want to make sure that you include their name in it, which makes it personalized.

Mistake #2

An example of a good invite message might be something like:

"Hey John, I was taking a look at your profile and saw that we're both in the XYZ industry here in XYZ city. So I thought I'd reach out to say hello. I hope all is well."

This message is effective because it gives a reason as to why you're trying to connect with them. It shows effort and says, *"Hey, I actually took the time to look at your profile before reaching out."*



This message is very relaxed, targeted, a little personalized, and it gives a good reason for why you're wanting to connect. That's how you should draft your invite message. Remember, don't pitch in the invite message.

The second mistake that most people make when prospecting on LinkedIn is that they pitch in their welcome message. Now, what's a welcome message? **A welcome message is the first message you send after the person accepts your connection request.** So you've sent your invite message, the person accepts your connection request, and now you're going to send them a follow up message.

Now, why should you not pitch in your welcome message? Well, simply because they're expecting you to.

The thing about LinkedIn is that people get sold to so much on the platform. Here's the thing, people love buying stuff. They really do, but people hate being sold. On LinkedIn, they've come to expect that the first thing you're going to send them, even if they do actually connect with you and you weren't salesy in your invite message, is a pitch. They're going to ignore you if you do that.

Instead of selling, offer your targets something of value in the welcome message. Shake it up. If they're expecting you to do the sales pitch in the welcome message, then don't. **Offer them something of value instead.** One of the ones I like using personally goes along the lines of:



"Hey John, thanks for connecting with me here on LinkedIn. Anyway, I'm connected to a ton of people in our industry, so if you see anyone I'm connected with that you'd like an introduction to, let me know. Happy to help!"

In this message, I offered them something of value and I asked for nothing in return. On my profile, I get a ton of responses just from this welcome message and people always respond, saying, "Hey, thanks a lot." And some do ask me to introduce them to someone, and I do.

So again, the second mistake that people make is they try to pitch and sell in their welcome message, and I highly advise against that. Throw them off. **Prove them wrong about you, and instead, give them something of value.**

Now, there is one exception to this rule that I do want to note. The one exception I've come across is for podcasters looking for great podcast guests. Why? Because their pitch is something of value upfront. Say a podcaster looking for podcast guests. If they say in their welcome message, for example:

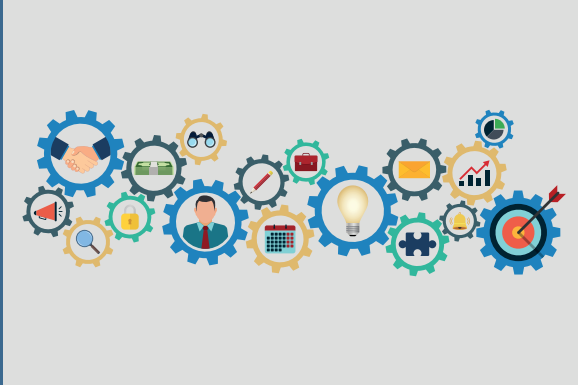


"Hey John, I host a podcast called Podcasters Are Us. I was looking at your profile and I thought you might be a great guest for it. Would you be interested in possibly being a guest on my show?"

The reason why we can give an exception to podcasters is that their sales pitch is something of value for the prospect without any charge. They're not selling anything (well, not yet anyway).

It's true - some podcasters try to get prospects on their show because they want to sell them something in the future; I do work with some companies that use podcasts as a sales funnel (and I highly suggest doing that). **There are also indie podcasters who are just legitimately looking for great podcast guests.**

I use podcasters as an example, but maybe you are a writer for a big magazine and you want to feature a new connection in an article. That's something that would make them happy and that's something that they would have no problem typically responding to in the first message that you send them. But, in general, the rule of thumb is don't sell or pitch in the welcome message. **Give them something of value instead.**



The third biggest mistake that people make when prospecting on LinkedIn is that they don't personalize their messages. Here's the

To avoid this, make sure that you use their name. ***"Hi John. Hi Jim. Hi Nancy. Hi Sue."***

First, you want to personalize the name. Second, personalize their job title like, ***“Hey John, I was trying to network with Vice Presidents of marketing agencies like yourself, because X, Y, Z.”***

Try personalizing and putting in their company name. For example:

“Hi John. I was looking for Vice Presidents of marketing agencies, like yourself, and I saw you work at XYZ company and I thought I would reach out,” or “I thought you might like this PDF.”



Again, you are going to eventually pitch and sell in your messages as you go on, but you want to make sure they're personalized to your prospect's name, their company, and their job title so that the person feels like you took the time out of your day to do a little research about them before sending them a message.

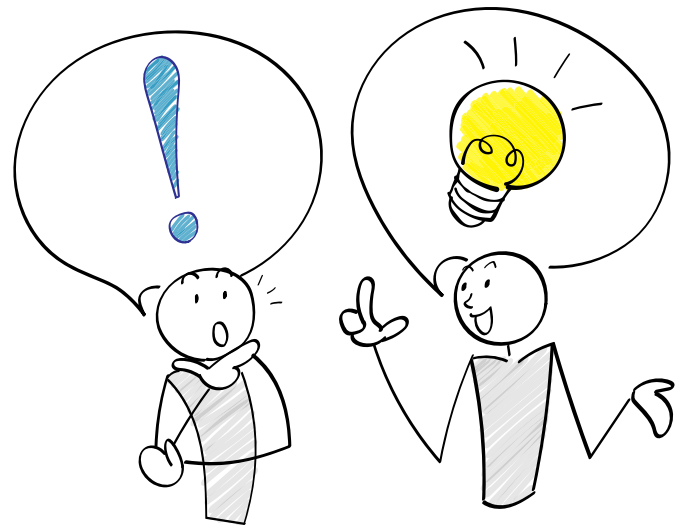
These personalized touches go a long way. You'd be surprised how many people don't personalize their communications on LinkedIn. Instead, they just copy and paste their messages, and their response conversion rates become dismally low. So in the future don't forget to always personalize your messages!

Mistake #4

The fourth biggest mistake people make when they're prospecting on LinkedIn is that they don't have a profile that speaks to their target audience. This is a huge issue. If your profile generically says what your job title is and what you do, that's not good.

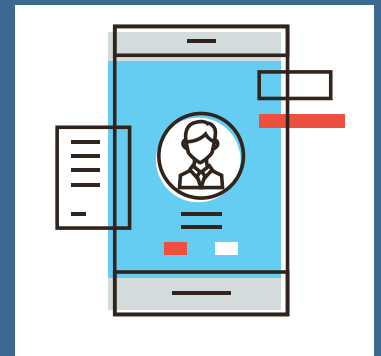
Your headline (the text just below your profile picture) must speak directly to your audience - if it doesn't, or if your summary section (the larger area between your profile picture and your job history) is lacking, then those are huge problems, especially when your connections want to learn more about you and how you can help them with the problems.

Here's a little known statistic: About 85 - 90% of all people considering connecting with, buying from or replying to you, are going to read your profile first. They're going to look at your profile and they're going to judge everything - even your background image.



Is your background the standard LinkedIn image with the blue lines or is it a custom one? Did you take the time to make a custom one or at least upload an image that's relevant to your industry or what you do? What's your profile picture look like? Are you riding a bike with shades on? Are you in a boat fishing with your back to the camera?

These types of pictures don't say anything about you professionally. Your profile is not a Facebook page. It's a LinkedIn page. You should have a professional headshot from the chest up, smiling, in good lighting, and looking at the camera. This gives potential connections the ability to connect with you on a personal level because they can see you.



Then onto your headline. **What does the line below your profile picture say?**

For example, mine says, ***"Helping B2B tech companies drive new revenue through digital marketing campaigns | CEO | Soccer Dad"***.

My headliner says who I help, what I help them do, and how I help them do it. Then I put my title and something personal about myself. The personal tidbit helps people connect with you emotionally. They might find something in common with you. I put soccer dad, so any male CEO who has a kid in soccer might relate to me a little more. That might give them a little more incentive to reply.

Then going down to the summary you want to write out in longer form exactly what problems you solve. So you usually want to start

with a few questions. **Turn the pain points that your prospects experience into question format.** Then, use the rest of that summary to solve those pain points and tell them how you do it. Just remember that you want to personalize everything - you want to make your profile talk directly to your target audience.



After you pick your perfect target audience, you want to make sure that it speaks just to those people and that it solves their problems. **Don't have a generic profile. Don't have a unprofessional Facebook-style profile picture.** Make sure you customize the background image.

That is the fourth biggest mistake that people make when prospecting on LinkedIn. They don't optimize their profile. So be sure to optimize yours so you stand out from the crowd.

Mistake #5

The fifth biggest mistake that people make when prospecting on LinkedIn is that they don't do an email follow-up.

I cannot possibly emphasize how bad this is. Here's the thing, people on LinkedIn are typically very responsive. That being said, most people don't check their LinkedIn every single day, 10 times a day.

Do you know what they check every day, 10 times a day? Their email.

It's not that you won't get a high response rate on LinkedIn, because you will. The problem is that you won't get it fast. **Some people check their LinkedIn one to three times a week.** Others check it once every couple of weeks.



It really depends on who your target demographic is. If your target demographic is more blue-collar businesses like construction companies or auto repair shops, they're going to check their LinkedIn maybe once every couple of weeks. If they're more white-collar corporate people in the tech or business consulting industry, they might check their LinkedIn 2 - 4 times a week.

But remember, most business professionals are checking their emails 10 - 20 times a day practically. Maybe even more.

Think about it - emails go right to their phones and even sends them an alert saying, *"You've got a new email."* This kind of immediacy is amazing, and something you can take advantage of.

If you have a paid subscription through LinkedIn (specifically, Sales Navigator) then when someone replies to you and you click on their profile, you can see a lot more of their information, like their email and sometimes even their phone number. So grab their email address and send them a quick email.

What's great about this particular outreach email is the first thing you've done is remind the person how they know you.

Because remember, if someone gets an email from you and their first reaction is, "Who's this person?" they're going to hit the spam

button, and you don't want that. You want to make sure that you quickly remind them how they know you so that they don't mark you as spam.

Your email should be light, casual, and relaxed, but it's also okay to be a little salesy. It's okay to get a little pitchy in email because people have a different expectation about what conversations they have in emails. This tactic allows you to pull the conversation out of LinkedIn into an email format, which has a 5:1 better response rate. Remember, LinkedIn is highly responsive, but email is 5x more responsive...and faster.



Here's a nice template for your first email:

"Hey John, thanks for connecting with me on LinkedIn. Anyway, I don't check LinkedIn as much as I should, but I'm always on my email so I thought I'd shoot you a quick message as well.

Anyway, here's a little bit about my company and what we do. I'd love to get on the phone with you sometime this week. Let me know if you have some time to chat."

Long story short, **I highly recommend that anytime you connect with someone that's an ideal prospect, make sure that you're following up with them on email** after you connect with them on LinkedIn.

I hope this was a helpful guide for you. Please take these top five mistakes and their fixes and implement them yourself.

And If you feel like all this work is a lot to do and you don't have the time and you want someone to help you do it, let us know. **At Infinity Marketing Group, we provide a completely done-for-you LinkedIn marketing service that can generate sales qualified leads for you fast.** And if you do have the time to do all of this yourself then I hope you put this information to good use to optimize your profile, get more sales, and grow your company.



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