

Spam/Viruses

Remember—once someone becomes a first-level connection, he/she automatically gets your email address. Now, that is no big deal if you are only connecting with people you know and trust, but it may become a big deal when someone's goal is to spread viruses or spam you with all kinds of offers and promotions.

Another form of spamming is unwanted sales calls. Once people have access to your list of connections, it's easy for them to call your connections and drop your name as a way to gain credibility.

Marketing Audience

Of course, when you send out a status update with a marketing message, you want to reach as many current and potential customers/clients as possible. This is when many of us would like to have 30,000 people in our network! However, if you do business in a defined geographic market (for instance, a large city or part of a state), having lots of strangers from across the country or even the globe in your network may not be worth the potential risks.

Introduction Effectiveness

People love to introduce their friends to each other, and LinkedIn makes it easy for your friends to see your entire professional network. If you decide to connect with lots of strangers, you may disappoint your friends when they request an introduction to someone in your network and you have no real relationship with that person.

Time Commitment

The more first-level connections you have, the busier your home page feed will be and the more time you will need to spend if you want to take full advantage of this wealth of information.

Search Ranking

We all want to come up high on the list when someone is searching on LinkedIn for the kinds of things we do, sell, or want to be searched for. One of the ways to improve your ranking significantly is to have lots of connections. Connections are the gas in the LinkedIn tank. Fill up your tank a bit more, and you'll have a much better chance of being found.

What Should Your Strategy Be?

The action step for you now is to think about where you are currently on the LinkedIn Connections Continuum and whether that spot is getting you what you want to get out of your efforts on LinkedIn. If not, you may benefit from strategically expanding your network—but keep in mind that moving farther to the right has its benefits but some issues you may have to manage through as well.