The Recruiter's Guide to Writing Effective LinkedIn InMails

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LinkedIn InMails offer you a way to speak one-on-one with the very best (and hard-to-reach) candidates in your market – in a way that's likely to get their attention and command a response. But do you know how to craft an InMail that will succeed in getting an answer, and will drive interest in your job opportunity?

In this guide, we'll share some tips about how to effectively reach out to candidates using InMails, one of LinkedIn's most powerful and popular tools.

Why having an InMail strategy matters

A well-crafted InMail message is the first step in engaging top-notch talent, so think carefully about your approach before you reach out.

Remember:

InMail messages are a direct **reflection of your company**. All of the touchpoints that a candidate has with your company come together to create a strong, compelling employer brand.

Your initial communication also **sets the stage** for what comes next. Creating a positive first experience will carry through during the entire hiring process.

Finally, don't forget that you also have a **personal brand** as a recruiter. When you take care to represent yourself well, it will pay off, since candidates will see you as a trustworthy partner in their career journey.

"LinkedIn offers an unparalleled pool of professional data, and an easy, yet effective way to contact relevant prospects. My team receives higher than average response rate on InMails because we send personalized InMails by first reviewing all the professional information a prospect has shared on LinkedIn and then focusing on finding the common connections to our business."

Suzanne Myers

Director, Talent Acquisition
Real Page

Personalization: the key to effective InMails

Put yourself in the shoes of a passive candidate, getting a message from a recruiter out of the blue. What's the best way to establish trust with someone who may not be actively looking for new opportunities?

They key is to carefully craft your InMail messages to establish a real connection with the people you're reaching out to. When you personalize your message – for example, mentioning things you have in common, or a skill or previous position you noticed on their profile – you instantly increase your chances of getting a response.

LinkedIn Recruiter makes it easy for you to quickly get the info you need to send a tailored, personalized one-to-one InMail by showing you everything you have in common with the person whose profile you're viewing.

5 ways LinkedIn Recruiter helps you personalize

01 Connections in common

LinkedIn Recruiter will point out people that you and the candidate are both connected to, and also connected to your company, so you can mention your common acquaintances in your InMail. You can even use the "Relationship" filter in Recruiter to target your 2nd-degree connections – that way, you'll be sure to have people in common.

02 Groups in common

Use the "My Groups" filter to find people who are members of the same groups you've joined. It's a good idea to take a look at some of the recent popular discussions in these groups, and bring them up as a conversation starter in your InMail. You're **21% more likely** to get a response from a candidate when you send an InMail to someone who shares a group with you.

03 Companies in common

LinkedIn Recruiter will also highlight when you've worked at the same company as someone you're targeting – which is a great way to establish common ground. Referencing a former employer in common increases your chances of getting an InMail response by **27%**.

5 ways LinkedIn Recruiter helps you personalize

(Continued)

04 Education in common

When you're composing your InMail message, Recruiter will also point out when you share an alma mater with the person you're contacting. Mentioning a school in common is another perfect conversation starter to help your message stand out.

05 Interests in common

Finally, don't forget to take a look around someone's profile for shared interests, volunteering and nonprofit experience, or other background that could create a connection.

Common InMail pitfalls

At LinkedIn, we've gathered a lot of data and heard plenty of feedback over the years about what works when crafting InMail messages – which means we've also learned a lot about what **doesn't** work.

If you'd like to create the best candidate experience (and get a higher response rate), remember that your **first** InMail to a candidate is really about establishing rapport and starting a conversation.

Here are some **don'ts** to keep in mind when crafting your next InMail:

- **Don't ask for a resume in your first message.** Focusing on your needs, instead of those of the candidate, is a quick way to turn off prospective talent. Acknowledge their accomplishments, learn more about their interests and career goals, and determine if they are the right fit for the position before asking for a resume or requesting they submit an application.

- **Don't ask the candidate for the names of other people they know who may be interested in the job in your first message.** This is a common mistake that recruiters make and reinforces the idea that "It's all about me" versus the candidate. Build credibility and trust first – then you'll find the candidate more receptive to sharing referrals.

Common InMail pitfalls

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- **Don't pitch a position that's at a lower level than the candidate's current position.** Our data indicates that nearly 70% of members who started a new role in the past 12 months were either promoted or took a lateral move.

- **Don't offer a temporary contract opportunity when the candidate is already employed full-time.** When contacting prospective talent, understanding their career trajectory is key in establishing productive initial contact. If candidates have been in permanent roles and growing in their career, they probably won't be receptive to the idea of switching to a three-month temporary position. Starting a conversation with this approach instantly diminishes your credibility and negatively impacts not only your employer brand, but also your personal brand as a recruiter.

- **Don't reach out to people whose background and experience aren't aligned with the role.** This is a surefire way to get your InMail transferred to the trash folder. Make the conversation about the specific candidate, and ensure you're contacting them for a position that connects to their experience.

When to send your InMail

On average, LinkedIn Recruiter users send nearly a million InMail messages to LinkedIn members each week. That makes it all the more important that your message stands out from the crowd.

Timing matters. First, don't send that InMail over the weekend! InMail messages sent on Saturdays are **16% less likely** to get a response compared to those sent earlier in the work week.

There's also a better time of day – between **9 AM and 10 AM local time for the recipient, on a Thursday.** You're about **12% more likely** to get a response at that time of day than on a Friday afternoon, when everyone's thinking about the weekend.

Finishing touches for subject lines

When you're getting ready to send an InMail, take special care with your subject line. Aim to grab someone's attention, while still keeping your tone professional. Ask yourself: Is the subject line short and engaging? If not, edit it until it's snappy and easy to read.

Keep in mind that as more and more messages are read on mobile devices, the subject line has to work even harder to get someone to open and read your InMail.

A few ideas for attention-grabbing subject lines:

- Say something positive about the candidate's background.
- If the candidate has viewed your profile, thank them in the subject line.
- Mention something you have in common with a candidate or something you noticed on their profile, like, "I see you like to golf."

You can even get creative with information in a candidate's profile that's related to the company or industry they work in. For example, if you're recruiting a candidate who works for a video game company, you could try a subject line that reads, "What's your favorite video game?"

Honing your approach with analytics

Now that you've got the basics of **how** and **when** to reach out with InMails, it's time to take a look at your **InMail Analytics** so you can be sure you're getting the results you want.

Before diving into the specifics of an InMail analytics report, let's look at terminology. There are two buttons that show up at the bottom of each InMail message: **Reply to message** and **Not interested**.

The calculations to the right also include free InMail messages sent to your connections and to OpenLink members. It doesn't include any messages you sent to candidates' email addresses.

Accepted InMails = number of InMail messages that candidates replied to by clicking **Reply to message**

Declined InMails = number of InMail messages that candidates replied to by clicking **Not Interested**, regardless of the reason

Pending (No Response) InMails = number of InMail messages that candidates did not respond to at all

Total InMails = accepted InMails + declined InMails + pending InMails

**Acceptance rate** = (accepted InMails) / (total InMails)

Response rate = (accepted InMails + declined InMails) / (total InMails)

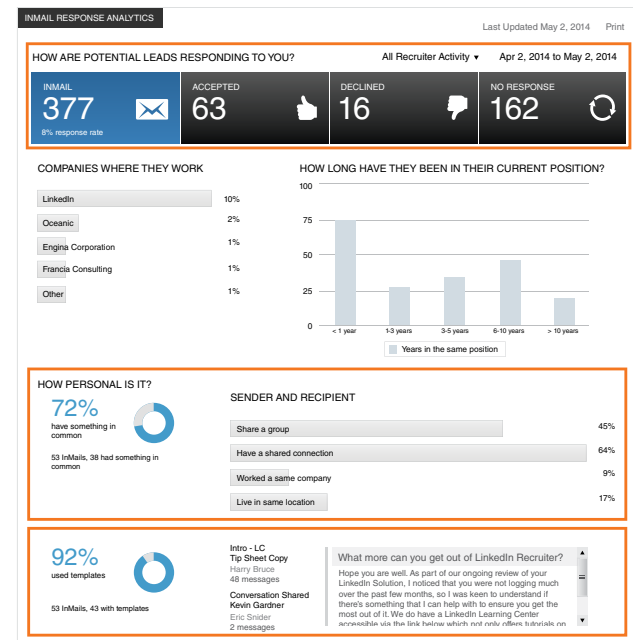# Honing your approach with analytics

Here's how to find your InMail Analytics report in LinkedIn Recruiter:

01 Sign in to Recruiter.

02 Move your cursor over **Reports** and click **InMail Analytics**.

Reports	More

Recruiter Usage
Pipeline Analytics
Job Analytics
InMail Analytics
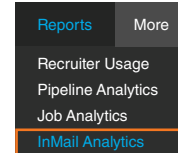
03 At the top of your screen, review activity, commonalities, and template usage.

Honing your approach with analytics

Here's how to find your InMail Analytics report in LinkedIn Recruiter:

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You can use this information to identify your most and least responsive talent pools, which can help you shape and adapt your InMail strategy over time. As a manager, you can also determine how your team of recruiters is performing. Download the Review InMail Analytics tip sheet for more information.

04 At the bottom of the screen, the **Analytics Details** table summarizes the individual recruiter InMail data for each person on your dashboard. Click **Download Data** to download the information to a .CSV file.

| | Download Data ⬇ |
| | |

SE	RESPONSE RATE	TEMPLATE USE
	10%	90%

About LinkedIn Talent Solutions

Founded in 2003, LinkedIn connects the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. With over 300 million members worldwide, including executives from every Fortune 500 company, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network.

LinkedIn Talent Solutions offers a full range of recruiting solutions to help organizations of all sizes find, engage, and attract the best talent. We are committed to giving our members the best possible experience.