



SALES SECRETS REVEALED

JILL KONRATH

Can LinkedIn Increase Sales?

Recently we surveyed 3094 sellers to find out the answer to this question. We wanted to know how they were using LinkedIn and its impact on creating opportunities. Of all the respondents to our [2013 Sales & LinkedIn Survey](#):

- 4.9% were “top sellers” who’d created lots of opportunities via LinkedIn and were having a good year in sales.
- 39.5% of respondents had created several opportunities.
- 55.5% of respondents didn’t have any business they could attribute to LinkedIn.

We discovered that top sellers used LinkedIn more often and very differently than their colleagues. They saw it as a tool that could be leveraged to open more doors, expand their business in existing accounts and enhance their professional presence.

That’s why we wanted to share their stories with you. In this eBook you’ll hear what seven top sellers are doing to win sales via LinkedIn. And you’ll also get access to lots of good resources to help you leverage LinkedIn more effectively.

Hopefully you’ll be inspired to learn more.

Jill Konrath

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JILL KONRATH

[Jill Konrath](#), bestselling author of 2 award-winning books, is a frequent speaker at sales conferences. She shows salespeople how to get more customers faster by leveraging LinkedIn and other social selling strategies.

Her clients include IBM, GE, Microsoft, Wells Fargo, Staples and numerous mid-market firms.

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Robbie Johnson

Wins a \$500,000 contract with LinkedIn's help

I was at a \$4 million dollar consulting company, selling IT consulting services, trying to break into Fortune 500 companies. The company I was calling into generated over \$100 billion in revenue per year. My first few calls were routed into the IT procurement/sourcing person.

I started out by telling him my value proposition on why we'd be valuable to his organization. About 5 minutes into my pitch, he started laughing. I stopped and asked him what I was missing. He told me that their organization had just gone through a huge exercise to purge their IT vendor list for the upcoming years. He threw out the top three qualifications to get on that vendor list: global presence, over 25 areas of practice, and over \$100 million in assets. When I told him we had none of them, he said he appreciated my pitch but to call back in three years when we might be a viable option.

My bosses told me not to pursue it, that I'd never get in. I decided to take a different approach—LinkedIn! I started by finding out that the people in his company regularly attended local Project Management Office (PMO) groups. I went to the local meeting, got a list of attendees (including from the company that laughed at me) and then looked everyone up on LinkedIn to get backgrounds on them.

Over the next nine months, I went to every PMO meeting and met all the people I'd researched on LinkedIn. I'd also see who they were connected to and ask about that person's role in the organization. After a few meetings, I'd ask for an introduction to this person and then start the process over again. My only constant through all of this was LinkedIn.



Robbie Johnson
Channel Sales Manager
SPS Commerce

view my [LinkedIn](#) profile

After nine months, one of my new contacts, whose title was deceiving for her role in the targeted organization, connected with me at a conference. She said that she had an upcoming project that my company looked perfect for and wanted my execs to meet with her bosses.

We set up a meeting and walked into her company to meet with three of the decision makers that previously were "impossible" to set up an appointment with. At the end of a 30-minute presentation, they said we were perfect for the project and were thrilled to be doing business with us. We told them we didn't have a master contract with them and that we were told it would be difficult to get.

They told us, no problem, we'll just tell IT procurement to work with you. Who called later that week? The guy who just nine months earlier told me I'd never get in.

Ultimately, we landed a \$500K contract that we should have never gotten. Without LinkedIn, I would have never gotten that contract or met with those contacts. Since then, I utilize LinkedIn in almost 100 percent of my sales cycles. It's been my not-so-secret weapon to working with executives at many companies who in the past were nearly impossible to meet with.

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Jill Rowley

Sees big payoff with connection & thought leadership strategies

To me, selling is all about relationships, building trust and establishing rapport. That's why and how I use LinkedIn. And it all starts with your profile. It has to be created with your buyer in mind. Most salespeople don't realize that.

My headline showcases that I'm a team player and major contributor. I have eleven recommendations. On my profile, I post presentations that are relevant to my buyers, such as case studies and analyst reports. I link to our company blog so that everyone can see our thought leadership content.

I see myself as an information concierge. I constantly look for good information that my prospects and customers would want to read – and share it with them via updates and Tweeting.

In my sales, I'm very targeted and strategic. LinkedIn helps me find the right people at the right companies. Using the advanced search function, I'll enter in the company name, marketing titles, then keywords like automation, operations, and web. I use what I call a "surround strategy" – meaning I want to identify a number of folks in the organization that would be involved in our decision. I never want to be "single threaded" and just have one contact.

And, I surround my prospects on multiple channels too. I invite them to connect on LinkedIn. I follow them on Twitter. I retweet their tweets. I add them to my Google+ circle. I check them out on SlideShare. I want to know them intimately.

I'm always thinking, "How can I leverage my network too?" I'll even check out the University of Virginia Alumni group on LinkedIn to see if I can find a person who can help me connect with a targeted decision maker. It's been extremely effective.



Jill Rowley

National Account Manager
Eloqua

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When I reach out to people, I say something personal right away so I can create an immediate connection. I study people's profiles carefully to find out what's important to them professionally and personally. After doing that, I send them a message via LinkedIn with a connection request.

Each message is personally crafted to show I've done my homework. For example, I might start: "Wahoowa (our school battle cry)! Please allow me to use our UVA connection to e-meet you. I received a BS in Commerce in 1994." Then, I'll go on to mention:

- Something about their profile/accomplishments I found interesting or relevant.
- Names of mutual acquaintances or interests.
- What Eloqua does – but focused on the issues or business goals we help companies with. (It's never, ever a product pitch.)
- Several other companies we've worked with so they know we're a credible resource.

Finally, I'll close by asking if we can connect briefly to explore if our company is a good fit for their needs.

This approach has been highly effective in starting conversations. It gets me in the door, positioned as a valuable resource. But it's not for salespeople who are looking for shortcuts and quick sales. It takes time to do the research and create personal messages. And, I want to be seen as a trusted advisor and expert in my area.

It's a long-term strategy that's led to lots of business already, so I know it pays off big-time. I've been a top rep at Eloqua for many years now. And, in 2011, I was even named the Employee of the Year.

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Jamie Shanks

Nets \$350,000 in new opportunities in just 6 months

Sales leaders are always asking what's the ROI and cost-per-lead of LinkedIn. To answer the question simply, my personal business development ROI with LinkedIn is unmatched by other sales mediums. That's right – I personally (not including what our sales team accomplished) created \$350,000 in new opportunities in six months, using LinkedIn Executive (\$100/month account).

Cold calling, email campaigns, webinars, tradeshows, PR – none were as effective at producing this kind of ROI. I've chosen to isolate my LinkedIn metrics to only the last 6 months, as it's when my business Shanks Group merged with Sales for Life. Since then, we've truly begun maximizing our LinkedIn efforts and documenting strategies.

Here's my personal LinkedIn ROI metrics:

- # of Opportunities Created = 34
- Total Opportunity Value = \$350,000
- Cost per Opportunity = \$600 (LinkedIn Premium) / 34 Leads = **\$20**
- ROI per Opportunity = \$350,000 / \$600 = **\$583 : \$1**

Let's focus on these last two metrics in comparison to your business development costs:

Cost per Opportunity (Lead) of \$20: That means we spend a quick lunch for two people, to enter into a proposal opportunity in a deal worth thousands of dollars. This is a fraction of the cost of "Smile & Dial" outsourced cold calling.

ROI per Opportunity of \$583: \$1 Ratio. This is like the ProLine bet on the 2012 Cleveland Browns, Oakland Raiders and Kansas City Chiefs, all to win in a shootout. Except our potential \$583 has the same odds to win as last year's 2011 Super Bowl Champion New York Giants. This is the easiest bet in the world – I give you \$1, and I have a really good chance to make \$583.



Jamie Shanks
Partner, Sales for Life

view my **LinkedIn** profile

ROE (Return-on-Effort) LinkedIn metrics: ROE is vital to understand with LinkedIn. Once people see our success and our client's success on LinkedIn, the common objection is "My sales reps don't have time to spend all day on LinkedIn."

Please understand that I spend less than six hours a week on LinkedIn! This should be a huge wake-up call to sales leaders that long-term commitment to social selling is the common denominator. As a business owner, I'm being pulled in ten directions at once, many times concentrating on our client's business development before our own. That's why we've developed a system on LinkedIn (that we teach) to maximize time-to-money ratio.

In all honesty, I spend about one hour each day on LinkedIn, minus Saturdays:

- Total Time on LinkedIn: 6 hours x 24 weeks = 144 hours
- Opportunities Created per Hour: 34 Ops / 144 hours = every 4 hours (1.5 a week)
- Potential Revenue per Hour: \$350,000 / 144 = \$2,341/hour

Let's review these last two metrics:

Opportunities Created per Hour: Looking at the math, by Wednesday after distributing great content using HootSuite, answering a few questions, reviewing my triggers in LinkedIn Signal and sending LinkedIn InMails, I have an opportunity with a software company worth \$10,000+. The process was fun. It builds long-term brand value and I'm able to put myself in a proposal opportunity all during my lunch breaks.

Potential Revenue per Hour: We don't win every opportunity, but I can tell you that at least I have a shot at \$2,341 for one hour of work on LinkedIn. That's time well spent.

All of this ROI was *not* generated in my first few weeks of using LinkedIn for business development. Your pipeline won't be created from your first few phone calls either. This is an investment of time and effort, but an investment that builds everlasting brand power for you and your sales acumen.

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Note: This article was first published on the [Sales for Life](#) website and is reprinted with permission.

Thomas von Ahn

Generates 58 percent of his revenue via LinkedIn

58 percent of our revenue comes directly from new contacts we've generated via LinkedIn. We don't go chasing these people. Instead, they invite us into their decision process, wanting to learn more about how we can help their company.

We're closing nearly two thirds of these warm prospects with an average deal size of \$7500. Last year, our revenue doubled and in the upcoming year, we're expecting huge growth too. We directly attribute this to the work we continually do on LinkedIn and the foundation we've laid.

Most people think LinkedIn is a prospecting mecca where miracles occur. They may practice the "push" style of marketing themselves. Or, they have a hit-and-run approach where they put up posts, articles and links that get ignored, but still hope to get hits from. It doesn't work that way.

My business partner, Christine Kelly, and I take an entirely different approach. Here are some of our core business growth strategies on LinkedIn:

We're "groupies." Having a clearly defined target market allows us to pinpoint groups that our targeted decision makers would likely belong to. I like smaller groups with less than 5000 members. Before I join, I scout them out, looking for groups filled with active discussions and minimal spam. Christine and I each belong to different groups; we "divide and conquer." And, because we're so unlike, we personally appeal to different people.

We're "go-givers." Groups give us a forum to provide content. We participate in numerous discussions, always focusing on how we can help our targeted prospects. We give tons of free advice. We share free eBooks and white papers from our website. Sometimes we start our own discussions by asking probing questions, and then join in the ensuing conversation. When it's appropriate, we even refer other experts and companies who could help our group colleagues with their challenges.



Thomas von Ahn
Founding Partner
Viral Solutions, Inc.

[view my !\[\]\(147b0c7dce349edf02b6b21226344f99_img.jpg\) profile](#)

We get personal. LinkedIn isn't about technology. It's about people. While many are concerned that one-on-one relationships will suffer in our virtual world, we believe they're enhanced. Before we even connect with people, we can learn so much about them and their company. And, because we're so intent on building relationships with our LinkedIn connections, we even send them birthday cards.

We shake things up. I'm constantly reevaluating my group memberships. Some groups get stale, others become spam-filled and some just get too big. Also, every 90 days, Christine and I go through our LinkedIn connections and eliminate people with whom we've been unable to build a relationship.

We invest time. Too many people are looking for overnight results. It won't happen. We invest about 10 hours per week on LinkedIn. While that may seem like a lot, when you compare it to the time that most people spend prospecting, it's minimal.

Also, so many people forget the definition of social. We take advantage of that and build relationships. Plus, we are who we are. We're genuine, personal and candid on LinkedIn; people get to know us and trust us.

When you combine that with the power of InfusionSoft (our marketing automation software), sales becomes easy. Literally easy! Our sales funnel *never ever* leaks! The social automation and personal attention allows us to reach more people, address more needs and solve more problems with fewer bodies and a higher ROI.

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Rachael Lyman

Connects, participates & closes lots of business

Just do it! When I first started using LinkedIn, if I saw someone I wanted to be in my network (like an executive), I sent an invitation. It didn't matter whether or not I'd actually met him or her. Most executives don't remember anyhow. To my surprise, most accepted. Now I don't ask them to connect. They're reaching out to me.

It's not personal. To make LinkedIn work for me, I needed high-level connections within specific industry clusters. I knew that the more connections I had in common with my prospects, the more likely they'd connect. But I don't connect with everyone. If I do, my ratio will be off. And, you're only as strong as the weakest person in your LinkedIn network.

Post relevant information. LinkedIn is not Facebook. I use status updates to share good resources that are helpful to busy executives who are trying to keep up with so many things.

Groups, groups, groups! As my connections increased, I noticed something that annoyed me. The same five to ten people were posting updates. This was frustrating because I was trying to keep an eye out for trigger events, relevant information, industry news or posts from CEO prospects I was hoping to close.

Thinking that my updates might be getting lost in the noise, I began posting them to my groups. Wow! It was nothing less than amazing. More likes, more comments, shares, and... yep... sales! My groups include Aerospace, Energy, Infrastructure, Bioscience, Site Selectors, Colorado Companies to Watch, my competitor's groups and my sales groups. I go where my prospects are.

That's it - seriously! Here are some ways this strategy has worked for me:

- I rarely send out requests to connect anymore, yet have an average of 30-40 high-level invites each week.



Rachael Lyman

Membership Account Executive
Denver Metro Chamber of Chamber

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- Almost daily, executives comment positively on my LinkedIn activity. Recently, the CEO of a big bank (who's my prospect) said, "The most prolific and relevant information I get from LinkedIn comes from you."
- At least once a week I get a request for information, or better put, an unsolicited lead via LinkedIn. They close pretty easily. Not too shabby.
- My LinkedIn page, connections and groups have become a resource for people in my network. I encourage my clients who want to sell to big companies to think of my LinkedIn profile as a "go-to" resource for high-level connections.

I also share my success strategies with my clients and my network. It always comes back to me. Why have a powerful network if you can't use it for good?

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Gene McNaughton

Successfully connects with high-level executives

I work directly with C-level executives. Having a solid relationship with the CEO/owner is critical to moving a project forward and ultimately, the overall success of the project itself.

The basis of a relationship starts with rapport. When dealing with an executive, I have five minutes (or less) to create a positive initial impression. In that short time, I have to be impressive (via voice, presence, posture), establish something in common and give a sincere compliment (where it applies).

This is where LinkedIn is solid gold for me. I always look through these executive's profiles, because that's where I find the gold. Specifically I look at:

- **Work history**
I want to see if I know anyone from their previous companies and, better yet, at their level too. Knowing someone in common is huge, especially if that person used to be his or her boss.
- **How big their job is**
I'm seeing if I've had a job similar in scope, size or responsibility to theirs. If so, I can relate to the complexity, the pressure, the typical patterns and so on.
- **Schooling**
I'm checking to see if I know anyone who went to that school at a similar time. You'll never know, and if you don't look for this you'll never find out. But if you do, it's a huge rapport builder. You can mention sports teams or special events too.
- **Hobbies**
Only mention this if you truly share something in common there. Don't BS about it because if he/she asks a detailed question and you answer like an amateur, you've ruined your credibility.



Gene McNaughton

President
Business Breakthroughs, Intl.

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- **Where they grew up/lived**

This may be another area that you have in common with them – like "cold winters" or "beautiful leaves in the fall." I'm originally from Iowa. When I talk with anyone from the Midwestern states, I always say, "It's nice to talk with another Midwesterner." That helps get the conversation off to the right start.

Initial impressions are everything – including the basis of why someone would like you enough to listen to you. Most salespeople forget that initial impressions are a strategy of their own. If you can perfect this, you'll get into more meaningful conversations with your prospects.

I regularly sell consulting contracts that are well over \$350,000 for a six-month engagement. And I know that building rapport is the first step to trust and respect, and getting prospects to feel like I'm similar to them in some way, shape or form.

This approach is paramount to every conversation I have. Rapport is power.

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Stuart Armstrong

Creates & leverages a highly targeted database

We sell \$400,000 to \$2 million operating systems software primarily to North American telecommunications companies. My goal is to ensure these companies consider us when their buying cycle starts. To make this happen, I leveraged LinkedIn as well as several other key resources.

Challenge: Within 45 days, starting from scratch, I built a database of North American telecoms, cell phone and cable companies that have more than 200,000 subscribers (about \$150MM sales) from a total cohort of 1200 companies. My objectives were twofold:

- 1) To quickly determine if there were pending deals we were unaware of. Since only CFOs could approve these deals, that's where we focused.
- 2) To implement best Sales 2.0 business development and lead generation practices, enabling a future flow of opportunities. We wanted to identify and begin communicating with the ecosystem of decision makers, stakeholders and influencers.

I started by building a global list merging data I'd gathered from Jigsaw, InfoUSA/Canada, Wikipedia, and associations. After that I pre-sorted and de-duped the information and got my prospect list down to about 250 companies.

Next, I used InsideView and my LinkedIn connections to identify the correct people to contact in these companies. I also used InsideView to track trigger events and competitive intelligence about these companies, looking for things that could create potential opportunities for our services.

Process: Based on this research, I narrowed my list down to 60 high probability prospects who met my minimum ideal customer profile. Then, I dug into LinkedIn again.

- I visited the profiles of many people in each company to identify decision makers and influencers in finance (Chief Financial Officer, LOB finance, audit, OSS/billing, corporate controller, fraud prevention and analysts.) I found between five to twenty people per account.



Stuart Armstrong

Business Development NA
cVidya Networks

view my [LinkedIn](#) profile

- I monitored who visited my profile and verified this traffic on our website. And, I connected with as many of these people as possible so I had access to their second level connections. Plus, I made sure they could see my groups and the link to the website.
- I used LinkedIn and other services to get the contact info for the CFOs of these 60 high potential prospects.

Then I wrote an email focused on our value and thought leadership. After finalizing the message, I contacted the personal assistants of each of these CFOs, letting them know I'd be sending them an email with insight into recent revenue assurance and fraud issues. This was just the start of my campaign, which includes at least seven contacts.

Outcome: This approach is already yielding results as many high-level executives have already initiated a conversation with me or referred me to the right people in their organization.

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The Next Step

As you can see from these stories, LinkedIn is an online resource that can be strategically and creatively leveraged to create new opportunities. The ultimate goal is to engage prospects in real discussions – outside of LinkedIn. Here are things to consider in moving to the next step.

- **Keep focused on what matters.**
Not to you, but to your prospects. All they care about are the issues and challenges that keep them from achieving their objectives. Make sure that any direct communication offers them relevant ideas, insights and information.
- **Propose a short initial conversation.**
Busy people are much more inclined to set up a time to talk if you suggest ten minutes instead of an hour. When you do get the opportunity, don't waste it talking about your company. Be a valuable resource. Think helpful!
- **Suggest an online meeting.**
Virtual videoconferences give you a chance to connect with people at a deeper level than a phone call. You'll be seen as a person, not a seller. Use them to build relationships quickly.

Hopefully the success stories of our seven LinkedIn sales pros have inspired you to learn more about how to leverage LinkedIn to open more doors. In the upcoming pages, you'll find numerous resources you can use to shorten your learning curve.

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Cracking the LinkedIn Sales Code



Get the FREE eBook Now!

Get the 2013 Sales & LinkedIn Survey Results

We recently analyzed how 3094 sellers used LinkedIn. Only 4.9% of survey respondents were getting lots of opportunities from it and having a great year. These top sellers were using LinkedIn very differently from their counterparts. We have much we can learn from them.

In Cracking the LinkedIn Sales Code, you'll get the inside scoop on:

- Which of LinkedIn's capabilities these top sellers use a lot!
- Their mindset: how they actually think about using LinkedIn to get more business.
- Action steps you can take to better leverage LinkedIn for prospecting.

Plus, you'll be able to compare what they're doing to create all these sales opportunities with your own LinkedIn usage. It's an eye-opener!

[Click here to get the FREE eBook Now!](#)

<http://bit.ly/Cracking-LinkedIn-Sales-Code>

More on LinkedIn & Social Selling

Check out this series of videos and articles on Jill Konrath's website. Discover strategies & techniques to leverage online resources such as LinkedIn to get more customers.



These and more social selling videos and articles are available [here](#).

- [Does Social Selling Really Work?](#)
- [Examples of a Good LinkedIn Summary](#)
- [Examples of a High Impact LinkedIn Headline](#)
- [Get a Jump on New Sales Opportunities](#)
- [Most Important Info To Get From Your Prospect Research](#)
- [The Rise of Social Selling](#)
- [The Secret Power of Using LinkedIn Groups](#)
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- [3 Reasons to Grow Your LinkedIn Network](#)
- [5 Ways To Use LinkedIn For Prospecting](#)
- [5 Ways to Build Your LinkedIn Personal Brand With SlideShare](#)

Watch for more upcoming articles. They'll be filled with fresh sales strategies that you can implement NOW.

Don't miss out!

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LinkedIn Books

For more info on leveraging LinkedIn to create sales opportunities, check out these books.

[SNAP Selling](#)

Jill Konrath

[The Power Formula for LinkedIn Success](#)

Wayne Breitbarth

[How to Really Use LinkedIn](#)

Jan Vermeiren & Bert Verdonck

[The New Handshake: Sales Meets Social Media](#)

Barbara Giamanco & Joan C. Curtis

[The Infinite Pipeline](#)

Mike Ellsworth, Robbie Johnson & Ken Morris JD

[LinkedIn Marketing: An Hour a Day](#)

Viveka von Rosen

[I'm on LinkedIn, Now What?](#)

Jason Alba

[Rock the World With Your Online Presence](#)

Mike O'Neil & Lori Ruff

LinkedIn Pros

On these websites, you'll find good articles, videos, online training & in-person training. I know the people and they're good!

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www.salesforlife.com

The Sales Foundry

www.thesalesfoundry.com

Social-Centered Selling

<http://scs-connect.com>

Patrick O'Malley

www.patrickomalley.com

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