

# Get Closer to the Buying Committee

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How **LinkedIn Sales Navigator**  
Equips You to Be a Buying  
Committee's Dream Salesperson

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# Getting to Know the Buying Committee

**As a sales professional, you need to connect with your target audience.**

Building relationships with the right people is the key to prospecting success. But how much do you truly understand about the workings of the typical B2B buying committee—which comprises **6.8 people** on average? In the technology sector, the buying teams can be even bigger, averaging 12 to 14 participants.

We created this ebook to give you insight into how buying committees operate and how they want to work with salespeople. To bring you a firsthand, real-world perspective, we interviewed the buying committee at Relativity Space, a small but rapidly growing high-tech engineering firm that builds reusable rockets.

The distillation of these interviews: Relativity's buying committee values salespeople who do their homework, understand the needs—and limits—of a small but growing company, and can suggest useful solutions. The company and its employees want to work with vendors that are trustworthy, are focused more on helping than on selling, and are eager to establish partnerships over the long haul.

Understanding the buying committee's point of view makes it that much easier for you to establish the right relationships and guide prospective accounts down the purchase path. To make it even easier to find the right prospects and build trusted relationships—even as people leave the company or change positions—you can call upon LinkedIn Sales Navigator.

**Dig in for insights on the buying committee that you won't find anywhere else.**



How Relativity Space's Buying Committee Depends on Salespeople:

## Their Expectations and Insights for Success

At Relativity Space, vendors are valued throughout the buying process, and buying committees want to interact with salespeople who are knowledgeable and prepared. The buying committee especially appreciates salespeople who are committed for the entire process—from pitch and negotiations to implementation and post-purchase. They seek out long-standing partners who want to share in their growth and success.

## The Buying Committee: Anchoring the Company's Strategic Plans

At Relativity, the Strategic Planning Team, comprising leaders from every department, approves large-ticket purchases. The team bases its decisions on how well any purchase supports the company's long-term strategic vision and goals.

“The buying committee analyzes every strategically important purchase for the company. We determine the fundamental problem that we're trying to solve as an organization, the best options on the market, the cost, and the best suppliers to provide those solutions.”



—**Tobi Duschl**, Vice President for Operations, Relativity Space

## How the Committee Makes Decisions

The larger the purchase, the greater the amount of vetting before the committee commits to a purchase order. The committee needs to align the purchase with Relativity's overall strategy, which means getting input from finance and legal to augment the company's engineers and purchasers. The committee expects individuals to understand the need and the solution and to vet the vendor. What are the terms of the agreement? How quickly can the vendor deliver the solution? How strong is the vendor's commitment to customer service?

“When our committee has all required answers and data up front, we see fewer issues down the line.”



—**Tosin Akinagbe**, IT Technician, Relativity Space



## A Decentralized—but Evolving—Purchasing Process

At Relativity, purchasing is decentralized; the company empowers its engineers to find vendors and solutions, since they set the purchasing parameters as far as technical requirements. That said, the buying process is highly collaborative, because it's a small company developing many complex systems in multi-disciplinary, cross-departmental teams.

The more—and more relevant—information the vendor can provide prospects, the better. This helps the committee understand how a solution aligns long-term with what the company is trying to accomplish strategically—and can greatly influence the purchase decision.

## Finding and Researching Potential Vendors

Individuals and the buying committee will consider off-the-shelf products that employees have used in the past. They also receive significant outreach every day on social platforms, such as LinkedIn. They are open to tailored inbound advertisements via email, and will visit a vendor's website for educational content, such as white papers, videos, and webinars. Understanding the technical specifications and how the product meets the department's or company's needs is critical for more sophisticated technology products.

“As someone who does a lot of purchasing, I receive a great deal of ads, emails, solicitations, and inbound mail. These range from being completely irrelevant to ones I'll log in the back of my mind for future reference. What was irrelevant at one time can become relevant in the future. Having seen or heard something from a vendor, I can research it when the time is right.”



—**Ruby Willman**, General Operations Manager, Relativity Space



We started as two people three-and-a-half years ago, are now around 85 and will be at 150 by year's end. Every time the company doubles in size, we expect every process to break. To stay ahead of that, we will distribute more purchasing authority, effectively elevating large purchases to the leadership team and making sure purchasing doesn't become a bottleneck as our processes scale quickly.”



—**Jordan Noone**, CTO and Co-Founder, Relativity Space

## The Importance of Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration

For Relativity, it's critical to build a strong relationship with vendors. As a startup, the company is dead in the water if it can't get the products and components needed to build its product. Whether they realize it or not, vendors are part of the company's business. The company's purchasing agents—e.g., engineers, IT technicians, the CMO—are thinking about what solutions are needed today as well as in the future. By connecting with a salesperson well in advance of needing to make a purchase, they pave the way for a smoother process.

“To win our business, vendors should think strategically about where their product is heading long-term. We're a young company with huge growth potential. We aren't looking for a one-off purchase. We're looking for vendors that understand our mission and align with us early so we can grow with them.”



—**Alex Kwan**, Head of Finance and Business Operations, Relativity Space

## Trusting That You're In It Together

Trust is critical in the sales process, especially for a venture-backed company like Relativity. It operates on timelines between 12 and 18 months and must achieve specific milestones during that time. The fate of the company hangs in the balance if purchases are delayed or don't satisfy its requirements.

While every business interaction comes down to a transaction between a seller and a buyer, human connection, vulnerability, connection, and authenticity are invaluable. These attributes make it possible to move beyond the business transaction and for both parties to trust that they're in it together.



Trust is fundamental to our core mission at Relativity. We're trying to do a fantastical thing in terms of 3D printing a rocket within a short duration. To achieve that goal, we need to work with vendors that can meet our schedules and satisfy our needs for high-quality products.”



—**Alex Kwan**, Head of Finance and Business Operations,  
Relativity Space



## Looking for Relevance, Responsiveness, and Competence

When buyers reach out, they want to see salespeople respond quickly and knowledgeably. That means engaging in conversations focused on the buyer's needs, being knowledgeable about the solutions you're offering, and responding to inquiries in a timely, relevant way.

“

The last thing we want is someone not telling us correct lead times or giving the wrong technical information. You can make erroneous and deleterious decisions based on bad information. By maintaining a good relationship with honest, open, and clear communication, salespeople can work with us to jointly achieve desired objectives.”



—**Eliana Fu**, Senior Materials Supply Chain Engineer,  
Relativity Space

## Expecting Salespeople to Do Their Homework

It's essential for salespeople to tailor their offering to the company and the decision makers. Doing so requires preparation, but it makes the purchasing process easier for the buyer and shows you're committed to helping their company.

Relativity's time is precious. Its employees need to focus on their products and on building the company. They can't afford to interact with a misinformed vendor that doesn't understand the company's mission and goal. The right vendors take the time to understand before engaging.

Some salespeople will mistakenly think they understand Relativity's business because the company is involved in 3D printing. But Relativity is 3D printing rockets with an arc welding process—an incredibly innovative application that most salespeople would need to educate themselves on.

“

It's critical that a salesperson knows a lot about Relativity and our brand and our mission. Then they can understand if their technology aligns with our business and technology now as well as with our future vision.”



—**Alex Kwan**, Head of Finance and Business Operations,  
Relativity Space

## What Makes for a Winning Pitch

You must clearly demonstrate you've done your research and your product has a place within Relativity's ecosystem. Some prospective vendors are well versed in Relativity's business and requirements when they reach out. However, if a vendor sends an inquiry without knowing much about Relativity or what the company is trying to accomplish, employees ignore it because they have to focus on their mission.

“It's a turnoff when sales reps haven't done their due diligence and don't know if they can solve a problem we are experiencing.”



—**Jordan Noone**, CTO and Co-Founder, Relativity Space

## Salespeople Play a Critical Role in the Collaborative Process

As a salesperson, you play a critical role in the decision-making process. Ideally, you are so heavily engaged with the buyer that you understand their needs and can provide the best data and insights to help them make a compelling case for purchase.



Whether that's proving the potential return on investment, supplying references, or being responsive to all buyer inquiries, it's a collaborative partnership. Relativity wants salespeople to provide the nitty-gritty technical detail of their product tailored to the company's needs, along with a demo and reasonable prices.



A nightmare sales process is when the salesperson will not give me the information I need, such as a lead time, until I place an order. If the product won't arrive for four months, we need to know and source another vendor. Not telling me that your product has a really long lead time until I've signed a contract is unacceptable.”



—**Ruby Willman**, General Operations Manager, Relativity Space



## Communicating with Personalization in Mind

Relativity's employees won't answer a call from a number they don't recognize. In fact, like many buyers, Relativity's employees are put off by cold calls.

“It's a desperate act, which leads me to believe they're not confident in their subject matter. When a salesperson is extremely confident in their subject matter, it breeds confidence in me, making me more inclined to work with them.”



—**Eliana Fu**, Senior Materials Supply Chain Engineer,  
Relativity Space

However, the company's employees are open to initial outreach via email or LinkedIn. Every engineer at Relativity has a thorough LinkedIn profile. If you read these and understand the job descriptions and responsibilities, you will know how your company and product fit. Explaining that in a personalized email usually sparks interest.

“It's enticing to receive an email quoting specific keywords that show the salesperson has read up on our company, and knows what solution they can offer. I often forward these emails to my engineers to see if they want to follow up.”



—**Ruby Willmann**, General Operations Manager, Relativity Space

Ultimately, nothing beats face-to-face contact and in-person interactions.



Meeting in person is important when it comes to a vendor understanding our needs and us getting a true sense of their product, such as touching a piece of metal that's going in a rocket ship.”



—**Eliana Fu**, Senior Materials Supply Chain Engineer,  
Relativity Space



## Using LinkedIn to Vet Vendors and Sales Reps

When Relativity is trying to figure out which vendor—and if a vendor—is the right fit, it researches the vendor's location. For this company, it's important to work with a vendor that has a local presence because so much of Relativity's work is customized and employees often need vendors to visit and see what they're working on.



To inspire confidence and ensure a response to your outreach, develop a comprehensive and compelling LinkedIn profile. Relativity's employees review the profile of any salesperson they're not familiar with before responding.

“

Once we understand who the sales representative is, LinkedIn is a good source to vet them. We don't have time for someone to get up to speed. We use LinkedIn to make sure the salesperson has the right experience, can help us, and will add value.”



—**Ruby Willmann**, General Operations Manager, Relativity Space



## A Step-by-Step Dream Sales Process

For Relativity, a dream sales process resembles a slow courtship. Many employees prefer researching solution options without being approached by a salesperson. Once they identify potential solutions, they reach out to learn more about the potential vendors.

“

My priority is to make a human connection and that means I don't want to deal with overly eager or aggressive salespeople. I want answers and data without any pressure. And I want to take the relationship at a comfortable pace.”



—**Tosin Akinagbe**, IT Technician, Relativity Space

You as a sales rep must invest the time to understand the company's problems and needs. It might mean admitting that your company can't help solve a problem today but suggesting alignment with the buyer's future strategy. Investing the time and not rushing the process demonstrates that you truly care about helping the company succeed. And that goes a long way to convincing the entire buying committee that your company is the right strategic partner.

Relativity's online presence is strong and the many news articles about the company make it clear what it will need in the future.

Terms and conditions of the sale are an important aspect of the purchase. Unfriendly terms and conditions and an unwillingness to negotiate can be a red flag, no matter how wonderful your product, because they might signal your company isn't aligned with the buyer's long-term interests as a true partner.

“

A dream sales process is when a salesperson says they read about our dedicated launch site in Cape Canaveral, explains their company's experience with launch sites or Cape Canaveral, and how they can help. That's helpful, because while many of our employees have experience with dedicated launch sites, this is new for some of us and we appreciate any resources that help us learn more.”



—**Ruby Willmann**, General Operations Manager, Relativity Space

## Looking for a Long-Term, Mutually Beneficial Relationship

Relativity is looking for vendors that want to develop a long-term relationship:



As a rapidly growing company, it will need to continually evolve and scale many processes.



It needs vendors and solutions that address its immediate problems and support the company's vision one and two years out.



Early on, we needed to figure out how to 3D print large vessels and had to work closely with our vendors to make the process work. Having our vendors' support after the sale has been critical to our success and to trusting them as our partners."



—**Alex Kwan**, Head of Finance and Business Operations,  
Relativity Space



A good sales relationship can echo around a business due to the nature of the trust built with influential people. We've built strong relationships with companies and sales reps that made bets on us as a very small company and chose to support and prioritize us despite our limited credit history and limited funds on hand. It is embedded within our company's culture to use that vendor. And it's a bidirectional relationship. While we benefit from discounts and early insight into the vendor's new products, they get our feedback and a future return on their sales efforts."



—**Jordan Noone**, CTO and Co-Founder, Relativity Space

LinkedIn Sales Navigator:

# How Salespeople Can Satisfy Buying Committee Expectations

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With upwards of six people on average involved in major purchase decisions, your company's deals are at risk when key players are overlooked, change roles, or leave the company. With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can efficiently identify and track all buyer stakeholders—including decision makers, champions, and influencers—and see how they may influence the purchase.

## Find the Right People



Using Sales Navigator Advanced Lead and Company Search, you can find the right people and companies.

Once you identify accounts that are the perfect fit, use advanced search and segmentation to find the relevant people within those accounts. You can search by seniority, function, relationships to your connections, and more. This paves the way for more timely and efficient prospecting, a shorter sales cycle, and larger deals.

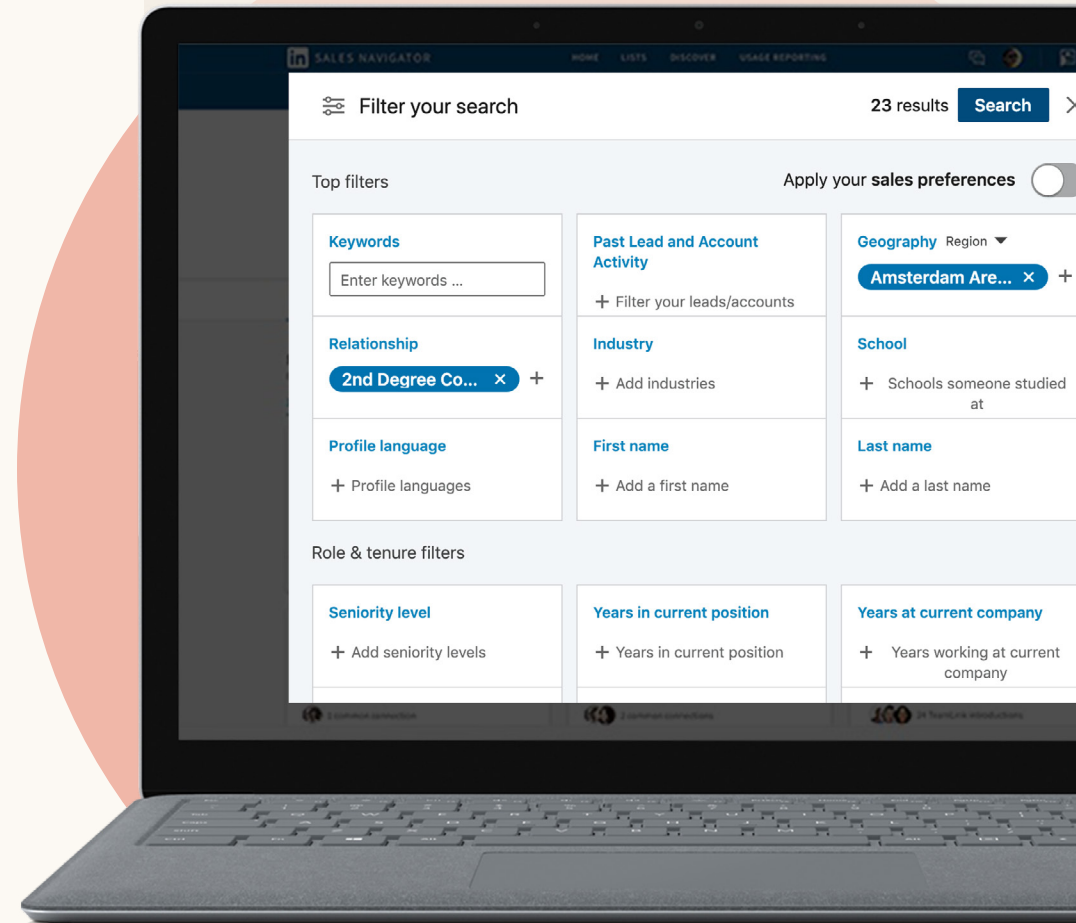
## Get Lead Recommendations Delivered to You

With Sales Navigator, you can also quickly discover the right people at your target accounts with suggestions customized for you. When you save accounts or leads, Sales Navigator pairs that information with your sales preferences to generate recommended leads. The more active you are in Sales Navigator, the more relevant your results will be: The tool learns from your past searches and automatically combs LinkedIn for relevant lead recommendations.

## Map the Entire Buying Committee

The Advanced Search feature offers a big advantage, giving you a view into how companies are structured so you can confidently map the buying committee. Not only does it boost the likelihood of your engaging the right prospects, it reveals account decision makers and influencers that you might have overlooked.

Mapping also helps you know which individuals to communicate with regularly. Plus, by connecting with more than one person in the account, you get a well-rounded, realistic view of the buying process and potential barriers to purchase. You're also better able to tailor your approach to the overall account and each individual within it.



## Multiply Your Connections

With so many people influencing the average purchase decision, it's smart to take a multithreaded approach in all your accounts. In other words, establish relationships with six or more stakeholders.

Sales Navigator can uncover opportunities for warm introductions. With the embedded TeamLink feature, you can easily identify promising contacts and automatically see connections between them and your colleagues.

## Keep Pace with Real-time Changes

Connecting with relevance is key to building relationships for the long haul and giving prospects a reason to welcome your outreach. Real-time Sales Updates supplies you with the insights you need to position yourself as an ally who engages in meaningful discussions.

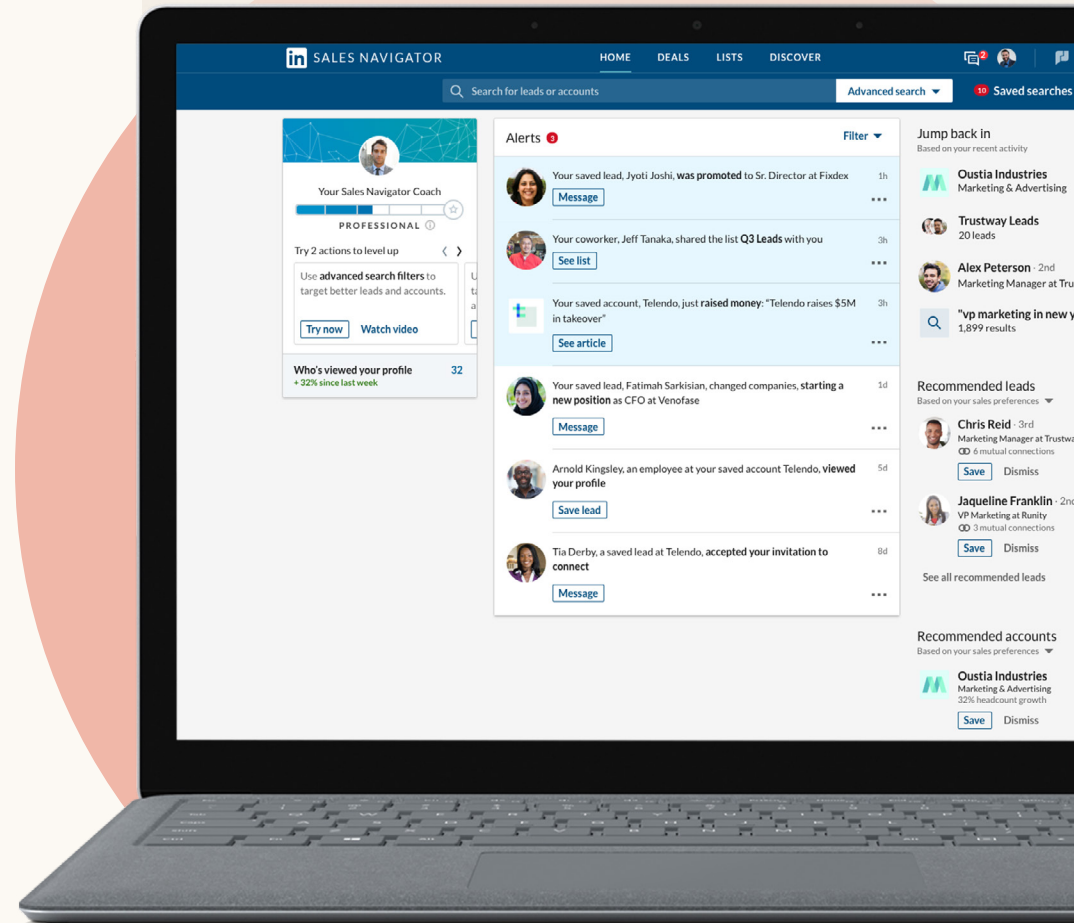


Real-time alerts are also crucial to helping you keep track of job changes that could impact the composition of the buying committee. You can know immediately if members are leaving or new ones are joining.

## Get Noticed with InMail

InMail is a tool within Sales Navigator that enables you to reach those who aren't your first-degree LinkedIn connections. This capability is especially valuable when trying to connect with prospects but don't have their email addresses.

Unlike email where you're competing with a crowded inbox, people are more likely to respond to InMails because they receive fewer of them. Plus, InMail's real-time delivery feature means your message will appear at the top of a prospect's inbox when they are most likely to see it.



## Deliver Relevant Information with Ease

B2B buyers are constantly bombarded with an overwhelming amount of information in emails. Anything you can do to ease that pain makes the experience better for the buyer and increases the likelihood of the engagement.

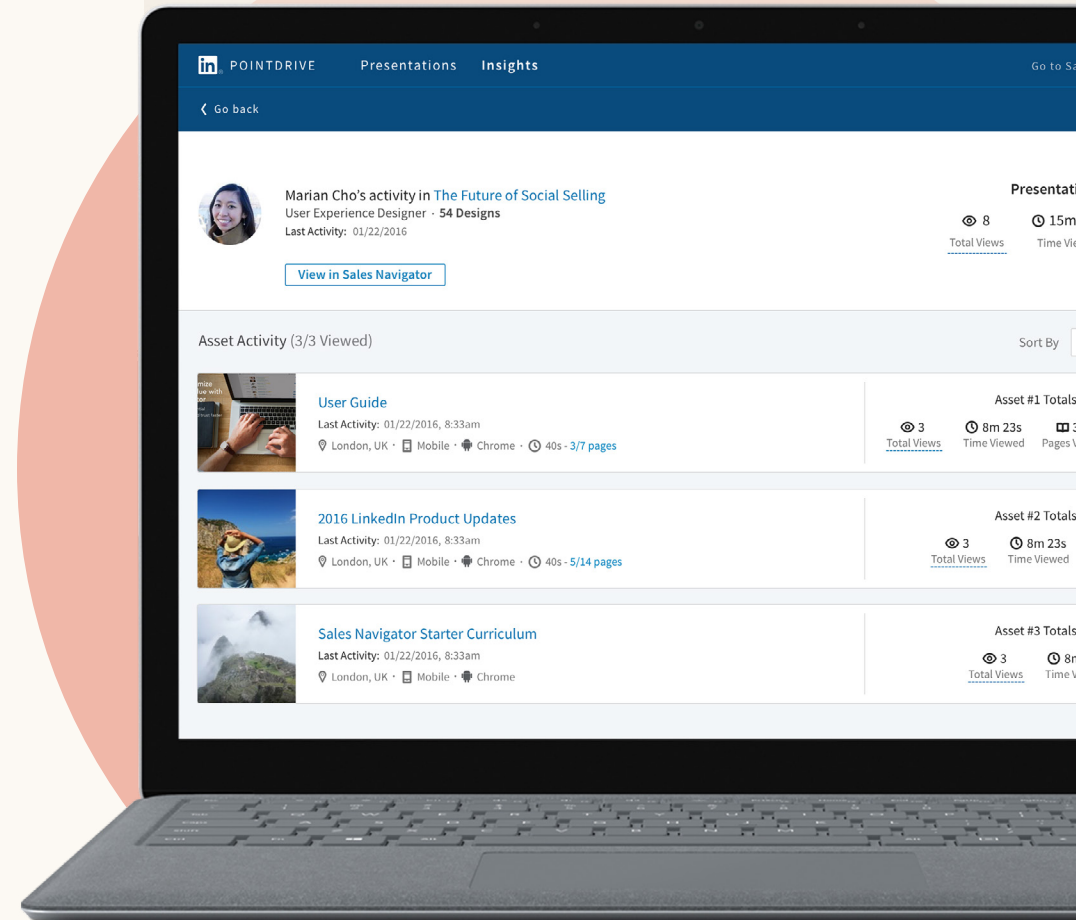


Using PointDrive, a feature within Sales Navigator, you can easily bundle documents, PDFs, articles, and more into one easily sharable package.

You send a URL that prospects can access via any device and any electronic communication channel: real-time chat, InMail, and more. Recipients can easily share the content with their colleagues, and you can easily track who opens it and how long they spend viewing the content.

## Know When to Keep Working a Deal

Even on the best days, your follow-up might not resonate. By seeing who's viewed your profile on LinkedIn, you'll know when it makes sense to persist—even when the buyer didn't respond to your outreach. A non-response might indicate you need to incorporate better insights or data into your message.



## Stay Nimble—Even on the Go

Using the Sales Navigator mobile app, you can keep track of all updates and intent signals wherever you are, whether standing in line at the coffee shop, waiting to board a flight, or checking into your hotel. When you sign in, the most pressing and actionable alerts will appear at the top of your feed. Whether you see a spike in hires or the announcement of a strategic initiative, these alerts enable you to immediately jump on opportunities.

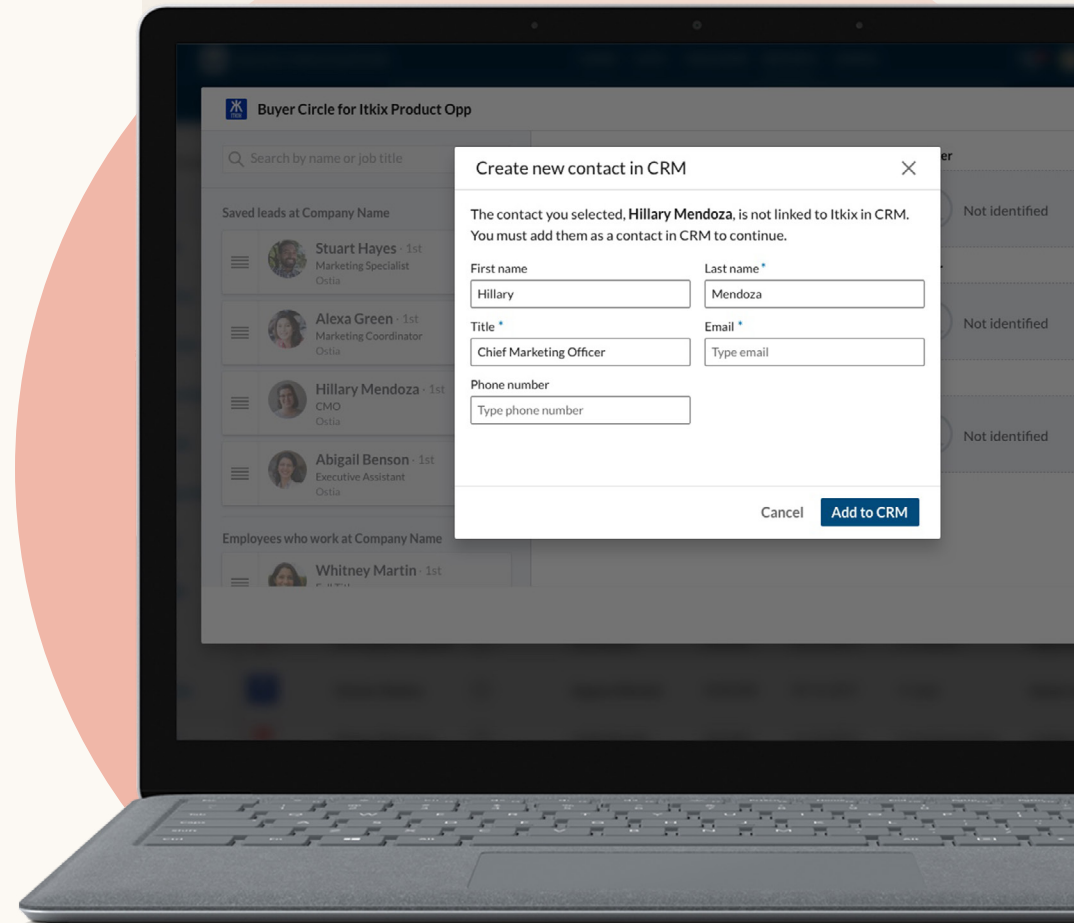
## Automatically Sync with CRM for a Seamless Sales Experience



With the LinkedIn CRM Sync feature in Sales Navigator, you can pair your CRM with Sales Navigator to create a seamless workflow between the two systems.

You can write-back your communications on LinkedIn—InMail, notes, messages—into your CRM, and push your accounts and leads into Sales Navigator automatically as saved leads and saved accounts.

Once CRM Sync is activated, Sales Navigator can tailor recommended leads for you based on saved accounts and leads that mirror your accounts and leads in CRM. This makes short work of prospecting.



# Getting Closer to the Buying Committee

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**It's no longer a winning sales strategy to identify and court a single decision maker when it comes to major purchases.**

These days, you need to develop relationships with and build consensus among buying committee members. That's no small task as people join and leave buying committees—and buyers expect you to understand their business at a deep level and engage with insights and solutions at just the right time.

LinkedIn Sales Navigator is the way you get closer to the buying committee. Not only are Sales Navigator reps discovering more decision makers, they are connecting with more of them—in the way that buying committees prefer. In other words, Sales Navigator makes it possible to fulfill the dream of every buying committee for a sales process that works.



## LinkedIn SALES NAVIGATOR

LinkedIn Sales Navigator makes it simple to establish and grow relationships with prospects and customers by helping you tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of more than 630 million members. Designed for sales professionals, LinkedIn Sales Navigator combines LinkedIn's network data, relevant news sources, and your accounts, leads, and preferences to produce customized recommendations and insights.

With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can focus on the right people and companies, stay up-to-date on what's happening with your accounts, and build trust with your prospects and customers.