

All You Need is LinkedIn

How to get what you want in business, using only your LinkedIn connections

By Sara Grillo, CFA

Introduction

Being successful in business is as simple as mastering LinkedIn. Somebody once told me your network is your net worth and there is no better tool on the planet available to monetize your existing contacts than LinkedIn.

This online tool, the most powerful business website in the world, is all that you need to get where you want to go in your career, whether it be getting more attention and leads for your business to getting the job you want. Why? The mobile phone has become the single most relied upon device for communication between human beings on the planet today. Getting attention for yourself online and closing the deal with a phone call are an unstoppable combination.

I offer as evidence to you the positive impact that LinkedIn has had on my clients and on my own business. I have personally used LinkedIn to:

- Effectively market and increase sales for a number of my e-books
- Promote my YouTube channel and earn money from the advertising revenue
- Earn referrals from existing contacts
- Gain attention for my services using blogging which has resulted in numerous new client engagements
- Solicit introductions to decision makers and people who control money which has resulted in endless appointments, sales opportunities, and closed business

This book is going to walk you through all that you need to know about how to get more attention on LinkedIn, get better responses from those people you wish to connect with, maintaining top of mindedness in a way that is not spamming or annoying to the audience, and lastly getting referred to your online contacts. It includes actual scripts that you can use when you reach out to somebody through LinkedIn, wording that has proven successful for me, my business, and my clients.

The “New Networking” vs. “Old Networking”

When I was laid off in March 2008, there were literally no portfolio manager jobs to be had. I was going to have to pump gas if I wanted to work in finance for an established firm. Applying for jobs over the Internet was futile. At some point, I decided to stop looking for a job and focus on building an empire.

I had about 50 professional contacts (as of today, I have over 5,000.) So I started networking 9 to 5, like it was a full time job. I used to attend a morning breakfast session and an afternoon cocktail networking session almost every day. When I wasn't at events, I was following up, having one on one meetings, or researching the next day's events. I took advantage of the fact that there was rampant unemployment in New York City in the years 2008-2010. You could go to a networking event and meet Managing Director level executives that wouldn't have even returned your phone call when they were employed. Now you were chatting with them over the nacho bowl. The environment was very equalizing and I took advantage of it.

Here's the problem with going to networking events, though. Half the people there, like me, were unemployed. The other half were salespeople, vendors who were looking for new prospects to sell their wares to. There were very few people at these networking events who could actually hire me, very few hiring managers, company presidents, in short the people who were in control of the money.

I decided to use these connections though, these unemployed people and these salespeople, as a conduit to meeting the people who write the checks. I was determined to find a way, a “new networking” strategy.

So I got an Excel spreadsheet one night and stayed up late writing the names and email addresses of every single person I knew in business. Everyone I knew, literally. People I used to work for, people who used to work for me, people I went to college with, people from my MBA class, people I met when I was studying for the CFA exam, vendors who sold products to my old employers. Then I emailed them through LinkedIn and said, “Hello there, how are you, let's catch up and have coffee.” Then I got access to the Harvard alumni network and emailed every single person who graduated from HBS over the last 30 years, asking them all for coffee. This was a gargantuan task but it has yielded long lasting friendships, clients for my investment practice, radio and TV appearances, and thousands of dollars of free advice. There was one span of time when I got about four job offers in two months without even applying or interviewing for any of them. My 1st, 2nd, and 3rd connections on LinkedIn exploded. I became so active on LinkedIn that they upgraded my membership for free.

Here's the "new networking" strategy that you should use if you want to connect with the people who control the money. You'll notice on LinkedIn that a contact of yours, let's say Greg Smith, has his contacts in blue coloring on his profile page. Blue means that those connections are visible to you, while black means only shared connections (people that you and he are both 1st connections with) are visible.

In cases where connections are in blue, you can use the "net networking." Search through the contacts using a key phrase, such as "human resources" for example. Write down the names of the people in Greg's contacts you want to meet. Then you have to request either a phone call or an in person meeting with Greg. During the conversation, you must request an introduction from Greg to the contacts on the list.

So what happens after an Introduction is made? What is the best way to make a Introduction? The easiest way, I have found, is for Greg to send an email to Betty, with me on a Cc. It goes something like this, customized to your tone:

"I thought it might be a good idea to introduce you to a colleague of mine, Sara Grillo. I have known her for a few years. She is a marketing consultant who helps companies with over 500 employees increase their online visibility. We spoke and I found our conversation to be helpful. You two should connect so that if any needs arise in the future, you know how she can help you. Her information is below."

So there you have it. This doesn't always work but it's a much better investment of time than talking to people who are not in the position to get it done for you. You get the best results when you request to meet the people that Greg has the most credibility with. So for example, if there is someone that wrote Greg a recommendation, or he wrote about him or her, there's usually a strong relationship there. Lots of trust. So you're more likely to have a successful Introduction with that person than another random person from Greg's contacts.

Try this tip and let me know how it works!

Scripts and Wording So You Can Get a Job Using Only Your iPhone

What would you say if I told you that the quickest possible way to get a job was using your iPhone? If you are in the market, all you need to do is take your iPhone, shut off Candy Crush and those pictures of Taylor Swift, and follow these five steps.

1. Revise your LinkedIn profile. If you would like some guidance as to how precisely you may go about this, please the chapter “How to get Hired Through Your LinkedIn Profile.” In short, the summary field, descriptive title, and picture are the most critical components. If you need to upgrade your picture you can of course do so – guess how – in a matter of seconds using your iPhone.
2. Open the Advanced Search option at the top of the search bar and type in a company name that you would like to work for (I will use JPMorgan as an example). Your connections should pop up as long as you have “people” selected on the left hand menu.
3. If a **first degree connection** of yours works at JPMorgan, send a LinkedIn message asking to talk. Do this by either guessing their email address and filling it into the “other” field, or by using the “colleague” options when you request the connection.

Subject: Investment Management Networking Request...

Chris,

I noticed your profile on LinkedIn and see that we both work in the field of investment management with a specialty in marketing. Let's connect and discuss how we may help each other!

Sara 917.873.9297

Now, they may or may not accept this request. If they do, within 48 hours you must follow up with an email and use this script:

Subject: Business talk?

Chris,

Thanks so much for joining the network. My goal is to reach out to contacts of mine in NY Tristate to see if we might be able to help each other in the real world not just online. Does Thursday or Friday afternoon at 3 PM work better for a 5 minute conversation?

4. If a **second or third degree connection** of yours works at JPMorgan, send an introduction request to your first degree asking to be introduced to them. Once you get introduced, ask to talk.

Jake,

I have recently been sent the way of Karen Powers who is a second degree connection of yours. I'm not sure how well you two know each other, though. Would you be comfortable with me using your name when I reach out? I will not take action until I hear back from you.

Thanks in advance.

5. Talk to the connections and discuss your desire to learn more about working at JPMorgan. Please note, you can even use your iPhone for these conversations. People always whine to me that they don't see themselves getting a job or a new client through the Internet. No duh. Who hires someone just based on a resume? Nobody. The point is to get attention for yourself and your brand, and then take the conversation to the real world, such as in person meetings, virtual chats, or phone conversations. That is how you close business. Use social media to get attention, and then communicate your pitch in person and close the deal.

It seems so plain, but there you have it. Believe it or not, less than 2% of the population actually does it. This can be done anytime you have a free five minutes. It's remarkably efficient and once you get going it can be quite rewarding. Please note, the determining factor that will render success or failure here is how you write your messages to your connections. Many people talk themselves out of jobs by phrasing it the wrong way. It has to be written just so or you will frustrate people by being too vague, annoy people by coming off as too aggressive, or not present enough of your value as a professional to get them to respond.

How to Get Hired Through Your LinkedIn Profile

When I work with my clients, the first thing I revise is their LinkedIn profile page. This is because recruiters and hiring managers search LinkedIn actively for candidates, and the profile has to be optimized so they can find you. It's way better to be discovered than to be the hunter – it makes the whole process go smoother and you many times end up with a better salary.

Title

It is critical to have the right title (the line that appears right under your name) for your profile. Many people believe that this is the same as their functional title. It's not! It's ****descriptive****, not functional. It functions as a summary of your profile and should capture what your strongest skill is. Here's an example of the difference. Descriptive title (appears until your name): Top Lead Generator with a Passion for Social Media vs. Functional title: Sales Consultant, JPMorgan. See the difference? I see a lot of people with titles such as "seeking next opportunity." While this does effectively signal to recruiters that you are a possible candidate, it doesn't give any indication of the type of work that you do. You won't be found as easily.

Picture

Your LinkedIn picture should look how you would dress up if you were going to a job interview. It should look as you would look if you were going to meet with a client. You are showing your prospective employers or clients how you would present yourself to your coworkers, clients, and the public. I see a lot of pictures that ambush the candidate – see my blog "Do I Really Look Like This on LinkedIn"?

Please note that many employers will pass you over if you do not include a picture in your profile because it looks as if you are hiding something or are not that serious about your job search.

Summary

The summary field should be exactly that: a synopsis. It should not be more than two or at most three lines long. Here you want to focus on your key accomplishments but tailor them to where you want to be next. Many people clutter this with every single thing they've ever done, including even their education. I wouldn't advocate that anyone emphasize their education as a selling point. Unless it is your first job, hiring managers care more about your experience.

Job Descriptions

One of the biggest mistakes with job descriptions is that the candidate comes off as trying too hard. The key idea is relevance and less is more. I constantly see resumes that are cluttered with items that the candidate takes personal pride in, but are not that meaningful to the employer. For

example, GPA of 2.9. Leave off the GPA if it's not stellar and differentiating you significantly from your peers (example: in top 2% of class, was the valedictorian). Focus on three key achievements and put them in bullets. Bullet points should be one line, not two, lines long. Don't list out that you know how to use MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint (most professionals who work in an office can use them), but do include expert work done with any statistical software, for example. Decorate the Christmas Tree too much and people forget about opening the presents. Too much screaming at them has a diluting effect.

22 Ways to Use the Internet to Get the Attention of Someone Ignoring Your Cold Calls

Anyone who's ever cold called for a living knows it's the most tedious and discouraging experience known to the business world. The excellent news is that with the advent of social media, we can shed these outmoded methods for newer, more effective ways of reaching prospects who ignore our cold calls, such as the following:

1. Request to connect to them on LinkedIn
2. Join LinkedIn groups that they are a member of, and post discussions that are relevant to their business challenges or needs
3. Create a LinkedIn group which contains discussions which are highly salient to their business needs and invite them to join
4. If #3 fails, create a LinkedIn group which contains discussions which are highly salient to their business needs and invite their competitors to join
5. Follow them on Twitter and retweet their content until they follow you back
6. Follow their blog on Tumblr and like their content until they follow you back
7. Make their business associates your followers on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn so that they see what you are posting when people like your updates
8. Post updates on their Facebook timeline
9. Like their postings on their Facebook timeline
10. Write a blog about a topic of interest to them, and relate it to your product or service
11. Write a blog about a challenge they may be facing as a result of not using your product or service
12. Write a blog discussing a strategic analysis of the future of the industry group that their business belongs to
13. Set up a Google alert so that you are notified every time they appear in the news, and then analyze and post the news content to your social media so all your followers see it
14. Review their website in a blog you post to Tumblr

15. Review their website in a YouTube video
16. Review their product or service in a blog you post to Tumblr
17. Review their product or service in a YouTube video
18. Post relevant content to their strategic partners' or service providers' social media sites
19. Make a YouTube video describing why you feel their product or service would be ideal for them, and then post it to their YouTube channel, or an associated company's YouTube channel
20. Write a blog about why their competitors are using your product in a way that enables them to have an distinguishing advantage over those who are not
21. Create a Twitter hashtag in their company name and tweet news pertinent to them utilizing this hashtag
22. Go to the Fiverr website and locate the guy from Sri Lanka who sells the \$5 gig of himself climbing a coconut tree in Sri Lanka. Order a \$5 gig in which this guy makes a video of himself climbing to the top of a coconut tree and discovers the person's name or business name written on a piece of paper at the top of the tree inside a coconut bushel.

The Top 10 Mistakes People are Making on LinkedIn

For those of you out there who are looking to accomplish a challenging professional goal, whether it be finding a new job, starting a business, or just building a bigger network, if you can use LinkedIn the right way, you may actually be unstoppable. Here's what to avoid doing so you can maximize your success and get to your goal sooner!

1. Hard pitch on the introduction – making yourself unwanted.

When you request to connect with somebody, don't say something like, "I am looking for a job and had a few questions about your company" or "I thought you might be interested in learning about our hedge fund." Think about it – the person doesn't even know who you are. You have zero credibility, but right away you're asking them to trust you? Or people who blast email their whole connection base selling their newest product, advertising their new book, etc. In both situations you come off as that unwanted sales sleazebag that people want to get rid of. I suggest making the connection by proposing to start a mutually beneficial business relationship, have a phone call with the person, and then try to develop a relationship of trust with them. Later on you can read the situation to see if they'd be open to what you are proposing.

2. Making acridly negative comments on blog posts or discussions.

I post a blog everyday and have had more than one of my blogs read by more than 2k people. The more widely read posts always seem to attract one or two toxic commentators. They range from everything from criticizing my physical appearance to making nasty threats. No lie. Now, everybody is surely entitled to their opinion. But when you go in on somebody in writing on the Internet, it never goes away. It can so easily be forwarded to your boss or someone that you wouldn't want seeing you as a negative person **at a point in the future when you don't want it to**. Play it safe and if you disagree with something, do it without an attitude problem.

3. Spamming the discussion groups, or overdoing it

There is no better way to build credibility with a large amount of people than posting discussions to groups. I personally have benefited from this several times, gaining new clients, when a few of my blogs became massively popular. Post often, but post thoughtfully. Anything that sounds like a sales pitch is going to get filtered or even worse, make people in the group so turned off that the next time they won't even read your post. Also, if you notice that you are posting consecutively (e.g. your posts are the last 5 posted to the group) and nobody else is liking or commenting, take a step back. Maybe post somewhere else. In other words, you'll get the best results when you are able to successfully gauge the audience's responsiveness.

4. Not turning off the profile update when you change status

If you are updating your job profile to attract attention from hiring managers, remember to turn off the option to have your network see that you are doing so. Nothing gives your boss a clearer indication that you are on the market.

5. Neglecting to pursue 2nd and 3rd connections

When people refer to their network, many times they only use the first degree connections. True, it's harder to think of a way to get connected to a second or third degree connection. You may not know the first degree person well enough to ask them to make the intro. But if you look at how wide your reach can span by getting access to those not directly connected to you, it could actually make you unstoppable. Find creative ways to get to them.

6. Not following companies you are interested in

Let's say you either want to work at Company XYZ or perhaps take them on as a client. Following their company page and paying attention to their updates, maybe even liking or commenting on them, is a great way to get them to notice you. People think of Twitter as the media for following others but don't let that make you forget about LinkedIn!

7. Thinking that more connections is better

You don't have to be one of these "open networkers" with thousands of connections to be effective. That actually reduces your search ranking because the LinkedIn search engines penalizes you for connecting with people you're not likely to have a meaningful relationship with. It's quality, not quantity. Meaningful, consistent interactions with your network in which you paint a favorable, branded picture of yourself will trump having a million connections.

8. Not following up

Let's say that you connect with someone who works in the same industry and has the same job title as you. You check out their profile and they seem pretty impressive. But you're not looking for a job so no need to go any further. Right? Wrong! Remember that there's no better time to look for a job than when you are happily employed. Likewise, there's no better time to make relationships with people that could potentially help you than when you don't need their help. I suggest that my clients make at least 3 meaningful connections per week, even when they are not in job search mode. Your network is your armor. It can never hurt to have positive relationships with your peers, or even your competitors, ready for when the going gets tough.

9. Asking questions that the person's profile answers.

When I want to build a relationship with someone on LinkedIn, or when they want to build one with me, I typically suggest a phone call after we connect. Before I talk to them, I make sure to read their profile so that I have meaningful questions to ask them about what they are involved with. I can honestly say that this has not always been the case with the person on the other end of the line. I can always tell because they'll ask me what I do for a living or where I went to school – and it's clearly written on my profile page. Unfortunately they have discredited

themselves with me. I usually end the conversation right then and there before wasting more of my time. Bad first impression! If this person doesn't take the 30 seconds to at least know who he or she is talking to, they're not taking the call, or me, very seriously. And so why should I? On the other hand, when I talk to somebody who has intelligent questions to ask and shows they actually cared enough to know a little about me, I'm much more motivated to continue the relationship.

10. Doing inappropriate things like asking people out on a date.

I'm putting this one last because it's humorous but it has actually happened to me twice. Those people are now blocked from ever contacting me again. Other examples of inappropriate things include stalking someone or posting a picture with bikini clad women as your profile shot. I've seen both of these happen, no lie. LinkedIn is a business website - save the romance for Facebook or even better yet Match.com.

Top 10 Reasons That You Are Not Getting Leads from Social Media

My clients come to me because they have hit a wall and can't grow their business by finding new buyers of their product or service, and they are looking for ways to generate leads. Very often I suggest using social media. Frequently I get responses such as:

- But Sara, I'm already using social media and it's going nowhere.
- I tried this already, Sara, and it didn't work. I sell a high quality product. My clients are not the type to buy on the Internet. I'm not selling to broke 20 year olds on Twitter, Sara!

Contrary to popular belief, it is in fact not just for college kids and not everybody on there is broke. Social media fails to generate leads when any one of the following 10 things are happening. Please read on to learn which one may be happening at your company.

1. Your content has not been properly designed to lead the right people to see you and your advice as valuable

It's got to be too good to be ignored, or else it will be ignored. This sounds harsh, but it is the truth. The way to get there is not by talking about you. It's by getting into the buyer's head, their subconscious mind. The best blog posts are those which provide the reader with information that answers questions people have, but don't necessarily realize that they have. One woman I know had tremendous success because she was featured in a prominent article entitled, "Do I really sound like that when I talk?" She is a speech therapist and the business. Think about it. This is something that crosses people's minds all the time, but they never ponder it in detail. Your content has to make a light bulb go off in people's heads. When you do, responsiveness increases.

The other thing is, are you talking to the right level of a buyer. If you are selling luxury suits, do your YouTube videos feature demonstrations of how to properly hang a suit on a hanger? Think about it – do you think the people who buy Zegna suits don't know how to take care of them? The people who are going to search for information about how to hang up a suit are college kids or first time suit buyers. Not likely to buy Zegna! A better topic would have been a video about how to pick a business suit to wear to a Board meeting. Here you're targeting the higher level executive who probably already owns a luxury suit or two.

2. Your posts are not properly tagged

Most people, even if they buy in person, at least check out the product and its competitors on the Internet before they make the purchase. The algorithms used by search engines are constantly changing. Are you updating your tags with them? If not, all the money you spent on SEO has

now gone down the drain. People typically make the mistake of tagging the post with words that describe the post. A more effective way is to tag with words that people type into the search box.

3. You are not interacting the right way, quickly enough, or frequently enough, with the people who like or comment on your postings

When somebody asks a question, posts a comment, likes, or forwards one of your postings, you have a short amount of time to respond and motivate them to take the next action. In the age of social media, you have 24 hours for an article to be “live” and then it fades away. If you are too busy to respond, you’re wasting all the effort you put in to get people’s attention in the first place. Do not assume that they will take the action on their own – you have to lead them there. Appoint a marketing specialist to assume your identity on social media and follow up if you lack time to do so.

After a reader responds, you should thank them as the first thing you do. Then quickly take the next step, such as sending them a white paper, asking for their email address, or directing them to another posting on the subject. They’re way more likely to do what you want if you get them right after they post.

4. There is something wrong with your professional presentation.

Spelling errors, grammatical errors, unprofessional LinkedIn picture, website is too slow or crashes frequently, website text is too small, not colorful enough, information clearly hasn’t been updated in months or years. All of these things say to the reader, “I don’t really care about how I present myself to the public.” Why would anyone buy from you when the next competitor is just a click away? Really, that is how competitive it is!

5. You are not posting frequently enough.

In sales, they say that people need to be contacted 5-6 times before they respond. There is so much noise in the media and people are inundated. Don’t expect to get noticed if you post a blog every month. I post every day but I’m a professional writer and can get my stuff out super fast. I would suggest a weekly or biweekly posting at minimum. Never sacrifice quality for quantity though.

6. Once people get interested, they can’t find you.

Imagine that you read this great blog post and then you Google the writer and they don’t come up anywhere. The only thing you could do would be initiate a friend request on LinkedIn but you don’t have their email address. It goes no further. Or, you search for their website and you can’t find it because it’s on page 2 of Google. Yes, page 2 of Google. That is how impatient a society we have become.

7. You are not including a call to action

Even the most motivating of content can get lost if there is no clear indication of what the reader should do next to benefit from your expertise. At a minimum, at the end of your post you should encourage readers to subscribe to all your channels. Offering a small giveaway such as “The first 20 people to like this post will receive a copy of my monthly economic commentary” is an even better example of how to get more visibility with your audience in a way that drives home your value.

8. Your title or first two lines are boring.

If you had to choose between two frozen yogurt restaurants, one with a bold bright sign called Bananas for Yogurt, and the other one with a faded, chipping sign called Frozen Yogurt Store, which one would you pick? It’s that much of a jungle out there folks. The most immediately engaging content, not the most intelligent, is the one that attracts viewers.

9. Your content is negative

In an effort to get people’s attention, you may perhaps be coming off as too critical of the buyers that you are intending to attract. Ask yourself these questions. Is our tone condescending? It’s so easy to sound shrill in writing. Are we making the prospect feel stupid by ragging on them for having the challenge that our product solves? You may be turning people off inadvertently.

10. You lack a grand finale

Yes folks, as important as it is to draw people in with our first two lines, you’ve got to inspire them to forward your posting by doing something exciting at the end. I try to use humor as a way to lighten the tone before my call to action, which are the last lines of my post. Wake them up!

Use This Blogging Trick When Somebody is Blowing You Off

First of all, I will say that I honestly did what I am going to describe and it worked excellently. This takes guts - but it works. As they say, you've got to risk it to get the biscuit.

About a month ago I went on a sales call with a company who was interested in my social media services. The initial meeting went great, but the person signing the check wasn't present. The influencers liked me - but after the meeting, I sensed that they were apprehensive to present my proposal to the decision maker. This is a common problem that influencers have, because they are going out on a limb in asking the decision maker to possibly write a check on their behalf. See, everybody is brave until it comes time to talk turkey. So as expected, radio silence ensued. My numerous attempts to follow up were blown off. So typical.

Not willing to accept being blown off, I wrote a blog about the business problem that the prospect was having which led them to meet with me. Now, of course I did not use their name or give away any details about them. I didn't trash them in public. My blog post simply talked about the universal issues certain companies may face, and how social media services could be designed to solve these problems for them.

I posted it, and then the next day I sent this email to the decision maker.

Email Subject Line: Hey John, check out this blog post I wrote about your company.

Email Text: [Click here \(url\)](#)

Well, within five minutes the company responded and asked me to talk the next morning.

Bingo card!

My point here is that social media can be used in many creative ways. The more pointed, as in this example, the better. Stumbling around trying to randomly come across as a subject matter expert, with no targeted audience, is like trying to fumigate every single inch of a house that has vermin. My friends, whether it is social media or pest control, you only have to hit one or two key spots to be effective.

I am constantly told that social media is for millennials only, that hoity toity people don't buy things on the Internet (they all go in person or through word of mouth), that there's no need to use Twitter because nobody buys things on Twitter. It's true that I wouldn't select a pediatric cardiologist through FaceBook, but boy would I be sure to check him/her out on Facebook once I

got the referral. See what I mean? There are endless uses of social media which can have a huge impact on the buyer's decision other than direct marketing.

For anyone being blown off by another person at the current moment, sit down for five minutes, write a blog post, and try my strategy. Whether you're looking for a job, building a business, or pursuing another goal, try it. Then post up comments below about how it worked (or didn't work).

Good luck!

You're Not Kim K, So Quit Trying to Be Sexy on LinkedIn

A while ago, I ran a LinkedIn Profile Page contest. I saw many people destroying their own credibility by trying to be Kim Kardashian - and much, much more. If your LinkedIn profile sounds like what I describe below, perhaps you should consider an upgrade.

- The picture should be formatted in a crisp fashion. If it's a cropped picture where it's obvious you have your arm around someone that you cut out, don't bother posting it. Also, it doesn't have to be perfect to the millimeter, but overall it should be centered horizontally and vertically. Otherwise, what you're saying is that you are okay with sloppy work. It would be better to have no picture at all. Let me ask you this. How many times do you pass by a restaurant with a dingy exterior or torn curtains and say, "What a pigsty but I'll just give them the benefit of the doubt and go on it anyways. I'm sure the food won't taste bad." Nope! You're flying past them and heading to KFC.
- Noisy background. I've seen it all: stop signs, palm trees, Brazilian Carnivale, family room curtains, American flags in the background. Fine for FaceBook but not for a business website. A plain monotone backdrop works best.
- Some people look like they are going out on a date in their pictures. This is a business website, not Match.com. It's not time for being cute or sexy. How many times does a boss say, "She looks so hot on LinkedIn. I bet she can recite the whole Fibonacci series from memory, let me hire her now." Trying to look like a hottie as if you are going on American Idol (too much makeup, casual clothing, casual jewelry) is going to discredit you. Unless, of course, you are an aspiring musician.
- Not looking straight at the camera. It is a basic human instinct. We respond most strongly to body language rather than verbal language. Lack of direct eye contact, whether in person or in a photo, conveys either that you are hiding something or you have poor self esteem. It is a subconscious effect that this has on the audience. We may not even realize that it is having this effect on us, but it is. Even if you are half making eye contact (eyes averted as if you are gazing into the distance instead of looking right at the camera), it is offputting to the viewer.
- Extreme close up. I think people do this in order to crop out something in the background. While no doubt it's better to hide something that doesn't belong in the picture, it has a slightly overbearing effect to present an enlarged picture of a gigantic face with no empty space surrounding it.
- No picture at all. Now, while it is better to not include a picture than include one with the characteristics described above, omitting a picture might convey the sense that you either are scared to show what you look like for some reason or that you don't really intend to foster personal connections with other people on the site who don't already know you.

Your LinkedIn picture should look how you would dress up if you were going to a job interview. It should look as you would look if you were going to meet with a client. You are showing your prospective employers or clients how you would present yourself to your coworkers, clients, and

the public.

The Next Time a Telemarketer Calls, Try This

Cold calls. We all get them. They are the pesky mosquitoes of the professional world. But listen up, everybody. If you're one of those people who just hangs up on telemarketers, you're missing out on a valuable professional opportunity.

What most people do not realize about telemarketers is that people who build human relationships from scratch for a living are very valuable people to know. The typical cold caller makes at least 50-100 calls per day. If you do that math on that, a successful caller will be in contact with thousands of people a month, many of them decision makers or key influencers at companies. Now why wouldn't you want to be connected to someone with such a powerful network?

So whenever somebody cold calls me about something I don't want, I decline the service politely. I then suggest connecting to me on LinkedIn so that if and when I ever need their service in the future I will know how to get in touch with them.

This achieves three critical things. One, most telemarketers are used to being hung up on or blown off, so when you treat them with respect it stops them in their tracks. Two, by taking the relationship to LinkedIn you're giving them what they want: the opportunity to build a relationship with you, which is essentially the reason for their call. After we connect on LinkedIn I usually never hear from them again. Treat them with basic respect, treat them like people with feelings, and more often than not they'll return the favor.

Three, and most importantly, you never know how you may need that connection years down the line. I can't even begin to tell you about all the times I've called on people who have tried to sell me something in the past. As years go by, they move into different roles and sometimes the tables turn and I'm the one calling them to ask a favor!

The next time a telemarketer calls, try my tip.

How to Meet Big Mucky Mucks on LinkedIn

With half the planet on LinkedIn, it's pretty clear what the most powerful business website in the world is. Yet so many people who target high net worth individuals and big mucky mucks insist that their clients are not using these websites, and they whine that trying to generate leads on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter is useless.

Listen up, everyone. There is an incorrect perception that social media is for teeny boppers and millennials who are broke and are wandering around jobless. Whenever somebody tells me that they don't need to use LinkedIn because their clients are big Mucky Mucks who are too high level to use LinkedIn, here's my response:

It's not that they are not using LinkedIn. They are all on LinkedIn.

They are choosing to ignore you and that is why you think they are not available to you through LinkedIn.

If you are having a hard time getting attention from rich, important, busy people, my advice is to step your game up and find something creative, engaging, and relevant to say. Don't tell me that the high net worth people aren't out there. They are, and they are in big numbers. But everyone in the world wants to sell to them which is why they are so jaded. They've already heard the marketing pitch before. Stop selling and start captivating, start intriguing. They ARE on social media and they are ripe for the taking, but you've got to hit them with some content that is too good for them to ignore.

About the Author

[Sara Grillo](#), CFA, is a top financial writer with a focus on marketing and branding for investment management, financial planning, and RIA firms. Prior to launching her own firm, she was a financial advisor and worked at Lehman Brothers. Sara graduated from Harvard with a degree in English literature and has an MBA from NYU Stern in Quantitative Finance.