




PASSIVE PROSPECTING ON LINKEDIN

Part 3 of LinkedIn's INside Sales Series



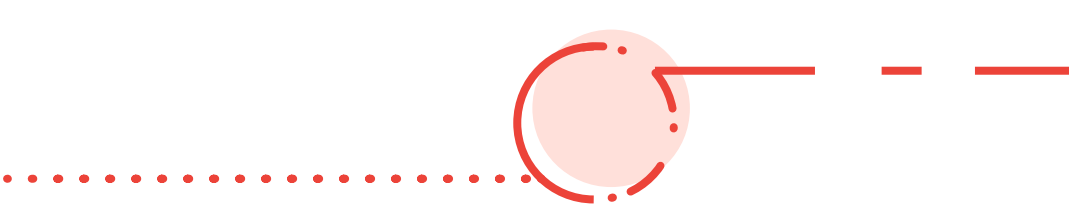

Unlike “active hunting”, a passive sales approach on LinkedIn works by getting prospects to come to you. This eBook offers three ways to apply passive prospecting as part of your social selling strategy: targeting specific individuals, being alert to “outbound triggers” in your social network, and using content to generate inbound leads.

THE OBJECTIVE

Build a reputation on social media that makes prospects want to contact you.

WHY IT MATTERS

B2B decision-makers are already 70% through their buying journey by the time they contact vendors, while 3 in every 4 use social media to research their decisions.¹ Establishing relationships and a personal brand as a trusted, expert advisor is one of the best ways for you to influence B2B decision-makers and position yourself above the competition.



¹ <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/blog/6/60-b2b-marketing-quotes-stats-and-facts-for-the-modern-marketer>

THREE WAYS TO MAKE PASSIVE PROSPECTING WORK FOR YOU

1

TARGET SPECIFIC DECISION-MAKERS WITH A TAILORED MESSAGE

LinkedIn is a goldmine of data that can help sellers forge relationships with potential prospects. The best salespeople will study what prospects are doing online and incorporate that into their conversations, including the following:

LANGUAGE

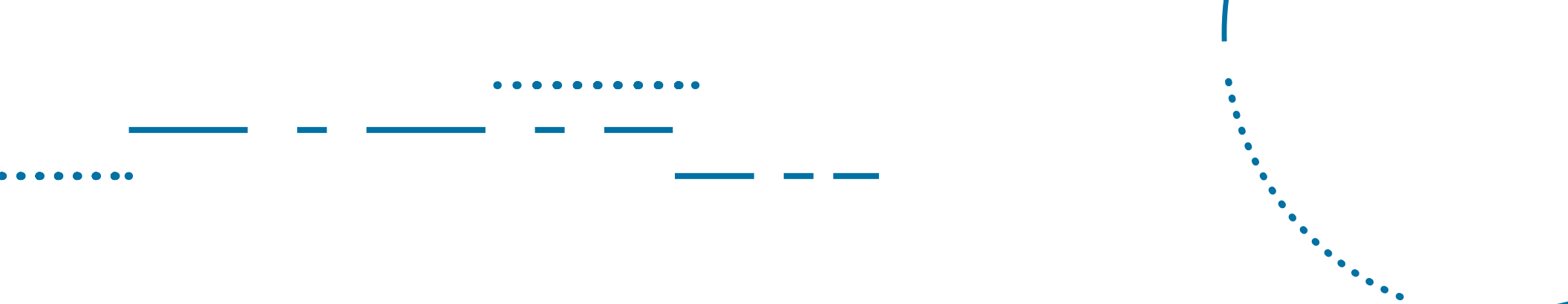
What sorts of phrases does the prospect highlight or repeat in their headline / summary? These often give insight into their values and passions: “culture-focused” or “growth mindset” immediately tell you a lot about both business style and personality.

CAREER HISTORY

What sorts of companies has the prospect usually worked for? This can indicate their preferred working style: prospects with a history in start-ups, for example, will operate differently to those who’ve matured in large enterprises.

ROLES

Has the prospect always been in the same discipline or have they switched careers in the past? This can reveal a lot about their appetite for risk and growth.



When using these insights to engage with your prospects, be authentic and positive. Remember, people post on LinkedIn the things they want their professional peers to know about and comment on. See “Breaking it Down (page 8)” for an example of how to “read” a prospect’s profile.



Pro Tip:

Sports and community activities are extremely effective areas to reference in relationship-building. A background image of cycling or skiing can put the conversation on a positive foot from the word go.



2


ENGAGE AT SCALE WITH LINKEDIN'S NEWSFEED

In the past, trying to uncover outbound triggers (like a change in job role) came largely down to chance: whom you overheard at the water-cooler, or what you happened to see on the customer's desk. Platforms like LinkedIn, however, have put all these insights in the one place. This makes it easier and quicker to respond to changes when they occur - which is great for social sellers as 50% of all sales go to the first salesperson to contact the prospect.

The best social sellers will look out for "digital body language" like these signs:



Company News
Acquisitions, cutting costs, new strategic direction - any major organisation-level change can mean new opportunities or demands.



Change in Job
This can disrupt sellers' work in positive and negative ways. When a prospect changes jobs, you may need to find a replacement sponsor in the business - but it may also create opportunities for working with them in their new role.



Status Updates

These have huge value because they reveal what prospects really care about and prioritise in the now. Engage with them by Liking, commenting, and sharing their updates to put the focus on their interests - not your product.



Blog Post

Reference the deeper insights in a LinkedIn Longform post by linking to it or leaving a comment that adds on something useful. You can also cite or even respond to prospects' ideas in your own posts (see next section).



Group Discussions

Start or contribute to discussions in order to raise your profile as an industry expert and thought leader. Not only are you making your expertise more visible to prospects in their newsfeeds, but everyone who replies to you also becomes a new lead to track.



Pro Tip:

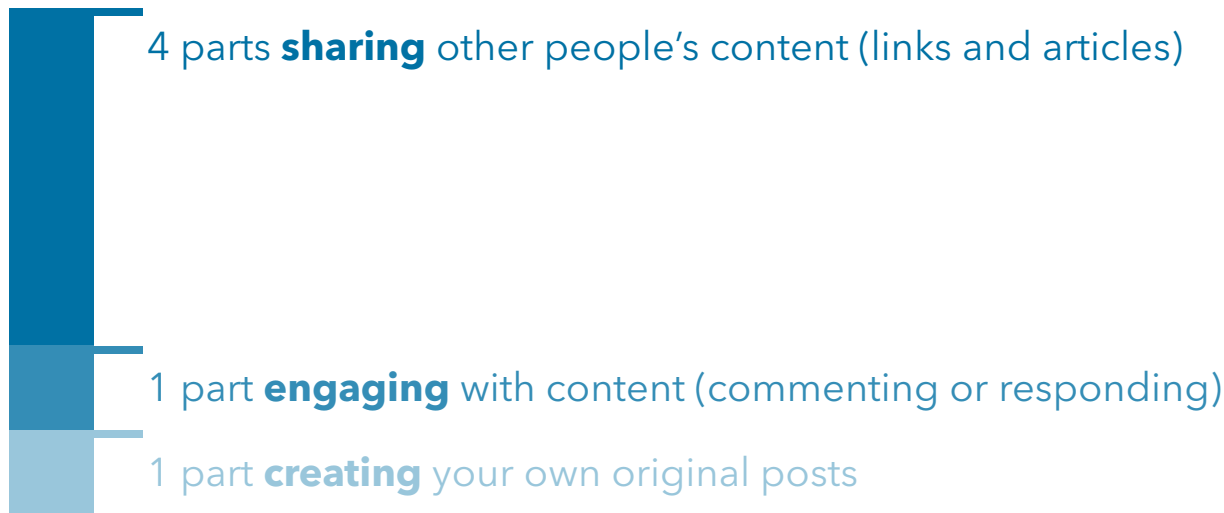
When reaching out to prospects based on outbound triggers, try to craft messages based on three principles - **personalisation, commonality, and advocacy**. Directly addressing a prospect's background and endorsing their expertise will set a positive tone for the future.

3

GENERATE INBOUND LEADS WITH ENGAGING CONTENT

Salespeople are naturally well-endowed for content marketing. Who else speaks directly to multiple customers, companies, and industries on a daily basis? The challenges and success stories that you see each day provide a unique breadth and depth of knowledge that prospects can benefit greatly from.

Not all content has to be created by you. At LinkedIn, we use the "4:1:1 ratio" of



A “Cheat’s Guide” to writing content:

Be authentic. Write about what you’re interested in, in your own voice. This includes topics that don’t relate directly to business but resonate on a personal level with your prospects. Meditation may prove a far hotter topic than derivatives amongst bankers, for example.

Put the audience first. What does your audience care about? Use tools like [Buzzsumo](#) to analyse what people are already posting about, identify the gaps - like industry-focused insights, or case studies - and fill them.

Have an opinion. Don’t just stick to facts. Give a new perspective on an issue, and use it to start and finish your post. A rough skeleton or plan will help more philosophical sellers avoid wandering off on tangents.

Write for the medium. This means catering to skim-readers. Write short paragraphs, keep them to two or three sentences each, and don’t worry about paragraph length.

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Find a copy partner. Make sure your posts go past a second set of eyes. One way to do this is to write in the evening, review your post in the morning, and send it to a colleague for their opinion first thing at work.

Be social. Refer to prospects’ Twitter handles, link to their Longform posts, and copy them when you share articles. Doing so kick-starts conversations and proves to them that your expertise is both current and relevant.



Pro Tip:

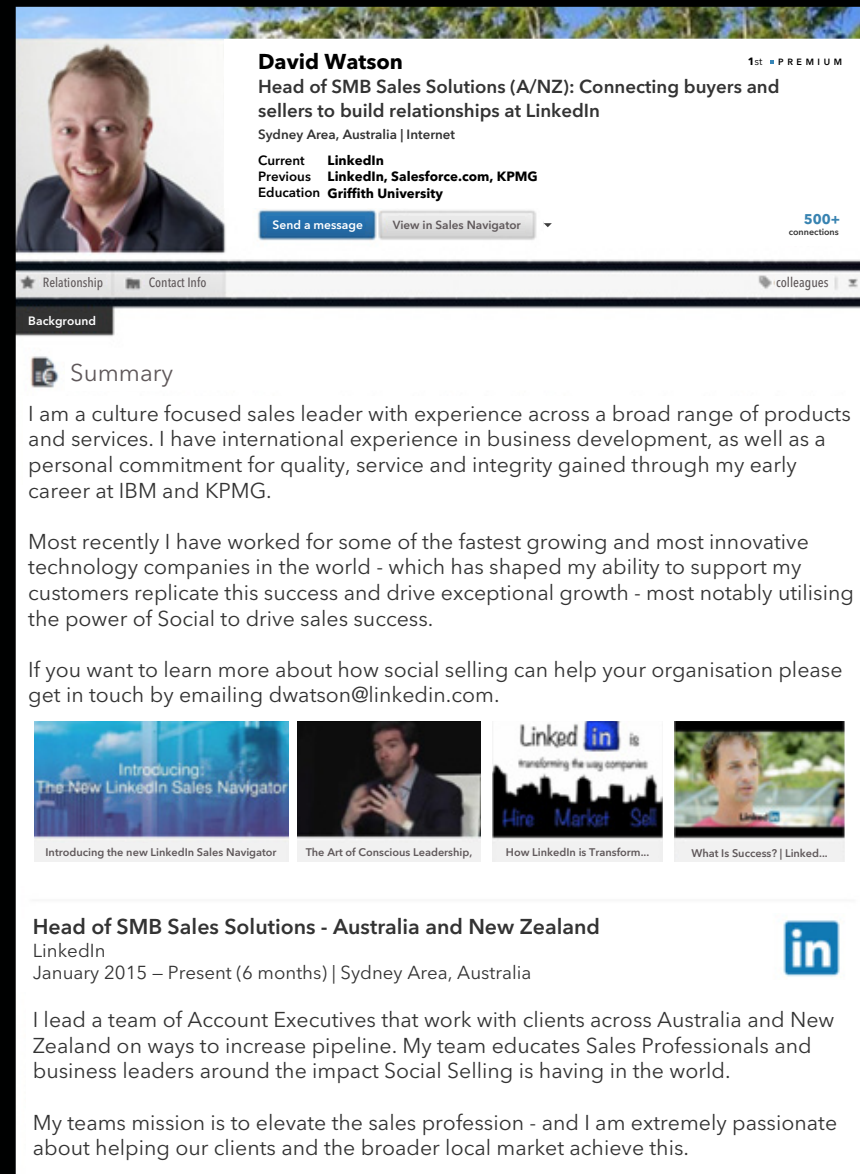
What terms do your prospects and customers use the most? Tweak your headline and summary to incorporate them wherever possible. You can work out these terms by analysing your customers’ profiles or asking your marketing team for insights.

Breaking it Down

What do we know about David from his profile?

From David's language, we quickly realise that his core values include growth and collaboration: his summary focuses on how his experience benefits not only his customers, but also his team members. The roles that he's been in - sales leadership and business development roles - seem to confirm this. His work history, which he mentions in his summary, suggests that he thrives in leading change within larger organisations, particularly in the enterprise technology sector. On a personal note, David's background image implies that he's a fan of the outdoors and travelling around Australia.

Based on this, we could approach David with an interesting article about collaboration in software companies, or perhaps engage him by mentioning a recent hiking trip on the outskirts of Sydney. If pitching, it'd make sense to emphasise the benefits of the solution to both him and his team.



David Watson 1st • PREMIUM
Head of SMB Sales Solutions (A/NZ): Connecting buyers and sellers to build relationships at LinkedIn
Sydney Area, Australia | Internet

Current **LinkedIn**
Previous **LinkedIn, Salesforce.com, KPMG**
Education **Griffith University**

Send a message View in Sales Navigator

500+ connections

Relationship Contact Info colleagues

Background

Summary

I am a culture focused sales leader with experience across a broad range of products and services. I have international experience in business development, as well as a personal commitment for quality, service and integrity gained through my early career at IBM and KPMG.

Most recently I have worked for some of the fastest growing and most innovative technology companies in the world - which has shaped my ability to support my customers replicate this success and drive exceptional growth - most notably utilising the power of Social to drive sales success.

If you want to learn more about how social selling can help your organisation please get in touch by emailing dwatson@linkedin.com.

Introducing: The New LinkedIn Sales Navigator | The Art of Conscious Leadership, | How LinkedIn is Transform... | What Is Success? | Linked...

Head of SMB Sales Solutions - Australia and New Zealand

LinkedIn
January 2015 – Present (6 months) | Sydney Area, Australia

I lead a team of Account Executives that work with clients across Australia and New Zealand on ways to increase pipeline. My team educates Sales Professionals and business leaders around the impact Social Selling is having in the world.

My teams mission is to elevate the sales profession - and I am extremely passionate about helping our clients and the broader local market achieve this.



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.