

Patrice-Anne Rutledge

Sams **Teach Yourself**

LinkedIn®

in **10**
Minutes



SAMS

Sams Teach Yourself LinkedIn® in 10 Minutes

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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 has more than 40 million members worldwide, including executives from all Fortune 500 firms and President Barack Obama. 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 business, foster strategic partnerships, and develop their professional networks. 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.

Sams Teach Yourself LinkedIn in 10 Minutes 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 Lesson 1, "Introducing LinkedIn," to get started with this powerful networking tool.

Who Is This Book For?

This book is for you if...

- ▶ You're new to LinkedIn and want to become productive as quickly as possible.
- ▶ You want to find a job or promote your business online, taking advantage of all that social networking has to offer.
- ▶ You want to become productive on LinkedIn as quickly as possible and are short on time.

Companion Websites

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

Additional information is located at <http://www.informit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0672330857>. Here you can find additional lessons and articles, including information about recruiting job candidates, working with company profiles, advertising on LinkedIn, and using LinkedIn on your mobile device.

Conventions Used in This Book

The Teach Yourself series has several unique elements that help you as you learn more about LinkedIn. These include

NOTE

A note presents interesting pieces of information related to the discussion.

TIP

A tip offers advice or teaches an easier way to do something.

CAUTION

A caution advises you about potential problems and helps you steer clear of disaster.

PLAIN ENGLISH

Plain English sidebars provide clear definitions of new, essential terms.

LESSON 1

Introducing LinkedIn

In this lesson, you'll learn the basics of LinkedIn and develop a strategy for success with this popular social networking site.

Understanding What LinkedIn Can Do for You

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is the world's leading social networking site for business, with profiles of more than 40 million professionals around the world. LinkedIn is also rapidly expanding: A new member joins approximately every second. The site is extremely active with recruiters from recruiting firms as well as from major companies such as Microsoft, eBay, and L'Oréal, which makes it a prime hunting ground for job seekers.

Everyone from top CEOs to President Barack Obama has a LinkedIn profile. If you want to network for business on just one social networking site, LinkedIn is the site to choose.

NOTE: LinkedIn History

LinkedIn was founded in May 2003 when the five company founders invited 300 of their closest business contacts to join. By the end of that first year, LinkedIn had reached 81,000 members.

With LinkedIn, you can

- ▶ Create a profile that helps achieve your professional goals
- ▶ Develop and manage a network of professional contacts
- ▶ Reconnect with former colleagues and classmates

- ▶ Find jobs, consulting opportunities, and clients
- ▶ Recruit job candidates
- ▶ Request and give professional recommendations
- ▶ Find and give answers to compelling business questions
- ▶ Join groups to discuss issues with like-minded individuals
- ▶ Establish your credibility as an expert in your field
- ▶ Conduct marketing research
- ▶ Promote your services as a LinkedIn service provider
- ▶ Advertise your business

TIP: Focus on Strategy, Not Filling Out Forms

At first glance, LinkedIn appears deceptively simple. Its true power, however, comes from employing the strategic best practices of online networking, not on your ability to enter your professional data in a form.

The key to success on LinkedIn is to establish clear goals and ensure that all your actions on the site work to achieve these goals.

For example, if your goal is to find a job on LinkedIn, you want to create a strong profile with keywords that attract recruiters. You also want to develop a solid network of professional contacts in your industry—the type of people who might hire you or who might provide relevant job leads.

On the other hand, if your goal is to find business leads and develop your platform as an expert in your field, you could use a different approach. A strong profile and network are still important, but you might also want to participate in LinkedIn Answers and LinkedIn Groups to promote your expertise among LinkedIn's 40 million members.

Before establishing your goals, however, you need to understand the unwritten rules of LinkedIn. LinkedIn's focus is on developing a mutually

beneficial online business network. With LinkedIn, you can stay in touch with your existing contacts and connect with other professionals who share your goals and interests. LinkedIn is not the place to amass thousands of “followers,” engage in heavy sales tactics, or send spam-like communications. Keeping these “rules” in mind will help you develop a LinkedIn strategy that generates positive results in your professional career.

Understanding LinkedIn Account Types

LinkedIn offers several account types, including a free personal account and three types of premium accounts. All accounts offer the ability to create a professional profile, develop a network of contacts, search for jobs and people, receive unlimited InMail and requests for introductions, participate in groups, and participate in LinkedIn Answers.

PLAIN ENGLISH: **InMail**

An InMail is a private message from a LinkedIn member who is not your connection. Although you can receive InMail free if you indicate that you are open to receiving InMail messages, you cannot send InMail unless you pay for that particular service. InMail is a paid service because messages you send via InMail are far less likely to be confused for spam. Keep in mind, however, that InMail isn't the same as the free messages you are able to exchange with your connections after you have already made a connection.

PLAIN ENGLISH: **Introduction**

A LinkedIn introduction provides a way to reach out to 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. For example, one of your connections might be connected to a hiring manager at a company you want to work for. Requesting an introduction to this hiring manager is a much better way to find a job than just sending a resume along with hundreds of other people.

LESSON 6

Communicating with Other LinkedIn Members

In this lesson, you'll learn about the LinkedIn network and the many ways to communicate with other LinkedIn members.

Understanding Your LinkedIn Network

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

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.
- ▶ **3rd degree connections.** LinkedIn members who connect directly with your 2nd degree connections.

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

LinkedIn also considers fellow members of groups as part of your network. See Lesson 11, “Working with LinkedIn Groups,” for more information about LinkedIn groups.

PLAIN ENGLISH: My Network

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 40 million members.

TIP: View Your Network Statistics

To view how many people are in each level of your network, click the Network Statistics link in the expanded left navigation menu.

Understanding InMail, Introductions, and LinkedIn Messages

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

- ▶ **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 Messages” later in this lesson 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 Lesson 3, "Adding and Managing Connections," 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 lesson 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 lesson 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).

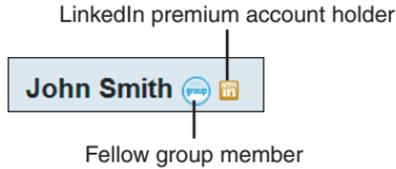


FIGURE 6.1 The icons next to a member’s name tell you how you’re connected.

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

NOTE: Some LinkedIn Members Have No Icons

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

- ▶ **Send 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 Lesson 1, “Introducing LinkedIn,” for more information about the OpenLink Network.
- ▶ **Get Introduced Through a Connection.** Request an introduction to this member through a 1st degree connection.

- ▶ **Add [person's first name] to Network.** Send an invitation to connect. See Lesson 3, “Adding and Managing Connections,” 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.

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

CAUTION: Not All Options Are Available for All Members

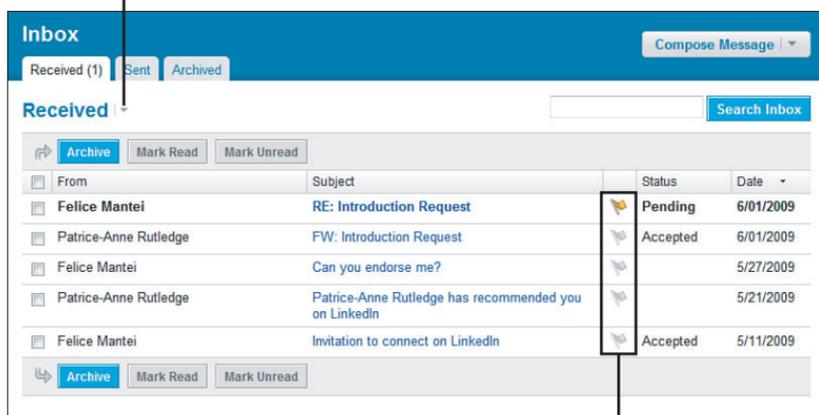
Remember that you'll never see all of these options for any one member. For example, it wouldn't make sense to send InMail, request an introduction, or add to your network a member who is already your connection, so these options don't appear for your connections.

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 left navigation menu to open the Inbox page, shown in Figure 6.2.

The default view of your Inbox is the Received 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 the down arrow next to the Received heading and choose one of the available options. For example, you can choose to display only action items, messages, InMails, introductions, invitations, jobs, recommendations, or group messages.

Click to filter messages



Toggle to flag and unflag action items

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

TIP: Search for Specific Content

In addition to filtering Inbox items, you can also search for a specific message. Enter a keyword in the text box on the right 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 Received tab, you can

- ▶ 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 check box 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.

CAUTION: You Can't Delete Messages from Your Inbox

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 check box to the left of a message and click either the Mark Read 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.

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.** Identifies an InMail or introduction 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

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

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

Sending Messages

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

1. Click the Compose Message link on the expanded left navigation menu to open the Compose Your Message page, shown in Figure 6.3.

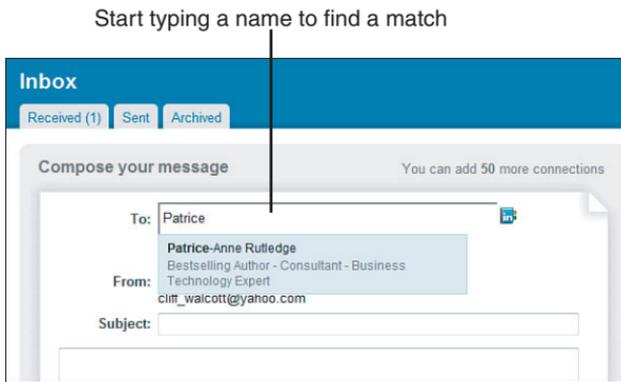


FIGURE 6.3 Sending a direct message to one your LinkedIn connections.

2. In the To field, start typing the name of your connection and wait for LinkedIn to find a match.

TIP: Send a Message to Multiple 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 allows 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 check mark before the Allow Recipients to See Each Other's Names and Email Addresses check box (selected by default).
6. To email yourself a copy of your message, select the Send Me a Copy check box. 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 Message link in a profile, on your home page, or in search results.

TIP: Other Ways to Contact LinkedIn Members

The profiles of your direct connections also display their external email address in the Your Private Info About [First Name] box. 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 left navigation menu.)

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

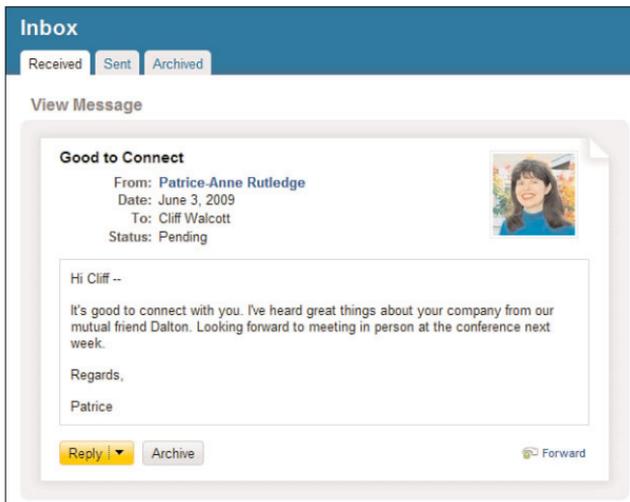


FIGURE 6.4 View a message and reply to it.

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 a 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 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. You can also purchase individual InMails at \$10 each. To do so, click the Account & Settings link on the top navigation menu 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.

TIP: When You Can Send Free 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 Lesson 1 to learn more about the OpenLink Network and premium account options.

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

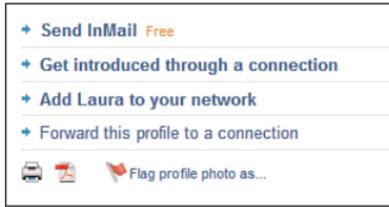


FIGURE 6.5 Determine the InMail options for a particular LinkedIn member.

NOTE: Where Is the Send InMail Link?

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.

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.

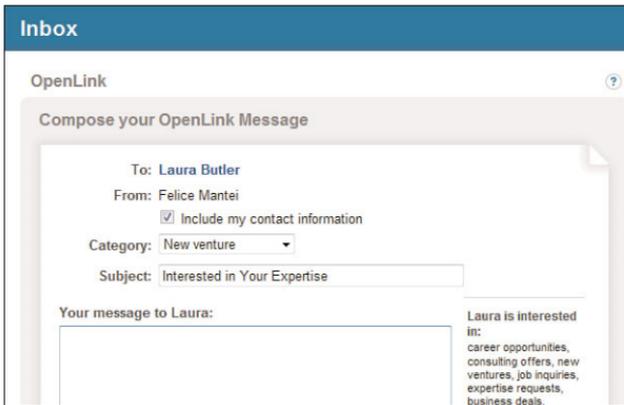


FIGURE 6.6 Sending free InMail to members of the OpenLink Network.

2. If you don't want to share your contact information with the person you want to reach, remove the check mark from the Include My Contact Information check box (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, see “Understanding InMail, Introductions, and LinkedIn Messages” in this lesson and see Lesson 1.

TIP: Consider Alternatives to InMail

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 Introductions

Requesting an introduction is a good way to connect with 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, you might want to consider requesting an introduction through a shared connection for important communications. An introduction can carry more weight than a cold contact.

For example, let's say that you're connected to your former manager Felice (1st degree connection) and Felice 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 Felice.

Often you'll know already 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.

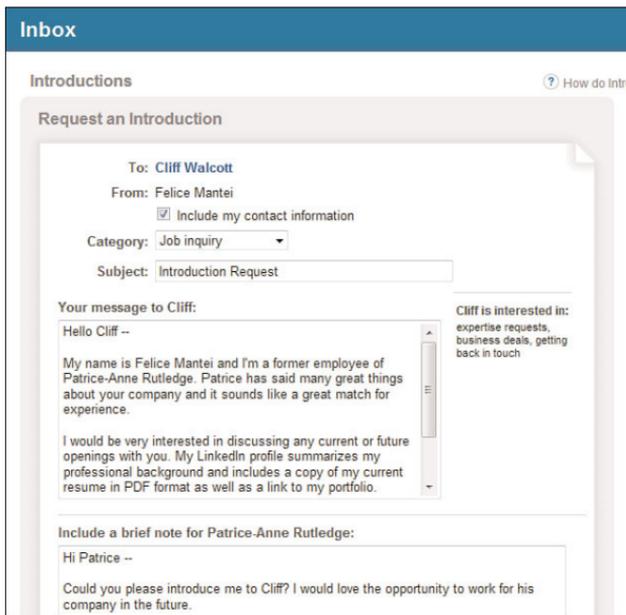
Here are several tips for making the most of LinkedIn introductions:

- ▶ 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 Account & Settings link in the top navigation menu 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.

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.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Request an Introduction' form. At the top, it says 'Inbox' and 'Introductions'. Below that, there's a 'Request an Introduction' section with the following fields:

- To: Cliff Walcott
- From: Felice Mantei
- Include my contact information
- Category: Job inquiry (dropdown menu)
- Subject: Introduction Request

Below the form, there's a section titled 'Your message to Cliff:' with the following text:

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.

Below the message, there's a section titled 'Include a brief note for Patrice-Anne Rutledge:' with the following text:

Hi Patrice --

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

On the right side of the form, there's a section titled 'Cliff is interested in:' with the following text:

expertise requests, business deals, getting back in touch

FIGURE 6.7 Requesting an introduction to someone your connection knows.

TIP: Other Ways to Request an Introduction

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 check mark from the Include My Contact Information check box (selected by default). In general, it's a good idea to share contact information.
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

In addition to requesting your own introductions to others, you might also receive introduction requests. For example, LinkedIn members might ask you to facilitate an introduction to one of your connections or might ask your connection to facilitate an introduction to you.

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

1. Click the **Inbox** link on the left navigation menu to open your Inbox.
2. If you have many messages in your Inbox, select **Introductions** from the **Received** drop-down list. 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.

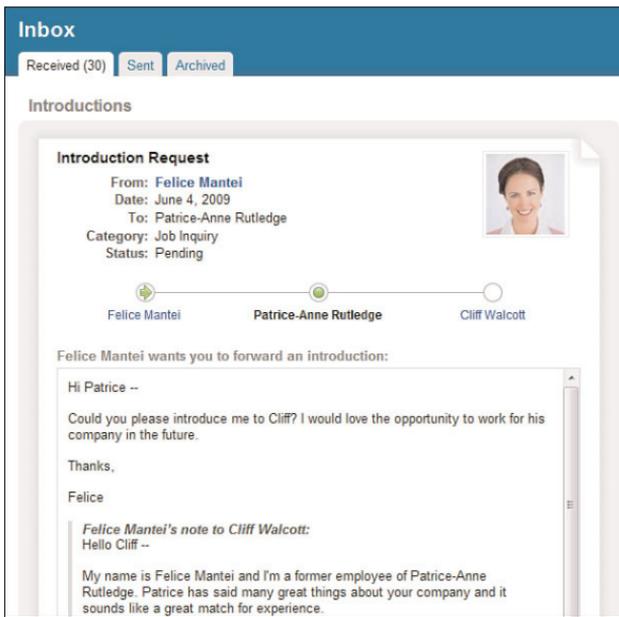


FIGURE 6.8 Forward an introduction request on to one of your connections.

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

NOTE: Declining or Archiving an Introduction Request

If you don't want to make the introduction, click the Decline Introduction 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.

Summary

In this lesson, you learned about the many ways to communicate with other LinkedIn members and the options available based on their connection to you. Next, you'll learn how to search for people on LinkedIn.

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