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The Uncomplicated Guide to Business Outreach on LinkedIn

1. Ensure that you have updated your LinkedIn Profile to be as current and relevant as possible.
    a. Try not to be so formal. Remember you're not the one going to be reading it.
    b. You need to be appealing to your profile's visitors. Leave the job history to the experience section and tell YOUR story in the bio.
    c. Think of things that make you who you are and note them

2. Once your profile is up to date, it is time to start your research.
    a. Who are you going to target and why?
    b. What is your message?
    c. Are you looking for opportunity or to build your network?

3. How are you going to conduct your research?
    a. Are you going to use the free version of LinkedIn? Do you know its limitations? The free version of LinkedIn is great to get you started, but you are going to be limited in the outreach you can do each month. While there is no 'official' number, we do know that the number of people LinkedIn will let you reach for free is not very many. Once you reach your limit, a freeze is put on your ability to view further profiles to connect with. It resets at the start of every month.
    b. Free vs Paid. You might be able to get away with using the free version of LinkedIn if you are just looking to add a few connections to your network each month and that is fine. However, if you intend to go a little further than that and use it as a business development exercise, then you are going to need to look at a paid subscription such as Premium or Sales Navigator. You'll get more access and reach with a premium account but the lack of list building (Leads, Opportunities) will be a concern. If you are going in to a full-blown Business Development program, we highly recommend investing in Sales Navigator (approx. $100 US per month)

4. Process, Process, Process!!
    a. You are going to need one, especially if you are looking to create business opportunities.
    b. How many touch points will you require?
    c. Do you have any tools or information you are willing to give away for free? You will need something of value here to share.
    d. Time to start considering those scripts - What are you going to say, what is your key message? Remember you only have 300 characters here to make an impression. It would be a wise idea to have several scripts ready to test and refine. Some days your scripts will work better than others.
    e. How are you going to track your pipeline? What means do you have available to you?
    f. What is your daily, weekly or monthly outreach target?
    g. How will you manage your follow-up process? Do you have a specific timeline in mind?

5. Outreach for Connections
    a. Now that you have a plan and process in place and know who you are looking to connect with, you have written your scripts and built your lists/searches depending on whether you are using a free subscription or a paid one. It is time to begin.
    b. Outreach is the simple part; you send someone a connection request with a 300-character (well worded) message and then you wait. They will either connect or they won't. A good connection benchmark is 30% anything above is fantastic, anything below, well that's not terrible but you might need to review your list and script to make sure they are in sync. Are you going to sales focused too early?
    c. From here, it's all about conversation and relationship building. Don't be too pushy, be willing to take your time, and work through it, remember you are the one that reached out to them.

Your Checklist to Getting Started

Actions	Completed
1. Profile	
Updated LinkedIn Profile	
2. Subscription	
Free or Paid?	
3. Identified Target Audience	
Vertical (Industry)	
Key Contacts (Decision Makers)	
Region (State, City)	
Business Size (Number of Staff)	
Lists built (if using Sales Navigator)	
4. Process & Plan	
Objective	
Outreach Target (Daily/Weekly/Monthly)	
Timeline for Opportunities	
Number of Touch Points (Initial and follow ups)	
Timeline for Touch Points	
Tools to be used (Free information)	
Scripts Written	
Follow Up process created	
Pipeline Tracking process created	

Tips

- Be prepared for rejection. There will be people on LI that do not want to connect with you or do not wish to engage in your offer. This is OK. If people connect with you and don't wish to take up your offer, the fact you have the connection with them is just as valuable as it has just opened up your outreach possibilities even further.
- Don't be afraid to revisit and rewrite your script. If you are having no success with connections, then review your script against your list and consider if it is strong enough.
- Don't be too sales focused or pushy. You were the one who instigated the connection. You can't rush people. Everyone will respond and react differently. There is no science here, just patience.
- Be polite. Always thank someone for their connection or their feedback and if they decline be sure to thank them for their time. Their decision not to move forward now might not be a permanent one.
- Be patient. This is a relationship and conversation building process. It's not a fire sale.
- Commit to your plan. Instant successes have been known to happen, but on average you are at the beginning of a minimum 3-month plan. You have to simply give it time. Don't give up!