

# Why LinkedIn is essential for building your sales pipeline

5-min read



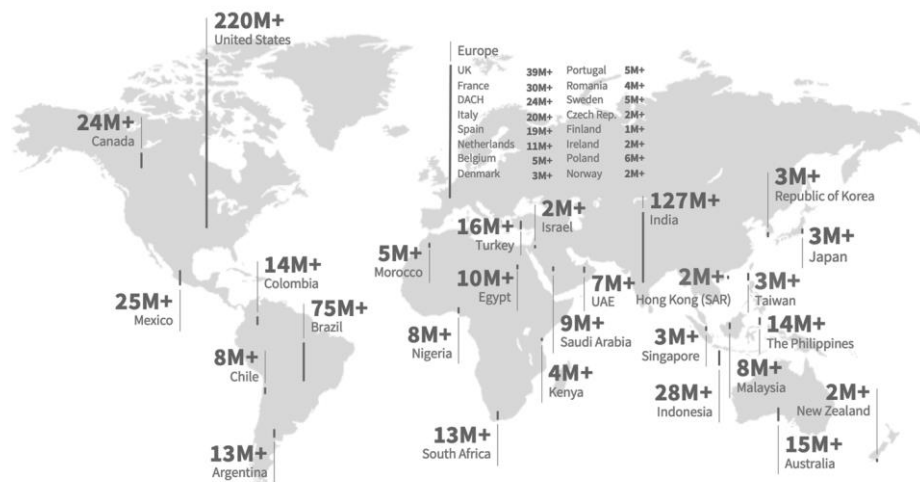
Whether you're selling products or services, you've heard that sales is a numbers game. And to hit your numbers, you constantly and consistently need to talk to new potential buyers or prospects. You've got to fill that pipeline with quality leads that you can nurture and convert.

So, based on a benchmark of a 5% to 10% conversion rate, how many decision-makers do you need to approach every month or every quarter? This is where LinkedIn can help.

Any social media platform can be used to generate more leads. But with over [1 billion users](#) worldwide and [growing levels of engagement](#), LinkedIn has established itself as a powerhouse for business-to-business (B2B) marketing and social selling.

In this blog, we'll discuss our two-pronged approach to making more sales using LinkedIn by:

1. Growing your reach – making yourself visible to your ideal prospects.
2. Connecting and converting prospects into buyers – the dos and don'ts of direct prospecting.



## First things first

Before you attempt anything else on LinkedIn, make sure to optimise your profile with a picture (who wants to see a grey circle?), a carefully crafted bio, and, most importantly, a clear headline.

In most cases, your job title and company name will say very little about what you actually do. So, to make your headline work for you, make sure to include your area of expertise and how you can help your ideal prospects.

It's also important to set targets and track your numbers to measure the effectiveness of your strategy over time. How many new leads do you aim to bring in through LinkedIn each quarter? And how many of them can you realistically get to hop on a call with you?

## Growing your reach for inbound connections

With 4 out of 5 LinkedIn members driving business decisions, it is no surprise that the platform has been [rated number 1 for B2B lead generation](#). Here are ways to make yourself more visible and attract your ideal prospects:

### A) Establish thought leadership

Creating and publishing valuable content related to your industry is one of the best ways to establish yourself as a thought leader in your field. Your posts are not only displayed on your page, they are shared with your network, which can drive traffic to your page, your company page, and, outside of LinkedIn, your company's website.

It pays to experiment with different types of posts to see which ones get the most engagement. A good mix of media will ensure that you cater for different parts of your audience as well. While some will spend 5 to 10 minutes reading a long-form article on a topic they're interested in, others might engage more with infographics or videos.

### B) Comment & engage

For your posts to appear more prominently in your prospects' feed, the algorithm needs to pick up on a level of engagement between you and them. So, when publishing content, think about how you can get a conversation started.

And when people do comment on your posts, make sure to reply. Be thankful for the time they're investing in you and see how you can keep the dialogue going. A sustained two-way interaction between members will signal to the LinkedIn algorithm that you know each other and are interested in seeing more of each other's content.

Targeted commenting can be a powerful way of expanding your network too. Seek out those decision-makers who would benefit from your products or services, and react to their content. This will ensure that you don't only become visible to them but also to their network. For this to be most effective, it may be worth using LinkedIn Sales Navigator, as it allows you to track your prospects and gain valuable insights.

However, our partner [Tony Restell](#) from [Social Hire](#) warns against relying exclusively on this method:

“The majority of people on LinkedIn are ‘lurkers’ – they are looking at other people's content, but they very rarely post anything themselves.”

In fact, according to statistics from Sales Navigator, only 7% of directors and heads of finance tend to post on LinkedIn. So, while they may keep an eye on your content, which should prime them for conversion later down the road, you'll have no way of engaging with them unless you approach them directly.

## C) Connecting & converting

There are some pitfalls to the direct prospecting approach, so here are some dos and don'ts:

### 1. Find the right people

**Do** your research:

- Find your ideal clients and the decision-makers within those companies. You may need to rely on sources outside of LinkedIn to find the right people.

**Don't** neglect the seconds-in-command:

- They may not be in a position to buy from you today, but they are likely to be tomorrow. A large part of social selling is being able to play the long game and build trust over time. So, nurturing connections with people who are not yet in decision-making roles could pay off in time.

### 2. Send connection requests (you can currently send up to 100 per week)

**Do** personalise your request:

- Make sure to send a note with your connection request and make it specific to them. Let them know why you're reaching out to them and try to start a conversation by asking a question.

**Don't** be 'salesy':

- If you try to sell to them as soon as they've accepted your connection request or, even worse, in your personalised message, they're likely to dismiss you straight away. We've all been on the receiving end of a pushy cold introduction and chances are, we did not like it.

### 3. Nurture and convert

**Do** give it time:

- Let your new connections sit in your network for a few weeks before you contact them again. Let them see your content so they can get a sense of who you are and how you can help them. It's all about earning their trust at this point.

**Don't** stumble at the last hurdle:

- A lot of the processes we've discussed so far can be delegated to different people within your team and some, like publication, can even be automated. However, messaging a prospect to get them to book a call or meeting is the pivotal point in the conversion process.
- Get your best people on it if you don't do it yourself, and make sure that each message gives the right impression with impeccable grammar and spelling.

## In summary

Social selling has become a significant part of any good sales strategy. And with so many decision-makers on one platform, LinkedIn is a goldmine for B2B marketing and sales.

If you're not already using it to generate more leads and sales, then now is the time to start. Remember that growing your network is a two-speed system with a slow setting to attract inbound connections and a faster one to ensure that you hit those outbound connection numbers every month or every quarter. To discover more about growing & developing your professional network, [let's talk growth](#).