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# The Power Formula for **LinkedIn** Success

## HOW TO REACH YOUR LINKEDIN AUDIENCE

You know there are lots of ways to share information on LinkedIn, but you may be thinking:

- There don't appear to be any hard and fast rules on what is appropriate and what isn't
- In my opinion, some people are doing way too much marketing and not enough real sharing
- I am sometimes confused about what to say and where to say it
- I don't want to mess up
- I don't want to bother people too much

You're right—there are no hard and fast rules—but once you understand LinkedIn's two avenues of communication (direct and indirect sharing) and the basic rules for using them, you will be ready to start sharing helpful information and including an occasional marketing message as well.

### Direct Sharing

There are three ways you can send a direct message to someone, and these messages go directly into his/her email inbox. This is essentially an email initiated by you that comes through LinkedIn.

1. Direct message to any of your first-degree connections. You can send the same message to up to 50 connections at the same time.
2. Direct message to a fellow group member. Access this by going to the group, searching the person's name, and then clicking the Envelope icon.
3. An InMail message to any LinkedIn member who has set his/her account to receive InMails. If you want to send a direct message to someone who is not a first-level connection or a fellow group member, you must use an InMail. You get InMails by upgrading to one of the premium accounts.

One cool feature of purchased InMails is if the person responds within seven days, you get a \$10 credit for a future InMail.



### SAVING TIP

To get around the \$10 fee, you can join a group your target is in and then send him/her a message through the group. You can send a maximum of 15 messages to fellow group members each calendar month. This limit applies to all the groups to which you belong.

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## Indirect Sharing

This part can be confusing to some people, but it is also where the fun starts and where the greatest marketing opportunity lies as long as you know what you are doing and have a strategy for doing so. This diagram shows the channels for indirect sharing.

**As you can see, everything starts with YOU, the individual user on LinkedIn.**

You can share with three different types of audiences: your direct connections, group members, and company followers. Some of the three audiences may overlap. These messages are not as “in your face” as the direct messages discussed above because the person may or may not see the information, depending on his/her individual activity level and habits on LinkedIn.

Each audience has a different level of influence and expectation for communications. When deciding what to communicate and with which group(s), your overriding purpose should be helping and sharing good information. Strive to be a trusted thought leader, regardless of the audience, and address their pain point as it relates to your products and services.

### 1. Your Network Connections

Of course, these are the people who have chosen to be communicated with at the most personal level. You can share almost any information, always remembering the professionalism expected on LinkedIn.

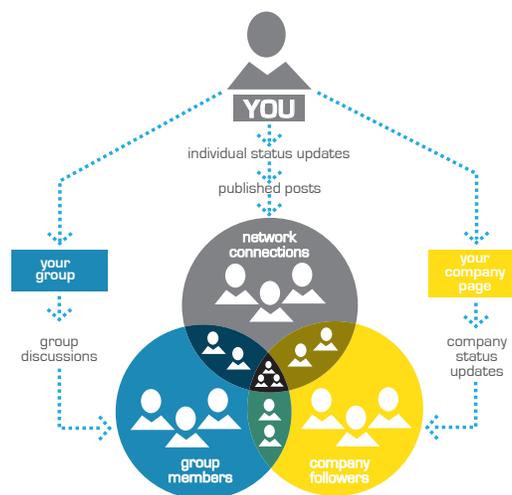
If you cross this line and start posting lots of Twitter or Facebook-like information or do too much marketing, some of your connections may remove you from their list of connections or hide your updates. This is a relationship of trust, so treat it accordingly.

These people want to hear from you as long as the information is useful, relevant, helpful or interesting, and from time to time a marketing message can be shared as long as it is not the only thing you ever share. There are no black-and-white rules, so watch what others are doing, and then use your judgment.

### 2. Group Members

These people expect the discussions you post or engage in with them will be in accordance with the group’s rules and revolve around the group’s mission as opposed to promoting your goods and services. It is the group manager’s responsibility to monitor discussions so the discussion section doesn’t become a replacement for the Yellow Pages.

## LinkedIn Circles of Influence



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LinkedIn groups (especially groups in your industry and your customers' industries) provide an extraordinary opportunity to engage with existing customers and potential customers. So have a strategy to be active in the best available groups, and then mind your LinkedIn etiquette.

### 3. Company Followers

These people have signed on and agree to receive status updates about what is going on at your company, so feel free to share a bit more information of a marketing nature. This is probably your biggest opportunity for sharing your marketing message to a large group of people. Also, once you get a significant number of followers, you can then begin to target these updates by the recipients' company size, industry, function, seniority, and geography (Note: The company page administrator can authorize multiple people from the company to share status updates.)

The key is to encourage people to follow your company. HP (Hewlett Packard) has over two million followers on their company page. Just think what an efficient way that is to communicate with a big group of people when they release a new printer.

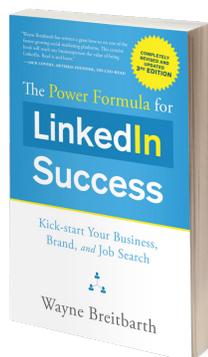
Now that you know the available channels for sharing on LinkedIn, I hope you are already starting to think of new messages your audience is just waiting to hear from you, the expert.

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