

Sales Navigator¹ Research Results

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As you embark on this year's effort, there are likely several challenges facing your sales team. The top three initiatives companies identified in CSO Insights' [2012 Sales Performance Optimization study](#) (data gathered Q4 2011 from 1500+ firms) to address this year's challenges are: revising/enhancing our lead generation programs; improving sales rep access to key information that they need to sell effectively; and revising our sales process. Each of these is aimed at increasing sales rep effectiveness, game readiness, and/or account intelligence.

If you are like other sales executives, you've probably been using LinkedIn Basic to maintain and manage your professional identity. You may be using it to look up sales prospects prior to making sales calls and attending client meetings. It's quite likely that you see LinkedIn as a vital tool to research accounts and sales contacts--an import aid in helping you be better informed, better prepared.

The objective of this paper is to compare LinkedIn Basic and LinkedIn Premium to LinkedIn's recently launched *Sales Navigator* offering. As you think through this portfolio of offerings from LinkedIn, you may have this question in mind:

Why pay for Sales Navigator when you already pay for Salesforce.com and can access LinkedIn for free?

This fundamental question is addressed in this white paper and presented with recently gathered survey data and user comments that will help you decide for yourself.

¹ LinkedIn Sales Navigator was initially launched as "LinkedIn for Salesforce" and introduced at Dreamforce in August 2011. When referencing CRM integration in this study, all charts and testimonials are specific to LinkedIn for Salesforce, as this was the only CRM integration offered at the time of the surveys. At the time of this study's publication, LinkedIn Sales Navigator integration has since extended to other CRM platforms.

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All that I need is available for free on LinkedIn...Or is it?

The assumption here is that you're already familiar with LinkedIn, that we needn't go through a lengthy description of social networking, how/why self-defined profiles are created, or LinkedIn's search capabilities. Suffice to say, there are 150 million individuals who have defined their professional identities on this network making it the largest professional network in the world – the only one with credible, self-authored, generally up-to-date profiles.

However, if you're consuming content from LinkedIn as a free user there are a few features not available to you. One of these is InMail, a member communication service powered by LinkedIn that allows you to reach out directly to other members you are not connected to. LinkedIn Premium Subscribers are allowed 3, 10 or 25 InMails per month (more on this later). LinkedIn Premium subscribers also see expanded profiles of everyone on the LinkedIn network, not just those individuals who are direct connections (i.e., in your personal network).

Sales Navigator includes a Premium LinkedIn subscription and also has additional features including the ability to show you profiles of sales contacts and profiles of companies that are in your sales opportunity (within your CRM system). In addition to the automated matching of contacts to relevant LinkedIn profiles, your sales reps are able to glean insights about key decision makers and influencers from these self-authored profiles. They can also monitor the sentiment at accounts by tracking status updates and posts of these key individuals. Our research tells us that having a more informed understanding of the backgrounds of decision makers, influencers and the sentiment at key accounts before walking into a client meeting can make the difference between a successful meeting and an unsuccessful one.

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Researching Prospects Contributes to Relationship Building

In our 2012 Sales Performance Optimization survey, firms needing improvement in researching prospects outnumbered those exceeding expectations in this ability 4:1. The group that exceeded expectations in researching prospects reported that they were twice as likely to be perceived at higher levels of relationship – contributor and trusted partner – than firms in need of improvement. Further, 61% of reps in the group needing improvement met or exceeded their quota while 70% of reps exceeding expectations with respect to researching prospects did so.

The Power of LinkedIn and CRM

Total sales rep turnover has been averaging 25% or better the past three years, which means an entirely new sales team every four years. You know the drill: all of the accounts, contacts and opportunities are now supposed to be in the CRM system. Then a rep leaves, voluntarily or is let go, and it turns out all this information is not in the system after all. How much is missing is uncertain but when asked directly, 22% of reps said they withheld some contact information

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and did not enter it in the CRM system. And 20% of the contacts/leads in the CRM system were no longer valid.

The problem of data completeness and credibility is compounded by turnover in sales territories and organizational changes. Key decision makers and influencers at accounts you are targeting may have changed and not being on top of these changes could be detrimental to your sales efforts.

LinkedIn can augment account information by providing the names of contacts, their profiles and, for Premium subscribers, a number of InMails each month.

How useful is this? The survey data proves these are very useful in identifying/creating new opportunities. Across 178 reps polled, the weighted average was 17 InMails sent per year—less than two/month. A quarter of reps sent fewer than 5 InMails/year; one in ten reps sent more than 50 InMails/year. These reps reported the ratio of InMails leading directly to a new sales opportunity at an impressive 8 InMails to 1 opportunity.

Which means even with these relatively low levels of InMail activity (4+/month at the high end), an average of two opportunities were created for each rep each year. If reps were provided and taking advantage of sending 10 InMails/month, this could translate to 15 additional opportunities each year.



Figure 1 – InMails have proven extremely productive yielding, on average, 1 new opportunity for every 8 InMails sent.

The Power of Sales Navigator in CRM

We've now looked at Basic versus LinkedIn Premium and offered an overview of Sales Navigator. The following table captures feedback from charter customers (Beta users) using the newly released Sales Navigator offering.

This is not a product review; rather, CSO Insights does project reviews. We're interested in what impact a product or service has on reps' ability to get the job done. In a recent survey of charter users of Sales Navigator, we spotted three key findings that speak directly to the challenges reps are facing today (see Figure 2 below).

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	Yes	No
Have you found information about people or companies using Sales Navigator you wouldn't have known otherwise?	87%	13%
Has Sales Navigator improved your ability to identify key decision makers?	81%	19%
Will Sales Navigator increase your ability to achieve your sales goals? [27% were unsure]	70%	3%

Figure 2 – Identifying all the buying influences in both new and existing accounts is key to reducing vulnerability.

The numbers in the table above are compelling in themselves but deserve a bit of expanded commentary. For starters, the survey population represented is not the general population of sales reps. These were sales reps that were already users of both Salesforce.com and LinkedIn. Even among this group, the integration of the two programs caused nearly nine of ten (87%) users to report they had, in fact, found information about people and companies they would not have known otherwise; and seven in ten to feel it would better help them attain their quota. Why would that be if these reps are already using both programs?

One reason might be the time saved toggling between the two applications. We did, in fact, survey to learn what this efficiency bonus might be: average 29 min/day. An extra half-hour a day is not insignificant; 2.5 hrs/week adds up to 125 hours or 3 full weeks of production per year. Even if you apply, as one world-class firm does, only one-half this gain to increased sales capacity and one-half to increase quality of life for the rep, it's meaningful.

We would assert, however, that the bigger payoff is increased consistency in *using* the two programs. That is, using Sales Navigator reinforced reps "living in" their CRM system. And having the LinkedIn profiles integrated and immediately available within that interface enhanced the reps' ability to do background research on the prospects they were contacting. In effect, the integration becomes a virtuous cycle resulting in greater use of CRM, higher data quality, better insights and consequently, more productive selling.

From LinkedIn's own user database across all users, they see that the average LinkedIn user (including titles associated with sales professionals such as account executive, account rep, etc.) reports viewing just a handful of profile per day. However, Sales Navigator users are reporting more than five time this number of views per day! This is a combination of contacts already in their Salesforce database and those being researched in LinkedIn since they are not yet in their Salesforce contacts.

Consider Sales Navigator users viewing at more than 5 times the frequency of other sales professionals using LinkedIn! (see Figure 3 below)

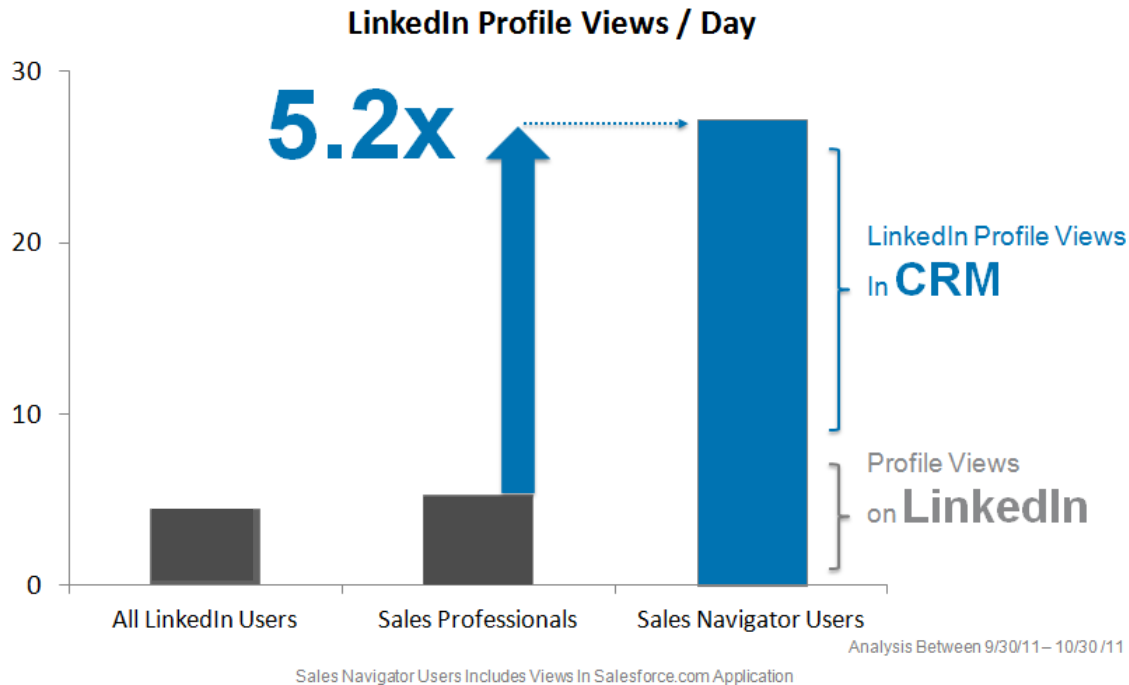


Figure 3 – Sales Navigator users report viewing 5X as many user profiles each day.
(source: LinkedIn Data – Aggregate Profile Views)

Finding the “Phantoms”

It is often an unidentified player that emerges late in the sales cycle that causes a change in direction—away from your forecast win. These are individuals that do not appear in press releases, annual reports, or corporate web pages where they can be found by web crawling technologies. They’re not hiding so much as hidden; these are typically lower level workers fulfilling their job function-- increasingly with less time, support or assistance. How do you identify and connect with these individuals to do the best job of covering all the buying influences?

It has allowed me to seamlessly research and then develop relationships with prospective clients. The integration of LinkedIn is simply the best tool I have used in Salesforce.

The surprising answer is: they tell you who they are and/or their colleagues do. And the place they do this is in LinkedIn. All the profiles in LinkedIn are self-authored as are the profiles of professionals within each of their networks.

These are the people who are influencing and/or making buying decisions about your products or services. These are the same people that are looking to establish their bona fides in their current company or elsewhere. They use today’s technology to enhance and expand their sphere of influence and their network of contacts. Social networking allows them to stay in touch with and support their colleagues. And by becoming part of the decision process they make themselves more *visible in that sphere*.

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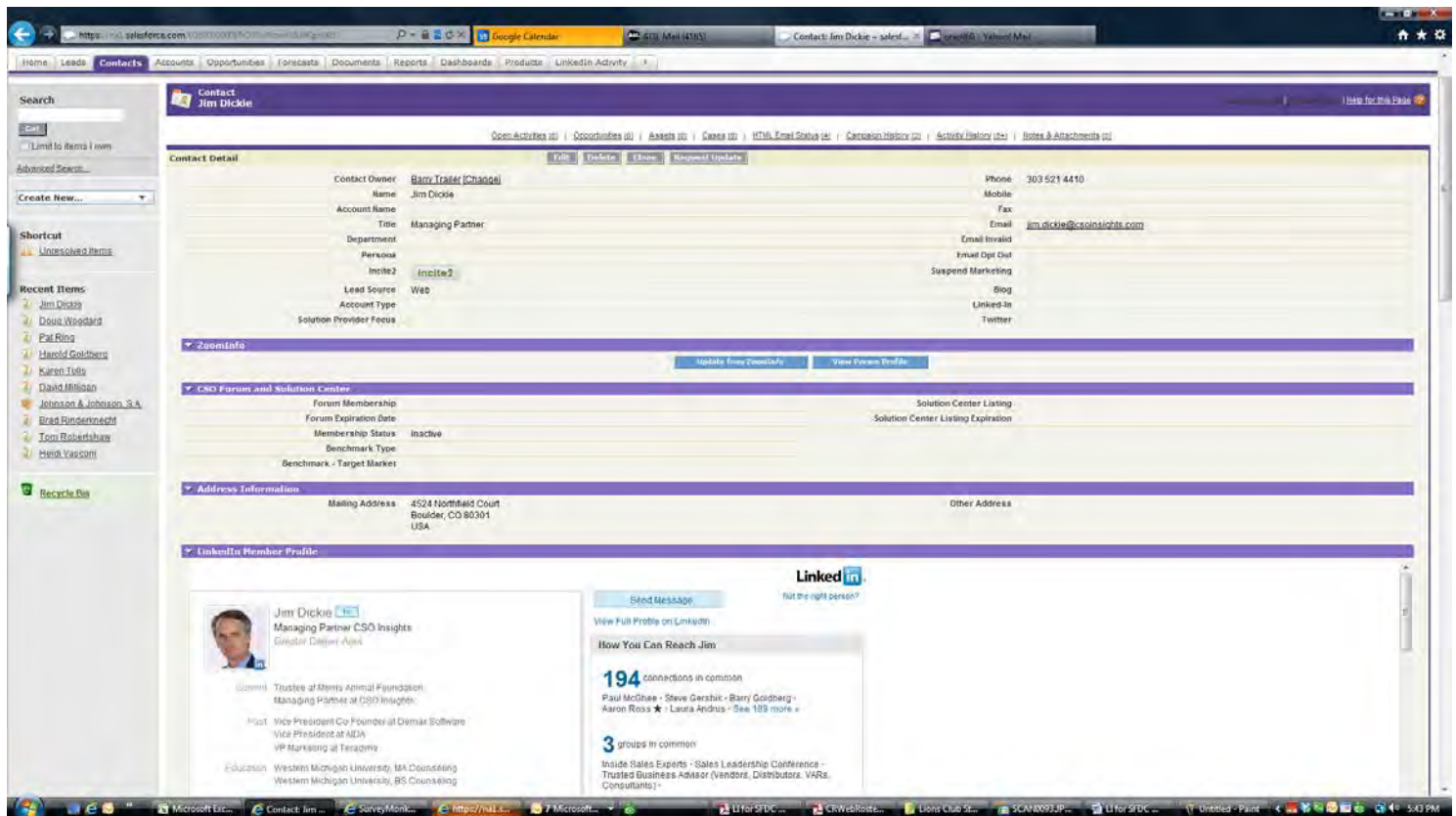
The screenshot displays the Salesforce Sales Navigator interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with tabs like Home, Leads, Contacts, Accounts, Opportunities, Forecasts, Documents, Reports, Dashboards, Products, and LinkedIn Activity. The main content area shows the profile of a contact named Jim Dickie. The profile includes a 'Contact Detail' section with fields for Name, Account Name, Title, Department, Person, Incite2, Lead Source, Account Type, and Solution Provider Focus. Below this is a '2pointInfo' section with buttons for 'Update from 2pointInfo' and 'View Person Profile'. The 'CSO Forum and Solution Center' section shows forum membership details. The 'Address Information' section lists mailing and other addresses. The 'LinkedIn Member Profile' section features a LinkedIn profile picture, name, title, and a list of 194 connections in common. The interface is clean and professional, with a purple and white color scheme.

Figure 4--Screen shot shows how LinkedIn profiles are integrated directly into Salesforce contacts.

The Bottom Line

Will Sales Navigator help you make your number? This is the question you must consider and each rep must answer. As seen above, 70% answered “Yes” to this question, 3% “No”; the remainder was uncertain. Of course, only time will tell with each of these individuals and for the group collectively. But 23:1 odds are a good start.

The early returns from surveyed users are very positive (as the various quotes from them suggest). It is reasonable to assume that as new users become increasingly familiar and facile with other functionality within Sales Navigator the reviews and results will only improve. For example, the ability to navigate complex organizations, identifying sister companies of current accounts/prospects, and individuals within these, will prove extraordinarily useful.

The ability to reach out to these previously unknown but no longer cold contacts via InMail, and to leverage LinkedIn data before every call are just two such use cases where Sales Navigator goes beyond free LinkedIn. In short, these help reps identify, research backgrounds, contact and establish rapport more easily, quickly and consistently.

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About LinkedIn

Founded in 2003, [LinkedIn](#) connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With more than 150 million members worldwide, including executives from every Fortune 500 company, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the Internet. The company has a diversified business model with revenue coming from member subscriptions, marketing solutions and hiring solutions. Headquartered in Silicon Valley, LinkedIn also has offices across North America, as well as throughout Europe, Asia and Australia.

About CSO Insights

[CSO Insights](#) has provided executives with best practices in sales and marketing for over eighteen years. Each year, we survey thousands of Chief Sales Officers (CSOs) to benchmark the use of people, process, technology, and knowledge, and the impact on sales effectiveness. We also review offerings from solution providers to retain our position as the experts on options for CSOs.

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