

LinkedIn Connection Kit

Let's LiCK LinkedIn connections, together.

Let's face it, LinkedIn has made connecting so damned easy that at times the ease of connecting actually defeats its own purpose.

You don't have to let that happen.

If you're into building more than just the number of your connections, then I've got some tips and tools for you.

*"I felt like a kid with a new toy using...Melanie's ebook on making meaningful connections to **prompt instant response from recruiters and my network.**"*

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Welcome!

I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.

-Joe "Lazy" Schmuck

If I could have one wish, it would be that I'd never receive another generic invitation to connect on LinkedIn.

Ok, that's a wee bit of an exaggeration, because no matter how much of a LinkedIn freak I am, even I wouldn't waste a wish on that.

Still, generic invites drive me absolutely nuts! I make snap judgements about a sender whenever one of those messages hits my inbox from a name and face I don't recognize. That's why I shout from the rooftops my LinkedIn **rule #2: – Don't send generic invitations to connect.**

So, what do I mean by snap judgements? Well, I wonder why a person would think I'd want to make a place in my network for someone so lazy that they didn't even take two minutes to introduce themselves, tell me how they heard of me, remind me how they know me, or enlighten me as to why in the world I'd want to accept and give their face exposure in the Connections section of my profile without even knowing them.

I know I'm not the only one who feels this way, which is why I'll help you avoid that stigma and stand out by customizing your invites to connect. But before we get to that, let's talk about prompting profile double-takes by applying my LinkedIn **rule #1: Don't accept invites to connect without actually engaging with the sender.**

The Right Tools to Make Connection Magic

Before you check out some conversation prompting connection examples, take note that although the principles can be applied whichever method you choose, **the how-to-connect steps I define within this book are geared toward using your desktop or laptop internet browser** to initiate and respond to connection requests (though you mobile device devotees / app addicts can capitalize on the advice I'll dole out in these pages by entering a customized message after you've tapped *Personalize* within the *Menu* dropdown of another pro's profile).

Rule #1: Don't Accept Invites to Connect without Engaging

By taking a few steps before accepting invites, you'll have the **opportunity to engage with senders, show personality, and add value while inspiring your LinkedIn fans to think twice about who you are and what you have to offer.**

Now, once upon a time, there was a wonderful, no-cost way to include email addresses and links to your heart's content when sending invites. You were also allowed more characters to customize those messages and didn't need to know the email address of the person you were trying to bring into your network (if you didn't already have that). In February 2016, LinkedIn slammed its back door to this approach when it removed the *Save Contacts* feature, which is why what was once my rule #2 (don't accept invites to connect without actually engaging with the sender) became my rule #1.

Since **replying to invites you receive allows you to craft longer responses and include your email address and live links to whatever great info you want to share, AND because it saves you time scouring the internet searching for an email address,** replying has become the simpler, less confining, and more advantageous means of making an actual connection.

With a Word doc chock full of sample scripts like the ones in this book (which I recommend you create for yourself to use as a template so you don't need to reinvent the wheel each time you connect), it's easy to personalize replies as simple as:

I'm always open to connecting with other career services industry pros, so thanks so much for initiating our connection, Orlando, and I hope you have a fabulous Friday.

Melanie Lenci
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Super user tip: I've saved myself a lot of time by setting my templates up as 2 separate files named LinkedIn Accept Template.doc and LinkedIn Invite Template.doc, which may make more sense to you as you read along.

Your LinkedIn Signature

Before we go any further, yes, I'm well aware that my email signature is stupid long. That's just the boilerplate text that I pick and choose from, depending on what I know about my new connection. If my latest connection has some sort of connection to NY (pun intended), then "NY-based" stays. If they're an IT recruiter or potential client, then of course I want them to know about my Masters in Applied Science. If we're already following one another on Twitter, then I take my Twitter URL out. You get the point.

While I've excluded the signature from the remaining examples for the sake of saving space, **your customized signature reinforces your professional brand**, so I definitely recommend inserting yours every chance you get. And, since you followed my recommendation above and created a Word doc or added entries to Notes on your Mac, it's that much easier for you to **copy, paste, and customize your e-signature** every time you reply to invites to connect, send [InMail](#) (a paid privilege), or converse with current connections via *Messages* (fka your *Inbox*).

Provide Value when Replying to Invites to Connect

Even when approached by a total stranger with one of those cringeworthy generic invites, I set out to **share and provide value**, and you should do the same. Just by participating in LinkedIn Groups and reading blogs and ebooks like this, you likely have a ton of resources to share with those in and out of your industry, so why not dole out some of your favorites in replies to invites, like this:

I'm psyched to make your connection, Ryan.

Since I noticed that you're not yet capitalizing on the most important real estate on your LinkedIn profile, this article, [How to Spice Up Your LinkedIn Headline](#), can definitely help you out.

Thanks so much for including me in your network, Ryan, and I hope you're having an energizing start to your week.

Now, **what about that person you hit it off with at last week's fundraiser, conference, or sales call, who sends you a LinkedIn invitation before you get the chance?** How about providing some value by replying with:

You beat me to the punch, Ruth!

Meeting you at the CDI conference was icing on the cake, and here's that article I was telling you about, [How to Rock Out Your LinkedIn Background Photo](#).

Strike a Chord through a Shared Connection

And isn't it nice when you see a familiar face on LinkedIn in the form of a [shared connection](#)? Build your interaction off that, and **throw in a question if you're really itching to get a conversation started**, like:

Kevin,

I'm thrilled to make your connection, as it looks like we're both fortunate enough to know the wonderful Agnes Black.

Did you hear about me through Agnes?

Make an Impression when Accepting a Connection

We've all encountered **spelling errors or dead links when scoping a profile** (and you can [Browse Profiles in Private and Semi-Private Mode](#), if you'd like), so why not help them out and send something like:

I'm happy to make your connection, Chris, and as a heads-up, when I clicked on your company website link within the contact section of your profile, I got a page error message, so you may want to check that out.

Thanks for initiating our connection, and have a terrific day, Chris.

Or:

Steve,

I was just skimming your profile before accepting your invite, when I noticed the following in your Summary section:

We're on a on good trajectory for 2 reasons.

I hope this helps and thanks for reaching out, Steve.

When all else fails, you can always simply **shoot back a message that shows that you at least took the time to check them out:**

Michael,

I'm ecstatic to become your connection and blown away by the work you do and recommendations you've earned on LinkedIn.

You've made my day, as I consider it a professional high to be included in your network.

Or try **something light and fun if their profile screams personality:**

I'm tickled pink to have a spot in your network, Christa, and impressed by the progression of your career at Google and the sheer volume of your endorsements.

You go, girl!

To Connect, or not to Connect: that is the Question

If you are questioning whether you want someone in your network, whether it's a boss, a relentless recruiter or an ex-anything who you just don't want to receive updates

on your LinkedIn activity (which you can learn how to limit [somewhat] in [Showing or Hiding Activity Updates About You](#)), or you don't want their picture in the Connections section of your profile (which you can also learn more about in [Controlling Who Sees Your Connections List](#) [though no matter what, your 1st-degree connections will always be able to see your shared connections]), then **I advocate simply ignoring or deleting undesired requests** and moving on to something truly worthy of your worries.

For me, if, after taking 30 seconds or less to skim a profile, I'm feeling rather generous (or lazy), I might just accept (extremely rare) and be done with it. But, **if I can't discern any potential benefit to adding an invitor to my network, then that invite will simply go unaccepted, guilt free** (especially if they've left it up to me to take the time to seek out the potential upside to our connection).

Now, if someone's managed to pique my interest, I'll set out to share value and prompt profile double-takes through the scripts I provided earlier. I'll achieve that by **not simply hitting the *Accept* button**. To walk you through what I do, make sure you're on your own profile, click on the grey head silhouette in the upper right (to the immediate left of your beautiful headshot), and click on *Pending invitations*. Hover over the gray quote symbols to expose the sender's message, move your cursor over the arrow up top, and click *Reply* to send one of your custom notes. With your reply sent, head back to *Pending invitations* and click the *Accept* button with pride, knowing you've made an impression on your most recent connection.

Rule #2 - Don't Send Generic Invitations to Connect

Now that you know a plethora of ways to stand out and prompt engagement when accepting invites, let's switch gears to the invitations YOU send.

I want you to think beyond simply personalizing invites to connect. I want you to retrain your brain to not just reach out when you want or need something, but to take a more proactive approach to building a network of people you like, people you admire, or people you appreciate. Because in the end, isn't that who you want in your network?

Switching up those boring, generic LinkedIn invites doesn't only demonstrate that you aren't reaching out just because you need something, but it sets you apart from the lazy majority with proof that you're a pro who takes the time to show you care.

Since I'm going to assume the majority of you aren't subscribers of LinkedIn's [Sales Navigator](#) (which provides more robust connecting options), we'll keep these samples void of email addresses and links and to the 300-character maximum that most of us are restricted to when personalizing our invites to connect.

Build a Network of Likeminded Experts

If you're a voracious consumer of info, whether as a frequent webinar participant or a constant reader of articles, books, and industry-relevant reports, like I am, then **seize the opportunity to elevate yourself by building a network of likeminded experts** by sending requests like:

You provided some great insights in your blog last week, Brynne.
Thanks for continually teaching this old LinkedIn dog a few new tricks and I hope that you'll accept my invite to connect.

Or:

I've been diggin' your findings within the 2015 SOH report, Gerry, and I'd love to have you in my LinkedIn network

And while you may remember me mentioning that you can't include links through standard means on LinkedIn, the live links in the below examples are here merely to provide you with quick access to more great info.

I just love your article, [5 Alternatives to 'To Whom It May Concern,'](#) and feel that my LinkedIn network wouldn't be complete without you, Vicki.

If reaching out based on a nudge from someone you know, send something like:

Our mutual friend, Amy Peloso, has been singing your praises, and now that I've read your article, [If You Need a Letter of Recommendation, Write Your Own,](#) I agree.

Pretty please, accept my invite to connect?

And by all means, **share value when you can**, as demonstrated in:

I was so glad that I happened to sit next to you at our committee meeting today, Nancy, and as for the editor I mentioned, you should check out [Jennifer George](#), as she's prevented me from looking a fool time and time again by catching what my eyes have overlooked.

Or:

I was thrilled to chat with you at the CTL conference, Mary.

I do hope that you'll accept my invite to connect and, in the meantime, the non-Wordpress blog option I mentioned, which I love and have implemented on my site, is Perch, so you should definitely check them out.

Turn Your Twitter Followers into Connections

And, **why not add super-cool Twitter followers to your LinkedIn network?** Kick that off by sending invites like:

I'm psyched to have a Twitter follower of your caliber, Jon.

I dig your professional style and hope you're willing to extend our connection to LinkedIn.

Or:

Having you follow me on Twitter made my day, Darrell, and I would be pleased as punch to continue the camaraderie on LinkedIn.

I've even been known to **extract bits of a Twitter follower's handle to really strike a chord** with my invite, like:

Thanks for the follow on Twitter, Yann.

I love your blog and writing style, and since I'm also an entrepreneur, a writer, an idea generator, and a lover of photography, I'd love to connect so that I can keep up with your LinkedIn updates.

Kick Start a Dialog with Those who've Viewed Your Profile

If you've clicked on the *Who's Viewed Your Profile* link under your *Profile* menu and noticed **someone's been checking you out (maybe a hiring manager or recruiter)**, **you might want to know why**. If they seem worth your time, you can craft a connection request or use InMail to send a simple message that reads something like:

Thanks for stopping by my profile, Sarah.

If you were just browsing, no need to respond, but if there are any questions I can answer for you, I'd be more than happy to.

Or:

Sarah,

I was delighted to see that you viewed my profile, because I'm super interested in the work your firm does.

Any chance you're open to scheduling a 15-minute phone meeting at 11 AM on Friday?

Connect with a Standout Discussion Starter or Contributor

If you'd like to **connect with a person who started or contributed a valuable addition to a particularly interesting LinkedIn group discussion**, click the 3 dots (...) to *Reply privately* and send an invite like:

Frank,

I loved the article you shared in our Friends of LinkedIn group, and I hope you'll accept my invite to connect so I can stay on top of all the other great info you have to share.

The Old-School Approach to Requesting Intros

If you have a connection who knows someone you want to make a connection with, try LinkedIn's old school method of [Requesting an Introduction](#) with something like:

Subject: Introduction to Vivika von Rosen?

Nelly,

I'm currently looking for a job in social media marketing and interested in meeting professionals who might provide some good guidance. I'm a long-time admirer of Vivika von Rosen and noticed that you're connected to her.

Would you be willing to introduce me so that I can contact her for advice? Of course, if you're not comfortable, I totally understand.

Thanks for considering my request, and have splendid day, Nelly.

Or:

Sally,

I'm so excited about a medical device sales position at Graham Nash's company and noticed that you're connected to him.

As you know, I've always been a top performer, and I make it my job to build team strength as well as surpass individual goals (by 35% in 2015!). I'm thrilled to transition my sales skills to the medical device field, and Graham's company has such a stellar reputation for customer care that I can see myself knocking it out of the park for his firm.

Would you be willing to introduce me so that I can reach out to him and learn more about the position? Of course, if you're not comfortable, I completely understand.

Thanks for considering my request, and have lovely day, Sally.

But, if you have InMail credits you can **go straight to the source** with something like:

Graham,

It looks like we're both fortunate enough to know the lovely and talented Sally Winters — my former sales teammate, your wife's sorority sister, and one of the bridesmaids at your wedding.

After chatting with Sally and doing some research, I uncovered the exciting medical device sales opportunity posted by your firm.

As you can see from my profile, I've always been a top performer and I make it my job to build team strength as well as surpass individual goals (by 37% in 2015). Because I'm attracted by your company's stellar reputation for customer care, I'd love the chance to knock market expansion out of the park for your firm.

I hope you'll accept my invitation to connect, Graham, and if you'd be willing to set a 15-minute phone chat to share any insight you may have about your company or the position, I'd so appreciate it.

Engage Your Network in Your Career Change

Now, beyond simply initiating and responding to connections, perhaps you want to **spread the word about a career change**. You might try sending something like:

Gail,

Your support has always meant the world to me, so I wanted to reach out and let you know that I'm planning on making a career change, from HR to the exciting world of event planning.

Is there a chance that you'll have some time in the next few weeks for a brief phone chat so that I can hear your advice on this transition, as I so value your perspective?

Thank you, and I hope you're having a wonderful Wednesday.

Or, if you've narrowed down some companies you'd like to target during your job search, and through probing your connections you find that **your friend or a past colleague works at one of your target companies**, you might try a version of:

It's been a while since we chatted, and I hope all is well with that new baby of yours, Sam.

As for me, I've recently decided to transfer my 11 years in product development to a company whose culture is a better fit for me.

I saw some of the excellent work you've been doing at Crocs on your LinkedIn profile (like the market expansion you recently led. Nice work!) and would be interested in learning more about your experience at the company.

Would you be open to a brief phone chat sometime soon? I'd so appreciate your time, as your insight is extremely valuable to me.

Thanks so much, and I'm looking forward to catching up with you soon, Sam.

Follow Up on a Position Applied for through LinkedIn

If you've applied for a position posted on LinkedIn and need to do that **all-important follow up**, send something like:

I recently applied for your STE position (#82346) here on LinkedIn and can't contain my enthusiasm at the chance to join your team.

As Squarespace's #1 fan, it would be an honor to contribute my 12 years of IT dexterity, developing and enhancing services while ensuring security and stability for your end users.

Thank you for considering my application, Frank, and please let me know if I can share any additional details or qualifications.

LinkedIn Recommendation Quality Control

And, finally, if you've received a **LinkedIn Recommendation that failed to reflect the brand you're seeking to promote**, you might request a revision by sending:

I can't thank you enough for taking the time to write me a recommendation, Mary.

Right now, I'm really striving to highlight some specific areas where I excel and would love it if you could change the recommendation to something like this (feel free to edit)...

Thanks again. Your recommendation made my day!

And if someone's offered, **take matters into your own hands**. Customize and send:

I hope all is well, Fran, and since I know how busy you are at your new job, I crafted the following recommendation based on what you shared with me about our experience working together.

Include the kick-butt recommendation you crafted here.

Please feel free to edit or revise to what you'd prefer to express, but if you're still willing to add a recommendation to my LinkedIn profile, I'd be extremely grateful!

Remember...

- * While you now have an excellent jumping off point, these scripts are simply samples and NEED to be put in your own voice.
- * Whether working within the character limitations of the platform or not, work to keep your communications concise, to the point, and uniquely you.
- * As you've probably figured out by now, these scripts not only can easily be reconfigured to work for both initiating or replying to invites to connect, but they can also be reworked to help you show some personality and add value while reaching out through good old-fashioned email.
- * And though I do my best to update these materials as LinkedIn makes changes, if you notice something before I do, please let me know!

It's a Wrap

To soak up some additional career and LinkedIn gems, you can listen to podcasts featuring yours truly on [Win-Win@Work Radio Show](#) and [The Career Confidante](#). And to catch up on other LinkedIn tips, tricks, and vents, feel free to explore:

- * [STOP Irking Your Connections with Crappy LinkedIn Endorsements](#)
- * [How to Spice Up Your LinkedIn Profile Headline](#)
- * [How to Rock Out Your LinkedIn Background Photo](#)
- * [Give the Gift of a LinkedIn Recommendation without Telling the World](#)
- * [How to Create a Polished LinkedIn URL](#)

Since winning a Best LinkedIn Profile award while competing against some of the best-of-the-best LinkedIn profile writers in 2011, I've continued to experiment with the platform and share my findings so that it's ever-easier for you to take control of the possibilities available through this dynamic professional marketing tool.

As an avid LinkedIn user, content developer, and client educator, I've collected my savvy from countless sources, including conferences; blogs and e-lists; other members of the Professional Association of Resume Writers and Career Coaches (PARW/CC), the National Resume Writers' Association (NRWA), Career Thought Leaders (CTL), and Career Directors International (CDI); as well as other LinkedIn experts who generously share their findings and insight, such as the social selling guru, Brynn Tillman.



Connect with me!

