Stupid Human Tricks
for salespeople using LinkedIn

Photo by smi23le
This e-book was inspired by a question from Amy Johnston, a blog reader who responded to a request for questions. Amy asked:

"How many sales people use LinkedIn for leads?

Have you found emailing thru LinkedIn or directly to their posted email address more successful?

Any tips to share?"

Where Do I Begin?!

Now, of course I’ve got a lot thoughts and tips to share. First, I want to consider the source.

“Consider the source? What for?”

Possible sources and the implication:

• an evangelist, they may be asking to make me look good.

• a competitor, they may be looking to make me look bad.

• a spammer, they may be looking for exposure to my readers.

• a prospect, they may be giving me a clue to an issue that I can help them fix.

Trick:

Who is asking the questions and why is often more important then the question itself. Before I reach out to my reader, or contact a lead that filled out a form, or call a referral or anyone else, I want to see if I can learn a little about the real reason that they’re on my radar.
Chapter 1:

Learn More About Current Prospects

Be Curious: The Internet Offers an Easy Way to Learn More

My reader didn’t give me a last name, her first name is Amy. She also gave me her email address, amy@alndata.com and she listed her website as http://www.vendoredge.net.

Remember Your Manners, Ask Permission and Keep Your Promises

When a reader comments on my blog, they give me their email address with the condition that, “Email (will not be published) (required)”. So, the first thing that I did was Google her email address.

Trick:

Like many people that show up on your radar, my reader wants to maintain some level of privacy. They don’t want me calling them to try to sell anything. Something caught their curiosity and they’re taking a peek.
Learn More About Current Prospects

Then I typed http://www.vendoredge.net into my browser and saw this.

I clicked around, but there was no mention of Amy anywhere. I went back to the Google search results and clicked on the first entry. There I learn that Amy is a new hire, her last name is Johnston and that her email address is published on line.
(Or I would not have shared it here.)
Learn More About Current Prospects

I scrolled down the page and found this article.

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Then I went back to the first article and clicked on “Connect with Amy on LinkedIn”.

And I have everything that I need and it took me less then 5 minutes to get what I needed.
Learn More About Current Prospects

How To (Politely) Use What You Have Learned

I noticed on Amy’s LinkedIn a whole bunch of other stuff about Amy and her company. Some of it may become important, but at this point I’m not going to use it because if I mention it, I’ll sound like a salesman and scare Amy away. Let’s look at what I know and how I can use the information to start a conversation with Amy, and maybe learn why she asked her question:

“How many sales people use LinkedIn for leads? Have you found emailing thru LinkedIn or directly to their posted email address more successful? Any tips to share?

To answer Amy’s questions;
I don’t know. Yes and No. Sure!

I don’t know how many sales people use LinkedIn for leads, but I’ll tell you that many of the salespeople that have, did it incorrectly, got discouraged and gave up. If you know somebody like that, send them this ebook. Maybe it will help.

Are posted email addresses more effective than InMail? Yes and No. I prefer to use a posted email address than to send messages through LinkedIn because I think that some people prefer to receive direct messages rather than LinkedIn messages. That being said, some people prefer DM’s through Twitter, texts on their phone, or phone calls.

Trick:
We need to determine as quickly as possible how someone wants to be communicated with and Do it their way!
Learn More About Current Prospects

The message itself is just as important as how it is delivered, and many salespeople blow it there. I lead with issues, features or benefits, I will sound like every other salesman and scare Amy away. So, my email (through LinkedIn or direct) will be different. Maybe:

“Hi Amy, thanks for your comment. I see that you’re new at ALN. Have you settled in yet?”

Or

“Hi Amy, when I read your introduction on the ALN company news, I also noticed the article about Jo Harmon. Looks like you have big shoes to fill.”

If Amy is a closed off person, she may think that I’m a stalker and won’t reply. Most people who use social media are just that - social- and are trying to be happy and will reply. When Amy replies, she will reply as a person and not as a prospect and she will be replying to someone that is taking the time to get to know the real Amy. No walls. No resistance.

If I had replied with;

“Hi Amy, I noticed that your LinkedIn profile needs to be optimized because… I also noticed that your website is boring. If you check out my profile, you’ll see that I am the world’s best at both of those. So, I’m the guy that you need to talk to. Want to schedule a no obligation call?”

Do you think that she’ll reply? Do you think that she’ll even read the whole thing before she deletes it?
Chapter 2:
Finding New Prospects

Can we use LinkedIn to find people to talk to?

Have you tried any of these?

• Do you connect to your clients?

• Have you looked at your clients connections?

• Are they connected to anyone that has the same title and occupation that your client does?

• Did they go to college to learn how to do what they do?

• Are they connected to any alumni that are prospects for you?

• How about their former employers?

• Is there anyone at a former employer that you should talk to?

• How about former employees or co-workers?

• People that used to work at your client’s company that moved on?

• Is there any chance that they might be worth a reach out?
Finding New Prospects

So, let’s go back to Amy. If Amy is a client, I could do a search for former employees at ALN Apartment Data. I didn’t find any.

I could do a search for property managers. I found 569,891. I’m connected to 20 property managers, but I have 7,175 that are connected to one of my connections. I did a search for Apartment Data and found 179 people that know somebody that I know. Amy has Apartment Association of Greater Dallas listed as her Education. I searched for that and found 8 people that know somebody that I know. If Amy were a client, that’s over 7,300 people that I could send an email. Apply the same rules as above. Do not try to sell. Do not try to qualify. Don’t say that you’re awesome. Send an email something like, “I found your profile on LinkedIn and notice that you’re connected to ‘so and so’ How do you know them?”. They may reply. They might not. If they do, ask another question that’s based on their reply. Understand that they’ll often look at your profile before they reply to see who you are, what you do, etc.
Finding New Prospects

**Trick:**

Be creative about finding prospects that know people that you know and touch them gently. Remember that most of the people that join LinkedIn don’t know how to use it. They might be sitting there waiting for somebody with your credentials to contact them.

**Trick:**

Do NOT ask them to connect to you. Save connecting for people that you have a conversation with, that you think are professional and that you would refer to your friends. It’ll be doubly great if they like you and you believe that they’ll refer you to their friends.
Chapter 3:

Expanding Your Network

As long as we’re talking about connecting, let’s talk about inviting people to connect. I have strong opinions on what qualities make a good connection. Consider the previous examples. If you don’t know your connections very well, and you send an email to one of their connections, what will happen if the recipient asks your connection about you? Are they likely to say, “I don’t know them.” You will have wasted your email, your time, and your chance at a good first impression.

This is the standard invitation to connect. Don’t use it
Expanding Your Network

I get several a week. Whenever I see, “I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.” My reaction is; “Who cares what you’d like?” Is it that hard or take up that much of your time to personalize the invitation? Stand out!

Use something like;

“Great conversation! I really liked what you said about accounting practices. Would you like to connect on LinkedIn?”

or

“Looking forward to our next conversation. Meanwhile, would you like to join my professional network on LinkedIn?”

Investigate Your Current Connections

You have likely heard of the saying “Out of sight out of mind?”. Or how about the theory of 6 degrees of separation? In short, it means seeing who your connections are and reconnecting with them. Even if they are not your ideal “prospect” they likely know someone who might be.

Have you searched for fellow alumni at your alma mater, former co-workers, relatives, former neighbors?
Expanding Your Network

True story:

My cousin, Dan, used to own a gym. One day, Bernie, one of Dan’s personal training clients, was complaining about an issue at work. Dan said something like, “You should call my cousin, Rick. I think that’s what he does.” We did millions of dollars in business over close to 20 years. Dan didn’t know exactly what I did, or whether I was any good. But he cared about me and he cared about Bernie. So Dan made a gentle suggestion to Bernie and gave me the benefit of the doubt.

Ask yourself the question, “Who did I used to know that I lost track of?” Go find them on LinkedIn. Send them an email that says something like:

““I was playing with LinkedIn and wound up on your profile. Looks like you’ve been doing some interesting stuff since we used to ______ at _______. Maybe we should have a ‘catch-up’ conversation some time?”

If the conversation goes well, ask them if they’d like to connect on LinkedIn, then do it.
Expanding Your Network

LinkedIn Groups: Go to New Places to Find New People

How do you use LinkedIn groups? Do you join groups that your competitors join? Do you join groups that your customers join? Why should you belong to either or both? If you join groups with your competitors, you’re probably doing it to learn. Ask questions. Read and learn about ‘best practices’. Share if you want. Take if that’s your style. Reach out privately to people that would be good partners, resources or sub-contractors. If you join groups that your customers join, don’t be salesy. Don’t be tricky or cute salesy. Don’t think that they won’t notice that you’re pitching. They will and you’ll be banned.

Remarkable content, well placed in a discussion or a comment will cause readers to click on your profile to see who you are and what you do. In order to place remarkable content without it seeming like a pitch, the first thing to do is listen, or read. What are others talking about and commenting on? Who do you agree or disagree with, and why? Comment on other discussions, answer their questions. Same rule applies; less you more them.

LinkedIn Interaction Tips:

• Be other focused.
• Tell a story.
• Share an experience.
• Make it personal and real.
• Read before you publish.
• Be sure that you’re not selling.
• Converse on LinkedIn.
• Sell privately behind the scene.
• To get behind the scene, send a non-threatening email asking which solution they chose, how it turned out, whether the situation resolved itself, or asking if they saw (and send them a link to an article or other resource.).
Expanding Your Network

LinkedIn Answers: Share, But Don’t Spam

You’ll find the “Answers” section in the “More” drop down on your LinkedIn home page. Recognize that LinkedIn has well over 100 Million members and most of them are trying to sell something and many of them are terrible salespeople.

So, a few cautions using this screen shot;
Expanding Your Network

Some people have too much time on their hands. Is it even possible for one person to answer 559 questions in one week? When does he have time to do anything else? So, recognize that people that spend an excessive amount of time on LinkedIn might be more interested in their own opinion than in you. Some might consider them to be spammers. They may just be trying to avoid talking to people! So, always consider the source. Is their answer a veiled sales pitch?

As you explore the Q&A section, look for questions about issues that you solve. When you find one, consider the source before you answer. You may notice that the question is asked by one of your competitors who is trying to get some unsuspecting prospect to indicate that they have that problem. I’ve always felt that doing that was akin to entrapment. If you want to toy with your competitor, answer his question with the solution to the issue. (Remember, no selling!) If someone reads the question, the reader may click on your profile rather than the asker’s.

When you find a question that is asked by someone that might be a prospect, share remarkable content. Remember not to sell. If you don’t get a reply to your answer in a day or two, send them an email asking what they tried and what worked. See if they engage. If they do, have a conversation.

Who is Checking Your Profile Out?

Do you know who looked at your profile today? What did you do about it? I pay $24.95/month for my premium LinkedIn account. That’s $300/year. How many sales do you need to justify a $300 expense?
Expanding Your Network

3 Uses of a Premium Account and the “Profile Stats Pro” page.

Top Search Keywords –
How are people finding you? What do they type in the search box that causes them to click on your profile? Are you showing up when a prospect might be looking?

Views by Industry –
Who is finding you, your prospects, your competitors, potential partners, potential vendors? Is that who you are trying to attract?

Who’s Viewed Your Profile –
Specifically, who found you? What can you do with that knowledge?. I send an email through LinkedIn and ask, “I see that you visited my profile on LinkedIn. What brought you by?” Most reply and the reply will indicate whether any further follow-up is appropriate. If you are active on LinkedIn, you’ll need to check every day to keep up.
Expanding Your Network

One last tip…

Keep in touch –

‘Touch’ your connections periodically. Short, other-centered, emails won’t have 100% response rate, but may start or renew some interesting conversations.

Try:

“Hi – I was trolling through my LinkedIn connections and landed on your profile. Forgive my memory, but how and why did we connect?”

Or

“Looks like we’ve been connected for a while and a lot has changed since the last time that we spoke. Want to have a “catch-up” conversation?”

Conclusion:

We all know that the Internet has changed the world. It’s changed the way buyers shop and buy. It’s changed the way we market, prospect and sell. As you read this, my guess is that you saw a integration of marketing and sales and in today’s world, you not only have to be good at both, you have to understand when to do what. LinkedIn is a prime example.

If you’d like to learn more about the 12 steps of Sales & Marketing Integration, send me an email at:

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This eBook was Written, Edited, Developed and Designed as a Collaborative effort by:

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