HOW *LINKEDIN'S SALES REPS* TARGET PROSPECTS

Part 2 of LinkedIn's INside Sales Series

Just like any organisation, LinkedIn's sales team aims to get in front of key decision-makers by generating high-quality leads. This eBook shares how LinkedIn conducts its social selling using an "active hunting" approach, with tips on how to apply this to your own organisation.

THE OBJECTIVE

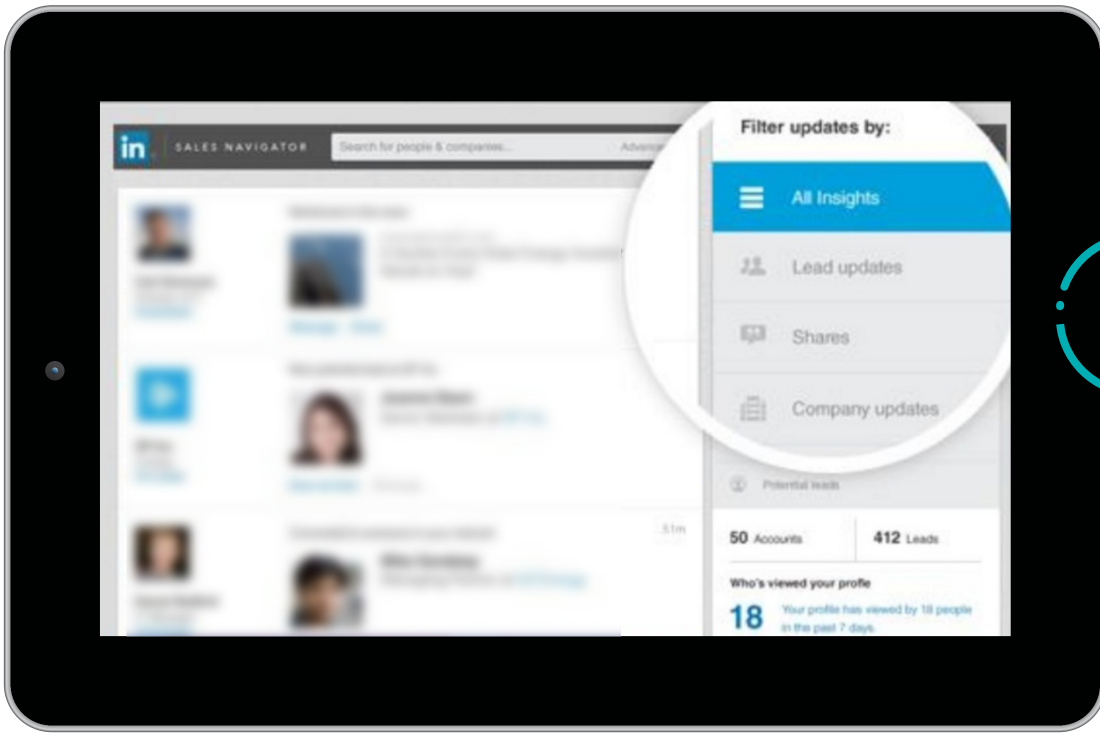
Adopt a system to target the right buyers when they're ready to buy.

WHY IT MATTERS

In today's digital marketplace, there are now so many buyers that identifying the warmest ones is like searching for a needle in a stack of ones and zeros. On LinkedIn, simply searching according to job titles and company names is unlikely to give you the exact prospects you're going after. Company Pages tend to only provide content relating to employee branding and thought leadership, and searching by a prospect's name isn't at all scalable on a day-to-day basis. While there are numerous hidden gems of opportunity on LinkedIn's network of over 414 million members, getting to them requires specific tools and selling strategies.

SOCIAL SELLING, THE LINKEDIN WAY

Everyone in LinkedIn's sales practice uses a tool called Sales Navigator. Built specifically for sales professionals, Sales Navigator allows sellers to quickly search, filter, and find ways of connecting with decision-makers of potential value to their businesses.



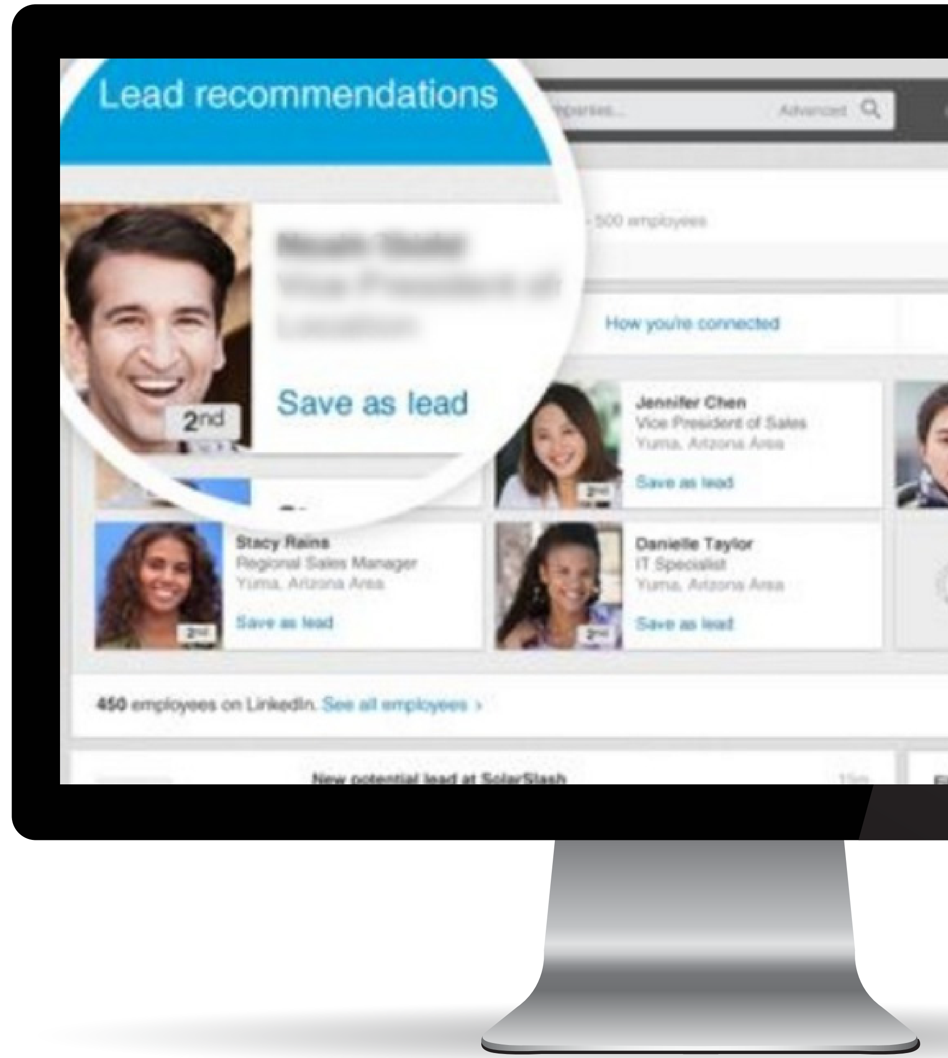
At LinkedIn, we use a simple three-step approach to social selling:

STEP 1

IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

Before using Sales Navigator, work out the types of individuals who are likely to benefit your business the most. Think about factors like industry, function/department, location, and seniority level.

At LinkedIn, for example, we tend to look for Director or CXO-level individuals within the marketing function of a range of industries. Entering these criteria into Sales Navigator will create a list of leads for you to review.



STEP 2

FIND YOUR CLOSEST CONNECTIONS

You'll immediately see that the results from Sales Navigator are much more precise than those from the standard LinkedIn search function. However, you should still filter down even further based on two things: shared connections and TeamLink connections.

Shared connections indicate you and the lead have a common connection. TeamLink, however, finds common factors – such as colleges attended, or prior workplaces – between the lead and other people in your sales team. LinkedIn sellers will use both shared and TeamLink connections to "open the door" for initial contact. Choose two or three leads who are most relevant to your objectives, and with whom you share at least one connection or TeamLink.

STEP 3

CREATE A REFERRAL

Reach out to your shared connection or team member to request an introduction to the lead. At LinkedIn, we stress the importance of a warm, personal introduction that clearly explains why you're getting in touch and what value you might offer to the lead's current situation. The information that Sales Navigator provides – such as shared interests, education, or work history with your team members – can help inform the content of your introductions.

Pro Tip:

Sometimes you may wish to build up greater influence in an organisation than can be provided by a single individual. When you access leads via Sales Navigator, the top of their profile will also list "Lead Recommendations", other individuals in the organisation who may also be worth approaching. LinkedIn sellers strive for a "multithreaded" approach to organisational engagement, meaning that we try to build connections with several decision-makers or influencers in any company we're approaching.

Our best sellers have the following three tips for social selling:

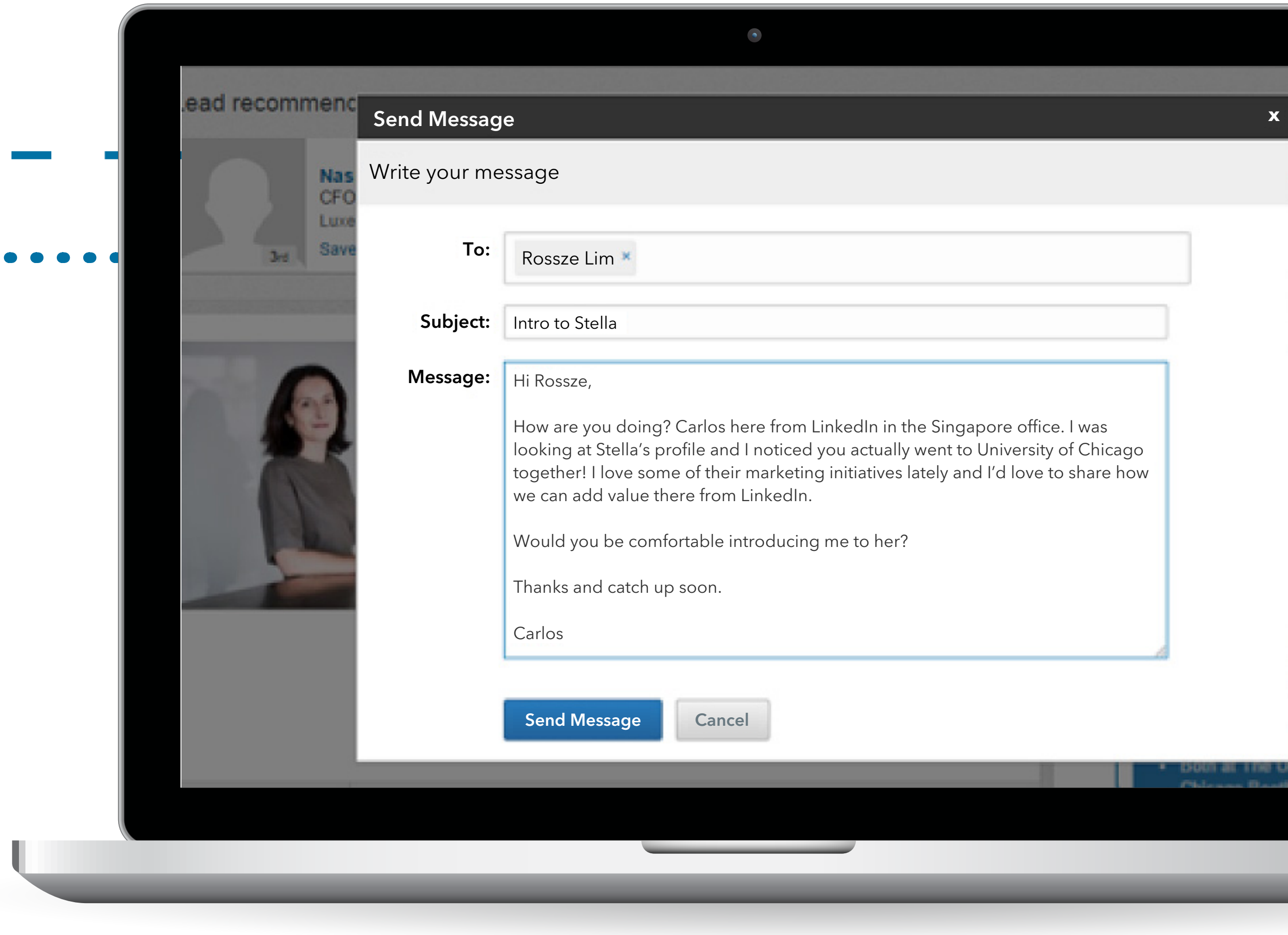
- **Focus on the right people:**
  You can't sell to everyone Sales Navigator gives you, so only choose the most valuable decision-makers or persons most likely to respond.

- **The warmer, the better:**
  Explain why you're getting in touch and how you wish to help the lead for a better chance of a strong introduction.

- **Don't miss out:**
  Use "Lead Recommendations" to find alternate avenues into the organisation in case your first choice doesn't pan out.

Our internal studies show that sales teams using this approach with Sales Navigator grow their revenues by nearly 20% more than those only using LinkedIn. This "active hunting" approach is used 100% of the time by all our staff. It keeps our sales cycle short, efficient, and constantly growing.

Breaking it Down



Requesting an introduction is the same as asking for a favour. In this example, Carlos gets straight to the point about what it is that his colleague Rossze has in common with Stella, the lead. But more importantly, he also states what value he wants to offer Stella, offering something relevant rather than simply saying he wants to sell to her company. This gives Rossze the context to broker the introduction in a way that will gain Stella's interest – both on a personal and a professional front.

Carlos also takes a warm but professional tone. He keeps his sentences short (saving Rossze's time) and writes the same way that he might speak to his colleague in an internal meeting. Warm introductions are five times more likely than cold calls to connect you with a decision-maker. And the tone you use when requesting an introduction will typically filter into how your shared connection introduces you – so start off on a friendly, helpful note.

About Us

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 414M+ 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.

For more information, please visit our Sales Solutions site.