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Using LinkedIn®

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Introduction

Although professionals have always acknowledged the value of networking, today's economic climate makes developing a solid network even more critical. LinkedIn, the leading social networking site for professionals, is the ideal tool for maximizing the potential of an online network. LinkedIn currently has more than 65 million members worldwide, including executives from all Fortune 500 firms and President Barack Obama, and is growing rapidly. A new member joins approximately every second.

It's clear that today's technology has forever changed the way people find a job, promote their businesses, foster strategic partnerships, and develop their professional networks. Social networking continues to generate media buzz and mainstream appeal. According to a March 2009 study by Nielsen Online, participating on social networking sites is now more popular than reading email. But technology is just the enabler. The fundamental concepts of professional networking remain the same both online and off. Building relationships through mutual connections and trust is the foundation of success on LinkedIn just as it is in the real world.

This book is for anyone who wants to tap into the power of LinkedIn for professional reasons. LinkedIn connects you with a network of professional colleagues and enables you to maintain an online presence, find a job, recruit employees, promote your business, find clients and partners, get answers to professional questions, perform market research, and much more. It's a viable business tool that opens up new ways to connect with others who can help you achieve your business goals.

Using LinkedIn is designed to get you up and running on LinkedIn as quickly as possible. This book focuses on standard LinkedIn functionality. LinkedIn rolls out beta functionality and new features on a regular basis, so the features available to you might vary at any given time. The companion website to this book will help keep you updated on what's new with LinkedIn. For now, turn to Chapter 1, "Introducing LinkedIn," to get started with this powerful networking tool.

Who Is This Book For?

This book is for you if..

- You want to become productive on LinkedIn as quickly as possible and are short on time.
- You want to generate better results from your LinkedIn profile.
- You want to find a job or promote your business online, taking advantage of all that social networking has to offer.
- You're a visual learner and want to see how to use LinkedIn in addition to reading about it.

Companion Website

This book has a companion website online at <http://www.patricerutledge.com/using-linkedin>.

Visit the site to access the following:

- Book updates
- News about LinkedIn enhancements and features
- Other books and courses that might be of interest to you

Conventions Used in This Book

More than just a book, *Using LinkedIn* is tightly integrated with online video tutorials, audio insights, and other web-based content, which is all designed to provide you with a media-rich, customized learning experience not available through any other book series today. *Using LinkedIn* is a thorough resource at your fingertips.

Important tasks are offset to draw attention to them.



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This chapter introduces you to the LinkedIn network and the many ways to communicate with other LinkedIn members.

6

Communicating with Your LinkedIn Network

Before you start communicating with others on LinkedIn, you need to understand how LinkedIn classifies its members in terms of their connection to you. This distinction is important because it determines what, if any, restrictions LinkedIn places on your ability to contact people.

In this chapter, you learn about LinkedIn's three levels of connection, sending messages and InMail, working with the introduction process, and managing your Inbox. You can also listen to tips on how to maximize the potential of your LinkedIn network and watch videos that show you how to send a message, request an introduction, and manage introduction requests.

Understanding Your LinkedIn Network

Your LinkedIn network consists of three levels of connections:

- **1st-degree connections.** LinkedIn members you connect with directly. Either you sent them an invitation to connect and they accepted, or you accepted their invitation. Your connection list on your profile displays your 1st-degree connections. When LinkedIn refers to “your connections,” this means your 1st-degree connections.
- **2nd-degree connections.** LinkedIn members who connect directly with your 1st-degree connections but aren't your 1st-degree connections.
- **3rd-degree connections.** LinkedIn members who connect directly with your 2nd-degree connections but aren't your 1st- or 2nd-degree connections.



TELL ME MORE Media 6.1—The LinkedIn Network

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For example, if you connect directly with your colleague Amanda, she is your 1st-degree connection. If Amanda connects directly to Justin, her former classmate, Justin is your 2nd-degree connection. If Justin connects directly with Blake, one of his co-workers, Blake is your 3rd-degree connection.

LinkedIn also considers fellow members of groups as part of your network. See Chapter 13, “Participating in LinkedIn Groups,” for more information about LinkedIn groups.

To view how many people are in each level of your network, select Network Statistics from the Contacts drop-down menu on the global navigation bar.

Your LinkedIn network (termed “My Network”) differs from the entire LinkedIn network, which consists of all LinkedIn members. At the time of this printing, the entire LinkedIn network includes more than 65 million members.

Understanding LinkedIn Messages, InMail, and Introductions

LinkedIn offers several ways to communicate with other members. The type of communication you can send depends on how you’re connected to these members. Your choices include the following:

- **Messages.** Messages are the primary form of communication on LinkedIn. You can send messages to your direct connections as well as to the people who belong to the same LinkedIn groups as you do. If you can send a message to someone, the Send Message link appears next to their name on their profile and in search results. See “Sending and Managing Messages” later in this chapter for more information. Although you’ll often see the term “message” used generically to refer to all items in your Inbox, it is a specific type of communication in itself.
- **Invitations.** An invitation is a request to connect with another LinkedIn member. See Chapter 3, “Developing Your LinkedIn Network,” for more information about sending invitations.
- **InMail.** An InMail is a private message to or from a LinkedIn member who is not your connection. You can receive InMail free if you indicate that you are open to receiving InMail messages on the Account & Settings page. In general, sending InMail is a paid LinkedIn feature unless the recipient is a premium

member who belongs to the OpenLink Network. See “Sending InMail” later in this chapter for more information.

- **Introductions.** An introduction provides a way to reach out to the people who are connected to your connections. By requesting an introduction through someone you already know, that person can introduce you to the person you’re trying to reach. You can contact your 1st-degree connections to request introductions to members who are 2nd- and 3rd-degree connections. Members with free accounts can have up to five introductions open at a time. See “Requesting Introductions” later in this chapter for more information.

Understanding Your Contact Options

Before you start communicating with another LinkedIn member, you need to understand your available options for contacting that particular person. When you view member profiles or their summary information from another part of the site, the icons next to a member’s name tell you how you’re connected (see Figure 6.1).

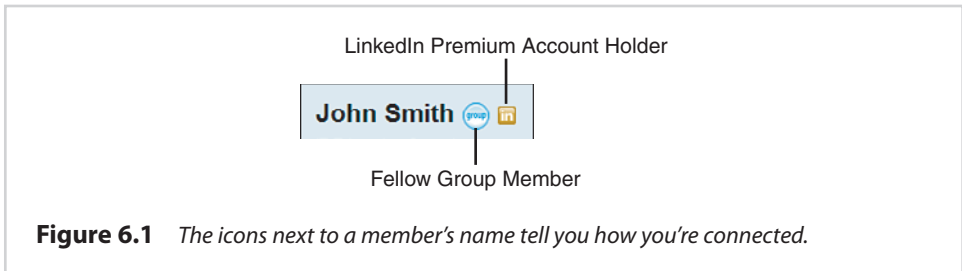


Figure 6.1 *The icons next to a member’s name tell you how you’re connected.*

These icons identify 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-degree connections, fellow group members, and LinkedIn premium account holders.

Members who display no icons next to their names are out of your network, don’t share any groups, and aren’t premium account holders.

The links that display to the right of a member’s name let you know what contact options are available. These include the following:

- **Send a Message.** Send a message to a direct connection or group member.
- **Send InMail.** Send an InMail to someone who isn’t in your network. This option doesn’t appear for members to whom you can send a message

because it wouldn't make sense to pay to contact someone you can communicate with freely. If you click the Send InMail link and don't have a premium account, LinkedIn prompts you to sign up for one before you can proceed.

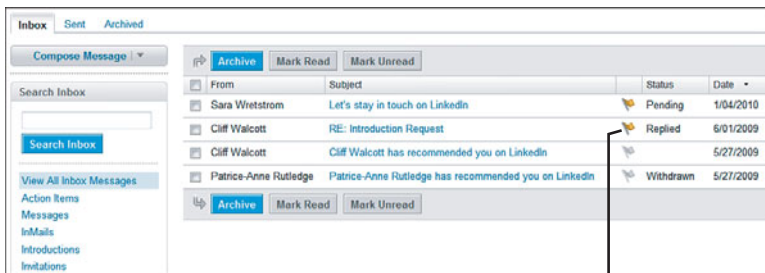
- **Send InMail (Free).** Send an OpenLink message to a member of the OpenLink Network. LinkedIn members who hold premium accounts can offer you the option of sending them free InMail. See Chapter 1 for more information about the OpenLink Network.
- **Recommend This Person.** Post a recommendation for this LinkedIn member.
- **You Have Recommended This Person.** View the recommendation you posted.
- **Get Introduced Through a Connection.** Request an introduction to this member through a 1st-degree connection.
- **Add [First Name] to Your Network.** Send an invitation to connect. See Chapter 3, "Developing Your LinkedIn Network," for more information about sending connection requests.
- **Forward This Profile to a Connection.** Forward a member's profile to a member you know, as a way of informal introduction.
- **Search for References/Find References.** Search for LinkedIn members who worked at the same company at the same time as this member.
- **Save [First Name]'s Profile.** Save this person's profile to your Profile Organizer (a premium feature). See Chapter 7, "Searching for People on LinkedIn," for more information.

These are the link names that appear on an actual profile. The link names in search results are sometimes abbreviated.

Remember that you'll never see all of these options for any one member. For example, it wouldn't make sense to send InMail, request an introduction, or add to your network a member who is already your connection, so these options don't appear for your connections.

Managing Your Inbox

Your Inbox is the focal point for all your direct communication on LinkedIn. A summary of your five most recent Inbox items appears at the top of your home page. You can also click the Inbox link on the global navigation bar to open the Inbox page, shown in Figure 6.2.



Toggle to flag and unflag action items.

Figure 6.2 *Your Inbox is the focal point for your personal communications on LinkedIn.*

The default view of your Inbox is the Inbox tab, which displays all the items you've received. If you have a lot of Inbox items and want to filter what you see, click one of the links below the search box to narrow your choices. For example, you can choose to display only action items, messages, InMails, introductions, invitations, profiles, jobs, recommendations, or group messages.

In addition to filtering Inbox items, you can also search for a specific message. Enter a keyword in the text box on the left side of the page and click the Search Inbox button. LinkedIn displays all messages containing that search term. For example, you could search for a person's name or a word or phrase in the subject line or message text.

From the Inbox, you can do the following:

- **Sort your messages.** Click one of the message headings (From, Subject, Status, or Date) to sort based on that heading.
- **Archive a message.** Select the checkbox to the left of the message you want to move to the Archive folder and click the Archive button. It's a good idea to archive old or resolved messages to keep your Inbox focused on your current action items.

LinkedIn doesn't let you delete messages from your Inbox. If you want to remove messages, simply archive the messages you no longer need to view.

- **Mark a message as read or unread.** By default, new messages appear in bold text to signify they have not yet been read. After you read a message,

the message no longer is boldfaced in your Inbox. To change this, select the checkbox to the left of a message and click either the Mark Read button or Mark Unread button.

- **Flag a message as an action item for follow-up.** By default, new messages include a flag icon to the right of the subject line, flagging it as an action item. Click the flag icon, which serves as a toggle, to flag or unflag a message for action.

The Inbox also includes two other tabs. The Sent tab displays all your sent messages, and the Archived tab displays all the messages you archived.

You can also access each tab of your Inbox from the Inbox drop-down menu on the global navigation bar.

Each message also lists a status. When a new message arrives, its status displays as Pending. Based on the action you take on each message, your status changes. Status options include

- **Accepted.** You accepted the message, such as an invitation to connect.
- **Bounced.** The message bounced when sent to an email provider.
- **Don't Know/Doesn't Know.** The message, such as an invitation to connect, was rejected when the recipient clicked the I Don't Know This User button. LinkedIn lists the status as "Don't Know" if you clicked the button. The status is "Doesn't Know" if you sent the request that was rejected.
- **In Progress/Pending.** Identifies an InMail or request that is still an action item for one of the people involved.
- **Replaced.** Another message has replaced this message, and you can no longer respond to it. For example, someone sent you a recommendation request and then resent it when you didn't respond.
- **Replied.** You replied to the message.
- **Sent.** You sent this message. If the message was a request, the recipient hasn't accepted it yet.
- **Withdrawn.** The sender has withdrawn this message, request, or invitation.

You can also send messages directly from the Inbox. Click the Compose Message button to open the Compose Your Message page and send a message to a

connection. For other options, click the down arrow to the right of the Compose Message button. From the drop-down list, you can choose to do the following:

- Send a message to a connection (the same result as clicking the Compose Message button)
- Send InMail or an introduction
- Send an invitation
- Send a recommendation
- Request a recommendation
- Send a job notification

Refer to other sections in this chapter and other chapters in this book for more information about each specific type of communication.

Sending and Managing Messages

Messages are the most common form of communication on LinkedIn. They're free and enable you to stay in touch with your connections.

Sending Messages



SHOW ME Media 6.2—Sending a Message in LinkedIn

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Sending a Message

To send a message to a 1st-degree connection or group member, follow these steps:

1. On the global navigation bar, select Compose Message from the Inbox drop-down menu to open the Compose Your Message page, shown in Figure 6.3.
2. In the To field, start typing the name of your connection and wait for LinkedIn to find a match.

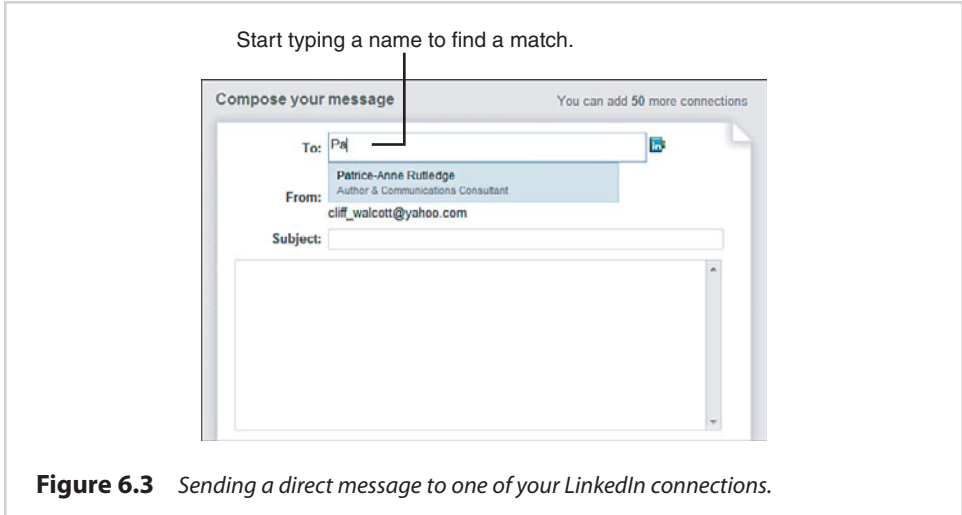


Figure 6.3 Sending a direct message to one of your LinkedIn connections.

Alternatively, click the Address Book icon to open your connection list. With the address book, you can search for the person you want to reach or select multiple recipients for your message. LinkedIn enables you to send a message to up to 50 connections at one time.

3. Enter a subject for your message.
4. Enter your message in the text box.
5. If you're sending a message to multiple recipients and don't want to disclose this information, remove the checkmark before the Allow Recipients to See Each Other's Names and Email Addresses checkbox (selected by default).
6. To email yourself a copy of your message, select the Send Me a Copy checkbox. Your message already appears in your Sent folder by default.
7. Click the Send button. LinkedIn sends your message to the recipient and notifies you that your message was sent.

Although clicking the Compose Message link is the primary way to send messages on LinkedIn, you can also send messages by clicking the Send a Message link in a profile, on your home page, or in search results.

The profiles of your direct connections also display their external email address in the Contact Information box on the right side of their profile. Some members include their email addresses directly on their profiles for the entire LinkedIn network to see.

Reading and Replying to Messages

You can open your messages from the Inbox preview on your home page or from the Inbox itself (access it by clicking the Inbox link on the global navigation bar).

Click the Subject line link of any message to open it. Figure 6.4 illustrates a sample message.

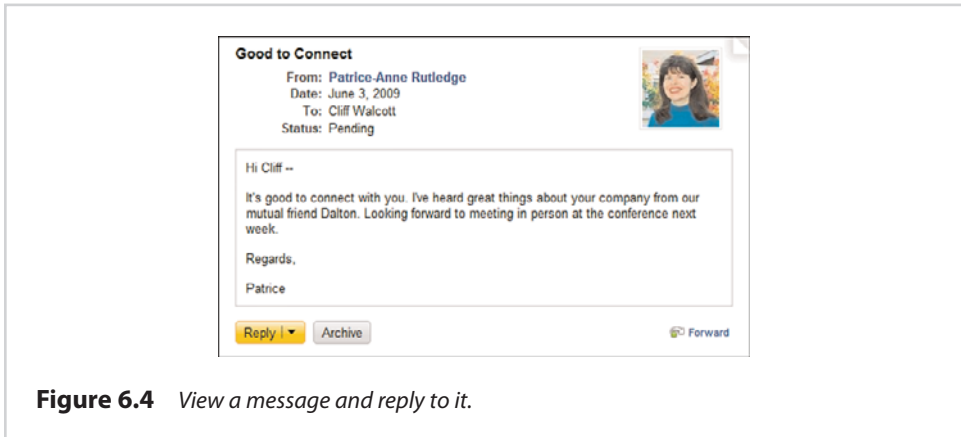


Figure 6.4 View a message and reply to it.

The buttons that appear at the bottom of a message vary depending upon the message type and what actions you can take. For example, a basic message includes the Reply button, a recommendation request includes the Write Recommendation button, and an invitation to connect includes the Accept button and I Don't Know This User button.

Sending InMail

As you learned earlier in this chapter, InMail enables you to contact LinkedIn members who aren't in your network. In an effort to manage spam, LinkedIn requires members to pay to send InMail. InMail is most useful for members who want to contact a wide variety of people, such as recruiters or individuals using LinkedIn for business development.

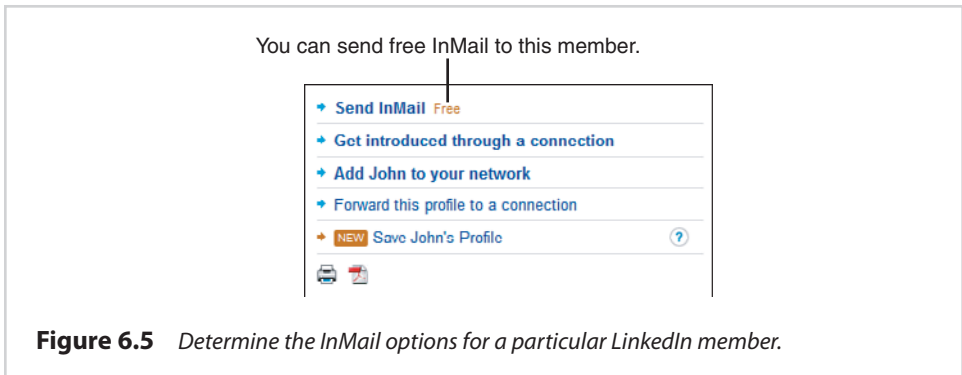
LinkedIn premium accounts, including Job Seeker premium accounts, enable you to send a fixed number of InMail messages per month. To learn more about LinkedIn premium accounts and InMail, click the Upgrade Your Account link on the bottom navigation menu. To learn more about Job Seeker premium accounts, select Job Seeker Premium from the Jobs drop-down menu on the global navigation bar.

You can also purchase individual InMails at \$10 each. To do so, click the Settings link on the global navigation bar and then click the Purchase link in the Account section. This is cost-efficient only if you want to contact just a few people by InMail.

If you see the word “Free” immediately following a Send InMail link, you can send InMail to this LinkedIn member at no charge. To enable members to send you free InMail, you must participate in the OpenLink Network, a premium feature.

See Chapter 1 to learn more about the OpenLink Network and premium account options. See Chapter 9 to learn more about Job Seeker premium accounts.

To determine the InMail options available for a particular member, view the contact options on that person’s profile (see Figure 6.5).



You won’t see any Send InMail link for members who indicate on the Account & Settings page that they aren’t open to receiving InMail. InMail isn’t an option for your connections, either. You can contact them directly at no cost to either party.

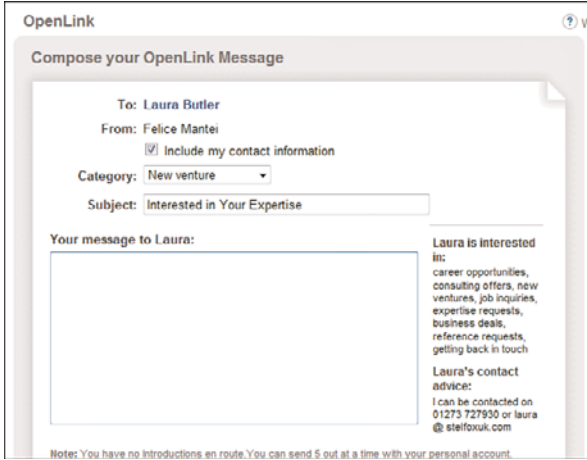


LET ME TRY IT

Sending InMail to a LinkedIn Member

To send InMail to a LinkedIn member, follow these steps:

1. Click the Send InMail link on the profile of the person you want to reach. If you’re sending paid InMail, the Compose Your Message page opens. If you’re sending free InMail, the Compose Your OpenLink Message page opens (see Figure 6.6). These pages contain identical information.



OpenLink

Compose your OpenLink Message

To: Laura Butler

From: Felice Mantei

Include my contact information

Category: New venture

Subject: Interested in Your Expertise

Your message to Laura:

Laura is interested in:
 career opportunities,
 consulting offers, new
 ventures, job inquiries,
 expertise requests,
 business deals,
 reference requests,
 getting back in touch

Laura's contact
 advice:
 I can be contacted on
 01273 727930 or laura
 @stefoxuk.com

Note: You have no introductions en route. You can send 5 out at a time with your personal account.

Figure 6.6 Sending free InMail to members of the OpenLink Network.

2. If you don't want to share your contact information with the person you want to reach, remove the checkmark from the Include My Contact Information checkbox (selected by default). In general, it's a good idea to share contact information.
3. In the Category drop-down list, select the reason for your InMail. Options include: career opportunity, consulting offer, new venture, job inquiry, expertise request, business deal, reference request, or get back in touch.
4. In the Subject field, enter the subject of your InMail.
5. In the text box, enter your message. To increase your chances of a positive reply, be as specific as possible.
6. Click the Send button to send your InMail. If the recipient doesn't respond to the InMail within seven days, the message expires.

For more information about InMail, refer to "Understanding InMail, Introductions, and LinkedIn Messages" in this chapter, and see Chapter 1.

Although InMail is an effective LinkedIn communication tool, it comes at a price. If you want to contact someone you don't know and don't want to pay to send InMail, you have several other options. You could join a group that this person belongs to and then send a message or invitation to connect as a fellow group member. You could also request an introduction through a mutual connection. Alternatively, you could choose to contact the individual outside LinkedIn by accessing the website links and external email information individuals provide on their profiles.

Requesting and Managing Introductions

Requesting an introduction is a good way to reach people in your network whom you don't connect with directly. Although you can send an invitation to connect to someone you don't know, for important communications you might want to consider requesting an introduction through a shared connection. An introduction can carry more weight than a cold contact.

Maximizing the Power of LinkedIn Introductions

Here are several tips for making the most of LinkedIn introductions:

- **Talk to your 1st-degree connection before sending an introduction request on LinkedIn.** Your connection might have information that's pertinent to your request. For example, if you're trying to reach someone about job opportunities, your connection might know if your target is hiring or if there's a more suitable person to contact.
- **Focus on introductions to 2nd-degree connections for best results.** Although you can request an introduction to a 3rd-degree connection, this requires two intermediaries. In many cases, the second intermediary (your 2nd-degree connection passing on your request to your 3rd-degree connection) might not even know you.
- **Make your introduction request concise and specific.** A vague request to "get to know" someone isn't nearly as effective as stating your specific purpose, such as seeking employment, recruiting for a job, offering consulting services, and so forth.
- **Keep in mind that you can have only five open introductions at one time with a free LinkedIn personal account.** Find out how many introductions you still have available by clicking the Settings link on the global navigation bar and viewing your account summary. To increase your number of open introductions, you need to upgrade to a premium account. LinkedIn recommends using introductions judiciously rather than as a tool to contact hundreds of members.

Requesting Introductions

Before you send your first introduction request, it's important to understand how the process works. For example, let's say that you're connected to your former manager, Marianne (1st-degree connection), and Marianne is connected to Dalton (2nd-degree connection), a manager at another local company. You're very

interested in working in Dalton's department, but you don't know him and haven't seen any posted job openings. Rather than sending Dalton an email and resume as a "cold contact," you could send an introduction request through Marianne.

Often you'll already know how you're connected to the person you want to reach, but you can also determine this by viewing the How You're Connected To [First Name] on your target contact's profile. If you don't already know of a common connection, this box could list a name you recognize.



SHOW ME Media 6.3—Requesting Introductions in LinkedIn

Access this video file through your registered Web Edition at my.safaribooksonline.com/9780789745095/media.



LET ME TRY IT

Requesting an Introduction

To request an introduction, follow these steps:

1. Click the Get Introduced Through a Connection link on the profile of the person you want to reach. The Introductions page opens, shown in Figure 6.7.

Request an Introduction

To: **Cliff Walcott**
 From: **Felice Mantei**
 Include my contact information
 Category: **Job inquiry**
 Subject: **Introduction Request**

Your message to Cliff:

Hello Cliff --

My name is Felice Mantei and I'm a former employee of Patrice-Anne Rutledge. Patrice has said many great things about your company and it sounds like a great match for experience.

I would be very interested in discussing any current or future openings with you. My LinkedIn profile summarizes my professional background and includes a copy of my current resume in PDF format as well as a link to my portfolio.

Cliff is interested in: expertise requests, business deals, getting back in touch

Include a brief note for Patrice-Anne Rutledge:

Hi Patrice --

Could you please introduce me to Cliff? I would love the opportunity to work for his company in the future.

Figure 6.7 Requesting an introduction to someone your connection knows.

You can also request an introduction by clicking the Get Introduced link in search results or group member lists.

2. If you don't want to share your contact information with the person you want to reach, remove the checkmark from the Include My Contact Information checkbox (selected by default). LinkedIn shares your email address and an optional phone number.
3. From the Category drop-down list, select the reason for your introduction request. Options include career opportunity, consulting offer, new venture, job inquiry, expertise request, business deal, reference request, or get back in touch.
4. In the Subject field, enter the subject of your request.
5. In the first text box, enter your message to the person you want to be introduced to.
6. In the second text box, enter a brief note to the person you want to make the referral (your 1st-degree connection).
7. Click the Send button to send your introduction request.

Your 1st-degree connection receives your request and can choose to forward it to your target connection with comments or decline your request. If your request wasn't clear, your connection might ask you for more information.

See the following section, "Managing Introduction Requests," for more information about the next step in the process.

Managing Introduction Requests

If you send an introduction request, it's a good idea to understand the next steps in the process. In addition, you'll need to know how to manage the introduction requests other LinkedIn members send to you. For example, someone might ask you to facilitate an introduction to one of your connections or might ask your connection to facilitate an introduction to you.



SHOW ME Media 6.4—Managing LinkedIn Introduction Requests

Access this video file through your registered Web Edition at my.safaribooksonline.com/9780789745095/media.



LET ME TRY IT

Responding to an Introduction Request

To review and respond to introduction requests, follow these steps:

1. On the global navigation bar, click the Inbox link to open your Inbox.
2. If you have many messages in your Inbox, click the Introductions link below the search box. Your Inbox displays only your introduction requests. Alternatively, you can also view new introduction requests in your Inbox preview on your home page or receive them by email (specify this on the Account & Settings page).
3. To open the request, click the Subject Line link. Figure 6.8 illustrates a sample introduction request.

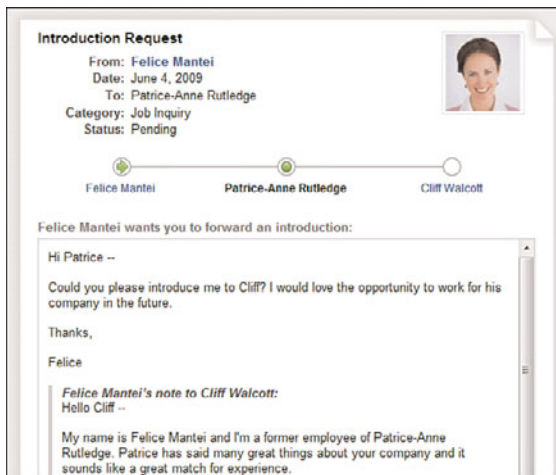


Figure 6.8 Forward an introduction request to one of your connections.

4. Click the Forward Introduction button to forward the request to your connection.

If you don't want to make the introduction, click the Decline to Forward button. Alternatively, click the Archive button to move the request to your Archive folder where you can take action on the request later. Introduction requests remain active for six months.

5. Enter any additional comments in the text box and click the Forward Message button.

The target recipient receives your forwarded introduction request and can accept, decline, or archive it. Accepting the introduction enables the requestor and target to communicate with each other, but they still need to send an invitation request to become connections.

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